

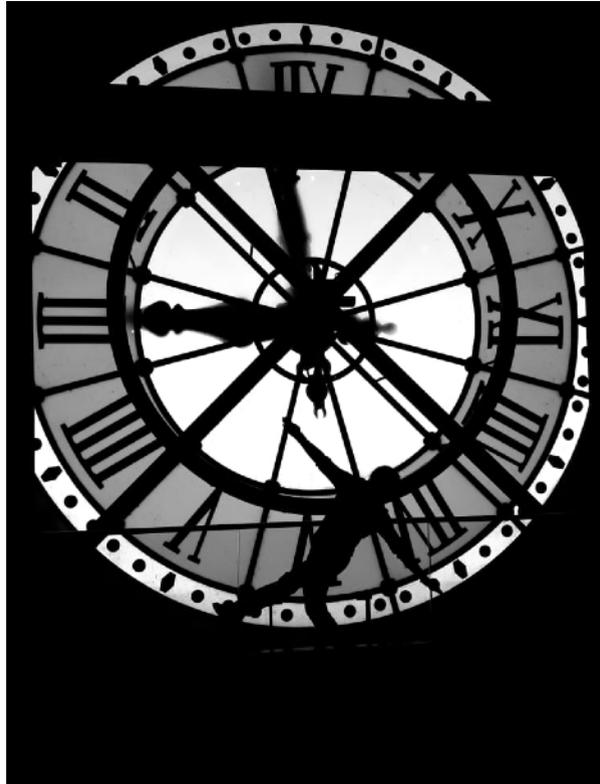


little review
2020

**To express the emotions of life is to live.
To express the life of emotions is to make art.**

JANE HEAP
EDITOR OF THE LITTLE REVIEW,
1914-1929

little review



VOL. 1 - 2020

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IMAGES

Front Cover: Tsolak MLKE-Galstyan, 'Conversation of Bodies'

Title page: Tsolak MLKE-Galstyan, 'Musée D'Orsay', photo by Fiona Leonard

Contents: Mayumi Lashbrook, 'Croissants of Instagram'

Page iv: Mayumi Lashbrook and Kunji Mark Ikeda, 'Matisse', photo by Eric Lawrence Taylor

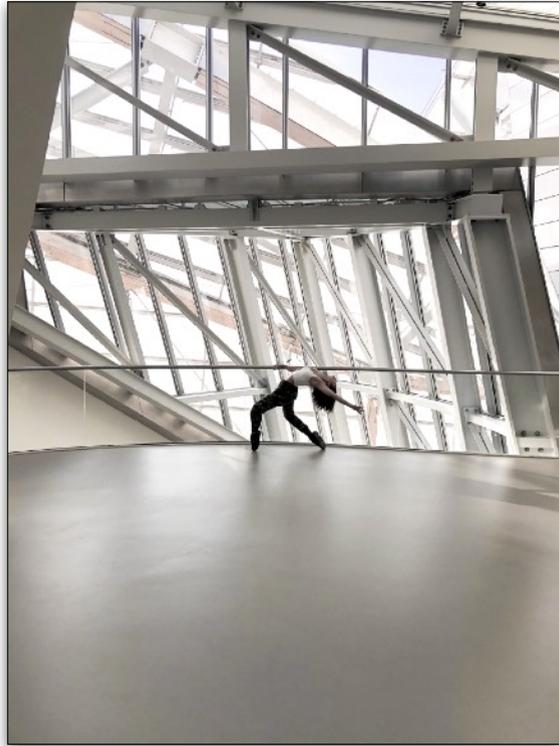
Page 29: Mayumi Lashbrook, 'Musée D'Orsay', photo by Shireen Ikramullah

Back Cover: Tsolak MLKE-Galstyan, 'Conversation in Me'

contents

- i. Introduction — *by Kelly Burke*
1. an active part — *by Kunji Mark Ikeda*
3. Reflections of Inspiration — *by Tsolak MLKE-Galstyan*
5. My Year as a Fairy Tale — *by Helen Hopcroft*
8. Black Lines on Grey in the Mirror —
by Tsolak MLKE-Galstyan
9. Reform School — *by Debra Spark*
11. Black Lines on Grey — *by Tsolak MLKE-Galstyan*
12. Untitled — *by Shireen Ikramullah*
13. meditation on a dropped glove — *by Kelly Burke*
14. Floating Window — *by Shireen Ikramullah*
15. Blinding Glare — *by Eric Lawrence Taylor*
19. Heart Haven — *by Shireen Ikramullah*
20. Inverted Heart Haven — *by Shireen Ikramullah*
21. Running — *by Karina Muñiz-Pagán*
25. Of Ink — *by Mayumi Lashbrook*
27. Love, Sex, and Zombies — *by Fiona Leonard*
31. Bios





MAYUMI LASHBROOK, FOUNDATION LOUIS VUITTON
PHOTO BY ERIC LAWRENCE TAYLOR

The Little Review— an introduction

In January, 2020 — during widespread strikes which brought the city’s public transportation to a standstill — eleven international artists met in Paris under the auspices of L’AiR Arts for a multi-disciplinary residency entitled *Revisiting the Roaring Twenties 1920/2020: Art, Culture and the École de Paris*.

The purpose of the residency was to seek ideas, models, and inspiration for our own creative practices in the ‘intercultural artistic exchange’ of 1920s Paris. For three weeks we - and a group of international cultural professionals - lived together in Montparnasse, attending workshops with Paris-based artists and chasing the ghosts of the 1920s artistic community through galleries, cafés, *ateliers* — and salons.

The salon was an institution which took on increasing importance for us as the weeks went on. We gathered in the evenings — around inevitable cheeses and bottles of wine — investigating each other’s work, sharing practical skills, and devising games to unearth a kind of creative intimacy and symbiosis many of us had not experienced before.

A favourite of these games involved story telling. One of us would begin an autobiographical story and, just before the climax, would cede the floor to another member of the group to begin an autobiographical story of their own, inspired by some detail of what they’d just heard. The result was a dove-tailed narrative that was both shared and individual — disparate, with a kind of underlying cohesion.

*

Disparate with underlying cohesion might have been a good description of Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap’s *Little Review*, which was published between 1914-1929 and was arguably one of the most important ‘little magazines’ of the 1920s. The *Little Review* moved its headquarters from New York to Paris in 1923, where it brought together some of the most daring and eclectic work of the Modernists.¹

Ezra Pound criticised Anderson for not imposing an organising aesthetic or artistic treatise on the magazine — but he mistook her aim. Unlike other publications at the time, what Anderson sought from the *Little Review* was “inspired conversation... the best conversation the world has to offer.”²

As such, the *Little Review* would ultimately become a touchstone for the expatriate artistic community in 1920s Paris: a place where they could test new forms, read each others’ work, and analyse it at length via letters to the editors.

The richness of this ‘conversation’ had the *Little Review* flying from the shelves of Sylvia Beach’s iconic bookstore, Shakespeare and Company.

*

If you were to jump forward exactly one hundred years, you would have found the eleven of us tucked into the upstairs room at Shakespeare and Company, contemplating disruption and Modernism, pens scratching under the cynical eye of the bookstore cat.

You will find some of those scratchings in the following pages. Although the residency had been intended to be experiential rather than output-oriented, many of us started developing our own work, diverging unexpectedly from our habitual practices, and nurturing the seeds of unanticipated collaborations.

We were an eclectic family, united by a devotion to practice, by curiosity, by the unexpected rhythm of walking everywhere in a city designed for transport — by Paris itself. We were dancers, novelists, ceramicists, visual artists, poets, directors, performance artists, artistic directors, playwrights. We had come from Australia, South Korea, Armenia, Canada, the US, the UK, Germany, the Netherlands — to which places we have since returned, and where we are all now waiting out an indeterminate period of isolation and restriction imposed by global pandemic. Deprived of physical connection, the idea of conversation seems more important than ever.

What follows is a collection of work from L’AiR Arts’ multidisciplinary residents — the continuation of a conversation begun in a grey Paris January, and which has already wound itself into idioms, artistic collaborations, and friendships. We’ve called it the *Little Review*, in homage to its predecessor, and hope this will be the first conversation of many.

And if this *Little Review* provides no answers in this strange moment, perhaps it can offer some comfort, some incitement to curiosity, some distraction, some sense of long-distance community. Perhaps you can slip into the salon with us, into our circle of mis-matched chairs... It’s getting on towards midnight. The wine is mostly drunk. There is a moment of reluctant stillness, one of those transitions which could so easily mark the end of the evening. Then someone turns to you and says:

“Tell us a story. But only tell us the beginning...”

Kelly Burke
London, April 2020

¹ Anderson and Heap were tried for - and convicted of - obscenity in the US when the magazine serialised James Joyce’s *Ulysses*.

² As quoted in Shari Benstock’s *Women of the Left Bank: Paris, 1900-1940*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988

little review



an active part—
by Kunji Mark Ikeda

this is an invitation to join this work
actively
to read along and fill in the

because i'm not sure where you are
or even who you are
while i am sitting in the cold sun
on my back deck with snow on the ground
and you are in your
with around you
i have not the skill - or interest -
to re-write your world
so i ask to join it
to be welcomed into a part of your thoughts
admitted temporarily alongside your
so we can together

because the information you have is hidden to me
if only we could sit together
recognize the of one another
breathe in and out
breathe ... and

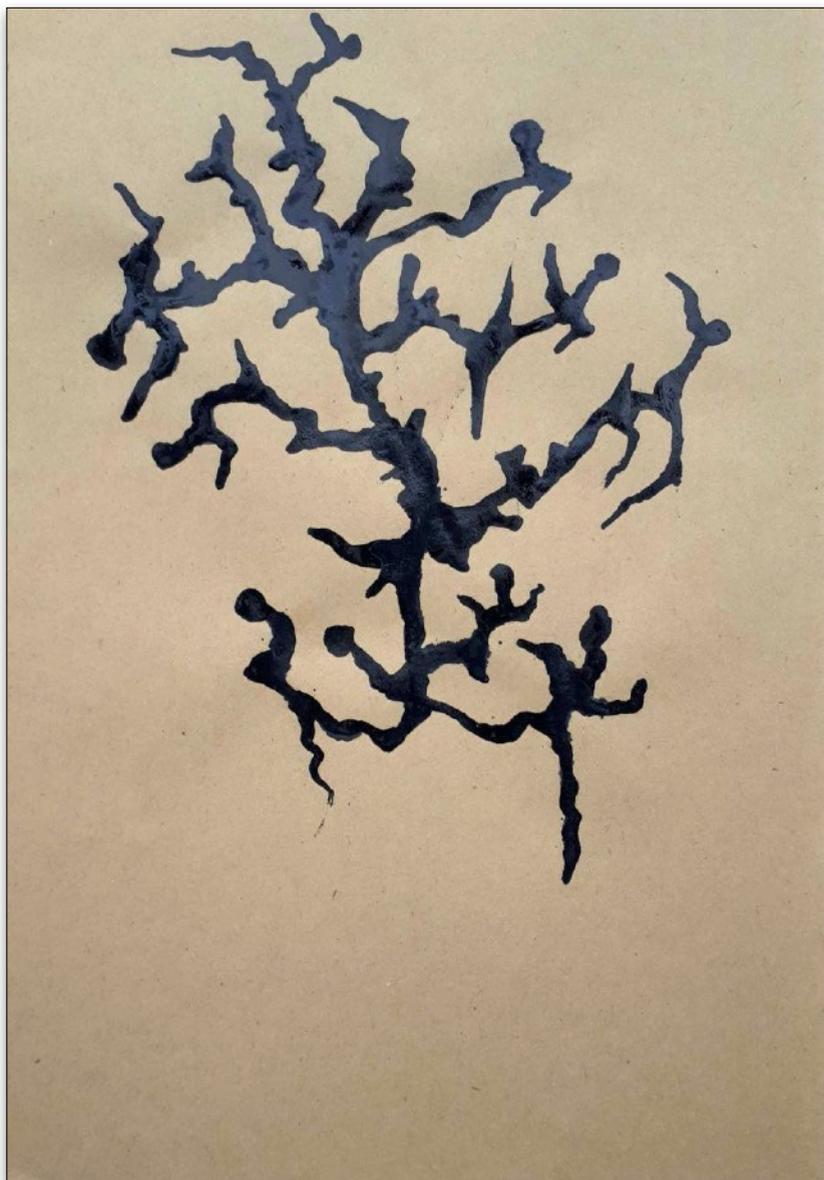
without your creativity i can't finish this work
... ..to make it work
i need you to
will you help me?
to acknowledge that your body feels

your mind has been
filled with
because the weight of your experience is more
than I can imagine
you can be
i can imagine you and i as we
and remember the
where and how could our lives intersect
in order to one another
i need to of your
..... to feel that we
..... in a world
that can
..... a thankful lack of information

it's difficult to assume so much, to relinquish
the control of the work
some words don't gain
weight and pass by us like the oppressive wind
of
but i trust that together we
..... and
i hope the words are not lost on either of us

because i can't do this without you

Reflections of Inspiration—
by Tsolak MLKE-Galstyan



‘CONVERSATION ON EACH OTHER’



‘CONVERSATION OF FACES’

All these graphic works were inspired from the conversations and discussions of the participants of the residency. Each time, a conversation had its own mood and its own shape. Each of the graphic works represents a particular conversation, which is, in a way, the translation of a topic and the mood of the conversation.

-Tsolak MLKE-Galystan



‘CONVERSATION IN HAIR’

Excerpt from

**My Year as a Fairy Tale—
by Helen Hopcroft**

The First Day, 1st May, 2017

My year as a fairy tale began today. In my imagination, it was supposed to begin in a leisurely fashion. I would roll out of bed and then gradually assume the costume of late eighteenth century France - the chemise, stays, petticoats, paniers, dress, wig and stockings. I pictured the delicious smell of white-powdered flesh, sweet perfume, the slippery glide of raw silk falling over naked flesh, the intricate ribbony tug of a corset being laced tightly against my breasts. Layers of fine petticoat, light as tissue paper, lace like feathery clouds at dawn. Later, a hairdresser would pile my hair on top of my head, pin it into place in an elaborate pouf, powder the whole thing so that I emerged from it dusty as an almond croissant swathed with sugar. Perhaps someone would bring me hot chocolate in a white china bowl?

It has just gone midnight and there are no servants, no fine suit of clothing, no warm bowl of chocolate. Instead, I am surrounded by wet paintings in a cold house. The paint refuses to dry in the still air, while the evening chill keeps every surface damp. I look around me. Large chunks of plaster are missing from the wall of my dining room, where my ex-husband and I tried, unsuccessfully, to carry a large wardrobe up the stairs. Blue paint is peeling off the fireplace wall, where no fire burns. The house stinks of dog, cat piss, dead skin. Mismatched furniture brought from garage sales, a striped curtain that nobody wanted, a lamp that only works if you jiggle the cord. Objects that were always supposed to be temporary - that would be replaced when things got better - but which have now become permanent guests. My belongings are sticky with the inevitable layer of dust, courtesy of the local coalmines. Every surface is crowded with projects started but not finished, neat piles of unpaid bills,

paperwork I keep meaning to do something about, books I think I should read. On the table in front of me, art materials are strewn in an untidy heap. I've mixed paint in old yoghurt containers, Sophie's lunch box, takeaway food containers, whatever I could find.

I've always thought of artists as heroic people, battling for higher truths amidst an indifferent world, champions of courage and beauty. Yet tonight, when I look around, all I see is the detritus of compromise. I look at my paintings, spread out on the table in front of me, and each image seems a fraud. In the dead of night, in the middle of the year, in the middle of my life, an unpleasant truth hoists a muscular haunch and craps on my dream. I'm uncomfortably aware that nothing I'm doing in this room matters. My life's work has been a waste of time. Nobody cares that I'm awake after midnight, putting the finishing touches on some paintings for an exhibition in Tasmania. And they're bad paintings, I see that now. Their sporadic focus and rushed execution have robbed them of the precious intensity that they need to shine. They glisten in the harsh light, magic spells that didn't work.

A new emotion hits me then, the kind of desperation that only middle-aged people know. The truth is coldest at the nadir of the night. Like many female artists, I've spent years trying to balance work with art and family. I have taken time away from painting to make money, and time away from my daughter to make art, and somehow in the mad scramble for survival the whole thing has been bled dry of passion, of integrity. In the relentless circle of the seasons, in the fast whirl of twenty years, I have lost my way. Not only have I become a half-artist, but I am a half-mother with two ex-husbands and a crippled career.

I need to leave soon, or I will miss my plane. I'm going south, back to my hometown, the place where it all began. To start afresh; to be reborn. The strangeness of this thing, so odd that it needs to happen in Hobart, a small city on an island on the bottom of the world. The place where I grew up, where I became an artist, which set the bones of the person I would eventually become. My beloved island home: an empty cage that still waits, after all these years. The past calls, ricocheting off these faded

walls. Already some other self is taking over, propelling me forward, pushing me to take one final stumbling step into an abyss. I am tired and cold, yes, but the rigid feeling in my limbs is fear.

I open the front door, stumble out into the freezing dark, pop the boot of my hatchback, load the paintings as carefully as I am able. I lug our suitcase into the backseat — there's only one to save on baggage allowance — and gently place a roll of drawing paper on top of it all. Walking upstairs, my body feels heavy, slow. The stairs stretch upwards like a dream. I wake Sophie, my ten-year-old daughter; she stretches, looks around blearily, then is instantly awake. I tell her we're going to the airport, that she needs to get up. "Can we stop at McDonalds?" she asks, scrambling out of bed. She pulls on tracksuit pants that are slightly too short, a fleecy sweater, her favourite stained t-shirt. She clatters downstairs, chattering, grabs a stuffed tiger, gets in the car, still talking. I reverse the car out of the driveway, edge down our narrow street, past rows of desperate houses and sad gardens. Nothing stirs, even the dogs on the corner forget to bark.

Soon we are on the freeway, the lonely flick of overhead bridges rushing past, headlights like searchlights looking for escaped prisoners, the impatient blink of red indicator lights. Signs pointing to other destinations loom up out of the darkness, are quickly left behind. We stop at a service station, buy takeaway breakfast. The smell of cheap fryer fat and low-grade carbs fills the car. Sophie scrabbles amidst the layers of plastic packaging, digs out a rubbery piece of pancake, drenches it with palm oil syrup. I'm too tired to care. The syrup spurts out of its container, covering her food. "It's too sweet," she complains, abandoning the pancake to its small brown lake. She puts it down on the floor, where it sits in a nest of used tissues and take-away cutlery. I roll down my window, sucking in cold air to stay awake, then crunch into a hash brown; it slides out of its snug bag, paper transparent with grease. The bag is tiny, just large enough for the oily brown square. Freeway lights dance past, red and white and orange, the sudden flicker of a vast green sign, white letters burning like a vision in the dark sky. I drive on.



BLACK LINES ON GREY IN THE MIRROR
TSOLAK MLKE-GALSTYAN, HELEN HOPCROFT, FIONA LEONARD

Excerpt from

Reform School— by Debra Spark

Spanish was first period, so Reggie was dozing in one of the mobile classrooms when a tall middle-aged man, dark haired with a round, sweaty face, shook him roughly awake. “OK, buddy. OK, come on.”

“What?” Reggie said, instinctively shrugging the stranger’s hand off his shoulders, a “get off of me” springing to his lips, though he didn’t speak it.

“You’re coming with us,” the man said.

“What?” Reggie repeated. The man jerked his head toward the door, as if Reggie were confused about the avenue of egress rather than the reason for it. “Who are you?” The classroom, so ordinarily stifling, was suddenly electric. *Something was happening.*

“That’s for me to know, and you to find out,” the man said, schoolyard-style. Was he for real?

Improbably, he was wearing a long duster coat, even though it was early June, already so hot the city’s newspapers were full of angry letters saying the school year should be shortened, kids couldn’t concentrate in the un-air-conditioned classrooms. Next to the stranger stood a short, beefy guy, wearing a white T-shirt, jeans, and a Red Sox cap, which was confusing in a different way. Bridgeport wasn’t a city where people wore baseball caps, and if they did, it was for the Yankees.

“Ay caramba. What’s going on?” said the Olive-Oyl-shaped Ms. Funes, hand to cheek, at the front of the classroom, behind her the magazine pictures from Spanish-speaking lands that she’d taped around the blackboard. She always talked in rapid, overexcited Spanish, and no one could tell if this was a Ricky Ricardo imitation, the way she really talked, or something she put on to get the class motivated. It didn’t tend to work, whatever it was, but now Reggie’s classmates were livening at the possibility of drama. Nothing really good had happened all year.

“He’s coming with us to the principal,” the bigger man announced to the room, an orderly grid of students trapped in chairs attached to pastel

island writing surfaces. He handed Reggie a soft-edged hall pass, confirming the official nature of the errand. Hall passes only came from one office.

Reggie had not, to his knowledge, done something wrong. Not recently anyway. “What for?” he asked.

“There’ll be time for all that,” the man said.

“Nice coat,” a kid called from the back of the room. The garment looked like something a pimp might wear, and Reggie assumed the kid — it was Noah Tremont, that bonehead — had the same thought and was offering the insult disguised as a compliment.

“All right, whatever. I’m coming,” Reggie said. He stood and swung his backpack over one shoulder and then offered a broad shrug to convey to his classmates that this was a mystery to him too. At least he wasn’t going out in handcuffs, never to reappear again, as one kid had in English last year. He followed the men out of the classroom and down the hall, walls painted in what Reggie always thought of as a thick Milk of Magnesia white to cover (and then re-cover) the swears routinely penned there. He was really tired. He was always tired, so he wasn’t even thinking, “What’s going on?” more like “OK, man, whatever you want.”

Later, of course, much later, he’d wonder why he didn’t think to start asking questions right away. Why didn’t he think to resist? Had he been able to avoid the situation he was about to step into, his life might have gone in an entirely different direction. *Could* he have stopped things? Who might have helped him, if he had realized that, at that very moment, he was in profound need of help?

**Black lines on Grey—
by Tsolak MLKE-Galstyan**

*Contemporary dance action-painting piece
First performed at La Coupole, 26 January, 2020*

This a journey to yourself when you are opening the dark side of your soul which is unexpected for you. The first step is starting from the idea that you are an absolutely clean spirit, but when you are going to deep discussion with yourself you are finding your dark colours.



Choreography was based on the research which had been done from 10th to 25th January, Paris, France. Original Music: Tiezerk Band. Dedication to my father, Hrachya Galstyan, and to my aunt, Heriqnaz Galstyan.

Untitled—
by Shireen Ikramullah

Mixed Media on Hand-Made Paper

January 2020

24.5cm x 24cm



meditation on a dropped glove—
by Kelly Burke

The furniture in its drunken 5 a.m. shapes. You said you would wait for me here but you are not here, not here and may never have been here except that on the floor, here, like snakeskin, writhing in the dirty dawn—

And only one. I don't see where the second has fallen and for a moment I panic, sensing myself incomplete, wondering where you may have gone without me and — where is the other one? What do you want with me, leaving me one glove to look at lust over live with light myself aflame with the whisper of your perfume in its slightly worn fingertips, those unspooling herringbone sutures which I have kissed carefully (and which he has kissed carefully but which I have removed more than once with my teeth) — I feel you in the smooth satin (oh cliché!) in the liquid sky rolling up — no, now for God's sake stop. Perhaps it's under the bed.

There that would teach me, hunting desperately for a mate, as though one glove signified as though one signified as though one — where is the other one? I don't have things, I don't keep things, can't you understand that therefore your things are sacred to me one it's wrong for you to go off and leave one leave me one leave without your other one wrong for you to wonder (wrong) whether I might one wonder what you have done with where you have gone off with who you have run up their body carefully with bound between teeth with kept from screaming with wondered if I could ever have been so free with wondered how I would find wondered what I would find wondered what would one

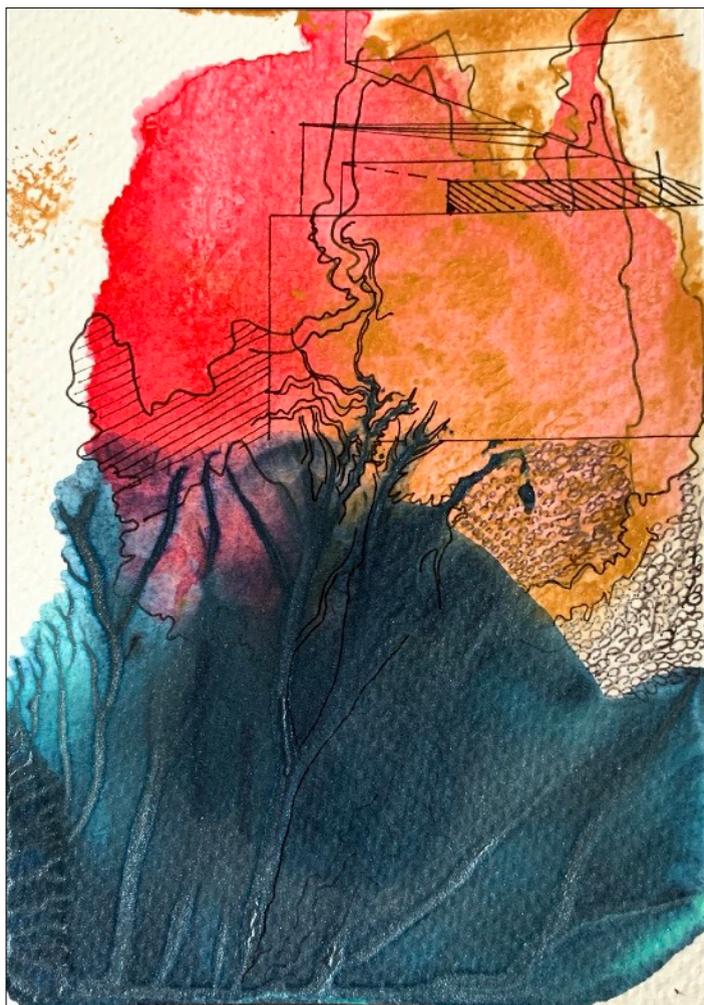
In one of our workshops at L'AiR, we were given random objects and asked to free-write on them. At the time, I was writing a play about writer and salon hostess, Natalie Barney, and had just been reading her account of losing two of her (female) lovers to each other. Though the above wasn't deliberately tied to Barney, certainly my imagination had been saturated by Belle Epoque bedrooms — and when I was handed a slightly-worn, sea-blue evening glove, this was the result.

**Floating Window—
by Shireen Ikramullah**

Medium-Ink and Pen on Watercolour Paper

March-April 2020

15cm x 10.5cm



Excerpt from

Blinding Glare— by Eric Lawrence Taylor

And with that he was doomed. Cecil, and his sax, were condemned to scream into the abyss, the blinding glare of an applauding white audience. He exited the stage with a wave of the hand and made it out back to his rental car. Cecil locked his laughing sorrow into his case which he placed into the trunk, walking back after exhaling a spent cigarette. By the time he had swallowed two Bloody Marys, he regained his ability to speak and even laugh. Unfortunately, this meant the many fans in the four corners of this hotel saw their first opening.

“Cecil! Cecil,” they would say, as if they were long friends.

“Great show Cecil!”

“Wow-just-wow. I see what you're doing there!”

“Thank you - just thank you.” The last one gave him a hug.

“Cecil!” They all thought they were friends. Not without reason. After all, they knew everything from the interviews. They knew how his mother died. What he wore to prom, and who he took. What she was doing now. Even he didn't know that.

“Funny about Van right?”

“What?” said Cecil.

“Van - uh...” The fan was trying not to say ‘your ex’. “Your old - uh - well she's gonna be playing here in the next few days,” the fan said.

Van. Her face was rising from the depths, coming into Cecil's mind. He decided he would stay, to see an old friend. And so; two days, four-hundred and eighty euros, eight Bloody Marys, two packs of cigarettes, and six and ½ fans later (the last mistook him for an actor), he saw a manicured hand strum a guitar. The room did not quiet. It was alive with the clatter of food being brought to tables. Then her voice touched the mic, and 40 minutes later Cecil could breathe again. The room became hot again with that same, white, glaring, applause.

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He flew everywhere now. Back and forth to cities he had been to but never lived. Walking down familiar but not homely streets. Talking to no one. Traveling had its perks. He was out of the States. He had his window seat, where he could watch the red sun sink into the earth. As a young man he envied those who squandered it. Now he could afford to stretch his legs, order a drink and food while watching the blue swell deeper into black. When the plane landed he prepared for his second favorite leg of the trip. Cecil put the key in the door, closed his eyes and felt it. The lavender scent of a fresh hotel room. Arranged on the bed were five fan letters and a card balanced on a sweating glass of a Bloody Mary.

“For Cecil. Because he we know you like them.”

He left them on the bed and inhaled two cigarettes on the terrace. Connor, his manager, had written the note. Connor was white, a people pleaser. He had inherited his father's smile and his handshake. Both things that, though it made him successful, had also made Cecil distrust him.

*

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“Is that your manager?” Van said pointing her pinky finger at the sharp faced man.

“I know! I know!” Connor said to the crowd of ‘industry types’ around him. “He’s great, right? God, I tell ya, I really don’t like those studio albums. Ya gotta watch him play. Watching Cecil play ya know... it... it almost makes you understand - uh - his experience.” He was going to say ‘the Black Experience’. However, a few recent BuzzFeed articles had dissuaded him.

“10 ways to stop microaggressions at your workplace.” Cecil was Connor’s workplace. He clicked. “7. Remember that the ‘Black Experience’ is not a monolith. Black experiences are all individual though they happen to happen under the umbrella of a racist system. One might say that the ‘White Experience’ happens under this same cloth.”

“Yes, that’s Connor,” Cecil said.

“For someone who hates White people you sure know how to keep ‘em around,” Van said.

“I don’t hate them — I don’t hate anyone. I just don’t trust them.”

“Oh that’s why you let them handle your money.”

“That’s different.”

This made Van’s brow twitch. Then she smiled.

“Black men love to be in this old story.” She leaned in. “And you are an oooooold Black man singing that old story.”

“Old?!” said Cecil’s face.

“Yup, old. Why do you think you’re so successful? They got you on your European tour doing your victory lap. Soon they’re gonna be remastering your albums if you’re lucky.”

“And if I’m not.”

“Why does your mind always go there? Relax, I’m just playin’. Crack a joke or something! You could be in a coal mine somewhere.”

“People still do that?”

“Yeah... White people. Let that one marinate for a bit.” She laughed, and took a sip of her wine. “I don’t like talking about politics anymore, Cecil, I don’t. Americans, we talk and talk and talk all the time, because we don’t know how to tell someone where it really hurts.”

A moment passed and Cecil steadied himself. “So - uh, are you seeing anyone?” Van’s eyes fluttered as she suppressed a smile.

“Nigga what?”

“Are-you-seeing-anyone?”

“Yes.”

“Oh.”

Van rolled her eyes and finished her drink. “Listen, you of all be happy for me. Dating is rough when you’re—”

“Old?”

“No, when you have a resume. I mean we spend our entire lives getting emotionally in touch with ourselves. They can’t compete. On top of that, I’ve given so many speeches about knowing your worth, I can’t just show up somewhere with a dumb nigga.”

“So he’s a corny nigga.”

“Nigga you’re corny! He’s an architect. Working out in Dubai. I mean this was a trip. Me, a guitarist looking at an architect like, ‘damn how you make that work?’”

Cecil didn’t reply.

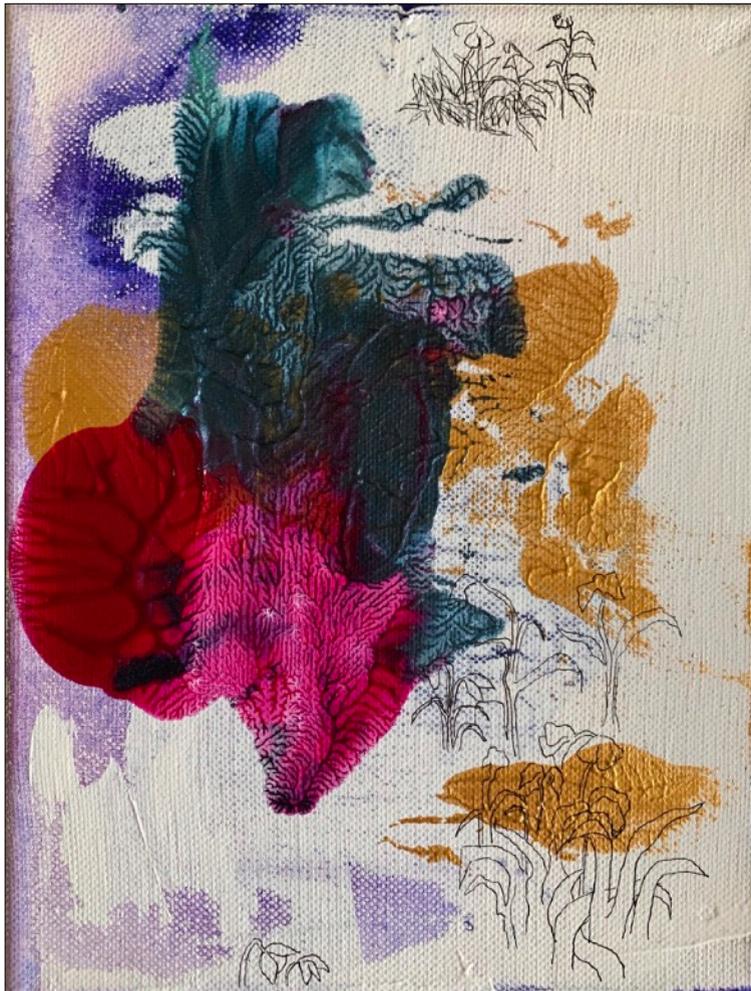
“Anyway, I thought it was pretty cool because you never really hear about Black people making buildings. Besides the pyramids and America that’s it.”

**Heart Haven—
by Shireen Ikramullah**

Medium—Ink, Acrylic and Pen on Canvas

March–April 2020

23.3cm x 17.8cm

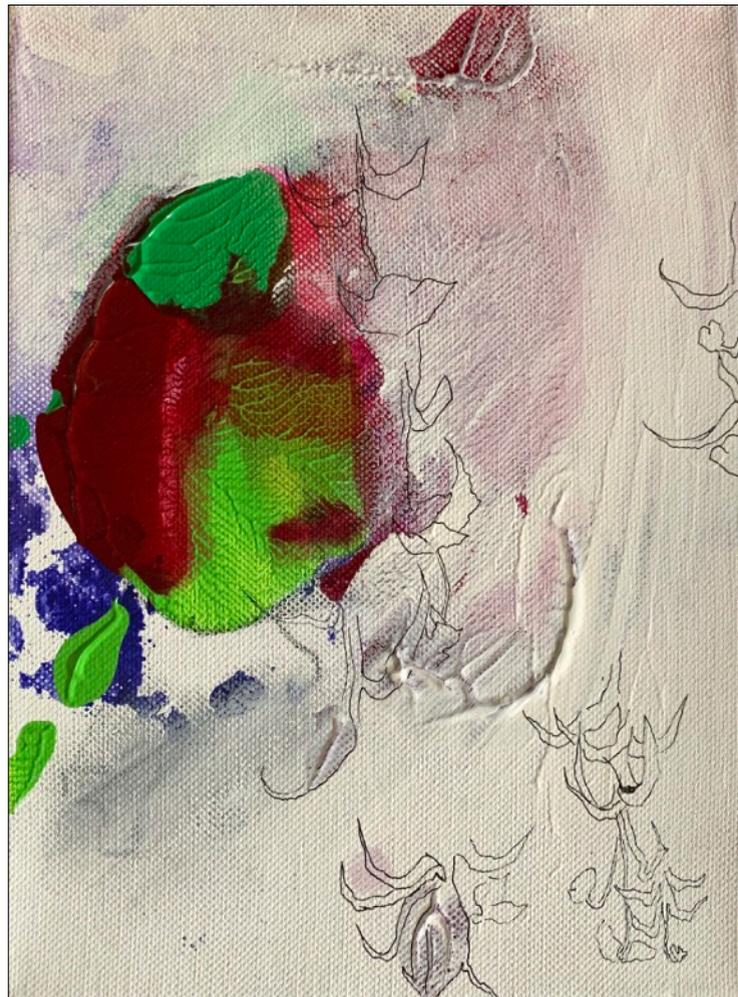


**Inverted Heart Haven—
by Shireen Ikramullah**

Medium-Ink, Acrylic and Pen on Canvas

March-April 2020

23.3cm x 17.8cm



Excerpt from

Running—

by Karina Muñiz-Pagán

This monologue was read at ParisLitUp in January, 2020, and comes from a play called Our Undocumented Lives directed by Maestra Cherríe Moraga, a Xicana/Mexicana playwright and director.

The play was produced at Brava Theater in San Francisco in 2013. We were using storytelling and theater to center the voices of undocumented artists and migrants. For those of us who participated with citizenship privilege, we shared stories of our personal connection to the undocumented movement, and what parts of ourselves we had kept hidden and in the shadows until we no longer could.

I return often to U.S./Mexico borderland stories, contested spaces of steel, river and desert terrain.

One story is of my father. He is seven years old, playing stick ball with his friends on a dirt road in Val Verde, in El Paso, Tejas. I can hear the crack of the bat and see them as children, barely one meter tall, in their older brothers' hand me down shorts.

I can hear them yell, "Pégale!" and then the crack of the bat as it slams against the baseball. They hold their breath as their heads lean back and their eyes follow the ball. It is soaring towards green trucks, battlefield vehicles charging down the road, leaving dust in their wake like mini-tornadoes. And then the chamaquitos shout, "Correle ya viene la migra," and they run, away from the immigration agents, scattering back to their homes. They run past the evaporating traces of disappeared neighbors, family and friends.

At that time, ten years had barely passed since the massive deportations of thousands of Mexicans blamed for the U.S. Great Depression.

There's a rhythm to what my father chooses to remember. He sips his Juaquin Daniel, as he likes to call it, chasing it with his Corona. He pauses, and swishes the beer around in his throat, feeling medicated by the whiskey.

When he reveals this excavated moment as a little boy, he says to me, “You know, mi’ja. I finally asked myself. We were all born here in the U.S. Why did we still have to run from la migra? But we did.”

It’s the year 2000, and I’m running too. I’m mixed-heritage from San Francisco, living in an evaporating city, with stories of the Mexican Revolution and Ellis Island crossings in my blood — and I am running.

My great-grandmother arrived here solita from Sweden, before social democracy lifted everyone up, when there were hungry mouths to be fed back in the Old Country. At the time, Swedish domestic workers were in high demand in San Francisco. For years she shined the silver, cooked the meatballs and dill potatoes, and wiped the hand painted plates dry for her employer up on Russian Hill, while she sent money home to those left behind. My mother treasures her Scandinavian heritage and shows it with her Välkommen mat at the front door and the Dala horses painted with red and blue stencil that adorn her home.

It often feels worlds away from the bright-colored walls, the tapetes, velas and altares that adorn mine. I have heard her say, on more than one occasion, “You’re more Mexican than your father.” It’s meant to chastise me for leaving her.

It’s taken years to find my home, to push away the guilt of not being able to follow in her footsteps and to come full circle in my love for her and for myself. But you see, age, near fatal accidents, cancer, all build bridges across such chasms. Saline now occupies a space that was once flesh — the part of her body that grew up too fast, that trumped her brilliance in the eyes of men.

Yet there was another side of me too that my mother, did not (could not) know.

Stealing kisses with women in dimly lit corners at clubs on the weekends. Seeing, sensing, her hips move with mine. Reggaetón beats in sync with our rhythm. I can feel the warmth of her breath on my neck, the beads of sweat under her hair as I caress the back of her head. Something calls me here to these places. Still I run...

I run into the arms of what will make me Mexican enough. When I met Aarón, he was my DFeño sueño, my mythical Mexico City. He was the danzantes in front of Templo Mayor en el Zocalo, Diego Rivera's murals, Frida Kahlo's bright Blue House, and the pulque drunk inside Xochimilco's trajineras. La mera mera ciudad — Chilangolandia — intact on a pedestal.

It was a fair exchange — we both had our agendas. For him, I was 'Americana' enough and the prospect of marriage wasn't too far out of reach. We had been dating for nine months and were already tired of landlords refusing to rent to us, of not being able to travel far, when a new immigration law turned the prospect of seeing the world together into a reality. Say yes now, or if not, the law was clear, he'd have to go back to Mexico for ten years, wait a decade, and then petition.

So I said yes... to a possibility. A yes that squashed the warning signs, "This isn't you."

We married anyway, and had our one-way tickets around the world in our hands. But my "Queer card" — that ID nobody even asked if I had — was hidden deep inside the cabinet of my heart, tucked away like a file labeled "To Do".

It was on that same trip that I met her — in Selçuk, Turkey. She was the wife of the local circumciser. In accordance with Muslim tradition, her husband cut and snipped every boy in the village. That night we had agreed to make Mexican food for our new-found Turkish friends in Afshad's apartment. She sat in front of me at the table. Her curly dark burgundy hair hung over her face. Every now and then she would tuck her hair back behind her ear revealing a playful smile that left me daydreaming about her thoughts. In between sips of red wine, our eyes would lock over the rim of our glasses. Flushed face and sweaty palms — fuck! She exposed me with her gaze.

Her name was Salime, and by the next day we were all together again.

In sign language-esque gestures she invites me for a walk. It's the kind of walk I have only seen in movies. The sun is setting, leaving a canvas of

lavender and orange streaks behind as it sinks into the horizon. A green hillside stretches for miles on end. Fourteenth-century brick buildings of towers and domes, in shades the color of earth, scatter the landscape. I can hear my husband laughing with the men at the table we just left.

My knees tremble, I hold my breath, biting my lip, thankful for the language barrier that hides my loss of words. We take five paces and she plucks a flower from the side of the road. Off in the distance someone inside a minaret sings the call to prayer. Five more paces, another flower... more paces, more flowers. Finally, she turns to me with a bouquet in hand. I inhale the scent of her — gift. And for that one moment, I stop running.

Of Ink— by Mayumi Lashbrook



Choreographically Mayumi is interested in how the body holds trauma and how it can be identified, released, and healed.

Through the residency, Mayumi deepened her research of her family's traumas of the 1940s WWII era as Japanese Canadians. She investigated what we can learn from the past to shape our future. She developed a new piece, titled *Of Ink*, and the residency culminated in a performance at La Coupole to premiere the work. Through dialogue with the other international artists, she was able to weave other perspectives into the piece giving it a rich and wide scope. In her performance, she explored the way performer meets audience, seeking connection, vulnerability and awareness of self to jointly uncover areas of misconception and ignorance. The piece culminated in an expression of release and reconciliation. The audience erupted into dance together, uniting in a shared expression of joy.



PHOTOS BY SHIREEN IKRAMULLAH

Excerpt from

Love, Sex, and Zombies—
by Fiona Leonard

This one is different.

He sits, watching her collect the coasters.

She appreciates the silence, the way he holds space as she makes her way around the deserted bar: a place where they found themselves together.

She slides the coasters one by one into the gaps, shoring up the tables as if she can somehow make things right, after the fact.

Healing flows back as well as forward she tells him. Seven generations in each direction. She slides a coaster for her father, for her grand-father for all those who came before.

He slides the splinter from her finger without question, without a word. She sees the hesitation though before he lets go of her hand and for the first time since they met, she thinks about how it will be when they part.

He was sitting on a fence, three miles out of town. Waiting to meet her. His sister had told him she'd be there.

Have I met your sister, she asks.

No.

And yet she knew I'd be here?

He nods. *Yes.*

Today?

Just here. Not when.

How long have you been waiting?

As long as it takes.

That doesn't make sense, she says.

Does anything?

Where is your sister now? she asks.

Waiting.

Then we should go.



*thanks to LAiR Arts and Mila Orchinnikova
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bios

KELLY BURKE



Kelly Burke is a performer and writer from Denver, Colorado. Her performance work has spanned the West End, film, fringe theatre, Off-Broadway and immersive cabaret. As a writer and theatre-maker, her practice is focused on women's stories, often collaging historical texts to explore contemporary themes. She is particularly fascinated by the reliability (and ownership) of narrative, and the relationship between identity and place.

Kelly trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and is based in London.

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HELEN HOPCROFT

Helen Hopcroft is an artist, performer and writer. She holds a Masters degree in Painting from London's Royal College of Art, and a Creative Writing PhD from the University of Newcastle (UoN). Hopcroft's publication list includes the *Griffith Review*, *The Australian*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, *Art Monthly* and *ArtsHub.com*. She recently spent a year dressed as Marie Antoinette, 24/7, for a piece of performance art titled *My Year as a Fairy Tale*.

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'Marie Antoinette Strikes Back'
by Lizz Mackenzie (2018)



KUNJI MARK IKEDA

Kunji Mark Ikeda demonstrates how physical communication can lead to physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing. Based in Calgary Canada,

Ikeda is the Artistic Director of Cloudsway Dance Theatre and is honoured to be pursuing a life of connection and empathy.

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SHIREEN IKRAMULLAH

Shireen Ikramullah is a Pakistani/British artist, art critic, educator and museologist with a background in painting and printmaking. She has exhibited within Pakistan and overseas, and is an active member of AICA (International Association of Art Critics) and writer for several art publications worldwide.

Based in Europe since 2017, Shireen continues to maintain her own visual art practice. She is, in parallel, working with international artists to curate shows in Pakistan as a means of building stronger bridges for sharing of culture and knowledge.

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MAYUMI LASHBROOK

Mayumi is an accomplished dance artist, choreographer, teacher, arts administrator and artistic director. Her different roles are all-encompassing and overlapping. This enables her to approach projects and communities with openness, curiosity, excellence, skill and deep satisfaction.

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FIONA LEONARD

Fiona is a professional storyteller (which is just a polite way of saying she makes things up for a living). A published author, blogger, freelancer and playwright she has worked with theatre companies in Australia, Zimbabwe, Ghana and Germany, performing, crewing, writing, directing and producing. She moved to Düsseldorf, Germany in 2015 and in 2018 founded Blue Goat Theatre to promote original works in English and foster independent, inclusive and representative theatre.

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TSOLAK MLKE-GALSTYAN



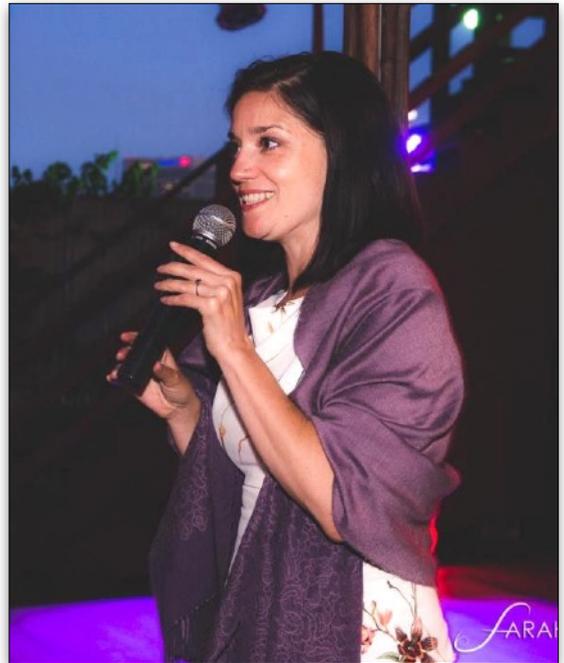
Tsolak MLKE-Galstyan is a choreographer, director, painter, dancer, playwright, and art manager. He has been co-founder and Artistic Director of MIHR Theatre since 2003, and open-air and special events Manager and Curator of Dance Platform at HIGH FEST International Performing Arts Festival since 2005. Tsolak has been lecturer of the Master's course 'Contemporary Dance Improvisation' at the Armenian State Pedagogical University since 2018.

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KARINA MUÑIZ-PAGÁN

Karina Muñiz-Pagán is a queer Xicana writer, literary translator and community organizer. She has an MFA from Mills College where she was awarded the Community Engagement Fellowship and co-founded the writers' collective, Las Malcriadas. She is the editor, translator and contributing author of the bilingual anthology *Mujeres Mágicas: Domestic Workers Right to Write*. Her creative nonfiction has also appeared in several anthologies and online magazines. She is an alumna of Voices of our Nations Arts Foundation (VONA), lives in Long Beach, CA and is currently working on a memoir called *Fly Girl*.

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DEBRA SPARK

Debra Spark is the author of five books of fiction, including *Unknown Caller*, *The Pretty Girl*, and *Good for the Jews*. Other books include *Curious Attractions: Essays on Fiction Writing*, and the anthology *Twenty Under Thirty*. Her second book of essays on writing, *And Then Something Happened*, is due out in 2020. At the same time, her first novel, *Coconuts for the Saint*, will be reissued.

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ERIC LAWRENCE TAYLOR

Eric Lawrence Taylor is an Actor/Writer/Director. He has performed at La Mama, Abrons Art Center and University Settlement. He's also the founder of the Anti-Capitalist Black Film Collective and is currently developing his piece "A Case Against Peaceful Protest."

Eric's work spans from movement and spoken word to music and film. He consistently explores cultural taboos around Blackness and seeks to uplift its communities into a start of not only self-actualization but transformation. Eric has received the fellowship at the Hemispheric Institute and the Denzel Washington Endowed Scholarship.

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