

"A MOVING AND DEEPLY AFFECTING PORTRAIT OF AN INDIGENOUS TWO SPIRIT TEENAGER."  
—DANA ALIYA LEVINSON, GLAAD

# BEING THUNDER



A FILM BY STÉPHANIE LAMORRÉ

MAGNETO AND GAMMINO CREATIVE GROUP LLC PRESENT "BEING THUNDER"  
A FILM BY STÉPHANIE LAMORRÉ PRODUCERS MARC BERDUGO BARBARA CONFORTI MAE GAMMINO  
VIDEO & SOUND STÉPHANIE LAMORRÉ EDITING AEL DALLIER VEGA ORIGINAL MUSIC COMPOSED BY NICOLAS BABY  
PERFORMED BY NICOLAS BABY AND REBECCA BABY A MAGNETO GAMMINO CREATIVE GROUP LLC CO-PRODUCTION  
IN ASSOCIATION WITH ARTE FRANCE - LA LUCARNE WITH THE SUPPORT OF CENTRE NATIONAL DU CINÉMA ET DE  
L'IMAGE ANIMÉE (CNC) AND PROCIREP - SOCIÉTÉ DES PRODUCTEURS ET DE L'ANGO  
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A FILM BY STÉPHANIE LAMORRÉ



United States, France | 2021 | Color | English Language | 85 minutes

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## SYNOPSIS

Sherenté, a Two Spirit Genderqueer teenager from Rhode Island's Narragansett tribe performs in dance competitions at annual regional powwows of New England tribes. There is no formal rule which prohibits Two Spirit Genderqueer people from competing in a category different from their birth gender. Wearing female fancy shawl regalia, Sherenté dances with joy and beauty. Behind the scenes, tribal leaders manipulate Sherenté's scores or disqualify them outright because of their belief in traditional binary gender roles. Blindsided by ongoing dishonesty and deception, Sherenté continues to perform in spite of insensitive behavior by tribal leaders and others in their community. Sherenté's enduring courage and self-respect are met with an outpouring of support from family, powwow attendees, and fellow competitors.



## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I have always devoted my work as a director to trying to draw up an inventory of our world by telling singular stories that made visible the complexity of situations and global issues. I found the topic of Two Spirit while researching information about Indigenous women. It is here that I first learned about Two Spirit teenager, Sherenté Harris. After speaking with Sherenté and their family, I decided to visit Rhode Island in the hope that we might learn more about each other; I first met Sherenté when they were fifteen. As our initial visit came to a close I promised myself and them that I'd return to document the story of Sherenté's emerging identity and journey to revive the Two Spirit role in their community.

I saw Sherenté's concurrent challenge of identity as unique and at the same time representative of a larger question indicative of our times regarding what it is to be labeled 'other' within society's increasingly tumultuous atmosphere. Wanting to understand how a person decides to live openly and then does so while actively dismantling falsehoods by replacing them with accurate information, drew me to Sherenté. In this film, with its multi-generational family and following them for more than a year, I talk about the idea of gender through Sherenté's experience and show aspects of the evolution of Native American identity in the United States, an identity that works to survive both by integrating and standing out. Through Sherenté my film tells the desire for memory of a community, the unspoken, its traumas, and most important for the Harris family, not through stereotypes commonly seen as soon as we talk about Native Americans. Sherenté takes us with them to a world of gratitude for their ancestors, and to the challenges from those in their community which judge and discriminate against Sherenté for living openly Two Spirit.

Working alone, I lived with the Harrises and some of their extended family while making this film. My proximity allowed me to reveal a unique environment which continually shapes this remarkable young person. When capturing Sherenté's purposeful life as a Two Spirit teenager I immersed myself in the family's daily life, their culture, and tribal community, which they graciously allowed me to enter.

– *Stéphanie Lamorré*



## **BIOS**

### **Stéphanie Lamorré (Director/Writer)**

Stéphanie Lamorré is a French documentary filmmaker working as an international independent writer/producer/director having produced a diverse array of films for European and American television. Stéphanie spent time alone in Iraq, all Africa, South America and Central America shooting documentaries covering different subjects from modern slavery to illegal immigration. She began her career working in Africa as a writer for GEO magazine. She has lived and traveled extensively throughout Africa and frequently in areas of armed conflict. Stéphanie's style is to spend a great deal of time with her subjects to become an intimate part of their lives, and by gaining their trust and keeping her objectivity, she makes the camera invisible to better tell their story.

### **Ael Dallier Vega (Editor)**

Ael Dallier Vega grew up between Guyana, Mali, the West Indies, France and England. She studied film theory in Paris and filmmaking in Cuba, where she learned film editing at the EICTV in San Antonio de los Baños. Since 2004, she's been editing short, feature, fiction and documentary films; music, fashion, dance videos and video art. Choosing multidisciplinary form has been part of her ongoing commitment to believing in life encounters with directors, artists and producers of all genders. She has accompanied films by Mati Diop (*Atlantics* - 2019), Daniele Luchetti (*Lacci* - 2020), Benjamin Crotty, Jérôme Clément-Wilz, Marie Losier (*Cassandro, the Exotico!* - 2018), Gabriel Abrantes, Julien Prévieux, among others. She has edited numerous award-winning and nominated films at international film festivals such as Cannes, the Venice Mostra, Locarno, Toronto, BFI London, Cinéma du Réel, IDFA, FIPA, Rotterdam, Viennale, Mar del Plata, Ficunam, Morelia, Dubai, Busan, Doc Lisboa, MoMa, Tate Modern, Prix Marcel Duchamp 2014, Palazzo Grassi, NYFF, and New Films New Directors.

## **Sherenté Mishitashin Harris**

### **(Subject)**

Sherenté was born face up, looking towards the heavens. From that moment onward they have existed in a place between two worlds, one of earth, one of the celestial, one of man, and one of woman.

Sherenté Mishitashin (“Being Thunder”) Harris is Niantic Narragansett and a citizen of the Narragansett Tribal Nation. They intertwine the stories of their cultural path with Two Spirit identity, to evoke emotion, spark dialogue, and amplify ideologies that are too often silenced. Sherenté’s efforts oppose the prolonged issue of Indigenous Invisibility.

Sherenté works to create change within their Indigenous world, and part of these efforts has been focused in revitalizing Indigenous language which resulted in an invitation to the White House’s first ever National Tribal Youth Gather Conference. They also attended the UNITY conference, where they sat at the 1st ever Two Spirit workshop run by them. In 2018, Sherenté was named a Carter Roger Williams Scholar through the Rhode Island Foundation, and was a 2018 United States Department of Education Presidential Scholar. They have become a 1st place champion Fancy Shawl dancer, and even been honored as a head person dancer at Dartmouth University’s Annual Spring Thaw Powwow, where they danced both Eastern War and Fancy Shawl. Performing the fancy shawl dance has acted as a liberating dance for Sherenté, breaking barriers within the Indigenous LGBTQ+ community, honoring those that have walked this path before them, and creating change for those that will walk that path in the generations to come. Sherenté has chosen to make this change, for their dance is their prayer. By dancing this way they are able to give thanks for living as themselves as opposed to hiding that half they were gifted at birth.

Sherenté has explored gender roles within indigenous communities through project work, and an internship at Tomaquag Museum, which is Rhode Island’s only Indigenous museum, Sherenté’s visual arts have been showcased at the Hera Gallery, the University of Rhode Island Gallery, The Dirt Palace, Unpolished Legacies Exhibition, and the Atrium Gallery, and Sherenté was featured in the RISD Museum’s *Polished Legacies* exhibition. Sherenté’s work speaks to their Niantic Narragansett and Two Spirit identity, often redefining gender norms and roles through their art.

Sherenté was a 2019 TEDx speaker sharing their “Complete the Circle” talk and a 2019 LGBTQ+ History Month Icon. Sherenté’s work as an LGBTQ+ activist has been featured in Teen Vogue and in LGBTQ+ magazines and publications around the world.

During the pandemic, Sherenté collaborated with the fashion brand Club Monaco for Pride 2020. They have been a guest speaker on countless LGBTQ+ and Indigenous forums including the United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative and The Center for Native Youth, and they serves on Rhode Island’s LGBTQ+ Community Archives Advisor Board. Sherenté was nominated as a 2021 Advocate Magazine Champion of Pride.

Sherenté is a fourth year dual degree student at Brown University and Rhode Island School of Design.

## CREDITS

a film written and directed by Stéphanie Lamorré

### Producers

Marc Berdugo  
Barbara Conforti  
Mae Gammino

### Video and Sound

Stéphanie Lamorré / Pumpernickel Films

### Editing

Ael Dallier Vega

### Original Music

Composed by Nicolas Baby  
Performed by Nicolas Baby and Rebecca Baby

### Color Correction

Sasha Savic

### Audio Mixing and Sound Effects

Vincent Pateau - Cinq sur Sync

### Additional Music

“Appât”

Composed by Nicolas Baby

From the film original soundtrack “Pseudonyme” directed by Thierry Sebban

(p) 2014 Diabolo films

© 2014 Tuvache Music / Statica

### Post-Production

Isabelle Bocquet  
Denis Waldburger

### Production

Frédérique Pittau  
Félix Le Cornec

Special Thanks to

The Harris Family  
The Spears family  
Tomaquag museum  
Reign Man and Brent  
The Rhode Island Narragansett community Aude Corai-Lopez  
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Nolan Ryan  
Suzanne Richiardone  
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Alican Taylan  
Tracie Wiliams  
Mani Mortazavi  
Andrea Queralt Lange  
David Mathieu-Mathias  
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