



WE
ARE
THE
ONCE
AND
FUTURE

VISION
OF OUR
ANCESTORS

rites of passage

20/20 VISION

AUGUST 13-17 2021

Whitney Center for the Arts

Pittsfield, Massachusetts

RITESOFPASSAGEPROJECT.ORG



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the uncommon
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rites ♀ passage

20/20 vision

Dear friends,

Welcome to *Rites of Passage: 20/20 Vision* — a house of belonging, resilience, and re-membering, honoring the lives of Women of Color.

From the first Rites of Passage iteration in 2013 to the current *20/20 Vision*, ROP was envisioned as a place for women to literally take up space in embodying our life experiences, healing, and truth, set within the former historic "Women's Club of the Berkshires." It was then — and is now — a sprawling, poly-lingual expression of our shared Collective Female/Feminine Soul searching for and reassembling Herself; a house of shared flowering, and a celebration of that very nature of the Feminine which births, sustains, nurtures and grieves, and which also gives death when it's due.

20/20 Vision, specifically, is a testament not only to the brutal histories endured by Black, Indigenous and Immigrant Women of Color (BIWOC), but also to our resilience, our brilliance and our power as the leading edge of a vital movement forward — one based in interconnection, communion, and in renewing the threads that have been torn apart. *Rites of Passage: 20/20 Vision* bears witness to who we are beyond our oppression, and the necessity for us as People of Color and as women — and ultimately as human beings — to honor, release & shed the burdens of inherited grief & trauma, while also reclaiming the ancestral technologies that once served to weave together the warp and weft of the sacred & mundane. Together we are working to become ancestors worth descending from, human beings who know how to live a whole life again.

With Women of Color at the center of this collective re-membering, I believe we have the power to remake our lives, our communities, and our futures into more of our true likeness. The soil, seeds, flowers, water & fruit you witness in this house are not merely metaphors. They are our actual inheritance as human beings, and as women — as keepers of seeds, water, and the sustenance of family and community.

It is my and our hope that this collaborative offering of our personal & collective healing & liberation inspires the same in you.

We are the once & future vision of our Ancestors.

With gratitude,

Pooja Prema

Founder & Artistic Director
The Rites of Passage Project

20/20 VISION MS

ADLESCENCE

Cure-ated & Performed by R.O.P.E.:
Chante Wellington, Keya Robertson,
Victoria Monsalve & Zoë-Ruth Brizan
Facilitated by DeeArah Wright

| Sponsored by Berkshire United Way &
The Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation

QUEER RIGINS

Cure-ated by Yura Sapi & Nani Medrano
with Ballistikal

| Sponsored by Hillary Hawk

RE-MATRIATIN

Cure-ated by Pooja Prema
with Brenda Salgado
Performed by Brenda Salgado

SUSTENANCE

Cure-ated by Pooja Prema
with Barbara Bockbrader
Performed by Pooja Prema

| Sponsored by Campo de' Fiori

UL KITCHEN

Cure-ated by Cheryl R. Riley
Performed by Tashi Colston & Mayari Carter,
Laura Cabrera & Liberty Ortiz

| Sponsored by Barbara Tober

NLONGER SILENT

Cure-ated & Performed by Juliet Olivier

THE BODY

Cure-ated by Shaina Lu, Vivian Ho & Tiandra Ray
Performed by Devyn Harris

THE SUSTENANCE PANTRY

Cure-ated by Tiandra Ray, Nadine Zaza
& Marie Tattiana Aqeel

| Sponsored by Sophia Maravell & Community

LEGACY

Cure-ated & Performed by Sarah Varichon

| Sponsored by Ronni Verebay

MIGRATION/DIASPRA

Cure-ated by Nicole Combeau & Pooja Prema
Performed by Nicole Combeau

| Sponsored by Sherwood Guernsey

AGE AS POWER

| Performed by Sokhna Heathyre Mabin

WOMBMAN HEAL THYSELF

Cure-ated by Sunder Ashni
Performed by Sunder Ashni & Anais L'amour

THE LIBRARY

Cure-ated by Charisse Madlock & Pooja Prema

DIVORCE

Cure-ated by Pooja Prema

THE GRIEF

Cure-ated by Pooja Prema

LOSS/A PAUSE

Cure-ated by Manon Bogerd Wada

THE APOTHECARY

Cure-ated by Marie Tattiana Aqeel,
Jasmine Burems & Pooja Prema

HAIR: THE CROWN TEMPLE

Cure-ated & Performed by Amanda Castillo

RE-MEMBERING MY FATHER

Cure-ated by Desiree Mwalimu-Banks
& Pooja Prema

| Sponsored by Brad Verebay

THE LIVING WOMB & THE NOTHING

Cure-ated by Sokhna Heathyre Mabin
with Elisa Jimenez

| Sponsored by Jayne Atkinson

FORGIVENESS

Cure-ated & Performed by
Rev. Azaria Carolyn Ulmer

| Sponsored by Cameron Melville

DEATH: A STAIRWAY TO AN INVISIBLE EXIT

Cure-ated by Manon Bogerd Wada
& Mia Reiko Braverman

| Sponsored by End Well

THE ELDER

Cure-ated & Performed by Amber Chand
& Satyena Ananda

| Sponsored by Carolyn Butler

DISSOLUTI

Cure-ated & Performed by
Desiree Mwalimu-Banks

THE RE-BIRTH CANAL

Cure-ated by Amy Alaman

V IS FOR VICTORY

Cure-ated by Pooja Prema
Performed by Cynthia Alberto
& Lula Christopher

| Sponsored by Collective Healing Legacy of Love

DAILY THEMES

Featuring nightly post-performance talk-backs
at 9pm.

20% of ticket donations go to support organiza-
tions working for Trans Liberation, Black Birthcare,
Indigenous Water Rights, Seed Sovereignty Immi-
gration Justice, and to R.O.P.E. Learn more
at ritesofpassageproject.org/2020vision.

Fri, Aug 13
VISIONS OF
LIBERATION

Sat, Aug 14
HONORING OUR
ANCESTORS

Sun, Aug 15
EMBODIED
TRUTH

Mon, Aug 16
RECLAIMING
SUSTENANCE

Tues, Aug 17
EMERGENT
FUTURES/FUTURE
GENERATIONS

20/20 VISION COLLABORATORS

PRO-CREATIVE TEAM

Pooja Prema
Founder & Artistic Director,
Cure-ator, Performer

Janel Munoa
Company Manager

Afrikah Smith
Co-Production Manager

Melissa Mowry
Co-Production Manager
& Stage Manager

Sesha Liz Coleman
Support Systems Manager

Michelle Allerte
Community Outreach
& Box Office

Maia Robbins-Zust
Technical Manager

Devyn Harris
Intern Support

Marina Dominguez
Materials Sourcing

Shiku Thuo
Assistant Stage Manager

Nina Flowers
Regional PR

Beth Carlson
Local PR

Erin Murphy
Graphic Design

Anna J. Witiuk
Grant Writer

Jinni Cavanaugh
Patreon Manager

Emily Paskus
Food Team

Maddie Elling
Food Team

Olivia Wade
Fundraising Support

SOUL SUPPORT MAMAS

Aki Hirata Baker

Amy Alaman

Rev. Azaria Carolynn Ulmer

Brenda Salgado

Lula Christopher

Venus Paloma

EXPRESSIVE ARTS FACILITATORS

América López
Migration/Diaspora

DeeArah Wright
Adolescence

Gabrielle Senza
No Longer Silent

CURE-ATORS

Amanda Castillo
Hair: The Crown Temple

Amber Chand
The Elder Room

Amy Alaman
The Re-Birth Canal

Rev. Azaria Carolynn Ulmer
Forgiveness

Charisse Madlock
The Library

Cheryl R. Riley
Soul Kitchen

Desiree Mwalimu-Banks
Dissolution
Re-Membering My Father

Jasmine Burems
The Apothecary

Juliet Olivier
No Longer Silent

Marie Tattiana Aqeel
The Sustenance Pantry
& The Apothecary

Manon Bogerd Wada
Loss: A Pause

**Death: A Stairway to
an Invisible Exit**

Mia Reiko Braverman
Death: A Stairway to
an Invisible Exit

Nadine Zaza
The Sustenance Pantry

Nicole Combeau
Migration/Diaspora

Sarah Varichon
Legacy

Satyena Ananda
The Elder Room

Shaina Lu
The Body Room

Sokhna Heathyre Mabin
The Living Womb
& The Nothing

Sunder Ashni
Wombman Heal Thyself

Tiandra Ray
The Sustenance Pantry
The Body Room

Vivian Ho
The Body Room

Yura Sapi
Queer Origins

ARTISTS

Béatrice Doumet
The Grief Room (Middle-
Eastern Diaspora Grief Wall)

Brenda Salgado
Collaborator in Re-Matriation

Constanza Bergs
The Grief Room (Americas
Diaspora Grief Wall)

Cynthia Alberto
Weaving in V is for Victory

Elisa Jimenez
Photographs in Sustenance
Collaborator in The Living
Womb & The Nothing

Emily Frisch
Dress in Divorce & Sustenance

Jeannine Hooks-Allen
The Grief Room (African
Diaspora Grief Wall)

Jeanny Tsai
The Grief Room
(Asian Diaspora Grief Wall)/
Book photographer

Jenny Min
Ceramics throughout the house

Kaamilah
Books in The Sustenance Pantry
& The Apothecary

"Lottie" Ling Ou
Soil Installation in
Migration/Diaspora

Manon Bogerd Wada
Counternarratives of
Herstory Census

Maria Ramirez
Web in Legacy

Mitsuko Brooks
Paintings in The Library

Monica Mody
Poetry in upstairs hallway

Nana Fran
Front Yard Installation

Nicole Combeau
The Grief Room (Americas
Diaspora Grief Wall)

Teresa O'Keefe
The Grief Room (African
Diaspora Grief Wall)

Toni Luck Buckley
The Grief Room (Middle-
Eastern Diaspora Grief Wall)

Venus Paloma
Photographs in The Living Womb

Sanié Bokari
Paintings in Re-Matriation

Sonia Mañon
Counternarratives of Herstory
Census in Migration/Diaspora

Verónica G. Cárdenas
"Traveling Soles" in
Migration/Diaspora

PERFORMERS

Amanda Castillo
Hair: The Crown Temple

Amber Chand
The Elder Room

Anais L'amour
Wombman Heal Thyself

Rev. Azaria Carolynn Ulmer
Forgiveness

Brenda Salgado
Re-Matriation

Cynthia Alberto
V is for Victory

Cheryl. R Riley
Soul Kitchen

Desiree Mwalimu-Banks
Dissolution

Devyn Harris
The Body Room

Juliet Oliver
No Longer Silent

Laura Cabrera
Soul Kitchen

Liberty Ortiz
Soul Kitchen

Lula Christopher
V is for Victory

Marie Tattiana Aqeel
Soul Kitchen

Nicole Combeau
Migration/Diaspora

Sarah Varichon
Legacy

Pooja Prema
Sustenance

Satyena Ananda
The Elder Room

Sokhna Heathyre Mabin
Age As Power

Sunder Ashni
Wombman Heal Thyself

Tashi Colston & Mayari Carter
Soul Kitchen

PERCUSSIONISTS

Amanda Turk

Caroyln Koebel

Krista Speroni

HOUSE DOULAS

Aki Hirata Baker

Marina Dominguez

Ayo Eniola

Janel Munoa

Kanako Kawabe

Neviah Waldron

Felicia Flores

Béatrice Doumet

Ellie Rostan

Venus Paloma

Amy Alaman

Jenny Min

APPRENTICES

Ayo Eniola

Béatrice Doumet

Ellie Rostan

Felicia Flores

Kanako Kawabe

Neviah Waldron

Solana Priestley

ORIGINS & INITIATION ♀

Rites of Passage first came to me as a series of visions in 2012. I wanted to honor and celebrate the rites of passage that women undergo in a lifetime because I deeply longed for such a culture, and guessed that hidden underneath our collective amnesia — we all did — whether we knew it or not. I had come to the realization that there's virtually no acknowledgment of personal rites of passage in our modern Westernized culture; almost no place to seek out ritual or community that would gift us life-giving support when we most need it. And unless our trials can be ritually heard, seen and honored, they will likely remain dimmed as traumas to cope with, instead of as powerful initiations.ⁱ

Aging has become something to abhor, to hide and delay, along with so many other good things — including birth, menstruation, menopause, and death. There are no rites of passage for our entry into life itself, or for puberty and the death of our girlhood, or our passage into motherhood or elderhood. There are no rites of passages commemorating the betrayals we've endured, or the abuses against us through which we've thrived, or which allow us to heal the vestiges of fear we've inherited. There are no rites of passage that honor our personal evolution through the many deaths we encounter in a lifetime — the passing away of our own mothers, fathers and children, transitions such as divorce or the end of a significant relationship, or the cyclical dissolution of who we thought we were — more often than not through situations beyond our control.

Collected together, these myriad initiations that occur over the course of a lifetime hold the potential to make us ripe and complete; they are the making of well-earned strength, wisdom and grace. I needed a place for this whole spectrum of complex, gorgeous life-living to exist and to be seen and treasured; a place for conversations to arise, so that those of us who have no template for a culture of celebrations and ritual could begin to see and to viscerally feel what honoring a lived life could mean, and then perhaps know, too, the desire for this in our own lives. These kinds of initiations can only be created from within a community, developing organically from the rich collage of our own 'indigenosity'ⁱⁱ (born of relationship with a place and with people) — out of our own personal needs, heartaches, and brilliant soul.

ⁱ Malidoma Somé, *Of Water and the Spirit*

ⁱⁱ Martin Prechtel, *Long Life, Honey in the Heart*

MISSION ♀

Our mission is to empower cis and trans women of all ages and ethnicities to recognize + reclaim rites of passage throughout our lives — whether it be menstruation, pregnancy or abortion, divorce, menopause, healing trauma, immigration, claiming queer identity, or any other significant initiatory life experience.

The Rites of Passage living museum installation — performances and other iterations in print + film — are intended to act as catalysts for introspection, transformation and connection and to inspire us to create new ways to honor the myriad cycles and transitions in their lives. Ultimately Rites of Passage seeks to expand the human potential to embrace the full spectrum of our lived experience.

Learn More & Support at
RitesofPassageProject.org

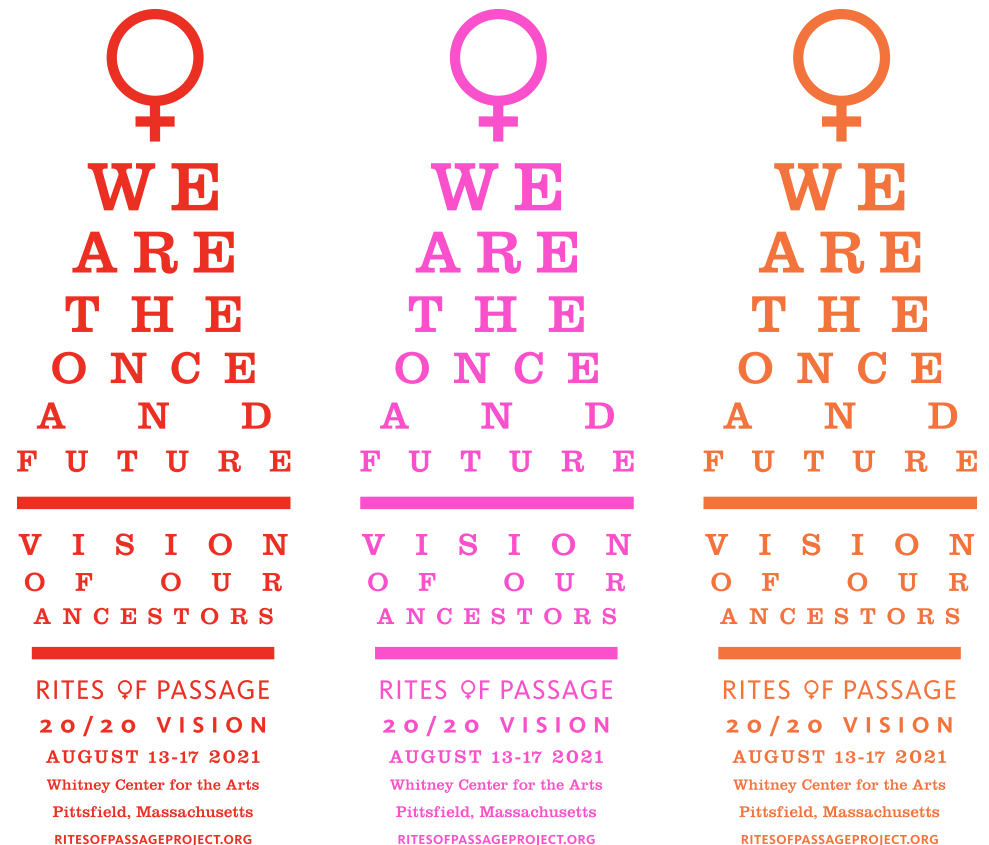
LONG-TERM VISION ♀

The long-term vision of Rites of Passage is to create a large format photo book (of which there exists one draft copy), an online virtual museum, and eventually, a workbook-template that would enable other groups of women around the country and the world to create their own Rites of Passage living museum installations.

Yet, the vision for Rites of Passage doesn't begin or end with art, theatre or print. It blossoms into a yet larger and more encompassing vision for a permanent land-based sanctuary for radical healing, liberation & art-making, focused on, but not exclusive to women and Black, Indigenous and Immigrant Women of Color.

If you are inspired by Rites of Passage and wish to support its forward evolution, we invite you to help water these fertile vision-seeds. We are currently working to form our own 501(c)(3). Meanwhile, donations can be made via Venmo: RitesofPassage or PayPal: info@ritesofpassageproject.org.

For larger reparations-donations of money or land to our soon-to-be land trust, please contact Pooja directly: pooja@ritesofpassageproject.org.



R♀OMS OF CURE

AD♀LESCENCE

Cure-ated & Performed by R.O.P.E.:

Chante Wellington, Keya Robertson, Victoria Monsalve & Zoë-Ruth Brizan

Facilitated by DeeArah Wright

| Sponsored by Berkshire United Way & The Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation

Envisioned, created & performed by 4 youth from the Rites of Passage Empowerment (R.O.P.E.) program, the Adolescence room is a glimpse into the world of young women of Color as they find meaning and craft identity in 2021. Their cooperative bedroom installation serves as their gathering place to discuss topics related to their personal experiences with rites of passage, such the COVID-19 pandemic, self-love, maturity, trust, and gender. Visitors will witness these conversations in motion while the cure-ators also enjoy each other's company in authentic ways.

QUEER ♀RIGINS

| Cure-ated by Yura Sapi & Nani Medrano, with Ballistikal

| Sponsored by Hillary Hawk

How can we connect to and receive messages from our inner child? Join Black and Indigenous women and non-binary artists from the Latin America-based BALISTIKAL, an LGBTQ+ arts and healing space, as each of us work to heal our own childhoods in this project, reconnecting with our “girlhoods” and queer and non-binary lineage (the childhood of our ancestors).

Before the West invaded, ruled and imposed its doctrine of shock through patriarchy, heteronormativity and religion there were Indigenous and African communities. They had a strong connection with nature, living and growing in community, working for the care of the land and their connection with it through the sun, the moon, the stars, the astros, stories, spirituality, music, agriculture, science and songs.

We are here 500 years later honoring our ancestors, healing our lineage, going back to our childhood. This ritual is intentionally for our reconnection to the origin, making a trip to and from the ocean, letting us be carried away by the therapeutic sounds of the Cajon (instrument), reconnecting with our inner children, healing ties and labels imposed from colonization, and the binary of “boy or girl.”

We hope to transmit an Afro-Indigenous ancestrality of the South American coastal countries Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela through the queer artists represented: Nani Medrano (Peru), Yura Sapi (Ecuador/Colombia), TropiGalactica (Venezuela/Colombia), Migreis González (Venezuela/Colombia), Lia Catalina Perea Mena (Colombia) and Jhon Esteban Lasso Mena (Colombia). Through the ocean we heal our lineage: our ancestors are in the ocean.

RE-MATRIATI♀N

Cure-ated by Pooja Prema

with Brenda Salgado

Performed by Brenda Salgado

Rematriation is defined as a return to a spiritual way of life with reverence to Mother Earth. This room embodies that, and features prominently one of the most basic elements of life that we both come from and return to: soil. The earth, i.e. soil, is our original Mother. Soil, like Soul, is in a continual metamorphosis of death-life-death which re-cycles every living thing into itself; the literal ground from which all emerges again. Along with the soil is artwork exploring self-love & radical acceptance, which is what the Earth teaches us.

SUSTENANCE

Cure-ated by Pooja Prema with Barbara Bockbrader

Performed by Pooja Prema

| Sponsored by Campo de' Fiori

Sustenance is a reclamation of R E S T and of all that grows green on this earth. Plantcestors teach us the true meaning of resilience; of what it means to grow in spite of and because, and to grow more beautifully because of it. This room is also about homecoming, and about the way we breathe plants and plants breathe us into reciprocity and into a deeper felt sense of belonging.

It is always in the forest and the jungle where I have felt most deeply at home.

20 years ago I had my first real encounter with forest and moss that was bigger than a 5 x 2 patch of wildness growing out of suburban concrete. This room is a cocoon of belonging and of rest for my own journey, my inner child, my inner mother, and for my ancestors who lived in jungles along the rivers and mountains of South India.

S♀UL KITCHEN

Cure-ated by Cheryl R. Riley

Performed by Cheryl R. Riley, Marie Tattiana Aqeel, Tashi Colston & Mayari Carter, Laura Cabrera & Liberty Ortiz

| Sponsored by Barbara Tober

In the Soul Kitchen, I want to emphasize connection to nature (farm-to-table in contemporary terminology), and honor my ancestors' ability to survive, thrive and excel despite the racism and sexism that make life a constant burden for peoples of colors and females since 1619 when we were brought to this continent as slaves. I want to demonstrate how we transform the ugly into beauty and establish what is American Culture in the eyes of the world through our food, fashion, music and language.

My grandmother was the daughter of a minister and a housewife mother of eight children. My grandfather built their home to accommodate her so the kitchen was the largest room. The dining table was huge and long and out the back door was an enormous backyard filled with fruit trees and her vegetable garden. That table was the center of our lives. Always activities there—babies being nursed or fed, telephone conversations that everyone participated in, gossip, visiting neighbors, snacks laid out, peas being shelled, homework being done, coloring book pages filled, etc.

Both my grandmothers, of course, made what is known as ‘soul food’ and also traditional ‘American’ cuisine. The men in the family might return as we early rising children awoke towing a boat full of still swimming fish and crabs which my grandmother would turn into gumbo. The men also hunted and my grandmothers both had chickens for fresh eggs and their meat. Meanwhile, we lived in all Black neighborhoods that were considered ‘food deserts’. So, I want to honor my grandmothers and the legacy that is food and nourishment and ‘making a way out of no way’ as they often said.

I will be making more of my SCULPTURES IN THE FORM OF A NECKLACE with my primary material being oxtail, rib and marrow bones. I will also paint in media of gouache and metallic inks GLYPHS on the pages of vintage encyclopedia Pooja found on the site. The walls and kitchen cabinets will be covered by hundreds of Glyphs that are painted on pages of a 1957 encyclopedia. The GLYPHS are a symbolic language I developed over many years that revealed themselves to me as from a matriarchal society after I learned that in every war, women and children die most, and in matriarchies, there are no wars. Their closest approximation of a religion is THE ARTS. When one has mastered them, they are rewarded with a GOOD DEATH.

NO LONGER SILENT

| Cure-ated & Performed by Juliet Olivier

Healing is a process of reconnecting with our true selves, creating a practice of becoming safe in our nervous system, of coming home to the body. No Longer Silent visualizes being wrapped in safety, wrapped and protected by self-love, the infinite love of those who came before us, and the infinite love of the Universe.

It's haunting to consider that the number of beings who are survivors of sexual trauma can never be calculated. Some stories are shared, some will never be known. Each person who breaks the silence becomes a warrior, a protector, a pathmaker, a pattern-breaker. We hear you. We hear your public assertions, we hear your private confidences. We hear your stories and we grieve, we shake and weep, we empathise, we hope, we fight, and we all grow stronger. Each human who has the courage to tell their story or to confront their oppressor gives us an opportunity to heal, to be less alone, to hold those in false power accountable to the power of truth. Politically, healing is radical. It benefits capitalist empire for us to remain disembodied, isolated, and unhappy within ourselves. Sexual and gender-based violence have been an intentional tool in the oppression of People of Color, historically and currently.

Each person's process of healing is uniquely their own. Our bodies are our home on earth, and we deserve to inhabit them fully and without shame. It can be painful when we reconnect with ourselves on a deeper level. We feel more of what we may have blocked out in an attempt at self protection, but how can we heal the wound we can't see and feel? The only way out is through.

The work of healing is life long, and it is imperative that we embark on the journey so we can invite more than mere survival into our lives. We invite pleasure, autonomy, power, sensuality, strength, kindness, mourning, forgiveness, rage, beauty, softness, humor, joy. We invite you to the wholeness that is your right as a child of Earth. Heal, grow, celebrate and love each other, so that we may thrive collectively.

THE BODY ROOM

| Cure-ated by Shaina Lu, Vivian Ho & Tiandra Ray
| Performed by Devyn Harris

The Body Room is filled with figures who serve as ancestral women/mothers/caretakers who live within the walls of the spaces we occupy, giving us permission to fully be present and seen in the vast ways we have presented and cared for ourselves over time. "At home" in the body is represented in a couple of ways. One being the largeness of the bodies occupying space in positions that are open and exposed rather than closed. In addition, through representations of various body types and types of grooming, we celebrate both comfort in the body as is and as we shape it to be. In performance, the communion between occupant and ancestors comes to life in a ritual of self-care, an "exhale" and expression of love for the bodies that hold us.

THE SUSTENANCE PANTRY

| Cure-ated by Tiandra Ray, Nadine Zaza & Marie Tattiana Aqeel
| Sponsored by Sophia Maravell & Community

The Sustenance Pantry explores both ancestral foods and the tools and ingredients used to make them, as well as the origins — seeds — which sustain our life. From seed to table, food is integral to our cultural identity, legacy, and the evolution of culture to understand and maintain the preservation of the foods that nourish and nurture us. The natural fermentation and immersion of seasonal vegetation and flora in brine has been an ongoing identity building exercise for refugees, immigrants, and the forebears that carry their diasporic truths dating from the depths of the Tigris Valley in 2030 BCE. The Sustenance Pantry endeavor is a construction of the given social identities around sustenance, both in terms of the heterogeneity that it may encompass and in the fluidity with which it may be applied, enacted, and understood across time and contexts. Time is the key ingredient in pickling, fermenting and drying foods and to preserve food, is to preserve one's self and heritage, as well as to save and preserve the seeds of our past and future.

LEGACY

| Cure-ated & Performed by Sarah Varichon

| Sponsored by Ronni Verebay

The Legacy room holds space for the healing of our matrilineal lineages. This room speaks particularly to the bonds of Mothers and children, of Mother Earth and her people. It speaks to the Mother wound and to the grief & rage that is experienced when this primary bond is broken due to colonization, forced migration, mental illness, trauma, misused institutional power and the devastating ways of capitalism & patriarchy.

It unveils the impact of this separation on the psyche and emotional fabric of the Mother, child, and community at large. This theme hits home for me, having been separated from my mother at the age of two when she was diagnosed with schizophrenia. This space is an offering to my ancestral healing and to the healing of all those who have experienced forced separation with their Mother, their children, their families or their Ancestral Land. It's a space of healing for those who are mending the broken parts of themselves rooted in the Mother wound and in ancestral trauma.

This Room offers us permission to feel the depth of our pain and to embody the fire of our liveliness. Here we create life with the substance of our tears, sowing seeds for new legacies to emerge and bloom. Here we dance the joy of re-mothering ourselves back to Belonging.

MIGRATION/DIASPORA

| Cure-ated by Nicole Combeau & Pooja Prema
| Performed by Nicole Combeau

| Sponsored by Sherwood Guernsey

As Homo sapiens, like most sentient and living organisms, our existence is directly shaped by our environment. The conditions of our environments are constantly shifting, changing and adapting; and by virtue so are we. Migration, outside of a political and social phenomenon, is an effect of nature's processes of change.

When fear, politics, greed, and capital come into this picture, the natural order becomes manipulated. Border patrols, forced displacements, segregation are normalized. The othering of certain groups becomes a part of life. Our natural inclination to migrate becomes something only those with economic privileges can hold. For everyone else, migration becomes a struggle, a burden, an unsatisfiable necessity.

It is only through the lens of the colonizer that false concepts of belonging and unbelonging are born — invasives and non-invasive species. The Earth has no categorization for Her children. We all belong here — wherever we are. Wherever we go. And we have always — just as plants — traveled and re-established our roots elsewhere.

In the Migration/Diaspora room, we hold space for migration as a natural part of existence, for its interconnection with life and survival. We hold space for the inevitable pain and grief that living beings experience when migrating, when being displaced & dispossessed. We hold space for the resilience that it takes to adapt and thrive in new conditions, and the bond that connects us all as children from diasporas.

OFRENDAS

| Created by América López

Ofrendas are an essential part of the Day of the Dead celebrations in Mexico and for that reason many people think of them as grieving altars. While ofrendas are often constructed as a way to grieve, they also are made to remember and honor those who are no longer walking on earth.

This altar is a bridge between past and present. It was made to remember the women who we used to be when we first arrived to this land as immigrants and honor the women we have become while living in it. Through this altar we, Latin-American women in the Berkshires, remember our old selves and honor the women we are today.

AGE AS PŌWER

| Performed by Sokhna Heathyre Mabin

We are born innocent and wise. Life is the journey of experimenting with power. Water is life. Blood is consciousness. As a woman ages, she becomes more power-full with the blood she holds.

WŌMBMAN HEAL THYSELF

| Cure-ated by Sunder Ashni

| Performed by Sunder Ashni & Anaïs L'amour

Wombman Heal Thyself explores the creative and healing force of the element water, transversing everyday and mystic reality using physical, visual and sound driven prayers.

It is said that from primordial waters the Earth emerged.

We are water babies I was told.

We are made up of 75% water.

With Water covering approximately 70% of the earth.

Controlling the tides, our emotions, the seasons/cycles, the cycles of our physical body and more than our minds can fathom; We are the Water.

This ritual is intended to honor, heal and transmute the water within us and on the Earth. It is time we sing its praises and sing for its healing. It is time we move our bodies of water to ancient wave rhythms.

The room is a multi-layered land/sound/sense-scape. The water within the space with frequencies of compassion, acceptance, understanding grace and flow and these drops of water to be carried from the space within the cells of those who enter, charged and activated with these qualities. I would like individuals to be able to connect to their own waters internally and to the sources closest to them. Spatially I hope to invite a labyrinth-like experience, a space where individuals will find ways to their center, a space for reflection and an exit rooted in their experience of being connected to the center.

THE LIBRARY

| Cure-ated by Charisse Madlock & Pooja Prema

The (radical feminist) Library is testament to the wisdom of women and particularly BIWOC women writers, poets, visionaries and seers who practiced eloquence through the written word. We are the "Canon" of the future. This space is about the way in which literature from the perspective of women of color helps shape our view of ourselves. In particular, these books can shape how we see our transition to adulthood and inform how we anticipate the ways in which we can be in this world. Novels can show us opportunities or make us question what we are capable of and how our own stories will play out.

COUNTERNARRATIVES OF HERSTORY CENSUS

| Project Co-Conveners: Sonia Mañón, Manon Bogerd Wada

| Web Designers: Alice Lin, Daisy Ozim

Herstory Census is a collection of writing from women of color which reports incidents of injustice and is rooted in a restorative practice. This socially engaged, collaborative and co-authored project exists as a website at www.herstorycensus.com and debuted as a physical installation at Rites of Passage. Herstory Census offers a visible and accessible platform to record, witness, and share each other's stories.

DIVŌRCE

| Cure-ated by Pooja Prema

This is the personal rite of passage that hits closest to home for me right now. This space is inspired by the Sumerian myth of Inanna, Star of Heaven, and her journey to the underworld down a spiral staircase. The myth, like divorce, teaches us how heartbreak & the death of dreams serve ultimately to make us more of who we truly are. Divorce is a purging of the patriarchy, and invites our reclamation of true wholeness & sovereignty. She who somehow emerges through the cocoon of loss, a butterfly willing wings to love self and Life again.

THE GRIEF RŌŌM

| Cure-ated by Pooja Prema

The Grief Room is a memorial for the collectively held, ungrieved grief of countless generations of Black & Brown ancestors who suffered the heartaches of colonization, displacement, enslavement, forgetting, and abuse. Each of the 4 walls represents 4 different diasporas: African, Middle Eastern, Asian and the Americas diasporas, with 108 photos of women present and past. Featuring photographers: Jeannine Hooks-Allen, Teresa O-Keefe, Toni Buckley, Beatrice Doumet, Jeanny Tsai, Nicole Combeau & Constanza Bergs, with additional photos from Carolina Hernández.

Until now, for many of our ancestors there was no space to grieve, no time for tears. Standing at the front of our lineages today, it is time that we feel fully the weight of our inheritance, and offer that grief back to the Earth. In creating a space to truly recognize and honor our grief, we create an opening to a truly liberated shared present & future.

LŌSS/A PAUSE

| Cure-ated by Manon Bogerd Wada

This closet is intended to function as a momentary pause for collective mourning and as an altar acknowledging loss. There are layered framing mechanisms repeated in this installation mimicking how loss continues to resurface and echo over time. Peering through the door frame, there is a collection of suspended frames, which internally hold an empty oval and alludes to portraiture of the past. The framing of absence considers this past year and ongoing, of immense loss of life and change of our rituals. With the primarily empty imagery, the absence of what has been lost is open for one's personal projection.

"I think it is healing behavior, to look at something so broken and see the possibility of wholeness in it."

— adrienne maree brown

THE APOTHECARY

| Cure-ated by Marie Tattiana Aqeel, Jasmine Burems & Pooja Prema

The Apothecary is a world of potent botanical medicine, a visual display of plant remedies, cures and conjure. Many of the plants were harvested locally from Mahican territory in the Hudson Valley and Berkshires. Some herbs are wild harvested while others are organic grown by Claudine Field Apothecary, a black matriarchal family farm in Copake, NY and Stellar Roots Farm.

Together we revive and lift up the medicine ways of our ancestors and of the plantcestors themselves. We create a space of remembrance for the healing ways of our grandmothers, and of generations of Black and Brown women who knew how to stay well and how to get well using simple wise women remedies which have always existed outside of the patriarchal and capitalist allopathic paradigm. This is grandmother wisdom which teaches us that the best way to tend health is to nourish ourselves deeply, and to in all ways mimic nature: walk barefoot, eat the things that grow in the meadow, sing songs, and make good friends with flowers and wild things.

HAIR: THE CROWN TEMPLE

| Cure-ated & Performed by Amanda Castillo

My intention with this space is to initiate deeper reflection of image & identity, particularly as it relates to cultural identity, and to celebrate the connection to the crown that can create the way we carry ourselves.

As this connection has been interrupted, through the corruption of mainstream marketing conflating beauty standards with superficiality & the appearance of whiteness, the reclamation of our ritual ways to love ourselves through one of our most notable & noticeable features — our hair represents an opportunity to celebrate our unique array of natural fibers & the way we weave, wear & work it. By creating an intimate and inspiring space that catalyzes creativity & confidence, this space offers a holistic view of beauty & wellness in communication with ancestry & new vision.

RE-MEMBERING MY FATHER

| Cure-ated by Desiree Mwalimu-Banks & Pooja Prema

| Sponsored by Brad Verebay

This closet is an altar to the complex, often painful, relationships women have with our own fathers — their shadows and their light, their love and self-hate, their potential and their failure, and therefore also with other men. Here, we honor, celebrate, mourn, and exalt the lineage of fathers whose narratives have informed our identities and experiences. We acknowledge the threads of our fathers' blueprints within each of us, and the myriad ways their choices have circumscribed our own.

"You can't lean on your ancestry for your identity; you get your identity from what you do for the future by becoming an ancestor worth descending from."

— MARTÍN PRECHTEL

THE LIVING WOMB & THE NOTHING

| Cure-ated by Sokhna Heathyre Mabin
with Elisa Jimenez

| Sponsored by Jayne Atkinson

The Living Womb is the room of life. It is the place through which life organizes, develops, and sometimes dies. The living womb is the perfect temperature, pressure, atmosphere to grow life. In the body it is a hollow muscle. When life is conceived a placenta is also formed. In some cultures it is believed that the placenta is the body of the guardian angel. They look like trees. May all who enter experience an invocation of possibility, heal, refocus, attune, and remember. It may also provoke. I wish for this room to educate everyone about the portal of creativity. It is the original 3D printer. It is the throne of creativity. We have all lived in one and passed through one. The Nothing, located in The Living Womb, represents, perhaps, a black hole. It is the place where our unborn conceptions dwell: by choice, miscarriage, or those born sleeping.

FORGIVENESS

| Cure-ated & Performed by Rev. Azaria Carolynn Ulmer

| Sponsored by Cameron Melville

The Forgiveness room speaks to the complexities of forgiveness. Forgiveness of self, forgiveness of others, forgiveness to our ancestors, forgiveness to our oppressors. The journey of forgiveness as wrestling with spirit, wrestling with self, wrestling with the situation. It's about liberation. How do we get free?

Ultimately, forgiveness for me is surrendering to Divinity for something bigger than myself to come through me and support me. Only then can I hold the possibility of true forgiveness. This room offers us permission to dive into the messy, vulnerable, spiritual, healing journey to true forgiveness.

DEATH: A STAIRWAY TO AN INVISIBLE EXIT

| Cure-ated by Manon Bogerd Wada & Mia Reiko Braverman

| Sponsored by End Well

Meditating on death, we considered its mysterious character yet its stark boundary, its speed to strike with grief, and its residue of release.

In the process of working on this installation, Manon's father passed away suddenly. The collection of ashes was a shredded paper trail of his documents, the wood pillars from constructed furniture in his home, and the bowls were inherited.

The audio piece is layered with singing glass vessels, Mia passing through a river, and our breaths held and then exhaled.

THE ELDER ROOM

| Cure-ated & Performed by Amber Chand & Satyena Ananda

| Sponsored by Carolyn Butler

The Elder Room is a portal into a rich experience of elderhood as it is experienced through the lens of 3 distinct lineages — African American, East Indian, and Indigenous, the lineages of its collaborators. As women in our 7th decade, we ask ourselves: what is the essence of elderhood? How do we express the vibrancy and vitality of the spirit of elderhood, even as our bodies begin to diminish? Through storytelling, poetry, painting, prayer and ceremony we will explore the sacred creativity of this time in our lives. We honor the wisdom of our elders and the golden thread that ties them to future generations. Our message to all who enter into the Elder Room is this: You are Loved. You Are A Gift. Go Share Your Gift with the World.

DISSOLUTION

| Cure-ated & Performed by Desiree Mwalimu-Banks

Dissolution sits between two worlds: the world of death and the world of rebirth. Dissolution involves being dissolved; the one becomes broken up into the many. In the messiness of this reality, we re-member what is most essential in ourselves as we walk the labyrinth of our return from the center of the spiral, back out into the world.

The room of dissolution is a reflection of the mirror that lives between myself and my shadow. Inspired by Dr. Clarissa Pinkola Estes's concept of creating *descansos* (meaning 'resting place' in Spanish) as a practice for healing unacknowledged loss and trauma, I excavate the wounds that have not been named in my life. Here, we apprehend the realm of dissolution by entering into its physical and metaphysical watery depths. Under the aegis of the Isian/Osirian Mysteries, the Myth of the Sumerian Goddess Inanna, and the ancient medicine of the Yoruba Goddess Oya, I explore themes of duality, dismemberment, and the piecing together of a fragmented self.

In this room, sound and video installations that reimagine the frequencies and landscapes of the archetypal feminine and its relationship to self-actualization abound. These offerings are rooted in my creative and spiritual practices, which integrate an ethics of deep listening through ritual ceremony, performance, sonic journeying, and written transmissions.

This room is not an answer, but a process; an invitation to give yourself permission to go into your own dark psychic interior; to dive deeply into your personal experience of dissolution. What does it mean to name the layers of our losses? How can we create room for their complexity? When we can stay with this process, as uncomfortable and annihilating as it is, we may receive the gifts of being reborn with new eyes to see our stories. We learn to organize chaos and to return to what is most essential and enduring in ourselves. There is a great deal of power available to us in willingly surrendering to this process, which in itself, is its own rite of passage.

THE RE-BIRTH CANAL

| Cure-ated by Amy Alaman

The Re-Birth Canal is the embodiment of the cyclical nature of all that exists, in all directions of space and time. Our conception of the self is limited, and yet also completely expansive when we can see it in relation to all existence, energy, consciousness, stardust and galaxies. There are no beginning and no endings, only changes in energy and form. I want this offering to convey the nourishing, unifying, fluidity of existence, and the relationship between death and re-birth. Parts of ourselves are constantly dying, changing, growing, and evolving, yet we are just one being living this particular iteration of existence. I want this descension to be an invitation to slow down, breathe deep, and connect with the sensations of this current existence. The beginning is The end is The beginning...

V IS FOR VICTORY

| Cure-ated by Pooja Prema

| Performed by Cynthia Alberto & Lula Christopher

| Sponsored by Collective Healing Legacy of Love

"V is for Victory" is the final room in the *Rites of Passage: 20/20 Vision* house of belonging. As such, it is an offering to the healing of all our ancestral lineages. It calls forth the flowering of the prayer of all of our ancestors for peace & justice for all living beings, and sovereign fertility in all its forms. In it, we honor & celebrate the power of the Divine Feminine and of women specifically — as weavers of story and bearers of both wound & cure; grandmothers, mothers and daughters who carry within us all the seeds and DNA memory that ever was, and ever will be: we who hold the power to gestate & renew our species... We are the Once & Future Vision of our Ancestors.

With a bow to the awe-inspiring organ from which most of us emerge, this V tells the 200,000 year old story of the forgetting and gradual re-membling of the weave of humanity — the patterns, languages, and many-colored ways of connection that once served as the warp and weave between human beings and the matrix of Life. The act of weaving itself has always been one of the ancient technologies that connected us to everything else. While weaving, women prayed and sang stories into the cloth — cloth made from threads spun of plant, animal and ultimately, soil. Despite hundreds of years of recent colonization, and thousands of years of patriarchal conquest, the essential truth of this perennial heritage — the seed possibility of who we truly are — remain, waiting for us to rediscover and reclaim our place in the garden that is Mother Earth.

V is for Victory is also a testament to the legacy of my own ancestral lineage, in whose language (Malayalam/Sanskrit/Dravidian), "Ma" (Mother) is the first word any of us utter. And in which "Jai Ma" is one of the most ancient and potent primordial prayers in existence. This room is an homage to that which we are. "Jai Ma." May there be Victory to the Great Mother. May Beauty, Justice & Truth be Victorious. May there be Victory to the Flowering Earth.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



Weaving by Cynthia Alberto

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"To acknowledge our ancestors means we are aware that we did not make ourselves, that the line stretches all the way back, perhaps to God; or to Gods.

We remember them because it is an easy thing to forget. that we are not the first to suffer, rebel, fight, love and die."

—ALICE WALKER

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