

ARX PHIL

2026 RESEARCHER + ARTIST LOOK BOOK

**ARTIST**

Lyra Butler-Denman

I am a dancer, choreographer, actor, visual artist, and theatre maker who makes live performances (devised plays, dances, and rituals, sometimes all at once), as well as sculpture and alternative process photography. My work is grounded in relationality and living systems and is often about death, grief, trauma, sensuality, belonging, and the impact of our world on our bodies.

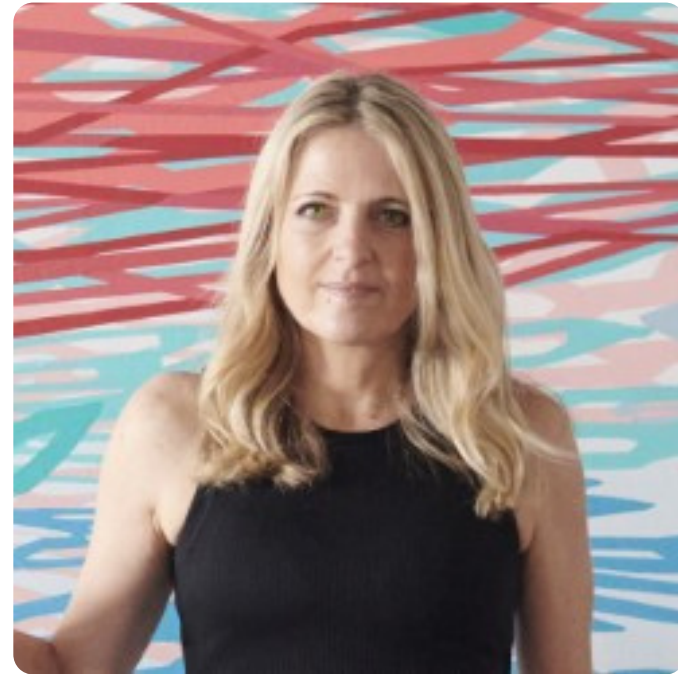
I make work that agitates, delights, and disturbs in order to offer the pleasure of being touched, the joy of our magnificent bodies, the discomfort of change, and the pain of being human in this world. I believe living fully in our bodies is anti-oppressive practice and that art making, especially with our bodies, is radical cultural and political work. I am obsessed with anatomy as metaphor, how dams affect rivers over time, and what happens when we remove them

**RESEARCHER**

Geoanna Bautista

I am the Chief Science Officer at the Monell Chemical Senses Center; my laboratory studies genetics, specifically person-to-person differences in taste and smell, but I am interested in almost all aspects of science. Science and art are both ways of learning the truth of human experience—one through observation and experiment, the other through expression, intuition, and form—and both are necessary to understand what it means to be alive in a body.

Taste and smell sit at this intersection: they are sensory gateways that carry memory, emotion, and cultural meaning, reminding us that biology is not separate from feeling.

**ARTIST****Rebecca Rutstein**

Rebecca Rutstein is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice bridges art and science. For over twenty years she has created painting, sculpture, interactive installation and public art inspired by the natural world. Rutstein is passionate about creating visual and immersive experiences that shed light on hidden networks in nature to foster deeper connection and environmental stewardship.

As an artist in residence she has collaborated with scientists around the world including eight expeditions at sea, supported by the National Science Foundation. A Pew Fellowship in the Arts recipient with recognition from the National Endowment for the Arts, Rutstein's works can be found in over fifty public collections including the Philadelphia Museum of Art, National Academy of Sciences, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Museum, the Georgia Museum of Art and the U.S. Department of State.

**RESEARCHER****Sony Tuteja**

Dr. Tuteja is the Director of Pharmacogenomics in the Penn Medicine Center for Genomic Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. She is a clinical pharmacist with expertise in genomic, translational, and implementation research.

Her work focuses on implementing pharmacogenomics into clinical care to improve medication safety and discovering novel pharmacogenomic markers of drug response using electronic health record data (EHR) coupled with large DNA repositories. She established the first pharmacist-run pharmacogenomics clinic within Penn Medicine, where patients can receive pharmacogenomics testing.

**ARTIST**

Rah Gerg

Rah Gerg is a mixed-media painter who creates immersive collage works with an emphasis in papermaking to portray natural and supernatural queer kinships. They move fluidly between works on paper, fabric, and sculptural modes, often experimenting with floating works which shift with movement and with modular wall arrangements which welcome interaction.

Their studio-laboratory produces relational works which beckon, repulse, mimic, and decay. As surfaces are rearranged and undergo metamorphosis, they are constantly subjected to new encounters and ecologies. Rah works as an artist-educator, curator, and muralist based in Philadelphia, and received their BFA in Painting from Rhode Island School of Design in 2024.

**RESEARCHER**

Jordan Williams

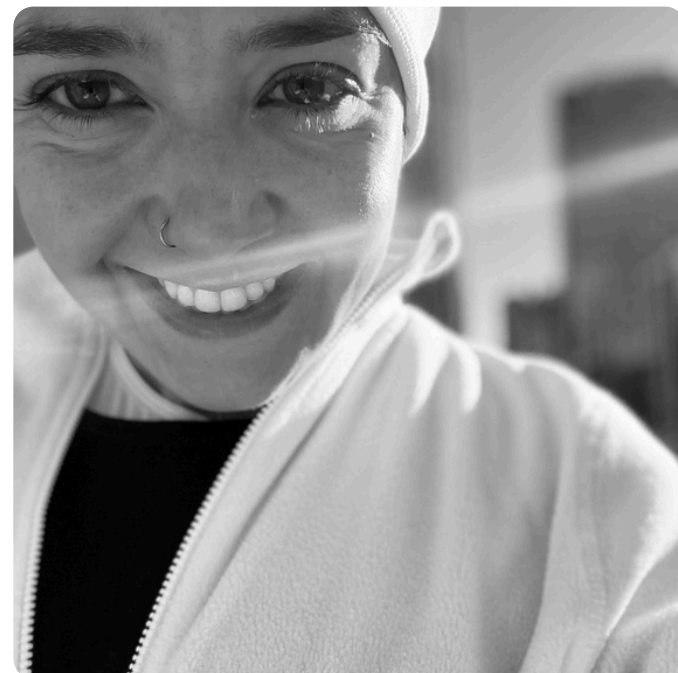
Jordan is a pharmacology PhD candidate at the University of Pennsylvania with bachelor's in Chemistry. She current research centers around airway physiology, bitter taste receptors, calcium signaling, and how interfering with calcium signaling can impact the airway's existing immune responses. Through this work, Jordan hopes to discover new ways to treat chronic upper airway diseases while avoiding overuse/misuse of antibiotics.

Jordan has a particular passion for science communication, policy, and outreach, with a special interest in improving access to active science communication in rural areas thanks to her upbringing in Idaho. Outside of the lab and outreach, Jordan enjoys walks around the city, horror movies, and nights spent reading with her cat, Honey Badger.

**ARTIST****PJ Pivarshev**

PJ likes drawing, painting, and collage; he also does vogue & waacking in his spare time! He has spent a lot of time studying art history & theory and is very interested in how we visually (& subvisually) communicate ideas to one another. In addition to painting and dancing, PJ also works as a technician at a sleep & circadian lab at Penn!

Pavel is an Aquarius. He was born in Yoshkar-Ola, Russia; grew up in Columbus, GA; and earned a Biology B.S. & Visual Arts B.A. from Duke University in Durham, NC. As an undergrad, he worked at two Evolutionary Biology labs, investigating broad genetic concepts like natural selection & adaptive evolution. He also helped out at the Nijhout Lab, studying the phylogenesis of butterfly wings. Post-graduation, he moved to Philly and joined the Sehgal lab.

**RESEARCHER****Sara Bernardez Noya**

I am Sara, born in a picturesque city in the northwest of Spain. As early as I can remember I was drawn to symmetry and harmony. What I couldn't guess by then is that later in life I would be studying circadian rhythms and sleep. An unparalleled example of Nature's synchrony.

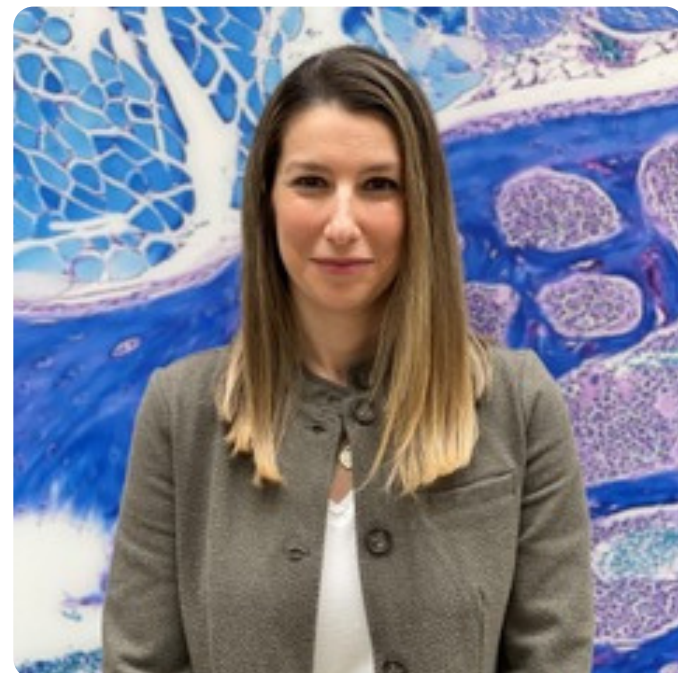
How do the brain and body talk to each other? And even more, how does that serve us to feel good? Those questions motivated me to move from Spain to Switzerland, complete a PhD in Neuroscience in Zurich and now cross the Atlantic to keep digging into them at the Sehgal Lab. During my postdoc I look at how sleep is encoded in the brain when our body is sick, because yes! How good it feels when our brain puts our body to sleep to recover from disease!

**ARTIST**

Oluwafemi Olatunji

Oluwafemi (Femi) is a rhythmist who explores visual, musical and experiential patterns. Based in Philadelphia by way of Lagos, Nigeria, his artistic practice includes music production, deejaying, painting, pen drawings, digital graphics and animation. He has created several indoor and outdoor murals in the Philadelphia area, including two at the international airport. In addition to recently exhibiting work at the Imperfect and Vox galleries, he has also completed artist residencies in the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Shofuso Japanese House in Fairmount Park.

Femi has deejayed and hosted events in Philadelphia for almost two decades, playing in venues such as World Cafe Live, The Fillmore, The Barnes Museum and Bartram's Garden. His practice of rhythmism is heavily influenced by African and Hip Hop cultures, and Mathematics.

**RESEARCHER**

Eileen Workman

I am the Executive Director of Neurology at GEMMABio, a new startup biotech company spun out from the University of Pennsylvania that is focused on moving adeno-associated virus (AAV) gene therapies for rare diseases from the bench to the clinic.

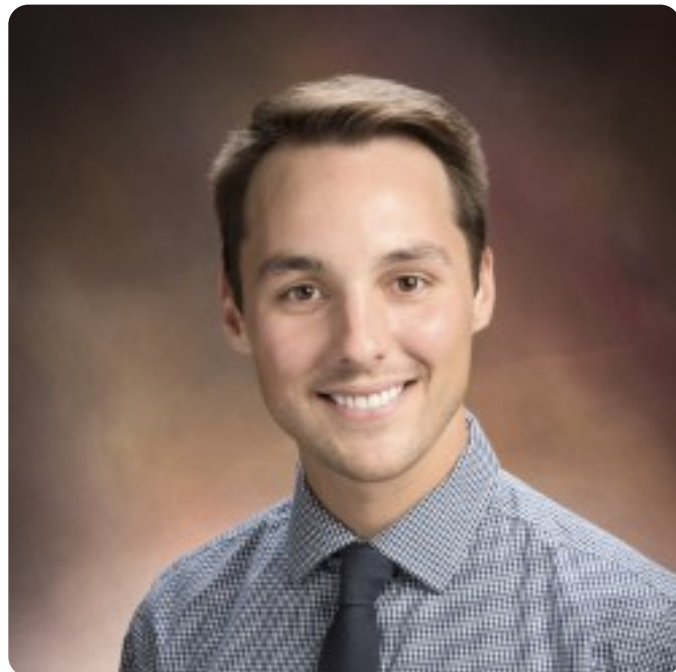
I have worked on rare neurological diseases for over 20 years, and I am passionate about translating research into meaningful therapies that can improve patient lives and advance the field of neuroscience.

**ARTIST**

Jazmyn Crosby

Jazmyn Crosby is an interdisciplinary artist whose work investigates communication, technology and ecological resilience. Born and raised in New Mexico, Jazmyn lives in Philadelphia where she received her MFA from the Tyler School of Art and Architecture.

She got her BFA from the University of New Mexico. Jazmyn is an educator at several universities in the Philadelphia area, and is a founding member of Graft Gallery/Collective and is a current member of the Bio Materials Working Group.

**RESEARCHER**

Dustin Flann

Dr. Dustin Daniel Flannery is a neonatologist and clinical epidemiologist at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania. His research focuses on infections in preterm newborns.

Currently, he investigates how E. coli evolves from a harmless colonizer into a life-threatening infection in newborns, using national data and genomic science to guide prevention. Through ARx, Dr. Flannery aims to make the unseen biology of neonatal infection more visible and understandable to broader audiences.

**ARTIST**

Elizabeth Mackie

Elizabeth Mackie is an interdisciplinary artist and professor whose work explores the relationship between humans and the natural world through the lens of environmental change. Centering on water as both subject and material, her installations address issues such as glacier loss, pollution, and ecological regeneration.

Combining handmade paper, video, sound, and sculpture, she creates immersive works that foster awareness and dialogue about our shared environment.

**RESEARCHER**

Mahalakshmi (Maha) Somayaji

Mahalakshmi (Maha) Somayaji is a Biochemist and neuroscientist exploring neuronal signatures from molecular pathways to network dynamics, currently focused on pediatric obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) diagnosis and management.

She is passionate about advancing sleep research to improve neurodevelopmental outcomes in children.

**ARTIST****Taj Rauch**

Taj Rauch is an immersive game designer, theater maker, and filmmaker. His multidisciplinary practice centers the audience as the protagonist, merging interactive design, narrative systems, and performance to ask: in a myriad of worlds, would you still find yourself to be you?

Taj is the winner of the 2025 Black Immersive Creators Grant, an awardee of the Niantic Developer Accelerator Fund, and a recipient of a 2024 Residency with the Tony Award Winning Wilma Theater. His work has been exhibited in the IceBox Project Space, featured in the PAFA Museum, and played at the VGTVG Conference.

**RESEARCHER****Scott Daniel**

Hailing from Huntington Beach, CA, Scott completed his B.A. in Psychology at the University of California, Berkeley. He then completed his Ph.D. in Molecular and Cellular Biology at the University of Arizona, with a thesis focused on the interplay between TGF-beta, colon cancer, and the microbiome.

Scott has worked as a Bioinformatic Scientist at the CHOP Microbiome Center since 2019, having published over 20 papers. His main project is currently the Human Virome Program, a wide-reaching effort to catalog the depth and breadth of viruses that live in / on / and around the human body throughout life. When he is not doing science, you can find him exploring his creative side with drawing, gardening, and creative writing.

**ARTIST****Marguerita Hagan**

Marguerita Hagan is a ceramicist based in Philadelphia and activist for mutually thriving, sustainable communities and environments. Her practice shines light on interdependence and inclusivity individually and collectively.

Hagan brings to light the beauty and engineering of our planet's diverse ecosystems and our powerful role as stewards as if our lives depend on it because they do. Her intricate ceramic magnifies the wonder and respect for the fragile, diverse life with which our lives are intrinsically linked. Her projects include collaborations with scientists and communities and her work is in collections and exhibitions nationally and internationally.

**RESEARCHER****Medini Annavajhala**

I have always been in awe of, and inspired by, what microorganisms can do to and for us humans. As a microbiologist and engineer, I study pathogens that cause infectious diseases as they travel through human and environmental microbiomes.

My lab uses wastewater and other environmental samples to track pathogens in hospital systems and city sewer systems, understand how microbes interact with each other in the environment, and develop ways to detect new disease-causing strains.

My experience with art has ranged throughout my life from at-home crafting to semi-formal instruction in various media; I am excited to revisit my love for artistic expression and marry it with my newer love of science!

ARX PHL

UCITYSQUARE.COM/ARX