

# THE MEDICAL ARTS PROGRAM

## 2022-2023 Annual Report



*Medical students display their handiwork from a Medical Arts Program Workshop at the Penny W. Stamps School of Art & Design, Winter 2023.*



**The Medical Arts Program would like to thank the following partners:**



**The Medical Arts Program is supported by generous contributions from Maxine and Stuart Frankel and by the University of Michigan Medical School.**

# MAP VOICES 2022-2023

Painting Workshops, Art Corner Studio; October 2nd and 9th, 2022

“... I want it to feel like pieces of my life that shine through the darkness. That my resilience comes not just from within but from my **community support**.”

Rite of Spring / common ground[s] dance performance, University Musical Society; October 21st, 2022

“I loved the duet because it brought me through a range of emotions and felt very intimate. I recall the moment the two began dancing and my mind thought ‘wait, those don’t look like typical dancers,’ and from there on out, so many other aspects of the performance also **defied my expectation of what dance should be...**”

The Berlin Philharmonic - Mahler Symphony No. 7, University Musical Society; November 19th, 2022

“Being able to hear the **dissonance and subtlety of emotion** as it was mentioned in the pre-show talk was extremely rewarding. Each section maintained its own distinct sound but were all tied together by familiar motifs...”

Noura, The Detroit Public Theatre; December 4th, 2022

“I think Iraqi refugees are people we don’t see depicted often in art, so just having the opportunity to see a **‘slice of life’ through the performance** was most impactful.”

Ceramics Workshop Series, Penny W. Stamps School of Art & Design; January 26th, February 5th and 12th, 2023

“I felt refreshed and reset and better able to take on the professional tasks in front of me. It also gave me a **new framework** for trying to think through how **patients and communities think about their bodies**.”

UMMA Tour, University of Michigan Museum of Art; May 21st, 2023

“It was a wonderful opportunity to take time to use a more **creative part of my brain** that I don’t access as often in the clinical space. I also appreciated that there were **no wrong answers** in reflecting on art...”

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

### WHAT MAP GIVES TO STUDENTS (and what they give back)

The University of Michigan Medical Arts Program (MAP) uses the arts to strengthen the critical skills necessary for medical students and house officers to deliver high quality medical care. It is based on our belief that the humanistic skills of medical students and house officers are enhanced by engaging with the visual, theatrical, musical, and literary arts. These arts experiences increase their comfort in delivering empathic care and help them become comfortable with the ambiguity and uncertainty that are central elements of clinical practice. The arts help medical students increase awareness of the importance of social and economic context with a nuance and intensity unavailable through other means. They enhance the ability of medical students and house officers to provide high-quality patient care by encouraging the growth of skills in observation, communication, self-care, and the understanding of difference. The arts thus help students prepare for their future lives and careers.

We are especially delighted by this year's student-initiated projects, as well as events that offered learners the opportunity to create their own artwork. Many students in the health professions have at one time or another received training in the arts. Others have not. Both groups find it tremendously fulfilling to join with like-minded classmates in creating their own art, be it in the form of performance or visual creations. Experiencing first-hand the decisions artists make and the ways that they hone their craft is a rich and instructive experience for all health professionals in training.

The Medical Arts Program has four specific aims: (1) to develop a curriculum that enhances learners' abilities to provide humanistic clinical care through experiences and analysis of the musical, dramatic, and visual arts; (2) to evaluate the curriculum's success; (3) to achieve program sustainability; and (4) to disseminate the results to the health profession and the public.

Some 184 learners participated in seven arts events during the academic year 2022-2023. A group of sixteen student and house officer "Medical Arts Ambassadors" served as a liaison with other medical students, advised program leadership at periodic meetings, and even spearheaded Medical Arts Program events of their own. Ceramics artists, dance scholars, musicologists, playwrights, and museum curators led the learners at these events. We assessed each event using both qualitative and quantitative metrics. Learners believed that experiencing works of art as well as creating art themselves contributed to bettering their medical education. Learners also noted the close connections between works of art and the human issues they faced daily in hospitals and clinics.

Emerging from the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Medical Arts Program was thrilled to welcome back participants for in-person events. These hands-on learning opportunities made all the difference. Many medical students noted how impactful it was to meet and create with other medical students. They especially appreciated the rare opportunity to spend time in a non-clinical setting with fellow learners from a wide range of levels. We are grateful for the ability to once again host in-person events and to break bread together.

# THE MEDICAL ARTS EXPERIENCE

## THE PROGRAM

Medical schools provide students with the scientific knowledge necessary to deliver technically proficient care. However, many practicing physicians do not do particularly well at delivering *humanistic* care. Too often, caregivers don't communicate well with their patients, or fail to understand the impact of disease within the larger social context. Both of these failings can compromise patient care.<sup>1</sup>



Trainees can learn to better understand these humanistic elements of medical care through engagement with works of art. Artists have long explored issues that are central to human health and disease: joy, suffering, devotion, despair, anxiety, loss of power and control, and, of course, impending death. Artists have grappled with the nature of human relationships and the purpose of life. Some artists have reflected on their own illnesses, disabilities, and aging. These are all profound issues that illnesses often bring to the fore. The arts can connect life-as-lived to medicine with an intensity and fidelity that cannot easily be conveyed by conventional classroom instruction or on hospital rounds.

The arts may also help facilitate physicians to move from understanding to action. That action includes patient-centered health care, defined by the Institute of Medicine as “care that is respectful of and responsive to individual patient preferences, needs, and values and ensures that patient values guide all clinical decisions.”<sup>2</sup>

Ub order ti deliver patient-centered care, students and residents need to learn how to truly listen to their patients, including not only oral communication but also the subtleties of tone, rhythm, and body language. Artistic experiences teach us to pay careful attention to myriad types of communication. Art can also help us appreciate that different people see and experience the world in different ways. Often, there is not one clear solution to a clinical problem, and physicians-in-training must learn to be comfortable with this uncertainty. The arts, too, draw much of their power from creative ambiguity.



1. Lown, BA et al. An agenda for improving compassionate care: a survey shows about half of patients say such care is missing. *Health Affairs* 30: 1772-8, 2011.

2. Institute of Medicine. (2001). *Crossing the Quality Chasm*. Washington: National Academies Press, 2001.

## LEADERSHIP

### **Joel Howell, MD, PhD**

Director, the Medical Arts Program

Elizabeth Farrand Professor of the History of Medicine

Professor, Departments of Internal Medicine, History, and Health Management and Policy

### **Sanjay Saint, MD, MPH**

Co-Director, the Medical Arts Program

George Dock Professor of Internal Medicine, University of Michigan

Chief of Medicine, Ann Arbor VA Medical Center

### **Lona Mody, MD MSc**

Co-Director, the Medical Arts Program

Amanda Sanford Hickey Professor of Internal Medicine

Interim Division Chief, Geriatric and Palliative Care Medicine

Director, U-M Pepper Center Pilot & Exploratory Studies Core

Associate Director, Clinical and Translational Research, Geriatrics Center

## STAFF

### **Kristin Hanson**

Medical Arts Program Assistant 2022-2023

BFA Dance, '22

Minors in History of Art, Performing Arts Management and Entrepreneurship



# MEDICAL ARTS PROGRAM 2022-2023 SEASON

For a summary listing of all activities, please see Appendix.

## Interactive Painting Workshops — Art Depicting Pandemics

October 2nd & 9th, 2022 | Art Corner Studio | Ann Arbor

October 2nd marked the first in-person Medical Arts Program event since 2019 and the continuation of MAP co-director Dr. Lona Mody and Art Corner Studio instructor Julee Li's Interactive Painting Workshops. The theme of this year's workshop series was "Art Depicting Pandemics," which was inspired by a recently published article featuring Dr. Mody's paintings. [<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41591-021-00009-5>] The session opened with a discussion about what art can teach us about resiliency. Students were then given the



opportunity to create an acrylic painting expressing their own artistic interpretation of the theme. Some chose to depict the challenge of training during the COVID-19 pandemic. One participant said; "I wanted a painting that would depict how Chinese-Americans have felt over the past couple of years -- detested and blamed. It was a hard painting to make, but . . . it was necessary." Yet another student described the image they painted thusly: "There are three strong women that have both a soft warmth but somehow also tough skin. I also have feelings that on the outside being called strong and resilient, but inside there is exhaustion. I am tired of being resilient." Despite the challenges of the pandemic, some students created paintings that depicted the "light that shines through the darkness." Participants noted how meaningful it was to have the opportunity to have a tangible creative outlet in the midst of their life as a medical student.

Over the course of two sessions, twenty medical students and house officers finished their acrylic paintings under the tutelage of Dr. Mody and Julee Li. The casual ambience of Art Corner Studio allowed for authentic conversations about how healthcare workers were perceived during the midst of the pandemic and how they can find resiliency and relaxation within the task of painting. Some learners were incredibly particular about how they sketched, planned, and executed their artistic vision. Others dove in head first and improvised along the way. These differences in artistic processes led to further conversation about differences in medical care, or the lack thereof. Artwork from previous sessions now hangs in the halls of the Medical School. The Medical Arts Program hopes that more student paintings can be displayed throughout Michigan Medicine.

## *Rite of Spring / common ground[s]*

October 21st, 2022 | Power Center for the Performing Arts | Ann Arbor

In the midst of the fall semester, the Medical Arts Program attended a dance-theatre performance of Pina Bauche's *The Rite of Spring* and a new duet by Germaine Acogny and Malou Airaud, *common ground[s]*. Ahead of the performance, the fifteen Medical Arts Program participants were joined by dance scholar Jennifer Peters to discuss the artistic legacy of both Pina Bausch and Germaine Acogny. For every student in attendance, this was their first experience with dance theatre, so the explanatory session was a big help for understanding what they were about to witness

The show opened with *common ground[s]*, a duet exploring the shared histories and emotional beats of two women's lives. Dancer Germaine Acogny, 79, displayed her incredible carriage onstage alongside her dance partner Malou Airaud, 75. Not only a beautiful performance, the first half of the evening, as one student put it, "defied expectations" through the ages of the performers and offered an antidote to a variety of ageist



assumptions about what older people can and cannot do with their bodies. MAP participants discussed how unusual it is to see older dancers presented onstage - they even noted the incredible condition that their bodies were in. "I recall the moment the two began dancing and my mind thought: Wait, those don't look like typical dancers," shared a medical student. During the intermission, Jen Peters joined the group to informally discuss what they had just experienced - and to give a sneak peak into what they would experience next.

During intermission the stage was completely covered with peat, the earthy smell wafting all the way to the back of the theatre. Pina Bausch's *The Rite of Spring* was set to begin. Choreographed to

Igor Stravinsky's seminal masterpiece of the same name, dancers from fourteen different African countries initiated a performance unlike any other. The audience was completely focused on the dancing a student "didn't even realize that I was holding my breath throughout a large portion of the performance until afterwards." Another student described their experience, "Seeing stories told through movement--something I don't often have the pleasure of. It was harrowing, beautiful, grounded and graceful." The audience could practically feel the exhaustion of the dancers as they continuously threw themselves into the air, the ground, and the arms of one another. Our participants were enthralled by the pure athleticism intertwined with the harrowing humanity. Ending in an triumphant sacrifice, the all-African cast received a standing ovation from all in the theatre, including our MAP learners.



## The Berlin Philharmonic

November 19th, 2022 | Hill Auditorium | Ann Arbor

As an early winter snow flurried on Ann Arbor, thirty-five medical students and house officers gathered to witness the world-renowned Berlin Philharmonic (Berliner Philharmoniker) perform Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 7 under the direction of chief conductor Kirill Petrenko. Ahead of the concert, UM School of Music, Theatre, & Dance Professor Emeritus and musicologist Steven Whiting gave an immersive lecture on what to expect during the symphony. Students found the discussion extremely enlightening. "I enjoyed the varying levels of detail, from broad overview to specific thoughts on music theory," shared one listener. Unlike most classes in medical school, this event had a wide spread of students in "all age and stages of [their] training." Our speaker drew connections between working in an orchestra and working in an operating room; each person has their own tasks that contribute to the whole of the operation. Although some are clearly visible to the casual observer, others are far less obvious - but all are essential.



After Professor Whiting's presentation, the students traveled *en masse* to Hill Auditorium, where they were dazzled by the magnificent architecture. For many, this was their first experience seeing an orchestra perform. Audience member etiquette was compared to that of the hospital. (Some members of the group noted the lack of diversity in the audience.)

The Berlin Philharmonic's performance did not disappoint. Students observed with amazement how an ensemble that large and with that wide a diversity of instruments (and instrumental sounds) could somehow meld together to sound like a single instrument. Encouraged to focus on how the music felt rather than how it sounded, M1s and M4s alike noted "the dissonance and subtlety of emotion" in the music, reminding them "to be mindful and present." Our MAP group left the theatre awestruck - "absolutely raving about the whole night."

## Noura

December 4, 2022 | Detroit Public Theatre | Detroit

*Noura* is a powerful drama that depicts an Iraqi refugee family preparing to celebrate a holiday dinner, when new arrivals force them to confront the cost of their choices and the past they left behind, along with the meanings of motherhood, marriage, and what we call “home.” The Medical Arts Program attended a performance at the Detroit Public Theatre, with a cast led by *Noura*’s internationally-acclaimed playwright, Heather Raffo.

Our group stayed after the show for a talkback from Heather Raffo herself - giving these twenty-five students an opportunity to hear more about the artistic decisions made by the performance’s creator in both the creation of the work and its performance. One participant was struck by “how different members of the audience connected and resonated with different aspects of the performance . . . the interaction between that performance and each audience member’s own perspective was so rich and varied.” The emotions, another pointed out, are both “unique to the refugee experience as well as universally present.” Continuing the conversation, the MAP group moved their discussion to a local restaurant. Here, the students discussed the incredibly intimate nature of theatrical performance and the dramatization of refugee experiences. Another participant was struck by “the deep, intense emotion felt by all the characters, the depiction of the common human experience of questioning identity and struggling to find something “right” to hold onto.” The Medical Arts Program’s first event in Detroit for several years was well-received - we hope to offer more events outside of the Ann Arbor “bubble.” As one student said, “It was incredible.”



## Ceramics Workshop Series

January 26th, February 5th & 12th, 2023 | U-M Stamps School of Art & Design | Ann Arbor

The Medical Arts Program kickstarted the winter semester with a new partnership with the Penny W. Stamps School of Art & Design. The partnership was in response to (and in collaboration with) an idea from medical student Kavya Davuluri. Over the course of three sessions, sixteen medical students were taken on an art-making journey from craft arts to decorative arts, from nutrition to digestion, and into the cultural importance of food and how “food has way more valence than just the digestive process.” The course was scheduled to coincide with the gastroenterology section of the first-year medical student curriculum, thus enhancing the conceptual overlap between the arts and medicine in one specific area. Stamps Professor and Faculty Leader-in-Residence Nick Tobier led the charge, assisted by ceramics specialist Hayden Richer. Each session began with a brief lecture from Tobier that connected art history to ideas about nutrition and digestion. Participants spent three sessions creating their own artwork. After creating a ceramics piece (or three) and custom wooden plates/cutlery, participants used the fruits of their labor during the final meeting to make and eat pizza from a woodfire oven.



An M1 shared the following observation, “I think this session and the ones prior are really important for helping us to remember our patients as people, not just their problems.” Leaning into the amorphous humanity of creating something with one’s bare hands “provided one more tool to help with the ongoing project of trying to understand how people think about their bodies and their health-relevant behaviors.” Tobier also shared: “Ideally we can each experience this type of surprise/dislocation and illumination and visit one another’s places of daily work to gain more empathetic understandings of how the places we work and how the tools and materials we use affect the work we do.” Students were reminded “that we are social beings that exist as more than just parts of a body” and felt “refreshed and reset and better able to take on [their] professional tasks.” (This sentiment was shared by almost all participants in a formal survey.) The Medical Arts Program looks forward to repeating this art-making series in the Fall semester of 2023 and beyond.





## University of Michigan Museum of Art Tour

May 31st, 2023 | UMMA | Ann Arbor

Continuing a valued relationship with UMMA, the Medical Arts Program visited the museum on a scorching spring day for a fascinating tour of recent exhibits and new acquisitions led by David Choberka, Andrew W. Mellon Curator for University Learning and Programs,

Choberka led the group of twenty medical students through a brief sketch exercise / reflection, demonstrating that we all have commonalities when it comes to interpretation of art. Exploring a ceramics installation by Korean artist YehRim Lee called *"Dopamine Dressing,"* the MAP participants practiced their visual analysis skills while examining the ceramics sculptures in *"Dopamine Dressing."* This led to discussions of creation, entropy, and the destruction of order.



Next, the group visited a new museum acquisition by Ghanian artist Frederick Ebenezer Okai titled *When Gods Speak, Heaven Listens*. Choberka led the group to think about the ceramic sculpture, in part by having students write (and share) a poem about the piece. This discussion was especially thought-provoking for our group. They reflected on what the artwork had to say about terminal illnesses and intensive care unit experiences. "The figure is both between the heavens and attached to the earth. The seated figure made me think about how patients are often in a liminal space between two places as well; between life and

death in the ICU, between metastatic or non-metastatic cancer while waiting for a full body CT scan, between pain and no pain while waiting for medications. I felt reflecting on my patient interactions through this lens was immensely humbling..." expressed one of the learners. Participants liked being able to "get outside of the medical school bubble" and enter a space in which "there are no wrong answers." Following the conclusion of the tour, our group shared a dinner at Knight's Steakhouse. One student commented "I loved being able to speak with peers from different years, as well as with Kristin [Medical Arts Program Assistant, BFA '22] who offers such a different perspective from the ones we so frequently encounter as med students."



## MAPAG Spring Showcase

June 6th, 2023 | Kerrytown Concert House | Ann Arbor

The Medical Arts Program Artists Guild (MAPAG) is a seasonal showcase at which medical students and house officers are given the opportunity to present their diverse talents on stage at the Kerrytown Concert House. After a multi-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, MAPAG returned in the Spring of 2023. Students shared their talents for an audience of around 50 of their peers in a variety of disciplines, ranging from musical duets to poetry reading to a solo piano performance. In creating a community around the arts, the performances paved the way to make uncommon connections between art and medicine. This showcase also raised over \$100 to support Seven Mile, a student organization that is dedicated to music education in Detroit.

One participant said; “I loved being able to see my classmates perform and showcase their talents!! I feel like I got to know a different side of them.” This quote highlights one of the most tangible outcomes of the MAPAG Spring Showcase: the realization that medical students are more than one dimensional beings. Practicing medicine can be a large part of a person - but doesn’t need to be the entirety of one. It’s hard to remember that sentiment whilst in the thick of medical school, and the showcase served as a reminder to many of the



world outside of medicine. Students found it to be a “supportive environment” that “brought them a sense of peace.” Others noted not only the talent but also the vulnerability of the participants and the trust allowing them to take the stage. One hundred percent of audience members that took our post-showcase survey agreed that the event increased their sense of appreciation for the UMMS (University of Michigan Medical School) community. Enhancing this sense of community is an essential part of emerging from the limitations of the pandemic. Remote learning limited these in-person community opportunities over the last few years. The Medical Arts Program looks forward to returning to hosting semesterly showcases, broadening the scope of the performers presented, and continuing to hone the participants’ sense of dimensionality and community.

## University of Michigan Museum of Art Tour for Faculty & Staff

June 15th, 2023 | UMMA | Ann Arbor

The Medical Arts Program took a step towards broadening its audience with a tour of UMMA for faculty, staff, and their families. This event came out of the IMPOWER initiative (Inspiring Medicine to Promote Opportunities for Well-being, Equity, and Diversity), a group that has been working to ameliorate burnout and dissatisfaction among faculty and staff. Under the expert tutelage of Felix Gomez, the Irving Stenn Jr. Fellow in Public and

Digital Humanities and Museum Pedagogy, the group spent time with several objects within the museum, drawing insights and appreciation from both the objects themselves and the active discussion. Participants noted that the event was “enlightening to share perspectives . . . with an expert guide and with colleagues.” They also appreciated that the activity was valuable not only for offering an opportunity to engage outside of the medical center but also for doing so in a setting in which all of the participants participated on the same level.



## Medical Arts Collaborations

The Medical Arts Program collaborated with other arts-related initiatives to help enhance the incorporation of the arts into diverse parts of the Medical School curriculum.

One is a student-run elective course designed to explore the values of the arts through art therapy. Goals include increasing skills at confronting ambiguity, exploring how best to deal with human suffering and loss, and using the arts as a means of increasing meaningful communication between patients and providers. The month-long course concluded with a collaborative showcase of student achievements, <https://www.medartinfo.com/s-projects-side-by-side>. The course will continue next academic year. Another elective course on Visual Arts and Medicine was initially run as an innovative, pilot course during the pandemic (a description of which was published in the peer-reviewed literature) and has now transitioned into a museum-based elective.

We also continued our collaboration with the Pathway of Excellence in the Medical Humanities, a co-curricular, longitudinal program that runs throughout the four years of medical school. The Medical Arts Program co-sponsored two performance - based events. One was a carillon performance on North Campus on June 1 given by Pamela Ruiter-Feenstra, which was paired with a discussion of how her composing practices relate to contemporary social concerns. The other was a concert at Joel Howell's house on 21 June, at which 14 medical students were treated to a performance of and discussion of a new work by Native-American Connor Chee, *Sand Paintings*, performed by pianist Joel Schoenhals.

## MAP 2023-2024 GOALS

In 2023-2024, the Medical Arts Program will continue to pursue our main goal of using the arts to give medical students and house officers the means to become better physicians, as well as extending our target audience to include faculty and staff. We will involve learners in a variety of events, including a diverse representation of international arts, as we continue to gather data on MAP's impact on its participants and prepare manuscripts based on these findings. We continue to explore opportunities for external support and look forward to another productive year. We also look forward to hosting even more in-person events and opportunities for arts engagement in the coming years.

### **MAP Contact Information**

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### **MAP Website**

Along with information about the Medical Arts Program leadership, funders, and purpose, our website at <http://themedicalarts.med.umich.edu> also features descriptions of Medical Arts events with photographs and links to the artists and performers.

## Appendix: MAP Activities, 2022-2023

Date	Event	Venue	Speaker(s)
October 2 October 9	Interactive Painting Workshop	Art Corner Studio	Lona Mody, MD, MSc Julee Li, Artistic Instructor
October 21	Rite of Spring / common ground[s]	The Power Center for the Performing Arts / Rackham Auditorium	Jen Peters, MFA, Dance Scholar
November 19	The Berlin Philharmonic	Hill Auditorium / Rackham Auditorium	Steven Whiting, Musicologist, SMTD Professor Emeritus
December 4	Noura	The Detroit Public Theatre	Heather Raffo, Playwright
January 26 February 5 February 12	Ceramics and Woodworking Workshop Series	Penny W. Stamps School of Art & Design	Nick Tobier, MFA, Stamps Faculty Hayden Richter, Ceramics Specialist
May 31	Tour of University of Michigan Museum of Art	UMMA	David Choberka, Andrew W. Mellon Curator for University Learning and Programs
June 6	Medical Arts Program Artists Guild Student Showcase	Kerrytown Concert House	Current Medical Students and House Officers Joel Howell, MD PhD - Director of the Medical Arts Program