

ARTS IN THE ONE WORLD: A CONSIDERATION OF GENOCIDE

**A Conference at CalArts and Downtown Los Angeles, Jan 26-29, 2006
Co-Sponsored by Theater with out Borders, and Coexistence International
(Brandeis)**

Overview

Lectures, demonstrations, panels and roundtables centering on the Rwandan Genocide and the potentials of art for witness, representation, reconciliation and peace building. Discussion expands outward to examine genocide's working definition, to investigate the extent and variety of contemporary genocidal practices, and to share methods of artistic response.

This gathering grows from a commitment on the part of CalArts' School of Theater to develop an ongoing exchange program with Rwanda (for notes on last summer's trip to Rwanda, see the Theatre Without Borders website).

Premise: that a way forward through violent times requires the persistent practice of hospitality and conversation across borders. The art of the near future is the art of hospitality: the elemental political act of performance arts is to insist on the cultural and spiritual import of *being with*.

Our goal: to share histories and hopes regarding art in the international arena, particularly in the fields of conflict resolution, recovery of historical memory, and work towards peaceful coexistence. Our touchstone is the Rwandan Genocide, and art's role in cause and recovery.

Practicum

Art making workshops, in connection with AOW. Three groups, under the direction of teams of visiting artists, collaborated to devise multi-media artistic expressions on the conference's themes. Pieces were presented at the conference.

Jan 26

Welcome and a definition of terms:

Arts = Activism. Art is built of actions and causes action. The essential action of the artist, the audience, is to see, to experience, to witness (and deriving from witness – to give testimony), to trust.

Seeing can be a moral act: we consent to take in, we draw our attention to focus, we turn our heads and open our eyes – we change our own place to put ourselves squarely in the presence of a unique event. We invest will.

In seeing in this way, by deliberately committing to a new perspective, we allow ourselves to be shaped by the event – to be created by it.

One World: Art is a worldwide action. Materially, politically, culturally we are forming a single-system ecology. Art and artists are traveling widely, rapidly. Success and failure of the civil in any one society is laced into the consequences and responsibilities of an extensive web of societies. We are responsible to more and responsive to more. We remain different from one another, in ways that can be co-celebrated. (The loss of diversity is an acknowledged ecological disaster.) But diversity is creative when cooperative. (In one panel it was proposed think in terms of ensemble – as in an outfit one wears... The colors and patterns are distinct, but they work together to create an overall effect.)

Why Genocide? To know a living thing, attend to how it suffers. Genocide – so difficult to take in or represent – forces us to expand our capacities for observation, description... and compassion. To know the extent of a life know how it moves beyond itself – how it breaks into joy or hope. In spite of suffering, we race to catch up to hope, to the persistence of life and the re-knitting of strength. We study genocide to understand survival better. Performance events end; we leave them with the minimal lesson that there is something to do after the end of things...

Why Rwanda? It is proximate: America is complicit. Prominently in the world community – we had resources to intervene (for years), and rather than seeing and doing, we were immoral artists – we saw and turned away; we let the end come and operate definitively. Events in Rwanda '94 are extreme, and cautionary. The will to reinvent and renew is extraordinary.

Rwanda is not a case study; it is itself. We do not compare genocides. Rwanda is at this event as our teacher, our guide.

What we will need through the four days of the conference:

Time in and time out.

On the one hand, we'll allow information and experience to sink into us; we will open ourselves to profound biographies including survivor testimonies, to complex histories, and to ethical and cognitive challenges. Stories may be acting on us in ways we are barely aware of, and we need to let them act.

We also need to know when we've taken in all we can take. The depth of the circumstances described, and the seeming intractability of genocidal evil, can be overwhelming. We have to give ourselves permission to do less, to take time out, as we need to...

January 26

Immaculee Ilibagiza (panelist) – She talked with her neighbor about his participation as a killer in the genocide. He replied: “We killed you and now we miss you.”

It is apparent that the conventional history of Rwanda – one that describes separate races or ethnicities with rooted, antique antipathy, is in fact a construct (promoted and formalized by the Belgian colonial authority, who eventually introduced identity cards). Hutu and Tutsi were traditionally class or professional distinctions, with Hutu representing cultivators and Tutsi standing for cattle owners. There was intermarriage and fluidity – one could move from Hutu to Tutsi for example, on the occasion of securing cows... The construct and the rigidity of the divisions were susceptible to political manipulation. **Genocide is an ideology, not a natural human instinct. It is an ideology that in its prosecution is always supported by the state.** [Thumbnail definition: the systematic attempt to destroy a population and their history per narrowly defined or projected characteristics (e.g. race, ethnicity, religion or gender).] There is a measure of hope in this. Since genocide is – inhuman – since it is not grounded in human nature (imposed on our will), and since its source is political manipulation... it can be countered by human will.

From public discussion - Not a minority (noun) but minoritized (verb).

Nearly a million dead in 100 days, killed largely hand to hand, with farm tools and clubs. It had been planned for years, and rehearsed for decades. There was ample warning prior, and clear calls for help throughout. But, this being “only Africa,” the rest of the world chose to let the slaughter burn and fade on its own accord. The killing stopped when the exile army – the Rwandan Patriotic Front, took the capital. The French, with Operation Turquoise, allowed for the escape of key perpetrators under the cover of peacekeeping. The refugee camps were public health nightmares, and actually concentrated killers with their targets, allowing the destruction to continue. Orphans and AIDS, legacy of rape as a tool of genocide, continue to afflict the society.

The justice system (the entire national infrastructure) is shattered – there is no way to imprison or try all those who are culpable. The *gaçaza* system has emerged – village-run convenings that gather testimony (confirming or overturning prison sentences, readmitting the accused to the communities...). Truth telling (in advance of forgiveness, which may never come) is a vital aspect of reconciliation.

The words “Hutu” and “Tutsi” have been struck from ID cards; the effort is afoot to create a new Rwandan identity.

Marie-Chantal Kalisa (panelist) - Genocide obliterates rituals of birth and death (the connection with the past is severed). Daily rituals are changed forever. Neighbors, who used to greet each other, no longer can.

*

Kate Gardner (panelist) – “A border is a line enforced by violence.”

*

Jean-Pierre Karegeye (panelist) - Artistic response to genocide is the effort to create a space between possibility and impossibility, to find speech for the

unspeakable, an attempt to represent a “non-object.” An artist who tries to represent genocide becomes ipso facto a witness.

Witness by proxy – is such a thing possible? At the core of artistic ideas of representation... How does fiction represent a very real reality? What does it have to offer that adds to direct testimony? Also – **fiction is complicit** in the realization of genocide – it is complicit, through the articulation and popularization of ideology...

From *After the Sun*, by Emily Jackson

Maybe they won't come

Maybe no one's coming.

Maybe they're not even going.

My tears begin to break
Louder than the machete itself.
After the sun
I watch the thick black smoke
Ascend the stairs to heaven.

January 27

World Holocaust Remembrance Day: the anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz

Thursday we met with members of the Rwandan Community to improve our knowledge of what happened there, and to share/discover ways of reclaiming history and moving with new purpose into the future. Today we expand to consider other genocides, other responses.

Mid-day we look at the work of the three Practica that took place – process-driven performance workshops ranging from a few to several days in length. Approaches include the methodologies of Grotowski and Boal, storytelling and movement theater – but explorations stemmed primarily from the personal connections of the people in the room to the guiding ideas of the Conference.

From public discussion – “We need more representation, even if it's bad.”

*

Meghan Monaghan (attendee) – “To what degree are we artists bound to worry about *mis*representing what we respond to in creation? Is respect only embodied in scrupulous correctness, accuracy, regarding a thing that cannot be understood

in the first place? How else can respect appear in art? How can we escape being silenced by the fear of misrepresenting?”

*

Rachel Jagoda-Smith (panelist) - “Forgetting prolongs exile.”

*

Roberto Varea (panelist and practicum leader; paraphrased) - The engineering of genocide requires the social construction of fear; in order for this to take effect, powerful narratives need to be in place. We must create counter-narratives.

*

Bridget Kimball (panelist) – “The human toll of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda is commonly counted as between 800,000 and one million victims that year. In fact, the deaths that can be attributed to the genocide continue to this day, most tragically through AIDS. Many thousands of women who were sexually assaulted during the genocide are now living with HIV/AIDS. Many have already died; thousands of others are desperately ill or dying.

“Adèle was one of the women who spoke with *African Rights*. She lost five children and her husband in 1994. Along with grief, she now battles with the memory of the rapes.

“The cruelties I experienced during the genocide have affected me profoundly. It’s unthinkable to see someone who has just killed your brothers and sisters, your parents, and then have him turn to you and demand that you sleep with him. Our morale was badly tortured and even now the feeling hasn’t gone away. It’s impossible to put it out of your mind.

“Many survivors who were raped became infected with HIV/AIDS. Rape was invariably one element in a succession of traumatic episodes, including other forms of abuse, terror, bereavement and displacement. All of the women interviewed by *African Rights* were deeply traumatized and it is likely that most were clinically depressed. Some received limited counseling, but efforts to repair the emotional damage in the Rwandan context meet with a series of complexities, unique to genocidal rape.”

Jan 28

Our first day in Los Angeles: we begin at Redcat, with keynotes and a panel, followed by a presentation from forensic anthropologist/muralist Claudia Bernardi. We move to Redcat for a second panel and a presentation of Okello Sam’s work-in-progress: *Vessels of Fire* (based on his experiences as a child soldier in the Lord’s Army, Northern Uganda). We end the day at the Cathedral – Our Lady of the Angels, where we eat dinner and watch Ntare Mwine’s film – *Beware of Time*. Addresses available separately.

Chris Merrill (keynote) – *The Folded Lie*

A heavy fog shrouded the besieged city from the snipers and gunners in the surrounding hills—a blessing for Sarajevans under ordinary wartime circumstances, since it provided cover to walk the streets in relative safety. But the Bosnian government had chosen this day to crack down on a pair of warlords who had outlived their usefulness in the defense of the city. Civilians and soldiers alike were ordered to stay inside, where the progress of this internal campaign could be monitored on battery-operated radios—there had been no gas, water, or electricity in Sarajevo for eighteen months. Rumors swirled of raids and running battles, of hostage-taking and rogue military units loose on the streets. From the window of the house I was staying in little could be seen, which inspired jokes about “the fog of war”—the difficulty, that is, of distinguishing fact from fiction. When the all-clear siren rang in the afternoon I ventured out to be stopped almost immediately by a firefight. Seeking cover between two apartment buildings, with my back pressed against a wall and bullets flying by, I could not tell who was shooting at whom: an emblem, it seems to me, of the problems involved in attempting to discern the truth in war.

But a writer is obliged to navigate through this man-made fog, illuminating the way forward by describing the context and dimensions of the tragedy—the sights and sounds and smells, the stories and lies and jokes, the grieving—as faithfully as possible. No earthly agency can redeem the losses inflicted by war. But a writer may discover meaning in the seemingly meaningless course of a conflict, upsetting the beliefs that govern the narratives essential to war-mongering.

During my travels in the war zones of the former Yugoslavia, interviewing artists and writers, scholars and soldiers, peasants and teachers, I took note of the certainty expressed on all sides, victim and perpetrator alike, about the justness of their cause. Nor was I immune to such thinking. Indeed whenever I found myself parroting the beliefs of one group or another, I knew that it was time to hear the other side...

The first casualty in war is truth—another useful adage. “All I have is a voice/ To undo the folded lie,” W. H. Auden famously wrote in “September 1, 1939”—lines that continue to reverberate, despite the poet’s subsequent repudiation of the poem’s overtly political design. For the lyric voice is a counter to the black art honed by politicians and their scribes of folding lies into every corner of society:

The romantic lie in the brain
 Of the sensual man-in-the-street
 And the lie of Authority
 Whose buildings grope the sky:
 There is no such thing as the State
 And no one exists alone;
 Hunger allows no choice
 To the citizens or the police;

We must love one another or die.

“The only thing that controls the sorrow here is the beat,” Joseph Brodsky argues in an insightful reading of this poem; “and ‘sorrow controlled by meter’ may do for you as a provisional definition of humility, if not of the entire art of poetry.”...

No wonder that “September 1, 1939” flew around the Internet after 9/11, reminding us of poetry’s singular power in times of national grief. And even if the Bush administration has used this collective tragedy to fold one lie after another into our body politic, it is crucial to recognize literature’s power to unfold, however belatedly, the lies essential to war-mongering, whether in Bosnia, Rwanda, or Iraq...

On the first anniversary of the Asian tsunami, the manager of a Holiday Inn in Thailand was reported to say, “Are we going to see these pictures again and again? I can’t see any of these tsunami pictures anymore, believe me. I don’t want to see them anymore. It’s part of our history. We have to deal with it, we have to remember it, and then have a memory plaque here in the hotel commemorating that this has happened. But that’s it. It’s time to move on, really, it’s time to move on.” But such a disaster cannot be forgotten. Primo Levi said that there were two sorts of survivors of the Nazi concentration camps—those who could put their experiences behind them and those for whom the horrors were always present. War literature explores the line between the two, sometimes starting from the one, sometimes from the other, in an effort to map the new terrain created by what Clausewitz called the continuation of politics by other means.

The first section of Tomaž Šalamun’s early poem, “Eclipse”:

I grew tired of the image of my tribe
and moved out.

Out of long nails
I weld limbs for my new body.
Out of old rags, my entrails.
A coat of carrion
will be my coat of solitude.
I pluck my eye from the depths of the marsh.
Out of the devoured plates of disgust
I will build my hut.

My world will be a world of sharp edges.
Cruel and eternal.

Hannah Arendt argued that in the twentieth century facts could be manufactured. Let us consider the mechanism by which this happens. First is the political imperative to repeat something enough—that Germans, Serbs, Hutus, Americans are threatened—until the audience for such falsehoods grows large enough to drown out those brave voices seeking to tell the truth. The adage about

the speed with which a lie travels around the world while the truth is still pulling on its pants tells us something about the nature of truth, which in the end generally wins out—albeit often too late for justice to prevail. And when a nation’s political elite loses its bearings, the innocent inevitably suffer. The last century gave us enough names, regimes, and sites of infamy to create a modern litany of evil: Hitler, the SS, the Gestapo, Auschwitz, Dachau, Bergen Belsen; Stalin and the Gulag Archipelago; Mao and the Cultural Revolution; Pol Pot and Cambodia’s killing fields; Slobodan Milošević, Radovan Karadžić, Ratko Mladić, ethnic cleansing, the siege of Sarajevo, Srebrenica; Hutu militias in Rwanda; Darfur; Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo Bay, Bagram. It was Mallarmé who argued that “It is the writer’s compelling task to purify the language of the tribe.” Ordinarily we take this to mean that the writer is obliged to rid the language of clichés, received opinions, shopworn usages, in order to discover an original vision. But there is a political sense to Mallarmé’s injunction: literature works against the deadening effects of propaganda, which works on the spirit like acid, corroding our ability to distinguish between truth and falsehood. Wallace Stevens said that “A new meaning is the equivalent of a new word,’ and we live in a time of many new meanings, new words, like extraordinary rendition, each of which must be countered by the poet.]

*

Cynthia Cohen (keynote) – “We must we hold in view the reality that we live in groups, and we are intersubjectively bound up within the narratives and the moral frameworks of the groups to which we belong; AND that human life is contingent on each person making ethical decisions and being held to account for them.

“The importance of building a culture of peace. The notion of a culture of peace emerges from the Seville Statement on Violence, the outcome of a meeting of scientists addressing the question of whether war is inevitable, if violence is simply a part of human nature. They concluded: ‘The same species that invented war is capable of inventing peace.’

“Time. Reconciliation requires a long time. Thinking about it puts us into a different time frame than the one in which we live our everyday lives. Elise Boulding counsels us to imagine a “200 year present”: The time that our oldest living relatives can remember, to the time that our youngest relatives might hope to be alive. When we use this as a timeframe, it helps us remember that the events that we are experiencing today have been shaped by events and forces that preceded them, and that the actions that we take today, the choices that we make today will have consequences long into the future. It cautions us against expecting to expect immediate results from some of our most important work. Since reconciliation almost always requires the telling of stories, it also puts us into a narrative frame. The telling, re-telling, and revising of stories rarely conforms to the constraints of bureaucratically determined timeframes.

“How the arts can contribute to peace: - Art can also be engaged to:

Build or strengthen a culture of peace

Address injustices, amplify disenfranchised voices, bear witness, take a stand for creativity and life in contrast to the absurdity and destruction of war

Mobilize and strengthen people for non-violent struggle against oppression

Build respectful relationships across differences

Provide platforms in which conflicts can be surfaced and engaged non-violently and constructively

Provide platforms for societies to imagine new ways of configuring elements of the current contexts

Integrate the sensuous with rational – feelingful awareness, engaged detachment, calm alertness

“Almost every reconciliation process will include some, perhaps all, of the elements listed below, not necessarily in this order. The form in which each element is engaged will be inflected by the cultural context:

1. Rehumanizing of other (and of self, own group)
2. Telling stories, listening to stories, sharing stories, revising stories.
3. Mourning losses
4. Empathizing with the suffering of the other
5. Addressing injustices
6. Letting go of bitterness
7. Imagining and substantiating a new future

(NB: These seven points are described in detail in my essay ‘Creative Approaches to Reconciliation’ available on-line at <http://www.brandeis.edu/go/CreateCoexistence>)

“The moral imagination requires the acceptance of risk and the willingness to step into the unknown. (Violence is what has become familiar.)”

*

Mr. Yoohoo (Moshe Cohen, from Clowns Without borders, panelist) remembers asking someone who worked with refugees what he could do. The question in reply: “Well, what *do* you do?” “I clown.” “Well then, that’s the thing to do.” We may have passionate, all-absorbing responses to the stories of misery we hear; overwhelmed, we may feel that the only appropriate response is one that requires us to be other than we are – to apply skills or gifts we don’t feel we possess... and we do nothing. While the impulse to serve may require us to be ourselves in a new way, it nonetheless asks us to come as ourselves, from who we are and what we have to offer. If you are an artist, respond to suffering with art – by including it as subject, or excluding it as subject (providing a refuge; Dijana cited Matisse on this point), or by taking the practice of your craft into areas where healing is needed.

[And, later]

“I think I forgot to talk about CWB's second part of our mission: to bring back and share, inform the public in our home countries about our experiences, what we witness and what is going on in the places we visit, especially on the human level. The importance of bringing up levels of awareness about what takes place far from the public, and sometimes, the media's eyes.”

*

Ntare Mwine (panelist) – “The task of the artist is to turn death into prayer.”

Jan 29

Summary thoughts: performance is a time art, and the subject of time keeps emerging from our discussions. We point again and a gain to the importance of duration and repetition – in the struggle sense of enduring suffering and witnessing to the recurrent, repetitive nature of genocide. But also in relation to recovery – how vital it is that efforts at peace building and reconciliation be sustained persistently, and that exchanges, workshops, etc. happen consistently (avoiding air-drop art...).

The gospel of Mark contains a short manual on how to form an activist collective. Members of the working class are called from their nets to gather around Christ – around perfection, however it is best defined for you (empathy, creativity, courage). The cause, the perfection itself asks: “What do you want?” The workers’ excellent reply: “Where do you live?” – indicating their willingness to be, to be with, to be utterly committed to the call of the perfect, even if it means shifting to a new place. Then the perfection says “Come and see,” welcoming the willing. Open your eyes to where you are and where you are meant to be.

A literal conclusion – travel. At least – be where you are in a new way. The place where you are is the One World. We are connected to Okello, for example.

He speaks more about his presentation the previous day, and about Hope North, his project with escapees from the Lord’s Army and other young victims of the conflict in northern Uganda. Despite his own harrowing youth (or, in fact, out of the distress itself) he has arrived at a dramaturgy of joy – he feels that through music and dance, through live encounter, artists work out a responsibility to cause greater openness – to expand capacity for feeling and speaking against a stunning pressure towards numbness and silence.

We break into smaller groups according to an Open Space agenda, reconvene to share our experiences, and end the conference in the afternoon.

Groups: What is the relationship between art’s role in reconciliation and cultural resistance?

Education: Promoting cultural understanding and humanizing the enemy

The impact of language and culture on the work of peace building.

Why do I exist? (A survivor's question.)

Personal story telling.

How can CalArts take a leadership role in networking artists?

There was much, and we are determined that there will be more.

Be with. Comfort the afflicted. Bury the dead.

More

Laurie Lathem (workshop leader)

Among many indelible moments were getting into a discussion with Dijana Milosevic in the Disney Hall about the Crips and the Bloods, the Hutus and the Tutsis of Los Angeles, and the importance of working with young people in our own back yards; Marie-Claudine, unable to help herself, getting up to dance in the middle of Okello Kelo Sam's one-man show; Glenna Avila holding up the work of her teenaged CAP students, one by one, proudly, like a mother.

*

Reflections About a Remarkable Gathering by Claudia Bernardi (panelist)

There are conferences that are very interesting. Informative.

There are conferences that are ideal for networking.

And there are conferences that are transformative for its message and because the people who deliver the messages managed to leave and imprint in the way we observe the world and our transit through it.

That is, I believe, the most remarkable aspect of the recent gathering at Cal Arts.

When I was invited to attend, I was in El Salvador. As I said in my presentation, the concepts explored in the paradigm of investigation: *Art* and *Genocide*, could not be more distant one from the other, and yet, that was the very essence of my work in Perquin during 2005.

Art is the act of creating an "artifact" of aesthetic quality and beauty. So it is explained most generally.

Genocide, (Gen: origin/ Cide: extermination/ death) is the act of, deliberately, causing the extinction of life and the impediment of the continuation of lineage.

So it is assumed in the world of international law.

One could conclude then, that there are artists and there are genocides. Both activities/ or practices are "doable" by any of us.

It is in the awareness of this paradigm that my work as an artist and as a human rights activist exists. It is also a constant reflection that forces me to investigate ceaselessly whether and how, could I stop being an artist, activity that I feel comfortable with, and become a person capable to cause genocide, for I am perplexed at how frequently one merges into the field of crimes against humanity, by action or complacency, apparently with relative ease.

It was not a conference of scholars. It was a conference of wounded people and the ones who were not wounded, were empathetic enough as to listen carefully to the damaged.

I spent the year 2005 in a small community in the North of Morazán. Perquin is a community of wounded people. Everyone who lives there today is a survivor of a massacre or an ex-combatant, or both. Perquin and its people suffered greatly through the war. The United Nations Truth Commission identified in its report that more than 300 massacres had occurred in the state of Morazan alone, during the civil war 1980-1992. The total number of massacres occurred in the whole country is difficult to produce.

To imagine an art project in Perquin was a dear vision, a beloved project and, at times, it appeared to me that it suffered from being delusional. The first time I arrived to El Salvador in 1992, was as part of the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team. Our task was to exhume the victims of the massacre at El Mozote where more than 1000 people had been assassinated.

And we found them.

As the only survivor, Rufina Amaya Marquez narrated for us in her testimony, the Atlacatl Battalion had killed even the children of El Mozote.

And we found them.

In a small building we found 143 people of whom 136 were children under the age of 12. Many were infants at the time of death.

And in the year 2005, I was back in Morazan trying to create a school, for children the same age of those who perished at El Mozote. A school of art for the whole community in which everyone and all would be invited and welcome to produce art. To rejoy in art. To trust art.

How to communicate that art generated a constant activity that not only produced art in form of murals, workshops and urban intervention but , perhaps most importantly, it was a school in which people laughed.

In which people came to share joy.

In which all what we did had the component of celebration.

How? just how, would I not sound corny? Or even stupid?

The world is a horrific place where genocide is not the exception but the rule.

And, I was to present, triumphantly, the beauty of our beloved art school.

It was not about the art *per se*. It was about the hope that this year in Perquin brought to me. Brought to all of us.

“Hope” is a loaded word, for it frequently is associated with recovery. And, in my experience, to some human damage such as state terror, torture or having survived genocide, something fundamental disappears from ones life and recovery is impossible. What is possible, I believe, is the change of paradigm.

It is the urge, if not the conviction, that a new self and a new version of what has been destroyed needs to happen.

It may manifest in one single question:

“What if”???

What if one places energy in art instead of in personal economic gain?

What if one exercises trust and one assumes that justice and beauty are possible?

What if one never will forget torture but one becomes a militant of the joy of having survived it?

“What if?”.... You tell me....

While taking testimony to the survivors of the massacre of La Joya in El Salvador in 1992, a woman who had lost her six children , her husband and her whole community, told me:

*“Ellos nos quieren tristes, pero nosotros no nos dejamos/
They want us sad, but we will not let them.”*

The most inspirational aspect of the recent conference at Cal Arts is the confirmation that we may be creating, together, the kernel of a new stage of the world in which to exercise solidarity is possible, where to build communities through art is a tangible reality, where the pursue of joy is not candid but a militancy and where the distances of the geographic frontiers are ever more near, not for the catastrophe imposed by globalization but, by the tenacity of men and women who do not want to live and die in sadness.

Ruby Pan (attendee)

How the arts might interface with social justice has not been a major part of my arts education, thus this symposium has been a huge educational experience for me. The only context through which I have learnt about art for therapy/ community building is through working with a community theatre in Singapore, and I feel like I didn't have a critical framework through which I could reflect upon my experiences back home. The symposium really opened my eyes to the work done by other practitioners around the world, gave me a sense of the discourse about art and peacemaking, and has renewed the strength of my commitment to community-building work in the arts in Singapore. Kate Gardner's international community soap opera model was definitely an inspiration and I see the possibility of doing a similar project connecting migrant workers in Singapore and their communities in the Philippines/ Indonesia. The conference pushed me to think about my own position of power in facilitating arts workshops, and looking back on the workshops I ran with migrant workers over the summer I feel like I was imposing my ideas about theatre on the workers, as opposed to facilitating their creative expression – it seems to me now that they would have been much happier creating a community soap opera than doing the SITi company exercises that I put them through to create a piece of “experimental” theatre. I'm holding on to what Daniel Banks said about always asking how I might be of service to the community that I'm working with, and how to make myself the least important person in the room eventually. Also to take his advice, which I have heard from Erik Ehn and Anne Bogart, to stop worrying about the industry, commit to where I feel called, and things will take care of themselves.

The conference left me with questions about what it means to have a “genocide study center” and the ramifications of the development of a “discourse of genocide.” I guess I'm thinking about a passage Adorno wrote in *Minima Moralia* about how the creation of the term “genocide” after the Jewish Holocaust is simply going to lead to debates about whether an event is a genocide or not, and become yet another tool for political control rather than contributing to the cause of “never again.” I guess it all depends on how the education is conducted – the symposium featuring survivor testimonies and films such as that of Eric Kabera's certainly took a very different approach than the political science class at Princeton (recommended film was, of course, *Hotel Rwanda*).

“Rwanda is not a case study but rather our teacher” – apologies for the paraphrasing – the conference gave me a new understanding of why it is imperative for the rest of humanity to learn about and learn from communities like Rwanda. Instead of seeking to learn from the US re: how to accelerate economic development in keeping with current global structures of power, a country like Singapore, for instance, has much more to learn about humanity from Rwanda. Questions about love and forgiveness are pushed to the extreme in post-genocide communities, when survivors have to live with perpetrators of crimes against their loved ones and find a way to rebuild their lives together. I once saw a clip on Oprah about the conflict in DR Congo, in which young women who had been impregnated by rape said that they would not abort their babies because they were innocent, despite the fact that the babies would be a reminder of their pain and shame, not to mention a strain on their meager resources as well. I ask myself if I would have that

magnanimity, coming from a social set where girls can afford to abort accidental babies in the name of continuing education and having a career.

More than ever I believe in the importance of diversity and embracing paradox, to borrow a phrase that Roberta Levitow used in the open space on the last day. But how to open that space in a place like Singapore, where so many things seem fixed by institutions? E.g. Having my race printed on my identity card, which I never thought much of till seeing the ramifications of that in the Rwandan context?

Once again the sense that the arts/ culture can be complicit with the machinery of genocide hit home for me. Okello Sam's piece in which dancing and singing purely for joy became implicated with the enterprise of tourism, and later with militarism and propaganda. How to break old symbols and forge a new language? At the same time the necessity of art in the face of genocide – to mourn, to memorialize, to sing about the dark times. If on the first day we heard from survivors who became artists in spite of themselves, I feel like we later heard from artists who became activists despite themselves after working in conflict zones. DAH Teatar in the place of being a theatre “forced” to be political because of circumstance.

Ananda Breed (attendee) - RECONCILIATION: GRASSROOTS THEATRE

People should participate in the gacaca Court.
Work in the morning and then go to the Gacaca

People should speak the truth.
What happened was in the daylight.

You watched it,
That's why you must speak the truth

- Reconciliation song in the genocide play *Ongera Urebe Ibyaye Mu Rwanda (Once Again See What Happened in Rwanda)*

Grassroots associations have emerged in Rwanda, creating a space for reconciliation between perpetrators and survivors. Many of these associations use the interactions of theatre to weave new relationships between community members, although other activities such as beekeeping, building houses, and farming have also been used for the same purposes. I will present several case studies of grassroots organizations that use theatre to explore how the associations developed, why they decided to use theatre, and what objectives the organizations hope to achieve. The associations utilize various themes such as theatre to elicit memory, theatre as forgiveness and confession, theatre for critical analysis, and theatre as education. I will draw from my experience with different community and grassroots associations to explore each of the above-mentioned objectives.

The Minister of Culture states how culture was destroyed during the genocide,

because a part of Rwandan culture is respect for life. Thus, the arts are being used to recreate identity and to rebuild values that were destroyed.

We cannot erase what happened in the past, but we can create a bright future with elements of the past, the genocide experience and with contributions from other countries and cultures. I want to say that we can, from the genocide, find some good things that can help us towards a brighter future. In Kinyarwanda, there is a proverb that says 'Tragedy, doesn't go away, but it doesn't remain forever', meaning that the experience of tragedy helps to build a new society.

He goes on to speak of the Rwandan tradition of Kugangahura, in which, if a person is struck by lightning, there is a ceremony to wash away the bad event. He compares the use of arts as a kind of Kugangahura for the genocide.

It is not special to Rwanda, always in human history, when there is a great event, could be negative or positive; it is a source of creations. This is why I consider the genocide a source of creation and cultural productions. It is an inspirer of creations, for cultural creations, must have deep emotions and feelings. I think genocide has given us very deep emotions and feelings. It could also give many serious ideas, which could inspire many important actions. I don't know if we should separate ideas and emotions.

Presidential Math and Regret

by Professor Eric Trules, USC School of Theatre (attende)

On one side of the Puritanical, political equation, we have former President Bill Clinton who was impeached for a single personal sexexploit after he lied about Monica and tried to cover it up. He was “caught”, held accountable, and apologized for it, much to the disbelief and distaste of half the American people and a great deal of the rest of the world. Yet in Clinton’s own words, the greatest failure of his Presidency, was not this, but his not taking action in 1994 to prevent the hundred day Tutsi genocide in Rwanda. On the other side of the equation, we have sitting duck President George Bush who has apparently lied about weapons of mass destruction, led America into a calamitous war in Iraq that is bankrupting the nation, still has no exit strategy, and has changed the balance of power in the Middle East, as well as the lives of Iraquis and Afghanis, for the worse; whose hegemonic, myopic “spreading of democracy” has led to newly elected militant and theocratic anti-American governments in Palestine and Iraq; whose country’s own shameful military behavior has become a world-wide human rights embarrassment in places like Abu Gharib and Guantanamo; whose government’s response to our nation’s worst recent natural disaster last year in New Orleans was, and continues to be, clumsy and ineffectual; whose policies on Social Security, Medicare, health care, and taxation are ill-conceived, failing, and designed mostly to benefit the rich; whose over-reaching Patriot Act and probably illegal, wire-tapping intrusions into the privacy of American citizens are another mis-calculated and over-bearing response to a self-described and

unwinable “war on terror”; whose personal image and that of his country is daily becoming the object of derision and hatred in more and more places on the planet; and whose stubborn, inflexible policies refuse to recognize the consensus of the world’s nations on such things as the Kyoto Treaty and any other agreements or proposals that do not directly benefit the United States’ short term economic or nationalistic interests. Yet while this President continues to be called out by his own nations’ citizens, as well as by many nations and peoples around the planet, on this abominable laundry list, he also continues to simple-mindedly deny and dissemble about almost all of it, rarely, if ever apologizes for any of it, and with his gun-toting (and misfiring) colleagues, Cheney and Rove, continues to flaunt his arrogance and aggression to the nation and the world, while, at the same time, remaining, miraculously, unaccountable and un-impeached. You do the math. Meanwhile, we have heard not a single word about the current genocide in Northern Uganda, where thousands of “invisible children” are being abducted every day for the last twenty years, by a mad rebel army leader in the bush, who brainwashes and trains five to ten year olds to murder villagers and to continue this heart-breaking cycle of abduction and slaughter. Will this current President look back with regret if he and his country refuse to take a stand and make a difference in Uganda? Again, you do the math.

For Further Study

Autodafe: Journal of Writers in Exile started by the International Parliament of Writers. *Violence and Subjectivity*, eds. Veena Das, Arthur Kleinman, Mamphela Ramphele, and Pamela Reynolds (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000)

Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

Alexander Laban Hinton, ed. *Annihilating Difference: The Anthropology of Genocide* (Berkeley: University of California, 2002).

Liisa Malkki, *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology Among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

Home, Exile, Homeland: film, Media, and the Politics of Place, ed. Hamid Naficy

Vivian Patraka, *Spectacular Suffering: Theatre, Fascism, and the Holocaust* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).

Speakers/Presenters

Robert Ajwang', Tanzania, Performing Artist
 Glenna Avila, CalArts, Visual Artist and CAP Program
 Claudia Bernardi, Berkeley, El Salvador, Artist
 Cynthia Cohen, Brandeis, Director Director of Coexistence Research
 Moshe Cohen, San Francisco, Clowns Without Borders
 Laura Edmonson, Florida, Playwright, Scholar
 Catherine Filloux, NY, Theater Without Borders
 Kate Gardner, Brooklyn, Community Theater Internationale
 Hanay Geigomah, UCLA, Playwright

Tessa Hicks, LA, Intercultural Relations Consultant
 Immaculee Ilibagiza, NY/Rwanda, Author : "Left To Tell: Discovering God Amidst the
 Rwandan Holocaust,"member of UNDP
 Melanie Joseph, NY, Foundry Theater
 Eric Kabera, Rwanda, Filmmaker
 Marie-Chantal Kalisa, NE, University of Nebraska, Modern Languages and Literatures
 Jean-Pierre Karegeye, Kigali/Berkeley, Interdisciplinary Genocide Studies
 Jack Kohler, SF, Filmmaker
 Laurie Lathem, LA, Writer and Actor
 Roberta Levitow, LA, Theater Without Borders
 Rachel Lithgow-Jagoda, LA, Holocaust Museum
 Christopher Merrill, Head, Iowa International Writer's Program
 Ntare Guma Mbaho Mwine, LA and Uganda, Artist
 Emmanuel Murekezi, LA, Artist
 Dr. Zac Nsenga, Rwandan Ambassador to the US
 Okello Sam, Uganda, Performer
 Diane Rodriguez, LA, Theater Director
 William Saa, LA, Everyday Gandhis
 Cynthia Travis, LA, Everyday Gandhis
 Torange Yeghiazarian, San Francisco, Golden Thread Productions

Practicum Leaders

Roberto Varea, USF, Theater Director and Violeta Luna, Mexico, SF, Performer
 Dijana Milosevic, Belgrade, Performance Director
 Daniel Banks, Faculty, Dept of Drama, NYU; Theater Without Borders; Co-Founder
 DnA Works
 Adam McKinney workshop co-leader./wBanks, Company Member, Lines Contemporary
 Ballet; Co-Founder, DnA Works

Practicum Participants

Laura Arnett
 Jason Ball
 Terra Balthrop
 Kevin Biely
 Abra Brayman
 Brian Bauman
 Erin Demos
 Hannah Donaldson
 Derrick Everett
 Loren Fenton
 Stevens Gaston
 Elisia Griego

Mara Herbkersman
 Ashley Olivia Henry
 Asha Kancherlapalli
 Martin McCormick
 Darius Mannino
 Stephen Marion
 Sibyl O'Malley
 Jane Pickett
 Justin Sacks
 Victor Santos
 Joy Tomasko
 Bethany Umbach

Organizers

California Institute of the Arts

California Institute of the Arts educates professional artists in a unique learning environment founded on the principles of art making excellence, experimentation, critical reflection and independent inquiry. Throughout its history, CalArts has sought to advance the practice of art and promote its understanding in a broad social, cultural and historical context. CalArts offers students the knowledge and expertise of leading professional artists and scholars and a full complement of art making tools. In return, it asks for the highest artistic and academic achievement. Reflecting its longstanding commitment to new forms and expressions in art, CalArts invites creative risk-taking and urges active collaboration and exchange among artists, artistic disciplines and cultural traditions.

Theatre Without Borders

Theatre Without Borders is an informal group of individual artists around the world who are interested in supporting international theatre exchange. TWB advocates for theatre artists who see themselves as members of a global community, as well as citizens of their respective nations and cultures. TWB works through an informational website www.theatrewithoutborders.com, as well as through public forums to explore and encourage the exchange of international theatre projects and artists. TWB works with and supports the activities of other American organizations involved with international theatre exchange such as ITI, The Center for International Theatre Development, and many others. TWB does not represent any political ideology. TWB was created to recognize the universality and diversity of theatrical expression and the need for international artists to maintain dialogue across political boundaries.

Coexistence International at Brandeis University

Coexistence International is a new initiative funded through a gift of the Alan B. Slifka Foundation, housed within the Slifka Program in Intercommunal Coexistence, itself a program of Brandeis' International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life. CI envisions a world in which people of different religions, races, ethnicities and cultures relate with respect and recognize their interdependence, where diversity is embraced for

its positive potential, and where equality is valued and actively pursued. Its mission is to strengthen the field of policymakers, practitioners, researchers, advocates, organizations and networks promoting coexistence at local, national and international levels.

“Strengthening the Contributions of Theater to the Coexistence Field” is one five strands of work being undertaken by Coexistence International. It will be convened by Dr. Cynthia Cohen of the Slifka Program at Brandeis University and Roberta Levitow and Ruth Margraff from Theatre Without Borders.