CDN Creative Placemaking Convocation

Plenary

October 15, 2020 at 3:45pm EDT

English Transcript

>> ERIC: Welcome back. I am sorry that have to interrupt a dance party, but we have a lot to do this afternoon still. I am hoping you enjoyed the workshop and had a great break. I don't want to take up too much time. We have been on Zoom quite a bit lately. We are encouraging you to interact with each other and us via chat.

Just feel free to send a text a chat. Our sketch artist is back. Good to see you again. You can watch through the gallery view as it is set ‑‑ or was set before I was spotlighted or pin him and make his work your primary view. To do so just hover over the video and right click, from the menu click pin. To unpin, click remove pin in the upper left corner. Speaking of views, you have a choice of how to view the Convocation on your screen. Click view in the top right corner and select speaker or gallery to toggle between them. At certain moments we will spotlight a speaker, which will force your screen on speaker view. When you want to see the whole crowd again, please press gallery view.

As much as you are able, we encourage everyone to keep your individual video feeds on. It will reinforce our sense of community and it allows our speaker to see who they are talking to.

We are also offering closed captioning today in both English and Spanish. To access English, right click on the CC icon at the bottom of the window. From there, choose to view the captioning as a full transcript or on the screen in realtime. To access the Spanish captioning, click on the link in the chat window. And we are recording this viewing for future viewing. We will get the plenary off and running. I will introduce senior program manager at ArtPlace America. She helped put this Convocation together.

>> LEILA: Thank you so much. It is the final word. So grateful to be here with you and Eric gave me too much credit. I didn't have a big hand in any of this. I want to thank all the folks at NASA for the amazing work they have done to put this together. The partners at Looking Glass Creative and all you. You helped shaped all the content. I don't want to say too much because I am grateful I get to share the stage with brilliant friends and I want to get to it. I have some questions pressed but the panel lists don't know yet. We will see where we go. I just thought it would be nice to ground us as humans first and the way I wanted to do that was to ask you to introduce yourselves but by telling a story about the place you call home. That could be the place you are currently based or somewhere else. Doesn't have to be where you currently are. Let's go. Tell us a story about the place you call home.

>> TAMARA: Hi everyone. Okay. We committed to being succinct. I will tell you a story, I live in downtown San Jose under the flight path next to the freeway and couple blocks away from the fire stage. Just a little story about this place that I call home. Especially impacted by being at home quite a bit in the last several months. I went outside to our garden, some of the important ceremonial plants here that I wanted to share. We don't have smell‑o‑vision but I have some sage, I have rue, cedar here that is important to us. A leaf of tobacco. And, of course, I am Chicana, mind you, if they are this little and bright, it is hot. The story I want to share, I am so grateful to Mother Earth and even here in this urban setting, in San Jose, next to the freeway, I am next to the freeway, Mother Earth still gives me an abundance of spiritual, ceremonial to cook with, pray with and I wanted to share that with everyone.

>> EVAN: I think it is me now. I can't follow that up. That is beautiful. I will say I am going to switch up my initial answer was going to do with what has affected me, where I am from in Denver, the Chicano movement and artists on the west side and north side of Denver but I am not going to mention that now because this is where I am from right now, my house, like all of you and I have a four‑year‑old and I have an almost nine‑month‑old but I will share this story which I find funny. I finished teaching a class and one of the ‑‑ over the course of the course, there is a bunch of different subjects. One was forgiveness. We were having dinner and I was talking about forgiveness. My wife was saying what are you covering, I said, you know, who is forgiveness for. Can you forgive too early, can you forgive too late. And in the same pattern that I was speaking, my son goes, can you forgive yourself and I thought, oh, I knew it. I knew that my son was going to be a genius. Look at that, he is bringing up a big thing. He follows it up can you forgive your we. Yeah. A thought provoking four‑year‑old and a baby.

>> CARLTON: I am Carlton Turner. I am down here in Mississippi. This place where I am from, I have been ‑‑ my family has been on these lands for eight generations. What that means is ‑‑ in a small rural community like Utica, the relationship are generational and concentric circles. In many ways my children are going to school with children that I went to school with their parents and those parents and ‑‑ our parents went to school together and so on and so forth back many generations.

I guess the story I will share is, I remember as a child growing up in this area, you know, and only ‑‑ not having access to cable or television and the only television we had because the four major networks, NBC, CBS, ABC and PBC, that was before Fox came along. There wasn't a lot of television but we used to play lot of imaginary settings in our around. We were always making use of the natural surrounding and turning it into our place and now I guess I use that same kind of visioning strategy to imagine what my community could look like if we change our practices in the way we approach community development. That is my story and I am excited to be here.

>> LEILA: Thank you so much. This is why it is good to keep it funky and surprising and I am grateful because each of you talked about the gifts that the land brings us, the place we are rooted in and also family. And our connections to that. I want to thank you for grounding us there because the story about land is the story about us too. You know? There are forces, capitalism that are trying to disconnect us from that every day, all the time. But we are all fighting against that and each of you are in big ways so I am grateful.

Pivoting, shifting gears a little bit, this last plenary, and thank you Tamara for putting where you are currently based and acknowledging our ancestors who ‑‑ and the original lands, that we are on. Thank you for that. This is about future and the change we want to see and how we will get there. I think you would agree with change comes trouble and I want to invoke John Lewis and bring his spirit into the room. And tell us about the last time you caused trouble. I am curious. I want to start with Evan because you smiled. Something must have come to your mind. The last time you caused trouble ‑‑ you can talk about your family if you want, but I was hoping you could ground it in something based in your work or cultural practice.

>> ERIC: Yeah. Good question. Couple things come to mind. It might apply to some people on the call. Let me start with this.

I think that Denver's greatest contribution to American art is ‑‑ comes often in the form of the guys in the low rider communities and in car culture. And cruising. Something that has been going on here for decades and that is never considered art by maybe the establishment. I have been involved with a bunch of people who are intimately tied there and we pushed for the city council to recognize this. This was in response to a part of town where folks traditionally cruise, it is basically a parade show casing your art, show casing your culture, it is the most American thing you could imagine. These are cars from the '40s, '50s, '60s, '70s. In Denver it is largely Chicano. It is adaptation and you parade it. And anyways, in the neighborhoods there that are gentrifying with a lot of cities, there have been pushback and complaints from newer residents and it was making the news. A group of folks, we pushed city council to recognize this culture for what it was and to celebrate it and they responded and proclaimed it a cruise down feds day. And that was a big thing for the people involved. It was a recognition, this is a community that had been policed, had been ostracized, targeted for a long, long time. I think that was a type of trouble that I was minorly involved in.

>> TAMARA: Do you want to call on us?

>> LEILA: You can go.

>> TAMARA: I will go next. I have been working in philanthropy for the last two years and change. Prior to that doing community organizing, leading arts organizations. So you can imagine it has been different. The last time I caused trouble, I would say that ‑‑ so if ‑‑ those working in philanthropy you have to cause trouble. You have to cause trouble. It is a huge privilege to not have to worry about meeting payroll for two weeks. That is what I did for a very long time. Taking that to heart and moving in November 2019, I pushed my board, this is a very small, small family foundation, brought the conversation of race and equity to the board retreat and I did a little bit of prep work but not too much because I didn't want to hear it about a no. Those who are on these call who know me very well, I like to bring humor into the conversation but I am also disciplined about my business and my business is about race and equity and having the conversations.

It was very unpleasant that board retreat. One of the co‑founders of the organization was quite upset and that was not pleasant at all. Wasn't, like, stomping out of the room but almost but it was very unpleasant to be in the room where only two of us of color, I doubted myself half way through this retreat, I thought this was a bad idea. Really bad. What does this mean? We are trying to inspire, what I want to say is that we owe it, right, owe it to the ancestors, we have to do these things. It is really uncomfortable. Believe me, it is hard. When I say we have to do it, it is because I am doing it and that because this organization that I work for is moving forward and even though it is painful and people have been upset, and I have been afraid, it is moving forward. It is going to move forward. And I take ‑‑ I don't want to take up all the time on that but I am saying I wanted to give a story, one thing is to be on a Zoom, write an op‑ed, one thing to be across the table from an individual feeling attacked and you are feeling like you might be attacked next. It is real. That is the last time ‑‑ well, one of the last times that I caused some trouble.

>> CARLTON: I will be brief and share two things. One, the first I will be super brief and put it in the chat so people can read about it, but was part of a group that helped to develop the Cultural New Deal, which is calling out making ‑‑ naming what it is we need in this work as artists and culture bearers and people who end up being the first responders as our communities are in crisis. And so the Cultural New Deal that came out in August, a piece of work that helped to foster since the pandemic jumped off, so that is one. I consider that life trouble, I feel like that is the baseline of what we should have already been doing. It is not anything super innovative or cutting edge.

The other piece, I can't take credit for this piece, other than being on the board of this magnificent organization for the elimination of poverty and genocide, in September, worked with a nurse as the whistle‑blower who exposed the atrocities in the Irwin Detention Center in Georgia of immigrant women forcibly having hysterectomies and that became national news and has made ripples and in the south when you are working in any of the systems, it is dangerous work so I applaud the organizers and those on the frontlines making their voices heard and trying to keep people like the nurse safe in these times.

>> LEILA: Thank you all for sharing. Incredible. The thing I am wrestling with or hearing is that it is uncomfortable. It is uncomfortable and especially when we want to recognize and do acknowledgment, all of a sudden, everybody is hurt. It takes a lot to end to that. A lot of care and humility. Just really all the very different but in some ways similar examples are really useful for all of us. Thank you. Y'all are bad. Cue the next Michael Jackson song.

I want to get tactical for a moment because the changes are happening around us all the time. We have seen that, obviously, this year, knowing the year it has been. And folks have been causing trouble for a long time. And, you know, this is as good as any other time to blow things up. From where you sit, what is one of the most major opportunities you see in this moment and don't hold back. I want to know your dream, I want to start with your Carlton, given your perspective, there is so much ‑‑ I feel you are constantly giving ‑‑ you know? Constantly feeling like there is an opportunity to be had, to be seized. Right now, what is feeling you need to jump on it?

>> CARLTON: First, I feel like the work we are doing is about food and stories about narratives and food justice. How ‑‑ who gets to tell stories, where the stories are told, how they are told is important in how public policy is shaped. We feel that is just important as a baseline for people to have the skills and the backing to tell their own story, to advocate on their own behalf and the food side is super important because our community has been decimated, our food infrastructure over the last 30 years have basically been eliminated. We went to having several grocery stores in the community to now only having a dollar general and the nearest grocery store is 20 miles away. I see there is an opportunity to disrupt the current cycle of how our community accesses and produces food.

And that may seem like a minor thing but if you can't eat, you can't think about the other issues that are, you know, that are bearing down on you. Those are two of the immediate pieces but I think the most important one, I think where we are as a country, as a nation, is directly tied to ‑‑ what some would say is a failing educational institution, others would say is a very carefully executed public education system, either way you want to look at it, the result is we have a society that is ‑‑ not intelligent. And not sophisticated when it comes to understanding community, how power happens, how political power happens, and I see the education system with COVID, there is an opportunity for a large disruption to happen there because students are now being educated mostly from home and so that creates an opening to create different types of community based systems that allow for a different type of education for our communities and I think ultimately where the food is working on an immediate need and addressing an immediate moment, the education work is about the future and if we don't do that work now, then we are losing time in the future. Those are pieces ‑‑ this is also, like, people who are defining science, saying the sciences don't know what you are talking about. That is because you are dumb. To think like that is because you are not educated and you don't understand mathematical equations and you are denying that because you are led by some emotional framework that did you not make logical sense. I connect that back to critical thinking, back to having an education of ‑‑ by people who care about you and your future and want to see you excel so they actually want you to learn.

Anyway, I will get off that.

>> LEILA: Don't get off that. I think there is something there and I would like you to speak a little bit more about ‑‑ specifically this connection to education and how ‑‑ this is a space that I think State Arts Agencies do support in a major way. When you are talking about this is a big opportunity in this current moment of COVID, what is that, what does that look like? A vision for how that needs to be localized. You are speaking from a rural perspective that is useful to dream out loud here.

>> CARLTON: I think State Arts Agencies have always had an opportunity to impact the quality of education that is happening because you are working with artists who are by definition undermining the status for how teaching happens, to bring a different type of strategy to young people, to the school. I worked with teaching artists with the Mississippi State Arts Commission, when we had an opportunity to go into classrooms and say things their teachers could not say and teach them and expose them to ideas that were not part of their curriculum, it had a profound impact on the young people we were able to touch. I think the moment now is similar in which teachers are being asked to redesign the way they teach based on this distance and the way they were teaching in the classroom, they had access to the young people, face to face, wasn't working either. Now they are asked to do this mental gymnastics to create a new way of engaging the same material, the same young people but with this whole play of distance. It is an opportunity organize with teachers, bring more creativity and strategy around how to undermine the way that teaching has really dulled the sensibilities of our young people. There is an opportunity here to strategize and organize teachers and organize people working on educational boards at the local level to try something new because now is the moment to interject that into a system, then you can begin to change and shift the way other school systems around you see ‑‑ they are having results over here because they have shaken up thing. It is time to be bold. Someone said the other day on the call, we don't have time for this partisan thinking. The only space we have left now is for revolutionary type of change in our systems because we see going down this pathway, what it takes and how long it will impact our world because people are just kind of struggling and lost.

>> LEILA: Can you hear me?

>> CARLTON: I can hear you now.

>> LEILA: Education check. Food sovereignty, check. What else is feeling like a big opportunity right now from where you sit?

>> EVAN: I feel it connects to what Carlton was saying and he has a lot of wisdom to share. Excited to connect with you more after this. I work with an organization called Warm Cookies of the Revolution, a civic health club, you exercise your civic health. That is how we conceptualize it, civic education, what it means as a resident to own your community. What does it mean to own your community. We talk a lot about voting every day and where I am in Denver, in 2016, there is one tiny little precinct out of ‑‑ I don't know, 100 some precincts in Denver, one that was majority voted for Trump, right, this is a city that is democratic run and supported and we have to deal with incredible issues of inequity, incredible issues of racial wealth gap, you know the litany of issues that we have. I think that what we are dealing with when you ‑‑ we talk about voting every day, though what is coming up is a big election nationally, and it will have profound effects but locally we have been dealing with things for long time and we will continue to deal with them, regardless of your party. If you talk about what is an opportunity, the way we see it, this is just our lens, we would like to see a civic health club in every community. A place where people can go to learn about, you know, who gets what, when they get it, how they get it, where is power. How do you push for what you want? You own your community the same way you own your purse, your bicycle, you own the jail, you own the schools, the street, you own the water. But the trick to this, this is the trick in terms of why it is arts based, culture based, people are busy and they have such limited time and money and there is a barrage of culture that is saying this is what you should do with your limited time and money and that includes watching Netflix, that includes shopping, that includes watching football, whatever the thing is, going to church, spending time with your family, those are the things people do.

The trick is how do we ‑‑ instead of pushing people away and wagging our hands and saying you should be doing this, this is crucially important, people who are smacked up in their face, they already know and they are doing it. And then there is a bunch of people who have the privilege to show up at a meeting at 2:00 p.m. in a fancy building and it is in the language they speak and they can pay for childcare. If we can take care of some of those things, you are into sports? The NBA bubble, that is the challenge of artists and cultural workers, connecting with people to ‑‑ what we are doing with this spirit so that you allow people ways to get in and get in touch. That is what is available. That is what I see. A civic health club or whatever you want to call it. This education Carlton is talking about, what it means to be a citizen. I am not talking about papers.

>> TAMARA: May I jump in? Okay. This ‑‑ the opportunity, the challenge right now, maybe I will share a little story and then bring it to the present. One of my old shops at the school of arts and culture at the Mexican Heritage Culture in San Jose, we had this great ‑‑ I am thinking about you on the call, State Arts Agencies, for transparency sake, I am the chair of the Western State Arts Federation, I like to feel I am here among colleagues. going back to the school of arts and culture, Mexican Heritage Plaza, okay, fast‑forward, this east side San Jose neighborhood, gentrification, in the Bay Area, and we saw the arts organization that I led them and is still there and thriving, and doing good work, school of arts and culture, doing COVID testing, food distribution, these are artists handling business. I want to give them a shout out. We had this great opportunity where we created a corridor, one of the Main Streets by us, we created ARUVA, it was the Alum Rock Urban Village Advocates. I was so happy a city bureaucrat called and said I can't find anything on this ARUVA, where did it come from? I had to laugh. This was part of the opportunity. We created it. We drummed it up. We thought it up. We had food and we ate and thought about it and created our own urban village advocates and we said the developers have to come to us and we told them, when you come here, you have to come to us and then they got the word. And this is where you come in. I love my bureaucrats because my people didn't stop us. They didn't say wait a minute; you can't have that. Might have been because we were determined. But also, they had the ability, those good people that I was working and are still there at city hall said okay. All right. You guys, you have your own rules and we have our own set of agreements on how we conduct ourselves. I appreciate that from my colleagues there inside of agencies, government entities that have the thought to say, okay, we are in this together. How can we support you? They don't always work out that way, right? It is not always rainbows and unicorns. We are talking about land and land is in high demand here in the Bay Area. Having a group of community people, artists, moms, saying hold up, your definition of community benefit that developers are coming with and the city comes with is not our definition.

>> LEILA: Land. Talking about food sovereignty, every day, you know, we started with land for a reason and that is so central to this work. I am curious what you think the role land plays in the future and what you would say one of the biggest opportunities government has here.

>> CARLTON: This is a question that came up, I was on one of the 27,000 Zoom plenaries I am doing in October, the other day, and this conversation came up about ‑‑ we were talking about land and story and food and someone asked a question, what about the fact that we are on all on stolen land, how does that impact the way we think about our strategies, our organizing and I said well, you know, there is so much talk right now about ‑‑ you know, Black Lives Matter, and the movement for black lives and when I think about black liberation, I can't think about black liberation without thinking about indigenous sovereignty and what that means. The liberation of black people in this country is deeply tied up in fighting for indigenous people’s rights to their sovereignty. This is Native American land and so many people start off their conferences with land acknowledgments and it ends there.

But the only way we get to where we need to go is to not just acknowledge that they are here but actually follow their leadership because the challenges that we face on this land, especially talking about issues of climate change, issues of land stewardship, the fires in California, the droughts across the country, all those challenges have been solved. There is no innovation that is left that is needed to solve the challenges. It is about who is leading and whose solutions are being implemented and right now the indigenous peoples who know how to steward the land, their solutions aren't the ones being implemented. We are facing the double challenges of having the society, the land collapsing because it is not being properly taken care of and the people who know how to do that being denied the space to lead in the area that they have expertise. Those are the things I think when we talk about land, there is great opportunity to move past the land acknowledgment into recognizing indigenous leadership, which is one of the parts of the Cultural New Deal we talked about which is important if we are going to shift the tide for the future of the country.

>> TAMARA: The political and social capital we each have.

It is interesting to me how, you know, like, here in San Jose, the mayor texting me, I want to talk to you about Indigenous Peoples Day. All right. call me. Right? I know I get it, some of us live in bigger cities, smaller cities, whatever. He was my city council member. Right? Yeah. Anyway, he is Indigenous Peoples Day, I said you know what? I said, you know, thank you for calling me. I appreciate it but this is not my land. I know who you can talk to and speak to and I can set that up and he said great, would you be in the calls? I said no. You are going to speak to tribal leaders. I am not a tribal leader and you are the mayor of the city. You need to give them that respect and he said okay. All right. There are opportunities. I am making this simple here. Right? There are opportunities, each one of you have, and I shouldn't have waited, actually, for the mayor to call me, I should have called him up, I am hearing stuff about Indigenous Peoples Day, do you want a consultation and we can do this from if you don't know who your elected official is, I know all of us know who our elected officials are, but thinking about indigenous sovereignty, it is incumbent upon all of us to understand our role and then get out of the way. If there is an opportunity to get in there and say if you know who to speak to, signal that and then move. Right? That is that dance, really important to know when to remove yourself from that conversation and I see that as an opportunity as well.

Another opportunity I will put around ‑‑ what ‑‑ it is the inside‑outside game. We have our jobs and then our jobs in the community. If anybody wants to talk to me about my recent experience as a green campaign manager for a woman of color for elected office, I think that is another opportunity that is happening, always been present but really alive for a lot of folks, I get that some of us don't wanting into do with the political system. If you met my husband, he is out there and supporting women of color in elected office is incredibly important and even if you are an introvert you could do lot of things and this is an opportunity right now that is important because we as women of color we center family and community first. I am not saying others can't but I will say that is something that is incredibly important. I am not bringing something new to the table. This is something that has been written about. Great article from MPQ. Anyways. I threw in a couple of rants there.

>> LEILA: Anything you want to add on that around land and what role government has in that?

>> EVAN: There is a lot. I am a non‑Zionist Jew so I have strong opinions on land-based nationalism. We will put that aside for a moment. In Denver, we are doing a thing next weekend at a cemetery called riverside and it is where people who built this city live internally. I mean constructed the city and it is a dead place. They lost their water rights because they said it was a handshake deal a long time ago. You go there and it is yellow, the grass isn't there, the trees died. It is a dead place with these souls and it happens to be right next to ‑‑ it a fully gentrified neighborhood in many ways but there is still parts that are yet to be completely gentrified and the people that are buried there, there are interesting folks that bring up questions of ablation. There is a confederate monument here in Colorado and there is a lot of union soldiers. Including one, Silas, he is a very inspiring person. A person, brought black professional baseball to Colorado, it is in this place where we already displaced, this is currently, we displaced people over time, we displaced so many people out of the city that the question of what the government owes the people, the other municipalities. Working class people in this city, particularly black and brown folks have been pushed to outside of the city. What do we know the municipalities that don't have the services, that don't have what people built for decades inside the city? I know people who have to take three buses to get downtown to go to health servings, it is an hour's long trip. I think that is a form of reparations that we need to look at. As governments we need to have answers to the questions, how do you expand the tax base, can you expand the tax base. No politician is going to run on that. It is up to us. The policy is the last thing that changes. We need to bring those things up. And I have one other thing but I have a feeling we are out of time.

>> LEILA: Say it.

>> EVAN: You made me think of how the dynamics of power work. There is a suburb just south, it is its own city of Denver, they rectified it a little bit but there is another one that did this, they have made stringent laws, regulations for where a registered sex offender, where they could live, how close to a school, community center, a pool, 1.7% of the city they could live, they would need to find a place to live there. It outlawed the folks from living there. Everything says that is not the way you go about doing it. It makes these people more isolated. Plus, most of the folks who are on this list, they are on it for a variety of reasons. They are not all scary monsters but some are. This is land, this is about zoning. There are these intricate, nerdy things that are done that are very ‑‑ that aren't sexy, you can't look at them and say this evil person is doing this evil thing, it is part of the machinery of it, in how we zone. We need to bring to light these nerdy things. We need people to cut through it, through art or gathering people or education to say these are things we have to address and they are not easy and people will have strong opinions about them but the way it is going right now, the status quo is the decisions are being made without your consent so you need to participate.

>> LEILA: Thank you. That is not an easy thing but thank you for sharing that example. I think in all the things you said, I guess where I am curious, shifting the conversation, it is what we need to get there. I think all of us, based on why we are here, we understand that creativity, arts and culture allows us to come up with ways we can't imagine right now that we need. I am going to invite us to be in that space for a minute and ask you all to put on your superpower cape, your superwoman, superperson cape, what is the one superpower you will need? I will start and say it is in some ways reaction to what you said. The one superpower I would have is ultrahealing being or something. That is not the best word for it. Something that could ‑‑ I don't know if it is just about empathy but healing deep wounds within it and how it gets shared. I would be mine. I am curious what you would be for how we are going to get there.

>> TAMARA: I think ‑‑ if I could have the ideal superpower, am I reading the question, right? The ideal superpower would be for myself and others would be able to beam active decolonization powers and also the ‑‑ to the white supremacy culture, just removing ‑‑ being able to identify it, seeing it, it is so hard, it is all over. It is what we are swimming in and there is a great article I shared with our team. It is not new to ‑‑ I am sure to most of you ‑‑ around white supremacy culture and antidotes. I have been using that with different groups I am involved with to help us move back. Especially in my own community and in some of the professional circles I am in so we could move away from this idea that white supremacy culture, I only hear okay, that means you are calling me a racist. That superpower of here are antidotes, taking time to stop and think, what am I doing, am I participating in this, how can I stop and call that out for myself and model it.

With the decolonization piece, I am influenced as a parent. In our culture, our children are supposed to respond to parents, we have been talking about decolonization ourselves from that. I have actively tried to think about that piece where in our own culture and colonization and the conquest where our indigenous people were made to and were enslaved and told you could not respond in your indigenous language so now we are trying to in our own home and circles to saying, which is culturally hard for Mexicans. This is a personal thing ‑‑ anyway. Did I answer the question?

>> LEILA: You did. That is beautiful. I love that. I visualize it. For real. Carlton, Evan?

>> CARLTON: I think I am going to ‑‑ for me, the superpower is one I feel like ‑‑ I want to go back a little bit and say I think, first of all, the superpower is the ability to see things that don't exist. That is the superpower and it is not a superpower because we are born with it and the education system actually rips it from our grasp. Artists turn out to not be anything special, we are just people who have grown up and been able to hold on to a piece of this ability to access the creative center that exists in everybody.

For me the superpower would be making sure that everybody has ‑‑ always constantly taps back into their creativity center to understand and unpack and see things that don't exist and then understand how to manifest those things in a material form.

>> EVAN: Carlton stole mine. Same thing. Many people grow up with this pianist idea they are not artists, not creative. When I was little, I couldn't draw very well. The kid who could draw in class was the artist but took being a professional artist for a decade, okay, I guess I am an artist. Same thing, if people could recognize that we have the creative ability to work around, through, over, inside out challenges, we have the ability to resist obedience to laws and systems that don't work, we could do those things with creativity, joy, humor, with a strong backbone and with each other, I throw that cloak on to everyone. That is my superpower.

>> TAMARA: On the two thinks, thank you for dropping them in there. I know they have long ‑‑ they may seem difficult to use but briefly, what I used is the anti‑bias continuum, a self‑assessment, but yourself on the continuum and put the institution or department you are a part of and if you are willing to do this in your group, your staff, your team, your board, whatever entity you are in, it is useful to then share, come back and share I am on this part of the continuum and our institution is on this part and comparing notes. Right?

And with the dismantling racism, in a group, I had the group each take the white supremacy culture, the negative and the antidote in separate groups, and having that discussion and come back. It is basic facilitation stuff but these are things I used and they have been wonderful to use, wonderful tools that help. Have helped me and others to understand what is it that we are talking about.

>> LEILA: Thank you for sharing that. I am mad, I had more questions. It is time. This went so quickly.

I know, boo. After party. After. I have to say thank you so much. You are brilliant. I have to pass it back to Eric at this point but just thank you. This was really inspiring.

>> ERIC: Thank you. Yes, thank you, that was such a deep conversation that I think we barely scratched the surface. But now to bring things to a close. Unfortunately, this Convocation must end at some point.

But not quite yet because we have Mike Bond, who is a brilliant jazz pianist and composer, he put the themes from the Convocation and put them into a composition. He is going to tell you about it and then he and his band are going to perform it. Mike?

>> MIKE: Hello. Good afternoon everyone. My name is Mike Bond. I am from the native land in New Brunswick, New Jersey. I want to express deep administration for NASAA for allowing me to close out the Convocation with a commissioned musical piece that I composed and get to share with you today. This piece was written for key themes and takeaways from this Convocation. The trumpet is a versatile instrument. Its sound could be a symbol of triumph and the somber sound of loss and lament. It is both of lament, sorrow and hope. I chose to include vocal percussionist beat box, it symbolizes the chatters of the world and the pressures that come with following social normative ideas, confirmative, validated and successful. The piece is separated into three movements. The first is a Blues influenced melody about the individual voice that you will hear in the trumpet. it is written with a lot of space in mind. In the first plenary we are reminded of George Floyd's murder in Minneapolis. And what it would take to reconcile with communities of color to create artistic space. This movement is about lament, realizing and identifying with others hurt and pain. The trumpet is lament and a cry of anger.

The second movement happens when the beat kicks win the beat boxer. This is about making connections. The music is more improvisational, busier in the instruments. There is an initial melody that is framed in human questions that we may have in making connections. [Playing music] You will hear something like that. The rhythm of that is what are we going to do, how do we move ahead, what if they disagree, how do we keep the faith. I took that rhythm, that similar rhythm and made that into the melody there. It features the trumpet and a solo improvisational instrument, which is one must do in building real connections, improvise. It refers to the struggle of breaking barriers, connecting with communities and sacrificing comforts in order to pursue deeper relationships between groups of people, whether or not we are talking about artists versus grant makers or communities that share different ethnicities and definitions for what they call their home.

The third movement is about hope and optimism moving forward, it is where the title came from. The melody is home of the brave backwards. Think of the national anthem, I put the home of the brave and just made it backwards. Brave of the home. Which is the title of the piece. The brave of the home. When we think of the Star‑Spangled Banner the lyrics represent a country that's patriotism is rooted in its triumphs and is a nod to the bloodied history of colonization. The anthem focuses on the country, our home or place rather than the people who built this home into what it is today. It is brave individuals willing to share their stories as people of color or their story as a gender neutral or transgender person or an undocumented immigrant that have continued to fight to make this country a home for them. It is a power of these individual stories that break barriers and transform our cultural understanding of one another. This is our inspiration for moving forward. The more that we couldn't hold space for others and access community driven empathy within ourselves. This is why I added the quote from the well‑known hymn, lift every voice and sing. Although there is much work to be done. That quote is let us march on until victory is won. As we end the Convocation, it is my hope we can work to create a thriving environment for communities to express their cultural identities through theater, art, music, dance, et cetera, by identifying with one another as being on a joint mission with equity, transformation and lasting change. Thanks and I hope you enjoy it.

 [MUSIC PLAYING}

>> ERIC: Wow! That was amazing. Thank you. As a former trumpet player, let me say it is the right move to include a trumpet. Never downside to that. We will put up the links to all those great musicians in the chat in a moment. I recommend checking them out. And can recommend the album he dropped earlier this year, pick it up and enjoy it. I have a few quick last things. If you could join me in gallery view. We will send out a survey. You will get a link to that in the chat. I would appreciate it if you could fill that out and let us know how we have done, what we could do better, what we could do more of. It will go out in e‑mail tomorrow. But you will get the link in the chat in a moment.

Look out for the video recordings, transcripts and so on soon. We will get those up within the next few weeks. You can relive this, check out the sessions you missed. And finally, I want to thank everyone, thank you to the workshop leaders, the plenary speakers, the facilitators, you made this thing run. Art place, thank you so much for funding the Convocation and partnering with us throughout the planning process. Your insight, everything made the difference, helped us going the right way. You are always a pleasure to work with. And you made this into a special conference with all your heart work and finding the right people to pull this off and thank you to Thomas and the crew at Looking Glass Creative, they kept us moving forward and make sure everything ran smoothly. Let me be the emcee for this one, which I appreciate it. Thank you for that. And last but not least, take a moment and look around at your peers here today, you are the ones doing the work, take a moment here for the end and unmute yourselves and give yourselves a round of applauses for the work you are doing now, the work you have done in the past and in the future. Let's end on applause for everything you guys are doing out there.

Please join me, don't make me the only one who is clapping here. Thank you so much for a great Convocation. I am looking forward to working with you all again in the future. Have a good night and a great rest of the week.

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