

MARIA CROOKS & CAROLINE RUSSELL-KING

SELMA



BURKE

theatre:
CALGARY

Stafford Arima, Artistic Director



Presented in partnership with
Alberta Theatre Projects

WORLD PREMIERE
APRIL 2 - 27, 2024

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WELCOME



I first witnessed Selma Burke's *Untitled (Woman and Child)* several years ago at the Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM) in Washington, D.C. SAAM is one of the world's most inclusive collections of art from the colonial period to the present, made in the United States.

I was transfixed by this poetic, haunting, beautiful work of art. The maternal bond between mother and child is inextricably powerful, and I felt that Burke captured that bond with such simplicity and honesty in the figure. As

a sculptor, Burke used bronze, brass, limestone, and alabaster to create many of her works. For *Untitled (Woman and Child)* she chose to work with American red oak - a strong wood with medium bending strength. The untitled work was not shaped with live models or a preconceived design. Burke once said that "It is very inspiring to release a figure from a piece of stone or wood...Very often, I look at (the) stone or wood for a year or longer ... I will have completed the piece mentally before attacking the material." In 1994 she was quoted in Artnews that "Art didn't start black or white, it just started. There have been too many labels in this world: . . . Black, African American . . . Why do we still label people with everything except 'children of God'?" Burke chose to create *Untitled (Woman and Child)* devoid of any characteristics that could define their race or ethnicity, but purely as a figurative symbol of the strength of the relationship between woman and child.

This photograph does not do the work justice, but I hope you can get a glimpse of the power of Burke's work and the love and poetry in this figure.

I am so proud that Theatre Calgary in partnership with ATP is presenting this World Premiere of *Selma Burke*. I hope you enjoy the play as much as I enjoyed spending time with *Untitled (Woman and Child)*.

- **STAFFORD ARIMA**
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, THEATRE CALGARY



Untitled (Woman and Child) - Selma Burke

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- Video and audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited.
- We ask that you please refrain from using your cell phone, smart watch, or any other digital device, in any capacity, during the performance.
- Good theatre etiquette benefits everyone. Please do not talk or unwrap candies during the performance, remain in your seat until the curtain call is finished and the house lights have been turned on.
- Babies are not permitted in the theatre.
- We also offer relaxed performances. For more information, visit our website.
- Assisted listening devices for the hard of hearing are available at the coat check.
- For first aid assistance, see the house manager, or nearest usher.

SAFETY AND COMFORT

- At Theatre Calgary, we recognize our responsibility to have practical guidelines in place to ensure our performances are safe and enjoyable for everyone. To learn more about our current Safety and Comfort protocols go to theatrecalgary.com/comfort-and-safety or scan here:



WELCOME



Welcome to the Martha Cohen theatre and the world premiere of *Selma Burke*. We are so excited to once again team up with our great friends at Theatre Calgary after the tremendous success of our previous collaboration *Made in Italy*.

As you embark on this captivating journey into the Harlem Renaissance, we invite you to delve into the creative minds of our talented playwrights, Maria Crooks and Caroline Russell-King, both proud Calgary writers with a passion for storytelling.

Together, Maria and Caroline have crafted a script that goes beyond the historical narrative, exploring the complexities of art, courage, romance, and justice. Their collaborative effort not only resurrects the legacy of Selma Burke, but also serves as a testament to the power of storytelling to bridge gaps in our understanding of the past.

As you immerse yourself in the world of *Selma Burke*, take a moment to appreciate the dedication and passion of these two extraordinary playwrights. Through their words, we invite you to witness history come alive on stage and join us in the celebration of Selma Burke's legacy.

- HAYSAM KADRI
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, ALBERTA THEATRE PROJECTS

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the spirit of reconciliation, Theatre Calgary acknowledges that we live, work and create on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, the Îyâxe Nakoda Nations, the Métis Nation of Alberta, Districts 5 & 6, and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta. They were the original occupants of this land and continue to be here to this day. Theatre Calgary is grateful to have the opportunity to present in this territory.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES



I have a confession to make. I didn't know about Selma Burke. There are many reasons why: she wasn't covered in my art history class in the 90s; I don't collect or know much about sculpture; visual arts haven't really been my thing - I love poetry and playwrights' ability to use language to create imagery.

The reasons don't matter. I should have known of her before now, as most of my life's work has been dedicated to giving voice to female artists. I am grateful to Theatre Calgary and our playwrights that I finally know about her!

This play is not a biography. It's not a lecture. It is "a flight of fancy" born from the imaginations of the playwrights, infused with the inventiveness of the designers, actors, and now you, the audience.

I am reminded that theatre has the ability to build a bridge between "now and then." I am reminded that building - whether it's a bridge or sculpture - is an act of creation. And, while it takes no courage to destroy, it takes an amazing amount of courage to create. I hope, like me, you are moved by an artist striving to create. An artist trying to find, hear and follow her voice. I hope it inspires you to listen and follow your own. More importantly, I hope it encourages us to seek out, engage, and invest in the current Selmas building and creating amongst us.

- DELICIA TURNER SONNENBERG
DIRECTOR



Selma Burke at Eastern Chapter Links Conference, Virginia, 1983. (Spelman College Archives)

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PLAYWRIGHTS' NOTES



In the winter of 2021, my friend and fellow playwright, Caroline Russell-King and I decided to attempt writing a play together. I had never co-written a play, and Caroline had tried it once with less than happy results. Nevertheless, we forged ahead and not only did the project help to take our minds off the grim reality that was COVID 19, but it resulted in a play we are both proud of.

Selma Burke recounts the incredible life and talent of Dr. Selma Hortense Burke, an African American sculptor who creates art despite a husband who destroys her work, the government that steals it, and the FBI that threatens her.

Gifted with exceptional talent, Selma chronicled many of the extraordinary events of the 20th century through her art - lynchings, the Harlem Renaissance, the Holocaust, the assassination of Martin Luther King.

We took liberties in our interpretation. For example, in her mind, actors metamorphize into sculptures who challenge, support, and bicker with her and each other.

For me, writing together was fun, difficult, challenging and ultimately, an extraordinarily rewarding experience.

- MARIA CROOKS
CO-PLAYWRIGHT



I am an artist whose medium is words, but to relax and reinvigorate myself I go to an art gallery. I once had an experience at the MoMA that was as close to a religious experience as I will ever have. I was transfixed and transformed. Dramaturging a workshop with Peter Hinton Davis, I was introduced to the idea that visual art is a conversation. As someone whose life is all about writing dialogue, I was fascinated.

In this play Matisse says, "Art is an invitation. An invitation to a conversation. It says, 'This is how I see the world. Do you like this lens? What do you see? Que voyez-vous? Do you want to have this conversation with me? Do you see the technique? Do you see the brush strokes? Do you see the person behind the paint?'"

I wish I could have had a conversation with Selma to ask how do we make art, who gets to make art, and who gets to destroy it?

Selma Burke is a great artist. I met her and fell in love with her through her art. I hope you come to love her too.

- CAROLINE RUSSELL-KING
CO-PLAYWRIGHT

BOOK BY
IRIS RAINER DART & THOM THOMAS

MUSIC BY **MIKE STOLLER** LYRICS BY **IRIS RAINER DART**

BASED ON THE NOVEL BEACHES BY
IRIS RAINER DART

DEVELOPED IN COLLABORATION WITH DAVID AUSTIN

BEACHES

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LONNY PRICE**

**CO-DIRECTED BY
MATT COWART**

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theatre:
CALGARY

WORLD PREMIERE

Martha Cohen Theatre at Arts Commons
April 2 - 27, 2024

theatre:
CALGARY

Stafford Arima, Artistic Director

presents

SELMA BURKE

BY **MARIA CROOKS &
CAROLINE RUSSELL-KING**

Presented in partnership with Alberta Theatre Projects



Director	DELICIA TURNER SONNENBERG
Set Design	HANNE LOOSEN*
Costume Design	ADEJOKÉ TAIWO
Lighting Design	TIM RODRIGUES*
Sound Design & Composition	KATHRYN SMITH
Projection Design	BRENDAN BRICELAND
Movement Choreographer	JAVIER VILALTA
Intimacy Director	ANASTASIA ST. AMAND
Assistant Director	LENNETTE RANDALL
Voice & Dialect Coach	JANE MACFARLANE
Intimacy Director Mentee	MEGAN WONG**
Stage Manager	MEREDITH JOHNSON
Assistant Stage Manager	JENNIFER YEUNG
Apprentice Stage Manager	BRADY HILLMAN

TC MENTORS PROGRAM

Set & Costume Design	ANNA DALGLEISH
Voice & Dialect Coach	JESSICA ECKSTADT

*Indicated designers on this production are represented by the
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** Participating through the Principal Intimacy Professionals mentorship program.

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SELMA BURKE

CAST

Actor 1 - Selma Burke	NORMA LEWIS
Actor 2	CHRISTOPHER CLARE
Actor 3	HEATHER PATTENGALE
Actor 4	CHRISTOPHER HUNT

SETTING

New York, Paris, Memphis, Washington D.C.,
and Charlotte, North Carolina.

Selma Burke is performed without an intermission.

CREW

Head of Sound	MISHA HLEBNICOV
Head of Lighting	ANDY FAWCETT
Head Stage Carpenter	GEOFF BUCHANAN
Head Dresser	RACHEL MICHELLE SHERIDAN
Head of Wigs	CHRISTA HOEFLING
Assistant Head of Sound	TRAVIS MCKINNON

Selma Burke was first workshopped and presented in a public reading February, 2023 at Theatre Calgary, under Artistic Director Stafford Arima. Workshop Director: Dian Marie Bridges; Cast - Actor 1: Norma Lewis, Actor 2: Edward Ogum, Actor 3: Elinor Holt, Actor 4: Doug McKeag; Production Assistant: Raynah Bourne

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DIAGNOSTICS

CAST



CHRISTOPHER CLARE

Actor 2

(he/him) Theatre Calgary debut. Christopher Clare, also known as “Mr. Clip”, hails from Calgary, Alberta. He is a versatile artist who has made a name for himself in the entertainment industry in Calgary, as a dancer and actor. Chris got his start in performing and competing as a member of the Break Crew Original Rudes in 2000, where he honed his skills in Hip Hop dance. This eventually led to opportunities in theatre and film,

where he has continued to evolve as a dancer, choreographer, actor, and movement director. He recently starred in the independent film *DROP*, which he also co-produced. Now working with Theatre Calgary for the first time, Chris can check one more dream off the list. With a strong commitment and passion for both the performing arts and behind-the-scenes work, Chris is always seeking ways to be creative and diversify his art.



CHRISTOPHER HUNT

Actor 4

For Theatre Calgary: Over 40 productions, including *Little Women*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Audience*, *7 Stories*, *Glorious*, *Humble Boy*, *Copenhagen*, *True West*, *Private Lives*, *Memoir*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Charley's Aunt*, *Amadeus*, *Tartuffe*. Elsewhere: *The Immaculate Perfection...* (High Performance Rodeo, BodyCube Arts Collective); *Sleuth* (Vertigo); *Resident Aliens* (Theatre New Brunswick); *Driving*

Miss Daisy (Stage West); *Gilgamesh Lazyboy* (OYR); *Waiting For Godot* (Black Radish Theatre); *The Wedding Party, 1979* (ATP); *Flight Risk* (Lunchbox); *The Ballad of Weedy Peetstraw* (Caravan Farm Theatre). Film/TV: *Things I Know To Be True*, *Heartland*, *Caitlin's Way*, *Shanghai Noon*, *You Know My Name*. Awards: Christopher received the 2018 Harry and Martha Cohen Award for his significant and sustained contribution to the Calgary theatre community. He's also the recipient of eight of Calgary's Betty Mitchell Awards for his acting.

CAST



NORMA LEWIS

Actor 1 - Selma Burke

For Theatre Calgary: *Steel Magnolias*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Norma has been working as an artist in Calgary for over 20 years with various theatre companies. She is the co-founder of 8ROJO, a collaborative performance company developing innovative work, creating unique, fantastical theatre experiences. For more than a decade she has produced, co-created, and performed in several original works (*After*, *Gretchen's Nightmare*, *The Lost Hours*, *Neruda Nude*, and *Macula*), internationally, in such places as Reykjavik, London, Taipei, Stockholm, Prague, and Mexico City. Norma also prides her work with Dandi Productions in their original creation of *The Twins and the Monster* in affiliation with several philharmonic orchestras in cities across Canada and the United States for family audiences. Her next upcoming performance will be with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra in May.



HEATHER PATTENGALE

Actor 3

(she/her) For Theatre Calgary: *The Scarlet Letter*, *A Christmas Carol* (2015-2018). For over a decade Heather has been working as an actor, playwright, director, musician, singer and more recently, a filmmaker. Favourite credits include: *Whispers in the Dark* (Vertigo); *The Trip to Bountiful*, *The Diary of Adam and Eve*, *Outside Mullingar* (Rosebud); *Talley's Folly* (Chemainus); *We Are The Body* (Burnt Thicket); *Mary Jane*, *Badger* (Fire Exit); *Hamlet*

(Shakespeare Company). Check her out onscreen in *Joe Pickett* (Paramount+), *Heart's Creek* (Polyscope), the films *Power Chord* and *Ties that Bind*, or in her self-produced shorts, *The Red Letter* and *The Blue Warbler*. Heather has received multiple nominations for her work at the Calgary Critics Awards and Betty Mitchell Awards, and one time she even came home a winner. Much love to Paul and Amelia who make her feel like a winner every day.

CREATIVE TEAM



MARIA CROOKS

Co-Playwright

(she/her) Theatre Calgary debut. Maria is a Calgary playwright who has written five full-length plays and three short one-act pieces. Her play *Selma Burke*, which she co-wrote with Caroline Russell-King, was a finalist in the Sharon Pollock Playwriting Competition. Two other plays, *The Servant* and *The Age of Love*, were produced in Calgary by Urban Stories Theatre. *The Servant* was nominated for a CAT Award for the 2014-2015

theatre season in the Best Original Script category. Her plays are often inspired by historical events. Maria has participated in several playwriting programs through Alberta Playwrights Network (APN) including the RBC Emerging Artists Mentorship Program and PlayWorks Ink. She has taken workshops and courses with playwrights Caroline Russell-King, Trevor Rueger and the late Sharon Pollock. Maria was born in Cuba and has lived and worked in Calgary for over 30 years. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree from L'Université de Paris VIII.



CAROLINE RUSSELL-KING

Co-Playwright

Theatre Calgary debut. Caroline is thrilled to be working at Theatre Calgary & ATP. This is her 32nd play. Caroline has had 62 productions across Canada and the USA. She is a member and past vice-president of the Playwrights Guild of Canada. In 2022, her play *Selma Burke* (with Maria Crooks), was a finalist for the Sharon Pollock Playwriting Competition. In 2022, her play *High and Splendid Braveries* won the Writers Guild of Alberta

Gwen Pharis Ringwood award for drama. Her play *Absinthe, Bourbon Vodka and Sake* had its third production by Bema Productions last year. Her trilogy of plays, *Palliser Suite*, was published by Frontenac House Press and was a finalist of the Stephen Leacock Award for Humour. *Mr. Fixit* (Lunchbox Theatre) was nominated for a Betty Mitchell Theatre Award. *Second Chance, First Love*, nominated for a Calgary Theatre Critics Award. Love always to Gerald and Emma. www.carolinerussellking.com

Dreams of being on stage?



The young company cast of *A Christmas Carol* (2023). Photo: Trudie Lee.

theatre:
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Theatre Calgary's Creative Learning is funded by the Government of Canada under the Community Services Recovery Fund.

Theatre Calgary's Creative Learning est financé par le gouvernement du Canada sous le Fonds de relance des services communautaires.

CREATIVE TEAM



DELICIA TURNER SONNENBERG

Director

(she/her) Theatre Calgary debut. Delicia is a founder and the former Artistic Director of MOXIE Theatre, which she helmed for twelve acclaimed seasons. During that time, she received the Des McAnuff New Visions Award for "Risk Taking Leadership and Body of Work," as well as "2015 Director of the Year" from the San Diego Theatre Critics Circle. In addition to MOXIE, Delicia has directed plays for the Old Globe Theatre, San Diego REP,

La Jolla Playhouse, Actors Theatre of Louisville, and Round House Theatre among others. Some honours include: the Van Lier Directing Fellowship through Second Stage Theatre in New York, New York Drama League's Directors Program, as well as Theatre Communication Group's New Generations Program. Recent credits include *Appropriate*, South Coast Repertory; *Trouble in Mind*, The Old Globe; *Thurgood*, Utah Shakespeare Festival. Coming up: *Derecho*, La Jolla Playhouse; *Gem of the Ocean*, Two River Theater.



HANNE LOOSEN

Set Design

(she/her) For Theatre Calgary: Set & Costumes - *Iceland*, *Skylight*; Costumes - *The Shoplifters*. Hanne is a set and costume designer living and working in Calgary. She grew up in Belgium and got a BA from the Academy of Visual Arts Maastricht in The Netherlands and an MA in Scenography at the Technical University Berlin. Before her move to the beautiful prairies, Hanne was mainly working in opera where she gained traditional

experience at some major repertory houses in Europe as well as in the experimental opera laboratories of Berlin. Across the street at Vertigo Theatre you can see her set design for *The Girl on the Train*. Outside of Calgary, she is a regular guest at the Shaw Festival and she is excited to be part of their upcoming season once more.



ADEJOKÉ TAIWO

Costume Design

(she/her) For Theatre Calgary: *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill*. As a second-generation Canadian of African descent, Adejoké has lived a world full of experiences. She received her formal training in Costume Cutting and Construction and furthered her education at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, and the former Ryerson (Toronto Metropolitan) University receiving a BFA in Design. As a design professional for the past 18 years in the theatre and film

industry, Adejoké is passionate about designing, creating, and telling beautiful stories through imagery. She is excited to collaborate and share her creativity on all projects that cross her path. Select design credits include *My Life With the Walter Boys* (Netflix); *Fraggle Rock: Back to the Rock Season 2* (Apple TV); *Tin Star Season 2* (Amazon).

CREATIVE TEAM



TIM RODRIGUES

Lighting Design

(he/him) Theatre Calgary debut. A former dancer/choreographer turned lighting designer, Tim has worked with an array of companies on creation-based projects and international tours. Notable lighting designs include: *Serving Elizabeth* (Theatre Aquarius); *English* (Soulpepper/Segal Centre); *Paint Me This House Of Love* (Tarragon Theatre); *The River* (Magnus Theatre); *Marjorie Prime* (Segal Centre); *How Black Mothers Say I Love You* (Black

Theatre Workshop); *From The Stars In The Sky, To The Fish In The Sea* (Geordie Theatre). Tim is a four-time Montreal English Theatre Awards nominee for Outstanding Lighting Design, and was the recipient of the award in 2023. In addition to his designs, he proudly serves on the Board of Directors for Mainline Theatre and Parts+Labour_Danse.



KATHRYN SMITH

Sound Design & Composition

(they/them) For Theatre Calgary: *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Shakespeare on the Go 2022), *The Secret Garden* (TC Mentors). Kathryn is a queer and trans director, designer, and creator who has worked across Canada for the last 10 years. They are the Artistic Director of Verb Theatre where they produce bold independent theatre, and they are part of the Mudfoot Theatre Collective which focuses on sustainable practices. Elsewhere:

Ms. Holmes & Ms. Watson - #2B, *Murder In the Studio* (Vertigo); *inVISIBLE, A Chitenge Story*, *inVISIBLE Too* (Handsome Alice Theatre); *The F Word*, *Safe Site Sessions*, *Bottle Picker Monologues* (Downstage); *Care Takers*, *Countries Shaped Like Stars* (Lunchbox); *Undressed* (ATP); *Bright Half Life* (Persephone Theatre); *Beautiful Man, We're Gonna Die* (Verb Theatre); *Yabber: A Musical Junk Tale* (Mudfoot Theatre). Kathryn is an award-winning singer songwriter under the name KP Smith. Much love to Lara and Scout the GSD. Follow along: @heyits.kpsmith



BRENDAN BRICELAND

Projection Design

(he/him) For Theatre Calgary: *Little Women* (Asst. Projection Design - TC Mentors), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Asst. Projection/Lighting Design - TC Mentors). Brendan is beyond thrilled to be returning to Theatre Calgary, especially on such an important production as *Selma Burke*. Brendan's past credits include: Projection Designer for *Jungle Book* (ATP); Digital Media Designs for: *Serena Ryder* (2022 Concert), *Twin Flames*

(2022 Concert), *Don Giovanni* (The Banff Centre), *Opera in the 21st Century* (The Banff Centre), *Evolution Classical Concert Series* (The Banff Centre 22/23). Brendan would like to thank his partner Mark for always being his rock and allowing him to follow his dreams. "I couldn't do it without you!" @mrbrendanb

CREATIVE TEAM



JAVIER VILALTA

Movement Choreographer

(he/him) Theatre Calgary debut. Javier is a Mexican-Canadian visual performance creator, stage director, and movement designer. He has developed performance techniques which incorporate Latinx influences in combination with ritualistic movement. As a movement director and choreographer, he has collaborated with Vertigo Theatre, Sage Theatre, Downstage, CYPT, and One Yellow Rabbit. Javier has complimented his

training in stage movement by studying with renowned practitioners such as Marissa Nielsen-Pincus in New York City and Guillaume LePape in France. These explorations have resulted in the development and creation of new artistic approaches, such as cinematic movement structures, ritual storytelling and moving shapes for the stage. Along with Black artist Norma Lewis, he created the visual performance ensemble 8ROJO, with which he has toured around Canada, Mexico, Czech Republic, Sweden, France, Taiwan, UK, and Iceland.



LENNETTE RANDALL

Assistant Director

For Theatre Calgary: Actor - *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare by the Bow, 2013); *The Crucible*, *'da Kink in my Hair*; Assistant Director - *Steel Magnolias*. Select credits: Directing - *The Lehman Trilogy* (Canadian Stage); *Controlled Damage* (Grand Theatre); *Duty* (A Little Tw!sted); *The Sound of Music* (Kaleidoscope Theatre). Other: Artistic Director Intern at Grand Theatre (London, ON); Young, Gifted and Black Inaugural Cohort

(Obsidian Theatre); Indie Producer Co-op (Theatre by the Bay); RBC Emerging Director Intern (Canadian Stage). Lennette graduated from Rosebud School of the Arts; London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA). She is currently doing her Master of Studies (MSt.) in Creative Writing at the University of Cambridge, UK. Lennette is a recipient of the "Black People Making History in Calgary" – Awarded by CRIEC, the Stephen Hair Emerging Actor Award, the Fight Directors of Canada (FDC) Jacie Levinson Memorial Award.

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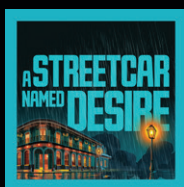
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ANATASIA ST. AMAND

Intimacy Director

(she/her) For Theatre Calgary: *Meteor Shower*, *Jimmy Buffett's Escape to Margaritaville*. Anastasia is a queer, certified intimacy director and coordinator. She is a founding member of Principal Intimacy Professionals (PIPs) and an instructor for PIP's SAG-AFTRA accredited intimacy training program. Select credits include: *The Immaculate Perfection* (Body Cube Arts/ High Performance Rodeo), *Stage Kiss* (Pine

Tree Players), *Bombay Black* (Alberta Theatre Projects), *Frankenstein* (Jupiter Theatre), *Hurry Hard* (Western Canada Theatre), *Brontë* (Studio Theatre UofA), *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Measure For Measure* (FreeWill Shakespeare), *Genesis: The Mary Shelley Play* (Edinburgh Fringe). Special thanks to her PIPs Pals and loved ones for their ongoing support.



JANE MACFARLANE

Voice & Dialect Coach

(she/her) For Theatre Calgary: Assistant Director - *A Christmas Carol* (2023), Resident Voice Coach - More than 80 productions since 2000 including: *Meteor Shower*, *The Mousetrap*, *Jimmy Buffett's Escape to Margaritaville*, *Forgiveness*, *Little Women*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Million Dollar Quartet*, *Steel Magnolias*, 12 seasons of Shakespeare by the Bow and 15 years of *A Christmas Carol* (incl. playing Mrs. Cratchit from 2001-02). Additionally,

Jane adapted and directed the 2022 Shakespeare on the Go production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. She has also worked for ATP, Vertigo, and The Shakespeare Company, and coaches Voice and Presence through her business Voice Activated. She has taught Voice for the Actor and Acting at such institutions as York University, Harvard University, Southern Methodist University, MRU, UofA, and is currently on faculty in the Drama Division in the School of Creative & Performing Arts at UCalgary.

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CREATIVE TEAM



MEREDITH JOHNSON

Stage Manager

(she/her) For Theatre Calgary: *The Mousetrap*, *Little Women*, *Iceland*. Meredith is a Calgary based stage manager who has stage managed with Alberta Theatre Projects, Bad Knaps Theatre, Black Radish Theatre, Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, Calgary Young People's Theatre, Globe Theatre, Handsome Alice Theatre, Heritage Park, Inside Out Theatre, Lunchbox Theatre, Making Treaty 7, Major Matt Mason Collective, One

Yellow Rabbit, The Shakespeare Company, Spontaneous Theatre/Arts Club Theatre, Quest Theatre, Verb Theatre and Vertigo Theatre. Meredith wishes to thank her Mom, Lorna, her first and best mentor.



JENNIFER YEUNG

Assistant Stage Manager

(she/her) For Theatre Calgary: *Jimmy Buffet's Escape to Margaritaville*, *Steel Magnolias*. Jennifer is ecstatic to come back to Theatre Calgary for *Selma Burke*. Selected stage management credits include: *Naughty But Nice 9* (Forte); *Hookman* (SCPA & Chromatic Theatre); *Undressed* (ATP); 我的名是张欣恩 (Chromatic Theatre); *Sherlock Holmes and the Raven's Curse* (Vertigo Theatre); *The Tempest* (The Shakespeare Company);

The Sound of Music (Storybook Theatre). In her free time, you will see her rock climbing, exploring new restaurants, or playing video games. She is grateful for her parents, Catherine and Paul, her partner, Darius, and puppy Max, for their immense love and continued support. @jyeungrealestates



BRADY HILLMAN

Apprentice Stage Manager

(he/him) Theatre Calgary debut. Brady is absolutely thrilled to be pursuing his equity apprenticeship as a local emerging stage manager, starting with Theatre Calgary and Alberta Theatre Projects! Previous non-equity stage management credits include: *Ride The Cyclone* (BrownCow Collective); *Candy Cane Kids* (Occasional Notes); *We Are Pussy Riot, or Everything is PR* (Holy Fools Theatre); *The Time Machinist* (Theatre Jupiter/

Cirque Nuit); *Honk!*, *Newsies JR* (StoryBook Theatre). He's also very grateful to have been part of the sound/lighting teams during StoryBook's past two seasons - a big support helping him get to where he is today. He sends his love to all friends and family, and most importantly a huge thank you to Mom + Dad for their continued endless love and support in pursuing his dreams.

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CREATIVE TEAM



ANNA DALGLEISH

TC Mentors Program* - Set & Costume Design

(she/her) For Theatre Calgary: *Romeo and Juliet* (Shakespeare by the Bow online, 2020), *The Comedy of Errors* (Shakespeare on the Go, 2021). Anna is a jack-of-all-trades theatre maker of German and Scottish descent. It is her deep privilege to call Mohkinstsis home. This is Anna's design debut with Theatre Calgary. Previous design credits include *The Rocky Mountain Special* (set/lights - Buddies in Bad Times Theatre); *Bright Star* (asst. set - Rosebud);

Swallowing Seeds (set - Incendiary Festival); *Salt Water Moon* (set - Creating Genesis); *The Last Five Years* (set, costumes, props - Madness and Merriment Productions); *Red Rover* (set, costumes, props - self produced). She is grateful to make art with and for this community and extends particular thanks to her mentors on this project and the many artists she observes, learns with, and is transformed by.



JESSICA ECKSTADT

TC Mentors Program* - Voice & Dialect

(she/her) For Theatre Calgary: *Meteor Shower* (Voice & Dialect Mentee), *A Christmas Carol* (2023), *Ragtime: A Concert Performance*. Jessica discovered her love for the performing arts at a young age, and believes sharing her passion through acting or teaching is one of the best experiences in life. She is very proud to be an award-winning choreographer for the Youth Singers of Calgary, as well as teaching students from

across the city to discover their passion for the performing arts through classes and private lessons. She is a Betty Mitchell Award nominee, and has had the pleasure of performing across Canada, the United States, Europe, and South America. She holds a performance diploma from Mount Royal University and BFA from Concordia University. Jessica is very thankful for the entire team at Theatre Calgary as well as her loved ones and supporters.

* TC Mentors participants are generously supported by the RBC Emerging Artist Program.

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Selma Burke was written and developed with generous assistance from The Alberta Foundation for the Arts, Calgary Arts Development Authority, Spelman College Museum of Fine Art, and Theatre Calgary.

A PASSION FOR UNUSUAL OBJECTS

By Lev T. Mills

Selma Hortense Burke was born Dec. 1, 1900 in Mooreville, North Carolina, the seventh of 10 children. Her mother was a respected teacher; her father was an African Methodist Episcopal Zion minister. The family's belief that education and knowledge were the keys to freedom from bondage had started with Selma's grandfather, a slave of Stonewall Jackson. Her grandfather had been allowed to attend Berea college in Kentucky. He became a minister and, after the end of the Civil War, received an advanced degree in theology from Livingstone College in North Carolina. Selma and her siblings all had professional careers.



*Selma Burke working in New Hope studio, no date.
(Spelman College Archives)*

At five, Selma discovered clay and mud along the creek banks that were part of the family land. She spent hours squeezing mud between her toes and making red clay objects with her hands, returning home with her dress torn and muddy. Selma had a passion for collecting unusual objects which she kept in her room; these included chicken and fish bones, which soon developed a ripe odor. Her mother, wanting a quiet studious daughter, disapproved of the dirt, the smells, and Selma's interests, labeling her a peculiar child with "perplexed mannerisms." Her father, however, was supportive of her "peculiar" habits and created a special space for her collections in the attic, which Selma could reach with a rope ladder from her room. This space not only helped Selma to avoid confrontations with her mother, it also enabled her to charge a small fee to those who visited her private museum.

By the time she was nine, Selma was modeling objects, hiding them under the house for safekeeping. She also quilted, embroidered, and made lace. Everyone in the family was required to participate in church; Selma sang solos and played the piano.

After Selma completed the eighth grade, at the time considered the equivalent of a high school education, she followed her mother's wishes and pursued a career in nursing. She graduated from nursing school and after further study in Philadelphia, moved to New York in 1924.

While working as a private nurse in New York, Selma became involved with the WA and the Student Arts League. These affiliations provided her the opportunity

to associate with artists such as Jacob Lawrence, Richmond Barthe, Romare Bearden, Norman Lewis and Harlem Renaissance poets and writers such as Claude McKay and Countee Cullen. Because she was a private nurse who accompanied her employers to various cultural functions, she became acquainted with the Metropolitan Opera, Carnegie Hall, museums and art galleries. This level of sophistication remained with her throughout her life.

During the Depression, Selma, like many others, found herself looking for new ways to make do. She discovered the garbage bins of the neighbouring Vanderbilts and began to make frequent visits to seek out useful items. On one of her forays she found a plaster cast, something she had never seen before. The year was 1931 and the discovery changed her life. She became determined to become a sculptor; she never wavered from that determination, not even during a short stint in the navy. She enrolled at Columbia University and worked hard to develop her art, winning a scholarship and then a grant to travel in Europe where she could study ceramics and sculpture by such masters as Maillol and Matisse. She completed her studies at Columbia in 1941.

That same year she entered a competition to create a profile of Franklin D. Roosevelt that would appear on a dime. President Roosevelt sat for Selma for 45 minutes, during which time she made several profile sketches of him on brown butcher paper. She won the competition and sculpted the image into the profile that is now on the dime.

Unfortunately, for years neither the Fine Arts Commission for the District of Columbia nor the United States government acknowledged that the profile was Selma's work. She suspected that racism, sexism, and all of the -isms would not allow a black person or a woman to be credited with such a notable accomplishment. The lack of recognition caused her great pain. Finally, in 1990, when Selma met with members of the Roosevelt family, she got the credit she deserved. Following that visit she received a letter from FDR's son, James, thanking her for her portrayal of his father.



Selma Burke working on MLK Statue, no date. (Spelman College Archives)

Lev T. Mills, professor of art and chair of Spelman's art department, conducted a series of taped interviews with Selma Burke during the summers of 1992 and 1994, on which this article is based. This excerpt from the article Dr. Selma Burke: "I Have Been Here" was published in the Spelman Messenger Winter/Spring 1996.

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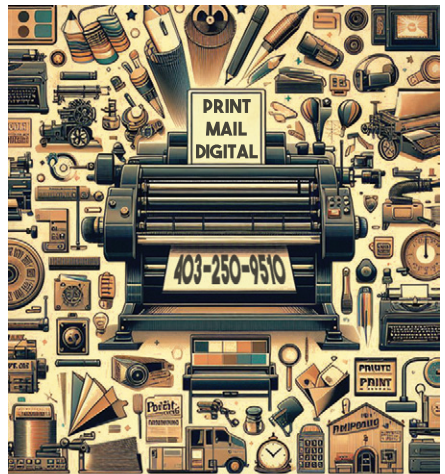
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Photo by Trudie Lee