

CLOSE UPS | curated by
ursula rucker

Sham-e-Ali Nayeem

FEBRUARY 7, 2022
7PM



2021-22 SEASON: **scars & emblems**



ABOUT US

Intercultural Journeys boldly leverages the power of the performing arts to catalyze social change, challenge bias, and create spaces for dialogue and understanding by presenting culturally diverse voices that celebrate and affirm our shared humanity.

VISION

We imagine a world of more:
more welcome, more curiosity, more empathy, and more connection.

Where more voices tell our history and shape our future,
and we create an inclusive space to be still, to listen, to watch, to dance, and to learn together;
Where recognition and respect for one and all are the starting point, and not the finish line,
and love drives our journey forward.

STAFF

Carly Rapaport-Stein, Executive Director

Marla Burkholder, Artistic Director

Nia Benjamin, Program and Communications Manager

SUPPORT

If you'd like to support the work of Intercultural Journeys, please visit interculturaljourneys.org/donate, or contact Executive Director Carly Rapaport-Stein at carly@interculturaljourneys.org.

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INTERCULTURAL JOURNEYS

scars & emblems

2021 - 2022 SEASON

ABOUT THE SEASON: A NOTE FROM ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

I inherited an antique cedar chest from my great aunt filled with items from the Great Depression — ordinary towels, pillow cases, blankets embroidered to create something precious in a time of scarcity. I could almost see the way the deep want of those years stitched itself onto her being.

As we have moved through all the extraordinary events of this past year I have often thought about the ways humans are marked by events, people, experiences. In moments of collective tragedy we may feel that etching more because we recognize the shaping happening in us by seeing it happen to the world around us. But every individual is constantly re-formed by the wounds and gifts of time and place, opportunity and culture.

In this season of Scars and Emblems, we open the door to those shape-shifting stories, welcoming artists to reflect on the common and uncommon ways they have been marked.

We are deeply honored that the incomparable Ursula Rucker — visionary, activist, Philadelphia legend and extraordinary artist — agreed to curate this season's *Close Ups* series. She brought her wisdom and artistic prowess to assembling and mentoring an exceptional group of artists to delve into their scars and emblems. Her unique voice infuses the series with a depth of exploration and a freedom of expression that feels revelatory.

And our first live performance in over 2 years, planned for spring 2022, couldn't be more timely. Ruth Naomi Floyd's prescient work *The Frances Suite* is an urgent, joyful, searing musical jewel that traverses the prophetic life of a largely unsung poetic voice from history to find markers for a just and vibrant future.

Thank you for stepping onto this new path with us. I hope you will find something in this season of stories that moves you deeply and perhaps leaves an indelible impression.

Marla

ABOUT THE CURATOR:

Ursula Rucker



Poet, recording artist, songwriter, activist and revolutionary Ma'at Mama, Ursula Rucker is a certified veteran of the global music and poetry scene. A skilled writer and dynamic performer, Rucker's rich and textured voice is one of the world's great, living instruments. Born and raised in Philadelphia, Rucker has released five wide-ranging albums and built an equally impressive catalogue as a collaborator, working with everyone from The Roots to DJ King Britt side-project Firefly, 4Hero, Jazzanova, Louie Vega and Doodlbug of Digable Planets.

Today, Rucker enjoys an influential standing as a respected poet and vocalist. Philadelphia's Mural Arts Program features two portraits of Rucker — the 2013 building-sized commission by artist Jetsonorama titled "You Go Girl", and a new mural in Rucker's home neighborhood of Germantown unveiled in August 2021. Recent accomplishments include being a 2018 recipient of the prestigious fellowship award from The Pew Center for Arts & Change, and a 2020 sold-out release of *big/small poems for pockets*, a chapbook of haikus.

Production Staff

Cinematography

Stephanie Malson

Audio

Danielle Lewis

Film Editing

Nia Benjamin

Sound Engineer

Jon Picciano

Special Thanks

We're so grateful to our friends at Bartram's Gardens and The Germantown Espresso Bar for the generous use of their beautiful spaces to film the Close Ups series.



BARTRAM'S GARDEN



GERMANTOWN
ESPRESSO BAR

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Sham-e-Ali Nayeem

Author of the poetry collection, *City of Pearls* (UpSet Press 2019), Sham-e-Ali Nayeem is an Indian Muslim American poet, artist and public interest lawyer of Hyderabadi descent.

Her poetry has appeared in *Apiary*, *Dusie* and *Mizna*, and can be found in anthologies, including *Shattering the Stereotypes: Muslim Women Speak Out* (Olive Branch Press, 2005), *Living Islam Out Loud: American Muslim Women Speak* (Beacon Press, 2005) and *Shout Out: Women of Color Respond to Violence* (Seal Press, 2008). Sham-e-Ali is the recipient of the Loft Literary Center Spoken Word Immersion Fellowship.



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Poetry, Collage and Synth Instrumentals by
SHAM-E-ALI NAYEEM

Curation and Interview by
URSULA RUCKER

Rabab
QAIS ESSAR

Synth, *Moth II*
SHIRO FUJIOKA

PRODUCTION

Director and Editor
NIA BENJAMIN

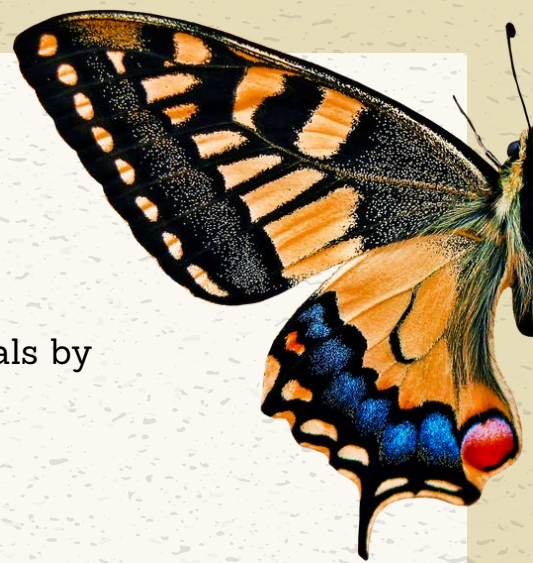
Videography
STEPHANIE MALSON

Sound
DANIELLE LEWIS

Audio Engineering
JON PICCIANO

Production Support from
CARLY RAPAPORT-STEIN
MARLA BURKHOLDER

With thanks to our friends at Bartrams Gardens and Germantown
Espresso Bar for the generous use of their beautiful spaces to film
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