

File Name: BUF_040222_ART2

Event Date: April 2, 2022

Location: Buffalo, NY, USA

Participants:

ASHLEY POWELL

RENEE BROWN

YAO KAHLIL NEWKIRK

AYANA MCKOY

TAYRON LOPEZ

INEIL QUARAN

AQUEIRA OSHUN

Length: 01:28:42

Preface

The following conversation was hosted virtually over ZOOM, facilitated by jina valentine, in collaboration with the Burchfield-Penney Art Center. Consent was given by the participants to have their conversation recorded and transcribed.

Readers should keep in mind that they are reading a transcript of the spoken word and are encouraged to refer directly to the original audio if possible as some interactions and utterances may not have been transcribed due to the nature of unscripted group conversations. The views, thoughts, and opinions expressed in the text belong solely to the roundtable participants and do not necessarily reflect the views of Black Lunch Table.

START OF RECORDING

JINA VALENTINE: I guess the other question is, is everybody able to access the cards okay?

Unknown: Yeah.

Unknown: Yeah, cool. Great.

JV: Um, I think that's it. Have a good conversation. See you, we'll send you, I'll send you like a twenty-five minute warning and a five minute warning before we have to wrap.

YKN: Thank you.

JV: Thank you. All right. See you soon, thank you.

RB: Where are the cards?

JV: Um, uh [laughs] Here, it's blacklunchtable.com/buffalo, all lower case. Here you go. It's up on the chat now. And if you go there there's a little link that says, uh, it says "Art, Art Roundtable cards." See it?

RB: Under "Jina?"

Speaker 1: No, do you see in the, the chat? Are you able to--,

RB: Under the chat.

Unknown: Okay.

RB: Uh, I, black lunch, it's under blacklunchtable?

JV: Oh, yeah, I'm probably showing up as--,

RB: Your name?

JV: Yeah, Jina. JINA

RB: Okay.

JV: And if you just highlight that link.

RB: Yeah, but they're not coming.

YKN: I have the cards.

JV: So, yeah, so you can share a screen too, that's one way to do it.

YKN: Okay.

JV: Right, there you go. Um, I think you should be able to message me or [inaudible: 00:01:29.24] in the, in the tech support during the conversation.

Unknown: Okay.

[00:01:34.29]

JV: All right, thank you.

YKN: Let me share the screen. Make it easier. Hmm...right, can everyone see this?

[00:01:47.25]

RB: Yeah. I see it.

YKN: So, I guess I'll, I'm going to randomize this. Let's see.

IQ: [inaudible: 00:01:57.21] everyone doing?

YKN: *How has your community changed since you became a part of it?*

[00:02:07.05]

AP: Drastically and dramatically. Um, [inaudible: 00:02:12.11] when I first started socio political artwork, like back in, what was it, 2010, or 2009 -- um, I was in Southeast Missouri, in a little town called [inaudible: 00:02:27.10] Hejuardo. And everything that I made about like Black issues and white diaspora had so much, um, pushback from everyone, like including uh, the local Black population there. And they would say, like 'we've come so far and you're complaining and people like you just want to stir up noise.' And then a few years later they're all running around shouting Black Lives Matter and I was like: 'well, I'm happy we changed our tune.' Um, and everybody, they all with the cause but it's very interesting, from, from how it started out to where it is now.

[00:03:03.09]

RB: Uh, can you hear me?

YKN: Yes.

RB: Okay, there was, uh, a few years ago there was a call, there wasn't a call for artists to do the, um, the mural that's currently up now in Buffalo, on the corner of Ferry. So, I appro--, at a meeting, at a community meeting I approached the head of the Albright and I said 'there's plenty of Black artists in Buffalo.' They had chosen one Caucasian. And I said -- and I never saw the call. Not that I want to scale a building, but um, I, I knew that there were uh, Black artists in Buffalo. And so it seems like uh, a ripple effect. It's, things are just changing. They got Black artists too, and they're being more open and receptive but I did go and tell them: 'there are artists in this community and I never saw that call.' You know? That's, so things have changed here in Buffalo, locally, I think. They're more receptive and they're creating programs and opportunities. So, lot of things came out of that. And continue.

[00:04:24.27]

IQ: Um, so I have a, a clarifying question cause I-I needed to move cause my space [inaudible: 00:04:32.21] out. Um, is, change [inaudible: 00:04:40.27] is that a question. I've always been a part of my community. But like, talking about something specific, like if you joined an institution or something?

[00:04:55.05]

AP: Um, it's not necessarily specific. It's just how you just relate to the question. It's like I-I talked about my experience in college and Renee talked about a specific experience in Buffalo. So it's just however you relate to it.

[00:05:10.27]

YKN: Yeah, I think it's, uh, it's really about how you define your community. And

that's very, it's really broad, so whatever your community is, you can speak to that.

[00:05:24.14]

IQ: Okay, um, well, I guess my community has changed since I -- mm, I guess I created like intentional space. Um, definitely as like more [inaudible: 00:05:51.11] um, I have my own [inaudible: 00:05:55.01] group and so we do [inaudible: 00:05:58.12] in the same place. Uh, there's like more 1hip hop has opproutnity. Um, give things to like white [inaudible: 00:06:17.22]. You know, people kinda still associate hip hop and punk with violence. But I think like more things have changed especially with like [inaudible: 00:06:28.17] when there's more eyes on Buffalo, so I think that more people are more open to having different artists performing. Um, at the same time I don't know what that looks like in a long term, but I think currently it's helped people to kinda -- and talked about what I've been doing, like it's helped people like practice their skill set. So, then when they want to open for somebody like -- um, I know an artist who, they really didn't have a lot of professional opprotunites prior to just doing open mics and we would pay people. Um, and would pay people like a good, um, fee, cause some people trying to pay artists like twenty dollars or whatever. And we use fifty, given bands, you know, want fifty, two hundred. Um, even if there's their first time performing just so we could [inaudible: 00:07:25.01] with their, [inaudible: 00:07:30.08] your um, [inaudible: 00:07:33.16]. For [inaudible: 00:07:38.11] I look up [inaudible: 00:07:42.10] people, stage presence [inaudible: 00:07:50.13].

[00:07:45.24]

YKN: [inaudible: 00:07:50.14] we also don't have to do anything in any particular order. I mean I, and people want to pass on any card, we can always pass on the card

too. So, uh, they're just, we'll focus on number four: So, *How do you keep acquiring and practicing skills and avoid performative* [inaudible: 00:08:09.18]?

[00:08:13.05]

AP: I can relate to this question [laughs]

IQ: I can [inaudible: 00:08:17.29] at odds. I like shifting things [inaudible: 00:08:24.15] on, uh--,

AP: You're breaking up a little bit. Sorry to interrupt. I said you're breaking up a little bit. Sorry to interrupt.

[00:08:34.22]

IQ: I don't know what I can do about that. Just, it's too bad, then I [inaudible: 00:08:44.29] um, [inaudible: 00:08:50.24] getting in, like uh, [inaudible: 00:08:54.12] to me, it looks like not only giving people money, you know what I mean? But it's also it's like [inaudible: 00:09:01.24] community like, how people have to go to the [inaudible: 00:09:09.19] put people in real um, situation and not -- is, is things that I can do. And I think like in Buffalo because we're not New York City, we're not Toronto, we're not Atlanta, um, it's really good when people do go outside and bring resources, like tangible resources um, back into the community. And I know something that I try to tell people, because it's kind of a, I think over-hyping of like different metropolitan cities, um, specifically New York city. It's like, yo, Toronto is two hours away. You know, if you don't have anything, you know on your record because you know, you can't cross the border like that, but it's like for people who do or, or who can cross the border it's like you know, go there, get what you can. It's only two hours away and come back and bring that back to the community. You know what I mean? Um, and also there's more things that are

more remote now. So, I think just being real.

[00:10:13.11]

AM: I'll chime in on that question as well. Can everybody hear me clearly?

Unknown: Yes.

Unknown: Yes.

AM: Yeah, so: *How do you keep acquiring skills and practicing your skills and avoiding performative allyship?* I specifically work within many disciplines of arts. Um, but I primarily focus on, um, urbanatical tran-sustainable arts. Um, so me personally, I like to focus on Indigenous ways, um, that my people and where I come from, um, likes to grow things. And how we use, uh, sustainability, um, ethnically in, in the way that I was brought up. I am specifically Afro Caribbean. Um, my parents are from the islands. My parents are from Panama. And then I have one grandfather who is Southern African American. Um, and sustainability, to me, looks like you know, bags inside of bags. I'm pretty sure everybody has their house, look like you save your bags and you know, you, you store them somewhere and you use them for anything that you need, you know? Um, reusing uh, old, uh, old t-shirts as washcloths on Sunday morning to, to clean your apartment or your house. Um, and then just recycling those things, you know? D-I-Y-ing old shirts from the thrift store or um, bleaching them and then creating your own works um, using your grandmothers or, or your parents old clothes to, to sew different materials or sew different looks. Um, that's what sustainable arts means to me. And just using what you have, using, you know, we don't necessarily have an abundance but we have what we have and we create new things, regenerative things from those things and that's culture. And that culture forms art. Um, so in, in avoiding performative

allyship, I just encourage everyone else with different ethnicities to hone in on uh, the, the authentic intricacies that their culture provides to them. We can just accentuate those things proudly. Um, and then we, we have a discourse. We become together and we, we build and we share things of our, of our culture that could [inaudible: 00:12:34.11] to all of us. Um, and that's pretty it, that's pretty much it to me.

[00:12:38.26]

YKN: Beautiful. Thank you for sharing that. Are we comfortable going to the next card or anybody else want to chime in?

AM: I would actually love to know who, who I'm all, like who I'm talking to. And I'm familiar with you, Kahlil. I met you at your recent, uh, performance.

YKN: Yes.

AM: At the African American Corridor. And that was lovely. That was a beautiful event. I loved that play. Um, I'm familiar with you, Taitan. You are a studio artist. Um, at the UB. Um, at UB North Campus. Culture, arts. Does everybody, can we go around and just say what we do and, and how we, how we got to Black Lunch Table before we go into any more questions?

[00:13:27.09]

AP: Okay, well, I'll um, I'll start out. That's an excellent idea. I'm, so my name's Ashley Powell. I'm from Chicago. The way that I got to Black Lunch Table is I met, um, Renata and I had the, and was a part of the art community when I was going to grad school, um, at UB. And um, I did like this really controversial art piece back in 2015 that had like a whirlwind of controversy. The, the BFU was trying to get me expelled and I was getting hate mail and death threats mailed to the school. It was traumatic and

bananas but it did open up a lot of not only opportunities but um, conversations. And the reason I'm here now is because I'm actually, what I call "re-emerging" from my depression. Um, after grad school I had like this five year fit of like the worst depression ever. And then last year a bunch of cosmic horrible shit happened to me -- sorry, it's my language -- um, and at this moment my art practice not only focuses on sociopolitical issues but right now it's really seeped in mental health and redeveloping self hood after being completely mentally and physically obliterated. Um, so right now it's mainly focusing on writing. Because the way that my practice goes in general is I write, write, write, write and then the actual art can be made in, made in a few weeks. So it's like ninety percent writing and thinking, two percent creating. And I'm, that's where I'm at right now. So I just do art and write and try to stay stable.

[00:15:04.00]

AM: When you say "art" what, like, what particular discipline do you mean by that?

AP: Well-,

AM: In [inaudible: 00:15:10.25] write writing.

AP: Um, so I really relate to you because I'm actually, I'm multi-discipline as well. Like I do performance art. Um, I sculpture, painting, printmaking, drawing. Um, you know, trying to be as multilingual as possible so that whatever point you're trying to make you have a-a large breath to speak for it, you know? Um, and as far as writing, um, just essays and stuff. Just essays that -- one got published, hope to get others published. And just trying to stay stable, y/all. [inaudible: 00:15:45.18]

AM: That's awesome. And oh, also if we have like any portfolios or websites,

since we're having this conv [inaudible: 00:15:52.26] I would love to peak and show support in any kind of way.

[00:15:58.02]

RB: Yeah, same, definitely.

AM: Who's next? Let's get it, let's get it [inaudible: 00:16:05.11].

[00:16:04.12]

RB: Do you want me to go next?

YKN: Yeah, please.

[00:16:07.18]

RB: Okay, I-I'm, my name is Renee Brown. I graduated years ago. Um, with uh, a, an MFA in painting from UB. And uh, when I went to uh, the system I be-became an art teacher, a public art teacher but now after an accident I reemerged as a painter and uh, got connected with my dream life and trained in that. And I do dream interpretation. So I basically am dealing with time and dreams and uh, sort of a mystical approach when [inaudible: 00:16:44.23] departure and uh, just showing how they come true. And uh, dealing with a lot of uh, I'm going back, actually I'm going to go another MFA in uh, in England at Transart so that I can do, more, get more research into it and give my, give, put some teeth into what I'm doing and lift it up and give it a voice. Yeah, so that's kinda where I'm at right now. But I'm a painter.

[00:17:19.18]

AP: That's awesome.

RB: And I've got a book out and I, I'll put it in the chat. Chat.

YKN: Beautiful. Uh--,

RB: That's it.

YKN: Okay [laughs] All right, I'll guess, I'll uh, go. Uh, greetings. My name is Yao Kahlil Newkirk. I uh, currently serve as the artistic director of the Paul Robeson theater. Uh, here in Buffalo at the African American Cultural Center. Um, you know, so I- I am absolutely a thespian, do a lot of work in the theater, as industry. My uh, undergraduate and masters were done at the Theater and Dance department at UB. Um, and I'm also currently a doctoral student in the Africana and Americana Studies department at UB as well. Uh, I'm an adjunct in the Theater and Dance department at SUNY Fredonia. Uh, [laughs] and so I'm doing some, uh, work there. I'm directing a show, actually Pipeline, that goes up, uh, next weekend. Uh, so lots of tech rehearsals right now. But uh, outside of that I am multi-disciplinary uh, artist, performance art. I do a lot of social experients. Um, uh, a lot of uh, not as much painting as I used to do but I-I still paint every now and then. Um, I get really involved here at work. But um, I'm a singer/songwriter, uh, performer myself. I'm a, a writer of many things including uh, children's novels, um, which are almost, almost reasyd to get published right now. So, uh, tha'ts going to be happening very, very soon. Um, uh, additionally I am, and I tell Ayana about this later, I am also a grower. Uh, and so I am, I just recently just purchased an entire farm, um, out in Cattaraugus. Um, and so we're, I'm developing a program to introduce into the Buffalo public school system called "How to Grow a Human," uh, which will teach uh, our young people in the inner city and so on, how to um, learn leadership and life skills through the process of self-sustainability and growing and, and all that good stuff. Yeah. So--,

[00:19:45.29]

AM: [inaudible: 00:19:49.19]

Unknown: Hey!

AM That's beautiful!

YKN: Yes, and so I am, um, really looking forward to that process getting up and running off the ground. And so uh, anyhow, that's, that's me. Greetings, hello. [laughs]

[00:20:05.18]

IQ: Okay, so hello everyone. So we had some more guests popping up.

YKN: Is that Oshun?

AO: Yes, that is. I was, I was listening to you talk. I said, oh wow, that was my director! That's Mr. Newkirk.

YKN: Hey.

[00:20:23.18]

AO: Hey. I'm sorry.

IQ: No, do your thing. If [inaudible: 00:20:27.17] you know, introductions. Like you showed up perfectly.

[00:20:30.01]

AO: Hi everybody. My name is Aqueira Oshun and I am an actress and also a filmmaker here in Buffalo. Um, I create a lot of stories for Black people. Um, unbiased stories as well, so um, a lot of my stories do involve um, LGBTQ artists or LGBTQ type characters. Uh, very voluptuous characters. Um, Black women. Most of my, most of my work is all geared towards Black women, and the Black women plight. Um, and yeah,

I'm excited to be here. I uh, also, acted in Mr. Newkirk's, uh, past production of *FACING OUR TRUTH*.

[00:21:11.18]

Unknown: Yes.

AO: So, yeah.

[00:21:16.12]

AM: I wasn't sure but I recognized you. You were the pregnant woman.

AO: Yup, yup.

AM: You played that well, girl! [laughs]

AO: Yeah, everybody thought I was pregnant. Everyone thought I was pregnant. I was like, 'oh, I'd be a pretty pregnant person but I'm glad to see that.'

Unknown: [laughter]

[00:21:32.17]

AM: And who's your neighbor?

[00:21:32.29]

IQ: Um, I'm Ineil Quaran. Um, so, I was, like I was saying earlier, so I'm the co-founder of Build Collective, a [inaudible: 00:21:41.06] advancing, a [inaudible: 00:21:42.18] for environment. Um, we really do focus on arts, all kinds of arts. But, um, we're a project development collaborative, so if anybody wants to work on their artwork or theories, workshops, we just try to point people in the right direction and also give collective feedback. Um, in terms of my, like -- I don't want to say "personal" because everything is personal to me, but um, in terms of art that I do for myself, I'll say, um, very

similar -- like everybody was saying beforehand, I'm also a disciple, multi-disciplinary. So, I started doing painting, drawing, you know, the traditional fine arts stuff. But I've been taught like multiple things. So sculpting, photographer, both digital and analog. Um, I do some performance art here and there. Um, really want to get into like the performance art and how I can embody um, my art visually. So, I've been getting into like -- I don't want to say steelwork. I don't really know what that artistry is called, but I've done uh, workshops on it and just how to make different masks and jewelry and things like that. So I'm a jack of all trades. Um, a master of some. And I also do graphic design, digital art. And trying to transition into animation. I went to school for animation and um, really want to complete that.

[00:23:14.05]

Unknown: Yeah, dope.

Unknown: [laughs]

IQ: Thank you. As we all are.

AO: Knee slapper. [inaudible: 00:23:21.19]

[00:23:22.25]

TL: It's nice to uh, meet everybody and learn everybody and see what everybody's doing in the world. Can everybody hear me well?

Unknown: Yes.

TL: All right. Super cool. So, peace and love everybody. My name is uh, Tay, uh, also known as Titan. Uh, my name says Tayron Lopez down there, so you know my government. Um, but um, yeah, I, I'm an artist, I guess I would say, if-if I'm going to like put a label to myself or information a little description thing. Um, I'm currently here at

UB, or North Campus and I'm here for my Masters. I'm about to graduate in May, so it's coming up. And uh, thank you, thank you, thank you. Yeah, it feels good. It feels good to not have to go to school after this, you know? But you, you never stop being a student. So I'm looking forward to the teachings after this. Um, primarily my work is within illustration and painting. Uh, it's based off a technique that I learned about when I was reading Surrealist Manifesto by Andre Breton. It's called Psychic Automatism, which is pretty much a, a really scientific name for saying "doodling." You know, you're, it, but it's not quite "doodling" so to speak. But it's like um, it's similar in concept which is like a subconscious way of creating, which allows you to kind of like create through a sense of intuition and um, and, and inherent nature. Uh, it allows room for the subconscious mind to speak because a subconscious mind is like a sponge and absorbs things that they, uh, time to time, year to year. You know, so, uh, a lot of those things that we tend to absorb tends to manifest into like uh, habits or what some studies and say, what say, like slips of the tongue kind of you know? Or like, um, I don't know, uh, physical elements even. You know, if, if you are stressed over something you may notice that you start to grow like ulcers or something like that. Or you, you may lose hair physically. So it's all exploring how uh, our mental processes may transgress into like physical elements or repressions or even traumas and stuff. So, I like to explore how art can uh, interweave with these kind of studies to help us understanding ourselves more intuitively. And uh, learning things at an earlier age. And so, um, I currently put in an application for the, uh, big grant that went around for artists, the CRNY grant. Uh, and I will hopefully, when all things go well, work with organizations that I grew it with, called BronxWorks. And I actually started going there with after school program when I was

like, damn, maybe like seven or something like that. So, since 2003 I've been rocking with them. You know, so, it kind of come full circle once that comes around and I graduate from here and I'm able to go home and just give back to the community and teach them everything that I've been learning along the way about automatism and how it can work as a sort of like therapeutic thing, so to speak, you know? And implementing it into early education systems I feel like will help give uh, the younger generation the, the knowledge and language to express the things they may not be able to express with words. But it also just lets us know how important art is on a right, you know? And why it should be practiced. Even if it seems like that is a lead to like monetary gain, so to speak. There is a, a inherent currency that you gain through the practice of art that is much more important than the dollar, dollar bill, you know? Um, but, that, that's kind of me in a nutshell. I have created a small little book, uh, just kind of detailing and summarizing some psychoanalytic studies interweaving with some more Black focused psychoanalytic studies, so like stuff my friends [inaudible: 00:27:03.05] and how this kind of plays into how we view ourselves on a daily basis and even, uh, conjure what we call perspective. Um, I have a show up right now, uh, called 'SOMETIMES ABOUT RACE, SOMETIMES IT'S NOT, SOMETIMES IT IS.' Uh, but highlighted it says 'MOST TIMES IT IS' And that is speaking about uh, the, the inherent feelings that come up, experienced about covert racist moments or overt racist moments and just how we can sort of understand each other at a new conversation and transparency. So, if you guys would like to check that out too, I'll drop in a flier or a rake or something like that. And I'll drop in a bunch of stuff for you all. But, oh, I have another show coming up April 15 so I'll, I'll drop off something for that too. Uh, and some other shows after that, so, yeah,

you'll be hearing my name. And if you want to stay in touch, uh, please pass me, like your email or something. Because I've been create like an emailing list so when I leave, outside of school it kinda just snowballs and grows and it becomes like more personalized. So, if everybody wants to drop theri email, that'd be super dope. I may actually, I'm glad I got to go last cause I may have to leave in like about five or ten minutes but I would love to stay in contact with, uh, preferably everybody, you know? That'd be dope. It's nice to meet everybody. So many beautiful Black people in the same room, even if it's an internet room, you know?

[00:28:22.26]

Unknown: It's [inaudible: 00:28:24.20] dope. It's [inaudible: 00:28:27.06] mutual.

[00:28:28.22]

TL: Yeah. Thank you, Ayana, for starting the ice breaker, you know?

YKN: I'm just going to throw my email in there now before you leave.

TL: Thank you.

[00:28:44.08]

YKN: Then we'll [pauses] I don't think they'll let us do that, okay. Uh--,

AM: Yeah, I don't think it's going to let us put the emails in. But a confirmation email we got yesterday should have all our emails I think.

TL: Ah, okay. I'll just send it to the whole lunch table event.

[00:29:06.05]

YKN: All right, so you want to, really, you could always let me know if you want to pass onto the next card and see what it is. We can always go back.

AP: Yeah, let's check out the next card.

YKN: You're saying check out the next card, okay. *How is cultural memory passed down to younger generations? Discuss legacy, intergenerational advocacy and mentorship.* Hmm. What say [inaudible: 00:29:36.03], yah, nay?

AM: Yeah.

YKN: We're good, okay. We got some thumbs up here. All right.

[00:29:43.14]

AO: Uh, can I go?

YKN: Of course.

AO: So, um something that's very interesting about even this topic -- my little sister and I, we were having like this conversation recently. And she was, she was singing this song and she goes, she goes 'I feel like, I feel like, I feel like everybody has heard this one song.' And I was like: 'what?' She goes: 'it goes something, something, something, something. I shay, I shay I shay.' And I said 'oh' I say, I say: 'so you know that one?' She goes, 'I don't know where I know it from but I know this song.' And she was, 'actually I wish I could find it. I wish I knew what song that is.' And it makes me think about just how much, they, like how much of our culture -- like I think like, too, the African American doesn't realize how much culture we place into our younger generation just at birth. And the fact that my sister could never pinpoint it but she knew this song. This song that traveled for years. And I mean we're not talking about just like a ten or twenty, we're talking about decades. Like I'm pretty sure this, this song is something that's been passed down from century to century to century. And I think that is so important. I, and then the fact that she sang that song is the reason why, even still

like going back to like my art, when kids see Black art and Black representation it-it's almost something that just ingrains within you discussing that legacy. Letting them know who they are. I, like I've learned, my sister told me that right now she hasn't learned anything about Nat Turner. Not to say that, that, that, you know, uh, you have to know about that violent history but even still, she doesn't know too much about Nat Turner. She didn't know too much about the Black Panther party. She doesn't know too much about all of these amazing things that, that really helped shaped America. Like, you know, the one of the main things too with the Black Panther party, and even their legacy and their ad, advocacy and their mentorship, you know, um, Social Security. When Blacks couldn't find jobs, the Black Panther party was the ones that created this system in which Black people could survive, could live. And it got transpired into something that's completely different but um, it just brought about like that memory. Like the minute I saw "*how is cultural memory passed down to younger generations*," I genuinely think that, I think that familiarity is important. And I think education is so, so, so important. That's why the brother who, uh, UB campus, you said Tai, right? Your name is Tai?

TL: Yes ma'am.

AO: Yeah. I think, think that is so, so important, like what you're doing for little kids, because really the moment you -- the, I always tell people all the time, I tell Black artists this a lot -- the minute you decide to put yourself in the public, you have involuntarily, regardless to if you say you shouldn't be one or not, you have made yourself an influence. And, and you, and you have to take that kind of responsibility and I think that is super, super, super important that the younger generation does know about their Blackness. It's starting to be erased. And the fact that, like I said, the fact

that even my little sister, at the age of sixteen can sit here and say 'I don't know where that song came from but I know that song.' That is so important to us. It keeps our Blackness alive. That's all I had as far as thoughts on that. I know I can get lengthy, I've been told.

YKN: [laughs] Thank you for sharing. I, um, I-I will say that, um, there is something to be said about repetition. Uh, the way that we learn music and the way that children learn these, these songs, um, they're listening to these things over and over again. They have them on repeat. And they don't just hear it when they're at home listening to their, you know, their, on their I-tunes, right? They hear it on the radio. They hear it playing over the loudspeaker in the grocery store. They hear it in the car. They hear it in, in, in school somewhere from another student. The thing is that the information is being spread and it's coming from all different angles. But it's the same information. And so when they hear it they're able to recognize it, they're able to, to live with it and it sits with them. And then they start to internalize it at some point. And perhaps use it in some other way, some other format. It's the same thing with the knowledge of our culture, history, ancestors, uh, uh, anything about our, our lifestyles and so on and so forth. All the important information it, it, it gets, it gets transferred through your auntie, your uncle. You hear it again at the African American Cultural Center. Maybe you hear it from a-a T-shirt. Maybe you hear it from a mentor. Maybe you hear it from a friend or a cousin in them. Or maybe you heard it, or you know, just on the, on the bus, some other people were having a conversation. But if nobody is talking about the information that's important for the next generations to know or to hear, if they don't hear it coming from all these different angles, it's not as easy to retain the

information like it is to listen to songs, right? And so, when it comes to cultural memory, if we don't talk about it, if we don't put the information out there in our art, right? If we don't put it out there to spark these conversations, nobody's ever listening to it and everybody ever thinks, 'oh, well, what about, yeah, I hadn't thought about that in a long time.' Or 'I forgot about that.' Or 'Yeah, yeah, yeah, so and so did do that.' You know, like you had to find ways -- and we do this in our art all the time in all these different mediums of art, right? We find ways to, to, to put our, our expressions or our history or our memory into these forms of art so that somebody will remember. So that somebody will question it. So that somebody will consider it again, will think about it. And then it's a conversation like it's passed on and on and on. And so a lot of it for me is, is um, and I'm thinking now as, as an educator [laughs], those synaptic nerves that we have, that you know they say that a child, you only have like that first six months to introduce certain new information to them like language. Anything outside of like the English language, if you want them to be familiar with the sounds and the, the tones of Spanish or French or any other language you need to introduce it before they turn six months because after that it's very difficult for them to be able to grasp new sounds. Right? And so you always want to introduce these things as early as possible so that they're able to retain it and it lives with them a lot longer. And so, I encourage [laughs] all of the artists, right, to be able to take your, your memories or your stories or your culture and put them into your art everywhere you go because at some point it's going to trigger something for someone that, it forgot or didn't know or whatever from years and years ago. And it's about circulating that information so that they hear it and see it and read it and smell it and taste it from all different directions the same way as learning a song. We got to, we

got to put our culture in all of our art everywhere we go. In our films, Aqueira, right? That everywhere we go we got to put our culture so that it's remembered. one of the worst things you, anybody can ever do is forget. Right? It's one of the most tragic things that happens, you know, when we come across those who have, uh, an illness that, that, that they cannot physically remember anymore. A lot of times it's because those synaptic nerves have not been exercised. The way that your brain remembers is by repetition. If you constantly repeat something, think of something, read something, those synaptic nerves, they get stronger and stronger until the point where you don't have to put effort into it anymore. Now you do it without thinking. You say it and you can recall it without trying to. Because those synaptic nerves have been so well exercised that it's second nature. And that's what we want to do with our memory, is we got -- our cultural memory. We want to make it so well exercised that it's second nature and you do it without effort. I'm done, cause I can talk about this.

[00:38:55.02]

RB: Excellent. Excellent. I enjoyed that.

YKN: Me too.

TL: Thank you, thank you, thank you for that. I think we all needed to hear that. And I love how the, how the point started with this idea of music as well, this idea of sound being this point of like memory, you know? I think it, uh, not only allows us to remember from it like the past but it taps closer to each other in the present too. Because, like you said, one person hears a sound and they go, like 'oh, I know that.' You know, that it's not just your family that does it. It's people outside your immediate family that then becomes family, you know, which helps us tie together and band

together close to this community. Which is really what it's all about and how people drive and strive and just continue to build and build and build, you know/ So, yeah. Now, this is a beautiful conversation. I can tell it's going to still move on to something even greater.

[laughter]

TL: I have to get ready to go.

[00:39:48.29]

YKN: Yes.

TL: But, honored to even be a part of this little small section of what's going to be a big thing, you know? So, I'm looking forward to meeting everybody in the real world and I appreciate all of the love that's just been circulating.

[00:40:00.25]

AM: It was excellent meeting you too.

TL: Yeah.

YKN: Yes, thank you for joining us.

TL: Absolutely. Um, well, I hope--,

Unknown: That's horrible.

TL: [laughs] So I hope everybody has a beautiful weekend.

IQ: You too, thank you, bless you.

Unknown: Thank you.

[00:40:16.07]

AP: I have a question. Like we're talking about cultural memory and how to

constantly work to influence, you know, our, our culture, our Blackness and especially for the younger generations. But how do you guys feel that works out when you think about issues of censorship or backlash or issues of, um, I want to say discord within the conversation because people don't, may not agree with your cultural memory or people may not agree with how you're expressing your own particular experience with Blackness and [inaudible: 00:40:54.20] experience. And then your experience starts to be questioned just because the mainstream may not agree with it. Um, have you guys ever like struggled with something like that or how do you think that we can combat that and try to form this really diverse cultural memory? Because I mean you all Black folk, we just probably the most multi [inaudible: 00:41:12.23] people in the planet. So, all of our experiences are going to be so frickin different. But I've noticed in my own practice that there's pushback and backlash depending on how you express yourselves. So what do you guys, what do you guys think about that?

[00:41:28.23]

YKN: It's a big question.

RB: Mm hmm.

AM: Yeah. [laughs]

YKN: Uh, we might, you might need to leave that one to, to lady Renee Brown to answer that one, cause--,

[00:41:43.13]

RB: Well I--,

YKN: I feel like, I feel like you might have a lot of wisdom on [laughs] like [inaudible: 00:41:51.20].

AP: I ask because it's something that I really struggle with and I have struggled with in my own art practice. I mean like the, the majority of the backlash I've received, um, have been from Black people. So,

YKN: Is, is it okay if I ask you to be -- cause I feel like there's something very specific that you're talking about. And I don't, I don't want you to have to get too personal or anything, but, but is it -- could you give a little bit of detail about what might be like this, this incident that it sounds like you're talking about.

[00:42:32.15]

AP: Yeah, so in 2015 when I was at UB I was in um, a Warren Quigley's. um, what was it called? It was the, Urban Installation Art Class where we're working on, like you know, urban installations. So, we had to do a project that related to time and we had to interpret time in regard to our own practice. Um, so time in regard to my practice since that time is in this chasm of standing still because you know, although we're advancing technologically and visually so many of our mindsets are still stuck in our either racist ambition of country. So you know, even though we don't have Black only or white only signs plastered all over America, we still do know where Blacks and whites are allowed, you know, in, in the different settings that we're allowed to function in. So, what I did was I mimicked um, Jim Crow Black Only White Only signs. And put them on um, elevators and water fountains and bathrooms and what not, um, around the campus. And ho ho, you would have thought that I murdered a baby in the street [laughs] in how people reacted. Um, I ended up at a BFU meeting and [inaudible: 00:43:42.05] was there as well. It was like this giant combo meeting were like a hundred people plus they were all really, really angry. And the thing that was interesting is that I

was, I had a good rapport with the leaders of the BFU because I was in this Black uh, film class with them. They were undergrad, you know, I was grad. We didn't really intersect too much because of you know, the different, um, departments that we were in, but we int, interested in that class. So when I met with them and I was like 'hey you guys, this is my art project actually discussing white privilege and our compliance with this legal, a leader in cultural racism,' They were like, 'well, this,' they basically were like 'well, this is hurt our feelings so you're the bad guy.' So um, I ended up at the BSU meeting. Everybody just sort of, um, roasted me on a spit and told me how much of a bad person I was. And um, they tried to get me expelled. I started getting hate mail. I started getting death threats. Um, but I also got a lot of um, attention in regard to the discussion it brought up. Like there were students at Buffalo State who were like, 'yes, when you see these signs it's triggering' but, but what she's saying, it's true. These signs are invisible now. Racism is still very prevalent. She didn't, [inaudible: 00:44:54.17] racism, she's just calling our compliance of racism. And other people are bringing up things like people are more outraged at these printed, cardboard signs than they are when people get shot in the street. So, you know, it, it brought up a lot of different conversations. Um, but this, it was like this very vicious, like really insidious backlash of 'how dare you speak out of tune from what our mainstream opinions are on this campus.' The BSU's biggest issue was that I didn't get permission from my teachers. And that I didn't go through them first to make that kind of, um, to express that sort of thought on that campus. So I'm like, 'so you all aren't worried about racism? You're worried about who's talking about it and how we're talking about it?' So, it was a very um, eye opening but also, unfortunately confusing experience because at the end

of the day none of us here are responsible for racism and we're not even responsible for people being triggered or traumatized for racism, you know? It was interesting to think that anything that someone who reminded them of the state of our lives, versus the things that are responsible for the state of our lives. Um, so yeah, that's, that's what happened. And, um, like Karl Walker wrote me a letter. I got to like interview with the New York Times and have [inaudible: 00:46:12.09] and um, and like interview with magazines in London and radios and it was, it was all like really traumatic but also a good experience but also more traumatic. [laughs]

[00:46:27.18]

YKN: Oh no, and I, I, I hate that any of that experience was traumatic for you, but listen, I am going to applaud you [claps] for opening--,

RB: Yes.

YKN: Because--,

AP: Thank you.

YKN: That is absolutely amazing to be able to do something that's that, that bold and thought provoking cause you know, again, I do social experiments so that is right up my alley. And I'm surp -- that really surprises me, um, that anybody, you know, at BSU would have any sort of issue with, with that. I could understand maybe the university having the issue with it. [laughs] You know, if they didn't give you like the okay or whatever to, to, you know, to do that kind of thing. I get it. But, but as far as the content and, and reaching a specific goal, you know, I, I think you did, youi did that, you know, um. And I, I just, I applaud it. And I think it's unfortunate uh, when you have -- anytime we do art, you know, just in general as artists we're always going to have some sort of

backlash in some kind of way, you know, uh, especially when the art is uh, it makes people uncomfortable, right? Okay, um, but, but sometimes you know, people need to be uncomfortable. Um, and I said this during the last show that we did, uh, if you're not willing to talk about an issue you can't ever, you can't ever fix an issue that, that you don't talk about. Uh, you can't, you can't ever uh, uh, hope to, to bring some sort of resolve to, to problems that stem back hundreds of years if you're never willing to have that conversation. And sometimes it needs to be directly in your face in order for you to, to see, hey yeah, this is still a problem. It's still a thing. It's a thing we have to talk about and it's going to happen today. So, I, uh, I applaud you.

AP: Thank you.

[00:48:26.06]

AO: Can I also interject. One main thing -- I took a leadership class, uh, because I stirred quite -- I, listen, I love starting when it comes to Blackness. Uh, I really do. Because I'm very in your face with it. I am not subtle about my Blackness at all. Um, even though, even though this camera is definitely.

[laughter]

AO: But um, cause I keep going in and out. But like um, but over all, I took a leadership class, uh, because a professor of mine, he was a little Indian man [laughs] uh, him and, him and another Jewish professor of mine, they found it super interesting that I was in a class of a hundred and fifty students and I was the only person going against everyone in what I had to say about uh, gun control and how, and how it affects the African American community. And I was the only one. When I tell you the entire class hated me afterwards, it was insane. What I will say is, one thing that my teacher

told me in my leadership class was, 'You know you are bound to be someone great if you cause a whole bunch of commotion.' [laughs] And I want to applaud you. Um, you be, you be a culture, and Buff State's culture as somebody who was a bangle and not a bull. Um, I can definitely tell you that Buff State has a more uh, in tuneness. I'm not saying that it's, it's one hundred percent. Because I have combated with Black people as well about the state of Blackness, um, in American and I -- there is more of a culture diversity in Buff State that you don't quite --like you find it in UB but as far as what I hear from people, especially people of color who went to UB, is that there is a, there is a disconnect, um, from, from the people and the campus. Um, so I, I, so I-I do understand where that may have, may have caused a stir. I am also shocked uh, that Black people, like there was no one? Like I am so shocked that nobody was on your side for that. Because just because we ain't got white people here and Black people there don't mean that racism don't exist. They just simply say [inaudible: 00:51:14.21].

AP: [laughs]

AO: They simply, when they're hiring they simply say like you know, in Black code, we have to say, 'oh, don't travel too far in West Seneca.' You know what I mean? Like it's, there's still, there's still that aspect of that being here, especially in, in Buffalo. And we're the second most segregated city in America. I'm so shocked. And, and, and then I-I, expect scholars from UB to know that. So, I just --

AP: [inaudible: 00:51:44.08]

[00:51:45.03]

AO: Huh?

AP: Just to follow up on what you're saying about like the cultural differences in

regard to Blackness between the two campuses, um, like you, like you were saying it was very interesting because I, I read an essay from a student from Buff State who was like: 'Yeah, first [inaudible: 00:51:58.05], when I read her statement, I get it. It's true.'

There's a low road toward, um, addressing racism in this country and we, we immediately and every way we can have to stop being compliant and valuing our comfort, like [inaudible: 00:52:12.17], val, valuing our comfort over actually working for a change." Cause it's going to be at this comfort and experience. So, I was just following up on what you were saying because it was, it was like , such a political issue that, that basically I didn't go through them or get their permission. I wasn't part of, you know, the BSU um, the BSU people. And, and the Vice President of the BSU even said on an interview on the news that she doesn't believe UB has an issue with race. And I was like, okay, what is the BSU, you all really just a collection of Black people, just hanging out? Like why did she even from the BSU if there's no race issues on campus? So it was, it was weird, you know, cause we want this like, back to the question, we want our cultural memory to be circulated and passed down and we need all these different voices. But my struggle is is like a, some of our voices don't seem to go out, you know? Of course we're still going to speak regardless of whether we're allowed or not, but it was definitely something that I think that's um, makes it difficult to, to get towards the, the world that won't see you, you know?

[00:53:20.17]

AO: And I think the main thing with that, too, and I, and I stress that to my little sister quite a bit is education. Because there was a white woman who tried to tell me that the Greeks are the ones who invented dreading. There was, cause there was a

time, cause like I was speaking about cultural appropriation. And she was like: 'dreading didn't even come from Africa. It came from the Greeks when they tried to preserve bodies.' I said, 'you know, aside from the fact that our hair naturally dreads, I'm going to give you a little bit of education. When Carthage was actually a country and went to go rule over the Greek people, see you always sit here and you all talk about the Greek Gods and blah, blah, blah. You don't even realize -- because that Egyptian empire took over Greece, the forced them to love those type of Gods. That's the whole reason why you got Athena and Zeus baby. At the end of the day, even all the way down to how they preserved bodies, if you think that they forced their religion on you, what else do you think that they forced on you as well? Dreading was still a part of our culture. What are you talking about?' I think education is so important. And the more you know, the more nobody can back you in a corner. The more you are aware and equipped of, of, of, of whatever you have to say, girl, I wish I was with you. Cause I would have stood `firmly with you, you know?

[00:54:39.25]

AP: [inaudible: 00:54:41.24] Yo [inaudible: 00:54:42.01] toward me.

AO: Yeah, cause, cause there's a lot of things that I'm, that because Black people have so much miseducation.

AP: Mm hmm.

AO: Because it was, I don't know if you are African American, but I will say African Americans were whipped out of our memory. We were whipped out of -- they forced us to know a history. And this is the thing that really kills me about this racism stuff. When they sit there and they say: 'Oh, slavery was so many years ago. Get over

it.' You cannot force Black people to forget about something that you forced them to know. You can't make them forget that. It's a part of our DNA. It's a part of our ancestry that you forced upon us. So, at the end of the day, I am not here for that conversation at all. When I tell you there is almost no way you can move my head when it comes to Blackness. When I tell you those people are ignorant, girl, at the end of the day if they did that, you were supposed to be the, the new -- not to say that, that you would be that violent, but you were supposed to be the new Angela Davis. You were supposed to be the new Rosa Parks. You were supposed. And I feel like the an, the, the universe put that energy in your way because you are meant to be a leader. And don't ever forget that. Don't let anybody make you question your Blackness, even if it's Black people. Black people in America question their Blackness. Black people in Africa question their Blackness. It is something that is literally sent all around the world to make us think differently from ourselves. And take from ourselves. So, at the end of the day, no girl, you had it. You could go off, queen.

AP: [laughs] Thank you.

[00:56:22.05]

AO: Go off queen.

AP: Wow. I love that you said that too. Because that's like definitely what's my current struggle is, or my current art practice is. It's speaking toward that struggle of redeveloping self-hood, again, after being completely and totally obliterated. And I'm not exaggerating. Completely and totally obliterated between when I graduated to this point in time right now. So, thank you all. I really appreciate your input. And like just to answer a question you said, there were two people in the meeting, uh, that agreed with

me but they got booed out of the room. So, there is that. It was a, it was a Black, um, kid that was a part of the BSU, so he said "I'm more upset that this the highest attendance we've had."

Unknown: Wow.

[00:57:04.27]

AP: And a week ago another Black male was killed by the cops, there was only about fifty people in here. And then the, the last person who spoke was this international student. He was extraordinarily brave. He was like trembling because the crowd was really hostile. But he's like: 'I'm from Saudi Arabia. I'm not Black but like I might as well be Black in this country. Like I understand, you know, how you guys struggle and experience with racism. And, and she's trying to point out racism. She's not the racist.' Um, but he was also booed out. But I'm happy that, like you said, like on the broader scale, also the campus there was much better, um, more tolerant discussions had, so it was wild.

[00:57:43.08]

AM: Um, I hate to interject but I have to go now. Um, I have an appointment at the All Night [inaudible: 00:57:49.04] but I want to to say that that was like, that was really like powerful. Um, and but I think in reference back to your original question, I think, um, personally I don't necessarily always identify as Black just because of the fact that it marginalizes the diaspora. Um, Oshir and she was like, oh, 'I don't know if you're African American.' That's like, that's the thing, you know what I mean. The Diaspora, the Black Diaspora is so vast, you know, so, and a lot of things get lost in translation. So, I think whenever you're around, you know, another Black person, someone outside

of the Diaspora, you know, just like identify who you are authentically. Who you are, um, indigenously or where you come from, um, and move from there. That's how I do things, personally. Everything that I um, accentuate when I'm in front of other people, I let people know firmly that I am of Afro-Caribbean descent and this is my culture, this is my custom. Not just like, 'Oh, I'm Black, you know?' So, that's, that's my piece on that. But I love that she made a statement, that she made a discussion, a dialogue out of that, either way. Whether people agreed or disagreed with you, that has lasted in their memory. That's lasted in, in history. I remember coming in. I, I came in undergrad in 2016 and I remember that article in the UB Spectrum. And people were still talking about that after, after the fact, a year after. Two semesters after. So, yeah, that, that was awesome. I didn't know that was you. It's an honor to, to att, to have spoken to you today and to be in this discussion with everyone.

[00:59:26.02]

AP: Thank you. It's an honor to have spoken to you all too. For real.

RB: Good to meet you. I, I heard about it too. I was [inaudible: 00:59:36.00].

AP: Oh [laughs]

RB: Very good to meet you.

AP: Thank you.

AM: Have a good one.

YKN: You too, thank you.

AM: Take care.

IQ: Take care.

[00:59:43.03]

YKN: Ashley, you a celebrity around here.

AP: [laughs]

YKN: [laughs]

AP: I'm stable. That's all I am, is stable.

YKN: This is, I mean this is good conversation.

AP: [inaudible: 00:59:59.14]

[00:59:59.25]

IQ: I, I saw the card is about to move, but I'm going to continue.'

YKN: Oh, I'll go back.

IQ: [laughs] Um, I just wanted to add a few, around the intergenerational part. I love what everybody's been saying. Um, and I guess for me, the things that have been coming up has been like around how are we passing through generations and even what Osh was spoken, speaking about, um, around what white people are doing in terms of you know, through violence, you know, they are making us remember a certain situation that, um, kind of lift up what our own people in our culture do intergenerationally, uh, to make us both remember certain things culturally, and forget things culturally as well. Um, I personally grew up hating adults. Um, and had to struggle with even just becoming an adult because 1., I didn't know that I would have that opportunity. And then 2., to become one, it's like what am I going to do with this power and privilege and you know, I just thought that once people became adults that they just really started to hate children. That that was a right of passage.

Unknown: Wow.

[01:01:08.01]

IQ: Was to hate young people. Um, even to hear teenagers talk down to children and you know, so -- not necessarily want to be grown. Um, cause I don't like to throw that type of um, mentality towards them either. But, um, definitely wanting to separate themselves so badly and what does that dynamic do. Um, so like when I think about like cultural memory being passed down I think about like gatekeeping, um, which I think Ashley you were speaking, uh, about throughout. And it's like in my experience you'll have some people who want to share certain cultures with certain genders versus others. And, you know, if you don't fit those gender roles then you don't, you're not going to get this. Um, you know, I definitely grew up being more effeminate. So, when it came down to my family having, you know drummers and things like that I was around it, but I was never, uh, invited to it. Um, and just what does those, what does that kind of cultural, um, ritual do to certain people, like the people who really embraced me were older women, not necessarily because I wanted to have that, but um, I also didn't shun it. I was fine with it. Love is love. Um, but it's like, my cultural memory came more from food. It came more from like what music was being played in those spaces. And um, it really sucks when uh, okay, there's a note. Um, it really sucks when people have a certain idea around what they want young people to know and understand. And yet adults actively ostracize young people and, um, instigate. And I think our children's first beliefs. And I'm very specific on who is supposed to hold certain types of cultures. Who's supposed to know music. Who's supposed to know how to play music. Who is supposed to know how to do certain forms of art or just any type of skill set. And I think

like I would like to see more responsibility from adults. Cause even um, um, what was said. Let me see what your name is. How do you pronounce your name, Kahlil? What's, how do you pronounce your first name?

[01:03:31.09]

YKN: Yao.

IQ: Yao. Thank you. Um, when you were talking about like the synapse not being exercised through repetition, that you forget. Um, I think that there are -- we have people who have a certain type of stereotype or standard and because they're actively ostracizing people, when you do have a certain type of memory and you don't remember it the way that they want you to remember it, that it reinforces what they believe about you and those stereotypes and it strengthens that gatekeeping. Like, for example, like I see that a lot in the anime community. If you don't remember every name, character--,

Unknown: [laughs]

IQ: Move, you know what I mean? You don't watch--,

RB: You're not a real fan.

IQ: Yeah.

Unknown: Yeah, which is a lot.

IQ: Like you were never there.

Unknown: Yeah.

IQ: Even when you open the doors for them to be nerdy, all of a sudden you just don't exist. So, um, I think adults are very active in the erasure of culture. And at the

same time placing the responsibility on young people and children. And I just think that there's just too many adults in too many positions of power who are just perpetuating various levels of violence. And I still have uh, a gripe, I guess at this point since I'm an adult with us. [laughs]

[01:04:52.03]

RB: Let me, let me interject something right there. I, I'm, I'm doing a workshop, a dream workshop for kids. And I'm trained the facilitators, the people that work in there, the, they're working along with me to keep -- I'm teaching the children to journal, and to, to remember their dreams and you know, so forth and so -- to cherish it. And, uh, I've had to kind of -- I had to create a list of wonderful things that the, the uh, the teachers, the facilitators could say to the children as they work; 'Don't use colors. Mistakes are okay. It's okay.' Everything, you know. So I think we have that, uh, adv, we can, we can make and impact on our communities if we refrain some of that negativity from our culture, that harshness, that dogma, that dogmatic way of handling things and we create programs for our youth. We could do a lot.

IQ: Well, I definitely think we--,

RB: We can, you can change the very thing that you've come out of.

IQ: power. Well, I definitely do. I mean--,

RB: Yeah.

IQ: You know, what Ashley was speaking about, you know what I mean, like, like racism is something that's taught. It's not about blaming people.

RB: Yeah.

[01:06:05.05]

IQ: About, you know, like we have the responsibility to change our society and again, when I'm thinking about this question: *How is cultural memory being passed down to younger generations* like some of this cultural miseducation or even you know, um, confusion is-is-is through violence. And it's like if you have something that is very beautifully culturally, but it's through a messenger that is homophobic, misogynistic, adultist--,

RB: I understand.

IQ: Why, why would I want to be a part of that? And so I just think like as adults it-it-it's, I just think that there needs to be more responsibility in terms of making sure, like culture is spurred by everybody and even like sometimes in my experience--,

RB: With various views.

IQ: Yeah. And also saying, like, you know, sometimes you'll have men who say a woman can't pass down a certain culture to a man. Only a man can do something.

RB: Oh, I see what you're saying, yeah.

IQ: You know, and it's like why are we limiting ourselves on certain vehicles -- you know what I mean, to pass things down to people? Why are we cutting off all these different extensions of ourselves and then blaming young people?

RB: So we need to--,

Unknown: Oh, sorry.

RB: We need to be more open and then, and, and uh, uh, teach our people, our, our kids to be open and then to see things in various ways. I do, that's breaking it down simplistically, okay? So, create programs. Write books.

Unknown: Mmmm.

[01:07:44.16]

Unknown: Okay.

IQ: I [inaudible: 01:07:46.08].

RB: Yeah.

AP: Yeah, to speak to what you both are saying, because I also thought about the, the issues that are also being passed down intergen, intergenerationally with our culture. Um, it's like the reason that we are still passing out all that negative, horrible stuff is cause we're humans and all humans in every culture practices that. But also like within our Blackness we all feel the struggle of being tasked with um, of trying to, basically trying to heal this Diaspora and form our own culture and, and become alive and be considered first class citizens, first class humans. So it's like we're doing all that problematic stuff because that's what people do but we're not allowed to just be normal people. We always are in this struggle or this fight, um, to overcome all of this [inaudible: 01:08:37.14] that's constantly thrown at us. I was just saying like that's, those are good points that you both bring up because like world change, it's going to start with the selves. I think that a lot of people think that in order to instill change, we have to clean up this park or we have to do this or we have to do, you know, teach people these things. But at the same time it, it's also the self. Like we all have to change along with the world for the world to change. When I do experience this, like um, this friction between like, between current generations and different generations because I think current generations are, are attempting to be a little bit more um, less problematic with our thinking. So, we have to figure out what, what components of the teachings from the

older generation do we take, like--,

[01:09:24.10]

RB: Right.

AP: Like my dad, you know, he was an amazing man but he also struggled with mental illness. And after going back home -- this is part of the reason why I fell into a horrible depression -- after coming back home after grad school I finally was able to realize and feel how emotionally abusive my home setting was because I spent about nine years between undergrad and grad school not being in that setting. And when I came back I felt it in a different way. I was, I was fully self-aware of, of it. So, after he passed away and, I'm, I'm in a struggle every day too, you all. I'm like I love my dad but he was also extremely problematic. He was a man who took care of his family but he also beat my mom when I was a kid and traumatized the hell out of me. So, it's like, I have to figure out what to take from him. I could take from him you take care of your family if you form a family. But I can also take from him as a man, that treats a woman the way he treated my mom, he's got to go regardless of what he's taken care of.

YKN: Yeah.

[01:10:21.19]

ÄP: So I think that like the struggle is figuring out what things to take from that cultural teaching and what things we need to like, like nah, you all can keep that. We all don't got to keep that going, you know?

Unknown: Yeah.

RB: You have to filter.

Unknown: What is--,

RB: What you're not, yes.

YKN: Yeah, cause you, you can learn, you can learn uh, uh, more than one way. He, so he can either teach me what I need to do or you can show me what I-I-I don't need to do.

AP: Yeah.

YKN: Yeah.

[01:10:53.07]

AP: And, and I think that the reason that I-I have like a lot of bitterness over this issue, particularly because it's like I feel like it's white people were under such a microscope. Like if we do do anything problematic we're just immediately villainous and it's inherent cause we're Black. And nobody really understands this internal struggle that we go through with the self and with our own people in regard to gatekeeping. We're also trying to build ourselves up, you know And, and like I feel where you're coming from Ineil, like it's, it's like this frustration or bitterness on top of it. But I think that I guess we just got to commiserate instead of like listen and try to keep moving forward. I don't know.

[01:11:29.27]

IQ: I mean, we don't -- I don't know if, if we're going to have the solution now. I just, I'm like, I'm seeing the card and I'm like this intergenerational piece is just, is really important to me because, um, I, I am a big person on just family and, and just coming from, um, coming from a big family. I don't want to say necessarily dysfunctional which isn't bad, but it's just like, it's very interesting about the ideas of family that um, I think like other Black people try to put as the ideal. And sometimes, like for example like you

know, there will be Black people who will at, will say like two parent households but also um, it takes a village to, to raise a child. And for me, it, it's confusing because if you invest in the village then everybody is, is to be supported. Investing in the village doesn't just look like neighbors being able to beat each other's kids, you know what I mean? Like it looks like all you see a teenage mother that we support her. You know, like, like it, it's just a very confusing thing. So when I just see "intergenerational discussions and dynamics" I'm just like this, we, we need to have a conversation around this and I think like young people's voices are important and, shoul, and at least in my experience also doing a lot of youth programs they tend to sometimes repeat what other adults are saying. And it's like how do we even cultivate uh, critical thinking in young people to really express what they're saying and not have pushback because [inaudible: 01:13:11.10] their problems sound very adult. And it's like young people go through very adult things and that needs to be, um, acknowledged.

[01:13:20.18]

RB: Yeah, they do.

AO: And also, um, just to give a ti, just a tad bit of credit to the younger generation, too, I don't know, as far as uh, as far as your little sister, like and speaking to her and her friends, these kids are really aware. And I think it's because, I think it's because of what in, it is the intergenerational advocacy. I think it really is what they're seeing. Like how you say, like how they take, they take the things that they see from adults and they, they kind of reiterate, uh, and reenact ideas and, and, and physicalities that they get from who they were raised to look at. And I will say in a lot of ways this younger generation [laughs], they, I will say there are some things that they do definitely

need to work on. Um, and they definitely need education for. But I, I also want to give them a little bit of credit because they, they are very aware of the world they live in and they are very aware of what is right and what is wrong. Um, and actually there was an incident that happened recently at my little sister's school. She goes to performing arts. And there was, uh, there was like this white kid who created this huge, I don't know, like Instagram page or whatever else like that. And it was talking about all kinds of Black people and this and that. And, and it's, the amount of kids who had this outpour or who said, well, "this is racist." And also I feel really scared for that child cause they're looking for--, [laughs]. Those little kids are looking for that child who started that, who started that group. But I, I will say this. Um, yeah, and like and, and I didn't really have too much to elaborate on it. I just will say like I do want to give them a little bit of credit cause those kids, they are aware. They -- I don't know who that kid is who started that Instagram page but they, they, and they told them multiple times in the little comments they said: 'If we figure out who you are, and we figure out who you are you better know what's coming to you.' [laughs]. So, you know, so yeah. That's, that's all I wanted to say on that.

[01:15:50.10]

AP: So I, I know it's [inaudible: 01:15:52.15] to end in calm, unfortunately. But I wanted to ask you all a question. It's actually from one of the cards. I had it put up on my phone. Um, this is something I want to ask you all because I do definitely consider you all to more so be working artists and creators. Right now I'm like sort of crawling out of this like depression shield.

RB: Re-emerging.

AP: Yeah, reemerging [laughs]. Um, so the card says: *Discuss strategies for maintaining your practice and your spiritual, physical, mental wellbeing as an artist or art worker.*

RB: Well, let me start there.

AP: Okay.

RB: It has been something transitioning after and automobile accident I was, I had a trauma and all of this, cognitive. I had to learn to read again. I had to learn to write again after a near fatal au, accident in 2000. And then I reemerged as an artist. And I had to put a lot of stuff together. And so, uh, my dream world became so vivid. I went that channel. And I, I was allowed to train throughout, go all the way around the country and uh, train on dream interpretation. That was my, that was my particular avenue. So I mastered that. And then I began showing, showing in New York and various places. And uh, set, set back a little bit but always painting. Every, draw, every day. I had to make a stroke of something. You know. One line. If I didn't get to it, one line every day. And now it's just like how I breathe. I do it a little bit every day. More and more and more and more. And now it's just unfolding. You know, it kind of unfolds. But just a discipline. A little bit everyday and just keep building it up. You're going to be fine. R, and you know, I was thinking of the timing that should you release what you did at UB? I wonder what would happen if you released it today with all that's coming, you know, come in, you know, gone on. That's something to look at. And maybe even to, to retry. You know?

[01:18:06.22]

AP: I think that's excellent advice.

YKN: Yeah, I would, listen, I would do that right now.

[laughter]

YKN: With [inaudible: 01:18:14.16]. When he, when you talk about it I said, 'where was I?' That was before I got back to Buffalo so I missed it.

AP: Ohh.

YKN: Uh, so, cause I-I think I got back to UB in 2017. So, I-I-I had just missed it by a year or two. But I would do that right now.

AP: Woah.

YKN: [inaudible: 01:18:32.11] I would do that right now, today, uh, at, I would do it, I would do it at UB. [laughs]

Unknown: [inaudible: 01:18:39.14]

AP: I have to revisit it [laughs]

[01:18:40.18]

RB: Look at the research, look at the research of all that's happened since then.

YKN: Yeah.

RB: The movements. That's very strategic.

AP: Yeah.

YKN: You know I told you I love social experiments. Like that's the kind of stuff that I like to do.

AP: Oh, goodness.

YKN: You know, going all the way back to -- I just did an experiment with the last show that I did because of you know, Jane Elliott, the educator who had the Blue Eye, Brown Eye experiment. You know, you know what I'm talking about a little bit.

AP: Yeah, yeah, Jane Elliott.

YKN: Okay, so, well, all right.

RB: I'll Google it.

[01:19:11.15]

YKN: Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait.

AP: This white lady that's down for the cause.

RB: Okay, okay.

YKN: [inaudible: 01:19:18.01] cause. And -- and what she did was she took a group of uh, I think it was, what grade were they, like third graders or something, and um, she separated them. Those who had blue eyes and those who had brown eyes.

RB: Okay, yeah.

YKN: Uh huh. And those with the blue eyes were the ones that were mistreated or ignored and so on and so forth. And it was an experiment that she did to show, uh, uh, what it would be like to be a person of color who was, you know, uh, uh, treated in any particular way. And so I love that. I would take that right now and still do it at UB because--,

AP: [laughs]

RB: Oh yeah.

YKN: I don't mind being a little bit messy. Um, [laughs] and you know, and, I'm, I'm limping through UB campus right now anyway between the theater and the African American Studies department. You know, like I would do that right now in a heartbeat and not even, I wouldn't even bat an eye.

[01:20:08.16]

AP: Yeah, don't blink.

[laughter]

AP: I need to, I need to come up to UB and kick it with you all.

YKN: Yes [inaudible: 01:20:12.24]

AP: I'm in Chicago right now but I got to come back to my art home. [laughs]

YKN: Yeah, seriously, like that would, especially like what Miss Brown was saying, you know, with the, with the, the, the social climate right now. And everything that's happened since uh, the pandemic started and then with George Floyd. And then the, the, the, the--,

RB: Yeah.

YKN: The domino of everything that came up--,

RB: All the movements.

YKN: Yes, over the past two years.

AP: With Trump and everything.

RB: That's a book coming out of that.

AP: Yeah, I, I am working on writing. And I wanted to show it to you all because we are talking about, like we are talking about like conversations on how to like circulate, um, and bring our art to, to the masses. So, just this book, is this backward? This is backwards, isn't it?

YKN: No, no, no, no, it's not.

AP: Okay, it's called um, *IN AND OUT OF VIEW, ART AND THE DYNAMICS OF*

CIRCULATION AND SUPPRESSION AND CENSORSHIP. So, it's an anthology from um, artists and creators, um, all around the world, the majority in the US but also some international artists and creators. And it's basically talking about um, our experiences with the, the, the you know, heading that it's just explaining. And they do have a section, um, in there for like voices. Like art in circulation and our experiences as Black artists and creators, so, um, I think that'll be a good read. And me and Kara Walker have like a little combo essay in it. And her essay in it is um, amazing. It's the letter she wrote me and she, she kept it very real with me. She was like 'good job but you got to get yourself together and know who you are cause you just stepped out into the forefront.' And that's a [inaudible: 01:21:50.00]. It is fiery. So, it's, it's really good and I think it really speaks towards us having this ground, being in this whole of using all of our voices uh, to change the world.

[01:22:02.17]

Unknown: [inaudible: 01:22:02.01]

YKN: I love that. I love that. And she's one of my favorites. I love uh, I love her civil right work. Yeah, I was just--, yeah.

AP: She's the person who made me think I could be an artist. When I was like thirteen or fourteen I always liked art but I didn't think it was a thing I could do cause I was, you know, I was ignorant. And I saw her artwork and then, um, she inspired me to pursue art as, as a lifestyle.

[01:22:24.05]

YKN: Yeah. And see, I love doing the installations. Art installations like that, you know, like her, uh, her sphinx piece that, you know, the, the, the, the, the Sugar--,

AP: Yeah.

YKN: You know what I'm saying, the Sugar is--,

[laughter]

YKN: You, [inaudible: 01:22:39.26] could be art. Man, the, all, those pieces are [inaudible: 01:22:43.25].

RB: Phenomenal.

YKN: Yes, the Domino Factory. Oh, my goodness. Like all those pieces, they're just, I love -- just, just the conversation that it forces you to have and the history that it forces you to confront. That it exists. It existed and it's still here in some, some form or fashion. Like we just did the *FACING OUR TRUTH* production, uh, where we talked a lot about uh, uh, uh, the, the uh, the, the police violence that, that's been taking place now. And I referred to them as modern day lynchings, right? So, you know, here a lynching is not necessarily a thing of the past. It's still happening today but it's taken on a different form. Okay, we, we're still being lynched, you know? And so I, I love being able to, to, to, to cause an audience to confront the fact that history is really not history. It's, it's--,

[01:23:38.14]

AO: It's like infinite. It's just constantly happening.

YKN: It's [inaudible: 01:23:40.12]. It's now. It's now.

RB: Yeah.

[01:23:43.17]

YKN: Right.

IQ: I think I have a comment. Cause I just want to make sure that I got the question right. [inaudible: 01:23:49.19] is perfect. Um, it was about how to re-engage your art after healing or, or healing?

AP: It was, um, *how do you maintain your practice and also your spiritual, physical and mental wellbeing*. Like how do you [inaudible: 01:24:06.26] and still basically stay sane and grounded--,

IQ: Okay.

AP: And, and continuing on.

YKN: Mmm.

IQ: Okay. Um, I'm still working on that but I will say um, there was a time in my life where definitely lots of depression. But I think the thing that really woke me up was I was doing more like, um, organizing and doing more show productions. So, just getting, you know, artists together and doing things like that in workshops. And it, I was doing it for so long that I started to have people around me, friends who didn't even know, know that I drew. Um, and so when I would speak about being an artist they would just be like: 'Oh, what? I didn't know.' And, and that kind of caused uh, I forget what the word is. But it's, it's like, um, I think it's imposter syndrome.

RB: Mm hmm. Yeah.

[01:24:55.24]

IQ: Like it was, it was giving me that caused it was just reinforcing all these different attitudes. Um, we got, we got fam here. [laughs] And so, I would definitely say like Covid um, for me, there was a bright side cause I was actually able to rest. Um, cause there was a time in my life when I was working like--,

RB: Mm hmm.

IQ: Three jobs, plus doing Dope Collective and you know, helping various nonprofits, which I think nonprofits in general, um, while they may help communities, they definitely do burn out the staff. Um--,

YKN: [inaudible: 01:25:32.28]

IQ: [laughs] It definitely, um, was a lot of toxicity in, in that way. And so, what helped me, kind of like how we were speaking about memory and even forgetting, um, was leaving room for myself uh, to not actively erase myself. Like, even if people around me didn't necessarily see me in this light or you know, the phrase, um 'If you can take a picture then it doesn't exist.' Or like I was kind of getting that feeling, like here I am producing these shows and I'm the one behind the camera. Here I am, making art shows happen but I'm not creating art. So, it's like I'm doing these things but slowly I'm not existing. And I couldn't see that, even if everything else reinforced it. Um, so I definitely do feel like not actively erasing yourself is, is important as well. Like, even if you're not drawing, which I definitely do agree with Miss Brown.

RB: Yeah, one line.

[01:26:36.21]

IQ: Anything you do--,

AP: I'm going to start doing that.

IQ: As--,

RB: [inaudible: 01:26:39.21]

YKN: Yes.

IQ: You know, but even if you don't do it, you are, you're still an artist.

RB: Yeah.

IQ: You know what I mean? You have to stay firm in who you are and that's something that I had to fight through, um, and just solidify. Like it didn't matter whether I existed or not. I am who I am and sometimes--,

YKN: Yes.

IQ: You know, that has to be enough.

[01:27:02.08]

AP: Yeah, thank you all. That was, that's like [inaudible: 01:27:06.04]

[01:27:07.00] [cross talk]

IQ: Yes. Comeback song. Cause I remember that too. It was lit.

[laughter]

AO: Oh, and you're really uh, trying to go back to UB and start of all that, girl, we could -- look, I have so many books at our house--,

AP: [laughing]

AO: We could, we could really go into it together, reading books together. And we could go [inaudible: 01:27:28.14].

AP: [inaudible: 01:27:28.09] Okay. I'm going to hit you all up for real, for real. This is, [inaudible: 01:27:31.07].

YKN: We are here for you.

RB: It's been beautiful.

AP: Yeah.

YKN: Yes, same here.

AP: I appreciate all of you.

YKN: So nice to meet you all.

[01:27:38.13]

RB: Yes, yes.

IQ: Yeah.

YKN: I'll find you on social media [laughs]

AP: [laughs]

RB: Bye y'all.

YKN: Bye.

RB: Best to you all.

YKN: Yes.

[01:27:51.00]

[what follows is a crossover zoom ending from another discussion/overlap]

KEVIN WHITENEIR: No.

JV: What happened?

KV: That's weird, all right.

RB: Are we done? It came back on. Okay, all right, sir. Thank you. Bye bye. It won't go off. It's still on. You're still there.

KV: We're still here. There's just like, uh, for some reason, people have so much

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recording power, um--,

Unknown: I think it's okay.

KV: Renata, will you unrecord. [inaudible: 01:28:30.22], will you unrecord? And
Yao Kahlil, will you also unrecord?

[01:28:42.17]

END OF RECORDING

Transcribed by Carolyn Berner 07/07/2023

To be copyedited.