



Arts and Culture Grantees and their Projects

CJP is proud to partner with local artists who share their work to offer opportunities for our community to explore and appreciate the beauty of Jewish arts and culture.

Amy Geller

Cambridge, MA



(Courtesy Photo)

www.amygeller.com

In process

“Sometimes, if you listen very carefully, a creative project will ‘tell you’ the form it wants to take.”

Amy M. Geller is an award-winning creative producer and filmmaker whose 20+ year career includes fiction and documentaries for broadcast, educational media, industrials, and branded content. Her work has been broadcast on PBS, the BBC, Documentary Channel, Turner Classic Movies and YES Satellite TV in Israel and is available on Netflix, Apple TV, Amazon, Tubi and HERE TV. Geller served as the Artistic Director of the Boston Jewish Film Festival and was President of Women in Film & Video/New England. She produced the widely-seen “For the Love of Movies: The Story of American Film Criticism” (2009) and is the co-director of two acclaimed feature documentaries, “The Guys Next Door” (2016) and “The Rabbi Goes West” (2019).

The Rabbis Go South, *Amy Geller*

The Rabbis Go South (tentative title) is a multi-part, stand-alone podcast which tells the story of the three dramatic days in 1964 when 16 rabbis and one Jewish lay person followed the call of Martin Luther King to come and help integrate St. Augustine, Florida. It is based on “Why We Went,” the manifesto that the rabbis wrote during their night in the St. Augustine jail.

- This project is a work in progress.
- More info coming soon!

“Given the rise in hate crimes against both African Americans and Jews in this country, we believe that now is the time to provide models of Black-Jewish cooperation.”

Ariel Basson Freiberg

Somerville, MA



(Courtesy Photo)

www.arielbassonfreiberg.com

“Discovery through the process is key in my practice. Sometimes that can be scary and overwhelming, but persistence and curiosity guides us to the other side, to a place of resolution.”

Ariel Basson Freiberg, born in Texas of Iraqi/Israeli background, has a MFA in painting from Boston University and a BA from Smith College. She has had multiple solo shows including exhibitions at the Kniznick Gallery, Miller Yezerski Gallery, Dartmouth College, Tufts Art Gallery, Danforth Museum, Montserrat College of Art and the Art Center of Macedonia. Her work is reviewed in ARTnews, Boston Globe, Big Red and Shiny, and featured in Modern Painters for the Tenot Foundation Bursary for the residency, Camac in France. She has also received a Vermont Studio Center Fellowship, debuted a performance and installation of her work, “love like salt,” at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, and collaborated with dancers at Jacob’s Pillow as part of an artist residency at MASS MoCA. Ariel is currently a Professor and Coordinator of the Post-Baccalaureate Studio Art Program at Brandeis University.

Love + Salt: Shards of Memory, Ariel Basson Freiberg

Love + Salt: Shards of Memory is a public art installation of cement paintings inspired by artist Ariel Basson Freiberg's family's refugee story. On view at the Brookline Arts Center in 2022 and reimaged at Bentley University in 2023, the piece is made from mortar (cement) as paint, and utilizes glitter and mosaic tiles with imagery sourced from her Iraqi Jewish family heritage. Together, the work describes memories, stories and ephemera from the story of her family. [A website](#) was created to host resources of it day Israel, Canada, and USA.

Iraqi Jewish artists, dialect language information, and additional information about the project.

- [Hear Ariel describe her family's story in a 3 min video](#) and a [35 min artist talk](#).
- The cement paintings include photo transfers from her family archive and from the Iraqi Jewish diaspora.



"Since 2015 I have focused on my multicultural identity, with research on Iraqi Jews, my personal family history and the complex fissures my family has with our identity. I am curious how the Jewish identity encompasses a diverse range of cultures, creative expression and Jewish philosophy."

Guy Mendilow

Roxbury, MA



(Photo: Elizabeth Friar Photography)

“I look to stories because they offer pathways. They help me decipher bewildering environments and remind me that I am not alone.”

Guy Mendilow was raised in an academic immigrant family prioritizing continuous learning, disciplined curiosity and improving others’ lives. His love of music and story reflects his family’s multi-generational fascination with the unspoken ways we make meaning of an ambiguous world around us. A citizen of Israel, UK and USA, Mendilow began performing at age 10, touring internationally and domestically with the American Boychoir, singing 200+ concerts a year in venues from Carnegie Hall and Boston Symphony Hall to churches in remote rural communities. Mendilow is the founding Artistic Director of Inquiry Arts, an organization that uses moving multimedia performance, arts-based residencies/facilitations and consultancy to create spaces of listening for people to explore experiences and perspectives different from their own and the ways their stories intersect with those of others.

www.guymendilowensemble.com

Regie Gibson

Lexington, MA



(Courtesy Photo)

www.regiegibson.com

“Our responsibility [as poets] is not merely to speak of the world as it is, but also how it should be. How it must be.”

Regie Gibson is a poet, songwriter, author, workshop facilitator, and educator who received his MFA in Poetry from New England College, has performed widely in the US, Cuba, and Europe, and continues to facilitate creative writing workshops, performances, and otherwise augmenting literary curricula for high schools and colleges across the United States. Honors include Italy’s Absolute Poetry (Monfalcone) and Europa en Versi (LaGuardia di Como) Awards, Walker Scholarship, awards from the Mass Cultural Council and the Boston Foundation, and service as poet-in-residence at Boston’s Museum of Fine Arts. Gibson served as a consultant for the NEA’s “Mere Distinction of Colour,” a permanent exhibit examining the legacy of slavery on the US Constitution. He advises the Red Cross-Red Crescent Climate Center (Netherlands) and teaches at Clark University. Regie and his work appear in the New Line Cinema film *love jones*, based largely on events in his life.

Radio Play(s), Guy Mendilow & Regie Gibson

Radio Play(s) is a performed podcast co-hosted by literary performer Regie Gibson and composer Guy Mendilow that was launched in 2022 to address mounting civic and racial tensions compounded by COVID19. It includes two episodes, each unpacking a timely theme through a collection of stories, whether told through the spoken word, musical segments or theatrically projected sand animation. A continuous score unites each episode, drawing on classical, contemporary and Ottoman Jewish influences and performed by a world-class, multiethnic

sextet **Episode 2 premiered in 2022 at an Interfaith gathering for Temple Israel of Boston and Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church**

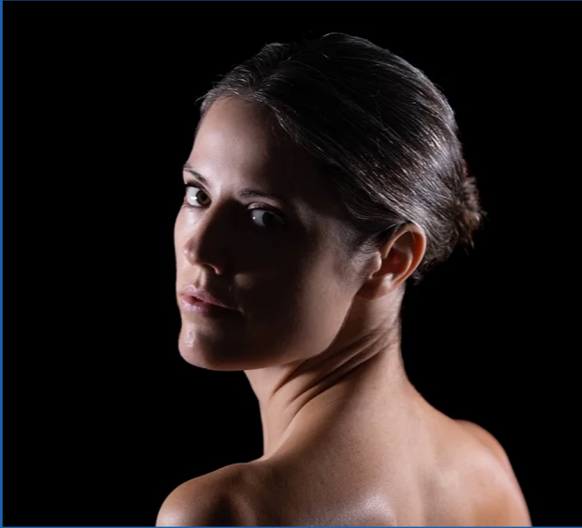
- View a 1 minute series sizzler [here](#).
- Each episode culminates with a thoughtfully- crafted, participatory, community conversation for which comprehensive [conversation guides](#) were prepared.



“Moving artistic experiences can be powerful agents for conversation: A coming together to listen to one another and share our stories to explore who we are and who we wish to be, building an understanding of how others have come to see what they see, believe what they believe and know what they know.”

Jesse Jeanne Stinnett

Medford, MA



(Courtesy Photo)

www.bostondancetheater.com

“It is my belief that the performing arts have the power to convey meaning in a profound way and can potentially aid in a shift toward global transformation with regard to society and culture.”

Jessie Jeanne Stinnett is a dance teacher, choreographer, and co-artistic director of Boston Dance Theater. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in dance performance from The Boston Conservatory and a Master of Fine Arts degree in “Creative Practice: Dance Professional Pathway” from Trinity Laban Conservatoire, in conjunction with Independent Dance/Siobhan Davies Dance. Most notably, Jessie has performed for the Metropolitan Opera, Tate Britain (UK), Prometheus Dance, Institute of Applied Systems Analysis (Vienna), The Boston Baroque Opera, and Bard College’s SummerScape Festival. She has also received grants from The MAP Fund, supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Howard Gilman Foundation, and Mellon Foundation, NH State Council for the Arts, Combined Jewish Philanthropies, The Boston Foundation with support from The Barr Foundation, New England Foundation for the Arts, Assets4Artists at MASS MoCA, and Fidelity Charitable.

Yoni Battat

Boston, MA



(Courtesy Photo)

www.yonibattat.com

“Whether in the synagogue or the concert hall, sharing an experience of true beauty is what creates community amongst strangers and brings hope and holiness into a world that truly needs it.”

Yoni Avi Battat is a multi-instrumentalist, vocalist, and composer, celebrating his Ashkenazi and Mizrahi ancestry through music. He maintains an active performance schedule across the country and internationally, playing violin, viola, and oud (middle-eastern lute) in collaborative and interdisciplinary projects spanning a wide range of styles. Over the past 15 years, Yoni has been immersing himself in maqam, the musical mode system of Arab music. These efforts gave way to his 2022 debut album *Fragments*, which explores his Iraqi-Jewish identity by pairing maqam music with lyrics in Arabic, Hebrew, English, and Yiddish. From 2021-2022 Yoni toured nationally as an actor and violinist with the Tony Award-winning musical, “*The Band’s Visit*.” Yoni now lives in Boston, MA, working locally and nationally towards his mission of bringing Arab music into the soundscape of American Jewish life.

Boston Dance Theater, *Jesse Jeanne Stinnett & Yoni Battat*

Boston Dance Theater with Yoni Battat is a new work of dance and music that celebrates multiculturalism and resilience. Incorporating both historical and contemporary ideologies, the work celebrates the artistic cohort's multicultural heritage and community in anticipation of the emergence of a more interconnected and conscientious society. It was created in partnership with the Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy, Yoni Battat, and the BIPOC dancers of Boston Dance Theater.

- Watch an excerpt [here](#).
- The cultural heritage represented by the creative team includes Latinx, Cape Verdean, Arabic, Haitian, and Jewish American.
- Community engagement included workshops that combined storytelling, music, and movement generation with BDT's extended community of dancers.



“It was part of the artistic process to consider how contemporary art making practices can draw upon conflict resolution practices to be inclusive and celebratory of the multiplicity that each artist brings into the creation space.”

Leahy Ardon

Waban, MA



(Courtesy Photo)

www.leahyardon.com

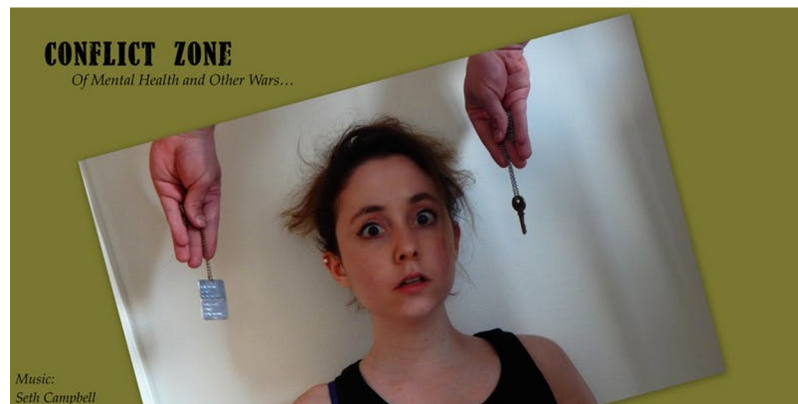
“Through my art I aspire to inspire people, illuminate feelings and ideas, raise awareness and provoke thought; celebrate the here and now, connecting us through what makes us human- reminding people that in our human experience, we are not alone.”

Leahy Ardon (Ish-Shalom) is an Israeli-American multi-disciplinary artist and educator. She has experience performing and studying both theater and music in London, Tel Aviv, and Boston. As a musician, Ardon has played with and performed for artists such as Lionel Ritchie, Lucinda Williams, and Sarah McLachlan. She released her debut album, *Out on the Water*, in 2023. Ardon has also written and directed several plays for children and adults, most recently receiving a “Best of Fest” Award for her one-woman play, *Conflict Zone*, at the Whitefire Theater Solofest in LA. Ardon earned her bachelor's degree from Berklee College of Music in 2017 with top honors, and a master's degree from Harvard Graduate School of Education in 2021.

Conflict Zone, Leahy Ardon

Conflict Zone is one-woman play written and presented by Leahy Ardon. The show, created by artists and scholars from Berklee College of Music and Harvard University, takes us on the journey of a young immigrant to the US as she battles an eating disorder and how her Jewish-Israeli identity plays a role in her fight for recovery. Through a compelling storyline, combined with music and poetry, we are taken on a ride through laughter and tears, and a journey of self-discovery.

- **Won Best of Fest Award - Whitefire Theater Solofest 2021**
- **Performed at temples and colleges across the Boston area, followed by a guided discussion and open Q&A with a mental health professional.**
- **A new version of the play, workshopped with Boston director Christine Hamel, is set to tour in 2024 following a performance at Boston University.**



“There is nothing simple about the human struggle with mental health, but in working on this project I’ve found that through honest art, humor, and community we can support loved ones, and heal many wounds.”

Nat Seelen

Newton, MA



(Courtesy Photo)

www.natseelen.com

“I use the language of traditional klezmer music to tell contemporary stories, honor my heritage, and bring people together.”

Nat Seelen is a musician, educator, and nonprofit leader based in Boston, MA. He began his musical training in the preparatory department of New England Conservatory, where he studied jazz, music theory, and early music. He continued at Brown University, where he led the university orchestra and the klezmer band while maintaining a busy schedule of chamber music, jazz combos, funk bands, and pit orchestras. Nat has a Bachelor’s in Music Theory, History, and Composition and wrote his honors thesis in ethnomusicology focused on klezmer music. Nat is the founder of the internationally- recognized Ezekiel’s Wheels Klezmer Band, maintains an active freelance career on clarinet, saxophone, and percussion, and is an award-winning composer and writer as well as a performer.

The Wedding/Di Khassene, *Nat Seelen*

The Wedding/Di Khassene is a mixed-media song cycle co-created with and featuring the voices and stories of a group of older adults who have been living in Jewish senior housing facilities in the Boston area during the COVID-19 pandemic. By using the musical language of klezmer and the formal structure of the traditional Jewish wedding, the performance helps to bring memories to life within the context of a ritual of renewal and togetherness.

- Performed as part of the **Boston Festival of New Jewish Music Festival in 2022**. ([Video](#))
- Features 31 recorded interview samples woven into the music.
- The oldest participant in the project was 97 years old at the time of her interview!



“Many audience members came up to me after the performance to talk about what they had heard: about stories and voices they had connected with, musical sections they felt deeply about, and about the wonderful interpretation by the band.”

Sarah Plotkin, Jesse Garlick, Rebecca Powell



(From left: Sarah Plotkin, Rebecca Powell and Jesse Garlick (Courtesy photos)

www.sarahplotkin.com

“We use devising techniques to transform stories into performance and maintain our values of centering community, discussion, and diverse perspectives.”

Sarah Plotkin (co-director) is a director, devisor, educator and cultural worker now based in Ithaca, NY. She collaborates with community artists, professional artists, and young people to bridge divides and inspire joyful community-building.

Rebecca Powell (co-director) is an educator and facilitator committed to the intersection of pluralistic community building, creative arts, and social change.

Jesse Garlick (production design/dramaturg) Jesse is a Boston-based actor and theater educator dedicated to creating a lasting impact in his community by unlocking others artistic expression. He is currently education director/artistic associate with local theater company Liars and Believers, as well as a faculty member at the Boston Ballet school.

Coming Together, Sarah Plotkin, Rebecca Powell & Jesse Garlick

Coming together was virtual, community-engaged storytelling project that explored the meaning of Jewish community, how we build it, and how it has transformed during COVID-19. This music, dance, and storytelling collaboration was created by Boston artists Sarah Plotkin, Rebecca Powell, and Jesse Garlick.

- This project engaged 5 core ensemble members, 30 amateur actors, 6 interviewees who inspired the pieces and 550 audience members who logged on for the live performances.
- The [program guide](#) invited people to reflect on their own experiences of community.
- The show's content offered thoughts about Covid-19, U.S. political polarization, family dynamics, and mental health.



Shirah Rubin

Brookline, MA



(Courtesy Photo)

www.shirahrubin.com

“The creative process to me is the holistic integration of mind, body, heart, and hand expressing feelings, ideas, and meanings both particular and universal.”

Shirah Rubin is a multidisciplinary artist living in Boston. Her art practice is centered in the spheres of sculpture, predominantly ceramics, and community art. Rubin utilizes materials that emerge from the metaphorical, historical, and social elements of each project. Her work often explores memory and the challenges posed by its fragile nature. As a teaching artist, Rubin develops art workshops for audiences ranging from children through adults in museums, universities, schools, camps, and synagogues. She also leads professional development workshops, facilitates arts-based collaborations, and inspires arts instructors and administrators to think creatively. Born outside of Washington D.C. she studied studio art and psychology at the University of Delaware and has an MA in Jewish Education from the Jewish Theological Seminary.

Wisdom Exchange Project, Shirah Rubin

Wisdom Exchange Project is an interactive installation featuring letters of personal wisdom and ceramic vessels created and shared by Boston's Jewish community. Inspired by the 75th anniversary of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, ancient texts preserved in ceramic jars for centuries, the installation continues to be experienced in an online living archive, and represents the multi-vocal lived experience and insights of different communities in the Boston area during a time of a global pandemic.

- The [archive collection](#) consists of advice, values, aphorisms, and hopes by people ranging in age from 6 to 96.
- This project was featured in a [documentary](#) by Weiyang Olivia Huang.
- Workshops created an intergenerational visual dialogue of wisdom legacy letters and their ceramic time capsules.



“How do we reconnect in community? Gather together. Gather wisdom. Exchange wisdom to clarify our values and learn from each other.”

TJ Reynolds

Arlington, MA



(Courtesy Photo)

www.tjreynolds.net

“I use conversations with my subjects to inform my work, trying to imbue their portraits and poems with their own perspective.”

TJ Reynolds is an artist, musician, writer and educator who spent his formative years in Indianapolis. As a musician, he blends hip-hop with other forms of music, including African Drumming and the Bambula music of his ancestral Puerto Rico. And a visual artist, he has had solo exhibitions, commissions and shows at museums, including The Kurt Vonnegut Memorial Library, Newfields, The Indiana Historical Society, The Multicultural Art Center, and the Children's Museum. As a poet, Reynolds toured with Indianapolis' first official Slam poetry team, representing Indy in cities including Chicago and New York. He currently teaches elementary art for Cambridge Public Schools in Massachusetts.

Black & Jewish, TJ Reynolds

Black and Jewish: an intersection of identities is a series of painted and drawn black and white portraits highlighting the intersectional identities of Jews of Color. Portrait subjects were interviewed and their stories were shared with poets of color who interpreted and illuminated the subjects' experiences into poems to be displayed alongside the art. The project culminated with an exhibit that helped build community and amplify the voices, experience, and visibility of Black and Jewish people.

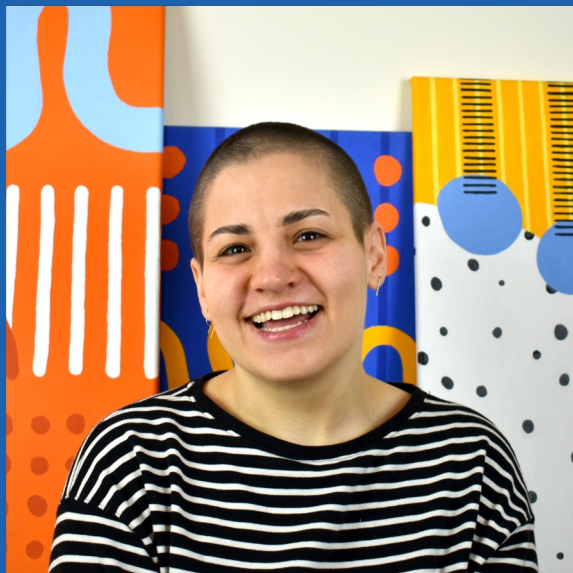
- The Multicultural Center reported that this was the most attended show in their gallery's history.
- View images and an interview from the opening [here](#).
- Inspiration to explore this intersectionality began with the artist's family - his twin niece and nephew and son are featured in the exhibit.



"This project was a chance to bring together many of my interests in ways I hadn't before: Interviewing someone and learning their truth, writing poetry, drawing portraits, making music, connecting people, all in the name of racial justice and harmony."

Tom Lerental

Waltham, MA



(Courtesy Photo)

www.tommabloom.com

“I create tactile, joyous, and playful objects that illustrate textile design as a visual language.”

Tom Lerental (she/her) is a textile designer in passion and practice and the founder of Tomma Bloom. Using the four fundamental tools of her trade - pattern, structure, shape, and color, she creates and realizes joyful experiences in space. While applied to various mediums, her work demonstrates how textile design can be used as a textbook for object design, communicating the energy of form and color in a non-traditional matter. Tom's approach to design thinking is deeply influenced by early 20th-century art. Tom graduated from Shenkar College of Design with a Bachelor's in Textile Design (Cum Laude) and from Tel-Aviv University with a Master of Art in Interdisciplinary Arts.

Meanings of Duality, Tom Lerental

Meanings of Duality is a textile exploration of the duality of the artist's experience as a Jewish immigrant in the U.S. struggling to reconcile identities and their meaning in different societies. The two wall rugs that represent different locations, identities, and cultures create a dialogue, challenging common perceptions about Jewish community.

- The two rugs are made from the same materials in their core.
- [Fun fact/link 1](#)
- [Fun fact/link 1](#)

"I believe that the wall rugs duo, as two complementary objects that symbolize home and comfort, present the delicate relationships between home, tradition, community, and the Jewish individual."

Wendy Jehlen

Somerville, MA



Credit P.: Marcel Gbeffa

(Photo: Marcel Gbeffa)

www.anikaya.org

“My work is in creating communities from individuals who might not otherwise think of themselves as connected to each other.”

Wendy Jehlen is a choreographer and community builder whose work questions the boundaries that we imagine between ourselves, and seeks to break down these imagined walls through an embodied practice of radical empathy. Her approach incorporates elements of performance art, theater, installation, and her foundational movement practices of Bharata Natyam, Odissi, Capoeira, Kalaripayattu and Butoh. She has created and performed in the US, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, China, Italy, India, Japan, Mali, Mexico, Mozambique, Rwanda, Palestine and Turkey. Works include *The Women Gather* (2022); *Conference of the Birds* (2018); *Entangling* (2015); *The Deep* (2015), *Lilith* (2013), *The Knocking Within* (2012); *Forest* (2010); and *He Who Burns* (2006). Jehlen has received support from the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, Theater Communications Group, Japan Foundation, The Boston Foundation, NEFA, Network of Ensemble Theaters, Boston Center for the Arts, Mass Cultural Council, the NEA, and the Department of State, among others.

The Women Gather, *Wendy Jehlen*

The Women Gather is a ritual of healing created by an ensemble of women-identified artists. This ritual takes place in an environment created by the ensemble, in a soundscape of our voices and bodies and the voices of our mothers and our grandmothers. We come to this space with different stories, different cultures, different bodies. We gather to create a safe space to exist and to gather our strength for what lies ahead.

- Performances have taken place in NYC, Boston and Botswana, with upcoming performances in DC, Brazil and Benin in 2024.
- Featured in an [article](#) in Dance Informa.
- The team includes Wendy Jehlen (Director/Choreographer), Shaw Pong Liu (Music Director), Annie Wiegand (Light Design), Marlene Santana, Raquel Flor, Annie Wiegand and Grace Keller (Installation/Textile Artists)



“This project has been, and will continue to be, a place of necessary healing for me and the women who join me in our ritual - in Boston and around the world. I am grateful.”

Carol Marton

Jamaica Plain, MA



(Photo: Alan Novick)

www.koleinu.org

“To facilitate the creation of joy and community in making art is a fundamental goal of my work with Koleinu.”

Carol Marton is a Boston-based singer and choral conductor. She is the founding Artistic Director of Koleinu, Boston’s Jewish Community Chorus. Carol has also been a singer and conductor with Triad: Boston’s Choral Collective, was a guest conductor for Cantilena, A Women’s Chorale, based in Arlington, MA, and she is the Founder and Artistic Director of Pandora’s Vox, a contemporary music ensemble for women’s voices. Known for her work in Jewish choral music, Carol directed the Temple Sinai Choir in Sharon, MA, for more than 20 years, and she has been on the faculty of the School of Jewish Music at Hebrew College, teaching conducting, vocal technique, and voice and piano privately. She earned her Master’s Degree in Choral Conducting at Indiana University School of Music, and upon returning to Boston, she served as assistant conductor for the Zamir Chorale of Boston, and as conductor of the Temple Emanuel Choir in Newton.

A Funkl Gleybik, Carol Marton & Koleinu

A Funkl Gleybik (A Spark of Belief) is a new Jewish choral work by Osnat Netzer commissioned by Koleinu, that had its world premiere at a concert celebrating Koleinu's 20th anniversary with special guests Hankus Netsky and internationally renowned Ezekiel's Wheels Klezmer Band. This delightful evocation of nature and time was based on poems by Rosa Nevadovska, Malka Tussman and Anna Margolin.

- The texts in Yiddish by three women poets connect nature and being present in the world.
- The in-person performance was one of the first live events bringing the Boston Jewish community together post-pandemic.
- Listen to the recording [here](#).



“This new work speaks wonderfully for the cause of new Jewish music, new music in Yiddish, the relevance of Yiddish poetry to contemporary life, the power of women, and the power of community music-making!”

Ilya Vidrin

Boston, MA



(Courtesy Photo)

www.ilyavidrin.com

“As a movement artist I feel sometimes like a permeable membrane moving between choreography and visual art.”

Ilya Vidrin is Assistant Professor of Creative Practice Research and core faculty at the Institute for Experiential Robotics at Northeastern University. Born into a refugee family, Ilya’s work engages with and investigates ethics of interaction, including the embodiment of care, trust, cultural competence, and social responsibility. As a movement artist, Ilya has been featured as one of Dance Magazine’s “25 to Watch” (2022) with close collaborator Jessi Stegall, and has been an artist-in-residence at the BallettxSchwerin, MIT Media Lab, Harvard ArtLab, L.A. Contemporary Dance Company, North Atlantic Ballet, Ballet Des Moines, Jacob’s Pillow, the National Parks Service, The Walnut Hill School, Interlochen Arts Academy, Boston Center for the Arts, Museum of Fine Arts (Boston), and the New Museum (NYC).

OtherWise, Ilya Vidrin

OtherWise is a dance theatre production centering on intergenerational trauma in refugee experience, that investigates and responds to dissident Soviet-era bard songs of oppression and hope through dance. Through embodied exploration of music, dance, and spoken word, *OtherWise* investigates and builds on political themes within the poetic texts, including love of land, distrust of the government, hope in the face of hopelessness, humor as a coping mechanism, and uncertainty for the future. Collaborating artists include Alec Hutson (music), Sue Mura ^d (cinematographer), Valeria Solomonoff (dramaturgy), and Jenni St. John (costume designer).

- [Watch the trailer](#) and [learn more on the website](#)
- Incubated in the [BCA Dancemakers Laboratory](#) in 2021, *OtherWise* will premiere at Harvard in 2024.
- This project has also received support from the Mass Cultural Council, Boston Foundation, Harvard University, Northeastern University, and Movement Arts Creation Studio.



“Our process invites the voices of community members to share their experience living within oppressive regimes. By making our creative process open to the public, we hope to encourage vulnerability, courage, and community healing.”

Jason Slavick

Cambridge, MA



(Courtesy Photo)

www.liarsandbelievers.com

“I’ve always been interested in mythology as a source of storytelling. The myth that has spoken to me most deeply is Jewish source material. From the biblical to folklore, I have a deep connection to the treasury of our own stories.”

As the founding Artistic Director of the ensemble theatre company, Liars & Believers, **Jason Slavick** specializes in collaboration and innovative storytelling. Jason uses the dynamism of live theater to reach and engage audiences with powerful experiences that help them explore ideas, develop creativity and find the good in themselves and others. He served as Gann Academy’s director of drama in Waltham for over a decade and has co-authored over a dozen plays which have won awards and accolades in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. Jason helped develop work by contemporary writers Joyce Carol Oates and Emily Mann, and he has directed dozens of plays from Shakespeare to Arthur Miller. Jason earned his BA in Philosophy from Trinity College and an MFA in Directing from Trinity Repertory Conservatory. He lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with his wife and their puppy Stella.

Letters from Prague, Jason Slavick

Letters From Prague is an adaptation of a nonfiction [book](#) into both a dramatic play and Holocaust education experience. The play uses text from the letters between members of the Czerner family (the artist's in-laws) during WWII, as well as images from the family and original contemporary music by a local Jewish musician; with a goal of making the Holocaust "specific, personal, and relevant for Jews and non-Jews alike."

- The play is taken from family letters & offers a unique perspective of hearing from people who didn't survive.
- Gann Academy students collaborated to develop a visual installation to accompany the play as well as a Holocaust curriculum for high school students.
- A Stage Reading took place for Yom Hashoah in 2022. "Rolling premiere" scheduled for Spring 2024 in Cambridge, MA before traveling to audiences around the country and beyond.



"My goal is to do justice to the letters and the people who wrote them, bringing their words to life."

Jessica Roseman

Lexington, MA



(Photo: Mel Taing)

www.jessicaroseman.com

“I create opportunities to recognize our individuality within a connected and diverse world. My dances aim to instill equality by resourcing our collective inner well-being.”

Jessica Roseman is a choreographer, movement educator, and a mother who helps people to sense, feel, and move better, equitably. Her community-based dance projects instill social change by inviting deeper physical connections to our selves, our environment, and each other. Her multiyear NOURISH Project, offers participatory dance engagements, and has earned numerous social justice grants. Jess has a BA in Dance and African American Studies from Wesleyan University. She was appointed to NEFA’s Regional Dance Development Initiative (RDDI) cohort to build sustainable choreographic landscapes in New England. She is the inaugural Artist in Residence at Lexington Community Farm. A New England States Touring Artist, Jessica performs, teaches, and mentors, nationally.

Nourish, Jessica Roseman

Nourish investigates how food equity, redlining and segregation, embodied labor, identity, and family wellbeing relate to dance. Developed as an artist-residency project at Lexington Community Farm, inclusive movement practices were taught at the farm to participants of different ages, faiths, abilities, and races. *Nourish* provided healing, creative solutions to societal inadequacies. Multimedia artist Olivia Moon videotaped the sessions, and a dance film essay was produced from the footage.

- Her [website](#) includes an [artist talk](#) about the project as well as a [preview of the film](#).
- Featured on [JewishBoston](#) and in the [Boston Art Review](#)
- Inspiration was sourced from asking questions including:
“What makes you feel positive in your body? What soothes you?
How do you know in your body that you are in a good place?”



“In Nourish, parent participants experienced the farm through their children’s eyes and bodies. People with mixed abilities participated comfortably with many options for comfortable creativity. Many participants expressed their appreciation for having time and space to just BE, and to feel the earth through their feet.”

Joshua Meyer

Cambridge, MA



(Photo: Evelyn Herwitz)

www.joshuameyer.com

“Time is about how we change—questioning whether art can hold multiple, competing truths. Each daub of paint holds a memory, and when they overlap, you can see time elapse.”

Artist **Joshua Meyer** is known for his thickly layered paintings of people, and for a searching, open-ended process. “These aren’t so much portraits as they are depictions of intimacy,” suggests the Boston Globe. Meyer has been recognized with a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant, a CJP Arts and Culture Impact Award, The Sustainable Arts Foundation Award, as well as the Massachusetts Cultural Council’s Painting Fellowship. The Cambridge, Massachusetts artist studied art at Yale University and The Bezalel Academy, and has exhibited in galleries and museums internationally, including *Eight Approaches* at Boston’s Museum of Fine Arts, *Tohu vaVohu* at Hebrew College, and *Becoming* at the Yale Slifka Center and NYU Bronfman Center and the retrospective *Seek My Face* at UCLA’s Dortort Center. Meyer is represented by Rice Polak Gallery in Provincetown, and Dolby Chadwick Gallery in San Francisco.

Eight Approaches, Joshua Meyer

Eight Approaches is a series of eight paintings hung in a row, suggesting a Hanukkah menorah, circling the themes of time and light. The work also tells a story about the spaces in-between the paintings and consequently, about the spaces in-between people and ideas. This projects uses Hanukkah as a lens to think about art and ourselves, and the diversity and complexity of Jewish identity, community, and tradition.

- Debuted at the MFA Boston, Dec 2022, on view at Hebrew College, Jan - Jul 2023
- Inspired an [essay](#) about connections with Philip Guston, empathy, and rededication
- Included an artist talk: *When Art and Judaism Collide: A Conversation with Artist Joshua Meyer and Laura Mandel of JArts*



“Art has an ability to hold competing truths, and Judaism loves this complexity too. We love to answer a question with a parable—from Chassidic Tales to Kafka and Midrash—so we can enter and engage. I hope the paintings will cause the audience to add their own stories, weaving and sorting the coincidences and contradictions.”

Matthew Shifrin

Newton, MA



(Photo: Webb Chappell)

“The necessity for me, as a blind person, to focus on sound makes me keenly aware of the nuances that music offers.”

Matthew Shifrin is a counter-tenor, accordionist, and composer. He has performed at National Sawdust, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Boston Children's Museum, The Blue Building with The International Contemporary Ensemble, Boston University's Tsai Performing Arts Center, and at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival as a member of Floating Tower, an NYC-based musical-theater collective. His podcast, *Blind Guy Travels*, distributed by Radiotopia, premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival, and was 4th on Spotify's list of the Best Podcasts Of 2021. As an actor, Shifrin played a blind musician in Mark Turtletaub's "Puzzle," which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, and is published by Sony Pictures. Matthew loves helping blind people enjoy previously inaccessible hobbies. He and a friend created a system of text-based instructions which lets blind people build Lego sets independently. The system has been featured on NBC, CBS, and in The Washington Post; he's now collaborating with Lego to create text-based instructions using artificial intelligence.

My Grandma's Mind is Like an Ocean, *Matthew Shifrin*

My Grandma's Mind is Like an Ocean is a one-man show for singer and accordion loosely based on the artist's Holocaust survivor grandmother's memoirs. The show features English, Russian, and Yiddish. This project creatively re-interprets Jewish Life by approaching it from a blind person's perspective.

- Watch a sneak peek for the show [here](#).
- When writing this musical the artist realized that Yiddish Braille didn't exist, so he partnered with Duxbury Braille Systems to create it.
- A new iteration of the show, premiering at NYC's United Solo Theatre Festival, features tap-dancing, even more accordion, and a killer cactus.



“This show embraces the complexity of Jewish identity, community, and tradition by providing two intertwined perspectives - my grandmother's and my own attempts to understand them as a Jew in the 21st century.”

Schon Family

Various locations



(Photo: Josh Reynolds, Boston Globe)

Nancy Schön
Schön

Ellen

Susan Schön Jackie Schon

Mia Schon Hannah Schon

Charlie Dov Schön

“We are an intergenerational family of Jewish women artists with a strong connection to each other, our Jewish heritage, and the Boston community.”

Nancy Schön is a Boston-based sculptor known for her warm, evocative bronze representations of human and animal figures including Make Way for Ducklings in the Boston Public Garden. Ellen Schön is a ceramicist and art professor with a creative process grounded in reflective practice. Susan Schön is a multi-skilled textile designer/graphic designer with over 20 years of experience in print and digital innovative design solutions. Jackie Schon is a painter, co-founder of The Paint Bar, and a public speaker on the power of creativity through innovation. Mia Schon is an American-Israeli mosaic muralist and mixed media artist who spreads large, colorful mosaics through Israel and abroad while incorporating social, political, and cultural themes to her work. Hannah Schon is a freelance creative producer, strategist, and stylist on a mission to spread authentic joy in the community through genuine storytelling and connection. Charlie Dov Schön is an emerging textile and found object artist whose work is deeply place-based, engaging with transparencies, ritual, sexuality, and the natural world.

Seven Species, Three Generations, *Schon Family*

Seven Species, Three Generations is an artistic collaborative intergenerational exhibition by a group of seven women artists, all in one family, that centers on seven species: wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates. It uses several media, including clay, fiber, paint, mosaics, and more - to explore how the virtues of each plant embody and reflect their relationships to femininity, fertility, resilience, and growth.

- The exhibit was reviewed in articles in the [Boston Globe](#) and on [JewishBoston](#).
- This project included a gallery exhibit at the Kniznik Gallery at Brandeis, an online [lecture](#), and an in person creative workshop.
- Each artist began from a sourced Kabbalah translation of the species to inspire their work.



“Not only did this project bring our family even closer, but it enabled us to dig into each of our species’ and new Jewish concepts as a whole. The experience was invaluable.”

Rachel Linsky

Boston, MA



(Photo: Noel Valero)

www.rachellinsky.com

“I use the universal language of dance as a way to start conversations across communities and cultivate empathy, as we work to keep the testimonies of Holocaust survivors alive.”

Rachel Linsky is a Boston-based contemporary dance artist. She holds a B.F.A. in Dance Performance and Choreography and a B.A. in Arts Administration from Elon University where she graduated summa cum laude. She directs and choreographs ZACHOR, an ongoing series that seeks to preserve the words of WWII Holocaust survivors through dance. She has presented choreography at venues throughout Boston including New England Conservatory, the Boston Center for the Arts, and The Huntington Theater. Her work for dance film has been presented nationally and internationally in festivals such as Earl Mosely’s Diversity of Dance “Dance is Activism Film Festival,” Prague International Film Festival, and many more. Rachel was one of the 2022-23 JArts and CJP Community Creative Fellows and is currently a member of the 2023-24 Next Steps for Boston Dance cohort.

Hidden, Rachel Linsky

Hidden is a contemporary dance performance inspired by the story of Holocaust survivor Aaron Elster, who survived at the mercy of a Polish family that kept him hidden in their attic for two years. This piece explores the pressing question of what the future of Holocaust education might look like, especially in this pivotal time where so few survivors are left to tell their stories first-hand. Performers include a cast of professional dancers from [ZACHOR](#), and a cohort of teenage dancers who engaged in a week-long Embodied Holocaust Education Workshop Series.

- Premiered at The Boston Center for the Arts in October of 2022. Watch a [promo](#) and [full performance video](#).
- Featured in an [article](#) in ArtsFuse
- Aaron's son Steven Elster served as dramaturg, and now shares his father's story as a second generation speaker.



(Photo: Nicole Volpe)

“Working collaboratively with teens was refreshing not only for the participants but also for me as a teacher. The experience became more powerful with each performance, as the dancers were able to see the impact that their work had on the audiences through post-show interactions.”

Tutti Druyan, Shaged Druyan, Edmar Colón



(From left: Shaged Druyan, Edmar Colón, and Tutti Druyan. Courtesy photo)

www.tuttidruyan.com

“Our hope is to present Ladino as a language, and also the history and the music, in a way that lots of people can relate to.”

Tutti Druyan is a singer and actress who started out by dubbing some of the most successful cartoons in Israel. She performed at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival; and “Connected,” an album of Jewish prayers she released in collaboration with her musician parents, Gitit Shoval and Ron Druyan, was nominated for a New England Music Award in the World Music category in 2021.

Shaged Druyan is a drummer, producer and sound engineer who has opened on global stages for Peter Frampton, The Doobie Brothers, Matisyahu, and many other popular bands.

Edmar Colón is a saxophonist, pianist, composer, and singer. Colón was awarded the “Latino 30 Under 30 Award New England,” and has written, arranged, and orchestrated pieces for the Kennedy Center Honors award ceremony, and the National Symphony Orchestra.

Kantika, Tutti Druyan, Shaqed Druyan, Edmar Colón

Kantika, which means “little song” in Ladino (Judeo-Spanish), is an album that combines portions of Ladino traditional songs with new material written in English. The music serves as a tribute to Tutti and Shaqed’s maternal grandfather, Nissim, and the many other people of Ladino heritage, to expose listeners to the language and Sephardic songs that have been disappearing in modern times.

- Featured in an article in [The Times of Israel](#)
- The project launched with a [trailer](#) and live showcase in Brookline in 2023.
- Today, there are few Ladino speakers left and the language was classified by UNESCO in 2019 as severely endangered.



“We are taking these very old songs and making them new, staying true to the original melodies while adding new material. Hopefully, a new generation of Ladino speakers can emerge and carry on this language, music, and tradition.”

Becky Behar

Newton, MA



(Courtesy Photo)

www.beckybehar.com

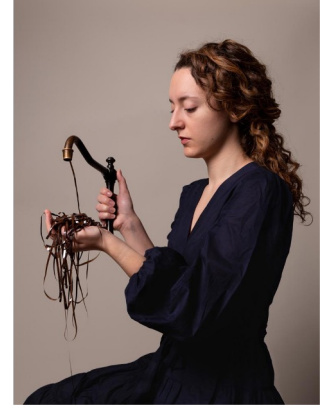
“My images are layered and filled with symbolism.”

Becky Behar is a photo-based artist born in Colombia and now living in the suburbs of Boston. Her richly choreographed portraits and still lifes investigate motherhood, the passage of time, and generational links. Behar began photographing her three children as they matured into adults. Her compositions reflect embellished autobiographical and fictional narratives about their transition to adulthood and Behar’s shifting maternal identity as her children left home. With incandescent subject matter emerging from rich shadows, her photographs evoke Dutch oil paintings, replete with symbols of transience, family, and faith. Behar punctuates portraits with still lifes that mark the present-day, rendering plastic bags luminous amongst cherries and figs. Here, home is an idea, not a place. Behar has exhibited at national and international galleries including solo exhibitions with Kniznick Gallery (Waltham, MA), Griffin Museum of Photography (Winchester, MA), Workspace Gallery (Lincoln, NE) and Concord Free Public Library (Concord, MA).

Tu Que Bivas, *Becky Behar*

Tu Que Bivas is a photography experience that highlights family, immigration, memory, and loss. It explores the idea of “home” and how it is made up of the experiences, cultures, mores, traditions and memories that each of us pick up along the way. Each of the 20 portraits and still lifes will be curated alongside objects and food to create an interactive environment, allowing audiences to conjure up their own collection of what family and home means to them.

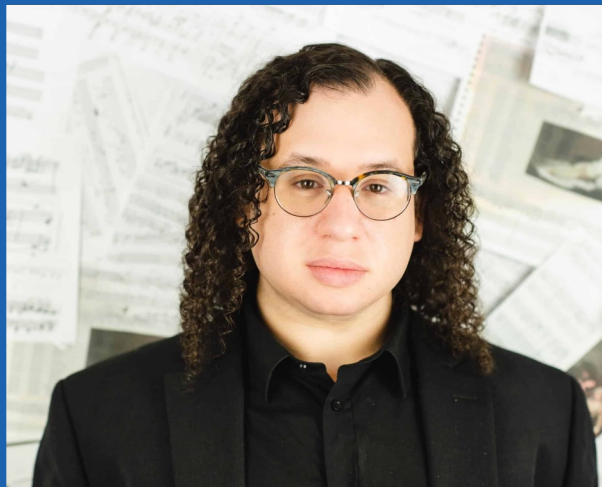
- The title is part of a Sephardic blessing my parents often invoked: "May you live, grow, and thrive like a little fish in freshwater."
- Behar travels between Boston and Miami photographing her daughter and mother with a blue dress they each wear in order to link them together.
- The artist is also reading about medicinal/religious practices and interviewing Sephardic women as part of her research.



“My photographs explore how my mother and daughter continue to enact Sephardic traditions and rituals today. As I contemplate their different ways of preserving and celebrating our history, I consider my own relationship to this heritage and what interpretations my daughter will carry forward.”

Derek David

Boston, MA



(Courtesy Photo)

www.derekdavid.com

“For me, my art is a deeply personal undeniable expression of myself in the world.”

Derek David is a composer, conductor, and music educator based in Boston, Massachusetts. He has been commissioned by the Juventas Ensemble, SAKURA Cello Quintet, Del Sol Quartet, the Verona Quartet, San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. Derek is currently the musical director and conductor of ‘A Besere Velt’ - א, בעסערע וועלט - the world’s largest chorus dedicated to the performance and preservation of Yiddish repertoire. Derek studied composition at The San Francisco Conservatory of Music and received Masters and Doctoral degrees from The New England Conservatory. Previously a Teaching Fellow at Harvard University and five-time recipient of its Distinction in Teaching Award, he is now Lecturer in Music at The Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His areas of interest extend to Medieval theory and musicology, the Beatles, and music of the Yiddish world.

Yiddish Dreams & Futures, *Derek David*

Yiddish Dreams & Futures is a portrait concert of Derek David's music, featuring new compositions that reflect upon Jewish identity and Yiddish culture in a contemporary landscape. The concert in Kresge Auditorium featured the full premiere of the Clarinet Quintet "Oh World, Goodnight" with Andrew Friedman and Del Sol Quartet, and the premiere of String Quartet No. 4 "Kaddish" with Verona Quartet. Other works included "Four Yiddish Folksongs" with an all-star quartet and choral works with A Besere Velt.

- Watch the featured Clarinet Quintet [here](#) and view a [full video](#) of the Portrait Concert
- The Boston Musical Intelligencer, an essential blog of the classical music scene in greater Boston, featured an [interview](#) about the project
- Performed at MIT, a full program including notes, lyrics, and performer bios can be found [here](#).



"The project was an extraordinarily meaningful endeavor in which I was able to collaborate with exceptional artists in envisioning the future of Yiddish art. Their commitment to the project brought forth an evening of contemporary Yiddish music that had an impact on the Jewish and non-Jewish audiences and performers."

Brooke Saias

Somerville, MA



(Courtesy Photo)

www.brookesaias.com

“My hope is to bring stories of the past into our present conversations and complicate notions of Jewish identity.”

Brooke Saias (she/her) is an independent filmmaker, director, and producer. She collaborates with organizations and artists to develop impactful, compelling, and overlooked stories. She is also an associate producer with Arch+Bow Films supporting films with bold artistic vision. Recent credits include the feature documentary *RICHLAND* (Tribeca, Sheffield 2023.) Her own film practice explores personal and collective memory in relationship to place and identity. Her documentary short about the preservation of the Ladino language, *SONGS OF THE SEPHARDIM IN IZMIR*, premiered at the Boston Jewish Film Festival in 2022. Her upcoming short film *KARPUS*, supported by a CJP Arts & Culture Grant, questions her upbringing within an Ashkenazi and Sephardic family and connects with other Sephardic Jews of her generation reflecting on their own experience. Brooke previously produced international documentary films for Compass Light Productions, and worked as an award-winning video journalist for Education Week.

Karpus, Brooke Saias

Karpus is a personal, reflexive film that explores the underrepresentation of Sephardic heritage in America and how this group has largely been absorbed into Ashkenazi culture. Using a poetic approach, the film interrogates and explores the filmmaker's own upbringing within a mixed Ashkenazi and Sephardic family, and engages other Sephardic Jews of her generation who are asking similar questions about their childhood. Through home videos, archival material, and personal narratives, Karpus uncovers and elevates the American Sephardic experience.

- **Karpus means “watermelon” in Ladino— one of the only words that stayed in the filmmaker’s family from her grandfather’s Sephardic heritage.**
- **This film is currently still in process.**



“I have a vast archive of home videos filmed by my dad, but still so much was lost. I’m drawn to this footage as a way of recovering my family’s full Jewish identities.”

Jessi Stegall

Brookline, MA



(Photo: Lo Kuemeier)

www.jessistegall.com

*“I approach performance as an act of ode:
expressing curiosity and homage toward worlds
built by others.”*

Originally from Dallas, Texas, **Jessi Stegall** is a dance-theatre artist, applied ethicist, educator, and filmmaker based between Boston, MA and Chicago, IL. She has been an artist-in-residence at Boston Center for the Arts, Harvard ArtLab, National Parks Service, Rhode Island Women's Choreography Project, Windhover Performing Arts Center, and was recently featured as one of Dance Magazine's "25 to Watch" (2022). Her choreographic work has been featured at Boston Center for the Arts, Tufts University, the Dance Complex, Motion State Dance Film Festival, and Emergence Festival. As a dancer, Jessi has performed works by Raja Feather Kelly, Jill Johnson, Ilya Vidrin, Ali Kenner Brodsky, Mariel Pettee, and Jamila Glass. In addition to her work in dance, Jessi holds an M.S. in Bioethics from Harvard University, a B.S. in Expressive Art Therapy from Lesley University, and is an alumna of Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts.

The Theremin Vignettes, *Jessi Stegall*

The Theremin Vignettes is an evening-length dance-theatre production set to and inspired by the music and life of thereminist Clara Rockmore, a Lithuanian-Jewish woman, virtuosa and pioneer of electronic music. Set in the form of choreographic vignettes with a diverse cast of 11 dancers, the piece explores themes of grief, remembrance, and devotion through theatrical interpretations of real events from Rockmore's life with a movement style that blends ballet, contemporary, gesture, and spoken word.

- The performance debuted at the Boston Center for the Arts in 2023 and will be presented at the ICA/Boston in 2024.
- The only instrument to be played without physical contact, the theremin produces a warbly tone made from thin air.
- Watch the trailer [here](#).



“Her [Clara’s] life, like her music, was rich with stories of love, loss, resilience, and wonder. It is my honor to interpret her stories, both real and imaginary, through this movement.”

Adah Hetko

Somerville, MA



(Photo: Olga Voyazides)

www.adahetko.net

“By connecting listeners to the Yiddish song tradition, I feel that I am calling forward the power of our ancestors, and making hopeful space for our descendants to come, moving together toward a more beautiful world.”

Adah Hetko is a Yiddish singer, songwriter, and dance leader active in the international Yiddish culture scene. Since 2013, she has trained with leading Yiddish singers, including Judy Bressler and Ethel Raim, and has been mentored in Yiddish songwriting by Daniel Kahn and Josh Waletzky. While completing an MA in Jewish Studies at Indiana University, she developed deep knowledge of Yiddish language and culture, which she has learned to joyously share with audiences in the Boston area and beyond. Her work has been supported by the New Jewish Culture Fellowship, the Mass Cultural Council, KlezKanada, Yiddish New York, and the Yiddish Book Center.

Levyosn

Somerville, MA



(Photo: Jess O'Donoghue)

“Each Levyosn performance is a tight collaboration that deepens our connections to our wonderful fellow musicians, to our beloved audiences, and to the bright fire of Yiddish music.”

Levyosn (Ashkenazi Hebrew for “Leviathan”) brings together three rising stars of the Boston Jewish music scene: violinist, vocalist and world-music aficionado **Lysander Jaffe**, accordionist, vocalist, and composer **Kaia Berman-Peters**, and singer-songwriter **Adah Hetko**. They spend their time in joyful exploration of Yiddish song, klezmer, original compositions, and adjacent Jewish and Eastern European folk traditions, bringing harmony-rich arrangements and driving dance rhythms to old gems and new tunes alike. Levyosn has been featured by the Boston Festival of New Jewish Music, the National Yiddish Theatre Folksbeine, KlezCummington and more. They released their debut album, Levyosn’s Lullaby through Borscht Beat in June 2023, with support from Combined Jewish Philanthropy’s Arts and Culture Community Impact Grant Fund.

www.adahetko.net

Levyosn's Lullaby, Adah Hetko and Levyosn Ensemble

Levyosn's Lullaby is a full-length album inspired by havdalah, the ritual that separates Shabbat from the rest of the week. The album includes pieces traditionally sung during havdalah (in Yiddish, Ladino and Hebrew), as well as songs that echo the steps and symbols of the ritual: candle-lighting, wine, spices, and communal singing. Our live concerts engage audiences in an interactive havdalah experience including participatory Yiddish dance, sing-alongs, and heartfelt performances of traditional gems and original compositions.

- [Watch](#) their performance at the **Boston Festival of New Jewish Music**.
- [Listen](#) to the project featured on the New England Public Media podcast, "The Fabulous 413."
- Experience the album on [Bandcamp](#). Tour performances have included The Jewish Museum of Maryland, The Boston Synagogue, and more!



(Photo: Neil Shapiro)

"It's been an incredible honor to record our debut album, and share it with audiences in Greater Boston and beyond! Every performance has both moved audiences members to tears and brought them together in joyful community."

Hadar Ahuvia

Jamaica Plain, MA



(Photo: Maria Baranova)

website

“As I make work during the ongoing global pandemic, I am more aware than ever of the ways our bodies, breath, and voices are necessary points of connection and care.”

Hadar Ahuvia (she/her) is a cross-disciplinary artist, a ritual leader and Jewish educator. Hadar’s work centers the body in explorations of Jewish political and cultural lineages. Her essay “Joy Vey” on choreographing a diasporic identity beyond Zionism is featured in the Oxford Handbook of Jewishness and Dance. Her choreographer credits include: Baryshnikov Arts Center, Danspace Project, 14th St Y, Gibney, LABA, Movement Research, and New Jewish Culture Fellowship, a Bessie nomination for Outstanding Breakout Choreographer, and Dance Magazine’s ‘25 to Watch in 2019’. Research for her dances began alongside curriculums she developed for Kolot Chayeinu’s b'nai mitzvah program. Hadar is a rabbinical student at Hebrew College and is studying Ashekanzi vernacular and cantorial music, weaving performance and services that suture between generations and are committed to collective transformation.

nefesh, Hadar Ahuvia

nefesh is a performance project that sutures across generations and genres, weaving together contemporary dance, traditional Ashekanzi vernacular and cantorial singing, and feminist Jewish mysticism. It lingers in the details of shuckling, krechtsing, unmetered singing and chanting that made distinct the artist's grandparents' Eastern European Jewish soundscape.

- After years of researching and deconstructing the Israeli folk dances she danced with her mother, this work reaches back to the artist's orthodox, Yiddish-speaking great-grandparents, reclaiming cultures almost destroyed by anti-semitism and Zionism.
- Performed at Hebrew College and in NYC in 2023.
- View the performance [here](#).



"I seek to repair the generational and cultural rift between the present and the culture that sustained Ashkenazi Jews for at least 1,000 years. While moored in my own cultural heritage, this work is not a turning inward, but a necessary step towards genuine connection with others."

Mishkaleh

Somerville, MA



(Courtesy Photo)

www.demedonsa.com

“I use ancient silversmithing techniques to make futuristic sculptures, with a goal to have the modern and ancient coexist in objects the same way they coexist in Jewish society and people.”

Artist bio

Project title, *Mishkaleh*

Project title is a.....

- Fun fact/link 1
- Fun fact/link 1
- Fun fact/link 1

“The sculptures, aside from pointing out the presence and beauty of an internal dichotomy, hopefully will spark a dialogue, inspiring others to self-reflect and consider the dichotomies in their own culture.”

Paloma Valenzuela

Boston, MA



(Courtesy Photo)

“As a writer and filmmaker, pondering is a large part of the process for me. As I let myself ponder, I write it all down and piece it together as I go, wondering where I can take it...”

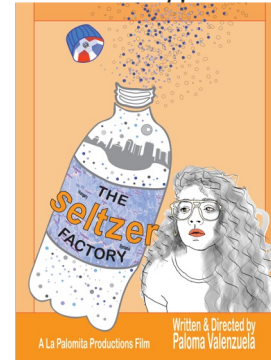
Paloma Valenzuela is a Dominican-American screenwriter, playwright, filmmaker and lecturer originally from Boston. She is the creative director of the production company La Palomita Productions, and the writer/producer/creator of the comedic web series "The Pineapple Diaries." The show was featured in the Latina Magazine's "5 Web Series Every Latinx Needs to Watch Right Now", The Boston Globe, Boston Magazine, Remezcla and Hip Latina. She is a 2018-2019 Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum Neighborhood Salon Luminary and a 2019 City of Boston Artist Fellow. She has taught screenwriting and film at Brandeis University, GrubStreet in Boston and the Institute of Contemporary Art. Valenzuela's writing has been published in the anthology book "Ni De Aquí Ni de Allá" a compilation of stories and works created by the Dominican Writers Association, and her recent documentary film "The Seltzer Factory," explores her maternal family's history in Hungary and Romania.

www.lapalomitaproductions.com

The Seltzer Factory, *Paloma Valenzuela*

The Seltzer Factory is a short documentary film (with narrative elements) that traces back a family story from the filmmaker's mother's side in Hungary and Romania; a story that has shared importance in her family - believing it might have set off a series of events that led her great grandmother to move to Cleveland before the war; ultimately saving her life. This powerful story is one with which many families can relate -- in terms of looking back, tracing back and finding those extraordinary moments that lead us to even still being here today.

- The inspiration for the film came from the filmmaker's trip to Romania in 2017, first meeting her cousin and family, and later interviewing them as they shared the extraordinary story of their shared relatives.
- The story is told from the filmmaker's perspective as a proud Jewish Latina and woman of color.
- Behind the Scenes and other extras can be found on the [film's website](#).



“Wanting to honor my ancestors and their stories while at the same time navigating the world of documentary filmmaking has made the process of producing this one of the biggest challenges I have had as a filmmaker and writer. Ultimately I just hope the story resonates with audiences as it has for me.”

Jenna Billian

Wrentham, MA



(Courtesy Photo)

www.jennabillian.com

“As an artist, I’m always eager to learn, connect and make. Connection and community are integral parts of my studio practice.”

Jenna Billian was born in 1985. She received her BA in Studio Art in May 2022 from Framingham State University where she studied Sculpture. Billian has already been included in various important exhibitions including Fitchburg Art Museum’s 87th Regional Exhibition of Art and Craft where she won the Craft Prize, and the Danforth Art Museum’s Annual Juried Show where she won the Emerging Artist Award in 2022. In 2023, Billian has been awarded two artist grants, and her first solo exhibition will open in September 2023 at the Danforth Art Museum in Framingham. Billian explores the intersection of trauma, addiction, and escape in her work. She currently lives and works outside of Boston, Massachusetts.

Zekher Tzadik Livrakha, Jenna Billian

Zekher Tzadik Livrakha translates to “may the memory of the righteous be a blessing” and explores the rituals and traditions around death and mourning in Judaism. Comprised of stones collected and borrowed from loved ones who have passed, the year-long collaboration with the community merges conversations of shared experiences with Billian’s unique and vibrant style, and culminated in a seven day immersive installation at the Danforth.

- The exhibit premiered at the [Danforth Art Museum](#) along with an artist talk in September 2023.
- Over 100 plaster stones were cast for the installation.
- The artist traveled to visit the graves of her great grandmother and great uncle for the first time as part of this project.



“It has been a very moving experience to meet with community members at their loved one’s graves and bear witness to people’s love and grief for those they have lost.”

Leslie Starobin

Needham, MA



(Courtesy Photo)

www.starobinartworks.com

“Unraveling the threads of human memory has been central to my creative process. My imagery is inspired by people and places steeped in family lore, enriched by Jewish cultural traditions, and central to world history.”

Leslie Starobin is Professor Emerita of Art, Framingham State University. She has worked on various long-term projects including “Dead Sea: Mirror of Time” and “The Last Address.” She sought out and interviewed Jewish refugees from Arab and Muslim lands as well as Holocaust survivors, and then composed still-life photomontages from “the things they carried” and passed down to their children and grandchildren. Starobin's photographs are in the permanent collection of many American museums, including Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University; Jewish Museum, NY; Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Museum of Modern Art, NY; Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University; Smith College Museum of Art; The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life, UC Berkeley; and Worcester Art Museum. Starobin has had numerous solo exhibitions, including at the Holocaust Museum Houston, and Nasher Museum of Art, Durham, NC.

Looming in the Shadows of Łódź, *Leslie Starobin*

Looming in the Shadows of Łódź is structured as a travelogue tracing the routes of memory in Poland, interweaving photo-narratives depicting familial habits and sites of Nazi genocide with videos of the artist's aunt recalling her experiences at Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1944. The project incorporates written testimony and excerpts from her aunt's post-war diary around the borders of site-specific photographs. As viewers encounter these "photo-narratives," they move between memory and place, between past and present, between word and image.

- On the 75th anniversary of relatives' deportation to Auschwitz from the Łódź ghetto, the artist's family traveled to Poland on a roots journey.
- Read more in a [JewishBoston article](#), and watch a [preview](#) of a corresponding documentary.
- The work will be exhibited at The Vilna in Boston and the Turchin Center for the Visual Arts in NC in 2024.



"Highlighting female survivors whose accounts were marginalized in 20th century Holocaust anthologies, this project is inspired by questions artists, historians, scholars, and writers posit today: how does this story survive without first-generation witnesses? With rising antisemitism and xenophobia, survivors' stories can serve as warnings about the perils of hatred unchecked."

Yoni Battat

Boston, MA



(Courtesy Photo)

www.yonibattat.com

“What I aspire to do, and the artist I aspire to be is to take old traditions and add my unique voice to it and make it my own.”

Yoni Avi Battat is a multi-instrumentalist, vocalist, and composer, celebrating his Ashkenazi and Mizrahi ancestry through music. He maintains an active performance schedule across the country and internationally, playing violin, viola, and oud (middle-eastern lute) in collaborative and interdisciplinary projects spanning a wide range of styles. Over the past 15 years, Yoni has been immersing himself in maqam, the musical mode system of Arab music. These efforts gave way to his 2022 debut album *Fragments*, which explores his Iraqi-Jewish identity by pairing maqam music with lyrics in Arabic, Hebrew, English, and Yiddish. From 2021-2022 Yoni toured nationally as an actor and violinist with the Tony Award-winning musical, “*The Band’s Visit*.” Yoni now lives in Boston, MA, working locally and nationally towards his mission of bringing Arab music into the soundscape of American Jewish life.

Fragments, Yoni Battat

Fragments is a collection of original and traditional music surrounding Yoni's Iraqi-Jewish identity. With lyrics in Arabic, Hebrew, English, and Yiddish, the music utilizes Arabic modes and rhythms to make sense of Yoni's fragmented identity. The album was released in 2022 as a culmination of his fellowship work and includes tracks inspired by, and including the voices of, participants from workshops he facilitated throughout the fellowship.

- [Listen to the album on Bandcamp.](#)
- [Watch the music videos for Vapor, Will Her Love Remember](#) and clips from a live concert in [Jerusalem](#), as well as interviews with the [Institute of Jewish Experience](#), [Moment Magazine](#), and [JLive](#).
- [Read articles in the Jewish Journal, Hey Alma!, JewishBoston, and more.](#)



“[In my workshops] I discovered I’m not the only one that feels they are rediscovering the music, language, and traditions of their family as an outsider. At the same time, these precious moments helped me to recognize that fragmentation is a valid and meaningful part of my experience in this world—both in its pain and in its beauty.”

Adriana Katzew

Jamaica Plain, MA



(Courtesy Photo)

“My work is about trying to bring forth people’s histories that aren’t often thought about, and to share their stories artistically.”

Adriana Katzew is an artist, educator, and scholar. Her photography-based art practice reveals her interest in social documentary, history, and marginalized voices. Her work strives to unearth stories and memories of people, moments, and places, addressing societal conditions and issues of social justice. Through her work, Adriana captures an often-voiceless segment of society and uncovers the individual narratives and humanity of each subject. Adriana is a professor of art education at Massachusetts College of Art and Design, where she focuses on community engagement and social justice, Latinx activism through the visual arts, and arts-based approaches to interdisciplinary teaching and learning. She holds a doctorate from Harvard Graduate School of Education, a law degree from the University of Pennsylvania and a bachelor’s degree from Harvard University.

A New World / Un Nuevo Mundo, *Adriana Katzew*

A New World / Un Nuevo Mundo premiered as a solo exhibition exploring the artist's maternal grandparents' immigration to México from Poland through objects that hold memory. Adriana's work searches to unearth stories and memories of people, moments, and places, with much of her photography-based work featuring images of her own Mexican Jewish family. The installation also included photographs of meaningful objects and stories sourced from the community during workshops she facilitated as part of the fellowship.

- Watch an interview with Adriana on [JLive](#).
- Read about the fellowship process from Adriana's perspective on [JewishBoston](#).
- The exhibit debuted in a gallery in Needham and was the first art exhibit of a new museum of [Discovery and Innovation](#) at the Paul Revere Heritage Site in Canton.



"In the workshops I shared objects and stories of my loved ones, and, in return, was entrusted with the objects and stories the participants have shared back. These have been the most powerful moments - allowing me to listen carefully and caringly to their stories, and to find connections amongst us all "

Rotem Goldenberg

Israel



(Courtesy Photo)

“I am increasingly fascinated by the meeting point between the personal and the public and aim to find a connection to the public audience through my personal experiences.”

Rotem Goldenberg is a multi-disciplinary artist, puppeteer, storyteller and medical clown. She holds a dual Bachelor's degree from Tel Aviv University in the Multidisciplinary Program in Humanities and in the Theater Arts, and graduated from the School and Stage for Physical Theater, inspired by the method of Jacques Lecoq. Now back in Israel after living in the Boston area for a few years, Rotem's art exists between the spaces of visual theater, puppets, performance, storytelling, and clowning. She has performed in various festivals in Israel and worldwide and believes in using theater as a tool in both social activism and therapy. Rotem has taught and lectured in universities, schools, and community events across the globe. She is an actor and partner in the Holot Theater, a social theater group for Israelis and asylum seekers. As a medical clown, she has worked in children's departments, rehabilitative geriatric hospitals, and mental health hospitals.

Home. Alone., Rotem Goldenberg

Home. Alone. was a site specific art piece in the form of an audio walk through Boston Common. Part podcast, part performance, this creative tour explored a local area from a new perspective as stories were told through the eyes of someone new to Boston. The audience was invited to individually and collectively connect with Rotem's journey as they explored themes of home and belonging and discovered small surprises along the way. This project was the culmination of Rotem's fellowship in which she led puppetry and storytelling workshops throughout the greater Boston community.

- Watch a [trailer](#) for the audio tours that premiered in Boston Common in 2022.
- Rotem shared her process and project on [JLive](#).
- Read Rotem's reflections on her journey as a Community Creative Fellow on [JewishBoston](#).



“As I creatively explored what ‘home’ means, I found the fellowship [to be] an opportunity to belong, to meet new people, to make friendships, to listen to people and to create with them.”

Paloma Valenzuela

Boston, MA



(Courtesy Photo)

“We are all living so many different experiences in similar ways. We are retelling stories and living connected experiences. In my art I want to tell stories that reflect the reality that I see.”

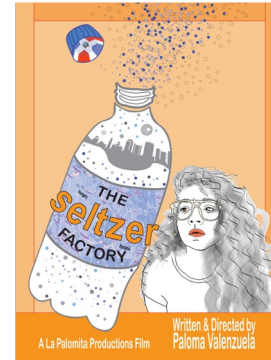
Paloma Valenzuela is a Dominican-American screenwriter, playwright, filmmaker and lecturer originally from Boston. She is the creative director of the production company La Palomita Productions, and the writer/producer/creator of the comedic web series "The Pineapple Diaries." The show was featured in the Latina Magazine's "5 Web Series Every Latinx Needs to Watch Right Now", The Boston Globe, Boston Magazine, Remezcla and Hip Latina. She is a 2018-2019 Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum Neighborhood Salon Luminary and a 2019 City of Boston Artist Fellow. She has taught screenwriting and film at Brandeis University, GrubStreet in Boston and the Institute of Contemporary Art. Valenzuela's writing has been published in the anthology book "Ni De Aquí Ni de Allá" a compilation of stories and works created by the Dominican Writers Association, and her recent documentary film "The Seltzer Factory," explores her maternal family's history in Hungary and Romania.

www.lapalomitaproductions.com

The Seltzer Factory, *Paloma Valenzuela*

The Seltzer Factory is a short film exploring the connection of the writer/director's present day life to stories of her family's past experiences in Hungary where they owned a seltzer factory. A hybrid of narrative and documentary, the film was inspired by complicated family stories touching on themes of identity, heritage, and seltzer. The workshops facilitated through the fellowship with other Jewish people of color involved discussions of belonging that informed the artist's monologue in the film as she reflected on her own experience as a Jewish woman of color.

- **Community workshops focused on monologue writing and an exploration of identity; and engaged a variety of groups from teens to older adults.**
- **Read more from Paloma's fellowship journey on [JewishBoston](#).**
- **Behind the Scenes and other extras can be found on the [film's website](#).**



“In some way, we all have that special story, special recipe or connection to food and nourishment that glides through the generations in families, connecting us and our larger family stories.”

Rachel Linsky

Boston, MA



(Photo: Noel Valero)

www.rachellinsky.com

“I use the universal language of dance as a way to start conversations across communities and cultivate empathy, as we work to keep the testimonies of Holocaust survivors alive.”

Rachel Linsky is a Boston-based contemporary dance artist. She holds a B.F.A. in Dance Performance and Choreography and a B.A. in Arts Administration from Elon University where she graduated summa cum laude. She directs and choreographs ZACHOR, an ongoing series that seeks to preserve the words of WWII Holocaust survivors through dance. She has presented choreography at venues throughout Boston including New England Conservatory, the Boston Center for the Arts, and The Huntington Theater. Her work for dance film has been presented nationally and internationally in festivals such as Earl Mosely’s Diversity of Dance “Dance is Activism Film Festival,” Prague International Film Festival, and many more. Rachel was one of the 2022-23 JArts and CJP Community Creative Fellows and is currently a member of the 2023-24 Next Steps for Boston Dance cohort.

Z" L, Rachel Linsky

Z" L is a dance film set to music by Mieczyslaw Weinberg, a Jewish composer from Poland who fled the Nazis and who used his music to evoke emotion. This film contains a narrative focused on evoking memory as well as movement language derived from a Yiddish/Contemporary dance fusion. Workshops with non-Jewish dancers as well as within the Jewish community focused on the idea of artistic legacy and honoring the memory of silenced voices.

- Hear more about Rachel and her work in an [interview](#) and through her series of Vlog posts ([1](#), [2a](#), [2b](#), [3](#), [4](#)).
- Watch [Z" L](#), which premiered at the Vilna Shul in 2023 with a reception with live Klezmer music and communal dancing.
- In Judaism, Z" L (pronounced "zal") is an abbreviation that we put after someone's name when they have passed to honor their impact and legacy.



"Through this fellowship I was able to go deeper into research [of Yiddish dance and culture and Klezmer music] than I've ever been able to do before. I discovered my own movement language - a fusion of my classical training and exploration of Yiddish/Jewish dance - as the process unlocked something in me and allowed me to find my unique and individual voice."

Ira Klein

Cambridge, MA



(Courtesy Photo)

www.irakleinmusic.com

“When ancient songs meet a modern interpretive approach, the creative possibilities are boundless. I hope to create discussion about what tradition means in our contemporary experience as we live with an awareness of that which has come before us.”

Ira Klein is an award-winning guitarist, composer, and producer from Jerusalem, Israel, currently based in Cambridge, MA. He aspires to create deeply rooted, fresh, and idiosyncratic contemporary music. Inspired by his fascination with Ladino and American roots music traditions, as well as his background in jazz and rock, Ira takes a melting-pot musical approach to create his sound. He has taught at Berklee College of Music, Longy Conservatory of Bard College, Somerville Public Library, Cambridge Music Consortium, and the Club Passim School of Music. With a Bachelor’s from Berklee College of Music, and Master’s from the Longy Conservatory of Bard College, Ira has performed widely, including local performances at The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Harvard University, Mass MOCA, Boston University, the Longfellow House Museum, and Bigelow Chapel (Mount Auburn Cemetery).

Expansion/Protection and The Hare Chase, *Ira Klein*

Expansion/Protection and *The Hare Chase* are original music compositions that emerged from the fellowship and focus on themes of peace and escape from persecution. *Expansion/Protection* uses sound and movement to reflect both the tension and beauty involved in seeking peace. *The Hare Chase* was inspired by an image from the Catalan Mahzor, a 14th century micrographic manuscript from Spain.

- Watch [Expansion/Protection](#) (featuring dancing by Rachel Linsky) and [The Hare Chase](#) (featuring the playing of Beth Bahia Cohen and dancing of Rachel Linsky).
- Hear more in an [interview](#) with the Jewish Arts Collaborative, read about Ira's fellowship journey on [JewishBoston](#), and learn more about the work on [Kulture](#).
- The compositions will premiere at the Yale Slifka Center for Jewish Life and Vilna Shul in November 2023.



“As part of my workshops, we looked at examples of traditional prayers as models and developed our own collective, modern poems about peace. Grounded in our shared humanity, peace invites us to work patiently, actively, and consciously to create a more compassionate society.”