

OPEN DIALOGUE XI: GLOBAL CONNECTIONS TO CULTURAL DEMOCRACY



CONFERENCE AND SYMPOSIUM PROCEEDINGS

Denver, Colorado
July 12-15, 2007

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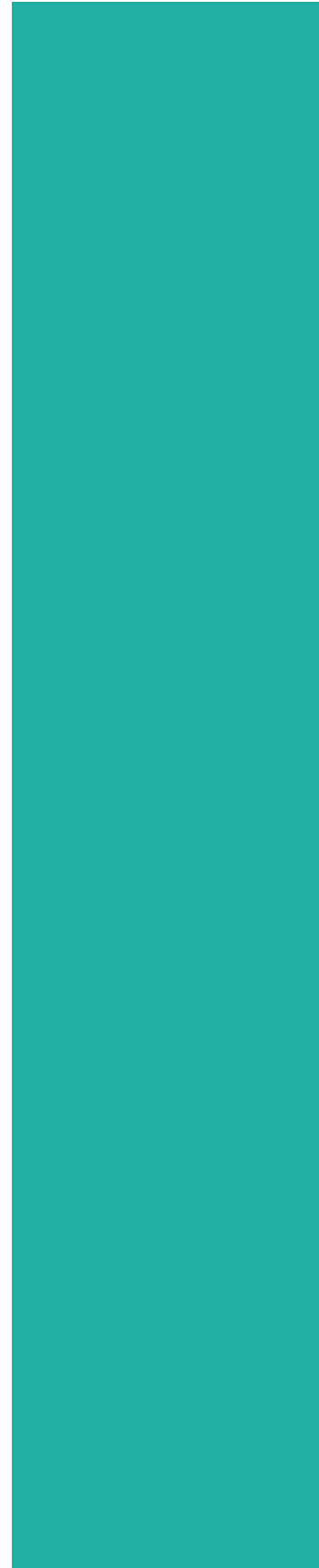
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DEDICATION

The Board of Directors of The Association of American Cultures (TAAC) and the Western States Arts Federation (WESTAF) dedicate these proceedings to TAAC's late board chairman, Louis LeRoy. Louis died peacefully in Yuma, Arizona, on November 26, 2007, only four months after the 11th Open Dialogue Conference and shortly after the Board's successful strategic planning retreat in Chicago.

Louis was born in Yuma on August 18, 1941. After a distinguished career in arts management nationally, he returned to Yuma in 2002 to assume the position of executive director of the Yuma Fine Arts Association. Up until the end, Louis continued his work as a professional visual artist.

Louis contributed greatly to the national field of arts advocacy and administration. He demonstrated extraordinary dedication to the promotion of artists and the broader social value of their aesthetic expressions as the first expansion arts coordinator for the Arizona Commission on the Arts, area representative for the National Endowment for the Arts, and a former director for the Arts Council of San Antonio. Most importantly, Louis' work on behalf of the many American communities and artists of color found its mission in 2001, when Louis almost single-handedly resurrected The Association of American Cultures—which had been dormant for four years at that point. Now a 23-year-old organization, Louis strengthened TAAC's pursuit of its challenge to promote multicultural diversity and cultural democracy in the arts field. The most visible accomplishment of Louis' work is the biennial Open Dialogue, a national arts conference that has been held in San Jose, Philadelphia, and Denver since he took over the organization.

Louis always had a keen mind for American political advocacy, a wide perspective on life, and a good nature. He told many a good story about climbing the Eiffel Tower or riding a motorcycle in the desert. He had a gift for setting the stage to bring ethnically diverse peoples together to discuss, argue, reach principled compromises of collaboration, and have a good time—while learning to trust and love one another.

The TAAC Board will miss Louis very much. We honor his memory by continuing in the work of TAAC.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors of The Association of American Cultures



Drawing by Paul Nguyen

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE PRESENTER

The Association of American Cultures

The mission of The Association of American Cultures (TAAC) is to represent the distinctive and collective concerns of people of diverse populations in the United States and its Trust Territories regarding the preservation and creative vitality of their cultural identities through the arts. TAAC is committed to cultural diversity as a distinct element in American public arts policy.

TAAC was established to provide arts services to people of color in America, specifically to African Americans, Latinos, Asians, and Native Americans. The organization has evolved to recognize the importance of including representatives of all cultures in the Open Dialogue. America is a country of immigrants, and TAAC is dedicated to honoring our ancestors and the traditions and beliefs that guided their lives.

TAAC was founded in 1985 after the participants of Open Dialogue II passed a resolution establishing it. Open Dialogue II was the second national meeting held in the United States for artists and arts managers of color. Participants represented all arts disciplines and all ethnically specific minority communities. The resolution formed a national arts service organization that would continue to convene the Open Dialogues and act as an advocate for artists and arts organizations concerned with the preservation of cultural identities through the arts.

Core Values

In fulfilling its mission and vision, TAAC:

- Respects the integrity of the diversity of cultural expressions
- Believes in the inclusiveness of all artists and cultural workers in the arts/culture policy dialogue
- Advocates for recognition and equality of cultural worldviews within their historical context

- Embraces principles of cultural democracy that support practices reflecting diverse creative visions of excellence and open dialogue

Past Open Dialogues

- 2007 Denver, Colorado
Host, Western States Arts Federation
- 2005 Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Host, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts
- 2003 San Jose, CA
Host, San Jose Office of Cultural Affairs
- 1998 Dallas, TX
Host, Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs
- 1996 St. Louis, MO
Host, St. Louis Regional Arts Commission
- 1994 Columbus, OH
Host, Ohio Arts Council
- 1992 Los Angeles, CA
Host, California Arts Council
- 1990 Oklahoma
Host, Oklahoma Arts Council
- 1989 Washington, D.C.
Host, D.C. Commission on the Arts
- 1985 San Antonio, TX
Host, Arts Council of San Antonio

Advocacy

TAAC monitors national legislation which may have an impact on its constituency. Its fax-alert broadcast system can inform members within hours of important activity in Washington D.C.. TAAC participates annually in National Advocacy Day by visiting congressional offices in Washington D.C. and providing information on the needs of culturally specific artists and arts organizations. Additionally, a TAAC representative attends meetings called by the Chair for the National Endowment for the Arts and those of other arts service organizations in the United States that inform public policy.



ABOUT THE CONFERENCE AND SYMPOSIUM SPONSOR

The Western States Arts Federation (WESTAF)

WESTAF is a nonprofit arts-service organization dedicated to the creative advancement and preservation of the arts. Founded in 1974, the organization fulfills its mission to strengthen the financial, organizational, and policy infrastructure of the arts in the West by providing innovative programs and services. WESTAF is located in Denver, Colorado, and is governed by a 22-member board of trustees largely comprised of arts leaders in the West. The organization serves the largest geographical area and number of states of the six U.S. regional arts organizations. WESTAF's constituents include the state arts agencies, artists, and arts organizations of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. WESTAF is funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.

WESTAF is engaged in information-systems development, arts-policy research, state-arts-agency development, and the convening of arts experts and leaders to address critical issues in the arts. In addition, the organization is committed to programmatic work in the areas of performing arts presenting, visual arts, literature, and folk arts. Programs in these areas include activities such as convening leaders from an arts discipline; the development of model programs; and the sponsorship of long-term, region-wide programs that fill a gap in the arts infrastructure of the West. WESTAF has also developed a number of Web-based programs designed to benefit the future well-being of the arts communities of the West.

In 2000, WESTAF created a multicultural task force to provide inspiration and guidance for the organization's commitment to multicultural policies and values. After eight meetings in locations across the West, the task force presented a report and recommendations to the WESTAF Board of Trustees, which adopted the recommendations with the stated intent of infusing WESTAF with multicultural values and placing it on a path to evolve into a truly multicultural organization. The trustees then institutionalized the work of the

task force and transformed the group into a permanent advisory committee. The Multicultural Advisory Committee now regularly meets and advises WESTAF on a wide variety of issues. Cultural Identity in the West was the first in a series of planned convenings on topics related to multiculturalism and the arts in the West. The New Face of Arts Leadership in the West was the second in that series.

FOREWORD

Looking Back to the Present, Living Forward to the Future

James Early

The Association of American Cultures (TAAC) was founded in 1985 with courage, vision, and belief. From the beginning, TAAC declared its commitment to see, to affirm, and to communicate to America the living cultural diversity represented by its artistic production—this in contrast to the commonly propagated official portrait of a mono-cultural American identity with arts to match. Since then, TAAC’s Open Dialogues have made a positive difference in fostering cultural democracy in arts and culture throughout the United States. Open Dialogues have provided a forum in which to explore and advocate the integrity and validity of diverse ways of knowing and doing, particularly as expressed in aesthetic standards, artistic practices, and sociopolitical commentary.

TAAC leaders and organizers have provided a convening space wherein we can negotiate, inform, and change guidelines for determining artistic merit and for funding policies at the local and national levels. TAAC has been an advocate for cultural diversity among decision makers in private, government, and foundation entities related to the arts. TAAC has also championed the employment of well-prepared younger adults in arts and culture leadership.

Today, in this new era when economies and cultural identities flow and connect at a global, transnational level, TAAC and WESTAF have launched a new multi-logical engagement and discourse. TAAC’s history in the arts has been via “citizen-artists and cultural workers”—that is, practitioners, arts producers and service organizations engaged across the spectrum of sociopolitical, economic, and cultural life. In order that we may continue to address and work with this broad population, Open Dialogue XI is designed to foster and facilitate exploration, particularly about how global migrations of people, ideas, and aesthetics are changing demographics, impacting economies, creating social conflicts, foreshadowing and informing new unities, and expanding the

identity-formation and arts environments of a new generation of artists, citizens, and cultural and political leaders across the United States and the world.

Well-documented frustration abroad with U.S. cultural policies and the general isolation of the U.S. public, including artists, from global cultural and arts policy deliberations suggests that most U.S. arts, culture, and cultural policy sectors are not nearly as aware of or as involved in global arts and culture policy discourses as are our counterparts in Europe, Latin America, Africa, and to some extent, Asia. We lack, as a nation, an active discourse about the transversal dimensions of culture, and about the simultaneous threats to and possibilities for spiritual well-being and material growth that globalization poses for cultural traditions, expressions, and identities.

Open Dialogue XI is an opportunity to engage U.S. arts and culture policy-makers in conversation with young adult artists and arts and culture workers from the U.S. and other areas of the world. This conversation has significant issues to address, including the cultural dimensions of global migratory flows, the resultant cultural democracy policy debates, and the consequential practices reflected in such momentous accords as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO) Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. In line with TAAC’s history as a catalytic forum, I hope that participation of artists and cultural workers of all ages from the United States, Mexico, France, Belize, India, Mongolia, El Salvador, Canada, England, and Senegal in Open Dialogue XI will inform and influence U.S. national arts and culture policies and contribute to respectful and productive U.S. engagement in global arts and culture discourses and policy-making.

I further hope that arts and culture veterans from TAAC, WESTAF, and other arts and culture organizations will use Open Dialogue XI to once again exhibit courage to follow the new generation of arts and culture practitioners where they effectively lead; to have the vision to see our national American project through the multicultural and transnational realities of today’s young leaders; and to exhibit belief through

our future actions that a new world is possible and that it will be, with culture and the arts to help make it so.

In peace, progress, justice,
James Early

Conference Program Advisor

SYMPOSIUM PARTICIPANTS

The information listed here was current in June, 2008. Some information may have changed by the publishing date.

Keynote Speaker

Doudou Diène

United Nations Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance, the United Nations High Commission on Human Rights
Paris, France

Co-Facilitators

James Early

Board member, The Association of American Cultures; Director of Cultural Heritage Policy Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage Smithsonian Institution
Washington, DC

Sunya Ganbold

Branding/Marketing Manager, The Apartment Creative Agency
New York, NY

Presenters

Suzanne Benally

Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, Naropa University
Boulder, CO

A.B. Spellman

Scholar, poet, and former senior official of the National Endowment for the Arts
Washington, DC

Louis LeRoy

Chairman of the Board, The Association of American Cultures
Yuma, AZ

Tomás Ybarra-Frausto

Winner of the Smithsonian Institution's Henry Medal, former Associate Director for Creativity and Culture for the Rockefeller Foundation
New York, NY

Tabassum Haleem

Executive Director, Organization of Islamic Speakers Midwest, Inc.
Chicago, IL

Roland Tanglao

Co-Founder and technologist, Bryght
Vancouver, BC

Maria-Rosario Jackson

Senior Research Associate Director, Culture, Creativity and Communities Program, The Urban Institute
Washington, DC

Ilona Kish

Secretary General, European Forum for the Arts and Heritage
Brussels, Belgium

Diana Molina

Photographer and journalist
El Paso, TX and New Mexico

Tatiana Reinoza Perkins

Artist, curator, co-founder of the Women's Art Forum in Sacramento, and active leader in the Latino art community
Austin, TX

Paula Astorga

Director, Mexico City International Contemporary Film Festival (FICCO)
Mexico City, Mexico

Ivan Duran

Producer and Director, Stonetree Records
Benque Viejo del Carmen, Belize

Aziz Ridouan

Political lobbyist, advisor to French presidential candidate Segolène Royal, President of Association des Audionautes
France

Quentin Renaudo

Political lobbyist, Vice-President of Association des Audionautes
France

Gabriella Gomez-Mont

Interdisciplinary artist and writer
Mexico City, Mexico

Natalia Toledo

Zapotec poet, writer, spokesperson and activist
for indigenous women's rights Oaxaca, Mexico

Carlos Enríquez Verdura

Director of International Cultural Promotions,
CONACULTA
Mexico City, Mexico

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Loie Fecteau

Executive Director, New Mexico Arts
Santa Fe, NM

Shani Jamila

Former host and producer of Blackademics radio
program; co-host, BlackSoul Mondays; essayist;
human rights researcher and speaker
Washington, DC

Arthur Jones

Clinical Professor of Psychology, University of Denver;
Founder and Chair, The Spirituals Project
Denver, CO

Annette Evans Smith

Vice president of Community Relations,
Alaska Native Heritage Center
Anchorage, AK

Cristina King Miranda

Arts leader and administrator
Mexico City, Mexico

Sangeeta Isvaran

Dancer, choreographer, activist and researcher
Chennai, India

Justin Laing

Program Officer, The Heinz Endowments
Pittsburgh, PA

Jennifer Armstrong

Director of Community Arts Development,
Illinois Arts Council
Chicago, IL

Rick Hernandez

Executive Director (ret), Texas Commission
on the Arts
Austin, TX



WELCOME ADDRESS

Louis LeRoy

Welcome to Open Dialogue XI and to a new conversation involving the arts, cultural diversity, and global migrations of peoples and ideas. I would now like to set a tone for the direction of that conversation. In essence, this is a “multilogue” with and from various cultural perspectives that exist in America today and their relation to global demographic and cultural changes. This will be the first of many conversations that pertain to population shifts, cultural migration, immigrants, outsourcing, and shifting demographics that embody our rapidly shrinking planet.

Recently, TAAC leadership discussed issues related to global migration. During these conversations we extensively discussed current topics such as controlling our borders, building fences, and creating a modern *Maginot Line*¹ along our frontiers. In these conversations about exclusion, there has been little talk about the cultural implications that associated new demographic shifts can have on the American consciousness. As people of color in the arts who believe that art is a voice of inclusion, what does the influx of new populations mean to the arts programs we currently maintain and to the development of new programs? Where do we stand on these questions and how are we incorporating these changing population dynamics into our long-term plans? How can arts programs help maintain vital immigrant customs involving music, food, and language? How do we incorporate new audiences into our marketing efforts? This is a far-reaching subject with many questions that warrant serious consideration.

I will also suggest that these issues involve the next generation of administrative and artistic leaders. We ask that each of you take these conversations back to your own communities and create positive approaches to address this new reality of shifting global populations and changing demographics, and the impact they have on your local communities. TAAC will act as a clearinghouse of information pertaining to this topic. In 1985, when TAAC began in San Antonio, Texas, internal considerations of funding and program exclusion were the primary focus. Today, we are externalizing

our work in the arts to involve our brothers and sisters from the farthest reaches of the planet. This is indeed an enormous challenge, but the journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step.

What we are trying to do during these kinds of discussions is not easy to articulate—I witnessed the massive efforts undertaken in the previous sessions to try and better convey the issues we will be discussing. I will give you an example of what I think communicates these ideas in the simplest way. Last night during the reception, a woman from Mexico, Natalia Toledo, a Zapotec Indian and a poet, spoke about what she was going to address to the larger delegation. As she finished her presentation, I asked her if she would share a poem in the Zapotec language. The language she spoke was very beautiful; to hear a poem in Zapotec is a rare opportunity. I think her recitation of that poem articulates what this symposium is all about: respecting one other. We Americans have a major problem because the rest of the world views us as having little respect for them. They say, “Well, you are us,” and they are right. We, as part of the larger global community, must learn to embrace various cultures, and that is the essence of what this conference is all about: learning how to share our similarities while recognizing the beauty of our differences. With that in mind, I would like to welcome you to the eleventh dialogue on cultural diversity in the arts.

¹ The Maginot Line was a well-constructed line of staggered defensive forts, anti-tank measures, and lookout posts that spread along the eastern border of France during World War II. Retrieved from <http://www.history.com>.

INTRODUCTION

James Early

I am very pleased to be at this conference and symposium. While I travel broadly attending forums of this sort, I think we are involved in something here that has the potential to reflect both our changed realities and the way we live our lives, notwithstanding what may be the old categories with which we have identified.

We have the possibility to seed the ground in this network that is The Association of American Cultures to contribute by exploring a more positive and transformative perspective about some of the very intense and negative debates that are occurring in this country. These debates are heavily influenced by immigration—which involves people’s imaginations, their creativity, and their will to express themselves—rather than simply economics. I believe we have the opportunity, through guests from other areas of the world such as Europe and particularly Mexico, to see how other countries are considering these issues. While similar debates are taking place in other countries, I think we will find that they are being approached with no more maturity or tolerance than exists in the United States.

Through our deliberations at this Open Dialogue, I think we have the possibility to grasp what has been one of the central contributions of The Association of American Cultures (TAAC)—they, TAAC’s founders—had the foresight as people of color to create a name for their organization that conveys ownership of a national project without sacrificing the specific ways of knowing and doing into which they were born. I interpret this as a message that they were, and that we are multi-cultural, not just multi-racial. Their religions, languages, views, and values could qualitatively inform a vibrant public space and identity within the national project.

I am excited because from my vantage point, we have witnessed democracy—which is all of your voices—inform the preparation of this Open Dialogue in Denver. While historically we have called this a TAAC Open Dialogue, I think we have seen the multi-vocal process, with each of you contributing your own experiences, languages, religions, and perspectives. You wanted to participate because you were interested in

this topic of Global Connections to Cultural Democracy, but it did not open with an expert’s opinion of the definition of that concept; instead, it opened by asking what you thought about the topic. I believe that is the simplest and most profound expression of democracy—people speaking, debating, and trying to develop common goals without giving up individual identities. Recognizing that we have multiple and distinct identities yet share larger national identities is fundamental to the pursuit of democratic ideals. We are increasingly sharing our global identities, which will be apparent as we hear people from other parts of the world discuss how they are addressing important cultural-political issues.

I am also very excited about the possibility of entering a new TAAC organizational moment. I think we see the embodiment of that new moment in young adults, and I want to characterize young adults as those who are not coming but who have already arrived—those who have the ability to lead and would lead more often if some of us would get out of the way and follow.

I was telling Doudou Diène, whom I will introduce momentarily, about a piece written in 1937 by the Spanish writer Antonio Machado in which he suggested that young people should not listen to older people who want them to be disciplined because they are trying to make younger people into an image of themselves. Young people have a lot of time to be older, but only have one chance to be young and bright and to offer possibilities for new ways of doing things. I hope we can be as daring as we were in the watershed 1960s and the 1980s when The Association of American Cultures was founded, when we put forth our voices. We were much younger then and we said to the status quo, “You have virtues, but you have limitations and flaws, and we will dare to engage you by acknowledging our different communities and perspectives, expanding this American project with these new identities.”

I hope we will take Louis Leroy’s words literally and apply these ideas to our daily lives and to the organizations in which we work, understanding that this global moment is no longer about individual organizations, but rather about networks of networks and the

interdependence and interaction of different entities. We are living transnational realities even as we maintain our national identities.

I want to say something else about The Association of American Cultures and the Western States Arts Federation. Organizations come into existence and sometimes they can make really important contributions. As time goes on, however, the energy and focus often diminishes. This Open Dialogue in Denver is an opportunity for all of us to emphasize that these organizations do not make a single contribution on their own, but instead they do so in conjunction with others, by advancing new American identities. I will discuss one example of this view.

As you know, immigration is currently a major issue. More Africans have come to the United States since the 1965 Immigration Act than all of those—approximately 500,000 people—who were brought during the entire period of slavery. This is one aspect of diversity within the African-American community. Though we look alike, we do not necessarily feel alike. Similarly, new immigrants bring more diversity to Latino communities. The different ethnic and racial composition of the Muslim-American community is another example. Recognizing these distinctions within various cultural communities is important for us to address in an effort to begin a new conversation.

When we were considering how to set the tone for this multilogue, I immediately thought of Doudou Diène. He is from Senegal; he is an African. He is from Paris; he is an Afro-European. He travels the globe—he is a local citizen, a national citizen, and a transnational citizen. He has taken the notion of public service quite seriously. He has achieved extraordinary things as an individual, but always from the vantage point of a social individual with an understanding that if he prepared himself, he would be better able to make contributions to various communities. For 30 years he worked with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). He is the person who launched the intercultural dialogue, the inter-religious dialogue, the slave roots project, the iron root project of Africa, and the silk roots project. He is the person who has spoken for his own community, as well as all of your

communities. He is the vice chair of the International Council of Philosophy and Social Scientists. For the last several years he has occupied the global position as a United Nations Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance for the High Commission on Human Rights. He is an activist who understands the role of voice and understands the need to speak truth about those discriminations of voice in order to build a new world. I ask you to please welcome Doudou Diène.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

The Challenge of Cultural Diversity in the Global Context

Doudou Diène

I want to share my thoughts on the two basic concepts central to this symposium, beginning with diversity. I would like us to consider this concept in two different contexts. In terms of its historical meaning, diversity means differences; that things are not of the same nature. In contrast, the “scientific” interpretation of diversity—which began at the end of the 17th century and was used throughout the 18th and 19th centuries—led to theories of race based on Western rankings of civilizations and cultures. When the so-called “European thinkers” started to reflect on the diversity of species, their reflections coincided with the massive imperial movement from Europe to the world beyond its borders. Within that imperial context, European thinkers developed theories and impressions that established a hierarchy of races, peoples, civilizations, and cultures.

It was in this context that the slave trade was introduced, and the assumed inferiority of enslaved people is a theory originating from that period. Keep in mind that when the Atlantic slave trade began it was purely an economic exercise. European powers wanted to exploit what they perceived to be “new” lands and they needed a workforce. In the beginning, at least in this hemisphere, they used poor white people, including those taken from jails. Slowly they realized that Africa was situated just in front of the geographical space that they wanted to exploit. Thus they began to sail around the African coast buying people from various regions. Over time this practice became industrialized until it reached such a magnitude that they were procuring and selling human beings on a grand scale. They were faced with the need to legitimize this system, and the ideological forces swung into action. First the church, the Holy See, gave its blessing. The Pope at the time asked the slave traders to evangelize the enslaved Africans so their souls could go to paradise as a Christian virtue by obeying their masters. The church was one very powerful ideological force that legitimized this enterprise.

Similarly, the purported “Enlightened thinkers” of Europe began to write about the inferiority of the enslaved Africans. One can look to the writings of people like Voltaire as an example. Fundamentally, this is the basis on which research on diversity started. Even within the political context, diversity was perceived as a radical difference based on hierarchy, and theories regarding the inferiority of non-Europeans have been developed within this framework. We must keep this history in mind: The concept of diversity is not neutral; it is historically charged and was based on hierarchy. In that context, all branches of knowledge including philosophies, social sciences, and poetry, were mobilized to accommodate that interpretation of diversity as hierarchy.

This hemisphere is where the rational paradigm has been profoundly implemented, and within this hemisphere the related concepts of color and race have structured all societies. So profound is the structure made possible through the rational paradigm that I have discussed it in my special report on racism. One can recognize the deep structure of racism by looking at how two different kinds of maps overlap. The map of social, political, and economic marginalization corresponds exactly to the ethnic map, and when we see how closely the two maps are connected, we can see the historical scope of racism. Racism does not come from the cosmos—racism is a construction. There is racism against Africans, and before Africans there was racism against the American Indians, which still exists today.

On a side note, I recently submitted my report to the Human Rights Commission in Geneva, and I challenged the concept of Latin America. I asserted that the concept was ideologically charged because it meant that this hemisphere—at least a certain part of it—was characterized exclusively by its Latin identity. By calling the area Latin American we are demonstrating our ignorance of the true autonomous Indian and African roots of the hemisphere.

I also invite you to consider the notion of diversity following the events of September 11, 2001. It was at this point that the old ideological picture changed

profoundly. We are now witnessing several developments in progress. One is the political instrumentation of diversity. As you remember, the day after September 11, 2001, many Western leaders made statements characterizing what happened as a war between civilizations. President Bush used that concept, as did the German chancellor and the prime minister of Italy. The event was perceived as a war between one civilization—an enlightened one—and another that was symbolized by darkness and backwardness. This perception was not new; it is the recycling of the old ideological approach that divided the enlightened and the dark regions of the world.

Immigration may be the most ancient historical fact; people have been moving from one place to another since the beginning of time. From the first day humans went out of their caves to look for food or run from wild animals they began migrating. Now, however, we are witnessing an ethnicization of migration. The mass media has created a correlation between migration and ethnicity, evident in political speeches, newspaper articles, and editorials. There is a very serious element at play that I want to discuss at greater length. I am referring to the democratization of racism, and it works in two ways.

In the first way we can see that the ethnic reading of immigration and the instrumentalization of racism as xenophobia are combined in the debate about immigration when they are framed as part of the broader effort to combat terrorism. In that regard, the instrumentalization of diversity has become a useful political tool. We can trace the movement of political platforms of the extreme right, especially those that have been promoting ethnic and racist views, as they have slowly but profoundly been imprinted on the political programs of other democratic parties. Over time we see the rhetoric, the concepts, and the approaches of the extreme right and their racist political platforms slowly infiltrating the political program of democratic parties. This has happened via the notion of identity, or more specifically the notion of separate identity. In the post-9/11 ideological political discourse, one concept that emerged was the notion of difference—a difference of identity. Defending an identity means defending it against someone else, and this remains the primary

mode of thinking for many political leaders. Defending identity, in the context of fighting illegal immigration, means reverting back to the old notion of the division of the world into two parts: the enlightened one and the backward one. Still, behind the notion of defending identity, we are witnessing the old ethnic reading of diversity.

I would like to call upon you to politically investigate the way the concept is utilized. One aspect of what I have called the democratization of racism is not only the instrumentalization of diversity, but what we are witnessing in many countries, predominantly in Europe: political leaders of extreme right-wing parties promoting their racist agendas and winning votes. Without a doubt, their platforms give rise to a very popular impact; coalition governments in Switzerland, Austria, Denmark, and most recently in France have incorporated the political platforms of the extreme right. As a result, these right-leaning governments and leaders are in a position to implement their racist agendas using the legitimizing force of democracy through their secured elections. The growing number of alliance governments comprised of extreme right parties has been legitimized through the debates on immigration, asylum, and combating terrorism.

I invite you to consider how this can be changed. The historical connotations of diversity and its subsequent ideological mappings have been profoundly influential. Let us move away from this concept of diversity toward one of value. Pluralism is a value. It is the acceptance, recognition, protection, and promotion of diversity, but not only diversity. If you remain at the level of promoting diversity, there is a risk of the concept being instrumentalized, which we have seen throughout history.

This leads me to the matter for which I have been trying to raise awareness in the United Nations since I began my position as Special Rapporteur. I speak of the fundamental causes of racism and xenophobia and the rise of racist violence. People are being killed in some countries on the basis of their race, religion, or culture. I recently investigated racism in Russia and submitted my report at the Human Rights Council. In Moscow people who did not look Slavic—those who appeared

African, Arabian, Chinese, or Asian—were being killed in daylight. Recently in Belgium, a woman from Mali was killed in Anvers (Antwerp) by a young man who took his gun and began shooting people in the street who did not look white enough to him. He killed the Malian woman and a young white girl for whom she was caring. This rise of racist violence is something we must keep in mind. It can be linked to the rise of political instrumentalization of racism, which can be connected to the instrumentalization of diversity. I call this notion the intellectualization of racism.

One example of how racism is intellectualized in the United States can be seen in the work of Samuel Huntington. Huntington's theory, as developed in his book *The Clash of Civilizations*², is that the Cold War will be replaced by wars of civilization, particularly between the Western and Islamic civilizations. His theory posits that a clash between these two civilizations is inevitable. In articulating these ideas, Huntington has recycled some very old concepts and ideas without realizing he was doing so. His latest work entitled *Who Are We?*³ is a reflection on American identity. For Huntington, the demographic and cultural influence of Latinos is a threat to American identity. Huntington is a professor at Harvard University, and his credibility helps to legitimize this form of discrimination against Latinos in this country.

Huntington is not alone. If you go to France, for example, one can find a surge of books by purported scholars that openly legitimize racism and reuse antiquated concepts such as the hierarchy of different races, civilizations, and cultures. The ethnic interpretation of immigration and the intellectualization of racism create a very dangerous combination, which is one of the most significant threats we are presently facing. If you focus your attention only on the picture I have been painting, the image is quite bleak. Therefore, I want you to look behind the picture.

I cannot confine my tenure as Special Rapporteur to only presenting a dark picture of the increase of racism and xenophobia, and the ethnicization of

immigration. What I want to do instead is use some of the positive examples from my own life. I come from Senegal, where we have never had an ethnic war. I come from a country where one of the fundamental values is the concept that man is a medicine of man—that the one thing that can solve your problems is the person in front of you. The Archbishop of Senegal has a brother who is the imam of a mosque. My wife and I are Christians, though I come from a very traditional Muslim-Sufi family. We have had three presidents in Senegal married to white women and this has never caused any problems. The Senegalese perspective of plurality has helped me to see that there are different ways to live, and I want to use that experience to improve conditions for all people.

My experience in UNESCO has also taught me a great deal. There I learned something that I am proud to bring to this critical review of diversity and how we may combat racism. I speak of the fundamental notion that identity is a construction. Identity and racism do not arise out of nothingness—they have political, social, economic, and cultural contexts. In order to combat racism, we must deconstruct these concepts. This is why I have pride in my work as a Rapporteur, so that people can identify the basic cause of this increase in racism, especially since September 11, 2001.

One way of reflecting on the issues we are facing is to consider that at the core of the old historic picture is the notion of multiculturalism. Behind the notion of multiculturalism is a kind of identity crisis, which many societies are facing. National identities have been built over the ages, as well as story book constitutions, and these no longer conform to the multiple dynamics of their societies. The more societies become ethnic, religious, and cultural pluralities, the more the dominant classes—political and intellectual—cling to this strong notion of a national identity that must be defended. The dominant classes believe that their national identity gives them ethical, religious, or cultural content. In the end this is a clash between national identity and the multiple dynamics of societies, which in my view, drives at the core of the old problem. Finally,

²Huntington, S. P. (1996). *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

³Huntington, S. P. (2004). *Who are we? The challenges to America's national identity*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

the tension caused by the supposed clash of identities is instrumentalized by the extreme right through the debate on immigration, asylum, and combating terrorism, all of which have a very powerful political impact.

The challenge we are facing—the one thing that we must confront and revisit—is a notion of multiculturalism as a conclusion to civilizations. Multiculturalism is used by some political leaders and scholars as a mantra. But when we carefully read the writings and speeches of these leaders, we realize that there is a very profound misunderstanding of culture, and this is another concept I want to invite you to critically revisit. When you encounter the notion of culture, it is mostly read and practiced in what I call the first level, or first dimension, which is an aesthetic dimension of culture. The aesthetic dimension of culture refers to the diverse ways in which people and societies have expressed themselves through food, clothing, music, and art, among other aspects. This is the primary level of culture, and the one on which most of the speeches about culture converge. If you remain at that level, you will play into the hands of those who portray diversity as radical difference. For instance, you might find people who like African masks and collect African art, but who are profoundly racist. There are also those who like Islamic art, yet who are anti-Islam. The list of those who limit culture to this one dimension and demonstrate a particular form of hypocrisy is vast. What I am saying is that those who have been promoting the notion of diversity as a radical difference have tried to confine us to a notion of culture as only aesthetic expression.

What I want to do is deepen this interpretation of culture by moving away from the aesthetic toward the ethical understanding of culture. The ethical dimension is comprised of values. Unlike the first level of culture, which has enshrined racism and hierarchy at its fundamental principles, the ethical dimension is different. Yet the first order historical theories of racism have been built on our denial to recognize the value of all people. And on such a basis the promoters of the hierarchy of racism have legitimized all the wanton enterprises of Europe; they have justified slavery and colonization as an exercise in enlightening other people, and brought an invasive and problematic form of civilization to other people because they were assumed to be inferior

and lacking values. One example is Africa—what the English called the Dark Continent and what in France was called *le continent noir*. A dark continent is like the dark matter of the cosmos, where no light escapes. The whole colonial exercise was intended to bring light to Africa, Asia, and elsewhere. In place of the older, more hierarchical and racist interpretation of diversity, I propose the ethical interpretation of diversity.

I want to offer a brief example as to how the elite resist opportunities to move toward a more ethical understanding of diversity. In 2006, in France, there was a revolt in the suburbs of Paris and other cities. The rebels were prompted by discrimination in employment and housing, their confinement to the suburbs, the police force's use of racial profiling, and an obvious correlation between social marginalization and ethnicity. The new migrants and descendants of migrants began to fight against those social, political, and economic expressions of racism in several ways. For instance, they started to raise the issue of exclusion from the national identity; they saw a need to rewrite French history to include the history of their ancestors, which is the history of slavery and colonization. But when they raised the issue of having contributed to the nation and culture, and demanded better treatment, the French and the European elites responded by writing histories that legitimize racism. The extreme right turned the struggle into an opportunity to further entrench their hierarchies and racism.

I invite you to conceptualize and promote diversity at three levels of culture. As I discussed, the first level is aesthetic—what you can touch, see, and taste. While the aesthetic level of diversity is very important, I believe we are better served by engaging in discussions of diversity at the level of value systems. This is the level at which the humanity of different communities is expressed. The acknowledgement and sharing of these values helps everyone to reach full potential as human beings, as part of a community. This level is where identity has been built and enshrined, and sadly where humanity has been refused. We must bring the expression of diversity to that level. In so doing we will prompt the revisiting of old notions of civilization, while advancing an understanding of pluralism that should exemplify

civilized societies. Civilization is not centered in any one continent, race, or culture but it is instead like a garden with many flowers, each of them flourishing.

I launched a slave root program during my time with UNESCO. Our main purpose was to revisit the history of slavery and explore the political, moral, and cultural contexts that gave rise to and supported it. In addition, we looked at the consequences of slavery. Through this project, I personally identified something that had been ignored by many scholars and was not included in many history books: the resistance of the enslaved. Africans had been resisting slavery physically from their first day of capture in the African villages, in their confinement in the forts on the coast of Africa, within the decks of the ships in the middle passage, and on the plantations and in the mines of this hemisphere. When the enslaved Africans were bound on the decks of the slave ships by their necks and hands, as they asked the person next to them what was happening, they developed a culture of resistance. The slaves kept fighting back. Yet this resistance—what I call the “coup de resistance to slavery”—has been largely forgotten by the descendants of the enslaved and deliberately ignored by the culture of slavery.

The slaves knew that in the long term their so-called masters were going to lose because they were blinded by racism. The slave masters saw the enslaved only as a workforce; as muscle to exploit in the mines, the cotton fields, and so on. The slave owners’ racism—their denial and ignorance of the humanity of their captives—constituted a major weakness in the long term. The enslaved realized that they were going to rely on their roots and their culture to preserve their humanity, which was denied by their masters. The enslaved actively observed their masters, examining their dress, body movements, stance, and even the way they danced. They kept observing and they consequently developed what I call the marooned culture. The marooned culture used the value system that was denied to slaves in inventive ways. For example, whenever the master asked the enslaved to worship Christ or the Virgin Mary, the enslaved could not refuse because they would have been killed. The slaves’ response to compulsory worship was to integrate Christ and the Virgin Mary as African gods and give them new identities. By taking what had

been imposed on them and giving it a new African name, identity, and meaning, they resisted. This is the way they invented the *Orisha*, the *Candomble* in Brazil, and the *Santeria* in Cuba.

Slaves did not blindly accept the value systems of the slave owners; they transformed them. For example, in Brazil, Sundays were feast days and slaves were made to kill a pig, yet they were not allowed to eat the sweet flesh. Instead, they used the bones for themselves and cooked them with seafood and herbs, inventing the Brazilian dish *feijoada*. Slaves kept inventing and subverting. When the master said they could not use any weapons they invented Capoeira. To their masters Capoeira was just a dance, but it was actually a massive act of resistance.

In my view, the inventive and transformative power of culture and values was a fundamental force in the liberation of the slaves. Maybe the best example is the Haitian Revolution. As you know, the enslaved Africans of Haiti started their revolt on the night of August 22, 1791. Their masters were surprised because the slaves revolted throughout the entire island of Española. We might marvel at how they were able to revolt without the aid of radios or mobile phones. The communicative power of culture, which in this case was Vodou, allowed them to join forces in the revolt. In Haiti, they used their culture—their African rituals—to spread the word; in the fading light after working all day in the fields, they gathered to drum and dance. Their masters permitted this because they thought they would be in better condition to work the next morning. What the masters failed to realize was that the slaves were organizing their revolt using Vodou rituals. This is one example of how the blindness of racism overlooks the transformative power of culture.

These historical accounts have not been passed on because an ideology of slavery still exists. Such narratives are untold because they will convince the descendants of the enslaved, or the descendants of the communities of indigenous people, that resistance is possible and has been occurring for centuries in ways we do not often recognize. The history of the oppressed can help us to realize that resistance is not only physical but intellectual. We can reconquer humanity through

culture, by transforming our ethics, our value systems, and our spirituality. The aesthetic, ethical, and spiritual levels must be the fundamental framework in which we translate the notion of diversity into pluralism.

In conclusion, I want to share another African proverb. “In the forests,” it says, “while the branches of the trees are fighting with each other, their roots are kissing.” This proverb represents a kind of solution to our current dilemma. Let us consider the branches of the trees as the diversity of races, ethnicities, and religions. This type of diversity is what is visible. Our branches fight each other because ideological or political events make them touch, move around, and fight. Our solution, however, lies not in the branches but in the roots. The roots represent what is invisible and intangible—the universal values that all communities have created. We should start at the roots and move toward the branches rather than the other way around. If we begin by cutting the branches then we risk killing the trees. Starting from the roots means we have to work at the level of the tree trunks. The trunks represent society, and this is where we can revisit identity. At the trunk we can revisit our histories, our writings, our value systems, and the ways in which we live together. When we focus our efforts on the tree trunks, we can revitalize the branches and make them live together without fighting each other. This allows us to practice a multiculturalism that is not discriminatory but recognizes the authenticity, value, importance, and specificity of each community. This is the only way to practice unity in diversity, and to both recognize and promote the individuality of each community.

QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

Facilitated by James Early

I want to thank Doudou Diène for giving us a description of the global context of discrimination with regard to culture and humanity, and for urging us to revisit the three levels of culture. I think this message is particularly appropriate for a conference of image makers who deal with the aesthetic level—image makers who have promoted historical values about the distinct humanities from which we all originate, and who have projected a transformative spirit about how a new world can be drawn from that perspective. The notion of the citizen artist is something that I hope we will carry with us, especially given the significance of culture in the world today.

In the context of a multilogue and in the democratic expression of hearing all voices, I want to open the floor to hear your observations, your commentaries, your critiques, and perhaps you may have some questions to ask Doudou Diène.

Carmen Guerrero

Though I live in Arizona, I am originally from Brazil. Right now I think that diversity in America is what separates us. Everyone tends to think that diversity brings us together, but it does not; pluralism is what brings us together. I want to thank Mr. Diène for making this argument and for sharing a new vision.

Rosanna Penn Fields

As a descendant of slaves, your message brought tears to my eyes and I thank you. I would also like to know why you live in France.

Loie Fecteau

I want to thank you for the image of the tree. This is a wonderful reminder of how sometimes when everything seems very dark and hopeless, especially when we are at war, that beneath the surface we are more alike than we realize. Your words made me think of the transformative power of the arts and how we could use them to inspire us to go forward.

Unidentified Speaker

This is my first time attending this conference and I did not expect to hear such realness. I think that as artists we believe we can avoid these topics, but it is important to address them. As an artist who works with young people in an organization that promotes the arts and social justice, I think that when you apply your life to what you are saying as an artist you make different choices about the way you live and you also promote different choices to the people who buy your art. I live in a community in Chicago that has been completely gentrified, but I think back to my youth; my father was part of the Black Panther movement. I think about the struggle and hardship in our community and now it is gone. The organization I work with is dedicated to preserving hip hop. I grew up with hip hop, yet I hesitate to identify with it because of how it is portrayed in the media. Listening to you helps me remember why I am an artist. This is why I inspire young people to take a stand—not to be the best booty-shaker or the best painter, but to be the best person that they were put on this earth to be.

Jan Williamson

What stood out for me was the idea that nationalism around the globe is under threat. This is a profound thought and a new insight for me. Population growth seems to be the underlying issue here, which is something you did not discuss. Our cultures appear to be bumping into each other because there are so many more people on the planet and I am wondering if you might talk a little bit about population growth in general.

Makeda Coaston

Thank you for presenting that historic and contemporary array of ideological forces that have been rallied to redefine who we are and to legitimize other groups of people. I agree that when we try to expand these thoughts in terms of aesthetics, values, and spirituality, those same forces then label us as being essentialists. Could you comment on this, as well as the notion that regardless of the ideologies we employ in response, those forces are not going to come up with counter ideas but instead will likely talk more about why their values are important for their own sake?

Doudou Diéne

Thank you for all of your questions. My purpose was not to say anything enlightening but just to raise questions and to share ideas. Still, I will try to answer your questions on two key issues. One is the complexity of and the difficulty in practicing diversity. In this room I see all shades of color, which is beautiful. What we often forget is that we all wear cultural glasses. By this I mean that throughout history the manner by which different communities view each other has been instrumentalized and ideologically structured. None of our glasses are pure and without distortion. Each lens produces stereotypical images, so it is important for us clean our glasses.

Allow me to give you one example. Take three communities in this country that have been equally discriminated against: the indigenous Indian community, the African community, and the Jewish community. Consider the relationships of these communities to society and the way they look at each other. Though each is a clear victim of discrimination, they do not live together peacefully and lovingly. We know of the tensions that exist among these communities, so it is very important to recognize the complexity of the notion of diversity and to realize the need to move from the mere fact of differences toward the consideration of living together.

This is why the notion of pluralism is very important—it is a value. Pluralism means we respect and recognize diversity. Consider the history books of the United States and the position given to the American Indian and African descendants. Promoting, respecting, and defending pluralism means enacting rules and laws that will defend diversity. Combating discrimination requires that we use the law to condemn it and correct it. Racism is similar to an iceberg. You can melt the surface of racism with the law, but unless you touch the submerged parts of the iceberg and thaw those deeper levels where feelings and emotions reside, then whatever has been done at the legal level can be undone. This is what we are seeing in South Africa, despite the political defeat of apartheid. Communities live side by side, but they still wear the old cultural glasses and the hostility is still manifest. This is why in

this country you see profound expressions of racism in the field of education. Think of the challenges to affirmative action and what lies behind that mentality. This is partly why whenever we speak of diversity and combating racism and discrimination, we must devise what I call ethical and cultural strategies; we need to begin those processes that enable us to clean our glasses so that we can address our emotions and feelings on a deeper level.

I was asked why I live in Paris and I want to respond to that question. The reason I live in Paris is because my country was colonized by France, so I ended up studying in Paris. In addition, my wife is half Senegalese and half French. Her father was a Senegalese soldier who went to France to fight in the war. He married a French woman and is now buried in a cemetery in eastern France. As you know, I worked at UNESCO for almost 30 years. This meant that I was not just in France and Senegal but many other places as well.

By way of closing this discussion I want to share another African proverb. The proverb was coined by Africans sitting under the baobab trees observing the comings and goings of foreigners over the centuries. The proverb says that the white man only sees what he knows. What this means is that the Europeans did not see the diversity of Africa. The cultural glasses they were wearing distorted their view of the indigenous people and land. So, the old challenge of promoting diversity and combating discrimination means seeing past our cultural glasses, which should be both an individual and a collective journey.

SYMPOSIUM WELCOME ADDRESS FRIDAY, JULY 13, 2007

WESTAF Welcome by Juan Carrillo, WESTAF Trustee

As we open this dialogue I want to share some thoughts with you. First of all, though I recently retired, I was an arts administrator for many years. Some of you may know of me from my time with the California Arts Council. Before that I was a member of a group called the Royal Chicano Air Force, which was based in Sacramento. The Royal Chicano Air Force is a group of artists engaged with the world and dedicated to community development. The notion of artists reflecting a community, becoming a voice for that community, and helping to organize a community helped to nurture me as a young Chicano artist. Over the last few years, I felt that momentum once again as WESTAF began to focus strongly on multiculturalism in the arts.

There was another foundational experience—one that came from attending a conference in New Orleans many years ago—that I would like to share with you. By way of offering some contrast, let me explain how conferences usually worked for me. Typically, I would scan the hundreds attending and look for others like myself, and I would see very few people who shared my background, my culture, my ethnicity. I believe many of us have that experience; we go to places and we look around and hope to find others similar to us (maybe our commonality is our color, maybe it is our language). I often went to conferences to attend to some other kind of business—business that was missing from the agenda. I went with some sense of encountering community and building it—organizing it.

The New Orleans conference turned out to be different. In fact, the origins of TAAC began there because some people who shared a feeling about the role of the arts and the role of artists relative to those larger numbers of people we sometimes call community decided to coalesce and do something about the missing agenda. The New Orleans conference happened to be about multicultural art, but many of us felt like it did not speak to the issue in the way we felt it should have. So on the banks of the Mississippi, the idea of TAAC was born. TAAC was created to make a difference,

to become a national voice for the arts, for those we sometimes refer to as “people of color.” But TAAC actually became more than that. It is about a spirit—a certain responsibility. What eventually transpired was a dialogue, a conference. We are now at Dialogue XI. I believe we have been coming year after year because of what TAAC provides: When you are informed, when you are inspired, your spirit rises.

Buenos días, everyone. I hope you had a good night. I also hope that last night’s presentation left you with much to think about. This morning we would like to start with an introduction. Please welcome Erin Trapp, once a staff member of WESTAF and now the director of the Denver Office of Cultural Affairs.

Erin Trapp

On behalf of the city of Denver, I want to thank you very much for giving us the honor of hosting this conference. This is a very exciting gathering to have happening in our city. I have the great pleasure this morning to introduce Mayor John Hickenlooper, who hates it when I say things like this, but he is really one of the reasons that Denver is the culturally vibrant city that it is. We hope that you will all have the opportunity to experience Denver’s culture between sessions of this conference. Mayor Hickenlooper has been named one of the top five big-city mayors in the country by *Time* magazine, and I think you will soon understand why. Please join me in welcoming Mayor Hickenlooper.

Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper

Erin is exactly right—I hate those kinds of introductions. I am not yet convinced that there is such a thing as a “top five” mayor. So many mayors are talented in so many different ways that the notion of measuring or comparing them is a bit of a slight to all of us. Today I would like to talk about Denver and the way we embrace diversity and multiculturalism.

We have ten sister cities around the world, and we send and receive delegations from those cities. Denver also has one of the two largest Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. celebrations in the country—our “Marade,” an enormous combination of a march and a parade. Our Cinco de Mayo celebration is very close to the largest, if not the largest, in the country.

This community has always valued bridging cultural boundaries and learning more about oneself through learning about others. We have had a multitude of international events. My predecessor, Mayor Wellington Webb, hosted the Summit of the Eight, which brought together the leaders of the eight largest developed countries in the world. In 2006, the 10th anniversary of Peace Jam took place in Denver. Many of you may not be familiar with Peace Jam, but the event brought together 12 Nobel Peace Prize Laureates from all over the world. They spent a long weekend surrounded by approximately 10,000 children from the United States and several other countries. The Nobel Peace Prize Laureates are remarkably powerful leaders in their own countries, yet we do not tend to celebrate them within our own communities in the United States. Peace Jam addresses this need in a powerful way.

When I was elected, Mayor Webb's term had expired. Prior to the election, I had never been involved in politics. I never ran for student council, nor had I served as class president in school. I was a geologist who had been laid off, so I decided to open a restaurant. Similar to many others attempting to operate a restaurant, I almost went out of business, but my staff and I worked very hard until the business was eventually a success. Some time later, Coors Field was built two blocks away and we suddenly became very successful. My grandfather told me that you had to work hard your whole life, but in the end it was better to be lucky than to be good.

I was goaded into running for mayor. Mayor Webb served for 12 years, and was one of the very best American mayors in the second half of the 20th century. Before Webb, Mayor Federico Peña was elected as Denver's first mayor of color. He served eight years before going on to become Secretary of Transportation. As you can tell, Denver has been blessed with many good leaders, so there was some understandable concern about a white restaurateur serving as Mayor.

Still, I campaigned on a notion of collaboration—whether it be the inner city working in collaboration with the suburbs, the metropolitan area being better connected to the rest of the state, or the city government partnering with the school district—I knew that we needed to think about partnerships and collaborative

opportunities. A substantial part of that collaboration was based on the value of diversity. In fact, I used to tease Mayor Webb that I was going to have a more diverse administration than he had. He laughed and said, "Good luck!" because he did not believe I had the connections and relationships to draw talented people with different cultural experiences—Latinos, African-Americans, Asians, and those with multicultural backgrounds—to run our big city agencies. He did not realize that the moment I was elected, I created a transition committee for every single function of our government. In so doing we put together anywhere from 15 to 25 heads of nonprofit organizations, foundation directors, business executives, and civic leaders to explore the function of each agency and recruit talented people. In the end, approximately 60 percent of the heads of agencies were culturally diverse.

At times, it was somewhat difficult to fill an opening in a particular agency. For instance, the transition committee gave me a list of three finalists to run the Parks and Recreation Department and each applicant was a white male. We paused and thought, "Wait a second. Of our 29 recreation centers, 94 percent of the kids they work with are of color. The director of that agency should have a more direct awareness of the challenges these kids are facing. Perhaps we should look harder for someone more appropriate." We eventually found Kim Bailey, who at the time of appointment was the third or fourth highest person at the equivalent department in Chicago. She was getting her doctorate in child development and had been studying 12- to 16-year-olds and the ways in which their self-identity changes. Kim also happens to be African-American. In the end, she was the best person for the position. In fact, I can confidently say that we hired the best person we could find for every position. We never once sacrificed excellence for diversity, and we never once sacrificed diversity for excellence.

I believe the success we have had as an administration is due to the diversity of the people that comprise it. With every decision we make, the range of different backgrounds with respect to ethnicity, age, and place of origin provides us with a broad array of options, ideas, and solutions to any given problem. I spend probably 60 to 70 percent of the city's time resolving unexpected

consequences of well-intentioned decisions, and having that diverse background to address those situations is incredibly powerful. I believe we have been spared many embarrassing consequences that too often accompany government solutions through the power of diversity and by using civic engagement to reach out and unify our population. This is something our country is lacking as a whole, but you all are here to help address that problem.

On behalf of the City of Denver, I welcome you to this gathering. I see that one of our great city council members, Doug Linkhart, is here. Doug has been a champion of diversity from the city perspective for many years. I want to congratulate and champion the work you are all doing. I think it is incredibly important that we push these boundaries as the global economy expands, and the world becomes more competitive. Diversity is our greatest strength, an asset that no other country will be able to match. If we appropriately value and use our diversity, it will be our greatest competitive advantage. I want to thank you all for helping to make that happen.

SYMPOSIUM SESSION: A

The History and Significance of The Association of American Cultures and Other Organizations' Work on Racism and Cultural Democracy in our Nation

Presenters: Suzanne Benally, A.B. Spellman, Louis LeRoy

Discussant: Loie Fecteau

James Early

Good morning to all of you. We had a very rich beginning and I know we will continue. This morning we are going to take a look back in order to look forward. We start with a reflection and analysis of the initial context for the establishment of organizations of color such as TAAC and an introduction to global connections to cultural democracy. I am going to now turn the microphone over to my colleague Sunya Ganbold. Though formerly from Denver, Sunya now lives in New York and works as a branding and marketing manager at The Apartment Creative Agency. Yesterday she told me, "I am going to learn all I can about branding and then I am coming back to the arts." Please welcome our chief facilitator for the morning.

Sunya Ganbold

Thank you, James. Today we have several wonderful presenters discussing our central topic. Suzanne Benally is the chair of the Environmental Studies Program at Naropa University in Boulder. A.B. Spellman is a scholar, a poet, and an avid jewelry maker. He is also a former vice chairman at the National Endowment for the Arts. Finally, we have Louis LeRoy, the chairman of the TAAC Board and executive director of Yuma Fine Arts and Yuma Art Center Museum in Arizona.

Before we give our speakers a chance to present their thoughts and ideas, I would like to ask each of you to preface your speeches with an interesting tidbit from your professional or personal background that is related to the topic we will be discussing. I would also like to mention that our first discussant, Loie Fecteau, is the executive director at New Mexico Arts in Santa Fe. We begin with Suzanne Benally.

Suzanne Benally

Often I am introduced by way of my professional duties and I want to say a quick word about what that means. True, I am on the faculty of Environmental Studies and I am the associate vice president for academic affairs at Naropa University, a small Buddhist-inspired college in Boulder, Colorado. All the same, I do not know if this tells you who I really am. On this occasion I would like to introduce myself a little differently and that is from the perspective of my own cultural background. I am Navajo and Santa Clara Tewa from New Mexico. Were I in my own community, I would introduce myself as a member of the Kinlich'i'nii Clan, which is the Red House Clan—my mother's clan. I would also acknowledge that I descended from my father's clan, which is the Summer Clan of the Tewa People. That introduction acknowledges who I am to a community that is based on clanships and values the importance of community over the individual.

When I began to think about what I wanted to discuss today I realized that I want to reflect on organizations, but I want to do so through a personal story. This will allow me to connect some of the conversations we heard yesterday, such as Doudou Diéne's discussion on moving from diversity to a deeper understanding of cultural pluralism. My story presents a familiar experience that has become a common metaphor for many of us, and this metaphor can be applied to many different contexts.

When I was a very young child, probably about three, I was living with my extended and very traditional family in Cove, New Mexico. Periodically, the whole family would travel in our pickup truck to Shiprock, a larger community nearby, where the Bureau of Indian Affairs was located. As we drove up to that agency, which was housed in a white-washed building, the landscape turned a fertile green and it was enclosed by what seemed like a ten-foot chain link fence. We always parked outside the fence. We understood very early on that we did not belong and the fence was there to keep us out. We knew the white man was in there. He created, cultivated, and owned that square piece of land in the desert and we were not a part of it. We also understood some of the power dynamics around

the visible demarcation of inclusion and exclusion very early on. I often encounter the same kind of physical infrastructure—whether it is a school, a prison, or a governmental building—and each is often enclosed by some type of fence. Inside there are organizations. When I think about organizations, I always ask myself, “How far have we moved from that landscape or paradigm of exclusion?”

Perhaps we have made some changes, but we have not moved entirely away from a construct of exclusion. Even as we build ethnic-specific organizations, we still struggle in our relationship with dominant organizations, and we are still trying to assert our voices—which are sometimes multiple voices. Those multiple voices sometimes occur outside of ourselves or we internalize them—something that we have acquired from generations of colonization and struggle for identity in order to survive and to gain access. But simply having multiple voices is not sufficient; we have to find a way to turn voice into agency, then we can use that agency as a tool for change and shifting power. When I think about organizations today, especially culturally specific organizations, I think about these ongoing challenges. I am reminded that the significant challenges and barriers are always in the context of something larger. When I think about arts organizations in communities, I think about overarching and interrelated economic, social, and educational contexts. Any change we are trying to make through our arts organizations always takes place within a larger context. To that end, our work in arts agencies faces many challenges in the broader context and comes with challenges and opportunities.

Working primarily with institutions of higher education, I must say that after all of these years we are still focused on issues of access and representation—which we call diversity. We certainly have not moved from diversity to the kind of cultural pluralism that Doudou Diéne discussed. We are lacking that deeper engagement with each other that respects all of our cultural, ethnic, and racial heritages. Our discussion of cultural pluralism has to take place within a context of broader issues; we must talk about cultural pluralism in the context of democracy, social justice, and human rights. One challenge we are facing is that while we are still

struggling to understand and address diversity issues within our own country, the boundaries are opening up and we are talking about diversity issues globally.

As organizations, we still have much work to do, and the wisdom we need to guide us lies in examining cultural pluralism in our communities. If I have spent my life trying to take down the fences I mentioned earlier—trying to find access into the white-washed buildings, the white organizations—I have also spent my life trying to enter that powerful, master narrative while trying to keep my voice and self intact. Our task as organizations should include finding ways to interrupt the master narrative, so that we can represent our own visions and find the agency in our own voices.

I was asked to discuss what I struggle with and what currently concerns me. From an Indigenous perspective, we talk about art as life and art as “lifeway.” This means understanding art as a sacred process rather than art as in terms of the object produced. The creative process that we might call art is truly in the realm of the sacred. For Indigenous people, art is an expression of who we are and is tied deeply to place, location, and land. We understand art as an expression of stories, ritual, change, continuity, and cultural survival. For this reason, I am alarmed when we talk dualistically about non-specific ethnic art versus ethnic specific art. A conversation debating a move away from ethnic specific art can symbolize the cultural genocide of a people. This is not to say that we shouldn’t be cultivating the kind of art emerging from the many intersections of peoples and cultures and recent generations of experience. I propose that we consider art in the myriad of various ethnic and cultural relationships, ethnic-specific and contemporary expressions of change.

We have great environmental change and global warming facing us. The first impact of global warming will be the devastation of Indigenous peoples—their communities and villages in several areas of the world. We have a lot to think about in this regard, and we need to understand the role of the arts in finding a voice to stay connected to the land, to focus on the environment, and to deal with the changes we are facing.

Sunya Ganbold

Thank you, Suzanne; that was very powerful. With these kinds of gatherings and through the dialogue that emerges, I think we are beginning to gain access to the other side of the fence. The next speaker I would like to present is A.B. Spellman.

A.B. Spellman

It is wonderful to be here, I always take pleasure in seeing old friends with whom I have been in the trenches for decades. I am rewarded further by being amongst people whom I met when they were young and have gone on to become prominent leaders in their own right.

I have been asked to talk about the role that TAAC and its members have played in combating racism in America. I think this is a crucial subject to raise, but first I would like to share a personal story about how I found my authentic voice. When I went to the National Endowment for the Arts, where I remained for 30 years, I was unable to publish due to the conflict of interest rules for the small presses that applied to the agency. As a consequence, I stopped writing. Then sometime in my 60s, I woke up and looked in the mirror and said, "A.B. Spellman, you are a poet. That is how you got into this business. But you are no longer a poet because you are not writing poetry. You are what you do." I struggled to get my voice back, which was extremely difficult. I know it is tempting to put down your art once you become involved in running an organization, but I strongly encourage you not to stop creating art. Finding your voice again is one of the toughest challenges you will encounter.

I first became involved with the National Endowment for the Arts around 1975. As a defender of jazz, I spent a lot of time writing about it. One particular day, I was in a meeting of the National Council of the Arts and I heard an argument between council members and Billy Taylor, the great jazz pianist. The council members were questioning whether jazz was appropriate for the National Endowment for the Arts to fund since many thought that it was commercial music. I sat listening to this and finally I said, "If you were to ask these people to distinguish between a solo of Lester Young and Coleman Hawkins, two of the giants

of music recognized throughout the world as great geniuses, you could empty the room." The exchange made it clear to me what we are up against. Jazz music had changed the culture of the world, but these folks did not seem to know that. This would not be true of the Académie Française, the arts councils of Great Britain or Japan, or any other similar body. Yet these council members did not know it. This is largely what we fought against during the TAAC business: trying to break through the monolithic structure that reigned over the giant institutions that had built the 501(c)3 world, and to which our organizations were trying to adapt their own realities.

With respect to TAAC and racism, the organizations that comprised TAAC in its early years were primarily groups that came into existence as a result of the great human rights movements originating in the 1950s through the 60s. I am using the word "originating" with some reservation because things do not come about in such a clean-cut manner. There have always been human rights struggles in the United States and elsewhere, but I speak specifically of the events that occurred here in the 1950s and the 1960s: the Native American arts movement, the Latino arts movement—that is to say the La Raza arts movement—the Asian American arts movement, the African-American arts movement, and the rural arts movement. There were also the women's movement, the gay and lesbian movement, and the peace movement. One thing we did in the 1960s was begin movements, and I take great pride in being part of that generation. Many people who founded arts organizations came into consciousness during this period, and their consciousness was fiercely anti-racist. They operated largely from the perspective that it was not enough to oppose racism; you had to fight racism with one hand while building something with the other. That is what they attempted to do by sending artists back into the communities. So people founded organizations in their communities, and gave communities access to the arts and to their own voices and heritage. There is a great multiplicity of forms that were considered art in that sense.

The consciousness that motivated these actions was definitely an anti-racist consciousness. The racism that affected them was of the modern kind—the kind of

racism that never identifies itself by name. I am sure you all know it well; this form is very subtle and operates in a lot of ways that are difficult to combat unless you have a great force behind you. The advantage at this time—a great force in the streets—struck some terror in the hearts of power. Filmmaker Michael Moore made an interesting point made in his film *Sicko*: countries with state-sponsored healthcare systems have governments that are afraid of their people. Without a fear of the people on the part of the government there cannot be a government that responds by offering services. I think there is a great deficit in this country since the decline of these powerful movements; the government no longer fears the people. Unlike a parliamentary society that has a source of public power because the parties must form coalitions in order to rule, a society like ours has no parties—the Democratic and Republican parties are barely parties in this sense. These two parties are so much a part of the great structure of modern technological post-industrial capitalism that they do not have the capacity to address real problems in a meaningful way. Not to mention that the parties do not give a real voice to the people, but that is another conversation in its own right.

Some of the organizations I mentioned earlier were explicitly activists; I will cite two as examples. The first is El Teatro Campesino in California, led by the great Louis Valdez. This organization began as the agitprop wing of Caesar Chavez's farmers' movement. El Teatro presented agitprop theater rather brilliantly; campesinos were involved in the making of the plays, which were all about the exploitation of farmhands by farm owners. Another activist organization was the Free Southern Theater, led by the great John O'Neal. They saw themselves as a cultural wing of the most militant aspect of the Southern civil rights movement. They worked very hard to arouse communities by preparing them for the voter registration people who would later arrive. Other rural arts groups, like the Foxfire Movement in the mountains of Tennessee and the Appleshop in the tri-state area, were doing similar things with rural culture. This type of activist guerrilla theater was very good, and I am sorry that it faded out the way it did. Seeing a theater troupe jumping off their truck in parking lots, setting up, and doing a play

was wonderful. While these companies may not have had a long life in the theater catalog, they were very powerful at the time.

I think it is vital that we begin thinking about activism again. The political aspect was very powerful and the potential was great around the time when the first coalitions among people of color formed in this country. Bringing people from different communities together is a difficult thing, particularly when they are struggling and have been pitted against each other to fight over crumbs dropped in the local economy. It is a challenge to get these communities to work together because they are facing the same issues, causes, and enemies—there is a long history of this sort of struggle in America.

If you have the time, I recommend that you read C. Vann Woodward's⁴ book about the Georgia populist Tom Watson. It is a very slim book about the 19th century populist movement of agrarian reform. Vann Woodward writes of these great agrarian activists struggling against the railroads and big industry, which were crushing the potential of the agrarian workers. Early in the Georgia movement, Tom Watson acknowledged that he was a bigot, but he realized that the black farmer had the same issues as the white farmer, and both would be stronger if they worked together. The author goes on to tell how the movement began and how the separate racial groups fought together, until Tom Watson turned completely in the opposite direction. He became the most vehement racist around, working with the Klan largely because he found that the Southern politician was able to obtain greater power among his farm members simply by raising the words "Black Rule" among them. Watson said the only way to move forward was to keep the black man so far down that he poses no threat at all. This is a very interesting book, especially with respect to the way the powerful were able to harness the movement so that it turned against itself and lost its authenticity. This is quite common among people at the bottom of society, and it warrants further study.

⁴Woodward, C.V. (1938). *Tom Watson: Agrarian rebel*. New York: Macmillan.

Returning to the present, the TAAC movement appeared to evolve into a very powerful force in the cultural wars. The organization could have counterbalanced the great weight that large institutions have over cultural resources. TAAC also could have been a strong voice in the larger political issues that arose during the period since its founding. However, I think there have been some disappointments in the role that our cultural organizations have taken in the current political arena. I did not think that the African-American cultural organizations were strident enough during the campaign against apartheid in South Africa, for example. I attended conferences that did not offer any resolutions about South Africa—I was working for the government then and I could not make that case myself. Nevertheless, the work of TAAC in the United States cannot be denied; it has been instrumental in giving voice to the voiceless. We can see some of the results of that work at this conference. I think the value of TAAC is clear, particularly in terms of its goals, definitions, and arguments for an America that is not well represented by an extension of European culture. This point has been well made and is understood by those who enjoy the arts everywhere.

Sunya Ganbold

Our next presenter is Louis LeRoy.

Louis LeRoy

Good morning, everyone. I have been asked to provide some historical context behind who we are, what TAAC is. TAAC was founded in 1984, but I was involved before it was even conceptualized. Because I grew up with the organization, I think that starting with some personal history would be best. As contemporary Americans of color, we are fortunate because we have chosen to live within our own context—the people, languages, traditions, and understandings from which we came—in contrast to some Americans who seem to have distanced themselves from their ethnic heritage and fellow immigrants. The Irish Americans no longer maintain their language, and the reasons are clear. When the Irish immigrated to this country the culture demanded that everyone assimilate and join this huge pot of vegetables and simmer until everything came out looking the same. Of course that did not actually

happen, but the effort was made to achieve a certain level of sameness nonetheless. We are unique and different and this is where our strength lies. Our strength also lies in the stories we share as fellow immigrants, or children of immigrants, of color.

I would like to start my story by telling you that I was born in the small town of Yuma, Arizona. Yuma is an interesting community; it is in the desert and is isolated because it is 300 miles from a major metropolitan area, so people who live in Yuma are really out of the information loop. I am a Chicano and I am fair skinned. My parents would not allow us to speak Spanish because they thought we would fare better if we passed for white. This created somewhat of a problem for us because we lived behind my grandparents' house, and neither my grandmother nor my grandfather could speak English. We were not supposed to speak Spanish and they could not speak English, yet we had to communicate. To the left of our house lived an African-American family. There was a traditional bias within our ethnic community—Mexicans had a long tradition of not caring for African Americans, which meant we were not supposed to play with *los negritos* who lived next door. We solved that problem by having rock fights—we hit each other. Our parents considered our fighting an appropriate behavior, but we were actually playing and not fighting.

As the years passed, I became an artist. I started painting in the third grade and have been painting ever since. I received my degree from the University of Arizona, but even with the degree I found myself without a career. You have to create your own opportunities if you are an artist in this country. If you go to an employment agency and tell them that you are an artist they will try to talk you into being a taxi driver. I ended up working for six years in an institution for children with developmental disabilities. This facility was located in Coolidge, Arizona, and we oversaw about 1,100 children who were held there by the state.

After six years I thought about going back to school to gain some credentials related to developmental disabilities. I can clearly remember telling myself, "Louis, you are really an artist; you are not interested in developmental disabilities. You are just here because you

cannot find a different job and this is a way to make a living, but there must be another way of making a living that is aligned with the arts." I ended up working for the Arizona Commission on the Arts, which had just started in Phoenix. To my good fortune, the woman running the organization was from Yuma and we knew one another because we had the same art teacher. She knew my background and that I was very familiar with the Mexican culture, and we lived side by side with Native Americans in Yuma. There are a few small reservations in the area—the Quechans and the Cocopah. My background, along with her faith in me, enabled me to become the first expansion arts coordinator for the state of Arizona. My boss, Louise, consistently told me to go out and talk to members of the Mexican community. She wanted me to go to the reservations, make more telephone calls, and generally get out of the office to meet people in order to increase the number of grants we received from them; my job was to stimulate activity within the ethnic communities in Arizona.

I began with TAAC when Louise and I went to a conference in Seattle she grabbed me by the collar and said, "Go talk to that guy over there. He is from the National Endowment for the Arts and he has this new program. He ought to know who you are." I felt awkward talking to this man I did not know, but I followed her guidance and eventually ended up on a National Endowment for the Arts expansion arts panel. My work related to issues of ethnicity and the arts led to a job with the National Endowment for the Arts. Unfortunately, when President Reagan was elected, he reduced government spending on the arts and I consequently lost my job.

Next I found myself as the executive director of the San Antonio Arts Council. While in that position I met some important people, like Barbara Nicholson, the executive director for the District of Columbia Commission on the Arts. I mention her name because she was crucial to the start of this organization. TAAC exists because of the support of several state and district art agencies, including those from Illinois, Ohio, Texas, and Washington, D.C. From the outset, the state arts agencies believed that their leadership positions could be used to found important organizations like The Association of American Cultures.

The next chapter in my story begins when I was invited by a national organization to a meeting in New Orleans. The theme of the meeting was cultural pluralism in America. Many of us said, "We are finally getting a little recognition, and now we can tell people what this is all about." At one session in particular we were all sitting at the table waiting to discuss ethnicity in the arts, except there was one problem—almost no one was in the audience. We had about 15 people total in that room; most of the conference attendees were out shopping or eating. Remember, this was New Orleans; people were out on the town, on Bourbon Street, having a good time. All the same, we gave our presentation and afterward Barbara Nicholson said, "Let's go talk some more. This is really strange; we were invited to this conference and nobody listened to what we had to say." And on the banks of the Mississippi, we talked about the invisibility of both our ethnic arts programs and our role as ethnic arts administrators. Our invisibility to our colleagues might not have been by design; it could be due to exclusion, or simple omission. Regardless of the reason, they did not think that we were important. As a result, we knew we had to do something to increase our visibility.

The first step was a meeting held in Washington, D.C., which was called Open Dialogue I. As a side note, many people have wondered why TAAC started with the Open Dialogue II conference; the answer is because of that first meeting, which occurred around 1984. The group from New Orleans decided to hold a national meeting and bring the constituency together to discuss next steps. The thought of organizing anything seemed unlikely; we only planned to gather like-minded people to talk about our shared sense of invisibility. As the executive director of the Arts Council of San Antonio, I was asked to be the fiscal sponsor for the event. I immediately agreed because I did not think the conference was actually going to happen. Ten days later I received a check in the mail from Barbara Nicholson for \$10,000. In those days I was not accustomed to seeing amounts of that size; actually, I am still not accustomed to seeing them. Seeing that check made me realize that we may have been on to something important.

The first conference was held in 1985 at the Menger Hotel, which, incidentally, is located next to the Alamo. There was no conscious decision behind the selection of this site—we just found ourselves in a hotel beside a famous symbol of rebellion. Though I thought we were onto something special, we did not expect a large turnout; maybe 25 or 30 people total. Instead, five hundred people showed up from across the country. We had touched a nerve in American culture. That first conference was an extraordinary experience, as each of the Open Dialogues has been since.

The first participants asked that we consider officially creating an organization. They also made us aware of some important issues. For instance, the participants objected to the use of the word “minority” in the work environment, because it was considered a pejorative term. While we were unaware that this sentiment was shared by many others, we had articulated an important concern to the rest of the world. Therein lies the power of TAAC—at every Open Dialogue there are people in the audience from other parts of the country taking notes because this is one of the few places where you can hear this kind of discussion. These TAAC conferences offer a unique opportunity to learn more about cultural diversity in this country.

Around five years later we discovered that the arts community had heard our message; we no longer heard the term “minority” within this field. From that point forward the terms were “cultural diversity” and “people of color.” The Association has become a very powerful voice for the community. I should point out that we never meant for The Association of American Cultures to be called TAAC. I arrived in Washington, D.C. soon after we had formed the organization, and we sought the advice of national mentors like Vantile Whitfield. Vantile was the first director of the expansion arts program at the National Endowment for the Arts. We approached him for advice about starting this organization. His advice was, “Do not name it something that is going to throw a red flag in the face of America.” That seemed like good advice, so we called ourselves The Association of American Cultures. The next thing I knew when I showed up at a planning meeting a few months later was that people kept referring to us as “TAAC.”

I wanted to give you this context because I believe knowing where we came from is important. We all come from a similar place, and want to deliver the same kind of message. What we did not know at the time was how much things were going to change. We have realized over the years that one of the things you can count on is change. We did not anticipate the enormity of what we were involved in doing and that our efforts would involve the planet as a whole. We had not been thinking in global terms; we were merely thinking in terms of The Association of American Cultures.

Another message I want to share concerns one of the reasons I am here. I mentioned earlier a woman who kept grabbing me by the collar and pushing me forward. She helped me get to where I am today by pushing and encouraging me. That is the charge I give each and every one of you. Many people in our field wonder who will replace our generation. The individuals you identify in your office, your community, and your state as having the potential to continue carrying this banner are the ones who will replace us. This means that you have a responsibility to become a mentor in your community and in your office. Find that person who has that glimmer of potential and guide them. You must help them at every juncture, because that is what is required for people to move forward in a significant way. I know that some of you are mentoring others already, and you have been doing it for years. But as a group we need to consider who is going to replace us.

Our role here is to serve as leaders. TAAC is a leadership organization and each of you must support the organized effort that we are trying to accomplish. We are like union organizers; we represent our families, the people back home, and the artists with whom we interact on a local level. This bears a certain degree of responsibility. You all are leaders and the basis I am using to make that statement is the fact that you are here. Getting here was not easy; you had to do a lot of talking and it cost money. I see a positive future for this organization because we can still bring about positive change, but our success is up to you.

James Early

Loie Fecteau is going to provide a few summary comments and then we will move into the next session.

Loie Fecteau

Good morning. I am Loie Fecteau and I head the state arts agency in New Mexico. Before that I was a journalist for 20 years. Stories and contexts have always been of interest to me, and I really want to thank Louis because I think the reasons and development of this organization are important. I have been struck by the many connections among the speakers we have heard at this conference. I keep returning to Doudou Diène's comment: "You just see what you know." I am also thinking about the idea of resistance against what Suzanne referred to as the "master narrative." In fact, earlier in this session I wrote down the name of that song by The Doors: "Break on Through to the Other Side." Finally, I loved A.B. Spellman's comment about TAAC giving voice to the voiceless.

James Early

Before we move into our next session, I want to make a few comments. The Association of American Cultures includes all of you; we emerged not just out of the specific perspectives and ideas of people of color, but also from the unity with people not of color who want to make a new world. This is particularly true among our young adult leaders. We are all members of ethnic and racial groups, and we are learning about the brilliance of the name of this organization, The Association of American Cultures, which was beyond our grasp at the time it was suggested.

I want to make a another observation before we move on. Yesterday someone raised the question, "Where have all the politics gone?" In response, I think we have seen examples in the young people amongst us at this conference who—while they will not become us—will take the spirit of who we are and grow into their own. When I was 19 or 20 years old, I saw A.B. Spellman involved in a student takeover. He was one among many who believed these two groups could be brought together. So we must gather around the young people and consider where we are in relationship to them, rather than ask where the politics have gone.

SYMPOSIUM SESSION B

Changing Culture-Scapes

Presenters: Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, Tabassum Haleem, Roland Tanglao

Respondents: Shani Jamila, Arthur Jones, Annette Evans Smith

Discussant: Loie Fecteau

Sunya Ganbold

The next symposium session is called *Changing Culture-Scapes*. We will be discussing perspectives on the developments that have occurred since the mid-1980s—demographics, technological advances, and things of that nature—that have changed the national and global “culture-scape” for communities of color working in the arts.

Our first presenter is Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, winner of the Smithsonian Institution’s Henry Medal and former associate director for creativity and culture at the Rockefeller Foundation in New York City. Following Mr. Ybarra-Frausto is Tabassum Haleem, executive director and CEO of the Organization of Islamic Speakers Midwest, Inc. from Chicago. Our final presenter in this session will be Roland Tanglao, a technologist and co-founder of Bryght from Vancouver, B.C.

Responding to our speakers will be Shani Jamila, host and producer of *Blackademics*, a radio program. In addition she is an essayist and speaker from Washington, D.C. We also have Arthur Jones, professor of clinical psychology at the University of Denver and founder and chair of the Spirituals Project in Denver. Last but not least is Annette Evans Smith, the vice president of community relations at the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage. Tomás Ybarra-Frausto will be speaking first.

Tomás Ybarra-Frausto

Good morning everyone. In preparing for this session I referred to one of the books I enjoyed when I was a graduate student—Raymond Williams’ *Keywords*⁵. I decided I would use a couple of words to tell a story and in that way introduce some concerns that are

important to discuss. In all my years of teaching I have discovered that culture ultimately comprises the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves. I think that the major story for this symposium is the envisioning of a new America. I have learned that if you ask people what kind of world they would want for their children, they envision what we are talking about as a new America.

The first key phrase that I want to consider is “imagined communities,” a term borrowed from Benedict Anderson⁶. In terms of imagined communities, I want to tell a story called “A Cup of Coffee and Cake.” This short skit is from the 1920s and is set in the Southwest. It concerns two people who meet, one of whom has just arrived from Mexico. One character says to the other, “Juan, it is so wonderful to see you. *Que bueno que estas aqui, hombre. Pero mida*, I don’t speak English. Help me, help me. What do I do?”

Juan replies, “Well, you go to a restaurant and say, ‘cuppa coffee and cake.’” So he goes to a restaurant and the waiter comes over and says, “Good morning. May I help you?” and he replies, “*Si, senorita*. Cuppa coffee and cake.” He eats the delicious cake and he feels very good. Each subsequent morning, he says, “Good morning, *senorita*. Cuppa coffee and cake.”

Some time later he meets his friend again and says, “*Juan, otra vez, que maravilloso, pero Juan, estoy cansado*, how wonderful to see you but I am just sick of coffee and cake.” Juan tells him, “*vas al restaurante y, go to a restaurant and say ‘ham sandwich.’*” He practices and practices until he arrives at the restaurant. When he sits down the waitress asks, “May I help you?”

He answers, “*Si senorita*. Ham sandwich.”

“Sure,” she says. “Wheat or rye?”

He responds, “Cuppa coffee and cake.”

The reason I think this story says something about imagined communities is because there is always someone who has just come into our community, and currently, in terms of immigration, we have people who are at the “cuppa coffee and cake” stage. This creates a great deal of tension between those of us who are

⁵Williams, R. (1972). *Keywords: A vocabulary of culture and society*. London: Fontana

⁶Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London: Verso.

established and those of us who are new arrivals. This is true in every community, including the Mexican, the Mexican-American, the Asian, the newer Asian communities, and so on. The fault line is the “cuppa coffee and cake” stage and how we can imagine our communities as pluralities rather than singularities.

I want to make a few points about the community I come from, which is the Mexican-American-Chicano community. It is very heterogeneous; we have Afro Latinos, Asian Latinos, and indigenous Latinos. We are not comprised of one group of people. All of these communities have different languages, worldviews, and ethical and moral standards. Some elements bridge communities, but others are bound to a particular community. One important thing we must keep in mind is the class dimension. Much of the time when we work with so-called “ethnic communities” we tend to assume that they are at the bottom of the heap, yet all communities have a top, middle, and bottom. You might think of a community’s structure as a pyramid; the largest concentration is found at the bottom, then there is a smaller mid-range, and finally we see very few at the top. The important point for every question depends on where you are situated in that pyramid.

For many of us, another element that accompanies imagined communities is the word “fear.” I am referring to fear in relation to retaining difference across generations. Fear is communicated in statements such as, “But they are not Americans—they do not speak English yet,” in reference to families that have been in this country for five or six generations. Understanding how we value difference in its essential, transformative manner is crucial. The first quality of imagined communities is that they are very complex and multiple. In short, they do not all behave alike. Our task is to move beyond the “cuppa of coffee and cake” so that when people say “ham sandwich” they can actually have choices about how they want that ham sandwich.

The next key phrase for us to consider is “intangible heritage.” The story I am going to tell is a personal one, and it occurred about ten years ago when I went to San Antonio, my hometown in Texas. My mother and I went to a *panadería*, a bakery, with all the wonderful *pan dulce*. I said to the person behind the counter,

“*Quiero tres pesos de pan sortido*, I want three dollars of bread mixed all up, all different kinds.” My mother was shocked. She looked at me and said, “*Hijo, te has olvidado los nombres de los panes?* My son, have you forgotten the names of the breads?” She told me that every type of bread has its own texture, feeling, and mood. She explained the differences among various kinds of bread in texture, feeling, and mood, and said, “I know you have gone to the university, pero, *cuándo olvidas los nombres de los panes, olvidas la cultura*. When you forget the names of the breads you forget culture.” What she described was the intangible heritage of a culture. She discussed how the transitory and the ephemeral are also eternal.

We must be very careful because many institutions, like my university, teach us knowledge found in books and they teach us about the arts. However, the loss of elements of intangible heritage, like the names of the breads in our *panaderías*, is the loss of one’s culture. Our everyday life practices—the embodied knowledge systems of cooking, altar-making, witnessing, and oratory—are passed on through the body. In learning how to knead the *masa* to make the tortillas, one learns the rhythm of the community. An important issue is whether or not embodied knowledge can be passed on through disembodied mediums. I am not opposed to all the new articulations of media, but we must address embodied knowledge as well.

How can we pass along embodied knowledge? I think those of us who come from the civil rights generation have a very good base because we started to record our histories. In fact, we have the beginnings of an archive of oral stories and oral traditions. We also started an image bank that people can use to build and create an important archive of embodied knowledge. We must develop educational materials based on these archives because they are needed in our communities. Teachers also need information about embodied knowledge that is passed on by watching and then doing. My mother told me it would take me a long time to understand this, but I now know that when an elder dies, a whole library disappears. This is why we must build the archive and a library containing our intangible heritage.

The next key word I have for you is “cosmopolitanism.” I have borrowed this concept from the respected philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah, which comes from his book of the same title.⁷ Appiah’s work reminds me of a story I call “Benito Juarez and Mickey Mouse.” Benito Juarez is, of course, the first indigenous president of Mexico. This story is about purity and contamination.

One of the struggles we encounter in this country is the pressure exerted by others for a sense of purity. To be an ideal American often means a singularity of language, identity, and existence, and there are some who crave such unity. Others want options, but in many ways these options are considered impure or contaminated. The dilemma we often face is a choice between the hybridity of Benito Juarez and the purity of Mickey Mouse. I believe we must keep creating options and alternatives, which brings us back to the concept of cosmopolitanism. The idea dates back to the fourth century before Christ, when the cynics began understanding that they wanted to be a citizen of the cosmos. This resulted in the concept of cosmopolitanism.

Every citizen belongs to a community of communities, so the two strands that interweave in the idea of cosmopolitanism are of universal concern because we have an obligation to others beyond those whom we are related to by birth or by kith and kind. Other individuals also have obligations to us, and this mutuality is the beginning of a new envisioning of the United States. We have a universal concern beyond our national borders in terms of the cosmos and the universe. The second strand of cosmopolitanism concerns the respect for legitimate differences. There is much we can learn from the differences of others. Universal concern and a respect for differences weave into this idea of cosmopolitanism.

In both the human community and national communities we need to develop habitats of co-existence and conversation. By conversation I mean the older sense of the word—of living together, association, conviviality, and *con vivencia*. Conversation is not only the literal act of talking but also a metaphor for engaging with other people, while acknowledging that we can never be them. Conversation does not need to lead to

a consensus about anything, particularly with respect to values. Conversation allows people to become used to one another. We must get accustomed to one another because we cannot get out of each other’s way in our crowded world. At the same time, we need to acknowledge that spaces are continuously being transcended; Mexico is not “over there” while we are here—Mexico is both here and there.

In my view, mixture is very important. Cultural purity seems like an oxymoron. Mixture, or what we call in Spanish, *mestizaje*, is a counter ideal to purity. I believe we should celebrate hybridity, impurity, intermingling, and the transformation that comes from new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, and ideas. I rejoice in what some people call “mongrelization.” On the other hand, I fear the absolutism of the pure. Our challenge is to balance heterogeneity, multiplicity, and difference with models of communication and connectedness. We must learn to build, as Arjun Appadurai so beautifully phrases it, “communities of sentiment” across borders⁸.

My last key word is *esperanza*, or hope. We should recognize the necessity and the power of hope. We can build new paths of connection, trust, and conviviality, but our efforts are based on the idea of hope. We hope that those we love will be with us and love us in return. We hope that tomorrow will be better. We hope that the next generation will figure things out better than we did. I come from New York and in that world, particularly in the arts community, the culture of irony is dominant. Irony and cynicism are connected but when you are sincere, people do not know how to respond because sincerity is based on hope. I leave you with this notion of hope wedded to the earlier reflections for a re-envisioning of the United States.

Sunya Ganbold

Thank you Tomás. Our next speaker is Tabassum Haleem.

⁷Appiah, K.A. (2006). *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a world of strangers*. New York: W.W. Norton.

⁸Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Tabassum Haleem

Good morning; *As-Salaamu Alaykum* (May peace be upon you). I am honored and privileged to be a part of such an important conference and to share the stage with such impressive speakers. Last month I was asked to moderate a panel discussion at a public symposium entitled “The Future of Torture.” My panel was called “Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib: Extraordinary Renditions.” One of the panelists was a former U.S. Army interrogator, Tony Lagouranis, who served at Abu Ghraib and Fallujah. Under orders, he, along with numerous other soldiers, abused and terrorized hundreds of prisoners by employing “enhanced” interrogation methods designed to terrify prisoners into revealing information. In Iraq, these new enhancements included sleep deprivation, induced hypothermia, and binding. All of these actions were given either explicit or tacit approval from all levels of the U.S. military chain of command.

Convinced such methods did not work and disturbed by his own behavior, Lagouranis felt “the feeble voice of my deeply suppressed morality trying to be heard.” His assessment of the tyranny in Iraq was that as the occupying force, we immediately blamed the entire Iraqi population—men, women, and children—for the insurgency and treated them accordingly. Accordingly, the military’s interrogation methods were not actually used to gather intelligence, since they knew that most of the detainees were innocent. The real reason we have engaged and continue to engage in the abuse of Iraqis is to exhibit our dominance over that population. Tony Lagouranis documents all of this in his book *Fear Up Harsh*.⁹ When I asked him if he had found it easier to abuse and torture prisoners simply because they came from a different ethnic and religious background than his own, his answer was “yes.” We all know that dehumanizing an enemy helps us to annihilate them.

At a time when the Internet and international travel has made our world even smaller and has brought its inhabitants ever closer, the real question we should be asking ourselves is: Who is the enemy? That is why this gathering is so important. In my professional life, I seldom find opportunities to discuss important issues such as the impact of race, gender, and ethnicity in my field—I am an accountant, for heaven’s sake

Today, I would like to address not only the importance of understanding other cultures and religions, but the urgency with which we should formulate and incorporate this understanding into our art and cultural policies. In today’s global society we have replaced the belief that knowledge is power with an awareness that wisdom is based on understanding. We know many factors determine how we live our lives, which include our religion, culture, family background, education, and personal experiences.

Reflecting on my own life, I have realized that I cannot attribute my station in life to a single factor. Rather, there is a culmination of various influences and experiences—distant and intimate, successful and failed, material and spiritual. I consider myself fortunate for many reasons; I was born in India, the largest democracy in the world, and raised in the United States, the oldest democracy in the world. I was also raised within a faith that unequivocally affirms the spiritual equality of men and women. Above all I consider myself lucky to have parents who have taught me about grace, dignity, independence, integrity, and the power of education. To escape corruption and with hopes of earning an honest living, my parents set out for the U.S. in the early 1970s with eight dollars in their pockets, all their worldly possessions in a few suitcases, and three young children in tow. One of my most indelible memories from my childhood was hearing my father say repeatedly that the best gift the U.S. had given him was the opportunity to live life as a true Muslim by allowing him to earn an honest living, and empowering him to lead life on his own terms rather than as a victim of circumstances in another country.

As with most parents, I also believe that some of our greatest lessons about life and power come from our children. Shortly after the events of September 11th one of my sons, who was nine years old at the time, happened to be alone in our garage when one of the neighborhood children came to our house. This boy noticed my children’s go-cart, which is modeled after the Porsche 911, and said to my son, “911. I bet that does not mean anything to you. In fact, I bet you are happy that 9/11 happened.” Even though Meraaj did not tell me about this incident until several days later,

⁹Lagouranis, T. & Mikaelian, A. (2007). *Fear up harsh: An army interrogator’s dark journey through Iraq*. New York: NAL Caliber.

I could not imagine what might have been going through my son's mind, so I asked him what he did or said in response. As an aside, my son was born in Ridgewood, New Jersey, has been going to YMCA swim meets since he was five, grew up attending peace marches and interfaith gatherings, and considers George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Malcolm X his heroes. Meraaj turned to me and said in a very matter-of-fact tone, "I did not say anything. I just turned around and left because I figured he had been watching too much TV." Now, that is power.

As you might imagine, power—or the lack of power felt by the American Muslim community—has been the focus of many conversations in recent years. Although ignorance and misunderstanding about the Islam religion and the Muslim community existed in the U.S. prior to September 11th, since that day they have become deeply embedded in the American psyche. The resulting ills have permeated our media, popular discourse, congressional discussions, and even our legislation. According to Richard Cimino of *Religion Watch*, certain religious groups have undertaken concerted efforts to push their anti-Islamic rhetoric into a broader secular format in an effort to oppose religious pluralism and interfaith relations in the United States. The real question we need to ask is whether Muslims will be the only casualties in this new America. Author Reza Aslan states in his book *No God but God* that pluralism, not secularism, defines democracy, and there are few scriptures in the great religions of the world that can match the reverence with which the Qur'an speaks of other religious traditions.¹⁰ In support of the claim that Islam has had a long commitment to religious pluralism, Aslan cites the Qur'anic verse that says there can be no compulsion in religion. Sadly, if ignorance, misunderstanding, and the efforts of some religious groups opposed to Islam continue to advance, America will lose a powerful intellectual ally in its quest for peace and justice in the world: Islam. No doubt we will also be diminished in our ability to influence the course of a large segment of humanity, the greater Muslim community.

Contrary to the assertions of media organizations like Fox News, which offers its viewers a distorted portrayal of Islam and characterizes Muslims as powerless, the actual evidence proves otherwise. For instance, in his book *The Bridge Betrayed*, Professor Michael Sells of the University of Chicago chronicles the insistence of the Bosnians to produce art during the Balkan conflict at great risk to themselves.¹¹ The testimony of hundreds of Bosnians indicates that living as a captive and sneaking along alleys and walls to receive a UN food handout is intolerable to them. Creating or protecting culture is an act of living. Perhaps this sentiment of intolerance toward living with injustice, however it is defined, is universal. The need to speak up or stand against aggression or oppression becomes so overwhelming that doing nothing is no longer an option.

The negative impact on U.S. domestic and foreign policy after September 11th by the purported experts in Islam demonstrated an even more urgent need for fair and objective analysis. If moderate Muslims including the Swiss Muslim scholar Dr. Tariq Ramadan; former president of Bosnia Herzegovina, Alija Izetbegovi; and Muslim peace activist Yusuf Islam, formerly known as Cat Stevens, are labeled as Islamic extremists and consequently excluded from any discussion of Islam, then who will be allowed to present the Muslim perspective? Such forms of exclusion highlight the dual responsibilities of American Muslims and American society. American Muslims need to become credentialed in Islam, while American society needs to accommodate Muslim participation.

Where do we go from here? Simply acknowledging the presence of injustice and exclusion is not enough; the true measure of power is acting on wisdom to change the world from what it is to what it should be. The only way to achieve peace is to wage a war on ignorance. To that end, I have compiled a list of actions which we should strive toward to advance this goal. While some of these actions are more involved, most can be accomplished through grassroots efforts.

1. Request a presentation from the Organization of Islamic Speakers Midwest to speak to you or your group about Islam and Muslim cultures.

¹⁰Aslan, R. (2005). *No god but God: The origins, evolution, and future of Islam*. New York: Random House.

¹¹Sells, M.A. (1998). *The bridge betrayed: Religion and genocide in Bosnia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

2. If you are a Muslim, accept an invitation from a local church, temple, or other house of worship, perhaps during a religious holiday. If you are not a Muslim then accept an invitation from a local mosque, perhaps for the breaking of the fast during the month of Ramadan.
3. Check history books for bias and inaccuracies, and promote books that are accurate and impartial.
4. Examine the other casualty of war—the destruction of cultural institutions.
5. Organize and attend conferences of the sort held by the University of Chicago's Cultural Policy Center, called "Protecting Cultural Heritage: International Law after the War in Iraq."
6. Read both Michael Sells' book *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia* and Noel Malcolm's book *Bosnia: A Short History*. Both works detail the heartbreaking destruction of the national library in Sarajevo, in which two million books and ancient manuscripts were burned, a 500-year-old bridge in Mostar was obliterated, and over 1,400 historical mosques were demolished. Most importantly, support those artists who are passionately and painstakingly working to preserve Bosnia's art, culture, and language by slowly rebuilding its cultural institutions.
7. When you work in groups, take notice of who is present, and particularly who is absent.
8. Question all modifiers of nouns used to describe religious groups, such as Islamic "terrorists," Christian "fundamentalists," or Shiite "militants."
9. Create a diversity dinner group.
10. Join an interfaith group or a community organizing group in an effort to go beyond theology and actually work together toward the common good.
11. Take a comparative religion class at your local community college.
12. Watch an episode of the Canadian sitcom "Little Mosque on the Prairie."
13. Read the book *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace . . . One School at a Time* by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin.
14. Ask your child's teacher how he or she is fulfilling the social studies learning standard as it relates to the world's religions and cultures, and encourage the teacher to invite speakers from different religions and cultures into the classroom so that your children can experience the richness and diversity within our country.
15. Turn the television off for a month and limit your news gathering to more balanced and thoughtful sources of information, such as the Christian Science Monitor, National Public Radio, and BBC News. Read the letters to the editor.

I would like to close with the oft-repeated verse from the Qur'an in chapter 49, verse 13: "O, Mankind! We have created you from a single pair of a male and female and made you into nations and tribes so that you may come together and know each other, not so you despise each other. Verily, the most honored of you in the sight of God is he who is the most righteous and God has full knowledge and is well-appointed with all things." How history will judge us will depend entirely on where we decide to go from here. Thank you again for the opportunity to speak to you this morning. May peace be upon you.

Sunya Ganbold

Thank you, Tabassum. Next, Roland Tanglao will elaborate on the topic of changing culture-scapes.

Roland Tanglao

I am a technologist. I was born in the Philippines in 1964 and am now 43 years old. My parents immigrated to Canada in 1965 with \$200 and three kids. The words of the previous speaker resonate with me. I also feel the way many Filipinos do, affected by 300 years of Spanish influence and over 100 years of American influence. I also identify with Canadians; I have lived in Ontario since I was an infant. I attended the University of Waterloo, which is a world-renowned university

for computer science and engineering. That is where I became acquainted with technology, and I am an engineer by training.

I grew up in a small town in Ontario not far from Niagara Falls, and I always thought I was unique. I am unique, but there are also many people across the United States and Canada—and increasingly from Europe and elsewhere—who have the same sort of background as me. They are from an ethnic family and isolated from their ethnicity, but perhaps not as much today as they were in the 60s, 70s, or 80s.

My real claim to fame is my blogging, which I have been doing since 1999. Everything I have—my job, along with almost everything I have owned or done since 2001—has been possible because of blogging. I am a compulsive photographer, but I do not consider myself a photographer. Instead, I consider myself a recorder. Steve Mann, from the University of Toronto, is an academic who has a head-mounted camera over his eye and feels disoriented when he cannot record. While I feel similar, I try to act somewhat more normal. I take many pictures with different cameras, which I hope will bring out the best of people.

Another crucial aspect of my identity involves Drupal, an open-source software started in Belgium to help university students collaborate and network online. Open-source software has changed my life. We started a company called Bryght, based in Vancouver, Canada. Open-source thinking resonates with the idea of blogging, transparency, and putting the software out there. I worked for many years at Nortel Networks, the large telecommunications company equipment supplier. The experience was like the final scene of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, when the ark of the covenant is packed into a U.S. Army crate, never to be seen again. That is the philosophy behind a large number of corporations and organizations—keep the valuable materials away from people. Companies do not often make the good technology accessible to the public, but we can learn from the people who are making their creations available through open-source software like Drupal, or through online tools like Flickr.

I would like to speak about technological developments. For comparison's sake, consider that when my father arrived, a one-way ticket from Manila to Toronto cost roughly \$400 U.S., which was a significant amount of money. Now, travel is ubiquitous, though it may be destroying the environment. Even if you are a Filipino domestic worker in Vancouver, you can afford to save some money and go home to visit every few years, or even every year. That was not possible when we emigrated in 1965. The contemporary banking network enables large transfers of capital, and diasporic Filipinos are a prime example. Another illustrative example is sending money back home from abroad using early banking networks. We can also chart the advance of technology through satellite and cable television. When I was growing up in Canada we did not have Filipino shows. Today you can access television shows directly from the Philippines. Moreover, there are shows created by Filipinos here in the United States and Canada available through local cable television.

Then, of course, is the thing that has changed my life, and probably many other people's lives, the Internet. The Internet allows us—corporations, people, and especially youth—to tell our stories. The Internet is a fast-moving, fast-changing revolution. It can be distracting; it can divert our attention away from the real issues. Those of us who are mentors and influencers need to be knowledgeable about the Internet and should be able to teach others to be literate also—how to ignore the wrong websites, how to filter, how to pay attention to what is actually important, and how to tune out. I work with twenty-somethings, and I am the oldest person in our company. I watch my colleagues multi-task, which mostly works for them. But even they need time to focus on priorities, to dedicate time to singular issues that warrant special attention. That is a skill we generally do not teach, which perhaps comes more intuitively to other cultures.

We can also consider mobile technology, such as the Apple iPhone. The innovators of mobile space are not only in Cupertino, California, the home of Apple; they are in India and the Philippines. Did you know that in the Philippines text messaging helped to overthrow the government? Mobile technology and the Internet are things we will all be using, or they will influence our

lives in some way. We cannot avoid the role they will play in our future. While we do not absolutely have to use them, we must understand them.

In terms of the future of technology, emerging developments are leading to a world where at any time and any place we can create, collaborate, socialize, remix, and share our thoughts and work. Consider that I am using my pocket device to take pictures of everyone at this conference and post them online in real time. I can record videos and post them in real time as well. How does this affect us as artists, as people, and as citizens when we can create and spontaneously share things on screens all over the world, as a form of communication?

In 1965, I was disconnected from my extended Filipino family; we did not have affordable phone service and we certainly did not have inexpensive video capabilities. Now I can talk for free through the Internet by video or by telephone. What if we can choose our identities? Our identity for many years was rooted in place, but what if we can constantly change locations through cheap air travel? What if we can maintain our family interactions through virtual worlds? We can also use other virtual connections, including blogs, instant messaging, online chats, and SMS—the list goes on and on. These technologically enabled connections that bridge the vast distance between people represent a very interesting premise, something that was first brought to my attention by the American author Neal Stephenson. He developed a concept of files or tribes, and though he did not state the idea overtly, he explained that an individual could join a tribe but did not have to be rooted in that place.¹² Instead, you only had to follow the precepts, beliefs, and values of that tribe. If technology now enables that sort of sharing between unrelated individuals, what does that mean for us? We still live in a world of nation states, but I do not believe this is the only reality. Often our desire to travel beyond our country's borders means we must have passports and observe national laws, but technol-

ogy is making this less of a requirement. Technology has made the movement between borders less subject to the control of nation states.

My final statement is simple—embrace the world of the Internet. People are putting audio, video, and image files into a digital space. They are ignoring the increasingly extensive digital rights management and copyright controls forced on them by the older generation and uploading materials that others can use as they see fit. We cannot help but embrace the online world. The networked, pluralistic world is a reality and as a technologist I acknowledge the difficulty in adapting to it; I am 43 and I know exactly the kinds of struggles that many of us go through, but we can manage. We have to embrace this world in order to understand the younger people and the generations following us.

Sunya Ganbold

We are surrounded by some very powerful personal narratives today. Shani Jamila, Arthur Jones, and Annette Evans Smith will respond to our presenters.

Shani Jamila

Let me first say what an honor it is to be seated at this table and in this room with all of you. I am going to take my cue from some of the people who have provided context on who they are. Who am I? I am the daughter of Helen, who is the daughter of Hattie, who was the daughter of Helen, who was the daughter of Janie, who was the daughter of Sybie who was the daughter of Bessie. I am the daughter of Wendell, who is the son of Rosetta, who was the daughter of Geneva, who was the daughter of Emma, who was the daughter of John, who was the son of Channey. I say this because I believe this kind of cultural connection is important, to know one's family history and heritage. I lost both of my grandmothers this year, but I can say that with a measure of comfort because before both of them left this earth they made sure to teach us who we were and who we are as people—as my Grandma liked to say, “who we be and where we belong.” So I am

¹²Stephenson, N. (2000). *The diamond age: Or, a young lady's illustrated primer*. New York: Bantam.

honored to share this with you. These are the men and women who taught me, as I wrote in a poem, “Some Mighty Righteous Women,”

How to set fire to the wind with our songs

Even as battle scars brandish our tongues.

These are the men and women who taught me that even when life gives you what is left, you can create laughter. These are the men and women who taught me, in the words of the United States Social Forum—which I just left, that another world is possible. But in order for another world to be possible, another United States is necessary. I have dedicated my life to exploring how we can create another U.S.

I think we must move beyond the myopia that this country engenders, to be able to understand ourselves as part of a larger global community, as part of a diaspora. Mos Def speaks about this, but he is talking about hip hop. He says, “You know, people always ask what’s going on with hip hop, what’s the state of hip hop, like it’s some sort of giant living off in the hilltops. Hip hop is us; we are hip hop, and in order for changes to happen within that culture, changes have to happen within us.”¹³ I would argue that the same concept could apply to the understanding of diasporas. We are not set apart from the rest of the world, although if you listen to a lot of the mainstream media you may be led to believe so. If you listen to their mantras then you would believe the U.S. is the only remaining superpower. We distinguish ourselves from the rest of the world in that respect, as if we have any moral standing to go and police the rest of the world on their human rights violations. We must be able to challenge these notions and see ourselves as part of what Wendy Walters calls “a plural local,”¹⁴ and also as an imagined community of the sort Tomás Ybarra-Frausto spoke about. This is a community of people who are politically self-identified within a scope that can represent a homeland that is not bounded, not exclusionary, and not singular. Stuart Hall calls a homeland a “symbolic

imaginary,” someplace where we can really begin to allow our imaginations to roam free and construct new realities for ourselves.¹⁵

One of my favorite books is by Robin D.G. Kelley and is called *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*.¹⁶ Kelley notes that if you look back at the history of black freedom struggles then one can argue that they did not succeed; capitalism, racism, and sexism still exist, and all of the things that we have been resistant to are still with us. He asks what inspires us to continue to dream, and to continue to envision our lives in a struggle toward a new and better world. The answer to his question lies in our politicized imagination, our vision of life.

I think when we look at the current state of hip hop culture, and I speak of that as a member of the hip hop generation, one can easily see how our imaginations have been limited. A very narrow component of this culture has been promulgated on a worldwide scale in a way that is especially pronounced for this generation due to the technological advances since the 1980s. I am currently working on a project called 30x30, based on having traveled to 30 countries by the age of 30. Something that remains especially powerful for me in my travels and in my explorations of black global identity and culture has been the influence of hip hop. Hip hop is truly a global culture. At a school in Francophone Gabon, Africa, I noticed that half of the graffiti on the walls was written in English—these were hip hop lyrics. In Trinidad they have a fusion of calypso, soca, and hip hop that is called Rapso. People are using hip hop to create their own synchronic traditions that draw on all of these global cultures, and that is the state in which we presently find ourselves. So many incredible possibilities are emerging from this state of cultural expression. However, there is also incredible danger if we do not take back control of the media and the culture in an effort to ensure that the commercialized components of it are not overwhelmingly misogynistic and hyper-materialistic. We also need to be certain that the work of artists with a focus on human rights

¹³Def, M. (1999). Fear not of men [Recorded by Mos Def]. On *Black on both sides* [CD]. Los Angeles, Calif.: Priority Records.

¹⁴Walters, W.S. (2005). *At home in Diaspora: Black international writing*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

¹⁵Hall, S. (1992). The question of cultural identity. In S. Hall, D. Held, & T. McGrew (Eds.), *Modernity and its futures* (pp. 273-325). Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

¹⁶Kelley, R.D.G. (2002). *Freedom dreams: The black radical imagination*. Boston: Beacon Press.

and social justice issues also has a platform. That is the work we seek to do on WPFW's *Blackademics*, the radio show that I host.

This type of work is also being done by artists such as Chuck D, formerly of Public Enemy, who decided to get away from "eMpTy V" as he calls it, and sell his own work on the Internet. He understands that the Internet is a place where we can tell our own stories. It is also a place where definitions or expertise can be subverted. Wikipedia is a good example; anyone can post an entry and tell you what something is or what it means. The Internet is a place where the commodification of knowledge can be challenged. Many of the resources currently available on the Internet were formerly available only in university classrooms, where you had to be able to afford the opportunity to be in that space. The Internet also supersedes the limitations of the nation-state, an entity that I believe is rapidly disappearing as more people engage in a diasporic framework. This framework, by the way, eradicates the notion of minority—something we heard about when the formation of TAAC was discussed earlier. We as people of color need to understand that when we see ourselves in the global context we are far from a minority. This is another reason why the ability to embrace a global imagination via technologies such as the Internet is very crucial from my perspective.

I want to share a story about when my own political imagination was challenged. I currently direct an organization in Washington, D.C. called Justice for D.C. Youth, in which we work with incarcerated kids. During a recent session in a juvenile detention center we facilitated a story circle in the tradition of my uncle John, who A.B. Spellman noted and who worked with the Free Southern Theater. When we invited folks to join our circle so that we could begin the process, we included our volunteers, the kids and also the guards who worked with them. Story circles constitute a delicate and sacred space, and they are best conducted when everyone in the room participates. As my uncle puts it, "when we share stories, we share whole parts of ourselves. Stories come charged with the spirit of the teller and have lives of their own."¹⁷

In this case I was scared at first that the kids would be silenced because the presence of the guards would remind them of the structures of power that would exist long after we left. What we found, however, was much different. Either through the power of this technique or through the power of art, the guards became humanized in the eyes of these kids by sharing their stories. Male guards were actually brought to tears in the middle of the story circle, which I thought was such an incredible thing for these young incarcerated men to witness. The guards' actions expanded the definition of what manhood is and can be. What I observed was the power of art used to its fullest potential, which is the power of imagination and being able to go beyond prescriptive ideas of power, domination, hierarchy, and order.

We live in a world where disparities are incredibly pronounced. Just the other day I was on the campus of the University of Maryland watching sprinklers water the lawn in the middle of a thunderstorm. As I watched these sprinklers I thought about all the countries I have been to where people walk for miles just to be able to get water for cleaning, cooking, or bathing. Even more incredible, this kind of inequity has been rendered as normal in the popular conception of entirely too many people.

For a stunning example, we need look no further than the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. There were points where the images that surfaced during that crisis were indistinguishable from those typically associated with the places "over there" where human rights violations happen, right? Of course, many of us already knew that such inequities exist in this era and in this country. Many of us thought we should have accepted the help offered from countries such as Cuba and Venezuela—this was not a time for political posturing. It served as the harshest reminder that we should see ourselves as global citizens.

We need to understand that another world is possible, and that another United States is necessary. This is particularly true for those of us in the hip hop generation who stand on the shoulders of the civil rights generation; we should see the gains of their struggle as weapons to further the work we must do, rather than considering them spoils of war. We have another

¹⁷O'Neal, J. (n.d.). Story Circle Process Discussion Paper. Retrieved May, 2008, from <http://www.racematters.org/storycircleprocess.htm>

future to build, we have ancestors to answer to. Being in a room with all of you who are doing the work to make another world possible is a great pleasure.

Sunya Ganbold

We have two more respondents, Arthur Jones and Annette Evans Smith.

Arthur Jones

There are so many rich ideas in the room, and I just want to add a few things to the discussion. I think the concept that binds all of these presentations together is that we find ourselves in a new world where the culture-scapes are changing, and the old ways of thinking about ourselves as distinct communities are becoming obsolete. The important question is how we come to terms with this new reality and what these changed circumstances mean for what we do as artists.

I would like to share some thoughts from my own personal experience and position regarding how we might think about these changing culture-scapes. First, I think things are going to be just as difficult as they always have been, but I think the way we define the difficulty will be different, just as the way we address the difficulties will be different. Allow me to provide some background information about the kind of work I do.

I founded a nonprofit organization in Denver called the Spirituals Project, to which I came serendipitously. In 1991, I had the opportunity to build a program focused on the tradition of Negro spirituals, those songs created by enslaved Africans as they were struggling against the oppression of slavery. In particular, I did a presentation on the deeper meanings of the spirituals, and I surprised myself with some of the insights that came out of that presentation. Because of the work I have been doing since 1991, I think I have some ideas to share that may be helpful in talking about some of the issues we have been discussing in this session.

When I formed that program, there were three key elements that were of particular significance to me. One was that I was honoring a musical tradition that was the basis of a lot of what has happened in African-American culture. Second, this music reached into the deepest parts of the humanity of its creators so that it

transcended them and spoke about being human, not just about being African Americans. The third element that struck me was how this music empowered people to change their condition. This music is truly art in the service of social change, and, as such, it was a template for what we all can embrace in terms of the possibilities of creating art.

One of the reasons I have spent the last 16 years working on sharing these songs with people is that I believe these songs are a way to bring people together. What I have also learned is that bringing people together is not an easy task. Following on what Doudou Diène talked about last night, one of the things we have discovered is that embracing the arts from an aesthetic position becomes one of the biggest barriers to using that art to create social change. What Doudou noted about those who collect African art while remaining racist is true to spirituals as well; many people love the beautiful music, and yet they have not changed anything about how they view oppression.

What we have learned and continue to learn in our journey is that when you create art and intend to use it in the service of social change—and when you attempt to bring people together to change the way things have been done in the past—you will encounter some significant human barriers. One is that issues of oppression and ideas about how people are different from us and from each other are extremely difficult to change; they are incredibly robust. I learned that lesson early on in my work as a psychologist, when I would see families and talk with teenagers. I realized that the issues those adolescents faced in their families were actually problems that began perhaps two or three generations ago, and were still present. The same is true when we deal with race, ethnicity, power, and difference; we have several ideas about who we are and who they are, and they do not tend to change or evolve. When we realize that everything else around us is in flux and we are forced to come together and create new cultural mixes, it becomes even more complicated.

It is also very important to acknowledge that there is a deep human need to feel part of a group or a heritage that is bigger than yourself in order to feel connected. If I am African-American, then I have a very deep need

to feel connected to the history of what it means not only to be an African in America, but to be an African somewhere else in the world. As we come together, we must address the tension of what fuels that need, as well as the energy and the resources required in order to create new communities—to imagine new communities as Tomás Ybarra-Frausto said—to consider ourselves *mestizaje*, and to think about how to create our own identities. I am not certain how easy this is to achieve.

In our organization we embrace different people coming together to celebrate an art form that has the ability to touch us in the deepest parts of our humanity, but we are still struggling. I would hope that we are still struggling with how we do so in a way that factors in the reality of what human beings need. We need to ask ourselves how we maintain these deep connections while still celebrating pluralism, coming together, and thinking about how we can connect with other people. Finally, we need to consider how we can create art that slices through those barriers.

Annette Evans Smith

Allow me to introduce myself: I am Yup'ik, I am Athabascan, and I am Sugpiaq. These are the names for our people in Alaska. If I were to introduce myself in a more American context then I would say that I am Eskimo, Indian, and Aleut, which are names that others call us, not names that we use to refer to ourselves. When I say Yup'ik or Sugpiaq, for example, what I am saying is that I am one of the real people. In our Native languages our names for ourselves mean “the real people” or “the human beings.” I need to also introduce myself in the context of my family. I am the daughter of Richard and Carol Evans; I am the granddaughter on my father's side of Peter and Katherine Evans; I am the granddaughter on my mother's side of Carvel and Anuska Zimin. Where I come from, we introduce ourselves through our families and we ask permission from our elders before speaking.

I heard a proverb recently that says we should be respectful of our elders because they are the ones who will teach us what we need to know. That is an incredible part of my life and the lives of Alaska Native people because there is a critical time frame with regard to maintaining traditional knowledge. When you lose

an elder, as we heard earlier, you lose so much. Alaska Native people are losing our elders daily and with them we are losing worlds of information about our languages, traditions, and values. For some of our languages there is only one speaker left in the world. For others there are only 30 speakers left, and some languages have 300 remaining speakers. Though Alaska is sometimes perceived as one homogenous state, it has an incredible amount of diversity. Accordingly, there is an enormous need to maintain the integrity of the individual Alaska Native cultures.

Normally when I am at a cultural gathering, I am welcomed by the people from that place. I do not mean people in a national sense; I mean a very local sense of place. No matter where we are, there were people who existed at this place before us—whether we are in the Bronx, San Francisco, or in Tallahassee, Florida, people were there before us. They might have been invisible or their voices may have been muffled, but they were there and are perhaps still there. I wanted to remind everyone of that reality as we discuss immigration and the integrity of cultures. One thing I have noticed at this conference is the perspective that the American context began in 1492, but the American context actually dates back tens of thousands of years. We should remember that there are indigenous cultures fighting to survive and keep going, and striving to make their cultures last not just a few more generations, but ten thousand more years. This work has been my calling because Alaska Native languages, cultures, and values are under siege and struggling to survive. Thus, I ask that you respect the cultures and lands you are in and remember that the indigenous voices are there even though they might not be recognizable.

With regard to technology and its place in our world, it has both hurt and helped us as we try to move forward and endure the massive influx of people from all over the world who are coming to our lands. For example, my village has 80 people and is not accessible by road, yet television, satellite, and the Internet have all found their ways into the village. Currently the elders are fighting for access into the minds of our youth because they are so influenced by MTV and similar kinds of external forces. On the other hand, technology has helped us; at the Alaska Native Heritage Center program, all our

young members use YouTube and have MySpace pages. They display their art and dances on YouTube. If you were to search on YouTube, you could find the Alaska Native Heritage Center dancers, who are carrying on our culture and our dances.

Where technology hurts us, however, is in the usage and ownership of cultural information in the public versus private realms. This is because we tend to become more guarded with our traditions and knowledge when they can be used in a way that is not beneficial to us, or when they are actually taken away from us. There are entire Alaska Native dance groups in Anchorage that will not allow anyone to record or photograph them because media recordings have been used for the economic benefit of others. As a result, people become more guarded with technology and with what is made public because of its far-reaching impact and the accompanying lack of control. We need to respect the rights of those who make their information and knowledge widely available through technology; access should be earned rather than automatic.

I want to share a story about my own family that illustrates the positive aspects of technology. I had a great-grandfather who lived to be 119 years old. He died in the 1970s, which puts his birth roughly in the 1850s-1860s when Alaska was still occupied by Russia. My grandmother had the foresight to make a tape of my great-grandfather telling traditional Yup'ik stories of our ancestors—about the raven, fox, and owl and how they interacted. My grandmother lent the family tape to our great aunt, and somehow it ended up being thrown away. We only know what happened to it because a man in our village went to the dump looking for things that were useful. He picked up the tape and brought it home. Shortly thereafter, my aunt and grandmother took this man to Anchorage because his mother was undergoing surgery. One of the things this man brought on the trip was that tape. My aunt, recognizing the handwriting on the tape as my grandmother's, looked at the tape in shock. We do not know how long that tape was in the dump exposed to the elements, but it was in very poor shape. Luckily, I had just begun to work for the Alaska Native Heritage Center, where we have access to technology that can digitize and clean up such tapes. Now my family has a

recording of my great-grandfather telling stories, and I play it for my one-year-old son who normally would never have had the opportunity to hear his great-great-grandfather. This is one benefit of technology for my family and my world.

Sunya Ganbold

Thank you, Annette. To help us wrap up with this discussion, Loie Fecteau will give us her thoughts on the common threads we have witnessed today.

Loie Fecteau

In order to address the common threads we have heard, I am going to borrow from the previous speakers:

Who are the real people?

Be respectful of your elders. They are the ones who will teach you what to know.

Can we say Katrina?

We need to construct new realities for ourselves

Anytime, anywhere, anyplace

Mobile is it

Get it out there

To live is to create

When you work in groups, take notice of who is absent

Turn the TV off

Who is the enemy?

My situation does not control my fate

Because if it's not you, then who?

Don't give in. Don't become like them.

Listen, Learn and Take heed

I still believe in love even though it has broken me

Why are we so blind?

Enlighten me

James Early

We have had an incredible morning. Many times I have wanted to cry and have been in dialogue with myself about being the hard-core ideologue and macho man, but all this tells me that the spirit is calling. And that spirit has called very deeply this morning to two of our speakers, who want to share that call and ask us all to respond. I would like to conclude with Doudou Diène and A.B. Spellman.

Doudou Diène

I just want to add four developments that I think are going to change the whole cultural landscape. One: I think that because of culture, migration, and globalization, the reconnection among Africans and African Americans is having a significant impact. The first relates to enlarging the historical picture, because the history of the black man in Africa has been confined to the important, unique tragedy of slavery. There has been an attempt to wipe out the older part of African history, the really powerful and the deep influence of Africa and Asia through the tribal movements. What I am saying is that because of this reconnection we are no longer focused solely on this important subject, and I think we should reflect on what this means.

Two: DNA is revolutionizing the whole picture. It is breaking down the walls that have been built by ideologies of identities. Take the case of the Lemba. The Lemba are an African tribe living in the east part of the continent who have been saying that they are of Jewish origin and are one of the first Biblical tribes. As you can imagine, this was completely and contemptuously denied. But recently a multidisciplinary study was conducted that revealed the DNA of the Lemba is the same as Cohen's DNA, one of the oldest priests in Israel. Anthropologists and historians have retraced the migration of the Lemba to Yemen, which is where some theories place Biblical Jewish tribes. DNA analysis has revolutionized the thinking of Jewish identity, which means that DNA goes beyond history. We should interrogate this new development.

Three: There is a negative development at the heart of the creation of art and culture. We are witnessing a growth and concentration of those who seek to

control culture and communication; powerful groups realize that culture and communication are the most important forces. Their agendas are carried out via publishing companies, editing houses, libraries, movie companies, television studios, and universities. What we are witnessing is the emergence of new, powerful actors who are beyond democratic control, and they are slowly wiping out the whole notion of plurality and, what we have been talking about here, diversity.

Four: Some of you mentioned hip hop, but please look at the larger picture. Hip hop originated as an expression of a cultural revolution in the lives of young people within American cities, but has now become the world culture of all youth. Young generations from all over are looking at MTV and American hip-hop culture and are adapting the aesthetics of young people from your suburbs. This means that the revolution we are witnessing has gone beyond ethnicity; if the origin was an ethnic expression of revolt and identity, it was a revolt against the dominant aesthetic. Now, however, the revolt is universal. These are a few ideas that I wanted to share with you.

A.B. Spellman

From what I understand about the beliefs we have in common, we should adopt a series of resolutions at this conference, because we have more political voice that we should express in this world.

The first proposal has to do with cultural diversity as it is understood internationally, which has to do with resistance against the cultural imperialism of the United States. People are fighting to defend their national voices against the dominance of Hollywood and the American recording industry, both of which exploit the worst of American culture and inflict it upon the world. There is a U.N. resolution to this effect and I think that, as a conference, we ought to support that resolution.

The second proposal I have is a resolution against genocide. Genocide is the flip side of pluralism, where people who have power over others try to eliminate them and their culture from existence. We heard some comments about Bosnia Herzegovina and the genocide

that took place there. Genocide occurs in other places in the world too, like Darfur, and I propose we ought to have a resolution against it.

A final resolution that I would propose is against this grotesque war that we have imposed upon the Iraqi people. I think a resolution against this war is a minimal statement of consciousness that we ought to make.

James Early

I would like to suggest that the degree of applause we hear is proof of support for those proposals, and ask that A.B. Spellman be our scribe in putting together these resolutions. I would add the friendly comment that the United Nations convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions, which was adopted about a year and a half ago with a vote of 142 to 2 with the United States and Israel being the only countries to oppose it, is at the level of state craft. These various elected or government representatives, on behalf of their citizens around the world, have given their support to the expression of pluralism and cultural diversity. We are generally ignorant in the United States about this global discourse and global policy making. But for those of you who travel extensively around the world as I do, you already know that this policy discussion has moved far beyond the level of philosophy and into the level of practice. This is not only a question of diversity among countries but fundamentally a question of diversity within countries as the indispensable step toward sharing that diversity across borders. Governments are not the only entities speaking to one another regarding who will control the market share of media platforms; citizens within those nations have indicated that media platforms should reflect diversity, including the right of citizens to inform and to be informed. As we have learned here, people are making their own media programs. This is a broader context at the level of policy that I think embraces A.B. Spellman's first point.

Justin Laing

I think we should consider that we have a body here—the TAAC board—that does not take these processes lightly. I am referring to the assumption that clapping be taken as a show of support for a formal resolution.

We should not accept resolutions lightly and should discipline ourselves to ensure that if we do want to accept a resolution that we use consistent processes that can be monitored and can lead to some outcome. Our work is easy when we all agree, but we have to anticipate disagreement at times, which can be more complex. And while I am in full support of the resolutions just put forth, I think the TAAC Board should consider real ways to incorporate them, because diversity goes beyond simple agreement on issues.

SYMPOSIUM SESSION C

Migration of Peoples, Cultural Flows, and the Surrounding Debate

Presenters: Maria-Rosario Jackson, Ilona Kish, Diana Molina

Respondents: Cristina King Miranda, Sangeeta Isvaran

Sunya Ganbold

We would like to welcome you to the next session of our symposium, *Migration of Peoples, Cultural Flows and the Surrounding Political Debate*. Our discussion will consider how we can learn from the U.S. immigration debate and the dialogue surrounding global migration. We will also analyze how the arts intersect with these issues.

Our presenters are Maria-Rosario Jackson, senior research associate director in the Culture, Creativity and Communities Program at the Urban Institute in Washington, DC. We also have Ilona Kish, who is the secretary general of the European Forum for the Arts and Heritage in Brussels, Belgium. Then we will be joined by Diana Molina, a photographer and journalist from New Mexico.

After the presentations, we will hear from our respondents: Cristina King Miranda, director of development and public relations of the Festival de Mexico and El Centro Historico in Mexico City, Mexico; and Sangeeta Isvaran, a dancer, choreographer, activist, and researcher from Chennai, India.

Maria-Rosario Jackson

By way of background, I want to acknowledge that my background is not in the arts but in urban planning. I work at a think tank in Washington, D.C. We are a policy research organization that conducts studies to inform policy decisions on a number of levels: national, state, and, at times, local. My particular work is focused on community development, quality of life issues, neighborhood revitalization, and the politics of race, ethnicity, and gender in urban settings. For the past 12 years my focus at the Urban Institute has been about integrating arts and culture into policy discussions, into

our consideration of what it means to have a healthy city and a healthy community, and what it takes to align arts and culture beside other issues like education, employment, health, public safety, and the rest.

Even before we consider arts and culture as the primary topics within the context of cities, arts and culture have always been part of the prism through which I have sought to understand a community—where they come from, what they are about, and where they are headed. I think the inclination to view arts and culture as part of the big picture comes very naturally in my case. I am the daughter of an African-American father from Ohio, but with deep roots in the South. I am also the daughter of an immigrant mother from Mexico City. While growing up in Los Angeles, my parents turned to the arts as a means of teaching me things that they felt I would not get in school, including blues lyrics to explain the migration of southern African Americans to the North. Part of my complemented curriculum also included looking at Mexican murals to understand what it means to be Mexican and *mestizaje*. So you see, including the arts in the effort to understand cities is not difficult, but the effort is often not made in policy studies that deal with cities, neighborhoods, and quality of life issues.

The work in which I have been involved came about in large part as recognition that the arts and culture were not part of the larger discussion about quality of life concerns in communities. During the last 12 years I have been examining cities using a broader lens. This allows me to understand the place and role of the arts and culture in a number of U.S. communities, including moderately low income communities, communities of color, and places with large, new immigrant populations—often the places that have experienced radical change in terms of their demographic composition over the last 15 to 20 years. I have been asking questions that help to understand how the arts and culture are present in these communities, why cultural participation matters, and what conditions have to exist and what resources are necessary in order for cultural vitality to thrive in communities.

Now I would like to say a little about what I discovered over the past several years. In order to understand how the arts and culture are present in a community and why they matter, we conducted fieldwork, which included interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation. This fieldwork occurred in a number of American cities and in many different neighborhoods, but I want to share a story regarding one particular focus group discussion in Oakland, California. Many of the residents there had low to moderate incomes, and many of them came from communities of color. Naively, we asked what kinds of arts and culture existed in their community. Very promptly they said, “We do not have any.” When we asked them to say more, they told us that they did not have any theaters, any museums, or any concert halls. We interpreted that they were talking about buildings and places where the arts, as conventionally defined, exist or take place—which is not what we were interested in primarily. As a result, we changed the question and we asked about what kinds of creative expressions existed in their neighborhoods, what kinds of things they found moving, beautiful, and challenging. A whole range of activities surfaced in response to the new question, ranging from amateur to professional, from formal to informal, in places that were explicitly arts venues and others that were not, like schools, community centers, parks, etc. Given these responses, we asked people if what they were talking about was “art” and “culture.” Our respondents argued, but could not reach any conclusion. That result was acceptable to us because the purpose of our inquiry was not to limit exclusively the parameters of what mattered, but to unearth what mattered and why it did so. I was particularly moved by what people said mattered to them about an artistic experience, but these things also intersected with issues like community safety, education, and different kinds of development issues—youth development, family development, and leadership development. These issues were not necessarily at odds with each other, but multiple meanings existed in these artistic and cultural activities about which people said they cared.

Another question we hoped to answer concerned the sorts of conditions that must exist in order for these art and cultural activities to thrive. This question was

more research oriented and we did not ask our groups about it. I should say, however, that in getting people to talk about the range of arts and cultural activities that mattered to them was liberating in the sense that they were freed from using language that excluded them from the activity in question. Clearly, the notion of art was something from which they often felt alienated; it was not something that resonated with them or that they felt was part of their lives. Yet when they were allowed to get beyond the common parameters associated with the term, their discussions became rich and we began to understand those community assets that one could build from in an urban-planning and community-development context.

All of that work led to a concept that we use to this day, which is the notion of cultural vitality. We define cultural vitality as evidence of a community’s capacity to create, disseminate, and validate arts and culture as part of everyday life. Inherent in the concept is a broad range of cultural activities, which go beyond the typically elitist and/or consumerist-oriented notions of the arts. This particular vision of art and culture overturns several common assumptions, which is both the strength of the concept and a huge challenge in trying to get traction for it in real life. As an example, our view moves us beyond the notion that cultural participation means audience participation, and we all know that audience participation is what drives common understandings of the cultural sector.

Our vision threatened other assumptions as well; the artist is no longer the anonymous producer of something that is consumed as art, but she has to be interpreted as a leader and someone who helps publics, not just audiences, take responsibility for their own creativity. As I noted a moment ago, participation is not limited to the idea of a passive audience; participants also make, teach, support, and perform a whole range of direct actions. Our vision alludes to something that is worth stating overtly because it moves us beyond the familiar truism based on a false dichotomy: art for art’s sake is somehow in opposition to art that has instrumental purposes. This and other common assumptions have been exploded.

Trying to adopt and implement this notion of cultural vitality has implications from an urban planning perspective, and I will list them quickly. First, there has to be a political will to accept cultural vitality as crucial to a healthy community; personal and collective expressions on the public's own terms matter. Second, in many communities, particularly those that are becoming increasingly ethnically and racially complex, cultural vitality is reliant on such diversity and pluralism is a precondition for that diversity. A healthy community that values pluralism and diversity and that holds cultural vitality as part of its *raison d'être* is one that is both able to preserve and invent itself at the same time, which is a really important concept to keep on the table in all the discussion about tradition. There are times when the panic that accompanies the changes associated with a *mélange* of influences and technologies is a sign of a healthy community. With that in mind, some of the things that I have been thinking and writing about consider the physical implications of adopting that kind of an ideology. I have framed them as questions that I pose to myself in my work. For instance, if you buy into the notion of cultural vitality and a wide range of expression, then how does the concept of cultural districts change? Would they be just districts for consumption, or would they also be places where people come to make, teach, create, etcetera? What of the notion of a community cultural center?

I would like to share two more ideas that focus on the kinds of amenities that have to be present in a culturally vital place. One idea is that ethnic-specific spaces and activities are essential. At the same time, there is a need for cultural comment; you cannot have cultural vitality without both, which has implications for space, and I mean both physical space and cyberspace. We need to ask if a community permits cultural comment. For instance, does it have the activities and spaces where groups and individuals can assert and affirm their identities, but also constructively criticize them, which is often when invention happens and where innovation takes place? These are some the things that I believe are essential when integrating cultural vitality into any kind of cultural planning framework.

The last idea that I want to share concerns the need to recognize that cultural vitality is not the only domain of the cultural sector. While it certainly has a leadership role to play, many other sectors are implicated. When you talk about the need for affordable space, you are talking about community development, economic development, and housing. When you talk about integrating cultural value into people's lives then you are talking about the education system, the healthcare system, and the like. Making sure that those elements are considered alongside cultural policy is essential. Finally, a diverse community is not always a comfortable community, which should be something we recognize and accept. In fact, there has to be some comfort with discomfort.

Ilona Kish

My name is Ilona Kish and I am English by birth, which is to say that I am feeling really uncomfortable with the expression of emotion here today. Wolves will walk over my grave before I will be able to say the spirit is calling me, which is to say that this a surreal place for me. Moreover, I am agreeing with the old truism that says we might share a language, but we are from very different continents.

Nevertheless, I will take the plunge and tell you something about myself, which is that my mother was from New Zealand, which is not even a colonial country but a commonwealth country on the other side of the world from England, and my father was a refugee from the 1956 Hungarian revolution. My name means "small" in Hungarian, but it is shared by about 20 percent of the Hungarian population. Thus the chances of my doing any real roots exploration of where my father's family comes from is quite challenging, and I am really impressed with your sense of ancestry, because I think I have absolutely no idea where I am from or to whom I am connected. I have been living in Belgium for the last 15 years—it is a strange country. Belgium is that little country in between France, Germany, and Holland. It only actually became a country in 1830. Belgium is a bilingual country, and is also a place that has been occupied by many other countries over the years; it was known as the battlefield of Europe, which means

it has been appropriated many times. The current occupation is by the European Union, and that is what I am going to talk to you about today.

I run an advocacy association that lobbies the European Union on cultural affairs. I am going to tell you a little bit about what the European Union is and is not doing, which is quite a bleak view actually. Over the past few days, I have heard quite a few self-critical statements about policy affairs in the U.S., and I am not sure I have anything particularly more positive to say about what is happening in Europe. I am going to talk about the lack of politicization of the cultural sector in general, as well as the desperate need for some mobilization and engagement of cultural actors.

The European Union (EU) was formed in 1957, essentially as a post-war rebuilding exercise by six countries. This was an economic exercise centered on coal, steel, and food, but with an explicit peace-building agenda. In 2007, the Union had grown to 27 member states, and there are several pockets of exclusion or slow incorporation; Rumania and Bulgaria just joined the European Union at the beginning of this year. Most of the fragmented Balkans are engaged in the process to join the EU, but Albania is not even there yet. Turkey is the big problem and question mark, particularly in intercultural terms. In sum, you have a geographical space holding some 500 million citizens, 27 defined national borders, multiple ethnic identities, and many national partners with strong regional divisions, like Catalonia in Spain and the German Federal Land. The slogan of the European Union is “unity in diversity” and mostly we feel that these words have little meaning in terms of the way they are expressed in both the political and policy points of view.

In terms of the ethnic and cultural diversity of the space of the EU, this is a post-colonial, post-war, post-empire space, and now you have a post-communist space. There have been multiple migrations into and out of this space over time, and what is really hitting Europe hardest now—certainly within the EU territory—is the East-West migration from and confrontation with the post-communist countries who are trying to rebuild democratic societies. There are also many worrying trends and tendencies across Europe, particularly in

Poland, France, Italy, and the United Kingdom. As a result, I have great difficulty in talking about policies related to minority arts and diversity practices at the pan-European level; every country is different, every country has its own practices. Generally speaking, the European Union seems to be about 20 years behind the most progressive of nation-states. For instance, if you look at the United Kingdom as being perhaps more visible in terms of its explicit multicultural policies, activities, and anti-racist legislation, consider that only 20 years ago that the first independent black arts group was created. We are talking about really recent history for a country that has a long history of multiculturalism.

The EU has a directly elected parliament, which now comprises over 700 directly elected deputies. I believe only 10 of them are from ethnically diverse backgrounds, which does not reflect actual populations. There are very clear right-wing tendencies in the EU parliament as well. The areas that the EU can and cannot play in policy terms are very limited, but what is happening in Europe is a clear, emerging desire for this space to get some sort of political, cultural, and ideological coherence. In part that is motivated by a desire to be a strong economic counterweight to the U.S., but there is also a desire to become a political and ideological counterweight to the U.S.. What we are hearing in many European circles is how the EU should be a carrier of democratic values, with particular regard to foreign-policy decisions. We can see that culture is starting to play a role here, because as soon as a group of states starts to have a political agenda then it starts to become cultural. Both the implicit and increasingly explicit focus of the EU is to build some sense of European identity and to identify European values and European cultures, and I think we are having a lot of problems with that discussion and that discourse. Particularly, as we heard from Doudou Diène, there is no clear discussion about what the diversity of this continent means. Mostly the discussion is reduced to national terms and linguistic differences. Broadly speaking, we are still obsessed by the Second World War, and that remains the very trenchant image of Europe.

I want to draw a picture of what the European Union is facing today. Discussions about cultural diversity or intercultural dialogue are in their infancy; Sweden had its first year of dialogue on cultural diversity last year. Next year will be the European year of intercultural dialogue, which is funded with a budget of 10 million Euros for the whole of the European Union. The point of the dialogue is to raise awareness about cultural differences, but there is just no strategy or coherent approach. There are multiple invisible populations, particularly in France and Germany. There are many countries that do not even see or acknowledge ethnic differences. There are questions of the other Russian minorities in the Balkans. There is also the gypsy population, which numbers maybe five million. And while there are some small programs starting to look at these elements, there is not a coherent response.

The media issue is not important because we do not have a public space in Europe, so what we can see is MTV and CNN, just like the rest of you. Maybe we have easier access to the BBC—but because I am British I resent the sort of British cultural imperialism that is thrown over the whole of Europe—which does not allow a lot of space for something else.

We have a sort of cultural policy by default in Europe, which a French deputy described to me recently, and I am translating here, as “let us progress if we can, but whatever happens, do not step back.” You see, we cheer ourselves on for every tiny little gain that we might make toward a progressive policy or a little more money, but in truth the effort is inadequate.

I do not think that Europe is the cradle of civilization and democracy. What is important concerns something James Early alluded to earlier, about being cut off from public discourse in the U.S. I think as a cultural axis we need to do what we can to build bridges. Public opinion and the reputation of the U.S. in Europe is really low, the media is full of negative debates about what is happening here in the U.S., and I do not think we are getting real information either. A lot of what I have heard here is applicable, particularly what you were saying about community development. We have the same preoccupation in Europe.

I am really grateful to be here because I have never been involved in such a culturally diverse event as this. I do not believe they happen very much in Europe. Organizations like TAAC are important because if there is going to be a carrier of democratic values, it is here in this group of people. I would like to see something similar mobilized in Europe, so I encourage you to come as much as you can to Europe and build connections and bridges and network with other relevant groups, wherever they are, because what Europe could do would be really positive. Unfortunately, what we have seen so far is the rise of populist rights. We are seeing all the post-Communist countries jumping into the arms of corporate-consumer capitalism; we are seeing instrumentalism of the political funding system of the arts in Europe, which is well developed and highly politicized. Things are moving very quickly and we need to speak up and act, which is what I would encourage you all to do.

Diana Molina

I am a multi-media artist. I will be speaking about the work that I do to integrate our stories and other people’s stories into our institutions and media. I am a multi-media artist. I will be speaking about the work that I do to integrate our stories—mine and those of others—into our cultural institutions and media. I see the border and the border situation constantly. The border comes with opportunities and melding, coming together, but clashing as well. At the time when I was born there were signs that read “No dogs, no blacks, and no Mexicans.” When I went to school we were not allowed to speak Spanish. We had Spanish class where we would say, *Buenos tardes Senior Garcia*, but we were not allowed to speak Spanish outside of the classroom.

Further back, my mother was adopted. She was born to an Irish mother whose mother was a professor at the university and whose father showed up on the birth certificate as a “healthy Mexican male.” I never met those ancestors because they gave up my mother for adoption. Interracial marriage was not allowed, and perhaps the birth occurred out of wedlock; I do not know the whole story. To my great joy and advantage

my mother was adopted by a Mexican-American family. Part of this family had grown up in what was Mexico, then the border changed and it became New Mexico.

In my work I draw from my life experiences, not only in the literal sense of governmental division of territory, but also by the influence of ideologies, customs, politics, economics, and views of life. The visible impact of interaction between distinct cultures is an important aspect of my portrayals. I have a background in computer science and worked for IBM. I used that knowledge to begin my foundation for my artistic endeavors. I moved to Europe for a decade and began to integrate my stories in mainstream media. Europe was a very positive experience because there are many outlets for creative expression. For example, *Marie Claire* magazine in Europe will give ten pages to a cultural story in Holland, Spain, or Germany, while *Marie Claire* in the United States gives only one or two pages. After a decade abroad I moved back and now I am closer to my roots and focused on the border.

I am going to discuss the methodology I have used with seven-string barbed wire fence, which is one of the projects that, as a producer of media, I have engaged in to present different people's perspectives. For the first five years of my life, I grew up with a *Nana* who was an illegal immigrant. We helped her gain citizenship and she is still a close family member. That is one of the foundational experiences that guided me as I developed this project.

Seven strings of barbed wire divide the two countries along sections of New Mexico and Arizona. Along other stretches there are more formidable barriers, and the wall that is going up is growing daily. I first came face to face with the magnitude of the division on the issue of immigration through a long section of barbed wire fence.

The seeds of this project arose from direct confrontation between opposing and often antagonizing viewpoints. I was camping out with the Minutemen Campaign of April of 2005, and initially my feeling was to run away. I had to keep quiet during many a conversation in order to continue. But instead of running away from an uncomfortable situation, I responded by creating

this exhibit that shows different viewpoints. I feel that as the quality of information improves on this issue so does the quality of the debate. We are often moved by ideological prejudices that guide our decisions, but the more we know the better we can support and sustain the policies and laws enacted by our governmental entities and policy makers. The methodology I chose for this project also represents the polyphonic composition where a sound is comprised of a variety of independent voices tied together by a common theme. One thing that most parties involved agree about is the need for reform.

The journey began on the Immigrant Work for Freedom rides, which consisted of 20 buses from across the nation that coalesced in Washington D.C. to advocate for policy change. I rode the bus from Houston that retraced the routes of the original freedom rides. Approximately a thousand immigrants gathered to unite with union workers and civil rights activists. The entire journey was very emotional; I was moved by immigrants' stories and what motivated them to be there. Undocumented participants put themselves at risk of deportation, but they took that chance to come and share their stories in order to bring about change. Essentially, the policy objectives were legalization, family reunification, workers' rights, and civil rights for all. Part of the effort also recognized the many people who have died crossing the border to come to work in this country.

In order to present these many faces and perspectives I also spent time with the aforementioned Minutemen. When people see this work they want to know who the Minutemen are. Mostly they are made up of older white men—many ex-military—who are very motivated to keep the Latino language, culture, and people away from what they perceive to be American culture. They feel that Latino influences are destroying the "American fabric." There is a great fear of a cultural shift. One of the comments that I heard along the way was, "Can you just imagine America if it were 50 percent Latino?" I come from a community that is 80 percent Latino, so this is easy for me to imagine.

In addition to images from the bus trip and my time with the Minutemen, the exhibit also includes information—there are about 6,000 words of text. The border wall is a big issue in the immigration debate, so I have incorporated it into the exhibit as well. The places where the walls come together are fractures that represent the social customs, the diverging viewpoints, and all the potential for conflict with the issue. For me the wall is a metaphor for this monumental division that leaves traces of vacancy. By its very existence it defines humanity's failure and an abandoned set of futures. One theme concerns our government's decision to shore up our nation's borders, our nation's porous ontology, by erecting a vast wall that isolates us from all that we fear from our Southern neighbors and countless others. Because the motivation for the wall is based on fear, much of the activity and policy making is fear based, and the wall in my exhibit illustrates that as well.

I have incorporated fences into the exhibit itself. In reference to the journey that the immigrants make and the terrain they cover, my exhibit includes objects that they have left behind on that corridor. These are the material traces of their journeys: letters, pieces of wall, tequila bottles, and pieces of cloth used to wrap tortillas.

My sponsors for this project include the City of El Paso Museum and Cultural Affairs Department, some relief foundations, Humanities Texas, the New Mexico Endowment for the Humanities, and the Crate-All corporation of El Paso to help ship it around. The exhibit opened at the Albuquerque Museum of Art, and has been shown at the Institute of Texan Cultures and the Las Cruces Museum of Art.

Before closing, I wanted to talk about the challenges I have faced with this exhibit. Primarily these include a cultural and aesthetic supremacy that is not open to the "ethnic" look. I have heard comments like, "this is too ethnic" or "this is too political." Fear of rocking the boat with a controversial issue could mean a lack of funding in presenting something like this in a community. There is also a lack of diversity within arts institutions; in some communities that are 70 or 80 percent Latino possess institutions where there is no diversity among the decision makers who bring in and implement programs like mine.

I will end by saying that I believe we all have an ethical obligation to demand change in policies that affect our world and environment. If we do not each take a step then we cannot put the blame elsewhere. Our struggle takes individual courage, community action, and compassion. Constructive reform is elemental to our global character and human progress.

Sunya Ganbold

To respond and to further expound on the topic of immigration debates as well as the arts intersection are Sangeeta and Cristina King Miranda. And first I would like to ask Cristina to share her thoughts.

Cristina King Miranda

There are a couple of overriding points that I would like to take from our speakers and throughout the course of the day, but first I think it is important that I tell you about my perspective, how I am approaching this dialogue, why I am here, why I am a cultural worker, why I was an artist and always consider myself an artist, and why I went into management and producing. My experience has to do with the number one theme I have been hearing today, which concerns issues of identity. Identity factors into issues surrounding transnational communities and what it means to be Mexican, Puerto Rican, or Latina. The issue of identity is the big question and to tie in with something that Maestro Doudou Diène said yesterday, identity is really how you live your life, not necessarily how you identify with your life. If I relegated myself into identifying with my life (and I will tell you why in a moment), I would become stagnant due to the incongruities of my own person and of my own life. I think that the energy, movement, and focus in our dialogues and work should inform our discussions about identity and personas.

My identity has multiple repertoires; it is not rooted in one place. A friend and co-worker of mine, who is also an artist many of you know because he spoke at one of the TAAC conferences in Washington, is one of the seminal thinkers on people of color, diversity, and multiculturalism. He told me, "You know what you are, Cristina? You are Pan-Latina, post-Mexicana, boardie-Mex, trans-territorial, trans-American, post-colonial *boriqua*. You are called a *sodiqua* in Europe and you

are *sodaca* all the way around.” I share the realities of many of you here in this room: I was born in Spain and lived there for a while; my father is of Scottish-Irish descent who was raised in Forth Worth, Texas; my mother is a Puerto Rican from Las Marías, Puerto Rico; I grew up in Washington, D.C. and was sent to very elite preparatory schools when I was in high school; and I went to Puerto Rico every summer. Finally, I have been living in Mexico for nine years as a naturalized Mexicana. How do I self identify? I ask this of myself every day now because I am questioned by my son, Matias. Well, my feeling is that the matter rests in your mind, because your mind defines the spaces where you are traveling and how you are living in them.

All that said, I have another relationship to this dialogue, which is part of me and my repertoire of identities—that of *lo Mexicano*, the husband, the child, and my persona as a mother, as a partner, which goes far beyond and complements my persona as an artist, cultural worker, and as a woman.

Thinking about all of these issues of identity makes me wonder how I learned about being Latina, about being Puerto Rican. Well, you learn it at home. We had this conversation at our breakout session and I think it is very important to bring it back to the whole group. Cultural exchange begins at home. Interaction begins at home, locally. It begins with getting to know cross-cultural expressions, with getting to know your grassroots communities and the people who are working in the trenches in those communities. For me the matter included going to Gala Hispanic Theater when I was six years old. This was long before it was trendy, before there was a Latino theater in Washington, before the Kennedy Center for the Arts began multicultural programming, and before the mainstream presenters co-opted us and our organizations, because the history has been a bit about co-opting. In sum, I learned about my *Latinata*, about my cultures, at home and by going to the Peruvian Day Parade and the Gala Hispanic Theater. I think that when we talk about cultural exchange, we tend to forget these experiences as presenters of others’ work.

Tomás Ybarra-Frausto mentioned this, and I agree: we are almost falling back into this kind of Cold War perspective about cultural exchange, with blocks of lip service and a highly protectionist agenda—bring in your traditional national dance companies, then move them out. That is not the cultural exchange that we need. We have to have these discussions; we have to go beyond a cultural exchange that is not just about lip service. One of those ways is to look to our people, to look to *el restaurateur Mexicano* in your community and ask what is going on. To begin to have a conversation, and as Maestro Doudou Diène said yesterday as well, “To begin to focus on the values of cultures, not just the aesthetics.” We focus too much on the aesthetics and this why we are so misunderstood. We also tend to talk amongst ourselves in ways that do not help us to break out or move our agenda to a broader level.

The first issue is about identity, cultural exchange, and about beginning to look locally at the ways that we can come together, examine connections, and illustrate differences. As was mentioned by one of our speakers, diversity is not always comfortable. I remember a project I worked on in Washington, D.C., that illustrates this point. We worked with a Maryland-based company called Memory of African Culture, which was run by a former dancer and artistic director from Senegal. We connected them with a company playing *Son Jarocho*—one of the 90 music traditions that we have in Mexico. *Son Jarocho* is particular to the Caribbean side of Mexico and arose from three musical sources: African, Indigenous, and Spanish. In this particular collaboration we found that the *corta* is a root instrument of the *Harana* in the *Jarocho* from way back. The only way you are going to find these things out is by bringing artists, who are our greatest chroniclers and griots together to get to know one another. They, in turn, bring our communities together so they can know one another. Interestingly, we found that the director of Memory of African Culture had spent three months in a town called Mandinga in Vera Cruz. That town is completely *Africano* today because the slave trade passed through Vera Cruz and was a very strong part of colonial culture.

Other ways of bringing our communities together include engaging in projects where we bring in different groups. The work I am doing now involves bringing together the *Mala Salvaorena*—the Vietnamese and the African-American gangs in our local community—and they are beginning to communicate through spoken word, poetry, graffiti, and dance. These activities help all begin to see similarities and differences, which is the start of learning to be comfortable with different cultures and to be able to work amongst ourselves. The whole issue of cultural exchange and of getting to know what brings us together and what does not can start at home, but we have to find those similarities. Take percussive space dance; you can pull it from Appalachia, you can pull it from Puerto Rico, or you can pull it from Cuba. From wherever we pull it, we have to come together and have a conversation about cultural exchange and commonalities—something we need to do more often.

Another issue we must address is immigration rhetoric and specifically the border wall. I am going to put on my Mexicana hat, my Latina hat, and all of your hats because we all have to share each other's humanity and each other's context in order to really move forward, which is what I think we are doing during these days together. For those of us in Mexico the wall is painful, it displeases and annoys us. Generations of Latinos, a fifth-generation Mexicano maybe, are part of the United States. The relationship has been intrinsic for centuries, yet there is this wall which is destructive, offensive, painful, and while much work has been done at the border to discuss the wall—art in public spaces, that kind of thing—we need to see more of it. Even though we have a physical barrier, the wall, we must consider that there are other walls that may not be made of brick, mortar, or electric fence but they exist. For example, Puerto Rico is a commonwealth, but there is another Puerto Rico that people do not consider. There are four million or more of us in the United States than the three million of us who live in Puerto Rico. We have our *musica*, our cultural value, tradition, and our *idiomas*—and this issue of barriers, walls, and divisions requires our attention.

There are other sorts of walls we should consider; artists are being stereotyped or pigeonholed into certain constructs. In Mexico our artists are stereotyped. As Diana Molina mentioned, many view Latino art and artists as either too ethnic or not ethnic enough. For example, an artist may be invited to present her work in a gallery in New York because she is a Latino artist and because she is going to show something Mexican. I have repeatedly heard my colleagues say, "This is a contemporary dance company from Mexico." What is Mexican about it? Such ignorance touches on the broader issue of contemporaneity and the dynamism of our culture. As arts presenters, we forget that sometimes and I think we must remind ourselves how vibrant culture is. In Mexico my colleagues and I talk about *Mexico profundo*, or "deep Mexico." The expression was coined by one of our greatest thinkers, Guillermo Bonfil Batalla.¹⁸ *Mexico profundo* is traditional and it is also contemporary, yet in *Mexico profundo* there still exists the perspective that the best indigenous representative is the one from 500 years ago, that the culture is static, that the relationship does not evolve, that tradition exists in a *vitrina*, which is clearly not the case. This is another sort of wall that we must overcome.

We also need to be aware that high art, popular art, and mass art are no longer found in familiar places; traditional and modern are often mixed together. Many of you have heard of Lila Downs from Oaxaca, Mexico. She is rooted in tradition, but she expresses herself and uses her voice in a contemporary way. So we need to be very conscious of the fact that high, popular, and mass art are found in familiar places. What is really going on is a reconversion of cultural capital, something that another thinker, Néstor García Canclini, has considered. He examined the idea of reconverting cultural capital, the concept of cultural capital, and how we nourish each other; how high art, mass art, and popular art nourish one another.¹⁹ The reality of Mexico today is that the artisan who is probably working with some fairly modern methodology to create traditional weavings and pottery is also sitting in front of a huge contemporary art museum. There

¹⁸Bonfil Batalla, G. (1996). *México profundo: Reclaiming a civilization*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

¹⁹García Canclini, N. (1993). *Transforming modernity: Popular culture in Mexico*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

are a lot of juxtapositions, and there are going to be more of them because of the move from the rural areas to the urban cities.

Some arts projects sponsored by our governments are useful, but they need to be complemented by the guerrilla initiatives. Government projects need to be complemented by the artists' own initiatives. Governments are about order, so we need to build the chaos; we need to talk more about our intangible heritage, more about preserving the essence of our *artisanos*, our music, our traditions, and to not let the commercialized *televisa* sensationalize and define perspectives of our cultures for us and for others. Where yesterday you had *Quinceañera* and traditional parties and festivities in the homes, today you have them being celebrated in McDonalds, in malls, and in commercial centers. This is deeply disturbing.

In conclusion I would just like to say that I enjoy being back. I have shared many of these conversations; I matured on them some 10 years ago or so, but I find interest in the fact that we are still having them. My hope is that we can include more voices at the table, from different generations and also from different perspectives—some of which may be polemic—so that we can bring them into the fold and begin to generate another paradigm and another vision.

Sangeeta Isvaran

Immigration and migration are movement. Internal or external, they are movement, but when I work with communities mostly I see local immigrants. These are people who are refugees from communal violence, from tsunamis, earthquakes, they are sex workers, street children, and people who are victims of land mines. They migrate normally from a rural environment to an urban environment, or from one city to another for employment, for security reasons, for medication—like the people who have AIDS, and with the workshops that I do the intention is to invoke this 13th century verse: “Why did you move? What was the intention? Are you conscious of what you have done? Do you know what emotions it has evoked in you?” With this in mind, the movement becomes one with understanding and, I hope, with joy.

I work with traditional art forms from southern India, mainly dance and theater forms, and I have worked in many Southeast Asian communities and in a few West African communities, in Burkina Faso, in France, and lately in Mexico. In each of these projects the goal has been to use the arts that belong to these people to help them express what they want to say. We believe the arts are sacred, and in India the teachers of the arts are called gurus not because they are cult seekers or because they have a spiritual sect behind them but because art is spiritual, it is a road that the spirit follows.

What interests me in the first place is not that art is spiritual because it talks to the gods and goddesses, it is spiritual because it talks of the sublimation of the ego; “I” dissolves in “us.” In the second place, art talks of cycles of time, or regeneration and degeneration, and that is an extremely healthy human concept when you look at things cyclically. In the third place is something that Monsieur Tomás Ybarra-Frausto said today: that which is transitory and ephemeral is also eternal. Reality is illusion and illusion is reality, because meaning is subjective, and that is a construct anyway. In the fourth place, I want to note that action is important, not reaction. Karma is about action; you act and when you do not react to what is happening, you are acting all the same.

I use a particular verse when a movement is assigned to a conscious intention and emotion in order to transcend our reality. This particular verse helps me to work with people; it notes that people assign responsibility, not blame. Responsibility is proactive and empowering, while blame is guilt and is disempowering. Some of the techniques that I use, especially the notion of cultural vitality, are important when you work with displaced groups because they are lost. For instance, in Asia, community and family are your center. When these are gone you have lost your center. Without them you are no longer accepted and you have to fight just to survive, just to be alive in that place.

I would like to tell you about a rap song written by Cambodian group with which I worked. The lyrics tell us that the future is something that we cannot see, the past pulls us down, and the present is lost in finding food to eat. The song reminds us that we are born, we

grow old, we get sick, and we die. Life comes and it goes, it comes and it goes again without end. This song explains that notion of regeneration and degeneration that I mentioned earlier.

Many of our traditions already have structures that were built to help people express what they feel and find a context for that expression. For example, I would like to share a few examples because I believe that traditions are important, that we have a lot to learn from them, and we can use them constructively in a new context. For example, in Indian culture we believe there is importance in expressing completely a single moment in time. In all of our art forms we take a single word and improvise on it for hours. During my work with communities I tell each participant to choose one word and then improvise on it. A sex worker once gave me her word for suffering. With that one word we were able to explore the entire meaning that the word held for her, including her past and present, her future, her children, her husband, her sickness, and her health. One word can lead you to a whole world of emotions.

We have many forms of literature in India, which have spread to Southeast Asia as well. I use the legends from these stories as structures when I work with underprivileged communities because it is a structure which they can express. For example, the story of the heroine Sita, who is a chaste, perfect wife and is accused of being touched by another man when she is kidnapped by him. She had no choice, but she was touched and hence, her husband told her he could not take her back because she had been touched by another man. He tells her to leave him, that he has done his duty by her, that now she is free to go. She curses him—good for her, builds a fire, and jumps into it. However, she is so chaste that the fire cannot touch her and it gives her back to her husband because she has passed the test of fire to prove her chastity—which is an absolutely appalling notion. Still, I used this story when I worked with a group of sexually abused children who have been repudiated by their families because they are no longer virgins. The girls took this story and performed it. Each child—they were between 10 and 15 years of age—became a flame and she chose to burn or not to burn. Some of them chose to burn Sita, saying that she was so stupid to rely on this man. They felt she should

get over him, find a new life, find a new man, or do not find a man at all and find a woman. There were varied reactions, but these structures in our legends and mythology provided immense help for self questioning.

As another example, I offer you Bollywood. Bollywood, for those of you unfamiliar with it, is the Indian version of Hollywood. It has an amazing amount of rhythm, rap, contemporary lyrics, and fun. I incorporate some Bollywood elements into the work that I do, such as the work I did with a group of Mexican girls. We were doing isolations of the body, and this meant we could talk very easily about a woman's body; in doing isolations we were able to discuss the high levels of teenage pregnancy, assuming the responsibility of being a woman, why hair grows in certain places, why dresses suddenly stick out, and what these implications mean. Dancing is a very useful way of helping people to bring up and discuss bodily changes.

Another example is Nias, an island in Indonesia, which was devastated by earthquakes in 2005 and since been devastated over and over again. For the most part, the island refugees have been living off Christian missionaries, because most of the people there are Christian. These well-meaning missionaries would bring back American artifacts like teddy bears, western clothes, guitars, and brass music instruments. The traditional sounds of gamelans and gongs are no longer heard on that island; the people are losing their traditions—their music, their clothes, and their culture—because of the well-meant intentions of the missionaries. In response we created a traditional dance and the local people wrote their own lyrics for it commemorating the earthquake experience. Now this dance can be passed down now as a record of their emotional experience of going through an earthquake. This is what traditional art forms are all about: they record an experience in order to preserve and develop it, which allows people to create new experiences from that process.

What really bothers me about India is that we have adopted—thanks to the British and colonization—much of the infrastructure, education, and forms of analysis from the West. I feel that our traditional forms have their own systems of analysis and their own systems of education that are as rich as the Western systems.

We have this belief that technology and education from the West is the best, which is not true at all. I would like to share this piece of poetry, written by a person who lost her leg to a land mine.

Thirsty, thirsty

Wounded grievously

With so much pain in my body

Nearly dead.

My last wish

I want to see my parents.

What past sin has condemned me to this torture?

Mother, father, come help me.

Save me.

Everybody has deserted me callously,

Bleeding, bleeding.

My blood covers the ground

I'm dying,

Please, so thirsty, thirsty.

My body becomes still

Too much pain.

Please, help me.

Everybody has abandoned me

Like I am a wild animal.

Tears falling on my body.

No love, no village, no parents,

Only separation, alone in the forest.

Forest, mountain, and jungle

I promise you if I will not die

I will go and see you all again.

Apart from ripping my heart out and wondering why God allows war to happen, three things strike me. First is the feeling of complete abandonment and separation. Second, this is obviously a person who has come from a rural environment to an urban environment and is lost. The speaker connects to things that are natural and not part of our urban-techno life. Third, there is a textual quality to the thirst. This is not just about being thirsty for water, there is the thirst for a touch, for an experience of sharing. Displaced people feel this way because they have no more connections, they have no more roots to the soil. Sometimes through our performances where audiences are reactive and interactive, we try to build community interactions where people can feel a greater connection to their community.

What is most important above all else is love and laughter. We all need to laugh. As proof, I have a small anecdote from Mexico where I worked with a group of adults and boys, young and minor criminals who are in this *reformatoria* in Merida. I went in speaking very little Spanish, my vocabulary consisted of ten words. I told the group, "Okay, put the music on and we will all dance." This was the most terrifying experience for many of them, but I said in Spanish, "we will make a circle." They just looked at me and then burst out laughing. I did not know why they laughed, but laughter is good so I repeated myself. I am happy they are laughing, even if they are laughing at me. Still, I was wondering what about me was so funny, and then the facilitator told me, "Stop saying *culo*! This is a terrible word." Basically it means "ass." All the same, it was a good experience—it broke the ice and then some. Thanks to that word we had so much fun. I learned a few things, and I hope they did too.

In conclusion, I want to say that what art is about does not matter. As humans, and this is a *crie de cour*, we invent notions of compassion, justice, love, spirituality, yet given the slightest chance we kill each other. That is what horrifies me, and I do not understand it. I once worked with a bunch of Cambodian kids; in the morning I danced with them, but in the evening they were out with these old disgusting men and there was nothing I could do. A German woman had just been killed for trying to bring authorities to this place called Kiddie's Corner. There were children you could buy;

you could just go get a kid and walk out. When you see things like this happening, you really begin to question everything. No matter where you think your center is, the center is the earth, the center is in you, is in me, and if we cannot transcend this and transmit this love from one to another and prevent such horror from happening, then there is nothing much else one can do in this world. That is the only way we need to move forward. We need to move forward as a universal soul and not as singular entities. We need to forget the "I" in the "us."

SYMPOSIUM SESSION D

Building a Cultural Democracy Agenda

Presenter: Tatiana Reinoza Perkins

Respondent: Justin Laing

Discussant: Loie Fecteau

James Early

Now we are going to do something that as conference advisor I will take the liberty to say that I wish I had thought about earlier. We are going to ask Tatiana Reinoza Perkins to deliver a presentation on building a cultural democracy agenda for the future. Justin Laing will respond.

Tatiana Reinoza Perkins

Being here is really a privilege and an honor. I am going to talk about building a cultural democracy agenda for the future, and I am going to start out by talking about the most current project I have taken on, which is with an organization called Serie Project, based out of Austin. The Serie Project is a non-profit Latino arts organization that specializes in printmaking. One of the reasons that I started working with the Serie Project is because I met Sam Coronado at a conference in April of this year. He showed a print that he had recently produced about a young girl who was a guerilla fighter in the town of Perquin, El Salvador. I have a strong connection to that town because there is a school of art and a studio that serves as a post-conflict mediation center and place where ex-combatants can come and create art, and where the young people are also becoming arts activists. During the conference I approached him about doing an archival project for Serie. It is an organization that provides artist residencies—an average of 15 artists are selected every year—and we house them for a week and they produce a limited edition of silkscreen prints. I am at the point where I want to work with an organization that has a Latino focus, but embraces the broader values of cultural pluralism; the Serie Project does not just invite Latino artists, it invites African Americans and other artists in the community.

We are beginning our 15th year of production, and at present I am the archives and collection management intern. This means that I am working with about 2,500 prints, which is taking me a very long time. Thinking about their collection brings up something that was said earlier and that I want to emphasize again: Latinos are a non-monolithic culture, which means much of this art is very rich and very diverse.

Now I want to talk about a manifesto for young cultural workers in the 21st Century. I want to do this in the form of a manifesto because I want young artists in the room to remember that a manifesto is a means of expressing, publicizing, and recording ideas. I believe young artists should write new theories about art and make manifest their ideas. One of the most famous 20th-Century examples of this was *Dada*, a movement that began in 1916 in Zurich, Switzerland, and that changed the contemporary-art landscape. Originally an anti-war movement, Dada was also in many ways an anti-art movement, introducing new aesthetics, techniques, and styles. Dadaists, many of whom were artists, were fed up with the first World War, especially the slaughter of ten million people. Another example that I often come back to is the *Antropofago Manifesto* written in 1928 by Oswald de Andrade²⁰, the well known Brazilian writer. *Antropofago Manifesto* is about cannibalizing European art and culture and turning it into something new, something ultimately Brazilian.

My manifesto would go something like this: We are creating a world where cultural pluralism is valued, protected, and promoted. We position ourselves on a global scale. We are anti-institutional, but seek recognition from the mainstream. We envision culture as surpassing nationalism and ethnic boundaries. We firmly denounce the use of social constructions, like race and geographic borders, to limit access to cultural resources. We embrace all forms of technology, but use them to facilitate communication, collaboration, and equal access. We encourage the need for specialists in cultural production. What I mean by that is that we need Native American curators, we need African-American conservators, etc. We want permanent collections in our public institutions that reflect and accurately represent our diverse communities.

²⁰de Andrade, O. (1976). "Manifesto Antropofago." In G. M. Teles (Ed.), *Vanguarda Europeia E Modernismo Brasileiro* (pp. 17-28). Brasilia.

I want to close with a quote by Roberto Juarroz, the Argentinean poet, whom was introduced to me by my dear friend and mentor, Claudia Bernardi. Juarroz²¹ writes,

“A net of gazing eyes
keeps the world united
It does not allow it to fall.”

We are the net and we are the gazing eyes. We are very powerful that way.

Justin Laing

One of the things Tatiana said that jumped out at me was the part about anti-institutionalizing, about how we should want to work in the mainstream. Maybe others of my generation can relate to this, but this suggestion seems to be at odds with something I learned in the Black Studies department at The University of Pittsburgh under people like Rob Penny and Dr. Vernell Lillie; we were encouraged to build institutions for the Black community that would support the Black community and bring it forward. I think that for some of the people who have come a little after us, there is a sense that institutions have become stodgy, which perhaps causes them to prefer working with individuals. I believe someone else here made a similar comment, suggesting that maybe we do not want these institutions. While I agree with the need for flexibility, I think we need to be careful that we do not overestimate the power of individuals alone to support our goals.

I believe there is merit in thinking about issues around institution building and cultural democracy. We need to ask how we can find a connection between the two. We might develop ways to deal with the needs of our community to employ people who put these kinds of ideas forward for the long term, but at the same time embrace the capacity to communicate as individuals using, for example, technology. The inflexible institutional method loses something, but so do the younger people who think that as individuals we can do the whole thing ourselves. In some sense we have not recognized that we always sit in a larger structure that makes its chief impacts through institutions. The first

institution that most of us join is that of the family. Maybe I have misunderstood the comment, so I welcome your comments later.

In terms of our cultural democracy, I think we should consider the language that we are using to forward our concerns. I am specifically referring to phrases like “people of color.” Use of this terminology highlights the fact that we are non-white people. At the core, that is what we are saying. This tells me that we are not focused on our African origins, our Latin-American origins, or our Asian origins; instead, we emphasize that we are non-white people—this is what makes us proud. I think there is a lot that we are not noticing in that phrase. This works against everything we fought so hard against as “colored people.” The irony for me is that we moved beyond colored people only to turn around the words as if that was somehow an advanced concept! I owe a special debt to the poet Sekou Sundiata—who, in my opinion, has addressed this issue more articulately than all others. As we are thinking about language, we should pay close attention to ensure that we are supporting pluralism rather than simply diversity because, as our keynote speaker advised, diversity is a fact and pluralism is a value. I am thankful for Mr. Diène’s words, because I think he encouraged us to be brilliant and to take that as a challenge, to be as broad and wide thinking as possible and to take the values forward.

On a related note, I always throw out the term *ALANA*—African, Latino, Asian, Native American—because when we say all of our names together, we stand together. When we put that out there we acknowledge our collective place, not just our separate identities. I think we should put this in our policy guidelines, in our institutions, and we should require our institutions to have this conversation about our role as being far greater than just being non-white. These are the places and situations where we can do that, where we can fight for that essential ground and all it includes.

Thinking about language also makes me think of something Sekou Sundiata said during a presentation held in Pittsburgh a few years ago called “Revisiting

²¹Juarroz, R. (1995). *Vertical poetry: Recent poems*. Translated by Mary Crow. Buffalo: White Pine Press.

Democracy.” His comment was that diversity is a warmed-over idea, and he was disappointed that he was revisiting it after all this time. He said we need to focus on democracy because democracy is the center of the discussion; he felt it put us at the center, and said we should fight for the definition of what it means to be an American. This is why I am really impressed by art that has American flags in it, because I really believe we should fight for that symbol, that we should not just let it go.

Again, on the subject of language and definitions of terms, the idea of democracy relates to how we view culturally and ethnically specific art. Why do we see opera and classical music as universal and not ethnic specific? In fact, this is beyond the label of ethnically specific—we are being class specific. Why do we cede that debate and allow ourselves and our art to be ethnically specific while others and their cultural products are considered universal? If we learn anything from the black arts movement of the 1960s and 1970s, our lesson should be about not giving away that ground.

I am trying to work with the idea of what cultural democracy means, and since culture comes from agriculture—which is what sustains us—and at the same time, democracy means people. Maybe taken together, we can see that we are having a discussion about what really sustains us as people. Mr. Diène gave us a great three-level piece about just that. If we have our own discussion about what sustains us then we find cultural democracy right at the core of a number of important issues: economic development, education, drug treatment, and so on. These are the ideas that I would like us to carry forward.

James Early

Loie Fecteau will now share her comments with us and then I will make a closing comment.

Loie Fecteau

I want to share a few more common threads on the transformative power of arts and culture. This is more of a poem:

We need to focus on democracy

Our focus should be building a cultural-democracy agenda

What is taboo?

It doesn't matter

Arts are sacred

Transcendence

Where the mind goes, let your heart follow

We need to build the chaos

It's how you live your life

Shake it out – circulate that energy

Will the wall lock us in a cage?

Border Gothic

I straddle the border on a daily basis

I think I have absolutely no idea of where I'm from

Diversity

Pluralism

Compassion

Why does it matter?

Is it art? Is it culture?

Arts and culture have always been part of the prism through which I've sought to understand a community

If only she would see me – no – not me – us

So how 'bout now – can you see me now

And to cycle back to the beginning since one of our themes has been how fear is such a driver of racism, bigotry, and repression

Now that fear is no more, I stand up proud.

So let us stand up

James Early

Before I share a few closing remarks, Dr. Vernell Lillie is here and would like to share something with us.

Vernell A. Lillie

My problem with what I have heard here is that we are talking about transformation, but I would say that you have less than five percent of African Americans who understand their heritage and know what ancient Kemet is, what the Cush is, who the Nubians are, and our contributions in terms of cultural landmarks like the pyramids. We cannot have transformation when we have not yet finished our recovery. By recovery I mean we must add the brilliant works by Langston Hughes and others into our schools' curriculums. Our children should know what happened in Mali and other important places. The current absence of this material means we are not on an even keel. Robert Lee (Rob) Penny, God rest his soul, died much too soon, because he was on the right road towards doing just that.

Let me be clear—I am talking about cultural recovery; African Americans must know who built the pyramids and how we are and were an oral people. What do you think the hieroglyphics are on those pyramids? The hieroglyphics can be translated into language. In them you see some interesting things, like mathematical calculations. Our present state of ignorance has not prepared us for the total transformation. As for the institutions, and in contrast to what Tatiana Reinoza Perkins said, they must be involved. If we look at the Bantu cultures and others we see that institutions are crucial.

Do you realize that I am 76 years old, and the only black role I ever played in my life was Mother in "Raisin in the Sun?" I have been in theater since I was a 7th grader at Phyllis Sweetly High School, but that black role was all that was open to me. What about the history around Barbara Jordan, that great speaker and politician? How many of you know the name of Jordan's debate partner when they beat Harvard? We all know that Jordan was a Southern black girl out of a Southern black school who became a member of Congress, but what of her male partner? His name is James Race. He graduated from Texas Southern with Barbara. Did you know that when Barbara graduated

from Phyllis Sweetly High School there were approximately 30 other brilliant students who matched her, like Ruth Simmons of Brown University? I remember the *Post* asked me one day, "Were you surprised at Ruth achieving what she did?" I said, "No; I was surprised that you would allow it to happen."

My focus is on recovery. Yes, I want an institution. I want an institution that says black people are decent human beings. I want theater plays that reflect my mother and my father, plays that will not allow Americans to decide that all black folks are scoundrels, drunkards, and all of that. I want you to get angry when the dominant culture constantly puts forth such images. I am not ready for transformation; I have to have recovery so that you will write to the newspaper and say "Do not put that filth in there." We need some sense of equality and understanding that matches the rest of American culture; if there is a drunk Chicano, then we all know this Chicano does not represent the whole Chicano culture. The same is true of a drunken Asian, but take a black man and all of a sudden he represents everyone—every black criminal.

James Early

Thank you, Dr. Lillie.

Now I would like to make two comments about building our agenda that I think we have to consider, and they relate directly to something that Justin just said. In my observations of people who have been exploited and oppressed, like the different voices representing different communities in this room, they have great difficulty seeing themselves as "the public." In particular, we juxtapose our race, culture, and our ethnic-specific identities against the notion of the mainstream, almost saying, "You take that. I am going to save myself," rather than understanding that the mainstream also is comprised of ethnically specific people. White supremacy has blinded people to their own ethnicity. The eastern migration in Europe that Ilona Kish alluded to is comprised of caucasian, or white, people—natural blondes with blue eyes, or green eyes—but these people are Muslims.

My second point concerns democracy and the flag; I agree with Justin that we should not give up the flag and what it represents to us. We too have died for it, whoever the “we” are. In my view, the brilliance was to call this organization The Association of American Cultures when it was fundamentally people of color who brought it to be. That was a huge ideological leap. My thoughts concern the white people sitting in the room who are members of The Association of American Cultures, some of who are on our board; we must bring our historical terminology in line with our contemporary reality. These people are not visiting; they are not here because they feel guilty; they are here, I dare say, because they are trying to transform this country, which is also about transforming not just their humanity but all of our humanity. I believe we have to figure out the proper articulation of our reality regarding the people-of-color issue that Justin Laing mentioned.

Two weeks ago I moderated a panel in New York City under the auspices of the South African Embassy, which had been given a charge by the African Union to develop a sixth region of diaspora. Within two days of the conclusion of that conference, an e-mail message was circulated highlighting 40 names, all of whom were said to be descendants of enslaved Africans. They are not the real diaspora—we are the diaspora. So who are those people? They are the new African citizens who have come since 1965, some of who are now second generation Americans. These people are not immigrants, they are citizens. They are the ones who say, “We are sending 3.4 billion dollars a year back to Africa.” We should be asking just who is the 21st century African American born in the United States of America. They are East-Indian Africans; they are born where they are born. They are white Africans who speak languages that I do not speak. If language is culture, then skin color is not. We have a lot of adjusting to do regarding the new composition of this country. We have diversity within groups and we have diversity among groups. I think in building our agenda for the 21st Century, we are going to have to grapple with a deeper, more organic articulation of diversity and then look at the practical implications of it, because this cannot be just a “feel good talk fest.” This is really about institution building and altering the notion of the power that is

manifested in our public institutions like the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the service organizations, Americans for the Arts, and so forth. Let us transition.

GLOBAL CULTURAL ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Presenters: Paula Astorga, Ivan Duran, Aziz Ridouan, Quentin Renaudo, Gabriella Gomez-Mont, Natalia Toledo, Carlos Enríquez Verdura

Sunya Ganbold

We would like to invite the young, acclaimed arts administrators and leaders from around the world to share their thoughts and further expand on the topics we have heard today.

James Early

To begin this session, poet Laura “Piece” Kelley-Jahn, an HBO Def Poetry Jam Poet, is here to share a poem with us. She is also a member of the Arts Commission of Seattle and an educator.

Laura “Piece” Kelley-Jahn

I just arrived and I am very glad to be a part of this conference. When I walked in, which was at the tail end of what Mr. Early just said, this sounded like a continuation of a conversation I just had with my students. Right now, two young girls are on their way to the National Poetry Slam Competition for Youth. They asked if would I come and hear their group poem about educational integration in Seattle, Washington in 1978; Seattle was the first city to opt for integrated education, which was when kids were being bused out of the central district of Seattle some 45-minutes north.

I come from the culture of hip hop; I am from the first generation of freedom. We stepped into a big mess when we were born; hip hop was our savior on the streets. We had specific elements in our culture—MCs, breakdancing, graffiti art, beatboxing—and we used them as a way to create a healthy competition on the streets. Today, I am a poet, a dancer, and I like to draw. About 10 years ago I was given an opportunity to be published in *National Geographic*. I was only 20 years old at the time and I was a slam poet. *National Geographic* took a liking to some of my words and felt like they wanted to examine this “new” culture known as hip hop through spoken-word poetry. The article earned me some bragging rights around Seattle, and it

helped me get into juvenile detention facilities doing spoken word and creative-writing workshops. I was asked by one of the truant officers if I would come down and teach these kids how to create poetry. I took a liking to the work and they took a liking to my efforts; for the last decade I have been doing media literacy work through spoken-word poetry in the hip-hop culture.

In response to what I heard when I walked into the room, I am going to offer a poem to this space.

With Indo-European Sanskrit carved upon my palms

I walk with calloused footprints from the Nile

Singing slave songs in bondage.

I am ancestrally Slavic with Croatian eyes widespread

But I grew from a family tree with African native roots

So deep that beneath my feet I probe the core of this planet Earth.

And if I could I would swallow the sun and give it birth

In search of my self worth as grey.

Between black and white I live.

Some say half-breed, high-yellow, light, bright-crossbred,

Red-boned, banana-tone, mulatto, quadroon,

Nappy-head, bubble-bootied and big-lipped

But you can bet on this,

I’m honey dipped and that’s a butterscotch-caramel kiss

With a ghetto strut.

Backed up by a queen’s stride

I’ve been a true break in the bloodline

Down-home-drinking-high-tea-with-biscuits type of chick

While my people are pumping their Black-Power fist

And waving a Confederate flag in the other hand.

On the other hand I live grey

Between black and white as grey

And while they're wearing Malcolm X hats

And swastikas on the KKK dunce cap

Eatin' bean pies and éclair

Living in the projects and trailer parks

Drivin' low-ridin' Impalas and Cadillacs

With those two sexy women hologrammed in their rear window.

You know the ones, they sit back to back with their legs up.

And bright red big-bodied monster trucks with gun racks

And those same two girls only swingin' on their mud flaps.

And when my people speak in slang they say things like

"Hey you really rock, girl" and "dang that was tight"

And when they get mad at each other they yell obscenities like

Nigger, honkie, pica-ninny, hillbilly, cry baby, redneck,

Peckerwood, coon, crackerjack, black spot, white trash,

and one more white princess who raped my black sister

while I have black friends but you stole this land

And then in unison they say to one another,

"You hate me because you're not me"

And then there's me, the grey one

Who lives in a world between black and white

That sometimes just refuses to contrast

Maybe because their mothers are maids

Or their mothers have maids.

And their father is a gamblin' numbers runner

And his father is a Wall Street stockbroker

And his son sells crack

And his son runs a meth lab

And they love hip hop and go to raids

And they've got black tops and mohawks

And wear 24-carat gold chains

Or just plain old chains with padlocks

From the hardware store like those kids on the 'Ave

Nose reductions, liposuctions, control-top gut tights

Hair extensions, highlights matching color contacts, implants

And some of my people even bleach their skin.

And tan every other day.

So a better way for me to be than grey

I may think of it in this way when I say my people

Maybe some of you even hear your own name

Because you know that we are all truly one and the same

As if we lived in between the Yin and Yang

As grey.

I will now close with another poem. This is actually the piece that I did for HBO's *Def Poetry Jam*. It is about the gentrification that occurred in Seattle during the early 1980s. While gentrification happened all across the nation, Seattle had what we call the Black Wall Street in the center of this metropolitan city, which was completely occupied by educated African-American business people. We were one of the first cities where Jewish, Chinese, and Native American people integrated in our apartment buildings and businesses. "Reaganomics" hit just when our so-called freedom hit the streets; we were hip hopping on the corner with crack cocaine and guns being funneled into every inner-city neighborhood. I do not know if it happened in Denver, but Seattle was like a microscopic version of what was happening in New York, Chicago, and many of the other large urban cities.

If you believe it

Then you should be it and live it

Or leave it be.

For me it started with block parties

All night-long gatherings.

The standard greeting was,

"Man, what's happenin' " back when Empire Way became MLK

And every summer was a celebration

And we had a parade – it went to Judkins

For the SoulFest function

And I was young then

But I felt grown on the bus

Home alone after dark.

I used to roll through Garfield Park

In a stolen shopping cart.

And even though my mom didn't smoke crack or have crack

It doesn't erase the fact that

I had to sleep on the floor in a sleeping bag with rats

and spit shined shoes for a buck.

To get a three-in-one bar from the ice cream truck

Or some chicken from Ezell's

And on my feet I had everything from suede gazelles

To broken jelly shoes and fake shell tops with two stripes.

I would drive a broken BMX bike with tennis balls in the spokes.

I wore terry cloth wristbands and a pink and grey troop coat.

Little pom-pom footies and personalized hoodies

The goodies of the ghetto were ginger inside of lemons.

We would climb trees in the backyard

Picking persimmons and cherries and blackberries.

It was legendary.

My feet carried me down endless blocks

From the Terrace to the Vista,

High Point and Hill Top

All the way back to the Central District

I would say

If you believe it, then be it and live it

Or leave it be.

And now I walk down these same desolate streets

And see drug themes

And scenes of demeaned homeless teens
With nude magazines
And some propose to pose
Or take off their clothes running nickel booths on the side
Doing free shows that stench of tar, mildew, mugginess
Trapped and caved in by society's ugliness.
Feel the drunkenness of the urban bourbon
Down it, take it to the head like a turban
Lies have flooded those lives and death did the rest.
Alternatives died when they cried
"I'm stressed" my first nation natives visualize with miserable sighs
My very own blood ties
Makes my blood rise and boil
We should be royal
From original soil that has been fertilized and plowed.
Where is our cloak and our crown?
But you know what I'd rather be?
Black, broke, with nothin' but lint
Coming out of my pockets
Than not be down.
To not be down for you,
To not be down for me.
So I say if you believe it
Then be it and live it
Or leave it be.

Thank you so much. I am making a plea at this point on behalf of my wonderful generation created during the last 35 to 40 years. Many of us believe we are free young people and we were born into a great deal of responsibility after the civil rights movement. Our fight, our struggles, and our freedom have not been completely won because it is not entirely there. Integration is a big piece, but so is arts education—and offering urban arts education in particular, especially since the United Nations has signed off on the fact that hip hop is officially an international culture as of 2001. Hip hop is noted as an international peaceful, loving nation, and we are now combating the mainstream and the industry who co-opt our culture, our poets, our DJs, our music, and our tongues as an indigenous tribe from America that is only 40 years old and a direct descendent of the civil rights movement. We need help, support, love, honor, and we need all of the things that a new generation needs to survive. I thank you all for being here and being present to hear these words. Be well.

James Early

We will now hear from several young, acclaimed arts leaders from around the world. They will talk about how to maintain global cultural exchange, continue our previous dialogue on funding and leadership, and discuss their experiences here at the conference.

When we were putting this conference together, we realized that these global connections, particularly what we see taking place in Latin America, are a key element in helping to understand the global connections of this country that are buried under the term "immigration". We have heard from Ilona Kish about the European attempt at integration along similar lines, and this next session serves as a useful counterpoint and offers us an important perspective that we do not often hear in the United States because we are so insular and solipsistic.

Sunya Ganbold

We will start with Paula Astorga, who is the director of the Mexico City International Contemporary Film Festival.

Paula Astorga

In 2004, I founded the Mexico City International Contemporary Film Festival. This marked the first time that Mexico had an international film festival. I started the Festival as an independent organization sponsored and funded by different non-governmental organizations. Our programming goals were focused on getting the best of art-house cinema from around the world. The majority of the cinema you find in Mexico City are the big blockbusters, because we are so close to Hollywood. To make a long story short, the Festival is quite a success; when we started in 2000, we estimated that 18,000 people would attend, but 41,000 people attended. The people in Mexico City anticipate the Festival's yearly arrival, as it is really a cultural and visionary educational experience and a worldwide site-building event.

The central structure of the Festival is a competitive section. We have both documentaries and fictional narratives. Our jury is international, made up of some very important people. There have been American jurors, of course, because your independent film industry has some incredibly talented people. The Festival includes parallel programs, like retrospectives and film exhibitions from that year's guest country. There are also tributes, midnight cult-film screenings, galas, and a program where we highlight new and visionary directors from all over the world. One particular emphasis of ours has been finding Asian and African filmmakers who are developing new languages. Their work is amazing, and we have access to it thanks to new technologies and the accessibility they bring. Then we have a strong section that is called *Mexico Digitale*. This is a unique space in Mexico where we transform commercial 35mm theaters into video screening rooms for independent and marginal digitally done projects. In these projects you will find kids and younger filmmakers with greater artistic visions than you find at either Disney or Pixar. We offer kids other options as well, like a competitive program with a very strong human-rights focus. Of course, one of the most popular topics

is migration. You will see plenty of documentaries on migration, war, and from Africa come all manner of topics concerning human rights. We have found use in bringing not just filmmakers and industry insiders to the festival but all manner of people, so that we can offer master classes that address all sides of what is happening in the world. We have a permanent program to support the development of new films, including short films. Our festival offers an international forum for the critique and analysis of cinema and we have two educational programs that have emerged from this.

The first one consists of taking marginalized students to the theaters and initiating them into the movie experience. You might not believe me, but we have 21-year olds who have never been inside a movie theater. Once we get them there, they see documentaries or narrative films selected from the human rights section, and they have meetings with the directors, producers, and actors. This allows them to engage deeper into the artistic process.

The second educational program we have is done in conjunction with the Mexico City Cultural Ministry, and it runs the whole year. We are doing programming for the *Cineclubs*, which are existing film clubs in the communities. We take them to original art house films, and then we work with them to open their programs to documentary and other independent worldwide productions. We reinforce their screening programs with workshops—workshops that are dependent on the characteristics of each group—like documentary and narrative filmmaking, film analysis, and critical roundtables. The claymation workshop for the young kids is our most successful. The kids come to understand all basic movements of filmmaking, and they also sculpt their own characters so that they can shoot them frame-by-frame. This requires them to work with still cameras. For the last two years, most of the creative workshops on filmmaking and animation have been concerned with environmental topics, especially focusing on taking care of water resources.

We also have a two-year-old *Cineclub* project that we have been programming in women's jails. The incarcerated women we serve really love this project. And now in San Margarita, which is one of the jails, the women who participate in the project are producing a documentary about their lives inside the jail and they are managing all aspects of the film's production.

Besides the film festival activities, I have a non-profit association where we are developing a *Cineclub* program with the National Education Ministry that benefits junior-high-age children. The goal is to establish a weekly gathering of teachers, students, and parents to watch a film, then debate particular aspects of it. This work occurs in places where school violence, prostitution, and drugs are prevalent. The film debates have allowed connections between the children, their teachers, and the parents before there was little, if any, rapport. While the students involved in the program are able to decide if the parents and teachers can be included, they have always elected to do so. A key aspect is that the students promote their own film organizations: they fund the organization and act to keep it going.

To conclude, I will say that global and cultural exchange is exactly how I explain the content and context of my film festival, and it makes sense in all imaginable ways. I believe a film festival is inspiring and inclusive, which are my goals when I tackle the larger issue of global introspection through cinematography. The last thing I would say is that our main responsibility is to consider serious issues in all the things we do with the film festival. We have about 100 guests each year, and each one must provide either an academic discussion or social encounter with Mexican students or the general public. This means that there is always interchange. Our commitment to serious issues was also evident this year because the festival publicly proclaimed that diversity was a value and artistic expression was a right.

Sunya Ganbold

Our next presenter is Aziz Ridouan, from the *l'Association des Audionautes* in France. He is also a political lobbyist and special advisor to former French presidential candidate Segolène Royal.

Aziz Ridouan

Bonjour. Je m'appelle Aziz, j'ai 16 ans, ma mama est au RMI, je télécharge de la musique illégalement, je ne veux pas aller en prison. Hello. My name is Aziz. I am 16-years-old. My mother is on social security and unemployment. I download music illegally and I do not want to go to jail. This is the statement that I made years ago in France that has made me famous! This is my story.

In telling you my story, I hope you will understand something about France, our culture, and about Arabs in France.

I grew up in the little French town of Bretagne, living in a high-rise apartment as many of the French with Middle Eastern ancestry do. My father left long ago—so long ago that I do not even remember if I was born yet by the time he left. My mother was a maid, but she lost her job. Despite the ups and downs we encountered, my mother, brother, and I were a strong family and we shared a lot of love and fun times.

At 14 years of age, I became upset with America Online's habit of sending free CDs of their software with our newspapers and letters. I tried to sue them, but my efforts failed. I learned that you do not sue the Time Warner Corporation when you are a teenager living in rural France.

At that age I was also downloading a lot of music and was upset at the risk that I might be jailed for my music collecting. My response was to create, with a friend, a nonprofit organization: *l'Association des Audionautes*, which roughly translates as "the Internet audio surfers." The *Audionautes* is a nonprofit association that protects the rights of Internet users. Our organization provides legal assistance to those accused of illegally downloading music, many of whom were taken to court by the Civil Society of Phonographic Producers, the French equivalent of the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA).

At this point I would like to say that I am not against artists' copyrights, or their right to be remunerated. I believe in copyright law; I love artists. Today, however, millions of French kids like me are downloading

music illegally. Even the sons of our president, Nicolas Sarkozy, download music illegally. This is why I believe we have to change the system, why we must find new ways of financing the artists, and why conglomerates have to develop these solutions instead of trying to put three million kids in jail.

As long as we are on the subject of jails, I have never understood how our former minister of the interior and security, now our president, could put three million kids in jail. If my information is correct, our jails are overcrowded and there is no room for us.

Some time after I created Audionautes I was invited to speak at an important forum in Paris. That was where I first uttered the words, "I am Aziz, I am 16, I don't wanna go to jail." With those words I became a symbol of French youth who download music illegally. I was given a one-page profile in *Le Monde* (our French *New York Times*), one prime-time interview on French NPR and French PBS, and even a one-page article here in the U.S. in the *New York Times*.²²

With the publicity came the phone calls to our house. The first time it was Nicholas Sarkozy, minister of the Interior and would-be president: I met him, we connected, and we got along pretty well. He is charming, but not my kind of guy. You see, I am from the left, so there was no way I could work with Sarkozy, who is on the right.

The second phone call I received was from Segolène Royal, another would-be president. Ms. Royal asked me to work for her and I became her special advisor on the Internet and technology during the presidential campaign. Ms. Royal, the democratic candidate, won the first round of the election. Fortunately for you, we lost the second, which is why I am able to be here tonight.

While working in politics, I was still working on protecting my fellow Internet kids from the conglomerates. Today, our association has dozens of lawyers, advisers, and we fight hard. We won several trials against the major music conglomerates and were able to protect our peer-to-peer network. I believe that the Internet is a magnificent new way to distribute culture. The

Internet serves my generation in the same way that the library did for those in the 1950s, as free speech did in the 1960s, and as free radio did in the 1980s.

Let me turn to something more serious beyond issues of law. In particular you will remember that I made some propositions regarding the necessary way of paying artists for downloading music from the Internet. The solution advocated by Audionautes is to create a fund, financed by fees from Internet users and Internet service providers, to pay artists based on the popularity of their works, which is similar to the system used by radio stations. Given the current state of the music industry, we have to find new solutions in the long run. More to the point, the Internet is a way to improve many people's access to culture, to help democratize it, and to help arts and culture to become more diverse.

I battled the previous minister of culture because he wanted to penalize the French youth for downloading music illegally. He won some fights and was able to establish some laws against us, but we won as well. For instance, thanks to our volunteers, he was not reelected. The future is always in the hands of the youth!

We want to introduce new ways of thinking about French politics toward youth, culture, and people from Middle Eastern backgrounds. I am still working for Segolène Royal, and I hope she will be our president next time. After Bush, you will have Hillary or Barack Obama. This is the same for us, but our wait will be a little bit longer because Sarkozy is our new Bush and we are just at the beginning of his tenure. But I have the time.

I am Aziz. I am now 19 and I now live in Paris, but I am still downloading music illegally. And guess what? I still do not want to go to jail.

Sunya Ganbold

Aziz is followed by Quentin Renaudo, who is also from the l'Association des Audionautes, and he is also a political lobbyist.

²²Crampton, T. (2006, May 15). France Debates Downloads, With Teenager as Top Expert. The New York Times Online. Retrieved May 28, 2008 from: <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/15/technology/15audionaut.html?partner=rssnyt&emc=rss>

Quentin Renaudo

Being here with you is a great pleasure. I would like to take this occasion to thank The Association of American Cultures and the Western States Arts Federation for inviting Aziz and I to this conference. I will now try to explain to you what Aziz and I are doing as Parisian lobbyists.

We created this Association in September of 2004. At that time Aziz was 16 years old and I was 14 years old, so you can imagine that the effort was not easy. I do not mean the simple act of creating a national organization, I mean petitioning the court for the right to do it. We created the Association after the music industry launched the first legal actions in France against people downloading music from the Internet because we thought—and we still think—that lawsuits were not the best response to peer-to-peer networks. In 2004, there were four million people downloading music in France, and the music industry launched 50 legal actions and a huge ad campaign in an effort to intimidate peer-to-peer users. Our opinion on the folly of this effort seems to have been correct, because in France today there are eight million people downloading music. Our position on the problem for users is that the issue is generally one of access to culture. On the other side, we need to figure out better ways to remunerate artists and the music industry, while still allowing online music to be shared. Through our actions with political, international, and consumer organizations we tried to initiate this discussion and debate in France. Just the same, in December of 2005 the French government, under pressure from major companies like Universal and BMI, proposed a law to the French parliament that would modify copyright and royalty policies and strongly condemn those who download music for noncommercial and cultural use. The minister of culture proposed fines of \$300,000 as well as three-year prison sentences for downloading a single MP3 file. As if this proposal was not crazy enough, the law offered no new way to remunerate artists for their creations and the music industry for supporting them.

I want to say this one more time: We believe that remuneration is necessary if we want to guarantee a society characterized by open knowledge. Major companies

are the only distributors for most of the content on the Internet, but the Internet is also a good tool for those independent artists because it allows them to find an audience in the same way that major record labels do. This is why our efforts are supported by some French artist organizations like Société Anonyme—which represents about 200,000 artists in France.

The solution chosen by the major record labels and our government consisted solely of intimidation. Alternately, our lobby proposed that we find new economic models in order to remunerate artists and support a greater exchange of information and culture—which would be more democratic and reach far more people because it enables users to create and to share content without impediment. In addition, we wished to support the discovery of new artists, and this is a very important point for us. Our solution, as Aziz noted earlier, was based on a fee paid by everyone who has an Internet connection at home. These funds, which would be paid to the Internet service providers, would be redistributed to a classic artist organization.

The efforts to institute this solution were successful in that parliament voted for our proposal, but this was a short-lived victory because the law was never applied. Still, we continue to make progress by continuing public discussion on the subject, and we have enlarged the debate beyond peer-to-peer networks. In addition, we transformed our lobby group into a general opinion maker in the field of Internet culture, not just music. We continue our efforts to protect users, because there are again new threats of prosecution in France. Finally, we search for other economic solutions to remunerate both the music industry and artists. We enjoy our work, and I think invitations of the sort you have extended allow us to move these debates forward.

Sunya Ganbold

Ivan Duran is a producer and director from Stonetree Records in Belize.

Ivan Duran

First I would like to thank everyone at TAAC and WESTAF for this invitation. I want to share a bit about my experiences. For those who do not know, I come from Belize, which is Central America's newest nation,

independent since 1981. I grew up in the small town of Benque Viejo, which is near the Guatemalan border. When I was 19, I made what was possibly the most difficult decision a young aspiring artist could make; after studying abroad for many years, I decided to go back to my country and make a career. This was so difficult because in Belize there was not a single recording studio, record label, or recording artist to be found. Our artists, up to that point, had gone to LA, New York, or Guatemala City to record their albums. In short, there was absolutely no recording industry in Belize. Previously, the only recording experiment had been Radio Belize, which was made possible through the help of the BBC and some basic two-track equipment. Our musicians would go into that radio studio and get recorded just before broadcast, but that was about it.

As a young musician I had made a decision never to play onstage, but would be behind the controls in a recording studio and produce music. The most exciting thing about that choice was the fact that I was part of a cultural movement in my country, which provided us with all kinds of possibilities. The fact that we all felt young—not just because of our age but because our country was recently independent—gave us the feeling that we could do whatever we wanted. As an example, in 1992 my friend Yasser Musa and I took the country by storm when we had an exhibition in the Belize Institute for Arts. This is the old arts council's art gallery—a traditional art space—in Belize City. Our decision was to take the city inside the gallery by putting graffiti on the walls of the entire gallery. We had to promise the director that we would paint it all white again when we left. There were no contemporary art movements that took street art into the county's galleries, and we were looking to transform Belize's conservative art scene. The old folks hated it; up to that point the gallery had only shown the romantic idea of Belize: sailboats, coral reefs, and the glorious Mayan temples. Nevertheless, that was one of the most successful exhibitions in the country. Thousands of kids went there and identified themselves with what was happening inside the gallery.

Right after that I decided to found Stonetree Records. We just set up a studio, brought in musicians, and started releasing recordings. Everyone either thought I

was crazy or that I intended to get rich quick by recording poor musicians. We released dozens of albums that radio stations did not play. Our then prime minister asked me what I was doing “recording that boring music?” At first there was no appreciation for what was going on, but in 1998 something very special happened. I recorded an old man, Mr. Paul Nabor, who was 70 at the time. He played this very beautiful traditional music called *paranda*, which is from the Garifuna culture. They are a very unique Afro-Caribbean culture that live in Belize, Honduras, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. We recorded Mr. Nabor, and right after that we started touring with him. We did a show in France and when we came back home he was an idol. Just to clarify, this was long before Ry Cooder went to Havana to record local Cuban jazz artists. I think a lot of people tend to compare these two efforts, but that moment in Belize's musical history was special; for the first time kids, especially Garifuna kids, identified with their own music in a way that had not happened before. When Paul Nabor became a celebrity everybody wanted to play his kind of music again. Before that record, even finding a guitar in a Garifuna community was difficult. Our artists were using keyboards and playing with drum machines to make *punta* rock music, which is a kind of up-tempo commercial dance music like *soca*. This other soulful side of Garifuna music had never been recorded.

A few years and about a dozen more records later, we basically transformed Belize's musical industry into a very exciting thing. I think the biggest reward for me has always been the ability to inspire young people to keep their musical traditions alive. Preservation is not my only goal; the effort is also about how you can connect with people through your music, and I think that is what my artists have done and why I am so proud of them.

A few years ago we founded the Música Association of Belize, of which I am the president and co-founder. We are not against illegal downloading by the way, and we did not start an association to sue anyone; on the contrary, we founded our association to educate young artists that one needs more than talent to succeed. My example is myself. When my talent was combined with the talent of my artists, we were able to create something very beautiful for our country, and

it was a team effort. If we do not educate our young artists that they need teamwork to succeed, then their futures are going to be very difficult.

Sunya Ganbold

Our next presenter is Gabriella Gomez-Mont, who is an interdisciplinary artist and writer from Mexico City.

Gabriella Gomez-Mont

Thank you so much for this invitation. I am part of an artistic collaboration that includes three other people who could not be here: Javier Toscano, Lourdes Morales, and Daniela Wolf. We come from different fields: philosophy, art history, architecture, and communications. Our group started out doing more conventional exhibitions, such as those we did for the major contemporary Mexican museums. Aside from public institutions, we are interested in experimental projects. In 2008, we were invited to the Culture House of Berlin as curators. At the same time the Core Foundation in Chelsea invited us as artists. We were criticized for acting as both artists and curators and told that we needed to decide who we are. The problem was and is that we do not see such distinctions as necessary; our themes tend to be so strong that it would become a big piece made up of little pieces. At any rate, we tend to follow our own rules.

Every project we do has a very strong theoretical background, and we use all of our projects as platforms to discuss politically or socially charged issues. We are also very interested in opening dialogues, such as this one. We have been invited to organize dialogues and conversations with other people, and we just came back from one in Berlin.

You might wonder what we really do for a living. Well, we ask questions, we look for the grey areas, we question the answers we gave to former questions, and we probe. Sometimes we probe in uncomfortable areas and then people may become angry with us. Still, I think those grey areas are fun, and even when they are not fun they are incredibly interesting because hard questions must be asked. We do not believe that art is a way of changing the world in one huge leap, but it is a way to make dialogues happen.

As a way to give you a better sense of our work, I want to discuss a few of our current projects: Laboratorio Curatorial 060, Toxico: Cultura Contemporanea, and La Incubadora. Each says something about cultural democracy and the different ways it can be implemented. They also share the belief that imagination and creativity are not luxuries. I will start by explaining the Laboratorio Curatorial 060.

The first thing you should know is that each word of the project's title is significant. Most obviously, the phrase *laboratorio curatorial* means curatorial laboratory. The title becomes more nuanced, however, when each word is examined separately. A *curatorium* means a curator, but a similar Spanish word, *curador*, means healer. This is confusing to most people because of some elements in the project, like herbal medicine. We thought this semantic confusion was important because we are interested in "un-defining" what we do instead of defining ourselves more strongly. This title helps to explain our orientation toward one another as well as to the art we create.

In Toxico we bring internationally renowned filmmakers, visual artists, and writers to Mexico to give workshops and master classes. The workshops, some of which are open to the general public, are limited to 15 to 20 people. This might sound contrary to our goals of cultural democracy, but many of these people are already at the top of their fields and still need to bridge a huge gap to reach the international level. Just as important, the attendees of the workshops are often teachers, which means they serve as muses for the younger generations. As such, you can think of the project as a trickle-down sort of cultural democracy, where you try to feed the people who are already at the top of the ladder. I think Mexico is at a fantastic point in time where we can be generators of ideas for contemporary culture, and the workshops help to do this.

Lastly, we have La Incubadora. This project is like Toxico, but for young people. Young artists are interesting because there are no sacred subjects to them: they can talk about religion, they can talk about anything. This ability to question everything and discuss anything is refreshing. In conclusion, I believe what is important

in these Open Dialogue discussions is that curiosity and questioning can do more for pluralism than politeness and tolerance will ever do.

Sunya Ganbold

Our next presenter is Natalia Toledo, a poet, writer, spokesperson, and activist for indigenous women. She hails from Oaxaca, Mexico.

Natalia Toledo

During the time of the conquest, our animal skin canvases—on which were drawings illustrating many of the beliefs of our forefathers—were destroyed. The Spaniards did not understand the diversity, richness, and knowledge inherent in the stories of indigenous people and instead said the stories were of the devil. They tried to impose the Catholic religion on the indigenous people, who in order to keep their identity and culture intact, began to transmit our cultural stories orally.

My poetry has been influenced by the stories and cultural themes I learned as a young child. I learned about our history from the lips of the Juchitán elders. I learned stories, cooking recipes, and songs in Zapoteco. My elders taught me how to dress for every occasion and I learned from them the essence of the Zapoteco culture. The oral tradition permits knowledge to be transmitted this way. Such ways of teaching are assimilated and kept in memory in order to be transmitted to new generations. Today I am going to talk to you about this way of conserving the history of a people as seen from the point of view of my personal experience.

I was born in Juchitán, Oaxaca, a place that is located in the south of the Tejuantepec Isthmus. Juchitán is a city of more than 100,000 inhabitants, and the majority of them are bilingual. We have a long history of being bilingual, since we have always been farmers, fisherfolk, artistic creators, and business people. The geography was right for it; there is a big highway that passes through the region, and there have always been many travelers. At the age of eight I left my village. Since then I have lived in Mexico City, but I have never stopped going to my village when time and my heart demand I must.

When I arrived in Mexico City I became quite aware of how accents distinguish us from one another. My native tongue is Zapoteco, and it was the first thing I heard when I was thrown into this world. I learned this language from my maternal grandmother and my mother. They were the ones who hummed the first lullabies to me in Zapoteco. I remember that these songs were not the most tender for a little girl to hear. For example, the lyrics they sang to me are roughly translated like this:

Whoever hit you little one
Whose father has hit him
And if he hits you again
Pick up a rock and bust his head open.

Another one went like this:

What time was the puppy born?
It was born at midnight
And if they give me one
I will come and give him tortillas so he can eat.

And yet another went like this:

Now that grandma is asleep
Now that grandpa is asleep
Let us steal some money from them
To buy bread from Chiapas.

There are also word games that my grandmother played, where the only difference between words was the accent. Just changing the stress of the syllables alters the meaning, say from being cold to hot.

In the case of Zapoteco, our language reveals to us the beauty, the humor, the double entendre, the musicality, and the metaphors that make up a poetic sensibility. For example, to say start, we say “fire up the sky;” to say seashore we say “the lips of the sea.” In Zapoteco everything has hands, feet, heart, and life. There is a phrase for morning that literally means the day is a flower that is opening. One of the things that is lost when translated into Spanish is the musical nature of Zapoteco, the schematic scale that only native speakers can speak and hear. For example, we use broken vowels, shortened and simple, and the double vowels stretch out the word and it acquires a very sensual sound.

My great, great grandfather had the gift of rainmaking, and the legend goes that in times of drought the farm workers looked to him to make it rain. On one occasion, he was at a party under an arbor and the people could not take the heat, so my great, great grandfather said, "I am going to freshen things up a bit because this is too much to take." He started to invoke the natural forces in a language that nobody understood, and as if by magic the first drops began to fall from the sky. But this was not all; he made fresh flowers sprout in the women's skirts. My place is not to doubt the ability of my great, great grandfather Juan to perform these tasks. What I can say is that there have always been special beings that have had an intimate relationship with nature and her energy.

I would like to talk now about the work of the *curanderas*, or the spiritual doctors. They are very important in the village because they work like psychoanalysts and take care of the health of the spirit. My mother always took me first to a *curandera* and afterward to a doctor. I have learned much from my encounters with them. For example, I learned that sadness is found in the back. There are little pimples like the thorns of a plant buried under your body. You wet a stiff cornhusk with water and lime, and then you pass it over your whole back several times. In this way you flush out the sadness. Or when you get sick from shock or fear then you have to go out into the street and scream a saying in Zapoteco, which is a warning. Then the people ask you to tell them what you saw, and then you have to share everything without exception so that you get cured. If you hide information then you will not be completely cured. After you have shared all the details of your fear, they take you to the banks of the river and they bury you in fresh sand so that the river can suck your fear out. Another part of the cure consists of you sitting in a chair and your friends jump over your head so that the fear becomes ashamed and leaves you.

All of this knowledge is transmitted orally. You live it and you assimilate it. I am glad that I was able to share some of it with you. *Gracias*.

Sunya Ganbold

Our last speaker is Carlos Enríquez Verdura, who was director of international cultural promotions for CONACULTA, Mexico's national council for culture and the arts.

Carlos Enríquez Verdura

I want to apologize for not being a theorist of ethnicity or racism, and not having an obvious ethnic origin apart from being an urban middle class Mexican gay man who happens to know a lot about my country's history and who is very proud of it. Unfortunately, I have only been a bureaucrat, or so I was until a short while ago. Therefore, I will speak to you about my experience as a Mexican government official and the approach I have towards globalization, intercultural dialogue, and cultural diversity.

In the very globalized and interdependent world in which we live today the affiliations between cultures should become the core of the relations between nations. In this matter, international cooperation is crucial to strengthening mutual comprehension and to promoting a real and substantive exchange based on cultural diversity. In our country, different cultural realities coexist. Respect and understanding of our differences should become the base of our diplomatic and economic relations. Speaking of globalization from the Mexican point of view presupposes thinking about the transits, encounters, exchanges, and experiences that have taken place in my country for several centuries. Our culture, or rather the cultures that formed what we know as Mexico, are the result of these connections and contrasts, and we define ourselves as a fortunate mix of elements from multiple origins blended into a new and ever-changing being.

The very first Hispanic civilizations were receptors and transmitters of cultural elements among themselves. Consider Spain, a geographical space where an endless number of cultural canons determine its culture—Jews, Christians, and Muslims, among others. The result of this wide mixture was defined centuries ago as New Spain, and later as Mexico. As an independent nation, Mexico was also a bridge of immigration flows that brought diverse aesthetic, artistic, and ideological points of

reference, which included multiple alterations and local adaptations. From the end of the 19th Century and up to the first half of the 20th Century, the national being was described in terms of a colonial *mestizaje*. From that point onward, several outstanding elements were identified, and a definition of that which is Mexican emerged. At this point Mexico became an exporter of culture and therefore an accomplice to the globalizing processes we see to this day. Nevertheless, from the 19th Century to the last decade of the 20th Century, the idea of the Mexican identity was fostered as a whole.

During the last decade of the 20th Century and the first decade of this 21st Century we have congratulated ourselves for talking about the multicultural identities that form Mexico—which has been perfectly portrayed by Natalia Toledo. With its long history, Mexico has developed an intensely creative culture and particularly rich cultural forms. At the same time, our country has been a bridge between east and west and between north and south. This characteristic predisposes us to rather easily embrace the flow of cultural elements, although they were always filtered through our own sensitivity, temper, and vision of the world.

Given all of this, we should not see the process of globalization as a new phenomenon. What has changed concerns the speed, the intensity, the multiplicity, and dynamism with which speech flows and contacts happen. Today, thanks to the democratic development experienced by several nations and the expansion of communication, more and more people become active actors within the globalization process. This grants individuals power, choices, alternatives, and a wider vision of their own reality and that of others. Formerly closed circles are opening, giving way to more information and to more reciprocal influences. Today, as more cultural sectors establish contacts with other societies, they share codes and confront their realities. In this more open communication scheme, the actors become at once receptors and transmitters. The flow is no longer one way only; we have the possibility of a reciprocal stream.

How do we face the contemporary globalization process from the point of view of culture? I would say we face it first as an opportunity. I have mentioned the

speed and the multiplicity of actors that the globalization paradigm causes. By placing ourselves in the position of a solely receptive culture, we would assume that the purity and integrity of our own culture could be endangered due to the ever-growing influences that we receive from abroad, influences that could corrupt our uniqueness. I would like to stress, however, the idea that national cultures now can no longer be receptors only. On the contrary, we have to acknowledge the fact that the world's cultural diversity has existed and exists because of the multiplicity of encounters that have taken place throughout history. Cultural diversity is a reality that our societies must encourage, foster, preserve, but not encapsulate. Cultural phenomena are dynamic in their own right, and keeping them isolated and static leads to their extinction. We must recognize, analyze, and allow their flows. One must promote cultural diversity by always acknowledging the double nature of culture, its spiritual value as keeper of identity and meanings and its importance as a medium of exchange. We can profit from globalization and its ability to foster exchange and the promotion of our own cultural goods, our richness, and our diversity. In this day and age I believe that the best way to protect our own culture is by promoting it as we give its creators the facilities and opportunities for better and stronger development. At the same time, this is the best way to generate mutual knowledge and understanding among different cultures and nations. All this certainly implies an exercise of confidence, discipline, and trust.

Such a faith in the benefits of interaction supposes a richness of culture, costumes, and traditions. Traditions are specific ways in which human beings develop approaches to their own specific realities. Because these realities are ever changing, we cannot suppose that our traditions will not suffer the same fate. One is the consequence of the other. Nevertheless, we should trust that the new elements that come from changed realities will always pass through the filter of our own environment, temperament, character, cosmology, identity, and idiosyncrasy; in short, they must pass through our own culture. I firmly believe in the strength of the Mexican cultures and their capacity to internalize, adapt, and make elements from other

cultures their own without risking their individual natures and characters, and without leading to the feared homogenization with other cultures. At the same time, I also trust in their capacity to travel the world, permeate, and enrich other societies.

I believe that the promotion of Mexican culture and art around the world constitutes a fundamental objective of our foreign policy, and should constitute a fundamental objective because everything we do in this vein strengthens our inter-cultural dialogue and brings us closer together with people from all over the world. Having traveled to the United States since I was three has allowed me to see the amount of similarities that we share, what makes us different, and how much are we related in our conception of each other. Granted, much has changed in profound ways over the last 30 years, due to immigration, economic interdependence, and commercial and economic interests. I strongly believe that being with you here today and recognizing our common interests in fostering international cultural cooperation and understanding is an opportunity to demonstrate to our societies our commitment to expand the knowledge of and about our cultures; we become aware that the more we understand each other's similarities and differences, the greater the opportunity we will have to grow together. Our common goal should be to build bridges that contribute to opening our cultures. We do this by facing globalization as an opportunity to foster common knowledge and mutual understanding.

Now I want to share with you some experiences that have exemplified all of what I have said so far. Some years ago I was invited to come to Denver to the opening of the exhibition "Painting a New World: Mexican Art and Lives, 1521 to 1821" at the splendid Denver Art Museum. There are several great things to say about the exhibition and its organizers, but the most revealing story comes from a person who came to talk with me on the opening night. He introduced himself to me in English, but he had a Spanish-sounding last name. This man had decided to learn Spanish, although he was still not very good at it. His family had arrived before 1848 when the southwestern part of the U.S. still belonged to Mexico, but his ancestors had been Americans for more than 150 years. At this point, he

was happy to be able to learn so much about his origins and to understand how much he shared with that culture south of the border. He and his family had been culturally enriched because of living in the U.S., but at the same time knowing he had other cultural elements made him even richer. He was excited because he exemplified this dialogue.

Something else: Two years ago while traveling to the U.S. I ended up in Minneapolis, which was a great, surprising city. I met with some people from Arts Midwest, and speaking about opening dialogues and understanding, they taught me a lesson. As you know, Minnesota has not been a traditional destination for Mexican immigrants, but that is changing. Seeing this they decided that before those Mexicans arrived they had to make an effort to understand who these people were. They did some research and found an amazing traditional folk music group from Veracruz, which has lively music and exciting dances. They hired them for six weeks and presented them in several venues throughout the Midwest. The most interesting part of the project was that they made sure the musicians performed and gave workshops in elementary schools. Their idea was that if Mexicans are arriving then we have to show our children who these people are, what part of their culture is like, and how exciting and enriching it will be to have them share our state and contribute to our diversity.

Finally, let us focus on the most crossed border in the world, Tijuana/San Diego, where there are 60 million crossings a year. There is real intensity and cultural exposure here, as both cities could not be more different. Tijuana, fundamentally due to the nature of the daily cultural clash experienced by its artists, has become a Mecca of contemporary Mexican art. Everybody is speaking of Tijuana's artists whose work epitomizes the idea of cultural contrast, dialogue, influence, absorption, interpretation, and vivid creation. They are some of the artists who are most acclaimed at art fairs and biennales around the world. They must be strong because of this contrast and because of this context.

I believe these examples demonstrate what I have been saying about the possibilities globalization brings. Our presence and the conversations taking place here illustrate that globalization and culture need not be seen as working in opposition.

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SYMPOSIUM PROCESS AND CONFERENCE AGENDA

About the Symposium Process

The symposium was convened at the Magnolia Hotel in Denver, Colorado, and was structured around the presentations, responses, and discussions of participants seated around a large table. Surrounding the symposium table were conference participants and other observers, who were invited to the discussion at periodic intervals.

The following definition of cultural democracy informed the early planning discussions that led to the formation of the conference title and theme:

The concept of cultural democracy comprises a set of related commitments:

- Protecting and promoting the right to culture for everyone in our society and around the world
- Encouraging active participation in community cultural life
- Enabling people to participate in policy decisions that affect the quality of our cultural lives
- Assuring fair and equitable access to cultural resources and support.

—Webster's World of Cultural
Democracy, www.wwcd.org

CONFERENCE AGENDA

Thursday, July 12, 2007

Opening Reception and Keynote Address

4 p.m. : WESTAF Welcome

by **Juan Carrillo**, WESTAF Trustee

Open Dialogue Session One

“What do you want to talk about?”

Facilitators:

Tatiana Reinoza Perkins, Artist, curator, co-founder of the Women’s Art Forum in Sacramento, active leader in the Latino art community, Austin, TX

Justin Laing, Program Officer, The Heinz Endowments, Pittsburgh, PA.

About the Open Dialogue Process

Open Dialogues are opportunities for conference attendees to engage in conversation on topics of particular interest to them throughout the conference. Topics for these sessions were developed by conference participants before the conference and during the first Open Dialogue session, which was facilitated by Tatiana Reinoza Perkins and Justin Laing on the first day of the conference. Topics, facilitators, and experienced resource people were scheduled for each session following the first Open Dialogue session. This format allowed conference attendees to both propose and select sessions of interest.

6 p.m. : Opening Reception

7 p.m. : TAAC Welcome

by **Louis LeRoy**, TAAC Chairman of the Board

Introduction

by **James Early**, TAAC board member; Director of Cultural Heritage Policy, Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC

Keynote Address

The Challenge of Cultural Diversity in the Global Context

Doudou Diène, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance for the United Nations High Commission on Human Rights

Friday, July 13, 2007

8 a.m. : Open Dialogue Session Two

Topic A

How does the arts community proactively provide platforms for artists, particularly in informal or participatory arts, outside of the 501(c)(3) paradigm? What are the sustainable models for this type of work?

Topic B

When TAAC was formed, it addressed the then-dominant “monoculture” by insisting that “polyculturalism” was a way of being American. If this remains true, what strategies are we using to bring this definition of American culture into community programming and policy? For example, do we still believe that funding dedicated to a specific ethnic group is in our best interest?

9 a.m. : Welcome by Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper

Symposium begins

Symposium Facilitators:

James Early, TAAC board member; Director of Cultural Heritage Policy, Center for Folklife & Cultural Heritage, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC

Sunya Ganbold, Branding/Marketing Manager, The Apartment Creative Agency, New York, NY

Discussant:

Loie Fecteau, Executive Director, New Mexico Arts, Santa Fe, NM

Symposium Session A:***The History and Significance of TAAC and Other Organizations' Work on Racism and Cultural Democracy in our Nation***

A reflection and analysis of the initial context for the establishment of organizations of color such as TAAC and an introduction to Global Connections to Cultural Democracy.

Presenters:

Suzanne Benally, Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs, Naropa University; Boulder, CO

A.B. Spellman, Scholar, poet, and longtime senior NEA official, Washington, DC

Louis LeRoy, TAAC Chairman of the Board

10 a.m. : Symposium Session B:***Changing Culture-Scapes***

Perspectives on the developments that have occurred since the mid 1980s—demographics, technological advances, etc.—that have changed the national and transnational “culture-scape” for issues of interest to communities of color organized to work in the arts.

Presenters:

Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, Winner of the Smithsonian Institution's Henry Medal; former Associate Director for Creativity and Culture, Rockefeller Foundation, New York, NY

Tabassum Haleem, Executive Director and CEO, Organization of Islamic Speakers Midwest, Inc., Chicago, IL

Roland Tanglao, Co-Founder, Bryght, Technologist, Vancouver, BC

Respondents:

Shani Jamila, Host and producer, *Blackademics* radio program; co-host, BlackSoul Mondays; essayist; human rights researcher and speaker, Washington, DC

Arthur Jones, Clinical Professor of Psychology, University of Denver; Founder and Chair, The Spirituals Project, Denver, CO

Annette Evans Smith, Vice President of Community Relations, Alaska Native Heritage Center, Anchorage, AK

12 p.m. : Open Dialogue Session Three**Topic A**

What are we currently doing—or what should we be doing—to reform education to advance the cause of cultural pluralism in education and community programming?

Topic B

How are the fields of urban planning and architecture—designing and constructing neighborhoods, districts, communities—shaped by cultural expression? How can urban planning deliberately encourage or facilitate cultural expression? How can urban planning include transnational identities? What policy mechanisms could achieve this?

Topic C

How can we take responsibility for encouraging the media to provide free and equal access to information that reflects our cultural interests (whatever they may be)? What is our responsibility? What specifically are we doing/trying to do as producers of media to present “our” perspective to “our” audience (whoever that may be)?

Topic D

Keeping in mind the comments of Doudou Diène, how are we and how can we advance cultural activity and multilogues in the U.S.? How do we build relationships with the global community to advance this agenda?

1 p.m. : Symposium Session C:***Migration of Peoples, Cultural Flows and the Surrounding Political Debate***

A discussion about what we can learn from the U.S. immigration debate and the dialogue surrounding global migration. Analysis of how the arts intersect with these issues.

Presenters:

Maria-Rosario Jackson, Senior Research Associate Director, Culture, Creativity and Communities Program, Urban Institute, Washington, DC

Ilona Kish, Secretary General, European Forum for the Arts and Heritage, Brussels, Belgium

Diana Molina, Photographer and journalist, NM

Respondents:

Cristina King Miranda, Arts leader and administrator, Mexico City, Mexico

Sangeeta Isvaran, dancer, choreographer, activist and researcher, Chennai, India

2:30 p.m. : Symposium Session D:

Building a Cultural Democracy Agenda for the Future

A policy discussion about how TAAC and other organizations can meaningfully contribute to cultural democracy.

Presenter:

Tatiana Reinoza Perkins, Artist, curator, co-founder of the Women's Art Forum in Sacramento, and active leader in the Latino art community, Austin, TX

Respondent:

Justin Laing, Program Officer, The Heinz Endowments, Pittsburgh, PA

4 p.m. : Global Cultural Roundtable Discussion

Young, acclaimed leaders in the arts from around the world will talk about how to maintain a global cultural exchange, continue dialogue on funding and leadership, and discuss their experiences at the conference.

Presenters:

Paula Astorga, Director, Mexico City International Contemporary Film Festival (FICCO), Mexico City, Mexico

Ivan Duran, Producer and director, Stonetree Records, Belize

Aziz Ridouan, Political lobbyist, advisor, President of Association des Audionautes, France

Quentin Renaudo, Political lobbyist, Vice-President of Association des Audionautes, France

Gabriella Gomez-Mont, Interdisciplinary artist and writer, Mexico City

Natalia Toledo, Zapotec poet, writer, spokesperson and activist for indigenous women's rights, Oaxaca, Mexico

Carlos Enríquez Verdura, Director of International Cultural Promotions for CONACULTA, Mexico's National Council of Culture and Arts, Mexico City, Mexico

6 p.m. : Group Discussion

7:30 p.m.

Reception at the Museo de las Americas, 861 Santa Fe Drive, Denver

Saturday, July 14, 2007

8:30 a.m. : Open Dialogue Session Four

Topic A

How can the visual arts be a means by which new, effective political commentary can be transmitted, and activism encouraged?

Topic B

How are migration and immigration experienced or viewed differently through the "migrant" or "immigrant" lens vs. through the "static" or "non-migrant" lens? How does this point of view change the artistic,

cultural production resulting from (im)migration? How can these two viewpoints better communicate and learn from one another?

Topic C

How can different governmental or social approaches to the arts—education and discourse vs. economic investment or exploitation—work for cultural democracy?

Topic D

How can we promote an arts environment in which artists are identified without ethnic or gender taglines? Why would you want or not want to be identified without those tags?

9 a.m. : Professional Development Seminar

Succeeding in a World of Distractions: Ways to Advance the Performing Arts in a World of Increasing Options

Faculty:

Neill Archer Roan, Arts consultant, the Roan Group, Washington D.C.

Teniqua Broughton, Cultural Participation Manager, Arizona State University Gammage, Tempe, AZ

Rennie Harris, Artistic Director, choreographer, and director, Puremovement dance company, Philadelphia, PA

9:30 a.m. : Open Dialogue Session Five

Topic A

How can ideas or artworks be introduced to cultures or communities which may be resistant to cultural or racial diversity?

Topic B

How are urban planning and architecture—designing and constructing neighborhoods, districts, communities—shaped by cultural expression? How can urban planning deliberately encourage or facilitate cultural

expression? How can urban planning include transnational identities? What policy mechanisms could achieve this?

Topic C

What role can technology play in opening up space for conversation and collaboration between cultures? How can organizations support, facilitate, and enhance collaborations enabled by technology?

Topic D

Discuss the need for those who work in the arts to have “cultural fluency.” What is the necessary skill base that would prepare arts administrators and others to do their work based on a recognition of issue affecting intercultural relationships? How can we “raise the bar” in order to make such skills universally required in arts work?

11 a.m. : Open Dialogue Session Six

Topic A

How, in the U.S., have we taken ownership of or adopted aspects of cultures that have changed us, but of which we haven’t recognized as influences? How have we destroyed other cultures (e.g. Iraqi, Bosnian), and to what extent is this a problem of not recognizing and not valuing non-Western cultures?

Topic B

Even in an age of globalization and transnationalism, can any nation truly be without a dominant culture? What advantages and disadvantages exist in the (intended or unintended) homogenization of a nation’s language and customs?

Topic C

What challenges are involved in recognizing the diversity already present in given communities? How can this diversity be framed so that communities may recognize and organize initiatives around it?

Topic D

How can ethnic- and culturally-specific mission-based institutions challenge the arts paradigm presented by the eurocentric arts establishment?

Topic E

Discuss strategies of the cultural community in building a robust democracy.

1:30 p.m. : Professional Development Workshops

Chaired by **Teniqua Broughton**, Cultural Participation Manager, Arizona State University Gammage, Tempe, AZ

Workshops

Harnessing New Technologies for the Arts

Faculty:

Roland Tanglao, Bryght, Vancouver, BC

Matthew Saunders, WESTAF, Denver, CO

The Future of Arts Funding in the Public and Private Sectors

Faculty:

Judy Hussie-Taylor, Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver, CO

E. San San Wong, San Francisco Arts Commission, San Francisco, CA

Managing a Cultural Organization as a Segment of the Creative Economy

Faculty:

Gerald Yoshitomi, Independent cultural facilitator, Los Angeles, CA

8 p.m. : *Not the Same Old Song and Dance Performing Arts Showcase*,

The Stage Theatre at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts

Performers:

The Spirituals Project

Laura "Piece" Kelley-Jahn

The Brown Lotus Collective

Rennie Harris Puremovement

Sunday, July 15, 2007

5:30 a.m. : Sunrise Celebration

9 a.m. : Final Open Dialogue Session

Facilitators:

Jennifer Armstrong

Ricardo Hernandez

PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES

The biographies listed here were current in June, 2008. Some information may have changed by the publishing date.

Keynote Speaker

Doudou Diène

Doudou Diène is the special rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance to the United Nations High Commission on Human Rights. Born in Senegal in 1941, Diène was a prizewinner in philosophy of Senegal's Concours Général, holds a law degree from the University of Caen, a doctorate in public law from the University of Paris, and a degree in political science from the Institut d'Études Politiques in Paris.

Diène joined the UNESCO Secretariat in 1977, in 1980 he was appointed director of the New York liaison office of the United Nations Permanent Missions department. Prior, Diène served as deputy representative of Senegal to UNESCO and vice-president and secretary of the African Group and Group of 77.

Between 1985 and 1987, Diène held the posts of deputy assistant director-general for the United Nations External Relations department, spokesperson for the director-general, and acting director of the Bureau of Public Information. After a period as project manager of the *Integral Study of the Silk Roads: Roads of Dialogue aimed at revitalizing East-West dialogue*, he was appointed director of the Division of Intercultural Projects in 1993 (currently named the Division of Intercultural Dialogue). In this capacity, he was responsible for intercultural dialogue projects concerning geo-cultural areas such as the Slave Route, Routes of Faith, Routes of al-Andalus, and Iron Roads in Africa. In 1998, he was placed in charge of activities pertaining to inter-religious dialogue.

Diène has taken part in a number of radio and television programs: *Neuf siècles de guerres saintes* (May 1996), UNESCO/ARTE; *Sur la piste des caravanes: L'endroit de toutes les rencontres* (February 1998) and *Sur la route des épices* (March 2000), UNESCO/NDR/ARTE; and a program in the Thalassa series on *The Slave Route*

(FR3, April 1998). He is co-author of *Patrimoine culturel et créations contemporaines* and of Vol. 35, No. 2 of the Journal of International Affairs on the New World Information Order. He has also published many articles on the issue of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue in journals such as *Archeologia*, *Historia*, *Sciences et Vie*, *Actualité des Religions*, *Diogenes*, and others. As editorial director of *From Chains to Bonds*, (UNESCO, 1998), he wrote the preface to *Tradition orale et archives de la traite négrière* (UNESCO, 2001), as well as the editorial of Newsletter No. 2 for *The Slave Route* (UNESCO, 2001).

Symposium Facilitators

James Early

James Early is the director of cultural heritage policy at the Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Since 1984, Early has served in various positions at the Smithsonian Institution, including assistant provost for educational and cultural programs, assistant secretary for education and public service, deputy assistant secretary for public service, and executive assistant to the assistant secretary for public service.

Prior to his work with the Smithsonian, Early was a humanist administrator at the National Endowment for the Humanities, Washington, D.C.; a producer, writer, and host of *Ten Minutes Left*, a weekly radio segment of cultural, educational and political interviews and commentary at WHUR FM radio at Howard University; and a research associate for programs and documentation at the Howard University Institute for the Arts and Humanities. As a long-time advocate and supporter of cultural diversity and equity issues in the nation's public cultural and educational institutions, Early began these pursuits at Morehouse College in Atlanta, GA, in 1969, where he received a bachelor's degree in Spanish. In 1971, Early entered a graduate studies program at Howard University on a Ford Foundation Fellowship to pursue a doctorate in Latin American and Caribbean history and a minor in African and Afro-American history.

Over the course of his 25-year professional career, Early has consistently recognized the integrity of historically evolved values and cultures of African-American, Latino, Native-American, and Asian-Pacific American communities. He has taught high school Spanish, worked with the incarcerated, taught at the college level, lectured in the U.S. and internationally, and written extensively on the politics of culture.

Sunya Ganbold

Born in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, Sunya Ganbold was raised in Moscow. She studied at a Russian high school in the capital of Mongolia and at King's School in Worcester, United Kingdom, followed by a year as an exchange student in Grosse Pointe South High School in Michigan, United States. She later enrolled in the International College at Beijing, where she studied economics and Chinese language. At the International College, she initiated and served as the editor-in-chief for the first grassroots student newspaper to be published in English on any Chinese college campus. Ganbold completed her final year of college at the University of Colorado at Denver (the International College's sister campus), where she received a bachelor's degree in economics with a minor in online information design.

Currently a branding/marketing project manager at The Apartment Creative Agency in New York, Ganbold possesses colorful professional and educational backgrounds garnered through her nomadic life. Ganbold is currently pursuing her masters degree in strategic communication at Columbia University. Prior to joining The Apartment, she managed PR, marketing, and operations for an architectural boutique firm specializing in high end residential and hospitality projects.

Ganbold also oversaw PR and marketing at the Museum of Contemporary Art/Denver where she increased museum attendance and raised community awareness and support through dynamic advertising campaigns, outreach programs, and guerilla marketing. Ganbold also acted as the project manager for the filming of Radiotelevisione Italiana's two-hour special on Chinggis Khan, led by Italy's legendary TV personality Piero Angela. Her commitment to her cultural roots was put to the test during her highly involved, month-long stint as the project coordinator for a Mongolian Culture Festival in the U.S. where she led a crew of contortionists, musicians, dancers, and "long song" singers

through the streets of New York City and Washington D.C. In addition to her other endeavors, Ganbold also acts as consultant and artistic director for an innovative non-profit poetry press, Apostrophe Books.

Symposium Discussant

Loie Fecteau

Loie Fecteau is executive director of New Mexico Arts, the state arts agency as well as a division of the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs. Fecteau also serves as director of the New Mexico Arts Commission, the governor-appointed advisory body to New Mexico Arts. Fecteau was appointed to her post by New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson. She has a strong interest in the transformative power of the arts and in using the arts to promote economic development and cultural tourism across New Mexico, particularly in rural areas. Toward that end, New Mexico Arts developed a project, Arts Trails, designed to put New Mexico artists on the map and to bring the market to them.

Fecteau has a master's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri and worked as a journalist for more than 20 years before becoming an arts administrator. She covered politics in New Mexico, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania for a variety of news organizations including the *Albuquerque Journal*, *United Press International* and *Gannett News Service*. Fecteau has a lifelong passion for the arts and is a strong literacy advocate.

Symposium Presenters and Respondents

Jennifer Armstrong

Jennifer Armstrong is the director of community arts development for the Illinois Arts Council. Prior to moving to Chicago, Armstrong served as the executive director of 40 North I 88 West—Champaign County's Arts, Culture and Entertainment Council (Illinois). She is a co-founder and past chair of Americans for the Arts Emerging Leader Council and is on the board of The Association of American Cultures.

Armstrong is the recipient of the Americans for the Arts inaugural Emerging Leader award. In 2004, she moved to Illinois from Phoenix, Arizona, where she served as the program coordinator for the Herberger College Department of Dance at Arizona State University. Armstrong studied arts and business administration, theatre, and dance at Millikin University. She has a

passion for bringing together diverse ideas, individuals, and institutions to ignite social change. She also works to ensure all generations of leaders are actively engaged, inspired, empowered, supported, connected, financially secure, and have an active role in shaping the future of our global communities.

Suzanne Benally

Suzanne Benally is the associate vice president for academic affairs and senior diversity officer at Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado. She has extensive experience in higher education policy, assessment, and diversity. Formerly, she directed an Institute on Ethnic Diversity at the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. Benally has worked with the American Indian Science and Engineering Society as an interim executive director and director of education programs to address the concerns and needs of American Indian education in grades K-12 and post-secondary education. Her special interests and research have focused on the relationship between land and place as expressed through written and oral literature. She is a former member of the Board of Trustees of the Western States Arts Federation. Benally is Navajo and Santa Clara Tewa.

Juan Carrillo

Juan Carrillo is a retired deputy director of the California Arts Council where he managed grants programs for 27 years. He now focuses on painting and writing and is a trustee of the Western States Arts Federation. Carrillo has served as a policy and funding advisor to the National Endowment for the Arts as well as to many state and local arts agencies. He is a founding member of several arts organizations including the Royal Chicano Air Force, an artists' collective; the Center for Contemporary Art, Sacramento; the Association of American Cultures and the Concilio de Arte Popular. He has also served as a board member of the Oak Park Summer Concert Series and conducted a monthly Latin jazz radio show for nine years on KDVS-FM. He taught history, sociology and Chicano studies at Cosumnes River College. Carrillo holds a bachelor's degree in American history from the University of California, Berkeley, and a master's degree in education and cultural anthropology from California State University, Sacramento.

Tabassum Haleem

Tabassum Haleem is the co-founder and executive director of the Organization of Islamic Speakers Midwest—an organization that fosters understanding of Islam and Muslim cultures in the U.S. and the world through education and civic engagement. She serves as the co-chair of DuPage United, is a 2005 Leadership Greater Chicago fellow and a McCormick Tribune Urban Policy leadership fellow. As a certified public accountant, she has worked for companies such as Arthur Andersen and Company, Paramount Pictures Corporation, and BMW of North America as well as for her own accounting, audit, and tax firm. She is currently working on a joint master's degree in public policy and Islamic studies at the University of Chicago. Haleem speaks three languages and is currently learning Arabic.

Rick (Ricardo) Hernandez

Rick Hernandez is the former executive director (retired) of the Texas Commission on the Arts. Serving in a variety of capacities, Hernandez worked for the Commission for 30 years. The hallmarks of his tenure at the Commission include developing a social conscience at the agency, bringing issues of equity to the forefront, the co-founding of The Association of American Cultures, and the creation of the Commission's electronic communication and grants systems. Hernandez served on many national boards and over 40 review and advisory panels at the National Endowment for the Arts as well as those of state and local arts agencies. As an artist, Hernandez is a potter, painter and sculptor.

Sangeeta Isvaran

Sangeeta Isvaran is a dancer, choreographer, research scholar and social worker from Chennai, India. Using a combination of arts—classical, popular, martial, circus, Bollywood—from the different domains of dance, music, visual arts, poetry and literature, her work focuses on helping individuals express how they perceive their lives. Her most recent work has been with teenagers in a juvenile delinquent home in the state of Yucatan, Mexico in May and June, 2007—the objective being to create a space for self-expression and to generate discussion about the teenagers' lives, their present situations, and their projections for the future.

Isvaran's other projects have involved discussions of sexuality, perceptions of and responsibility for the body, and the tradition and contemporary context of Indian dance. She works in the medium of dance with diverse underprivileged communities including street children, women and young people affected by HIV, transsexuals, land-mine victims, refugees, tsunami and earthquake victims, transvestites, destitute women, and sex workers. These projects are designed with the aim of using dance and theatre in social reform to empower, to educate, and to aid in developing economic independence. Isvaran has pursued these projects with such organizations as UNESCO, World Vision, Handicap International, Angkor Association for the Disabled, Deepam Educational Society for Health, Aseema Trust, Friends, and Oxfam.

Isvaran is trained in many forms of classical Indian dance, vocal music, and martial arts including Bharatanatyam, Nattuvangam, Kuchipudi, and Kalaripayattu, and as well as in classical Cambodian, Javanese, Balinese, Thai, and Burmese dance, and various forms of African dance. She has been awarded numerous scholarships and awards in both India and France, and choreographed 13 works apart from her traditional Bharatanatyam repertoire. She tours internationally and has performed, taught and lectured in Mexico, India, Morocco, the United States, Canada, France, Cambodia, Croatia, Indonesia, Finland, Myanmar, Thailand, Germany, and England. She holds a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Madras Christian College, and a master's degree in performing arts (dance) from the Sarojini Naidu School of Performing Arts at the University of Hyderabad.

Maria-Rosario Jackson

Maria-Rosario Jackson is a senior research associate and director of the Urban Institute's Culture, Creativity, and Communities Program. Jackson's research focuses on urban policy, urban poverty, community planning, and the role of arts and culture in community building processes and the politics of race, ethnicity, and gender in urban settings. She earned a master's degree in public administration from the University of Southern California and a doctorate in urban planning from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Arthur Jones

Arthur Jones is the founder, co-chair and artistic program director of The Spirituals Project, an organization that seeks to preserve and revitalize the music and teaching of the spirituals—sacred songs created and first sung by enslaved Africans in North America. He is also a senior clinical professor of psychology at the University of Denver and the chair of the Denver Commission on Cultural Affairs.

Since earning a doctorate in clinical psychology as a Danforth Fellow at the University of Iowa in 1974, Jones has focused much of his scholarship, teaching, and consultative work on issues of intercultural and multicultural psychology. In the early 1990s, his additional training as a professional singer cultivated his interest in the psychological and cultural functions of African-American music, and particularly the spirituals.

Jones is also the author of the award-winning book *Wade in the Water: The Wisdom of the Spirituals*, and the co-editor (with his brother, Brown University Professor Ferdinand Jones) of *The Triumph of the Soul: Cultural and Psychological Aspects of African-American Music*. He has presented lecture-concert and workshop programs around the country and currently coordinates the educational and artistic work of The Spirituals Project, including three multi-ethnic, multi-generational performance ensembles, a program of workshops presented in schools, an adult education series, and a comprehensive multimedia educational website (<http://ctl.du.edu/spirituals>) developed in collaboration with the University of Denver.

Ilona Kish

Ilona Kish is the secretary general of the European Forum for Arts and Heritage (EFAH). EFAH is a platform organization of cultural networks and associations that represents the interests of the cultural sector at European Union level. EFAH aims to create a forum for civil dialogue within the cultural sector. EFAH has over 85 members at local, regional, national and European level, which in turn represent over 8,000 cultural organizations. Kish trained in literature and modern languages before working in the European Commission culture directorate. She worked in the private and

corporate sector as an international project manager for eight years before joining EFAH as secretary general in 2003. Kish speaks four languages, hails from the United Kingdom, and currently resides in Brussels, Belgium.

Justin Laing

Justin Laing works as a program officer in The Heinz Endowments' Arts and Culture Program and manages the Endowments' relationships with small and mid-sized arts organizations. He is also developing an agenda for Culturally Responsive Arts Education, a Heinz program, and continues to work on issues pertaining to African-American boys and men.

In his former life, Laing worked as the manager and assistant director Nego Gato, Inc. (NGI), an African-Brazilian arts organization based in Pittsburgh. He received his bachelor's degree in Black studies and political science from the University of Pittsburgh and is now a perpetual student in Carnegie Mellon University's Master of Arts Management program. Laing serves on the boards of The Hill House Association and The Kelly Strayhorn Theater.

Louis LeRoy

Louis LeRoy is the executive director of Yuma Fine Arts and a visual artist. He was born and raised in the border community of Yuma, Arizona. He obtained a bachelor's degree in fine art from the University of Arizona in 1971. His career in arts administration began as the nation's first expansion arts coordinator for the Arizona Commission on the Arts in 1974. While in Arizona, he developed the agency's bi-national program between Arizona and Mexico. In 1981, he took a position as the field representative for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in Washington, D.C. He represented the NEA in Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming. LeRoy then took the position of director of the Arts Council of San Antonio. During his tenure in San Antonio, he helped found The Association of American Cultures (TAAC) and organized the Hispanic Theatre Conference, which was funded by the Ford Foundation.

LeRoy is the author of the book *How to Make Money for Your Organization*, published in 1998. He was a participant artist in *Ancient Roots and New Visions* and *Chicano Arts Resistance and Affirmation (CARA)*,

two nationally-touring exhibits. LeRoy has started three national arts organizations, and worked on the local, state and federal level with various arts agencies. He has, at the same time, been an active artist, participating in at least one exhibition per year for the past 20 years.

Cristina King Miranda

Cristina King Miranda is a Fulbright García Robles scholar who has been living and working in Mexico since 1998. A native of Washington, D.C., and the daughter of Puerto Rican and Scotch-Irish parents, King Miranda has lived and worked in the United States, Spain, and Mexico for the past 12 years. A bicultural and bilingual ombudsperson and arts activist, King Miranda has specialized in strategic planning for U.S. and international cultural organizations to diversify programs, expand their audiences and markets, and build multiple constituencies in the performing arts. Her areas of interest include: forging creative linkages and alliances among non-traditional sectors and partners; identifying and producing programs, special events, and performances, as well as audience development, fundraising and marketing strategies for U.S. and Latin American presenters, with a special focus on Latino communities in the U.S.

In Mexico, King Miranda has served as development director and director of international alliances for the National Fund for Culture and the Arts (FONCA), the U.S.-Mexico Foundation for Culture, and the Mexico Gateway to the Americas Performing Arts Market. Until December 2006, King Miranda was the co-artistic director of performing arts for the Universal Forum of Cultures, the second edition of the Barcelona Forum.

Prior to moving to Mexico, Ms. King Miranda was the artistic director and the director of Latino Programming for the Washington Performing Arts Society (WPAS). She currently serves on the boards of the Tambuco and Onix musical ensembles in Mexico, the North American World Music Coalition, the RES ARTIS International Network of Artist Residency Centres, and Fortaleza de la Mujer Maya, an indigenous women's theater collective in Chiapas.

Diana Molina

Diana Molina was born in El Paso, Texas, and attended the University of Texas at Austin—where she earned a bachelor’s degree in computer science. She then worked at IBM as a software engineer for several years. After a year of travel throughout Europe, Molina changed career paths and became a writer and photographer. She then moved to Amsterdam where she lived for almost a decade. She collaborated with Ben Deiman, a Dutch photographer, in producing collections of photographs for the Netherlands Bureau of Tourism, The Amsterdam Bureau of Tourism, Greenpeace Netherlands, and a book published by Scriptum Press titled, *Amsterdam, Small Town Big City*. Molina’s photography has been featured in exhibits at several venues, including: The World Museum of Art in Rotterdam, Holland; The Art Museum of the Americas in Washington, D.C.; The Houston Museum of Natural Science; The Institute of Texan Cultures at The University of Texas at San Antonio; and The Albuquerque Museum of Natural History and Science.

Molina currently lives near the New Mexico/Texas border, across from Chihuahua, Mexico. She directed a prize-winning documentary, *La Mujer Obrera*, about the struggles of women employed in the El Paso garment industry. At present, three collections of her work are touring museums nationally: Raramuri; The Tarahumara of the Sierra Madre; Morena Moderna; a modern depiction of the Virgin of Guadalupe; and Entre Fronteras—a series of images presenting Indigenous, Mestizo, and Hispanic cultures on both sides of the border. Molina is currently working on a collection titled: Seven-String Barbed-Wire Fence. The collection focuses on the many faces of Latino immigration in the United States.

Shani Jamila

Shani Jamila’s work is rooted in a commitment to the African diaspora, and fueled by a passion for social justice. As the host and producer of *Blackademics*, a Washington D.C. based program on the Pacifica Radio network that features provocative discussions on news and contemporary affairs as they impact the hip-hop generation, she has interviewed a wide array of leading artists, authors, and activists. She also co-hosted

WPFW’s *Black Soul Mondays*, a hip-hop show designed to provide an outlet for the music underplayed on commercial radio.

Jamila has spoken at global gatherings such as the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Switzerland, and led workshops at conferences like the World Social Forum in India. An incisive essayist and editor, her writings on race, gender, and culture are regularly taught in university curricula. Her varied accomplishments also include studying human rights in France, co-founding a library in Gabon, working with incarcerated youth in Washington D.C., and performing with a women’s poetry collective in Trinidad. In addition, she designed and directed the Howard University-based Art of Activism seminar series—an initiative that combined cultural work and political education to inform young people about organizing for progressive social change.

Jamila is a Fulbright Fellow and Spelman graduate who also has a master’s degree in Africana cultural studies from the University of California, Los Angeles. Having taught or researched at institutions in Europe, Africa, the Caribbean, and the United States, she possesses a truly cosmopolitan perspective. Her work has received international recognition in publications such as the *Trinidad Guardian* newspaper, the London-based literary magazine *Sable*, and *ESSENCE*—as “One of the 35 Most Remarkable Women in the World.”

Tatiana Reinoza Perkins

Tatiana Reinoza Perkins is an artist and independent curator. Born in El Salvador in 1981, during the beginning of the armed conflict, Reinoza Perkins became aware of the human cost of war at an early age. She migrated to the United States with her mother at the age of six. Her experiences with war and migration have informed much of her research interest in diaspora, human rights, the rebuilding of communities through art, and in particular, her interest in the art of Latin America. In 2004, Reinoza Perkins received her bachelor’s degree in art studio from California State University Sacramento, where she co-founded the Women’s Art Forum. Through her leadership and initiative, she has coordinated visiting artist lectures, curated art exhibits, and organized workshops for

youth. The current focus of her work is to promote, exhibit and document the contributions of contemporary Latino artists in the U.S. She is currently pursuing a master's degree in art history at the University of Texas at Austin.

Annette Evans Smith

Annette Evans Smith is the vice president of community relations and development for the Alaska Native Heritage Center. She is of Athabascan, Yup'ik and Alutiiq descent. Evans Smith was born in Fairbanks, Alaska, and was raised in the rural community of Dillingham, Alaska. She attended Stanford University where she majored in international relations and minored in Native American studies.

After completing her bachelor's degree, Evans Smith returned to Alaska and moved to Anchorage, Alaska's largest city, and has worked in international relations, public relations, and development for several nonprofit organizations. Evans Smith is WESTAF trustee and is currently working on a master's degree in business administration.

A.B. Spellman

A.B. Spellman is an author, poet, critic, and lecturer. He was a poet-in-residence at Morehouse College, in Atlanta, Georgia. He taught various courses in African-American culture; offered courses in modern poetry, creative writing, and jazz at Emory, Rutgers, and Harvard University. Spellman is an occasional television and radio commentator. He offered reviews and commentaries on National Public Radio's *Jazz Riffs* series, including the NPR *Basic Jazz Record Library* program. Spellman is a graduate of Howard University. He has published numerous books and articles on the arts, including *Art Tatum: A Critical Biography* (a chapbook), *The Beautiful Days* (poetry), and *Four Lives in the Bebop Business*, now available as *Four Jazz Lives* (University of Michigan Press). Spellman's first volume of poetry in 40 years, *Things I Must Have Known*, was published in 2008 year by Coffee House Press. Spellman has served on numerous arts panels including the Rockefeller Panel on Arts, Education and Americans; the Awards Panel of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP); the

Africa Diaspora Advisory Group, the Jazz Advisory Group, and the Advisory Group on the African-American Museum for the Smithsonian Institution.

Spellman worked at the National Endowment for the Arts from 1975 to 2005, first as the director of the Expansion Arts Program and, for the last decade of his term at the NEA, as deputy chairman. In recognition of Spellman's commitment and service to jazz, the National Endowment for the Arts in 2005 named one of its prestigious Jazz Masters awards the A.B. Spellman NEA Jazz Masters Award for Jazz Advocacy. Also in 2005, the Jazz Journalists Association voted to honor Spellman with its A-Team award.

Roland Tanglao

Roland Tanglao has been blogging since 1999 and believes in the power of the online global-multimedia conversation as popularized by blogging, podcasting, and videoblogging for businesses, organizations, and individuals. Tanglao is a technologist and founder of Bryght—a purveyor of community sites and website technology powered by the open-source system Drupal. Tanglao was born in the Philippines, raised in Canada and speaks better German—thanks to a three-and-a-half year stint in Germany during the Dot-Com boom—and French than Tagalog. He grew up shoveling snow and playing hockey in a small town in Ontario near Niagra Falls and currently resides in Vancouver.

Tomás Ybarra-Frausto

Tomás Ybarra-Frausto is the former associate director for creativity and culture at the Rockefeller Foundation. His work with the foundation includes the Humanities Residency Fellowship Program, the Recovering and Reinventing Cultures Through Museums Program, the U.S. Mexico Fund for Culture, and Partnerships Affirming Community Transformation (PACT). Prior to joining the Rockefeller Foundation, Ybarra-Frausto was a tenured professor at Stanford University in the department of Spanish and Portuguese. He has served as the chair of the Mexican Museum in San Francisco and the Smithsonian Council and has written and published extensively, focusing—for the most part—on

Latin American and U.S./Latino cultural issues. In 1998, Ybarra-Frausto was awarded the Henry Medal by the Smithsonian Institution.

Global Roundtable Discussants

Gabriella Gomez-Mont

Gabriella Gomez-Mont is an interdisciplinary artist, writer, and thinker from Mexico City. She has worked in Mexico, the United States, and Italy; has exhibited her work in Japan, Mexico, and Europe; and has acted as contributor and editor for a number of national and international arts magazines. In 2004 she founded *Toxico: Cultura Contemporanea*, an art foundation which brings world-famous artists to Mexico to conduct workshops and create collaborative projects with young professionals. She also founded *Laboratorio Curatorial 060*, an experimental collective of thinkers who come to the arts from diverse backgrounds, and who focus on questioning contemporary cultural practices.

Aziz Ridouan

Aziz Ridouan is a 19-year-old political lobbyist from Paris who serves as an advisor to French politician Ségolène Royal, the recent French presidential contender. He is the co-founder of the French Association des Audionautes, a group that provides legal services to individuals charged by major corporations for illegal downloading of music. Ridouan often gives media interviews, meets regularly with French Parliament members and other politicians, and has been consistently praised for his eloquence, ease, and lack of pretension. As he describes it, his role is largely to explain and represent the reality of young French citizens to the politicians whose decisions affect their lives. Ridouan resides in Paris and is the son of Moroccan immigrants.

Quentin Renaudo

Quentin Renaudo is a 17-year-old political lobbyist from Paris who co-founded the French Association des Audionautes—which loosely translates as “the audio surfers”—with Aziz Ridouan in 2004. The Audionautes is a non-profit association that provides legal assistance to those accused of illegally downloading music, many of whom were taken to court by the Civil Society of

Phonographic Producers, the French equivalent of the Recording Industry Association of America. Renaudo currently serves as the organization’s vice president.

Carlos Enríquez Verdura

Carlos Enríquez Verdura is the director of international cultural promotions for the National Council of Culture and Arts (CONACULTA), which is Mexico’s equivalent of the National Endowment for the Arts in the United States. Enríquez Verdura believes that art does not specifically correspond to a nation based on the cultural identities of the artist, but that it extends beyond borders and functions similarly to a universal language. In his work, he presents contemporary Mexican art in a way that transcends stereotypes—created by the prominence of notable artists such as Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera—and depicts Mexican art as unique and globally significant. Through his work with CONACULTA, Enríquez Verdura seeks to connect the development of Mexican art and culture to the global conversation, to expose the richness and diversity of Mexican contemporary art to other nations’ arts communities, and to help launch the careers of a younger generation of Mexican artists.

Natalia Toledo

Natalia Toledo is a Zapotec poet, writer, spokesperson, and activist for indigenous women’s rights; and daughter of the acclaimed painter Francisco Toledo, from Oaxaca, Mexico. In 2004, Toledo wrote *Guie’ Yaasé’ (Black Olivo)*, for which she received the *Nezahualcóyotl de Literatura*, the only national prize for contemporary indigenous literature in Mexico. Toledo travels around the world doing readings of her poetry and speaking to the plight of indigenous women.

Ivan Duran

Ivan Duran is the Belize-based director of Stonetree Records, a record label that works with artists in the Afro-Cuban, African-Belize, and Caribbean music genre. Duran, born in Belize to Catalanian parents, founded Stonetree in 1995 after studying music at the Escuela Nacional de Música in Havana, Cuba. His work involves producing, researching, promoting, and managing the tours of artists engaged in the Garifuna traditions (African-Belize). Duran is currently working on his next project: Umalali. Umalali, the Garifuna Women's project, is the result of countless auditions of the best Garifuna women singers and efforts to revive their voices in the musical tradition. He has been described as "an incredible one-man show of the next generation."

Paula Astorga

Paula Astorga is the former director and co-founder of the Mexico City International Contemporary Film Festival (FICCO). With Astorga's help, festival sponsor Cinemex launched the film festival in 2004. Known for its sophisticated programming, FICCO has become one of Mexico's top festivals. FICCO succeeds in promoting culture and education through several projects aimed at addressing social and environmental issues through film. Previously, Astorga specialized in film production as the director of the Center for Cinematographic Training in Mexico City, where she produced music videos, short films, and video for advertising campaigns. Also a film director and writer, Astorga hails from Pachuca, Hidalgo, in Mexico, and is currently pursuing personal film projects.

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The Association of American Cultures Action Circle

Action Circle representatives hail from various national and regional arts and cultural organizations. This group was invited to meet with Board members regarding future Open Dialogue conferences and to discuss how leaders from diverse arts service organizations could improve communication in order to foster a more cooperative network for sharing resources.

Action Circle Invited Representatives:

Bill Aguado, Association for Hispanic Arts, New York , NY

Rose Yvonne Coletta, Autry National Center, Wells
Fargo Theater, Los Angeles, CA

Maria Lopez De Leon, National Association of Latino
Arts and Culture, San Antonio, TX

James B. Borders IV, African Grove Institute for the
Arts, New Orleans, LA

Tomas Benitez, California Latino Arts Network, Los
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Arts Consultant

The Roan Group, Washington D.C.

Teniqua Broughton

Cultural Participation Manager

Arizona State University Gammage, Tempe, AZ

Rennie Harris

Artistic Director and Choreographer

Puremovement Dance Company, Philadelphia, PA

Roland Tanglao

Bryght, Vancouver, BC

Matthew Saunders

PingVision, Boulder, CO

Judy Hussie-Taylor

Denver Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver, CO

E. San San Wong

San Francisco Arts Commission, San Francisco, CA

Gerald Yoshitomi

Independent Cultural Facilitator, Los Angeles, CA

Special thanks also to **Lunden MacDonald** who provided Spanish translation for Natalia Toledo throughout the conference, and to **Mary Headrick** for facilitating local travel and assistance to international participants.