

# INSPIRATIONS

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ARTS & LEISURE

## COURTNEY GILMOUR

*breaks down  
barriers with  
comedy at  
Just For Laughs*

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Courtney Gilmour  
performs at the Just For Laughs Festival  
(Photo, JFL Courtney Gilmour).



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Celebrating inclusive communities*

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Theatre is an art form that relies highly on the visual experience to tell a story. We read an actor's mood by his facial expressions and body language, and the set design, costumes, and lighting heighten our experience.

Several years ago, **Audrey-Anne Bouchard**, director and creator of *Camille*, asked the question: "How can we create a dance and theatre piece that would be completely accessible to audience members living with a visual impairment?"

"This idea came to me because I myself have a visual impairment," said Bouchard, who has Stargardt's disease; an inherited disorder that causes progressive degeneration of the macula (a small area in the centre of the retina that is responsible for sharp, straight-ahead vision).

After three years of research, Bouchard, along with her team and people living with visual impairments, developed strategies to share art with a visually impaired audience. To personally evaluate the procedure, Bouchard closed her eyes throughout most of the creative process.

## CAMILLE: An immersive and multisensorial show beyond sight

By Wendy Singer



Audrey Anne Bouchard, fourth from the left, with the cast and crew of *Camille*.

A story of the loss of friendship, and how we modify our lives moving forward, *Camille* does not address visual impairment at all in the script. Each show accommodates only six audience members. After being blindfolded, participants are escorted onto the set by an actor/guide who stays with them throughout the one-hour show. In the barber-shop scene, we are placed in our seats and

experience the sensations and smells that a haircut offers – the sound of a blow dryer, the trickling of a shower, the feel of a shampoo and the scent of hairspray. It is a surprisingly liberating and relaxing experience as the senses of smell and hearing take charge. In another scene, audience members move in the space with their guides while experiencing various dance styles and music together.

Actress Sarah Leblanc-Gosselin explains how unique each audience member is as they work to gain their trust. "People with visual impairments are much more comfortable with their mobility in this piece than those that are blindfolded," she relates.

While the show was designed specifically for people with visual impairments, and not to give those with sight an experience of how it feels to not have sight, the experience succeeds with both groups. As a participant with sight, it is an experience like none other as you learn to trust your guide, the space you are in, and completely become immersed in the story.

*Camille* runs from September 4 to 22 at the Montréal, arts interculturels (MAI), 3680 Jeanne-Mance. For tickets, visit <https://m-a-i.qc.ca/billetterie> or visit Audrey-Anne Bouchard – Conceptrice au-delà du visual on Facebook. The show is performed in French.

Listen to Mark Bergman's one-on-one interview with Audrey-Anne Bouchard on the Inspirations Podcast at <https://soundcloud.com/inspirationsnews>

## 'You Can't Ask That' on CBC Gem sheds light on the truth

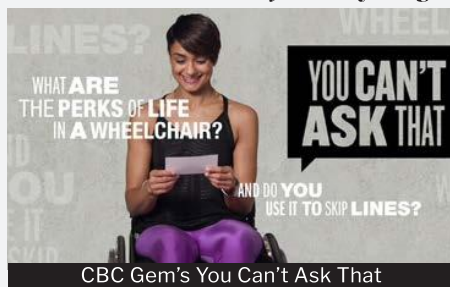
By Wendy Singer

*You Can't Ask That* invites Canadians from across the country to ask questions to people with disabilities that they've always wondered about but were too politically correct to ask.

Based on the hugely successful unscripted format from ABC Australia, the new documentary series offers individuals whose lives are often marginalized or misunderstood the opportunity to share their experiences, yielding raw, often surprising insights. Their answers demystify the disability and show that people are simply people, no matter what their abilities.

Each of Season One's eight episodes feature different individuals and topics, including Wheelchair Users, Tourette Syndrome, Visual Impairment, Autism, Limb Differences, Little People, Down Syndrome and Facial Differences.

In the Wheelchair Users episode, subjects respond to somewhat awkward questions including: "Can you take a shower alone?" or "How do you feel when an able-bodied person uses a wheelchair accessible bathroom stall?"



CBC Gem's *You Can't Ask That*

Answers are direct, to the point, and at times comical. In the Visual Impairment episode, the question, "How do you know you're not dressed like a fool?" is asked. The response: "I'm sure I've made a lot of poor outfit choices, but I definitely did that in the 14 years I had sight as well....so!"

The answers break down stereotypes and offer highly informative insight. Be sure to make *You Can't Ask That* a pick on your show list.

This is the first CBC series to use Integrated Described Video (IDV). To view Season One, visit, <https://gem.cbc.ca/season/you-cant-ask-that/season-1/72c403c1-54c9-41c9-9608-e07f82bf4b84>

## REGISTER FOR SUMMIT SCHOOL'S SCERT CONFERENCE 2019

NOVEMBER 1, 2019

New Residence Hall, 3629 Ave Du Parc, Montreal, QC

The Summit Centre for Education, Research, and Training (SCERT) invites you to the first annual Conference on Neurodevelopmental Conditions (NDCs). The aim is to bring together leading scholars to communicate their knowledge on issues concerning individuals with NDCs.

Keynote speakers **Dr. Bryna Siegel** and **Dr. Michael Wehmeyer** will address self-determination and transitioning into adulthood. Breakout session speakers will lead workshops on diverse topics including healthy sexuality, sleep difficulties, cognitive assessment, and family dynamics (some workshops offered in French). The conference is geared toward scholars, professionals, educators, and parents.

### Continuing Education Credits:

The Summit Center for Education, Research, and Training (SCERT) is approved by l'Ordre des Psychologues du Québec and the Canadian Psychological Association to offer up to five hours of continuing education credits for psychologists. SCERT maintains responsibility for the program.

Early bird prices are available until **September 23, 2019**

Register now at: [www.summit-scert.com/conference](http://www.summit-scert.com/conference).

For information, contact Andrea at [scert@summit-school.com](mailto:scert@summit-school.com)