

A woman with dark hair, wearing a vibrant red, long-sleeved, ruffled dress with a matching belt, is captured in a moment of intense performance. She has her mouth wide open as if singing or shouting, and her right arm is extended outwards. The background is dark, with a large, expressive red brushstroke behind the text. The overall mood is one of passion and energy.

Gutless & Grateful

The Deliciously Inspiring One-Woman Musical

Written and Performed by **Amy Oestreicher**

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About Gutless & Grateful

Gutless & Grateful is the one-woman musical autobiography of Amy Oestreicher, taking her audience on a journey of hope, resilience and gratitude.

The story has been featured on CBS, Cosmopolitan, Seventeen, and more. This is no ordinary one-woman show, but an inspiring powerhouse production that leaves audiences in tears and laughing hysterically.

Gutless & Grateful is family-friendly, inspirational programming that has been a critic's darling for years, and winner of seven major awards. It's an ideal one-night-only event to fill a dark night, with extremely minimal technical/space requirements and a flexible format, which can also include an artist talkback or facilitated Q & A.

Come for an evening of inspiring story-telling and song as she shares the disappointments, the triumphs, and the humor – the challenges, the battles, and ultimately the gifts of what Amy received from this experience. It is a story of hope, determination, and perseverance a way to share her gratitude and strength with the world. Through the ups and downs, Amy's fight proves that you never know what you are capable of until you are asked to the challenge and the human spirit can prevail over any odds.

[Gutless & Grateful Press Release](#)



“One part moving testament to human indomitability, the other a thoroughly satisfying evening of song. While each element is strong enough to stand on its own, combined they illuminate and enhance each other. Rarely have I seen narration and song so artfully meshed, and Oestreicher’s likeability, good humor, interpretive skill, and manifest commitment to what she is saying and singing make us not only understand her story, but also feel it on a very deep level.”

- Roy Sander, critic for BistroAwards.co

About Amy

Lost a Stomach...Gained a Story: www.amyoes.com/gutless

One bad stomach ache after noshing on a little too much matzah at Passover Dinner changed the course of my life forever.

I was your average teenage musical theatre ham, when, two weeks before my senior prom, a blood clot caused my stomach to explode, literally hitting the ceiling of the operating room. After both lungs collapsed, I almost died. When I woke from a coma, months later, doctors told me I had no stomach anymore, I couldn't eat or drink, and they didn't know if I'd ever be able to again. (I'll let you "digest" that for a second.)

Just when you think this is going to be a why me tragedy, I share the secret thriving through 27 surgeries and 6 of the past 10 years unable to eat a morsel of food or drink a drop of liquid: HUMOR. (Sink your "teeth" into that!)

I take audiences on an adventure of 42 field trips to the CT SCAN room, hitting on doctors, a surprise visit by William Finn at my very own high school graduation in the surgical ICU, and a song David Friedman and Kathie Lee Gifford wrote especially for me after being on The Today Show, all in a 70-minute musical comedy. (Now that's a mouth-watering recipe for a hit!)

The show has been a critic's darling for 4 years and a favorite of Jewish mothers all over, earning a NYC Bistro Award, Woman of the Year in 2014 and a Best Theatre Debut nomination by BroadwayWorld. I am also touring the show to conferences and colleges across the country, as a mental health and sexual assault prevention program, and presenting it for two TEDx Talks.

I've garnered a large loyal following from both my online presence and in-person engagements, and the show already has substantial property. Being a born musical theatre ham, I'd love to bring it to you. In the meantime, I'm off to grab a steak dinner. (Now that, I'm serious about.)

TEDx

Amy is a TEDx speaker! Read more about her performances in the links below!

[TEDx Syracuse April 2016](#)

•

[TEDx VCU FEBRUARY 2017](#)

Highlights

Amy performed **Gutless & Grateful** at **Feinstein's/54 Below** in June 30th 2017



Gutless & Grateful at Feinstein's/54 Below Highlights! #Liveat54Below
[Read About it Here](#)

A complete video of the entire 54 Below performance is available upon request.

Broadway World Cabaret's PUTTING IT TOGETHER:
GUTLESS & GRATEFUL - Putting It Together + Showtime!

[View the Four Part Series Here!](#)



Amy is a staff writer/critic for Broadway World. See her contributions [Here](#).

[See Complete Booking History](#)

Show Synopsis



Amy Oestreicher was an ambitious, audacious teenager who had her life all planned out: go to college, win a Tony, and conquer the world. But life took an unexpected detour when the week before her high school senior prom, she found herself in **unusual pain**. She was rushed to the emergency room, and due to a blood clot, Amy's stomach exploded to the ceiling of the operating room. After both lungs collapsed, she almost died.

Months later, she awoke from a coma covered in tubes, bags, and drains, and was told that she had no stomach anymore, she **could not eat or drink**, and it was not certain if or when she would ever taste one bite ever again. It took 27 surgeries and over three years, but eventually, Amy was miraculously reconstructed, and with the intestines she had left, was given a system that digests food.

Read a more detailed synopsis [here](#).

"Theatre comes down to amazing storytelling, and Amy Oestreicher has an astounding story to tell."

-Broadway World

Educational Outreach

Gutless & Grateful for Colleges

“Gutless & Grateful” is part of “LoveMyDetour,” a fiscally sponsored organization creating seminars, workshops, curriculum, books, music, and performances designed to entertain, educate, and engage on Mental Health, Sexual Assault Prevention, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Disability, Storytelling, Anti-Bullying, Leadership, Creative Arts, and Diversity.

Read more about programs for [student mental health](#).

Learn more about programs for [sexual assault prevention](#).



Mental Health Assembly for Middle and High School Students

According to a 2015 NHANES study, 1 in 5 youth aged 13-18 experiences a severe mental health crisis at some point during their life.

Gutless and Grateful is a program that combines Broadway theatre and mental health advocacy, appropriate for events both entertaining and educational, and for programs that engage and inspire students, parents and teachers alike. Read more about the Middle and High School program [here](#).

Students will learn how to:

- Develop Healthy Habits and Take an Empowered Approach to Wellness
- Clinical Presentations & Hospitals - <https://amyoes.com/patient-care/>
- Find resources for support on campus and learn PTSD coping skills
- Start a Student Detourists Chapter on campus
- Support Diversity, LGBT Students and Allies

Other Audiences & Speaking

An inspiring story of survival and determination, Gutless & Grateful is ideal for audiences of all ages. The 70 minute performance can be customized for fundraisers, support groups, hospitals, non-profit organizations, theatres, cabarets, schools, conferences, seminars, motivational speaking engagements, and special events.



Customized Performances Available for:

- Clinically Informed Presentations **Patients** and recovery
- Doctors, med students and **healthcare professionals**
- **Students**/College campuses
- **Artists** and creators
- Writers and **storytellers**
- **Spirituality** and Faith
- Survivors of **Sexual Assault**
- **High School** Students
- Trauma-informed programming for **PTSD Warriors**
- **Corporate Events** and Leadership

View the themes Gutless & Grateful addresses and download a **comprehensive facilitator's guide** for Gutless & Grateful as an educational mental health program.

Honors & Awards

Women in the Age of Trump	NYC Playwrights	January 2017
Best Theatre Debut	BroadwayWorld	October 2012
The Singular Award Winner	Sarasolo Theatre Festival	January 2017
Therapeutic Humor Academy Scholarship	Assoc. Applied & Therapeutic Humor	December 2016
Women to Celebrate 2014	Woman Around Town	November 2014
Bistro Awards NY Top Pick	Bistro Awards	December 2015
“Post Traumatic Gifts”	Nat’l Initiative for Military Arts & Health	December 2016
Great Comeback Awards	Convatec National	September 2014
Manhattan Repertory Theatre Short Play Finalist	Manhattan Repertory Theatre	April 2016
Herstory Honoree	She Rocks MEDIA	January 2017
Top Creativity Writer	Medium	January 2017
Creative Arts Community Helper	United Way, CT	April 2005
Finalist, Original Musical Composition	Reflections Contest	March 2005
Solo Debut “Top Not to Miss Pick”	AMNY	October 2012
Solo Performer/Playwright Finalist	New York New Works Theatre Festival	October, 2016
“Sold Out Additional Performance”	United Solo Festival	November 2014
The Perpetual You Inner Beauty Honoree	The Perpetual You	January 2016
Lower East Side Chronicles Playwright Finalist	Metropolitan Playhouse	March 2017
Caleb Reese Festival of New Plays Finalist	Phoenix Theatre	October 2016
Artist Honoree	Yale New Haven Smilow Gallery	December 2016

Media

- Hear Amy's [interview with Seth Rudetsky](#) about the show.
- [“Your Program is Your Ticket”](#) Theater Podcast Interview with Sean Handler
- Adam Szymkowicz Blog: [I Interview Playwrights Part 959: Amy Oestreicher](#)
- Malinism Theatre Beyond Broadway: [Meet Amy Oestreicher & Gutless & Grateful](#)
- BroadwayWorld: [Amy Oestreicher Makes Feinstein's/54 Below Debut with GUTLESS & GRATEFUL](#)
- Read about Gutless & Grateful in [The Huffington Post](#)
- Feature Article on [‘Gutless & Grateful’ at Boston College in “The Heights”](#)
- AirPlay Presents: [Amy Oestreicher’s Musical Gutless & Grateful](#)
- Gutless & Grateful awarded [“Singular Award” at Sarasolo Theatre Festival!](#)
- [Time Square Chronicles Review NYC Debut](#)
- [Gutless & Grateful Feature by “Hampshire Reviews”](#)
- Navigating Life’s Beautiful Detours: [Gutless & Grateful Review](#)



Booking History

- Triad Theatre (October 2012, New York, New York)
 - ◊ *BroadwayWorld Award Nominee “Best Theatre Debut”*
- Stage 72 (June 2013, New York, New York)
 - ◊ *Woman About Town’s “Woman to Celebrate”*
- The Bijou Theatre (June 2013, Bridgeport, CT)
- Barrington Stage Company (July 2013, Pittsfield, MA)
 - ◊ *Part of “Mr. Finn’s Cabaret” series (personally invited by William Finn)*
- United Solo Festival (New York, New York, October & November 2014)
 - ◊ *“Sold Out Top Pick” – awarded additional performance*
- Transformative Language Arts Network “Power of Words” National Conference (Kansas City, MO, September 2015)
- Eating Recovery Center (October, 2015, Denver, CO)
- Hampshire College (November, 2015, and May, 2017, Amherst, MA)
- Boston College (February, 2016, Boston, MA)
- Emerging Artist Theatre (March 2016, New York, New York)
 - ◊ *NYC Bistro Awards Top Pick*
- Chenango Non-Profit Equity Theatre (Greene, NY, June 2016)
- Midtown Theatre Festival, New York (August, 2016)
- Transformative Language Arts Network (Sacco, Maine, August 2016)
- Metropolitan Room (NYC, February 2017)
- Statera Women and Theatre Conference (Denver, CO, October 2017)
- New York New Works Theatre Festival (NYC, August, 2016) *Semifinalist
- Feinstein’s/54 Below (NYC, June 2017)
- Firehouse Arts Center, Newburyport, MA, August 2017
- East Hampton, NY:JDT Lab Series, November 2016
- Clark University, Worcester, MA, April 2017
- Proscenium Theatre, Tucson, AZ, April 2017
- National Conference for College Student Leaders, College Park, Maryland, April 2017
- Disney Springs, Orlando Florida, April 2017
- Holiday Inn San Diego, Applied and Therapeutic Humor, April 2017 - Bayside
- Wesleyan University, September 2017
- Licensed to monologue competitions and college theatre departments as performance piece

Gutless & Grateful has also been performed as a Keynote combining mental health advocacy and sexual assault prevention with Broadway Theatre

Selected Engagements

- Keynote Speaker: Pacific Rim International Disability Conference, Honolulu, Hawaii, 2016
- Keynote Speaker: International School of Social Work Conference, Columbus, Ohio March 2018

Presentations

- American College of Surgeons Clinical Congress 2016 (Washington, DC)
- Transformative Language Arts Network's Power of Words Conference, Kansas City, MO (Narrative Medicine)
- Eating Recovery Center, Denver, CO (Mental Health, Acceptance)
- Heart of the City: Turning Passion to Business (B:Hive, Bridgeport 2015) (Entrepreneurship)
- Mental Health America Annual Conference 2016, Alexandria, VA (Media, Messaging and Mental Health)
- New England Educational Opportunity Association 2016 (Sexual Assault)
- Transformative Language Arts Network, Sacco, Maine, 2016
- Great Comebacks Eastern Regional Recipient WOCN Conference, Greensboro, NC 2014
- Great Comebacks (Convatec) Eastern Regional WOCN Conference, Meriden, CT 2014
- Great Comebacks (Convatec) National WOCN Conference, Nashville, TN, 2014
- Wound and Ostomy Continence Nurses Society Annual Meeting, NJ, 2016
- Creator of Gutless & Grateful (Mental Health/Disability/PTSD Education performance), Presentations 2012-2016 Colleges Nationwide
- Expert/Features on NBC's Today, CBS, WNBC, News 12, Cosmopolitan
- Co-creator of medical workshops with Adam Blatner, MD
- League for Advancement of New England Storytellers Annual Conference
- Brockport College Diversity Conference (2016)
- Modern Femme Conference (Virginia Beach, May 2017)
- National Student Leadership Diversity Convention (NYC, October 2016)



College Mental Health Speaker/Advocacy Program (selected colleges)

- Hampshire College 2014
- Boston College 2015
- Central Penn College 2015
- Russell Sage College 2015
- Haverford College 2015
- Fulton Montgomery Community College 2015
- New York University 2016
- College of St. Benedict & St Johns 2017

Speaking (selected organizations)

- Fairfield County Arts Association, Fairfield, CT
- National WOCN Conference, Nashville, TN
- Convatec Great Comebacks Awards, Greensboro, NC
- WOCN Eastern Regional Conference, New Jersey, November 2016
- TEDx Syracuse Glitch, April 2016
- Sharing the Fire (LANES Conference), April 2016
- Great Comebacks Awards, Meriden, CT
- Fairfield County Cultural Alliance
- Coastal Arts Guild "Make Art Monthly"
- Resilience and the Power of the Human Spirit, Westport, CT
- Youth to Youth International Leadership Conference (Bryant College, RI)
- NAMI Ending the Silence Presentations

Playwright Resume

Amy Oestreicher • www.amyoes.com • 203 209 4948 • amyoes70@gmail.com
Playwright, Multidisciplinary Teaching Artist, Global Speaker, Actress, Art Entrepreneur, Storyteller

EDUCATION (full details available upon request)

- **Hampshire College**, Amherst, MA BA, Playwriting, Theatre, Psychology, 2017
- **National Theatre Institute/Eugene O'Neill Theater Center**, Waterford, CT, Fall 2016
- **Gotham Writers**, New York, NY, FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY, Fairfield, CT, 2015
- ***Includes coursework in theatre-related disciplines:*** Playwriting, Theatre History, Stage Combat, Shakespeare, Voice, Creative Movement for Children, Creative Writing Fiction, Musical Composition. Expressive Arts Therapies including Voice Dialogues, Authentic Movement, Psychodrama, PTSD Specialist.
- ***Additional training includes:*** Acting, Physical Theatre/Devised Performance/Improvisation, Acting for Film, Voice, Dance (multiple styles), Cabaret. Classically trained musical theatre soprano w/ belt.
- ***Companies trained with include:*** Neo-Futurists, Tectonic Theatre Lab, Fiasco Theatre, American Globe Theatre, Shakespeare & Co., Primary Stages, Stella Adler, Upright Citizens Brigade, Weist-Barron

PLAYWRIGHT (full list available upon request)

- **LEFTOVERS:** (full-length musical Susan Einhorn, workshopped at TRU, NY)
- **Gutless & Grateful:** (ongoing) Writer, Director, Performer, Composer, Producer
 - Toured to over 40 colleges nationwide, winner of seven Nat'l Awards
 - 13 NYC Productions including 54 Below, Metropolitan Room, The Triad
 - Headlined int'l conferences, three keynotes, five international performing arts festivals
 - Featured in 2 TEDx Talks, Huffington Post, NBC, CBS, 4 local news stations, Washington Post
- **Factory Treasures:** (2017, Thespis Theatre Festival, NY, invited reading at Primary Stages, 2017)
- **The Sky is Blue** Casa De Beverley (2017)) Manhattan Repertory Theatre (2016) Bechdel Project (2017)
- **Our First Family Dinner** (2016, Published in Eddy Theatre Directory, UK and read at O'Neill Center)
- **The Greeks Are Trying to Tell Us Something:** (2016, with original music, read at O'Neill Center)
- **IMPRINTS:** (2017 Playlight Theatre); (2016 Producer's Club, NYC); (2015 Hampshire College, MA)
- **Fibers:** (Performance: 2017, Beechwood Arts, CT, Immigrants and Exile, Brooklyn, NY, Seekonk, MA)
- **Persephone & Me:** (2017, workshop, Blockheads Collective)
- **Five Windows on Resilience** (Commission: multidisciplinary performance for Beechwood Arts, CT)

PERFORMANCE:

- (Lead or supporting roles in 50+ regional musical theatre and dramatic productions), including Agnes/Agnes of God (Pound Ridge Theatre, NY); Anne Frank/Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl (Pound Ridge Theatre, NY); Tzeitl/Fiddler on the Roof (Center Stage, CT) Nancy/Oliver (Curtain Call, Stamford, CT); Marta/Company (Darien Arts, CT); Pegeen/Playboy of the Western World (Fairfield Warde, CT); Eponine/Les Miserables (Island Lake Arts, PA); Maria/The Sound of Music (PA Players, CT) and Baker's Wife in Into The Woods, (CenterStage, CT) Moll in Cradle Will Rock (Judson Church)

RESIDENCIES:

- Art Kibbutz, NY, PLAYA Residency (OR), Discovery Museum (CT)

MEMBER:

- Dramatists Guild, International Center for Women Playwrights; Fairfield County Cultural Alliance; Ridgefield Arts Guild; League of New England Storytellers (LANES); League of Professional Theatre Women, New York Gotham Writers, Artemis Theatricals (as composer/ lyricist), Theatre Resources Unlimited, National Speakers Assoc.

AWARDS:

- Singular Award (Sarasolo), Best Theatre Debut Nom. (Broadway World), Nat'l HERSTORY Performing Artist, Great Comebacks (Canvatec) Semifinalists: Women in the Age of Trump, NY Theatre Workshop, Manhattan Rep, Caleb Reese Fest New Plays, Metropolitan Playhouse

PUBLICATIONS:

- TheatreFolk, Eddy Theatre Co, BroadwayWorld, TEDx Experience, Huffington Post, Teaching Artist Guild, Art is Moving, Art with Impact, PerformerStuff, 265 Women a Year, My Beautiful Detour, (author, memoir) Trigger Points Anthology, Project Semicolon, Narcissists' Playbook, Backstage, Stage32, Assoc. for Theatre in Higher Ed., Transformative Language Arts Network



"Gutless & Grateful: A Musical Feast" is a moving personal history told with grace and humor, and garnished with great songs sung from the heart.

- Paulanne Simmons (Times Square Chronicles)

Biography

Amy Oestreicher • www.amyoes.com • 203 209 4948 • amyoes70@gmail.com
Playwright, Multidisciplinary Teaching Artist, Global Speaker, Actress, Art Entrepreneur, Storyteller



“ I learned that the human spirit feeds off of hope, and hope is fuel we can cultivate ourselves. Ultimately, I learned that with resourcefulness, creativity, and unwavering curiosity, we can transform any adversity into personal growth and a resilience that is uniquely ours. ”

Amy Oestreicher is a PTSD peer-to-peer specialist, artist, author, writer for The Huffington Post, speaker for **TEDx** and **RAINN**, health advocate, award-winning actress, and playwright. As a survivor and “thrivor” of multiple traumas, Amy eagerly shares the gifts of life’s “beautiful detours” her educational programming, **writing, mixed media art, performance** and **inspirational speaking**. Amy has headlined international conferences on leadership, entrepreneurship, women’s rights, mental health, disability, creativity, and **domestic violence prevention**. She is a **SheSource Expert**, a “Top Mental Health” writer for Medium, and a regular lifestyle, wellness, and arts contributor for over 70 notable online and print publications, and her story has appeared on NBC’s TODAY, CBS, Cosmopolitan, Seventeen Magazine, Washington Post, Good Housekeeping, MSNBC, among others.

As a playwright, Amy has received awards and accolades for engaging her audiences in dynamic conversation on trauma’s effects on society, including Women Around Town’s “Women to Celebrate” 2014, BroadwayWorld “Best Theatre Debut,” and Bistro Awards “New York Top Pick.” Amy has written, directed and starred in a one-woman musical about her life, **Gutless & Grateful**, touring over 200 venues, theatres, schools, festivals, conventions and organizations since it’s 2012 New York debut, including Barrington Stage Co. and Feinstein’s/54 Below. Gutless & Grateful has won seven national awards, including The Singular Award for an innovative original performance, is listed as part of the National Initiative for Arts and Health in the Military, and is currently being licensed to students across the country for academic projects and competitions. Amy spent Fall of 2015 participating as a playwright and performance artist in the National Musical Theatre Institute at the world-renowned Eugene O’Neill Theater Center, where she helped to develop the full-length multimedia ensemble piece, The Greeks Are Trying to Tell Us Something, and was a writer, actress, composer and set designer for “Playwrights and Librettists” – a festival of 27 30-minute plays in five days. Her original, full-length drama, Imprints, exploring the physical and psychological impact of trauma, premiered at the Producer’s Club in

2016, and is currently in development for a full New York production as Flicker and a Firestarter. Her short plays have been published by the Eddy Theatre Company, PerformerStuff, and The Narcissists Anthology, and have been finalists in Manhattan Repertory Theatre's Short Play Festival, New York New Works Theatre Fest, as well as NYC Playwright's Women in the Age of Trump.

Amy's collaboration with Beechwood Arts on the immersion salon, "Resilience and the Power of the Human Spirit", has traveled around the world to health and arts facilities as a public installation, incorporating her monologues, art, writing and recipes to express the life-altering detours and ultimately the invaluable gifts of her resilient journey. Amy is also an active artist and teacher in the Jewish community, being honored by United Way in 2005 for her music programs at Hollander House, completing artist residencies at Art Kibbutz, and delivering "Hope, Resilience & Biblical Women" keynotes for synagogues and religious schools. After studying Theatre of the Oppressed in her studies at Hampshire College, she helped to train ACTSmart, a Playback Theatre troupe in Amherst, MA. She is also a passionate arts education advocate, a successful mixed media visual artist, a continuing education studio arts teacher, and an active member of the League of Professional Theatre Women, League for Advancement of New England Storytellers, Dramatists Guild, Fairfield County Cultural Alliance, International Center for Women Playwrights, International Women's Art Salon, Theatre Artist Workshop, and several art guilds throughout Connecticut and New York.

To celebrate her own "beautiful detour", Amy created the #LoveMyDetour campaign, to help others cope in the face of unexpected events. Her passion for inclusion, equity and amplifying marginalized voices has earned her various honors, including a scholarship from the Association for Applied and Therapeutic Humor Professionals, the first annual SHERocks Herstory National Performing Artist Honoree, a United Way Community Helper award, and a National Sexual Education Grant honor. To creatively engage student advocacy efforts, Amy developed a trauma-informed program combining mental health education, sexual assault prevention, and Broadway Theatre for **college campuses**, organizations and conferences. She has designed a creative curriculum for "Detourist Resiliency," an outreach program taken to schools, hospitals and at-risk youth. She also has launched Detourist peer-led chapters on college campuses, Detourist creative arts workshops, and an online community to creatively fight stigma in society through storytelling. "Detourism" is also the subject of her TEDx Talk and upcoming book, *My Beautiful Detour*, available December 2017.

As the 2014 Eastern Regional Recipient of Convatec's **Great Comebacks Award** and WEGO Health 2016 "Health Activist Hero" Finalist, Amy is a passionate voice in the ostomy community, founding the online community Fearless Ostomates, speaking for National and Regional WOCN conferences, and writing for the official print publication of the **UOAA**. Her presentations on alternative medicine, and patient advocacy and healthcare have also been accepted to international conferences on patient care, internal medicine, medical trauma and therapeutic humor in hospitals. She has devised workshops for the Transformative Language Arts Network National Conference, the Eating Recovery Foundation, the 40th Anniversary New England Educational Opportunity Association Milestones Conference, the Annual National Mental Health America Conference, 2016 American College of Surgeons Clinical Congress, and others. She was the 2016 keynote speaker for the Hawaii Pacific Rim International Conference on Diversity and

Disability. and will be the featured keynote speaker at the 2018 International School of Social Work Conference in Ohio.

Amy is currently creating a multimedia performance project based on her most recent TEDx Talk at Virginia Commonwealth University, exploring trauma through the archetypal hero's journey. She is developing FIBERS, inspired by verbatim theatre, immigration narratives and oral history interviews with her relatives, LEFTOVERS, a full-length play with music with director and dramaturge Susan Einhorn, based on her life after the surgical ICU, and Factory Treasures, inspired by her grandparents' sewing corporation and legacy as Holocaust survivors.

“Everything became possible once I was willing to intentionally wander from the life I planned and embrace this ‘detour’ as an opportunity for discovery. This is not the life that I planned for myself – but does anyone’s life ever work out exactly how they plan it?”

Download full resume as PDF [here](#).



Artist Statement

Learn about Amy as a Playwright [here](#).

AMY OESTREICHER ARTISTIC STATEMENT/pieces of my heART

Storytelling, since the beginning of time, has driven change, created movements, and empowered those who never knew they had a story to tell. Stories transform our personal experience, enrich our community and teach others the lessons we have learned for ourselves – they're reliable patterns we can lean on in a world with no map. As an artist, creating stories is my way to uncover the certainty and significance from chaos and unsteadiness. After surviving a decade of trauma, I discovered this storytelling "survival strategy" as a lifeline, roadmap and anchor to myself. Creating stories become my lifeline, teaching me to turn this "detour" into the richest time of my life, through my art, theatre, writings and everyday celebration of ordinary miracles. To cope with years unable to eat or drink, I locked myself in my room and journaling thousands of pages, using Joseph Campbell's archetypal hero's journey to create a structure for my life that had lost all structure entirely. Not only did stories help my own personal transformation, they helped me reintegrate into society once I myself had transformed.

Trauma affected me in ways I could sense but not yet verbalize. Initially, I could only sense that my life was now separated by "pre-coma" and "post-coma." I grappled with these opposing halves of my psyche, until I discovered music, dance, art, light and sound as means to convey how ten years of sexual and medical trauma had affected me.

These multidisciplinary aspects clicked with a quote from "The Body Keeps the Score," a groundbreaking book on PTSD by Dr. Bessel Van Der Kolk: "The imprints of traumatic experiences are organized not as coherent logical narratives but in fragmented sensory and emotional traces: images, sounds, and physical sensations."

Studying through the National Theater Institute, at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, I was further inspired by the multidisciplinary techniques of Simon McBurney and the Complicité Theatre Company. Their use of physical theatre, facial expressions, music and projection brought together multidisciplinary artists and ideas in revelatory ways. I realized that not only could I heal through multidisciplinary elements of theatre, I could also find the healing that comes from community and collaboration. I could make a difference with my story, AND finally, my story would be relatable, once transformed through artistic metaphor – or archetypes, I soon learned after devouring every word of Joseph Campbell and his passion for mythology.

As an artist, stories, leftovers and scraps are my life force. I'm a scavenger, telling stories through mixed media art, movement, music, and text to make reimagined meaning from catastrophe. I'm a "Detourist," embracing unexpected routes as opportunities for creative growth, and the opportunity to build a culture based on empathy and inclusion. Literally reassembling the fragments of my life, after decade of life-shattering trauma, pushed me to create a roadmap where there was none, reframing my own narrative as I began to reassemble the broken shards of the life I once knew, as a sculptor would reassemble broken glass into a breathtaking mosaic. I learned that resilience comes from the hope that as artists, we must create ourselves, out of

these dismembered parts of our lives. Through transforming the aftermath of trauma into art, we create our own unique masterpiece, cultivating a bold, new identity that is uniquely ours...yet, this transformation draws us together in a universal narrative. I create to find the commonality, as well as the distinctiveness, in all of our “life detours.”

My art is honest, primal, vulnerable and involuntary. I share my art to shift an entire community ethos in the direction of inclusion – partly to give courage and a sense of belonging to people who are struggling with all kinds of mental health or physical challenges, but also to help build a society that gives everyone the kind of awareness and generosity of spirit that makes that world a better place. I have witnessed firsthand how theatre can challenge ideas, create solutions and elevate our struggles to something heroic to triumph over – like a choose your own adventure novel. We have a choice in how we view our “call to adventure” and our “journey into darkness.” Perhaps that is why I never felt like a victim, even after years of being a medical guinea pig in two dozen hospitals, and the performance art that came from this, is a celebration of life’s beautiful detours, rather than a Greek Tragedy.

I create to feel heard in my heart, to find clarity and coherence between mind and body, and to let myself know I’m still in there after 27 surgeries. I create to share what I’ve learned from trauma, to feel connected to society, to earth, to the universe. I’ve missed them all so much, lost in a world of dissociation, coping, and merely getting through. I create to thrive, exist, transform and belong, and to start a vital conversation on how society views and creates to one another’s obstacles. Our archetypal journeys are beautiful detours, traveled more easily in solidarity, and they help us cultivate a shared resilience that is both universal and uniquely ours.

WHAT I LIKE TO WRITE ABOUT...

I’m an emerging playwright whose commitment to a professional career is driven by the power of stories, and the multidisciplinary elements that bring the unspeakable to life. After surviving a decade of medical traumas, playwriting created a road map through 27 surgeries and a frightening uncharted territory. As I discussed in two TEDx Talks, creating theatre enabled me to reframe my narrative, and share my story through a universal narrative that allowed me to reintegrated into society. Since then, I’ve received awards and accolades for engaging audiences in dynamic conversations on trauma’s societal impact, including Women Around Town’s “Women to Celebrate” 2014, Bistro Awards “NY Top Pick,” and the “Singular Award” at the Sarasolo Theatre Festival, presented to an “exceptionally uncommon, groundbreaking, and inventive performance.” My short plays have been published by the Eddy Theatre Company and have been finalists in Manhattan Repertory Theatre’s Short Play Festival, NYNW Theatre Festival, and NYC Playwright’s Women in the Age of Trump Competition.

I’ve written, produced and starred in in my autobiographical one-woman musical, Gutless & Grateful, which I’ve toured internationally since it’s BroadwayWorld nominated “Best Theatre Debut.” The musical, focusing on my near-death experience and my celebration of life, has received seven national awards, was adapted as a mental health and sexual assault education program, and licensed to students nationwide for academic projects and competitions. I participated as a playwright and performance artist at the Eugene O’Neill Theater Center, where I helped to develop the full-length multimedia ensemble piece, “The Greeks Are Trying to Tell Us Something,” and was a writer, composer and set designer for “Playwrights and Librettists”

– a festival of 27 30-minute plays in five days. My collaboration with Beechwood Arts on the immersion salon, “Resilience and the Power of the Human Spirit”, has traveled internationally to health and arts facilities as a public installation, incorporating my monologues, art, and music, to express the life-altering, yet beautiful detours traveled through illness. I’m developing a musical, LEFTOVERS with director and dramaturge Susan Einhorn, which is a musicalized version of my “Musical chair-like” transition out of the surgical ICU. Other projects include a multidisciplinary solo play, “Trust/In Development,” based on my most recent TEDx Talk, using Joseph Campbell’s archetypal hero’s journey to portray the “heroic adventures” in recovery, and after completing a residency at Art Kibbutz, I created a documentary drama based on 300 pages of transcribed oral histories from my grandmother and her nine siblings, after surviving Auschwitz. Judaism has been an overflowing source of playwriting inspiration, and its resilient stories have also inspired two short plays, “Factory Treasures” and “We Re-Member,” based on the garment factory that my grandparents established after immigrating to New York.

Knowing how difficult it was for me to speak of my own abuse after waking up from a coma months later, I was inspired to write the three-act play, “IMPRINTS”, a compelling, humorous and poignant portrayal of how trauma affects the family, exploring the physical and psychological impact of PTSD, conveying the pain, the losses and ultimately the gifts of transformation that stem from trauma. Rather than a chronological accurate sequence of events, the play illustrates how trauma is actually experienced: in intricate nonlinear tapestries of sounds, images and sensations. The script is based on journals my brother kept for the first 72 days I was in a coma, packed with moments of raw emotion as well as endearing humor from a Jewish family who camped out in the ICU together for two years. “IMPRINTS” strives to shift an entire community ethos in the direction of inclusion to provide courage and a sense of belonging to individuals struggling with mental health or physical challenges, but also to help build a society that gives everyone an awareness that betters our world. This mission of social change drives my body of work. With the support of your Fellowship, I would take these works to the next stages of development, building relationships not only with theatres, but to with advocacy organizations, traumatized communities, hospitals, and populations who would not ordinarily have access to theatre, creating allies and leaders, fighting stigma and facilitating healing.

If I could create a play of my choosing, I’d interview survivors of all types of trauma globally, on their personal experiences, and how trauma impacted their families and communities. I’d conduct similar experiments that Bill T. Jones led in preparation for choreographing Still/Here, who led workshops with terminally ill patients to devise choreography based on their movements. As a playwright, I’d construct a multidisciplinary drama based on survivors’ stories, their innermost desires, longing, thoughts and fears, elevating these heightened emotions through a synthesis of movement, text, music, dramatic action. The story and dialogue would span generations of trauma as an in-depth exploration inspired by purely the movement and body language of survivors of trauma, to create an aesthetically moving, universal experience how trauma affects us all, sharing a vital message with society.

View more work [here](#).

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- For organizations interested in hosting a performance, view a **[comprehensive guide](#)** of the mental health and advocacy themes, and watch excerpts of the **[talkback component](#)**.

