March 2015

Notes from the Director

Greetings from Brandeis. We've been focused on the launch of our new undergraduate minor in Creativity, the Arts, and Social Transformation. Students in the introductory course have been composing outstanding creative works based on oral history interviews with people different from themselves and doing research for ‘design labs’ -- focused time-limited creative engagements that bring diverse stakeholders into imaginative conversation about an issue or possibility. We are particularly excited to be working with Imagining America and the U.S. Department of Art and Culture (USDAC) to conceptualize the college campus chapters initiative of USDAC. Also, we are continuing our relationship with the Portraits of Purpose project, developing a sustainable approach to programming related to its collection of stunning photographic portraits of Boston-area African American social justice leaders. Four members of the Brandeis faculty have received small grants to pursue research and creative projects related to the cultural significance of works by artists with disabilities; a videogame based on the lives of immigrant women; a new musical composition incorporating the calls of songbirds at risk of extinction; and a new course on theater and race.

Meanwhile, we are continuing to disseminate the resources of the Acting Together project, with screenings scheduled soon in Bogotá, Colombia; Zurich, Switzerland; and on Cyprus. We are thrilled to announce a small grants program that will offer funds to acquire the Acting Together documentary and toolkit to members of faculties who teach in institutions that would not otherwise have access to the Acting Together resources, focusing on instructors in community colleges, historically Black and tribal institutions, and colleges and universities that serve large numbers of Spanish-speaking students. Please consider applying yourself, and also sharing news of this small grants program with colleagues who are eligible.

Send us news of your latest initiatives. Contemporary challenges make your
work more important than ever, and we need to ‘catch courage’ from each other’s stories.

All the best,
Cindy
Cynthia E. Cohen, Ph.D., Director Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts

Artists and Ebola: Preventing, Honoring, Grieving, Healing

**Music for Ebola Awareness including the Song "Africa Stop Ebola"**
A collective of African musicians came together to record a song entitled “Africa Stop Ebola” to help raise awareness about Ebola in Africa. iTunes profits go to Médecins Sans Frontières / Doctors without Borders (MSF). Another song was created by a doctor in Nigeria, ”Ebola Rap” by Dr. Kingsley Ihima, otherwise known as Dr. Groundzero. [View these videos and others](#) and [read a related article](#).

"**West Africans get creative with Ebola awareness**"
Associated Press
"Liberian rappers Shadow and D-12 recorded several Ebola-related tunes. Their hit song, ‘Ebola in Town,’ was intended to counter early skepticism of the threat posed by the disease, which has infected more than 1,000 people in Liberia and killed at least 624...." [Read more](#).

**B4YouthTheatre Ebola Awareness Campaign in Liberia**
B4 Youth Theatre (B4YT) works in Liberia, West Africa with a mission of empowering young people to become educated citizens through the arts. B4YT has trained thousands of people in Liberia combining in-class direct instruction including educational posters and flipcharts from UNICEF with discussion and theatrical improvisation. Students improvise dramas as they might occur in real life between community members. [Read updates and view photos](#) of the campaign and learn more about B4YT.

**Portraits: Braving Ebola**
Featured by the New York Times, photographs and interviews by Daniel Berehulak provide powerful, personal insights and portraits of those who labor and those who survived at an Ebola treatment center in rural Liberia. The clinic is run by the American charity International Medical Corps and as of October 2014, employed more than 170 workers, including locals residents and foreigners. [View the portraits](#).

[Read more](#) News from the Field, including Featured Themes.

"**The Most Important Images of the Year**: Artists Respond to Racial Violence in the U.S."
Police killings prompt a resurgence in political art
Artists were among the earliest activists in the protests that erupted across the US in December over the grand jury decisions not to indict either of the policemen responsible for the deaths of Michael Brown and Eric Garner, two unarmed black men. Some see the response as a renewed willingness to embrace political art after a long period of cynicism, while others suggest that it could be the crystallization of a new movement. Read more.

"Why a charcoal of police in Ferguson is the most important artwork of 2014"
The Guardian
"...Robert Longo’s Untitled (Ferguson Police August 13, 2014) is a 10-ft wide charcoal drawing of a line of faceless cops, clad and helmeted in black, silhouetted against searchlights in a swirl of illuminated smoke. ... Since the first protests and police reaction that Longo set out to draw, this has become an ever more significant moment in the old and unending story of racial injustice in America...This is a true history painting for our time, done from photographs in desolate charcoal..." Read more.

Dialogues on Race: Billboard and Mural Project
The Dialogues on Race billboard and mural project explores issues connected to race. The project was designed the founder of Make Art with Purpose (MAP) director Janeil Engelstad to foster discussions about racial justice and equity and to leave a lasting legacy in the Dallas community with two permanent murals. The billboards, designed by North Texas artists, were on display during the November 2014 Facing Race national conference on racial justice. Read more.

How the local arts community engages in conversations about race
Minnesota Public Radio
"On The Daily Circuit Tuesday, we talked about how the local [Minnesota] arts community has engaged with the dialogue around race in recent months. Ananya Chatterjea, founder and artistic director of Ananya Dance Theatre, and Sarah Bellamy, co-artistic director of Penumbra Theater, joined the discussion and brought up what they’re seeing in the most recent reactions to national stories like Ferguson. Bellamy said you can look at protests as a form of artistic performance....” Read more and listen in on the conversation.

Ferguson Moments: Artists Respond
Following the events in Ferguson, artists from all over the United States quickly began connecting by phone, email, and social media over the ensuing militarized police action, protests, violence, and reconciliation taking place. Over the weekend of August 22-24, two weeks after Michael Brown was killed, five theater artists traveled from Ashland, Oregon; Boston, Mass; and New York City to St. Louis and Ferguson where they volunteered, created and saw work, and met with members of the community. Read


**Facing Race Spotlight: Detroit Artist Collective Complex Movements**
The Detroit-based artist collective Complex Movements initiated a traveling installation called “Beware of the Dandelions” that fuses interactive hip-hop performance, visual arts and video projection mapping with community organizing. In each city visit, the installation’s crew makes connections with local activists and students. The premise, according to its website, is that “change occurs through critical connections rather than critical mass.” [Read more.](#)

**Artists Activate in Response to Ferguson Shooting**
The St. Louis arts community has been active in response to the fatal Aug. 9 shooting of unarmed black teenager Michael Brown by a white policeman in Ferguson, Mo. "Many arts people have been coming out," said artist Dail Chambers, cofounder of the Yeyo Arts Collective. Artists included "poet Elizabeth Vega, and Danny and Kevin McCoy of print and design studio Work/Play, political activist/community artist Montague Simmons and sculptor and installation artist Simiya Sudduth." Chambers spearheaded the creation of a quilt made of one-foot-square panels contributed by community members. [Read more.](#)

**Let’s Talk: Ferguson - The role of arts in racial equity**
Penumbra Theatre invited the community for “Let’s Talk: Ferguson,” a discussion about the events in Ferguson, Missouri and the resurgence of activism around racial equity fifty years after Freedom Summer. Hundreds of people attended the discussion, including theatre artists, social activists, scholars, and civil and religious leaders. Panelists addressed the shooting of Michael Brown, the long-standing and complex racial tensions in the United Stage, and the role that the arts can play in achieving social justice and racial equality. [View a video of the event.](#)

Read more [News from the Field, including Featured Themes.](#)

**Resources and Opportunities**

**Cultures in Harmony**
Cultures in Harmony (CiH) brings people together through music, aiming to advance and promote international and cultural understanding through music and interaction. CiH is pleased to announce the Passacaglia Project, which will celebrate the organization’s 10th anniversary by traveling to ten of the countries where they have conducted projects. [Read more.](#)

**Pan Intercultural Arts**
Pan is an intercultural arts organisation based in London that is dedicated to the exploration of cultural diversity through the arts and how such work can inspire and implement social change. Its Arts Against Violence program supports young people to use creativity to investigate social issues.

![Musicians in Cameroon. Photo courtesy of Cultures in Harmony.](#)
such as racism and prejudice through participatory arts activities, empowering them to gain a voice to examine and explore their situation, their possibilities and their futures. Read more.

**Play: Shivering of the Rose**
Lexington, Virginia and Georgetown, Washington
March 24-31, 2015
The Peruvian Quechua people believe that to be able to construct the future we have to constantly gaze at the past. The play "Shivering of the Rose", featuring DAH Theatre’s director and Acting Together contributor Dijana Milosevic and actress Maja Mitic, deals with the post-traumatic memories of family members, especially women, who have experienced first hand the disappearance of a loved one. During the process of resolution, which requires time, the memory fades, but also being erased are the historical truths. Art, and specifically theatre art is able to record and revive those efforts through the live word and the presence of the performers. Read more.

**White Paper on Peacebuilding from Geneva Peacebuilding**
Released on February 27, 2015, a very important White Paper on Peacebuilding provides a rich global context for the current state of the peacebuilding field, and recommendations for how we can move toward more effective, sustainable peacebuilding practices. Issued by the Geneva Platform on Peacebuilding, the white paper is based on voluminous studies and interviews, and reflects on the assistance the United Nations and other international and local actors can bring to peacebuilding processes. Read the white paper and additional background papers.

**Optivism**
Elad Mehl, recent Sorensen Fellow and Brandeis undergraduate, founded the website Optivism. "The idea behind it that cultures are very broad, and enjoying each other's cultures through inviting outlets such as music and films is exciting and positive for the world." The website includes a world music blog, a growing collection of recommended world music radio stations, as well as a collection of international films. Visit Optivism.

**24th International Festival of Student Theatre**
September 28 to October 2, 2015
Besançon, Franche-Comté, France
**Registration Deadline: April 1, 2015**
The University Theatre of Franche-Comté is pleased to announce the 24th International Festival of Student Theatre. The originality of this festival resides in the fact that it is both educational and festive. Discussion sessions following shows, lecture demonstrations, and short training courses form an integral part of the week-long festival. Learn more and register now.

**The White Mountain National Forest Artist-in-Residence Program**
Application Deadline: April 17
The White Mountain National Forest partners with the Arts Alliance of Northern New Hampshire to host the Artist-in-Residence (AIR) program. The program offers professional and emerging artists in all media an opportunity to pursue their particular art form while being inspired by the forest and sharing their work and their artistic process with members of the public. Application deadline is April 17, 2015. Read more.

**Consensus**
Consensus is an Arts-Based Peacebuilding Center on the southwest side of Chicago where people connect, create, and cultivate. Consensus aims to build peace by fostering collaboration among artists and human service projects in Chicago. The organization’s programs, events, and outreach
mobilize the arts to prevent violence, transform conflict, and promote healing. Current programs include Graffic Traffic, Urban Art Movement (UAM), Mora Open Mic, and Art as Therapy. Read more.

View more Resources & Opportunities.

Opportunity for Educators:
Small Grants for Course Development in Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflict Acting Together Project
Application deadline: April 30, 2015
Apply now.

The Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts at Brandeis University is offering $500 grants to college and university educators to support efforts to incorporate the resources of the Acting Together project into curricula. The resources include a documentary film, a toolkit of resources for teaching and learning, and a two-volume anthology. Grant recipients will also receive: a copy of the documentary with subtitles in Arabic, Hebrew, Japanese, Sinhala, Spanish, and Tamil.

Read more and apply.

Grants available with generous support from Brandeis alumna Elaine Reuben.

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To comment on "Peacebuilding and the Arts Now" or to join the listserv, send a message here.