

WADSWORTH



ARTPHILLY

**WHAT NOW: 2026
FESTIVAL GUIDEBOOK**





PHILADANCO! in 'Promise Me You Won't Call,' Tommie-Waheed Evans, c/o Julianne Harris

ArtPhilly Staff at Press Preview, c/o Daniel Jackson for Embassy: Interactive



Laurin Talese with Black Music City at Sketch 2025, c/o RECPHilly



FIELD NOTES FROM THE PRESENT

WELCOME TO WHAT NOW: 2026

ArtPhilly's *What Now: 2026* festival unfolds as our nation marks the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence—a milestone rooted here in Philadelphia. We are acutely aware that this anniversary arrives during a profoundly difficult and complicated moment in our country's history.

We are not looking away.

What Now: 2026 artists are capturing this moment as it is: with provocation and anger, with celebration and delight, with tenderness, urgency, humor—and above all, with questions. They offer works that ask us to look harder, feel more fully, and imagine otherwise. Together, we offer you this festival as an invitation. Not an escape, but an encounter. So... What Now?

ArtPhilly's mission has always been to foreground ambitious contemporary artists, animate the city's neighborhoods, create access to bold ideas, and spark civic imagination through art. We believe artists are essential thinkers. We believe audiences are collaborators. We believe the city itself is a studio, a stage, and a site of possibility, with its own beautiful and complex history to tell.

We ask you to give the work your curiosity and your openness. Our artists have given you their questions. Please meet them there. **Enjoy the process!**

With gratitude and eager anticipation,

KATHERINE SACHS

Founder and Board Chair

BILL ADAIR

Creative and Executive Director

TANIA ISAAC

Curatorial and Deputy Director

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The Crossing at National Sawdust, c/o Jill Steinberg



Civic Theater Project, c/o A.Smith



Blackstar Film Festival, c/o Daniel Jackson for Embassy; Interactive

A LOT HAS CHANGED SINCE 1776



DenFarrn, Eric Battle, c/o the artist



*Malé Oyélidé at Sketch 2024,
c/o Daniel Jackson for Embassy; Interactive*



Eric Battle at Sketch 2025, c/o the artist



Tommie Waheed-Evans, c/o RECPhilly



Trapeta B. Mayson, Yolanda Wisher, c/o Naamneh Jovin



Ruth Naomi Floyd at Sketch 2025, c/o REC Philly

GRATITUDE FOR OUR EARLIEST CHAMPIONS

OUR SINCEREST THANK YOU

To The Pew Center for Arts and Heritage and Paula Marincola, thank you for our very first planning grant which sent us on our way. To Tim Durkin and Chris Levenick, we applaud your vision for creating The Philadelphia Funder Collaborative for the Semiquincentennial, bringing together The William Penn Foundation, the Neubauer Family Foundation, The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Connelly Foundation, Comcast NBCUniversal, the Hamilton Family Charitable Trust, and the Knight Foundation to help our city realize the full potential that the 250th anniversary of our nation would bring to Philadelphia. To the William Penn Foundation and Barbara Wong, we thank you for recognizing the importance of a city-wide festival which would represent neighborhoods and artists from every corner. And to The Hearthland Foundation, and Rachel Levin and Kate Fowle, for their early support, inspired by our shared belief that artists are the best interpreters of history—and any moment in time. You gave us the confidence to realize that our born-in-Philadelphia focus had a national and international appeal.

To our community advisory committee, thank you for connecting us with remarkable artistic talent throughout our city. And to our staff, thank you for your tireless work and commitment in bringing this project to fruition. And to our many friends and funders, we could not have done this without you.

Special thanks to our collaborators and thought partners: Witty Gritty, who have been integral in realizing our vision; the incredible designers of J2; the savvy advice from Anthony Wojciechowski; and Dave Silver and the REC Philly crew, all of whom have helped us bring vision to our programming.

Stay for conversation after a performance.

Dance from one venue to another.

Laugh out loud.

Visit a bookstore.

See a project that doesn't immediately appeal to you.

Search for ideas in a project that intrigue or provoke you.

CHECK LIST

Research three or four artists in the festival, then seek out their work in person.

Share a meal.

Write a review for a website or your local paper.

Share your excitement.

FOR

EXPLO RING

Bring a sketchbook.

Try a new cafe.

CURI OUSLY

Invite a friend to see something that's new for them.

Roll the dice and attend a project at random.

Take a walk through the festival districts, perhaps your own neighborhood, and notice how the city shifts from block to block.

Adore this city.

Exclaim loudly—and often—that Philly has the most astonishingly talented artists.



Dr. Kendrah Butler-Waters at Sketch 2025

Theatre in the X, c/o Eddie Richet



Black Music City x REC Philly, c/o WXPIN

WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE WHAT NOW

Plan your *What Now: 2026* experience with ease. Grab your tickets, plan for the whole family, download our festival app, and leave the logistics to us. You've got a festival to see.



TICKETS

Get your tickets for the festival! Visit the *What Now: 2026* project pages on our website to purchase tickets, powered through our partners at Showpass.



FAMILY PROGRAMMING

Art is for everyone. Scoop up the young people in your life to explore the festival together. Deepen your understanding of the city, its many communities and incredible artistry—and consider your family's growing relationship to it all! Our Family Programs team have selected projects that are best for the littlest littles, others that will delight the whole family, and some that even your teens *might* not roll their eyes at.

Follow the QR code to begin your exploration, and design an experience that best meets your family needs and desires. We hope this invitation, and gentle curation of family experiences, allows for joy and inspires conversation, curiosity, and wonder.



OUR COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY

We envision a world in which art belongs to everyone, and art is accessible by everyone. For *What Now: 2026*, we've worked to provide accessible programming for artists and audiences alike.



OUR FESTIVAL APP

ArtPhilly is proud to partner with **Bloomberg Philanthropies** on **Bloomberg Connects**, their app that offers audiences access to exhibitions, collections, and renowned artists at over 1250 museums and other cultural organizations, all from your smartphone. All events for *What Now: 2026* are just a tap away on Bloomberg Connects, as well as exclusive app-only content.

PROGRAMMING DISCIPLINES

We're thrilled to present twelve different artistic disciplines across the festival, from dance to food and everything in between. As you explore the projects, look for the icons that call out each discipline. Some span multiple categories—that's where the magic happens.



← INTERACTIVE



↑ MUSIC

ENVIRONMENT →



FILM ↓



INSTALLATION →



← VISUAL ART



← DANCE



FOOD ↑

POETRY →



↓ THEATRE



COMMUNITY →



← STORYTELLING



ArtPhilly is dedicated to showcasing the complexity and culture of Philadelphia, and you can't do that without tapping into its vibrant neighborhoods. This city is equal parts Independence Mall and Kensington rowhome, Girard Avenue Trolley and Germantown cobblestones. *What Now: 2026* is built around five Festival Districts, each one hosting projects and public gatherings. Join us!

If you're looking for more on what to do and see in these neighborhoods, explore Festival District maps at ArtPhilly.org.

WEST OF THE RIVER

Across the Schuylkill, there's action happening in Kingsessing, Parkside, University City, and beyond.

AVENUE OF THE ARTS

Visit the beloved and bustling stretch of theaters and institutions on Broad Street between City Hall and South Street.

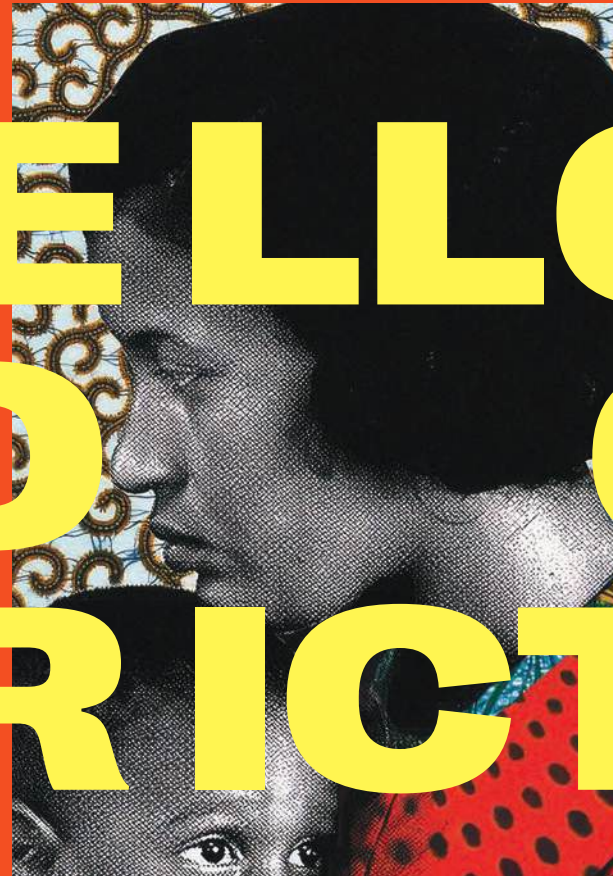
GERMANTOWN AVENUE CORRIDOR

One of the places where the world of 1776 feels tangible and alive, set in the heart of Northwest Philadelphia.

SAY HELLO TO OUR DISTRICTS



Kelsi Bolden, c/o Daniel Jackson for Embassy: Interactive



Artwork c/o Makeba Rainey

KENSINGTON

The River Wards were the beating heart of industrial Philadelphia, set between Kensington and Aramingo, between Lehigh and Castor.

OLD CITY

Stroll the storied streets between 6th Street and the Delaware River, and between Vine and Walnut Streets.



Dionysus, Alexei Mansour, c/o 12Gates Arts



Colette Fu in her studio, c/o the artist



Philadelphia Young Playwrights, c/o Daniel Jackson for Embassy Interactive

GERMANTOWN AVENUE CORRIDOR

Germantown, Mount Airy & Chestnut Hill

There are few areas of the city where the world of 1776 is more palpable. Colonial manors and 18th-century homes help form the fabric of this diverse neighborhood in Northwest Philadelphia. For example, Cliveden, site of the bloody Battle of Germantown, is now a community hub, hosting contemporary art, public programming that reflects its complex history, and locals looking for a place to lay down a picnic blanket or let a toddler run free. When the gates are open, anyone is welcome to explore the grounds. This reflects the neighborhood's creative, collaborative heart. From young families fixing up fading Victorians to ambitious entrepreneurs opening cafes and galleries, to old timers making sure Northwest Philadelphia stays true to its legacy of activism and engagement, this community presses forward.

WEST OF THE RIVER

Across the Schuylkill River

The visual language of West Philadelphia is rich. Rowhome front porches, painted in rich greens and burgundies. The arc of a frisbee through the air. The awesome hulk of 30th Street Station, that paragon of early 20th century municipal ambition. The glow from storefront restaurants offering dishes from across the world: Vietnam, Ethiopia, Pakistan. Shiny vintage trolleys rumbling down Girard Avenue. Sparkling lab buildings. Food co-ops and punk share houses. Generated by a blend of storied institutions, anarchist spirit, Black culture, and tofu banh mi, this enticing amalgam provides West Philly with its particular flavor. With action happening in Kingsessing, Parkside, and University City, this is a place to hang out and learn.

OLD CITY

Between 6th Street and the Delaware River, Vine and Walnut Streets

Come for the history—Independence Mall, the Betsy Ross House, that darn bell—and stay for the buzzing galleries and jewel-box boutiques. Old City is a place where the past and the present connect, where you can walk out of an 18th century historic site and into a cutting-edge restaurant that just happens to be housed in a 19th century storefront. That glorious chronological confusion will continue during *What Now: 2026*. The neighborhood will host contemporary musicians at a museum dedicated to the Revolutionary War and a waterfront reflection on the connection between Colonial-era slavery and anti-trans violence.



Rashid Zakat at Sketch 2025, c/o REC Philly

BalletX at Sketch 2024, c/o Daniel Jackson for Embassy Interactive



AVENUE OF THE ARTS

Broad Street between City Hall and South Street

A visitor to Philadelphia might logically assume that the Avenue of the Arts is part of the city's centuries old artistic legacy. But this bustling stretch of theaters and institutions is not an ode to the long arc of history, but rather a marvel of modern urban planning. In the 1990s, a consortium of dedicated culture lovers and local politicians used a combination of public money and private fundraising to create Avenue of the Arts. The crown jewel of that effort was the construction of the Kimmel Center, a world class performance hall at the corner of Broad and Spruce Streets. So whether you're celebrating a Super Bowl victory or catching a *What Now: 2026* dance performance, celebrate Philadelphia's spirit in the shadow of City Hall.



Still from Moving Words, Glenn Holsten, c/o the artist

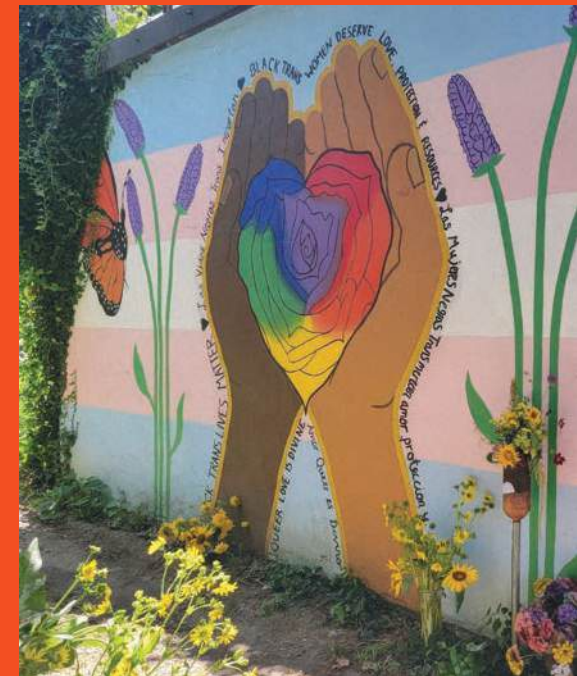
Bearded Ladies Cabaret, c/o Kevin Monko



KENSINGTON

Between Kensington and Aramingo, and between Lehigh and Castor

The River Wards were the beating heart of industrial Philadelphia. Things were made in this neighborhood. That legacy continues, as abandoned factories become artist studios and the housing built for those workers welcomes a new generation of Philadelphians, including immigrants and young people looking for space to create. Kensington exemplifies the challenges and thrills of the city at its current moment—tension between gentrification and poverty is offset by a spirit of collaboration and camaraderie amongst neighbors. ArtPhilly is channeling that energy, helping transform a former-factory-turned-vacant-lot into an urban forest and public gathering place. Be there when the first seeds are planted.



Rem'mie Fells memorial, c/o the Artist



BalletX, c/o Whitney Browne & BalletX

THE PROJECTS

ArtPhilly is deeply invested in work that invites us to share our layered stories and that shapes our experiences with thoughtful, unrelenting, transformative force. The festival experiences span the traditional and experimental: in each instance, the artists define their own invitations for us to be alternately—or simultaneously—audience and participant. When we talk about artists as interpreters of history, every form of expression reveals another facet, another way of thinking, another point of entry.

All of this incredible work brings us that immediacy in gardens, museums, downtown streets, concert halls, theaters, libraries, clubs—and at tables in community.

These artists are our voices.
They bring us worlds to inhabit.

Welcome in.

Tania Isaac
Curatorial and Deputy Director

WHAT NOW

EMILY SCHREINER, LIZ YOHLIN BAILL

WHAT CAN YOU DO WHILE YOU'RE WAITING

A public art takeover that makes waiting for the bus into something far more transporting.

Artists Emily Schreiner and Liz Yohlin Baill are taking over SEPTA bus shelters with thoughtfully designed games and conversation starters that spark intergenerational creative exchange about the world right outside the window. The goal is simple: Look up and out together, rather than down at a screen alone. The method is joyful, visual, and unmistakably Philly.

Drawing on their work creating family guides and exhibitions for the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Schreiner and Baill will fill bus shelter poster spaces with content that brings the city to life for the families waiting in it. The project, co-produced by WHYY, is in conversation with the new children's TV series *The Good Neighbor Club*—premiering summer 2026—extending the show's mission of building good neighbors directly to the public-transit stops of Philadelphia.

Emily Schreiner works at the intersection of art, performance, and education—collaborating widely, curating large-scale public projects, and bringing people together through transformative, participatory experiences for over two decades.

Liz Baill is a Philadelphia-based educator, writer, and museum veteran whose award-winning work—spanning kids' books, exhibitions, and children's television—makes art irresistibly accessible to young audiences.



Liz and Emily, c/o the artists



What Can You Do While You're Waiting: Philly Color Hunt, c/o the artists

Broad Street Bus Shelters
April 6–May 3



Scan here for ticketing information

What Can You Do While You're Waiting is co-commissioned by ArtPhilly and WHYY as part of the *What Now: 2026* Festival with lead support provided by the William Penn Foundation.



CHEF LAQUANDA DOBSON WITH JENNIFER KIDWELL,
OREOLUWA BADAKI

GIVING THANKS

A site-specific performance, planting ceremony, meal and gathering rooted in the ancestral and agricultural traditions of the African Diaspora.

Giving Thanks unfolds in two phases, supported by Bartram's Garden and Sankofa Community Farm.

Give Thanks to The Beginning, The Soil, The Seed

Held at Sankofa Community Farm, this event invites participants to engage in the sacred act of sowing seeds—an offering to the land and the legacy of those who came before us. Through guided planting, collective reflection, and an original movement piece inspired by the gestures of farming—digging, weeding, lifting, and planting—we honor the invisible labor of growing food and the spiritual connections embedded in each motion.

Giving Thanks

Attend an intimate meal and performance gathering under a full moon at Bartram's Garden. Curated by Chef Laquanda Dobson and artist Jennifer Kidwell, *Giving Thanks* invites guests to share seasonal food, movement, and ritual rooted in Black ancestral knowledge and land-based gratitude. Through shared dishes, poetic activations, and community presence, the evening reimagines what it means to gather, nourish, and give thanks—together.

Chef Laquanda Dobson is a Philly born chef, farmer and educator who creates togetherness by growing crops and nourishing her community through cooking.

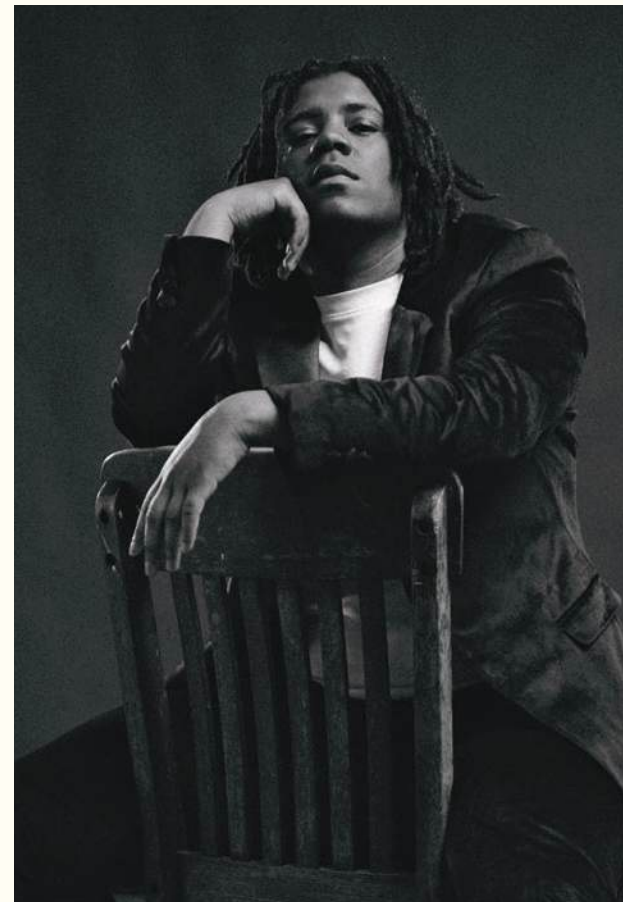
Jennifer Kidwell is a theater-maker and performer whose work cracks open America's most dangerous truths—race, history, normative systems—with razor-sharp intelligence, wry humor, and no restraint.

OreOluwa Badaki's movement practice, research, writing, and teaching examines how power moves through bodies and spaces within food and land systems. She is grateful for the generous and dynamic Philly dance community that she has been a part of for the past 9 years, training in West African, Afro-Cuban, Afro-Brazilian, Hip Hop, House, and Contemporary dance forms.

Bartram's Garden is located in the Kingsessing neighborhood of Southwest Philadelphia. Bartram's is proud to be Southwest Philly's backyard and to work closely with its community to amplify local voices, support local owners, advance community priorities, and employ neighborhood residents through programming and investments.



Giving Thanks at Sketch 2025, c/o REC Philly



Laquanda Dobson, c/o the artist

Bartram's Garden

April 11 · *Give Thanks to The Beginning, The Soil, The Seed*

June 28 · *Giving Thanks*

Admission \$26/\$13



Scan here for ticketing information

Giving Thanks is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026* Festival with lead support provided by the William Penn Foundation and additional support from Bartram's Garden and Sankofa Community Farm.



YOLANDA WISHER WITH V SHAYNE FREDERICK

BICENTENNIAL BABY

How have the last five decades changed us, our home, and what it means to be a community?



Yolanda Wisner c. July 1986, c/o the artist

Yolanda Wisner, c/o Naomieh Jovin



Former Philadelphia Poet Laureate Yolanda Wisner sits down with five fellow Bicentennial Babies—Philadelphians born in 1976—to talk about what it means to turn half a century old in 2026. Together, they dig into five decades of life, see how the city and country have changed, and look ahead to what’s next. Sound engineer V. Shayne Frederick weaves their stories together with music and sound to shape a limited series podcast.

Yolanda Wisner, poet, musician, educator, and curator, is a Germantown-born force who’s shaped Philly’s cultural landscape for decades. As the city’s third Poet Laureate (2016–2017), she’s authored “Monk Eats an Afro,” fronted Yolanda Wisner & The Afroeaters, and founded School of Guerrilla Poetics—a training ground for community-driven poetry. She co-founded ConsenSIS with Trapeta B. Mayson to honor Black femme poets and curated projects across the city’s most vital institutions. A Pew Fellow and Philadelphia Cultural Treasures Artist, Wisner creates art that moves people and communities forward.

Limited Series Podcast
Premieres May 27

Free Download



Scan here for download information

Bicentennial Baby is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026* Festival with lead support provided by the William Penn Foundation.



Yolanda Wisner c. July 1976, c/o the artist



INDIRA ALLEGRA WITH DELAWARE RIVER WATERFRONT CORPORATION, THE FABRIC WORKSHOP AND MUSEUM, WILLIAM WAY LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER

SAIL THROUGH THIS TO THAT

Three hand-sewn sails connect two women's stories.

Indira Allegra invites us to explore the lives and connection between Ona Judge, the seamstress and bondswoman who styled Martha Washington and escaped to freedom in 1796, and the aspiring Philadelphia fashion designer and trans woman Rem'mie Fells, who was tragically killed in 2020. Allegra will use 18th-century techniques and fabrics reflecting Fells' vibrant aesthetic to create three schooner sails. The project culminates in a community-led procession to the Delaware River.

In partnership with the Delaware River Waterfront Corporation, the Fabric Workshop and Museum, and William Way LGBT Community Center, the finished sails will be exhibited on the North Wind schooner at Spruce Street Harbor—which will also host the project's public programming. *Sail Through This to That* connects centuries, honors lives, and asks what it means to move toward freedom.

Indira Allegra is an interdisciplinary artist working in textile, video, and performance. Their practice draws on weaving and cloth-making as metaphors for connection, memory, and resistance. Their commissions span major cultural institutions across the U.S.

Community Procession
May 28

Spruce Street Harbor
Exhibition · May 28–July 30

Free Admission



Scan here for more information

Sail Through This to That is co-commissioned by ArtPhilly and the Delaware River Waterfront Corporation as part of the *What Now: 2026* Festival. Major support for *Sail Through This to That* has been provided by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage.



Indira Allegra aboard North Wind Schooner c/o Rob Blackson



COLETTE FU, DAVE KYU WITH BRAD LITWIN

IRON & PAPER: UNFOLDING PHILADELPHIA'S CHINATOWN

A city-sized pop-up book honoring
Chinatown's legacy and tomorrow.

Artist Colette Fu and curator Dave Kyu offer an insider's view of Philly's Chinatown through a massive, crank-operated pop-up book. Set atop an altar-like table—referencing a 1903 invention by Edmund Smith, derogatorily named the “Iron Chink”—visitors turn the pages to explore Chinatown's cultural contributions and the future of democracy.

Colette Fu is a Philadelphia artist who blends photography and paper engineering into show-stopping works, including the world's largest pop-up book. Her pieces live in The Met, the Library of Congress, and beyond. A 2024 Philadelphia Cultural Treasures grantee and Fulbright Fellow, Fu amplifies community voices through pop-up workshops locally and internationally.

Dave Kyu is a socially engaged artist, writer, and project manager based in Philadelphia. Born in Seoul, South Korea, and raised in the U.S., his work explores the creative tensions of identity and community in public space.

Brad Litwin is a multidisciplinary artist with a focus in kinetic sculpture based in Philadelphia.

**Crane Community Center,
Ground Floor Lobby**
May 28–July 3

Free Admission



Scan here
for more
information

Iron and Paper: Unfolding Philadelphia's Chinatown is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026* Festival with lead support provided by the William Penn Foundation, in partnership with Asian Arts Initiative and the Crane Community Center.



Noodle Mountain, Colette Fu, c/o the artist

Tao Hua Yuan Ji, Colette Fu, c/o the artist



AISLINN PENTECOST-FARREN WITH PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART, INDEPENDENCE SEAPORT MUSEUM, SCIENCE HISTORY INSTITUTE

FROM OUR FOREFATHERS: CLIMATE CRISIS THROUGH MUSEUM TOURS

What can our museums teach us about the origins of our climate crisis?

Aislinn Pentecost-Farren, c/o the artist



Golden Spike: 24 Places, Aislinn Pentecost-Farren, c/o the artist

Artist and educator Aislinn Pentecost-Farren guides participants through iconic Philadelphia museums to uncover a history that's been hiding in plain sight: America's outsized role in creating the climate crisis. From Indigenous dispossession through the industrial revolution, she re-narrates existing exhibitions to reveal the unseen origins of catastrophe embedded in accepted histories of the artifacts we've walked past countless times.

From a stove made by enslaved ironworkers to an oil painting of a steam turbine, each object becomes a new kind of document through Pentecost-Farren's environmentalist lens. Touring the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Independence Seaport Museum, and Science History Institute, participants will answer: what does it mean to understand catastrophe by starting at the beginning?

Aislinn Pentecost-Farren is an artist, curator and public historian who transforms artifacts, landscapes, and historic sites into urgent, site-specific work confronting the cultural and environmental weight of the climate crisis.

Independence Seaport Museum
May 28, June 7, 14, & 28

Philadelphia Museum of Art
May 30, June 13 & 26

Science History Institute
June 4 & 17

Free Admission



Scan here for more information

From Our Forefathers is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026 Festival*.





Jos Duncan-Ase headshot, c/o the artist



Jos Duncan-Ase with Khalil Munir at BeLoved Stories, c/o Tezarah Wilkins

LOVE NOW MEDIA: JOS DUNCAN-ASE,
MEANTIME ON MARKET

WHAT NOW? LOVE NOW!

A multi-day creative experience rooted
in love, resilience, and joy.

Jos Duncan-Ase's Love Now Media presents a celebration of connection, community, and the transformative power of love—right when we need it most. Through archival photography, film screenings, panel discussions, interactive art-making stations, and live storytelling, *What Now? Love Now!* creates an experiential exhibit that posits love as a force for healing, change, and the relentless pursuit of happiness.

The multi-day exhibit features art-making activation stations that invite visitors to create alongside floral artists, herbalists, painters, polaroid photographers and clothing makers, including storytelling concerts with live bands.

Jos Duncan-Ase is an award-winning media executive, business strategist, and storytelling innovator with over 15 years of leadership.

Love Now Media, founded by Duncan-Ase, is an organization that envisions a world where storytelling serves as a powerful tool for trust, accountability, and imagination; amplifying acts of love at the intersection of social justice, wellness, and equity.

932-34 Market St
May 28–July 2
(Wednesdays–Sundays)

Free Admission



Scan here
for more
information

What Now? Love Now! is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026 Festival* with lead support provided by the William Penn Foundation in partnership with Meantime on Market.



TOMMIE-WAHEED EVANS, MARTHA GRAHAM DANCE COMPANY, AND PHILADANCO! WITH AIN GORDON, UWAZI ZAMANI, DR. AZSANEÉ TRUSS

IN CASE OF FIRE, SPEAK

Two legendary dance companies. A performance. An exhibition. One essential question: What is an American?

For the first time in history, the Martha Graham Dance Company and PHILADANCO! share a stage, brought together in a response to Martha Graham's 1938 work "American Document." Choreographer Tommie-Waheed Evans—in conversation with dramaturg Ain Gordon—implements archival material, new musical composition, writing, and visual design to reckon with Graham's original provocation: What is an American? Framed by Uwazi Zamani's sonic design, dancers from both companies unite, inviting us to imagine what an American voice could be at this moment.

in case of fire, speak includes an archival exhibit, curated by Ain Gordon and designed by Dr. Azsaneé Truss with support from the Sachs Program for Arts Innovation. Organized to accompany the premiere performances of *in case of fire, speak*, the companion exhibition brings together an array of archival materials that inspired the newly commissioned work. It traces the lineages of artistic experimentation and cultural intervention through the work of Martha Graham and Joan Myers Brown, two women who reshaped the possibilities of American dance from radically different vantage points.

Tommie-Waheed Evans is a queer Black dance maker merging street and contemporary movement to explore blackness, spirituality, queerness, and liberation—Philly made, for the world.

Ain Gordon is a three-time Obie Award-winning writer, director and actor who excavates forgotten histories and marginalized figures, crafting bold, genre-defying work seen on stages worldwide.

Uwazi Zamani is a celebrated Black queer multidisciplinary performance artist, choreographer, and sound designer from Houston, Texas who conjures worlds where movement, sound, and storytelling collide.



in case of fire, speak, c/o Daniel Jackson for Embassy: Interactive

Azsaneé Truss, PhD, is a Thinking Artist and scholar whose practice moves fluidly between the archive and the speculative. Broadly speaking, she engages her scholarly and artistic practices to understand Black cultural production as sites of theory, resistance, and world-making around the globe.

Donovan Reed is a dancer and native Philadelphian named one of Dance Magazine's "25 to Watch" in 2024. Reed is currently collaborating with Kimberly Bartosik and GALLIM.

Sachs Program for Arts Innovation
Exhibit • March 19–July 3

Penn Live Arts / Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts
Performance • May 29–30

Admission \$59–\$119



Scan here for ticketing information

in case of fire, speak is produced by ArtPhilly in partnership with The Sachs Program for Arts Innovation and the Penn Live Arts Accelerator Program, with lead support from The Hearshland Foundation.



Exhibition c/o Daniel Jackson for Embassy: Interactive



PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY WITH ROOMFUL OF TEETH, JAZIMINA CREAMER-MACNEIL, TCHIN, CHRISTOPHER THEOFANIDIS, MELISSA STUDDARD, BRETT ASHLEY ROBINSON, WE ARE THE SEEDS

ROOT SONG: LISTENING TO THE WISDOM OF TREES

Live choral music and ancient wisdom come to full bloom in the nation's oldest botanic garden.

Premiering at Bartram's Garden—the nation's first landmarked landscape—*Root Song* blends live vocal chamber music by Roomful of Teeth with storytelling by indigenous artist Tchin, channeling the wisdom of our forests and the mycorrhizal networks that connect them.

Directed by Jazimina Creamer-MacNeil with music by Christopher Theofanidis and a libretto by Melissa Studdard, *Root Song* invites audiences to forge their own personal relationships with Philadelphia's native trees. In an age of ecological loss and cultural forgetting, it creates a space to remember and reclaim old ways: the habit of listening, the work of restoration, and the practice of reciprocity.

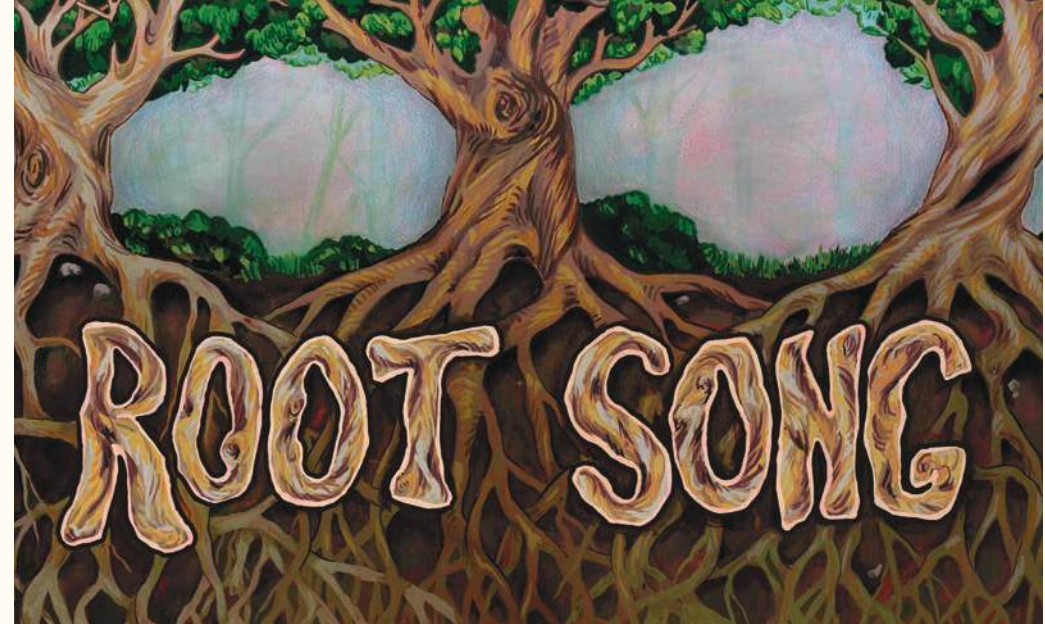
Root Song is part of ArtPhilly's opening weekend and is accompanied by workshops, nature walks, and a panel discussion featuring Robin Wall Kimmerer (*Braiding Sweetgrass*) and Suzanne Simard (*Finding the Mother Tree*).

Roomful of Teeth is a Grammy Award-winning vocal ensemble dedicated to exploring and expanding the expressive potential of the human voice—drawing on diverse global traditions from yodeling to Inuit throat singing.

The Philadelphia Chamber Music Society aims to engage its community in a life more beautiful through the shared experience of chamber music. Every season, PCMS presents 50 performances by world-renowned musicians representing a broad spectrum of ages, ethnicities, nationalities, and cultural perspectives from throughout this region and around the world.

Jazimina Creamer-MacNeil, *Root Song's* creative director, is a visionary artist who has mounted several interdisciplinary works exploring the intersection of music, storytelling, and the natural world.

Christopher Theofanidis is a composer and Guggenheim/Fulbright fellow who is adept at exploring the unique capabilities of vocalists and is especially interested in translating unseen realities into musical form.



Header image, c/o Erik Petersons

Melissa Studdard, a poet/librettist, has a deep facility for combining words and imagery to illustrate complex ideas. She has written extensively for vocal artists and has previously worked with Theofanidis.

Tchin is a Siksika/Narragansett artist and nationally known storykeeper and musician from the Philadelphia region. His mission of telling stories connects audiences with their natural surroundings.

Brett Ashley Robinson, a Pew Fellow and Philadelphia theatre-maker, crafts movement and visual drama to connect artists with their audiences and plays a key role in focusing attention.

Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania is dedicated to increasing awareness of Lenape history and culture. They advance their mission of “fostering cultural, historical, and environmental education and preservation” of the Lenape people through the revival of tradition and community engagement.

We Are the Seeds celebrates and educates about contemporary Indigenous arts and cultures, creates expansive and holistic opportunities for Indigenous artists, and provides positive and accurate representation of Indigenous peoples.

Bartram's Garden
May 29 & 31

Perelman Theater
May 30

Admission \$35–\$60



Scan here
for ticketing
information

Root Song: Listening to the Wisdom of Trees is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026 Festival*, with lead sponsorship provided by The Albert M. Greenfield Foundation and Andrea Baldeck, and additional support from Chamber Music America's Classical Commissioning: A Responsive Shift program, Gordon and Patricia Fowler, Pauline Candaux and Sol Katz; Kenneth Rainin Foundation, as recommended by Moy Eng; Katherine Niven; Louise and David Strawbridge; and Joan and David Kligerman.



ODILI DONALD ODITA WITH THE FABRIC WORKSHOP AND MUSEUM, BROAD STREET LOVE

FREEDOM IS...

A commission, a poetic prompt, and a question worth asking in every language.

Nigerian-American artist Odili Donald Odita has created a monumental new work for Philadelphia. *Freedom Is...* takes the form of a triptych of sheer fabric banners suspended from the vaulted ceiling of Broad Street Love, a historic site of sanctuary on South Broad Street. Bathed in light from the site's stained-glass windows, the work pulses with abstract shapes and vibrant color, a visual response to its own open-ended title.

Created in collaboration with The Fabric Workshop and Museum, this permanent commission honors Philadelphia as both the birthplace of America and a sanctuary city, and lifts up the voices of those whose contributions have too often gone unrecognized.

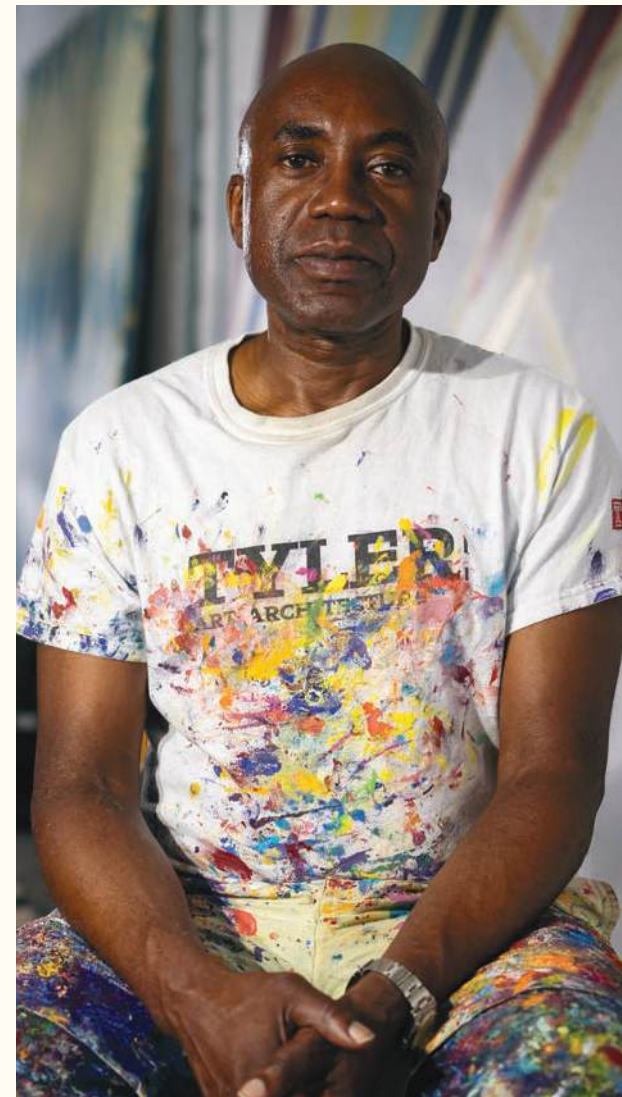
Odita has also designed an evening of spoken word around the artwork's poetic prompt—*Freedom Is...*—featuring Philadelphia's youth poets and the communities served by Broad Street Love, asking everyone present to complete the sentence for themselves.

Odili Donald Odita was born in Enugu, Nigeria, and lives and works in Philadelphia, where he is a professor of painting and drawing at Tyler School of Art and Architecture, Temple University. Known primarily as a painter, his public work has appeared at Brandywine Workshop and Archives on South Broad Street, and currently covers the lobby of the Museum of Modern Art in New York.



Color drawing, c/o Odili Donald Odita

Photo of Odili, c/o Natalie Kahn and the artist



Broad Street Love

May 30

Free Admission



Scan here for more information

Freedom is... is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026 Festival* in partnership with Broad Street Love.



PETE ANGEVINE, PEDRO OSPINA, NEW KENSINGTON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, MURAL ARTS PHILADELPHIA, ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF DREXEL UNIVERSITY, RECYCLED ARTIST IN RESIDENCE (RAIR)

REWILDING PHILADELPHIA: COMMUNITY FIELD DAY

New life is planted in an empty Kensington lot, seeding an ecosystem for the future.

Creative producer Pete Angevine and a coalition of Philly’s most committed institutions are turning a vacant lot in Kensington into a living, breathing pocket forest and public art space. Using the Miyawaki Method—a proven approach to rapid, biodiverse reforestation—*Rewilding Philadelphia* plants the seeds of something that will outlast the festival by decades.

The project launches with a Planting Festival and an artist-in-residence program featuring Pedro Ospina. Paid job opportunities are available for neighbors trained to maintain the space and work alongside Academy of Natural Sciences scientists studying its ecological impact.

Ten years from now, this once-vacant lot will be a cool, dense, biodiverse green space. Teeming with birds, bugs, bats, and human community, the lot can become a shared space for healing, creating, and resting. Nature does its thing, and the community shapes what grows around it.

Pete Angevine works independently as a creative producer and musician with a constellation of individuals and organizations at the intersection of fields including unconventional music, public art, healing, and the natural world.

Pedro Ospina is a Colombian-born artist educator and innovator with a prolific career in visionary art-making through redefining the status quo. He is the Founder/Director of the living art project The Open Kitchen Sculpture Garden.



Mockup for *Rewilding Philadelphia*, c/o Steven Dufala



Rewilding Philadelphia installation at Sketch 2025, c/o REC Philly

2717 Jasper Street
May 31

Free Admission



Scan here
for more
information

Rewilding Philadelphia is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026* Festival, with the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, NKCDC, RAIR and Mural Arts Philadelphia serving as project partners. Lead support is provided by the William Penn Foundation, with additional support from the 25th Century Foundation and The McLean Contributionship.



**GLENN HOLSTEN WITH MAJESTY ROYALE-JACKSON,
NATALIE VALENTINE**

PATINA / PROMISE

Philly turns the lens on itself and captures an essence like no other.

Filmed by Philadelphians. Voiced by Philadelphians. Assembled by director Glenn Holsten and artist Majesty Royale-Jackson.

Patina / Promise is a new city-symphony film for 2026, captured using cell phones, drone footage, interviews, and the sounds of our streets to create an energetic, moving self-portrait of Philadelphia in all its complexity and brilliance. Holsten guides citizen filmmakers through brief workshop-training sessions, turning everyday Philadelphians into the cinematographers of their own story. The tradition of the great city-symphony film comes home to Philly, made from the inside out and the ground up.

Glenn Holsten is a documentary storyteller who creates human-driven films. His work covers topics ranging from the arts and sciences to mental-health awareness and recovery.

Majesty Royale-Jackson (they/them) is a Black Seminole performance-maker and installationist working in dance, sound art, and digital media based in Durham, NC.

Natalie Valentine is a filmmaker and media producer with over 25 years of experience in broadcast and digital storytelling. Her work spans documentary film, television, and branded content, with a focus on stories that are timely, thought-provoking, and deeply human.

**Welsh Fountain at West
Fairmount Park**
June 3 & 10

Free Admission



Scan here
for more
information

Patina / Promise is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026* Festival with lead support provided by the William Penn Foundation and additional support from the Fairmount Park Conservancy.

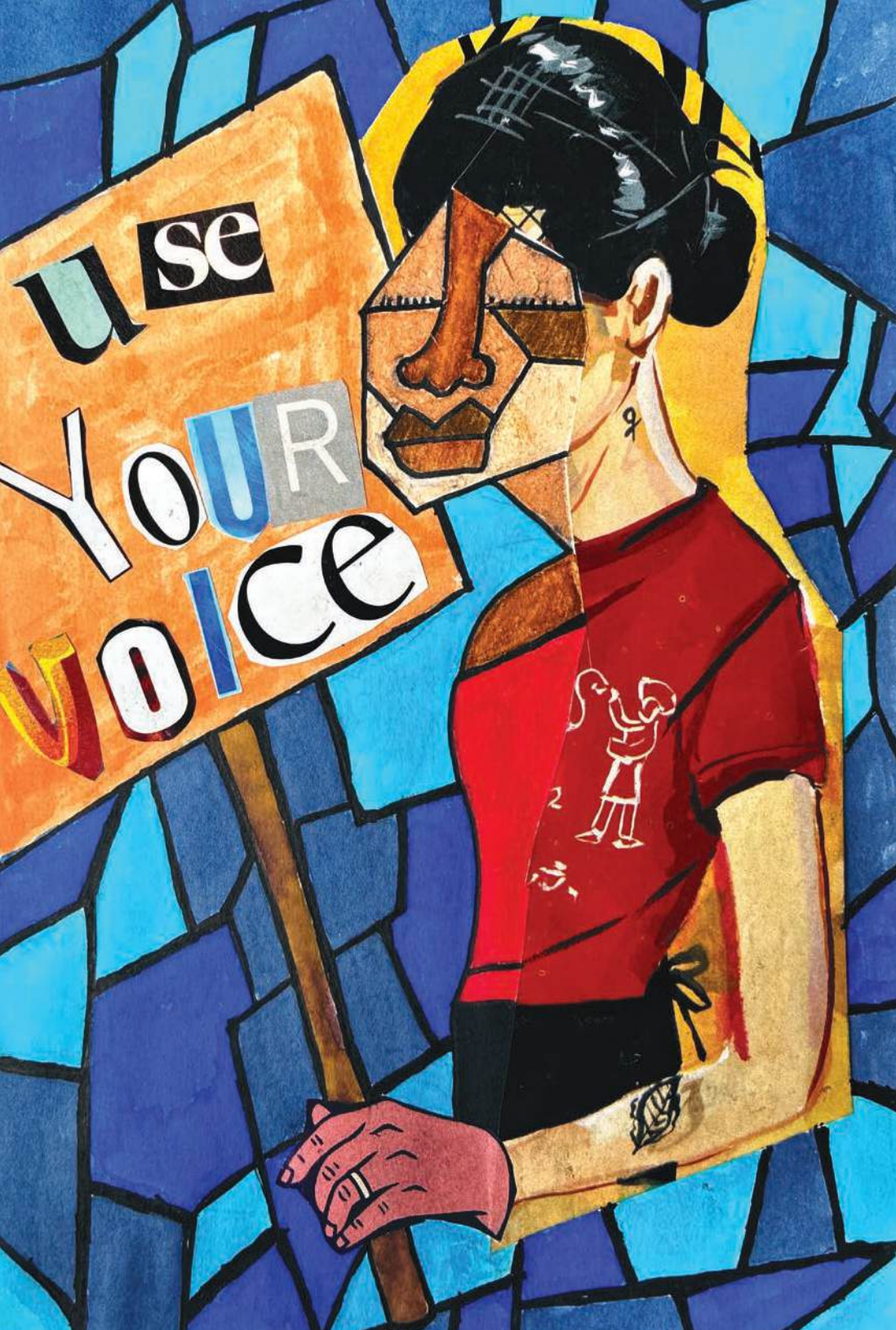


Majesty Royale-Jackson, c/o APW Media



Glenn Holsten, c/o artist





Use Your Voice, Faruq Adger, c/o @scribblism_art

#VOTETHATJAWN, LORENE CARY, BETH FELDMAN GRANT

VOTE THAT JAWN!

Young Philadelphians turn the spoken word into civic power with Youth Voice and the Youth Vote Variety Show.

Vote That Jawn! encourages young people in Philadelphia to harness their own cool—their rebelliousness and beauty, their wit, incisive intelligence, and formal and informal networks—to encourage each other to take seriously their social complaints and hope, and to see how what matters to them connects to the governance that acts in their name.

Developed in collaboration with renowned spoken-word artists, the project's culmination showcases performance, video, and social media. The students were asked a question that's as Philly as it gets—"What's your jawn?"—and they answered.

#VotethatJawn is a Philadelphia youth civic engagement organization that uses art, spoken word, and cultural expression to mobilize young people around voting, governance, and the issues that matter most to them. Their work meets young Philadelphians where they are and challenges them to go further.

Participants: Academy at Palumbo, Anti-Violence Youth Rock Band, Cosmic Writers, Excelano Project, Franklin Learning Center Band, Philadelphia Young Playwrights, Philly Slam League, Philadelphia Youth Poets Laureate.

Performance Garage

June 3

Free Admission



Scan here for more information

Vote That Jawn! is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026* Festival with lead support provided by the William Penn Foundation.



SEBASTIENNE MUNDHEIM, WHITE BOX THEATRE

KEA AND THE ARK / TWIST THE GRID

An ark built in protest. A river reborn in imagination. Two performances that refuse to accept the world as it is.

Kea and the Ark performance, c/o of the artist



Kea and the Ark Performance, c/o the artist

White Box Theatre's Sebastienne Mundheim brings two extraordinary works to ArtPhilly.

First, *Kea and the Ark*: a spellbinding performance through puppetry, dance, and storytelling about Kea Tawana, who built an 86-foot ark in Newark's Central Ward as an act of protest and imagination. *Kea and the Ark* has been presented at colleges, theaters, and museums across the U.S. since its 2023 commission by ArtYard. It arrives at ArtPhilly with discussions and workshops that ask the questions Kea's story provokes, many of which speak directly to our current moment.

Then, *Twist the Grid*: a new work-in-development exploring the myth, science, history, and imagination around the life of the Delaware River and the language of independence. *Twist the Grid* invites audiences into a process-sharing and workshop series with collaborators Harlee Trautman, Daniel de Jesús, Kennedy Candra, Payton Smith, and Ain Gordon.

Sebastienne Mundheim is a performance-maker, installation artist, and educator with more than 30 years of experience in interdisciplinary arts and arts education. Her work integrates visual installation, puppetry, storytelling, dance, and theater.

The Sedgwick Theater

Twist The Grid Workshops
June 4 & 5

Kea & the Ark
June 25–July 1

Admissions \$26/\$13



Scan here
for ticketing
information

Kea & The Ark / Twist the Grid is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026* Festival.



SHAVON NORRIS, GERMAINE INGRAM WITH ALEX TORRA

THE BECOMING

Five Black Philadelphians share what it means to grow into yourself in this city, right now.

Movement and theater artist Shavon Norris will invite four Black female-identifying Philadelphians between the ages of 13 and 39 to participate in an interview and oral history process designed to probe the conditions, challenges and opportunities that Black girls and young women face as they approach adulthood and middle age.

Interview excerpts, along with still- and video-portraits will fuel development of individual and collective storytelling, choreography, rediscovered and newly-created rituals, and songs. The “reveal” for the project will be an exhibition of the portraits and listening booths for experiencing excerpts of the interviews.

Visitors to the exhibition will be able to record their own responses to prompts that focus on how they perceive present-day conditions and prospects for Black women and girls, and how Black women can foster positive change and provide guidance and support for themselves, their families and communities. On the final day of the exhibition, project participants will present/perform artifacts of their storytelling, gestures and choreography, songs, and rituals.

Shavon Norris creates dance and theater works inspired by her background in biology and upbringing in Black church storytelling traditions. Her work excavates the body’s held memories through movement, story circles, and facilitation to reveal and activate the interior lives of Black people.

Germaine Ingram has dedicated a half-century to work in law, public service, performing arts, and arts/cultural strategy and production. In addition to 30 years in legal practice and law teaching, her career in arts and culture, spanning more than 25 years, includes dance and vocal performance, choreography, stage production, oral history, writing, film-making, and arts/culture strategy at the intersection of art and social change.

Alex Torra creates ensemble-driven, experimental performances that blend theater, dance, and music to explore contemporary cultural identity and community. Influenced by his Cuban-American upbringing, his highly collaborative process seeks to create opportunities for communion and reflection on the complexities of shared humanity.



Elle Morris performing at Sketch 2025, c/o REC Philly

Shavon Norris performing, c/o Johanna Austin



Painted Bride Art Center

June 4–7

Admission \$26/\$13



Scan here for ticketing information

The Becoming is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026 Festival* with lead support provided by the William Penn Foundation.



BALLETX WITH DAN DEACON, EMMA KINGSBURY, MORGANN RUNACRE-TEMPLE, TREY MCINTYRE, CHRISTOPHER ASH, JAMAR ROBERTS, PENNY SAUNDERS

THE FOUR SEASONS REIMAGINED

Vivaldi's iconic concerti, brought to vivid life on an epic scale by Philly's own BalletX.

The Four Seasons Reimagined is an epic new work co-produced by Highmark Mann that invites audiences into a living, breathing world shaped by sound, design, light, and movement. Composer and electronic music innovator Dan Deacon creates and performs a bold original score live on stage, igniting an immersive landscape where the seasons pulse with urgency and wonder. Four visionary choreographers each bring a distinct season to life, revealing nature as the driving force at the heart of the story: fragile, fierce, and alive.

With visually arresting costumes and scenic design by Emma Kingsbury and evocative lighting by Christopher Ash, the production surrounds audiences in a fully realized sensory environment where music unfolds in real time, movement surges through shifting landscapes, and light transforms the stage into a world in constant evolution. Inspired by Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, this groundbreaking collaboration draws audiences into an immersive journey through the beauty, volatility, and majesty of our planet.

BalletX, Philadelphia's premier contemporary ballet, was founded in 2005 and is led by Artistic and Executive Director Christine Cox. With a diverse ensemble of 16 dancers, the company is known for commissioning and premiering original works that push the boundaries of dance and establish Philadelphia as a destination for cutting-edge contemporary ballet.

Dan Deacon is a Baltimore-based recording artist and performer renowned for his five studio albums of innovative electronic music, his live performances in both contemporary and classical settings, and his extensive body of work in film scores.



Photo c/o BalletX

Morgann Runacre-Temple is a London-based choreographer working across dance, theatre, film, and opera. She has created works for companies including Stuttgart Ballet, Royal Ballet, and Northern Ballet, and has received multiple Critics' Circle awards.

Penny Saunders is an award-winning choreographer who has created works for companies across the United States and Europe. A former dancer with Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, she is known for inventive storytelling and richly textured movement.

Jamar Roberts is an acclaimed choreographer who has created works for companies including Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, New York City Ballet, and BalletX. A former Ailey dancer and 2016 Bessie Award winner, his work spans stage and film.

Trey McIntyre is an acclaimed choreographer who has created more than 100 works for companies including American Ballet Theatre, New York City Ballet, and San Francisco Ballet. A United States Artists Fellow, he founded the Trey McIntyre Project.

The Highmark Mann Center for the Performing Arts

June 4 & 5

Admission \$25



Scan here for ticketing information

The Four Seasons Reimagined is co-commissioned by ArtPhilly and Highmark Mann as part of the *What Now: 2026* Festival, with additional support from the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, National Endowment for the Arts, Anne M. and Philip H. Glatfelter, III Family Foundation, Jeanne B. Fisher, Mark Singer and Barbara Podell, TD Charitable Foundation, and WXP.N.





**THEATRE IN THE X WITH CARLO CAMPBELL,
COMMUNITY PLAY SESSION CONTRIBUTORS**

ACKNOWLEDGE ME, A COMMUNITY PLAY

A new play built from the voices of Philadelphia.

Theatre in the X invites collective reflection, gathering multigenerational community members whose stories become the building blocks of an original play. Using the prompt “What Now?,” four community groups answer: What does the nation’s 250th anniversary mean to you? What do you hope for Philadelphia’s next 250 years?

From 2019–2021, Theatre in the X piloted a community-play creation process with remarkable results, culminating in original works that belong to all involved. The 2026 edition carries that same conviction forward: that the stories of our city are worth a stage.

Theatre in the X was created in 2013 to provide the people of West Philadelphia and the African-American community at large the opportunity to see professional-quality theater in their own neighborhood for no cost. They provide opportunities to playwrights, actors, directors, stage managers, DJs, sound engineers, and vendors of color.

LaNeshe Miller-White, Executive Director
Carlo Campbell, Co-Artistic Director
Walter DeShields, Co-Artistic Director

**Community Education
Center**
June 4 & 5

Admission \$26/\$13



Scan here
for ticketing
information

Acknowledge Me, A Community Play is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026* Festival with lead support provided by the William Penn Foundation.



**SHEHREZAD MAHER, SĀGAR KĀMATH,
ALEXEI MANSOUR, MIR MASUD-ELIAS**

A TRAVELER WEEPS, A RIVER LAUGHS

Four artists. Four journeys.
One shared history, reconsidered.

Twelve Gates Arts brings together four diasporic artists connected to Philadelphia that delve into identity, migration, and historical narratives in the year of America's 250th.

Featuring "the curfew" by Shehrezad Maher alongside work from diasporic artists sāgar kāmāth, Alexei Mansour, and poet Mir Masud-Elias, the exhibition spans film, poetry, mixed-media installation, and conceptual research. This immersive project creates a multidimensional storytelling experience that invites you to reflect on the journeys that have shaped our collective histories and the diverse lived experiences that continue to define our shared present.

Shehrezad Maher is a filmmaker creating work that centers South Asian characters, intersecting documentary, and creative storytelling and drawing from interdisciplinary influences including visual arts, theater, and music.

sāgar kāmāth is a multidisciplinary artist who dismantles borders—between identity, culture, and form—conjuring joyous, chaotic worlds from the liminal spaces in between.

Alexei Mansour is a painter creating work around the multiplicity of his Middle Eastern heritage, cultural upbringing, and queer identity.

Mir Masud-Elias is a poet and photographer influenced by Sufi poetic tradition, myths, folk, and fairy tales.

Twelve Gates Arts
Exhibition · June 5–July 24

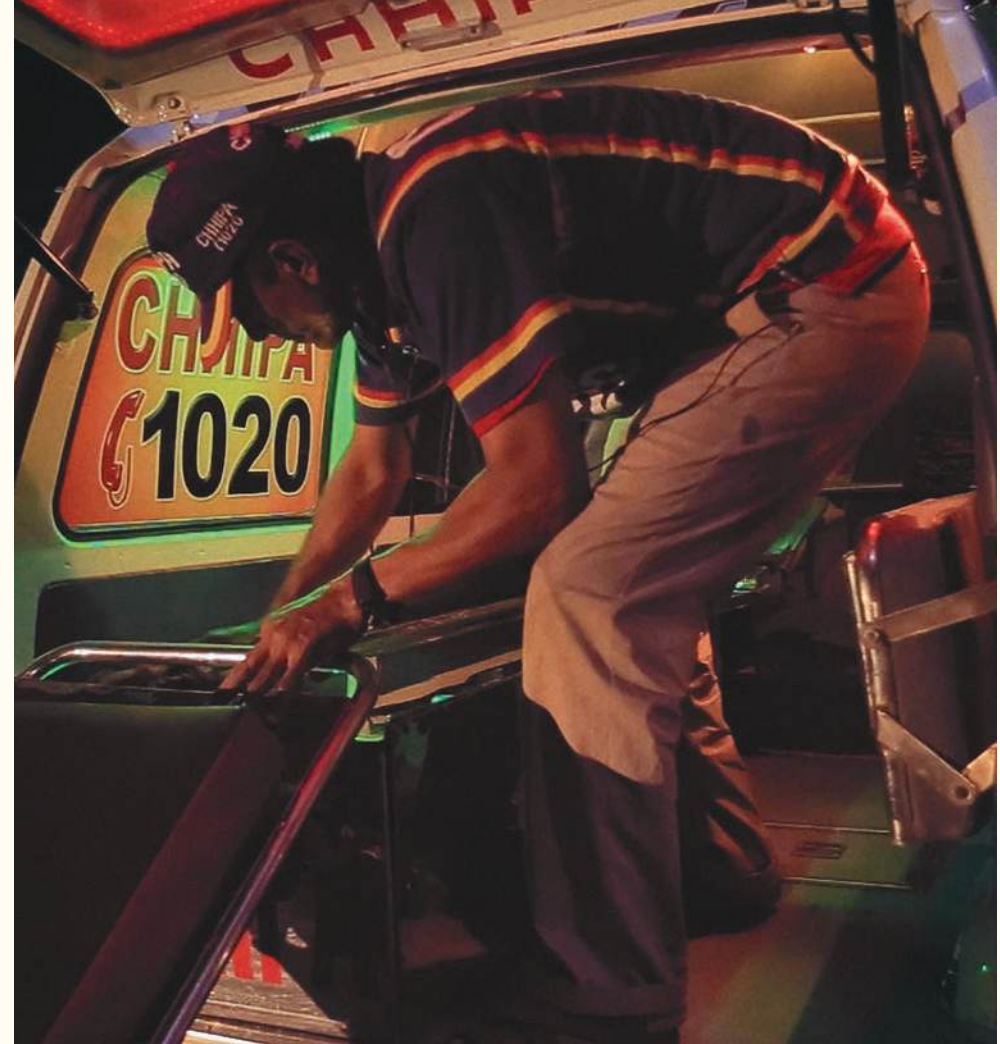
Gordon Gallery ·
Performance · June 12

Free Admission



Scan here
for more
information

A Traveler Weeps, A River Laughs is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026* Festival with lead support provided by the William Penn Foundation, in partnership with the Gordon Gallery at the Weitzman School of Design.



Still from *THIS SHAKING KEEPS ME STEADY*, Shehrezad Maher, c/o 12Gates Arts and the artist



Poster for the curfew, Shehrezad Maher, c/o the artist





Philadelphia Young Playwrights at Sketch 2024, c/o Daniel Jackson for Embassy: Interactive

PHILADELPHIA YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS

CIVIC THEATER PROJECT

Young Philadelphians meet the people shaping their city, hone their individual perspectives, and write what happens next.

Philadelphia Young Playwrights' *Civic Theater Project* is an inspiring initiative inviting passionate young change-makers from diverse backgrounds and neighborhoods across the Philadelphia area to dive deep into the world of civic engagement and the art of playwriting.

After a semester-long deep-dive into the issues that sparked their furor and passion—plus a crash course in theater for social change—these students crafted original one-act plays exploring their visions for transformative change in Philadelphia. The project will culminate in staged readings of all five plays, featuring professional actors, directors, and designers, bringing these bold new plays to life and sparking dialogue around the city's most urgent issues.

Philadelphia Young Playwrights has partnered with educators to bring the transformative power of playwriting into classrooms and community settings across Greater Philadelphia since 1987.

The playwrights include: Ángel Okeke, Avigail Wus, Maroua Benfadhla, Rut Pendygraft, Harmonee' Summers, and Charlie McGeehan.

Louis Blumer Theatre at the Drake
June 5–7

Free Admission



Scan here for more information

Civic Theater Project is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026* Festival with lead support provided by the William Penn Foundation and additional support from the Dolfinger-McMahon Foundation.



TRAPETA B. MAYSON AND YOLANDA WISHER
WITH RJ SMITH

DINNER WITH DINAH

A reclamation—using food, land, and performance to explore memory, freedom, and care beyond the limits of the archive.

Dinner with Dinah is an immersive dinner and performance created, written, and co-directed by Trapeta B. Mayson, and co-directed by Yolanda Wisner, unfolding on the grounds of the historic Stenton house in Germantown. The work centers Dinah, a woman of African descent who was enslaved and later employed at Stenton in the 18th century.

Long known through fragments of archival record and oral tradition, Dinah is reimagined here as a fully dimensional woman—mother, grandmother, laborer, beloved, and ancestor.

This is not a reenactment. The experience unfolds in two acts with a prelude. Act I is a shared, family-style outdoor meal shaped by poetic prompts and guided conversation. Act II transitions into a performance in which multiple performers embody Dinah across interior states and moments through poetry, movement, and music, all on land Dinah would have known intimately.

Trapeta B. Mayson is a Liberian-American poet and community practice artist. She is a former Philadelphia Poet Laureate (2020–2021), a Pew Fellow and Leeway Foundation grantee.

Yolanda Wisner is a Germantown-born writer, educator, and spoken word artist who served as Philadelphia's third Poet Laureate (2016–2017). She is the founder of the School of Guerrilla Poetics, a Pew Fellow, and a Leeway Foundation grantee.

Together, Mayson and Wisner lead ConsenSIS, which seeks to count, gather, and memorialize Black women and femme poets in the Philadelphia area, past and present.

RJ Smith is a chef and culinary student at Drexel University whose work is shaped by his upbringing in the Bay Area. He trained in several notable kitchens, including Californios restaurant in San Francisco and Core by Clare Smyth in London. He is the founder of Ocho Supper Club, an intimate dining experience in Philadelphia that explores Afro-Caribbean flavors through a tasting menu format. While continuing his studies, he is focused on refining his culinary voice, building a career centered on thoughtful cooking and hospitality, and bringing people together through food.



Dinner with Dinah Artwork, c/o the artists

Dinner with Dinah Rendering, c/o the artists



Stenton
June 6

Admission \$26/\$13



Scan here
for ticketing
information

Dinner with Dinah is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026* Festival with lead support provided by the William Penn Foundation, in partnership with Stenton.



MENDELSSOHN CHORUS OF PHILADELPHIA WITH EVAN WANG, BALDWIN GIANG, TED BABCOCK, BARBARA LEWANDOWSKI, NAILA FRANCIS, OCTAVIA MCBRIDE-AHEBEE, LEIGHA AMICK, AMY BETH SISSON, ADELINA DIGIACOMO, HALEY STORM EVANS

JOYFUL ABUNDANCE: EMERGING ARTISTS

Philadelphia's next generation of composers and poets take the stage.

As the Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia celebrates 150 years, they're turning the spotlight forward, commissioning five composer-poet teams to create new works for choral and acoustic instruments exploring "What Now?"

Each three-to-five minute piece will debut in a world premiere performance featuring live music and the poetry that inspired it, celebrating Philadelphia's diverse identities and perspectives through the power of the human voice.

Selected through the Joyful Abundance Emerging Artist Commissioning Award, each team receives a cash award and professional mentorship to bring their vision to life.

The Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia, founded in 1874, is one of America's oldest and most distinguished choral ensembles. Their 150-year legacy is one of musical excellence, civic engagement, and a deep belief in the transformative power of choral music performed at the highest level.

Commissioned world premiere musical and poetic works for chorus:

We are made foreign

Evan Wang, Poet

Baldwin Giang, Composer

Electric Bloom

Octavia McBride-Ahebee, Poet

Ted Babcock, Composer

A Fern Uprising

Naila Francis, Poet

Barbara Lewandowski, Composer

What Now

Amy Beth Sisson, Poet

Leigha Amick, Composer

Welcome Home

Haley Evans, Poet

Adelina DiGiacomo, Composer



Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia, c/o Torello Productions



Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia, c/o Torello Productions

Congregation Rodeph Shalom

June 6

Admission \$26/\$13



Scan here for ticketing information

Joyful Abundance is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026* Festival with lead support provided by the William Penn Foundation, and additional support from the Alan Harler New Ventures Fund and The Musical Fund Society of Philadelphia.



THE CROSSING WITH NATHALIE JOACHIM, NICOLE LIZÉE

THE CROSSING: THE MONTH OF MODERNS

Bold, honest, and inquisitive choral commissions voiced through some of the country's most adventurous composers.

Four-time Grammy Award-winning choir The Crossing, conducted by Donald Nally, brings us two concerts for June's *Month of Moderns*. The first—*Life, Liberty, Pursuit of Happiness: The People Speak from the Birthplace of America (Philadelphia Composers Ask Questions)*—features a new piece by Haitian-American performer and composer Nathalie Joachim that sets Benjamin Franklin's Thirteen Virtues alongside works from Philadelphia composers. The second—*The People Address the Nation's Issues (The Society, The Environment, The Displaced)*—features a world premiere from Nicole Lizée with works from their repertory.

The Crossing is a Philadelphia-based professional chamber choir dedicated to commissioning and performing the new canon of American choral music. The ensemble has won four Grammy Awards and is recognized internationally as one of the most important forces in contemporary choral music.

Donald Nally, their conductor, collaborates with creative artists, leading orchestras, and art museums to create choral works that address social and environmental issues. He has commissioned over 200 works and produced 36 recordings, earning 10 Grammy nominations along the way.

Nathalie Joachim is a Grammy-nominated flutist, composer, and vocalist. The Brooklyn-born Haitian-American artist was a co-founder of the critically acclaimed urban art pop duo Flutronix and navigates everything from classical to indie-rock, all while advocating for social change and cultural awareness.

Nicole Lizée is a Montreal-based, award-winning composer and video artist. Her music and videos reflect influences from an eclectic mix of influences including the earliest MTV videos, turntablism, rave culture, Hitchcock, Kubrick, Cage, Alexander McQueen, and 1960s psychedelia and modernism.



Sound From The Bench @ National Sawdust in 2017 c/o Jill Steinberg



Nathalie Joachim, c/o the artist

Nicole Lizée, c/o the artist



Broad Street Love

June 6 & 27

The Presbyterian Church of Chestnut Hill

June 7 & 28

Admission \$26/\$13



Scan here for ticketing information

The Crossing: The Month of Moderns is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026 Festival*.



URBAN MOVEMENT ARTS, VINCE JOHNSON WITH PAUL GIESS, UNTETHERED AND THE HOODLOCKERS, MARCUS TUCKER, RYLEE LOCKER, WILLEM COUSINEAU, MASON MCAVOY, AIDAN UN

SAY YES, PHILLY!

Expressions of Philly’s Black American vernacular dance scene and culture—performed, celebrated, and evolved in real time.

Urban Movement Arts presents a series of events that honor the thriving legacy of Black American vernacular dance in Philadelphia, where the roots of club culture entwine with genre-defying exploration. *Say Yes, Philly!* is the cipher, battles, theater, interdisciplinary jams, and stories that express the boundless continuum of street dance culture, and will also feature Aidan Un and Vince Johnson’s film *You Don’t Have to Go Home, But...*

In Philly’s street dance scene, the line between the freestyle cipher and the journey of artistic conceptualization has blurred beautifully. *Say Yes, Philly!* leans into this exchange in full, honoring the city’s extraordinary history of generating communal art and culture, while shining a light on the range of artistry that stems from Black American vernacular dance roots.

You Don’t Have to Go Home, But... is an ode to dancing bodies, a grimy love letter to Philadelphia, and a story about what to do when the DJ has played the last song, the club’s lights have come on and you gotta go... somewhere. Following three dancers at different stages of their lives, with legendary Philly dance party Second Sundae as backdrop, this documentary film examines the possibility of spiritual fulfillment in a socioeconomic configuration that ultimately doesn’t value the practices that make us free.



(Above and below) Urban Movement Arts, c/o Laney Powers

Urban Movement Arts (UMA) is a Philadelphia-based organization dedicated to dance. UMA classes and events celebrate and focus on Black vernacular dance forms, including Hip Hop, House, Locking, Voguing, Waacking, and more. UMA believes Black vernacular dance is meant for all bodies, ages, genders, racial identities, and experience levels to enjoy.

Vince Johnson is a Philadelphia-based dancer, choreographer, dance educator, and community organizer whose work spans vernacular dance tradition, contemporary dance practices, and interdisciplinary exploration.

Aidan Un is an independent filmmaker who has spent more than a decade capturing the vibrant scene of Philadelphia’s Second Sundae dance party for his documentary *You Don’t Have to Go Home, But...* The film was screened at the Asian American Film Festival and BlackStar Film Festival, where it won the Audience Award for Favorite Feature Documentary.

The Louis Bluver Theatre at The Drake

Film Screening • June 2

The Sedgwick Theater

June 7 & 13

The Wilma Theater

June 11 & 12

Admission \$26/\$13



Scan here for ticketing information

Say Yes, Philly! is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026* Festival with lead support provided by the William Penn Foundation



BLACKSTAR PROJECTS WITH ANTHONY TIDD

JOHN COLTRANE EN MOTION: LIVE RESCORING DIASPORIC STORIES OF MIGRATION

Coltrane's sonic universe meets contemporary diasporic cinema in an immersive film-and-music experience.



2019 BlackStar Festival, c/o Daniel Jackson for Embassy; Interactive



Still from *Queen of My Dreams*, c/o Blackstar



Stories of Migration is an immersive film-and-music experience that explores the emotional, cultural, and spiritual pathways of migration through the sonic universe of John Coltrane. By pairing Coltrane's expansive sound world with two contemporary, feature films: *The Queen of My Dreams* and *Mother of George*, the project illuminates diasporic stories of displacement, identity, tradition, and transformation across continents.

BlackStar creates the spaces and resources needed to uplift Black, Brown, and Indigenous artists working beyond the confines of genre. Championing visionary work that is experimental in aesthetics, content, and form, BlackStar elevates overlooked, invisibilized, misunderstood artists—celebrating the full spectrum of their storytelling and experience. Building on the work of elders and ancestors, BlackStar brings bold, boundary-defying work to new audiences and places it in dialogue with the past, present, and future.

Anthony Tidd is a composer, producer, audio engineer, educator, and musician. He plays bass, guitar, and piano/keyboards. Tidd's musical palette as a composer and performer is diverse with a deep knowledge of jazz, R&B, hip-hop, classical, and new music, as well as a particular affinity for creative improvisation.

FringeArts
June 10 & 12

Free Admission



Scan here
for more
information

John Coltrane En Motion is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026* Festival with support provided by FringeArts.

WALÉ OYÉJIDÉ, IMMANUEL WILKINS

DISPLACED FLOWERS; STILL IN BLOOM

Vivid cinema. Vibrant jazz. An electrifying tribute to one of Philadelphia's most legendary musicians.

Filmmaker and designer Walé Oyéjidé's "The Voyagers," "Bravo, Burkina!" and "Do You See Me" come to life in Philadelphia premiere screenings. The films, accompanied by live scores from saxophonist Immanuel Wilkins and his quartet (Micah Thomas, Daryl Johns, and Kweku Sumbry) pay spiritual homage to Philadelphia's own John Coltrane.

In a marriage of Philly's most cherished artforms, audiences will enjoy vivid displays of Black cinema, fashion, dance, and classical American music. Walé's films range from narratives produced locally in Philadelphia, to West Africa and Italy, forming a narrative world that is distinctly global, and deeply Philly.

Walé Oyéjidé is a Philadelphia-based, award-winning filmmaker, designer, and lawyer whose work combats bias with beauty. He employs fashion design as a vehicle to celebrate the marginalized.

Immanuel Wilkins is a Grammy-nominated alto saxophonist and composer from Glen Mills, PA. Hailed as one of the most vital voices in contemporary jazz, his music explores melody and lamentation in contrast to gestures of space and breath.

The Perelman Theatre at Ensemble Arts
June 11

Admission \$26/\$13



Scan here for ticketing information

Displaced Flowers is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026* Festival with lead support provided by the William Penn Foundation.



Still from *Bravo, Burkina!*, c/o Walé Oyéjidé

Walé Oyéjidé at *Sketch 2024*, c/o Daniel Jackson for Embassy: Interactive



Immanuel Wilkins, c/o the artist





Jarbeaux, c/o Bearded Ladies

THE BEARDED LADIES CABARET, JARBEAUX

AAAHH!!! WTF NOW?!

The horrors persist. So do The Bearded Ladies.

Philly's most fearless queer cabaret company is back—and they brought songs. Directed by Jarbeaux, *AAAHH!!! WTF Now?!* is a 90-minute solidarity sing-along arriving right on time for America's 250th. Rousing, ridiculous, and entirely necessary, the show invites audiences to scream, sing, and survive the moment together. A (key) change is coming—but only if we make it ourselves.

Whether you come for the community, the catharsis, or just to let out a primal scream, there's a seat for you. By the time this 90-minute show is over, you will have survived another 90 minutes.

The Bearded Ladies Cabaret is Philadelphia's genre-defying queer performance company, creating original work that is as politically sharp as it is joyfully unhinged. Through opera, cabaret, musical walking tours, and site-specific spectacle, they usher audiences into moments of joy, healing, and subversion.

The Wilma Theater

June 13

Admission \$26/\$13



Scan here for ticketing information

AAAHH!!! WTF Now?! is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026* Festival.



**V. SHAYNE FREDERICK, CHEF VALERIE ERWIN, ERIC BATTLE,
DR. KENDRA BUTLER-WATERS, ASAKE DENISE JONES,
LYNN WASHINGTON**

PEPPERPOT

A legendary Philly street food becomes the portal to a story of African-American women, community, and resilience.

Initially conceived by the late interdisciplinary artist Homer Jackson envisioning a collaboration with Chef Valerie Erwin and illustrator Eric Battle, *Pepperpot* will be presented and developed under the guidance of jazz artist V. Shayne Frederick in close conversation with Jackson's widow and creative partner, Lynn Washington, and culture worker and teaching artist Asake Denise Jones.

At its heart is the story of pepper pot soup, a traditional dish with a multi-faceted and far reaching heritage. The project harkens back to the America of 250 years ago, anchoring the existence of African-American women and culture within Philadelphia's historic marketplaces.

This multimedia intergenerational event centers live musical and poetic performance composed by pianist and bandleader Dr. Kendrah Butler-Waters, performed by a team of Philadelphia-area musicians and poets, consisting of new music inspired by American Folk, Blues, and Afro-Caribbean musics, alongside poetry and prose inspired

by the songs of historic urban street merchants who used their music to gain customers. *Pepperpot* will feature a collection of imaginary "portraits" of these historic, unsung chefs executed by Eric Battle. Integral to the experience is an authentic and delicious pepper pot food service organized and facilitated by Chef Valerie Erwin and presented in tandem with the performance.

V. Shayne Frederick is a Philadelphia jazz artist and sound engineer whose work connects musical traditions across generations and genres.

Chef Valerie Erwin is a Philadelphia chef working at the intersection of social justice, food justice, culture, and the culinary arts.

Eric Battle is a Philadelphia-based illustrator, curator, and art director known for his contributions to comic arts and culture.

Kendrah Butler-Waters' affinity for Philadelphia's historic musical roots has served as the muse for her creative output as a skilled and imaginative pianist, composer, violinist, and vocalist.



Pepperpot illustration, Eric Battle, c/o the artist



Pepper-Pot: A Scene in the Philadelphia Market, John Lewis Krimmel, 1871, c/o the PMA

Race Street Pier

June 13

Free Admission



Scan here for more information

Pepperpot is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026* Festival with lead support provided by the William Penn Foundation and additional support from the Delaware River Waterfront Corporation.

V. Shayne Frederick, c/o Daniel Jackson for Embassy: Interactive



RUTH NAOMI FLOYD WITH THE ENSEMBLE: AARON GRAVES,
KEITH LOFTIS, LEE SMITH, DR. LISA M. WEAVER, BYRON LYNDDHAM

MARIAN ANDERSON: A VOICE OF BEAUTY, HOPE, AND CHANGE

One of Philadelphia's musical greats inspires new compositions, and her story has never been more timely.

A distinguished native of Philadelphia, Marian Anderson left an indelible imprint on the world. In this collection of new work, composer and vocalist Ruth Naomi Floyd masterfully intertwines jazz and classical music to celebrate Anderson's legacy—examining how her artistry served as a powerful, transformative voice against the pressing issues of race, gender, and justice that continue to resonate today.

Marian Anderson, a distinguished native of Philadelphia, was not only an African-American contralto but also a trailblazer for civil rights, whose extraordinary musical gifts and unwavering commitment to freedom, justice, and equality left an indelible imprint on the world. In this compelling collection of new work, composer and vocalist Ruth Naomi Floyd masterfully intertwines elements of jazz and classical music to celebrate Anderson's legacy. As society grapples with pressing issues of race, gender, and justice, Floyd's new body of work serves as a poignant homage to Anderson's life, revealing how her artistry resonated as a powerful and transformative voice. This reexamination of Marian Anderson's story enriches the dialogue surrounding these vital themes, reminding us of the enduring impact of her artistry.

Ruth Naomi Floyd is a Philadelphia-based composer, vocalist, and educator who works in a world between spirituals, the blues, and concert music to tell stories of the African American experience with beauty and depth. She has been at the forefront of creating sacred jazz vocal settings for over 20 years and currently leads her own multifaceted ensemble.



Ruth Naomi Floyd, c/o the artist



Marian Anderson, c/o Hans Kyllberg via Wikimedia Commons

Marian Anderson Hall at Ensemble Arts

June 16

Admission \$26/\$13



Scan here
for ticketing
information

Marian Anderson: A Voice of Beauty, Hope, and Change is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026* Festival with lead support provided by the William Penn Foundation, and additional support from Penn's Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts.





Cookie Diorio with Philadelphia Gay Men's Chorus, c/o Joe Mac Creative

Andrea Clearfield, c/o the artist



ANDREA CLEARFIELD, COOKIE DIORIO WITH ANNA CRUSIS FEMINIST CHOIR, PHILADELPHIA GAY MEN'S CHORUS, VOICES OF PRIDE, ORCHESTRA 2001

LONG LIVE THE QUEEN: A HER-STORY OF DRAG

Choir, cabaret, and drag take the stage in a living, loving tribute to queer performance.

Composer Andrea Clearfield and drag artist/opera singer Cookie Diorio lead an hour-long fusion of opera, multimedia cantata, drag, cabaret, and performance art.

Featuring Philadelphia's LGBTQ+ choruses alongside a chamber ensemble of strings, winds, piano, and percussion from Orchestra 2001, *Long Live the Queen* charts a journey across time—Before (When), Now (Conflict), and Forward (Where), refusing to apologize for a single sequin.

Long Live the Queen incorporates costumes designed by Cookie Diorio. Supporting choruses include the ANNA Crusis Feminist Choir, Philadelphia Gay Men's Chorus, and Voices of Pride.

Andrea Clearfield is a Philadelphia-based composer whose catalog spans opera, choral, orchestral, and chamber music performed across the U.S., Europe, and Asia.

Cookie Diorio is a Philadelphia-based drag artist and opera singer who brings a rare combination of vocal training and theatrical fearlessness to every stage. She occupies the exhilarating space where high art and high camp become one.

The Wilma Theater
June 18–20

Admission \$26/\$13



Scan here for ticketing information

Long Live the Queen is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026* Festival with lead support provided by the William Penn Foundation.



**ZEEK BURSE, LAURIN TALESE, BLACK MUSIC CITY,
MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION**

SOUND OF HISTORY

The American Revolution. Remixed.
Rescored. Reimagined.

What does it mean for musicians to be embedded in a history museum? How might art influence practice, and history influence art? Together, the Museum of the American Revolution and Black Music City—a collaboration between WXPN, WRTI, and REC Philly—creates the conditions for exactly that kind of generative collision.

Two artist fellows have been immersed in the Museum—exploring collections and exhibitions, attending meetings and public programs—and ultimately, they will use their experience to create original musical works bridging the worlds between 1776 and 2026.

Black Music City is a Philadelphia initiative—a collaboration between WXPN, WRTI, and REC Philly—dedicated to celebrating, documenting, and amplifying the rich legacy of Black music in Philadelphia and its influence.

The Museum of the American Revolution explores the founding era of the United States through immersive, inclusive storytelling. Located in Old City, it is one of the nation's preeminent institutions understanding the Revolution and its meaning today.

Laurin Talese has been captivating audiences with her pure tone and poignant lyrics since childhood. A Cleveland, Ohio native, Laurin was classically trained at the Cleveland Institute of Music, The Cleveland School of the Arts, and later studied classical and jazz voice at the University of the Arts—where she received a bachelor's degree in Vocal Performance. Her debut album, *Gorgeous Chaos*, produced by Adam Blackstone and released in 2016, features a stellar lineup of musicians and was met with wide acclaim.

Zeek Burse is a captivating force in the music scene. He seamlessly weaves his roles as a singer, songwriter, producer, and model. Zeek is not just an artist; he's a trailblazer challenging the constraints of musical genres and societal norms. His global presence extends to performances in Paris, Milan, London, and beyond.



Laurin Talese at Sketch 2025, c/o REC Philly

Zeek Burse, c/o the artist



**Museum of the
American Revolution**
June 19

Free Admission



Scan here
for more
information

Sound of History is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026* festival with support from America250PA, The Presser Foundation, and the 25th Century Foundation.





King Britt, c/o B+ and the artist

KING BRITT

BLACKTRONIKA: PHILADELPHIA NOW AND THEN

Philly’s electronic legacy, turned all the way up.

As a tribute to his local roots, celebrated musician, producer, curator, and professor King Britt brings you *BLACKTRONIKA: Philadelphia Now and Then*, a curated, week-long series of performances, workshops and discussions celebrating Philly’s innovators of color in the electronic music scene.

BLACKTRONIKA will showcase Dexter Wansel of Philadelphia International Records; Black Lily Tribute featuring Tracey Moore; Tastytreats hosted by Flygirrl and Yameen Allworld, with DJ Mike Nyce and surprise guest; BodyRock with The Illvibe Collective; Beat Society hosted by Hezekiah and Sao & Stef Tataz; Rockers hosted by Moor Mother; King Britt & Sylk130 with appearances from various Philly artists.

King Britt is a Philadelphia-born electronic music pioneer with 30-plus years of experience shaping sound both locally and globally and has long been a pivotal figure in placing his hometown on the global electronic music map. His groundbreaking course “Blacktronika: Afrofuturism in Electronic Music”—a celebration of the contributions of innovators of color to electronic music—has grown into a festival with events in Los Angeles, Brooklyn, Knoxville and Paris, featuring high-profile guests like Questlove and Herbie Hancock.

Margolis
June 23

Johnny Brenda’s
June 24 & 25

Solar Myth
June 26

Kung Fu Necktie
June 27

Silk City
June 28 & 29

Free Admission



Scan here
for more
information

Blacktronika; Philadelphia Now and Then is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026* Festival with lead support provided by the William Penn Foundation. *Blacktronika* parties are co-produced by ArtPhilly in partnership with Johnny Brenda’s, Silk City, Margolis, and ArsNova Workshop.



PHILADELPHIA LATINO ARTS & FILM FESTIVAL, RAÚL ROMERO
WITH BRENT HOWARD / ANCHOR & KEY IRONWORK & STUDIO

TRANSMISSIONS: ROBERTO CLEMENTE

An afternoon in the park. Baseball. Sculpture.
Sound. Film. Community.

This collaboration will feature a public video and sound art installation by artist Raúl Romero and present a unique opportunity: an evening of viewing baseball footage of Roberto Clemente, paired with old, unseen footage featuring Puerto Rican life from the island and the diaspora, at the iconic Roberto Clemente Park. This initiative celebrates America's pastime and pays homage to the first Latino player inducted into Baseball's Hall of Fame.

As Philadelphia's neighborhoods grow and evolve, this open-air event offers an educational experience rooted in community, inviting audiences to discover or rediscover the park's history and significance.

The Philadelphia Latino Arts & Film Festival is a Philadelphia institution dedicated to celebrating and amplifying Latine/x/a/o arts and culture through film, performance, and community programming. Their work showcases the richness, complexity, and cultural breadth of their communities.

Raúl Romero is a Philadelphia-based artist weaving technological histories, Puerto Rican ancestry, and ancient artifacts together in explorations of nostalgia, colonialism's exploitation, and the environment to present sound as a versatile tool.

Roberto Clemente Park

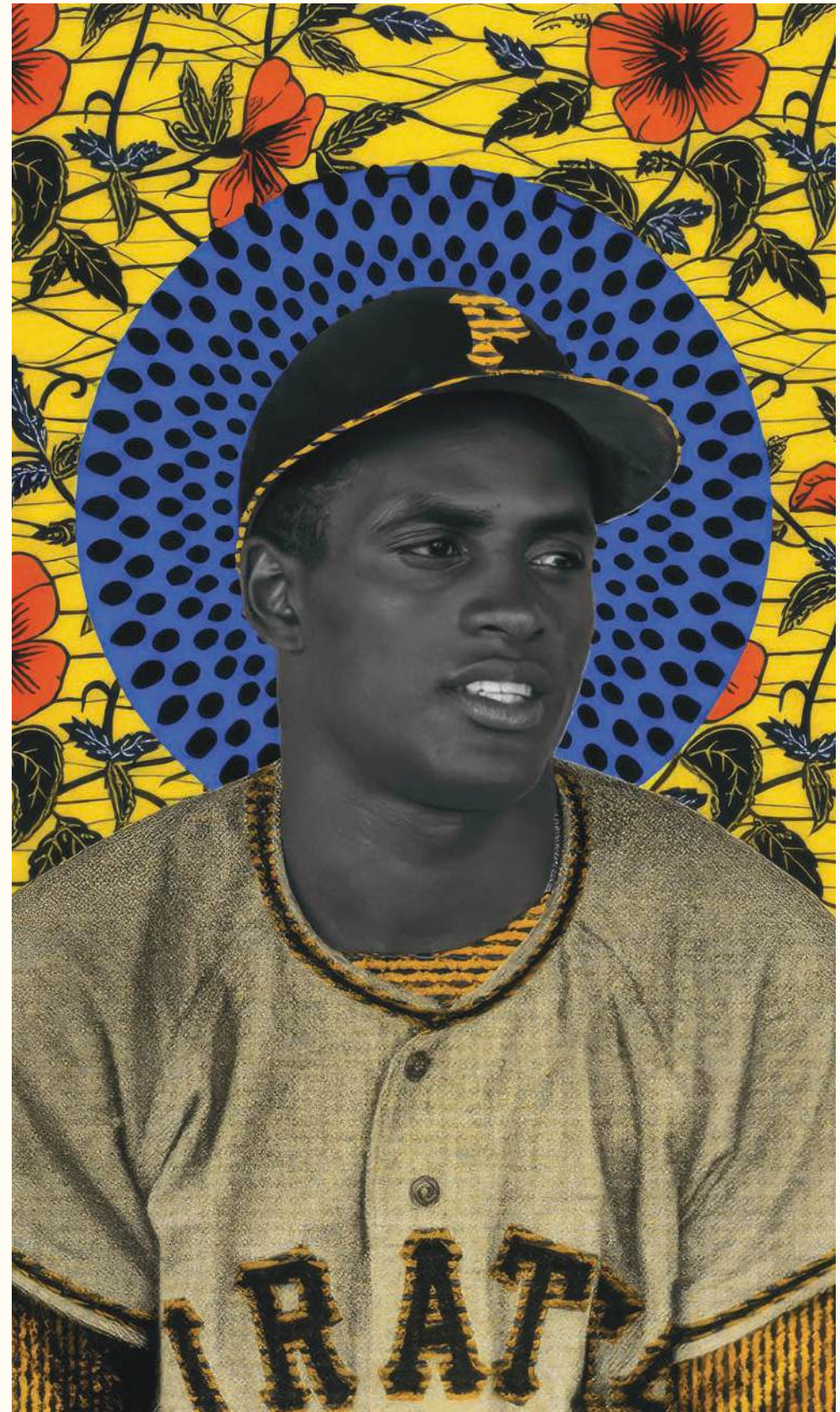
June 24

Free Admission



Scan here
for more
information

Transmissions: Roberto Clemente is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026* Festival with lead support provided by the William Penn Foundation, in partnership with Clemente Park.



Roberto Clemente, Makeba Rainey, c/o Raúl Romero and the artist



ANNA DEAVERE SMITH WITH LEONARD FOGLIA,
ANN HOULD-WARD, GUTHRIE RAMSEY

THE BASIL BIGGS PROJECT

Screen and stage star Anna Deavere Smith follows her Gettysburg family history in a new original play.

Eminent playwright, actor, and professor Anna Deavere Smith has created *The Basil Biggs Project*, a new play tracing the life of Smith's great-great-grandfather—a farmer, veterinarian, and prominent Gettysburg figure who received a contract to disinter and rebury the Union dead after the bloodiest battle of the Civil War. Though he was a prominent figure in his community, it appears that Biggs did not read or write. Smith uses available archival material to imagine how the Biggs family met the challenges of a tumultuous and transformative time.

Directed by Leonard Foglia, and in collaboration with designer Ann Hould-Ward, *The Basil Biggs Project* is emblematic of Smith's longstanding mission, which is to integrate historical fact and artistic imagination to weave individual stories into cohesive reflections which celebrate American resilience and inspire discussion.

Anna Deavere Smith is one of America's most celebrated playwrights, actors, and educators. Known for *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* and *Fires in the Mirror*, her work integrates historical fact and artistic imagination to illuminate the American experience with precision and empathy.

Leonard Foglia is a theater and opera director and librettist whose work has been seen on Broadway, across the country, and internationally. Original Broadway productions include *Master Class* with Zoe Caldwell and Audra McDonald (also on the West End with Patti LuPone, on the national tour with Faye Dunaway), *Thurgood* with Laurence Fishburne (filmed for HBO), and *The People in the Picture* with Donna Murphy.



Anna Deavere Smith and cellist Joshua Roman, c/o Diana Walker

Ann Hould-Ward has won, or been nominated for, virtually every major theatre award, including the Tony, Drama Desk, Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle, American Theatre Wing, Outer Critics Circle and Olivier awards for her costume design. A Tony winner for *Beauty and the Beast* and Tony nominee for *Into the Woods*, and *Sunday in the Park with George*, Hould-Ward's stage credits also include countless off-Broadway productions and designs for the most highly regarded regional theaters and the theater-world's finest producers and directors.

Guthrie P. Ramsey, Jr. is a 2022 Guggenheim Fellow and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. A music historian, pianist, composer, and Professor Emeritus of Music at the University of Pennsylvania, he is the author of *Who Hears Here: On Black Music Past and Present*, *The Amazing Bud Powell: Black Genius, Jazz History and the Challenge of Bebop*, and *Race Music: Black Cultures from Bebop to Hip-Hop*.

The Wilma Theater

June 26–28

Admission \$26/\$13



Scan here
for ticketing
information

The Basil Biggs Project is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026* Festival with major support from The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage. Additional project support is provided by The Historical Society of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia and Andrew Dalton of the Adams County Historical Society in Gettysburg.



RASHID ZAKAT WITH LADY ALMA, DJ LIL' DAVE, OLUWAFEMI, JEAN-JACQUES GABRIEL, SUDAN GREEN / SPIRITS UP, LUKE CARLOS O'REILLY AND ULISES BOOKS

REVIVAL!

Inspired by and attuned to the spiritual practices of Black Philadelphians.



Rashid Zakat, c/o the artist



Revival! performance, c/o the artist

Artist Rashid Zakat takes *Revival!* to the streets, sacred spaces, and neighborhood hubs of Philadelphia in a series of pop-up video and installation performances, culminating in a full day of presence and practice. Drawing on archival footage, original video art, live performance, and AI-generated imagery, Zakat composes public art as a communal ritual, and an open invitation to gather.

During the day, *Revival!* functions as a third space: part coffee shop, part reading room, part sanctuary. Co-produced with ICA (Institute of Contemporary Art Philadelphia), and partnering with local coffee roasters, vendors, and bookshops, Zakat creates a space for community members to read, discuss, and commune—with yoga, meditation, breathwork, and somatic practices woven throughout. Whether sought out by attendees, or stumbled upon by passers-by, *Revival!* welcomes you either way.

Rashid Zakat is a Philadelphia-based filmmaker, artist, DJ, and creative technologist exploring creative space-making that interacts with Black social and spiritual life.

Institute of Contemporary Art at The University of Pennsylvania

June 28

Free Admission



Scan here for more information

Revival! is commissioned by ArtPhilly as part of the *What Now: 2026* Festival and co-produced by the Institute of Contemporary Art Philadelphia, with lead support provided by the William Penn Foundation.



SALON-ISHES



In the Garden, Alexei Mansour, c/o Twelve Gates Arts

We believe that artists are the best interpreters of history, and this is the chance to take a closer look. Throughout the run of the festival, we're hosting four **salon-ishes**, bringing together artists from *What Now: 2026* with some of our festival partners. Listen to our youngest writers test out new pieces, try an appetizer from a few of our favorite chefs—even maybe dust off your old recorder for a session with some of the Philadelphia's best jazz musicians.

Salon-ish, (Noun)

What is a Salon-ish? It's a word we made up. Think of it as not quite formal enough to be a "salon," but structured enough for a little casual discourse with some food.

FRESH INK, NEW VOICES

Barnes and Noble

June 2 • 6–8PM

Join the next generation of playwrights (Philadelphia Young Playwrights), spoken word poets (*Vote That Jawn!*) and songwriters (Esperanza's band, Paradox), for an honest look at what it means to use your voice for art and mandate change. Smaller groups will be moderated by author and #VoteThatJawn founder Lorene Cary. Not a bad start to your "how I spent my summer break" essay.

THE DINNER-SATION

Culinary Literacy Center, Parkway Central Library

June 9 • 6–8PM

Take a seat at the chef's table. Chef Valerie Erwin (*Pepperpot*) is inviting some of her favorite collaborators to put together a dish that shows off how the immigrant and diasporic experiences can tell a story through meaningful ingredients. This salon-ish has a maximum capacity of 35 people.

REWILDING PHILADELPHIA: SMALL FORESTS, BIG IDEAS

Athenaeum of Philadelphia

June 23 • 6–8PM

What's a pocket forest? Come find out. The team behind *Rewilding Philadelphia* is hosting a science fair, ArtPhilly style. Join gardening and horticultural organizations from across the city at their "booths" to learn about community greening initiatives. Wrap up with a little musical performance in Athenaeum's new garden plot and take home a sachet of seeds of your own.

BYOI: BRING YOUR OWN INSTRUMENTS

Peter A. Benoliel Germantown Branch, Settlement School

June 30 • 8–10PM

Ever dream of being in a band? What about with some of the best musicians in the city? Emcee Black Butterfly and composer/producer Anthony Tidd are hosting a conduction session—a structured, real-time method of directing an improvising ensemble using hand gestures and facial expressions—so tune your guitar or borrow your kid's tambourine. This is one you don't want to miss.

**BEAUTIFUL
THINGS
HAPPEN
IN
PHILA-
DELPHIA**

Cookie Dioro with Philadelphia Gay Men's Chorus, c/o Joe Mac

YOUR CITY, YOUR FESTIVAL, YOUR CALENDAR



John Coltrane illustration, c/o Eric Battle

Excited? So are we. Start planning your *What Now: 2026* experience with our projects, salon-ishes, and supporting events using these calendar pages as your guide.

Tommie Waheed-Evans at Sketch 2025, c/o REC Philly



Rehearsal for *in case of fire, speak*, c/o Daniel Jackson for Embassy: Interactive

APRIL

APRIL 1 *in case of fire, speak (Exhibition)*
Sachs Program for Arts Innovation, through July 6

APRIL 6 *What Can You Do While You're Waiting*
Broad Street Bus Shelters, through May 3

APRIL 11 *Give Thanks to The Beginning, The Soil, The Seed*
Bartram's Garden

MAY

MAY 27 *Bicentennial Baby*
Digital Podcast Release

MAY 28 *From Our Forefathers: Climate Crisis Through Museum Tours*
Independence Seaport Museum
Iron & Paper: Unfolding Philadelphia's Chinatown
Crane Community Center, through July 3

Sail Through This to That
Community Procession; Spruce Street Harbor, through July 30

What Now? Love Now!
932-34 Market Street, through July 2

MAY 29 *in case of fire, speak (Performance)*
Penn Live Arts / Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

Root Song: Listening to the Wisdom of the Trees
Bartram's Garden

MAY 30 *Freedom is...*
Broad Street Love
From Our Forefathers: Climate Crisis Through Museum Tours
Philadelphia Museum of Art

in case of fire, speak (Performance)
Penn Live Arts / Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

Root Song: Listening to the Wisdom of the Trees
Perelman Theater

MAY 31 *Rewilding Philadelphia: Community Field Day*
2717 Jasper Street

Root Song: Listening to the Wisdom of the Trees
Bartram's Garden

Dai Food, Colette Fu, c/o the artist




JUNE

JUNE 2	<i>Salon-ish: Fresh Ink; New Voices</i> Barnes & Noble	<i>Say Yes, Philly! (Film Screening: You Don't Have to Go Home, But...)</i> The Louis Bluver Theatre at The Drake
JUNE 3	<i>Patina / Promise</i> Welsh Fountain at West Fairmount Park	<i>Vote That Jawn</i> Performance Garage
JUNE 4	<i>Acknowledge Me, A Community Play</i> Community Education Center <i>The Becoming</i> Painted Bride Art Center <i>From Our Forefathers: Climate Crisis Through Museum Tours</i> Science History Institute	<i>The Four Seasons Reimagined</i> The Highmark Mann Center For Performing Arts <i>Twist The Grid (Workshop)</i> The Sedgwick Theater
JUNE 5	<i>A Traveler Weeps, A River Laughs (Exhibition)</i> 12 Gates Arts, through July 24 <i>Acknowledge Me, A Community Play</i> Community Education Center <i>The Becoming</i> Painted Bride Art Center	<i>Civic Theater Project</i> Louis Bluver Theatre at the Drake <i>The Four Seasons Reimagined</i> The Highmark Mann Center For Performing Arts <i>Twist The Grid (Workshop)</i> The Sedgwick Theater
JUNE 6	<i>The Becoming</i> Painted Bride Art Center <i>Civic Theater Project</i> Louis Bluver Theatre at the Drake <i>The Crossing: Month of Moderns</i> The Presbyterian Church of Chestnut Hill	<i>Dinner with Dinah</i> Stenton Museum <i>Joyful Abundance: Emerging Artists</i> Congregation Rodeph Shalom
JUNE 7	<i>The Becoming</i> Painted Bride Art Center <i>Civic Theater Project</i> Louis Bluver Theatre at the Drake <i>The Crossing: Month of Moderns</i> Broad Street Love	<i>From Our Forefathers: Climate Crisis Through Museum Tours</i> Independence Seaport Museum <i>Say Yes, Philly!</i> The Sedgwick Theater
JUNE 9	<i>Salon-ish: The Dinnersation</i> Culinary Literacy Center, Parkway Central Library	
JUNE 10	<i>John Coltrane En Motion</i> FringeArts	<i>Patina / Promise</i> Welsh Fountain at West Fairmount Park
JUNE 11	<i>Displaced Flowers; Still in Bloom</i> The Perelman Theatre at Ensemble Arts	<i>Say Yes, Philly!</i> The Wilma Theater
JUNE 12	<i>A Traveler Weeps, A River Laughs (Performance)</i> Gordon Gallery <i>John Coltrane En Motion</i> FringeArts	<i>Say Yes, Philly!</i> The Wilma Theater

JUNE 13	<i>AAAHH!!! WTF Now?!</i> The Wilma Theater <i>From Our Forefathers: Climate Crisis Through Museum Tours</i> Philadelphia Museum of Art	<i>Pepperpot</i> Race Street Pier <i>Say Yes, Philly!</i> The Sedgwick Theater
JUNE 14	<i>From Our Forefathers: Climate Crisis Through Museum Tours</i> Independence Seaport Museum	
JUNE 16	<i>Marian Anderson: A Voice of Beauty, Hope, and Change</i> Marian Anderson Hall at Ensemble Arts	
JUNE 17	<i>From Our Forefathers: Climate Crisis Through Museum Tours</i> Science History Institute	
JUNE 18	<i>Long Live the Queen: A Her-Story of Drag</i> The Wilma Theater	
JUNE 19	<i>Long Live the Queen: A Her-Story of Drag</i> The Wilma Theater	<i>Sound of History</i> Museum of the American Revolution
JUNE 20	<i>Long Live the Queen: A Her-Story of Drag</i> The Wilma Theater	
JUNE 23	<i>Blacktronika: Philadelphia Now and Then</i> Margolis	<i>Salon-ish: Rewilding Philadelphia</i> Athenaeum of Philadelphia
JUNE 24	<i>Blacktronika: Philadelphia Now and Then</i> Johnny Brenda's	<i>Philadelphia Latino Arts & Film Festival</i> Roberto Clemente Park
JUNE 25	<i>Blacktronika: Philadelphia Now and Then</i> Johnny Brenda's	<i>Kea & The Ark</i> The Sedgwick Theater, through July 1
JUNE 26	<i>Blacktronika: Philadelphia Now and Then</i> Solar Myth <i>The Basil Biggs Project</i> The Wilma Theater	<i>From Our Forefathers: Climate Crisis Through Museum Tours</i> Philadelphia Museum of Art
JUNE 27	<i>Blacktronika: Philadelphia Now and Then</i> Kung Fu Necktie <i>The Basil Biggs Project</i> The Wilma Theater	<i>The Crossing: Month of Moderns</i> Broad Street Love
JUNE 28	<i>Blacktronika: Philadelphia Now and Then</i> Silk City <i>The Basil Biggs Project</i> The Wilma Theater <i>Revival!</i> Institute of Contemporary Art at The University of Pennsylvania	<i>From Our Forefathers: Climate Crisis Through Museum Tours</i> Independence Seaport Museum <i>Giving Thanks</i> Broad Street Love <i>The Crossing: Month of Moderns</i> Broad Street Love
JUNE 29	<i>Blacktronika: Philadelphia Now and Then</i> Silk City	
JUNE 30	<i>Salon-ish: BYOI: Bring Your Own Instrument</i> Peter A. Benoliel Germantown Branch, Settlement School	

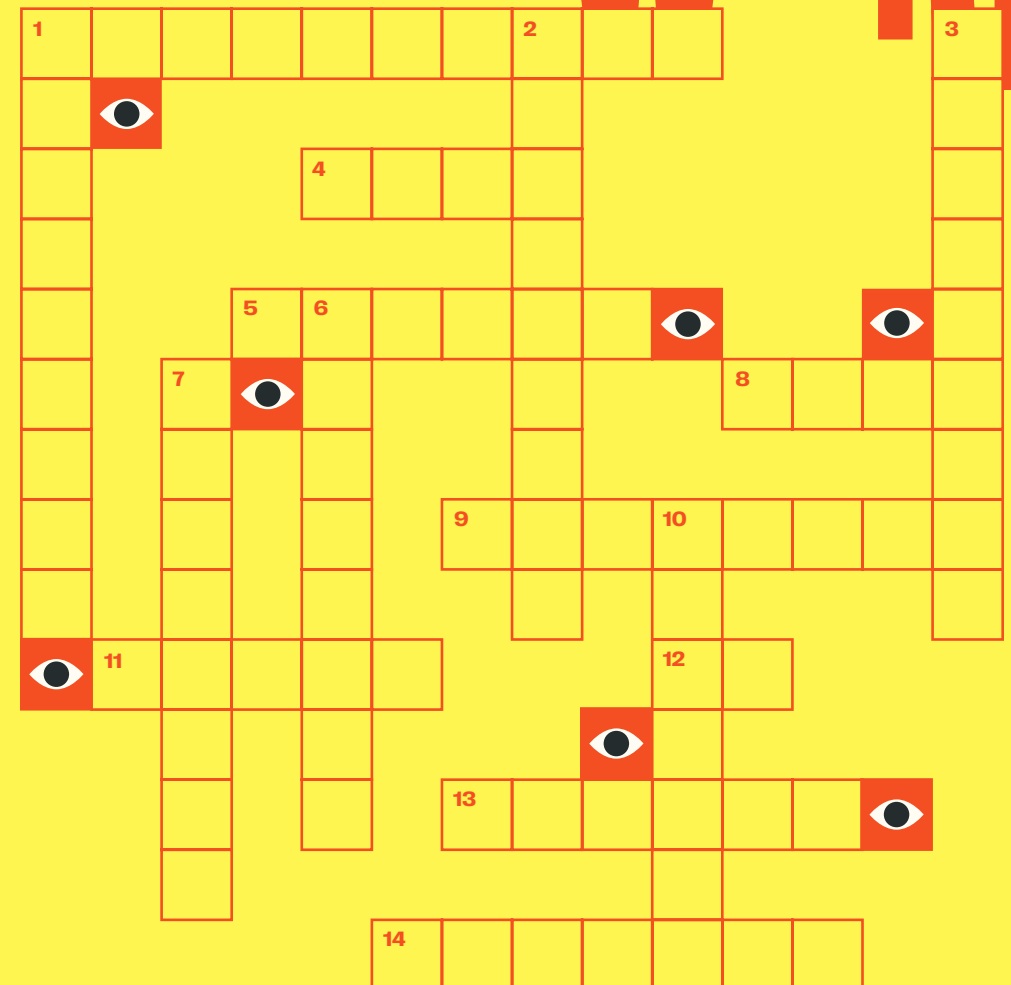
WHAT NOW: 2026 POCKET PUZZLES

Waiting for a show to start? Stuck on the subway? Out for food with friends after an event? We've got just the thing: our pocket puzzles. Play **Bingo** to check if you've really seen all there is to see at the festival. Then, test your Philly arts & culture knowledge with the **Crossword**.

Heard a drag queen sing opera	Shared a delicious meal	Expanded how I think about art	Surprised by a performance	Saw Philly in a new light
Created art of my own	Saw the past and present cross paths	Experienced two forms of art at once	Asked myself, "What now?"	Learned a new piece of Philly history
Witnessed puppetry in action	Watched a new film		Attended an artist talk	Experienced a museum new to me
Saw a neighborhood I hadn't before	Heard a car honk their horn during an event	Visited a Philadelphia park	Took public transit to an event	Heard live music of any kind
Saw someone dressed in all black	Spotted someone get lifted into the air	Watched a performance of a play	Completed the <i>What Now: 2026</i> crossword	Followed @ArtPhilly2026 on social media

DOWN

- Graffiti legend; soul food side
- Dish loved from the Caribbean to the Valley Forge
- Home to our oldest organ
- Righteous contralto's last name
- Our oldest arboretum
- Philly's peculiar pavement tiles



A crossword puzzle grid with 14 numbered clues. The grid is 14 columns wide and 14 rows high. Clues are numbered 1 through 14. Some cells in the grid contain a black eye icon, indicating that those cells are not to be filled with letters. The clues are:

- 1 Down: Graffiti legend; soul food side
- 2 Down: Dish loved from the Caribbean to the Valley Forge
- 3 Down: Home to our oldest organ
- 4 Across: Righteous contralto's last name
- 5 Across: Our oldest arboretum
- 6 Across: Philly's peculiar pavement tiles
- 7 Down: Eye icon
- 8 Across: Eye icon
- 9 Across: Eye icon
- 10 Across: Eye icon
- 11 Down: Eye icon
- 12 Down: Eye icon
- 13 Across: Eye icon
- 14 Across: Eye icon

ACROSS

- Bicentennial landmark, in a pinch
- O.G. U.S. Art school
- Philly jazz giant
- Philly's sound, in short
- Monumental and mobile family
- The Twist inventor, or how you may feel after a cheesesteak
- Thomas Eakins' disgusting clinic
- Pointed Philly graffiti style
- Adrian's earful

CROSSWORD

BINGO

OUR PROMOTIONAL PARTNERS

ArtPhilly is proud to partner with our peers across the city: artists, museums, and organizations who are presenting their own programs during the *What Now: 2026* Festival. We want you to walk through their doors and experience their excellent work.



Use the QR code to visit our website and learn more about partner programming.

A Book A Day

The Academy of
Natural Sciences of
Drexel University

African American
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Arctinia

Asian Arts Initiative

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ArsNova Workshop

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CraftNOW Philadelphia

Curtis Institute
of Music

Ensemble Arts
Philly

Esperanza

FringeArts

Gettysburg History

Inis Nua
Theatre Company

Frances M. Maguire
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Musicopia

Our Market Project

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of the Fine Arts

Penn Museum

Pentimenti Gallery

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of Art

The Philadelphia Hip
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Pig Iron Theatre Company

Temple Performing
Arts Center

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Museum of Jewish History



Kampar Philly at Sketch 2025, c/o RECPhilly

*in case of fire, speak,
c/o Daniel Jackson for Embassy: Interactive*

*Daniel de Jesús at Sketch 2024,
c/o Daniel Jackson for Embassy: Interactive*



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*Front Cover (top to bottom):
Dionysus, Alexei Mansour, c/o
Twelve Gates Arts; Laurin Talese,
c/o REC Philly*

*Back Cover (top to bottom):
Still from Bravo, Burkina!, c/o Walé
Oyéjide; UMA Adult Show, c/o Laney
Powers; V. Shayne Frederick at
Sketch 2024, c/o D. Jackson*

