

RAC Conference

Quote

- “What hurts the victim most is not the physical cruelty of the oppressor, but the silence of the bystander.” –Elie Wiesel, writer and Holocaust survivor

What can I do?

- I am not a legislator or law enforcement officer. I am an artist and a teacher.
- The reason that I chose to work in the arts is that I recognized art as an enormous umbrella that accommodates all of life. Within the arts everyone has an opportunity to be heard. It does not matter what your gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, religion or race might be. It is all given voice within the arts.
- The history of humanity is found within museums and galleries. Every work of art is a moment in time. It is an expression of humanity. An exploration that questions what is to be alive.
- With all of these different points of view presented under the umbrella of art, we as spectators are given the opportunity to experience different points of view. If you are able to see things from another person’s point of view it is much harder to hate.
- Hatred and bigotry are not natural to us. These are things that are taught and learned. This is systemic racism and this is the cycle we are trying to break.
- Art is the way a society sees itself and the way that it wants to be seen.

What Change Would I Like to See

- I want to see a society where an individual will not fire an automatic weapon into a church, or drive a car in to a crowd of people. I want it to be incomprehensible that a

human being could shoot an unarmed man 7 times in the back or a convenience store clerk could shoot an unarmed teenage girl point-blank in the back of the head.

How Do We Use the Arts to Create Change?

- Sesame Street celebrated its 50th anniversary this year. The show was created with an objective of creating social equality. It has used art and entertainment to educate. The show has handled issues like race, gender, death and sexual orientation. It was the first children's show to demonstrate racial and cultural diversity.
- Arts can communicate the struggle of people of color in America and the rest of the world.
- The study of the civil rights movement in America is not only the story of people of color in America; it is the story of America. The civil rights movement is founded in the idea of non-violent protest. It asked for equality for all men and women. It has inspired and provided guidance for many individuals and organizations to seek and achieve equality. When the Berlin Wall fell, crowds on both sides sang "We Shall Overcome", the anthem of the civil rights movement.

The Desired Result

- On 2/14/21 I was driving to Shepherdstown to visit my mother and sister. It is a five-hour drive. I listened to talk radio to pass the time. Two-hours into the drive, a story comes across the radio about the LAPD. At this point, I had been researching the civil rights movement at a furious pace. I was preparing the teaching program that I will be presenting in the immediate future. The story was about the LAPD circulating a Valentine's card with an image of George Floyd with the text "You Take My Breath Away". I was rocked to my core. For the next 3 hours of the drive, I could not shake the story. When I arrived at my sister's, I was a mess. I was so hurt by the lack of

humanity demonstrated by the LAPD and human beings in general. I believe that we need to allow and encourage the students to find that emotion. Empathy and compassion. That is how we create change.

The Bucket Brigade

- Before we were able to pressurize and project water, we were dependent upon the bucket brigade. If your house or barn was on fire, you relied on your family and neighbors to carry water from a water source like a well or creek or river to your structure. If you had two individuals, your house would burn. If you had two hundred people passing buckets, your house might survive. Right now, the house is on fire. I believe that the more people we have passing buckets, the better chance we have of surviving and moving forward.

The Washington Square Arch

- I attended NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. The building sat on the edge of Washington Square Park. I spent a lot of time in the park. We often had drawing exercises in the park. The arch that defines the park has a statement that has always stuck with me. "Let Us Raise a Standard to Which the Wise and Honest Can Repair. The event is in the hand of God." This statement reminds me of our humanity. No one is perfect and we have to expect that we will falter and fail. What defines us is that we continue to move forward towards a society that is free of discrimination and prejudice.