

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 12, 2016

**Aboriginal Artists take Front Stage at Magnetic North Theatre Festival**

WHITEHORSE, YUKON – Magnetic North Theatre Festival, Canada’s only national theatre festival, celebrates Aboriginal voices in its 14th year. The festival has picked Yukon for its 2016 home, and from June 9-18 within its programming it will be highlighting Aboriginal content and offering opportunities for emerging Aboriginal artists.

With the theme of Navigating New Dimensions this year’s festival challenges audiences and artists to open their hearts and minds to new perspectives, views, and worlds. For ten full days, audiences will enjoy unique theatrical experiences alongside workshops, talk back sessions, and engaging community events. Infused with the magic of the midnight sun, this year’s festival will see everyday Yukon places – forests, restaurants, and more – transformed into other worlds.

**Gwaandak Theatre – Map of the Land, Map of the Stars**

Gwaandak Theatre is a Whitehorse-based theatre company that develops, produces and tours professional plays to empower Indigenous and Northern voices.

In its work-in-progress Map of the Land, Map of the Stars, audiences will follow Yukon’s rivers, trails, and the people who travel them, from First Peoples to waves of newcomers. This new project in development gathers artists to explore and string together story-beads from our land.

“We believe it is vital to develop and share Aboriginal-centred work exploring Yukon’s past, present and future from perspectives not commonly shared in the dominant historic and cultural narratives of our region,” says Gwaandak Theatre’s Managing Artistic Director Patti Flather. “We’re thrilled to share our work-in-progress, Map of the Land, Map of the Stars, during Magnetic North, with theatre stories honouring our rich diversity in an Indigenous-centred, intercultural creation.”

**Storyweaving with Muriel Miguel: June 16-18**

Award-winning Muriel Miguel, founder and director of Spiderwoman Theatre (New York, NY) and grandmother of Indigenous theatre, will facilitate a three-day workshop on Storyweaving. Storyweaving is a process that Spiderwoman Theatre uses to create their work, layering and weaving stories, images, sound, movement, dance and music; creating a three-dimensional tapestry embodied in space. Their approach to creating a performance rises out of an Indigenous aesthetic, a deeply cultural place where the elements of cultural life are always an integral part of the whole. Her work has been profiled in numerous articles and essays.

“This workshop is a very unique opportunity to host an incredibly talented, devoted, inspiring legend as Ms. Miguel,” says Hazel Venzon, Industry Producer of Magnetic North Theatre Festival. “This workshop will complement our landscape and the vibrant work that is ripping at the seam, here in Whitehorse.”

This workshop is an excellent opportunity for emerging and established artists of all mediums or for anyone with an interest in Storyweaving.

Registration Deadline: May 16, 2016

Cost: \$150 CAD (Covers cost of materials needed, and lunch on both days)

**Compass Point – an opportunity for emerging Aboriginal artists 18+: June 11-16**

Now in its ninth year, Compass Points is a 6-day intensive program designed to inspire and nurture the careers of emerging artists from across the country. It provides a firsthand introduction to the professional theatre industry and fosters lifelong collaborative relationships among a peer community of Canada's next generation of theatre creators. The program will focus on providing participants with new tools, inspiration, and ideas to fuel their creative practices while engaging in a critical discourse on artistic creation and criticism.

The deadline to apply for Compass Points is Friday, April 29th, 2016

**Other Aboriginal artists and content include:**

- Prophecy Fog by Jani Lauzon, a First Nation's artist who is also the solo performer.
- A piece by Cliff Cardinal in Theatre in the Bush – you may remember him from the award-winning Huff.
- Elder-led walking tours
- Keynote speaker Louise Profeit Leblanc, a Yukon icon and a vision of hope for Trondek Hwechin people, hails from Mayo and has been working with the Canada Council for the Arts as the Coordinator of Aboriginal Arts.

For more information and for the latest developments and news, visit [magneticnorthfestival.ca](http://magneticnorthfestival.ca) and on Facebook: [/MNTFest](https://www.facebook.com/MNTFest)

-30-

**For photos, interviews and more information, contact:**

Selene Vakharia, Publicist  
(867) 333-6666  
[selene@magneticnorthfestival.ca](mailto:selene@magneticnorthfestival.ca)