A Sanctuary for Contemplative Leadership

Fellowship Program Impact Report
2020–2022
by Dr. Angel Acosta
The impact of the Fellowship Program is seen in the collective strength and imagination of our eleven Fellows, contemplative leaders of tomorrow, and also in the thousands of people who engaged their work over the last two years.
The Fellowship Program extends the impact of the Garrison Institute in the broader world by training the next generation of mindfulness leaders. We aim for the program to be a:

- **Sanctuary** for Fellows to practice, learn, and grow
- **Creative incubator** for interdisciplinary collaboration
- **Beacon** for community members and leaders, who can spread what they learn at the Garrison Institute into communities around the world.

It is with a profound sense of pride and honor that we share this report on the impact of the Garrison Institute’s inaugural Fellowship cohort, which ran from 2020 to 2022. During that time, through their individual research initiatives and numerous group projects, our Fellows met this historical moment with courage and wisdom. They taught, researched, built community, designed, and held space for difficult and cutting-edge conversations; they hosted Fellowship Forums, produced abundant multimedia artifacts and publications, and engaged with world-renowned guest teachers.

The collective impact of this work will be felt for years to come.
IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

20,000+ people engaged through live & asynchronous teaching, workshop facilitation and discussion forums at the Institute and beyond

400+ hours of mentoring and community building with and between Fellows

20+ curated events for the Garrison Institute community
Fellowship Forums

As part of our public-facing programming, we hosted monthly Forums with leading figures from across a multitude of fields. The intention behind these curated events was to bring in new voices to the Institute, while also inviting the broader community to discuss cutting-edge ideas.

**Critical Thought & Contemplative Wisdom for Our Times with Dr. Michael Eric Dyson**

We invited Dr. Michael Eric Dyson to join us for a session on critical social thought, prophetic witness, contemplative wisdom and his latest book, *Long Time Coming: Reckoning with Race in America*.

**Wrestling With Post-Activism & Planetary Health with Dr. Bayo Akomolafe**

We hosted Dr. Bayo Akomolafe for a conversation about his perspectives on his cutting-edge notion of “post-activism” and how this relates to the challenges of sustaining planetary health.
Race, Restorative Justice and Healing with Dr. Fania Davis

Dr. Fania Davis joined us to explore how we can re-imagine healing and justice in the context of our racialized society. We explored the intersections of racial justice, restorative justice, healing, and indigeneity at this inflection point. In addition, we explored two questions: 1) How are these times of disaster, awakening and repair inviting us to release and imagine old social structures rooted in white supremacy?; and 2) How are these times ultimately inviting us to reimagine what it means to be human?

The Reality of Intraconnection with Dr. Dan Siegel

Dr. Dan Siegel shared his latest research on interpersonal neurobiology with a particular focus on his concept of intraconnection. We discussed the concept of MWe (Me + We) as a way of framing how we can enter into deeper relationships with the communities and systems that we are embedded in without falling into the illusion of the separate Self.

The Science Of Social Justice with Dr. Sará King

One of our very own Fellows, Dr. Sará King, led a discussion and exploration of her cutting-edge model – the Science of Social Justice. Dr. King explored how this model aims to give people a fuller understanding of the effects of oppression and injustice by talking about how it manifests in our bodies and minds, in addition to societal systems.

Restorative & Healing-Centered Philanthropy with Edgar Villanueva

The ground-breaking philanthropist Edgar Villanueva joined us for a conversation on his book Decolonizing Wealth and the ways in which traditional philanthropy is being transformed by more restorative and healing-centered approaches.

Walking the Path of Freedom and Justice with an Open Heart with Kate Johnson and Kaira Jewel Lingo

We were joined by Kate Johnson, author of Radical Friendship, and Kaira Jewel Lingo, author of We Were Made for These Times, in a conversation about their new books. We explored the profound resonance and power of contemplative practice, intentional friendship and holding sacred space for others.
The Inner and Outer Work of Radical Healing in Our Times with Rhonda Magee
We were joined by Rhonda Magee, Law Professor and Mindfulness expert, to reflect on how we can come together to hold space for emerging consciousness and radical healing, when our world and nation continue to face tragedy and difficult crises.

Collective Trauma and Healing in a Fractured World with Thomas Hubl
Thomas Hubl joined us for a conversation on how contemplative-based approaches can nurture and support the work of social justice. We also discussed the research and insight forthcoming book titled Healing Collective Trauma: A Process for Integrating Intergenerational and Cultural Wounds.

Cultivating R.E.S.T: The Ground of Liberation with Rashid Hughes
Rashid Hughes joined us to facilitate an experiential contemplative practice called R.E.S.T – a restorative process that serves as an antidote to the systems of capitalism and White Supremacy. With an emphasis on skillfully unhooking from patterns of striving and obsessive seeking, R.E.S.T. provides a path of liberation that is rooted in resting and being aware.

Welcoming the Unknown Through Embodied Practices with Arawana Hayashi
Arawana Hayashi joined us to discuss her work on embodied presence and awareness practices for getting unstuck in the face of uncertainty. This timely dialogue offered practices to help us face and embrace the unknown.

Resonance & Impact of the Garrison Institute Fellowship with Dr. Angel Acosta
Dr. Angel Acosta, Director of the Garrison Institute Fellowship, shared updates on the state of the Fellowship a year into its formation. This discussion explored the philosophical and theoretical influences underlying the Fellowship program’s design combined with the practical ways the experience has had a profound impact on the community more broadly.
ENGAGE

How can we tend to all the serious work that needs to be done with care, love, and maybe even joy?
Throughout the Fellowship, Fellows worked on a variety of individual and group projects. The events and projects below represent the variety of initiatives that either grew out of the Fellowship or were nurtured by the experience.

Neuroscience & Anthropology Research at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA)

Dr. Sará King and sound artist and composer Orlando Villarraga worked with MoMA staff to produce an immersive exploration of the relationship between individual and collective awareness and the capacity we all have for transformation and healing. Participants explored Dr. King’s Systems-Based Awareness Map (SBAM) to consider their internal world and how it connects to their perception of and responses to the world around them. The core theme of this experience was considering art and awareness as a catalyst for healing. Works of art from MoMA’s collection were used as catalysts for participants to consider the complexity of identity, personal truths, and what it means to be in the world. This has become a ground-breaking research project to advance the intersection of anthropology, neuroscience, and art as a vehicle for healing.
Art and Awareness as a Catalyst for Healing Music Album

This album was composed by Orlando Villarraga as a sonic journey to complement the research and facilitation carried out at MoMA. Each track is paired with artwork from MoMA’s collection and corresponds with layers of awareness within Dr. Sará King’s System’s Based Awareness Map model. These collections of soundscapes aim to create a contemplative container to support the exploration of awareness in its different layers.

Liberation Experience

Co-led by Shelly Tygielski and Justin Michael Williams, The Liberation Experience combines teachings from social justice activists and wellness leaders into one 8-week virtual fellowship to help people change their lives and lead change in the world. The Liberation Experience is centered around the core topics that are critical for cultivating an awakened social justice mindset. Thus far, over 550 people have experienced this transformative journey.

Somatic, Sonic & Superconscious Sanctuaries

Nichol Chase designed and facilitated three gatherings for the broader community to explore her work and research of integrating mindfulness, movement and music. Throughout each event, she shared practices, theories and a unique framework. She also invited the renowned embodiment expert Arawana Hayashi and leading mental health expert Dr. Dan Siegel to participate as guest teachers. Below are the titles of each sanctuary:

- Creating a Somatic Sanctuary: The Liberating Power of Movement
- Creating a Sonic Sanctuary: The Healing Power of Music
- Creating a Superconscious Sanctuary: The Expansive Power of Mindfulness

Healing Trauma in the Here and Now Online Course

Kasey Crown taught an online course exploring the neurobiological, social, ecological and spiritual impact of traumatic injury and adverse conditioning. She illuminated how the healing of one’s trauma is in fact an act of social and ecological justice; an imperative that paradoxically requires our thoughtful attention and urgent action. She drew from the fields of interpersonal neurobiology, integrative and spiritual psychology, energy medicine and contemplative wisdom.

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Emerging Research Symposium
Andrew Villamil designed and led a powerful day-long symposium with Dr. Lisa Walsh and Dr. Jason Beck on the science of happiness, interconnection and generative action. Speakers shared insights and wisdom on happiness, gratitude, mindfulness, emotions, technology, and altruism. Using the latest research, they invited participants to explore helpful strategies on how to live a better life and experience healing.

Compassionate Selves for a Compassionate World Virtual Retreat
Orlando Villarraga, Jennifer Bloom, Nichol Chase, Barnaby Willett, and Nico Cary designed and facilitated a weekend-long virtual retreat as a multidisciplinary journey into the heart of the self and the fabric of our interconnection. They wove meditation, gentle movement, sound, spoken word, personal reflection, and community conversation into a ceremonial experience. They used this opportunity to reflect on, clarify, and catalyze the community’s presence in the world. With dozens of participants they explored a core question: How can we tend to all the serious work that needs to be done with care, love, and maybe even joy?

Nurturing Relational Sensemaking: An Ideas & Practices Festival
Together all Fellows designed and co-facilitated this weekend-long virtual retreat. It was a multidisciplinary journey into the heart of relational sensemaking. This two-day festival wove scientific research, meditation, personal reflection, collaborative creativity, and community conversation into a playful and ceremonial experience.

Nurturing Relational Sensemaking: An Ideas & Practices Fellowship Forum Series
After the success of the Ideas and Practices Festival, Fellows decided to host a monthly Fellowship Forum exploring the same theme. Each forum became opportunities to explore practices and dialogues at the edges of some of our most pressing questions, concerns, and dreams.
Sit Down to Rise Up Book Launch Event
Shelly Tygielski, accompanied by Sharon Salzberg, a world-renowned teacher and author, hosted a book launch event to celebrate and explore Shelly’s new book titled *Sit Down to Rise Up: How Radical Self-Care Can Change the World*. The book invites us to take on the challenge of deepening our care for our minds, body and soul in order to be of service for the greater good.

Grief Alter Art Installation at the Smithsonian Museum
Nico Cary worked with close colleagues – Eli Marienthal and Josh Begley – on an art installation called “The Prayer Is In the Gathering” at the Smithsonian Museum. It was a series of site-specific altars built with locally sourced materials. The altars are invitations for honoring both celebration and loss, reverence and grief.

Finding Breath & Weaving Your Purpose Workshop
Jackie Ivy facilitated a workshop that explored the use of breath as the entry point to process our sense of purpose in life. Using her own experiences as an entry point into the work, Jackie shared how breath work and mindfulness has served as a key ingredient in her journey towards integration, both professionally and personally.

4th International Conference on Mindfulness
Dr. Sará King, Selma A. Quist-Møller, Justin Michael Williams and Dr. Angel Acosta were invited to participate in the 4th International Conference on Mindfulness, hosted by the Dansk Center for Mindfulness at Aarhus University. This international conference showcased the latest research in the field of mindfulness-based applications, and featured leading experts on mindfulness and compassion.

Wisdom 2.0 Conferences in 2021 & 2022
During the last two conferences, a number of our Fellows were invited to speak during plenary sessions and workshops. Wisdom 2.0 has become one of the many popular gatherings in the field where some of the world’s leading voices on mindfulness, technology and mental health speak.
Production of Audio Garden & Album of Contemplative Practices
All fellows participated in this audio production process to produce an 11-track album full of contemplative practices and meditations. From body scans, sound healing to movement-based meditations, this album captures the collective power of all of our voices and our contribution to the world.

Design of 3D Dimensional World and Virtual Meditation Sanctuary
Led by Jackie Ivy and Andrew Villamil, our Fellows designed an interactive digital space where participants can walk around and experience different meditations, listen to Garrison Institute discussions and relax. This special project was also supported by an external 3D designer and a partnership with the virtual reality platform Spatial Web.

Embodied Social Justice Certificate Program
Dr. Sará King co-directed the ground-breaking Embodied Social Justice Certificate Program. This foundational experience is a 3-month online program that explores how we embody unjust social conditions, how oppression affects our relationship with our body, and how we can harness the body’s wisdom in making our social justice work more grounded, responsive, and sustainable. Dr. King leveraged the intellectual, spiritual and emotional support from the fellowship to deepen her work as a key leader in this program.

Wellbeing Summit for Social Change in 2022
Justin Michael Williams, Shelly Tygielski and Dr. Sará King were speakers for the inaugural Wellbeing Summit for Social Change in Bilbao, Spain. The gathering brought together more than 1000 global leaders in the areas of social change, government and business for talks and artistic experiences to deepen our collective understanding of individual and collective wellbeing. Andrew Villamil also attended the summit.

How can we harness the body’s wisdom in making our social justice work more grounded, responsive, and sustainable?

To view these special projects online, visit garrisoninstitute.org/fellowship
Guest Teachers

During our private monthly meetings, Fellows were visited by a number of scholars, activists and technologists. These conversations provided Fellows with a direct connection to profound thinkers in a more intimate setting.

BAYO AKOMOLAFE is an author, speaker, lecturer, renegade academic, ethno psychotherapeutic researcher and proud diaper-changer, Bayo Akomolafe, PhD, is globally recognized for his poetic, unconventional and counterintuitive take on global crisis, civic action and social change. He is Executive Director and Initiating / Co-ordinating Curator for the Emergence Network.

ARAWANA HAYASHI’S pioneering work as a choreographer, performer, and educator is deeply sourced in collaborative improvisation. She currently heads the creation of Social Presencing Theater (SPT) for the Presencing Institute, using a combination of arts, meditation, and social justice to create “social presencing” that makes visible both current reality and emerging future possibilities. She has been Co-Director of the Dance Program at Naropa University, Boulder, CO; and founder-director of two contemporary dance companies in Cambridge.
**ADRIENNE MAREE BROWN** is the writer-in-residence at the Emergent Strategy Ideation Institute, and author of *Grievers* (the first novella in a trilogy on the Black Dawn imprint), *Holding Change: The Way of Emergent Strategy Facilitation and Mediation*, *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds* and the co-editor of *Octavia’s Brood: Science Fiction from Social Justice Movements* and *How to Get Stupid White Men Out of Office*. She is the co-host of the *How to Survive the End of the World, Octavia’s Parables* and *Emergent Strategy* podcasts. Adrienne is rooted in Detroit.

**ADAM HOROWITZ** is an artist and instigator of collaborative love mischief. In recent years, he co-founded: the U.S. Department of Arts and Culture (USDAC), a grassroots action network of 35K+ artists, activists, and allies inciting creativity to shape a culture of empathy, equity, and belonging; Nuns & Nones, an intergenerational, spiritual community dedicated to care, contemplation, and courageous action in service of life and liberation; and Taproot, a deep-dive learning community for Jewish lineage healing, ritual skill-building, and wisdom exchange.

**ARI MELENCIANO** is an artist, designer, and creative technologist whose research and practice explores the relationships between various forms of design and sentient experiences. She is a creative technologist at Google’s Creative Lab, professor at NYU’s Interactive Telecommunications Graduate Program, and founder of Afrotectopia, a social institution that is imagining, researching, and building at the nexus of new media art, design, science, and technology through a Black and Afrocentric lens.
OTTO SHARMER is an action researcher who co-creates innovations in learning and leadership that he delivers through classes and programs at MIT, MITx U.Lab, the Presencing Institute, and through innovation projects with organizations in business, government, and civil society around the world. He is the author of *Theory U* and co-author of the newly released *Leading from the Emerging Future: From Ego-system to Eco-system Economies.*

DANIEL SIEGEL received his medical degree from Harvard University and completed his postgraduate medical education at UCLA with training in pediatrics and child, adolescent and adult psychiatry. He served as a National Institute of Mental Health Research Fellow at UCLA, studying family interactions with an emphasis on how attachment experiences influence emotions, behavior, autobiographical memory and narrative.
ENGAGE

How do we create a nurturing space so that we can unite in our efforts for global shift?
Our Fellows

**NICO CARY** is a mindfulness teacher, writer and interdisciplinary artist focusing on decolonial art practices and exploring grief as a wild edge of activism. His work provokes deep reflection around climate collapse by asking questions such as, “What if survival wasn’t the goal of climate work?” Nico writes poetry and creates a set of practices for holding, healing and composting climate grief. Honoring process and ritual, he makes space for the fear and grief to dissolve and helps us arrive at a new set of questions and stories of a future worth living into.

**NICHOL CHASE** is a teacher, musician, and yogi who leads powerful sound journey experiences. She believes our bodies are instruments that we can engage and prime for powerful action to live a life of purpose and meaning. Nichol’s work explores how practices in music, movement and mindfulness create a sanctuary for healing and learning. Her Wisdom Building Map framework weaves together these practices to further develop a training method for others to implement the somatic, sonic, and superconscious into their lives and their communities.
KASEY CROWN is a psychotherapist, spiritualist, activist, wellness educator, and writer. Drawing upon research from the fields of interpersonal neurobiology, integrative and spiritual psychology, psychedelic science, traditional and indigenous wisdom and many more, Kasey’s work in the Fellowship includes developing a bio-psycho-social-eco-spiritual individual and collective trauma healing curriculum. Her ability to rest in paradox and value science and spirit equally allows her to feel the sense of urgency of the times and also lean into non-linear, indigenous forms of healing.

JACKIE IVY is a design consultant with an extensive career in academic and commercial experiential design. Her work with the Fellowship explores how design can allow for post-traumatic growth. By approaching design as emergence born from authentic needs and desires and challenging the linear process of progress, Jackie creates healing spaces of sacred hospitality.

DR. SARÁ KING is conducting the first neuroscience and anthropology study that has ever been launched in partnership with MoMA. In her research, Sará uses art to explore the complexity of identity and healing. Coupled with her model of systems-based awareness this project serves as a well-being intervention guide as it explores the relationship between individual and collective awareness and healing intergenerational trauma. Sará’s commitment to this project is to enrich the relationship between art, science, social justice, and community-based alternative medicine.
JUSTIN MICHAEL WILLIAMS is a transformational speaker, musician, and the author of *Stay Woke*. The deepening of his work around antiracism goes beyond talking about what we are fighting against and invites us to dream of what we are fighting for. Along with Garrison Institute Fellow Shelly Tygielski, he is co-developing The Liberation Experience and the Infinity Model which teaches the tools of proximity, intimacy and connection to move us towards ending racism from the inside out.

SELMA QUIST-MØLLER is a psychologist, researcher, and writer studying post-traumatic growth from collective and intergenerational trauma. Her research on post-traumatic growth focuses on bridging science and mindfulness through interpersonal neurobiology. Through facilitating public forums and workshops on her research findings, she is developing a model that explores community action and prosociality as promising interventions to healing trauma.

SHELLY TYGIELSKI is a meditation teacher, community organizer, and author co-developing The Liberation Experience and the Infinity Model with Garrison Institute Fellow Justin Michael Williams. The project initially was created to connect mindfulness to antiracism work and has since evolved to be all-encompassing and bridge wherever there is a gap or divide. Their work asks the deep question of “What inner work needs to be done before a person can truly show up to do the tangible work that antiracism requires”?

IN THEIR WORDS
To hear from the Fellows, visit garrisoninstitute.org/fellowship
ANDREW VILLAMIL is a researcher with a focus on positive developmental psychology and with over 10 years of research experience. His work in the Fellowship focuses on understanding how technology can influence prosocial behaviors and well-being and how these prosocial behaviors can influence our use of technology and our well-being. Through audio and visual experiences and the use of interventions, Andrew explores how to make science, truth and information accessible and how we can leverage positive psychology to generate action.

ORLANDO VILLARRAGA is a poet, musician, visual artist and cofounder of The Resonance Experience, a group of innovators revealing the power of experiential sound in “refreshing” how we listen to the world. From a place of curiosity, his work explores connection across divides using creative and contemplative practices. Orlando crafts immersive sound sanctuaries that allow us to touch our own sacredness and sense of interconnection.

BARNABY WILLET is an educator, contemplative practitioner, and systems thinker. His central question is, “How do we, as a human species, develop our consciousness so that we are able to survive as a species and have a sustainable future?” Fueled by this inquiry, Barnaby is developing a contemplative practice of ally work, relational compassion and relational spirituality designed to help us remember our collective identity.
Program Leadership

**DR. ANGEL ACOSTA**  
*Director of the Garrison Institute Fellowship*

For the last decade, Dr. Angel Acosta has worked to bridge the fields of leadership, social justice, and mindfulness. He is the current Director of the Garrison Institute Fellowship Program. He holds a doctorate degree in curriculum and teaching at Teachers College, Columbia University. Acosta has supported more than educational leaders and their students by facilitating leadership trainings, creating pathways to higher education, and designing dynamic learning experiences. His dissertation explored healing-centered education as a promising framework for educational leadership development.

**JENNIFER BLOOM**  
*Advisor to the Fellowship Program*

Jennifer Bloom is a mother, poet, singer, scholar, and advisor to the Garrison Institute Fellowship. Jennifer loves to weave the intellectual and creative worlds together to inform one another. She considers her role to be that of meaning maker and sacred space holder, whether she is performing, facilitating a retreat, or writing. Jennifer has published two collections of poetry and an album of music and holds a B.A. in English from Yale University and a Master’s of Science in Health and Social Behavior from the Harvard School of Public Health. Her perspectives integrate continued studies through The Neuroleadership Institute, The Mindsight Institute, Prosocial World as well as Jewish, Yogic, and Earth-based wisdom traditions. Jennifer’s poetry explores questions that arise when making friends with paradox, allowing boundaries to blur, and testing the limits of our habits and beliefs.
ENGAGE

What does a mindfulness practice feel like that is inseparable from the movement for social justice?
About the Institute

MISSION
The Garrison Institute aims to bring about systemic change in our world through a unique combination of science and the wisdom cultivated in contemplative practices. Working collaboratively with practitioners in diverse fields — from front-line workers to finance executives — we teach the skills and benefits of contemplation, host retreats and symposia, produce research and publications, and provide a hub for ongoing learning networks.

HISTORY OF THE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM
Established in 2020, the Garrison Institute Fellowship is a two-year training program that provides the next generation of contemplative leaders with the practical skills and collective imagination they need to tackle our world’s great problems. Our groundbreaking approach is aimed at translating mindfulness into action.

The Fellowship Program is intended to be a sanctuary for fellows to practice, learn, and grow; a creative incubator for shifting systemic paradigms through interdisciplinary collaboration; and a beacon for community members, leaders, and organizations.
How are these times ultimately inviting us to reimagine what it means to be human?
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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