

COURTNEY SURMANEK

1315 Hillcrest Drive, Blacksburg, VA 24060

P: (631) 384-4179

E: hello@courtneysurmanek.com

EDUCATION

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University **Blacksburg, VA**
M.S. in Urban and Regional Planning, School for Public and International Affairs 2022
M.F.A. in Theatre: Directing and Public Dialogue, School of Performing Arts 2022

Columbia Law School and Broadway Advocacy Coalition **New York, NY**
Theater of Change: Artistry, Law & Activism 2019
• *Winter session course that equips participants with tools to craft and enact compelling stories about justice/injustice in "theaters for change" that reach thought leaders and policy makers. Participants include lawyers, artists, and directly affected activists in education and criminal justice.*

Cornell University **New York, NY**
The Art & Law Program 2017
• *Seminar-colloquium on the study of law as a linguistic system, institutional force, and power structure. Topics: crime, culture and justice, freedom of expression, tangible/intangible property, land use, language and contracts, and authority/authorship.*

New York University **New York, NY**
B.F.A. in Studio Art, Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development 2014
• *Concentration in Art and Public Politics | Awards: Jack Goodman Scholarship in Art + Technology, Community College Transfer Opportunity Program (CCTOP) Scholarship, Maurice N. Flecker Memorial Art Scholarship*

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Theatre as a Tool in Conflict Management and Peace Building
- Community Cultural Development
- Creative Placemaking and Placekeeping
- Asset-Based Community Development
- Verbatim, Devised, and Ensemble Theatre
- Theatre of the Oppressed
- Methodologies in Research-Creation

FELLOWSHIPS + RESIDENCIES (2017—present)

- 2020 [Member](#), Stage Directors & Choreographers Foundation (SDCF) Observership Program, USA
- 2019 [SU-CASA Artist-in-Residence](#), The Town Hall + Department of Cultural Affairs, Brooklyn, NY
[Social Practice Artist-in-Residence](#), ProjectArt, Queens Central Library, Queens, NY
[Fellow](#), The Performance Project at University Settlement, New York, NY
- 2018 [Artist-in-Residence](#), Mitchell Art Gallery, MacEwan University, Edmonton, AB, Canada
[EmergeNYC Fellow](#), Hemispheric Institute for Performance and Politics, New York, NY
- 2017 [ConsenSys Social Impact Diversity Fellow](#), StartupBus / PA, NC, GA, AL, MS, LA

CONTINUING EDUCATION + PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 2019 [Civic Practice, Creative Placemaking & Placekeeping: Building Effective Partnerships](#), Center for Performance and Civic Practice, Chicago, IL
[Weekend Intensive](#), Shakespeare & Company, New York, NY
[Training Institute for Artists in Healthcare and Creative Aging](#), The Creative Center at University Settlement, New York, NY
[Radical Inclusion: Intersectional Approaches to Facilitation](#), Ping Chong + Company, New York, NY
- 2018 [Training Program in Mind-Body Medicine](#), The Center for Mind-Body Medicine, New York, NY
[Intersectional Identities: Innovative Methodologies for Classrooms and GSAs](#), Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art, New York, NY1
[Creative Aging Training for Teaching Artists](#), Lifetime Arts, Queens, NY
[Teaching Artist Professional Development](#), Abrons Arts Center, New York, NY
[Tell Your Story: Theater Workshop on Gender and Public Harassment](#), The Performance Project, New York, NY
- 2017 [The Center for Artistic Activism's Art Action Academy](#), Queens Museum, Queens, NY
[Writing from Queer Resistance](#), Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay & Lesbian Art, New York, NY
- 2016 [Physical Comedy Intensive: Workshop with Hilary Chaplain](#), Triskelion ArtsBrooklyn, NY
- 2015 [The Institute for Community Action Training \(ICAT\)](#), Gibney Dance, New York, NY

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT

Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance (VT IPG)

Research Associate

- Supports literature review, workshop design, research analysis and praxis in community and economic development projects in regional Appalachian towns.

Blacksburg, VA

2019—present

Freelance

Teaching Artist and Nonprofit Consultant (see below)

New York, NY

December 2017—present

The Lowline

Program Manager

- **Community Engagement:** Established a Community Advisory Board with 50 active members from diverse backgrounds across the Lower East Side, including NYCHA residents, leaders at CBOs, and teens. Facilitated design charrettes with ~500 residents.
- **Management:** Oversaw the RFP and selection process for an urban strategy firm that helped provide a framework for the organization's New York City mandated community engagement work on the Lower East Side.
- **Public Programming:** Developed 50+ cultural/educational programs for youth/adult audiences on topics including art/tech, urban activism, neighborhood history, and sustainability, bringing 45,000 weekend visitors to the Lowline Lab from 2015-17.
- **Youth Development:** Mapped out program scope, secured grant funding, and built local partnerships to launch a STEAM career training initiative for teens focused on experiential learning, oral history, arts, and community engagement.
- **STEAM Education:** Managed/led workshops for 1,500 K-12 students in topics including neighborhood history/creative placemaking.
- **Communications:** Published updates via newsletter and website to highlight education and community programs.

New York, NY

October 2015—December 2017

Arts for Art / Vision Festival 20th Anniversary

Festival Organizer/Communications Manager

- **Event Planning/Coordination:** Programmed and produced the festival's panel discussion series and visual art programs.
- **Partnership Building:** Created and executed an outreach plan focused on art organizations with a commitment to social justice.

New York, NY

March—August 2015

Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM)

Artistic Programming Assistant

- Conducted research on BAM artists and partner organizations, managed the artistic planning database on ArtsVision and coordinated an archival cleanup of BAM's history of performance from 1970 - 2010.

Brooklyn, NY

September 2014—May 2015

Suffolk L.I. Mentor & Mentee (M&M)

Board Member

Assistant Director, Planning and Outreach (Volunteer)

- Developed the organization's mission and objectives, and programmed monthly social and skill-building events.
- Served as Mentee Coordinator, providing 1:1 check-ins for mentees and evaluating their experience with their mentor.

Long Island, NY

November 2015—June 2017

July 2014—November 2015

Smithtown Township Arts Council

Program Coordinator and Teaching Artist

- Developed/led visual art and "Community Arts" curriculum; and produced/coordinated public programs and classes.
- Conducted program and teacher evaluations, collected program data, and supervised visiting and teaching artists.

St. James, NY

March 2011—August 2014

Whitney Museum of American Art

Curatorial Intern, Performance Department

- Aided in the planning of performance art through research; supported production of "Blues for Smoke" exhibition performances; drafted language for press/promotional materials; and compiled a report on the history of renowned dancer Trisha Brown.

New York, NY

December 2012—June 2013

SELECT FREELANCE TEACHING (2017—present)

I facilitate workshops to increase individual and collective capacity to engage in transformative dialogue through creative approaches. I have 10+ years of experience working as a Teaching Artist with youth and adults in a range of arts disciplines. Over the past year and half, I developed community-specific, interview-based artworks examining issues of culture and identity with teens and elders.

The Town Hall, SU-CASA Artist Residency, Born Park YMHA, Ages 60+, Memoir + Theater, Brooklyn, NY, March 2019—present
Explore the art form of memoir and storytelling through visual art and theater with Jewish elders at the Boro Park YWHA.

LEAP, Public Art + Social Justice, Grades 7-10, World Journalism Preparatory High School, Flushing, NY, February—June 2019
Explore the history and practice, and power of public art and create collaboratively painted murals on vital community issues.

Urban Arts Partnership, Photography, Grades 9-12, Pan-American International High School, Elmhurst, NY, March—June 2019
Photography program centered on the socio-political impact of images and skill-building in Adobe programs.

Ping Chong + Company, Oral History + Theater, Grades 7-8, I.S. 102Q, Elmhurst, NY, December 2018—present
Develop and explore personal narratives and community histories, engaging in interviews, drama skills-building, and sequential writing activities to devise original, collaborative performances, expressing stories and histories theatrically.

Urban Arts Partnership, Visual Art, Grades K-5, P.S. 165, Robert E Simon, New York, NY, September 2018—February 2019
Develop and teach sequential after-school visual art classes in multiple mediums.

ProjectArt, Visual Art, Grades K-7, Queens Central Library, Queens, NY, September 2018—June 2019
Develop and teach sequential after-school visual art classes.

Usdan Center for the Creative and Performing Arts, Drawing & Painting, Grades 4-12, Wyandanch, NY, Summer 2018 + 2019
Teach inquiry-based multimedia art curriculum with a focus on portfolio development.

Rural and Migrant Ministry, Political Resistance and Forum Theater, Grades 4-8, Riverhead, New York, Summer 2018 + 2019
Develop curriculum and teach at a summer program on sociopolitical resistance and forum theater with the children of migrant farmworkers.

SELECT FREELANCE PROJECTS

Streaks of Lavender, January 2019—present
Collective of LGBTQIA+ identified people dedicated to writing as an act of sociopolitical resistance.

Royal Family Productions, *New York, NY, Match 2017—present*
Provide consultation on fundraising and direct support on grant strategy, writing, application, and reporting.

1,000 Bridges, *Creator, Queens, NY and Edmonton, Alberta (Canada), August 2018—present*
Series of creative workshops that ignite conversations on gentrification/displacement, safety/perception, and bias/belonging.

Artist Action Group, *Co-Founder, Organizer, Western Suffolk County, NY, February 2015—present*
Collective working with artists and activists to combine the emotional power of the arts with the strategic planning of activism.

The Town Hall, *New York, NY, November 2018*
Provided consultation on the SU-CASA grant proposal for creative aging initiatives, including curriculum development and strategy.

Arts for Art's Under_Line Salon, *Organizer, Various Locations, New York, NY, July 2015—December 2017*
Co-organized a monthly salon presenting free jazz artists with a focus on dynamic community building.

Baryshnikov Arts Center, *New York, NY, June 2014—September 2017*
Drafted press materials, grant narratives, and donor letters; and coordinated the visual art auction at the annual gala.

WaterFire International (WI), *Consultant, Providence, RI, November 2014—December 2015*
Worked with WI's founder and lead strategist on a Creative Placemaking Study funded by New York State for the Town of Riverhead.

#DareToImagine, *Organizer, Riverside Rediscovered, Riverside, NY, October 2015*
Produced the hamlet of Riverside's first art festival as part of the U.S. Dept. of Arts and Culture's national #DareToImagine action.

USDAC Café, *Organizer, U.S. Dept. of Arts and Culture, Bowery Poetry Club, New York, NY, January—June 2014*
Organized a weekly mixer for artists and activists feat. workshops with Arts & Democracy and the Laundromat Project, amongst others.

DIRECTING + PERFORMING

<i>teach your daughter to lose their tongue</i>	<i>Playwright, Director, Performer</i>
2019	Excerpt, Kerouac International Festival, Instituto Cervantes, New York, NY
2019	Premiere, Performance Project at University Settlement, New York, NY
2018	Work-in-Progress, Performance Project at University Settlement, New York, NY
2018	Work-in-Progress, Abrons Arts Center, New York, NY
2018	Reading, Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art, New York, NY

<i>XIV by George Emilio Sanchez</i>	<i>Researcher</i>
2019	Dixon Place, New York, NY

<i>Carguen con sus muertos by Regina José Galindo</i>	<i>Performer (Cortège)</i>
2018	Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics, New York, NY

<i>Clean/Caress</i>	<i>Co-Director and Co-Performer with Monica Furman</i>
2018	Abrons Arts Center, New York, NY

<i>Go Between by Dillon de Give</i>	<i>Performer (Go Between)</i>
2018	Essex Street Market and the Cuchifritos Gallery, New York, NY

Ghost Rings by Tina Satter / Half Straddle **Stagehand / Assistant**
 2017 Abrons Arts Center, New York, NY

American Realness (Festival) **Volunteer**
 2015-16 Abrons Arts Center, New York, NY

Time Cycles (Festival) **Curatorial Team / Project Manager**
 2015 The Wild Project, New York, NY
Performances by Raphael Sacks and Neva Cockrell (The Art Monastery), Harry Einhorn, Christina Poblador, Michelle Sui

Elastic City (Festival) **Festival Emissary**
 2015 New York, NY

The Station by InnerCity Projects **Assistant Director, Project Manager**
 2014 Whitebox Art Center, New York, NY
Hamid Drake (drums), Cooper-Moore (keys), Anaïs Maviel (voice), Miriam Parker (choreography), Jo Wood-Brown (film)

entre-deux **Playwright, Director, Performer**
 2014 New York University, New York, NY

Burying the Blues by William Pope.L **Performer (Undertaker)**
 2013 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY

Synonym for Untitled by Andrew Lampert **Assistant**
 2013 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY

Important Topics **Writer, Director, Performer**
 2013 Forward Flux Productions' collaborate:create residency series, Theaterlab, New York, NY

LECTURES + WORKSHOPS

2019 [Women's Diversity Summit](#), Co-Presenter, SUNY College at Old Westbury, Old Westbury, NY
[cHURCH of Monika](#), Featured Presenter, Open Source Gallery, Brooklyn, NY

2018 [Trans Camp](#), Featured Presenter, The Pride Centre, Edmonton, Canada),

2017 [Women's Empowerment Group](#), Guest Speaker, Paper Doll Vintage Boutique, Sayville, NY

2016 [Long Island University MFA in Fine Arts & Design](#), Visiting Artist, Brookville, NY

RECENT PRESS (2015—present)

2019 "O festival Kerouac axita a escena noeryorquina", *Faro de Vigo*, web/print (mention)
 "Se celebra en Nueva York la cuarta edición del Festival Internacional Kerouac", *Mundiario*, web/print (mention)
 "Broadway Advocacy Coalition And Columbia Law School Announce Participants...", *Broadway World*, web (mention)

2018 "The disruptors: carving out a space for women and TGNC in tech", *NBC News*, web (video feature)
 The Archive: The Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art's tri-annual publication, print (poetry feature)

2017 "Making Ourstory", *Poets & Writers*, web (mention)

2016 "Artists Announced for Islip Art Museum's Slide Slam 2", *Hamptons Art Hub*, web
 "Multi-Arts Gathering BYOFestival Unites L.I. Artists", *Aces Magazine*, print (p. 6-7)
 "Our Community: BYO Art", *Verizon Fios1 News*, web (video feature)

2015 "Riverside celebrates its (hoped-for) future...", *Times Review*, web (feature)

SKILLS

Proficient in Adobe Design and Video Production suites; Final Cut Pro; Microsoft Office; CMS (Salesforce/ FileMaker Pro), contact management (Tessitura); asset and donor research (DonorSearch/ WealthEngine); email marketing (Mailchimp); social media strategy; vinyl production and installation; and large-format and 3D printing. Basic skills in HTML (Wordpress).