



*And you know the reason I really love the stars is that we cannot hurt them. We can't burn them or melt them or make them overflow. We can't flood them or blow them up or burn them out  
But we are reaching for them  
We are reaching for them*

*And all my brothers. And all my long-lost sisters  
How do we begin again?  
How do we begin?*

In her song “Another Day in America,” Laurie Anderson speaks with the deep bass monotone of her alter-ego Fenway Bergamot. His voice hums with authority but also something fragile and hushed. Is he an eerie father figure or the conduit for Anderson’s most private thoughts? This mix of the commanding and the intimate, the reproachful and the yearning, lies at the heart of this multi-generation family show centering on the connections between family, home, and art.

How do we make sense of the constellation of connectedness in this family? Tisch Abelow’s uncanny group portrait *Nuclear Family* provides a roadmap. The mother’s face is plastered with an uproarious smile and the father looks relaxed in his shirt and tie. But there’s an air of terror in her face and he’s unkempt and wilting. Though the group melds into a single floating form, each family member stares in a different direction, suggesting they have their own stories to tell.

What then binds this family together? For one, a relentless optimism and unadulterated mischievousness. It’s apparent in the work on display and in the family’s history, with its stories of escape and self-creation. Before the outbreak of WWII, Paula Brunner Abelow fled with her parents and siblings from their well-heeled life in Prague, settling comfortably in New York. Katya Kirilloff herself is the daughter of Ukrainian immigrants who came to the US after WWII. And still later, self-imposed flight: Paula with her husband to a farm in West Virginia, Joshua Abelow to the Big City, then to a church Upstate. From the margins to the center and back again.

This show is part looking back, part looking forward. We can see this dynamic at play in its emphasis on portraiture, which allows the family to hold a mirror up to itself. Paula’s 1945 self-portrait, with her pink cheeks and red lips, shows a young woman brimming with confidence. The war years were happy ones for her family until they learned the fate of those who remained in Europe. It’s hard not to see an air of recognition in Paula’s sidelong stare. Painted decades later, the central figure in Tisch’s *Shoot for the Stars* shows a similar wide-eyed,

sideways gaze. What has she inherited from her grandmother? In Katya's self-portrait on a brown paper bag, she stares back without compunction, the face of a tireless mother sketching between errands. Lev Lazarus' marker drawings of villains and superheroes remind us that this family, like all families, has its myths, mysteries, thoughts that sit on the surface but go unsaid. Joshua's photos of Frederick, Maryland, where he, Tisch, and Katya grew up, suggest a teenage angst at the banality of suburban life. But there's something more introspective going on. His camera captures the small moments of recognition in returning home: apertures between bushes, dust catching the flash, middle age, the process of becoming a step-father.

As Laurie Anderson/Fenway Bergamot asks, how do we begin again? Though a persistent restlessness binds these family members together, home plays its part, and for this reason they are constantly building it anew. Making art seems to be this family's act of renewal, whether it's a nine-year old drawing with abandon or a ninety-year-old grandmother painting until her final days. *Shoot for the Stars* highlights this family's bonds: a tangle of unconscious phantasies, self-doubt, and love – suffocating, tender, commanding love – and the obsessive need to make art.

- Ezra Tessler

Joshua Abelow (b. 1976) is an artist based in the Catskills. He received a BFA from RISD and an MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art. The artist has held more than twenty solo exhibitions in a variety of cities including New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, Providence, Omaha, Wichita, Copenhagen, Sydney, Sao Paulo, Toronto, Milan, and Brussels. His work is currently on view in a two-person exhibition at Parapet Real Humans, St. Louis. Abelow will present a solo exhibition of paintings and photographs at Arnolds, Baltimore in November.

Paula Brunner Abelow (b. 1923, d. 2018) lived and worked in Charles Town, West Virginia. The artist studied at Cooper Union from 1944-1948 and was later granted a BFA in 1981. Over the years, Paula's work was featured in numerous exhibitions in Baltimore, Washington D.C., Frederick, Hagerstown and Bel Air, Maryland as well as in Martinsburg and Shepherdstown, WV. In 2013, her work was included in the Prague Biennale, Czech Republic. In 2014, she had a solo exhibition at Lucie Fontaine, Milan, Italy and in 2016 she had a mini retrospective exhibition at Freddy, Harris, NY. Additionally, in 2016, her work was included in a group exhibition at Jack Hanley, NY. Posthumously, the work has been exhibited at Nina Johnson, Miami and Et al., San Francisco.

Tisch Abelow (b. 1985) is an artist based in NYC. She received her BA from Sarah Lawrence College and her MA from the New York Graduate School of Psychoanalysis. Abelow has exhibited widely at galleries such as Michael Thibault, Jack Hanley, Nina Johnson, and Freddy. Her practice incorporates painting, curation, writing, and video work. In June, she will present a two-person exhibition with the late Paul Harris at the Paul Harris Estate in Bozeman, MT, curated by Brackett Creek Exhibitions.

Katya Kirilloff (b. 1976) is an artist living and working in the Catskills. She received her BFA from ArtCenter College of Design. Kirilloff held her first solo exhibition at Freddy (2022) followed by a two-person exhibition at Romantic Acquaintances, Great Barrington (2023). She is currently debuting recent sculpture and new paintings in a two-person exhibition at Parapet Real Humans, St. Louis.

Lev Lazarus is currently in elementary school. He loves animals and villains.