To expand Brown University’s legacy of enriching tradition by supporting all that is EXPERIMENTAL, forward-thinking and cutting-edge in the arts

To facilitate greater opportunity for COLLABORATION across arts departments, among artists, with other academic fields, and with external partners locally, nationally and globally

To enhance opportunities for ENGAGED, activist artists and scholars whose work responds to contemporary issues

FROM THE DIRECTORS

Dear Friends,

We began this year as an if-we-build-it-will-they-come kind of experiment, one backed by years of research and experience, as well as hopeful expectation that our hypothesis was correct. We posited that coming together as an arts community at Brown and inviting the campus, local and international artist communities to join us would yield results we couldn’t predict.

This annual report on our inaugural program season documents our process of discovery and what we learned from the many individuals who shared their insights, talents and provocations with us. We couldn’t be more honored by the enthusiastic response, nor more appreciative of the support we received.

The very existence of the Brown Arts Initiative has been made possible by the passionate kinship of artists, scholars, faculty, staff, students, alumni, parents, friends and colleagues who accepted our invitation to EXPERIMENT, COLLABORATE and ENGAGE with us. We are especially grateful to the BAI team whose dedication to this collective endeavor is unflagging; the BAI committee members who lent their time, ideas and connections to ensure robust programming and supportive resources linked to the curriculum; and the leadership of President Christina Paxson and Provost Richard Locke who encouraged this creative exploration.

We hope you enjoy this record of our first year of programming. Come join us! arts.brown.edu

BUTCH ROVAN
Faculty Director & Professor of Music

ANNE BERGERON
Managing Director

Photo by Shawn Tavares.
BAI PROGRAMS

Warren and Allison Kanders Lecture Series
BAI Songwriting Series
Main Stage
Fixed and Multimedia Performances
Perfoma Partnership
Annual Symposium
Exhibitions

DEPARTMENTAL PROGRAMS

Music
Literary Arts
Theatre Arts & Performance Studies
Modern Culture and Media
Rites and Reason Theatre | Africana Studies
David Winton Bell Gallery
History of Art and Architecture
Visual Art

ENGAGEMENT & SUPPORT

BAI Grants Program
Professors of the Practice
Fellows
Student Engagement

PERFORMING ARTS CENTER
FINANCIAL STATEMENT FY18
BAI COMMITTEE AND STAFF LISTS
PRESIDENT’S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE ARTS
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
The Brown Arts Initiative (BAI) at Brown University seeks to cultivate creative expression and foster an interdisciplinary environment where faculty and students learn from one another and from artists and scholars in a wide range of fields across the campus and around the world. A consortium of six academic departments and two affiliated programs in the performing, literary and visual arts, the BAI works collaboratively to enhance curricular and co-curricular offerings, directly engage students with prominent artists working in all genre and media, and supports a diverse program of concerts, performances, exhibitions, screenings, lectures and symposia each year. The BAI seeks to build on Brown’s reputation as a destination for arts exploration, contributing to cultural enterprise through the integration of theory, practice and scholarship with an emphasis on innovation and discovery that results from rigorous artmaking and experimentation.

The BAI comprises the Departments of History of Art and Architecture, Literary Arts, Modern Culture and Media, Music, Theatre Arts & Performance Studies, and Visual Art, plus David Winton Bell Gallery, and Rites and Reason Theatre | Africana Studies. For more information on the BAI, see arts.brown.edu.

ABOUT BROWN ARTS INITIATIVE

Clockwise from top left:
Thelma Golden. Photo by Jacob Cader ’19.
Steve Tannen and Deb Talan ’90. Photo by Victor Alvarez ’19.
In November, Iranian-born artist Shirin Neshat discussed how literature, politics and her own personal narrative have influenced her work in photography, video and film. “I come from a country full of contradictions,” she said. “Everything I do is based on some notion of duality—men/women, magic/reality, nature/culture, private/global, black/white. My work is organized around the notion of opposites.” Thelma Golden, director and chief curator of the Studio Museum in Harlem, visited Brown in sleety February and reflected on her professional pathway with Courtney Martin, chief curator of Dia Art Foundation and Brown assistant professor of Art History. Golden expressed gratitude for the opportunity she has at the Studio Museum for “radical authorship that isn’t always reactive.” Referencing her “instinctual” curatorial practice, she explained, “I learned how to curate from other curators, placing objects in dialogue with other objects and in rooms with people in them. I make exhibitions for audiences.”

In March, Kenyan-born artist Wangeci Mutu joined Performa curator Adrienne Edwards in examining the influence of traditional African craft and cultural heritage on Mutu’s work in drawing, painting, sculpture, video and performance. The artist screened excerpts from several of her videos and dialogue with Edwards about “the constant battle to come to terms with (her native country’s) colonial past, a rich present, and a much deeper history that’s sort of forgotten.” Like the other lectures in the series, Mutu and Edwards’ conversation was a sold-out event, demonstrating the community’s deep interest in provocative programming that considers contemporary art and artists in context.

The inaugural season spotlighted another signature program, the BAI Songwriting Series, which brought acclaimed musical artists to campus for public performances, alongside workshops and open master classes for Brown students and community members. Led by American Studies PhD student and singer-songwriter Julian Saporiti, the BAI Songwriting Workshop met regularly throughout the academic year. Its 14 participants, who were selected via recorded audition from Brown’s student body and the Providence community, gained confidence through solo and group exercises and received feedback on new compositions.

Workshop members also had the opportunity to have their songs critiqued by an array of talented musicians hosted by the BAI. Lauded singer-songwriter Rosanne Cash led the first session in October with her collaborator and husband John Leventhal. The duo offered both specific suggestions to workshop participants and more general advice about songwriting. From Cash: “You can’t teach songwriting. You can’t teach talent. But you can walk hand-in-hand with a person through the process of becoming a songwriter and just point things out.” And from Leventhal: “Use non-predictable subject matter and write from a non-internal narrative.”

Then the Grammy Award-winning pair enthralled an enthusiastic audience of friends and family. And in early May, workshop members gathered for a culminating Songwriters Showcase before an enthusiastic audience of friends and family. Even BAI directors Butch Rovan and Anne Bergeron offered their thanks to the group...in an original new song.
**MAIN STAGE: MEREDITH MONK AND ANNE WALDMAN**

Renowned singer, composer, director and choreographer MEREDITH MONK joined celebrated poet ANNE WALDMAN for an evening of verse, music and movement in the Granoff Center’s Studio 1. Waldman, a BAI Professor of the Practice, opened Act I with a haunting, otherworldly sensory experience. The following month, German composer KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN’s 1967–68 electronic composition Hymnen was presented in immersive, multichannel surround sound in the Martinos Auditorium. Offered in conjunction with the Brown University course What Was Europe?, Hymnen inaugurated the BAI’s Audiovision series — programs that envelop the audience in dimensional, spatial soundscapes.

**FIXED AND MULTIMEDIA PERFORMANCES**

The BAI’s commitment to all forms of contemporary artistic expression was evident in a number of fixed and multimedia performances — experimental works blurring boundaries in media, discipline and collaboration. September brought PAMELA Z, the groundbreaking composer and multimedia artist to the Granoff Center for a mesmerizing performance in Studio 1. Using hand-mounted motion sensors and other advanced technology, Z manipulated her own voice as well as video and audio recordings to create a multi-textured, visceral and otherworldly sensory experience. The following month, German composer KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN’s 1967–68 electronic composition Hymnen was presented in immersive, multichannel surround sound in the Martinos Auditorium. Offered in conjunction with the Brown University course What Was Europe?, Hymnen inaugurated the BAI’s Audiovision series — programs that envelop the audience in dimensional, spatial soundscapes.

**PERFORMA PARTNERSHIP**

In June 2017, the BAI formalized a three-year partnership with Performa, the leading organization dedicated to exploring the critical role of visual art performance of the 20th and 21st centuries. This partnership includes co-commissioning new work for the Performa biennials; exchanging artistic and scholarly talent among Performa artists and curators and Brown faculty, students and staff; and offering internship opportunities at Performa for Brown students. The BAI-Performa collaboration began with artist KELLY NIPPER in residence at the Granoff Center during summer 2017, where she further developed her new performance Terre Mécanique. Four Brown students — Colin Kent-Daggett 19, Marley Kirton ’17, Sophie Schwartz ‘17 and Sophia Washburn ‘17 — served as studio assistants, working with Nipper, dancer Marco Ruazol and designers from MIT’s SAIL Assembly Lab (SAIL). Together, the team investigated Nipper’s discipline-bending research that combined video, photography, movement, Rapid Liquid Printing (invented by the SAIL) and the design and production of choreographic objects. Nipper’s approach was documented in a Cohen Gallery exhibition, Terre Mécanique by Kelly Nipper: In Process, on view from September 6–24, 2017. An enormous, inverted Plexiglass dome suspended from the ceiling served as the installation’s centerpiece, and gestured toward its use in the performance supporting the real-time printing of 3D sculptural forms. In October, Nipper joined Performa’s founding director / curator ROSELEE GOLDBERG for a wide-ranging conversation about her evolving work. A graduate of CalArts, Nipper discussed her experience organizing the archives of pioneering installation and performance artist Allan Kaprow, and how that led to incorporating postmodern dance in her practice. Terre Mécanique had its world premiere at Performa 17 in New York City, an occasion attended by a group of excited Brown students on a BAI-sponsored trip to the biennial. They found the performance to be an intense, immersive experience of sound, light, rhythm, movement and experimentation, a fitting culmination to the first year of a dynamic collaboration between the BAI and Performa.
As part of its three-year theme on Arts & Environment, the BAI held its second annual symposium called Polar Opposites: Creative Interventions in the Arctic and Antarctic. Sponsored by Poseidon Expeditions, the convening brought together artists, scientists and researchers whose work addresses the polar regions, especially the impact of climate change.

Polar Opposites was part of WeatherProof: Arts, Humanities and Sciences Explore the Environment, a broader University initiative that coordinated spring programming among the David Winton Bell Gallery, John Carter Brown Library, Cogut Institute for the Humanities, Institute at Brown for Environment and Society, and the BAI.

Artist, filmmaker, environmental activist and sailor DAVID BUCKLAND delivered a galvanizing keynote discussing his efforts to aid scientists in conveying via the arts the true effects of climate change. He has co-produced films and organized exhibitions, such as the ArtCop21 Art Fair in Paris in association with the 2016 United Nations Conference on Climate Change. Speaking on behalf of artists, Buckland stressed that “we face our humanity and its effect on climate change with a cold stare, crafting works that are as emotionally alarming as the hard facts of our scientists.”

Brown Professors AMANDA LYNCH and ED OSBORN joined artists PETRA BACHMAIER and JUSTIN BRICE GUARIGLIA on the “Knowing Ice” panel, illuminating the connections between artistic and scientific practices relating to the poles. A second panel on “Art, Polarities and Politics” offered diverse perspectives on governmental policies and economics affecting the polar regions. Weighing in on the shifting nature of custodianship and how artists are calling attention to regional concerns were playwright CHANTAL BILODEAU, Director of Arts Partnerships at the National Resources Defense Council ELIZABETH CORR; Lt. Commander and Researcher at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy’s Center for Arctic Study and Policy JEREMY MCKENZIE; and Deputy Director and Chief Curator of Brown’s Halfenreffer Museum of Anthropology KEVIN P. SMITH.

Corr commented, “What art allows us to do is to come at this issue [of climate change] from a place of receptiveness…This is really a call for us to be working together systematically and in long-term collaborations to change the world.”

In addition to the David Winton Bell Gallery’s 33° (see page 18), Polar Opposites was complemented by two exhibitions and an array of public programs presented in the Granoff Center. The Cohen Gallery featured Open Waters (Northwest Passage & Polar Sea), a collaborative installation among computer scientist BRIDGET BAIRD, poet JUDITH GOLDMAN, sound artist BRETT TERRY and visual artist ANDREA WOLLENSAK that uses generative art to examine the rich history of Arctic exploration. The Atrium Gallery showcased White Wonderer, an installation by BACHMEIER and SEAN GALLIER of Luftwerk inspired by the Larsen C ice shelf crack in Antarctica.

The Speculative Auralizations of the Anthropocene, in the Key of the Schumann Resonances, performed by Stephon Alexander, Melvin Gibbs and Butch Rovan, with projections by Justin Price Guariglia. Photo by Jacob Cader ’19.

We face our humanity and its affect on climate change with a cold stare, crafting works that are as emotionally alarming as the hard facts of our scientists.

DAVID BUCKLAND
As classes and performances filled the varied spaces of the Granoff Center throughout the year, the building’s galleries—the Upper Lobby, Cohen Gallery and Atrium Gallery—displayed engaging exhibitions by local, regional and national artists, while the higher floors showed student work. Many reflected on the BAI’s Arts & Environment theme. For example, MAY BABCOCK and MEGAN SINGLETON were inspired by the waterways and flora of Rhode Island’s Narragansett Bay. They transformed invasive plants into handmade paper and created a beautiful mural, Ebb and Flow, featured in the Upper Lobby from August 7, 2017–June 1, 2018.

Exhibitions in the Cohen Gallery included LUMEN, an immersive, multidisciplinary installation by Brown’s David S. Josephson Assistant Professor of Music and composer ERIC NATHAN, landscape architect LORETTA GARGAN, artist CATHERINE WAGNER and architect THOMAS KELLEY. Incorporating original music, video projection and elements of architecture and nature, LUMEN provided a meditative respite for visitors from October 5–November 6, 2017. Artist Daniel Miller’s exhibition Simulating Nature, which presented technological recreations of natural phenomena, served as the capstone to the Cohen Gallery spring season. Brown community members also lent their talents: from January 24–February 22, 2018, the Atrium Gallery featured the artwork of 10 staff members in the annual exhibition After Hours, and the work of BAI student grant recipients enlivened the halls of the Granoff Center from March 1–23, 2018.

Other programs included The Speculative Auralizations of the Anthropocene, in the Key of the Schumann Resonances, an improvisational concert featuring MELVIN GIBBS (on electric bass), BAI Faculty Director BUTCH ROVAN (on clarinet and electronics) and Brown University Professor of Physics STEPHON ALEXANDER (on tenor saxophone), with projected images by Guariglia. Virensent, a sound and video installation by Osborn in Studio 2, examined Arctic sites on micro and macro scales. The symposium concluded with two film screenings, Burning Ice (Peter M. Gilbert and Adam Singer, co-directors, 2016) and There Will Be Some Who Will Not Fear Even That Void (Saeed Taji Farouky, director, 2012).
LITERARY ARTS

Brown’s Literary Arts Department—the home on campus for writers of fiction, poetry, screenplays, digital language arts and mixed media—hosted celebrations of creative writing throughout the year. In October, noted poet and literary critic ELIZABETH WILLIS gave the inaugural C.D. Wright Lecture titled “Silent Letters, Talking Pictures, and the Punch-drunk Gospel of the Bone Man’s Dictionary.” In her talk, Willis explored theories about the practice of contemporary poetry by mixing the anecdotal, the historical and the poetic, with primary emphasis on the life and writing of C.D. Wright. Following her lecture, Willis engaged the audience in a multi-layered conversation about what it means to live through the lens of poetry.

Another highlight of the Literary Arts calendar was April’s festival International Fiction Now: A Celebration of Robert Coover and the International Writers Project. In a multi-day series of readings, talks and presentations, two-dozen writers, scholars and artists paid tribute to Robert Coover, T.B. Stowell professor emeritus of literary arts and renowned author of experimental fiction. Among the featured presenters, novelists DON DELILLO, MARLON JAMES and T.C. BOYLE expressed admiration for their colleague, while others, including authors EDWIDGE DANTICAT, SHELLEY JACKSON and BEN MARCUS, expressed gratitude to their former mentor. The dizzying array of readings brought to campus many of the nation’s premier figures in avant-garde narrative, reminding the overflow audiences of Coover’s—and Brown’s—central role in creating and nurturing a diverse range of approaches to the making of the novel and the short story.

DEPARTMENTAL PROGRAMS

MUSIC

In support of course offerings that spanned orchestral conducting, computer music and Ghanaian drumming and dancing, Brown’s Department of Music brought a diverse range of musical artists to campus during the 2017-18 academic year. It also hosted collaborations and performances involving 40+ student musical groups, Brown professors and guest musicians. In October 2018, T.S. Eliot Prize-winning poet OCEAN VUONG, and David S. Josephson Assistant Professor of Music WANG LU shared the product of their six-week summer residency, On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous. Inspired by Vuong’s expressive language, Wang composed four pieces for guitar and saxophone. As Vuong read his poetry, musicians DAN LIPPEL and RYAN MUNCY interpreted Wang’s music for the engrossed audience in Martinos Auditorium.

In a March concert with the Brown University Orchestra, electric violinist TRACY SILVERMAN performed his concerto Love Song to the Sun. Co-commissioned by Brown, the piece featured interactive video projections by Professor of Music TODD WINKLER. Earlier in the academic year, Silverman had participated in a residency led by students in the “Timbre in Electroacoustic Music” composition course.

In addition to the BAI’s public program season, each of its member units presented a rich and varied array of events, productions and exhibitions that complement the curriculum. Below is a sampling.
THEATRE ARTS & PERFORMANCE STUDIES

Consistent with its mission to consider, in theory and in practice, multiple forms of performance—the Department of Theatre Arts & Performance Studies (TAPS) draws audiences into imaginative investigations and productions throughout the year.

TAPS hosted the Activist Body Symposium, a day-long sequence of presentations, conversations, workshops, and performances, hosted in late September in the Granoff Center. Examining what it means to be a politically responsive body, the symposium concluded with a tap dance performance exploring legacies of colonialism. Clad all in white, dancer ORLANDO HERNÁNDEZ moved through the halls and staircases of the building while reciting a 16th century Spanish proclamation to displaced indigenous peoples.

In April, over 450 community members enjoyed a production of Sometimes the Rain, Sometimes the Sea, written by JULIA IZUMI MFA ’19, directed by KATE BERGSTROM MFA ’18 and acted by a cast of talented undergraduates. A reimagining of Hans Christian Andersen’s beloved fairy tale The Little Mermaid, the play had received its first public reading in 2017 as part of the Writing is Life annual festival of new plays, featuring works from Brown University’s Writing for Performance graduate program.

MODERN CULTURE AND MEDIA

Brown’s Department of Modern Culture and Media (MCM), which explores media in the context of 20th and 21st century cultural and social constructs, offered multifaceted programs throughout the year. In October, science-fiction author SAMUEL “CHIP” DELANY visited campus as a BAI-funded Fitt Artist-in-Residence. His ground-breaking work explores race, sexuality, language, perception and fluctuating concepts of “the human”—topics he discussed with Brown students and faculty. To conclude his residency, Delany gave the Roger B. Henkle Memorial Lecture, “The Mirror and the Maze,” to a full house in Martinos Auditorium, followed by a lively exchange with the audience.

In partnership with the Department of French Studies, MCM presented the 2018 French Film Festival in late February. More than 2,000 Brown and Providence community members attended the eight-day festival, enjoying critically-acclaimed films from France, Canada and Africa. The festival offered something for everyone: drama, animation, comedies and documentaries. The César-winning children’s animated film Le Grand Méchant Renard (Patrick Imbert and Benjamin Renner, co-directors, 2017) was also screened, to the delight of the youthful audience members jumping up and down in the aisles.

Award-winning independent film director, screenwriter and producer TODD HAYNES ’85 participated in a number of events in April organized by MCM and the John Hay Library. A pioneer of New Queer Cinema, Haynes led a workshop for student filmmakers and held an audience Q&A session after screening his newly released film, Wonderstruck. He continued the conversation at the John Hay Library discussing an exhibition of his “image books,” the visual archives he creates for each film.

RITES AND REASON THEATRE | AFRICANA STUDIES

Dedicated to the critical examination of the cultures of Africa and the African Diaspora, the Department of Africana Studies is also home to Brown’s Rites and Reason Theatre. Founded in 1790 out of the Black Arts Movement, the Theatre gives voice to diverse cultural expressions using its unique Research-to-Performance Method (RPM). In the spring, it presented the choreo-drama Ashes, a narrative of healing and resilience after domestic abuse, directed by LILY MENGESA PHD ’18 and featuring current student, alumni and community actors.

From April 11–14, 2018, over 300 audience members enjoyed the performances, presentations, workshops and panels that comprised the 10th Annual Black Lavender Experience. Five students and two faculty members from Tougaloo College in Mississippi joined events sparked by activist TOM RATCLIFFE ’81 and Becky Page, a film chronicling the protest by elite runners Tommie Smith and John Carlos at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics; and Music of ‘68: A Change is Gonna Come, a four-day immersion in jazz, reggae, R&B and popular dance music that responded to the social and political upheavals of the late 60s.

DAVID WINTON BELL GALLERY

Brown’s notable contemporary art exhibition space, the David Winton Bell Gallery in the List Art Building, presented six thought-provoking exhibitions in its 2017-18 season. From November 11, 2017-February 11, 2018, visitors explored Festivals, Funerals and New Life, a survey of work by the pioneering African American sculptor and installation artist MELVIN EDWARDS, and curated by IAN ALDEN RUSSELL. The gallery was pleased to host Edwards for events associated with the exhibition, including the fabrication of a new sculpture at Providence’s Steel Yard and a public conversation with his good friend, the artist TONY RAMOS.

The List’s lobby showcased an exhibition drawn from the Bell’s permanent collection. Organized by graduate curatorial assistant RICA MAESTAS MA’18, Llevando La Cultura explored conflicting and shifting definitions of Mexican identity throughout the 20th century. Open from January 10-February 11, 2018, the exhibition culminated in a community reception featuring the University’s own mariachi band, Mariachi de Brown.

In late March 2018, the campus community began to notice out-sized photo murals of polar landscapes and animals mounted on the facades of several Brown buildings. This public art installation was part of 33˚, a multi-dimensional Bell Gallery exhibition curated by JO-ANN CONKLIN and organized to coincide with the BAI’s Polar Opposites symposium (see page 10). In addition to the murals, the gallery presented the work of five polar photographers documenting the beauty and destruction of the regions, plus an installation by JACOB KIRKEGAARD called Isfald, which recreates the below-surface sound and vibrations of calving glaciers.

HISTORY OF ART AND ARCHITECTURE

The Department of the History of Art and Architecture (HIAA), dedicated to the study of visual cultures from ancient to modern day, drew participants from both on and off campus for its scholarly programming. A graduate student-organized conference called Reuse Reconsidered explored both historical and contemporary perspectives on the reuse of cultural heritage. Activating the Granoff Center from September 15-17, 2017, the conference presented 11 panels on themes such as “Appropriation and Power,” “Redefining Identity” and “Policiting Reuse.” Speakers ranged from graduate students to senior faculty who traveled from as close as Brown’s Main Green and as far as Oxford, England. These topics were further investigated via HIAA’s Reuse Reconsidered lecture series, which included an October presentation by University of Massachusetts, Amherst Professor MAX PAGE on the discourse around Confederate monuments in the South.

VISUAL ART

Each academic year, Brown’s Visual Art Department presents the work of both established and emerging artists in exhibitions and events at the List Art Building. These activities are designed to integrate with the curriculum offered by the departments of Visual Art and History of Art and Architecture.

During the fall semester, the David Winton Bell Gallery and the Visual Art Department jointly invited students to submit work for the 38th Annual Juried Student Art Exhibition. Artist SOPHIA NARRETT ’10 and curator/educator KALIA BROOKS reviewed nearly 200 submissions, and ultimately selected 34 works by student artists for display in the David Winton Bell Gallery from February 24-March 11, 2018.


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From December 18, 2017-February 1, 2018, wall sculptures by YVONNE LOVE from her 2017 nature-inspired Alluvial Plain series were shown in the List 221 Gallery. In early March, cross-disciplinary artist WENDY RED STAR visited Brown and gave a lecture open to the campus and local community. Raised on the Apsáalooke (Crow) reservation in Montana and an avid archival and historical researcher, Red Star spoke about her education, career and the continuing inspiration she finds in her cultural heritage. Prior to her talk, she spent an afternoon visiting students in their studios and providing feedback on their new work.

DEPARTMENTAL PROGRAMS
Recognizing the importance of broadly supporting the arts at Brown, the BAI administers a two-pronged grants program, one designed for faculty and arts professional staff, and the other for students. Each fall and spring semester of the academic year, the BAI provides competitive funding for projects that enrich the campus and local community through arts-focused public presentations, artist-in-residence opportunities, research and development projects, and student projects. A volunteer committee comprising arts faculty and staff reviewed and rated applications from peers according to criteria refined by an external review conducted in summer 2017. A committee of the Brown Arts Student Council vetted student applications.

In FY18, $108,230 was awarded in grants to 23 faculty, postdoctoral fellows and professional staff in support of artistic production, presentation and research. Grant recipients included James Tompkin, assistant professor of computer science, for Discover Art/Science, a program which pairs science and art students to create new artwork together; Karen Allen Baxter, senior managing director of Rites and Reason Theatre, for a residency by documentary filmmaker Yoruba Richen ’96 continuing the investigation of the 1968 protest at Brown by African American students; and Sawako Nakayasu, assistant professor of literary arts, for research on her collaborative book project, Japanese Experimental Poetry in the 20th Century.

Eighty-seven Brown students received funding totaling $30,428 to support a range of projects, including the following: Jacob Alabab-Moser ’20 and Caitlin Takeda ’20 received support for the second edition of Garden magazine, which showcased the work of Providence-area student photographers; Luc Bukor-Smith ’18 received funding to build a large-scale, interactive multimedia installation using LED light strips; and Grace Monk ’18 brought three artists to campus from Greece and Chile for a panel discussion on Re-thinking the Wall: Greek and Chilean Street Art followed by a public painting demonstration.
Resistance is motion, a matter of velocity, a quality of action. And resistance is always confronting history.

RALPH LEMON

PROFESSORS OF THE PRACTICE

During the 2017-18 academic year, the BAI was delighted to host three visiting professors of the practice (or PoPs, as they’re called around campus): ANNE WALDMAN, RALPH LEMON and SEBASTIAN RUTH ’97, PHD ’12 HON. In a position created by the BAI to directly connect visiting artists and art world professionals with students, the PoPs taught courses, gave presentations open to the public, embarked on collaborations with Brown community members and mentored and advised students active in the arts.

Renowned poet, performer, editor and teacher Anne Waldman opened the BAI’s program season in September with a poetic presentation and declaimed reading of her decades-spanning work. She noted that the creative process demands dialogue with “the crazy weather of our existence.” Referencing the 20th century Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, she said the contemporary artist or poet perceives the darkness, and paradoxically, “the light out of darkness.” During the spring semester, Waldman taught “The Restless Desk: Hybrid Writing, Performance, Collaboration” through the Literary Arts department. Students in the course designed semester-long creative projects drawing on both their study of literary performance practice and conversations with guest lecturers. As aforementioned, Waldman also performed with Meredith Monk (see page 8 for more details).

FELLOWS

Following his successful engagement as one of the BAI’s inaugural professors of the practice in FY17, Providence-based writer, photographer and filmmaker RAMELL ROSS received a Mellon Gateway Fellowship at Brown. This prestigious two-year award, designed to support the early career of practitioners and scholars from historically underrepresented groups, enabled Ross to continue his creative work while also teaching one semester and leads to a full-time, tenure-track position as assistant professor in the Visual Art Department.

During the fall semester, genre-defying director, choreographer, dancer, visual artist, curator and writer Ralph Lemon taught the course “13 Positions” through Theatre Arts & Performance Studies. His lab explored the relationship between one’s body and one’s “cultural cosmology.” Lemon shared his work with the BAI community in a November performance and talk-back, where he considered the politics of different bodies at different historical moments. For Lemon, “Resistance is motion, a matter of velocity, a quality of action. And resistance is always confronting history.”

Sebastian Ruth made a repeat appearance with the BAI, teaching his course “Music, Civil Society and Public Service” in the spring semester. A violinist, educator and 2010 MacArthur “Genius Award” recipient, Ruth is the founder of Providence-based Community MusicWorks, an organization that connects professional musicians with urban youth and families. His class examined the relationship of the arts to activism and positive social change, and concluded with student presentations of their capstone projects.

My performances are often spontaneous because that’s life... they call attention to social ills, but also atonement.

JELILI ATIKU

Creative Vision. In April, Ross joined the film’s co-writer, Moroccan American visual artist and photographer MAYA KRINSKY, at Martinos Auditorium for an excerpt screening and in-depth discussion about the philosophy and decision-making entailed in crafting a film that reveals a non-conventional, non-stereotypical and more realistic depiction of rural black Southern life. Nigerian multimedia artist JELILI ATIKU joined the Brown Arts Initiative and the Department of Africana Studies in January 2018 for a year-long visiting assistant professorship sponsored by the Artist Protection Fund (APF). A new program of the Institute of International Education, APF partners with host organizations, such as universities and cultural centers, to provide relief and safe haven to threatened artists. Atiku’s work, which encompasses drawing, installation, sculpture, photography, video and live performance, promotes freedom of expression and addresses human rights and social justice issues. His observations on poverty, corruption, war, violence and oppression have made him a target of the ruling class in his native Lagos.

Atiku shared his artistic perspectives with the Brown community in two BAI-organized events in April: Shoot the Breeze, an interactive, outdoor performance with student participants, and a subsequent conversation with Africana Studies Postdoctoral Research Associate and Mellon Gateway Fellow DOTUN AYOBADE. Atiku noted that his performances “are often spontaneous because that’s life... they call attention to social ills, but also atonement.” Witnesses to Shoot the Breeze would have agreed—entirely concealed in a hand-fabricated ram mask and business suit, Atiku processed with students dressed as sheep to the American flag on the campus’ Main Green, providing visually compelling and political commentary on current events.

I’m still absolutely astounded at photography’s complicity in perpetuating stereotypes.

RAMELL ROSS

My performances are often spontaneous because that’s life... they call attention to social ills, but also atonement. JELILI ATIKU

Creative Vision. In April, Ross joined the film’s co-writer, Moroccan American visual artist and photographer MAYA KRINSKY, at Martinos Auditorium for an excerpt screening and in-depth discussion about the philosophy and decision-making entailed in crafting a film that reveals a non-conventional, non-stereotypical and more realistic depiction of rural black Southern life. Nigerian multimedia artist JELILI ATIKU joined the Brown Arts Initiative and the Department of Africana Studies in January 2018 for a year-long visiting assistant professorship sponsored by the Artist Protection Fund (APF). A new program of the Institute of International Education, APF partners with host organizations, such as universities and cultural centers, to provide relief and safe haven to threatened artists. Atiku’s work, which encompasses drawing, installation, sculpture, photography, video and live performance, promotes freedom of expression and addresses human rights and social justice issues. His observations on poverty, corruption, war, violence and oppression have made him a target of the ruling class in his native Lagos.

Atiku shared his artistic perspectives with the Brown community in two BAI-organized events in April: Shoot the Breeze, an interactive, outdoor performance with student participants, and a subsequent conversation with Africana Studies Postdoctoral Research Associate and Mellon Gateway Fellow DOTUN AYOBADE. Atiku noted that his performances “are often spontaneous because that’s life... they call attention to social ills, but also atonement.” Witnesses to Shoot the Breeze would have agreed—entirely concealed in a hand-fabricated ram mask and business suit, Atiku processed with students dressed as sheep to the American flag on the campus’ Main Green, providing visually compelling and political commentary on current events.

I’m still absolutely astounded at photography’s complicity in perpetuating stereotypes. RAMELL ROSS
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Recognizing students as its primary constituency, the BAI offered singular opportunities to engage with undergraduates and graduate students throughout the year. In addition to participating in BAI-sponsored performances, conversations and symposia, they enjoyed direct access to renowned artists of varied genre and media, including Rosanne Cash, Nick Cave and Thelma Golden, via workshops, critiques and salon-style lunches and dinners. In a more extended engagement (as previously noted on page 9), four student assistants worked closely with BAI artist-in-residence Kelly Nippert to help develop her performance work, Terre Mécanique during summer 2017, co-commissioned by PerforMa and the BAI. Two dozen students then attended the piece’s world premiere during a November trip to the Performa 17 biennial in New York City, one of several student workers who contributed to the BAI’s curatorial and marketing/communications efforts.

Students were also active on the Brown Arts Student Council (BASC) co-chaired by Maddy Forbes ‘18 and Alex Fredman ‘18. BASC members worked with BAI staff to bring artists João Exxuto and Erica Love ‘99 to campus for the Spring Arts Lecture; plan exhibitions and programming for the annual MESH series and Spring Arts Fest; jury fall and spring student grant applications; and curate an exhibition of work funded by BAI student grants in the Atrium Gallery from March 1–23, 2018.

Animating Science, ” led by Professor of Biology John Stein, about learning to use visual media to convey scientific concepts. Class attendees walked through corridors, elevator bays and living rooms filled with art made by their peers—approximately 180 students in total exhibited in Granoff spaces over the course of the year. Graduate Curatorial Fellow Emma Boast MA ’19 organized these displays, one of several student workers who contributed to the BAI’s curatorial and marketing/communications efforts.

Brown University’s current strategic plan, Building on Distinction, emphasizes “cultivating creative expression” as one of its key tenets. As such, it calls for a substantial expansion of resources for the arts. This includes the construction of a new Performing Arts Center (PAC) to support teaching and learning around the development and presentation of music, theater, dance and multimedia arts. Following the selection of an exceptional design team—REX architecture from New York, Theatre Project Consultants from Norwalk, CT, and Threshold Acoustics from Chicago—and the location directly across The Walk from the Granoff Center as the site of the PAC, much progress has been made on this project so vital to enhancing the arts at Brown. The new facility has been envisioned to complement the Granoff Center, aesthetically and programmatically, creating a synergistic relationship between the two buildings.

The PAC’s main hall has been designed as a flexible space adaptable to different disciplines, capable of supporting both large ensembles and intimate recitals, with superb acoustics and an audience capacity of 500. Other spaces include a smaller performance and rehearsal space, a studio suitable for dance and another for acting, all outfitted with state-of-the-art audio/visual technology, plus dressing rooms, student practice rooms, instrument storage and back of house areas, as well as an expansive lobby serving as a central gathering space on campus. The project has proceeded on schedule, with its anticipated opening in early 2021.
Brown University is deeply grateful to the many alumni, parents, friends and other donors who provided financial support to enrich the arts curriculum and programming on campus. The following list recognizes those who contributed $5,000 or more during the BrownTogether campaign (as of June 30, 2018).

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Anne Waldman and Meredith Monk at Brown University. Performance still. Photo by Anne Bergeron.
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