



Mural Title: "Holding Space 2018"

SOCIAL JUSTICE THRU THE ARTS

June 17-22, 2018

FINAL REPORT



SOCIAL JUSTICE THRU THE ARTS

THE PROJECT

SOCIAL JUSTICE THRU THE ARTS (SJTA) was part of the 2018 summer institutes hosted by the CSU Alliance Partnership.

Funding was provided by the **CSU College of Liberal Arts and the CSU Alliance Partnership**.

Additional support and space use was provided by **CSU Women's Studies and Gender Research, the University Center for the Arts, the School of Music Theatre and Dance, Gregory Allcar Museum and CSU Art Education**.

SJTA Facilitators:

Dr. Caridad Souza, Director of Women's Studies and Gender Research

Lisa Morgan, CSU Dance Faculty, School of Music, Theatre & Dance

Rose Jaffe, Washington D.C. based mural artist

Silvia Minguzzi, Designer and Communications Manager, Gregory Allcar Museum

Dr. Patricia Vigil, Director of University Partnerships and Student Success & Director of the Alliance and University Partnership Relations

CSU Student Interns/Artists:

Puleng "Ratu" Marutle, Shayla Monteiro, Jovan Rivera-Lovato

Student participants were from four different Alliance schools:

Adams City High School, Commerce City, CO

Fort Lupton High School, Fort Lupton, CO

Hinkley High School, Aurora, CO

Pueblo Central High School, Pueblo, CO

Sixteen students applied and we ended up with ten students attending:

Magdalena Garcia, Jimmy Lee, Erin McGrew, Moo Moo, Krysna Cassandra Quinonez-Gasca, Hemily Madrigal, Viviana Retana, Franchesca-Julia Reyes, Martin-Angel Reyes, Lael Vigil.

CSU Alliance Partnership works with ten Colorado high schools promoting a college-going culture. These schools are the least resourced high schools in Colorado composed of First Generation, racially and ethnically diverse students and high numbers of students who are on free and reduced lunch.





SOCIAL JUSTICE THRU THE ARTS

SJTA OVERVIEW

This institute taught basic social justice concepts and advocacy through integrated work and exploration in the arts. Participants engaged in hands-on learning in storytelling, movement and dance, image theatre, designing and painting. We utilized the arts to emphasize concepts learned in dialogue and reflection that culminated in a group mural project. We emphasized collaborative learning among community educators, students, and faculty through team building, intercultural dialogue, nurturing individual and collective voice, and fostering communication across differences.

Learning Outcomes

- Understand the role of art in social justice advocacy through intercultural dialogue.
- Recognize and see each other in various roles as individuals and creators of community.
- Nurture individual and collective voice through the creative process while teambuilding and problem solving.
- Encourage open exploration of identity and community to support belonging and trust.
- Build relationships and empathetic connections to feel heard and understood.
- Understand the importance of social capital - equity, access, and justice within and across communities.
- Envision, create and design a community mural and present, to the public, about the work and the process.
- Become familiar with CSU admissions process and orient them to campus

Implementation/Process of the week

- A welcome luncheon was provided for students and families to meet everyone, review the schedule and discuss the focus and topics of the institute.
- Students stayed in campus residence halls and ate meals in the dining halls. Each participant received CSU t-shirts, Alliance water bottles and journals for them to document their experience at the institute.
- Three CSU student mentors were with the students throughout their stay, accompanying them to all activities, as well as facilitating debrief sessions in the evening. They were excellent role models who offered support, facilitated team-building activities and shared personal experiences of their journey to college and success at Colorado State University. Their academic paths at CSU were very beneficial for this institute.





- The CSU Admissions office worked with the students to help them better understand the path to college, including the application process, financial support and timelines.
- Sessions were from 9:00 – 4:30 each day in the following spaces on campus: Art Education classroom in the CSU Visual Art Building; CSU Theatre shop, black box theatre, classrooms and the Gregory Allicar Museum in the University Center for the Arts. The final presentation – and where the mural is installed through October 2018, took place in the sculpture garden of the Gregory Allicar Museum.

Curriculum for the sessions is outlined below.



SOCIAL JUSTICE THRU THE ARTS

CURRICULUM/CONTENT

All curriculum was presented through a lens of social justice, socially engaged art, individual story/narrative, self-expression, creativity and collaboration. Topic areas included:

- Team building and establishing a community charter
- Activism - power, privilege, difference, systemic oppression (Caridad – please add clarification here).
- Dance/Movement exploring themes of body awareness & physical language, pathway, intersection, overlap, meetings/partings, design, shape
- Visual Art – Art as Voice - why this work is important, how generations of peoples have used creative expression to celebrate, process trauma, create community, tell stories, etc
- Drawing and painting technique in preparation for designing and painting the mural
- Poetry/Writing
- Activism in Social Media - gender equity & intersectional perspectives
- Drumming and dance classes including Capoeira: Afro-Brazilian Martial Art and Dance and (Caridad, do you want to add dialogue here on specific West African dances?)
- Documentation of the process with photographs and video
- Work together to develop presentation of final mural for invited guests and family

The institute was successful on many levels. Some of the highlights were:

- Interactions with the participants through the social justice topics and the arts
- Quick transformations and deep processing of personal stories for all involved
- Collaboration and integration of varying activities involving visual arts, movement/dance and discussions around social justice issues
- The mural – the process of designing and painting the mural provided an anchor/platform for dialogue, creativity, collaboration and empowerment.
- The CSU student mentors provided a crucial role in facilitating the work.
- Given the short amount of time allotted for coordination, and the fact that the facilitators had not worked together before, the logistics and outcomes were very positive – we look forward to future institutes.
- How well the featured artist—Rose Jaffe—coincided with our vision





- The students were very aware and passionate about social issues
- Evening debrief time with mentors and students was essential.
- The closing reception/presentation was a wonderful way to share the work. The students were extremely proud of their work on the mural and how far they had come as a group.



BUDGET

Insert Budget here

STUDENT EVALUATION FEEDBACK

(I used some narrative from a past final report that Patricia supplied. I have not gone through the evaluations to substantiate these numbers and WILL do that but in general, I think this is concurrent with SJTA).

A Likert scale of fourteen questions was used requesting a rating from 1 – 5, with 1 indicating strongly disagree to 5, indicating strongly agree.

Aggregate scores of 4 and above (Agree) were listed on all statements indicating that that they found the mentors extremely accessible and helpful and the students wanted to pursue a college degree after attending this program. They also felt more informed about career opportunities, leadership roles and educational opportunities in the areas of Social Justice and the Arts and would be willing to participate in similar programs hosted by the Colorado State University Alliance Partnership. They agreed they had gained more confidence after attending this program.



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Challenges to consider as we move forward:

- Planning throughout – with more time and a year under our belt, this will
- Working with the Alliance schools on recruitment and deposits for applications
- We would like to extend to seven days rather than five - from one Saturday to another Saturday
- Build in more down-time for students to process/integrate, rest
- Integrate the media documenting piece more
- Secure Rec Center and review CSU Admissions session
- More trauma-informed curriculum
- There is need for a program manager/coordinator
- Establish a working system for planning, timelines and communication
- Train mentors further
- Further curriculum/schedule planning and development
- Develop assessment/evaluation to utilize more for grant writing/funding support and curriculum/personnel planning

Support Needed:

- Foundational support - both financial and administrative
- Media/documentation had a great start and we have much to work with in terms of developing support material for funding requests. NOW we need to develop these pieces. CSU PR to report and promote the institute.
- Help with getting the word out to schools and follow-up successes.

Next steps:

- CSU Diversity Symposium presentation – October 2-4, 2018
- Personnel and curriculum planning for 2019 including schedule/calendar – set a timeline.
- CSU Alliance Meeting with Participant Reunion – Fall, 2018
- Meet with Alliance Partnership for collaborative goals/wishes for future
- Community Event/Artist Talk (October) held at Gregory Allcar Museum
- Propose 2019 Institute with budget and funding requests
- Developing Mentor Training
- Developing the Curriculum
- Connecting with individuals at Alliance Schools to build recruitment plan
- Outreach to Alliance schools and locations – hoping for fall, 2018

Ideas for Future:

- Returning to Alliance schools to extend summer institute learning and recruit, involve previous year's participants in this process





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- Revisiting curriculum/partner with Alliance schools teachers to collaborate/promote material to a wider student population
- Collaboration ideas for integrated projects in Alliance schools, ie. Workshop with arts/civic/social studies . . . teachers or whomever is interested in incorporating these principles into their work
- Capitalize on the value of this practicum experience for our CSU student mentors, applying skills and concepts through hands on co-teaching





Artists' Statement for "Holding Space 2018"

We are the next generation of voices. We are the future, we are change, we are hope, we are power and intelligence. We came into this program as strangers, and we will leave it not only as friends, but accomplished artists. Our faces painted on this mural will forever be remembered. We all come from different family backgrounds including American, Indigenous and Immigrants. Many of us face hardships. Many of us come from trauma, pain and struggle. Many of us come from places where people believe we will be nothing because of our skin colors, genders, religions, and sexualities. Our pasts do not define us. Where we live, our families economic status, what people think negatively of us, this does not define us. Our maturity, wisdom and kindness define us. We will impact the world through great changes. Many of us come from nothing but we are beyond more than something. Nobody can stop us, we can do anything.

During the program of creating our mural, feelings of excitement led us through the process of creating the design for the mural. This involved building community and celebrating our differences by bringing our different ideas together and creating collaborative collective. This process required lots of honesty with ourselves and each other.

To begin, we started by priming the panels to prep for painting. We spent time the first day creating movement sculptures inspired by themes of connection and intersectionality which we photographed as imagery for the mural design. We also practiced Theater of the Oppressed techniques that informed some of the poses on the mural. We made sure to incorporate everyone in this critical piece of the process. The second day we used line drawings of the photos taken and tracing paper to create our own compositions. Through this process we reinforced themes of unity, difference, acceptance, hope and love. For example, we decided on a powerful red "ribbon" or through line that connected each figure. Red was decided on because of its powerful color and rooting qualities. Taking time to talk through the what was important to us to include on the wall made a more powerful and intentional mural design.

During the first day we faced a few challenges, grappling with judgment for ourselves/each other and being overwhelmed by many people being in one space. While we had the fear of messing up, our confidence broke through and overcame one of many challenges. During this process we continued to embrace our differences and used them to motivate each other. Setting our egos aside and





trusting one another through the process of painting, we made sure to hold space for one another. We completed all the painting in two days of intense work, and in the end felt satisfied and proud of our dedication. The check-ins and debriefs at the end of our days made us think deeper and find the deep parts within us to help us explain how we all can relate to the mural and our peers.

Throughout the week, it became apparent that we all have our own artistic mediums; whether it be painting, writing, drawing, music, or dance. These artistic differences offered many avenues for us to explore while creating our mural. We found that it was our social differences, however, which really provided us with the content of our message. Things like race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, spirituality, and language help determine how we perceive and are perceived, and each of us faced challenges engaging with differences across these lines. Because we are all unique in each of these regards, it is the coming together with these differences that is important and powerful. Each person had the opportunity to share and learn about the experiences of the people next to them. Through looking inward and travelling outward, we found power, and from this place of power, we taught ourselves to appreciate our creations, to learn, to honor our cultures, and to understand the message behind the faces of this mural.

The last few days here have allowed for growth in each and every one of us. Many of us have learned to embrace our stories and where we come from. Many of us are building a conscious understanding of the internal and external struggles of other peoples. We, as young people, have become united under a call to make change and address social issues. It is our commitment and responsibility to bring what we've learned here back to our communities throughout Colorado, to help draw their attention to social issues and the potential of working across difference to produce power for social change. As we become activists, we seek to restore power and hope by honoring each other's differences and creating a more just society.

Additional notes provided by facilitators:

Artists are our visionaries. Art provides us with inspiration. The creative process is infused in everything so it is part of our everyday life. All of us can be creative and artistic; art and creativity allow us to dream our biggest dreams and support our biggest actions towards social change.



SOCIAL JUSTICE THRU THE ARTS

The art of dance/movement is a universal form of expression and communication, through story, ritual, gesture, celebration, and healing, . . . our bodies HOLD our history and speak in ways that words cannot. When we are IN our bodies, we come forward as our best selves and with the most knowing. Notice the language our body speaks.

Social Media is reshaping how many human beings initiate and/or maintain virtually every type of ethically significant social bond or role: friend-to-friend, parent-to-child, co-worker-to co-worker, employer-to-employee, teacher-to-student, neighbor-to-neighbor. Maintaining an ethical conduct while using social media is an important part of how we communicate and create change.

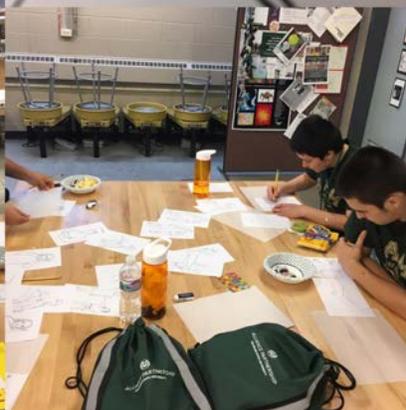


GALLERY





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