

OUTSIDE THE LINES

A NATIONAL CONVENING FOR TEENS IN THE ARTS

2015 EDUCATION REPORT



THE INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART/BOSTON





Teens and educators collaborate during a performance workshop.

OUTSIDE THE LINES

A NATIONAL CONVENING FOR TEENS IN THE ARTS

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Outside the Lines: A National Convening for Teens in the Arts is part of the John Hancock Teen Education Program, made possible by significant support from John Hancock.



Teen Programs are made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, Award Number MA-10-14-0235-14.

Additional support is provided by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts; the Cabot Family Charitable Trust; The Robert Lehman Foundation; MFS Investment Management; the Thomas Anthony Pappas Charitable Foundation, Inc.; the Rowland Foundation, Inc.; the William E. Schrafft and Bertha E. Schrafft Charitable Trust; the Surdna Foundation; and the Tiny Tiger Foundation.

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Cover: Teens and educators come together during the first day of the Convening.

Back cover: Participating teens exploring the ICA galleries.



**“THE ENERGY, IDEAS,
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WE HONOR OUR TEENS
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ENGAGED CITIZENS,
AND ACTIVE LEADERS.”**

—Jill Medvedow, Ellen Matilda Poss Director, ICA/Boston

INTRODUCTION

Outside the Lines, the seventh annual National Convening for Teens in the Arts, energized and organized teens and educators at the ICA to develop friendships, make and experience art, and debate and discuss the role teens play as collaborators in art museums across the country. Since its launch in 2009, the event has remained one of the only opportunities for teens to lead vital conversations on a national level about young people in the arts.

The 2015 Convening began with its doors open to the public for a full day of programming including teen presentations, a public panel featuring teen program alumni from around the country, and a lively and dynamic ICA Teen Night attended by hundreds of colleagues and teens. For two additional days, teens and educators from participating institutions—Artpace in San Antonio; the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit; the High Museum of Art in Atlanta; the Pérez Art Museum in Miami; and the Queens Museum—immersed themselves in discussing museums' current roles and challenges, questioning traditional practices, and envisioning the future.

This year's Convening would not have been possible without the generosity and dedication of the many individuals and organizations who share our commitment to teen arts education. The ICA extends our most sincere thanks to Converse for their partnership and sponsorship of this year's event, and to our longtime teen education supporters John Hancock and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, as well as many other foundation, government, and corporate partners.

We thank artist Sandrine Schaefer, who served as the artist-in-residence for *Outside the Lines*; current ICA Teen Arts Council members Aric Oak, Cecelia Halle, and Amireh Rezaei-Kamalabad; and Teen Arts Council alumna Eden Bekele. They dedicated their summer to the Convening, and their constant creativity, hard work, and passion were evident throughout the three days.

I also extend my appreciation to the ICA Education staff: Associate Director of Education and Teen Convening Project Director Gabrielle Wyrick, Teen Programs Assistant Carlie Bristow, Teen New Media Program Manager Joe Douillette, Teen New Media Program Associate Lenora Symczak, and Director of Education Monica Garza.

The ICA is immensely pleased to facilitate this national dialogue on teens in museums, and I am grateful to all our teens. The energy, ideas, innovations, and passion of our young people has changed our museum and made us a better, more transparent, and more civically engaged institution. We honor our teens as individuals, creative thinkers, engaged citizens, and active leaders.

Each of the participating organizations in the 2015 Convening extends our collective aim to empower teens through the arts, and we are grateful for their partnership. Over seven years, the ICA has hosted 33 institutions from across the country and is devoted to continuing these partnerships in the years to come. We celebrate the impact that the National Convening for Teens in the Arts has had on the field of museum education and are excited to see the growth and further development of teen programs at art museums across the country.

Jill Medvedow
Ellen Matilda Poss Director

OVERVIEW

Since 2009, the annual National Convening for Teens in the Arts has brought together teens and educators from museums across the country to collaboratively discuss the issues, possibilities, and potential of teens in museums. Using a teen-driven format since its inception, the three-day Teen Convening is the only event of its kind to place youth voices at the center of the shaping and development of teen arts education on a national scale. The Teen Convening also provides much-needed professional development, training, and a specialized professional community for participating organizations and staff.

Teen arts education is central to the ICA/Boston. We believe that robust arts education—including learning by doing—is critical to building future artists, audiences, and engaged citizens, and we aim especially to create a more equitable education for urban youth. Our teens meet with visiting artists to collaborate on creative projects. In dedicated teen spaces, students learn valuable new media skills such as filmmaking and digital photography. Multiple times a year, hundreds of area teens take over the building for dynamic Teen Nights and hear live music, dance, have a great time, and, of course, see and make art.

The ICA's teen programming has grown exponentially in the past decade, pioneering programs that have not only made a huge impact on Boston-area youth, but also have changed the national conversation around teen arts education. The institution now serves approximately 7,000 area youths annually, most of them at no cost, and many programs have become models for peer institutions, inspiring the creation of similar programs or regional offshoots around the country. Central to the ICA's teen program offerings is the Teen Convening. Created in response to the lack of opportunities for teens and educators to come together to debate and exchange ideas, the Teen Convening provides a structured forum for teens and museum staff to actively learn together how best to engage adolescents through contemporary art.

Entitled *Outside the Lines*, the 2015 Teen Convening considered the possibilities inherent in challenging defined categories of artistic, educational, and social practice. In recent years, contemporary art has seen a growing fluidity

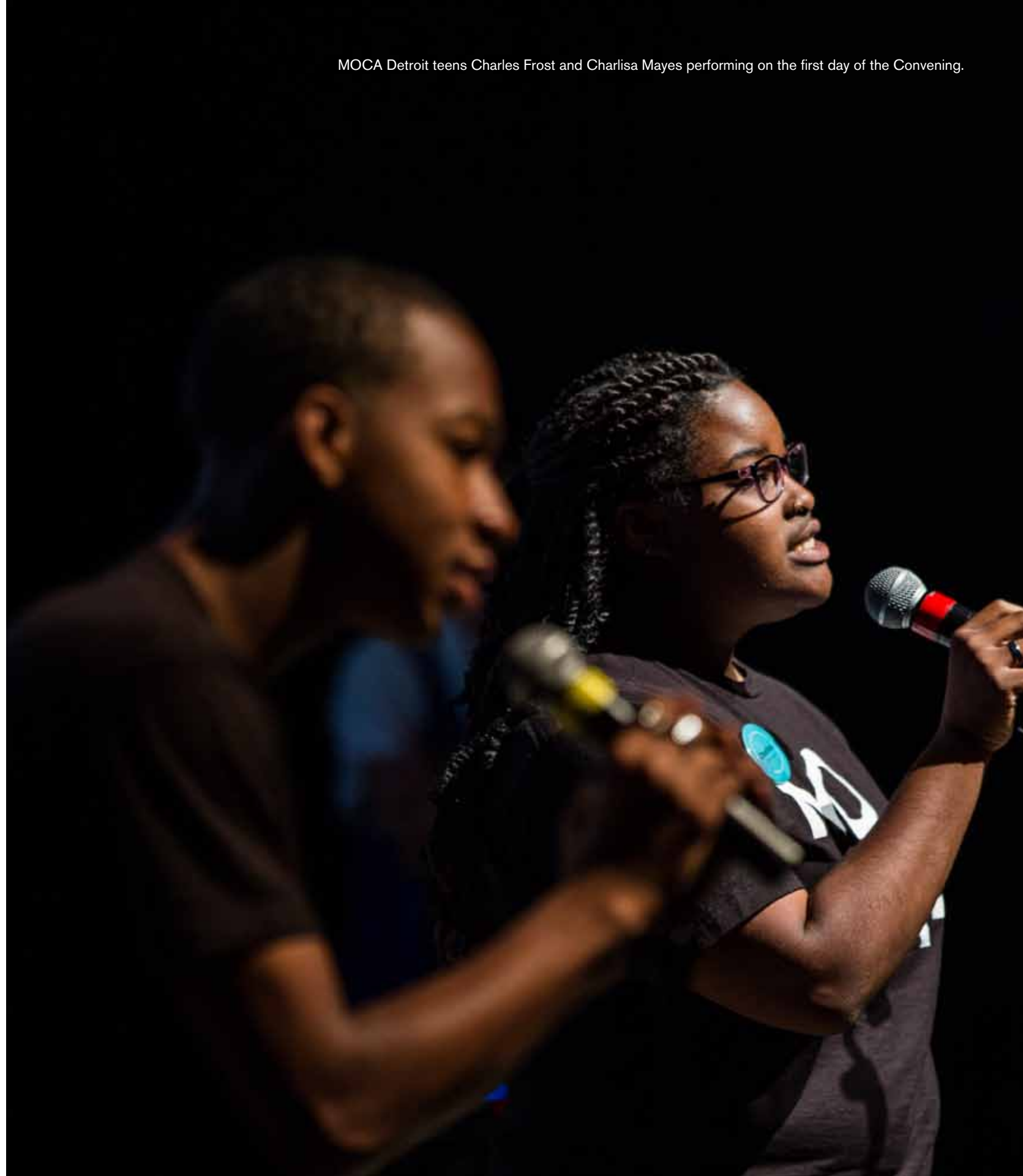
between rigid, strictly defined categories of art. Many artists have increasingly embraced methods of performance, collaboration, and public practice, placing human experience and interaction over object-making as the focus of their artistic activity. Similarly, teen programs in museums often center on expansive modes of collaboration and provide new models of exchange between audiences, artists, and institutions.

Seven organizations representing exceptional teen programs, varied communities, and distinctive challenges were invited to participate in the 2015 Teen Convening. Participating organizations included Artpace, San Antonio; the High Museum of Art, Atlanta; the ICA/Boston; the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit; the Pérez Art Museum Miami; and the Queens Museum, New York.

As a means of building group rapport and creating a strong foundation for dialogue, the 2015 participating cohort collaborated on a series of online forums leading up to the in-person event. Emerging from these online conversations were four core questions for deliberation:

1. What role should museums play in response to current events? Are there particular examples you have experienced?
2. During the online forums we collectively determined that a museum's role should be to *educate*, *empower*, and *empathize* with its audiences. How could this specifically be done for the teen audience?
3. What are some traditional museum practices

MOCA Detroit teens Charles Frost and Charlisa Mayes performing on the first day of the Convening.





High Museum of Art teens Hope Lennox and Kevin Bryant working together during a movement and performance workshop.

that should be challenged and why? What are some traditional artistic practices that should be challenged and why?

4. How do you envision the future of teen programs in museums?

The seventh annual National Convening for Teens in the Arts opened on August 5, 2015, with a public day attended by museum professionals and teens from across the region and beyond. Teens from the seven participating institutions began the public day by creatively presenting their distinctive programs to a sizeable, animated, and intergenerational audience in the ICA's Barbara Lee Family Foundation Theater. Guided to structure their presentations in a way that was teen-centered, outside the box, and utilizing the inventive resources and ingenuity of each organization's youth, teens presented in a wide array of formats, including puppet shows, videos, audience-centered games, and more. In the afternoon, ICA teen program participants moderated the public panel "Alumni Look Back." Featuring alumni from long-standing teen programs from across the country, this event considered the formative and long-term impact on teen program participants working in a range of fields.

Never a group to miss an opportunity for celebration, the ICA Teen Arts Council hosted a large-scale Teen Night open to all Boston-area youth as the opening ceremony of the Convening. Developed in partnership with the artist Maria Molteni and the collective NCAA (New Craft Artists in Action), this Teen Night took its inspiration from the intersections between athletics, craft, public space, and recreation. Featuring artmaking, gallery tours, screen-printing, food trucks, and youth performers from partner organizations from across the city, and attended by more than 650 area teens, the ICA Teen Night was a festive and vibrant end to the Convening's first day.

Motivated and inspired by the activities of the first day, the second day began with an in-depth and immersive performance workshop with the ICA's 2015 *James and Audrey Foster Prize* artist Sandrine Schaefer. After a shared morning of collaborative art exploration, participants came together for an in-depth series of roundtable discussions. As one teen participant noted, "Talking to both my peers and educators really made me think and better understand how different people perceive different things. The discussion sessions allowed for people and ideas from different backgrounds to collide in common interests and create a shared ground to create something new."

On the third and final day of the Convening, educators and teens spent the first part of the day separately. The ICA's Convening presenters from 2014 facilitated a teen roundtable and reflection session to explore insights, takeaways, and action items that emerged from the previous day's activities. Educators, meanwhile, gathered for a group conversation moderated by the ICA's contract social worker for teen programs on the many joys, challenges, and opportunities present in working with teens in an extended way.

After seven years of hosting the National Convening for Teens in the Arts, we have been profoundly energized by the rich and varied idea sharing, intergenerational problem solving, and vital dialogue impacting the field on a widespread level. With each passing year, the program empowers new and significant insights to rise to the forefront of dialogue in the professional landscape and fresh perspectives to shine on the intersection between teens and museums. But perhaps most significantly, it remains one of the only events of its kind to place youth voice and insight at the center of the professional conversation. As one educator stated after participating in the 2015 Teen Convening, "This has informed me as to what teens actually want and need, and not what I think they want and need. The two sound remarkably similar, but can be worlds apart."

Gabrielle Wyrick

*Associate Director of Education
and Teen Convening Project Director*

“THIS HAS INFORMED ME AS TO WHAT TEENS ACTUALLY WANT AND NEED, AND NOT WHAT I THINK THEY WANT AND NEED. THE TWO SOUND REMARKABLY SIMILAR, BUT CAN BE WORLDS APART.”

—Museum Educator

CONVENING PARTICIPANTS

Artpace San Antonio, TX

Not quite a museum, not quite a gallery, Artpace is a contemporary art center featuring an International Artist-in-Residence program that nurtures the freedom to dream. Three times a year, Artpace invites three artists—one from Texas, one national, and one international—to live and create new work at Artpace for two months. Artpace plays a critical role in bringing the most innovative art and artists from all over the world to San Antonio, Texas, while creating access to this creativity through its robust educational outreach programs, particularly the You[th]Pace Teen Art Council. You[th]Pace members get a first-hand perspective of the artistic process and become advocates for contemporary art through interactions with Artpace Artists-in-Residence as well as exhibiting artists, helping to connect and engage with other teens in the San Antonio area. You[th]Pace members play a major role in developing teen programs at Artpace by hosting Remix teen nights each fall and spring, and also help draw teen audiences to Artpace's community programs. The year culminates with a student-driven Capstone Project reflecting the group's unique experience at Artpace. You[th]Pace emboldens teens to be leaders in their community, approaching whatever they pursue with an artist's creative zeal.

High Museum of Art Atlanta, GA

Boasting a collection of classic and contemporary art and award-winning architecture by Richard Meier and Renzo Piano, the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, Georgia has grown from its origins in a stately home on Peachtree Street to become the leading art museum in the southeastern United States. With more than 15,000 works of art in its permanent collection, the High has an extensive anthology of 19th- and 20th-century American and decorative art; significant holdings

of European paintings; a growing collection of African-American art; and burgeoning collections of modern and contemporary art, photography, folk art, and African art. The High is also dedicated to supporting and collecting works by Southern artists. The High Museum is part of the Woodruff Arts Center, one of the largest arts centers in the world, along with its arts partners the Tony Award-winning Alliance Theatre and the Grammy Award-winning Atlanta Symphony Orchestra.

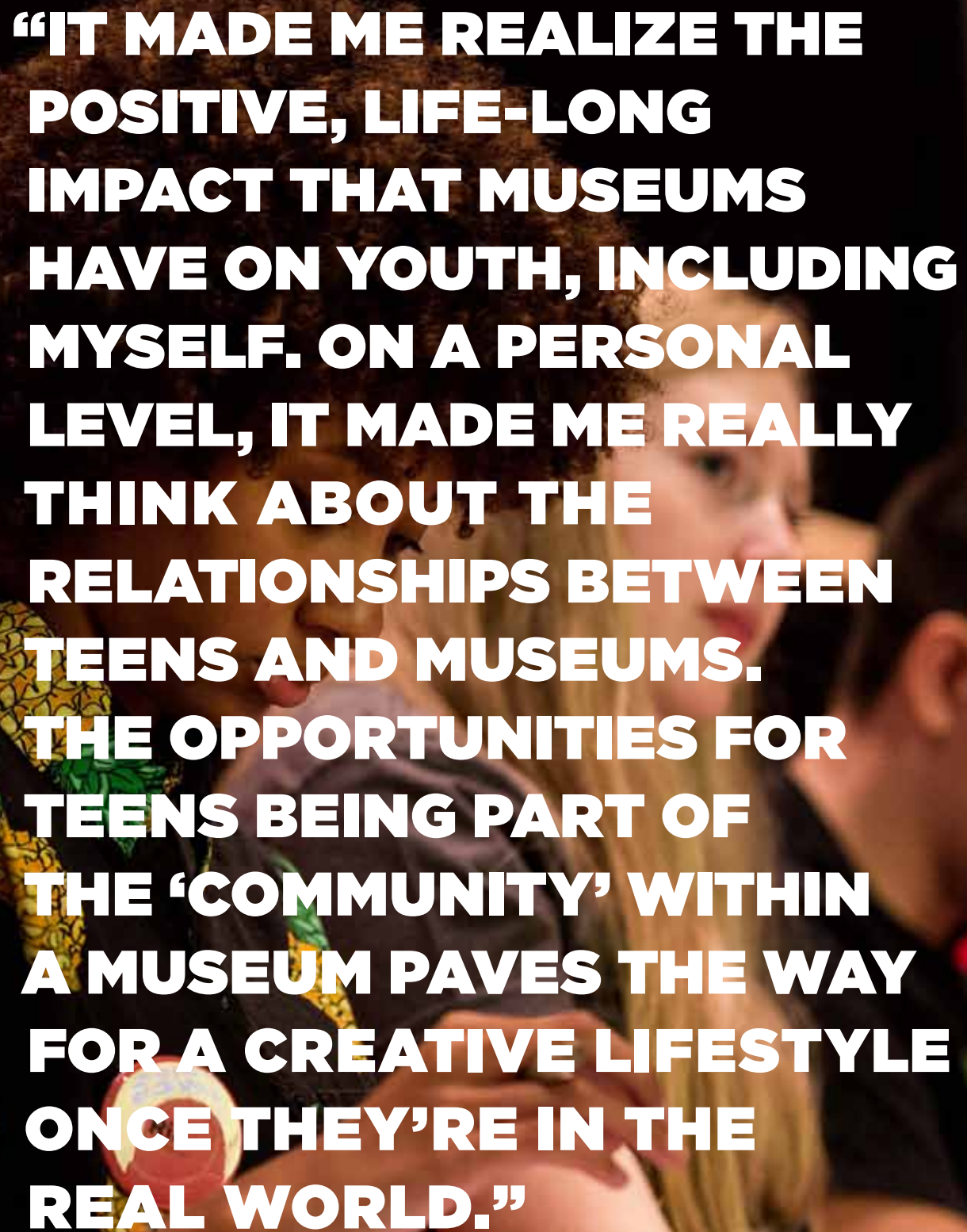
ArtsVibe is a collaborative effort between all of the arts partners of the Woodruff Arts Center designed to meet the needs of arts-oriented teens as well as those who are less familiar with the arts, offering a combination of paid and free events for students in grades 6–12. The High Museum hosts monthly art-making workshops, poetry slams inspired by works in the permanent collection, and gallery experiences for the general public and youth organizations in the community. Essential to these efforts is the High Museum of Art's Teen Team, a group of creative high school students who share a common interest in art and community engagement. The Teen Team gets behind-the-scenes access to the museum, plans teen nights and events, assists with summer camps, and learns about the museum's exhibitions and collections. The Teen Team also takes on a large project for the museum each year. In the past they have staged a Teen Film Festival and curated an exhibition of prints from the High's modern and contemporary art collection. This year the Teen Team worked together to create a Teen Experience highlighting the museum's permanent collection.

Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston Boston, MA

The ICA's Teen Programs encourage artistic expression and creative thinking among Boston-area youth. Each school year, the ICA introduces



2015 participating teens.



“IT MADE ME REALIZE THE POSITIVE, LIFE-LONG IMPACT THAT MUSEUMS HAVE ON YOUTH, INCLUDING MYSELF. ON A PERSONAL LEVEL, IT MADE ME REALLY THINK ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TEENS AND MUSEUMS. THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEENS BEING PART OF THE ‘COMMUNITY’ WITHIN A MUSEUM PAVES THE WAY FOR A CREATIVE LIFESTYLE ONCE THEY’RE IN THE REAL WORLD.”

—Carlos Moreno, *Teen Program Participant, Artpace*

thousands of teens to contemporary art through drop-in events such as Teen Nights and school tours of ICA exhibitions. Enrollment-based programs such as Teen New Media courses offer instruction in digital photography, game design, and more, while year-long programs such as Fast Forward (FF) and Teen Arts Council (TAC) provide an immersive experience with teens and contemporary art. In Fast Forward, teens create films and gain real job skills using cutting-edge technologies. In the ICA's Teen Arts Council, teens develop and implement creative programming for their peers. Programs created by the TAC include an ongoing series of video interviews with featured ICA artists, in partnership with Fast Forward; multiple Teen Nights throughout the year; and various exhibition-related programs designed to connect teens from across the greater Boston area to the world of contemporary art.

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago Chicago, IL

The MCA is recognized as the region's foremost cultural institution dedicated to the art of our time, documenting contemporary visual culture through painting, sculpture, photography, video, film, and performance since its founding in 1967. The vision of the MCA is to be an artist-activated and audience-engaged contemporary art museum that generates art, ideas, and conversation around the creative process, and is a cultural leader of local necessity and international distinction.

The Teen Creative Agency (TCA) was founded in September 2011 and is the MCA's intensive, immersive creative youth development program. TCA is made up of a group of 25 curious, creative, committed young people, ages 15 to 19, from all over the Chicago area who meet at the MCA every Saturday for two years. Led by two artists, TCA members learn about the museum, immersing themselves in contemporary art and ideas at the MCA and elsewhere in Chicago; collaborate with museum staff, other artists, and young people; and hone their critical thinking, collaboration, and leadership skills. With this new knowledge, they curate exciting, unexpected, critical, and creative programs with and for their peers, as well as for the general public. This includes the Living Room, a monthly pop-up program, and 21Minus, an annual festival of contemporary art and experiences by artists under 21 years old. TCA's goal is to build a community of young artists and thinkers within

the context of a larger contemporary arts community in Chicago, and to develop the next generation of cultural leaders and creative, engaged citizens.

Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit Detroit, MI

The Department of Education and Public Engagement develops adventurous, multidisciplinary programming in which the museum and city of Detroit function as sites for investigation and experimentation. MOCAD curators and invited guests work with international and local communities to produce events and projects that are fun, rigorous, and innovative. The department aspires to support youth and adults in learning and growing as free thinkers to be culturally inclusive, artistically forward-thinking, and intellectually ambitious. MOCAD's youth programs echo this sentiment by providing enriching artistic opportunities for middle and high school students to advocate for themselves. These programs are designed to empower local youth and to provide a good introduction to creative careers.

The Teen Council is created for and by 12 to 18 diverse young creatives from metro Detroit as a means to inspire and empower the local youth and to provide an innovative introduction to creative careers. With the help of museum professionals, these teens come together to plan and produce programming for youth and adults here at MOCAD. The council explores the proposition that teens who collaboratively contextualize the making, understanding, and valuing of art within larger cultural frameworks of community, identity, agency, and teamwork. The democratic process develops skill sets that translate into meaningful careers later in life, whether that career is creative or not. Additionally, Teen Council members participate in activities such as college tours, financial workshops, portfolio reviews, and artist studio visits to prepare for a post-secondary school experience.

Pérez Art Museum Miami Miami, FL

Pérez Art Museum Miami serves one of the most diverse populations in one of the fastest growing regions in the country, where a unique confluence of Caribbean and North and South

American cultures adds vibrancy and texture to the civic landscape. The city's thriving community of artists, designers, and collectors, and its avid and growing art-engaged public, are driving Miami's demand for a world-class museum and dynamic center of visual arts education. Pérez Art Museum Miami exists to improve the quality of life for individual residents of and visitors to Miami-Dade County, as well as social life in the communities they represent, by facilitating catalytic engagements with the most progressive visual arts of our time. The museum is located on Biscayne Bay in Museum Park, downtown Miami, and alongside its overall mission, provides a safe and fun environment for teens that is full of possibilities for self-exploration and learning.

Pérez Art Museum Miami Teen Arts Council (PTAC) is an incubator for the future art community in South Florida. The three main objectives of PTAC are ambassadorship, apprenticeship and art education. PTAC Members develop interactive projects with new media for visitors to enjoy a teen perspective online and in the museum. They organize fun and innovative events for South Florida's growing teen audience; collaborate with local teens and professional artists; acquire skills for college preparedness with hands-on educational experiences; and create exhibition-related editorials, photography, film and sound in a state-of-the-art multimedia studio, and become leaders in the arts.

The Queens Museum Queens, NY

The Queens Museum is dedicated to presenting the highest quality visual arts and educational programming for people in the New York metropolitan area, and particularly for the residents of Queens, a uniquely diverse, ethnic, cultural, and international community.

The museum fulfills its mission by designing and providing art exhibitions, public programs, and educational experiences that promote the appreciation and enjoyment of art, support the creative efforts of artists, and enhance the quality of life through interpreting, collecting, and exhibiting art, architecture, and design.

The Queens Museum presents artistic and educational programs and exhibitions that directly relate to the contemporary urban life of its constituents, while maintaining the highest standards of professional, intellectual, and ethical responsibility.

Queens Teens offers local youth opportunities to learn about contemporary art and gain a deep understanding of the inner workings of a cultural institution, while developing their own creative interests and passion for the arts in a community of like-minded peers. The Teens become part of a close-knit professional and peer network that fosters personal and professional growth, and provides individualized support as they move toward college and beyond.

In this paid, year-long apprenticeship program, students meet at the Queens Museum on Saturday afternoons (and other mutually agreed-on times throughout the year) for art-making, exhibition tours, skill-building workshops, and presentations by museum staff. In addition, Queens Teens receive work assignments in one of the museum's major departments—curatorial, education, and public programs—where responsibilities include assisting with family art workshops, public programs, and events, helping museum visitors navigate the galleries; and sharing insights and knowledge about current exhibitions. Students can receive school community service credit for Saturday activities and a salary for weekend work assignments.

Teens may participate in Queens Teens over multiple years with the aim of building on skills developed, and gaining confidence as they grow in the program and progress through high school.

**“MUSEUMS NEED
PEOPLE, NOT JUST
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BUT THEY’RE ALIVE
WHEN PEOPLE COME
INTO THE SPACE.”**

—Hope Lennox, *High Museum of Art*

Queens Museum teens Emily Torres and Hayley Mackenzie Bain presenting on the public day.



Pérez Art Museum Miami teens
Ezekiel Jahbari Binns and Maggie
Gault during the teen presentations.



Teens and educators take part
in a joint performance workshop.



MOCA Detroit Teen Council member Charles Frost participates in the roundtable discussions.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

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

Question 1

What role should museums play in response to current events? Are there particular examples you have experienced?

Participants agreed that museums should (and many already do or try to) play a role in response to current events. As “open, public spaces,” museums need to “promote conversation” and provide a “safe space” for dialogue and “contemplation.” Museums “have a responsibility to be in tune with what’s happening in the world,” and should not ignore timely social issues. Current events also engage new audiences. Grace Needleman, an artist/educator at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, witnessed this during her museum’s “Black Lives Matter” conversations. “People were showing up who weren’t going to come to a museum otherwise, but they really cared about talking about this issue. Maybe there’s a different way we can be thinking about this, not as a responsibility, but as an opportunity and a need that museums could fill.”

Teens and educators brainstormed ways in which museums can respond to current events, from hosting conversations, “open Q&As,” “TED Talks,” and “panel discussions with experts,” to providing a dedicated space in the museum for topical discussions, to having weekly artist installations. There was some debate as to how soon is too soon for artists to explore current issues. Hastily thrown together or “heavy-handed” installations in response to sensitive topics—especially while still in the national spotlight—can backfire, making an artist or institution look bad or insensitive; teens and educators referenced works in response to 9/11 and Eric Garner, as examples. Eden Bekele, Teen Arts Council member at the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston shared, “I think it’s difficult because the museum’s not a person. You don’t want to have

the museum’s opinion on an event or issue ... it’s important to have a lot of discussions and talks so that things are open-ended.” Teens felt strongly that museums need to say a topic is important and “matters in this space,” and to let people know that it’s OK to talk about a particular subject in this setting. Presenting “multiple perspectives,” “research,” and “facts” rather than providing a single opinion or taking a side is key.

Some teens raised an issue with museums being totally neutral on an issue, “otherwise what’s the point?” while others debated as to whose responsibility is it—the museum’s or the artist’s—to take a specific stand. Amireh Rezaei-Kamalabad of the ICA posed some interesting questions for future discussion: “Is it the responsibility of the museum, after exhibiting these ideas, to then do something? Or do we just want them to be this stagnant place that just showcases these ideas, but then never does anything with them? ... Or is it just that the conversations inspire people and those people have the responsibility?”

“Contemporary art is a perfect match for teen programs. It allows us to reflect on current events and current issues that matter to us. It also allows us to feel uncomfortable, and I think when you feel uncomfortable, it’s a good thing, not a bad thing. It allows us to be creative in terms of solving problems, not just personal problems, but problems related to social issues or world themes.”

—**Fabrizio Flores**, Teen Program Alumnus and Museum Educator

“I think one of the many things we can do is have weekly meetings about what’s going on in your lives, what’s going on in the outside world, what you’ve been

experiencing that week. If you're aware of what everybody's going through, you can probably see a trend in what's going on and that can definitely help with the process of coming up with new ideas or projects for the future. I feel it's more up to us too if we want to keep up with the times ... if you educate yourself, it's easier to educate others."

—Emily Torres, Queens Museum

Question 2

During the online forums, participating teens and educators collectively determined that a museum's role should be to educate, empower, and empathize with its audiences. How could this specifically be done for the teen audience?

Who better to know what teens will like than teens themselves? Nurturing programs that are "planned and run by teens for teens" and ensuring accessibility by providing "free teen admission" are both key to educating, empowering, and empathizing with teen audiences. Teens agree that giving space to teen voices in the museum and putting teens on the same level as adults are essential for teens to feel empowered and respected by their institutions. From creating "a relaxed space for teens only" to exhibiting artwork by teens in the galleries, these lively discussions resulted in many ideas for museums to better include and relate to teen audiences.

In terms of educating teens, many agreed that providing more context with the art is important. One way to achieve this is through teen-led tours where teen guides engage visitors in conversation about the work by asking questions rather than just providing facts. Also, when teens see other teens in these leadership roles, they think "I can do this too," which also empowers teens. Having audio tours narrated by teens "allows us to speak directly to teens about an artwork, and also allows us to have our own interpretation of what we see," said Ezekiel Jahbari Binns from the Pérez Art Museum Miami. Several teens felt strongly that museums should explore current events and social justice issues via panels or roundtable discussions so teens can learn about "what's happening in the world, something better than the news, less biased." However, as Amireh Rezaei-Kamalabad

of the ICA/Boston stated, in order for a museum to properly educate teens on a particular current event, "they should collaborate with groups who are experts in it."

Many agreed that museums are doing a great job of empowering teens and providing them with a platform for self-expression. "Open dialogues," "mutual respect," and "being treated and valued the same as employees" were common themes. Another way for teens to feel empowered is through interactivity—from being part of the artwork, witnessing the installation process, talking to working artists, or engaging with curators. Ultimately, empowerment comes from letting teens make their own decisions and giving them the authority to plan and execute programs. Putting teens into positions where they can directly engage with other teens also helps teens (who may be new to the museum) feel more comfortable in the museum setting.

Empathy is best demonstrated through open communication and active listening; many teens reiterated, "we need someone who will actually listen to us." Adults overseeing teen programs need to "follow through and support" teens in their program-making decisions. In addition, several teens expressed their desire to have mentorship and guidance from adults. Charles A. Frost III from the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit said teens "need to find someone who can nurture, but also tell the truth when a person's wrong." Maggie Gault of Pérez Art Museum Miami agreed: "We're looking for friends, but at the same time, we're looking for direction. That's what we need ... a 'friend-tor'."

"I don't think it's about making (teens) feel superior to another group. I think it's about saying that their opinions are valued and are valid, because in museum settings that's not always the case. You see adults, and they have their opinions, but your opinions aren't usually at the same level. So I think it's about leveling the playing field for opinions."

—Ria Sylva, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago

"As teens in our arts organizations, we serve as ambassadors for our generation within the arts. And because our voices are being heard, we can empathize with a broader audience and a diverse audience."

—Carlos Moreno, Artpace



Teen participant Amireh Rezaei-Kamalabad sharing her thoughts during the small group discussion session.

“We do get a lot of control over what happens, which is important to make you feel like you’re a part of something, because it’s not just like you’re getting told ‘do this and that.’ You get to make decisions about what happens to you, which does make you feel like ‘I’m someone who matters.’ And also, when you’re having this positive experience, you’re going to want to tell other people you know and say ‘I had a lot of fun at this program. You should come and do it with me.’ ”

—Hayley Mackenzie Bain, Queens Museum

Question 3

What are some traditional *museum* practices that should be challenged and why? What are some traditional *artistic* practices that should be challenged and why?

Teens and educators had plenty to say about challenging traditional museum practices, especially ones related to the perceived formality of institutions, including “no photography,” “no touching,” “proximity to artwork,” and “being quiet,” as well as admission, access, and how curatorial decisions are made.

A popular topic was challenging the physical museum space itself. Many teens feel that art shouldn’t be limited to just within the museum walls. From “pop-up shops” and “museum trucks instead of food trucks,” Artpace’s Carlos Moreno stated, “the museum doesn’t have to be in the building; it can be outside or wherever.”

Museums need to bring in more “hands-on artwork” and works that are “intended to be interacted with,” as well as artists who are creating interactive moments or spaces inside the museum. Several teens loved the idea of interactive touch tours for people with limited or no vision. Also, teens are very curious to see the art-making and installation process. Emily Torres of the Queens Museum suggested “having a place in the museum just dedicated to basically how it’s done, how this happens.” Educator Fabrizio Flores said it would be great to “bring some of that studio practice information into the galleries so that we have a much deeper understanding and appreciation of the practice.” Teens discussed

how museums could be “more active” or more of “a place of use.” Having “noise” and “people talking” allows visitors to enjoy themselves more; they feel less “restrained and restricted” and more free to “have conversations in the galleries,” rather than in a separate space. While teens recognized that museums’ quiet atmosphere may be out of “respect for the art,” Hayley Mackenzie Bain of the Queens Museum shared, “it almost feels like the museum patrons aren’t really being respected in that way if you can’t talk about what you’re looking at or you can’t interact with it.”

A lively debate ensued regarding whether or not to allow the public to weigh in on what is exhibited, via a “suggestion box,” “open poll,” or a rotating “board of curators” rather than just one curator making the decisions. Some acknowledged, however, that you couldn’t have “everyone at the table at once” and “in some ways no matter who you pick, you’re ultimately leaving someone else out,” which is problematic.

Traditional notions of artistic practice that teens believed should be challenged include what it means to be “successful,” whether or not formal training or “going to art school” is necessary to be an artist, and the “idea of the artist as one person”—thinking about how work “can be more collective- and more community-based.”

“How do we free the person when they’re in the space? Maybe one way is those supplemental things that you can bring into a gallery space: maybe there is an audio component where you can put the headphones on and that creates a dialogue in the space. Or if it’s a printmaking piece—I know what Artpace did, which I thought was really effective—they brought out the block that actually made the print; you can’t touch the piece that’s hanging in a frame on the wall, but all of a sudden you get to interact with the process that helped make the piece, and it completely changed the way people experienced that show. Maybe we have to think more creatively about the resources we bring into the galleries so people don’t feel so restricted going through.”

—Zaneta Taylor, Artpace

“We don’t want to just tell people ‘you’re missing out if you don’t come here.’ Museums should feel like they’re missing out if people don’t come to them too. Because museums need people, not just because they



MCA Chicago teen Ria Sylva participates in the roundtable discussions.

need visitors to come, but they're alive when people come into the space. If nobody's in the space, they're not alive. It's a reciprocal relationship, it's a symbiotic relationship."

—Hope Lennox, High Museum of Art

Question 4

How do you envision the future of teen programs in museums?

In the future, participating teens and educators hope that teen programs will be a “normal,” “necessary,” “prominent,” and “expected” part of every museum—not just a unique feature at some museums—and “accessible for all teens.” Charlisa Mayes of the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit said museums need teen programs in order “for everything to stay fresh, relevant, and contemporary.”

Rather than be “something separate,” teen programs will be “integrated into all aspects of the museum,” with greater teen involvement across departments. There will be less (or no) distinction of programs by age groups (i.e., teen programs, adult programs, and kid programs), with “all ages interacting together, on an equal playing field,” said Taylor Browning, associate curator for education at Artpace, adding, “It’s important for adults to have opportunities to play also.”

Directors and other leaders will talk to teens, ask them questions, and gain their input to improve the museum as a whole. Teens will take on “more responsibilities,” play a bigger role in the museum, and be given greater agency to take charge without “adult higher powers.” From designing ads (for any museum program, not just teen-related ones) to curating an annual exhibition, teens would gain valuable skills and work experience in all areas of museum life.

Several teens expressed the need for more mentorship opportunities—with artists, adults, and other teens—as well as chances to partner with their respective teen arts council alumni. Hope Lennox of the High Museum of Art envisions a mentor program or “apprenticeship” where, for example, “a teen is working in the gift shop and that would expose them to buying and marketing, the different fields that maybe we don’t think about in a museum.”

Ezekiel Jahbari Binns from the Pérez Art Museum Miami shared, “The future of teen programs can be a more instructive way of teaching teens, leading them into adulthood through real-life applications,”

such as workshops on how to “register to vote,” “file taxes,” “pay a mortgage,” “handle a landlord,” and other “fundamentals of being an adult” that aren’t taught in school.

In addition, teens want to receive “technical skill training” and more hands-on learning opportunities to help “fill in the gaps of high school.” As Emily Torres from the Queens Museum stated, “Even if you do grow out of art, you have these skills that you’ve built and grown throughout your time here: you have public speaking skills, skills on how to talk in an interview ... it’s not necessarily just skills for art, it’s skills for life.”

“I have a vision for future teen programs ... we’re creatively fulfilling you in different ways, but they’re also a place where there are social services, where you can come and do your homework, a place that always has food if you need food, a place you can just come. I feel this is so important in urban city settings where kids might not have a space or a comfortable place to go home to. If they’re looking to this institution as mentors and comfort, why can’t these spaces provide all those needs as well? So it shifts from an art museum space to art museum, community center, event space, all these things mixed into one.”

—Carlie Bristow, Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston

“I definitely see teen programming and teen programs evolving for the better, in a positive manner, in museums. I think a lot of museums and individuals with a lot of influence, they’re seeing that this is actually having a positive impact, this is actually something that needs to happen. I believe that in a few years, or maybe 10 years, it’s going to be something that’s almost expected, it’s going to be normal ... and something that you see at every museum.”

—Kevin Bryant, High Museum

“I know being a part of my teen council has really shaped who I am now and who I want to be. It really opened my eyes to the opportunities I have after high school, who I can be, and who I want to be.”

—Carlos Moreno, Artpace



Educator and MOCA Los Angeles Teen Program Alumnus, Fabrizio Flores in conversation with other participating educators.

EDUCATOR ROUNDTABLE

Marie Vickles, Manager of Gallery
and Studio Programs at Pérez Art Museum
Miami, during the Educator Roundtable.

When teens and program alumni at the Teen Convening talk about their experiences in museum programs, they use words like safe space and home. We opened our Educator Roundtable discussion by exploring these themes. We asked ourselves: What places felt safe to us when we were teenagers? Our safe spaces were places where we felt happy and proud of what we were doing. They were places that could hold dichotomies: they allowed us to be alone while also having a community; they let us have autonomy, but also offered us support; they gave us opportunities to be both children and adults.

We then delved into the challenges of creating safe spaces for teens in a world that often feels uncertain. Teen programs have so many moving parts that it is almost impossible to know, for sure, what each part will do when. Because of this, we can never know exactly what each day will look like. This uncertainty can be dynamic and exciting. It can also be overwhelming. As educators, how can we create and maintain strong programs while also embracing this uncertainty?

Our conversation gave us time to share both our challenges and successes. We explored practices that have worked for us, as well as those that haven't. Through sharing our knowledge, we developed a list of suggestions to help address difficult situations before they happen, in the moment when they occur, and after they have taken place. Below are some of the practices that we discussed.

Before a program begins and before any students step into the museum, we can set structure for ourselves. We can sketch out the tentative shape and parameters of our programs, figuring out what our missions, objectives, and goals are. What can our program do, and what can't it do? With our resources and expertise, what can we accomplish? What tasks are beyond our capacity?

Once we figure out the parameters of our programs, we can put plans in place. On a programmatic level, this may mean figuring out the steps we will take to create a functioning program—or knowing what to do when an emergency arises.

As programs begin and students, alumni, and visiting artists arrive, we can continue to create structure. By discussing and setting norms and goals at the beginning of the year, staff and students create an outline for the path they will follow. When things get off track, they can refer back to these guidelines. Setting norms and goals with visiting artists and staff helps create clear expectations, allowing staff to better understand what their responsibilities are and how to fill their role. It also allows us to know when something is not a good fit for our program.

In the same way that we create a plan to guide our own work, we can create plans with students and their families. Together, we can think through difficult situations that may arise and what steps we can take to address the situations. For instance, if a student knows that she becomes overwhelmed during group conversations, an educator can talk with her about recognizing signs that she is becoming overwhelmed and then outlining steps she can take to calm down.

Check-ins and rituals can also help us create structure. The consistency of rituals can be both calming and empowering to students. Through check-ins, students can tell staff how they are feeling and what they are thinking about.

A common concern among educators at the roundtable was what to do when we become overwhelmed, frustrated, or angry in the moment. Is it OK to have these feelings? Is it OK to express them? The common view was that it's important to be yourself. As one participant said, "You have these real reactions. You have beliefs. You're trying to protect [the students], but you're also a person and sometimes you make mistakes. I think that's important for teens to see, too." Students can learn from how we, as educators, handle our reactions. If we handle our emotions calmly and articulate our experiences, we can model ways to handle emotions effectively.

Part of handling our own emotions means taking the space that we need—slowing down our responses, getting support from colleagues, and talking through situations. Discussing a

situation with a colleague or supervisor can broaden our understanding of what is happening, as well as introduce us to new perspectives. If we seek support from outside resources, such as students' parents/guardians, teachers, and counselors, we can create solutions that might not be feasible within our programs.

Often, we figure out better ways to handle a situation after the situation is over. One educator noted: "There's a lot of pressure that we put on ourselves to have the answer right in the moment. A through line for all of our stories is that we didn't necessarily have (the right answer) in the moment. But we did something afterward. That debrief is really powerful for us in our work. And really important in terms of ... behaving transparently about failure. (We can say to a student,) 'Oh man, I did not handle that well.' (We can) give ourselves permission to fail as long as we create the follow-up to the moment."

As this educator said, it's OK to make mistakes! What's important is how we address the mistake afterward. The follow-up can be powerful for both the educator and the student. And, it can lead to a deeper conversation.

In most situations, there will be things we've done well and things we can do better. Debriefing after an event or program gives space for letting us talk about our successes and failures. It lets us figure out what we want to keep doing, as well as what we want to do differently the next time around.

By sharing our expertise and experience at the roundtable, we were able to broaden our perspectives on our work. How can we continue having these conversations at each of our museums?

This year's roundtable facilitator was Melissa Rocklen. Melissa is a clinical social worker and artist who specializes in working with youth and collaborating with institutions to build their social and emotional support systems.



LESSONS LEARNED

Artpace

Taylor Browning

Associate Curator of Education

Carlos Moreno

You[th]Pace Teen Art Council Member

Gallian Torres

You[th]Pace Teen Art Council Member

The ICA Teen Convening makes magic happen. Having had the incredible opportunity to participate in the Convening two summers in a row and also host the first-ever Teen Convening: Texas, I have witnessed firsthand the profound impact of working with a small-scale group of teens and educators in a very focused, concentrated way. Being given the space to converse and reflect with educators and teens from around the country has shaped me into a more risk-taking and resilient educator and, as a result, Artpace's teen programs have flourished. The ICA Teen Convening generates a visionary energy that inspires not only its direct participants, but also now an infinite number of people through the regional events its participating organizations will host. In one summer of preparing for and attending both the Texas and National Teen Convening, our teens gained confidence, grit, humility, patience, an expanded worldview, new friends, new tastes, and new goals to guide them into the future.

—**Taylor Browning**, *Associate Curator of Education*

It was an honor to participate at this year's National Convening for Teens in the Arts. Overall, the Convening was invigorating. It was an eye-opening experience, and it was empowering to represent Artpace on a national platform. I feel the ICA/Boston illustrated so well this idea of bringing together a diverse group of individuals, and provided a safe space for us to have our individual voices heard.

The most inspiring part of the event was the teen-moderated discussion with alumni from teen programs. They discussed how being part of a teen program has impacted their lives. It made me realize the positive, life-long impact that museums have on youth, including myself. On a personal level, it made

me really think about the relationships between teens and museums. The opportunities for teens being part of the "community" within a museum paves the way for a creative lifestyle once they're in the real world.

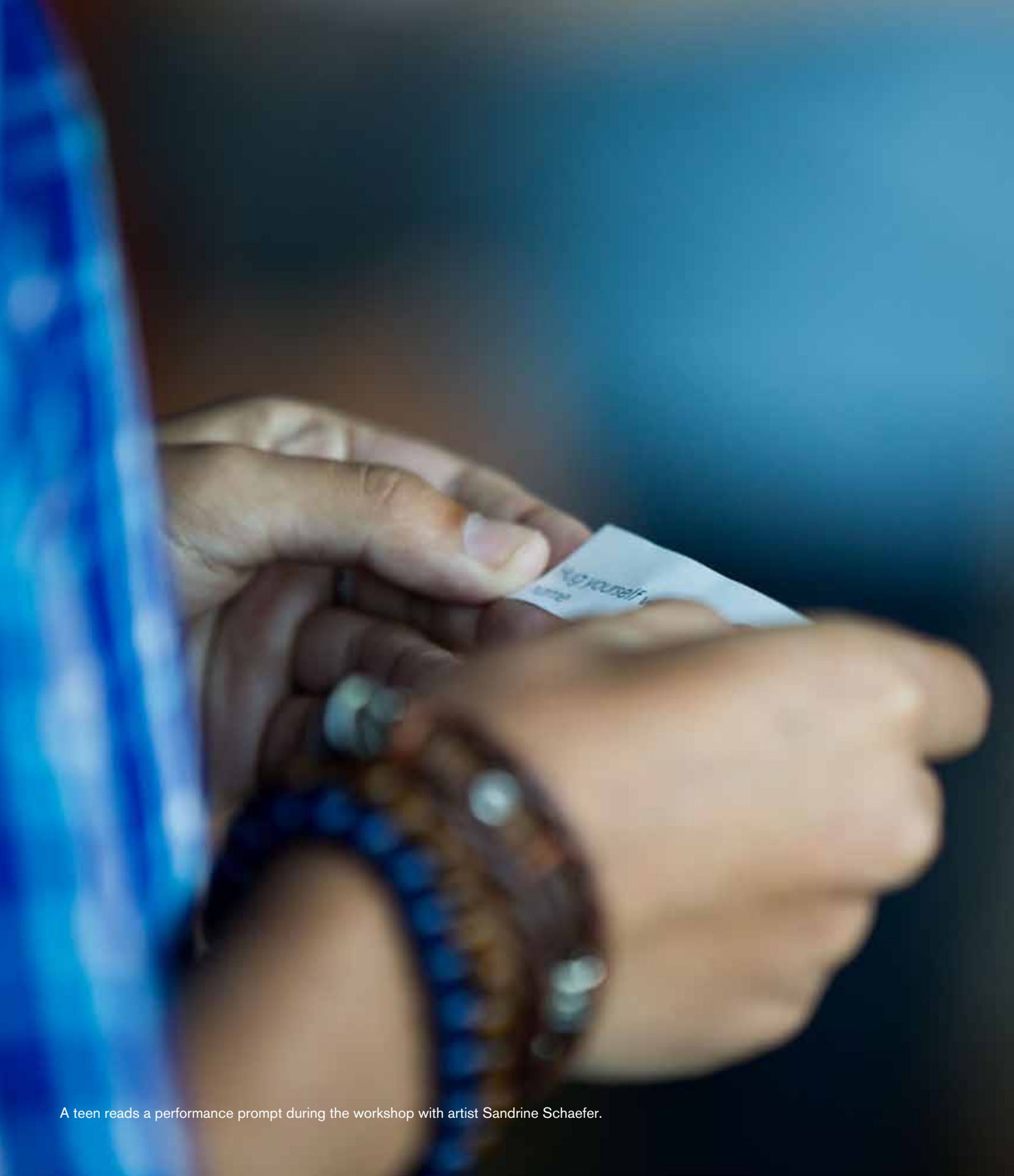
From the first time seeing everyone on a computer screen in the online forums to our last discussion at the ICA, I have met some incredible, inspiring, and intelligent individuals who have exposed me to new ideas and perspectives about teen programs. Now it's up to us, the teen participants, to keep striving for the best and be the leaders of tomorrow. I'm inspired to make an impact, not only within the Artpace Teen Council, but also in the greater community. This opportunity has reminded me to never forget to "dream big."

—**Carlos Moreno**, *You[th]Pace Teen Art Council Member*

In one word, the ICA Teen Convening was enlightening. I was learning the whole time through meeting people with different backgrounds and ideas, exchanging experiences, and even acting out performance art. Definitely my favorite part of the ICA Teen Convening was being the most transparent I have ever been with meeting people for the first time. Not only that, but everyone was totally accepting of me.

This trip was also a great space for conversation. We spent time sharing ideas in a "subjective space" as one of the ICA alumni put it. He was trying to say how in school all learning is geared toward a subject, and some thoughts or ideas aren't always in line with them. Thanks to teen programs and events like this, students can't really be wrong, and can grow from understanding how others may feel about their ideas or opinions. Hearing thoughts like that, and getting support for my own, created a different form of feedback that I could never imagine receiving in school from some students or teachers.

Having such a great time made me realize how unintentionally exclusive teen programs or events can be sometimes. I was wondering how my friends would have liked this experience or how



A teen reads a performance prompt during the workshop with artist Sandrine Schaefer.

they would've taken something different from it than I did. Maybe, though, the problem is not in teen programs but in schooling. If schools had areas or moments like this, I could see everyone having the opportunity to excel. Subjects like "Give a Presentation in an Auditorium Full of Strangers," "Communication Skills 101," or even "Failure Workshop" aren't taught. Imagine if they were! Teens as students and young adults would be engaged in the world and would feel the same level of enlightenment and learning that I did at the Teen Convening.

—Gallian Torres, *You[th]Pace Teen Art Council Member*

High Museum of Art

Erin Dougherty
Head of Public Programs and
Community Engagement

Shannon Green
Teaching Artist

Kevin Bryant
Teen Team Member

Hope Lennox
Teen Team Member

When the High Museum of Art's Teen Team got the official invitation to participate in the ICA's Teen Convening, I felt like we had been asked to the big show. We were all excited to spend an entire conference discussing teen engagement in museums, hearing directly from teens, and experiencing teen programming in a different city. We got that and so much more.

In the month before the conference, our Teen Team representatives spent many hours preparing and practicing their presentation. As an educator, I thought it was an amazing experience to watch these two young people represent the High Museum, their opinions, and their ideas in such an enthusiastic and polished way. Part of the genius of the Convening was seeing how such rich and diverse teen programming was affecting teens from across the U.S. Witnessing how such programming had shaped and continues to shape their lives and outlooks made me feel like we are all doing something right. I also left the conference realizing there is so much more work ahead for all of us educators, but I felt inspired that teens want to be part of museums.

Our next big step in spreading what insight we gained during the ICA/Boston's Teen Convening is our Southeastern Regional Teen Convening. The High Museum Teen Team and Education Department are looking forward to gathering and

discussing teen programming here in our corner of the world, and to share what we learned in Boston.

ICA Boston's Teen Convening opened my eyes to things that we are already doing right, which is great, but then reminded me that there is always more that we can do. It was a wonderful thing to hear what teens expect from museums, and to continue to remember that we are cultivating future museum patrons.

—Erin Dougherty, *Head of Public Programs and Community Engagement*

It was an incredible honor to represent the High Museum's Teen Team program during this summer's Teen Convening at the ICA/Boston. The event gave me the chance to meet teens from all over the country who share a common interest and really want to work together to make our respective programs the best they can be. We brainstormed new ways to reach out to our teen communities and get them involved at our institutions. We all agreed a stronger social media presence was needed to get the word out about teenage involvement in the arts.

Throughout the program, we were treated as equals to the adults. We heard from teen program alumni who now work for prestigious art museums across the country. I loved this because you could see yourself in their shoes and could visualize amazing opportunities waiting out there in the art world.

I will always remember this experience and the amazing friends I made on the trip. What a great way to see Boston!

—Hope Lennox, *Teen Team Member*

Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston

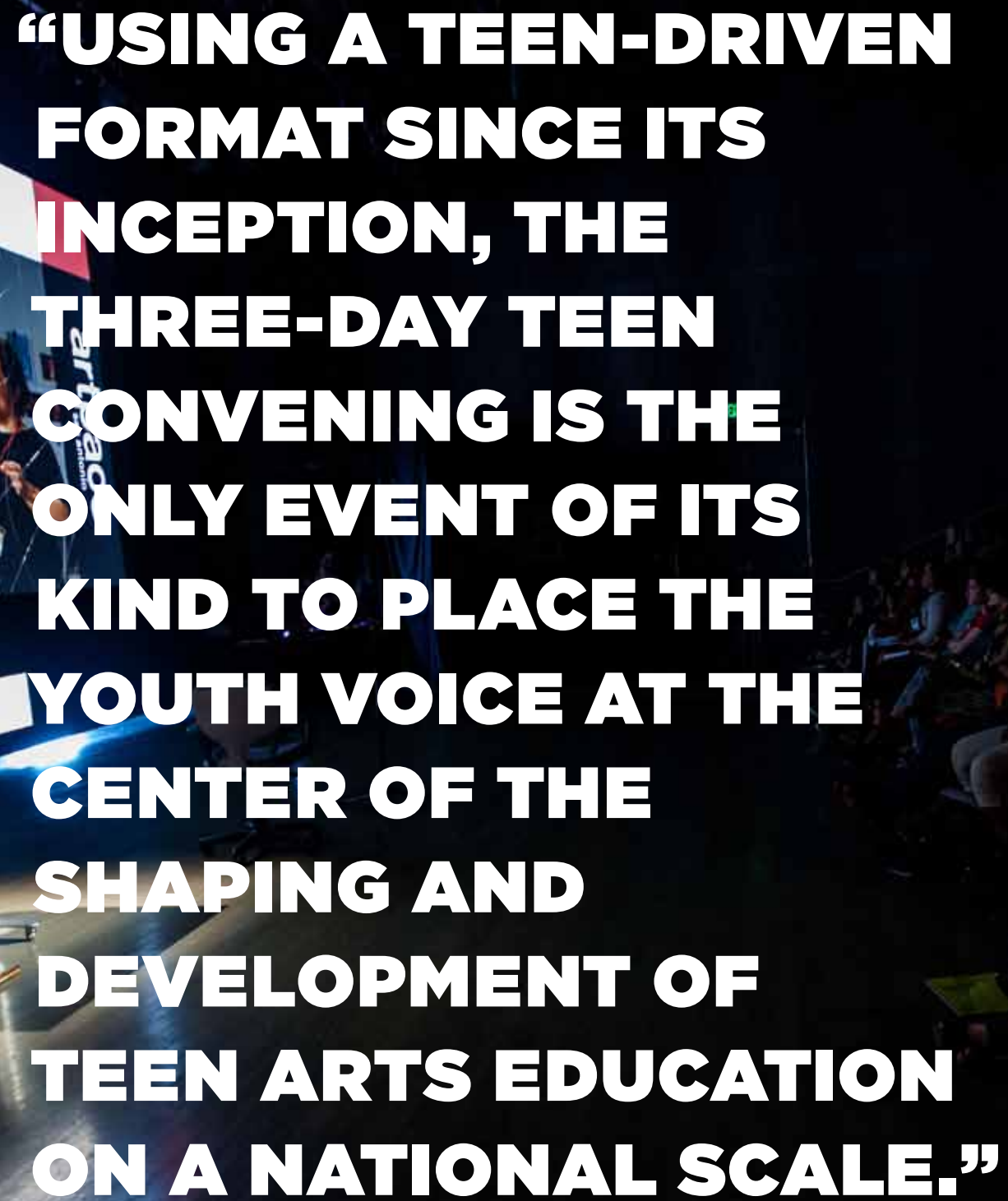
Amireh Rezaei-Kamalabad
Teen Arts Council Member

The three days I spent discussing teens in museums with delegates from across the country easily turned out to be the highlight of my year. The Teen Convening made ways for teen program participants, museum educators, and artists to discuss, on equal footing, the possibilities for teen programming in museums. Constructively, we discussed the current state of youth involvement in museums and mused on their possibilities in the near future.

However, early in our discussions, I began to wonder if it was really a topic in need of a convening. After all, we weren't tackling the "big" problems like war, global warming, or world hunger. This made me question how our discussions on art, museums, and youth could be related to such



Teens and educators exploring the ICA galleries together on the first day of the conference.



**“USING A TEEN-DRIVEN
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INCEPTION, THE
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KIND TO PLACE THE
YOUTH VOICE AT THE
CENTER OF THE
SHAPING AND
DEVELOPMENT OF
TEEN ARTS EDUCATION
ON A NATIONAL SCALE.”**

—Gabrielle Wyrick, Associate Director of Education and Teen Convening Project Director at ICA/Boston

universal conflicts. While I haven't stopped thinking about these questions, the Teen Convening has made me consider them differently.

Museums are often assumed to be isolated environments, distinct from reality, and often associated with elitism and silence. Yet, as art museums become more contemporary and inclusive, they have shifted to become important catalysts for conversation rather than merely showcasing objects. Through the engagement of youth with teen programming and exhibitions relevant to current issues, museums attract an audience that is truly contemporary. This not only benefits the museum, it also fosters society's next generation of citizens, who are able to think more critically about global issues. Through their teen programs, museums promote a chain reaction of leadership and initiative that could change the world.

While the very real and present challenges of poverty, war, and global warming remain unsolved, the ideas and characteristics museums promote, especially with youth, is what will contribute to their possible resolution. The events I plan for teens, the art I make accessible, and the power I pass on to other youth creates a chain reaction, making teens in museums an integral, rather than isolated, aspect of society. After leaving the Teen Convening with that realization in mind, I began to truly understand the significance of the work I do as a Teen Arts Council member at the ICA.

Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago

Deidre Corrigan
TCA Member

Ria Sylva
TCA Member

Grace Needlman
TCA Co-Lead Artist

Lauren C. Watkins
Programmer of Education: Family and
Youth Programs

In the Teen Creative Agency (TCA), we think a lot about what it takes to build community. It's actually our core goal: We want to build community and build community builders. This means that in TCA, we're always looking for new ways to invite other people in, connect, and collaborate.

The Teen Convening was an amazing community-building experience. Back in Chicago, we have been reflecting on what was special about it:

We had deep, impactful, igniting conversations.

It created rare opportunities for analytic reflection and maintained space for the joy of big thinking, new ideas, and creative exchange. One of the biggest takeaways we had is that art is powerful, and conversations are just as powerful. We all have the chance to make museums a setting for important conversations that lead to change and lasting experiences.

We built connections that crossed boundaries of place and age.

All of the conversations were inspiring and impactful, but it was also the mix of voices that was a main highlight. The conversations and experiences we had at the Convening were more genuine and authentic because they broke down the usual boundaries you expect between generations. We were different people at different stages in life, but we all had the same motives for being there, and we were passionate about the same ideas.

The mix of activities also helped us connect in deeper ways. The second day, we did a series of exercises with an artist. Being led blindfolded, and then leading someone that same way, helped us build trust with each other. It was fun, and it gave us ideas for future projects, and for how to get to know people better.

We were able to see ourselves and the work we do in our program within the context of a larger community.

It can be easy to focus on your program as an island unto itself. Getting to know other people who are committed to this work was even more affirming than expected. Through the Convening, we were able to see how other groups work, learn from what they're doing, and to bring our own insights to help them in their pursuits as well. From the conversations with other educators and youth, we are bringing back new tools for advocating for our program and new fodder for pushing it forward.

We are still, months later, unpacking what of this incredible experience we want to bring back to our work in TCA. But some of the immediate questions we're asking ourselves are: How do we create the conditions for a good conversation? How do we build connections among strangers? How do we help people trust one another? How do we make many voices—younger and older, from different places and backgrounds—speak loudly side by side? It was inspiring to see that the Convening made it possible for us to see the world and our work differently, just from conversations that were had in a span of three days.

Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit

Tylonn J. Sawyer
Youth Program Producer

On behalf of the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, I want to say that it was a pleasure participating in the 2015 Convening of Teens in the Arts. I cannot express how valuable this experience has been for us.

Key takeaways:

Agency and Creativity

By meeting and connecting with like-minded individuals working with youth in museum settings, I gained a greater understanding of the scope of experiences that teens can have. Meeting with Taylor and the teens from Artpace, San Antonio, I saw similarities in our program models. I loved hearing about the ways in which Artpace has its resident artists interact with the teens to create unique artistic experiences. This is something that I will make a concerted effort to achieve moving forward.

Similarly, I enjoyed observing the teen program at ICA/Boston, especially the execution of Teen Night. The organization of the teens hosting the event showed me the amazing things youth can achieve when given agency and support.

Alumni

The panel discussion by alumni teen members now turned adults in the field of youth programming was amazing. Observing the continuity of these experiences and how it pours back into the pool of new youth really gave me a sense of hope for the impact that our programs will have long-term. Also the presentation study by the Whitney really put into perspective the long-term effects of giving teens these kinds of enriching artistic experiences.

Roundtable Discussion With Youth

Listening to the teens voice their opinions on where they feel adults fail to educate them really stood out to me. One young lady explained how she often felt unprepared for adulthood, because the world suppresses teen agency. They are often told they are children, to stay in a child's place, but when they turn 18 they are expected to know how to perform all the duties of an adult. The young lady explained no one discussed with her how to vote, how to get an apartment, and to pay taxes, etc.

Since this discussion, I have really made an effort to incorporate life-skills learning in our programs. We discuss everything from budgets, grants, resumes, taxes, voting, etc.

Pérez Art Museum Miami

Marie Vickles
Manager of Gallery and Studio Programs

Felecia Chizuko Carlisle
Teen Program Facilitator

Marjorie Gault
PAMM Teen Arts Council Member

Ezekiel Jahbari Binns
PAMM Teen Arts Council Member

Attending the Teen Convening at the ICA/Boston was one of the best professional development experiences that I have been a part of in my years working as an educator. During the three days of discussions, reflection, and amazing events, I was inspired at every turn about the future of teen programming in arts institutions. I was provided with opportunities to discuss and learn from more established teen programs and educators concerning proven paths for effectively growing teen programming at the Pérez Art Museum Miami. From this experience, I have made it a point to continuously reflect upon the importance and role that my institution can facilitate in nurturing teen audiences and fostering the support of teen advocates. As an educator from a contemporary arts institution, it was refreshing to hear about new ways to explore the natural and compelling connections of contemporary art and teen audiences. This Teen Convening experience encouraged me to re-focus on how our institution will remain relevant in the lives of youth in Miami—as well as provide a path for our teens to lead new initiatives as we develop and grow our teen programming. It has been so exciting to see how this experience continues to energize the teens and fellow educators who also attended. This was a team-building experience, and as a group, we are collectively excited about the future of the PAMM Teen Arts Council."

—Marie Vickles

I was so honored by the invitation to participate at the Teen Convening. PAMM Teen Arts Council was only two years old at the time, so it was amazing to me that we were noticed at all, but it became clear right away this was part of the master plan. To place younger programs in the same room with established veterans really put into practice the whole strategy of peer-to-peer mentorship, proving that it works for all age groups, not just teens. The leaders at the ICA provided us with the infrastructure to learn from each other. They did not simply stand at a podium and impart wisdom; it was all about action. We learned through practice. I am super impressed by what ICA/Boston has achieved since

ICA teen Ralph Casseus performs spoken word poetry during the public day.



they started their program, and will do everything I can moving forward to apply the great knowledge and insight that this experience has offered me as an educator. Anyone who wants to engage a teen audience should look at this program as an outstanding model. I observed a tangible burst of self-confidence in each of the participating teens at the end of the program, and I saw relief, awe, satisfaction, and encouragement among my peers. I also observed a renewed sense of enthusiasm and empowerment in our two PAMM teen representatives that I am utterly grateful for and I am already seeing make a difference for the group as a whole. I expect this all to have lasting and irreversible effects on all of us, and that is a good thing.

—**Felecia Chizuko Carlisle**

I was thrilled to participate in the 2015 Teen Convening and focus on the relationship between teens and their institutions. Having teens be the voice of the forum promoted discussion between teens and educators, and showed the impact teens can have.

The Convening pushed boundaries and made ground for each program to collide with other programs with both different backgrounds and common interests, and it allowed for ideas to form something new. The Teen Convening provided a platform that allowed everyone to become equal to one another. The discussions between the teens and educators were extremely important and created relationships. The open-mindedness among all the participants made it possible to have a dialogue and share our perspective and ideas to implement change for the future of teen programs.

—**Marjorie Gault**

The Teen Convening at the ICA/Boston evoked a kind of subtle epiphany that resulted in my realizing how much of a role I can play as a teen in an adult-narrated institution. Being able to sit down, listen, and discuss the various teen programming each of the other groups facilitated was also a very thought-provoking experience as it led to numerous ideas. The discussion from teens in programs older than our own also encouraged the realization that so many things are possible in relation to the limitations I assumed were within my own program. Both the experience, and the realization were liberating, and they worked in tandem to encourage new ideas for my own institution. The duality of the formal and informal programming during the Convening proved to serve as a successful way of allowing us teens to gather and socialize “off the clock.”

—**Ezekiel Jahbari Binns**

Queens Museum

Cata Elisabeth

Queens Museum Youth and Family Programs Manager

Hayley Mackenzie Bain

Queens Teen

Emily Torres

Queens Teen

This August I was given the opportunity to attend the Teen Convening at ICA/Boston. It was a really amazing learning experience that was also a lot of unexpected fun. I'll never forget the memories I made in Boston this summer.

What made the Teen Convening a unique experience was that while we did learn from the conference, we also got to meet a lot of new people and enjoy a different city. Boston is a place I'd want to visit again for the people I met and the Institute of Contemporary Art itself. I also want to visit all the museums that the other kids I met in Boston came from. Not to mention the kids themselves. Everyone I met was just so interesting and enjoyable to be around, and I'm still missing them. One of my favorite memories was on the free afternoon we had walking around Boston all day and then just sitting under a public artwork created by Janet Echelman. It was a great way to end an amazing day.

This Convening is important to both teens and educators. I feel like as a person who really does want to pursue a career in the arts, I've really gotten to see a part of what having a job in this field is like. This also benefits the educators because they get to learn from us. We really led the show that week, and I think it gave our educators a chance to really hear what we had to say and to see our abilities. This is going to be my second year in the Queens Teens program, and with this experience behind me, I feel like I can be more comfortable in accepting responsibility and leadership roles.

—**Hayley Mackenzie Bain**, *Queens Teen*

The entire Teen Convening experience has helped me to gain public speaking skills and explanation skills. Before this conference, I was able to speak in front of a decent crowd of people, but I'd always have this fear in the back of my head of messing up on a word or forgetting what I have to say, and this fear would prevent me from doing my best. The presentation that I had to do at the conference really helped me break through that fear. My speaking came naturally and I will definitely be applying this new skill toward speaking to teens who are new to the program. As for my skills in explaining things, I believe that this conference has helped

me to better think through my ideas and questions before actually speaking aloud. I learned to think of things not only through my perspective, but through everyone else's as well, which can really change an idea or thought. This skill will help me to come up with new ideas for the Queens Museum teen program to try out or create. Generally speaking, I am no longer afraid or hesitant to speak my opinion.

Meeting new people from all over the country that all have the same intentions, goals, and ideas as I do truly made this a unique experience for me. It opened a new window for me in my life, letting me know and be aware that people from all over are trying to help out a cause or movement (in this case teen programs) just as much as I am. The conference was truly something I've never experienced before. It was nice to start the conference off with performances and presentations from everyone's teen program and then get into the more professional and typical roundtable discussions because it made the conference much more casual and comfortable. Seeing everyone's ideas and talents, such as singing, puppet shows, giveaways, and well-edited presentations, was very fun and pleasing to watch. It really did remind me that we were all teenagers with different talents coming together to change the world.

—**Emily Torres**, *Queens Teen*

At the Queens Museum's Queens Teens program, we are still talking about ICA/Boston and our participation in the Teen Convening, as you might be able to imagine from the reflections above. The Convening provided a unique space centered

on youth and educator collaboration like we had not experienced before. Though our participating youth Emily and Hayley were very nervous to present and speak in front of others, from our first welcome dinner and activities, they saw how other teens were at the forefront as speakers, leaders, and hosts. Seeing this, Queens Museum youth began to see themselves empowered in the same ways. As an educator, the roundtable was one of my favorite activities. Teens and educators alike engaged in conversations on different topics connected to youth and cultural institutions. It was a special time to dive deep into issues like, “What will teen programs look like in the future?” (To which Hayley answered: “We're [teens] building the landscape of future teen programs right now.”) I remember a youth at my table answered the question “How can current issues be brought into cultural institutions and why is it important?” by referring back to his own museum's contemporary art exhibitions. He reflected that if our museums' artworks are dealing with contemporary issues, then we as educators and teen programs should be doing the same, and I agree.

Being able to hear the thoughts of youth and educators from Boston, Chicago, Miami, Detroit, Atlanta, and San Antonio on these topics showed how important it is to gather and discuss. It highlighted even more the importance of having open conversations that are centered on and committed to involving youth voices as equal contributors. Thank you ICA/Boston for making such experiences possible.

—**Cata Elisabeth**

“THE TEEN CONVENING PROVIDED A PLATFORM THAT ALLOWED EVERYONE TO BECOME EQUAL TO ONE ANOTHER. THE DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE TEENS AND EDUCATORS WERE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT AND CREATED RELATIONSHIPS. THE OPEN-MINDEDNESS AMONG ALL THE PARTICIPANTS MADE IT POSSIBLE TO HAVE A DIALOGUE AND SHARE OUR PERSPECTIVE AND IDEAS TO IMPLEMENT CHANGE FOR THE FUTURE OF TEEN PROGRAMS.”

—Marjorie Gault, *Teen Program Participant*, Pérez Art Museum Miami



Participating teens touring the 2015 Foster Prize exhibition at the ICA.

ONLINE FORUMS

For four weeks leading up to the in-person Convening, the participating teens took part in a series of online discussions focused on teens in museums. During these online forums, teens discussed a wide range of topics, including the museum's role in collaboration with artists and the broader community, and how museums can better reflect the needs of teens and support their interests as they grow into adulthood.

When asked what the main goals of the museum should be, teens came up with "the four Cs: community, connection, cost, and comfort." Ria Sylva, from the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, believes that museums should "empower, educate, and empathize with people." It's important for teens to feel comfortable in the museum setting by making museums more "approachable," "accessible," and "less intimidating." Several teens touched on free admission for teens and ease of transportation to the museum as ways to improve access. Also, offering more interactive experiences to engage audience participation is key to making teens—and visitors of all ages—feel welcome.

Teens wanted to see more art-making events and activities for visitors to create their own art in the galleries. In addition, participants talked about the necessity of featuring a variety of artwork—including work by teens and artists from different countries—to better showcase "different perspectives" and reach out to new audiences. Teens were extra passionate about supporting local artists and the need for museums to provide more opportunities for artists in their own community to show their work.

Museums can better connect with teens, participants believed, by "actually having teens plan events for teens." As teens are focused on their future, the best way museums can support their interests is by preparing them for their careers through "apprenticeships"

with staff across all departments and "portfolio reviews from curators."

Teens felt very strongly that museums should collaborate more with artists. From artist-led workshops to large-scale, collaborative community art projects, teens are hungry for more opportunities to "work alongside the artists" so they can talk to and learn from the artists, and be exposed to "new processes of making art." Eden Bekele of the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston said a workshop she attended—led by circuit-bending artists Beatrix*JAR—"changed my thought process, because before I never would have thought that I could solder or do anything like that. And I also never considered myself an artist before that. It showed me that I can be open to doing new things." Many teens echoed this by sharing their own personal examples of how an artist conversation or hands-on workshop "opened their eyes to new perspectives" and changed their idea of "what art is and what art can be."

**"IT SHOWED ME THAT
I CAN BE OPEN TO
DOING NEW THINGS."**

—Eden Bekele, *Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston*

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CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

OUTSIDE THE LINES A National Convening for Teens in the Arts

ICA/BOSTON, AUGUST 5–7, 2015

DAY 1	WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, PUBLIC DAY
9:20 AM	Introductions/Icebreaker: Sandrine Schaefer
10:10 AM	Kickoff/Introductions: Gabrielle Wyrick
	TEEN PRESENTATIONS
10:20 AM	Presentation #1: Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston
10:32 AM	Presentation #2: Artpace
10:44 AM	Presentation #3: Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago
10:56 AM	Presentation #4: High Museum of Art
11:08 AM	Break
11:28 AM	Presentation #5: Queens Museum
11:40 AM	Presentation #6: Pérez Art Museum Miami
11:52 AM	Presentation #7: Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit
12:04–12:20 PM	Questions and Discussion
12:20–1:45 PM	Lunch and Gallery Tours
	PANEL: ALUMNI LOOK BACK
2 PM	Moderators: Aric Oak and Cecelia Halle
	Panelists: Diane Exavier, Calder Zwicky, Fabrizio Flores, and Janine Quarles
3:10 PM	Whitney Alumni Study Presentation: Heather Maxson
3:20 PM	ICA/Boston Alumni Study Presentation: Gabrielle Wyrick
6–9 PM	Teen Night

DAY TWO	THURSDAY, AUGUST 6
9:45 AM–12:15 PM	Artist Workshop: Led by Sandrine Schaefer
12:15–1 PM	Lunch
1–2:30 PM	Discussion Sessions 1 and 2
2:30–3 PM	Break
3–4:30 PM	Discussion Sessions 3 and 4
DAY THREE	FRIDAY, AUGUST 7
	EDUCATOR TRACK
8:30 AM	Breakfast/Regional Forum Overview
10 AM–Noon	Educator Roundtable
Noon–2 PM	Educator Lunch
	TEEN TRACK
9 AM	Breakfast
10 AM–Noon	Teen Roundtable: Moderated by Cecelia Halle
Noon–2 PM	Teen Lunch
	EVERYONE
2–4 PM	Group Wrap Session
4 PM	Convening Concludes

Visit www.icateens.org to access past Teen Convening reports.



THE INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART/BOSTON

