

BU Arts Initiative Annual Report

August 2019



The Boston University Arts Initiative works to deepen the presence and impact of the arts in the academic life of the university, ensuring that the arts are fundamental to the BU student experience through faculty driven, student-oriented arts programming.

HIGHLIGHTS:

In FY19 the BU Arts Initiative focused on producing major programming with high impact and high visibility to the BU community and beyond (see page 3 infographic). At the same time throughout the year we offer a number of introductory ways for students to engage in the arts through programming in our office, discount and free tickets to Boston area events, and general promotion of campus and regional arts programming. This year we also partnered on programming with two community based organizations, Brookline Puppet Theatre and ReelAbilities Film Festival.

Our programming is always intentional about representing the broadest spectrum of identities to model inclusive practices. Our major program artists this year included individuals who identify as Black, African American, Transgender, and Native-American. We featured regionally and internationally recognized poets Danielle Legros Georges, Gerald Vizenor, and Sonia Sanchez; award winning novelist Charlie Jane Anders and producer/screenwriter Leigh Dana Jackson; and world-renowned filmmaker Werner Herzog. Each event was planned and executed in collaboration with one or more BU faculty. Each artist spent significant time with students through class visits and workshops, but none worked as intensely and joyously as puppeteer Tarish Pipkins.

Pipkins, who in January *The Clyde Fitch Report* named as one of 25 Change-Making Artists You Should Track During 2019, was in residence at BU from November 4 to 10, 2018. The residency was proposed and planned in collaboration with School of Visual Arts, Art Education Faculty member Felice Amato, and was co-sponsored by the School of Visual Arts and Brookline's Puppet Showplace Theatre.



Puppeteer Tarish Pipkins, a.k.a. "Jeghetto" works with students during a class visit at CFA

During the residency Tarish:

- participated in an AfroFuturism panel discussion with BU SVA Alum Joel Gill
- conducted multiple puppet building workshops for the public, School of Theatre, and art education students
- spoke to students at the BUild Lab about launching a creative business
- presented on using puppets in special education
- shared his work with 200+ Brookline High School students
- performed, with local puppeteers, his show *Just Another Lynching: An American Horror Story* at Puppet Showplace Theatre (twice)
- hosted a puppet slam at BU Central

In total, more than 600 people attended or participated in events with Tarish. As a result of her outstanding work in planning and executing this residency with the BU Arts Initiative staff, Felice Amato was named the 2019 BU Provost Faculty Arts Fellow.



The Zhou Family Band (China) performs during the inaugural BU Global Music Festival

In the fall of 2018 we also launched the inaugural BU Global Music Festival, produced in collaboration with School of Music. Associate Professor Marié Abe, serves as the festival Artistic Director, and the festival was supported by the Boston Foundation, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Boston Cultural Council, and the following BU offices and programs: The Karbank Fund for Global Music, The College of Fine Arts, BU Global Programs, The Pardee School of Global Studies, The Dean of Students, and Global House. The festival, which featured 14 international and local musical acts, and took place on October 5th & 6th, welcomed just over 500 festival attendees, 53% of which were BU Community Members. The 2018 BU Global Music Festival was named 3rd best newcomer festival and 3rd best small/mid-size festival by the Transglobal World Music Chart Festival Awards.

The BU Global Music Festival in the fall, and our now annual spring partnership with BU Conversations in the Arts and Ideas Lecture (CORE, BUCH, and Kilachand Honors Program) provide two highly visible, large-scale anchor programs along with our residencies. In addition, the office continued to expand upon our more grass roots programming, including the Fall Arts Fair, end-of-semester study breaks, the weekly campus arts event email, office gallery receptions, Arts Insiders, and Boston Ballet's Nutcracker ticket sales. This year we also started a new program in our office, First Fridays, where students can close out their week enjoying a casual art activity and live music.

It needs to be noted that our capacity to execute day to day activities and our residencies has been significantly increased by the addition of an administrative coordinator to our staff. We are tremendously grateful for the support of the Provost and the Office of the Provost.

2019 BU Arts Initiative EVENTS & PARTICIPATION

The Numbers:

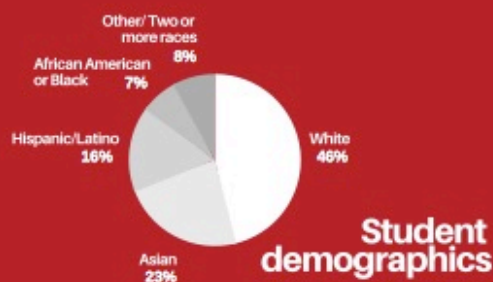
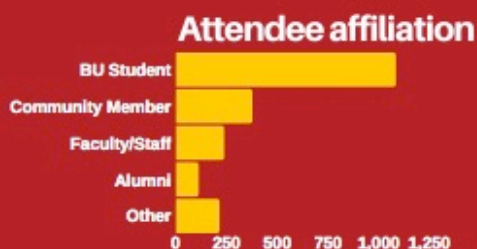
44 events with
22 unique schools,
departments, or programs
\$255k total spent



Attendees:

4,800
Total attendees

1,084
Unique Students
representing all schools
& colleges



Note: Total events includes grant funded. Co-sponsored events occurred with Arts Education, College of Communications, College of Fine Arts, College of General Studies, Dean of Students Office, Favorite Poem Project, BU Center for Humanities, Kilachand Honors Program, CFA Leadership and Outreach, Dean of Students, Innovate@BU, Musicology & Ethnomusicology, BU Global Programs, and Pardee School of Global Studies. See page four for program grantees. Unique student count, affiliations, and demographics were based on attendees we were able to track. Demographics were collected by asking attendees to self-identify and through Institutional Relations data. Numbers do not include BSO and Museum attendees.

OTHER PROGRAMS:

Marketing/Promotion

The weekly on campus arts email is sent to more than 13,500 individual emails and regularly sees a 26% to 30% open rate. We use email and social media to promote all arts events at BU, not just our sponsored events. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have 2,133, 1,293, and 1,292 followers respectively. For September through April our tweets and retweets saw a respectable 795 engagements. Additionally, our staff participated in 19 university orientations, fairs, or resource expos throughout the year to share the programs and resources of the Arts Initiative.

Museum Membership & BSO Card Participation

We saw a marked increase in museum and BSO visits in FY19. On average we spent \$2.44 per visit to all our membership locations, which is down \$0.61 from last year.

Museum/BSO	FY17 Total Participation	FY18 Total Participation	FY19 Total Participation	% Increase from FY18
Museum of Fine Arts	13,604	17,500	20,715	18%
Isabella Stewart Gardner	6,300	5,624	6,919	17%
Institute of Contemporary Art	2,003	2,079	4,338	109%
Harvard Art Museum	565	1,221	1,417	16%
Boston Symphony Orchestra	1,765	2,142	2,849	33%
TOTAL	24,237	28,566	36,238	27%

Arts Grants

FY19 was a milestone, as it marks our fifth year of awarding Graduate Arts Research Grants in partnership with the Associate Provost of Graduate Affairs. In those five years, we have distributed more than \$106,000 to 41 graduate students for arts related research.

This year a total of \$52,053 in grants was distributed in the following ways:

Interdisciplinary Arts Programming Grants: 12 grants to The Center for Humanities, Romance Studies, MET Gastronomy, World Languages & Literature (3), School of Visual Arts, Music Education, African American Studies, Marsh Chapel & Religious Life, BU Galleries, and Musicology

Social Impact Grants: 3 grants to student organizations in College of Fine Arts and Sargent College

Arts Integration: 6 grants awarded to faculty in Musicology, Romance Studies (2), Dance, and World Languages and Literature.

Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) Arts Research Awards: 4 grants to students in Comparative Literature, Music, Music Performance, and Music Education

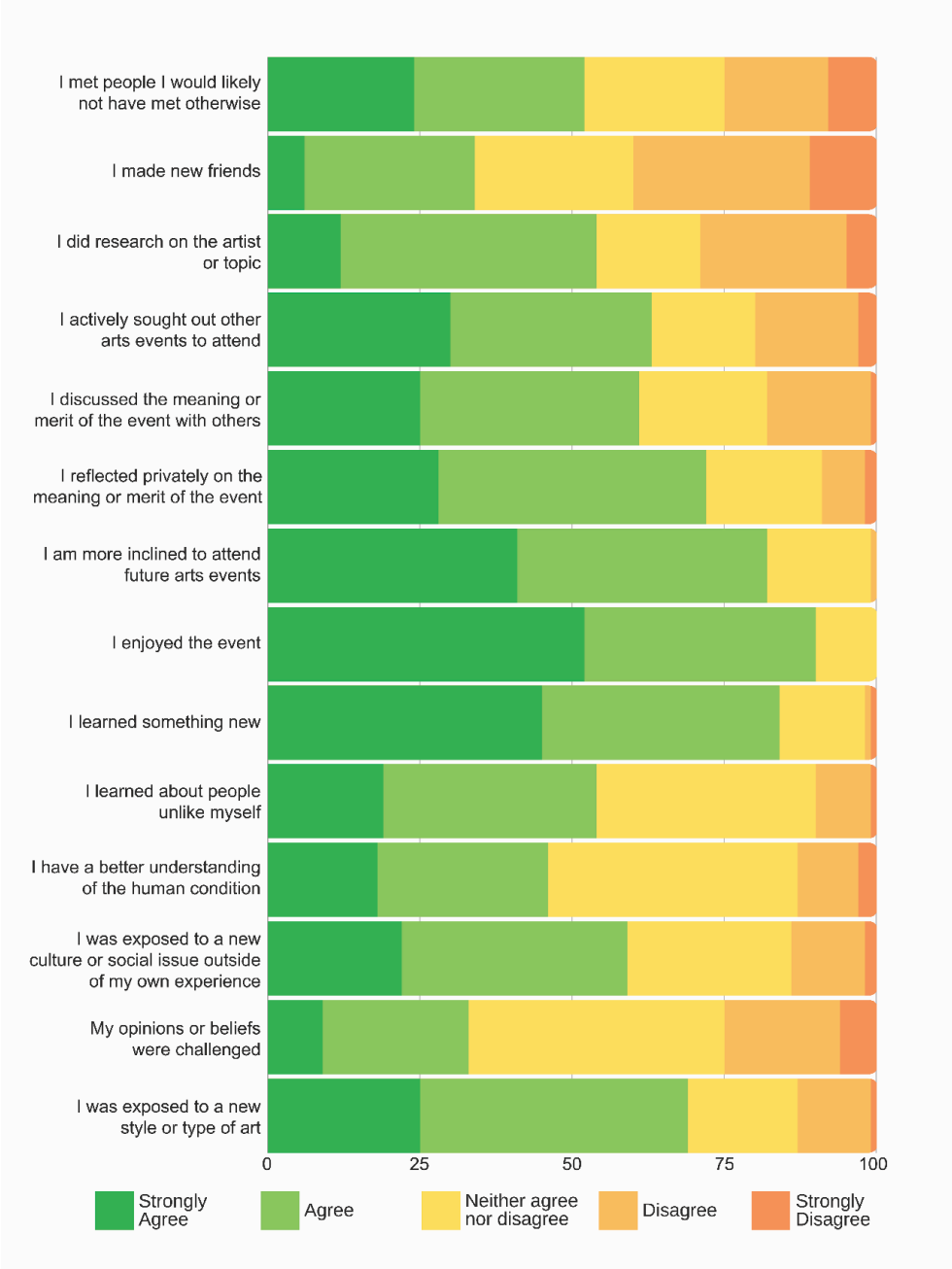
Graduate Arts Research Grants: 8 grants to students in Playwriting, History of Art & Architecture, Sculpture, Archeology, Social Work, Musicology (2), and Biology.

ASSESSMENT:

Program and Learning Outcomes

Responses to our student survey continue to affirm what we know about barriers to arts engagement and ways students receive information. Of the respondents who did not attend any arts events at BU this year, their top reasons were “*I didn’t know about the events,*” and “*I don’t have time.*” Of those who attended any arts event, 57% attended something at least once a month, which remains similar to past years data. The BU Arts Initiative weekly email continues to be the top way students found out about events, with BU Today rising to the second, and word of mouth falling to the third most noted source.

Our learning outcomes assessment tool is designed to measure three areas of intrinsic value in arts engagement; social/ communal bonds, health/happiness, and cognitive/empathetic growth.



CHALLENGES/FUTURE:



BU Bhangra dance team performs at the 2018 Fall Arts Fair

Student Engagement: Like most student programming offices, one of our continued challenges is attracting the attention of students and turning that attention into participation. While, in general, we consider ourselves successful, it can be discouraging to have a 20%, 30%, or even 40% drop off between registration and attendance at an event. Our model of developing programming with faculty does guarantee some level of success for student participation, as faculty can require or encourage attendance. However, we will continue to explore creative ways to engage BU students.

BU Global Music Festival: The BU Global Music Festival was created to provide outstanding global and inclusive programming to BU and the region and to enhance the BU brand regionally. However, it is a challenge to start something new. External funders, of which Boston has few, are hesitant to support university programs, particularly without a track record. We are working hard to build the brand and provide the highest quality annual program that will positively represent Boston University to the city and region, and eventually attract a healthy funding base.

Social and Hard Sciences: Soliciting and planning unique and exciting programming with faculty in the arts and humanities at BU presents few challenges. However, building relationships and then programming based in the social and hard sciences can be difficult. We began that journey in FY18 with programs in collaboration with Sociology, and look forward to upcoming programs in FY20 with computational science and the School of Public Health, but we are also eagerly exploring more programming with other social and hard science units at the university.

Public Art: For the last two years we have collaboratively worked with faculty and administration to lay a foundation for improved support and visibility of public art at BU. A public art committee was established two years ago, that is now part of the BU Arts Council. Public art guidelines have been drafted and reviewed by several offices, and a number of new public art initiatives are in the works. In addition, FY20 will see a new public art web page created. Our plan is to continue to build public art programming and solicit more institutional support in the coming years.

BU Arts District: With the addition of the Booth Theatre and WBUR City Space west of



"Writing the Fantastic" reading & panel discussion with [from left to right] Leigh Dana Jackson, Charlie Jane Anders, Theodora Goss, and moderator Regina Hansen.

the BU bridge and the renovation of the College of Fine Arts façade, 808 and Stone Gallery, BU has created a potentially vibrant and exciting arts district that includes those programs as well as the BU Dance Theatre, the Student Theatre, Boston Playwrights' Theatre, and Agganis Arena. The BU Arts Initiative plans to work with the Dean of the College of Fine Arts and other units to encourage the administration and in particular marketing and communications to think and act strategically about how we might leverage such a district to continue to enhance our campus and university profile.

External Relationships: Over the years we have built a number of positive relationships with local arts and cultural organizations usually tied to an individual program. Those have included the Goethe Institute of Boston, The Pao Arts Center, World Music/CRASH Arts (now Global Arts Live), MassCreative, Puppet Showplace Theatre, and the Boston ReelAbilities Film Festival. We are also members/participants in a number of arts service organizations including ArtsBoston, MassCreative, the Fenway Cultural District, Arts Administrators in Higher Education, and the Alliance for the Arts in Research Universities (A2RU). Locally, we plan to continue to expand casual relationships into more ongoing collaborative relationships that provide mutual support for both BU and the community organization. We will work in collaboration with the College of Fine Arts and the MET Arts Administration program to strategically identify and enhance such relationships to benefit students (internships and job opportunities) as well as the entire campus and community with unique programming. Nationally, we need to broaden the awareness on campus of our membership in A2RU and encourage more faculty and leadership participation in the annual conferences.



Marcos Santos' Afro-Brazilian drumming group Grooversity performs outside of the George Sherman Union as part of the BU Global Music Festival