

Welcome Remarks

By [Ingrid Schorr](#), Director of Brandeis Art Engagement, CAST

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Behind the chapels, on a little path that leads to the back of the Heller School, there is a stone sculpture of a reclining nude woman. It's called Sleeping Jennie and it's by Maurice B. Hexter, a prominent human rights activist and a key figure in the founding of the Heller School.

One day I was walking behind a group of toddlers from Lemberg. A little boy pointed at the figure and touched her lips with a stick. "I give her medicine," he said.

We all know this as children, that art reflects human desires and needs and histories. That a representation of a woman in stone represents humanity.

You know this still, as CAST students.

You know that everything is art, that every aspect of life can be approached creatively. Art is inherently social. Every society, every culture, expresses ideas through art. Art reflects love, ambition, faith, disappointment. It expresses social discord and dysfunction. It speaks of every possible human idea and emotion.

By extension, everyone has the potential to be an artist, and more broadly, to engage art's potential to transform society.

While the arts can be a source of intense pleasure, engaging in the arts can also bring us to a state of full awareness that may even become wide-awakeness. When we awaken the creative mind, we are capable of crossing borders, of inciting action, of making discoveries. We can envision the world as it should be.

The arts educator and philosopher Maxine Greene said that in order to create a more just, humane world we first must develop our poetic and social imaginations.

The little boy was engaging his ***poetic imagination***. He had the capacity to see the world through the eyes of another. To participate in that person's world, to discover how it looks and feels.

When we use our **social imagination**, we invent visions of what should be and what it might be, on the streets where we live, in our schools, in our cities.

The arts, it has been said, cannot change the world, but they may change human beings who might change the world.

Sammi, Ella, Nicole, April, Joanna, Linnea, Yael, and Margo. You will change the world.