

Artpark 2020



a journal



a season we never anticipated
but the season we all needed

The healing power of art

The arts heal. Art, in all of its forms, is understood by many to have that power—and that function—in the world. And we need that, especially now.

The arts represent an essential part of our quality of life: the emotional aspect of our individual and collective beings. And what is more important than that?

The 2020 season at Artpark affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and adapted on short notice for social distancing was a living experiment, a success in demonstrating the fact that the arts, and arts organizations in general, while constantly facing challenges, also present an incredible opportunity for healing with creativity and inspiration...even in the times of cultural and societal upheaval such as we are all experiencing.

The season included live orchestral music literally incorporating the sounds of nature and guided walks through the park to notice, experience and participate in art literally everywhere. It highlighted arts and cultural connections to nature and made space to honor indigenous people. It offered an artist and his collaborative team a residency; the rare-at-any-time chance to relax, breathe and create—which became even more treasured since surviving lockdown in New York City for months leading up to his trip to Lewiston. This season again took advantage of Artpark's vast parking lots to offer a huge canvas to a pair of local muralists and the community for artistic expression (and fun!)

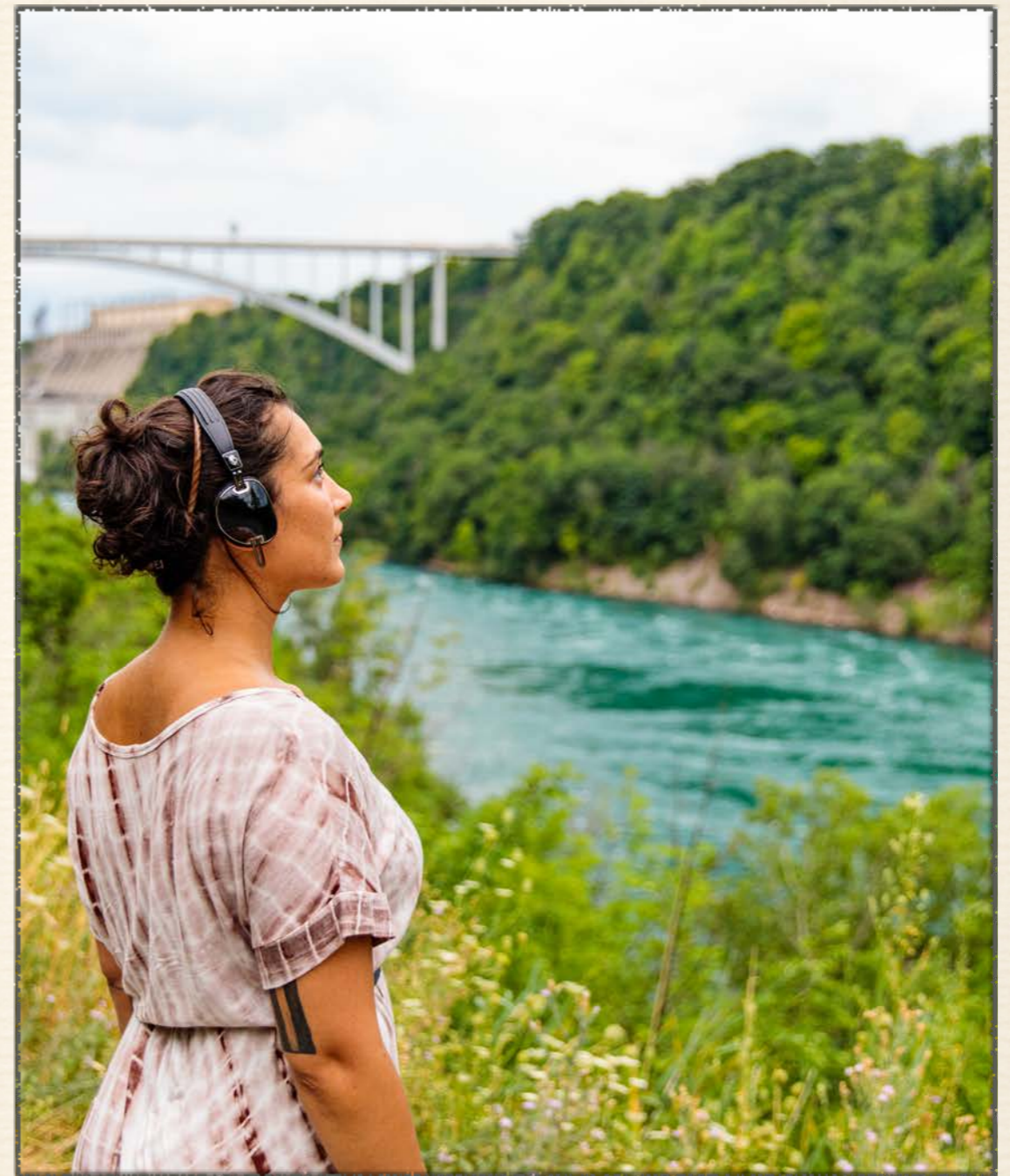


Putting the “park” in Artpark

In March 2020, Artpark was about to launch its characteristically ambitious and full season, including big-name, big-ticket popular music concerts, as well as its inclusive programs incorporating theater, additional music genres (classical, chamber, opera, jazz), nature, and community.

Facing the pandemic just at that time, the almost 50-year-old institution had to suddenly pivot and reconsider...everything. Unlike other venues that may simply exist as a building, Artpark’s strength and greatest resource is nature—it is actually a 150-acre park, and its stunning setting along the Niagara River and its gorge is both iconic and awe-inspiring.

The setting reminds us that nature is always here—it was there before we arrived, and will be there after we are gone. The river flowing, silently, powerfully and continuously, gives people a sense of grandeur and continuity. And when the pandemic hit, it became apparent that what Artpark had, and needed to rely on for many reasons, is just that—the continuity of nature, and its own healing powers.



Artpark's commitment to live arts

Artists, by definition and custom, imagine things out of nothing, and are continually confronting and surmounting —obstacles, and doing so in short periods of time. So this season could actually be seen as *status quo*, or even providing inspiration, since artists frequently respond to and are connected with what's going on around them.



The Art of Walking, a “moving meditation combining walking, stillness, listening and site-specific performance,” is a collaboration between artists Itsaso Iribarren and Germán de la Riva from Spain and New York-based theatre and visual artist Carin Jean White, performed by a cast of two— Cast Thoreau: Angela Lopez, Phil Wackerfuss and Cast Machado: Michael Wells, Alexia Buono, Stage Manager: Ally Hasselback



Rather than being observers, or audience members, attendees were active participants—in this case, exploring the nature, poetry and story of Artpark (while of course, adhering to social distancing guidelines during COVID-19). Indescribably beyond what we think of as a traditional walking tour, the Art of Walking inspired a sense of a calm, a feeling of being embraced.



“The Art of Walking allowed me to feel and experience the environment and elements around me, on trodden forest path, beside sacred ground, in backstage wings, within a spiral of sea rocks, along rushing water, until each of us created our walk with the wind sound of chimes. I found a feeling of relaxation and release that left me with a whole new attitude. Thank you for this unique experience.”

— Ed Smith, Buffalo, NY, participant in Art of Walking



“I cried at the resilience and creativity of humans, designing ways for us to engage with each other and the world safely and meaningfully...Something about being masked in the heat became consciousness shifting, like the heat from a sweat lodge, and the use of headphones caused us to focus deeply...we noticed our walking. And we noticed the leaves and the stones and the cracks in the walls. And we felt alive and a part of something, a part of community and a part of the earth.”

— Tamara Rettino, participant in Art of Walking



From Art of Walking script: “Being in this place connects me with what is near and far in time and space. We get connected with the ground ...with the space up to the ground...with those metal structures...with those wooden benches...with the green leafy trees...with the people who walk... with the streetlights...With the Niagara River running fast...with the force of the water...with the other shore...with another country...with other people... with other cultures...”

Carin Jean White, Itsaso Irribaren, German de la Riva



"During these challenging times, Art of Walking provided context and an entry point to experience the stunning landscape of Artpark. The experience made you aware of the small moments and exertion of energies it takes to travel, while reminding you we are all connected even while physically isolated."

— Dan Shanahan, Artistic Director/Founder, Torn Space Theater, participant, Art of Walking



photo by Nancy J. Parisi

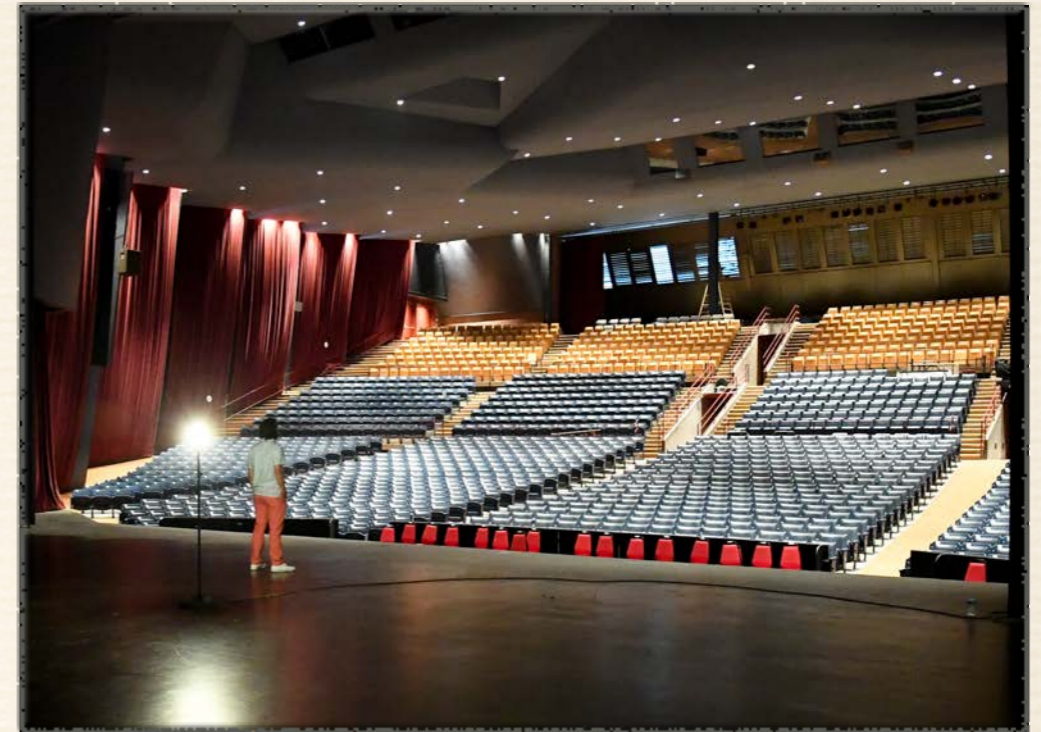


photo by Nancy J. Parisi

from the Artists' journal:

Art of Walking at Artpark

An international collaboration

Carin Jean White, Itsaso Iribaren, German de la Riva

After meeting Sonia Clark, the Executive Director of Artpark, at the 2019 Tárrega International Theater Fair, we began to talk about how to perform our spectacle *Urban Walk* at Artpark. The *Urban Walk* is a piece of art in which the participants take a walk with us and discover those special features that occur in the simple and human act of walking. We wanted to walk through Artpark and we did it. In November 2019 we visited that beautiful space of art and nature and began to devise a new project called the Art of Walking with new trails, new choreography and new sounds and texts which would grasp the essence of this location. In those days we met the American theatre director Carin Jean White and we glimpsed the possibility of carrying out an international collaboration between two Spanish artists and one North American.

We felt that it was possible. We wanted it to be possible. Some months later the pandemic situation occurred. It seemed like it was the end of the world but we kept trying. How to transport an idea and implement it in a different place without being physically there?

Madrid, April 15, 2020

Every time we end a conversation with Carin we feel full of energy. As we talk to her through the screen we hear a train pass by. Itsaso imagines the train is on a bridge over a street, like London trains. Germán imagines that Carin lives in the middle of an arid desert and the train is like one of those from the Far West. Each session we move forward effectively. We understand each other, we listen to each other, we can create together.

Madrid, May 26, 2020

Today we have done our first trial. The measures we took from Artpark in Google Maps are correct. The walk lasted an hour. Simulating the walk in our neighborhood makes us feel that we are there. We have been able to pass near the Burial Mound, we have danced in the Painted Parking Lot and performed an action in front of the Robert Smithson's mural. Sometimes we even hear the Niagara River.

New York, April 21, 2020

I just finished another successful meeting with Itsaso and Germán. We have our structure and path for this script. The themes of scale we are writing about also resonate as we work across the globe and through screens. As they sit in the frame of my tablet, I notice light comes from their right and coffee arrives from the left. My plans to visit Spain have evaporated, but it seems even in this strange context and through these small technological windows we can create.

New York, May 30, 2020

A flash of light blue floats and flutters past, loops around and returns to my side. I walk on a rocky dirt path and the blue butterfly follows me. I film my feet walking and listen to the sound of my steps. Spain is in lockdown, and while New York is as well, I'm allowed to go outside. Walking outdoors: we take such simple acts for granted. Walking with others is yet another, and for this reason I believe our walk will bring relief to people.



Madrid, June 1, 2020

We feel like we've done a YouTube tutorial. We have just uploaded some images for someone in Lewiston to build a sound system that only we know how it works. Short and concise phrases. Structuring each step with precision so that the receiver will be able to reproduce the device. This act is a technological work of art.

New York, June 8, 2020

Today is the first day of rehearsal. We all wear masks and stand ten feet away from each other. I walk our path with the actors, speaking softly. Our words have now been spoken in the place for which they were created. I wish I could bottle this moment up and send it to Itsaso and Germán. Through our script, the words we wrote, we are together in Artpark.

I dream that there is a thin silvery cord that stretches from here to there, connecting the three of us when we rehearse.

Madrid, June 27, 2020

We are nervous. It's 10pm and the show is going to start; 6,000 kilometers away, in another place and in another time. It is 4pm in Lewiston, 10pm in Madrid. Where are we? Our bodies are here, in our house, but our minds and souls are in Artpark with the actors, with the technician, with our loved Carin and Sonia. Ok, so right now they are starting to walk, now it is their first dance, now is the walk through the theater, now they are walking among the trees... We are there, we are here. Time and space are not what they used to be. Something has changed and it is magical.

New York, June 27, 2020

Butterflies in my stomach. It's minutes before the first performance. Tonight we will walk with around 20 people. It's late in Madrid, but I picture Itsaso and Germán awake sitting in their apartment. My emotions do not translate themselves into words. I stand with an open email draft on my phone until it is time for me to join the cast. I will speak with them tomorrow. Right now I must join the cast and audience.

Nurturing artists, helping them to heal

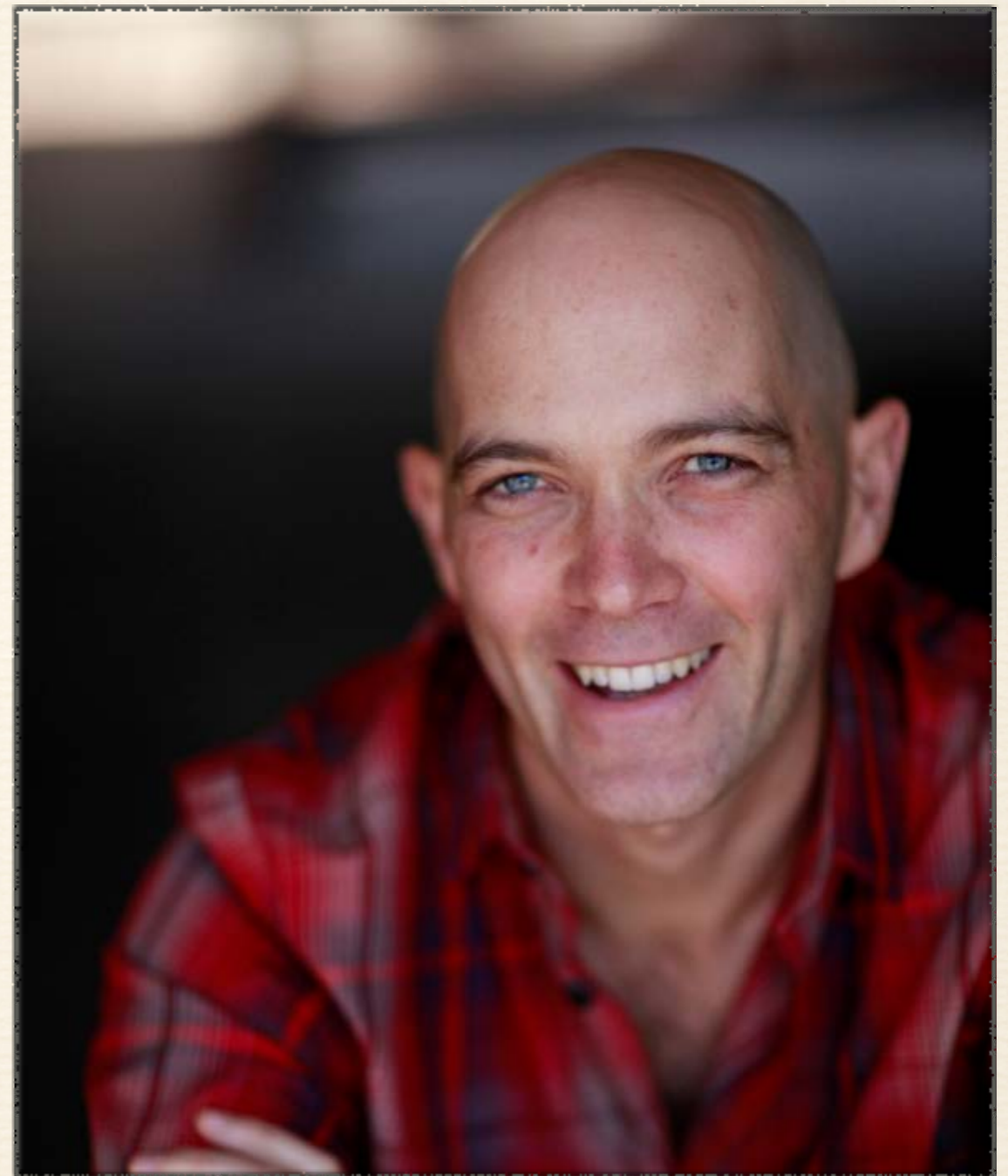
Artpark was founded in the mid-1970s by artists; in addition to their then-unusual determination to play up and play with combining art with and in nature, they made sure that within its DNA was actual support of artists.

In earlier decades, artists enjoyed working in studio spaces within the park's structures, where the public could immediately or eventually enjoy the fruits of their creativity. In 2020, this support came in the form of offering a residency to an artist from outside the area, where he could enjoy the space and respite in an idyllic setting to focus on his work.

In a “normal” residency the recipient generally spends some time in seclusion doing their creative practice. Then, there would be an element of engagement with the sponsoring organization's audience/ the public—frequently a talk and/or a performance.

The Artpark Artistic Director and the artist, in this case Taylor Mac, a multi-talented composer, playwright, performer and cultural historian, decided that Mac would still benefit from the time here, even if the public part was less certain. While he was here, Mac enjoyed being in nature, and was able to focus on a current project. One of his signature works is “A 24-Decade History of Popular Music,” a 24-hour interactive song cycle performance, during which he sings 246 songs, wearing 24 different costumes. The project he ended up working on while in Western New York during the summer of 2020 is tentatively titled “Queer Icons,” and will include original songs interpreting the ups and downs of history from a different perspective.

Mac fell under the spell of Artpark, noting during his stay that it “harkens to a time when people considered the arts important.” He shares Clarks belief that the arts “help us go deeper in to consideration, connect us to loved ones, and connect us with past,” in addition to “dreaming the culture forward.” The opportunity to come to a place dedicated to that, and set in nature, he says, was unique. The residency's conclusion was left open-ended, with both parties certain that it's beginning of fruitful, long-term relationship.



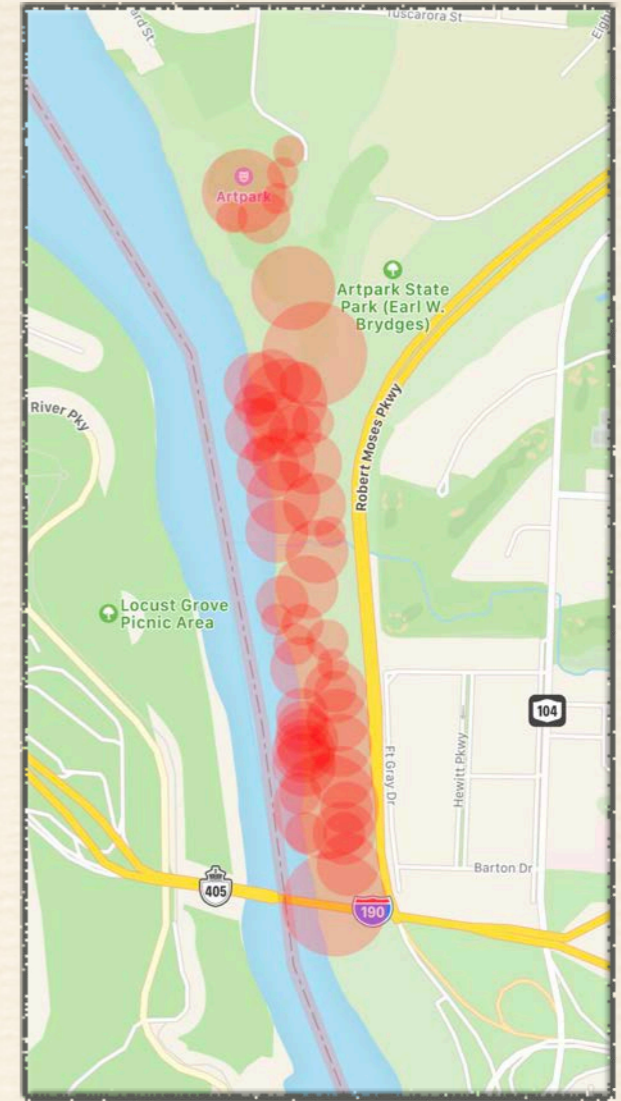
COVER THE WATER

by Holladay Brothers

Cover The Water is a new site-specific composition by acclaimed multimedia artists and composers **The Holladay Brothers**. Visitors can experience the work while at Artpark via **free mobile app** available now for download for Apple and Google Play/Android devices.

This Location-Aware composition came out of another artistic residency at Artpark during the pandemic. This time a remote one. The artists, having visited Artpark in 2019, have dedicated several weeks to developing this piece for Artpark remotely during the summer 2020. The result is an interactive sonic celebration of the beauty, topography and history of Artpark. The work utilizes GPS and other dynamic data from the user's mobile device to enable them to traverse a sonic work comprised of hundreds of musical motifs, field recordings and other nodes of sound that dovetail into one another. The piece evolves differently depending on the user's chosen speed, path and location in the park.

"While this is not the first in our series of Location-Aware compositions, it is the first since the Coronavirus outbreak. In jarring fashion, our use of shared space has been altered dramatically and so many of the activities that connect us have been put on hiatus. We're interested in the idea of using what may inevitably be a solitary pursuit and allowing the user to contribute from within the app to a larger tapestry. How can we create the feeling of humanity and connectedness within this new reality?" stated Ryan and Hays Holladay



Hays and Ryan Holladay create innovative music experiences that celebrate the act of discovery. With a shared background in composition and music production, their projects span a range of fields and disciplines and frequently invite user interaction, blurring the lines between performer and participant. From sound and video installations to mobile apps, their expansive body of work represents an intricate blend of art and technology that reimagines how we interact with and experience sound. The Holladay Brothers have garnered critical acclaim as sound pioneers and multi-dimensional storytellers.

Their first production, "The National Mall," a location-aware album mapped to the eponymous park in Washington, DC, was described by the *Washington Post* as "magical... like using GPS to navigate a dream" and was included in their list of the year's top albums (a first for an app). They've since gone on to create similar works for New York's Central Park, SXSW Interactive in Austin, TX, and other sites around the world, partnering with groups like IBM and the U.S. State Department in the process. As a Senior TED Fellow, Ryan spoke about the project at the annual TED Conference.

Listen to the birds sing

The engagement with the highly collaborative ensemble **Alarm Will Sound** came about as a result of the need for alternate content caused by the pandemic. Clark connected with Performance Spaces for the 21st Century (PS21), an arts organization located in the Berkshire Mountains of New York, with a similar venue and mission as Artpark. They collaborated on the idea of creating shared programming—and to apply jointly for funding to make it possible to bring the group to perform at both venues.

Alarm Will Sound, based in New York City, takes their approach beyond the music, frequently incorporating collaborations with other artists, in media including video, text, theater, and movement. It's all meant to “inspire new questions in listeners and encourage the search for new answers.” A perfect fit.

They proposed performing John Luther Adams’ “Ten Thousand Birds,” which he wrote for them. The composition requires the musicians and listeners to be spread out, and also incorporates nature: specifically birdsongs native to or migrating through the area where it’s performed, exploring the connections between nature and music. The fit for the venues, the times and the audiences seemed to be made to order. According to the composer’s directions, at times the music was so quiet that the listeners needed to mindfully search for the sounds.

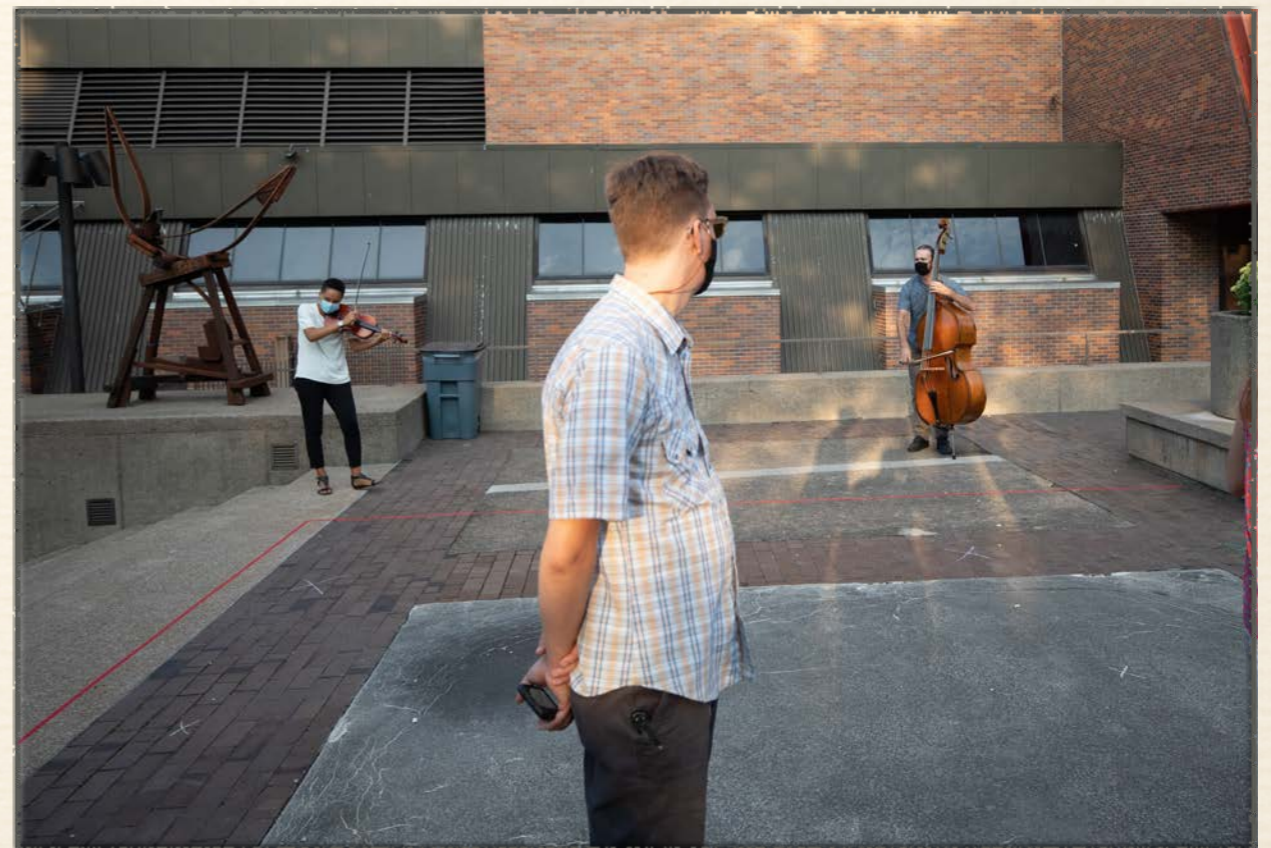


“One of my greatest hopes for my music is that it may be of use. So I'm thrilled that...**Alarm Will Sound**...found such a creative use for ‘Ten Thousand Birds.’ At this difficult moment, it's more important than ever for us to remember our connections with the larger-than-human world, and to celebrate the never-ending music of the miraculous planet that is our one and only home.” —John Luther Adams, composer

“A deeply profound experience.” John Smigielsky, an audience member, percussionist and Burchfield Penney Art Museum Public Programs Manager

“These are extraordinary, beautiful performances by the players of **Alarm Will Sound**. And a beautiful composition. Some of them really sound like birds and others are more interpretive. Some of the music feels fun and some feels really tender and touching. They embody a lot of the longing that we're feeling and the people who are missing from our lives during this time.”—Paul Melnikow, ensemble member.

ALARM WILL SOUND ENSEMBLE at Artpark: John Romeri, flute; Hayley Grainger, flute; Christa Robinson, oboe; Marianne Gythfeldt, clarinet; Elisabeth Stimpert, clarinets; Michael Harley, bassoon; Laura Weiner, horn; Tim Leopold, trumpet; Hakeem Bilal, trombone; Jeffrey Irving, percussion; Eric Poland, percussion; Matt Smallcomb, percussion; John Orfe, piano, keyboards; Courtney Orlando, violin; Chris Otto, violin; Dana Kelley, viola; Jay Campbell, cello; Logan Coale, bass; Alan Pierson, conductor and Artistic Director





The comfort of the familiar, the challenge of the new

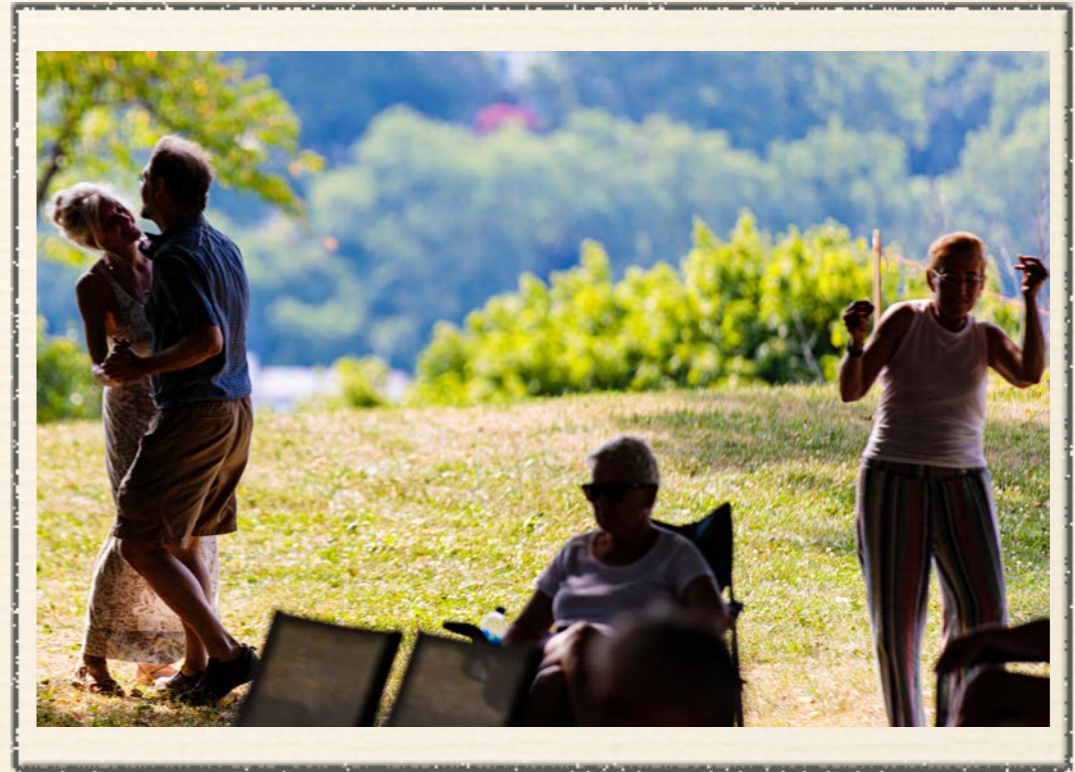
Artpark's annual events, such as **Music in the Woods** and the **Fairy House Festival** were reimagined, with the organization striving to provide continuity of its own.

Music In the Woods took on a special significance for both the musicians and the performers within the peaceful yet invigorating surroundings, as it provided another way to safely come together around a shared love of nature and music.

While continually adjusting to the guidelines for both audience and musician safety, second performances were added for groups including **Svetlana & The New York Collective**, the **UB Faculty Jazz Quartet** and the **Buffalo Jazz Composers Workshop**, to accommodate the demand from Artpark's audiences.

COVID-19 travel restrictions have presented a special challenge to the artists causing last minute changes to the program and ensembles. The special **Baroque Dreams** concert was envisioned as a program combining new visions for the Baroque music through both performance, designs and the musical arrangements. One of the costumes by a Tbilisi, Georgia-based artist Uta Bekaia was brought in from his collection "Baroque, new vision". A World premiere of an arrangement of JS Bach-Vivaldi's *Italian Concerto* was composed and presented by NY-based pianist Sergei Dreznin with a Buffalo-based ensemble led by Moshe Shulman. The concert was originally to be led by a Virginia-based counter tenor, Eric Jurenas. In several-days notice only, due to imposed travel restrictions the role of the countertenor was replaced with a dancer Phil Wackerfuss and the Buffalo-Based soprano Colleen Marcello Brecker. The site of the concert was set originally at Artpark Emerald Grove, but due to rain prognosis, the entire production was moved to a unique setting of the back of Artpark MainStage Theater where the musicians were placed under an awning behind the last row of the theater and the audience were invited to take socially-distanced seats on the Lawn. This configuration was completely unique to Artpark's almost 50-year history, but has proved to fit the spirit of the times and accommodate the music, making for an unforgettable, unique event.





Artpark Music in the Woods season 2020:

Svetlana & The New York Collective: Svetlana (vocals), Noah Jackson (bass), Henry Conerway III (drums), Harry Graser (piano)

UB Faculty Jazz Quartet: Bobby Militello (sax and flute), George Caldwell (piano), Sabu Adeyola (bass), John Bacon (drums), Alex McArthur (guest vocalist)

Buffalo Jazz Composers Workshop: Sara Rogers (vocals & percussion), Tim Clarke (trumpet), Nelson Rivera (saxophone), Ken Kuriscak (saxophone), Alec Dube (vibraphone), Jared Tinkham (guitar), Joe Goehle (bass), John Bacon (drums)

Drum Circles by **Stephen Bell**



Baroque Dreams program featured an eight-piece ensemble with special guest pianist **Sergei Dreznin**, soprano **Colleen Marcello Brecker**, dancer **Phil Wackerfuss** and a costume by artist **Uta Bekaia**. The Ensemble under the Music Direction of **Moshe Shulman** included: **Miranda Shulman** – Violin; **Antoine Lefebvre** – Violin; **Diana Sachs** - Violin; **Inga Yanoski** – Violin; **Moshe Shulman** – Viola; **Jonathan Golove** – Cello; and **James Marone** - Double Bass

Creating magic from across the ocean

The ever-popular Fairy House Festival became even more wondrous, in its tenth incarnation.

With attendance limited to 50 at a time, the event quickly was filled to capacity. Modifications included contact-free activities and a tour of both artist- and community-created fairy houses, winding through the Artpark woods. “Artpark Fairies,” roaming performers dressed in newly-commissioned by Artpark whimsical and highly innovative costumes by Tbilisi, Georgia-based **Uta Bekaia**, who has been part of the festival since 2016.

Roaming musicians added to the magical feel that pervaded the grove, both relieving and inspiring people of all ages.

Due to international travel lockdown, the costumes, originally planned to be created on site, had to be made entirely in Tbilisi, Georgia, shipped and adjusted on site by an specially hired wardrobe master and face painter, Alena Gomberg, who also made custom masks for the performers. Musicians traveling from Brooklyn and Catskills tested and quarantined on Artpark ED’s home lawn for two weeks in order to take part in the performance. The dressing process to accommodate social distancing and professional hygiene requirements took over 5 hours and 10 individualized makeup kits.

Featured visual artists who created the fairy houses included: Miggie Wong, Jeremy Grzybowski, Rachel Grzybowski, Robin Gabriella Damiano, Catie and Alexandria Dillemoth, George White and Marleen Stamp, WJ Hurley, Charity Huff, Tammy ODierno, Alexandra Lee, Casey Mark Shultz, Meredith and Samantha Phelps, Rylee Luczak, Candace and Leela Masters, Ani Hoover, Shasti O’Leary Soudant, Jesse Walp, Bethany Krull, Suzie Molnar Goad, Juniper Moon, Hilary McAndrew, Leeane Catanzaro-Banes and Leah Banes, Stephanie Kowalski, Megan Tenney, Andrew Palinski, and *Color Constellation* by Virginia Melnyk Designs









Native American Peace Garden:
a reflection space for healing, celebrating and tranquility

A permanent place to honor the land, its history, and its people

The planning for Artpark's second annual Strawberry Moon Festival, with a full day of family- and community-oriented music, dancing, storytelling and other activities, had been in the works when everything changed. With intention it was decided to proceed with a minimized plan: the creation of a garden and meditation/storytelling space on the grounds, collaboratively created by members of regional Indigenous people, both in the U.S. and from Canada.

Led remotely by **Michele-Elise Burnett** of **Kakekalanicks Consultancy** and implemented collaboratively by people from the **Tuscarora Iroquois reservation**, including **Bryan Printup, Violet Printup, Rene Rickard,** and **Vince Schiffert**, the final result was designed in the shape of a sacred turtle. Its official name is “**Native American Peace Garden: a reflection space for healing, celebrating and tranquility.**”

It's beautiful, peaceful and intimate, meant for sharing or contemplation; its location and design organically offering healing, connection and history. It reminds us that Indigenous nations have been here for thousands of years, surviving, meeting challenges, and thriving in all kinds of circumstances.







Photo by K&D Action Photo & Aerial Imaging

It's a parking lot! It's a mural! It's...a parking-lot mural!

The artist team calling itself the **Solo Roths** made up of Niagara Falls-based **Rob Lynch** and Buffalo-based **Matt SaGurney** won the commission to paint one of their signature vibrant murals, with Artpark's lower 400 foot by 400 foot parking lot as their canvas.

Engagement with underserved segments was built in to the plan for the design. Lynch and SaGurney worked with the Artpark Bridges team, which includes representatives and participants from **People Inc.**, a leading non-profit human services agency in the Buffalo/Rochester region, and the **Parkinson's Community**, led by Cynthia Pegado, who is also director of the Bridges team, to generate concepts and imagery for the mural.

Pegado and the group came up with a vision statement for their participation: "Artpark Bridges artists will generously and courageously extend their intrepid spirit through the outward-reaching collaborative art venture of creating a mural on the giant canvas..." and worked however they could, via Zoom or phone.

One of the Artpark Bridges Parkinson's Community artists wrote: "In our virtual workshops as we design ideas for the mural, I feel inspired by our discussions about creating different pathways and tracings of people's ambulation patterns: skipping, leaping, shuffling footsteps, rolling patterns of wheelchair tracks...It made me think about the importance of making and finding safe-crossings."

The result, titled "**The Solo Roths Waltz Across the Red Hot Colossus Lot**," includes a nod to dancing, which Pegado and the active Parkinson's Community emphasize. Lynch and SaGurney's painting and compositional style has improvisational elements, and has been compared to jazz music in its liveliness and humor.

"The whole thing...the paint, the Toro, the volunteers, the Covid sign-in sheets, the Tennis, the beautiful Artpark Campus, the rain...all here to help preserve our memories"

—Rob Lynch Solo Roths





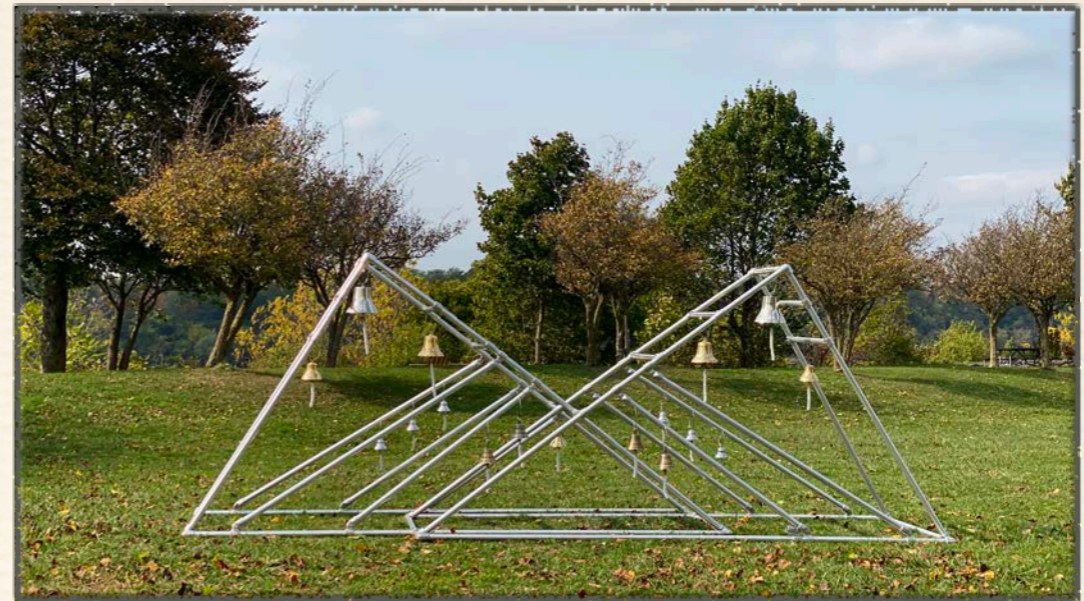
Bell Towers by William Close

This interactive sound sculpture is a celebration of bells and sonic communication. One bell rings and another responds. Multiple people playing simple bell patterns can work together to create bell music.

The piece is also inspired by two intersecting mountains, architecture, landscape and sailboats. All the bells on the sculpture are of a style actually created for boats. In the past boats would have these bells mounted on deck where they could be rung to communicate with other boats. In the fog or at night they would ring out to let others know their position.

William Close has been creating new instruments for over 20 years and has invented over 100 new instruments and new musical designs. He conceptualizes, designs and builds these musical inventions. In most cases he plays the inventions, though William often has other talented musicians play and perform with the instruments as they and often find new ways and styles of creating music with the new instruments! He has performed all over the world with his musical inventions inventions, including two popular engagements at Artpark with his Earth Harp Collective.

This installation is made possible with funding by Mary E. Knotts.



Play/Ground Festival at Artpark

PLAY/GROUND is a platform for site-specific installations by contemporary artists. The focus is on experimental, immersive, and ambitious projects that will engage and excite all visitors. In 2020, PLAY/GROUND will consist of public outdoor installations throughout Buffalo and the region including Artpark, Burchfield Penney Art Center, Explore and More Children's Museum, Hotel Henry, Larkinville, UB Anderson Gallery and more.

Residuals by Allen & Aster Topolski

created by father-daughter collaborators Allen and Aster Topolski, forms an intersection of the artists' own work with that of the notable artists who participated in the Artpark Residency program. Positioned on the former foundations of the Artpark Residency's cottage living quarters, the Topolskis conjure up the ghosts of the illustrious program's past in an architectural installation that echoes the work once dreamed up and created at the site. Past and present meet with a stunning view of the Niagara Gorge



Mountains by Kyle Kegler

Mountains is a live-directed performance by Kyla Kegler in the Artpark Amphitheater that uses big-head puppets (people wearing full-head masks), music, and cardboard scenery. The public is invited to participate in the performance as a member of the socially-distanced big-head-masked movement-choir. The not always linear narrative draws on current events and archetypal relationships to utopia and the apocalypse, struggle and triumph, and big feelings. Conceived by Kyla Kegler, performed by Avey Alexandres, Griffin Brady, Dorothea Braemner, Lindsey Griffin, Jadion Jones, Kristen Kelley, Addison Laczkowski, Thomas Swaggard, Jean Zhu





Photo: K&D Action Photo & Aerial Imaging / wnypapers.com

Artpark Drive-In Movies



over the course of the summer Artpark presented 20 movies to over 8,000 people ranging from rock documentaries to family films

Mindful inclusion and diversity, with attention to individual interests

Looking to the future, Artpark's live arts programming will follow the model built this summer, including expanding on the idea of walking in the park—blending art and walking, with an emphasis on different ways for people to engage, according to their interests. Because there are a variety of “performance” spaces, some traditional, and other not so much, the definition of what a “stage” is can be redefined to be an environment, a setting, the woods, a parking lot...or the entire park.

Artpark, serving **Erie and Niagara Counties and Southern Ontario**, and with a broad appeal to families, artists, music and theatre fans, nature-lovers, the culture-curious and cultural tourists, has a deep desire to be even more inclusive, modeling for our society and other organizations to be inclusive of all the parts of one's community—making an effort to first see them, and second, include them.

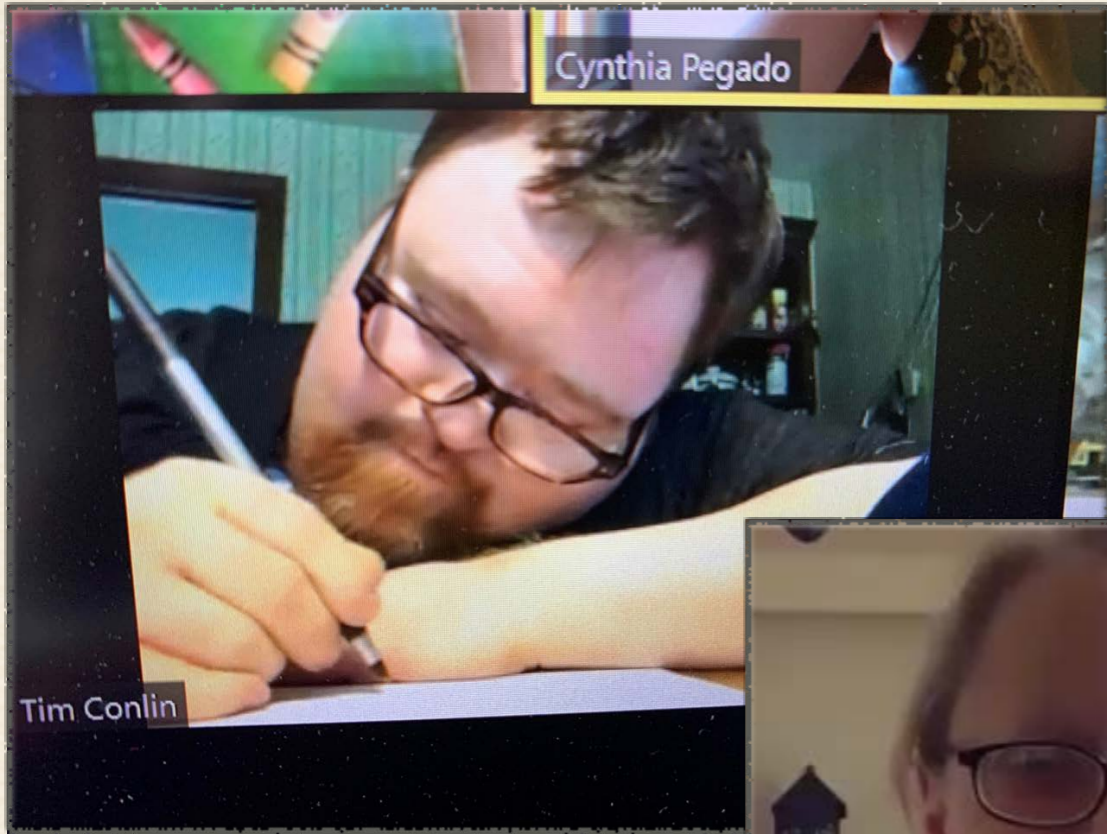


Organizations that are truly in touch with their communities make connections. They acknowledge and celebrate all that power, especially the Native American communities, the service persons and the people with disabilities.

Artpark Bridges focused on safely opening creativity and collaboration in a time of isolation

Four WNY agencies and community groups: People Inc. Arts Experience, Artisan's Edge, Empower and Parkinson's Community focused on safely creating and collaboration in a time of isolation. Zoom classes transcended the boundaries of quarantine and embodied artistic expression, while in-person activities, for those who were able to visit, explored "my Artpark" moments. The use of dance, music, and nature as a healer, the development of a vocabulary of visual motifs and authentic expression, these interactive opportunities allowed our participants to engage with Artpark, even from afar. "In our virtual workshops as we design ideas for the mural, I feel inspired by discussion about creating different pathways and tracings of people's ambulation patterns, skipping leaping, shuffling footsteps, rolling patterns of wheelchair tracks... It made me think about the importance of making and finding safe-crossings."





Finding a sustainable way forward

This season proved again to Artpark and its administration and board that it is a powerful and useful arts organization. It is vibrant and beneficial, creative and artistic.

It can inspire the production of a variety of types of new works: in small scale or in a landscape, with or without large crowds. And it can inspire visitors, audiences, and community simply by its presence; by preserving and presenting the gift of the arts and nature in mindful combination.

The fact that the 2020 season broke so many boundaries opened the floodgates for programming ideas, from large-scale spectacles with elaborate costumes, to intimate, one-on-one experiences with none.

The challenge, as with all arts organizations, is not *what* do to. Of course, the challenge, after the abrupt about-face and major income losses, is making it work financially, sustainably. Creative community and funder engagement are necessary. Now is the time for forward-thinking foundations and funders to realize the benefits of collaboration, of making projects and experiences that can be enjoyed and used across larger geographic areas, across populations.

From Buffalo and Rochester to Lewiston and Niagara Falls, from the residential care home to the reservation, it's time to share and maximize the resources that we have.

This is an invitation to think together, to gather our resilience and commitment to feeding the soul through art and nature.

This is beyond worthwhile. It is essential.



written for Artpark by Jana Eisenberg
photography by Jordan Oscar (unless indicated)

acknowledgements

This journal is dedicated to the staff at Artpark who could have simply cancelled all of our events, and rolled up the awnings, lawn chairs and trails, like some were forced to do. But we sensed the need to carry on, to reimagine ways to engage the community, to inspire artists, and to create that healing safely, with respect and concern for nature, people and society.

The “small” team that have accomplished an extraordinary season is worth a special mention here: the Artistic and Executive leader **Sonia Kozlova Clark**; her right hand covering far more than his job title suggests, Marketing and Sales Director, **David Wedekindt**; the ever-ready, willing and knowledgeable about all things Artpark, Business Manager **Katie Miller**; **Susan Stimson**, Artpark’s production manager, inventive problem solver and “mother” of all young stage managers; the ever-resourceful, soulful and imaginative **Tanis Winslow** and her “Adventure Crew” of part-time art installers attending to Artpark’s collection of public art collection; the new to the team **Anjuli Vecchies** technically in charge of box office but able to step in as a producer of any event and Development Associate **Michael Riccio** doubling his grant writing and fundraising support duties as graphic designer, diplomat and record keeper; **Sara Dolan**, the ever-ready concessions operations manager; **David Hobba**, the facilities manager keeping watch on our safety, accommodations and equipment; **Francine Delmonte**; volunteer coordinator corralling, supporting and attracting a substantial force of dedicated volunteers often serving as Artpark’s lead ambassadors, kept the organization not only running, but caring and inspiring, **Cynthia Pegado**, the always inspired and poetic former ballerina and now Director of Artpark Bridges.

Many of the creative programming ideas came from this team this season and we could not imagine Artpark without any of them.

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