

DEI Summit Community Assembly & Discussion
October 26, 2020 | 10-11:30 a.m. EST
Event recording available at <https://youtu.be/RX7Z-A1d0ms>



ROB SELLERS:

GOOD MORNING, HELLO I'M ROBERT SELLERS THE VICE PROVOST FOR EQUITY AND INCLUSION AND CHIEF DIVERSITY OFFICER HERE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN.

WELCOME TO OUR 2020 DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION SUMMIT. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE OFFICIALLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE PEOPLES WHOSE LAND WE LIVE AND LEARN.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN ACKNOWLEDGES THE UNIVERSITY'S ORIGINS IN A LAND GRANT FROM THE ANISHINAABEG INCLUDING THE ODAWA, OJIBWE AND BODEWADMI PEOPLES AS WELL AS THE WYANDOT AND WE FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGE THAT OUR UNIVERSITY STANDS LIKE ALL PROPERTY IN THE UNITED STATES ON LANDS OBTAINED GENERALLY IN UNCONSCIONABLE WAYS FROM THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE.

KNOWING WHERE WE ARE CHANGES NEITHER THE PAST NOR THE PRESENT.

HOWEVER THROUGH SCHOLARSHIP AND PEDAGOGY WE WORK TO CREATE A FUTURE IN WHICH THE PAST IS THOROUGHLY UNDERSTOOD AND THE PRESENT SUPPORTS HUMAN FLOURISHING AND JUSTICE WHILE ENACTING AN ETHIC OF CARE AND COMPASSION.

THE THEME FOR THIS YEAR'S DEI SUMMIT IS ARTS+SOCIAL CHANGE: BUILDING AN ANTI-RACIST WORLD THROUGH THE ARTS.

OWING TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, TODAY'S ASSEMBLY WILL BE AN ALL VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE.

IN THE SPIRIT OF MAKING THE MOST OUT OF A TRAGIC SITUATION, WE HAVE ENDEAVORED TO SPOTLIGHT THE WEALTH OF TALENT THAT RESIDES WITHIN OUR UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY.

LEADING UP TO THE EVENTS TODAY, WE PUT OUT A CALL FOR CREATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS, INVITING MEMBERS OF THE U-M COMMUNITY TO SUBMIT THEIR ARTWORK AND CREATIVE PROJECTS THAT ALIGN WITH OUR SUMMIT THEME.

WE RECEIVED A NUMBER OF SUBMISSIONS THAT ARE NOW AVAILABLE FOR YOU TO VIEW ON THE SUMMIT WEBSITE DEISUMMIT.UMICH.EDU.

THROUGHOUT OUR PROGRAM TODAY, WE'RE PLEASED TO HIGHLIGHT SOME OF THESE CREATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS SUCH AS THE ONE THAT OPENED OUR EVENT TODAY.

YOU HEARD A CLIP CALLED HISTORY OF TODAY BY KING MICHA THE INFAMOUS ALSO KNOWN AS MICHAEL BRYANT WHO IS A STAFF MEMBER IN HEALTH INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY SERVICES HERE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN.

THIS SONG WAS PAIRED WITH A SERIES OF PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN AT THE BLACK LIVES MATTER PROTEST -- OF PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN AT DETROIT'S BLACK LIVES MATTER PROTEST BY KEVIN MCCAWLEY, A U-M MEDICAL STUDENT.

BOTH THE SONG AND THE PHOTOGRAPHY ARE AMAZING AS IS THE REST OF TODAY'S PROGRAM.

LET'S MOVE ON WITH THIS MORNING'S PROGRAM. IT IS MY GREAT PLEASURE TO INTRODUCE OUR PRESIDENT TO PROVIDE US WITH SOME OPENING REMARKS.

MARK S. SCHLISSEL IS THE 14th PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN.

THROUGHOUT HIS SIX PLUS YEAR TENURE AS PRESIDENT, MARK HAS CONSISTENTLY DEMONSTRATED A PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO MAKING THE UNIVERSITY AS DIVERSE, EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE AS POSSIBLE.

HIS COMMITMENT IS PERHAPS MOST VISIBLE IN THE LEADERSHIP IN THE UNIVERSITY'S FIVE-YEAR DEI STRATEGIC PLAN.

HOWEVER, I HAVE WITNESSED THIS COMMITMENT FIRSTHAND ON ALMOST A DAILY BASIS IN NUMEROUS DECISIONS HE'S MADE, BOTH BIG AND SMALL.

I CAN THINK OF NO BETTER PERSON TO START OFF THIS MORNING'S PROGRAM.

SO I PRESENT TO YOU PRESIDENT MARK S. SCHLISSEL.

PRESIDENT SCHLISSEL:

HI ROB. THANK YOU VERY MUCH AND GOOD MORNING EVERYBODY. AND THANKS FOR THAT VERY KIND INTRODUCTION ROB.

ALSO A SHOUT OUT TO THE VARIOUS ARTISTS AND STUDENTS WHO CONTRIBUTED MATERIALS FOR THAT FANTASTIC INTRODUCTION.

IT REALLY IS A GREAT STATEMENT OF THE POWER OF THE ARTS IN ALIGNMENT WITH OUR EFFORTS AROUND SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY.

I ALSO WANT TO THANK EVERYONE WHO REACHED THIS POINT TO ENHANCE DIVERSITY EQUITY AND INCLUSION ACROSS THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN.

THE DEI LEADS IN OUR UNITS, THE MANY ADVOCATES IN OUR COMMUNITY AND THE THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF WHO HAVE EMBRACED OUR COMMITMENT TO DEI AND PUSHED US TO BE BETTER AS A UNIVERSITY.

THE DIFFICULTIES AND TRAGEDIES OF THE PAST FEW MONTHS RE-EMPHASIZE THE ENORMOUS CHALLENGES WE MUST CONFRONT.

THE LIVES OF BLACK PEOPLE SUCH AS GEORGE FLOYD AND BREONNA TAYLOR AND OTHERS LOST TO UNJUST KILLINGS BY LAW ENFORCEMENT, THE HARMS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, MANIFESTED DIFFERENTIALLY IN OUR COMMUNITIES DEPENDING UPON RACE, INCOME OR ZIP CODE.

THE OPPORTUNITIES TO LIVE, LEARN, SUCCEED AND THRIVE HERE AT MICHIGAN AND BEYOND SQUELCHED BY GENERATIONS OF SYSTEMIC RACISM.

THESE ARE HORRIFIC REMINDERS OF HOW MUCH MORE WE NEED TO DO.

AND THEY ARE REPRESENTATIONS OF THE DAILY EXPERIENCES OF MANY IN AMERICAN SOCIETY.

TOO MANY PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITIES ARE MARGINALIZED AND DEVALUED BECAUSE OF WHO THEY ARE.

I'M COMMITTED TO CONTINUING THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN'S DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION INITIATIVE FOR YEARS TO COME, BEYOND THE FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN.

IT MUST CONTINUE AND WE MUST PERSIST WITH URGENCY.

THE EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC HAVE REDUCED OUR ENROLLMENT OF UNDERREPRESENTED MINORITIES.

WE MUST CONTINUE TO MOVE OUR CAMPUS AND OUR WORK FORWARD ALONG WITH SOCIETY.

AND BUILD ON THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS YOU HAVE INSPIRED, CREATED AND ENACTED.

YOUR ADVOCACY AND COMMITMENT ARE HELPING TO US CREATE A SET OF NEW CAMPUS ANTI-RACISM INITIATIVES WHICH PROVOST COLLINS WILL DISCUSS SHORTLY.

AMONG THESE WE HAVE CREATED A NEW SCHOLARSHIP IN HONOR OF GEORGE PLOYED AFTER U-M ALUMNUS MARCHELL WILLIAN REACHED OUT TO US INSPIRED BY A CHALLENGE FROM NORTH CENTRAL UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT SCOTT HAGEN.

THIS NEED BASED SCHOLARSHIP WILL GIVE PREFERENCE TO STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE WOLVERINE PATHWAYS, OUR COLLEGE READINESS PROGRAM THAT SERVES STUDENTS FROM DETROIT, SOUTHFIELD, AND YPSILANTI COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND WHO HAVE DEMONSTRATED A COMMITMENT TO BETTERING THEIR COMMUNITIES.

I KNOW THAT MANY IN OUR COMMUNITY HAVE ALREADY MADE DONATIONS TO SUPPORT THIS SCHOLARSHIP. I ENCOURAGE YOU TO CONTINUE TO CONSIDER MAKING A DONATION TO THIS WORTHY EFFORT. TO DO SO YOU CAN VISIT DIVERSITY.UMICH.EDU.

YOUR RECOGNITION OF OUR NEED TO PROMOTE ACADEMIC SUCCESS HAS LED TO THE DOUBLE-DIGIT GROWTH OF OUR SUCCESS CONNECTS HOLISTICS SUPPORT PROGRAM. IT IS OPEN TO ALL STUDENTS AND INCLUDES OUR FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS, FROM LOW SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS AND UNDERREPRESENTED MINORITY STUDENTS.

AND LAST FALL MORE THAN 1600 STUDENTS FROM LOW INCOME FAMILIES RECEIVED A TOTAL OF \$19 MILLION DOLLARS -- INSTITUTIONAL AND FEDERAL SUPPORT TO COVER THE ENTIRE COST OF TUITION AND FEES THROUGH OUR GO BLUE GUARANTEE.

THERE IS ONE MORE OPPORTUNITY TO EFFECT CHANGE AND HELP DETERMINE THE FUTURE WE ALL WANT TO SEE.

IT TAKES PLACE A WEEK FROM

TOMORROW ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3rd, REGARDLESS OF YOUR POLITICAL AFFILIATION OR IDEOLOGY, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD.

PLEASE REGISTER AND VOTE ON OR BEFORE ELECTION DAY. IF YOU'RE NOT A U.S. CITIZEN, YOU CAN BECOME ENGAGED AND HELP YOUR PEERS BETTER UNDERSTAND ISSUES.

THOSE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE CAN REGISTER OR TURN IN YOUR ABSENTEE BALLOT RIGHT HERE ON CAMPUS AT THE MUSEUM OF ART ON STATE STREET.

AND WHILE THE CITY CLERK SATELLITE OFFICE IN UMMA IS A LITERAL REPRESENTATION OF THE INTERSECTION OF DEMOCRACY AND THE ARTS, TODAY'S COMMUNITY ASSEMBLY ALLOWS US TO EXPLORE THE IDEA IN A DIFFERENT WAY.

THE ARTS ARE A POWERFUL VEHICLE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE AND WE SEE IN THEM THE POWER OF OUR UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY.

I APPLAUD ALL IN OUR COMMUNITY WHO HAVE EXPRESSED AND ADVANCED OUR COMMITMENT TO JUSTICE AND PEACE THROUGH THE ARTS, GIVEN VOICE TO MARGINALIZED INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES AND BROUGHT US TOGETHER TO CONFRONT OUR MOST PRESSING ISSUES.

THIS INCLUDES THE FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENTS OF THE U-M ARTS INITIATIVE AND OTHER PARTNERS IN THE SUMMIT AS WELL.

EARLIER THIS YEAR OUR COUNTRY LOST ONE OF ITS GREAT ELECTED LEADERS AND NATIONAL HEROES, CONGRESSMAN JOHN LEWIS.

AS A 25-YEAR-OLD HE LED HUNDREDS OF NON-VIOLENT PROTESTORS ACROSS THE EDMUND PETTUS BRIDGE TO CALL FOR VOTING RIGHTS IN THE STATE.

POLICE BEAT HIM AND FRACTURED HIS SKULL.

I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY AND HONOR TO MEET AND SPEND TIME WITH HIM EIGHT YEARS AGO WHEN HE CAME TO BROWN UNIVERSITY TO RECEIVE AN HONORARY DOCTORATE AND AGAIN IN 2017 WHEN HE SPOKE AT HILL AUDITORIUM INVITED AS PART OF THE STAMP SCHOOL DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS SERIES.

I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER HIS WORDS -- WHEN WE SEE SOMETHING THAT IS NOT RIGHT, THAT IS NOT FAIR OR JUST, HE SAID, WE HAVE A MISSION, A MANDATE AND A MORAL OBLIGATION TO STAND UP AND SPEAK OUT.

AND FIND A WAY TO GET IN THE WAY.

I WANT TO THANK ALL OF YOU FOR ENSURING THAT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN'S MISSION REMAINS INSEPARABLE FROM DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION.

AND FOR REINFORCING THROUGH YOUR ACTIONS ADVOCACY, PROTEST AND PERSISTENCE THAT WE ALL HAVE A MORAL OBLIGATION TO LIVE UP TO OUR VALUES AS A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY. THANK YOU.

IT IS NOW MY PLEASURE TO INTRODUCE THE UNIVERSITY PROVOST SUSAN COLLINS, PROVOST COLLINS?

SUSAN COLLINS:

THANK YOU VERY MUCH, MARK. GOOD MORNING, EVERYONE.

I'M DELIGHTED TO BE WITH ALL OF YOU HERE TODAY. AND I WELCOME THIS OPPORTUNITY FOR US TOGETHER TO EXPLORE THE MANY WAYS THAT THE ARTS CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIAL CHANGE.

THIS SUMMIT IS AN IMPORTANT ANNUAL OCCASION FOR OUR COMMUNITY. IT PROMPTS US TO ASSESS THE PROGRESS WE HAVE MADE TOWARDS OUR DIVERSITY GOALS, TO MARK THAT PROGRESS AND TO IDENTIFY AREAS THAT NEED FOCUSED ATTENTION.

THE SUMMIT ALSO PROVIDES US WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO CONSIDER NEW IDEAS AND TO LEARN FROM ONE ANOTHER ABOUT HOW WE CAN CONTRIBUTE TO ANTI-RACISM WORK.

WHEN DIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLANNING BEGAN IN 2016, WE RECOGNIZED THAT OUR WORK IS MOST EFFECTIVE WHEN IT BUILDS ON THE STRENGTH AND UNIQUENESS OF OUR MANY SCHOOLS, PROGRAMS, OFFICES, AND DEPARTMENTS AND WHEN IT LEVERAGES THEIR EXCELLENCE TO PROMOTE INSTITUTION-WIDE CHANGE.

THIS COMBINATION OF LOCAL AND CAMPUS-WIDE WORK HAS MOVED US FORWARD IN IMPORTANT WAYS.

NOW WE'RE LAUNCHING A SET OF ANTI-RACISM INITIATIVES THAT WILL CONTINUE AND ENHANCE OUR ABILITY TO ADDRESS STRUCTURAL INEQUITIES AND SYSTEMIC RACISM BOTH ON CAMPUS AND IN OUR SOCIETY.

THESE INCLUDE A NUMBER OF ITEMS BUT TO HIGHLIGHT, AS PRESIDENT SCHLISSEL MENTIONED, WE ARE ESTABLISHING A GEORGE FLOYD MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP FUND TO PROVIDE NEED-BASED SCHOLARSHIPS TO STUDENTS WITH A DEMONSTRATED COMMITMENT TO BETTERING THEIR COMMUNITY THROUGH SOCIAL JUSTICE.

WE WILL HIRE AT LEAST 20 NEW FULL-TIME FACULTY MEMBERS WITH SCHOLARLY EXPERTISE IN RACIAL INEQUALITY AND STRUCTURAL RACISM IN THE NEXT THREE YEARS.

WE ARE ALSO EXPANDING RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT THE SCHOLARS WORKING IN THE AREAS OF ANTI-RACISM AND THIS INCLUDES THE RECENT AWARDING OF OVER \$260,000 TO SIX ACTION-BASED RESEARCH PROJECTS AS PART OF THE INAUGURAL CONFRONTING AND COMBATING RACISM GRANT PROGRAM.

WE ARE CREATING A TASKFORCE ON POLICING AND PUBLIC SAFETY FOR THE CAMPUS AND THERE WILL BE AN ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT THE PROCESS FOR NOMINATIONS AND SELF-NOMINATIONS IN THE RECORD TOMORROW MORNING.

WE ARE RE-EVALUATING RACE AND ETHNICITY CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS ACROSS ALL OF OUR 19 SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES.

WE'RE STRENGTHENING FACULTY AND STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, PROGRAMS AND OPPORTUNITIES RELATED TO ANTI-RACISM.

WE ARE ALSO CREATING A TASKFORCE TO DEVELOP A COMMUNITY ENGAGED PROCESS FOR DIVERSIFYING THE NAMES THAT WE CONSIDER FOR CAMPUS SPACES, FACILITIES AND STREETS.

AND WE'RE INCORPORATING WAYS TO ADDRESS STRUCTURAL RACISM IN THE UNIVERSITY'S DEMOCRACY AND DEBATE THEME SEMESTER.

THESE INITIATIVES ARE KEY TO MAKING OUR CAMPUS A COMMUNITY IN WHICH EACH OF US IS VALUED AND WHERE EVERYONE CAN THRIVE.

THEY WILL ALSO MAKE IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO BUILDING AN ANTI-RACIST SOCIETY MORE BROADLY.

IT'S MY GREAT PLEASURE AGAIN TO THANK ALL OF YOU FOR JOINING US TODAY AND I REALLY LOOK FORWARD TO OUR CONTINUING WORK TOGETHER IN THE THESE AND SO MANY OTHER AREAS.

NOW, IT IS MY PLEASURE TO INTRODUCE KATRINA WADE-GOLDEN, A MICHIGAN ALUM WHO RECEIVED HER PH.D. AT WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY, DR. WADE-GOLDEN IS OUR DEPUTY CHIEF DIVERSITY OFFICER AS WELL AS DIRECTOR OF IMPLEMENTATION FOR CAMPUS WIDE DIVERSITY EQUITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGIC PLAN.

KATRINA, ON TO YOU.

KATRINA:

GOOD MORNING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN COMMUNITY AND THANK YOU ROB SELLERS, PRESIDENT SCHLISSEL, AND PROVOST COLLINS FOR YOUR OPENING REMARKS.

IT IS NOW MY DISTINCT PLEASURE TODAY TO INTRODUCE OUR FIRST GUEST SPEAKER JOHANNA KEPLER, WHO IS A RECENT GRADUATE OF OUR VERY OWN SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE AND DANCE WHERE SHE MAJORED IN MUSIC -- I'M SORRY, IN DANCE.

WELCOME, JOHANNA.

JOHANNA:

HI THANK YOU SO MUCH.

THE POWER OF A SINGLE STORY HAS ALWAYS FASCINATED ME. EMPOWERED ME AND INSPIRED ME TO CREATE THE ART THAT I MAKE EVERY DAY.

WE ALL HAVE A STORY. THE INTERSECTIONALITY IN OUR IDENTITY, WHERE THE THREADS OF OUR UNIQUE EXPERIENCES MEET TO WEAVE THE FABRIC OF OUR LIVES.

IN THINKING ABOUT IDENTITY, I HAVE ALWAYS ASKED MYSELF -- HOW CAN WE BE OUR MOST AUTHENTIC SELF?

CAN OUR SINGULAR PRESENCE IN A GIVEN ROOM BE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO DECONSTRUCT SYSTEMS OF OPPRESSION THAT ARE DEEPLY ROOTED IN THE U.S. JUST BECAUSE WE SHOW UP?

MY NAME IS JOHANNA KEPLER, AND I JUST GRADUATED FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN WITH A BFA IN DANCE PERFORMANCE AND A MINOR IN LATINO STUDIES.

I AM AN INDIGINOUS MAYA GUATEMALAN JEWISH IMMIGRANT. DURING MY FOUR YEARS AT MICHIGAN, I BECAME DEEPLY PASSIONATE ABOUT FIGURING OUT WAYS TO CONNECT MY PASSION FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, SPECIFICALLY DANCE, WITH MY SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY WORK, SPECIFICALLY RACIAL JUSTICE AND IMMIGRATION REFORM.

THAT PASSION STEMMED FROM MY OWN IDENTITY AS A WOMAN OF COLOR ADOPTED INTO AN UNCONVENTIONAL HOUSEHOLD.

I WAS ADOPTED FROM GUATEMALA WHEN I WAS A BABY BY TWO WHITE LESBIAN MOTHERS RAISED IN A HALF JEWISH HOUSEHOLD. I ALSO HAVE A LITTLE SISTER ADOPTED FROM GUATEMALA AS WELL.

I GREW UP IN A WHITE UPPER CLASS NEIGHBORHOOD WHERE THE PEOPLE I SAW ON A DAY TO DAY BASIS DID NOT LOOK LIKE ME.

I HAD TO LEARN TO BE PROUD OF MY HERITAGE, WHAT IT MEANT TO BE LATINA AND GRAPPLE WITH BEING RAISED WITH PRIVILEGES THAT I WAS NOT BORN INTO. MY BIRTH MOTHER SIGNED MY BIRTH CERTIFICATE WITH HER FINGERPRINT BECAUSE SHE COULD NOT READ OR WRITE HER OWN NAME.

THE ONE THING SHE WISHED FOR ME WAS A GOOD EDUCATION. HER STORY DRIVES ME FORWARD EVERYDAY.

MY SOPHOMORE YEAR AT SCHOOL I CHOREOGRAPHED AND DIRECTED A PIECE CALLED "THROUGH OUR EYES" THAT WAS IN RESPONSE TO THE OUTWARD PHYSICAL RACIST ATTACKS ON STUDENTS OF COLOR SPRINGING UP SHORTLY AFTER THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION ON OUR CAMPUS.

I KNEW WHAT IT FELT LIKE TO BE A PERSON OF COLOR ON A PREDOMINANTLY WHITE CAMPUS, BUT I ALSO KNEW THERE WAS NOT ONE NARRATIVE THAT DEFINED EVERY PERSON OF COLOR ON CAMPUS.

I RECOGNIZE THAT I DO NOT KNOW WHAT IT IS TO BE A YOUNG BLACK MALE AND HAVE THE N WORD WRITTEN ON MY NAME TAG IN WEST QUAD.

I DO NOT KNOW A MUSLIM WOMAN AND HAVE MY HIJAB RIPPED OFF WHILE WALKING BACK TO MY DORM IN BROAD DAYLIGHT. BUT I ALSO KNEW THAT MANY OF MY WHITE CLASSMATES WERE NOT AFFECTED BY THIS NEWS IN THE SAME WAY THAT STUDENTS OF COLOR WERE ACROSS CAMPUS.

I SAW MANY WHITE STUDENTS WERE COMPLACENT WHEN IT CAME TO THESE CONVERSATIONS.

I WANTED TO WAKE UP THE CAMPUS AND HAVE THE RACIST ATTACKS NOT BE SEEN AS ISOLATED INCIDENTS, BUT A WINDOW INTO WHAT THE STUDENTS OF COLOR FACED EVERYDAY.

WHETHER IT BE PHYSICAL ATTACKS, MICROAGGRESSIONS OR THE FACT THAT UNLESS WE TOOK SPECIFIED CLASSES WE DID NOT LEARN FROM OR LEARN ABOUT PEOPLE THAT LOOKED LIKE US IN OUR TEXTBOOKS.

I DECIDED TO USE THE MOST POWERFUL TOOL I HAVE TO CREATE HUMAN CONNECTION AND EMPATHY, THE ART OF DANCE.

I DECIDED TO PUT ON STAGE WHAT WORDS HAD FAILED TO EXPRESS, SOMETHING THAT TOUCHES PEOPLE AT THEIR CORE.

"THROUGH OUR EYES" INCLUDED MYSELF AND SEVEN OTHER DANCERS OF COLOR IN THE DANCE DEPARTMENT AND TWO VOCAL PERFORMANCE MAJORS OF COLOR.

TOGETHER IN COLLABORATION WE CREATED A PIECE HIGHLIGHTING WHAT STUDENTS OF COLOR GO THROUGH ON A DAY TO DAY BASIS THROUGH RECORDED AUDIO, SONG AND DANCE.

FOR THE SOUND SCORE I INTERVIEWED 15 STUDENTS OF COLOR ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES ON U-M CAMPUS, INCLUDING A FEW OF THE MOST RECENT VICTIMS OF THE OUTWARD RACIST ASSAULTS THAT TOOK PLACE WEEKS EARLIER ON OUR CAMPUS.

IN BETWEEN THE RECORDED INTERVIEW TESTIMONIALS FROM STUDENTS TWO VOCAL PERFORMANCE MAJORS SANG THE MAYA ANGELOU POEM -- STILL I RISE -- I DIRECTED THE PIECE AND TOGETHER WE CREATED THE MOVEMENT THAT SPOKE TO THE WORDS OF EACH INTERVIEW AND THE MELODY OF THE VOCALS.

WE WERE THEN SELECTED TO PERFORM THE PIECE AT THE ANNUAL SMTD COLLAGE EVENT AT HILL AUDITORIUM.

WE PERFORMED THE PIECE FOR 3500 ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY WHITE STUDENTS, ALUMNI, FACULTY AND STAFF.

WHEN WE FINISHED WE GOT A STANDING OVATION.

FOR THE FIRST TIME MY CAST AND I FELT WE HAD BEEN HEARD.

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE, MULTIPLE WHITE STUDENTS CAME UP TO US TELLING US THEY THAT "HAD NO IDEA WHAT WE WERE GOING THROUGH" AND THANKED US FOR SHARING OUR TRUTHS ON STAGE.

EVERYDAY I AM REMINDED THAT PEOPLE THAT LOOK LIKE ME AND SHARE MY BLOODLINE DO NOT HAVE THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES THAT I HAVE BEEN GIVEN MY WHOLE LIFE.

WHEN I TURN ON THE NEWS AND SEE THE MIGRANT CHILDREN IN CAGES, I AM NOT UPSET I AM ENRAGED. BECAUSE THOSE CHILDREN ARE MY PEOPLE. SAME WIDE BROWN MAYAN EYES. SAME NOSES, SAME DARK RAVEN HAIR.

I STARE BACK INTO A MIRROR OF MYSELF.

HOW CAN I TURN AWAY? BUT NOT EVERYONE FEELS THAT WAY.

IT IS EASY TO READ A NEWSPAPER ABOUT HORRIBLE THINGS HAPPENING IN OUR WORLD AND NOT HAVE THAT GUT WRENCHING REACTION.

WE ARE NUMB, WE HAVE TO TO SURVIVE.

BUT WHAT IF YOU PUT THAT TOPIC ABOUT AN INK ON STAGE?

WHAT IF THE WORDS ON THE NEWSPAPER PAGE WERE A SONG. WHAT IF THEY JUMPED OFF THE PAGE AND DANCED FOR YOU, CRIED FOR YOU, SCREAMED FOR YOU.

COULD YOU IGNORE IT?

SOMEONE ONCE TOLD ME IF YOU CANNOT SAY IT, WRITE IT.

IF YOU CAN NOT WRITE IT SING IT.

IF YOU CAN NOT SING IT, DANCE IT.

ANOTHER PROJECT DURING MY TIME AT MICHIGAN STEMMED FROM MY IMMIGRATION LAW CLASS SENIOR YEAR.

I BECAME FASCINATED WITH ASYLUM LAW.

ALL OF THE HISTORY AND STORIES OF WAVES OF IMMIGRATION OF PEOPLE COMING TO THE U.S., THE PERSONAL NARRATIVES WRITTEN UP IN ASYLUM CREDIBLE FEAR CASES, THAT FUELED MY PASSION FOR THE POWER OF THE PERSONAL NARRATIVE EVEN MORE.

I DECIDED TO CREATE A SOLO ENTITLED "THROUGH THE EYES OF MY PEOPLE" ABOUT THE CURRENT U.S.-MEXICO BORDER CRISIS.

I KNOW THAT MY BODY ALONE ON STAGE MAKES A STATEMENT.

THE AUDIENCE SEE A WOMAN OF COLOR AND AUTOMATICALLY MAKES ASSUMPTIONS WITHOUT REALIZING IT.

WHAT IS SHE? MEXICAN? INDIAN?

I WONDER IF SHE SPEAKS ENGLISH. IT IS A NATURAL HUMAN REACTION.

I BELIEVE THAT THERE IS SO MUCH POWER IN THE BODY AND IN MOVEMENT.

WITHOUT SAYING A WORD I KNOW MY BODY ALONE MAKE AS STATEMENT IN SPACE.

NOW WE WILL SEE A SHORT CLIP FROM THE PIECE THAT I JUST REFERENCED.

♪

I AM 36 FROM HONDURAS.

I WATCHED AS MY HUSBAND WAS SHOT IN FRONT OF THE CAPITAL.

I THEN RECEIVED A DEATH THREATS.

I HAVE NO POLICE REPORT.

WHEN YOU ARE POOR THEY DO NOT INVESTIGATE AND IT REMAINS UNPUNISHED.

THAT IS WHY I LEFT.

I AM 33 FROM HONDURAS. A SINGLE MOTHER WITH FIVE DAUGHTERS.

I BEGAN THE JOURNEY WITH MY BROTHER AND THREE OF HIS CHILDREN.

NOW I ONLY HAVE TWO OF MY GIRLS WITH ME.

IN THE CHAOS ALONG THE WAY WE BECAME SEPARATED.

MY BROTHER IS SOMEWHERE WITH ONE OF MY DAUGHTERS.

I HAVE MY DAUGHTER, 5 AND SOPHIA, 1.

I DON'T KNOW IF THEY ARE AHEAD ME OR BEHIND ME.

I PRAY FOR THEM.

♪

FOR THE SOLO I STARTED BY CREATING A SCORE OF 15 INTERVIEWS FROM CREDIBLE FEAR ASYLUM CASES OF MIGRANTS TRAVELING TO THE U.S. FROM CENTRAL AMERICA, TAKEN FROM VARIOUS NEWS SOURCES.

EACH WAS ABOUT 30 SECONDS TO A MINUTE LONG.

I THEN HAD READ AND RECORDED BY A U-M LATINX STUDENT TO GET A FEEL OF THE DIFFERENT VOICES.

THE MOVEMENT WAS CREATED NOT BY ACTING OUT THE STORY BUT THEY MADE ME FEEL INSIDE WHEN I LISTENED TO EACH ONE.

THE BODY CANNOT LIE.

WHEN ONE IS FEARFUL THEY SHRINK. SHOULDERS RAISED UP TO THE EARS, TAILBONE IN TOWARD THE SPINE.

SAD, SHOULDERS SLOUCH AND THE BODY BECOMES WEIGHTED.

I LET MY BODY EXPRESS WHAT IT FELT AND IN DOING SO THE AUDIENCE SAW MY AUTHENTIC SELF.

THE SOLO WAS SELECTED TO REPRESENT U-M AT THE AMERICAN COLLEGE DANCE FESTIVAL REGIONAL EASTERN CONFERENCE.

AFTER PERFORMING MANY STUDENTS FROM THE UNIVERSITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY CAME UP TO ME WITH TEARS IN THEIR EYES ADMITTING THEY HAD NEVER FELT THE STORIES OR THE CRISIS AT THE BORDER THE WAY I EXPRESSED TO THEM ON STAGE.

THEY WERE READY TO JOIN THE FIGHT.

AFTER MY FOUR YEARS AT MICHIGAN BEGAN TO COME TOO CLOSE I REALIZED IT WAS NOT JUST ABOUT THE STORIES I WAS DRAWN TO BUT CREATING THE SPACES FOR THOSE TO BE SHARED.

I HAVE LEARNED HOW TO BUILD THEM FOR OTHER CREATIVES TO SHARE THEIR OWN STORIES AND NARRATIVES IN THE MOST AUTHENTIC WAY POSSIBLE, THROUGH THEIR ART.

I HAD ALSO LEARNED HOW TO BE A PLATFORM FOR MARGINALIZED PEOPLE OF COLOR TO RECLAIM THEIR OWN NARRATIVES, RAISE AWARENESS ON RACIAL ISSUES AND GIVE THOSE WITHOUT A VOICE A PLATFORM TO BE HEARD.

AFTER GRADUATING I WANTED TO ELEVATE PEOPLE OF COLOR AND THE POWER OF THE PERSONAL NARRATIVES.

I FOUND A SERIES PROJECT CALLED THE POWER OF THE PERFORMING ARTS UNITING ARTISTS WHILE APART.

THIS INTERVIEW SERIES PROJECT AIMS TO RAISE AWARENESS HOW THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IS AFFECTING PERFORMING ARTISTS IN OUR COMMUNITIES AS WELL AS CONTINUE TO SHARE THE STORY OF THE ARTISTS DURING A TIME OF SOCIAL DISTANCE.

I HAVE INTERVIEWED OVER 200 ARTISTS WORLD WIDE AND WITH THE HELP OF OTHER U-M STUDENTS CREATED A WEBSITE PLATFORM IN WHICH WE MOST EACH ARTIST INTERVIEW.

WE ARE WORKING ON TRANSLATING THE WEB SITE INTO SPANISH TO REACH A LARGER DEMOGRAPHIC OF PEOPLE WHO ARE OFTEN NOT INCLUDED IN THE CONVERSATIONS DUE TO LANGUAGE BARRIERS.

FAST FORWARD TO NOW, I JUST MOVED TO NEW YORK CITY, YES, DURING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC.

EVERY MORNING I WAKE UP AND WALK TWO BLOCKS TO MY LEFT FOR COFFEE.

EVERY MORNING ON THE WAY I PASS THE GUATEMALAN CONSUL. A TALL DARK CEMENT BUILDING WITH A LINE OF AT LEAST 100 GUATEMALANS OUTSIDE OF IT AT ALL TIMES.

I SEE THEIR EYES TO SHIFT TO LOOK AT ME ABOVE THEIR MASKS AS I PASS BY WAITING FOR IMMIGRATION STATUS AND WORK VISAS.

I THINK TO MYSELF, THAT COULD HAVE BEEN ME.

EVEN THOUGH I DO NOT KNOW THEM OR THEIR STORIES, THEIR STORIES DRIVE ME FORWARD EVERY DAY.

I WONDER EACH MORNING IF ANYONE IS AN ARTIST DO THEY USE THEIR ART TO EXPRESS THEIR TRUTH?

MY IDENTITY CONTINUES TO INFLUENCE THE WAY I SEE THE WORLD AROUND ME.

I WANT TO CONTINUE TO DEDICATE MY LIFE TO MAKING SPACES WHICH PEOPLE OF COLOR CAN REPRESENT THEMSELVES IN THE MOST AUTHENTIC WAY POSSIBLE.

WITH MORE EMPATHY BUILDING THROUGH ART I BELIEVE WE CAN MAKE POSITIVE TANGIBLE CHANGE TOWARD AS MORE EQUITABLE WORLD WE WANT TO LIVE IN.

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING TO MY STORY TODAY.

KATRINA:

THANK YOU SO MUCH JOHANNA FOR THAT VERY POWERFUL CONTRIBUTION.

OUR NEXT SPEAKER IS COLLEEN MEDICINE WHO IS THE DIRECTOR OF LANGUAGE AND CULTURE OF THE SAULT SAINT MARIE TRIBE OF CHIPPEWA INDIANS AND A MEMBER OF THE ANISHINAABE THEATER EXCHANGE.

COLLEEN:

WELCOME. AANIIN/BOOZHOU, WHAABSHKAA

ASINEKWE NDIIZHNIKAAZ, SAGINAW NDOONJIBAA, BAHWETING NDIDAA, DEH ENJIBAAMKAK MACKINAC MNISING MISHIIKENH NDODEM, OJIBWE, ANISHINAABE KEW NDAW.

MII/GWECH/WEN/DAM MAANDA E/NA/KI'IING NAN/GWA.

HELLO-MY ENGLISH NAME IS COLLEEN MEDICINE, MY SPIRIT NAME IS WHITE ROCK WOMAN, MY HEART FIRST SOUNDED IN SAGINAW, MICHIGAN BUT NOW I LIVE IN SAULT STE. MARIE (BAHWETING) AND MY HEART, MY RELATIVES, MY FAMILY COMES FROM MACKINAC ISLAND, MICHIGAN.

I AM TURTLE CLAN AND A CITIZEN OF THE SAULT STE. MARIE TRIBE OF CHIPPEWA INDIANS. I GIVE THANKS FOR WHAT WE ARE DOING HERE TODAY.

I'VE BEEN TOLD TO ALWAYS INTRODUCE MYSELF IN OUR BEAUTIFUL LANGUAGE SO AS TO ALERT SPIRIT TO COME AND LISTEN.

I AM SO HONORED AND HUMBLLED TO BE ASKED TO TAKE PART IN THE 2020 DEI SUMMIT. I AM THANKFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE SOME ANISHINAABE HISTORY AND SOME OF THE EFFORTS TAKING PLACE IN AND AROUND OUR COMMUNITIES.

THIS IS VERY APPROPRIATE TO ME BECAUSE THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN IS ON LANDS THAT ARE PART OF THE TRADITIONAL HOMELANDS OF THE ANISHINAABE.

GAA MAAMPII DAA GI YAA ZI NAA BAA

I SHOULDN'T BE HERE. LET ME EXPLAIN.

AS A WOMAN, AND AS A NATIVE WOMAN. AS AN OJIBWE AND AS AN ANISHINAABE WOMAN, I SHOULDN'T BE HERE.

THE AREA THAT MY PEOPLE COME FROM HAS HAD OVER 500 YEARS OF CONTACT. AND IN ADDITION TO THAT THERE WERE SEVERAL FEDERAL INDIAN POLICIES THAT WERE MEANT TO STAMP OUT AND ERADICATE NATIVE AMERICAN PEOPLE, INCLUDING THE ANISHINAABE HERE IN MICHIGAN.

SOME OF THESE POLICIES INCLUDE REMOVAL, ASSIMILATION, RELOCATION, AND ALLOTMENT. AS A RESULT OF THESE POLICIES, MY ANCESTORS EXPERIENCED ATROCITIES AND INDIGNITIES, THAT HAVE PLAYED OUT OVER TIME WITHIN OUR COMMUNITIES AS LOSS OF LANGUAGE, CULTURE, AND IDENTITY.

OVER TIME, WE HAVE MADE GREAT EFFORTS THOUGH TO GO BACK AND SEARCH OUT SOME OF THE THINGS THAT WERE LOST, TAKEN, AND STOLEN WITHOUT CONSENT.

IN MY WORK AS THE DIRECTOR OF LANGUAGE & CULTURE FOR THE SAULT STE. MARIE TRIBE OF CHIPPEWA INDIANS, I FACILITATE THE REPATRIATION OF OUR ANCESTORS, SACRED OBJECTS, AND OBJECTS OF CULTURAL PATRIMONY WHICH WERE REMOVED FROM OUR HOMELANDS WITHOUT CONSENT AND ARE NOW SITTING IN MUSEUMS, UNIVERSITIES, INSTITUTIONS, AND IN SOME CASES WITHIN PRIVATE COLLECTIONS.

I ASSIST WITH THE REBURIAL CEREMONY OF MY ANCESTORS AND THOSE OBJECTS AN APPROPRIATE AND RESPECTFUL REBURIAL CEREMONY.

MY DEPARTMENT WORKS HARD TO DELIVER ANISHINAABEMOWIN LANGUAGE OPPORTUNITIES, PROTECT SACRED SITES, AND TO PROVIDE MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN TEACHINGS, CULTURE, AND CEREMONIES.

WE ALSO WORK ON REMATRIATION OF SEEDS, FOOD SOVEREIGNTY, AND BRINGING BACK TRADITIONAL CRAFTING, ART, AND KNOWLEDGE.

RECLAIMING IDENTITY IS HEAVILY ROOTED IN ARTISTIC EXPRESSION OF CULTURE. THIS CAN BE SEEN AT PUBLIC GATHERINGS-YOU MAY BE MORE FAMILIAR WITH THE TERM "POWWOW."

AS THERE ARE 12 FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED TRIBES IN THE STATE OF MICHIGAN WHERE YOU MAY HAVE ATTENDED OR HEARD OF POWWOW GATHERINGS IN TRIBAL COMMUNITIES.

OUR COMMUNITIES ARE ALSO SPEAKING OUT IN EFFORTS TO PROTECT PRECIOUS ECOLOGICAL RESOURCES SUCH AS THE GREAT LAKES AND BRINGING BACK TRADITIONAL CLOTHING AND WEAR.

AND MANY OF OUR OLD WAYS ARE COMING BACK AND OUR YOUNG PEOPLE ARE PICKING UP THE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE THAT WAS LEFT TO US BY OUR ANCESTORS.

IN ADDITION TO THE WORK THAT I DO WITHIN THE LANGUAGE & CULTURE DEPARTMENT, I'VE ALSO BEEN ABLE TO RECLAIM IDENTITY THROUGH MY PARTICIPATION IN THE ANISHINAABE THEATRE EXCHANGE (ATE).

THE THEATRE EXCHANGE WAS FOUNDED BY DR. ANITA GONZALEZ, ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR FACULTY AFFAIRS, AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, ALONG WITH A GROUP OF STUDENTS FROM THE UNIVERSITY AND SOME ANISHINAABE COMMUNITY MEMBERS FROM TRIBAL COMMUNITIES IN THE UPPER PENINSULA!

THE THEATRE EXCHANGE USES THEATRE AS THE MAIN VEHICLE OF DELIVERY TO BRING AWARENESS AND EDUCATION TO IMPORTANT ISSUES THAT AFFECT TRIBAL COMMUNITIES.

SOME OF THESE ISSUES INCLUDE TRAUMA, LOSS, MISSING GIRLS, SEXUAL ASSAULT, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, AND MANY OTHER ISSUES.

BUT THE COMMON THEME CENTERS ON LOSS OF CULTURE AND IDENTITY.

THE ATE HAS PERFORMED A HANDFUL OF PLAYS INCLUDING- "SLIVER OF A FULL MOON BY MARY KATHRYN NAGLE. THIS IS A POWER PIECE ABOUT THE REAUTHORIZATION OF VAWA, THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN'S ACT.

"FRYBREAD QUEEN BY DR. CAROLYN DUNN. THIS PIECE IS ABOUT LOSS AS TOLD THROUGH THREE GENERATIONS OF REALLY POWERFUL WOMEN.

WE'VE PERFORMED "50 CENTS A POUND BY REBECCA PODLESKI AND IS ABOUT THE STRUGGLE TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE FISHING AND TREATY RIGHTS WITHIN LOCAL ANISHINAABE COMMUNITIES.

"THREE SISTERS BY CAROLYN DUNN

REGARDING THREE ESTRANGED SISTERS WHO RETURN TO THE HOMELANDS TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THEIR AUNTS FINAL JOURNEY.

THIS WAS MOST RECENTLY PERFORMED IN 2019 AT UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN AS PART OF A THEATRE RESIDENCY THAT THE EXCHANGE DID WITH THE CENTER FOR WORLD PERFORMANCE.

NOW I'D LIKE TO SHARE A FEW PHOTOS FROM THESE PERFORMANCES

SO WHAT I FEEL WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT IS YOU WILL SEE THE CLOTHING HERE AND THE INDIVIDUALS PART OF THE EXCHANGE ARE WEARING THE THROWING ON STAGE TO REPRESENT THEMSELVES AND THEIR IDENTITIES.

CAN YOU SEE A LOT OF THAT THROUGH THE PETITIONS.

THE EXCHANGE HAS A LOT OF ANISHINAABE PEOPLE AND A LOT OF NATIVE PEOPLE FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

HERE WE ARE AT REHEARSAL.

GREAT.

SO NOW I WOULD LIKE TO SHOW YOU A SMALL VIDEO CLIP THAT WAS PRODUCED BY THE CENTER FOR WORLD PERFORMANCE AND IT IS ABOUT THE THEATRE EXCHANGE.

♪

THE ANISHINAABE THEATRE EXCHANGE FORMED BECAUSE WE WERE IN THE UP OF MICHIGAN AND WE WERE TRYING TO FIND WAYS TO CONNECT PEOPLE TO STORYTELLING IN THE REGION.

I WAS THINKING IN THE BACK OF MY MIND ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ABOUT REALLY THAT PHENOMENON OF MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN IS REALLY JUST EXPLODING.

WHEN ARE YOU JUST TELLING A STORY LIKE SPEAKING IT IS NOT AS EXCITING YOU GET THE VISUAL AIDS, SO YOU CAN YOU EXPRESS ISSUES AND DO IT THROUGH STORYTELLING BUT DURING THEATRE SO IT ALLOWS FOR THAT CONNECTION WITH THE AUDIENCE.

IT MEANS A LOT TO BE A WOMAN LIKE AND EXPRESS MY IDENTITY AS A NATIVE WOMAN ON STAGE AND BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY.

SOMETIMES WE'RE NOT.

STATISTICALLY SPEAKING, WE SHOULD NOT BE HERE.

WE SHOULD NOT BE HERE.

AND THE FACT THAT WE GET TO BE ON STAGE AND MANUFACTURE WITH EACH AS NATIVE WOMEN AND EXPRESS THE ISSUES, THE IMPORTANT ISSUES THAT ARE NOT JUST AFFECTING INDIAN COUNTRY BUT INDIAN COUNTRY AT A MUCH HIGHER RATES.

♪

GREAT.

THAT'S SUCH A POWERFUL VIDEO.

AND I WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE BEAUTIFUL SONG THAT IS INSIDE THAT VIDEO IT IS CALLED MAANDA GIIZHIGAK AND PERFORMED BY THE SWAMP SINGERS AND WRITTEN BY FRANK BARTLY AND BY HOWARD KIMAWAN.

YOU MAY BE WONDERING WHAT IS NEXT FOR THE EXCHANGE.

I'M HAPPY TO ANNOUNCE WE HAVE AN EXCITING PROJECT COMING THAT UP WILL FOCUS ON THE STORY TELLING -- TELLING USING THE ANISHINAABEMOWIN LANGUAGE.

GAA MAAMPII DAA GI YAA ZI NAA BAA.
GAA MAAMPII DAA GI YAA ZI NAA BAA.

I SHOULDN'T BE HERE.

I SHOULDN'T BE HERE BECAUSE THERE WERE SEVERAL ACTS DONE TO ENSURE THAT NATIVE PEOPLE,

INCLUDING THE ANISHINAABE, WOULD NOT CONTINUE TO EXIST WELL INTO THE FUTURE.

BUT WE ARE HERE.

WE DON'T ALL LOOK ALIKE, SOUND ALIKE WE DON'T SHARE THE SAME CULTURE, LANGUAGE AND TRADITIONS.

BUT WE ARE STILL HERE.

STILL TRYING TO RETRACE THE STEPS OF OUR ANCESTORS.

IT IS AN HONOR TO WALK IN THE FOOT STEPS OF THE GETE ANISHINAABKE, THE ONE BEFORE ME AND PAVE THE WAY FOR GENERATIONS AFTER ME.

I WORK HARD TO RECLAIM THE LANGUAGE, IDENTITY AND CULTURE AND SHARE WITH OTHERS WHAT I KNOW.

I CONTINUE TO DO THIS THROUGH MY WORK AT THE SAULT TRIBE AND THE LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL DEPARTMENT AND MY PARTICIPATION WITH THE ANISHINAABE THEATRE EXCHANGE.

I WOULD LIKE TO LEAVE YOU WITH THIS.

GI/YA/BE GWA G'DAA'AAH MI. WE STILL REMAIN.

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING.

PLEASE ENJOY A CREATIVE CONTRIBUTION FROM THE U-M COMMUNITY.



KATRINA:

THANK YOU, COLLEEN.

FOLLOWING COLLEEN'S PRESENTATION YOU HEARD A JAZZ COMPOSITION CALLED AIN'T I A WOMAN BY ELLEN ROWE A FACULTY MEMBER IN THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE AND DANCE.

THE IMAGE WAS A COLLAGE OF THE ALL WOMAN BAND THAT RECORDED THIS PERFORMANCE.

NOW I WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME OUR NEXT SPEAKER BACK TO CAMPUS AS SHE IS AN ALUM OF U OF M.

COURTNEY COGBURN. SHE IS AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF SOCIAL WORK AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY.

WELCOME COURTNEY.

COURTNEY:

HELLO, EVERYONE. THANK YOU FOR HAVING ME I'M DELIGHTED TO BE HERE.

LET ME JUST SHARE MY SLIDES HERE

♪

YOU HAVE NOW BECOME MIKE STERLING.

LOOK AT YOURSELF IN THE MIRROR.

♪

I HAVE RECENTLY STARTED WORKING IN VIRTUAL REALITY THINKING ABOUT WAYS TO REPRESENT EXPERIENCES OF RACISM IN AN IMMERSIVE MANNER.

MOST OF MY CAREER I STUDIED THE LIVES OF BLACK FOLKS, NOT PEOPLE OF COLOR, NOT DIVERSITY, NOT IN COMPARISON TO WHITES, BUT THE LIVES OF BLACK PEOPLE AND THE WAYS IN WHICH THEY THRIVE IN SPITE OF.

WHEN I CREATED A THOUSAND CUT JOURNEY I MADE A CONSCIOUS DECISION TO SHIFT THAT FOCUS AND TO AT LEAST TEMPORARILY HOLD WHITENESS ACCOUNTABLE.

I'M NOT HERE TODAY TO CENTER BLACKNESS IN A DISCUSSION ABOUT RACISM AND ANTI-RACISM OR TO WEAVE BEAUTIFUL NARRATIVES OF BLACK STRUGGLE OR GIVE YOU ABSTRACTIONS OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION BUT AS WAS THE CASE WITH A THOUSAND CUT JOURNEY, I'M HERE TO HOLD WHITENESS ACCOUNTABLE.

WHEN I CREATED A THOUSAND CUT JOURNEY I MADE A CONSCIOUS DECISION TO TARGET A WHITE LIBERAL AUDIENCE.

THIS WAS A RESPONSE TO THE LIBERAL TENDENCY TO INTELLECTUALIZE AND PONTIFICATE ABOUT RACISM TO INVEST IN SYMBOLS OF EQUALITY WITHOUT REALLY SACRIFICING ANYTHING WITHOUT TRULY REPAIRING ANYTHING WITHOUT ACTUALLY INVESTING IN PATHWAYS TO DIFFERENT POSSIBILITIES.

WHEN I DO THIS AND I SAY THIS, PEOPLE OFTEN ASK ME, WELL AREN'T YOU PREACHING TO THE CHOIR?

AND MY RESPONSE IS, YES, THE CHOIR HAS A LOT OF WORK TO DO.

IN HIS LETTER TO WHITE AMERICA, DR. GEORGE YANCY STATES, I ASK YOU TO LOOK DEEP TO LOOK INTO YOUR SOULS WITH SILENCE, TO QUIET THAT VOICE THAT WILL SPEAK TO YOU OF YOUR WHITE INNOCENCE.

TAKE A DEEP BREATH, MAKE SPACE FOR MY VOICE IN THE DEEPEST PART OF YOUR PSYCHE, TRY TO LISTEN, TO PRACTICE BEING SILENT.

THERE ARE TWO ARGUMENTS THAT I FOLLOWED IN BUILDING AND CONDUCTING THIS WORK.

THE FIRST IS THAT WHITE PEOPLE DON'T UNDERSTAND RACISM.

THERE IS AN ASTERISK HERE SORT OF SPEAKING TO WAYS IN WHICH THERE IS RESISTANCE, ACTIVELY AVOIDING, ET CETERA.

AND FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO VALUE EMPIRICAL DATA MORE THAN GENERATIONS OF KNOWING THAT FLOWS THROUGH MY VEINS, YOU CAN SEE THE CITATIONS FOR THIS BELOW.

THE SECOND ARGUMENT I MAKE IS THAT WE MUST UNDERSTAND A PROBLEM IN ORDER TO SOLVE A PROBLEM.

AND SO THIS MISUNDERSTANDING OR LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OR RESISTANCE AMONG WHITE PEOPLE IS A POINT OF INTERVENTION FOR ME.

SO THAT'S THE WHY. HOW ABOUT THE WHAT?

IN TERMS OF A THOUSAND CUT JOURNEY A THOUSAND CUT JOURNEY PLACES YOU INTO THE DIGITAL SHOES OF A BLACK MALE CHARACTER NAMED MICHAEL STERLING.

AND FROM HIS PERSPECTIVE YOU EXPERIENCE RACISM ACROSS TIME AND CONTEXT.

AS A CHILD BEING UNFAIRLY DISCIPLINED IN A CLASSROOM, AS AN ADOLESCENT HEADING TO A BASKETBALL GAME AND BEING THREATENED BY THE POLICE, AS AN ADULT MADE TO FEEL INVISIBLE AND INSIGNIFICANT WHILE APPLYING FOR A JOB.

BUT AGAIN THIS IS NOT A STORY OF A BLACK MAN.

THIS IS A STORY OF WHITENESS.

SIDE NOTE -- REGARDING THE KNOWING IN MY VEINS -- IN ONE OF THE FIRST INTERVIEWS I GAVE ABOUT THIS WORK BEFORE THE PIECE WAS EVEN FINISHED.

THE JOURNALIST ASKED ME, SO THE CHARACTER'S NAME IS MICHAEL STERLING.

YOU COMBINED THE NAMES OF MIKE BROWN AND ALTON STERLING, CORRECT?

AND I ACTUALLY HAD TO CATCH MY BREATH BEFORE RESPONDING NO, IT WAS JUST A NAME THAT CAME TO ME.

AND HOW DO YOU TELL A STORY LIKE THIS?

WHEN ARE YOU THE MOTHER OF A YOUNG BLACK BOY.

WHEN THERE IS TRAUMA AND RESENTMENT IN TELLING THE STORY YET AGAIN IN ANOTHER WAY HOPING WHITE PEOPLE WILL UNDERSTAND?

I TOLD IT WITH HOPE AND IMAGINATION AND UNWILLINGNESS TO GIVE UP ON POSSIBILITY.

I TOLD THIS STORY WITH A SENSE OF URGENCY, AND I ALSO TOLD IT WITH A TEAM.

I SPENT A LOT OF TIME WITH THIS TEAM THINKING ABOUT HOW DO WE CREATE WORK THROUGH A TRANSDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVE?

HOW CAN I LEVERAGE WHAT I KNOW AND UNDERSTAND WITH THE EXPERTISE AND KNOWLEDGE IN KNOWING OF OTHERS.

IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR ME TO NOT COME TO THIS TABLE, TO COME TO THIS TEAM WITH AN EXISTING PIECE THAT I WANTED THEM TO IMPLEMENT BUT INSTEAD COME TO THEM WITH A FRAMEWORK.

A OUTLINE OF WHAT I THOUGHT WAS IMPORTANT.

SOME OF WHAT I DECIDED AT THE OUTSET WAS TO THINK ABOUT WAYS IN WHICH THESE EXPERIENCES OF RACISM ARE ALWAYS CONTRASTED TO WHITENESS, THEY'RE HAPPENING IN THE CONTEXT OF WHITENESS.

SO THERE WERE STRATEGIC WAYS WE THOUGHT ABOUT REPRESENTING WHITENESS IN EVERY SCENE.

IT WAS ALSO IMPORTANT FOR ME THAT THE WORK BE EMPIRICALLY GROUNDED.

SO IN THE FIRST SCENE WHEN ARE YOU A SMALL CHILD SITTING WITH BLOCKS ON THE FLOOR AND YOU ARE TOSSING AND THROWING THEM WITH OTHER KIDS IN THE CLASSROOM AND THEN ARE YOU UNFAIRLY CHASTISED BY YOUR WHITE TEACHER WHO YELLS AT YOU SAYING THAT YOU'RE BEING DANGEROUS AND YOU'RE

GOING TO HURT SOMEONE IS DRAWN FROM AN EMPIRICAL LITERATURE THAT HAS TRACKED DISCIPLINARY DIFFERENCES IN THE CLASSROOM ON THE BASIS OF RACE.

IN THE SECOND SCENE, WE HAVE AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE POLICE WHERE WE HAVE YOU THE USER GET DOWN ON YOUR KNEES PUT YOUR HANDS IN THE AIR AS THE POLICE OFFICERS ARE YELLING AND CURSING AT YOU.

YOU WERE JUST STANDING ON THE SIDEWALK SPEAKING TO A NEIGHBOR ON THE WAY TO A BASKETBALL GAME.

THERE IS A MOMENT IN THAT SCENE WHERE THE LIGHTS GO OUT AND YOU HEAR THE POLICE -- YOUR MOTHER'S VOICE SAYING JUST DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO TO GET HOME ALIVE.

IN THAT WE'RE CAPTURING NOT ONLY STOP AND FRISK PRACTICES IN NEW YORK CITY AND THE WAYS IN WHICH THESE TYPES OF STOPS OFTEN UNFOLD BUT WE'RE CAPTURING THE LAYERS IN WHICH RACISM SHOWS UP IN A LIFE, THE WAYS IN WHICH THREATS OF WHITENESS HAVE TO BE CALCULATED ON ANY GIVEN DAY.

A MOTHER'S VOICE TO TRAIN HER SON AT THE VERY OUTSET OF HIS LIFE THAT HE NEEDS TO CONSIDER THE THREAT AND MINIMIZE THE PERCEPTIONS OF HIS OWN THREAT SO HE CAN SURVIVE AND LIVE TO SEE ANOTHER DAY.

ALL OF THIS IS RACISM.

A MOTHER HAVING TO WORRY, A SON HAVING TO DIMINISH HIS OWN VALID EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS IN A MOMENT WHERE HE IS PROBABLY FEELING TERRIFIED FOR THE SAKE OF SURVIVAL IN THE FACE OF WHITENESS.

IN THE FINAL SCENE OF THIS EXPERIENCE, WE HAVE YOU IN A WORKPLACE SETTING WHERE YOU'RE APPLYING FOR A JOB. AND IT'S CLEAR THAT YOU'RE NOT WELCOME HERE.

IT'S SUBTLE IN THE WAYS IN WHICH VIRTUAL REALITY CAN BE QUITE POWERFUL IN CONVEYING, WAYS IN WHICH STORIES TOLD TO YOU BY FRIENDS AND FAMILY MAY GO DISMISSED OR YOU MAY PROVIDE ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS FOR WHY THAT IS HAPPENING.

IN THIS SCENE, IT'S VERY CLEAR THAT YOUR BLACKNESS IN CONTRAST TO WHITENESS IS AT PLAY.

AND WE WANT TO YOU EXPERIENCE AND FEEL THAT IN YOUR BODY WHICH IS PART OF WHY VIRTUAL REALITY IS SO POWERFUL.

SO I COME BACK TO THIS TEAM, WE CAN'T DO THIS KIND OF WORK WITHOUT MANY VOICES AND PERSPECTIVES SITTING AT THE SAME TABLE.

I OFTEN QUOTE ONE OF MY COLUMBIA COLLEAGUES WHO ONCE TOLD ME THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO SEEK TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF THEIR DISCIPLINES AND OTHERS WHO SEEK TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF THE WORLD.

I LIKE TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF THE WORLD.

AND I CAN'T DO THAT ALONE.

WE CAN'T DO THAT ALONE.

SO IF YOU'RE A PART OF THE FIGHT, YOU'RE A PART OF THE JOURNEY, I ASK YOU, JUST AS WE ASKED IN THE TRAILER AT THE BEGINNING.

LOOK AT YOURSELF IN THE MIRROR. AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF THIS WORK IS TO THINK ABOUT HOW WE ACTUALLY ACHIEVE RACIAL JUSTICE.

THE WAY WE ACHIEVE RACIAL JUSTICE IS NOT THROUGH AN EXERCISE THAT'S INTELLECTUAL OR EVEN IN THE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION OF SCIENCE BUT RATHER A VISCERAL UNDERSTANDING THAT CONNECTS THE SPIRIT AND BODY AS MUCH AS REASON.

THANK YOU AND I'LL NOW TURN IT BACK TO DR. KATRINA WADE-GOLDEN.

KATRINA:

THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH COURTNEY FOR THAT VERY POWERFUL CONTRIBUTION.

NOW WE HAVE REACHED THE TIME FOR THE FINAL SPEAKER TODAY WHO IS WENDELL PIERCE, AN ACTOR AND MUSICIAN.

THIS YEAR WE HAVE THE INCREDIBLE DELIGHT TO HAVE HIM IN OUR COMMUNITY AS A UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY DIGITAL RESIDENCY ARTIST AT THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY.

WE ARE THRILLED TO WELCOME HIM TO OUR COMMUNITY.

WELCOME, WENDELL.

WENDELL:

THANK YOU VERY MUCH, I REALLY APPRECIATE IT.

THIS HAS BEEN A VERY EXCITING AND MOVING MORNING.

THE ONE THING THAT MY 35-YEAR CAREER AS AN ACTOR HAS TAUGHT ME IS TO NEVER FOLLOW UP GREATER TALENT THAN YOURSELF.

AND I HAVE FAILED THAT MORNING BECAUSE WITH ALL OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THIS SUMMIT AS ON DISPLAY BY THE DEPUTY PROVOST, THE PROVOST, THE PRESIDENT, YOURSELF, YOU THEN ADD TO THAT THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE SPEAKERS THAT HAVE GONE BEFORE -- JOHANNA AND COLLEEN AND COURTNEY.

I PALE IN COMPARISON TO THE PASSION AND INTELLIGENCE AND REFLECTION THAT THOSE WOMEN HAVE EXPRESSED THIS MORNING BUT I WILL DO MY BEST TO MAKE AN IMPACT ON WHAT WE HAVE COME TOGETHER TO TALK ABOUT THIS MORNING.

ART -- ART.

ART AS SOCIAL CHANGE.

THE POWER OF ART AS ACTIVISM.

ART AS A CHANGE AGENT.

OUR WORLD HAS COME TO A HALT AND IT IS SOMETHING THAT I HAVE NEVER EXPERIENCED MY LIFE.

I HAVE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT.

MOST OF YOU HAVEN'T EITHER.

IT HAS COME TO A HALT RIGHT AT YOUR ASCENT FOR THE COMMUNITY THAT I'M SPEAKING TO THE YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE COME TO SCHOOL WHETHER IT'S YOUR FIRST OR LAST YEAR.

THE PROFESSORS AND ALL THE ADMINISTRATORS AND THE LEADERS OF THE MICHIGAN COMMUNITY, THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN COMMUNITY, YOU HAVE BEEN STIFLED RIGHT AS ARE YOU TRYING TO ASCEND, IS THE WORD THAT KEEPS COMING TO MIND.

THESE HAVE BEEN PRESCIENT DAYS, PRESCIENT DAYS THAT WE WON'T SOON FORGET.

NOR SHOULD YOU.

BECAUSE IT IS IN THESE DIFFICULT TIMES, REMEMBER THAT CRISIS DOES NOT BUILD CHARACTER BUT IT REVEALS IT.

SO USE YOUR ART TO REVEAL YOUR CHARACTER.

USE YOUR ART TO REVEAL YOUR CHARACTER.

EVEN IN EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES ART ALWAYS MATTERS.

IN THE AMERICAN CULTURE WE HAVE TURNED AWAY FROM THE PROPHETIC POWER OF ART, WE HAVE LOST OUR WAY OF THE UNDERSTANDING OF -- THE ROLE THAT ART PLAYS IN OUR SOCIETY,

THE ROLE AS A MEANS OF REVEALING THE HIDDEN ORDER BENEATH THE EVERYDAYNESS.

ART HAS A PROPHETIC POWER AND ITS POWER TO TRANSFORM US AND THE WORLD IS ON DISPLAY IN THIS MOST DIFFICULT TIMES.

ART DOES NOT GIVE US LIFE'S ANSWERS AS MUCH AS THE POWER TO LIVE LIFE'S QUESTIONS.

WHAT THOUGHTS ARE TO THE INDIVIDUAL, ART IS TO THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE, IT'S THE PLACE WHERE WE REFLECT ON WHO WE ARE,

WHERE WE HAVE BEEN, WHERE WE HOPE TO GO.

WHERE WE REFLECT ON OUR TRIUMPHS AND OUR FAILURES, THE PLACE WHERE WE DECIDE WHAT OUR VALUES ARE AND THEN ACT ON THEM.

WHAT THOUGHTS ARE TO THE INDIVIDUAL, WHERE WE REFLECT ON WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO WITH OUR LIFE, IT IS IN THAT COMMUNAL AND COMMUNITY STAGE OF ART THAT WE DO THE SAME FOR THE SOCIETY AS A WHOLE.

IT IS ART AS ACTIVISM.

ART IS A VERY TANGIBLE THING,

IT'S NOT JUST ETHEREAL, IT'S NOT JUST CONCEPTUAL, ENTERTAINMENT IS JUST A BY-PRODUCT OF THE WORK OF THE ART.

ART AS ACTIVISM, INTENTIONAL OR NOT.

NOW WHILE LAWS PROHIBIT PEOPLE'S BEHAVIOR, ART CAN CHANGE PEOPLE'S HEARTS AND MINDS AND HUMANITY.

ART AS ACTIVISM ISN'T RESERVED FOR THE PAST.

I SAY TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE ON THIS - IN THE SUMMIT, ART IS NOT RESERVED FOR GENERATIONS OF THE PAST.

IT IS YOUR GENERATION THAT WILL MAKE ITS MARK AS IT ANSWERS THIS CLARION CALL TO SPEAK TRUTH TODAY.

IN THE MIDST OF THE PANDEMIC, IN THE MIDST OF THIS RACIAL AWAKENING.

IN THE MIDST OF THE TURBULENT TIMES, ART ALWAYS MATTERS AND IT IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE ART CAN CHANGE PEOPLE'S HUMANITY. WHAT THOUGHTS ARE TO THE INDIVIDUAL,

ART IS TO THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE. IT IS SOMETHING THAT I'VE REFLECTED ON ALL MY LIFE.

I'M A MIDDLE AGED AFRICAN-AMERICAN MAN, BORN AND RAISED IN NEW ORLEANS, THE NORTHERNMOST CARIBBEAN CITY, THE MOST SWINGING CITY IN AMERICA.

I LOVE IT. IT IS TRANSFORMATIVE. WE LIVE OUR CULTURE AND CULTURE IS THAT PLACE, THAT INTERSECTION BETWEEN A PEOPLE AND HOW THEY DEAL WITH LIFE ITSELF.

THAT LITERAL INTERSECTION IS SOMETHING THAT WAS EXPLAINED TO ME AND TAUGHT TO ME NOT ONLY IN THE EXPERIENCES OF GROWING UP IN NEW ORLEANS BUT ONE OF MY HEROES WHO IS ALBERT MURRAY WHO WROTE THE OMNI-AMERICANS AND BLUES PEOPLE -- PLEASE, AS THE INTELLECTUALS THAT ARE YOU, LOOK HIM UP.

READ HIS WORK. HE TEACHES YOU THE IMPORTANCE OF ART AS SOCIAL CHANGE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF ART AS ACTIVISM.

YOU KNOW IN NEW ORLEANS IS THE BIRTHPLACE OF JAZZ.

AND IT WAS AT CONGO SQUARE, IT'S HALLOWED GROUND, WHERE CAPTURED AFRICANS REFLECTED ON THEIR EXPERIENCE AND CREATED THE MUSIC THAT IS RENOWNED AROUND THE WORLD, AROUND THE WORLD.

THEY FOUND THEIR CREATIVE FREEDOM BEFORE THEY FOUND THEIR INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM, CAPTURED AND ENSLAVED THEY TOOK THE EUROPEAN BRASS MUSIC OF THEIR CAPTORS AND THAT AFRICAN SIX BEAT.

THAT THEY CAME THERE AND DANCED AND PLAYED THE BAMBOULA AND THEY CREATED THE AMERICAN AESTHETIC OF JAZZ, THIS ART FORM THAT HAS CHANGED THE WORLD -- JAZZ IS REFLECTIVE OF THE AMERICAN AESTHETIC THAT WE ALL HOPE THAT THIS MORE PERFECT UNION BECOMES.

WHERE THE INDIVIDUAL CAN BE FREE AND EXPRESSIVE LIKE A JAZZ SOLO INTERPRETATION AND IMPROVISATION IN THE MIDST OF CONFINEMENT AND REFORM, LAWS, IN THIS CASE, IMPRISONMENT AND ENSLAVEMENT, THEY FOUND THEIR FREEDOM.

THAT IS AN AMERICAN AESTHETIC THAT WE HAVE YET TO ACHIEVE AND THAT WE CHALLENGE OURSELVES.

IT WAS THERE IN THAT HALLOWED GROUND THAT NOT ONLY DID WE CREATE JAZZ BUT THE HAITIANS WHO CAME FROM THEIR OWN LIBERATION 20 YEARS BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR OF AMERICA AND THEY EXCHANGED IDEAS WITH THOSE CAPTURED AFRICANS WHO WERE ENSLAVED ON PLANTATIONS JUST OUTSIDE OF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS AND TOLD THEM RISE UP, RISE UP, CREATE INSURRECTION SO THERE WAS ART AS ACTIVISM IN THE MIDST OF CREATING JAZZ THEY ALSO CREATED INSURRECTION IT WAS YEARS LATER FROM THE SAME COMMUNITY WHERE THE COMMITTEE OF CITIZENS IN THE LATE 1890s POST RECONSTRUCTION.

JIM CROW LAWS COME INTO EFFECT IN THE DEEP SOUTH THAT THEY SAID, LET'S ORGANIZE AND THEY PUT TOGETHER THE MISSION TO ATTACK AND CHALLENGE JIM CROW LAWS IN WHAT BECAME PLESSY VS. FERGUSON.

IT CAME FROM CONGO SQUARE. ART AS ACTIVISM THIS INCUBATION OF INSURRECTION AND ACTIVISM AND CHANGE AGENT.

IT WAS FROM THAT HALLOWED GROUND THAT THOSE THOUGHTS CAME, IT WAS WITH THE CREATION OF JAZZ THAT WE CREATED ONE OF OUR GREAT NEW ORLEANS HEROES, LOUIS ARMSTRONG, WHO SHOWED YOU WHAT MUSIC CAN DO AND THEN DEMONSTRATE THE DEMOCRACY OF WHAT JAZZ WAS AS AN ART FORM.

IT WAS LOUIS ARMSTRONG WHO WAS SEEN BY A YOUNG BOY FROM ALABAMA, YOUNG WHITE BOY WHO HAD NEVER SEEN THE GENIUS IN THE FORM OF A BLACK MAN HIS NAME WAS JUSTICE BLACK WHO ULTIMATELY LEFT HIS SOUTHERN IDEOLOGY AND THE KKK, WHICH HE HAD MEMBERSHIP IN, BECAME A JUSTICE ON

THE SUPREME COURT AND ACTUALLY WAS A CHAMPION FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES AND CIVIL RIGHTS.

IT WAS THE IMPACT OF ART AS ACTIVISM SEEN IN LOUIS ARMSTRONG.

AND THAT WAS FROM NEW ORLEANS AND WHERE I'M FROM, I HAD A RESPONSIBILITY POST KATRINA TO COME TO MY COMMUNITY AND SAY, I HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO USE MY ART AS ACTIVISM.

I DEDICATING PLAYING THE THAT DEMONSTRATES THAT THE VOID -- THE DEPRESSION, THE HOPELESSNESS OF LIFE AFTER A DESTRUCTION LIKE KATRINA I DID THE PLAY THERE IN THE LOWER 9th WARD WHERE SO MANY PEOPLE HAD DIED.

AS BECKETT SAYS AT THIS PLACE IN THIS MOMENT OF TIME, ALL MANKIND IS US.

LET US DO SOMETHING WHILE WE HAVE THE CHANCE.

ART AS ACTIVISM, AS A CHANGE AGENT.

IT MOVED ME TO DECLARE WHAT MY VALUES ARE AND TO ACT ON THEM.

I WENT BACK TO MY COMMUNITY OF PONTCHARTRAIN PARK, I ORGANIZED THE RESIDENTS AND WE REBUILT OUR NEIGHBORHOOD, LITERALLY BRICK BY BRICK, BLOCK BY BLOCK, HOUSE BY HOUSE.

WE REBUILT 40 HOUSES SO PEOPLE CAN COME BACK HOME WITH SOLAR AND GEOTHERMAL SYSTEMS IN THE MIDST OF A DISASTER AND IN PONTCHARTRAIN PARK WAS CREATED DURING THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT WHEN BLACKS COULD NOT BUY A HOME ANYWHERE AND IT WAS THERE THAT I TOOK THE LESSONS OF THE MOSES GENERATION AND TOOK IT AS PART OF THE JOSHUA GENERATION TO EXERCISE MY RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION.

AND THAT IS THE POWER OF ART.

THAT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU MUST REMEMBER THAT THIS IS NOT JUST A PIECE OF ENTERTAINMENT BUT THIS IS A PIECE OF ACTIVISM, OF CHANGE.

REMEMBER THAT WE SHALL OVERCOME AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS SONGS THAT INSPIRED PEOPLE TO CONTINUE ON IN THE FACE OF VIOLENCE AND EVEN DEATH.

TO CONTINUE ON IN THEIR MOVEMENT.

IT IS WITH THAT CLARION CALL THAT EVEN THE PRESIDENT HAS TO SAY IT FROM THE PODIUM OF A JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS WHEN LBJ -- LYNDON B JOHNSON SAID WE SHALL OVERCOME.

IT WAS A MOMENT WHERE ART MOVED THE NATION SO THAT CAN DECLARE WHAT ITS VALUES ARE AND TO ACT ON THEM WHICH THEN MANIFEST ITSELF IN THE CIVIL

RIGHTS LEGISLATION OF THE MID-'60s.

NOW THAT IS WHAT BRINGS ME HERE TO MICHIGAN. AS A DIGITAL ARTIST AT THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY.

WE ARE IN A QUARANTINE DOING A PLAY SOME OLD BLACK MAN THAT SPEAKS TO RACISM WHERE A FATHER AND SON HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE HISTORY OF THEIR LIFE AND THE CONFLICT IN THAT HISTORY AND REALIZE THAT A PART OF IT WAS CREATED,

THE CONFLICT, WAS CREATED BY THE INSIDIOUS NATURE OF RACISM THAT IS PART OF THE WORLD AROUND THEM AND THE HISTORY OF THEIR OWN PERSONAL LIVES.

OUR RACISM NOT ONLY AFFECTS US IN OUR COMMUNITY BUT IT CAN AFFECT US PERSONALLY.

SO WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO LEAVE WITH YOU NOW AS I END MY CONVERSATION IS TO EXERCISE YOUR RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION AND USE ART AS SOCIAL CHANGE AND ACTIVISM BECAUSE THE TEMPLATE HAS BEEN GIVEN TO YOU.

ART IS NOT ENTERTAINMENT IT IS THE PLACE WHERE WE REFLECT ON WHO WE ARE AND OUR VALUES ARE AND THEN TO GO OUT AND ANSWER THAT CLARION CALL AND TO ACT ON THOSE VALUES.

THAT'S THE POWER OF ART.

AND AS A DEMONSTRATION OF THAT NOW I WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE ANOTHER CREATIVE CONTRIBUTION FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN ARTISTIC COMMUNITY.

THANK YOU.

♪ ♪ ♪

KATRINA:

THANK YOU WENDELL FOR THAT WONDERFUL CONTRIBUTION AND THAT CALL TO ACTION.

THE PRESENTATION WAS FOLLOWED BY A DANCE PRODUCTION CALLED A REPETITIOUS NARRATIVE BY BROOK TAYLOR AND MARIAH STEPHENS, UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE AND DANCE.

YOU CAN VIEW THIS PIECE ALONG WITH ALL THE OTHER CREATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS ON OUR SUMMIT WEBSITE.

AND NOW I WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME OUR DISCUSSION MODERATOR AARON DWORKIN.

THE FORMER DEAN OF SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE AND DANCE WHERE HE IS A CURRENT PROFESSOR OF ARTS LEADERSHIP AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP.

WELCOME AARON.

AARON:

THANK YOU SO MUCH, KATRINA.

THIS HAS JUST BEEN TRULY AMAZING. I'M SO MOVED AND INSPIRED BY ALL OF THE INCREDIBLE PRESENTATIONS BY OUR WONDERFUL SPEAKERS.

AND I WOULD LOVE TO WELCOME ALL OF THEM BACK SO THAT WE CAN ENGAGE IN A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE ISSUES.

AND I WOULD ENCOURAGE ALL OF YOU AS -- I'M POSING QUESTIONS, FEEL FREE TO HOP INTO ANY OF OUR PANELISTS, FEEL FREE TO HOP IN EVEN IF I DON'T DIRECT THE QUESTION TO YOU.

I WOULD LIKE TO SEE IF WE CAN BUILD A DIALOGUE ABOUT SOME OF THE ISSUES. AND I WAS JUST EXTRAORDINARILY MOVED.

SO, I THOUGHT I WOULD START, WENDELL, YOU JUST SHARED AND YOU SPOKE SO POWERFULLY ABOUT THIS IMPORTANCE OF ART IN THE SOCIETY, ESPECIALLY ART AS ACTIVISM.

AND WHAT I WAS WONDERING IS IF WE CAN TALK ABOUT THESE THINGS BUT IT IS OFTEN DIFFICULT FOR ARTISTS TO THEN GET OUR STORIES OUT.

THERE ARE THOSE WHO CONTROL THE LEVERS OF POWER, THOSE WHO ARE DETERMINING THE JOBS, WHO IS GETTING THE JOBS AND GREEN LIGHT PROJECTS AND WHO IS DETERMINING DIRECTORS, LEAD ACTORS. ETC.

CAN YOU SPEAK TO WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT HOW BEST TO AFFECT THE POWERS THAT BE SO MORE OF THE EXTRAORDINARY STORIES CAN ACTUALLY REACH THE MASSES?

WENDELL:

THANK YOU.

THAT'S ALWAYS DIFFICULT TO MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE ACCESS AND THAT YOU ARE FOR ALL INTENSIVE PURPOSES THAT ARE YOU SPONSORED OR HAVE THE MONEY OR THE BUDGET TO GET IT OUT THERE.

BUT THERE ARE TOO MANY EXAMPLES OF ARTISTS THROUGHOUT HISTORY, RECENT HISTORY THAT JUST GO OUT AND DO IT WITH THE LITTLE MEANS THAT THEY HAVE.

I MEAN I'M SURE COLLEEN CAN TELL YOU THAT THE THEY ARE STRUGGLING WITH ALWAYS GETTING FUNDING FOR THEIR THEATRE BUT IT IS VERY IMPACTFUL.

IMPACTFUL NOT ONLY TO THE NATIVE COMMUNITY THAT IT COMES FROM AND IT IS IMPACTFUL FOR THOSE PEOPLE WHO RECEIVE IT. THAT ARE NOT FROM THE COMMUNITY.

IT TEACHES US THE MORE SPECIFIC AND MORE UNIVERSAL THE STORY BECOMES.

THE MORE UNIVERSAL YOUR WORK BECOMES.

COLLEEN SPEAKS TO ALL OF US. THE MORE SHE TELLS THE TRUTHFULNESS OF HER EXPERIENCE AND THE COMMUNITY'S EXPERIENCE.

SO YOU HAVE PETER HALL GOES TO THE MIDST OF THE SAHARA DESERT AND PUT DOWN A MAT AND REFLECT HOW THEY WOULD GO TO A VILLAGE IN THE MIDDLE OF A BARRENNESS AND JUST DO THEIR PLAYS.

I CAME FROM NEW NEW ORLEANS, AS I SAID, FREE SOUTHERN THEATRE, IT WAS A GROUP THAT WENT OUT DURING THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT TO INSPIRE THE MARCHERS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND THEY JUST WOULD PITCH A TENT AND DO THEIR PLAYS. THEY DID WAITING FOR GODOT,

IN THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA, IN THE MIDDLE OF THE COTTON FIELDS FOR SHARECROPPERS AND IT SPOKE TO THEM BECAUSE WAITING FOR GODOT THE STORY OF THIS VOID WHERE YOU ARE WAITING FOR AN ENTITY TO COME AND YOU KNOW AT INTERMISSION.

ONE OF THE SHARECROPPERS, THIS ELDERLY BLACK MAN TURNED TO THE DIRECTOR AND SAID HE AIN'T COMING.

I'VE SEEN THIS BEFORE.

NOW SOMETHING THAT CAME FROM NAZI OCCUPATION IS BECKETT WAS HIDDEN DURING ALL OF THE YEARS AND BECAME A CLASSIC BECAUSE IT SPEAKS TO THE HUMANITY OF A ELDERLY BLACK MAN IN MISSISSIPPI IN THE 1960s AND SPOKE TO THE PEOPLE OF BOSNIA AS THEY WERE IN THE MIDST DURING A CIVIL WAR AND THE PEOPLE IN NEW ORLEANS POST-KATRINA BECAUSE IT SPOKE TO THEIR HUMANITY.

I SAY THAT YOU ALWAYS FIGHT FOR HELP TO GET YOUR WORK OUT THERE BUT AT THE SAME TIME, DON'T LET YOUR LIMITED RESOURCES STOP YOU FROM DOING WHAT YOU WANT TO DO.

AND I WANT TO PUT OUT THERE IS SOMETHING LIKE THE BLACK SEED TO HELP THEATRE ACROSS THIS COUNTRY.

IT IS A 10 MILLION-DOLLAR PROJECT THAT CAME OUT OF THE MELLON FOUNDATION, DISTRIBUTED FROM THE BLACK THEATRE IN NEW YORK CALLED THE BILLY HOLIDAY THEATRE WHICH ALONG WITH THE PLOW SHARES HERE IN DETROIT ARE ACTUALLY FUNDING PROJECTS ANYONE ON THE CALL SHOULD PUT IN THEIR RFP TO GET SOME OF THE SEEDS OF MONEY.

SO ON BOTH HANDS YOU HAVE IT.

PUTTING THE MONEY OUT AND TO WHO NEED TO GET OUT AND START DOING THEIR WORK.

AARON:

AND THAT IS SO TRUE AND STUDENTS.

IF YOU HAVE A PROJECT YOU KNOW I WAS AN UNDERGRADUATE AND HAD THAT IDEA FOR THE SPHINX ORGANIZATION AND THE CORE RESOURCES CAME DIRECTLY FROM THE UNIVERSITY ITSELF.

NOT ONLY FUNDING AND SUPPORT FROM THE FACULTY. WE HAVE AN ENORMOUS NETWORK OF RESOURCES HERE AT THE UNIVERSITY.

I ENCOURAGE TO YOU TAP INTO THOSE.

SO WENDELL, YOU MENTIONED COLLEEN, COLLEEN, I WAS GOING TO ASK YOU, BECAUSE YOU SPOKE SO BEAUTIFULLY ABOUT CULL CULTURE AND IDENTITY.

AND WHAT I WAS WONDERING IS RIGHT THIS PRAGMATIC REALITY THAT UNFORTUNATELY THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT PART OF THE COUNTRY WHO ARE LIKE YOU KNOW WHAT, I LIKE MY CULTURE AND I FEEL LIKE MY CULTURE IS THE DOMINANT CULTURE,

AND I DON'T WANT TO LEARN ABOUT OTHER CULTURES AND THOSE TYPES OF THINGS.

WHAT I WONDER, IS HOW DO YOU FEEL, OR HOW WOULD YOU SUGGEST OR GUIDE US, HOW DO WE RESPOND TO PEOPLE WHO SEEM TO HAVE THAT VIEWPOINT NOW?

HOW CAN WE IDEALLY OPEN THEIR MINDS MORE AND OR FOR THOSE WHO MAY CONTROL PEOPLE ON THE SCHOOL BOARDS AND OTHERS IN LARGE PART CONTROLLING WHAT -- WHAT IDENTITIES AND CULTURES THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR SOCIETY LEARN ABOUT.

HOW CAN WE SPEAK TO THEM AND CONVINCING THEM.

HOW CAN WE MAKE THE VALUE, PROPOSITION TO THEM ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF ALL OF THE CULTURES AND IDENTITIES THAT MAKE UP WHO WE ARE?

COLLEEN:

THANK YOU, AARON, THAT'S A GREAT QUESTION.

SO ONE OF THE THINGS I TELL MY TEAM ALL THE TIME IS THAT WE DON'T CHANGE THE END GOAL, THE END GOAL IS ALWAYS EDUCATION AND AWARENESSIVE THE ISSUES.

WE MAY HAVE TO CHANGE THE ROAD TO GET THERE AND I COMPARE IT TO BEING THAT MUCH LIKE WATER, RIGHT.

WATER IS POWERFUL AND WATER IS FIERCE, IT FIND AS WAY TO GO OVER SOMETHING, OVER SOMETHING, THROUGH SOMETHING, AROUND SOMETHING AND SO I COMPARE IT TO THAT.

I SAY TO MY TEAM AND ALSO TO THE OTHER ACTORS AND ACTRESSES IN THE EXCHANGE, THE END GOAL IS THE EDUCATION, WE KNOW THAT WE ARE UNDER REPRESENTED AND THE ISSUES

ARE GOING ON AND NOT GETTING OUT THERE.

THE EDUCATION IS A -- I CAN'T SPEAK TO OTHER STATES, IN MICHIGAN KIND OF LACKS THAT TRUE NATIVE HISTORY WE KNOW THAT HAPPENS HERE.

THE END GOAL IS TO GET EDUCATION AND AWARENESS TO THE COMMUNITIES AND NOT JUST OUR NATIVE COMMUNITY BUT ALL OF THE PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITIES BECAUSE THIS IS IMPORTANT.

WE DO LIVE IN A STATE THAT HAS 12 RECOGNIZED TRIBES AND AT LEAST TWO HISTORIC TRIBES AND SO WE HAVE A STATE THAT IS HEAVILY POPULATED WITH NATIVE PEOPLE.

AND SO THESE ISSUES DON'T GO AWAY.

SO I DON'T KNOW WANT TO GET DISCOURAGED OR TO BACKTRACK.

IT'S ALWAYS THIS IS THE END GOAL AND HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET THERE.

I GUESS THE ADVICE IS THAT YOU DON'T CHANGE THE END GOAL, YOU CHANGE THE ROUTE TO GET THERE.

WE KEEP PUSHING FORWARD EVEN IF WE CAN CAN IMPACT ONE PERSON.

EDUCATE ONE PERSON, THEY WILL EDUCATE ANOTHER.

AND SO ON.

AND WE'RE JUST MOST THANKFUL TO SHARE THAT WITH AT LEAST ONE PERSON BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT'S IMPORTANT.

AARON:

I LOVE THAT VIEWPOINT BECAUSE SOMETIMES I KNOW ESPECIALLY STUDENTS WILL TALK TO ME AND SAY, YOU KNOW, I'M JUST DOING THIS OR TALKING TO ONE PERSON.

THAT RIPPLE EFFECT THAT YOU'RE DESCRIBING CAN ABSOLUTELY BECOME ULTIMATELY A TSUNAMI, THAT'S AMAZING.

AND COURTNEY, YOU KNOW THIS I HAD TO SHARE A BIT.

IT SPOKE TO ME STRONGLY AND UTILIZING THIS MEDIUM OF VIRTUAL REALITY.

WHEN YOU TALKED ABOUT CAPTURING THIS IN VIRTUAL REALITY, ESPECIALLY FOR WHAT HAPPENS FOR A YOUNG CHILD, LITERALLY SOMEHOW WATCHING THAT BROUGHT ME RIGHT BACK TO WHEN I WAS IN THE FIFTH GRADE AND WE WERE THROWING PAPER IN CLASS AND THIS WAS BACK WITH PADDLING.

AND SO OUR TEACHER BROUGHT FIVE OF US OUT INTO THE HALLWAY AND I WAS THE ONLY BLACK STUDENT IN CLASS.

WHEN SHE CAME TO US SHE GAVE ONE PADDLE.

SHE WHISPERED IN MY EAR I WISH I COULD GIVE YOU MORE.

AND THAT IS OF COURSE STUCK WITH ME ALL THESE YEARS BUT THAT ABILITY TO BRING PEOPLE INTO A PLACE OF WHAT OTHER PEOPLE EXPERIENCE, I THINK THAT'S POWERFUL.

I WANT TO ASK YOU, YOU TALKED ABOUT HOW YOU LIKE TO FOCUS ON IF YOU WILL, LIBERAL WHITE PEOPLE AND PEOPLE SAY, YOU KNOW PREACHING TO THE CHOIR BUT THE CHOIR HAS A LOT OF WORK TO DO.

I HAVE A TWO-PART QUESTION AND WONDERING IF ANYONE WANTED TO ADD IN BASED ON YOUR RESPONSE.

BUT DO YOU WORRY ABOUT ALIENATING THOSE WHO MIGHT BE OUR STRONGEST ALLIES WITH THE ISSUES, KIND OF THAT.

ALSO, WHAT ABOUT THE CONSERVATIVE VIEWPOINTS THAT ARE SO DISTANT FROM WHERE WE ARE AND THESE ISSUES AND WHAT ABOUT KIND OF CONVINCING THEM.

CAN YOU SPEAK TO SOME OF THOSE?

COURTNEY:

NO, I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT ALIENATING PEOPLE, I THINK THAT WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO BE SUGAR COATING THIS FOR FOLKS.

AND SO EITHER YOUR BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS ALIGN OR THEY DON'T.

I SEE MYSELF AS, YOU KNOW, TRYING TO HOLD UP A MIRROR WHERE I FEEL LIKE WHITE LIBERAL PEOPLE FOR TOO LONG HAVE INVESTED IN THE LANGUAGE AND SYMBOLS OF THEIR VALUE BUT THE BEHAVIOR HAS BEEN INCONSISTENT.

THAT SHOULD NO LONGER BE SUFFICIENT AND, SURE, I COULD BE ENGAGING A WHOLE RANGE OF PEOPLE AROUND THESE ISSUES.

BUT IF MORE OF THE GROUP I'M TARGETING WERE DOING THE WORK OF ANTI-RACISM AND INVESTING IN MEANINGFUL PRACTICE IN THAT REGARD.

WE WOULD BE MUCH FURTHER ALONG THAN WE ARE RIGHT NOW.

I THINK IT'S NOT INCONSEQUENTIAL TO THINK ABOUT HOW TO TARGET AND ADDRESS THIS GROUP.

WE'RE TALKING ABOUT WHITE PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE FIRMLY IN RACIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY AND SUPPORT THE ARTS OF ALL SORTS, AT THE RALLIES AND MARCHES AND WHO CONSISTENTLY STILL MISS THE MARK IN EITHER THEIR DEPTH AND COMPLEXITY OR UNDERSTANDING WHAT RACISM ACTUALLY IS AND HOW IT FUNCTIONS IN SOCIETY.

AND SO, THAT'S PART OF MY WORK.

THAT'S WHO I'M ENGAGING AND JUST QUICKLY TO YOUR STORY, AARON.

IT IS ALWAYS SO MOVING TO ME WHEN THAT HAPPENS.

IT HAPPENS QUITE OFTEN AND REPRESENTS ATTENTION FOR ME THAT I DESIGN THIS FOR A PARTICULAR AUDIENCE BUT CLEARLY BLACK PEOPLE PUT ON THIS HEADSET AND PEOPLE ARE ENGAGED IN THE WORK.

I HAD TO STRUGGLE WHAT EFFECT DO I HAVE ON THEM WHEN I PUT THIS INTO -- PUTTING THEM INTO THIS EXPERIENCE AND ONE STORY A BLACK MAN, THE FIRST TIME WE WERE DEMONSTRATING THE PIECE HERE IN COLUMBIA WE FORGET TO TELL HIM ABOUT THE POLICING.

NOW EVERY BLACK MAN I KNOW HAS HAD AN ENCOUNTER IF NOT VIOLENT ENCOUNTER WITH THE POLICE AND WE FORGOT TO TELL HIM THAT.

AND HE LIFTED THE HEAD SET WHEN WE GOT TO THAT SCENE AND ALMOST TOOK IT OFF.

HE FINISHED AND WHEN I TALKED TO HIM HE SAID I COULDN'T HEAR WHAT THEY WERE SAYING AND I WAS AFRAID WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF I DIDN'T FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS.

SO YOU KNOW WHAT WE DO TO BLACK PEOPLE VERSUS WHAT WE ARE DOING TO WHITE IN THE PIECE REPRESENTS MULTIPLE TENSIONS FOR ME BUT REGARDLESS WHITE LIBERAL AUDIENCE IS A MEANINGFUL AND COMPELLING GROUP TO ADDRESS.

AARON:

ONE KIND OF FOLLOW UP TO THAT TO YOU COURTNEY OR ANYONE ONE OF OUR SPEAKERS, THE, YOU KNOW IF WE -- MY QUESTION RELATES TO HOW WE CAN DEFINE A FIELD.

CAN WE SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, THIS FIELD IS RACIST, RIGHT.

FOR EXAMPLE IN THE ORCHESTRAL WORLD LESS THAN 1% OF ALL OF THE WORKS PERFORMED BY ALL AMERICAN ORCHESTRAS ARE BY ANY COMPOSER OF COLOR.

THAT'S JUST ONE OF THE MEASURES THAT WE KNOW AS OF TODAY.

CAN WE SAY THIS FIELD AS IT RELATES TO THAT IS RACIST.

IN OTHER WORDS WHEN WE TAKE THE MEASURES WE SEE THIS STARK LACK OF INCLUSION, CAN WE CONCLUDE FROM THAT THAT THE FIELD IS RACIST, HOW SHOULD WE APPROACH THAT.

COURTNEY OR ANYONE WHO WOULD LIKE TO JUMP IN?

WENDELL:

THAT'S INTERESTING YOU SAID THAT, YOU KNOW I'M ON THE PANEL WITH THESE YOUNG WOMEN, AND I'M AS CAN YOU SEE A MIDDLE AGED MAN.

I'M BECOMING IMPATIENT.

I DON'T CARE.

I DON'T CARE IF I HAVE TO EXPLAIN TO YOU IF SOMETHING IS RACIST OR TRYING TO DEFINE AND EXPLAIN AND EDUCATION.

THIS WORLD SHOULD BE THANKFUL FOR JOHANNA AND COLLEEN AND COURTNEY, THAT THEY ARE TRYING TO MAKE THAT ATTEMPT TO CHANGE AND EXPLAIN AND OPEN YOUR EYES THE BIAS IN THIS ALL.

I DON'T HAVE TIME TO CHANGE YOUR BIGOTRY.

I HAVE FEWER DAYS. I HAVE MORE BEHIND ME THAN IN FRONT OF ME.

SO I APPRECIATE THEIR WORK EVEN MORE.

I'M NOT HERE TO CHANGE YOU BIAS OR EDUCATE I'M JUST HERE TO TEAR DOWN THE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT ALLOWS YOU TO YOU PERPETUATE THIS BAD BEHAVIOR.

AND SO IN THE WORK THAT I'M DOING, I'M WITH A GROUP CALLED BLACK THEATRE UNITED.

WE HAVE SUMMITS WITH THE THEATRE AND BROADWAY WEEK, I'M GETTING TO A DOCUMENT OF ACTIONABLE ITEMS.

SO, WHILE OTHERS CAN HAVE THAT CONVERSATION, AND I THINK IT IS A TWO-FOLD THING.

WE NEED TO DO THE WORK THAT YOU ARE DOING AND DEFINE AND GET THE ANALYTICS TO KNOW AND THE EMPIRICAL DATA WHETHER THIS IS RACIST AND UNDERSTAND WHERE IT IS COMING FROM AND HOW IT IS BUILT UP AND HOW THE BEHAVIORS HAPPENED OVER TIME.

I'M AT THE PLACE WHERE YOU SEE FIGURE THAT OUT ON YOUR OWN.

LET'S TEAR DOWN THE INFRASTRUCTURE TO MAKE SURE IT DOES NOT GIVE YOU A PLATFORM TO THEN TAKE THE BIASES AND MANIFEST THEM INTO BAD BEHAVIOR OR MY OPPORTUNITY TO DO MY WORK.

AARON:

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR THAT, WENDELL.

JOHANNA, THE WORK THAT ARE YOU DOING IS PHENOMENAL AND JUST FELT BLESSED TO HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN YOUR SERIES AND JUST YOUR WORK IS FANTASTIC.

IN A LOT OF THE ART FORMS DO YOU FEEL LIKE THERE ARE A LOT OF THE HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS OF WHOSE WORK IS PERFORMED AND THAT SOMETIMES

PEOPLE EQUATE THAT WITH ARTISTIC AND IN CLASSICAL MUSIC THAT MIGHT BE THE STANDARD WESTERN, AND EUROPEAN REPERTOIRE.

IN DANCE, DO YOU FIND THERE ARE FORMS OF DANCE, WHO SAY THIS IS WHAT ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO DO.

WHAT DO YOU SAY TO PEOPLE WHO WANT TO BE IN THE NARROW LANES THAT HAVE THAT HISTORICAL

PRECEDENT VERSUS EXPLORING SOME OF THIS NEW WORK AND, OBVIOUSLY, THINGS AS POWERFUL AS ASYLUM STORIES.

WHAT DO YOU SAY TO PEOPLE WHO WANT TO STAY IN WHAT THEY HAVE KNOWN?

JOHANNA:

THAT'S SUCH A GREAT POINT.

I WOULD SAY THAT WESTERN FORMS OF ART SPECIFICALLY IN DANCE, BALETT HAS HELD ON THIS PEDESTAL THAT IS DIFFERENT FROM CONTEMPORARY AND MODERN DANCE.

AND CHOREOGRAPHERS OF COLOR ARE TRYING TO RECLAIM THEIR NARRATIVES THROUGH ART AND USE THE AFRICAN DISAPORA AND THE LATIN DISAPORA TO TALK ABOUT WHO THEY ARE ON STAGE.

IT'S NOT A QUESTION OF WHAT ART IS BEING MADE BY PEOPLE OF COLOR BUT THE EDUCATION -- EDUCATION AND ACCESS TO ART.

WHO IS THE AUDIENCE IS. HOW DO WE GET PEOPLE IN THE DOOR.

AN EXAMPLE A WHEN I TALK ABOUT THESE ASYLUM WORKS, A LOT IS IN ENGLISH BUT A LOT IS IN SPANISH.

SO WHY WOULD AN IMMIGRANT MOTHER WITH CHILDREN IN THIS COUNTRY HAS COME HERE WANT TO GO SEE AN OPERA IN A LANGUAGE THAT SHE DOESN'T NECESSARILY UNDERSTAND AND REALLY CANNOT RELATE TO.

SO I THINK IT IS JUST ABOUT KIND OF THE ACCESS THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND HIGHLIGHTING THE NARRATIVES OF PEOPLE OF COLOR MORE AND MORE.

AARON:

THANK YOU FOR THAT.

UNFORTUNATELY WE'RE RUNNING SHORT ON TIME.

ONE LAST QUESTION I WANTED TO PUT OUT WHOEVER WOULD LIKE TO RESPOND, YOU KNOW, PRESIDENT SCHLISSEL SHARED ABOUT JOHN LEWIS' COMMENTS ABOUT GETTING IN THE WAY, RIGHT.

THERE ARE SO MANY STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF THAT HAVE BEEN INSPIRED BY YOUR PRESENTATIONS BUT COMING OUT MAY NOT KNOW, I WANT TO DO SOMETHING AND GET IN THE WAY.

BUT I'M NOT SURE WHERE I SHOULD START.

WHAT IS THE FIRST STEP I SHOULD TAKE?

ANYONE HAVE A SUGGESTION, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO THAT PERSON WHO HAS BEEN MOVED, WHAT SHOULD THEY DO NOW?

WENDELL:

AS THE OLD MAN SPEAKS.

[LAUGHTER]

I WANT TO SAY FIRST OF ALL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, KNOW THAT ARE YOU NOT ALONE AND YOU ARE PROBABLY NOT THE FIRST.

YOU NOT HAVE TO REINVENT THE WHEEL.

I SAW JOHANNA'S WORK I THOUGHT OF JOSE LIMON ONE OF THE GREAT LATIN ARTISTS WHO IS WONDERFUL.

I HAVE A FRIEND THAT COLLEEN PROBABLY KNOWS.

JACQUELINE KELLER WHO DOES THE WORK OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, I MET HER IN PORTLAND BUT SHE IS ALL OVER AND DOING THE WORK. THERE IS THE BLACK ARTS MOVEMENT THAT WAS THERE AHEAD OF US THAT WERE BEING INNOVATIVE AND DOING INNOVATIVE THINGS.

AND WILLIAM GREAVES COMES TO MIND WHEN I I THINK ABOUT COURTNEY'S WORK. WHAT I TELL THE YOUNG PEOPLE IS TO KNOW THAT WHAT THEY'RE FEELING IS CORRECT.

TO KNOW THAT THEY FEEL THAT URGENCY OF NOW -- CARPE DIEM IS CORRECT AND KNOW THEY ARE NOT ALONE AND PROBABLY AN EXAMPLE IN OUR HISTORY THAT GIVES US A PATHWAY AND BLUEPRINT.

I TELL THE PROTEST MOVEMENT ALL THE TIME, DO NOT THINK THAT ARE YOU FEELING THIS FOR THE FIRST TIME.

YOUNG PEOPLE ALWAYS TELL US YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND.

GUESS WHAT?

WE DO UNDERSTAND.

NOT ONLY DID WE HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING BUT WE CAME UP WITH SOME BLUEPRINTS AND SOME BLUEPRINTS AND WAYS TO MOVE THE NEEDLE.

SO HAND THE BATON SAY MOVE THIS MORE AND PUSH IT MORE.

WE'RE NOT GOING TO GET TO AN END POINT.

THIS A CONTINUUM.

SEE IT AS A DISEASE THAT ARE YOU VIGILANT ABOUT WHAT YOU NEED TO DO.

ASSUME THERE IS SOMEONE WHO HAS DONE IT BEFORE.

SEEK THEM OUT SO CAN YOU CAN THEN TAKE ON THE MANTEL AND MOVE THE NEEDLE FORWARD.

AARON:
AWESOME.

THANK YOU SO MUCH TO ALL OF OUR EXTRAORDINARY SPEAKERS.

THERE WAS A MOMENT YEARS AGO WHEN A SPHINX LAUREATE WAS PERFORMING IN ATLANTA AT A PHILANTHROPY CONFERENCE AND CORETTA SCOTT KING SPOKE TO ME ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ARTS AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT.

SHE AND MARTIN LUTHER KING MET AT A MUSIC SCHOOL THE CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC.

I WANT TO LEAVE WITH THIS QUOTE FROM MARTIN LUTHER KING.

THE CHANGE GOES TO THE ROLL IN ON THE WHEELS OF INEVITABILITY BUT COMES THROUGH CONTINUOUS STRUGGLE.

HISTORY WILL HAVE TO RECORD THE GREATEST TRAGEDY OF THE PERIOD WAS NOT THE STRIDENT CLAMOR OF THE BAD PEOPLE BUT THE APPALLING SILENCE OF THE GOOD PEOPLE.

OUR LIVES BEGIN TO END THE DAY WE BECOME SILENT ABOUT THINGS THAT MATTER.

AND I KNOW FROM ALL OF OUR EXTRAORDINARY SPEAKERS TODAY, WE KNOW THAT THIS INTERSECTION OF THE ARTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE MATTERS.

THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH FOR JOINING US AND I'LL TOSS IT BACK TO ROB, WHO WILL CONCLUDE THE SESSION.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

ROBERT:

THANK YOU SO MUCH, AARON.

I WANT TO THANK OUR PANEL OF SPEAKERS, THE PRESENTATIONS AND THE CONVERSATIONS WERE TRULY INVIGORATING, INSIGHTFUL AND JUST PLAIN POWERFUL.

PLEASE I HOPE THAT EVERYONE WILL JOIN ME IN GIVING THEM A HAND.

[APPLAUSE]

I INVITE TO YOU CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION ON OUR SUMMIT WEB SITE AT DEISUMMIT.UMICH.EDU.

WE WILL POST THIS MORNING'S RECORDING OF THIS MORNING'S EVENT AND WHERE THE SPEAKERS WILL RESPOND TO QUESTIONS THAT WE DIDN'T GET TO THIS MORNING.

THIS YEAR I'M ALSO PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE AN INNOVATIVE OPPORTUNITY TO CARRY FORWARD THE MOMENTUM OF BUILDING THE WORLD THEY WANT TO SEE THROUGH A SEMESTER-LONG CHALLENGE ENTITLED ENVISIONING AN ANTI-RACIST WORLD.

THIS DESIGN CHALLENGE IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE PRESIDENTIAL ARTS INITIATIVE, THE CENTER FOR ACADEMIC INNOVATIONS EXTENDED REALITY INITIATIVE, CENTER FOR SOCIAL ENGAGED DESIGN AND THE OFFICE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION.

PLEASE, AGAIN, VISIT OUR SUMMIT EVENTS PAGE FOR THE DETAILS ON THE FIRST INFO SESSION THAT WILL OCCUR NOVEMBER 9th.

ALSO ON THE WEB SITE, CAN YOU VIEW A VISUAL COLLAGE OF IMAGES CAPTURING SOME OF THE PROGRESS THAT'S BEEN MADE BY OUR INDIVIDUAL UNITS ACROSS OUR CAMPUS DURING YEAR 4 OF OUR DEI STRATEGIC PLAN.

AND IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO TAKE A BROADER LOOK AND TRACK ALL OF THE PROGRESS THAT'S BEEN MADE ON THE MORE THAN 2300 -- YEAR FOUR DEI INITIATIVES.

GO TO [DIVERSITY.UMICH.EDU](https://diversity.umich.edu) AND CHECK OUT THE REPORT.

THIS REPORT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT, IT REPRESENTS ONE OF THE WAYS THAT WE HOLD OURSELVES ACCOUNTABLE AND ONE OF THE WAYS WE ARE TRANSPARENT TO OUR BROADER COMMUNITY IN REGARDS TO THE PROGRESS WE HAVE MADE AND MORE IMPORTANTLY THE PROGRESS THAT STILL NEEDS TO BE MADE.

I WANT TO TAKE THIS TIME TO BRING TO YOUR ATTENTION THE DEMOCRACY AND DEBATE THEME SEMESTER EVENT THAT WILL BE HAPPENING TODAY AT 4 PM AND IS ENTITLED: MUSIC FOR OUR TIMES, AND A TIME FOR OUR MUSIC.

VERY, VERY SIMILAR TO OUR DISCUSSIONS TODAY.

IT IS A DISCUSSION ABOUT MUSIC AND SOCIAL JUSTICE WITH FOUR EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE WHO HAVE DEDICATED THEIR CAREERS THROUGH THE POWER OF MUSIC TO MAKE CHANGE.

CHECK OUT THE DEI SUMMIT EVENTS PAGE OR THE DEMOCRACY AND DEBATE WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION.

AND FINALLY, I WANT TO TAKE THIS TIME TO THANK EVERYONE INVOLVED IN MAKING TODAY'S EVENT POSSIBLE INCLUDING THOSE WHO SUBMITTED THEIR CREATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS AND THE ARTIST'S PROFILES FOR A SUMMIT WEBSITE.

JOIN ME IN THANKING THEM. IT TAKES A LOT OF HARD WORK AND DEDICATION TO DO ALL THE THINGS THAT GOES INTO A PRODUCTION LIKE THIS.

IT TAKES EVEN MORE EFFORT TO DO SO UNDER THE CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES WITH REGARD TO THE PANDEMIC.

TO ALL OF YOU WHO HAVE PLAYED A PART IN PUTTING THIS WONDERFUL PRODUCTION ON, YOU HAVE MY HEART-FELT APPRECIATION AND GRATITUDE.

AND NOW I CANNOT LEAVE WITHOUT ALSO AGAIN ACKNOWLEDGING THE GREAT TALENT THAT HAS BEEN ON DISPLAY THIS MORNING FROM OUR COMMUNITY HERE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN.

JUST OUTSTANDING.

THANK YOU.

WE LEAVE YOU WITH A SONG BY MICHAEL TURNER WHO IS A PROGRAM DIRECTOR OF THE COLLEGE ADVISING CORPS IN THE CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH THIS SONG IS ENTITLED LET YOUR LIGHTS SHINE.

THE SONG FEATURES URBAN STRINGZ A YOUTH ARTS ORGANIZATION AND THE ACCOMPANYING ARTWORK IS THE COVER ILLUSTRATION OF A CHILDREN'S BOOK BY THREE GRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK. EMILY KU, JOYCE Y. LEE AND MAGGIE CHEN.

I WANT TO THANK YOU ALL FOR ATTENDING AND WISH YOU A GLORIOUS AND SAFE DAY. AND PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE DO NOT FORGET TO VOTE WHETHER IT IS TODAY, TOMORROW BUT MAKE SURE YOU VOTE BY NOVEMBER 3rd.

THANK YOU ALL AND HAVE A WONDERFUL DAY.

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