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FOREWORD BY JOHN PAUL LEDERACH



Navigating
the Nexus
of Art and Peace

A reflective guide for peacebuilding practitioners and artists working together to transform conflict and inspire creativity

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The views expressed in this publication represent those of the contributing authors. They do not reflect the position of any particular organisation, partner, or funding source involved in the publication of this work.

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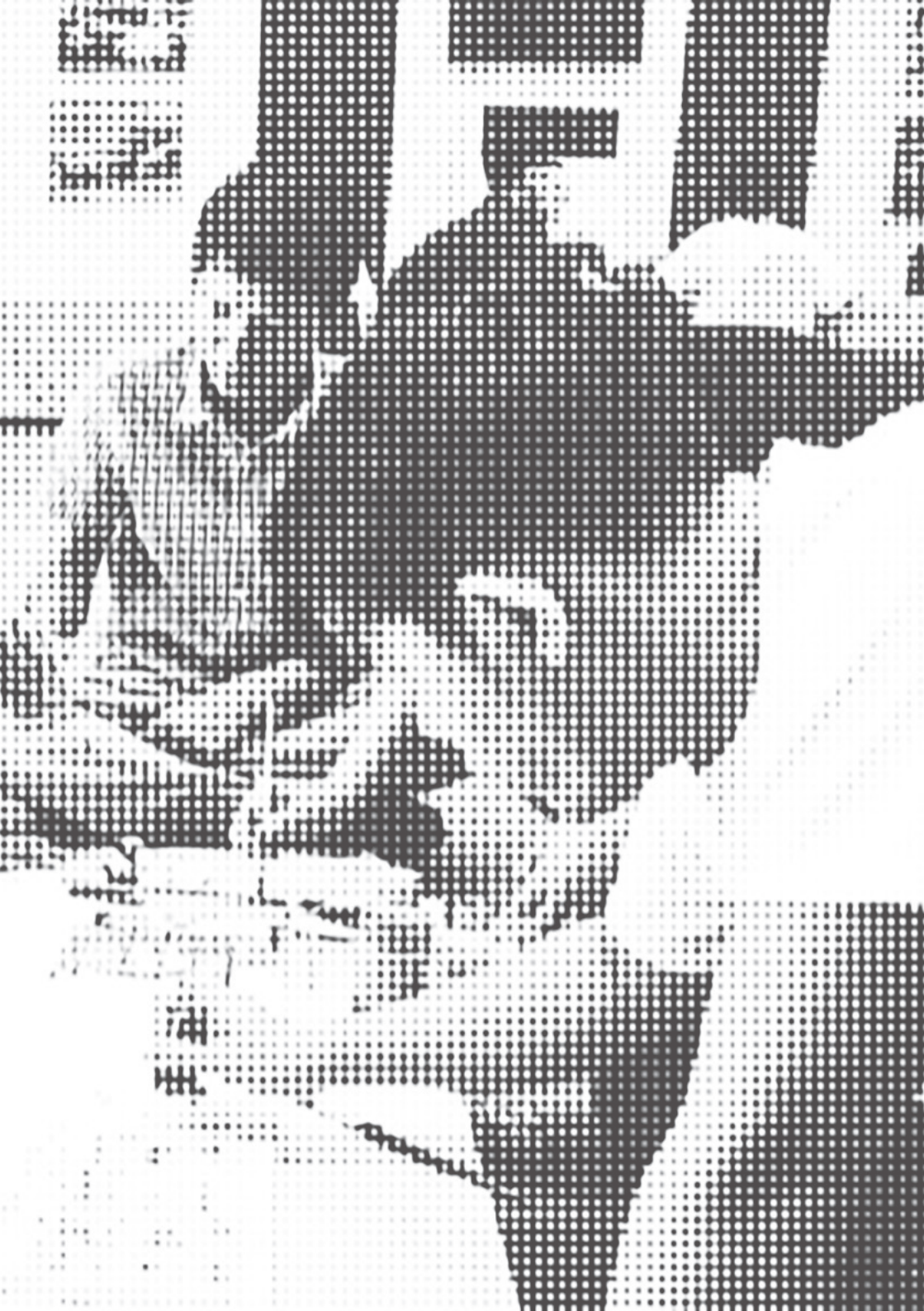


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In memory of Alain Fressanges.
Inspired by your dedicated commitment
throughout your lifetime to seek out
creative and novel ways to bring
people together against all odds.



FOREWORD BY
JOHN PAUL LEDERACH

F O R E W O R D S

When I received the manuscript and found myself moving slowly through the stories, ideas, and guideposts found in *Navigating The Nexus of Art and Peace*, I knew I had in hand a precious gift of a book rising from experience and careful reflection.

Navigating draws attention, not just to their journey, but the notion of a sea of potential and challenges. Compass. Finding North. Courage. Tenacity.

Nexus, the sea of which they speak, offers a sense of integration. Connections. A meeting place. Crossroads. The hubs of spider strands.

Art and Peace, the holding together of that which in reality can never be separated: The innate human capacity to create alongside the embrace of our mutual humanity.

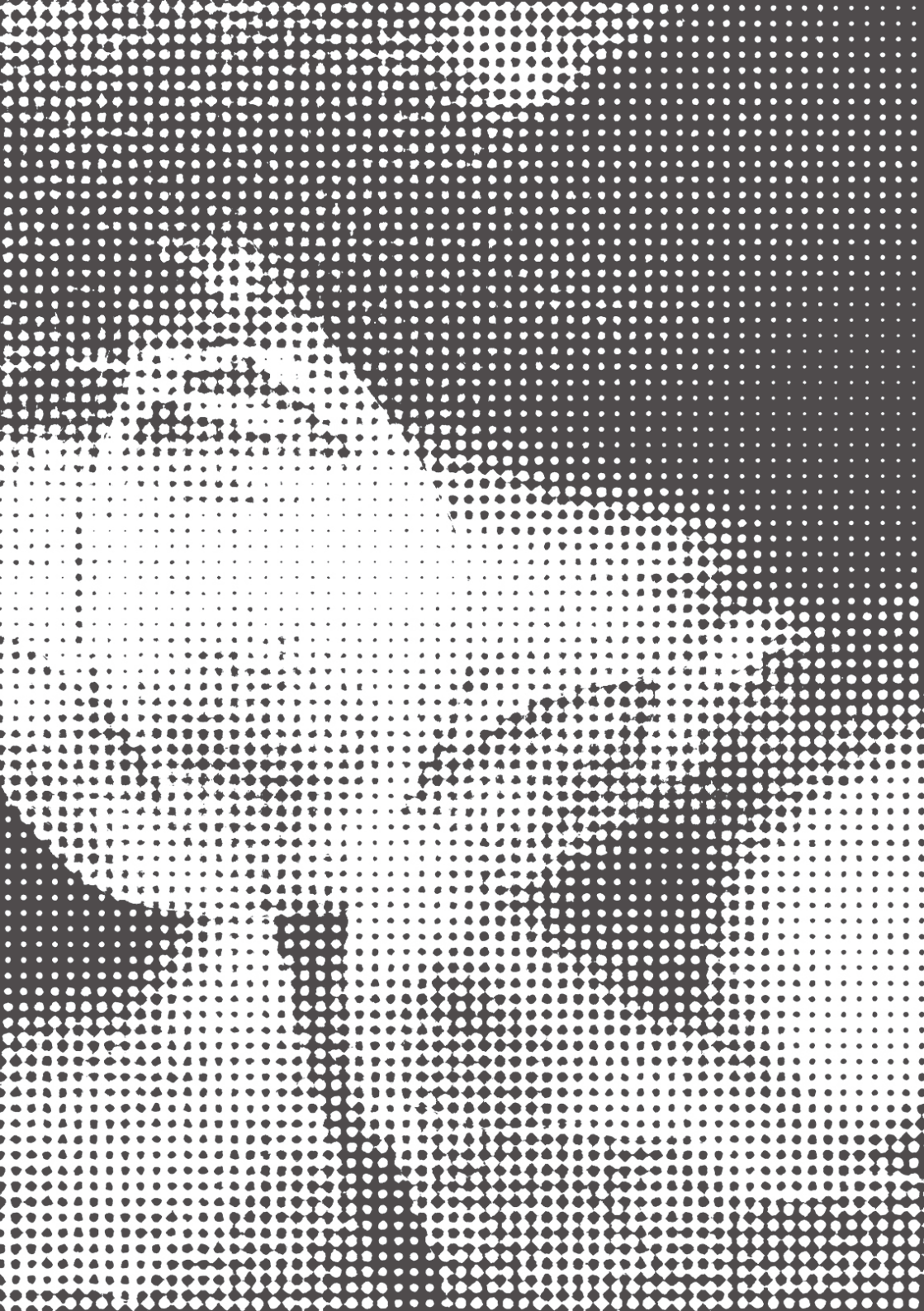
Their subtitle suggests the goal of inspiring. I was inspired by so many things. The ways in which practitioners offered their experience. The commitment for artists to imagine themselves as forging peace. The ever needed example of peacebuilders imagining social change as the artistic process.

We have few books that stitch these worlds together so seamlessly and fewer yet that do so by building the

bridge between the practice, the reflection, and the imagination.

We live in a fragmented world. We need the courage of these navigators, who with compass in hand, share the deep wisdom that peace is possible when the imagination unfolds in the creative act.

- *John Paul Lederach*



EVOLVING PRAXIS THROUGH
A LIVING PROCESS -
A JOURNEY WITH THE HEART AND
SOUL OF WOMEN PEACE MAKERS

EVOLVING PRAXIS THROUGH A LIVING PROCESS - A JOURNEY WITH THE HEART AND SOUL OF WOMEN PEACE MAKERS

Carrie Herbert

Integrative Arts Psychotherapist

Navigating the Nexus of Art and Peace is an inspiring guidebook for peacebuilding practitioners and community artists born out of a deep reflective praxis by Women Peace Makers (WPM). In the context of their work with diverse and marginalised populations in Cambodia and across South East Asia, WPM has been exploring how creativity can facilitate empathic listening and peacebuilding in communities. Their collaborations with artists and consultation with the field of Arts Therapy has brought the arenas of creativity and peacebuilding into a more harmonised dialogue. WPM has been evolving a model that prioritises the needs of communities and their wellbeing over the agenda to make artistic products that promote peace.

The arts are innate in all people regardless of age, gender, race, ability. Embedded into every culture, the arts, when harnessed as tools of creativity, have a powerful healing, expressive and relational building force. The arts become a bridge to not only the inner world of individuals but also to the dynamic landscape between people, families, communities and nations. The arts can weave together a collective narrative that can bear witness to suffering, loss, conflict, and

discrimination - and so transform it into a form where communities can be deeply heard.

The arts create a deeper sense of safety within which reparation, reconciliation and forgiveness can be discovered. While it may not be possible for external judicial reconciliation in certain contexts, the arts in peacebuilding, together with the use of ritual and ceremony, can provide communities with the deepest recognition of the injuries that have occurred. Thus, empowering them in the process out of a victimised stance into the role of creator. As creators, individuals and communities can discover new pathways through even the most complex problems as the arts help us to transcend our suffering and enable us to 'see beyond.' To then discover a meta perspective that can guide us towards more holistic ways of personal, relational, and community wellbeing.

WPM embodies a commitment to evolving consciousness as an organisation as their mode de operandi seeks to 'turn the lights on', reflect deeply, and develop models of best practice. I was engaged as a Creative Arts Therapy Consultant to enable the leadership team to explore their current research question: How can we use artistic processes in peacebuilding in a safer and more effective way?

The experiential process engaged the team in a creative journey into their core values and beliefs at both an interpersonal and collective dimension. To discover what embedded beliefs and values could inform and inspire

the creation of a navigation map in response to their research question. Through meditation and the use of art and reflective writing, the team dived deeply into their own inner worlds whilst expanding this to a larger meta perspective as they considered the vision of WPM. A collective vision began to emerge as reflected on by Suyheang Kry, the Executive Director of WPM:

*“If we can believe we are human
we are connected
we are just the same
if only we can think beyond ourselves
and discover that we have the same deepest desires
for peace and wellbeing for all”*

As the team shared metaphors that took them into the heart and out to a universal perspective of light and collective compassion, they began to share essential values and core beliefs for the work:

*...to create a space that is safe and conducive;
to provide activities that enable people to feel
calm and focused, like meditation and creativity;
to build trust, to ensure people’s voice can
be heard, to connect and deeply listen; self-
ownership; community; empowering; facilitative;
interactive; reflective; fun; engaging - they
remember it; spiritual connection; to open heart
and be able to talk honestly; strong bonding;
inspiration for the audience of the community;
to discover the peace inside ourselves;*

accompaniment - a shared process; self and collective component; process is not linear; the arts process - let's make it a humble re-alignment to the arts process...

As a result of this process they went on to develop the guidelines presented in this book as a framework for practice. They took these guidelines and have already applied them to a powerful community project and so demonstrated the living application of their core values into their work with one of the most marginalised communities in Cambodia.

Principles of Do No Harm, safety, and confidentiality are foundations WPM has established, upon which creative artistic projects can be created that aim to build peace in communities. Peacemaking is all about relationships and the foundational principles of safety, trust, heart-based listening, and empathy need to be embodied by peacemakers and artists.

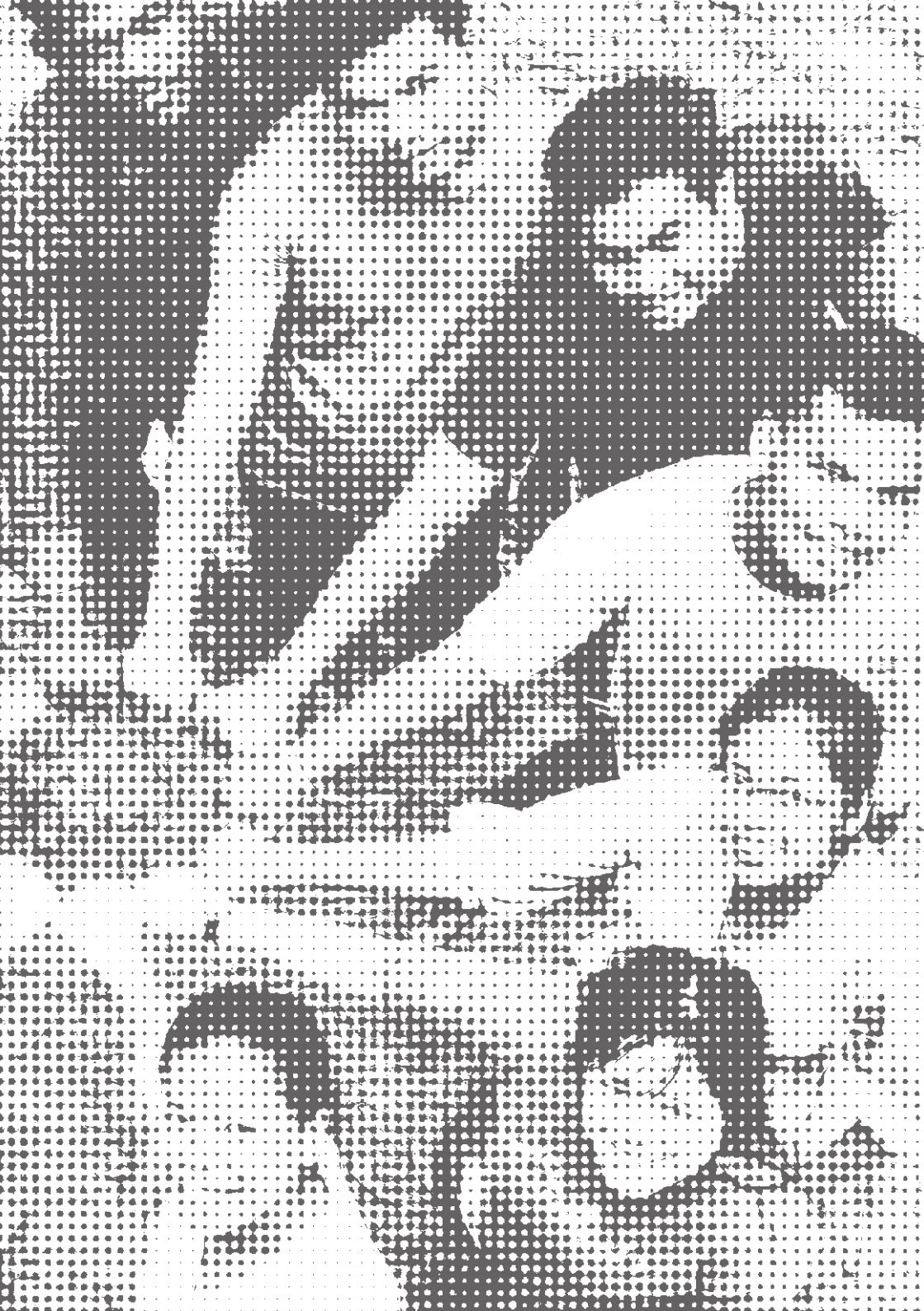
Collaborations with artists to create artistic experiences that are fully owned by communities is essential. Artists become orchestrators of the artistic process and are required to surrender the personal need they may have for a specific outcome or product in favour of being in service to the community.

Safeguarding communities in the presentation of any product or outcome is also a priority for WPM as they consider how these core values are honoured from

beginning to end, from the private to the public spheres, and are empowered to advocate for this to funders and stakeholders - thus removing the agendas that may not be in service of safeguarding a community. Rather than focusing on being provocative or advocating where it is not safe, WPM's desire to sacrificing these agendas in service of what is going to ensure safety of a community remains paramount. As such they maintain a core integrity where values are lived out through every dimension of their programmes and ripple out into the communities they serve.

I invite you to find the right moment and space to take in the words and experiences so generously gifted to the reader throughout this book. Whether you find yourself inclined towards the arts or geared towards peacebuilding; whether you work at a renowned art gallery or out in the fields under the sun with rural communities; whether you are seeking collaboration or looking for individual inspiration - join the conversation, share in the wisdom, and be part of this movement to transform the relationship with the self and the other through imaginativeness, creativity, and the beauty of co-creation.

Carrie Herbert is an Arts Psychotherapist, Clinical Supervisor, Trainer, Celebrant, and Consultant with over 20 years of experience in integrating creativity and mental health directing Ragamuffin International's work in Cambodia and internationally as well as the Founder of Alkimia. Her passion is empowering organisations, teams, and individuals in creativity, well-being, and resilience in post conflict and challenging environments. Herbert is also a photographer, musician and songwriter, with an avid interest in all of the arts for expression, peacebuilding and change and is currently writing a PhD dissertation on Therapeutic Songwriting to navigate trauma and resilience in the context of complex global issues.



INTRODUCTION
TO A JOURNEY OF
COLLABORATION

INTRODUCTION TO A JOURNEY OF COLLABORATION

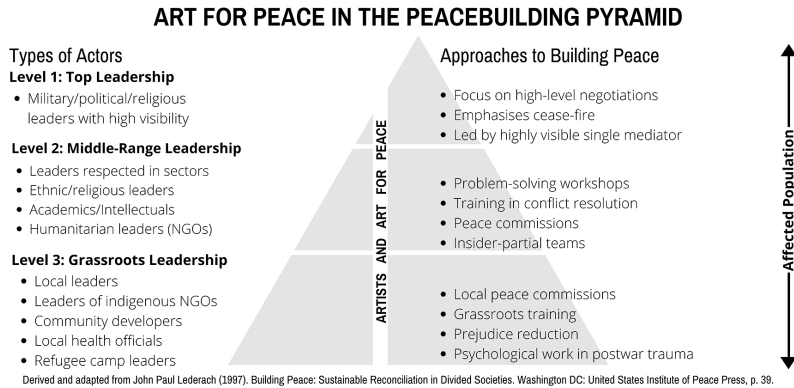
Suyheang Kry

Executive Director, Women Peace Makers

Art can take form into peacebuilding through many mediums. Visual arts, including mask-making, painting, drawing, photography, documentary, sculpture, carving, and numerous other forms, bring an incredible opportunity for people to co-create something tangible, often with their hands. Performing arts, like music and theatre, bring people together, reaching deeply into the soul and transmitting powerful messages that can influence those both involved in production and as audiences. Film and documentary have vast potential to reach viewers far and wide, across the globe without the boundaries of time or space. New media art, using advanced technologies and creative interpretation, can take art consumers far beyond what is possible and mundane, providing for abstruse exploration into dimensions and alternative realities to spark creativity and imagination.

Peacebuilding itself also works through a number of mediums, and through what are often called “channels”. There are countless theories and approaches to apply to conflict at the community level. Peace and conflict academics, practitioners, and policy-makers often ponder and debate whether sustainable peace is built from the top-down or the bottom up. They consider what roles each

actor has to play and what might be the best methods to transform conflict into deeper mutual understanding and non-violent outcomes. The “peacebuilding pyramid” developed by renowned academic, John Paul Lederach, provides one of the most useful forms of analysis on actors and levels of key players in the peacebuilding sphere. Artists and art for peace initiatives make for an interesting incorporation into such a framework.



The pyramid not only shows layers of elite, middle, and grassroots actors involved in peacebuilding, but also the sheer numbers and distribution of actors at each level. The top-level often focuses on negotiated settlement, the middle-range on creating infrastructure for achieving and sustaining peace, and the grassroots on providing on-the-ground interventions, generally for dealing with violence and repairing damaged relationships or transforming conflict dynamics. Art has the potential to transcend all levels of the pyramid. Artists are

found at every layer and can influence actors in different ways.

Women Peace Makers (WPM) is a Cambodia-based organisation working both locally and globally at the intersection of gender and peacebuilding. At the core of its peace and conflict programming, conflict transformation is used as the key approach to working within conflict at any level. Transforming conflict does not mean resolving or getting over it. It more appropriately involves facing conflict and accepting that it is a part of being human. It strives to prevent violent responses to conflict rather than eliminate conflict all together. Why might conflict be a good thing? Having different views, disagreement, or distinct narratives is part of social diversity and influences philosophical thinking and creativity. Agreeing to disagree can often be the key to lasting peace for all sides.

WPM takes a practitioner approach supported by grounded academic theory through growing knowledge that continually develops as we learn more from our own work and the work of others. We focus our efforts at the bottom of the pyramid, localising our interventions to ensure our communities feel connected and part of any processes we initiate. We recognise that local approaches must adapt and flexibly respond to each environment, given that peacebuilding is not just a concept owned by outsiders or the international community, but is localised in society when given its own language and cultural cues.

This is our job, working at the grassroots level, to ensure concepts and approaches are adopted and owned by the communities they serve. Art is the epitome of human creation and imagination. It can break down barriers, language, and perceptions from one culture to the next.

We know that a Do No Harm principle is an essential foundation to any work of this nature. Peacebuilders and artists alike will find common ground in the lessons of well-intentioned work happening around the world. Do No Harm analysis and reflection is not just limited to the planning and final reflection phases of an art for peace initiative, but should be a constant process of dialogue and consideration among the actors throughout. Art is a technical process as much as it is creative, and may often involve tools or methods beyond the scope of a peacebuilder's experience. Likewise, conflict dynamics in a peacebuilding process may be vastly complex and beyond the scope of an artist's intentions in the creation of a work of art.

This publication strives to bring artists and peacebuilders together, to recognise the incredible work already happening, and to engage in the challenges and have the sometimes hard conversations that are necessary. As said in Cambodia, to walk fast is to walk alone, while to walk far you must walk together. By providing real experiences and examples coupled with distinct perspectives of peacebuilders and artists, this publication can be used as a reflective guide to any work with actors ultimately hoping to achieve peace

and foster creativity. This is a living publication, one that can change, evolve, and grow from continued learning and sharing in the field of arts for peace. A practical collaboration document developed together by peacebuilders and artists at WPM to better navigate art for peace project planning is also included. The document proposes core principles to consider when developing an initiative together, and helps to facilitate an important conversation around collaborations forming to tackle conflict and evoke creativity. We invite you to take this document into your own practices, adapt it as needed, and consider important principles in your role and work.

The exploration in art for peacebuilding at WPM comes from experimental approaches partnering with artists and art organisations in Cambodia and around the world. We have trialled and piloted numerous approaches in meaningful collaboration with incredible creatives that have brought their skills and craft to our communities. We have worked with and learnt so much from arts and creativity-based organisations including the Ragamuffin Project Centre for Creative Arts Therapy, Alkimia, Songkites, Bophana Audiovisual Resource Center, Peace Mask Project in Japan, Peace Boat, the School of Slow Media, and Cambodia Living Arts. Our funding partners have supported our expansion into creative peacebuilding, providing resources for numerous initiatives that bring art into peace activities. The Niwano Peace Foundation and Pangea Giving are pillars of the deep reflection

laid out in this publication, allowing us to share our experiences and bring our perspectives to the public. We have also received generous funding to use artistic approaches in our work from GIZ Civil Peace Service, the Toyota Foundation, Danmission, the Mennonite Central Committee, and the Japan Foundation. We have relied heavily on the expertise, experience, and guidance of our advising “peacebuilding artists” - or “artistic peacebuilders” - Dona Park, Carrie Herbert, and María Antonia Pérez. Each one of them intersects the nexus of art and peace and they serve as fundamental connectors to bring artists and peacebuilders closer together, to better understand each other, and to serve our communities and ourselves through thoughtful intentions and creativity.

Collaboration begins with a common goal. A healthy and fruitful collaborative effort will bring organisations and people together, provide a space for learning from each other, and open up new channels for communication and exploration. The potential for peacebuilders and artists is boundless, only limited by the extent to which our minds allow us to imagine creatively.

Suyheang Kry is the executive director of Women Peace Makers (WPM), a Cambodia-based non-governmental organisation (NGO) that works on issues of gender and peacebuilding in Asia. Born and raised in a conservative Chinese-Cambodian family in the post-conflict context, she has witnessed and understood the pressure of traditional gender norms on women and girls in the country. Kry is an expert in gender, mediation, conflict transformation, and transitional justice and holds a Master's Degree in Peace and Conflict Studies from the University of Massachusetts Lowell, USA.



NO NO HARM
HOW AID CAN SUPPORT
PEACE OR WAR

D O N O H A R M

DO NO HARM

We know that any intervention aiming to engage parties in a conflict enters into the dynamics of the conflict itself. As well-intentioned as any peacebuilding activity or creation of a work of art may be, there is always great potential to do harm. Even initiatives outside the realm of peace and conflict may negatively impact dynamics among different groups in a community.

Do No Harm¹ is a renowned international tool for conflict sensitivity. It requires practitioners and project planners to understand the context, the interaction between the intervention and the context, and act on the positive impact rather than amplify the potential negative impact.

Before planning any project, initiative, or collaborative work, let us consider how our potential art for peace contribution may interact with those we are setting out to engage.²

1 Mary B. Anderson (1999). *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace - Or War*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

2 The following section explores art for peace initiatives in the context of a Do No Harm framework laid out in practical terms contextualised in the work of Marshall Wallace (2015). *From Principle to Practice: A User's Guide to Do No Harm*. Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Project: <https://www.cdacollaborative.org/publication/from-principle-to-practice-a-users-guide-to-do-no-harm/>

1.

Interventions become part of the context.

Whenever an intervention of any sort enters a context, it becomes part of the context. One of the shared motivations that often inspire both peacebuilders and artists alike is change. You can very frequently find idealism among both groups, and the word “changemaker” can provoke a sense of purpose and excitement. This can be a positive force! Intended and unintended impacts may arise. Given that we begin any intervention hoping to aspire for positive change, we consequently enter the context and become one of the actors involved. Particularly in conflict settings, this can be extraordinarily complex, even for the most well-intentioned peacebuilders and artists joining forces to engage communities. Collaborators must come together to begin any initiative with a context analysis to understand all the actors and the dynamics in a conflict setting. It is just as important for the artist as it is for the peacebuilder to understand the full context as much as possible. It is likewise essential to recognise whether one is acting as an 'insider' or an 'outsider' within the conflict at hand.

2.

*Contexts are characterised
by dividers and connectors.*

Sometimes known as “realities”, the driving forces of social dynamics include both dividers and connectors. Dividers are often the sources of tension while connectors can be already existing local capacities for peace. Art in itself can already be a natural connecting element in society or among different groups. For a peacebuilder, art can initially be perceived as a connector, an activity that might connect people and bring them together even in spite of differences or conflict. Understanding the issues, factors, or elements in societies that might divide or connect people is crucial to planning any art for peacebuilding activity.

3.

*Interventions interact
with dividers and connectors.*

Any intervention, including an art for peacebuilding initiative, will engage with and impact dividers and connectors, either making them better or worse in the process. It is essential to consider potential negative impacts from the onset. Negative impacts can result both from making dividers worse and raising tensions, or reducing connectors and influencing the ability to mitigate conflict. Art for peacebuilding initiatives need to acknowledge how both the process and the products of any planned intervention may affect dynamics among different groups, particularly in conflict contexts. In artistic environments where conflict may positively fuel creativity, it is imperative to prepare how dividers may be managed from start to finish, and how connectors will be nourished to the final stage. Similarly, artists do not necessarily have to feel admonished to introduce conflict into the artistic process, since many conflict transformation-focused peacebuilders welcome engaging conflict and transforming relationships, interests, discourses, and even the very core of a society that perpetuates

violence.³ The most important factor is that artists and peacebuilders work together to consider how the art for peace intervention will interact with dividers and connectors, and plan for creative ways to ensure that activities and processes can inject positive contributions to longer-term outcomes.

3 Hugh Miall (2004). Conflict Transformation: A Multi-Dimensional Task. Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management: https://www.berghof-foundation.org/fileadmin/redaktion/Publications/Handbook/Articles/miall_handbook.pdf

4.

Actions and behaviours have consequences, which create impacts.

Interventions can bring resources that are applied in the context. These resources can be financial or human, and affect dynamics within any conflict or setting. How intervention actors behave also produces messages to everyone involved. Mindsets can be connecting or dividing, and communicate individual values that affect the entire group. Most art for peace interventions will involve both financial and human resources, including funds for implementation, supplies, logistics, and exhibition. They will often bring in other people, sometimes outsiders, such as peacebuilding practitioners and artists with their own expertise. How these resources are managed, who has access to them, and the power dynamics they can result in all need to be considered from a Do No Harm perspective. The messages from the people involved, both insiders and outsiders alike, will contribute to impacts that can be attributed to the intervention and the activities involved with it. Safety must be at the forefront of all interventions as it is precisely the actions and behaviours that may lead to unintended

consequences, that can also result in danger or harm. Art for peace work can involve dealing with personal trauma or group dynamics in delicate ways. It is vital to create safe spaces and continually monitor actors and participants that are using creative approaches to work through conflict. Likewise, any peacebuilders and artists involved in planning and implementation are not excluded from such consideration. Self-care and group support are important components in work of this nature as people delve deeper into themselves and with others through creativity and transformative approaches.

5.

The details of interventions matter.

Even before an intervention begins, choices are made at every level. As the intervention is carried out, choices continue to be made, and can change at any time. The planners decide who to work with, where and when to intervene, and how to implement. These choices make up the details of an intervention and impact how everything will affect an art for peacebuilding initiative. It is essential to ensure flexibility throughout any peacebuilding or creative process. In order to truly consider the details of an intervention, Do No Harm users often employ tools for Critical Detail Mapping (CDM), to seriously consider how choices are made, many of which can be implicit or unspoken. In the process of peacebuilder and artist collaboration, a discussion at any stage of an intervention can shed light on how an art for peace initiative is progressing based on the details that stem from choices. One way to frame such a conversation is referred to as the “Seven Elements of Circumstance”, which can map out an intervention and its planning decisions. This entails asking Why? Where? What? When?

With whom? By Whom? and How? By bringing this level of analysis to the preparation stage of an art for peace initiative, it can later provide a record of how choices were made from the beginning, and provide the basis for future change at a later stage.

6.

There are always options.

Do No Harm grounds people in the acknowledgement of imperfection and the multitude of options that exist in any given situation. Experience shows that devising different options happens better in teams. Likewise, options chosen and decisions made can always be changed. There is no such thing as a static project or an irreversible initiative, and any thinking otherwise should be questioned at once. Any work that could potentially cause harm must be changed. If an art for peace initiative is supporting dividers or thwarting connectors, actors involved need to change course. More options should be generated. Acknowledgement of harm should be recognised and communicated. Peacebuilders and artists must have an understanding that whenever an actor presents evidence of harm, change must be the top priority. This is the essence of any intervention that involves accompanying a community with peacebuilding and artistic approaches.



A PEACEBUILDER
LOOKING TO
LEVERAGE THE ARTS

A P E A C E B U I L D E R L O O K I N G T O L E V E R A G E T H E A R T S

Raymond Hyma

Co-developer of Facilitative Listening Design

“By peace, we mean the capacity to transform conflicts with empathy, without violence, and creatively - a never-ending process.”

- Johan Galtung, renowned scholar and often considered the “father of peace studies”⁴

Peacebuilding requires creativity, whether or not choosing to embark upon an artistic approach. Anyone working in the peace and conflict field will be familiar with the often employed term “protracted conflict”. This is frequently used when the reality of a conflict reaches a stage that feels nearly impossible to overcome. Such a conflict might span over decades, over multiple generations, and even over centuries, pitting different groups against one another. A first instinct for one group might be war or forced dominance over another

⁴ Academically trained as an artist, professionally to become one of the world’s foremost peace and conflict scholars, Johan Galtung’s work is essential for peacebuilders and artists, especially in the sphere of conflict transformation. Of particular interest to those interested in art for peace collaboration, see Johan Galtung (1996). *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*. London: Sage Publications.

group. Negotiation, dialogue, and mediation might be the instincts for outsiders or for those in a conflict that are more versed to collaborative approaches. Nearly any peacebuilder working locally or globally from the inside or the outside will recognise that at some point, it will be necessary to be creative to get “foes” to engage in a meaningful process to transform conflict.

Peacebuilding branches into many directions based on age-old philosophies and wisdom. It is often seen as a way to tackle injustices in a non-violent way. In general, peacebuilding differs from peacemaking or conflict resolution by striving to build peace before a violent conflict, or after one has taken place. Root causes are often considered in peacebuilding, and conflict itself is not necessarily seen as bad, but as a natural phenomenon whenever people are in contact with each other. Often, it is the result of conflict, namely violent interactions, that are seen as the focus of prevention in peacebuilding interventions.

Art is a natural fit into peacebuilding thinking. Particularly for those working in conflict transformation, seeking a change from negative destructive conflict to one of positive constructive conflict, the idea of artistic approaches offers hopeful opportunities. As a product, art is often seen as a wondrous expression of human imagination. Whether that is visual, such as in the form of painting or sculpture, media-related in terms of film or photography, or audio like music and song, peacebuilders of any artistic inclination can readily

appreciate the idea of human creativity and skill. These elements are most often seen as key requirements in overcoming intractable conflict.

When considering an artistic approach in a peacebuilding intervention, a peacebuilder may be enticed by the possibility of the process of any community-based conceptual art practice as a dialogue tool. If communities can contribute to creating something of artistic value, opportunity abounds for group cohesiveness, shared goals, and the space to express oneself. It can also present the potential for publicly highlighting issues, especially in terms of awareness of negative sentiment, discrimination, or persisting stereotypes that affect people's lives. An art exhibition might allow for the discussion of an issue that might not ordinarily be easily talked about at a public level.

EXCITING OPPORTUNITIES

A peacebuilder working within the international organisation or non-profit realm of peace and conflict who may not consider themselves an artist, or with little to no experience working in the arts, will often find the idea of an artistic approach novel and exciting. Plundering through grant proposals, logframes, semester reporting, publications, and project communications, the possibility of an artistic injection into ongoing conflict dynamics in a project setting can bring excitement and intrigue to a peacebuilder.

For those working in peacebuilding, there are real recognised opportunities that art-based interventions can bring to the field. Concepts that peacebuilders are often very familiar with can be enhanced by art and activities promoting artistic expression.⁵

Experiencing “the Other”

Art forms, particularly performing arts, can provide the rare opportunity for a participant to experience the viewpoints of others, including those from opposing sides of conflict. Many approaches involve participants actively and put them at the centre of a character’s world; a task that many working in the field of psychology or wishing to invoke compassion or empathy strive to accomplish. As many peacebuilders struggle to put conflict actors “in the shoes” of the other, many forms of drama, role play, theatre, and media-based acting can directly transplant one person into the mind of another. This can directly lead to the cultivation of empathy or a space for stronger mutual understanding that goes beyond constructed narratives. It breaks down barriers and can foster stronger positions for later dialogue.

Distancing

Art approaches treated as an external activity from

5 The opportunities for people to gain real skills that are particularly important in a peacebuilding context are established in Marian Liebmann (1996). *Arts Approaches to Conflict*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. Pp 2-3.

traditional trajectories of peacebuilding, negotiation, mediation, and dialogue, can take conflict actors out of conflict resolution and provide time to distance themselves from many of the dynamics at play. Art may start as neutral, personal, and individualised, rather than group-based. Art processes can create spaces of escape and open opportunities for creativity and new perspectives that can subsequently foster ideas to overcome broader issues in conflict.

Parallel lives

Most art forms allow people to explore alternative ways of being that go beyond the boundaries of what they know to be everyday life. This can open people's minds to alternative ways of thinking that might never be discovered or considered before. Whether it is painting, sculpture, drama, dance, or music, all forms can go into a frame of reference that parallels what the artist experiences in their life.

Holistic personal reflection

In general, any involvement in the arts engages the whole person to express themselves from the heart. This can be from the point of view of producing or appreciating art, and is a space for deep self-reflection. For transformative peacebuilding or conflict transformation, understanding one's self prior to understanding conflict between multiple parties can be the foundation for consensus-building or dialogue. Being able to clearly articulate one's own perceptions, and having the ability

to understand the basis of those perceptions, can greatly contribute in conveying one side of any conflict. It can also push for acknowledging personal change needed to resolve conflicts and the potential for every actor to take some degree of responsibility in transforming conflicts over the longer term.

Group dynamics and teamwork

Group art provides further opportunity for cooperation and collaboration across differences. For any peacebuilding intervention, the simple act of bringing different sides of a conflict together to accomplish any mutual task is a major accomplishment. Some peacebuilders leverage outdoor camping and experiential learning to do this. Others foster collaboration around community research, for example. Similarly, art activities that get conflict actors together to produce something or engage in a process together can have an impact on the group, and can serve as a 'tangible forum' to teach people how to work together to resolve conflict.

Alternative communication skills

For people in conflict with themselves or with others, communication can be an enormous barrier in directly addressing issues. Verbal communication is a particular focus whether engaging in negotiation, mediation, dialogue, or even individualised therapy. Art approaches can often help people develop better communication skills, working with abstract concepts and perceptions while practising to convey and communicate that with

others. Whether working in a group and providing a space of distinct ideas and creative flows, or elaborating on a personal work of art to an audience for the first time, there are many opportunities to help people improve communication.

PERPETUAL PEACEBUILDING PERCEPTIONS

The professional peacebuilder can relish in a relatively prized career or role that generally evokes positive recognition for noble contribution to conflicts around the world. It is a working environment that requires deep expertise, constant learning and evolving, and the ability to embrace changes and complex actors. The art world, however, may prove to be an unfamiliar place. Artists may have very different priorities. There may seem to be a clash of values between peacebuilding concepts for groups and artistic practices for individuals or group artists.

Lack of understanding of the arts

For the most part, many peacebuilders and peacebuilding organisations have a limited understanding of art. Although there are exceptions, particularly among peacebuilding artists, the general field of peacebuilding often places art or creative peacebuilding as an activity rather than a philosophy or approach to conflict resolution or transformation. For peacebuilders, art can be seen as a novelty or as an innovative idea to contribute to a

larger process. However, art often does not fit into the same programme management cycles that a peacebuilding intervention might. It can often be far more complex than peacebuilders initially perceive.

Unfamiliar engagement with artists and art-based civil society

For peacebuilders, the art world can be unfamiliar. Many organisations working in conflict often do not have the in-house expertise or experience working with artists or art organisations. This can lead to miscommunication, misunderstanding, and even frustration in navigating the imaginative or technical context based on human agency or creation.

Priority of peace over artistic expression

Though the conditions for peace may vary depending on subscription to a particular theory of peacebuilding, the ultimate goal for peace is shared among peacebuilders. Most often, peace is desired at all costs. Art can be uncomfortable for a peacebuilder with a very clear goal. Art processes can involve deep conflict within themselves. They can include elements of expression that are so individual or right-side-oriented in the brain⁶, non-artists may be wholly unable to relate to

6 The right side of the brain is responsible for functions such as art awareness, creativity, imagination, intuition, holistic thought, music awareness, and 3-D forms. The left side of the brain includes functions such as analytic thought, logic, language, reasoning, science and maths, and number skills.

them, and even fear them. It may be completely impossible to control an artistic process.

Difficulty to balance individual recognition over community needs

Most peacebuilders will feel more comfortable in community-focused art initiatives than those featuring established artists who intend to show their own work. There is a delicate balance between recognising the individual artistic work of someone who does this for a living or is professionally viewed as an artist versus displaying the art of community residents who have worked through an artistic process. Both have merits in the peacebuilding context, and they do not need to be mutually exclusive.

Many peace practitioners would aptly point out that peacebuilding itself is an art unto its own. Like a delicate musical piece, every sound must be played in harmony to produce a successful song. Like a painting, each stroke matters and adds something to the masterpiece. Like a performance, every detail at the centre stage and in the background counts. Everyone can own or produce art. It is important, however, to acknowledge that artists bring another dimension into the work. Professional and established artists are vastly different from amateur artists or art activities being led by non-artists. In every society, at every point in time, artists have made up an essential and unique group. Artists have been revered and celebrated, as well as reviled and feared.



ART FOR ~~PEACE~~ WAR?

Peacebuilders instinctively explore conflict through amateur art

A group of inter-ethnic peacebuilders came together in Cambodia to discuss different points of view and their own perspectives on issues of history, culture, and nationalism. The planning team had experienced many challenges in getting members of this group to really open their hearts and minds to diverse narratives and decided to try and get creative. The facilitators started a day's session off by telling the peacebuilding participants that the morning would be an art class. Although there was no artist or resource person to provide guidance,

everyone was given a terracotta clay pot for plants and a set of paints and paintbrushes. They were asked to paint something from within themselves, to transplant those feelings and images on their pot. The participants loved the activity, in what seemed like a well-needed break from the tension that had taken place the day before. They painted beautiful designs and images on the pots and let them dry.

During their lunch break, planners went in and broke their artwork! They smashed their jars and left the shattered pieces throughout the room. What followed was profound. When the participants came back, they were shocked. Some experienced deep anger, others cried, some detached themselves from everyone, and some even laughed and thought it was amusing. Together, the group explored their reactive feelings and decided to put the pieces together and re-paint them. Through the use of amateur art production, the young peacebuilders went through a deep experiential learning process to examine inner conflict and group dynamics in a sense of “war”. They then shifted to feelings of reconstruction and rebuilding together. Despite the context, an artistic product was created and participants appreciated their repaired art even more than the first version. Their jars are now displayed in different peace and conflict settings and are used as an example to discuss broader issues of peacebuilding processes in many workshops today!

Deciding to collaborate on a peacebuilding intervention with an artist will bring in a very unique component. It will also create challenges, likely through different focuses and values. Some are easy to predict, others are more complex and may not be understood until an issue emerges. Any peacebuilder can benefit from thinking about how they interact with art. Sharing experience and perceptions as an art consumer first before taking an artist into the heart of conflict and peacebuilding might be one way to initiate a collaboration that could go further than ever imagined.

Raymond Hyma is Canadian peacebuilder who has spent much of his career working in Cambodia, as well as throughout Asia and Latin America. A practitioner of conflict transformation approaches, he is the co-developer of Facilitative Listening Design, an information-gathering methodology that directly involves community in all stages of action research planning and implementation to explore underlying conflict and negative sentiment. Hyma holds a Master's Degree in International Relations from the Universidad del Salvador in Argentina and is a two-time Rotary Peace Fellow awardee.



AN ARTIST
ENTERING
THE WORLD OF
PEACE AND CONFLICT

AN ARTIST ENTERING THE WORLD OF PEACE AND CONFLICT

Dona Park, Artist

Identity: Resident Alien

It is fundamental to understand the upbringing that constantly forms an artist's ethos and way of life- to understand how they became who they were. Although text rarely tells the whole picture of a person's development, it offers one perspective to better understand not only the artist themselves, but the work that they produce. Reading and understanding the history of an artist contextualises who they are, what their art is about, why they tell their stories, what images they recreate, and what their subliminal message is.

Travel, cultural exchanges and excursions are a turning point or a milestone for many artists around the world. Despite the opportunities where there could be an artistic, cultural exchange between people of different countries, the general art world has been far from peacemaking. Celebrated for centuries, art has been far often eurocentric, where most artists appropriate the "exotic other"- the world beyond the Western Hemisphere. Pablo Picasso painted *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. M.)*, heavily influenced by African tribal masks. Japonisme remained popular in the late 19th century, with artists such

Vincent Van Gogh and Mary Cassatt emulating the Japanese print style. Paul Poiret's blatant exoticism trademarked the harem pant, referring to Middle Eastern fashions but also grossly misrepresenting traditional pants with the symbolism of harems. Rarely, do we hear about artists beyond the borders of the continent of Europe, given the exception of ancient artifacts.

In the modern context, the art world continues to evolve as more and more artists, from far beyond the Western Hemisphere, beyond the palaces of the aristocrats and the renown French Salon, enter the scene and challenge misrepresentation of their culture and identity. More stories are being told by artists, bringing in formerly unspoken themes. Artists share new and different perspectives and offer their testament of humanity. While the old masters remain revered for their mind boggling professional skill and patience, the artists of today too, continue to challenge public thought with their unconventional versatility and ideas. Now, artists are bringing to the limelight stories that had been told for centuries in their own communities; these ideas should not even be considered 'unconventional.' Rather, it is exceptional and essential.

The responsibility of an artist extends further than the paintbrush, and beyond the moment that varnish dries on the canvas. What happens and what does it mean for an artist to identify as marginalised? Does the artwork that the artist creates have purpose and cause beyond what is visually there? What is the reality and stories

untold that they are interpreting and creating? Frida Kahlo once said, “They thought I was a Surrealist, but I wasn’t. I never painted dreams. I painted my own reality.”

As the artist works, they should also form their philosophy and ethos. They too, will be confronted with many power dynamics and be challenged with the realities of gender, ethnicity, and race. The reality of equality or how far societies are from achieving human equity and rights delivers a tension that can stimulate and suffocate the artist. Despite this, artists can learn from their predecessors and be astounded by the perseverance and integrity of the activists, writers, poets, scholars, lawyers, and so forth, that came through to share their philosophy, prayers, torment, ideas, and encouragement. When confronted with such knowledge, the artist can choose to continue to learn and create.

Renowned astronomer Carl Sagan said in his acclaimed Pale Blue Dot quote, “.... There is perhaps no better demonstration of the folly of human conceits than this distant image of our tiny world. To me, it underscores our responsibility to deal more kindly with one another, and to preserve and cherish the pale blue dot, the only home we’ve ever known.” Although this is only a small excerpt of Sagan’s monologue, the message is simple and humbling. It is a theme that also applies to the larger picture of living, a world where the artist too, can become aware of themselves and the humanity that too, exists in between the margins.

Everyone lives on this tiny, blue planet that has been graciously shared with us in this small world teeming with poverty, death, and injustice. Artists strive to learn to live within the tension in spite of the reality while creating beauty which in turn, continues to preserve our humanity.

Storyteller

The process of creating is like breathing. It is refreshing and vital, coming up from the water, close to drowning. It can also be very mundane and difficult, stuffy like polluted air that depletes our energy. Artists are brave. They face an ongoing debate in their consciousness juggling money, recognition, comparison, self-worth. And yet, artists still continue to create, just as everyone continues to breathe.

The artist is a storyteller. They are a storyteller the moment their pen hits the paper, brush on canvas, and in the most contemporary sense, a digital pencil to a tablet. Artists carry the ability to fragment their soul to a physical medium, through visual expression. Creativity is borne out of sensitivity, a word easily dismissed as a burdensome trait.

Yet this sensitivity is what sustains an artist's creativity. To notice the details, to feel the air from the fingers to the toes, to breathe in all the different scents that surround the world. How do artists understand the world, the natural world and the people

within it, and the energetic buzz that they strive to create, without this? Without it, how do artists aim to tell a different perspective?

Art is also a powerful tool for storytelling, a powerful medium that can be transformed into many things; a weapon, a bandage, a love poem, a time capsule, or just maybe, just maybe, something decorative to brighten a dull wall. It is not a moving image- it allows the viewer to have an important, lasting impression and gives time for interpretation and that interpretation is in part, up to the creator and the viewer. When an artist creates an art piece, success is relative. They could be fascinated and consider it a success when the audience feels and offers their own interpretation. It is beautiful to see the viewer reflect on an artwork like a mirror; more often than not, their response is merely a reflection of their own worldviews. Are artists not supposed to incite feelings? It is not always about happiness and butterflies, but through the art, artists create a safe space for reaction: anger, frustration, resentment, melancholy, desperation, devastation, comfort, fondness, laughter, joy, to list a few of the very human, complicated emotions.

Community vs Self

If an artist works with a community or/and with different peacebuilding organisations, it is necessary to distinguish what is community art and individual art. This section is most applicable to artists without or

minimal experience with community art. Inevitably, if an artist is creating their art piece in partnership with a community, there can be tension between ownership, the creation process, outcome, and final presentation. Both parties must communicate and define their needs so that their expectations are the same.

When artists step into the peacebuilding world, the expectations, from professional to cultural, are quite different. By asking clarifying questions, they can have a better sense in what space they are entering.

Community art requires a different mindset where the focus of the process centres around the artist, peacebuilder, and other participants. The artist can serve as a guide, while being mindful of the stories of the other collaborators. Frankly, it is not an easy task, particularly as the project can question the role of the artist. The artist is encouraged to listen and interpret the community and the community's stories. Here are two possible scenarios: does the artist act as a medium for the community or does the community participate in the creation process? If it is the first, the artist may become more of a tool and question how much of their own interpretation, integrity, and style become compromised. For the latter, then the artist's role is less of the creator but a guide.

These questions arise and the process of community art requires communication and flexibility for both parties, as the artist, peacebuilder, and the participating

community come from different backgrounds. Artists can be particular about their own style and practice, and vice versa, the community may not understand the artist's methods or vision. In a situation where communication is difficult, an intermediary (who could be the peacebuilder or an external figure) who understands both sides should be invited to communicate the artist's needs to the community and communicate the community's needs to the artist.

Cultural sensitivity

As artists step into the peacebuilding world, the power dynamics are amplified versus what they may find back home in their studio. When working with peacebuilders and communities, artists must seek to understand the perspective of power, privilege and difference.⁷ Each individual, artist and peacebuilder, entering a peace and conflict environment must understand the social dynamics they carry in order to maintain a balance in power dynamics.

Consider these different dynamics when an artist works with a community in a different country. The artist is a foreigner, does not speak the language fluently, and is invited into a space where strangers seldom enter. They may feel isolated and different and may react in a variety of ways.

⁷ Reference to "Power, Privilege, and Difference." Allan G. Johnson. McGraw-Hill Education, 2005. In this guidebook, Johnson articulately explains and helps readers view their own privileges and their impact on others.

1. What does it mean for an artist to work with a peacebuilder or even other artists from different traditions, cultures, and ways of working?
2. How will the artist communicate in the peacebuilding world? What languages are being used?
3. In this new environment, how and who will accommodate the artist's needs?

Questions that may arise for the artist are:

1. Culturally, it is overwhelming to take in a new environment. How will the artist cope and understand their own culture shock?
2. Some materials are not readily available and are mandatory for the project. What does the artist do or who should they contact?
3. How important is the artwork to the peacebuilder and the community? How does the artist explain the significance, or the sacredness of an art piece?

Out of their comfort zone, the artist will grapple with these factors. In the peacebuilding world or conflict areas, the silence of an empty art studio is suddenly transformed into a tornado of senses. As the artist

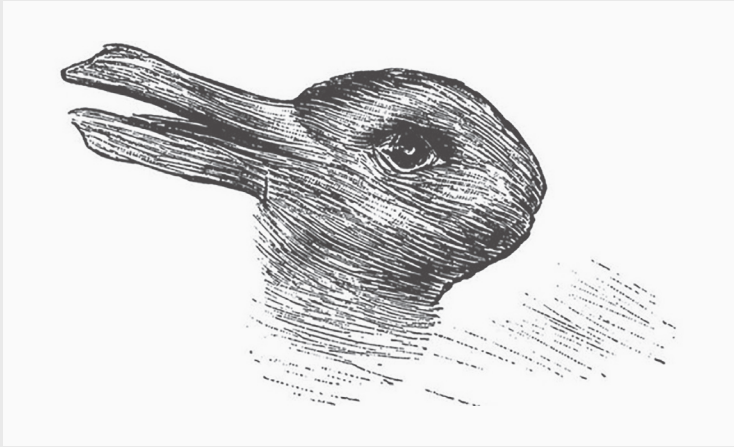
witnesses their own sensitivity grow from the conflict, one key concept for artists to remember is how to become an ethical storyteller while preserving their own artistic integrity.

The artist learns to carve out their space amidst conflict and pressure and becomes an observer in these types of settings. Rather than succumbing to the new environment, the artist can enter the environment as an observer and a listener. Just as the peacebuilder will ask questions to the artist, the artist continually asks questions to better understand their situation. The role of peacebuilder is integral in offering assistance to the artist to adjust and understand the cultural difference; the peacebuilder is not only a translator, they act as a cultural bridge for the artist.

Artwork is REAL Work

More often than not, artists continue to struggle in defining their work as a “real” profession. With creative work, there is a false assumption that art is effortless. “Even a child could paint that!” one might exclaim, hands thrown up in exasperation. To put an end to this assumption, is this one mythical, whimsical story starring Picasso and the artists’ fan.

There’s a legend about a woman who asked Picasso to draw something for her on a napkin. Picasso scribbled a dove in his Picasso-esque surprise on a napkin, and to the fan’s surprise, he replied, “That will be \$10,000”.



THINGS AREN'T ALWAYS AS THEY SEEM

*Artists facilitate self-reflection on
perceptions and reality*

What do you see when you look into this image? A duck? A rabbit? Do you see it differently if you tilt your head or turn the page to the side? This image was created by Polish-born American illustrative artist Joseph Jastrow, who also was a psychologist and published it in 1892. It was a sketch that would later become internationally recognised and show the origins of art involving ambiguous images or reversible figures. Jastrow used this image to provoke in consciousness the difference between perception and interpretation. Such a sketch also

pushed viewers to realise the relationship between choice and forced reality, since if you only saw one image, you saw the second one after you were told.

Artists have pushed their viewers and audiences to go beyond seeing the world from their own limited points of perception for centuries. They do this through visual arts that have deep underlying symbolism or demonstrate illusion, through performance arts that can bring messages about values and society, and through film and documentary that may humanise others who are often invisible or seen as “the other” in society. Not unlike a lot of peacebuilding work using conflict transformation approaches, many artists are pushing everyday people to look at alternative narratives and engage with unfamiliar people and unknown places. Artists can provide peacebuilders, and those working in conflict dynamics, with multi-dimensional perspectives that can prove to be a natural fit for not only bringing people together, but also providing the space and tools for difficult conversations or issues that often impede contact between opposing actors.

“But you did that in thirty seconds,” the astonished woman replied.

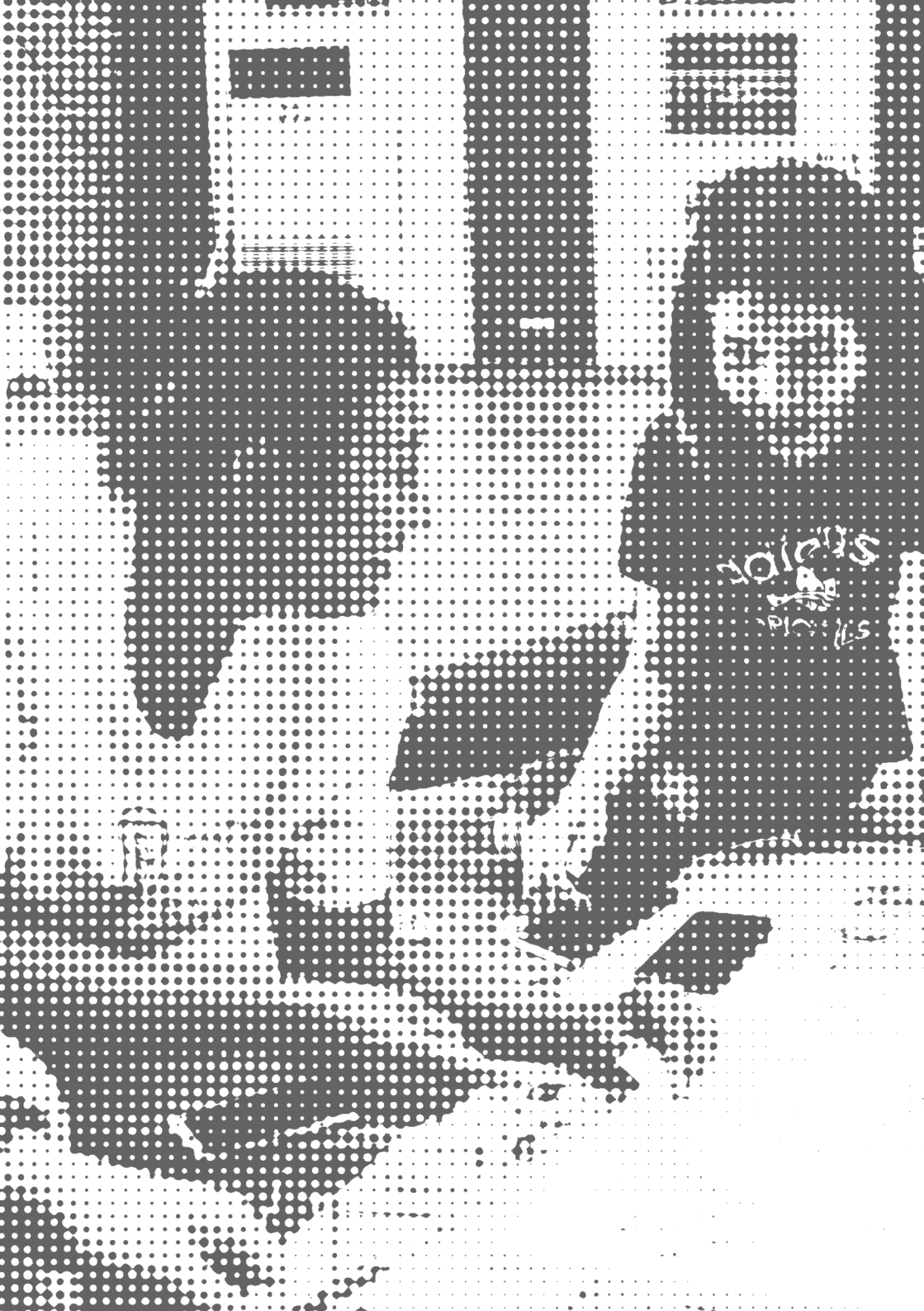
One of the most prolific street artists of the 21st century, an artist going by the pseudonym JR, has labeled himself as an “Artist until I find a real job,” on Instagram. Although he wrote this statement tongue

in cheek, it is important to recognise that creative occupations are “real jobs.”

So how is art not a real job? Maybe the definition of a real job consists of regular 40 hour week days, a supervisor and boss, or having consistent salaried pay. There are many events and opportunities that contest the fact that the occupation of an artist is not a real one, paid minimally or not, and often the transaction is made with the promise of future pay or exposure. Exposure, does not pay the bills.

Although social stigma towards creatives is an age old story, it is a story that artists strive to change. Being a creative requires education, experience, and immense self-discipline to practice, practice, and practice. Whether it is through post secondary education of the arts (with a massive price tag) or through endless nights of freelance work, artists are indeed working, at times spending beyond the 8am to 5pm hours that many other occupations require. The creative field is as valid as any other profession and exists in so many facets that shape our culture and society. The picture on the wall, the design of a house, the fact that the default Times New Roman font exists in each computer, to the colours of a country’s flag- these are only a few examples to say that art lives and breathes around us. The creators, the artists, the creatives -be they anonymous or not- pursued the task to research, manually create and present these artifacts that take part in our lives.

Dona Park is an Korean Canadian illustrator and graphic designer living in Vancouver, Canada who has worked intensively on art for peacebuilding initiatives in Cambodia. She pulls inspiration from personal experience to her cross cultural experiences, travels, and living abroad, particularly interacting with nature and women from all over the world. Most of Park's illustrations reflect small bittersweet moments of her 20s, moments women around the world can perhaps empathise with and women just being themselves. Whether it is heartbreak, unexpected periods, or self-evaluation of our stretch marks, Park enjoys exploring her own effervescent and ephemeral youth.



MISPERCEIVING TENSIONS
AS BARRIERS IN ART
FOR PEACE COLLABORATION

MISPERCEIVING TENSIONS AS BARRIERS IN ART FOR PEACE COLLABORATION

Dona Park and Raymond Hyma

Tensions can be goals or objectives that appear to be in conflict with each other. They are often felt strongly when values seem to collide. In the case of artists and peacebuilders, like in any collaborative effort, tensions are bound to surface. As different goals, priorities, and perspectives cross, there is no doubt that serious questions will arise, particularly when involving communities.

Tensions do not need to be seen as barriers in art for peace collaboration. In fact, there is often much more common ground than disagreement. It is essential to recognise that artists and peacebuilders have their own expertise. At the same time, they are both often able to adapt to the context of the other actor. Artists can understand conflict in nuanced and profound ways. For example, an artist might employ conflict as a tool in their work. They might create elements of contradiction in their artwork to foster irony or even tension, to push the boundaries on controversy or dividing issues. Peacebuilders also can also work in the arts. For professionals who are tasked with skills in adapting and shifting in complex conflict dynamics, creativity is not a foreign concept in finding out-of-the-box ways

to facilitate dialogue, mediation, or even explore one's own inner conflict. Working together in community art creation can be a natural fit for a seasoned peacebuilder.

In identifying common tensions that may arise in art for peace collaboration, there are many examples of how combined approaches can not only be accommodated, but may actually enhance the priorities of both sides. Through continuous dialogue and reflection at all stages, peacebuilders and artists can create opportunities from issues that may be misperceived as bottlenecks or barriers.

CREATIVE OWNERSHIP VS COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

How does one have a successful, mutual collaboration where both the artist and peacebuilder feel represented?

The question of ownership can become contentious, especially as more parties become involved in an art production process alongside an artist. With an individual, personal project, an artist claims ownership of the artwork they create. With a community art project, which can involve artists, peacebuilders, local community members, and so forth, that ownership can become split into different percentages. Expectations of ownership for both the artist and peacebuilder can be different, even after communication between both parties. Ownership might refer to the recognition of who produced a work

of art, whether it is a work of the artist or the community, or both. It might be more centred on who will keep the final artistic output, especially if it was created with communities by outsiders - with everyone claiming ownership of the physical result.

Aspects of ownership make for a sometimes difficult, but necessary, conversation among everyone involved in a collective process of art for peace production. Through practical experience and constructive reflection, the following questions are offered as a starting point for discussions between peacebuilders and artists preparing for any initiative.

Who is the creator?

1. Will the artist be working individually to create one piece? A set of artworks?
2. Will the artist and the peacebuilder partner together to create an art piece?
3. Will the artist be guiding the peacebuilder to create their own artwork?

Process and feedback

1. Is the artist given full creative autonomy on the creation of the artwork? Or does the art piece require editing and feedback?

2. If editing is required, how many feedback sessions will be required?
3. When is the deadline?

Compensation

1. Who has ownership of the final artwork?
2. Who will fund the production of the artwork?
3. Will the artist be compensated for their artwork if it is a commissioned piece?
4. Will compensation be discussed between both the peacebuilder and the artist?

Goals

1. What are the goals of the artist?
2. What are the goals of the peacebuilder?
3. Do the goals overlap?

PROCESS VS PRODUCT

One of the challenges that peacebuilders and artists may encounter working together stems from different levels of priority put on the individual or participatory process of the intervention versus the quality of the product created through the stages of artistic formation. At a simplistic level, peacebuilders may naturally focus more heavily on the process of the actors and the potential for the transformation of negative perceptions or impact that can be made in protracted conflict dynamics. Conversely, artists may often feel that the work of art is of critical importance and will determine its success, particularly if it is to be shown publicly, such as in a gallery or for an exhibition. This is especially true for visual arts where the public's attention may also be on the beauty or appearance of a masterpiece or on a display.

It is possible to accommodate different priorities in an art for peacebuilding intervention. Process versus product do not necessarily have to be exclusive of each other.



PRODUCING THROUGH PROCESS

A reflective journey transforms into a spectacular work of art

In one collaboration between an art-based organisation from Japan and a peacebuilding organisation in Cambodia, two teams came together to conceive an artistic activity as the conclusion of a year-long project. The project had focused on intensive listening, and participants had spent long periods listening to other people and communicating their messages with as little bias as possible. With that in mind, it was decided that a process of “Peace Mask” making with the participants would provide for a reflective and meditative process where the participants could have a chance to listen to their own thoughts.

The Peace Masks⁸ were a longstanding conceptual art form developed over years of production and perfection by the art-based team. Over three days, the peacebuilding participants took turns, experiencing the mask-making process, engaging in meaningful dialogue, and watching images of their own faces slowly connect to form a beautiful work of art. One week later, an exhibition was held in a well-known art gallery to bring the Peace Masks to the public and provide the space for participants to share their experiences in peacebuilding work over the year. The event attracted artists, art lovers, peacebuilders, and civil society alike.

By creating a process around the product, and exhibiting the product to also showcase the process, the activity was highly successful for both participants and the general public.

8 Peace Masks come from a unique art form of washi paper facial impressions developed by Japan-based Peace Mask Project and highlight the uniqueness of each individual face while simultaneously celebrating that part of our humanity that cannot be divided. In collaboration with Women Peace Makers in Cambodia, the two organisations worked together to use art and action research as a process that led to the production of a visual work of art and a scholarly contribution on interethnic dynamics and identity. See the publication Hear, Listen. Look, See. Touch, Feel: Using our senses to understand the other (2018). Phnom Penh: Women Peace Makers: <https://wpmcambodia.org/project/hear-listen-look-see-touch-feel>

PROFESSIONAL ART VS COMMUNITY ART

Even the debate in the art world of who is deemed to be a professional artist versus who is an amateur artist can cause stark divisions and differences of opinion. For peacebuilders, the community art might be the real result in any interventions attempting to tackle conflict. High profile art exhibitions, however, often revolve around a single artist, who is well-known and can attract an audience by name and recognition. How can professional art reconcile with the community so that the artist can maintain a standard reputation while community art can also be present to communicate local societal action?

Some artists will be more well versed than others at incorporating community art into their own art forms. Others will prefer to have full authority of their work with no external influence, particularly in the stage of exhibition or public display. It is essential to understand these dynamics and to manage any potential tension from the beginning. There are many options for exhibition and it is the onus of both artists and peacebuilders to get creative in planning and execution to ensure everyone feels represented and recognised for their work.



ARTIST AND COMMUNITY SYMBIOSIS

A co-creation of two art forms create a single masterpiece

Working in a vulnerable floating village of mainly stateless residents in houseboats, a peacebuilding organisation enlisted the artistic expertise of an established international illustrator and painter. The goal was to provide the community with a space to explore their sense of place and to express what they felt as “home”. The situation was sensitive, as a controversial relocation initiative led by state authorities had begun and residents were being moved to live on land. Their community was being dismantled piece by piece.

The artist joined the peacebuilding organisation in the community where they secured an old fishing boat that had been in use for more than a decade. Over several days, the artist listened to their stories and to how they saw their home over the generations they were there. She began to interpret their conversations and translated them into visual form across the boat. Meanwhile, the residents learnt to use digital cameras and photography concepts. They went out and took pictures around their community, seeking out familiar scenes from everyday life. The boat, becoming a narrative canvas, was completed and displayed mid-air in an art gallery with the photography, in black and white, strung up by fishing line around the boat to provoke a sense of floating on the water. The result was a more abstract and visual way to foster public empathy for a community that shared its own challenging journey through art.

The co-creation, blending both professional and community art, brought something unique to the public that ensured high artistic quality and community representation. Both the artist and the community were recognised and drew the attention of a diverse local audience.

TECHNICAL CAPACITY VS LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

One of the tensions that can work its way into a well-intentioned collaboration, particularly when involving outsiders into a local conflict setting, is the major gap between technical capacity to produce an art form and local knowledge and understanding of the context. Artists bring creative skills that are unique and cannot be reproduced. They also bring technical skills that are essential in facilitating any community art-based initiative. A local peacebuilding organisation or the participants themselves will have in depth knowledge of the context and situation in which they are working, which might be unknown or misunderstood by the artist.

It is essential that artists and peacebuilders recognise and respect each other's expertise. Peacebuilders must allow artists to fully lead the artistic component of art for peace interventions, and ensure that they can be trusted not to appropriate the processes or adapt them in the future unless it had been previously agreed upon with the artist. At the same time, artists must value and respect that the local partners have the knowledge and the instinct of what is appropriate for participants and the public. They must enter into collaboration with peacebuilders ensuring that they will do everything possible to Do No Harm, and be able to change course if necessary.



AMATEUR DOCUMENTARY FILMING

Professional filmmakers develop intervention for local ownership

In one initiative between a regional school for filmmaking and a local peacebuilding NGO, documentary producers and grassroots peacebuilders came together to co-create storytelling films of everyday people. The goal was to develop a relationship with a stranger that may normally be passed by without any attention or acknowledgement, film a small snippet of their life, and use the mini-documentary to introduce this person to the public. A process such as this has the potential to humanise people and push our ability

to connect with unfamiliar people.

The filming teams were made up of people from different backgrounds and skill sets. Participants were taught in a short period how to plan, produce, and edit films. Each team had at least one local participant who was able to navigate the city, speak the language, and connect to people. With the technical expertise of the filmmaking team, and the local knowledge of many of the participants, many short films were produced and screened for the general public at the end of the training.

It was essential to combine local knowledge and technical expertise to work together to produce creative short films on everyday lives. One of the key factors in a successful collaboration between artists and peacebuilders is the mutual understanding and respect that both are experts in their own crafts and communications in their own right.

BIG PUBLIC SPLASH VS UNDERGROUND IMPACT

Art can bring in a crowd. Peacebuilding often works at different stages where staying low-key might be an advantage. In contrast, artists may feel that their art should be thought provoking, controversial, draw attention and criticism to their audience, community or authority figures. This tension can also be felt in the Process vs Product predicament. How much and at what point might you want to engage the public? Should you focus on the artist and their artwork, or should you focus on community voices and learnings? Either approach will draw in quite different audiences. What if the topic is sensitive from a peacebuilding perspective but excitingly provocative from an artistic perspective?

The option of having a high-profile event, such as an art exhibition, may foster a tension between peacebuilders and artists, particularly in highly sensitive conflict contexts. It can also cause tension in dynamics where artists or communities may be the centre for such attention. If planning to hold an event such as an exhibition, an opening, a launch, or a public workshop, artists and peacebuilders should decide together what such an event will look like. Who will be credited? How will it be promoted? Who should be there? Most importantly, what is too sensitive to publicly communicate?



ART UP FRONT, PEACEBUILDING FROM BEHIND

*High-profile artist creates intimate space for
low-key dialogue*

In one initiative, an artist and a peacebuilding organisation worked deeply on the production of a work of art in a highly sensitive and controversial community that had historically been negatively perceived or accepted into mainstream society. The organisation working with the community knew that putting them into the spotlight could jeopardise their safety, and might only further divide their relations with others in the area. The artist, on the other hand, felt that bringing the art to the public

was a vital part of providing access to others and showcasing the work. Together, the artist and the peacebuilders decided to showcase the main art as a creation of the artist herself, using her name and artistic identity. Instead of naming the community, they recognised the artist had drawn inspiration from a community and co-created a collection of pieces together. By having a higher-profile exhibition and by keeping the identity of the community private, artistic merit was recognised and celebrated. At the same time, the indirect and subtle presence of the community allowed for deeper conversation and reflection by visitors who could discuss an important issue of conflict without focusing on any single community or specific residents involved.

EXPERIENTIAL FEEDBACK VS FORMAL FEEDBACK

In art for peace initiatives, it is most often the artist who receives feedback throughout the process. It is natural for others to comment on art. Commissioned artists, graphic designers, and any producer of art receive critique for their projects or products. However, constructive criticism and feedback is something that many people can have a difficult time offering in an artistic context, especially when one lacks the lingo used by creatives.

Experiential feedback can refer to the expressed emotional effect someone experiences directly with a work of art or the process of production. It is interpretive and involves deep personal reflection. Artists may choose to engage non-artists in experiential feedback, to hear an internalisation of their art. Understanding the story one sees in the art, or how they feel by looking at it, or what they see can provide a powerful critique. This can be very meaningful and productive in artistic development.

Formal feedback can be more specific and focused on the choices made in the artwork. It can refer to the elements used to create the work or technical decisions involved in it. Most artists would benefit from formal feedback from other artists and creatives. Often this type of feedback happens in the art world and needs to

be treated with care by non-artists engaging in other realms.

As both artist and peacebuilder come together, the question of ownership arises again in order to decide how artistic feedback should be incorporated in the initiative. Will the artist be given full creative authorship of the project? Are they open to constructive criticism? If it is a community peacebuilding art project, will the artist be open to on-the-ground changes and recommendations by the peacebuilder? It is important to begin with a conversation between the peacebuilder and the artist to agree on how many feedback sessions will be needed, according to the timeline of the project or collaboration. This also includes commissioned work or even graphic design projects that are destined for mass consumption.

Examples of ineffective criticisms artists face:

“I don’t like it. Can you make it better?”

“Can you just make it more sophisticated?”

“Looks kind of weird.”

These examples are extremely vague. They lead to more ineffective responses and questions that delineate from the main design. What do you not like? Make what better? What looks weird? How does one even define weird?

Most of these comments undermine the artistic integrity of the artist and do not offer either experiential

or formal criticism towards the artwork. If both the artist and peacebuilder agree on feedback, here are some productive tips for non-artists on how to offer constructive and effective criticism.

1. Avoid vague comments

Be extremely design specific and explain these choices. Better yet, explaining the goal and concept in a visual matter is helpful to the artist. Being clear and explaining details and specifications of the product, lays out a good foundation even before the project begins.

Ex. Instead of “Can you make it better?” one can ask, “Could you enhance the colour of the title to a bright yellow or white, instead of the black so that the colour stands out better?”

2. Be clear and refrain from using unnecessary descriptions

“Can you make it more sophisticated? Add a little bit of more flare? More flamboyant?”

Again, this refers back to keeping criticisms detailed and specific. Moreover, don't refer to ambiguous concepts but describe the feedback into tangible descriptions of what can be changed. If the work is supposed to be “sophisticated,” what does this mean? Don't assume the artist shares the same definition of sophisticated, chic, or modern. When working with the artist, offering visual examples are beneficial as visual concepts need visual references

and descriptions.

Eg. Instead of “Make it sophisticated,” reason and describe the practical steps in what sophistication looks like: “Can you make two separate text boxes, rather than one? It makes the space look less cluttered and easier to read” or “I’m inspired by Mondrian’s colour palette. Could we utilise it?”

3. Research and prepare

Again, visual examples are extremely helpful for the artist. Obviously, when working with a specific art form, the artist brings their artistic style and ingenuite to the collaboration table. For a non-artist wishing to discuss artistic details or ideas, it is helpful to show visual examples, such as venues, either in person or with photographs. Tangible references, especially before the activity begins, will help artists understand the environment and other important factors. Doing the research and using visual language is again not only helpful to the artist, but demonstrates an effort to respect the artist’s trade to make the process smoother. Artists likewise have the opportunity to enter into a context, even as a complete outsider, with more understanding of the dynamics at play. The more information gathered on the groups involved or the conflict at hand will not only arm the artist with information, but also ensure that the artist can apply the best possible Do No Harm approach while engaging in a conflict setting.

4. *Ask questions*

There is no harm in creating a culture of feedback or asking questions. If artist lingo is difficult to understand, ask. From simply asking about the difference between CMYK⁹, RGB¹⁰, or Pantone¹¹, to more complex design questions, ask in order to receive clarification from the artist. Apart from design specification questions, ask clarifying questions if a concept is difficult to understand. Asking the right questions allows the artist to share their years of expertise. Creativity is nurtured by healthy collaboration- non-artist micromanagement of art and creativity can render the artist into a tool and stifles their trust and creative space. At the same time, artists can ask more questions about the context, the conflict, or the setting. Not only will this contribute to an atmosphere of collaboration, but can inspire artistic creativity through better understanding.

9 CMYK stands for "Cyan Magenta Yellow Black", the four basic colours used in print. Most designers or artists working in digital arts would understand and use such terms while those unfamiliar with them may become lost in technical conversations that can significantly impact the products.

10 RGB stands for "Red Green Blue" and are the colours used in the process that you see on your computer screen. The difference between the colour on your screen and the colour that is printed can be very significant.

11 Pantone refers to a system of colour codes that refer to exact shades. The point is that an artistic or designer counterpart may be well versed in terminology that is unfamiliar to others.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR
COMMUNITY ART FOR
PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVES

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR COMMUNITY ART FOR PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVES

Women Peace Makers (WPM) is a gender and peacebuilding organisation that works primarily using conflict transformation approaches in its work with conflict actors. Although it is not an arts-based entity, WPM incorporates art activities into its programming with the objective to foster creativity and bring people together around novel and artistic approaches. This is primarily in the context of peace and conflict, but also includes areas of identity, gender, discrimination, and community mediation.

We value the expertise and importance of professional artists in their field. We understand that tensions may exist when art and peacebuilding come together with distinct goals and objectives for all parties.

In order to show greater transparency and provide a full disclosure on our interests and priorities, we present a list of guiding principles that we believe need to drive art initiatives with the communities in which we work. We ask for peacebuilders and artists to come together to evaluate each principle in the scope of any potential collaborative project. We similarly encourage all artists working with us to create or share guiding principles for their work and processes. As such, we

can also better understand priorities and perspectives prior to engaging in an art-for-peace or creative peacebuilding initiative directly with communities.

For any principle that may prove to be challenging for either party, discussion should take place to assess any issues. Short notes can be included by the principle to acknowledge discussion and include any resulting shared understanding. Not every principle needs to be fully agreed upon, but any principle that may pose a challenge to cooperation should be addressed and expectations should be clarified by each partner through the process of completing this form.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ART FOR PEACEBUILDING INITIATIVES

Developed by Women Peace Makers in Cambodia, this agreement provides an opportunity for peacebuilders and artists to come together at the initial stage of any project or intervention planning to discuss important aspects of collaboration. More important than just a binding agreement, the Guiding Principles for Art for Peacebuilding Initiatives document encourages early communication to explore any potential tensions or differences of perspective that might exist between parties. Prior to beginning an Art for Peacebuilding Initiative, take the time to read out each principle together, share thoughts and values, discuss potential issues that could arise, and try to reach an agreement on how to ensure principles are incorporated into the work. Include notes on any points discussed; both artists and the peacebuilding organisation representatives should acknowledge whether they agree or disagree before moving forward.

DO NO HARM AND SAFETY

Art for peacebuilding with communities puts the Do No Harm framework and principles at the centre. Safety must be considered the top priority of any initiative. This includes the safety of the community being engaged, the safety of the team members such as the staff and artists involved, and the safety of the participants and public who interact with the process or the product.

Artist

Agree

Do not agree

Peacebuilding Organisation

Agree

Do not agree

Notes :

CALM MEDIATION

Art for peacebuilding needs to leverage the potential for calm mediation between different actors. Whereas a professional artist, in some cases, may derive inspiration from chaos or conflict, it is important to keep in mind the dangers of the same elements in a conflict environment.

Artist

Agree

Do not agree

Peacebuilding Organisation

Agree

Do not agree

Notes :

I N C L U S I V E

Art production must provide the potential to include every person that shows up. This includes those who may profess to having no artistic ability whatsoever, or others who do not necessarily wish to engage in traditional art forms or activities. With a peacebuilding objective clearly in mind, art activities must foster an environment that invites everybody, regardless of background or beliefs, to join and partake in the production.

Artist

Agree

Do not agree

Peacebuilding Organisation

Agree

Do not agree

Notes :

F U N / P L A Y F U L

It is important, at least at the beginning, to ensure that an art-based peacebuilding activity can be entertaining for anyone and in an environment that invokes playfulness and enjoyment. For survivors of conflict, art can have a powerful effect and must be initiated carefully. Putting emphasis on the process and ensuring it is not heavy or arduous can ensure an atmosphere where all participants can relax and enjoy.

Artist

Agree

Do not agree

Peacebuilding Organisation

Agree

Do not agree

Notes :

SAFE SPACE AND TRUST - BUILDING

When an art-based intervention is specifically designed for a peacebuilding purpose, attention by all parties must be put on creating a safe space for every participant. Building trust among the group is likely a significant challenge in any conflict contexts. Designing any art activity for these purposes should provide opportunities to build relationships among the participants in a group. Creating something together, space for ongoing dialogue and conversation, physically touching each other, all lead to an ongoing process of trust-building.

Artist Agree Do not agree Peacebuilding Organisation Agree Do not agree

Notes :

HEARING ALL VOICES

In traditional dialogue, one of the constant challenges is the imbalance of different voices. Some are heard far less than others. Mediation is often an ongoing process to provide the space for all voices. Art-for-peace and creative peacebuilding should also create that space. The expression of every person involved should be conveyed equally, without more emphasis on one over the other.

Artist Agree Do not agree Peacebuilding Organisation Agree Do not agree

Notes :

SELF - CONFIDENCE AND INDIVIDUAL EMPOWERMENT

All stages of art conception, production, and exhibition must take into account the importance of participant well-being. No matter the level of artistic ability or talent, each person should be provided the space to develop confidence and feel empowered when engaging in art.

Artist

Agree

Do not agree

Peacebuilding Organisation

Agree

Do not agree

Notes :

ENGAGING

The process of implementing art-based activities should aim to engage everyone in the room and strive to be continually interactive. Even at times when individuals are focusing on their own artistic endeavour, space should be given for people to observe and interact with others.

Artist

Agree

Do not agree

Peacebuilding Organisation

Agree

Do not agree

Notes :

W E L C O M I N G

The goal of any art for peacebuilding initiative should be to bring people together, to transcend social barriers, and to allow full access to anyone who wishes to join. Activities should be flexible and provide space for people to join in at different points. Although closed-door activities will sometimes be more appropriate, effort should also be put into welcoming outsiders in and being prepared for observers to join.

Artist

Agree

Do not agree

Peacebuilding Organisation

Agree

Do not agree

Notes :

S U P P O R T I V E

Artists and peacebuilders must be ready to support each other and the participants. In the complexity of conflict dynamics, trauma, and personal exploration, art-for-peace or creative peacebuilding initiatives must put both peacebuilders and artists in positions of responsibility to support those that are involved.

Artist

Agree

Do not agree

Peacebuilding Organisation

Agree

Do not agree

Notes :

MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is a process to bring attention to the present moment without judgement, which can be a useful concept in both peacebuilding and art. Interventions using art in a peacebuilding context should consider the environment, the individuals, and the group involved to bring mindful practice to the work. Participants should be encouraged to check-in to themselves and with their peers throughout and continually reflect on what is happening at different moments.

Artist

Agree

Do not agree

Peacebuilding Organisation

Agree

Do not agree

Notes :

INSPIRING

Both peacebuilding and art can be highly inspiring activities and processes that can have profound impact on the individuals involved. Our collective goal should be to reach into the hearts of the participants and the potential audiences who will consume the works of art or listen to voices of those who produced it. The process and the creation should inspire others in a positive and transformational way and ideally inspire change within people and communities.

Artist

Agree

Do not agree

Peacebuilding Organisation

Agree

Do not agree

Notes :

C R E A T I V E

From a peacebuilding perspective, art is a creative concept and process. It provides a possibility to go beyond our known realities, explore a parallel dimension, and allow for people to create something that may not be possible in everyday life. Creative peacebuilding requires creativity from the very onset. Thinking outside of the box in ways that surpass the traditional is often understood and practiced among peacebuilders working among conflict parties. Art for peacebuilding initiatives have the potential to unlock creativity in a unique and distinct way and should encourage everyone to tap into their own creative space.

Artist

Agree

Do not agree

Peacebuilding Organisation

Agree

Do not agree

Notes :

P R O C E S S - O R I E N T E D (C O N C E P T U A L A R T)

Creative peacebuilding can derive stronger impact from a well planned production process that has a well developed concept or idea from the beginning. Conceptual art is one way that ensures communities and non-artist producers of art are guaranteed participation and ownership of the process. Art that follows a process requires the skills, expertise, and leadership of an artist or artists, but relies on the participation and involvement of the communities. All efforts should be made to design art for peacebuilding activities that put the participants at the centre of activities that have a purpose and methodological way forward to leverage art production, and occasionally exhibition, as part of an experiential process.

Artist

Agree

Do not agree

Peacebuilding Organisation

Agree

Do not agree

Notes :

OPEN LEARNING

The goal to use art, and any activity in peacebuilding, is always to encourage mutual understanding, foster empathy, and bring people closer together in the pursuit of peace. The methods, results, and lessons learnt in any initiative should be open for everyone and potentially replicated or adapted in the future to enable and improve creative interventions used in conflict settings. An art for peacebuilding initiative should begin with the intentions of all parties involved to share the process and encourage others to participate, or try themselves, to utilise the knowledge gained for wider peace and positive relations.

Artist

Agree

Do not agree

Peacebuilding Organisation

Agree

Do not agree

Notes :

ONESELF AND GROUP ORIENTED

For peacebuilding, it is as important to recognise conflict within oneself as it is to view it between two or more parties. Art can also be a process involving the individual or the collective. It is essential that initiatives consider both aspects and ideally provide the space for as much self-exploration as group interaction

Artist

Agree

Do not agree

Peacebuilding Organisation

Agree

Do not agree

Notes :

AN ENABLING SPACE

In addition to a process, an art for peacebuilding intervention should always provide an enabling space. An enabling space is one that supports and fosters processes of communication, innovation, and knowledge creation that adapt to diverse environments or contexts as needed. Whether that happens around the creation of a work of art, a process incorporating dialogue and activities, or an exhibition to reach out to the public, planners should always be giving thought to a continual enabling space at all points.

Artist

Agree

Do not agree

Peacebuilding Organisation

Agree

Do not agree

Notes :

REFLECTIVE

It is vital that any activity using art and peacebuilding incorporate elements of reflection, both at the individual and group level. This does not necessarily need to be at a final stage, but can be incorporated throughout any process. Being reflective means ensuring that actions and the process are thoughtful and deliberative through both thinking and discussion. An intervention needs to include reflection by implementers and participants, and can also include observers and the public.

Artist

Agree

Do not agree

Peacebuilding Organisation

Agree

Do not agree

Notes :

COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

One significant tension that can exist between community work and art is the concept of ownership. Artists and peacebuilders working together must begin by discussing key issues around ownership. Is the process owned by the artists working with the community or can it eventually be used and replicated with other communities? Who owns the artwork produced from the intervention?

Artist

Agree

Do not agree

Peacebuilding Organisation

Agree

Do not agree

Notes :

ARTIST

I agree that I have discussed each of the Guiding Principles for Community Art for Peacebuilding Initiatives listed above with the Peacebuilding Organisation. I understand that this collaboration will be guided by these principles and I will strive to ensure that all artistic practices with the communities will follow them.

Name (Print)

Organisation or affiliation

Date

Signature

PEACEBUILDING ORGANISATION

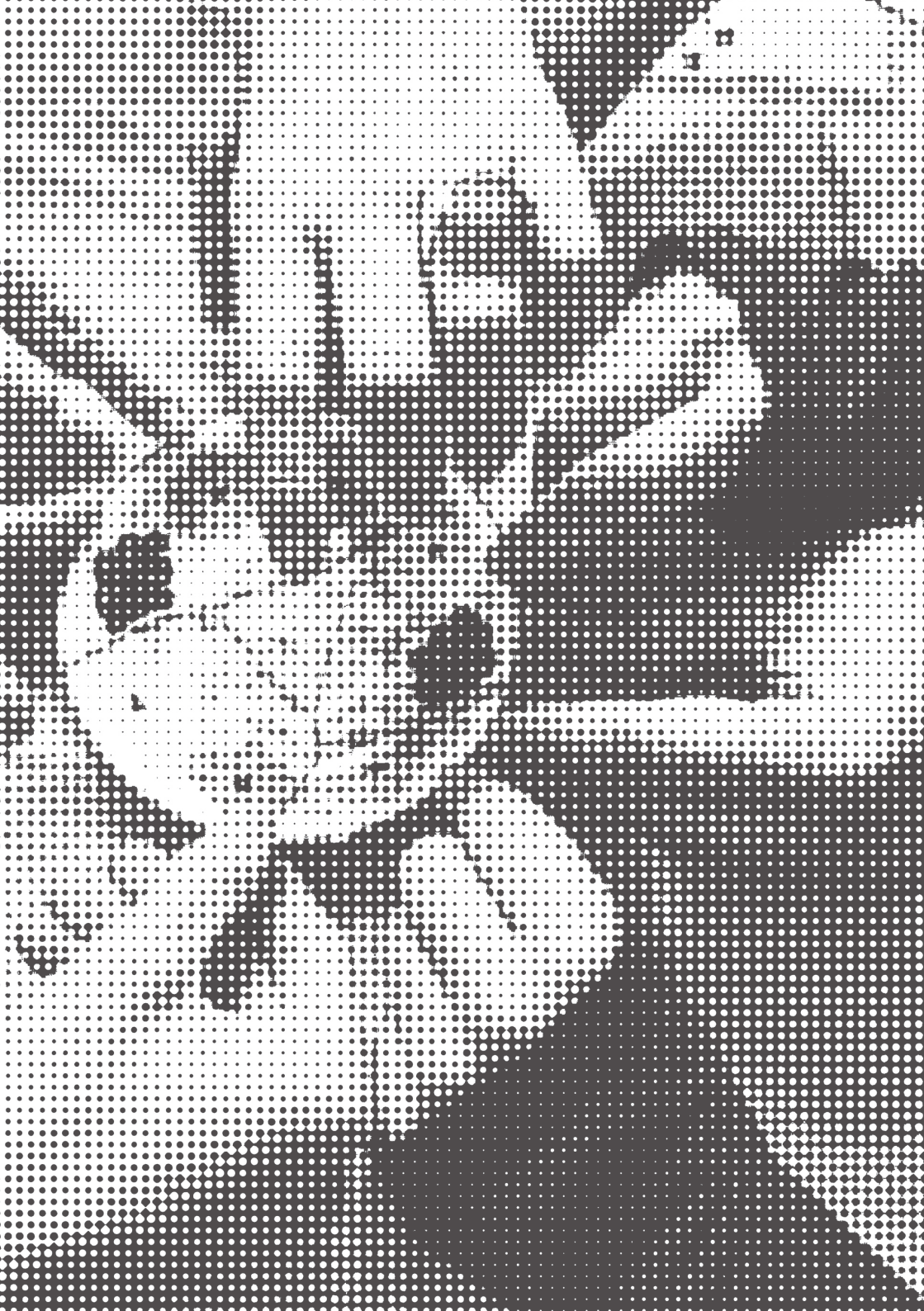
I agree that I have discussed each of the Guiding Principles for Community Art for Peacebuilding Initiatives listed above with the artist. I acknowledge that any principles not agreed upon were discussed in detail and we have reached an agreement on how to navigate our distinct perspectives once beginning artistic practices with the communities.

Name (Print)

Organisation or affiliation

Date

Signature



IN CONCLUSION,
TO BE CONTINUED...

IN CONCLUSION, TO BE CONTINUED ...

María Antonia Pérez
Creative Social Transformer

WHEN NAVIGATING BECOMES THE WAY TO MOVE FORWARD

Navigating through the nexus of art and peace is a journey unto itself. Navigating, in one sense of the word, includes the act of moving or progressing through something in a logical or planned sequence. Not unlike a ship that sets out from one port to another, bringing two fields together for a shared goal can serve as a voyage that takes place in the middle of the sea rather than at either one of the ports. Some routes are well-known, others venture upon uncharted territories.

The act of navigating also implies mastering of the vessel, coordination, flexibility, and knowledge. Those embarking upon the voyage must understand the variables of speed, time, distance, their crew, the tides, wind directions, and the stars. Some aspects which can be controlled, others that cannot. Flow is essential, and adaptation is key to navigate, create art, and build peace. Each requires intuition, common sense, creativity, and above all, passion.

This book represents the perspectives of peacebuilders and artists and compiles reflections on the journey,

navigating the nexus of art and peace with a focus on human connection. It explores unique forms, tools, and projects that inspire us to see creativity as mediation. A reflective guide for peacebuilding practitioners and artists working together to transform conflict and inspire creativity, it was designed for and by its own intended audiences. The journey does not end here, however. We need to continue to come together, to share our experiences, to foster stronger collaboration, and to co-create a diverse and vibrant art for peace field that builds a new generation of artistic peacebuilders or, peacebuilding artists.

Art and peacebuilding both share the notions of path, intention, and process. Art transforms when its intention is to do so. Through an artistic process, imagination, modelled behaviour, and human connections, art can expose its true transformative power: the interpretation of ideas, feelings and thought into actions, colours, movements, music, or words. As art forms one of the most powerful expressions of culture and has the possibility to raise the quality of thought and the lives of human beings, it can - and must - play an important role beyond simply the aesthetic. Artistic expressions or practices provide the channel for stories to circulate and for notions that form and reaffirm a culture. Art has always been, and continues to be today, a powerful tool against war, exclusion, indifference, and the absence of identity and memory. Art is a very forceful means for social transformation because it appeals to the senses, feelings, emotions, and creativity of the subject. Art

provides the space to construct a place of knowledge. It transcends politics and economics where they fail, since cultural expression becomes a natural right of every community. Art is memory, reflection, and a way forward. It is a synthesis of culture. It is a language that allows us to name the un-nameable. Art can become the action to passivity.

Professor John Paul Lederach, distinguished pioneer and theorist in the field of conflict transformation, has distilled the idea that listening itself is in the domain of aesthetics, that artists listen in a different way than social scientists. His book, *The Moral Imagination*¹², is a reflection on over 30 years in the field of peacebuilding, and explores the capacity to imagine and create possibilities of change to overcome cycles of violence

For Lederach, imagination is required. True peacebuilders need to be more like artists. They need to embrace aesthetics that support social change. Adaptive and responsive processes require creative acts. He sees peacebuilding as an imaginative, intuitive, rational, practical, strategic, holistic activity. Lederach discusses the need for peace to be built with the style and transformational powers of an artist who can bring together and reflect the complexity of the human experience in a single piece, image, poem, or work.

¹² Peacebuilders and artists alike will find solace and wisdom in John Paul Lederach (2005). *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.



Guernica, Pablo Picasso, 1937

In another dimension, revered painter Pablo Picasso never missed a moment to expose the unlimited possibilities for artists to socially engage the confines of a physical world reality. The shocking work of *Guernica*, arguably one of his most famous pieces that puts the suffering of humans and animals on full display, is one of the strongest wordless anti-war statements we have in human history. A work of art “inspired” by the chaos and violence of a 1937 bombing in Spain, *Guernica* represents incredible complexity of geopolitical forces, destruction, and humanity. When confronted by a German officer visiting his studio in occupied Paris during the 1940s with a photo of *Guernica* asking if he was responsible for doing it, Picasso famously retorted “No, you did.” It is no surprise that Picasso would finish off the same decade contributing to the world his work of art *Dove of Peace* - that would become not only the emblem of the first International Peace Conference

of Paris in 1949, but the most recognised symbol of peace worldwide.

We celebrate art and we celebrate peace. Bringing together peacebuilders, artists, and grassroots communities opens up to infinite possibilities that we can imagine and create together. Different perspectives, technical skills, and knowledge can enhance collaboration, reflections, and guidelines in the co-creation of diverse multi-stakeholder projects and initiatives. Now, more than ever, there is great need across the globe for collaboration across disciplines in a cooperative way to confront age-old issues that continue to persist in contemporary times. Navigating the nexus of art and peace in the same ship will bring us to many new ports, but more importantly, let us join in on the most significant part of the journey out on the open sea.

María Antonia Pérez has worked in art, the culture of peace, and social transformation projects in different contexts and countries with various non-profit organisations in Colombia, Sri Lanka, Cambodia and Japan. She has served for nearly two decades as adviser to the international NGO Peace Boat, promoting peace education programs, sustainable tourism, and the promotion of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals onboard a ship and in ports across the world. Pérez holds a Master's Degree in Management of Social Innovation and Local Development, and is a Rotary Peace Fellow from Chulalongkorn University's Peace and Conflict programme in Bangkok, Thailand. She was the Coordinator of Art for Social Transformation for the Municipality of Bogotá and currently works on Cultural Citizenship projects at the Secretary of Culture of Medellín, Colombia.



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AND
RESOURCES

There are numerous articles, books, reflections, and pieces written on art, peacebuilding, and art for peacebuilding. Though this publication relies principally on the reflections and experiences of artists and peace practitioners, it is also founded on the continually-evolving knowledge across multiple disciplines and expertise. Although this list of resources and references is by no means exclusive, the authors recognise the core contribution of these works in their own personal and professional advancement and in the development of this work.

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Navigating the Nexus of Art and Peace
edited by *Melissa Martin*

Melissa Martin works at the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs in the Division for Inclusive Social Development that monitors national and global socio-economic trends, identifies emerging issues, and assesses their implications for social policy at the national and international levels. She has worked on civil society relations and outreach related to intergovernmental processes, as well as on advancing the rights of indigenous peoples globally. She currently works on the portfolio of sport for development and peace - where sport is defined in its broadest term, comprising sport for all, physical play, recreation, dance, organised, casual, competitive, traditional, and indigenous sports and games in their diverse forms. Martin holds bachelor's degrees in International Development and Law, and a Master's Degree in Peace and Conflict Studies.



This book for peacebuilders and artists is a must-read for those seeking out collaboration. Art for peace initiatives are becoming more and more popular as creative approaches are proving their worth to bridge divides and transform conflict in novel and inspiring ways. At the same time, community access and the dynamics of conflict can contribute to artistic inspiration and the opportunity to co-create something absorbing and impactful. Such approaches merit more attention. Peacebuilders and artists come to the table with very distinct priorities and perspectives. This guide brings together artists and peacebuilders to reflect on collaboration and to promote the best possible practices for art for peace and creative peacebuilding through all the tension - and the potential - that lie in the process.

"We live in a fragmented world. We need the courage of these navigators, who with compass in hand, share the deep wisdom that peace is possible when the imagination unfolds in the creative act."

-JOHN PAUL LEDERACH

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