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“POLITICS OF PRESENCE” PLENARY

WESTERN ARTS ALLIANCE

AUGUST 26, 2018

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>> Good afternoon, everyone, we're going to get started in just a minute. We're going to get started in just a minute. If those of you at the back want to find your way to -- come forward and we'll sit and we'll get started in just a moment. Thanks for being here.

[Music]

>> Hello? Welcome to the 52nd Western Arts Alliance conference. I'm Eleanor Oldham, co director of 2Luck Concepts.

[Applause]

Hi.

And I'm the President of the Board of Western Arts Alliance. Welcome. It's great to see you all. As people still keep coming in, come on! Come very front.

Los Angeles has always been one of WAA's popular sites. And when we closed pre-registration few weeks ago, we had 805 registered attendees, up almost 10% from Las Vegas; that was already a big conference. So this is great. I believe now it's about 850. I think Tim told me that, so this is really great.

This conference is known as the friendly conference. [Laughter].

And I think that has a lot to do with us just getting back from vacation, everybody's kind of chill. So that's nice. [Laughter].

Oh. I lost my notes. What we're about here is stimulating conversations, it's about networking and so we were discussing all this at the new colleagues' session earlier on. And so it's about just exchanging ideas, discovering, going to see as many showcases as

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you can, meeting up with old colleagues, all those things that you do. And it's the friendly
conference because we can do all that and have fun. Page | 2

Okay. So for the 2019 conference, WAA. Has received generous support from the Andrew Mellon Foundation, the National Endowment For the Arts, West Staff, the L.A. County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, the Office of Cultural Affairs, the Oregon Arts Commission. Join me in thanking our foundation and public sector partners, thank you.

[Applause]

>> One other [indiscernible] is missing, I'm supposed to be here now. So, I'm trying to figure out -- so before you introduce, before you introduce Heather, we'll have Ed do the welcome to country. [Laughter].

Moving right along.

>> It's my pleasure to thank the sponsor of the opening plenary, "The Politics of Presence". The Broadway Center for the Performing Arts, the Edmond Center for the Arts and Portland Center for the Arts.

[Applause]

Putting this conference together is a big job for the board and staff. Especially for the staff, and I think we can have another little round of applause for the staff who worked so hard, thank you! Thank you, guys.

[Applause]

Leading our efforts for the, for 2019 is the L.A. Host Committee and I will introduce them in just a moment but that's why Tim came up here. So I'm just gonna -- I can sing you a little song while we're waiting. [Laughter] come on up front, don't leave any spaces, join us, it's gonna be a fabulous session. This session is gonna be, not our normal plenary

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keynote speech we're gonna have a call and response format with some wonderful speakers. And I'm very much looking forward to that. And I'm thinking of something else to say right now.

>> Ed, this is all on you.

>> Any advice for newcomers on honing our decision-making process? You guys put a lot up in front of us, being hard to pick what to choose and what not to.

>> Oh my goodness! Advice about that. What to choose and -- what do you mean, choosing above what and what?

>> The sessions to attend and sessions we'd love to attend but we couldn't because there's more than one going on.

>> That's absolutely true. Well, look for things that would benefit what you're looking for in this conference. You could also look for things that are quite outside of what you're looking for and say, you know, I may learn something new. That's my advice. You never know. Ed, thank God! [Laughter].

[Applause]

>> Every moment is a teachable moment. [Laughter] And what we have to learn here is about cultural competency. When we invite our Native relatives to be here, we open our space to them, things take the time that they take. And a lot of planning has gone in to the session; so our apologies in advance for delaying any of that. But in our world it takes what it takes. So we apologize for being a little behind but we did have some protocol that needed to happen between our hosts and our guests from Our Terrero now, those from the Gabrielino Band of Mission Indians.

>> Thank you.

[Applause]

>> Good evening. My name [Indiscernible] we are the inhabitants of the L.A. basin, we are the tribe that named the village Cucamonga, Cahuenga, and we come from [Indiscernible] is where the first San Gabriel Mission was going to be established here in [Indiscernible] California. We are Mesquizos because the first that arrived here were the Spanish, our grandfathers, great grandfathers, also were the Perez Nietos from Santa Fe springs, California. But most of all, I want to welcome all of you here. All of you have descended from other nations and those nations that are also a part of this event that also come from other nations this is a sacred area of our people. This was called Yangna. A place of the poison oak. Also in downtown there was a sacred sycamore tree that was in the center here of Los Angeles which there's a plaque today that still commemorates that sacred tree where other nations would walk from their long, long journeys in to L.A. just to commemorate and recognize the great ancestors of this land.

-- [lost audio] -- enter here of Los Angeles there's a lot today that commemorates, we're going to do for all of you here today also. I have some of my family members here, yesterday there was some of the elders here, but they're up in age and it's hard to get them up and down and all around town. We've got them big in downtown L.A., hard to get them around. So today with me are not only some of my tribal members but our family members because we are all family, our tribal people. So we have Charming here who's going to start off with the Four Directions and then I will continue with the opening prayer.

We're inside, we will look at the ceiling, but let's look up to the heaven and let's call on the great spirit so that he can hear us today and hear all of you that are here today. Hear us with our hearts and our minds.

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O, great spirit, whose voice we hear in the winds and whose breath is light to all,
hear us we are some of your many children, we are small and weak. We need your ^{Page | 5}
strength and wisdom. Make our eyes ever behold the red and purple sunsets, our hands
respect the things that you have created, our ears sharp to hear your voice. Make us wise
so we may know the things that you have or the lessons that you have left our children. The
message that you have hidden, maybe deep in rock. We seek your strength not to be
superior to our brothers and sisters but to be able to fight our greatest enemy, ourselves.
Make us ever ready to be with you ahead with a strong eye so when life fades as the fading
sunsets, our spirits can come to you without shame.

[Speaking another language]

Thank you. I'm gonna hand it over here to Dee Dee who will just quickly, I know that
we're on a tight schedule here, but she's going to open up with a welcome song.

>> A welcome song for the people, because of all the fires that are going on and
everything that is happening right now, we thought it would be better to do a blessing for our
Mother Earth so this is an original song in a language that has been lost for many, many
years, the song in our language for over 400 years.

[Singing] [Singing].

And what it says is, the fire in the sky, it is our ancestors. The fire in the land. It is
us. The fire in our hearts is what keeps us strong. May it comfort you, all of our nations.

>> Thank you.

[Applause]

>> Thank you so much. We appreciate you.

So, just finishing outside, that was a little confused but well worth waiting for.
Leading our efforts for the 2019 is the L.A. Host Committee chaired by my colleague

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Heather Rigby, deputy chief of L.A. County Department of Arts and Culture here to say a few words on the head of the committee, are Heather Rigby and Betto Gonzalez, ^{Page | 6} program associate at the Skirball Cultural Center and host Committee Member.

[Applause]

>> Hello! Hi, thank you so much for coming, I'm so happy to be representing the L.A. Host Committee if you served on the Host Committee, could you just please stand up quickly and if we can have a round of applause for all their service in helping to put together this wonderful conference today.

[Applause]

While supporting planning of the conference, the last Host Committee discussed ways to open the plenary and to provide a framing that gets us thinking about how we can enter in to community during our time together and how we can center values of equity, inclusion, and access.

>> Together, we developed a series of invitations to all of you that might guide our conversations and inspire connections between all of us as we move through this conference and build our complex and multifaceted community.

>> So we'll read those invitations now.

Let's talk about why we do what we do, how we got here and where we are going.

>> Let's articulate and activate our values, how can they manifest as practice, as process?

>> Let's be real about who our institutions were designed to serve, and how we define our communities. Who are we embracing and who is left out?

>> Let's think about the power that we hold, individually and collectively. How can we all leverage that power to positively impact our communities?

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>> We are more than our badges, our day jobs, our gigs, our side hustles. We are complex, complicated, whole people. Let's show up that way and be brave enough to see the wholeness of our colleagues.

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>> Let's believe that access to the arts is a right and not a privilege.

[Applause]

>> Thank you so much, thank you. Thank you, Betto.

We wish you a joyful conference experience, full of fruitful connections. So now I'll push us in to the next part of our presentation.

For this year's opening plenary, WAA wanted to offer a more substantive program. After a phone call from L.A.'s favorite arts maven, Ben Johnson, I saw Ben Johnson over there. Thanks, Ben!

[Cheers and Applause].

WAA Executive Director Tim Wilson was connected to Roberta Uno, Executive Director of Arts in a Changing America, also known as ArtChangeUs. It has been a privilege to work with Roberta and her team to put together the Politics of Presence. Thank you, Roberta, Kassandra, Daniela and Elizabeth, Kapena for your work and -- oh, yes, round of applause, you deserve it. To take us in to the politics of presence, it is my pleasure to introduce Daniela Alvarez. Daniela is the education and REFRAME journal coordinator for Arts in a Changing America, a five-year initiative based at the California Institute of the Arts and New York City. Also the newly appointed public programs coordinator at the Getty Museum of Los Angeles. Daniela, please join.

[Applause]

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>> DANIELA ALVAREZ: Thank you, Heather for that introduction. Good afternoon, everyone. I want to first begin by thanking Tim, Ed, and the L.A. WAA Host Committee for their guiding values and invitation to collaborate on this plenary today. Page | 8

The questions regarding how we define communities and the role of artists within them resonate deeply with the work of ArtChangeUs. We have focused on the demographic and cultural transformation in the U.S. as a critical moment to create new and equitable partnerships to strengthen and elevate artist leadership and cultural assets on the ground. We only work where we're invited and have been honored to organize ArtChangeUs programs in New York City, the S.F. Bay Area, Richmond, Virginia; Detroit; the Pine Ridge Reservation and Rapid City and the Twin Cities. We call the collaboration "REMAP" and each has taken different forms. This plenary is part of REMAP: L.A. which launched last April with the cultural equity summit that at its core brought heads of city art agencies from Los Angeles, New York City, Oakland, San Francisco, and Seattle. Today follows two days of deeper equity workshops this past Friday and Saturday on language justice, undoing racism, and unpacking ableism.

REMAP L.A. will close this January 2020 and we invite you all to imagine a new map. A forum that will take place at Red Cat and to artists-led participatory workshops throughout L.A. that will impact creative approaches to community engagement and finally we will also offer a series of cultural community benefits trainings on strategies towards equity for individual, institutional, and community work.

So the plenary today from the, stems from the last two years of ArtChangeUs planning. Meeting with and listening to various artists and organizations throughout Los Angeles. Two things repeatedly surfaced throughout our visits: The inequity in arts funding and the entwined issues of gentrification, place keeping, and belonging. These issues were happening in realtime. For example, in September 2017 we met with artistic director

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Michael John Garcez and it was announced they were leaving their space, their home of over 20 years due to rent hikes in the downtown area just Arts Districts.

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Many cities and locations across the country are facing an unprecedented acceleration and gentrification that threatens historic neighborhoods and communities. Artists have both been important resources in communities and harbingers of displacement. Arts organizations of color in historically marginalized neighborhoods are vital cultural anchors that provide community cohesion and inspiration. As many of you experienced yesterday at that powerful WAA pre conference in Crenshaw and Leimert Park.

They are facing ways of gentrification compounded by persistent underfunding and are also going a generational shift in leadership as organizations catalyze by civil rights era activism. In this plenary, we hope to uplift ideas on how the arts can play a larger role in advancing creative strategies towards a pluralistic community and country.

We'd like to hear perspectives on gentrification, place keeping, and belonging through a call and response. The call will be by Associate Professor of urban cities and planning at the Portland State University, Lisa Bates who will give an overview through data, policy, and the memory and policy of place anchored at her work in Portland. Following will be shorter response speakers who will reflect on the politics of presence from where they are located offering insights of different communities.

The respondents are: Dr. Mishuana Goeman, Tonawanda Band of Seneca, associate professor of gender studies, chair of American Indian studies Interdevelopmental program and the Special Advisor to the chancellor.

Former visual artist Jazmin Urrea, Scott Oshima and project manager for Sustainable Little Tokyo and performance poet, educator and community arts activist Kamau Daaood will give his perspective to the stage. Afterwards we'll invite everyone back to the configuration. Please join me in welcoming to the stage, Lisa Bates.

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[Applause]

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>> LISA BATES: Thank you. And let me first express my really deepest appreciation for the welcome that we have just been given and the blessing that we've been given. It is critical that we understand that we are on native land, we are also this weekend commemorating the beginning of chattel slavery on this continent with the first African Americans to arrive to what English colonists called Virginia. And I believe that is the, those two understandings are inextricably intertwined. We are connected deeply, indigenous and Black folks in this country in addressing the dehumanization of our peoples is at the core of my work and I know it's at the core of many of the artists in this room. I think we do our most powerful work when we understand those systems as being intertwined. And so again, I thank you so much for welcoming us and for your blessing.

I'm not a performing artist. I'm an urban planner. And I spent a lot of time with my students working on issues like zoning codes and development regulations, trying to figure out if we can reform our institutions of city making, of policy, processes to have a more equitable and more just way of living together in communities. But when we really want to think about how to transform how we live together in cities, how to confront the histories of our theft of native land, of slavery, of our oppressions along many intersecting identities, we need art to help us with that. Because we need a completely new imagination about how we live together. We don't just need to reform institutions, we need to dramatically transform the way that we live together.

And we don't just need art to be aesthetic or performative, although that's fun and wonderful; we need it to be a method of inquiry and investigation, of story-telling and to help us develop this radical new vision.

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My work is in Portland, Oregon. And I work with Black community in Portland. It's a place that in some ways is unique but in many ways is exactly the same as every other city in America. So when I say something has happened in Portland, you can sort of imagine in parentheses that I'm saying, and pretty much everywhere else. So in Portland, right now our city is governed by a real estate market logic that is displacing thousands of Black families from their historic community and homes, pushing them to the outer edges of the city.

We organize for tenants' rights, we organize for racial equity and policies, we organize for anti displacement work, and we are doing that in the recognition of a deep and long history of particularly anti-Black planning and policy making from redlining that segregated people and denied them investment to the utter destruction of our historic communities where Black families' homes were demolished in the path of highways and sports stadiums.

This kind of disregard for Black life and Black communities was baked in to the way that our cities were built.

So we need an urban planning that's gonna reallocate resources, create new housing policies, create new infrastructures. But we need art that will also help us to tell those stories, to confront those truths and to bring our communities back together. I look to the work of Karen Till who has used theater and dance in memory-keeping and place-keeping, place-making work. Recognizing that our ecological, social, political, and built environments have been hurt. They've been wounded by racist policies, by classist policies. That gentrification is a disruption and it's a trauma. And the story telling of art, the work that we do to keep those memories alive through performance let's us see those wounds because without seeing them, how could we ever stitch them closed?

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We need the meaning making of art to help us remember that Black life and Black communities are sacred.

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In the work that I do in Portland with my collaborator Sharita Towne, we have worked to bring forward pieces that undo demolitions, urban renewal, but also insist that the story that there aren't any Black people left in northeast Portland isn't real. We are here and we make living claims. For example, we have represented images where the City of Portland, the capital C city of Portland would prefer to leave its actions in the past, in the distant past showing in our old-timey black and white photo, the site of the Black business community, it was subject to an illegal condemnation action and demolished, essentially destroying Black wealth, Black community, vibrancy and a commercial area.

That didn't happen in the pre, the days of color photography. That action took place in 1972, just a few years before I was born. So we need to excavate and recall the real historical context of the actions that we've taken, not render them in the past.

Often times our public art is sanitized, it's depoliticized. It doesn't want to speak about these truths. We have in Portland our, a traffic diverter sharing with us one of the most sanitized and Anodyne quotes, and R.V. Smith, a celebration of Black life but it was appropriated as a mural on a side of a building that was heavily subsidized by the city and despite Black activists fighting for jobs and housing on that site, we didn't win any of those things, leaving folks with the question, do you want living black people in this community? Or would you rather see two de representations of diversity that don't connect at all, leave us in the past, leave us in the history and sanitize the story of what you've done here.

Sharita and I work to create a counter-memorial here in the shadow of a plaque that celebrates some of Oregon's white colonial founders. We placed a memorial in light to Black families and businesses that were demolished, their homes were demolished to make room for a sports stadium. We also projected the video and audio of elders speaking about

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the community, about their memories and their resistance to those. Down to our history, it needs to be clear about the violence of anti-Black planning and policy and also ^{Page | 13} really clear about the resilience and the persistence of Black life, because we still out here. In my planning work, we recognize yes, one of the things art can do is make a mark.

It leaves that mark and that claim in space. But we can also use it as a verb, as a method, as an inquiry; right? As a tool. If we said we want to build a city that recognized that Black people have a right to be in place and to make and shape place, we have no idea what that looks like. We don't yet know what a city is that's built on a solidarity of Black, indigenous, and people of color. That sees the world and re envisions the world through queer and trans ways of looking at things, that recognizes that we are all on a border land and abolishes those borders.

We need art to help us not only reflect where we are today but to tell us stories of where we could be going. A radical new spatial imaginary.

When we started the process of making this people's plan, we quickly realized that it couldn't be based on questions from urban planners, what's your preferred infrastructure alignment or what do you think about this urban design sketch up that we made. We had to start with the questions of our community, opening that up. And in doing so, we recognized that we have to work through and with these traumas to really dig deeply. How much anger do we have to swallow to demand the spaces that we deserve? What would it take? How much permission do we need to create these spaces for ourselves? One of the most powerful questions that we were able to ask: What would it look like if your city loved Black people? And in the words of one of our young participants, then it would be the best Portland that it pretends to be. Our city doesn't know how to love us yet. But we can begin to love ourselves.

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When we think about this dream, this vision, this imagination, right, art is integral to that. I am sure everyone in this room agrees that these are deep human needs to create, to generate; right? To tell stories and perform, new ways of seeing, new ways of thinking. In my profession in urban planning, we also believe we have a deep human need to organize and to work collectively, to work toward a common good. And we are moving toward understanding that we don't have a common good, we don't have a good city unless we have a just city. Doesn't matter how much composting or Kombucha, it's not gonna be okay until we can say that our city truly loves us.

So, we've rooted this work and I invite you to root with us in that idea of a Black imagination. After all, my ancestors imagined freedom on this continent beyond their wildest dreams. And thinking about what Kevin Young tells us about the Black imagination, it is not just the distraction, it is not an aesthetic, it is not a decoration that papers over the past. It is literally how we invent our way out of the traps that we're in. This imagination is going to derail oppression. This imagination creates the underground railroad.

We're imagining our own escape. And we need all of you to come along.

[Applause]

Well, as I mentioned, just about every city in the United States of America has done every planning that we've done in Portland. Everywhere that you live you can find a freeway and you can find a Black community that used to live there. Every city that you live in, you can find a map like that colorful, multicolored map that I showed you of redlining. Where people of color lived that couldn't receive any lending. You'll notice them because they'll either continue to be disinvested or they'll have many, many cranes in the sky right now.

So, these same practices have happened everywhere and in just about any place that anyone in this audience lives certainly on the West Coast there are very active movements rooted in the analysis that we have to start from thinking about individual lands and people, we have to start thinking about undoing anti-Black racism, we have to create a solidarity with people of color and then out from there to recognize new ideas and new visions for building new kinds of cities.

>> Thank you. Now I'd like to bring on to stage Dr. Mishuana Goeman.

[Applause]

>> MISHUANA GOEMAN: Hi, my name is Mishuana Goeman, I'm Tonawanda Band of Seneca, my reservation is outside of Buffalo, New York and I introduce myself and who I am because in our communities that's how we start. And it's not a matter of authenticating oneself but it's a matter of placing oneself. And when you place oneself, when you introduce yourself or acknowledge, you're also giving a political genealogy. And you're making reference towards a future that you may want to have, a future relationship with people that you may want to have. So when Native people introduce themselves or as we saw today, when you introduce yourself, you're putting yourself in relationship with people. And as such, you're also putting yourself, it's a reciprocal relationship that you're putting yourself in. In many ways I see art as similar to that; right? You make a piece of art, you introduce yourself as an artist. And you're putting yourself in relationship with the community and the public that views that, to move towards creating a better future and a better way of being in the world. So I'm very happy to be here tonight and I'm gonna just show a couple of slides while I talk here. And talk about the diversity, particularly of indigenous art in Los Angeles area. Now, L.A. has amazing native artists, for those of you not aware, L.A. has over 70,000 American Indian people in its borders, the Los Angeles

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basin. 70,000. Now, the Gabrielino Tongva people, they're a smaller subset and we can think about what it means in a second, what does it mean when you have over 70,000 Indian Americans that now call it home? The federal Indian policy that has displaced and moved native people off the reservation and large cities to become factory workers, et cetera. They become the presence, since this is about presence, that presence often is unknown. People still don't know when a child is in a classroom or when, or when the other people are at work with them, et cetera.

That, there isn't often a place to express who we are as indigenous people within those settings. Art provides that mechanism to do just that, to express who we are. Often teachers will tell me they find out who native children are through their art work, through their songs, and through that sort of expression. So when we think about art as a way to introduce our way to move in to that presence, I think this is also many elements to begin to think of indigenous futurities, and that's what I wanted to focus on. We asked the question, what is the historic and community memory mean to a sense of belonging to a place?

There is a sense of belonging to a place in Los Angeles for many people who came in the early 20s when Hollywood was booming to federal Indian policies when there was a large surge of American Indians who came to the city. To those who followed their family, to reach for employment, to work for employment and kind of, you know, volunteer, voluntarily came to Los Angeles to call it home. Many of these came to be artists, came to work, I'm one of those people. And when I came here, I introduced myself to the people whose land I was on and formed a relationship with them and I think a lot about the artists.

Here we have a young Artists, River Garza and this is a mural close to here, on a place called Winston Street and that itself was a place where UAI. The United American Indian Involvement with outcome to this space. We have beautiful, talented artists, I often get out of a hotel at a conference, it gets stuffy, I highly suggest you take a walk, about a

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two minute drive to Winston Street to see this in person but also see the artists such as Steven Paul Judd and other people that are also part of the establishing a presence there. Page | 17

Now, what we see here is a map, we heard our openers talk pretty much about a lot of these villages and so what we see on the wall here is Pimu is Catalina, if you take a look at that. But we are in Nyongna, in red there. And that's where it's at as well. When they start about this particular place on Winston Street where you find indigenous artwork and mural space, you'll see they didn't have a Gabrielino, Tongva presence. It's a powerful site and it's an act of decolonization, and that's what artists are trying to do, Craig Torres, a cultural educator, it's not about environmental issues or making a relationship to land or we often think too often about just the humans we also don't think about the non humans place based, what a lot of people in Los Angeles are thinking through is also place-based in that sense.

And it carries with it certain knowledge that we need to function and to live. Now here I wanted to also just show Pamela J. Peters, she's a Navajo artist. I think she's here. She's on her way, right over there.

She's a beautiful photographer who actually thinks about the history of Los Angeles and what it means to be a guest on this land. And what it meant for young people to come off the reservation of the 1950s what you see is a remaking of the exiles which is a famous movie by Peter McKenzie. But what you see here is the remaking called "Indians and Exiles" and we see the Los Angeles station. A lot of these students are UCLA students who are very sweet and actors themselves now.

They redid these scenes through Pamela's artwork where she was trying to capture and imagine what it was like for other people who came to this place to make a place-based situation also happen. So we also see here that many of those subjects of her photographs are people that may have been born in Los Angeles and grew up in Los Angeles, but they

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come from communities. They know where their homes are. It's called, it's a term I call, not to get too academic, sovereign mobility of indigenous people as we move back and forth to our homes and place. We don't lose those connections but we do make new connections to people as we move in to cities and urban places.

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In my community we have a political philosophy called extending the rafters, that is we extend our rafters to welcome people in and become part of a relationship that we have with them. Now, this is on Venice Beach, and I wanted to show this. She, what she does, Pamela does in her photography, she makes native presence known in these places. And in all these iconic places in Los Angeles and that awareness itself goes beyond just a representation of native people. It also begs the question what do I not know about the city? What do I not know about indigenous peoples?

Enter, I think about the, all the various artists such as Mercedes Dorme, Alvitre and Craig Torres, added to the reuse, reduce, recycle three R's but he talks about place based and what it means to be in relationship to native people in the city you're in, he calls it reciprocity, recognition, and respect. So that reciprocity becomes a key point of that. That is, we don't just represent indigenous people, but we go beyond that and act in reciprocity to that. So what does it mean in Los Angeles to be a guest on this land?

What does it mean not to be a settler? You don't have to be a settler basically is what I tell my students. You can enter in to relationship, you can enter in to dialogue. You can understand the histories of the various places, the history of Yangna itself is a very violent history but also one where we look at the Gabrielino peoples and they have survived in to the future and more than that, they are doing a lot of resurgence and that is coming through their art and through participating and making art out of their past whether that's through using archival collections that are in archeology labs or beyond. And that's where the significance comes for native people, place-based making and I'm out of town. Place

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making and thinking through, thinking through what it means to be here and what it means to engage with indigenous art which is a question of always asking for reciprocity, for always imagining as we heard in Lisa's talk, radical spatial imaginaries, and even what that means to be in relation to each other as we, as we think about what, what it means to be in relationship to spaces that have developed in Los Angeles we think also not just a return to the history, I encourage you all not to just think of indigenous people as recovering a history.

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But what they're doing in their art, to emerge and envision a future for indigenous futurities that will survive throughout and we see this art mostly, I see it a lot in the contemporary artists that I use from the skirt I'm wearing which is my aunt Fay Lone's skirt to my uncle's baskets skull horse Goeman and he recovered the moose hair baskets. We see these resurgences in our community of recovering these traditional practices, art practices. And those are what are also helping us remember our relationship to land and place and that process.

And so that's how I see indigenous art, I see it not as a reflection of the past or even a current reflection of individuality, but it's something that the ancestors give us in order to move forward and to imagine that future where we can thrive. So thank you.

[Applause]

>> Thank you, Mishuana. And now I would like to invite to the stage Jazmin Urrea.

[Applause]

>> JAZMIN URREA: Hello, everyone! I am super excited to be here! I want to thank WAA, Arts in a Changing America and all of you being here today. My name is Jazmin Urrea and I'm a visual artist born and raised in Compton, California for nine years of my life.

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I grew up and currently live in an area formerly known as South Central. More specifically, I live in the neighborhood of Watts, home of the Watts Towers. Page | 20

[Applause]

Just realized I was supposed to be on this slide. South L.A. is considered to be a disadvantaged area, a food desert and it is commonly referred to as the hood. I have shopped for groceries at liquor stores and currently work at a pre school, usually considered to be in the ghetto. But in reality, South L.A. is a cluster of underserved communities.

And it is the place that I call home.

My home influences me, it informs my identity and practice, and it serves as subject matter and inspiration.

There are several reasons why I chose to pursue art as a career choice. But one of the interesting reasons was being personally victimized by junk food. Specifically Flaming Hot Cheetos at age 12. I was hospitalized for an overindulgence, if you will, of Flaming Hot Cheetos. The doctors at first couldn't figure out what was wrong with me. I had my stomach pumped, several C.T. scans, several ultrasounds. Pretty much, the works.

I eventually had surgery for appendicitis and ovarian cysts. The doctors told my mother and I that the overindulgence left a hole and found the cyst by surprise. After a month of being hospitalized I was free to go. I was told it was okay to keep eating Hot Cheetos and to go back to my regular, sugary diet.

Fast forward a couple years later and my youngest sister is now 12. She began a battle with obesity and health-related issues as well. I saw her going down the same path as me. So I began making artwork with her about our diets during my undergraduate studies. This is where this piece, bon-bon stems from. In the piece you witness a masked figure being force fed and almost tortured. The force feeding is being done by multiple hands, including my sister's. I am the figure on the receiving end.

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One second, I want to let y'all watch it. [Laughter].

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It's almost done, I promise.

Fast forward two years later and I entered graduate school at Cal Arts. I started my graduate studies at a time when students were pushing back against the school for an unacceptable hiring practices and their lack of diversity in staff. I began to think of my race, family, culture and upbringing, what it meant to be a Latino coming in a predominantly white space. The predicament gave me motivation to create a voice for myself and it created my mid-res installation, "Jazmin, 15 Anos". I had music playing throughout the installation the week it was up and everyone to join me for a celebration coupled with tamales, horchata and Jamaica.

Here you can see a close up of my Damas and Chambelanes. They're all life-sized figures of myself.

[Laughter].

During my back and forth commute from South L.A. to Santa Clarita, I began to notice the food disparities in both cities. Santa Clarita has a Whole Food, the Trader Joe's, the Ralph's, all within a 10-minute drive or less. And for members of my community, it can take upwards of 25 to 30 minutes to get to the nearest Whole Foods to get access to organic foods. I also noticed a majority of my preschool students were eating Flaming Hot Cheetos for breakfast. It reminded me of my younger self again. All these factors led me to create my thesis exhibition, "Red 40".

To raise awareness of the food desert problem in Los Angeles. Red 40 was made with approximately 300 pounds of Flaming Hot Cheetos, that includes original lime and extra, extra, extra hot, Flaming Hot Cheetos. [Laughter].

The walls were covered with Flaming Hot Cheeto bags and we pasted 11 by 17 Xerox prints of Mexican candies. Without healthier edible alternatives, low income

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neighborhoods are polluted daily by the universal additives, red 40, yellow 5, yellow 6 and many others. These dyes are linked to cause allergies, attention deficit disorders in children and can contain cancer-causing chemicals.

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23.5 million people live in food deserts and with limited options, many people living in food deserts are, get their meals from convenient stores and fast food restaurants. This October, I along with 14 other artists will be participating in this year's current L.A. food public art tri annual. I'll begin creating my first public arts sculpture ever at Martin Luther King Jr. Park located in the neighborhood of ex Position Park.

[Cheers and Applause].

Unfortunately, I can't share with you all what it will look like. But I can tell you that it is titled "Imperishable" and it is accompanied by imperishable talks! And these talks are a series of talks that are organized with members of my community and with myself.

These conversations with free, open to the public, and they'll be ongoing from October 5th, sorry, through November 3rd. My goal for creating this two-part project is to empower my community and to create sustainability for these conversations to continue after the show comes down. For me it is crucial! To create a relationship with community leaders, students, teachers, and many others to create a platform for change and awareness. Thank you all!

[Cheers and Applause].

And I hope to see some of you there!

[Cheers and Applause].

Question? I finished early?

>> DANIELA ALVAREZ: Before I let you go off stage, I have a question. Do you still eat Hot Cheetos?

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>> JAZMIN URREA: Okay, I'm gonna tell you all the truth. I can't eat them as much as I used to before. But, like, I'll have one or two if someone has a bag. But not, ^{Page 1, 23} not, like, I used to. It's not as addictive anymore.

>> DANIELA ALVAREZ: Okay. I mean, full disclosure, I eat them too. Just wanted to know. Thank you, Jazmin!

>> JAZMIN URREA: Thank you, everyone!

>> DANIELA ALVAREZ: And now I would like to invite to the stage, Scott Oshima.

[Applause]

>> SCOTT OSHIMA: Hello, everyone, my pronouns are them, they, their and I'm the lead community organizer at the Japanese American cultural community center here in little Tokyo, here in Los Angeles.

So, JACCC is a hub for Japanese American arts and culture, as well as the many diverse voices that it inspires. We are also one of the three lead organizations in sustainable Little Tokyo. So sustainable is a group of organizations and people who came together to imagine a future for our neighborhood as one of three remaining historic Japanese towns, and we're working to make that vision and that future real.

And so for us -- oh, the "L" just jumped. So sustainability is cultural and historical, it is economic, and it is also environmental. A lot of folks are, like, oh, you do green stuff, oh, we do much more.

And so what began as a community development vision focusing on a fight for equitable development on the last three remaining pieces of public land left in the neighborhood evolved in to various community-driven and artist-driven projects that are meant to bring our community together to strengthen the neighborhood and then to make

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real and advocate for this longer-term development vision which seems really abstract for a lot of people. And so in, part of my response, I've been thinking a lot about this word, ^{Page | 24} ~~word,~~ ^{ibasho,} ~~word,~~ ^{ibasho.} It roughly translates to one where one exists or where one belongs. And for us, this work of creative place-keeping is, you know, not just about fighting for a place, it's about fighting for the memories that that place holds and the people, lives, and community that call this place home and call this place *ibasho*. And so -- oh, here's my family. So I am fourth-generation Japanese Chinese American and actually fourth generation in Los Angeles, my family's been here for a very long time. And for them and my Japanese American family, I was always told that I needed to support Little Tokyo because growing up in post war San Diego, this is one of the only places where they could come and feel welcome.

And then I wanted to share a little bit about this idea about community memories and how we carry them forward in our work. We have a community archive called Takachizu where community members give treasure as to what our neighborhoods feel valuable and find ways to help and support that. I'm gonna share some of the programs and ways that artists have found ways to carry these treasures in to the future. This is a photograph of a map pre World War II. Little Tokyo is only a quarter of the size that it was historically because of multiple ways of displacement, including the World War II Japanese American incarceration camps, the civic center expansion in the 50s and redevelopment in the 70s and 80s.

We also alongside that history of displacement have a long history of community activism. I work alongside a lot of the folks in this photo, actually. And we, want to recognize that fight, that's the only reason this community is still here today and also the creation of major cultural institutions like JACCC. This is a brick from the Atomic Cafe. We are faced with another wave of gentrification. This is from the Atomic Cafe, a Japanese American diner turned infamous punk rock venue, atomic Nancy whose historic building

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was destroyed to make way for the metro regional connector station, the second largest transit hub in all of L.A. County. This is a photo of Fugetsu-do, at 116 years old, ^{Page | 25} this is the oldest operating business, this is Bryan, his rent just tripled this year.

This is a photograph of FandangOndo at the Nisei week festival, just this past weekend, one of 15 of the major Japanese American cultural institutions in our neighborhood. This is a poem as much as we've lost many of the housing stock in our neighborhood, we are still home to many residents including folks living in affordable housing and a quarter of our residents are seniors.

And then this is a tree -- oh my God, two minutes! So, this is a grapefruit tree, our unofficial mascot. It was a tree that's 150 years old, older than Little Tokyo that was saved during redevelopment because it has witnessed our entire history and continues to bear fruit to this day.

So some of the projects -- so in the fight for more arts and cultural space, that's part of our vision, we did a takeover of this space on, called 341 First Street North on the historic First Street and a committee of artists organized two months with 23 events an exhibition, three pop up stores, community photo booths all to make real temporarily what we're fighting for.

It was book ended and kicked off actually by, that is Atomic Nancy, that brick I showed. She spun vinyl off the old jukebox to keep that legacy alive. We had Japanese American music reclamation performances and conversations, and response to working with, especially low-income residents, we had three youth art workshops as well as senior traditional calligraphy workshops. We had public art projects like windows of Little Tokyo commissioning temporary artworks on the windows of various institutions and small businesses in our community, including actually Fugetsu-do.

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That dancing that was shown in the Nisei Week the Ondo dancing, at this Fandang Festival, taking Odori but also bridging it with West African circle dance as well as the Mexican Veracruz to find ways that intersect in Little Tokyo. And that trifecta made unveiled last year as a giant puppet, as a part of the procession.

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Every year, this is a fun one. We pick the grapefruit from sunny the grapefruit tree and make cocktails. Because sometimes you just need to come together and drink!

[Cheers and Applause].

And it's also a fundraiser, don't worry. This upcoming year it's gonna be the fifth anniversary. And then there you can see the tree again with this protest fighting for First Street North at the Nisei week parade a year ago. And working with artists, it's made clear in this image has been a way to bring community together through accessible and engaging programs that are just fun, especially for folks that don't know what's going on in our community.

They are a way for us to remember what we're fighting for because we are so exhausted by the countless issues that we are facing that art is a way to express the community and culture that we are fighting for. And it also is a way to build a movement of folks that through the arts have come to love this community to feel that they also belong here and to work with us in fighting for the future of ibasho. Thank you!

>> DANIELA ALVAREZ: Thank you, Scott, I'm definitely going to the grapefruit cocktail night.

Now I'd like to invite to the stage our artistic response to this call and response, Kamau Daaood.

[Applause]

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>> KAMAU DAAOOD: Sometimes when you do a gig, the band that get around and sometimes we try to get ourselves together, you know, clear it out and say a little ^{Page | 27} prayer, you know, before the cats get in a circle.

And one of the saxophonists, his name is Justo Mario. I say Justo, say the prayer, man! He says, "Lord! Please help us to vacate ourselves!"

[Laughter].

And I believe in that, you know. I believe in that. I believe in that. Here, lord from the depth of us come. Hear, lord, from the depth of us come. Menders of mind, soothers of souls. Menders of minds, soother of souls. Healer from the depth of us come. Healer from the depth of us come.

Menders of minds, soother of souls. Menders of minds, soothers of souls.

Open the circle of wholeness, open the circle of wholeness.

Unblock the flow of goodness. Unblock the flow of goodness.

Build bridges to self and human kind. Bridges to self and human kind.

Come warriors to this place of chaos, a world that's out of tune.

This search for piece, this struggle within our breast.

Come with your urge and words and hands of warmth.

Come with your dance of memory.

Come with your sleeves rolled up.

Come with your holy water and your flame.

Come with your perfect pool of sweat.

Make the body sing, bring the family near.

Let the children hear the sacred beating in their chest.

Healer, from the depth of us come.

Healer, from the depth of us come.

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From the core of us, come.

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Menders of minds, soother of souls.

Menders of minds, soother of souls.

Dark wanderings.

How many hearts of shattered glass? How many homes like cracked egg shells?
How many bodies on streets with chalked halos? The dull-eyed assassins, the park bench
beds, the mumblers, the petrified tongues, how many grief soaked corners, how many faces
clocks?

The demon think tanks, the jack leg vampires? The jagged cars, the bruised
histories, the one-legged slow dancers, the dagger words of the red eyes, the deep dump of
failures?

Twisted ballet of mangled promises, futures hanging from a noose? Barbed wire
wrapped around human hearts, drive by relationships? How many, how many, how many
stuck in digital rat traps? How many brief cases are full of stolen dreams? Who are these
demons that we have created?

What rulers do we place above ourselves? What shackles do we wear like shiny
bracelets? What prisons do we decorate as temples?

What do we do when we don't know where to start? Our heart beating, breath
moving through a body, an open mind, a corner in which to gather strength and meaning,
daring to imagine light in the midst of darkness, sharpen the vision beyond us, stills, voices
calling us the madness, stop the blindly, stop moving blindly through the thoughts of others,
the high tech pimp manipulations branded on the mind dangling dollar bills out of reach
smoke screen and puppet strings a life not conscious of itself what yearning pulls the heart
towards destiny find this silk voice hear this true voice even in a crowd.

Moving in the loving direction of others, we are not alone. The family surrounds us.

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Grab this stillness with the will of spirit make this life this new music that we hear so dance, dance with your fist balled up. Dance, dance as your heart expands. Dance, dance, dance. Page | 29

The canvas stretched eternally in all directions, the clay of the earth at hand take the form of the wind and make an instrument that speaks in universal tongues about the wealth of our laughter, here in this room the masters meditating on love we can say little of revelation we only wish to remind encourage to dig deeper in to our moments the breath essence pull out the new colors waiting to be born the sounds that lift us the praise and jubilation sometimes we forget the value of now, movement and meaning promise and possibilities we can bend it this way we can open it up we can brighten it that way and extend it beyond infinity build this up and tear this down instill that we can round the corners of a square until it spins and swirls and spins and swirls we can paint this with apologies, we can paint this with apologies and forgiveness, we can grow in new directions.

The sky can be the floor, we can braid the nappy-haired rainbows in to the brilliant evening shores. We can construct our love songs out of silence, stack words to make them heal, the glue of this assemblage, our minds a stew of images morphed in to a sacred sound that washes the bitter from our pasts. We turn ourselves inside out, seeking our beginnings at the ends of ourself, the silence from our lips travels back to its source changed form and live forever, seated in a chair made of stars. Weeping to the beauty of the music of the spirits, outside the box is freedom. Inside they hid our keys, the shackles that bind are the ones we accept, the heart it truly has wings. Outside the box is freedom, inside the hid our keys, the shackles that bind are the ones we accept the heart, the heart, the heart, the heart [whispering].

[Cheers and Applause].

>> Thank you, everyone, just take that in, that was just wonderful. And now I would like to invite everyone back on to the stage for further conversation -- oh, we have ^{Page | 30} these chairs for all of you. All right. Let's dig in to this: I think just coming off of that wonderful performance, something that struck me was Kamau, when you said "what do we do when we don't know where to start". So if each of you could just speak to one action item that people here today can take away to incorporate in their work to create a sense of belonging within their community, what would that be?

>> SCOTT OSHIMA: So I think in Little Tokyo, seeing the Takachizu treasures for an example of what I ran through, a lot of what we begin, it is, like, already there that a lot of it is just, like, excavating, I think there's a lot of conversation about excavating and finding what is already beneath our feet in these cities and in these places and sometimes it's just uncovering those geographic but also historical connections that are already there and finding new ways to express them.

>> JAZMIN URREA: I think just starting to talk to your community leaders and get involved somehow. Make an effort.

>> LISA BATES: Yeah, I would say not to underestimate the powerful possibilities of creating a space, creating if it's a physical place or a meet-up that happens, that is just very open to hearing from people in the community about what it is that they actually want and want to see and want to reflect in to the art space, in to the urban space, just keeping it very open.

>> MISHUANA GOEMAN: I think for me, I think about presence a lot for native people. I think one of the first things people can do is know whose land you're on and understand what that means and not just in a historic way but also what that means in terms of reciprocity.

And thinking about not just inviting native people in, in terms of past of talking about native people in the past tense, there's a thing that often can happen, talking about people in the past even though you're right there as a native person. So I think those are, that's one of the elements that I believe is really important is not just having the acknowledgement but moving beyond that in to the intellectual, because native people have a lot to teach this world as we're learning now as the Amazon is burning.

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>> KAMAU DAAOOD: You know, I heard this Buddhist monk say that the only thing that belongs to us are our deeds that everything else, you know you're just passing through. You know, and so we kind of conceptualize this planet like there's a sense of ownership to the planet, you know? And rather than, so I think the beginning starts with the battlefield of mirrors, you know, in terms of us looking at ourselves and the core of our beliefs because if we looked at the planet, if we sincerely looked at the planet as a gift for an amount of time and we looked at each other as fellow travellers as brothers and sisters, it would be a different kind of concept. I know this is very, very idealistic. But I'm saying that's where the real work is in terms of shifting consciousness, consciousness how we think because all of us broke off our little piece and there are those who control, control so much of these little pieces from on high with dollar bills and with the consciousness that they hold, you know. And so I think that that, that's a beginning for some, I'm not -- it's not to say it's not being done but that's where the work is at. It's here and here, the mind and heart. You know.

[Applause]

>> DANIELA ALVAREZ: Yes. And I think as we've been talking about, the work that we do within our own communities, how do different communities of color come together and understand each other, each other's work?

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[Laughter].

>> SCOTT OSHIMA: Sure. I think the FandangObon Festival, created by two ^{Page | 32} artists, Nobuko Miyamoto and Peritez, and Kitsaro invited Kimoko to come, oh, this is interesting, participatory circle dancing, community, there's a little Yagura, Tamira stage. So I think what kind of flourished out of that was this festival that, you know, as I mentioned, it reconnects communities that have always been in Little Tokyo. It's a historic Japantown but it's always been an multiethnic community, in World War II it was known as the Bronzeville Community, and in the 70s and 80s, many of the residents were Latinx. So I think we recognize that those connections are already there and we're also at the intersections of many communities of color and so you know, creating opportunities and moments like Fandango to come together and be together and recognize the beauty and joy of what is here and what we're fighting for. So.

>> There's also really great support of work, the van port development, it was a huge war worker's housing development that was, you know, very racially diverse, a lot of black workers, native workers and it was also the, it was the relocation destination for Japanese, Japanese Americans returning from internment in Oregon. It became this integrated community and washed away by a catastrophic flood. So there was this work to recall these stories and talk about what Vanport was and the next step is to marry that to a political education, to understand what it meant. It wasn't just accidentally here's all these people of color living together on this place on the edge of town, that was nice. But there was, you know, there's a politics and a logic around why folks live there and then what happened to them after the flood and then sort of differential trajectory for folks when they lost those homes and why they weren't rebuilt.

So moving that to a political education, where we're talking about what does it mean to say decolonization, chattel slavery to understand the authorization of Asian people in the

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United States? What does it mean to understand ourselves as all being linked together by imperialism, colonialism? So there's kind of, we don't want to leave it just in this space of kind of the really wonderful and joyful work of coming together around these sort of performances but also to delve a little bit deeper, I think.

>> MISHUANA GOEMAN: I think I really believe in expansive relationships, and I see youth in those expansive relationships because many people come from different families, Latino and native or black and native, just in thinking through my family. I really believe in that, I know that there's going to be tensions and things at times so it's important to listen to each other and I see, you know, there's been a lot of tension around the 1619, you brought it up. And that was a misnaming, I think by an institution or the New York Times as something that could've been avoided, avoiding, like, sort of oppression Olympics and things like that, and rather thinking about how we can work together in understanding also that we're going to rub up against each other sometimes because sometimes, you know, we don't listen enough to each other.

I've learned so much from listening to my black feminist friends and organizing around that, those are the conversations that can really matter that can be brought up through art or can be brought out just through listening. We're going to be holding a tribal listening session for California Indians at UCLA and that's important to do, to have those listening sessions and, like, we talk a lot about how to communicate with each other, sometimes we don't talk about how to listen to each other. So.

>> KAMAU DAAOOD: You know, the search for our commonness, you know, like, most, I guess mostly everybody's tears are salty in this room, you know. And the common language of laughter, you know, those things that are just -- and then you know, like, when you get in to those, like, those festivals and art shows and big openings where, you know, there's music and everything like that, you know, there's a setting where, you know, we're

sitting next to people that we don't know a lot of times and we find our commonness, you know? We're not in a, in the zone where it's, that's threatening and the air is light and lifted.^{Page | 34}
But again, I go back to, I go back to in terms of what we are open to in terms of our own heads. I know because, you know, when I was a youngster coming up you know, like, I came out of the [Indiscernible] workshop, I've been in this work for 50 years, you know, and I start studying about my history and stuff like that and really was a disciple of Malcolm X. And then I was just angry. And then so when I looked with my eyes and looked at people and I saw a color, you know, I -- that was the enemy. You know? I mean, that's the way, I looked at the world. And then I had mentors like John Outterbridge at the Tower Center and he took that anger and channelled it in to something else and then humanized people and when you begin to see people as people and you're not so quick to judge because I see the same thing in Leimert Park, I'm gonna be quick as I can.

>> DANIELA ALVAREZ: No worries.

>> KAMAU DAAOOD: In Leimert Park, we, I grew up not far from Leimert Park. My father played football at UCLA and then, in '59 we moved over in that area. And we were about five black families on the block. So when we come in the Leimert Park area, we, a lot of times we over there fighting white boys, you know? I mean because, just because we black in a white neighborhood. Now that's, it's come full circle again and now the so-called gentrification that's coming in to Leimert Park and basically, it's young kids from the West side who are coming over there because they can't afford where they used to live and their parents are helping them come to that direction and they see the development that's coming in that area.

But it's the same process, you know? I started doing a T-shirt, have you come to live with us or have you come to take over? And they walk, they walked on the street and they

won't, with the dogs and all that and they won't even, and they won't even engage in you.

They won't, they won't nod their head, but I know it's fear.

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But then on the flip side of that there are young black people, see the people in the neighborhood and they're angry at them because they haven't got those skills to see people as people and to judge -- and so they selling wolf tickets at them and, you know, and so, you know? It's self-development. It's consciousness. You know, what change, what is it just gonna change people? How can you put something proper in a orange head and make it light? You know? Orange head, you know. Orange head do -- I don't know, man.

[Laughter].

But what can you put in to that that enlightens that? I won't say nothing further.

>> DANIELA ALVAREZ: Oh, wait.

>> JAZMIN URREA: I was just gonna say I second everything my colleagues have to say.

[Laughter].

>> DANIELA ALVAREZ: We've got time if you want to expand on that.

>> JAZMIN URREA: I just think having an open mind and not assuming also that you just know everything and coming in to a community and assuming -- you know, like, thinking that you know what is best for everyone? I think that's also something to be aware of.

>> DANIELA ALVAREZ: And I think we can all recognize that the work that you all are doing and what a lot of artists are doing out here, it can be really deep and it can be really heavy. So how do you sustain that kind of work talking about self-care, financially, like, how do you do this work? Is that a heavy question?

>> Day job.

>> DANIELA ALVAREZ: Wow, that's deep!

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>> LISA BATES: So we were talking yesterday, I always remember to smile during my presentation because sometimes I can make a really mean face. Well, Daniela^{Page | 36} said you're talking about something heavy but in the reality of doing the work, it's often very light because it does -- yes. There is been racist oppression forever and also we're living in joy every day, we're together you know, celebrating even within hardship and laughing and the humor of black people, the music, the joy, just the entertainment that we have derived [sic] and the past few weeks over a fast food chicken sandwich on the Internet alone is enough self-care to drive me for months! I don't even eat the sandwich, but I can laugh about it!

[Laughter].

>> KAMAU DAAOOD: My mentor John Outterbridge said that being an artist is like being wounded with a blessing, you know? Being an artist is like being wounded with a blessing. I look at my life, five kids, wife 42 years, you know, and basically, it's been like a cat trying to chase two mice, you know, trying to be the artist over here and what I'm gonna do to bring in the money over here and that thing. I mean, I turn 69 July 12th and I said forget it, man. I'm an artist! But that's, you know, that's what these cats and catresses [sic] go to. They go to school and they teach and find ways to do that but especially if you're like a fine artist and you've got all these concepts in your head and you're making a room full of Cheetos and stuff like that!

[Laughter].

Like, wow, you know? How am I gonna get paid for that, who pays for that? You know?

>> MISHUANA GOEMAN: I have to say I'm very fortunate to be a tenured professor, it was a hard road to get there but I see my role as bringing artists and people in particular in to the university or trying to support young artists whenever I can and trying to open up indigenous spaces because in this city there's very few places for, to hold because

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of the way gentrification has worked and because of the way erasure and disavowal of native people have worked in this city. There's not the spaces often even at UCLA it's very hard to get a space at UCLA, we're a little overcrowded. But I try to bring artists in whenever I can. I got you on speed dial, my students would love that Hot Cheetos, that's all they do when I lecture is eat Hot Cheetos all day. But, you know, it's supporting and trying to make channels, reading artist grants and things like that anyway I can help, there might have been a dangerous thing to say in this room. But that's the, that's the way I think those of us who aren't artists should help is open up and make spaces especially for people of color and indigenous people and that is what I see my role as doing.

And that actually helps me with the self-care because sometimes I'd much rather work with artists than grade a bunch of papers sometimes, those kind of things. It gives me inspiration, I'm truly inspired, I've been inspired, Pamela Peters was my student and I'm truly inspired by her artwork and what it's become. So there's a reciprocity that kind of relationship that exists in those moments. I know there's many people like me too that would love to bring more artists in. Fund education better would be one.

>> DANIELA ALVAREZ: And I think how can artists, you know, and what they create and what they put out in the world, how can they ensure that what, that all that doesn't get co opted or used as a tool for gentrification?

>> JAZMIN URREA: I think that definitely has a lot to do with the artists researching where they will be showing and the opportunities that they're getting and, like, an artist basically taking a stand for themselves. Like, am I going to be showing at this spot that, you know, was problematic? Like, I think that's something that the artist has to reconcile within themselves and, like, make sure that they're, you know, staying true to themselves and not causing gentrification and other terrible things to go down.

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>> LISA BATES: So I get asked this question all the time because most of my work and research is about gentrification. And the thing I like to point out is people think that artists are the first wave of gentrification because they view artists as making neighborhoods safer for the consumption of white middle class people.

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So my question to you as artists is, how can your art be way more dangerous?

[Cheers and Applause].

>> MISHUANA GOEMAN: In a lot of my community work there's a lot of projects rights now in L.A. about cleaning up the L.A. River, cleaning up Ballona Creek in Culver City, and the tribal people I work with, they have concerns because we're bringing in artists but what happens when you clean up those spaces? What has happened? They see time and time again, they have a longevity of time immemorial of spaces in L.A., and what that means. They get cleaned up and they ask native people for their knowledge of the land and also their art and then it gets turned over to the State and this happened close by here with the Cornfield Project that I'm sure many of you -- it got turned over to the State. You know, so there is a fear of what that means to do those clean-up projects on something we should all be doing which is cleaning up the toxins in L.A., right?

>> KAMAU DAAOOD: Yeah, you know what, one of the things, part of it is consciousness and the other part is money, you know? And that basically like in Leimert Park, you know, I'm watching the, you know, what's going on there and the thing is that the same pattern what you just said, we came in there, like, in the 80s, you know, the boarded up buildings and, you know, and the artists took over the space, you know, took over the space and put coffee house in there, dance and all these different things, music and all that kind of stuff.

And then they start having charades, I think that's what they call them, these studies, these think tanks and pulling the information from the community and then they get all these

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things and start making all these plans and stuff like that. And then, then what happens is people get wind of oh, look what's happening down there and the next thing all the corporate interests and all the developers and all that, that stuff kind of get involved.

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But the thing is if people, you know, if conscious people with money would invest, you know, we made the mistake at the organization called the world stage, you know, and we didn't have --

[Cheers and Applause].

-- you know, we didn't have any, we were just a collective of artists and had, we had the wherewithal or the allied with conscious people to buy the building, you know, and investment down there and buy the building down there, it would've been a total different story down there. You know, because, because the buildings were available, I mean you could --

>> LISA BATES: I mean, I think it's important, yes, there is a connection that's been seen between our artists being in a place and not particular place gentrifying, but our place doesn't make gentrification. Gentrification is made by capitalism, a system of investing in real estate and turning land in to property and making that valuable. And so our art is also not gonna stop that from happening. But what it can do is, you know, work together with a people who are organizing for power; right? Who are organizing to say that the interest of us as human beings, the interest of us as a community needs to become more powerful than the interest of the small number of people who make a large sum of money by investing in places on their terms.

[Applause]

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>> KAMAU DAAOOD: I agree with you. But we got jammed up, like, this was the thing. They own the property, they can do what they want with their property. You know, ^{Page | 40} and, you know, because it was an arms dealer that was taking over the spaces and using the space to fill the places up with, with the arms, you know? And, I mean, it was crazy. And -- but, I mean, you know, Marlie Gibbs she bought a building around there, she bought the Vision Theater over there and she tried to work it as best she could. I think her monthly note was something like \$30,000 a month for the, you know, for the building. And then she had to let it go. She did make that effort and I want to acknowledge Marlie for doing that because a lot of people in Hollywood, you know, they don't always do that kind of work, you know? But it's not no easy solution to this.

But organization is, I mean, there's only certain things that people respond to. Either they're gonna do something out the kindness of their heart or there's something that they're being forced to do, you know, something in their face that's hurting them or that's, you know, that's the only thing that changes them, it makes those in power do something that they may not want to do. If they're not a shift in consciousness.

>> MISHUANA GOEMAN: I think it's thinking outside of the boxes, I think of what Karina Gould has done, she made volunteer tax but it's been used as this community garden not just for native people to have philosophies but bringing everybody in, children where art work is done, community gardening, et cetera. So I think she has this great film I highly recommend called "Beyond Recognition" so it's thinking outside of these disciplinary boxes and institutional boxes really and for the Ohlone, that's thinking outside of state politics. But, you know, thinking outside those boxes in relation to each other is key so there are lots of people from the communities supporting that, not necessarily the big donors or anything. So it's a great way to turn capitalism on its head, because it is about turning land

in to property and the way that works with gentrification in Oakland has a particular long history that begins with settler colonialism.

>> DANIELA ALVAREZ: And now I'd like to invite our speakers for just any final thoughts and comments. Let's start with Jazmin!

>> JAZMIN URREA: No, I just am really thankful that WAA, ArtChangeUs and all of you were here, thank you so much for having me, this was my first conference talk! So, thank you!

>> DANIELA ALVAREZ: She killed it!

[Cheers and Applause].

>> JAZMIN URREA: And I learned a lot.

>> SCOTT OSHIMA: Yeah, I mean I think it's just been exciting to be alongside all of you, the speakers and just hearing obviously the work that we're doing, we're not doing alone in silence, this is happening all over and excited to find ways to start connecting in this work.

>> LISA BATES: Can I say something slightly more pointed? Which is that I think that for folks in the room who are in dominant culture institutions, that it's time to start thinking about what it is that you need to give up in order for other people to flourish, what are those resources, opportunities, seats at what tables you actually need to let go of.

>> MISHUANA GOEMAN: I like that a lot.

I also, I also just like to leave, like, you know all of you in this room, you know, know who the native artists are from the areas where you're from, invite them to the table because there's such a lack of institutional support along those lines, so get to know that and it's a great way to know space and place through your native local artists and how that works itself out, so I highly recommend doing that.

And just thank you all for listening.

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>> KAMAU DAAOOD: I just, I'm inspired by the youth on this panel here and the, to see these young bright minds, you know, moving on the world like that, it makes me feel good. And I see, I can see, you know? I can see a future. So thank you all.

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And then I would just ask that we, you know, each and every one of us find someplace that we can start or that we can continue in terms of doing the work, you know? Because like in a dark room, everybody starts turning on a light and turning on a light oh, the next thing you know, the room is light. And then there's something in here that everybody can do whether it's supporting the artists, whether it's changing the backward attitude, whether it's, you know, supporting an organization or whatever it is, there's something in the air that all of us can do, you know? Even if it's destroying the crazy thought within ourselves.

>> DANIELA ALVAREZ: Can we give it up to all of our wonderful speakers today! They have been amazing!

[Cheers and Applause].

Thank you, Jazmin, Scott, Lisa, Mishuana, and Kamau. And I also just want to give a huge shout out to Tim and his wonderful WAA staff. Shout out to the ArtChangeUs team, Kapena, Kassandra, Elizabeth, Morgan and our fearless director Roberta Uno. And also shout out to Ben Johnson from the LADCA. He's always connecting good people together! Thank you all!

Reception outside.

>> Thank you, everybody! And thanks for staying here, join us for the reception out the doors, out the doors, not outdoors, hosted by the L.A. Host Committee and L.A. Tourism Board. Join us outside. Thank you all!

[Plenary has ended 6:00 P.M.]