



Nov 1-2, 2024

A gathering within and throughout the Lindemann Performing Arts Center

Nov 1-17, 2024

A Gallery Exhibition in The Lindemann Performing Arts Center

Open Hours 10am-8pm

# the dead teach me how to die by letting me wildly live

*An Emergent Forest Production*

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*the dead teach me how to die by letting me wildly live* is an invitation to remember how we return our bodies to earth. Kei Soares Cobb and Laura Brown-Lavoie call you to bring forward your knowledges of times before, flirtations with times beyond, and grief of the present toward a healing vision of death and burial. This two-day gathering features a performance-ritual by Laura Brown-Lavoie and Kei Soares Cobb, a gallery installation curated by Becci Davis, a conversation-circle of green burial practitioners and earth-workers, and a night of ecstatic performances on the prompt “how to die.”

*Let us release our fear of turning to soil. Until then, let us wildly live.*

## Curators

Kei Soares Cobb

Laura Lamb Brown-Lavoie

Becci Davis

## Featuring

The visual imaginations of Jordan Seaberry,

Jazzmen Lee-Johnson, Brooke Erin Goldstein

The worlds and ideas of April Brown, Andraly Horn, Viennia Lopes Booth

The poetry and music of Ceci Pineda, Early Shinada, Vatic Kuumba, Charlotte Abotsi, Justice Ameer, Franny Choi, and Lilly Manycolors

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## November 1

### **5:00 pm: Opening Reception and Gallery Show**

*Lobby, The Lindemann Performing Arts Center*

Join us for the commencement of this multi-day gathering with a reception and opening of the gallery show, curated by Becci Davis (Department of Visual Art), featuring works by Jordan Seaberry, Jazzmen Lee-Johnson, and Brooke Erin Goldstein, Kei Soares-Cobb, and Laura Brown-Lavoie

### **7:00 pm: “THE DEAD”**

*Lobby, The Lindemann Performing Arts Center*

A ritual performance led by Kei Soares Cobb and Laura Brown-Lavoie, which will begin in the Lobby and process down to The Lindemann’s Performance Lab.

## November 2

### **3:00 -5:00 pm: “HOW TO DIE”**

*Lobby, The Lindemann Performing Arts Center*

A conversation circle on the topics of death, ritual, and green burial, with April Brown, Laura Brown-Lavoie, Andraly Horn, Viennia Lopes Booth, and Kei Soares Cobb. The conversation will be followed by a shared meal.

### **7:00 pm: “WILDLY LIVE”**

*Performance Lab, The Lindemann Performing Arts Center*

Performances of music and poetry by Providence’s most deadly artists, featuring Ceci Pineda, Early Shinada, Vatic Kuumba, Charlotte Abotsi, Justice Ameer, Franny Choi, and Lilly Manycolors. DJ set and dancing will follow to close out the gathering.

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## About the Curators



**Laura Brown-Lavoie** is a poet, seminarian, and earth-worker. Author of *Club Desire* (Binch Press, 2022), Laura was the co-director of the Providence Poetry Slam from 2012-2015, and three times represented Providence as a finalist at national slam competitions. A long-time vegetable and flower farmer, Laura has in recent years turned to working with medicine plants and tending sanctuary gardens, with her teacher Deb Soule of Avena Botanicals. Laura serves as a birth doula for people as they welcome new babies, and as an ancestral medicine practitioner, supporting people to heal within their family lineages (more at [elasticportal.space](http://elasticportal.space).) In 2023, Laura began a Masters of Divinity program at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. She will serve for the coming year supporting the ministries of All Souls NYC Unitarian Universalist Church.



**Kei Soares Cobb** is a healing-artist, educator, and Father based in Providence, RI. His sound design and performance art has been shared at the Trinity Repertory Theatre, RISD Museum and on stages worldwide with his guru, nora chipaumire. Kei is a Licensed Massage Therapist, Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapist, and a Registered Yoga Teacher trained in the Viniyoga tradition of T.K.V. Krishnamacharya.



**Becci Davis** is a mother and conceptual artist who finds inspiration in nature, archives, memory, and connection to place. Born and raised in Georgia, she now calls Providence, Rhode Island home. Becci's research-based practice creates a new history and personal geography through accumulations of images, text and occupying space with her body. She has been the recipient of the RI Humanities' Public Humanities Scholar Award, the St. Botolph Club Foundation Emerging Artist Award in Visual Art, the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts Fellowship in New Genres, the RISD Museum Artist Fellowship and a finalist for the MacColl Johnson Fellowship. Becci teaches Foundations in Brown University's Department of Visual Art. She serves on the boards of Emergent Forest, a non-profit centering green burial and collective mourning and Feminist art space Dirt Palace Public Projects. Becci is also a member of the WARP Collective housed in Olneyville's historic Atlantic Mills.

## Participating Artists



**Justice Ameer** is a poet, facilitator, and political educator in Providence, RI. Xe is a co-founding member of blackearth collective + lab. Xe is a two-time Providence Grand Slam champion and a member of the inaugural co-champion team of the Feminine Empowerment Movement Slam. Xe is a Pink Door Fellow and Faculty member, and xe was an Artist-in-Residence at Williams College in Spring 2020. Ameer co-created the theatrical production ANTHEM with Chrysanthemum at American Repertory Theater's OBERON. Xyr work can be found in Split This Rock, the Academy of American Poets, POETRY magazine, The Nation, and various anthologies and journals.



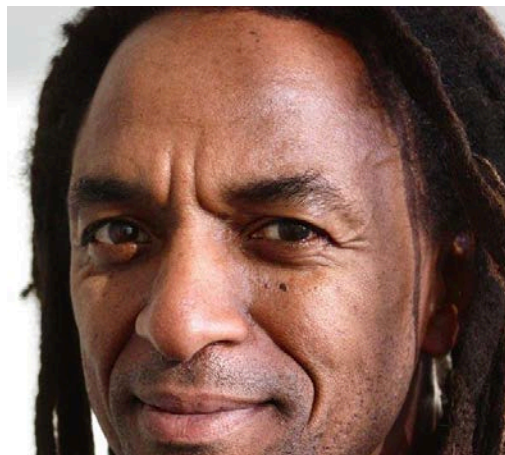
**April Brown** is an entrepreneur, artist, Director of the Racial & Environmental Justice Committee and co-director of the annual Langston Hughes Community Poetry Reading Committee in Providence. Brown's experience includes being an ordained minister and former teacher, education administrator, artist programmer and college counselor. More specifically here in Rhode Island, she has worked with Rhode Island Black Storytellers and the National Association of Black Storytellers as the African Marketplace director; and with Turnaround Arts: Providence as its local program director. She is a published poet, acclaimed singer and actress who has performed in the United States, Japan and Israel. Brown holds a Bachelors of Arts (BA) degree from the American University, in Washington, DC, and a Master's in Education from the University of Rhode Island. It's no wonder that when asked, she served in several community-at-large leadership positions for arts and civics organizations. She has also served as a board member of Community Music Works and is a member of the Special Committee for Commemorative Works for Providence and other boards throughout the State.



**Franny Choi** is a poet & essayist whose books include *The World Keeps Ending, and the World Goes On* (Ecco, 2022), a finalist for the Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award, *Soft Science* (Alice James Books, 2019), and *Floating, Brilliant, Gone* (Write Bloody Publishing, 2014). Franny is the current Poet Laureate of Northampton, MA and the founder of Brew & Forge. They teach at Bennington College.



**Cai Diluvio** — i am mother, artist, educator, organizer, facilitator, ritualist, storyteller, and land and food tender, hailing from the shores of the visayas in central philippines. the essence of my work is eco-social repair and world building, rooted in my animist lineage and care for the generations that came before and the ones to come after. i am the program director for movement education outdoors, co-organizer for new moon mycology summit, board member of taíno woods sanctuary, board member of emergent forest. currently, my favorite workshop to teach is intro to interspecies communication taught through a trance + arts workshop.



**The Haus of Glitter** (based in Providence, RI) works, through movement, choreography, and song to shift the energetic center of the universe towards Queer Feminist BIPOC Liberation. In the work we share and co-create with audiences, we strive to embody ancestral liberation, healing and love in every step and every breath of our creative process and pedagogy. Our choreography aims to reach beyond the stage and into the streets; into our homes; into our institutions; into our hearts.

[thehausofglitter.org](http://thehausofglitter.org) @hausofglitterdanceco

**Andraly Horn** — Born and raised in Nagadoches, Texas, Andraly has worn many hats in this life: son, brother, father, husband, friend, healer. Theater Arts in New York City, long-distance trucking, Massage Therapy School in Florida, frequent bather in an open air cast iron hot tub in the piney woods of East Texas, and at last moving to Rhode Island seventeen years ago. Andraly loves to spend as much time as possible observing and being still in the natural world. His love of nature is what informs him in his guided meditations and farming practices.

He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Health Science and he is an organic farmer. This connection to the land led him to become a Mindful Outdoor Guide through the Kripalu Center. He currently leads Nature Liberations and hosts retreats at Open fArms Retreat, a 2-acre farm in Cumberland, RI educating youth on sustainable farming practices while connecting with nature.



**Vatic Astahili Tayari Kuumba [V.A.T.K.]** (he/him) is an artist, writer, educator, and father of three children. Vatic is an Arts Facilitator for One Square World, a racial and climate justice organization, where he applies creativity as an essential tool for policy design, civic engagement, and popular education. Vatic is the Artist in residence for Chad Brown and the Lead artist for Casa Futura (2024) part of One Nation One Project's Arts for Everybody Initiative. Vatic is co-director and lead writer for MoralDocs (2021), an abolitionist transmedia project and virtual reality film. He was a collaborator on the creation of the City of Providence's Climate Justice Plan and the Environmental Racism Resolution passed by Providence City Council in 2020, as part of the Racial and Environmental Justice Committee (REJC) in Providence. Vatic was Artist-in-Residence for the State Association of Arts Agencies in 2019. His first theatrical production, *A Furtive Movement* (2017) premiered at AS220 in Providence, RI, as a culmination of his AS220 Live Arts Residency. Vatic is also the recipient of the RI State Council for the Arts (RISCA) 2018 Fellowship for Theater and 2017 Playwright Merit Fellowship.

**Viennia Lopes Booth** explores the intersections of life, death, and the plant world as an educator, advocate and earth tender. Guided by her indigenous cultural traditions and her dad's deep respect for nature, Viennia successfully navigated the end-of-life continuum to honor her father's wishes to die at home, have a home wake and be cared for by family until the very end. Her experience caring for her dad at the end of his life took her on a deep exploration of natural deathcare, and she shares her personal story to help spread awareness about options beyond conventional deathcare. She aims to empower families and communities to care for their loved ones at the time of death. Viennia encourages consideration about choices around deathcare and its impact on the environment, our communities and each other. She is currently working toward creating a conservation burial ground in her home county and forming a non-profit focused on community-empowered and ecologically conscious deathcare advocacy. \*([www.returningtoourroots.org](http://www.returningtoourroots.org)) Viennia is an enrolled member of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe. She is the daughter of a Mashpee Wampanoag /Cape Verdean father and a Dutch/English mother whose ancestors include both the original indigenous inhabitants of Cape Cod and some of its earliest colonists from afar.



**Lilly Manycolors** (Australian-American b. 1989), is a mother, mixed media visual & performing artist, scholar and youth arts educator known for their emotionally-excavating artworks and ritual performances. Their work centers the issues of humanness, anthropocentrism and motherhood, seeking to practice imagining liberated worlds and paths to get there. Manycolors' is the founder and director of AUNTY'S HOUSE, a community arts studio in Providence, RI which centers parent artists, youth and arts education.



**ceci pineda** (they/them) is a brown queer musician, ecosystem caretaker and facilitator. A singer, guitarist, and jaranere, ceci creates for Tlalli (earth, land, and soil), our more-than-human relationships, community liberation and dreaming of new relationships-based climate justice worlds.





**Early Shinada** is an interdisciplinary artist and writer whose work convenes collective moments of witness around live relays of history.



**Sydesho** — Oliver 'Syde-Sho' Arias is a Dominican-American filmmaker from Providence, RI. He aims to use the power of film to highlight the lives of artists, activists, community members/organizers, and social/political movements.

He prides himself in being able to film amazing storytellers that bring life to the screen as he helps facilitate that process by creating a vulnerable and safe space that allows for the best stories.

## Exhibiting Artists



**Brooke Erin Goldstein** is a textile artist, curator, and teaching artist based in North Providence, RI. She is a RISD alumnus with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Textiles. Goldstein has shown nationally since 2003. From 2022 to 2023, her installation Reverberations saw 23,014 visitors at the Missouri Botanical Garden Sachs Museum and was featured in a St. Louis NPR piece. In 2024, Goldstein's artist book *Whatever: Thoughts on Feeling and Feelings on Thoughts* was on display at the Jamestown Arts Center.

Goldstein co-founded the award-winning pop-up exhibition business Kiosk PVD. Goldstein's curatorial project *Con/textile/ize* was featured on the cover of the Newport Mercury in 2018. Their curatorial project *Resurfacing* at the Jamestown Arts Center in 2022 broke new ground for the organization by including a sensory room experience for visitors.

As a teaching artist, Goldstein was the Gordon School's Britt Nelson Visiting Artist and the Happy White Visiting Artist at the St. Andrew's School in 2018. In 2023, she was selected for the RISCA's Teaching Artist Roster and regularly offers free Anti-Capitalist Personal Finance for Artists workshops.

Her show *Behind Open Doors* at the New Bedford Art Museum in 2017 enlightened her perspective to the power of showing in educational spaces versus commercial galleries. In 2023 her public art piece *Space & Time* was on display at the Providence train station. This opened her eyes to the power of exhibiting outside of institutions. Goldstein loves the accessibility that public art provides and is inspired to make it a focus of her practice moving forward.

<https://brookeeringoldstein.com/>

## Artist Statement

We don't often think about the social and emotional lives of plants. What is even more overlooked is the auditory aspect of how plants collectively utilize sound to respond to stress and trauma. In *Reverberations* I abstractly illustrate the feelings and purpose behind the sounds made by the two most common plants in our lives, grass and trees. As a textile artist I use our human connection with fabric to immerse the viewer in an emotional experience.

In this immersive installation, you enter a bisected world half above and half below the soil's surface. To your right, this side of the gallery explores the screaming sound that grass makes when it is cut. I am fascinated by this occurrence mainly because of the synesthesia that happens as the smell of cut grass is actually an olfactory manifestation of the distressing scream that grass makes to signal to other grasses that they are in danger and a threat may be headed their way. This sound, smell and visual event fully represents the emotional life of grass and gives us an insight into how plants "feel".

To your left, this side of *Reverberations* takes you below ground level to give a window into the symbiotic fungal system that make tree roots able to communicate, commonly known as the "wood wide web". Tree roots in the forest send each other sound waves and other signals through the fungi to warn others of disease, invasive insects, drought, etc. They also send each other resources such as moisture and nutrients to keep the community thriving. Scientists have found that tree roots not only talk but also listen. Specifically, trees can "hear" water and have their roots grow in the direction to find it. The individual yet interwoven relationship between these species opens up our understanding of nature as a societal collective exchanging ideas and resources for the betterment of their community.

While I don't use sound in the traditional sense, I am visualizing these auditory occurrences by using layered patchwork, fabric painting, quilting and radial composition. I make use of optical effects so that you can see and feel the sound rather than hear it. Highlighting the emotional aspects of these plants lives as well as the multi-sensory nature of how they talk, falls in line with the themes in my greater body of work. It means something to me that we don't just look at the what and how but also the why of this type of communication. As you immerse yourselves in these two worlds, above and below the surface, I hope they will leave you with a whole new understanding of the natural world, opening you up to more sensitivity and excitement by the greenery around you.



**Jazzmen Lee-Johnson** is a visual artist, scholar, composer, and curator. Her practice centers on the interplay of animation, printmaking, music, and dance, informed by a yearning to understand how our current circumstance is tethered to the trauma of the past. She received her BFA in Film, Animation, and Video at RISD, her MA in Public Humanities at Brown University, and a heavy dose of education working with youth in Baltimore, South Africa, India, New York City and Providence. Her work has been shown around the world and is held in many collections including the Baltimore Museum of Art, RISD Museum, Allen Memorial Art Museum of Oberlin College, and UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive.

As the 2019 inaugural Artist in Residence at the Rhode Island Department of Health she utilized the arts to confront health disparities. As 2022 Fitt Artist-in-Residence at the John Nicholas Brown Center for Humanities and Cultural Heritage at Brown University, where she created *Not Never More* a visual remix of the historic wallpaper *Les Vues D'amérique Du Nord*. For the 150th Anniversary of the Colfax Massacre she designed the Colfax Massacre Memorial—etched in granite, centering the stories of the Black victims of the tragedy. She is the illustrator of Zora Neale Hurston's *Barracoon*, adapted for young readers by Ibram X Kendi released in 2024.

<https://www.jazzmenleejohnson.com/>

#### Artist Statement

*Phendula* and *Tsedimose* are two pieces from *Grandma's Lament / Sello sa Nkoko, Chapter 1: Diriti-Dintsho* a silkscreened portfolio and graphic novella that comprises the first chapter of a multimedia audio/visual sci-fi Afro-surrealist composition. In this portfolio of 11 silkscreened pages we meet the *diriti-dintsho*, a people forced to live in plastic squalor outside the exquisite and lush orbs inhabited by the wealthy. The future, past, and present—each driven by divergent forces—are at a conjunction, struggling for the souls of their inhabitants.

Understanding time as nonlinear, I read one historical moment through the veiled experiences of many, which enables me to assign Black bodies new agency in lives past, lives living and lives forming. We inhabit our history, encapsulating the pains and triumphs of our ancestors. In order to reclaim Black bodies and upend generational trauma, I use my imagination to render alternative narratives that empower Black lineage to come into their power at the nexus of the submerged past, the dystopian present, and the devastated toxicity of an exiled future.

Other translations:

**nkoko** -grandmother, granny, grandma. Setswana (pr. hnn go go; hnn said like hmm, but with an n.)

**sello sa** - the cry of, weeping of, grief of. Setswana (pr. *say-low sah*)

**diriti-dintsho** - directly translates into dark black shadows or silhouettes, but in the context of *Grandma's Lament*, Lee-Johnson interprets it as shadows of our ancestors/ shadows of ourselves. Setswana (pr. *dee-ree-ti deent-sue*)



**Jordan Seaberry** is a painter, organizer, legislative advocate and educator. Born and raised on the Southside of Chicago, he came to Providence to attend Rhode Island School of Design, and later, Roger Williams University School of Law. Alongside his art, he built a career as a grassroots organizer and as Director of Public Policy at the Nonviolence Institute, helping to pass multiple criminal justice reform milestones, including probation reform, the Unshackling Pregnant Prisoners Bill, and the statewide Community-Police Relationship Act.

Seaberry serves as Co-Director of the U.S. Department of Arts and Culture, and as a professor at Rhode Island School of Design. He serves as Chairman of the Providence Board of Canvassers, overseeing the city's elections, and as a Board Member at New Urban Arts.

He has served as artist in residence at Skowhegan, Yaddo, the Verge Center of the Arts, and elsewhere. His work is in collections including the RISD Museum, the Crystal Bridges Museum, the deCordova Museum, and others.

Seaberry maintains a studio in Providence.

<https://www.jordanseaberry.com/>

#### **Artist Statement**

My practice combines painting and policy change, in equal measure. Considering painting as an act of listening and politics as an act of relating, I see the external results as two extensions of the same investigation.

My paintings bridge a practice of collage, mixed media painting, sampling and drawing. My politics involve a years-long performance of the state (the US Department of Arts and Culture) legislative organizing, and political leadership.

Both of these threads come alive with one animating fact: if matter cannot be created or destroyed, then the embers that swallowed my grandfather's Mississippi home are still here with us, in us. Every bead of sweat he dropped running through the woods soaked into the dirt, as his family's abandoned garden decomposed into soil. The smoke's carbon monoxide fed the pines that may have been milled into my stretcher bars. But if every particle of the fire is still here, then so is every drop of water that extinguished it. As in, every drop of water needed for the fires of the future is already here, moving through me, through you, through a cloud and a sunflower. All the tools we need for the fights of the future are already here and, indeed, always have been.

My job as an artist and an organizer is to take those tools, to name them, to depict them, to hand them out.

Each painting is in search of this: how to listen in paint, relate within a politic, and gather water for tomorrow.

## About Emergent Forest

Emergent Forest is a new non-profit organization based in Rhode Island, founded by Kei Soares Cobb and Laura Brown-Lavoie for the vision of planting sanctuary orchards, where people can return their own and their loved ones' bodies to earth in a way that is ritually supported, ecologically intimate, and nourishing of future generations. To join our mailing list, and listen to our first podcast episode, visit [emergent-forest.org](http://emergent-forest.org). Your donations are gratefully received as compost for these visions.

## About IGNITE

Brown Arts' IGNITE Series uplifts the spirit of artistic collaboration across Brown, Providence, the Rhode Island region, and beyond. Ignite your creative curiosity through this multi-year series of programs, activations, interventions, and investigations.

## Credits + Acknowledgements

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