TEACHING ARTISTRY & SOCIAL JUSTICE

CONFERENCE REFLECTIONS:
VSA & ITAC3

LOVE, ART, & RACIAL JUSTICE
Hello reader,

Nice to see ya again.

Welcome to Autumn with us! It’s Arts Education week starting the 11th of September. Americans for the Arts is so all over this. Check out the advocacy efforts they and their friends and partners (including TAG!) are getting up to. This issue of the TAG Quarterly, we feature one of AFTA’s recent, and I think one of their most important, developments: an Arts Equity statement. It begins to get to the heart of the matter.

The matter: this issue we take a look at the movements for social justice and equity, and what that’s got to do with our work as teaching artists. We realized we take it for granted, the idea that artists who teach are involved in creating positive social change. But does everyone recognize this? See my article on page # for more on this. And look to our incredible contributors for more reflections, resources, and advances in thinking around the ways working in arts and community is moving us forward in the US, towards each other and towards an equitable and just society. Artists and educators and community activists are doing so much in this area. I’ll keep this short and save my breath for my piece on this topic later in the magazine!

This season TAG will be at home in the San Francisco Bay and Los Angeles Areas, plus we’ll see some of you in New Jersey when we present at the Arts Education Collective’s Connect Conference to talk about the philosophy of teaching artistry, advocacy, and building community on Sept 21st. We’ll also be in NYC, Chicago, and Philadelphia this Fall, so be in touch! Things are moving forward here and we are busy working on both our new strategic plan and a California pilot of the National Teaching Artists Asset Map, which will map the field and connect us, but also be a research tool illuminating where access to arts education is equitable— and where it is not.

Good things ahead.

In Solidarity,

Jean Johnstone
Executive Director
Teaching Artists Guild
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3Arts might run the premiere teaching artists awards in the US. Here they describe their program, the prestigious prize, and past winners; next issue we’ll reveal 2016’s two newest recipients! Page 36.

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Cover photo: Tongo Eisen-Martin

Originally from San Francisco, Tongo Eisen-Martin is a poet, movement worker and educator. He has taught in detention centers from New York’s Rikers Island to California county jails. He designed curricula for oppressed people’s education projects from San Francisco to South Africa. His latest curriculum on extrajudicial killing of Black people, We Charge Genocide Again, has been used as an educational and organizing tool throughout the country. His latest book of poems titled, “Someone’s Dead Already” was nominated for a California Book Award. He recently lived and organized around issues of human rights and self-determination in Jackson, MS.

Get the work that Marc Bamuthi Joseph calls, “...as hungry as revolution, a necessary, deadly still in these shifting times...” Purchase Tongo’s book of poetry by clicking here.

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Much of my work teaching social justice through art is with the juvenile justice population and others who have been impacted by the mass incarceration system. I was, myself, a juvenile offender. At eleven years old, I sat in the cell of a detention center for six months, uncertain as to how I’d suddenly entered a portal from which there seemed to be no escape. There were, perhaps, some clues I had missed.

I am black, female, and queer. I am adopted and grew up in a predominately Mexican American, working class neighborhood in West Texas. Both of my parents were sharecroppers. Neither of them was really literate, and for both of them the church was key in maintaining their connection to community. They worked well past retirement age, into their nineties, out of necessity. And when they acquired me as a toddler, they had no idea that I would one day use my creative proclivities to forge a bunch of checks in an attempt to better all of our stations in life.

I was incarcerated on one hand for breaking the law. But on the other, it was standing in opposition, even as child, to the inequities of a system I could not name or see but clearly felt, that sparked the series of events that would alter the course of my life. Albeit misguided, and unskilled — I was wielding my wand of resistance in any way that I could.

It was years later that I decided to revisit those early events and write a performative piece about belonging and isolation. Through the experience of telling and re-imagining that story, the power of art gained its full focus for me.

Art is both reflective and immediate. It’s soft and sharp. It acts dynamically and subtly on the ways in which we perceive ourselves, and the world around us. It’s healing precisely because it allows us to bring into the space of creative consideration parts of ourselves for which there is often shame and experiences for which we seldom have words. In this space of safely being seen, the seeds of social justice work take root. True, it is akin to tilling hard rock sometimes, but the condition of the soil has never negated the necessity for growing life-sustaining things. When we create the space for conversation and communion through art, we are really laying the groundwork for action that considers our connection to the collective, even as the imperative is often spawned by just a single story.

I credit art with giving me a deeper understanding of my own familial and cultural histories, with helping me to heal some of the traumas of my youth, and with engaging difficult conversations around the systemic oppression that produced the circumstances of my life. In every instance, my work as a writer and a musician has drawn from and returned to this wellspring.

I spend a lot of time encouraging bravery and imagination in my sessions, explaining to youth and adults alike that creativity isn’t just for the artistic, or the intellectual, or the future. It is a most powerful ally.

Shontina Vernon is a writer/musician/teaching artist. Her interdisciplinary work fuses live music, poetic narrative, and multi-media to tell the diverse stories of underrepresented communities. She is a 2016 recipient of the Robert Rauschenberg “Artist as Activist” Fellowship, a recipient of 4Culture’s Artist Grant and a nominated playwright on the Kilroy’s List. Her work has been produced by Seattle’s ACT Theatre, WoW-iWo (Denmark), Hip-Hop Theater Festival (NYC), and the Central District Forum for Arts and Ideas in collaboration with the Hansberry Project.
Art is part of being alive. Through it we share the universal themes and subjective stories of the human experience. Art and story can accentuate and perpetuate archetypes, as well as create new myths for social change.

To be whole, to be true to our human condition, requires that we seize the opportunity to express ourselves, even if it requires rebellion. Especially if it requires rebellion.

How does this notion of art and expression intersect with education and social justice? Our expressions are reactions, from wow to ouch, complex intensity to simplistic calm. It is paramount that we as teaching artists encourage students to embrace and celebrate their voice.

Although expression takes many forms – performance, design, music, film, writing, even science, mathematics and engineering – I teach visual arts and foster this creativity through the lens of social justice and self-expression. Using visual storytelling to understand archetypal identities creates knowledge of self, community and history.

The culture of our times should be reflected in art. Young people deserve the opportunity to express themselves and create a new culture, see oppression, upset complacency, become innovators and change makers.

However, too often when the arts are included in education the dominant languages of art are the primary, if not the only, voices taught in schools. This dominant language of art tells a valid story, but it rarely speaks to the diversity of our city, our state, our country, our diasporas. A recovery and re-establishment of a new narrative voice is needed to create equity and encourage individual expressions of artistic language.

As part of a social studies - visual arts integration project, I asked students to think critically and reflect on the question what does the American Dream look like? There are many interpretations, drawings of dollar signs, stacks of dollar bills, gold, diamonds, jewels, American presidents, flags, lots of big cars, big houses, guns, gifts, candy, cheeseburgers, dogs. Stuff. Possessions. Materialism. Sometimes they draw friends or family or people they know, who they see as American.

Whose stories are the students celebrating? How do we learn to tell and live our own dreams, and how do we help students do the same?

As teaching artists we must help students find their stories and express themselves through the arts to illuminate and transform their experiences. Sharing their stories serve as an entry point to discover meanings and uncover connections between their peers, teachers, families, communities, and the larger world.

For over a decade Nate Herth has facilitated playful, investigative, youth arts education in the Pacific Northwest working with Arts Corps and the Creative Schools Initiative, the City of Seattle, the Seattle Art Museum, the EMP, the Gage Academy, Seattle, Highline and Tacoma Public Schools, among others.

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VSA INTERSECTIONS: ARTS AND SPECIAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

VSA, the international organization on arts and disability, was founded more than 35 years ago by Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith to provide arts and education opportunities for people with disabilities and increase access to the arts for all.

With 52 international affiliates and a network of nationwide affiliates, VSA is providing arts and education programming for youth and adults with disabilities around the world.

Each year, 7 million people of all ages and abilities participate in VSA programs, in every aspect of the arts – from visual arts, performing arts, to the literary arts.

August 1-2nd, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Through innovative, thought-provoking, and interactive sessions, the VSA Intersections: Arts and Special Education Conference provides professionals in the fields of arts education and special education the opportunity to share current information in research, practice, and policy, and serve as a leading catalyst for change. This conference brings together educators, administrators, researchers, and teaching artists to build new skills, transfer knowledge, network, and ultimately, help to shape the best practices-improving educational experiences for students with disabilities learning in and through the arts.

Teaching Artists Nia Womack-Freeman (Luna Dance & Teaching Artist Support Collaborative) and Miko Lee (Youth in Arts & Teaching Artists Guild) attended the conference and share their perspectives.
Reflections on VSA Intersections: Arts and Special Education Conference: How do you design a lesson or a workshop that is accessible to all learners?

By Nia Womack-Freeman

Dance Teaching Artists would like to create a safe environment, but we do not always know the learning needs of the students in our classrooms. The workshop Teaching Social and Creative Dance for Students with Disabilities; Strategies for Success presented by There- sa Cone provided a number of examples of how to create inclusive dance classrooms using the principles of Universal Design for Learning (representation, engagement, and expression). I was fortunate to attend the VSA Intersections: Arts and Special Education conference; with an interest in unpacking Universal Design of Learning (UDL), I was eager to experience Ms. Cone’s strategies.

Upon entering the large empty room, I noticed a variety of stations with props and visual materials on the walls and floor. Visual materials included text, pictures, and symbols, and props were of a variety of textures and sizes. We started in a circle with a toward-and-away dance activity. Ms. Cone used concrete objects to teach her lesson: organizing spot markers in a circle to establish a starting place, drawing an inner circle with tape to stop, and using hand gestures to cue movement. For a scarf/flocking dance we were provided scarves with varying sizes, textures and colors. People who may have sensitivities to touch could participate as there were many options: silk, natural fibers, cotton, and canvas. Having this choice quickly engaged all kinds of learners, as we perused the scarves looking for the right one.

The movement/dance activities were thematic and interesting for children (car wash, sea life, and sports). Directions for each activity were given verbally and through visual representation (signs, hand cues, soft toys). The activities were engaging because they provided opportunities for participants to modify the lesson towards their needs. For example, in the car wash activity, we could decide (by stepping on or holding a yes/no cue card) if we wanted the dancers far from us or close as they rattled their props over, under and around our bodies. I appreciated the open structure which allowed me, as a dance teacher, to imagine ways to extend the activities using other dance concepts.

I came to the workshop hoping to learn how to make dance accessible, and came away with new questions: what is disability and where does it exist— in the environment, the limitation of the teacher, the communication approach, the child, or the class structure.

It is often through experimentation with art materials, that people initially learn the value of making art. The workshop Exploring UDL & a Process of Descriptive Review through a Lesson in Watercolors presented by Barbara Hackett Cox, Lori Brink and Craig Dunn, provided an approach to experimentation, observation, reflection and content accessibility. Able-bodied people may take for granted their ability to hold a paintbrush of all sizes and engage in drawing with little physical encumbrances. This workshop was geared though for the differently abled body. Imagine being a person where a tight grip is uncomfortable or impossible; well there was a brush with a thick sponge or tennis ball handle to paint with. Imagine not being able to hold a brush at all, there was a brush with a strap that could be fastened on to your limbs. The variety in art tools and the freedom to experiment made the lesson interesting and accessible.

Providing materials and delivery of content are elements of a lesson as arts educators we have control over, but what happens when the conditions in which we prepared drastically change? The workshop successfully showed how to approach UDL in an art classroom for students with different physical limitations. However, the circumstances in which the lesson was taught at the conference presented a different UDL challenge that was not addressed; how to construct a workshop based on the principles of UDL when there are limited resources.

Questions arose as I observed my internal feelings and thinking processes as the presenters conducted a workshop where they had a limited number of resources in lieu of the workshop’s popularity. There were art resources for sixteen people to participate in the lesson and the other attendees were asked to observe. What happens when resources are limited and therefore experimentation is inaccessible for everyone at a workshop or in a classroom? I was curious about how their challenges might impact my own teaching environment leading me to reflect on important values I feel are essential to our work as teaching artists, workshop presenters and change makers. These values are shared below as simple tools to keep in mind when thinking of UDL for all kinds of learning environments.
Choice and Transparency
Sharing the challenges that you are experiencing with your learners and providing options for participants can support engagement and agency. I wonder if we were told that there were not enough resources, then given choice in how we could participate or asked our opinions about how to solve the problem the learning environment would have shifted to one where everyone felt involved.

Feelings
How our students feel affects their ability to learn. I felt like an outsider when I learned that I could not do art. Considering the feelings of my students, while keeping them interested in the creative process is an area for me to continually reflect upon.

Engagement
Making our lessons engaging and meaningful for all learners is important. Having the opportunity to walk around and observe helped me re-engage, as I was able to connect to the lesson being taught. I wondered what other ways could we as “observers” participate? I imagined being able to touch the various art tools. Also be given a small group or peer task where I could reflect on what I saw/felt.imagined in between activities.

Observation
With a specific purpose and designated time observation can allow for meaningful learning and reflection to happen. Being an observer provided space for me to see expansive experimentation and reflect on the learning environment. However, I needed short observation times and an actually task to sustain interest.

Practice as participant and observer
Having students move back and forth between these roles in our classes provides opportunities for them to develop reflection skills as artists. What would have happened if we shared the resources and also shared the role of observer with those who had materials?

Unpacking Universal Design for Learning brings to light the fundamental issue of equity and how arts educators can make learning accessible to all at all times. Being able to turn challenges into learning opportunities whether in the classroom, workshop, or other environments is relevant to being able to give all individuals equal access to the arts. Attending this conference provided meaningful opportunities to look deeper at inclusion and arts education at a personal, local, national, and international level. There is much to be done in this area and yet I am moved by the work that is currently happening across the globe.

To learn more about VSA visit: http://education.kennedy-center.org/education/vsa/

Learn more about UDL and dance: http://dancersgroup.org/2013/10/universal-design-for-learning-why-does-it-matter-to-dance-teaching/, by Patricia Reedy, Luna Dance Institute.

Nia Womack-Freeman is a Teaching Artist and PL Registrar /Program Associate with Luna Dance Institute in Berkeley, CA. She is grateful to be able to merge her love of dance and education.

Presenters Katie Kirkman and Andy Dakopolos demystified the language of special education and provided useful tools for teaching artists to utilize in a self-contained classroom. “Self contained classrooms” are specifically designated for children with disabilities, usually with up to 10 students and led by a credentialed special education teacher.

The presenters outlined The BOX, which surrounds every self-contained classroom. They identified several key elements including IEP, CLASSROOM STRUCTURE, STANDARDS & ASSESSMENT, and BEHAVIOR PLANS.

IEP
Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a document that is developed for each public school child who is eligible for special education. It is an official signed contract between the parents/guardians and the school district. An IEP Team develops the IEP that is reviewed and revised annually. Every student in a self-contained Special Education classroom will have an IEP. Elements of the IEP include:

- PLOP – The student’s Present Level of Performance
- IEP Goals that are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-Bound)
- Progress the student has made on the previous year’s IEP goals
- Support Services to be provided to the student (i.e. speech, physical therapy)
- Supports
  - Modifications (to a general education curriculum)
  - Accommodations (access such as interpretation in ASL, more time for tests)
- Rationale – why doesn’t the student participate in a general education classroom
- Assessments that relate to the IEP goals
- A Start & End Date of services for the students

*Thinking Outside the Box, From Inside the Box.*
CLASSROOM STRUCTURE
Self-contained classrooms are intended to be highly structured so that children know what is expected of them at all times. The goal is to create a safe and predictable environment. Many classrooms utilize:

- Visual Cues – visual cues include drawings and text to describe an activity. This helps students understand where they are in the process.
- Physical Boundaries – Many teachers tape out locations or identify specific areas to help students adjust to the classroom settings.
- Label – Teachers label as much as possible to create a print-rich environment and enable multiple types of learners to be engaged.
- JARS – Joint Action Routines - interactions between two or more people, which follow a predictable and logical sequence of events, repeated on a regular basis and used most often with students who are on the autism spectrum.
- Transitions – explaining transitions in between activities is helpful way to reduce anxiety. Some teachers use a clock, or the visual cue boards.

STANDARDS & ASSESSMENT
Most self-contained classrooms are expected to adhere to Common Core standards. Assessments are linked to the IEPs. With the implementation of the new Every Student Succeeds acts, each state will be developing their own assessments for students with IEPs.

BEHAVIOR PLANS
School districts may adopt a number of specific behavior plans, here are a few:

- FBA – Functional Behavior Assessment
- BOP – Behavior Intervention Plan
- MTSS – Multi-Tiered Support Systems, designed to support students, educators, as well as parents.
- PBIS – Positive Behavior Intervention Supports – a positive reinforcement behavior plan

Teaching Artist Tip
Check with the classroom teacher to find out what their learning targets are. Make sure you are matching their goals for their students.

Teaching Artist Tip
Ask what type of Behavior Plan is utilized in the classroom; explain your process so that the teacher can understand how they can best facilitate a successful session.

Teaching Artist Tip
Communicate with your classroom teacher so that you can share skills and knowledge to provide the most creative environment for your students.

Miko Lee is Executive Director of Youth in Arts, which provides quality arts education for 33,000 students in the North Bay. Miko previously served as Director of Art and Education at East Bay Center for the Performing Arts, where she designed and directed Learning Without Borders, recipient of three consecutive U.S. Department of Education Model Arts Awards. Miko has developed arts education programs for the Bay Area Discovery Museum and the National Park Services Rosie the Riveter project. Miko’s extensive background in theatre, as a performer, choreographer and director, include shows at American Conservatory Theatre, Mark Taper Forum, Seattle Repertory Theatre and New York’s Public Theatre.
EDUCATORS

“@ LARJ”

by Mariah Rankine Landers

The artist Ai WeiWei had a provocative exhibit on Alcatraz (an island off of San Francisco that once served as a federal prison) in which he exposed the injustice of political prisoners around the world, imprisoned for challenging systems of oppression and standing up for basic human rights. He called the exhibit @Large. The term stuck with me as an educator and I began referring to the network of teachers, teaching artists, administrators and those invested in teaching and learning as Educators @ Large. A most striking correlation is that at the heart of my work I stand for 3 key ideas: Love, Art and Racial Justice or LARJ. Here is my essay on LARJ Conditions in teaching and learning.

LARJ CONDITIONS:

LOVE, ART, AND RACIAL JUSTICE

Love. Most of us are in the field of teaching and art because of love. We are desperately, hopelessly in a long-term relationship with our art forms and that immeasurable feeling that surges when we ignite the same passion in others to see themselves as artists. There is an indescribable joy that surface when we witness students making connections and making meaning about the world around them through the lens of their artful selves.

Love is the basis for which we understand who we are and our cultures, through which we stay motivated and compelled to be of service and through which we activate the most compelling places of humanity. As teachers, it is our love of content and material, questions and investigations, and deep curiosity that transfer through our teaching practices to activate spaces of joy, attachment, curiosity, and creativity within our students so that they can develop the skills necessary to be provocative and insightful thinkers.

With love, you invoke the roots of a LARJ practice.

Art. Art stirs us profoundly. It is the foundation of our existence to observe the world, make meaning and express our thinking. The forms through which we channel the worlds’ questions, needs, complexities, and contradictions (i.e. sculpture, poetry, dancing, playwriting, photography, music, gastronomy, gaming) are the ways that we form and express our critical thought by listening, interpreting and speaking back to the world.

Art is an invitation to move beyond current understandings into new ones. Art is an offering to remain curious and open to new questions, evolving, and essential questions to investigate the world around us and how we might shape and inform it.

Art is a life-giving gift innate to the human condition. It is the pathway to developing qualities of our minds. Contemporary practices in art elevate critical questions and complexities found throughout the world, allowing us to understand more fully the lives of others, ourselves, systems of harm, destruction, power and greed, systems of love, abundance and hope, and tend to the places on our planet that harbor the unknown.

With art, you invoke the roots of a LARJ practice.

Racial Justice. Undoubtedly, this is the most urgent social issue we are striving for. Black and brown people live under a system of injustice, oppression and inequity. We are disproportionately represented in our prison system, special education, school expulsions, health statistics and hate crimes. We are treated systematically as second-class people. We need an end to mass incarceration, and end to the school to prison pipeline, and an end to the system of inequity that perpetuates ongoing oppression of people of color.

Why is it that families with wealth and means have access to schools that position the arts as central to student learning? Because the arts amplify their students understanding of the world and position them with thinking abilities that come from learning through the arts as mentioned above. What has been the narrative to poor/communities of color? That
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is the tool for tilling fertile ground to grow and sustain conditions of racial justice. It eliminates cognitive apartheid. It is a way for students to know who they are, where they come from and where they are going.

When educators create space for students to investigate the world through art forms, our young people have the opportunity to build cognitive skills that prime their neurons for encoding information. In fact, learning through the arts, are the very ways that humans learn the best. We all become stronger critical thinkers and doers when our thinking is activated through an art practice.

Contemporary artists use their energy to investigate critical questions of racial justice and offer ways that we might solve and bring an end to injustice. They illuminate a problem, interrogate the problem through critical inquiry and ask the public to entertain these questions and join in community to be creative solution makers.

For example, The Alley Project in Detroit, Michigan lead by youth and community organizers combined their efforts to address a community concerned about the empty lots in their streets and lack of opportunities for youth in the neighborhood that led to an upsurge in crime. Young people began creating pieces of graffiti art, finding their canvases to be the garage doors that lined the alleys in their neighborhoods. The Alley Project has opened opportunities for poor youth of color to build their own businesses, be in fellowship together, and take care of their community by having relationships built on trust, respect and pride.

Teacher and artist Rochelle Royster and her project called Breathing Through Fiber, responded to her grieving community in Chicago, after the untimely death of a student to gun violence, one among hundreds that has plagued her city. In her words “Students come to school with trauma, in need of a safe space to deal with their feelings and thoughts on death and violence. This lesson began with a group of students using collaborative art making rituals to heal from trauma caused by the death of a school member. Teacher and students continued to work as a collective to create memorials for all lives that have been lost to gun violence in Chicago in 2015 by facilitating doll-making workshops to honor victims, raise awareness, and create space for healing.” This is racial justice through the arts. Rochelle’s practice exemplifies Love, Art and Racial Justice through and through.

With your heart and mind focused on racial justice, you invoke the roots of a LARJ practice.

To close, I offer you a list of artists that inspire me to understand how we can all investigate the opportunity of love, art, and racial justice. May you live LARJ and continue to create opportunities that manifest an end to oppression and a platform for your students to be everything and anything they can imagine!

1) Ai Wei Wei: A Chinese born artist, Ai Wei Wei questions the world so magnificently that you can’t turn your head without being affected. He is an artist activist for human rights exposing the injustices found around our globe.
2) Kara Walker: Kara Walker defines racial injustice through collective memory, drawing upon the assaults of 400 years of oppression. What child wouldn’t want to stand below a towering sphinx made of sugar and ask “why?”
3) Mark Bradford: Mark Bradford’s work takes me to emotional places I haven’t seen inside me. He speaks to the suffering of communities through the majesty of intricate lines, shapes, and penetrating color.
4) Constance Moore: I love this artist! She’s my personal friend and shero. Her current pieces of art investigate the relationship of things as they relate to each other and as they relate to us, essentially.
5) Oscar Murillo: Oscar investigates memory, our ancestors and our interaction with time. I love how he allows you to breathe the ancestors into frame-literally.
6) Stan Douglas: Stan recreates historical depictions of riots and crowds in such a compelling way that you are left stunned and wanting to know absolutely more about
what just happened and what happened afterwards. He’s a master storyteller of the moment.

7) Tongo Eisen-Martin: Tongo creates poetry so profound you have to allow yourself to sit with each phrase, like sipping ice tea on the porch in summertime. And when you’ve made meaning of his words you want to get up and devote the rest of your life to the cause, if you haven’t already.

8) Wangechi Mutu: You humble yourself in the site of Wangechi’s pieces. She absorbs surreal fantasies with afrofuturistic visions to complete visual pieces that respond to the caves of your imagination waiting to be invited to the table.

Additional resources to explore the topic include:

Zaretta Hammond, Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain, 2014
Zaidee Stavley, KQED News, Two Moms Choose Between Separate and Unequal Schools in Oakland. August 30, 2016

Mariah is a committed educator, artist, and integrated learning practitioner with 20 years of teaching experience. She holds a BA in Anthropology from UC Santa Cruz and an Ed.M in Equity and Social Justice in Education from SFSU. She currently serves as the Director of the Integrated Learning Specialist Program, through the Alameda County Office of Education in Northern California. In addition, she is an educational consultant with clients in Bay Area that include the Oakland Museum of California, Hack the Hood, Alphabet Rockers, Chapter 510, and Not Much But Good. She is the co-founder of Canerow.org, a place reflective of the histories, lives, experiences, and dreams of people of color. Mariah has been featured on PBS’s “The Electric Company” for a teacher instructional series. She is the recipient of an award from Teacher for Social Justice for her work to foster equity in the classroom and is 2016-2017 fellows at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.

RESOURCE HIGHLIGHT: ANIMATING DEMOCRACY

“Cultivating a landscape for creative social change”

We are thrilled to share with you an incredible resource. Housed within Americans for the Arts, and led by co-directors Barbara Schaffer Bacon and Pam Korza, Animating Democracy was originally based on a study which revealed some of the pivotal and innovating roles that the arts can play in the renewal of civic dialogue. The study’s resulting report, published in 1999 and still extremely relevant, is available here: Animating Democracy: The Artistic Imagination as a Force in Civic Dialogue.

Check out their two major projects:

The Arts & Social Change MAPPING Initiative maps and highlights the spectrum of ways the arts are being activated to engage and make change through online PROFILES of those doing and supporting the work and through writings and other resources in the LANDSCAPE of Arts for Change.

The Arts & Civic Engagement IMPACT Initiative works to advance understanding among practitioners, funders, and other stakeholders of the social impact of arts-based civic engagement and social change work.
WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

By Teaching Artists Guild Executive Director, Jean Johnstone

I’m going to get a bit chatty about an important subject. If you don’t have one already, grab a cup of tea. Here we go!

Recently, in a strategic planning meeting, our consultant was wondering aloud if the work teaching artists did was in anyway tied to contributing to the development of racial equity in school settings. We stared, surprised at the question, because to us the connection was so clear and obvious. But our consultant, who had done national education policy work, was not aware of it. That’s a wake up call. We have a lot of work to do to connect our intention and beliefs around this work to our “collective” story. It is out and about in your setting, but the tools to help build it- to all.

What does the world we want look like?

Perhaps we can start with acknowledging the world that has been. When we generally wonder why our systems still are not equitable, and lament, while reading the news on Facebook (I’m just talking about me here, right?), that everything seems so broken, we have no further to look back than a few hundred years. The systematic inequalities which persist are not mysteries. They persisted because they were never fully addressed and amended. This particular nation was built on the backs of people who were stolen from their land and forced into servitude. Our nation as we know it today was made possible by the genocide of ancient and evolved societies, societies which happened to already be on this land. That doesn’t just go away, or wash clean after a couple generations of the people in power not remembering. Nor should it be a surprising or provocative statement, but a fact so commonly held that it needs no citation (there are many, however, should you need them); I’ve looked most recently to An Indigenous People’s History of the United States by Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz, listed here in “further reading”).

Indeed, facts can be provocative but this one should not be surprising. From this author’s position, it still feels like a bizarrely provocative thing to write publicly; if my Facebook feed (my current non-academic gauge on society, let’s just call it) tells me anything, it is that many people still find this extremely challenging.

But why? To raise these facts at all, and to point out their influence on today’s society, is still a stinging blow to the myth of US American origin, which millions of us travel through life with, holding as our “collective” story. It is serves to bind us together. Bind who together, exactly? And to what end?

As a nation, what do we do now?

It’s an enormous question, and the most worthy undertaking I can see. But let’s break it down into some do-able pieces to begin (pause to sip tea).

If you are reading this, you are most likely an artist or somehow affiliated with the arts via community, educational, or otherwise participatory settings.

If you are an artist, you might be addressing inequities and injustices you see or experience through your work, as a subject matter. Or you might acknowledge them by making your work accessible to all, and by being in conversation about it and your relationship to these systems. If you are an artist who works in a participatory setting, out and about in your community/ies, you might work to make the practise of your art available to all. You might be employing your art as a means of bringing communities together. You might work with schools, prisons, families, elders, to create the opportunity for all to express themselves, to discover themselves more fully, to see the world around them and build connections, to be what they can imagine, to make room for that. We know everyone deserves these opportunities. Let us insist on this.

When we work at TAG to advocate for and support teaching artists in doing their best work, and in making that work visible, we are supporting this, precisely. We are waving the banner and hitting the street: arts for all, and we mean it because we, as teaching artists, do it.

We bring the arts to all.

Arts education, or arts in participatory settings, is a still invisible workhorse in this movement towards social and racial justice, to some. But perhaps it can be our Trojan Horse! No, I don’t like war metaphors. We are insisting on the Arts’ powerful role in creating and sustaining an equitable, and just society, a dream founded on a terrible past but nonetheless achievable. It is our duty as artists to help make visible the past and present, and to give a glimpse of a real New World- no, not just a glimpse, but the tools to help build it- to all.

So that’s why we do what we do. What about you?

Further reading:
American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland (Politics and Society in Modern America), by Robert O. Self

An Indigenous People’s History of the United States, by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz

Art and Politics ( A Small History of Art for Social Change since 1945), by Claudia Mesch

There were 220 delegates from 18 countries gathering at the University of Edinburgh campus, tucked under the mountain “Arthur’s Seat,” overlapping with the International Fringe Festival and focusing intently for three long inspiring days. The conference was designed and led by Creative Scotland and sponsored primarily by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. Rather than report on the many presentations (over 40), or celebrating the keynote perspectives, or praising the contributions of our U.S. colleagues, I will focus on what I learned. I am the co-founder of the biennial International Teaching Artist conference and was again astonished to see how it has grown, how big and generous our field is by nature (even if that connectedness is usually invisible), and how we are beginning to make connections that will grow one fabric of practice, no matter what it is called. And let’s note that semantic challenge—what we call teaching artists in the U.S. and some other countries, are called artists in participatory settings, or artist educators, or citizen artists, or artist facilitators or community artists or other titles. The semantic distinction keeps us apart and hides the depth of the ways we are united; so don’t get possessive about the term unless you want to stay disconnected from the world of artists who activate the artistry of others to make the world a better place.

We had three driving questions for ITAC3. Here are – not answers, because we didn’t pull together the experiences in a conclusive way – my own impressions from three days in a deluge of experiences and presentations.

How can we collectively strengthen support for artists working with people? There was a lot of agreement about the challenge and the urgency to find answers, and not many were offered. The problems of inadequate pay, underdeveloped ways into the field and for advancement, isolation, no provision for retirement were recognized widely as challenges, with some additional challenges in other countries. The recent four year ArtWorks program in the U.K. is probably the largest study and program to advance of artists working in participatory settings that has ever been undertaken, and it was central at the conference; we saw some of their best work. But even that extensive program didn’t develop workable solutions to the issue of support for artists. There was a clear consensus that artists must start taking better care of themselves, that we are asking too much of ourselves and must not feel indulgent when we invest in our own professional development. There was also a recognition that funders must start structuring this kind of care and development of artists into grant guidelines; Régis Cochefert, the Grants and Program Director of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation (the main funder of ITAC3), asserted this and intends to start building such a requirement into PHF grants. We can all start making this point to our funders, and over time, push together, for change.

How is participatory arts practice evolving to meet the challenges of the 21st century? It seemed clear to me that the content of the conference flipped this question to become: How is participatory arts practice meeting the challenges of the 21st century? Delegates and presenters instinctively focused on what we provide to address current problems,
not how the practices of the field were evolving. (That said, there were several good programs using technology and the internet in effective ways.) This switch of the original questions seems so essential to who we are – teaching artists focus on what we need to accomplish, what will make communities more cohesive and joyful, what will make individuals more alive and successful – than on ourselves and our field. We do evolve, constantly, to find more effective ways to address the needs, even as we back-burner our emphasis on developing our practice together.

What can the world learn from radical approaches to socially engaged art-making? (The true answer to that within the collective intelligence of the conference was: They can only learn everything that is important for fixing the thousand challenges we face—that’s all!) I found my definition of “radical” practice changed over the three days. I helped plan the conference, thinking “radical” meant unusually bold and strikingly original. Seeing so many sessions and talking with many TAs from around the world brought me back to the etymological sense of “radical” which means connected to the roots. Almost every presentation, almost every individual I spoke with, identifies some part of her practice as radical, even when it didn’t seem so unconventional on the surface. Every artist meant that their full commitment and passion to some features of their work made their practice beyond the typical. It’s true; when we are engaged at our fullest, pouring our best work into our own creation in the medium of learning, generating new work from our most roots-connected beliefs, we are in some way radical. There are not two camps – of “normal” and “radical” practice – there is a continuum of our boldness, usually determined more by our circumstances than our capacity, and our radicalism is the blossom of our passion. What the world can learn is that indeed art-making that is made from absolute commitment to personal artistry (of the TA and the participant) is what changes individuals and the world.

Inspired by the boldness of so strong much world work around the world, I left Edinburgh feeling that I can be more radical in my own work; I can be planted more firmly in the soil of my deepest beliefs and grow more boldly.

I note a few things that surprised me. The delegates rarely focused on “what they are trying to accomplish” – purposes and evaluation of impact were largely absent at the conference. Outside the U.S., artists working in participatory settings and their programs think about their learning goals less than we do in the U.S. They also think about schools less; there were conspicuously few mentions of schools and TA work in those settings at this conference. Of course such work does happen in most of the countries represented, but it not where they identify their “radical” work at play.

ITAC3 focused on community based work more than previous conferences. Perhaps the most powerful impact of the conference was to help us with some strong programs unfolding in the neighborhoods of Glasgow, in Malaysia and South Korea, in Australia and New Zealand, in Norway and Argentina—this made the world feel much closer and the emerging network of our global field even stronger. Indeed, the hunger for international connections now feels strong enough to create an ongoing ITAC organization, one that can consistently (not just for three days every two years) nurture connections, strengthen visibility, and support artists who work in schools and communities around the world.

Eric Booth

As an actor, Eric Booth performed in many plays on Broadway, Off-Broadway and around the U.S. As a businessman, he started a small company, Alert Publishing, that in seven years became the largest of its kind in the U.S. analyzing research on trends in American lifestyles. As an author, he has had five books published. The Everyday Work of Art was a Book of the Month Club selection, and The Music Teaching Artist’s Bible, was published by Oxford University Press. He has written dozens of magazine articles, and was the Founding Editor of the quarterly Teaching Artist Journal.
STATEMENT ON CULTURAL EQUITY

To support a full creative life for all, Americans for the Arts commits to championing policies and practices of cultural equity that empower a just, inclusive, equitable nation.

DEFINITION OF CULTURAL EQUITY

Cultural equity embodies the values, policies, and practices that ensure that all people—including but not limited to those who have been historically underrepresented based on race/ethnicity, age, ability, sexual orientation, gender, socioeconomic status, geography, citizenship status, or religion—are represented in the development of arts policy; the support of artists; the nurturing of accessible, thriving venues for expression; and the fair distribution of programmatic, financial, and informational resources.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & AFFIRMATIONS

In the United States, there are systems of power that grant privilege and access unequally such that inequity and injustice result, and that must be continuously addressed and changed. Cultural equity is critical to the long-term viability of the arts sector. We must all hold ourselves accountable, because acknowledging and challenging our inequities and working in partnership is how we will make change happen. Everyone deserves equal access to a full, vibrant creative life, which is essential to a healthy and democratic society. The prominent presence of artists challenges inequities and encourages alternatives.

As we mentioned in our intro letter, Americans for the Arts developed earlier this year a statement on cultural equity. You can get your own copy on their website, and edit it for your own organization. Thanks, AFTA!

MODELING THROUGH ACTION

To provide informed, authentic leadership for cultural equity, we strive to...

Pursue cultural competency throughout our organization through substantive learning and formal, transparent policies. Acknowledge and dismantle any inequities within our policies, systems, programs, and services, and report organization progress.

Commit time and resources to expand more diverse leadership within our board, staff, and advisory bodies.

FUELING FIELD PROGRESS

To pursue needed systemic change related to equity, we strive to...

Encourage substantive learning to build cultural competency and to proliferate pro-equity policies and practices by all of our constituencies and audiences.

Improve the cultural leadership pipeline by creating and supporting programs and policies that foster leadership that reflects the full breadth of American society.

Generate and aggregate quantitative and qualitative research related to equity to make incremental, measurable progress towards cultural equity more visible.

Advocate for public and private-sector policy that promotes cultural equity.

To download a copy to use for your organization, and to read more about the development of this statement, go to this link: http://www.americansforthearts.org/about-americans-for-the-arts/statement-on-cultural-equity
How Much To Charge For A Project: 3 Pricing Strategies For Teaching Artists

by Dave Ruch

This article first appeared on the Educate and Entertain blog as “3 Pricing Strategies for Performers;” it has been adapted here specifically for teaching artists.

THE BUSINESS OF BEING A TEACHING ARTIST

HOW MUCH TO CHARGE FOR A PROJECT: 3 PRICING STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING ARTISTS

by Dave Ruch

There are probably as many “pricing strategies for teaching artists” as there are teaching artists, right?

Ultimately, what we charge for a project has everything to do with our own personal needs and goals, the market(s) we work in, and a whole range of other factors. This article is going to assume that you have some flexibility in setting your own rates (I’m almost sure that you do), and we’ll take a look at three ways to go about doing that.

How Much To Charge For A Project

#1. Take What You Can Get (Minus The Paranoia Factor)

This is the place where most of us start. I know I certainly did. In fact, I spent years smelling the flowers and kicking the tires here until, ultimately, my responsibilities (read: kids, wife, house, mortgage) outgrew my ability to continue working at the “going” rate for local musicians. This pricing method generally goes one of two ways:

SCENARIO A: WHEN THE SCHOOL OR VENUE TELLS YOU WHAT THEY PAY

Step 1 – you think back on what you’ve been paid for gigs in the past
Step 2 – look around at what other artists are being paid for similar gigs
Step 3 – consider what you are being offered
Step 4 – say “OK”

SCENARIO B: WHEN THE SCHOOL OR VENUE ASKS YOU WHAT YOU CHARGE

Step 1 – think back on what you’ve been paid for projects in the past
Step 2 – look around at what other artists are being paid for similar work
Step 3 – dream about getting what you actually deserve
Step 4 – experience the paranoia factor™
Step 5 – quote a price that’s not much better than Scenario A, or perhaps even worse!

(The paranoia factor™ refers to that moment of trepidation just before stating your price when you become petrified of quoting too high and losing the engagement.)

For artists with streamlined needs or other sources of income, the “Take What You Can Get” pricing scenario can work just fine. For others, it’s good to move out of this category ASAP.

#2. Starting From What You Need

Holy paradigm shift!

What if, instead of taking what you can get, you start with a number, on paper, representing what you need to be making per week or per month, and figure out your rates from there?

Would this change the way you do things?

Would it force you into some different areas of work that pay better?

It certainly did for me.

Once I realized that I needed to be making mid three figures to low four figures each day I travel and perform, my entire approach changed.

It became very clear to me that I couldn’t afford to be giving guitar lessons anymore, I couldn’t be spending 3-5 hours at a coffeehouse gig, and I needed to shift all (or most of) my work into the areas where I can make that kind of money.

For me, that meant teaching artist work in schools, libraries, grant-funded concerts, community gigs, residencies, workshops, and other opportunities I’ve discovered along the way. Teaching artistry is specialized work; it can and should be compensated accordingly.

An Interesting Side Benefit
Naturally, this approach to pricing my programs has spilled over to the occasional gig I get asked to do from back when I was in the “Take What You Can Get” category.

The great thing is, although I still like doing many of those gigs, I don’t necessarily need to do them now.

So, if it’s something that sounds like fun, and I’m not already working 60 hours that week, then I’ll just do it. It’s certainly not always about the money.

But if it’s one of those gigs that I could take or leave, then I’ll quote my (now) regular prices – the same fees I ask for in my other, more specialized work.

And usually, I don’t get the gig. That’s OK. But! It seems like somewhere around 25-30%* of the time (+a non-scientific number), I get hired! Yes, my quote is a lot higher than some others they may have gotten, but I get the gig anyways.

Why? I can’t really say for sure, but I have a few theories:

• Perceived value – they figure I must be worth it (and I better be able to deliver on that expectation)
• They had the money and nobody else asked for it
• Perhaps a decent reputation built up over time for delivering value

Whatever the case, I think this is pretty interesting, and could really inform all of us during our “paranoid” price-quoting moments. As David Roth said in his pricing article for Gigmasters, “you will only ever get what you think you are worth.”

NOTE: There are several articles on the Educate and Entertain blog that go into more detail on the “Starting From What You Need” approach, including Do You Work Too Cheap? and What Do You Do When You’re NOT Performing?

#3. “The Decent Buck” (aka The Uber-Rational Approach)

My friend and colleague Chris Holder has been an independent teaching artist for over 35 years. Once upon a time, Chris was writing a newsletter for fellow teaching artists called “Artists With Class” with his colleague Michael Rutherford.

The publication, now sadly out of print, was filled with useful articles on grant funding, showcase opportunities, marketing, and general logistics related to working in schools.

Chris told me recently that, by far, the most copied, shared, mimeographed (it was 1993), and reprinted article they wrote was called “The Decent Buck.” With his blessing, I’m summarizing one part of it here. It’s my hope that I can get Chris to collaborate on a complete updating of this article (now almost 25 years old) with current-day monetary figures in place of 20th-century numbers, and we’ll reprint it in its entirety in a future post.

For now, I’m just going to give a basic outline of the formula he provides at the end of the piece. This is smart food for thought in terms of making sure we’re charging enough for our work, and sobering for those of us who don’t normally take all of these elements into account. (I know I don’t!)

Chris Holder’s Pricing Formula

What do you want your gross income to be for the year?
Add a third more on to that for expenses
Add in your health and disability insurance along with some sick and vacation days
Add in the amount you’d like to contribute to your IRA or other retirement plan
Add 5% of the number you started with for “profit to be reinvested in your business/art”
Add in 20% or so for Federal and State Income Taxes
Now, divide your figure – which by now might be almost double what you started with – by the number of days you’d like to (or can) work in a year, remembering to set aside plenty of “non earning” office days to keep this all going.

That’s how much you need to be making each day you perform.

Thanks Chris!

Check out the “Fees” page on Chris’s website to see where he’s ended up with his pricing, at least for now.

Wrapping Up

So Many More Ways to Slice It...

I hope this has given you some valuable new ways to look at your pricing, but let’s face it: we’re all freelancers. None of this is set in stone.

I imagine that every teaching artist reading this article will have their own way of pricing things. I’d love to hear how you do it. Feel free to reach out on Twitter (@daveruchk12) or at the Educate and Entertain blog (http://daveruch.com/advice).

Dave Ruch is a full-time musician and performer whose work has been featured on American Public Media, in Emmy Award-winning documentaries, and on stages across North America and the U.K. A Buffalo NY-based teaching artist and Public Scholar for the New York Council for the Humanities, Ruch helps audiences of all ages connect with history and culture through music.

Dave’s marketing blog for performing artists is entitled “Educate and Entertain: A Great Living in the Arts,” and he also contributes to The Huffington Post. Blog: http://daveruch.com/advice
Website: http://daveruch.com
NO STRINGS ATTACHED:

THE 3ARTS TEACHING ARTS AWARDS

by Esther Grisham Grimm
FOUNDING, FUNDING, AND FOUNDATION

Regin’s description of his evolving understanding of being a teaching artist is just as apt a portrayal of the evolution of 3Arts. A century-old organization, 3Arts has transformed over the years, from a bricks-and-mortar institution housing young women in the arts in 1912 to our current practice of providing unrestricted and multyear support to artists. Just as Regin works to benefit and activate people in our community, the purpose of 3Arts is to benefit and activate Chicago artists so that they may propel their art into every corner of our city and, in doing so, moderate the great social debates of our time. We do our work because artists like Regin do theirs.

3Arts supports and advocates for Chicago’s women artists, artists of color, and artists with disabilities in the performing, teaching, and visual arts. Although we are often mistaken for a foundation because of our funding streams, 3Arts is actually a nonprofit organization that bridges arts service and grantmaking, enlisting community support to increase the impact of our mission and connect audiences to the artists who are on the frontlines of our field.

Our unusually overt focus on racial and gender equity in tandem with disability culture stems from both the original social justice purpose of our organization, which was founded by Jane Addams and more than 30 other civic leaders 104 years ago, and the ongoing imperative to strive for equity in and beyond the arts. That is the backbone of 3Arts.

Our flagship program is the 3Arts Awards, through which ten Chicago-based artists receive unrestricted cash grants of $25,000 annually as a result of a nomination and jury selection process. Five panels of national judges convene in Chicago every year to select the ten newest award recipients—two each in the categories of dance, music, teaching arts, theater, and visual arts. As 3Arts evolved, we came to recognize that a single cash grant, no matter how significant, is not always enough to help artists build serious momentum in their careers, so we developed multyear support to bolster them over time. 3Arts Teaching Arts Award recipients are eligible for the following additional support streams: 3Arts Residency Fellowships that offer month-long residencies to artists who need dedicated time and place to create new work, and the ongoing imperative to strive for equity in and beyond the arts. That is the backbone of 3Arts.

As we began to compile responses from the annual surveys of our awardees, we discovered that the majority of them were working in some capacity as teaching artists. With that in mind, we sought guidance from some of our awardees, as well as from local researchers and leaders in the field of arts education, and set about understanding the distinction between a teaching artist and an art teacher. A clearer picture emerged of artists whose work exists in a hybridized space between art-making and social practice and who are equal parts maker and changer. We next researched other awards programs to locate models to replicate. We were unable to find a single unrestricted award of this size specifically designated for teaching artists, although we were gratified to see that project-based grants are available. It is worth noting that our emphasis on unrestricted funding has to do with advocating for artists to
get paid for their time, so we opted to chart new territory instead of offering restricted funding. Next, we put all of that into the context of our city and considered the immense value of teaching artists to Chicago—a marvelous and vibrant city, but also an unquestionably troubled one.

For years, Chicago has been in the national spotlight as much for its culture and tourism as for its gun violence, segregation, and dwindling resources. This fact alone makes supporting and retaining local teaching artists of critical importance. Further, Chicago is nestled in a state that has failed to pass a budget for going on two years and that now has a rudimentary stopgap budget in place that is draining so-called “rainy day” funds (the money that is reserved for items including food and medicine for people in state-run facilities). Illinois is the only state in the country that does not fund its arts council, leaving 3Arts and very few other funders who directly support artists in Chicago to fill as much of the growing gap as possible.

Putting all of this together, we decided that opening a teaching artist category in our awards program would fulfill multiple goals. First, we wanted to call attention to the important work teaching artists do in prisons, after school programs, hospitals, community centers and gardens, eldercare facilities, and all of the under-resourced places that are often the lone bastions of culture in otherwise beleaguered neighborhoods. Second, we wanted to help teaching artists have a little financial security to continue to do their multifaceted work without burning out. Third, we wanted to help them continue to generate “ripple effects” in a city that truly needs them. And, finally, we hoped to encourage the funding community to consider following suit. Since 2010, we have presented 14 teaching artists with 3Arts Awards. Those artists represent the breadth of the field, with creative practices spanning visual arts, music, spoken word, and theater.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS
Recently, we surveyed award recipients from our first six years in order to gauge the impact of this kind of support over time. The feedback from artists underscored how important and at times transformative the financial boost and recognition can be. For many teaching artists, the greatest value of an award like this is recognition and legitimacy for their role in the creative sector. It also quite simply gives them unencumbered breathing room to explore and experiment. 2012 teaching arts awardee and graffiti artist Miguel Aguilar summed this up neatly when he said, “3Arts is like being given Oxygen—and told that I can finally take a full breath.” He added, “At times, I question if art is worth the financial hurdles that I put myself and my family through. Being an awardee reminds me that my path is important, and that I have a responsibility to make good on the recognition 3Arts has given me.”

Others noted the financial independence the 3Arts Award provided. 2013 teaching arts awardee and photographer Marta Garcia said, “The award brought a financial stability to my life that I have never had before.” Many teaching artists must hold down several jobs, and those jobs are usually temporary, making it tough to budget and pay for living expenses. 2012 awardee Avery R. Young added, “With school funding cuts, many summer programs or the length of them are cut short, and in some cases, completely eliminated. The art of spoken word and/or theater is often passed over for athletic programs. In the year that I received the award, by the time summer arrived, I had enough cash to sustain myself, and work on my art.”

Benji Hart is a 2015 teaching arts awardee who uses the dance form of vogueing to teach Black and Brown queer history and empower youth in creative and celebratory
BECOME A MEMBER OF TEACHING ARTISTS GUILD TODAY!

Teaching Artists Guild (TAG), a fiscally sponsored project of Community Initiatives, is a member-driven organization committed to the professionalization and visibility of artists who teach. We are the voice of the teaching artist, communicating the depth and breadth of work that teaching artists provide our educational systems and communities.

You can support our work by becoming an Allied or Full member. Our membership provides Teaching Artists with the tools and resources they need to take their career to the next level.

Want to learn more? Visit us on the web: www.teachingartistsguild.org

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

- TAG Careington Card – comes with big discounts on Dental, Vision, Alternative Health Providers, Tax, Financial, and Legal services, LASIK Surgery, Pet Medications, Online Shopping, Identity Theft, Child and Elderly Care, and Concierge services. Need we say more? These services are not insurance.

- Free access to the TAG Job Board.

- Featured placement on the TAG Member Directory

- Placement on the Teaching Artist’s Asset Map

- Free access to the TAG Events Calendar

- Free and discounted in-person and online professional and social events and

- Discounts to businesses and organizations in your area that provide you with the tools & experiences you need to enhance your art (shows, admissions, supplies)

JOIN THE MOVEMENT. BECOME A MEMBER TODAY.

Chris Silva received the award in 2015 to support his work with youth and community groups creating public murals and graffiti projects around the city. “Trying to stay afloat financially, while aiming to hold fast to your artistic ideals, can be extremely demoralizing. 3Arts not only awarded me a big, no-strings attached check as a reward for my efforts, but has continued to promote and offer me a variety of support ever since.”

At 3Arts, we feel it is both a privilege and a duty to champion artists and invest in the creative process that drives their art forth and touches all of us, in every corner of our community. That creative energy is the foundation on which the future will be built. In the December issue, we will look forward to introducing TAG readers to the two newest recipients of 3Arts Awards in teaching arts. We hope this is another opportunity to bring greater awareness to their work and to the field.

Esther Grisham Grimm

Esther’s lifelong commitment to the arts spans administration, museum education, arts education, and philanthropy. She is the executive director of 3Arts. Esther is on the Grantmakers in the Arts Individual Artist Support Committee, and serves on the Board of the Alliance of Artists Communities (vice chair), the American Friends of the Vienna Museums (secretary), Arts Alliance Illinois, and The Hypocrites.

The 3Arts Award has been a remarkable opportunity not just to support myself doing work that is so often overlooked and devalued, but also other members of my larger community. Black and Brown trans and queer youth are responsible for the most relevant and cutting-edge art in existence, yet continue to be marginalized in every aspect of our society. This award has been a small step toward reminding us of our true value, our true power, and beginning to compensate us for our creative and political labor.”
What’s new? TAG is introducing an ongoing section dedicated to regional updates from the field. This autumn, our partners, TASC in California and SAY Sí in Texas share with us about important innovations, news, and discussions with their teaching artist communities. In the winter, we will welcome partners in Florida, New York, New Jersey, Colorado, Rhode Island, and Missouri to our pages to fill you in on what’s happening across the nation.

Interested in becoming a TAG Regional Partner? Contact us!

CALIFORNIA

Teaching Artist Support Collaborative (TASC) of California brings you a snapshot of conversations we’ve been having with teaching artists around the Golden State. Many of these center around one big question: how should teaching artists respond to and grow within an evolving field? With increasing calls for teaching artists to step up and step in as partners in education, social services, social justice and community settings, teaching artists and arts programming providers have a lot of questions -- and a lot of ideas!

To Certify or Not to Certify: Is That the Question?
http://tascofcalifornia.org/updatesfromthefield/3884868
Nearly 200 teaching artists participated in person and in written responses in regional conversations focused specifically on the issues surrounding questions of professionally strengthening our field. How can we negotiate the challenges of documenting competence and making mastery visible in a diverse field?

Mentoring Teaching Artists for Arts in Corrections Work
One model of professional development to consider is a mentoring model. Sacramento has initiated a pilot project to mentor teaching artists for arts in corrections work, and we’re excited to see where it goes.
http://tascofcalifornia.org/updatesfromthefield/4066631

Becoming a Teaching Artist? There’s an Infographic for That!
From Jill Randall, dance teaching artist and blogger extraordinaire, here is one of the most popular featured blog/resources that we’ve shared with our members.
http://blog.lifesasmolderdancer.com/2016/08/ten-resources-for-teaching-artists-as-we-prepare-for-the-new-school-year-2.html

REGIONAL UPDATES

TEXAS

Legislators send new visual and performing arts standards for California schools to governor
State legislators recently passed two pieces of legislation which, pending Governor Brown’s signature, update the state’s content standards in the arts for the first time since 2001 and also reestablish Dance and Theatre credentials in the state for the first time since 1970!
http://www.scpr.org/news/2016/08/30/64137/legislators-send-new-visual-and-perform-
ing-arts-st/

With increased state funds, the California Arts Council expands its reach
Executive Director Craig Watson comments, “Amazing stories are coming out of virtually every corner of the state about what the state investment [in the arts] means to local communities.” Teaching artists are at the heart of this work.
http://www.scpr.org/news/2016/07/07/62407/with-increased-state-funds-the-california-arts-
cou/

Website: http://www.tascofcalifornia.org
Facebook https://www.facebook.com/TascOfCalifornia

The folks at SAY Sí in San Antonio bring us this update on what’s been happening recently in the Lone Star state.

On Monday, May 16, 2016, Creative Action (Austin, TX) hosted an open forum conversation about the growing field of creative youth development (CYD). Karen LaShelle, executive director of Creative Action and a National Guild for Community Arts Education Ambassador, welcomed SAY Sí (San Antonio, TX) representatives as well as the National Guild Ambassador Program to convene with over 40 arts education leaders. Practitioners discussed success qualities of CYD programs, shared best practices and explored the national growth of the movement. Speakers at the event included Heather Ikemire, director of program and membership strategy for the National Guild for Community Arts Education, Nicole Amri, program director at SAY Sí, as well as youth representatives from both programs. Student-artists from Say Sí shared a spoken word performance and youth participants in Creative Action’s programming shared a series of short films.

Website: http://saysi.org/
Facebook https://www.facebook.com/say.sí.98

Website: http://saysi.org/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/say.si.98