



Annual Report 2022-2023

**The Interdisciplinary Minor in
Creativity, the Arts, and Social
Transformation (CAST)**

and

**the Program in Peacebuilding
and the Arts (PBA)**

Compiled by Armine Avetisyan,
CAST Administrator



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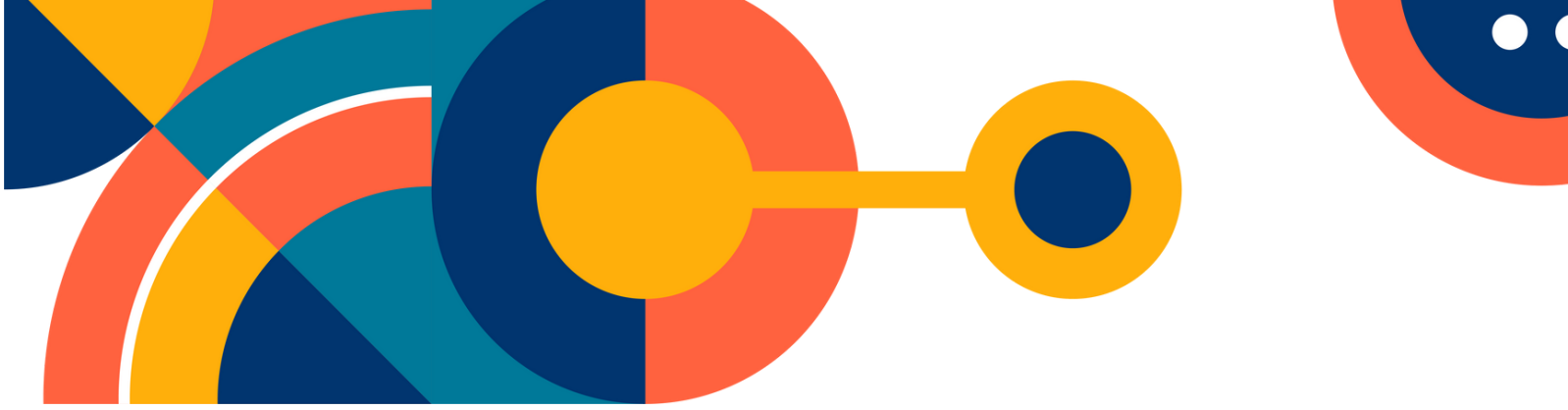
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PART 1:
The Interdisciplinary
Minor in Creativity,
the Arts, and Social
Transformation



The students, faculty, and staff of the Interdisciplinary Minor in Creativity, the Arts, and Social Transformation (CAST) are enormously appreciative of the contributions of Elaine Reuben '63 whose support has made possible many of the activities described in this annual report. We appreciate support from Ammad Bahalim,'04, for his visionary support of CAST 170a: Documenting Immigrant Experiences.

Many thanks also to past supporters: Amy Merrill '68, Max and Sunny Howard Memorial Foundation, with the inspiration of Naomi Sinnreich P'13; Louis D. Brandeis Legacy Fund for Social Justice for its 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.

The Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts and its related global IMPACT community express appreciation to Porticus Community Art Lab for its support.





DESIGN LAB on Climate Justice

Highlight

In the fall of 2022, CAST partnered with the Charles River Watershed Association (CRWA) on a Design Lab focused on the theme of climate justice. With intensive planning undertaken in the spring and summer, the climate justice design lab was implemented as part of the course “Introduction to Creativity, the Arts and Social Transformation.” The lab was a collaborative venture, designed by scientists and humanities scholars, academics, artists and community leaders, students and members of the faculty.

Through seven three-hour class sessions and substantial out-of-class assignments, as well as a field trip to a Climate Activism exhibition at the Peabody Essex Museum, students were introduced to multiple global and local perspectives on the climate crisis. They learned to conduct oral history interviews and gathered stories from people who live along the Charles River and work to protect it. They then developed, shared and discussed creative presentations interpreting the stories they heard, discussing their interpretations with the very scholars and artists and community leaders who had visited class earlier. (The Watershed Association was so impressed that they said they are reworking their approach to advocacy and education, to focus on creativity and the arts.) The students also, under the guidance of civil rights pioneer and cultural worker Jane Sapp, collectively wrote a song synthesizing their learning.

Learning centered on climate justice, including perspectives from climate science and Indigenous ways of knowing; on oral history, interviewing, the power of stories and listening; and on creativity, many forms of creative expression, and the importance of creative engagement in engendering feelings of hope and possibilities for action.

Every aspect of the design lab was animated by commitments to reciprocity, respect, resilience, diversity, creativity, and responsibility to act.



1. Contribution to DEI at Brandeis

We prioritized hearing directly from – and reading and viewing materials by – people from diverse backgrounds, situations, and perspectives in multiple CAST courses, including Introduction to CAST, Documenting Immigrant Experiences, Provocative Arts, and Dance and Migration, among others. Our Intro to CAST Design Lab was rooted in an introduction to Indigenous worldviews. Design Lab students conducted oral history interviews with Native American, African American, Italian American, and other people who live and work along the Charles River, including immigrants from the Ivory Coast and India. Documenting Immigrant Experiences had an explicit focus on getting to know local Muslim immigrants and representing aspects of their stories on film. (Please see the full list of guests in the Intro to CAST and Dance and Migration courses.)





2. CAST Courses

Fall 2022

Core Course

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

Capstone Practicum

CAST 181B: Ethics of Community Engagement. Toni Shapiro-Phim

Core Electives

ANTH 159A: Museums and Public Memory. Ellen Schattschneider

CAST 170A: Documenting Immigrant Experiences. Jenny Alexander, Maya Jamaledine

ENG 139A: Publishing Workshop: Literary Editing and Publishing. Elizabeth Bradfield

ENG 143A: The History of Mediascapes and Critical Maker Culture. Dorothy Kim

FA 181A: Housing and Social Justice. Muna Guvenc, Ospina Leon

LGLS 129A: Transitional Justice: Global Justice and Societies in Transition. Melissa Stimell

NEJS 184B: Disability Cultures: Art, Film and Literature of People with Disabilities. Ilana Szobel

THA 40A: The Art of Visual Narrative and Production Design. Cameron Anderson

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

Spring 2023

Project Design Practicum

CAST 189A: Project Design Practicum. Toni Shapiro-Phim

Core Electives

CAST 110B: Dance and Migration. Toni Shapiro-Phim
HISP 165B: The Storyteller: Short Fiction in Latin America. Julio Ariza

MUS 3B: Global Soundscapes: Performing Musical Tradition Across Time and Place. Bradford Garvey

NEJS 173A: Trauma and Violence in Israeli Literature and Film. Ilana Szobel

NEJS/WGS 110A: Sexual Violence in Film and Culture. Ilana Szobel

SOC 155B: Protest, Politics, and Change: Social Movements. Gowri Vijayakumar

THA 138B: Creative Pedagogy. Jennifer Cleary

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






3. CAST Affiliated Faculty and Staff

CAST engages interdisciplinary arts, humanities, and social sciences 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.

This year we had a CAST affiliates gathering at Executive Committee member Leigh Swigart's home in Gloucester – a time to share plans for the year in a beautiful setting, just as the academic year was getting underway.






3. CAST Affiliated Faculty and Staff

Executive Committee

- Toni Shapiro-Phim, Chair, CAST; Co-Director, Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts
- Emilie Diouf, English and African and African American Studies
- Leigh Swigart, Programs in International Justice and Society

Affiliates

- Cameron Anderson, Theater Arts
- Elizabeth Bradfield, English and Creative Writing
- Jennifer Cleary, Theater Arts
- Cynthia Cohen, Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts
- Caren Irr, English
- Thomas King, English
- Dorothy Kim, English
- Kristin Parker, Associate, Ethics Center; formerly with Rose Art Museum
- Fernando Rosenberg, Hispanic Studies, Comparative Literature
- David Sherman, English
- Faith Smith, English and Latin American, Caribbean and Latinx Studies, and African and African American Studies
- Ilana Szobel, Hebrew Literature
- Sabine von Mering, German, Russian and Asian Languages, and Environmental Studies, and Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies
- 

Staff

- Armine Avetisyan, Administrator

4. Faculty and Staff Achievements

Toni Shapiro-Phim

Publications:

- “Listening as common ground: oral history performance for transitional justice.” Co-author with Luis Sotelo Castro. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* Vol 28/Issue 1, 2023.
- Oral History Performance, Listening and Transitional Justice (Special issue of *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*). Co-editor with Luis Sotelo Castro. Vol 28/Issue 1, 2023.
- “Freedom and the Archive.” Co-author with Germaine Ingram. *Art and Human Rights: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Contemporary Issues*. Edited by Fiana Gantheret, Nolwenn Guibert and Sofia Stolk, Edward Elgar Publishing, 2023.

Research, Conferences and More:

- Research trip to Cambodia, supported by the Norman Fund. Dec 2022 – Jan 2023.
- Climate Justice panel moderator: Beginning to End the Climate Crisis Conference, Brandeis, March 30.
- Participant in IMPACT, Inc. (Imagining Together Platform for Arts, Culture and Conflict Transformation) strategic planning conference, Rotterdam, April 2-4.
- Presenter of talk, “Editing the Oxford Handbook of Jewishness and Dance: Some Stories” as part of the Seminar on Contemporary Jewish Life at Brandeis, April 26.
- Selection panelist for INSPIRE Art Award, a program of the Peace Research Institute of Oslo, April.

Caren Irr was appointed as Head of the Division of Humanities.



4. Faculty and Staff Achievements



Cindy Cohen

- Co-led a learning session on arts and peace hosted by Netherlands-based organization PAX in October
- Was a respondent on a panel for the book launch of James Thompson's *Care Aesthetics*
- Together with Toni Shapiro -Phim and Leigh Swigart, planned and led the Design Lab on Climate Justice
- A summary of the [Invite/Affirm/Evoke/Unleash report](#), by Cindy Cohen with support from Armine Avetisyan, Toni Shapiro-Phim, and their colleague Polly Walker was published in the August issue of the [International Peace Research Association Newsletter](#).
- Participated in IMPACT, Inc. (Imagining Together Platform for Arts, Culture and Conflict Transformation) strategic planning conference, in Rotterdam in April
- Launched a preliminary inquiry into the contributions of arts and cultural work to countering authoritarianism, and co-lead a session on the topic at 22nd Century Conference: Forging a People-Powered Democracy, held in Minneapolis, Minnesota in July 2023.

Thomas King (on sabbatical in AY 2022-23) won a Brandeis Public Humanities/ Community Engagement Grant for Faculty, for his project "Urban Pastoral."

Published three articles:

- "From the Body Politic to Biopolitics." Oxford Handbook of Restoration Literature. Eds. Matthew C. Augustine and Steven N. Zwicker. Oxford University Press
- "Queering and Transing the Eighteenth Century". Routledge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Literatures in English. Eds. Nicole Aljoe, Suvir Kaul, and Sarah Eron. Routledge.
- "Performing Climate Justice." Routledge Handbook of Grassroots Climate Activism. Eds. Sabine von Mering et al.



4. Faculty and Staff Achievements



Emilie Diouf

- Organized the 2nd edition of the *écrire au féminin* women writers festival in Dakar in May
- Held writing workshops to empower women writers in their efforts in countering gender-based violence in Wolof and French
- Received a small grant from the inaugural Reckonings Summer Institute in Social Justice and Community Archiving at Northeastern University
- Led two sessions on *Creative Approaches to Ending Gender-Based Violence* at International Community Arts Festival (ICAF) in Rotterdam in March.

Faith Smith

Published the book, *Strolling in the Ruins: the Caribbean's non-sovereign modern in the early twentieth century*, Duke University Press.



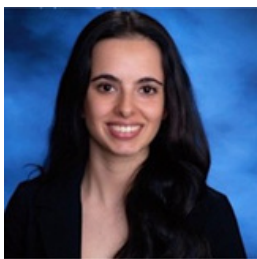
Armine Avetisyan



- Co-authored a research report *What's Next? Civil Dialogue Work in Armenia and Turkey after the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War in 2020*.
- Co-organized and participated in IMPACT, Inc. (Imagining Together Platform for Arts, Culture and Conflict Transformation) strategic planning conference, in Rotterdam in April
- Presented (virtually) at Arts and Human Rights Festival of DAH Theatre in Belgrade in June.

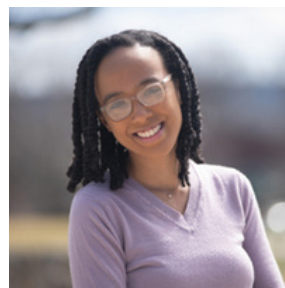
5. Student News

Fall 2022 CAST Design Lab students were honored with the Young Professionals Award from the Charles River Watershed Association for "those who have demonstrated meaningful environmental improvements at a young age, recognizing their contributions toward a more sustainable future."



Camila Cano '23 was honored with the Jacob and Bella Thurman Award for Social Citizenship, given by the Dean of Students' office to a student who has demonstrated the highest type of social citizenship. Camila was hired as a TA for CAST 110B: Dance and Migration class in the 2023 spring semester. She also gave a presentation about the Jewish dance community in Mexico to the Seminar of Contemporary Jewish Life in April.

Delaine Gneco de la Cruz '23 was awarded a Film Department prize for best student film. She was hired as a TA for CAST 150 B: Introduction to Creativity, the Arts, and Social Transformation in the 2022 fall semester.



5. Student News



Liz Sandoval '25 was awarded the Maurice L. Shaer Memorial Prize by the Dean of Students' office. Liz was a Climate Justice panel facilitator at the Beginning to End the Climate Crisis Conference at Brandeis in March.



We hired **Sophia Fedus' 24** as a TA for CAST 150 B: Introduction to Creativity, the Arts, and Social Transformation in the 2022 fall semester.

We hired **Erick Amezkua' 23** as a Media Specialist for CAST and the Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts to help with video and photo documentation and more.

Erick was also hired as a TA for CAST 170A: Documenting Immigrant Experiences in the 2022 fall semester, and CAST 110B: Dance and Migration in the Spring 2023 semester.



Rasheed Peters '20 returned to campus as the Keynote Speaker at our CAST graduation ceremony.



Emmanuel Hernandez
Jacob Krah
Nicholas Ong

Fiona Ripp
Liz Sandoval
Madison Sirois

6. Capstone Projects

In the spring CAST Project Practicum course, six students who had been part of the fall Design Lab, chose to continue their collaboration with the Charles River Watershed Association and their explorations/interpretations of the oral history interviews they had conducted through a group public art project. (Two additional students joined them.) Guided by local artist Andy Li, and following extensive conversations with Watershed Association staff, the students decided to make individual lanterns, each amplifying messages from their individual oral history interviews – messages about the river and its future -- in a public art exhibition they called “Voices of a Resilient River” that premiered on campus during Brandeis’ Festival of Creative Arts. Each lantern, about three feet high, has four cloth panels, decorated (in images – using paint or yarn or found materials – and words). They light up from inside, powered by a solar panel that gathers energy by day. Together they are a statement about the precarity of the Charles River and people’s lives along it, given the climate crisis and lack of concrete action to combat it. Several of the interviewees showed up to view the lanterns at night on campus. And the Watershed Association, who will keep and use the lanterns, has already put them to work during an action related to advocating for dam removal in Watertown.





7. Visiting Artists and Scholars in the Classroom

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

Fall 2022:

CAST 150B: Introduction to Creativity, the Arts and Social Transformation

Claudia Bernardi, Argentinian human rights activist and artist

Fatu Gayflor, Liberian anti-violence activist and singer, community leader

Dr. Megan Ross, hip hop specialist (Brandeis staff)

Elizabeth Bradfield, poet and climate justice activist (Brandeis faculty)

Dr. Polly Walker, conflict transformation and Indigenous worldview specialist

Dr. Kealoha Fox, Institute for Climate and Peace, Honolulu

Dr. Prakash Kashwan, environmental justice professor (Brandeis faculty)

Devi Lockwood, journalist

Mary Fischer, sustainability specialist (Brandeis staff)

Dr. Sara Shostak, community engagement specialist (Brandeis faculty)

Staff of the Charles River Watershed Association, Boston

Dr. Colleen Hitchcock, environmental and citizen science specialist (Brandeis faculty) Jane

Wilburn Sapp, civil rights activist and singer/songwriter

Spring 2023:

CAST: 110B: Dance and Migration

Peter Rockford Espiritu, Native Hawaiian dancer/choreographer

Pahonu Coleman, Native Hawaiian ritual specialist

Mitsu Salmon, Butoh dancer (Brandeis faculty)

Dr. Eva Macias, Native American dance scholar and dancer (Brandeis faculty)

Dr. Ola Yaco-Haliso, refugee and gender specialist (Brandeis faculty)

Dr. Adam Saltsman, gender and migration specialist (Worcester State University)

Fatu Gayflor, Liberian anti-violence activist, singer, community leader

Sydney Skov, dance movement therapy specialist, filmmaker

Camila Cano, Jewish dance in Mexico specialist (Brandeis '23)

Dr. Katja Kolcio, Ukrainian culture specialist (Wesleyan University faculty)



8. Events

Fall 2022



Poetry Workshop 'Say My Name'

January 27, 2022

CAST co-sponsored a poetry workshop with Latinx poet Angelica Maria Aguilera "Say My Name". The workshop focused on the themes of machoism, womanhood, and immigration.



Talk Kirsten Greenidge and Melia Bensussen on *Common Ground Revisited* Play

November 7, 2022

CAST co-sponsored a talk with Kirsten Greenidge, playwright, and Melia Bensussen, an award-winning director and the Artistic Director of Hartford Stage, discussed their collaboration on the play *Common Ground Revisited*, which premiered at The Huntington Theatre spring 2022. It is documentary style theater based upon the Pulitzer Prize-winning book *Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families*. a nonfiction book by J. Anthony Lukas (c. 1985) that examines race relations in Boston through the prism of desegregation busing. It was an amazing production that examined issues around racial equity that we still face as a community and a nation.

8. Events

Fall 2022

Cultures of Camouflage: Art, Politics, History October 21, 2022

A special session of CA 125A: Provocative Art: Outside Your Comfort Zone class. The wider Brandeis community and the public participated in a conversation between Sheida Soleimani, Brandeis Assistant Professor of Fine Arts, and Mahan Moalemi, Harvard University Teaching Fellow and discussed how observing a historical turning point asks for rethinking the politics of exposure and cultures of camouflage.



Documenting Immigrant Experiences: Films of Muslim Identity December 10, 2022

Film festival featuring short films by the students of CAST 170A: Documenting Immigrants Experiences class. The films explored Muslim identity, community, and unity themes to promote further understanding, acceptance, and inclusion.

8. Events

Spring 2023

Berlinale Panorama
MYANMAR DIARIES
by the Myanmar Film Collective



Documentary Screening *Myanmar Diaries* March 23, 2023

CAST co-sponsored the documentary screening and follow-up discussion on the junta's brutality, and courageous resistance to it in Myanmar. The event was organized by the Myanmar/Burma Advocacy Group comprised of Heller students.



Photo Exhibition *Quo Vadis, Europe? The Human/Nature Relationship Crisis in the Anthropocene* March 30, 2023

CAST co-sponsored a photo exhibition within CGES@25: Beginning to End the Climate Crisis festival.

8. Events

Spring 2023

Fall 2022 CAST Design Lab students receive Young Professionals Award from Charles River Watershed Association for

"those who have demonstrated meaningful environmental improvements at a young age, recognizing their contributions toward a more sustainable future."



Photo credit: Toni Shapiro-Phim

JOIN THE
CRWA VIRTUAL
ANNUAL GALA

March 30 | 6:00 pm

Register



Charles River Watershed Association Virtual Annual Gala March 30, 2023

CAST Design Lab students received 'DY' Award for "those who have demonstrated meaningful environmental improvements at a young age, recognizing their contributions toward a more sustainable future."

CAST Graduation Ceremony May 4, 2023

CAST celebrated its 2023 graduates: Nicholas Ong, Delaine Gneco De La Cruz, Erick Amezcua, Jacob Krahn, Kobi Russell, Shawna-Gay Duncan, Hannah Taylor, Becky Goodfellow.

CAST Affiliate David Sherman included a poem in his interactive speech to the graduates, and CAST Alum Rasheed Peters'20 gave a keynote speech.

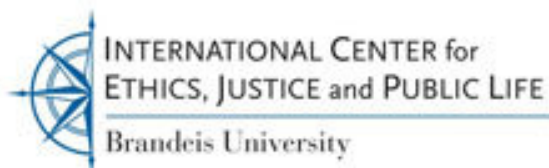




PART 2:
The Program in
Peacebuilding
and the Arts




E-Newsletter



PEACEBUILDING AND THE ARTS NOW

EXPLORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ARTS AND CULTURE TO PEACE

The PBA team produced four issues of the Peacebuilding and the Arts Now quarterly e-newsletter (reaching over 5,000 people) covering the news, resources, opportunities, events, projects and publications from the field of arts, culture, and conflict transformation.





Acting Together



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ACTING TOGETHER on the WORLD STAGE

Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflict

PBA continues the translation of *Acting Together on the World Stage* documentary into different languages.

In 2022, the Russian version of the documentary was produced and made available for free download on: the <https://www.atwsresources.com/>

The Ukrainian version of the documentary was screened in Belgrade as a part of “Prologue to the Arts and Human Rights Festival” organized by DAH Theatre in December 2022.

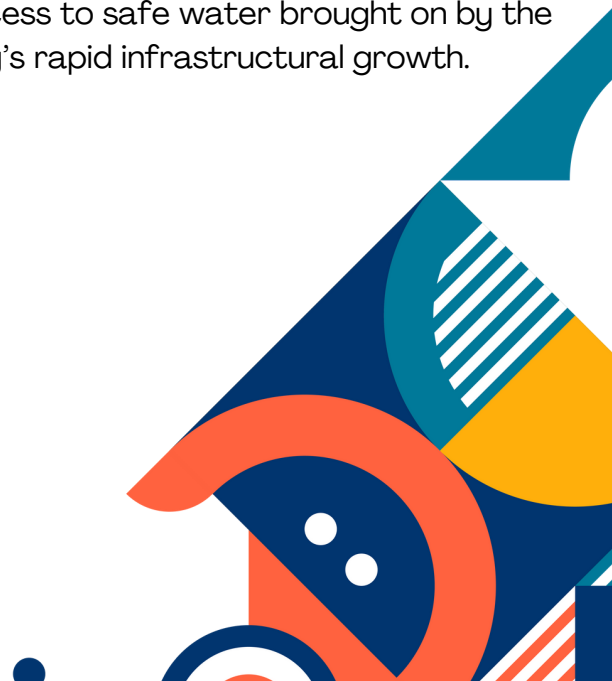




Stories of Water India



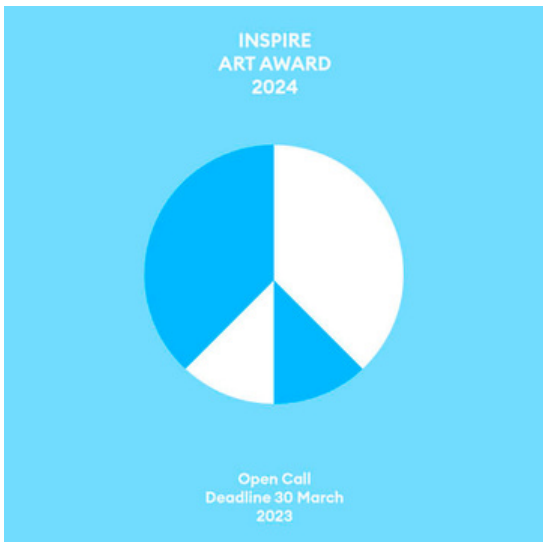
PBA and IMPACT supported Bangalore Creative Circus and Harsha Bhamdipati, a Heller student, to design a walking tour titled “Stories of Water” in Bangalore, India, to draw public attention to the environmental issues in Bangalore. Local artists were invited to design a walking tour, which included visual arts, murals, poetry, and sound installation and music. The tour engaged community members from different walks of life, and provided a space for discussion on the issues of justice and inequity in access to safe water brought on by the city’s rapid infrastructural growth.





and more

Members of the PBA team participated in the International Community Arts Festival in Rotterdam in March and in the IMPACT strategic planning gathering in Rotterdam in April.



PBA contributed support to the 2023 INSPIRE award given by the Peace Research Institute of Norway.

