



We sing for you, Bay Creatures

*EDEN Engagement: Berkeley
Seed City Curriculum
Risa Dye*

JANUARY 2023



ABOUT

Three-time Grammy Award winning opera superstar Joyce DiDonato has created the global tour of EDEN, her major concert hall performance about environmentalism. Her personal commitment and partnership with ITAC has launched a re-imagining of the impact of a concert experience through teaching artist-led workshops in every city. The International Teaching Artists Collaborative (ITAC) is the world-wide network of artists who work in community and educational settings, who have the skills to bring change to communities. Together ITAC and EDEN Engagement will pilot a new approach to prove that touring can be a legitimate and powerful tool for change in communities.

Cities on the tour are designated either "Root Cities" or "Seed Cities". Seed Cities are a 1-4 day(s) event that engages the youth with one of three specific environmental issues; Urban Gardens, Urban Trees, Food Choices:

- Urban Gardens: They are youth-friendly. Among many social benefits, they bring these environmental benefits: reduce carbon use (reduced food transport); reduce water runoff; help pollinators; plants absorb CO2 and pollutants and produce oxygen; health benefits in the food and the community building (reduced stress and blood pressure).
- Urban Trees: Trees are omnipresent and overlooked in cities—kid friendly. They can plant them, and the EDEN performance encourages that. Trees are powerful answers to heat mitigation (reduce temperatures by 8 to 10 degrees and need for air conditioning), carbon and pollution sequestration and oxygen production, water flow pollution reduction, biodiversity, and food insecurity. Health benefits include healthier air, psychological benefits, lowering blood pressure and stress.
- Food Choices: Scientists have proven that small choices make a big difference. Because many foods with a high health burden, including processed meats or red meats, also have high environmental costs, switching out 10 percent of a person's daily caloric intake can cut a person's food-based environmental footprint by over 30 percent. Between growing it, packaging it, moving it around, cooking it, and often wasting it, food production makes up about one-fifth to one-third of all annual greenhouse gas emissions globally. Eat less red and processed meats, eat more veggies and fruits, reduce food waste, and if you have a way...compost.

Teaching Artist: Risa Dye

Participants: Piedmont Children's Choir 35-40 kids.

Workshop length: 2 Hours

Topic: Berkeley Bay



WORKSHOP

Opening: WE will be using puppetry to amplify our voices to speak for the creatures of the bay. Kids will enter to find 6 stations with guidebooks, and a pageant puppet making "kit" at each station

Warm-up activity: (15-20 min) Choir will start the workshop with a warm up and a rehearsal of their piece with Piedmont Children's Choir Artistic Director Erin Tuan.

Welcome: (5 min) Circle up for Name game, pronouns and name one animal you know that lives in the bay.

Key Question(s): What are people doing today to help or harm the health of the Bay?
What creatures make the Bay and the inlets their home?

Main activity: 30-45 minutes: design and build puppets.

Using puppets to amplify voice- as a larger than life collaboration much like the larger than life collaboration among activists to fight gigantic money makers that often disregard the environmental impacts of their extraction/ building/ filling, etc.
Often groups can use one species to fight for to help an entire habitat thrive that in turn allows other organisms to thrive.

Demonstrate and facilitate

Just like in environmental activism and advocacy people in groups all come with different skills that complement each-other and make the whole stronger.

Ex: two people make the face, two decorate the fabric and one works on the hair, two create simple stick puppets. . . all the while communicating about your process.

We are going to divide up into 6 groups of 6 -each group building a larger-than-life puppet.
For this next 45 minutes, you are a team of designers and builders.

Materials:

- 1 Large dowel per group (I sourced reused empty fabric tubes as dowels)
- 2-3 Medium dowels per group for the hand manipulation and (If time allows) marine creature puppets
- Large Oval Cardboard for head (pre-cut)
- Rope for arm
- Yarn of different colors.
- Books with large pictures for collage
- 1 large piece of fabric per group (approx. ~50" x 50" / ~130cm x 130cm)
- Strong Tape to tape on Head and
- Scissors
- Glue for paper
- Staplers for yarn (glue is not ideal for yarn as we have no time for drying)
- Large Sharpies
- Cereal Boxes (to add features)

Inspired by the creature that this puppet speaks for-
We look at guides and books to familiarize ourselves with some animals of the bay.

You will design your character based on the designs of the creature you are defending.
Nature is the best designer! Take inspiration from nature.

Ex: a leopard shark has dark grey spots of different sizes and is sleek and long and round-
How can you use these descriptors to make marks on the fabric, design your character's hair, eyes, etc?

(Take water and pee breaks as needed in this workshop time)

15 minutes:

- Puppets can often say and do what individual humans cannot- they can embolden us and help us stand up and speak out.

Demonstrate giving life to the puppet as a team-

- Practice: Breath, focus, weight.
- Practice as a group, 2 people manipulate, one on head, one on hand.
- The one on the head:
- Script:
- "I am _____ (name of puppet) and I sing for the _____ (creature chosen)"
- The whole group improvises a little song/ rap/ ambient notes of what the creature's voice might be, or what they might be singing. . .
- While two- four puppeteers manipulate puppets, the others act as directors- seeing if the puppet comes to life.
- Then rotate through until everyone has done everything.

20 minutes:

- Choose which configuration you like best as a group. (ex: who loves being the hand? The head?)
- Does a third person need to wave the fabric for effect? Did you have time to make a creature so the fourth person could have a small creature?)

Share your little improvisation.

- Have puppet breathe,
- Look around, look at audience, while maintaining a weighted appearance like a person standing.
- Then sing a little improv after the script: "I am _____ (name of puppet) and I sing for the _____ (creature chosen)".

Reflection: Sharing highlights with neighbor in circle

"Before today, I never knew: _____"

Closing: EDEN Call + Response

- It's your planet, it's my planet, it's our planet, let's take care of it

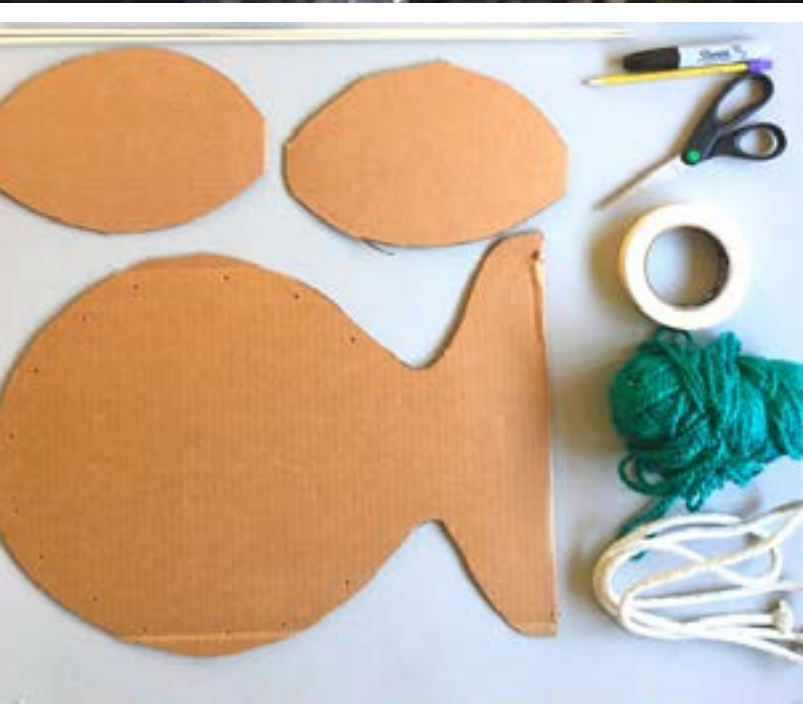
Local resources:

- These materials are gathered from local re-use stores,
- from places that channel refuse away from the waste stream for resale.
- In the San Francisco Bay Area we have:
- East Bay Depot for Use and Reuse in Oakland
- Habitat for Humanity ReStore in Oakland
- Reuse Art Store in Berkeley
- Urban Ore in Berkeley
- SCRAP in San Francisco

Some groups working for the health of the bay:

- Save the Bay
- San Francisco Estuary Institute
- Water Education Foundation
- California Institute for Community, Art and Nature
- Student Conservation Association

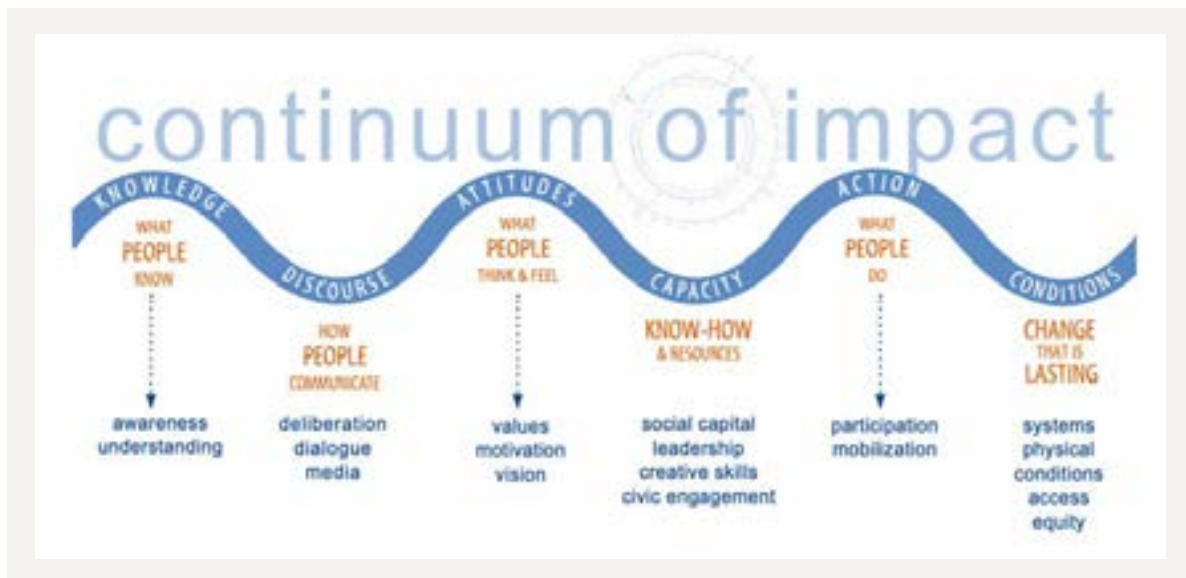


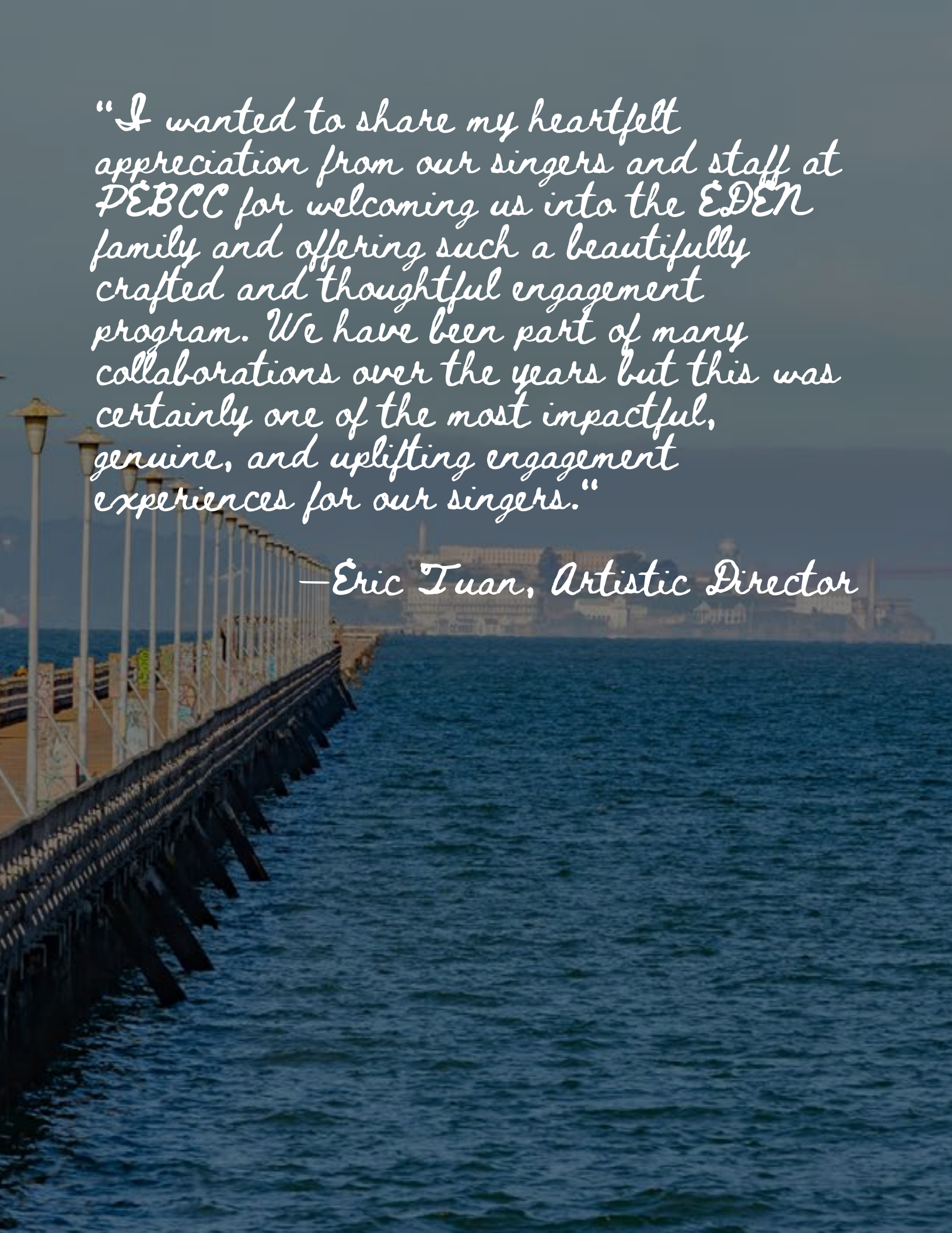


IMPACT & EVALUATION

The goal of this effort is to learn about the impact that the activities have on participants. We are especially curious to learn if there is any evidence that they have the impulse to take action and/or feel they can make a difference—this is the high goal of the arts-for-climate field, and we believe teaching artists have a particularly strong contribution to the field.

During the EDEN project, teaching artists were encouraged to use the Continuum of Impact Guide as a model when thinking about impact and assessment in their workshops.



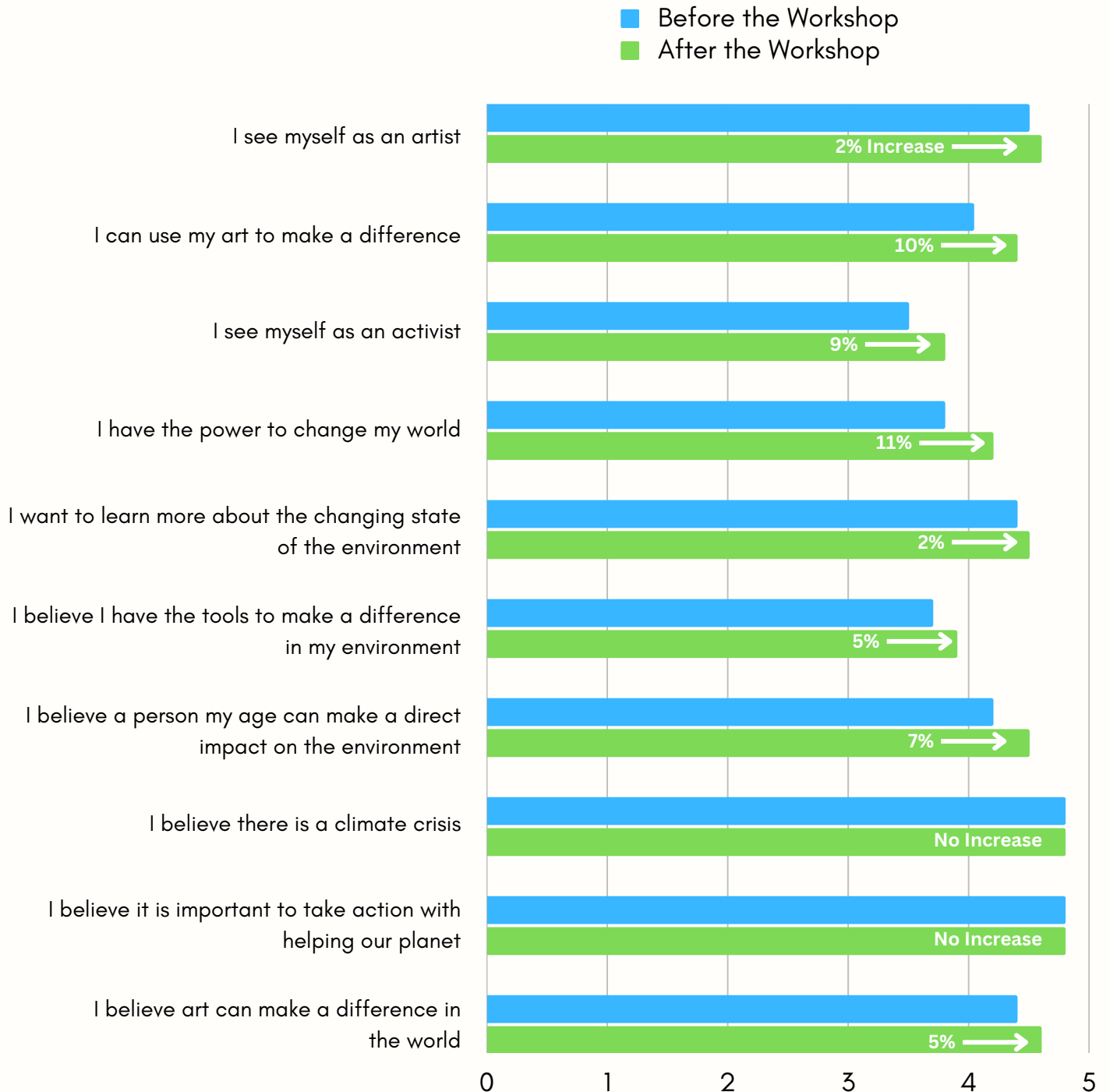
A long pier with a wooden railing and several tall, thin light poles extends from the left side of the frame into the ocean. The water is a deep blue with gentle ripples. In the far distance, a city skyline is visible across the water, including a prominent building with a dome and several tall, thin structures. The sky is a pale, hazy blue.

"I wanted to share my heartfelt appreciation from our singers and staff at PEBCC for welcoming us into the EDEN family and offering such a beautifully crafted and thoughtful engagement program. We have been part of many collaborations over the years but this was certainly one of the most impactful, genuine, and uplifting engagement experiences for our singers."

—Eric Tuan, Artistic Director

STUDENT EVALUATIONS

During this round of EDEN, students were given a survey before and after the workshops. These surveys were designed according to the outcomes provided in the [Continuum of Impact Guide](#). Students were asked if they Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Agree, or Strongly Agree with the following statements. In Berkeley, the students were middle and early high schoolers (7th-10th grade), ages ranging from 12-15 years old.



REFLECTIONS FROM THE TEACHING ARTISTS

In what ways did you observe change in your participants understanding and engagement of the environmental issue you chose?

"They learned about some species that live in the bay that they weren't familiar with before."

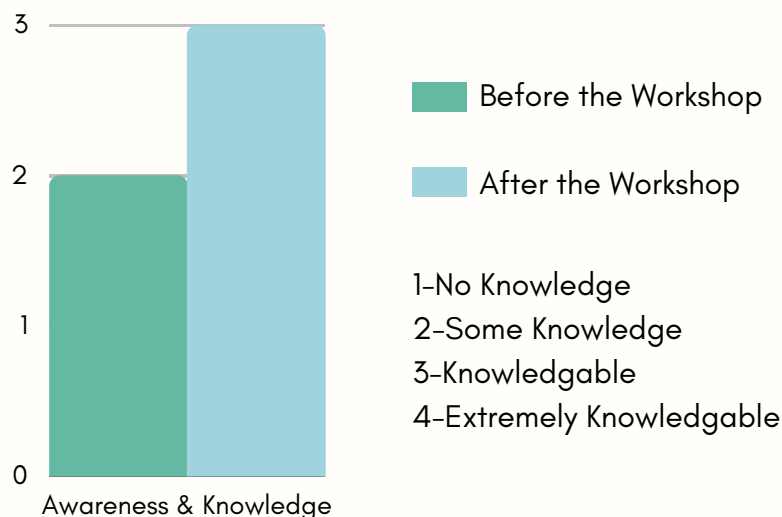
What challenges did you face in creating and facilitating your workshop?

"The length of the workshop- It was very short, so we couldn't go in depth."

Did your EDEN experience expand your work or skills as a teaching artist in any specific ways?

"It expanded my age range- I mostly work with younger elementary aged children, and these were teenagers. They were AWESOME!"

We tasked each teaching artist with evaluating their students based on the Continuum of Impact Guide. They rated their students on a scale from 1 (no knowledge of the subject) to 4 (extremely knowledgeable about the subject). The following graph reflects Dee & Joanna's observations of their students.



"The groups all completed their puppets and each group altered a choir song from the choir's repertoire and with puppet in hands, sang about the species that the puppet represented. I was surrounded by convivial collaborators filling the air with sublime song. It was pure bliss."

—Risa Dye, Teaching Artist

ABOUT THE TEACHING ARTIST



RISA DYE

Berkeley based artist, costume designer, puppeteer and educator Risa Lenore is known for her creative energy in teaching and for her engaging puppet shows. She holds a BA in anthropology from Beloit College and she studied puppetry at Humber College in Toronto, Canada. Working mostly with paper, fabric and wood, she playfully combines colors and textures into visual theatre-in-motion. Risa explores the themes of greed, loss, and environmental stewardship in her tales. (www.possiblypuppets.com). From 2019 to 2020, she was an artist in residence at the El Cerrito Recycling Center and built all new puppets and stories from milk jugs, suitcases and books. After attending Jaques LeCoq's School of International Theatre in Paris, France in 2009, Risa designed and implemented her own curriculum combining theatre, creative movement and storytelling, a program that has had great success in the Bay Area (www.jellyjamtime.com). Risa is currently a teaching artist with Marin-based organization Youth In Arts, teaching creative movement and puppetry in public elementary schools.



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