FINE Artist Residency Series

2009 - 2014

Made possible through the generous support of The Fine Foundation
FINE Artist Residency Series
2009 - 2014

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Cover photo by Kristi Jan Hoover
Curating Creative Collisions

At Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh, we witness children’s creativity everyday. From our 4,000 sq. ft. Studio to the MAKESHOP®, from the Garage exhibit to the gardens that surround the Museum, we see children tinker, test, try, and try again to understand and engage their world.

Funded through the generous and visionary support of the Fine Foundation, the FINE Artist Residency at the Children’s Museum is a multi-year experiment in “curating creative collisions” between professional artists and Museum-going families. Simply conceived to bring working artists into the Museum for 25 to 40 hour residencies, the program also includes outreach to schools, programs for field trips, professional development, and staff training opportunities.

The FINE Residency is a bold experiment in arts education that respects the inherent creative energy of children and the capacity of working artists to reach beyond their studios and into community spaces.

Each of the 35 projects chronicled here tells a story of what’s possible when creative energies converge, collaborate, and create side by side.
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During the first year of the FINE Artist Residency, I sat down for coffee with John Miyazawa, a gifted ceramicist who also taught children’s clay classes around Pittsburgh. I respected John’s work as an artist and educator but wanted to push him and our staff to develop something more impactful. So I asked John: what’s currently inspiring you, what are you tinkering with or curious about?

John had been gathering raw clay from local construction sites to connect his pottery more closely to the earth of his community, as is the tradition of his Japanese heritage. He lamented that people felt they needed to use expensive supplies to make pots. So that’s where we started.

The Children’s Museum
believes that children deserve high quality arts experiences, engaging with real artists and real art-making processes. For these experiences to emerge authentically and memorably, staff learn to short-circuit normal stereotypes about children’s art programs.

For five years, the FINE Residency created bridges between working artists and families. Funded by the Fine Foundation, the program ensured that these two groups met each other in a uniquely supported middle space – the Museum space – to discover unexpected possibilities.

John’s simple revelation is emblematic of how the Museum approached the residency. Unique experiences emerged when Museum staff asked good questions at the outset: What is currently inspiring you? How could this residency challenge you? How does your art practice link to your childhood? What opportunity does this audience afford you that you haven’t had before? Doing so helped staff connect to the heart of artists’ practices and encourage deep engagement with children and families during the residency.

Museum staff co-designed activities to transform elements of artists’ practices into experiences for families, considering the limitations of affordability, supplies, safety, and developmental appropriateness. Working alongside adult artists, children tried things they hadn’t tried before, from using an 8-mm projector to performing on stage to using scissors. By trying, they grew, as did their definitions of “art” and “artist.” Parents’ understanding of their children grew. The artist’s ability to work with diverse audiences grew.

Each residency profiled here is about relationships, because expression is ultimately about relating. Magic unfolds when strangers create together and suddenly find they are no longer strangers.

I hope this book inspires all of us to be braver in developing art programs for families. If you are a parent, I hope it inspires you to try something new with your child. And if you are an artist, I hope you will consider working with children in new ways. Much is possible when we set aside the popsicle sticks and begin to truly play.
Year One

2009 - 2010

Amanda Long: White Light

Amy Johnson & JULIACKS: The Library of Imagined Memories

Cara Lynn Kleid: Speed Portraits

James Maszle: Sentinels

Joana Ricou: Spiral of Life

Bovey Lee: TheZodiac Project

Schmutz Company: Papermation

Ron Donoughe: Plein Air Painting

John Miyazawa: Raw Clay

Amisha Gadini: Animal Art
Amanda Long

White Light, 2009

Amanda Long’s initial concept for her residency was to create a real rainbow in the Museum’s Waterplay exhibit. When the logistics of mist, projection, and refraction proved prohibitive, she adapted the idea to a dark gallery, using multiple projectors to create her successful installation, White Light.

White Light playfully engaged visitors with color theory, physical shadow play, abstract animation, and projection. Overlapping color fields drew families into the installation while the crisp, sudden black of their shadows encouraged them to explore. Small children could be seen dancing, running, and even body slamming the wall as they interacted with their shadows in the rainbow.

For visitors wishing to move beyond exploration to manipulation, light-altering glasses, flashlights, and prisms were provided.

White Light was supported by workshop programming. During the “Abstract Animation” workshop, children drew with markers directly on reels of 8-mm film, which Long looped through an old reel-to-reel projector. She then showed examples of avant-garde films from the early days of filmmaking.
“I love rainbows, unicorns, and other symbols of hope from fairy tales and biblical stories. Growing up in Falls Church, VA, I liked to go exploring and find secret places where my toys could talk. I would form small families with them and go on adventures in the wilderness of my family’s dark, unfinished basement or the neighborhood park. Now I create fantasy worlds through animations, sculpture, and installation. My art investigates light, color, questions of faith, and why we exist.”

- Amanda Long

that closely mirrored the children’s work, placing it in context. The end results were whimsical, beautiful, and totally abstract, especially when set to music.

Long was so inspired by the educational potential of interactive video sculpture that she subsequently toured a portable version of White Light to Southwestern Pennsylvania schools.
Amy Johnson & JULIACKS

The Library of Imagined Memories, 2009

How do you catalog memory? How do you store imagination? Amy Johnson and JULIACKS crafted The Library of Imagined Memories to explore these questions with visitors during their residency.

Children donned “imagination glasses” and cloaks before passing through a ribbon curtain into the installation space. These props gave visitors clues that they were entering a new experience and emphasized the metaphor of “seeing differently.” This technique was later repeated by several FINE Artist Residents.

Amy Johnson then asked visitors to create white-on-blue ink blot prints, and invited them to draw on top of the dried prints of previous visitors. Their drawings often transformed abstract shapes into familiar objects and characters. These images were titled and mounted in The Library of Imagined Memories.

JULIACKS recorded audio tracks of visitors’ earliest memories. Children then illustrated repurposed hardcover books with their memories, which they left on the library shelves for others to read and discuss.
During Cara Lynn Kleid’s residency, she created expressive portraits to explore emotion and identity. For young children who’ve seen their own images taken with digital cameras, her whimsical likenesses were often surprising. The question, “Why doesn’t it look like me?” helped them explore how artists are interpreters of reality.

Visitors were given rough collage materials to create their own portraits, focusing attention on expression over literal representation.

“I hope my playful, organic attitude towards art making is passed on. I hope that by introducing myself as an artist to children they will know that art is something adults do.”

- Cara Lynn Kleid
Easel Prompts

Can you paint a portrait of yourself?

What do you look like when you laugh?

Paint what it’s like to know a secret.

Paint yourself now and then paint yourself one year ago.

Paint what you feel like right now.

How do you look when you’ve made a mistake?

Paint what you look like when you are unsure about something.

Can you paint something that is unique about you?

What color is your mood today?
James Maszle

Sentinels, 2009

James Maszle was classically trained in European drawing and painting techniques, but found that oil paints didn’t allow him to reproduce the look and texture of antique film he wanted. He taught himself to use sand, spices, pigments, stones, and other textured materials to create large-scale floor murals inspired by the South Asian tradition of Rangoli painting.

Maszle’s residency involved long hours spent in the “fishbowl” of the Studio, with all stages of his process visible to visitors.

Sentinels was created over the course of two months as a site-specific sand mural installed in the center of the Studio floor in Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh. The finished piece measured 12’ x 20’ and included more than a dozen distinct panels. Images referenced Maszle’s childhood and American 1970s media icons.

Photos by Angela Seals
“As a boy growing up in the 1970s, I wanted to be an artist, a football player, or an astronaut. I loved crazy cartoon characters on TV and the art on cereal boxes. I was captivated by the scale of things, and I loved to get up close to big billboards. I fondly remember the bold graphic style of the Brady Bunch era and I still associate clashing patterns with innocence and optimism.”

- James Maszle
To make Maszle’s mural technique interactive for visitors, Museum staff developed activities to complement his process. These included a sand drawing table, sand painting, and sand silkscreens.

Most of the children who interacted with Maszle’s work had played in sandboxes, but few had explored sand’s artistic properties. They took to the sand art activities immediately, meditatively enjoying the texture and color of the material.

Children created drawings with liquid glue and coated them in sand, mirroring the exact process Maszle was using on his much larger work, providing them with a direct, immediate experience of his process.

For the youngest visitors, trays of colored sand provided an opportunity for basic material exploration. This activity served as a prototype for a permanent sand drawing table in the Museum’s Nursery exhibit.

Maszle also visited the Museum’s after-school program for 6-8th graders to create a second 15’ x 15’ sand mural with them.

Photos by Angela Seals
Joana Ricou

Spiral of Life, 2010

Photos by Josh Gates
Charles Darwin visualized the classification of biological organisms as a tree of life. A new system, created in part by scientist and artist Joana Ricou, depicts these relationships as a “Spiral of Life.” She explored this concept with visitors in her residency.

Ricou spent several weeks crafting a soft floor sculpture in the Studio. Walk-up activities invited visitors to experiment with foam and fabric to create their own sculptures or illustrate their major life events on tree-ring graphics.

Once Spiral of Life was complete, Ricou hosted interactive storytimes where children were prompted to climb across her work to find images of species, play games about biological relationships, and ask questions about ecology.

“Art is where I experiment with the scientific world. Sometimes just for fun, sometimes to teach, but always exploring something new.”

- Joana Ricou
Born in Hong Kong, Bovey Lee grew up practicing Chinese calligraphy, designing paper dolls, and studying pencil drawing. She loved to read, fascinated by the surreal events in Chinese fables, biblical stories, and science fiction. When she was a teenager, Lee’s father introduced her to Chinese papercutting, an ancient folk art she now seeks to preserve and practice. Her art tells tales of imaginative worlds in which different cultures, forces, animals, and people share their experiences and overcome difficulties together.
Bovey Lee
The Zodiac Project, 2010

In her residency, Bovey Lee created a series of papercut works representing the signs of the Chinese Zodiac to demonstrate her process live in the Studio. She brought visual aids for visitors to touch and explore as they received a close look at her modern approach to an ancient Chinese art form. She also created six papercut templates for visitors to follow, or they could design and cut their own unique image. After cutting, visitors mounted their cutouts on vividly colored paper similar to Lee’s work.

While the fine scissor work was challenging to younger visitors, with encouragement and coaching from Lee and Museum staff, they were often able to accomplish a complete cutout. Proving, as happened throughout the FINE Residency, that children will consistently surpass adult expectations.
The Schmutz Company is a Pittsburgh-based artist group led by Dave English and Don Orkoskey. Together with a crew of artists, they create original works of puppetry, animation, live performance, web videos, and general mayhem.

For their FINE Residency, The Schmutz Company brought old-fashioned stop-motion animation to the Children’s Museum, sharing techniques with visitors of the digital generation.

First, they wrangled visitors into animation teams, usually consisting of one family. Each team enjoyed exclusive work time with The Schmutz Company.

Some teams chose an artistic director, director of cinematography, and other fun roles to reflect real animation jobs. Animation
team names included “Team Zebra,” “Team Girls Rock,” and “The Smelly Pants.”

Teams then developed characters from original drawings and recycled paper materials, including kitschy 1920s advertisements. Finally, they chose a title for their piece.

Narratives unfolded in an open, flowing process, with all animation team members contributing ideas and moving pieces by hand. As visitors positioned their characters through the story, a still camera snapped the action frame by frame. Don Orkoskey animated the frames digitally, refining the quality and speed in a post-production round of edits. At the end of the residency, twenty-one short films were completed.

Visitors’ papermation shorts were screened at a “world premiere” along with Schmutz Company stop-motion shorts. Musicians Eric Smith and Aaron Crothers accompanied the screening with live music and sound effects.

Creating a “silver-screen moment” for children to see and share their work elevated the experience for both kids and their parents and caregivers.

While the FINE Residency typically emphasizes artistic process and exploration, the public showing of their work was a rewarding conclusion to a job well done. Schmutz believes that such a moment can serve as the key to ongoing arts engagement for children.
Painter Ron Donoughe’s plein air paintings, usually completed outdoors in a single sitting, capture a transient time, light, and spirit.

For his residency at Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh (depicted above), Donoughe created a teaching tool to demonstrate perspective in painting through overlapping shapes. He painted on large canvasses before the watchful eyes of visitors of all ages, and observed and coached young painters at work at the Studio’s easels.

Museum staff tried various formats to adapt Donoughe’s painting workshops to the child-directed mode of Museum-visiting families. Ultimately, Donoughe was most successful when he simply painted alongside families and talked informally about his process, materials, and techniques.
“By learning to see the painting subject as interlocking colorful shapes, we can ‘trick our brains.’ The world becomes a series of shapes, not things we already know. To paint is to see as an artist - so before we can learn to paint, we must learn how to see.”

- Ron Donoughe

Southside Industrial, 11 x 14, oil on panel

Image courtesy of Ron Donoughe
For most of human history, artists have used natural, locally-sourced materials to create beautiful, functional objects. Ceramic artist John Miyazawa asked Children’s Museum visitors to consider the roots and origins of art-making materials through his Raw Clay residency.

During the first weekend of his residency, Miyazawa and geologist Stephen Scheidt delivered mounds of local, raw clay from construction sites and riverbeds to the Museum Studio. To transform the raw clay into a smooth, workable
material, children pounded it with mallets, added water, stirred, pounded some more, watered some more, got completely covered with clay dust and muck, and loved every minute of it.

On subsequent weekends, Miyazawa offered wheelthrowing and handbuilding workshops that transformed the clay into works of art.

Finally, Miyazawa set up a small firepit in the Children’s Museum’s Backyard to fire the children’s work. This humble set up produced beautiful work that enthusiastic families could replicate at home.

Museum staff provided parents with instructions for harvesting raw clay and firing pieces in their own backyards.
A native Pennsylvanian, Amisha Gadani spent her youth in her wooded backyard cultivating her observation skills and developing a strong tactile nature. She liked the feel of rough bark, the sliminess of worms and slugs, and the way her clothes stuck to her when she got soaked in the rain. These early explorations helped develop her interests in naturally occurring forms and systems, from sinuous curves to swarming patterns and super organisms. Gadani’s work draws on curious creatures and their behaviors, offering viewers a chance to experience the inspiration she finds in animal wonders of the world.
Throughout her residency, Amisha Gadani helped visitors design and make costumes inspired by the quirky physical adaptations of animal creatures. She imagined that small children could relate to feeling vulnerable, and would be empowered by adopting a “superpower” like quills, claws, or camouflage.

Gadani humorously demonstrated ecological dynamics by offering “camouflage backgrounds” for visitors to blend into, e.g. pictures of jelly beans and cars in traffic. The results were vibrant, playful, and often hilarious.

Gadani modeled her own costume creations on animal defense mechanisms, including a porcupine dress and an inflatable pufferfish suit.
Year Two
2010 - 2011

Scott Andrews,
Adam Atkinson,
& Michael McParlane:
Starship Astrotron

Mayumi Matsuo:
Peace Lanterns

Wade Kramm:
Portal

LaVerne Kemp:
Weaving and Felting

Dick Esterle:
SpaceShape Garden

Petra Fallaux:
Abstract Quilting

Laura Jean McLaughlin:
Grow Mosaic
Scott Andrews, Adam Atkinson, Michael McParlane

Starship Astrotron, 2010
The collaborative team behind Starship Astrotron set out to create an immersive, theatrical experience that encouraged imaginative play by simulating a starship that had crash-landed on Earth. As alien creatures, the artists were seeking support and assistance from the Earthling visitors to help them return to their home planet. Museum visitors were prompted to compose and recite poems on camera, often in otherworldly garb, to create poetic “patches” for the broken ship.

“I felt like so many kids came into the installation feeling intimidated, but left with a smile on their face and hopefully a feeling of accomplishment,” recalled Scott Andrews. “I loved prompting the children (and parents) to perform for the camera and for us. I think several kids left the installation without fully knowing what they had just done, but knowing on some level that it was a positive experience that prompted them to try on a new persona for part of their day at the Museum.”

Children who left the experience with comments like, “Good luck with your crystals captain, see you on planet Pittsburgh!” were a highlight for the artists.

Another surprise occurred when the group’s fog machine set off the Museum’s fire alarm on the first day of their residency. Rather than calling it quits, the artists stayed in character throughout the experience, improvising with children that the alarms, and the fire engine that arrived, were signaling the crash of their starship into the Museum.
We were in a lot of ways making this work as an explorative opportunity for the kids growing up who are more like we were at that age. I would have loved interacting with an installation like this as a child. Boys who picked a wig for their outfit and who liked the color pink and choose the pink crystals for their video background, or girls who wanted to fight aliens with a spear and create characters for themselves that were kings or princes. I don’t see much in our society that speaks to these children in a positive way, and I hope we were able to encourage them in a small and nearly unnoticeable way to be themselves and to be comfortable with their own imaginations.”

- Scott Andrews
Mayumi Matsuo
Peace Lanterns,
2010
Mayumi Matsuo’s quietly provocative art practice and her work with children both seek to inspire a more peaceful world by creating genuine experiences of peace for her audience.

Her FINE Residency invited visitors to use real Japanese brushes, inks, and shoji paper to create peace lanterns. This idea was drawing from the tradition of her home city of Hiroshima, Japan, where lanterns are floated down the Motoyasu River as part of an annual peace ceremony.

During her workshops, Matsuo insisted that no child touch a paint brush until the whole class had become silent. Then, she would ask the children to touch their shoji rice paper while she
held a sample up to the light to demonstrate its special qualities. Then the group would discuss the qualities of peace. Only then were children invited to pick up their brushes.

Matsuo’s residency was part of Pittsburgh’s observance of the 65th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, organized by the Pittsburgh-based organization Remembering Hiroshima, Imagining Peace. An arts-based collaboration with this group occurs each year at the Children’s Museum since this residency took place.
Wade Kramm

Portal, 2011

Through cross-disciplinary educational activities, Wade Kramm’s residency let visitors explore reflection, shadows and light, translucency, scale, angles, and vision. Kramm’s non-linear process began with questions, theories, and experiments.

The exploration of scientific phenomenon inherent in Kramm’s sculptural work and the many questions his residency posed inspired Museum staff to locate his project in the Curiosity Lab, an exhibit area dedicated to experimentation and inquiry.

Using giant mirrors on the floor and wall and everyday objects cut in half, Kramm invited visitors to explore the tricks mirrored surfaces can play on the logical mind.

Some viewers immediately saw the half objects as whole objects suspended in space when held to the mirror; others only saw the two halves. Through multiple configurations and testing with visitors, Kramm explored how artistic intention can often best be achieved through play.

Kramm also created Portal, a site-specific mirror sculpture installed in the Children’s Museum’s Attic exhibit. Visitors who look into Portal don’t see a direct reflection in the mirror, but instead a “tunnel” of layered reflections repeating endless, angled views into the Attic.
LaVerne Kemp and her award-winning textiles have been a fixture of Pittsburgh’s fiber arts community for more than 20 years. A committed teaching artist, Kemp offered fiber arts workshops in multiple disciplines to children and families during her FINE Residency. She also exhibited her own fiber arts creations.
Kemp helped visitors felt their own beads and shapes using colorful wool and their sudsy hands. Visitors could take these home for special keeping, or leave them at the Museum to be incorporated into a larger installation. Kemp also taught the complex practice of weaving using a simplified technique inspired by her own art practice.
“A part of me is interwoven into each piece that I create. Like my life, my weaving is a collaboration of color, texture, and pattern. Over the years my fiber work has evolved into an art form rather than simply traditional weaving. I have explored and incorporated photo transfer, batik, stamping, dying, beading, hand and machine assembly, embroidery, and quilting. My art and my passion are interwoven as one fabric.”

- LaVerne Kemp
Dick Esterle
SpaceShape Garden,
2011
A mathematician by training and a toymaker by trade, Dick Esterle shared the fun he finds in math and geometry during his FINE Residency.

Based on the idea of attaching shapes to create larger collaborative objects, Esterle and visitors created SpaceShape Garden, an installation of sculptural forms built of triangle, square, and pentagon-shaped pieces. Visitors die cut shapes from recycled cardboard packaging and fit them together, adding to and modifying the work of others. They could also simply interact with the lightweight shapes.

SpaceShape Garden resulted in a playful and complex landscape of suspended and moveable forms that was installed in the Studio.
Dick Esterle has always liked space - the space around all of us - and the fact that space has shapes in it such as triangles and squares. He also likes that when you put these shapes together, you get new shapes.

Esterle has created and installed several art works in the Children’s Museum, including “more light”, a signature sculpture made of pink and orange flagging tape that hangs in the Studio rotunda.
Petra Fallaux
Abstract Quilts, 2011
Petra Fallaux grew up in the Netherlands and the modern, abstract quilts she creates are inspired by the geometric, agricultural landscapes of her homeland. Her palette also recalls the colorful poppy fields she loved as a child.

To adapt her quilting practice to children, Fallaux worked with staff to create a multi-step activity that emphasized layout and design. These are the aspects of quilting Fallaux feels inspires the most joy and playfulness.

Her choice was a success. Entire families were engaged for long periods of time in the color selection and geometric piecing instead of sewing skills or collaboration. Even young children designed using pattern and abstraction.
Born in the early 1960s to a textile worker dad and seamstress mom, Petra Fallaux has always been “too fond” of fabrics. She finds the modern retro design and textile sensibilities of that era irresistible.

Fallaux is most attracted to spare geometric forms. Her credo is shape, color, and simplicity. The polar landscapes, rectangular color fields of tulips, and immense skies of the Netherlands all inspire her work. Fallaux’s approach to quilt design is also strongly influenced by modern painting and design.

Over the years, she honed her quilting skills and broadened her technique through classes in improvisational quilt design, fabric dyeing, and screen printing.
Laura Jean McLaughlin
Grow Mosaic, 2011
Mosaic is an ancient, meditative art form ripe with metaphor: many small pieces combining to form a bigger work that has meaning far beyond the sum of its parts.

Laura Jean McLaughlin’s FINE Residency resulted in the creation of Grow, a 6’x5’ collaborative mosaic in ceramic, glass, and mirror. Grow was guided by the artist with visitor participation at every stage, from design to mosaic making to grouting and installation.

McLaughlin worked alongside families and school groups to combine their individual efforts into an epic collective creation.

The final composition is permanently installed at the Children’s Museum.
Year Three
2011 - 2012

Michael & Jade Corle: Blank World
Sibel Deren Guler: Activating Origami
Stacy Innerst: Painting Jeans
Bob Ziller: Bike Painting
Kathryn Carr: Shadow Puppets
Jennifer Meyers: Character Collectors
Tsawa Monks of Gaden
Jangste Monastery: Tibetan Arts Weekend
Sister I’Asia: Umoja Karamu Circle
The Corles were interested in working alongside children to explore the mechanics of storymaking. Their idea was deceptively simple, and as crisp and clear as the title: a blank world made of dry-erase surfaces onto which children could project and illustrate endless possibilities.

The Corles used empty space to draw out the components of a good story - characters and plot - from the experiences of visitors.
"The goal is to interact with these environments and create concepts, characters, and stories that grow and change organically. We are there engaging families, drawing alongside them, questioning and seeing how they reinterpret their world." - The Corles
In the Museum’s MAKESHOP® maker space, collisions happen daily between the tactile and digital, the functional and decorative.

For her FINE Residency, Sibel Deren Guler created a unique project where visitors transformed intricate folded paper pieces (origami) by introducing movement, sound, and automation.

Guler worked with visitors to add automating technology that responds to the creases and folds in origami pieces. Children also used sound chips harvested from musical greeting cards to record messages or sound effects and tucked them into their origami. Finally, they activated their pieces to fold or unfold on their own with the addition of small motors.
Stacy Innerst
Painting Jeans, 2012
For his picture book, *Levi Strauss Gets a Bright Idea*, artist and illustrator Stacy Innerst created imaginative, whimsical illustrations on denim. So it seemed fitting that during his FINE Residency, visitors would have the novel opportunity to paint blue jeans right alongside him.

Innerst remembers, “I was generally very impressed with how safe the kids felt in that art environment and how confident they were to paint and to come up to me to talk and ask questions. Not intimidated at all. I can’t imagine a better experience for getting a sense of what my audience (kids) thinks of the pictures I paint.”
Bob Ziller

Bike Painting, 2012
There’s something inherently fun about breaking the rules. In one of the most memorable FINE Residencies to date, Bob Ziller invited visitors to do just that - ride a bike, through paint, inside the Museum.

To complement the Museum’s WHEELS! exhibit, Ziller helped visitors of all ages paint up their tire treads and cruise across 25’ canvases in the center of the Studio.

Finished paintings were hung in the Studio, then cut and framed for sale. All proceeds were donated to buy bikes for an orphanage in India’s Kullu Valley.

“I have had a compulsion to make art since I was a child. I’ve worked in various mediums: painting, film, sculpture, poetry, music, translation. I have no preconceived ideas or intentions as to why I create the art I do. Being an artist is not an occupation, it’s a condition.”

– Bob Ziller
Kathryn Carr
Shadow Puppets,
2012
Scherenschnitte (pronounced sharon-SHNIT-tah), means “scissor cuts” in German and is the art of designing with cut paper. Originating in Switzerland and Germany in the 16th century, Scherenschnitte was brought to the U.S. in the 18th century by immigrants who settled primarily in Pennsylvania. Common Scherenschnitte forms include symmetrical silhouettes, valentines, and love letters.

Kathryn Carr became a practitioner of Scherenschnitte because she was drawn to the bold imagery of the papercut silhouette and the intriguing shadows they cast. For her FINE Residency, Carr invited visitors to create their own shadow-puppet characters and mount them on paper straws. She then assisted visitors to perform shadow puppet shows on an intricate papercut backdrop she constructed.

“My whimsical designs begin by sketching an idea and giving it a sense of movement and playfulness. Ideas for my art stem from the storybooks my mother read to me as a child, my travels near and far, a vivid imagination, and a wry sense of humor.” - Kathryn Carr
Jennifer Myers’ work centers around character creation and storytelling in a variety of media. She often collaborates with other organizations, artists, and children.

For her FINE Residency, Myers donned the role of the Character Collector, casting Museum visitors as co-creators of her giant Children’s Encyclopedia of Characters.

In 15-minute intensive studio sessions, Myers invited children to use costumes, a small set, and props to play, imagine, and develop a unique character profile. They then used ink, graphite, colored pencils, and collage materials to depict their imagined characters and add them to the book.
“My work is project-based and interdisciplinary. I move from drawings, prints, video, photography, performance, installation, and sculpture with fluidity. The work I make believes in one thing: we still have stories to tell each other and they are important. We must listen. All voices must be heard. Silencing the weak is not a solution, but it pervades globally. My work aims to illuminate the epic love story of which we are all the central characters, that is as mournful as it is joyful. It is an attempt to bring aspects of this story into focus, if only momentarily, before we move on and forget the past again.”

– Jennifer Myers
Tsawa Monks of Gaden Jangtse Monastery

Tibetan Arts Weekend, 2012

The Tsawa Monks of Gaden Jangtse Monastery came to the Museum in 2012 in conjunction with their World Peace Cultural Tour. For their FINE Residency, the Museum themed the entire Studio with activities inspired by the monk’s cultural practices, including making sand mandalas and prayer flags, thangka painting, and a touch table with artifacts and photos from Tibet.

Visitors had the opportunity to “Meet the Monks” as they roamed the Studio to teach, demonstrate their practices, and play with families.

The highlight of the monks’ days in the Studio was a procession and llama dance with music and chanting. Finally, they offered a special workshop for a teen and adult audience.
Sister I’Asia
Umoja Karamu Circle,
2012

Photos by Angela Seals
As Project Manager for the Culturally Responsive Arts Education Program for Pittsburgh Public Schools, Sister l’Asia is well versed in helping children explore cultural art forms.

During her residency, Sister l’Asia helped visitors learn some of the cultural traditions of West Africa. Attired in *adinkra* and other printed cloth and body painting, she led *umoja* circles (Swahili for unity) with visitors daily. The circles used movement, music, rhythm, and spoken language to orchestrate a collective gathering experience.

Sister l’Asia was assisted by over a dozen teaching artists from Wacongo Dance Company. She was also accompanied by master Congolese drummers including the respected Dr. Mundundu.
Year Four
2012 - 2013

Kate Pfeil
& Mark Barlow: Glow Trees

Zach Dorn: It Was The Coldest Year

Steffi Mayer-Staley: Bamboo Fun Days

Tugboat Printshop: Collaborative Print Mural

Attack Theatre: Dance With Art
Glow Trees was the overwhelmingly popular result of an art and science mash-up. Designer Kate Pfeil and electrical engineer Mark Barlow combined their distinct expertise to sculpt “trees” with visitors using naturally sourced twigs, conductive copper wire, and metal mesh.

The trees were placed in Barlow’s specially designed vacuum chamber to activate the wire and illuminate the trees with glowing purple and green light through an electromagnetic process called bremsstrahlung.

Similar to the aurora borealis effect, the process caused the trees to emanate arcs and halos of vivid purple light, occasionally sparking an unusual shade of green. Visitors were entranced by the effects of this natural phenomenon.
Zach Dorn

It Was The Coldest Year, 2013
Zach Dorn is a puppeteer and theater artist who explores interactive territory through “spectacles” and live-streaming puppet shows filmed in unusual locations. His distinct, high-energy performance style and inventive use of overhead projectors, fishbowls, swinging light bulbs, and hand-drawn characters create memorable, imaginative worlds.

While many of his stories are designed for adult audiences, Dorn made the show, *It Was The Coldest Year*, an engaging experience for all ages.
Audience members seated around a miniature city made from recycled materials watched as Dorn placed puppets in the city and used a handheld video camera and giant projection screen to depict a full-sized world for the puppets.

After each 15-minute show, Museum visitors made their own miniature buildings and puppets to live in the growing “city of junk” installed in the Museum’s Theater space.

Dorn remembers, “Visitors would rush the stage after each performance. The story still lived within their imaginations. The idea that stories are glimpses into pieces, that possibilities are endless, and that there could be thousands of endings is a concept I never expected such young visitors to grasp.

“Of course, it was always a success when families would proclaim excitement to do this kind of work at home.”
“After the performance, a mom and her son approached me. The son was about four years old; his eyes were blurry red and he looked a bit distressed. At the end of the story, the protagonist leaves in a small two-seat airplane. ‘What happens to the mother?’ the boy stammered. Although I wrote the puppet play, I wasn’t certain. I was most taken aback by the boy’s ability to follow the story, themes, and characters well enough to make an observation that challenged my own view of the story. I explained that this was a small moment in the boy’s journey; the story could continue at any time. I challenged him to write the next part. ‘And the plane comes back for the mom,’ he said.”

- Zach Dorn
Steffi Mayer-Staley’s work ranges from set and lighting design to installation, land art, painting, photography, and stone masonry. At the Children’s Museum, visitors helped her create a series of bamboo sculptures from hundreds of bamboo sticks and rubber bands. Visitors found endless opportunities to create intimate or room-sized structures, sometimes adorned with colorful fabrics.

Completed sculptures were installed on the Museum grounds - even in the trees! - and in the Studio. Mayer-Staley also worked with Museum staff to take her show on the road, offering building experiences to children at summer schools programs across Pittsburgh.
“One little boy was very much into it and fully concentrated. I think the world around him disappeared as he twisted and built his structure. He had just learned how to twist rubber bands and it was still a challenge for him. As he twisted and twisted, his tongue stuck out and he made funny sounds. For every last twist he farted - it was that challenging. But neither he nor anyone around him noticed.

“Later, a mother-daughter team was trying to recreate a long and flexible bamboo stick igloo. They used a different technique and struggled with the flexibility of the bamboo. The design changed into an “Eiffel Tower” style sculpture but still it would not stand up. Only when mom turned away and worked on something else did her daughter finish the design with ease!

“All of us learned that we should just let the kids play and not enforce adult ideas onto their creations.”

- Steffi Mayer-Stayley
Tugboat Printshop, led by the collaborative team of Valerie Lueth and Paul Roden, brought the art of woodblock printing to Children’s Museum visitors through an immersive start-to-finish mural project. Tugboat artists worked with visitors to ink, print, cut, and wheat paste the textures of trees and bushes into a giant woodcut wall mural installed in the Museum’s Studio.
“Advice? Stay simple! Kids want to try things. They really seemed to enjoy the rolling of ink and were thrilled at the printed results.” - Tugboat Printshop
Professional woodblock printing requires specialty machinery and sharp, potentially dangerous tools. Museum staff and the artists worked together to turn Tugboat’s multi-step work process into a simplified, two-step process safe for all ages. Children inked pre-carved blocks and turned the antique printing press independently.
Attack Theatre’s residency took place in the Museum’s temporary exhibit, Move With Art, a retrospective of six years of interactive Tough Art pieces. These pieces are created during annual, summer-long artist residencies and designed to be “tough enough” to withstand the ongoing physical demands of playful children.

Attack dancers created spontaneous, complementary choreography based on audience interpretations of, and reactions to, the art.

To design the residency programming, Museum staff and Attack Theatre dancers intentionally observed the interactions of children and families with the art and
each other in the exhibit. Attack dancers then played alongside visitors and distilled the core reactions that they witnessed.

Attack dancers also facilitated fast-paced Q&A games to provoke content contributions from visitors.

The dancers took cues from their own observations and transformed the audience’s suggestions into an experiential, original dance performance in and around the Tough Art pieces.

Improvisational and unique to each performance, the dancers often engaged visitors to mirror their own movement and sequences.
Year Five

2013 - 2014

the drift crew: Duck Call Orchestra

Dalia Shevin: Love Letters

Zena Ruiz: Mixed Feelings

Zany Umbrella Circus: The Gift

LUMiNS: The Nest
the drift crew

Duck Call Orchestra, 2013

Though many FINE Residencies have referenced or connected to art and cultural happenings beyond the walls of the Museum, none has done so as playfully as the drift crew’s Duck Call Orchestra.
The drift crew invited Museum visitors to add the element of sound to the giant Rubber Duck, a public art sensation by Florentijn Hofman.

What sound would a rubber duck make if it could quack for all the world to hear? What sounds might beckon the rubber duck?

Better bring out the kazoos. While you’re at it, get all the whistles and wind instruments you can find, and grab a life preserver, too.

Museum visitors tooted, blew, and bleated their very best duck calls, which the drift crew recorded. The artists then edited the calls into a soundtrack, and played it to Rubber Duck from a raft they floated alongside it. Rubber Duck had no discernable response.
Rubber Duck, built by Dutch artist Florentijn Hofman, cruised down the Allegheny River into downtown Pittsburgh in September 2013. Thousands turned out to welcome Rubber Duck, whose sensational presence was a highlight of the summer.
Dear Dad,
I went to Pittsburgh for a field trip. We went to a bunch of cool rooms. Someday I want to go to ALL of the rooms! I’m telling you it was pretty COOL!

Dear Stormy, thanks for being my horse. I know you have arthritis in your right leg but I still like you.

Dear Dad,
I went to Pittsburgh for a field trip. We went to a bunch of cool rooms. Someday I want to go to ALL of the rooms! I’m telling you it was pretty COOL!
Dear Mommy,
You are very sweet and kind. You always are there for me when I’m feeling sad. You are the best Mom I could ask for. The only thing I want for Christmas is you.

Dear Grandma, I really wish you were here again! P.S. you are in a better place.

Dear Reagan M, I am hoping that with time I can win back trust from you.

Dear Mom, I know you miss Dad and I do to I hoop [hope] we fill your heart but we can’t fill our dad’s shoes. I love you very much. Love Braden. Hoop we make you happy.
As a complementary program to XOXO: An Exhibit About Love & Forgiveness, artist Dalia Shevin explored the delight of traditional postal mail, the wonders of writing by hand, and the joy of discovering the love that words can hold.

Children and adults crafted written and illustrated messages which were stamped, hand delivered, mailed on their behalf, or displayed to inspire.

Throughout her residency, Shevin worked with Museum educators to engage families in thoughtful reflection about where they find love in their lives. Classes on field trips brainstormed the things they loved the most.

Shevin’s portable letter booth also provoked loving expressions at dozens of public sites across Pittsburgh.
Facilitator Prompts

Have you ever received a letter in the mail? How did it feel to get mail?

Is there anyone in your life who would love to get a letter from you?

Do you have a special animal in your life?

Is there anyone you would like to say “I’m sorry” to?

What is your favorite place? What makes it special?

What food do you love so much you want to eat it every single day?

Is there anyone you miss? What do you want to say to them?

What do you appreciate most about the person you are writing to?
Zena Ruiz
Mixed Feelings, 2014
Zena Ruiz developed her collaborative fiber installation *Mixed Feelings* around the metaphor of braiding: joining different elements into a singular, bound cord in which each strand retains its independence. She used braids to demonstrate the way multiple feelings often co-exist and intermingle within us. While some feelings produce ambivalence, others might amplify an experience, such as the confluence of sadness, fear and anger, or the mixing of excitement, joy, and nervousness.

*Mixed Feelings* invited participants to choose at least three strands of recycled fiber material, each representing a different emotion (labeled with words and a graphic of an expressive face). They...
were invited to braid (or twist) their strands together, forming a small “feeling braid” that they could wear on their wrist, carry in their pocket, or weave into the ever-expanding canopy in the Studio. As many visitors didn’t know how to braid, they learned this new skill from staff or their caregivers.

Ruiz’s vision was to create a braiding table where children and adults could pause, reflect, and work side by side with their hands. She imagined emotional conversations would emerge.

Often, the very act of assigning colors to feelings prompted in-depth conversations between Ruiz, Museum staff, and visitors about how colors make us feel, how our feelings can be plural and even contradictory, and how we
feel about specific things or people in our lives. They asked, Which color feels sad to you? Is there a favorite shirt you like to wear? What color is it? What feelings do you think belong with red?

As the canopy of colored strands, braided and twisted by intentional hands, became increasingly dense with tangled fibers, it created a festive, focused space in which conversations flourished.
Zany Umbrella Circus
The Gift, 2014
Zany Umbrella Circus collaborated with the Children’s Museum to produce *The Gift*, an original theater production for young audiences. Based on O. Henry’s classic short story, *The Gift of the Magi*, *The Gift* was a 30-minute play performed entirely in pantomime and set to music. *The Gift* featured Karen Forney as Della and Ben Sota as Jim.

*The Gift* was prefaced with a short expectation-setting announcement from the performers: this was to be a “no shushing show.” Visitors of all ages were asked to repeat a pledge not to shush their neighbor, their sister, their grandma, their cat, or anyone else, but rather to allow the people around them to talk along with the show and try to solve the “really hard puzzle” (the complex plot).

While some audiences quietly absorbed the show, others took the “no shushing” policy immediately to heart, talking, exclaiming, and even chanting along to the most dramatic scenes.
The show was supported by hands-on workshops in “Acting in a Mask” and “Low Tech Overhead Projector Animations,” both techniques featured in the performance. To generate an audience, the performers circulated through the Museum between shows, doing simple circus tricks and making friends with visitors.

To finance the project, Sota organized a Kickstarter campaign to fundraise half of the production costs. The Museum provided the other half of the costs and donated passes, memberships, and prints created by staff for rewards.
Because *The Gift* relied almost exclusively on music and movement to tell its story, it provided an opportunity to invite members of the deaf community to the Museum for an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreted performance. The opening remarks, after-show Q&A, and workshops by the performers were also interpreted in ASL.

**Talking About *The Gift* with Young Children**

What did you think was going on in this story?

How did the characters feel about each other? How did you know?

Since the actors didn’t speak or show their faces, what clues did they give you to help you understand their feelings?

How did the music make you feel?

How does it feel when you get gifts from people you love? How do you feel when you give gifts?
Have you SEEN it?
This was the guiding question of the five-member artistic team LUMiNS, which engaged school groups and families in a serious quest to locate the Beast - a debatably scary or kindly figure - they claimed had taken up temporary residence in the Children’s Museum.

How do you create a collaborative, theatrical installation focused on an absent subject? After all, no one had seen the Beast! The Nest relied on imagination, collective storytelling, ritual, excavation of artifacts, and correspondence to bring the Beast to life.

The LUMiNS team consisted of Megan Flød Johnson, Siri Hellerman, Lisa Leibering, Jamie Erin Murphy, and Anastasia Schneider.

Photos by Krist Jan Hoover
The LUMiNS team created a playful and child-led space in which the practices of creative and visionary thinking were nurtured and protected. Children were encouraged to write, draw, and express a full range of emotions about the unknown, and the results were hilarious, brutally honest, and heartbreakingly sweet.

“Classroom groups were special to have in The Nest, as our storytelling had to be facilitated moment by moment to 20 children at once. It challenged us to tell the story of the Beast as a group. Writings and drawings emotionally connected the groups to the Beast. ‘We can call him with a whistle,’ one child wrote, which led another person to say, ‘We can howl to him so he knows we like animal creatures!’ We created a collective ritual of ‘stomp stomp’ for children and staff to practice with us, ending each time in a physical pose of the Beast as we imagined him.”

- Megan Flød Johnson
“It was wonderful to see kids understand that the Beast needed friends and that they were capable of being that for him.”

- Siri Hellerman
Museums provide artists and educators with fertile testing ground for arts education practices. As the projects detailed here demonstrate, remarkable learning experiences can emerge from Museum-based experiments in arts education.

The FINE Artist Residency Series provided the staff at Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh invaluable opportunities to curate public arts programs for families.

In this series, the Museum served as a matchmaker among creative individuals of different generations, artistic traditions, and communities. We will continue to curate creative collisions and work with artists to bring their projects to the community.

With the lessons we learned from the residency, and inspired by the artists and children whose creative reach is recorded here, we will continue to stretch ourselves toward new possibilities and new ways of thinking about arts education.
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