

“Art is not neutral. It either upholds or disrupts the status quo, advancing or regressing justice.

We are living now inside the imagination of people who thought economic disparity and environmental destruction were acceptable costs for their power.

It is our right and responsibility to write ourselves into the future.”

-adrienne maree brown

MFA in Arts Leadership
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2022 MFA IN ARTS LEADERSHIP

Summary Project Presentations

SATURDAY, JUNE 11, 2022

SEATTLE UNIVERSITY

Presentation Schedule

Pigott Building 102

8:50 am	Welcome & Breathing Exercise
	Doing it Differently: Projects engaging what has been to innovate what could be
9:00 am	Samantha Anderson Pulling the invisible strings: How a cross-sector analysis of arts and human services organizations can reveal mutual benefit for progress toward equity in the nonprofit ecosystem
9:30 am	Hahn (Hang) Chen Commercializing Traditional Chinese Folk Art - Exploring the commercial opportunities of traditional folk art combined with modern pop culture
10:00 am	Madeline Berkman From Salvator Mundi to NFTs: Using art history to define and contextualize NFTs and explore how they affect utility, community, and equity within fine art valuation and the contemporary art market
10:30 am	Kati Simek Punk rock ethics in social justice spaces (and one org's quest for a plan)
11:00-11:10 am	Break
	Being in the Work: Projects seeking individual response to collective change
11:10 am	Austin Sargent Next gen arts leadership: Defining arts leadership learning through the exploration and embodiment of artistic, educational, and liberatory processes
11:40 am	Xiaoxuan (Pam) Zeng Visual representation of non-binary early childhood leadership development: Psami's Universe
12:10 pm	Alexandra Mielcarek "Let's meet": A gathering tool for feeding conversation
12:40-1:30 pm	Lunch Break

Presentation Schedule

Pigott Building 102

	Changing the Frame: Projects breaking through the structure
1:30 pm	Stefanie Fatooh Mapping Seattle's cultural assets: Using data from the Arts Ecosystem Research Project to inform future arts leaders
2:00 pm	Jackson Cooper Bright lights, bold futures: Embodied practices of accountability in commitments to equity and antiracism in performing arts organizations
2:30 pm	Carol Roscoe Anti-racist repertoires of practice in the theater: How culture-makers are remaking theater culture
3:00 pm	Trés McMichael Down in my soul: An invitation towards joy centered social impact strategies in the arts
3:30 - 3:40 pm	Break
	Curating with Purpose: Projects organizing aesthetics as acts of resistance
3:40 pm	Adetola Abatan Memory and the archive: The role of personal and communal narratives in reframing museum collections and practices
4:10 pm	Arielle Simmons Curating embodiment: The impact of art on gender identity
4:30 pm	Closing Thank You
4:30 - 5:00 pm	Hedreen Gallery Walk-Thru
5:00 pm	Reception
	Pigott Building 102
June 8th 1:00 pm	Leah St. Lawrence Mind the gap: What's missing in cultural assessment methods
	Presentation given as a Lunch & Learn with 4Culture

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Land Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge Summary Project Presentations from the Class of 2022 MFA Arts Leaders take place on occupied Coast Salish land and that Seattle University is on the homelands of the Coast Salish people, including the Duwamish, Stillaguamish, Muckleshoot, and Suquamish people. We pay respect to Coast Salish Elders past and present and extend that respect to their descendants and to all Indigenous people.

To acknowledge this land is to recognize the history of physical and cultural genocide and settler colonialism, which continues to displace Indigenous people today. It is to also recognize these lands, waters, and their significance for the resilient and wise peoples who continue to thrive in this region despite the consequences of displacement and broken treaties. Those who hold settler privilege in this city must work towards supporting Coast Salish people and all Indigenous people using the various forms of wealth and privilege they reap due to it.

“I think it is healing behavior, to look at something so broken and see the possibility and wholeness in it.”

-adrienne maree brown

Welcome to the Arts Leadership Summary Project Presentations for the MFA '22 Cohort!

Our MFA 22 Arts Leadership Cohort started their pursuit of a graduate degree in Arts Leadership at the height of a global health pandemic and within the all too familiar cries of national racial unrest. Since then, the world outside has continued to break in with a constant barrage of heartache and tragedy. The fact that this tenacious collective of individuals has made it to this point is not an act of defiance, but a representation of hope. They hope for a world changed. They hope for a world made new. They hope for a world where everyone belongs. Some of the quotes that have guided this hope come from noted artist, advocate, and scholar, adrienne maree brown. Those quotes are included throughout the program.

I, Roxy Hornbeck, had the honor of instructing this year's Summary Project course. The Spring 2022 capstone course integrates MFA in Arts Leadership students' academic, practicum, and professional experience into one applied research project. Historically, Summary Projects have been reviewed and approved by the faculty of record in the Arts Leadership Program only. After taking a deeper look at this process, we noted, as a program, how this can center the perspective of the instructor alone as they serve as the sole voice of academic feedback.

As one-way to open feedback channels, we strategically chose to expand the ways in which feedback is shared and received within the Summary Project process by launching the inaugural year of Summary Project Committees. In addition to working with me as their Summary Project Committee Chair, each MFA 22 student worked on their Summary Project in consultation with a Summary Project Committee of two (2) Summary Project Readers. Readers—including voices of alumni, community leaders, educators, faculty, artists, curators, practitioners, DEI consultants, creatives, musicians, and policy makers--provided robust feedback on Summary Projects through their own expertise and lived experience as members of the arts sector. Through the guidance of the Summary Project Committee, each Summary Project is a representation of what could be as each student seeks to adeptly apply their Arts Leadership learning towards the creation of a project that is actively rooted in equity, empathy, and value.

Everything is made more complicated when more people are involved, and we experienced that within this new process. However, everything is also made more vibrant and beautiful when it is not closed off to possibility and situated within a collective work of inquiry. And that is what is abundantly reflected in the dynamic titles, descriptions, and bios of MFA 22's Summary Projects contained in this program. The work has just begun!

Immense gratitude and respect for all 24 of this year's Summary Project Readers. We could not have done this good work without you!

And to the MFA in Arts Leadership Class of 2022 – I am forever changed because you allowed me to share this journey of hope with each of you.

#goothework

Roxy



Roxy Hornbeck, MFA
Assistant Professor



Samantha Anderson

Pulling the invisible strings: How a cross-sector analysis of arts and human services organizations can reveal mutual benefit for progress toward equity in the nonprofit ecosystem

New ways of thinking, shifting power, and emphasizing creativity are necessities in the world of philanthropy in order to push for progress. The “charitable sector” is built from systemic racism, and the inequities in the system of development and fundraising is perpetuated throughout the nonprofit world as a whole. I am conducting a cross-sectoral analysis to identify what exists within these separate sectors of arts and human services, what conversations and actions are being held to promote new ways of thinking about philanthropic models, and where these two sectors can collaborate for mutual benefit and co-create with equity. How can a cross-sector analysis bring about collaboration between arts organizations and human services organizations to reveal mutual benefit towards equitable philanthropy and access to resources? The primary method of investigation comes from semi-structured interviews with fundraisers in the field of development, whether that be arts or human services focused work. Through voices such as Villaneueva’s “Decolonizing Wealth” and the Community Centric Fundraising movement, I am searching for future space for this integration amongst nonprofits of differing missions, ultimately to question and shift the current systems of philanthropy that perpetuate inequity and narrowed thought. Reflections are included throughout this work to embrace the value of using questioning as process and progress. Recommendations are informed by past literature and cross-sector themes and ideas across personal interviews.

Samantha Anderson (she/her) was raised in Edmond, Oklahoma and recently moved to Seattle to complete her second year in the Arts Leadership program. With a B.S. in Psychology and a Minor in Theatre from Oklahoma State University, integration of the of the arts has been a core value throughout her life. Her current work on a nonprofit development team in tandem with her experience through the MFA program has allowed her to further explore the intersection of arts and non-arts entities, and this project is ultimately an expression of her belief in the power of collaboration for community impact.



Hahn (Hang) Chen

Commercializing Traditional Chinese Folk Art - Exploring the commercial opportunities of traditional folk art combined with modern pop culture

Traditional Chinese folk art is a broad representation of traditional Chinese culture. This historically steeped traditional art originated in the vast rural areas of China and is reflected in daily food, clothing, transportation, traditional festivals, beliefs, and taboos. It has authentic rural culture and a distinctive local It has authentic rural culture, an outstanding local style, and romantic, artistic techniques. Folk art embraces decoration, symbolism, and allegory in its unique way, containing wisdom in its simplicity, a delicacy in its roughness, and humor in its clumsiness. This summary project proposes an innovative solution for commercializing traditional folk art. The rationale of this model is to use popular culture elements as a vehicle for traditional folk art and to promote the diversification of traditional folk art across zones. The purpose of the model is to explore new paths for the innovative development of traditional folk art and help traditional folk artists establish higher visibility in the commercial market. Folk art is more consumable with more public attention and gains a more extensive commercial market through innovation.

Hahn (Hang) Chen (he/him) is an international student from Hangzhou, China. He has been in touch with American street culture since 2013, when he was a high school student in China, and started his own trendy business in the US in 2015. As a person with considerable knowledge of American pop culture, especially street culture, being inspired by the significant influence of American street culture in business has always encouraged his research on commercialized Chinese traditional folk art. He completed his Bachelor’s degree in Business Management at Saginaw Valley State University in the United States. After graduation, he chose to pursue a Master’s degree in Arts Leadership at Seattle University. He hopes that represent traditional Chinese folk art and culture through modern pop culture. Like American street culture, traditional folk art in a commercial mode will gain greater market visibility and popularity both at home and overseas.



Madeline Berkman

From Salvator Mundi to NFTs: Using art history to define and contextualize NFTs and explore how they affect utility, community, and equity within fine art valuation and the contemporary art market

In March 2021, Christie's auction house sold an Andy Warhol silkscreen print of Marilyn Monroe for approximately \$1.3 million, a Lucian Freud self-portrait on paper for \$2.2 million and a Vincent Van Gogh ink drawing on paper for over \$10.4 million, and a digital artwork by Beeple as a non-fungible token (NFT) for \$69 million. With blockchain technology rapidly developing, resources are needed that allow those without a background in technology an alternate understanding of how and why NFTs are valued within the contemporary art market. By analyzing NFTs through an art history lens, this project aims to define and contextualize NFTs and examine their presentation within the context of the contemporary art market. Framing this research with adrienne maree brown's Emergent Strategy (2017) uncovers themes that have historically evolved in cycles that follow the advancement of technology and digital artmaking. Through a literature review, semi-structured conversations, a case study, and a glossary this project examines themes of utility, community, and equity within the context of NFTs, fine art valuation, and the contemporary art market. The goal of this paper is to give the reader an alternate epistemology to understand how NFTs exist within the greater context of contemporary art.

Madeline Berkman (she/her) is a Seattle-based analog photographer and mixed media artist who is passionate about creating work that sparks conversations. In 2016, Madeline completed a BA in Studio Art and Art History at Western Washington University through the Fairhaven College of Interdisciplinary studies. Madeline has worked with a variety of organizations paralleling her MFA studies, like METHOD Gallery, ARCADE NW, and Bellevue Arts Museum. Madeline aims to utilize artmaking, art history, and arts leadership as a tool for people to explore their own realities, create conversations, and critically reflect on built and natural environments. Following graduation, Madeline will continue working as the Gallery and Exhibitions Coordinator at The Magnuson Park Gallery, a division of the Sand Point Arts and Cultural Exchange.



Kati Simek

Punk rock ethics in social justice spaces (and one org's quest for a plan)

Punk Rock Ethics in Social Justice Spaces (and one org's quest for a plan) deconstructs the institutional frameworks of mission-based organizations which center art as a justice tool. I aim to learn what makes a nonprofit effective, in order to understand the degree to which justice spaces are in-fact just and how we can do better. By identifying what systems serve and which do not, my research has potential practical application in the strategic planning of emerging justice models. Micro-organization ParkPunks.Org is my vessel for the application of this research. Grounding the values of ParkPunks.Org are what I herein refer to as Punk Rock Ethics. That term is explored, as well as the nonprofit industrial complex and the relationships between the two. I consider alternative models to traditional nonprofits such as for-profit, hybrid, fiscal partnerships, as well as emerging forms of grassroots, informal activism models like DIY/mutual aid.

I present the argument that organizational models, governance and funding in particular, of mission-based arts organizations are restrictive and ineffective, and as such the boundaries of conventions can and should be pushed if not eliminated to facilitate more equitable systems. ParkPunks.Org is my praxis, the application of this theory.

Kati Simek (she, they) is an inter-disciplinary visual artist, advocate, and analyst centering marginalized voices in arts and culture. Grounding my research, art, and professional practice are principles of camaraderie, justice, and the abolition of broken systems.

Austin Sargent

Next gen arts leadership: Defining arts leadership learning through the exploration and embodiment of artistic, educational, and liberatory processes



To be truly visionary we have to root our imagination in our concrete reality while simultaneously imagining possibilities beyond that reality.

- bell hooks

This summary project is an exploration of the overlap between Artistic Practice, Leadership Practice, and Liberatory Practice with a pointed focus towards educational application.

What is there? What is missing?

Citing my own experience as educator, artist, and advocate, I compare and contrast literature from these three domains, in an effort to find a common thread that roots itself in practice.

How can we hold these domains in equitable dialogue?

From this vantage point, I begin to imagine a new pedagogy, Arts Leadership Learning (ALL), which uses the previously identified framework as a way to challenge inequitable education systems and inspire new ways of learning and teaching.

What is possible?

This work is presented as evidence of my own Arts Leadership Learning, an embodied commitment to future learning and liberation, and as grateful tribute to the Arts Leaders who continuously inspire me.

The function of freedom is to free someone else.

- Toni Morrison

Austin Sargent (he/him) is an artist, administrator, and advocate who has built a career working with and for young people in the Arts. Spanning the East Coast, Midwest, and now West Coast, Austin uses the arts as a medium to build and engage communities, inspire challenging conversations, and empower youth into action. Through his time at Seattle University, Austin has worked in partnership with the Washington State Arts Commission, Village Theatre, Speak With Purpose, Broadway Square (Fargo), Crux Consulting, and more. After graduation, Austin will step into his new role as Deputy Director of TeenTix.

Xiaoxuan (Pam) Zeng

Visual representation of non-binary early childhood leadership development: Psami's Universe



There are tons of books out there and on the shelves for children's picture books that if you search key terms with "children, leadership, development," but when "non-binary" is added in the search column, there only a few are to be found within the field and in academic/article research. I believe there is a lack of visual representation of non-binary children and youth, centering on their unique needs and voices while exploring leadership development unique to this demographic. To fulfill the gap that finds in the research, we developed the Psami project, with intersectionality as a method. Psami, as a non-binary character, will carry on their daily life interacting with different leadership styles in the art sector. The purpose of the *Psami's Universe* series will be to showcase the power artistic expression can hold in the life of a child. Youths are an important force and agent of social justice awareness. We provide a visual representation of what early childhood leadership development looks like.

It should not be the job of transgender and non-binary people to advocate for their own inclusion.

- Kelly-Ann Allen, Andrea Reupert, Lindsay Oades (2021)

Xiaoxuan (Pam) Zeng (she/her) is an illustrator, painter, art lover, photographer, and duo language speaker (primary Mandarin, English, Japanese, Korean, and Italian in practicing). Born and raised in China, Kunming, Yunnan. She spent six years on the east coast and had her BA degree in Fine Arts and Business. She discovered and pursued her passion for the fashion industry and experienced her New York Fashion week backstage in 2019. Then she decided to move across the country from New York to Seattle. She regained and relearned her love for art here in Washington and enrolled in her master's degree in Arts Leadership at Seattle University in 2020, aiming to become an arts leader. During this process, she and her teammates created an illustrated children's literature, *Psami's Universe*, to express the artistic power and storytelling through the lens of intersectionality with her and others' combined positionality. She believes in Psami's vision, and mission will bring better change to this existing society and culture. And she is still learning and exploring with her endless curiosity.



Alex Mielcarek

*“Let’s meet”:
A gathering tool for feeding conversation*

Through the purposeful gathering of artists, arts leaders, and community members over a culturally relevant shared meal, we can find ways to celebrate historically excluded cultures and build relationships. Academic and investigative literature suggest that using food-based gatherings as a starting point for relationship building can lead to conversations on developing culturally celebratory programming and greater understanding of prospective community members to the arts organization. Even so, the particular needs of arts organizations in the United States vary based on discipline and size just as the needs of a community can vary based on the cultures within. Through my roles as a liaison for arts organizations, artists, and community members and passion for the culinary arts, I often ask myself how food and arts programming can meet the variation in needs and foster opportunities for dialogue between these constituencies. In efforts to better understand variation in the application of culturally relevant arts and food events, I conducted a literature review and consulted one focus consisting of three participants hailing from these constituencies. Following the collection of these data, I utilized discourse and theory analysis to find ways of gathering over food that might lead to the celebration of historically excluded cultures and serve as a foundation for building relationships with community members and arts organizations. These ways of gathering have been distilled into a guide to food-based gathering for arts organizations, presented here.

Alex Mielcarek (she/her) is a creative, gluten-free baker, academic, cat-mom, and dedicated friend and daughter. Her most recent projects include earning her MFA in Arts Leadership from Seattle University, volunteering with arts nonprofits, and perfecting a recipe for gluten-free challah. Prior to her move to the Seattle-area, she completed a Bachelor of Science in Public Health and a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish from the College of Charleston in Charleston, South Carolina. Much of her academic work is centered on community-focused research which she has presented at the 2021 Association of Arts Administration Educators and 2019 American Public Health Association conferences. Mielcarek is set to graduate in June 2022 and intends to pursue careers in event production and community outreach post-graduation.



Stefanie Fatooh

Mapping Seattle’s cultural assets: Using data from the Arts Ecosystem Research Project to inform future arts leaders

This project proposes the use of Seattle University’s Arts Ecosystem Research Project (AERP) as a source for the mapping of Seattle’s cultural assets. The mapping of cultural assets has emerged as an evolution in mapping, bringing together “both qualitative and quantitative mapping of cultures” in order to create a cultural inventory that allows for multi-faceted planning efforts (Duxbury, et al., 2015, p. 7). By placing the Seattle area arts organizations documented by the Arts Ecosystem Research Project onto a map organized by decade, arts researchers like myself can gain a valuable tool to help us practice Sankofa—learning from the past to inform the future. This project seeks to use this map to answer the question: what can data derived from AERP research tell us about how arts and cultural activity in Seattle has changed since the 1960s? Specifically, how has the geographic density of arts and culture activity within Seattle shifted over time? And what does analyzing this data through a series of micro versus macro level comparisons reveal about the Seattle arts sector? Through this analysis, we can begin to better understand how a variety of influences such as cultural planning trends and local philanthropic efforts can affect the formation and physical placement of cultural assets in an urban area such as Seattle. This type of analysis can also give us valuable insights about not just the growth and resilience of the Seattle arts ecosystem, but the nature of arts ecosystems in general.

Stefanie Fatooh (she/her) is a Los Angeles native who relocated to Seattle in 2019. She graduated from the University of San Francisco in 2007 with bachelor’s degrees in Performing Arts and Social Justice (Dance) and African History. Stefanie is a professional traditional dance artist who specializes in Arab dance forms and directs the Seattle Chapter of the Qabila Dance Company. While completing her MFA at Seattle University, she has also worked as a Research Assistant for the Arts Ecosystem Research Project (AERP) and as the Graduate Marketing Assistant for the Arts Leadership Department. She currently works as an administrator at the contemporary performing arts organization On the Boards. She is also an arts researcher, specializing in decolonial practices, dance studies, and the local Seattle arts ecosystem.

Jackson Cooper

*Bright lights, bold futures:
Embodied practices of accountability in
commitments to equity and antiracism in
performing arts organizations*



In committing to dismantling harmful institutional practices, arts organizations are relying on constructive processes to operationalize and mobilize their commitments to equity and antiracism into workplace practices. Like the start of a rehearsal period for a show, a process must adapt and change with circumstances of who is in the room, creating a space for discovery and openness within practice. What happens when an organization approaches putting their commitments into equity as a director approaches the rehearsal period of their new show?

By grounding leadership practices within emergent strategy and decentralized tools of measurement, organizations can begin to advance their work in equity once a foundation of shared values and strategy is named by individuals in and outside of an organization. Providing an array of avenues for employees, artists, and stakeholders to contribute to the work of equity and antiracism and facing the procedural work of these efforts collectively, organizations will enter into a daring, reflective cycle of resilient growth. This paper explores embodied practices within these commitments and seeks to explore the ways tools of measuring accountability within this work can advance an organization's growth. By creating a culture of openness and curiosity will find arts organizations responding to the communities they serve with open doors and open hearts.

Jackson Cooper (he/him) is a community-centered fundraiser, writer, arts administrator, and consultant. He has served as an arts philanthropy professional for 12+ years in North Carolina, New York, and Pittsburgh. Now based in Seattle, he is the Major Gifts Manager for Pacific Northwest Ballet, Adjunct Faculty at UNC-Greensboro in their Arts Administration program, and an MFA in Arts Leadership candidate at Seattle University. He has served in leadership capacities at the NC Museum of Art, North Carolina Theatre, PlayMakers Repertory Company, and the Town of Cary among others, has been a grant panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts, and presented at conferences such as Theatre Communications Group. He has been a trusted mentor for emerging arts leaders in Seattle, New York, and North Carolina and will be featured in an upcoming profile in SOUTHERN THEATRE magazine as one of the country's arts leaders who are paving the way for the "Future of Fundraising". He serves on the board of Seattle Choruses and Seattle Arts and Culture for Antiracism. He is authoring *Giving, Philanthropy, and the Practice of Gratitude*, due out by Routledge in 2024 and a chapter for Financial Management in Museums, also to be published in 2024.



Carol Roscoe

*Anti-racist repertoires of practice in the theater:
How culture-makers are remaking theater culture*

"The Great White Way", a name given to Broadway in NYC due to the glare of lights from all the theaters, could easily be given to theater across the country. American Theater has been a historically white and historically male space (The Visibility Project 2018-2019, Wilson, 2016, Howe, 1998). It's processes and practices have been designed to keep it that way (Pierce, 2021, Wilson, 2016, Howe, 1998). In 2020, an anonymous collective called We See You White American Theater wrote a letter to the theatre industry with a list of principles and demands for racial equity and social justice (We See You W.A.T. 2020). Since then, many organizations and individual artists sought out anti-racist and DEI training in a variety of ways, but how many and to what effect has not yet been widely studied.

The primary issue this project seeks to understand is the impact that anti-racist training has on theater practice. How do individuals implement anti-racist training into their daily arts practice? How do individual practices influence organizational behavior? What barriers do individual practitioners face when engaging in anti-racist practices in the American? What can we, as individuals, and as an industry, learn from their praxis? Through surveys and interviews with a cross-functional strata of theater makers, this project adds to that body knowledge by seeking to understand how theater practitioners' praxis is changing as a result of this training and what effects practitioners are seeing in the industry.

Carol Roscoe (she/her) has had a successful career as a business owner, a professional actor, stage director, and educator. Noticing the disconnect between art and business for many artists, she developed curriculum to educate young artists in entrepreneurial skills which would support their arts careers. She has coached over a hundred artists on their strategic goals and has taught for Cornish College of the Arts, Seattle Pacific University, and the University of Washington's School of Drama Graduate program. Through the Arts Leadership MFA program, Carol has pursued a deeper understanding of transformational leadership as well as dismantling racial and gender bias within the performing arts sector. She is delighted to be applying her skills and learning in arts and non-profit consulting.

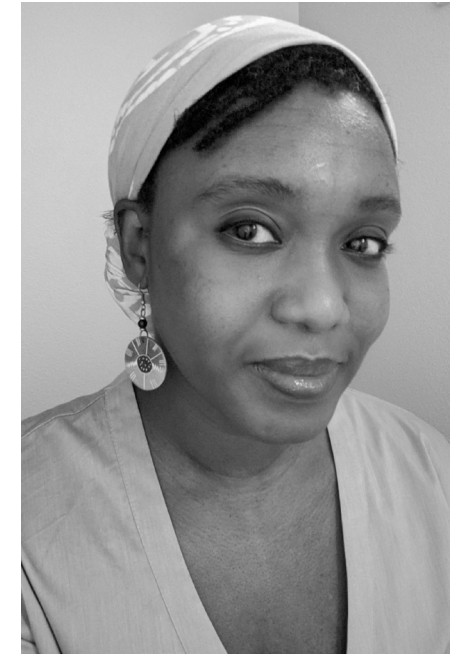


Trés McMichael

Down in my soul: An invitation towards joy centered social impact strategies in the arts

My elders often tell me that “weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning”. I wrestle with this because isn’t the sun still shining even when it’s dark? We do not have to see the light to know that it still exists. The last few years of our collective living has felt like night, and yet, many of us continue to find joy in and with community through arts and culture. As I have worked to center joy in my arts leadership practice as a queer Black man, I lean towards the light, the morning, I know is always present. That knowing, and the action inspired by it is what I call joy. In 2010, Americans for the Arts developed a logic model called the Continuum of Impact to help artists, arts leaders, and organizations strategize and measure social impact work within the arts and culture sector, through the creation of outcomes, indicators, and evaluation plans. In this paper, I will use intersectional (Hill Collins) and decolonized (Tuhiwai Smith) methodologies to critic and adapt the Continuum of Impact to include joy and Culturally Responsive Evaluation methods (Hood, et.al). The research questions for this project include: (1) What is the case for including and centering joy in social impact work in the arts? (2) How might incorporating joy into the Continuum of Impact, through an intersectional and decolonized lens, better support arts leaders, practitioners, and organizations who are committed to social impact facing work?

Trés McMichael (he/him) is a joy filled arts leader and performer who is passionate about community engagement, arts education, and social justice. Trés is an alumnus of Elon University, where he graduated with degrees in Music Theatre (BFA) and Arts Administration (BA). He has worked with various nonprofit and arts organizations such as Arena Stage, Maryland Leadership Workshops, and the NAACP. He currently serves as the Program Manager for Social Impact Civic Alliances at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC. Over the years, Trés has performed on the stages of Mill Mountain Theatre, Theatre Raleigh, Lyric Opera Baltimore, Signature Theater, and Lincoln Center. Through his work, he strives to make the arts sector more inclusive and equitable for all.



Adetola Abatan

Memory and the archive: The role of personal and communal narratives in reframing museum collections and practices

In the wake of 2020’s social justice and #blacklivesmatter demonstrations, some arts institutions are coming to terms with their role in preserving a Eurocentric colonial history that supports white supremacy and undermines racial equity. Despite claims of objectivity, the archives preserved within such arts institutions “are never neutral but, rather, exist to reinforce existing colonial hierarchies as inevitable and natural by classifying some individuals... as observers and others as the observed” (Mccracken, 2019). As a female creative with roots in both Yoruba and Southern American culture, my understanding of my cultural heritage has been both informed and hindered by the archives preserved in museums and cultural institutions. How can the artifacts in museum collections be continuously put in dialogue with contemporary artists from the continent and the Diaspora who are bridging the gaps to the past in their work? What story would these objects tell if given a contextual voice?

The role of the visual arts in critiquing and recontextualizing Black/African cultural arts will be examined through a racial iconography and decolonial lens, specifically the Remembering and Reframing Indigenous Projects (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2021). This work culminates in the Blue is Our Color exhibit at the Hedreen Gallery in June 2022, which will showcase indigo textiles from West Africa in dialogue with cyanotype photographs, fabric collages and vibrant abstractions from the Pacific Northwest. As a visual thread, blue is used to represent a version of Blackness and African-ness that holds much more than stagnant history and simplistic ideas of identity.

Adetola Abatan (she/her) is a collage artist, drummer, engineer, and emerging arts leader based in Seattle, WA. Her artwork was featured in the 2021 Seattle Deconstructed Art Fair at Wa Na Wari (where she also completed an artist residency), the 2022 “After the Quiet: On Black Figures and Folds” exhibit at Mini Mart City Park, as well as the 2022 “Solace and Solitude” solo exhibit at the University Unitarian Church. She holds a PhD in Chemical Engineering and is so proud to have earned an MFA in Arts Leadership at Seattle University. She plans to continue creating and curating the stories of Africans in the Diaspora, and extends heartfelt thanks to her family, friends, cohort, and professors who helped make this graduate experience so very worthwhile.

Arielle Simmons

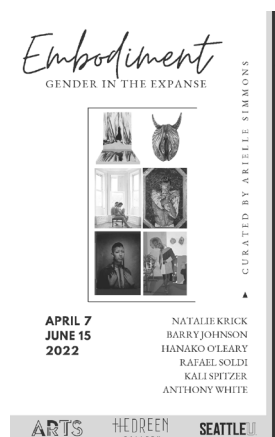
*Curating embodiment:
The impact of art on gender identity*



Expectations of gender shape our social landscape. Judith Butler, a foremost gender and feminist theorist, advanced the foundational concept that gender is a performative act, rather than biologically determined (1988). From this sociological perspective, I've curated a mixed-media exhibition, *Embodiment: Gender in the Expanse*, at Seattle University's Hedreen Gallery. The show features six Pacific Northwest artists who examine the relationship between our internal truth and external positionality. Through their unique artistic expressions, they each give light to how cultural and societal impositions may be placed on our bodies. As they reveal the framework of our socially constructed world, we have the opportunity to see our own enactment of these gender roles more clearly.

This curatorial praxis is representative of the role artists play in our society, influencing individual identity as well as broader cultural change. Each of the artists were drawn together in the exhibition by the question: how does our physical embodiment contribute to our gender identity? Now that their work is on the walls, in dialogue with the public and each other, I ask: how do the arts impact our gender identity?

Arielle Simmons (she/her) was raised surrounded by art and artists in South Carolina, with a French mother and American father. From them, she adopted the development and programming of their long-running artistic retreat to her family's home in the Jura Mountains of France. Running her own photography business for the last decade, she was a Critical Mass Finalist and has exhibited in solo and group shows across the country. Her guest curation, *Embodiment: Gender in the Expanse* is on view at Seattle University's Hedreen Gallery through June 15, 2022. After graduation, she plans to continue working as staff for Seattle University, as their Arts Operations Coordinator. She holds a BS in Communications Studies from Emerson College and attended the New England School of Photography.



Embodiment: Gender in the Expanse
Exhibition Catalog Cover

Leah St. Lawrence

*Mind the gap:
What's missing in cultural assessment methods*



Presentation given June 8th as a Lunch & Learn with 4Culture

Data is an important aspect of communication between cultural and arts organizations and those they aim to serve, but who is still being left out of the interaction between organizational goals, survey development, data gathering, and data driven implementation? This paper analyzes the process of assessment tools through a deep look at a number of cultural reports utilizing data and surveys in order to re-develop the process of how an organization can engage with assessment tools while also highlighting the need for community communication.

Leah St Lawrence (she/her) is a curator, writer, and publisher. She is the co-founder of Great Jones Gallery, the Executive Editor at *ARCADE NW* Magazine, and has written for such publications as the *Monday Arts Journal* and *The Stranger*.

“We have experienced what it’s like to release any assumption that one person has all the skills needed to lead and support the work.”

-adrienne maree brown

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“Are you actively practicing generosity and vulnerability in order to make the connections between you and others clear, open, available, durable? Generosity here means giving of what you have without strings or expectations attached. Vulnerability means showing your needs.”

-adrienne maree brown

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