

# LeAnn Siefferman

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## Education

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Graduate Certificate, Social Justice, Harvard Extension School, Harvard University	2016 - 2018
BA, Studio Art, Randolph-Macon Woman's College, Lynchburg, Virginia	2002 - 2007
University of Reading, Reading, England (junior year abroad)	2004 - 2005

## Experience

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### **Making Conversations, Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School, Rabun Gap, GA** **2018**

Developed a semester-long curriculum using pottery to facilitate interpersonal exchange and cultural literacy across a variety of religious, socioeconomic and political differences. Our classroom represented five countries. Curriculum was based on my ongoing social practice project (see below for details).

### **"Making Conversations that Matter," half-day workshop, Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School** **2018**

I was invited to facilitate a workshop for the school's annual "Community Day" programming. Using writing and drawing exercises, students learned to engage with one another by better understanding their own "story of self."

### **"Talking to Strangers," presentation, Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School** **2018**

In my first conversation with Rabun Gap students, I led a short presentation and discussion of my experiences in creating Making Conversations.

### **Sustainability Associate, Office of Sustainability & Resilience, City of Orlando, FL** **2018 to present**

I oversee the City of Orlando's commercial food waste recycling program. I organize and lead outreach activities, including workshops and the development of a new marketing campaign to increase awareness and participation, which has nearly doubled during my tenure. I am working to improve data tracking to make participation more efficient, and am developing educational activities to engage student tour groups with the purpose and process of food waste recycling. I am currently coordinating the City's first Equity and Sustainability training.

### **Founder, Making Conversations** **2017 to present**

Making Conversations is a social practice project in civil discourse using handmade, illustrated pottery to prompt group conversation on complex social issues. For each topic, I make 12 unique plates illustrated with imagery inspired by my own personal stories and contradicting complexity regarding the subject. A personal narrative accompanies each plate. I share these narratives with dinner guests to facilitate group questioning and consideration of personal and normative assumptions about specific topics. Moderators and content experts help guide topics of discussion, which have included mental health, homelessness, climate change, race and privilege, gender and identity, and aging. In sharing my fears and assumptions alongside professional facilitators, I invite everyone to join me in seeking the source of our beliefs and to ask better questions of ourselves and others. I have hosted 8 sold-out dinners, with 12 guests at each

event, and have handmade nearly 80 unique plates. This structure of art-facilitated personal testimony has thus far successfully established safe, vulnerable spaces of meaningful group discussion. For this project, I brokered partnerships for moderators, chefs, venues, and marketing with The Peace & Justice Institute at Valencia College, Dinner Party Project, Designer's Press and Sunny Oranges Productions. I developed a high school curriculum to take this project into the classroom, and was awarded with both a ceramics fellowship from The Hambidge Center for Arts and Creative Sciences in Rabun Gap, GA, and the very first artist educator residency position at Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School, my high school alma mater.

**Ceramics Fellow, The Hambidge Center for Arts and Creative Sciences, Rabun Gap, GA                      2018**

I was awarded a two-month artist residency, which enabled me to step away from employment and focus on crafting narrative clay pots and building my functional body of work. I was given a private cabin and access to my own ceramics studio. During my residency, I produced roughly 50 functional pieces. All of my work was fired in a Japanese anagama kiln, which has to be hand-fed wood over a 48-hour period. I developed a new series of work as well, incorporating personal stories onto the surface of large vases. This was the longest Hambidge fellowship awarded for Fall/Winter 2018, and was awarded in tandem with my position as Artist Educator in Residence with a local school (see below).

**Artist Educator in Residence, Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School, Rabun Gap, GA                      2018**

Rabun Gap is a boarding school in Southern Appalachia. Students represent 50 different countries and multiple faith traditions. Not much has changed since I was a Rabun Gap student, as knowledge gaps continue to stymie meaningful cross-cultural engagement on campus. In the fall of 2018, I was awarded the position of Artist Educator in Residence for the development of my arts-facilitated cultural literacy curriculum, using pottery as a tool to help students better understand themselves and each other. It was the school's first such position in their 115-year history. Over a semester of journaling, reading and conversation exercises, students explored their personal story and what it was about their world they wanted to better understand. Turning these thoughts into imagery, students made and illustrated pottery to reflect their experiences: struggles, hopes and all. Together we approached drug addiction, broken homes, poverty, LGBTQ+ identity, religion, racism and mental health with dignity for ourselves and one another. To end the project, students used their pottery to host a campus lunch, inviting faculty and students from outside our classroom as they shared about their experiences with civil conversation across difference. Each table was assigned questions and faculty guided students through group discussion. Feedback was tremendously positive from both faculty and students. Here are a few survey responses:

- *"[Making Conversations] was my first art project. I learned so much about my fellow students.... I could express my mind and could think a lot about things people said there. It helped me open up and be more social to people I don't automatically feel like 'fit' to me [sic]."*
- *"This [project] was super meaningful to me because I have always enjoyed these types of conversations and I have struggled in my high school years to create these conversations among peers, especially when I am not already close with them."*

- *“Thank you for hosting this project. I enjoyed every single second of it... No one else has ever given me a feeling that I could open up so much. I learned to understand people although I don’t have to agree. I will be forever thankful for that.”*

**Program Manager and Donor Relations Manager, Crealdé School of Art, Winter Park, FL 2018**

I was responsible for producing the tri-annual Program Guide, which consisted of coordinating roughly 175 classes across 7 studios and 3 campuses every 3 months. In restructuring Crealdé’s Program Guide production schedule, I introduced project management software to open communication and collaboration between department silos, significantly reducing employee overtime and improving morale. I updated their donor acknowledgement process with new thank you letters and shortened turnaround time between donation and recognition for two campaigns totaling over \$70,000 in gifts. Crealdé lacked standard operating procedures and consistent job descriptions, so I developed SOPs and job descriptions for Donor Relations Manager and Program Manager. My conflict resolution skills were highly valued in this position, and I was periodically asked to assist the Executive Director in navigating challenging interpersonal situations. Nearing the end of my contractual arrangement with Crealdé, I was given responsibility to interview, hire and train the new Program Manager, and I successfully managed a seamless transition.

**Sustainability Forum for Orange County Mayor, creator/organizer 2018**

Frustrated by the lack of priority on environmental justice in local politics, I orchestrated Central Florida’s first political forum to address Sustainability and Equity. Securing participation from all three mayoral candidates, I assembled a coalition of Orange County stakeholders across the for-profit and non-profit sectors. Over a series of meetings, we coalesced into a unified demand that the new Orange County Mayor address sustainability with an equity lens. To accomplish this goal, my assembled forum committee crafted and publicly presented coalition questions to each candidate before 175 citizens. All of Orlando’s major TV, radio and print news media outlets were present. Questions highlighted the critical need for a focused Sustainability and Equity initiative in Orange County government, prompting the newly elected mayor to appoint a sustainability member to his transition taskforce and to announce a new Office for Sustainability at the County level.

**Common Threads, Arts & Sustainability Workshop, Florida Hospital Innovation Lab 2017**

In conceptualizing a visual conversation about values and our environment, I invited hospital staff to share their first or favorite memory of nature by illustrating these stories on scrubs and lab coats. I captured about 40 memories, and hand embroidered their work, resulting in colorfully illustrated garments. The project was put on hiatus due to a change in focus by the lab, and pieces are still in holding to be shown.

***Sustain Orlando, creator/organizer*****2017**

This was a collaborative mural project of my own conception addressing Sustainability in Orlando. The mural was painted live during Green Builder Media's Sustainability Symposium at Orlando's Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts. From 20 applications, I selected four local artists representing the diversity of Central Florida's community, and secured \$2,500 in sponsorships to pay for supplies and compensate artists. I oversaw development of the painting's concept, coordinated mural wall construction and day-of events. For three months, Sustain Orlando was on display at Orlando International Airport, and was recently acquired by City Hall to be placed on permanent display in their Sustainability Conference Room.

**Teaching Artist, ArtReach Orlando****2016 - 2017**

As a Teaching Artist, I led youth arts programming for underserved communities. We primarily worked with afterschool programs, homeschool students and summer camps. In collaboration with other ArtReach Teaching Artists, I delivered lesson plans focusing on artists and voices of color. Our classes were offered in partnership with the Orange County Public Library System, The Boys & Girls Club, and Central Florida Community Arts.

**Sustainability Intern, Office of Sustainability & Resilience, City of Orlando, FL****2016**

As a part-time intern, I assisted with climate change mitigation and adaptation project development. My projects included conducting interviews with 15 Sustainability offices in cities across the country in order to build and propose a "Citizen Forester" volunteer arborist program for Orlando. I contributed language for two grants, and was tasked with assembling and managing volunteer work teams for community garden builds and neighborhood tree plantings.

**Puppy Program Manager, Canine Companions for Independence, Orlando, FL****2011 - 2015**

Canine Companions for Independence (CCI) is the largest and oldest assistance dog organization in the country. My role as Puppy Program Manager for their Southeast regional facility was the most complex and demanding position of my non-profit career. For nearly five years, I interviewed, selected, coached and counseled 250 full-time volunteer puppy raisers in eight states across the Southeastern United States. My role was to ensure the health and appropriate behavior, socialization and obedience training of 185 puppies in training. My volunteer team ranged in age from 10 to 85, and included programs at four prisons and three universities. I introduced a new video training blog and real-time virtual training sessions to ensure every puppy raiser, no matter their schedule or location, was able to work one-on-one with a professional trainer. I developed a new puppy training exchange program between Tulane University and the Louisiana State Prison system, statistically improving canine success rates and inmate rehabilitation. Traveling the Southeast, I established service provider relationships saving CCI over \$90,000. During my tenure, our volunteer wait list grew from 5 to 75 names, ensuring every puppy was placed in a prepared home. When CCI was selected by the Department of Veterans Affairs to participate in their research studying the impacts of assistance dogs on PTSD, I personally negotiated contractual arrangements to

ensure responsible management of valuable and oft-abused service dog equipment. Towards the end of my time with CCI, I developed standard operating procedures for the position, and designed and led departmental training for a new organization-wide digital filing system.

### **Programming Director, Merrimack Hall Performing Arts Center, Huntsville, Alabama 2008 - 2010**

In my first “real job” out of college, I was responsible for booking all of Merrimack’s theatrical programming, corporate fundraisers and educational events. Merrimack was the region’s first Off-Broadway theatre, and I had the opportunity to craft new arts experiences for the community. In addition to booking a season of performing arts, I developed a classic and cult film series and touring author series. As House & Hospitality Manager for most events, I was responsible for the needs and enjoyment of all patrons, and I managed all catering and green room needs for each production. As part of my responsibility for managing artist contracts and tech needs, I coordinated transportation, hotels, artist fees and merchandise sales, as well as sound and lighting techs, for every production. As Box Office Manager, I was responsible for all ticket sales and for the operation of box office software, delivering professional and courteous assistance for all ticketing and customer service issues. Towards the end of my time at Merrimack, I was able to help develop and teach the region’s first performing arts curriculum for special needs youth entitled “Dance Your Dreams.”

### **Grants / Sponsorships / Scholarships**

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- 2018 \$220 scholarship recipient, Gladdening Light Symposium, Winter Park, FL
- 2017 \$1,000 Awesome Grant recipient, *Making Conversations*
- 2017 \$2,500 sponsorship, *Sustain Orlando*
- 2016 \$1,000 workshop scholarship recipient, Penland School of Crafts, Spruce Pine, NC

### **Commissions**

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- 2018 Teapots, Jade Sushi & New Asian Restaurant, Orlando, FL

### **Gallery Representation**

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The Bascom, Highlands, NC – Making Conversations dinnerware (coming Spring 2019)

### **Permanent Collection of Note**

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LeAnn Siefferman, Hali Hali, Charles Mighty, Gladiola Sotomayor, Thomas Thorspecken. *Sustain Orlando*. 2017. Permanent collection, City Hall, Orlando, FL.

### **Selected Recognition**

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Cidney Bachert, “Artist Spotlight: LeAnn Siefferman,” *Downtown Community Paper*, February 28, 2018. Available here: <https://tinyurl.com/ycrkd6xl>

Vanessa Echols, "Seeing Color," *Colorblind: Race Across Generations Podcast*, April 13, 2018. Available here: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/colorblind-race-across-generations/id1365789852>

Lauren Delgado, "Making Conversations Tackles Tough Topics – Around the Dinner Table," *Orlando Sentinel*, October 3, 2017. Available here: <https://tinyurl.com/ybjaskcv>

Diana Griffith, "Making Conversations through Art with LeAnn Siefferman", *Orlando Lady Boss Podcast*, (podcast, blog), August 25, 2017. Available here: <https://tinyurl.com/yc5rzarx>

Michelle Imperato, "Making Conversations with The Dinner Party Project," WESH2-TV News, Orlando, FL, August 21, 2017. Available here: <https://tinyurl.com/ydg7uvv3>

### **Continuing Education & Professional Development**

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<b>Ceramics Fellowship Application Selection Committee, The Hambidge Center</b>	<b>2019</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nominated by The Hambidge Center to help select Ceramics Fellowship recipients for 2019</li> </ul>	
<b>Florida Master Naturalist Certificate</b>	<b>2016 to present</b>
<b>Catalyst, MIT Climate CoLab</b>	<b>2016</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selected by MIT CoLab staff to provide sustainability guidance on Climate CoLab proposals</li> </ul>	
<b>Work-Study Student, Penland School of Crafts, Spruce Pine, NC</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>College of Graduate Studies, University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL</b>	<b>2015</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Course: Environmental Security</li> </ul>	
<b>School of Public Administration, University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL</b>	<b>2015</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Course: Volunteer Management</li> </ul>	
<b>Member, Create Huntsville, Huntsville, AL</b>	<b>2010</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Panel of local and state leaders promoting incorporation of the arts in downtown development</li> </ul>	
<b>Chamber of Commerce Connect, Huntsville, AL</b>	<b>2010</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leadership Development Training</li> </ul>	
<b>Committee Chairman, Panoply Arts Festival, Huntsville, AL</b>	<b>2008 to 2010</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chaired both the Youth Arts and Community Arts committees for one of the largest three-day arts festivals in the Southeast</li> </ul>	