

# JACOB WATSON

ARTIST | EDUCATOR | RESEARCHER

jacobcwatson@gmail.com  
www.jacobcwatson.com  
Chicago, IL

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## EDUCATION

**Harvard Graduate School of Education**  
Cambridge, MA

**Ed.M. - Arts in Education**  
Relevant Coursework: *Analyzing Culture; Emancipatory Inquiry; Leadership, Entrepreneurship, and Learning.*

**Northwestern University**  
Evanston, IL

**B.A. - Theatre**  
*Summa Cum Laude*

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## CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

**The Practice**  
*Founder & Principal*  
2019-present  
Chicago, IL

Consult with cultural, non-profit, and educational organizations on research, evaluation, curriculum, strategy, facilitation, and more. Clients include: Chicago Architecture Biennial, Jewish Council on Urban Affairs, and Ideal18.

**UpStart Lab**  
*Assoc. Director, Change Initiatives*  
2019-present  
Chicago, IL

Design and lead change programs for Jewish professionals in Chicago and beyond. Apply frameworks of design thinking and adaptive leadership alongside individual and group coaching. Supervise curriculum design and implementation.

**Convergence Design Lab**  
*Research Associate and Learning Specialist*  
2019-present  
Chicago, IL

Conceptualize and conduct impact research and reports for clients (including literature reviews, surveys, interviews, and focus groups); wrote and obtained research \$20k grant from NEA. Build online, self-paced e-learning courses using software including Articulate, Rise360, and Tovuti.

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## PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

**Honey Pot Performance**  
*Pillar Hub Artist*  
Summer 2021  
Chicago, IL

Co-lead Lifelong Learning pillar in city-wide civic planning project *We Will Chicago*, in partnership with the mayor's office and Dept. Planning + Development. Host community dialogue around key priorities to develop agenda for future of Chicago.

**Tellin' Tales Theatre**  
*Artistic Producer*  
2016-2021  
Chicago, IL

Lead creative team to develop original musical, *Always Greener*, which reimagines and redefines public understanding of disability. Steward fundraising and development efforts, including securing \$13k grant from MAP Fund.

**Lyric Opera of Chicago**  
*Program Facilitator*  
2016-2021  
Chicago, IL

Facilitate weekly playmaking workshops alongside opera professionals. Devise original musical performances that shift public consciousness and center the voices of community, including teens, older adults, and performers with disabilities.

**Urban Gateways**  
*Teaching Artist*  
2011 - 2021  
Chicago, IL

Create and implement original in-school arts residencies spanning grades K-12 in neighborhoods across the city. Train artists and teachers on fundamentals of arts-based curriculum design.

**Project Zero, Harvard Graduate School of Education**

*Research Assistant,*  
2018-2019  
Cambridge, MA

Research projects: *Arts as Civic Commons* and *Idea into Action*. Produced over 60 literature summaries, case studies, tools, and frameworks. Led stakeholder interviews; distilled, analyzed, and communicated key insights from qualitative survey data.

**Derek Bok Center for Teaching + Learning at Harvard University**

*Learning Lab Media Fellow,*  
2018-2019  
Cambridge, MA

Activated new media and inclusive teaching practices in pedagogy and course design at Harvard University. Collaborated with faculty, teaching fellows, and staff across university departments to foster innovative approaches to teaching and learning.

**Center for Community Arts Partnerships at Columbia College Chicago**

*Project Manager,*  
2013 - 2017  
Chicago, IL

Managed cadre of 20 teaching artists for *Project AIM* and *Convergence Academies*. Implemented over 50 arts & media-integrated residencies per year in schools across Chicago. Structured in-depth partnerships and supported measurement, evaluation, and reporting efforts of \$1.3-\$3.5 million grants from the U.S. Department of Education.

**Erasing the Distance**

*Facilitator + Designer*  
2015 - 2017  
Chicago, IL

Designed and built environments to support mental health dialogue through theatre performance. Led post-performance conversations on mental health topics.

**FYI Performance Company, Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health**

*Co-Founder*  
2011 - 2017  
Chicago, IL

Collectively built early mission, vision, and strategy for organization in partnership with educators, organizers, and activists. Directed and performed in participatory plays about sexual health + sexual violence. Designed games, workshops, and adult education training series.

**Redmoon.** *Teaching Artist*

2011 - 2013  
Chicago, IL

Constructed spectacle arts curricula; curated youth-led performance installations in schools, museums, and public spaces.

**Creative Directions**

*Arts Education Consultant*  
2011 - 2013  
Evanston, IL

Designed and led professional development in arts integration for teachers across the country. Curated and edited curricula and books on drama-based instruction.

----- **UNIVERSITY TEACHING** -----

**Harvard University,** Cambridge, MA

*Crafting Your Teaching Persona: Power, Presence, and Performance.* Co-designed and co-taught original 6-week seminar for graduate students. Spring 2019.

*Education on the Move: Examining and Embracing What Movement Can Teach Across Educational Settings.* Teaching Fellow for new 6-week graduate course. Spring 2019.

**University of Girona,** Girona, Spain

*The Aesthetics of Participation.* Guest Lecture in Arts Pedagogy Course. Spring 2019.

**Columbia College Chicago,** Chicago, IL

*Design for Participation.* Guest Lecture in Theatre Department Teaching Practicum. Winter 2020, *Arts Integration.* Guest Lecture in Dance Department Pedagogy Course. Fall 2016.

*Integrating Drama.* Guest Lecture in Education Department Teaching Artist Course. Fall 2016.

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## WORKSHOPS + PRESENTATIONS (SELECTED)

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- *Theory of Action MadLibs: Engaging Practitioners as Action Researchers*. Connected Learning Summit. 2021.
- *Transplant: a Radically-Different New Musical*. Chicago Disability Studies Conference. 2020.
- *The Authentic Self: Leadership*. Harvard Center for Public Leadership. Cambridge, MA. 2017.
- *Creating Buy-In and Sustaining Partnerships*. U.S. Department of Education: Arts in Education Conference. Washington, DC. 2017.
- *How #Woke is your Theatre Class? Art and the Myth of the Politically-Neutral*. American Alliance for Theatre & Education. New Orleans, LA. August 2017.
- *Shared Delivery of Arts Education: The Benefits & Challenges of Forging Collaborations among Theatre Educators in School-Based Residency Models*. Network of Ensemble Theatres Symposium. Chicago, IL. May 2016
- *On Your Feet: Participatory Theatre for Learning*. SXSWedu. Austin, TX. March 2016.
- *Creative Collaborations: Changing Hearts & Minds through Cross-Sector Arts-Based Partnerships*. American Alliance for Theatre & Education. Milwaukee, WI. 2015.
- *Civically Engaged Alumni Panel*. Northwestern University. Chicago, IL. April 2014.
- *STEAM-ing Ahead in Arts Education: How Inquiry Based Learning can Transform Classrooms*. American Alliance for Theatre & Education Conference. Washington, DC. Summer 2013.
- *For Youth Inquiry: Sexual Health Programming Through Theater Arts*. Health Disparities and Social Justice Conference. Chicago, IL. January 2012 and Pedagogy & Theatre of the Oppressed Conference. Chicago, IL. July 2011.

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## PERFORMANCE (SELECTED)

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### Directing + Devising

*This Boat Called My Body*. FYI Performance Company. Chicago, IL. 2019.  
*This Place / Displaced*. (Remount, Co-Direction.) Artists' Theatre of Boston. Boston, MA. 2019.  
*held*. HybridSalon Harvard. Cambridge, MA. 2018.  
*Gray Area: a new play on consent*. FYI Performance Company. Chicago, IL. 2017.  
*Are We Not Happy? (The Crane Wife)*. Chicago Home Theatre Festival. Chicago, IL. 2014.  
*Project US + Can I Hit It?* FYI Performance Company. Chicago, IL. 2011 - 2013.

### Scenic Design

*Moon Shot*. Theatre Unspeakable. Chicago, IL. 2016.  
*Tell Me What You Remember*. Erasing the Distance. Chicago, IL. 2014, 2015.  
*Melancholy Play: a Chamber Musical*. Piven Theatre Workshop. Evanston, IL. 2015.  
*Ivanov*. Piven Theatre Workshop. Evanston, IL. 2014.  
*The Language Archive*. Piven Theatre Workshop. Evanston, IL. 2014.

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## PUBLICATIONS

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- "Shame will not make people wear masks, but creative thinking will." Chicago Tribune, 2020.
- "The Work Speaks for Itself: Understanding the Impact of Youth Media" and "Showing Up During COVID-19." (co-authored) Convergence Design Lab. 2020. [www.spyhop.org](http://www.spyhop.org)
- "Finding the 'Learning Edge:' Personalization and Creative Engagement in Visual Art Education." ACS Centre for Inspiring Minds. 2019.
- "When Learners Get 'Stuck,' Try Thinking Like An Artist." *Education Week: Learning Deeply*. 2018. [www.blogs.edweek.org/edweek/learning\\_deeply](http://www.blogs.edweek.org/edweek/learning_deeply)
- "Teaching Artistry in the Age of Convergence: Distributed Expertise and the Case for Outside Content Experts (OCEs)" *Convergence Design Lab*. 2015. [www.convergencedesignlab.org](http://www.convergencedesignlab.org)

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Contemplative Practice Fellowship from the Hemera Foundation. 2020.
- MAP Fund Grant Recipient for *Transplant* (\$13,350) Chicago, IL. 2019.
- Devising Performance & Civic Practice, Sojourn Theatre (Michael Rohd). Chicago, IL. 2012, 2019.
- Individual Artist Residency. Swarm Artist Residency. Chicago, IL. 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019.
- Thematic residency in Pedagogical Innovation. Faber Artist Residency. Olot, Spain. 2019.
- Critical Response Training with Liz Lerman. Harvard University. Cambridge, MA. 2018, 2019.
- Ritual & Performance: Audience Initiations. Third Rail Projects (Tom Pearson). New York, NY. 2018
- Devising New Dramaturgical Structures for Forum Theatre. Julian Boal, Chicago, IL. 2017.
- Meisner Technique, Lev. 1-3. The Artistic Home (Kathy Scambiaterra). Chicago, IL. 2015-2017.
- Certificate in Human-Centered Design, IDEO.org and Acumen+. Online course. 2015.
- Artist Grant Recipient (\$4,000). Dept. Cultural Affairs & Special Events. Chicago, IL. 2013.
- Hack the Museum, Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History (Nina Simon). Santa Cruz, CA. 2013.