ARTS

"I've written my own part. Eat of the apple, so young, I'm crawling back to start"
ROTTEN APPLE ALICE IN CHAINS

Exhibition explores art, music that has traversed global refugee camps

BY ANGELINA KOVALCHUK AND BEATRIX LOZACH
STAFF REPORTER AND CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Collaborative artworks made and shared across refugee communities spanning five continents are now on view at a new exhibition at the Institute of Sacred Music's Miller Hall.

Originally launched at the United Nations in 2024, "Interwoven: Sounds and Visions from the World's Refugee Camp" at Yale showcases over 30 works representing eight different refugee communities. The exhibition will be on view from Oct. 15 to Dec. 3, open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

"One of the things that's super powerful about this exhibition is that they each represent stories, and they represent hundreds of people who made each of these artworks come to life all over the globe," said Max Frieder, a community arts educator who organized the exhibition.

Frieder co-founded Artolution, an international organization that uses creative expression and public arts education to cultivate healing and resilience in communities affected by displacement and crisis. The artwork is produced by people living in refugee camps who are guided by Artolution's programs.

"These folks are some of the most talented, brilliant, funny, incredible folks who just happen to have been born into a difficult situation," Frieder said.

Yale's iteration of the exhibition features video documentation of traditional folkloric musicians at these camps, in addition to showcasing visual art and cultural artifacts.

"It's a really great way to contextualize the visual artworks with actually seeing and hearing what these are like," Julia Alexander, a postgraduate associate at the ISM who helped organize the exhibition, said. "I'm really excited that we have that addition, which is unique from the other iterations of this exhibition."

According to Frieder, folkloric musicians also participate in Artolution's programs, which highlights the interdisciplinary nature of the organization.

"We're working with musicians and with painters and sculptors and fashion designers, all working together to be able to have locally contextualized approaches to how the arts can really transform the local community," Frieder said.

Most of the artworks on display are what Frieder described as "exchange artworks," collaborative works made at refugee camps that travel around the world to be built upon further.

One such work, titled "Fabric of Women's Resilience," was originally produced at a refugee camp in South Sudan, then sent to Rohingya refugee women in Bangladesh, Syrian women in Jordan and Afghan women in Greece, each of whom added their own stories.

Frieder said that art can play a role in fighting against cultural erasure. In 1982, the government of Myanmar — formerly Burma — passed the Burma Citizenship Law, which stripped the Rohingya people of their citizenship and exacerbated persecution, ultimately culminating in the Rohingya genocide.

"People really weren't able to practice their traditional art forms when they were in Myanmar," Frieder said. "So now in Bangladesh, of all places, they are now able to have this kind of new exploration of what the arts mean to the community, which is, I think, something that's really important."

According to Frieder, public arts programming makes tangible differences for participants' mental health, social inclusion and livelihoods, helping with stress alleviation, conflict resolution and the generation of conversations about stigmatized issues.

"The arts are a catalyst to being able to make these transformations come to life," Frieder said.

Eben Graves, the associate director of the ISM, said the exhibition also aligns with the broader mission of the institute. The documentation of folkloric music was recorded especially for the exhibition at Yale.

"We have lots of research and teaching areas all across the arts," Graves said. "There were so many stories and views making this art that had to be very connected and overlapped in important ways."

Collin Edouard GRD '27, an ethnomusicology student who visited the exhibit, said he was drawn to Artolution's emphasis on providing artistic experiences for children. Edouard co-founded the Kampala Music Festival in Kampala, Uganda, alongside the Mengo Senior School in that city and Macquarie University in Australia to achieve a similar objective.

"The point is to create positive indelible memories for children, especially ones who are vulnerable," Edouard said. "So that's where we overlap, and that's really what drew me here, because of the similarities."

One of Edouard's main takeaways from the exhibition, he said, was that no strict set of rules need be followed for the creation of art.

"It demonstrates that you can really create out of anything," Edouard said. "You don't need to have expensive brushes or whatever. I find it more interesting to see the ways in which people can be creative in unconventional ways that really express the mindset of the people at the time."

Miller Hall is located at 406 Prospect St.



ANGELINA KOVALCHUK / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER
"Interwoven: Sounds and Visions from the World's Refugee Camps," an exhibition originally launched at the United Nations that explores the impact of art in contexts of displacement, is on view at the Institute of Sacred Music through Dec. 3.

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Architecture School symposium celebrates life and work of former dean

BY TAJRIAN KHAN
STAFF REPORTER

Former Architecture School dean Robert A. M. Stern ARC '65 was honored in a day-long symposium at the Yale University Art Gallery on Saturday, where audience members heard about Stern's formative years, his reverence for history and his conviction for an architecture of inclusion and pluralism.

Stern, who died last year at age 86, served as the dean of the Yale School of Architecture from 1998 to 2016. In 1969, he founded Robert A. M. Stern Architects, or RAMSA, and was commissioned in 2008 to design what are now Yale's Benjamin Franklin and Pauli Murray colleges. The symposium on Saturday began with a guided tour of the colleges by RAMSA partners Melissa DelVecchio ARC '98, Jennifer Stone and Graham Wyatt.

"As much as his legacy lives in the books and buildings, it lives on just as much in the faculty who came to Yale," Deborah Berke, who succeeded Stern as the dean of Yale's Architecture School in 2016, said of her predecessor. "He convinced them it was the right place to be, and in the students who became architects because he let them in, taught them, and pushed them really hard."

Stern was the host of the 1986 PBS series "Pride of Place: Building the American Dream," the brief opening monologue to which was screened during the symposium. In it, Stern begins by saying that as a child growing up in Brooklyn, New York, in the 1950s, he was dismayed by the modernist International Style architecture of the time.

Instead, Stern continues in the monologue, he admired the proud towers of the 1920s," whose fusion of history and technology, he thought, defined them as "American architecture."

Leopoldo Villardi, the managing editor of the Architectural Record magazine, said in his speech that Stern wanted to "put back into architecture what the modernists had excised from it," which inspired the symposium's name: "Putting Architecture in Its Place."

Villardi helped Stern write his 2022 autobiography "Between Memory and Invention: My Journey in Architecture."

After graduating from Columbia and coming to New Haven in 1960, Stern was influenced by prolific teachers at Yale's architecture department, including Paul Rudolph, Robert Venturi, Vincent Scully '40 GRD '47 '49 and Philip Johnson, Villardi added.

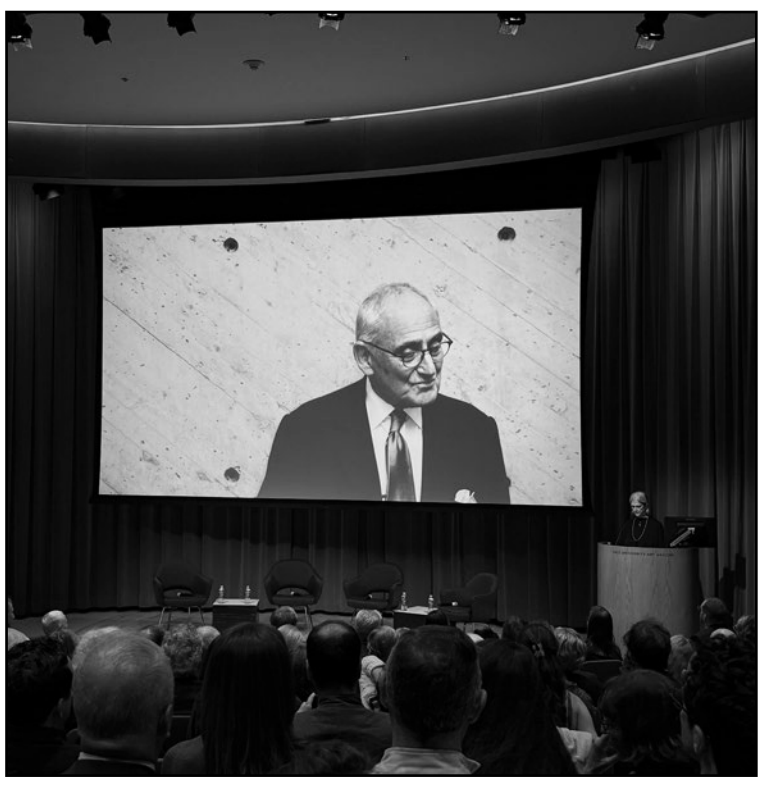
Mark Foster Gage ARC '01, who worked at RAMSA in 1997 and is now an associate professor at the School of Architecture, described Stern's commitment to pluralism in architectural education. Quoting Stern, he said, "We learned that architectural history pulses with life, that discourse is impossible without debate, that students are empowered to participate in that discourse from day one."

"That kind of interest in debate is something we should keep alive even in a world where it seems like opening your mouth is increasingly dangerous," Gage said in a discussion about Stern's belief in pluralism.

Berke said in her concluding remarks that Yale's Architecture School "has always stood apart for its firm commitment to pluralism." In Stern's 18 years as dean, he "set the model for a more expansive and engaging form of architectural pedagogy," she added.

When former Yale President Richard Levin appointed Stern to design Yale's two new residential colleges in 2008, he cited the architect's familiarity with Yale's campus in an interview with the News at the time.

The event was held in the gallery's McNeil Jr. Lecture Hall.



TAJRIAN KHAN / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER
Robert A. M. Stern ARC '65, who served as the dean of the School of Architecture from 1998 to 2016, was honored on Saturday with a symposium that covered his career as a key figure in postmodern architecture. He died on Nov. 27 last year.

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