



head, heart, and hands
a report on the Art of Changing the World 2017

Carleton University, Nov. 3 - 5
Ottawa, Ontario

ASC! The Art for Social Change
Research Project

/ICASC The International
Centre of Art for
Social Change



Art for Social Change

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At Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario, November 3rd to 5th 2017, a wide circle of nearly 200 artists, scholars, activists, policymakers and changemakers from across Canada and abroad gathered to share visions, perspectives, knowledge and strategies to enrich and sustain work in the community-engaged participatory arts sector. This was not the usual conference with formal lectures and paper presentations; rather, *The Art of Changing the World (ACW) 2017* featured a diverse collection of workshops, installations, art-infused activities, dialogues, and opportunities for hands-on learning, networking, and knowledge exchange. From theatre to hip hop, partnerships to evaluation, conflict resolution to theory, the sessions reflected a broad range in mediums and approaches in community-engaged arts practices. [See the ACW Program, participants, and more at <https://artofchangingtheworld2017.sched.com/>]

The ACW gathering was organized and conducted by the *International Centre of Art for Social Change (ICASC)*, an organization committed to supporting art for social change (ASC) work in Canada and around the world. ACW 2017 was the final public event of a 6 year-long (2013-2018), SSHRC-funded research project called the *ASC! Project*, directed by ICASC. The ASC! Project brought together artists, scholars, students and change-makers from diverse public and private sectors to better understand how ASC practices are evolving in Canada, as well as to provide knowledge-sharing opportunities for exchange, and resources for artists, practitioners, community-engaged organizations, and those interested in learning more about the field.

“The first thing that comes to my mind is to tell you that by its richness and variety the conference proved that art can change the world. It did at least for the people who attended and, also, for those who worked with them all over Canada and in other countries. It was quite clear as people were describing their different projects, the variety of techniques used, the results, the challenges, etc. that those involved in this work were going through rich, life-enhancing experiences. This, of course, does give strength, skills and understanding to overcome the many difficulties we all face.” ACW participant

ACW 2017 brought together diverse actors in community-engaged arts so they could share perspectives and ideas for future strategies and policy, gather inspiration, insights and information. There were also many questions explored around the complexity of bridging different branches and cultures of the art for social change field. How do we honour different ways of knowing/ learning? How do we approach intergenerational collaboration? How do we support/mentor emerging artists and practitioners? How do we sustain the work? How do we approach Truth and Reconciliation in our work now and into the future?

Before presenting summaries for each of the ACW sessions, we will encapsulate some of the dominant issues and themes discussed throughout the gathering.



Themes and Issues

Community-engaged arts programming is, by its nature, local. Its implications are global.

Many of the sessions emphasized the ways in which ASC work necessarily stems from engagement with unique people in particular communities. Often, these programs evolve out of a community need and the personal relationships that are forged in the process. One example: Anne Flynn argued in her session, “Working with Older Adults,” that success in arts-based initiatives is not necessarily determined by growth or scalability:

“Meaningful work can and does occur on a small scale.”

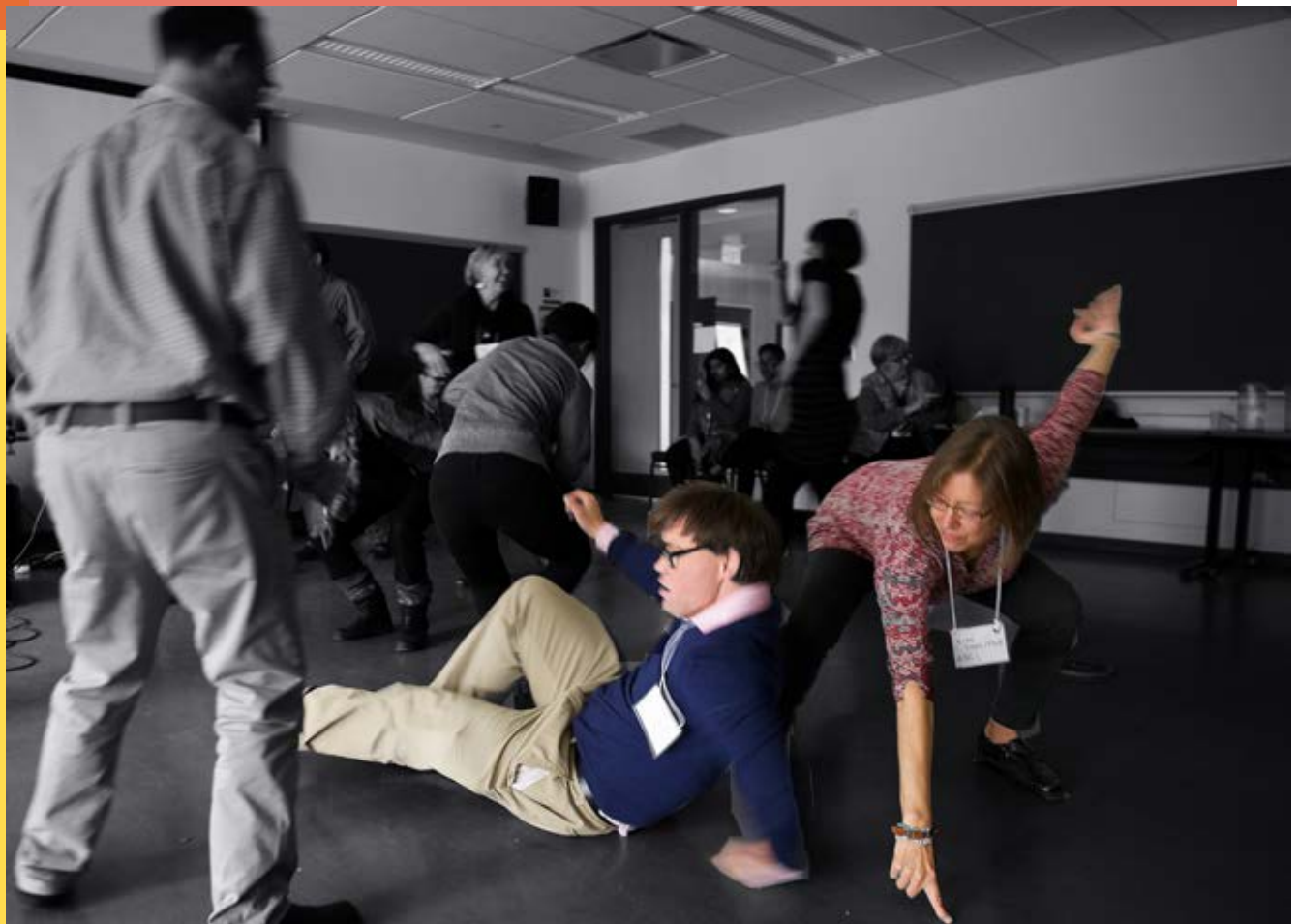
Flynn shared her experiences leading the Dancing Parkinson’s YYC project (part of the Community University Dance study, one of the ASC! Project’s field studies), as well as the Calgary-based initiative it grew out of (a dance program started in 2006 for older adults living in low-income housing). For Flynn, as with many other participants at ACW, one of the most important indicators of success has been direct feedback from participants. Flynn’s dancers often report improvements as a result of dance classes. Flynn remarked:

**“Dance class day is their favourite day of the week.
They always look forward to Tuesdays!”**

However, although stemming from local community engagement, it is important to emphasize that these programs

often go beyond the local. Continuing with Flynn's program as an example: her ongoing work has revealed that there are tangible, substantiated emotional and neurological results/improvements for participants. There is now wide-spread recognition of the transformative potential of this work that stimulates the growth of the sector well beyond the local and individual. These programs often transcend the local through cross-sector collaborations. This is illustrated by Flynn's program which includes the involvement of the University of Calgary, the Hotchkiss Brain Institute, and both arts and non-arts researchers and practitioners. Collaborations have been part of the growing national and international recognition that dance can serve as a therapeutic art that fosters health and wellbeing for those with Parkinson's and other neurological diseases.

The old activist saying, *think globally, act locally*, quickly comes to mind. An obstacle to a more complete recognition of ASC work is that it is often viewed as limited to isolated, local phenomena and not understood as having additional global dimensions. With the adage in mind, we are reminded that ASC practitioners must be prepared to speak to, and advocate for, the national and international possibilities and benefits of their work, as well as the local potential for social change, given its local rootedness and character.





Lack of resources and recognition of the work

The local character of community-engaged art for social change often leaves this work vulnerable to misunderstanding by funding bodies and formal institutions, particularly at provincial and federal levels. Because of their inherently local nature, these programs may not be financially supported or even recognized in broad social policy. This issue was emphasized in many of the sessions and widely discussed.

Limited support was one of the focal issues brought to the fore in Frédéric Julien's session, "Arts and Health: New Strategies and Forms of Collaboration." Although there are many amazing arts for health initiatives taking place on the local/community level, there remain numerous challenges in articulating to funders the justification for nurturing a national art for health network.

Other sessions highlighted how ASC work faces additional obstacles in terms of access and support within rural and remote communities, in particular in Canada's North. Even more than their counterparts in urban centres, these communities routinely struggle to find support for arts programming. Limited awareness and funding are major hindrances to the long-term impact of community-engaged arts work almost everywhere; it is especially acute in remote communities, ones that often are those most in need.

The absolute necessity to convey the value, efficacy, and breadth of ASC work

There is an absolute need to articulate the value and efficacy of ASC work to funders, government bodies, arts and non-arts changemakers/organizations, and the public at large. This requires full recognition that the diverse ASC work taking place across the country and beyond is not only local in its implications, but engages with broad social phenomena with truly global dimensions.

During “Mapping and Sharing ASC/Community-Engaged Arts Practices Across Canada,” Linda Albright highlighted the existing infrastructural challenges that face the field of arts for youth, which stem from the lack of professional acceptance of the field by funding bodies. The discussion that followed emphasized the need to better communicate ASC as “a unique form of art-making with its own practices, pedagogy, and scholarship.” As Linda and many other participants in ACW pointed out, there is a substantial body of practices, scholarship, and pedagogy — and it is growing!

Participants, sometimes ecstatically, noted that the ACW gathering made them (re)realize and feel that they belonged to something larger, and even referred to “a social movement.” The sector is not emerging but, as expressed by many, is already fully emerged and has a long history! The creation of the International Centre of Art for Social Change (ICASC) in 2007 reflects the cohesion and interconnections already present in the field.



The importance of networks and community partners

In order to address the relative lack of formal support and resources, many facilitators and participants emphasized the importance of fostering community partnerships and developing networks, both formal and informal, that can connect organizations, researchers, practitioners, and community members.

In the session “Partnerships: Stories from the Field,” Judith Marcuse and Nicole Armos examined the key role of partnerships in maintaining community arts programming. Summarizing key findings from their ASC! research, after interviewing 45 community-engaged artists/practitioners, they emphasized the importance of: developing relationships of trust with communities; developing a shared language and understanding of the work; discussing policies, protocols, and logistics to facilitate art-making in sometimes unconventional spaces; working toward equitable and reciprocal exchange; and planning for program sustainability and respectful closure.

In the provocative panel discussion, “Reconciliation and Hope,” Ange Loft spoke to the importance of developing trusting relationships with the Northern Indigenous communities she works with. “I need to return to those people so that they trust me...and we need to return to each other constantly and maintain these relationships so you trust me enough and want to work with me and trust me that I am not going to just swoop in and leave...because that’s a real issue with reconciliation. [If] you do ‘touch and go’, one workshop in a northern community and then you leave, these kids are going to be so busted after you go.”

In the “Art and Health” session, it was proposed that a more local/provincial approach could, perhaps, in the end, be a more sustainable way to fund and support art for health initiatives. One such approach could be a social prescription model in which medical practitioners refer patients to arts for health programs. Such networks would include artist practitioners

Doing the work: methods

Many of the ACW sessions emphasized the diverse methods and approaches involved in the field of community-engaged collaborative arts work. People discussed the different aspects of arts-based methods: from facilitation, group dialogue and communication approaches, to ethical treatment, relationship-forming, and evaluation.



During her session “Facilitation: Sharing our Methods,” Arlene Goldbard accentuated how one of the main qualities in good facilitators in community programs is self-awareness:

“If I don’t know my own identities, sore spots, values, triggers, biases, and when and how they arise in relation to what people say or do, I will be reacting instead of holding the space and facilitating where the group needs and wants to go.”

Judith Marcuse noted that one of the most difficult parts of facilitation is balancing and refining the triple-edged, action-response of arts facilitation: reading the room; analysis of what is going on; and planning and anticipating the next steps.

For the session “Rencontres / Encounters (R/E) “What Are We Not Talking About?” Farah Fancy and Lisa Ndejuru led a series of activities that involved the participants moving around and interacting in a shared space. These experiential activities reminded participants that the processes of engaged dialogue, so central to community-engaged arts initiatives, are ultimately embodied ways of knowing ourselves and others. The emphasis was on how these values must be lived and practiced and are not reducible to didactic explanation or methodology.

Arts-based research, while opening up new insights and opportunities for advocacy and increased recognition, also brings particular dynamics and challenges. During Katherine Boydell’s “Ineffable Knowledge: Creating and Disseminating Arts-based Health Research,” participants discussed some of the challenges and opportunities facing arts-based research. Some prominent themes in this conversation were the issues of authorship, copyright, and anonymity in arts-based research

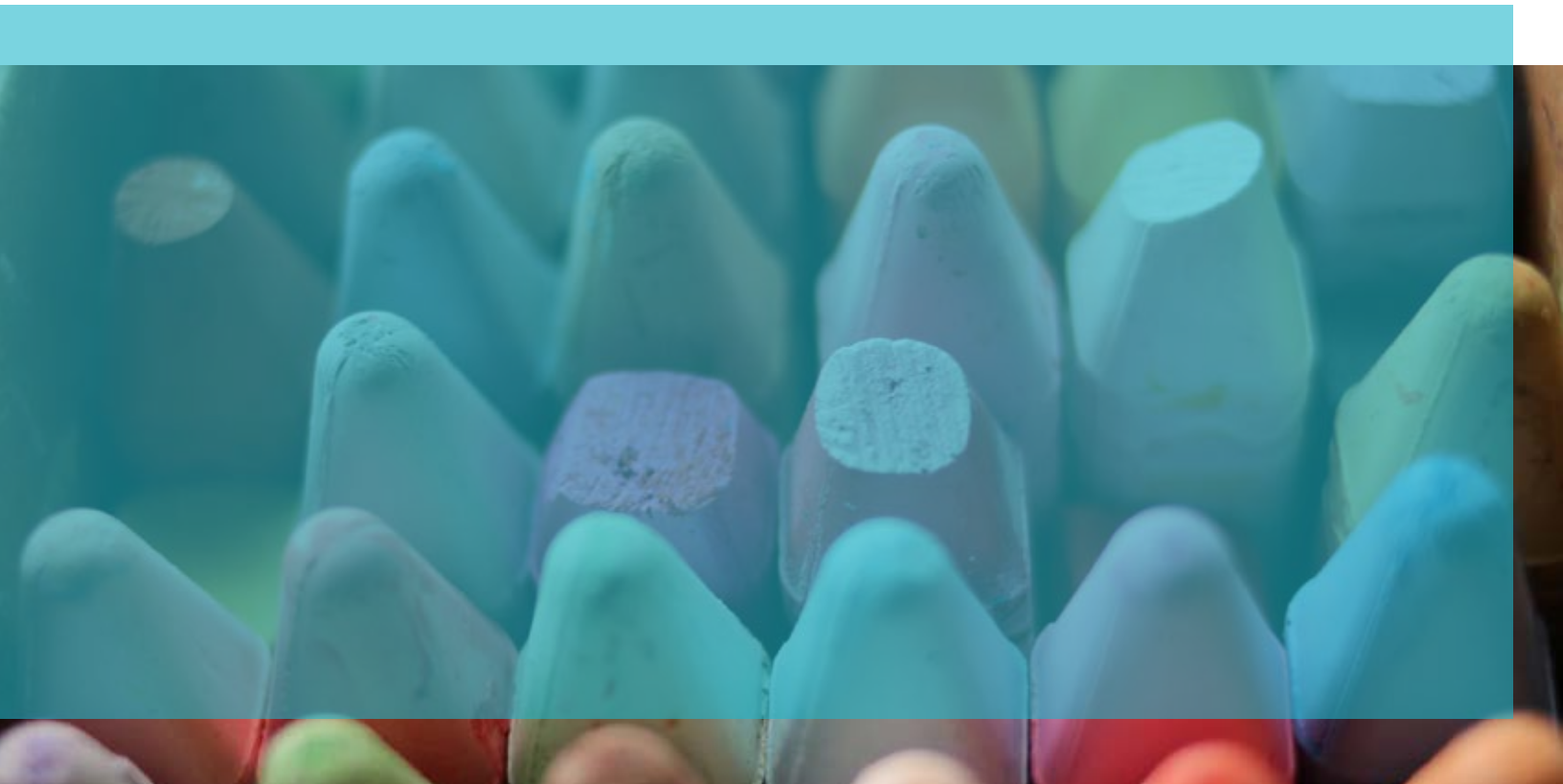


and knowledge translation. As arts-based research blurs boundaries between participants, researchers, and audience, tensions and opportunities can arise. The group highlighted the importance of always asking, “Whose story is it?” This orients us to possible problems of inequity and subject vulnerability.

**“Who benefits from the project?
Who gets the most out of it?”**

In “Listening to Young Artists Speak,” Lynn Fels and Patti Fraser highlighted how arts-based research is about disrupting and deconstructing the hardened boundaries between art, research, and community:

**“...trying to create work that has some
degree of transparency and uncertainty
to it, because that’s what research really is.”**



Three priorities for the community-engaged arts sector that we heard about most often.

We can pinpoint three general priorities for the continuation, recognition, and growth of the community-engaged art for social change (ASC) sector:

1

Increase opportunities that build capacity for artists and administrators, including access to mentorships, as well as skills development and exchange initiatives. This includes regularly-scheduled local and national gatherings.

2

Develop policies and projects that address urban/rural divides and that develop local, national, and international networking. Participants explored how these interrelated issues could be addressed.

3

Continue to advocate for recognition and support of the sector across Canada. Continue to support these approaches by ongoing research in the field.

*For further insights and information about community-engaged arts in Canada and these priorities, please read the ASC! research project's reports, **State of the Art** and the **Art for Social Change Policy Recommendations**.*



have a way of staying with us and set the stage by sharing some of the stories and key moments that they captured during the gathering. Sharing and reflecting on these stories reveal possibilities for the future of art for social change.

Afterward, they invited participants to share their own “gift stories” for those gathered — including memorable quotes, anecdotes, connections, ideas, and more.

One participant spoke about how effectively Stephen Leafloor’s session demonstrated the importance of “righting our relationships with ourselves before we begin to work with others.” Participants in the R/E session shared their new awareness of dialogue as an embodied practice, a potent reminder not just to *describe*, but also to *find*, that learning in our bodies. Another person shared her discovery, in the “Influential Writers and Thinkers” session, of the powerful

writing of Leanne Betasamosake Simpson in the essay *Land as pedagogy*. Raised in hyper-urbanized London, she explained that this realization — that land could be a form of pedagogy — was deeply powerful for her. Another participant shared a poem she was inspired to write after attending Jesse Stewart’s music session. Many others raised the importance of nurturing more inclusive and diverse communities involved in community-engaged art within Canada.

The closing session was a unique and generous opportunity to share our diverse learnings and experiences at ACW.

Beginning with the end

Before we present the session summaries with their wealth of insights, we want to look at the final session. This plenary was designed for recapping and sharing experiences after three days of intense engagement and learning.

What Just Happened and Where Next?

Arlene Goldbard

Chief Policy Wonk, U.S. Department of Arts and Culture
Santa Fe, NM

Will Weigler, Community-Engaged Theatre Practitioner
Victoria, BC

As we return to our social change work across Canada and abroad after such a dynamic weekend, we may wonder how to hold on to the moments of inspiration we experienced at this 2017 ACW gathering. ***What remains with us? How can we move conversations, connections, and insights forward?***

Arlene Goldbard and Will Weigler proposed that stories

It wrapped up the gifts of stories for us to take away, sending us off with (re)actions and (re)thinking about the exciting present and future possibilities of community-engaged art for social change in Canada and abroad.



ACW 2017 Session Summaries

Imagining Victory: A Journey to the Future and Back

Arlene Goldbard

*Chief Policy Wonk, U.S. Department of Arts and Culture
Santa Fe, NM*

**“It is 2041 and the values and practices of art
for social change have become embedded in
every social sector, public and private....”**

Participants in this session stepped through a portal in time with a guided visualization exercise, led by Arlene Goldbard, to explore possibilities for the future and trace history backward to help understand actions that could contribute to the manifestation of our vision.

**“You have permission to make your own story....
What would happen if you took yourself 100%
seriously? What would the difference be?”**

While our capacity to imagine is universal, as changemakers we are often challenged by internalized oppression and fear. To imagine requires vulnerability and a continual renewal of hope. Goldbard says that starting from a vision of the future helps us to resist the discouragement changemakers often experience as they confront seemingly-endless obstacles and challenges.

Many participants found the visualization exercise liberating, as they created a space to let go of cynicisms and worries. Others, however, noted the difficulty of fully inhabiting this space of imagination. The group discussed differences in our visions for the future and the importance of exercising critical thinking and autonomy as we engage in collective imagination activities.

“You have permission to make your own story,” Goldbard reminded participants, encouraging them to reflect on the aspects of her vision that they most identified with, as well as considering what they would modify for their own unique vision of the future.

ACW 2017 Session Summaries

Working with Older Adults: Notes from the Field of Dance

Anne Flynn

University of Calgary, Calgary, AB

Co-Investigator, Community Dance Field Study, ASC! Project

The Calgary-based *Dancing Parkinson's* YYC project (part of the ASC! Project field study, Community University Dance) has contributed valuable research findings on the impact of dancing for people with Parkinson's disease and their care partners. When the music starts, however, the focus is on the joy of dancing, not on Parkinson's. Participants are not treated like patients; they do not need to disclose information about their diagnosis, symptoms, or struggles. Rather, first and foremost, they are all dancers. The class provides people with the opportunity to learn something new, feel good in their bodies, build community, and enjoy the "here and now."

This was just one of the many insights Anne Flynn, Professor Emeritus of Dance at Calgary University, shared from her experience leading the *Dancing Parkinson's* YYC project, as well as the Calgary-based initiative it grew out of — a dance program for older adults living in low-income housing that has been running successfully since 2006. Flynn argues that success in arts-based initiatives does not necessarily mean growth or scalability: "meaningful work can and does occur on a small-scale." For instance, Dance Parkinson's YYC focuses on offering high-quality dance

instruction once a week. For Flynn, the most important thing has always been the feedback from participants who often tell her that "Dance class day is their favourite day of the week."

This Calgary initiative has created a bonded and interconnected community of participants and their instructors — a valuable support structure for older adults whose lives are often filled with loss and precarity. Flynn describes the transformative effect of dance through a tulip metaphor: "the participants often enter like a closed tulip, soften and open in class, and then close again to return to their lives." The dance class offers participants a space to experience their bodies in a positive way and witness one another's presence through movement and *togethering*.

Participants are not treated like patients. They do not need to disclose information about their diagnosis, symptoms, or struggles. Rather, first and foremost, they are all dancers.

Flynn emphasized that working with student volunteers and seasoned dance instructors has been key to the success of these programs.

Additionally, Flynn

would like to see such programs supported systematically, such as through medical prescriptions for dance and exercise classes that could be financially subsidized via the healthcare system.

ACW 2017 Session Summaries continued

Evaluation of ASC: Community-Engaged Projects

Annalee Yassi, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC

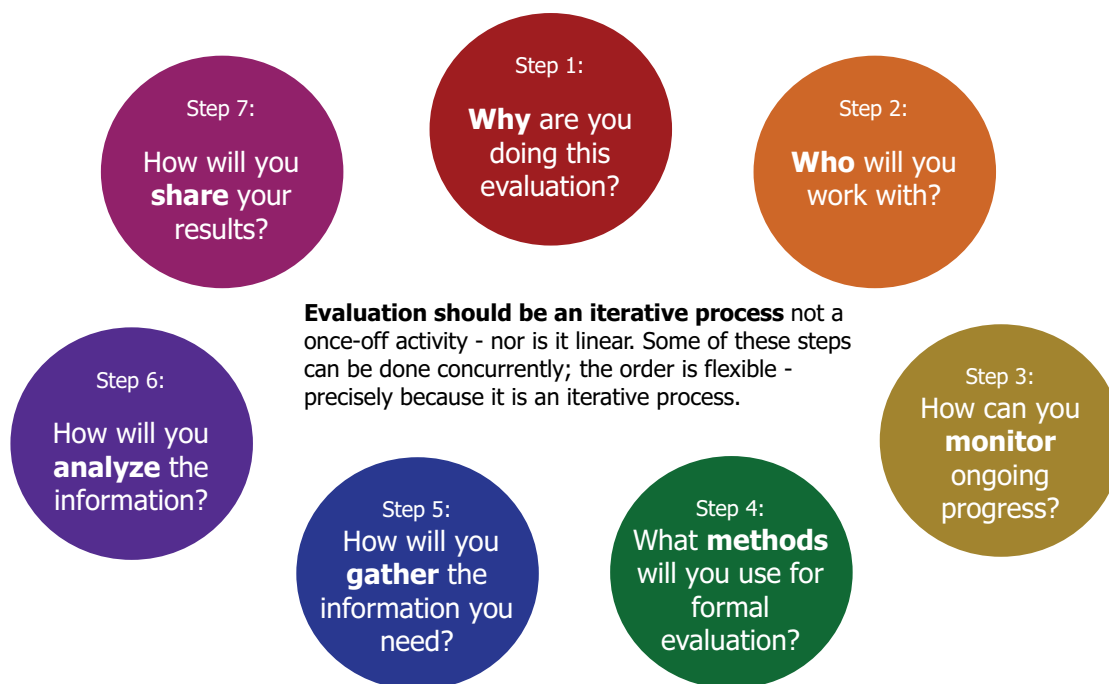
Co-Investigator, Evaluation/Impact Assessment, ASC! Project

Patricia Gray, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC

Research Assistant, Evaluation/Impact Assessment, ASC! Project

Evaluation is a key issue in the field of community-engaged arts work. Some important questions to ask are: why do we evaluate and for whom? What approaches and methods can be used? What ethical issues emerge through evaluation and how can we best address them?

As part of the ASC! Project, Dr. Annalee Yassi and her team at UBC have done extensive research into evaluation of community-engaged arts, culminating in an online, interactive evaluation tool to support practitioners, funders, and researchers. In this highly-anticipated workshop, Dr. Yassi and her Research Assistant, Patricia Gray, offered a demonstration of their evaluation tool which aims to clearly explain the concepts, theories, and practical challenges involved in evaluation. This tool is for those with minimal previous knowledge of evaluation, as well as those who are experienced. Users of the tool follow easy steps and engage in scenarios that suit their work best.



Workshop participants engaged in a lively discussion on the purpose and challenges of evaluation in social change work, for instance: the importance of collaborating with participants to identify project objectives and evaluation strategies; and the necessity of considering the varying power dynamics created through different approaches to evaluation, particularly when they are framed as a form of research. While it is not often possible to measure the long-term impact of community-engaged art-making, Dr. Yassi recommends identifying measurable indicators that move toward long-term aims.

Suggestions for further support of evaluation processes included: developing online forums where practitioners can discuss and share resources on evaluation; and working in collaboration with wider networks of evaluation, such as the Canadian Evaluation Society. The new evaluation tool is accessible at <http://www.ascevaluation.ca> and Dr. Yassi's team invites users to share resources that are not included in the tool.

Teaching ASC/Community-Engaged Arts: What Matters?

*Lisa Doolittle, University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, AB
Co-Investigator, Teaching and Learning, ASC! Project
Lauren Jerke, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC
Research Assistant, Teaching and Learning, ASC! Project*

The ability to sustain and deepen the arts-based community development/social change field depends on consistent opportunities for learning and teaching practices that will support and inspire the next generation of practitioners, artists and scholars.

As part of the ASC! research project, Lisa Doolittle, Lauren Jerke and their colleagues conducted extensive research on existing pedagogical theory and practice for



community-engaged art in Canada, through interviews with practitioners, analysis of existing curricula, and a review of the literature. Doolittle and Jerke shared key findings from their research which launched participants into a lengthy and engaged discussion, some of which is outlined in the following.

Teaching and learning in the field of community-engaged arts occurs in a wide variety of settings, including: mentorships and training offered by community groups; a growing number of programs offered by post-secondary institutions in Canada; and through informal interactions between community members and organizations. Participants discussed some of the many challenges of teaching and learning within institutional structures

generally. For instance, although institutional programs offer students valuable time to develop theoretical knowledge before entering the field, they often have limited opportunities for long-term mentorships and experiential learning, both of which are key to community-engaged art projects. Additionally, institutional programs may struggle with questions of legitimacy and unequal power dynamics when working with community partners. A key concept from this work, *positionality*, was discussed for its potential to bring critical attention and awareness to the power dynamics at play between artist practitioners and the communities they work in. On the other hand, rural communities may struggle to develop teaching and learning opportunities with the limited personnel and resources available. Participants discussed the promising idea of a mobile institute that could partner with post-secondary institutions, community groups, and municipalities to increase opportunities for place-based knowledge exchange and training across Canada, particularly in underserved Northern communities.

The group also discussed the importance of balancing training with employment opportunities, securing funding for teaching and learning initiatives, and bringing increased recognition of the value of training opportunities outside of formal academic institutions.

Ethical Challenges: A Dialogue

Dr. Naomi Jackson

*Associate Professor of Dance, Arizona State University
Tempe, AZ*



There are many ethical challenges that arise for artists and participants within the field of community-engaged arts. People working within social change sectors need to be increasingly ethically conscious in order to influence meaningful and lasting change.

The first portion of this session involved establishing a typology of common ethical perspectives, along with a discussion of the tensions that differing ethical perceptions can have within the dynamics of art-making and activism. This overview stressed that people often have very different perspectives on what constitutes ethical treatment and the importance of this awareness for changemakers. Dr. Jackson highlighted recurring ethical issues that can occur within socially-engaged work, connecting these examples to well-known ethical guidelines, including the Nuremberg Code and the core principles of public engagement. Following this discussion and collective study, participants discussed methods and approaches for ethical decision-making.

The dialogue session itself constituted a validation of these ideas, as participants were encouraged throughout to share their own preferred ethical



perspectives
and offer examples

of how these might conflict with dissimilar perspectives. This discussion raised sensitive ethical issues, such as the culture of silence that has grown on many university campuses (especially in the United States). One participant claimed this culture of silence had grown out of ethics-veiled attacks to shut down freedom of expression. In the last section of the session, breakout groups formed to share personal instances in which they had faced ethical dilemmas and discussed what was done, or what could be done, to solve such dilemmas.

Partnerships: Stories from the Field

Judith Marcuse

Founder/Co-Director, ICASC

Principal Investigator, ASC! Project

Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC

Founder/Artistic Producer, Judith Marcuse Projects

Nicole Armos, *Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC*

Research Assistant, Partnership Capacity Building, ASC! Project

Partnerships are key to the success of ASC work. They provide: connections with participants; access to resources, such as space and funding; and add leverage to enhance the impact of the work. There is growing interest in Canada in cross-sector partnerships to address social and environmental issues, and positive partnership experiences often seed and foster future collaboration.

summaries continued

As part of the ASC! research project, Marcuse and Armos interviewed 45 community-engaged artist/practitioners and organizations from across Canada, asking them about challenges and successful strategies for developing diverse forms of partnerships. In the session, Marcuse and Armos shared key findings from the research, such as: the importance of building trusting relationships with partners and communities; developing a shared language and understanding of the work; discussing policies, protocols, and logistics to facilitate art-making in sometimes unconventional spaces; working toward equitable and reciprocal exchange; and planning for sustainability or respectful closure.

Listening to Young Artists Speak

Lynn Fels, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC

Co-Investigator, Knowledge Mobilization, ASC! Project

Patti Fraser, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC

Post-Doctoral Research Associate, Knowledge Mobilization, ASC! Project

As part of the ASC! Project, Patti Fraser, Flick Harrison and Lynn Fels interviewed a variety of community-engaged participatory artist practitioners about their perspectives and experiences. These interviews resulted in three digital storytelling pieces, emphasizing the past, present and future of community-engaged participatory arts respectively. In this session, Fraser and Fels presented their future-oriented video.

Sparked by conversations with younger artists, this video is an experimental exploration into the dynamics of the research relationship itself, framed within the larger backdrop of the geo-political events of 2016. Fraser and Fels describe the work as “placing art inside of research...a small and whimsical gesture in trying to create research that has some degree of transparency and uncertainty to it, because that’s what research really is.”

Fraser and Fels invited participants in this dialogue to share their reactions to the video, and in particular the “tugs on the sleeve” or “stop moments” that caused participants to question and think twice. The viewing nurtured rich discussion and sharing. Many were moved by the interlacing of the artists’ words, historical quotes, imagistic reflections, and journalistic footage from global political events. The words of some of the participants express the depth and yearning of these dialogues:

“very moving.... I appreciate the combination of research with the visceral...the moment where the young dancer says she thinks she needs trust...a bit of intellectual searching is happening for all of us...



Speaking from an intellectual space sometimes you can get trapped in your words but clearly in this practice there seems to be room for a place beyond the words....”

The video was a visceral reminder of the importance of community, collaboration across silos, and the interrelated role that the arts and scholarship play in bringing these/us all together.

Le Cirque Social Comme un Art Pour le Changement Social: explorant les idées transdisciplinaires du domaine / Social Circus as an Art for Social Change: exploring transdisciplinary insights from the field

Jennifer Beth Spiegel, Concordia University, Montréal, QC

Post-Doctoral Research Associate, Social Circus Field Study, ASC! Project

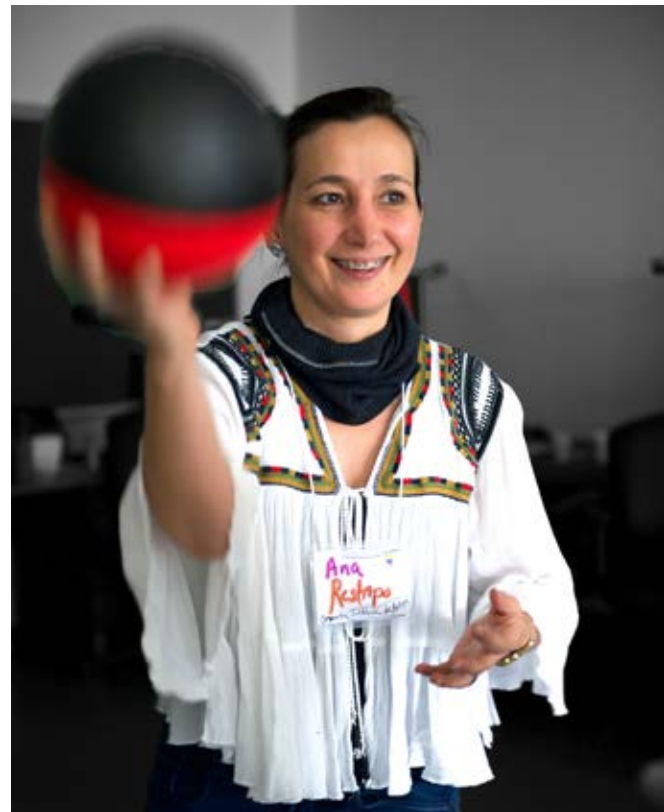
Benjamin Ortiz, Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar, Quito, Ecuador

Director, Tejido Circo Social (the Ecuadorian social circus network)

Social circus has been gaining in popularity and prominence. Two major community-university studies that examined the relationship between social policy, program structure, pedagogy and social impacts within their respective socio-cultural contexts, contain implications for ASC more broadly. In this session, leaders from both the ASC! research team and the Ecuador social circus community introduced their approach to social circus practices and research, as well as the insights they gained through this work.

Spiegel and Ortiz laid out some of the results from their longitudinal study that included the interviews of some 500 youth involved with different community-engaged arts programs: social circus, parkour, capoeira, dance, etc. They stressed how social circus requires a participant-centred approach that is sensitive to the needs of the individuals in the group. However, they described how many organizations, both implicitly and explicitly, actually work against such an approach by imposing strong pressure to perform and by focusing on the development of professional circus skills in order to make participants more employable.

The study framed a conversation among session participants on what the broader community-engaged arts sector can learn from these case studies and from social circus in particular. Many issues were discussed, including the tension between the growing professionalization of the circus arts and the impact this has on programs like social circus and the problem of participant retention in some programming, especially with youth in precarious living situations. Spiegel and Ortiz also shared their findings demonstrating the benefits to the health and well-being of the youth in their social circus programs.





ACW 2017 Session Summaries continued

Like most community-engaged participatory arts, social circus requires a participant-centred approach that is sensitive to the needs of the individuals in the group.

Session participants were also guided through some introductory exercises popular in social circus and encouraged to discuss how these may relate to their own community-engaged practices.

Reconciliation and Hope

Ange Loft, Jumbies Theatre, Toronto, ON

Renae Morriseau, Director, Actor, Writer, Musician, Vancouver, BC

Savannah Walling, Artistic Director, Vancouver Moving Theatre, Vancouver, BC

David Diamond, Artistic and Managing Director/Joker, Theatre for Living, Vancouver, BC

What does the word “reconciliation” mean for both Indigenous and Settler communities today?

This question served as a jumping off point to a vital discussion, facilitated by Ange Loft (AL), on the issues of reconciliation within the world of community-engaged arts work. Artists David Diamond (DD), Renae Morriseau (RM) and Savannah Walling (SW) – who have all collaborated in various projects engaging Indigenous and non-indigenous communities in Canada – led the dialogue. Loft first asked these speakers to introduce themselves in relation to the themes of the session. After the introductions, the session leaders led an intense discussion about what reconciliation means for both themselves and, more generally, for work in community-engaged arts settings.

The quotations that follow highlight some of the dominant themes in this passionate exchange.

DD: “So...isn’t the challenge for us, to open ourselves up to a process of assimilation into the cultures of the territories that we inhabit without certainty, without knowing what the country is going to end up looking and feeling like as that process continues? Isn’t it exciting to wonder what Canada would look like if traditional Indigenous knowledge was actually respected in terms of the education system, the health system, the environment, how the fisheries are managed...? It goes on and on...but in order for that to happen, we have to take a leap of faith.”

RM: “When we talk about healing in my Indigenous communities, we are actually talking about decolonial therapy...that reality of having to push away being ‘less than.’”

AL: “I need to return to those people so that they trust me...and we need to return to each other constantly and maintain these relationships so you trust me enough and want to work with me and trust me that I am not going to just swoop in and leave...because that’s a real issue with reconciliation. [If] you do ‘touch and go’, one workshop in a northern community and then you leave, these kids are going to be so busted after you go.”

RM: “Weaving reconciliation is recognizing that we ourselves as Indigenous peoples have to reconcile with our own communities, with our own families. And so, we are still dealing with those realities, so I have to have hope in the midst of this grief.”

DD: “Apologies are nice, but unless they are accompanied by behavioral change they are utterly meaningless. The theatre for me isn’t necessarily a terrific vehicle for structural change. That leads to bad theatre....But the theatre is really a wonderful vehicle for behavioural change. And I believe that behavioural change leads to structural change.”

SW: “I found hope in learning from Indigenous cultural practices that prioritize good relationships with each other, and the land, and the waters. I find hope in projects that weave together Indigenous and immigrant strands of knowledge to inform and transform this artistic practice and processes, and in processes where the traditional and contemporary practice can find continuum. When I’m in those situations I don’t always know how they’re going to affect the art they’re engaged in making. I don’t know how they’re going to affect me personally in my life, but I feel a place of hope, and also from the relationships that have happened and continue over the years.”

DD: “Folks, hope is a verb. It’s not sitting at home wishing things were different. Get off your couches! Hope is a verb!”
[Here, David shared advice he received from an Indigenous Elder.]



Facilitation: Sharing our Methods

Arlene Goldbard

*Chief Policy Wonk, U.S. Department of Arts and Culture
Santa Fe, NM*

Judith Marcuse

*Founder/Co-Director, ICASC
Principal Investigator, ASC! Project
Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC
Founder/Artistic Producer, Judith Marcuse Projects*

As evidenced in all sessions at the ACW 2017 gathering, arts-based facilitation is a dynamic and complex set of practices. Drawing from decades of experience, Judith Marcuse and Arlene Goldbard shared facilitation methods and techniques and opened up discussion on the role of the facilitator in community-engaged arts processes.

The workshop emphasized many important steps in facilitating group process, such as: opening a transparent discussion with participants about why they have gathered; establishing clear working agreements; and understanding how we talk to each other and hold each other in dialogue. Additionally, Marcuse and Goldbard discussed the importance of practicing equity (across all indicators) with participants, such as: ensuring that “the person with whom I agree the least” has a voice; or that “the quietest has the same support at exercising their presence as everyone else.”

For Goldbard, the main quality of good facilitation is self-awareness:



“If I don’t know my own identities, sore spots, values, triggers, biases and when and how they arise in relation to what people say or do, I will be reacting instead of holding the space and facilitating where the group needs and wants to go.”

She suggests that one thing that makes the practice of facilitation constantly gratifying is the practice of unconditional love: i.e., to “show up” as fully as possible for whomever may be holding the space with you.

Finally, the group discussed some more practical challenges of facilitation, including what to do when participants, for various reasons, may

want to end a process; and how to explore progressive levels of risk with a group in a safe and constructive manner. Marcuse noted that one of the most difficult elements is balancing and refining the triple-edged action-response of arts facilitation: reading the room; analysis of what is going on; and planning and anticipating the next steps.

Arts and Health: New Strategies and Forms of Collaboration

Frédéric Julien

*Director of Research and Development,
CAPACOA, Gatineau, QC*

“Art has the power to inspire, the power to heal, the power to transform, to rehabilitate, to bear witness and to make us believe that there are better days ahead.”

**Michaëlle Jean, former
Governor General of Canada**



Arts and health and art for social change are distinct fields, but have much in common. Frédéric Julien led this session through an exploration of the many ways that community-engaged arts are working to provide diverse and improved health outcomes for members of society. After discussing various arts and health initiatives and programs (such as patients using theatre to convey their experiences of care to healthcare workers; dance programs with positive therapeutic results; and how art-making programs can be beneficial for people living with MS), the group launched into a riveting dialogue.

Discussing the programmatic examples led to a collective acknowledgement that the arts are central to a well-rounded definition of health that includes well-being. Some participants highlighted how it is one thing to target health, and quite another to target the social inequities at play in the dynamics of healthcare. A big question arose: how can art fundamentally change/address these dynamics? Some possible applications of ASC and art for health were raised speculatively, for example: enlisting high-functioning addicts as partners to aid in the opioid crisis; collaborating with researchers and healthcare responders; and advocating for harm-reduction through community art-making. Drawing upon his own collaborative experience and work with the health sector, David Diamond (Artistic and Managing Director of Vancouver-based Theatre for Living) emphasized the ways in which theatre could aid health practitioners in creating a less mechanized and depersonalized health system. Shira Taylor (founder and Director of the Sex Education Theatre group, SExT) put forward the notion that, on a fundamental level, arts and health and ASC cannot be separated, “especially in regard to adopting a holistic view on sexual health, one that incorporates social, religious and political dimensions into treatment and care.”

The practical and often problematic issue of funding for arts and health initiatives was explored through an

summaries continued

experiential exercise with group members acting as funders. A number of significant issues were highlighted, including whether or not to advocate for these joint initiatives on the provincial or national level; potential funding bodies (private and governmental) that might assist with sustainability; organizational alliances (for example, Arts Health

Network Canada perhaps joining forces with ICASC; and possible organizational structures (for instance, a “paid membership model”). The key question was raised:

“What can we do together so arts for health and social change are stronger?”

The group concluded, given the many roadblocks and challenges involved in sustaining a national Arts Health Network, that a regional or provincial approach might be more pragmatic. Specifically, this could be a social prescription approach in which general medical practitioners refer patients to arts health programs (and thus be compensated by the healthcare system). This could support access to arts-based approaches to health and well-being and become a financially and structurally viable avenue for this important work to continue into the future.



Artists as Catalysts: Risks and Possibilities for Conflict Transformation

Michelle LeBaron, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC

Elaine Forde, International Culture Arts Network Coordinator

The Playhouse, Derry-Londonderry, NIR

This session set out to explore the risks artists must navigate in facilitating community-engaged art in conflict situations. The group explored important issues, such as how artists can be sensitive toward painful moments in victims’ lives; and how to respectfully reflect differing perspectives and strive for reconciliation, instead of creating further division.

LeBaron and Forde grounded the discussion in two case studies from nationalist conflicts in Northern Ireland: the work of the Playhouse in Derry/Londonderry in their production of *The Troubles*, and theatre/dance performances in Dublin commemorating the centenary of the 1916 Easter Uprising.

Forde shared a video that documented, through layered personal narratives, the experiences of several people who were affected by the Northern Irish conflict. The video revealed the importance of sharing fraught experiences through art-making and art processes. To illustrate with one example: the exploration of conflict through theatre and art allowed a victim of a violent political act to better understand, and even sympathize with, the perpetrator's motive, opening a path to reconciliation and healing.

Key points of the ensuing discussion included the necessity of forming alliances, careful timing, and talking to a wide range of people when doing community-engaged art for social change work. Another discussion arose around the importance of being aware of different, often conflicting, accounts of political events, and the role community artmaking has in fostering this awareness. Art helps us recognize the complexity of historic and political events, encouraging communities to hold and explore a plurality of viewpoints.

Ineffable Knowledge: Creating and Disseminating Arts-based Health Research

Katherine Boydell

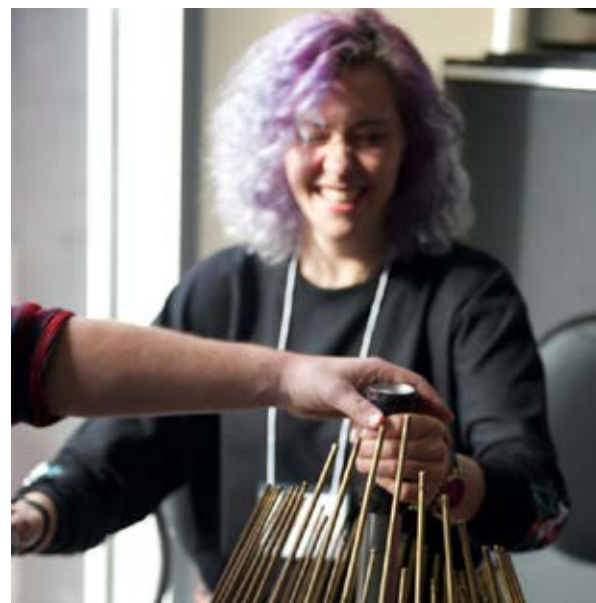
Co-Investigator, Knowledge Mobilization, ASC! Project

Black Dog Institute, University of New South Wales, Sydney, AU

There is a growing practice of incorporating the arts in various stages of research processes, including as a form of inquiry, analysis, and knowledge mobilization. In this session, Dr. Katherine Boydell began by sharing from her extensive experience using arts-based research methods in health, such as a recent initiative using dance to disseminate research on youth psychosis. She went on to discuss arts-based methods in healthcare more broadly, summarizing the findings of a national study on arts-based health research in Canada. Boydell highlighted some of the dominant issues facing this kind of work, such as a lack of theoretical underpinnings, and unique ethical challenges to do with ownership, authorship, and participation.

The session then entered into an in-depth group dialogue exploring some of the challenges and opportunities facing arts-based research. Two prominent themes in this conversation revolved around the issue of authorship, copyright, and anonymity in arts-based research and knowledge translation. Boydell highlighted the importance of transparency in ownership and intention when conducting arts-based research. In addition, the group discussed problems surrounding interpretative license and the possibility for misinterpretation: for example, how much should researchers leave up to interpretation when balancing the need to honour the integrity of research findings, as well as the participants' experiences? The group highlighted that the issue of *"Whose story is it?"* is always important to keep in mind, as it orients the researcher to possible problems of inequity and subject vulnerability.

The discussion eventually shifted to issues and questions on the merit and evaluation of arts-based work in general. What is good work aesthetically, and does it matter? It was stressed how participatory arts comprise not just process or product, but, more predominantly, community engagement; therefore, non-participants may not necessarily be as engaged or fully recognize the impacts of this type of work. Ultimately, the group was left with lingering questions, among



ACW 2017 Session Summaries continued

them: “Who are we doing this work for and what is its significance for communities, for researchers, for ourselves?” and “Who benefits from the project and who gets the most out of it?”

Working with Youth in Change Agendas

Shira Taylor, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON

Research Assistant, Knowledge Mobilization, ASC! Project

Founder and Director, SExT

A burst of music brought everyone to their feet at the start of this dynamic and insightful dialogue on empowering and mobilizing youth through arts-based social change initiatives. Fittingly, facilitator Shira Taylor opened the session by inviting Mary Getachew and Thuriga Balasubramaniam to share their experiences as participants in Taylor’s landmark initiative SExT, a workshop and performance program that engages youth on topics relating to sexual health and education.



After they shared their experiences, Taylor invited session participants to form discussion groups to share challenges (or horror stories!) from their experiences working with youth in community-engaged arts. Participants discussed issues around communication between youth and adults; appropriate versus inappropriate physical contact; how to name problematic behaviour and conduct without shaming participants; as well as logistical challenges such as permission slips, parental consent, etc.

Key takeaways included: the need to build and maintain trust and support with youth without a focus on rules and authority; the importance of teacher/facilitator honesty and authenticity in acknowledging that they, too, are lifelong learners and don’t have all the answers; and the need to scale risk, allowing and providing support for youth to try out their ideas and contribute equitably.

Taylor then invited groups to share what she calls “We are the Champions” moments, or success stories, from their experiences working with youth. A number of points were elaborated upon, including

the importance of recognizing and cherishing subtle triumphs or rewarding moments; the significant pedagogical merits of ceremony and ritual; the concordant recognition of *making* as a way of *knowing*; the power of transforming spaces (home and community-making); the power of youth to teach us; and the important and transformative power of simply listening.

They Come for the Hip Hop – But Stay for the Healing

Stephen “Buddha” Leafloor

Executive Director, BlueprintForLife and Blueprint Pathways, Stittsville, ON

Stephen “Buddha” Leafloor introduced the background and history of BlueprintForLife, an organization that “offers dynamic, culturally appropriate programs designed for First Nations youth that are founded on hip hop, rooted in traditional culture, and centred on community needs.” Buddha is a father, social worker, and has been a street dancer for over 40 years.

Leafloor emphasized how

“complex trauma requires diverse and complex intervention,” highlighting the elasticity of the human brain and the possibility of re-networking neural pathways through dance, arts, and storytelling. He spoke about the liberating aspects of dance, and its role in providing “permission for lifelong healing.”



For Leafloor, hip hop allows young people to bring their own distinct youth culture to the healing process, and thus represents an *embodied flexibility*. He also spoke about how hip hop aligns itself with healing quite naturally, as it was historically born out of communities that were expressing their despair and rage.

The term *trauma-informed care* is increasingly used today, but challenges remain as how best to implement this. Leafloor stressed the importance of building relationships of support and nourishment first, before work on complex trauma can begin.

This follows from the research and work of Alfred Adler who emphasized that change occurs not so much through what one does, but through the intensity of relationships between people. Hip hop culture presents such opportunities for intense, culturally-significant relationships for youth, and is an ideal platform for healing work.

Influential Writers and Thinkers: Theory and Practice

Jennifer Beth Spiegel, Concordia University, Montréal, QC

Post-Doctoral Research Associate, Social Circus Field Study, ASC! Project

How do influential writers and thinkers inform our practices? What are the connections to be made between community-based and university-based researchers and artist practitioners? Between theory and praxis?

This session began with a short presentation on some of the theoretical perspectives and frameworks that have influenced the ASC! research project. Afterward, Spiegel led an interactive theory jam activity where participants shared and discussed their thoughts and reflections on the principles and theories of change that influence their work. This activity inspired a fruitful discussion on the role of theory in change work. Some participants expressed their tension around the very notion and purpose of theory, which led to more discussion around the divide between artists/practitioners and theorists/academics.

The theory jam led to a better recognition of the multiple ways people draw upon theory and a deeper understanding of the diverse perspectives and ways of knowing that underpin art for social change work. All in all, participants left the session inspired and fortified with new conceptual resources and with a greater awareness of the interrelationships between theory and practice.

Music in Our Midst

Geneviève Cimon, Director of Music Education and Community Engagement, National Arts Centre, Ottawa, ON
Hussein Janmohamed, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON

Cimon and Janmohamed's session exploring how music can transform, connect, and validate us, opened with a collective music-making activity that embodied the dialogic potential of music. Janmohamed invited participants to "release their singing baggage" by conducting several renditions of "Row your Boat" with the group. Starting simply at first, the group gradually progressed to more complex variations in rhythm, melody, and arrangement by assigning different roles for smaller groups of people, adding non-verbal noises like clapping and stomping, and even incorporating gestures. The song eventually evolved to a point where each person in the room was doing something completely different from everyone else; however, although the complexity increased, the communal unity of the music shone through.

Janmohamed described music as a means to express identity in a pluralistic society, drawing on his own experiences as a Muslim in Canada. Cimon, Director of Music Education at Canada's National Arts Centre, described her work in rural and remote communities and highlighted her work with First Nations youth.

Music can transform, connect and validate us. Collective music making can be an embodied, creative process and a means to express, explore, and dialogue about identity in a pluralistic society.

Participants formed breakout groups to discuss the opportunities and challenges involved with such community-engaged music projects, and then came back together to discuss and compare their ideas. Important insights emerged from the explorative dialogue on topics such as the lasting legacy and long-term impact of these community musical projects. However, it was through the collective experience of "musicking" together in a shared space that the transformative potential of music as a vehicle for social change was felt and made clear.



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Rencontres / Encounters (R/E) “What Are We Not Talking About?”

Lisa Ndejuru, Concordia University, Montréal, QC

Research Assistant, Research Creation Field Study, ASC! Project

Farah Fancy, Co-founder, Le Groupe Herencias, Montréal, QC

Rencontres/Encounters (R/E) is an engaged, intercultural research-creation project, whose aim is to R/E-evaluate, R/E-envision and R/E-imagine performance as a means to build relationship in a range of community contexts. R/E believes that

another person’s perspective can be better understood through storytelling, dialogue, and performance.

In this interactive session, R/E asked, “What are the differences that matter?” After opening with a game of dance tag, Fancy and Ndejuru introduced Rencontres/Encounters (R/E) and its relation to the ASC! Project. Afterward, the group launched into a collective storytelling activity called “Doing Justice,” which encouraged engaged reflection and discussion on the process of listening and *doing justice* to another’s story. This led into a series of embodied activities that explored the concept of moving around and interacting in a shared space.



The activities reminded participants that these processes of engaged dialogue are ultimately embodied ways of knowing others and ourselves. The emphasis was on how these values must be lived and practiced and are not reducible to didactic explanation or operationalization.

Social Innovation, Reconciliation and the Arts

Stephen “Buddha” Leafloor

Executive Director, BlueprintForLife and Blueprint Pathways, Stittsville, ON

Danica Straith

Director of Venture and Strategic Partnerships

Ashoka Canada, Montréal, QC

What does social innovation mean to you? How can we take a social innovation lens — that is rooted in the arts — to approaching reconciliation?

These were two of the guiding questions in this dialogue session led by Danica Straith, Director of Venture and Strategic Partnerships at Ashoka Canada, and Stephen Leafloor, founder of BlueprintForLife.

Straith opened the session with a presentation and discussion on social innovation as a method for addressing deep-seated and systemic social challenges. She and Leafloor shared some of their own experiences in order to demonstrate their conceptions of social innovation.

Leafloor told how he started BlueprintForLife and the ways he had to continually adapt his mindset as his programs grew and developed.

He described his learning process using a cheese metaphor: as his experience grew, he found bigger and bigger holes that called him to constantly refine and adapt his programming. It was concluded that a social innovation mindset is primarily a way of thinking and visualizing change work.

Participants were then invited to share their own conceptions of social innovation, prompting a lively discussion. Participants expressed some of the tensions around the notion of social innovation, such as: how it can be co-opted by neoliberal policy in an attempt to monetize process and product and thus promote a product-oriented mindset; and how it can become a philanthropic buzz term. Some people proposed to use the term *change-making* rather than *social innovation*, in order to get around some of the challenges with the concept of social innovation.

Mapping and Sharing ASC/Community-Engaged Arts Practices Across Canada

Seanna Connell, Co-Founder and Executive Director, Artbridges, Toronto, ON

Linda Albright, Executive Director, Arts Network for Children and Youth (ANCY), Toronto, ON

In this session, Seanna Connell and Linda Albright shared highlights and findings from their organizations' work to open up a discussion about the landscape of community-engaged art in Canada.

ArtBridges is a Canada-wide hub for community-engaged arts aimed at facilitating access to arts and artmaking for Canadians, particularly for people living in remote, under-resourced, and underserved communities. Since its inception in 2008, ArtBridges has conducted over 200 site visits and connected with over 265 partner organizations, developing a growing online map of community-engaged initiatives in Canada.

Connell noted that there are regional differences in levels of community support and funding to facilitate community-engaged art initiatives. In particular, ArtBridges has found that artists and arts organizations in Northern Canada, especially Nunavut, lack the resources to keep up with a growing demand for community-engaged art programs. There is also a general sense of disconnection between community-engaged arts practitioners across Canada.

Established in 2001, ANCY is a national non-profit community arts service organization working to develop sustainable arts programming for children and youth in communities across Canada. Albright noted that there is a wide range of formats for arts programming, including conservatory-style arts education, experiential education (field programs), and arts-infused learning. Albright reported an increase in the creation of arts organizations as vehicles for social change and in outreach programs for northern, rural, and remote communities.

Despite rapid growth in this sector in recent years and the fact that it has its own practices, pedagogy, and scholarship, Albright noted that community-engaged arts for children and youth is still often not accepted as a professional field. One way of achieving this recognition would be to create and foster a broader social movement: initiating new practices, setting up pilot programs, conducting research and evaluation, and working to increase understanding of arts-based programming among communities, policymakers, and institutions.

Additionally, the group discussed the importance of cross-sector partnerships. The arts are bringing tangible benefits to the work of different sectors and can benefit from seeking cross-sector funding and partnering with practitioners in other fields. For instance, when working around issues of mental health, artist-facilitators may require professional training or partnerships with other practitioners in order to navigate the ethical challenges and complexities of the work.



Emerging and New Artists/Practitioners: A Dialogue

Nicole Armos, Research Assistant, Partnership Capacity Building, ASC! Project

Lauren Jerke, Research Assistant, Teaching and Learning, ASC! Project

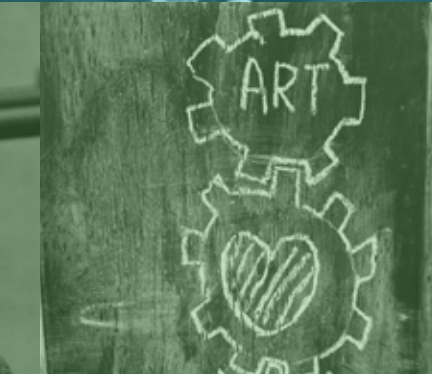
Lisa Ndejuru, Research Assistant, Research Creation Field Study, ASC! Project

Shira Taylor, Research Assistant, Knowledge Mobilization, ASC! Project

Emerging artists and practitioners infuse new life into the Canadian landscape of art for social change. Through a series of arts-based activities, four Research Assistants from the ASC! Project (Armos, Ndejuru, Taylor, and Jerke) opened a discussion on how established ASC organizations and changemakers can assist emerging artists as they explore the evolving terrain of community-engaged art for social change. The presenters shared how they experienced an evolution in their own selves as practitioners over the course of their involvement with the ASC! research project and their individual ASC initiatives: growing from the stage of “feeling like a baby” in the field, to charging forward, confident in their own ideas and art-making practices.

In particular, participants and presenters highlighted the need to develop greater connection, community, mentorship, and solidarity amongst ASC practitioners. The group challenged the typical dichotomy between old and young artist practitioners, emphasizing that age is not indicative of whether an artist is emerging or not. They suggested that artist practitioners continually emerge, evolve, and grow throughout their career. Further, they discussed how the field needs a sense of reciprocity between emerging and established practitioners with mutual care, support, and an open exchange of learning.

Participants brainstormed ideas to build better networks amongst practitioners, such as by creating online forums and networks where artists could be paired with other organizations and artists for mentorship, advice, or career opportunities.



Merging Storytelling and Mixed Media: Diverse Methods to Share Life Stories

Simone Hausknecht, Ph.D. Candidate

Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC

Weaving stories with images and sound, digital storytelling can help preserve and pass on personal and community histories and knowledge, explore stories of the self, while offering a powerful and accessible means of expression for people whose stories have been systematically marginalized.

Drawing from her experience facilitating digital storytelling with seniors, Simone Hausknecht led participants in this workshop through a variety of storytelling exercises to demonstrate the starting point of a digital storytelling process. Participants explored how question prompts such as “What does snow remind you of?” or “What song makes you cry?” can help tap into stories hidden in our embodied sense memory. Unique and unexpected question prompts such as these help the storyteller stay present in their narrative, instead of simply performing a story that they are accustomed to telling.

Storytelling in a group draws upon empathy, helps people connect meaningfully, and can further inspire new memories for individuals.

Hausknecht described how digital storytelling platforms, such as *WeVideo*, add tone and meaning to a story by layering images, music, narrative, and voice. The group also discussed ethical issues in digital storytelling, including copyright and the challenges of working with vulnerable and emotional stories (for example, artist facilitators may need to partner with counsellors).

Hausknecht recommended following the model developed by the Story Centre, which has outlined strong ethical practice in order to avoid causing harm.



Community Making Music: Music Making Community

*Jesse Stewart, Carleton University
Ottawa, ON*

In this hands-on session led by percussionist and music scholar, Jesse Stewart, participants explored music's capacity to foster social inclusion and community health. Combining traditional musical instruments with adaptive-use musical technologies, this workshop offered opportunities for participants of all abilities (musical, physical, cognitive, etc.) to interact with one another musically across various forms of difference and to discuss the roles that music has played (and might be able to play) in facilitating community and advocating for equality.

Instead of summarizing this session in depth, perhaps it would be more fitting and communicative to share a poem one of the participants was inspired to write immediately following:





ImPulse to Dance
Called to Move
Yes, And. Yes, And:

From the Throat
To the Feet
To the Hands
To the Heart.

Here We Are.
Here We're ART.

Lyrical Invitation
Musical Initiation
To Start

somewhere
A conversation
Constellation
Choreographing Transformation
Singing out into the Spirit
Weaving Stories
with Chords of Treasure
All is Welcome.
All are Welcome.

Learning how to Re-Create
Feelings of Sunlit Rain-drops
Flowing In and Out again

Open to the ocean
Wings Guiding the Way
Blessings of Discovery:
This is how We Play

By Naomi Tessler (November 4, 2017)



Thanks to everyone who contributed to and participated in the Art of Changing the World 2017!

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This event would not have been such a great success without you!

We also wish to give our thanks to the British Council in Canada for their funding contribution that made possible the participation of Indigenous youth and international guests.



Photo credits: Christine Germano, Kim Gilker & Corey Makoloski



Simon Fraser University (SFU) hosts the ASC! research project.
SFU is also a partner in ICASC along with Judith Marcuse Projects (JMP).

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