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A compilation of visual and written works by Haverford interns sponsored by the Center for Peace and Global Citizenship during the summer of 2011. The works that follow explore a diverse set of topics that the interns encountered. We hope you find the selection as interesting as we do.

Claire Perry & Hannah Zieve
on the corner by daylight
men wait silent and still
standing, squatting, standing
they gaze across the
expanse of suburban
strip malls, gas stations and
beltway signage
out toward the memory of the
South
(the dirt of their land still
under their nails)

on the same corner
latino brothers
protect and abuse each other
paisano, how could you?
the justice of el norte
drifting away like a
ragged balloon
policed and patrolled

they wear guilty masks speak
guilty words sleep/dream/smile/
work/love guilty always
while tucking their child in
while breathing
in every heartbeat
always a kind of criminal

some days the sun sets early
and the men eat dinner in darkness
the chatter of utensils and heavy breaths
the lonely chorus of night

Kate Irick ’13
Community Outreach at the
Legal Aid Justice Center
Falls Church, Virginia
I couldn’t sleep. Even after two weeks I guess my mind, like my body, was still adjusting to India: the food, the language, the people. This day had been the hardest yet. This day, I had watched a newborn die. I sat and watched for hours as he faded away, holding his limp hand and wondering why this child, who probably could have been saved in my hometown hospital, had to slip through the cracks in a hospital that doesn’t have enough modern equipment. I stayed with him, naively hoping that his lungs would magically start working again, or that the pediatrician would come in and fix him. But as the sun set, his color changed and the nurses came to take his tiny body to his family.

Instead of lying in my bed thinking about the child we’d lost, I decided to head over to the hospital—the corner from my sleeping quarters. Understaffed and inundated with patients, the nurses and nuns at the hospital could always use a hand, even if it was just someone to push a gurney or change bed sheets.

The night started out quiet. I made cotton balls and laughed with the quiet on-duty nurses who were catching up on charts and checking blood pressures in the delivery room. As usual, two mothers started pushing at the same time and the two nurses each took one mother to assist, with the third nurse going in between the two whenever she was needed. Then, into the delivery room came Sister Rani, the sister at the convent who serves as the 24 hour on call doctor. She did rounds on all of the patients and found that our newest patient presented with an umbilical cord prolapse, a dangerous situation in which the cord delivers before the baby. The patient needed an emergency c-section to save her baby’s life. Sister Rani went to get permission from the patient’s husband.

Suddenly, the third nurse was washing the patient and yelling my name, pointing to a cabinet that held the catheterization kits and the surgical gowns. Having watched, but never participated in, many surgery prep scenarios, I found myself assisting in the catheterization, then dressing the scared mother and transferring her to the surgical gurney by myself while the nurse rushed to the lab with blood tests.

We pushed the gurney up to the operating room as the mother screamed in pain. As we tried to transfer her to the OR table, the baby started crowning and, before anyone could even
get gloves on, the baby was born...silent. The doctor and nurses in the operating room took the baby to the other side of the room, crowded around it and worked. When I tried to go observe the baby, I found the mother’s clinched fist attached to my pants. Crying, she turned to me and said, “Why isn’t he crying? Is he alive?” She kept repeating “why isn’t he crying?” I took her hand and told her, in my broken Hindi, that the doctors were trying to wake her baby. They were doing everything they could.

After a few minutes, we heard a faint sound followed by successive high-pitched wails coming from the child. The mother looked at me and said, “My baby?” I answered, “Yes. Your baby.” She loosened her grip and said something I didn’t understand before falling into an exhausted sleep.

Nicole Lantz ’12

India Health & Education Internship
Holy Family Hospital and St. Clare’s School
Koderma, India
Making Friends out of Strangers in Mexico City

Some of my favorite moments this summer are not what most people would classify as typical social justice work. While others characterized my job as reaching out to marginalized youth, addressing problems of migration and human rights abuse, or working for economic justice, the Casa de los Amigos’ self-ascribed title really says it all: this summer I engaged in work for peace and international understanding. While this may seem way too broad, in fact I have come to believe that this is all that social justice work can boil down to. While interns may lend an extra two hands to building a structure or a community, taking notes in a hospital or teaching kids how to grow things from the earth, I found that my peacebuilding work this summer came down to something the Casa prides itself on: simply sharing a meal with
someone who appears quite different from me.

The Casa’s hospitality program, according to the staff, is very much a peace program. My breakfast table was always populated by some mixture of American researchers, volunteers, college students, refugees of all ages from all over the world, and Mexican locals from the surrounding neighborhood. Many of these people came to the breakfast table without knowing that the other groups that I mentioned would also be sharing the bread and jam, papaya and eggs freshly prepared by a Casa volunteer. This summer I came to understand that something as huge and overwhelming as the pursuit of international understanding all comes down to something as small and warm, familiar and strange, as sharing breakfast with goodhearted strangers.

I found this to be overwhelmingly true in my experiences with my second organization, a Mexican nonprofit called Barrio Activo, or Active Neighborhood. As welcome and supported as I felt at the Casa, I was absolutely unprepared for the profound selflessness and love I encountered with this community from a poorer neighborhood of Mexico City.

I don’t know if I will ever understand why these people took such good care of me. After a summer of early mornings, teaching English classes, counseling summer camp, making posters, chaperoning field trips, and supporting a dance marathon, I still felt like I had given nothing in return. After a wonderful goodbye party full of food and dancing and affirmation circles, I spent my last afternoon in Mexico with my good friend and co-counselor from the neighborhood.

I tried, in Spanish, to explain these feelings I had of bafflement, of too-deep-to-explain gratitude, to this incredible community of jokers and nurturers. He said, “You gave all of yourself to us. You were genuine with us, and we saw the real you. You are just another piece of the cake.”

To me, this is what peace and international understanding means. It means sitting down to the breakfast table with Nigerian, Colombian, and Iranian refugees who have stories to share, jokes to tell, and incredible things to teach me. It means sharing a taco with the three malos (bad boys) and their cousins and aunt and uncle. It means coming into a new community, and completely opening yourself to learn as much as you can, to come to truly care about and know people. It means giving your whole self, until you realize that we are all just another piece of the cake. Navigating this wonderful pastel takes effort, because cultural differences and miscommunications are very real things. But with time, interest, and humility, we can achieve peace, one breakfast at a time.

Annie Boggess ’12

Casa de los amigos
Barrio Activo
Mexico City, Mexico
Teaching English in China over the summer was an unforgettable experience. In part, I taught at Hongshang Primary School, a school for migrant children in Nanjing. On the first day during recess, the kids stormed the front of the classroom, overwhelming my partner and me. Thrusting their textbooks into our hands asking for autographs, pulling our leg hair, and staring up at us asking why we were so tall. All the attention embarrassed me, but my memories from Hongshan are some of my fondest.

In our English classes, we followed the Chinese model of teaching, which is essentially a repeat-after-me model. The kids were used to this and it was impossible to give personal attention due to the large class sizes. We also taught a special seminar for kids grades 3-6 that were interested in learning some additional English comprehension and speaking. My group had six students, all boys, and I gave them all English names. They laughed at each other’s names and argued over whose was better while struggling to pronounce their own.

The weeks I spent at Hongshan weren’t all that rosy, though. There were some things to get used to: the hot classrooms, pungent bathrooms, and new rituals like mandatory eye-rubbing that was designed to soothe the aches from staring at the board too long. When I visited other primary schools in China, I realized just how poor Hongshan was. At Mochoulu Primary School, one of the best primary schools in Nanjing, the differences in teaching and learning experience was startling. The obvious discrepancies were material; the classrooms at Mochoulu had projectors and computers, the school had a turf field, and facilities were noticeably newer and cleaner. There were also subtle indications as to why Mochoulu was considered a much better school. For example, the students at Mochoulu could speak and understand English at a higher level, and the school administrators were much more organized.

Even though I was in China to teach English, I was also there to learn. Being immersed in the culture and conversing with actual Chinese people lent invaluable perspective to many key issues that I had learned about at Haverford. Learning English has become an important component of the Chinese education system. China
has a major need for English teachers, especially because there are so many children. English is especially important for students because many examinations that allow them to get into middle and high school, not to mention college, test for proficiency in English. Furthermore, these tests have begun to shift toward emphasizing speaking and listening to English. Many teachers have poor speaking and listening skills, and consequently their students suffer. There has always been a shortage of good English teachers, especially in the countryside and at poorer schools in the cities that serve the migrant population. Thus, since most of China’s population is in the poor countryside, many children of the countryside and migrant workers in the city have a difficult time getting a decent education.

With China rapidly modernizing, the best jobs and living conditions are found in major cities such as Nanjing. This has led to an enormous influx of migrant workers from the countryside into major cities, who apply for temporary work permits and come to cities looking for better jobs and a better life. Migrant workers and their families have no access to many essential social services that the Chinese government normally provides, such as healthcare and education. After middle school, the children of migrants are not allowed to attend high school in the cities.

I recall one insight that my boss, She Hongyu, shared with the volunteers. She told us that, yes, China is a vast nation with vast resources and yes, China could conceivably solve its domestic problems. After all, if you divide a problem by 1.3 billion people, then that issue seems to be small and easily dealt with. However, if you multiply that problem by 1.3 billion people, then it becomes a huge problem that affects many people. The enormous number of people in China has amplified inequalities in education. Educational justice is but one of the many battlegrounds in China’s struggle for social justice; however, as it effects the future generations of Chinese, it stands as one of the most important issues facing China today.
I almost didn’t meet Rikki Wemega-Kwawu. In my last few days in Accra, Wiz Kudowor, another of my artist friends, told me that I must visit him. I could discuss art for hours with Rikki, he said. I would not regret my trip to Takoradi.

And so I met Rikki, and, I’m almost embarrassed to say, began to engage with an issue of contemporary African art that I had not before realized was central: artists based on the continent of Africa versus in the diaspora.

Since engaging with art in Ghana on my first CPGC internship the previous summer, I’d thought about economic challenges for artists working in Africa – how potential African buyers may prefer Western art or may not be interested in art at all; how foreigners buy works cheaply in Africa then mark up the prices once they hit Western markets.

I’d thought about how European and American institutions have historically marginalized and objectified African art and artists; how Af-
rica is grouped as a continent and artists are often “otherized” through a focus on their origins; how the same set of names tends to be circulated at all the big African exhibitions.

But I hadn’t thought seriously about structural systems within the art world that favor and promote diaspora artists at the expense of continental ones. I hadn’t wrestled with theories that some curators and scholars have put forth arguing that there has been a mass migration of African artists to the West – a theory that ignores the rich and exciting work by artists on the continent today, and that justifies curatorial efforts that favor African artists in Europe and America. I hadn’t questioned why in the books that define contemporary African art, there is almost no mention of my artist friends in Ghana. Rikki handed me a book I’d been flipping through at the Brooklyn Museum bookstore the very evening before I flew to Ghana, and suddenly I saw it in a new light.

Where in the books and exhibitions I know is Ablade Glover, who runs the preeminent Artists Alliance gallery in Accra and helped to establish Ghanaian painting as it is today, with his yellow and blue-hued canvases of crowds and confident market ladies?

Where is Larry Otoo, the artist whose family I lived with this summer, who fuses Ghanaian symbols and scenes of markets, ceremonies, and jazzy nights with an expressionist style that breathes with the rhythm of daily life?

Where is Wiz Kudowor, the artist who told me I must see Rikki, whose bold canvases of lovers, spirits, and ephemeral shapes are painted with a foam roller and palette knife alone; paintings that reveal new layers and meaning upon each view?

Where is Rikki Wemega-Kwawu himself, whose abstract grids of adinkra symbols and colorful beach scenes play with geometry, spirituality, and ideas of Africanity?

These are some of the top artists in Accra. They are just a fraction of the artists working on the continent of Africa today, artists who are in many ways missing from a global picture of African art. That afternoon in Takoradi, 200 kilometers and a four-hour bumpy “tro-tro” ride southwest of Accra, Rikki taught me to critically examine not just issues in contemporary African art, but issues between artists on the continent and off.

Curatorial practices should include not just the biggest and most accessible names, but the richest array of artists engaging in the most interesting and fresh set of practices. They must look to the continent and to the diaspora, not one at the expense of the other.

Robin Riskin ’12
Sharing, Empowering, Preserving:
Art Worlds in Ghana
The Junior Art Club
Accra, Ghana