



MEET THE FELLOWS

2019 COHORT



2019 Creative Community Fellows New England



Rachel Balaban
Middletown, RI



Slate Ballard
Hamden, CT



Erica Barreto
North Adams, MA



Kate Beever
Cornish, ME



Elizabeth Billings
Tunbridge, VT



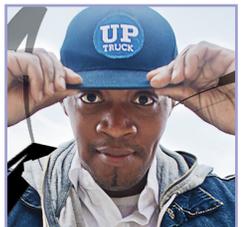
Ilana Brownstein
Arlington, MA



Lisa Burk-McCoy
Concord, NH



J Cottle
Boston, MA



Cedric Douglas
Quincy, MA



Melanie Faranello
West Hartford, CT



Jessica Gelter
Keene, NH



Charmane Glass-Tripp
Bloomfield, CT



Elisa Hamilton
Malden, MA



Kelly Hickey
Weybridge, VT



Tracie Konopinski
Boston, MA



Dana Legawiec
Bowdoinham, ME



Gabrielle Molina
New Haven, CT



David Norville
Allston, MA



Sam Potrykus
Jamaica Plain, MA



Hannah Rechtschaffen
Greenfield, MA



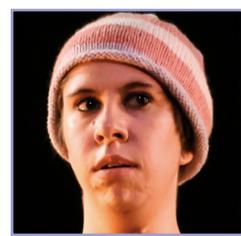
Romy Saint Hilaire
Quincy, MA



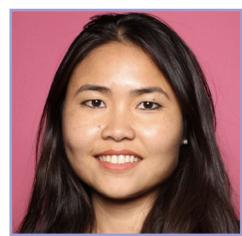
Catherine Stewart
Portsmouth, NH



Ashley Strazzinski
North Adams, MA



Jo Troll
Cambridge, MA



Ngoc-Tran Vu
Dorchester, MA



Rachel Balaban
Middletown, RI

Ms. Rachel Balaban is Adjunct Lecturer at Brown University in the Department of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies. She is Co-Founder and Co-Director of ASaP, Artists and Scientists as Partners, an organization housed at Brown University that facilitates educational programs on the topic of arts and health, working with both medical and arts practitioners to foster creative, integrative health practices. Rachel also facilitates programs within Brown's Warren Alpert Medical School. She is Dance for PD (Parkinson's Disease) Coordinator in Connecticut and Rhode Island and regularly teaches People with Parkinson's and their caregivers. A lifelong teacher, dancer, artist and designer, Rachel is also a certified instructor in Shake Your Soul/Kripalu YogaDance and leads movement classes and workshops for schools, faculty, foundations and corporations.



Slate Ballard
Hamden, CT

I have been involved in community building in the nonprofit, arts, and innovation space in New Haven for the last 8 years. I studied creative organizational cultures and after graduating started Connecticut's first coworking space - The Grove. I transferred ownership of The Grove last year when I launched The State House, a multi-purpose performance space centered around live music. I also have been part of design agencies and have been working on a software product that helps artists and causes connect. I believe in the power of the arts and creating spaces where folks can come together, celebrate one another, have fun, and make an impact in their community. My partner is a photographer and we have 3 awesome children.



Erica Barreto
North Adams, MA

Erica Barreto is a multicultural educator, administrator, and researcher. As Coordinator for the Institute for the Arts and Humanities at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA-IAH), Barreto's work focuses on improving access to regional arts and humanities resources, advancing possibilities for engagement with innovative and contemporary experiential learning opportunities, and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion both on the MCLA campus and in the greater community. In addition to her work at MCLA, Barreto also advises the Multicultural Alliance, an after-school program for students in grades 6-12 at Berkshire Arts & Technology (BART) Charter Public School. In 2019, the Multicultural Alliance was recognized as the Berkshire Eagle's "Classroom of the Week" on behalf of students' commitment to making a difference at BART and in their communities.



Kate Beever
Cornish, ME

Kate Beever, MA, MT-BC, studied at the USM School of Music and then worked for Frank Glazer before earning her Master's degree in Music Psychotherapy from New York University. She interned at Beth Israel Medical Center and Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. She returned to the fresh air of Maine to open Maine Music & Health, LLC. She works with clients of all ages with cancer, cerebral palsy, brain injury, depression, developmental disabilities, dementia, and respiratory diseases. Kate presents at conferences and facilitates group and individual sessions while keeping an active performing schedule as a pianist and percussionist. She is also a trained REMO HealthRhythms facilitator and has her certification in Neurologic Music Therapy. Kate serves as vice president of the USM Alumni Board.



Elizabeth Billings
Tunbridge, VT

Elizabeth Billings is a collaborative maker and ikat weaver who lives and works in Tunbridge, Vermont. Her formal training comes from working with master weavers in the United States and Japan and an art education at Cranbrook Academy of Art. All the edges are being rounded out by an informal education in creative problem solving through making and installing large scale public artwork across the country. Through the process of making, she is keenly aware of the ability the sense of the hand has to balance the highly technological aspects of our built environment and connect us to nature. The real work is in making that connection.

Ilana M. Brownstein is a dramaturg and creative producer specializing in new plays, public advocacy, and work centered on a mission of equity, diversity, and inclusion. She is the Director of New Work and senior dramaturg at Company One Theatre, and was formerly the head of the dramatic literature core curriculum at the Boston University School of Theatre, Literary Manager at the Huntington Theatre, and Founder of Playwrights' Commons. She holds an MFA in Dramaturgy (Yale), and a Directing BA (College of Wooster). Ilana is a Kilroys nominator for The List, part of artEquity's 2017 anti-racism facilitator cohort, and is a two-time winner of the LMDA Elliott Hayes Award for excellence in dramaturgy (2008, 2014).



Ilana Brownstein
Arlington, MA



Lisa Burk-McCoy
Concord, NH

Lisa Burk-McCoy is an arts enthusiast and musician who studied classical flute with preeminent performers from the international stage. She now plays with community groups and teaches young flutists. After receiving her M.S. in Arts Administration, Lisa co-founded a nonprofit consulting practice drawing on her background in communications, fundraising and business development. Her work facilitated cross-sector engagement and collaboration as the foundation for mission-driven work. She remains committed to community and the arts in her new position at the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts. As coordinator of the Creative Communities and Arts in Health programs, she is excited to advance the arts as a catalyst for community development, health and wellbeing.



J Cottle
Boston, MA

J. Cottle is an educator, arts-administrator, musician, writer, and producer. In these roles he has supported the work of Boston Arts Academy, Boston University, 3050 Music Group, the Community Music Center of Boston, Berklee College of Music and currently serves as the founder and Executive Director of Dunamis, and the Young Civic Leaders Coordinator at MassVOTE. J's work specializes in designing curriculum and O.S.T-programs that facilitate trans-formative growth using integrated arts-techniques and youth development practices.



Cedric Douglas
Quincy, MA

Street Artist - Cedric “VISE1” Douglas is an accomplished artist and community activist engaging communities through art and projects that draw upon creativity in all of us. As a young boy, Cedric first began transforming abandoned spaces using graffiti art in the surrounding cities and towns of Boston. By the 1990s, he was known as alias “VISE1” an acronym for Visually Intercepting Society’s Emotion one image at a time. He later went on to receive a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design in 2011. It was here,

where the influence and inspiration of professor, Chaz Maviyane-Davies, a world-renowned poster designer and social activist, helped him to see how to use this craft as a way to reach a wider audience through deeper social messages.

In 2014, The Boston Foundation in partnership with Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative awarded Douglas a \$100, 000 grant for his understanding of art as a means to engage communities. Together with his partner, Julia Roth, Douglas created The Up Truck, a creative art lab. They have engaged thousands of Boston residents using mobile art to tap into the creativity of underserved Boston communities. Douglas’ partnerships include working with colleges, universities such as Harvard and Northeastern to name a few, local graffiti artists, community organizations and galleries around the country. He is highly recognized for his large-scale murals and portraits known as social realism. His artwork can be seen at W Hotel Boston, Adjust Gallery Wynwood Miami, Cali Colombia, Burlington Vermont. Boston Harbor Arts, and private collections for the Rosoff Family, Google and Northeastern University.

Cedric is honored to have been featured in the Boston Globe, Take Magazine, Roxbury Banner, Lens Magazine and Boston Magazine, TEDx Springfield, WCVB Ch 5 Chronicle, WGBH TV Art Talks.

Douglas currently resides in Quincy, Massachusetts and is an active board member of multiple Boston based art organizations including, Celebrity Series Community Engagement Advisory Committee, Artweek Boston’s Public Art Advisory Board, and, Mass Creative Community Engagement Advisory Committee.



Melanie Faranello
West Hartford, CT

Melanie Pappadis Faranello is the recipient of a 2018 Individual Artist Fellowship Award in Fiction from the Connecticut Office of the Arts. She received her MFA in creative writing from The New School. Her fiction has appeared in Fifth Wednesday Journal, Blackbird, StorySouth, Literary Mama, and many other literary magazines. Her work has received numerous awards and honorable mentions, including finalist in Sarabande Books’ Mary McCarthy Prize in Fiction, The Petrochino Reprint Award, The Dana Awards for the Novel, William Faulkner’s Wisdom Competition in the Novel, a top twenty-five winner in Glimmer Train’s Very Short Fiction Contest, winner of The New School Fiction Competition, and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

She is the creator of Poetry on the Streets (POTS), an interactive poetry writing exhibit created in 2017 in Hartford, CT., which received a 2018 grant from The Pollination Project, awarded to global leaders in support of social change.

Originally from Chicago, she currently lives with her family in Connecticut where teaches creative writing to youth and teens in downtown Hartford.



Jessica Gelter
Keene, NH

Jessica Gelter is the Executive Director of Arts Alive!, a noted arts service organization located in southwest New Hampshire and is chair of the NH Creative Communities Network. She is a dedicated nonprofit leader with over 15 years of experience in community outreach, team leadership, event management, and program development and evaluation. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Boston University's theater conservatory program, and a Certificate in Arts Management from the University of Massachusetts. In her spare time she practices her art - as a musician, playwright, actress, and theater director, and was featured recently on the National Endowment for the Arts website. She lives in Brattleboro, Vermont with her husband James and daughter Evelyn.



Charmane Glass-Tripp
Bloomfield, CT

I am a Grammy Award winning singer and songwriter with over 20 years experience in the music business. I am also the creative director of a two person music and theater production company I established in 2013 called Gripp Productions. Our mission is to write, create, produce, and to be an incubator for original work. We aim to highlight the voices and stories of marginalized groups including, but not limited to, Black and LGBTQi communities. My day gig is as the Creative Projects and Marketing Associate for a national nonprofit called Everyday Democracy whose ultimate goal is to create positive community change that includes everyone, and we believe that our tools, advice, and resources will help foster that kind of change. Whether you're grappling with a divisive community issue, or simply want to include residents' voices in city government, Everyday Democracy's Dialogue to Change process, using a racial equity lens, can help. Some of my responsibilities at Everyday Democracy is to leverage art to create face to face opportunities for real civic discussion. Demonstrate how art can depict and share one's authentic, honest and diverse perspective/life experience—his/her story; and support community problem-solving that works for all. I am fortunate that I get to do the things I love. Create and try make the world a better place.



Elisa Hamilton
Malden, MA

Elisa H. Hamilton is a socially engaged multimedia artist who creates inclusive artworks that emphasize shared spaces and the hopeful examination of our everyday places, objects, and experiences. Her work has been shown locally and nationally in solo and group exhibitions. In 2017 Hamilton was honored by the Improper Bostonian as Boston's Best Creative Catalyst. Her ongoing public art project "Dance

Spot" has engaged with communities around Boston, as well as at the DeCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, and Tyler School of Art, Philadelphia, PA. She has been the recipient of four public art grants to create temporary public works in Boston's Fort Point neighborhood, and a Creative City grant from New England Foundation for the Arts. She has held artist residencies with Vermont Studio Center, Boston Center for the Arts, the Eliot School of Fine & Applied Arts, and the Fenway Alliance. She continues her creative practice at her Boston South End studio at Boston Center for the Arts.



Kelly Hickey
Weybridge, VT

My name is Kelly Hickey and I am a life long seamstress and designer, embroiderer, tinkerer and crafter. I've been alive almost 54 years and hold a degree in Apparel Design from the University of Delaware and a 200hr Yoga Teacher Certification. I'm not intimidated by what I don't know and that has been invaluable in the various forms of employment I've had ranging from design consultant, entrepreneur, restaurant manager and teacher. I'm an awesome collaborator and use this skill fluidly to make custom textile creations in my clothing & home-goods business & many Artist markets I participate in. Management roles in running several businesses as well as raising a family of 6 has proven to me that I can stretch my capacity to learn new skills to foster the best outcomes. I've been fortunate to live with my family for 1 year sabbaticals in Argentina, Chile & Spain and find that although Spanish is not my expertise - I have a natural ability to improv language and use play acting to bring humor and connection between cultures. Along with running my design business (www.edieandglo.etsy.com) I am currently managing a Pop-Up format store front for 'Better Middlebury Partnership' to encourage bringing business back to Main Street during a 3-year rebuild period of the town's Railroad and Bridge systems. Finally, I deeply enjoy & recognize my true super power is making human connections and find art to be a great connector!



Tracie Konopinski
Boston, MA

I'm a dancer and a community organizer. I work with MASSCreative, the statewide advocacy organization for the arts and creative community. As Program Director, I work with a network of artists, arts leaders, supporters, and teen artists to run grassroots campaigns and advocate for a vibrant, healthy, and equitable Massachusetts. Prior to joining the MASSCreative team in 2013, I worked for six years on voter registration, affordable higher education, and environmental campaigns in western Massachusetts and Maine.



Dana Legawiec
Bowdoinham, ME

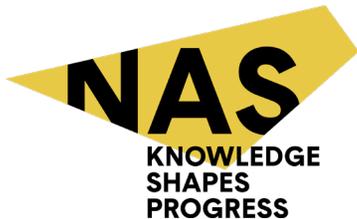
Dana Wieluns Legawiec is a professional Theatre Artist, Teaching Artist and Arts Educator specializing in Physical Theatre with over two decades' experience in the creative and performing arts. Dana builds relationships with schools and communities to offer embodied creative theatre experiences for children, youth and adults in rural and underserved communities. After witnessing the transformational potential of the elementary school play as a volunteer teaching artist, Dana is in the process of founding The School Play Project to design collaborative creative drama enrichment programs for elementary schools and communities in rural areas within the state and region. Dana is an original founding member and co-Artistic Director of Ziggurat Theatre Ensemble dedicated to creating original ensemble-based performance, and an Artistic Associate of Bath and Camden Shakespeare Festivals. Dana received her BA in English Literature and a Certificate in Theatre and Dance from Princeton University, graduated from the Dell'Arte School of Physical Theater, and will receive her Master of Education, Arts in Education, from the Harvard Graduate School of Education in May 2019.



Gabrielle Molina
New Haven, CT

Gabrielle Molina is the founder and executive director of Teaching Artists International (TAI), a non-profit that connects musicians with socially-based music programs around the world. Gabrielle was selected by the Orchestra of the Americas as a 2016-17 Global Leader. In partnership with the Fulbright Association, University of Oxford, and McGill University, she travelled throughout Europe, Africa, and South America as a guest teacher, performer, and consultant and completed professional certification in musical leadership, teaching artistry, and social entrepreneurship.

She has experience working in non-profit management and public education, previously holding positions with the Glendale Unified School District in Los Angeles, California and Music Director and Lead Teaching Artist for the Incredible Children's Art Network, an arts non-profit that brought high-quality art and music instruction to thousands of underserved students in Santa Barbara, California. Gabrielle holds three summa cum laude bachelors degrees: B.M. in Music Performance (Clarinet), B.S. in Spanish, and B.A. in Global Studies from Middle Tennessee State University and a Master of Arts in Teaching from the Longy School of Music of Bard College in partnership with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. Gabrielle also holds K-12 teaching credentials in California and Connecticut. In her free time, she enjoys reading, traveling, and undertaking adventurous feats. She is studying International Education Policy at Harvard's Graduate School of Education.



David Norville
Allston, MA

David Alexander Norville (born July 15th, 1998) is an American oboist, writer and podcaster from Fort Myers, Florida. As an oboist, Norville is known for his musical performances on NPR's Daytime Emmy-Award winning radio show *From the Top*, as well as his summer 2016 tour with the National Youth Orchestra of the United States of America. As a writer, he is known for his poem titled "Ham's Girls," published in the literary journal 'Hear Here' in 2018. David also is a podcaster, co-host of the new podcast "The No Modifications Podcast," a production in cooperation with the artistic collective, "Focus On Your Art." Based in Boston, Massachusetts, David is currently attending the New England Conservatory of Music and working as a Production Assistant at *From the Top*. David's background and artistic experience contribute to his work deconstructing race, social class, and politics through multifaceted artistic lenses.



Sam Potrykus
Jamaica Plain, MA

Sam Potrykus is founder and volunteer coordinator of Brain Arts Organization. BAO's mission is to create platforms for fringe artistic communities in and around Greater Boston and New England. It is entirely volunteer-run 501 (c) (3) nonprofit that is made up of five main initiatives: The Boston Hassle website/webzine, the Boston Compass free monthly

newspaper, Boston Hassle Shows including the bi-monthly art/flea market Black Market Flea and art gallery and community space Dorchester Art Project as of fall 2017. In addition to hosting shows and bolstering the culture in Dorchester BAO actively tries to find new spaces for hosting engaging all ages music and art performances all over Greater Boston.

Sam was raised in Braintree, MA and moved to Wareham where he finished high school. After two years at Bridgewater State College he transferred to UMass Boston in 2008 and started living in Jamaica Plain where he still resides. Sam graduated with a BA in History but has chosen to focus on making his nonprofit efforts sustainable while moving furniture and doing odd jobs to pay the bills. In 2005 he did a 45 day US tour with his band at the time and has done shorter tours in the US and Europe every year since. The opportunity to travel, play music and see so many different communities all over the world helped Sam realize his calling to be a life long arts advocate. Specifically, his passion is for creating accessible, all ages spaces and opportunities for artists of all kinds, but especially those on the artistic fringes of society.



Hannah Rechtschaffen
Greenfield, MA

I currently serve as Director of Placemaking for WD Cowls, a ninth generation, female-led company that actively works in timber farming, operates an independent building-supply store, and develops diverse, creative real estate projects on Cowls owned property. My position has me working at the intersection of creative placemaking, community building, arts-based economic development, and commercial real estate marketing.

I earned my Masters in Arts Administration from Drexel University in 2016, and subsequently worked for the University at The Lindy Institute for Urban Innovation as a Project Manager. Our firm focused on Urban Design and Civic Engagement projects, both for the University and across the country, with an extended focus for me on creative placemaking. While with the Lindy Institute, I also had the invaluable experience of co-developing a new Masters Program in Urban Strategy - Drexel's first fully interdisciplinary Masters Program, now in its third year. I consulted with organizations ranging from arts and culture nonprofits, to social justice organizations, to the City of Philadelphia itself.

I received a BA in Theatre and History from Oberlin College in 2006, and continue to perform and direct in my home community of the Pioneer Valley. I own a home in Greenfield, Massachusetts and am especially active in my town with the Sustainable Greenfield Implementation Committee - working with others to put the town's Master Sustainability Plan into action.

My professional background is incredibly varied, with many twists and turns, and through it all, I am focused on and fascinated by the interconnectedness of people: the complexities, responsibilities, communication demands, and potential of encouraging the highest possible level of radical, honest, transparent interaction. Arts-based community building is at the core of what I do, and I love every day that I am involved in this work.



Romy Saint Hilaire
Quincy, MA

My name is Romy Saint Hilaire. I was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti and grew up in south Florida where I was surrounded by artistic and cultural diversity. I made my way here by attending UMass Boston where I studied Art History and French. My travels in the Caribbean, Europe and across the United States have allowed me to experience the ways in which systems and institutions limit

the access points of enrichment opportunities for marginalized communities. I am very interested in integrating art, educational and cultural enrichment opportunities as integral to a city space. In an urban environment it is important to utilize creative access and expression as tools for liberation. My time in Boston has allowed me to develop an affinity for the city and support for its communities. My passion for art, community building, education, and youth development has encouraged me to navigate my professional pursuits with a deep sense of intention. I currently coordinate the STEAM Team Fellowship program at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. This is a pre-college program to expose teen fellows to mentorship opportunities with museum staff professionals in various Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math roles to establish pipeline workforce and leadership development for Boston teens. I am driven to do work that focuses on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility as actionable changes for marginalized communities. These values are integral parts of the social renewal happening in Boston and I hope to have communities of color centralized in the transition towards a greater city.



I grew up in Scotland, and moved to the Seacoast of New Hampshire in 2012. I am a playwright and director. My commissioned full-length plays include *At The Table*, *The Time Machine* (an adaptation of H.G.Wells Novel), and *She Will Lead*. My one-act play *Over The Fence* was the winner of the 2017 30 Pages in 30 Days competition produced by Prescott Park Arts Festival. I was selected to become a member of the 2018 Lincoln Center Theater Directors Lab. And was a participant in the 2018 International Teaching Artist Conference.

My work as a writer and director for both theatre and film has been presented both in the U.S and in the UK. In both professional and community settings, as a teaching artist, I work with educational and community institutions to utilize theatre for social and political change.

Leading with the idea of “an expert in every seat” I have facilitated projects that address inequality in the fashion industry with at risk teen girls, created a large scale theatrical performance with members of a community affected by asbestos mills (mainly working with adults 55+), and I am currently working in Ashland NH with a K-8 school to build an immersive performance that uses fictional storytelling to explore what it means to deeply understand other cultures.



Catherine Stewart
Portsmouth, NH



Ashley Strazzinski
North Adams, MA

Ashley Strazzinski was born in Upper Michigan and was raised in Italy, Kansas, Alaska, and Minnesota. She is a visual artist and creative placemaker. After working as the Manager of Public Programs and Education at Aperture Foundation, she relocated from New York City to North Adams, Massachusetts with the desire to be a part of a smaller more accessible community and to follow her own creative pursuits. She is the founder of a small imprint, soft-boiled, which produces a zine series that chronicles the North Adams City Council meetings, as well as other topics of interest. In May 2018, she launched a pilot program, Ashland Street Project Space, which is a community work/event space and lounge where people can build relationships and exchange resources and knowledge.



Jo Troll
Cambridge, MA

Jo Troll, an aroace trans choreographer, art-maker, and blogger, has a Graduate Diploma in Dance Studies at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance. Originally an Irish dancer, Jo engages with challenging questions of tradition and identity to explore the intersection between different forms of percussive and contemporary dance. They recently have performed in the Femme Show, as part of OnStage Dance Company's Fifth Residency Season and in the Dancing Queerly Festival at the Dance Complex. Over the years, they have created work for amateur queer dance performance and as one of the first DUCKiE upstarts at the Royal Vauxhall Tavern in London. Jo also organizes regular queer dance workshops in a variety of styles to create safe dance space for queer folks in the Boston community and loves every minute spent dancing with fellow queer folks.



Ngoc-Tran Vu
Dorchester, MA

Ngoc-Tran Vu is a Vietnamese American multimedia artist and cultural organizer whose practice is rooted in community engagement and social justice. Born in Vietnam, she and her family came to the US as political refugees in the early 90s and grew up in Boston's Dorchester neighborhood where she's currently based. Tran received her MA in Arts and Politics at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and her BA in Ethnic Studies and Visual Arts at Brown University.





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