

NARRATING YOUR NARRATIVE

Project: Narrating Your Narrative

Question for Investigation: What does it mean to be an Artist of Color in the 21st Century?

Statement of Purpose: Considering the current state of our nation, the conversations surrounding whiteness, privilege, race, and the emergence of Black Lives Matters, what does it mean to be an Artist of Color in the 21st century? How does it differ from being an artist of color in the 20th century? And how does the media, class, economics, social, and family in modern society effect the perceptions and messaging of Artist of Color within the communities and populations they serve?

Proposal Summary: Narrating Your Narrative, is an immersive and devised, Applied Theatre workshop that looks to enrich the scope of the work of Artists of Color through investigation and unpacking of the project question. The workshop, which takes place for six, 2-hour meeting sessions, is open to any artists who self-identifies themselves as an Artist of Color. All disciplines of artistry will be considered through the spectrum of the Fine and Performing Arts. The impact of this project will hopefully give Artists of Color a better understanding in the perception of who they are in the communities they serve, and the impact their cultural identity plays within those communities. The “big” world implication of the project is to bring about change, focusing and encouraging authenticity of self, by looking at how labels of cultural identity can limit the population within a community on their perception of who an artist is before ever meeting or engaging with the artist. How can a community embrace someone different other than who they are, if the perceptions and messaging of whom that person is, is gleamed through a negative lens, whether well intentioned or not?

Session I – Building Community – through *Group Theater* techniques, including Theater Games and improvisation, we begin building community to unpack the Central Question.

Session II – Exploring The Unexpected – through *Drama Conventions* created gallery walls of images and quotes to unpack the Central Question.

Session III – My Story – using *Forum Theatre* “Roll on the Wall”, participants begin to tell their story as it relates to the Central Question.

Session IV – Responding – *Co-Intentional Directing*, using pre-established text from a question (how does the term “person of non-color” make you feel?) participants ask Caucasian members of their respective communities, participants wrote responses to the respondents of the initial question.

In showing the success for the individual and potential for continued success of Narrating Your Narrative below are participant’s responses to the post-program evaluation question.

What was your biggest success in the project Narrating Your Narrative?

- “Voicing what it means to work in our given fields as Black Artists.” (participant 2)
- “Being able to vent and explore my own thoughts openly.” (participant 4)
- “Sharing ideas with fellow Pan-African artists and gaining new perspectives through the skilled facilitation we underwent.” (participants 3)
- “The sessions succeeded greatly in forming a community focused on civic engagement through the Arts.” (participant 1)
- “Gaining more knowledge and being more open to making a difference in my personal life.” (participant 6)

The Project: The “pilot” program of Narrating Your Narrative ran over four sessions between October and November in the Fall of 2017. We met on Wednesday evenings from 7-9, each session ran for 2 hours with 2-sessions taking place at CUNY School of Professional Studies, Masters of Applied Theater Program, 1-session at Pearl Studios and the last “pilot” session taking place at the historical theatrical landmark, The Players on Gramercy Park. There was a total of 9 participants over the four-weeks, whose demographics breakdown as the following:

- **Participant 1** – 50’s, African American woman, who is a Singer, Actress, Copy Editor and Music manager. Well established in her career.
- **Participant 2** – 40’s, Caribbean man, who is an Actor, Director, Writer and Producer. Well established in his career.
- **Participant 3** – 30’s, African woman, who is a Dancer, Singer, Actress, Social Worker and Arts Facilitator. Well established in her career
- **Participant 4** – 40’s, African American woman, Actress, Singer and Writer. Well established in her career.
- **Participant 5** – 30’s, Afro-Latino man, who is a Singer. He is not a novice but is at the beginning stages of his career.
- **Participant 6** – 20’s, African woman, who is a Singer at the very beginning of her career.
- **Participant 7** – 20’s, African woman, Arts facilitator, arts administrator. Well established in her career.
- **Participant 8** – 40’s, African American man, who is a Dancer. Well established in his career.
- **Participant 9** – 40’s, African American man, who is an Actor, Writer and Producer. Well established in his career.

The mission of this 6-session workshop is to create an artistic, think tank, through an immersive Applied Theater workshop to explore this conversation with Artist of Color. Taking into consideration, this topic is very rarely offered as an outlet of exploration in the further development of artistry for Artist of Color. We will use methodology of auto ethnography for participants to reflect on topics that allow for full investigation in a safe community building environment, as discovered in the pilot program of Narrating Your Narrative.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO BOOK NARRATING YOUR NARRATIVE FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION:

EMAIL – narratingyournarrative@gmail.com

WORKSHOP CAN RUN VIRTUALLY

© 2020 Free2BU Productions