Greetings!

I’ve been sensing lately that the field of Peacebuilding and the Arts is gathering credibility in the large peacebuilding field, from both practitioners and policymakers. I’m wondering if readers of this newsletter are experiencing a similar development.

The last few months have witnessed groundbreaking convenings in various parts of the world. In April, the District Institute of the Arts of the mayor’s office in Bogotá convened a World Summit on Art and Culture for Peace in Colombia. Over 10,000 artists, activists and educators registered for the event, witnessing concerts and performances, participating in panel discussions, watching films, marching in demonstrations, and meeting up with old and new friends and colleagues.

Also in April, two conferences were held on Cyprus: BuildPeace and the closing symposium of Songs of my Neighbors. Acting Together’s Lee Perlman and Dijana Milošević were there, as was Diomedes Koufteros, a friend who joined our network at the International Peace Research Association conference in Istanbul last summer and who coordinated the Songs of my Neighbors project. Their reflections on the convenings are below.

In May, the Hague Institute for Global Justice hosted the first meeting of the research team of City Responsibility: The Role of Municipalities in Violence Prevention, a 30-month project researching the role of municipalities (including civil society actors) in preventing and exacerbating urban violence. The project’s leaders are including perspectives of arts and culture in their inquiry — thinking of the arts as modes of inquiry as well forms of intervention. I’m hoping that readers of this newsletter will submit a research memo sharing insights about violence in particular urban areas, and the role that the arts are playing in ameliorating or exacerbating violent conflict. Please see the sidebar of this newsletter and our News page for more details and contribute your perspectives on the role of...
arts and culture in urban violence; it isn’t that often that artists are invited to the table in shaping a major research project like this – so your input is especially significant now.

Also in May, the Swiss NGO ArtsAsFoundation for Peace teamed up with the Swiss Agency for Development and the Zurich University of the Arts to host an unusually interactive practitioners’ forum, in order to connect experts with different backgrounds (arts, development cooperation, research) and to foster exchange about their experience-based knowledge and trans-disciplinary practices. Half of the participants were development practitioners working in Switzerland and in conflict regions around the world; and the modes of engagement -- small group conversations based on project displays; gatherings focused in particular dilemmas raised by participants, facilitated working groups -- were particularly interactive. ArtsAsFoundation’s director Dagmar Reichert offered an especially thought-provoking presentation on the paradoxes inherent in our work.

As the ugliness of racism in the U.S. rears its head in the most painful of ways, artists and cultural workers continue to make meaning of what has been happening, to protest and heal. A recent issue of the Huffington Post captures the power of artists’ responses to the Charleston shootings.

Please send information about your projects, books, convenings, and thoughts – and we will post them on our website and when space, publish them in upcoming editions of Peacebuilding and the Arts Now.

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

Announcing the Recipients of the Acting Together Small Grants for Course Development in Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflict

The Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts is proud to announce the recipients of five small grants designed to provide support to college and university educators as well as trainers of theater practitioners support they need to incorporate the resources of the Acting Together Project into their course curricula and workshop sessions. The Acting Together Small Grants for Course Development in Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflict were made possible by the generous contribution of Elaine Reuben ’63.
Acting Together resources will be sent to educators and trainers in Canada, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nepal, and the Oglala Lakota College in South Dakota, USA:

- Walungwa Bitela Christian, Association pour la Solidarite des Enfants Demuni/ASED (Solidarity Association for Underprivileged Children/ASED), Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Jessica Charest, Humanities and Social Science Department Faculty, Oglala Lakota College, South Dakota, USA
- Rajan Khatriwada, Creative Director and founding member, Mandala Theatre, Nepal
- Kirsten Sadeghi-Yekta, Assistant Professor, Applied Theatre, University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada
- Paolo Vignolo, Associate Professor, Department of History and Center of Social Studies, National University of Colombia - Bogotá

Read more about the recipients.

Call for Research Memos: Urban Violence and the Arts

The Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts is enlisting your assistance with a timely and important research project exploring the role of municipalities in contributing to, preventing and ameliorating the effects of urban violence. This research is part of a larger project initiated by the Global Institute for Justice in the Hague named City Responsibility: The Role of Municipalities in Conflict Prevention.

It will be highly appreciated if you can draw from your own wealth of knowledge and guide us towards relevant examples from the cities where you live and work.

Read the full call for research memos and questions to guide your response, which can be submitted via online form by August 10. We welcome responses ranging from a paragraph to two pages in length.

CAST Student Grants Awarded

The minor in Creativity, the Arts and Social Transformation offers a coherent curriculum designed to support Brandeis undergraduates with interests in the arts and creative expression as well as commitments to understanding and advancing social justice and the transformation of conflict. Students enrolled in CAST courses were eligible to submit proposals in April for CAST-related projects that would take place over the summer. Of 20 eligible students, 4 submitted applications, and 3 were selected to receive the award and subsequent funding. Recipients were chosen by a subset of the CAST student committee. Student recipients of CAST small grants include:

LaShawn Simmons ’18 - Ebony Axis Zine
LaShawn Simmons plans to invite women within the Brandeis community who identify as Black, to contribute poetry to a zine entitled Ebony Axis and host a
“...Songs of my Neighbors has clearly evolved into a very robust platform for creative and bold inter-cultural expression and engagement within and between each of the societies of the participating artists: Cyprus, Poland and Italy... For me, the Saturday evening performance of the Cypriot and Polish artists which utilized the mystical performance space of the hosting Mitos Theater ‘Old Vinegar House’ was magical...” Read Lee’s full reflection.

Reflection on ‘Songs of My Neighbors’ Convening in Limmasol, Cyprus
April 2015 | By Dijana Milošević

“...I met Diomedes last August in Istanbul, during the IPRA conference, where we both presented our work as a part of the Art and Peace commission. We both realized that the work we are doing has a lot in common... I really loved the core idea of the [Songs of My Neighbors] project - if people from divided parts of the community could sing each other songs, maybe they would simply realize that they share something more important than conflict...” Read Dijana’s full reflection.
**Kidnap Road - A New Play by Catherine Filloux**

*Kidnap Road* is a new play by Catherine Filloux, directed by Stan Cahill and starring Kimber Riddle and Steve Guevara. The play focuses on Ingrid Betancourt, a presidential candidate in the country of Colombia in 2002, who while conducting her campaign was kidnapped by the terrorist organization the FARC. Details of Ingrid Betancourt’s story can be found in the public record. The story is imagined as a two-person play based in part on those events.

In its first public reading, the play headlined the staged reading series at Planet Connections Theatre in New York City on June 27, 2015. A community discussion followed the play. Read more about the community discussion, and read background on the play's development including the convening of the play's leading contributors and their reflections.

Catherine Filloux was recently awarded the Planet Activist Award to honor her long career as an activist artist in the theater community.

**Additional Resources and Opportunities**

**Novel: Dancing with Diana**
A novel by Acting Together Project contributor Jo Salas.

**Tomorrow’s Peacebuilders Awards**
Application Deadline: September 15
The third annual awards hosted by Peace Direct. The three winning organizations will receive: $10,000 prize funding for peacebuilding activities, and more.

**The Incredible Ways Art Is Helping Charleston Unite After Church Massacre**
“Early last week, a few artists painted murals on the walls of a warehouse around a vacant lot in Charleston, South Carolina, preparing for a celebration intended to fill the neglected space with sunlight, art and joy...”

**The Intercultural Innovation Award**
Submission Deadline: September 30, 5:00pm EST
To support the most innovative grassroots projects that encourage intercultural dialogue and cooperation around the world.

**IIE Launches Program to Assist Threatened Artists-Artist Protection Fund (APF)**
A program to save the lives and work of artists who face persecution in their home countries.
Film: Two Faiths One Prayer - Muslims and Jews Pray Together in LA
Through NewGround: A Muslim-Jewish Partnership for Change

Public e-Journal from Imagining America
A peer-reviewed, multimedia e-journal focused on humanities, arts, and design in public life.

Plays by Sean Christopher Lewis:
Killadelphia, Dogs of Rwanda, and Rust
A theater artist engaged with issues of social justice in the city of Philadelphia.

BogotArt Foundation
To promote a more democratic art and cultural world in the city of Bogotá, capital of Colombia.

Press Release La MaMa Umbria International Spoleto Festival
Summer 2015
The largest gathering of world theatre artists. The 16th La Mama Umbria International Symposium for Directors will take place June 27 - July 27, 2015. The 9th Annual Playwright Retreat will take place August 9-18, 2015. Read more

USDAC "HI-LI" Creative Community Database
Accepting project submissions
High-Impact Low-Infrastructure project database via the U.S. Department of Art and Culture (USDAC).

Acting Together Project Toolkit: Minimizing the Risk of Doing Harm
The Acting Together Project toolkit offers a synthesis of the risks of harm inherent in peacebuilding performance. Care to minimize harm should be a central aspect of assessment in this field. View the print guide for minimizing risks of doing harm for practitioners.

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