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# THE AUNTIES

A CONTEMPORARY INDIGENOUS STORYTELLING SERIES

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# THE AUNTIES

## A CONTEMPORARY INDIGENOUS STORYTELLING SERIES

*The Aunties* is an invitation to come together to honor the women that shape, heal, and uphold Indigenous communities—the aunties—through an evening of contemporary storytelling, shared live from the stage alongside familial and archival photographs, and works of legacy. *The Aunties* in Yakima is one installment in a series of events across Turtle Island (North America), featuring stories by Indigenous women who call the local area their home who have dedicated their lifework in service to their community.

Storytelling from the live performances will be preserved on film to become the heart of a narrative-driven documentary series that captures the artistic, cultural, and visual integrity of the places and people from which auntie stories emerge. The documentary films are intended as a cultural resource for the benefit of future generations.

*The Aunties* live performance and film series intends to create a dedicated space for Indigenous storytelling tradition. Indigenous storytelling spans purpose, complexity and tradition. As part of this series, storytelling is honored as a living art form that continuously shapes identity, facilitates healing, and builds solidarity across and within communities.

We come together to honor the contributions and enduring legacy of our aunties, whose stories inspire new narratives and guide new generations of leaders. In Yakima, we join in community to reflect on our collective history to nurture hope for a brighter future

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# THE AUNTIES



MARY LEE "SMUNITEE" JONES



EMILY WASHINES



ELAINE MILES

**Mary Lee "Smunitee" Jones** (*Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation*) Hello. My name is Mary Lee Jones. I am a citizen of the Yakama. I work for the federal government and my passion is with the plants and the children in the communities I serve. I am a daughter, mother, grandmother, and love learning from my elders. I am a traditional food gatherer, medicine gatherer, and gatherer of beautiful lights for the sake of collaboration. I also assist in building mini forests with the Natural Urban Forest program. I have worked in the education system in early childhood, parenting programs, and personally with my community children to gain an understanding of the gathering lifestyle. Last but not least, our family has contributed with the community Swan Dancers aka Iksiks Washanalama to share our culture with youth. As a family we take on activities to live by my elder's words, "Teach and do not take it into the ground with you." Thank you for having me.

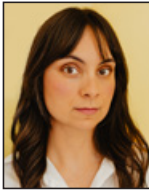
**Emily Washines**, MPA and scholar, is an enrolled Yakama Nation tribal member with Cree and Skokomish lineage. Her blog, Native Friends, focuses on history and culture. Building understanding and support for Native Americans is evident in her films, writing, speaking, and exhibits. Emily received a 2025 Emmy Nomination for her cultural consultant work on the film, "Billy's Magic." Her research topics include the Yakama War, women's rights, traditional knowledge, resource management, fishing rights, and food sovereignty. Her publications include Natural Restoration and Cultural Knowledge of the Yakama Nation, War Cry: Will Crossing Historical Boundaries

in Indian Wars help Yakama Women?, The Pathway of Reaffirming Treaty Rights, and How Learning about Salmon Connects Kids to Culture. She teaches at Yakima Valley College and The Evergreen State College. She is a board member on the Museum of Culture and Environment, Columbia Riverkeeper, and Boys and Girls Club of the Yakama Nation. She lives on the Yakama reservation with her husband and three children.

**Elaine Miles** (*Actress*) Elaine has been acting since 1990. Her acting debut was in the Award winning show, Northern Exposure. She worked all six seasons as a cast regular, Marilyn Whirlwind. Being first Native Woman as a cast regular on an international TV series. Afterwards she worked as cast regular on the last two seasons of Canadian CBC TV series, *The Rez*, as Etta the Medicine Woman. She also was guest star on the series, *The Last of Us*, as Florence. She has done 11 movies. One most recognizable, as Lucy the driver of backwards car in *Smoke Signals*. First written, directed, produced & main characters being Native American. She is still acting. She has done 8 videos/documentaries also. Has done appearances at different conferences. Ranging from being single mother, mother of a Marine, caring for family members with Diabetes, Cancer or Elder. She also did Modeling for Macy's Department Store in 1993. For the *Northern Exposure* line of clothing. Before Acting career Elaine traveled all over the US & Canada for pow wows. She was a Buckskin traditional dancer. She danced from 10 months old when she started walking.

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# CREATIVE TEAM



**KENDRA  
MYLNECHUCK  
POTTER**



**ANDRE  
BOUCHARD**



**SEAN EVE**



**LARONN  
KATCHIA**

## **Kendra Mylnechuck Potter-Director**

Kendra Mylnechuck Potter, Theatre Artist: Kendra, an enrolled citizen of the Lummi Nation, is a theatre artist and filmmaker, currently based in Missoula, MT. Her film performances have screened at Sundance, Tribeca, SXSW, NY Human Rights Watch, and other festivals around the world. She won best actor in NBC/Universal Pictures Short Cuts Film Festival. The New York Times has called her “a skilled collaborator.” NY theatre includes both off and off-off Broadway venues. Regional work includes a national tour as Shelby in Steel Magnolias for MT Rep, and other productions in LA, OR, and MT. She developed a theatre and storytelling program at N’Kwusm Salish language school with William Yellowrobe, has created and implemented curriculum for Missoula County Public School’s Sparks program on Native American Studies using theatre in education techniques, and has presented work as a keynote and panelist at national and international conferences on personal storytelling, race, creative writing, Native issues, and literary study. In 2015, she co-founded MT+NYC Collaborative, and directed two of the company’s first productions: The Woodstove and Dido of Idaho, and performed in The Wolf before co writing and performing the titular role in The Buffalo Play, which enjoyed its premiere in NY in the 2019 season at The Tank. She helps facilitate annual writing retreats for all genres with MT+NYC Collaborative. Kendra is producer and protagonist of a documentary called DAUGHTER OF A LOST BIRD (2020) about her adoption and reunion with her birth mother and Lummi heritage, currently making the rounds of the festival circuit and on PBS’ America ReFramed and World Channel. She is currently working on writing a play commissioned by MT Repertory Theatre, scheduled for full production in their 2024-2025 season

## **Andre Bouchard-Director/Producer**

Andre Bouchard (of Kootenai/Ojibwe/Pend d’Oreille/ Salish descent) is an activist, agent, director, producer and consultant who was born and raised on the Flathead Reservation in western Montana. As a person with a background in both Native and non-

native worlds Andre aspires to serve as an inter-cultural activist, working to build bridges and reverse the invisibility that serves to marginalize Native people in the US. Andre’s primary background is as producer of dance, theatre, music and multi-disciplinary performance but has worked in practically every roll in the performing arts since he began as an active artist and arts administrator in 1999. In 2001 he founded Walrus Performance Productions, a non-profit dedicated to providing first opportunities to choreographers, playwrights and multi-disciplinary performing artists in the Pacific Northwest. In 2010 he founded Walrus Arts Management and Consulting which was expanded in 2015 to serve as a home to the first Native run performing arts booking agency representing Indigenous dance, theatre, music and multi-disciplinary artists. In 2019 he founded Indigenous Performance Productions, a non-profit company dedicated to producing new works, booking and managing tours, providing professional development and educating the performing arts field about Indigenous culture and performing arts content.

## **Sean Eve-Producer**

Sean Eve is a Gay, Welsh-born writer and producer, who teaches at NYU- where he founded Global Media Lab, and is the Director of Animated Ecologies, a non-profit supporting socially and ecologically conscious filmmaking worldwide. As a playwright, works including By Land, American Heart and recently Bedside Manners, have been produced in London and New York. Other theatre works, such as Paint, the inspiration for Mike Leigh’s Topsy Turvy, have been adapted to film. Working behind the scenes for the better part of two decades in script and concept development, Eve is a little more visible these days, with Shiva Baby, winning a Cassavetes at the Independent Spirit Awards in 2022. He is currently producing, Just Justice, a documentary feature being directed by Katie Schiller that chronicles three decades of the life and activism of Justice Roe Williams, and is Executive and Lead Creative Producer of 24/2, a film directed by Anna Filonenko that introduces us to Four Female Russian Artists and the impact the invasion of Ukraine has on their lives and work.



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# CREATIVE TEAM

As well as the Aunties, which is being produced in conjunction with IPP, other current projects include Flore, a musical biopic set in Bogota and Mexico City, “Nowhere”, a trio of short films focused on gay and trans undocumented young people in New Jersey, and “Anger and Dust” a film on the disconnect between youth culture and ecological crisis in Bangladesh, being directed Tanjimul Alam.

## LaRonn Katchia, Director of Photography

LaRonn Katchia is a Warm Springs/Wasco/Paiute filmmaker and storyteller from the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Oregon. His passion, dedication, and love for film derive from his Indigenous teachings and lived experience as a tribal member. His films contain a unique, impactful and powerful approach to narrative and documentary storytelling. Some of LaRonn’s achievements include: Shooting and editing PBS’s Roadtrip Nation: Native Way Forward, a behind the scenes segment for FX’s hit show Reservation Dogs, both projects in collaboration with Ryan Redcorn and Buffalo Nickel Creative. LaRonn is also the Associate Programmer/ Advisor /Jury for the Indigenous Films Program at the Oscar-qualifying Bend Film Festival. Recently

LaRonn & Bendfilm director Todd Looby hosted acting legends Gary Farmer & Tatanka Means, showcasing their work alongside the Warm Springs tribal membership. Today, in collaboration with the Warm Springs Community Action Team, LaRonn is working on his first feature documentary about the transformation of a 125-year old, historic Commissary Building as it is moved and restored into a small business incubator to serve tribal entrepreneurs on the Warm Springs Reservation.

“My mission is to change the Indigenous stereotypes of film and to represent us through an authentic lens. The Indigenous perspective is what’s missing in Hollywood today and needs to be brought to light. There are too many untouched original stories waiting to be filmed, and that being filmed by an Indigenous director.”

LaRonn is currently based in Portland, Oregon and hopes to continue to amplify the stories and honor the voices of Warm Springs & Indigenous people.



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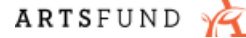
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