

Sub-Merge

**Direction and Dramaturgy
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**Performance and Dramaturgy
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To come closer to one's own buried past, one must act like an excavator. Above all, one mustn't be afraid of coming back to the same point time and time again – to spread it like one spreads the earth, to churn it like one churns the soil.

Walter Benjamin, *Excavating and Remembering*

We are in the former Mohawk Institute residential school, in the basement, in the boy's shower room. This space, where children were naked and vulnerable for the purpose of simple cleansing, is a site of notorious abuse. So what happens when we submerge ourselves in this space and this history? How do we feel or hear the echo of the acts that took place here?

In this performance we represent a relationship between a Mohawk young man and his non-indigenous friend: she is a newcomer to this site and its legacy; he is haunted by its intergenerational trauma. There are few words for what he wants to convey to her; a part of him is trapped in this room.

Our performance explores how liberation and healing might happen through a mutual submersion in the troubled experiences of past and present. We are excavating emotional, political, and cultural strata here so that we may have a shared understanding of how this strata forms our world, and how we can all be part of stirring up the sedimentation of this strata, in the pursuit of knowledge, healing, and a new relationship to this past.