



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

2020-2021 Annual Report
Prepared by Quinn Filler '23 and
Barbara Strauss, CAST administrator

Brandeis University

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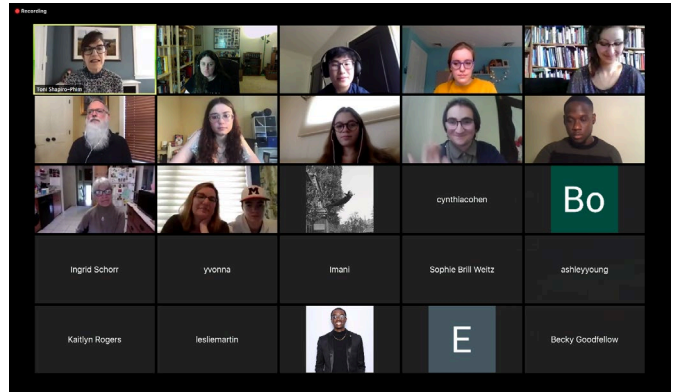
The students, faculty, and staff of the Interdisciplinary Minor in Creativity, the Arts, and Social Transformation (CAST) are enormously appreciative of the contributions of three steadfast donors whose support has made possible many of the activities described in this annual report: Amy Merrill '68, 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; and video podcasts related to the movement for racial justice and the imperatives to vote; and the development of an archive in the Brandeis Library. We appreciate support from Ammad Bahalim, '04, for his visionary support of CAST 170a: Documenting Immigrant Experiences.

The global IMPACT community expresses its appreciation to Porticus Community Art Lab for its support.

I. Highlights

CAST on COVID

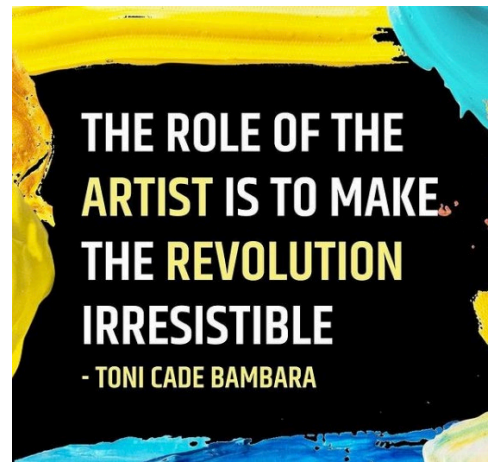
The CAST program maintained close communication with our minors and affiliates throughout the academic year, which was conducted mostly online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to proceeding with most scheduled courses, virtual events and visits to classes by artists and practitioners, CAST offered some pandemic-specific conversations in order to help our community process this unprecedented experience. Read below about Social Deis-tance DIY and Creative Quarantining: A CAST and Creative Writing Event for all Brandeis Students.



CAST carried on despite COVID; we connected online for events, artist visits, and courses.

CAST on Social Media

This year we heightened our presence on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). Our Undergraduate Departmental Representatives (UDRs) Anna Cass '21 and Aviva Davis '21 [opened our social media space for creative work](#) responding to COVID-19, Black Lives Matter, and much else of concern in 2020. Ingrid Schorr, Director of Arts Engagement at Brandeis, further publicized the work of CAST by posting our 2020 virtual capstone presentations on the [Arts at Brandeis YouTube Channel](#) and the [Arts at Brandeis Facebook page](#) to show the incoming class of 2024 how they can engage with the arts. We also increased visibility of our programming by jazzing up our website, adding a carousel of student work to the homepage and a video produced by CAST minor April Ginns, called "[So, you're interested in minoring in CAST?](#)" to the requirements page. The new design was shared with the Office of Admissions for inclusion in their outreach to prospective students interested in combining creativity with social change.



Renowned Playwright Catherine Filloux works with CAST 150b students

Photo credit Vandy Rattana

In fall 2020, Intro to CAST students were given a very special opportunity to work directly with renowned playwright Catherine Filloux, who visited class multiple times and helped students craft a series of monologues based on transcripts of interviews of survivors of the Cambodian genocide. The students performed these monologues for the campus community on Dec 7. Read below (page 15) about Filloux's background and her work with CAST.



II. Contributions to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Brandeis

CAST Commitments in Solidarity with Black Lives Matter

CAST Co-Chairs Tom King and Toni Shapiro-Phim, along with UDRs Anna Cass '21 and Aviva Davis '21, developed the following statement in summer 2020. The statement was backed by CAST's affiliated faculty and staff and the Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts, and distributed to our constituencies across campus. Programs that helped to fulfill these commitments are listed below the statement.

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, with additional acknowledgements and commitments
<https://www.brandeis.edu/creativity-arts-social-transformation/#Black-Lives-Matter>

Programs and initiatives that helped fulfill CAST's Commitments in Solidarity with Black Lives Matter in AY 2020-21:

Working Group on Fighting Anti-Blackness

Organized by: The interdisciplinary minor in Creativity, the Arts, and Social Transformation (CAST), Tom King and Toni Shapiro-Phim, Co-Chairs.

The Mandel Center for the Humanities (MCH) at Brandeis approved and funded at the level of \$2000 a CAST-hosted Working Group on Fighting Anti-Blackness in Our Curricular, Research, and Creative Spaces. The Working Group aims to create a space for (1) uncovering and fighting anti-Blackness in our institutional, scholarly, creative, and curricular frameworks and practices; (2) facilitating our development as artists, researchers, educators, community-engaged practitioners, and administrators; and (3) following the leadership of our colleagues working in such areas as DEI research and implementation, Black and African American studies, and critical

race studies and supporting, promoting, and celebrating their work at Brandeis. We proposed the following initial topics for conversation and learning:

1. Naming anti-Blackness at all levels of our work;
2. Identifying and dismantling the racialized frameworks and epistemologies informing our work as artists, researchers, educators, community-engaged practitioners, and administrators, with particular attention to anti-Blackness;
3. Developing actual racial equity in our programs and at the institutional level;
4. Identifying and overcoming obstacles to the success and belonging of BIPOC faculty and graduate students at Brandeis;
5. Decolonizing our methods as researchers, artists, educators, and administrators;
6. Decentering the university in community-engaged learning and practice; and
7. Advancing a regenerative/restorative model of community.

The MCH Working Group is open to all faculty, administrative staff, and graduate students at Brandeis who (1) understand creativity, broadly defined, as a key component of their practice, research methodology, or object of study; (2) commit to centering the voices and knowledge of those whose lives have been rendered most precarious by anti-Blackness; and (3) commit to the process of learning together in community and to the principles for engagement established at our initial meetings.

Open Letter from Boston Arts and Cultural Workers in Demand of Racial Equity and Social Transformation

CAST Co-Chairs Toni Shapiro-Phim and Tom King both signed this letter, which recognizes the inherent racism in arts institutions around the world and in Boston, and which aims to unmake the structures in Boston's arts community which uphold the interests of white supremacy. The letter outlines specific methods by which the most powerful members of Boston's artistic world should go about dismantling these structures, as well as their underlying ideas.

A diverse, equitable, and inclusive curriculum

CAST's key curricular themes center diversity, equity, and inclusion. We actively work to decolonize our curriculum, teaching, and research practices. The core course, CAST 150b: Introduction to Creativity, the Arts, and Social Transformation, requires students to reflect on their own identities and the challenges of communicating across differences in power. The capacity to communicate respectfully across differences in power is central to work as a practitioner or researcher in the arts and social transformation field, and it is essential for effectiveness in social justice efforts of any kind. Our core course introduces students to possible risks of harm while working in community, and ways to minimize them. It also prioritizes the study of writing and creative works by BIPOC scholars and artists in and with, for the most part, communities of color. The Ethics of Community Engagement practicum, CAST 181b, focuses on a range of arts and social justice organizations and initiatives as case studies, most of which are BIPOC-led. In fall 2020, the practicum course invited a representative from the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to facilitate a workshop with our students on issues of identity and inclusion.

All courses cross-listed with CAST must, among other criteria, “demonstrate inclusiveness and equity in selection of materials and pedagogical approaches” and should explore such themes as power, inequality, and/or conflict; social justice and/or ethics; models of social transformation; creativity, aesthetic expression, and cultural production as ways of analyzing and transforming conflict, building resilience, and/or imagining and rehearsing change; and the risks of doing harm, and other issues of ethics and efficacy pertinent to creative and cultural workers seeking social transformation.

Resources in the Wake of Anti-Asian Racism

In an April 5 letter to the CAST community, the department shared three resources in solidarity with the struggle against anti-Asian hate:

Panny Tao, the Student Union Undergraduate Diversity & Inclusion Officer, shared with us the recording of the "[Student Union Responding to Anti-Asian Racism](#)" panel discussion held virtually on March 25. Panny and the student organizers of this panel discussion speak directly and helpfully to anti-Asian racism, its presence on the Brandeis campus, and its implications for the success and thriving of our Asian peers, students, and colleagues. My Tam H. Nguyen has written about the embodied trauma of Asian American women, in response to the horrific events in Atlanta, in her essay, "[Asian American Women are Resilient -- and We Are Not Okay,](#)" for Medium.com. She writes, "The knowledge that my body is the target for violence is not the America my family crossed the seas for." The writer Ocean Vuong is interviewed in, "[Ocean Vuong: A Life Worthy of Our Breath \(On Being with Krista Tippett\).](#)" Vuong's words (so beautifully and carefully chosen) embrace those among us who have experienced racist trauma and violence and inspire all of us to action.

III. Courses

In fall 2020 we implemented approved changes to CAST course and capstone requirements, along with our new governance structure (for details, see [last year's annual report, page 4](#)). Co-Chair Toni Shapiro-Phim created new courses that deepen essential learning in the realm of arts, creativity and social transformation theory and practice. We offered the first semesters of a Capstone Project Design Practicum (Spring 2020) and an Ethics of Community Engagement Practicum (Fall 2020). Another new course, Dance and Migration (first offered Spring 2020), will rotate with other CAST core electives, including Confronting Gender-Based Violence, first taught in spring 2021 (see below).



Performers from Music and Dance from Ghana, a CAST elective

Fall 2020:

Core Course

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

Core electives

- CAST 181b: Ethics of Community Engagement Capstone Practicum (Toni Shapiro-Phim)
- AAAS 124a: After the Dance: Performing Sovereignty in the Caribbean (Faith Smith)
- ANTH 130b: Visuality and Culture (Patricia Alvarez Astacio)
- ANTH 159a: Museums and Public Memory (Ellen Schattschneider)
- ENG 139a: Publishing Workshop: Literary Editing and Publishing (Elizabeth Bradfield)
- ENG 170b: Contemporary Theatre and Performance: Between Rights and the Post-Human (Tom King)
- LGLS 129a: Global Justice and Societies in Transition (Melissa Stimell, Cynthia Cohen, Leigh Swigart)

Spring 2021:

Core electives

- NEW COURSE (see below) CAST 125a: Confronting Gender-Based Violence (Toni Shapiro-Phim)
- HISP 160a: Culture/Media and Social Change in Latin America (Fernando Rosenberg)
- MUS 3b: Global Soundscapes: Performing Musical Tradition Across Time and Place (Judith Eissenberg)
- NEJS 173a: Trauma and Violence in Israeli Literature and Film (Ilana Szobel)
- NEJS 184b: Disability Cultures: Art, Film and Literature of People with Disabilities (Ilana Szobel)
- SOC 155b: Protest, Politics, and Change: Social Movements (Gowri Vijayakumar)
- THA 40a: The Art of Visual Narrative and Production Design (Cameron Anderson)

Toni Shapiro-Phim created the new course, **CAST 125a: Confronting Gender-Based Violence**, which she taught in spring 2021. Originally capped at 20 participants, the course was so popular that 44 enrollees were accepted. Engaging with multiple forms of creative expression and several different social change frameworks as they address and counter various aspects of gender-based violence in discrete cultural and historical contexts, this course explores gender-based violence as a grave violation of human rights, and the creative, innovative and meaningful methods through which particular communities and individuals counter such violation, including as it intersects with race and socioeconomic status.



Taking to the streets in Mexico City to protest violence against women

These methods might range from art installations in galleries or public spaces to formal theatrical productions, from the choreography of street protests to graffiti, films, pop-up concerts and podcasts, many involving survivors of gender-based violence in the creative process. The course focuses in particular on the experiences of those who identify as women, have been assigned to or perceived of as members of that category, or who identify and present as femme. The course fulfills university requirements in [Difference and Justice in the World](#) and [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Studies in the U.S.](#)

Additional CAST electives can be found on the [registrar's website](#).

IV. Affiliated Faculty and Staff

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 between change agents, peacebuilders, and artists. The work is supported by Brandeis faculty and staff members from diverse fields. Per our plans laid out in last year's review with the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, we divided what was once the "advisory committee" into an [executive committee and a committee of CAST affiliates](#). The executive committee meets twice per semester to review the nuts and bolts of the program, while the affiliates meet once per semester to discuss broader concerns. Throughout the academic year, members of both groups offer programming suggestions, look over drafts of important correspondence (such as the Solidarity Statement with Black Lives Matter), and teach courses that are part of the CAST curriculum.

Executive Committee

- Thomas King, Undergraduate Advising Head and Co-Chair, CAST; English
- Toni Shapiro-Phim, Associate Professor and Co-Chair, CAST; Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts at the Ethics Center
- Emilie Diouf, English
- Leigh Swigart, Programs in International Justice and Society at the Ethics Center

Affiliates

- Cameron Anderson, Theater Arts
- Elizabeth Bradfield, English and Creative Writing
- Jennifer Cleary, Theater Arts
- Cynthia Cohen, Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts at the Ethics Center
- Judith Eissenberg, Music
- Robin Feuer Miller, Humanities
- Dorothy Kim, English
- Kristin Parker, Associate, Ethics Center; formerly with Rose Art Museum
- Fernando Rosenberg, Hispanic Studies, Comparative Literature
- David Sherman, English
- Faith Smith, African and Afro-American Studies, English
- Ilana Szobel, Hebrew Literature
- Sabine von Mering, German; Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies

V. Faculty and Staff Achievements



Faith Smith (AAAS, ENG) was one of five Brandeis faculty members recognized for excellence in the classroom with a 2019-20 teaching award. Smith received the 2020 Dean of Arts & Sciences Faculty Service Award, which is given to an outstanding faculty member of the graduate school who has impacted his or her students' education inside and outside the classroom. [Read more about Smith's award at BrandeisNOW.](#)

Smith inspired Dannie Brice '20 and the topic of her senior research thesis “Performing Sovereignty and Staging Creolization in theaters of Revolt: Marie Vieux Chauvet and the Grammars of Historical Drama in Dance on the Volcano.” Brice says, “Dr. Smith has taught me that Performance is pervasive throughout Caribbean Black life and is the essence through which we understand and focus on Transatlantic bodies at the turn of the slave trade. I am incredibly lucky to have been mentored by Dr. Smith.” Read the [BrandeisNOW article.](#)



Dannie Brice '20, credit Heratch Ekmekjian

Cameron Anderson (THA) was promoted to the rank of associate professor of theater arts with tenure. Twelve Brandeis faculty achieved tenure in spring 2020 with approval from the Brandeis University Board of Trustees. “These faculty members carry on the Brandeisian traditions of producing consequential research across all fields of study, along with an eagerness to connect with undergraduate and graduate students in laboratory and field work,” President Ron Liebowitz said. [Read more about Anderson's promotion at BrandeisNOW.](#)



Elizabeth Bradfield (English, Creative Writing) published and taught widely this year. Her poem “[Touchy](#)” was in the July/August 2020 issue of *Atlantic Monthly*. A new anthology, [When Birds Are Near](#), from Cornell University Press, contains her essay, “Buried Birds.” And she taught (online) for the [Orion Environmental Writers Workshop](#).





The Liberian Women's Chorus for Change

CAST Co-Chair Toni Shapiro-Phim's documentary film, [*Because of the War*](#), was the focus of part of the [UNESCO Art-Lab's](#) International Human Rights Day celebration on December 10, 2020. UNESCO screened the trailer and interviewed Dr. Shapiro-Phim as well as Fatu Gayflor, one of the Liberian anti-violence activists and artists who share their stories in the movie.

About the film: In West Africa and North America, four Liberian women – mothers, singers, dancers, survivors of civil wars, refugees and immigrants – use their music to address injustice and inspire action for social change. Fatu Gayflor, Marie Nyenabo, Zaye Tete and Tokay Tomah share their stories, deepening understandings of the active, constructive roles the arts and artists can take in moments of crisis in the lives of families and communities.

Also in December, Shapiro-Phim gave a presentation at the Theatre in a Time of Crisis conference, hosted by the Open University of Cyprus. In January 2021, Shapiro-Phim presented a paper as part of a workshop called "Transnational mobilities of music and dance in the Global South: Choreographing belonging, composing identity." The workshop was hosted by the Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University (The Hague, Netherlands). In February 2021, she gave a presentation on IMPACT: Imagining Together Platform for Arts, Culture and Conflict Transformation, in collaboration with an IMPACT colleague in Cyprus, at the International Peace Research Association conference in Nairobi, Kenya. Finally, Shapiro-Phim wrote a chapter in the recently-published book *Coexistence in the Aftermath of Mass Violence: Imagination, Empathy and Resilience*. The book details the ways societies repair themselves through imagination, empathy, and resilience.



Kristin Parker (on the staff of the Boston Public Library, formerly of the Rose Art Museum), was awarded a planning grant from UCLA's Modern Endangered Archives Program for the project, *Preserving Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis: The Role of Social Media*, with a focus on displaced Syrians. Social media applications, including Facebook, Instagram, and Tripadvisor, have become essential platforms for displaced communities seeking to commemorate their lost homes and remain connected. This project will identify and survey virtual cultural heritage collections, seen as commemorative community archives, created by Aleppians and other Syrians who have been forcibly displaced from their homes.



November 2020 saw the publication of Leigh Swigart's chapter, "Now You See It, Now You Don't: Culture at the International Criminal Court" in *Intersections of Law and Culture at the International Criminal Court*. She also participated in the launch of the book at the December 2020 meeting of the International Criminal Court's Assembly of States Parties. Swigart was recently invited to join the editorial board of the Hart Publishing series *Studies in International and Comparative Criminal Law*. She has also been invited to contribute a paper – based on her research on linguistic challenges facing the International Criminal Court – to a publication entitled "International Criminal Law - a Counter-Hegemonic Project?"



Cynthia Cohen and Fernando Rosenberg made important contributions to the fields of human rights and social justice. Rosenberg (HISP, COMP LIT) was a speaker at the International Colloquium on the Inter-American System of Human Rights, on a panel about Symbolic Reparations. Cohen (Peacebuilding and the Arts, Ethics Center) served on an external review committee for the Program in Human Rights at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut. She also served as co-convenor of the [Creative Approaches to Transitional Justice series](#), a set of virtual presentations and conversations based on the special issue of the [International Journal of Transitional Justice](#) that she co-edited in March 2020.



VI. Student News

Undergraduate Departmental Representatives

Anna Cass '21

Anna majored in HSSP with CAST and Social Justice and Social Policy minors. She knew she wanted to be involved with CAST before she came to Brandeis and throughout her career has pursued painting and comedy. "I firmly believe that creative expression gives us opportunities to grow empathy in ways that other forms of communication do not."





Aviva Davis '21

Aviva majored in Psychology and minored in CAST. “I have loved the performing arts since I was a child, and learning how to do what I love to bring about social change is one of the many reasons I love the CAST program.”

Richard Quinn Weiner '21 selected as Schiff Undergraduate Fellow, Urban Transgender Community Researcher



CAST minor R. Quinn Weiner '21 (they/them/theirs) was selected in May 2020 to receive one of the ten Schiff Undergraduate Fellowships for the 2020-2021 Brandeis University academic year for their project 'Generations of Impactful Scholarship' with their faculty mentor, Tom King.

As Quinn described, "For my Schiff Fellowship project, I am expanding upon my English senior honors thesis, within which I am studying the way the phrase 'gender identity' takes on different meanings and uses among various academic and lay populations.

Essentially, I am trying to unravel a giant miscommunication, one which has led to unproductive and nonsensical conversations around gender and gender identity, impeding research, justice work, and individuals' searches for language and recognition. With this in mind, under the mentorship of Prof. Tom King, I explored the ways my research findings can be creatively and effectively communicated to a variety of audiences (including through the creation of a blog, an academic unit, and an oral research presentation) in hopes of reducing that miscommunication and hopefully the barriers it creates.

As a Schiff Fellow, Quinn received a \$2000 stipend to support their research, and their Faculty mentor received a \$500 payment to support their own research endeavors. Learn more about the [Jerome A. Schiff Fellowship](#).

Then, in spring 2021, Quinn worked as the Urban Transgender Communities Research Assistant for CAST 125a: Confronting Gender-Based Violence. Given their specialization in gender studies and language use, Quinn was chosen to conduct research about urban transgender communities in the U.S., especially in New York City, with a focus on ballroom culture and violence against transgender women.

CAST 170a Research Assistant Erick Amezcua '23



Photo by CAST minor Sarah Terrazano '19. The CAST 170a student filmmakers at the course's 2019 film festival with some of the people they featured in their documentaries.

Erick Amezcua '23 was originally hired to serve as teaching assistant for CAST 170a: Documenting Immigrant Experiences in fall 2020. The course ultimately had to be postponed until fall 2021.

Meanwhile, Amezcua, from Juarez, Mexico, a talented creator of short films, was rehired as a CAST Research Assistant. He spent the remainder of the fall semester exploring programs and resources for members of Waltham-area Muslim communities,

conducting research about local immigration history, and identifying and establishing relationships with organizations and institutions focused on the wellbeing of immigrant communities in general, and immigrant Muslim communities in particular. His research prepared the groundwork for the future continuation of CAST 170a.

Camila Cano '23 Helps Create CAST 125a: Confronting Gender-Based Violence

Camila Cano '23 not only served as CAST co-chair [Toni Shapiro-Phim](#)'s TA for [CAST 125a: Confronting Gender-Based Violence](#), but she helped *create* the course. In Camila's own words:



Credit: Mike Lovett

I was born in Mexico City and attended an international school there. After graduating, I took a gap year in Israel. I am currently a sophomore majoring in Economics and Education Studies. My interest in gender-based violence was sparked by the alarming scourge of femicide in Mexico. As tensions escalated in the country, I've felt powerless as I couldn't physically participate in the fight. I decided to act within the community I was in: Brandeis. I created a video about violence in Mexico for one of my classes and participated in the International Women's Day essay contest. I then shared my work and concerns with Professor Toni Shapiro-Phim, who proposed that we create a new course to address gender-based violence and the ways it has been confronted. I had previously taken a class with her which opened my eyes to how the arts can be a major tool for social transformation. Since I am very passionate about dance and art in general, having a creative focus in the new course is very inspiring. Creating this class is incredibly significant to me, as it is my way to contribute to the fight against such violence, not only in Mexico but in the Brandeis community and beyond. My work includes contacting, researching and interviewing potential guests for the class, or people whose creativity and projects we might study;

producing a video that gives an overview of different kinds of gender-based violence; and designing a three-day activity based on the situation in Mexico.”

Shapiro-Phim received an award from the [Theodore and Jane Norman Fund for Faculty Research and Creative Projects in Arts and Sciences](#) to support Camila’s work on developing the course. Camila’s story was featured on the university’s website homepage.

VII. Capstone Projects

Sophie Brill Weitz: Sophie produced a podcast as her capstone project. “[Family Remembrance: Marking Lives Lived with Stumbling Stones](#)” is an edited collection of interviews that Sophie conducted with her grandfather, mother and other relatives related to the family’s wish to have *stolpersteine* (stumbling stones) placed at the last voluntary residence, before the Holocaust, of her grandfather and his family in Belgrade, Serbia. (*Stolpersteine* are commemorative brass plaques placed in the pavement in front of the last known residence of choice of victims and survivors of the Holocaust.) What does it mean to remember, and to be remembered, Sophie and her family ask. [Listen to the podcast recording and view the transcript and credits.](#)



Aviva Davis: Aviva (she/they) hosted a monthly Zoom call featuring a different Jewish creator of color each time in hopes that these conversations would educate the group about the micro and macroaggressions Jews of color face in their daily lives, and how this discrimination is amplified when in the public eye. As a Jew of color herself, this is a cause close to her heart, having faced both micro and macroaggressions throughout the course of her life. At the end of the semester, Aviva presented a TED-style talk on the progress of these monthly sessions as well as goals for the future.

April Ginns: “Whose Voices are Being Heard in the Indie Electronic Scene?” was a culmination of April’s work for the spring 2021 [MusicUnitesUS](#) residency. As the Residency Documentarian, April was involved from the planning of the residency in November to the final virtual performance in February. She assisted with scheduling the residency events for Balún, sent emails, updated and managed the Brandeis MusicUnites US social media, and generated a substantial amount of user engagement. She then conducted an extensive [interview](#) with two members of the band Balún and broadcast it on her Brandeis radio show leading up to the final concert.



April Ginns (r) and Leah Sagan-Dworsky during the capstone presentation, April 29, 2021 on Zoom

Joanna Marcus: Joanna developed an art and mental health blog called [Journeys Through Art](#). She wanted to create something that would, in some capacity, help to destigmatize mental illness. She invited people to share any kind of art that has helped or inspired them through their mental health journey in the hopes of connecting them to others with similar stories.

Leah Sagan-Dworsky: During the Covid-19 pandemic, collaborative music-making was more difficult than ever. Leah's project, "Music Collabs," was an artistic initiative that brought together student musicians from different parts of the Brandeis community to create music virtually. The goals of the project were to foster friendship and promote creativity across musical genres, countering people's enforced isolation from one another and adding to Brandeis' soundscape.

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 discussions.

Fall 2020:

CAST 150b: Introduction to Creativity, the Arts, and Social Transformation, taught by Toni Shapiro-Phim, hosted accomplished artists and scholars including Tony-award-nominated Pascale Armand, speaking about her jump to playwriting in response to anti-Black and anti-immigrant statements and policies; Native American ritual and peace studies specialist Polly Walker, speaking about Native/Indigenous rituals and social justice; Jane Sapp, sharing her perspective on the relationship between music and today's demands for racial justice, and music and the Civil Rights Movement; and Claudia Bernardi, reviewing her mural project in Argentina with families of the "disappeared." The course also welcomed playwright, human rights activist, and educator Catherine Filloux (see below).



Pascale Armand, credit The Lark

CAST 181b: Ethics of Community

Engagement Capstone Practicum, taught by Toni Shapiro-Phim, hosted discussions with Lydia Casmier of Brandeis' Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Elizabeth Moy of the Rose Art Museum. The class also had a visit from artist Cesar Viveros, presenting his work on home altar traditions of Mexicans in Philadelphia, a project that arose in response to the dangers of deportation and anti-Mexican rhetoric.

Three artist-scholars (Lela Aisha Jones, Alex Shaw, and Germaine Ingram) facilitated a workshop – open to additional CAST students as well – on ethical engagement with community, focused on their multi-year Yoruba Performance Project initiative.



Kùlú Mèlé African Dance and Drum Ensemble performing *Yemaya*, 2014. Photo by Jaci Downs. Part of The Philadelphia Yoruba Performance Project.

ENG 170b: Contemporary Theatre and Performance: Between Rights and the Post-Human

With support from the School of Arts and Sciences Cocurricular Fund, CAST, and ENG, Tom King hosted three visiting artists in ENG 170b, Contemporary Theatre: Between Rights and the Posthuman. In a session open to the Brandeis community, playwright Catherine Filloux responded to student questions about the accountability of playwrights to the communities they represent, balancing commitments to accuracy and aesthetics, and the ethics of casting, through a focus on two plays, *Lemkin's House* and *The Breach: A Story about the Drowning of New Orleans* (created collaboratively with Joe Sutton and Tarell Alvin McCraney). In a second open session, “A Conversation with playwright Virginia Grise” – the second of two sessions with Grise that day, arranged primarily by María Durán, Florence Levy Kay Fellow in U.S. Latinx Cultural Studies – students engaged Grise on relationships among playwriting, community engagement, and activism, focusing on disability and trauma and considering how the rhetoric of individual healing might be redirected toward collective action and the transformation of the structural inequities that do harm. Finally, Anneke Reich (MA in Arts in Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education; Artistic Director, Artists' Theater of Boston; Engagement Coordinator, One Love Foundation, Boston; and Brandeis alum) joined students to discuss community engaged theatre, embodied education, and using creativity to help youth negotiate consent in intimate relationships.

AAAS 124a: Performing Sovereignty in the Caribbean, taught by Faith Smith, had a virtual screening, dance performance, and panel discussion. The event included Dr. Carolyn Cooper, author of *Sound Clash: Jamaican Dancehall Culture at Large* and Professor Emerita at the University of the West Indies Jamaica; Joelle Powe, documentarian of *Out There Without Fear: Jamaica's Dancehall*; and Latonya Style, the internationally renowned Dancehall choreographer and founder of Dance Jamaica.

Renowned Playwright Catherine Filloux



[CAST 150b](#) students had a special opportunity to work directly with [renowned playwright Catherine Filloux](#), who visited class multiple times during the latter part of the term. Under the guidance of this award-winning author of works that address human rights and social justice the world over, students crafted and presented a series of monologues based on transcripts of interviews of survivors of the Cambodian genocide (see “Events” below).

Catherine Filloux is an award-winning playwright who has been writing about human rights and social justice for over twenty-five years. Her plays have been produced around the world. Among the many honors she has received are the 2019 Barry Lopez Visiting Writer in Ethics and Community Fellowship; the 2017 Otto René Castillo Award for Political Theatre; and the 2015 Planet Activist Award. Filloux’s plays have been widely published and anthologized. She received her MFA at NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts’ Dramatic Writing Program and her French Baccalaureate in Philosophy, with Honors, in Toulon, France. She is a co-founder of Theatre Without Borders, and the first Art & Peacebuilding Scholar at the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies at the University of San Diego.

Filloux also visited an open session of Tom King’s ENG 170b: Contemporary Theatre: Between Rights and the Posthuman on 10/19/20 (see above).

Spring 2021:

MUS 3b: Global Soundscapes: Performing Musical Tradition Across Time and Place, taught by Judith Eissenberg, welcomed several visitors to class, including Holly Wissler, an ethnomusicologist from Q’eros from the Andes of Peru; Wayne Marshall, an ethnomusicologist from Nu Whirled Music; Balún, a band from Puerto Rico; Gamin Kang, a Korean musician; and Rajib Karmakar, a sitar player from India, among several others. The class also partook in an inaugural “musical mentors project,” in which students were assigned a mentor and for the semester researched the mentor’s tradition, analyzed the mentor’s performances, developed questions and then held a one hour zoom interview with the mentor. Students then presented their research, using aspects of all their work in the final class presentation. Mentors included Darsono Hadiraharjo (Javanese gamelan), Firas Zreik (Qanun player from Haifa), and Jacob Brillhart (Cape Breton fiddling), among several others.

HISP 160a: Culture/Media and Social Change in Latin America, taught by Fernando Rosenberg, had visits by the musicians Noraliz Ruiz and Angelica Negrón, from the Puerto Rican band Balún, who were part of the [MusicUnitesUS](#) program. They discussed the various musical roots and instruments played in Caribbean music.

IX. Events

Fall 2020:

Creative Quarantining: A CAST and Creative Writing Event for all Brandeis Students

August 21, 2020

As an opportunity to “bring us together through shared creative expression,” the CAST and Creative Writing Departments gave students a list of writing prompts and invited them to prepare a short poem, journal entry, two-minute play, or flash fiction piece. Then, on Zoom, students were able to share their work with their peers.

Event hosts provided information about The Quaranteen Collection, an online story-sharing platform for young adults that aims to promote reflection and find the positive side of quarantine.



Social Deis-tance DIY

September 11, 2020

The CAST UDRs hosted a socially distanced notebook collage and button-making event outside on campus. Participants used provided buttons and notebooks to express visions for the future. To inspire these expressions, CAST affiliated faculty offered quotes from materials or concepts taught in their CAST electives. A sample of quotes that were shared:

“Even in Kyoto / Hearing the cuckoo’s cry / I long for Kyoto” -Basho

“The words we use are who we are.” -Anna Deavere Smith

"[W]e must make just and liberated futures irresistible." -adrienne maree brown, referencing an interview with Toni Cade Bambara



(L-R) Eleni Bougioukli '22, Leah Fernandez '22, Grace Lee '22, Priyata Bhatta '22

Gathering around the Wreckage: Oliver Ressler on Climate Activism in Europe

October 14, 2020

CAST cosponsored this event that was hosted by the Center for German and European Studies. Artist and filmmaker Oliver Ressler gave a Zoom webinar about a cycle of recent films that follows the climate justice movement in its struggles to dismantle an economic system heavily dependent on fossil fuels. Ressler directs “Barricading the Ice Sheets,” a research project on the climate justice movement, made possible by the Austrian Science Fund.



Larry Rosenwald: On Antiwar Literature

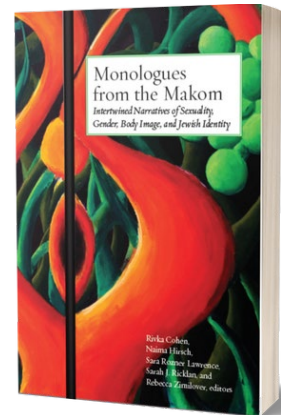
October 16, 2020

Sponsored by English and cosponsored by CAST, Larry Rosenwald gave an innovative and challenging account of antiwar literature. Innovative in doing justice to all the meanings of the term, and challenging in considering such questions as why so many notable antiwar actions have been so badly represented by literary writers, Rosenwald also explored why and how works not themselves antiwar have inspired antiwar feeling, and whether antiwar literature is necessarily bad literature.

Monologues from the Makom: Intertwined Narratives of Sexuality, Gender, Body Image, and Jewish Identity

October 19, 2020

Sponsored by HBI and cosponsored by CAST and others, this event featured the editors and contributors of *Monologues from the Makom* in conversation and reading from their work. Written and edited by recent Brandeis alumnae – including CAST alum Alona Weimer '18 – and inspired by The Vagina Monologues, this exciting collection of first-person poetry and prose is designed to break the observant Jewish community's taboo against open discussion of female sexuality.



Open session of ENG 170b, Contemporary Theatre: Between Rights and the Posthuman with award-winning playwright Catherine Filloux

October 19, 2020

See “Visiting Artists in the Classroom” above.

The Short Film: A Conversation featuring Paloma Valenzuela and Marc Weinberg

October 22, 2020

In spring 2021, writer, director, and producer Paloma Valenzuela joined the Creative Writing faculty and offered a screenwriting workshop called Writing and Producing a Short Film. In advance of her course, students were invited to join this fall 2020 event as Ms. Valenzuela and Professor Marc Weinberg talked about Valenzuela's award-winning web series, “The Pineapple Diaries,” the challenges of writing short films, and the joys and heartbreaks of writing for the screen. This event was sponsored by Creative Writing and cosponsored by CAST.



A Talk with Moisés Kaufman

November 8, 2020

The Theater Arts Department presented a livestreamed panel discussion with Moisés Kaufman, Scott Barrow, and Isaiah Wooden in conjunction with their virtual production of Kaufman's *The Laramie Project*. The event was sponsored by the Theater Arts Department and cosponsored by CAST, among others.



Voices of Comedy

November 14, 2020

Voices of Comedy is an event designed to amplify the voices of comedians who are often overlooked. This year's comedians from the Boston Comedy Chicks were [Wendy Liebman](#), [Xazmin Garza](#), [Tooky Kavanagh](#), and [Kelly MacFarland](#). After their sets, UDRs Aviva Davis and Anna Cass, who hosted the event, moderated a Q&A.

The event was sponsored by CAST and cosponsored by Brandeis Pluralism Alliance, Creative Writing, the English Department, Hiatt, Latin American and Latino Studies, the Library, Politics Department, Student Activities, and WBRS.



Your Healing Is Killing Me – Virginia Grise

November 18, 2020

From panzas to prisons, from street theatre to large-scale multimedia performances, from princess to chafa – Virginia Grise writes plays that are set in bars without windows, barrio rooftops, and lesbian bedrooms.

Grise presented at two events. The first was part performance, part lecture, part workshop, and cosponsored by the Department of Romance Studies, The Latin American and Latino Studies Program, and CAST. The second was an open session of Tom King's ENG 170b: Contemporary Theatre (see "Visiting Artists in the Classroom" above), sponsored by the Department of English and cosponsored by CAST. The event was also

financially supported by the [School of Arts and Sciences Cocurricular Fund](#).

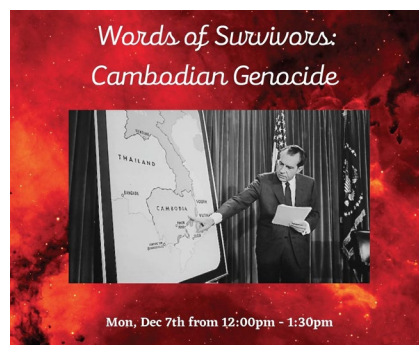
Examining Intersectionality, Identity, and Black Culture in America with Wesley Morris of The New York Times

November 18, 2020

Wesley Morris – *The New York Times* critic at large, writer for the 1619 Project, Pulitzer Prize winner, and co-host of the *Times* podcast *Still Processing* – joined us to discuss a variety of topics including his experience and career path, Black culture and art, the significance of symbols and the virality of stereotypes, and race and identity at predominately white institutions. This was a student-led conversation with Morris, followed by a question and answer session for attendees. One of the panelists was CAST minor Sophie Brill Weitz '21. Sponsored by the Brandeis Journalism Program and cosponsored by CAST, among others.



Credit: Chad Batka, courtesy of *The New York Times*



Words of Survivors: Cambodian Genocide

December 7, 2020

This event, attended by more than 70 people, featured monologues based on the words of survivors of the Cambodian genocide, arranged and presented by students in CAST 150b: Introduction to CAST. The crafting and presentation of these monologues was guided by renowned playwright Catherine Filloux (see “Visiting Artists in the Classroom” above). [View a recording of the event.](#)

Spring 2021:

Standing Above the Clouds

April 6, 2021



The Anthropology UDRs hosted a screening of *Standing Above the Clouds*, a documentary film about Native Hawaiian mother-daughter activists protecting their sacred mountain Mauna Kea from the building of the world's largest telescope. The screening was followed by a Q&A with the filmmakers and activists. The event was sponsored by the Anthropology Department and cosponsored by CAST.

A Conversation and Participatory Movement Experience with Dr. Ananya Chatterjea, April 21, 2021

In an event cosponsored by Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies and CAST, Dr. Chatterjea joined us for an enlightening discussion of dance and movement, along with an active component bringing the conversation to life. Dr. Chatterjea is founder of [Ananya Dance Theatre](#), a company of cultural activists and BIPOC women, womxn, and femme artists who believe in the transformative power of dance. She is also a Professor of Dance at the University of Minnesota, a 2011 Guggenheim Choreography Fellow, a 2016 Joyce Award recipient, and a 2019 Dance/USA Artist Fellow, among many other distinctions.



New CAST Sticker Design Contest

April 23, 2021

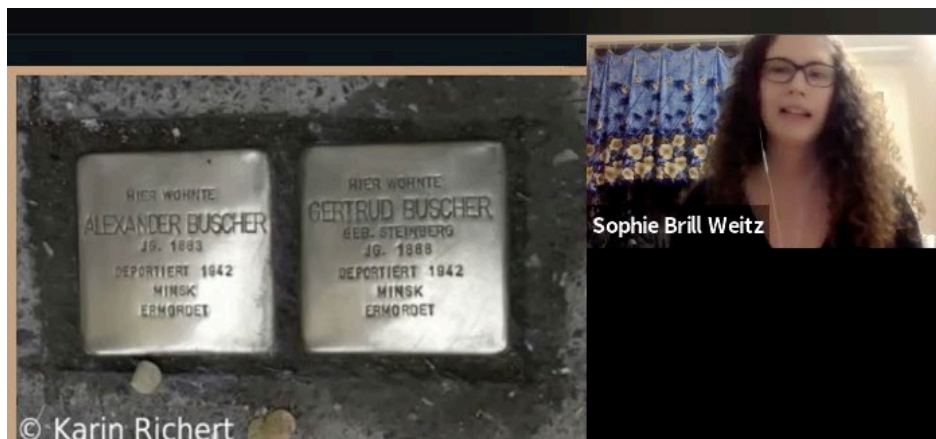
Jennifer and Lauren Podhorzer (both '24) created the winning designs for our new CAST sticker. Ideas were proposed during a UDR-hosted sticker design contest hosted online. The Podhorzers' stickers made the grade and were distributed at Social Deis-tance DIY #2 on April 23, a UDR event at which participants decorated clipboards and designed pins with social justice themes. Jennifer Podhorzer's sticker design is pictured here.



Connecting for Creative Change – Capstone Presentation

April 29, 2021

The CAST minors presented their capstone projects (see “Capstone Projects” above). Addressing microaggressions, stigmas of mental health issues, isolation, histories of loss and displacement and more through music, poetry, podcasts, conversations and other kinds of creativity, students shared how they are taking innovative steps to make the world a more caring, safe and beautiful place for us all. The event was part of the [Leonard Bernstein Festival of the Creative Arts](#), April 25-May 1.



Sophie Brill Weitz discusses Stolpersteine, “stumbling blocks,” that commemorate the people whose lives were taken or disrupted by the Nazis. Her project included a podcast of interviews exploring her family’s experience as Jews during the Holocaust in Belgrade and Budapest, and how their descendants remember.

X. The Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts

Through the work of Cynthia Cohen and Toni Shapiro-Phim, CAST benefits from association with the Imagining Together Platform for Arts, Culture and Conflict Transformation (IMPACT), housed at the International Center for Ethics, Justice and Social Life, under the umbrella of Brandeis' Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts. IMPACT is a worldwide, values-driven collaboration to design and activate strategies to strengthen the arts, culture, and conflict transformation (ACCT) ecosystem. This ecosystem includes individuals and organizations working on the international stage and in local neighborhoods - sometimes at great risk - creating festivals and crafting policies, documenting practices and developing theories, enlivening communities, and building bridges across differences. All involved in this ecosystem imagine and strive to embody and create a more just, more vibrant, less violent world. Shapiro-Phim and Cohen are members of the IMPACT Leadership Circle.

Highlights from PBA and IMPACT in 2020-2021 include:



Credit: UNESCO

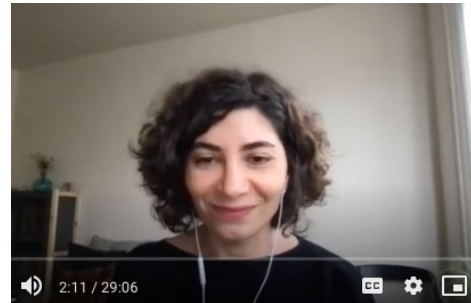
UNESCO Art Lab

On Human Rights Day 2020, UNESCO Art Lab hosted their fourth public event, “[Art Lab for Human Rights Dialogue](#),” since it launched in 2018. In keeping with its theme, the day was full of presentations on the intersection of the arts and human rights, including a screening of the trailer for [Because of the War](#), a film made by [Toni Shapiro-Phim](#), and a conversation moderated by [Cynthia Cohen](#), both of whom are IMPACT Leadership Circle members and direct Brandeis’

Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts. Shapiro-Phim and Cohen, as well as [Polly Walker](#) (IMPACT Leadership Circle member) were all additionally involved in the Art-Lab Platform, a group of professionals across disciplines who spent 2020 studying and making suggestions for how to better connect the artistic world with that of humanitarianism. The Human Rights Day Art Lab allowed for participants and viewers to better understand the subject of the day as well as the role the arts can play in human rights achievements.

Making the Case

In partnership with the Porticus Community Arts Network and ReCAST, Inc., IMPACT is undertaking a research project designed to “make the case” that artistic and cultural initiatives are uniquely well-suited to contribute in constructive ways to contemporary complex challenges. These intertwined challenges include the legacy of violent conflict, the climate crisis, the rise of authoritarianism, growing inequalities, racism, gender-based violence and more. Ten researchers from different parts of the world are exploring particular qualities associated with the arts such as beauty, ambiguity, interdependence, dignity, and so on. This is intended as a resource for community arts practitioners across the globe who are seeking to generate support for their work from foundations and policy makers. A final report is expected before September 2021. Watch the [session](#) in which researchers introduced themselves to one another.



PBA Hires CAST Alum Rasheed Peters '20



PBA was able to hire outstanding alum Rasheed Peters '20 to work on two new projects.

First, the Peacebuilding and the Arts Program ran a social media campaign based on the video podcasts of Jane Sapp, a cultural worker and artist whose podcast, *Songs of Resistance and Hope*, discusses her songs and their relevance to the current moment, particularly to the movement for racial justice. With support from

the Louis D. Brandeis Legacy Fund for Social Justice, Rasheed launched Facebook and Instagram pages about Sapp's work, with still images and short videos, each including music, some commentary from Sapp, and encouragement to vote. In the first week of the campaign, over 11,000 people viewed the ads, including many from swing states.

Based on the success of his work with Jane Sapp, the Ethics Center commissioned Rasheed to create a video for the Ethics Center event [OneShared.World: Youth Activism, Community Engagement and the Reality of Global Interdependence](#). The video featured interviews with current Brandeis students and alumni as well as young people directly engaged with OneShared.World, making change in their communities.

Peacebuilding and the Arts Now e-newsletter

We produced four issues of the [e-newsletter](#). Each issue contains a listing of upcoming events or opportunities for funding around the world, links to information about particular creative initiatives related to specific themes (struggles for racial justice, for example, or the pandemic), and essays about individuals and organizations on the frontlines of work in peacebuilding and the arts.

Thinking Partners

In most years, IMPACT would have visited conferences and festivals all over the world as part of their mission to engage collaboration and view the ecosystem of the arts, culture and conflict transformation on a global scale. But COVID-19 forced a change of plans. Left with the funds that otherwise would have gone to travel, IMPACT immediately set about finding ways to offer relief to programs affected by the pandemic. They soon established a collaboration with the [Cyprus Buffer Fringe Performing Arts Festival](#). Every year, Buffer Fringe is held in the buffer zone maintained by the United Nations between the north and south of Cyprus, and features international and Cyprus-based artists as they show and perform their work. Before the pandemic, the 2020 Buffer Fringe theme had been set as “displacement,” and that theme only became more apt as individuals across the world were separated and isolated.



Credit: Buffer Fringe

IMPACT reached out to Buffer Fringe, and by early spring they were brainstorming ways to expand the meaning of the Festival. This is how they built the “[Thinking Partners](#)” program, a global initiative in which advisors from all over the world are paired with artists and artist groups to create for the Buffer Fringe. The Thinking Partners work closely with their artists, discussing and building their project over the course of two or more months, which then became part of a greater collective. Though it came about through unique circumstances, the Thinking Partners program will continue to connect great artists and build up great art in 2021 as well.



IMPACT Learning Exchange Report

Prepared by Ameer Shaheed with Armine Avetisyan, [Cynthia Cohen](#), and [Polly Walker](#), over the summer IMPACT produced a report based on the findings from the IMPACT Learning Exchange held in April 2020. The theme of the Report is “[Protecting Human Rights During and After COVID-19](#).” Among other

topics, participants in the Learning Exchange -- from NGOs, government departments, private companies, academic institutions, and multilateral agencies -- weighed in on how the worlds of arts, culture, and conflict transformation would interact with such a distressing global event. The report discusses how these thinkers imagined a “post-corona” world, and what kinds of values and initiatives could be introduced after a pandemic. They also talked about ways to 1) raise awareness about the virus and its prevention, 2) address the issue of mental health and the pandemic, and 3) find new means of utilizing creativity in such circumstances, among other topics. The report also highlights the agreement between participants that collaboration must continue between those working in arts, culture, and conflict transformation, and must be strengthened during a time which so easily isolates.

Creative Responses to Gender-Based Violence in Africa

While the pandemic has made so many other forms of gathering and communication difficult, IMPACT is well-versed in creating virtual programs thanks to their past experiences with Learning Exchanges. So, when it came time to host the September 2020 Learning Exchange on Creative Responses to Gender-Based Violence in Africa, they were completely prepared for the success became.



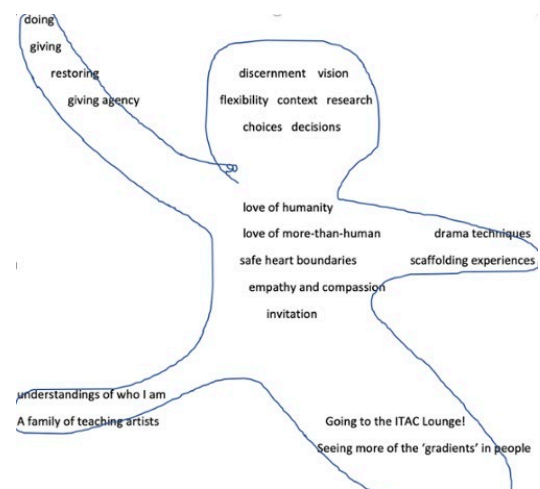
'Let it Down With Our Agonies' by Tumisang Khalipha

IMPACT worked with 11 African organizations: [Amani People's Theatre](#), Dafadoy Collective against Violence against Women and Children; [HeForShe](#), [Just Associates](#), [Noon Creative Enterprise](#), [Partners Global West Africa - Senegal](#), [Search for Common Ground](#) Africa, Senegalese Council of Arts, [Shayisfuba Feminist Collective](#), The Timbuktu Center for Peace Studies and [The Visual Arts Network in South Africa](#) to create a well-rounded conversation on how to approach the issue of gender-based violence in Africa. The Core Team included Bonface Beti, Emilie Diouf, Refilwe Nkomo, and Susan Mbula Kilonzo.

The Learning Exchange was framed around four main themes: Patriarchy and Women's Rights, Forms and Spaces for GBV in Africa, Creative Ways of Preventing and Responding to GBV, and Complexities of Cultural Approaches to GBV. Over the course of two days, almost 170 participants discussed their thoughts in both English and French. The Exchange also included a Creative Space which was highly effective in formulating ideas and new conversations, as well as spaces for healing in which participants were able to upload links to their creative practices and find opportunities for meditation and reflection. The September Learning Exchange connected participants in meaningful discussion of Creative Responses to Gender-Based Violence in Africa. Afterwards, IMPACT supported follow-up activities in East, West and South Africa.

Fifth International Teaching Artists Conference

[Mary Ann Hunter](#), an Australia-based member of the IMPACT Leadership Circle, represented the program at the [Fifth International Teaching Artists Conference](#) (ITAC5), hosted by Korea Arts and Culture Education Service. This year's theme was Boundaries into New Pathways, and Hunter spent the three days of the conference learning and discussing with teaching artists from 19 countries as they covered themes of unlearning, local and nomadic practices, and peace and reconciliation. Hunter also hosted a lunchtime Collective Gathering every day during ITAC5 and was able to dialogue about the role of the teaching artist and what kinds of effects they can have.



Selection of Peacebuilding Teaching Artists' sharings in a drawing

Sustainability and Culture Inquiry

IMPACT is undertaking an inquiry into the relationship between culture and sustainability, including insights from the field of conflict transformation and from artistic practice. This will also build on insights from indigenous knowledge traditions. The goals are to illuminate the significance of culture to the work toward sustainability and to provide opportunities for people doing related work to connect with each other. Some initial thinking about this is contained in Carmen Olachea's essay, "[Thoughts on Sustainability and Culture](#)."

