

# School of Media Studies at THE NEW SCHOOL

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RE: "Peace Educ-actors- Rethinking Peace Education: Towards a Critic Participatory Pedagogy of Conflict Transformation Through the Lens of the Arts and Creativity"

To whom it may concern,

I am very pleased to be writing on behalf of Daniel Fernández for his proposed project on Peace Education.

In my position as Assistant Professor of Media Studies at The New School, I have been part of the academic panel invited to the Rethinking Peace Studies (RPS) international series of seminars and conference held in New York, U.S.A and Tokyo, Japan between 2014-2016. On these occasions, I have deliberated on conceptual issues and questions around my research, teaching and creative practice in critical approaches to Peace Education and Conflict Transformation. I have also examined the role of new technologies for civic engagement and the importance of participatory media and community-based narratives regarding memory and identity.

I have come to know Daniel Fernández through my dear colleague Prof. Nela Navarro at Rutgers University, when he first visited The New School in November 2015 to consult with me regarding new perspectives and critical pedagogy needed for undertaking principles of the peace building and conflict transformation in educational settings. Our fruitful academic partnership has led so far to create spaces of inquiry about the role of the arts and humanities in investigating, reflecting and developing an action agenda in such contexts. This co-operation has been guided by a drive to re-think educational methodologies where the very meaning of peace is questioned, and the role of teachers and students in the learning process is revisited along with practitioners engaging in contested spaces. Daniel and I worked closely together to develop an extended collaboration for artistic inquiry with Japanese Butoh dancers and performers, which was showcased in the RPS conference at the Japan ICU University in June 2016, along with an essay that will be published in a forthcoming volume on Rethinking Peace Studies.

I believe this collaboration has greatly contributed towards Daniel's proposal to explore a new pedagogical model that will undoubtedly enrich critical approaches to Peace Education. Such approaches need to be inclusive, participatory, and empowering to allow students and practitioners to gain mutually relevant experience and working tools for engaging in real-world peace and conflict transformation work in the field. While Daniel's proposal is broad and ambitious in many ways, he brings with him a great deal of experience working in international development contexts as an artist, media practitioner and educator. I'm confident that he has the passion, drive and sensibility to undertake such a project and the research-based fieldwork involved in the diverse multi-cultural settings he has proposed. In consultation with his academic and professional advisors, Daniel has devised a solid research plan and has already conducted many formative interviews to ground his pedagogical approach and planning for the careful implementation of the project.

I very much hope that you will give due consideration and support to Daniel for this worthy and innovative proposal. I look forward to continue working with Daniel and learning from his ongoing fieldwork. I fully endorse his project and believe it will make a substantial contribution to rethinking Peace Education.

Sincerely,



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