

Post-Production FILE

EPISODE12LORES2.MOV

12/23/2020

Transcription PROVIDED BY:

PostCAP, LLC

www.CaptionFamily.com

* * * * *

Transcription is provided in order to facilitate communication accessibility and may not be a totally verbatim record of the proceedings.

* * * * *

[background music]

>> Hello, everyone, and welcome. My name is Donna Conwell.

>> My name is Kelly Sicat. We are your hosts of *Scratch Space*.

>> *Scratch Space* is a virtual forum hosted by the Lucas Artists Residency Program at Montalvo Arts Center, which is located in Saratoga, California on the ancestral lands of the Ohlone people. With *Scratch Space*, we are bringing together visual artists, scholars, composers, activists, writers, and others to explore what kinds of radical imaginaries can unfold in this moment of pandemic, racial reckoning, economic uncertainty, civil unrest, and environmental crisis.

>> We're interested in how we think about what is possible, how we can use our imaginations to build a better present and future, and how we can retool and create better and more equitable models for living and working together. Tell us about today's program, Donna.

>> Today, we're going to be talking with disabled activist, media maker, and consultant, Alice Wong about her work as Founder and Director of the Disability Visibility Project, and her recently edited book, *Disability Visibility: First-Person Stories from the Twenty-First Century*. We'll also be joined by visual artist, Jason Lazarus and Siebren Versteeg, who will be taking about their recent project, Public Public Address, which is a nationwide virtual protest in support of Black Lives Matter that prioritizes the civic engagement of individuals who are immunocompromised and their caregivers, people with disabilities, and precarious

community members.

We'll discuss tactics for making activism and protest accessible to all, and strategies for giving voice and visibility to communities at the margins, as well as how accessibility can be a form of creative practice as well as an act of love. This conversation was recorded in November, shortly after the 2020 election, and we're very happy to be sharing it with you today.

>> I'm excited for this conversation. The links for our guest bios have been posted in the chat. I want to thank Nathan Zanon for being our producer behind the scenes. I will disappear shortly and will return for a short Q&A with Jason Lazarus following the conversation.

>> That will be the beginning. I'm sorry, let me just pause it.

>> Okay.

>> All right, so we're recording again. This is take two.

>> [clears throat]

>> Hello, everyone, and welcome. My name is Donna Conwell.

>> My name is Kelly Sicat. We are your hosts for *Scratch Space*.

>> *Scratch Space* is a virtual forum hosted by the Lucas Artists Residency Program at Montalvo Arts Center, which is located in Saratoga, California on the ancestral lands of the Ohlone people. With *Scratch Space*, we are bringing together visual artists, scholars, composers, activists, writers, and others to explore what kinds of radical imaginaries can unfold in this moment of pandemic, racial reckoning, economic uncertainty, civil unrest, and environmental crisis.

>> We're interested in exploring how we think about what is possible, how we can use our imaginations to build a better present and future, and how we can retool and create better and more equitable models of living and working together. Donna, tell us about today's program.

>> Today, we're going to be talking with disabled activist, media maker, and consultant, Alice Wong about her work as Founder and Director of the Disability Visibility Project, and her recently edited book, *Disability Visibility: First-Person Stories from the Twenty-First Century*. We'll also be joined by visual artist, Jason Lazarus and Siebren Versteeg, who will be taking about their recent project, Public Public Address, which is a nationwide virtual protest in support of Black Lives Matter that prioritizes the civic engagement of individuals who are immunocompromised and their caregivers, people with disabilities, and precarious community members.

We're going to be discussing tactics for making activism and protest accessible to all, and strategies for giving voice and visibility to communities at the margins, as well as how accessibility can be a form of creative practice as well as an act of love. This conversation was recorded in November, shortly after the 2020 election, and we're very happy to be sharing it with you today.

>> I'm excited for this conversation. You'll find the links to our guests' full bios are posted in the chat. I want to thank Nathan Zanon for being our producer behind the scenes. I will

disappear shortly, and following the conversation with Alice, I'll return for a brief follow-on discussion between Donna, Jason Lazarus, and myself. Enjoy the program.

>> Okay. Let's start. Welcome, Alice and Jason, and thank you so much for joining us today. As I said, I've been looking forward to talking with you both very much, and I'm really excited for our conversation today. We're recording this conversation in November, just shortly after the presidential election but as you know, it's going to be broadcast in January, just after the presidential inauguration. I wanted to just start today by checking in with you both and to see how you're feeling post-election and just in general, in response to this very uncertain and anxious time of COVID-19.

>> Jason, do you want to go first, and I'll go after you?

>> Okay. I was talking to Donna a little bit about this question. I think the presidential election has me feeling like, for a moment, I'm not always 150% reactive, alarmist to every single thing. I'm thinking about the immediate fires that will continue, but also it's like a chance to think more aerially. To come out of the chaos of the present moment and start to anticipate the possibilities and the new challenges. I think that the election cloud, it is one thing. I think there's a lot of feelings of thankfulness here in terms of-- A lot of our experiences are newly limited together. I don't know. I feel newly appreciative and try to maintain presentness. What about you, Alice?

>> I guess I wish I could feel the way you do. I think nearly the last four years, and way before that, it wasn't just the last four years. In marginalized communities, it's been hard for decades to start the trace. There's just one that I posted of very explicit forms of oppression that we see by the States. It was a very close election. The fact that there's still plenty of white people voting for an autocrat, for a fascist and a racist, doesn't make me feel any better. I think that's really important to remember.

Right now, even though this piece shows in January, we should also think about how so many of our systems have been damaged and the fact that the validity of votes is being questioned. That, to me, is very disturbing. Even with the due administration, I don't think this should be the answer. I don't think overnight, everything should be better. I think we have to be really cautious and not too quick to celebrate.

I think the Saturday where they say, the electoral votes last Saturday. [inaudible] Joe Biden was the clear winner. It was nice to celebrate. It was nice to take a moment, to take a breath, to relax a little bit, but the work and the challenges to the results are right now happening. Hopefully in January when people watch this video, the transition of power just goes smoothly. That's my hope, but again, I don't think-- I think it's still really premature to relax about everything. We still have so many things that need to be rectified, and in addition to dealing with the pandemic that's just gone on uncontrolled.

>> Yes, that's reminding me, Jason, a little bit about when I first got to start working with you at the Lucas Artists Program in 2016. It was right before that first election. Your response to that moment was to create this really amazing, temporary, inflatable monument where you were inviting the public to contribute texts and images responding to this question of who in your everyday life as we were heading into those 2016 election political story needed to be broadcast.

How do we give voice to those people whose futures were potentially the most precarious as we were heading into that new political reality? It was a very powerful project for that time and feels very connected also to the work that you're doing now with public address and giving voice and visibility again to people who may have been left out of conversations or

just physically unable to participate. I see that we're now joined by Siebren, so I want to welcome Siebren. Thank you for joining us.

>> Thank you. So sorry I'm late. I got caught in cross-town traffic, literally.

>> No worries. We're very happy to have you with us. Maybe now would be a moment, Jason and Siebren, to turn over to you to ask you to tell us a bit about you and your project, Public Public Address.

>> Yes. I thought we had this unique local news coverage that I think is a really interesting way to step into the project quickly. Here it is, I'm going to share my screen.

>> The fever going virtual now. Black Lives Matter Tampa will be using this platform for protestors who cannot join them out on the streets, like people battling COVID-19.

>> The creators tell ABC Action news reporter, JJ Burton, they are going to do this 24/7 until the November election.

>> For months, we've seen millions out in the streets marching, chanting and demanding racial equality.

>> Think about all the people who, for a number of reasons, might not be able to protest physically on the street.

>> People battling COVID-19, the disabled, adopted immigrants, parents without childcare and many more, that's about to change. Check this out. There's a huge crowd of protestors marching, but the only difference is they're in their house.

>> We're here to widen the possibility of participation and visibility.

>> USF professor, Jason Lazarus, Professor Stephanie Syjuco in California and artist Siebren Versteeg in New York spent the last couple of months creating this virtual protest platform called Public Address. It's real simple, protestors will just use their phone to record themselves marching in place. For those who are wheelchair or bed-bound, you can just hold up a sign and chant and send that in. The video will then be edited and put into a system with thousands.

>> The public will be able to log in at any time, day or night, and see the virtual protest happening.

>> Black Lives Matter Tampa will be the first organization to use the program when it launches in early August.

>> Our project isn't meant to replace a physical protest because in a way, [inaudible] people around you need to show up.

>> From Tampa, JJ Burton, ABC, Action News.

>> Alongside this protest stream, that between Stephanie and Siebren and I we've started, there is a wrinkle. The project has had a few growth moments. One is that initially, we were really focused on folks who couldn't protest on the streets physically. After getting some feedback, which was basically people who can't protest on the streets didn't want to be isolated like the other. It was, just make a newly democratized space.

We evolved the language to actively court all participants from the whole spectrum, as opposed to singling anyone out. I have a physical disability where I find myself that it's harder and harder to participate in physical protests like I have in the past. We're also starting to expand the language because we realized after feedback, that even the idea of submitting footage of folks marching in place was problematic. We started to think about the inclusion of stills or bed-bound submissions, et cetera.

Then the last thing I'll add quickly is one of the things we did at our launch, which was a really-- Another possibility of the platform we realized is that we had a Zoom interview with Black Lives Matter Tampa. Similar to when you're in a physical protest, there might be a moment of where people stop marching or gather in place, and a megaphone is spoken through and/or passed to different speakers. We asked them to speak to the moment, talk about the activities and initiatives that they run that aren't normally covered in the media to explain how to contribute.

Then last, which I thought was super interesting, was when trying to figure out how to end this megaphone moment, I asked one of the lead organizers of Black Lives Matter Tampa, "What is a question you wish you were asked?" She said, "I wished I was asked what other things I wish I was doing." I thought that was a real powerful way to get into the cost of the lives of activists with real Capital A activists, who really put everything on the line, about all the other powers that they're sacrificing. That's how we ended it. In short, that's the project. That's an introduction to the project. Let me stop sharing here.

>> Siebren, do you have anything that you'd like to add at this time? I think you're on mute. Let's see if I can unmute you.

>> Got it. I'm sorry. Hi. I think Jason's description of the project is pretty succinct. I was actually brought in a little bit later, specifically. I was also interested in being more of a part of the activism that was happening this summer. I was quarantining actually, in a cabin in upstate New York, pretty out in the country. For me, this was a way to be able to really engage and become a part of something I believed in from a distance. I also come from a personal history of advocacy.

Both my mother and my uncle were advocates and involved in rights for people with obesity issues and handicapped issues as well. It was a good fit. Jason and I have been friends for a long time and this was a really nice way to be able to collaborate on something I think we both believed in.

>> That's great. Thank you. It's a great project and we're going to link to it in the chat so folks can find out more and participate. One of the things your project made me think about was actually an essay analysis that she's going to be talking about shortly, and it's called Disability Solidarity: Completing The "Vision For Black Lives" by Harriet Tubman Collective.

It talks about when the Black Lives Matter movement first released their groundbreaking policy platform in 2016. It didn't mention anything about disability or ableism, despite the fact that the US Black community has a very high prevalence of disabilities. I was just wondering, was that a tall part of the conversation Jason, that you guys were having with Black Lives Matter? What was the shared interest in this project?

>> Well, the project came out of a workshop that was initially started in 2017 with Stephanie Syjuco that her and I did at the University of South Florida, that was about daydreaming tactics in physical protest signs. The workshop was like, "Let's, for a minute, remove the constraints or the pressures of the social issues and just in this workshop, try to innovate and think critically about what is a protest sign? What are the possibilities of walking around

with an object that's meant to be photographed that has to do with representation and visibility and nuancing and speaking out to the grand democratic experiment?"

Then we were asked to redo the project at the University of Houston and COVID hit. That COVID wrinkle is really what started this. We have COVID plus the fact that at the moment of George Floyd's murder, there was just amazing street energy. I was delighted that the greater Tampa Bay region really came out strong. Then the opportunity to think about who are the folks who wish they could be here and for a number of reasons can't, or wish they could stay longer?

Let's ask ourselves what are all the vulnerabilities or precarities. All the forms of violence or structural political that keep people away from one form of protest but it's highly broadcast, unlike many other forms of activism and protest, which are much less visible or broadcast to mainstream audiences. I'll just say one thing really quick. When Stephanie and I were thinking about the projects and how to change it over, it was Siebren's work that was uniquely technological.

The technology that he employed circled back to the analog to me, to the human. That's why when we were thinking about the shift to digital, we thought, "Let's reach out to Siebren." He had been doing this work for 15 years. We were lucky that he would even think to come in and open up some of his long arc of knowledge for this new tactic.

>> Wonderful. Alice, I would love to turn to you now, if we could. I first came upon Alice's work listening to the podcast, Irresistible, which used to be called Healing Justice, and that led me to discover Alice's work as founder of the Disability Visibility Project and her podcast. I've been really learning so much and recognizing all of how much more I need to confront the world, how the world that we live in is really inherently ableist and trying to figure out how to be a better ally in that regard.

I'm so thrilled that you've joined us in conversation today and that you're willing to share with our audiences the work that you're doing with the Disability Visibility Project and your book which came out this year. Would you tell us a bit about the work that you're doing?

>> Thank you so much for clarity. Before I talk about my book, I just would love to respond to what Jason and Siebren shared about activism, if that's all right?

>> Of course.

>> I wanted to say that [inaudible]. I don't think that on the ground activism or marches or rallies are the most feasible but are ones that get the most attention. I think definitely the last 5, 10 years, because of the internet and social media, that there are so many different ways to show up, to organize and mobilize, that's just as real as these that are happening in physical spaces.

I really want to gently push back towards this idea, or the idea of a march itself. I think on my own perspective, many of these types of rallies or marches are important and symbolic, but there are other times to really for the individual experience. That we say something and do something. I also think, what is that extent? What does it really change, what changes?

I do think that that's my own, maybe a side-eye torch to these types of events where yes, it does get a lot of media coverage, and that is important. For me, change is very much more long-term and incremental. It has to be systemic and clearly organized, with the most marginalized in mind. I don't think it's either/or, but I do want to push back with the idea that online activism is less apparent or less powerful within all types. [inaudible] and I'm delighted

to see different ways to bring in people, no matter what space it is.

Giving people a chance to march virtually, it's fantastic. I think also with any sort of digital or online form of activism, I was just hearing from Jason and Siebren also about accessibility of their work with other disabled people, is that there's a lot of images and videos showed or just activism or artwork or installations, but they don't talk with audio descriptions, they don't talk with image descriptions.

I think that's interesting that it attempts to create access, to include people to inadvertently a lot of artwork and things that are posted online, I'd say exclude people as well. I think that's something that I audience members -- two are artists and part of the art community -- think a lot, especially museums and galleries, where visual culture is so centered and privileged, that we try to forget about other different ways that people are left out of the experience of enjoying arts.

You have to be mindful of that because I'm not perfect, but in my own activism and media march, I try to do my best. My podcast is not just audio, but it has a text, transcripts, it has image descriptions, and it's in many different platforms. This is based on the feedback from other people I know throughout the community. It does bother me that many of the creatives and artists don't think about access as a form of creative practice. That it's actually generative to create and build that access.

I think that there's a lot of curators who can really be engaged and should be engaged in these type of conversations since disabled artists and people who want to be in this space have been excluded historically. There's still a lot of disabled artists who struggle to get the recognition and to be of interest by the whole artists, by the whole gallery, museum world.

My book, *Disability Visibility*, is an offering to the world. It's an anthology featuring 37 first-person stories by disabled people. It's a [inaudible] in the 21st century. These are stories published from the year 2000 to 2019. For me, I think it's really important that we could have documents and curate just a reflection of disabled people and their lived experience. The culture of disability.

Again, this is a small snapshot of people and issues, and communities that I care about. I've got a curator instead of being a museum, but I do think my role as an editor definitely has a similar territorial vibe, a perspective, because I was very intentional about centering disabled people of color who are definitely forgotten and not represented, especially, let's just say it, especially in the art world.

There's a phrase, Nothing About Us Without Us. I think we could still forget how overwhelmingly whites-- People are centered on their idea of what disability looks like. One of the reasons behind my book is to show the breadth, the beauty, and the variety of our culture. I would say culture as in cultures, [inaudible] because we're part of every single community. That's the thinking behind it. The fact that mostly marginalized, disabled people really understands the way a system works and the way oppression work. I think very many cases were the ones that were the solutions as well.

>> Absolutely. Thank you so much, Alice. I have some thoughts that I'd like to share with you. I also want to give Jason and Siebren an opportunity, if you want to respond to anything that Alice has said.

>> I think those are all really great points. I completely agree with you. I think that part of the act of making and the act of producing is to learn. This has been an incredibly eye-opening experience, just a few months into it already. I think the work continues. We've been

confronting more and more different ways of contending with different submissions or our people's ways to engage or desire to engage with the project and trying to find different ways to accommodate different perspectives and different ways to have a different way to even present this idea of a march or of a protest in general.

I also feel very strongly about the potential for digital protest and protest in social media space. I think it's something that it's really unfortunate that people-- I guess it has a lot to do with the expected or implied short attention span of social media, that it's unfortunate to see how quickly people bend and give up and go back to their old habits before really being able to see the possibility of making change and seeing it through. It happens often. That's something I've been thinking about, on how to try to inspire people to stick with their guns when we all participate in terms of a mass way to interact with social media.

I also am, of course, always concerned and suspect to relying so heavily on the participation and time and energy of others to help to make an artwork. These are definitely topics and sensitivity is that I think Jason, Stephanie and I are all definitely looking into and thinking about a lot as much as we can.

>> There's something that comes to mind. I did the group portrait in Chicago in 2015, which asked anyone who considered themselves an artist to come sit for a portrait. It was through that experience that this idea that every time-- Being trained in photography too, every framed image, every image is violent because it has edges that are taken out of context from the world.

Every time you have representation, you have some beginning of an image field and the end of an image field, you have violence. Anytime you have a gate in or a filter or an opportunity. It is a little bit of a circular issue in a sense that every time you work to bring someone or something into the fold, it's like, what are the limits of the medium that then dictate that someone else is not included?

I think like a lot of art projects, this starts with this question of what if, which I think drives a lot of art projects. Then this is a project that's public, so technical wrinkles, conceptual wrinkles, disclosure, are part of a public process. At that point we become listeners rather than architects. I guess back to Siebren's point, it continues. Sound is something we've never had in image descriptions. This idea of flow of image descriptions is really rich. That's a technical opportunity. It's a conceptual opportunity.

>> Yes. I think today makes me think about the disabled artist I really want to pitch in. Her name is Sharon [inaudible]. She is a disabled artist and she has her entire projects drawn old texts as poetry. Then she really invites other artists and creators to think about the creation of old texts as more than just a publication or something that you're forced to do-- [crosstalk]

>> Another dimension of the understanding of publishing even.

>> Another really interesting way to judge the work of the actual subject or work through these words. I think that's what it's all about. I would encourage anyone to look up Shannon's work, which is really I think groundbreaking and important for any artist

for any curator or somebody that's [inaudible] to us to think about the disabled curators that are out there. There actually are people who are doing really fascinating work, including Dr. Amanda Cachia, C-A-C-H-I-A, who's based in Southern California [inaudible] curators access, and looking at the ways [inaudible] artists, the curators are really embedding access

as part of their work. Those would be my two shoutouts, if anyone's interested.

>> That's very helpful.

>> Yes, definitely. We can post those into the chat as well. Was that the curator that you had a conversation with recently, Alice, on your podcast?

>> Yes, that is the recent episode.

>> We can repost the link to that as well because I think that will be very interesting for everyone to access. I love how you answer all these questions you were raising about curatorial work. Being the editor of an anthology is absolutely that. It's like bringing together voices and how do you choose those voices. I'm thinking about our work, Kelly and my work at the residency program, who are those people around the table and how do they get there. I'd love for us to talk more about that. Perhaps we could save some of that to the end and bring Kelly back on and talk a bit more about that.

I'd like to just move now, if we could, to talk a little bit more about this role of stories and the role they play and allowing us to imagine what's possible. I'm not sure that you mentioned this in the description, Jason, but you're also collecting this archive of conversations as part of this project. Correct? Thinking about this process of archiving, and collecting stories and, of course, Alice, your work, obviously, is so much about storytelling and you work with oral histories with the story core project.

I have two questions about stories for all of you. That is, what are the stories that have affected you most in your life? The second question is, again, going back to this earlier point that you were raising, Alice, about how divided we obviously are at the end of this election process. What is this shared story? What's the story that's going to get us to a more inclusive vision for us? You can answer both, or you can answer one; whatever feels most interesting to you. Do you want to go, Jason?

>> Well, I'll start with this idea of we feel culpable when we feel moved. That's such a seed for so many things. I was reflecting back on this question; having a congenital birth defect. I think the world is telling you stories as you try to navigate it, the way people look at you, the way I often felt like I was a witness, not a participant, especially early on in life.

Some of the stories that affected me were just having that embodied experience and not really feeling different until the world told me I was different. The other thing I was thinking about was growing up in a Jewish family and the perennial [inaudible] of the-- I'm getting some feedback. I don't know if you guys can hear that.

>> Yes, we can hear a little bit. Is that coming from you, or is it one of us [inaudible]?

>> I can mute. Growing up with the Holocaust is a strong figure as a young person, and so having not only a personal, I don't want to say crisis, but a personal differentiated journey, and then having the societal "never forget" story that I was brought into me very young, and then going back to that idea of we feel culpable when we feel moved, and so I had what I felt was an individual story, or the stories I was receiving, and then the cultural story that I was hearing.

Later in life, looking at artists who, again, ask this question, perennially, "What if? What if? What if?" and getting into spaces where they're endeavoring to leap forward, or over problems, or create different frameworks to ask questions that might have a new set of parameters, a new set of opportunities, intellectual arcs, visual language that might not look

familiar. Those are my initial thoughts.

>> I would say that to write down the stories that [inaudible] the stories that are coming out of the pandemic by predominantly disabled [inaudible] immunocompromised people due to the fact that for some [inaudible] to wisdom and our expertise, they thought that [inaudible] pretty much take the order to [inaudible].

The fact that we're orators. I gave a talk earlier this summer to autistic group in Australia, of all places, to where they asked me to do a keynote to [inaudible] vision 2029. I talked about how disabled people are good oracles for eternity since the beginning of time. But for the fact that, traditionally, people don't listen to us. They don't heed our warnings.

I do feel like at this particular time period, there are so many stories by disabled people that are [inaudible], but also, in a sense, want to be to the whole deal through the billions of people that have to deal with the very long-lasting effects and surviving this virus, to the fact that our community is going to be very altered because of this pandemic.

They should have brought it. It should have [inaudible] people that whether they identify as disabled or not, you've just got to [inaudible] the D-word they're both definitely part of our community because they appreciate the traditions, they both definitely, at least in the United States, artists that are [inaudible] with a disability under the protection of the Americans with the Disabilities Act.

To me, the stories that we've always shared for a long time on surviving and thriving do really apply to so many people that are struggling now, yet that are entering to this new phase of their life, which it should be very fraught. Those are the stories that move me, and those are the ones that they're trying to amplify, to share, and talked about as well.

[silence]

>> I forgot to unmute myself. Sorry. [chuckles] Thank you, Alice. Siebren, do you have anything you'd like to respond to with that question?

>> I don't know if I have an answer to address right now. For me, the past six, seven months have been- there's been a lot of learning. I've been really amazed to realize how wrapped up the COVID situation is with [inaudible] and systemic racism in this country. It's been a really amazing period of exposure of a lot of things that were previously unnoticed by me and a lot of other people.

>> Yes. You're unraveling certain narratives.

>> Yes, yes.

>> [inaudible] hopefully, though constructing some better ones.

>> Yes.

>> I wanted to also ask you about sharing the platform. You all work very collaboratively, and you're interested in advocating for others. I wanted to ask you about why that was important to you. Alice, I don't know if it would make sense in this context, but it would be interesting to hear about your whole work with advocacy project of Crip the Vote and your work as an activist there. You could also talk about it any other way, if that makes sense.

>> Yes, sure. There is this [inaudible] I can definitely share a little bit about Crip the Vote,

which is a [inaudible] that political participation of disabled people. This was started in 2016 with my two partners, Gregg Beratan and Andrew Pulrang. Basically, the three of us have never met in real life, in person. We're all scattered all over the country. We know each other. We are friends and [inaudible] the 2016 election. There are a lot of candidates and very little discussion about the disability issues, or even the fact that the disabled people are actually devoted to a community worth doing outreach and a community that should be considered in their campaigns.

So the three of us, we do have a nonprofit which [inaudible] individuals who were like, "We have Twitter, which is used, social media. This is something that's readily at our hands." We thought let's create -- to try to create in all our communities. Did actually end up with a hashtag Crip the Votes. For those who are familiar with the term crip, this is very much to reach [inaudible] did all that historically to produce, but instead to give back by some disabled people, not all, about that.

When I say crip culture towards a space to use as a verb, I talking about, really, with the perspectives in politics and could have the [inaudible] of disabled people and they are doing it to all disabled people with [inaudible] by it; in many ways, to radicalize and transform it, because in my opinion, crip identity or the word crip is very much this politicized perspective that we are a community with a history, with political movements, we've been pretty much systemically excluded.

It's more than just towards [inaudible] with our bodies, but much more about community-based perspectives. I created that hashtag as a way for people to find each other, to have a way for us to gather [inaudible]. You don't have to be together at the same time using a tag. It's there for anybody who wants to use it.

It's very slow. We started with a live tweet of a Democratic debate in 2016. Here we are in 2020. We've had over 50 organized Twitter chats. We had two Twitter polls with presidential candidates, Pete Buttigieg and Senator Elizabeth Ward earlier this year. In many ways, we have created a huge amount of visibility from the internet.

It's resonating with a lot of people. People are following the tag. It means something to people. We don't own the tag. The tag is used by all kinds of people. I think that's what it's like creating a work of art. You release it out to the world. You don't have control over how people are going to interpret it, but it's there. It's an offering. To me, Twitter is really beautiful is that this is very much something that disabled people find useful. It is a place where people feel seen and heard. To me, that's very exciting

>> Yes. It's an amazing project. Jason, do you have anything you want to say about collaboration and advocacy [crosstalk]?

>> I think simply that--

>> Sharing the platform?

>> Yes. I think working collaboratively happened, I don't know, maybe five years after I started making work post grad school. I think at a certain point, I felt like I looked inward enough, and I was interested in interdependent projects and being put in a position to learn in public to have to adjust and be challenged, which very much continues with this project.

>> In a previous conversation that Jason and I had, Jason's been reading and thinking a fair amount about access intimacy. We know also that related to another project that you're working on, Alice, Access Is Love. I wonder if we could talk a little bit about that now. At this

time, we also ask Kelly if she would rejoin us so she can participate in this last segment of our conversation. I don't know who would like to begin. Alice, would you like to start by talking about Access Is Love? Jason, maybe you can respond because I know you've been really thinking about that.

>> Yes, want to preface that to access intimacy is a concept and a term coined by Mia Mingus. It is really important to cite Mia Mingus for this art. This isn't my solo work. Access Is Love is a collaboration between Mia Mingus and Sandy Ho. The three of us are disabled Asian American with [inaudible]. The phrase, access is love, emerged out of a keynote that Mia gave about two years ago where she said, "Access is a form of love."

This line [inaudible] really just resonated deeply with me. I really identified all of my feelings about accessibility. I think it's such a brilliant and really simple and direct phrase. Sandy, Mia, and I, we had different conversations about how do we build on this. It was a keynote, which was great, but what should we do together to really take this idea. It's usually Sandy Ho's website. Sandy is the organizer and creator of the Disability and Intersectionality Summit. It's a summit that takes place in Boston every two years.

There was [inaudible] this year, 2020, but it was postponed. There were two summits in the last six years. [inaudible] these websites to recreate a tab for Access Is Love [inaudible]. They put in a lot of resources. We also created gear or swag with the phrases access is love, the phrase disability justice is love, the phrase solidarity is love, those were the best years that to be [inaudible] for that keynote.

It's really to put our culture out there, get our posts visually through T-shirts, [inaudible] that supports the work of other [inaudible] to support the work of our projects, but also the fact that we have [inaudible] to have resources to really people, who don't know where to start, to just start access it their everyday lives.

If there's a lot of ways to do a very things -- it is a very [inaudible]. I think it's a bit that we feel like it's a collective practice, and it's not just the burden or official responsibility of the state or organizations to our employers, it's something that we all have the capacity to do for one another.

>> Yes, it's very powerful to think of it as a way of loving in the world. Jason, we'd like to bring you in here now too.

>> I have Mia's blog up in another browser. I'll just read a couple of passages from it. She writes, "Access intimacy is an elusive hard-to-describe feeling when someone else gets your access needs, the eerie comfort that your disabled self feels with someone on a purely access level. Sometimes it can happen with complete strangers, disabled or not, or sometimes it can be built over years.

In my life access intimacy is something that has been hard-won, organic, or at times even felt magical. It has taken me by surprise, showing up with people that I never would have expected to have that kind of access connection with." I think why reading Mia's scholarship was paradigm-shifting, it really changed the way that I thought about how feelings of us, as she said, stealing yourselves for encounters versus feeling light and open, that your relationship with family and friends, relationships where you think access intimacy wouldn't maybe naturally spill out of necessarily don't, and opposite.

Sometimes you find yourself connecting with someone almost immediately on this level without any words or labor that there's a shared understanding. That, for me, is how I understand the concept, and how it's made me think about all the relationships in my life

where access intimacy felt effortless, and then where I questioned why don't I feel that after having so much experience with a friend or a family person. Flipping the script is always when am I not that person as a bridge to the access intimacy for somebody else. That's how it's been paradigmatic for me and a rhetorical device going forward.

>> Very powerful. Kelly, I want to give you an opportunity to respond just before we wrap up today.

>> Thank you for being with us today, and Jason, for the work you do. We've had you in the residency. We've worked with you. I love ending on this idea. Throughout the pandemic, I feel like we've been encouraged, challenged, and really wanted to look at accessibility. It's an important piece for Montalvo. Where does that fit, and thinking about it in the boot movement of Black Lives Matter, and thinking about it with who's welcome in our venue? When we're there on site, who's welcome in that park? Who's that park made for? This really pushes both Donna and I to think more deeply about the entire program and what that looks like in terms of accessibility.

That idea of access is love, I know if Angela was sitting here would resonate with her, and access intimacy and what that means. We had a lot of conversations in the summer with artists of color who were willing to come up into this space of radical imagination with us and really wanting to talk about how can we start embodying each other. This makes me think of that. How do we start having that sense of humanity for each other and really embodying that experience? I just want to thank you both. I don't know if you have any thoughts on that. It's been really exciting to meet you, Alice, and to have you with us, Jason.

>> I know, Alice, that you have to leave for another meeting. I want to be respectful of that. I just want to thank you, all of you, so much for participating in this conversation with us today. I hope we can continue to be in touch. We will share all of the resources that you've mentioned in that chat. Thank you. Thank you all.

>> Thank you for having me.

>> Thanks so much.

>> All right, take care.

[crosstalk]

>> Bye-bye.

>> Bye-bye.

>> Bye.

>> We could have talked so much, but I knew that Alice had to leave, so that just had to be what it was [laughs]. We got quite a lot in with the time.

>> Thanks so much.

>> Is there any last thoughts, Jason, that you have? A million and then--

[laughter]

>> It's humbling to be around someone like Alice. She's truly like an activist. I feel like are

wondering what if projects shares and then definitely diverges from like the hardcore work that she's doing. I was talking to Stephanie about this, which is this idea that, for example-- One thing I wish we had gotten to talk about, I didn't even really think about it, is like that we have, or Siebren's expressed interest in sharing the algorithm, so it can be like a shareware. At some point, I think we're trying to figure out the projects and how to use the algorithms first, so that we could actually support people who want to do their own endless streams, if you will. There's a lot to think about.

>> I think it's important, the work, creating that space, creating that work, trying to make new ways for people to engage and participate. I think that's always important. The limitations, it's a little bit like being white at this moment of Black Lives Matter. We're always going to make mistakes. Creating access, how I think about Montalvo, and we can keep this or not, but it's a hard place to navigate. Making sure it's accessible is always, we've got a stretch in. That's an important work for us as an organization, but I feel like there's always someplace where you're going to learn; you're going to fail, you're going to learn. That ability to support each other through that is important.

>> Yes. One of the nice things, thinking about Montalvo, is that because Montalvo, when you're there, feels so like a firewall around you, like a protective firewall, there's a lot of space there physically and emotionally, and food-wise.

[laughter]

>> That's important.

>> One of the things that makes access so interesting to think about it is because one of the things that Montalvo does is, in some ways, it really keeps the world at bay for a minute, which is like a big-- The better it does that, the more these questions become important. Just to remind you guys that, yes, those questions are infinite, but having been a resident is a privilege and you do feel like you have space, it's the opposite of the real world in a great way.

>> It's our own little bubble. [chuckles]

>> Yes. It's important to think about that mission. What artists crave is like, "Just keep the world at bay for a minute, so I can focus and work on something or do experiments." Yes, so, keeping that in relationship to access. That's the, I don't know, dovetail or interlocking piece is in why that access and always reimagining, what does access mean, and what does equity mean is so important because walking into that threshold is so exciting as an artist. It's a good thing to keep in mind for these infinite work to be done.

>> Definitely, yes. It adds more to this ongoing conversation [inaudible] as we think through these questions. Yes.

>> Well, cool. I want to call Siebren in because I want to ask him -- I don't know. I feel like we have new things to talk about. I want to get him while he's fresh.

>> Well, that's good. That's always a good thing [crosstalk]--

>> You go and call him. It's terrific to see you [crosstalk]--

>> Yes, you guys too. It really means a lot to me. Especially, at the end of a week, it feels nice to be pulled into this. It's because otherwise, you're just rattling off your to-do list. I don't know. These are always like a chore to get started, but then at the end, you're so excited

about the-- It's not even easy to work to get these things together meaningfully. Donna, thanks for entertaining my questions about the questions, and trying to figure out a different way in.

>> It was great. It was very helpful to have had that conversation with you.

>> Yes, me too. Thank you. Hugs.

>> Hugs.

>> Infinite hugs, guys.

>> [laughs]

[crosstalk]

>> Take care.

>> Take care.

>> All right, guys. Be well.

>> You too.