

MERLI V. GUERRA

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ABSTRACT

Merli V. Guerra is a professional dancer and interdisciplinary artist who graduated Phi Beta Kappa with a B.A. in Dance and Studio Art from Mount Holyoke College in 2009. She is Co-Founder and Artistic Director of Luminarium Dance Company (Cambridge MA), and a lead company member of Deborah Abel Dance Company (Boston MA), with whom she performed on tour across India by invitation of the Indian government in December 2012. She is additionally a member of Nataraj Dancers (Amherst MA), a classical Indian dance company with whom she studied in India in 2007, and performed on tour in Japan in 2009. Guerra is also an artistic filmmaker, having won several awards for her dance-on-camera films and video installation artworks, and works as Production Manager of *Art New England* magazine in Boston. Since co-founding Luminarium in 2010, the company has received numerous grants and performance invitations, allowing Guerra to continue presenting new work throughout New England, New York, and the West Coast. Her interests lie in the layering of video projection with live performance, and in setting the visual arts into motion. To learn more about her work and to view her portfolio, please visit merliguerra.com. Thank you.

EDUCATION

Phi Beta Kappa and Magna Cum Laude Graduate of Mount Holyoke College '09.
Bachelor of Arts Degree in Dance and Studio Art with a focus on Film and a GPA of 3.94.

SELF-PRODUCED PERFORMANCES

- Secrets & Motion – Boston University Dance Theater, Boston MA (11/2013)
Luminarium's 2013 feature production, featuring installation art by local artist Hannah Verlin, and a photo series created in collaboration with Fine Art Photographer Larry Pratt.
- Secrets & Motion – Center for Arts at the Armory, Somerville MA (9/2013)
The production's debut performance.
- ChoreoFest – Julie Ince Thompson Theatre, Dance Complex, Cambridge MA (8/2013)
Luminarium pioneers this unique annual festival, in which five dance companies join Luminarium in locking themselves inside the famous Dance Complex overnight to create new work for a performance the following evening. Viewers are encouraged to watch the process unfold via live stream online throughout the 24-hour period. 2013 participants included: Impact Dance, Intimations, Monkeyhouse, Paradise Lost, and Ryan P. Casey.
- Mythos:Pathos Culminating Finale Performance – OBERON, Cambridge MA (11/2012)
The culminating finale performance of the *Mythos:Pathos* project, which expanded over time, allowing audiences to view its progress from summer to late fall of 2012. The show utilized nontraditional lighting, while showcasing a contemporary take on Greek mythology.
- Mythos:Pathos – Arsenal Center for the Arts, Watertown MA (9/2012)
Expanded performance.
- Mythos:Pathos – Center for Arts at the Armory, Somerville MA (8/2012)
Debut performance.
- ChoreoFest – Julie Ince Thompson Theatre, Dance Complex, Cambridge MA (8/2012)
2012 participants included: 1,000 Virtues Dance, Sarah Mae Gibbons and Renée Amirault, Monkeyhouse, The People Movers, and Synthesis Aesthetics Project. All profits from the inaugural 2012 performance were donated to *Young At Arts*, an arts-based charity in South Boston MA.
- Y.E.S. – Green Street Studios, Cambridge MA (11/2011)
Presented two new works in an evening-length concert including past repertory from throughout the season.
- LEAP: Leading & Engaging Artistic Pursuits – Cambridge YMCA Theater, Cambridge MA (5/2011)
A collaboration with the Boys & Girls Club of Boston through the President's Innovation Fund.
- FRACTURE: With fractured light comes self and shadow. – Cambridge, MA (10/2010)
Debut of Luminarium Dance Company. Acted as Artistic Director and one of two choreographers for the show. Premiered three new works, combining video projection with live performance.

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SELECTED INVITATIONAL SHOWS, SCREENINGS & EXHIBITIONS

- Time Lapse Dance – Fine Arts Center Concert Hall, Amherst MA (10/2013)
Invited to present three of Luminarium's works and one film series at the UMass Fine Arts Center Concert Hall, joining the ranks of the FAC's prestigious professional dance series, while opening for Time Lapse Dance.
- Boston Summer Arts Weekend – Copley Square, Boston MA (7/2012, 7/2013)
Invited to perform at this inaugural event, hosted by ArtsBoston, Citizen's Bank, WGBH and the Boston Globe.
- Dance for World Community Festival – Harvard Square, Cambridge MA (6/2011, 6/2012, 6/2013)
Luminarium invited to present work at this annual outdoor dance festival.
- Milestones: Textiles of Transition – San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles, San Jose CA (5/2013 – 7/2013)
West Coast launch of the bi-coastal debut of Luminarium's *Threading Motion Project*, featuring Guerra's film series *Quilt Vignettes*. Invited for display in this contemporary exhibition at the country's oldest quilt museum.
- Silk! – New England Quilt Museum, Lowell MA (4/2013 – 7/2013)
East Coast launch of the bi-coastal debut of Luminarium's *Threading Motion Project*, featuring Guerra's dance-on-camera film series *Quilt Vignettes*, on display and created in collaboration with the NEQM's exhibition *Silk!*
- Tinderbox Series – Mobius Alternative Arts Space, Cambridge MA (4/2013)
Luminarium is selected to present a preview performance of the *Threading Motion Project*, including live performances of *Cynthia Star* and *Spinal*, alongside five of the six final films.
- Against the Odds Festival – Springstep, Medford MA (3/2013)
Selected to present *Andromeda* in this annual festival hosted by Monkeyhouse Dance.
- Conscientização – Ford Hall, Ithaca College, Ithaca NY (10/2012)
Invited to create a commissioned choreographic work alongside composer Justyne Griffin, themed in feudal revolution, and performed with a live chamber orchestra of 26 musicians in Ithaca's Ford Hall.
- Dancers Among Us – Jordan Matter Photography (8/2012)
Featured online as one of nationally-acclaimed, NY Times best-selling author Jordan Matter's "Dancers Among Us" professional dancers, representing Boston MA.
- Centennial Celebration – Louisa May Alcott's Orchard House, Concord MA (5/2012)
Invited to present new work entitled the *Celebration of Preservation* project in honor of the museum's centennial anniversary. Funded in part by the Concord Cultural Council.
- Somerville Dance Festival – Union Square, Somerville MA (7/2012)
Selected to present *Andromeda*, as part of this outdoor evening festival combining video projection and performance.
- ArtBeat Festival – Davis Square, Somerville MA (7/2012)
Luminarium selected as sole dance company to perform outdoors at night. Presented three pieces including Guerra's *Andromeda*.
- Hatch Presenting Series – Jennifer Muller / The Works, NYC (5/2012)
Selected to present Guerra's dance-on-camera / live-performance piece *What seems so is transition (live)* in NYC.
- Memento Mori Exhibit – Mobius Alternative Arts Space, Cambridge MA (10/2011)
One live performance piece (*Casting Shadows, Tearing Holes*) and one artistic film (*What seems so is transition*) selected for this introspective gallery exhibition exploring mortality.
- Seacoast Fringe Festival – Portsmouth, NH (10/2011)
Invited to present a full evening of Luminarium work at two venues during this multi-day cultural arts festival.
- In Sync/Sambandh Japanese Fundraiser – Easthampton MA (6/2011)
Invited to present work alongside Nataraj Dancers to support those affected by the devastation in Japan.
- Commencement Concert – Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley MA (5/2011)
Presented an honorarium to return to Mount Holyoke and present new work in the Commencement Concert.

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Movement at the Mills – Boston Center for the Arts, Boston MA (3/2011)

Chosen to present *Upon*, as well as a “breathing” installation using video projection, lights, cloth and a solo performer to produce an artistic take on cocoons and the evolution of body and thought.

Rhodywood Filmmakers Showcase – Providence RI (9/2009)

Presented *Synchronic*, followed by a public Q&A session.

Five College Film Festival – Amherst MA (2/2009)

Juried screening and public premiere of *Synchronic*.

INVITATIONAL LECTURES & PANELS

Silk Symposium – New England Quilt Museum, Lowell MA (4/2013)

Invited to present the behind-the-scenes process behind the making of Guerra's *Quilt Vignettes* film series. This lecture is part of the *Fabric, Fashions & Quilts* symposium series presented by the New England Quilt Museum and the American Textile History Museum.

text & conText Artist Series – Arsenal Center for the Arts (9/2012)

Invited to speak about Guerra's career in the arts, covering a body of work from 2008 to present.

“Crafting a Life in the Arts” Panelist – Mount Holyoke College (3/2011)

Invited as an alumna to speak on a panel about succeeding in the arts after graduating. Held at Mount Holyoke College's first Arts Career Day: “Crafting a Life in the Arts,” attended by 200 eager students.

PERFORMANCE WORK

Deborah Abel Dance Company – Boston MA (2011 – Present)

Lead company member.

Performed in:

Deborah Abel, *Calling to You*

Calling to You was presented in Boston at the Tsai Center in March 2012 and again in January 2014, and was taken on tour across India by invitation of the Indian government in December 2012, performing in the following prestigious venues:

Deep Smriti Auditorium, Jaipur

Siri Fort Auditorium, New Delhi

Rukmini Arangam Theater at Kalashetra Foundation, Chennai

Luminarium Dance Company – Cambridge MA (2010 – Present)

Choreographer, Co-Founder, and Artistic Director.

Performed in:

Guerra, *Hush*

Guerra, *Left is Loss (or 'The Prelude')*

Holman, *For You, I*

Guerra, *Seirēn*

Holman, *of good, evil*

Holman, *Agonia*

Guerra, *Casting Shadows, Tearing Holes*

Guerra & Holman, *It was 4am...*

Guerra & Holman, *you have hands, too?*

Holman, *Everything But Blue (the film)*

Nataraj Dancers, Under Guru Ranjanaa Devi – Amherst MA (2007 – Present)

Performed with the company on its Japan Tour, Summer 2009:

「シルクロードの古典舞踊」 (“Classic Dances Along the Silk Road”)

American performances include:

Offerings

Diwali Festival of Lights

The Ramayana

Mudra: The Gesture Speaks

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Mount Holyoke College and Five College Dance Department – Pioneer Valley MA (2005 – 2008)

Performed in the following faculty and guest artist pieces:

Terese Freedman, <i>Four Eight</i>	Mark Davis, <i>Ella</i>
Tim Early, <i>Distortion to Static</i>	Charles Flachs, <i>Contradiction</i>
Mark Morris, <i>Canonic ¾ Studies</i>	Matisse Madden, <i>Suvai</i>

P R E S S

Guerra has been a featured artist in local and international periodicals, including:

[Boston Events Insider](#)

[Boston Arts Review](#)

[Somerville Café Blog](#)

[New England Theatre Geek](#)

[pixeladies.com](#)

[Mount Holyoke Alumnae Quarterly Magazine](#) (Fall 2013)

The Boston Globe

Secrets & Motion is highlighted as Critic's Pick twice and is featured in the annual [Fall Arts Preview](#) (2013)

ChoreoFest is featured as Editor's Pick (2012) and Critic's Pick (2013)

Mythos:Pathos is featured twice as Editor's Pick (2012)

[Quilt Alliance](#)

[Lowell Sun](#)

[Improper Bostonian](#)

Guerra and Holman are applauded as "unsung heroes" when Luminarium is featured as one of ten "stellar organizations" in the Boston arts scene.

[The Hindu](#)

Southern India's most widely-read English newspaper

[South Shore Critic](#)

[Boston Arts Review](#)

Watertown Tab

Somerville News

Somerville Journal

[MetroWest Daily News](#)

[Concord Journal](#)

[Mount Holyoke Alumnae Quarterly Magazine](#) (Summer 2011)

HONORS & AWARDS

LCC Grant Recipient – Arlington, & Boston MA (1/2014)

Awarded a grant through the Arlington Cultural Council (part of the MCC) for a 2014 project headed by Guerra, and the Boston Cultural Council for Luminarium's 2014 programming.

"Unsung Heros" – Improper Bostonian Magazine (3/2013)

Guerra and Holman are praised as "unsung heroes" in the Boston arts scene, with Luminarium (of which Guerra is Co-Founder and Artistic Director) featured as one of ten "stellar organizations that may have slipped under your radar" in the Spring 2013 Issue of Improper Bostonian Magazine.

LCC Grant Recipient – Lowell MA (1/2013)

Awarded a grant from the Lowell Cultural Council (part of the MCC) to go towards a collaboration headed by Guerra between Luminarium Dance Company and the New England Quilt Museum's upcoming exhibition "Silk."

LCC Grant Recipient – Boston, Concord, Somerville, & Watertown MA (1/2012)

Awarded four Local Cultural Council grants through the MCC to produce new work throughout 2012.

President's Innovation Fund – Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston (3/2011 – 5/2011)

Luminarium Dance Company (of which Guerra is both the Co-Founder and Artistic Director) was awarded a grant to introduce underprivileged city children to the arts through a series of workshops on visual art, dance, film and choreography, which culminated with a community performance.

Helen Rogers Award (4/2009)

For important contributions to the Mount Holyoke College Dance Department.

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Five College Film Festival (3/2009)

Awarded Best of Mount Holyoke, Best Dance on Camera, and Best of Festival for self-produced film *Synchronic*.

Sarah Williston Scholar (10/2007)

For academic excellence.

The National Dean's List (5/2007)

Selected for demonstrating "academic excellence, leadership, and character."

Blanche Yeagley Shakespeare Prize (5/2007)

For excellence in writing in the field of Shakespeare Studies.

Robert P. Sibley Prize (5/2006)

For excellence in writing.

The Williams Scholarship Fund (5/2005 – 5/2007)

Received three times for continued work and dedication towards the arts.

Mount Holyoke Student Leadership Award (5/2005 – 5/2009)

An annual merit-based scholarship for academic and extracurricular achievement.

References available upon request.