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*USING MEMORIES AS MEDICINE*

ARTSEMERSON ANNOUNCES  
**TRACES/REMAIN**

## **SEED TO HARVEST: THE WOODEN BOOK**

A TOURING BOOK PROJECT IN COLLABORATION  
WITH TOSHI REAGON'S PARABLE PATH BOSTON

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NOW THROUGH JUNE 26, 2021

**[Boston, MA – Wednesday, April 21, 2021]** – ArtsEmerson, Boston's leading presenter of contemporary stage and screen artistry from around the world and the professional presenting and producing organization at Emerson College, is proud to announce **Seed to Harvest: The Wooden Book**. **Seed to Harvest** is a touring book project where the community writes the pages; in collaboration with artist-in-residence, Toshi Reagon's [Parable Path Boston](#), the Traces/Remain ensemble invites the public to join on a Sower's journey that uses memories as medicine. The book tour will take place at various locations from April 08 – June 26, 2021, details can be found [here](#). The Wooden Book & the Submission Box is currently available for viewing in the front window of Emerson College's Elma Lewis Center (ELC) at 148 Boylston Street until Saturday, April 24.

"From our journey inside [Octavia E. Butler's *Parable of the Sower*], we've come to think of ourselves as Sowers. Sowers, for us, are those who scatter seed upon the earth for growth; those who plant sense; those who set in motion; and those who carry the messages we need to hear for growth."  
- Toshi Reagon

**Seed to Harvest: The Wooden Book** is the first in a series of books that will travel throughout the 50 US states and 14 US territories collecting stories, in the form of memories, that will serve as medicine for its readers. ArtsEmerson is opening the opportunity for anyone to become a "Sower" by submitting original content in response to one of four narrative prompts. Content may be submitted in the form of literary entries, drawings, paintings, music, etc.



Letta Neely (right) and Deen Rawlins-Harris (left) at the Boston Commons during the first community drop off event. *Photo: Marquel Norton*



The Wooden Book designed and created by Jenny Hughes. *Photo: Deen Rawlins Harris*

"I can think of nothing more deeply meaningful and necessary *right now* as part of ongoing collaborations throughout our communities, city and planet than **Seed to Harvest: Memory as Medicine: The Wooden Book** as part of the larger Parable Path Boston," says Tam (Tamera) Marko, Executive Director of the Elma Lewis Center in the Social Justice Center at Emerson College. "Sharing space with the *The Wooden Book* and its *Submission Box* offers a visual and spiritual portal for people of all walks of life to be Sowers and bring stories with potential to heal."

Anchored by the creative process and presentation of Toshi Reagon's work **Octavia E. Butler's Parable of the Sower**, Reagon's residency creates a framework for community organizing through artistic engagement. **Parable Path Boston** includes community led activities surrounding the belief systems and interrelated social issues that impact climate justice and survival in Boston. Inspired by the work of Octavia E. Butler's, *Parable of the Sower*, each book of the **Seed to Harvest** project will have a theme and community members are encouraged to make their entries in response to various thematic prompts. The first book (The Wooden Book) is being taken on a mini-tour throughout Boston. The theme of this first book is, Memory as Medicine. It engages the concept that one person's memories can be a storytelling medicine towards another person's healing. **The Wooden Book** will be available for public interaction at various locations.

**Traces/Remain** is an ensemble driven project by local Boston artists and facilitators who want to build communal memories by occupying public space together. All are welcome, especially BIPOC people who have experienced isolation as a result of being marginalized within their own communities. Sowers of the ensemble include playwright, author, artist, and co-artistic director for Fort Point Theatre Channel, Letta Neely, as well as theatre director, producer, and educator from Dorchester/Roxbury, Deen Rawlins-Harris.

Entries to become a Sower are being accepted now and may be made in-person at one of the neighborhood tour sites listed below or via email at: [Seedtoharvestentries@gmail.com](mailto:Seedtoharvestentries@gmail.com) Registration for **Seed to Harvest: Sower Sessions** is also now open [here](#).

## TOUR LOCATIONS, DATES & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Emerson College Elma Lewis Center

APR 08–APR 22

148 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116

Drop Off Hours: MON & WED 9:00AM–1:00PM

<https://www.emerson.edu/social-justice-center/elma-lewis-center>

#### **Sower Session:**

APR 15 @ 5:30-7:00PM (Zoom)

#### **Neighborhood Tabling Session:**

APR 11 & 18 @ 1:00PM-3:00PM (Boston Common by Boylston T stop)

### The Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University

APR 25

125 Arborway, Boston, MA 02130

#### **Sower Session:**

APR 20 @ 6:00-7:30PM (Zoom)

#### **Neighborhood Tabling Session:**

APR 25 @ 1:00PM-3:00PM

(Arnold Arboretum: Main Entrance at Arborway Gate)

### George Connolly School Playground

APR 29–MAY 02

450 Poplar St, Roslindale, MA 02131

#### **Sower Session:**

APR 29 @ 6:00-7:30PM (Zoom)

**Neighborhood Tabling Session:**

MAY 02 @ 1:00PM-3:00PM

**Egleston Branch Library, Egleston Square**

MAY 06–MAY 20

2044 Columbus Ave, Roxbury, MA 02119

Drop Off Hours: MON–THU 10:00AM–6:00PM;

FRI 9:00AM–5:00PM

<https://www.bpl.org/locations/22/>

**Sower Session:**

MAY 06 @ 6:00-7:30PM (Zoom)

**Neighborhood Tabling Session:**

MAY 08 & MAY 15 @ 1:00PM-3:00PM (Egleston Library)

MAY 16 @ 1:00PM-3:00PM (Egleston Peace Garden)

**Frugal Bookstore, Nubian Square**

MAY 24–JUN 07

57 Warren Street, Roxbury, MA 02119

Drop Off Hours: MON–WED 10:00AM–3:00PM;

THU–FRI 10:00AM–5:00PM

SAT 10:00AM–3:00PM

<https://frugalbookstore.net>

**Sower Session:**

MAY 25 @ 5:30-7:00PM (Zoom)

**Neighborhood Tabling Session:**

MAY 30 @ 1:00PM-3:00PM (Nubian Square Park)

**Franklin Park Tennis Courts****Neighborhood Tabling Session:**

JUN 06 @ 1:00PM-3:00PM (Franklin Park: Under bridge near Lemuel Shattuck Hospital)

**BCYF/Shelburne Community Center**

JUN 10–24

2730 Washington St, Roxbury, MA 02119

<https://www.boston.gov/departments/boston-centers-youth-families/bcyf-shelburne>

**Sower Session:**

JUN 10 @ 6:00-7:30PM

**Neighborhood Tabling Session:**

JUN 13 @ 1:00PM-3:00PM (Malcolm X Park, behind Shelburne)

**Egleston Branch Library**

JUN 26

2044 Columbus Ave, Roxbury, MA 02119

Drop Off Hours: 1:00PM–3:00PM

<https://www.bpl.org/locations/22/>

**Seed to Harvest: Sower Sessions**

Sower Sessions are 90 minute generative salons hosted on Zoom. They are an opportunity to learn more about the Seed to Harvest project, to view the tools, to explore the prompts, and to engage with the TRACES/REMAIN artists as they create The Wooden Book. The theme of The Wooden Book is, Memory as Medicine. Your memory can serve as medicine and be germinated with this project in a plethora of ways: sharing inspirations, creating your own dance medicine, finding people with whom to create, writing, drawing, singing, and video. This is a space for creation and all will be accepted as offerings within the Memory as Medicine theme. All things are possible when we come together. We can all be Sowers.

Registration is now open [here](#).

### **Neighborhood Tabling Sessions:**

Meet the TRACES/REMAIN artists at various locations around Boston! The Neighborhood Tabling Sessions are a great place to drop off your offering to The Wooden Book: Memory as Medicine and receive seeds for growing and saving; sacred plants for teas and cleansing; music (because there must always be music); new and ancient knowledge; and smiles. We invite you to let us share with you. Grab your mask and come meet us!

### **The Wooden Book Narrative Prompts:**

#### Prompt One:

Think of trees that you have a personal connection and/or memory of. Generate through essay, poem, or illustration the memory you have of that tree. What did this tree provide you and how did you nourish it in return?

#### Prompt Two:

Our memories are medicine. Inside our DNA we have both Ancestral trauma AND Ancestral healing. The Bitter & The Sweet. Without either, we would not be here now. What is a memory you hold that you are ready to pass on to others. Share your medicine. Let us be healed.

#### Prompt Three:

What do you see from your roots, from your branches, from your trunk, from the edges of your leaves, from your core, from your cousins? What have we planted and what are we planting? What is our harvest? How do we sow?

#### Prompt Four:

Got a problem or an answer or a thought. Share. We're all here for it.

### **Community Guidelines**

All submissions to The Wooden Book will be included at the discretion of the TRACES/REMAIN artists, the lead Sowers of this project. Please be considerate of the items you sow. You may include your name with your submission or submit anonymously. Please note that sexist, ableist, homophobic, racist, or other hateful forms of communication will not be included in the book.

## **ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

### **Letta Neely: Sower**

Letta Neely is an Earthling; she is also a Black Dyke, an Artist, an Activist, a Feminist, and a Mother. In addition to *Juba* and *Here*, Letta is the author of the chapbooks *When We Were Mud* and *gawd and alluh huh sistuhs*. Her plays: "Hamartia Blues", "Last Rites", and "Shackles & Sugar" have been produced in Boston, Philly, and Los Angeles. She is a co-artistic director for Fort Point Theatre Channel and the editor of Ife Franklin's book, "The Slave Narratives of Willie Mae". She is also an actor and director, most recently performing with the A.R.T. in the Boston Theatre Marathon Zoom Edition and directing Renita Martin's "Unmasked" for the Revolution of Values Black Theatre Project. She believes in the interconnectedness of both the struggle and the liberation. Her newest poetry project: Geographies of Power will be available in the Fall of 2021.

### **Deen Rawlins-Harris: Sower**

My name is Deen Rawlins-Harris. I am a theatre director, producer, and educator from Dorchester/Roxbury, Massachusetts. I create art that amplifies the vibrancy, ingenuity, and humanity of Black people by aligning our stories with historical, ongoing, and prophetic depictions of the world we live in. My work is created for all African Americans and those who identify as BIPOC that cherish intimate portrayals of themselves in art. My pronouns are they/them/theirs.

### **Jenny Hughes: Book Designer**

Through drawings, prints, and handmade books, my goal as an artist is to tell visual stories about myself and my family. Most recently, my drawings have been of my mother's hands: baking, praying, brushing my brother's head, and more. I am starting work on another series of drawings inspired by my girl cousins who are the next generation of leaders in my very matriarchal extended family. While most of my family is from Georgia, I grew up in the Bronx, New York and relocated to Boston after graduating from college, later re-relocating to Boston after graduate school. I'd taught as an adjunct teacher at numerous colleges in the Boston area before

settling into teaching high school students at Milton Academy. My art has been show locally and abroad, notably at Bunker Hill Community College, the Towne Gallery at Wheelock College, The Boston Printmakers North American Print Biennial, Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, University of Osnabruck in Germany, Tama Art University Museum in Japan, Adobe Books Backroom Gallery in San Francisco, and Muskat Studios in Somerville. I currently live in Milton MA with my 13yo son and partner.

### **Dyllan Nguyen: Sower**

Dyllan Nguyen is a queer Vietnamese-American artist and educator living and working in Boston, Massachusetts. He is an avid maker of sculptural, installation, and digital works along with the occasional performance as a way to digest his interests in materiality, process, play, waste, value, systems, and psychology. Professionally he works at the intersection of art, design, and education with a focus on access and inclusion, cultivating creative practices to enrich the lives of those he serves.

### **Leo Alarcon: Carpenter**

Ecuadorian living in Boston, MA. For over 3 decades. Master carpenter - builder with 20 years of experience in commercial & residential works. Specializing in custom projects including cabinetry and custom designs. Working with wood, metal and stone including concrete. Driven by the passion to realize designs for his clients.

### **Toshi Reagon: Artist**

Toshi Reagon is a talented and versatile singer, composer, musician, curator and producer with a profound ear for sonic Americana—from folk to funk, from blues to rock. While her expansive career has landed her at Carnegie Hall, the Paris Opera House and Madison Square Garden, you can just as easily find Toshi turning out at a music festival, intimate venue or local club. She has collaborated with many artists including Carl Hancock Rux, Ani DiFranco, Lenny Kravitz, Elvis Costello and Nona Hendryx. As a composer, she has worked with Katori Hall, Urban Bush Women and The Jane Comfort Dance Co., among others. She is currently touring Bessie Award-winning *The Blues Project* with tap dancer Michelle Dorrance and Dorrance Dance. She founded WORD\*ROCK\*&SWORD, a community festival that takes place throughout New York City every September. Together with her mother Bernice Johnson Reagon, she has created two operas with director Robert Wilson, *The Temptation of St. Anthony and Zinnias*, *The Life of Clementine Hunter*. Toshi co-composed music for two Peabody Award-winning films and received a NYFA Award for Music Composition, the 2010 OutMusic Heritage Award and The Black Lily Music and Film Festival Award for Outstanding Performance. She is a National Women's History Month honoree and was named a 2015 Art of Change Fellow by the Ford Foundation.

### **About Parable Path Boston**

**Parable Path Boston** is Toshi Reagon's commitment to investigating the ideologies inside Octavia E. Butler's by putting them to work in real life and in real time – discovering and creating a pathway forward. Reagon has assembled a team that includes playwrights, fashion designers, dancers, poets and other artists and educators to help lead activities surrounding the belief systems and interrelated social issues that impact climate justice and survival in Boston.

### **About The Elma Lewis Center**

The [Elma Lewis Center](#) (ELC) is part of the Social Justice Center at Emerson College. The ELC is about what stories have the power to *do*. We practice community-centered storytelling and radical listening. We collaborate with communities and individuals of all ages and identity intersections who are the most impacted by systems of oppression and thus have the most wisdom to move in liberatory practices. We work with social justice leaders to hold space for authentic story sharing, community centered archiving and interactive circulation practices so the memory of people's work--as shared in their own words, languages, images and vibe--is not dimmed or erased. We do story work through various portals, including words, sculpture, painting, theatre, zines, public performance, social media, film, poetry, music, singing and dancing.

## **PRESENTER INFORMATION**

### **ArtsEmerson**

ArtsEmerson's mission is to bring people together to experience powerful performances that delight, provoke, and inspire, celebrating both our differences and common humanity. Founded in 2010 by Robert J. Orchard —

the year the U.S. Census confirmed there was no single cultural majority in Boston — ArtsEmerson is committed to building a cultural institution that reflects the diversity of our city. Our imaginative and globe-spanning live and digital performances, films, and conversations invites each of us to be part of a Boston that is more creative, equitable, and connected. ArtsEmerson is led by Executive Director, David Howse. For more information visit [ArtsEmerson.org](http://ArtsEmerson.org).

### **Emerson College**

ArtsEmerson and HowlRound Theatre Commons both operate from within the Emerson College Office of the Arts. Based in Boston, Massachusetts, opposite the historic Boston Common and in the heart of the city's Theatre District, Emerson College educates individuals who will solve problems and change the world through engaged leadership in communication and the arts, a mission informed by liberal learning. The College has 3,780 undergraduates and 670 graduate students from across the United States and 50 countries. Supported by state-of-the-art facilities and a renowned faculty, students participate in more than 90 student organizations and performance groups. Emerson is known for its experiential learning programs in Los Angeles, Washington, DC, the Netherlands, London, China, and the Czech Republic as well as its new Global Portals, with the first program launching this fall in Paris. The College has an active network of 39,000 alumni who hold leadership positions in communication and the arts. For more information, visit [Emerson.edu](http://Emerson.edu). For media inquiries specific to Emerson College, please contact Michelle Gaseau (E: [Michelle\\_Gaseau@emerson.edu](mailto:Michelle_Gaseau@emerson.edu), O: 617-824-3547, C: 617-429-2624).

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