

# MOSS ARTS CENTER



## **CARTOGRAPHY**

Conceived and created by Kaneza Schaal and Christopher Myers

**STUDY GUIDE**



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Study guide content courtesy of the [New Victory Theater](#), powered by [New 42](#).

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## PULLING BACK THE CURTAIN

This section is a behind-the-scenes look at the artists, the company, and the art forms and themes of this production. Use these engaging activities and creativity pages to prepare for your virtual theatrical experience!



CONNECTING TO:  
*CARTOGRAPHY*



INTERESTING FACTS



THE ART FORMS



CONNECTING TO:  
LESSON PLAN IDEAS



PUSH / PULL FACTORS





# CONNECTING TO CARTOGRAPHY

Inflatable rafts on the Mediterranean. Dark holds of cargo trucks. Family photos hidden carefully in a backpack. Hear the stories of young refugees when *CARTOGRAPHY* asks what part we play in the lives of young people who set out into the unsure waters of their futures. In this multimedia theatrical work, witness a world alive with movement and migration as the effects of climate change, war, and poverty give shape to where we have come from and where we are going.



## WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE KANEZA SCHAAL AND CHRISTOPHER MYERS FROM? NEW YORK

### CONNECTING TO KANEZA SCHAAL AND CHRISTOPHER MYERS



Kaneza Schaal, an alum of Wesleyan University in Connecticut, is a New York City-based artist who got her start in the downtown experimental theatre community, first working with the Wooster Group. Schaal has since worked with many other companies and artists, including Elevator Repair Service, Richard Maxwell/New York City Players, Dean Moss, Claude Wampler, Jay Scheib, Jim Findlay, New York City Opera, and National Public Radio. This work brought her to over 18 countries and venues, including Centre Pompidou (Paris, France), Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh, REDCAT, the Whitney Museum, BAM, The Kitchen, St. Ann's Warehouse, and MoMA. Schaal was an artist-in-residence at the Baryshnikov Arts Center and received a 2014 Princess Grace Award grant, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council Process Space residency, Bogliasco

Fellowship, Nathan Cummings Foundation grant, Foundation for Contemporary Art Emergency Grant, and Princess Grace George C. Wolfe Award. Schaal was a member of Kara Walker's 6-8 Months Space and her video work appeared in *Visionaire*.



Christopher Myers is an artist and writer who lives in New York. While Myers is widely acclaimed for his work with literature for young people, he is also an accomplished fine artist who has lectured and exhibited internationally. He writes, "I've been asking the question lately, 'What does it mean to be an artist whose work is rooted in the experience of global cultural exchange?'" He has worked with traditional shadow puppet makers in Jogjakarta, silversmiths in Khartoum, conceptual video artists in Vietnam, young musicians in New Orleans, woodcarvers in Accra, weavers in Luxor, and many other artists. Myers views these artists as being part of one large conversation about the movement of culture, and the ways that languages are borrowed globally, traded from South to South, in order to address the specific local concerns of people

that have been thrust into contexts that range far beyond their locality.

## INTERESTING FACTS

- 1** Kaneza Schaal and Christopher Myers created this show to bridge the gap between the experiences of refugees and the world's population at large. According to the United Nations, as of May 2019, there are 68.5 million forcibly displaced people living in the world. That is eight times the population of New York City.
- 2** Fifty-seven percent of the refugee population comes from just three different countries: Syria, Afghanistan, and Sudan, stories of which are all represented in *CARTOGRAPHY*.
- 3** In 2017 52% of the refugee population were children, a large portion of whom were unaccompanied or separated from their families.
- 4** Refugees come from all over the world and many different walks of life. They also go on to live incredible lives with exciting careers. For example, Madeleine Albright, the first female Secretary of State, and Sergey Brin, co-founder of Google, both came to the United States as refugees.
- 5** Refugees are often forced to pack minimally for their journey, but always carry their culture and traditions with them. One major piece of cultural capital refugees have brought to different places in the world is diverse cooking and food traditions. The number of refugee-owned and -operated restaurants in the U.S. continues to grow with establishments like Brooklyn's Emma's Torch, which specializes in professional training for and food from refugees and asylum seekers from all over the world.



## CONNECTING TO: THE ART FORMS

**DEVISED THEATRE** is a collaborative art form that often starts with a group of performers, a theme, and a few found objects. Working, and, most importantly, playing closely together through various ice-breaking, ensemble-building, and improvisation games, these performing artists begin to offer different themes, topics, and stories, from fantastical to socially relevant, that they feel compelled to convey through theatre or other art forms. The rehearsal period often gives way to co-created text and often includes music, movement, dance, or a combination of art forms. This is how a piece like *CARTOGRAPHY*—in which each performer has their own bit of creative ownership—is formed.

**DOCUMENTARY THEATRE**—sometimes called Theatre of Fact, Testimonial Theatre, Tribunal Theatre, or Verbatim Theatre, though they are each slightly different in execution—is created by using the spoken words of real people, gathered by way of recorded interviews. *CARTOGRAPHY* features the stories and real-life experiences of young refugees.

*CARTOGRAPHY* combines both **devised theatre** and **documentary theatre** in its storytelling, creating an art form they've termed devised documentary theatre.

### **STORYTELLING**

This production features young people telling the personal stories and experiences of young refugees. This production uses music, song, sound effects, projection, and spoken word as a means to enhance the telling of these real-life stories.

### **MULTIMEDIA DESIGN**

Multimedia Design combines an array of artistic media such as film, literature, visual arts, music, and sound into a theatrical performance. In *CARTOGRAPHY*, video and image projection is used to create environments and atmosphere.

“THERE ARE MOMENTS  
IN WHICH I FEEL...  
JUST NOT IMAGINED  
MAYBE NONE OF THESE  
WORLDS COULD IMAGINE ME,  
PERFECTLY  
AND SO I CONTINUED  
RUNNING AWAY, INVENTING  
NEW WORLDS”

### **What do your students already know?**

Prior to experiencing *CARTOGRAPHY*, invite your students to explore some of the following questions.

*Have you ever seen a theatre performance? How did it make you feel?*

*What element(s) of storytelling do you like best? Why?*

*What does the word “home” mean to you?*

*What does the term “connection” mean to you?*

*Where do you think you might see “connection” at play in *CARTOGRAPHY*?*



# CONNECTING TO: LESSON PLAN IDEAS

## THE ART OF CARTOGRAPHY (WORLD HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY)

Cartography means the art and science of creating maps. Many people assume that maps are fact and show the world exactly as it is, but in actuality they reflect the perspectives of the map creators. Use the title of the show and its discussion of maps to explore how maps can differ. First, divide your students into groups to research maps of the world from different eras. Ask them questions like: *Who made the map? Who did they make it for? How do countries look compared to each other? What bias might that imply?* Have each small group share their thoughts out to the larger group. Then, collectively look at the Mercator map and the Peters Projection Map. Boston public schools have recently decided to adopt the Peters Projection Map over the Mercator map because countries' sizes are correct relative to each other. Facilitate a discussion with the whole group and ask, *How do these two maps look different? How do they convey different perceptions of the world? Do you think all schools should adopt the Peters Projection Map? Why?*

**To support this unit, use the Creativity Page: Cartograph Your Destiny in the Heading to the Virtual Theatre section.**

## PARTNERING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE (SOCIAL STUDIES)

The stories of the refugees in *CARTOGRAPHY* should be thought-provoking and encourage personal reflection, but also inspire action. As a class, embark on a research project to find various organizations that support local refugees. Decide on one to reach out to and ask what your class can do to help. This might take the form of a clothing drive, a food drive, group volunteering, or something else! Be sure to really listen to the needs of the organization with which you decide to partner. Before carrying out your project, discuss as a class: *Why are we doing this? What population(s) are we serving? How are our actions making a difference? After you've carried out your event or partnership, reflect as a class. Guide this reflection by asking questions like: How did it feel to do that work? What more can we do to make a difference?* If your class enjoyed this project, work on developing a stronger, longer relationship with the organization. You can even bring your whole school aboard!

**To support this unit, use the Creativity Page: Humanity: What Connects Us All and Be an Agent of Change in the After the Show section**

## "HOME" (THEATRE, SOCIAL STUDIES)

It takes a lot of different elements to bring a piece of theatre to life. In *CARTOGRAPHY*, projection, lighting, and set design play key roles in creating atmosphere and in the storytelling. Have your students make their own theatre magic by asking them to create a video piece answering the prompt: *What is "home?"* Give them creative license to interpret that question any way they wish. After all, "home" means something different to everyone. Give them different ways to think about and execute their video project by suggesting a few different formats and approaches, such as a music video, a vlog using poetry, a limited series on YouTube using scripted dialogue, or even a storytelling series through SnapChat using only gifs and text. The possibilities are endless! As part of their presentation have volunteers showcase their artistic creation for the class. Then, have a full group discussion about the many different interpretations of what "home" means to your students!

**To support this unit, use the Activity: Objects and Stories in the After the Show section.**

"HOW MANY YEARS WILL  
IT TAKE BEFORE YOU  
CALL THIS PLACE HOME?"



# INSIDE: PUSH / PULL FACTORS

Human migration has occurred for thousands of years.

The reasoning behind human migration can be sorted into two categories called “push” and “pull” factors.

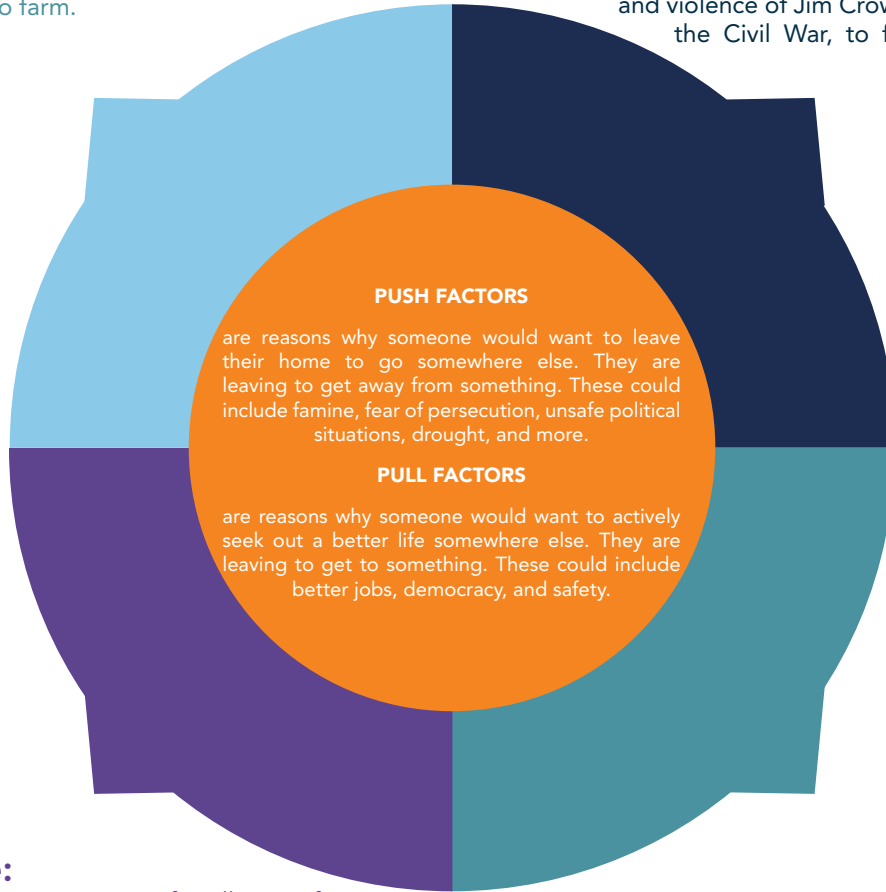
What exactly is meant by “push” and “pull”?

## The Dust Bowl:

In the 1930s, huge dust storms wiped out the crops of many farmers in the Midwest and Southern Great Plains, causing over two million people to move west, where they could find new, more fertile land to farm.

## The Great Migration:

Between 1916 and 1970, millions of black Americans moved away from Southern states to Northern and Midwestern cities to escape the continued racial segregation, discrimination, and violence of Jim Crow that persisted even after the Civil War, to find economic and social opportunity.



## The Third Wave:

From the 1880s to 1910s, tens of millions of Europeans immigrated to the United States (passing through New York’s Ellis Island) to chase the American Dream’s promise of economic opportunity and religious freedom as the U.S. rapidly industrialized.

## Irish Immigrants:

In the early to mid-1800s, Irish Catholics immigrated to the U.S. in significant numbers to escape religious persecution in their home country.

Often, these factors are two sides of the same coin, but in different situations the push or pull factors may be more or less influential. For refugees, the push factors are generally more significant because in order to be defined by the UN as a refugee, they must be fleeing an unsafe situation at home. Take a look at the examples of migrations from U.S. history on this page. Identify where you see push or pull factors. Which factors do you think were more significant in each situation?

### Consider This:

*Where in current events do you see examples of human migration?*

*Where do you see pull factors contributing to peoples’ decisions to migrate? Where do you see push factors?*

*Do you know someone who has moved from one home to another? Did they move by choice? How did both push and pull factors contribute to their decision?*





## BEFORE THE SHOW

In this section, you'll find ready-to-implement teacher-led classroom activities and student-centered creativity pages which allow educators and kids to explore the themes and artistry of the show!



**HANDOUT:**  
TERMS TO KNOW



**ACTIVITY:**  
WHAT MEANS MOST



**CREATIVE PAGE:**  
A PASSPORT THAT TELLS  
YOUR STORY



**FAMILY FACTIVITY!**



**MAP YOUR FUTURE**



# BEFORE THE SHOW: HANDOUT

## TERMS TO KNOW

World events come at us fast, and often the information we get is incomplete or even distorted. This difficulty includes news reports about migration and refugees. Below is a glossary of terms\* that will help you and your students get the most out of *CARTOGRAPHY* as well as current news coverage.

### **MIGRATION:**

a pattern of human or animal movement from one location or habitat to another

### **INTERNAL MIGRATION:**

the pattern of movement within one country—  
from the countryside to the city, for example

### **REFUGEES:**

persons fleeing armed conflict or persecution,  
perhaps because of their racial or religious identity;  
it is often unsafe for them to return home

### **MIGRANTS:**

persons who choose to move to improve their lives  
often by relocating somewhere with more resources or opportunities

### **IMMIGRANTS:**

people who move to another place to live. Undocumented immigrants  
are immigrants who settle in another country without seeking permission

### **ASYLUM:**

when refugees receive official permission to stay in a  
country after arriving there

### **VISAS:**

official documents that allow people to visit or stay in a foreign country

### **PASSPORTS:**

government documents that prove citizenship in a specific country

### **ID:**

short for “identification,” refers to papers that prove a person’s identity

# BEFORE THE SHOW: ACTIVITY

## WHAT MEANS MOST

*CARTOGRAPHY* tells real stories about real-life refugees displaced from their homeland for one reason or another.

Use the activity below to explore the idea of what means most in your life and your students' lives.

**Materials needed:** chart paper and markers

- 1** To begin, gather students in a circle.
- 2** As a class, have a group discussion about what it would mean to leave "home," taking only items you can carry—your most important possessions—with you. Guide this discussion by asking questions like: What is an item you have that is very important to you? Why is it important? What emotions do you feel when you're holding it? How would you feel if you lost it?
- 3** On a large sheet of butcher paper, draw a large outline of a suitcase and tape it to the wall.
- 4** Tell students that you're going on a journey and this bag is all they have to take with them.
- 5** On the inside of the outline, have students write or draw the physical objects they would take with them on their journey, as if they were packing a collective bag.
- 6** Then, on the outside of it, have students write or draw how they feel about those objects.
- 7** Finally, have a class discussion about all of the words and images students placed inside and outside of the suitcase. Ask questions like: What did you learn about your fellow students that you didn't know before? What did you learn about yourself during this activity?

### Reflection Questions:

*What was your favorite part of this activity?*

*What did you find challenging about this activity?*

*What was it like to consider your most prized or meaningful possessions?*

*What was it like to learn about your classmates' possessions?*

*What surprised you about this activity?*

"YOU CAN TELL WHERE PEOPLE COME FROM BY HOW THEY WAIT IN A LINE. THE LESS PEOPLE HAVE, THE CLOSER THE LINE BECOMES. UNTIL YOU MEET THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE NOTHING, WHO STAND SO CLOSE THEY BEGIN TO OVERLAP."



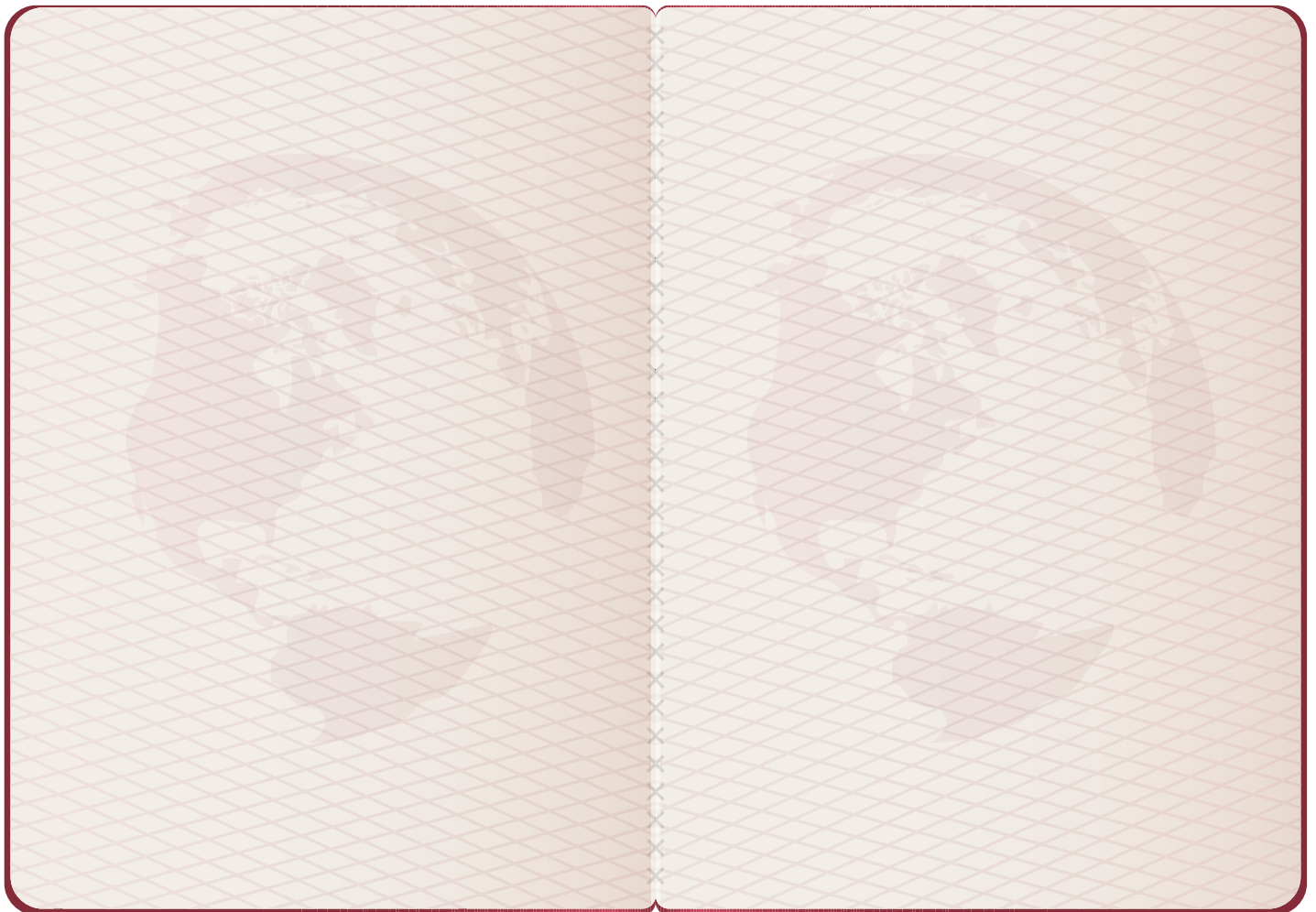


# BEFORE THE SHOW: CREATIVITY PAGE

## A PASSPORT THAT TELLS YOUR STORY

*CARTOGRAPHY* is about identity, belonging, and connecting to others and the world as a whole. Passports are documents that allow travel to parts unknown across the globe. If you could design your very own passport—one that truly reflects who you are as a human being—what would it look like?

In the large open space below, create your very own passport booklet that represents who you are!



# FAMILY FACTIVITY!

## YOUR LIFE, FROM NOW TO THEN

How can you tell the story of your life? How do we connect our journeys to those of other people? Tell the story of how you came to be who and where you are today by starting with now and working your way back through how you got here.

At the first waystation, you'll write down who you are today: what you like to do, who your friends are, where you live, etc. At each of the next four stations, write down some event that happened before and may have led to the previous checkpoint.

As you're working your way down, think about how you've changed, how the people and places around you have changed and how that has all shaped your journey. When you finish, share with a family member or friend and compare and discuss your stories!

1

2

3

4

5

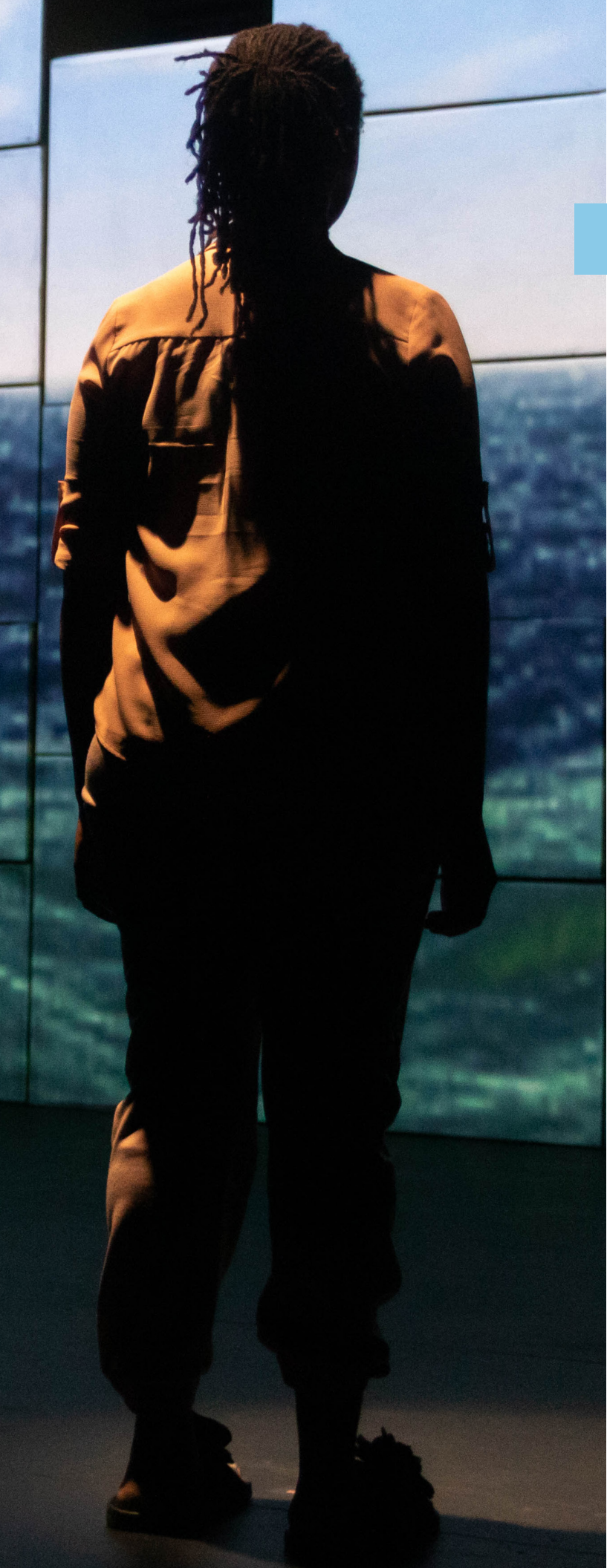


## MAP YOUR FUTURE

What if you could take fate into your own hands and map out your future? What would you like to do with your life? What do you hope to accomplish? How do you want to reach your goals? What obstacles might stand in the way of achieving your hopes and dreams?

Use the space below to create a visual map of your future. What will it look like?





## AFTER THE SHOW

Following your viewing of the Moss Arts Center's virtual presentation of *CARTOGRAPHY*, engage your students in an active discussion about the show's art forms and themes. Take time to reflect on the experience of seeing a virtual show, making connections to themselves, each other, and the world around them by thinking about the themes embedded in the show. The activities and creativity pages in this section are an extension of the theatre experience, allowing opportunities for students to activate and articulate their own thoughts and hear their classmates' ideas!



PERFORMANCE REFLECTION



ACTIVITY: OBJECTS AND STORIES



CREATIVITY PAGE:  
BE AN AGENT OF CHANGE



SOURCES



# PERFORMANCE REFLECTION

Following your viewing of the Moss Arts Center's virtual presentation of *CARTOGRAPHY*, you may find that your students want to discuss the performance and their own opinions. Reflecting on the show and voicing an aesthetic response is an important part of the theatre experience. Allowing your students the opportunity to articulate their own thoughts and hear the ideas of their classmates will increase the impact of the theatre experience. Engage in a conversation with your students to help them process their thoughts and feelings about the show by leading students in a discussion:

Was there a story? What was it about?

Who were the characters and what were their relationships to each other?

What were they in search of? Did they find it?

What were your favorite parts of the show?

What objects did you see onstage? How were they used? What did they remind you of?

What did you think about how the performers' created musical sounds?

What different production elements (music, lighting, costumes, set, etc.) did you notice in the show?

How did the show make you feel?

## TEACHER TIP

Engaging in dialogue, asking questions, and recalling observations are effective ways to foster students' confidence and skills in interpreting art. When leading a performance reflection, try these sentence starters.

**Describe (I saw...)**

**Analyze (I wonder...)**

**Interpret (I think/feel...)**

**Evaluate (I believe...)**



# PERFORMANCE REFLECTION

The part of the show that grabbed my attention the most was

---

While watching the show, I had the strongest reaction to

---

---

---

A question I have about the show is

---

One thing I saw on stage during this show that I've never seen before was

---

Overall, the show made me feel

---

The show made me think about

---

Before seeing this show, I didn't know that

---

If I were the director, one thing I would change about the show is

---

After seeing the show, my friends and I talked about

---





# AFTER THE SHOW: ACTIVITY

## OBJECTS AND STORIES

CARTOGRAPHY was created by two people who interviewed many different refugees in Munich, Germany, and Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Through this activity, challenge your students to create pieces of devised documentary theatre by connecting stories to specific objects and interviewing each other.

- 1** As a class, research what types of objects refugees have taken with them when they were forced to leave their homes. (**Teacher Tip:** Feel free to use the link listed [here](#) to guide your discussion: “Syrian Refugees—What They Carried” from CBS News.) Then, why people would bring those items with them. *Do they have practical value? Sentimental value? Why would this particular object be among the few things they carry with them?*
- 2** Over the course of a few days, have students take time to look at the objects they have in their place of residence, and choose one that they would take with them if they had to leave. Have them bring it with them to class. Let them know that they will be speaking and writing about this object, so they should be comfortable discussing it with their peers.
- 3** Next, have students pair up and have them share out about their objects. They should interview each other, asking questions like:
  - Describe your object to me using all of your senses.
  - What emotion(s) does this object make you feel?
  - Why is this object important to you?
  - Tell me a specific story about this object.
- 4** After both partners have had time to share, have students work individually to write a monologue based on the answers their partner gave. **Note:** Their goal should be to capture the importance and story of the object, and to fully explain why it would be the one thing their partner would take with them. The monologue should be written in the first person, with the student writing from the perspective of their partner.
- 5** Have each partner share the monologue they developed from their partner’s story with the original partner themselves. Give them the opportunity to provide each other feedback by using the sentence starters “I like...,” “I notice...,” and “I wonder...”
- 6** Let students incorporate each other’s feedback as they wish.
- 7** Finally, have a group discussion to reflect on the experience of interviewing their peers, listening to personal stories and writing monologues!

### Reflection Questions:

*What was your favorite part of this activity?*

*How did it feel to interview your partner?*

*How did learning about an object important to someone else help you learn more about them as a person?*

*What was it like to take on someone else’s experience and embody someone else’s perspective?*

*What was challenging about this activity?*

“I KNOW MY PASSPORT HAS EXPIRED,  
SO HAS MY COUNTRY.”



# AFTER THE SHOW: CREATIVITY PAGE

## BE AN AGENT OF CHANGE

Refugees are fleeing untold violence and persecution, hoping for a better way of life, needing to connect to others for help. Some people—sometimes referred to as gatekeepers—make it very difficult for folks to find the safe haven they need.

Think globally about actions that everyone in the city, state, country or around the globe can do to make a positive difference in the ways refugees are treated. Then, choose a leader, such as a community organizer or someone in Congress, and reach out to them by writing them a letter making the case for providing services for refugees.

From the desk of \_\_\_\_\_

Lined writing area for the letter.

## COMPANY

[New Victory LabWorks](#)

## CONTENT AND THEMES

[The Great Migration](#)

Immigration:

[history.com/topics/immigration/immigration-united-states-timeline](https://www.history.com/topics/immigration/immigration-united-states-timeline)  
[preceden.com/timelines/29989-waves-of-immigration-in-america](https://preceden.com/timelines/29989-waves-of-immigration-in-america)

[Letters of Hope](#)

[Letters of Love](#)

[Maps](#)

What does “refugee” mean?

[un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/refugees/](https://un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/refugees/)  
[unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/what-is-a-refugee/](https://unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/what-is-a-refugee/)

## READING LIST:\*

*The Odyssey* by Homer

*Wings* by Christopher Myers

*My Pen* by Christopher Myers

*Firebird* illustrated by Christopher Myers

*Harlem* illustrated by Christopher Myers

*Games for Actors and Nonactors* by Augusto Boal

*The Best We Could Do: An Illustrated Memoir* by Thi Bui

*Watership Down* by Richard Adams

*The Arrival* by Sean Tan

*Perfumed Nightmare: A Film* by Kidlat Tahimik

*La Noire de Film* by Ousmane Sembene

*The Gift of Freedom: War, Debt, and Other Refugee Passages* by Mimi Thi Nguyen

*Body Counts: The Vietnam War and Militarized Refugees* by Yen Le Espiritu

*From the Land of the Shadows: War, Revolution, and the Making of the Cambodian Diaspora* by Khatharya Um

*Intimacies of Four Continents* by Lisa Lowe

*Rites and Return: Diaspora Poetics and the Politics of Memory* edited by Marianne Hirsch and Nancy K. Miller

*Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* by Edward Said

*Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* by Gloria Anzaldúa

*We Refugees* by Hannah Arendt

*We Are America: A Tribute From the Heart* by Walter Dean Myers

\*Reading list provided by CARTOGRAPHY’s creative team

**CARTOGRAPHY Photos:** elmanstudios



# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Moss Center acknowledges the Tutelo and Monacan people, who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and live, and recognizes their continuing connection to the land, water, and air that Virginia Tech consumes. We pay respect to the Tutelo and Monacan Nations, and to their elders past, present, and emerging.

We also acknowledge the university's historical ties to the indentured and enslaved whose labors built this institution. We pay respect to these people for their contributions to Virginia Tech.

As you engage with one another and the arts we present, we invite you to reflect on the history of this space and its possibilities for reconciliation, truth, and humanity. In the spirit of *Ut Prosim*, let this acknowledgment be but a single step in the Moss Arts Center's commitment to these values.