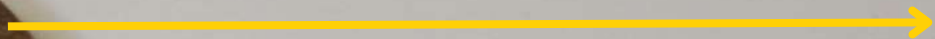




Cohort Archive



AWAKENED VOICES
ISSUE 15 | 2024



AWAKENED VOICES

LITERARY MAGAZINE

see. hear. heal.





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INTRODUCTION

Awakenings offers a trauma-informed art-making experience that encourages personal and communal healing. Awakenings cohorts allow our survivors to heal together in a safe, trauma-informed environment, while building a creative community.

Awakenings Cohort 2023 included twelve cohort members going through a healing arts curriculum together for six months. As the cohort finished, each member created installation art in Awakenings Chicago Studio. This artwork was on exhibit October 2023 - January 2024. This special issue of Awakened Voices contains images from some cohort member's installations and contains their reflections on the art they created and their cohort experience.

CONTENT WARNING

The following issue contains material including one or more of the following: rape, sexual assault, abuse, child abuse, gender-based violence.

The intention behind this content warning is to prepare a reader so they can choose to bravely engage with potentially activating material, even if this doesn't always feel comfortable. May it also serve as a reminder that a reader can pause and take a break from reading. The stories will be here, ready when the reader returns.

Words have Power

Peggy Martino
letter art



Words have Power

Peggy Martino
letter art



Words have Power

Peggy Martino
letter art



Words have power. Especially the words we tell ourselves. In allowing myself to go deep in my story, in choosing the words I did for calligraphic telling, I was able to see the beauty in my story as a whole. In so doing, I transformed. I saw clearly that my path, though painful, has always been one of forgiveness and redemption. The darkest night has truly found the day, and along with it, a bright future. I remain forever grateful.

May I share with you, our Awakenings audience some of my affirmations. May they encourage you.

- * 'I'm sorry that happened to you'
(empathy)
- * 'You are the Hero of your own story'
(courage)
- * 'Destiny delivers dreams to those who deliberately dance through doubt'
(optimism)
- * 'Sing a new song-sing it loud-sing it strong!'
(hope)
- * 'Arise!'
(action)
- * 'Meet the Moment. A new day has dawned'
(vision)
- * 'What they intended for evil, God has used for good, in order to accomplish a day like this—to preserve the lives of many people'
(Truth - Genesis 50:20)

May the words we tell ourselves always and only reflect the truth as seen through our eyes, no one else. Blessings.

Peggy Martino





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Chapter one: The First Time and LA

Chapter two: Home

Chapter three: The Funeral, The Aftermath, and I'm not afraid of you//I'll heal like I always do.

*Leah Huskey
collage, mixed media*



The First Time

LA

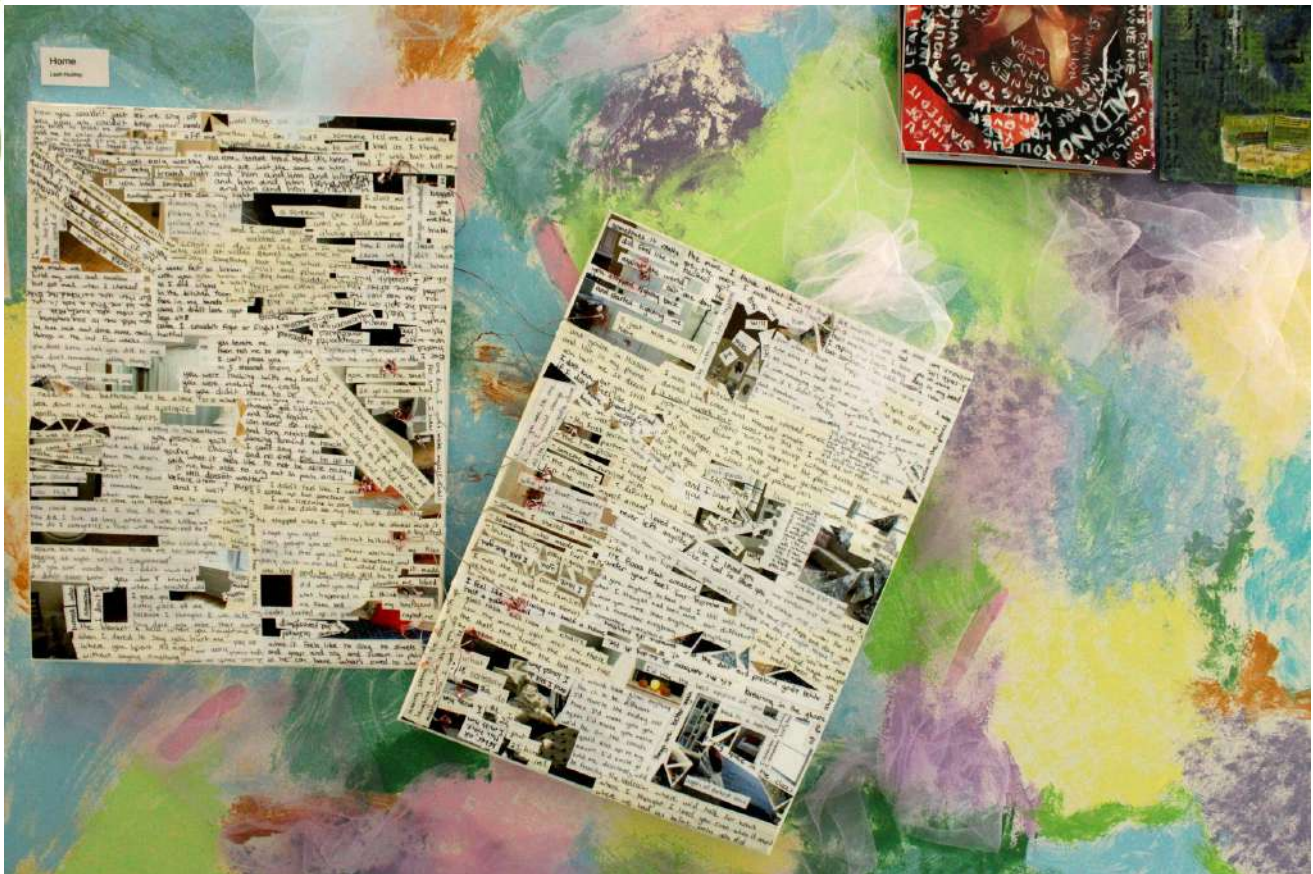
Leah Huskey
collage, mixed media

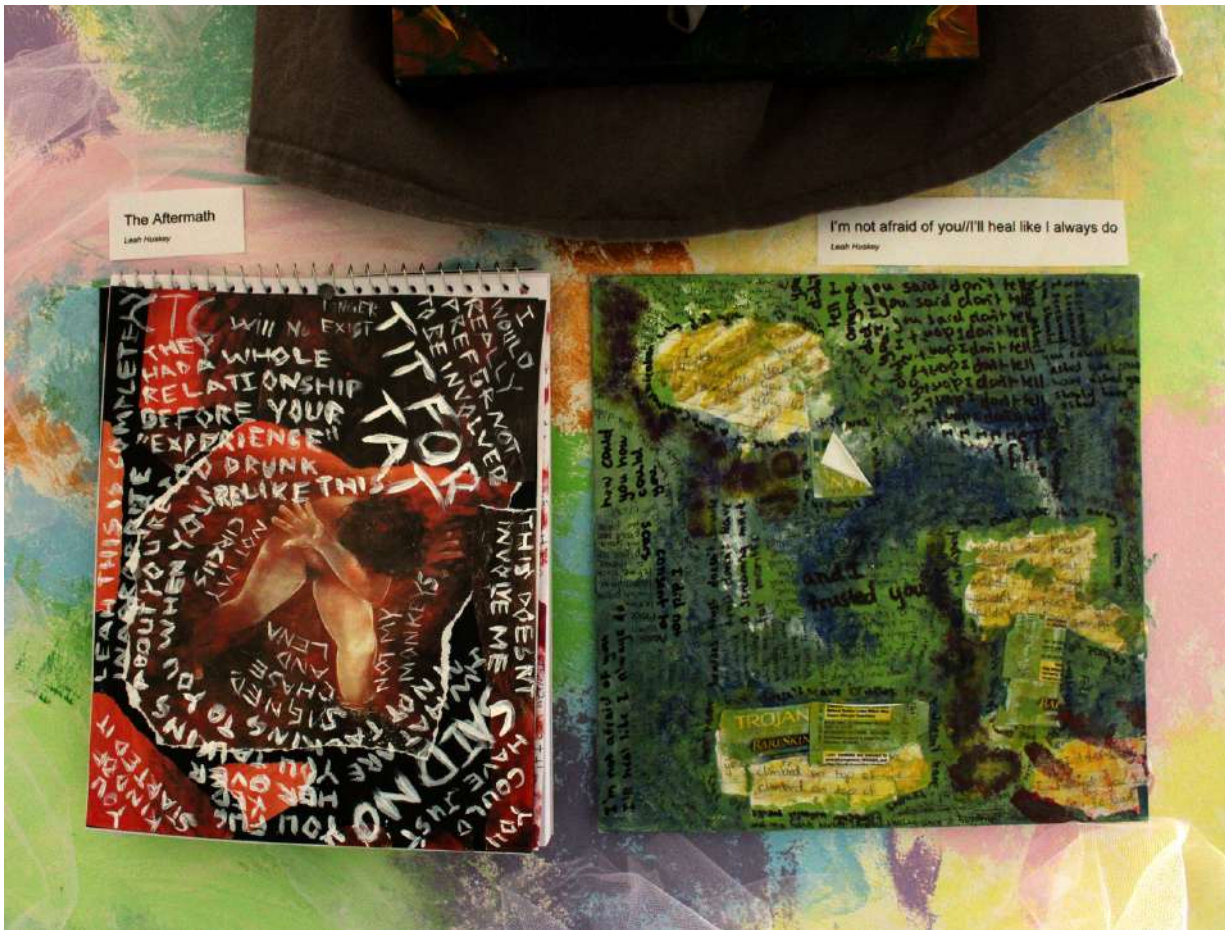


Home

Leah Huskey

collage, mixed media





With my portion of the installation co-created with Gillian Marwood and Veritas Revelata, I wanted to represent my experience of womanhood in a world deeply entrenched in rape culture and misogyny. Against a backdrop of soft feminine colors and textures, I placed pieces of art that showcase the raw pain of surviving gender-based violence and revictimization.

I have divided my pieces into three chapters, each representing a different time of survival: chapter one includes The First Time and LA, chapter two includes Home, and chapter three includes The Funeral, The Aftermath, and I'm not afraid of you//I'll heal like I always do.

Though these collages, weavings, and paintings came from a place of deep pain, I would like to encourage the viewer to focus on the light that can be found in the installation rather than the darkness. The very act of art-making has been transformative for me, and I see each piece as a step in my healing journey rather than a rumination on the pain of the past. I hope you can see it that way too.

Leah Huskey

I love you, so I won't let go

Gillian Marwood
polymer clay, gouache, printmaking,
roving wool fiber



I love you, so I won't let go

Gillian Marwood
polymer clay, gouache,



I love you, so I won't let go

Gillian Marwood
roving wool fiber





Gillian is a queer sculptor, jewelry designer, business owner, and stop motion animator. They grew up living all over the world, though mainly raised in Scotland. They now consider Chicago home. Their work focuses on sex work, trauma, and queerness which they bring to light through their stop motion films and sculptures. Their work has been featured in Woman Made Gallery, Locus, Elgin fringe festival, The Robin, Cherry Knot and Awakenings gallery. When they're not sculpting, they're usually working on their business GERM selling handmade jewelry.

I love you, so I won't let go, touches on my journey with both sex work and dissociation. Through the process of the cohort, I battled with my dissociative disorder. Despite wanting to get the most of the workshops and dive into discovering a new outlook on my trauma, my flight response got the better of me. But I chose to run with it, creating a beautiful installation alongside the talented Veritas and Leah. We all have different intentions behind our group choices made, but I chose to lean into where my mind goes when I dissociate - a dreamlike childlike space.

My artwork symbolizes my journey with sex work and sexual violence. When I started out as a sex worker over 5 years ago, I used it as an outlet to heal from sexual trauma, and do things on my own terms. I felt free. I love my job as a sex worker, but unfortunately there can be a lot of sexual violence. Sometimes assault feels all too familiar. I protect myself but it's a risk and unfortunately I don't think everyone takes sexual violence against sex workers as seriously as they do with non sex workers. I'd like to help change that.

Gillian Marwood

Recovery is not a straight line Phoenix Rising Behind Closed Doors

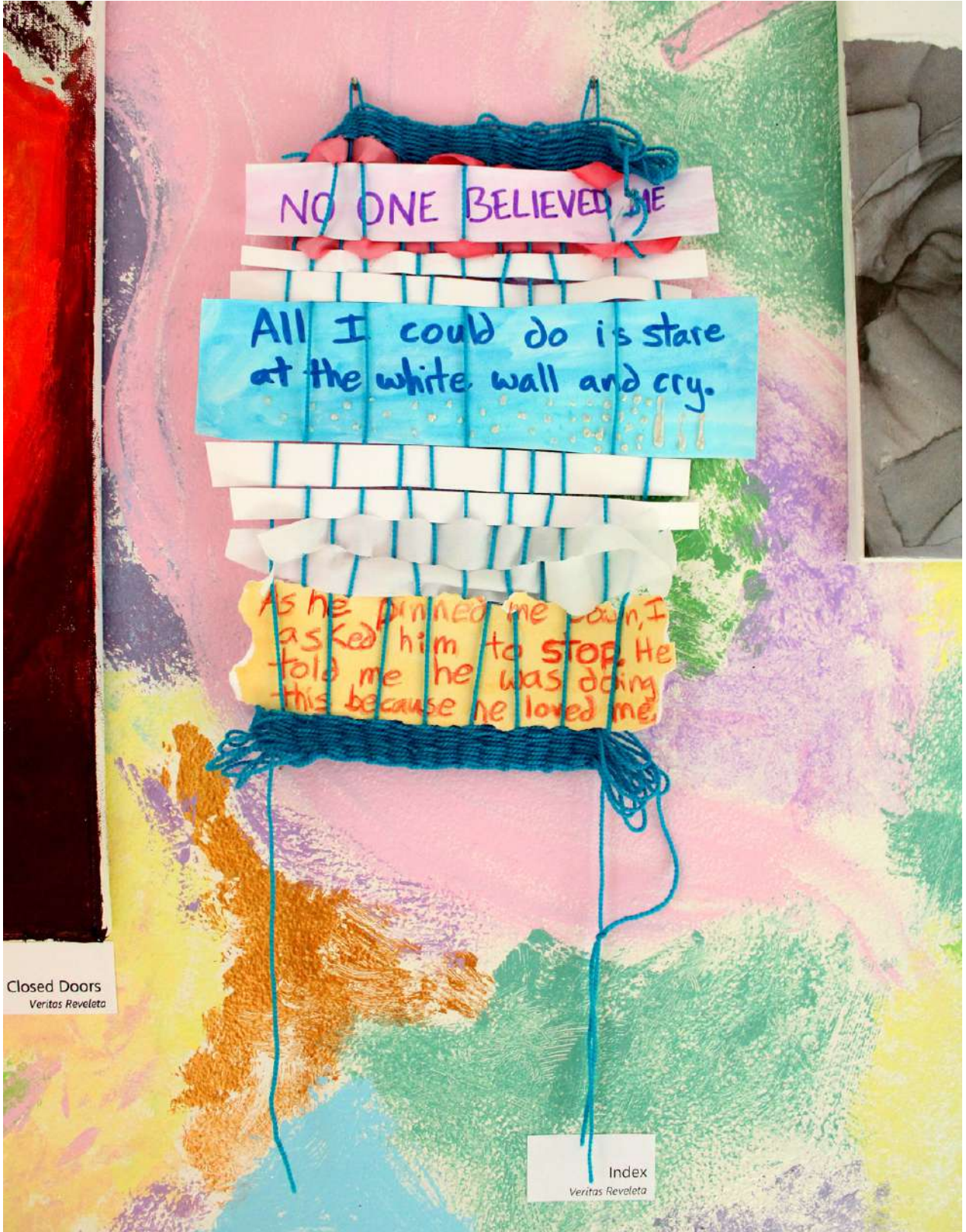
Veritas Revelata
mixed media

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Index

Veritas Revelata
mixed media



Closed Doors
Veritas Revelata

Index
Veritas Revelata



The Final Words

Veritas Revelata
mixed media

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Behind Closed Doors shows the unfortunate descent into a violent relationship and the painful progression. Index was the emotionally hardest piece to create. It is a loom portraying one of the worst memories of those two years. Phoenix Rising is a mixed media collage about breaking free. The Final Words is a visual journaling piece rewriting old beliefs. The new beliefs are blown up so they are easy for everyone to read. Convalescence portrays a continuation of the healing process. Grounding Station was created as an interactive experience showcasing multiple breathing exercises and engaging four of the five senses. This is a resource for anyone in the gallery who wants help grounding.

Veritas Revelata



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Telling the Truth

Bianca Thompson
collage



Telling the Truth

Bianca Thompson collage

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Telling the Truth
Bianca Thompson
collage





The imaginative framework for this piece is a childhood bedroom wall. My childhood bedroom was similarly collaged with photos of things I loved that made me happy and gave me peace to look at. This framework represents how our safest, coziest spaces can also be spaces where difficult processing and trauma can occur. The colorful section is an embodiment of the people, places, and things that have been crucial to my healing journey. It is a representation of how I see myself when I'm at my best. It includes letters from loved ones, photos, zines, journal entries, poetry, the program from my first performance at Awakenings, and collages I made at Awakenings' Open Studio. The dark section represents the turmoil that will always be a part of me. I ripped up, crumpled, painted, and wrote over Title IX documents from three cases I endured in college to express my rage and grief in response to elements of the cases—including instances where the other student involved lied about what happened. I also included a small plush starfish and moonstone that I held in my hands during my first Adjudication Panel where I had to deliver a statement in front of the person I reported and a faculty panel who would decide our fate.

I have told my story in many ways before--through poetry, prose, songwriting, performance art--but this was my first time expressing myself through a visual medium. Creating this collage allowed me to share parts of my story that I never had before. When I laid out the Title IX documents to begin working on this piece, I burst into tears. To see a visual representation of the labor, heartache, and trauma I went through at 19 years old allowed me to grieve in a way I hadn't yet. I grieved for the college sophomore who lost so many hours of their education to this nightmare. I grieved for the kid who couldn't bring herself to report further instances of violence because of how institutions had already failed her. But in creating this piece, I celebrated the survivor whose fight for their life changed my college's policies to improve the process for future reporters of sexual misconduct. I celebrated the love and support I have received that have allowed me to continue to heal. And that celebration is an equal part of my truth.

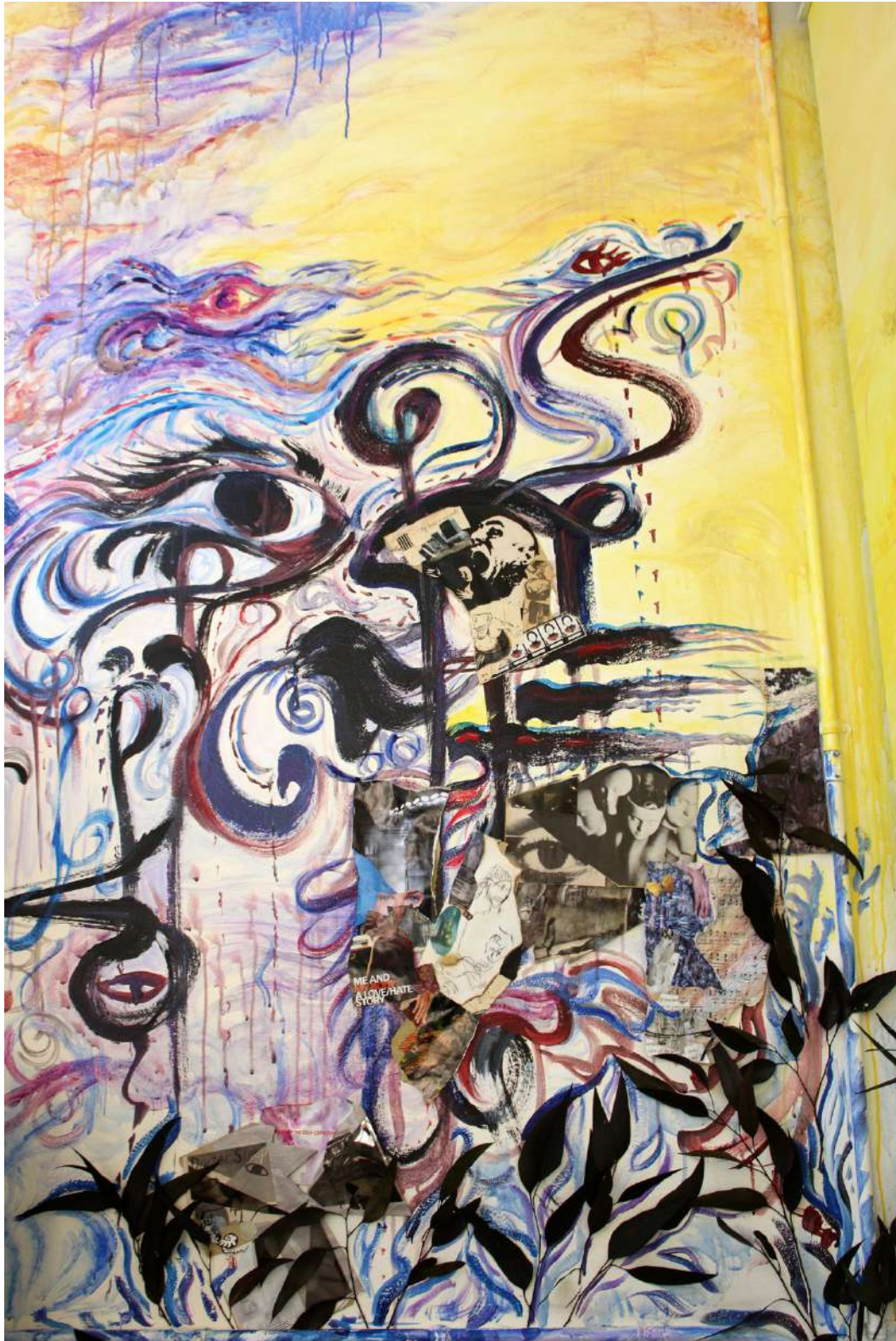
Bianca Thompson

[untitled]
Wendy Parman
mixed media

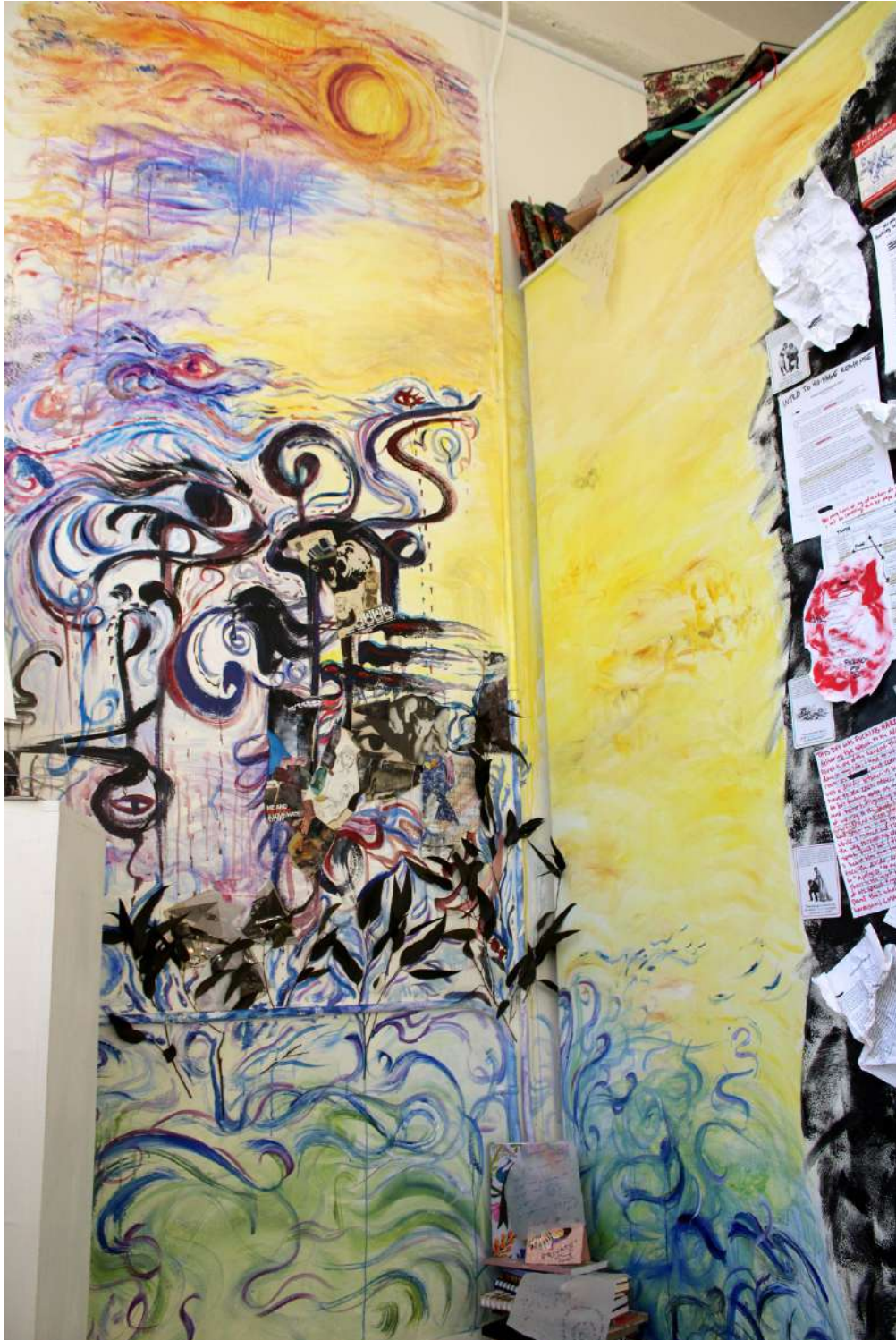


[untitled]

Wendy Parman
mixed media



[untitled]
Wendy Parman
mixed media





Wendy Parman

I'm not one to explain my work. I hope it speaks for itself, even if what it says is something best absorbed intuitively. The visual piece has to do with the role of the subconscious and mysticism in my healing process. The poem (really a song) both reflects on the past and projects into the future of healing, as that process is never really over.

The Seeds of the Future
 Are sown in the faraway
 The long ago
 Like stowaways
 They've vertigo
 They linger down under
 In the hull of the ship
 They rock back and forth
 And cry for tomorrow
 All dripping with sorrow
 All hanging with mumblings
 Of what they had hoped for
 And lost

They sing a sweet chorus
 So rousing
 Distinctive
 Useful for shrinking
 The memories blinking
 Like bulbs dim
 That won't quite go out
 They sing
 And then sleep tight
 To raise their hands upright
 In prayer one more time
 Saying their final
 Goodnight
 Goodnight

Resiliencia / Resilience

Lucía Garcés Dávila

Linoleum stamps & watercolor



Resiliencia / Resilience
Lucía Garcés Dávila
Linoleum stamps & watercolor



Resiliencia / Resilience

Lucía Garcés Dávila

Linoleum stamps & watercolor



Del diario visual creado durante Awakening Cohort

Levanta tu mirada mi pequeña niña
no tienes porque bajarla
Tú mi valiente sobreviviente
Tú tienes en tu alma la fuerza y la ternura
de quien ha sabido sobrevivir aferrándose a la vida

Dejemos que el agua se lleve el dolor
y sane las heridas del cuerpo, del alma y de la vergüenza
Hoy nos cubrimos de aguas aromáticas y de hierbas curativas
que nos sanen profundamente, que lleguen hasta nuestra alma
para reconciliarnos con nuestra parte herida

Hoy nos cubrimos de aromas, sabores y fluidos que corren
entre nuestras piernas sanando los nervios
llevándose consigo las huellas del dolor
Para que seamos más libres, para que alcancemos
a ser verdaderamente quien somos

Para regresar a la guarida, como mujeres renovadas
porque sabemos de nuestra propia capacidad de sanación
Porque nos estamos sanando ahora

Lucía Garcés Dávila



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Over and Over

Haley Huskey
mixed media



I created Over and Over on a day when I was struggling with the non-linear nature of healing and that the peace we build for ourselves is tested often and can be so tenuous.

She

Haley Huskey
mixed media



This piece has been a constant work in progress for the last five years. The initial iteration came about when I first started intentionally using art to interact with my trauma, and it is one of the first pieces I finished that taught me something I was struggling to express to myself. It seemed only appropriate She be included in this installation.

Dwelling

Haley Huskey
mixed media



Dwelling recreates my college dorm room in miniature, tucked away inside a kitchen cabinet. The process of recreating the texture of my daily life during a traumatic time— a whiteboard to-do list I couldn't finish, the scripts I was studying and performing, the wilting cactus on my windowsill— gave me a new perspective. Recreating mostly from memory a space that once felt so safe to me allowed me to see the objects as just objects and no longer as onlookers complicit in what I was going through. Giving those memories a physical realm to inhabit has allowed me to put them to rest, tuck them safely away until I wish to visit or share them with others.

Haley Huskey



make yourself. at home.
margo santiago
acrylic paint on canvas

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make yourself. at home.

margo santiago
acrylic paint on canvas





During the final cohort workshop-

In this way I can invite people into my home and share it without feeling overwhelmed or invaded. I spent a lot of nights in the studio singing and dancing and feeling like I could breathe. The pipes cleared from the moment I'd leave my apartment. A lot about this painting was challenging but it never felt daunting. I was happy to embrace the intricacies; to push myself to flex my skills and create room for growth. And yes, there was a mountain of frustration when I felt like I couldn't get it right or perfect which is bullshit because perfect doesn't exist.

I wish I could slip into this painting like a doll in a playhouse – *this is where the journal ends.* – I think now more like slipping into the depths of something like the ocean. This is the first painting I have shared with an audience, the first one I created with a purpose to share with others. It was terrifying and exhilarating, and I feel a joy I could only discover through the process of this cohort and this painting. I am grateful for what I have learned and grateful for who I have collaborated with.

xoxo margo

p.s here is a poem I wrote alongside this journal.



margo santiago

Wish you were here!

i guess in this way
we are friends,

and this is our bond.

i wish you could be
sitting next to me. to inhale it all
as it is.

i've got thirty minutes to write
but im not sure i've got thirty minutes
of words.

honestly, i just want you
to be here. be present in this space.

take a breath if you need
and know that everything outside -
it's just noise.

you can turn it down and off
in this house,
you are home

Tiptoeing into the Pantry

Bridgid Taylor

textile materials (made mirrors)

clay sculpting

decoupage

poetry

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Tiptoeing into the Pantry

Bridgid Taylor

textile materials (made mirrors)

clay sculpting

decoupage

poetry



Tiptoeing into the Pantry

Bridgid Taylor
textile materials (made mirrors)
clay sculpting
decoupage
poetry





I entered the Awakenings Cohort doubting my abilities as an artist, and wondering if I could rightfully consider myself one. What I discovered throughout this opportunity is that I AM an artist and that my genre is storytelling. I now understand that storytelling need not be relegated to writing. Through this artistic journey, I started to realize that storytelling can tranverse across varieties of art mediums.

For my group's installation we created a kitchen. We organically started telling a story of kitchens as symbols of safety and warmth where people experience joy and community through cooking, conversation, and laughter. Our interactive exhibit greeted participants with a welcome letter as if visiting a friend. They were invited to make a cup of tea at a tea station and look inside real objects such as cookie jars to discover poetry or objects.

My part of the installation was the pantry. I am titling it "Tiptoeing into the Pantry." For me pantries conjure feelings of warmth and childhood delight at sneaking into one and discovering sweet, hidden treasures. They also summon scary spaces for me. Cramped, dark settings are directly associated with my experience as a survivor of sexual violence. Experiencing both reactions reinforced the concept that survivorship is layered.

This experience opened chambers of my heart and cerebral lobes that I didn't know I had. This opened me up to all that is possible, including finding my voice as an artist

Bridgid Taylor



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from ashes to flames

Clara Fourcade

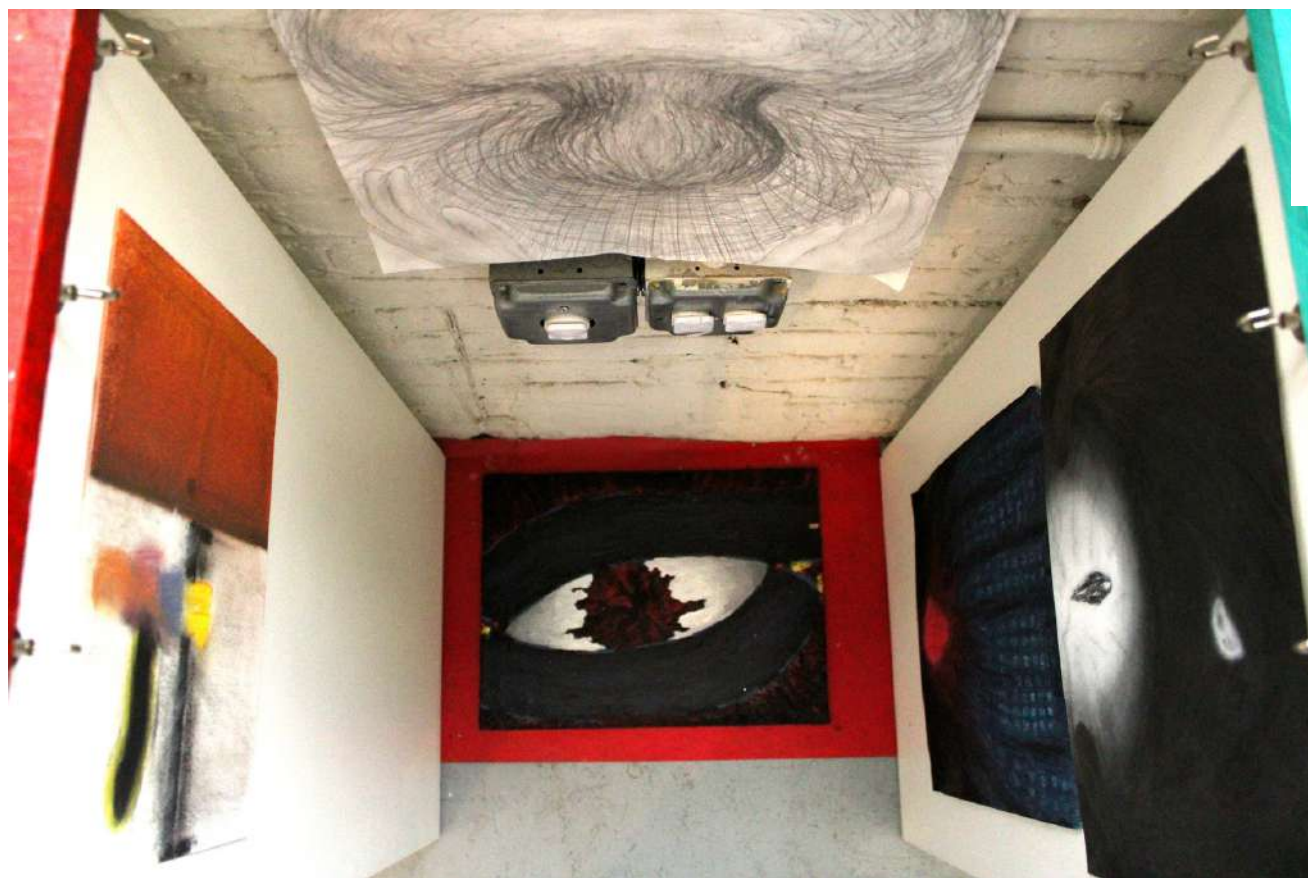


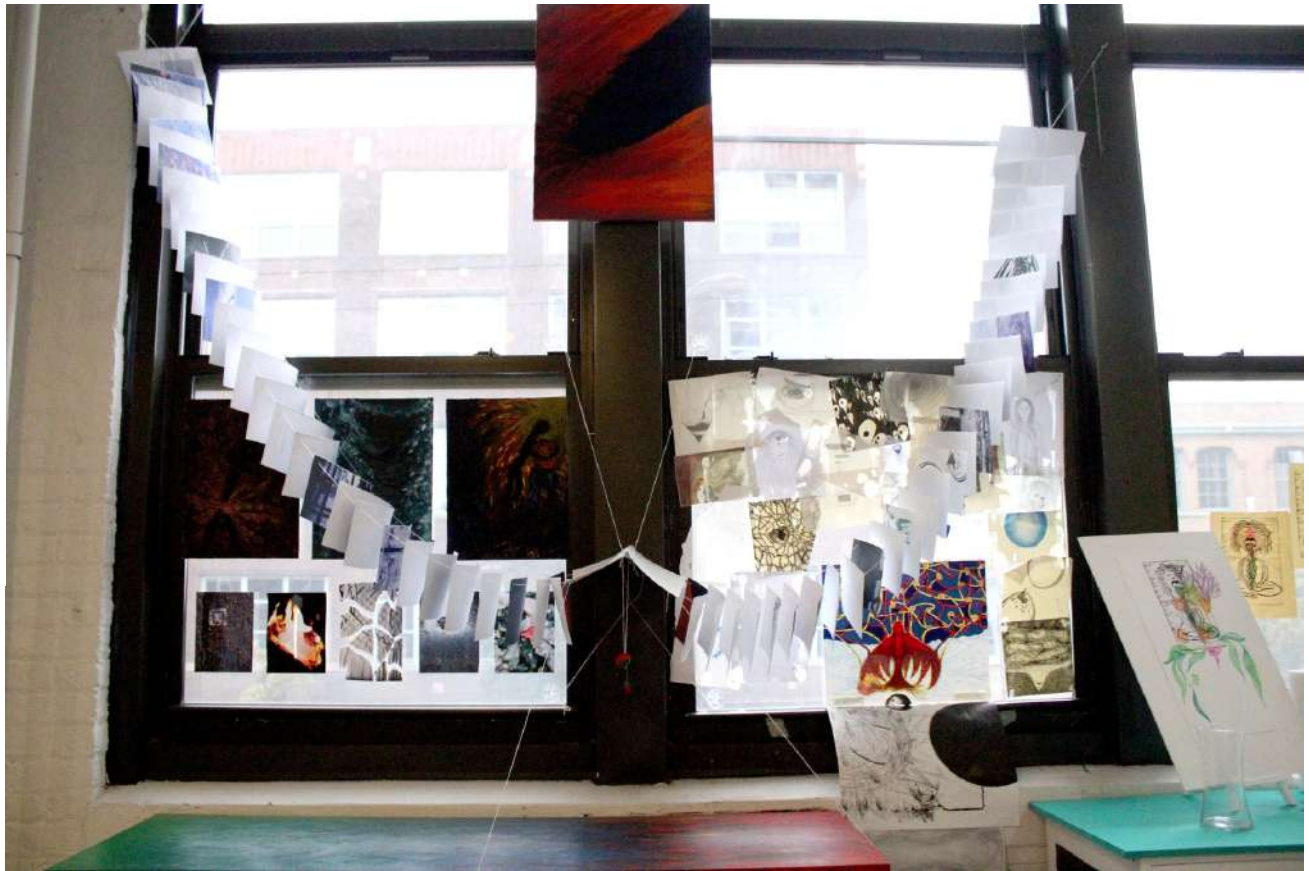
from ashes to flames

Clara Fourcade



from ashes to flames
Clara Fourcade





when will we be able to live in peace, not silencing ourselves, not having to tear off the pages of our books or throw them into dumpsters, not having to muffle our own voice for the comfort of others, not having to burn the only pages that speak of our suffering? when will we be able to just exist again, to take up space and time and air without fear of being watched, of being found, of being pushed into oblivion? when will we stop being objects? when will we stop being frozen in time?

in flight is the only way we have left. we cannot sit, still, lie, down - we must fly on, up, and out. we must rise up from the ashes and re-constitute the flames that burned us, lighting the way for all else to see. we must not let the ashes be our only remaining self on this earth; they will always be real but they are a part of us, not *all* that is us. we must not forget all that we are, all that we were, and all that we will be. from ashes to flames; trauma may swallow us whole, and yet - we rise again.

Clara Fourcade



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AWAKENINGS

Awakened Voices is a literary program of Awakenings, a non-profit organization dedicated to creating a physical and virtual artistic space in which to promote the healing of survivors through the arts and engage in an open dialogue that furthers awareness and understanding of sexual violence. Please consider helping us spread our message of healing by sharing and supporting Awakenings.

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



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Join our core squad of Awakenings' supporters and join Judith's Circle. By committing to making a monthly donation of any amount, you are directly impacting a survivor's healing process. Your contribution directly supports our artists and Awakenings' ability to provide trauma-informed, professional arts experiences like this for our survivor artists. Join the Circle at www.awakeningsart.org/donate



JUDITH'S CIRCLE