

“You can’t eat beauty, it doesn’t sustain you. What is fundamentally beautiful is compassion for yourself and those around you. That kind of beauty inflames the heart and enchants the soul.”

—Lupita Nyong’o

MFA in Arts Leadership

SEATTLEU.
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES



2020 MFA IN ARTS LEADERSHIP

Virtual Summary Project Presentations

SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 2020

SEATTLE UNIVERSITY

Presentation Schedule

8:45 am Welcome and Embodied Exercise

Creativity, Audience, and Place

9:00 am Katrina Fasulo
*Opera Under Reconstruction:
Strategic Responses for Audience Engagement in 2020*

9:30 am Grace Lansing
*Centering Cultural Value:
Contextualizing the Development of a Cultural Arts Plan for
the City of Tumwater*

10:00 am L.E. Webster
*Viral Sensations:
American Neo-Burlesque Re-Explored in a Hotspot*

10:30 am Erin Naomi Burrows
*"Building on a Proud Tradition:" -
Mapping Cultural Histories and Artist Networks in Downtown
Bremerton, WA*

11:00-11:15 am Break

Arts Policy, (In)Equities, and Growth

11:15am Tyson R. Walker
*Rethinking STE[Arts]M Through Creative Placemaking:
A Strategic Growth Strategy for a More Viable Future*

11:45 am Rachel Ballister
*Inequity in the Arts:
The Democratization of Culture in Tax-exemption Policy*

Presentation Schedule

12:15-1:00 pm Lunch Break

Aesthetic Engagement Across the Rural and Urban

1:00 pm Paige Petrangelo
*A New Seattle Sound:
How Community Investment in Touring Music Can Incite
Sustainability Through Reciprocity*

1:30 pm Andrea Ashton
*Public Works - Extending The Locale Through Virtual
Communities of Practice*

2:00 pm Kaelyn McGowen
*Nevada Neon Nights:
The Story of the Neon Bender and the Impact of Neon in
Public Space*

2:30 pm Megan Torgerson
*Reframing Rural:
Rewriting the Narrative on Rural America through Oral
Storytelling*

3:00 pm Break

Ethnographic Explorations: On Leadership and Possibilities

3:15 pm Megan Dung
*Keep HEARTS Beating:
Unpacking "Founder's Syndrome" in Modern-Day Hawai'i*

3:45 pm Sadiqua Iman
*We Were Made For This:
Black Women Leading the Way for Change in American Theatre*

4:15 pm Linnea Ingalls
*Visceral & Virtual:
Tensions of Grief and Discovery in Embodied Arts of the
COVID-19 Era*

Closing & Thank you

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“You are your best thing.”

—Toni Morrison

Welcome to the Arts Leadership Summary Project Presentations for the MFA 2020 Cohort!

The accompanying screenshot on page 17 comes from our penultimate class. Themed “What You Can Do,” that class featured a career panel with arts leaders doing the work in the field: Kareem Khubchandani (Tufts professor and performance artist), Molly Mac (Seattle University Galleries Curator), Mariko Nagashima (dance, journalist, and TeenTix Teen Programs Manager), and Annie Von Essen (consultant). These panelists generously presented their career work, the role of applied research therein, and what their careers look like at this moment, especially under the COVID-19 global pandemic that is necessitating physical distancing.

After the career panelists “left” our virtual classroom, we took a series of screenshots with cheeky prompts such as “how you are feeling right now after two hours on Zoom?” The accompanying screenshot followed a more hopeful prompt: “imagine the day after tomorrow” (a prompt from dancer/scholar Shamell Bell, among others). How might we study the arts sector amidst the COVID-19 global pandemic, and imagine the arts sector during and after it? How might this research mark this time, and move towards a future committed to the arts in fighting against racism and other forms of oppression? What role does applied research – conducted via physically distant constraints – play at this time in our sector?

We — Roxy Hornbeck and Jasmine Mahmoud, Assistant Professors in Arts Leadership — instructed this year’s Summary Project course centering these evolving questions. This Spring 2020 capstone course integrates MFA in Arts Leadership students’ academic, practicum, and professional experience into one applied research project. We had an explicit focus on *inquiry* or asking questions, *citation* or honoring past literature, and *doing the work* or practicing methods relevant to their research projects, analyzing data, and working through ideas and revision towards a paper, presentation, and project. Although the necessity of teaching over Zoom constrained this work, this present time also offered deep questions to root each student’s research.

While we’ve had the great privilege to intentionally engage each student throughout the Spring 2020 Quarter, the truth is that this work has been a hopeful process for students both before and within the MFA Arts Leadership Program. Their research engages arts publics as audiences and communities; virtual arts engagement amidst COVID-19; Black women arts leaders; arts education policy and leadership practices; tax policy; cultural planning; and cultural and oral histories of cities, art forms (including underground music, burlesque, and neon), and people. These students of MFA ’20 leave their mark on the Arts Leadership Program through the infusion of firsthand insights, new approaches, resourceful ideas, and innovative modes of resistance—while working within the epidemiological and oppressive structures of the time.

Contained within this program are bios, photos, titles, and abstracts for each MFA ’20 Summary Project. While these abstracts are thick with meaning and purpose, they are only small archives of the larger repertoire each student embodies in who they are and what they are passionate about.

As you read through the program pages, our hope is that you are spurred to consider your own *inquiry*, *citation*, and *work*, and how your embodied positionality and archive of knowledge dialogue and engage with this content. These Summary Projects are not static, but rather representations of what could be as we continue to pursue arts leadership through an anti-racist lens towards equity, empathy, and value, as well as an imaginative lens towards thinking about today, and the days after tomorrow.

#dothework

Jasmine & Roxy



Jasmine Mahmoud, PhD
Assistant Professor



Roxy Hornbeck, MFA
Assistant Professor

Katrina Fasulo

Opera Under Reconstruction: Strategic Responses for Audience Engagement in

As a classical artform with over 400 years of history, opera has endured and expanded stylistically. However, while other performing art disciplines have evolved more strategically in presentation and audience engagement, opera in the United States has been a slow agent in this process. Theories of cost, stigma, length and format, production values, and patron experience have all been suggested as reasons for barrier to attendance in reports such as “Building Audiences for Sustainability: What do Millennials Want?” from the Wallace Foundation and Opera America. Within our current context I seek to expand upon these theories while also exploring the implications of COVID-19 for the art form. Director Timothy O’Leary of Washington National Opera said: “Since 1597, when the first opera premiered, there have been 167 documented epidemics that have posed challenges to our way of life, and to gathering in groups to experience live performances. Whereas often we think of our 400-year history as one of our liabilities as an art form, in this case I hope it’s a measure of our continuity and resilience.” (OPERAAmerica, 2020). This project seeks to examine how opera organizations might better engage and grow their audiences in culturally conscious ways, both now and in a post-COVID timeline by situating analysis of engagement modes and aesthetic preferences. This project investigates: How might organizations keep patrons engaged in a digital format? Will the industry see a shift regarding new audiences as it relates to age demographic under these parameters? How do paradigms and evidence of classism and elitism behave as barriers to this artform, and how might organizations expand access and shift this narrative? Through examination of audience engagement literature and digital ethnography in organization and artist generated content beyond traditional confines of the opera house, requisite considerations for the future of opera are made apparent.

New York City native Katrina Fasulo grew up surrounded by a vibrant artistic landscape (thanks mom!) and fell in love with all things opera. She received a BMA in Vocal Performance with a Minor in Arts Administration & Program in Entrepreneurship from the University of Michigan. She got her start in arts leadership serving on the board of Arbor Opera Theatre and has since worked with organizations such as Opera America at the National Opera Center, Loft Opera, Glimmerglass Festival, Seattle Opera, and Seattle Symphony, and volunteers with the APAP|NYC conference annually. Upon graduation Katrina is committed to exploring ways to bring sustainability and a 21st century relevance to the opera sector. Katrina resides in Bremerton, WA with her husband John and cats Lily and Loki, and is eager to relocate to the Northeast next year.



Grace Lansing

Centering Cultural Value: Contextualizing the Development of a Cultural Arts Plan for the City of Tumwater

Community-based cultural arts plans have become increasingly recognized for their role in establishing strategies that revive cultural and socioeconomic vitality. This paper will serve as a case study on the development of a Cultural Arts Plan for the City of Tumwater in Washington state. My project will assess Tumwater's initial methods and serve as a springboard of ethical practice and inquiry. I aim to address the following questions: How does the concept and practice of creative placemaking and cultural equity frame my work for the City of Tumwater within the development of cultural planning? How will theoretical frameworks inform our values during the city's beginning stages of cultural mapping?

This project will explore the development process of the plan and contextualize the impact of ethnographic research throughout. The era of COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the city's timeline. However, it has also allowed me to carve out additional and necessary time to take a deeper dive in how we are incorporating culturally equitable practices to our research. My analysis and assessment will be centered around the following pieces of evidence: a community arts program survey, interviews with local artists and stakeholders, and a comprehensive list of cultural assets citywide. These methods are meant to inform cultural ingenuity and suggest best practices for small cities prior to implementation as opposed to after. All findings and methods will continue developing among myself and the task force – a group of thirty qualified, local stakeholders.

Based on a compilation of qualitative and quantitative analysis, the task force will determine a list of goals, objectives to support those goals, and possible initiatives to activate the plan. This research was made possible with the support and creative initiative of Tumwater's City Council, employees, and local artists.

Once the plan is complete, I will be presenting our proposal to Tumwater's City.

Grace is an artist and cultural advocate. Her work focuses on public policy, public art, community engagement and arts administration. Since her move to Seattle, Grace has developed a Marketing Plan for the Central Area's Chamber of Commerce, curated neighborhood galleries, assisted in public art projects with Overall Creative and Urban Artworks, worked with 4Culture's public art department, and served as a programs assistant for Inspire Washington. She was recently hired to facilitate and develop a Cultural Arts Plan for the City of Tumwater. Her work has since navigated citywide, countywide and statewide initiatives throughout the creative sector. Those who know Grace will all agree that she cherishes community wherever she goes. If she's not biking, she likely got sucked into a stimulating conversation or jam session with a stranger.



L.E. Webster

Viral Sensations: American Neo-Burlesque Re-Explored in a Hotspot

Artists of all kinds are adapting to a rapidly evolving cultural ecosystem in the wake of COVID-19. How is this an opportunity for the Seattle “Neo- Burlesque” community to be re-formed in a more sustainable way? Seattle, as one of the first American cities to be hit with the COVID-19 virus, has had a unique experience with this now global disaster; it has fully reshaped every portion of the arts sector. Seattle’s thriving Neo-Burlesque community has had to adopt a body-based practice to new digital and virtual media methods and expand the idea of what can be considered “burlesque.” As many burlesquers take to the streets to protest inequities facing BiPOC artists, the definition of burlesque takes on a yet another new meaning. These events drive exploration of the central research question; What makes burlesque a vital form of protest? Surveys, interviews, and an advisory panel nominated by community thought leaders all contributed to data collected pre-and post- pandemic. Ethnographic research was collected via field notes and anonymous audience interviews at ten notable instances of Seattle Neo-Burlesque live and online productions, with an addition ten productions studied from the audience. Paid work in the Neo-Burlesque community served as a basis for my immersion within the community, and my preliminary interest in this topic. Narrative descriptions from field notes and interviews assisted in the development of a history of a specific moment in time, and the beginnings of an archive. A gallery of images and sources enable further engagement in the world of burlesque.



L.E. Webster is a multi-disciplinary performance artist, dramatist, musician & aspiring historian. She previously earned her BFA cum laude in Theatre: Original Works from Cornish College of the Arts after attending Perpich Center for the Arts High School, where she began her relationship with Neo-Burlesque under the instruction of local innovator Cherry Manhattan. Webster’s research goals for the future include returning to her Seattle Burlesque Impact Study, which was one of many endeavors interrupted in Spring 2020. She performs as Pinkie Fingers and in the duo The Pinkie Fingers, a musical pair of comediennes who shock Seattle audiences with farcical lyrics- finding particular pleasure in performing parody. A comfort with liminality, thirst for equity, and passionate interest in public health guide Webster/Fingers in all she does. She currently works as an arts consultant and grant writer, which she hopes to pursue full time following graduation. This research could not have been completed with the generous involvement and support of the SeaBQ community. She is grateful to them, as well as her professors at Seattle University, her friends and family, her interview subjects, and most fervently her cohort.

Erin Naomi Burrows

“Building on a Proud Tradition” - Mapping Cultural Histories and Artist Networks in Downtown Bremerton, WA

What are the conditions for building an equitable arts community in a military and working-class town? How do artist networks bolster a sense of belonging and support for both emerging artists and small business owners? This project initiates a community conversation and collaborative mapping project of cultural histories and artist networks in Bremerton, WA. Beginning by piecing together a cultural history in downtown Bremerton, the project identifies arts leaders who have organized prominent spaces, events and initiatives in the urban core of Bremerton, WA from 1990 to 2020. This research is made possible by my community involvement as a resident-artist in Bremerton and leverages an autoethnographic exploration of community building, self-efficacy, and artistic identity formation. This summary project delineates existing and emerging networks of artists through a series of interviews with local leaders including members of the City of Bremerton Arts Commission and the volunteer organizers of Bremerton Arts District First Friday. The research demonstrates how diverse narratives of identity (including age, gender, race, dis/ability, class and military status) are necessary for inclusive and equitable network development, place-based community engagement and creative placemaking. I offer a critical analysis of how civic leaders and artists are building relationships and seeking public-private partnerships. My findings and recommendations are presented as an invitation to local arts leaders to join future participatory action research to enrich Bremerton’s cultural future.

Erin Naomi (Bunny) Burrows is an artist, poet, and historian. With over a decade of experience in higher education, Erin is skilled in ethical storytelling, facilitation, and coalition building. She currently oversees communications at the Seattle University Center for Community Engagement and manages the Place-Based Justice Network, a national learning community of college and university staff who are committed to anti-oppression work through long-term, reciprocal partnerships in their neighborhoods. She believes that creative thinking and action are practices capable of addressing our most pressing concerns of accessibility, inclusion, and equity. In 2018, she founded OysterHinge (OH!), a consulting project for emerging artists. She proudly lives in Bremerton, WA with her partner, Frances S. Lee, where she can found building creative community and tending to her garden.



Tyson R. Walker

Rethinking STE[Arts]M Through Creative Placemaking: A Strategic Growth Strategy for a More Viable Future

Arts education enhances student achievement; a claim of scholars and educators for the past century. But what if we look beyond the studies? Beyond student development? And beyond academic success? Arts education has the power to positively transform communities long-term, but only if we pave the pathway now through a critical examination of current growth development strategies. Reimagining the intersection of arts and education is imperative to create a sustainable future and should be the cornerstone of creative placemaking. This project claims that an investment in arts education policy will directly impact communities positively for a more viable future as arts education directly correlates to increased civic engagement, critical thinking, unity and inclusivity, and – art-making. By creating and implementing detailed investments in arts education policy as creative placemaking, through a cross-sector strategic plan, we can and will fundamentally improve communities. The proposals within this project intent on longitudinal justice, holistic learning, and equal opportunity embedded in the Puget Sound Regional Council's Vision 2050, the central Puget Sound growth development plan. This project focuses on regional-wide collaborative efforts to implement arts learning as a practical growth development strategy and situates arts education as equally important as other foundational planning needs such as housing, environmental protection, transportation, etc. Regional initiatives for equitable, holistic STE[Arts]M learning can radically change the local and regional Prek-12 education system - and subsequently the future of communities. Current and future students are our greatest investment and art is their pathway to reach their greatest potential.

As a fervent arts education advocate, Tyson is devoted to the longitudinal implementation of arts learning in curriculum. The transformative power of arts learning in character development fueled Tyson to earn a BFA in theatre teaching from the University of Utah. As a teaching artist, he's seen firsthand the influential impact the arts have on youth and communities, as his undergraduate work centered on theatre education for social change. Wanting to expand his arts education scholarship, Tyson enthusiastically pursued an MFA at Seattle University to sharpen his understanding of leadership and community. Having worked with organizations like Arts Corps and Arts Ed Washington in connection with his graduate studies, Tyson is prepared to help navigate the necessary and needed systemic changes for greater arts impact.



Rachel Ballister

Inequity in the Arts: The Democratization of Culture in Tax-exemption Policy

The 501(c)(3) public charity model is a common choice for arts and culture organizations. The benefits of federal corporate income tax exemption, ability to accept tax-deductible donations as contributed income, and lower postage rates contribute to its popularity. However, as United States tax policy changes, questioning the equity of the 501(c)(3) model for arts and culture organizations becomes necessary in promoting the growth of the arts and culture sector. I use a framework based on Kevin Mulcahy's theory of the democratization of culture as a tool to examine how the model favors larger, established arts and culture organizations to smaller, newer, community-based arts and culture organizations. In this paper I examine survey responses from two arts and culture organizations in Seattle, Washington, a city known for its funding and equity initiatives in the arts, to demonstrate the benefits of the 501(c)(3) model as well as the funding inequities within the model within the context of the IRS 990 form. I take a closer look at the effects of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act on the 501(c)(3) model and discuss how it furthers funding inequities. In the absence of changes to tax-exempt public charity policy, I offer recommendations that help mitigate the inequities, including Tax Hub for the Arts, a resource directory website for arts organizations in Washington State that I created over the span of two academic quarters as part of the MFA Arts Leadership program.

Rachel grew up in Los Angeles, California, where she frequently visited the Getty Center, LACMA, the Hollywood Bowl, and The Music Center. She harnessed her appreciation of the arts into a Bachelor's degree in Art History and Criticism from the University of California, San Diego and decided to pursue a career in arts administration. Upon graduating from Seattle University with an MFA in Arts Leadership, she hopes to continue her education in finance and accounting and eventually become an expert in the financial sustainability of arts and culture organizations.



Paige Petrangelo

A New Seattle Sound: How Community Investment in Touring Music Can Incite Sustainability Through Reciprocity

As a musician surviving in a city that has suffered and prospered from the tech boom of the 2010s, my experiences have drawn attention to disparities around the wellness and safety of musicians touring to Seattle stages. Rather than crashing on living room floors or driving overnight, my belief is that Seattle owes support to emerging musical talent in a city that historically profits from their plight. Noticing the importance of touring musician wellbeing creates an argument for improvement upon one opportunity: access to lodging. Focusing on the wellness of touring musicians, Ramble On, a Seattle-based lodging initiative, holds a candle up to some of the many inequalities which exist within the fabrics of the music-industrial complex and society today. While ethnographically navigating the Seattle music scene, this research is informed by my experiences as well as the Testimonies of musicians and industry affiliates across the country.

Given that Seattle is situated on ancestral Duwamish land, Indigenous decolonial methodologies frame this research as well as the evolving business model of Ramble On. They also inform the foundation of Ramble On as I seek to support and sustain the economic health of our Seattle music industry by use of anti-racist and Feminist practices alongside a purposed questioning of its positionality as an organization. By offering just one response to the physical symptoms of the touring music industry, can the cognitive dissonance between audience and performer be diminished? Can a community-supported lodging initiative push the narrative of inequity among musicians out of the frame?

Born and raised in Upstate New York, Paige Petrangelo earned her BA in Sociology among the Catskills at SUNY New Paltz. Upon relocating to her new mountainous home of Seattle in 2015, she quickly found herself picking up bass guitar, volunteering at Abbey Arts, and co-organizing grassroots arts events among friends. Applying this energy, passion, and affinity for networking towards her MFA journey, Paige has forged relationships with local music venues such as Neumos, Barboza, and the Vera Project as well as strengthened her presence within the Seattle music scene. She plans to launch her initiative Ramble On, which provides lodging for bands touring to Seattle, once the music industry is back on its feet.



Andrea Ashton

Public Works:

Extending The Locale Through Virtual Communities of Practice

While working as a research assistant for Dr. Jasmine Mahmoud's Public Works research project in partnership with Seattle Repertory Theatre, I have been inspired by the complexities and nuances of communities of practice. Dr. Mahmoud has overseen and guided the documentation, observation, and analysis process as I have attended a variety of Public Works classes where I have often wondered what the next steps would be in extending these local theatre communities to connect with other theatrical and artistic communities via virtual means. This summary project seeks to investigate these nuances and provide information on elements of transferring communities of practice to an online model. With an eye towards equity, imagination, and joy, the Public Works program at Seattle Repertory Theatre has offered opportunities for community members to assist in the production and performance of an annual Shakespeare production, in addition to offering regular free theatre classes. These opportunities have brought members of the public together from a wide range of backgrounds and professional experience to sing, dance, act, and share skills with one another. Amidst these spaces, I have observed the friendships, relationships, and connections that have linked people to one another, and believe that there are important lessons we can learn from these types of environments.

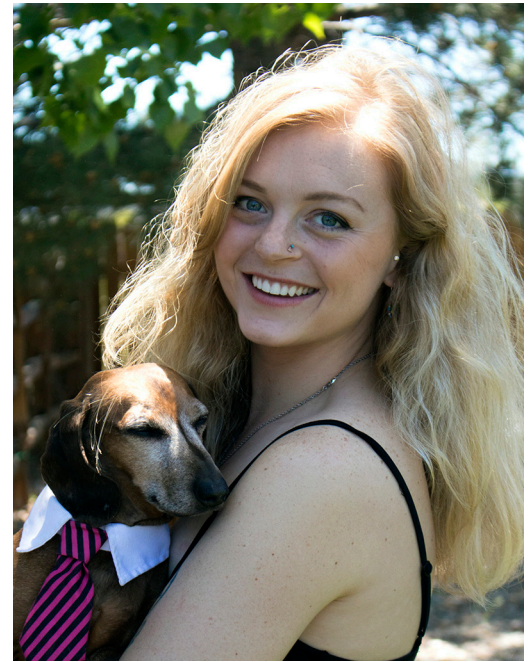


Andrea Ashton is a performer, writer, and artist from Vancouver, BC. Passionate about one-of-a-kind theatrical productions, Andrea began producing and creating theatre in the Pacific Northwest following her completion of a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Performance from the University of Wales. With an eye towards collective creativity, Andrea has collaborated with Rebel Haunt Theatre and other local artists to create a variety of site specific, ensemble based theatre pieces. She has performed at the Vancouver Fringe Theatre Festival, Shift:One Act Festival, and H.R. MacMillan Space Center, in addition to a smattering of gardens, backyards, porches, libraries, and historic sites. While studying at Seattle University, Andrea has had the opportunity to work with and learn from a variety of community arts organizations and businesses including: '57 Biscayne, SEEDArts, and Seattle Repertory Theatre.

Kaelyn McGowen

Nevada Neon Nights: The Story of the Neon Bender and the Impact of Neon in Public Space

Nevada Neon Nights is an ethnographic research project studying the untold life and story of the neon tube bender and the impact of neon lights on Western culture. This research makes the case that neon is a powerful cultural force by looking at the struggle of industrial makers, their crucial role in building an aesthetic cultural narrative, and the problems of accessibility and sexism in the industrial arts. Using a geographical lens, this research uses Nevada as a case study to showcase the value of the creation neon and its effect on the human experience. Through interviews, neon documentation and production, it is revealed that the story of the neon bender is one of our capacity for resilience and dedication, and the stubborn belief in and vision of a more beautiful luminous world.



Kaelyn McGowen is a multimedia maker, visual arts curator, and educator from Reno, Nevada. She holds a BA in Arts Education and Studio Arts from University of Nevada and is a current candidate in the MFA in Fine Arts Leadership program at Seattle University. She has curated solo and group fine arts exhibitions, organized arts festivals, produced public artwork, worked in the arts nonprofit sector, produced neon signs and fine art, and taught arts classes to both children and adults. Her artwork uses paint, neon lighting and found objects to add more collaboration to the making process and heighten the sense of wonder in the viewer. Her values of radical imagination, craftsmanship, and accessibility guide her work.

Megan Torgerson

Reframing Rural: Rewriting the Narrative on Rural America through Oral Storytelling

Reframing Rural is part oral history, part memoir and part initiative to reframe the narrative on rural America through storytelling. Elevating the unexplored stories and embodied knowledge of rural residents, this original podcast series seeks to cultivate conversation across geographic and cultural divides. The first season is set in Northeastern Montana's remote prairie wilderness and features stories from: a mother and environmental compliance officer in the oil industry; a high school teacher, teaching American history through an Indigenous lens; a playwright; a lay minister; a retired country school teacher; a taxidermist; a well-traveled young farmer; and a farming couple nearing retirement. For those with a rural background, Reframing Rural provides a place where people's experiences can be claimed and celebrated.

For those generationally removed from their rural roots, it inspires curiosity in rural Americans whose stories are not being told through election maps or newspaper headlines. This project engages Linda Tuhiwai-Smith's Indigenous project of reframing to interpret ethnographic observations and interviews conducted near Megan's unincorporated hometown, Dagmar, Montana. Storytelling is not only an outcome of this project, it is a method of practice-based research that Megan engages to validate experiences othered by cultural homogeneity, and to explore the following questions: How do single stories of rural America limit rural and non-rural individuals? How can embodied forms of rural knowledge expand dominant ways of knowing? How do mythologies of the pastoral impact rural communities' ability to navigate change and embrace diverse perspectives? Why is storytelling the method to bridge intra-rural and urban-rural divides?

Hailing from the windswept Great Plains of Montana, Megan Torgerson is a writer, creative entrepreneur and founder of the original podcast series, Reframing Rural. Megan earned a BA in English with a creative nonfiction emphasis from the University of Montana. Following a position working for Emmy award-winning documentarian, Ian McCluskey in Portland, Oregon, she moved to Asheville, North Carolina to live with her partner and artistic collaborator, Andrew Drinnan. In 2018 they moved to Seattle where Megan began her MFA journey and launched Reframing Rural, which was recently awarded a residency and fellowship from Guest House Cultural Capital Residency. Fueled by storytelling's ability to bridge divides, Megan looks forward to expanding Reframing Rural, grant writing for other artist-activists and spending time on her family's farm.



Megan Dung

Keep HEARTS Beating:

Unpacking “Founder’s Syndrome” in Modern-Day Hawai’i

Developed over years within an organization’s infrastructure, “Founder’s Syndrome” is a silent frailty in organizational development that many small to mid-sized nonprofits face. Its silence ceases during a season of succession. This project uses Hawai’i Education of the Arts (HEARTS) as a conduit for looking at “Founder’s Syndrome” through the lens of arts education and culture in Hawai’i. HEARTS is a 501(c)3 arts education organization located in Kailua, HI, founded in 2002 by Dr. Pamela DeBoard. With the mission of serving Hawai’i’s youth with a high-quality arts education, Dr. DeBoard has successfully led the organization as its Founder, Executive & Artistic Director for generations of students. As HEARTS is looking towards succession, how will the organization survive without her leadership? And how will the successor continue to carry out the mission of HEARTS and Dr. DeBoard’s legacy? This project will help inform the organization of symptoms of “Founder’s Syndrome” and how to successfully overcome them to continue the work HEARTS has done for nearly 20 years.



Megan Dung is a creative and emerging arts leader from Honolulu, HI. Upon graduating with a BM in Vocal Performance from Chapman University, she traded the sun for rain and moved to Seattle for the MFA Arts Leadership program. Her time spent in the program has brought exploration, growth, and peace, as well as friends, conversations, and happy hours that she will forever be grateful for. She does not have an elaborate resume or many lifetime accomplishments, but she does have a project she is proud to share with you all. Upon graduation, she plans on supporting HEARTS in any capacity she can, while working with St. Andrew’s Schools in Honolulu, HI as the Advancement Assistant to further her work and career as an arts leader in her local community. A special thank you to all of the beautiful people she’s had the absolute pleasure of meeting along this journey. The goo is a little less gooey because of you all.

Sadiqua Iman

We Were Made For This: Black Women Leading the Way for Change in American Theatre

I will compare the historical context of African American women's roles throughout history to their current advancement in American theatre using a grounded theory discovered during the research for this paper called Black Womanist Bridge Theory. It is based off of a comparative analysis of The Bridge Poem by Donna Kate Rushin and the issues that have historically weighed against black women in moving forward socially, academically, and professionally, and how in lieu of these experiences they have managed to excel in their fields and become trailblazers for the organizations they represent. There are four black women that currently hold significant positions in major theatre institutions across America that are unapologetically creating change in their institutions and in the theatre industry at large. They include Natakai Garrett, Executive Director of Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Sarah Bellamy, Artistic Director of Penumbra Theatre, Valerie Curtis-Newton, Director of University of Washington's Professional Theatre Director Department, and Janis Burley, President of August Wilson African American Cultural Center. I have chosen this particular mix of women because it will give a broad range of experience of individuals working in academic settings, historically white centered organizations, and theatres created by and for black people. What experiences and qualities do these women have in common that make them such dynamic leaders? What changes are happening in American Theatre today that are benefiting from their leadership? Through interviews, press releases, personal statements, newspaper articles, peer reviewed journals, black feminist's literature, and my own embodied ethnographic experiences I have engaged the Black Womanist Bridge Theory and concluded that many black women engaged in leadership practices do so by using their intersectional experiences to build bridges of understanding for the sake of social justice.

Sadiqua Iman is the Artistic Director of Earth Pearl Collective (EPC), a group that supports the work of women living at the intersections of the African Diaspora who are dedicated to healing their communities through creative collaborations. As an interdisciplinary artist and activist, Sadiqua challenges preconceived notions of marginalized identities through theater, dance, and poetry workshops and performances. She was awarded the National Arts Strategist Community Arts Fellowship, Theatre Communication Group Rising Leaders of Color Fellowship, and in 2019 the Seattle Arc Fellowship for Innovative Creations and used the funds to open the new African-centered healing arts center Nile's Edge. Sadiqua regularly freelances at many of Seattle's theatres as a director, program coordinator, and costume designer.



Linnea Ingalls

Visceral & Virtual: Tensions of Grief and Discovery in Embodied Arts of the COVID-19 Era

In March 2020, the Seattle region became the first epicenter in the U.S. of the COVID-19 pandemic. The live arts industry suffered – and continues to suffer – significant losses due to severe but necessary restrictions on gatherings. By April 24th, two thirds of artists had lost their jobs and 95% experienced income loss in the U.S. (NPR 2020). Yet, globally, artists began to create, while audiences participated and co-created virtually, and embodied experience began to deeply dialogue with virtual experience. Situated from the standpoint of Seattle in Spring 2020, this project engages performance and liveness during a pandemic asking, how have mediated live performance engagements impacted meanings of artistic embodied practice and influenced community and personal resilience? Using theories from 'The Queer Art of Failure' (Halberstam), 'Art-Making as Place-Making Following Disaster' (Puleo), 'Utopia in Performance' (Dolan), and 'What a Body Can Do' (Spatz), this project investigates embodied practices uniquely mediated under COVID-19 and how they act as a conduit between disaster and resilience. Through case studies (Yumi Sakugawa's Meditative Drawing Parties, Room Service Music Festival, Dancing Earth Indigenous Collective, Virtual Escape Room, Dance Church & 12 Seconds Max) it examines implications of redefining concepts of liveness and the boundaries of the fourth wall. Through interviews with four performing artists, with a particular emphasis on physically distant embodied practice and engaging aesthetics of live performance through the screen, it argues that arts participation has acted as embodied performances of hope through process, risk, failure, reciprocity, vulnerability, adaptability, and grounding.



Linnea Ingalls has been a storyteller all her life, inventing elaborate stories within whatever rich, dense Pacific Northwest vegetation she could find near her childhood home in Kent, WA. She was trained in theatre-making but is an avid advocate of artistic cross-pollination. A sense of adventure took her across the world post-undergrad, but her love for the PNW brought her to Seattle, where she directed with theatres throughout the city and served as Artistic Director with Heron Ensemble. Linnea's passions crystalize around her role as Co-Founder and Artistic Producer of She is FIERCE: stories from the female and genderqueer perspective. Her work throughout the program has examined equity in storytelling, interactive and immersive arts, and community engagement. She is eternally grateful to the ARTL faculty, the MFA '20 cohort, her friends and family, and her partner, Lucas.

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