

The Imaginative Reinvention of Education
A two-day symposium as part of Grand Art's "Dialogue by Design" Series
February 25-26, 2011



Stockyard Institute collaborators Chris Kennedy and Cassie Thornton, billboard design for School of the Future SOTF project, July 2010. Sgt. Dougherty Park, Brooklyn, NYC. Photo by Chris Kennedy.

For Immediate Release

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Grand Arts is pleased to present "The Imaginative Reinvention of Education" a two-day symposium that will invite community dialogue about what an excellent education means for this region in the 21st century. The symposium will be hosted at Grand Arts on **Friday, February 25th from 4 PM – 8 PM and Saturday, February 26th from 9:45 AM – 4:30 PM.**

"The Imaginative Reinvention of Education" is organized by **Julia Cole** (Kansas City, MO). We are inviting participants with any relationship to education to join the discussion: teachers, administrators, governance, parents, students and community advocates. The core component of the symposium will be three sessions of presentation and dialogue, each created by a collaborative team composed of artist-educators including: educational theorists, community educators, active teachers and performance artists.

Facilitator **Harlan Brownlee** (Kansas City, MO) will moderate the symposium's opening and closing dialogues. On Friday evening there will be a shared homemade meal **Bread!** hosted by **Sean Starowitz**, (Kansas City, MO). SESSION 1 "Scale and Connection," with **Jim Duignan** (Chicago, IL) and **Bill Genereux** (Salina, KS) will discuss past, present and future relationships between schools and the community. Saturday morning's SESSION 2 "Elastic Relationship," with **Zach Rockhill**, **Leralee Whittle**, **Zach Springer** and **Elysia Contreras** (Kansas City, MO), will consider the dynamic exchange between mentor and seeker / teacher and student. SESSION 3 "Creative Social Intelligence," with **Inez Bush** (Los Angeles, CA) and **Asma Kazmi**

(Kansas City, MO), will explore the value of different kinds of knowledge. Each session will focus on a particular aspect of pedagogy or educational structure intended to call into question the a gap between human values and the priorities manifest in the crisis of our educational systems.

The setting of this dialogue in an artistic space is a deliberate strategy. This symposium will revisit the role that artists can play in shaping social structures. By utilizing the creative potentiality of an artistic space, we hope to open up a new kind of conversation around the question of what an excellent education means here and now. The broad intention is to focus on a process of respectful and imaginative engagement as a kind of collective dreaming. The intent is not to dwell on nor assign blame for failures of the past, and bears we have no illusion that this brief encounter will provide any specific solutions to the deeply troubling complexities we face. We wish instead to collaboratively imagine responsive, relevant and daring future structures that will creatively redefine economic imperatives. We also hope that our inventive civil discourse might serve as a model and platform for future experimental initiatives.

The “Imaginative Reinvention of Education” symposium is open to the public and free with pre-registration <www.grandarts.com>. Registration forms are due by Friday, February 15, 2011. This symposium is a continuation of Grand Arts current project *Dialogues By Design: Experimental Platforms for Intimate Conversations* now through mid-March.

Symposium Program and Sessions:

All sessions will focus equally on provocation/inspiration and listening - each includes discussion among symposium participants as an integral element. Dialogue will be guided by some common agreements, designed to encourage deeper conversation.

Friday, February 25

4 PM: Welcome: Symposium convener **Julia Cole** & Grand Arts artistic director **Stacy Switzer**

4:10 PM: Opening dialogue facilitated by **Harlan Brownlee**

What do our symposium participants bring to this conversation? Can we ground our exchanges in the present reality and then decide to enter a different realm for the duration of this conversation?

5 PM: Evening meal hosted by artist **Sean Starowitz**

*This meal is part of a series called **BREAD!** which uses community-driven financial support to democratically fund provocative and locally-focused projects. Symposium participants can make an optional contribution of \$10, for which they will receive a ballot. This session of BREAD! will have a special focus on educational projects by local artists, who will make brief presentations during the meal. At the end of dinner, diners will vote and the artist whose proposal receives the most votes will be awarded the collected funds to produce the project.*

6 PM: SESSION I - “Scale and Connection,” Jim Duignan & Bill Genereux

This presentation will address the relationship - past, present and future - between school and the community. Could we consider a return to smaller scales and local communities of learning, while connecting to a larger culture through new technologies? What content and skills have meaning now, and how do we determine the best means of learning?

8 PM: Close for the evening

Saturday, February 26

9.45 AM: Coffee

10 AM: SESSION 2 – “Elastic Relationship,” Zach Rockhill, Leralee Whittle, Zach Springer & Elysia Contreras

This presentation will focus on the mysterious, inspiring, challenging and nurturing relationship between teacher and student, mentor and seeker, which is at the heart of all educational processes. How does this relationship determine, influence or support the transfer of information and ideas, and the capacity to think, feel and imagine? How can educational systems value and grow the enormous energy of this exchange?

12 PM: Lunch. Grand Arts will host participants with a meal. There will be time for open conversation, and access to digital resources gathered for participants to take away.

1 PM: SESSION 3 – “Creative Social Intelligence,” Inez Bush & Asma Kazmi

This session will reflect on the aspects of education that are qualitative rather than quantitative, and which foster social assets such as a sense of meaning and belonging. Art is mostly seen as an add-on to life and learning, a luxury that can be trimmed in troubled times. But, should the capacity that artistic processes foster instead be central to our pedagogies? Intangible narratives, expressions and abstractions build cultural richness and connections, which in turn foster the courage to imagine alternatives and embrace the unknown. Can we continue to grow and thrive without honoring this other kind of knowledge?

3 PM: Tea break. Time to gather, integrate and refresh, and shift back into a more practical space.

3.30 PM: Closing Session facilitated by **Harlan Brownlee**

Are there ways in which this kind of dialogue could continue? How can we move our collaborative insight forward?

4.30 PM: Symposium ends

*During the symposium, the local collaborative artist team the **Print Factory**, represented by **Jesse McAfee & Will Burnip**, will interact with **Jim Duignan** to produce materials related to the event.*

Collaborators will also be developing an ongoing digital resource that will archive materials from the artists’ presentations, document symposium participants’ ideas, collect resources for further developments and, perhaps, serve as a platform for a continuing conversation.

The Imaginative Reinvention of Education: Artist/Facilitator Bios

Harlan Brownlee is the President and CEO of the Arts Council of Metropolitan Kansas City. He has lead the Arts Council of Metropolitan Kansas City in developing community partnerships dedicated to insuring access to the arts and cultural development for the region. Brownlee served as the Executive Director for Kansas City Young Audiences, a non-profit dedicated to engaging all youth in the arts, promoting creativity, and inspiring success in education. He is on the Kennedy Center's National touring roster for the Partners in Education program, and has conducted master classes, workshops and residencies throughout the United States. In addition, he has been an adjunct professor for Rockhurst University's School of Education and the University of Missouri Kansas City's School of Education. Since 1996, he has served as a consultant for the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and as a member of the Fine Arts Task Force. Brownlee received his B.F.A. from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee where he was educated as a dancer and choreographer. His performance background includes work for thirteen years as one of the Artistic Co-Directors with City in Motion Dance Theater in Kansas City, Missouri. Mr. Brownlee received his M.A. in Educational Research and Psychology from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. <http://www.artskc.org/>

Inez Bush earned an M.A. in Education, Leadership and Change from Antioch University, Los Angeles, and a BFA in Graphic Design from SUNY Purchase. As an independent arts education consultant and strategic planning facilitator, she guides school districts in arts education implementation by developing integrated arts curricula, programs and professional development for educators. Inez is also co-founder, CEO and Creative Director of Gramercy Partners, Inc., an award-winning marketing, communications and design firm. Her thesis and lifework is focused on identifying the key to sustaining arts education and arts integrative methods in educational practices. She has co-produced two interactive events with performance artist Jerri Allyn: *Debating Through the Arts 1 and 2*. This summer, as a part of the Artist in Residence program at 18th Street Arts Center in Los Angeles (<http://18thstreet.org>), Bush, Allyn and the artist debaters will produce an exhibition from the first two debates and a 3rd debate. <http://www.farmlab.org/2008/07/metabolic-studio-public-salon-jerri.html>.

Julia Cole is a public artist, educator and community strategist. She had a first career as a scientist and then returned to college for a BFA at the San Francisco Art Institute. She earned her MFA at the University of Washington in Seattle, and most recently chaired the Interdisciplinary Arts department at the Kansas City Art Institute. Cole believes that imagination is an essential, core component of a healthy society, that civil discourse is the mark of a mature and caring culture, and that the quality of education defines our common future. She currently works with the Charlotte Street Foundation in Kansas City, coordinating an interdisciplinary grants program. <http://swalkkc.wordpress.com/>

Elysia Contreras is invested in a practice that is rooted in the exchange of knowledge, and sharing of skills. She teaches Art and Culture for Alta Vista Charter Middle School, and has worked at Mattie Rhodes Art Center serving the Westside community and Greater Kansas City since 2007. Elysia is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in Early Childhood Education at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Contreras received her B.F.A in Interdisciplinary Arts, and Art History, and a certificate in Community Art Service Learning from the Kansas City Art Institute in 2009. For past community projects, see: <http://www.elysiacontreras.com>

Jim Duignan received his B.F.A. and M.F.A. from the University of Illinois at Chicago and now teaches in the School of Education at De Paul University. His research interests include Innovative Visual and Media Arts Education, Radical Pedagogy, & Publishing. He is an artist and founder of the Stockyard Institute, an artist project that designs the conditions for developing temporary and sustainable projects and programs to the most underserved people in three Chicago communities: <http://www.stockyardinstitute.org>. Duignan also helped launch AREA Chicago: Art, Research Education & Activism, <http://www.areachicago.com> a biannual publication in Chicago, originally published by the Stockyard Institute. <http://jduignan.wordpress.com/blogs/> <http://nomadicstudio.wordpress.com/about/>

Bill Genereux is an Associate Professor of Computer Systems Technology at Kansas State University at Salina. He received his M.S. from Fort Hays State University in Internetworking & Telecommunications, and his Bachelors degree from Kansas Wesleyan University, where he majored in Computer Science and minored in English and Art. He has been working with computers for more than twenty years, and teaching in higher education since 2001. His interests are highly eclectic, and he loves exploring the relationships between the sciences and the humanities. Genereux is currently working on a Ph.D. in Education and authors a blog called TechIntersect, which explores the intersection of technology, science and the arts: <http://billgx.edublogs.org/>

Asma Kazmi received a B.F.A. from the Massachusetts College of Art and an M.F.A. from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She is the recipient of the At the Edge: Innovative Art in Chicago Award, given by the University of Illinois in Chicago and the Critical Mass Grant awarded by The Regional Arts Commission, St. Louis. Her work has been exhibited and included in collections such as the University of Missouri, St. Louis; Contemporary Art Museum in St. Louis; Webster University; Boots Contemporary Art Space, St. Louis; The Guild Gallery, New York; Galerie Sans Titre, Brussels, Belgium; Gallery 400, University of Illinois in Chicago; Boston Underground Film Festival; Balagan Film and Video Series, Boston; Women In Film & Video/New England; and the MassArt Film Society. Kazmi was born and raised in Karachi, Pakistan. She is currently teaching in her first year at the Kansas City Art Institute Foundation program. <http://asmakazmi.com> <http://relationchute.aa.uic.edu>

Zach Rockhill is an interdisciplinary artist who has been teaching in the foundation program at Cooper Union since 2005. After receiving his BFA from the University of Kansas in 1994 he joined the artist-run Arts in Education organization, Dreamyard, where he worked as an artist in residence in the New York City public school system for 5 years. He received his MFA from Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers, in 2003 where he worked closely with performance artist Geoff Hendricks. His work has been shown nationally and internationally. Recent projects include 'Long Black' at Fluxspace, Philadelphia, 'STOCKROOM,' & 'The Planet in Orgasm,' in Venice, Italy concurrent to the Venice Biennial. Rockhill is a recipient of a Finishing Funds Grant through the Electronic Media and Film Program of the New York State Council of the Arts in 2009 and was a 2007 New York Foundation for the Arts fellow. <http://psl.org/studio-visit/artist/zach-rockhill>

Zach Springer received his BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute, and his MFA in the Art and Social Practice program at Portland State. His community-based artwork focuses on developing systems of direct democracy and site specificity. He has shown and made his work nationally and internationally, at venues including Smackmellon in NY, Project Row House in Texas, the Portland Art Museum and Free Gallery in Toronto. His first teaching experience was through a class called The Alternative Energy Design Workshop, in which he utilized alternative pedagogical structures to illustrate first-hand how a multitude of experiences and knowledge bases can be applied in students' work, research and everyday lives. Springer is now teaching a class in Green Sculpture at the Kansas City Art Institute. <http://www.buildsomethingtogether.com> <http://craftandconcept.com/pfinfo.html>

Leralee Whittle is a choreographer, videographer and dancer who performed dance and experimental theatre for 12 years in the San Francisco Bay Area. In 2008 she was awarded a grant for innovative dance from the Theater Bay Area. She then toured and performed in galleries, colleges, and theaters all over the U.S. together with musician Paul Sprawl. After landing in Kansas City in 2010, she was awarded a Rocket Grant (funded by the Andy Warhol Foundation, Charlotte Street and the Spencer Museum) for innovative interdisciplinary performance. She has collaborated with many other dancers, performance groups and choreographers, including Nita Little Dance Theatre (2000-2005), Plan B Performance Group and others. Whittle's recent works include "WorkArtOut," "Occupied" & "You're Really Something." <http://www.leraleewhittle.com>