



**The Creativity, the Arts and Social Transformation Minor
and the Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts present:**

2016-2017 Annual Report

Brandeis University



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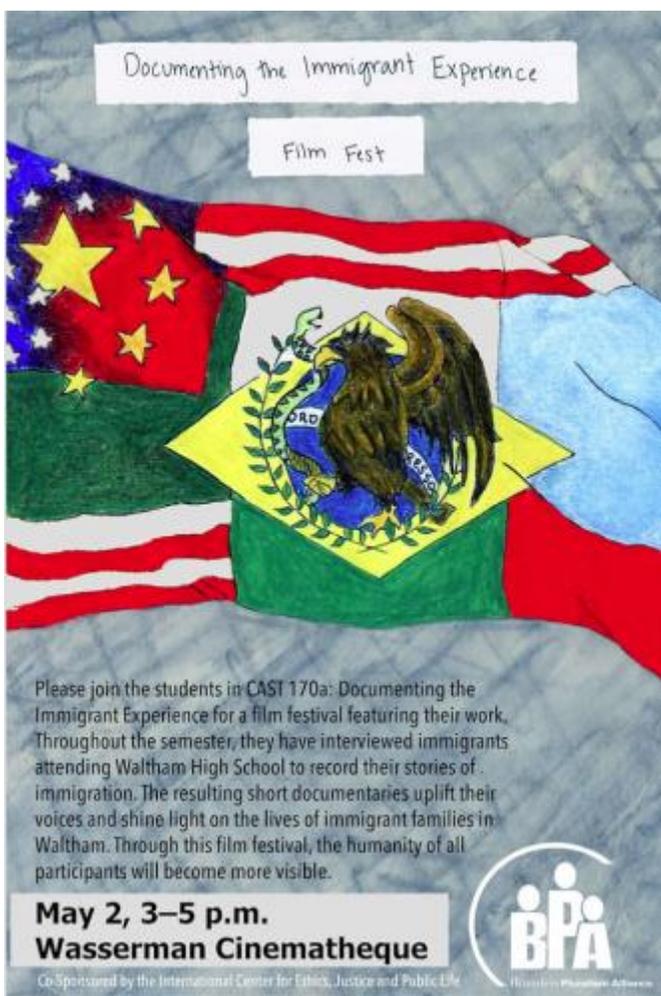
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The Minor in Creativity, The Arts And Social Transformation (CAST): Our Third Year

This report outlines the activities of the minor in Creativity, the Arts and Social Transformation (CAST) in its third year, Fall 2016–Spring 2017. A second section focuses on the activities of the Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts. From classes, design labs, research projects, and performance pieces, CAST students and faculty were engaged and productive in exploring connections between the arts and social transformation. Activities of the program have also been covered in several campus publications. These articles can be found in Appendix 8.

I. The **highlights** from this academic year all addressed issues of diversity, race, or racism. Below are some of these events.

New Course Offering, Spring 2017



Documenting the Immigrant Experience
Film Fest

Please join the students in CAST 170a: Documenting the Immigrant Experience for a film festival featuring their work. Throughout the semester, they have interviewed immigrants attending Waltham High School to record their stories of immigration. The resulting short documentaries uplift their voices and shine light on the lives of immigrant families in Waltham. Through this film festival, the humanity of all participants will become more visible.

May 2, 3–5 p.m.
Wasserman Cinematheque

Co-Sponsored by the International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life

BPA
Waltham High School

CAST 170a: Documenting the Immigrant Experience, taught by Prof. Azlin Perdomo

This course investigates documentary film as a genre and tool for social change. It explores the potential of the medium for engaging students with immigrant communities in Waltham through hands-on production experience, culminating in a film festival. The class aimed to discover and celebrate the shared humanity of the project participants.

The course enrolled 17 students of various backgrounds, academic tracks, and levels of film experience, and was assisted by undergraduate teaching assistant Sarah Terrazano '19. During Summer 2016, Prof. Perdomo received a grant to conduct research with Sarah's help. They established a partnership with Mary Jo Rendón, Family and Community Engagement Specialist at Waltham High School, who was integral in connecting the Brandeis class with the immigrant community at Waltham High.

The class was split into five small groups that were each connected with a Waltham High School student who has an immigrant experience. Throughout the semester, the groups met with the students for a series of interviews to generate the raw footage as the basis of the documentaries. The class also received filming and editing workshops from the Getz Media Lab and Prof. Daniel Mooney, and guest presentations from local filmmaker Jenny Alexander, photojournalist Renée Contreras from the organization Peace in Focus, and Federico Olivieri, co-founder of the Slum Film Festival.

Through these guest speakers, assigned readings, and various documentaries watched throughout the semester, students considered not only the aesthetic value of film, but how it can be used as a tool for social change. They also were taught to consider the ethical responsibility of telling someone else's story through film, and how these ethical concerns connect their roles as artists and activists.

The course culminated in a film festival featuring student work and ending with a discussion. The film festival raised awareness among students and members of the community about the potential of cultural spaces for social transformation. Those who attended the festival included Brandeis students and faculty, including Cindy Cohen and Tom King; Mary Jo Rendón and other faculty members from Waltham High; Renée Contreras, photojournalist for the organization Peace in Focus; and Matthew Basílio, one of the Waltham High students featured in a documentary. The documentary about Matt can be viewed online [here](#), and an article about the course can be read in the Ethics Center newsletter [here](#).

This class was made possible by a generous gift from Amy Merrill, '69. The film festival was supported by the Brandeis Pluralism Alliance.

The flyer for the film festival in Appendix 1 and the syllabus for CAST 170a can be found in Appendix 2.

"Imagining Freedom: Creating Justice": Salon Series at The Rose Art Museum

Hosted by LaShawn Simmons '18 and Artist-in-Residence Jane Wilburn Sapp

This salon series consisted of three events held throughout the Fall 2016 semester. It invited participants to consider how various art forms, such as songwriting and musical performance, address issues of social change.

**IMAGINING FREEDOM:
CREATING JUSTICE**

A series of salons at The Rose Art Museum hosted by:
LaShawn Simmons '18 and Artist-in-Residence Jane Wilburn Sapp



**Creating Art,
Seeking Justice**

Tuesday, October 18
5-8 PM

Part I: 5-6 PM
Lurias, Hassenfeld

Come meet the
Creativity, the Arts, and
Social Transformation
Minors!
Refreshments will be
served.

Part II: 6-8 PM
Rose Art Museum

How does art-making
contribute to social
justice?
Come share your poetry,
stories, dance, visual arts,
and music related to this
topic (even if unfinished)
and get feedback!

Feel free to join one or
both parts!



**Staging Social
Change**

Tuesday, November 1,
6-8 PM
Rose Art Museum

How does performance
create platforms for
exploring challenging
issues? Jane Sapp and
LaShawn Simmons '18 will
lead participants in
performing, witnessing and
discussing a series of
monologues and songs,
staged in different locations
throughout the museum.

Sponsored by the Program in
Peacebuilding and the Arts and the
minor in Creativity, the Arts, and Social
Transformation, the International Center
for Ethics, Justice, and Public Life, the
Rose Art Museum, the Division of
Creative Arts, and the
Arts|Race|Activism Series with the
support of the Brandeis Arts Council

**Sick and Tired
Of Being Sick
and Tired**

Thursday, October 13
6-8 PM
Lee Gallery
Rose Art Museum

Come share your impressions
of the works currently on view
at the Lee Gallery: What
stands out for you in these
works? What words, phrases,
images, and questions do they
str in you?

Based on our discussions, we
will create spoken word pieces
and a song with Jane Sapp.

RSVP REQUIRED FOR ALL EVENTS:
Email evimecc@brandeis.edu

In the first salon, “**Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired,**” on Oct. 13, guests engaged with the works on view at the Lee Gallery in the Rose, as Simmons read excerpts from the speech in which Fannie Lou Hamer first articulated the phrase “sick and tired of being sick and tired.” Based on their discussions of the works, the group, with guidance from Sapp, collectively wrote a song with the refrain, “Are we talkin’? Are we walkin’ the talk – or just talkin’?”

The second salon, “Creating Art, Seeking Justice,” on Oct. 18, encouraged guests to share their own artwork – poetry, stories, visual art, dance, and music – that answers the question, How does art-making contribute to social justice?

The third salon, “Staging Social Change,” on Nov. 1, featured Simmons and Sapp sharing their own songs and poetry to demonstrate how performance creates a platform for exploring cultural and social issues. Their pieces opened the space for other guests to share stories about their own communities, fostering a space for conversation about racism, forgiveness, and justice.

The flyer for the salon series can be found in Appendix 1, and more information on Jane Sapp and her residency is in Appendix 6.

The salon series at the Rose Art Museum was supported by CAST donors Naomi Sinnreich P’13, Elaine Reuben, ’63, and Amy Merrill ’69, and by a grant from the Mellon Foundation to support Brandeis faculty and students to engage works in the collection of The Rose Art Museum. The salon series was sponsored by the Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts and the minor in Creativity, the Arts, and Social Transformation, the International Center for Ethics, Justice, and Public Life, the Rose Art Museum, the Division of Creative Arts, and the Arts|Race|Activism Series with the support of the Brandeis Arts Council.

Aleppo Design Lab

Nov. 2016

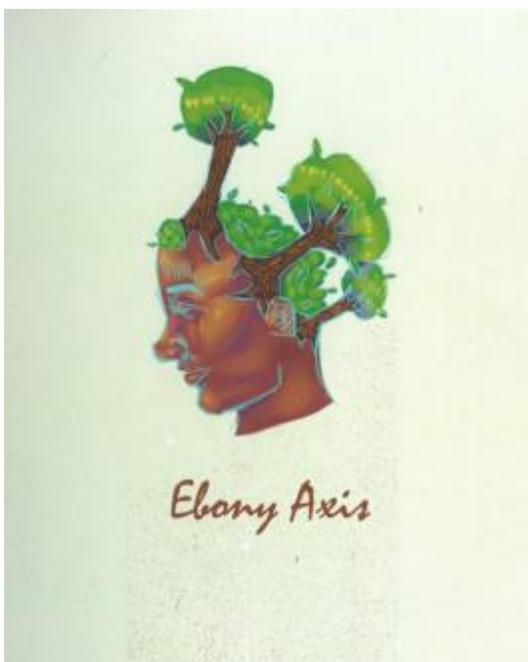
The CAST program partnered in November with The Aleppo Project, based at the Central European University, to host a design lab on the rebuilding of Aleppo, exploring the role arts and culture can play in the eventual post-conflict restoration of the city. The Aleppo Project is an open collaboration among Syrian refugees, students, scholars and policy experts to develop ideas about how to rebuild urban life after the violence. Participants included Artists-in-Residence Jane Sapp and Eylem Ertürk.

Eylem Ertürk, Artist-in-Residence for the Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts, is a project development and fundraising coordinator at *Anadolu Kültür*, a non-profit arts and cultural organization based in Istanbul that works throughout Turkey. During her Brandeis residency, Ertürk shared her expertise with CAST minors in the design lab.

See Section III of the Narrative Report for more information on the Aleppo Design Lab. The full report can be read in Appendix 3, which also includes a translation of the executive summary in Arabic. More information about Eylem Ertürk's residency can be found in Appendix 6.



Second year of Ebony Axis publication and launch event



LaShawn Simmons '18 founded Ebony Axis, a poetry zine for Black women, with help from a CAST grant in 2015. This past year, the second installment of Ebony Axis was released in October 2016, with an accompanying launch event in Chum's coffeehouse.

This issue of Ebony Axis features poems, narratives, and illustrations that highlight the experiences and challenges of Black women, and uplift themes of love, friendship, and joy.

The launch event, an extraordinary celebration of black culture at Brandeis, included a photo exhibition by

Gilberto Rosa '19, spoken word performances, and conversations about the complexities of Black womanhood. The zine continues to provide a space for the creative and personal expression of Black women on the Brandeis campus.

Unapologetically Black

Capstone project of Ashley Simmons '17

Feb. 11, 2017



Unapologetically Black was a culture show intended to celebrate, acknowledge, and uplift the existence of Black lives and culture on Brandeis' campus, in the United States, and the world. It served as the capstone project of Ashley Simmons '17, the creator and director of the show. Simmons' goal was to create a space for self-love, celebration, and unapologetic existence for the Black community on campus and in nearby communities.

The show included a performance by the Brandeis majorette dance group Toxic, Brandeis Platinum performance (Step Team), and three short scenes written by Simmons revolving around Blackness. The show also featured a spoken word performer, Jazz performance, fashion/hair show, and concluded with Soul Food served to attendees.

Co-Sponsors included the Minor in Creativity, The Arts, & Social Transformation, the Intercultural Center, and the Dean of Students Office.

Section II

CAST Courses

In order to achieve a CAST minor, students are required to complete the introductory course, CAST 150b: Introduction to Creativity, the Arts and Social Transformation; f

Core Course

- CAST 150b: Introduction to Creativity, the Arts and Social Transformation. Taught by Prof. Cynthia Cohen. Fall 2016.

Capstone Courses

Fall:

- ENG 151b: Performance Studies. Taught by Prof. Tom King
- SOC 154a: Community Structure and Youth Subcultures. Taught by Prof. Diana Schor

Spring:

- CAST 170a: Documenting the Immigrant Experience. Taught by Prof. Azlin Perdomo
- SOC 155b: Protest, Politics, and Change: Social Movements. Taught by Prof. Gowri Vijayakumar

To view a list of all CAST electives from 2016-2017, please see Appendix 2. The syllabi for CAST 150b and CAST 170a can also be found in Appendix 2.



Students in the CAST 150b course discuss the rebuilding of Aleppo with



As part of 'DEIS Impact, CAST Prof. Azlin Perdomo reflects on the past five years of 'DEIS Impact with remarks on

Section III

Aleppo Design Lab

The CAST program partnered in November with The Aleppo Project to host a design lab on the rebuilding of Aleppo, exploring the roles that arts and culture can play in the eventual post-conflict restoration of the city. The Aleppo Project is an open collaboration among Syrian refugees, students, academics, and policy experts to develop ideas about how to rebuild urban life after violence.

The Aleppo design lab devised four broad recommendations to participants: preserve the possibility of memory; reimagine and rebuild the city; acknowledge trauma and address it in part through arts and culture; and rebuild trust. These four points provided a framework to engaging with the design lab. The design lab was also informed by key theories and practices from the field of arts and conflict transformation, which allowed students to combine their CAST learning with real events in Aleppo. These concepts include the moral imagination; reconciliation; minimizing the risks of harm; and the permeable membrane between art and society.

To prepare to address these questions, students were introduced to Aleppo, its cultural heritage, and questions about a path forward by policy expert Robert Templer of Central European University's Shattuck Center on Conflict, Negotiation and Recovery; and Rim Lababidi, an Allepian architect now living in the United States. These two guests provided participants with extensive knowledge of Aleppo.

Guests with expertise in the fields of art and social change included Eylem Ertürk, Turkish Arts Administrator and CEC Artslink Artist-in-Residence; Kristin Parker, Interim Director of The Rose Art Museum and Cultural First Responder; Madhawa Palihapitiya, Associate Director at the Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration and alumnus of the Brandeis program in Coexistence and Conflict; Jane Sapp, composer and Artist-in-Residence; and Dan Feldman, Vice President of Institutional Planning at Brandeis. Participants included the above experts, facilitators from the Heller School, and students in the introductory CAST 150b course.

The design lab consisted of three separate three-hour sessions as part of CAST 150b. During each class session, participants split into four groups that each addressed a different question related to the rebuilding of Aleppo. These questions, and the proposals and recommendations achieved from the design lab, can be found in the Aleppo Design Lab Report, in Appendix 3. To access the entire report, including its numerous appendices, please visit this link:

http://www.brandeis.edu/ethics/peacebuildingarts/pdfs/library-authors/2017_04_cast_aleppo_final-report-and-appendices.pdf.

Section IV

Student and faculty grants

In the fall of 2016, the CAST minor awarded three grants of up to \$500 for projects proposed by students currently or previously enrolled in the CAST introductory course, or who have taken the former course The Arts of Building Peace. Student grants are intended to recognize exemplary creative, scholarly, and activist work at the nexus of arts, culture, justice, and peace, and enable students to engage further in theoretical and practical learning related to questions that are central to the minor. The grant provided funds for three events that took place in the Spring 2017 semester, and which were recapped during the CAST mini festival during the Leonard Bernstein Festival of the Arts.

The three students who received grants are:



Ashley Simmons '17 - *Unapologetically Black*

Ashley Simmons '17 used her grant funding towards the production of an African-American/Black Cultural Show, *Unapologetically Black*. Co-hosted by the Brandeis Black Students Organization, the show showcased a wide variety of performance styles and themes particular to the African-American/Black experience. The show embraced and lifted up the Black culture and acknowledged the historic and ongoing injustices faced by the community. The show invited Brandeis students, faculty, and staff to celebrate the nuances of cultural variation and resist its oppression. Simmons hopes that the process will allow her to tap into the core of what rests within her heritage and identity, and that it serves as inspiration for future generations.

Read more about *Unapologetically Black* in Section I of the Narrative Report.

Marcelo Brociner '18 – *One*

The Spring 2016 Intercultural Center Featured Artist, Marcelo Brociner '18, used his grant funding to create an installation combining photography and his personal illustrations. For the project, he photographed nine Brandeis students from different countries and arranged their portraits in a rectangular shape. Each participant held a piece of a frame and when combined the portraits created the illusion that all nine students are holding a unified frame together. In the center of the collaborative piece were five cut-outs of different shapes, sizes, and colors, that together form the phrase: "Let us join as one." The cut-outs speak to the importance of inclusivity in the world and that humans are beautiful regardless of their shape, size, or color. Brociner hopes this installation showed that it is the people of the world who hold together the framework required to join as one and to celebrate the diversity found at Brandeis. This installation was on display throughout the spring semester in the Intercultural Center.

Hauke Ziessler, 1st year MA in Coexistence and Conflict – *Sustainable Identities*

Identity is perceived and often constructed but the self has an identity that may be detached from the public opinion. Based on this idea, Hauke Ziessler explored personal identity and how identity changes or stays constant through an ever-changing society. He explored this through an independent study course exploring "the fluidity of identity and the role it plays in peacebuilding through the arts," which laid the foundational theoretical structure to his own art installations that challenged, perceived, and imposed identity. Together with other students and their artistic input, Hauke not only curated the mini-festival of the arts, which explored the idea of identity through different approaches of CAST minor students, but he also displayed his own interactive art installation. Throughout the four hours of the mini-festival, there were discussions, short film presentations, and various artist talks that helped both the artists explore their own artworks and the viewer dive deeper into diverse topics of identity. A leading question that came out of the whole day and which Ziessler hopes to continue his work is this: "How does one use the medium of art to engage with those communities that are not yet open to constructive, open dialogue?"

These awards are possible through generous support from Elaine Reuben '63.

Section V

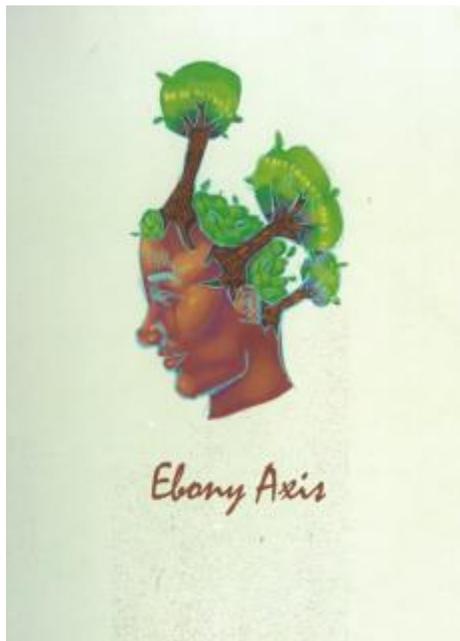
Ebony Axis

Ebony Axis is a poetry zine for Black women that was created by LaShawn Simmons '18 in 2015 with support from a CAST student grant. This past academic year, the second installment of Ebony Axis was released in October 2016, with an accompanying launch event in Chum's coffeehouse. This issue of Ebony Axis features poems, narratives, and illustrations that highlight the experiences and challenges of Black women, uplifting themes of love, friendship, and joy.

In the Editor's Note, Simmons writes that “*Ebony* represents the rich beauty of our skin and *Axis* speaks to the single-axis framework that disregards the intersections of racial and gender discrimination Black women continue to face. Another name for this concept is intersectionality... introduced by attorney and civil rights advocate Kimberlé W. Crenshaw.”

Simmons also writes that she hopes the zine can “be a space where you can candidly and unapologetically express your truth. Allow yourself to be free—whatever that means to you.”

A copy of the second installment of Ebony Axis can be read in Appendix 5.



Front cover of *Ebony Axis*.



LaShawn Simmons '18

Section VI

Events

The 2016-2017 academic year was teeming with events for CAST students and faculty. Below are descriptions of events, organized by semester, created or sponsored by the CAST program.

Fall 2016:

Rehearsing Change: A Theatre for Social Change Presentation and Workshop with Daniel Bryan at Brandeis University

September 29, 2016, 5:00pm

International Center Lounge

Daniel Bryan, Resident Director of "Rehearsing Change: Empowering Locally, Educating Globally", and students from American and Brown Universities presented short Theatre for Social Change pieces developed with their counterparts in the Amazon and Quito. Performances addressed racism, gender violence, and the tension between cultural identity and natural resource extraction. Daniel Bryan led a workshop following the performance. Sponsored by CAST; Peace, Conflict and Coexistence Studies (PAX); the Department of Theater Arts (THA); Latin American and Latino Studies (LALS); the MA in Sustainable International Development (SID); and the Intercultural Center (ICC).

Imagining Freedom | Creating Justice

Salon Series

A series of salons at The Rose Art Museum hosted by LaShawn Simmons '18 and Artist-in-Residence Jane Wilburn Sapp

The CAST program presented "Imagining Freedom: Creating Justice," a series of salons co-hosted by LaShawn Simmons '18 and Artist-in-Residence Jane Wilburn Sapp.

The salon series, held in three parts, invited participants to explore how various art forms approach the process of social change.

1. "Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired"

Thursday, October 13, 2016, 6:00-8:00pm

Rose Art Museum, Lee Gallery

The first event in the series focused on visual art. Participants shared their impressions of the works currently on view in the Lee Gallery: What stands out for you in these works? What words, phrases, images and questions do they stir in you? Based on the discussions, participants created spoken word pieces and a song with Jane Sapp.

2. "Creating Art, Seeking Justice"

Tuesday, October 18, 2016

Part I: 5:00-6:00pm, Lurias, Hassenfeld

Part II: 6:00-8:00pm, Rose Art Museum

During the second event in the series, Simmons and Sapp invited guests to share their art works, complete or otherwise, and receive feedback from other artists from our community.

3. "Staging Social Change"

Tuesday, November 1, 2016, 6:00-8:00pm

Rose Art Museum

The final event engaged participants through interactive performances of monologues and songs.

View the Salon Series flyer in Appendix 1.

Sponsored by the Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts and the minor in Creativity, the Arts, and Social Transformation, the International Center for Ethics, Justice, and Public Life, the Rose Art Museum, the Division of Creative Arts, and the Arts/Race/Activism Series with the support of the Brandeis Arts Council



Ebony Axis Launch Celebration

October 14, 2016, 8:00pm

Chum's Coffee House

Editor LaShawn Simmons '18 organized this launch to celebrate the release of the second edition of *Ebony Axis*. The publication showcases the beautiful and varied narratives of Black women on the Brandeis campus through poetry and stories.

Reading of Play: THE SQUARE by Amy Merrill

Monday, October 17, 2016, 7:30pm

Mandel Center, Reading Room



Amy Merrill '69 presented a reading of her full-length play *THE SQUARE*. The play is about the September, 2007 events in Nisour Square, Baghdad, and one vet's struggle to take a stand. The reading was directed by Guy Ben-Aharon, Producing Artistic Director, Israeli Stage.

A post-show discussion followed the reading.

Amy Merrill (left) and Guy Ben-Aharon (right).

Arts, Culture and Dialogue for Conflict Transformation and Diversity in Turkey

November 1, 2016, 4:00pm

Shiffman 002

Visiting arts administrator Eylem Erturk discussed her exhibition "*BAK: Revealing the City through Memory*," which deals with the conditions of her home, Istanbul, Turkey, in terms of cultural production and intercommunal relations. *BAK* was launched at the beginning of 2013 as a project that aims to increase the communication and cultural interaction among young people from different cities, and to provide them with opportunities for collective artistic productions. Co-sponsored by the Rose Art Museum and the Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts.

Spring 2017:

Lecture and Book Signing: Dr. Prasenjit Duara presents “Transcendence in a Secular World: Asian Traditions and a Sustainable Future”

Friday, February 3, 4:00-5:30pm

Mandel Center for Humanities, G03

This event was the first lecture in the special program “Art and Environmental Crisis,” featuring Professor Prasenjit Duara, author of “The Crisis of Global Modernity: Asian Traditions and a Sustainable Future” (Cambridge University Press, 2014). A book signing followed the lecture.

The crisis of global modernity has been produced by human overreach that was founded upon a paradigm of national modernization. Today, three global changes: the rise of non-western powers, the crisis of environmental sustainability and the loss of authoritative sources of transcendence—the ideals, principles and ethics once found in religions—define our condition. The physical salvation of the world is becoming the transcendent goal of our times, transcending national sovereignty. The foundations of sovereignty can no longer be sought in tunnelled histories of nations; we are recognizing that histories have always been circulatory and the planet is a collective responsibility.

Duara re-considers the values and resources in Asian traditions—particularly of China and India—that Max Weber found wanting in their capacity to achieve modernity. Several traditions in Asia, particularly in local communities, offer different ways of understanding the relationship between the personal, ecological, and universal. The idea of transcendence in these communities is more dialogical than radical or dualistic: separating God or the human subject from nature. Transnational civil society, NGOS, quasi-governmental and intergovernmental agencies committed to the inviolability or sacrality of the ‘commons’ will need to find common cause with these communities struggling to survive.

“Art and Environmental Crisis” was organized by the Dept. of Fine Arts and co-sponsored by the Mandel Center for the Humanities, the Peacebuilding and the Arts Program, and the Minor in Creativity, the Arts, and Social Transformation.

Artists Mining/Lifting Community Identity and Capacity - with Germaine Ingram

Wednesday, March 29, 2017, 4:00 - 5:30pm

SCC Room 314



This presentation excavated a recent artist residency at the Village of Arts & Humanities, a community-based arts organization that is a long-time fixture in a socially and economically challenged neighborhood of Philadelphia. The residency with Olanrewaju Tejuoso, an internationally recognized Nigerian artist, focused on themes of remembrance, memorialization and transformation. The presentation featured a conversation with Grimaldi Baez, a Philadelphia artist who facilitated the engagement between the resident artist and community residents. Guests considered the

intentions of the project, the opportunities and challenges of this arts-driven community engagement, the short-term and potential impacts of the project, and the lessons learned. Participants looked at how this project raises questions about art's capacity to stimulate social change, and the challenges for artists inherent in pursuing social practice.

Co-sponsored by the Mellon Foundation, The Rose Art Museum, the Social Justice and Social Policy (SJSP) Program, and Dean of Students.

Film Festival: Documenting the Immigrant Experience

Tuesday, May 2, 3:00-5:00pm

Wasserman Cinematheque

The students in CAST 170a: Documenting the Immigrant Experience curated this film festival featuring their work in the Wasserman Cinematheque. Throughout the semester, students in CAST 170a interviewed immigrants attending Waltham High School to record their stories of immigration. The resulting documentaries uplifted their voices and shined light on the lives of immigrant families in Waltham. Through the festival, the humanity of all participants became more visible.

**Open Session of Prof. Tom King's ENG 170b, Contemporary Theatre and Performance:
Between Rights and the Post-Human, with playwright Catherine Filloux**

Wednesday, May 3, 11:30 a.m.-12:50 p.m.

Shiffman 219

In May, CAST co-sponsored an open session of ENG 170b, Contemporary Theatre and Performance: Between Rights and the Post-Human (taught by Prof. Tom King) with playwright Catherine Filloux. A theater artist who has been writing and speaking about human rights and social justice for over twenty years and co-founder of Theatre Without Borders, Filloux was honored with the 2015 Planet Activist Award for her long career as an activist artist in the theater community. This year she will receive the Otto René Castillo Award for Political Theatre. Focusing on *Lemkin's House*—Filloux's stunning examination of our longing to recognize, witness, and end genocide, and our failure to do so—students in ENG 170b engaged Filloux in discussions of the possible alliances between contemporary theater and human rights movements.

Student Zoë Rose arranged a reading of excerpts from *Lemkin's House*, preparing attendees for Filloux's remarks on the production history of the play and the work of the playwright in telling stories and raising awareness about human rights. Students BT Montrym and Gabe Walker then staged a mock production meeting with the playwright, presenting a concept design for Filloux's feedback. The session concluded with an interview and audience talkback, led by student Rachel Geller.

Please join us!
An **Open Session** of ENG 170b,
Contemporary Theatre and Performance:
Between Rights and the Post-Human,
with

Playwright Catherine Filloux

Wednesday 3 May
11:30 a.m. - 12:50 p.m.
Shiffman 219

Refreshments!

RSVPs are not necessary
but encouraged (tking@brandeis.edu)



**Catherine Filloux is a theater artist who has been writing and speaking
about human rights and social justice for over twenty years.**

Section VII

Festival of the Arts

The Leonard Bernstein Festival of the Creative Arts is held on the Brandeis campus every spring semester. Founded in 1952 by legendary composer and Brandeis faculty member Leonard Bernstein, the festival showcases acclaimed performers and artists and celebrates the music, dance, theater, film, and artwork by over 300 students and alumni.

The CAST minor holds its own mini-festival of the arts in conjunction with the Leonard Bernstein Festival to celebrate the works of students in the CAST minor in the fields of art and social change. The 2017 mini-festival included film presentations of the documentaries from CAST 170a: Documenting the Immigrant Experience; a small graduation ceremony for graduating CAST minors; musical performances; and many displays of visual artwork.

Below is an article about the CAST mini-festival written by Hauke Ziessler (MA in COEX and NEJS '18), who played a large role in organizing the mini-festival.

Sustainable Identities: A CAST mini-festival

This year's Leonard Bernstein Festival of the Arts hosted a plethora of events around the topic of sustainability. The mini-festival of Creativity, the Arts and Social Transformation took this to heart and tackled the complexities of overlapping and interweaving identities. In just four hours the program included screenings of short films, held a mini-graduation for the minor's graduates, presented work of CAST students, and wrapped up the day with an open discussion around the displayed artworks.



The Scars Speak, Hauke Ziessler

Accompanied by snacks from the countries on Donald Trump's first travel ban executive order, the short film premiere screening began. The films were produced as part of Prof. Azlin Perdomo's CAST course, "Documenting the Immigrant Experience," and explored the experiences and narratives of various immigrant high school students. The Brandeis students documented these stories to "shine light on the lives of immigrant families in Waltham," said Morgan Taylor Winters '17, one of the students in the class. The student directors' ethical dilemmas, challenges, successes, and thought processes were explored in discussions with the audience. Discussion focused in part on how the films can create a more inclusive dialogue

around the immigrant experiences with local host communities. The link to one of the films, “Brazilian American,” can be found on the Ethics Center’s [YouTube channel](#).

After a short break and more snacks, an intimate graduation was held for the graduating seniors of the CAST minor. Each student presented their unique capstone works and were honored with a small gift and certificate from their CAST mentors. It was a heartfelt environment that honored the work of the students, highlighted by an encouraging commencement speech by Vice President for Institutional Research and Planning, Daniel Feldman. He congratulated all the graduates, and then offered a reflection on the meaning of ‘congratulations.’ Etymologically the word refers to “feeling joy with, and therefore is connected to empathy.” His full speech can be read in Appendix 7.

As the graduation reached an end it flowed into performances by CAST students Hangil Ryu ’20 and Marcelo Brociner ’18. Hangil Ryu performed a rap piece that spoke on being a bystander and his challenge to overcome that fear of taking a stand for what is right. The candid discussion, that commenced, flowed seamlessly into Brociner’s [piece](#), which challenged the gentrification in his hometown of Somerville, MA, both visually and lyrically. By overwhelming the viewer with images and sound, the short film helped the viewer understand the relentless pace of gentrification and its suffocating reign over Somerville. The discussion not only helped Brociner further explore his own piece but challenged the perceptions of the audience as they reflected on how they related with the piece and its dialogue.

The idea of identity came out through the discussion regarding how his piece related to the special dynamics of Somerville. Is the artwork more effective for people living in Somerville, or is it relatable to others outside of this context? This idea helped to introduce the next artist talks that were shaped around the displayed works of art by Morgan Winters, Hauke Ziessler, and Alona Weimer ’18. Hauke Ziessler challenged his own identities and revealed the divide between “the way people see him” and “how he sees himself.” Through this work he began to collaborate with Winters on a similar concept. From their thought processes on identity they made an artwork that challenged similar questions of identity through underwear.

The artwork is based on the quote that “gender is the underwear of oppression,” which Winters collected in an oral history interview earlier in the semester, from someone who was explaining their gender identity. The underwear represented the stories of people’s identities and was matched with a small book of stories that added to the narrative of their outer appearance (perceived identity) and their inner identity, or how they appear to themselves (their personal identity). This small space created a symbiosis of art pieces shaped around how people attempt to sustain a sound personal identity in the onslaught of clashing perceptions. The viewers interacted dynamically with the piece, exploring the ins and outs of the interactive pieces by personally discussing the topics with the other attendees.



The Underwear Speaks, Morgan Taylor Winters and Hauke Ziessler

Alona Weimer displayed her untitled print on menstruation items and the high price they carry. The print brought forward an interesting discussion around accessibility to menstruation products not only in the United States but also in third world countries, challenging the taboo nature of the topic. While starkly contrasting with the pieces that challenged identity, displayed by Ziessler and Winters, Weimer's work also challenged the relationship with the everyday lives of others, the perception that has been fabricated around the topic of menstruation, and how it relates to the identities and preconceived perceptions of women.

The mini-festival ended in an array of open discussions as people continued to enjoy the snacks and used the space to explore each piece further. Some of the discussions led to a further exchange of ideas between artists and participants, which, over the following days became a fertile ground for the artists to challenge their own work and further grow within their artistic media. Thanks to The Leonard Bernstein festival of the Arts organizing team, the technical support by the SCC team, and the International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life. Thanks also to the CAST program, and gifts from Amy Merrill '69, Elaine Reuben '63, and Naomi Sinnreich, P'13.

The Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts

The program in Peacebuilding and the Arts, directed by Cindy Cohen, is part of Brandeis' International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life. The program supports the contributions of art and culture to the transformation of conflict, and collaborates with various departments at Brandeis, such as the Peace, Conflict and Coexistence Studies (PAX) Program and the School of Creative Arts.

The program in Peacebuilding and the Arts enjoyed an active and productive 2016-2017 year. Highlights include:

- Throughout the year: Progress has been made this year on *A Way Out of No Way*, an initiative to document the 40+ year career of Jane Wilburn Sapp. David Briand and Cindy Cohen have been working with Jane on *I Feel Music Everywhere: The Jane Sapp Songbook* and an accompanying series of podcasts. Jane worked on these while in residence at Brandeis in the fall of 2016, when we interviewed five different interlocutors discussing a few of the songs with Jane, and, in the process elucidating the principles of her approach to cultural work practice. These podcast guests are: civil rights activist and compose Rose Sanders of Selma, Alabama; Michael Curtis, an educator and chorus leader who has been working with Jane since he was in 2nd grade; anti-racist, feminist, and LGBTQ activist Suzanne Pharr; professor of music education emerita from Boston University Sandra Nicolucci; and Brandeis junior and Posse Scholar, LaShawn Simmons. The manuscript for the songbook and the podcast series will be completed in the summer of 2017.
- Throughout the year: We continue to partner with ReCAST, Inc., disseminating the Acting Together documentary, toolkit and multi-lingual disc to practitioners, educators, policy-makers and funders. These resources are made available on a sliding scale; and through the generosity of Elaine Reuben '63, when appropriate we are also able to share these resources for free.
- September: Participation in a conference on Culture and Resilience, hosted by the Rockefeller Archives at the Rockefeller Foundation's conference center in Bellagio. Participants included leading artists, scholars, and philanthropists, exploring efforts to preserve and restore cultural heritage, historical memory, and freedom of expression, among other topics. She presented a slide lecture that summarized findings from several previous convenings. (See a copy of the slide presentation in Appendix 9).
- October: As part of our ongoing initiative into arts and violence prevention at the level of the municipality, Cindy co-facilitated with James Thompson of the University of Manchester (UK) a weekend retreat with teams of artists/peacebuilders from four different cities: Manchester, in the UK; Boston, New Orleans, and Oakland, in the US. This retreat was hosted by the British

Council, with support from the National Endowment for the Arts. A report on the retreat can be found [here](#).

- November: Cindy completed a chapter “Ain’t You Got a Right to the Tree of Life: Facilitators’ Intentions Toward Community, Integrity and Justice,” based on analysis of interviews with the African American cultural worker Jane Wilburn Sapp and Palestinian Israeli coexistence Farhat Agbaria. This chapter is attached in Appendix 9.
- January: As a follow-up to the conference on culture and resilience in Bellagio, Brandeis was invited to submit a concept note for a planning process for a university-based support structure for the field of arts and social transformation. Preparation for the concept note included a partial listing of gatherings and publications that have contributed ideas to the proposal, as well as a partial listing of potential academic, cultural and philanthropic partners. We have been invited to submit full proposal. A copy of the concept note is in Appendix 9.
- April: In response to a call for proposals on “Reassessing Peace Building in Uncertain Times,” we submitted a concept note to the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) for a project focusing on strengthening the contributions of arts and culture to preventing and ameliorating the problem of social and political polarization. On the basis of the concept note, we were invited to submit a proposal, which we did in May. We will hear back from USIP in September. Excerpts in the proposal can be found in Appendix 9.
- May: Cindy completed “Understanding an Enemy is Like Understanding a Poem: Art and Peace in Theory and Practice,” a chapter for a book exploring different disciplinary perspectives on the concept of peace, which will be entitled *Promoting Peace through Practice, Academic and the Arts*. The chapter builds on the concept of trans-subjectivity and the framework of the permeable membrane between art and society, as articulated by the poet Adrienne Rich and elaborated in the second volume of *Acting Together on the World Stage* (New Village Press).
- June: Dr. Polly Walker of the Baker Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies at Juniata College invited Cindy to join her and Dr. Kitche Magak to lead a training on incorporating the arts into peacebuilding trainings throughout Kenya. During the last week in June, they will lead a weeklong session for twelve participants, including Kenyan artists, scholars, and leaders of Kenyan peacebuilding organizations. The training was based on materials from the *Acting Together* documentary, books and toolkit, and resulted in workplans for four Kenyan peacebuilding organizations to collaborate on projects and trainings that incorporate the arts. Each of these initiatives will be documented by one of the participating scholars.