

Legal Name

Mapp International Productions Inc

Project Title

To support a structural expansion, bringing more US artists and arts organizations into global cultural dialogue with communities on the African continent

Project Progress and Successes

In the second and final year of this Project (1/1 - 12/31/2014), MAPP facilitated six TACAC exchange residencies for a total of 18 residency weeks, established a working list of 32 U.S. Artist Affiliates, and produced a national tour of "Tales of Home: Congo/Mozambique", two solo dance pieces featuring Faustin Linyekula of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Panaibra Gabriel Canda of Mozambique.

I. ARTIST EXCHANGE RESIDENCIES: The exchange residencies carried out during the grant period were vibrant and productive, covering a range of artistic fields including dance, music, lighting design and theater.

- Yin Mei (NYC) and Vincent Mantsoe (Soweto) - July 2014 - Bates Dance Festival hosted Vincent Mantsoe (South Africa) in a month-long residency at their pre-eminent summer institute, where he was able to engage with a range of U.S. dance artists including New York-based choreographers Jennifer Nugent, Mark Dendy, David Dorfman and Yin Mei, with whom Mantsoe shared an evening of public performances. Yin Mei and Mantsoe, both of whom are deeply rooted in their respective cultures, made a strong connection and their performances were among the most critically acclaimed and generated much excitement among the Bates artistic community.
- Takahiro Yamamoto (Portland, OR) and Opiyo Okach (Nairobi, Kenya): For this exchange residency, Taka visited Nairobi from August 14th-27th. Taka and Opiyo first met through a TACAC residency at PICA in 2013. As choreographers, Taka and Opiyo's goals were not only to exchange aesthetics but also to work with dancers and involve other members of the artistic community in Nairobi. To that end, artists from Ga'ara Projects and GoDown Arts Centre participated in the exchange. Activities included informal rehearsals, classes and artistic dialogues as well as four "mini" public performances of Taka's work with the Kenyan dancers.
- Meryem Jazouli (Casablanca, Morocco) and Mamela Nyamza (Capetown): From September 9th- 21st these two choreographers traveled from their respective cities to Portland, Oregon for an exchange hosted by PICA to coincide with its Time-Based Art Festival (TBA Festival). The festival context led to a particularly robust exchange in which dozens of American artists were able to meet, speak and share work with their counterparts in Morocco and Capetown. Jazouli and Nyamza attended multiple performances at the festival and taught their own workshops; the nature of the exchange also allowed for many peer-to-peer exchanges, such as pot-luck dinners, structured post-show dialogues, and meetings with other presenters. Samita Sinha, Cynthia Hopkins and Jack Ferver were particularly active in this exchange and are now discussing the possibility of furthering the relationship.
- Lukas Ligeti (NYC/Johannesburg) and Panaibra Gabriel Canda (Maputo, Mozambique): This exchange, the third for this pair of artists, took place from September 15th - October 4th, with Lukas traveling to Maputo to continue their collaboration. In October 2013 they had begun an immersive sharing of musical and choreographic ideas, and used their 2014 residency to move forward with development of a new dance/theater piece based on Panaibra's choreography and Lukas' music composition. Since Panaibra also traveled to the

U.S. as part of the "Tales of Home" tour (see below), they were able to further work on the piece together.

- Carrie Wood (NYC) and Opiyo Okach (Nairobi, Kenya): Carrie, a lighting designer based in New York City, visited Opiyo in Nairobi from October 2nd - 19th. This was the second time they worked together; the first was at a TACAC exchange in the fall of 2013 at PICA, which began a partnership to work on Opiyo's "Body Evidence". Opiyo then invited Carrie to Nairobi to design lighting for the piece, which they worked on in lab workshops with Ga'ara Projects at GoDown Arts Centre. This piece is now complete and enjoying a European tour.

- Nora Chipaumire (NYC) and Pape Ibrahima Ndiaye "Kaolack" (Senegal): This choreographic exchange was originally conceived to be between Chipaumire and Nadia Beugré, but Nora and Ndiaye formed a partnership for her next project, "portrait of myself as my father", making this pairing a more effective and fruitful use of exchange time. Their three-week residency took place at Baryshnikov Arts Center in November 2014, where they began developing a dance vocabulary and structure for the work, followed by another residency at Miami Light Project. Nora and Kaolack traveled together to Senegal to work at École de Sables and they are currently in residency at MANCC in Florida. 651 Arts has committed to supporting "portrait" through a commission, and we are presently lining up a five-venue tour for 2016-17.

II. TALES OF HOME TOUR: In its role as General Manager of TACAC, MAPP produced a four-week national tour of "Tales of Home: Congo/Mozambique", comprised of a two-evening shared bill. The first evening featured Faustin Linyekula from Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, performing his solo dance/theater piece "Le Cargo", and Panaibra Gabriel Canda of Maputo, Mozambique, performing his dance/theater piece "Time & Spaces: The Marrabenta Solos". The production toured to four different venues in four different cities for a total of eight performances. Additionally, Faustin and Panaibra offered master classes at Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, NY and University of Florida in Gainesville, in which over 175 aspiring dancers got the unique opportunity to work with contemporary African choreographers for the first time.

The tour began at BRICArts Media in Brooklyn, presented in collaboration with 651Arts and MAPP, followed by Flynn Center for the Arts in Burlington, VT; Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, MN; and The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland in College Park, Maryland. MAPP worked with each venue to design and coordinate diverse public engagement activities around the performances, including master classes, post show Q & As, film screenings and receptions that invited other artists to the table. Aside from the primary venues, community engagement partners included Juxtaposition Arts, a Minneapolis-based community organization working for social change, and the dance departments at University of Vermont and University of Minnesota.

In many ways our expectations for the tour were surpassed. "The Marrabenta Solos" received a rave review in the New York Times after its premiere at BRIC, which also marked the first time 651Arts and BRIC collaborated on a production - a promising new relationship fostered by MAPP. New York-based artists were particularly receptive to the exchange - the tour kicked off with an afternoon of dialogue co-hosted by Movement Research, two days prior to the first performance, in which 23 artists took part. Later that evening, a welcome dinner at POCO in the East Village drew individuals including artists, educators, presenters and artists at various stages in their careers. The "Tales of Home" tour also brought national visibility to TACAC, garnering not just the NY Times review but

dozens of other articles, blog posts and reviews in other cities.

III. ARTIST AFFILIATES: During Year Two of the project we put together a geographically, ethnically and discipline-diverse list of 32 potential U.S. Artist Affiliates who will be invited to accompany various of TACAC's institutional members on their 2014-15 trips to the African continent. The list was assembled through elicited suggestions from TACAC members, each of whom identified artists in their communities who they felt would be a good match for the program, and spoke with them to determine their interest and availability. The list will continue to develop and adapt as specific trips are planned and travel cohorts are put together.

The potential list is as follows:

Kyle Abraham
Esther Baker-Tarpaga
Christiane Bouger
Michele Boulé
Ron Brown (music)
Nora Chipaumire (dance)
Ebony Noelle Golden
John Keith Hennessey
Tania Isaac
Baba Israel
Millicent Johnnie
Ralph Lemon
N'ia Love
Lukas Lugeti
Emily Mendelssohn
Bebe Miller
Okwui Okpokwasili
Cynthia Oliver
Sarah Pearson
Jenny Lucero Rivera
Kaneza Schaal
JoAnna Shaw
Samita Sihna
Somi
Amara Tabor-Smith
Olivier Tarpaga
David Thompson
David Thornton
Patrick Widrig
Carrie Wood
Takahiro Yamamoto
Jawole Willa Jo Zolar

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND IMPACT: Year 2 activities manifested the project's goals of facilitating and fostering connections between American artists working in the U.S. and their artistic peers in African countries, not only enriching their artistic breadth but also making it possible for American audiences to experience art they may never otherwise have encountered. In order to evaluate our success we used tools ranging from written

reports by the participants to audience surveys, social media engagement and new inquiries from professional artists and presenters.

Each of the exchange artists completed a written report, and some also blogged about their residencies on the TACAC website (www.africaconsortium.org). Two of the four venues also completed reports and shared their publicity and promotional materials, as did a number of artist and audience participants who posted photos and anecdotes. Please see below for excerpts from the formal and informal feedback we received. While artistic enrichment can be hard to quantify, this year's residencies evidenced the creation of new relationships and the deepening of others, resulting in no fewer than three new high-profile collaborative works between African and American artists that are planning (or embarking) on a tour of the U.S., Europe and Africa. These include "Body Evidence", "portrait of my father as myself", and Ligeti and Canda's as-yet unnamed work. TACAC also provided opportunities for American artists to come together with each other, in the context of exchanges with artists from the African continent. For example, Takahiro Yamamoto and Carrie Wood conferred and shared stories about their time in Nairobi, and the artists involved in the Bates and PICA Festivals took advantage of informal down-time to exchange ideas, techniques and approaches with their African counterparts.

Following are some final report quotes from artists and presenters:

"Outside of the actual work time, we often talked a lot....we have this beautiful rapport and curiosity toward each other." - Taka Yamamoto

"I pretty much thought I would be watching and observing all day but after class they pulled me right in to join the discussion and critique... I wasn't just the Lighting Designer watching rehearsal, I was fully immersed in the process. So rare." - Carrie Wood

"One of the positive outcomes of the exchange, aside from introducing new creative voices to the Portland/TACAC presenting community, was to create the space for both artists to familiarize themselves with each other's work. They both expressed that they loved seeing multi-disciplinary work and they made many connections at these activities that carried beyond the residency." - Angela Mattox, PICA

"While the contemporary dance landscape has vastly expanded and grown since my initial visits to Dar es Salaam through TACAC in 2011, contemporary dancers and choreographers would benefit from more exchange, mentorship opportunities and infrastructural support." - Nora Chipaumire

"I absolutely love the fact that everyone either shakes hands or hugs good morning. Every morning. It seems like such a simple gesture, but it is a great way to start the day and break the ice. I wish this were more common at home." - Carrie Wood

"Towards the end of the feedback session, one dancer asked if I would come back to Kenya because "usually guest artists don't really come back." [...] Our intention is to continue this conversation. This is just a beginning." - Taka Yamamoto

Challenges / Obstacles / Failures Encountered in the Project

Outside of the obstacles in Year 1, namely the complexity of devising a system to involve U.S. artists on the research trips and process-based work of the Consortium, we did not experience any direct challenges or failures in Year Two of the project.

Although attendance was underwhelming at the New York presentation of "Tales from Home" at 651 Arts, the response from the other presenters -- Burlington, Minneapolis, College Park, and Gainesville -- was superlative. Notably, none of these had presented African artists before.

What was learned from these that might be of benefit to others?

We continue to be surprised--and delighted--to learn about the many U.S. artists who are thinking deeply about working globally, and who are already launching projects on the African continent; some independently, some with the support of a college or university. This process has opened our eyes to the exchanges that are already taking place, leading us to ask where TACAC fits into this bigger picture. We also look forward to sharing the participants' comments, above, which indicate how important and valuable artists and presenters have found the opportunity to engage in dialogue and exchange with their artistic peers, not just around general cultural issues but around technique, craft and approach to the work, whether it be dance, music, theater or design.

Links to relevant website(s) and/or project publications, reports, etc.

www.africaartsconsortium.org

New York Times review of "Tales of Home": <http://nyti.ms/1wYO3aR>

If someone wishes to speak with your organization further about your project, would there be a willing contact? Y/N

If yes, please provide contact name and information for preferred method of contact (email, phone, etc).

Yes - Cathy Zimmerman, cathy@mappinternational.org or (646) 602-9390.