

Report for UN Secretary General on Resolution 78/31

Youth Arts New York/Hibakusha Stories' work related to Disarmament Education 2023 –2025

YOUTH ARTS NEW YORK BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Linda S. Chapman, President; Mitchie Takeuchi, Vice President; Daniel Osman, Secretary; Kathleen Sullivan, Hibakusha Stories Director; and Robert Croonquist, Founder & Treasurer

We are an integral member organization of ICAN - the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, recipient of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize, supporting the participation of survivor voices and offering opportunities for intergenerational exchange.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the two year period from 2023 – 2035, Youth Arts New York/Hibakusha Stories primarily focused on disarmament education through the arts. For nearly 10 years, we welcomed atomic bomb survivors (*hibakusha*) in a unique program to share their living memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with high school students. We engaged some 100 hibakusha who shared their testimony with more than 50,000 young people. Coming out of the Covid-19 pandemic, our work in classrooms was slow to return. Teachers continue to feel the ripple effects of on-line education with fewer opportunities for extracurricular learning, such as our first hand witnesses to history. As it has become more difficult for our beloved atomic bomb survivor friends to travel our work necessarily shifts from authentic to artistic representation. It is our honor to partner with many talented New Yorkers who lend their artistry to the cause of nuclear abolition. The following are a few highlights of our work in creating art for disarmament.

THE NEW MANHATTAN PROJECT - A CONCERT FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

On the opening night of the Second Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, 250 international youth for disarmament, NGOs, UN diplomats, Atomic bomb survivors and local New Yorkers came to the Japan Society to attend *The New Manhattan Project* concert. With music direction by [Sam Sadigursky](#) and [Noah Diamond](#) as tour guide, *The New Manhattan Project* detailed the nuclear legacy that New York City uniquely claims. Short videos of sites on the [Nuclear NYC map](#) interwove with live performances by Sam Sadigursky, [Nathan Koci](#), [Meg Okura](#), [New York Taiko Aiko Kai](#) and [MARK Harmony](#), a group of young singers from the Marshall Islands whose families were exiled due to the devastation caused by 67 US nuclear weapons atmospheric 'test' explosions on their homelands. The concert highlighted the creativity and activism in NYC that fuels the movement for nuclear abolition. The concert was an inter-generational collaboration between Youth Arts New York/Hibakusha Stories, ICAN and NYCAN and utilized the talents of youth from NYU, Pace University, Montclair State University and Pratt Institute.

The concert was a tour in four parts:

CREATION explored how the door to the nuclear age first opened here in New York City through successful fission experiments at Columbia University and the secret storage of the vast majority

of the uranium used in the bomb project. It was also in New York that the first offices of the Manhattan Project were established.

RESISTANCE to nuclear weapons came almost immediately through the power and politics of ordinary and extraordinary New Yorkers.

REMEDICATION is still required of former Manhattan Project sites, specifically in Manhattan, Queens and Staten Island.

ABOLITION In 2017, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted here at the United Nations and entered into force in 2021. In that same year NYCAN, through the grit and tenacity of local New Yorkers, successfully worked with the New York City Council to pass two pieces of nuclear disarmament legislation.

WRITTEN BY Noah Diamond & Katheen Sullivan with Linda S. Chapman & Robert Croonquist

DIRECTION Linda S. Chapman

GRAPHIC DESIGN Moran Smithwick

ARCHIVAL RESEARCH Mays Smithwick

MUSIC DIRECTOR Sam Sadigursky

ORIGINAL MUSIC Sam Sadigursky, Nathan Koci, MARK Harmony, Meg Okura & New York Taiko Aiko Kai

PRODUCTION MANAGER Ron Botting

SOUND DESIGN Blaise Dupuy

CAST Noah Diamond, Nathan Koci, Meg Okura, Benetick Kabua Maddison, Sam Sadigursky and MARK Harmony

VIDEOGRAPHY Owen Crowley, Ari Beser & Mays Smithwick

VIDEO EDITOR Tricia Cooke, Emily Denker, Ryan Drum & Charlie Theobald

VIDEO CAST Leslie Cagan, Brendan Fay, Sally Jones, Johnny Marigliano, Omar McCray, Walter Naegle, Tyree Oredin & Mitchie Takeuchi

HOUSE MANAGER Bruce Allardice & Daniel Osman

THE NUCLEAR NYC MAP VIDEOS

Over the years, our research led us to discover many unknown, or barely known facts about the aptly named Manhattan Project. [The Nuclear NYC Map](#) was created by Matthew Bolton, Noah Diamond, Seth Shelden and Kathleen Sullivan, incorporating research by Catherine Falzone. Our map was designed by Noah Diamond who in real life is a bona fide New York City Tour Guide. The short films were shot by Owen Crowley and edited by Tricia Cooke, Emily Denker, Ryan Drum and Charlie Theobald. They are now featured on the Hibakusha Stories website and embedded in the Nuclear NYC Map for intrepid explorers to make self-guided tours of Nuclear New York, including:

AFRICAN AMERICANS AGAINST THE BOMB Some of the first Americans to oppose the bomb were Black Americans who saw the link between racism and colonialism and the use of nuclear weapons on non-white, non-combatant Japanese people. Among them were Langston Hughes,

Lorraine Hansberry, James Baldwin, Coretta Scott King, Harry Belafonte and Paul Robeson. The film featured two original students of the Youth Arts New York family, both now educators - Tyree Oredin and Omar McCray.

HIROSHIMA MAIDENS AND HIROSHIMA DOCTORS Mitchie Takeuchi, Youth Arts New York board vice president and granddaughter of Ken Takeuchi, Director of the Hiroshima Red Cross Hospital in 1945 who oversaw the recovery effort from his hospital bed, narrates the story of the 25 young women who were brought to the New York for reconstructive surgeries. [The Hiroshima Maidens](#), as they were called, were hosted by the Quakers and received their medical care at Mt. Sinai Hospital. Shigeko Sasamori, a long time Hibakusha Stories fellow, was herself a Hiroshima Maiden. We mourn the loss of our dear friend Shigeko, lovingly referred to as Baba-chan, who died at home in December 2024. We were honored to play a role in advocating [for her obituary in the New York Times](#), beautifully written by Richard Sandomir.

CITY HALL PARK The film (featuring Bayard Rustin's partner [Walter Naegle](#), New York State Peace Action's [Sally Jones](#) and [Brendan Fay](#) founder of the Lavender and Green Alliance) tells the story of the 1958 act of civil disobedience in which peace activists served time in jail for refusing to participate in government mandated civil defense drills. They asserted that to do so made them unwilling participants in the deception that nuclear war is survivable. Among the participants were [Dorothy Day](#), [Bayard Rustin](#), [A.J. Muste](#) and [Judith Malina](#).

BAKER AND WILLIAMS WAREHOUSES Johnny Marigliano, local Teamsters Union member, recalls his experience working in the [Baker and Williams Warehouses](#) decades after they housed 300,000 pounds of uranium used in the Manhattan Project. He recalls 55 gallon drums, emitting thermal heat and corroding into the concrete floor and questions how many of his co-workers may have developed cancer.

THE GREAT LAWN [Leslie Cagan](#), who was the lead logistics coordinator for the [1982 March and Rally Against the Arms Race and For Human Needs](#), describes the day in which over one million people descended on New York City's Central Park to demand an end to the nuclear arms race. The next year the New York City Council passed a resolution making New York City a nuclear weapons free zone.

THE UNITED NATIONS [Seth Shelden](#), the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons' UN liaison, narrates the story of the 2017 adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and its subsequent entry into force in 2021. The treaty prohibits the design, development, production, testing, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, focusing on victim's assistance and the environmental remediation of people and places harmed by nuclear weapons.

LIFE OUT OF BALANCE: FURTHER READING ON NUCLEAR ISSUES FOR THE LIVE SCORE SCREENING OF KOYAANISQATSI

During the Second Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, Youth Arts/Hibakusha Stories brought art for disarmament to the iconic Town Hall. We collaborated with the [Philip Glass Ensemble](#) to present the 40th anniversary live performance

screening of [Koyaanisqatsi](#)— a film conceived by [Philip Glass](#) and [Godfrey Reggio](#). While this classic work speaks to many manifestations of the Hopi People's Prophecy, meaning "life out of balance", the evening focused on the nuclear threat to highlight how intergenerational effects of radioactive violence disproportionately impact Indigenous Peoples across the globe.

Before the Philip Glass Ensemble took the stage, Youth Arts Hibakusha Stories artist fellow [Cynthia Madansky](#) presented a 5 minute reel of her forthcoming film [Index/Trace](#) portraying "the past, present and future impacts of the nuclear fuel trajectory in all 50 states, — uranium mines, nuclear weapons, nuclear power and nuclear waste — as told by impacted communities, scientists and activists who are working together for nuclear abolition and environmental justice."

During the 2MSP, TPNW states parties from 69 countries who reject nuclear madness met to address this existential threat. For the sold-out event, we produced a booklet highlighting the voices of frontline communities and distributed our NYC Nuclear Map to some 1,500 audience members. Through commissioned articles and further reading, we engaged attendees on the abolition of nuclear instruments of omnicide; on how we can take responsible care of the radioactive materials that have been produced from mining to weapons, from power to waste. And on how we can bring life out of balance towards some re-balancing in this singular moment of our time: to end the nuclear weapon age before intentional or accidental use may take from us our loves, our lives and our precious planet.

As Hibakusha Stories fellow Setsuko Thurlow said, when she delivered the 2017 Nobel Lecture on behalf of ICAN, "Every second of every day, nuclear weapons endanger everyone we love and everything we hold dear. We must not tolerate this insanity any longer."

We are ever grateful to Philip Glass, Godfrey Reggio and the Philip Glass Ensemble; to Melay Araya and to Town Hall; and especially to Andrew Serman and Sam Sadigursky, for gracing us with this opportunity.

THE VOW FROM HIROSHIMA

On November 20, 2023, a screening of [The Vow From Hiroshima](#), a film that came out of our Hibakusha Stories initiative, was held at Columbia University in the Boone Arledge Cinema, Lerner Hall. It was presented by Columbia University's Science Journal and hosted by the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation. A 56-minute broadcast version of the film was premiered, and it was followed by a Q & A with filmmaker Susan Strickler. This was an official event of the Second Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and was attended by youth delegates from around the world.

On May 31, 2024, the film was screened at the National Arts Club, followed by an active Q & A session with [Susan Strickler](#) and producer [Mitchie Takeuchi](#). The event was filmed by NHK broadcasting of Japan. A 22 year-old from Northern Ireland said the film moved him to tears, reminding him of the trials his country has been through. The screening was in memory of

Sandra Parker, a former member of National Arts Club and board member of Youth Arts New York. Sandy's presence was strongly felt.

In addition, the Vow from Hiroshima was broadcast on PBS stations in May 2024 and it reached over 75% of the United States. This 56 minute version is available on PBS streaming service at www.pbs.org until 2026.