

New Urban Arts End of Year Program Report 2013-2014

New Urban Arts' Programs maintained a healthy growth in student numbers and participation while experiencing a significant turn over in program and administration staff. Starting in July 2013, New Urban Arts brought on both a new Executive Director, as well as a new Youth Programs Manager. In November, NUA hired a new Director of Programs and hired for a new position, Studio Organizer. New Urban Arts struck a balance in hiring for these critical program positions by combining new hires to the organization along with staff that had prior experience, either as students or artist mentors. This mix proved to be a successful combination of new energy and ideas with prior experience of the organization, its history and mission. For more information on our new staff, see the final pages of this report.

With the addition of the Studio Organizer position, New Urban Arts has three full-time positions dedicated to supporting the maintenance and growth of NUA's programs. It is no surprise that during this time of heavy staff transition that NUA's student's participation and attendance grew steadily from the previous year.

"This year I feel like I have really found myself with the help of all of the mentors and everyday when I walk in here it is always an amazing day. This year I feel like the mentors have been the greatest and the staff also. I feel like this year, we as students, have also gotten really close. I LOVE THIS PLACE" – Student response to "What did you enjoy about New Urban Arts this year? In the End of Year Student Survey

The Youth Mentorship in the Arts Program

The Youth Mentorship in the Arts is New Urban Arts' core programming. Artist Mentors work with high school students after school five days a week, for four hours a day. Our long-term goal for the program is that our students make a permanent place for creativity and imagination in their lives. Our interim goals are that students:

- 1) develop close, positive relationships with non-parental adult mentors and peers;
- 2) acquire skills and knowledge in the arts;
- 3) begin to develop their unique artistic voice;
- 4) graduate high school with a plan for postsecondary success.

Program Activities

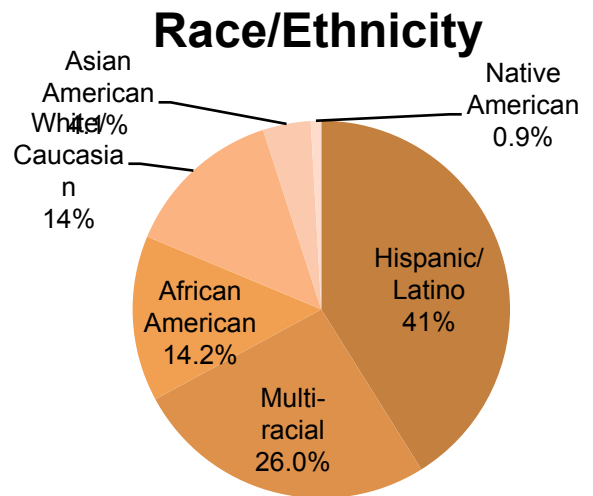
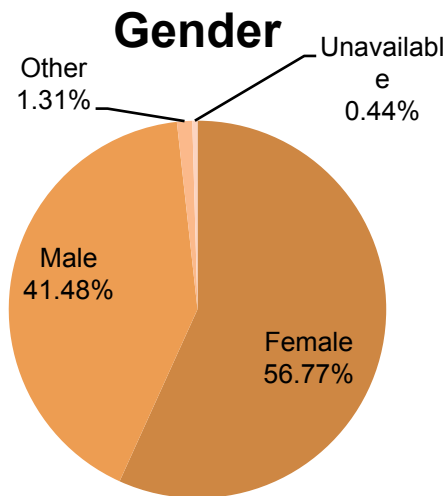
The Youth Mentorship in the Arts Program in the 2013-2014 school year recruited 20 artist mentors and three studio study buddies (tutors) to mentor students from October 2013 to May 2014 in painting, drawing, graphic design and digital media, printmaking, photography, sewing, embroidery, electronic music, soft sculpture, multi-media, creative writing and poetry.

As always, our artist mentors underwent a rigorous selection process, conducted by students, which includes a written application, submission of artwork and in-person

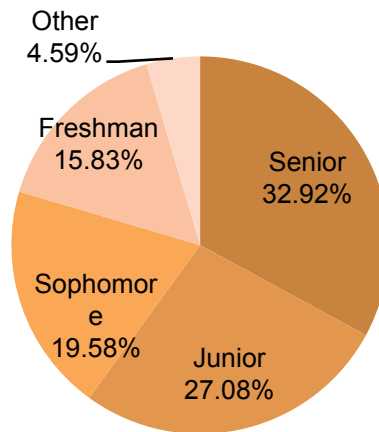
interviews. We received 42 applications. Over the ensuing year, artist mentors received over 30 hours of professional development and training in various elements of arts education. While our focus is the creative development of young people, we also recognize that we work with youth from under-resourced communities. To that end, we also provided after-school snacks, free bus passes, daily tutoring and homework help and a strong partnership with College Visions, a college access and success program for first-generation and low-income college students.

About the Students we Served in 2013-14

In 2013-14, 379 high school students enrolled in our programs. Of those, 193 students were active participants; 84 attended once or more per week, and 99 students attend 30 or more mentoring sessions over the course of the year. (Some experts in the after-school field consider 30 or more days of attendance a benchmark of high engagement.) Average daily attendance was 44 students, and average monthly attendance was 141 unique students.



Class Year



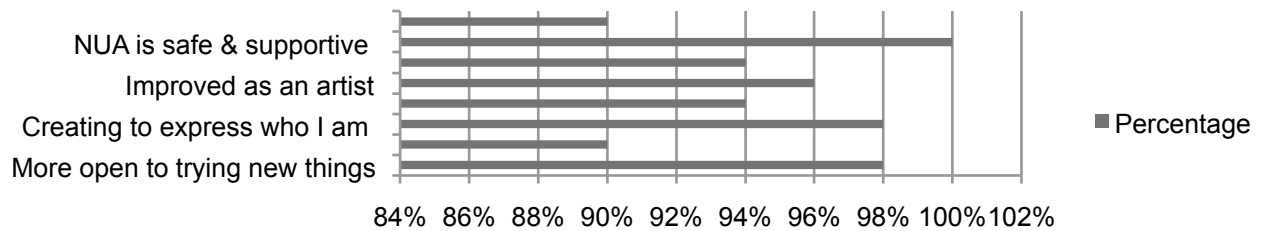
- 25.6% of students identified as LGBTQQ
- 71.1% qualified for free or reduced-price lunch.
Free lunch is for students from households at or below 130% of the poverty line; *reduced-price lunch* is for students from households between 130% and 185% of poverty. For a household of four with two children in Providence, 185% of poverty means subsisting on less than \$43,700 per year.
- 76.44% live in zip codes 02905, 02907, 02908, or 02909, where, collectively, the poverty rate for families with children is 33%, over twice the national rate.

Year End Student Survey Results

Fifty students completed our online end-of-year survey. The percent agreeing/strongly agreeing with each statement was as follows:

- I am more open to trying new things: 98%
- I have developed more confidence: 90%
- I have developed a way of creating that expresses who I am: 98%
- I have built strong, trusting relationships with my peers and artist mentor: 94%
- I have improved as an artist: 96%
- I have developed a better idea of what I want to do in the future: 94%
- I feel New Urban Arts is a supportive and safe environment: 100%
- 90% of students rate New Urban Arts programs “outstanding.”

Student Survey



Do you like working with an Artist Mentor?

- *I really enjoyed the mentors this year. The mentors were super helpful and I was able to pursue different mediums. I also really enjoyed the new music programs that we have here in the studio. It was really nice to hear people creating music and I was really happy for my fellow students who felt very proud of the music that they created themselves.*
- *I like working with artist mentors because it gives me chance to connect with young adults in a way I wouldn't have a chance to otherwise. They've also been in the same position as most of the students so we get to talk with them about stuff our parents might not have experienced, remember, or necessarily wanted to talk to us about.*
- *Yes, because they give you creative ideas and are respectful and feel like you're talking to a young adult*
- *I like working with an artist mentor because I like having someone to back me up. It's fun to find an artist mentor who enjoys doing what you do. We get to share ideas and have each other's support.*
- *Yes I do, since it gives me the opportunity to talk to someone from outside school and home, someone with an open mind/ free going.*

What does New Urban Arts mean to you?

- *New Urban Arts is a safe space for me. It's a family, it's shelter, it's love. Everything you need you can find here. Whether its inspiration, art, support, you can find it here. It's like a big happy family that is full of extremely talented artists. What more can you ask for?*
- *It means a safe place. Somewhere that no one can judge or be judged.*
- *New Urban Arts means everything to me. Without N.U.A I wouldn't be able to be the artist that I am and I wouldn't be able to be as confident as I am. Without N.U.A I wouldn't be able to have to confidence to be free and feel good about myself and love everybody around me no matter who they are. I don't know where I'd be and who I'd be without N.U.A and I sure as heck don't want to know. I LOVE THIS PLACE IT IS EVERYTHING.*
- *A place where weird yet interesting people come together to make art.*

life. Mostly that's from the support. I don't know if I would have developed seriously as an artist if it weren't for the support and variety of beautiful creation that comes out of NUA and I'm forever grateful for that.

Postsecondary Transition and College Enrollment

This year New Urban Arts had a large and active senior class. New Urban Arts invited 44 of those students to be recognized at its year-end graduation ceremony; all successfully completed high school, and 35 are headed to college.

Six of our seniors were eligible to participate in our College Visions partnership based on socioeconomic and educational criteria. College Visions (CV) is a Providence-based nonprofit organization focused on college access and success for first generation college students from low-income households. CV was founded by an alumni artist mentor, Simon Moore. Seniors participate in intensive college advising and placement. Seniors who have participated at New Urban Arts for one year are eligible to apply to participate. Since this partnership began, 98% of participants have successfully enrolled in college. This past year all six of our students successfully enrolled in colleges including The University of Rhode Island, Northeastern University, Community College of Rhode Island, and Lafayette College.

In addition to college advising, New Urban Arts hosted for the first time a “Not College Fair” in April 2014 to highlight post-secondary opportunities that don’t include college. Some of the presenters who attended included, AmeriCorps programs, YearUp, PeaceCorps, WWOOF, SAMI (a program of New England Tech that prepares unemployed Rhode Islanders to enter the marine and ship building industry), EMT, and Building Futures. 76 students attended from New Urban Arts, Youth Pride RI, and Everett Arts.

Gallery Attendance and Exhibitions

In addition to our core youth programs, New Urban Arts presented 20 public events ranging from small art workshops to artist talks to art exhibitions and student led events. During the 2013-2014 year we had a total of 2,102 people attend our events.

Beyond attendance and demographics, the various writing assignments that youth participants complete serve as a vital assessment tool. By insisting that youth reflect on their practice, we understand the extent to which they are building knowledge in the arts, and we understand the value of the mentoring relationships that they build with artists.

Studio Team Advisory Board:

This year we had an active Studio Team Advisory Board (STAB) which supported the organization during critical staff transitions. Of the twelve active participants on

STAB, nine were seniors, bringing with them extensive experience of the organization and a strong student voice. STAB met twice a month from October to May. During September they led the mentor selection process. STAB held a mid year retreat in February and an end of year retreat in June.

In addition to the student exhibitions of work, there were two student led events at New Urban Arts. One was the second annual Spring Into Hip Hop Cypher Jam in March, which was attended by 274 people, and coordinated by NUA Alumni Saulo Castillo. The other was a fundraising event for St. Baldericks, a childhood cancer research organization, and hosted by five NUA students who are also members of Classical High School's "Making a Difference (MAD)" Club. The St. Baldericks event engaged roughly 40 people.

Summer Programs:

Over the course of five weeks during the summer of 2013, New Urban Arts engaged 25 students in our summer programs. The summer program is treated as a rigorous internship, and students are paid a stipend of \$400 upon successful completion of one of three programs. The *Inquiry Group* consisted of 10 students, working around the theme "Faking It." They studied questions of forgery and imitation in the art world and beyond. In the *Untitlement Project*, 10 students explored identity, primarily through poetry, and five students on the *Mural Team* conceived and produced a large-scale mural for the side of our new building. In addition, New Urban Arts offered an Open Studio four days a week for two hours each day.

Students began the program with a full day orientation reviewing positive workplace behavior and expectations. The program met over five weeks, Monday-Thursday, 12:00 to 5:00pm July 8 - August 10, 2013. Students received free lunch every day through the Federal Summer Food Program and were provided RIPTA bus passes to and from the program each day.

Art Inquiry

The Art Inquiry theme for the summer was "Faking It." Through independent research, field trips and a mix of structured individual and group art making activities, ten students explored ideas of belief and doubt, forgery and fabrication, authenticity and authorship, lies and deception. They created counterfeit artifacts and learned tromp-l'oeil, they made replicas and reproductions, created parodies and mischief. They studied the art of illusion and hoax. Students visited the Glass Flower collection at the Harvard Museum of Natural History, created hoaxes at Narragansett Beach and presented workshops at Boston's Institute for Contemporary Art (ICA)'s Teen Night. The Art Inquiry program culminated in a public art exhibition in October 2013 that was attended by 127 people.

Untitlement Project

Ten students participated in the Untitlement Project, led by veteran Artist Mentors, Sydney Peak and Jorge Vargas students explored issues of gender, identity and

relationships. Through creative writing and conversation students exemplify inequities around language, power and privilege. The Untitlement Project hosted spoken word poets, Kevin Coval and Jamila Woods for an Open Mic night at New Urban Arts. In addition 70 people attended the Untitlement Project Showcase in August 2013.

Mural Team

Four students participated on the mural team, under the mentorship of Kedrin Frias. Students learned about the role of murals in the field of public art, practiced painting the inside of one of New Urban Art's bathrooms and completed a large scale public mural on the side of New Urban Arts building.

Progress Toward Youth Participant Objectives

To receive their \$400 stipend, youth participants must successfully complete both collaborative and independent art projects demonstrating their learning, meeting standards for success established by students, their artist mentors, the director of programs, and the youth programs manager. All participants in 2013 met the requirements to receive their stipends.

- *Students must complete collaborative and independent art projects to demonstrate their learning.* All students met this objective. Their work was exhibited at New Urban Arts in a public gallery show on October 4, 2013 for an audience of 127 people. Artwork from the exhibition can be seen here: <http://bit.ly/NuaOct2013>.

- *Students must write an artist statement to accompany their artwork or performance.*

All students met this objective; statements were displayed at the October show. Here are profiles of two students with excerpts from their artist statements:

- Axel Lozada was an incoming freshman at Classical High school this summer; the child of a single mother, he comes from a home where Spanish is the primary language spoken, and he identifies as multiracial. This summer, he explored drawing, watercolors and textile arts. His final project was a series of portraits of birds. Here is an excerpt from the artist statement for his piece *Half an Owl*:

"I am going to a new school and our mascot is the lady purple also Athena the goddess of wisdom. Athena is known to have an owl so I made a red owl. Owls are also known to be wise and people say I'm an old soul. I really like owls and so does my aunt so I was thinking of giving this to her as a gift. Also I found this cool mirror and I really wanted to make a symmetrical illusion with this piece. The mirror made the half of an owl make it look like a full owl."

- Yanine Castedo was an incoming sophomore at the MET High School. This summer, she learned both darkroom and digital photography. Her final piece, entitled simply *Domestic Partnership Abuse Photograph*, examined

the way that abusive relationships can hide in plain sight. Here is an excerpt from her artist statement:

“The couple you see look loving together. Her smile is socially acceptable to be considered happy. His facial expression fills with no doubt of happiness, not questioning the fact that maybe, just maybe their relationship could be a completely different story of what the photo shows. You see, sometimes in life we don’t see things that we should. Maybe a friend of yours could be depressed but you don’t know it. Perhaps they hide it too well. Or your next door neighbor could be going through the loss of a relative. You wouldn’t know, and who could blame you? Humans have a way of hiding things and not reaching out for help when needed, and it is an instinct I wanted to demonstrate using only a man and a woman. I hope that this sends a powerful message and that this helps folks open their minds a bit.”

- *In teams, students must plan and facilitate at least one public workshop presentation with a community partner.*

All students met this objective. In August 2012, students designed and facilitated workshops for the public at the Mount Hope Learning Center, a uniquely multi-generational community education center.

- *Students must fulfill attendance requirements.*

All students met this objective; the requirements are as follows:

- Students are allowed two excused absences.
- Excused absences beyond the first two have to be made up and verified by a New Urban Arts Staff member.
- Any unexcused absences must be made up and verified by a New Urban Arts Staff member.

Organizational Products

Based on this work of students and mentors in the Inquiry Group, our summer curriculum resource guide was completed in November; it is available here:

<http://bit.ly/NuaRG13>. The Mural Team’s new piece on the side of our building is visible here: <http://bit.ly/NuaMural>.

RIPQA

During the fall and winter, New Urban Arts underwent the RI Program Quality Assessment (RIPQA) process as a requirement of our 21st Century Community Learning Center grant. This process is a facilitated self evaluation of programs and included the participation of six staff members, two artist mentors, two students, one Arts Mentoring Fellow, one Board Member and one former Board Member and was facilitated by the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE)’s Program Quality Advisor, Shevaun Keogh-Walker.

Family and civic engagement, staffing and professional development and administration were all cited as strengths of the program. Areas identified for growth were:

- Expanding young people's understanding of post-secondary options and opportunities.
- Identifying potential partners and community resources in mental health to support youth and recent alumni
- Develop strategies to connect with alumni
- Clearly establish a parent policy in conjunction with the Studio Team Advisory Board.

New Staff

Executive Director Elia Gurna

BA, German and Visual Arts, Columbia University

MFA, Painting and Sculpture, Queens College, CUNY.

Elia Gurna is an artist and youth worker originally from Queens, NY and raised in Queens, Vienna, and Karachi. Her work has been included in exhibitions annually since 2001, including galleries in New York City, Beacon, NY, and Philadelphia. She is part of the music and poetry performance collaboration einLab, which was featured on Columbia University's WKCR's Live Constructions radio program and has performed live in various gallery and museum settings.

Elia has worked in youth programs for over 15 years in the United States and Europe. In New York, she founded and directed Art Without Limits, a program of Development Without Limits, which provided out of school time art experiences for youth. In this role, Elia also facilitated dozens of professional development workshops on onsite coaching for youth workers and educators on a range of topics including positive discipline and child and youth development.

As part of her mission to foster youth-led social change, Elia participated in Theater of the Oppressed trainings and became a Theater of the Oppressed Laboratory facilitator in 2011. She has since facilitated this work for Occupy activists and others. Elia has also taught German language courses at the university level.

Youth Programs Manager Ashley Paniagua

BA, Liberal Arts and Studio Art, Wheelock College, with certification in Community Based Human Services

As a student at New Urban Arts, Ashley Paniagua started a long tradition of New Urban Arts fashion shows. She graduated from Classical High School, and with help from College Visions, our college advising partner, she went on to study at the New School University, University of Hawaii and Wheelock College. She remained actively involved with New Urban Arts as an alumna, volunteering for various

events and working as staff during the 2009 Summer Youth Workforce Training Mural Program.

In 2010, Ashley moved to Honolulu, she worked at the Arc in Hawaii, a nonprofit providing services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities on the island of Oahu. She then took a position as a family services specialist at Help Understanding & Group Support, a nonprofit supporting families caring for children with chronic and life-threatening illness.

Director of Programs Emily Ustach

BA, Art History, Salem College

MA, Arts Education, RISD.

Emily Ustach has extensive professional experience in program design, non-profit administration, and art education, as well as a long history as a volunteer and part-time staffer at New Urban Arts. At the Learning Community Charter School in Central Falls, she developed and directed the Education Fellowship AmeriCorps program. She also worked as the Program Coordinator at Rhode Island Campus Compact, where she supported college students' civic and community engagement. Through her work with the Education Fellows and college students, she has built a practice of supporting emerging professionals as they take risks and explore future possibilities, making her ideal as a manager for our artist mentors.