

# Art Teachers as Community Artists as Community Leaders



Chicago has rich traditions of engaged participation in community life through artmaking.

**Re-imagine your teaching practice using community arts methods to identify issues of contemporary community life.**

Our goal for this session is to share exemplary work with youth by Chicago area artists to inspire teachers to use the methods of community art in their own work as art educators.

**Design innovative projects through which students bring into being a more just and joyful society.**

above: City as Site, 2010, Director Maria Gaspar

Teachers will be introduced to Chicago community arts projects related to place making in schools and neighborhoods, restorative justice, LGBTQ youth media, and school improvement.

Teachers will be able to utilize significant concepts of community arts practice such as generative themes, interrelationships of individual and community identity, agency and power, dialogical education and dialogical aesthetics.

Teachers will identify generative themes that might be the genesis of art projects and curriculum in their home communities.



Maria Gaspar is an interdisciplinary artist born in Chicago. Using installation, sculpture, performance, audio, and community-engagement processes, her artistic practice negotiates matters of space, contested geographies, and authority. Her action-based and performative interventions with youth and adults explore the social and political body through long-term processes. Gaspar's art practice includes founding major community-based art projects, such as *City As Site* (2010) and *The 96 Acres Project*, a current series of public, site-responsive art projects that examine the Cook County Jail and the impact of incarceration on communities of color. She has presented her work at The MCA Chicago, Jane Addams Hull House Museum, the Urban Institute of Contemporary Art, the Alpineum Produzentengalerie, and Artspace New Haven, amongst others. Recently, Gaspar was awarded a Creative Capital Award, a Joan Mitchell Foundation Emerging Artist Award, the National Museum of Mexican Art Sor Juana Women of Achievement Award, and residencies at the Experimental Sound Studio in Chicago and Project Row Houses in Houston. She was featured in the Chicago Tribune as Chicagoan of the Year in the Visual Arts in 2014. She is an Assistant Professor at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Gaspar received her MFA in Studio Arts from the University of Illinois at Chicago and her BFA from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY.

## Site, Geography, Spatial Justice: Making the Invisible Visible

### Maria Gaspar

A collective artistic process takes time. My projects are often community-specific, where I spend time in a place, researching, probing, and generating relationships with communities, such as with *City As Site* and the *96 Acres Project*. In the *96 Acres Project*, I address the Cook County Jail, the largest architecture of my native community in Chicago. Besides growing up in proximity to the jail, I was deeply impacted by its brutality during my first visit as part of my elementary school's "scared straight" program. Since then, I have witnessed its destructive effects on communities of color and the poor all across the city. Since undertaking this project, my research and art practice has included studying prison architecture, surveillance, and examining its simultaneous invisibility and visibility.

Redefining the politics of space requires tenderness and sensitivity for a location, its citizens, and its visual, and socio-cultural nuances. As a site-specific artist, I am interested in creative and liberatory actions that carve out opportunities for new and relevant community aesthetics to emerge. How do we make generative methods of radical imagination and dialogical exchange that are critical in producing artwork that disrupts boundaries and challenges our own misperceptions about place?

### Links/Resources:

[mariagaspar.com](http://mariagaspar.com)

[96acres.org](http://96acres.org)

[cityasSITE.wordpress.com](http://cityasSITE.wordpress.com)

*A Manual for Urban Projection* by Ali Momeni

*Sited Body, Public Visions* by Ernesto Pujol

*Games for Actors and Non-Actors* by Augusto Boal

*Walkscapes: Walking as Aesthetic Practice* by Francisco Careri



Projection on Cook County Jail, 96 Acres, 2015

## Towards a Theory of Contemporary Community Arts Curriculum

### Olivia Gude

Recently, I've been thinking about "paradoxical community," a notion I came across in the writing of Julia Kristeva, a French psychoanalyst. She talks about "paradoxical community." That is a wonderful image to consider when planning a public art project. We can be individuals and part of a collective. We can feel the community's strength and warmth without feeling stifled if we can acknowledge the many different experiences and ways of processing experiences—the paradoxes, gaps, and tensions within every community.

People have such tensions within their own psyches, but often, instead of experiencing, processing, consciously sustaining, and even entertaining these internal paradoxes, people tend to project them outward. Various groups within a community—generations, genders, immigration status, race and other things—are pressed into representing these various internal contradictions and oppositions. Art—making and experiencing—gives us the capacity to reconsider and reclaim these contradictions within ourselves and within others.

### Links and resources

Olivia Gude ePortfolio: <http://naea.digation.com/omg>

CPAG's Community Public Art Guide: [www.cpag.net/guide/](http://www.cpag.net/guide/)



Olivia Gude is the Angela Gregory Paterakis Professor of Art Education at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a Professor Emerita at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Olivia Gude's research focuses on developing new paradigms for visual art curriculum; her articles include: Drawing Color Lines, Principles of Possibility: Considerations for a 21st Century Art and Culture Curriculum, and Art Education for Democratic Life.

Gude has created many award-winning collaborative mural and mosaic projects. She is a Core Artist of the Chicago Public Art Group and edited the CPAG's on-line Community Public Art Guide: Making Murals, Mosaics, Sculptures, and Spaces. [www.cpag.net](http://www.cpag.net) Her writing on community-based public art includes Innovators and Elders, Painting in the Streets in Cultural Activisms: Poetic Voices, Political Voices and the book Urban Art Chicago: a Guide to Community Murals, Mosaics, and Sculptures.

In recent years, she has united her work as a community artist and art educator by creating participatory spaces in which teachers investigate and re-invent the social practice of art education. These include organizing a Manifesta of Art Education at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago in 2012 and gatherings of the Skeptical Assessment Society at Virginia Commonwealth University in 2013 and in Iowa in 2015.



above: Structure is Space, Hilliard Apartments mosaics, 2008, Olivia Gude with teens and elders  
below: Manifesta of Art Education at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, 2012



Photo: joe mazza/brave lux,

Andres L. Hernandez is an artist and educator who re-imagines the environments we inhabit. Through collaborative, community-based work with youth and adults, and independent, studio-based practice, he explores the potential of spaces for public dialogue, community building, and social action. Hernandez has been selected as a Chicago Artist Month Featured Artist; an Arts and Public Life/Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture Artist-In-Residence at University of Chicago; and a Propeller Fund co-recipient.

Hernandez received his B. Arch. from Cornell University, and his M.A. from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where he is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Art Education. He is concurrently faculty in the Graduate Studies in Art & Design Education program at Vermont College of Fine Arts, and co-founder of Revival Arts Collective—a network of citizen activists using arts and culture as a catalyst for community redevelopment in Chicago.

## Field/work: Place as Participatory Palimpsest

### Andres L. Hernandez

Given my initial education and professional training in the field of architecture, I consider the interpretation and shaping of space as central to my work. This work takes the form of archival research, writing, public programming, participatory workshops, creative placemaking, and ephemeral interventions and performances within public spaces.

Over the last several years, my work has focused on urban vacancy as a problematic condition rooted in economic crises. Vacancy is experienced firsthand through our navigation of urban environments, and secondhand through images of these spaces. Thus we come to know vacancy through its physical reality and its visual representation: both work to fix our conceptions of the urban as spaces of deficiency, disorder and incivility. My interest is in shifting the paradigm of urban vacancy from deficiency to opportunity and imaginative possibility.

In 2011, with several close friends and colleagues, I co-founded the Revival Arts Collective (RAC), a network of citizen activists committed to using arts and culture as a catalyst for community redevelopment in Chicago. Using strategies such as civic dialogues, micro-grantmaking, and creative placemaking, RAC considers creative, alternative models to mainstream community economic development efforts, while encouraging active citizen engagement in the process.

In 2013, I created the Urban Vacancy Research Initiative (UVRI), an ongoing endeavor that serves as both performative practice and qualitative research with human subjects in public settings and exhibition contexts. My work through UVRI involves four main activities: collaborative mapping of urban communities in which vacancy is a significant condition; walking tours within these communities to share stories of what was once present; public forums to gather citizens to discuss critical issues; and finally, collecting data in the form of interviews, oral histories, and public polling.

### Links and resources

<http://whimplaceknow.com>

<https://twitter.com/vacancyresearch>

<http://www.saic.edu/profiles/faculty/andresluishernandez/>



*Untitled (Out of Site)*, from the *Site Readings* series, archival inkjet print, 2011



*Untitled (Site Intervention #1)*, from the *Field Operations* series, still from digital video, 2015, Andres L. Hernandez

## What's the Real Deal About Power and Place? Teacher Agency and Interdisciplinary Collaboration in a Youth Media and Sexuality Curriculum

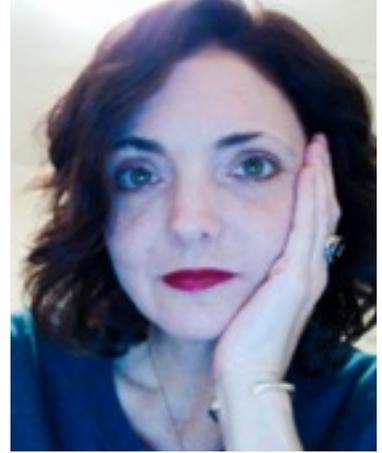
**Karyn Sandlos**

In my research and teaching, film holds a place of prominence. Some of the work that I do involves looking at how educational films made by young people address issues of gender, race, sexuality, power, and relationships. I am interested in how young people learn about these issues, and teach one another about them, through film. I also look at the role that adults and educators play in the process of supporting young people to become filmmakers and sexuality educators; helping them decide, for instance, what kind of content is 'appropriate,' how to shape a 'positive' educational message, and so on.

Conversations between young people and adult/educators during the filmmaking process tend to be complicated, because young people want to tell realistic stories that don't necessarily have moralizing, "just say no" or inspirational, "it gets better" kinds of endings. As a researcher, I interview the young people and adults who are involved in the process of writing and making a film. As a researcher, I want to understand where adults and educators find aesthetic and narrative space for a film to explore difficult issues such as LGBTQ bullying, relationship violence, HIV/AIDS or teen suicide, without telling adolescent viewers what to do or how to think. I look closely at how films use open ended-ness to convey their messages, often in ways that leave a lot of room for audiences of young people to relate to the film and come up with their own interpretations.

### Resources

[www.scenariosusa.org](http://www.scenariosusa.org)



Karyn Sandlos is Associate Professor of Art Education, School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her research focuses on sexuality education and film, curriculum and curation, psychoanalysis and the aesthetics of desire in teaching, and schooling as a space of emotional struggle. Sandlos is currently working in collaboration with Scenarios USA, an arts-education organization that "uses film and writing to amplify youth voices on social justice issues." Recently, the project brought Scenarios USA's "Power and Place" curriculum to 9 Chicago high schools and convened a talented group of teachers to pilot it.

Sandlos completed her Ph.D. in Education at York University in Toronto, Canada, and her M.A. in Sociology and Equity Studies in Education at The University of Toronto. She was a 2014-15 Fellow with the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis, where she is currently a student at large.



Still from *Veracity*, 2014, written by Janaya Greene



Production team for *Veracity* at Gwendolyn Brooks Academy



## Spiral into Reality: Spiral Workshop Practices in Public School

**Bobby Anderson**

**Madilyn Strentz**

Paradoxically, making fewer art projects can deepen the arts learning experience, allowing more time for contemplation, research, experimentation, conversation, action and reflection. By sharing examples of investigative and experimental art making units, teachers will gain new insights into the power of transformative process and be able to transfer those concepts into their home schools. Teachers can create curriculum that places emphasis on how to think like an artist by incorporating learning experiences that teach students how to find inspiration, play with media, journal, interpret, appropriate, create and present artworks.

This presentation shares strategies for building arts curriculum through which students learn how to think and act like contemporary artists by valuing the process of art making.

### Links and resources

Postmodern Principles: in Search of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Art Education by  
Olivia Gude

*Education for Critical Consciousness* by Paulo Freire

*Teaching Visual Culture* by Kerry Freedman

[Back of the Yards College Prep High School](#)



Madilyn Strentz is a National Board Certified Chicago Public School teacher of ten years and has served as the Chair of the Fine Arts Department of two high schools.

Bobby Anderson is a CPS visual arts and technology teacher of five years and working studio photographer.

As founding art teachers of the new Back of the Yards High School they created arts curriculum that is seen as central to the school's mission. Both Strentz and Anderson were faculty of University of Illinois at Chicago's Spiral Workshop, the widely acclaimed curriculum research project and teen art workshop. Together they have taken the core principles of Spiral Workshop—curriculum based on contemporary art practices through which students investigate significant themes in their lives—and have adapted and extended this curriculum in Chicago public schools and communities.



Back of the Yards College students creating community partnerships