



IMAGINING ART + SOCIAL CHANGE

Documentation from the March 2008 conference
presented by **Community MusicWorks**
and the **Providence Youth Arts Collaborative**

I am leaving with an affirmed conviction that this is the kind of work I want to do.
CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT

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IMAGINING ART + SOCIAL CHANGE

we all believe in trying to create venues and opportunities where people from whatever kind of background have an opportunity to grow and evolve as artists.

I WAS MORE INTERESTED WITH WHAT ABOUT PLAYING MUSIC AND UNDERSTANDING MUSIC CAN STIR SOMEONE'S INNER LIFE IN A VERY SIGNIFICANT WAY THAT WOULD MAKE THEM WANT TO CHANGE PERSONALLY

art means something to everybody... sometimes it means any way we can contact each other and any way we can talk with each other.

DON'T BE DISCOURAGED WHEN YOU'RE DISCOURAGED - sometimes that's just what you need.

i'm delighted to be in a place where arts organizations are so vibrant... THIS IS A PLACE WHERE THERE IS A SHALLOW FUNDING BASE AND YET ALL OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS THRIVE AND ARE LIFE-AFFIRMING IN SO MANY WAYS.

you have to prove a different way.

the arts are transforming Providence. they are adding beauty and value to the lives of the youth and they're making a difference.

• SEBASTIAN RUTH
COMMUNITY MUSIC WORKS

• BERT CRENCIA
AS220

how are we changing kid's expectations of the world by offering them a DIFFERENT MESSAGE

EVERY SOLICIT THAT I KNOW OF PROVIDES A DIFFERENT SERVICE AND IS WORKING ON A DIFFERENT

SOCIAL CHANGE IS A TERM I REALLY STRUGGLE WITH BECAUSE IT'S KIND OF AN IMPRECISE WORD

organizations themselves make social change in operating in certain ways.

• TYLER DENMEAD
NEW URBAN ARTS

• DOROTHY JUNGLES

EVERETT DANCE THEATRE + CARRIAGE HOUSE SCHOOL

WE ARE TRULY MAKING A DIFFERENCE AND THE ARTS ARE GIVING PEOPLE VOICE.

NEED. MAYBE WE'RE ALL IN THE ARTS BUT WE'RE ALL DOING IT DIFFERENT AND IT CREATES A KIND OF MENU, A KIND OF PORTFOLIO OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE TO ENGAGE IN.

I WAS TRYING TO CREATE A CULTURE WHERE ALL MARKS, ALL MOVEMENTS COULD BE VALUED AND CELEBRATED.

• DON KING
BLACK REPERTORY

• ALYSSA HOLLAND
SHORT, CITY ARTS

• RICK BENJAMIN, MODERATOR

THE PROVIDENCE YOUTH ARTS COLLABORATIVE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE RHODE ISLAND FOUNDATION, THE MELLON FOUNDATION, AND THE ARTISTS WHO CONTRIBUTED IMAGES TO THIS PUBLICATION.

PHOTOGRAPHS

SANDOR BODO 16
NATHAN FITCH 22, 33, 37
JORI KETTEN 3, 4, 7, 14, 15, 16, 19, 21, 30, 31, 32, 34
MARY BETH MEEHAN 3, 14, 21, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30
OWEN MUIR 2, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 21

DRAWINGS

JULIA GUALTIERI ABOVE, 20, 25
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ANDREW OESCH 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 33

BOOK DESIGN
JORI KETTEN

INTRODUCTION

In March 2008, Community MusicWorks and the Providence Youth Arts Collaborative (PYAC) hosted a two-day conference to explore the connection between arts education and social change. As this connection is central in different ways to the missions of each of our organizations, the conference was a chance for conference participants and indeed for ourselves to ask a set of questions, learn from our guest presenters, and deeply *experience* the work and practice of our organizations through site visits and art making.

With this book we want to give you varied ways of engaging with conference materials: you may find, for instance, the most benefit in the transcripts from the various sessions, or in the photos from the two days, or in the sketches and hand-written notes collected from participants, or in the transcripts from the private recordings and messages that participants created in the Conference Gallery. If this inspires you to plan a similar conference in your community, we've created a through-line of yellow stickies that shares our conference planning process.

Our incredible gratitude goes to Jori Ketten, who was hired by Community MusicWorks to coordinate the conference and who poured an amazing amount of creativity and thought into every detail so that it the conference would be not only *about* the ideas we were exploring, but in fact an *experience* in these ideas. We are grateful for Jori's continuing work with us to digest this material and to craft a book that captures and furthers the creativity of those two days.

The Directors of the Providence Youth Arts Collaborative
Providence, Rhode Island, December 2009

With the exception of the introduction, the Providence Youth Arts Collaborative (PYAC) profiles, and the text in yellow boxes, all the material in this book was recorded or created at the two day **Imagining Art + Social Change** conference.

The yellow boxes are the voice of the conference organizers – Jori Ketten, Sebastian Ruth, Heath Marlow, and the directors of PYAC. We took care to make this event different from typical conferences, and these text boxes are our attempt to provide some insight into our planning process.

We hope you find this publication thought-provoking and inspiring, especially if you were a conference attendee and this book serves to reconnect you with your conference experience. Please send questions and comments to jori@communitymusicworks.org, visit www.communitymusicworks.org to see additional documentation, and find out about future events by signing up for PYAC organizations' mailing lists (see websites on the following profile pages).

Jori Ketten, Conference Director, with Sebastian Ruth, Community MusicWorks Executive-Artistic Director, and the Providence Youth Arts Collaborative

THE PROVIDENCE YOUTH ARTS COLLABORATIVE (PYAC) is a consortium of youth-based arts organizations that was founded in 2004 to share and develop resources, learn from best practices, and collectively advocate for the field of youth arts. PYAC organizations share a commitment to offering free arts programming to youth as a strategy for empowering them to become future leaders of Providence and beyond.

PROVIDENCE YOUTH ARTS COLLABORATIVE



AS220's Broad Street Studio

as220.org/bss

Broad Street Studio (BSS) is the youth outreach program of AS220. BSS focuses on serving youth in the care and custody of the state of Rhode Island, helping them transition into a life full of choices through art and career development opportunities.

BSS was created because of the belief in the power of art and the art process to have a positive impact in the life of these young people. BSS offers free classes and workshops in three locations – our downtown Studio, at the Rhode Island Youth Development Center (YDC, the state's juvenile detention facility), and at the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program (UCAP), a middle school for youth at high risk for dropping out and/or becoming involved in the juvenile justice system. At the Studio, after-school workshops run 6 days a week, including photo, painting/drawing, hip-hop, music lessons, dance, creative writing, sewing, and computer aided design. Similar classes taught

by the same instructors are offered at the Youth Development Center and at UCAP, with the goal of creating strong relationships between instructors and students. At the end of each term, there are showcases where youth get to exhibit/perform the work created in their workshops. In addition, youth develop portfolios of their creative work, and these can be used to gain educational and employment opportunities.

AS220 has a dedicated Youth Gallery so young people can sell their artwork, as well as an online store. Youth can apply for production grants to create items to sell to the public, like t-shirts or CD's of their original music. The Studio also runs a mentoring program to provide emotional support to youth exiting the YDC. Youth can opt for an individual mentor or get involved in one of our three group mentoring projects – our basketball team, a babysitting cooperative, or DJ'ing workshops.



Everett Dance Theatre

everettdancetheatre.org

Everett is a nationally recognized company that has toured its award winning concerts to prestigious stages across the country. Everett put down deep roots when they built The Carriage House Stage and School in 1990, a training school in the performing arts. They mentored new generations of young artists in dance, theatre, music and video production. Youth perform, produce movies, design their own projects, and explore their interests in the multifaceted field of arts and culture. Mentors help students explore career goals, and provide connections to further resources.

At Everett's core is a committed belief in the talent of youth and the importance of bringing their voices to the public sphere. Everett's long-term commitment to this work has paid important dividends. Providence youth who started coming to Everett in high school grew to become highly

skilled artists and teachers. Many of these young people joined Everett producing a close-knit cadre of young community-arts professionals who represent the ethnic, racial, cultural, and economic diversity of greater Providence.

(PYAC) PROFILES



Providence iCityArts!

providencecityarts.org

Providence CityArts for Youth provides free professional art-based education and training to Providence youth in a fully developed community-based arts center that reflects, encourages, and promotes the rich ethnic diversity of Providence, our capital city. CityArts' mission is to ensure our capital city's most challenged youth access to quality arts programs—unhindered by socioeconomic barriers—and celebrating the arts as a means to youth empowerment, community building, and social change.

CityArts Afterschool and Summer Programs include classes in visual art and design, music, dance, theatre, and creative writing, and reach over 500 urban at-risk youth between ages 8-14 per year throughout Providence. Programs take place in our Broad Street Community Arts Center (renovation of 6 state-of-the-art studios, gallery and performance spaces completed in 2007), and

in partnership with public schools, libraries, and social service agencies citywide. Youth engage in up to 3-5 days a week of CityArts afterschool arts throughout the school year, and between 2-4 weeks of intensive summer arts camp training. Our partnership with Highlander Charter School includes integrated-art instruction, Artist Residencies and a Dept. of Education 21CLC Afterschool program. These programs are designed to build greater empowerment in learning, to integrate arts education with academic learning—embedded within a school setting, and to enhance and enrich educational opportunities towards higher achievement goals for youth.



Community MusicWorks

communitymusicworks.org

Community MusicWorks' mission is to create a cohesive urban community through music education and performance that transforms the lives of children, families, and musicians. At the center of this mission are the teaching, mentoring, program design, and performance activities of the Providence String Quartet.

Sebastian Ruth founded Community MusicWorks in 1997 with the conviction that music and musicians have an important role to play in creating and transforming communities. With start-up funding from the Swearer Center for Public Service at Brown University, Sebastian created the opportunity for a professional string quartet to teach, perform, live, and become fully integrated into an urban Providence neighborhood. Today, Community MusicWorks is a thriving community organization. Built around the permanent

residency of the Providence String Quartet, we offer exciting programs that engage and inspire Providence youth and their families. Each member of the Providence String Quartet teaches instrument lessons, mentors students, performs locally, and organizes community building events for entire families.

CMW receives strong support from the communities in which we are based, and we are excited to find that our students' enthusiasm for learning about music continually reinvigorates the many professional musicians and other performing artists who visit us each season. Among our annual visitors are members of our Advisory Council, a group dedicated to advancing and promoting our artistic and organizational goals.



New Urban Arts

newurbanarts.org

New Urban Arts is a nationally recognized arts studio and gallery for high school students and emerging artists in Providence, Rhode Island. Our mission is to build a vital community that empowers young people as artists and leaders to develop a creative practice they can sustain throughout their lives. The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities has named us one of the nation's top 50 youth arts programs six times. We serve over 300 high school students, 20 emerging artists and over 2,000 visitors through free youth programs, professional development, artist residencies and public performances, workshops and exhibitions each year.

By using the arts to put young people in charge of their learning, we're developing the citizens and leaders we need for the 21st century. At New Urban Arts, a sustainable creative practice is about continually seeking to bring people

together. We recruit and train artists from a range of backgrounds to mentor high school students in free after-school and summer programs. Artists and young people work together not following a script. Everything that comes out of our studio is the result of artists and youth working as collaborators and peers. Over 90% of our seniors graduate high school and get into college. The majority of our students live in Providence's poorest neighborhoods. In spite of the challenges they face, our young people graduate high school, go to college, and most importantly create opportunities for themselves.



The Providence Black Repertory Company

blackrep.org

The Providence Black Repertory Company (The Black Rep) produces and presents artistic performances that bring people together, provoke thought, inspire hope, and create understanding. The Black Rep is an arts organization that provides a unique experience inspired by the cultural traditions of the African Diaspora in three key areas: Theater, Education, and Public Programs.

Each season's artistic offerings are accompanied by a roster of Education programs, including student matinees, in-school residencies, and after-school workshops. As an arts organization with a dual mission both artistic and civic, Black Rep's education programs look at the intersection between arts, culture, social change and education. Artist Educators bring Black Rep's interdisciplinary approach into the community through workshops in music, dance, theater, poetry and video production. Teaching methodologies

stress collective collaboration and value students' cultural heritage and experience, with the goal of developing youth and adults who recognize the importance and power of the arts and culture of the African Diaspora and embrace the values of community and democracy that are part of these traditions.

WHY DO YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE?

I am a violinist and an urban educator (high school social sciences). My family members are all involved in community arts education. Maxine Greene visited our house when I was 10. I am involved with theater with refugee and student populations. I am interested in learning more about the Providence Arts Community, to see if I could get involved. I want to learn more about how to develop curricula that will inspire youth, instructors, and families to change their communities for the better. I can't wait to see Maxine Greene speak. I have read many of her articles, and I would like to hear her expand on her philosophy of education. Opportunity to gather and discuss issues I don't get to examine in my day job. I write, make videos, appreciate (intensely) music, am an activist an educator dreamer. Want to spend a day focusing on those things. Art and social change is exactly the combination I want to pursue in my career. I'm currently in photography school and trying to find some direction. I am interested in the mix of "big ideas" and "big thinkers" your conference offers along with praxis. I am a visual artist who is also socially concerned. I am interested in meeting and hearing from a variety of artists and how they integrate their social concerns into their lives and work. I see this conference as an opportunity to network as well as get my own cerebral juices flowing re: the issues, ideas/practices which I find most invigorating. I strongly believe in the transformative power of art and I am looking forward to connecting to other individuals and organizations who share the same beliefs and to hear and discuss what is going on in the field. It never used to be a field. As a teacher I hope to bring some inspiration back to my students. Examining race and class privilege in the context of community-based arts. I want to be around a group of people who are also committed to creating art and have a deep faith in its power and necessity for every human being's life. I want to learn more about bringing something new and foreign (like classical music) to a group of people / neighborhood without imposing or reducing the importance of their existing culture. I hope to have some of these ideas and discussions inform future career decisions.

"Why do you want to participate?" was a question we asked on the conference registration form as a way to get people to do some pre-conference thinking about art and social change. We also wanted to find out what ideas people were looking forward exploring at the conference so that we could accommodate peoples' interests when planning sessions.

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New Urban Arts / Studio tour and participatory visual and literary arts workshop, led by alumni and mentors

CityArts / Facility tour and gallery project kickoff

Community MusicWorks / Musical Workshop with jazz violinist John Blake and CMW students

Everett Dance Theatre at the Carriage House / Friday Night Live!, improv show, featuring youth artists

The Providence Black Repertory Company / Dinner and improvisational jazz performance

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Led by Community MusicWorks Fellows, staff, and board members

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With Shirley Brice Heath, Tyler Denmead, Nick Rabkin, and a panel of local teaching artists

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The contents of this book follow the order of the conference agenda. When designing the agenda, we asked ourselves what choices we could make to best engage a large group of participants over the course of two intensive days.

We paid particular attention to moving people between large and small group spaces and more formal and less formal settings. For example, on Friday, the full group attended the opening panel at AS220; afternoon site visits took place in small groups and ranged from casual to loosely structured; and the evening site visits brought the large group back together again for a mix of structured and unstructured workshops and performances.

Other priorities included providing choice within each day's program and providing healthy snacks and meals from local vendors (as well as always-full coffee pot).

OPENING PANEL

How do you frame a two-day conversation about arts and social change for 150 people? We chose to begin with a panel of PYAC founders (with the exception of the founder of CityArts, who was not available; the program director spoke in her place), and by asking local poet and teacher Rick Benjamin to moderate. He began by sharing a poem and then asked each of the panelists to speak for ten minutes about their organization. During the second hour of the session he facilitated an open conversation between the panelists and the audience.



PANELISTS (L-R)

Bert Cranca, AS220's Broad Street Studio
Dorothy Jungles, Everett Dance Theater
Alyssa Holland Short, Providence iCityArts! for Youth
Donald King, Providence Black Repertory Company
Rick Benjamin, Moderator
Sebastian Ruth, Community MusicWorks
Tyler Denmead, New Urban Arts

WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON / Lucile Clifton

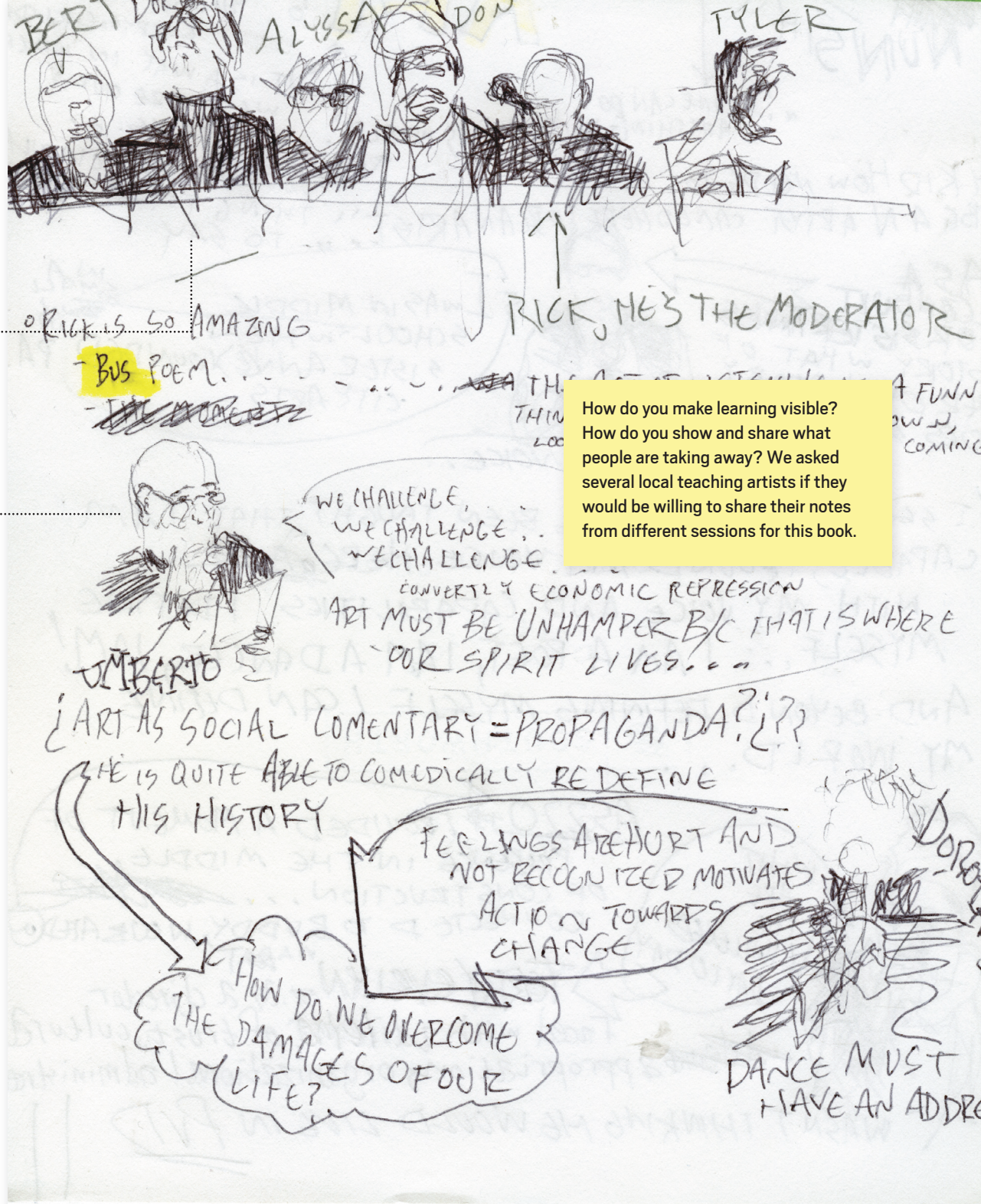
I mention the poem because in a very short and distilled way it reminds us about ideas of equity. I think a lot of us grow up wondering "whose side we're on." And this, it seems to me, goes to the heart of art and community change. **RICK BENJAMIN**

The side of the bus stop woman
Trying to drag her bags up the front steps
Before the doors clang shut.
I am on her side.
I give her exact change.
And him, the old man hanging by one strap,
His work hand folded shut as the bus doors.

I am on his side.
When he needs to leave I ring the bell.
I am on their side
Riding the same bus into the same someplace.
I am on the dark side always
The side of my daughters
The side of my tired sons.

There's really no place where kids can go when they are artists. That was what we committed to, and kids have grown up in our place and are now teaching all over our community. They are wonderful artists. It's been a passing of the torch.

DOROTHY JUNGELS



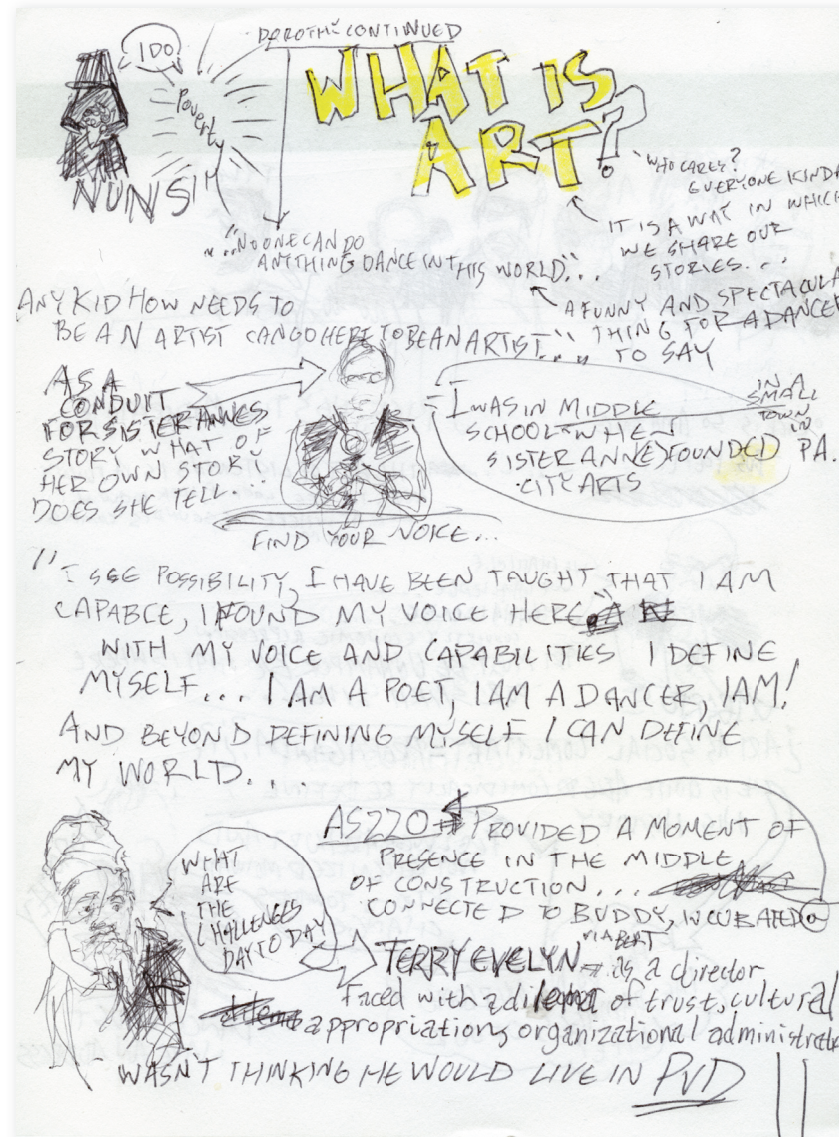
In the twenty years that we have been in business, to the best of my knowledge, we have never rejected a Rhode Island artist from performing here if they own their material. I'm not going to say that we've always done everything perfectly, but the demand and managing that demand has created a whole a way of thinking of "How do you meet that challenge?" It's a whole other way of trying to be accommodating and supportive as opposed to judgmental and controlling.

BERT CRENCIA

I think Sister Anne says it best: She did not found CityArts to create little Picassos and O'Keefes. **She created it to be a safe place for creative expression and for people to explore the arts and use the arts to find their voice.** As Program Director that's something I see happening everyday. On Broad Street we have people coming through all the time, parents, youth, saying, "Wow, we see so much color behind your windows! How can we get involved?"

A couple weeks ago PYAC put together a youth forum. I sat down with a group of three of our young artists and talked to them about CityArts. And I was thinking, **"Wow, it's true. What we write in these grants is true. We truly are making a difference."** They said CityArts is a safe place, they could come here and creatively express themselves without getting made fun of, and they felt tired and stressed out at school and they came to CityArts and it was a fresh start. They knew they could be whoever they wanted, and they could be artists. And that **coming to an afterschool arts program showed them that they really had so many options ahead of them.**

ALYSSA HOLLAND SHORT



DONALD W. KING

I wanted to point out that these are the kinds of challenges that we deal with on a regular basis, of a poor, brilliant kid who lives in Pawtucket's projects and can't always make it to rehearsal on time. **What I can say is that I am really proud of people on my staff who understand it all in a really deep nuanced way.**

RICK BENJAMIN

And I think that this gets to the heart of where we're hoping the conversation will go which is **that organizations themselves make social change by operating in certain ways.**

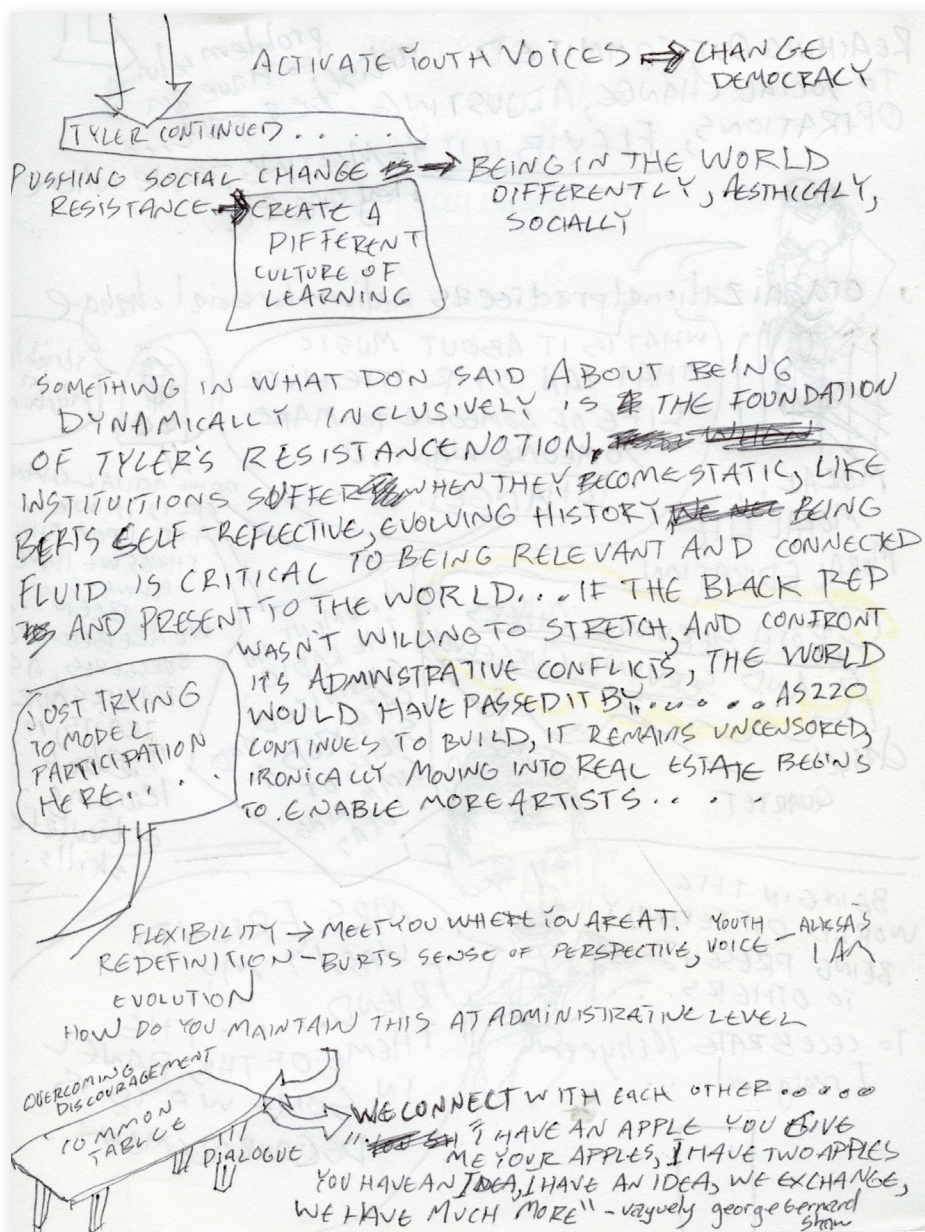
SEBASTIAN RUTH

I'm glad that opened up, the **organizational practice as a method of social change,** not only the art practice.

For me, it was like a bell went off. It was like, art! That's the vehicle. Self expression, self empowerment, people realizing their own voice and coming to terms with their own voice, this is the vehicle for me, to satisfy these needs, in terms of my needs of trying to deal with injustice in the world and be an activist in the world. So that was the reason why I gravitated toward art as the vehicle. **BERT CRENCA**

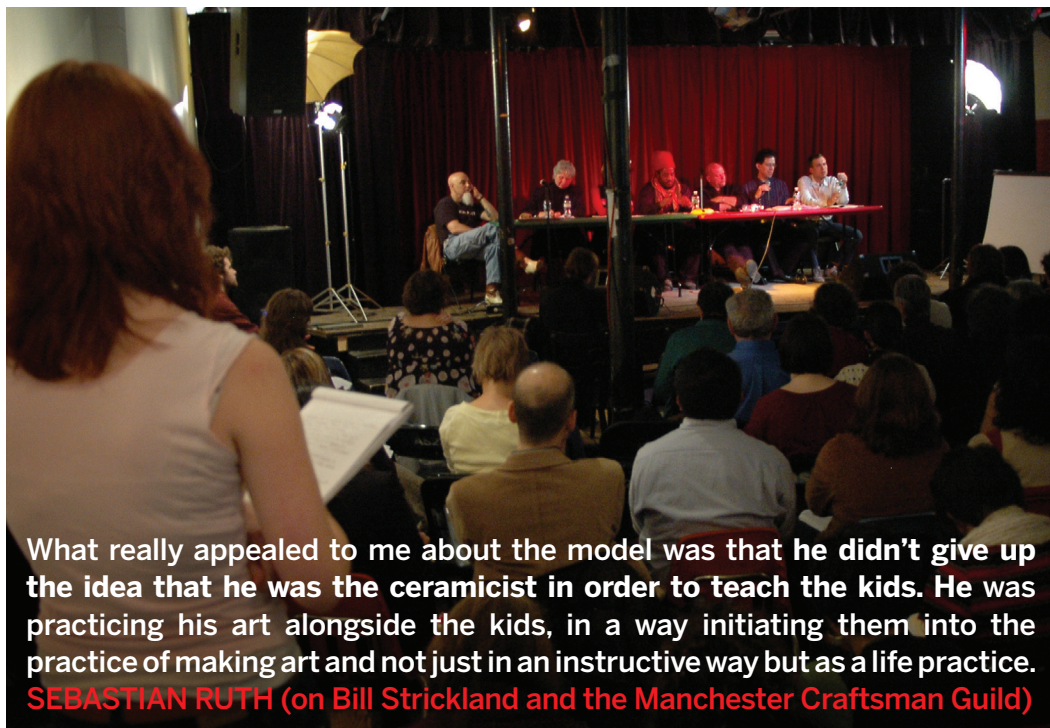


We have an improv comedy group every week, Friday Night Live!, and it's made up of people fourteen to forty five, something like that, and every color in the rainbow. And when you get up and improv it's a really beautiful form where **you're on the stage and you're equal**. Another very funny thing that happens is people are always hugging each other, lifting each other, becoming each other's mother, son, father, in the honest mixes of a quick scene. And again, improv doesn't depend on sets, costumes. You have to imagine. And I think **humor is such an amazing tool, you laugh together so much and there is something democratic about that, you can't feel a hierarchy then.** **DOROTHY JUNGELS**



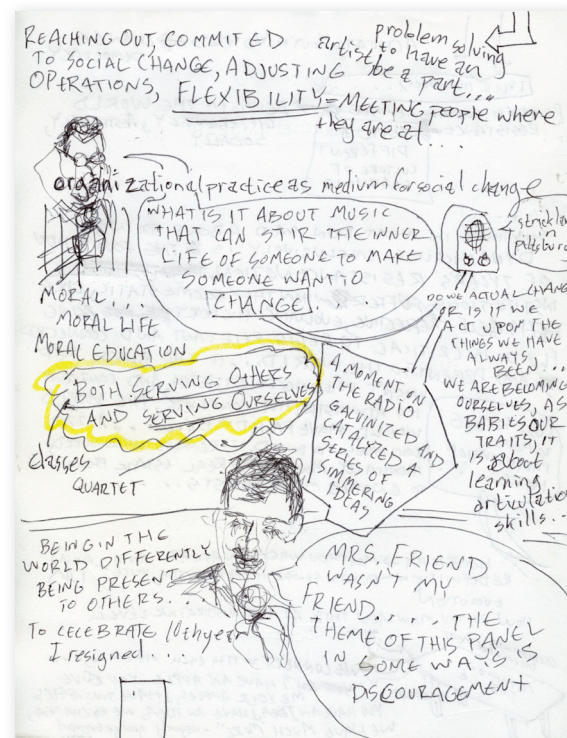
I was completely in love with the idea of playing string quartets professionally but really disenchanted with where people traditionally play string quartets and how its done. Simultaneously, I was very intrigued with the idea of music playing a role in education and specifically a role in transforming people's lives. I was working at Brown on some independent projects on music and moral education and finding those books and those conversations somewhat too orientated around what's good behavior and what's not good behavior. That's not the idea of moral education that I was fascinated with. **I was more interested with what about music can stir someone's inner life in a very significant way that would make them want change personally.**

I had gone by chance to the Fall Forum of the Coalition of the Central Schools and I saw this session called imagination and possibility. **And it was Maxine Greene, and I had no idea who she was but I was completely lit up by what she was saying,** because suddenly she was talking about this idea of transformation. **It wasn't about making right decisions or morally correct decisions, she was really talking about that inner life moment that can happen through the arts.** I went up to her afterwards and I said—I'm sure I was stuttering, I didn't quite know what to say—"This was really cool!" And Maxine, as a very quick thinking person, said, "Come to my conference, I'm doing a conference in two weeks. Write to me." **That was the greatest thing, she never said "call me," she said "write to me."** SEBASTIAN RUTH



I think at New Urban Arts originally my vision was one that comes out of the progressive tradition – all of us are going to have opportunities for self expression, we were going to promote youth voices and that would activate a sense of civic engagement, a sense of empowerment, a sense of participation in the world, and that would change the composition of public life, of civic life, and that would in turn change the composition of our democracy and what it entails. And that was sort of the vision.

In a lot of ways **I was trying to create a culture at New Urban Arts where all marks, all movements, whatever, could be valued and celebrated—including my own.** And I think actually **the artists and mentors who are an amazing group of people and the students at New Urban Arts—equally amazing—have really changed and pushed the notion of what social change means.** I think it's more a form political resistance in perhaps a way that I didn't anticipate or envision. I



think what they're doing is **trying to create an alternative way of being in the world.** An alternative to the logic of the market and how it defines us and who we are and this is about being in the world aesthetically about creating aesthetic significance in a way that we can share with other people.

TYLER DENMEAD

What struck me is that, whether it was being discouraged, or in Sebastian's case interestingly never discouraged, **it was all about voice.** It was about expressing things that the rest of society didn't give a damn about. **And that's where social change happens, when you feel free to voice that the society sucks.**

CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT

It could sound quaint but I think there's a deep power in a sense of community. One of the things we notice in particular when we talk with our families and parents is "I came to Providence from the Dominican Republic eight years ago, but the first time I felt like people really knew me was when I was at Community Music Works," or "I go to my kid's school and the teacher is just barely learning my kid's name by the end of the year and then they have a new teacher the following year." **The power of people knowing one another I think is not to be overlooked as one of the really defining messages of social change.** And that relates to one of the questions that [moderator Rick Benjamin] and I were thinking about in preparing for this panel: Is individual change social change? If we're working with one person who's experiencing the Maxine Greene kind of internal inner life changes, different perceptions about the world, is that a change in the community? **SEBASTIAN RUTH**

The term social change has always been intimidating and icky to me. I think about it along the same lines as "school reform." If any of the schools that [my organization] works with thought that we were going in to reform them they'd kick us out on our asses because they'd be like, "I didn't ask you to come in here and reform me." **So I really like the idea of resistance. It's fine to say to somebody "I'm challenging the way you're doing something;" it's another thing to come to them and say, "I'm going to reform you through my art."**

CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT



PYAC SITE VISITS

In order to give conference participants a chance to get to know PYAC, we arranged site visits at each organization, ranging from studio tours to youth-led workshops and performances. Sites were accessible via yellow school buses that traveled around town all afternoon and night, notable for their significance as cultural icons and for the informal space they provided for conversation during travel time.

BROAD STREET STUDIO



NEW URBAN ARTS



CITY ARTS



COMMUNITY MUSICWORKS



EVERRETT DANCE THEATRE



Being able to participate in regular events at the different sites that weren't staged just for us added an authenticity to the community-based/participatory approach embodied by these organizations.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT

MORNING WARM-UP



One challenge we faced as conference organizers was how to build community among participants. The conference was in essence a two-day event, but we offered registration fees for one and two-day participation. We ended up with a number of people who could only come on Saturday, and we wanted this day to feel like a complete conference experience for them. Additionally, the constant movement on Friday (from organization to organization) and the variety of

experiences offered were naturally energizing. Saturday's agenda was varied, but all events and sessions were located in the same building and we were concerned about keeping the energy of the group elevated. We decided to ask veteran performer Robbie McCauley to start Saturday with a whole-group, site-specific, community-building activity that got people on their feet, moving around the space, reflecting on the themes of art and social change, and interacting with each other.



Beginning with movement with Robbie McCauley connected and involved everyone to move forward as a community of participants rather than as separate and passive audience members.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT

EVALUATION SESSION

If you're going to talk about participatory evaluation, it makes sense for your presentation to include multiple voices. Dr. Dennie Palmer Wolf's session not only created space for participants to talk to each other in small groups and to share questions and comments with the large group, but it began with a panel of youth artists who talked about their experiences within different PYAC programs.

Let's talk about evaluation as we need it. It means that we have to really think, not just about external audiences, but also about internal audiences. **Nobody should be engaged in asking these kinds of questions, unless it's going to serve the program – unless it's going to be a conversation for teaching artists, for kids, for families.** So here's the rule. No evaluation just for external sources. It has to mean something to the stakeholders that are involved. And that means you have to be willing to think about all kinds of people who are affected. So when we had the Youth Forum here the other night, **one of the moms was back at the coffee table, and she said, "When is there going to be a forum for us, as parents?"** And the other rule is, it has to build the capacity of anybody who's involved in it. **It has to be a conversation amongst all of the people who care about the program. DENNIE PALMER WOLF**

After taking so many classes you begin to see the world differently. Art will do that to you. That's what drawing and painting and poetry do for me. They make me want to focus harder, and look at things deeper. To try to see what's on the inside. So for me, I suppose arts have just changed my entire perspective and the way I see everything. Everything is just different.

VICTORIA, CITYARTS

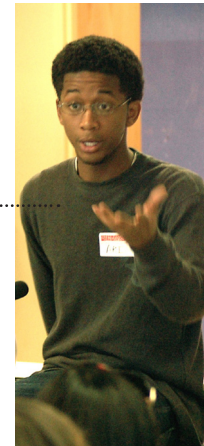
The program I'm in has given me a great opportunity to learn to play music, to be with people that I care about, and grow with them. They've given me a place where I feel like I can be myself, and I'm not afraid to grow up. And what we give back now is that we're learning to write music in theory class. We're learning to play better together. We're playing concerts for the community. We're having benefit concerts. They're giving us an opportunity to use our music to do something better for the community. KIRBY, CMW

Carriage House, they let me be the host for Friday Night Live, which makes me so happy. They allow me to go on stage and just speak. And it helps me hone in on my public speaking abilities. I think that with improv you learn public speaking skills, but in a more fun way, where it's actually sinking into your brain, because when you're speaking, you need to open yourself to the audience. ANDREA, EVERETT DANCE THEATRE

Everett Dance Theater, like I said before, has helped me learn how to be professional, learn to be a performing artist, but also I have learned how to see the world in a different way. And I perform not only to try to help kids to be influenced into becoming an artist or something like that, but to understand that you don't have to be the same person you were before, even though you're used to being that person. There's also this other person that is warm and vulnerable inside that you should let out, because there are other people that care about that type of person. ARI, EVERETT DANCE THEATRE

I'm so persistent in my artwork that I am constantly in the zone when I'm collaging or screen-printing. That has sort of carried into my AP statistics class. I try to just focus and get to the point that I want to get to, because in the end, the product is always great, despite the struggles, no matter what the process is. Studying, going through the process of preparing the print, it's all the same thing. REBECCA, NEW URBAN ARTS

They did not just give us the opportunity to play music, but the opportunity to become leaders within ourselves. We have these meetings, and they teach us how to speak, for free, in front of everybody, and have the courage to talk, and to take on leadership roles. They gave me the confidence to be talking right here, right now. JOSH, CMW



If you had these kinds of narratives, if you collected this kind of data, what could you code? **What could you pull out of it as evidence? How would you frame it for an external audience?** And another really important issue is, **what kinds of modalities do you offer kids, in terms of responding to your questions?** DENNIE PALMER WOLF

IMAGING ARTS AND SOCIAL CHANGE

SATURDAY MARCH 29th 2008

Evaluation → imagination

→ turning imagination into action

- artist inside
- reading to fuel ideas

a newer view

CREATIVITY

old view: formal (shape, size) rather than meaning
solo not social
rare versus everywhere

→ why do we think that everything valuable should be rare? ☆

↓ ↓
→ daily creativity -
→ widely dispersed - human capital that belongs to everybody

DEVELOPING "CREATIVE CAPITAL" in all young people

EVALUATION: collecting evidence

- attendance
- who moves to the next level
- grades and scores
- productive behaviors
- recognition and prizes
- how does the "after school stuff" affect these evidences?

INTERNAL/EXTERNAL AUDIENCES: need to collect evidence for ^{both}

→ how all factors are affected - parents, siblings, etc.

CONVERSATION that involves everybody. ☆

Kids: talking about their independent arts projects vs. academic projects

→ getting it right versus feeling ownership

being imaginative, listening to yourself as opposed to listening to the teacher, the facts

→ identity and initiative → creativity



↓
how do you use this as hard evidence?

CHOICES

↓
brains & guts -
trying them together

Knowing how to record it, your ideas, turning ideas into evidence - new way of thinking

♥ ♥ ♥
present vs. past: experience → identity

→ applying creative thinking and that ownership to other aspects of your life

enjoying learning ----- ??? what makes it enjoyable... different interests...

→ ACCESS to doing original work

teacher's role: making things accessible, giving out information in a way that allows them to have ownership over it, to make it their own

CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT

Over these last couple of days, we've been watching these organizations that are so obviously amazing, and I'm kind of in despair over the fact that we have to work so hard to justify them. I'm wondering, is that just a socioeconomic reality? Are we having this conversation because of the political reality of where money is not available?



DENNIE PALMER WOLF

Yes but also I think we're also having the conversation because we live in a culture which doesn't value the intrinsic worth of these things, which sees many of these activities as dessert. So, part of this is about fueling a national conversation about, this is meat and potatoes, not dessert.



What I will take away from this conference is new ways of evaluating our work, for us and by us.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT



CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT

I don't want to just go through the daily rigmarole of running these programs. I want to invest in evaluation, and invest in making programs better, so that it serves the work. It also sets an example for the students in the programs, because my program is not going to be good tomorrow if it's exactly the same as it is today. And this sort of investment is a strong statement for young people, I think. And it's a good entry point for them to be involved in making the organization better.

DENNIE PALMER WOLF

Yes! Let's think about this example of leadership. What we learned from the youth forum is how much of that was going on. So what it raises internally – never mind the government, never mind the foundation – is, huh, that's happening in an incidental way. How do we build those kinds of opportunities in a very substantial way into the organizations?

CONFERENCE GALLERY

One of reasons we were excited about being welcomed into CityArts' beautiful building for a site visit Friday and for the full day on Saturday was the availability of the CityArts gallery. We saw in the empty gallery an opportunity for the conference community to engage with the topic of art and social change, and with each other, outside of conference sessions.



CMW STUDENT QUARTET PERFORMING IN THE GALLERY



WRITING, DISCUSSING, RECORDING



READING RESPONSES TO THE REGISTRATION FORM QUERY, "WHY DO YOU WANT TO PARTICIPATE?"



THE START OF A WRITTEN CONVERSATION INSPIRED BY QUOTATIONS ABOUT ART AND SOCIAL CHANGE

I loved seeing the blank room turn into a room of inspiration.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT

It was a pleasure to see the gallery evolve over the course of the conference. As the conversation in sessions deepened, so did the content shared in the gallery.

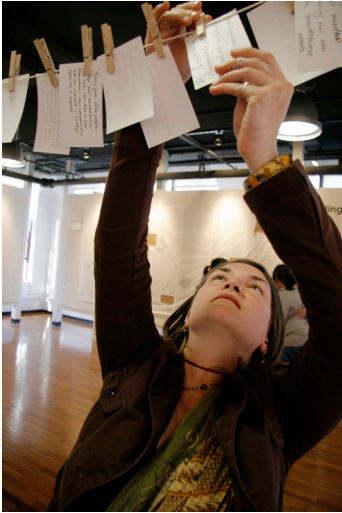
CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT

I am borrowing the interactive gallery idea for a workshop next week!

CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT

WHAT IS SOCIAL CHANGE?

One station in the gallery asked people to respond to the question, "What is Social Change?" on an index card. Cards were hung on a clothesline, which gradually filled over the course of the conference.



Hard work. Necessary work. Rewarding work. **The shifts in attitudes, thoughts, feelings, and opinions that affect our relationships to each other.** Making space where people realize their connections to each other, love to help themselves and their communities, and are invested in building happiness and respect. **Shaking things up! Being open to new perspectives, ideas, ways of being and doing.** Social change is thinking outside of what is comfortable in our lives, placing ourselves in someone else's shoes, empathizing with their experience – knowing that although we might never fully understand their experiences we can empathize and create changes to make their lives better. **Social change is what we work for when we realize that things do not have to stay how they are, and that, in fact, they must not.** **Social change is inherently concerned with with the collective and the well being of the individual.** Social change is moving beyond stereotypes and prejudice towards a society of mutual respect for our differences and appreciation of our common aspirations. **Social change is a realization, idea, feeling, or thought within an individual or individuals which, communicated to others, enables or stimulates actions which move the group to a new (hopefully better) situation.** Influencing individuals, groups, organizations, systems, structures to see themselves as a medium for building positive, intentional, well-rounded and more equitable communities. **A change in people's thinking about society.** Social change is being OPEN and FLEXIBLE to NEW IDEAS. The only thing that stays the same is that there will be change – let's keep communication always open, honest, and productive. **Social change is the activation of the realization that fundamentally we are not separate.** Social change begins with compassion for all human beings. Social change is about removing barriers to connectedness between people. **The root word for education is "educare," which means "to lead out of." So I'm curious about looking at social change as a liberation, an allowing of what is already present.** What is social change? When you decide something isn't right and you decide to do something about it. **Acting for the common good. "We are the ones we are waiting for."** Social change MIGHT be the ability for all of us to understand that at the end of the day we are all just mothers, people who go to the movies, food lovers, siblings that are linked through this thing called life. **Social change is creating an environment that empowers kids to believe their world can be different.** Creating change together, for each other. **Learning to think differently than you did before. Teaching others to think differently than they did before.** The process of individuals and groups becoming aware of their ability to transform reality. **Listening to what is needed and figuring out how to provide it.** It involves confronting our greatest fear – "Not that we are weak and incapable but that we are more powerful than we allow ourselves to realize!" And we can use our power to transform every part of our lives. **A rearrangement of the power dynamics among or between people.** Working with an inappropriate norm to change it to a positive normality. **Making it better.**

HOW HAS ART CHANGED YOUR LIFE?

Another gallery station, equipped with audio recorders, asked participants to tell their personal stories in response to the question, "How has art changed your life?" Here are a few of the stories.

I remember that night vividly.

It was 8th grade. I lived in a university town and a jazz band was playing. I was a pretty normal teen who was full of angst. But once I got into that auditorium, it was transformative. I heard the ting of the hi-hat cymbal, the syncopated accents of the bass drum, the blare of the trumpets, you know I just couldn't stand still. My head started nodding, my toes started tapping. I just couldn't stand still.

Art changed my life about two years ago, despite the fact that I've been making my own art for about 13 years.

When I went to Phenom Penh, Cambodia and I went to the S21 Prison Camp and I saw the paintings of one of the few survivors of that prison camp, paintings of some of the horrific atrocities that he saw in that place. It really changed my perspective. I began to think about the idea of art in context. The paintings weren't in a traditional Western gallery, they were in the setting of a place where thousands of people were systematically

murdered. I began to think about my role as an artist and decided I wanted to begin to focus my time and effort on researching such artwork and the power it has to educate the rest of us about the human experience and especially the unfortunate human experience of violence.

When I was a teenager I heard faculty at my music camp play Beethoven's Opus 132 String Quartet.

My parents had been into music so I always listened to music, but almost through someone else's ears. Somehow, in this experience, when I knew that these people were there to play music for us youth, something changed. There was more immediacy to the listening. The piece itself, the middle movement goes on for 17 minutes and it's very slow, ethereal music. Very boldly quiet. Listening to it changed the way I thought of playing music because suddenly I realized that someday, I could do this too, create that moment for people. I later learned that one of the teachers that wanted to play it had to

overcome resistance from a lot of the other faculty who said this piece is too serious, too intense, too mature for these kids to hear. And thank god for the perseverance of that one person who said, "No, they need to hear this."

When I started going to high school I was in a new place, and I didn't know what to get involved in, where to focus my attention.

After school often I would just kind of hang out with my old friends and try to rebuild the time we used to have. A lot of time was empty, there wasn't much substance. Just doing things that didn't really have lasting meaning or didn't go anywhere. Which gets kinda old. So when I discovered New Urban Arts, when someone told me about it and brought me over there, it was so amazing. This was a place you could spend time and do stuff, you know, just do whatever you wanted to do, whatever they had available or whatever people could teach you. And I was moved because it was free and it was an opportunity that was right

there and I could do these things that interested me, like deep down quietly there were things I wanted to do but I never really thought of or went after – but when they were presented to me, I jumped at that opportunity and went with it. So I was really happy and fortunate to have that kind of awakening experience, and I just built on it.

I grew up in an immigrant family and I came to the United States when I was five.

Because I moved over to a different county during my very early years, I grew up with the sense that I was verbally stunted. So when I started making music, that was when I first felt like I could communicate. Specifically when I started playing chamber music – it was the very first time I felt like I could truly communicate with my peers, without having to feel like I was confined by my limited vocabulary. It was a life changing, life saving experience. And that is how art changed my life. For the first time.

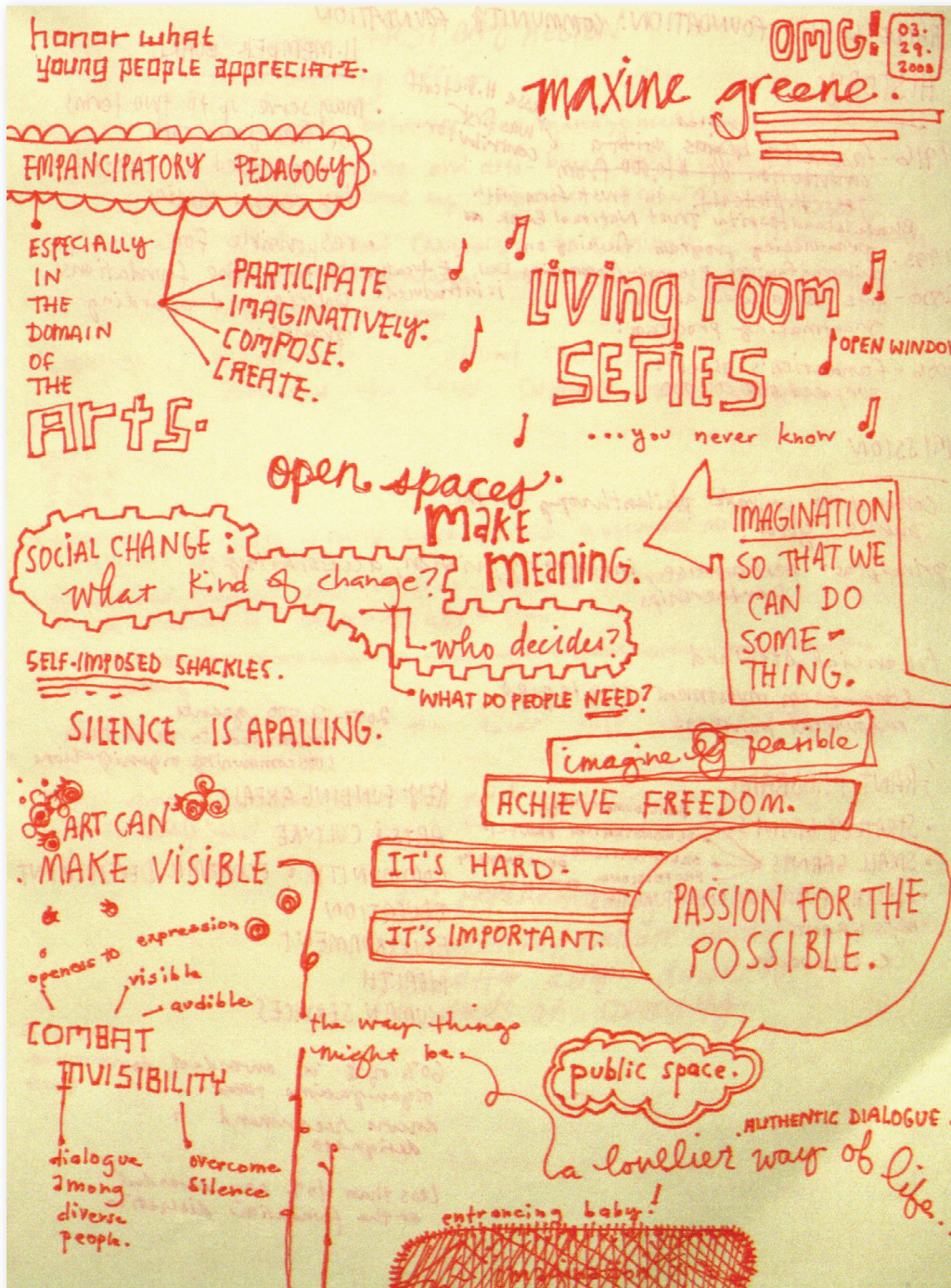
MAXINE GREENE

Maxine Greene's keynote was the focal point of the conference. Many of the PYAC organizations have been guided and influenced by her books and ideas, and the conference title itself is a reference to her writings. We welcomed her to the room first musically with John Blake's jazz violin and then with a standing ovation.



I met Sebastian with his grandmother in a restaurant near where I live. After that I was fortunate enough to have Sebastian and his quartet in my living room and **to have them in my living room made things look otherwise.** My living room looked different and what we saw out of the windows looked different. **It was a wonderful opening of possibility. It started me realizing a whole group of possibilities.** MAXINE GREENE

A phrase that jumped out at me when I was in college and reading [Maxine's book] **Releasing the Imagination** was this part where she refers to 'our' concerns. She says, "I say 'we' in hopes that I am speaking to a community of educators concerned with emancipatory pedagogy, especially in the domain of the arts." **If anything were a call to action to be emancipatory educators, especially in the domain of the arts, for me, that was it.** SEBASTIAN RUTH



Paulo Freire said one time that the peasants had to imagine a lovelier way of life before they could realize how much they were oppressed, how difficult things were. And it was then that perhaps they would turn to each other, bring themselves together, to bring into existence a better way of life. **So that's what's important to me about imagination, not just that we picture things on the hill, but imagination going beyond so that we can do something.**

I've always been impressed by a poem by William Blake that many of you know called London. The poet wanders through the charted streets of London alongside the charted river, charted meaning controlled or bought by someone else. And he said, "In every cry of every man, in every infant's cry of fear, in every voice in every man, the mind forged manacles," meaning people in some way chained their own brains. That people themselves accept messages, accept descriptions, accept the taking for granted. **And one of the things necessary if we're to use our imagination and to achieve our freedom is to break those manacles.**

Mind-forged manacles, the manacles we accept ourselves, the constraints we impose on our own thinking. They explain why so many people take for granted cultural policies, national practices and take for granted – now I'm a little bit crazy about this – take for granted the delight in celebrity the syndrome I name American Idol or Dancing with the Stars. Those things we are being taught to be valuable. The American Dream becomes a dream of celebrity or winning the competition and it's something we have to think through. **It's part of what shackles us and it's part of what we have imposed on ourselves.**

When I think of twenty three million people voting on American Idol, more than ever votes in the country, more than any voting population, I think, "Dammit, we've got to get people to break those shackles so that girls don't want to be beautiful and blonde and skinny like Paris Hilton." These images, these idols are somehow understood. It's part of what we have to do. **We have to look at the media in our classrooms we have to help people see the way the media and others impose, and make people realize it is their responsibility.**



Questions: how do the programs change

- the way they think of themselves
- how they relate to others
- the place of music in their lives
- how they think about and act in their community

What they take from it, then what they give back

This is good, and kind of weird.

How do we evaluate our guys?

How DO YOU FRAME IT? "CODE" IT AS EVIDENCE?

- paying attention to individual stories
- hard data vs. narratives
- DIAGRAMS of relationships of ways the social network and roles change

MAKING YOURSELF VULNERABLE AS A TEACHER, TO PAY ATTENTION TO INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS' LEARNING STYLES - TO MAKE SURE THEY'RE GETTING SOMETHING OUT OF IT, WHATEVER THEY'RE DOING.

how to make adults see what their students see? not forget what it was like to be a high schooler, or how important adult role models were to you...

JUSTIFICATION

realize that this creativity, these programs, are essential, not "dessert"

what's wrong with incidental?

SOCIAL CHANGE: what children need to come alive -

- ↳ not beginning with abstraction
- needing spaces to become alive

ART SHOULD CHANGE YOUR LIFE A LITTLE BIT

breaking boundaries...

when was that moment? where you broke boundaries?

babies.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ALL EXPERIENCE

creating meaning - it's up to us to create meaning, direction in our lives

A LITTLE BIT

IN BOXES WITH NO WINDOWS

...IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC SPACES TO CHILDREN...

artists moving into schools.

moving out of schools.

I'm crazy!

TEACHING STRANGERS →

- how to reach them beyond differences - existential
- how to give support to children, whose experiences we don't share - how to understand that.

invisibility stands in the way of fulfillment.

Overcoming invisibility - feeling invisible as a high-schooler - opportunities to be visible and audible

invisibility - as in only being seen as a high-school student, as a black man, as a woman, etc. etc.

CHAINING YOUR BRAIN

COMPETITION and CELEBRITY = chains on the brain

ENDING WITH FREEDOM? NOT ENOUGH. TAKEN FOR GRANTED.

I NEED RECOGNITION → recognition's responsibility

NVA → recognition → visibility - internal visibility as well as external

PARTICIPATION → physically → how to make that tangible, bring it out, visibility

Plank to Plan K... uncertainty

given a chance to participate

★ PRECARIOUSNESS OF CHILDREN

design project strategize

I believe, as Rilke, an experience with a work of art should change your life. I'm reading a book now which was very well reviewed in the New York Times. I really hate it, but it's wonderfully written.

It's called **Lush Life** by Richard Wright and it's about what happened to the Lower East Side in New York as different groups came in. It's all about the police and shooting and drugs but it's so well written it's

changing my life. It's a peculiar thing, you can hate something but it can change your life.



AUDIENCE MEMBER

You've taught for a long time and I'm just curious if you've noticed any changes or trends in the students that have come to you over the years and **how you maybe have had to adjust the way you teach to this new generation.**

MAXINE GREENE

I've had to learn a lot. Partly because as I grew up and began learning to teach I was sure that things I valued, everybody valued, and I just had to make it easier for people to listen to Mozart or read Tolstoy. As time goes on, I realize it's not that way. **People treasure different things, people want different kinds of awareness. So how do we come together?**

I want to honor what young people appreciate and, at the same time, I want to somehow show them what I love without imposing on them some elitist idea of culture. That's the hardest thing today. It's become very important to me, as it wasn't before, to make use of film in my literature classrooms.



This post-conference email exchange between CMW student Fidelia “Kirby” Vasquez, Sebastian Ruth, and Maxine Greene is an example of the kinds of connections we hoped the conference would inspire.

From: Fidelia Vasquez
Sent: Saturday, March 29, 2008, 9:04PM
To: Sebastian Ruth
Subject: (no subject)

Hey Sebastian,
Wow is all I can say. This was an amazing experience. Though I live it everyday, it's moments like these that make me so thankful for all that you have done for us. And I still can't get over Maxine Greene. She is such an amazing woman and I thank you for giving me the chance to have met her. I just wish I would have had a real chance to have spoken to her. I know she is very wise and I can learn a lot from her. Again I'm lost for words. I had so much fun meeting all these amazing people. I only hope I get the chance to see her again. Thanks for everything Sebastian.
KiRbY

From: Sebastian Ruth
Sent: Sunday, March 30, 2008 12:13 AM
To: Maxine Greene
Subject: Thank you!!

Maxine,
I hope you had a smooth trip home. You were magnificent here today--people were so lit up by your talk. The way you're able to weave together the important writers and philosophers of the last century with the news from yesterday to help us have a deeper understanding of life is rare and inspiring. I thought you'd like to know how Kirby, the 15 year-old cellist you met today, felt. She sent me an email this afternoon that I wanted to share with you.
With love, Sebastian

From: Maxine Greene
Sent: Monday, March 31, 2008 10:34AM
To: Sebastian Ruth
Subject: Re: Thank you!!

Dear Sebastian:

Thank you so very much for your letter and Kirby's attachment. The whole atmosphere, the gallery, the young people, the important grown-ups, your family: I shall never forget or lose the sense of the day. I hope we meet again soon; and, obviously, I wish you continuing success. Much much love.

Maxine

From: Fidelia Vasquez
Sent: Monday, March 31, 11:12PM
To: Sebastian Ruth
Subject: Re: Fwd: Re: Thank you!!

Hey Sebastian,
Dude that was soo sweet. Maxine is just so awesome. I went on the computer today and was reading about her. I saw that she has some books so I ordered one at the library. I got the book "Releasing the Imagination-essays on education, the arts and social change. Now I'm waiting for it. I bet it's going to be great. Anyways I'll see you tomorrow ok. Take care. Sounds very interesting. Have you read it? See you soon.
KiRbY

PS What does aesthetic mean? I was going to ask you tomorrow but I know I'll forget...

From: Sebastian Ruth
Sent: Tuesday, April 1, 4:43PM
To: Fidelia Vasquez
Subject: Re: Re: Fwd: Re: Thank you!!

Yes, this book is the one that really inspired me too. Good choice!

Aesthetic is an adjective that means having a sense of the beautiful. Aesthetics is a branch of philosophy dealing with how people define beautiful, people's ideas about beauty or ugliness, and about understanding art.

When Maxine talks about aesthetic education, she's talking about an education in looking at / listening to art or music, rather than art education which is about learning to make art or music. Let me know if that helps.
S

From: Fidelia Vasquez
Sent: Tuesday April 1, 9:51PM
To: Sebastian Ruth
Subject: Re: Re: Re: Fwd: Re: Thank you!!

Hey Sebastian,
It's pretty funny how you knew that when I asked about aesthetic I was talking about what Maxine said.. I was just wondering because she brought it up a lot. Thanks for explaining!
KiRbY



CMW STUDENTS JOSH RODRIGUEZ AND KIRBY VASQUEZ WITH SEBASTIAN RUTH AND MAXINE GREENE

PERFORMING IMAGINING ART + SOCIAL CHANGE

Conference participants had been working hard all morning and we knew this session would be critical, as it followed lunch! Once again we asked Robbie McCauley to lead an active, energizing session for the entire conference group that would get people on their feet, interacting with each other, and addressing the conference theme in yet another way.

Robbie split everyone into small groups and gave them parameters and a time limit for quickly crafting performances about “a moment in history you’d like to change.” The pieces ranged from serious to silly and were uniformly captivating.



Robbie’s ingenious methods of making each person’s creativity a part of the day were not only invigorating but also educational.

CONFERENCE
PARTICIPANT

I loved both workshops with Robbie. They were fun and very inspiring. They gave everyone a chance to have a voice in the day.

CONFERENCE
PARTICIPANT

COMMUNITY MUSICWORKS BREAKOUT SESSIONS

If you're a non-profit, you basically have certified to the federal government that you're going to represent the voice of the community in the activities that you're doing. You're accepting money from the public and you're tax-exempt because you're providing a service to the community. **And it's really important that the board make a special effort to represent, to listen to the community, and to make sure that the interests of the community are represented on the board.**

One way of doing that is to have a major portion of the board come from the neighborhood. I think that most of the work that people do here is place-based. **You need to get a sense of what that place is, and then make sure that the people, that the full range of people in that area are well represented so your activities meet the needs of the community.** You're not leaving out people because they're poor, you're not leaving out people because they're rich, you're not leaving out people of one color or another. **You really are trying to reflect the needs of whatever the community is, and whatever the culture is of that particular area.** And that's going to be different for each organization.

RICK KELLER, CMW BOARD

We have two students on the Board. They are invaluable. **But you have to think carefully about how their voices are heard, how they're supported in that.** There's time on our agendas for them to give feedback on their point of view.

LIZ HOLLANDER, CMW BOARD

Breakout sessions led by CMW fellows, staff, and board members were designed to address the interests of conference participants, as indicated on registration forms. Topics included:

- Not Just for the Kids: How do Arts Organizations Affect Parents, Families, and Artists
- Is Classical Music a "Foreign" Art Form to an Urban Community?: How CMW Integrates Classical Music into Community Life
- How We Started an Organization that Supports the Needs of Artists and Youth
- Teaching as Mentoring: How CMW Defines the Roles of Mentoring in its Work
- How a Community Board Supports a Community Organization



I know fundraising's on everyone's mind, and I just feel like it's important to clarify that **the word "development" encompasses more than fundraising.** We need the money, everyone needs money. But there's a distinction I want to make, which is that **we're developing something, we're building something, we're growing something. And that's the part that I love about it.** And in a way, I'd say I don't think about money very much of the time. Money's a sort of natural outgrowth of growing something. It's all about relationships. I'm the relationship manager. Some of those result in dollars, and some of them result in flowers, or photography, or all sorts of other things.

So how do we go about doing that? I say the key for starting out is we invite people. We offer things. Community MusicWorks is all about being inclusive, and we bring people in, whether it's to someone's house, or a free concert, or a free dinner, or just in the street outside of our office, keeping the door to our office literally open. And people come to us. **Everyone is fair game in my eyes. But that's not just, you know, "What can you give us?"; that's, "Now that we've met you, what's your interest, what makes your eyes light up?" Because if I know that – maybe it's not this year, maybe it's next year – we'll find some way of connecting.**

HEATH MARLOW, CMW DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT



People like to think in terms of five-year plans. Maybe it's just convenient, or maybe it's just as far out as we really can realistically think. Having a sort of near-end goal is useful. **But I think there's a value in doing the super far out, like to say, if we succeed, here's what would be different about the city. These are the conditions that would exist – these aspects of society will have changed, and therefore this work won't be necessary any more.** That's a useful exercise, whether or not those conditions are ever met. Like Maxine was saying, this is an abstraction. Let's define what you mean by social change. It should be what individual and particular people's needs are. So, OK, **what are these needs, and what would they look like if they were met?** SEBASTIAN RUTH, CMW EXECUTIVE- ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



TEACHING ARTIST PANEL



In addition to Maxine Greene and Dennie Palmer Wolf, we were fortunate to host a few other scholars at the conference. New Urban Arts Founder Tyler Denmead, currently studying at the University of Cambridge, moderated the teaching artist panel, and was supported by Nick Rabkin (University of Chicago), who provided history and context, and Shirley Brice Heath (Brown University), who provided summative remarks. Teaching artists from each PYAC organization were panelists. The panelists began by discussing what led them to become artists and teachers; these comments evolved into a conversation based around conference participants' questions.

This panel is about teaching artists, and how, in the frantic nature of the non-profit community arts scene, it's often difficult to make space to invest in and support the artists who are doing this work. This conference reflects the commitment of this community and these organizations to create that space. I know there are many people in the audience who identify as a teaching artist, or an artist activist, or an artist mentor, or an artist educator, or whatever. **And I think that's sort of the richness of this community, that people identify and don't separate these different identities. That they're all important and integrated, a part of who they are.**

TYLER DENMEAD, NEW URBAN ARTS FOUNDER

When I came here, I was under the impression that I was just going to be teaching and playing in a string quartet, and that was what I thought. And it became very clear right away that that's not all I was doing. I was suddenly having to deal with all of these other complicated issues with families, and just making sure that my kids came to lessons, and feeling very responsible for these kids, not just making sure that they were able to play Twinkle. That wasn't my main concern. My main concern was whether they were actually going to be able to make it to their lesson, based on whatever other issues that might have been going on with them. **I was really a part of the conditions of the community that I was living in.** JESSIE MONTGOMERY, COMMUNITY MUSICWORKS



Somebody earlier today
had suggested that
**artists frequently play
the role of court jester
in schools.**

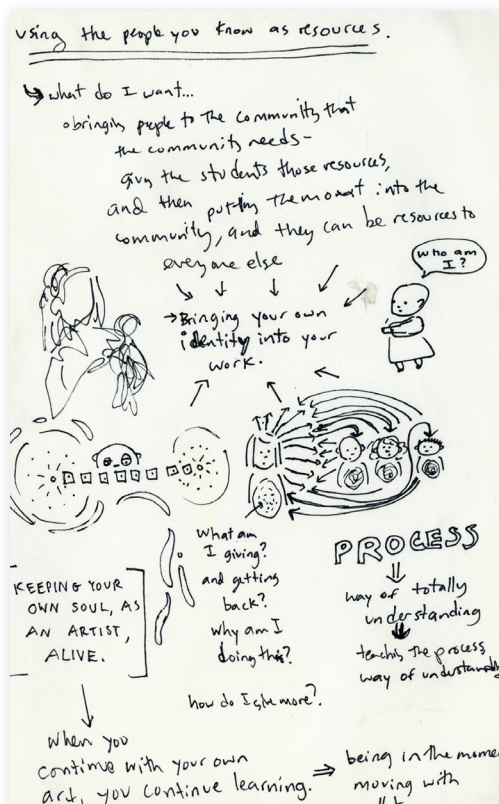
They're the sand in
the oyster that makes
the pearl. They're an
irritant, in certain kinds
of environments. **They
are agents of change,
and they make people
uncomfortable.**

**That cuts against
the grain of our
conventional
understanding of
professional.** But
at the same time,
they have extremely
high standards, that
are actually genuine,
professional standards,
that aren't just, did they
get the paperwork in on
time. **NICK RABKIN**

After college, all of a sudden, you turn around, and you're like, well, where did all those fun, funny, lively people in my life go? You know, I have to get this back in my life. The music, the feeling, the differences, the language, everything. So when we built the Carriage House, it wasn't to help anyone – it was just simply that we wanted it. **It was just simply that we were missing something.** So we wanted to open our doors, and we thought that only community members, neighborhood kids, would come. We had open breaking when it

was just coming back, and we had like 70 kids in there at any time, from all over the city, that were like the hottest break dancers around. And we made a piece with some of these kids, and it was extremely difficult, and we had a lot of differences. But, you know, it just led us to great places. So for me, **my art has been my teacher. My company has been my graduate school. And our theater in our school has been my heart, because you're able to bring people that the community need to the community, and help them get there.** And it's

amazing to watch kids that started off all rough in there, teaching other kids, and opening doors for us. I can perform in any school in Rhode Island, I can walk in and know I'm going to be successful, and the reason why is because I have Sokeo with me, I have Clayon with me, we represent the world that we live in, and therefore, we can really bring something to the people that we're trying to serve.
RACHAEL JUNGELS, EVERETT DANCE THEATRE/CARRIAGE HOUSE



And one of the great challenges that the field has got now is to begin to make the connections that are beginning to become more and more obvious to all of us. I want to begin by reminding you all that this is a field that has not emerged in whole cloth. I think this crowd is probably evidence of the growth of this field, good evidence of the growth of this field, over the last eight years. You folks are actually way out ahead of everybody else. **This is a field that's inventing itself, and the practitioners who are in the field are the source of real knowledge about the field.** There's really no academic field. You don't go to college to learn to become a teaching artist. You can go to college and presumptively learn how to be a teacher, or presumptively learn how to be an artist. But you can't learn how to be a teaching artist in college. **And the challenge that I'm trying to rise to now is to try to collect your practical understanding of what good practice is, of what kinds of organizational supports you need to do your best work, of what kinds of systemic supports could make your work higher quality or could make your work more accessible to those who are interested in taking advantage of it.** **NICK RABKIN**

→ YEARNING FOR LEARNING

being a "professional"?

Professional?



- sustained,
- long term,
- discipline and practice.

* young people given the opportunities to teach.

→ influence on later life

→ things in the world that make kids think they can learn just do it (art), which they can... but like they don't need to know anything else.

ARTS & SCIENCES

no way to truly separate them.

(sustainability))))))

in arts - quick rush to focus on individual.

interconnectivity
working as an individual but not without community, never actually without it. not without outside influences

BIOLOGY OF VISION

INNERVISION

AS A TEACHER, TAKING YOURSELF AND YOUR STUDENTS SERIOUSLY.

Art that's easy to make → makes it more accessible, the medium easier to access, not as remote

In all the studies that have been done, a **key issue comes to the top for teaching artists, which is that they must keep their own soul as artists alive, and they must see and feel themselves as artists, first and foremost.** And that was indicated here linguistically in all sorts of ways – in the ways that people introduced themselves, and the ways in which they kept referring to the continuations in their work.

A second issue is one that was very much represented here, and it is this matter of doing improv, and being, in a sense, of capability and power with regard to **improvisation.** Improv, across all fields, is a key to creativity. But it's the key to the **yearning for learning.** And Maxine talked so loud about yearning, in terms of yearning for imaginative outlet, and yearning for expression. And that's very, very core to artists.

The **third element** that we found in studies around the world and certainly comes through and our colleagues here, **is the sense of being a professional.** A professional artist, a professional creator, and a creator in the teaching. And you talked about this very eloquently, in terms of the way in which you found yourself creating, but knowing also that in that creativity that you were guiding and modeling, and moving, and then later, getting the affirmation of the young people moving into their own teaching roles.

And the **fourth issue** is one that's so often overlooked. And in my studies over the years of highly effective community organizations and sustained groups, it has mattered so much. And that is what we have come to call the **turnover/turnaround principle.** And that means **that young people have opportunities to enable others to learn – that is, to guide others in a learning process.** And every one of you mentioned that early experience of being able to lead and guide others.

The **fifth area** is one that comes up much more easily in the world of music and in the world of dance and that is **sustained long-term discipline and practice with experts, with masters.** SHIRLEY BRICE HEATH

CLOSING

The conference closing featured a video that was shot and edited over the course of the two-day event by local filmmakers Abe Halpert, Corinne Warnshuis, and Pete Ricci. The 8-minute piece captured the feel of the conference and was a great way for participants to reflect on their time at the conference. Visit [www. communitymusicworks.org](http://www.communitymusicworks.org) or the Community MusicWorks YouTube channel to watch for yourself!



The video was amazing! I have no idea how it was edited in such a short time, but I do know that it was a gift that we were able to watch it all together at the end of the day.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT

PRESENTER BIOS

Rick Benjamin is a poet whose creative life has always taken place at the intersection of social activism. When he was a graduate student in a doctoral program in literature he also worked full-time directing an HIV/AIDS project in New Jersey. This “job” naturally found its way into his dissertation, poetry and teaching, and also started him thinking about a life in which love, a “profession” and art did not compete with one another, but were part and parcel of the same thing. “Let the beauty we love be what we do,” Rumi says. Rick is interested in any medium that carries wisdom. He currently teaches at Brown University, the Rhode Island School of Design, and Goddard College, and conducts workshops on poetry and community practice as often as he can elsewhere. Recent publications include poems in Logolalia, a chapter on the poet Kevin Young in *American Poets in the 21st Century: The New Poetics* (Wesleyan University Press), and an essay on art and ecology in the environmental journal, *Watershed*. His book, *Passing Love* (Wolf Ridge Press), will be out at the end of 2009.

John Blake, Jr. is world renowned for his unique and exciting sound as a jazz violinist. He is regarded as a consummate musician and yet displays equal dedication in his role as an educator. John has worked with some of the most distinguished names in jazz, including McCoy Tyner, Cecil McBee, and Grover Washington, Jr., and has appeared on more than twenty albums. He has co-authored a jazz string method book, entitled “Jazz Improvisation Made Easy”, and has been recognized in *Down Beat* magazine as one of the top jazz violinists in America.

Umberto Crenca is the founder and Artistic Director of AS220, a non-profit center for the arts in Providence, Rhode Island. AS220 was established in 1985 to provide a local forum and home for the arts, that is unjuried and uncensored. The organization maintains nineteen artist live and/or work spaces, five galleries, and two performance spaces, and has established a powerful presence in the Downtown Arts and Entertainment District. Crenca serves on Providence Mayor Cicilline’s Arts Culture and Tourism Advisory Board. He was also appointed to the Providence School Board in January 2005. He is an advisor to the LINC initiative, a national effort to create better support systems for individual artists. In the past two decades, Crenca has been a panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts, The Urban Institute, The Ford Foundation, LEF Foundation, Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, Massachusetts Cultural Council, Connecticut Council on the Arts, the New England Artists’ Trust, and the Creative Cities Summit.

Tyler Denmead is presently a graduate student working toward a MPhil in Education (Arts, Culture, and Education) at Cambridge University through the support of an Antonio Cirino Art Education Fellowship from the Rhode Island Foundation. Denmead launched New Urban Arts, a nationally recognized interdisciplinary arts studio for high school students in Providence, Rhode Island, while a senior at Brown University in 1997. He resigned in 2007. He was also instrumental in founding the Providence Youth Arts Collaborative through the belief that shared learning opportunities across emerging youth arts organizations are vital to their development. Denmead was awarded an echoing green Fellowship in 1997, recognized as Rhode Island’s best ‘role model’ in 2003, and received a congressional proclamation in 2007. Research for his MPhil will focus on the educational and work histories of English artist educators who teach in and outside schools to provide a contextual understanding of the evolving arts education field.

Maxine Greene. Through inquiries into sociology, history, and especially philosophy and literature, Maxine Greene explores living in awareness and “wide-awakeness” in order to advance social justice. Her thinking about existence and the power of imagination have been brought to life through her study, academic appointments, essays and books. In her teaching, she desires to educate those who speak, write, and resist in their own voices, rather than mimic her ideas and language.

Shirley Brice Heath is a linguistic anthropologist whose research has centered on the out-of-school lives of young people in underserved communities. Key themes in her work are adolescents’ language and symbolic representations of themselves, as well as their leadership and initiative in identifying and solving what they see as community problems. Central in her current research is later language and multi-media literacy development and the voluntary engagement of young people in long-term projects that center in the arts, environmental sustainability, and social justice. She has carried out research in Mexico, Guatemala, South Africa, the United States, England, Germany, and Sweden. Her publications range across four major areas: language socialization, organizational learning, youth culture, and language planning. Beyond academic publications, she is also dedicated to providing research for a wide audience in video/film, photographic exhibitions, and popular journals.

When **Dorothy Jungels** co-founded Everett Dance Theatre in 1986, after receiving a Choreographer’s Fellowship from the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, she brought to the company a lifetime of experience in the visual arts, dance and education. As a teacher, she has been hired by the state to take dance to schools, mental hospitals, children’s hospitals, prisons, senior citizen’s sites and national conferences. In preparation for this work Dorothy was sent by the RI State Council on the arts to study with Katharine Dunham in East St. Louis. As a filmmaker, she co-produced a 50-minute documentary

about the history of social dance in Rhode Island (*Oh How We Danced*, 1982). As a choreographer, she has developed techniques for using videotape that are at the center of Everett Dance Theatre’s method of collaborative dance creation, and has been recognized by four Choreographer’s Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts. She is also the recipient of a Rhode Island Foundation Fellowship and six fellowships from the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts. Under Dorothy’s direction, Everett has been recognized with a Bessie, a New York Dance and Performance award, a Pell Award for excellence in the arts, and the Rhode Island Alliance in Education Award for combining science and art.

Donald King is the Artistic and Founding Director of the Providence Black Repertory Company in Providence, Rhode Island. Since 1996, the Providence Black Repertory Company has been an organization with a dual mission: community service and artistic excellence. The Black Rep achieves this by providing accessible public programming, educational programs, and excellent artistic performances in theatre. The work of Black Rep has brought to Rhode Island performances that provoke thought, inspire hope, create understanding, and bring people together. The work mirrors the rich cultural heritage of the U.S. and creates a venue where universal stories can be shared among all. Donald is currently an adjunct professor in the Africana Studies Department at Brown University, teaching courses on theater and hip-hop.

Robbie McCauley is a celebrated performance artist and theater director whose personal vision has consistently explored the “herstory” of Black women. She has been an active presence in American avant-garde theater for more than three decades. Her early work in New York included performances in plays by Lanford Wilson at Cafe Cino and by Adrienne Kennedy at the New York Shakespeare Festival. On Broadway, she appeared in the original cast of *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf* by Ntozake Shange. In the 1990s, she received both an OBIE Award (Best Play) and a New York Dance and Performance (BESSIE) Award for *Sally’s Rape*, which she wrote, directed and performed in many locations nationally and internationally. Among the many other important works she has written and directed are a number of community-based theater productions exploring issues of race and class in this country and in the Czech Republic. She is currently associate professor of theater at Emerson College in Boston.

Nick Rabkin has been the director of the Chicago Center for Arts Policy at Columbia College Chicago, the senior arts program officer at the MacArthur Foundation, the Deputy Commissioner of Cultural Affairs for Chicago, and a theater producer. His work, broadly, is about understanding how the arts can best contribute to the development of a genuinely democratic society and rich community life, and he has made arts education a major focus. In his writing (*Putting the Arts in the Picture: Reframing Education in the 21st Century*), he has linked the pioneering work of artists in education with new learning theory and research to construct a new kind of case for the arts in the education of all children. He now directs the Teaching Artist Research Project at a University of Chicago research center, NORC. It is the first study of artists who do vital work in communities and schools across the country, and is due to be completed in the summer of 2010.

Sebastian Ruth is the founder and Executive-Artistic Director of Community MusicWorks, a non-profit organization that connects professional musicians with youth and families in challenged neighborhoods of Providence, Rhode Island. Recently profiled in the *New Yorker Magazine*, Community MusicWorks is built around the permanent urban residency of the Providence String Quartet, of which Sebastian is a founding member. With the Providence String Quartet, Sebastian has performed in recent seasons in Providence, Boston, Los Angeles, and New York, and with members of the Borromeo, Miró, Muir, and Turtle Island String Quartets, and with pianist Jonathan Biss. He graduated from Brown University in 1997, where he worked closely with education scholars Reginald Archambault, Mary Ann Clark, and Theodore Sizer on a thesis project exploring connections between music and moral education. In 2003, Sebastian studied, under the auspices of a fellowship from The Rhode Island Foundation, in a two-week violin master class at the Schola Cantorum in Paris.

Dennie Palmer Wolf, is a Principal Researcher at WolfBrown, an international consulting firm specializing in cultural planning. Wolf focuses on the design, implementation, evaluation and research that help communities examine and improve how young people and their families’ gain access to learning, culture and creativity, in and outside of formal institutions. Wolf holds her doctorate from Harvard where she trained in developmental psychology and served as a researcher at Harvard Project Zero, leading studies on the early development of artistic and symbolic capacities. She has taught at Harvard and Brown Universities. Most recently, she has pioneered evaluation studies that build the capacities of organizations, funders, and the communities they serve, co-authoring *More Than Measuring*, a longitudinal study of the effects of arts-based learning, sponsored by Big Thought, a 80-organization consortium in Dallas. She is currently working as the evaluator for similar projects in Philadelphia, PA and Portland, OR. Wolf has published widely on issues of assessment, evaluation, and artistic development.