



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

2019-2020 Annual Report
Prepared by Sarah Ernst '20 and
Barbara Strauss, CAST administrator

Brandeis University

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The students, faculty, and staff of the Interdisciplinary Minor in Creativity, the Arts, and Social Transformation (CAST) are enormously appreciative of the contributions of three steadfast donors whose support has made possible most of the activities described in this annual report: Amy Merrill '68, Elaine Reuben '63; and the Max and Sunny Howard Memorial Foundation, with the inspiration of Naomi Sinnreich P'13. Many thanks also to the Louis D. Brandeis Legacy Fund for Social Justice, for its ongoing support of Let's Make a Better World: Stories and Songs by Jane Sapp, a book and podcast; a Brandeis launch event in 2019; and the development of an archive in the Brandeis Library.

The global IMPACT community expresses its appreciation to the Porticus Community Art Lab for its generous and flexible support of our multi-regional values driven collaboration to strengthen the arts, culture and conflict transformation ecosystem. It also appreciates the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for its support of our 18-month planning process. Thanks also to The Fresh Sound Foundation, the Max and Sunny Howard Memorial Foundation, Amy Merrill '68 and Elaine Reuben '63.

I. Highlights

New CAST Co-Chair: Toni Shapiro-Phim

Toni Shapiro-Phim was hired July 1, 2019 as Associate Professor and Co-Chair of CAST and Assistant Director of the [Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts](#) (PBA). Shapiro-Phim is a leading scholar and practitioner analyzing and building the role of the arts in conflict/post-conflict situations and in response to mass violence and sudden traumatic loss. Her international work has focused on Cambodia, while recent domestic projects include partnering with the Liberian Women's Chorus in Philadelphia. Shapiro-Phim brings to her work at Brandeis broad experience with human rights and conflict transformation, as well as the documentation of transitional justice institutions.



Dance in the Aftermath of Violence



Cambodian choreographers Sophiline Cheam Shapiro and Prumsodun Ok visited CAST in October 2019. Their lecture/demonstration allowed for an exploration of Cambodia's relationship between legacies of violence and expressive culture. More below.

Pictured: Choreographer Prumsodun Ok (standing)



Broadsides to Brandeis – event and new installation

The CAST and Creative Writing Undergraduate Departmental Representatives (UDRs) worked under the guidance of CAST Advisory Committee member Elizabeth Bradfield (ENG and Creative Writing) to create a new exhibition space outside of the CAST Creativity Lab on the top floor of the Abraham Shapiro Academic Complex. The exhibition space features poetry and art published by [Broadsided](#), a press founded by Bradfield. More about the opening below. It is ingeniously designed to create opportunities for members of the CAST community to exhibit work, as well.

Pictured: (l-r) Undergrads Uma Jagwani, Polina Potochevska, and Zoe Rose working on the installation.

CAST Commitments in Solidarity with Black Lives Matter/June 2020

The following statement was backed by CAST's affiliated faculty and distributed to our constituency across campus. Programs that will fulfill this commitment are in production for academic year 2020-21.

The interdisciplinary program in Creativity, the Arts, and Social Transformation (CAST) at Brandeis University condemns white supremacy, anti-Black violence, police brutality, the school-to-prison pipeline, and the many additional everyday violences against Black people through which individuals, groups, and institutions in the United States perpetuate the legacy of slavery and benefit from doing so. We commit to working toward repairing the racial, gender, economic, and environmental injustices, health disparities, and erasure of heritage that continue to situate Black lives as less valuable and more disposable than white lives, and to fostering antiracist, decolonizing, Indigenous, and intersectional perspectives and values in and through our research, teaching and learning. Recognizing that we are a predominantly white program within a predominantly white university, we commit to exploring our own biases, and we encourage our students to join us in this vulnerability. We renew our commitment to centering and advancing the knowledges, creativity, languages, and vision of our Black peers, students and colleagues, and to providing opportunities for our Black peers, students, and colleagues to create beauty and joy. For all these actions, we hold ourselves accountable.

Black Lives matter. Black flourishing matters.

Read our longer statement, still a work-in-progress, with additional acknowledgements and commitments:

<https://www.brandeis.edu/creativity-arts-social-transformation/#Black-Lives-Matter>

Anna Cass, Undergraduate Departmental Representative

Aviva Davis, Undergraduate Departmental Representative

Thomas A. King, Co-chair

Toni Shapiro-Phim, Co-chair

[Also signed by the Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts: Cynthia Cohen, Director; Toni Shapiro-Phim, Assistant Director]

All statements, including this one, are works in progress that must be further developed in action. Affiliated CAST faculty and staff, along with Peacebuilding and the Arts, will meet to discuss and build on this statement as possible this semester and across the academic year.

II. Program Review and Changes

Fifth-year review, new governance structure, and new degree requirements



The Minor in Creativity, The Arts,
and Social Transformation:
Program Governance
Adopted 18 November 2019

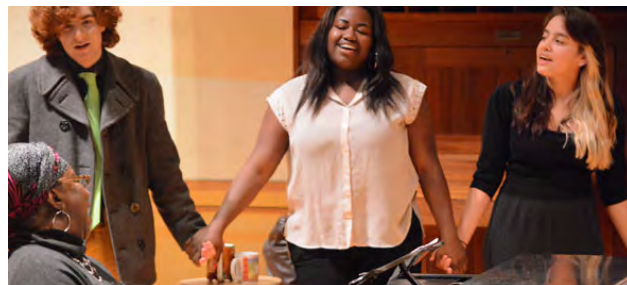
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CAST was reviewed in its sixth year by the University Curricular Committee (UCC), and it was recommended that the program be renewed. Part of the review was of a new governance structure: beginning in fall 2020, our “advisory committee” will instead consist of a smaller executive committee made up of highly committed faculty and staff, while the remainder of the current committee become “affiliated” faculty and staff. Both groups will meet throughout the academic year, with the executive committee meeting more often.

The UCC had several recommendations, including increasing connections among CAST cross-listed courses to help students navigate the minor. The advisory committee discussed the possibility of hosting symposia at which faculty currently teaching CAST electives and their students can share thematic connections among their courses and articulate ways that their CAST electives can build on each other. The UCC also recommended more clarity about the rigor, scope, outcomes, documentation, and assessment of capstone projects. CAST is addressing this in its new practicum requirement, as outlined in the following two paragraphs.

The UCC has also approved CAST’s new degree requirements. Under the [new structure](#), CAST minors will take 5.5 courses: the core course (CAST 150b), three electives (one each in Creative Arts, the Humanities, and the Social Sciences), a fourth elective from any school, and a two-credit capstone practicum, taken either in the fall (“Ethics of Community Engagement”) or the spring (“Project Design Practicum”) when they have fulfilled, or concurrently with, their final elective(s). Supervised projects in both practicums provide opportunities for minors to reflect on and integrate learning from the five required courses; to propose, design, and implement projects in the field of arts, culture, and social transformation; to work in and engage communities ethically; to provide and learn from peer feedback; and to develop skills in documenting and evaluating projects. The two-credit capstone practicums will replace the current system of four to five capstone peer feedback sessions and a final capstone presentation, scheduled outside of class time (and ungraded) each year. Our currently designated capstone courses have been renamed “core electives”; students will be required to take at least one core elective as any of their four electives.



With the hire of Dr. Toni Shapiro-Phim as Co-Chair, CAST is now able to offer a more rationalized and rigorous capstone experience to its students. We believe the new requirement structure will make the CAST minor more cohesive, increase mentoring during the capstone year, and improve the rigor of projects. We hope this new structure will also reduce confusion created by the variety of options for capstone experiences included under the old structure. Finally, students will now receive credit (and a grade) for the capstone experience. The new structure begins in fall 2020. Current minors can choose whether to fulfill their requirements under the old or the new structure.

New resources webpage for affiliated faculty

CAST has added [a new page to our website featuring resources for CAST affiliated faculty and staff](#). The page includes information on CAST Program Governance, including a statement of ethical principles governing interactions among community members, a description of the new leadership structure (see above), and grievance procedures. The page also links to guidelines for [cross-listing](#) courses with CAST, [objectives](#) and learning goals, and an [overview](#) of the program.



Pictured: Elizabeth Bradfield (ENG and Creative Writing), right, talking student Sophia Massidda.

III. Courses

Fall 2019:

Core Course

- **CAST 150b: Introduction to Creativity, the Arts, and Social Transformation.** Toni Shapiro-Phim.

Capstone Courses (“core electives” beginning fall 2020)

- **AAAS 124a: After the Dance: Performing Sovereignty in the Caribbean.** Faith Smith.
- **ENG 143a: The History of Mediascapes and Critical Maker Culture.** Dorothy Kim.
- **ENG 151b: Performance Studies.** Thomas King.
- **ENG 161a: Literature and Counterculture.** David Sherman.
- **FA 181a: Housing and Social Justice.** Muna Guvenc.
- **THA 138b: Creative Pedagogy.** Jennifer Cleary.

Spring 2020:

Capstone Courses (“core electives” beginning fall 2020)

- **CAST 110b: Dance and Migration.** Toni Shapiro-Phim. A new course that explores, through an interdisciplinary lens, the aesthetic, political, social and spiritual potency of dance forms and practices as they travel, transform, and are accorded meaning both domestically and transnationally, especially in situations of extreme violence and cultural dislocation.

Dance and Migration
CAST 110B
Tuesday/Thursday 2:00-3:20pm
Professor: Toni Shapiro-Phim

Through an interdisciplinary lens, *Dance and Migration* highlights the aesthetic, political, social and spiritual potency of dance forms and practices as they travel, transform, and are accorded meaning both domestically and transnationally, especially in situations of extreme violence and cultural dislocation.

The class will investigate the phenomenon of dance in refugee camps in war zones as well as in neighborhoods and/or national enclaves; will explore both the production of new traditions and the re-creation of aspects of expressive culture identified as valued by communities in exile and diaspora; as groups and individuals imagine and engage with contributing diasporan dynamics and relationships of power.

Memories and films, live performances, materials from the fields of anthropology, dance, ethnohistory, human rights, peace and conflict studies, and refugee and migration studies, as well as texts from guest artists will help us to consider the multi-faceted relationship of dance to migration as it intersects with issues of race, gender, nationalism, genocide, and conflict transformation.

- **CAST 189a: Capstone Project Design Practicum.** Toni Shapiro-Phim. Students apply theories, skills and critical questions to an individual capstone project that engages with social transformation concerns in creative, practical and ethically-sound ways.
- **ANTH 130a: Filming Culture: Ethnographic and Documentary Filmmaking.** Patricia Alvarez Astacio.
- **FA/NEJS 183a: Breaking Boundaries in Contemporary Israeli Culture.** Gannit Ankori and Ilana Szobel.
- **HISP 165b: The Storyteller: Short Fiction in Latin America.** Fernando Rosenberg.
- **SOC 155b: Protest, Politics, and Change: Social Movements.** Gowri Vijayakumar.
- **THA 126a: Playing for Change – Community Building and Social Change on Stage.** Jennifer Cleary.

Additional CAST electives can be found on the registrar's website:

<https://www.brandeis.edu/registrar/bulletin/provisional/courses/subjects/1475.html>

IV. Advisory Committee

To be split into an “executive committee” and “affiliated faculty and staff” fall 2020 (see above)

CAST engages interdisciplinary arts at Brandeis while retaining its own distinct identity that emphasizes a rigorous study of power relations, conflict and peace, and the dialogue among change agents, peacebuilders, researchers, and artists. The work is supported by an advisory committee that involves professors and staff members from different fields. The current advisory committee:

- Cameron Anderson, Theater Arts
- Elizabeth Bradfield, English and Creative Writing
- Jennifer Cleary, Theater Arts (on hiatus)
- Cynthia Cohen, Director, Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts at the International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life (Ethics Center)
- Emilie Diouf, English
- Judith Eissenberg, Music
- Robin Feuer Miller, Humanities
- Dorothy Kim, English
- Thomas King, English, CAST Undergraduate Advising Head, CAST Co-Chair
- Kristin Parker, Associate, Ethics Center; formerly with Rose Art Museum
- Fernando Rosenberg, Hispanic Studies, Comparative Literature
- Toni Shapiro-Phim, CAST and Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts at the Ethics Center; CAST Co-Chair
- David Sherman, English
- Faith Smith, African and Afro-American Studies, English
- Leigh Swigart, Programs in International Justice and Society at the Ethics Center
- Ilana Szobel, Hebrew Literature
- Sabine von Mering, German; Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies

V. Faculty and Staff Achievements



beyond their present circumstances.” (photo credit: *Aleppo. The Guardian. Joseph Eid/AFP/Getty Images*)

Kristin Parker, formerly of The Rose Art Museum, was featured in *The Guardian* in an article about the preservation of Syrian culture called “[Rebuilding Aleppo: ‘We cannot preserve the place but we can save our memories’](#)” (7/15/19). Parker is a cultural first aid trainer working with Syrian refugees to build a digital repository where they can store their stories. Parker is quoted, “It’s these links to identity and links to home that allow people to imagine a world

In November 2019, Elizabeth Bradfield (ENG and Creative Writing) and artist Antonia Contro collaborated to publish [Theorem, a hand-made, letterpressed art book](#). The book uses spare images, distilled text, and the resonant space between to investigate the legacy of secrets acquired in childhood and held throughout a life.



Also in November 2019, Toni Shapiro-Phim (CAST, PBA) provided initial observations on the impact of embodying survivor testimony on the artists themselves in an article for [The International Journal of Transitional Justice](#). This comes after a groundbreaking arts-centered reparations project of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (also known as the Khmer Rouge Tribunal) entitled *Phka Sla*.

Emilie Diouf (English) and Faith Smith (AAAS, English) were recipients of the 2020-21 [Mandel Faculty Grants in the Humanities](#). Diouf was awarded a grant for her work “Errant Voices: Traumatic Text and the Making of African Women Refugees” and Smith was awarded a grant for “Silk Roads and Highways: Imagining ‘China’ in the Caribbean Today.”

Fernando Rosenberg (HISP, COMP LIT) has written two articles that pertain to the discipline of CAST. One is “Teaching Poetry and Human Rights” in [Teaching Modern Latin American Poetries](#) (Approaches to Teaching World Literature MLA series) and the other is “Repairing Symbolic Reparations: Assessing the Effectiveness of Memorialization in the Inter-American System of Human Rights” (co-author), *International Journal of Transitional Justice* in Spring 2020 (see below).

Leigh Swigart, Director of Programs in International Justice and Society at the Ethics Center, recently launched the [Language, Culture and Justice Hub](#). This online platform was created as a site of scholarship, commentary and contacts for people working at the nexus of these three phenomena, aiming to centralize fields engaged in this work.

Sabine von Mering (CGES; WGS) worked with undergrad Perry Letourneau and [Sustainable Brandeis](#) to create a [video on recycling and composting](#). The project was cosponsored by the CAST minor and spread widely around the Brandeis community.



A special edition of *The International Journal of Transitional Justice* called “[Creative Approaches to Transitional Justice: the Contributions of Art and Culture](#)” was guest edited by PBA director Cynthia Cohen. The issue includes work from CAST faculty and affiliates: “Reimagining Transitional Justice” (Cynthia Cohen); “Embodying the Pain and Cruelty of Others” (Toni Shapiro-Phim, CAST, PBA); “Repairing Symbolic Reparations: Assessing the Effectiveness of Memorialization in the Inter-American System of Human Rights” (co-written by Fernando Rosenberg (HISP, COMP LIT)). Support for color images came from [Ethics Center Board Member](#) and CAST and PBA supporter Elaine Reuben ’63. Several articles from this issue will be assigned to students in the new course [LGLS 129a – Global Justice and Societies in Transition](#), being offered in fall 2020 by Melissa Stimell in collaboration with Cynthia Cohen and Leigh Swigart of the Ethics Center.

VI. Student News

2019-2020 Undergraduate Departmental Representative



Zoe Rose '20 was the 2019-2020 Undergraduate Departmental Representative for CAST. As a senior at Brandeis, Rose pursued a major in Psychology with minors in Classics and CAST. In her [bio](#), Rose says, “CAST has taught me how to put into practice both my love of art and my passion for social transformation. I’ve been able to further explore my interests in storytelling and community building, while building a special community of my own at Brandeis through CAST.”

Season 2 of *Proper Bantah!*

CAST minor Rasheed Peters '20 hosted an open live recording session for season 2 of his [talk show *Proper Bantah!*](#) on September 28, 2019. The goal of the talk show is to expose Brandeis to new people with interesting stories and facilitate conversation among community members who are different from one another.

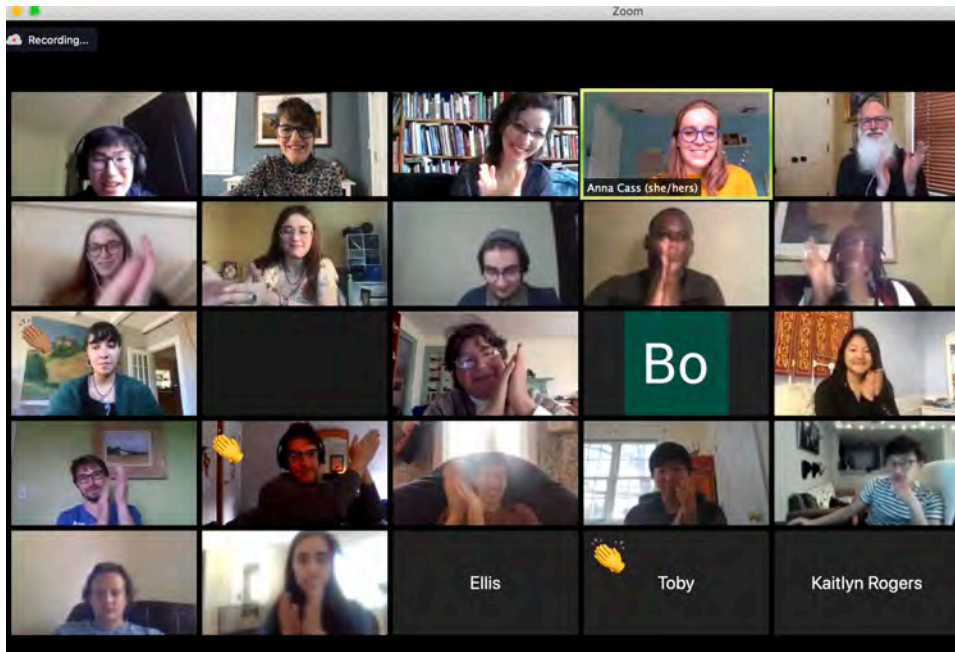
Alumni Profiles on Website

The CAST minor created an [Alum Profiles](#) page on its website. The page illustrates the ways in which alumni have explored and developed their own creative approaches to ethical social change.

CAST minor Sarah Terrazano '19 assisted in the initial submission screening for the [special edition of *The International Journal of Transitional Justice*](#) focusing on the contribution of arts and culture discussed above.

VII. Capstone Projects

Students presented from their capstone projects on May 1, 2020 via Zoom, as part of the [Create@Brandeis: Living Room Fest](#), May 1-3, Sponsored by the Arts Engagement team of the Division of Creative Arts (see “Events” below). Grants were awarded by CAST to Haia R'nana Bchiri, Anna Cass, Rasheed Peters, and Zoe Rose for the creation of their projects.



Attendees at the capstone presentation 5/1. This is just one screen – over 30 people showed up to watch the one-woman shows, student-produced videos, comedy sketches, cooking demonstrations, and more.

Haia R'nana Bchiri

“Comfort: Food” is a short anthology of corresponding poems and recipes Haia collected and composed as she worked on her senior thesis about mother-daughter relationships and the role of theater in the Western family structure. The anthology is focused primarily on stories from her own family, refocused after the shelter in place orders were issued and family structures had to shift because many could not gather as they usually would. The book is part of Haia’s effort to pay forward the gifts of home and connection she has found in the performing and culinary arts, as well as her research into alternative sensory stimulation. The research informs her creation of an immersive artistic experience without privileging sight or smell.

Anna Cass

A two-day, multi-event program, “Voices of Comedy” brought standup comics from diverse backgrounds with different comedic styles together for a show on Friday, March 6, featured a standup workshop by professional comics – free and open to all students – the following day, and included an open mic event during which workshop participants could test out their craft. This project broadened the Brandeis comedy community by providing training and an opportunity to practice comedy skills, and by prioritizing stories and perspectives that are often not present in the local and national comedy scenes.

Emily Eidler

Emily created a series of lesson plans to teach first graders about the concepts of culture and tradition. Through picture books, videos, activities, and arts, students explore these complex concepts in a kid-friendly way. They learn about their own culture and that of their classmates. The unit culminates in a quilt-making project that allows students to see the beauty of diversity.

Rasheed Peters

“At the Heart of it All” is a short video (musical piece-highlight reel-slideshow-monologue hybrid) and an open reflection (rambling) of Rasheed’s work as a storyteller and the elements that inspire and form it.

Zoë Rose

“Zoë Rose Spills Her Guts” is a one-woman show about exploring identity. Told in multiple iterations, “Zoë Rose Spills Her Guts” is an immersive, participatory theater experience that has given audience members a chance to hear new stories and to share their own, some of which Zoë then incorporated into the next iterations of the piece.

Hangil Ryu

“Be Kind, Have Fun” is a short film showcasing stories that demonstrate that kindness still spreads, even in the time of the coronavirus.

Quinn Weiner

To fulfill the capstone requirement, Quinn took the course Soc 155b: Social Movements: Protest, Politics, and Change in which they explored ways that individuals come to participate in, organize within, and create impact out of social movements. This involved combining theory with investigations of major historical and contemporary examples, including pulling from students' personal experiences and those of guest speakers. Quinn focused on research about anti-Trump activism in its many forms. Through interviews and virtual participant observation projects, they composed papers about how we can best understand the combining of multiple social movements into one larger anti-Trump movement in an unprecedented complication of mobilization and coalition-building. The class has inspired Quinn's hope for the future, and their desire to participate in activism on their own, as well as given them tools to understand the work they'll be doing out in the world.

VIII. Visiting Artists in the Classroom

Distinguished artists and scholars visited CAST core and elective courses during the year, adding expertise and insight to class discussion.

Fall 2019:

CAST 150b: Introduction to Creativity, the Arts, and Social Transformation, taught by Toni Shapiro-Phim, was visited by Sophiline Cheam Shapiro and Prumsodun Ok, John Paul Lederach, and Michelle Ortiz. Details in "Events" below.

ENG 52a: Refugee Stories, Refugee Lives, taught by Emilie Diouf, welcomed Michelle Ortiz and screened her documentary film *Las Madres de Berks*. Through Ortiz's comments on her approach to art, Professor Diouf introduced her students to the concept of Ubuntu, a Zulu philosophy made popular by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Ubuntu is a philosophy of community rooted in interdependency to sustain wellbeing for all.

ENG 151b, Performance Studies, taught by Tom King, invited Anneke Reich (Brandeis '12; M.Ed. Arts in Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education) to discuss her work as Artistic Director of the [Artists' Theater of Boston](#) and the Boston Regional Engagement Coordinator for the One Love Foundation. Across two sessions, Reich engaged students in using theater-based techniques in consent education. Also visiting was Sophiline Cheam Shapiro, who discussed her revisioning of traditional Cambodian dance and myth as vehicles for negotiating trauma. Dancers discovered resilience in the precision and rigor of training and performance.

HISP 196a: Latinx Theater: Politics, Performance, and Social Change, taught by Maria Duran, invited actor/producer Alejandro Rodríguez and playwright/producer/director Emilio Rodríguez to converse with students. Alejandro Rodríguez focused on the state of Latinx Theater and the artistry of Latinx actors in the contemporary moment. Emilio Rodríguez focused on his play, *Swimming While Drowning*.

Spring 2020:

CAST 110b: Dance and Migration, taught by Toni Shapiro-Phim, welcomed a number of guests throughout the semester. Presenters included: Cambodian dancer Huy Serey Phousita and other members of the Angkor Dance Troupe; Choreographer, performer and scholar Ananya Chatterjea, Ananya Dance Theater; social justice activist and jazz tap dancer Germaine Ingram; Betsayda Machado – The Voice of Venezuela ([MusicUnitesUs](#) spring 2020), and Liberian singer and dancer Fatu Gayflor.

MUS 86b: Improv Collective, taught by Thomas Hall, welcomed Betsayda Machado – The Voice of Venezuela ([MusicUnitesUs](#) spring 2020). The group brought a passion for creating together as a family, communicating through song, dance, and play.

SOC 155b: Protest, Politics, and Change: Social Movements, taught by Gowri Vijayakumar, hosted several guest speakers throughout the semester: Thaty Oliveira from [Matahari Women Workers' Center](#); Brandeis alum Aja Antoine; Brandeis graduate student Ann Ward; and Brandeis undergraduate student Phoebe Dolan from the [Sunrise Movement](#).

IX. Events

Fall 2019:

Create@Brandeis all-arts welcome party!

September 13

Located at Fellows Garden, the event was an outlet of creativity for students, alumni, and faculty to engage in artistic activities such as rock painting, collaging, and denim painting. The event was sponsored by the [Division of Creative Arts](#), with cosponsors including CAST, dance club Toxic and Playback Theater, among others.



Art-ivist with CAST

September 17

This was an event hosted by the CAST UDRs. Students came together for an evening of art making and conversation. In collaboration with Brandeis Climate Justice, CAST offered space to build community while converting recycled material into posters in preparation for the Boston Climate Strike on September 20. There were 35 people in attendance, and following the event, CAST helped fund student transportation into Boston.



Settling Down. Storytelling from and with Refugees, with Britta Wilmsmeier

October 16

Professional storyteller Britta Wilmsmeier came to Brandeis to discuss her experience working with refugees in Berlin to help them overcome language barriers and to provide safe spaces for people who have experienced trauma. The event was sponsored by the Center for German and European Studies and cosponsored by CAST.

Screening of *Acting Together on the World Stage*

October 16

In preparation for the [Gittler Prize](#) residency of [John Paul Lederach](#), the MA Program in Conflict Resolution and Coexistence held a screening of [Acting Together on the World Stage](#), a documentary featuring the stories and cultural productions of nine artist peacebuilders from Argentina, Serbia, Uganda, Peru, the United States, Australia, and Cambodia. The documentary was produced by Director of the Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts Cynthia Cohen.

Dance in the Aftermath of Mass Violence

October 22



This two-part lecture/demonstration featured Cambodia-based award-winning choreographers Sophiline Cheam Shapiro and Prumsodun Ok. Shapiro discussed choreography in late-20th and early-21st century Cambodia and the relationship between legacies of violence and contemporary expressive culture. Ok shared his story of encountering enduring forces of conflict through the founding of the first all-male gay classical dance company in Cambodia. The performance was based on a

Cambodian tale viewed to be the origin of thunder and lightning. The performance was followed by a panel discussion and Q&A session. The event was sponsored by CAST and cosponsored by the MA program in Conflict Resolution and Coexistence and the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. A reception followed in the Zinner Forum at the Heller School.

Toi Derricotte Reading

October 22

[Toi Derricotte](#) gave a reading from her poetry. She is the author of *I: New and Selected Poems* and *The Black Notebooks*, as well as recipient of two Pushcart Prizes, the PEN/Voelcker Award for Poetry, and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Guggenheim Foundation. The event was sponsored by the English Department and cosponsored by CAST.

Performance Studies with Sophiline Cheam Shapiro

October 23

Tom King's ENG 151b: Performance Studies class held an open session with Sophiline Cheam Shapiro of the Sophiline Arts Ensemble (see above).

Poetry as a Space for Activists to Recharge and Replenish: An Event in Preparation for the Visit of Dr. John Paul Lederach

October 28

Sponsored by the Creative Writing Program and the CAST UDR, this event, centered around John Paul Lederach's *The Moral Imagination* was held before the Gittler Prize residency (see below). Attendees found a space for rest and collaboration, with a focus on writing and then discussion of Lederach's theory of re-envisioning the moment. Participants were asked to write about a moment that engages with political life that was deeply perplexing, going from a free write into haiku form. The second prompt took the haiku from loss into gain, death into life, with a discussion on art as a vision of something that can be done together. CAST faculty member Elizabeth Bradfield (ENG and Creative Writing) led the workshop.

Contemplation, Creativity and Imagination in Building Peace: An open, interactive session of CAST 150b with John Paul Lederach

October 29

Dr. John Paul Lederach engaged students in CAST 150b and guests in activities and conversations that explored the disciplines of the moral imagination, and the inner and interpersonal work required to be an effective and ethical peacebuilder.

Dinner with Dr. John Paul Lederach

October 29



John Paul Lederach (center) with guests

Dr. John Paul Lederach attended a dinner with members of the CAST community in advance of his Gittler Prize lecture (see below). Lederach has made significant contributions to the arts, culture, and conflict transformation field, bringing experiences from his work with Colombia's TRC, in Nepal, Sri Lanka, Northern Ireland, and more. He has written several groundbreaking books and articles. A discussion of *The Moral Imagination* was held, and dinner participants read passages before the evening event. Lederach's lecture, along with an interview conducted by Dr. Toni Shapiro-Phim, are available at the [Gittler Prize website](#).

“Dispatches from Nowhere Near the Promised Land: How a Peacebuilder Unlearned his Trade” - 2019 Gittler Prize Award Presentation and Lecture

October 30

Dr. John Paul Lederach received the [2019 Gittler Prize](#), which recognizes outstanding and lasting scholarly contributions to racial, ethnic and/or religious relations throughout the world. Lederach was introduced by Provost Lisa Lynch and Peacebuilding and the Arts Director Cynthia Cohen. Lederach’s lecture explored his work in Guatemala, Nepal, and Nicaragua, revealing how he unlearned his process in order to become more human and connected to the people. A Q&A followed, facilitated by Cynthia Cohen.



Gabriel Arboleda on Socially Engaged Design in Latin America

November 18

Professor Muna Guvenc’s class FA 181a: Housing and Social Justice was joined by Professor [Gabriel Arboleda](#) of Amherst College. Arboleda spoke about the practices of self-help housing in the Global South, sharing his own experience as an architect working with local communities in Guyana. The event was sponsored by the Fine Arts Department and cosponsored by CAST, among others.

***Familias Separadas*/Stories of Families Affected by Detention**

November 19

Visual artist, muralist, community arts educator, and immigrant rights activist Michelle Angela Ortiz introduced the CAST community to her [Familias Separadas](#) project during a session of CAST’s introductory course, 150b. The project is a series of public art installations in Philadelphia and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, that explore the impact of family separation and detention. The event had a full house and, afterwards, Ortiz gave an impromptu second talk to Fine Arts students at the reception (photo right). The event was sponsored by CAST and cosponsored by the English Department, the Fine Arts Department, and the School of Arts and Sciences Co-Curricular Fund.



Las Madres de Berks

November 20

Michelle Angela Ortiz screened her documentary, [Las Madres de Berks](#), a film that shares the testimonials of four Central American mothers detained for two years with their children at The Berks County Residential Center, a family prison in Pennsylvania. The screening was followed by a conversation with the artist. The event was an open session of Emilie Diouf’s ENG 52a: Refugee Stories, Refugee Lives, and was sponsored by CAST and cosponsored by the Fine Arts and English Departments.

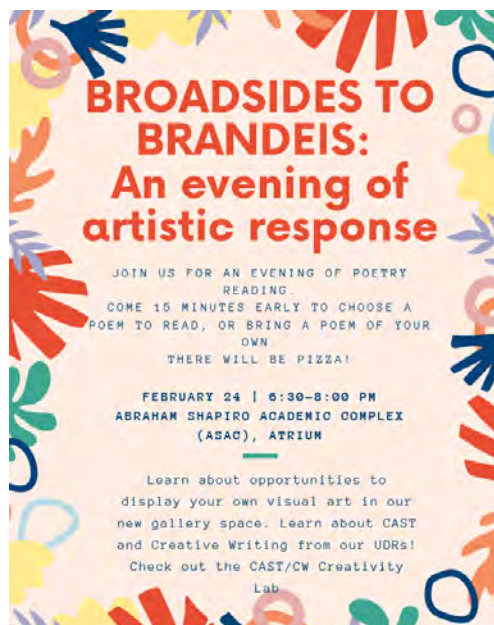
Spring 2020 [The spring 2020 events lineup was cut short due to the coronavirus spread and the closing of campus. The CAST program continued to work remotely and remained connected to faculty and students.]

Broadsides to Brandeis: An Evening of Artistic Response

February 24



CAST UDR Zoe Rose '20 beside the installation



This event marked the official opening of the CAST and Creative Writing exhibition space, outside the CAST Creativity Lab on the top floor of the Abraham Shapiro Academic Complex. Co-hosted by the CAST and Creative Writing UDRs, “Broadsides to Brandeis” celebrated the new permanent installation of the public art of Broadsided, a press founded by Brandeis professor Elizabeth Bradfield, co-director of the Creative Writing Program and builder of the installation. Broadsided Press selects and commissions work from poets and visual artists and makes their work available on the streets of communities. It brings words together with the energy of original visual art, publishing monthly collaborations on the website as PDFs that are then downloaded, printed, and posted around the world by “Vectors.” The event included poetry reading by CAST students.

Virtual Capstone Presentations

May 1 (via Zoom)

The CAST minors shared their capstone projects with the Brandeis community. This three-hour “festival” included comedy sketches, one-woman theatrical productions, student-produced films, and more. It was included in Create@Brandeis: Living Room Fest, May 1-3, sponsored by the Arts Engagement team of the Division of Creative Arts. For descriptions of the students’ capstone projects, see above.

X. The Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts

The program in [Peacebuilding and the Arts](#) (PBA), directed by Cynthia Cohen and assistant directed by Toni Shapiro-Phim, is part of Brandeis University's 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 2019-2020 year.

[IMPACT: Imagining Together Platform for Arts, Culture and Conflict Transformation](#)

began as a collaboration among PBA, the Baker Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies at Juniata College, and Maseno University in Western Kenya. The global IMPACT community expresses its appreciation to the Porticus Community Art Lab for its generous and flexible support of our multi-regional values-driven collaboration to strengthen the arts, culture



and conflict transformation ecosystem. It also appreciates the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for its support of our 18-month planning process. Thanks also to The Fresh Sound Foundation, the Max and Sunny Howard Memorial Foundation, Amy Merrill '68 and Elaine Reuben '63. IMPACT's mission is to design and activate a set of structures and processes to strengthen the field of Arts, Culture and Conflict Transformation (*acct*).

Highlights from PBA and IMPACT in 2019-2020 include:

International Teaching Artists' Collaborative "Think Tank"

In July 2019, IMPACT Leadership Circle members Cynthia Cohen, Carmen Olachea and Mary Ann Hunter hosted an [online think tank](#) for the International Teaching Artists' Collaborative. The talk explored key concepts associated with social transformation, conflict transformation, education, and art and aesthetics, which were illustrated by case examples. There were 40 participants from 7 different countries, which led to an engaging session that spread the word about IMPACT. Both Carmen Olachea and Mary Ann Hunter work with IMPACT on the Virtual Learning Exchanges that are being developed in relation to the *acct* field.

Strengthening the Arts, Culture and Conflict Transformation field: Thinking together creatively about the role of philanthropy

IMPACT and the Sillerman Center for the Advancement of Philanthropy convened a [strategy session](#) for *acct* from October 30 - November 1, 2019. The gathering – which took place in conjunction with a visit to Brandeis by Dr. John Paul Lederach (see above) – brought together [20 leading thinkers](#), including philanthropic professionals, artists and researchers, to develop creative strategies for strengthening the *acct* ecosystem. Participants were able to build relationships, discuss the challenges they face, engage in candid conversations about philanthropy, and explore possibilities for future collaborations.

Members of IMPACT contribute to UNESCO ArtLab project

Beginning in late spring of 2020, several representatives of IMPACT have been collaborating with international researchers and practitioners on a UNESCO/OHCHR initiative that aims ultimately to support advocacy for arts engagement with and among populations experiencing severe precarity and marginalization (refugees, for example). IMPACT participants are on a team tasked with identifying exemplary, ethical practices in the field.

Launch of Acting Together Online

In February 2020, PBA launched a new [website](#) designed by filmmaker Allison Lund featuring digital resources from *Acting Together on the World Stage*. Released in 2011, *Acting Together* documents work from conflict regions around the world, and shares them in multiple formats designed to strengthen the contributions of performance, including theater and ritual, social justice and conflict transformation. Features of the new website include a mini-documentary, short videos, and printable resources intended for learning and teaching.

Imagining Together/Acting Together IMPACT Virtual Learning Exchange

IMPACT hosted a virtual learning exchange April 21-22, 2020 to give artists, cultural workers, conflict transformation practitioners, researchers, funders, and policymakers a thorough introduction to the *acct* ecosystem. The 48-hour long exchange was hosted in both English and Spanish and allowed more than 700 participants from across the globe (Africa, Australia, Asia, Europe, South America and North America) to contribute their thoughts. The content included the exploration of key concepts in the *acct* ecosystem: resistance, re-humanization, reconciliation, re-enchancement, and conflict transformation. Thanks to [Peace Direct](#) for partnering to host this exchange on the [Peace Insight](#) platform.

Imagining Together/Acting Together" was conducted in both English and Spanish. Summaries of the comments are being prepared as this annual report is being finalized, with reports in multiple modalities being considered. The learning exchange included a discussion board focusing on creative responses to covid-19, and an exploring of the impact of the pandemic on *acct* as well as thoughts about the roles artists and cultural workers can play in shaping the narratives and the policies that emerge from this emergency. These comments have been summarized and shared with the special rapporteur on cultural rights from the UN's Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, as a contribution to a report she is preparing to the Human Rights Council.

Peacebuilding and the Arts Now e-newsletter

We continue our distribution of Peacebuilding and the Arts Now, the e-newsletter that reaches thousands of constituents every few months. Editions were issued in January, February and April of 2020, with more to come later in the year. These issues featured special sections on the artistic and cultural dimensions of protest movements around the globe; on creative responses to the global pandemic and relief resources for artists; on the launch of the new [Acting Together on the World Stage website](#); and on IMPACT's Leadership Circle virtual meetings.