

2022 George Luscombe Mentorship Award - Karen Kaeja – Aug 29, 2022

It is an honour to be standing here in the footsteps of those who have received this award before me, as the 2022 recipient of the George Luscombe Mentorship Award. This award is extremely meaningful to me and represents a way of being that I value... a walk-through life that I aspire to. I give gratitude to the many generous souls whose words of wisdom and way of being have inspired my journey.

Everything to do with relationships... whether brief encounters or lasting connections, mentorship is an impactful humbling act, a life-long essay on giving, receiving and self-learning. The reciprocal nature of mentorship is profound.

My deep pleasure of mentoring over the past two decades has led me to engage with dance artists from all walks of life and practices. For me, the mentor/mentee equation leans into an intimacy of minds that flourish, a kind of two-way symbiosis. Unravelling and deepening curious artist's practices, while tending to the correlation and process of thinking, imaging, the moving body and intuition... initiates a circular engagement that I find gritty, playful and intense.

I accept the gift to serve with great rigour and tune myself to each mentees' unique lead. There is no unplugging or finite end for me, rather a next chapter... a next conversation. Mentoring seeds fertile soil that is a privilege to be engaged in and privy to.

Breathable and porous, mentorship ignites me to be the best I can be and to care about how I care. A grand and vulnerable responsibility, it also leads me to my own imperfections, that I recognize are ok to live with, let be visible, and learn from. I lean into and encourage the messiness that is Art and Life, brushing up against the edge of discomfort and then rerouting towards more light. With questions come the unanswerable... the discoveries and growth.

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Mentoring and motherhood both beckon patience, capacity, listening, and deep-seeded love. My children Aniya and Mika are my heartbeat who have truly been my guides and the glue back to my essence, always.

I thank the wonderful Roshanak Jaberri for nominating me. My relationship with Roshanak exemplifies that sweet sweet spot where a mentor/mentee pairing, blossoms over the years into collaborative co-creatives.

I'm honoured to be in continuum with so many beautiful artists... blessed to be in relationships of reciprocity, and am elevated by their rapturous creative consciousness.

Thank you so much for this recognition, to the George Luscombe Award committee, Jacoba, TAPA, the King Fisher Foundation, Kaeja d'Dance, and to my gentle rock, Allen.

I am grateful to be a part of the Toronto Arts community with all of you... living, sharing and experiencing, with my senses and heart... and with the brilliant next generations of passionate dance art makers. We are all mentors to one another.

Thank you
Merci
Meegwetch
