



Tishman Environment
and Design Center



TISHMAN CENTER · MARCH 20, 2018

"Tar Sands Songbook" Disrupts Climate Injustice With Workshop Performance

By Greg Stewart

During The New School's curriculum disruption, [Disrupt Climate Injustice](#), the Tishman Center hosted a performance of The Tar Sands Songbook. This [amazing work of](#)

documentary theater was written and produced by Tanya Kalmanovitch, Associate Professor at Mannes School of Music. Actors Jennifer Van Dyck and Peter Jay-Fernandez donned the stage alongside Tanya and a pianist. The actors played various characters which were inspired by Tanya's life in Fort McMurray, just beside the Athabasca Oil Sands in Alberta, Canada. Tanya and the pianist provided a haunting original score which included classically informed composition, folksy jigs, and contemporary experimentation. Video projection of scenes from Fort McMurray's oil fields on the screen behind them in the Tishman Auditorium helped the audience truly visualize the effects of oil drilling. At one point, the trio of Tanya and the two actors jumped into a skit where they inform the audience that if they like the items listed, they like oil. With items ranging from laptops to cars to toys, the message was enlightening to the pervasiveness of oil in our everyday lives. The performance had many overtones about the negative effects of drilling upon the environment where it takes place, and around the globe. It also spoke to the experience of the indigenous communities that have been affected by drilling in Canada. The overall message was a critique of the regulatory structures

that are in place for the mining and utilization of natural resources by corporate entities. The piece at large also commented upon the social and environmental injustices that have taken place at the hands of oil companies. Tar Sands Songbook is still a workshop performance. This means that the actors hold scripts throughout the show, and the audience is encouraged to participate in a post-show discussion to provide feedback to Tanya and the actors. There will be a [lecture/performance of this terrific show during Earth Week on April 19, 2018.](#)

Greg Stewart is a Master's student in the Creative Publishing and Critical Journalism program. He writes for Ragazine.cc, archives for The Believer Magazine, and does interviews for Slice Literary Magazine blog. He expects to graduate in December of 2018.



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