



# The Arts at Amherst Initiative

Founded in 2012, the AAI enters its second decade with a renewed purpose of building our arts community. Our vision is to inspire a culture of arts participation at Amherst College in which everyone may celebrate, collaborate, and learn.



## Beginnings

In 2012/13, a group of faculty and staff from the departments of music, theater and dance, art & the history of art, and the Mead Art Museum took charge of that year's Copeland Colloquium. We invited dozens of guest artists in all disciplines from around the world to share their work with us and our students. The Dean of Faculty's office provided the Bailey Brown House at 19 Hitchcock Road to host our visitors and provide a home for social events.

Excited by the experience, the following year we established the Arts at Amherst Initiative. The goal was — and is — to continue our efforts to cooperate with one another, and with artists and scholars from around the world. Since then, every three years, the college has approved a modest budget and use of the Bailey Brown House for the AAI.



## A decade of variety

Over the years, the AAI has fostered a dozens of creative and community-building events. The AAI regularly hosts arts soirees, weekly lunches, and other social events. In addition, we have produced collaborative faculty performances, spring arts festivals, student art parties, workshops, and teaching events, among others. The AAI has provided hundreds of room-nights for guest artists and scholars in the Bailey Brown House, who have spent time with our community in many ways: as collaborators on faculty projects, as guest artists involved in projects with us and our students, in short and long term residencies for creating and sharing new work, and as guest lecturers or panelists.



## What we do, and how..

The AAI organizes regular events for staff and faculty to gather around the arts, hosts guests from around the world, and produces unique arts-oriented programming on campus. A smaller, rotating group of faculty and staff serves as a “steering committee” to point the way, manage priorities, facilitate programming suggested by the larger community of arts-oriented faculty and staff, and takes care of basic administration. They are assisted by a recent graduate of the college in the position of coordinator.

In recent years — and particularly during the pandemic — the AAI’s steering committees provided funding for arts-related events produced by community members not regularly involved in the AAI. Going forward, we will focus on encouraging more direct involvement in the AAI, and use its resources to support ideas that emerge from community-driven conversations among those most interested in participating.



## An invitation...

This coming fall, the AAI will convene a conversation of all interested faculty and staff who would like to help shape the AAI, and develop ideas for programming and community building. This is your Arts at Amherst Initiative! Please be on the lookout for an invitation in late summer!

We all can share ideas that spring from our artistic and scholarly interests, and our desires to serve the broader community. We can invite guest artists to create work with us, host residencies for artists to create and share their own work, and welcome artists, scholars, or others to deepen the conversation around the arts at Amherst in new ways. Interdisciplinary collaborations and class visits, as well as novel special events can be part of the mix. We can also dream of home-grown events, whether expressly collaborative or side-by-side, including performances and exhibits, panels, discussions, etc. The AAI doesn't have a set model: it is up to those who want to be involved to invent!

**We will also be holding a welcoming reception for new members of the arts community at Amherst on September 13. Please save the date!**



## Thank you!

Special thanks to our outgoing coordinator, Sienna McCulley, for her fantastic work this year!

Also, thanks to our outgoing committee: Jason Robinson, Mila Hrubá, Niko Vicario, Josh Guildford, and Ron Bashford.

Next year's steering committee includes Ron Bashford, Jason Robinson, Eric Sawyer, Charlotte Murtishaw, and Brian House. The steering committee has room for additional members who would like to more involved. Interested? Write to any committee member!