

**TITLE**

Art, Technology, Community: Local and Global Connections

**PARTICIPATING DISCIPLINES**

From the College of Arts + Architecture:  
Department of Art & Art History (studio arts & design);  
Department of Music (music performance);  
Department of Dance (choreography & performance);  
School of Architecture (design computation);  
Department of Theatre (physical theatre)

**AREA LEADERS**

Maja Godlewska, Associate Professor of Painting, Department of Art & Art History  
Erik Waterkotte, Associate Professor of Print Media, Department of Art & Art History  
Jessica Lindsey, Associate Professor of Clarinet, Department of Music

**TARGET CATEGORY**

Areas of Future Opportunity and Investment

**KEYWORDS**

Interdisciplinary, Collaboration, Inclusion, Outreach, Advancement

**AREA COLLABORATORS**

*Submission represents a contingent of faculty across the COA+A who actively engage in collaborative, interdisciplinary projects/performances that utilize technology as a means to further inclusivity and interactivity for successful community engagements at the local and international levels. Activities involve additional partnerships with UNCC faculty, faculty from peer institutions, community members, as well as local and international institutions.*

Aspen Hochhalter, Associate Professor, Department of Art & Art History  
Andrew Leventis, Assistant Professor, Department of Art & Art History  
Thomas Schmidt, Associate Professor, Department of Art & Art History  
Gretchen Alterowitz, Associate Professor, Department of Dance  
EE Balcos, Associate Professor, Department of Dance  
Bobby Campbell, Associate Professor, Department of Art & Art History  
Carlos Alexis Cruz, Associate Professor, Department of Theatre  
Jefferson Ellinger, Associate Professor, School of Architecture  
Heather Freeman, Professor, Department of Art & Art History  
Mira Frisch, Professor, Department of Music  
Kim Jones, Associate Professor, Department of Dance  
Jeff Murphy, Associate Professor, Department of Art & Art History  
Marek Ranis, Associate Professor, Department of Art & Art History

## Executive Summary

Our area represents a contingent of faculty across the COA+A who are leading the way in collaborative, interdisciplinary, arts research and pedagogy that align strongly with University, regional, and national priorities. As defined by COA+A's vision, "the five themes that help define our degree programs, collaborations, scholarship, external funding, and engagement strategies are 1) arts education, 2) environmental engagement, 3) global education and practices, 4) innovation, and 5) technology." As seen in our evidence of strength summary and supporting documentation, our area faculty actively create "meaningful collaborations among university, business, and community leaders to address issues and opportunities of the region," as stated in the University's Mission Statement to Achieve Leadership Position in Higher Education.

Through our research and activity integrating arts-based creativity/production with technology, our area is able to generate successful, relevant, inclusive, collaborative projects, performances, and programs, creating, "opportunities for experiential education to enhance students' personal and professional growth." At the core of these collaborations, we seek to activate the arts for Charlotte's diverse cultural landscape by creating global and local experiences for community members, students, and professionals.

The individual performing artists and practitioners in our group have 1) exemplified excellence in collaborative research, 2) utilized technologies to reexamine predominant trends of art-making, 3) applied technologies to expand community partnerships internationally, nationally, and locally, and 4) increased accessibility of underserved communities to the visual and performing arts. Our local to global outreach involves partnerships with COA+A faculty peers, community members, and local organizations--we are actively involved in numerous Charlotte institutions such as The Charlotte Symphony, Central Piedmont Community College, CMS, Novant Health, Project Harmony, Goodyear Arts, the Spartanburg Museum of Art, Opera Carolina, Bechtler Museum, ArchCo Residential, McColl Center, and The Light Factory. In recent years, we have visited, presented, performed, and exhibited in numerous institutions across the globe including in the UK, South Korea, Belgium, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Norway, Poland, Iceland, Malaysia, Russia, Mauritius and China. We have established sustained collaborations on the local, national, and international levels, such as Associate Professor Lindsey's work with Charlotte's Project Harmony, Associate Professor Ranis' Curator at Large position with the Anchorage Museum, the Interdisciplinary Rome study abroad program, and the Department of Art & Art History's cooperation and exchange agreement with the Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art, Poland.

With a recognition of this proposal we will further expand our connections to include more UNC Charlotte faculty and students; seek to build reciprocal relationships with international communities and Charlotte; and further collaborative scholarship between our disciplines and institutional partnerships. These initiatives will directly support the COA+A interdisciplinary *MFA in Community Centered Practices* that is currently in development.

## **Evidence of Strength and Excellence**

We are a dynamic, collaborative network of creatives-educators, with expertise in a variety of disciplines, including visual and performing arts, design and architecture. Accomplished as individual artist-researchers (as evidenced by the number and caliber of exhibitions, performances, conference presentations, publications, artist-in residence programs, awards and fellowships, found in our CV's) we partner within units of the CoA+A and across the University community. We generate collaborative, interdisciplinary projects in the Charlotte area and beyond, working directly with communities and individuals. We co-teach and co-lead student projects based in greater Charlotte and abroad. Our achievements and strengths are as much individual as collective. Our achievements show clear potential for future investment. Our activities are ambitious despite often limited resources for the arts. We believe that with arts-based learning, technology is a tool for accessibility and innovation, and that when combined with collaborative ingenuity, can be a vehicle for driving social change.

Collectively our group has received more than 40 University grants, including \$164,000 in 23 Faculty Research Grants, \$34,300 in 9 Chancellor Diversity Grants and \$13,130 in 5 Digital Arts Center Grants. Collectively our group has received over 10 regional grants from the Arts & Science Council and North Carolina State Arts Council, totaling over \$60,000. Collectively our group has received more than 6 national grants including prestigious awards from the National Endowment for the Arts and Knight Foundation. Other funding includes various stipends, production and travel grants from state, national and international public and private entities, including museums, state galleries, artist in residence programs and institutions of higher education. Collaboration is embedded in our area; our faculty partners' synergies are manifold, a system of dynamic cross-pollination. Our research and teaching generate meaningful collaborations among university, business, and community leaders that come together in local, regional, national, and international spaces:

- Godlewska and Waterkotte's (AAH) co-taught Mixed-Media class merging student experience, community engagement and regional business partnerships working with ArchCo Residential to create a site-specific mural, funded at over \$30,000.
- Kim Jones (Dance), founder of *Movement Migration* conducted monthly professional dance classes at CMS, supported by Wells Fargo Education Outreach Grant
- Aspen Hochhalter (AAH) established an official UNC Charlotte / Light Factory Internship providing Photography BFA students a unique immersion into the professional field.
- CarlosAlexis Cruz (Theatre) led an initiative for community engagement through the arts with the development and deployment of MAX (Mobile Arts and community eXperience), a traveling stage suited for outdoor performances and workshops.
- Multiple faculty continue to engage with the McColl Center for Art+Innovation, in the form of co-teaching courses with the Center's Artist in Residence, engagement in fundraising, workshops, and public lectures.

Our areas' faculty collaborations have developed innovative co-taught and interdisciplinary curriculum:

- Jessica Lindsey (Music) and Gretchen Alterowitz (Dance) have embarked upon unique endeavors in collaborative teaching artistry, involving electroacoustic composition, choreography, and students from dance and music performing together on stage.
- Eight of the A&AH faculty included in this proposal developed a new studio-wide, interdisciplinary, co-taught Senior Thesis capstone course for BFA majors.

Community outreach represents a key facet of our teaching and service:

- Bobby Campbell (AAH) developed the Graphic Design program capstone course into a community engagement experience, wherein students use design to address an identified community need.
- Freeman and Schmidt (AAH), with makers across Charlotte, form the group Charlotte MEDI, employing design and digital fabrication to produce face shields and cloth masks for medical workers during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Jessica Lindsey (Music) teaches with Project Harmony (a partnership with the Charlotte Symphony) to provide free music instruction to students in Charlotte.

Global partnerships and events:

- Godlewska and Ranis (AAH) established a partnership with the E. Geppert Academy of Art and Design, Wroclaw, Poland leading to exhibition exchanges and student exchanges with plans for faculty teaching exchanges in the future.
- Aspen Hochhalter (AAH) serves as the lead organizer of the Interdisciplinary Rome summer study abroad program, projecting 30+ students from across campus for the 2022 iteration.
- Schmidt (AAH) is the co-founder of design team Recycled China, whose work uses industrial waste within China to create architectural tiles and sculptural objects.

As faculty within the UNC System's Urban Research Institute, we are situated in a unique position to facilitate educational opportunities for our students through Charlotte's nationally recognized professional arts organizations. With future investment, faculty would strengthen connections between local, diverse, and emerging grassroots arts-organizations and our students like the Dept of A&AH recently established partnership with Goodyear Arts involving senior students and alumni. Further opportunities could be facilitated through a physical arts studio space in Uptown Charlotte. This space could serve as an exploratory incubator for student and faculty research, exhibitions, performances and an array of community engagement opportunities. In addition, with more resources the MAX mobile theater could serve as a model for other mobile art, performance, exhibition, technology, or maker space studios that could be utilized across the Charlotte region for community events.

Our collective faculty activity includes working within established networks from the local to the global. Our area faculty have incredible potential to expand our international academic partnerships within Europe, Asia, and Africa. Our current and projected future connections have the potential to enrich the education and research of students and faculty alike, serving as meaningful recruitment opportunities and fortifying local and regional community engagement. Investment in our area will make UNC-Charlotte a leading institution in community engagement, supporting the local landscape, networking the national terrain, and engaging with the world. As evidenced by area faculty led activities like the 2019 A&AH student trip to Senegal. Led by faculty Marek Ranis, A&AH, students engaged directly with the African Diaspora Festival on the Gorée Island. Gorée Island is a UNESCO World Heritage of profound significance, serving "as a reminder of human exploitation and as a sanctuary for reconciliation." The African Diaspora Festival is a unique, site-specific, immersive, art experience, involving artists from around the world. Thoughtful, poignant, arts-based exchange activities like this create a resounding impact by providing a multi-dimensional, empirical experience of the historic and global connections of our local social issues and the international efforts being taken for social justice and reconciliation.

## **Alignment with Regional and National Priorities**

Our area is positioned to uniquely address strategy U/21<sup>1</sup> of the Charlotte City Task Force Response, Community Strategies for Economic Mobility, per UNC Charlotte's "commitment to addressing the cultural, economic, educational, environmental, health, and social needs of the greater Charlotte region." While local, this task force represents pervasive social issues nation-wide. As artists, our area's expertise is in social capital. Through our research we engage in generating cultural works that grow and foster social capital. We understand that social capital cannot be determined but must be invoked by the community through sustained practice and engagement. Our area understands that upward mobility is about accessibility and empowerment and can only be generated by agency if it is to "help shift a young person's vague hopes to active aspirations." Our collaborative network constitutes creative makers who are "on the ground," and work directly with communities and individuals, facilitating change through the production of cultural programming, performances, workshops, murals, and festivals. Our area is vital to effectively engaging our local community and key to defining and directing the COA+A interdisciplinary MFA in Community Centered Practices that is currently in development. We see our area as a facility for art-based, social engagement, creating with communities across Charlotte and throughout the world.

Our research and expertise in art, technology, and collaboration represent a model for successful community engagement on a national level, like those cited by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Science Foundation. The art activities our area generates actively explore "the interaction of humans, society, and technology," and can "help shape the future of work to increase opportunities for workers and productivity for the American economy," as described by the NSF's "Big Ideas, Future of Work at the Human-Technology Frontier." Leading Higher Ed organizations like the Alliance for the Arts in Research Universities (a2ru) champion "the role of the arts and design in research universities," advocating for the kind of diverse, collaborative practices, events, and venues our area has exhibited, performed, and engaged in. Major R1 institutions like UGA, UNC-Chapel Hill, and UT-Knoxville are a part of a2ru, and support the kind of exploratory, experimental, engagements and social practices our area thrives in. With UNC Charlotte aspiring to R1 status it should follow a2ru and be "committed to supporting the growing body of high-quality scholarly and creative production most attainable when disciplines are free to experiment within and across their boundaries."

Our area's international activities are closely aligned with the mission of bodies like the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) and the Fulbright Scholarship Program that work, "to improve intercultural relations, cultural diplomacy, and intercultural competence..." by bringing "a little more knowledge, a little more reason, and a little more compassion into world affairs..." Members of our team have established arts-based exchange programs like that between UNC-Charlotte and the Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław, Poland. With the commission's recognition, exchange programs like this could be evolved into a cycle of relevant exchange where students create methods of generating local community engagement through the study of social art practice abroad.

---

<sup>1</sup>Ensure all children, youth and families have relationships in the community that connect them to opportunities, information, and resources; broaden their horizons about what's possible in their lives; assist in navigating through unexpected crises to stay on track; offer tangible pathways toward achieving their aspirations; and demonstrate to every child, youth, and family that their contribution is vital to the success of our community.

## Supporting Documents

| Contributor                | Title   | Short Description of Expertise / Contribution   |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| Maja Godlewska,<br>Leader  | Associate Professor,<br>Painting Area Coordinator,<br>Department of Art & Art History | Visual artist, working in painting, mixed-media, installation and public art; research centered on the visual consumption of nature, tourist gaze and the constructs of landscape and wilderness in the Anthropocene. Participated in regional, national and international exhibitions, collaborative projects with visual artists, performing artists and broader community. Numerous international residencies, including University of Tasmania, Cradle Coast, Australia and in-situ creative research projects. Grants and awards, including Fulbright Fellowship. Contributor to Format Art Magazine in Poland. International curatorial experience  |
| Jessica Lindsey,<br>Leader | Associate Professor of Clarinet,<br>Department of Music                               | Clarinet performance. Orchestral, modern, and electroacoustic performance. Electroacoustic composition. Performing opportunities with Charlotte Symphony, CPCC's Sensoria, McColl Center, and Goodyear Arts. Outreach workshops to K-12 schools; lead teacher with Project Harmony (non-profit, free instruction to Charlotte students). Solo and chamber music by underrepresented composers. Performances throughout U.S. and as far afield as China and New Zealand.   |
| Erik Waterkotte,<br>Leader | Associate Professor, Print Media Area Coordinator,<br>Department of Art & Art History | Mixed-Media artist and printmaker, integrating analog and digital forms of production, exploring concepts of ritual, magical-thinking, and the occult. Evidence of multiple collaborative efforts within the field of printmaking and contemporary art, interdisciplinary projects across the COA+A, and co-teaching within the Department of Art & Art History. Recognized national and internationally exhibitions. Local, Regional, and National interdisciplinary collaborative projects. Curation of interdisciplinary art exhibitions at major regional institutions. Co-founder and co-editor of Theurgical Studies Press: an arts and literature publisher focused on unique, limited-edition ephemera. |
| Aspen Hochhalter           | Associate Professor, Photography Area Coordinator,<br>Department of Art & Art History | Photographic mixed media artist investigating the crossover between digital, traditional, and experimental photographic materials and methods. Multiple student and community-oriented endeavors including the creation of a southeast regional (now national) photography portfolio review event for students in collaboration with The Light Factory, and the Society for Photographic Education; chair of The Light Factory's exhibition committee; lead organizer for the Interdisciplinary Rome summer study abroad program.   |

|                     |   |   |
|---------------------|---|---|
| Andrew Leventis     | Assistant Professor of Painting, Department of Art & Art History          | Still-life painter who is currently creating elaborately detailed works of refrigerator interiors. Currently collaborating with Johnson and Wales to snap photo references of food within chefs' and students' freezers and refrigerators to create paintings exploring food preservation throughout the current pandemic. Past collaborative projects have included curation of the international painting exhibition, "The World Without Us", which gathered paintings by 6 international artists from Chile, Sweden, Poland, Iran, the UK, and US. Iterations of the exhibit have been staged in London, UK and are forthcoming in Wroclaw, Poland as well as San Jose, CA.                            |
| Tom Schmidt         | Associate Professor, 3D Area Coordinator, Department of Art & Art History | Visual Artist, ceramics, sculpture and design, exploring the integration of digital fabrication with a range of traditional media. In 2012 he co-founded the design team Recycled China, whose work uses industrial waste to create architectural tile and sculptural objects. His collaborative and solo work has been acquired by numerous national and international venues including the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. As an advocate of digital tools serving as a shared language across disciplines, Schmidt helped develop the Rowe Fab Lab and corresponding curriculum within the Department of Art and Art History.  |
| Gretchen Alterowitz | Associate Professor, Department of Dance                                  | Founding member of a research collective, AGA Collaborative, that investigates and generates collaborative dancemaking and writing. Working together since 2011, we have created numerous dances ourselves and in collaboration with other artists, scholars, actors, writers, and students. We have published on our methods in the journal <i>Choreographic Practices</i> (2018) and on ethics in collaboration in the journal <i>Performing Ethos: International Journal of Ethics in Theatre and Performance</i> (2020). Our work has been performed nationally and internationally.  |
| E.E. Balcos         | Associate Professor, Department of Dance                                  | Modern dancer and choreographer, is a frequent interdisciplinary collaborator with dancers, musicians, artists involving technology and other media. A specialist in somatic movement and body-mind awareness. Presenting an experiential workshop, Engaging Somatic Principles for Individual and Collective Healing and speaking on the panel, The Body in the World: Somatic Strategies for Social and Environmental Change at the International Somatic Movement and Therapy Association (ISMETA) Conference: Engaging Embodiment (online) in March 2021. Recently received a 2020 FRG for Somatic Research in Choreography and Performance with internationally recognized dance artist, Bill Evans. |

|                    |  |   |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Bobby Campbell     | Associate Professor of Graphic Design, Department of Art & Art History   | Currently serve as the A&AH representative on the CoAA working group for the MFA in Community Centered Practices. Serving as instructor of record for a decade, developed the Graphic Design program capstone course into a community engagement experience. Multiple community engagement opportunities, including multiple collaborations with Changed Choices, a Charlotte nonprofit that serves formerly incarcerated women. As a Fulbright Scholar in 2007, partnered with an Irish artist and inner city Dublin students to create a visual story that was exhibited at the Irish Museum of Modern Arts. Professional designer since 1998, I am practiced in human-centered design strategies.  |
| CarlosAlexis Cruz  | Associate Professor of Physical Theatre, Department of Theatre, the Diversity Coordinator for the College of Arts + Architecture | CarlosAlexis Cruz is the Producing Artistic Director of the Nouveau Sud Circus project; a circus for social change company in service of intercultural and cross cultural communication in the urban region of Charlotte, North Carolina. The company is currently invested in the creation of BESTIA, a circus take on the journey of central American immigrants. Cruz's Nouveau Sud was just awarded a NEFA National Theatre Project Creation and Touring grant for Bestia. Other awards: Knight Foundation- Celebrate Charlotte Arts, Princess Grace Foundation 2017 Works in Progress Award for the development of Picaro with the support of the Baryshnikov Arts Center in NYC and the 2014 Arts and Science Council's McColl award for the development of new, socially-engaged work. |
| Jefferson Ellinger | Associate Professor of Architecture, Director of the Design Computation Program, School of Architecture                          | Ellinger is the director of the Design Computation program at UNC Charlotte, a dual degree program offering Master of Science in Architecture and Master of Science in Computer Science. Recent research includes building integrated plant based air filtration systems that reduce indoor air pollution, increase microbiological diversity and increase oxygen levels from within. The system is currently being tested for efficacy against live coronavirus at Yale University. His forthcoming book From Less to More outlines the evolution of architectural design theory as influenced by philosophical concepts of difference and advanced computation.   |



|                 |   |   |
|-----------------|---|---|
| Heather Freeman | Professor of Art (Digital Media), Department of Art & Art History ; D+ARTS Director   | Relevant Specialties: 2D and 3D Animation and Motion Graphics; Game and Interactive Design; Ethics and Equity in Technology Development. I recently completed the podcast series 'Familiar Shapes' (2020) which included interviews with technologists and historians about the role of infotech in the spread of disinformation.<br><a href="https://www.familiarshapesthemovie.com/episodes">https://www.familiarshapesthemovie.com/episodes</a> The podcast has received almost 3,000 downloads since its publication April 2020. I have also worked collaboratively with artists working in digital and traditional media. I am currently working with biology faculty on an informational animation demonstrating a novel technique for genetic repair.  |
| Mira Frisch     | Professor of Cello, Department of Music   | Cello performance, String performance, Outreach workshops to K-12 schools, Interdisciplinary collaborations with art, architecture, dance, interest in anti-racism (starting anti-racist certificate May 2021), string music by women, string music by BIPOC composers.   |
| Kim Jones       | Associate Professor, Department of Dance, College of Arts + Architecture. Former UNCC's Kingston University Resident Director, London, U.K. | Dancer. Choreographer. Artistic Director of Movement Migration. Reconstruct "lost" historical modern dance works. Research is centered in collaboration with other artists (sculptors, composers, dramaturg, and designers) supported by NEA Grants (2) and is reviewed by the NY Times. My restagings of historical works as research adds (performance/repertoire) to internationally recognized modern dance companies: Martha Graham (Imperial Gesture 1935/2013) and the Paul Taylor American Modern Dance (Tracer 1962/2017). Students performed these works at the Joyce Theater (NYC) and the Knight Theater (Charlotte) with both the Martha Graham and Paul Taylor 2 Company. Tracer was performed at the MoMA, & The Met Museum, NYC for the Robert Rauschenburg retrospect of his sculpture collaboration with Dance. |
| Jeff Murphy     | Associate Professor, Digital Media Area Coordinator, Department of Art and Art History  | Artist using Digital Media with a wide skillset applicable to the intersections of art, technology and community. Recent projects have explored environmental stewardship and ecology, with specific emphasis on how climate related issues are exchanged, manipulated and expressed on social media. Collaborative projects include musical composers in fabricating communicative works that build and support community relationships, most notably, the April 30th Remembrance Video streamed during United: A Remembrance Program. In July of 2019, received support and funding for the Sante Fe International Residency Program. Residency work included immersive VR video on a project about climate change denial and the influence of social media.  |

|             |   |   |
|-------------|---|---|
| Marek Ranis | Associate Professor of Art, Department of Art & Art History | Multidisciplinary artist, with research focused on Arctic Climate Change since 2005. Practice includes sculpture, painting, film, performance, large-scale public installations, and social games focused on enhancing cultural diversity. Work presented in national and international exhibitions, including Arctic Arts Festival in Harstad, Norway. Recent artistic projects focus on climate migration- postcolonialism- climate change and culture and art of Indigenous artists of the Arctic. Produced 6 films focused on climate change and was published by the US State Department in the book <u>Our Arctic Nation</u> . Since 2018 served as a Curator at Large at the Anchorage Museum. This collaboration includes co-directing grant US-Russia Peer-to-Peer Dialogue Program with the Eurasia Foundation and the US State Department. |
|-------------|---|---|