

ARTS IN THE ONE WORLD: CURRICULA AND AGENDA

Arts in the One World Panels and Presentations, January 24-27 '08

CalArts School of Theater, Valencia, California

Co-presented with the

Interdisciplinary Genocide Study Center, Kigali, Rwanda

Thoughts in Summary

Conference Mission

Agenda

Session by session notes

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CONFERENCE MISSION

We are a drawing together of schools and institutions offering degree/training in politically purposed art, broadly defined... And the definitions as they are emerging are innately broad – art and justice, art and social issues, art in the community, performance and public policy. Essentially – how are we trying reposition art's starting point, its aim, it's situation in culture at large, and – how is this exploration entering education? What are the emerging changes to curricula?

Discussion expands to include practical examples of artists who are enacting this repositioning. A sub-theme: social networking. How are artists finding other artists? Making communities of audiences and vice versa?

The conference is hosted by the theater school, is conceived and executed in collaboration with the broad participation of the Institute as a whole, invites students and faculty from institutions around the world, and is open to the general public. The school is one of six at the Institute, a community of artists committed to the international, interdisciplinary, experimental and diverse

Our partner in hosting and building the event is the Interdisciplinary Genocide Study Center (Rwanda), an independent learning and hosting organization centered on researching the Tutsi genocide, gathering testimony, resisting negationism, and preserving a safe social space for survivors. CalArts and the IGSC administer sister-libraries.

The Arts in the One World gathering is the local anchor of an ongoing artistic exchange. Each summer a group of students, faculty, and professionals in the field travel to study in Rwanda under the mentorship of the IGSC, exploring the ways in which art practice may participate in the processes of recovery.

Keynote Performance: *Jeans Generation*, by the Belarus Free Theater

The Belarus Free Theatre and its audience were recently arrested - up to 60 spectators, the actors, managers, and directors of the Free Theatre (including three children of 6, 7, and 8). On August 22, members of three different special forces operations (OMON, KGB, and the district police) entered a rented facility where the Free Theatre was set to perform.

“This act of harassment and intimidation in connection to the Belarus Free Theatre and its friends is just regular attempt in a row of many cases of harassment like dismissals of actors, directors, sending down of theatre manager,

closing down clubs where Free Theatre performed, etc.

According to the Geneva Convention, it is ‘Prohibition of Profession.’

“The Belarus Free Theatre wants to assure that we will not stop our activities and we would continue to promote human values by means of theatre.

“We appeal to all our friends to support freedom of Expression and Assembly in Belarus.”

Sincerely,

Natalia Koliada – Director and co-founder of the Belarus Free Theatre

Nikolai Khalezin – Art-director and co-founder of the Belarus Free Theatre,
playwright

Vladimir Scherban – Belarus Free Theatre Director

Agenda:

Wednesday

6-7 Orientation for CalArts students

Thursday

4-5 Introductions, orientation

Jean-Pierre Karegeye, Erik Ehn

Bill Reichblum/Kadmus Arts – One Network, One World

(Setting the stage for conversation)

5-6 Rwanda Exchange 07

- A presentation by some of last year’s attendees

Deborah Asiimwe

Brent Blair

Kathy Carbone

Jennafer Collins

Briana McClean

Darius Mannino

Emily Mendelsohn

Catherine Strecker

6-8 Dinner

8-10 Marie-France Collard/Groupov: *Rwanda '94*. Film screening and conversation, moderated by Alexandre Dauge-Roch

Friday

9-9:15 Opening Performance: Laurie Carlos/Deborah Asimwe

Morning Sessions – Focus on Rwanda: Thinking About, Representing, and Preventing Genocide. **Respondents: Chantal Kalisa, Jean-Pierre Karegeye**

9:20-9:30 Opening remarks: Erik Ehn, Jean-Pierre Karegeye – Framing Genocide Research

9:30-9:55 Michelle Bumatay, UCLA: Framing Genocide: *Déogratias* and *Rwanda 1994* – Descente en enfer

9:55-10:10 Marie-Chantal Kalisa: The IGSC Mission Statement

10:10-10:40 Kathy Carbone: Building a Genocide Library (Our Sisterhood)

10:40-11:05 Lara Garcia Reyne: In Search of Seeing – Discovering perspectives on Rwanda [Powerpoint]

11:05-11:30 Sonia Fournier: The Tutsi Genocide through Painting

11:30-11:45 Questions

11:45-12 Break

12-12:45 Margee Ensign: Rwanda, History and Hope

12:45-1 Questions

1-2 Lunch

2-3 Literary responses to Rwandan Genocide: Dialogue between Marie-Chantal Kalisa and Alexandre Dauge-Roch

3-4 Responses to the Rwandan Genocide through Visual Art continues:
Lara Garcia Reyne: part two [DVD, Rwanda Project]
Michael Robinson: *The Canyon* [Animation]

4:30-5 A report from Between4Eyes, a group that accompanied CalArts on last summer's CalArts trip.

Simultaneous Art-making Workshops

2-5 Dancing With Our Ancestors – Stephanie Waxman
“Dancing With Our Ancestors uses story telling, movement, song and spoken word to explore our connection or disconnection with our ancestors. Powerful healing takes place when we talk to our ancestors, and when we let them talk.”

2-5 Clowning – Orlando Pabotoy. “De-socializationn.”

2-5 Rehearsals for evening readings/presentations

2-5 Writing – Laurie Lathem.

5:30-6:30 Feedback from afternoon presentations

6:30-8 Dinner

8-10 Readings/presentations. Facilitator – Vicki Grise

Dancing with our Ancestors (workshop presentation)
Anne Garcia-Romero – *Earthquake Chica*
Carl Rux: *Negerplastik*
Dael Orlandersmith: *Yellowman*
Sybil Roberts: *Zimbabwe*
Phil Honour: *Gun*

Saturday

- 9-9:20 Opening Presentation: Ntare Mwine
9:30-10:45 Screening – *To Touch the Soul*. Teresa Hagen, Carlos Silveira
11-1 Panel: International Arts/Activism projects in Cambodia, with: Carlos Silveira, Thien Thach, Diana Chea of the CSULB/Cambodian Student Association. (Including a performance by the CSULB student group.)
1-2 Lunch
2-5 Curricular models – Breakout groups and a reconvening
a) In the schools
Facilitator, Erik Ehn
Participants include:
Elaine Avila – U New Mexico
Brent Blair – USC
Laura Edmonson/Roberta Levitow – Dartmouth
Dan Froot – UCLA
Nela Navarro – Rutgers
Sam Neylan – Valencia High
Michael Rhod – Sojourn Theater
Sybil Roberts – Catholic University
Ingrid Schorr – Brandeis
Kristen Smiarowski – Loyola Marymount, UCLA
Carole-Ann Upton – U Ulster
Lisa Tateosian – teachgenocide.org
Roberto Varea – USF
Martin Plot/James Wiltgen – CalArts
b) Best Practices in Social Networking for the Arts
Facilitator, Mark Valdez – NET
Participants include:
Terri Anderson, Richard Bruland, Nance Broderzen, Austin Wilkin – AMP
Paula Donnelly – Cornerstone Theater
Boris Gerrets, via DasArts
Kathy Randels – Home/New Orleans
Justine Williams – Glass Contraption
2-3:30 A representation of the CalArts Community Arts Partnership program, focusing on work with the Plaza Theater Program, *UPSET!* (a collaboratively developed piece), and the implementation of TO's Joker System in teaching/writing youth theater.
Evelyn Serrano, Mady Schutzman, B.J. Dodge, Glenna Avila

- 3:45-5 National Independent Theater Conference
(This organization is meeting simultaneously with our conference, and open a session here; they will be interweaving as they can throughout. *)
- 5:30-6:30 Feedback from afternoon sessions
- 6:30-8:30 Dinner
- 8:30-10:30 Performance: *Jeans Generation* – Belarus Free Theater
Talk back with the artists, Moderated by Boris Gerrets
- 11-12 Performance: *buried in the body of remembrance/enterrada en el cuerpo del recuerdo* – by secos y mojados (Roberto Varea, Violeta Luna, Victor Cartageña, David Molina)

Sunday

- 9-9:20 Morning reflection over coffee
- 9:30-12:30 Art and activism in practice: artists and producers
Performance: *Locust*, via SMU
Dorit Cypis: Foreign Exchanges – Getting to Know You
- 12:30-1:30 Sum and planning

* Theaters represented at the NITC conference –

Weekend Theater - Little Rock, AR
Actors Bridge Ensemble - Nashville, TN
Fusion Theater- Albuquerque, NM
Theatre for a Change - Des Moines, IA
Subjective Theatre Company - NYC
Nightingale Theatre - Tulsa, OK
Blue Barn - Omaha, NB
Burning Coal - Raleigh (by conference call)
Needtheater - Los Angeles, CA

NOTES

[Assorted recollections; feel free to add yours, and I'll compile an update for our site.]

1/24

A Look at the Next Few Days: Introductions and Introduction

Themes of our previous conferences – A Consideration of Genocide; Culture and Identity

Here: Curricula and Agenda – Programs, companies and artists who work to combine arts and activism:

Arts and activism are sometimes unnaturally separated; when theater becomes political it is either repressed or commissioned (recall one author's story from last year; when the Ugandan government felt uncomfortable with the politics of his writing, they took him out to lunch and offered to hire him at a nice fee to do a play about a public works project).. Sometimes the two are combined in ways that puts one in service of the other – either an abstract fulfillment of service to the community, to subsidize the heart of the work, or a means of raising excitement for debate and organization that happens after the bait of art is consumed. They do serve one another effectively (radically) in some settings, but just because the objective is clear, the will strong and the purposes shared, does not ensure that they will be very much the wrong tools for one another in other circumstances; it can be like using a strawberry to hammer a nail in the making of a strawberry crate. Between the extremes of these differentials, there is equipoise, not static – they are together (even undifferentiated) in live tension. Sometimes the fields are apart, appropriately. There are times for quiet, for choiring, for discord, and times we parse the silence.

The first two conferences were very much about sensitization. People were made aware of cultural need and power in the context of genocide; from there conversation expanded to include information on and testimony from war, disenfranchisement, hate speech, and many forms of exile; testimony and documentation were frequently searing... and frustrating. Tolstoy's question: What then must we do? The guiding question meant to be addressed by this conference: how do we move from sensitization to action?

- What do we know, through immediate inspiration, research and application, about links between art and acts of social transformation?
- What language and performance do we use to enter into our questions (what we don't know)?
- How do we teach and learn the history and responsibilities of our related fields?
- How do we create new knowledge by breaking our certainties against beloved failures?

In short, what is our articulation, what are our practical models for arts activism?

The conference and summer programs are about sharing information and building relationships. It is itself an action: we deepen and expand a conversational circle that has been building through the conferences, seen as an ongoing project. We remediate brevity with repetition, acquiring gravity over an expanse of time. Collaborations, workshops, books, a library, plans, projects and friendships have emerged for our time together so far. A function of friendship: so that there is labor for the crisis. (So, nowadays, we can hear of the plight of the Belarus company, stand beside them in principle, work with them on standing side by side in person, and move very rapidly to there time with us here at the conference. Many thanks here to Fritzie Brown at ArtsLink and Carrie Thompson at the Trust for Mutual Understanding.)

The conference is the other half of Rwanda/Uganda exchange, about which, more soon.

I've pushed this forward before but: I believe the theater of the future will not be framed by style or technique, but by ethics (cf Barba, others); specifically, the theater of hospitality. Hospitality may be defined as a mitigation of estrangement, this is the world's next great phase, lest, as we communicate more swiftly, we go at each other more than grow with. Remaining strange (local), but not estranged. The lion is still a lion, the lamb a lamb, but they lay down together.

Key ideas

Reprising some core concepts developed through previous conferences, to bring us up to speed:

Culture causes as well as heals genocide (if you want to predict the next Satan, look at the angels).

Choices are not always between good and evil.

Art promotes collective significance; helps prepare for collective action.

Political art needn't be political in topic, but in behavior: a critique of power.

Peace is not joy. Coexistence is not necessarily reconciliation. Justice is not necessarily judgment (there is no punishment to fit the crime).

When the going is tough – it is a function of the witness to be with, and then to represent. When the picture of social stresses becomes overwhelming, and the complexities unsupportable, try and discover habitation in paradox and metaphor. Reason poetically and feel for reason's sake.

An artist is well positioned to span analysis/observation and empathy. For an artist, the "I" may be another.

Rwanda is always the pathway into AOW convenings. We enter our dialogue through the specific instance of a crucial event, so that our unfolding narrative will be rooted in a specific reality.

Responsibilities

Rely on each other: Combat estrangement.

Serve each other as we can. There will be times when we need to pull together, to change a space, to offer a ride. Potluck dinner/party. If distressed, see me.

Will try to run on time.

Rebel conference: if you need to adjust the agenda, and we are not able to make apt changes for you in the official body of the conference, please take command of your experience! Find like-minded people, announce a purpose, and make the conference your own.

Bill Reichblum

Kadmus Arts (an artist networking organization – see kadmusarts.com).

Today, we're list makers (e.g. Amazon favorites, blogs are a list-like structure), developing a dramaturgy of pure middle. In this environment, the function of story changes. Information (masses of information) are not necessarily being organized by rising action, but a more protean purpose forward. On the positive side, this obviates the monolithic and proscriptive; we create identity optionally in a bath of myriad choices. Rather than an architecturally rigid and linear sequence of signs, we need something that navigates ceaseless middle – namely a purpose, or manner, rather than a drive towards convention. [A name for this purpose may be fidelity – to what are we faithful? This question guides us through an era of the epic or epistolary.] Individual mortality is the source of continuity. What is the responsibility that organizes lists?

Responsibility discovers itself in affinity – as you move, you chart your motion by what you intersect. This motion is guided by a history of, and search for authentic experience. [Requires an atomic expression to be compounded molecularly – needs (per string theory) to both be itself and reach out into all it might possibly be. Work needs to be in network (cycles, series; this network – conference as ensemble building).]

Polyphonic; a heterotopia.

[A note of caution: there can be a vampiric quality to the documentary quest for the authentic. Examine our work – are we addicted to suffering for our own sakes?]

Last Summer's Trip

We started in Auschwitz, went to a genocide conference in Sarajevo (sponsored by the International Association of Genocide Scholars), Rwanda and Uganda. The group featured students and alumni from CalArts, the University of Southern California, and Southern Methodist University, with faculty, and professionals in the field. We explored on the one hand thinking about genocide and warfare (causes, prevention, and recovery)

along with the lived experience of these (through survivors). In addition to looking at the range of ideas threaded through this conference, we looked at ways of being with the experience of this ongoing trip. A number of students have been before; perspectives change over time; relationships are built and students have a relationship with the countries we visited that exceed the bounds of our collective travel. Writing has been produced, and personal art practices have been examined and reformed.

A substantial material benefit deriving from the trip was the formation of the IGSC library. Kathy Carbone (CalArt's performing arts librarian) catalogued numerous book donations and with the help of CalArts alumna web designer Shannon Scrofano added electronic resources to the library's website. Jean-Pierre secured the donation of fifteen computers. The library will be housed in Ibuka's new headquarters (Ibuka is a survivors' organization, in charge of the nation's many memorials).

Marie-France Collard representing Groupov (Belgium) – A screening Through Us, Humanity... A documentary about the theater piece: Rwanda '94

Groupov was one of the first theaters to respond to the Tutsi Genocide; they researched exhaustively and premiered the piece first in 1999, eventually touring the piece in Rwanda on the tenth anniversary of the genocide, in 2004. The film and the play are demanding – they require close listening and the patience of witness. The play, for example, opens with an hour long first person autobiographical testimony from a survivor. There are litanies of the dead, historical reports, processions... with the constant support of a chamber orchestra and traditional Rwandan musicians. A dramaturgy of the epic in pursuit of the authentic. Play and film are excellent introductions to the history of the events, and excellently provocative in terms of methodology. How does one represent testimony? How does one include the point of view of the witness/other? Groupov is meticulous in the care it took; their purpose is clear – to inform/inculcate a European audience. A push to network...

The personal and the impersonal – How audience and artist are precisely themselves, exactly on behalf of presenting a story not wholly their own (porte-parole; visibility exhibit)

As artists we are not always asked to imitate, but to show, to demonstrate.

Alexandre Dauge-Roch: Forensic anthropology – the film is a shovel. We work to transform remains into relics. Draws our attention to a statement by the survivor: "If you are not willing to hear these words, you become an accomplice of the perpetrators." Groupov says: "She has the right to say so, as artists we're not allowed to go that far, but we stand firmly on the purpose of the play: "An attempt at symbolic reparation to the dead, for use by the living"

Groupov has a very self-reflexive process, which works to avoid vampirism.

1/25

IGSC – Jean-Pierre Karegeye (UC Berkeley, Founder, IGSC. From website.)

The Interdisciplinary Genocide Studies Center (IGSC) - Rwanda is a nonprofit organization based in Kigali, Rwanda.

IGSC's mission is to testify, to study genocide through rigorous cross-disciplinary scholarship, and to understand various mechanisms and structures of violence, with the goal of preventing genocide and mass violence.

Jean-Pierre Karegeye (Director of Interdisciplinary Genocide Studies, University of California at Berkeley) and Erik Ehn (Dean of the School of Theater, California Institute of the Arts) first met in Kigali three years ago. They resolved to create a space for the study of the Rwandan Genocide. The initiative has involved theater artists, filmmakers, human rights activists, politicians, survivors, religious practitioners, researchers, students and scholars from various disciplines and countries, whose practice engages questions of testimony, reconciliation, peace building, human rights and dignity.

Goals

- Encourage and facilitate interdisciplinary research on the Rwandan genocide
- Gather, organize, preserve and catalogue documentation on the Rwandan genocide
- Create a library of the Rwandan genocide
- Publish and disseminate scholarship on the genocide
- Record and publish testimonials Organize and host conferences, colloquia and symposia on the genocide
- Organize and facilitate summer courses at the Center
- Promote affiliations and collaboration with academic institutions and professional associations, domestically and internationally
- Fight revisionism and negationism

The Genocide of Tutsi: Image and Creation – Sonia Fournier (Codirectrice du Laboratoire d'Étude et d'Action pour le Développement de la Recherche en Éducation [LÉADRE] Université du Québec à Rimouski [UQAR])

From Sonia –

This presentation is on the 1994 Genocide of Tutsi and the creation of a series of images inspired by narratives, historical facts and visual documents. These images reveal esthetic, intellectual and moral values etc. Plastic language is articulated around themes, spatial organization, vocabulary, and image composition. The functions of the image such as representation, expression and symbolization are also discussed. These paintings show several key-events before, during and after the genocide. The figurative and abstract representations suggest ways that could bring about the reconstruction of memory and that of the Rwandan identity. This artistic approach proposes a vision and an understanding of the world. It also proposes concrete links and the recognition of traces of prior or current manifestation. It is about confronting the unspeakability of genocide, and addressing coherence, accuracy, treatment, and authenticity. This is also an attempt

to integrate reflexive recurrences on the experience of creation in connection with the genocide in Rwanda. This presentation also questions the pedagogical use of these images in schools. How can the image help explain genocide in school. Does this artistic approach allow influence in the classroom, that is, the transmission of a cognitive and emotional thought?

The Library – Kathy Carbone (Performing Arts Librarian, CalArts)

From Kathy –

CalArts and the IGSC have established a sister library relationship with a facility the summer exchange helped bring into being last July. The IGSC library is interdisciplinary in its approach and includes books, journals, DVDs and electronic resources in subject areas such as history, sociology, drama, literature, linguistics, theology, philosophy, poetry, painting, education, social ethics, peace-building, conflict resolution and cultural studies. The library encourages and facilitates interdisciplinary research.

The library looks forward to greatly expanding its print as well as its electronic resources collections by adding electronic databases, web space for online published research and testimony, a blog and pod/webcasts. The library will soon be housed physically at the headquarters of Ibuka, the leading survivor-support organization in Kigali.

From "The Five Laws of Library Science" by S.R. Ranganathan

“A library is a growing organism. It is an accepted biological fact that a growing organism alone will survive. An organism which ceases to grow will petrify and perish. The Fifth Law invites our attention to the fact that the library, as an institution, has all the attributes of a growing organism. A growing organism takes in new matter, casts off old matter, changes in size and takes new shapes and forms. Apart from sudden and apparently discontinuous changes involved in metamorphosis, it is also subject to a slow, continuous change which leads to what is known as ‘variation,’ in biological parlance, and to the evolution of new forms. This change is so slow but so effective that the protagonists of evolution assert that it is the shapeless undifferentiated protozoa that has transformed itself, by successive stages of variation, into the most differentiated specimen of creation – the human being. The one thing that has been persisting through all of these changes of form has been the vital principle of life. So it is with the library.”

It is this vital principle of life that has brought CalArts, the IGSC and all of us together today.

Rwanda: History and Hope – Margee Ensign (Dean of International Studies at the University of the Pacific)

An outstanding overview of recent Rwandan history with a focus on the successes being achieved in terms of recovery (clear-eyed – aware of the challenges – but resolutely forward looking).

Literary Responses to the Rwanda Genocide

From Lewiston to Kigali and Back: Documenting Genocide in Rwanda by Connecting Bates Students and Tutsi Survivors – Alexandre Dauge-Roch (Assistant Professor of French at Bates College)

From student notes –

Discusses class project: paired each of his 25 students in his French Class at Bates College w/a student survivor in Rwanda (Rwandan students were paid). Weekly email sessions. US students playing double-edged role – with the luxury of being outside comes the responsibility of *knowing*.

“In this world, who would respond to the terrible obstinacy of crime if it were not for the obstinacy of testimony...” Nyanza cemetery.

Challenges –

- Learning to listen
- Trying to imagine even though we cannot know
- Not losing sight of lived experience, finding ways to respond
- Overcoming stereotypes
- Building trust and respect
- Acknowledging that correspondents are not only survivors
- Defining community engagement at a distance

[see earlier conferences – “witness by proxy”]

Material later fashioned into a performance.

Students formed a charitable organization; visited and worked in partnership with an orphanage – selling orphans’ drawings as postcards.

Violence in Francophone Women’s Literature – Marie-Chantal Kalisa (Professor, U Nebraska-Lincoln)

From student notes –

Need to redefine the word “war” – no longer confined to the “front.” What is happening in the domestic spaces? (As per Iraq – we only hear about what’s happening on the street.

How do we use scholarship for activist practice?

Responses to the Genocide through Visual Art

Showing Seeing – Lara Garcia-Reyne

Showed footage of a Rwandan theater troupe's tour of a piece on the Genocide through Rwanda. Film centered on the experience of the performers – their sense of mission, method, response.

The Canyon – Michael Robinson

USC MFA grad student's work on an animated film inspired by events in Rwanda. With Groupov, and footage between, this forms an interesting series - a range of response, from the transcription of testimony, to the refiguring of testimony, to the imaginative/created experience of trauma.

From student notes –

A 6 minute animation telling the story of futuristic robotic human soldiers sent into the “canyon” to kill the “marauders” who turn out to be settlers. One soldier decides to spare a parent and baby, is pursued as a result, but manages to save himself and the family by killing other soldiers.

Some art asks the question – “how did this happen;” other art simply presents the experience of what happened – e.g. Cormac McCarthy/No Country.

From Michael Robinson –

The Canyon is about a soldier who is sent on a genocidal mission, balks at killing a mother and child, gets caught by his squad, and struggles to save the pair and himself. He loses his world but keeps his decency. The twist: its set in the Grand Canyon of the future which is now a giant shantytown under attack by rich people living in the sky.

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Art Making Workshops

Dancing With Our Ancestors – Stephanie Waxman

From Stephanie –

I opened my workshop, "Dancing With Our Ancestors," by tying in from the morning sessions: Lara Garcia-Reyne: "constructing memory" at the Tate and Sonia Fournier: "fragmented memory" and (from audience:) "frozen memory." We set out to explore our relationship to our ancestors through these various prisms of memory.

We introduced ourselves by saying who our ancestors were and where they came from. Then, after warming up physically and vocally, we played with some of the ancestor names and emblems, words or gestures which told about who they were.

We imagined an action that typified one ancestor's life and from that built a movement piece which was then taught to 3 other participants. (Two of these were presented in the evening performance.) We also built a "family portrait" using other participants to play the parts and tell the family story. (One of these was presented.)

The 3 hours flew by and in our closing circle, I was amazed to learn that in such a short time people had been very moved. Many felt that they had truly connected with not only their own ancestry, but to the ancestry of others.

I would welcome communication from any and all conference attendees! They may email me at waxman5@verizon.net and visit my web site: www.stephaniewaxman.com

Warm Regards, Stephanie

Writing Workshop – Laurie Lathem

From Laurie –

Here are notes on my workshop this last time around. Unfortunately, since my hard drive died this is from memory and may not be super accurate.

A group of about ten of us began by pairing off and conducting short interviews that dealt with moments of change. This could be change of a personal, social or, as the times would have it, political. The pairs took turns interviewing each other. Then, participants were asked to consider the interview material they had just gathered and, as a first step to creating original work from it, to change the name of the character or the speaker. For the next 45 minutes to an hour, workshop participants wrote a monologue in the voice of this new character, using the interview material as a springboard, about a moment in which they, the speaker (based on the interviewee) were misidentified or mis-labeled. Writers were invited and encouraged to embellish, fictionalize, add backstory, to truly untie themselves from the "truth" of the interviews themselves. The last step in the process was a short reading or "performance" of the monologues. As many of the participants were actors, these were stunningly represented and ranged from funny to acerbic to deeply moving, and were a fascinating blend of fiction and nonfiction that explored the notions of identity and possession. Throwing aside notions of race, gender, age and nationality, participants truly inhabited the skin of the "other" while speaking their own truths, a mix that was sometimes personally challenging or politically bold but in all cases was dramatically interesting.

Clowning – Orlando Pabotoy

From Orlando –

Here are some points that we touched on from my perspective as the teacher.

- Emphasized two points: Playfulness and Generosity.
- The workshop operated on the ideal that actors are a breed of givers, they give of themselves to the play, to each other, to the process of rehearsal, to the character they are representing, finally and most importantly they give of themselves to the audience.
- To give all of ourselves; we work on pursuing the part of us that is the most expressive.
- To eliminate the "need" to change who we are and what we love in order to "fit-in"
- To purely be affected by the world in front of us.
- We looked at the following emotions as muscles and we exercised them and gave it away to each other.
- Laughter, Despair, Nervousness, Anger.
- To recognize the critic in our head and to make another voice in us be slightly louder and a little more playful.
- We went through a process of De-Socializing where everyone laid down on the floor and began to "Forget": the room, each other, being a student, teacher, place where they came from, their name, how the world works. We wake up from that place (as if being born for the first time) began to rediscover sound, touch, voice, taste, smell, texture balance, seeing what it's like to discover people for the first time, and to communicate without language.
- To desire to know less when we know too much.
- To listen to what's happening with us and be at peace with it no matter what it is.
- Then we discussed the place for this work in the field of social justice and the conference.
- Then finally played an extremely competitive, violently aggressive game where we learnt how to live in problems without having to want to solve them. There were a few bruises I believe. All will heal.

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Evening Readings

From curator, Vicki Grise –

An evening of readings in conversation with each other. How are artists reacting/responding to genocide? How does that translate in works about the US? In the gathering of directors (Kendra Ware, Carl Hancock Rux, Toussiant Jeanlouis, myself) – the intention was to also have a deeper conversation between actors regarding the pieces they performed.

DJ Bonus: Potluck One Love in the Real World Slip and Slide

DJ Laurel (Lars Berzhanin) from the Belarus Free Theater (performing on the 26th) generously offered to DJ an impromptu party for all comers after the readings; folks were encouraged to bring their own food and drink. Bliss.

1/26

Screening – *To Touch the Soul*. Teresa Hagen, Carlos Silveira.

Raised valuable questions about notions of mercy and a colonial mentality – the mixed desire to save and make primitive a radical other... While at the same time, representing a legitimate avenue for encounter (good is done, awareness is raised, in exchange; redeem the brief with repetition).

Panel – Art and Historical Memory: Cambodia

We heard more about Cambodia and Carlos' work there; the concrete shape of a curriculum (an International Community Service Learning plan, marrying theory and international travel and experience). Sustainability – return to a remade context. Prepare without intellectualizing. Met Thien Thach, and the students of CSULB (headed up by Diana Chea), who presented us with a dance.

Carlos also oriented us to his Rio Favela project (arts and education in Rio slums).

Influenced heavily by Friere's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*:

“Social change needs to be started by the oppressed.”

Youth need “critical consciousness.”

From student notes –

Diana Chea: Cambodian Student Society – Cal State Long Beach. 25 year old club. Long Beach has the largest community of Cambodians outside Cambodia, after France.

CSS Mission: Share/promote/preserve Cambodian culture and unite Cambodian-American interchange.

- Reach out to elders in community
- Build leadership skills
- Network with students at other schools.
- Explore Cambodian culture through films, games, music and dance.

Cal State offers course in the Khmer language.

Next show: March 22, 2008

www.csulb.edu/~camss

cambodianstudentsociety@gmail.com

Thien Thach, Film-maker, presented us with an overview of Cambodian history – its links with Thailand and Viet Nam. His films highlight the cultural diversity within Cambodia. His short films and documentaries will be digitized and posted online.

In an open discussion (again from student notes) –

- Cultural pride vs. Khmer Rouge – the antipathy to the backward glance; one has to look through the barrier of these historical atrocities to a prior time. Difficult to reconcile and accurately present the entire history.
- Oligarchy controls the flow of resources. Playing field is not even; poverty perpetuates itself through a lack of education

General observations –

Occurred to me during this – need to examine first principles. Tell the truth as you experience it (carry words as they live in you – have they replaced you, or are you writing about their impact on you? – include the private point of view). Promote truth telling by creating an atmosphere of trust and mutuality. Know what you want, and promote knowledge of the will. Some of us have suggested that our wanting centers on love or fidelity.

Love waits, is faithful.

Love listens: love doesn't know and doesn't need to know.

Love listens actively: love learns, from this necessary vantage of not knowing.

Love acts; love knows. Is certain of some things. Love acts into relationship.

Love acts for the sake of silence; Romeo stops talking.

Artists as library/librarian.

Panels

Curricular Models:

The large group went member at a time around the circle; folks spent ten minutes or so laying out initiatives in their institutions or practice that supported the welding of arts and service.

General features of success:

Tie projects into the curriculum.

Involve production.

Work through gestaltic reconfiguration (Martin Plot) – meaning, bring tracks, programs, degrees into being based on an organization and enhancement of initiatives and impulses already in demonstration.

Esthetic interdisciplinarity, and the sense of polyphony, is useful to the arts and social action dialogue, social action being an epic undertaking (see notes on Reichblum, opening day).

Highlights per presenter –

Elaine Avila (U New Mexico)

1. Build from within.
2. Embody issues.
3. Change the definition of theater. “Open up your esthetics and you’ll open up your politics.”
4. Use your school as a mechanism for networking.
5. Accept students who will make new demands on you; rise to the pedagogical imperative and make new demands of them in turn.
6. Fundraise.

Brent Blair (USC)

Partner with the community – Intersubjectivity

Shift theater into other areas of the academy. USC is developing a dual degree –
MA/MSW

Laura Edmonson (Dartmouth)

Cause motion. Move students physically; corporeal network.

Not projects, but relationships.

Dan Froot (UCLA)

Discussed his oral history toy theater project; building partnerships to address
hunger abatement.

Develop your library – the importance of documentation (and its ethical
protocols).

Sybil Roberts (Catholic University)

Is your audience a dream or does it have material needs? If you are not addressing
the material needs of your real audience, you are wasting time.

Build a play out of dynamite.

Ingrid Schorr (Brandeis)

Tell the “truth unto its utmost parts.”

Works with the dept of Peace and Coexistence.

Arts + Justice is innately collaborative. In building the field, explore the spaces
between (between departments, agencies, discourses).

Encourage the full range of partners to do the schlepping (carry platforms, sweep
the stage).

Kristin Smiarowski (Loyola Marymount)

Make it a requirement.

Carol-Anne Upton (U Ulster)

(Anecdote – her town – Londonderry to the Unionists, Derry to the Republicans, can't agree on one name for the place. The best they can do, literally, is a sign reading “Welcome to the Walled City.”)

1. Discover the neutral/inclusive space (figurative and physical).
2. Increase the presence of art/the density of exposure.
3. To increase the pedagogical power of art, Increase artistic diversity.
4. A two phase track: teach the documentation of performance, leading to documentary performance.

Sam Neylan (with the students of Valencia High)

Nurture natural compassion.

Frought activism – nothing builds intellectual and moral capacity like the navigation of the logistical and logical challenges of activism.

Lisa Tateosian (teachgenocide.org)

Teach the history.

Understand the reality in contemporary, empathetic terms (e.g. via the play *Beasto on the Moon* – on the Armenian genocide)

Promote activism – e.g. lobby the media for coverage.

[This trio recalls to mind GM Hopkins' articulation of Augustine's frame: human perception is composed of the memory (facts), understanding and the will.]

Roberto Varea (USF)

Developing a bachelor's program. Interdisciplinary. Features performance, social engagement (projects beyond the school), and classes that bridge the two.

Dialogic.

Martin Plot, James Wiltgen (CalArts)

The School of Critical Studies is launching a new MA in Esthetics and Politics.

The core: Global Societies (concentration on phenomena); Critical Discourse in the Arts (theory: esthetics, politics, rhetoric).

Rounded by electives (concentration on specific circumstances).

Lecture series.

CalArts Community Arts Partnership Panel (via Serrano's agenda)

An informal forum led by Mady Schutzman (Critical Studies), Levi Brewster B.J. Dodge (CAP), Marvin Tunney (School of Theater), Glenna Avila (CAP), Evelyn Serrano (CAP), Amber Skalski, Risha Hill.

A brief presentation by Mady: key aspects of Theater of the Oppressed, the *UPSET!* project and the connection with the CAP/Plaza de la Raza Theater Program.

An excerpt of the *UPSET!* video documentation (The Beating).

Mady, Bj, Marvin, Amber, Risha and Levi talk about the process of creating and playing *UPSET!*

From Mady –

I interviewed the production team of *UPSET!* (the name of the play that we did at Plaza) and then I wrote an essay about the making of the piece with the youth. It is called “What a Riot!” and is being published in an anthology called *Social Theater*, edited by Sue Jennings, published by Routledge. It should be out later this year.

Some of the issues:

- Specific pedagogical strategies that were put in place using Theater of the Oppressed techniques in the writing and performance of *UPSET!*
- The writing process and strategies used to generate content with the students. Mady will bring samples of the writing exercises given to the participants.
- How were you able to interweave your students' contemporary concerns and context with events in the past (KKK, Rodney King, LA riots, etc)?
- What are the advantages of using Theater of the Oppressed techniques when working with youth?
- Were the students involved in the process of generating the questions that are asked throughout the play? What are the benefits of allowing youth to ask their own questions through the process of theatrical representation?
- This play allowed many of the actors to play several different roles within a single production. As I understand it, this practice is at the heart of T.O. What are the benefits of "being in the shoes" of several characters (often playing from opposite sides of the ethical spectrum) and understanding differing perspectives by performing each of the characters' view points and questions? Is this process fomenting empathy by allowing the students to understand issues through somebody else's eyes and experience?

Best Practices in Social Networking (representatives of artistic companies discuss their efforts at integrating art and social transformation) – facilitated by Mark Valdez

No direct notes from this rare and delirious gathering survive! We hope that in some ways the views expressed have found their way into the sensibilities of other, remarked conversations!

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Loaves and Fishes practicum

Dinner provided free to all comers built on the loaves and fishes model. The need for the meal was announced, and once again – AMONG US THERE IS ENOUGH! Delicious. And a nice group of drummers for auditory glee.

Performances

2 approaches to testimony – one personal, confessional; the other abstract, though intensely incarnated (per Jean-Pierre – in the arts, the “I” can be an other).

Belarus Free Theater – *Generation Jeans*

From BFT –

Dear All:

It was a great pleasure for all of us to be with you. We do ask you to continue your work, because Rwanda becomes a metaphor for all people who live under dictatorship.

Currently the Belarusian authorities create new "silent" forms of repressions and this way make a pressure on us: two of our actors just simply are not allowed from the country. We got to know about his just yesterday. It's just three days before we scheduled our trip to London with our performances.

Anyway, we would do our best to continue to do what we do and as I mentioned during the last get-together in CalArts we need your help.

We are in production of a new performance "Discover Love". This is a love story of our friend whose husband was kidnapped and killed. They has fantastic family with two daughters. He was kidnapped 9 years ago for supporting the Belarusian opposition. His granddaughters was born three years ago. Our dream that we would find his body and his granddaughter would a possibility to visit his grave.

We do need real stories of enforced disappearances from all over the world. If someone from the family survived and ready to share such the stories.

We travel a lot, and journalists pay attention to our performances. We need to use such the possibility in order to stop such the terrible things like enforced disappearances and genocide. Please help us with it.

Much love to all of you. Hope we would meet each other again.

Natalia and Nikolai

secos/mojados – buried in the body of remembrance/enterrada en el cuerpo del recuerdo

From Dana Gourrier (CalArts student) –

At first I thought, “All strapped in and ready for the ride.” Then as it progressed I thought, “Where the hell are we going?” By the time it ended I was brought to a place I have never been before. I found her use of nudity necessary. I found her confidence in what she had to say and what she was doing so transparent. It was needed just to scratch the show and tell the surface of her testimony. I loved being involved as an audience member and not just as a spectator. I loved the freedom of her body. I long to have freedom like that, but it was her experiences that led her to this freedom. Maybe mine will take me to my freedom...

From Rachel Mestrovich (CalArts student) –

The performances were so rich and moving, and exemplified the word made flesh... Everything we had been talking about was being lived on the stage. The performance by the Belarus Free Theater was a gift, invoking ideas about self-immolation as the ultimate renunciation, which led my thoughts to Gandhi and hunger strikes. This idea of renouncing is a point of inspiration to me as well. How does my life and work serve as a sacrifice for love? What am I willing to give up for something larger than myself? I was also deeply inspired by *buried in the body of remembrance*. Her performance marked me in a way I cannot find words for, something buried in the body. [This deeply stirred, inchoate, or in-the-body response to the performance is typical of comments.]

1/27

Examples in Artistic Practice

Locust

An impactful performance by the students of Southern Methodist University: sense from **Locust** – an imaginative response (see Mark Robinson’s *The Canyon*) to circumstances in Darfur, and in particular to the American response – from outcry to apathy.

Dorit Cypis (visual/performance artist)

“We all have a relationship with violence.” We possess an “intimacy of violence.”

Politics of violence, and psychology of violence closely related.

Artist as interceptor.

The challenge of “framing memories I never had.”

She has made long exploration of artistic strategies for mediation, especially via somatics (how the body holds memory).

Summing Up – A Circle

We've explored a range of definitions in looking at the arts/activism partnership – we've seen how one intervenes on behalf of the other; we've looked at art as a means of providing intense, live documentation; we've looked at art as an imaginative reach into and framing of experience.

We've looked at schools, at collaborative practices in, between and outside institutions, and we've encountered the methodology of solo artists. We have considered this locally, nationally, and internationally.

In practical terms, we reaffirm conclusions of past conferences: come here, go there, be with – faithfully.

Within need, find the competency (avoid imperial patriarchy).

Own your point of view. Who is it for? Me. Who else is it for?

The ultimate reward of the conference: *this* person, meet *this* person...

Last Round of Responses

Doug Jacobs spoke movingly about his appreciation of Buckminster Fuller: we need comprehensive education that looks at whole systems; American Transcendentalism; Margaret Fuller: "I accept the whole universe." In re – Arts in the *One World*.

Laurie (which Laurie) initially found herself estranged. "I am in the wrong place; I better start taking notes." Convert estrangement to fascination.

Some particular positives:

- When speakers were truly interdisciplinary (as was Margee Ensign) – combining politics, history, art...
- The practical workshops: writing, moving (there could be more of these – e.g. – on pedagogical practices).
- Holistic responsibilities – the way students were invited to a range of care giving options, and the way they accepted the options.

Opportunities for change:

- More production support (audio visual, maintaining spaces...).
- Smaller thread groups (small affinity groups, e.g. folks with a special interest in Boal, say) would meet together throughout the conference and help make thematic links for one another.
- Along with the abstract/universal, offer clear and practical paths forward in the work.
- Foster relationships with other networks and organizations (e.g. Mediators Without Borders).

Themes for next year's meet:

- Sustainability
- Esthetics, Ethics and Democracy
- Money/Hunger
- Environments (as in Green, also as in the ecologies of collaboration/dramaturgy)
- Motherhood (by looking at how mothers navigate art-making in the world, much of direct use can be gleaned by all working artists).

And we ended with a song, led by Kathy Randels!

Adapted from a note sent by Michael Rhod –

what is the central action that we are willing into presence
at this event and through our ongoing organizing...

it seems to me
that we are demanding, imploring, cajoling and insisting
for a forceful transformational use of story-
not in the single linear mono- narrative sense
but in the polyphonic
we take on the impossible when we challenge monstrous machines with hopeful acts of
imaginings
sense

we are provoking imaginings
and daring us to remember that to take on the impossible
is nothing less than the best attribute
and a primary responsibility
of being human

and if this contagion/alliance of individuals spread imagining to those we work with
and through what we make
imaginings can accumulate into power

so i am left with a sense of community
a re-chargedness
an injection of mission to walk alongside vision
and a question-

why is this conversation
related to naomi wallace's essay about playwriting in american theater last month
why is this conversation
not happening more in the halls of all schools that teach/explore theatre across our
country...?

and then i remember
right
its my responsibility, alongside many others
to make certain it does...

i really enjoyed my brief time at the conference
i got alot out of it
a whole lot
i'll be back

LINKS

- All the photos have been posted online, and are available for viewing at:
<http://www.photo.calarts.edu>
 USERNAME: calarts
 PASSWORD: photo
 The specific gallery in question:
<http://photo.calarts.edu/dpa/2008/20080126-artsintheoneworld/>
 I can easily pass along some high-res versions, just give me a list of filenames.
 Enjoy! – Scott Groller, CalArts Photogrpahper
- CalArts MA in Aesthetics and Politics:
<http://calarts.edu/criticalstudies/programs/maaestheticsandpolitics>
- Donations (e.g. books) to the Interdisciplinary Genocide Studies Center, Rwanda (From Kathy) – You can get to the Amazon Wish List through our IGSC Web Site: <http://www.igscrwanda.org/home.html>; Click on "library," click on "add a book to the library" and voila!
- AMP (Terri Anderson): <http://pluginamp.com>
- Dorit Cypis: dorit@doritcypis.com; www.doritcypis.com
- From Laurie Lathem: :Hey Friends, Here's the link to an article I wrote about the young and brilliant drumming prodigy, Magatte Sow, complete with links to YouTube clips of his playing and dancing. Hope you like it.”
<http://www.popandpolitics.com/2008/02/13/this-american-drumming-life/>
- Stephanie Waxman – “I would welcome communication from any and all conference attendees! They may email me at waxman5@verizon.net and visit my web site: www.stephaniewaxman.com”
- Cornerstone (via Paula Donnelly) – www.cornerstonetheater.org/Institute, and www.communityarts.net
- CSULB – www.csulb.edu/~camss; cambodianstudentsociety@gmail.com

PAPERS/ATTACHMENTS (Please request and I'll send as attachments)

Elaine Avila: Presentation Summary

Dorit Cypis: *Conflict, Mourning and Aesthetics*

Alexandre Dauge-Roth: *L'intimité à l'épreuve de L'Intrus et de L'interdite: la greffe
comme (des)saisie de soi*

and

Staging Dialogues and Performing Encounters in French AIDS Narratives

Lara García Reyne – *Looking for a Place to Understand Rwanda*

Links Hall: Chicago Area Workshops, performances

National Independent Theater Conference Minutes

Scripts from the Friday readings