

UGA Arts Collaborative Annual Report FY2026

I. OVERVIEW

Mission

The UGA Arts Collaborative is a catalyst for innovative, interdisciplinary creative projects, advanced research and critical discourse in the arts, and for creative applications of technologies, concepts, and practices found across disciplines. It is a collaborative network of faculty, students, and community members from all disciplines of the visual and performing arts in addition to other disciplines in the humanities and sciences. The Arts Collaborative enables all stages of creative activity, from concept and team formation through production, documentation, and dissemination of research.

Support

The UGA Arts Collaborative is supported by Franklin College of Arts and Sciences, the Office of Research, the Willson Center for Humanities and Arts, and the Graduate School. Additional support for the Arts Collaborative has been provided by the National Science Foundation, Lamar Dodd School of Art, Dance, Theatre and Film, English, Hugh Hodgson School of Music, Morehead Honors College, Center for Undergraduate Research Opportunities, Georgia Museum of Art, and the generous volunteer and financial support of many others.

History

The UGA Arts Collaborative began in 1999 as a series of conversations among faculty and students throughout the university and local community to address the need for a program that would support collaboration in the arts. Seed grant funding from the Office of the Provost enabled the launch of a summit in 2001 that brought together a group of national and international artists interested in issues of collaboration and new forms of art, often involving multiple disciplines. Known then as Ideas for Creative Exploration, the group developed original projects and events, hosted visiting artists and scholars, held workshops, published websites, and established a campus office.

Governance

David Saltz is the Executive Director and Mark Callahan is the Artistic Director of the Arts Collaborative.

The Advisory Board consists of the Executive Director and thirteen members appointed by the Executive Director for a three-year renewable term. The Advisory Board includes at least one student representative.

The following Advisory Board members served in FY26:

Anna Abraham (Torrance Center)
Melisa "Misha" Cahnmann-Taylor (Education)
Chris Cuomo (Women's Studies/Philosophy)
Broderick Flanigan (Athens community)
Connie Frigo (James Madison University X-Labs)
David T. Gay (Mathematics)
Rebecca Gose (Dance)
Moon Jung Jang (Art)
Peter Van Zandt Lane (Music)
T. Anthony Marotta (Theatre and Film)

Meredith Welch-Devine (Graduate School)
Andrew Zawacki (English)
Maddy Underwood (Student Representative)

See **Appendix A** for the Arts Collaborative Bylaws.

Graduate Assistantships in Interdisciplinary Arts Research

UGA offers Graduate School Assistantships to students entering programs in Art, Music, and Theatre and Film following a highly qualified student's nomination by their home department. These competitive, merit-based awards support collaborative research between the arts and other disciplines. Recipients of these assistantships work in a cohort of graduate students with the Arts Collaborative.

Assistantship recipients receive two years of funding from the Graduate School, followed by a third year of funding from the appropriate home department in the form of a Departmental Assistantship.

The current graduate assistants are Richie Arndorfer (Music), Eve Brown (Art), Jet Stephen Chong (Music), Amir Akbarpour Shiraz (Theatre and Film), Maddy Underwood (Art), and Jennifer Leigh Whitehead (Theatre and Film).

Graduate assistants starting in August 2026 are Julien Berger (Music), Mingjun Han (Theatre and Film), and Edward Hemphill (Art).

See **Appendix B** for a report of Graduate Assistant activities.

Partnerships

The Willson Center for Humanities and Arts is a showcase for faculty innovation and achievement. It facilitates intellectual exchange with the University and the public by the encouragement of interdisciplinary activity, which extends to the sciences and other orders of knowledge. The mission of the Willson Center is to promote research and creativity in the humanities and arts. It supports faculty through research grants, lectures, symposia, publications, visiting scholars, visiting artists, collaborative instruction, public conferences, exhibitions, and performances. It is committed to academic excellence and public impact.

UGA is an institutional member of the Alliance for the Arts in Research Universities (a2ru), an organization that advances the full range of arts-integrative research, curricula, programs, and creative practice to acknowledge, articulate, and expand the vital role of higher education in our global society. a2ru envisions a world in which universities – students, faculty, and leaders – acknowledge, deeply embed, and seamlessly integrate the arts in the pursuit of basic knowledge and in everyday practice.

The Arts Collaborative student organization is registered with the Student Affairs department of Engagement, Leadership, and Service. It is a network of graduate and undergraduate students interested in interdisciplinary arts collaboration. Members plan events and creative projects. The Artistic Director serves as an advisor to the student organization.

The Center for Integrative Conservation Research (CICR) mission is to advance new visions for conservation and environmental governance that are more just and more effective in creating the conditions in which all life can thrive, through innovations in graduate education, research and societal engagement that embrace multiple ways of knowing and relating to the world around us.

The UGA Office of Sustainability coordinates, communicates, and advances initiatives in teaching, research, service, student engagement, and campus operations. In alignment with UGA's Great Commitments to create healthier populations; stronger, more resilient communities; and a safer,

more secure future for all; our sustainability initiatives provide meaningful experiential learning for students and valuable support for the communities we serve.

In collaboration with the UGA Office of Sustainability, JW Fanning Institute for Leadership Development, and the UGA Arts Collaborative, the Sustainability Leadership Program enriches UGA staff members to strengthen sustainability knowledge, grow as leaders, connect with peers, and create positive change.

II. PROJECTS and EVENTS

Math and Design

GROVI (Geometry, Research, Outreach and Visualization Initiative) is supported by the National Science Foundation Research Training Groups in the Mathematical Sciences (RTG) program (\$2,497,014). The initiative engages students and faculty in math and design led by Arts Collaborative advisory board members David T. Gay and Moon Jang.

The award supports the research training of postdoctoral researchers, PhD students, and undergraduates in the mathematics department working in three closely related geometric areas: algebraic geometry, symplectic geometry and low-dimensional topology. The training includes collaborative seminars, outreach and visualization projects, summer schools, visiting speakers, and research working groups.

Jang and Gay began their collaboration with the support of the Arts Collaborative, producing a 2017 workshop called *Unsolved: Math+Design* and a Math Outreach Design Lab and exhibition.

Enhancing imaginative and collaborative STEM capacity through creative inquiry

Project team members Kathryn Roulston (Education), Kwame Acheampong (Education), Mark Callahan (Art), Elizabeth King (Ecology/Forestry), and Nathan Nibbelink (Forestry) published “Producing Trustworthiness in Studying What Works in Heterodox Curricular Interventions” in the peer-reviewed journal, *Qualitative Inquiry*. The project was supported by an Innovations in Graduate Education (IGE) award from the National Science Foundation (\$499,835).

The *Creativity and Collaboration* workshop continued in fall 2025 in partnership with the UGA GradFIRST program. Creativity and collaboration are fundamental to addressing today’s socio-environmental challenges. The workshops included arts-based, STEM-friendly activities developed by UGA researchers from the arts, humanities, and sciences designed to help students to think creatively, to collaborate across disciplines, and to work with people with different perspectives, knowledge, and values.

The National Science Foundation award allowed the team to study the effectiveness of the workshops and to generate the knowledge required to move these approaches into the broader community.

Organoids

The *Organoids* team of artists and scientists received a 2023 Mini Grant to develop prototypes and arts-integrative methods to create organoids, three-dimensional cellular structures which are developed from pluripotent stem cells. In FY26 they continued research with support from the National Science Foundation.

Organoid structures are of interest in seeking solutions for problems including adrenal gland insufficiency, understanding human embryonic development, and how hormone regulation

impacts diseases such as PTSD. The team includes faculty and students in art, dance, molecular medicine, engineering, animal science, and cellular biology.

Project leader Nadja Keltner is supported by an NSF CAREER grant for multi-year support of engineering next-generation adrenal gland organoids with arts-integrated methods.

Circular UGA

The Office of Sustainability leads an interdisciplinary experiential learning initiative to foster a culture of sustainability through waste reduction with campus partners including the Arts Collaborative. The UGA campus functions as a living laboratory to support teaching, research, service and outreach, student engagement, and operational innovations toward a circular economy. Students, faculty, staff, and external partners work together to significantly reduce landfilled waste through projects implemented during this three-year program.

HeartSong

HeartSong project team members Jeanne Marie Martineau and Richie Arndorfer presented their research at the 2025 a2ru national conference in Madison, Wisconsin. The student project team was supported by an a2ru Challenge Grant (\$5,000) to build a group-based singing biofeedback system that translates heart rate variability data into images and is used to compose music in real time to explore the intersection of bioscience, electroacoustic composition, music therapy, and generative art.

Project Team

Richie Arndorfer (Music)

Eliana Gelman (Art and Cognitive Science)

Jeanne Marie Martineau (Art)

Nicholas Myers (Biochemistry and Molecular Biology/Applied Mathematics)

Malady Mysteries Project

The *Malady Mysteries Project* is an inquiry into the intersections of medicine, history, and performance. Supported by a 2024 Arts Collaborative Mini Grant, the team created an interactive mystery that takes place in the early 1890s, a dynamic time where the development of the mystery genre, modern medicine, women's rights, and modern policing were emerging together.

Team member Jennifer Marks published "Reflecting on the Process: Devising an Interactive Murder Mystery Using Medical Improv" in the *Etudes* theatre and performance studies journal. The project was featured in a presentation at the Applied Improvisation Network (AIN) virtual conference, and will be included in the Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) conference "Resisting Medical Identities" panel session, and the poster "Co-Creating the Malady Mysteries Project: Transformational Learning Leads to Shifts in Educational and Clinical Practice" will be included in the International Transformative Learning Conference.

Project MACAW: Managing Avian Collisions at Windows

Project MACAW was supported by the Vertically Integrated Projects for Research (VIPR) program to identify hotspots and timing of lethal bird collisions with windows on the UGA campus. Students and faculty investigated the ecological and design drivers of collisions; developed education programming for UGA students, staff, and faculty about the issue; developed monitoring protocols; and proposed solutions to prevent collisions by engaging with multiple stakeholders at UGA, NGOs and industry.

The VIPR program is an initiative of the Office of Instruction that supports collaborative, interdisciplinary research teams that include undergraduate researchers, their faculty mentors, and other scientists such as graduate students, postdoctoral associates, and faculty collaborators. VIPR teams engage UGA students in long-term, large-scale, multidisciplinary research as they work alongside faculty and graduate students to solve real-world challenges.

Team Leads: Richard Hall (Ecology), Clark Rushing (Forestry and Natural Resources), Susan Tanner (Anthropology), Jon Calabria (Environment and Design), Mark Callahan (UGA Arts Collaborative), Michael Marshall (Art/Ecology)

Arts Collaborative Conversation: Malady Mysteries
Friday, September 26, 2025

Grace Snuggs (Augusta University and UGA Medical Partnership) and Jennifer Marks (Pharmacy/VetMed) presented the *Malady Mysteries Project*, a collaboration of medical students and experts in theatre, improv, and gender studies. This interactive murder mystery set in the 1890s blends dramaturgy, feminist praxis, and historical research to examine gender, class, disability, and medicine. How does embodying different roles impact empathy? The *Malady Mysteries Project* is supported in part by the UGA Arts Collaborative. Hosted by the Arts Collaborative student organization.

The Living Forest Events
Monday, October 13, 2025

The Living Forest: A Proposal for Indigenous-Led Conservation and Climate Change Mitigation

Tulio Viteri, an indigenous leader from the Kichwa community of Sarayaku in the Ecuadorian Amazon, gave a presentation on the Living Forest Proposal, a grassroots initiative for Indigenous-led conservation and climate change mitigation.

Film Screening and Q&A with Director Eriberto Gualinga

Helena from Sarayaku depicts Sarayaku's struggle against environmental degradation in their territory. Traveling between her life in Finland and her mother's homeland deep in the rainforests of Ecuador, 17-year-old Helena Gualinga yearns to protect her Indigenous community from extractive development and the repercussions of climate change.

Eriberto Gualinga is an award-winning Indigenous filmmaker from the Ecuadorian Amazon. He has a degree in cinema from the University of the Arts in Guayaquil, Ecuador and has been documenting the landscapes, livelihoods, and political struggles of his native village of Sarayaku for almost two decades.

Sponsors: Department of Anthropology, The Willson Center for Humanities and Arts, Office of Sustainability, Latin American and Caribbean Studies Institute, Center for Integrative Conservation Research, UGA Arts Collaborative, Department of Sociology, School of Public and International Affairs, Department of Geography, Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, Department of Romance Languages, Department of International Affairs, Dean Rusk International Law Center, Office of Global Engagement, Department of Theatre and Film, Center for the Study of Global Issues, Department of Entertainment and Media Studies, The Luminous Room Documentary Film Production Program at UGA, The Gable Foundation, and the Native American Student Association with additional thanks to Ciné.

Arts Collaborative Conversation: Maddy Underwood

Friday, October 10, 2025

Arts Collaborative Graduate Assistant Maddy Underwood gave a presentation about her summer research in Marblehead, Massachusetts supported by a Willson Center Graduate Research Award. There she investigated the history of Marblehead Handprints, a textile company founded in 1971 by two young mothers, and its role in translating Scandinavian modernist textiles like Marimekko for American consumers. Hosted by the Arts Collaborative student organization.

Arts Collaborative Conversation: Arts Funding Trends

Friday, November 14, 2025

What is the future of arts funding? Graduate assistants in interdisciplinary arts research presented a report about trends in arts funding based on recent data from Creative Capital, MAP Fund, South Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, Grantmakers in the Arts, and Americans for the Arts. Hosted by the Arts Collaborative student organization. This event was part of the UGA Spotlight on the Arts festival.

Lyrriic Jackson Events

Performance and Workshop

Thursday, February 5, 2026

Visiting artist Lyrriic Jackson performed an excerpt from *The Last Rest Stop Before Jupiter*, followed by audience discussion and a mini workshop in breathwork and movement syncing. Co-hosted by the UGA Arts Collaborative and the Department of Dance.

Arts Collaborative Conversation: Lyrriic Jackson

Friday, February 6, 2026

Visiting artist Lyrriic Jackson shared insights from her practice about creativity, leadership, and collaboration. Co-hosted by the Arts Collaborative student organization and the Student Composers Association in the Dancz Center for New Music.

Lyrriic Jackson is an American multidisciplinary artist, educator, and data scientist. She is the Founder and Artistic Director of Lyrriic Jackson Dance Company, a Lecturer of Dance Performance and Choreography at Spelman College, an Atlanta University Center Consortium Data Science Initiative Faculty Affiliate, a Spelman Faculty CODE Scholar, a Certified Data Carpentries Instructor, and a Sloan Data Science Faculty Fellow. Her work extends to local and global arts and educational institutions, including Brenau University, Emory University, and Mashirika Performing Arts in Kigali, Rwanda. She received her BA in Drama/Dance Concentration from Spelman College and holds an MA in Arts Administration and an MFA in LXFM from the Savannah College of Art and Design.

Arts Collaborative Conversation: Benjamin Wolff

Friday, January 30, 2026

Benjamin Wolff virtually joined the Arts Collaborative for an informal conversation about creative leadership. He is a New York City-based writer, speaker, and cellist who has been a Forbes Leadership contributor since 2017, reporting on insights for business from the world of the arts. Wolff graduated from Columbia University with a degree in history and studied cello and chamber music at the Juilliard School and Rice University. He is the author of *The Value of Immeasurable Things: Why the Arts—and Artists—Are Essential to the Future of Work*. Hosted by the Arts Collaborative student organization.

Quantum Castle

February 5-March 20, 2026

Lamar Dodd School of Art Suite Gallery

Quantum Castle was coordinated by Arts Collaborative Research Affiliate Jeanne Marie Martineau and featured artists Adah Bennion, Eve Brown, Brian George, Jana Ghezawi, Clara-Beth Hamill, and Maddy Underwood.

Inside *Quantum Castle* each work of art becomes an exploratory site where visitors become participants in the experience rather than observers. The experience is a sensorial place of play and rest that offers relief from institutions and world events. It cultivates presence and connection, empowering visitors to carry wonder and appreciation back into their daily lives and communities.

Quantum Castle reflects philosopher Glen Mazis' belief that "philosophy should be a work of imagination, fun, and excitement, dreaming new possible worlds by transforming the one we have always loved."

Arts Collaborative Conversation: Sustainability in the Arts

Friday, February 27, 2026

How can artistic practices and lives become more sustainable? What are some creative ways to engage with Circular UGA? Artist Gabrielle Gagné led a conversation about materials, processes, and sustainability practice in the arts. Gagné explores materials and bodily limits, focusing on what can be found and reused rather than bought. Gabrielle Gagné is a French-Canadian papermaker and MFA student in the Lamar Dodd School of Art. They hold an interdisciplinary bachelor's degree from Bishop's University and the University of Sherbrooke in Quebec. Hosted by the Arts Collaborative student organization.

Composer x Researcher Collaborative Concert

Saturday, February 28, 2026

Featured in the 2026 Integrative Conservation Conference, a place for collective learning and collaboration, bringing students, researchers, and practitioners together to share their work with each other. With this year's theme of "Centering Community," we hope to foster spaces where we can engage with the varied human, more-than-human, and beyond-human communities – communities of people, plants, wildlife, fungi, microbes, and beyond. We also hope to foster dialogue across natural and social sciences, humanities, and the arts, highlighting interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and antidisciplinary approaches to conservation and environmental research.

Land: Richard Arndorfer + Bruno Ubiali and Wezddy Del Toro Orozco

Water: Jared Tubbs + Jon Calabria

Fire: Sydney Passmore + Tommy Cabe, Eileen Joseph, and Aharna Sarkar

Entanglement: Logan Wynns and Akanksha

Murmurations Reimagined: envisioned by Liz Osbourn and performed by the Athens Dance Collective

2026 sponsors and collaborators: the Owens Institute for Behavioral Research, the UGA Arts Collaborative, Graduate School, Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, Odum School of Ecology, Department of Anthropology, and the Department of Geography, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and the ICON Student Organization.

Tapestries of Transmission

March 19-April 3, 2026

Lamar Dodd School of Art C-U-B-E Gallery

Work by Maddy Underwood | Sounds by Malik Henry

Tapestries of Transmission is an installation of soft sculptures composed of repeating modules. Beginning from a singular geometric form, the modules multiply into columns and sprawling forms that threaten to overtake— or be overtaken. Embedded light and sound activate the forms from within, forming a transmitted language decipherable only to the modular units. Here, geometry behaves less like a fixed outcome and more like a living organism: shapes shift between organic and columnar, accumulating rigidity or softness.

UGA Entomology Live Insect Zoo Grand Reopening

Wednesday, April 15, 2026

The UGA Insect Zoo houses a variety of arthropods from around the world. The UGA Entomology department teamed up with students from the Scientific Illustration program in the School of Art to create installations as part of the newly renovated Insect Zoo. The dynamic space helps to educate and inspire visitors from as diverse of backgrounds as the bugs that are modeled. Supported in part by an Arts Collaborative Mini Grant.

Arts Collaborative Conversation: Art-Science Integration

Friday, April 17, 2026

How are university research programs supporting the integration of art and science? Mary Beth Leigh, Lissy Goralnik, and Megan Halpern virtually joined the Arts Collaborative for an informal conversation about convergent research and collaboration. Leigh (University of Alaska Fairbanks) and Goralnik (Michigan State University) direct the In a Time of Change (ITOC) project, an incubator for advancing environmentally focused art-science integration in Alaska. ITOC is supported by the National Science Foundation, USDA Forest Service, and the Bonanza Creek Long-Term Ecological Research Program in Alaska. Halpern and Goralnik are leaders of the Center for Interdisciplinary Research, Collaboration, Learning, and Engagement (CIRCLE) program at Michigan State University. CIRCLE launched in the fall of 2023 to build community, provide training and support for interdisciplinary activities, and conduct research on interdisciplinarity. Hosted by the Arts Collaborative student organization.

Digital Diaspora Events

Monday, April 20, 2026

The *Digital Diaspora* project, supported by the Arts Collaborative Mini Grant program, explores the intersection of technology and live performance through a new piece for the UGA Wind Symphony in collaboration with composer Dr. Marie A. Douglas.

Dr. Marie A. Douglas discussion and Q&A

Dr. Douglas spoke about her new composition and provided perspectives on music education and performance of new band music.

UGA Wind Symphony

UGA Performing Arts Center

Marie A. Douglas, a composer hailing from Atlanta, has garnered widespread acclaim for her exceptional talent in seamlessly blending genres and textures within her captivating concert stage pieces. Her music serves as a profound reflection of her inner-city upbringing and her diverse musical experiences, infusing a genuine and authentic essence into each composition. Douglas draws significant inspiration from the African Diaspora, effectively integrating elements of hip-

hop and western art music idioms to create compositions that resonate with a wide range of audiences. With her works captivating concert-goers across the United States and Canada, Marie's artistry extends beyond the stage as she collaborates with various ensembles and lends her creative prowess to the world of film music, as well as hip hop and r&b.

Soul Suite No. 2: A Modular Suite is a multi-movement work for winds that integrates electronic and visual media with audience participation to expand the traditional concert experience. Drawing on a wide spectrum of Afro-diasporic musical styles, each movement offers a distinct sound world: *Licks n Hits* delivers a high-energy, funk-inspired brass and percussion fanfare rooted in the composer's childhood memories and the influence of bands like *Earth, Wind & Fire*; *Sweet Potato Pie* blends acoustic ensemble with electronic accompaniment in a dynamic, roller-coaster-like form full of shifting textures and climactic moments; *10972018Z* explores nuanced, groove-driven textures that evolve from intimate, smoky sonorities into the bold, visceral energy of HBCU marching band traditions; and *For What Shall It Profit a Man...?* reimagines the spiritual *Give Me Jesus* for woodwinds and percussion, building from delicate arpeggios to a hypnotic, reflective climax. Together, the movements create an immersive, community-centered work that celebrates memory, culture, and sonic innovation.

Co-hosted by the UGA Collegiate National Association for Music Education and the UGA Arts Collaborative.

Listen Athens

Monday, May 4, 2026

What would Athens tell you if you truly listened? *Listen Athens* is a project developed through recording, mapping, and archiving the soundscapes of Athens-Clarke County. The project takes shape as an interactive website that invites visitors to explore Athens through sound. Join us to meet the team behind the project and listen in. Supported in part by an Arts Collaborative Mini Grant.

Mini Grants

The Arts Collaborative student organization facilitates a mini grant program to emphasize project development through mentorship, flexible funding, and creative feedback. Collaborative teams must include participants from multiple disciplines and include at least one student, faculty, or staff member from UGA.

Insect Zoo Mural Collaboration

The UGA Entomology department is teaming up with students from the Scientific Illustration program to create installations as part of the newly renovated Insect Zoo. This project seeks to connect the skills of scientific illustrators with the knowledge of entomologists to create a dynamic space that helps to educate and inspire visitors from as diverse of backgrounds as the bugs that are modeled.

Project Team

Kelly Carruthers (Entomology)

Amanda Manowski (Art)

Malcolm Peavy (Entomology)

Seraphina Edwards (Art)

Kayla Schlueter (Art)

Mariah Yori (Art)

Reclaiming Trees

This interdisciplinary project proposes to repurpose downed and salvage trees from UGA's campus into usable wood products for students, faculty, community stakeholders to fostering sustainable practices and creative innovation. Currently, large woody debris is tub-ground for mulch, a process that emits greenhouse gases and forfeits the opportunity to create high-value products. By redirecting this material into furniture-making, sculpture, and other art projects, we advance the Circular UGA initiative and reduce emissions associated with grinding and purchasing commercial lumber.

Project Team

Jon Calabria (College of Environment + Design)
Mickey Boyd (Art)
Joe Dahlen (Forestry)
Lili Cai (Forestry)
Chris Peterson (Plant Biology)
Dave Long (Forestry)
Cam Bergland (College of Environment + Design)
Royce Dingley (Grounds Department)

Digital Diaspora

The project will explore the intersection of AI and live performance through a piece for the Wind Symphony that utilizes AI. With AI quickly becoming part of the conversation in music, this project brings that energy into the band world in a creative way.

Project Team

Jack Eaddy (Music)
Alvin Crews (Enterprise Information Technology Services)
Marie Douglas (composer)

Sound, Music, and the Environment: Mapping Acoustic Ecologies in Athens

This project develops acoustic recordings as rich interdisciplinary resources that generate knowledge across scientific, humanistic, and creative fields. Athens-Clarke County's soundscapes become data for ecological analysis, source material for musical composition, and baseline documentation for tracking environmental change.

Project Team

Jared Holton (Music)
Peter Van Zandt Lane (Music)
James A. Owen (Institute of Native American Studies)
Allison Injaian (Ecology)

Free Rein: A neuroscientific examination of creative brains interacting in real time through hyperscanning during musical concert performances

Free Rein is a collaboration between expert faculty from across five institutions representing the disciplines of neuroscience, biomedical engineering, music, dance, and digital art, where the goal of the project is to investigate the neural dynamics of musical and kinesthetic creativity in a real-world setting. Brain data will be gathered at rehearsals and nine live performances, making this

the most extensive longitudinal neuroimaging study of creativity ever conducted that involves hyperscanning, which is a neuroscientific technique featuring the simultaneous recording of the brain activity of two or more interacting people.

Project Team

Tyson Jordan (Psychology)
Anna Abraham (Torrance Center)
Anthony Brandt (Rice University)
Andrew Nordin (University of Houston)
Badie Khaleghian (Bowdoin College)

Art, Philosophy, and Awkwardness

This project proposes to explore awkwardness, especially the aesthetic and artistic dimensions of awkwardness, through a collaborative and creative research process involving a dialogue between philosophy, social psychology, and dance.

Project Team

Aaron Meskin (Philosophy)
Rebecca Gose (Dance)
Candy Beers (Human Development and Family Science)
Maryn Whitmore (Athens community)

Research Affiliates

Saurabh Anand
PhD student, English / Assistant Director, The Jill and Marvin Willis Center for Writing

Saurabh Anand | सौरभ आनंद is a queer, multilingual scholar, poet, and administrator whose work centers on questions of equity, multilingualism, and global rhetorical traditions in writing studies. His scholarship and creative work are animated by a belief that writing centers, classrooms, and scholarly communities can be sites of resistance and reimagination where queer, transnational, and multilingual writerly voices and experiences are valid expressions to research and the US community's imagination.

Samuel Horgan
MFA student, Art

Samuel Horgan is a sculptor, researcher, and new media artist working through American themes of dread, doom, ecstasy, paranoia. Born and raised in Western Pennsylvania and a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University, his practice draws on the concerns of community, history, ecology, and labor across an idiosyncratic variety of physical and performance media.

Lizzie King
Associate Professor, Odum School of Ecology / Warnell School of Forestry & Natural Resources

Lizzie King conducts research in three main areas of sustainability science. One area focuses on challenges faced by livestock-herding societies in rural Africa, combining ecology and social science to gain a more holistic view of livelihood vulnerability. The second area is restoration ecology in Georgia, including barrier islands of Georgia's coast and urban forests in Athens. Thirdly, she studies the value and practices of interdisciplinary and academic/non-academic partnerships in sustainability research.

Jeanne Marie Martineau
MFA student, Art

Jeanne Marie Martineau is a French-American transdisciplinary artist and facilitator who weaves various mediums of object making, writing, dream tending, song, and sound meditation into a unified peace practice and experiences of artistic self-discovery for others.

Peter Underhill
DMA student, Music

Peter Underhill is a composer and pianist from Eastern Washington whose work uses creative constraint techniques to arrive at surprising yet organic musical materials. He started composing in middle school as an antidote to boredom and found his interest in constraint techniques and computer-assisted composition after reading too many books on the history of mathematics.

Conferences

2025 a2ru National Conference: Creative Futures: Driving Interdisciplinary Innovation Through the Arts
October 23-25, 2025
University of Wisconsin-Madison

The Arts Collaborative supported the attendance of UGA graduate students Jeanne Marie Martineau (Art) and Richie Arndorfer (Music), and faculty member Mark Callahan (Art) at the a2ru national conference.

The a2ru national conference is an opportunity for practitioners and researchers from across the higher education spectrum to share innovations and perspectives in the arts. a2ru advances the full range of arts and design integrative research, curricula, programs, and creative practice to acknowledge, articulate, and expand the vital role of higher education in our global society. a2ru's work, in partnership with an international network of leading higher education institutions, envisions a world in which universities—students, faculty, and leaders—explore, embed, and integrate the arts in everyday practice and research.

a2ru Emerging Creatives Student Summit
March 5-8, 2026
Michigan State University

Three students from UGA were selected to participate in the 2026 Emerging Creatives Student Summit, hosted by a2ru and Michigan State University. Eve Brown (Art), Hannah Boone (Anthropology), and Amir Akbarpour Shiraz (Theatre and Film) joined students from across the a2ru network to explore the theme of “Rewilding: New Stories of Collective Wellbeing.”

Emerging Creatives is a three-day collaborative experience in which students form small cross-disciplinary teams to explore a specific area of the Summit's theme. Students not only envision and create their project; they also take field trips, meet extraordinary interdisciplinary thinkers, practice presenting their work, and exchange ideas about their project with peers and experts. Students also build collaboration skills in micro-workshops with a2ru staff.

Rewilding is a form of ecological restoration that asks us to reimagine — or, in some sense, rewind — the relationship between natural processes and human interventions into those processes, a relationship that has been fraught with conflict for centuries. “Rewilding” may suggest a nostalgic return to the past, but it can also help us reconsider how we understand the present.

APPENDIX A:

Bylaws

Executive Director

The Executive Director is responsible for the budget and overall direction of the Arts Collaborative.

The Executive Director serves as a member and chairperson of the Advisory Board.

The Executive Director is appointed by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

The Executive Director reports to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Artistic Director

The Artistic Director is responsible for the daily operation of the Arts Collaborative.

The Artistic Director is appointed by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

The Artistic Director reports to the Executive Director and Advisory Board.

Advisory Board

The Advisory Board consists of the Executive Director and thirteen members appointed by the Executive Director for a three-year renewable term. The committee should represent a diversity of perspectives and academic disciplines inside and beyond the arts, and might include faculty of any rank, staff, students, and community members. The Advisory Board shall include at least one student representative.

The Advisory Board gives counsel to the Artistic Director on the Arts Collaborative's goals, policies, and procedures.

The Advisory Board shall convene at least once each academic year.

Any member of the Advisory Board may convene a meeting of the board at any time with at least one week of prior notice.

A simple majority of the Advisory Board constitutes a quorum.

Ad Hoc Committees

The Advisory Board chairperson shall create ad hoc committees to address specific issues and initiatives as necessary. Members of these committees are appointed by the chairperson for a term of up to three years, eligible for renewal. The chair of each committee will provide a report to the Advisory Board at least once a year.

Graduate Assistants

Arts Collaborative graduate assistants receive peer mentorship and practical experience in arts research design, project leadership, and community engagement. Assistantship duties include the student's own collaborative work across disciplines and facilitating collaborative projects and proposals with faculty, students, and community members.

Graduate assistants are supervised by the Artistic Director.

Semester evaluation reports are provided to the graduate assistant's home department.

An annual report is provided to the Graduate School.

Willson Center for Humanities and Arts

The Willson Center is an administrative partner of the Arts Collaborative and a liaison to the Office of Research and UGA Arts Council.

The Arts Collaborative and Willson Center share resources to promote activities, communicate accomplishments, and develop research opportunities.

An annual report is provided to the Willson Center.

Research Affiliates

The designation "research affiliate" describes individuals or teams who receive funding and/or mentorship support for creative projects from the Arts Collaborative.

Student Organization

The UGA Arts Collaborative student organization is registered with the Student Affairs department of Engagement, Leadership, and Service. It is a network of graduate and undergraduate students interested in interdisciplinary arts collaboration. Members plan events and creative projects.

The Artistic Director serves as an advisor to the student organization.

Amendment Procedures

The Bylaws may be amended by a vote of nine members of the Advisory Board.

Amendments to the Bylaws must be submitted to Board members at least two weeks prior to the meeting at which the vote is taken. The ballot may be taken by mail if all members are not present at the designated meeting.

APPENDIX B:

Graduate Assistantships in Interdisciplinary Arts Research

Background

UGA offers Graduate School Assistantships to students entering programs in Art, Music, and Theatre and Film following a highly qualified student's nomination by their home department. These competitive, merit-based awards support collaborative research between the arts and other disciplines.

Graduate Assistants receive peer mentorship and practical experience in arts research design, project leadership, and community engagement while supervised by the Artistic Director of the Arts Collaborative. Assistantship duties include the student's own collaborative work across disciplines and facilitating collaborative projects and proposals with faculty, students, and community members.

Selection

To be considered for a Graduate School Assistantship, applicants must provide a one-page statement to their home department's Graduate Coordinator. The statement should describe the applicant's current research interests and any previous training and experience in interdisciplinary or collaborative programs and environments. Nominees will be reviewed by an interdisciplinary selection committee.

Graduate Coordinators in Art, Music, and Theatre and Film submit up to five nominees each for the assistantships. A five-member selection committee reviews the nominations and ranks them within each department. Nominees are considered based on their potential to conduct research in accordance with the Arts Collaborative mission to generate innovative, truly interdisciplinary creative projects and critical discourse in the arts.

The FY26 selection committee included the following members:

John Bray (Theatre and Film)
Emily Gertsch (Music)
David Saltz (Executive Director, Arts Collaborative)
Lindsey Reynolds (Art)
Meredith Welch-Devine (Graduate School)

Graduate Assistants

The current graduate assistants are Richie Arndorfer (Music), Eve Brown (Art), Jet Stephen Chong (Music), Amir Akbarpour Shiraz (Theatre and Film), Maddy Underwood (Art), and Jennifer Leigh Whitehead (Theatre and Film).

Graduate assistants starting in August 2026 are Julien Berger (Music), Mingjun Han (Theatre and Film), and Edward Hemphill (Art).

Research

Graduate assistants play an integral role in providing administrative support to the Arts Collaborative, facilitating interdisciplinary events that make research in the arts available to the UGA and Athens communities, participating in faculty-led projects, and creating self-initiated projects.

Graduate research assistants worked collectively on the following:

- Administration of the Arts Collaborative student organization committed to providing an open, interdisciplinary platform for engagement with topics in arts.

- Administration of the Mini Grants program, including development of criteria, call for proposals, information sessions, formation of selection committee, and administration of awards.
- Project mentorship for Mini Grant recipients including team meetings, timeline and budget development, documentation, and creative feedback.
- Arts research development including reviews of local, national, and international funding sources for research in the arts.
- Planning, facilitation, publicity, and logistical support for public events.
- Content development for newsletter and social media.
- Orientation for new graduate assistants.
- Leadership of graduate assistant team meetings.

Graduate research assistants worked individually and collaboratively on the following:

- Richie Arndorfer was a member of the *HeartSong* project team, supported by an a2ru Challenge Grant. He worked with UGA students Jeanne Marie Martineau, Eliana Gelman, and Nicholas Myers and presented at the a2ru National Conference in Madison, Wisconsin.
- Eve Brown and Amir Akbarpour Shiraz participated in the a2ru Emerging Creatives Student Summit at Michigan State University.
- Jennifer Leigh Whitehead assisted with organization of the 4 Minutes, 33 Seconds research in the arts contest hosted by the UGA Arts Council.
- Amir Akbarpour Shiraz and Jet Stephen Chong provided research assistance to the UGA Arts and Health working group.
- Maddy Underwood served as a liaison for the *GROVI* project team.
- Eve Brown served as a liaison for the *Organoids* project team.
- Jet Stephen Chong assisted with organization of the Torrance Center mini-conference *Creativity and Motivation*.
- Amir Akbarpour Shiraz served as a project mentor for the *Malady Mysteries Project* team.
- Jennifer Leigh Whitehead served as liaison for the Arts Collaborative Research Affiliate cohort.
- Richie Arndorfer served as a project mentor for the *Physical Methods of Creative Computation* project team.
- Eve Brown served as an Arts Collaborative Mini Grant project mentor for the *Insect Zoo* team.
- Maddy Underwood, Richie Arndorfer, and Amir Akbarpour Shiraz led an Arts Collaborative Conversation about national trends in arts funding.
- Eve Brown served as a liaison with the Office of Sustainability Circular UGA initiative.
- Jet Stephen Chong served as an Arts Collaborative Mini Grant project mentor for the *Digital Diaspora* team.

- Eve Brown facilitated an Arts Collaborative Conversation with MFA student Gabrielle Gagné.
- Amir Akbarpour Shiraz facilitated an Arts Collaborative Conversation with the *Malady Mysteries Project* team.
- Richie Arndorfer facilitated an Arts Collaborative Conversation with visiting artist Lyrric Jackson.
- Jet Stephen Chong assisted with research about creative leadership and cultural policy education.
- Eve Brown served as a reviewer for the UGA Campus Sustainability Grant program.
- Richie Arndorfer facilitated the *Composer x Researcher Collaborative Concert* event as part of the Integrative Conservation Conference.
- Eve Brown served as an Arts Collaborative Mini Grant project mentor for the *Awkward Dance* team.
- Jet Stephen Chong served as an Arts Collaborative Mini Grant project mentor for the *Free Rein* team.
- Jennifer Leigh Whitehead served as an Arts Collaborative Mini Grant project mentor for the *Sound, Music, and the Environment* team.
- Richie Arndorfer collaborated with Wezddy Del Toro and Bruno Ubiali to compose *Land and Jaguars*, an open-score work for two narrators, jaguar whistle, atecocolli shell, acoustic guitar, and multiple performers playing natural instruments, which was premiered at the 2026 Integrative Conservation Conference.
- Eve Brown co-facilitated the *Integrative Approach to Storm Recovery: Six Stories from Hurricane Helene* session at the UGA Integrative Conservation Conference.
- Maddy Underwood served as president of the Arts Collaborative student organization and student representative for the Arts Collaborative Advisory Board.
- Jennifer Leigh Whitehead served as an Arts Collaborative Mini Grant project mentor for the *Reclaiming Trees* team.
- Amir Akbarpour Shiraz and Jennifer Leigh Whitehead assisted with the book launch event for *Tales of Black Histories*, hosted by the Willson Center for Humanities and Arts.
- Maddy Underwood presented an Arts Collaborative Conversation on her research in Scandinavian-inspired textiles.
- Maddy Underwood exhibited a collaborative installation titled “Tapestries of Transmission” in the C-U-B-E Gallery, featuring recorded sound by MA candidate in Mathematics Malik Henry.

Accomplishments

- Eve Brown received a Graduate Research Award from the Willson Center for Humanities and Arts for “Exploring Interconnectivity through Porous Sculptures.”
- Amir Akbarpour Shiraz received an a2ru Scholar Award to attend the 2026 Emerging Creatives Summit.

- Maddy Underwood received a Graduate Research award from the Willson Center for Humanities and Arts for the “Marblehead Handprints Textile Collection Archiving Project.”
- Richie Arndorfer continued work on “Combining Generative Patterns with Distortion and Synthesis for Operatic Storytelling” supported by a Willson Center Graduate Research Award.
- Jet Stephen Chong received a travel scholarship from the Pro-Mozart Society to study in the International Summer Academy of the Mozarteum University Salzburg.
- Jennifer Leigh Whitehead premiered a short play, “Elven Intuition,” at the *Femme Fantasies Short Play Festival* in New York, New York.
- Richie Arndorfer served on the board of the Student Composers Association.
- Eve Brown participated as a panel member for the Georgia Review Symposium: Natural Histories.
- Jet Stephen Chong was elected president of the Music Teachers National Association's UGA collegiate chapter.
- Amir Akbarpour Shiraz presented “Graffiti as Political Performance: Disruption, Emancipation, and the Aesthetic Event” at *Painting the Town: A Conference on the Philosophy of Street Art* at Georgia State University.
- Maddy Underwood presented a paper titled “Imported from Marblehead–Not Finland: Transatlantic Textile Design in the 20th Century” at the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study’s 2026 conference.
- Jennifer Leigh Whitehead performed an original work, *Do Not Say Farewell*, at the UGA Three-Minute Thesis Competition.
- Richie Arndorfer received a New Music Opportunity Award from the Dancz Center for New Music.
- Jet Stephen Chong was awarded Honorable Mention in the Piano Category of the Hugh Hodgson School of Music Concerto Competition.
- Maddy Underwood and Richie Arndorfer received ASCEND awards from the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences.
- Jet Stephen Chong was awarded a Music Teachers National Association's Collegiate Travel Grant to attend the national conference.
- Maddy Underwood was awarded travel funding by the Graduate School to attend the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study’s 2026 conference.
- Jet Stephen Chong was a finalist in the Ruth Kern Young Artists Concerto Competition of the Atlanta Community Symphony Orchestra.
- Jet Stephen Chong was awarded second prize in the Graduate Division of the Atlanta Music Club Scholarship Competition.
- Maddy Underwood exhibited work in *Chance Operations* at Signal Return in Detroit, Michigan.
- Richie Arndorfer played oboe in a performance of Terry Riley’s *In C* by the Grand Valley State University New Music Ensemble at the Grand Rapids Museum of Art in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

- Jet Stephen Chong co-presented "Big Solutions for Small Hands: Repertoire and Resources for Pianists" for the Music Teachers National Association's Collegiate Symposium at the University of South Carolina.
- Jennifer Leigh Whitehead had a paper accepted for presentation at the Mid-America Theatre Conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- Maddy Underwood exhibited work in *Melt* at the Hambidge Hive during Atlanta Art Week.
- Amir Akbarpour Shiraz published "Torches in the Dark: Embodied Acts of Utopian Hope in Iranian Women's Protests" in the *Etudes* theatre and performance studies journal.
- Richie Arndorfer's piano composition *Spectrum* was performed at the 2026 Society of Composers Inc. Region IV Conference at the Hayes School of Music at Appalachian State University.
- Jet Stephen Chong was awarded Honorable Mention in the Music Teachers National Association: Georgia State Competition for the Young Artist Piano Category.
- Maddy Underwood will present "Imported from Marblehead—Not Finland: Translating Global Aesthetics Through Local Fashion" at the Costume Society of America's national Symposium.
- Amir Akbarpour Shiraz had a paper accepted for presentation at the 2026 Comparative Drama Conference in Madison, Wisconsin.
- Richie Arndorfer performed with the UGA Middle East Music Ensemble, performing at the UGA Arab Cultural Association's "Arabian Night" in the Memorial Ballroom; Palestinian Student Life's PALI-fest in Tate Plaza; Middle East Music Ensemble's feature concert in Ramsey Hall; and at Georgia Southern University as part of the Arabic Club's 3rd Annual Arabic Culture Week.
- Jet Stephen Chong was selected as the Conference Recitalist for the Georgia Music Teachers Association's state conference.
- Amir Akbarpour Shiraz had a paper accepted for presentation at the 2026 Association for Theatre in Higher Education conference in Baltimore, Maryland.
- Richie Arndorfer attended the SPLICE Festival where he performed his electroacoustic oboe composition *Tinker* at Colby College in Waterville, Maine.
- Jennifer Leigh Whitehead co-directed a staged reading of *Kingdom: A Play About Snow White and Climate Change*.
- Maddy Underwood co-curated and designed exhibition materials for "Records of the Past: The Making of Music Culture in Georgia" at UGA Special Collections Library.
- Eve Brown's work was featured in *Brink Literary Journal*.
- Richie Arndorfer was accepted to perform his composition *Tinker* at the New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival.
- Maddy Underwood published the zine, *abracadabra!* with collaborator Izzy Fradin.
- Eve Brown co-facilitated a mural project at Bigger Vision of Athens.

- Maddy Underwood taught a letterpress workshop for typography students in the School of Art.
- Jet Stephen Chong received a Music Teachers National Association's Collegiate Travel Grant to attend their national conference.
- Richie Arndorfer composed a work for trumpet octet titled *Color Weave*, which was performed in the Georgia Museum of Art sculpture garden and recorded as part of the Rachel B. Hayes exhibition *Between the Sewn Sky*.
- Maddy Underwood taught a workshop on zine-making for attendees of the 2026 National Art Honors Society symposium hosted by UGA.
- Eve Brown's work was included in the group exhibition *Getting it Together* at Echo Contemporary Art in Atlanta, Georgia.
- Richie Arndorfer wrote an open-score, open-instrumentation work titled *Pearls on a String* for the DawgBytes ensemble, which was performed at the Dancz Center for New Music fall recital.
- Jennifer Leigh Whitehead gave a guest lecture for the UGA undergraduate course "Athletes and Artists: The Drama of Sports."
- Eve Brown curated the exhibition *Hot Other World* in the Glass Gallery at the Lamar Dodd School of Art.
- Richie Arndorfer performed his electroacoustic oboe composition *Tinker* at the Student Composers Association New Works Recital in the Dancz Center for New Music.
- Maddy Underwood earned a certificate in "Archival Arrangement and Description" from Library Juice Academy.
- Eve Brown's work was included in the group exhibition *New in Town* at ATHICA (Athens Institute for Contemporary Art).
- Richie Arndorfer managed staging and technology at the UGA New Music Festival.
- Maddy Underwood exhibited work in the group installation "Quantum Castle" at the Lamar Dodd School of Art.
- Richie Arndorfer had his composition *Cassandra Madness Frames*, written for piano, actors, and electronics, performed at the Student Composers Association New Works Recital in the Dancz Center for New Music.
- Jet Stephen Chong received support from the Hugh Hodgson School of Music's Rhonda Hicks Music Student Opportunity Fund.

Reflections

Being a part of the Arts Collaborative has allowed me to access areas of study within the university I would never have been exposed to otherwise. The Arts Collaborative has had a profound effect on the way I think about research and make artwork. The amount of creative projects I am exposed to consistently challenges my ways of thinking, and allows for broader ideas. [Maddy Underwood]

Looking back on this year, what stands out to me is how much my work moved between different scales of engagement. Some parts of the work were very local — helping organize events, being present in conversations, or spending time in studios and galleries across campus. Other parts extended beyond UGA, especially through participating in the Emerging Creatives Summit and preparing for upcoming conference presentations. Moving between these spaces made me more aware of how my work fits both within the Arts Collaborative and within a broader network of interdisciplinary research and practice. [Amir Akbarpour Shiraz]

One thing I appreciate about the Arts Collaborative, which especially stands out relative to what others in my program experience, is that it provides opportunities to publicly and innovatively produce work: to put on events, to think outside the box and figure out what is required to put an idea out there, and to work with people from diverse backgrounds, from different disciplines and departments, and even outside of the university. This is a reflection of what is required to build an artistic career and what is required outside of a heavily structured academic program. To get this experience has been invaluable. [Richie Arndorfer]

Being a first-year grad student, the Arts Collaborative has allowed me to more quickly connect to a larger community outside of the art department. In my first weekend I participated in the *Organoids* project and was introduced to people in other departments as well as new ways of structuring projects, processing information and setting up collaborations. From this first weekend, my time in the program has been influenced by collaborative experiences and expansive networks. I'm able to think more creatively about how to problem solve, ask different kinds of questions and continue to agitate the edges of my inquiries. [Eve Brown]

Seeing how ideas develop through persistence and dialogue has been both humbling and motivating. I have also begun to navigate the complexities of project management, learning to strike a balance between offering support, resources, and connections while allowing project teams the autonomy to shape their own work. [Jet Stephen Chong]

I feel that I have had expansive opportunities to work and learn across disciplinary boundaries, collaborate with administrators and faculty outside the arts, and directly participate in event planning and research development. This combination of creative practice and community responsibility has had a substantial impact on my experience this semester. It has sharpened my project management abilities, broadened my network, and provided a new understanding of how arts research is valued and supported throughout the university. [Jennifer Leigh Whitehead]

This year was particularly rich collaboratively for me, as a direct result of relationships built through Arts Collaborative. Specifically, I worked closely with three other students from different disciplines in the development of a project. This was an incredibly rewarding, if at times challenging, experience that taught me more about how to collaborate well, resulted in the creation of something I am proud of, and gave me an opportunity to present at a national conference. [Richie Arndorfer]

Working in this role kept me involved in the day-to-day life of the arts community at UGA, while also giving me space to develop my own research path through regular reading and project-based work. Looking back at this year, I can

see how much my work with the UGA Arts Collaborative shaped both my research and my practical understanding of interdisciplinary arts. [Amir Akbarpour Shiraz]

I was able to attend the a2ru student summit at Michigan State University this spring because of the Arts Collaborative. This was an important experience around interdisciplinary programming and how others run workshops around these ideas. It helped deepen my knowledge of how one might begin an interdisciplinary project as well as emphasized the areas I am most interested in. [Eve Brown]

By attending the many conversations hosted by the Arts Collaborative, I learned about new perspectives on art-making, sustainability, and the role of the artist within institutions. This work has sharpened my focus as an artist and scholar, connecting my interest in somatic movement and fostering longevity with my role as a mentor and advocate for my community. These conversations encouraged me to pursue further training in movement facilitation, allowing me to actively contribute to my community. [Jennifer Leigh Whitehead]

Being an Arts Collaborative graduate assistant allows me to engage in cross-disciplinary collaboration, strengthening my ability to connect material research, historical analysis, and contemporary studio practice. My research on transatlantic textile histories, now the focus of my thesis, has grown during my time in the Arts Collaborative because I was able to connect previously disparate topics through interdisciplinary research. The Arts Collaborative gave me guidance on how best to conduct self-directed research that bridges a studio art practice, archival investigation, and design history. [Maddy Underwood]

My fellow graduate assistants have been especially inspiring in their thoughtfulness and communication, reminding me of the importance of learning from those around me and seeking mentorship without hesitation as growth does not happen in isolation. I look forward to continuing this journey, deepening my work as an artist, collaborator, and advocate for the transformative power of the arts. [Jet Stephen Chong]

Some of the smaller moments stayed with me the most—things like being at the social night or taking on a short acting role during the staged reading at the *Tales of Black Histories* book launch. These small interactions reminded me that an arts community grows through everyday connections just as much as through big projects. [Amir Akbarpour Shiraz]

My Arts Collaborative cohort has become a treasured part of my graduate school experience. We support each other in our endeavors and our collective duties as graduate assistants. Our relationship has not only improved my time here, but has also strengthened our abilities as a group to collectively mentor, discuss ideas, and collaborate. [Maddy Underwood]

I am so grateful that I have had the opportunity to work with the UGA Arts Collaborative. It has truly been one of the highlights of my time at UGA and has been such an incredible learning experience and source of growth. [Richie Arndorfer]