

Awakenings Presents

A DOZEN CREATIONS

Celebrating Survivor Artists



movement | literary | visual art

Program Schedule

Doors Open | 6pm

Program Starts | 6:30pm

some things. | Bianca Thompson

Me Too Monologues | Connective Theater Company

Visual Artist Talk | Raleen Kao, Anneasha Hogan, Jackie Valdez

Intermission

See You | Amanda Mitchell

Run, Better Than Before | Kaleigh Michelle Mattson

Once It All Ends: ReImagined | Amanda Boike, Anna Rodimtseva, & Leah Zeiger

Gallery Open Until | 9pm



Table of Contents

- 2** About
- 3** Miguel Barros
- 4** Phil Goldstein & Jackie Valdez
- 5** Veronica R.
- 6** Anneasha Hogan
- 7** Raeleen Kao
- 8** Bianca Thompson & Connective Theater Company
- 9** Amanda Mitchell & Kaleigh Michelle Mattson
- 10** Once It All Ends: ReImagined Ensemble
- 11** Thank You to Our Sponsors

About

A Dozen Creations: Celebrating Survivor Artists weaves together twelve years of story sharing and creative self-expression. We felt there was no better way to celebrate Awakenings' twelfth birthday than by honoring the survivors, advocates, and allies that have contributed to our mission over the years. Over a dozen artists have come together tonight from different artistic and professional backgrounds to give a glimpse into the many years of art-making, collaboration and healing that has taken place at Awakenings. This night is all about gathering together as a survivor community to celebrate.

Awakenings

Our mission is to provide survivors of sexual violence with a trauma-informed, inclusive art-making experience that encourages healing.

To learn more about us visit www.awakeningsart.org

Or follow us on social media



@awakeningsart



@awakeningsartchicago



@awakeningsart



Awakenings Art



@awakeningsart

"A Trapped Piece of Love I, II, III", oil on canvas, gold leaf, plastic, **"Burnt Skin I, II, III"**

Miguel Barros was born in Lisbon, 1962, he's a citizen of Canada, Portugal, and Angola. In 2014, he moved from Africa to Canada. His art's between harmony & conflict. His work is his soul handwriting a letter in a message of emotions that materialize into colours and shapeless forms!

Statement: The concept of [A Trapped Piece of Love I, II, III] were born in my mind like this: I started to paint the canvas using mixed techniques, like gold leaf, oil on canvas, then I cut everything and rebuilt the piece sewing it and putting it all together as a new piece who suffered a lot of changes during the process. When I finished the painting, it seemed to me that the canvas should not be like a canvas in a frame but something else, something different from the usual shape to hang on the wall in some frame, so, I've decided to crumple the canvas like if it was something that we use and dispose...

After that crumple act, I thought that I've should gone further and I put it inside of a plastic bag closed and under pressure and squeezed in vacuum. I've found such beauty in this kind of parallel about life, about people, about suffering, about all the victims of all cruel circumstances, that sometimes in life we all live under the pressure, in such hard suffering that could be similar to something closed and squeezed like there is no air to breathe, no space to move on, and trapped by someone, somewhere, suffocated and alone...

The paintings closed inside the plastic bags are like a metaphor for those who talk about the silence of the victims, but a helping hand can always relieve that pain when you take each of these paintings trapped and give them a hug, a lap, love!

We Are the Flowers in That Good Earth, framed poem

Phil Goldstein's debut poetry collection, *How to Bury a Boy at Sea*, was published by Stillhouse Press in April 2022. His poetry has been nominated for a Best of the Net award and has appeared in or is forthcoming in *Jet Fuel Review*, *Door Is a Jar Literary Magazine*, *The Bookends Review*, *The Laurel Review*, *Rust + Moth*, *Two Peach*, *Awakened Voices*, *The Indianapolis Review* and elsewhere. By day, he works as an editor and copywriter for a large technology company. He currently lives in Washington, D.C., with his wife, Jenny, and their animals: a dog named Brenna, and two cats, Grady and Princess.

"Textures of a Poem", collage with handmade colored paper

Jackie Valdez is a visual artist and staff member at Awakenings. Handmade paper is a medium she utilizes to talk about memory, accessibility to art, and repetitive art-making practices as a way of meditating on trauma, through a healing lens. Her work has been exhibited at Side Streets Studio Arts, and Woman Made Gallery.

Statement: In "Textures of a Poem", I am responding to Phil Goldstein's work *We Are the Flowers In That Good Earth*. When creating the paper for this piece I found myself focused on the last line of the poem:

"Hollowed-out hearts can be refilled, remade, renewed."

I repeated this line in my head like a sort of mantra. Imbuing the paper with the energy of renewal. My intent was to capture the textures of poignant images described in the poem from a place of care. The collage of textures and colored paper you see is a real time response to Phil's poem. I repeatedly read his words while making this piece as I wanted my feelings to guide me through the process.

“Struggle/Lost” & “Survivor/Found”, acrylic on canvas

Veronica R. is a self-taught artist based in Austin, Texas. She never attended art school but her unique art form has found its way to exhibitions in galleries in New York, Vegas and Texas. She explores details of lines and dots using a combination of various media. She uses lines and dots and repeat them to create unique patterns and design that all come together to invoke all five senses that connect us with the complex world we live in. Her art has been showcased in major exhibitions in Texas and participated in group exhibition in Franklin Place TriBeCa, Gallery 104 “Armory Art week in TriBeCa” in New York City. One of her art pieces was also featured in the Texas Capitol Hill picked by Rep John Bucy III as the Artist of the Month in March 2019, in conjunction with International Women’s days and Women’s History." It has appeared in a literacy magazine in Europe and online exhibition in Toronto.

Statements: The trauma of being assaulted can lead to fear, anger, guilt, anxiety and sadness. The stigma associated with sexual assault may cause embarrassment or shame for some people. Survivors of abuse more often stay silent, not discussing or reporting their abuse. In this art piece (“Struggle/Lost”) her hair is a symbol of her silence. The hair covers her mouth thus hushing her up. The written feelings on paper are floating in her hair, trapped, unable to voice the pain, anger, guilt, sadness, and worthlessness she is struggling with. It is chaos floating everywhere trying to get out from the prison hair of silence. She is lost and the blurry background gives emphasis to her lost and struggle.

In this picture (“Survivor/Found”) her hair is no longer a prison of silence. The words here are positive feelings and they flow with her hair. She is no longer trapped in her hair of silence but goes with the flow of her hair in harmony, calmness and peace, not chaos like the first piece. The flowers symbolize life, living and the feeling of being alive, blossoming. She has found her peace.

"Staircase", multi-media installation including; **"take care of urself"**, soft sculpture & **"Angel in a Red Room"**, colored pencil on paper, salt

Anneasha Hogan is a multi-disciplinary, Chicago-based artist. She graduated from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2017 with a BFA in Studio Arts. She uses photography, video, traditional media, and soft sculpture to create multilayered works that are not bound by any medium.

Statements: I first created this sculpture ("take care of urself") as a replica of myself. I traced my body on muslin, stuffed it, and stitched it together in uneven patchwork. I thought about the history of crafts, "woman's work," as well as all of the women who have shaped me. Their sharing of their intergenerational knowledge with me allowed me to make this work. At first, this sculpture was meant to be durable enough to live alongside of, but after a couple of accidents, I decided it had endured enough abuse. It was too precious to me and needed to be preserved. Its legs could not be saved, so I amputated them. I cut out stains and covered the holes with new fabric. I added a found news clipping, an old backpack, plastic flowers, and a broken laundry basket. It became a memorial for all of the women in my life - from loved ones, to acquaintances, to strangers in the news or on the internet - who deserve much more care and compassion than they have been given.

In "Angel in a Red Room" I created a fictional space where an undefined traumatic event occurs. The empty tiled room represents the private, domestic spaces that abuse can happen in. In the tiled room is a morphing shape, something un-perceivable, some kind of spirit. I like to think that even when it doesn't feel like it, we are guarded and protected through our most horrific moments. In making this piece I am entering a dangerous space. I sprinkle a ring of salt around the person stuck in the room as a communion of protection.

“Body Doubles”, Woodcut, hand-cut paper, graphite, paper mache, acrylic

Raeleen Kao’s work uses garmentry to carry the weight of her own medical history, a rejection of antiquated gender ideals centered around female reproductive health, and the reclamation of her Taiwanese heritage through the lens of anti-colonization and gender-based intergenerational violence. She is a recipient of the Luminarts Cultural Foundation Fellowship, Illinois Arts Council Agency Grant, and DCASE Individual Artist Program Grant. Her work is in permanent collections of the Kohler Art Museum, Smith College Museum of Art, University of Richmond Rare Books & Special Collections, and the North Carolina State University Libraries Special Collections.

Statement: “Body Doubles” is a piece birthed from my installation The Mother of All Monsters that I created at Awakenings in February 2022. I built these overgrown amorphous monsters from casts of my own arms and hundreds of woodcut prints of the Hakka tung blossom, an icon of my heritage. These figures reach out and fold me within the safety of their nest-like bodies. The multitude of figures and limbs are guardians, the chimeric manifestations of disassociation as a defense mechanism. They were born to ward off the solitude of trauma, to take possession of pain, and demonstrate that the monsters we cultivate can be protectors too.

“**some things.**”, original song

Bianca Thompson (she/her/hers) is a multidisciplinary theatre artist, educator, and singer/songwriter originally from Boston, MA. She is thrilled to return to Awakenings after appearing in Me Too Monologues in partnership with Connective Theatre Company in 2019, as well as performing as a featured musician in Gallery of Sounds in 2020. Her writing was also published in Issue 10 of Awakenings' Awakened Voices literary magazine entitled Intention for Change. Bianca is passionate about promoting empathy and healing through the arts. She hopes that by sharing her story and creating brave spaces in her work as an educator and intimacy director for theatre and film, she can continue to empower, validate, support, and advocate for young people and survivors wherever they may be in their journey. Learn more at biancalegardathompson.com.

“**Me Too Monologues**”

Directed by **Leah Nicole Huskey**, and **Lena Romano**, "Better" performed by **Haley Huskey**, "The Worm Turns" & "The Past" by **Wendy Parman**, "Clinger" & "Sorry" by **Ramona Pozek**, & "The Worm Turns" by **Bianca Thompson**

Connective Theatre Company is committed to telling stories that connect reason and emotion, provoke critical consciousness, and facilitate a path to action. Through partnerships with local organizations and community engagement, CTC hopes to not only create thrilling art, but to make a tangible impact on our city and the world at large.

Statement: This performance is a shortened reprisal of Me Too Monologues, a collection of pieces written and performed by survivors of sexual violence. Our original full-length production was created, devised, and performed in 2019 in collaboration with Awakenings.

“See you”

Amanda Mitchell is the Founder/CEO of InTouch & Motion, a creative arts therapies and psychotherapy practice here in Chicago. She is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor and Board-Certified Dance/ Movement Therapist that specializes in working with trauma survivors and fellow Creatives. She strives to create an environment that facilitates a sense of freedom, innovation, and acceptance for your uniqueness and process of healing. She has supported those impacted by sexual trauma in her personal and professional life and has a passion for performance-as-therapy, knowing the experience of being witnessed and/or witnessing others’ truths can be uniquely healing.

Statement: This piece is an exploration and reflection from a therapist's perspective on what it is like to witness and support someone, personally and professionally, on their healing journey after sexual trauma. This piece reflects on sensory, emotional, mental, spiritual, and relational layers of this experience.

“Run” & “Better Than Before”, original songs

Kaleigh Michelle Mattson is a singer-songwriter, visual artist, and educator from Morris, IL. She has performed at Awakenings as part of the Gallery of Sounds in the past. Sharing her story as a survivor of sexual assault through song and art in general has been a part of her healing journey. She is grateful to Awakenings for offering her another opportunity to connect with others and share her story.

Statement: "Run" is an original song that I wrote about 5 years after my first instance of sexual assault, which happened on a date while I was living in New York City at 17 years old, pursuing musical theatre. My drink was tampered with and my body was taken advantage of. This song explores the feeling of being paralyzed in your body and coping in the moment, by escaping somewhere else in your mind. This was the first song I wrote on the topic of sexual assault and was really the first time I openly shared this story.

"Better Than Before" is a piece I wrote after being out of an abusive relationship for a couple of years and after a long journey of putting myself back together again. It's a song I wrote about taking your power back after experiencing a long period of trauma. I premiered this song a few years ago at a Gallery of Sounds event at Awakenings and sharing it with other survivors was so empowering, inspiring, and most of all, healing.

"Once It All Ends: ReImagined"

Directed by **Leah Zeiger**, Performed by **Amanda Boike, Anna Rodimtseva, & Leah Zeiger**

Amanda Boike holds a BFA in Dance from Columbia College Chicago, where she trained under and performed works by Paige Cunningham-Caldarella, Rachel Damon, Darrell Jones, Emily Stein, and Meghann Wilkinson. She's continued her education at Bates Dance Festival, the New York City GagaLab Intensive and the New Dialect Countertechnique Intensive in Nashville, TN. Amanda appeared in the original performance of Once It All Ends at the Awakenings Gallery in 2019 and has performed in Links Hall's j e l l o series, Alluvion Dance Chicago's Emergence Choreography Showcase, and the Peacebook Festival. Outside of the dance studio, Amanda is a Personal Trainer, helping post-menopausal women stay strong, mobile and independent.

Anna Rodimtseva (they/she) is a multidisciplinary artist originally from West Virginia, currently based in Chicago. Their primary discipline is dance and somatic body movement. Since completing their BFA in Choreography at Columbia College Chicago, Anna has blended their body knowledge with photography, video, and writing to create a unique ritualistic creation practice. They seek to separate their artistic process from capitalist structure. Anna creates art with the purpose of enriching and healing their personal and intimate communal spaces.

Leah Zeiger is a choreographer, dancer, and activist based in Los Angeles. As a survivor of a teenage abusive relationship, Leah's work is largely derived from her lived experience as well as embodied research in the survivor community. Leah's methodology - Body Memory - invokes somatic principles, improvisational scores, and body-based research to explore the ways in which our bodies hold memory and how those memories shape our life experience. In 2015 she founded The Sunflower Project, an organization that uses dance to educate young people on abusive relationships, which was launched by the premiere of the documentary "Untold" that tells the harrowing story of Leah's abuse. She recently completed the Los Angeles Contemporary Choreographer's Lab, in which she choreographed an original duet titled "Bittersweet". She is in process of completing a commissioned new work for the National Hotline for Domestic Violence, and is amidst an in-depth creation process for her newest evening length work, "You Live In My Spine". Learn more and stay connected at leahzchoreography.com

Thank You to Our Sponsors!



ILLINOIS
ARTS
COUNCIL
AGENCY

