

Mount Auburn Cemetery Artist-in-Residence 10th Anniversary Celebration



“Spring” by Simone Nemes

Presented by Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery

Saturday, April 5, 2025 at 6:30pm
Sunday, April 6, 2025 at 2:30pm

Support the Artist-in-Residence Program by Joining the Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery (FOMAC)



Mount Auburn is a garden cemetery, an arboretum, an outdoor museum, a National Historical Landmark, a 175-acre habitat for native and migratory wildlife, as well as a place of solace and inspiration for everyone who visits. By joining the Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery, you can help sustain the natural beauty and rich history of this special place.

The Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery is a non-profit organization that assists in the conservation of the Cemetery's natural beauty, increases public awareness of its historic and natural resources, supports educational programming, and the arts.

A FOMAC Membership guarantees you discounted tickets to public events, members-only access to special events, a subscription to *Sweet Auburn* magazine, and more. Visit www.mountauburn.org/membership to become a member today!

Mount Auburn Cemetery

Artist-in-Residence (AiR) Program History

by Julie-Anne Whitney, Public Events Producer

Mount Auburn has a long history of sharing art with the public. In the mid-19th Century, the Cemetery commissioned a vast array of public art (i.e. monuments, sculptures, buildings, etc.) so that visitors could experience the site as an outdoor museum.

Today, Mount Auburn continues its dual mission of being an active cemetery and cultural landscape by offering an array of public events throughout the year. For nearly 40 years, Mount Auburn has been hosting public events that promote an appreciation and preservation of the Cemetery as a cultural and natural resource. With programs that focus on the arts, death education, healing from grief, history, horticulture, nature, and wildlife the Cemetery has long been a place for the community to convene for learning, enjoyment, and solace.

In 2014, as a way of expanding our public event offerings, Mount Auburn became the first cemetery in the United States to establish an artist residency program. The AiR program offers grants to local artists who are encouraged to create site-specific work that is unique and authentic to Mount Auburn. In the past ten years, we have worked with nearly 30 artists across different disciplines including film, music, theater, dance, sculpture, photography, painting, poetry, and more.

The Artist-in-Residence program has enabled us to create avenues for deeper connection with our visitors through intentional programming that centers on the Cemetery's values and expands Mount Auburn's ever-growing community. Through their thoughtful and imaginative work, our artists have interpreted and portrayed the Cemetery in compelling and surprising ways. Their work has brought thousands of visitors to Mount Auburn and has expanded what the Cemetery can be.

Please join us in celebrating this exciting milestone and we hope that you will continue supporting the AiR program for many years to come!

Mount Auburn Cemetery

Artists-in-Residence

2014-2015

Roberto Mighty (filmmaker)

2016-2017

Mary Bichner (composer)

2018-2019

Patrick Gabridge (playwright)

2019-2020

Jesse Aron Green (visual artist)

2021-2022

Ben Denzer (designer)

Zhonge Li (painter)

Jennifer Lin (dancer/choreographer)

Todd Thibaud (musician/composer)

Ponnapa Prakkamakul (painter)

2021-2022

Thierry Borcy (photographer) & Madge Evers (visual artist)

Ira Klein (musician)

Simone Nemes (visual artist/illustrator)

Jill Slosberg-Ackerman (interdisciplinary artist/wood-carver)

Liz Walker (dancer/choreographer)

John M. Williams (visual artist)

Continued on next page

Mount Auburn Cemetery

Artists-in-Residence

2022-2023

Swati Biswas (dancer/choreographer)
Resa Blatman (visual artist)
Billy Hickey (photographer)
Carolyn Oliver (poet)
Eden Rayz (musician/composer)
Debra Wise & Eliza Fichter (storytellers)

2024-2025

Yufan Gao & Adam Molinski (multimedia artists)
Fatima Seck (poet/illustrator)
Lonnie Stanton (dancer/choreographer)
Markel Uriu (interdisciplinary artist)

2025-2026

Emily Duggan (poet/performer)
Juls Gabs (digital painter)
Cara Giaimo (nature writer) & Lilia Kilburn (filmmaker)
Lia Pikus (musician/composer)

Artist-in-Residence

10th Anniversary Celebration – Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following organizations and individuals for their past and/or continued support of the Artist-in-Residence program:

Cambridge Arts Local Cultural Council

Bob Jolly Charitable Trust

Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC)

Mass Humanities

National Trust for Historic Preservation

A.J. & M.D. Ruggiero Memorial Trust

Watertown Cultural Council

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Ms. Eliza S. Anderson & Mr. Michael Anderson

Ms. Patricia Jao

Mrs. Pamela Michaelis & Mr. Don Michaelis

Mrs. Jeanne Mooney & Mr. Joel Mooney

Ms. Caroline Mortimer

Artist-in-Residence 10th Anniversary Celebration – Program

Storytelling



ROBERTO MIGHTY (2014–2016)

earth.sky

earth.sky is a transmedia meditation on life, death, ritual, history, landscape, nature and culture. The full online exhibit includes 29 original film shorts and a fine art photography gallery.



PATRICK GABRIDGE (2018–2019)

Hot Love in the Moonlight – Featuring Mordecai Choi (Jeremy), Chantha Luk (Mac), and Kimberly Blaise MacCormack (Samantha)
Directed by Frances Hellums

Hot Love in the Moonlight is part of a collection of plays, The Nature Plays, that Patrick wrote during his Mount Auburn residency. It centers on the curious mating habits of spotted salamanders.



DEBRA WISE (2023–2024)

This Life & Death

In collaboration with her daughter and fellow former AiR, Eliza Fichter, *This Life & Death* highlights verbatim excerpts from interviews with visitors that ask “How do we talk with each other about death, and how have those conversations and reflections shaped our lives?”



CAROLYN OLIVER (2023–2024)

*At Winslow Homer’s Grave; Dear Friend [If we could meet beyond];
Dear Friend [This Morning, as goldfinches tussle]*

These three pieces were written and performed for *Dear Friend, Let’s Meet: a Roaming Poetry Reading* which included a series of epistolary poems on friendship and grief, as well as a series of Cemetery praise poems.

Artist-in-Residence 10th Anniversary Celebration – Program

Storytelling



FATIMA SECK (2024-2025)

My Name is Harriet; Summertime Ode to Fall; Springtime

My Name is Harriet is from a collection of poems written about Mount Auburn resident Harriet Jacobs, the first Black woman to write a first-person narrative about the experience of being enslaved. *Summertime Ode to Fall* was written for Summer SOLSTICE 2024. *Springtime* was written in honor of the AiR Anniversary Celebration!

Dance

*There will be a 10-minute intermission
before the start of the Dance program*



JENNIFER LIN (2021-2022)

The Gathering Place - Featuring Andy Taylor-Blenis, Joanie Block, Eleanor Duckworth, Paul Kafka-Gibbons, Karen Klein, Julie Leavitt, Jennifer Lin, and Vicky Steinitz

The Gathering Place abstractly represents, mourns, honors, and celebrates the spirits and lives of historic figures buried at Mount Auburn including Amy Lowell, Erna Rosenberg, Harriet Jacobs, Isabella Stewart Gardener, and Julia Ward Howe, among others.



LIZ WALKER (2022-2023)

Dance of Arrival

Dance of Arrival explores stories of motherhood and new life juxtaposed with other parenthood realities found and experienced in the Cemetery. The piece was performed during Liz's third trimester of her first pregnancy and will be performed again today during her second pregnancy.

Artist-in-Residence 10th Anniversary Celebration – Program

Dance



LONNIE STANTON (2024-2025)

Grief to Gratitude

Grief to Gratitude explores different aspects of grief that are intrinsically tied to the human experience. The roaming performance will be performed in full for the first time on May 31 & June 1, 2025 at Auburn Lake.

Music

*There will be a 10-minute intermission
before the start of the Music program*



TODD THIBAUD (2021-2022)

Sweet Auburn; Louisa May

Two songs connected to Mount Auburn's history and to our relationships with grief, hope, and place. *Sweet Auburn* comes from the poem, "The Deserted Village" by Oliver Goldsmith. *Louisa May* was inspired by Joseph Story who lost his daughter of the same name just five months before giving his beloved Mount Auburn Cemetery consecration address on September 24, 1831.



EDEN RAYZ (2023-2024)

Aboriginal Sensible Muchness

This piece was written for *Reborn: Musical Innovations with the Bigelow Chapel Organ Pipes*, a death-aware musical performance that celebrated the 100th Anniversary homecoming of the Bigelow Chapel pipe organ after it was decommissioned by Mount Auburn and reformed by Eden as a new multi-component instrument called *Argent & Sable*. The piece, along with Eden's other original composition *Lux Aeterna*, explores collective grief, reinvention, ritual, and the abstraction of time.

Artist-in-Residence 10th Anniversary Celebration – Program

Music



IRA KLEIN (2022-2023)

The Oak Cycle

The Oak Cycle is a series of songs inspired by the large oak tree collection at Mount Auburn. The series represents a lens through which the artist could express his wonder at the Cemetery's natural environment.



IRA KLEIN & LIZ WALKER

At the Seam of Life & Death

In July of 2023, for the first time in the AiR program history, two former Artists-in-Residence came together to create a collaborative work. *At the Seam of Life & Death* was inspired by the Cemetery as a place of transition and remembrance. The music focuses on the beauty of the natural world while the choreography explores our connection to the materiality of the earth.



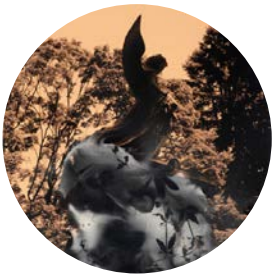
The Gathering Place, choreographed by Jennifer Lin

Artist-in-Residence 10th Anniversary Celebration

Gallery

We encourage audience members to explore the artworks during the two intermission breaks and/or after the show

The Artist-in-Residence gallery, located in the side-wing of Story Chapel, features selected residency works from the following visual and interdisciplinary artists:



THIERRY BORCY & MADGE EVERS (2022-2023)

Mount Auburn Sanctuary: a New Way of Seeing

A New Way of Seeing explores the transformation found in death, grief, and rebirth. The images were created through photography and mushroom spore print.



BILLY HICKEY (2023-2024)

An (Un)common Inheritance: the Beauty & Wonder of Mount Auburn's Ecosystem

An (Un)common Inheritance is a photographic story of the wildlife and horticultural environment at the Cemetery and the many staff and volunteers who protect and preserve it.



ZHONGHE (ELENA) LI (2021-2022)

The Art of Living Together

Through the ancient art of Chinese papercutting and modern multimedia art, *The Art of Living Together* depicts the Yin-Yang balance, biodiversity, and harmony between humans and nature.



SIMONE NEMES (2022-2023)

"Spring" & "Summer"

For her residency, Simone created four seasonal illustrations that featured urns and monuments adorned with native plants and animals. The works depict the balance of life and death as a core Cemetery value.

Artist-in-Residence 10th Anniversary Celebration

Gallery

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PONNAPA PRAKKAMAKUL (2021-2022)

Mount Auburn: Seasons of Change

Seasons of Change explores the concept of change through the landscape foliage and colors of the sky above/around Mount Auburn. The changing scenes are created through mixed media paintings and abstract pastel on paper.



JILL SLOSBURG-ACKERMAN (2022-2023)

Mourning Benches

Mourning Benches combines art and utility on a deeply personal level. Inspired by the desire to sit closer to her husband's grave, Jill created a series of "mourning benches" to be used by people visiting the graves of their loved ones.



MARKEL URIU (2024-2025)

Plucked From Earth to Bloom

Through the art of paper-weaving, this work is a portrait of Mount Auburn that explores the Cemetery's history and ecology through images of the physical landscape sourced from MAC's Historical Collections & Archives, satellite imagery, and photographs taken by the artist.



JOHN M. WILLIAMS (2022-2023)

"Spring" & "Summer"

Through the art of cut paper collage, John created four seasonal collages inspired by different parts of the Mount Auburn landscape.

Artist-in-Residence – Artist Bios

2014–2016

ROBERTO MIGHTY is an award-winning filmmaker, television producer/host, multimedia artist, and educator. He has been a writer, producer and director of thirty-nine TV episodes on PBS stations nationwide. Funders and Fellowships include The Mellon Foundation, National Science Foundation, Institute for Museum and Library Services, The National Trust for Historic Preservation, and Black Public Media, among others. www.robortomighty.com

2018–2019

PATRICK GABRIDGE is an award-winning writer of historical and contemporary stage plays, novels, audio plays, and screenplays. His short plays have been produced more 1,000 times in theaters and schools in 16 different countries around the world and appear in various anthologies. His company, Plays in Place, works in partnership with museums, historic sites, and other cultural institutions to develop and produce site-specific theatrical plays and presentations to help engage, entertain, and enlighten visitors in new ways.

2021–2022

ZHONGHE (ELENA) LI is a Cambridge-based multimedia artist specializing in traditional Chinese papercutting with scissors and watercolor painting. Through her art, she tells stories of biodiversity and interconnection, bringing people together in joyful, hands-on art-making experiences.

JENNIFER LIN is a dancer, choreographer, and teaching artist. She has also taught for 15 years at Boston Conservatory at Berklee in the Performance Technology division. Jennifer holds an MFA from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa.

PONNAPA PRAKKAMAKUL is a multidisciplinary artist and landscape architect. Her work explores the relationship between humans and their environment, focusing on cultural displacement and sense of belonging. Using found materials foraged from landscapes and stories collected from local communities, Ponnapa aims to create site-specific artwork that cultivates a strong sense of place. www.ponnapa.com

TODD THIBAUD is singer-songwriter. His songs are a slice of what life is really like– the pains and pleasures, love lost and life reborn. His music is meshed with elements of Americana, Folk, Country and Pop Rock. Todd has released two independent records, several studio recordings, and two albums. He tours throughout Europe regularly and performs regionally at home in the U.S. www.toddthibaud.com



Artist-in-Residence – Artist Bios

2022–2023

THIERRY BORCY is a photographer whose work lives at the intersection of nature, science, and emotion. His work has been exhibited throughout New England.

MADGE EVERS uses foraged materials to explore decomposition and regeneration. Through alternative photography, mushroom spores, and painting she depicts actual landscape details and imagined flora in her work. Her work has been published in *Antennae: the Journal of Nature in Visual Culture* and acquired by private and institutional collectors. www.madgeevers.com

IRA KLEIN is an award-winning guitarist and composer from Jerusalem, and based in Brooklyn, New York. Ira specializes in Middle-Eastern music, American folk, and cross-disciplinary collaborations with choreographers and visual artists. www.irakleinmusic.com

SIMONE NEMES is a multidisciplinary artist and freelance illustrator with an MFA from Rhode Island School of Design (RISD). Her illustrations are colorful, symbolic, and fantastical. She draws from her background in the sciences working with insects and her love of plants to create otherworldly artworks that are inspired by the natural world.

JILL SLOSBURG-ACKERMAN is a multidisciplinary artist who creates sculpture, drawings, and installations. Her work is intuitive and process-based, often about history, material culture, and relationships. She has had solo exhibitions throughout New England and is the recipient of numerous grants and awards. www.jillslosburg-ackerman.com

LIZ WALKER is a classically trained ballet dancer and choreographer. She was an inaugural member of Los Angeles Ballet and performed with the company for eight seasons, rising to the soloist rank and dancing a variety of roles in the classical, Balanchine, modern, and contemporary repertory. As a choreographer, Liz explores personal lived experience through movement, using dance as a vehicle for social commentary and change.

JOHN M. WILLIAMS specializes in creating landscape and portrait collages of historical figures. By “painting with paper,” John uses hundreds of small pieces of cut paper to create works that are compelling and multifaceted. As an autistic adult, John sees his work as a metaphor for his daily life. His work has been exhibited in New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Florida, and at numerous locations in New England. www.johnmwilliamsfineart.com



Artist-in-Residence – Artist Bios

2023–2024

BILLY HICKEY is a nature photographer. His passion is learning about nature and sharing its wonders through photography with the hope to educate and inspire. In his personal work, Billy makes stories about the intersections of the natural and human worlds. In 2020 he graduated from the International Center of Photography and his project “How We Were” won first place in Lensculture’s Black and White Photography Awards. Billy’s work has been featured in the Eastern Mass. Hawkwatch’s Newsletter, BuzzFeed News, and the New York Times. www.billyhickeyphoto.com

CAROLYN OLIVER is the author of *The Alcestis Machine* (Acre, 2024); *Inside the Storm I Want to Touch the Tremble* (University of Utah Press, 2022), winner of the Agha Shahid Ali Prize in Poetry; and three chapbooks, including, most recently, *Night Ocean* (Seven Kitchens Press, 2023), which was selected for the Rane Arroyo Series. Her poems appear or are forthcoming in *Poetry Daily*, *TriQuarterly*, *Ecotone*, *Copper Nickel*, *Image*, *Consequence*, and elsewhere. www.carolynoliver.net

EDEN RAYZ is a composer, multi-instrumentalist, and instrument designer. She serves as front person and cellist for death metal band Angel Grinder, and has recorded cello for artists including Moon Tooth, Third Eye Blind, Marrowfields, Cradle of Judah, and Wyclef Jean, and improvised on soundtracks like the 2023 Grammy-winning *Assassin’s Creed Valhalla: Dawn of Ragnarök*. Listen at edenrayz.bandcamp.com and read at substack.com/@edenrayz.

DEBRA WISE co-founded Underground Railway Theater, which toured its original repertoire nationally and abroad for 30 years before she cofounded Central Square Theater in Cambridge in 2007. She served as an Artistic Director there for 15 years, cofounding CST's science/theater partnership, Catalyst Collaborative@MIT. She is currently Interim Artistic Director for The Revels, and free-lances as an actor/director. (Creative partner Eliza Fichter, not available for the AiR Celebration event, is an educator and actor, currently appearing in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Actors' Shakespeare Project).



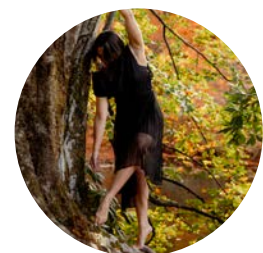
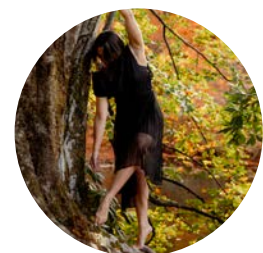
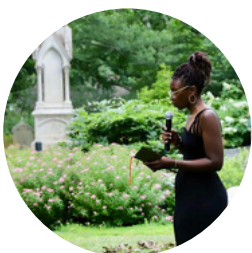
Artist-in-Residence – Artist Bios

2024–2025

FATIMA SECK is a teacher, poet, and community artist. Through public and community-centered projects, Fatima explores Black history, archival expansion, public space, land and materiality, and Black childhood. She is deeply grounded in pedagogy and social engagement, and has worked as an educator and teaching artist at several local public schools and institutions including the ICA Boston, where she currently facilitates their teen Photo Collective program. Her poem, “Carrots,” was selected for the 2023 Mayor’s Poetry Program and was displayed at Boston City Hall.

LONNIE ANELA O’KALANI is a proud native Hawaiian based in Boston. She is a dance artist and educator. She currently performs with Jean Appolon Expressions, Peter DiMuro, Lynn Modell, and Continuum Dance. Formerly, she worked as a performer and teacher for 10 years with Prometheus Dance. Lonnie is committed to providing dance education that is rooted in somatic exploration for all bodies. Her dance-making is often site specific or responsive, highlighting the resiliency of nature and humanity’s integral role as a part of the natural world. Lonnie is on faculty at the Boston Conservatory at Berklee and The Harvard Dance Center.

MARKEL URIU is an interdisciplinary artist from Seattle, WA, currently based in Boston while earning her master’s in landscape architecture from the Harvard Graduate School of Design. Her work explores impermanence, maintenance, and the unseen. Drawing from her Japanese and Irish-American heritage, she is particularly interested in liminal spaces, and explores these concepts through research, ephemeral botanical narratives, installations, and two-dimensional work. Her current work investigates the ways we view ourselves in relationship to other humans, species, and ecosystems and how it manifests in our landscapes. Markel is the recipient of various awards and residencies, including the Penny White Project Fund at Harvard Graduate School of Design (Cambridge, MA), the 4Culture Amazon Artist-in-Residence (Seattle, WA), and the 4Culture Artist Grant (Seattle, WA). www.markeluriu.com



Artist-in-Residence – Artist Bios

Meet our new 2025–2026 AiR cohort!

EMILY DUGGAN is a poet, performer, and storyteller. Inspired by her Playback Theater practice, she founded [StoryTailor Poems](#), for which she writes customized poems on the spot – and in only three minutes! She has appeared onstage with the Boston Poetry Slam, Uptown Poetry Slam (Chicago), ArtsEmerson, the Roslindale Square Theater, Deana’s Educational Theater, and the Perpetual Visitors Theatre Company. Her poems can be found in [Tinderbox Poetry Journal](#), [Writers Without Margins](#), and [Academic Psychiatry](#).

JULS GABS is a digital painter and media artist who redefines traditional painting by merging classical influences with contemporary digital methods. Her work has received notable awards and grants including the European Research of New Creative Spaces in new media and the Revelation Artist Prize Mayte Spinola, among others. Her work has been featured in numerous group exhibitions across the world and her solo exhibitions have been seen in Boston, Rome, London, and Madrid. She has held former artist residencies in Belgium, Germany, the U.K., and Japan. www.julsgabs.com

CARA GIAIMO (nature writer) & **LILIA KILBURN** (filmmaker) are a wife-and-wife artist team based in Somerville, MA. Their recent work has appeared in venues such as the ICA Boston First Fridays, the Harvard Film Archive, Fabrikzeitung Magazine, the South Street Seaport Museum, and the New York Times. Lilia is a fellow at the Film Study Center at Harvard, where she also teaches courses in anthropology and filmmaking. Cara is a science and nature journalist whose second book, *Atlas Obscura: Wild Life* (2024), is a thoughtful collection of cool species, ecosystem dynamics, and other wonders of the living world. She also writes music and plays guitar for the band [sidebody](#).

LIA PIKUS is a cellist, composer, and illustrator whose practice centers on art’s ability to cultivate experiences of presence and connection, both within community and in dialogue with the natural world. By drawing and reflecting on natural processes, Lia seeks to help audiences make emotional and sensory connections with their environments. As a Thomas J. Watson fellow (2023), she researched this connective power on a global scale, exploring the role of art in fostering community around the world. This research formed the foundation for her current explorations in live looping as a form of mediative ritual. It is also the central focus of her debut EP, *Ritual*, released in 2024. Lia was an Artist-in-Residence at Shenandoah National Park in 2024 and at Mothership NYC in 2023. She is currently pursuing a Masters in Religion, Ethics, and Politics at Harvard University. www.liapikus.com