

Notes from the Assistant Director
April 2020

Dear friends of Brandeis' Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts,

Dr. Cynthia Cohen, Director of the Peacebuilding and the Arts (PBA) Program, usually crafts this newsletter welcome. As the new PBA Assistant Director, I now share that honor.

The precarity of so many of the globe's residents has just intensified exponentially. With the onslaught of the novel coronavirus pandemic, what was violent a few months ago -- for individuals and communities in zones of volatile conflict, those marginalized from political and economic power or distanced from material resources, and people experiencing displacement, oppression and violence of many sorts -- is now even more so. Artists, ritual specialists, cultural workers and others who are already creatively countering dehumanizing and dangerous words, actions and circumstances, and building solidarity, dignity, and visions and models of constructive change, are now re-imagining possibilities in the face of this assault.

In this issue, we've gathered examples of ways people across the globe are addressing our new-found reality, carving paths through the unknown in order to share resources, inspiration and approaches to work at the nexus of peacebuilding and the arts at this unprecedented contemporary moment. With dire forecasts of untold loss and suffering, and with deep sorrow and worry, people are nonetheless finding and creating hope. They are connecting with one another with compassion and gratitude, imaginatively adapting to a changed circumstances, and acting, now, so as to lay the groundwork for a more just society when we come through on the other side.

PBA's **IMPACT (Imagining Together Platform for Arts, Culture and Conflict Transformation)** initiative is offering a way to connect across distance through its upcoming Virtual Learning Exchange, described in detail in our [last newsletter](#), and briefly in this issue. Scheduled for April 21st and 22nd, the Learning Exchange presents participants -- who can join from anywhere in the world, in any time zone -- a chance to share and expand their knowledge of aspects of the arts, culture and conflict transformation ecosystem, acknowledging the current prevailing public health crisis while keeping an eye on the future. It will be conducted in both Spanish and English.

In February of this year, UNESCO and the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights called together representatives of other UN agencies and people from the arts, culture and conflict transformation ecosystem for a one-day Art-Lab/Design Thinking Jam in Geneva, to reflect upon artistic interventions among populations in vulnerable circumstances, including refugees and those in post-conflict situations. PBA director Cynthia Cohen was an invited participant. [See reports on the exchange of ideas and plans, as well as on a second meeting](#) in Switzerland - the Art at Risk: Creative Work in Challenging Contexts conference in Zurich.

And, finally, we open a window into our own IMPACT Leadership Circle meetings. As families, school groups, business colleagues and government leaders scramble to develop meaningful ways to gather online, Emily Forsyth Queen, a member of the Leadership Circle -- which has been meeting in virtual space since its inception -- shares a few of the Circle's ingredients for rich conversations that span continents.

I hope this issue feeds your interest, and inspires ideas for your peacebuilding practice.

With warm wishes for safety and good health,

Toni Shapiro-Phim, Ph.D., Assistant Director, Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts and Associate Professor, Creativity, the Arts, and Social Transformation



Special Edition: "Creative Approaches to Transitional Justice: the Contributions of Art and Culture"
The Transitional Journal of International Justice
Guest edited by Dr. Cynthia Cohen and featuring:
• "Reimagining Transitional Justice" - Cindy Cohen
• "Embodying the Pain and Cruelty of Others" - Toni Shapiro-Phim
• and more!



Join the call for a **#GlobalCeasefire** because, as peacebuilders, we know that **#PeaceWorksBetter** when it comes to tackling COVID-19.



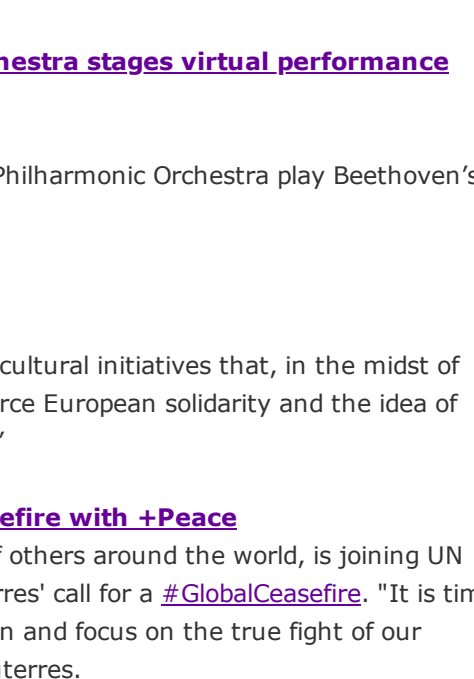
Call for Input - OHCHR Special Rapporteur's report on cultural rights and climate change
Deadline: May 1, 2020



Now Hiring: Designing Justice + Designing Spaces

Creative responses to the global pandemic

We've curated a sampling of some of the many creative responses to the world's public health crisis, as well as discussions about the pandemic's impact on artists and art-making, along with targeted artist-relief efforts. If you know of others, please share the information with us: [arminkav@brandeis.edu](#)



The Social Distancing Festival
"This is a site for celebrating art from all over the world, showcasing amazing talent, and coming together as a community at a time when we need it more than ever."

Historians Cooking The Past in the Time of Covid-19
A Call to Cook
"Facing the daily challenges that come with living through this pandemic has led us to rethink how we engage with the past. In this vein, we have cast aside the traditional call for papers in favour of a call to cook, asking oral and public historians throughout the world to share a food memory and a recipe during these COVID-19 times."

Coronavirus: Syrian artist paints murals in war-torn Idlib to warn of outbreak
Al Arabia
"As fears grow of an impending coronavirus outbreak in Syria, an artist in the war-torn city of Idlib is painting murals to raise public awareness about the virus -- and to remind the world of the Syrian regime's ongoing attacks against civilians."

'I am not a virus.' A Korean-Swedish artist illustrates coronavirus-fueled racism
Canvas Arts/Public Broadcasting Service
Through a series of one-panel comics entitled, "I am not a virus," Lisa Wool-Rim Sjöblom addresses hostilities Asians are facing during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Coronavirus, Beyond Intractability, and the Constructive Conflict Initiative
Beyond Intractability
"The Coronavirus is not just an epidemiological problem. It is a serious conflict problem. Find out about Beyond Intractability's effort to help us all think through what we can do to help."

Art Became the Oxygen
U.S. Department of Arts and Culture
A how-to guide for artists, resource providers and disaster response agencies that includes numerous examples of artistic responses to crises, and ways to build connection, amplify protest, and build resilience.

Amid coronavirus, Dutch orchestra stages virtual performance from homes
Reuters
"Musicians from the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra play Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" from their homes."

Culture of Solidarity Fund
European Cultural Foundation
"The Fund supports imaginative cultural initiatives that, in the midst of the global pandemic crisis, reinforce European solidarity and the idea of Europe as a shared public space."

Join the Call for #GlobalCeasefire with +Peace
+Peace, along with thousands of others around the world, is joining UN Secretary-General António Guterres' call for a **#GlobalCeasefire**. "It is time to put armed conflict on lockdown and focus on the true fight of our lives," said Secretary-General Guterres.

Exquisite Corps (42 choreographers, 1 dance)
"A dance-film: 42 American contemporary choreographers link together on a chain love letter to dance." [This was created a few weeks ago, but feels especially relevant now.] [Catch the sequel, "And So Say All of Us."](#)

Hyperallergic Discusses Pandemic's Effects on Museums and Art Schools
Hyperallergic
A special podcast about "what's happening at art museums, art schools, and other hubs of the art community during the coronavirus pandemic"

SEGAL TALKS
Live Online Conversations with Global Theatre Artists
[www.HowRound.com](#)

Every Monday through Friday, 12 noon (New York time)
"U.S. and international theatre artists, curators, researchers and academics talk with Segal Center's director Frank Hentschker about life and art in the Time of Corona."

Read about additional creative responses to the global pandemic.

Relief Resources for Artists



COVID 19 / [United States] CARES Act Resources
Center for the Study of Art & Community
"Here are some resources relevant to (U.S.-based) gig-workers, do-gooders, sole proprietors, small businesses, and members of the nation with good information about how to access funding contained in the StimBomB known as the CARES Act."

Coalition of U.S. Arts Funders Launches Emergency Artist Relief Fund
A coalition of national arts grantmakers, consisting of Academy of American Poets, Artadia, Creative Capital, Foundation for Contemporary Arts, MAP Fund, National YoungArts Foundation, and United States Artists, announces the launch of **Artist Relief**, which will provide rapid, unrestricted \$5,000 relief grants to assist artists facing dire financial emergencies due to the impact of COVID-19. The fund will launch with \$10 million, consisting of \$5 million in seed funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation matched with \$5 million in initial contributions from an array of foundations across the United States.

Arts Council England Has Launched a \$190 Million Emergency Relief Package for Creative Organizations and Artists
Artnet News

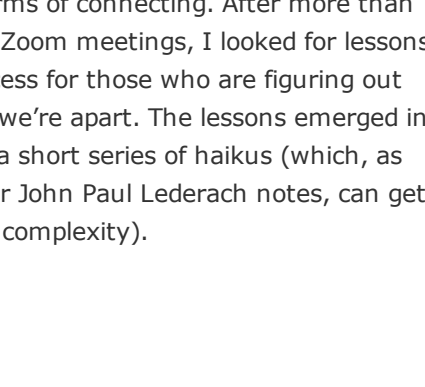
Germany Has Rolled Out a Staggering C\$0 Billion Aid Package For Small Businesses That Boosts Artists and Galleries--and Puts Other Countries to Shame
Artnet News
"Artists are not only indispensable, but also vital, especially now," says the country's culture minister."

Read about additional relief resources for artists.

April 21 & 22: Explore key conflict transformation concepts during IMPACT's Virtual Learning Exchange

Apply by: April 19, 2020

Join IMPACT's Virtual Learning Exchange: Imagining Together/Acting on April 21st and 22nd for an introduction to the arts, culture, and conflict transformation ecosystem (acct)! This 48-hour long Exchange will be hosted in both English and Spanish and will allow people from across the globe, in their own time zones, to contribute their thoughts in writing to prompts, questions and each other's responses.



IMPACT, together with [Artasfoundation](#), [Creat Vale la Pena](#) (CVLP), [Fundación Cambio Democrático](#) (FCD), [Free Culture Initiative, Humanity United](#) (HU), [International Community Arts Festival](#) (ICAF), and [International Teaching Artist Collaboration](#) (ITAC), would like to invite artists, cultural workers, conflict transformation practitioners, researchers, funders, and policymakers to explore key concepts in the acct ecosystem: resistance, re-humanization, reconciliation, re-entanglement, and conflict transformation. This online Exchange is an opportunity to learn from one another's experiences. We hope to hear from both younger participants and elders in the acct ecosystem and related fields.

Drawing on the resources of [Acting Together on the World Stage](#) multimedia educational initiative, we will explore these concepts in relation to performance, and extend an invitation to participants to share work in other media as well.

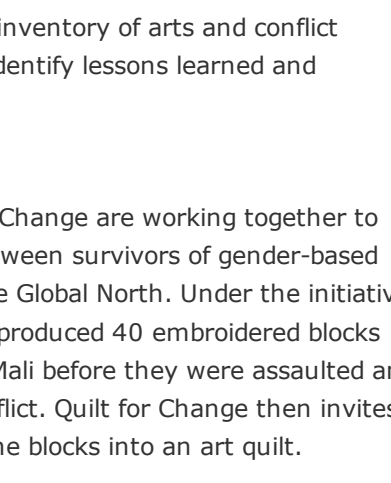
Thanks to [Peace Direct](#) for partnering to host this exchange on the [Platform4Dialogue](#).

Interested in participating or learning more? Send an email with a brief introduction to Armine Avetisyan at [arminkav@brandeis.edu](#) by April 19 to apply.

Art-Lab Design Thinking Jam and Art at Risk: February 2020 convenings in Geneva and Zurich

Cynthia Cohen

Just before the pandemic completely constrained travel and gatherings, I enjoyed the privilege of attending two important convenings in Switzerland. In both cases, I was able to share IMPACT's insights, vision and questions with key players in the arts, culture and conflict transformation ecosystem, to invite people to join our upcoming Learning Exchange, and to listen as people from many sectors of the ecosystem shared accomplishments and challenges.



Dagmar Reichert of artasfoundation, Zurich, and Dijana Milesevic of Ban Teatar, Belgrade, in Zurich train station following our briefing session.

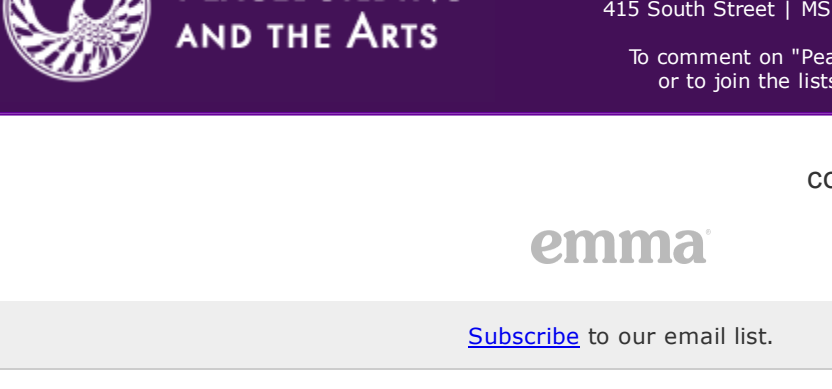
[Art-Lab Design Thinking Jam, Geneva, February 26, 2020](#)
In a unique inter-agency collaboration, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR), and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) hosted an Art-Lab Design Thinking Jam in Geneva on February 26. Participants included engaged artists, experts and researchers, cultural operators and activists working in the field, leaders of cultural foundations, and representatives of UN agencies and intercultural organizations. The agenda focused on this question: "Why are arts and culture, whose powers are transformative for people in precarious situations, not used more often?"

IMPACT will be an active player in follow-up activities. [Read more...](#)

[Art at Risk, Zurich, February 27 - 29, 2020](#)
The Art at Risk: Creative Work in Challenging Contexts conference was planned and organized by artasfoundation with support of the Culture and Development Section of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Zurich University of the Arts. ([Artasfoundation](#) initiates arts projects, accompanies their realization and investigates how art can promote conflict mediation and peace-building.) The gathering brought together 180 people from diverse sectors of the arts, culture and conflict transformation ecosystem from 42 countries. [View extensive documentation, including videos of three plenary sessions.](#)

IMPACT was present at the conference in several significant ways. [Read more...](#)

The magic of a creative, heart-centered global Zoom meeting: learning from IMPACT's year of convening Leadership Circle meetings



By Emily Forsyth Queen

"I value our efforts to bring collective visioning and embodiment to the virtual format. In the current crisis and its wake, those connective strategies are especially needed."
- Leadership Circle member

Our IMPACT Leadership Circle meetings started in December 2018 as an experiment in spreading leadership across five continents and in keeping the momentum of personal connections alive after an in-person Design Lab three months earlier.

For my colleagues at the Imagining Together Platform for Arts, Culture, and Conflict Transformation (IMPACT), Leadership Circle meetings became 10-15 hour vessels for important discussions and for recharging alongside 20-25 other key players in the organization. Most of IMPACT's concrete activities and strategic decisions happen within six other, smaller teams. This larger gathering brings people from each team together every six to eight weeks to share questions and perspectives, and sometimes to constructively challenge each other's ideas, about how IMPACT can best support the arts, culture, and conflict transformation ecosystem.

We are currently immersed in a global crisis that has brought physical distancing and an uptick in online forms of connecting. After more than one year of creative, heart-centered Zoom meetings, I looked for lessons from IMPACT's Leadership Circle process for those who are figuring out how we can be together even when we're apart. The lessons emerged in one of my favorite artistic forms: as a short series of haikus (which, as peace studies scholar and practitioner John Paul Lederach notes, can get to the simplicity on the other side of complexity).

[1]
lovely containers entrusted to all within we hold each other

[2]
who said these humans can't flow through air waves to bring tough truths and soft joys?

[3]
take the quick check-in breathe, imagine, reconnect make it ritual

[4]
oh, to meet on Zoom! souls reaching across ether I just want a hug

Processes that guide how Leadership Circle meetings unfold begin long before the meeting starts... [Read more!](#)

Additional Resources, Initiatives and Opportunities

Special Issue: Creative Approaches to Transitional Justice: Contributions of Arts and Culture
The International Journal of Transitional Justice
Volume 14, Issue 1, March 2020

- Editorial by Cynthia E. Cohen, director of the Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts, "Reimagining Transitional Justice"
- A "Note From the Field" by Toni Shapiro-Phim, assistant director of the Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts, "Embodying the Pain and Cruelty of Others"
- Articles covering developments and initiatives in Argentina, Cambodia, Colombia, Myanmar, Nepal, Peru, South Africa, Tunisia and elsewhere

Call for Input - OHCHR Special Rapporteur's report on cultural rights and climate change
Deadline: May 1, 2020
OHCHR opens a call for input for the Special Rapporteur's report on cultural rights and climate change, to be presented at the General Assembly, October 2020.

ALL ARTS
ALL ARTS is a new arts and culture hub created by WNET, the parent company of New York's public television stations. With the aim of being accessible to viewers everywhere, ALL ARTS programming -- from digital shorts to feature films -- is available online throughout the U.S. at [allarts.org](#), the free ALL ARTS app on all major streaming platforms, and social media.

Now Hiring: Designing Justice + Designing Spaces
Designing Justice + Designing Spaces (DJDS) is excited to announce that they're expanding and looking for new team members to join them in Oakland. They need to fill three important roles on our growing team: Intermediate Architectural Associate, Real Estate Development Manager, and Studio Director.

La PAZ Se Toma La Palabra (Peace Speaks Up)
In order to activate an Imagining Together Platform for Arts, Culture and Conflict Transformation (IMPACT) regional presence, Angela Perez Mejia (a participant in IMPACT's 2018 Design Lab and director of the Cultural Network of the Central Bank of Colombia) and her colleagues convened a meeting in Bogotá in late February 2020, for people who had been working on thirty discrete initiatives in the arts, culture and conflict transformation field. The aim was to build a Colombian inventory of arts and conflict transformation initiatives as well as to identify lessons learned and challenges.

Sister Artists
The Advocacy Project (AP) and Quilt for Change are working together to develop an exciting new partnership between survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) in Mali and quilters in the Global North. Under the initiative, known as Sister Artists, survivors have produced 40 embroidered blocks describing the life they led in northern Mali before they were assaulted and driven from their homes during the conflict. Quilt for Change then invites quilters from the Global North to turn the blocks into an art quilt.

Art With Impact
Art With Impact promotes mental wellness by creating space for young people to learn and connect through art and media.

View our [privacy policy](#). Opt-out at any time by clicking the "opt out" link below.

New website and free personal-use download of Acting Together on the World Stage documentary, through April 30th!

Acting Together on the World Stage (ATWS) recently launched a **new website** with many audio-visual and print resources that are easy to access and download, lovingly crafted by filmmaker Allison Lund, along with Cynthia Cohen and Polly Walker, co-creators of the original documentary and toolkit.

Check out the new mini-documentary and additional resources for teaching and learning. The full documentary is available for **individual download for free through April 30th**, and afterwards on a sliding scale. For a limited time, you can also **view the documentary on YouTube** (including a **version with Spanish subtitles**).

Please share these resources throughout your networks. Consider hosting a screening of the documentary in your community. **Join an IMPACT global Learning Exchange April 21 & 22** introducing the arts, culture and conflict transformation ecosystem.

Acting Together on the World Stage is a multi-media educational initiative intended to document and strengthen the contributions of performance and ritual to social justice and conflict transformation. The initiative consists of a feature documentary, a two-volume audiobook, short videos and PDF resources for learning and teaching.

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