

# NEW URBAN ARTS

is a nationally recognized interdisciplinary arts studio for high school students and emerging artists in Providence, Rhode Island. Our mission is to build a vital community that empowers young people as artists and leaders to develop a life-long creative practice.

For the past ten years, New Urban Arts has served as a safe haven for the youth of Providence, inspiring over a thousand students to envision themselves as creators and community leaders. Our free, year-round out-of-school programs allow young people to explore the visual, performing, and literary arts while forming significant relationships with a diverse group of artists who volunteer 4,000 hours to mentor youth. These programs encourage young people to make their voices heard, to show them the power of collaboration, and to guide them toward a self-directed creative practice they can sustain throughout their lives.

Visit [newurbanarts.org](http://newurbanarts.org) for more information.

Credits, this page, clockwise from top:  
Tape art illustration by student  
Laura Huaranga, 17; Portrait of student,  
Zoily Lopez, 17, by Erik Gould;  
Portrait of student, Joshua Deans, 18,  
by Erik Gould.



# News in 2007

Founding Director, **Tyler Denmead**, departs after ten years. In honor of his legacy, the Board of Directors has established the **Founder's Fund**, which will support continued excellence and innovation at New Urban Arts.

This Fall, the Board of Directors will launch another new initiative: the **Arts Mentoring Fellowship Program**, which will support a small group of artists and educators to provide more in-depth support and professional development to current artist mentors, and to share knowledge about New Urban Arts' community-based arts practice with like-minded programs and alumni throughout the country.

We celebrate our tenth anniversary this year, with a silkscreened **commemorative poster**, and the **Become the Change paperweight**, now available for sale. Visit our website for details.

This spring, a record-breaking 400 people attend the festivities in our studio to celebrate our **10th Anniversary Art Party!**

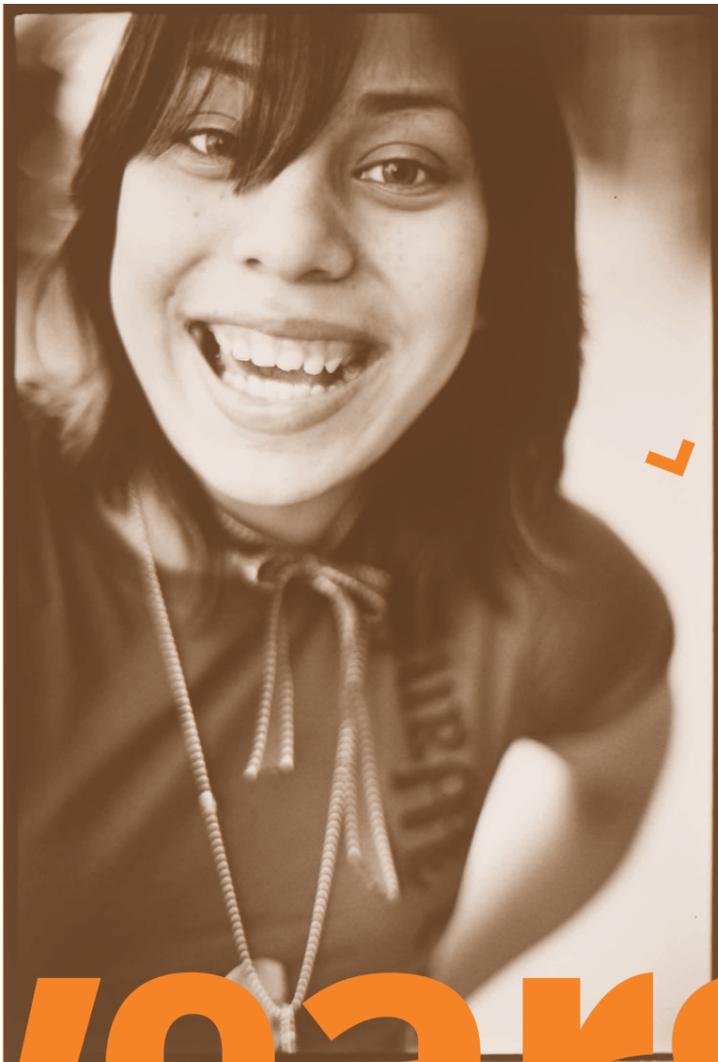
New Urban Arts' **Youth Mentorship Program** enrollment grows to 180 high school students this year, an increase from 100 in 2006.

**Armory Revival Company** gives New Urban Arts a \$10,000 annual lease reduction, and the studio signs a lease to remain in this location through 2011.

**The Starbucks Foundation** honors New Urban Arts with our first national grant award, to support literacy arts programs for Providence public high school students.

**The Rhode Island Department of Education** awards us a \$375,000 grant to support our nationally recognized arts mentoring programs over the next three years, as a **21st Century Community Learning Center**. Stay tuned for future updates about this exciting partnership.

# ten



# years

OF DEDICATION TO LIFELONG CREATIVITY.

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NEW URBAN ARTS  
743 Westminster Street  
Providence, RI 02903  
USA

## Program Highlights

Students publicly exhibited artworks at the **Providence City Hall Exhibition**, in conjunction with The Honorable Mayor Cicilline's Tree Lighting Ceremony, in December 2006. This exhibition featured spectacular 3' x 4' self-portraits made from recycled materials.

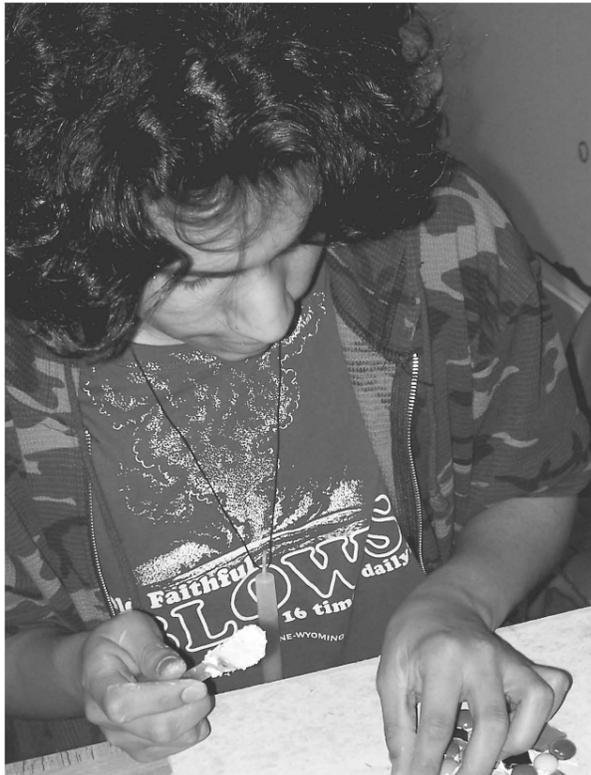
The **RISD Museum** education department hosted a public presentation of student works, **Focus on Young Photographers**, which featured photographs made by students in response to the Nan Goldin photography exhibition at The RISD Museum in January 2007.

Thanks to The Flying Wallendas, Scrabble-Rousers, Nerdie Wordies, Carbelbs, and the Chia Champs, who battled it out at our first-ever **Community Scrabble Tournament** fundraiser.

There are numerous studio traditions that students have initiated and established in our annual program calendar, including: **Comic Expo, all-night studio Lock-In, Halloween Photoshoot, Summer Zine Swap, Summer Art Inquiry, and Artsgiving.**

Last summer, New Urban Arts launched a new summer program, **Creative Cartography** which invited youth, scholars and artists to co-facilitate a creative and critical inquiry that explored mapmaking as a creative practice that fulfills the human impulse to locate itself. If you are interested in adapting our mapmaking workshops to spark ideas for your own creative practice or educational environment, a **resource guide is now available for free online.** Useful for artists, educators and young people, the resource guide can be downloaded from our website at [www.newurbanarts.org](http://www.newurbanarts.org)

Find us on myspace at  
[www.myspace.com/\\_nua](http://www.myspace.com/_nua)  
Log in to find us on facebook at  
[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)



## New Urban Arts from the Outside In by Sarah Gibson, edited by New Urban Arts

AT THE CORNER of Westminster and Dean Streets, past the roaring highway intersection and across from the concrete high school, sits a 19th century brick building. Stenciled in orange paint across the front window are the words: "New Urban Arts." Inside, tables overflow with ingredients for art projects. Colorful tissue-papered lamp shades form rectangular boxes over the hanging fluorescent lights. Above shelves of college guides and art books, a poster displays New Urban Arts' mission statement, "to build a vital community that empowers young people to develop a creative practice they can sustain throughout their lives."

Tyler Denmead, who started the youth arts organization in 1997 during an undergraduate independent study at Brown University, acknowledges that New Urban Arts [can be] "a scary place" but says that "it should be initially because we're asking people to do things that you don't do otherwise...it's going to be foreign and unfamiliar. Most people see this place as for the artsy type, but some of the best stories here are where people don't initially see themselves that way and find out this is a place for them."

When asked how the organization has evolved, Tyler lets out a high staccato laugh and jokes, "Well, my hair is greyer, and no one came when we first started, and now a lot of people come!" He pauses and squints into the distance. "This was a personal vision which has transformed into a self-driven, self-sustaining, self-evolving community of people who make art together."

Artist Mentor Bremen Donovan believes this safe space is essential to helping students feel comfortable and confident enough to make art. However, it took her a few months to realize that creating such a space meant foregoing a structured, goal-oriented workshop style. "I was really ambitious and I made up all these worksheets and the students were like 'um...trash'...I realized quickly that if you have a day when you don't make any artwork, it's fine—it's more than fine - because sometimes that propels you into a whole new relationship with your mentees." One week Bremen and her students Heather, John and Miguel are sitting in New Urban

Arts. When someone suggests a dance move, the mood grows somber. "Johnathan's not even going to finish his dance film," remarks Bremen. Johnathan, a tall, suavely dressed fourteen year old, in his second semester at New Urban Arts, is already well known for his lively dance moves. His film features an eagerly anticipated dance video featuring the misguided moves of Aneudy and Miguel in contrast to Johnathan's expertise. Johnathan just learned that his Mom is moving the family to Florida in a week, so he's home packing rather than finishing his projects at New Urban Arts.

John asks, "Why don't we edit it for him?" Miguel brings his chair back from its precarious tottering position and leans forward, his hands suspended in the air. "Yea, let's make a..." He and Bremen shout at once, "a tribute to Johnathan!" That afternoon, Miguel gets out the camera and walks around the warm, sun-drenched studio with a microphone asking people for memories of Johnathan. The workshop members agree to meet the next week and edit the clips.

The group's sudden inspiration recalls Tyler's earlier assessment of New Urban Arts: "This place bubbles up from underneath and is a groundswell of energy and ideas that come from high school students and artist mentors...There are very few places where people can have meaningful, authentic relationships with one another, and this is a place that demands that."

A week later the group struggles to create something before Johnathan leaves in two days. Johnathan's mother calls to inform New Urban Arts of a schedule change: the family will leave for Florida the next day. Program Director Sarah Meyer finds a going away card and rushes to each table asking students to sign it. Bremen sits with her film group as they absorb the new reality: no Johnathan, and no tribute film.

Johnathan stumbles into the studio and after exchanging distracted greetings with them, heads for the darkroom to immerse himself in the gloomy room's fumes one last time. After the final glints of winter light have disappeared from the studio's southern windows, he emerges from the darkroom carrying a stack of earlier art projects, photos, and photographic

negatives. He faces the remaining mentors and students.

"Okay. Bye guys," he says.

Bremen laughs: "Nu-uh. You aren't leavin' yet!" She walks purposefully to the stereo and hits "play." Soon the rhythm of a Michael Jackson greatest hit engulfs the melancholic silence of the studio. Johnathan drops his stack and joins the final, celebratory dance. When the music ends, Sarah hands him the card. Johnathan embraces the dancers, picks up his art, and ambles slowly towards the door. He says goodbye in a fragile, thin voice and walks a few steps.

"Bye," he says again.

Another step, and he cannot help but turn around.

"Bye," and he means it.

By the time the door closes softly behind Johnathan, it is more than two hours after Tuesday workshops officially end. This is not surprising though, given the nature of New Urban Arts. The most important experiences for people here seem to be the ones that occur outside of a strict structure: collage during screenprinting workshop, long conversations during film-editing hour, and spontaneous dancing after everyone should have packed up and gone home.



# College Corner

New Urban Arts partners with College Visions to offer an intensive college preparatory program for our seniors. Now in its third year, this partnership is crucial in helping our students access higher education. New Urban Arts' students who have participated in this program often have become the first members of their family to attend college.

"As we all sit down at the table chatting away about anything but college Simon Moore gets prepared for the meeting. We go through dummy college essays, college vocabulary games, scavenger hunts to hone our research skills, and even fake shark infested waters to learn another lesson about college. As the months pass by quickly, we begin to value these meetings, for the lessons that are learned will make us one step closer to our dreams," reflects New Urban Arts senior, Mary Adewusi, on the partnership with College Visions.

Founding Director, Simon Moore, explains College Visions' approach further; "The goal is not just to get into college but to also make thoughtful and informed choices about college." The holistic college advising program provides year-long support to graduating seniors on every imaginable aspect of getting into college, including: registering for the SAT; visiting New England colleges, preparing application forms; meeting with parents to complete financial aid forms; resolving issues with grades, advocating for youth with college admissions representatives; and creating customized lists of schools tailored to students' interests and profile, realistically stretch students to consider options otherwise not made available to them.

Mary continues, "One of the many things that make College Visions special is that during this whole process of

competing for a spot in the school you have your hopes set on, you have your fellow College Visions members going through the same thing. They make you feel like you are on the same team...At a College Visions meeting we look to our left and to our right and see only a friend who can help lend moral support through this very stressful process of applying to college." This year's graduated seniors are currently enrolled in Mount Holyoke College, Manhattanville College, Holy Cross, UMass-Dartmouth (School of Visual and Performing Arts), Rhode Island College, University of New Haven, University of Rhode Island, Community College of Rhode Island, Rhode Island School of Design, and Brown University.

For the past three years, 93 percent of our seniors have enrolled and remain in four-year colleges. This is three times the national rate for low-income students. The first three individuals to receive full scholarships for minority students at the Rhode Island School of Design were participants in New Urban Arts and College Visions.

Mary concludes, "It is not only College Visions that we have to thank for such great support in our college application process but also New Urban Arts. Thank you to all the New Urban Arts mentors, directors, volunteers, and students for the great recommendations and the wonderfully wrong pep talks about college. Thank you New Urban Arts for making our resumes explode with jobs, events, and artwork. Thank you to all the supporters of New Urban Arts because inadvertently you are sending more and more students to college who will stay there and really gain something from the experience."

## Mix Tape for the City

Listen to an imaginative audio tour of Providence created by artist mentor, Andrew Oesch, and volunteer, Megan Hall. This 30-minute podcast is a guided audio tour of the neighborhood around New Urban Arts, featuring street sounds and interviews with students, artists, business owners, and neighbors met along the way.

For best enjoyment, download to your portable player, bring it to New Urban Arts at 743 Westminster Street, then press play. Don't worry, it's easy and we promise you'll finish where you started. For out-of-towners or those who cannot make the trip, listen at home and enjoy an imaginary trip around our neighborhood. New Urban Arts' podcasts are free, and you can stop receiving the files at any time.

Subscribe today to our New Urban Arts' podcasts to be inspired by short videos, music, audio tours, and other unexpected curiosities created by high school students and artist mentors.

Copy this url into your podcasting software:

<http://www.newurbanarts.org/podcasts.rss>

Captions, clockwise starting facing page, top left:

[top cluster] New friends, student Valentina Jean-Claude, 17, and student Johnathan Santoni, 15, making movies; Student, Elizabeth Keith, 17, painting original work for the end of year exhibition; Artist mentor, Megan Billman, and a friend at a gallery exhibition opening; Student, Pedro Gonzalez, works on a mosaic; "Listen to Cranston Street," a collaborative project created during the 2006 Summer Art Inquiry: Creative Cartography; Student, Johnathan Santoni, 15, shows off his dance moves.

Congratulations and Good Luck to all the 2007 graduated seniors at New Urban Arts! For more information about College Visions, please visit [myspace.com/collegevisions](http://myspace.com/collegevisions)

## 2007 Studio Participants

### staff

Tyler Denmead  
Executive Director  
Sarah Meyer  
Program Director  
Tamara Kaplan  
Recruitment and Engagement  
Coordinator  
Priscilla Carrion  
Administrative Assistant

### artist mentors

Jesse Banks III  
Megan Billman  
Heidi Born  
Jason Brockert  
Lauren Carter  
Jessica Chermayeff  
Bremen Donovan  
Richard Edouard-Denor  
Kedrin Frias  
John Jacobson  
Melissa Mendes  
Charlotte O'Donnell  
Andrew Oesch  
Kate Sanders-Fleming  
Carrie Sandman  
Emmy Thelander

### artists in residence

Marcus Civin  
Jean Cozzens  
Erik Gould  
Peter Hocking  
Arthi Sundaresh

### students

Amanda Abreu  
Stephanie Acevedo  
Mary Adewusi  
Aneudy Alba  
Jose Luis  
Tola Badejo  
Junior Bamisile  
Emely Barrose Mode  
Jackson Boerner  
Chombo  
CJ  
David  
Nolan Burke  
Christopher Calderon  
Michael Calderon  
Darran Camacho  
Gloria Camacho  
Hannah Candelaria  
Rosa Cantor  
Alysia Carcier  
Lue Carto  
Casandra Castillo  
Karen Joy Castillo  
Gage Cate  
Marcha Charles  
Shirley Charles  
Harold Chartier  
Darin Cheng

Shanell Corporan  
Soria Cruz  
Kia Davis  
Melynda De La Cruz  
Damel De La Cruz  
Jennifer De La Cruz  
Joshua Deans  
Michele Downing  
Deron Drameh  
Krystal Dutra  
Mist Marie Fregeau  
Ninoska Garcia  
Dennes Garcia  
Demyx  
Miguel Garcia  
Sam Geerah  
Zainab Giwa  
Maritza Gomez  
Kevin Gonsalves  
Maria Gonzalez  
Pedro Gonzalez  
Tamara Gonzalez  
Goldie Hang  
Kim Leng Heng  
Abel Hernandez  
Stephanie Hernandez  
Yeriel Hernandez  
Kate Holden  
Laura Huaranga  
Phillip Huerta  
Ryan Jackson  
Carlos Javier  
Valentina Jean-Claude  
Taniquewah Jett  
Kendel Joseph  
JR

Elizabeth Keith  
Rhiannon Ketchem  
Mary Khang  
Samantha Khiev  
Socheatta Khiev  
Malida Khim  
Megan Ladds  
Azuki Le  
Roxas Lopez  
Petri Lopez  
Hannah Lutz Winkler  
Desteny Maldonado  
Samantha Maner  
David Mariale  
Vaughn Martin  
Leonore McCarthy  
Caleigh McGrath  
April Medina  
Galvin Medrano  
Anibal Melo  
Andrew Migliori  
Alison Migliori  
Lisa Minn  
Evan Monteiro  
Diana Morales  
Michael Moretti  
Fidan Moustafayara  
Mariana Navanjo  
Natalie Navarro  
Sosohtabna Ngim  
John Nguon  
Madelin Ortiz  
Tae Ortiz  
Jason Ovando  
Rebecca Padilla  
Lena Pan

Jacqueline Paniagua  
Ryan Pelagio  
Angel Pena  
Rebecca Perea  
Tiffany Pires  
Natalie Reyes  
Lady Reyes  
Rain Reyes  
Acacia Richardson  
Christine Ridihan  
Christina Rodrigues  
Erlin Rogel  
Ian Rosado  
Joe Rossi  
Lakeitha Ruffin  
James Sanchez  
Jennifer Sanchez  
Dania Sanchez  
Johnathan Santoni  
Ka Sek  
Kian Shenfield  
Luis Solares  
Sidney Son  
Brooke Taylor  
Lynda Tha  
Ashley Torres  
Saroeth Uon  
Tiffany Urena  
Estefany Urena  
Yeralin Valdez  
Daniel Valmas  
Shayna Vargas  
Rosalia Velis  
Heather Viera  
Rebecca Volynsky  
Paul Wagner

Elle Wagner  
Darryl Walter  
Christin White  
Charlotte Whittingham  
Jordan Wolfe

### volunteers

Adrienne Benz  
Celestino Vazquez  
Laura Cohen  
David Colannino  
Jill Cook  
Corinne Enni  
Claudia Frankenberg  
Adrienne Gagnon  
Dylan Going  
David Gold  
Glenda Goldberg  
Megan Hall  
Claire Harlan-Orsi  
Alyssa Holland  
Stacy Huggins  
Johnathan Levis  
Neil Minton  
Anna Mulligan  
Owen Muir  
Robert Muir  
Christopher de Ridder  
Carolyn Schmitz  
Lydia Stein  
Kamila Sych  
Felice Valmas  
Sandor Mullin  
Sarah Wignall  
Sungwon Yun  
Jay Zehngebot

# TEN YEARS OF NEW URBAN ARTS

Marcus Civin and students at the new space on Westminster Street.



## 1997

While I have watched the growth of New Urban Arts, it seems like the same structure we used when we started is still in place. It seems like **the organization is really faithful to itself.**

When I came back and visited last year, the same things that were happening in 1997 are happening now, just on a larger scale. The opportunities for students are greater now but the basic structure of groups of people who are coming from different places sitting around the table drawing and talking has stayed the basis of New Urban Arts.

**Marcus Civin**  
First Program Director, 1997–1999

**At New Urban Arts I'm reminded  
that the world is a mirror  
and you get what you give.**

**Jason Brockert**  
Artist Mentor, 2006–2007



## 2001

**New Urban Arts is my home.  
It's where I feel most safe and accepted  
for who I am and what I do.**

**CJ**  
Student, Age 16

Aixa Almonte, Kath Connolly and Tyler Denmead construct papier-mache lamps in the studio.



Student, Molyka Preap models an early New Urban Arts t-shirt.

## 1998

## 1999



Jen Rice with Melody Johnson, former Superintendent of Providence Public Schools.

**I will always think back on my memories of being a student at New Urban Arts as some of the happiest times of my youth; and I have yet to meet mentors [outside the studio] that were as fascinating and passionate about not only art, but existence as well.**

**Michele Downing**  
Student, Age 18

## 2000

I said to my students, "Well what do you want to do?" and they said we don't know what do you want to do and we all looked at each other and we didn't know what to do. But then around the time of the exhibition a bunch of lamps that a local artist had created appeared in the studio and one of my students said let's make a lamp and I said well, I'm a painter not a sculptor so we'd have to figure out how to make lamps together and I said sure why not. They actually made really cool lamps. I never finished mine but it was a nice process of learning together and trusting and realizing that

**I didn't need to be an expert at everything even though I was a mentor.**

**Jason Yoon**  
Artist Mentor, 2000–2001

## 2002



Mentor circle during "Community Building with Bill Eyman."

## 2004



Photograph of students Axtrid, Erica, Blue and Curtis.

of lamps made by local artist, my Woodward and New Urban students. Office space designed created by artists Will Machin Anton Willis.

# 2003

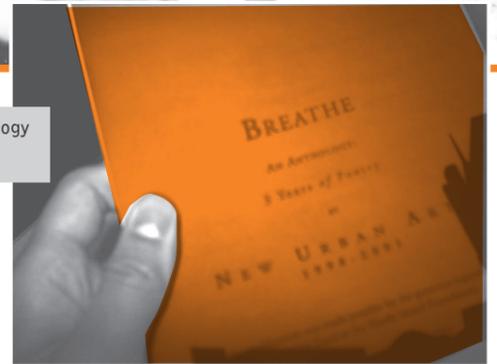
The studio is an escape from all the chaotic pressures of life into an environment that gives chaos a good name.

**Kian Shenfield**  
Student, Age 19

Jorge Garcia, Simon Moore, Kedrin Frias and Mike Moretti at the Steel Yard.



"Breathe," the 2003 poetry anthology created by students and mentors.



New Urban Arts was the first group of people that said I didn't have to conform to what my school told me and that even though I was only a student I could change things or at least choose my own path. That's part of why I came back and stayed. Because **choosing my path was something I was going to figure out while helping other people do the same thing here.**

That's why I'm here.

**Kedrin Frias**  
Student Alumnus and Current Artist Mentor

New Urban Arts directly put me on the path I'm on now. After meeting all these new people and this whole different world, I'm not afraid anymore. I'm more bold and courageous to go out there in the world.

**Adrienne Adeyemi**  
Student Alumnus, Age 19

My mentor helps me keep disciplined, and get things done. I'm all about ideas; making them happen, that's the tough part.

**Aneudy Alba**  
Student, Age 19

Portrait of student Adrienne Adeyemi by Erik Gould, Artist in Residence.



My students make my own art more interesting.

**Charlotte O'Donnell**  
Artist Mentor, 2004-2007

# 2005

My first impression of the actual space and the young people within the space was very compelling and that served as a motivator for me. I work with young people everyday, so that wasn't new for me, but the way in which New Urban Arts works with young people was very, very different. It was obvious to me that at New Urban Arts it was about creating a safe environment where **students can really connect with mentors no matter who they are, they are welcomed into the space.** And that was really inspiring to me.

**Michael Fournier**  
Board Member, 1998-2005

# 2006

Whenever I'm having a bad day and then after I go to the studio my mood just changes.

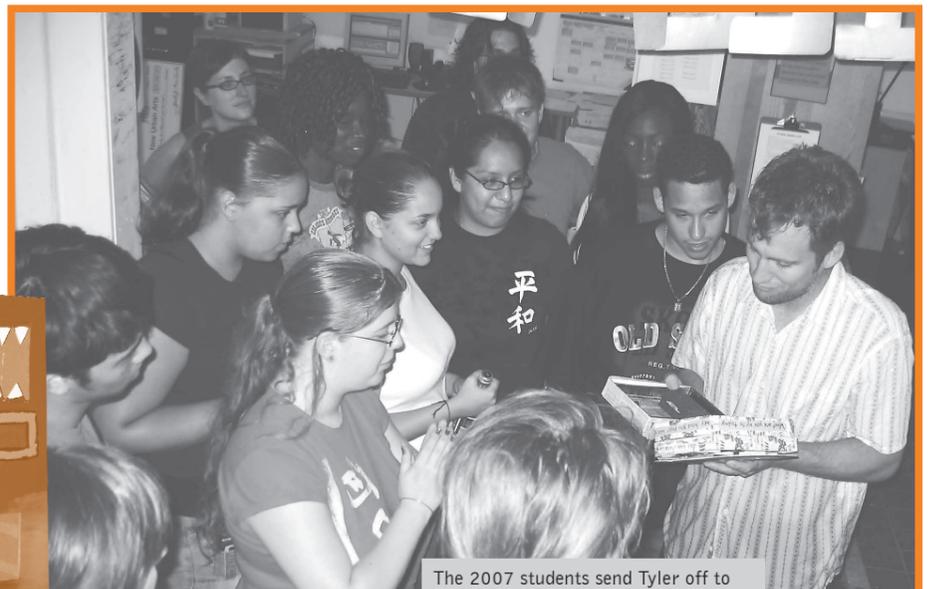
The energy in NUA is just amazing!

**Tiffany Pires**  
Student, Age 18

Muncho, the art-eating monster, collects contributions for Flip zine.



# 2007



The 2007 students send Tyler off to graduate school with a special gift.

## Are you an Alumnus? Keep in touch!

As New Urban Arts celebrates its 10th anniversary, we seek to reconnect with our alumni, having worked with over 150 emerging artists and over 1300 high school students since 1997. Our alumni are very important to us and we want to hear from you. We hope you will stay connected with New Urban Arts, in whatever way you can and let us know what you are up to.

### Alumni support New Urban Arts in Exciting New Ways

Alumni students and artist mentors who have benefited from New Urban Arts give back in so many ways—donating their artwork and books to the studio, leading our students on college tours, giving financially, and introducing our programs to their colleagues and peers.

This year, an anonymous artist mentor made a \$25,000 contribution to New Urban Arts with funds raised at her wedding where, in lieu of giving gifts, guests gave money to start an endowment that will provide financial assistance each year so that one or more work-study students from the Rhode Island School of Design can seek employment and community involvement opportunities at New Urban Arts.

For the past four years, former student Priscilla Carrion was the Administrative Assistant at New Urban Arts, as a work study student, while she pursued her degree at the Rhode Island School of Design. A recent RISD graduate, Priscilla now designs fabrics and travels the world, and teaches us new things everyday. Thank you, Priscilla, good luck, and we miss you already!

We are also pleased to announce that a second artist mentor, **Ellen Twaddell**, through the support of a family foundation, the **Minerva Foundation**, has pledged \$65,000 over the next five years to generously support New Urban Arts free arts mentoring programs. Ms. Twaddell and her partner Will Fertman, were creative writing artist mentors at New Urban Arts during the 2004–05 school year. Elizabeth Keith, a junior at New Urban Arts, was a student of Ellen's as a freshman. She reflects on her experience working with Ellen, "I miss her!!! She helped me so much with the composition of my writing and [helped me] prepare for the end-of-the year Art Party. That was really the first time I read my writing in public."

We are extremely grateful to all of our alumni for their generous support.



Captions, this page and facing page, clockwise starting this page, top: Artist mentor Kedrin Frias and Student Mary Adewusi, 18, at the end of year Art Party; "Autobiographical Skillet" by student alumna, Priscilla Carrion; High school students paint an outdoor mural on Cranston Street, with artist mentor Kate Sanders-Fleming; Student Rebecca Volynsky, 17, learning to solder metal.

## WAYS TO Get involved again

### Join the Online Alumni Community

Do you ever wonder what happened to those friends you made at New Urban Arts? You can now learn all about what they are doing and reconnect with our network of former students, mentors and volunteers who continue to stay involved with our vibrant arts community. "Haven't signed up yet?" Visit [newurbanarts.org](http://newurbanarts.org) to log in and create your alumni profile today! Look for the link on our homepage under "What's New." Your registration will take up to 48 hours to be processed and approved, after which you will have access to password-protected alumni-only information, where you can access profiles of artist mentors and students you worked with at New Urban Arts. You are a part of the alumni community and welcome to register no matter how long or how often you participated in our programs. We look forward to seeing you online!

### Make a Donation

Invest your hope in New Urban Arts, by donating what you can to directly support our nationally recognized after-school programs. You can make your donation online through Paypal, or mail to 743 Westminster Street Providence RI 02903. Does your employer match donations? Contact New Urban Arts to see about doubling your gift.

### Attend Gallery Events

New Urban Arts hosts 10-15 public gallery exhibitions and performances events. Visit [www.newurbanarts.org](http://www.newurbanarts.org) for detailed information about upcoming events in our studio.

Or sign up for our mailing list to receive invitations. Would you like to participate in our annual mail art exhibition? "Correspondence" features a process in which students, staff, volunteers, and alumni create original pieces of art for one another to respond to via the mail during the winter months. These new works are exhibited in our gallery every spring. Contact NUA if you would like to participate this year.

### Become an Artist Mentor

Want to make an impact on the Providence community this year? Each September, New Urban Arts selects fifteen artist mentors to participate in our after-school programs. Arts mentoring at New Urban Arts is a wonderful opportunity for artists and educators to learn how to effectively work with high school students in a community setting. Artist mentors must be caring individuals, willing to learn, open to taking risks, and able to commit 8 hours per week during an entire school year. Artist mentors participate in a professional development program to support their personal growth as artists and educators.

### Volunteer

Would you like to return to volunteer and support the studio's administrative efforts? New Urban Arts depends on the contributions of numerous volunteers each week. There are a variety of clerical projects that volunteers complete to support our operations. New Urban Arts seeks volunteers willing to come to our studio one hour a week for at least six weeks at a time. Volunteering is possible anytime weekdays between 10 am and 6 pm. If you are interested in volunteering, please email [info@newurbanarts.org](mailto:info@newurbanarts.org).

### Host an Event

Invite your friends and local contacts to an event at your house to help raise money and educate others about New Urban Arts.

To find out what New Urban Arts is up to, including the latest opportunities to get involved and reconnect with the studio, sign up to receive our Monthly E-News at [www.newurbanarts.org](http://www.newurbanarts.org)

## NOTES From the Founder

by Tyler Denmead, sent from Cambridge, England

Send me to Nigeria by Mary Adewusi

Say good morning in the mourning.  
Give respect to your elders.  
Have the chores finished by seven.  
And they won't send you to Nigeria.

Tell your friends to greet your parents.  
Let older people take a seat first.  
Speak only when spoken to.  
And they won't send you to Nigeria.

Don't forget your motherland.  
Take responsibility for your actions.  
Be the eyes and ears of a misunderstood people.  
And they won't send you to Nigeria.

Accept poverty as a part of life.  
By no means get impregnated too young.  
Keep yourself out of situations you can't escape from.  
And they won't send you to Nigeria.

I begin to rebel, uncontrolled by anyone.  
Too many American ideas penetrating my thoughts.  
My grades have slipped, too great to catch up.  
My memory is insufficient.  
I am on the plane.  
They are sending me to Nigeria.



## SUPPORTING Emerging artists

This spring, New Urban Arts entered into a partnership with the **Prolific Arts Association**, whose mission is to support and promote emerging artists.

"A lot of artists out of college or out on their own, will slow down and stop making new work without encouragement and support. We are providing that opportunity and a reason for them to keep re-inventing themselves as artists, because we only exhibit newly created work. We are excited about connecting with New Urban Arts as they provide a stable and consistent environment for us to meet and display work," says co-founder, Graham Heffernan.

Meeting every other Tuesday afternoon, the group offers emerging artists the opportunity to network, problem solve, receive feedback and encouragement. During the month of August, Prolific Arts held its first group exhibition in the New Urban Arts Studio Gallery. Says Co-Founder, Jill Cook, "The Prolific Art Association is extremely thankful to the staff, mentors and students of New Urban Arts. Your support means a great deal to us. We just cannot express how inspired we have become because of your encouragement...Thank you."

For more information about Prolific Arts and to find out how you can get involved, visit their myspace page at [www.myspace.com/prolific\\_arts\\_association](http://www.myspace.com/prolific_arts_association)

**I miss 2:45 pm the most.** The front door starts to open as soon as it closes at that time. The studio quickly fills with energy, movement, and curiosity. Inevitably, someone is always asking around for a pencil sharpener.

When the studio came alive in the afternoon, I always felt genuine excitement to reconnect with students and artist mentors since I had last seen them, whether it had been a day or a week. I think this is a shared feeling in the studio. It contributes to what even newcomers always first notice—the honesty, the companionship, the home away from home feeling that marks New Urban Arts.

Students and artist mentors often wondered what I did in the studio. I think my work was a bit mysterious to them and appeared to not have much value. Oftentimes, when asked what I did, students often said, "He doesn't really do anything. Well, that's not true—he types."

In the afternoons, I always tried to cross off some tedious items on my bubble to-do maps. But, mostly, I looked forward to cross paths with students and artist mentors for a laugh, to be inspired, to learn what was new in their lives or their practice in the studio.

Oftentimes, a student paced or sat behind my desk and stared at the wall. I learned early on that this was a cue for conversation. I cherished these moments as a friend ("Is everything okay?"), a confidant, ("Who do you have a crush on now?"), a father ("Why are you soaking wet, and where is your jacket?"), or an educator ("What did you learn in school today that excites you?")

Most of the time, students simply disregarded these questions, perhaps except the one about crushes. After a bit of an awkward silence, I often asked,

### "Well, what's up?"

"I am really scared about failing my English test tomorrow," I remember Mary saying one afternoon.

Her fear felt paralyzing and consuming. I stopped typing to talk with her about it and to help her prepare for the test. As we studied together, it was apparent that Mary was not going to fail, and that unpreparedness was probably not the source of her fear. At this point, studying was not going to help much.

I asked Mary what would be so bad about failing the English test. "What exactly will happen, Mary?"

"Well, for one, my parents will send me back to Nigeria." I wanted Mary to be at least half-joking, but she said it in such a striking truth-telling way. Feeling stumped, I asked her to write more about this idea: name it, describe it, explain how it plays out everyday. She went home and wrote the poem,

"Send Me to Nigeria," a beautiful, powerful piece that is worth everyone reading. Over the course of the year, she performed it publicly several times. Each time, her voice grew stronger and varied in a more theatrical style until the poem did not seem to weigh her down as much and let the audience in.

Peter Abbs, a poet and educator, might describe New Urban Arts as a "community of recognition." In this type of community, there is a continuous making of culture where people validate and celebrate one another. Together, they explore the "dilemmas of consciousness, the open predicament of being human, a predicament which requires a creative response."

At New Urban Arts, artist mentors and students have the privilege of serving as one another's inspiration as they create culture. They support each other by sharing strengths and baring weaknesses. They give importance to what each other knows and feels. They feel confident in their relationships so they reveal themselves to one another in transparent and authentic ways. They try to push each other out of a common sort of existence to that point where they have the best ideas and the most felt feelings. These are the moments I always enjoyed most with artist mentors and students, the moments that were incredibly out-of-focus, but most definitely exhilarating.

This experience strikes me as deeply relevant and important to the education of high school students. Students and artist mentors connect what they are learning to matters of human existence, to their existence and our common experiences. They make meaning of their lives and are given the freedom to ponder without expectations. They explore with one another in ways that expand a love for life and learning. They can free themselves from the mundane, and add depth to their daily lives. Perhaps most significantly, they deepen their sense of ethical kinship, a feeling of obligation for one another.

A creative practice, when located within a "community of recognition," presents wonderful moments. There are moments when questions take possession of us and we lose ourselves in art making. There are others when the relationships allow us to become who we enjoy most, whether it is more compassionate, forgiving, inspiring, or enlightened. It also supports us when our love for life might be waning — when crushes do not respond to our text messages, our shoes and pants are soaked from the puddles, the expectations from our parents are crippling, or when we have to say good bye to the studio, to our best friends, family and colleagues, in order to pursue new dreams in other parts of the world.

*I miss you all greatly, and best of luck to New Urban Arts' students, artist mentors, staff, volunteers, and community of supporters in 2007-08.*



## 2007 impact report

**180 students enrolled** in our after-school youth mentoring program this year, an increase from 100 in 2006.

**111 high school students** actively participated throughout the year.

**84** students, on average, attended the studio every month. Participation rates doubled this year.

**55% of underclassmen returned** to participate in 2006–2007.

**14 seniors** participated in College Visions, a year-long college preparatory program, and enrolled in college.

**2** of these seniors received full scholarships.

**100% of students agreed** or strongly agreed that New Urban Arts is a safe and supportive environment.

**Nearly 90%** of students rated New Urban Arts' programs "outstanding."

**98%** of student participants agreed or strongly agreed that they have developed a way of creating that expresses who they are.

**1600+ people** attended **16 gallery events** at New Urban Arts this year. Our events are free and open to the public.

**92,310** people visited **newurbanarts.org** last year.

**\$60,000** in donations received via the Annual Campaign.



### Find out how to...

get involved with New Urban Arts. Like our studio environment, everyone brings something unique to the community, and together all of these talents and efforts make us stronger. For more information about us, visit: [www.newurbanarts.org](http://www.newurbanarts.org)

...enroll as a student at any time.

...mentor for an entire school year or the duration of a special project.

...volunteer, especially if you are skilled at data entry, carpentry or tech support.

### Become a donor...

of tax-deductible art materials and equipment or monetary gifts. Sponsorship opportunities are available for exhibitions, performances and our annual fashion show.

...Ask how.

# NEW URBAN ARTS SAYS thank you!

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### Visit us some time!

We are located at 743 Westminster Street in the West End of Providence, Rhode Island. The best time to catch the studio vibe is weekdays from 3-5PM when students are here. Visit our website at: [www.newurbanarts.org](http://www.newurbanarts.org)

Photo caption: Artist mentor and student alumnus, Jesse Banks III, teaches photography to student Elle Wagner, 16.

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