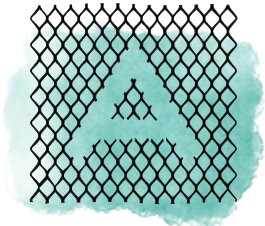


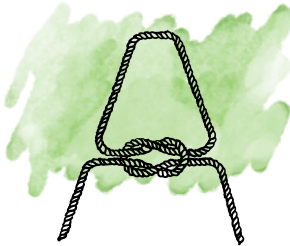
Teaching Artist Companion

AESTHETIC PERSPECTIVES

Attributes of Excellence in Arts for Change



disruption



commitment



communal meaning



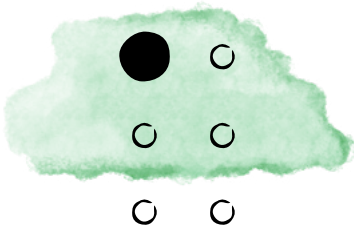
cultural integrity



risk-taking



emotional experience



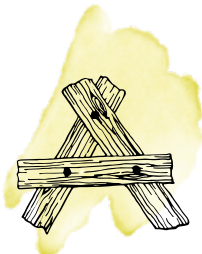
sensory experience



openness



coherence



resourcefulness



stickiness

The **Teaching Artist Companion** to *Aesthetic Perspectives: Attributes of Excellence in Arts for Change* is published by Americans for the Arts, with funding provided by the Nathan Cummings Foundation and Hemera Foundation. The guide is written by Dennie Palmer Wolf and Jeannette Rodríguez Pineda, supported by WolfBrown.



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WolfBrown helps funders, nonprofit institutions, and public agencies understand their potential, set priorities, and fulfill their promise. At the heart of our work is the belief that every human being has a unique creative voice of intrinsic worth and that every community has a responsibility to awaken, nurture, and sustain its cultural capital.

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Attributes of Excellence in Arts for Change



Commitment - Creative processes and products embody conviction to the cause espoused through the work.



Risk-taking - Creative work assumes risk by subverting dominant norms, values, narratives, standards, or aesthetics.



Communal Meaning - The creative work facilitates collective meaning that transcends individual perspective and experience.



Openness - The creative work deepens impact by remaining open, fluid, transparent, subject to influence, and able to hold contradiction.



Disruption - Art challenges what is by exposing what has been hidden, posing new ways of being, and modeling new forms of action.



Resourcefulness - Imaginative use of available resources drives artistic innovation and demonstrates responsible social and environmental practice.



Cultural Integrity - The creative work demonstrates integrity and ethical use of material with specific cultural origins and context.



Coherence - Strong ideas expressed with clarity advance both artistic and social purposes.



Emotional Experience - Arts for Change facilitates a productive movement between *heart* space—the emotional experience that art evokes—and the *head* space of civic or social issues.



Stickiness - The creative work achieves sustained resonance, impact, or value.



Sensory Experience - Vivid sensations deepen the experience of the creative work and heighten the power of its messages and the potential for change.

These attributes are further described online and are available for free download from the [Aesthetic Perspectives](#) webpage.

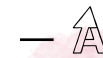
- **Pointed descriptions** relating each attribute to Arts for Change
- **Reflective questions** to guide consideration of the attribute in Arts for Change work
- **Illuminating examples** of creative work

Introduction:

Arts for Change as an Opportunity to Learn

By Dennie Palmer Wolf and Jeannette Rodríguez Pineda

Welcome! The *Teaching Artist Companion* guide builds upon **Aesthetic Perspectives: Attributes of Excellence in Arts for Change**, a framework that aims to enhance understanding, description, and evaluation of Arts for Change. Aesthetic Perspectives describes 11 attributes—observed in artistic processes and products—that heighten the potency and effectiveness of Arts for Change in contributing to social and civic outcomes. The framework was developed by artists and allied funders and evaluators who participated in the 2014–2015 Evaluation Learning Lab led by Animating Democracy, a program of Americans for the Arts.



“Arts for Change,” as described in the Aesthetic Perspectives framework, is an umbrella term that refers to artistic and cultural processes, products, and practices geared to progressive and positive change including justice, civic engagement, and community development.

Although primarily for teaching artists who work with youth in K–12 programs in and out of school and the institutional leaders who support their work, we believe the guide also has implications for funders, researchers, evaluators, and policy makers in the field of creative youth development. The guide addresses how teaching and learning change when teaching artists engage young people in conversations, art-making practices, and reflection informed by the values and perspectives of Arts for Change. It also shares how teaching artists—and the programs and institutions that support them—embody and activate the values in the Aesthetic Perspectives framework. Our aim is twofold: 1) to stimulate discussion about what makes Arts for Change work effective and what conditions allow it to flourish, and 2) to enrich the framework through a focus on teaching artists and their work with youth.

What Does the Aesthetic Perspectives Framework Address?

The Aesthetic Perspectives framework reexamines how to recognize what’s good/beautiful/true/worthy in art. It proposes that when artists examine civic and social issues, stakeholders—artists, cultural leaders and institutions, community partners, educators, and evaluators—need to

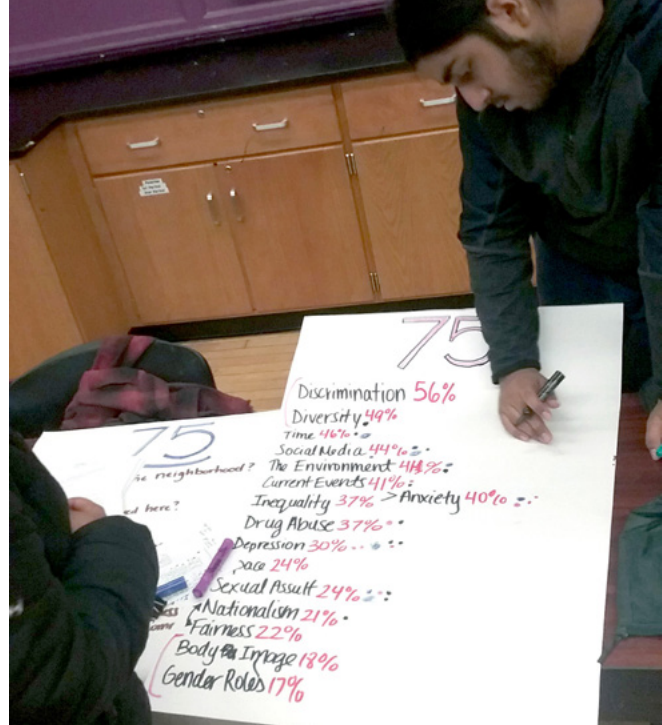
- expand the criteria by which such work is understood and assessed;
- embrace different artistic and cultural practices that break down the exclusivity and dominance of established canons; and
- challenge the assumption that artistic quality is compromised by social intent, as if aesthetic value is dulled or lost when works embrace social change.

You can recognize the qualities and impacts that are core to effective Arts for Change work, as well as the practices needed to support such work, by referring to the 11 aesthetic attributes on the facing page. Throughout this guide, these attributes provide a lens to understand what is distinctive about Arts for Change as an approach to teaching and learning.

Why Teaching Artists are Vital for Change

"The arts, it has been said, cannot change the world, but they may change human beings who might change the world."

Maxine Greene, Author, Social Activist, Teacher



Students vote on the issues they want to pursue in their artmaking. Photo by Douglas Paulson.

Teaching artists are explorers whose work can spread the values and strategies of Arts for Change across the many institutions in which they work and engage the next generation in thinking about the arts as a way to ask questions and imagine new possibilities. Teaching artists...

- explore the practice and the social use of the arts in ways that can enrich the school curriculum.
- advance equity in access to arts learning. Their in- and out-of-school programming, whether free or low cost, can help to equalize access to arts learning in a country where that important opportunity is highly correlated with family income and zip code.¹
- are often individuals from different cultures, ethnicities, cultural traditions, language groups, and ages, who can expand young people's conceptions of who makes art and whose art matters.
- inaugurate a next generation of creators and audiences into understanding how powerful the arts can be in articulating issues of social justice, and how moving artistic production becomes when it embraces the issues that shape human lives.
- create situations where young people can evolve into citizens who invest in the world around them and develop higher levels of volunteerism and participation in public life (e.g., voting, belonging to civic organizations, or having and using a library card).²
- spread practices to the many programs in which they work, across semesters and years. Like bees and wild birds, they can carry and plant the seeds of Arts for Change across institutions.

As professionals working with young people to raise issues, ask questions, and push boundaries through their art, teaching artists' own strategies and beliefs are often challenged. They are explorers mapping new territories in the spaces where they work and *creative engineers*³ who can teach youth how to build new worlds.

1. Kristen Engebretsen, ed., *Arts Education Navigator: Facts & Figures* (Washington, DC: Americans for the Arts, 2013). Accessed January 29, 2019. <https://www.miarted.org/pdf/AFTA-Arts-Education-Navigator-Facts-Figures.pdf>

2. James Catterall, *Doing Well and Doing Good by Doing Art: The Effects of Education in the Visual and Performing Arts on the Achievements and Values of Young Adults* (Los Angeles/London: Imagination Group/I-Group Books, 2009).

3. Teaching artist and author Javan Howard coined this phrase.

How This Guide Can Help Teaching Artists and Their Supporters

The examples of practice in this guide and the attributes that are explained in the Aesthetic Perspectives framework offer resources that can inform and strengthen Arts for Change work with young people.

If you are a current or prospective teaching artist, the guide and framework ...

- demonstrate the varied practices, skills, and knowledge that highly effective Arts for Change teaching demands (e.g., cultural competencies, responsive teaching strategies, knowledge of the arts and culture of site communities, and familiarity with arts and culture outside the dominant social and historical narratives).
- suggest how the values behind Arts for Change can be expressed through each choice that a teaching artist makes (e.g., materials, examples, discussions, or field trips).
- exemplify strategies for creative youth development that acknowledge students' diverse identities by focusing on creative work from different cultures, community-based and socially engaged artistic practices, and contemporary art forms and approaches that youth bring to the work.
- provide shared language for describing this work that helps others who may be new to its values and strategies to understand and assess it fully and fairly.

If you are a program designer or institutional leader who employs teaching artists, the guide and framework ...

- convey competencies you should look for when hiring teaching artists.
- elevate practices you should observe and consider when training or supervising teaching artists at work.
- offer language to use in formulating candid and explicit feedback to your teaching artists.
- expand areas in which you should be providing or supporting professional development for your teaching artists.
- provide an expanded set of qualities of well-designed and implemented Arts for Change projects and artworks for use in program design, implementation, and evaluation.

If you offer credentials or professional development for future or current teaching artists, the guide and framework ...

- suggest expanded competencies your programs should address and a framework for providing focused feedback to your teaching candidates to strengthen their practices.
- help to articulate a clear rationale for placing teaching artist candidates in practicums with organizations and with artists conducting strong Arts for Change work, as well as criteria by which to assess such practicum settings.

VALUE THE FEELING & EXPERIENCE OVER THE
KNOWLEDGE OF ART

DECENTRALIZE THE SYSTEM OF LEARNING

EMBRACE COLLECTIVE & INDIVIDUAL IDENTITIES

HONOR THE PAST & INFORM THE PRESENT

ENGAGE IN MULTIPLE WAYS OF EXPRESSION

RADICALLY LISTEN & RESPOND

CHALLENGE TRADITIONAL EURO-CENTRIC ART

EMPATHY, EMPATHY, EMPATHY

ELEVATE IMMIGRANT & POC VOICE

RESPECT OUR HOOD NARRATIVE

EXPERIMENT, PLAY, EXPLORE

COLLABORATE FOR THE WE

On the Ground: The Aesthetic Attributes in Teaching Artists' Work

It is in day-to-day applications that teaching artists evolve their practices in Arts for Change. In this section, multiple teaching artists working in New York City share examples of how they engage youth, and reflect on how their work embodies Arts for Change. While these examples focus on the visual arts in an urban setting, these same practices can be and are employed by artists in the fields of music, dance, theater, and film in communities of all sizes, as demonstrated in the additional examples shared throughout.

(See also the [Aesthetic Perspectives Performing Artist Companion](#).)

Facing page: One teaching artist's manifesto for doing the work of Arts for Change. Drawn and written by Jeannette Rodríguez Pineda.

The Four Examples

- A game design project featuring *cultural integrity* and *communal meaning*
- A community art hack that teaches young people to value and build on their *sensory experience* and *openness* to new ideas
- An outdoor sculpture project in which the use of unexpected materials insists on *risk-taking* and *resourcefulness*, as well as some surprising ideas about what an exhibit can be
- Sustained independent projects that support youth as they translate their *emotional experience* to broader themes and express their *commitment* powerfully and safely

The Four Aspects

- **Arts for Change intent.** What did the teaching artist seek to impact using arts learning: youth development; community, civic, and social concerns; or the access young people have to all kinds of arts and culture? In each example, specific aesthetic attributes stand out, though often many of the attributes are present.
- **On-the-ground practice.** A detailed description shares context, specific strategies, aesthetic attributes in play, and the impact of the work on teaching artists, youth, or program design.
- **Questions for practice and broader questions for the field.** The initial questions are ones that teaching artists and program and institutional leaders should ask in order to inform their Arts for Change work with young people and develop effective practices and supports. The questions that follow alert readers to cultural and institutional choices that either support or limit what teaching artists are able to accomplish.
- **Elsewhere.** A short example from another community and program where the particular attributes and practices flourish.

Games of Life



**Communal
Meaning**



**Cultural
Integrity**



Arts for Change Intent

Karl Orozco uses games to build *communal meaning* by evoking shared childhood memories of play, risk, winning, and losing. He explores the *cultural integrity* and many layers of meaning in *Tripa Cucha*, a traditional game from El Salvador, and invites his students to create their own equally powerful games about life circumstances.

"I want to work with young people to change their ideas about what counts as art and their sense of whether they have the right and the resources to be artists. Games are universal symbols of how all humans deal with life; they have as many layers as any painting. So, I use games to empower young people to recognize that their experiences and memories can be the raw materials of art."

Karl Orozco, Artist, Educator with Queens Museum, Whitney Museum of American Art, and City Lore

On-the-Ground Practice

Through the Queens Museum⁴, Orozco offers a workshop on games in the lives of youth. He asks his students about the games they remember and still play (e.g., Chutes and Ladders, Pokémon, or Monopoly) and has them think about how games stylize the ups and downs of life. As a class, they discuss the many levels on which games operate: fun, life lessons, and commentary or critique. To enrich this discussion, Orozco shows the work of Guadalupe Maravilla, a contemporary Salvadoran artist who was part of the first wave of children escaping from the civil war in the 1980s. Together the class looks at Maravilla's *Requiem for My Border Crossing*, a suite of drawings that portrays his experience of escape, migration, loss, and gain. The drawings build on a game Maravilla played as a child, *Tripa Cucha*, in which two players create increasingly complex pathways in order to connect the numerals one through ten, without ever crossing a line. The class listens to a [video](#) of Maravilla talking about how he played *Tripa Cucha* with other people who, like himself, journeyed seeking asylum. Using those twisting paths, Maravilla created mythic landscapes populated with imagery taken from a 16th century indigenous manuscript showing the territories he traveled four centuries later as an eight-year-old immigrant. Orozco and the students talk about the paths each of their families traveled to end up in their Queens neighborhoods. Using this enriched understanding of the meanings and sources of games, students develop their own games that portray their lives as young people negotiating the paths, tasks, and duties on their way to adulthood. Orozco circulates throughout the studio, asking questions that touch on the emerging games as drawings (line quality and direction, the total pattern, the interplay between details and overall design) and what the games say about the daily journeys of these young adolescents.

4. The Queens Museum works with schools and community organizations to offer after-school and summer intensive arts learning programs for middle school students throughout the borough of Queens, supported by the Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation.



Facing page: Guadalupe Maravilla's work is based on Tripa Cucha games and indigenous imagery. Photo courtesy Guadalupe Maravilla.

Left: Students explored the graphic designs created in playing Tripa Cucha. Photo by Karl Orozco.

Right: Orchestra Rouh in session. Photo by Rosalee Ward.

Questions for Practice

How do teaching artists

- learn about traditions, artists, and cultural practices outside the Western traditions that are often the backbone of their training?
- build on the traditions of the youth and the communities where they teach, especially if they are new to these communities and traditions?
- listen to and learn from contemporary genres and practices that young people know and love?
- introduce youth to all kinds of art worlds (e.g., museums, public spaces, and even arcades), as well as traditional practices (e.g., bakeries, tailor shops, and congregations)?

How do those who support teaching artists

- give teaching artists paid time to learn the cultural and artistic traditions of the communities in which they work?
- ensure that the staff who observe and respond to teaching artists are themselves culturally aware and competent?
- ensure professional development in culturally responsive teaching by building it into their organization's budget, staffing, and partnerships?

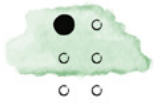
Cultural Integrity Elsewhere

Kalamazoo, Michigan, welcomes large numbers of refugee families, many who come bringing centuries-old musical traditions. Kalamazoo Kids in Tune, a youth program of the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, supports Orchestra Rouh, an after-school ensemble where teaching artists—including Project Director Ahmed Tofiq, who grew up playing both traditional Middle Eastern and Western music in Iraqi Kurdistan—invite both newcomers and US youth to explore how these two musical traditions can enrich one another.

Visit :

[KalamazooSymphony.com/education-community/community-partnerships/orchestra-rouh](https://www.kalamazooSymphony.com/education-community/community-partnerships/orchestra-rouh)

Community Art Hack



**Sensory
Experience**



Openness



Arts for Change Intent

“Being alive to everyday experience is the first art form. So, when I work with young people, I want to get them to use their immediate sensory experience as the foundation for their imaginations. I want students to open up their perceptions of a location that they might once have seen as noisy, crowded, smelly, or ordinary. Never mind what other people say about urban neighborhoods like Queens, I want them to hear the symphony that is happening on their own city block—the guy yelling in front of the cell phone store, kids playing, and the subway bell overhead. Life is an installation.... After the old Corona Plaza that I knew growing up was renovated into a community art space with the help of the Queens Museum and the city, I thought, ‘Why not teach young people to assume that power by reimagining their neighborhoods for themselves in the way that they use and mark and document the space?’ So, for a year we interviewed, recorded sounds, and photographed. It is how they are going to learn to care about what happens to where they live—whether there are places for old people to sit, whether it’s safe, or who can afford to go on living and working here.”

Jeannette Rodríguez Pineda, Photographer, Mixed Media Artist, and Educator with the Queens Museum, Whitney Museum of American Art, and Studio Museum of Harlem

On-the-Ground Practice

Jeannette Rodríguez Pineda met with groups of middle-school students for 12 weeks in an after-school arts program⁵ in the Corona neighborhood, learning to hear, see, smell, touch, and taste all over again. Each week they travelled through Corona Plaza using a different sense, recording what they noticed in a personal journal, and learning to use audio and visual recordings to capture what they experienced. At the same time, Rodríguez Pineda asked the students to consider how they would collect, represent, and share what they learned about the lives of others. Throughout the process, they discussed the ethics of art-making: how to interview respectfully, ask permission to take photos, represent other people’s lives, offer to give people a copy of their images, and invite them to come and see the exhibition. As one student pointed out, “You can’t just go in and grab what you see; you have to give back.”

In their final exhibition, students invented ways to immerse viewers in what was beautiful and surprising about Corona Plaza. They created slide shows that revealed the many different plazas each of them had uncovered: from the surprising number of trees and green spaces to the ways in which children’s movements transform the plaza into a playground. They installed a listening station where people could close their eyes and hear the music of peoples’ comings and goings and the sounds of traffic, punctuated by the bell of the 7 train overhead.



Facing page: Students learning to capture neighborhood scenes.

Left: Documentary photography engages young people in exploring through their senses.

Above: A student documents the fruits and vegetable displays throughout Corona Plaza.

Photos by Jeannette Rodríguez Pineda.

Questions for Practice

How do teaching artists

- teach students to observe through more than sight and sound?
- use young people's sensory experiences to build their capacity to experience different perspectives and build empathy for the lives of others?
- set up a community-based arts project in ways that respect the values and traditions of that community?
- teach young people the respect and ethics of working in and learning from the communities that host or fuel their work?
- engage young people in design thinking processes that will push them to evolve or try out their ideas as they gather more information?

How do those who support teaching artists

- establish relationships with community partners and residents so that young people are welcome as documenters, interviewers, and artists?
- build the necessary supports (transportation, permissions, and chaperones) needed so that young people can experience the power of Arts for Change in their neighborhoods?
- ensure that there are subsequent opportunities (courses, internships, or paid work) where youth can build on the skills they acquire in such field experiences?

Openness Elsewhere

Teaching artist Nina Devenney works at the Sweetland School in the rural community of Hope, Maine, supported by fellow artist Hannah Kuh and Principal Lindsay Pinchbeck. Woven into its arts curriculum is a partnership with Coastal Opportunities, an organization that assists adults with disabilities to become fully participating members of their local communities. The Sweetland students and visiting adults work side by side in studio sessions every other week on projects that draw on the talents of all participants. As Devenney observes, “working with their Coastal partners, children lose their critical edge, they learn to pour themselves into the work.”

Unusual Ways of Working



Risk-taking



Resourcefulness



Arts for Change Intent

"I have worked in settings like refugee camps where people invent out of found and discarded materials that are nothing like the watercolor paper or the full sets of illustration markers you find in art classes. It's taught me to respect the kind of imagination that can see plastic sheeting or discarded lumber as the makings of an inflatable sculpture. I want the young people I work with to develop that same kind of imaginative risk-taking. I want them to be resourceful—ready to explore spontaneous occasions, unconventional approaches, and unorthodox materials that expand their understanding of who can be an artist, what constitutes artistic processes, and whether creativity is ever an individual act."

**Douglas Paulson, Artist and Educator,
Parsons School of Design, Socrates Sculpture
Park, and the Queens Museum**

Above: Young people's impromptu sculpture parade through Socrates Sculpture Park. Photo by Douglas Paulson.

On-the-Ground Practice

Douglas Paulson includes elements of play and experimentation in his residencies and after-school classes, expanding his students' definition of artistry to more than individual accomplishment. He uses art-making to demonstrate how creativity is a social practice that thrives on the company and inspiration of others, as well as one that can be a strategy for building a sustainable world.

Paulson's commitment to risk-taking and resourcefulness continues into his work at Socrates Sculpture Park, an outdoor installation of contemporary work along the banks of the East River. There he and his students tour the monumental works on display and explore how the sculptures are placed in the park and how they invite visitors to understand the importance of shared green spaces in urban settings. Using recycled materials and basic equipment, Paulson has his students build a collaborative sculpture on the giant scale of the other works throughout the park. For hours, students experiment with recycled goods, discovering new possibilities for materials that they previously would have thought of as junk. On one visit, the result was a huge, jointed, transparent sculpture, inflated and animated with an industrial fan. In the same spirit of creative reuse, the students invented an *insta-exhibition* by parading the structure around the park in a wagon for a midday audience of dog walkers, seniors, caregivers, and babies in strollers. The impromptu audience applauded and photographed the moment, perhaps upending everyone's long-held definitions of an art exhibition.



“A good art exhibition is a lesson in seeing to those who need or want one, and a session of visual pleasure and excitement to those who don’t need anything—I mean rich in spirit. Grunts, sighs, shouts, laughter, and imprecations ought to be heard in a museum room.”

Walker Evans, Photographer and Photojournalist

Questions for Practice

How do teaching artists

- create learning environments where young artists learn to take risks on behalf of their artistic work?
- introduce young people to a more social view of creativity, alerting them to the ways in which their openness and curiosity can support and inform the work of others?
- work with youth to see their artwork as part of a larger movement to recycle, reuse, and repurpose materials as part of building a sustainable future?

How do those who support teaching artists

- train them to be leaders who can lead responsible and creative risk-taking projects with young people? (Imagine teaching artists trained to lead youth teams working as paid designers and testers for adventure playgrounds, or sculptors enriching community gardens.)
- support interdisciplinary programs where the arts and sciences come together to help students think about repurposing, redesigning, and recycling as vital investments in the future?
- design exhibitions that showcase young people as a community’s most valuable renewable resource, one that is well worth investment?

Risk-taking Elsewhere

Community MusicWorks (CMW) in the South Side and West End neighborhoods of Providence, Rhode Island, uses musical learning and performance to build a cohesive urban community by transforming the lives of children, families, and musicians. In order to develop youth voice and agency, CMW enriches traditional lessons and performances of classical music with opportunities for improvisation and composition. Cellist and teaching artist Laura Cetilia led a series of contemporary music performances in which even the youngest players participated in pieces that called on them to step up and invent in collaboration with their peers. In performing the contemporary piece “Cratères d’impact” by Andre Cormier, each player listened intently, found an opening, and improvised a sustained long tone as a soundscape for their crater before merging back into the larger sweep of the piece—not so different from being brave enough to speak up in a public meeting or step out to vote.

Independent Projects



Emotional Experience



Commitment

Arts for Change Intent

As part of the Queens Museum's Summer Youth Arts project, teaching artists Nora Rodriguez, Jeannette Rodriguez Pineda, and Sharmin Hossain involved young people in six-week long independent studio projects. The students spent the second half of their projects developing a personal question drawn from their *emotional experiences* and an artistic language that explored that question. The youth learned how to translate their questions into materials, images, and texts, and then into compelling artwork. In doing so, they learned how to express the *commitment* they felt to the issue they chose and how their artwork might become action beyond the studio. As a part of this process, students shared their beliefs and questions with their peers—many of whom are learning how to be curious and respectful of ideas different from their own.



On-the-Ground Practice

One of the students involved in the program chose to think through their (the student's preferred pronoun) strong feelings about traditional conceptions of binary gender identities. Over the course of several weeks—with daily conversations—they sketched, drafted, and completed a series of posters that combined language, images, and symbols drawn from the binary format of computer code to protest the distorting and limiting categorization of individuals into one of two strictly separate and immutable genders. They also researched, designed, and printed a pamphlet, "Everything you need to know about nonbinarism," in which they collected thought-provoking quotes about gender. They distributed the pamphlet at the final student exhibition in hope that it would spark discussion during and even after viewing.

Each morning in their studio space, the student found Post-it Notes from the teaching artists with comments and questions designed to move the work forward: Do [the posters] share a visual language? Can you make the poem a part of the whole? How can the choices you make (materials, symbols, words) motivate people to think and act differently? How is your own thinking about gender changing as you work?

"I am nonbinary and I am real: I wanted to do a multimedia project explaining nonbinary and gender binary.... I want [viewers] to learn things they may not have known before, but especially I want viewers to read my little zines.... I want my nonbinary people to look at my work with joy and hope."

Student artist statement

Questions for Practice

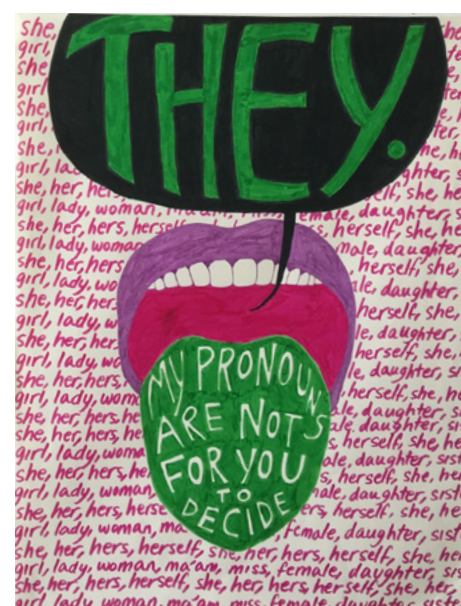
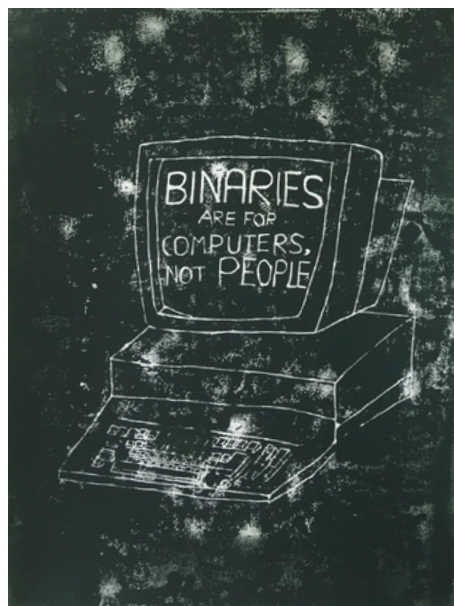
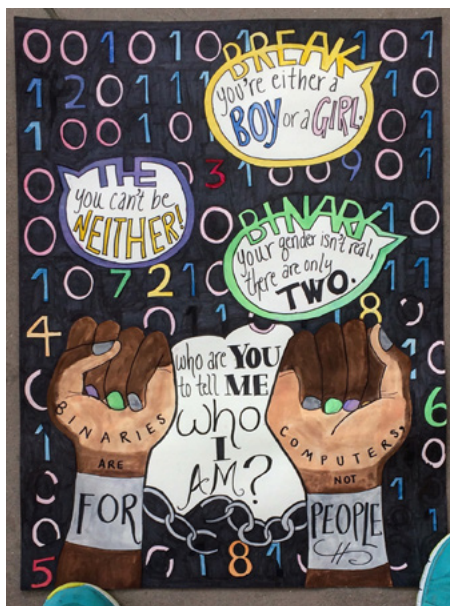
How do teaching artists

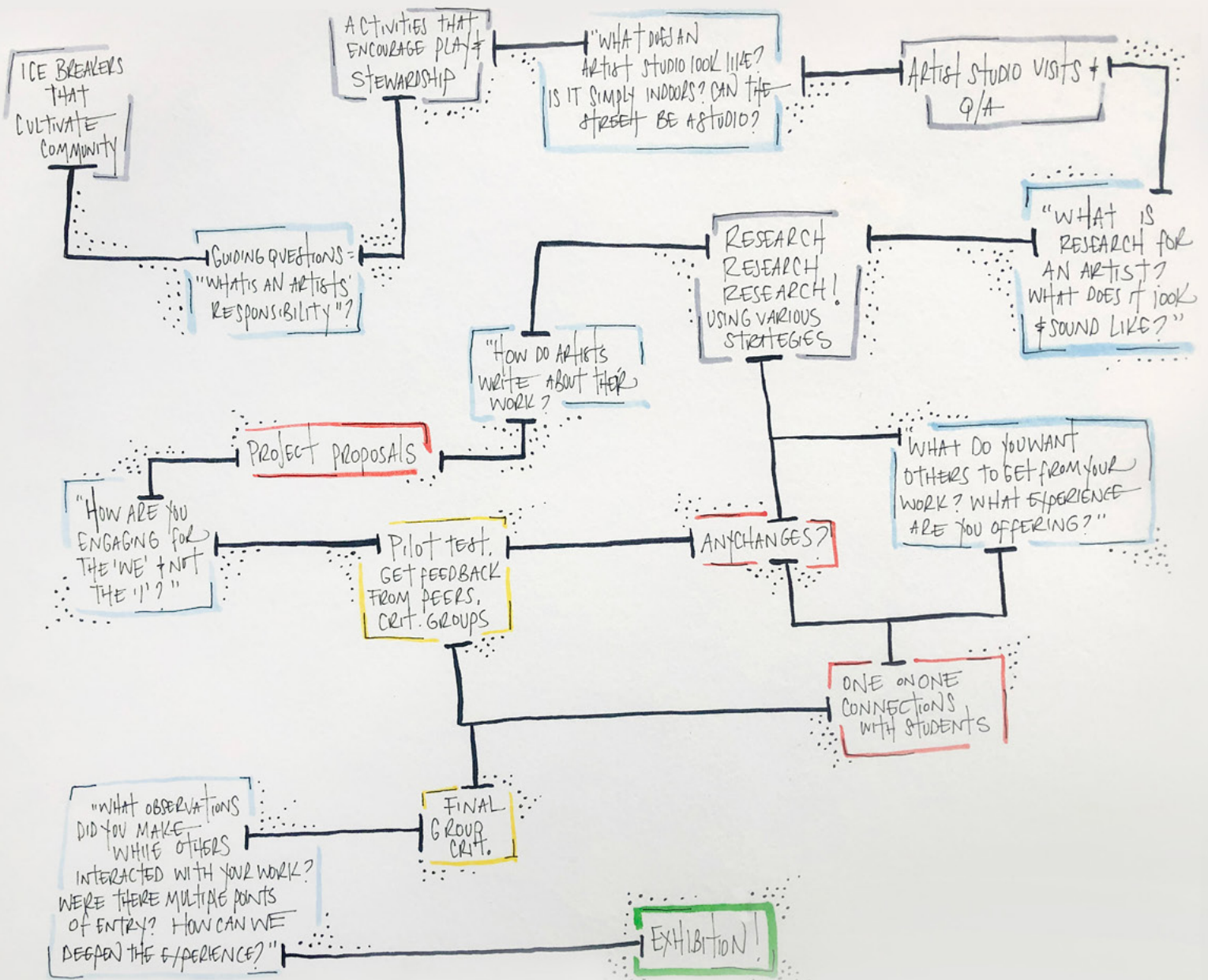
- help young people explore art's capacity to express and evoke strong emotions?
- help students think about the range of potential emotional responses that their creative work may evoke and how to use that power responsibly?
- attend to students' social and emotional experiences as they do committed and revealing work?
- foster and protect a studio climate that is tolerant and free of harassment or ridicule?
- include time for sustained research and reflection to help young artists develop personal positions, language, and imagery that reflects their commitments?
- respect community standards and families' values, even as they help students to articulate their beliefs?
- respond to student work in ways that promote continuous critical and artistic thinking?
- design new forms of student exhibitions that invite visitors to appreciate the ideas and point of view behind youth artworks?

How do those who support teaching artists

- create opportunities for teaching artists-in-training to learn the listening and discussion skills needed to help young people identify and explore the issues they care about?
- hire and pay experienced teaching artists to mentor younger colleagues in conducting this kind of challenging work?
- acknowledge that mentorship is best thought of as a two-way street, one that gives experienced teaching artists a chance to work with younger colleagues, thereby refreshing their own practices and exposing them to new issues that affect the lives of contemporary youth?
- support teaching artists if and when families or other members of the community question working with young people in such a frank way?
- support exhibitions of student work in prominent spaces, for multiple weeks, with acknowledgement in calendars and websites, in order to alert a wider public to a rising generation of potential artists?

Zines (facing page) and posters (below) that resulted from a student's committed exploration of the limits of binary conceptions of sexuality and gender. Photos by Jeannette Rodríguez Pineda.





Reflecting the process for the Queens Museum's Summer Youth Arts independent projects (previous page), this diagram illustrates an interconnected web of prompts and actions that teaching artists might take in conceiving, testing, and implementing committed Arts for Change work. Created by Jeannette Rodríguez Pineda.

A Wider Ecology of Teaching Artistry and Arts for Change

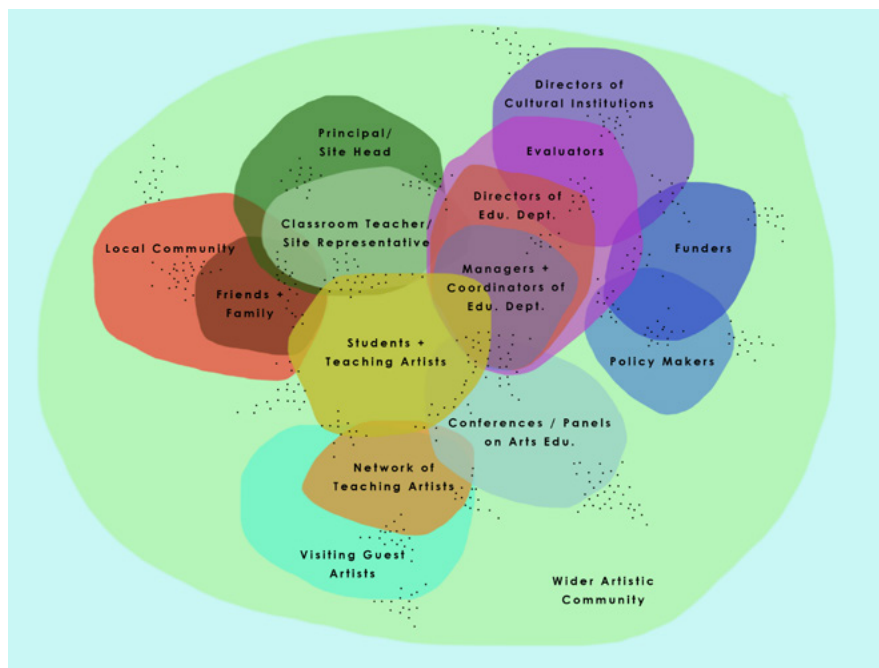
The work of teaching artists—who are agents of Arts for Change—is far from an independent venture. The quality of the work is amplified, or constrained, by organizational priorities and choices (e.g., program content, hiring practices, and community partnerships) and conditions (e.g., wages, benefits, professional learning opportunities, and feedback). If independent teaching artists are to work effectively in Arts for Change, those same aesthetic attributes that guide their work on the ground need to be echoed and endorsed by their host programs and sites. As author James Baldwin insisted: “Imagination creates the situation, and then, the situation creates imagination.”

Right: The wider ecology that supports teaching artists includes students, programs in which teaching artists work, and the world of funders, researchers, evaluators, and policy makers. Image by Jeannette Rodríguez Pineda.

In the following pages, we explore three examples that demonstrate how organizations can support Arts for Change.

- A children’s museum where design and program practices build social transformation and *disrupt* barriers, while supporting teaching artists to do the same
- A program involving youth in investigating community needs in ways that result in commanding murals that build enduring *communal meaning* and *stickiness*
- A museum evaluation project designed to *open up* the criteria for assessing Arts for Change work by integrating the voices of teaching artists and youth into the process

Each of these examples also contains a brief illustration that shows how the attributes of Arts for Change practices can animate the work of teaching artists in different artistic disciplines in other sizes and types of communities. The examples, in addition to posing Questions for Practice for teaching artists and program designers and leaders, also suggest Broader Questions for the Field.



Sugar Hill Children's Museum of Art & Storytelling

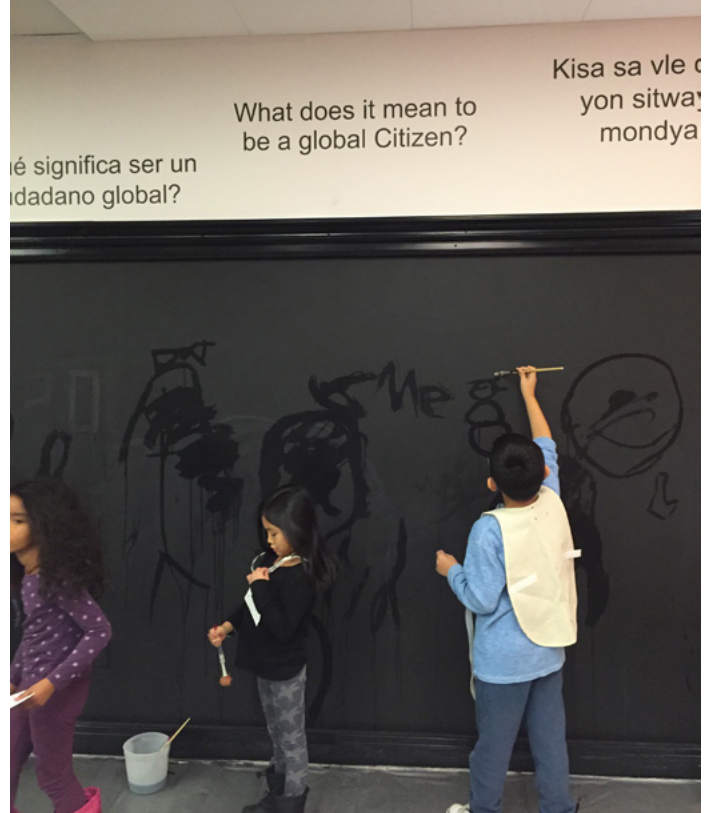


Disruption

Arts for Change Intent

"We focus on social transformation in every choice we make at Sugar Hill. Our parent organization, Broadway Housing Communities, disrupts stereotypes about what affordable public housing is. Our building in Harlem, the Sugar Hill Project, was designed by architect David Adjaye as a combination of permanent housing, preschool education, and access to the arts for all via a community art gallery and a bottom floor and outdoor space devoted to the Sugar Hill Children's Museum of Art & Storytelling. The building is an oasis of stability, learning, and imagination that supports cultural access and equity for children and families placed at risk by poverty. Every day the building and the programs it hosts challenge expectations about who can live in a 'museum tower,' what museum programs should feature, and how young children can start to think about why art matters."

Jennifer Ifil-Ryan, Deputy Director and Director of Creative Engagement, Sugar Hill Children's Museum of Art & Storytelling



"At Sugar Hill, what stood out is how we disrupted the idea that museums are only for showing artists' creativity. All our choices were about young people accessing their own creativity and decision-making. We hung work at 36 inches with simple, highly graphic text that was just as thoughtful as any adult text. We laid down a path of really textured tape to help kids look closely but stand back from the works. Right across from the exhibition is walk-in workshop space to try out ideas. Every choice was there to say, 'Life is going to push you around, but you can make decisions, you can choose to use your creative powers.' A blighted neighborhood is not broken windows or empty storefronts, it's where people have been robbed of that basic human confidence."

Alex Casso, Teaching Artist, and former Facilities and Exhibitions Manager, Sugar Hill Children's Museum of Art & Storytelling

Facing page: Exhibits can be designed specifically to engage children. Photo by Broadway Housing Communities.

On-the-Ground Practice

The spaces, programming, and institutional practices within the Sugar Hill Children's Museum of Art & Storytelling reflect its aim to provide cultural access to and foster participation by those living in the Sugar Hill Project. The performance space is a tiered semi-circular well designed to maximize exchange between performers and audiences. Program design offers invitations to develop human attributes like curiosity, empathy, and compassion. In one exhibition, the museum, which regularly features the work of creative individuals with roots in Harlem, featured Faith Ringgold's book illustrations and sculptures, reflecting how she used her imagination to transform her everyday circumstances. In the nearby Art Labs, children and families could do the same. In this spirit, the museum's storytelling hour focused on *Virtuous Journeys*, where teaching artists invited families to share tales of what it took for them to come to the US or to complete other personal journeys. In response, teaching artists convened conversations around narratives of hardship, choice, perseverance, loss, and gain, disrupting the idea that young children can only handle fairy tales and nursery rhymes. Throughout the museum, the staff for the exhibit combined experienced teaching artists and community members, working side by side, to bring artistry, local knowledge, and community connections together.

Disruption Elsewhere

In Seattle, the teaching artists at Arts Corps' Creative Schools Initiative are disrupting the idea of who can be an artist. As part of an arts-integrated program, they teach arts skills along with a set of learner behaviors like agency and productive persistence. The result is a much wider range of students, including those with special needs, who create and perform at high levels.

Questions for Practice

How do teaching artists

- help to create physical spaces that invite young people's agency and decision-making?
- learn from other staff members whose expertise is about family and community engagement, and respect and use that knowledge?

How do program designers and leaders

- rethink what it means to have thoroughgoing democratic practices? For instance, how do institutions balance the need for earned income without limiting who can attend, or staff members' need for regular hours with the schedules of working families?
- design physical spaces that use the arts to foster the habits of democratic interaction, like discussion, empathic listening, and collaboration? Do they regularly evaluate if those spaces work to promote the equitable and open opportunities they were meant to create?
- seek out and hire staff from the communities that host their programs even when those communities may have a history of under-education and unskilled employment?
- create professional learning opportunities that integrate artistic and community staff into a multiexpertise team?

Broader Questions for the Field

- Who will take responsibility for training leaders—everyone from architects to directors—who can design and sustain arts programs where the core values focus on social transformation?
- How do communities expand the definition of public housing to include access to the arts and people who do creative work?

Groundswell Mural Project



Communal Meaning



Arts for Change Intent

A civil society requires equitable participation. The arts can be a venue for developing the vital skills of discussion, taking a position, and speaking up—but *only* if they are deliberately structured to do so. Young people involved with Groundswell become *artists*—visual artists who create full-scale public murals that draw on and expand *communal meanings* important for many urban neighborhoods.

“If we are going to make real change, we must examine and understand the root causes of oppression and the actions towards liberation. Imagination is our secret power.... It catalyzes the spark into a flame and the flame into a fire. We provide opportunities for our youth to use their imagination to imagine, create, and be stewards of a better world.”

Robyne Walker Murphy, Executive Director, Groundswell

On-the-Ground Practice

In 2018, a group of young womxn (a term emphasizing females as independent of men, encompassing individuals of many sexual and gender orientations), ages 14 to 18, were part of Voices Her'd, a Groundswell project to research, discuss, and make visible issues affecting women of color. The teaching artists led the youth through four processes at the core of Groundswell practice. **Reflection:** The young womxn shared narratives of their lives and of women they knew, identifying mental health as a burden that many women of color silently carry, amidst their responsibilities for others and the inequalities they live with. **Community-based inquiry:** They then interviewed other women living in the neighborhood, especially close to the building where the mural would be sited. **Transformative imagery:** The young womxn realized that instead of documenting women's suffering, they wanted to extol the strength of women to resist and combat their conditions. Teaching artists introduced goddess figures drawn from world mythologies and religions, and the youth created contemporary figures that spoke to the strengths of living women of color. **Collaborative design:** Combining these sketches, the teaching artists and young womxn developed icons and then an overall design for the mural.

Groundswell recognizes what it takes to pursue work at the intersection of social justice and creative youth development and has identified four essential elements. **Time:** Projects are designed to be long enough to host inquiry that connects personal experiences to collaborative inquiry and creation. **Compensation:** Students are paid a stipend to acknowledge and support the seriousness of their work. **Space:** Everyone works together in a studio space that promotes shoulder-to-shoulder daily thinking, rather than hierarchical relationships. **People:** Groundswell interviews, hires, and advances artists with the capacity to work in ways that embody these values. It hired a self-taught artist not only because of her experience in youth programs, but also because it valued her alternative portfolio consisting of a giant protest banner. Another artist began as a student, became an assistant, and now is a lead artist.

Above: Teaching artists and young womxn develop a plan for a mural to address mental health. Photo courtesy of Groundswell.

Behind all of this is a commitment to professional development. Each year, Groundswell focuses intently on a specific area of practice, such as implementing social justice pedagogy in an organization-wide retreat attended by board members, program staff, and teaching artists. Throughout the year, there are follow-up sessions that the teaching artists are expected—and paid—to attend.

Questions for Practice

How do teaching artists

- model equity by creating art that integrates the input of many youth?
- build responsible practices that amplify youth voice while being sensitive to issues of privacy, risk, and emotional experience?
- equip students to interview, listen to, and reflect on the stories of others with sensitivity, respect, and understanding?

How do program designers and leaders

- hire with a balanced emphasis on candidates' capacity to help youth articulate issues and the artistry to express those issues in powerful ways?
- reflect program values in budgeting and resourcing this work (e.g., paid professional development time, youth stipends, and investment in talent development such that every project has both an assistant and a lead artist)?
- articulate the potential civic outcomes of this kind of work for external audiences who are accustomed to asking for more traditional youth outcomes (e.g., academic achievement or high school graduation)?

Broader Questions for the Field

- How might public art programs doing civically engaged art make room for youth artists?
- How does the field acknowledge slow-to-emerge outcomes (e.g., teaching artists who evolve from assistant to lead artist to studio or program manager, participants who return to work in programs, or students who continue on to engage in civic life or volunteer)?

Right: *The Goddess in You is Human*. Lead Artist: Jazmine Hayes. Assistant Artist: Micaela Anaya. Photo courtesy of Groundswell.

Communal Meaning Elsewhere

In Boston, the Theater Offensive supports True Colors: OUT Youth Theater, an ensemble for LGBTQ youth. Throughout the 2015 season, teaching artists and youth performers developed a production, "[The Year We Thought about Love](#)", in which ensemble members explored the meaning and consequences of same-sex relationships. The production toured Boston middle and high schools in an interactive format designed to increase understanding, respect, and safety for LGBTQ youth. A full-length documentary film of the project continues to tour the US.



The Queens Museum



Openness

Arts for Change Intent

The Queens Museum is dedicated to presenting the highest quality visual arts, public programs, and educational experiences for people in metropolitan New York, particularly in the uniquely diverse ethnic, cultural, and international community of Queens. With long-term funding from the Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation, the Museum has developed a linked set of after-school residencies and intensive summer workshops for middle school students. These programs, coupled with studios to build artistic skills, and field trips that expose young people to art and artists throughout New York City, introduce the role the arts can play in positive social change. Each student develops a project that focuses on an issue that matters to him or her. Building on those works, teaching artists and young people also design new approaches to exhibitions and audience engagement, with the goal of influencing how visitors see young people as artists and thinkers.

Until recently, Arts for Change has not been a regular part of the arts education field. Consequently, there are few established measures that capture what is distinctive about this practice. To change that, the museum brought together students, teaching artists, and an outside evaluator to develop ways to document students' growth as artists and critical thinkers. Everyone—young people, teaching artists, museum staff, and evaluators—had to imagine tools that could articulate the intended outcomes, the processes to get there, and outcomes the program was actually producing. This kind of collaborative work redistributed agency: people who are typically only the subjects of evaluation helped to shape tools that documented their own growth. This *opens up* an important discussion about how measures, just like portraits, are representations of how people are seen and understood.

On-the-Ground Practice

In a two-step process, teaching artists and students mapped out the forms of arts learning they experienced in this Arts for Change program and explored how best to capture and describe those processes. This resulted in two tools: the Student Growth Interview (see facing page) and the Observation Rubric (see pages 26-27).

Student Growth Interview

Students have much to teach us about how they develop in Arts for Change contexts and can broaden our understanding of the impact of such programs. To get this work started, evaluators interviewed students about whether and where they experienced growth during the program. Students were very clear about where they experienced the greatest changes:

- 1) thinking and interpreting** (waking up my brain, learning how to photograph what something means, investigating an idea);
- 2) speaking out** (how can I ask people to investigate what I am saying in my paintings, becoming a loud mouth sending big messages, waking others up to people my age being artists and thinkers); and
- 3) engaging in public life** (interviewing strangers to understand their lives, getting to own the bigger city outside my neighborhood, getting curious about what's going on).

Based on this preliminary information, students, teaching artists, and evaluators developed an interview designed to learn even more about students' growth in these three areas.

Student Growth Interview

Choose a piece that is a good example of your work from the first two weeks of the program.

- Describe the process you used to make the work.
- What influenced or inspired you?
- Who did you collaborate with? (This includes teachers, peers, people you showed it to, or artists whose work you may have looked at.)
- Imagine this work as part of an exhibition. People are walking up to it, stopping, and looking.
 - What do you want them to notice about your skills as an artist?
 - What do you want them to feel or sense?
 - What do you want them to think about as they look? Or even after they leave the show?
 - Do you want them to change in any way because of your work?

Choose a second piece that is a good example of your work from the final weeks of the program.

- Describe the process you used to make the work.
- What influenced or inspired you?
- Who did you collaborate with? (This includes teachers, peers, people you showed it to, or artists whose work you may have looked at.)
- Imagine this work as part of an exhibition. People are walking up to it, stopping, and looking.
 - What do you want them to notice about your skills as an artist?
 - What do you want them to feel or sense?
 - What do you want them to think about as they look? Or even after they leave the show?
 - Do you want them to change in any way because of your work?

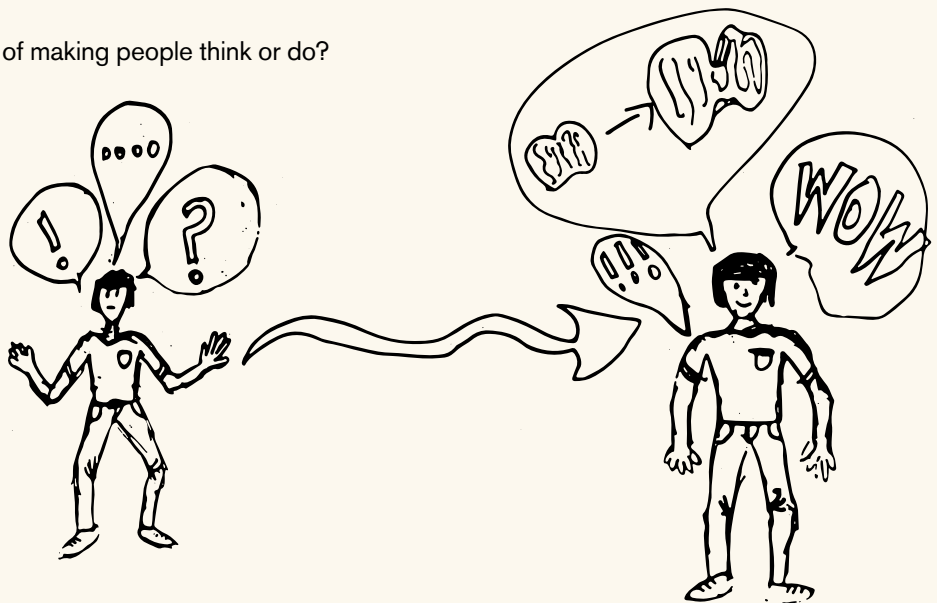
Look at your early and late work. Do you see any changes

- in what you can do as an artist?
- in what you want to say as an artist?
- in what you think your work could do in terms of making people think or do?

Finally, since you are an artist, create an image—a cartoon, a sketch, or a diagram—that shows what you were like at the beginning of this program and what you are like at the end. When you are done, explain what your drawing shows.

Credit: WolfBrown

Right: A student illustrates his growth, showing his scrawny, uncertain self (left side) becoming a filled-out, enthusiastic self (right side).



Observation Rubric: Dimensions of Teaching and Learning in Arts for Change Projects

In order to learn more about the key processes that promoted the growth that students reported, evaluators and teaching artists collaborated on designing an observation rubric that captured how Arts for Change work promoted students' growth as artists and thinkers. (In the rubric at right, these features are highlighted in underlined text.) Initially, the team used this rubric as a part of formative assessment to understand where their work was and wasn't successful. To do this, the team collected three streams of information.

- 1) An evidence-based running record of what happened in a session
- 2) Notes on questions the museum wanted to discuss
- 3) Notes about possible next steps for strengthening the museum's program practices

The rubric, shared with individual teaching artists or used in meetings, identified new possibilities and challenges for the program.

The team refined the rubric and then used it as part of more formal summative assessment (e.g., reports to funders). In this work the team examined the evolving quality of its programs by using the rubric in early, mid, and later sessions, rating the consistency and quality of the different practices using a 1–4 scale. These data provided a way to report on the development of the work in ways that reflected what youth and teaching artists saw themselves as working towards. The work also highlighted a number of the core practices that gave the program its impact.

Credit: WolfBrown

For Summative Assessment. Use to observe full sessions early, at mid-point, and later in programs in order to track growth and identify challenges in practices. Pay particular attention to evidence for highlighted features.

Learning climate. Environment, materials, and activities are well organized to promote excellent artistic work and focused articulation of community, civic, or social issues. Young people are treated, and treat one another, respectfully. Teaching artists are alert to and skilled at addressing the issues and experiences that working in Arts for Change projects may elicit.

Culturally responsive and inclusive art world. Students have access to the work of many times and cultures, with many purposes (e.g., fine arts, traditional arts, craft and design, or social change). These practices are taught with integrity, viewed in context, and examined for how they expand Western, school-based conceptions of making and valuing artistic activity. (See also Aesthetic Perspectives framework attribute of *cultural integrity*.)

Engagement and investment. Students with a range of skills participate actively, work in a productive way, and are supported by a teacher who is equally engaged. There are sustained opportunities to develop in-depth work committed to community, civic, or social concerns; collective meaning making; as well as supports for young people to identify, research, and execute work with a dual focus on artistry and the articulation of issues that matter to them. (See also Aesthetic Perspectives framework attributes of *commitment* and *communal meaning*.)

Issues and inquiry. Teachers and students work together on both fundamental and more advanced research skills to understand an issue in depth. This involves understanding how other artists, thinkers, and activists have explored the issue. It may also include reading, observation, and interviewing. Through this process, students come to own and understand an issue, where they stand, and what questions they want to raise for others. (See also Aesthetic Perspectives framework attribute of *commitment*.)

Creative strategies and choices. The processes and final works or performances allow students to use a variety of strategies, explore many artistic choices, and develop distinctive personal and ensemble styles. Teaching artists help students translate their issues and perspectives into compelling forms and images. Choices include how and where to exhibit work in order to engage audiences in thinking and further action. (See also Aesthetic Perspectives framework attributes of *openness* and *coherence*.)

Expectations and assessments. Expectations are high and clear. Assessments are designed to foster growth rather than to rank students. The power to assess is distributed, with students taking an active and thoughtful role in establishing the criteria for excellence and in assessing their own and others' work.

What additional dimensions should be added?

| | 1 No Evidence | 2 Little Evidence | 3 Some Evidence | 4 Strong Evidence |
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Questions for Practice

How do teaching artists

- take an active role in developing and critiquing the measures that will be used to describe the strengths and frontiers for their practice?
- engage young people in developing and critiquing the measures that are used to describe their work and their learning?
- consider and use the feedback from observations to strengthen their individual practices and build stronger collaborative practice?

How do program designers and leaders

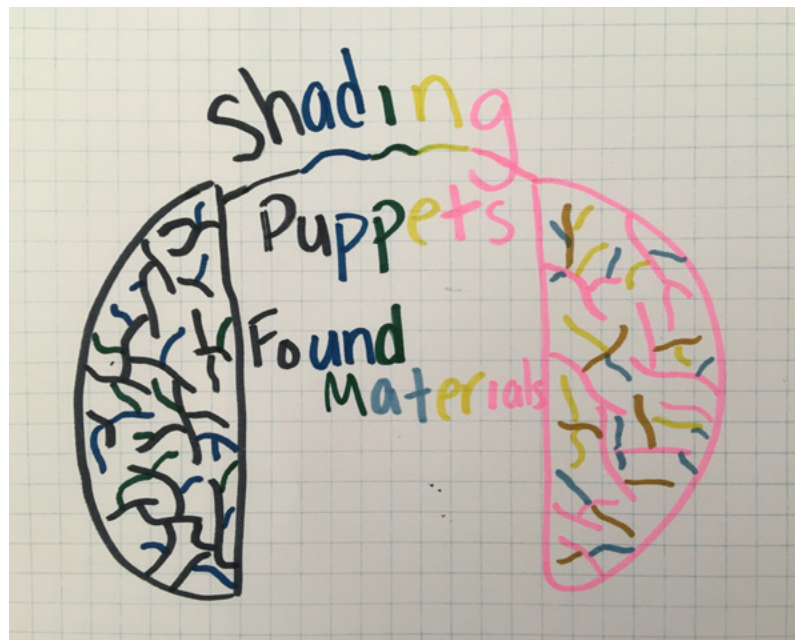
- make formative assessment a regular part of their programs (e.g., scheduling it regularly, taking part themselves, and paying teaching artists for their time to participate)?
- translate the findings into practices that will support program improvement (e.g., freeing up dollars to hire teaching artists or consultants who can help address challenges or stretch practices to new heights)?

Broader Questions for the Field

- What would it look like if program evaluators regularly worked with youth and teaching artists to develop a broader set of outcome measures for arts programs (e.g., socio-emotional outcomes, changes in peer relations, or impacts on youth civic behaviors)?
- What would help funders to take these expanded measures seriously when they evaluate the effectiveness of creative youth development programs?

Openness Elsewhere

In Lynn, Massachusetts, at RAW Art Works, teaching artists, youth, and program designers developed a set of evaluation tools through the [Boston Youth Arts Evaluation Project](#) that have been piloted and used by a network of youth-serving organizations. These tools, including self-report surveys and open-ended responses, give youth the opportunity to document and evaluate the impact of the arts on their development as artists and individuals.



Above: A student sketches her everyday brain (monochromatic left half); her experiences exploring color through shading, building life-size puppets, and sculpting with found materials (center); and her resulting artist brain (multi-colored, right half). Photo by Dennie Palmer Wolf.

In Conclusion

In this *Teaching Artist Companion* to [Aesthetic Perspectives: Attributes of Excellence in Arts for Change](#), we have shared the work of teaching artists who bring together socially engaged teaching with the highest artistic expectations. We argue that the two are reinforcing, not reductive. At the same time, we have shared the work of program designers, leaders, and evaluators who support teaching artists working in the arena of Arts for Change. These administrators are the opposite of distant bureaucrats; they are the beams that hold up the house.

Much of this guide is focused on Arts for Change work in a specific location (Queens, New York) and a single discipline (visual arts). Along the way, we have included brief illustrations of how the attributes from the Aesthetic Perspectives framework apply across artistic disciplines and in all kinds of communities. Even so, the guide is far from comprehensive. In this spirit, the Resources section points to other programs and frameworks for thinking about Arts for Change, its implications for teaching artistry, and the promise such work holds for a next generation of thinkers and artists.

But, also as we dug deep into the artistic, educational, and social change practices of teaching artists, the resulting work of their young students, and the thoughtful choices of their supporters, we began to think about whether there are additional attributes of Arts for Change—for instance, *mutuality*. Think about how the Community Art Hack projects demonstrate a heightened awareness of the lives of others. Or recall how the sculpture parade in Socrates Sculpture Park and the mental health mural from Groundswell are all about making—and sharing—meaning.

That is the power and beauty of applying a framework to daily practice: surprises occur, questions happen, and a document becomes a conversation. Our invitation: keep adding, keep discovering.

Additional Resources

This section provides additional materials for teaching artists and organizations doing work in the area of social change and the arts.

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Dr. Dennie Palmer Wolf is a leading arts education researcher and evaluator in the US. She holds a EdD from Harvard, where she was a researcher at Project Zero for more than a decade, and then headed Harvard PACE, an initiative linking schools and external partners in new approaches to assessing student learning. She led studies on the early development of artistic and symbolic capacities and later focused on design, implementation, and evaluation strategies that help cultural organizations and communities examine and improve how people gain access to learning, culture, and creativity both in and outside of formal institutions. Wolf has helped citywide and regional consortia build coordinated systems that support critical and creative learning for young people in and out of school time. Her work has been supported by the National Endowment for Arts, US Department of Education, Peter and Carmen Lucia Buck Foundation, Laura and John Arnold Foundation, Carnegie Corporation, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Spencer Foundation, and William Penn Foundation, and has appeared in numerous peer-reviewed journals and books.

Acknowledgments

The work, tools, and questions shared in the *Teaching Artist Companion* draw on the practice of a remarkable set of teaching artists and people who work to support them. Their combined efforts move the fields of arts education and youth development forward and, in so doing, mentor new voices and visions for a humane and equitable world.

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Featured Programs

Groundswell: Groundswell.nyc

Queens Museum: QueensMuseum.org

Socrates Sculpture Park: SocratesSculpturePark.org

Sugar Hill Children's Museum of Art & Storytelling:
SugarHillMuseum.org

Elsewhere

Arts Corp Creative Schools Initiative (Seattle, WA):
Artscorps.org/programs/creative-schools-initiative

Community MusicWorks (Providence, RI):
CommunityMusicWorks.org

Orchestra Rouh (Kalamazoo, MI):
[KalamazooSymphony.com/education-community/
community-partnerships/orchestra-rouh](http://KalamazooSymphony.com/education-community/community-partnerships/orchestra-rouh)

RAW Art Works (Lynn, MA): RAWartworks.org

Sweetland School (Hope, ME): sweettreats.org

Theater Offensive (Boston, MA):
TheTheaterOffensive.org/true-colors/youth-programming

Thanks also to Jeff Poulin, Arts Education Program Manager, Americans for the Arts, and Anne Canzonetti for their editorial support.

Stakeholders in Arts for Change will benefit from these additional [Companion guides](#) for Aesthetic Perspectives: Attributes of Excellence in Arts for Change, published by Animating Democracy/Americans for the Arts.

Curator Companion

by Sara Reisman

Educator Companion

by Bob Leonard

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