

Second International Arts and Human Rights Symposium
Human Rights Research and Education Centre
University of Ottawa

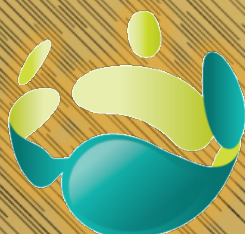
April 12-13 2022
Arts and Human Rights
Symposium

**Building Positive Relations:
The Arts,
New Materialism,
Posthumanism
& Human Rights**

This event is held via ZOOM

Centre
de recherche
et d'enseignement
sur les

DROITS DE LA PERSONNE



HUMAN RIGHTS
Research
and
Education
Centre

40

SESSIONS

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE TOPICS FOR THE 6 SESSIONS FOR THE SYMPOSIUM

Arts and Human Rights Symposium, Building Positive Relations: The Arts, New Materialism, Posthumanism & Human Rights

April 12 and 13 2022 (10:30 AM – 2:30 PM EST)

1. New Materialism, Post Humanism and Human rights

Teachers, philosophers, artists, and human rights advocates explore the post human age of the Anthropocene and being cyborgs, living speculative futures. They consider what it is to live and make art in the shadow of global technological and environmental crisis. How does new materialism intersect with post humanism, and how does this affect our understanding of human rights law? In light of critical (feminist, Indigenous, anti-colonial etc.) perspectives on international human rights in the global governance system, how do human rights intersect with economic and environmental rights and obligations? How do we express and define human rights in the posthuman new materialist era? How can art, music and performance help us understand these new ways of knowing and being in the world?

2. 4 Decades and 40 Years of Art, Philosophy and Human Rights

In celebration of HRREC's 40th anniversary, this is a conversation about what has changed or stayed the same in contemporary art history and recent human rights history. Experts in human rights and art history, philosophy and practice compare notes on the last 40 years, focusing on contemporary art that deals with new materialism, speculative futures, post humanism, social engagement, and major human rights issues such as gender equality, Rwandan genocide, refugee crises, cold war, war on terror, idle-no-more, black lives matter, diversity and inclusion, to elucidate the connections and interactions between the arts and human rights over the last 40 years.

3. Globalization, Human Rights and Art

This session examines how economic developments influence both art and human rights. Philosophers, teachers, human rights practitioners and artists consider both the positive effects of cosmopolitanism (e.g., globalized art markets, international collaborations and inspiration sharing) and the negative effects of race to the bottom labour practices, international corporate impunity and appropriation and exploitation of cultural and Indigenous knowledge and know-how through trade agreements and intellectual property rules.

What role do the arts play in catering to and glorifying globalized capitalism and to resisting and offering alternative narratives of meaning?

4. Sustainability, Equity and Justice in Teaching Human Rights and Art

This session explores how ideas of sustainability, equity, and justice in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can provide a more comprehensive and intersectional understanding of the interconnectedness of planetary life and how this knowledge could be deployed in the art class and the law class. Art teachers, community activists and organizers discuss their experience of working through the troubles of the Anthropocene and new materialism, to conceive, design and implement sustainable, inclusive art practices and pedagogies, and SDG related community art projects.

5. Anti-Coloniality, Intersectionality, and Identity

In This session investigates and celebrates the multiplicities of intersectionality in human rights and the arts. We are a web of intersecting identities of our own and others' creation, based on gender, sexual orientation, gender marginalization, racialization, cultural and religious association, neural and corporal capacities and divergences, beliefs, and values. Some identities centre people and give them power; others degrade people and tear them apart.

We still live in a world where coloniality defines much of our existence: extractive economies exploit land and people for profit; non-human corporate entities distribute wealth back to the advantaged groups to maintain their power. How do disadvantaged peoples and complex intersectional individuals reclaim their multiple identities, their dignity, and their human rights?

How have the arts been used as a site for reclaiming and allyship but also for appropriators and imposters? How do we break out of self-critical cycles that divide communities and allow our multiplicities to flourish and enliven the arts and our shared values?

6. Healing from Human rights and Anthropocene Trauma through Art\Creation

The pandemic caused a global trauma of loss, isolation, dislocation, and despair. There was also tremendous resilience, solidarity and resistance by health care workers, essential service providers, artists, musicians, and performers. What can we learn from this outcropping of creativity and positive energy in response to trauma? As we recover from the pandemic and deal with other crises on our doorstep, how can we carry forward and use this generative momentum and the healing power of art and music to broaden and deepen human rights protections and global solidarity?

Articulating a Manifesto on Human Rights and the Arts for our Times

Throughout the Symposium we will be gathering and building on the outcomes from the workshops and the symposium sessions to attempt to articulate a manifesto on Human Rights and the Arts for our Times. Participants will be invited to contribute their artistic or research practice to the articulation of the new manifesto (e.g., spoken, sung or written word, dance, visual art, music, coding, etc.). An initial assemblage (recording, images, etc.) of this manifesto will be released to the public on May 26, 2022, during International Arts Education Week. An art exposition exploring, critiquing, and inviting conversation and collaboration about the themes of the symposium and manifesto will be mounted in virtual and real gallery space in the coming months.

AGENDA

Day and Session	Topic	Time EST
DAY 1 Tuesday April 12		
	Introduction	10:30-10:45 AM
Session 1	New Materialism, Post Humanism and Human Rights	10:45-11:45 AM
Session 2	4 Decades of Art and Human Rights	11:45 AM-12:45 PM
	<i>Health Break</i>	12:45-1:15 PM
Session 3	Globalization, Human Rights and Art	1:15-2:15 PM
DAY 1 Wrap Up	Discussion of Outcomes\Manifesto	2:15-2:30 PM
DAY 2 Wednesday April 13		
	Introduction & Setting the Stage	10:30-10:45 AM
Session 4	Sustainability, Equity and Justice in Teaching Human Rights and Art	10:45-11:45 AM
Session 5	Anti-Coloniality, Intersectionality and Identity	11:45 AM-12:45 PM
	<i>Health Break</i>	12:45-1:15 PM
Session 6	Healing from Human rights & Anthropocene Trauma through Art \ Creation	1:15-2:15 PM
DAY 2 Wrap Up	Outcomes\Manifesto\Acknowledgements	2:15-2:30 PM

PARTICIPANTS

in alphabetic order of surnames

Van Armenian is a Ph.D. at the School of Music at the University of Ottawa. His research is guided by extensive experience as a professional musician and a deep interest in mechanisms that value Indigenous music as a tool for the development of a unifying and ethical Canadian identity.

Van Armenian

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Victoria Ayala-Preciado

Emergent Art Space, Website
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Victoria is a visual artist and educator from Los Angeles, CA, who earned a B.A. in Practice of Art from U.C. Berkeley in 2014. She has worked with Emergent Art Space for the past 7 years and is now the Website Coordinator and Artist Liaison for the organization.

Lorrie Blair is a professor in Art Education at Concordia University in Montreal. Her teaching and research interests include artistic research and ethics, qualitative research methodologies, art teacher identity, teenage cultural practices, accessible photography, and craft practices. She is the author of *Writing a Graduate Thesis or Dissertation* (2016, Brill).

Lorrie Blair

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Ramon Blanco-Barrera

Artist and Faculty Member of Fine
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Ramon is a Social Catalyst & Artist who sends social and political messages intended to inspire people to reflect about their communities, both local and universal. Ph.D. (2020). Currently, Faculty Member of Fine Arts at the University of Seville (Spain) teaching new media-based courses.

Artist and researcher.
Photo credit:
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Ricardo Dal Farra

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Professor of Music, Concordia University, Canada. Director of the international symposia Balance-Unbalance (BunB) on how the media arts could contribute to solving the environmental crisis, and Understanding Visual Music (UVM). Creator of the Latin American Electroacoustic Music Collection hosted by The Langlois Foundation, Canada. Former UNESCO researcher and Hexagram director.

Al-An deSouza is an artist, and Professor and Department Chair of Art Practice at University of California, Berkeley. They work in photo-media, installation, text and performance, and have published two recent books: *Ark of Martyrs* (2020), and *How Art Can Be Thought* (2018).

Al-An deSouza

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Francesca Ferrando

Adjunct Assistant Professor,
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Dr. Ferrando teaches Philosophy at New York University (US), NYU-Program of Liberal Studies, as an Adjunct Assistant Professor. She is the author of several publications; her latest book is *Philosophical Posthumanism*, published by Bloomsbury. Dr. Ferrando was the recipient of the Philosophical Prize "Premio Sainati", with the Acknowledgment of the President of the Italian Republic. Photo by Angelo Marino.

Visual artist, through his installations and his sculptures, Stanley Juillet explores the physical and psychological suffering caused to people by the violence of the modern world. If his works, political and committed, are inspired by the issues of power in the era of globalization, they also address more intimate questions, such as that of the relationship to oneself and the relationship to the other, which have become difficult in a world where listening loses its value. Photo by Jean Turgeon.

Stanley Février

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Oonagh E. Fitzgerald

International lawyer and artist
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Oonagh E. Fitzgerald, B.F.A., LL.B., LL.M., M.B.A., S.J.D., Member of the Law Society of Ontario. I am an artist and international lawyer, a Senior Fellow at the Human Rights Research and Education Centre, a Vice-President of the International Law Association of Canada, Co-Chair of the Canadian Environmental Domestic Advisory Group under CETA, and an INDI PhD student in the Fine Arts Programme, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada. Website: <https://oonaghfitzgerald.com>

Andrea Fitzpatrick (pronouns: they/them; she/her) is a researcher and academic at U. Ottawa, who teaches contemporary art history and theories. Their interest in human rights is related to the issues that are explored in the work of international artists using many media -- from photography, to video, to performance, sculpture/installation, to painting, and beyond -- who present concerns for identity, subjectivity, gender, embodiment, resistance to war, colonial oppression and occupation, and the desire for freedom of speech, in their artworks. Fitzpatrick's research has focused on artists, memorials, and monuments from Iran, the Arab world, Palestine/Israel, Africa, East and South Asia, and Germany, that show a concern for ending or resisting the useless suffering of conflict and oppression.

Andrea Fitzpatrick

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Federico Guzmán

Artist and independent
researcher
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Federico Guzmán (Seville, 1964) understands art as a free practice that embraces the sensitivity and conscious action of nature. Questioning the personal notion of the author and the belief in separation, Federico has worked in collectives in Colombia, New York, Spain and Western Sahara, approaching art as play, as activism, and as an unlimited experience of self-discovery. In recent years his visual research focuses on painting, engraving and digital techniques. Through a diversity of symbolic approaches, Federico invokes a holistic experience of the artistic process. The painter finds the whole in the part as an active absence that moves him. Thus he contemplates the work, and is guided by it instead of trying to represent it.

Kanienkehaka Bear Clan, Associate Professor of Indigenous Studies, Assistant Vice President Indigenous Initiatives.

Kahente Horn-Miller

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Asma Kazmi

Artist; Professor, UC Berkeley
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Asma Kazmi is a research based artist who tells intertwining stories about Muslim culture, complex trade routes, global flows of people and commodities, labor, colonial and indigenous knowledge systems, and interspecies entanglements. She is a professor in the Art Practice Department at UC Berkeley.

Academic Dean of Arts & English at the College of the Sequoias in California. Past Dean of Arts at Lane Community College, Oregon, Associate Professor of Art at South Texas College, and Instructor of Art at the Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico. MFA in Painting and Drawing, BA Art, AA Liberal Arts. 2013 Fulbright Research Chair in Human Rights and Social Justice at uOttawa, past College Arts Association Education Committee Chair and current Professional Practice Committee member.

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Omid B. Milani

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Exploring the nexus between art and current theories and practices of human rights, Omid B. Milani is the curator of *Images of Justice*, a political cartoon series on human rights issues as a part of CONTEKST, a research project on the Image-Law relationship. <https://Contekst.Education/>

Iranian-Canadian concert pianist, interdisciplinary composer, artist-researcher, educator and Ph.D candidate in individualized studies in fine arts, Anoush Moazzeni enjoys a performing career that has, frequently, taken her around the world. The development of her art incorporates the interaction between artistic interpretation and scholarly reflection; particular areas of her interest in research-creation include artistic research and philosophy on stage.

Anoush Moazzeni

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John Packer

HRREC Director
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Neuberger-Jesin Professor of International Conflict Resolution, Faculty of Law, and HRREC Director at the University of Ottawa, 35 years experience as a practitioner/scholar working at the international level toward the effective realisation of human rights including minority rights, preventive diplomacy, transitional arrangements and genocide prevention.

I am an artist living on Dja Dja Wurung country in south eastern Australia and teach Sculpture and Art Theory at the VCA, The University of Melbourne. My research is conducted through art and philosophy. Currently I am researching ancient augural practices as prompts to developing more contemplative and ethical relationships to the environment.

Elizabeth Presa

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Kimika

Artist
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Kimika es the artist name of Kimiko Nonomura. She studied Traditional Japanese Painting Materials and at the same time Painting Techniques, at the Aichi University of Fine Arts and Music. She worked as an Art Restoration Technician at the National Cultural Heritage Conservation Center of the Kyoto National Museum. She has participated in successive editions of ARTifariti, the International Festival of Art and Human Rights in the Saharawi Refugee Camps of Tindouf, Algeria.

Art historian, curator and editor that works in contemporary art projects approaching art from a social perspective. She has curated exhibitions at many art spaces internationally. In 2008 he started, together with Alonso Gil and Angustias Garcia, Sahara Libre Wear, a textile art project and fashion label in the Refugees Camps in Western Sahara. She has been invited professor at the Universities of Goteborg, Granada, Seville or San Petersburg. She is about to defend her dissertation PhD in Philosophy.

Esther Regueira Mauriz

Curator
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Gloria Song

PhD Candidate, University of Ottawa
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Gloria Song is a Ph.D. candidate in Law at the University of Ottawa, researching access to justice, housing, and gender in Nunavut. She is also a project coordinator for the Law Society of Nunavut, and an analyst with Polar Knowledge Canada, where she leads Canada's implementation of polar science diplomacy treaties.

Eldad Tsabary is a composer living in Montreal. He composes and performs in a variety of styles including contemporary, experimental, acousmatic, sound art, and live electronics. His works, in all styles, are created with wide textural and timbral variety and attention to motion and process. Dr. Tsabary is a professor of electroacoustic music at Concordia University, Montreal, where he teaches electroacoustic ear training, composition, modular programming, history, and live electronics.

Eldad Tsabary

Composer, Prof. at Concordia University in Montreal
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Ann Wettrich

Emergent Art Space, Director of Programs and Administration
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Ann Wettrich is an artist, educator and arts consultant based in the San Francisco Bay Area in the US. Her current work addresses pressing social, cultural and environmental concerns. She is one of two lead artists from Fieldworks Collaborative; Director of Programs & Administration for Emergent Art Space working with young artists across the globe. For well over forty years, she has served in creative leadership, program development and advisory roles with numerous educational institutions, civic agencies and nonprofit organizations.

Tony Yap, Malaysian born, is an accomplished dancer, director, choreographer and visual artist. He contributes to the development of contemporary dance & performance practice, particularly bringing a non-Western perspective to the palette of work being created. His practice is grounded in Asian philosophies, sensibilities and forms; inter-cultural and multi-disciplinary approaches.

Tony Yap

Independent Artist
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Ceyda Yolgörmez

Concordia University / Indigenous AI Working Group / Machine Agencies
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Ceyda Yolgörmez is a PhD candidate in Sociology and Anthropology. Her research questions the social conditions that lead to emergence of contemporary human-machine relations, and imagines how to conceive free relations with machinic others. She is interested in new forms of social relations that come into being through imaginaries and practices that sustain interactions with machinic systems.

Elsy Zavarce is a Ph.D. student in Art Education, Faculty of Fine Arts, Concordia University, Montreal. She is a multidisciplinary visual artist, researcher, and an emeritus professor of Architecture and Design at Zulia University. She was born in Canada and grew up in Venezuela. Her work is part of public and private collections in South and North America. She is in constant experimentation, exploring different mediums and materiality, dealing with memory, resistance, and global concerns of a citizen of the world. Now being forced to be an immigrant, she examines the notion of belonging, territories, diaspora, and identities.

Elsy Zavarce

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DETAILED PROGRAM

Day, Session and Participant	Topic	Session and Time EST
DAY 1 Tuesday April 12		
Oonagh, Ramon, John	Introduction	10:30-10:45 AM
Session 1 Oonagh moderates	New Materialism, Post Humanism and Human Rights	10:45-11:45 AM
Anoush Moazzeni	Performance - Topic: online/recorded Performance - Travelling in-between Intensities: An Interdisciplinary Composition for Social Dreaming	
Ricardo Dal Farra	experimental transdisciplinary art-science actions and the environmental crisis	
Francesca Ferrando	"The Posthuman Art of Existence"	
Asma Kazmi	I will speak about my project After Jahangir to talk about material relations, non western concepts of environmental stewardship, and hope	
Teresa Dillon	performance - I've been devising a number of mourning and other forms of rituals for other species and systems including soil, reeds, sea cables etc. 10-15 minutes	

Session 2	4 Decades of Art and Human Rights	11:45 AM-12:45 PM
Ramon moderates		
John Packer	40 Years of Human Rights “grands lignes” of HRREC activities and related thinking, and a few comments of my own	
Omid Milani	digital illustration and a few words respecting the nexus between 'art' and 'human rights': Art + Human Rights	
Al-An deSouza	How can the posthuman or the transhuman co-exist with the not-yet human? Within the arts, there is a current activation of work by BIPOC artists, including those who work within different frames of futurism. How might these claims towards authentic being coexist with the hybrid and perhaps co-optive forms of the transhuman or posthuman?	
Andrea Fitzpatrick	"Mourning and Memorial as Artistic Resistance" ; "Breathing life into Tiananmen Square: a performance by Song Dong": remembering an ambiguous artistic performance that took place on location in 1996	
Elizabeth Presa	Starting from Emmanuel Levinas's thesis of ethics as first philosophy which manifests as an address to the face of the Other, I ask what counts as a face? And can we say that an animal, an ocean or landscape has a face?	
	<i>Health Break</i>	12:45-1:15 PM



Session 3 Oonagh moderates	Globalization, Human Rights and Art	1:15-2:15 PM
Eldad Tsabary	A post-human future excerpt from her new micro-opera entitled "Lost Connections".	
Tony Yap	Performance Topic: Animal/God	
Victoria Ayala-Preciado	For their provocation \ performance topic Ann and Victoria will discuss Emergent Art Space stressing the importance of communication across cultures and how art can play a vital role toward this goal. Engaging the visual arts as a means of international, cross-cultural connection and dialogue	
Ann Wettrich		
DAY 1 Wrap Up	Discussion of Outcomes \ Manifesto	2:15-2:30 PM

DAY 2 Wednesday April 13

Oonagh, Ramon, John	Introduction & Setting the Stage	10:30-10:45 AM
Session 4 Oonagh moderates	Sustainability, Equity and Justice in Teaching Human Rights and Art	10:45-11:45 AM
Lorrie Blair	Topic: All that glitters end up in our waterways: Radically reimagining pedagogy and the use of art materials in Kindergarten through post secondary art classes	
Richard Lubben	Human Rights & Social Justice Art Exhibition	
Ramon Blanco-Barrera (233)	Topic: Is it possible a Democratic Art? How would it be? Do we need it? Art as a Social Catalyst for the present and as a Pathway to Knowledge for the past and the future	



Session 5 Oonagh moderates	Anti-Coloniality, Intersectionality and Identity	11:45 AM-12:45 PM
Stanley Février	a short performance	
Fernando Peraita	Discussion of organizing ARTifariti, the Encounters of Art and Human Rights at the Western Sahara	
Kimiko (Kimika) Nonomura	Collaboration with Esther Regueira Topic: Art with Women in the refugee camps of Western Sahara 7-8 min	
Esther Regueira	Kimika and I will participate together. Our common topic will be Art in the Refugees Camps of Western Sahara, especially with women. Topic: Sahara Libre Wear. Art as a powerful weapon 7-8 min	
Federico Guzmán (Fiko)	a short presentation/performance via my paintings. My topic will be transhumanism and human rights	
	<i>Health Break</i>	12:45-1:15 PM





Session 6 Ramon moderates	Healing from Human rights & Anthropocene Trauma through Art \ Creation	1:15-2:15 PM
Ceyda Yolgörmez	AI and post humanism with Indigenous perspectives?	
Elsy Zavarce	Sharing, connecting, reimaging through art	
Van Armenian	Resilience Hubs in the Vayots Dzor region of Armenia	
Dr. Kahente Horn-Miller	Storytelling. We are in her and she is in us. Sky woman creation story. 15-20 minutes	
DAY 2 Wrap Up Oonagh, Ramon, John	Outcomes\Manifesto\Acknowledgements	2:15-2:30 PM

SYMPOSIUM REPORT

DAY 1

Introduction

Oonagh Fitzgerald, Ramon Blanco Barrera and John Packer opened day 1 of the symposium by welcoming participants, thanking them for their support through the two preparatory workshops and acknowledging that the symposium was taking place on unceded territory of the Anishinaabe Algonquin in the Outaouais and of the Kanien'kehà:ka in Tiohtiá:ke/Montreal.

It was noted that this was the second Arts and Human Rights symposium to be held at the Human Rights Research and Education Centre (HRREC) at the University of Ottawa. It was also noted that this symposium was being held in the context of the HRREC's 40th anniversary, as well as the 40th anniversary of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Session 1: New Materialism, Post Humanism and Human Rights

In this first session teachers, philosophers, musicians, artists, and human rights advocates explored the post human age of the Anthropocene and being cyborgs living speculative futures. They considered what it is to live and make art in the shadow of global technological and environmental crisis. Their performances and presentations explored the following questions:

- How does new materialism intersect with post humanism, and how does this affect our understanding of human rights law?
- In light of critical (feminist, Indigenous, anti-colonial etc.) perspectives on international human rights in the global governance system, how do human rights intersect with economic and environmental rights and obligations?
- How do we express and define human rights in the posthuman new materialist era?
- How can art, music and performance help us understand these new ways of knowing and being in the world?

Anoush Moazzeni: Travelling in-between Intensities: An Interdisciplinary Composition for Social Dreaming

The first panel opened with a pre-recorded performance entitled "Travelling In-Between Intensities: An Interdisciplinary Composition: A Conceptual and Aesthetic Itinerary For Imaginative Investigations & Doing Philosophy" performed in Tehran, Iran by an interdisciplinary collective of Iranian and Iranian-Canadian artists, led by Anoush Moazzeni. She described the project as follows: "Experimenting with sonic and conceptual potentials of a wide range of interconnected events, matters and processes, this work consists of (sounds and visuals) transversal auto-generative and performative sculptures that take shape in real-time in a chaotic/autopoietic manner and are made of invented automata and musical instruments and a

prepared piano, mask and wearable technologies, video art and mapping projections, flowing liquids, oil and chemical processes.” The composers work as alchemists: “their experimentations with matters and concepts try to break down the binary assumptions between know/knower, object/subject and human/non-human, also to offer a critic of the anthropocentric human mind behind the technology of today and the presence of human exceptionalism in Western Epistemology.”

Ricardo Dal Farra: Experimental transdisciplinary art-science actions and the environmental crisis

Ricardo Dal Farra’s presentation focused on how art could be used in political advocacy for issues such as the climate crisis, given the power of non-textual media such as graphics in conveying persuasive messages. Ricardo Dal Farra highlighted the Balance-Unbalance initiative as an example of how art could be used as a catalyzer in the intersections between nature, science, technology, and society. Over the years, this initiative has brought together artists, musicians, scientists, academics, farmers, policymakers, etc. across multiple disciplines and from around the world to share their knowledge, vision, and perspectives on environmental issues, and discuss solutions for a sustainable future.

Francesca Ferrando: The Posthuman Art of Existence

Francesca Ferrando performed a poem titled “Poem to You,” dedicated to those in the future, in which she invited participants to move past the illusion that we exist separately from the rest of humanity, other species, or the planet. Instead, Francesca Ferrando encouraged participants to reflect on our existence as interconnected: with the micro-organisms inside us, the planet and universe that we are a part of, and the technosphere of which we are a part. Francesca Ferrando also described a non-linear conception of time, in how we are connected to all of those that came before us, and those in the future. Francesca Ferrando reminded us that art is all around us, is always here and will always be happening. Following the poem, Francesca Ferrando led a short meditation for participants to contemplate this notion that we are one with everything, until the end of space-time.

Asma Kazmi: After Jahangir: Material relations, non-western concepts of environmental stewardship, and hope

Asma Kazmi’s photographic exhibition “After Jahangir” draws on Emperor Jahangir, an avid collector who was frequently depicted in paintings posing with the plants, animals, and objects he collected. Asma Kazmi views Jahangir as representing an embodied enchantment of the material world. With the support of Asma Kazmi’s students, “After Jahangir” features an eco-feminist re-performance of Jahangir’s famous pose, where Asma Kazmi and students posed with different objects, often over-produced materials like plastics or electronics, to encourage thinking about matter, materiality, ecology, contemporary consumerism, excessive consumption, colonialism, and power. This re-performance highlights our relationships with the objects being held, rather than viewing them as property, to encourage non-hierarchical and non-exploitative ways to relate to matter, and the environment itself. Using traditional Islamic

book holders, the installation employs a non-western style of displaying these images to provoke reflections about how cultural, conceptual, and scientific frameworks are presented.

Teresa Dillon: “Cleansing Rituals for the Internet”

Teresa Dillon invited participants to turn off their video during her performance “Cleansing Rituals for the Internet” consisting of leading participants through a guided meditation on our relationship with the Internet. Building on earlier presentations about the changes required to de-centre our human perspective and bring awareness of our entangled collective existence as well as the technosphere, Teresa Dillon directed participants’ focus to the physical infrastructure of the internet and the massive network of undersea cables and invited us to consider both the power and benefits of technological connectivity as well as its ecological and social costs. Teresa Dillon spoke about the use of the Malaysian gutta-percha tree in the late 1800s to provide insulation for the undersea copper cables that formed the first telecommunications networks. The gutta-percha tree had been used by local peoples for centuries but was harvested to near extinction in its exploitation for undersea telecommunications cables. Teresa Dillon encouraged participants to contemplate and thank the sacrifice of the gutta-percha tree and all creatures who became entangled in the cables to produce the communications systems enabling our virtual connections at the symposium. In memory of these lost lives, Teresa Dillon concluded the meditation with the need to consider how these technologies have the power to render invisible the labours, materiality and bodies that are entangled with our production, consumption, and use of these technologies. Teresa Dillon invited participants to use our rights, our scholarship, and our practices to bring visibility to the multitudes, the entanglements, and the interdependencies that connect us.

Session 2: 4 Decades & 40 Years of Art, Philosophy and Human Rights

In celebration of HRREC’s 40th anniversary, this second session was a conversation about what has changed or stayed the same in contemporary art history and recent human rights history. Experts in human rights and art history, philosophy and practice compared notes on the last 40 years, focusing on contemporary art that deals with new materialism, speculative futures, post humanism, social engagement. Presenters touched on a wide range of significant human rights issues such as gender inequality and the HIV/AIDS crisis, the crushing of the democracy movement at Tiananmen square, genocide, refugees and persons displaced by conflict and environmental crisis, the war on terror, Edward Said’s trenchant critique of the idea of orientalism and the Other, Indigenous peoples’ rights, and Black Lives Matter, to elucidate the connections and interactions between the arts and human rights over the last 40 years.

John Packer: The Human Rights Research and Education Centre: 40 Years of Human Rights

John Packer used the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Human Rights Research and Education Centre (the first of its kind in Canada), as well as the 40th anniversary of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, to reflect on the state of human rights and the role

of the arts. He referred to a quotation attributed by oral tradition to Métis leader Louis Riel: “My people will sleep for one hundred years, but when they awake, it will be the artists who give them their spirit back.” John Packer observed that, while there has been notable progress in the last 40 years in demonstrating how human rights can be a universally translatable concept, we are seeing a global trend to discredit and undermine human rights. Nonetheless, he remarked on the persistence in mobilizing for human rights protection around the world.

John Packer identified three essential attributes connecting the arts and human rights, which have inspired HRREC’s arts and human rights program since 2015:

1. The communicative/expressive capacity of art to convey meaning in a manner that can be richer and more compelling than legal texts;
2. The arts as representing the creative spark for the pursuit of freedom and fullness of life and dignity; a desire that is both diverse and universal;
3. The role of artists on the front lines of challenging oppressive conventions and therefore being at risk of having their own human rights violated.

John Packer noted four decades of enormous changes around the world, including in computer technology, cryptocurrency, globalization, communication, migration of peoples, global crime syndicates and money laundering, and the relationships between state and business which reveal the pervasive power and wealth of oligarchs and plutocrats. Amid these changes, and despite there being a rich body of international and domestic human rights standards to draw upon, we are seeing human rights gaps and deepening socio-economic and environmental inequality. That existing institutions and paradigms of governance and commerce persist despite not being responsive to current conditions leads to decreasing confidence and social cohesion. John Packer sees the arts as playing an essential role in rescuing the concept of the global reach and resonance of human rights.

Omid B. Milani: Art + Human Rights: A digital illustration and a few words

Omid Milani drew attention to the limitations of using languages that are based on the process of symbolization through alphabetic text (such as English). Because words and letters are themselves abstract symbols that are distinct from what they represent, there is always a disconnect and state of separation that is inherent to the use of symbols. In contrast, other concepts can be conveyed in other forms without such symbolic translation, such as a musical piece, where the sound is directly perceived by the listener. In addition, these processes of abstraction are also linear, even though the universe is not linear. Alphabetic languages therefore invariably involve an element of hiding certain concepts and must be seen for the military, religious, industrial purposes of control and reproduction for which they have been designed. Language can become politicized and weaponized. Omid Milani pointed to how lawyers are often needed when there are complexities for citizens to understand what laws are or for the state to communicate the law. As such, Omid Milani challenged the suitability of alphabetic languages for universal messages about concepts such as human rights. For further reference on contextualizing the disguising nature of alphabetic languages, Omid Milani recommends Alanis Obamsawin's *Trick or Treaty?*

Omid Milani concluded by sharing an image of his multimedia illustration, *Jester & Justitia*, inspired by prior works of Francisco de Goya, who criticized the linearity and limitation of text, and Sebastien Brant's image of Justice being blindfolded by a Jester. In Omid Milani's *Jester & Justitia*, Justice is stepping out of a door from darkness and throwing away her scale, while holding on to her sword; on her back is the Jester, covering her eyes. Omid Milani urged participants to consider the transformation of consciousness that happens through the methodical use of linear language and alphabetical arrangements.

Al-An deSouza: The posthuman/transhuman and the not-yet human – Towards the Dark: Posthuman-ifestos for Art

Al-An deSouza spoke about the need to reconceptualize aesthetics and modernism while simultaneously sharing images from their art project *Flotsam*. Al-An deSouza noted how inequitable hierarchies persist in the arts and the humanities, using aesthetics as a strategy for creating hierarchical differences between the fit/unfit, rational/unreasonable, Man/Other, Man/Woman, human/racialized subject, as described by Kandice Chuh. Al-An deSouza suggested there is a need to re-conceptualize aesthetics from these categorizations of "unhuman", and to conceptualize other forms of relations. Specifically, rather than perceiving difference as an aesthetic deviation from a normative standard, difference can be conceived as a dynamic relational errant process of becoming. In a similar vein, Al-An deSouza spoke of the need to reconceptualize modernism (the dominant artistic colonialist productions and discourses from 1860s – 1960s) from being the aesthetic foundation of humanist art practice, and to divest it from colonialism's culture.

Al-An deSouza referenced José Esteban Muñoz' concept of *disidentification* and Indigenous notions of re-matriation as ways to move away from extractive models, towards unsettling, re-distributing, and examining those who have been historically excluded, including errant perspectives and ways of knowing. Al-An deSouza uses the term *errancy* to deliberately erase meanings for being wrong or outcast. Building on Milani's discussion on the power dynamics and constraints of certain language forms, Al-An deSouza pointed to how language is coded within canonical representations to speak to – and for – errant bodies. Al-An deSouza brought up the notion of *haunting*, a historically, materially, and corporeally resistant presence, which includes the "yet un-made" or regional modernisms, artists, and artwork that did not come into being or were remade through dominant ideologies of colonialism, and yet refuse to be completely erased. Al-An deSouza suggested that Euro-modernism, colonialism, and neoliberal capitalism project a constituted world that disembodies and re-embodies colonized cultures through abstraction. Euro-modernist abstractions can be re-considered as haunted territories that are linked to social and collective disembodiment. Al-An deSouza proposed that art could play an important role to resist this by helping us to critique certain worlds and practices while imagining and moving towards other worlds or futures. Al-An deSouza asked us to consider how the arts can perform a collective catharsis to heal a collective "us" from the trauma of colonially enforced and globalized collective unconsciousness.

Andrea Fitzpatrick: “Mourning and Memorial as Artistic Resistance”; Breathing life into Tiananmen Square: a performance by Song Dong”

Andrea Fitzpatrick recounted the performance, “Breathing Part 1” by Song Dong at Tiananmen Square in 1996, nearly seven years after the student-led pro-democracy uprising and subsequent massacre by the Chinese government at that same site. Song’s artistic experiment involved lying prostate and breathing on the stones of the square for 45 minutes to see if his exhalations could create frost or make a mark. This work was interrupted by guards who asked him to cease and leave before he could finish. Andrea Fitzpatrick encouraged participants to take advantage of our academic and political freedom to discuss the ghosts of Tiananmen Square, and the intense restriction of the human right to freedom of expression of artists in places like China. Andrea Fitzpatrick used this story to illustrate how art could be used to meet the deep-rooted, cross-cultural, socio-psychological, and political need to mourn or at least gesture towards, those considered political enemies of the state. This also demonstrates how human rights in the arts include freedom of speech. Andrea Fitzpatrick noted that Song did not make an explicit statement about his intentions for the performance, since he would thus risk his freedom in China. Visual art can convey meaning in ways that circumvent language, which can be advantageous in repressive states, as can be seen in the general metaphoricity and opacity deployed by contemporary artists in China and Iran. Andrea Fitzpatrick noted multiple levels of erasures with Song’s work. First, there was the initial suppression of human rights that took place during the June 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. Second, ever since the massacre, the Chinese government has suppressed and completely censored efforts to record, memorialize and mourn the events on social media, in news media and through artistic works (for example, the destruction of Jens Galschiøt’s artwork “Pillar of Shame” and the removal of Ai Weiwei’s *Perspective Study: Tian’anmen*). Andrea Fitzpatrick concluded by suggesting that Tiananmen Square exists not just as an apocryphal place, but also an ambivalent image that has become a in contemporary Chinese art, made silent and emptied.

Elizabeth Presa: “Levinas and faciality” philosopher art and human rights

Elizabeth Presa highlighted the role of philosophy in helping artists to interrogate the ontological and ethical underpinnings of their practice. Elizabeth Presa focused on Lithuanian-French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas’ discussions of faciality to explore how we might develop a deeper understanding of our ethical relationships with not just people, but animals, other living things, or oceans, or even a mountain range. In this context, a face does not merely refer to the arrangement of features on the head, but can be understood and expressed more broadly. Levinas believed that it is the face of the Other that reminds us of our ethical responsibilities. In her work as a sculptor, molding jellyfish that had washed up on shore, Elizabeth Presa explored how art can develop new and unexpected images of faciality. The molding process revealed the internal wounds that the creatures had experienced, which would normally be invisible to us because of the gelatinous nature of the creature. In another series of works, Elizabeth Presa created a series of molds made from human placentae, which can be seen as the face of a continual mediation between the self and the other, made visible through the molding process. Elizabeth Presa used these images to demonstrate how sculpture and art generally can help to give a face to the absent or invisible, to remind us of our ethical relationships with life in all its forms.

Session 3: Globalization, Human Rights and Art

This third session examined how economic developments influence both art and human rights. A musician and teacher, a dancer and two art gallery curators considered both the positive effects of cosmopolitanism (e.g., globalized art markets, international collaborations and inspiration sharing) and the negative effects of race to the bottom labour practices, international corporate impunity and appropriation and exploitation of cultural and Indigenous knowledge and know-how through trade agreements and intellectual property rules. Performances and presentations explored the role the arts play both in catering to and glorifying globalized capitalism and to resisting and offering alternative narratives of meaning.

Eldad Tsabary: *Lost_Connection*

Eldad Tsabary presented an excerpt from a micro-opera *Lost Connection*, part of Reflective Iterative Scenario Enactments (RISE) a SSHRC-funded 5-year, research creation project designed to enact and investigate cataclysmic scenarios in mini-operas. In its first two years the project has explored the fears of the COVID-19 pandemic in a mini-opera, and various anxieties about technology in a series of collaborative micro-operas. *Lost Connection* explores intimate apartment scenarios from the 1980s, Y2K, online shopping today and a future in which humans are no longer needed and computers talk to each other until humans shut them down. The intention of the RISE project is to explore how we deal with our fears by enacting them, using the rich opera toolbox (voice, instruments, dance, drama, costume, settings, props, special effects, and digital technology) to discover new ways to compose collective creations, working remotely and in person.

Tony Yap: Performance: *Animal/God*

Tony Yap's performance "animal / god – The Great Square" was presented next, as a pre-recorded video. This solo dance performance, filmed by Alex Cardy and Rhys Graham with a fixed camera, draws from Batu bull-trance rituals in Java and Yogyakarta royal court dance, to represent the animal and the deity. With the body's movements generated from a mingling of internal and external forces, the body is presented in a range of forms of trance resonance, from that of a contemplative state with minute movements to one that is possessed with a visceral intensity. The music, "*Unconditioned: Following a bird*" was composed and performed by the late Ezio Bosso, who passed away the same month that this performance video was being made. In the performance notes, Tony Yap writes, "In my state of trance I had a glimpse of a lost being taking the flight of a little bird for a guide out of darkness. I too followed that bird in the dance to 'animal / god'. 'Unconditioned' pointed to a love without condition."

Victoria Ayala-Preciado & Ann Wettrich: *Emergent Art Space*

Victoria Ayala-Preciado and Ann Wettrich discussed [Emergent Art Space](#) to demonstrate the importance of communication and dialogue across cultures and how art can play a vital role towards this goal. Emergent Art Space is a small non-profit international arts organization

founded ten years ago, focused on engaging young artists primarily aged 18 to 30 years old who work in traditional and new media, through an accessible online platform. Emergent Art Space can be seen as an experiment in re-conceiving and re-cultivating positive human connections across boundaries and zones of tension, by offering interconnected opportunities to amplify diverse voices and perspectives and encouraging new dialogues and understanding among young artists across the world. Emergent Art Space currently features over 200 artists on its website from a diversity of urban and rural locations from Asia, Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and North and South America. For this presentation, they highlighted six artists / projects that align with the theme of the symposium, to address the question of the role of the arts in critiquing degenerative systems and offering alternative narratives of meaning, including:

- Valerie Asimwe Amani, Tanzania, exploring issues of gender, race, identity, and culture;
- Sai [BLANK] (an anonymous name to protect his identity), Myanmar, raising international awareness of the military coup, autocratic rule, and human rights abuses in Myanmar;
- “All Across the Distance”, an exhibition created during the pandemic featuring international young artists to draw connections on similar experiences and common themes from diverse perspectives across borders;
- Paulius Sliupa, Lithuania, examining the effects of climate change on the environment and on the human psyche;
- “Documenting the Undocumented”, Tanzania, a project showcasing the Indigenous tribes of Tanzania in the Qangded village, the Hadzabe, and Datoga communities;
- Caitlin Mkhasibe, South Africa, exploring synesthesia.

DAY 1 Wrap up: Outcomes & Manifesto: Articulating a Manifesto on Human Rights and the Arts for our Times

Participants expressed their appreciation for the day’s moving and inspiring presentations and performances. Participants reflected on the role of the poetic voice in elaborating, complexifying, embodying and rethinking the experience of human rights. They also remarked on how performances were able to transcend the limitations of environment and helped to expand our thinking on how to use the virtual space. This was fortunate, as the symposium could not have happened in a non-virtual format given the current state of the pandemic. Participants also noted the themes of solidarity, connections, and lost connections. Interest was expressed in finding ways to disseminate further these ideas of interconnectedness and hope.

DAY 2

Oonagh Fitzgerald and Ramon Blanco-Barrera opened Day 2 with a land acknowledgement and a brief recap of Day 1’s discussions, and a general welcome to all participants. John Packer mentioned Bill C-15, a potentially transformative law in Canada obligating the Canadian government to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). He observed that discussions at the symposium may well help to illuminate pathways

to advance this important initiative. Oonagh Fitzgerald added that while the *Canadian Charter of Rights of Freedoms* ushered in a rights revolution in Canada it must be acknowledged that it was framed by and continued the binary and atomized system of thinking about rights as belonging to individuals as protections against state action. Because of its focus on state-individual relations, the Charter was not equipped to address the growing power of private sector actors to exploit individuals. Nor was it capable of addressing increasingly important and urgent ideas about collective and environmental rights and obligations. The UN Declaration, being such a significant expression of the world's Indigenous peoples' rights, adopted by the UN General Assembly and now being implemented in Canada, provides an opportunity to re-conceptualize human rights to consider collective rights and responsibilities to each other and to our environment and to tame the power of the corporation.

Session 4: Sustainability, Equity and Justice in Teaching Human Rights and Art

This fourth session explored how ideas of sustainability, equity, and justice in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can provide a more comprehensive and intersectional understanding of the interconnectedness of planetary life and how this knowledge could be deployed in the art class and the law class. Art teachers and community activists discussed their experience of working through the troubles of the Anthropocene and new materialism, to conceive, design and implement sustainable, inclusive art practices and pedagogies, and SDG related community art projects.

Lorrie Blair: All that glitters end up in our waterways: Radically reimagining pedagogy and the use of art materials in kindergarten through post secondary art classes

In response to the idea that art can be expressive of human rights and environmental issues, Lorrie Blair noted how artmaking can in fact contribute to environmental problems, unless the way that art is taught is radically changed. Lorrie Blair noted three common problems with art school pedagogy. First, school art is rooted in a pedagogy that uses quantity to achieve quality. Students are asked to make more in the hopes that they will get better. This results in many school art projects ending up in landfills after they are graded. Secondly, there is a reliance on cheap disposable materials. Lorrie Blair noted, for example, that it is easier and cheaper to buy a hundred disposable paint brushes than to get students to wash and re-use brushes, and materials used for school art often are not recyclable. Finally, teachers give assignments that students complete solely for a grade.

Lorrie Blair noted how art education programs are based on Western notions that objects are dumb, irrational materials upon which humans act, in the way students are expected to "master" materials towards a desired outcome, and in the consumption and disposal of art material in "burner projects" that students make simply to get the grade. Lorrie Blair sought to challenge this through two courses on new materialism. In the first class, students had to rely on the materials that were available to them, due to restrictions relating to the pandemic, and often elected to learn second wave craft, such as macrame, knitting, and tie-dyeing. These projects held meaning for the students, and were often gifted to family members or pets, rather than disposed. In the second class, Lorrie Blair added the idea of craft as a social

catalyst – “craftivism” – but due to the restrictions of the pandemic, pivoted to focus on Slow Design. Through a renewed sense of ethics that rejects a hierarchical relationship with materials as well as the idea of a distinction between our bodies and the things we make, Slow Design calls for students to pay attention to the histories of the materials used, including their environmental impact, and shifts from fixating on creating new things to how one interacts with the material. Lorrie Blair concluded with the recommendation that we incorporate slow design principles into our manifesto.

Richard Lubben: Human Rights & Social Justice Art Exhibition

Richard Lubben shared images of art from the Human Rights Art Exhibition series, while reflecting on the connections between the arts and human rights based on these experiences. The Human Rights Art Exhibition began in 2006 as part of a conference at South Texas College on women in war and involved working with local artists in the community to put together a conceptually and visually moving exhibit to go with the theme of the conference.

The exhibit became an annual event, with themes extending to human rights, social justice, and environmental issues, to allow for more voices, more artists, and more interdisciplinary conversations. This broader range of themes allows the exhibit to connect with more people who are inspired by different themes and imagery. This enables the exhibit to raise awareness about – and host profound interdisciplinary conversations about issues confronting manual workers, homeless people, migrants, people dealing with health care and food insecurity, etc. The exhibit also offers an uplifting and inspiring opportunity to present some of the successes and progress in addressing challenging issues facing humanity, the environment, and the world at large. Richard Lubben worked with the Human Rights Research and Education Centre at the University of Ottawa in 2013 to hold two exhibits and a series of lectures on these topics. Richard Lubben observed that art allows people to be more open to considering other possibilities and viewpoints different from their own and provokes more thinking on these issues. In this way, art can educate people and broaden their perspectives on important human rights issues.

Ramon Blanco-Barrera: Art as a social catalyst for the present and as a pathway to knowledge for the past and the future

Ramon Blanco-Barrera presented a performance video “The Cooking Class” that he created with Oonagh Fitzgerald involving a light-hearted virtual collaboration to put together a recipe for hope and solidarity. The performance did not use any spoken languages and instead relied on gestures and other symbols, as well as humour. Ramon Blanco-Barrera provided some remarks after presenting the video, noting that the performance could be seen as a call for the manifesto as well as a call for democratic art as a social catalyst and a pathway to knowledge for the past and the future. The performance also referenced the ethical use of technology, respect for the other, sustainability, and creativity.

Discussions

During the discussion portion of this panel, participants drew connections between the conceptual themes in Ramon Blanco-Barrera's performance video and the other panelists' presentations and performances which also discussed our relationship to the Other.

Participants commented on the various hierarchical binaries that exist in the artistic world. For example, the binary between "high art" and "low art" such as crafts can be seen as a false division replicating colonialist and patriarchal hierarchical binaries of East/West, mind/body, or art made by men / craft made by women.

Participants also remarked on hierarchies within academic art departments which reinforce these binaries, where art educators and craft-makers are not as appreciated as artists. There is also a divide between the arts and other academic disciplines, even though art can play a valuable role in encouraging those in other disciplines, such as science, to think differently and creatively. Art should be valued not only for its extrinsic qualities (for example, the notion that playing music helps you be better at math), but also for its intrinsic qualities, as it gives life more meaning and connects us to the land and to each other.

Participants agreed on the importance of moving beyond such limited categorizations of exclusion. Craft, for one thing, plays an important role in strengthening connections within communities, to cultures, and to the land. The usefulness of crafts means that we both use and appreciate them: they are a sustainable form of art that connects us to materials and culture. Other forms of doing, including everyday actions such as cooking or gardening, can also be seen as a form of art, which raises the question of who is not an artist? It was noted that some cultures would accept the idea that everyone can be an artist. Participants discussed how these cultural differences about art, craft and practice might be understood or reconciled. Kahente Horn-Miller's use of storytelling as a narrative to communicate her traditions and as a theory and methodology for her doctoral research provided an interesting illustration of overcoming these artificial categorizations.

Participants further discussed how the presentations and performances expanded on the symposium's theme of using art to engage people on topics such as human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals to understand how such issues are relevant to their own lives.

Session 5: Anti-coloniality, Intersectionality, and Identity

This fifth session investigated and celebrated the multiplicities of intersectionality in human rights and the arts. We are a web of intersecting identities of our own and others' creation, based on gender, sexual orientation, gender marginalization, racialization, cultural and religious association, neural and corporal capacities and divergences, beliefs, and values. Some identities centre people and give them power; others that are imposed upon them, can degrade and tear people apart. We still live in a world where coloniality defines much of our existence: extractive economies exploit land and people for profit; non-human corporate entities distribute wealth back to the advantaged groups to maintain their power; digital

technology companies farm human users for their data and mirror back a virtual future embedded with coloniality. Performances and presentations explored issues such as:

- How do disadvantaged peoples and complex intersectional individuals reclaim their multiple identities, their dignity, and their human rights?
- How have the arts been used as a site for reclaiming and allyship but also for appropriators and imposters?
- How do we break out of self-critical cycles that divide communities and allow our multiplicities to flourish and enliven the arts and our shared values?

Stanley Février: “Silence is death. And you, if you speak, you die. If you shut up, you die. So speak and die.” A Participatory Action Performance and Anarchive

Stanley Février shared a pre-recorded action performance and anarchive performed in Montréal-Nord involving a funeral procession where a white plaster cast of Stanley Février, naked and lying face down with his arms tied behind his back was laid down in front of a police station to pay tribute to 461 victims of police violence in Canada. Stanley Février reflected on this performance, noting how when he had begun working as an artist on the topic of police violence, he encountered resistance due to the persistent belief that these issues only happen in the United States. By highlighting the 461 shooting victims (many of whom were Black or Indigenous) who died at the hands of police in Canada, Stanley Février demonstrated the lack of freedom and human rights experienced by people who are Black, Indigenous, immigrant, poor or deal with mental health issues.

Stanley Février also noted how museums were originally reluctant to exhibit his sculpture due to its political nature, observing how these decisions are often made by white men in power. He spoke of how he faced rejection as an art student, being the only Black man in his graduate program, and as an artist. As an act of resistance against attempts to invisibilize Black experiences (which he also noted happens with Indigenous peoples), he took power by taking his art to the streets and developing his approach to incorporate his own body in his art – in this case, by creating the sculpture using plaster casts of himself. Stanley Février observed that even when an artist achieves some degree of critical acceptance art institutions can be exploitative, tokenizing, and inhumane. He argued that art is not just about objects that can be displayed or put on the wall; art represents the reality and every-day experience that people live. It is important to include these in the discussions, to raise awareness of these issues, and to work together.

Fernando Peraita: Organizing ARTifariti: The encounters of Art and Human Rights at the Western Sahara

Although Fernando Peraita was not able to attend the Symposium, Federico Guzmán was able to speak about Fernando Peraita and his work in organizing ARTifariti, an arts and human rights festival located in Tifariti in the Western Sahara. Inspired by his experiences serving in the military in the Western Sahara, Fernando Peraita founded the Seville Association of Friendship with the Sahrawi People, to strengthen connections between Spanish families and

and Sahrawi Peoples. Peraita also conceptualized the idea of exhibiting artwork to face and confront the “Wall of Shame”, the Moroccan Western Sahara Wall running through Western Sahara, comprising the longest minefield in the world. ARTifariti was then developed as a project that would allow international artists and human rights activists to meet local Sahrawi artists, including those living in the refugee camps there, to learn about their experiences and their artwork. The project features artwork that is exhibited outdoors at the Museum of Tifariti. Federico Guzmán described ARTifariti as having become an art intifada, comprising a peaceful uprising with Sahrawi people, using art and human rights as a tool for transformation.

Kimiko (Kimika) Nonomura & Esther Regueira: Sahara Libre Wear: Art as a powerful Weapon: Art with Women in the refugee camps of Western Sahara

Like Federico Guzmán, Kimika Nonomura and Esther Regueira both participated in ARTifariti as artists and shared their experiences in working with women in the refugee camps of Western Sahara. Kimika Nonomura was involved in an action performance where hundreds of women of western Sahara lined up in front of the Wall of Shame, holding hands, and dancing for freedom. Their aim was to re-create the experience of the wall, both emotionally and structurally, but demonstrating that the women’s bonds – in forming their own women’s wall of resistance – could not be broken. As part of this collaboration, Kimika Nonomura worked with the women to create a textile of peace. The women contributed fabric to the tapestry by ripping off a piece of their traditional clothing, which holds significance symbolically and emotionally, as part of their history and culture. These fabrics were used to create a large tapestry to help raise awareness of their political situation around the world.

Esther Regueira offered a textile workshop for women in the refugee camps to learn more about their needs and their daily lives. Some of these women have been living in the refugee camp for 40 years. Traditionally, sewing provides a context in which women can get together and discuss ideas and emotions. With the success of the workshop, a fashion label Sahara Libre Wear was created and, despite many challenges now continues to be based at and produced by those at the refugee camp. The clothing produced by Sahara Libre Wear have been exhibited at fashion shows and displays around the world. Like others involved in ARTifariti, Esther Regueira and Kimika Nonomura believe that the system can be changed and the world can be improved, using art as their tool for transformation.

Federico Guzmán: Transhumanism and Human Rights

Federico Guzmán shared a pre-recorded video that allowed participants to “walk through” an exhibition of his artwork. Federico Guzmán framed the three-storey exhibition as a narrative of a protagonist’s journey through three stages of separation, initiation, and return. This narrative could be applied to our experiences under the pandemic but can also be applied to other issues, including human rights issues in the Western Sahara and transhumanism under techno-capitalism.

In the first stage of separation, the protagonist is removed from his everyday context into an underworld of death. Federico Guzmán reminds us that our soil is comprised of the

transformed bodies of our ancestors, and as such, death is a necessary part of life. The second stage of initiation is where the protagonist encounters and overcomes challenges and ordeals in a dystopian world where truth and lies have become indistinguishable. Here Federico Guzmán discussed human rights as a social struggle for human dignity, and in that context, Federico Guzmán observed the moral and ethical dilemma involves in technological advances of transhumanism. Although transhumanism is portrayed as a beneficial evolution for enhanced well-being, Federico Guzmán posits that this change is not for the benefit of people, but for techno-capitalism. Federico Guzmán reminds us that when we allow access to our brain, we give up our sovereignty, self-determination, and free will. In the final stage of return, the protagonist returns home with a message to his community. Federico Guzmán suggests that now that life itself is under attack, we must reclaim our power and put life at the centre. Federico Guzmán reminded us that we are more than our brains or our bodies; we are consciousness and life itself. While others can destroy our body and torture our mind, we do not die, because we are immortal souls and we, as life, will prevail.

Session 6: Healing from Human Rights and Anthropocene Trauma Through Art/Creation

The pandemic caused a global trauma of loss, isolation, dislocation, and despair. There was also tremendous resilience, solidarity and resistance by health care workers, essential service providers, teachers, artists, musicians, and performers. In this final session of performances and presentations, participants contemplated such questions as:

- What can we learn from this outcropping of creativity and positive energy in response to trauma?
- As we recover from the pandemic and deal with other crises on our doorstep, how can we carry forward and use this generative momentum and the healing power of art and music to broaden and deepen human rights protections and global solidarity?

Ceyda Yolgörmez: AI and post humanism with Indigenous perspectives?

Ceyda Yolgörmez discussed a collaboration with the Initiative for Indigenous Futures to imagine alternative frameworks within which artificial intelligence technologies could be produced. Ceyda Yolgörmez noted how artificial intelligence technologies reproduce and re-consolidate existing hegemonic power asymmetries in our societies. Because artificial intelligence technology production is based on narrow modern western epistemologies relying on rationalism, dualism, and abstraction, our ability to imagine a different future is constrained, restricted to notions of human superiority, the concealment of materiality, relations, and labour involved in producing such technology. Ceyda Yolgörmez noted that the face of the Other as contemplated by Levinas, described by Elizabeth Presa in day 1 of the symposium, has escaped our gaze, preventing us from considering our ethical relationship with technological Others.

As an attempt to imagine different futures, the Initiative for Indigenous Futures created a multi-modal, multi-disciplinary Indigenous AI working group (see [position paper here](#)), to conceive,

instead, of Abundant Intelligence, in order to integrate knowledge systems that instigate frameworks of values that consider how to be together in radical difference, centering values such as abundance and care, rather than scarcity and lack. A more expansive thinking about what it means to be intelligent, also what it means to be human, will help heal the existing disconnect in technological production to foster a free relationship with our technological Others. Ceyda Yolgörmez emphasized the role of the arts in troubling the hegemonic distribution of values that dominate AI culture. The arts, with a genuine concern for human rights, can contribute to healing our attitude towards technological production, by providing a space for radical re-imaginings of different relationships with technology.

Elsy Zavarce: Sharing, connecting, reimagining through art

Elsy Zavarce shared her journey to becoming a more active artist engaging with her social responsibilities. Elsy Zavarce described her feelings of frustration and powerlessness in 2002 due to the political crisis in Venezuela, and being inspired by Hannah Arendt (and her quote “*Vita Activa is human life in so far as it is actively engaged in doing something*”) to find meaning through art. She explored these experiences of the developments in her country Venezuela through a series of art exhibits, and in 2020, Elsy Zavarce presented a virtual collective art exhibit *Confined Bodies*, which featured multidisciplinary works by over 80 artists and collectives from 31 cities in 25 countries around the world, reflecting on experiences of confinement during the pandemic. This made Elsy Zavarce reflect on art as a transformative experience for community building, bringing up the need to consider how to build decolonial pedagogical and curatorial frameworks.

Given the importance of community building, Elsy Zavarce explored the role of museums and the relationship between museums and communities. For example, the educational program ESCOLARTE allowed the MACZUL Museum to play an educational and social role to the local schools, providing teachers with art education support and exhibiting artwork by students at the museum. Elsy Zavarce also pointed to Socially Engaged Art as a strategic means to reach communities and encourage social change by enabling conversations and opportunities for collective learning and a sense of community. Art-Based Action Research is another methodology that can be used to re-imagine better futures and positive relationships. Elsy Zavarce described her vision of creating trans-local networks of communities of practice, where art education can contribute to helping communities to develop a sense of belonging and cultural resilience. She also dreams of helping to heal (*curar*) a wounded, divided, and shattered country.

Van Armenian: Resilience Hubs in the Vayots Dzor Region of Armenia

Van Armenian presented on how music can be used as a social justice tool to heal trauma and fight marginalization. In his view, music is a human right and must be part of development strategies, as music can be used as a tool for building positive relations and developing a more peaceful and understanding global community. Van Armenian highlighted the many roles that music can play in society and its positive effects psychologically, emotionally, behaviourally, and intellectually. Art is an essential part of humanity and can serve as a guiding light in what

could be a necessary renaissance in this Anthropocene era. Van Armenian expressed hope that the manifesto might help elevate the arts in this way.

Van Armenian noted that music can be an empowering tool for social equity and social justice goals if done through a post-colonial methodology. He emphasized that scientific research has proven that music has healing effects, in alleviating trauma and assessing post-traumatic conditions. As one example, Van Armenian described the work of the Atken Armenian Foundation which he co-founded, which set up a Resilience Hub where displaced Armenian children could take singing and dancing lessons to heal from trauma and build community and mutual understanding. More resilience hubs have been set up in other areas to serve other children. The children now have a renewed sense of hope, and Van Armenian shared testimonials of people re-discovering their identities and being able to dream again.

Kahente Horn-Miller: Storytelling: We are in her and she is in us. Sky woman creation story

Kahente Horn-Miller explained how her performance of the Sky Woman creation story came into being. For her doctoral work at Concordia University, Kahente Horn-Miller interviewed women in her Kahnawake community to explore how they understood their own identity. The women interviewed often referred to Sky Woman, the main character in their creation story, describing her as though she was in the room. Kahente Horn-Miller decided to re-visit the story to better understand this connection. She explained that this story is well known in her community, passed down in an oral format. When colonizers came, they wrote the story down in third person form, which had a flattening effect. Kahente Horn-Miller decided to re-tell the story, as a performance, in the first-person form, embodying Sky Woman, and infusing it with the stories of the women in her community along with her own life experiences. This performance brought the Sky Woman story back to life again in a powerful manner. In this way, she has de-colonized and re-matriated the story by embodying the feminine voice. This has allowed the story to become a powerful tool to help people understand their place in the world, and the power that they have.

Kahente Horn-Miller then performed part of the Sky Woman story. Although the performance is usually done live and in person, using dance and movement to have more impact, Kahente Horn-Miller adjusted to the virtual format of the Symposium and relied on the tone of her voice in speaking the words.

DAY 2 Wrap up: Outcomes, Manifesto & Acknowledgements

The organizers thanked the participants and those involved in putting on this symposium, noting that this symposium had been timed to align with World Art Day (April 15). Next steps were outlined, including the sharing of the symposium report, the gathering of artwork and writing for the manifesto, the launching of the manifesto, the construction of a website for symposium contents, and the organization of a physical exhibition of the manifesto.

Symposium Themes and Connections

Participants' interventions were presented in thematic panels, but throughout the symposium there were many connections and linking themes between panels. Indeed, the three aspects of the relationship between the arts and human rights, introduced by John Packer provide another prism for reflecting on the content of the six sessions.

One aspect of this relationship is that the arts provide the means to communicate human rights issues in a more expressive, imaginative, and powerful manner than can be achieved through writing and reading legal texts. Omid Milani explored this in commenting on the constraints of alphabetic languages, particularly text. Similarly, Kahente Horn-Miller recounted that in writing down the Sky Woman story, normally passed down by her people through oral form, colonizers had a flattening effect on the story, and by re-telling the story as a performance, she has helped bring it back to life. Inspired by Omid Milani's thought, Ramon Blanco-Barrera and Oonagh Fitzgerald presented a performance video with no spoken languages, with the aim of relying on universal symbology, facial expressions, and gestures instead to convey their ideas.

During the symposium several examples demonstrated how different art forms could be used to convey meaning. Richard Lubben remarked how photography and other visual art forms can effectively capture imagery representing human rights issues to inspire people to consider unfamiliar perspectives on these topics and to discuss them. Teresa Dillon and Andrea Fitzpatrick both highlighted mourning as a form of artistic performance, as did Stanley Février, whose action performance also used a funeral procession format. Lorie Blair discussed the use of crafts in activism, also known as craftivism. The powerful impact of storytelling was demonstrated by Kahente Horn-Miller, but also by Andrea Fitzpatrick, whose telling of the story of Song Dong's interrupted artistic performance at Tiananmen Square gave insights about artistic freedom of expression. Andrea Fitzpatrick also built on Omid Milani's critique of alphabetic languages by using Song's performance to demonstrate how art can convey meaning in ways that circumvent language, which can be an advantage for those living under repressive regimes. Federico Guzmán also used the narrative form to frame the exhibition of his artwork as a protagonist moving through three stages of separation, initiation, and return, which could be seen to represent our journey in experiencing the pandemic.

The use of art to challenge power structures, repressive ideas, and colonialism, and to raise awareness about human rights issues, was exemplified by works presented by Anoush Moazzeni, Asma Kazmi, Stanley Février, Elsy Zavarce, Federico Guzmán, Victoria Ayala-Preciado and Ann Wettrich's presentation of Emergent Art Space, Ricardo Dal Farra's Balance-Unbalance, Richard Lubben's Human Rights Art Exhibition, Fernando Peraita's ARTifaraiti, Ramon Blanco-Barrera and Oonagh Fitzgerald's performance video, and others. Elizabeth Presa framed this process as giving a "face" or representation, through which artists bring us into ethical relationships with what has been overlooked, ignored, or invisibilized. Van Armenian demonstrated the role that music can play in helping people to heal from traumas due to ongoing and intergenerational human rights violations.

Another aspect of the relationship between the arts and human rights is that artistic expression can be the creative spark through which to pursue freedom and the fullness of life and dignity. The arts can build connections to each other and the rest of the world. Francesca Ferrando and Teresa Dillon both led meditations to contemplate our connections to each other, to other living beings, and the environment. Van Armenian presented on how music could be used to heal devastated marginalized communities experiencing human rights trauma. Ramon Blanco-Barrera and Oonagh Fitzgerald also referenced these connections through their performance video. Tony Yap's innovative use of dance performance provided a visceral demonstration of what that interconnected state of being could feel like, displaying a body in trance, moving, and responding to internal and external forces. Elizabeth Presa explored how to feel this empathetic connection using the concept of faciality, showing how art can be used to develop new and unexpected images of a "face" for the absent and the invisible. Ceyda Yolgörmez proposed that this ethical relationship for the Other must also be applied to our relationships with artificial intelligence technology.

Lorrie Blair's suggestion for the use of Slow Design principles in art rejects the notion that we are separate from the objects that we make, and instead emphasizes our relationship with materials used in making art and the environmental impacts of our art. Meanwhile, Eldad Tsabary's collaborative micro-opera excerpt "Lost Connection" explores how communication technology both enables and disables human connection, with the excerpt played at the symposium focusing on our fears of what that loss of connection might lead to, in a world where humans are no longer needed. Victoria Ayala-Preciado and Ann Wettrich's presentation about Emergent Art Space, Ricardo Dal Farra's Balance-Unbalance, Richard Lubben's Human Rights Art Exhibit, Elsy Zavarce's *Confined Bodies* exhibit concretely exemplified how these connections can be made globally across borders through art, including virtually. Participants discussed the need to draw these connections across disciplines as well, as we saw in Anoush Moazzeni's video performance piece exploring artistic interpretations of philosophy.

Because of the interconnected nature of our existence, a related theme was materiality and embodiment. Anoush Moazzeni, Asma Kazmi, Teresa Dillon, and Lorrie Blair all encouraged participants more deeply to consider the materials that we use and our connection to them. Federico Guzmán posited that we are more than our material bodies, but we are consciousness and life itself. The idea of embodiment is also related to the question of what is human, particularly in the current technological age of transhumanism, a key theme in this symposium. Federico Guzmán expressed concern about the promises of transhumanism through technology, suggesting that these developments would benefit techno-capitalism more than humans. Ceyda Yolgörmez also noted how hegemonic power structures are reproduced, not overcome, through technological developments such as artificial intelligence, but proposed using alternative frameworks such as Indigenous perspectives radically to re-imagine our relationship with technology. She suggested this re-imagination could be done through the arts.

A further aspect of the relationship between the arts and human rights is that the arts and the life of the artist can be a manifestation of human rights struggle. Artists risk having their human rights violated if their work is seen as a form of resistance to a repressive regime. This topic was explicitly discussed by Andrea Fitzpatrick recounting Song Dong's interrupted performance at Tiananmen Square, but also was noted in the example brought up by Victoria Ayala-Preciado and Ann Wettrich discussing the artwork of Sai [BLANK] raising awareness of human rights abuses in Myanmar.

Omid Milani noted the power structures inherently (re)produced through such language forms as alphabetic texts. Al-An deSouza also discussed these hierarchies embedded in art, including through Euro-modernism's colonialist approach to abstraction, which is also linked to Omid Milani's concerns about the effects of symbols in separating and hiding the meanings that they represent. Al-An deSouza spoke of haunting as the persistent resistance of the errant to being erased; Andrea Fitzpatrick referred to the "ghosts" of Tiananmen square which provided an example of a presence that refuses to go away, despite active attempts to repress it. Asma Kazmi considered ideas of materiality, conquest, possession, and othering through her exploration of the gesture of holding of animals and everyday objects. Other participants noted the reproduction of power structures within art institutions that should be challenged, such as the hierarchical binaries of "art" versus "crafts", or the de-valuing of artwork made by art educators in favour of other artists. The challenges that Stanley Février faced in exhibiting his artwork critiquing anti-Black violence provided another example of these power structures within art institutions. In contrast, Elsy Zavarce's ESCOLARTE program provided a positive example of how traditional gatekeepers such as museums can play an innovative supportive role in building communities and engaging with the public.

Reflections on the idea of a Manifesto on posthumanism, new materialism, the arts and human rights

The organizers and participants were deeply moved, even overwhelmed, by the experience of sharing so many artistic works and insights about posthumanism, new materialism and the relationship between the arts and human rights. Although the organizers had optimistically suggested the report and manifesto might be ready by the end of May, there was far too much to digest and reflect upon. Slow design principles fortunately asserted themselves. Life happened, with all its obligations, inconveniences, rituals, sorrows, and joys. Spring came with saplings to be planted and gardens to be welcomed back to life, and eventually summer arrived. All the while the draft report and manifesto were shadowing us, playing softly in our unconscious, and slowly taking shape.

We approach the idea of a manifesto with trepidation. We do not purport to speak in universal terms, and we acknowledge the inherent risks in attempting to communicate ideas through words alone. We appreciate how the artistic works shared during the symposium enrich our conversation and understanding. Through this idea of manifesto, we try to note points of contact in our individual and collective reflections. We hope that additional notations and artistic works contributed by the symposium participants will further enrich this exploration of the idea of manifesto.

The preparation for and the presentations at the symposium demonstrate and teach us a generous and inclusive appreciation for human creativity and expression, liberated from appropriative capitalist, corporate, colonial, neocolonial and gendered canons of artistic worth. We discuss critically notions of canonical art, craft, folk art, protest art, socially engaged art, activism, craftivism and discard them all to embrace an open-armed, open-hearted, inclusive understanding of creative expression. We are concerned with the creative flame in each of us, unwavering in the face of such unhelpful categorizations.

The experience together in the preparatory workshops and symposium leads us to articulate an idea of manifesto that envisions a world in which:

- The flame of creativity, joy, love, dignity, compassion, individuality, and solidarity burns freely and brightly in all of us.
- We feel connection and responsibility to each other and acknowledge and seek to learn more about our connections and responsibilities to past and future generations, our planet, and the universe.
- We learn from Indigenous ways of knowing and thinking about our relationship with all things, past, present, and future.
- We acknowledge our undeserved privileges, power, and resources.
- We endeavour to be open-hearted, kind, and compassionate, and to be an ally but not to appropriate other peoples' experiences and causes.
- We care and are responsible for the planet and all the materials and beings we involve in our artmaking.
- We are not slaves to anyone, any ideology, or any other thing.
- We work together across disciplines to explore meanings, share our concerns and our knowledge, and find and implement solutions to the problems of the Anthropocene.
- We embrace slow design, relishing hesitancy, unconscious reflection, and the way ideas need to take shape slowly and in their own time.
- We create together to deepen our understanding of each other and to experience creative communion beyond ordinary conversation.
- We create to continue to learn about our motivations and the materials and methods of making and to express our most essential selves.
- We reconsider and ritualize our daily routines to understand their meaning and their impact on the planet, the sacrificed ghosts that enable our way of life and haunt our actions.
- We take responsibility for shaping human and corporate rights and obligations and will work to rebuild legal and governance structures to protect and restore the health of our planetary home.
- As post-humans experiencing cyborg existence and globalization, we hold ourselves and corporations to account for the social, economic, and environmental impacts of our actions and inactions.
- We insist that digital technologies be ethically, transparently, inclusively, democratically, and sustainably grounded, so they do not reinforce, perpetuate, or perpetrate injustice, inequality, oppression, and exploitation. As artists, teachers, and human rights advocates we can help transform the technology industry in this way.
- We work to rethink and reshape human rights from the bottom up, from the inside out, from past to future, to address the lived experiences and histories of the most disadvantaged and to give them expression.

- Through all forms of artmaking, teaching, research and discussion about artistic expression and the creative process, we seek to light the expressive flame in all our hearts and to spread love, peace and hope for each other and this planet.

Participants are invited to review and revise the ideas for the manifesto and to contribute artworks and video statements inspired by the symposium and this report.



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