

A NATIONAL CONVENING FOR TEENS IN THE ARTS

# ***STATE OF THE ART:*** **TEENS AND TECHNOLOGY**

2012 EDUCATION REPORT



THE INSTITUTE OF  
CONTEMPORARY ART/BOSTON  
[ICABOSTON.ORG](http://ICABOSTON.ORG)



<b>Introduction by Jill Medvedow</b>	
Ellen Matilda Poss Director.....	<b>1</b>
<b>I. Overview .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>II. Convening Participants.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>III. Topic-Based Discussions.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>IV. Educator Roundtable.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>V. Lessons Learned.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>VI. Teen Stories.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Conference Schedule.....</b>	<b>30</b>

*State of the Art: Teens and Technology*, a National Convening for Teens in the Arts, was sponsored by Chipotle.

The John Hancock Teen Education Program is made possible by significant support from John Hancock Financial Services.

Teen Programs are made possible in part by a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Additional support provided by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts; the Cabot Family Charitable Trust; The Fuller Foundation, Inc.; the JPMorgan Chase Foundation; The Robert Lehman Foundation; the Frank Reed & Margaret Jane Peters Memorial Fund I, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee; the Rowland Foundation, Inc.; the William E. Schrafft and Bertha E. Schrafft Charitable Trust; and the Surdna Foundation.

Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent those of the Institute of Museum and Library Services.





# ***INTRODUCTION***



## The 2012 National Convening for Teens in the Arts was the fourth-annual event of its kind since first being launched by the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston (ICA) in the summer of 2009. Realizing the lack of opportunity for teens and educators to come together to debate and exchange ideas, this event was created to provide a structured forum for teens and museums to actively learn, how best to engage adolescents through contemporary art.

Teens and educators from seven distinctive contemporary arts organizations across the country gathered at the ICA to collectively consider the role of young people in the arts.

The 2012 Convening, entitled *State of the Art: Teens and Technology*, explored the complex intersections among youth, technology, and the arts. Prior to arriving on-site in Boston, participants spent weeks interacting in a series of online forums through which four primary discussion topics for the Convening emerged: technology's role in making art and art institutions more accessible to teens; the differences between a "virtual" and "real" identity; the role of the museum and the necessity of balance in an increasingly technological world; and the question of technology's validity as a pursuit in its own right, or as a means to an end.

With each passing year, the ICA takes feedback and guidance from past participants as a catalyst and guide to implementing changes and improvements to the Teen Convening. Recognizing the need to complement the presentation and dialogue-based format, this year the ICA added a creative, project-based component. In teams that included teens and educators, participants worked with ICA teen alumni and teaching artists to tackle key discussion topics using a diverse range of media including film, audio, and photography. Next, building on the success of the Educator Roundtable, the ICA launched a parallel Teen Roundtable on the last day of the conference, providing participating teens with the opportunity to reflect on the lessons learned from the conference, and to consider how those lessons might be applied at their own institutions.

The 2012 National Convening for Teens in the Arts would not have been possible without the generosity of many individuals and institutions. We offer sincere thanks to Chipotle for sponsoring this year's event, as well as John Hancock Financial Services, and to our other Teen Program funders for their financial support and commitment. We also thank Aaron Rose for his contributions to the conference. ICA Teen Arts Council alumnus Nancy Vega and Teen Arts Council members Olaide Junaid and Romario Accime worked diligently all summer coordinating this event, while Fast Forward alumni Philip Cadet, Rene Dongo, and Connie Yip

worked tirelessly to document all aspects of the program, and we thank them all for their critical assistance. Director of Programs David Henry, Director of Education Monica Garza, Associate Director of Education Gabrielle Wyrick, Teen New Media Program Manager Joe Douillette, and Education Assistant Leah Kandel contributed their time, talent, and leadership, and we are extremely appreciative of their efforts. The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Marwen, Chicago; the Studio Museum in Harlem; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, each demonstrate extraordinary commitment to teen arts education, and we thank them for their partnership. Most importantly, the success and dynamism of the 2012 Convening was due to the enthusiasm, intelligence, and whole-hearted engagement of the participating educators and teens, and to them we extend our deepest thanks.

As an institution dedicated to supporting teens as engaged citizens, thinkers, leaders, and arts audiences, the ICA is thrilled to address our national need for dialogue and community among teens and educators in museums. Since its first year organizing the Convening, the ICA has engaged 14 participating organizations from across the country. Over the past four years, it has been immensely gratifying to all of us at the ICA to see the profound impact that the National Convening for Teens in the Arts has had on the emerging field of teen arts education in museums. This report offers the many ideas that were discussed at the 2012 Convening; it is my hope that it captures the great feelings of urgency and excitement that filled the ICA this past August, and provides inspiration and guidance for further program development at museums and arts institutions nationwide.

Warmly,

**Jill Medvedow**

Ellen Matilda Poss Director



# ***I. OVERVIEW***



While the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston (ICA) is widely known for its groundbreaking exhibitions and cutting-edge performing arts programs, it is equally dedicated to engaging with teen audiences as they consider, challenge, and define themselves and the world around them through the exploration of contemporary art. With each new day, we witness the electric connection between urban teens and contemporary art, and strive to empower these youth as they move through their diverse, complex, and varied paths to becoming critical thinkers, artists, and future leaders. Here at the ICA we strive to provide youth with the opportunities to utilize contemporary art and the museum as key resources in their personal journey to becoming engaged citizens in a broader world and cultural landscape.

Since moving to its current waterfront location in 2006, the ICA's teen programs have grown in an unprecedented way, now averaging more than 7,000 teens served annually.

Developed as a broad spectrum of engagement—from low-commitment, introductory opportunities to connect with the museum, such as Teen Nights and Teen New Media Workshops, to extended, multi-year commitment programs for youth, such as the Teen Arts Council and Fast Forward—teen programs at the ICA are central to the fabric, life, and vibrancy of the institution and its mission. At the heart of the ICA's teen programs stands the museum's annual National Convening for Teens in the Arts.

The 2012 National Convening for Teens in the Arts marks the fourth year since this unique program launched at the ICA in the summer of 2009. As the ICA's teen program grew, and as ICA teens and staff navigated the new and growing field of teen arts education in museums, we came to realize that not only were there precious few professional development opportunities for teens and museums, but there were even fewer opportunities centralizing the voice and leadership of youth in the formation of the field. Utilizing a teen-driven format to empower the youth voice and create a youth-centered impact on the broader field of museum education, the 2009 National Convening for Teens in the Arts, *Generation O*, brought together educators and teens from five national organizations. Held every August since then, teens and educators from diverse organizations, backgrounds, and geographic locales come together at the ICA to engage in a dynamic and intergenerational dialogue. In 2010, participants engaged with notions of identity and

self at the second-annual Teen Convening, *Art and Identity: Making Art to Belong, Making Art to Distinguish Oneself*. In 2011, Teen Convening attendees considered the intersection between contemporary art programming for youth in museums and youth development at *Real Life Remixed*.

For the 2012 National Convening for Teens in the Arts, *State of the Art: Teens and Technology*, attendees eagerly and enthusiastically tackled the complex and wide-reaching subject of youth, technology, and museums. Seven institutions with outstanding programs that engage teens with technology were invited to participate: the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; the ICA/Boston; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Marwen, Chicago; the Studio Museum in Harlem; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco. Prior to the in-person event, all participants came together for a series of lively online forums. These online events not only allowed both teens and educators to become acquainted with open-group dialogue prior to making their way to the ICA, but also created the foundation for discussions during the Convening.

Emerging from these online conversations were four key topics that formed the focal point of the Convening discussion sessions:

- 1) How has technology made art, artists, and art institutions more accessible to teens? And why is that significant?
- 2) What's the difference between the "virtual you" and the "real you"? Can the two ever meet? How does a youth's involvement with a museum/art institution contribute or detract from this phenomenon?

3) Based on the online conversations, the group determined that some of the skills required to be successful in a technological world are also those that are threatened by “too much” technology (patience, diligence, open mindedness, curiosity, communication, self control, and innovation). How does one strike a balance, and how can the museum be a place where that balance is cultivated?

4) Is technological advancement a means to an end, or can it be equal in value as an end in itself? In other words, is technology a tool to reach other goals, or is it a valid pursuit in its own right?

On August 8, 2012, the fourth-annual National Convening for Teens in the Arts kicked off with a welcome from Jill Medvedow, the ICA's Ellen Matilda Poss Director. Following this opening session, teens and educators from each organization presented their distinctive programs to a large public audience in the ICA's Barbara Lee Family Foundation Theater. In the afternoon, attendees worked in small intergenerational and interorganizational groups to develop a collaborative, creative response to one of the Convening's four main topics. Assisted by ICA teen program alumni, teaching artists, and resources from the ICA's Paul and Phyllis Fireman Family Digital Studio, groups utilized a range of media in their responses including audio, film, photography, and handcrafted magazines.

On the first evening, the ICA Teen Arts Council hosted a vibrant Teen Night in celebration of the opening day of the Convening, welcoming more than 500 teens from across the Boston area. This event featured hands on art-making activities, a teen-response video booth, teen-led tours of ICA exhibitions, and youth performers in diverse genres ranging from spoken word, to jazz, dance, and beyond. Local youth program partners Berklee City Music Network, Mass Leap Spoken Word Collective, and MIT Media Lab's High/Low Tech Group were also on hand to participate and showcase their exceptional programs and talented youth.

Energized and eager after a productive and invigorating first day, participants used the second day to dive deeply into the four main discussion topics, exchanging ideas and points of view with honesty and intense thoughtfulness. After sharing their group responses to topics from the day before, participants engaged in small-group discussions about each topic—a smaller group format than prior years when conversations included the whole group—allowing for a more intimate, engaged model. As a complement to the discussion sessions, attendees spent the second half of the day participating in an art-making activity with ICA Teen Program Artist-in-Residence Aaron Rose.

On the third and final day of the Teen Convening, educators and teens met separately to discuss the important topics and insights that emerged during the previous days, and to dialogue on key takeaways and action items with their peers. ICA Teen Arts Council alumnus Nancy Vega led a Teen Roundtable, providing youth with the opportunity to reflect on the impact of the Convening as well as the personal impact of their own arts program experiences. Similarly, this year's Educator Roundtable provided an opportunity for reflection and insight from three distinct panelists with different experiences and perspectives on the convergence of teens, museums, and technology. Moderated by David Henry, the ICA's Director of Programs, this year's panel included Moacir Barbosa, Assistant Director for Training and Capacity at Health Resources in Action, and BEST Initiative Program Coordinator; Ryan Hill, Director of Digital Learning and ArtLab+ Programs at the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden; and Mizuko Ito, cultural anthropologist of technology use, and Professor in Residence at the University of California, Irvine.

As stated in the introduction to this publication, since the Teen Convening launch in 2009, the ICA has had the great honor of hosting teens and educators from more than 14 organizations from across the country. It seems with each passing year the dialogue richens, deepens, and becomes increasingly necessary. In the words of Monty Alcott, ICA Fast Forward alumnus and 2012 Teen Convening participant, “The Teen Convening gave me a huge amount of perspective. It was an eye-opening experience to move from my small, close-knit community at the ICA to meet up with kids and educators from across the country, all from different walks of life with different ways of interacting with art. It gave me perspective on how interactions with art can be so diverse, and an understanding as to what that perspective can mean going forward in my own life.”

It is our hope that this report documents the great feelings of community, collaboration, and importance that were felt at the ICA this past August, and moving forward, inspires arts organizations to empower youth to explore the meaning of art in their own lives.

**Gabrielle Wyrick**  
Associate Director of Education





# II. CONVENING PARTICIPANTS



---

## The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

ARTLAB+ is an innovative, 21st-century learning space for teens located in the Sculpture Garden of the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, DC. ARTLAB+ connects teens, artists, technology, art-works, and mentors in one digital studio designed to inspire creative thinking and collaboration. Youth ages 13 to 19 who participate in ARTLAB+ programming can use our laptop and desktop computers, green screen technology, sound studio, and a wide range of media creation tools and software. By working both in teams and individually, teens engage in projects that promote critical thinking, creativity, and skill-building.

ARTLAB+ runs an informal after-school program called DropZone from 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm, Monday through Friday. During DropZone hours, informal learning takes place under the pedagogical framework of HOMAGO: hanging out, messing around, and geeking out. Teens in the DropZone are encouraged to experiment with technology, and ultimately self-direct their own learning experiences by working with ARTLAB+ Mentors to build their technical skills and professional portfolios.

In the fall of 2012, DropZone added a focused project to the informal drop-in programming. Between the hours of 5:00 pm and 7:00 pm, Monday through Friday, teens are encouraged to create a component under a thematic umbrella designed by Mentors to encourage teens to form opinions, and focus on process rather than output. At the end of 2012, these components were curated into an enhanced mixed tape, piecing together works across all digital media that express participating teens' opinions in creative ways.

In addition to our drop-in programming and focused project, ARTLAB+ will continue to partner with community organizations and other Smithsonian units to provide workshops, special events, production teams, and school programs to local DC youth. It's going to be an exciting year!

---

## The Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston

The Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston (ICA) has an unwavering institutional commitment to teens, recognizing that adolescents are our future artists, audiences, and leaders. Teens face key issues and themes explored by many contemporary artists and are often interested in social change, innovation, and digital media. The ICA's teen programs utilize

the museum's physical and artistic resources to improve equity and opportunity for Boston youth, and range from introductory to immersive programs and encounters with contemporary art and artists. Out-of-school programs include Teen New Media Workshops, Teen Arts Council, Fast Forward, and Teen Nights. In addition, the ICA runs WallTalk, an extended in-school program for high school students that explores contemporary art through the creation of writing, visual art, and spoken word. All programs offer opportunities for arts education, leadership, artistic advancement, and connections to artists and mentors, as well as marketable 21st-century skills. The ICA serves more than 2,000 middle and high school students each year through dedicated teen programs, and more than 5,000 through the ICA's tour program. The ICA is proud to be a local and national resource in the field of museum arts education for teens.

---

## Los Angeles County Museum of Art

The High School Internship Program at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) recruits high school students from Los Angeles-area public schools for unique experiences as interns at the museum. Interns learn about the museum as an institution, a workplace, a learning environment, and a world-class art collection. In addition to planning teen events, creating art videos, and various other projects, interns design specialized tours of the permanent collection and guide visiting school groups on these tours.

Each spring, LACMA receives more than 90 applications from high school students interested in participating in the program during the next school year. Local school teachers and counselors actively recruit students to participate, and due to the popularity of the program, many applicants inquire about the program and complete the application on their own. LACMA's education staff selects students who are responsible, self-motivated individuals who will make the internship a priority and benefit from the experience. The interns come from a variety of backgrounds: some happen to be artists, while others are interested in art history or in learning about the operations of a museum. The program coordinators encourage the interns to help shape the content of their program so their experience at the museum reflects their interests.

During the school year, the program meets once a week after school. The interns learn about the museum and its exhibitions, and meet staff from several museum departments. Through intensive



training sessions, participants gain knowledge about special exhibitions, gallery teaching techniques, and public speaking skills. The program provides its participants with a broad range of experiences: from an inside look at the museum workplace, to gaining a greater knowledge of art and art history, and fostering their creative growth as artists. At the conclusion of their training, the interns lead exhibition tours one morning per week for students in grades 6–12, and work as event facilitators during evenings and weekends. The hard work and commitment of the 15 students admitted each year benefits hundreds of students who participate in the intern-led tours. This year, each student spent at least 62 hours interacting with staff and peers.

---

## Marwen

Marwen is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting the development of Chicago's young people in grades 6–12 through free visual arts classes, and college and career planning courses.

Steven Berkowitz founded Marwen in 1987 with just a handful of teens in a single studio. It was the founder's vision to provide every young person in Chicago with access to high-quality visual arts programming, regardless of economic means.

Over the past 24 years, Marwen has grown into a nationally recognized visual arts education organization, offering a wide range of more than 175 visual arts courses, college and career exploration classes, and intensive workshop programs, exhibitions, special events, and individualized college and career counseling.

---

## The Studio Museum in Harlem

The Studio Museum in Harlem's Expanding the Walls (ETW) is an eight-month photography-based program that uses the work of renowned photographer James VanDerZee as a catalyst for discussion and art making. ETW selects a group of teenagers from the five boroughs of New York City to work with a diverse group of arts professionals to explore topics related to community, identity, history, and culture, while learning the basics of digital photography. Students also participate in a regimen of field excursions, art-making workshops, intellectual property workshops, intergenerational dialogue about art and society, while exploring career opportunities in the visual arts and museums. The program culminates with a seasonal exhibition of photographs in the Studio Museum's galleries, featuring works by both students and VanDerZee.

---

## Walker Art Center

The Walker Art Center initiated teen programming in 1994, and two years later launched the Walker Art Center Teen Arts Council (WACTAC) with the purpose of connecting teens to contemporary art and artists. WACTAC helps the museum attract a teen audience and create comfortable, welcoming spaces and programs for them. Walker teen programs engage youth on a variety of levels, from "gateway" programs that bring young people into the museum for the first time, to public programs aimed at teens, and an active workshop and exhibition program that offers opportunities for intensive learning from professional artists and staff curators. The Walker's model has been instrumental in supporting teens' creative development, but as the museum approaches the end of its second decade of working with teens, the staff is keeping an open mind about possibilities for new approaches in the future.

---

## Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA) is an integrated site for creative endeavor; a unique fusion of art, innovation, and ideas in a social environment. It serves as a curated platform for the dynamic convergence of artists, inventors, thinkers, producers, and the community, working together to sustain multiple levels of participation, propel short- and long-term social change, and ensure contemporary arts and living artists are vital to our society. YBCA revolutionizes how the world engages with contemporary art and ideas.

The YBCA Young Artists at Work (YAAW) program is a paid, year-long, multidisciplinary arts-as-activism residency for youth. During the summer, up to 30 Bay Area high school youth spend a month immersed in contemporary art and ideas at YBCA, learning from Bay Area artists who make relevant, project-based, social-justice-oriented work. Then, the YAAWs spend the year designing and producing original community-based arts projects under the guidance of YBCA artist mentors. Within the residency model, YBCA provides resources, space, aesthetic inspiration, and collaborative community to support young artists and activists in developing their own creative visions. The YBCA YAAW program isn't just an artist factory or a traditional internship, it's an incubator for tomorrow's creative thinkers and social change-makers.





# III. TOPIC-BASED DISCUSSIONS

On the second day of the Teen Convening, participants discussed four key teen-identified topics. Teens and educators alike shared their unique perspectives.

1. Technology and museum accessibility
2. The “virtual you” and the “real you”
3. Balancing technology
4. Technology advancement



# 1. TECHNOLOGY AND MUSEUM ACCESSIBILITY

## How has technology made art, artists, and art institutions more accessible to teens?

### Why is this significant?

**GENESIS**, The Studio Museum in Harlem: *“One of the most important things art institutions can do in terms of technology is to simply expose the work. Put it out there, so that people can stumble across it and take from it what they will. Just the fact that they see it will affect someone. And if you’re curious, then you’ll want to know more.”*

**ZE**, Walker Art Center: *“I think the Internet is more accessible to teens than art is. Before I worked at the Walker, I would go online and look at their website, because it’s easier than visiting a big, prestigious contemporary art museum. I always wanted to show up one day and feel welcome and accepted, and so it’s cool that the Internet has helped us learn more, so that we feel confident enough to enter the building.”*

**MONTY**, ICA/Boston: *“It can be overwhelming to have so much accessibility to everything. If I’m on the Internet looking at an artist, I can just keep going and lose track; then I don’t remember why I started. You can get lost; you’re not able to hold onto what you looked at because it was too easy.”*

This question sparked thoughtful, reflective dialogue among participants who reached widespread agreement that technology has enabled art institutions and artists to forge deeper connections to teen audiences, “expanding the minds” of young people and generating confidence and exposure among a new generation of teens, museumgoers, and artists.

Teen participants said they valued technology’s ability to spread the word about exhibitions and programs via Twitter, Facebook, blogs, and YouTube. They agreed that using technology as a promotional tool, as opposed to traditional flyers and postcards, developed word of mouth more quickly because it’s “replicable,” “easy to forward,” and “more interesting.” As Ze from Walker stated, “To us, word of mouth is Facebook.”

Teens and educators said that technology can also help make art more “relatable,” fostering understanding through tools such as SmartPhone Apps that let you “look up the interpretation immediately”; YouTube videos that “let you into the artist’s process”; and Wikipedia descriptions that “enrich” learning. Teens can also introduce their peers to art, by becoming “broadcasters” on teen-run blogs. The caveat: some participants were adamant that technology can’t replace “a creative, resourceful instructor with a dry erase board,” and that institutions should be mindful about making assumptions as to what teens prefer in terms of using technology, and of using technology to stay “relevant.” In fact, many programs encourage their students to step away from technology, citing the need to “unplug” and “disconnect.”

Some students said that technology has created a safe gateway to the world of art institutions, enabling them to become familiar online first, then inspiring them to visit in person. Through Google searches for artistic genres, teens have discovered new and unknown artists, inciting them to seek works of art in person. The benefits of technology have rippled into artist communities as well, empowering young artists to develop audiences and gain validation for their work, at minimal cost. For instance, Brandon from Marwen, said that because of his Tumblr account, thousands of people have seen his photography online, many of whom are teens. In his words, “What’s art, if you keep it all to yourself?”

However, groups were passionate in their conviction that technology has significant limitations in creating access. Socioeconomic, generational, and geographic factors create barriers; some teens don’t have access to computers or live too far away to visit art institutions in person; others are not computer literate. And while technology is “necessary,” access to constant streams of information can be “overwhelming” and “endless” so that “you get lost in the process of searching and lose your critical thinking skills.” Shirley, an educator from Marwen, seemed to express the feelings of her group when she said, “It’s a balancing act. You can be so “connected” that you become disconnected from yourself. You have to be able to create those limits for yourself because technology isn’t creating those for you.”

## 2. THE “VIRTUAL YOU” AND THE “REAL YOU”

**What’s the difference between the “virtual you” and the “real you”? Can the two ever meet?**

**How does your involvement with your museum/art institution contribute or detract from this phenomenon?**

*MAYA, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts: “You know how there are chat rooms with certain interests? I think that’s one of the benefits of the Internet because you meet people with the same interests, and you can actually talk about them. But the real world is more interesting because it’s more diverse.”*

*SHAQUILLE, ICA/Boston: “The virtual you is different, because you get to choose how you are viewed. You can make your life look awesome all the time. It’s easier to keep a persona in the virtual world.”*

*CHRISTIAN, The Studio Museum in Harlem: “Are my Facebook friends really my friends? I only have three to four friends I regularly hang out with. Real life is so much more unpredictable and diverse and just better.”*

Educators and teens tackled the complexities inherent in these questions with gusto, expressing a range of opinions that depended, in part, on how much time they spend online. Some participants felt the “virtual you” and the “real you” were parts of a whole, while others felt they were completely different. Some thought the virtual self was an “extension” of the real self, while participants who don’t interact much online at all, said they were the same.

Most participants, however, agreed that the virtual self was a “curated” entity that gave them “control” over how they appeared to others, making them more “presentable” and sometimes even “cooler,” because they are “choosing the stories [they] tell.” Some felt their online identity was “limiting” and encouraged reserve, while others found the anonymity freeing, with “more space to express yourself.” A significant number felt their online presence was less authentic, “fabricated,” and solely comprised of “likes” and “dislikes.”

When thinking about whether the two selves ever meet, some participants felt it depends on the “intention” behind creating a virtual persona. For instance, some people use Facebook and Twitter as open journals, while others create online personas that are very different from real life. Most agreed, however, that although they’ll always know someone better in person, “there’s always a piece of you in the virtual you.” Regardless of how much time participants spend online, they agreed that codes of conduct vary according to each online space; educators were unanimous about the need to set boundaries between their personal and professional selves.

Participants agreed universally that the virtual relationship to their institution has helped them develop “appropriate” professional identities, provide a “positive forum” to share their work, and facilitate connection to their peer and alumni networks. Many said they appreciated the opportunity to blog and share opinions in online forums as representatives of their institutions. Barbara from Marwen seemed to mirror the feelings of many group participants when she said museums “encourage the real you more, because you are there in person and always learning.”

### 3. BALANCING TECHNOLOGY

**Based on the online conversations, we determined that some of the skills required to be successful in a technological world—patience, diligence, open mindedness, curiosity, and innovation—are also those threatened by “too much” technology. How does one strike a balance, and how can the museum be a place where that balance is cultivated?**

**JAKE, Walker Art Center:** *“People don’t talk about how using technology for a long time makes you feel. I sometimes force myself not to go online for a week, because it’s cleansing. You can get so much more done. I find that when I spend a lot of time on the computer, I get cabin fever and I feel gross and cranky. I don’t care for that.”*

**MICHAEL, LACMA:** *“I think you can find a balance if you’re using technology to be creative, like if you’re on iMovie, or have a research project and it’s productive—that’s ok, but if you’re on Facebook all day or just searching for frivolous things, that’s a time waster.”*

**MARILYN, LACMA:** *“I like to visit a gallery by myself and think about what something might mean and try to be a critic. I take in as much as I can on my own and may go back a second time with the answers that a technological tool might provide. I like comparing the two: my own interpretation and what the institution has to say about it, so in that way, technology can be a tool to offer you a different perspective. Museums are not forcing you to use the tools they offer. It’s up to you to find the balance.”*

The complexities inherent in these questions generated intense debate and discussion, touching upon the benefits and dangers of living in a world where technology is the “modern-day currency.” Participants remarked that as technology becomes faster, it breeds greater impatience, whereas engaging in the artistic process may generate more sustained levels of patience, producing more concrete end results. As Brandon from Marwen explained, “I take hundreds of photos to get one perfect picture. I’m very impatient, but I still do it.”

Groups thought deeply about the qualities they need to engage in technology, and those that enable them to “hold on” to their “humanity” amidst a “saturated” media landscape. Although there was agreement that the skills listed could be activated by engaging with technology—such as the diligence required to master FinalCut Pro—many said it was equally important to connect in-person and spend time alone in order to “feel alive.” As Genesis from the Studio Museum in Harlem said, “I rely on technology, but I don’t want it to take over my life.”

Participants agreed that to achieve a balance, time management is critical. Teens described avoiding the dangers of getting sucked into the “rabbit hole” of technology which induces feelings of “glazing over,” being on “autopilot,” and becoming “lazy.” They described using a range of techniques to establish “self discipline” and time away. Some teens installed computer programs that limit access to social networking sites or web surfing. Others ride bikes, take walks, or spend time outdoors. Sometimes help comes from within the institution itself. Gerald from the Studio Museum in Harlem, for instance, challenges his students to go on “media fasts” and to document the process.

Museum and teen programs cultivate balance both through the art they exhibit and the artistic processes they teach. For instance, educators encourage students to tackle ideas through critique, reflective discourse, drawing, and writing while teaching tech-based skills in photography and film. Museums can also exhibit works of art that are both organic and grounded in technology, “nurturing conversation” and sharing two different ways of looking at the world. Moreover, museums are places where open mindedness, curiosity, and other skills can flourish: viewing art encourages contemplation, connection, and exposure to other’s opinions, giving teens the opportunity to develop solid life skills.

## 4. TECHNOLOGY ADVANCEMENT

**Is technology advancement a means to an end, or can it be equal in value as an end in itself? In other words, is technology a tool to reach other goals, or is it a valid pursuit in its own right?**

**ZE, Walker Art Center:** *“Do we—as human beings living in a civilized society—decide how technology will transform, or does technology decide? Is it as simple as “supply and demand”? I think if we want to advance and be considered a civilized society, technological advancement happens naturally because we want control and to make sure that everything works in our favor; technology does that for human beings.”*

**EDDIE, LACMA:** *“I look at technology in the context of human history and then it becomes clearer for me. That’s why I see it as a tool that will continue moving forward, because human beings are curious and we want to develop and create. When man created fire, shelter, and a better way to cook food, all this stuff improved our life. Ultimately, to be successful, the tool has to be useful, or it’s discarded.”*

**CHRISTIAN, The Studio Museum in Harlem:** *“In the beginning technology was used for advancement, but now that we have so much stuff, we have problems. Now people are inventing new technology “just because,” but it’s not taking us anywhere. We’re being overrun by technology.”*

In a heated and energetic discussion, the groups raised a number of issues regarding the validity and usefulness of technology. Rigorous philosophical debate ensued, as participants examined cultural and generational perspectives on technology, intentions behind new technology, and where technology is leading society as a whole.

A large number of participants felt that technological advancement is “inevitable.” Participants could not agree, however, as to whether technology is innately valuable, or whether it’s validity lies in its relevance as a creative tool. When learning technological skills in a museum setting, for instance, participants agreed that while learning the skill itself is useful, it is the responsibility of the student to use the skills to their advantage. Many said that while technology provides us with more options, it doesn’t always make life better, and not everyone can keep up with the changes. While some raised the point that technology fosters efficiency, others questioned why such a high level of productivity is valued.

Once more, participants gravitated toward discussing the drawbacks of technology. Although it’s “human nature” to want the “next big thing,” there were concerns that using technology can become excessive, “The more people are exposed, the more they want it.” Some expressed fear of a world further saturated by technology. As Barbara, from Manwen, said, “Technology has progressed so quickly in the past 20 years that I’m freaked out by what will happen in another 20.”

If technology isn’t the prevailing value in life, then what is? Teens and educators agreed about the need to further explore the role of technology in society as a whole. Some group discussions ended with more positive conclusions. Marilyn from LACMA, for instance, reflected that we should value technology, as long as it is being used to “help us learn and better the lives of others around us.”

# IV. EDUCATOR ROUNDTABLE

## On the third day of the Teen Convening, museum educators participated in a roundtable discussion about next steps and lessons learned.

The roundtable discussion made clear that technology plays a crucial role in engaging youth and bridging the generational divide that often exists among teens, their parents, teachers, and educators. Three professional development panelists, Ryan Hill, Mizuko Ito, and Moacir Barbosa, talked with museum educators about their perspectives on teen arts programs, the challenges they face in making contemporary art relatable, and how technology can help with that effort.

Participants agreed that technology creates access and can enable teens to take ownership of their experiences at their institutions. Based on her research, however, Ito urged museum educators to embrace an even more positive vision of how informal learning through new media can impact teen programs. Her advice: to create intergenerational, customizable, interest-driven spaces for teens that build bridges among youth culture, museum culture, and youth interest. Open ecosystems—whereby information is shared across institutions through visible and transparent online networks, like YouTube—lower barriers to expertise and promote opportunities to diversify and customize learning. Further, harnessing social media to provide broader access to interest-driven mentorships and peer relationships can expand entry points to learning, creating pathways for teens to achieve mainstream success.

Educators pointed out that the integration of teen programs into the culture of an institution as a whole can be challenging, and that sometimes, agendas compete. Even the physical space occupied by teen programs, and how that space is perceived, can play an influential role. Yet teen programs have equal power to create cultural change within an institution. Hill stressed that educators can slowly create an internal cultural shift by advo-

cating for the value of their programs, and finding colleagues to share ideas that benefit both teen programs and the arts institution at large.

Participants noted, however, that the “privilege gap” often makes it difficult for at-risk youth to thrive in a teen arts program. They may not possess the skills required to navigate the system, and wind up feeling alienated from their peers. In addition, this gap has widened in recent years, as public schools have reduced enrichment activities, while families with greater resources are spending more to provide specialized after-school experiences for their children. Educators and panelists offered suggestions to lessen the impact of this divide. Scholarships with built-in accountability may help bridge the financial gap. Increased support from mentors and artists can also help.

Toward the end of the roundtable, a crucial question was raised that resonated deeply with participants: How can we make contemporary art accessible to teens who don’t necessarily relate it to their everyday lives? The perceived elitism that museums and art institutions represent can often keep teens away. Strategic solutions, based on building connections between institutions and reaching out to kids when they are young, can “pick up where the city is failing.” Educators from one institution, for instance, hold workshops and information sessions at elementary schools, libraries, and community centers, creating connections across institutions and reaching kids earlier, so that when the time comes, they are ready for teen arts programs.

Other vital questions were raised throughout the roundtable session. While participants agreed that technology is a bridge for teens, creating access and cultivating ownership, the remaining questions deserve further consideration: What outcomes are teen programs striving for? What are the missing pieces and missing connections in a teen’s need for learning? Are kids ready? And when they are ready, how do educators and institutions embrace them and meet their needs?

---

## MOACIR (MO) BARBOSA

Assistant Director for Training and Capacity at Health Resources in Action, and BEST Initiative Program Coordinator

“So much of what we’re doing is giving young people the permission to create by providing the resources so that they can do it. How much responsibility can we give to young people, how do we hold them to this, insure they’re a part of what we’re doing, and still get results?”

I like the science museum, because you get to DO something. You get to interact. Often at an art museum, you don’t. When young people get to DO something in an art space it transforms how they perceive that space, “If I touch it, I can understand it.” One of the wonderful things about digital media is that the kids are already in it. You’re showing them something and they’re thinking about how they could do it on whatever device they have, and what space they can do it in. The freedom is already there.”

---

## RYAN HILL

Director of Digital Learning at ArtLab+, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

“There’s a telling divide between arts organizations and community youth organizations and what they do with art. It’s a big issue for museums; there’s a kind of elitism built into the structure. These are cultural differences that impact lives and jobs, but the question remains, ‘How can we make meaningful encounters with kids through art?’”

---

## MIZUKO (MIMI) ITO

Cultural Anthropologist of Technology Use and Professor in Residence at the University of California, Irvine

“Do kids have organizational support? Do they have friends who support them and share their passionate interests? Is this tied to their identity? Online networks transcend space so you can make these connections transparent and more visible.”







# ***V. LESSONS LEARNED***



---

## The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

**ANNA KASSINGER**, Program Coordinator

The 2012 Teen Convening was an unparalleled opportunity to discuss the role of youth and technology in museums today. Coming together as a community inspired us to build and strengthen our approach and programming, and to experiment with new ideas when we return to ARTLAB+.

The threads of conversation during the Convening wove around a central theme, “How can we make our institutions accessible to youth audiences?” Teen presentations and group discussions demonstrated that both youth and art administrators are eager to connect with each other as well as engage in museum programming. We concluded that the thoughtful use of technology, in both outreach and art making, can help educators connect with “next gen” audiences and foster an inclusive community of arts supporters.

Taj, the ARTLAB+ youth representative, and I learned that teen councils are powerful catalysts for achieving these goals. Teens know their peers best, the programs that are most appealing to them, and successful strategies for outreach. Within the museum, teen council members can advocate for events that create relevant, approachable entry points for teen museum visitors. We were able to experience this idea firsthand during the ICA Teen Night. The evening’s activities included art making informed by the collection, and watching a number of excellent teen solo artists and group performers. The tremendous enthusiasm (and size!) of the crowd was inspiring.

It was clear that teens who participate in arts programming also gain deep benefits from their roles as advisors and artists within the museum space. Teens described a sense of tremendous pride from working at their institutions, and directly linked their experiences to personal growth and professional development. Participating teens also talked about their own futures as filmmakers, photographers, and musicians. As Taj noted, “The integration of technology and museums helps teens learn new techniques for self-expression.”

We hope to continue to connect with the administrators and teens we met during our visit. We would like to continue the conversations started at the Convening—both in person and online—with regular chat times and discussion topics for sharing our work and ideas. The most valuable part of the Convening was the chance to talk, listen, and debate; we enjoyed being challenged by so many points of view.

---

## The Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston

**JOSEPH DOUILLETTE**, Teen New Media Program Manager

The 2012 Teen Convening came at an ideal time for the ICA, in terms of both the development of the institution’s teen programs, as well as the development of my role at the ICA. It was a powerful experience to converse with teens and educators from around the country at a deep level, on a topic that is at the crux of our efforts.

In general, I was incredibly impressed with the eloquence with which the teens spoke of their experiences and expertise. The online forums allowed students from each group to begin a conversation using familiar social-networking technology, but not necessarily for formal discussion. I enjoyed witnessing the dialogue weave in and out of a professional tone, as the students’ “teen-ness” and colloquialisms often appeared. Nevertheless, it was an invaluable start to the full Convening. We discovered that teens see an almost inseparable link among art, artists, and technology. In fact, during the conversations that took place at the Convening, we began to understand the complexity of the term “technology” as we argued that all artists past, present, and future, use some sort of “technology,” whether in the form of oil paint, printing presses, or computers.

I was encouraged to learn that teens feel more empowered as artists because of the significant developments in technology, from an analog, tactile, intuitive tradition to a more digital one. Within the digital tradition, there are many tools and techniques, but artists fluent in computers and their peripherals have an advantage in experimentation and output. It was also interesting to consider the ways in which technology and creativity are so entwined in the everyday lives of teens. As ICA Teen Monty Alcott reflected, “The discussions made me realize how much I take art and technology for granted. As a teenager in today’s world, I realize how embedded technology is within the fabric of my life, without even noticing. The conversations helped me articulate what art means to me, how I can have a close relationship with art in my life, and how important it is to think about those things.”

The discussion about online identity resonated deeply with me. As the older generation struggles with how we present ourselves online—creating our past and present—teens lamented about the archive of one’s life that is generated and presented online. They explained that your history follows you from such a young age because so much is posted

online. This makes a “clean-slate” transition into any new arena nearly impossible because of the simplicity of researching someone’s background. For those of us that moved on to college, a new job, or a new town to “start a new life,” our analog archive, letters, or photos that we used to keep with us in a box were shown to people only if we so chose. Teens at the Convening suggested that information about their history is not always within their control, and that even though they can create identities online, they cannot distance themselves from the other identities—real or contrived—that might already exist.

The project on the first day was a highlight, as each group approached their allotted question with significant seriousness in thought and effort. The resulting presentations in photography, video, audio, and zine mirrored that seriousness. The participants presented work that seemed to represent current-day technology as simultaneously distracting and focusing, allowing us to move both mentally and physically in and out of the present. This was an exciting addition to the Convening, and one that I feel developed a strong bond among participants.

---

## Los Angeles County Museum of Art

**EDUARDO SANCHEZ**, Education Coordinator

The 2012 ICA Convening was an incredibly empowering event for the attending teens. I was impressed by the high levels of responsibility and collaboration I witnessed throughout the run of the conference. The Convening reminded me that when you entrust teens with a serious topic or project, they approach ideas with playful maturity and deliver amazing results. Giving teens their first taste of a professional museum conference, where they had to present to an audience, was invaluable. Most people don’t experience this until after graduating from college. The level of collaboration between teens and educators was inspiring. I walked away with so many ideas that I plan to infuse into our teen program. It’s so easy to get lost in day-to-day program operations; we sometimes forget that we are part of a larger community of educators and institutions trying to heal our country with meaningful art experiences. The Convening reminded me that we are not alone, and I’m thankful that the ICA put me in touch with such an uplifting group of educators from DC, New York, Chicago, Minneapolis, and Boston, to share our goals, struggles, and passions.

Teen participants Marilyn Liu and Michael Magna traveled with me to the conference. Marilyn stated, “I was truly honored to represent the Los Angeles

County Museum of Art at the ICA’s 2012 National Convening for Teens in the Arts. It felt so good to share my experience as an intern with everyone, and to meet other teens from as far away as New York and Minneapolis who are doing similar things. I met people who were just as passionate, if not more, about the arts as I am. The conference enabled us to form friendships with people we may never have met otherwise, and encouraged us to explore ideas and issues concerning the arts and technology, and make art as a unique and collaborative team. There was a spirit of enthusiasm, encouragement, and empathy throughout the Convening. It was awesome, and a great stepping stone on my way to starting college.”

From Michael, “The ICA successfully carried out its mission of hosting an extended dialogue about the role of young people in the arts for yet another year, and I am so grateful to have been invited to participate. I was raised in Los Angeles, America’s most diverse city, but the incredible individuals at the Convening exposed me to many new perspectives and ideas. Through a busy, well-structured schedule of activities that were fun and thought provoking, we grappled with some interesting questions, and engaged in a lot of open-ended critical thinking. The 2012 Teen Convening was an unimaginably fantastic first experience representing the Los Angeles County museum of Art, and I came away with a stronger sense of community with other youth involved in the arts.

---

## Marwen

**SHIRLEY ALFARO**, Manager of Studio Programs

Marwen was thrilled to participate in the ICA’s 2012 Teen Convening. The conference gave us the opportunity to listen and share best practices with professionals from remarkable institutions and their knowledgeable teens. The online conversations that occurred prior to the conference provided a helpful context. As technology continues to grow in our lives, exchanging concepts and ideas around this central theme is both fascinating and necessary.

Marwen was fortunate to bring along two teen students, Barbara Banda and Brandon Williams, whose experiences in technology are increasing rapidly as they begin their college careers in video production and photography. The conference facilitated connections to youth and professionals who are passionate about art, which was very fulfilling. In the words of Barbara, “I enjoyed hearing the numerous perspectives of my fellow peers and professionals. I learned about myself while I listened to everyone speak. It just clicked.” The art-making sessions and









conversations allowed for these exchanges to happen naturally. As Brandon stated, “I loved the art-making activity and Teen Night. It gave everyone an opportunity to really bond with each other and find a connection through art.” The ICA’s Teen Council did an exceptional job planning and hosting, ensuring that all teens felt comfortable and engaged. The level of maturity and grace throughout the conference was a genuine learning experience.

The conference allowed Marwen teens to experience genuine leadership and stronger connections to art. As we reflected on the conference, Barbara and Brandon remarked on the undoubted commitment participating institutions have for teen programming. Although programs vary across institutions, they each recognize and genuinely appreciate the value placed on teens. Gaining a deeper understanding of each institution and their programming allowed us to consider our own opportunities and reflect on “what’s next.” I am grateful to the ICA for bringing together such a fantastic group of individuals, with which to learn, grow, and share. The opportunity to collaborate professionally with my peers—both students and professionals alike—will continue to motivate my efforts to strengthen Marwen’s mission to develop teen-focused art programs.

---

## The Studio Museum in Harlem

**GERALD L. LEAVELL II**, Expanding the Walls/  
Youth Program Coordinator

What an affirming and invigorating experience. Upon our return to New York City, I continued to discuss the topics brought up at the Convening with Genesis Valencia and Christian Ogando, the teen participants representing The Studio Museum in Harlem. More importantly, however, we volleyed ideas back and forth about the enhancement of existing teen programs at our museum. Although the three of us are accustomed to discourse across generations within Expanding the Walls (ETW), somehow the afterglow of the Convening facilitated a conversation where Genesis and Chris were the leaders. The statements, “We should do [this]...and we should do [that]...and [those] would be great for our museum...” were indicators that they feel a sense of ownership with the museum, are invested in its progress, and genuinely believe in the measurable impacts of youth programs in arts institutions, particularly their own.

Though Genesis and Chris are both articulate and expressive young people, I observed a new light in them, one that is obviously guiding them

closer to their goals. Quite frankly, the Convening did the same for me. The experience of engaging with brilliant, concerned teens and arts educators from across the country excited the potential ideas already ruminating in my mind. It also inspired new ones. I loved hearing from the teens and educators about the innovative programs they are involved in and the ways in which they facilitate them, not to mention the comfort I felt in sharing information about our own programs and processes.

I realized that there are people from Boston to Los Angeles who are just as passionate about the relationship between art and societal advancement as we are in the education department at the Studio Museum of Harlem (including the teens dedicated to our programs). How amazing!

I followed Chris in “...enjoying the ability to detail my ideas while listening to the profound and prolific ideas of others. Especially teens!” Like Genesis, I appreciated “liberating myself from the grasp of technology...and agreed with other participants that the benefits of modern technology do not necessarily outweigh the detrimental effects of its overuse.” Yet my overall take-away might be that teen programs in museums (and other art institutions) have a ripple effect on society, with teens at the center of this change.

---

## Walker Art Center

**ADRIANA RIMPEL**, Teen Program Manager

The ICA has an amazing capacity to lead, as evidenced by its high regard for youth arts education and in organizing such a thoughtful, relevant, and stimulating event. Every organization that participated in the Convening demonstrated strong leadership and successful models for youth arts engagement, and we all gained new insights from each other. Jake Folsom, a recent graduate from the Walker Art Center Teen Arts Council (WACTAC) program, appreciated the opportunity to consider diverse perspectives outside of his local teen council, “Getting perspective from other regions of the United States on arts and arts education was awesome. While Americans are similar in many ways, our opinions are shaped by the diverse cultures we live in. It was cool to see the differing approaches to teen arts. I have never before experienced sharing in a conference discussion; I loved learning about the perspectives of so many diverse, intelligent people.”

Ze Thao, also a recent graduate of WACTAC, enjoyed the opportunity to experience a teen-hosted event outside of the Walker Art Center and learn



new strategies for engaging youth: "It was great to see how these teen councils and programs were similar as well as different from WACTAC. Having free Chipotle was definitely a huge attraction to get teens to come to the ICA Teen Night. I'd like to see Walker do more with food sponsors too."

For many practitioners, the Convening is a rare opportunity to find support from colleagues working in the specialized field of teen arts museum education. For the past three years, I have benefited greatly from the professional connections I have made, and every year I find new ways to implement the knowledge I've acquired both formally and informally during my visit. We are so grateful to the ICA, and all the other participating organizations for sharing in this special opportunity!

---

## Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

**LAUREL BUTLER**, Youth Arts Manager and Education/Engagement Specialist

What an honor to have been asked to participate in the 2012 National Convening for Teens in the Arts! As I complete my first year as Youth Arts Manager at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA), I can't imagine a more fortuitous opportunity to learn about how our program fits into the national ecosystem of teen arts initiatives. Along with Mike Turner Jr. and Mariana Navarrete—the extraordinary YBCA Young Artists at Work—we were inspired by the youth-driven nature of the Convening, that reflects the high value the ICA places on its teen programming. Hearing Jill Medvedow, Ellen Matilda Poss Director, on the first day describe teen arts education as "one of the legs that the ICA stool stands on" was moving, especially as an educator seeking to weave youth arts programming more fully into the fabric of her arts organization as a whole.

YBCA is currently reimagining the role that youth arts play in our institution. The models of other youth arts organizations provided inspiration around effective practices, such as youth-curated programming, high levels of program visibility, and deep and authentic resident artist integration. I am personally invigorated by the examples of youth-centered and interest-driven program initiatives I learned about, and am excited to move forward in my own work to investigate new ways to empower youth with higher levels of leadership and programmatic accountability. The complex, creative, and rigorous structure of the Convening served as evidence of the success of youth-driven programming, and the care and planning that went into the event was apparent. Of course, the structural rigor of the Convening was complemented by a healthy dose of ballpark tours, record shopping, ice cream parlors, rainy field trips

to Cambridge vintage clothing stores, and lots of inter-programmatic/multigenerational social bonding.

The investigation of the central topic, teens and technology, was the most salient example of "lessons learned." As Mariana observed, "I learned that technology has both a positive and negative effect on the world. Most of us use technology to connect with everyone, and it eventually becomes our reality. My opinion about technology and the arts has changed immensely." Michael linked the discussions about technology and access back to the very foundation of the Convening: "What I've taken from this amazing experience is that technology plays an important role in the world of art; without quick and efficient ways of communicating, it would have been a great hassle to pull off the Teen Convening and to spread art on such a massive scale." The first day's project-based investigation validated the meaning-making potential of the collaborative artistic process, and the group conversations around technology, teens, and the arts were complex and sophisticated. I have not had conversations of that level of profound philosophical inquiry in a long time! It was great to see the YBCA youth present themselves to their newfound peers and own their voices as young people with expertise in a particular field. In Mariana's words, "The Boston trip allowed everyone to voice their opinions; everyone had something different to say, but we also found similarities."

Mike, Mariana, and I all benefitted from recognizing that teen arts education is a nationally legitimate field, with its own set of benchmarks, objectives, standards, and best practices. It was affirming for Mike and Mariana to see that their work contributes to a national network of ideas, and to feel part of a professional community of emerging, multifaceted, creative leaders. It was also affirming to realize that my work at YBCA is not happening in a vacuum! To see the ICA filled with hundreds and hundreds of teens during its annual Teen Night, to hear the passion provoked by the controversy surrounding the Os Gemeos mural, to witness the authenticity of the ICA Teens' relationship with artist-in-residence Aaron Rose, and to learn about the diversity of program models available to teens across the country provided me with tangible visions of the innovations YBCA can consider as we move forward, bringing Youth Arts at YBCA from the margins to the center.

# VI. TEEN STORIES

Documented as part of the program evaluation process, the profiles below provide a sense of the diversity and range of impact teen programs have on their varied participants.

## SHAQUILLE ALBERTS

The Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston



Shaquille (Shaq) Alberts, a senior at Codman Academy in Boston, is a member of the Teen Arts Council (TAC) at the ICA. He initially heard about the Council through his school and thought it sounded “cool.” This is his third year with the ICA.

### His Convening Experience

This was Shaq’s second time attending the Convening, though last year he participated behind the scenes to provide logistics support and prep work. This year, he was one of two ICA teen presenters, and co-developed the presentation made to the participating institutions on the first day. Shaq said he enjoyed attending this year more than last, because it “felt more natural, not at all uncomfortable for the youth participants, and everyone was engaged and willing to try new things.” He welcomed the range of interactive activities offered, and felt like it was a successful experience for everyone.

The opportunity, both to attend and present at the Convening this year, fostered Shaq’s sense of personal engagement and inspired him, for the first time, to reflect on his overall experience as an ICA TAC member. He expressed a dawning realization of just how significantly the ICA has impacted his life on a personal level.

### His Experience on the ICA Teen Arts Council

Shaq described how he was “shy” and “reserved” when he first became a member of the TAC. Over the past three years, the ICA encouraged his growth in vital ways. “The ICA has become a safe place, a sanctuary for me, someplace I can call

my own,” he said. At the same time, participating in ICA teen programs urged Shaq out of his comfort zone—like the time he emceed at an ICA event for the very first time—challenging him in unexpected ways.

Shaq has valued meeting people from different backgrounds and with different perspectives; it’s helped him think about ideas and art in new and different ways. “Through the TAC, I have learned that art and self expression are important,” he said. “I didn’t know other people who felt that way before. It’s been great from the perspective of gaining life lessons.”

In addition to being on the TAC, Shaq was a summer intern in the ICA’s Education Department, a truly eye-opening experience that allowed him to witness the breadth of the ICA’s activities beyond the teen programs. Throughout his involvement with the ICA, Shaq has been treated as a staff member, held to the same standards of responsibility, which he also feels are essential life experiences. Shaq has also participated in Teen New Media Workshops at the ICA, such as DJ Workshops, Digital Photography, and the Punk Rock Film School.

Since the Convening Shaq has kept in contact with the Convening participants through Facebook, where his new friends talk about imminent subjects like college. Though he is not sure he will pursue a career in art, he is confident his interest in contemporary art—developed from his years on the TAC—will be an important part of his life going forward.

## GENESIS VALENCIA

The Studio Museum in Harlem



Genesis Valencia, a graduate of the Studio Museum in Harlem’s Expanding the Walls program, was one of 14 teens attending this year’s Convening. Currently a sophomore at Allegheny College in Pennsylvania, Genesis became involved with

the Studio Museum during her senior year in high school when she took a photography workshop led by the Expanding the Walls program coordinator at the Studio Museum. Genesis learned about the

Studio Museum's teen programs and was intrigued, soon becoming an enthusiastic participant in the Studio Museum teen program.

#### **Her Convening Experience**

Genesis knew two things walking into the Convening: first that she would present on Expanding the Walls, and second, that the focus of the Convening was technology. She tried not to expect much ahead of time, and to just be open to the experience.

What an experience it was. Genesis had never imagined she would be meeting people from museums across the country, from as far away as Los Angeles and Chicago. She was "excited" and "amazed" by the conversations she had. Meeting teens from other museums helped her gain new and enriching perspectives, as her peers expressed similar ideas, interests, and eye-opening differences. In addition, she was able to learn about how other museums work with youth and seek to engage with their audiences.

On the second day of the Convening, teens and educators were divided into groups, each assigned a broad topic related to technology, and instructed to create a creative collaborative work based on their given topic. Genesis's group was asked to illustrate how technology can throw people off balance in an auditory way; the group focused on collecting sounds and arranging them to convey their point.

Genesis explained that her group collected noise around the museum with recorders, creating a soundtrack that began slowly, rose into chaos, then softened. "Through this experience," she said, "I learned how technology can sometimes get people off balance. I think it's important to have conversations and listen... to seek out peaceful and quiet parts of life, to be contemplative. I realized there is so much technology around us all the time; it's easy to become consumed by it."

Overall, Genesis felt the Convening was an enormously positive experience. She would love to be involved again!

#### **MARIANA NAVARRETE**

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco



Mariana Navarrete, a senior in high school in San Francisco, has been involved with the Young Artists at Work (YAAW) program at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts for two years. She learned about the organization

from her older sister, who had become involved in YAAW after hearing about the program from her high school art teacher. Mariana is interested in visual art, illustrations, books, and comics, as well as photography, film, and media arts.

This fall, Mariana is participating in two new interesting projects at Yerba Buena. Like all YAAW teens, she has been assigned to work on a community-based art project with the task of using different media. In addition, she is working with YBCA staff on a project that deals with the media, using billboards and visual art to bring attention to specific issues.

Next year, Mariana plans to attend college and is currently in the process of applying. She hopes to come east, and find a college that has a good art department, as she wants to study visual art and illustration.

#### **Her Convening Experience**

Mariana had never been to a Convening before, and her first experience at the ICA was "inspiring." She expected to sit through a series of lectures, and instead she had fun! She particularly enjoyed the excitement of being in a community of her peers and meeting educators who talked about issues and topics she cares about. Mariana observed that the Convening was "nothing like school" and was "totally new."

Her experience at this year's ICA Convening undoubtedly left its mark. When the issue of technology comes up at YAAW or at school, as it often does, she finds herself referencing her experience thinking and talking about technology at the ICA Convening.

Mariana was hopeful in her desire to attend the Convening again and exchange ideas with her peers and educators, and if given the opportunity, she would say yes in an instant!

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## ICA/Boston Planning Team

### GABRIELLE WYRICK

Associate Director of Education and  
Teen Convening Project Director

### MONICA GARZA

Director of Education

### JOE DOUILLETTE

Teen New Media Program Manager

### LEAH KANDEL

Education Department Assistant

### DAVID HENRY

Director of Programs

### NANCY VEGA

Teen Arts Council Alumnus  
and Teen Program Assistant

### OLAIDE JUNAID

Teen Arts Council

### ROMARIO ACCIME

Teen Arts Council

## 2012 Convening Participants

---

### The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC

#### ANNA KASSINGER

Program Coordinator, ArtLab+

#### OMOTAJO GARY

Teen Participant

---

### The Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston

#### GABRIELLE WYRICK

Associate Director of Education

#### JOE DOUILLETTE

Teen New Media Program Manager

#### SHAQUILLE ALBERTS

Teen Arts Council

#### MONTGOMERY ALCOTT

Fast Forward

---

### Los Angeles County Museum of Art

#### EDUARDO SANCHEZ

Education Coordinator

#### MARILYN LIU

Teen Participant

#### MICHAEL MAGANA

Teen Participant

---

### Marwen, Chicago

#### SHIRLEY ALFARO

Manager of Studio Programs

#### BARBARA BANDA

Teen Participant

#### BRANDON WILLIAMS

Teen Participant

---

## **The Studio Museum in Harlem**

### **GERALD LEAVELL II**

Expanding the Walls  
and Youth Program Coordinator

### **CHRISTIAN OGANDA**

Expanding the Walls

### **GENESIS VALENCIA**

Expanding the Walls Alumnus

---

## **Walker Art Center, Minneapolis**

### **ADRIANA RIMPEL**

Program Manager, Teen Programs

### **JAKE FOLSOM**

Walker Art Center Teen Arts Council  
(WACTAC)

### **ZE THAO**

Walker Art Center Teen Arts Council  
(WACTAC)

---

## **Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco**

### **LAUREL BUTLER**

Youth Arts Manager  
and Education/Engagement Specialist

### **MARIANA NAVARRETE**

Young Artists at Work (YAAW)

### **MICHAEL TURNER JR.**

Young Artists at Work (YAAW)

---

## **Artist-in-Residence**

AARON ROSE, Los Angeles

## **2012 Museum Educator Roundtable Panelists**

### **MOACIR BARBOSA**

Assistant Director for Training  
and Capacity Building,  
Health Resources in Action

### **DAVID HENRY**

Director of Programs, ICA/Boston

### **RYAN HILL**

Director of Digital Learning  
and ArtLab+, Hirshhorn Museum  
and Sculpture Garden

### **MIZUKO ITO**

Professor in Residence,  
University of California, Irvine

## **Contributing Writers**

Shirley Alfaro, Laurel Butler,  
Joe Douillette, Julia Gittelman,  
Anna Kassinger, Gerald Leavell II,  
Jill Medvedow, Eduardo Sanchez,  
Melissa Hale Woodman, and  
Gabrielle Wyrick

## **Editors**

Melissa Hale Woodman  
and Donna Sturtevant

## **Evaluator**

Julia Gittelman,  
Mendelsohn, Gittleman & Associates

## **Videographers**

ICA Fast Forward alumni Philip Cadet,  
Rene Dongo, and Connie Yip

## **Photographers**

Lenora Symczack and Kristyn Ulanday

# ***CONFERENCE SCHEDULE***

## **State of the Art: Teens and Technology**

A National Convening for Teens in the Arts

The Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston

August 8–10, 2012

### **DAY 1:**

### **WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 8**

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>9:00 am</b>       | <b>Registration and Breakfast</b>  |
| <b>9:30 am</b>       | <b>The Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA)<br/>Teen-Led Introductions and Icebreakers</b>  |
| <b>10:00 am</b>      | <b>Kick-Off/Introductions</b><br>Jill Medvedow, Ellen Matilda Poss Director<br>Gabrielle Wyrick, Associate Director of Education |
| <b>10:10 am</b>      | <b>Presentation #1: The Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston</b><br>Gabrielle Wyrick, Shaquille Alberts, and Monty Alcott        |
| <b>10:22 am</b>      | <b>Presentation #2: Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden</b><br>Anna Kassinger, and Omotajo (Taj) Gary                          |
| <b>10:34 am</b>      | <b>Presentation #3: Los Angeles County Museum of Art</b><br>Eduardo Sanchez, Michael Magana, and Marilyn Liu                     |
| <b>10:46 am</b>      | <b>Presentation #4: Yerba Buena Center for the Arts</b><br>Laurel Butler, Mariana Navarrete, and Michael Turner                  |
| <b>10:58 am</b>      | <b>Presentation #5: Marwen</b><br>Shirley Alfaro, Brandon Williams, and Barbara Banda  |
| <b>11:00 am</b>      | <b>Break and Tour</b><br>Gallery tours led by ICA Teen Arts Council  |
| <b>11:35 am</b>      | <b>Presentation #6: Studio Museum of Harlem</b><br>Gerald Leavell, Christian Oganda, and Genesis Valencia                        |
| <b>11:47 am</b>      | <b>Presentation #7: Walker Art Center</b><br>Adriana Rimpel, Jacob Pollak Folsom, and Ze Thao                                    |
| <b>12:00 pm</b>      | <b>Questions and Discussion</b>  |
| <b>12:15–1:30 pm</b> | <b>Lunch and Gallery Tours</b><br>Tours led by ICA Teen Arts Council   |
| <b>1:30 pm</b>       | <b>Creative/Tech Teams: Group Work</b>   |
| <b>4:00 pm</b>       | <b>Dismissal</b>   |
| <b>6:00–9:00 pm</b>  | <b>Teen Night/Opening Reception</b>  |

**DAY 2:****THURSDAY, AUGUST 9**

9:00 am	Breakfast
10:00 am	Share Back: Creative/Tech Team Projects
10:30 am	Discussion: Sessions 1 and 2
12:00–1:00 pm	Lunch and Gallery Tours Tours led by ICA Teen Arts Council
1:00–3:00 pm	Art-Making with Aaron Rose
3:00–4:30 pm	Discussion: Sessions 3 and 4

**DAY 3****FRIDAY, AUGUST 10**

9:00 am	Breakfast and Group Wrap Session
10:00 am–12:00 pm	Educators Roundtable
12:00–1:30 pm	Educators Lunch
10:00–11:15 am	Teen Roundtable Moderators: Nancy Vega and Romario Accime, ICA Teens
11:45 am	Teen Lunch
12:45–1:30 pm	Teen Boston Exploration
2:30–4:00 pm	Fenway Park Back of House Tour
4:00 pm	Convening Concludes

ICA Presentations - 9/15/18

• Yerba Buena - used 1776 - 1847

• Marwin (arts center in garage)

↳ not a museum - arts center

• also called "Marwin Center"

• student advisory program for

• Yerba Buena - 1970s

↳ a residential program for

and mostly

angle

• Marwin

