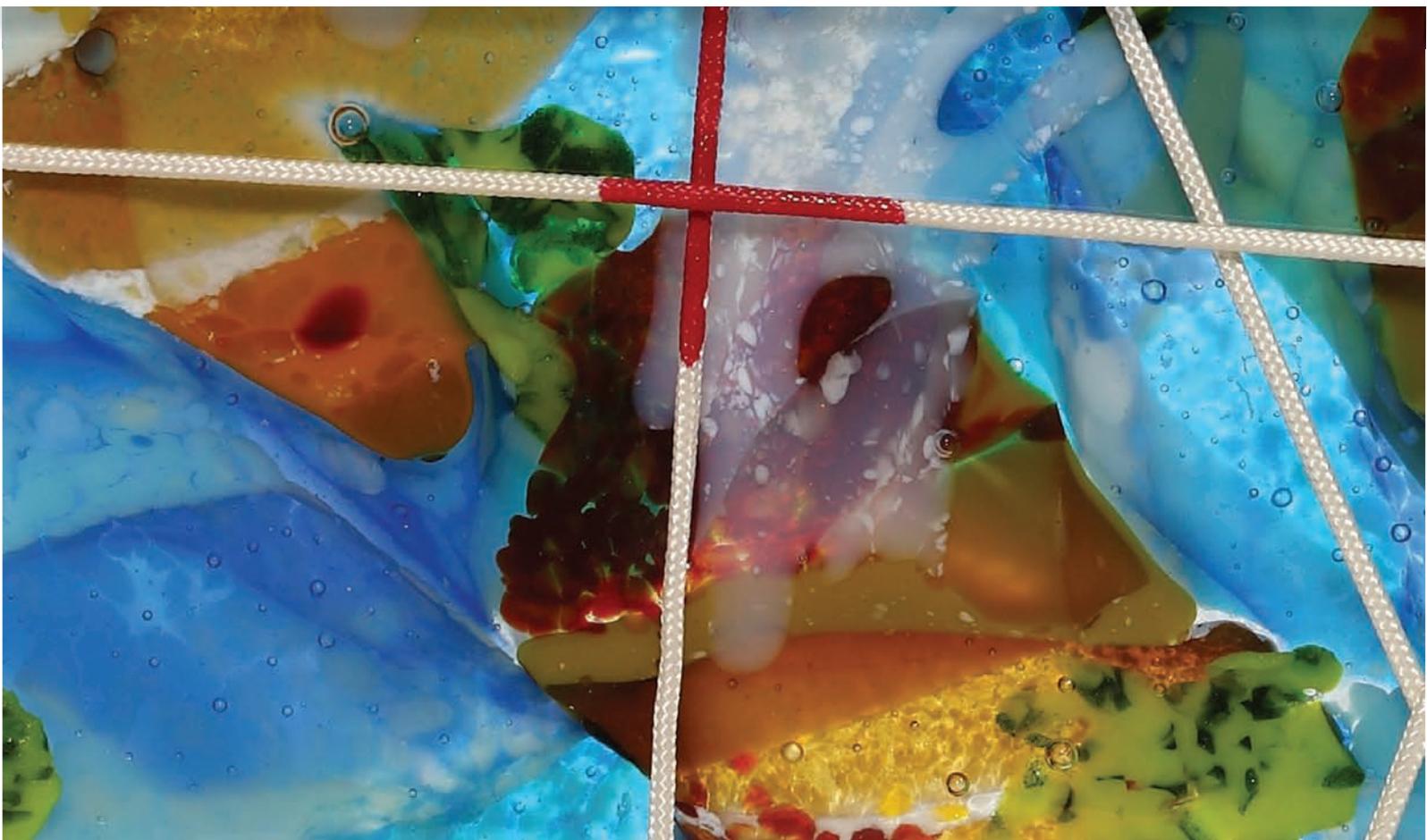




CREATIVE FUSION

The Cleveland Foundation's International Artist-in-Residence Program



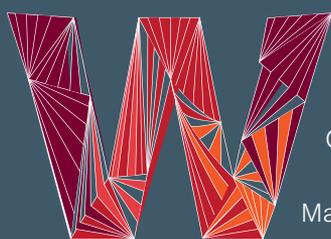


Creative Fusion is an international artist-in-residence program, a special initiative of the Cleveland Foundation.

Foreign artists are invited to spend up to a year in Cleveland, hosted by our cultural and educational institutions. Visiting artists participate in community engagement and learning activities, work with and learn from local artists, and continue to create and share work. Our program looks for exceptional contemporary artists from cultures not well represented here. We consider artists of any discipline whose work addresses the human experience.

In our first year, we have hosted four artists from Turkey and South Africa, in partnership with four major sponsors and nine partner organizations. These artists, representing theater, dance, and visual arts, have educated and inspired thousands of lives in our community by sharing their unique art forms and cultural perspectives.

The striking glass artwork (on the cover), commissioned by the Cleveland Foundation, is given as a gift to our artists in residence as a reminder of their experience with us. Each unique piece is part of a series handcrafted by a local artist-run business, Streets of Manhattan. The fused glass symbolizes the fusion of cultures that is our program's mission. The colors are an abstract impression of the earth's oceans and continents, and the rope represents the transportation paths that connect us as well as the cultural ties that bind us as we share our backgrounds, ideas, and values.



hat a privilege it is for us to offer a global arts program of the depth and reach of Creative Fusion!

Many cultural institutions are passionate about world cultures

but rarely have the resources to host international artists for more than one performance or exhibition. Creative Fusion permits a deeper engagement at the artistic level and a richer, more lasting impact on our community through extended time and meaningful interactions with international artists.

For example, over three months, Turkish dancer Sevi Bayraktar was able to conduct 81 workshops and performances on Roma dance and culture in Greater Cleveland schools, while also completing an intensive collaboration with local modern dance company MorrisonDance and offering master classes for local dancers and choreographers.

We believe Creative Fusion is unique among artist residency programs for two main reasons. First, each residency is a true community partnership, requiring collaboration between at least two organizations: cultural and educational. Playwright and director Özen Yula was embedded with both Cleveland State University and Cleveland Public Theatre and also worked closely with a group of Cleveland Metropolitan School District students during his nine-month residency.

Second, our program has enormous flexibility. Each residency can be crafted to suit the artist and

support the missions of the sponsoring organizations. Recognizing that significant time and resources are needed to plan a successful residency, the foundation supports planning grants, such as Spaces Gallery needed to research up-and-coming young artists from South Africa and then travel there to interview and select Nandipha Mntambo for its residency.

We are justifiably proud of Creative Fusion's quantitative and qualitative first-year results, from the standpoint of both artistic engagement and community impact. As you'll see in this report, we've documented key results.

We thank Özen, Sevi, Serpil, and Nandi, who shared so much of themselves with us over our inaugural year and became dear friends.

Our gratitude also goes to the sponsoring organizations who worked so hard to give these artists a creative and intellectual home here and provide opportunities for rich encounters with our youth and the community. We also greatly appreciate the collaborative spirit and openness of the many other organizations that worked with our international artists to extend their reach and impact in our community and beyond.

There is Creative Fusion, on a worldwide level, happening in Cleveland, and we are being changed – for the better – as a result!

Kathleen A. Cerveny
Director, Evaluation and Institutional Learning



“Creative Fusion is a fantastic venue for melding creative expression, cultural interaction, and a firsthand awareness of a world bigger than the one we each live in.”

– Carol Lynn Mitchell, Artist

“I feel fortunate to have had the chance to glimpse into an outsider’s perspective and to explore the aspects of our culture that we might wish to ignore.”

– Faye Hargate, Actress

“Creative Fusion is building an amazing network within Cleveland. There are so many people doing great things here and this program pulls them together. Moving forward there will be more new connections the next time an artist comes here.”

– Sarah Beiderman, Manager, Spaces World Artist Program

“This was indeed a profoundly successful residency not only for the arts community but for the community at large. Just goes to show us that the arts can and do have enormous influence on the way we see the world.”



Creative Fusion



in residence



Sevi Bayraktar

is an accomplished dancer and teacher of the Roma (Gypsy) culture

COUNTRY: **TURKEY**

AGE: **28**

MEDIUM: **DANCE**

CREATIVE FUSION

RESIDENCY: **FEB-MAY 2010**

Sevi Bayraktar has traveled the world studying the Roma culture. She incorporates her knowledge of dance and theater with arts-based education methods focusing on at-risk youth.

Bayraktar earned an undergraduate degree in political science and international relations from Bogaziçi

University in Istanbul, Turkey, and received her certification in racism and discrimination education through the Romanian Government Department for Interethnic Relations. She is completing a master's degree in sociology at Bogaziçi University.

“The program gave me a broader perspective to think about the commonalities for oppressed communities. I saw how children in the African-American and Hispanic populations living in the U.S. identified themselves with other communities that are or have been oppressed through time.” – *Sevi Bayraktar*





Bayraktar was engaged by Young Audiences of Northeast Ohio for a three-month residency, with an emphasis on working with youth.

While in Cleveland, she led 81 workshops and performances at elementary, middle, and high schools throughout Greater Cleveland. More than half of her sessions were carried out at K-8 schools within the Cleveland Metropolitan School District as part of Young Audiences' Art is Education program.

"It's a different world that kids are growing up in now, and artists like Sevi can help them understand it," says Marsha Dobrzynski, executive director of Young Audiences. "Sevi is so charismatic, she was surrounded by kids as soon as she walked into a school, and would have an auditorium full of kids up and dancing. A natural teacher, she was able to help them understand what it means to be from Turkey."

For CMSD's All-City Dance Ensemble, Bayraktar taught 20 students a Roma dance and discussed its relevance to contemporary urban culture.

Tony Sias, director of arts education for CMSD, says, "It was exciting to see students make connections to cultures they knew. As they learned how the Gypsy people weren't accepted in many places, they immediately thought of the hip-hop culture."

One ensemble student concludes, "I learned that dance is a world that connects people... and that we are more similar than we are different."

Bayraktar spent a significant part of her residency in collaboration with MorrisonDance. She choreographed an ensemble piece and collaborated on a duet for MorrisonDance's show "Mysterious," performed at Cleveland Public Theatre. It was paired with a post-show gathering where Bayraktar and the company discussed their experiences together and entertained audience questions about Roma heritage and culture.

Sarah Morrison, director and choreographer of MorrisonDance, points out how the different movements and rhythm of Roma dancing were challenging for her professional dancers. "We felt like pioneers again, re-experiencing movement in a natural, organic form. Even though Sevi has left Cleveland, her work has been woven into the fabric of our community and will always be a part of who we are."

Morrison continues, "Sevi had the freedom to immerse herself completely in our arts community. She was able to bring many of us together through her work, giving us a chance to rekindle artistic relationships and forge new ones."

Bayraktar's other outreach efforts ranged from teaching a master class at Cleveland State University to performing at a local Israeli restaurant.

Dobrzynski adds, "Our staff benefited from a deeper understanding of the world view of art as a vehicle for communication. You could ask 13 different people Sevi touched while she was here, and you'd get 13 different stories about what they learned from the experience."





COUNTRY: SOUTH AFRICA

AGE: 28

MEDIUM: VISUAL ART

CREATIVE FUSION

RESIDENCY: JULY-NOV 2010

Nandipha Mntambo

is an award-winning, versatile
visual artist from South Africa

Nandipha Mntambo earned early critical acclaim as a sculptor, using natural elements – cowhide in particular – as a canvas for her artistic expression. She has developed a distinctive aesthetic through tanning and molding hides onto casts of the female body – usually her own – and placing them in ambiguous physical contexts. Her work is known for delving into issues of gender, mortality, and conflict, and frequently draws on bull mythology. Mntambo's work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions in numerous countries.

Born in Swaziland, Mntambo earned a master of fine arts with distinction from the University of Cape Town's Michaelis School. She migrated into the arts from an early interest in pathology and forensics, and studied taxidermy as a foundation for her sculpting.

During her Cleveland residency, Mntambo was named the Visual Art Winner in the 2011 Standard Bank Young Artist Awards in South Africa.





“There is not only one way to look at the world. I am trying to find new ways of speaking in the context of a complex globalized experience. I want to encourage a new language of art focused on the understanding that we are all connected.” –*Nandipha Mntambo*

Spaces Gallery has a long history of hosting emerging artists for short-term residencies through its Spaces World Artist Program. Creative Fusion allowed the organization to extend the length of a residency and to reach into a new part of the world.

“This opportunity marked our first foray into the African continent,” states Christopher Lynn, Spaces executive director. “Thanks to the generosity of the Cleveland Foundation, I was able to travel to South Africa to meet with artists and curators before selecting Nandi.”

Mntambo’s technical prowess and willingness to experiment with traditional and nontraditional material in gallery and museum settings distinguished her from a list of 20 qualified candidates, according to Sarah Beiderman, manager of SWAP. “Her creative process feeds the kind of experimentation we support.”

Within her own studio at Spaces, Mntambo created a body of work in painting, a new medium for her. On large canvases, she painted black-and-white images of bullfighters and bulls, inspired by photos from the Cleveland Public Library archives. The paintings were unveiled in a Spaces exhibition.

Creative Fusion enabled Mntambo to work in Cleveland for four months. “Because of the extended timeframe, the artistic and cultural exchange can be deeper,” says Beiderman. “It can also bring unexpected opportunities.”

Mntambo spent time at Zygote Press, where she tried her hand at etching. Liz Maugans, founder and managing director of Zygote Press, says, “At Zygote, Nandi networked not only with the people here, but also with the larger arts community.” She shed light on issues of apartheid, democracy, and art in South Africa.

Mntambo’s community engagements included a lecture for 30 students at Oberlin College, where she discussed various world cultures and their influence on her art. She also worked with 25 professors, administrators, and students at Cuyahoga Community College, where she participated in film shoots and was the subject of a special video production shown at her exhibition.

Meghana Karnik, an art history and political science major at Case Western Reserve University who was Mntambo’s assistant at Spaces, says, “Working with Nandi has given me the opportunity to see how a contemporary professional

artist of her caliber manages her career, her studio work, a relationship with a nonprofit like Spaces, and the politics of the art world. I certainly could not have learned as much through my coursework.”

Adds Beiderman, “Thanks to our experience with Nandi and Creative Fusion, we have expanded our international network into South Africa, and hope to leverage those connections to bring more of Africa’s astounding artists to Northeast Ohio.”





COUNTRY: TURKEY

AGE: 39

MEDIUM: PAPER MARBLING

CREATIVE FUSION

RESIDENCY: JUNE-AUG 2010

Serpil Sevgen Schmutz

is an experienced visual artist specializing in the ancient Turkish art of paper marbling

Serpil Sevgen Schmutz is more than an artist. She is also a psychological counselor and education planner for grades K-12. She resides in Istanbul, Turkey, and has worked for the Turkish Ministry of Education for 12 years.

She participated in the 2008-09 U.S. Department of State cultural exchange

program between Cleveland artists and the Turkish Ministry of Education, which brought the arts to hundreds of marginalized youth in one of Istanbul's poorest neighborhoods.

Sevgen earned a diploma in educational sciences from Ankara University in Turkey.



She was chosen for a Creative Fusion residency by Young Audiences of Northeast Ohio, and lived and worked here for three months.

A major part of her residency involved teaching for ArtWorks, Young Audiences' arts-based job-training program for high school students. At the two ArtWorks sites, Sevgen worked with 120 students each day for six weeks.

Sevgen taught students about Turkish lifestyle and customs while she discussed and demonstrated traditional Turkish paper marbling. The technique involves painting on water and transferring the design to paper or fabric.

"I witnessed teen visual arts apprentices creating beautiful pieces of art through this time-honored creative method," says artist and author JoAnn DePolo, a master teaching artist with ArtWorks. "At the same time, they discovered unique qualities about themselves and developed an appreciation for diversity. To engage teens in this type of learning is priceless."

Sevgen's innovative teaching approach greatly enriched the students' experiences, according to Young Audiences Executive Director Marsha Dobrzynski. "Serpil was able to solve the problems that arise anytime you deal with diverse kids in a group setting. Her presence and interaction supported them in ways that only a professional counselor could."

Sevgen also led public workshops and demonstrations at the Morgan Art of Papermaking Conservatory and Educational Foundation, Zygoté Press, and the studio of local artist Augusto Bordelois.

She spent about a week in Morgan's studio, working with resident artists to learn papermaking as well as teach marbling.

One of the aims of Creative Fusion is to stimulate new collaborative work between local and international artists. During her residency, Sevgen worked closely with Young Audiences visual artist Carol Lynn Mitchell and others to create and publish a children's picture book using the marbling technique on paper made at Morgan.

Mitchell, illustrator and project manager, says, "The outcome would not have been nearly as rich without what each of us brought to the project."

Another enduring aspect of Sevgen's residency is that several local artists have begun to incorporate Turkish art into their ongoing work, including Mitchell who is now creating a marbling workshop for general audiences.

In turn, Sevgen took some of what she called "My Cleveland" back to Turkey. She learned acrylic painting techniques and book design and construction methods, which she plans to share with her students.

Sevgen's residency had a significant personal impact on those who reached out to support her and her five-year-old daughter, who traveled with her. "Creating a close social network, finding childcare, donating living space, and more yielded a far deeper connection than we could have anticipated," says Dobrzynski. "Serpil put her whole heart and soul into this experience, and we benefited so much as a result."



"I am explaining to teachers in Turkey that 'art is education.' I am now working on a pilot after-school program to use visual arts to improve the math skills of first graders."

—Serpil Sevgen Schmutz





Özen Yula

is a daring, avant-garde
playwright and director

COUNTRY: TURKEY

AGE: 45

MEDIUM: THEATER

CREATIVE FUSION

RESIDENCY: FEB-OCT 2010

Özen Yula's plays have been translated into more than 10 languages and performed worldwide. His work is characterized as dark, comical, visually daring, and at the forefront of controversial issues of social justice and human rights.

Yula grew up in Eskisehir, Turkey, and lives primarily in Istanbul. He graduated with a degree in economics at Hacettepe University in Turkey and later earned his master's degree in drama from Ankara University.

He has received numerous awards for his works, including the first Savas Dincel Best Playwright Award 2010 in Turkey. His plays have been featured at many prestigious festivals, such as the Kontext: Europa Festival in Austria, the Toga Festival in Japan, and the Experimental Plays Festival in Egypt.

Just as he was arriving in Cleveland in February, his play, "Lick, Don't Swallow," was closed in Istanbul to protect the safety of the actors, after a fundamentalist Islamic newspaper declared it blasphemous.

"I write about the other side of society, about the people we don't care about, the people we don't really see – so we can see them. We have to know other people in order to know ourselves. It's stupid to try to know ourselves by only telling our own stories." – Özen Yula





Yula was chosen for the first Creative Fusion residency from a number of applicants from Turkey. His nine-month tenure, the longest in 2010, was divided between a 15-week, spring-semester residency at Cleveland State University and a five-month residency at Cleveland Public Theatre.

While at Cleveland State University, Yula worked closely with about 40 student actors, designers, musicians, and technicians as well as faculty and staff. He taught a dramatic arts class in “devised theater,” which involves creating a new theater piece based on already written texts.

With input from CSU dramatic arts majors, Yula wrote and staged the first of two full-length plays during his residency. “Codename: EXILE” explored the commonality and brutality of exile throughout different historical eras.

“For students to have the opportunity in their undergraduate experience to interact with an internationally acclaimed director and playwright is very rare. It also gave many their first exposure to the creative process of developing a new work,” says Dr. Michael Mauldin, associate professor and interim chair of the Department of Theatre and Dance at CSU.

Dramatic arts major Randy Muchowski, one of 22 students who made up the

cast and crew, says, “Özen always took time to help me and other young artists, encouraging us to find our own path. We learned how to communicate with someone who was not from America, but who was reaching out to us.”

For the broader Cleveland community, the staging of the play was a chance to experience international cutting-edge theater, says Mauldin. “It had a profound effect, aesthetically and emotionally, on audience members.”

At Cleveland Public Theatre, Yula worked with professional actors and staff on an original play and participated in community outreach efforts.

The centerpiece of the experience was the world premiere of “Don’t Call Me Fat.” The play has been characterized as an indictment of American consumption. “Özen’s play had great meaning and value to our community,” says Raymond Bobgan, executive artistic director of CPT. “And it was met with a wide range of reactions, although almost no one argued with the premise.

“In a very positive way, Özen challenged our actors and taught us a lot as an organization. It was an experience that will fundamentally change us going forward.”

Over an intensive three-week period, Yula worked with six high school students in the Cleveland Metropolitan

School District’s All-City Arts, an after-school and weekend college-readiness program. Yula guided the students in writing a one-act play.

Tony Sias, director of arts education for CMSD, says, “Özen triggered in students an understanding of the importance of research and detail in playwriting. These are critical thinking skills that help students create informed opinions and decisions.”

One student notes, “Özen made us think. He never gave us the answer to obvious questions, and he never wrote the play for us. It was a very powerful learning experience.” Another student says, “I will remember to never rely on stereotypes in writing as well as in life. All people and characters are three-dimensional.”

During his residency, Yula participated in the Theatre Communications Guild’s national conference. Because of his presence, the Dramatists Guild of America held a daylong symposium in September in Cleveland on censorship, where Yula was a lead speaker.

Bobgan adds, “Özen has given us a connectedness outside of our own community. We think we will see the true impact of this residency over the next five years, as our experience leads to other collaborations and a greater international awareness of Cleveland and its theater community.”

RESULTS

The heart of Creative Fusion is the dynamic interaction between our international artists in residence and members of our own community, including youth, arts professionals, and others.

Creative Fusion had a very successful first year, as measured by the significant numbers of Greater Clevelanders who were reached and influenced by our four visiting artists and their diverse arts and cultural programming.

More than

7,000

elementary and high school students engaged directly with an international artist through hands-on workshops, multiweek training programs, and lecture-demonstrations.

More than

100

college and university students met and worked with our artists to learn, discuss and share work, and produce new work.

More than

175

Cleveland professional artists – dancers, visual artists, and theater artists – collaborated with, learned from, and bonded with our international artists.

More than

1,000

members of the Cleveland community attended plays, dance performances, student showcases, and gallery exhibitions resulting from Creative Fusion residencies.

Countless artists and others in our community will continue to be touched by the “gifts” our visiting artists left us, including two original plays, a children’s book, the technique of Roma dancing, and paper marbling methods. These leave-behinds, as well as cultural teachings and insights, will continue to influence the work of artists and the perceptions of others in our community for many years to come.

Looking Ahead

As we celebrate our first year, we also are in various stages of planning with a number of organizations for the next round of Creative Fusion residencies. We anticipate a strong second year with exciting international artists who will bring us creative art forms and fresh cultural perspectives.

Our hope is to continue to grow this program. Indeed, we dream of the day when we can host a dozen international residencies and offer true exchange opportunities for Cleveland artists as well.

We encourage leaders of local organizations to consider partnering with us. You can sponsor or help host an international artist who will enhance the mission of your organization and enrich our community.



**To start a conversation,
please contact:**

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To learn more about **Creative Fusion** and the application process, please visit: www.ClevelandFoundation.org/CreativeFusion.html

To read stories about our 2010 Creative Fusion artists, please see our blog archives: <http://artsandcultureblog.ClevelandFoundation.org/>

To find out how you can contribute to help support future **Creative Fusion** partnerships, please contact Kathleen Cerveny.

“In any cultural exchange, as much as you learn about the other person, you end up learning more about yourself.”

– Raymond Bobgan, Executive Artistic Director, Cleveland Public Theatre

“This program will have a very significant impact in changing the way people in Cleveland view the world.”

– Marsha Dobrzynski, Executive Director, Young Audiences of Northeast Ohio

Our Partners

Creative Fusion is a partnership-based initiative and has enjoyed early success because of the wonderful organizations that have sponsored and helped host our international artists.

Sponsors

Cleveland Public Theatre

Cleveland State University

Spaces Gallery

Young Audiences of
Northeast Ohio

Participating Organizations

Cleveland Metropolitan School
District

Cleveland Neighborhood
Development Coalition

Council of International
Programs USA

Cuyahoga Community College

Dramatists Guild of America,
Ohio Chapter

Morgan Art of Papermaking
Conservatory and Educational
Foundation

MorrisonDance

Oberlin College

Zygote Press



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