

Pictured: Isaura Oliveira & Power of Skirts Collective
#HellaBlack Vol. 6: Sacred
Photo by Carven Boursiquo

BOSTON CENTER FOR THE ARTS

FY24 / ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT



**PICTURED: CHAUNG Stage's
The Fortune Teller**

We welcomed CHUANG Stage, Boston's first Asian-American-led theatre company, as our FY24-FY26 Launchpad Theatre Resident. Learn more on page 15.

A LETTER FROM THE CEO

As I reflect on the past year at Boston Center for the Arts (BCA), I'm incredibly proud of the impact we continue to have on Boston's vibrant arts community, while also acknowledging the broader challenges facing the sector.

In response to the growing need for affordable artist space in the city, BCA continued to operate Boston's largest residency program. And we provided over \$1 million in free and subsidized space, supported 787 artists across 7 residency programs, and hosted 86 total exhibitions, performances, and events. Our residency applications reached record numbers, and our rehearsal and performance venues were nearly fully booked, underscoring the critical role BCA plays in providing free and deeply subsidized space for Boston artists.

Looking ahead, collective action will be crucial to sustaining and growing the arts in Boston. The shortage of space for artists remains a pressing issue, and we remain deeply committed as stewards of our historic campus, ensuring it continues to be a central anchor in the arts ecosystem of Boston.

As the funding landscape evolves and the demand for resources grows, we are grateful for the ongoing support of our donors, sponsors, neighbors, and partners. Nor can we do this without the artists, staff, and volunteers who are at the heart of the BCA community. These collaborations are essential to ensuring that Boston artists have the resources they need to thrive.

I invite you to join us on this journey as we work to shape a stronger future for BCA. Together, I'm excited about what we can all accomplish in the year ahead.

KRISTI KEEFE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Portrait by Carlie Febo

A LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

As Board Chair of Boston Center for the Arts (BCA), it is my privilege to share this reflection on the past fiscal year. FY24 has been a year of both triumphs and challenges, as we navigated a rapidly changing landscape for the arts sector. The arts are the heartbeat of our community, driving not only cultural enrichment but also economic vitality. Yet, as we reflect on the past year, it is clear that the path forward requires both urgency and collective action.

While these challenges are significant, they are not insurmountable. We believe deeply in the power of the arts to transform lives and communities, and are committed to continue to support the artists who inspire us all. We cannot do it alone.

As we look ahead, I invite you to join us in reaffirming our commitment to the arts. Your support—whether through donations, partnerships, or advocacy—will be critical in helping us sustain our mission during these uncertain times. Together, we can ensure that BCA remains a place where artists not only survive but thrive, pushing the boundaries of creativity and enriching the cultural fabric of our city.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to extend our deepest gratitude for your continued support and belief in the power of the arts. Let us move forward with urgency, determination, and hope, as we work to build a brighter future for the Boston arts community.

JENNIFER PINCK
CHAIR, BCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

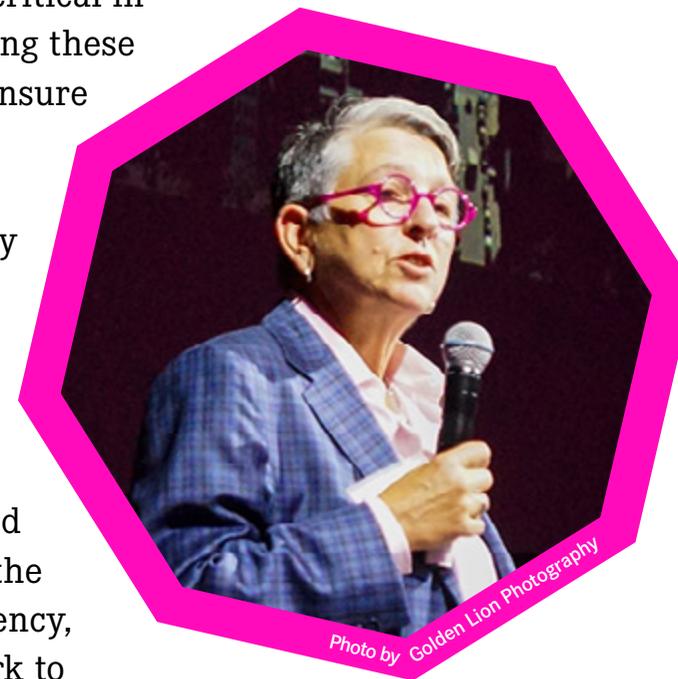


Photo by Golden Lion Photography

**PICTURED:
The Boston Art Book Fair**

The 2023 Boston Art Book Fair—a vibrant community event celebrating independent publishers, artists, and creatives—was our largest yet. Learn more on page 17.



The arts sector is vital to the health of our region. But in FY24, **small and medium-sized arts organizations** have continued to experience an unstable funding landscape:



Annual fund donors are feeling the effects of global unrest



More need for nonprofit services than ever



Inflation and rising operating costs



Space crisis



Institutional funders are struggling to keep up with high demand

As a **medium-sized organization**, BCA has:



...experienced all of these wider trends and



...event rentals of the Cyclorama, a crucial revenue stream in supporting our mission, have been slow to reach pre-pandemic levels



...and we have the added daily challenge of maintaining an aging campus of historic buildings

All of these factors directly affect our ability to provide and sustain the deep support and professional development for our residencies and public programs that artists need to thrive.

While funding for our operations has become increasingly complex, our commitment to supporting Boston artists remains stronger than ever. The need for our resources is undeniable:

- Studio, theatre, and rehearsal spaces were nearly fully booked throughout the year.
- Applications for our residencies, exhibitions, and public programs reached record highs.

In FY24, the support we were able to provide artists speaks for itself...

787

artists supported



Photo by Andrea Blesso

7

residencies



Photo by Michaila Cowie

86

**exhibitions,
performances,
and events**

\$1,087,500

worth of subsidized studio
and performance space



Photo by Olivia Moon Photography



Photo by Olivia Moon Photography

\$104,000

payments to artists in FY24

At BCA, we proudly operate and steward a 2.5 acre campus of historic buildings in the South End that serves as one of the boldest incubators of new work in the city.



- Public Plaza
- Artist Studios Building/
Mills Gallery
- Plaza Theatres
- Cyclorama
- Calderwood Pavilion

We offer deeply subsidized rehearsal, performance, and event spaces to individual artists, non-profit organizations, and performing arts companies. Renting a venue on our campus directly supports our artist residencies, exhibitions, and public programs, helping to nurture and grow the creative community in our city.

- OTHER CAMPUS PARTNERS**
- Boston Art Review
 - Boston Gay Men's Chorus
 - Banyan Bar + Refuge
 - The Beehive
 - Community Music Center of Boston
 - Company One Theatre
 - SpeakEasy Stage
 - The Boston Ballet
 - The Huntington
 - The Theater Offensive



ARTIST STUDIOS BUILDING & MILLS GALLERY

- Artist Residency Studios
- Mills Gallery*
- Studio 204*
- Studio 414*
- Campus Partners' Offices

RESIDENCIES

- BCA Studio Residency
- Boston Dancemakers Residency
- Dance Lab at BCA
- Launchpad Residency
- Launchpad Extension Residency
- Playwright Residency



PLAZA THEATRES

- Plaza Theatre*
- Black Box Theatre*

RESIDENCIES

- Boston Dancemakers Residency
- Dance Lab at BCA
- Launchpad Residency
- Launchpad Extension Residency
- Playwright Residency



CYCLORAMA

- Cyclorama Rotunda*
- Cyclorama South Salon*
- Cyclorama East Salon*
- BCA Administrative Offices
- Campus Partners' Offices

RESIDENCIES

- ACTivate Residency



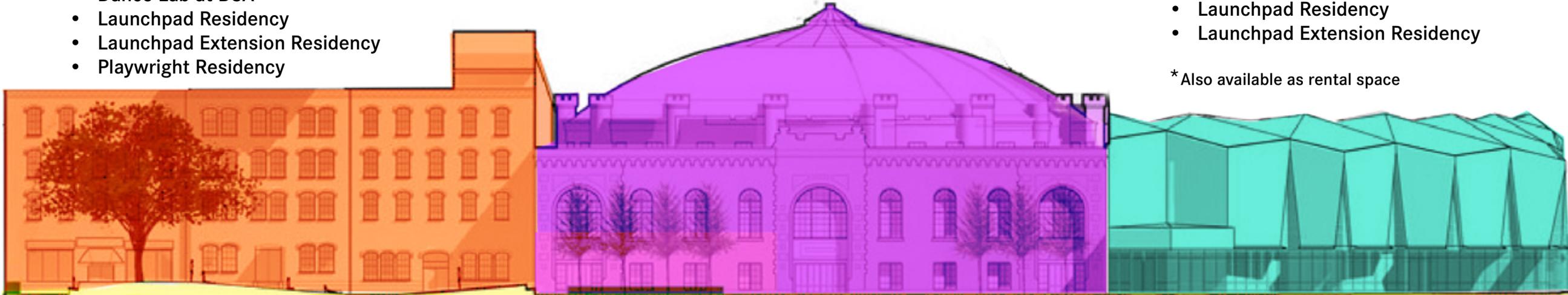
CALDERWOOD PAVILION

- Arts Resource Room*
- Carol G. Deane Hall*
- Nancy & Edward Roberts Studio Theatre*
- Nicholas Martin Rehearsal Hall*
- Virginia Wimberly Theatre*
- Campus Partners' Offices

RESIDENCIES

- Boston Dancemakers Residency
- Dance Lab at BCA
- Launchpad Residency
- Launchpad Extension Residency

*Also available as rental space



DANCE & INTER-DISCIPLINARY ARTS



**PICTURED: Laila R. Franklin's
BABYBABYBABY**

Photo by Cameron Kincheloe

The 2023-2024 Season of Dance & Interdisciplinary Residencies at BCA was a year of new works exploring connection, love, dreams, identity, and home. Through expanding and shifting partnerships with New England-based organizations such as Boston Dance Alliance, Earthdance, The Field Center, and Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture, our residencies received more than double the number of applications through BCA's open call process.

The **Boston Dancemakers Residency** supported Laila Franklin's *BABYBABYBABY*, a dance about dances about love, which sold out its week-long run. Laila developed the concept during her previous Dance Lab residency with us. Boston Dancemaker Resident Simon Montalvo's *a house with no walls: first floor* explored transgender and gender nonconforming experiences through movement, objects, and interviews. Simon's performances aligned with Boston's Pride Parade, creating a beautiful counterbalance of external celebration and internal exploration of gender and sexual identity.

Dance Lab at BCA, in its fourth year, hosted Cassie Wang, Gina Marte, and Andrea Muniz. Their five-week-long residencies explored themes of myths and memories, dreams, and human understanding and longing. Cassie Wang's work would later be chosen for the 2024-2025 Boston Dancemakers Residency.

The **ACTivate Residency** showcased multi-disciplinary artists Soyoung L. Kim and ponnapa prakkamakul, with their teams of collaborators. Focused on freeing artists to explore and experiment with ideas in the BCA Cyclorama, the ACTivate Residency elevates the work of BIPOC artists of Boston. Soyoung's residency sparked her work, *Be/Longing*, an interdisciplinary piece weaving together performance art, film, soundscape, dance, and live painting. In response to the circular space of the Cyclorama, she reinterpreted the Ganggangsullae, a traditional Korean dance performed in a circle, and stories around themes of immigration, dislocation, being a Korean American woman. Soyoung partnered with filmmaker Olivia Moon, and Continuum Dance Project on elements of the project. ponnapa's ACTivate Residency deepened her collaboration with blind/low vision musician

Amber Percy, trumpeter and composer Wayne Percy, and filmmaker Weiyang Olivia Huang. Through creating a tactile mural and original music their residency explored ideas of home, place, and community, making the work accessible to all through multi-sensory engagement.



Photo by Carlie Febo

**— Andrea Blesso,
DIRECTOR OF DANCE &
INTERDISCIPLINARY ARTS**

THEATRE

**PICTURED: CHUANG Stage's
Nuwä in Fairyland**

In FY24, our theatre programming reached new audiences, uplifted diverse voices, and supported thought-provoking work through our three residencies, the theatre rentals program, and through #HellaBlack.

We welcomed CHUANG Stage, Boston's first Asian-American-led theatre company, as our FY24-FY26 **Launchpad Theatre Resident**. Committed to cultivating joy and radical pan-Asian stories that engage and support the community, their inaugural year included two sold-out productions of new works: *The Fortune Teller* by Christina Chan, co-produced with TC2 Theatre Company, and *Nuwā in Fairyland* by Brandon Zang, CHUANG Stage's first solo show and the residency's first bilingual show. These productions, along with community engagement efforts, highlighted the power of collaborative artistic processes. Our **Launchpad Extension Resident**, Fresh Ink Theatre, redesigned their programmatic values and introduced their own expanded residencies for their artistic partners. They produced *Orpheus in the Overworld* along with two Ink Spot Readings: *The More the Man*, and *Honey Girl*, and a workshop of their Incubation Residency, *A Midsummer Queer Night Dream*.

The **Playwright Residency** concluded its pilot year, allowing the playwright residents to work-shop their plays with audiences and collaborators. In March 2024, Fabiola R. Decius presented a final reading of their work *(UN)HOUSED*, exploring themes of housing inequities, and Shanelle Chloe Villegas examined generational trauma and healing in *X: The Soul Wound Memoir*. Witnessing these powerful stories, alongside the collaborative spirit of the artistic community, served as a profound testament to the ways in which our communities uplift and support one another.

#HellaBlack Vol 6: Sacred, curated by Amanda Shea, was a standout of FY24 and marked the first time the event was held in the historic Cyclorama. This year #HellaBlack featured nine artists, the largest lineup to date, showcasing dance, spoken word, and music, and also included two inspiring students selected from the Boston-based organization 617Peak. The event fostered a sense of safety and grounding for all artists. The expanded venue allowed for 16 Black-owned businesses from the Boston area to showcase their products. Collaborations with Illuminus, Comfort Kitchen, and EventKore enriched the experience, strengthening #HellaBlack's vital role in Boston's Black community.

PERFORMANCE AND REHEARSAL SPACE RENTALS

Driven by our commitment to supporting the arts, the BCA Theatre Rental Program provides artists and community members with deeply discounted theatre and rehearsal spaces, while also contributing to an inspiring environment that nurtures creativity and collaboration among artists. In FY24, we experienced a rise in demand, highlighting the program's importance to Boston and surrounding artistic communities. The growth also reflected an ongoing interest in live performances and community events. As individuals and organizations seek venues for a wide array of events – such as theatrical performances, conferences, workshops, and more – our spaces offer flexible options that cater to diverse needs.



– **Michaila Cowie,**
DIRECTOR OF THEATRE ARTS

Photo by Carlie Febo



**PICTURED: BCA Studio
Resident nicola**

VISUAL ARTS

FY24 was an amazing year for our Visual Arts programs.

The **BCA Studio Residency Program** got even stronger, with the first full year of our Visiting Curator program, which brought two curators for studio visits. The residents were part of several networking events and public Open Houses organized by BCA, and the Mills Gallery Project Room featured two residents' solo-show exhibitions: a retrospective of Robert Rovenolt's work and a new project by R. Galvan exploring time, memory, and trauma. This year, we said goodbye to the first wave of three-year residents who started their residencies in 2021. We are very grateful to each of them for helping foster such a vibrant community, and we hope to keep connected through our Alumni program. We were thrilled to announce a \$300,000 grant from Wagner Foundation to support three-years of free studios for the next cohort of studio residents. This grant is a crucial step in our effort to raise \$1.5M over three years to fully award all 41 studio residencies and create a runway that ensures future sustainability for this essential program.

In the **Mills Gallery**, our first exhibition *Cristobal Cea: No Monsters, No Paradise*, curated by Byte Footage, included a collaboration with Sociedad Latina. This multimedia show was supported by an NEA grant which helped upgrade our gallery technology. In the Spring, we welcomed *Lani Asunción: Duty-Free Paradise*, curated by J.R. Uretsky, an immersive exhibition that had a record attendance. Our final exhibition of the year was BCA's 27th Drawing Show, titled *Yušká: Uncoil*, and curated by Erin Genia. The exhibition featured 41 local and national artists responding to an open call exploring Dakota cosmology, Earth's agency, and our place in it.

Additionally, with the Dance and Interdisciplinary Arts team, we organized *Deconstructed Anthems: Massachusetts*, an installation and performance by Ekene Ijeoma at the BCA Cyclorama that tackled mass incarceration through art and music. The piece featured a series of performances by different musicians each evening for an entire week.

The **Boston Art Book Fair** in November was our largest yet, a vibrant community event celebrating independent publishers, artists, and creatives that included two days of free and open public programs, panel discussions, and workshops.

It has been a year filled with thoughtful art that started important conversations in our community.



Photo by Carlie Febo

— **Julia Szejnblum**
DIRECTOR OF VISUAL ARTS

OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS

BCA thanks our generous supporters. With your partnership, we amplify culture that moves people. Together, we help Boston artists thrive.

Anonymous (x20)
Amanda Accardi and
Sasha Goodfriend
Peter Accardo
Rebecca Adelglass
Jonathan Aibel and
Julie Rohwein
Jim Aisner (In Memory
of Virginia S. Aisner)
Bethany Allen
Camilo Alvarez and
Alexandra Cherubini
Katherine Anderson
Whit Arau
Jason Archibald
Heidi Arndt
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Please see our financial information and other important details about us on our [Guidestar Page](#).

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We are also very grateful for the support and partnership of each and every one of our volunteers, gallery sitters, and house associates for helping Boston artists continue to thrive!

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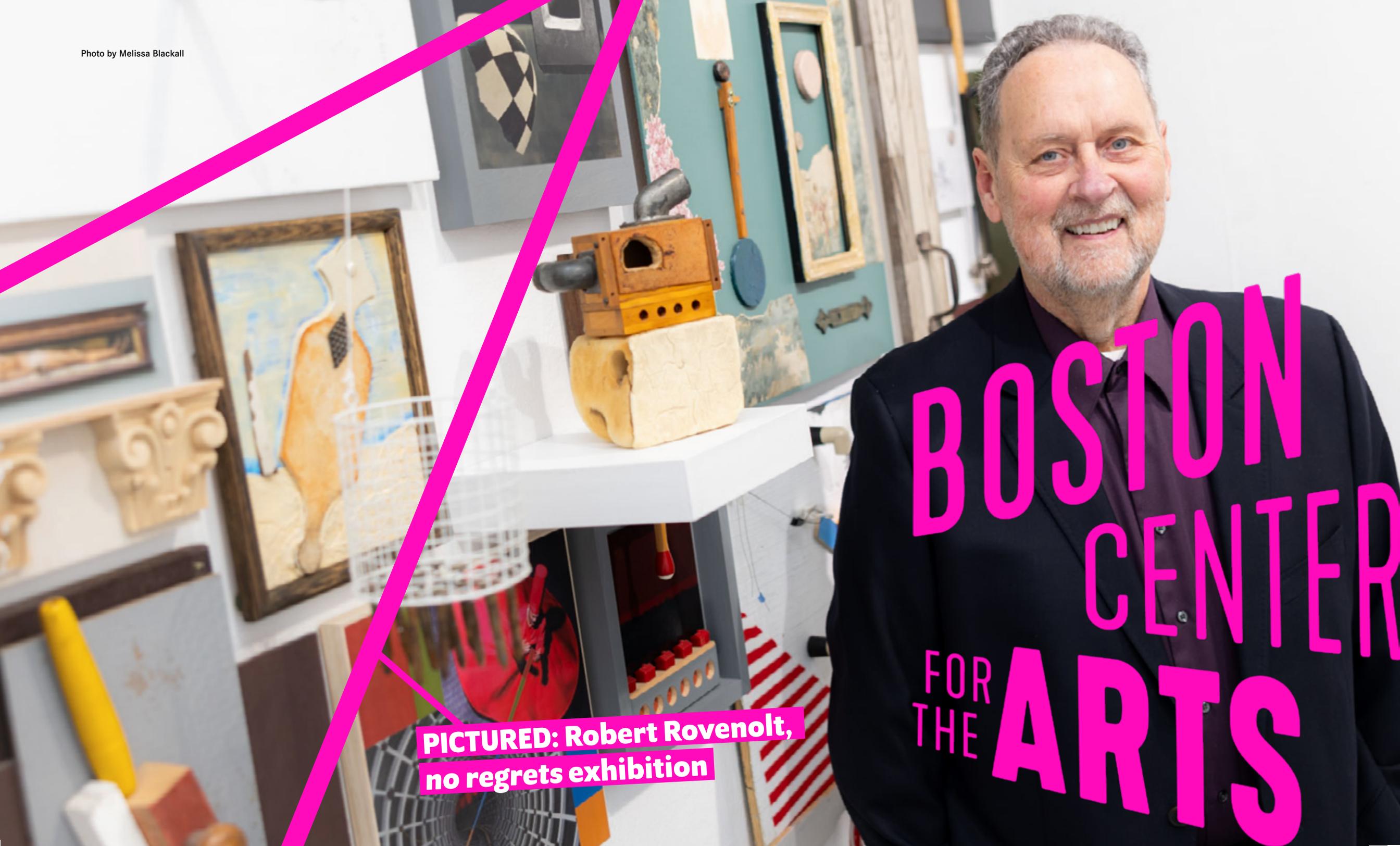
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Lily Boland, DANCE PROGRAMS INTERN
Louisa Gundeck, DEVELOPMENT INTERN
Abbeny Solis, DEVELOPMENT HARVARD WINTERN
Alexis Thomas, VISUAL ARTS PROGRAM INTERN

An installation and performance by Ekene Ijeoma in the BCA Cyclorama that tackled mass incarceration through art and music. Learn more on page 17.

**PICTURED: Ekene Ijeoma's
Deconstructed Anthems:
Massachusetts**

Photo by Melissa Blackall



BOSTON CENTER FOR THE ARTS

**PICTURED: Robert Rovenolt,
no regrets exhibition**