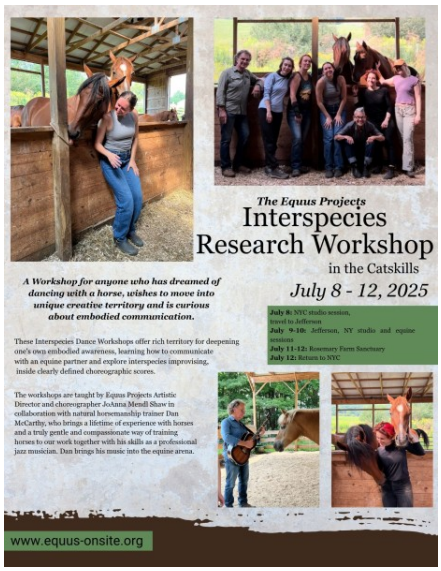
July, 8-12, 2025

Interspecies Research Workshop in the Catskills

Company: The Equus Projects
Venue: The Equus Projects
Location: New York, NY



Sarah France

Join The Equus Projects for our next Interspecies Research Workshop July 8-12th! If you are curious about what it is like to dance with a horse, want to know more about the practice of Physical Listening and interspecies communication, and want to learn more deeply about the work we do while trying it yourself, this workshop is for you - all types of movers are welcome!

A workshop that fluidly merges equine communication with creative decision-making in NYC & Jefferson, NY.

COST: $600
Includes all studio and equine sessions, lodging, transportation upstate, opening dinner.
Limited scholarships available - please email JoAnna Mendl Shaw at joannamendlshaw@gmail.com to inquire about scholarship options

AUDITORS WELCOME
Auditors are welcome for a fee of $50 per day

SCHEDULE
July 8th: 4 hour NYC studio session, travel upstate
Grocery shopping in Jefferson

July 9th-10th: Studio and equine sessions in Jefferson, NY

July 11th-12th: 1.5 days of equine sessions with Dan McCarthy at Rosemary Farms Sanctuary

July 12th: Return to NYC

MEALS
Each workshop formally begins with an Opening Night Dinner, hosted by The Equus Projects. All other meals are collaboratively prepared with minimal ($25-$30) charge for all groceries. Often one evening meal is a restaurant excursion to the Mill Pond Inn where a masterful chef makes magic with fresh, home-grown produce and locally sourced meats.

LODGING
Comfortable beds, some shared rooms, pillows, blankets, linens, towels provided.
Full house with kitchen in town of Jefferson, NY.

WORKSHOP CONTENT

In The STUDIO:
Head-Tail Connectivity
Contra-lateral Body Organization
Inhabiting Effort States
Hands-on Tactile Investigations
Working with Spatial Intent
Integrating Eyes and Body
Energetic Phasing
Choreographic Scores
Working through an interspecies lens

With HORSES:

Honoring the individual equines, we begin with observation, gentle natural horsemanship lessons progressing into choreographic explorations.

Equine work focuses on:
Working with clear spatial intention in an equine arena
Integrating Eyes and Body
Energetic Phasing
Defining the Task, Defining the ASK

WORKSHOP INSTRUCTORS

JoAnna Mendl Shaw
Veteran choreographer and dance educator, JoAnna Mendl Shaw has been expanding the parameters and strategies for dance-making since 1998.

Her company, The Equus Projects, tours throughout the States and Europe, creating site-specific works in immersive collaboration with local communities.

Shaw has taught on faculty at NYU, The Juilliard School, Alvin Ailey BFA and Certificate Programs, Princeton University, Mount Holyoke College, Montclair State, Marymount Manhattan and most recently as a Visiting Adjunct Professor at Stanford University. She has been a Visiting Artist at University of Florida, Ohio State, Colorado State, Dickinson College, Point Park College, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee.

Shaw is the recipient of two NEA Choreographic Fellowships and multiple NEA grants for the Equus Projects' Interdisciplinary Performances. She has brought her somatic practice of Physical Listening into elementary schools and academic think tanks, the Naval War College, workshops at NYU Medical School and Stanford School of Medicine. Shaw is a certified Laban Movement Analyst and the author of the 2022 book, Physical Listening, A Dancer's Interspecies Journey.

Shaw has served on the Board of Directors of Ping Chong Company and Ice Theatre of New York, a Founding Board Member of The Gender Project, Career Transitions for Dancers and DANCE RISING.

Dan McCarthy
The workshops are taught in close collaboration with natural horsemanship trainer Dan McCarthy, who brings a lifetime of experience with horses and a truly gentle and compassionate way of training horses to our work together. He has been an influential collaborator and horsemanship trainer with The Equus Projects. Dan began working with horses as a teen, then took a long detour as a professional musician before returning to his first love, and merges these two passions bringing his music into the arena with the horses. He relocated to the western Catskill Mountains and began his particular version of release-based natural horsemanship. Dan believes in making the right answer obvious, setting the horse up for success and working within their timeline and ability.

ABOUT THE EQUUS PROJECTS

The Equus Projects creates site-specific performance works that viscerally engage with the geographic and cultural environments. Their work often brings dancers and horses into shared landscapes. Equine works are created in collaboration with local equestrians and their horses.

The Equus Projects company is a core of highly accomplished professional dancers who have extensive natural horsemanship ground skills training. Horsemanship deeply informs all choreographic content, shapes the company's Physical Listening studio practice, and lies at the foundation their teaching.

The company brings a unique inter-species lens into the dance world and beyond. The Equus Projects has taught Physical Listening sessions for the Strategic Studies think tank at the Naval War College, offered workshops at NYU Medical School, done corporate leadership training sessions, performed as the keynote event for the Creative Problem Solving Institute and taught pre-med students in the School of medicine at Stanford University.

The Equus Projects dancers are actively merging sensing and thinking inside performance works constructed as a complex interweaving of scored events and rigorous choreographic material. The performers function in a constant state of real time decision-making, drawing audiences into a state of visceral sensory awareness.

The Equus Projects
121 West 17th Street #4B
New York, NY, 10011
917-533-4946
https://www.equus-onsite.org/dancing-with-horses-in-the-catskills

Schedule
July 8, 2025: 7:00am
July 10, 2025: 7:00am
July 11, 2025: 7:00am
July 12, 2025: 7:00am

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