U.S. Cultural Engagement with Global Muslim Communities

A Report on an International Convening at The Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center

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“U.S. Cultural Engagement with Global Muslim Communities”

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October 21-25, 2013

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I. Executive Summary

“U.S. Cultural Engagement with Global Muslim Communities”
Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center, October 21-25, 2013

In 2008, the NYU Brademas Center launched a project on cultural diplomacy. Since then, the center has organized US-based and international conferences, public programs, and supported research all to study the contributions of arts and culture in a global context. Building on this work, in October of 2013, the Brademas Center organized, at the Rockefeller Foundation’s Bellagio Center, a conference on “U.S. Cultural Engagement with Global Muslim Communities.” Participants were cultural practitioners – professionals who move art and artists between Western and predominantly Muslim communities. They came from a dozen countries, work in a diversity of institutional settings, and represent a full range of artistic disciplines.

On the pressing divide between the United States and Muslim communities, the difficulties were directly faced and discussed. Participants acknowledged misinformation and mistrust on both sides, and considered the need to counter extreme ideologies.

The conferees identified from their experience the actors most involved in cultural engagement in the U.S. and Muslim communities: professionals working as independent producers and curators; and nonprofit organizations and cultural institutions, which organize exchanges. The types of activities these actors organize include exhibitions, festivals, tours, residencies, concerts and theater, film and media and literature in translation. The spectrum can be charted from the traditional to the experimental, from the most intimate to the most public of events, offered in a great variety of venues. The conferees also described their most persistent concerns in doing their work: exercising strong standards of curatorship, finding funding and support, identifying the best uses of technology, advancing professional development and designing effective evaluation methods.

Conferees also considered the best explanations of and arguments for the work that they do. They acknowledged that the diversity and depth of work itself is an argument for support and expansion. They also identified how cultural exchange and the arts can help address the crisis in international understanding, convey universally shared values across societies, and reach youth beyond global boundaries. They also spoke about the ways in which artists and cultural professionals speak at parity, with special directness and equality, across divides.

The conference ended with specific suggestions for how to expand and deepen cultural engagement between the U.S. and global Muslim communities. Suggestions included improved research on the current state of activity and funding, efforts to influence decision-makers, advocacy to improve visa and travel regulations and an expansion of residency and travel funds.
II. Cultural Engagement: Background to the Bellagio Conference

Recent years have seen around the world a renewed interest in international cultural engagement—connecting nations and communities through culture and the arts. In 2008, New York University’s John Brademas Center for the Study of Congress launched a Project on Cultural Diplomacy with a conference and a report directed to the Administration and the Congress, Moving Forward: A Renewed Role for American Art and Artists in a Global Age, with policy recommendations for a recommitment of U.S. support of international arts and cultural exchange. In 2012, the Brademas Center followed up by partnering with the Ditchley Foundation to assemble a diverse group of political and cultural leaders to analyze how cultural diplomacy helps to foster mutual engagement between countries. In addition to these initial convenings and reports, a variety of initiatives – research studies, international conferences, public programs – by the Brademas Center and other organizations indicate quite clearly that culture and the arts have fresh relevance, providing critical opportunities to foster cooperation and understanding in our time.

Continuing this momentum, the Brademas Center mounted an invitational conference on international cultural activity at the Rockefeller Foundation’s Bellagio Center on Lake Como, Italy in October 2013. While the conference benefitted from the inspiration and findings of prior work, Bellagio was different in particular ways. First, the Bellagio meeting assembled practitioners in cultural exchange – the professionals who actually move art and artists and facilitate the flow of ideas and influences from one part of the world to another. Second, the meeting addressed work that specifically crosses the cultural divide most evident in our day – that between Western and Muslim-majority countries.

In three days of intense discussion and examination, the Bellagio participants reframed the original thesis of the conference, “Cultural Connections: Engaging the Muslim World and the West.” By the final session, participants agreed upon a revised title for the meeting more reflective of their cultural exchange concerns and the focus of the discussions, namely, "U.S. Cultural Engagement with Global Muslim Communities."

The implications are clear. First, the group noted that the West as represented at the meeting was actually the United States. The group agreed that the U.S. has a history and a range of contemporary issues that make it different from other Western nations and which affect international sensitivities. Participants, including those from the United States, acknowledged the relative insularity and global innocence of many Americans, and spoke about misinformation, media distortion and anti-Muslim sentiment in the U.S. They were frank about Americans’ ignorance of Muslims and the tendency to identify all Muslims with “fundamentalism,” especially since 9/11. They discussed the negative image of the United States held by many of those living in Muslim-majority countries as well as the need to counter extreme ideologies.

In discussion of the East/West divide, participants immediately agreed that the use of the designation “Muslim” was more accurate than “Islamic,” which traditionally refers more directly to a religious conviction. Muslim is more inclusive of social and cultural identity. Equally important, it also acknowledges the breadth of Muslim communities around the
world, including Muslim-majority countries and Muslim populations in other countries, as well as diaspora communities.

The conferees set the format and built discussion topics, session by session, working together as a group. Discussing their activities, participants detailed the nature of their programs, the rewards and challenges encountered, their needs for support and sustainability, and likely next steps for advancing this work in changing political, cultural and economic environments. Most important, they articulated the best arguments for the work in which they are engaged. Their attention to “culture” in all its meanings, and their passion and commitment to international understanding, informed and animated the discussions throughout.

While the arts and artists are the preoccupying and unifying interest of the Bellagio participants and their peers, this convening asked them for a concentrated focus on art’s purposefulness and on ideas in art; in this case, the purpose and the idea of connecting cultures. It would be misleading to think that this function is the only or even the most important aspect of their work. But at this discussion, it was the instrumental focus.
III. The Size and Range of Practitioner Activity

The group of conferees assembled at Bellagio was made up of nineteen practitioners working in international cultural engagement. The members of this group, based in the United States or Muslim-majority countries, are particularly active in cultural exchange between the U.S. and global Muslim communities. Participants came from Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Lebanon, Nigeria, Pakistan, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States. They represented a breadth of disciplines in the arts: graphics, dance, music, theater, photography, film, new media, traditional arts and poetry.

Many of these practitioners are themselves artists. They all work as organizers and presenters or producers.

Some refer to themselves as independent producers or curators. They have either no permanent institutional affiliation, or an affiliation with an institution (e.g. a university or a museum) that is not directly or solely involved in cultural exchange. They take on individual projects at their own or other institutions, or they even create temporary organizations to produce a project such as a music festival or an art exhibition.

Others have an institutional home which is the base for their work. These bases are usually nonprofit organizations, with a sustained interest in exchange, including art galleries, museums, performing arts centers, cultural institutions, community centers, libraries and arts advocacy organizations.

Individual practitioners and organizations dedicate various degrees of attention and resources to Western-Muslim cultural engagement. For some, it is a primary focus of their activity. For others, it is one area in which they are involved, through either ongoing programs or by mounting special or time-limited projects.

To various degrees, these practitioners focus on engaging and educating local communities and audiences. They strive for better connections among their citizens, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, as well as building connections between their populations and communities elsewhere.

Practitioners like these form networks of connections, or global cultural “circuits,” specifically between the U.S. and Muslim communities, through which art and artists flow. There is a variety of such networks or connections between practitioners, ranging from the most casual, in which practitioners may not have met, but have worked with the same artist or received grants from the same funder, to the most calculated, in which professionals directly collaborate.

From their bases – formal or informal, casual or calculated – cultural practitioners produce, at an ever-expanding rate, a range of local, regional and global activities. Cultural engagement involves live audiences and, in the Internet era, increasingly involves virtual
connections. Their work is infused with creative imagination and deliberation in every field of the arts. The work described by the participants encompasses a broad spectrum of programs, venues and disciplines.

Programs cited include artist residencies, travel and tours, performances, exhibitions, art markets and social media projects. They feature individual artists and groups in a range of settings from small to vast, from intimate to blockbuster.

The Bellagio participants also discussed the variations in their venues. These were often described as “trusted spaces” where art, artists and community come together to engage and educate each other. In these spaces artists intend their work not only to be experienced but also to spark conversations. Venues include residency sites, galleries, museums, theaters, performance halls, colleges and universities, libraries, community centers, outdoor spaces, local fairs, festival sites, cultural districts and computer and mobile screens.

The practitioners also characterized their activities by disciplines that range from the traditional to the most contemporary, including visual arts, music, dance, poetry and literature, film and video, mixed media, performance art and installation art. Hybrid examples include contemporary work inspired by or incorporating traditional disciplines and influences, and traditional work rethought for dissemination to new audiences and through new technologies.

Discussing this diversity of programs, venues and artistic disciplines, the Bellagio practitioners actually educated themselves about the scale of their own enterprise. One of the major outcomes of the conference may be a better understanding of international cultural exchange as a field in which practitioners are setting goals, curating and commissioning work, funding artists and projects and reaching audiences at a vibrant level and at a growing rate.
IV. Significant Issues in Practice

Throughout the individual presentations and group discussions, persistent concerns were raised about issues of best practice. The most significant of these, which warrant further attention, were:

- **Curatorship.** Questions were raised about how practitioners select art and artists and decide how to best present them. They discussed application procedures, competitions, recommendations and formal and informal review of artists’ work. This issue emerged as one that merits careful review.

- **Funding.** Support from government, foundations and other sources is predictably a major concern for these professionals. They operate in an environment in which few resources are dedicated to art and culture, with even less for international exchanges. Prior to the Bellagio meeting, the Brademas Center had commissioned research to provide examples of government, foundation and private support of cultural exchanges between U.S. and Muslim communities. It was agreed that more comprehensive research is needed to identify key supporters for this work.

- **Professional development.** This issue emerged most powerfully in the insistence throughout the meeting on the need for more travel funds and more residencies for artists and arts practitioners to provide experience and connections in communities outside their own. There were also calls for mentoring by seasoned practitioners of younger artists to heighten the practical aspects of their work, such as applying for grants and organizing tours. There may be ways to meet these needs, reasonably, within existing frameworks and institutions.

- **Audience development.** While recognizing successes in developing audiences, participants were nevertheless concerned about achieving greater diversity in the ages and social and economic backgrounds of their audiences. In particular, given the goal of increasing understanding between U.S. and Muslim communities, practitioners need additional tools and methods to identify and reach the “open and persuadable middle,” including people who do not normally go to see “art.” The Internet and social media are successfully expanding the reach of cultural programs. Participants discussed technology’s multiplier effect: for example, online videos can engage a wider, global audience after an original performance. New technology also offers opportunities to connect artists, to build audiences, and to experiment with greater interactivity. There was acknowledgment that practitioners must grapple with issues of moderation, curation, and legality in uploading content.

- **Evaluation.** An issue that seems increasingly pressing is evaluation.
Practitioners recognize its importance and the need to articulate goals and develop procedures for measuring outcomes. There was agreement that evaluation methods tend to be inadequate or unsatisfactory. There was also agreement that assessment must be seen as a positive and essential process. Any evaluation plan should be built into a project at its inception, with practitioners helping to identify the goals and standards to be met.

*The “field.”* Finally, there was a clear consensus that the scope and sweep of activity described at Bellagio merits further study. There was debate about whether global cultural engagement is indeed a “field” (and U.S. cultural engagement with Muslim communities a “sub-field”). There was little disagreement about the importance of what these practitioners are achieving in the aggregate, whether as a “field” or not. Research on "circuits" of cultural activity between Western and Muslim communities commissioned prior to the conference provided a sampling of relevant programs. Participants asked that the study be refined and expanded, to create a more accurate map of actors and programs.
V. The Arguments for the Work

The participants at Bellagio believe their work, its importance and ubiquity, is not as well comprehended or appreciated as it could be. They made good use of the Bellagio opportunity to engage with one another, to share their experiences, to express inherent values and to form well articulated arguments that support their work.

Arguments for Cultural Engagement

- **Extent of activity.** The range, diversity and sheer amount of activity in cultural engagement between the United States and global Muslim communities is an argument in itself. The Bellagio conference clearly demonstrated there is a significant amount of engagement to build upon.

- **Value of the activity.** Practitioners should draw on their extensive experience to build case studies and models which show the effectiveness of their work.

- **Readiness for leveraging.** Acknowledging the breadth and diversity of what they do, practitioners see the opportunity to learn from each other and leverage even more work, more effectively, through partnering and collaborating.

- **Using social media opportunities.** Adapting to new technologies will allow for program development, cultural distribution, audience engagement and artist collaboration. Increasing experimentation with technology is promising and timely.

- **Building understanding.** Relations and communication between the United States and global Muslim communities are at a low point; suspicion, mutual distrust, and stereotyping pervade both sides of the divide. Cultural expression – visual, performing and literary – conveys facts and feelings in immediate, forceful, personal ways that move people and can educate them about each other.

- **Sharing “everyday life.”** This idea, advanced by an artist-activist at the meeting, deeply resonates. While politicians and the news media often focus on difference and negative stories, there are universal values across societies and cultures that can be communicated through the arts and culture. The arts can offer a fuller, humanistic picture of faraway or little-known communities than we get from the “news,” conveying such values as family, work, dignity and creativity – daily, defining values, the reasons to live, that matter to us all.

- **Reaching youth.** The young are the future; they are actors in much of what is
happening on the world stage; and they are the makers of ideas and ideals for their changing communities. Contemporary art disciplines such as rap and hip-hop, graffiti and street art, film, video and mixed media and cultural experimentation connect and transmit, particularly through the Internet and social media, shared interests, values and hopes of young men and women within and across communities.

- **Fostering parity in exchange.** Science and technology, which define so much of modern life, are often perceived as dominant in the West, and lagging in other parts of the world. This perception can lead to an unfortunate sense of superiority among Westerners. What is notable about the arts, humanities and culture is that they are not seen as privileged in this way in one part of the world over another. Artists work at par; artistic institutions exist and artistic discoveries happen everywhere; artists, practitioners and scholars in this field do their work in full partnership with their peers around the globe. Recognizing the value of the arts and culture is a way to recognize the fully comparable worth of all societies and communities.
VI. Building U.S. Cultural Engagement with Global Muslim Communities

Through all three days of discussion, ideas were expressed about possible next steps to enhance and expand cultural connections between the United States and global Muslim communities. The sense of community that characterized the meeting, acknowledgement of the scale and density of the work being done, respect for the disciplines and the institutions represented, all added to a sense that there are opportunities to work together across the communities, to improve connections and expand cultural circuits.

- *Improved research.* The Brademas Center commissioned a research report in advance of the meeting on the current extent of cultural activity between the U.S. and Muslim communities and on funding sources. This research should be refocused and expanded.

- *Studies of significant issues.* Working groups of practitioners might focus on questions raised about curatorship, evaluation, funding and the greater adoption of new technology.

- *Informing and influencing decision makers.* The results of the meeting should reach an audience of foundations, news media outlets, policymakers and government officials, researchers and scholars, arts presenters and producers, opinion leaders and others who can help advance cultural contacts and connections between the U.S. and global Muslim communities. Outlets for presentations of findings from the Bellagio meeting could include panels and information sessions at appropriate professional gatherings, opinion pieces and social media postings.

- *Visa and travel arrangements.* The group was understandably concerned about the logistical difficulties faced by artists and practitioners when traveling internationally, especially for those coming to the U.S. from Muslim-majority countries. Several practitioners present at Bellagio have dedicated significant time and resources to secure visas and make travel arrangements for artists. Some expressed interest in working with Washington-based advocates who are concerned with these issues.

- *Residency and travel funds.* There were sustained and repeated calls for more artist residencies and more travel grants for artists and arts practitioners. Increased government and foundation funding for this purpose would strongly impact work being done by artists, expand cross-border connections between practitioners and artists and enhance community engagement.
VII. Conclusion

The Bellagio meeting was notable for bringing together a group of experienced cultural exchange practitioners from the United States and from Muslim communities in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, Europe, South Asia and Southeast Asia. Participants were notably frank and open in discussing their aspirations as well as the challenges and difficulties of making connections across contemporary fault lines.

Cultural engagement, or cultural diplomacy, can be successful only if it identifies the needs, the problems, the dissonances and distances it is trying to address. These practitioners evidenced throughout the meeting their talents as curators, advocates and activists for the arts and artists. They also bravely named the goals that motivate them to move the arts across borders - their will to fight hatred and suspicion, to reduce ignorance, to broaden understanding, to encourage expression and to rally communities to care for each other. All urged a continuation of discussion to deepen understanding of cultural engagement and to seek effective ways to fortify and expand this work.
VIII. Conference Participants

Shahidul Alam (Bangladesh)  
*Managing Director, Drik Picture Library Limited*  
www.drik.net

Shahidul Alam is a Bangladeshi photographer and writer with a special interest in education and new media. He set up the Drik Picture Library, the Bangladesh Photographic Institute, the South Asian Institute of Photography and Banglarights, the Bangladesh Human Rights portal. His work has been shown in the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Arts and the Royal Albert Hall in London; and been published in *National Geographic, Time Magazine, The Guardian* and *Le Monde*.

Cecily D. Cook (USA)  
*Senior Program Officer, Asian Cultural Council*  
www.asianculturalcouncil.org

Cecily D. Cook is the Senior Program Officer at the Asian Cultural Council, a foundation supporting cultural exchange in the visual and performing arts between the countries of Asia and the United States. She works closely with the Council’s grantees to realize their programs and travels regularly to Asia to meet with current, former, and prospective grantees.

Rachel Cooper (USA)  
*Director of Performing Arts and Cultural Initiatives, The Asia Society*  
www.asiasociety.org

Rachel Cooper oversees the performing arts and cultural programming at the Asia Society. She conceived and directs the Society’s Creative Voices of Muslim Asia. She co-edited “Making a Difference Through the Arts: Strengthening America's Links with Asian Muslim Communities.” She is an advisor to Center Stage, a State Department program to bring artists to the United States, and was a co-organizer of the 2009 New York City-wide Muslim Voices: Arts and Ideas Festival.

Yasmin Elayat (Egypt)  
*New Media Artist/Creative Technologist, OpenLabEgypt*  
www.elayat.com

Yasmin Elayat is a new media artist and creative technologist. She is the Co-Creator of “18 Days In Egypt: A Participatory Interactive Documentary Project” about the Egyptian Revolution. The project was awarded the Tribeca New Media Fund grant, was selected by the Sundance Institute New Frontier Lab, and featured in the Margaret Mead Film Festival 2012. Yasmin is a member of OpenLabEgypt, a media art collective in Cairo.
As an interpretation officer at the British Museum, David Francis acts as the audience advocate – representing visitors’ views and needs throughout the exhibition planning process. This process begins with front-end and formative evaluation to establish visitors’ relationship with the exhibition’s subject matter; this information is used to craft the exhibition narrative, select objects and write label text; and ends with researching visitors’ engagement with the exhibition through observations and questionnaires. One of David’s recent assignments included the exhibition: *Hajj: Journey to the Heart of Islam* (2012).

Nada Ghosn worked at the United Nations Office in Geneva and the French Institute and Alliance before joining the Beirut Art Center. At the Center she implements bilateral cooperation projects and serves as liaison with government agencies.

Salima Hashmi is currently Dean at the School of Visual Arts and Design at Beaconhouse National University, Lahore. In addition, she has taught at the National College of Arts--Pakistan’s premier art institution--for 31 years. She is a painter whose works have been exhibited in Pakistan and in international exhibitions. She has curated exhibitions of contemporary art in Pakistan as well as internationally. She is Vice Chair of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and founding member of Pakistan’s Women’s Action Forum.

Asad Ali Jafri served as the Director of Arts and Culture for the Inner-city Muslim Action Network (IMAN) until 2012, where he produced large-scale festivals, concerts, workshops and productions; established a global artist network with regular artist retreats and residencies; and conducted youth arts programming. He serves as advisor to Arts Midwest’s CaravanSerai and New England Foundation of the Art’s Center Stage. Productions with his group FEW Collective include “Turntable Dhikr” and “Bollywood Breaks”. Most recently, he worked with the World Islamic Economic Forum on MOCAfest (Marketplace of Creative Arts) in Malaysia and the UK.
Beth Janson (Canada/USA)
Executive Director, Tribeca Film Institute
www.tribecafilminstitute.org

As Executive Director of the Tribeca Film Institute, Beth Janson heads a non-profit that champions storytellers to be agents of change in their communities and around the world. TFI identifies a diverse and exceptional group of filmmakers and media artists and empowers them with funding and other resources to fully realize their stories and connect with audiences. Through hands-on training and exposure to socially relevant films, Tribeca’s educational programming helps young people gain the media skills necessary to be productive global citizens and creative individuals.

Moukhtar Kocache (Lebanon)
Consultant and adviser in philanthropy, cultural and civil society development

From 2004 to 2012 Moukhtar Kocache was Program Officer at the Ford Foundation’s regional office in Cairo. During his tenure, grant-making supported small to mid-sized organizations and focused on creativity, discourse, arts education and cultural development in Egypt, the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Lebanon. He has curated, managed and organized exhibitions, and has consulted for art galleries, museums, not-for-profit organizations and foundations in the US, Europe and the Middle East.

Restu I Kusumaningrum (Indonesia)
Founder and Creative Director of the Bali Purnati Center for the Arts; independent producer for the company Bumi Purnati Indonesia; and Chairwoman of the Losari Foundation
www.balipurnati.com

Restu I. Kusumaningrum has been active as a dancer-performer, choreographer, producer, and public advocate for the arts in Indonesia and abroad. She has received a fellowship from the Asian Cultural Council and the Prince Claus Foundation award. In 2000, she founded the Bali Purnati Center on the island of Bali, a multi-disciplinary arts institution focusing on crossing borders between tradition and contemporary life today.

Salwa Mikdadi (USA)
Visiting Associate Professor of Art History, NYU Abu Dhabi; Consultant, Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority
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Salwa Mikdadi is an art historian who has curated numerous exhibitions, including the first Palestinian Exhibition for the 53rd Venice Biennial, 2009. She works as a consultant to museums and art institutions in the Arab world. From 2009-2012 she developed the Arts and Culture Program at UAE’s Emirates Foundation that included international artists residencies and collaborations with regional and
international institutions in visual arts, film, literature and theatre. She is currently a Visiting Associate Professor of Art History at NYU Abu Dhabi.

**Malika Fairouz Nishanova (Switzerland)**  
*Director of the Aga Khan Music Initiative, Aga Khan Development Network*  
www.akdn.org

Fairouz Nishanova joined the Aga Khan Development Network in 2000 and has served as Director of the Aga Khan Music Initiative at the Geneva-based Trust for Culture since 2005. The Music Initiative is an inter-regional music and arts education program with worldwide performance, outreach, mentoring, and artistic production activities. The Initiative designs and implements a country-specific set of activities for each country in which it invests and works to promote revitalization of cultural heritage both as a source of livelihood for musicians and as a means to strengthen pluralism in those nations.

**Patrick-Jude Oteh (Nigeria)**  
*Artistic Director, Jos Repertory Theatre*  
www.josreptheatre.org

Patrick Jude-Oteh is the founding Artistic Director of the Jos Repertory Theatre, an independent not-for-profit theatre organization in Nigeria. He has been a Summer International Fellow at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington D.C. He writes a weekly column on Arts Management for the Peoples’ Daily Newspaper. He is the festival producer of Jos Festival of Theatre and the Festival of Theatre in Abuja showcasing plays from Nigerian and international repertory as well as a new writers’ initiative.

**Zeyba Rahman (USA)**  
*Senior Program Officer, Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art*  
www.ddfia.org

Zeyba Rahman leads the national grant-making program for the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art. Before joining the Foundation, she was an internationally recognized creative director/producer for bridge building projects with cultural and educational organizations, including the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music, Morocco where she launched the Festival’s US programs and expanded its presence in Asia. She is an advisor to Artworks For Freedom and PBS TV’s “Sacred” documentary series.

**Nadia Roumani (USA)**  
*Lecturer, Stanford Design School*  
www.designthinkingphilanthropy.com

Nadia Roumani is a lecturer and 2012-13 Fellow at the Stanford Design School, where she is applying design thinking to philanthropy and launching the Muslim
Giving Project – an online philanthropic platform for American Muslims. She is former program officer of the Building Bridges Program at the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, which aims to improve Americans’ understanding of Muslim societies through arts and media.

Chris Shields (USA)
Partner, Entech Holdings
www.festivalnetwork.com

Chris Shields is a founding partner in EnTech, a media & tech incubator; and FN.org, a charitable trust. FN uses EnTech's networks to promote cultural exchange for educational and development initiatives. FN most recently launched the Festival-in-Exile, an international tolerance campaign seeded from the acclaimed but exiled Festival au Desert in the Sahara. He is a regular panelist at the United Nations, Billboard Conference, the Africa Festivals Forum and US Islamic Forum in Doha.

Görgün Taner (Turkey)
General Director of the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSV); and Chairman of the European Cultural Foundation (ECF)
www.iksv.org

Gorgun Taner is the General Director of the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSV), a non-profit, non-governmental organisation that organises four international festivals (Film, Theatre, Classical Music and Jazz), the Istanbul Biennial, and the Istanbul Design Biennial. He is a Faculty Member of the Cultural Management Program of Istanbul Bilgi University and a board member of the Istanbul Modern Art Museum. He was the Turkish commissioner during the Cultural Season of Turkey in France, between July 2009 and March 2010.

Steve Zeitlin (USA)
Founding Director, City Lore, Inc.
www.citylore.org

Steve Zeitlin is Director of City Lore, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to foster New York City–and America’s–living cultural heritage through education and public programs. In 2007, he received a lifetime achievement award for his work in public folklore from the American Folklore Society. He is the author of a number of books and documentary films on America’s folk culture, and coordinated City Lore’s recent project: Poetic Voices of the Muslim World.
Organizers:

Alberta Arthurs (USA)  
*consultant in the arts and humanities*  
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Alberta Arthurs is an independent consultant in the arts, education and philanthropy, and a frequent commentator and writer on cultural issues. She is the former Director for Arts and Humanities at the Rockefeller Foundation, and was, prior to that, the President of Chatham University and an administrator/teacher at Harvard/Radcliffe, Rutgers and Tufts Universities. She has served as a board member or advisor to numerous non-profits, including PEN, Yaddo, the Tribeca Film Institute, the League of American Orchestras, UNESCO, the Salzburg Global Seminar, among others. Current consulting assignments include the AG Foundation, J.P. Morgan/Chase, and the Association of Performing Arts Presenters.

Michael DiNiscia (USA)  
*Associate Director, John Brademas Center for the Study of Congress, New York University*  
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Michael DiNiscia is Associate Director of New York University's John Brademas Center for the Study of Congress. He develops and directs the Center's research initiatives including the Project on Cultural Diplomacy. With his colleagues Tom McIntyre and Ruth Ann Stewart, he was editor of the 2009 Report, "Moving Forward: A Renewed Role for American Arts and Artists in the Global Age." He has held previous positions with the National Endowment for Democracy and the Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs. He is a member of the Advisory Council of the American Ditchley Foundation.

Thomas McIntyre (USA)  
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Thomas McIntyre is Assistant Director of New York University's John Brademas Center for the Study of Congress where he oversees the Center’s program agenda, acts as the Congressional liaison and coordinates its Congressional Internship Program. He is also Assistant Director for External Relations and Special Programs of NYU Washington, DC where he builds and maintains relationships with DC area organizations, works with students securing internship opportunities and manages the center’s programming schedule. Prior to working at NYU, Thomas worked for Senator Tom Daschle as his correspondence director.
Ruth Ann Stewart (USA)
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Ruth Ann Stewart was appointed Senior Fellow at New York University's John Brademas Center for the Study of Congress following her tenure as professor of public policy at NYU's Wagner Graduate School of Public Service and Affiliated Faculty at NYUAbu Dhabi. She served in government as Assistant Librarian of Congress for National Programs and as Associate Director at the Congressional Research Service. A founding co-editor of the cultural policy series, "The Public Life of the Arts," she is co-editor of Understanding the Arts and Creative Sector in the United States (2008). She is a trustee of the Smithsonian Institution's Cooper-Hewitt Design Museum and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.
IX. Acknowledgements

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Convened by:

New York University’s John Brademas Center for the Study of Congress

The mission of the John Brademas Center for the Study of Congress is to increase the understanding of Congress—"the People's Branch" of government—its role in making policy; its powers, processes and responsibilities. The Center's nonpartisan work is aimed at scholars, students and the public. The Center conducts research, organizes symposia and conferences, has a Congressional Internship program and holds public outreach events in New York and Washington, D.C. Our programming aims to explore issues and problems of the legislative branch from new perspectives. The Center is named for its founder, NYU President Emeritus John Brademas, who served in the U.S. House of Representatives for 22 years (1959-81).

Supported by:

The Rockefeller Foundation

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