

Merli V. Guerra
Curriculum Vitae

Mason Gross School of the Arts
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
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EDUCATION

MFA Dance, Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University, May 2021

BA Dance and Studio Art (Graphic Design and Film), Mount Holyoke
College, Phi Beta Kappa, Magna Cum Laude, May 2009

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2010–Present Co-Founder, Artistic Director, and Choreographer,
Luminarium Dance Company – Boston MA / Central NJ

2018–Present Dance Critic, Dance International Magazine – Vancouver, Canada

2016–Present Journalist / Dance Critic, Fjord Review – Toronto, Canada

2015–Present Senior Contributor, The Arts Fuse – Boston MA

2012–Present Director, Cultural Community Outreach Project – Northeast USA

AWARDS & HONORS

2020 Award Recipient, SounDance Film Festival
Barcelona, Spain, and Resistencia, Argentina
“Best Choreography” and “Best Narrative Dance” Film Awards for *For you, to
mentor me*

2020 Award Recipient, Europa Film Festival
Barcelona, Spain, and Resistencia, Argentina
“Best Experimental” Film Award for *The One I Keep*

2019 Award Recipient, Mary Lyon Award
Mount Holyoke College Alumnae Association
Given to young alumnae (15 years or less since graduation) who “demonstrate
exceptional promise and sustained achievement in their life, profession, and

community, and whose work embodies the humane values which Mary Lyon exemplified in her life and inspired in others.” Awarded by the Alumnae External Achievement Awards Committee.

- 2019 Award Finalist – Festival Cinematica: Immagine in Movimento, Ancona, Italy
Synchronic, one of 14 award finalists at international screendance festival.
- 2018 Featured Artist – *WomenCinemakers*, Berlin, Germany
The One I Keep is featured in a special edition of periodical *WomenCinemakers* highlighting artistic films by noteworthy female artists hailing from Tokyo, Amsterdam, and Athens, among others.
- 2016 Choreographer, TEDxCambridge – Boston Opera House
Commissioned by TEDxCambridge to choreograph the opening act for its Spring 2016 TEDx Talks. Held for 2,600 viewers—the largest TED event in history, worldwide.
- 2016 Panelist / Choreographer, Local Cultural Council 2016 Statewide Assembly
Massachusetts State House
By invitation of the Massachusetts Cultural Council – panelist advocate for funding of the arts, alongside distinguished colleagues Ben Taylor (musician), Scarlet Keys (Associate Professor, Berklee College of Music), and keynote speaker Sally Taylor (musician and *Consenses* founder). Also invited to present choreographic excerpt from Guerra’s *Phoenixial Cycle*.
- 2015 Award Recipient, Gold Star Award – Massachusetts Cultural Council
Innovated and championed *Night at the Tower* (Arlington MA), largest Cultural Community Outreach Project to date. One of three projects out of 5,000+ candidates to receive the Massachusetts Cultural Council’s Gold Star Award.
- 2014 Panelist, Breaking Barriers: (Re-Defining) Entrepreneurship Conference
Mount Holyoke College
Invitation to speak on the Innovation in Art & Design entrepreneurship panel.
Keynote speaker: Alicia Stewart, Senior Producer of CNN’s In America.
- 2013 “Unsung Hero” – *Improper Bostonian Magazine*
Praised as an “unsung hero” in the Boston arts scene in the Spring 2013 issue of *Improper Bostonian* magazine.

GRANT AWARDS

- 2012–20 Grant Recipient – Boston Cultural Council
7-time grant recipient for organizational support and the creation of new Boston-specific programming, with a focus on projects with underserved communities.

- 2017 Grant Recipient, Brockton Cultural Council – Brockton MA
Funding to create *Kinetic Craft*, weeklong residency at the Fuller Craft Museum.
- 2016 Grant Recipient, Sudbury Cultural Council – Sudbury MA
Funding to produce *300 Years* at Longfellow’s Wayside Inn.
- 2015 Grant Recipient, Amherst Cultural Council – Amherst MA
Funding to create the *Amherst Storybook Project*, self-published storybook, film, and performance at the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art.
- 2014 Grant Recipient – The Bob Jolly Charitable Trust
Development of new work that provides “access to, appreciation of, education about, and exposure to the work of the Greater Boston theater community.”
Funding to produce *Night at the Tower* at the Arlington Reservoir Water Tower.
- 2014 Grant Recipient, Arlington Cultural Council – Arlington MA
Funding to produce *Night at the Tower* at the Arlington Reservoir Water Tower.
- 2014 Grant Recipient, Somerville Arts Council – Somerville MA
Funding to produce Luminarium’s debut *DANCE+ Series* for local youth at the Center for Arts at the Armory.
- 2013 Grant Recipient, Lowell Cultural Council – Lowell MA
Funding to create the *Threading Motion Project* at New England Quilt Museum.
- 2012 Grant Recipient, Concord Cultural Council – Concord MA
Funding to create the *Celebration of Preservation Project* at Louisa May Alcott’s Orchard House.
- 2012 Grant Recipient, Somerville Arts Council – Somerville MA
Funding to develop *MYTHOS:PATHOS Project*, Center for Arts at the Armory.
- 2012 Grant Recipient, Watertown Cultural Council – Watertown MA
Funding to develop *MYTHOS:PATHOS Project*, shown at the Arsenal Center for the Arts.

CHOREOGRAPHIC WORKS

Over the past 12 years, Guerra has choreographed 45 ‘made for stage’ works, 14 screendance films, 7 performance installations, and self-published one dance/art storybook. A complete list of creative works is available upon request.

Selected Self-Produced Performances

- 2020 *TEN4TEN Performance Series* – Virtual Curated Series

- 2012–20 *24-Hour ChoreoFest*
 Guerra’s Luminarium Dance Company pioneers this unique annual festival, in which five dance companies join Luminarium in creating new work overnight for a performance the following afternoon. Viewers are encouraged to watch the process unfold via live stream online throughout the 24-hour period. More than 250 dancers accompanying 24 companies and choreographers have participated in this annual event.
- National Online Edition, CA, IL, MA, NH, NJ, NYC, PA, 2020
 - Green Street Studios, Cambridge MA, 2019
 - Dance Complex, Cambridge MA, 2012–16
- 2019 *Luminarium in Concert* – Multicultural Arts Center, Cambridge MA
 2018 *HIVELAND* – Multicultural Arts Center, Cambridge MA
 2017 *Kinetic Craft* – Fuller Craft Museum, Brockton MA
 2016 *Portal: Stories from the Edge* – Boston University Dance Theater, Boston MA
 2016 *300 Years* – Longfellow’s Wayside Inn, Sudbury MA
 2015 *Spektrel* – Multicultural Arts Center, Cambridge MA
 2014 *The Sleeprunner* – Multicultural Arts Center, Cambridge MA
 2014 *Night at the Tower* – Arlington Reservoir, Arlington MA
 2013 *Secrets & Motion* – Boston University Dance Theater, Boston MA

Selected Choreographic Commissions & Performances

- 2020 Motion: New Dance Works – Rutgers University, New Brunswick NJ
 2019 Global Water Dances: North & South – West Windsor NJ & Merrimack NH
 Part of *Global Water Dances*, an international performance event
 2019 ArtBeat Festival – Somerville MA
 2018 Liberty Hall Dance Festival – Kean University, Union NJ
 2018 Friends of Clermont Commission – Clermont Historic Site, Germantown NY
 2017 Outlet Dance Project Commission – Grounds for Sculpture, Hamilton NJ
 2017 The Rosoff Awards Commission – The State Room, Boston MA
 2017 Ars Nexa Tempora Commission – Boston New Music Initiative, Somerville MA
 2014–16 Wiscasset Art Walk Commission – Wiscasset ME
 2016 Outside the Box Festival – Boston MA
 2016 TEDxCambridge Commission – Boston Opera House, Boston MA
 2015 Southern Vermont Dance Festival – Latchis Theatre, Brattleboro VT
 2013 Time Lapse Dance, Opener – Fine Arts Center Concert Hall, UMass Amherst, Amherst MA
 2013 Tinderbox Series – Mobius Alternative Arts Space, Cambridge MA

Selected Works as Guest Choreographer

- 2020 Guest Choreographer, *River Stories*, Odissi piece for “Moving in Our Community” – Rider University, Lawrenceville NJ

- 2019 Guest Choreographer, *8.7 million minus one*, combining Odissi, modern, and poetry for “Dance & Sustainability Project” – Rider University, Lawrenceville NJ
- 2015 Guest Choreographer, *With You*, modern piece for “Momentum” Emerson College, Boston MA

Selected Film Festivals & Screenings

- 2020 *The One I Keep*, 28th Quinzena de Dança de Almada International Dance Festival Almada, Portugal
- 2020 *For you, to mentor me*, SounDance Film Festival Barcelona, Spain, and Resistencia, Argentina
“Best Choreography” and “Best Narrative Dance” Film Awards
- 2020 *The One I Keep*, Europa Film Festival Barcelona, Spain, and Resistencia, Argentina
“Best Experimental” Film Award
- 2020 *For you, to mentor me*, Prisma Independent Film Awards – Rome, Italy
- 2019 *For you, to mentor me*, Imajitari International Dance Film Festival Jakarta, Indonesia
- 2019 *What seems so is transition* and *The One I Keep*, Women in Dance Leadership Conference – Philadelphia PA
- 2019 *Synchronic*, Festival Cinematica: Immagine in Movimento – Ancona, Italy
One of 14 award finalists
- 2018 *The One I Keep*, ViDEOSKiN Contemporary Dance Video Works Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada
- 2018 *The One I Keep*, Cefalù Film Festival – Palermo, Italy
- 2018 *The One I Keep*, First Take Shorts Series and Q&A – Doylestown PA
- 2015 *Amherst Storybook Project (The Film)*, Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art Amherst MA
- 2015 *The One I Keep*, Glovebox Film Festival, Brattleboro Theatre – Cambridge MA
- 2013 *Threading Motion Project: Quilt Vignettes in Milestones: Textiles of Transition* San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles – San Jose CA
- 2013 *Threading Motion Project: Quilt Vignettes in Silk!*, New England Quilt Museum Lowell MA

PERFORMANCE

- 2010–Present Luminarium Dance Company
Co-Founder, Artistic Director, Choreographer, Performer – USA
20 major productions and over 80 national engagements
- 2007–Present Nataraj Dancers, under Guru Ranjanaa Devi
Company Member – USA & Japan
Performed with the company on its Japan Tour, Summer 2009:
シルクロードの古典舞踊 (Classic Dances Along the Silk Road)

American performances include:

Songs of the River

Offerings

Diwali Festival of Lights

The Ramayana

Mudra: The Gesture Speaks

2011–14

Deborah Abel Dance Company

Lead Company Member – USA & India

Work Performed: *Calling to You*

National Engagements:

- Tsai Center, Boston MA, March 2012 and January 2014

International Engagements:

- Tour of India, by invitation of Indian government, December 2012.

Performances at the following prestigious venues:

- Deep Smriti Auditorium, Jaipur
- Siri Fort Auditorium, New Delhi
- Rukmini Arangam Theater at Kalakshetra Foundation, Chennai

PUBLIC ARTS PROGRAMS

Director / Producer

2018	<i>Luminarium in Concert</i> , Clermont Historic Site – Germantown NY
2017	<i>Kinetic Craft</i> , Fuller Craft Museum – Brockton MA
2016	<i>300 Years</i> , Longfellow’s Wayside Inn – Sudbury MA
2015	<i>Amherst Storybook Project</i> , self-published storybook, film, and performance Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art – Amherst MA
2015	<i>DANCE+Bugs</i> , Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art – Amherst MA
2015	<i>DANCE+Technology at Especially for Me</i> , The Discovery Museums – Acton MA
2014	<i>Night at the Tower</i> , Arlington Reservoir Water Tower – Arlington MA
2014	<i>DANCE+ Series</i> , Center for Arts at the Armory – Somerville MA
2013	<i>Threading Motion Project</i> , New England Quilt Museum – Lowell MA
2012	<i>Celebration of Preservation Project</i> , Louisa May Alcott’s Orchard House Concord MA

Learn more about these uniquely individualized programs at luminariumdance.org/programs.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Selected Print Publications as Author

2020 “Interview: Choreographer Pam Tanowitz,” *Fjord Review* #3, December 2020.

- 2018 “Invisible Threads: Alonzo King LINES Ballet collaborates with Zakir Hussain for ‘Sutra,’” *Fjord Review* #1, December 2018.
- 2018 “Boston Ballet: Jorma Elo / Fifth Symphony of Jean Sibelius, Wayne McGregor / Obsidian Tear,” *Dance International Magazine*, Spring 2018.

Selected Online Publications as Author

- 2019 “Rhapsody: Boston Ballet performs rarely-seen work by Leonid Yakobson,” *Fjord Review*, May 31, 2019. <https://fjordreview.com/boston-ballet-rhapsody-leonid-yakobson>
- 2019 “Dance Feature: Boston Dance Alliance Celebrates Tony Williams and Duggan Hill,” *The Arts Fuse*, March 19, 2019. <http://artsfuse.org/182234/dance-feature-boston-dance-alliance-celebrates-tony-williams-and-duggan-hill>
- 2019 “When Angels Fall: Man versus machine in Raphaëlle Boitel's newest work,” *Fjord Review*, February 17, 2019. <https://fjordreview.com/when-angels-fall-raphaelle-boitel>
- 2018 “Women of the Hour: Boston Dance Theater's home city debut,” *Fjord Review*, November 29, 2018. <https://fjordreview.com/boston-dance-theater-debut>
- 2018 “City of Others: Dance and social change with Sankofa Danzafro,” *Fjord Review*, October 26, 2018. <https://fjordreview.com/sankofa-danzafro-city-of-others/>
- 2018 “The Wild Divine: Deborah Abel's inspired choreography,” *Fjord Review*, February 27, 2018. <https://fjordreview.com/the-wild-divine-deborah-abel-dance-company>

SELECTED MEDIA COVERAGE

Print

- 2020 NEWS: Guerra recognized as a “gifted filmmaker” and lauded for receiving the “Best Experimental” award for her screendance *The One I Keep* at Europa Film Festival in Barcelona, Spain. Karen Campbell, *The Boston Globe*, April 9, 2020.
- 2018 REVIEW: “Dance company dives into group dynamics with compelling ‘Hiveland,’” Karen Campbell, *The Boston Globe*, September 24, 2018.
- 2015 REVIEW: “Shadows and light in Luminarium Dance's ‘Spektrel,’” Jeffrey Gantz, *The Boston Globe*, October 29, 2015.

Radio and Television

- 2016 TV INTERVIEW: “300 Years: Music & Dance Celebrating the Wayside Inn Tricentennial,” with Mike Morrissey, Sudbury TV, episode 8/8/2016.
- 2016 TV INTERVIEW: “Wayside Inn celebrates 300 years through dance,” with reporter Zoe Joulis, WMCT-TV, Marlborough, MA, aired 8/1/2016.
- 2015 TV INTERVIEW: “It’s All About Arts,” with host Glenn Williams, Boston Neighborhood Network, episode 8/17/2015.
- 2014 TV SPECIAL: “The Luminarium Dance Company,” Cyn & Gareth Williams, Arlington Public News, September 26, 2014.

Online Publications

- 2019 REVIEW: “Luminarium Dance Company Lives Up to Their Name,” Sara Komatsu, *The Harvard Crimson*, December 27, 2019. <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2019/12/27/luminarium-in-concert-article>
- 2018 PREVIEW: “A Creative Buzz: Luminarium’s HIVELAND,” Olivia J. Kiers, *Art New England Magazine*, September 13, 2018. <http://artnewengland.com/blogs/a-creative-buzz-luminariums-hiveland>
- 2016 REVIEW: “Luminarium Dance Company Inspires Transcendence in Face of Uncertainty,” Hannah Bresnahan, *Everything She Wrote*, November 13, 2016. <https://www.luminariumdance.org/single-post/2016/11/13/REVIEW-Everything-She-Wrote>
- 2015 REVIEW: “‘Spektrel’ Spectacular,” Gillian Daniels, *New England Theatre Geek*, Nov. 4, 2015. <http://www.netheatregeek.com/2015/11/04/spektrel-spectacular>
- 2014 INTERVIEW: “Merli V. Guerra on the Movement and Light of Luminarium Dance,” Dan Blask, Massachusetts Cultural Council's ArtSake "Nano-Interview," June 19, 2014. <https://artsake.massculturalcouncil.org/merli-guerra-on-the-movement-and-light-of-luminarium-dance>

WORKSHOPS & MASTER CLASSES

- 2018, 2019 Master classes in classical Odissi Indian dance
Rider University, Lawrenceville NJ
- 2018 Master classes in classical Odissi Indian dance
Rutgers Preparatory School, Somerset NJ

- 2014, 2015 Master classes in classical Odissi Indian dance
Endicott College, Beverly MA
- 2010–11 Semester-long classes in Creative Ballet, Creative Dance, and Theatre
Cambridge Performance Project, Cambridge MA

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

Presenter

- 2020 “Community Engagement: Exploring Benefits from Historical, Practical, and
Social Work-Based Approaches.” National Dance Education Organization
Conference, October 25.

Panelist

- 2019 Featured Filmmaker; Panelist, Screendance – Women in Dance Leadership
Conference, Philadelphia PA
- 2014 Panelist, Breaking Barriers: (Re-Defining) Entrepreneurship Conference –
Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley MA

COURSES TAUGHT

- 2020 Dance Appreciation Online – Undergraduate course
Mason Gross Dance Department, Rutgers University
- 2020 Modern I – Undergraduate course for BA majors, minors and non-majors
Mason Gross Dance Department, Rutgers University
- 2019 Rotation: Classical Odissi Indian Dance – Undergraduate course for BFA majors
Mason Gross Dance Department, Rutgers University

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- 2019 Grant Adjudicator, Local Arts Program Panel, New Jersey State Council
on the Arts – State of New Jersey
- 2018–19 Board Member, Dance New Jersey – State of New Jersey
- 2015–16 Co-Chair, Arlington Cultural Council – Arlington MA
- 2015 Grant Adjudicator, Dance Review Panel – Cambridge Arts Council,
Cambridge MA

2014 Grant Adjudicator, Dance, Theatre & Multidisciplinary Arts Review Panel
Somerville Arts Council, Somerville MA

2013–14 Board Member, Center for Arts at Armory – Somerville MA

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- ConcussionWise Training
- CITI Training
- Bates Dance Festival Professional Training (2008)

TECHNICAL ABILITIES

Technical:

Highly trained in Adobe Creative Suite and Adobe Creative Cloud (Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator, Dreamweaver), as well as HTML, Final Cut Pro, Flash, Quark, Acrobat, Excel, and Microsoft Office. Experienced in copy-editing, writing, typography, and the Chicago Manual of Style. Proficient in both Mac and PC platforms, and preparing documents for print and web. Strong photography, film, and graphic arts skills. Adept at multitasking, working within tight deadlines, and managing budgets.

Additional Skills:

Other professional work includes: dance (ballet, modern, and classical Indian dance); choreography; filmmaking; journalism; public speaking; non-profit administration and fundraising; museum administration and education; arts advocacy; and event management.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2007–Present Freelance Web Designer

2005–Present Freelance Graphic Designer

2018–19 Senior Production Coordinator, Princeton University Press – Princeton NJ

2013–17 Art Director, Art New England Magazine – Boston MA

2011–13 Creative Services Associate, New Repertory Theatre – Watertown MA

LANGUAGES

French: Fluent in reading and writing; proficient in speaking

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

National Dance Education Organization (NDEO) – Baltimore MD

Boston Dance Alliance – Boston MA

Dance New Jersey – Morristown NJ

REFERENCES

Julia M. Ritter, PhD, MFA

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