

Artolution '23 Annual Report



ARTOLUTION

“

We discovered our strengths and abilities that we did not recognize before. We are now able to express our feelings and thoughts through illustration and colors.

”

-Asma, age 16

Student from Qadisiyah
School for Girls in Jordan



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Words from our co-founders

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we reflect on the challenges that have tested our world – violent conflicts, climate-related disasters and mass displacement—it's clearer than ever that unity and creativity are not just desirable but essential for shaping our collective destiny. In the face of despair, Artolution stands firm in our belief that collaborative art-making is a powerful force for addressing our collective challenges, forging meaningful relationships and strengthening the mental health and wellbeing of our community members.

In 2023, we continued to expand our reach, bringing our transformative programming to communities across the globe. From Jordan to Bangladesh, from Uganda to the United States, we worked tirelessly to provide valuable skills, paid work, and, perhaps most importantly, a sense of belonging to those who have experienced conflict and trauma. Our methodology, grounded in fostering positive relationships and creative expression, serves as a beacon of hope in even the darkest of times. We expanded our impact to Nigeria, Myanmar, Turkey's earthquake zone, and across Ukraine and Eastern Europe, where we trained and certified dozens of new community artists in the Artolution approach.

Innovating beyond traditional boundaries, Artolution embraces technology as a catalyst for even greater impact. We've empowered youth to breathe life into their murals by programming their own Augmented Reality experiences. This fusion of art and technology fosters a deeper connection to their work and its message. We're venturing into uncharted territory with new programs that unite refugee youth and artists across the world through art-making in virtual spaces. We are cultivating innovative tools to combat social isolation and address the complex mental health challenges facing marginalized communities. In this way, we're not just adapting to the digital age; we're leveraging its potential to transform lives and inspire change on a global scale.

At the heart of our work is the belief that every individual—regardless of age, background, or circumstance—deserves a platform to share their voice with the world. It's a belief that's only made possible through the generous support of our institutional partners and individual donors. Your unwavering commitment fuels our mission and inspires us to dream bigger, reach further, and create a world where creative expression is not just a luxury but a fundamental human right.

As we look to the future, we do so with optimism and determination. Together, we will continue to harness the power of art to build bridges, foster understanding, and create a more just and compassionate world for all.

With gratitude,
Joel Bergner & Dr. Max Frieder, Ed.D

Joel Bergner Max Frieder



Challenges

According to UNHCR, over 110 million people around the world have been forced to flee their homes— 40% of whom are children— more than at any time in documented history. The traumas of conflict and displacement create barriers to successful transitions to adulthood.

In addition, in the aftermath of Covid lockdowns and school closures, children and youth across the world are experiencing mental health challenges and severe social isolation, with reported higher rates of antisocial behavior, depression and violence.

Many vulnerable communities lack creative, interactive programming that promotes community building, strengthens social-emotional development and provides platforms for young people to shape their own narratives and express themselves positively. This is where Artolution steps in.

Our Solution

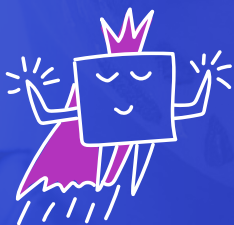
Artolution addresses these challenges by training and hiring teams of local teaching artists, who facilitate dynamic educational arts programming in crisis-affected communities.

We provide creative platforms for our youth participants to tell their own stories, build positive relationships and learn skills for self-expression through collaborative art-making.

Our proven creative and collaborative approach strengthens thousands of vulnerable individuals building self-esteem and self-confidence while promoting peaceful co-existence and tools to reimagine and take charge of a hopeful future.



Core Values



Self-empowerment

We believe that everyone has the potential to be a leader and contribute to their communities in meaningful ways.



Transformation

We believe in the transformative power of art to generate change, resilience and growth within each individual and community.



Self-respect

We believe that every person and every community deserves to have a platform from which to share their voice and express their humanity to the wider world.

Our Pillars

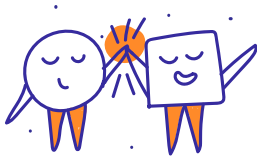


Livelihoods

Artolution trains, certifies and provides paid work for teaching artists from vulnerable communities, who facilitate our programs.



Uganda



Social Inclusion

Artolution programs promote inter-group cooperation where tensions exist between ethnicities, religions, nationalities or other social groups, based on Intergroup Contact Theory.



USA



Mental Health

Through collaborative art-making practices and workshops that focus on relationship building, Artolution programming strengthens the psychosocial wellbeing of participants.



Amman Jordan

Our Vision

A world where
**collaborative art-making is
a globally implemented tool
to strengthen and transform
communities.**

Our Mission

To create **inclusive
and transformative
experiences where
crisis-affected communities
globally cultivate their own
strengths and resilience
through collaborative
art-making.**

Our Impact

Artolution has facilitated more than

1,000 projects

in **30** countries

globally, and currently offers year-round programming in Uganda, Colombia, Jordan, Bangladesh, Lebanon and the U.S.A

45



New organizational and corporate partnerships

+10,000



Participants served



Artolution has now
trained & certified over



community artists globally



Our goal is to
continue growing
our net of artists
and teams by
10% yearly.

After experiencing Artolution programming, participants reported:



increase in dealing
with **frustration** in
positive ways.



increase in **having
friendships** with
people of different
backgrounds.



increase in the
belief that **girls
should have equal
rights to boys.**



**decrease in
resistance** to
interacting with those
of other cultures/
nationalities.



Our Year's Highlights

This year, newly-trained Artolution artist teams have launched new programming in Ukraine and 8 other countries across **Eastern Europe**. Additionally, programs have been launched in the earthquake zone in **Turkey, Myanmar, Nigeria, and Kenya**. Furthermore, we have expanded our existing programs in **Uganda, Jordan, Colombia, Bangladesh, and Lebanon**.



Newly formed Team across the earthquake zone in Turkey

In February 2024, Artolution initiated a program aimed at aiding Turkish and Syrian earthquake survivors, particularly focusing on children and youth, by offering mental health and psychosocial support through creative programming. Despite providing essential services such as food, medical care, and shelter to affected families, there remains a significant need for educational and creative initiatives, especially for displaced children residing in camps. Artolution's primary objective is to swiftly deploy a response team to fulfill this requirement. Having already completed a large-scale mural in the summer of 2023, the team continues its efforts, creating a safe environment for participants to address their emotions.



Conflict zone response in Myanmar

In Myanmar's Rakhine State, our partnership with ACTED and UNHCR is central to building unity through collaborative art practices. By employing murals and sculptures as mediums of expression and reconciliation, we're bridging the gap between the Rohingya and Rakhine communities. At the heart of our initiative are vibrant murals and captivating sculptures, serving as tangible symbols of unity, resilience, and hope. Supported by ACTED and UNHCR, we're embarking on a journey toward a more harmonious future for Rakhine State.

New partnership with UNIQLO (NYC and Japan activations)

Artolution created 3 collage canvas murals titled 'The Birds of Peace' series with Japanese children and Ukrainian refugee

children together for an exhibition at the Yokohama City Hall outside in Japan with UNHCR Japan and UNIQLO.



IRC World Refugee Day events in NYC

During the summer we co-hosted an interactive mural workshop with IRC to highlight the positive impact of refugees leading up to World Refugee Day. Attendees were invited to reflect on the contributions refugees bring to their communities and express gratitude through written messages and drawings on the canvas. The event drew a diverse crowd of over 250 participants of all ages and backgrounds at Washington Square Park, resulting in a collaborative mural filled with expressions of thanks and artistic representations. The canvas was later showcased at the Oculus in the World Trade Center on Refugee Day, June 20th, where participants had a final opportunity to add their touches and celebrate the completion of the mural.

Making Our Mark in Eastern Europe

(Ukraine, Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Artolution led a regional teaching artist training for 2 weeks in Sofia, Bulgaria with 20 refugee and host community teaching artists from 10 countries including Ukraine, Syria, Bosnia, Moldova, Romania, Bulgaria,

Hungary Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland, working with Afghan, Syrian, Ukrainian and Bulgarian children to paint a 4 story mural and interactive recycled "Owl-strument" Musical Sculpture.



In Ukraine the team has piloted its first two locally led programs which has grown into four more teaching artist training programs throughout 2024.





“

**This is
the next
model for
arts and
education
to support
refugees and
host communities
through creativity
and collaboration
all over the world.**

”

- Dr. Max Frieder, Ed.D,
Co-Founder of Artolution



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Our UNHCR program in Uganda

Artolution initiated a series of 10 projects with urban refugees in Kampala, in collaboration with partner UNHCR. The program will emphasize environmentally-friendly initiatives aimed at raising awareness in vulnerable communities. Utilizing art as a catalyst, our team will lead diverse activities, including the transformation of discarded trash into public art installations. These projects aim to empower individuals by equipping them with new skills and honing existing ones, ultimately facilitating alternative means of livelihood.



“

Art has created a lot of change in our community, most especially in our youth. There is improvement in creativity, they are better at adapting to their environment, it has enabled participants to become good leaders, advocates for positive social change, and protection of their adolescence.

”

- Miriam Adaru

South Sudanese refugee artist in Uganda

MEDAIR

Global Partnership

Artolution led a global mural tour with MEDAIR across South Sudan, Kenya, Jordan, Ukraine, Poland and Switzerland. This is launching the global partnership signed in 2023 for years to come.



Murals in Lebanon

In Lebanon the team was specifically tasked with creating five communal murals and sculptures. Together with community members, they completed two entrance murals at the Serraine primary health care center in Becka Valley. Additionally, as part of the program, they painted murals at the Deir El Ahmar Sports Club over eight consecutive days, involving adults, adolescents, and members from MEDAIR, Artolution, and ILEAFART (local organization) in the project.

Global Refugee Forum Collaboration

Artolution played a pivotal role in the Global Refugee Forum, where our established artist teams in Uganda, Jordan, Colombia, and Bangladesh collaborated to create the powerful canvas, “3 Orbs of Light.” This collaborative canvas reflects the shared

challenges faced by diverse communities, transcending geographical boundaries. Our co-founders Dr. Max Frieder and Joel Bergner showcased the artwork at the conference in Geneva, connecting with leaders in refugee response from around the world.



Geneva, Switzerland



Geneva, Switzerland

“What makes this program special is its inclusivity”

- Testimonial excerpt from a participant in our Women's Program in Jordan





“

This program supported us on so many levels, like how to think on alternative solutions to overcome struggles like covid.

”

- Testimonial excerpt from a participant
in our **Women's Program** in Jordan

Our Collaboration with Snapchat

Our sister organization in Colombia, Artolución, initiated an arts and technology program with support from a grant from Snapchat, aiming to refine students' design skills in digital platforms and equip them with profitable skills for their futures. Known as Snapchat 2.0, this innovative project empowers over 16 teenage students by utilizing tools like Adobe Photoshop, InDesign, Procreate, and Lens Studio. Through nine Lens Studio workshops, the project facilitated the creation of over 20 unique filters and has now progressed to transforming 2D artworks into 3D using Lens Studio and

augmented reality (AR) technology.

In a significant milestone, the team hosted an exhibition at Museo La Tertulia in Cali, showcasing the participants' creativity. Subsequently, the project transitioned into the portfolio design phase, allowing students to compile their artworks for presentation to potential stakeholders, sponsors, and collaborators.



Rohingya artwork exhibition at Russell Senate Building in Washington, DC.

The event hosted an honorable list of guests including Syrian swimmer and refugee Yusra Mardini who is pictured in slide 4, in addition to several US senators.



Expanding Our Impact



We consistently orient our efforts around these **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, ensuring they serve as guiding principles across all of our teams.

SDG 3:

Good Health and Wellbeing
(Arts and Culture for MHPSS)

SDG 4:

Quality Education (Arts and Culture Educational Programming)

SDG 16:

Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (Social Cohesion Programming)



Uganda

In partnership with UNHCR, we launched a series of 10 projects in different refugee communities across Kampala, fostering connections across generations and promoting social cohesion among the South Sudanese and Congolese communities. Seven projects have already been completed, providing vital spaces for healing and community reconstruction.



Bangladesh



Our team completed a series of 40 murals, 5 recycled musical sculptures and painting a mobile art studio, across the Rohingya refugee camps and Bhasan Char Island Refugee Camp. We exhibited their work at two exhibitions in Jamuna Future Park and the Dhaka Art Summit, showcasing Rohingya Artolution Artists' representation in Bangladesh. We completed a big project with Terre des Hommes, funded by UNHCR Bangladesh.



USA

This year, we collaborated with a diverse group of local teenagers in Middletown, Connecticut, to revitalize the facade of a public art project at the city's community center. In Providence, Rhode Island we worked with resettled refugees, immigrants and justice involved youth in a single mural together.



Washington Heights, NY



South Bronx, NY

We worked with an enthusiastic group of fourth graders from Brightwood in Washington DC, embarking on the creation of a monumental ground mural. In NYC, we took on the mission of bringing collaborative community murals to the South Bronx and Washington Heights.





Colombia

Our sister organization participated in two significant exhibitions in Cali, showcasing art created by underserved communities and Venezuelan refugees in the city's biggest libraries. We partnered with Snapchat on a project in which youth learned to bring their mural to life by programming their own Augmented Reality experiences.



Jordan



Our team partnered with the US embassy in Jordan to paint a huge mural honoring women, emphasizing the importance of empowering women and girls for environmental protection and broader development goals. Our Women's Empowerment Program remains strong, providing livelihood programs for women to become financially independent.



Meet Our Team

Since 2008, co-founders Max Frieder and Joel Bergner—first independently and later jointly— have led hundreds of Artolution community-based public art projects around the world. Artolution became incorporated as a non-profit corporation in 2016 with a focus on developing sustainable programs in communities where they have been active, to be facilitated by local artists trained by Frieder and Bergner.



Joel Bergner
Co-founder, CEO

Joel Bergner’s collaborative mural projects have spanned 12 years and 25 countries, from the favelas of Brazil to prisons in the US; Syrian refugee camps to slum communities in Kenya and India. His work aims to create platforms for vulnerable young people to shape their own narratives, strengthen resilience and promote social inclusion. Joel developed his methodology based on his dual background as a counselor for traumatized youth and as a public artist.



Dr. Max Frieder, Ed.D
Co-founder, Chief Creative Officer

Max Frieder is an artist and educator from Denver, Colorado who is based out of New York City. He graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design with honors and a degree in Painting with a focus in “Community Based Public Arts” and received his Education Masters in “Community Arts” in Art and Art Education from the Teachers College, Columbia University. He has worked with communities in different contexts across the globe. His work ranges from community building in the refugee crisis, hospital workshops, abuse, and addiction counseling through art, trauma relief, reconciliation, and conflict resolution.

Global Team



Suza Uddin
Bangladesh Country Manager



Ayat Asa'ad
Jordan Program Manager



Esero Nalyong
Uganda Field Coordinator



Phillipa Olwol
Uganda Program Manager



Alban Mukombozi
Uganda Operations Coordinator



Carolina Sanchez
Communications &
Social Media Specialist



Camila Arboleda
Graphic Designer



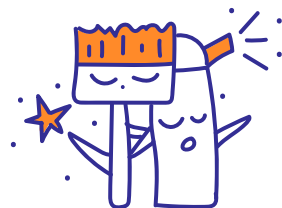
Camilo Echeverri
Artolución Colombia
Director



CJ Thomas
Head of Performance
Programming



Emma Altman
Global Fashion Specialist



Our “Training of Trainers” (ToT) Professional Development Model for Community Artists

Two-Week Training

Community artists learn the Artolution methodology through a series of workshops that include both theoretical training as well as participating in a real community art project with children. They learn:

- Best practices in collaborative art-making
- Approaches to working with vulnerable youth
- How to engage diverse communities
- Techniques for community muralism, performance, sculpture and more.

Ongoing Professional Development

After being trained and certified, community artists begin leading their own community projects, with Artolution’s support. We continue to provide virtual and in-person professional development, including:

- Addressing challenges that came up for artists while implementing the curriculum
- Opportunities for feedback and guidance
- Assessments of performance
- Training workshops on more advanced skills

Our approach supports local artists to make an impact on the lives of their fellow community members



“Everyone was eager to actively participate. We also saw a change in attendance, with even children who were often absent coming to school daily.”

- Teacher interview
(December 2023)



Photos and testimonial from
our project in Ubumwe funded by
Columbia World Program



Uniting regions in a collaborative effort for 'The Colour of Resilience'

Four of Artolution's global teams came together for 'The Colour of Resilience,' a personal and universal project that narrates their stories of migration. This was the first collaborative mural to be made by refugee artists and children from four different refugee communities around the globe.

Participants were asked to communicate their stories of migration through a giant

canvas, capturing four displacement crises experienced by Syrians, Rohingya, South Sudanese and Venezuelans.

It is now being exhibited at the World Economic Forum. This project awakens conversations globally about situations for all refugee communities around the world.



Jordan's team canvas



Uganda's team canvas



Colombia



Bangladesh

Meet Our Network of Artists Around the Globe

 Uganda

 Colombia

 Turkey

 Bangladesh

 Jordan

 Lebanon



Flora Ayakaka



Kizito Azamuke



Joel Kateeba



Vivian Khemisa



Sheriff Mangaro



Gift Moses



Nakato Sauda



Alexx Page



Alinda Patience



Amany Immaculate



Carine Cibembe



Kateeba Joel



Miriam Adaru



Alounzi Victor



Jane Apio



Loic Barahk

Uganda
Colombia

Turkey
Bangladesh

Jordan
Lebanon



Wendy Ezekiel



Patriarche Mulenda



Peter Kivumbi



Spino Josias Balibuno



Anser Ullah



Boshir Ullah



Mohamed Yonus



Rema



Somira Khatun



Jannatul Masarafa



Hosina Begum



Beauty Akter



Mohamed Amin



Anowara Begum



Ayela



Dildar Begum



Anowar Faruk



Hasina



Nobi Hossain



Nobi Hossein



Mohamed Nur



Mohamed Nuur



July



Kamrul Hassan



Mohamed Islam



Mohamed Noor



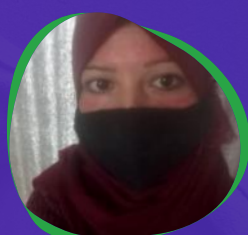
Reshmi



Suha Sultan



Seddeq AbuGhoush



Ayoush Al Akoud



Adham Al Ammar



Salma Al Ayed



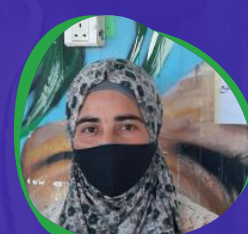
Hisham Al Ghafary



Mohammad Al Ghafary



Sameer Al Ghafary



Riham Al Ghosh



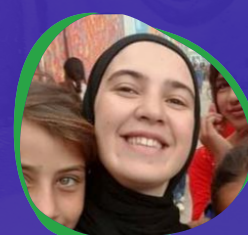
Ali Al Lafie



Wafa'a Al Mahmoud



Ghazeyah Al Shawakh



Batool Edais

● Eastern Europe

● Nigeria

● Myanmar

● Colombia

● Jordan



Ibrahim Tonnerieux



Suhaib Attar



Sarah Allan



Marah Rimawi



Saleh Bellagon



Anna Álvarez



Eliecer Bermudez



Daniel Cárdenas



Nandy Mondragón



Kevin Ramirez



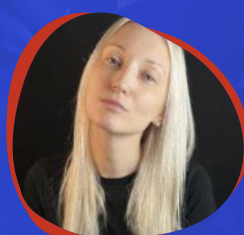
Wilson Silva



Moohamed Ibrahim



Kateryna Rudakova



Lena Panasiuk



Aya alhaj



Olga Koroliuk



Iryna Babanina



Ella Zoloarenko



Dariia Prokhorchuk



Anna Troshina



Katarzyna Szymczak



Małgorzata Wesołowska



Adnan Dupanović



Nigeria Team
of Artists



Myanmar Team of Artists

“Children often hold fears in expressing their thoughts. Witnessing them express their emotions through canvas drawings was a profoundly moving experience. It was a beautiful process”

-Kata,
Ukrainian Refugee
Teaching Artist

Thanks to all the incredible institutions we partnered with in 2023

Our programs are made possible through partnerships with institutions around the world, from international NGOs to grassroots organizations; corporations to government agencies.

Their funding and logistical support ensures that Artolution can continue to make an incredible impact on thousands of vulnerable young lives each year, and our teaching artists can earn a dignified living as they lead these projects.



We extend our heartfelt appreciation to everyone who has contributed to our mission

Aideen Schaufelberger

Adam Parker

Adam Sokoloff

Arshiya Bhadu

Ava Penman

Barbara M. Smith

Batuhan Bintas

Bruce Unterman

Charities Aid Foundation
America

Charlie Goodlake

Christina Li

Cleve Schenck

Elizabeth Porritt

Ellen Plotkin

Fulya Kulabas

George and Myra Gordon

Gillian Scadden

Give Lively Foundation

Gildin Family Foundation

Ingrid Cox

Janet Johnson

James Kimak

Janet Johnson

Jim Parr

John Blume

John Hoelle

Joyce Altman

Julie Bergner

Julie Laitin

Kaan Gezguc

Karen Sokoloff

Kasra Alavi

Kemba Maish

Laura Berk

Lane Spigner

Laurie and Ray Bergner

Laurie Gonthier

Leslie Feder

Logan Wray

Ludivine Camus

Marilyn Neiswander

Marilyn Ruth Levitt

Marilyn Simpson

Marie Saddlemire

Mark Freeman

Martin Fletcher

Martha Singleton

Mary Pond-Coster

Marty Betts

Menichetti Massimo

Michele Dastin-van Rijn

Mieke Thorson

Esserman

Naomi Schrag

Nancy Armstrong

Nancy L. Armstrong

Nicholas Johantgen

Pamela and Tony
McGraw

Patricia B. Carley

Pamela Strandquist

Ramya Krishnaswamy

Red Butterfly
Foundation

Robert Hathway

Ron Williams

Rondi and David Frieder

Rosemary Koesling

Russell Kirby

Schwab Charitable

Sheila Silverman

Shahidah Bilal

Sheryl Sokoloff

Sophie Brondel

Stefano Zanetti

Steve and Tracey Boutelle

Susan Langus

Sue O'Connor

The Wilson Sexton Foundation

Thomas a Loricco

Tim and Carol Lovseth

Ty Flewelling

Virginia Feitner

William Warshauer

Wiriya Sirivuttikarn

Yves + Séverine Richardet



“To me, the most important part of the program was to **connect me to my community in a new way.** Previously, I had no way to exhibit my talents publicly, but now it has become a reality!”

-Nicholas
South Sudanese Teaching Artist

**“This project helped me
start my own crafting
practice and maintain
a consistent income.”**

-Testimonial excerpt from a participant in
our **Women's Program** in Jordan



**“Art was a meeting portal for us;
painting together gave us the
opportunity to know each other.”**

-Abdullah
Participant from Jordan