

Report of Mayors of Peace and Hiroshima & Peace 2016
Peace-building through Culture and Arts Exchange

Chenlu (Tracey) Cui
August 22 2016

**Personal Reflection:
The role of arts in peace building in Hiroshima**

My understanding of peace only becomes more ambiguous after the program. After learning on lectures from professors of different backgrounds and participating in-group discussions, most of us reach the consensus that peace is more than the visible absence of war, but a continuous flow between the visible and the invisible. The later is composed of messages of hibakusha to the world and diversified opinions of peace. Although it is impossible to assign peace a clear-cut definition, I think that peace should include the following elements: a common ground among different groups, communality, individual security and freedom.

However, modern society under the sway of unstoppable globalization and capitalism encounters great difficulties in realizing such kind of comprehensive peace such as the manipulation of image-building by mass media, the lack of direct experience which leads to our reliance on pseudo-environment, the authoritarianism of official sources, and the set of questions regarding modernity derived from consumerism, surveillance, industrialism and militarism. From my point of view, these inevitable and inherent social and ideological problems can be mitigated by tackling peace-building via arts practices.

The significant role of arts in peace-building and peace communication can be explained from the following 3 aspects.

1. Arts practice can overcome the hegemony of language, namely the domination of English in the current peace-building discourse. Unlike other forms of presentation and communication, art is less relied on language capabilities and it allows for diversity of interpretations rather than constraining the receivers within a hegemonic conclusion.
2. Arts provide an important alternative voice to the official statements propagated by mass media and government authority. The transfer of arts between countries serves as an important culture and ideology exchange. The space of imagination and the freedom of expression in creative arts help to break the stereotypical view of foreign countries and to construct a more neutral and authentic image of the unknown. Thereby, it to some extends mitigates the over-domineering influence of political and economic

interests in the process of peace-building.

3. Last but not least, the creative process is an ongoing process of individual artists. Moreover, art, regardless of representational form, is an ongoing exchange between the artists and the receivers. It depends on the immediate environment and requires individual efforts and engagement from both sides. Therefore, peace-building through arts always involve direct individual experience, which is necessary for gaining an independent and unmediated idea of peace.

Peace-building Activities Proposal: Arts Exchange between Montreal and Hiroshima

Background:

- The two cities have a long-lasting connection in peace-building.
- Both cities are active culture hubs of emerging and established local-based artists.
- Montreal hosts a great number of culture spaces and performance venue for medium to large-scale exhibition and performances.

Events and Programs:

1. “Momentary and Infinite Light” by Erin and Mayumi

Summary: “Momentary and Infinite Light” is a collaborative exhibition of American artist Elin O’Hara Slavick and Japanese artist Mayumi Matsuo. Both artists use photographic images of remnants in Hiroshima and Fukuyama to visually and poetically expose the invisible yet profound impacts as a result of A-bomb and nucleus power plants.

More info:

<http://gallery-g.jp/exhibition/elin-ohara-slavick-matsuo-mayumi%E3%80%80/>

<http://www.elinoharaslavick.com>

<http://www.mayumimatsuo.com>

2. “The Black Rain” by multiple artists

Summary: “The Black Rain” is a collective of performance incorporating acting, dance, music and botanical arts. Artists with various backgrounds and nationalities use different arts forms to address the issue concerning unrecognized-hibakusha, including black rain hibakusha. They have suffered severe physical and mental problems and faced persistent discrimination from society and government authority. This performance is inspired by German photographer Thomas Damm’s “Black Rain Hibakusha – Out of the Shadow” at the Former Bank of Japan, Hiroshima Branch. And it aims to celebrate the lives of courage and love of unrecognized hibakusha.

More info:

<http://www.hiroshima-cu.ac.jp/event/content0404.html>

3. Hiroshima and A-bombs film screening

Documentaries, testimonies videos, and films from the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum Archive

More info:

http://www.pcf.city.hiroshima.jp/index_e2.html

Potential Venues and Sponsors (especially those active in political and social justice):

Arts galleries in Montreal:

- Articule (<http://www.articule.org>),
- Dazibao (<http://dazibao-photo.org/en/>)
- Phi Centre (<https://phi-centre.com/en/>)

Live venues in Montreal

- Divan Orange (<http://divanorange.org>),
- Resonance Café (<http://www.resonancecafe.com>)

Screening venues in Montreal

- Cinema Politica (<https://www.cinemapolitica.org/concordia>)
- Le Cinematique Quebécoise (<http://www.cinematheque.qc.ca/en>)
- HOWL! Arts Collective (<http://howlarts.net>)

Other collaborators and sponsors:

- McGill University: Thomas LaMarre (<http://www.lamarre-mediaken.com/Site/Home.html>), professor of East Asian Studies. Furuhashi Yuriko (<http://www.yurikofuruhashi.com>), professor of East Asian Studies.
- Concordia University
- Japanese Canadian Culture Centre of Montreal
- The City of Montreal
- Mayor for Peace Hiroshima
- Mayor for Peace Montreal
- Hiroshima City University