

Plantulary

Sequoia Hauck, Rachel Jendrzewski, Koa Mirai, Mankwe Ndosì, Lela Pierce, Pramila Vasudevan, and Jeffrey Wells

Reflection for Aniccha Arts' Plantulary Word List

Aniccha Arts (est. 2004) is an experimental arts collaborative based in Mni Sota Ma-koce. Under the leadership of Pramila Vasudevan, our group has involved a number of artists over the years. *Plantulary* was our most recent production, featuring a live performance grounded in a word list that was generated over the course of a year. Held at Minneapolis's Red Eye Theater in December 2024, *Plantulary* reminded us as artists to stay connected to our ecology through language and embodiment. To rehearse, we took plant walks through South Minneapolis neighborhoods, contemplating our presence on Dakota land with our complex and diverse personal histories. Rather than relying on Google or plant-identifying apps as our mediators to engage with plant beings around us, we worked with live interactions and learned about the ways of native and non-native plants. We came up with words and embodied gestures that describe what we observed and sensed, which make up this *Plantulary* word list. In this way, our performance became an accumulation of those observations as we deepened our relationship with plants that nourished our perspectives.

For example, we created the phrase, “needle roll - S P I N N N N N N N N in the fingers” in late spring when we encountered a tall pine tree on a plant walk. When we rolled a pine needle from this tree back and forth across the thumbpad, there was an ease about that connection that was notably grounding in the body. We found ourselves continuously moving the needles across both thumb pads, and these gestures catalyzed into other movements throughout the body, creating very lovely short dances. Then, in the process of documenting needle roll and its definition in what would become our word list, we wanted to capture the particular qualities we observed of the tree that day, as reflected in our text-rendering of the multiple Ns.

At the performance, we distributed the word list below to all audience members as testament to our process of being attuned to plants, trees, and non-human living things. The vocabulary on this list was woven into and throughout the performance itself, which involved dancing and singing. To continue the example of “needle roll,” two of us sang this phrase and accompanying definition from the back corner of the stage; we then began moving in a patterned way towards the audience, inviting theatergoers into the process. While we did not cover every word, the performance highlighted specific words from each season (loosely defined), whether it was spring (“Warburbling”), summer (“Loudpour”), or fall (“Crispedraw”).

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Author Bios

Sequoia Hauck (they/them) is a two-spirit, queer, Anishinaabe and Hupa filmmaker, interdisciplinary artist and director who creates work that indigenizes the process of art-making. Their work weaves Indigenous epistemologies, indigiqueer identity and the possibilities of Indigenous futurism. Sequoia is a 2023 Jerome Hill Artist Fellow and First Peoples Fund Cultural Capital Fellow as well as an Aniccha Arts Artistic Associate. www.sequoiahauck.com

Rachel Jendrzejewski (she/her) is a writer who frequently collaborates with choreographers, musicians, and visual artists to interrogate language and unpack wide-ranging performative vocabularies. She is grateful to be part of the *Plantulary* cohort and a rhizome of conversations and collaborations extending from it. Recent works have included *a|c|c|e|p|t|i|n|s|i|s|t*, an exhibition created with Pramila Vasudevan at Hair+Nails Gallery (2022); a writing vector on deep pattern for Valerie Oliveira's *VASTNESSESS* (2024); and *TRACES (AFTER SOPHIE CALLE)*, an immersive performance created with WaxFactory, featuring matt regan and Jeffrey Wells, among others, presented by Walker Art Center (2024). Rachel is a Co-Artistic Director at Red Eye (on medical leave), a Playwrights' Center Core Writer, and a student of cancer and plants.

Koa Mirai (she/they), a cultural anthropologist by training, dedicates their work to empowering BIPOC real estate developers to craft spaces that authentically reflect and serve their communities. Raised in cities across India, Koa was shaped by the intersection of many marginalized identities, embracing the beauty of being queer—a perpetual outsider, even among outsiders. In this periphery, however, they find a profound richness: a deep well of spirituality, kinship, and creativity. Beyond their work in real estate, Koa serves on the board of Family Tree Clinic, a super-rad sexual and reproductive justice org. They ground themselves in writing and movement-based practices like *butoh* and *qigong* while exploring the world of watercolor. For Koa, art-making is both a healing modality and an invitation. To play, to be, and to belong.

Mankwe Ndosi is a Song Catcher and Culture Worker based in Minneapolis. She is a member of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM Chicago/ New York), and a Resident Community Engaged Artist at Pillsbury House and Theatre. She is a lay herbalist and a Wise Woman ever growing in her practice of listening to and learning with the plant world. Mankwe is a commitment to emergent engagements of earth, sound, and regeneration through creative and embodied practices.

Lela Pierce is a Black Multiracial visual artist and dancer born in rural MniSota Makoce. She grew up playing in prairies, forests and waterfalls while communing with horses, goats, chickens, frogs and birds. Lela has danced extensively with Ananya Dance Theater, Rosy Simas Danse and Pramila Vasudevan. She teaches Sculpture at Macalester College. In 2018 she received the Jerome Emerging Artist Fellowship for visual art and at this time she is a current Jerome Hill Fellowship artist.

Pramila Vasudevan is of Tamil descent, and is a Twin-Cities-based movement-centered artist, culture worker, and maker of community-rooted/routed transdisciplinary work. She has been living and working on Dakota land, Mni Sota Makoce since 1995. Vasudevan is the founder and artistic director of Aniccha Arts (2004–2024), an arts collaborative producing site-specific performances that examine agency, voice, and group dynamics within community histories, institutions, and systems. She is an artist associate of Pillsbury House Theatre. She has been honored with Mcknight (2024, 2016), Joyce Award (2022), United States Artists (2022) and Guggenheim (2017) fellowships in choreography. Her current practice involves gardening, hosting conversations and gatherings, and developing improvisational movement sessions inspired by growing practices in gardens and greenhouses and by plant cycles in urban areas.

Jeffrey Wells (he/him) is queer performance creator, performer, designer, technician, and administrator working in Minneapolis for the past 18 years. He is a co-founder and current member of the performance ensemble SuperGroup, which has been creating all kinds of performance experiences for most of that time. He currently spends his time exploring and cultivating novelty and non-habitual behavior through his Feldenkrais practice as well as supporting artistic endeavors in his beloved Twin Cities' weirdo performance community, including projects with Rosy Simas and Emily Gastineau. Past collaborations include works by WaxFactory/Rachel Jendrzejewski, Valerie Oliveiro, Eric Larson/Toot Performance, Kaz Sherman, Fire Drill, Mad King Thomas, Judith Howard among others.