



THE ART OF **CHANGE** ON BEAUTY

DECEMBER 8, 2015
Ford Foundation



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FRAMING OF THE DISCUSSION

Contemporary society has overvalued economic growth and technological innovation, equating these with progress in human development and prioritizing them at the expense of the things that most people agree make life worth living—among them human connection, beauty, nature, love, and art. We have always known intuitively—and now we have research data to back this up—that material wealth alone does not lead to happiness. Yet our hyper-capitalist society has made it increasingly difficult to talk about and champion the more humanistic elements of life as worthy of investment and development.

To attract and retain support in this context, the arts have become increasingly adept at justifying their value in terms of economic impact. While not invalid, economic value has little to do with the reasons people are drawn to art, and why it has been an essential element of all human communities throughout history. Our current socioeconomic paradigm creates few openings to talk about these other aspects of art—its ability to inspire wonder and joy, to help us transcend our small selves and see ourselves as part of something bigger, to connect us to each other, to make meaning, to stir empathy, and to affirm human dignity. We struggle to talk seriously and publicly about the essential role of beauty in our experience as individuals and as a society—not as mere prettiness, but in all of its ethical, life-affirming, disruptive, and even “terrible,” dimensions.¹

There are indications that we may be seeing a shift in larger society—a pushback against the hyper-capitalist and materialist values that so dominate our lives today. There is growing interest—not only among spiritual leaders, artists, and philosophers, but also among economists, social scientists, and policymakers—in more holistic approaches to thinking about personal and social development. These approaches recognize the importance of humanistic principles, and challenge the premise that maximizing economic value is or should be the primary project of our lives as individuals and as a society. This has implications for the way we understand the value of art—and art itself may be a powerful agent for propelling this shift.

This convening brings together a small group of experts and thinkers in a range of fields who are interested in what makes a meaningful life and a vibrant society. We hope to draw on the diversity of perspectives in the room to have a multidimensional discussion about the role of beauty in our lives. We hope to circumvent the argument that art is *either* “for arts sake” or “instrumental,” and instead suggest that it is actually *always* both. Beauty is not essential because it is in service to some economic or social outcome that is more basic than it; it is *in and of itself* a basic need. Together we will investigate how we might more effectively articulate, value, and nurture beauty as a basic need and right in our society.

We will consider the interdependence between beauty and justice, exploring how beauty itself is a kind of justice, and also how beauty can be an agent of justice because of what it provokes in us. We will ask: How might we leverage this inherent yet often unexamined connection between beauty and justice in order to build, in the words of Ford Foundation president Darren Walker, “an economy of empathy”?

¹ W. B. Yeats poem “Easter, 1916.”



AGENDA

11:30 AM	REGISTRATION OPENS
12:00 PM	WELCOME REMARKS Elizabeth Alexander <i>Writer and Director, Creativity and Free Expression, Ford Foundation</i>
12:10 PM	AGENDA, GOALS, AND PARAMETERS FOR THE CONVERSATION Alexis Frasz <i>Founding Member, Helicon Collaborative</i> Holly Sidford <i>Founding Member, Helicon Collaborative</i>
12:20 PM	PARTICIPANT INTRODUCTIONS
1:25 PM	BREAK
1:30 PM	MAKING THE CASE FOR BEAUTY <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How is beauty essential to the health of human beings and of society?• How is beauty both a form of and a catalyst for justice?
3:00 PM	EXPANDING THE SPACE FOR BEAUTY <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How could the space for beauty be enlarged in our contemporary discourse and policymaking?• What is the role of art/artists in provoking and propelling this shift?• How might we collaborate across sectors to reaffirm the central role of beauty in a just and democratic society?
4:30 PM	MOVING FORWARD <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What tangible steps can we take to move this agenda forward?• What might we each contribute to this effort in our own domains?
4:55 PM	CLOSING REMARKS Hilary Pennington <i>Vice President, Education, Creativity, and Free Expression, Ford Foundation</i>
5:00 PM	RECEPTION



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PARTICIPANTS

Nancy J. Adler *Professor, Organizational Behavior, McGill University*

Elizabeth Alexander *Writer and Director, Creativity and Free Expression, Ford Foundation*

Hilton Als *Writer and Critic, “New Yorker” Magazine*

Polly Carl *Creative Director, ArtsEmerson*

Charles Eisenstein *Speaker and Author, “The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know Is Possible”*

Teresita Fernández *Artist*

Alexis Frasz *Founding Member, Helicon Collaborative*

Carol Graham *Well-Being Researcher, Brookings Institution*

Trajal Harrell *Choreographer and Dancer*

Gladstone (Fluney) Hutchinson *Associate Professor, Economics, Lafayette College*

Sunil Iyengar *Director, Research and Analysis, National Endowment for the Arts*

Maria Rosario Jackson *Senior Advisor, Arts and Culture, Kresge Foundation*

Anna Marazuela Kim *Associate Fellow, Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture, University of Virginia*

Kate D. Levin *Principal, Cultural Assets Management, Bloomberg Associates*

Margaret Morton *Program Officer, Creativity and Free Expression, Ford Foundation*

Hilary Pennington *Vice President, Education, Creativity, and Free Expression, Ford Foundation*

Diane Ragsdale *Visiting Artist and Lecturer, University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Business*

Claudia Rankine *Poet*

Sarah Ruhl *Playwright*

Martin Seligman *Director, Positive Psychology Center, University of Pennsylvania*

Holly Sidford *Founding Member, Helicon Collaborative*

Steven J. Tepper *Dean, Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts, Arizona State University*

Krista Tippett *Radio Host, “On Being”*

Alexandra T. Vazquez *Associate Professor, Performance Studies, New York University*



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PARTICIPANTS

NANCY J. ADLER

Professor, Organizational Behavior, McGill University

Nancy J. Adler is the S. Bronfman Chair in Management at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. She consults and conducts research on global leadership, cross-cultural management, and the arts and leadership. She has written extensively on the role of art and beauty in leadership and management, drawing on her own experience as a visual artist. She argues that the best leadership is ultimately a highly creative, artistic practice and that artistic methodologies can help develop indispensable leadership skills. Nancy consults with major companies and government organizations worldwide and has been recognized with numerous awards for her work. She was elected to the Fellows of the Academy of International Business and the Academy of Management and inducted into the Royal Society of Canada. She has been an artist-in-residence at the Banff Centre and her art exhibition, *Reality in Translation: Going Beyond the Dehydrated Language of Management*, was presented at Galerie MX in Montreal in 2010. Her paintings are held in private collections in Asia, the Americas, and Europe.

ELIZABETH ALEXANDER

Writer and Director, Creativity and Free Expression, Ford Foundation

Elizabeth Alexander joined the Ford Foundation in 2015 as director of Creativity and Free Expression. She guides the foundation's efforts to examine how cultural narratives affect and shape social movements and how media and the arts, including film and visual storytelling, can contribute to a fairer and more just society. She is the author of six books of poetry, including *American Sublime*, a finalist for the 2005 Pulitzer Prize; two collections of essays; and *The Light of the World*, a critically acclaimed memoir on love and loss. Her writing explores such subjects as race, gender, politics, art, and history. In 2009, she delivered her poem "Praise Song for the Day" for President Barack Obama's first inauguration. Elizabeth has taught with distinction at the University of Chicago, New York University, and Yale University. She has received many awards, fellowships, and honorary degrees, including the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award for Lifetime Achievement in Poetry. She is the inaugural recipient of the Jackson Poetry Prize and a chancellor of the Academy of American Poets. She earned a bachelor's degree from Yale University, a master's degree from Boston University, and a PhD in English from the University of Pennsylvania.

HILTON ALS

Writer and Critic, "New Yorker" Magazine

Hilton Als is an author, critic, and artist. He is a theater critic at the *New Yorker*, where he has been a contributor since 1989. Previously, he was a staff writer for the *Village Voice* and an editor-at-large at *Vibe*. He edited the catalog for the Whitney Museum of American Art's groundbreaking exhibition *Black Male: Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art*, which ran from November 1994 to March 1995. His most recent book of poetic essays, *White Girls*, published in 2013, considers race, gender, and history through the lens of personal experience, literature, and art. In 1997, the New York Association of Black Journalists awarded Hilton first prize in both Magazine Critique/Review and Magazine Arts and Entertainment. He was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship for Creative Writing in 2000 and the George Jean Nathan Award for Dramatic Criticism for 2002-03. In 2009, Hilton worked with the performer Justin Bond on *Cold Water*, an exhibition of paintings, drawings, and videos at La MaMa Galleria. In 2010, he co-curated *Self-Consciousness*, at the VeneKlasen/Werner gallery in Berlin. Hilton has taught at Yale University, Wesleyan University, and Smith College.



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POLLY CARL

Creative Director, ArtsEmerson

Polly Carl is creative director of ArtsEmerson where s/he co-artistic directs an annual season of international work for the downtown theaters of Emerson College. S/he develops, dramaturges, and presents an eclectic array of work from diverse artists from around the globe. Operating from the core belief that theater is for everyone, Polly seeks to use the work of the theater in concert with opportunities for public dialogue to foster civic transformation through the shared experience of art. Polly is also director and co-founder of HowlRound, a knowledge commons by and for the theater community. In addition, as a Distinguished Artist-in-Residence on the Emerson faculty, s/he has developed a creative producing curriculum for Emerson College students to fully explore the professional work of ArtsEmerson and HowlRound. S/he previously worked as producing artistic director at the Playwrights' Center in Minneapolis, and as director of artistic development for Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago. Last year, s/he co-taught a course on beauty and aesthetics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Business with Diane Ragsdale. S/he holds a PhD in comparative studies in discourse and society from the University of Minnesota.

CHARLES EISENSTEIN

Speaker and Author, "The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know Is Possible"

Charles Eisenstein is a teacher, speaker, and writer, focusing on themes of civilization, consciousness, money, identity, and human cultural evolution. He is the author of several books, including *The Ascent of Humanity*, *Sacred Economics*, and *The More Beautiful World Our Hearts Know Is Possible*. He is interested in exploring the boundaries of what is "possible" according to our received beliefs, received habits, received technologies, and received ways of knowing. His background includes a degree in mathematics and philosophy from Yale University, a decade in Taiwan working as a translator, and stints as a college instructor, a yoga teacher, and a construction worker. He currently writes and speaks full time about how we can effect a change in our culture's "mythology"—a transition in civilization's defining stories that tell us who we are, how the world works, how change happens, how to live life, what is important, what is valuable, and what is real.

TERESITA FERNÁNDEZ

Artist

Teresita Fernández is an artist best known for her prominent public sculptures and unconventional use of materials. Her work is characterized by an interest in perception and the psychology of looking. Her experiential, large-scale works are often inspired by landscape and place, as well as by diverse historical and cultural references. They present spectacular optical illusions that evoke natural phenomena and engage audiences in immersive art experiences. Teresita has received numerous awards, including a MacArthur Fellowship, a Guggenheim Fellowship, a National Endowment for the Arts grant, and a Tiffany Biennial Award. Appointed by President Barack Obama, she is the first Latina to serve on the US Commission of Fine Arts, a 100-year-old federal panel that advises the president and Congress on national matters of design and aesthetics. In June 2015, *Fata Morgana*, the artist's largest public art project, opened in New York's Madison Square Park. Teresita is currently working on a Ford Foundation-funded artist's initiative that focuses on the Latino American future in museums and cultural institutions.



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ALEXIS FRASZ

Founding Member, Helicon Collaborative

Alexis Frasz is a founding member of Helicon Collaborative, an organization launched in 2007 to focus on amplifying the role of culture in making communities better places for all people—more vital, sustainable, and just. Alexis currently leads strategic initiatives on the role of the arts in addressing issues of climate sustainability, equity, and the value of beauty, meaning, and empathy as essential parts of individual and societal health. She is also leading a national research project on socially engaged artistic practice. Alexis has worked as a researcher, creative strategist, and consultant in the arts and cultural sector for over a decade. She helped conceive and now co-manages the Art of Change initiative for the Ford Foundation. Previously, Alexis worked at New York's Center for an Urban Future, where she contributed to a comprehensive study of the city's creative sector, *Creative New York*. Alexis serves on the board of Food Shift, a Bay Area nonprofit organization working to end food waste and hunger. She holds a BA in cultural anthropology from Princeton University and has pursued master's-level studies in Chinese medicine.

CAROL GRAHAM

Well-Being Researcher, Brookings Institution

Carol Graham is Leo Pasvolsky Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, College Park Professor in the School of Public Policy at the University of Maryland, and Research Fellow at the Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA) in Bonn, Germany. She served on a National Academy of Sciences panel on well-being metrics for policy in 2012-13, and received a Distinguished Research Fellow award for significant contribution to the field from the International Society of Quality of Life Studies in 2014. She has also served as special adviser to the vice president of the Inter-American Development Bank, as a visiting fellow in the Office of the Chief Economist of the World Bank, and as a consultant to the International Monetary Fund and the Harvard Institute for International Development. Her most recent books are *The Pursuit of Happiness: An Economy of Well-Being* (Brookings, 2011) and *Happiness around the World: The Paradox of Happy Peasants and Miserable Millionaires* (Oxford University Press, 2010). She is senior editor at *Behavioral Science and Policy* and an associate editor at the *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*. She has an AB from Princeton University, an MA from the Johns Hopkins University, and a DPhil from Oxford University.

TRAJAL HARRELL

Choreographer and Dancer

Trajal Harrell is a choreographer and dancer whose work has been presented by The Kitchen, New York Live Arts, TBA Festival, Walker Art Center, Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art, Danspace Project, PS122, Philadelphia's Fringe Festival, and Los Angeles' REDCAT Theater, as well as in numerous international festivals and visual art contexts. He has received several prestigious fellowships and in 2014 was an inaugural recipient of the Doris Duke Impact Award. He is known for *Twenty Looks or Paris is Burning at the Judson Church*, a series of works "created in seven sizes" that re-imagine a meeting between early postmodern dance and the voguing dance tradition. *Antigone Sr.*, the "largest size" in the series, won the 2012 Bessie Award for Outstanding Production. Most recently, Trajal began research examining Japanese *butoh* dance from the theoretical praxis of voguing. This latest body of work includes *Used, Abused, and Hung Out to Dry*, which was commissioned by and premiered at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA); *The Return of the Modern Dance* for Cullberg Ballet; *The Ghost of Montpellier Meets the Samurai*, which premiered at the 2015 Montpellier Danse festival; and *The Return of La Argentina*, co-commissioned by MoMA and Le Centre National de la Danse.



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GLADSTONE (FLUNEY) HUTCHINSON

Associate Professor, Economics, Lafayette College

Gladstone (Fluney) Hutchinson is associate professor of economics, and founder and director of the Economic Empowerment and Global Learning Project at Lafayette College. His professional work focuses on economics as a moral philosophy and its foundational role in social living, especially in the areas of distributive justice and human security, and the freedoms and happiness people enjoy. He has led community development projects in numerous communities, including the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans and rural villages in Honduras. The EEGLP has been recognized for its leadership in higher education by the Clinton Foundation, the US Environmental Protection Agency, the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, and the Association of American Colleges and Universities. Fluney is currently a co-principal investigator of Performing Our Future, a national project on culture and community development. He was awarded the Prime Minister of Jamaica's Medal of Appreciation for Contributions to Economic Policy and National Development in July 2013 for his work overseeing the country's first long-term development plan. He serves on the National Advisory Board of Imagining America, a higher education consortium dedicated to strengthening academic institutions' commitment to valuing publicly engaged scholarship and the arts, design, and cultural humanities disciplines.

SUNIL IYENGAR

Director, Research and Analysis, National Endowment for the Arts

Sunil Iyengar directs the Office of Research and Analysis at the National Endowment for the Arts and chairs the Interagency Task Force on the Arts and Human Development, which includes representatives from across federal government departments, including the Department of Health and Human Services, the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, and the Department of Education. The Task Force's goal is to encourage more and better research on how the arts can help people reach their full potential at all stages of life. Recent projects Sunil has overseen include *How Creativity Works in the Brain* (2015), a summary of themes and trends emerging from psychological and neurobiological studies of creativity and a 2014 symposium, and *Measuring Cultural Engagement: A Quest for New Terms, Tools, and Techniques*, based on a convening at which cultural researchers, practitioners, and policymakers reviewed common assumptions, techniques, and challenges in measuring cultural engagement. He writes poetry, and his book reviews have appeared in publications such as the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *American Scholar*, *New Criterion*, *Essays in Criticism*, and *Contemporary Poetry Review*. Sunil has a BA in English from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

MARIA ROSARIO JACKSON

Senior Advisor, Arts and Culture, Kresge Foundation

Maria Rosario Jackson's expertise is in comprehensive community revitalization, systems change, the dynamics of race and ethnicity, and the roles of and arts and culture in communities. She is senior advisor to the Kresge Foundation and also consults with national and regional foundations and government agencies. In 2013, President Barack Obama appointed her to the National Council on the Arts. She is on the advisory boards of Lambent Foundation and LA Commons, and on the board of directors of the Alliance for California Traditional Arts. Previously, Maria was based at Urban Institute in Washington, DC, for 18 years, where she was a senior researcher in the Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center and founding director of UI's Culture, Creativity, and Communities Program. At UI, she led pioneering research on arts and culture indicators, measuring cultural vitality, arts and culture in community revitalization, development of art spaces, and support systems for artists. She also worked on studies of public housing programs, urban parks, violence prevention, and teacher training initiatives. Maria earned a PhD in urban planning from the University of California, Los Angeles, and an MPA from the University of Southern California.



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ANNA MARAZUELA KIM

Associate Fellow, Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture, University of Virginia

Anna Marazuela Kim is currently an Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at the Courtauld Institute of Art in London. Since 2011, she has been a fellow of the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture at the University of Virginia, where she earned a PhD in the history of art and architecture in 2014. She is the lead scholar for research on the role of art and aesthetics in urban revitalization for the Thriving Cities project, which is based there. Her wide-ranging research engages the deep structures of people's complex relation to images, drawing together ethics and aesthetics, phenomenology, anthropology, religion, and technology. As part of an international network of scholars and curators, she contributed to the 2013 exhibition at Tate Britain, *Art Under Attack: Histories of British Iconoclasm*, and an edited volume, *Striking Images, Iconoclasm Past and Present* (Ashgate, 2013). She has been program coordinator for a number of transdisciplinary initiatives, including a National Endowment for the Humanities-sponsored seminar at the Kunsthistorisches Institut-Florenz on Leonardo da Vinci: Between Art and Science. She is currently co-organizing a symposium on art and terrorism to be held in February 2016.

KATE D. LEVIN

Principal, Cultural Assets Management, Bloomberg Associates

Kate D. Levin oversees the arts program at Bloomberg Philanthropies, which supports a range of organizations and initiatives in the US and around the world. She is also a principal at Bloomberg Associates, a philanthropic consulting firm, where she advises cities on strengthening cultural assets and public-private partnerships. From 2002 to 2013, Kate served as commissioner of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. The NYC DCA is the largest arts funder in the US, and while there Kate increased support for cultural organizations; expanded creative sector participation in economic development, tourism, human services, and education initiatives; and oversaw the city's permanent and temporary public art projects. She is the inaugural fellow at the National Center for Arts Research at Southern Methodist University. A former professor of English at City College/CUNY, Kate also served in the administration of Mayor Ed Koch.

MARGARET MORTON

Program Officer, Creativity and Free Expression, Ford Foundation

Margaret Morton joined the Ford Foundation in February 2015 as part of the Creativity and Free Expression team, supporting grant making in the arts and other forms of cultural expression. Previously, she was deputy commissioner of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, overseeing funding for arts and cultural program activities and capital infrastructure. She also served as the department's general counsel, in which capacity she devised new frameworks for grant programs, designed development resources to support arts administrators, and implemented a new model for addressing the affordability of space for artists. In addition, she guided large-scale capital funding initiatives for cultural institutions, including Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn Academy of Music, and BRIC Arts | Media House. Margaret serves on the Art Law Committee of the New York City Bar Association and holds a JD from Georgetown University Law Center and a bachelor's degree from Barnard College.



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HILARY PENNINGTON

Vice President, Education, Creativity, and Free Expression, Ford Foundation

Hilary Pennington is vice president of the Ford Foundation's Education, Creativity, and Free Expression program. She leads Ford's work on school reform in the US and higher education around the world, next-generation media policy and journalism, and support for arts and culture. She also oversees regional programming in four offices based in Africa and the Middle East. Hilary is a national expert on postsecondary education and intergenerational change. Between 2006 and 2012, she served as director of Education, Postsecondary Success, and Special Initiatives at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation where she guided grant programs across the country and worldwide. Before joining Gates, she was a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress and president and CEO of Jobs for the Future, a research and policy development organization she co-founded. She graduated from the Yale School of Management and Yale College, holds graduate degrees from Oxford University and the Episcopal Divinity School, and in 2000 was a fellow at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

DIANE RAGSDALE

Visiting Artist and Lecturer, University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Business

Diane Ragsdale holds an MFA in theater and is an independent arts researcher, lecturer, and blogger at artsjournal.com/jumper. In the spring of 2015, she was a visiting guest artist and lecturer at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Business, where she designed and taught an experimental course on beauty and aesthetics to undergraduate business majors. She is particularly interested in the relationship between aesthetics, ethics, and economics. She is currently writing a doctoral dissertation on how the relationship between the nonprofit and commercial theater sectors in the United States has evolved since the 1940s. Since moving to the Netherlands in 2010, in addition to working toward a PhD, Diane has also lectured within the Cultural Economics and Cultural Sociology departments at Erasmus University in Rotterdam. She worked for more than 20 years in the arts and culture sector in the US before returning to the academy. In the decade prior to moving to the Netherlands, she was a program officer for theater and dance at the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in New York City and, before that, managing director of On the Boards, a contemporary performing arts center in Seattle.

CLAUDIA RANKINE

Poet

Claudia Rankine has published several collections of poetry, including her most recent book, *Citizen: An American Lyric* (2014), a finalist for the National Book Award and winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award in Poetry, the PEN Center USA Poetry Award, and the Forward Prize for Best Poetry Collection. Her work often crosses genres as it tracks wild and precise movements of mind. Claudia has co-edited several poetry anthologies and her poems have been included in the anthologies *Great American Prose Poems: From Poe to the Present* (2003), *Best American Poetry* (2001), and *The Garden Thrives: Twentieth Century African-American Poetry* (1996). Her play *Detour/South Bronx* premiered in 2009 at New York's Foundry Theatre. Claudia has been awarded fellowships from the Academy of American Poets, the National Endowment for the Arts, and Lannan Foundation. In 2013, she was elected as a chancellor of the Academy of American Poets, and in 2014 she received a Lannan Literary Award. She has taught at the University of Houston, Case Western Reserve University, Barnard College, and Pomona College. Born in Kingston, Jamaica, Claudia earned a BA at Williams College and an MFA at Columbia University.



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SARAH RUHL

Playwright

Sarah Ruhl is a playwright whose works include *The Oldest Boy*, *In the Next Room or the vibrator play*, *The Clean House*, *Passion Play*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, *Melancholy Play*, *Eurydice*, *Orlando*, *Late: A Cowboy Song*, *Dear Elizabeth*, and *Stage Kiss*. She is a two-time Pulitzer Prize finalist and a Tony Award nominee. Her plays have been produced on Broadway, and off-Broadway at Playwrights Horizons, Second Stage Theatre, and Lincoln Center's Lyceum and Mitzi Newhouse Theaters. Her plays have also been produced all over the US and internationally, often with premieres at Yale Repertory Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Goodman Theatre, and the Piven Theatre Workshop in Chicago. In 2014, Sarah was the second most frequently produced playwright in the country. She has received the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, the Whiting Award, the Lilly Award, a PEN award for mid-career playwrights, and a MacArthur Fellowship. Her book of essays, *100 Essays I Don't Have Time to Write*, was published by Faber and Faber last fall. Sarah teaches at the Yale School of Drama. Originally from Chicago, she received her MFA from Brown University where she studied with Paula Vogel.

MARTIN SELIGMAN

Director, Positive Psychology Center, University of Pennsylvania

Martin Seligman works on learned helplessness, depression, optimism, and positive psychology. He is commonly known as the founder of Positive Psychology, an approach that focuses on understanding and amplifying the mechanisms for enhancing personal growth and life satisfaction, rather than simply treating pathology. He has been working to promote this as a field since 2000. He is the recipient of three Distinguished Scientific Contribution awards from the American Psychological Association, and the Lifetime Achievement Award of the Society for Research in Psychopathology. Martin received both the American Psychological Society's William James Fellow Award (for contribution to basic science) and its James McKeen Cattell Fellow Award (for the application of psychological knowledge). He received the British Academy's inaugural Wiley Prize for lifetime contributions to psychology. He holds five honorary doctorates from prestigious institutions that include Uppsala University in Sweden and Complutense University of Madrid. Martin was elected president of the American Psychological Association in 1996 by the largest vote in modern history. His presidential initiatives concerned the prevention of ethnopolitical warfare and the founding of Positive Psychology.

HOLLY SIDFORD

Founding Member, Helicon Collaborative

Holly Sidford is a strategic thinker, program developer, and fundraiser with three decades of experience leading and developing nonprofit cultural and philanthropic organizations. She founded Helicon Collaborative in 2007 to elevate creativity, equity, sustainability, and meaning, and works with national partners on research, developing strategy, and designing and implementing program initiatives. She co-manages the Ford Foundation's Art of Change project. Holly was the founding president of Leveraging Investments in Creativity (LINC), a 10-year initiative (2003 to 2013) that enhanced support systems for creative artists across the country. Prior to that, she was program director for Arts, Parks, and Adult Literacy at the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund; executive director of the New England Foundation for the Arts; and associate director of the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities. Holly serves on the boards of Sadie Nash Leadership Project, an award-winning leadership program for young female leaders in metropolitan New York, and Fractured Atlas, a national organization pioneering technology-based ways to empower artists, cultural organizations, and other creative enterprises. She holds a BA in American history and literature from Mount Holyoke College and a management certificate from Columbia University.



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STEVEN J. TEPPER

Dean, Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts, Arizona State University

Steven J. Tepper is dean of the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts at Arizona State University, the nation's largest comprehensive design and arts school at a research university. He is a leading writer and speaker on US cultural policy, and his work has fostered national discussions around topics of cultural engagement, everyday creativity, and the transformative possibilities of a 21st-century creative campus. Prior to his appointment at ASU, Steven was on the faculty at Vanderbilt University where he was a chief architect of the Curb Center for Art, Enterprise, and Public Policy, a national think tank for cultural policy and creativity. Steven holds a bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a master's in public policy from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, and a PhD in sociology from Princeton University.

KRISTA TIPPETT

Radio Host, "On Being"

Krista Tippett created and hosts the Peabody Award-winning public radio program and podcast *On Being*, and curates the *Civil Conversations Project*, an emergent approach to new conversation and relationship-building across significant difference. She grew up in Oklahoma, attended Brown University, and became a journalist and diplomat in Cold War Berlin before attending divinity school in the 1990s. Her work focuses on conversations about large questions of meaning in 21st-century lives. For her, beauty is something to pursue alongside wisdom, indeed as an essential element of it. Poets, artists, and musicians illuminate this, and so do her Muslim conversation partners, who insist on beauty as a "core moral value," a litmus test of whether something is of God. Physicists and mathematicians explain that if an equation is not elegant and beautiful, it is likely not true. She's grounded and nourished by a working definition of beauty that she learned from the late Irish poet and philosopher John O'Donohue: "Beauty is that, in the presence of which, you feel more alive."

ALEXANDRA T. VAZQUEZ

Associate Professor, Performance Studies, New York University

Alexandra T. Vazquez was born in Miami, Florida. She is associate professor in the Department of Performance Studies at New York University. Her book, *Listening in Detail: Performances of Cuban Music* (Duke University Press, 2013), won the American Studies Association's Lora Romero Book Prize in 2014. Alexandra's work has been featured in the journals *American Quarterly*, *Social Text*, *Women and Performance*, and *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, and in the edited volumes *Reggaeton* and *Pop When the World Falls Apart*.



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SELECTED RESOURCES

Participants are indicated in red.

Adler, Nancy J. “Finding Beauty in a Fractured World: Art Inspires Leaders—Leaders Change the World.” *Academy of Management Review* (2015): 480-94. [Article](#).

Suggests that because they help us see things not as they are, but as they could be, the artistic mindset and skills are key to envisioning and realizing a better, more sustainable and healthier future. Using an “artist’s lens” in various worldly contexts can help us “to see more and to interpret what we see in more novel, complex, and multilayered ways.”

Carl, Polly. “The Beauty of Complexity: Or the Death of the Pure Aesthetic.” *HowlRound* (6 Nov 2015). [Essay/transcribed lecture](#).

Challenges the predominant orientation of the arts toward a “pure aesthetic”—the idea that curatorial expertise “gives us an objectivity that allows us to identify good art, art that ‘works’ and has impact. And generally we extrapolate from believing we know the truly beautiful that engages our hearts to purporting to know what will engage the hearts of our audience and our community.” Instead, we could consider that what moves each of us might be different, equally valid forms of beauty, and ask what that might mean for us as artistic curators and intermediaries.

Eisenstein, Charles. “Charles Eisenstein: More Beautiful World/Findhorn.” (1 Sept 2014). [Short video](#).

A brief video meditation that connects the experience of natural beauty with grief at realizing the injustices in the world. We are increasingly recognizing that the old story of civilization isn’t working, and we must be willing to step into the space of the unknown in order to create a more beautiful world.

Graham, Carol. “Happiness Requires Opportunity, Not Just Contentment.” *Brookings Institution* (5 Jan 2015). [Blog post](#).

Distinguishes between three types of well-being: hedonic (daily life experience), evaluative (general life satisfaction), and eudemonic (purpose and meaning). Research has found that while the poor are often able to achieve a sense daily well-being in a utilitarian sense, they are often severely restricted in their ability to pursue lives of meaning and purpose (eudemonic happiness).

Jackson, Maria Rosario. “What Are the Makings of a Healthy Community?” *The Role of Art and Artists in Creative Placemaking* (Goethe Institut, 2015) and “Arts, Culture and Communities: Do Our Neighborhoods Inspire Our Children to Reach Higher?” *State of Black America* (National Urban League, 2012). [Selected excerpts](#).

Draws from research to argue that a community’s ability to express itself through art and other forms of beauty is a critical aspect of community health that is often overlooked by urban planners and policymakers. Questions how valuing and including this as a metric of “successful” places might change the way we plan and design cities and allocate resources.



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Kim, Anna Marazuela, Elizabeth Merrill, Christopher C. Miller, and Christopher S. Yates. “The Beautiful.” *Thriving Cities* (6 Nov 2015). [Project brief](#).

Asserts the importance of “The Beautiful” as one of six key foundational elements critical for human communities to thrive. This encompasses the built environment and urban design, as well as the realms of artistic and creative expression.

Ragsdale, Diane. “Approaching Justice and Democracy (in Beauty Class).” *Jumper* (29 Apr 2015). [Blog post](#).

Reflects on Elaine Scarry’s monograph *On Beauty and Being Just* and other sources to explore the link between beauty and justice and the importance of beauty in a democratic society. The bottom right-hand navigation bar has more posts from Diane Ragsdale’s beauty class at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Business.

Rankine, Claudia. *Citizen: An American Lyric*. (Graywolf Press, 2014). [Poetry book](#).

Claudia Rankine’s poetic work explores race and injustice in America, putting the question of seeing at the forefront. Who sees? Who is seen? What and how do we intentionally avoid seeing? How does not seeing/being seen cause injury? A visceral and beautiful demonstration of how art, as a form of seeing, can reveal deeper truths and propel justice.

Rudd, Melanie, Kathleen D. Vohs, and Jennifer Aaker. “Awe Expands People’s Perception of Time, Alters Decision Making, and Enhances Well-Being.” *Psychological Science* (2012): 1130-136. [Article](#).

Research suggests that experiences of awe make people feel that they have more time available, are more willing to volunteer their time to help other people, more strongly prefer experiences over material products, and experience greater life satisfaction. Concludes that this effect is due to awe’s ability to bring people into the present moment.

Sandel, Michael. “What Money Can’t Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets.” *Chicago Ideas Week* (4 Mar 2003). [Lecture](#).

From the perspective of political philosophy, questions the role that markets and money do and should play in our society. Argues that we have drifted from *having* a market economy to *being* a market society, and suggests that we reclaim spheres of life where market values don’t belong.

Scarry, Elaine. *On Beauty and Being Just*. The Tanner Lectures on Human Values. Yale University (25 Mar 1998). [Monograph/transcribed lecture](#).

Counters common criticisms of beauty, that it is in some way a distraction from the world, and instead details multiple ways that beauty in fact moves us toward justice in unique ways. Beauty and justice share the same synonym—fairness—and the etymological opposite of both is injury.



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Tepper, Steven. “Thinking ‘Bigger Than Me’ in the Liberal Arts.” *Chronicle of Higher Education* (15 Sept 2014). [Article](#).

Suggests that the “me” era of personal creativity and expression may have gone too far, and argues that “bigger than me” experiences are critical for healthy human development. The arts are key training grounds for this development as places where “students hone their empathic imagination, routinely shift contexts, ask ‘what if’ questions, try out multiple perspectives, and, in the words of [Liz] Lerman, experience the ‘free fall’ of recognizing that reality is up for grabs and their assumptions about the world might not be shared.”

Tippett, Krista. Producer. “The Inner Landscape of Beauty, with John O’Donohue.” *On Being* (5 Aug 2015). [Radio interview](#).

Interview with late Irish poet and philosopher John O’Donohue who makes the case for beauty as a human calling. He articulates how the material and the spiritual—the visible and the invisible—intertwine in human experience. The beauty of O’Donohue’s voice alone inspires.



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