UC SANTA BARBARA

THE Current

December 2, 2020
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# A Moving Award

brooke smiley, a lecturer in the Department of Theater and Dance, has received one of five Native Launchpad Artist Awards from the Western Arts Alliance. The award, valued at $40,000 over three years, provides cash grants, travel support, promotional benefits, artist showcases and more.

In her first work since receiving the award, smiley will present “Lifelines,” a new improvisational dance film seeking bodies’ connection to the land. Additionally, she will premiere “Re:Forming,” a live-streamed performance creating choreographic sculptures based on her movements, utilizing a 3D printer. The performance takes place Dec. 4 at 7 p.m., broadcast from Center Stage Theater in Santa Barbara.

“Lifelines,” choreographed and directed by smiley, features artists from the U.S., Ireland, Europe and the U.K, and is the first iteration for this award.

Created by smiley and UCSB graduate students Mark Hirsch, Sam Bourgault and Phillip Kobernik, “Lifelines + Re:Forming” is the culmination of an artist residency at the theater Nov. 30 to Dec. 4.

For smiley, an indigenous dance and somatic movement artist, the Native Launchpad award is more than a nod to her artistry, she said, “it is the gift of acknowledgement, of “being seen,” which she called “a transformative act.”

“Being recognized as an embodied artist, with support and encouragement to lead from my gifts at this moment in time is hugely humbling, and honoring,” she said. “It also shares hope in how humanity is valuing the body and our felt experiences

individually and collectively. Personally, it means a lot for the generations of my family, in being seen."

"I am thrilled," she continued, "and eager to bridge the fields of dance, earth architecture and somatics to generate experiences that will bring people together for self-awareness, healing and belonging.  My work speaks from an indigenous, environmental and social justice lens and recreates what performance is and can be in community."

Looking ahead, smiley said her "big dream" for the award is to partner with national parks to create residencies and performances that would engage the histories and knowledge of American Indian and Indigenous at that site.

"When people visit the parks today," she said, "they are primarily getting a white, colonial history, and often speak of indigenous in the past tense, as gone. These are lands taken, unceded, that the U.S. government and many U.S. places of learning capitalize from, including UCSB. These multidisciplinary art and dance performance events will be part of deeper and lasting action, working in collaboration with local indigenous communities, such as creating new markers or signifiers on the land that would be a step towards acknowledging a broader, more accurate history, and be of benefit to local indigenous groups in ways that they are asking for."

smiley acknowledges the support of Christina McCarthy, vice chair and director of dance, and Irwin Appel, professor and chair of the theater and dance department, and her colleagues at the UCSB American Indian and Indigenous Collective Academic Council.

"I guide experiences that engage people to move and think differently," she said, "I am so excited to create this on a new level within the performing arts field in this country."

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draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.