



RENEGHUE

No Safety Net 2.0

PROVOCATIVE
THEATER.
COURAGEOUS
CONVERSATIONS.
SAFE SPACES.

FESTIVAL GUIDE
JAN 16 — FEB 9, 2020
ANN ARBOR, MI



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“When we first presented No Safety Net in 2018, we felt it was an important idea and initiative emanating from our Renegade series of programming, and ultimately a new chapter in the way that UMS thinks about presenting theatrical performance. As we embark on No Safety Net 2.0 in the year 2020, it now feels like a truly integral part of UMS and what we do, as well as an embodiment of the importance and impact of the arts at the University of Michigan. For 2.0 we’ve selected four new and cutting-edge works — and their artists’ intentions — to inspire and challenge you, the audience. Presenting this range and diversity of work is something to which we’re extraordinarily committed, and with equal commitment to the exploration, contextual learning, and community programming to accompany and help elevate the work further in our consciousness. In this challenging, divisive, and polarizing moment, our hope is that these works not only convene people to engage in difficult and troubling subject matter, but bring people together to share an impactful artistic experience, celebrating the arts and human expression. My sincere thanks to all of the 2.0 artists, our incredible UMS team, President Schlissel and the leadership at U-M, William Davidson Foundation, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, U-M College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, Valerie and Jeff Wilpon, and all the other important supporters who help make ambitious work possible.”



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew VanBesien". The signature is fluid and cursive.

MATTHEW VANBESIEN —
President, UMS

“When I proudly announced a new Arts Initiative at the University of Michigan in October 2019, one of the primary motivations was my strong belief that the arts provide a powerful opportunity for exploration and learning around some of the most challenging issues confronting our society. I am thrilled that in addition to its rich offerings across their regular season, UMS is once again taking this bold move to present a collection of socially relevant theater works in the No Safety Net 2.0 project. Thoughtfully combined with activities that bring important context and opportunities for reflection, dialogue, and even action around these productions, No Safety Net 2.0 will provide a unique artistic and community space for all of us to engage in difficult conversations, as we work towards a deeper understanding of our world.”



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Schlissel". The signature is cursive and elegant.

MARK SCHLISSSEL —
President, University of Michigan

Continue the Conversation

Please join UMS and our University and community partners for a series of events that highlight important historical, political, and artistic contexts for the works in *No Safety Net*, and create space for gathering, dialogue, and celebration!

Keynote Event with the Penny Stamps Speaker Series: Oskar Eustis: In Conversation No Safety Net Opening Talk

Thursday, January 16 // 5:10–6:45 pm
Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty Street

Join UMS for the official kickoff of *No Safety Net 2.0*. This talk will inspire and challenge audiences while preparing them for the upcoming performances and the responsibilities audiences can take after seeing or participating in a performance.

Workshop: How to Become an Internet Troll

Saturday, January 25 // 4:00–5:30 pm
Pierpont Commons, Boulevard Room, 2101 Bonisteel Boulevard

In this workshop, you will learn about common types of trolling techniques, including the mechanisms behind different types of conflicts that can happen between users online. We'll show how people create memes to insult others, find information for doxing, and construct posts to inflame anger in others. The goal of this is to raise overall awareness of how these processes operate and increase your ability to resist these attacks yourself. Led by Cliff Lampe, professor in the U-M School of Information.

Panel: Reality Winner, Russian Election Meddling, and The Future of America

Friday, January 31 // 6:30–7:30 pm
Pierpont Commons, East Room, 2101 Bonisteel Boulevard

Get a special insight into the Reality Winner case with this special pre-show conversation between Brian Willen (U-M lecturer and partner at Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati), Alex Halderman (U-M professor of Computer Science and Engineering, who was featured on *The Intercept*, the radio show that released the information Reality leaked), and Kevin Gosztola (journalist and managing editor for Shadowproof.com, known for his work covering Reality Winner's case and other whistleblowers).

Panel: Reality Now: A Discussion with Reality Winner’s Mother

Saturday, February 1 // 4:00–5:30 pm

Pierpont Commons, East Room, 2101 Bonisteel Boulevard

Reality Winner’s mother Billie Winner-Davis sits down with Ashley Lucas (associate professor of theatre & drama and the Residential College/director of the Prison Creative Arts Project) and Kevin Gosztola (journalist and managing editor for Shadowproof.com, known for his work covering Reality Winner’s case and other whistleblowers) for a special talk sharing her experiences of Reality’s arrest and updates on Reality’s current status.

Panel: Girl Talk: Race, Comedy, and Feminism Now

Saturday, February 8 // 4:00–5:30 pm

Pierpont Commons, Boulevard Room, 2101 Bonisteel Boulevard

What are the challenges women face in comedy? How are those challenges exacerbated when race is added to the mix? Local female comics Tiffany Baxi, Asia Marie Hicks, and Johanna Medranda will take the stage to share their work and talk about their personal experiences as women of color in comedy today.

Unless otherwise indicated, all events are free and open to the public. Please note that some locations have limited seating and visitors will be seated on a first-come, first-served basis.



INTRODUCING THE NO SAFETY NET PODCAST!

UMS programming manager and host Mary Roeder takes you behind the scenes in conversation with our artists and discovers the inspiration behind their work. Now on Apple Podcasts or wherever you choose to listen.

No Safety Net



Wednesday Evening, January 22, 2020 at 7:30
Thursday Evening, January 23, 2020 at 7:30
Friday Evening, January 24, 2020 at 8:00
Saturday Evening, January 25, 2020 at 8:00
Sunday Afternoon, January 26, 2020 at 2:00
Arthur Miller Theatre
Ann Arbor

THE BELIEVERS ARE BUT BROTHERS

Javaad Alipoor
Writer, Performer, and Co-Director

Kirsty Housley
Co-Director

RENEGHUT

34th, 35th, 36th, 38th, and 41st Performances of the 141st Annual Season
No Safety Net 2.0

Performances of *The Believers Are But Brothers* are supported by the U-M College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and are funded in part by the William Davidson Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the British Council.

Educational programs for No Safety Net 2.0 are funded in part by the U-M Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion.

Media partnership provided by WDET 101.9 FM, *Between The Lines*, and *Metro Times*.

Special thanks to Karilú Forshee, Andrew Morton, Cara Graninger, Cliff Lampe, Victoria Langland, Mark Clague, Priscilla Lindsay, Malcolm Tulip, Jake Hooker, Sharman Spieser, Alex Stern, Lisa Nakamura, Lori Watanabe Saginaw, Morghan Boydston Williams, Tayler Jones, John Roselli, Amy Helms, Adam Eickmeyer, Saline High School, Arts Academy | Plymouth-Canton Community Schools, School at Marygrove, Early College Alliance at Eastern Michigan University, U-M College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, and U-M School of Music, Theatre & Dance for their participation in events surrounding No Safety Net 2.0.

The Believers Are But Brothers is supported by Arts Council England.

The photography, sound recording, or videotaping of this performance is prohibited.

A gender-inclusive restroom is located in the main lobby of the Walgreen Drama Center, on the first floor near the north entrance of the building.

In the interests of both the environment and expenses, please consider returning with your No Safety Net 2.0 Festival Guide to future festival performances.

CREATIVE TEAM

Writer, Performer, and Co-Director / Javaad Alipoor
Performer / Luke Emery
Co-Director / Kirsty Housley
Associate Director / Natalie Diddams
Lighting and Sound Designer / Ben Pacey
Sound Designer / Simon McCrory
Video Design / Limbic
Additional Video Content / Adam Radolinski
Assistant Director / Heather Knudston
Original Producer / Luke Emery
American Tour Producer / Nick Sweeting
Co-Commissioner / TRANSFORM Festival, HOME, and Ovalhouse

The Believers Are But Brothers is approximately 65 minutes in duration and is performed without intermission.



Post-Performance Artist Q&A: January 22

Following Wednesday evening's opening-night performance, please feel free to remain in your seat for a Q&A to unpack complex themes throughout the performance with the artists and special guests, including U-M professor of information Clifford Lampe, U-M professor of history and American culture Alexandra Stern, and U-M professor of American culture and screen arts and director of the Digital Studies Institute Lisa Nakamura.

Community Dialogue

After non-opening night performances, UMS will provide a space for audience members to reflect on, discuss, and analyze the performance they've just experienced. Conversations will be guided by experienced facilitators from the community, including Sharman Spieser, Equity Consultant and Community Collaborator.

BELIEVERS

When UMS programming manager Mary Roeder and her colleagues from UMS asked me to write a contribution to this program book, it felt like a really good opportunity to look back over the genesis and development of *The Believers Are But Brothers* and set out a little bit of the story of its development and its journey to the stage here in Ann Arbor. Ann Arbor feels like a very different place to the location in which I began to make the show, but in some ways this leg of the international tour has really brought something out for me when I think about what it means to make political theater for an international audience.

By background and by inclination I'm a very political animal. I grew up in a mixed-race family in Bradford, a working-class city in northern England. My family and my early experiences have helped to shape my world view and the kind of art I think needs to be made in the 21st century.

Bradford is a city with two kinds of reputations. In the first and largest sense, it doesn't have one. It doesn't pop internationally with the same reputation as Manchester or Liverpool for a variety of reasons. But it's also known visually as a poorer city with a large Muslim population, and it is often used as a kind of visual cliché to illustrate new stories or dramas about supposedly "problematic" European cities with alleged "racial troubles."

Before I began my artistic career, I was a community worker and a political and social activist. Now, as an artist, I feel like those parts of my practice, although sometimes less to the fore, are a crucial part of my work. I'm often told that we are living through a renaissance of political theater. But the problem is that a lot of it isn't very good theater, and it doesn't really have very deep politics.

For me a lot of that is because it's made by artists whose only real political commitment comes through the work they make. As a result, it's built on bad faith; the assumption that the artist has something to say that will somehow teach an audience something about the world. But here is the rub: audiences are more politically savvy than ever; we live in a world where people are clear that they need to know more about what's going on than ever before. This is especially true in the self-selecting sample of the population that makes up theater audiences.

For me, political theater isn't about that at all. It's about taking a problem — in the case of *The Believers Are But Brothers*, the relationship between extreme politics, masculinity, and the internet, and sharing that with an audience. So, I hope what might once have been a question that felt intellectual feels visceral,

emotional, and centered in the gut.

Throughout the making of *Believers*, as well as my more recent work, I have tried to stay true to these ideas. As a community worker, I had first-hand experience of the racist and Islamophobic "anti-extremism" policies that were delivered throughout the UK in the aftermath of the July 7, 2005 London attacks. Artistically, it felt to me like the most important reframing for me to make of this discourse, as a young Muslim man, was to point out that we don't live in a society where there is some sort of problem with young Muslim men, we live in one where increasingly there is a problem with *young men*.

Aside from that, the other big influence on *Believers* was the community of Syrian refugees and my links to the Syrian Solidarity Campaign. When I was making the very first iteration of the show, I shared it with some refugees and Syrian activists. They spoke eloquently to me about how the West's focus on ISIS seemed to them to be part of the constellation that buried that country's revolution in barrel bombs, inaction, and empty geopolitical discourse.

The Believers Are But Brothers is the first part of a trilogy of plays. I have just opened the second part, *Rich Kids: A History of Shopping Malls in Tehran*, where it also won a Fringe First Award (it transferred to London in early spring 2019). I want the trilogy to explore the relationship between emerging technologies and the great shifts in political reality we are seeing as the second act of the 21st century opens. That's why it has felt important to me to experiment with using technology like WhatsApp and Instagram theatrically.

Over the past two years, *The Believers Are But Brothers* has really found its audience from its first award-winning run at the Edinburgh Fringe, through its London transfer, and international touring. It's been seen across Europe, Australia, Canada, and now premieres in the US in Ann Arbor. In each city we have been to, it has felt like the work has reverberated with a community of people who look at the dynamics of contemporary politics with the same mixture of confusion and resolve that I, and the team that made it, do.

In some ways, it's the kind of show that stands in an uncelebrated tradition of formally experimental political theater and art from my hometown. Artists like Albert Hunt and Noel Greig led different waves of radicalism in the 1960s and late 1970s, respectively, Hunt from the local art college, and Greig through his company Gay Sweatshop. In the 1990s and early 2000s the city became the home of radical south

Asian artists and musicians like Fun-Da-Mental and Aki Nawaz.

I think, whether we consider Brexit, the 2016 American presidential election, or any of a host of other political events, we see the breakdown of the traditional “national” level of politics. People will talk about a feeling of living within two different countries, for instance. At the same time, digital communities and global migration patterns are connecting people and places in ways never seen

before. When I think about what it means to make international theater or art, I want it to be that apparent contradiction.

That means, I think, that we have to make work that speaks authentically to place, but that finds the universal. Work that gives up the “state of the nation,” and seeks instead the new networks of power, resentment, and identity that criss-cross the whole world.

— Javaad Alipoor, *writer, performer, and director*

GLOSSARY OF INTERNET SLANG TERMS

4chan / An online chat room from which many popular memes emerge

Cuck / A term popular on the alt-right corners of the internet used to describe a man who is weak, effeminate, or submissive

Dabiq / an online magazine used by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant for Islamic radicalization and recruitment

Doge / A comically misspelled word for “dog” associated with photos of a dog that went viral in 2010

Doxxing / Searching for or publishing private material about another person on the internet with malicious intent

Gamergate / A 2014 harassment campaign that targeted sexism in video game culture, through which 4chan came to the attention of the mainstream media

KEK / A picture of an ancient Egyptian god with a frog’s head, which was dubbed the god of chaos on 4chan

Pepe / An anthropomorphic cartoon frog popular in memes which has become associated with the alt-right movement

Red Pill / A metaphor emerging from the 1999 movie *The Matrix*, in which the red pill represents the harsh truths of reality

Troll / A person who instigates quarrels on the internet by posting inflammatory or digressive statements, content, or material

MY TIME AT THE FRINGE

by Isabel K. Olson



From its very origin, theater was designed to be political. In Ancient Greece theater was used to tackle local issues onstage and influence the democracy and social tide. However, today, particularly in America, we are accustomed to

thinking of theater as entertainment. We might even be a bit peeved if after our long work week we go to the theater and find the show provocative rather than fun and rejuvenating. Yet, at its core, theater is a form designed to activate a debate that might be more uncomfortable than enjoyable and might raise more questions than answers.

This season, No Safety Net 2.0 offers a diverse group of artists whose works use a variety of artistic mediums to tackle vastly different political topics. These unconventional shows risk a great deal in their creation, not only juggling sensitive subject matters but also using forms of art that are not all that common in mainstream American works. By the very definition of “no safety net,” these artists are not here to give us reassurance, security, or even entertainment, they are here to challenge our views.

Through the UMS 21st Century Artist Internship, I had the life-altering opportunity to travel to the UK and the Edinburgh Festival Fringe to work with No Safety Net artist and activist Javaad Alipoor on *The Believers are But Brothers* and *Rich Kids: The History of Shopping Malls in Tehran*. Alipoor is a bold artist who is unafraid to assume the audience’s highest intelligence when tackling a stream of political topics. Alipoor crafts his work by devising, a form of creating theater in a collaborative environment with no finalized script or preordained result. For me, Alipoor’s rehearsal room was unlike any I’d experienced in America; it was a space for creative thinking and trial and error without the constraint of the “perfect outcome.” I’d grown accustomed to the “time is money” mindset of much American commercial work where the result is known before the collaborators walk in the door. However, in my experience working with Alipoor, I remembered that art is about creation — the literal act of molding and experimenting with endless possible consequences. And, it was a reminder that with certain limitations comes opportunity.

No amount of money thrown at art will make it innovative or meaningful. Great political theater comes from bold artists willing to fail and try again, attempting to connect pathos to activism, making large-scale issues heartfelt, and forcing us to think.

With the backdrop of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, my life in Edinburgh resulted in seeing 56 productions that ranged from music to dance, circus to comedy, and street performance to pub theater. Over the course of the month, the world opened up to me as I saw art forms collide in ways I’d never seen before. Everything I’d known felt stale in comparison to these new risk-taking artists who were giving up everything to perform. Over the course of one month I was reminded why I loved art in the first place and how art is absolutely a vehicle for political and social change.

If I had it my way, every single person would be given the opportunity to go to the Fringe. And though we can’t all go to Scotland, we can embrace how lucky we are to have an organization like UMS deliver bold work from around the world to our Ann Arbor doorstep. Political theater attempts to create a dialogue with new groups of people, and we are fortunate to have these works invite us to continue the dialogue.

My time at the Fringe taught me two very important lessons: first, that independent artists who take risks onstage, such as those that you will be seeing in No Safety Net, give themselves over to give you a show. You don’t have to like the show, but you owe it to the artist to consider their work and respect their risk. Second, there are no rules to art, and in my opinion, any art worth watching is the kind that redefines what we thought art could be or say.

I challenge you to embrace the uncomfortable and put your thoughts into words after the performance. Talk to those sitting next to you. Ask yourself *why* you feel the way you do. Continue the dialogue and continue to support the art that pushes boundaries.

Isabel Olson is a UMS 21st Century Artist Intern and a U-M senior majoring in theatre arts/directing and history.

WONDER AND WOE: THE CHALLENGES OF INTERNET

by Clifford Lampe



The internet is filled with wonders. Really. It is filled with beauty. Tools like social media have helped people find love, reconnect with long-lost relatives, and maintain distant relationships. People have found others like themselves when

their physical neighbors had excluded them, have built massive works of collaborative art, and have learned about people and places outside of their immediate experiences.

However, the internet is also filled with horrors. It is filled with monsters. Computer tools can't differentiate whether a person is finding someone with the same medical problem to share emotional support, or whether a person is finding someone with a shared hatred of a group of people. Interactions on the internet take place within an architecture where several different specific design features "afford" a variety of actions. For example, the feature that allows you to share your photo on a social media site affords control over how you express your identity. You can show your face, or share a picture that is intended to deceive others. These features of computer-mediated communication mean that we have new opportunities for benefits, as well as harms, that happen via online interactions.

There is a dizzying array of bad behaviors that happen online, usually with colorful labels that only the internet could generate. Trolling, flaming, brigading, spamming, redpilling, doxxing, and more are all bad behaviors in which people engage. Some of these have been with us since the beginning of online social interaction. For example, "trolling" is saying something (usually deceptively naïve or aggressive) to elicit angry responses from an audience. The term itself relates to the fishing method — not the mythical creature — and the behavior has been around since the early 1980s, when Usenet was a primary mode by which people interacted in online communities.

In my work, I typically break adversarial online interactions into two main categories: those that target individuals, and those that target a group. The bad behaviors targeted at a specific individual can be devastating. Cyber-bullying has caused emotional

distress, trauma, and death in adolescents. Women and people of color have been especially vulnerable to threats and intimidation from online harassers — in the same way they are more likely targets of harassment in every context. Actor Leslie Jones had to leave social media after a coordinated effort was made to harass her on Twitter. This type of coordinated action is known as "brigading," where many harassers plan an assault on a person, using multiple channels and multiple types of attack. One common attack that harassers use online is "doxxing." This is where documents ranging from home addresses and phone numbers to financial records and personal intimate photos are obtained both legally and illegally and shared with a broad audience. There are hundreds of variations of targeted harassment like this. While it is tempting to blame this type of attack on a small group of bad actors or "trolls," the research has shown that almost anyone can become a harasser online. When triggered to anger, people often lash out, and that lashing out often becomes some form of harassment.

Adversarial online interactions that target groups are just as harmful as individual attacks, but the goals are often very different. Where an individual may be harassed for revenge, to prove a point, or to signal a virtue, group harassment often has a more specific goal in mind. A familiar example is how ISIS used social media to recruit sympathizers and convert them into active supporters. There, the message was sent to a large audience with the anticipation that most people would be hostile to their goals. But they weren't trying to win over most people, they were trying to speak to a few folks who harbored similar resentments and fears, and to catch them in the net. This strategy is also common among hate groups in the US. They use social media to plan, create, and launch sophisticated recruitment campaigns. Whether the group's goals be around misogyny, white nationalism, or religious extremism, the methods remain the same. Creating content that mocks the opposition forms strong group affinity in sympathizers, and establishes a trail of media sites that lead to even more extreme beliefs. This process is known as "redpilling," named after the scene in the Matrix where the protagonist takes the red pill to learn the harsh truth about a false reality. It's really just radicalization that takes advantage of the features of social media that hide identity, allow for creativity, and avoid suppression.

Photo (next spread): *The Believers Are But Brothers*; photographer: The Other Richard.





Another attack against groups is in the misinformation and disinformation campaigns currently seen surrounding global elections. Different groups that share the goals of disrupting free and fair democratic elections are using online tools to create false identities, news sources, and online groups with the goal of sowing dissension and getting us to question the nature of a shared truth.

Most of these behaviors are not new. They have been occurring in online spaces for decades — and with humans broadly — for thousands of years. What's new is how important mediated interactions have become for us as a whole, and how unprepared we are for people who break the rules using features of online environments. However, I still think the juice is worth the squeeze when it comes to the internet. If we work on solving these problems of adversarial interactions, we can increase the wonders we experience. We will never entirely get rid of adversarial interactions, but we can support people who suffer from them and do our best to improve the internet overall.

Cliff Lampe is a professor in the U-M School of Information. His research is on how computing environments interact with social processes. For that work, he's looked at how social motivations affect participation in online communities like Wikipedia, the psychosocial value people get from social media platforms like Facebook, and how features can be used to regulate social behavior on sites like Reddit. While much of his work has focused on the positive aspects of online interaction, recently he has been studying how the features of online systems propel hate speech, disinformation, partisanship, and harassment. He publishes in the fields of computer science and communication.

DECODING AND DERAILING WHITE NATIONALIST DISCOURSE

Excerpted from *Proud Boys and the White Ethnostate: How the Alt-Right is Warping the American Imagination*, (Beacon Press, 2019)

by Alexandra Minna Stern



The alt-right is nowhere and everywhere. Nowhere, because its core believers constitute a tiny fraction of the white nationalist faithful in a bigger multicultural and multiracial sea. Its brand is dismissed and derided, and ongoing

deplatforming has compelled its leaders and acolytes to play a perpetual game of online whack-a-mole. Everywhere, because alt-right ideas have set down sinewy roots in American discourse, culture, and politics. Terms such as “cuck,” “identitarian,” and “red pill” are recognized by many and Google-able by all. Worse, Trumpian rhetoric and policies have opened the door to an unwanted visitor peddling ideas that are antithetical to cherished values of social equality, racial inclusion, human rights, and collective dignity. It is not the first time that this intimate stranger has come calling. It has long lurked ominously just outside the door, and it has traumatized, handcuffed, shot, whipped, punished, restrained, maimed, murdered, and condescended in the name of patriarchal white America in the past. Yet right now the contemporary conditions are hospitable for an extended stay. Alt-right ideas might be held tightly by a few, but in the current climate their potential reach is perilously large.

This book has sought to provide tools for mapping and understanding the magnifying presence, ideas, and outgrowth of the alt-right, right here, right now. This exercise involves teasing out manifestations of fascism in white nationalist narratives and unpacking tropes of individual and collective rebirth, cyclical time, gender essentialism, and racial difference. It also requires discernment of the profound affective dimensions of digital worlds and platforms, which have mediated and modulated alt-right identities and networks, granting them a wider berth and multiple points of access. My hope is that by dismantling and disassembling alt-right ideas, and scrutinizing their flawed logics and bigoted assumptions, we will be better able to defuse and short-circuit them.

It is challenging, when living through a time of passage to a darker, scarier place, to find the respite and footing to analyze how things as amorphous as

ideas and concepts can insinuate themselves into, and shape, politics and discourse.¹ Even though such tracking will, by virtue of being amidst the swirling mess of the moment, be confounding and imprecise, it is imperative to try with the tools at our disposal. With that motivation in mind, we can unpack a handful of examples of alt-right messaging, illuminating the mercurial back-and-forth movement between the margins of the internet and the zenith of presidential power. I have chosen three vignettes that bear out the extent to which alt-right terminology and concepts are setting the parameters of possibility and have become legible ways of seeing and knowing. This discursive realignment is exactly what the alt-right means when they talk about metapolitical change, and it’s why there is reason for optimism among white nationalists, even as they are suspended on Twitter and blocked on YouTube. This also is why hastily labeling them as neo-Nazis and white supremacists, while an understandable impulse, can be counterproductive. Rather than rushing to see them as outliers, today’s white nationalists might be more aptly recognized as intimate strangers underhandedly outstretching to reach America’s alt-right “tipping point.”² As one alt-righter explained to a *New York Times* reporter in a recent article on the shocking indifference of law enforcement to rising white nationalism: “This idea that the alt-right is falling apart and is going to go away, it’s not true.” Referring to the tropes of white genocide and migrant caravans, he crowed, “The alt-right formulates all these ideas,” adding, “What Tucker Carlson talks about, we talked about a year ago.”³

“White genocide” is one of these nefarious ideas, conjured into being by alt-right media warriors, right-wing pundits, and the POTUS himself. In August 2018, on his Fox News show, Tucker Carlson criticized the US State Department for failing to protect white South African farmers from land seizures, putatively being carried out en masse by the black African-led government.⁴ Although the reference for this specific claim was not clear, it is an open secret that white nationalists are the primary group making the most noise about the ostensibly out-of-control killing of white South African farmers. Most notably, Lauren Southern, a Canadian nationalist, who has been banned from the UK for strident Islamophobia but

managed to tour Australia with Stefan Molyneux in summer 2018, released the movie *Farmlands*.⁵ In this agitprop, Southern wears the cloak of objectivity, assuring viewers that she is on the hunt for the “real story,” but the one she tells is decidedly about white eradication, dramatizing the made-up travesty of the seizure of centuries-held Afrikaner homesteads. Carlson’s reference of the plight of white South African farmers, thus, was practically a plug for *Farmlands* and an endorsement of the platform of AfriForum, an Afrikaner rights organization, which the Council on Foreign Relations cautions is “raising the specter of the murder of white farmers and stoking fears of ‘white genocide’ among American, European, and Australian leaders and media outlets.”⁶

Within two hours of Carlson’s broadcast, Trump issued a tweet, tagging Carlson, indicating that he had asked Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to “closely study the South Africa land and farm seizures and expropriations and the large-scale killing of farmers.”⁷ Not surprisingly, Trump’s tweet elicited praise from the alt-right and from Southern, who glowed, “To have Donald Trump tweet about the seizure of white [owned] land in South Africa, as well as the farm murders, is finally going to put this on the global issues that we’re talking about.”⁸ For its part, the South African government condemned Trump’s tweet as a mistruth, and major news outlets reported at some length on the issue, finding that extant information contradicts allegations that Afrikaner farmers are being killed at exorbitant rates. For instance, a recent report by a “consortium of agricultural associations said that the number of farmers killed from 2017 to 2018 — 47 — was actually at a 20-year low.”⁹ The BBC reports, “There is no reliable data to suggest farmers are at greater risk of being murdered than the average South African.”¹⁰ For its part, the Anti-Defamation League lambasted POTUS’ tweet as “one of the most startling examples of this president indulging in racist thinking.”¹¹

The power of this confabulation — of white farmers being ethnically cleansed and murdered by marauding vengeful blacks — could have been pulled directly out of *The Turner Diaries* or Harold Covington’s *Brigade*. In these scenarios, the survival of dispossessed whites, who have been reduced to a pathetic and persecuted smattering, is on the line, and the only response to racial annihilation is white vigilante resistance and insurrection. The specter of “white genocide” pervades *Farmlands*, making South Africa the screen onto which alt-righters project their smoldering rage because America is mutating into a country where whites will be nothing more

than a despised minority, subject to untold oppression and left to fend for themselves.¹²

Alt-righters brazenly appropriate the word “genocide,” which acquired its contemporary meaning in the immediate aftermath of World War II, when the United Nations defined it as acts carried out with the “intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group,” including “killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group”; or “deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction.”¹³ Even though as of 2018 whites constitute 61 percent of the US population, and 77 percent if white Hispanics are included in the count, and white families possess a median worth 10 times that of black families, in the alt-right dystopia “whites are an endangered race” whose extinction is being expedited by the bulldozing combination of “habitat loss, invasive species, hybridization, and predation.”¹⁴ “White” plus “genocide” is a match invented by alt-righters, one we must question at every step and utterance, and not accept with complacency.

We must exert similar pushback against alt-right renditions of demographic change, which raise fears about an accelerated timescape of white extinction and the browning of America. This alt-right standard was played by another Fox News host, Laura Ingraham, on her show *The Ingraham Angle* in August 2018. In the context of the unpredicted victory of Democratic Socialist Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ingraham reflected on political transformations afoot in America. Ingraham quipped, “In some parts of the country, it does seem like the America we know and love doesn’t exist anymore. Massive demographic changes have been foisted upon the American people. And they’re changes that none of us ever voted for and most of us don’t like. From Virginia to California, we see stark examples of how radically, in some ways, the country has changed. How much of this is related to both illegal and, in some cases, legal immigration that, of course, progressives love.”¹⁵

Ingraham’s requiem was for a bygone white conservative America. In her telling, this idyllic homeland has been swamped by interlopers and undergone an irrevocable demographic make-over. Scratch the surface and you find ideas of white displacement and dreams of the resurrection of the white ethnostate. Unpack the implicit chronology of her monologue and it’s evident the “massive” changes that she complains did not occur at the ballot box can be attributed in large part to the 1965 Hart-Celler Act, the alt-right’s demographic watershed.

This was not the first time Ingraham has indulged in alt-right rhetoric, but this statement became a political lightning rod.¹⁶ She was rebuked by progressives and liberals and lauded by white nationalists. David Duke, for example, posted in a later-deleted tweet that her commentary was “one of the most important (truthful) monologues in the history of MSM.”¹⁷ In response, Ingraham contended that her monologue did not concern race but rather immigration, emphasizing that Democrats recklessly have supported open border policies. She insisted that her remarks were misconstrued, and aware that Duke had repeated them, she pivoted away from any perceived affiliation with white nationalism, asserting that her “commentary had nothing to do with race or ethnicity.” She ran for cover under the canopy of civic nationalism, insisting that her main concern was the “shared goal of keeping America safe and her citizens safe and prosperous.”¹⁸ But her backtracking was inconsequential; Ingraham’s white dispossession dirge had gone viral on social media. The foreboding, loss, and nostalgia evinced by alt-righters for 90 percent white 1965 America was skipping into the mainstream, chided by some, welcomed by others, but widely understood. What was unspeakable had become speakable and decamped to the center of political discourse and debate. As a reporter for the *Observer* writing about the Ingraham incident recapped, “White nationalism, xenophobia, racism and a fear of so-called ‘white genocide’ have increasingly moved out of the sketchier corners of the far-right and disreputable online forums, and become entrenched in establishment discourse.”¹⁹

These examples illustrate how alt-right unease about extinction and dispossession revolves around race and immigration. However, this unease also is profoundly linked to insecurities about gender and sexuality, more specifically, the perception that cisgendered male identity is being dethroned by feminism and multiculturalism. That trans people and gender nonbinariness do not and should not exist is an essential belief shared by Trump, the alt-right, and the alt-light. From the outset of his presidency, Trump has assailed trans folks. In short order, he rolled out transgender military bans that have been stymied in the courts but stoked perpetual uncertainty. In October 2018 the Trump administration intensified this animus, announcing sweeping changes to the definition of “transgender,” in a move that would erase trans folks from existence by mandating that “sex means a person’s status as male or female based on immutable biological traits identifiable by or before birth.”²⁰ Clearly this policy is an attempt to

reverse the LGBTQ gains made during the Obama administration. But it is not just another conservative manifestation of sexism and homophobia but rather malignant and punishing transphobia. In his astute analysis of coalescing fascism in the United States, Jason Stanley, author of *How Fascism Works: The Politics of Us and Them*, connects transphobia to fears of white male victimhood, identifying gender nonbinariness as the ultimate menace: “attacking trans women and representing the feared other as a threat to the manhood of the nation are ways of placing the very idea of manhood at the center of political attention.”²¹ In short, obliterating the possibility of gender fluidity is integral to the restoration of patriarchal white America.

Transphobia is the butter on the bread of much alt-right and alt-light vlogging. For example, in one of his videos, social media personality RamZPaul aims for a thorough take-down of the GenderBread Person, a model created in 2011 by Sam Killermann, a self-described social justice comedian and activist, to promote “understanding the complexity of gender.”²² This infographic often is used in classroom settings, and is akin to the Gender Unicorn, which also stresses gender fluidity and is preferred by some trans activists.²³ From RamZPaul’s perspective, the GenderBread Person has tarnished his innocent childhood memories of his grandmother baking gingerbread cookies during Christmas. But, according to RamZPaul, this is par for the course for leftists, who “like to take every childhood symbol and turn it into this rainbow perversion” and “describe to little children their fucked-up views” of “sexuality, and genderness, and gender fluidity.”²⁴ RamZPaul strives to dismember this “gingerbread frankenstein” by ridiculing its four components: gender identity, gender expression, biological sex, and romantic attraction. To RamZPaul, these distinctions are immaterial and bogus, and contradict the proven fact that sex is biological. According to him, each human is either male or female, and, moreover, the gender thing is “bullshit” — people have a sex, not a gender. Being categorically male or female is in our DNA, is genetic, and can’t be altered. Gender is sex is biological destiny. This video garnered almost 5,000 views and about 150 comments, many of which are brief, sarcastic, and cruel. One avatar, Generation Zyklon (referring to the euthanizing gas used in Nazi concentration camps), writes, “Everyone grab a rope and go to town,” invoking the “day of the rope” incitation in *The Turner Diaries*, when white renegades round up race traitors and hang them in public. In response, another avatar writes, “Synthetic rope for wiggers and trannys is the rule.” Alt-right

venom against trans folks is expressed with the language of race wars and violence, highlighting the close proximity of white nationalism and transphobia in the alt-right imagination.

Although alt-lighters purposefully abstain from “day of the rope” racism, they do not hesitate to dehumanize trans folks and gender nonbinariness on a regular basis. For example, Jordan Peterson voices an almost identical dislike of the GenderBread Person in one of his podcasts. Speaking with Claire Lehmann, the editor of the politically incorrect online webzine *Quillette*, Peterson, in a wide-ranging conversation about the excesses of leftism and feminism, singles out the GenderBread Person as a “ridiculous animation” that is “being pushed forward very hard in institutions all across Canada: elementary schools, junior high schools, the military, police.”²⁵ For him, this infographic is a simplistic crutch that “social constructionists” employ to “enforce what they cannot prove scientifically.” Peterson gripes, “The idea that gender identity is independent of biological sex is insane. It’s wrong. It’s wrong. The scientific data are not only clear; they’re clear beyond dispute. It’s as bad as claiming that the world is flat, by my estimation.” Never mind that the contemporary scientific consensus about sex and gender holds that “there is no single biological measure that unassailably places each and every human into one of two categories — male or female.”²⁶

Through a multiplicity of channels, alt-right ideas have slipped and seeped into discourse and culture; they are reshaping and warping the American imagination. Facets of these ideas are not new; racism and sexism often have been repackaged in the reliable American tradition of white domination and privilege. But the alt-right has gained a foothold at a time of tumult and restlessness, of worries about the fate of the planet, of refugees and migrants with nowhere to live and nowhere to land. A virulent brand of national populism is gaining ground, bolstered by xenophobia and contempt for democratic political institutions. European and American demographics are changing, and where some whites, like me and millions of others, see multicultural promise, others see near-guaranteed extinction. The alt-right’s younger generations can command social media and have learned from the Left and popular culture how to market an idea encapsulated in a meme. Those of us who cherish civic nationalism, which yes has disappointed as often as it has delivered, must be on alert. White nationalists are sore losers, and they are upset that they no longer dictate the rules of the game.

The alt-right emerged in earnest alongside the Obama administration, gaining traction and

solidifying its online counter-presence during those eight years; in the Trump era white nationalism has been unleashed with fury, both incurring intense opprobrium and attracting loyal followers in a compressed period of time. So, you might ask, what are concrete ways to counteract the alt-right? From my perspective as a scholar-activist, I know that we can interrogate and disassemble its metaphors and language, and remain mindful of the perfidious implications of concepts such as the ethnostate and white genocide. We can work tirelessly to keep the alt-right perpetually in a reduced realm of the metapolitical, where “white advocates” can plot but never realize their political schemes. We can impugn the unapologetic rhetoric of white nationalist congressman Steve King, and of other politicians and pundits who speak with less audacious, but dangerously insidious, alt-right forked tongues. We can support watchdog groups like the Southern Poverty Law Center and listen closely to journalists like *Vice*’s Elspeth Reeve, who does bold exposés on Richard Spencer and other white nationalists.²⁷ We can be vigilant and insist on the human rights of the vulnerable, like undocumented people, families and children of color, and trans folks, who the alt-right wants to banish from the white kingdom. We can expect that white people of good conscience call out sexist and racist narratives of white victimhood and dispossession. Finally, we need to become attuned to the tentacular reach of white identity media, tracking alt-right platforms and modes of dissemination and distribution, and demanding accountability and action from digital services and providers who, despite some pushback, remain hospitable to the perpetuation of alt-right messages and networking.²⁸ But even if we do all these things and more, we should refrain from hubris and not make the mistake of feeling secure in the current moment.

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Title in Health Sciences. Her book *Proud Boys and the White Ethnostate: How the Alt-Right is Warping the American Imagination* (Beacon Press, 2019) applies the lenses of historical analysis, feminist studies, and critical race studies to deconstruct the core ideas of the alt-right and white nationalism. Dr. Stern leads the Sterilization and Social Justice Lab, which uses mixed methods to study patterns and experiences of eugenic sterilization in the 20th-century US; this research has informed policy efforts to provide redress to survivors of compulsory sterilization. Dr. Stern has held numerous grants including from the National Endowment for the Humanities, National Institutes of Health, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

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Conclusion: Decoding and Derailing White Nationalist

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ARTISTS

Javaad Alipoor (*writer, performer, co-director*) is an artist, director, writer, and activist who regularly makes theater with and for communities that don't usually engage in the arts. In 2018 he adapted *The Believers Are But Brothers* into a film, broadcast by the BBC. The original production then ran at London's Bush Theatre before its world tour. Last year, he directed the stage adaptation of *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* for Sheffield Theatres, to mark the end of his three-year tenure as associate director at The Crucible Theatre. He opened his new show *Rich Kids: A History of Shopping Malls in Tehran* at last year's Edinburgh Fringe where it won a second Fringe First Award.

Luke Emrey (*performer*) was the original producer of *The Believers Are But Brothers*, and one of the executive producers on its BBC4 television adaptation. He is the studio producer at the Pervasive Media Studio, which hosts a community of over 150 artists, creative companies, technologists, and academics exploring experience design and creative technology. He manages the vibrant and playful space that is the studio, and works with its diverse community of residents to develop their creative and business practices. The Studio is a collaboration between Watershed, University of Bristol, and UWE Bristol.

Kirsty Housley (*co-director*) is co-director of *The Believers Are But Brothers*, and co-creator of *Rich Kids: A History of Shopping Malls in Tehran*. Other work includes *Avalanche: A Love Story* at the Barbican and Sydney Theatre (dramaturg) and *Mephisto (Rhapsodie)* at The Gate. Other theater credits include *Tao of Glass* at The Royal Exchange for MIF (co-director with Phelim McDermott); *The Encounter* with Complicite (co-director with Simon McBurney); *I'm a Phoenix, Bitch* (co-director with Bryony Kimmings); *Misty* at The Bush and West End (dramaturg); *Myth* at the Royal Shakespeare Company (co-written with Matt Hartley); and *A Pacifist's Guide to the War on Cancer* for Complicite (as dramaturg in 2016, and director 2018).

Natalie Diddams (*associate director*) is a theater director and academic. She is currently in the process of writing up her PhD thesis about gender and comedy, with a number of her papers reaching publication early this year. Her credits as a theater director include *My Brother's Country* (The Lowry, ARC Theatre in the Mill), B!RTH (Royal Exchange), and *Thesmo* (West Yorkshire Playhouse, Theatre in the Mill, Squarechapel). She teaches in the BA program in acting at Manchester Metropolitan University and the theater studies program at Warwick University. She is the artistic director of Radicle Comedy and a founding member of the Mixed Bull research collective.

Ben Pacey's (*lighting design*) recent lighting design includes Verity Standen's *Undersong*, Sleepdogs' *Dark Land Light House*; *Ice Road* for Raucous; *Thrive* for Zest Theatre; *Getting Dressed* for Second Hand Dance; Uninvited Guests' *This Last Tempest*; Kiln Ensemble's *The Furies*; and Melanie Wilson's *Autobiographer*. He also designs for performance with recent credits including *Idol* for Jamal Gerald, *Vessel* for Sue Maclaine, *Not I* for Touretteshero; *This Restless State* for Fuel; *Delightful* for Birmingham Rep/Kiln Ensemble; Greg Wohead's *Comeback Special*; and Javaad Alipoor's *The Believers Are But Brothers*. As an artist/maker, he makes installations, animations, and writes performance texts. He co-directs Dens & Signals (*Animals!*, *Feast of the Dead*, *The Wake*, *A Thousand Shards of Glass*). He is an associate artist of Coney. For more information, visit benpacey.co.uk.

Simon McCorry (*sound design*) was born in London to mixed Indian/British heritage, trained in cello at The Centre for Young Musicians & Morley College, and studied philosophy at Durham University. His music is a rich combination of field recordings, adept loop-based cello compositions, and atmospheric improvisations through a host of treatments and effects chains. His new album *Border Land* is available at closerecordings.com, which *Mojo* magazine calls "electro-orchestral drone-scapes of, by turns, gauzy intimacy and soaring grandeur."

Limbic Cinema (*video design*) is a video design studio that specializes in the creative application of projection, light, and digital technologies. Their work often involves augmenting architectural features, physical objects, and intricate spaces through the use of projected imagery and light. The results can be seen in a variety of scenarios from site-specific theater and installations to one-off music events, art galleries, and music videos. The outcome is very often immersive and always transformative.

UMS welcomes Javaad Alipoor and Luke Emrey as they make their UMS debuts this week.



Friday, January 24, 2020
Saturday, January 25, 2020
Sunday, January 26, 2020
Tuesday, January 28, 2020
Wednesday, January 29, 2020
Thursday, January 30, 2020
Friday, January 31, 2020
Saturday, February 1, 2020
Sunday, February 2, 2020

U-M Institute for the Humanities
Ann Arbor

Tuesday, February 4, 2020
Wednesday, February 5, 2020
Thursday, February 6, 2020
Friday, February 7, 2020
Saturday, February 8, 2020
Sunday, February 9, 2020
Arab American
National Museum
Dearborn

AS FAR AS MY FINGERTIPS TAKE ME

Tania El Khoury
Creator

Basel Zaraa
Performer

RENEGHUE

37th, 39th, 42nd, 43rd, 44th, 46th, 48th, 50th, 52nd, 55th, 57th, 59th, 64th, 66th, and 69th
Performances of the 141st Annual Season
No Safety Net 2.0

Performances of *As Far as My Fingertips Take Me* are supported by the U-M College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and are funded in part by the William Davidson Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs.

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Special thanks to Pamela Ruiters-Feenstra, visiting university carillonist, for coordinating pre-concert music on the Charles Baird Carillon for selected Ann Arbor performances.

In consideration of the artists and the audience, please refrain from the use of electronic devices during the performance.

The photography, sound recording, or videotaping of this performance is prohibited.

In the interests of both the environment and expenses, please consider returning with your No Safety Net 2.0 Festival Guide to future festival performances.

CREATIVE TEAM

Creator / Tania El Khoury

Performer / Basel Zaraa

Music / Song by Basel Zaraa (*vocals, bass, and keyboard*) with Emily Churchill Zaraa (*vocals*),
Pete Churchill (*music production*), and Katie Stevens (*flute and clarinet*)

Commissioned by “On the Move” LIFT 2016 in partnership with Royal Court Theatre, London.

As Far as My Fingertips Take Me is approximately 15 minutes in duration.

AS FAR AS MY FINGERTIPS TAKE ME

As Far As My Fingertips Take Me is an encounter through a gallery wall between an audience member and a refugee. Their arms touch without seeing each other. The refugee will mark the audience by drawing on their arm. The audience will listen to those who have recently challenged border discrimination. The marking can be kept or washed away.

I commissioned musician and street artist Basel Zaraa, who was born a Palestinian refugee in Syria, to record a rap song inspired by the journey his sisters made from Damascus to Sweden. Through touch and sound, this intimate encounter explores empathy and whether we need to literally “feel” a refugee in order to understand the effect of border discrimination on peoples’ lives.

Our fingertips facilitate touch and sensations, but are also used by authorities to track many of us. In today’s Europe, a refugee’s journey can be set as far as their fingertips take them. The Dublin Regulation mandated a fingerprinting database across Europe for all refugees and migrants. The regulation often means that a refugee is sent back to where their fingertips were first recorded, without any regard to their needs, desires, or plans.

— Tania El Khoury, *creator*

THE SOUNDS OF YOUR THREE A.M. DEPORTATION

by William D. Lopez



What does it sound like, to be deported at three in the morning?

When I walk out of my house, it first sounds like silence. It sounds like a country asleep, unaware that your family is about to be torn apart.

In the car on the way to meet you, it sounds like discussion about what our country has become, how we have arrived at the point of removing a mother of four who has been in the country cleaning our houses and making dinners for her kids for 15 years.

We get to the airport and the silence fades. It starts to get noisy, but it's not overpowering, not yet.

First it's the sounds of controlled cries as your children wrap their arms around you.

It's the tapping of our shoes, as the adrenaline and emotion make our knees shake.

It's the jingle of your bracelet hitting the studs on your American flag purse, a remnant of the times you believed our country had any shred of decency.

Then someone else joins the circle of family and advocates, and the sounds of your deportation become rhythmic, the thumping of our hearts in our chests as the ICE agent comes to ask you for the sweaty manila envelope that has somehow come to represent your humanity.

Your deportation begins to sound like utter hypocrisy, as the ICE agent offers to help you roll the life you have condensed into two suitcases to the ticket counter.

Then he takes you to the counter, and your deportation sounds like an agent who can't speak your language, who says, welp, I hope she figures out the connecting flight or her voluntary departure will become a deportation and she'll have no hope of returning.

Then the sound of your deportation starts to get louder.

It sounds like an older daughter trying to catch her breath knowing she has become the mother of two younger sisters.

The controlled tears become loud, body-shaking sobs and you are encircled in a mass of love and pain, and I can hear your wet lips smack against your husband's five times in a row, wondering if you will ever kiss him again.

Sometimes there's more silence. Silence and looking down to avoid eye contact as college students are flying to your destination to get tan and party and pretend you don't exist.

And there are silent nods of the head from brown people in solidarity, one or two coming up to the circle to say how fucked up things are.

And then you go to the security line, and the sounds of your deportation crescendo into the deafening roar of fists raised as you walk through the metal detector, into the scream of your husband waving goodbye with his Puma cap, and into the symphony of your daughters filming their mother's removal because they have just been reborn as *luchadores*, as *guerreras*, as the next generation of Latinas born into a new era in America where the party of family values systematically takes families apart.

And then you're gone. And we are left again in silence, returning to our tears, controlling our sobs, listening for the chime of our phones from the text message that says you're ok.

William D. Lopez is a clinical assistant professor at the U-M School of Public Health and faculty director of public scholarship at the National Center for Institutional Diversity. He is the author of the book *Separated: Family and Community in the Aftermath of an Immigration Raid*. His research considers how state violence impacts Black, Latino, and Muslim communities in the US. He lives in Ann Arbor with his partner and two children.



The boat sank in my tears and lament
And rock melted from my pain and lament
Do you think you will return while I'm alive
And our sun will rise after its absence

Crossing the border means leaving behind a 75% chance of death
Not from random shelling, barrel bombs, or even whippings
You enter, and just like everyone else, you nod your head
With each rejection
Say what you like, but all this won't cost you more than \$1000
Don't ask me why or for what
Half of it bribes for the army and the police in Turkey
And the rest to live on and for the guys to get drunk with
Then it's just your luck with the sea
In short, you either beat it, or it beats you
This part will also cost you \$1000
In the boats, all the faces are stressed
Holding their breaths
Bracing their wounds
They've heard so much gunfire
They no longer feel anything
They no longer feel anything

If I run run run run run
could it take me back
to where I started out
watching the kids from the balcony
the smell of your skin next to me
we only want what everyone wants

Rhythm is the beat of life that saves you from the coma
Dreams are drawn like a beam against the invaders
The enemy is whoever makes you hungry or frightens your heart
Whoever demonises or stigmatises
In war
Whoever legitimises taking from people's pockets
But whoever puts up with hardship
And remains free
May God not harm him
He is carrying
The whole burden
Alone
And history repeats
The same sentences

But with more foul play
Again
Metal confronts the flesh of slaves
There is no point to anything
On this round planet
A jungle where the strongest hand takes all
And the weak is like a farm animal
And everyone who rejects this and rebels is a terrorist
Accused, for example, of raising their index finger
Who said this cannot go on
Sorry brother, it's gone on and on
Adding salt to the wound
And your cares drown in sorrow with every drop of blood

ARTISTS

Tania El Khoury is a live artist creating installations and performances focused on audience interactivity and concerned with the ethical and political potential of such encounters. Her work has been translated and presented in multiple languages in 32 countries across six continents, in spaces ranging from museums to cable cars to the Mediterranean Sea. She is a 2019 Soros Art Fellow and the recipient of the 2017 International Live Art Prize, the 2011 Total Theatre Innovation Award, and Arches Brick Award. Ms. El Khoury was a festival guest curator at Bard College's Fisher Center. She holds a PhD in performance studies from Royal Holloway, University of London. In 2018, a survey of her work entitled *ear-whispered: works by Tania El Khoury* took place in Philadelphia organized by Bryn Mawr College and FringeArts Festival funded by Pew Centre for Arts and Heritage. Ms. El Khoury is affiliated with Forest Fringe in the UK and is the co-founder of the urban research and performance collective Dictaphone Group in Lebanon.

Basel Zaraq is a spoken word artist and percussionist who writes on themes of exile and resistance. He has collaborated with a wide range of international artists including Akala, Guildhall youth project (Im) possibilities, Palestinian hip-hop group Katibeh Khamseh, Arabic fusion band Raast, and funk band Shokunin. He is part of the cast of PsycheDELIGHT's *Borderline* satire about the Calais camp, in which he performs original music and DIY sound effects. He is also a visual and stencil graffiti artist. Mr. Zaraq performs in Tania El Khoury's *As Far As My Fingertips Take Me* and has co-created with her a second piece entitled *As Far As Isolation Goes*.

taniaelkhoury.com
dictaphonegroup.com
twitter.com/taniaelk
facebook.com/taniaelkhourypage
nstagram.com/taniaelk

UMS welcomes Tania El Khoury and Basel Zaraq as they make their UMS debuts this week.

PRESENTING PARTNERS

The **Arab American National Museum** (AANM), an institution of ACCESS, documents, preserves, and presents the history, lives, and contributions of Arab Americans. AANM promotes respect for Arab Americans and all Americans, regardless of ethnic heritage, by shedding light on the shared experiences of immigrants and the value of a diverse citizenry. The Museum features permanent collections and exhibits; national traveling exhibitions, conferences, and special events; educational programs; public programs, including live music, films, and panel discussions; and culinary walking tours. Amid the largest concentration of Arabs outside the Middle East, AANM has remained the only institution among America's 17,500 museums to focus on Arab Americans since opening its doors in Dearborn in 2005. In just a few short years, AANM distinguished itself as a highly successful institution as evidenced by funding and audience support. AANM is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, an Affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution, and a founding member of the Immigration and Civil Rights Network of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience. For further information, please visit arabamericanmuseum.org.

Research into the human condition — how we live in the world and how we live with each other — is vital to the cultivation of a just and equitable society. The **U-M Institute for the Humanities** (IH) facilitates work that examines humanities traditions broadly across space and time; deepens synergies among the humanities, the arts, and disciplines across the university; and brings the voices of the humanities to public life. Each year IH provides fellowships for Michigan faculty, graduate students, and visiting scholars who work on scholarly and artistic projects. It also offers a wide array of public and scholarly events, including public lectures, workshops, discussions, and art exhibitions. For further information, please visit lsa.umich.edu/humanities.

Assemblage is yearlong experimental performance series created by **The Hinterlands**, presenting internationally recognized theater and dance to audiences in Detroit, while linking Detroit performing artists into national networks and conversations around cutting-edge contemporary performance-making. Assemblage is funded through support by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and is conducted in partnership between The Hinterlands, UMS of the University of Michigan, Detroit Public Theatre, and Jennifer Harge/Harge Dance Stories.

ASSEMBLAGE PERFORMANCES

Tania El Khoury

As Far As My Fingertips Take Me

January 23–February 9, 2020 at the U-M Institute for the Humanities and the Arab American National Museum, Dearborn
Presented by UMS

Milka Djordjevich

Anthem

March 18–21, 2020 at the Jam Handy Building, Detroit
Presented by UMS

Double Edge Theatre

Leonora & Alejandro: La Maga y el Maestro

April 2–5, 2020 at the Jam Handy Building, Detroit
Co-Presented by Detroit Public Theatre

Jaamil Kosoko

Chameleon

Summer/Fall, 2020; Location TBA
Presented by The Hinterlands

Penny Godboldo and Karen Prall

(A newly commissioned work to be announced)

Fall 2020

Presented by The Hinterlands

STORIES OF REFUGE

An interactive installation by Dictaphone Group

January 15–31, Monday through Friday, 9:00 am–5:00 pm

U-M Institute for the Humanities Gallery, 202 S. Thayer Street

CREATIVE TEAM

Concept and Video Editing by Tania El Khoury

Devised with Petra Serhal

Videos shot by anonymous asylum seekers

Commissioned by Spielart Festival, Munich, 2013

Since the beginning of the Syrian revolution in 2011, Syrian refugees have been fleeing the brutal regime in search of safe haven. Munich, Germany, is one of the cities many Syrian refugees land after crossing unofficial borders through different European countries. Lebanese artist Tania El Khoury and her art collective Dictaphone Group collaborated with a group of Syrian refugees who had recently arrived in Munich. El Khoury gave each of these participants/collaborators a discreet camera for a day, their only instructions being to film their daily lives in Munich. Together they produced three videos, presented in this installation and viewed from bunk bed barracks in the gallery.



Wednesday Evening, January 29, 2020 at 7:30
Thursday Evening, January 30, 2020 at 7:30
Friday Evening, January 31, 2020 at 8:00
Saturday Evening, February 1, 2020 at 8:00
Sunday Afternoon, February 2, 2020 at 2:00
Arthur Miller Theatre
Ann Arbor

IS THIS A ROOM: REALITY WINNER VERBATIM TRANSCRIPTION

A production of
Half Straddle

Tina Satter
Concept and Director

RENEGHUE

45th, 47th, 49th, 51st, and 53rd Performances of the 141st Annual Season
No Safety Net 2.0

Performances of *Is This A Room: Reality Winner Verbatim Transcription* are supported by the U-M College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and Valerie and Jeff Wilpon, and funded in part by the William Davidson Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Educational programs for No Safety Net 2.0 are funded in part by the U-M Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion.

Media partnership provided by WDET 101.9 FM, *Between The Lines*, and *Metro Times*.

Special thanks to Jake Hooker, Sharman Spieser, Greg Stejskal, Barbara L. McQuade, Brian Willen, Alex Halderman, Kevin Gosztola, Ashley Lucas, Billie Jean Winner-Davis, Lynette Clementson, Morghan Boydston Williams, Desirae Simmons, Lori Watanabe Saginaw, Knight-Wallace Fellowship, and U-M School of Music, Theatre & Dance for their participation in events surrounding No Safety Net 2.0.

Special thanks to Tiffany Ng, U-M assistant professor of carillon and university carillonist, for coordinating Friday evening's pre-concert music on the Lurie Carillon.

In consideration of the artists and the audience, please refrain from the use of electronic devices during the performance.

The photography, sound recording, or videotaping of this performance is prohibited.

A gender-inclusive restroom is located in the main lobby of the Walgreen Drama Center, on the first floor near the north entrance of the building.

In the interests of both the environment and expenses, please consider returning with your No Safety Net 2.0 Festival Guide to future festival performances.

PERFORMERS

Unknown Male / Becca Blackwell
Special Agent Justin C. Garrick / Pete Simpson
Reality Winner / Emily Davis
Special Agent R. Wallace Taylor / TL Thompson

CREATIVE TEAM

Concept and Direction / Tina Satter
Score / Sanae Yamada
Costume Designer / Enver Chakartash
Set Designer / Parker Lutz
Lighting Designer / Thomas Dunn
Sculptural Designer / Amanda Villalobos
Additional Sound / Lee Kinney
Production and Stage Manager / Randi Rivera
Technical Director / Jørgen Skjaervold
Company Manager / Mariana Catalina
Creative Producer / Meiyin Wang

This happened on June 3, 2017, in Augusta, Georgia.

Is This A Room: Reality Winner Verbatim Transcription is approximately 70 minutes in duration and is performed without intermission.



Post-Performance Artist Q&A: January 29

Following Wednesday evening's opening-night performance, please feel free to remain in your seat for a Q&A to unpack complex themes throughout the performance with the artists and special guests, including Greg Stejskal, special agent/FBI (1975–2006); Barbara L. McQuade, U-M professor from practice in law; and Brian Willen, U-M lecturer and partner at Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati.

Community Dialogue

After non-opening night performances, UMS will provide a space for audience members to reflect on, discuss, and analyze the performance they've just experienced. Conversations will be guided by experienced facilitators from the community, including Sharman Spieser, Equity Consultant and Community Collaborator.



Reality Winner: A Timeline

DECEMBER 4, 1991

Reality Leigh Winner is born in Alice, Texas, to her mother Billie, a Child Protective Services worker, and father Ronald, an idealist who “collected degrees,” according to his wife.¹ Reality’s parents separated in 1999.

2001

Ronald holds intense conversations about geopolitics with his daughters following the September 11 terrorist attacks, careful to distinguish the religion of Islam from ideologies that fueled terrorism. (In a 2017 interview with *New York Magazine*, Reality recalls he taught her “that the fastest route to conflict resolution is understanding.”)

2008

At age 17, Reality begins studying Arabic outside of school and on her own. Her interest in Arabic would later be used against her in court, taken as evidence that she sympathized with the nation’s most feared enemies.²

While still in high school, Reality is recruited by the Army. Based on her test scores, she is selected to be a cryptologic linguist, learning Dari and Farsi, as well as Pashto.

2010–16

Reality serves in the US Air Force, translating communications so that drone operators would know where to target. Reality is awarded the Air Force Commendation Medal for “aiding in 650 enemy captures, 600 enemies killed in action, and identifying 900 high-value targets.”³

2016

Reality Winner is honorably discharged from the Air Force and relocates to Augusta, Georgia, where she works as a fitness and yoga instructor. Shortly thereafter, she is hired by Pluribus International Corporation, providing services under contract to the National Security Administration (NSA). She retains top-secret security clearance.⁴

¹ *New York Magazine* interview, December 2017

² *New York Magazine* interview, December 2017

³ *LA Times*, August 2018

⁴ *The Atlantic*, June 2017

⁵ *The Atlantic*, June 2016

2017

FEBRUARY 13, 2017

Reality is assigned work at Fort Gordon in Georgia, where she translates documents about Iran's aerospace program. She also has access to other documents, including a five-page classified report about Russia's attempt to interfere in America's 2016 election. She leaks this document to *The Intercept*.

MAY 30, 2017

The Intercept contacts the NSA for verification of leaked documents, and the NSA notifies the FBI about the leak. A report from the FBI noted that the documents "appeared to be folded and/or creased, suggesting they had been printed and hand-carried out of a secured space."⁵

JUNE 3, 2017

Eleven FBI agents interview Reality Winner at her home in Augusta, Georgia, and take her into custody that evening.

JUNE 5, 2017

The Intercept publishes the leaked NSA document within an article entitled "Top-Secret NSA Report Details Russian Hacking Effort Days Before 2016 Election."

AUGUST 23, 2018

Reality Winner is sentenced to 63 months in prison — the longest term ever given to someone for leaking classified information to the media.

REALITY WINNER: ESPIONAGE OR WHISTLE-BLOWING?

Interview conducted by Brian Willen



Brian Willen, lawyer and member of the UMS Board of Directors, sat down with Barbara McQuade, law professor at the University of Michigan and a legal analyst for NBC News and MSNBC, and Greg Stejskal, former special

agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), to discuss aspects of Reality Winner's case, including her interview with the FBI and the Espionage Act. The below transcription has been edited and condensed from their original November 2019 conversation.

Brian Willen: *Is This A Room* documents and dramatizes a particular moment in the Reality Winner story — her June 3, 2017 interview with the FBI, which ended with her arrest and ultimately a fairly long prison sentence. The show puts us in the room with Reality and the FBI agents, but we don't see the rest of the story. So, I thought we could examine a little bit of that bigger picture and provide a context and information for people who are seeing the play.

The law that Reality violated is called the Espionage Act, which is a pretty evocative name for a statute. Can you tell us what it is, where it comes from, and what it does?

Barbara McQuade: The Espionage Act is a rather clumsy statute, and it gets used for a lot of purposes. It was passed during World War I as an effort to deter and punish people who disclosed secrets to the enemy. It covers both people who have clearances and obtain the information in the course of their employment, and has certain prohibitions for those people...as well as anybody who receives the information. That's the piece that can be controversial, because in theory even the news media could be prosecuted for even having or publishing it.

Typically, the justice department has not done that, but has focused on those who have a sworn duty to protect secrets through their employment. And those people are prosecuted. The Espionage Act includes prosecution for people who give secrets to foreign adversaries — hostile foreign adversaries — and those crimes would then be punished more severely. But it also applies to people like Reality Winner, who

disclose it to someone who doesn't have permission to receive it, including the news media.

BW: Many people might think there's a pretty big difference between those scenarios...between sharing classified information with a foreign government, and sharing it with a journalist. So why do you think the Espionage Act doesn't make a distinction?

BMcQ: I agree with you, I think those are two very different harms, to very different degrees. When the statute was first passed, it was probably intended to address just the situation of someone who had access to military secrets sharing it with a hostile foreign adversary.

And then, a famous example of its use in a media sense came in the case known as the Pentagon Papers, when Daniel Ellsberg shared a long study about the Vietnam War that was classified that he had worked on with the *New York Times*. The Justice Department sent a letter to the effect of "if you keep this or publish it, it will be a violation of the Espionage Act...be warned, you should return this right away." And they filed a civil case to get a restraining order against them further publishing (they already published one or two days of stories about the Pentagon Papers). So it may have simply been a creative use of the statute, because there's no other statute that addresses it.

BW: That's an interesting point. Here, Reality Winner disclosed classified information to *The Intercept*. Do you think it would have been possible to bring a case against *The Intercept* for publishing this document?

BMcQ: Under the Espionage Act as it currently exists, yes, but the Justice Department has restrained itself from doing that. During the Obama administration, I know that there was concern about leak investigations including search warrants to reporters, and even referring to a reporter as a co-conspirator even though that reporter wasn't charged.

After the Justice Department's internal review of how to handle these types of situations, Attorney General Holder announced that he didn't want to do anything that would interfere with the legitimate news gathering functions of the media. That's a good goal, but it could be difficult to achieve in practice, when you think about how difficult it is nowadays to define *who is the media*. Certainly most people would

agree with traditional media outlets like the *New York Times*, but how about something like *The Intercept*, or *WikiLeaks*, or just Greg in his basement on his blog. Is that media? So that's where it becomes difficult.

BW: Let's bring Greg into the conversation. As a former FBI agent, how do you think about this differentiation between spying and leaking? Should it matter to the FBI or to the justice system that someone like Reality Winner did what she did not for money or for some desire to harm national security, but because she thought she was doing the right thing for the country?

Gregory Stejskal: I do think it makes a difference. But, you have to realize that there can be substantial harm to national security, whether it's given to a foreign power or ends up in the media. And I would cite the Snowden thing as a good example of the damage that can be done. Presumably, at least according to him, he thought he was doing the right thing. You don't get to have that kind of discretion when you have the federal government's trust to not violate classified regulations that you're working under.

On the other hand, a whistle-blower who decides to speak up has certain procedures and things that they follow, and the first stop isn't the media.

BW: In Reality Winner's case, this is a document that reveals certain efforts that the Russian government and intelligence services were making to interfere with US election machinery in the run-up to the 2016 election. Reality's lawyers argued that the disclosure of this information, rather than harming national security, actually helped national security because it alerted state and local officials to threats to the integrity of the election system that they might not have otherwise been aware of. What do you make of that argument?

GS: If the material is classified, that individual is not given discretion to determine the harm done or anything like that. Again, there are things that you can do, under the whistle-blower statute, or just talk to your supervisor. But you don't have the right to say, "Oh, you know, this is something that the public should be aware of," or, "These are things that we're doing that I don't agree with."

BW: Gregory makes an important point. This is why we have whistle-blower laws. If someone thinks

that there is an abuse, waste, fraud, some sort of issue...we want to deter people from taking it upon themselves to share the secret with the world, and instead, encourage them to follow this whistle-blower track, where you can go to an inspector general.

As we saw recently in the current case involving Ukraine — the process there is that the inspector general first makes a determination as to whether the claim is frivolous. If not, he'll go investigate and talk to people. We have intelligence committees in congress, in the house, and senate, so that they can exercise oversight and investigate if things are being done improperly. We *want* to encourage people like Reality Winner to go that route, and not taking it upon themselves to share information with the world.

One concern I have about what we're currently seeing is, when President Trump is, I believe, intimidating the whistle-blower to identify him and out him, and keep demanding that he testify. We are going to push people into the Reality Winner channel, and I worry that President Trump's conduct is diminishing faith in the system by people who are public servants who want to do things the right way.

BW: I want to shift gears a little bit. I want to go back to Reality's interview with the FBI agents. I think people have a particular intuition about the way that the FBI might question suspects, and what we see in this show is something more informal, more meandering, more conversational. So it'd be interesting I think for you, Greg, to talk about how the FBI approaches interviews like this and the strategies that you use to try to get people to talk when you think they've done something wrong but you don't necessarily have all the evidence.

GS: It's dependent on the agent, and you do receive training, but, you know there are certain things I would do to try to develop rapport. What I found early on is that threatening people and doing the classic "third-degree kind of thing" — the light in the face and all of that — generally is not very productive. I wanted to be able to convince the person, if possible, that it would be in their best interest to be cooperative.

When I would interview somebody, I would never have a table or anything else in between me and the person I'm interviewing. I would actually sit on the same side of the table as he or she did, or she did. And I would spend time, before I would ever ask them

a question, and even if I was going to Mirandize him, and talk to him, explain to him the situation, and try to develop that rapport. It would not be in a threatening manner. There have been times I arrested people where I might've been a bit more forceful, but that was only because of exigent circumstances.

BMcQ: What Greg is describing is common among all the agencies that we worked with at the US Attorney's office. I, as a prosecutor, was really gratified when we began recording the interviews, because I think there's a perception from TV and movies that agents are really tough on people, that they're beating them up, that they're intimidating. And in fact it's usually, perhaps because it is more effective, that the agents are usually very nice to the person. Being able to show that in the courtroom to a jury could usually cut off any suggestion that the person was brow beaten or something, to confess.

BW: What about Miranda Warnings? One of the interesting things about this case is that Reality Winner was never told during her interview that she had "the right to remain silent or the right to a lawyer. Why wouldn't the FBI have given Miranda Warnings here, and what would you have done if she had said, "I want to talk to my lawyer?"

GS: Well, once she says that, then that's it. You're done. That's again one of the reasons why you want to have an opportunity to talk to them before you specifically ask them a question or you Mirandize, because you want them to understand why it's in their best interest to talk.

The whole Miranda Warning thing was developed almost word-for-word by the FBI. Our policy was that unless they're in custody (which means if a reasonable person would believe they're in custody), you don't have to provide them with their Miranda Rights. In Reality's case, they didn't even have an arrest warrant...they arrested her after the fact, after the surge, and after they spoke to her.

BMcQ: The legal test is looking at the totality of the circumstances: would a reasonable person have felt that they were either free to leave or free not to answer the questions? Miranda requires both being in custody *and* being interrogated. So if either of those are not true, then there's not a requirement for a Miranda Warning. And as I read the transcription here, at least twice the agent said to Reality: "Talking to us is completely voluntary, right, just want you to understand that." I'm sure it was very deliberate...it's probably part of their training to make that statement

known. And so by saying that twice, they alerted her that even if you don't feel like you're free to go, you also don't have to answer our questions.

BW: Let me just ask you one final question. The three of us are joining the post-performance artist Q&A right after opening night of *Is This A Room* on January 29, and I'm just curious what each of you will be looking for when you see the show. Are there particular things that you are going to be paying attention to or looking for?

BMcQ: I suppose I will be looking for things that ring true or that seem unusual. I mean, this is a real scenario, so it's not fictional. This really happened. But, to what extent is it typical, and to what extent is it aberrational? I think that would be useful for an audience to know if this is the way it goes down most of the time, all the time, or, if this was a really unusual, outlier-type situation. I'll be looking for that, and then maybe just opportunities to explain how the law works in these situations, for better or worse. Most laws make sense — there's a reason we came up with them — but others have flaws, and sometimes things evolve in society and a law is not caught up with that yet. So I'll be looking for any areas like that that I might be able to flag for the audience after the show.

GS: I'm going to be interested in seeing how the agents handled it and be sort of critiquing it...I might find myself going "hey that's an interesting technique," or "boy, that's not the way to do it guys." So, I look for that, whether you see it in the media, like on TV or in movies, and then in real life. The other thing I think, and given the opportunity to talk about after the show it is what we've said...you know you have to understand that as an FBI agent, or as a US attorney, you have to enforce the laws. We don't have discretion either. But, irrespective of what this person's motive is — and that she's a wonderful person and all of that — there is a reason for these laws being there. And in our job, we're sworn to uphold the constitution, and with that goes the laws that are passed in pursuit of the constitution. It's not our job to question that. It's our job to enforce the laws.

Barbara L. McQuade is a law professor at the University of Michigan, where she teaches criminal law, criminal procedure, and national security law. She is also a legal analyst for NBC News and MSNBC. From 2010 to 2017, Ms. McQuade served as the US Attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan. Ms. McQuade was appointed by President Barack Obama, and was the

first woman to serve in her position. Ms. McQuade also served as vice chair of the Attorney General's Advisory Committee and co-chaired the Terrorism and National Security Subcommittee. Before becoming US Attorney, Ms. McQuade was an Assistant US Attorney in Detroit for 12 years, serving as Deputy Chief of the National Security Unit.

Greg Stejskal, SA/FBI (1975–2006), was born and raised in Omaha, Nebraska. He attended and graduated from the University of Nebraska and received a bachelor and juris doctorate ('74) degrees. In 1975 he entered on duty as special agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Following new agent training, he was assigned to the Detroit field office which covers all of Michigan. In 1981 he was assigned to the Ann Arbor resident agency (a satellite office of Detroit). During his career, he was involved in numerous and varied cases within the FBI's jurisdiction including foreign counterintelligence (espionage). In 2006, he retired from the FBI with over 31 years of service. He resides in Ann Arbor with his wife, Pat, who is a retired Ann Arbor Public Schools teacher. They have two grown children, Taryn and Andrew; both are graduates of the University of Michigan.

Brian Willen is a partner at the law firm Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati. He litigates cases on behalf of leading technology and Internet companies (including Google, Twitter, Dropbox, and Pinterest) focusing on intellectual property, online content-regulation, the First Amendment, national security, and privacy. Mr. Willen is also an adjunct professor at the University of Michigan Law School where he teaches classes on Internet law, and is a member of the UMS Board of Directors.

Further reading:

Intercept story on unfair treatment of Reality Winner:
<https://theintercept.com/2017/12/05/reality-winner-trial-nsa-russia-election>

New York Times story on Reality Winner sentencing:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/23/us/reality-winner-nsa-sentence.html>

UMS ARCHIVES

UMS welcomes **Half Straddle** as the company makes its UMS debut this week. **Becca Blackwell** makes their third appearance under UMS auspices this week, following their UMS debut in January 2016 in performances of Young Jean Lee's *Untitled Feminist Show* in the Power Center. They most recently appeared under UMS auspices in performances of *They, Themselves and Scherm* in January and February 2018 in the Arthur Miller Theatre.

RW:

Yeah.

SAG:

[sighs] So.

RW:

[OV] Guess that's not going to happen.

SAG:

[sighs] Well. [sighs]

SAT:

Anything else you can think of? Okay.

SAG:

Okay. Uhm, what we have to do is we have to do the search.

RW:

Of course.

SAG:

Uhm, now you said that. [coughs] I'm sorry. I have a sinus infection, so sound-

RW:

[OV] It's okay.

SAG:

-I'm-so I sound awful.

RW:

[OV] This is the best

the best room to be in with it.

[noises]

Yes.

[OV] Okay.

[OV] If it's there.

Do you remember the site from memory?

Uhm, it's just the-

uhm-contact. It-it's not as obvious as you think. [noise]

[Mm-hm,

ARTISTS

Half Straddle is an Obie Award-winning, New York City-based ensemble of performers and designers that makes plays, performances, videos, and music that have been seen through the US and internationally and is led by writer and director Tina Satter. Half Straddle has premiered 11 full-length shows, and a number of shorter works and video projects that have been seen at festivals and theaters throughout the US, Europe, Australia, and Asia. In 2014, Half Straddle's show *House of Dance* was nominated for a ZKB Patronage Prize at Zürcher Theater Spektakel. The company's most recent piece *Is This A Room* was named a "Top 10 Show of 2019" by the *New York Times*. The company's work has grown in recent years to include teaching, workshops, and curated lecture series of other artists in addition to their ongoing making of performances, music, and videos. All of Half Straddle's company members and collaborators also work extensively in a range of other performance contexts, often creating their own work, in avant-garde theater to Broadway, university teaching, and as theater artists in New York City public schools.

Becca Blackwell (*unknown male*) is a New York-based trans actor, performer, and writer. Existing between genders, and preferring the pronoun "they," Blackwell works collaboratively with playwrights and directors to expand our sense of personhood and the body through performance. Some of their collaborations have been with Young Jean Lee, Jennifer Miller's *Circus Amok*, Richard Maxwell, Erin Markey, Sharon Hayes, Theater of the Two-Headed Calf and Lisa D'Amour. Film/TV credits include *Untitled Noah Baumbach Project*, *High Maintenance*, *Shameless*, *Deadman's Barstool*, and *Jack in the Box*. Their solo show *They, Themself and Schmerm* tours to places that hire them. Becca is a recipient of the Doris Duke Impact Artist Award. For more information, visit beccablackwell.com.

Pete Simpson's (*special agent Justin C. Garrick*) credits include *Away Uniform* (Half Straddle); *Gatz, Measure for Measure, The Select* (Elevator Repair Service); *Grimly Handsome, The Terrifying* (Minor Theater Company); *Drummer Wanted, People Without History* (NYC Players); *The Appeal, Lear, Straight White Men* (Young Jean Lee's Theater Company); *North Atlantic* (Wooster Group); and *Paradise Hotel* (Richard Foreman). He has also worked with artists and companies including Clubbed Thumb, Big Dance Theater, Susan Marshall, Will Eno, Ethan Lipton, Christina Masciotti, and Blue Man Group. Film credits include *Marriage Story, Morning Glory, Stefan TV: Gotham*, and *Law and Order*. He is a 2017 Obie Award recipient for Sustained Excellence.

Emily C. Davis* (*Reality Winner*) has recently appeared in

New York productions of *Singlet* (The Bushwick Starr), *Of Government* (Clubbed Thumb), *My Old Man* (Dixon Place), *O, Earth!* (The Foundry Theater), and *When the Tanks Break* (Drama League). With Half Straddle, she has appeared in *Ancient Lives, In the Pony Palace/FOOTBALL, Seagull* (*Thinking of you*), *Away Uniform, Nurses in New England, FAMILY*, and *Girl Detectives*. Her film credits include *The Plagiarists, Gwen in Corpus, Almost Family, Ovum*, and *The Easiest Thing*.

TL Thompson's* (*special agent R. Wallace Taylor*) credits include *Straight White Men* (Person In Charge u/s, Second Stage Theater, Broadway); *Waafrica 123 (Aweeno)* (Criminal Queerness Festival); *NERVOUS/ SYSTEM* (Pollster/Core Cast, BAM Next Wave); *AFTER* (Company, Public Theater; and *Bathsheba's Psalms: Or, a Woman of Unusual Beauty Taking a Bath* (Ensemble, TANK Theater). Podcasts include *Adventures in New America (Bishop)* and *Welcome to Nightvale (Lee Marvin)*. Web series include *THESE/THEMS (TI)*, directed by Jett Garrison and *THE HUNTED(Nic)*, directed by Crystal Arnette. Films include *Flu\$h (Wrex)*, directed by Heather Acs; *Separation/Celebration*, directed by Amanda Madden; and *Friday Afternoon*, directed by Paige Campbell. TL is also a New York Neo Futurist, who performs frequently in *The Infinite Wrench*, an ongoing attempt to perform 30 plays in one hour.

Tina Satter (*concept and direction*) is a writer, director, and artistic director of Obie-winning theater company Half Straddle. Her over 10 plays, performances, and videos made with Half Straddle have been presented at theaters and festivals in Europe, Japan, Australia, Canada, and the US. She had her Off-Broadway debut in October 2019, when *Is This A Room* premiered at the Vineyard Theatre. She is a recipient of a 2019 Pew Fellowship, a Foundation for Contemporary Arts Award, and a Doris Duke Impact Artist Award. She has been in residence at Yaddo, Headlands Art Center, LMCC, The Performing Garage, New Museum, MASS MoCA, and been visiting faculty and/or a guest artist in recent years at Yale, NYU, Princeton, University of Michigan, Bowdoin, Reed, Sarah Lawrence, University of Pennsylvania, and the Hunter MFA playwriting program. Her first collection of plays, *Seagull (Thinking of you)*, was published by 53rd State Press in 2014 and the text and LP for *Ghost Rings* was released by 53rd State in 2017.

Sanae Yamada (*score*) is a musician based in Portland, Oregon. She tours and records as a member of the band Moon Duo and as a solo artist under the name Vive la Void. The score for *Is This A Room: Reality Winner Verbatim Transcription* is her first composition for theater and first collaboration with Half-Straddle.

Enver Chakartash (*costume design*) is a New York-based costume designer and wardrobe stylist. He has designed

costumes for Tony Oursler, The Wooster Group, Young Jean Lee, Erin Markey, and Reggie Wilson/Fist and Heel Performance Group. He began collaborating with Half Straddle in 2013. Since then, he has designed costumes for all of the company's works including *Seagull (Thinking of you)*, *House of Dance*, *Ancient Lives*, and *Ghost Rings*.

Parker Lutz (*set design*) has danced with Sarah Michelson, John Jasperse, and others. She has received Bessie Awards for Sustained Achievement and Visual Design. This is her third show with Half Straddle.

Thomas Dunn (*lighting design*) is an [REDACTED] artist based in [REDACTED]. His approach to lighting design stems from years of investigative work with light, treating it as both a sculptural medium and a facet of stage design. Selected design credits include works with [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Scheib/NYCO.

Amanda Villalobos (*sculptural design*) is a designer, fabricator, and performer. Credits include *Ghost Rings* for Half Straddle (NYLA), *Amélie, A New Musical* for Broadway (Walter Kerr), *Measure for Measure* (Public Theater), *Hand to God* (Berkeley Rep), *Late Night with Seth Meyers*, and the *12 Shouts* series at the Whitney Museum. For more information, visit avpuppets.com.

Randi Rivera (*production and stage management*) is a native New Yorker. She has been working with Tina Satter and Half Straddle since 2012 as stage manager, production manager, and lighting director. Ms. Rivera has premiered and/or traveled both internationally and domestically with Half Straddle's *Seagull (Thinking of you)*, *Away Uniform*, *In The Pony Palace/Football*, *House Of Dance*, *Ancient Lives*, and *Ghost Rings*. In addition, she is a proud contributor to many theater and dance production teams both in New York and on the road — favorites include Keigwin & Company, Dance Heginbotham, Harlem Stage, Faye Driscoll Group, Doug Elkins Choreography Etc, Sidra Bell Dance NY, The Chocolate Factory, Andrew Schneider, Ivy Baldwin, Cathy Weis, Sean Donovan, and Phantom Limb Company. All of her work is for her family.

Jørgen Noodt Skjærvold (*technical director*) is a sound designer and technician originally from Trondheim, Norway. He began working in theater in 2005 and became technical director at Theater Avant Garden in Trondheim in 2011. In 2015 he relocated to New York and was technical director

at Performance Space 122 from 2016-2018. He has worked as a sound designer and freelance technician with various artists including Findlay//Sandsmark, Mabou Mines, Monica Bill Barnes & Company, and Eirik Fauske.

Mariana Catalina (*company manager*) is a performer, writer, and director living in New York City. Her work expands across the genres of performance, poetry, and visual narrative. She is a frequent collaborator with Half Straddle.

Meiyin Wang (*creative producer*) is a producer and curator of live performance. Current collaborations include Half Straddle, Pig Iron, Andrew Ondrejcek, and Cal Shakes. Wang led the La Jolla Playhouse's Without Wall Festival; the Under the Radar/Devised Theater Initiative at The Public, and Park Avenue Armory's residency series.

Is This A Room was commissioned by and premiered at The Kitchen on January 4, 2019.

Is This A Room was produced by Vineyard Theater, Douglas Aibel, artistic director; Sarah Stern, artistic director; Suzanne Appel, managing director; New York City, 2019.

The show was developed in part at New York Theatre Workshop's Dartmouth Residency in August 2018 with the assistance of actors Greg Hermann and Gabriel Marin. Actors Jess Barbagallo and Kyle Vincent Terry both assisted in the development during a residency at The Kitchen in August 2018.

The production was made possible with support from Howard Gilman Foundation, The Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, and Joseph and Joan Cullman Foundation for the Arts; and in part by public funds from New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature. *Is This A Room: Reality Winner Verbatim Transcription* was developed in part at The Ground Floor at Berkeley Rep, New York Theatre Workshop's Dartmouth Residency, and a Lower Manhattan Cultural Council Residency in 2018.

Special thanks to Lumi Tan, Nick Zeig-Owens, Jess Barbagallo, Bora Kim, Lili Chopra, Linda Chapman, Jim Nicola, Madeleine Oldham, The Wooster Group, Sonia Kennebeck, Danny Manley, Hanna Novak, Annie Fox, Rachel Perks, Billie Winner-Davis, Reality Winner, Brittany Winner, Tim Griffin, Zack Tinkelman, Jimin Brelsford, Ian Douglas-Moore, Keilly McQuail, Captain Horatio Bonkers, Joey Truman, Andy Sowers, Cricket Brown, Murphey Wilkins, Rebecca Hermenze, Andrea Nellis, Rachel Viola, and Vineyard Theatre.

Please visit www.halfstraddle.com/realitywinner for a complete list of the very generous donors who made this show possible. THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH.

*Appearing through an Agreement with Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

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Monday Evening, February 3, 2020 at 7:30
Tuesday Evening, February 4, 2020 at 7:30
Wednesday Evening, February 5, 2020 at 7:30
Thursday Morning, February 6, 2020 at 11:40
Thursday Evening, February 6, 2020 at 7:30

Friday Evening, February 7, 2020 at 8:00
Saturday Afternoon, February 8, 2020 at 2:00
Saturday Evening, February 8, 2020 at 8:00
Sunday Afternoon, February 9, 2020 at 2:00
Sunday Evening, February 9, 2020 at 6:00

Video Studio, James and Anne Duderstadt Center
Ann Arbor

WHITE FEMINIST

Lee Minora
Writer and Performer

Alice Yorke
Director

RENEGHUE

54th, 56th, 58th, 60th, 61st, 65th, 66th, 67th, 68th, 70th and 71st Performances of the 141st Annual Season
No Safety Net 2.0

Performances of *White Feminist* are supported by the U-M College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and funded in part by the William Davidson Foundation and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Educational programs for No Safety Net 2.0 are funded in part by the U-M Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion.

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In consideration of the artists and the audience, please refrain from the use of electronic devices during the performance.

The photography, sound recording, or videotaping of this performance is prohibited.

In the interests of both the environment and expenses, please consider returning with your No Safety Net 2.0 Festival Guide to future festival performances.

CREATIVE TEAM

Writer and Performer / Lee Minora

Director / Alice Yorke

Sound Designer / Adriano Shaplin

White Feminist is approximately one hour in duration and is performed without intermission.



Post-Performance Artist Q&A: February 3

Following Monday evening's opening-night performance, please feel free to remain in your seat for a Q&A to unpack complex themes throughout the performance with the artists.

Community Dialogue

After non-opening night performances, UMS will provide a space for audience members to reflect on, discuss, and analyze the performance they've just experienced. Conversations will be guided by experienced facilitators from the community, including Sharman Spieser, Equity Consultant and Community Collaborator.

WHITE FEMINIST

Fuck Megyn Kelly, right? As a liberal, a comic, and a feminist theater-maker, Kelly stood for everything I was against. Her conservative politics, her role as a Fox News evangelist, and her unapologetic racist comments; such as “Santa is white,” had earned her a place on my boycotted-celebrities list. When she came forward with her #metoo story, I’ll be honest, I was kind of fascinated. A Fox propaganda darling breaking lock step to call out her leader, Rodger Ailes, was certainly unexpected and maybe kind of badass? But by the time Trump said she had “blood coming out of her wherever” I found myself in my living room, mouth gaping saying “how dare he!” Oh god, what was this twinge? Could it be sympathy? How could I want to defend someone I also wanted to dismantle? Was she really so bad? I’m sure she meant well.

Steeped in the discomfort of my newfound sympathy for Megyn Kelly I conceived of *White Feminist*. I was thinking a lot about good intentions; the good intentions of allies; of liberals, of the theater, and of white feminists, including myself. I felt tired of the theater of good intentions: theater that seemed to congratulate theater-goers rather than rouse them. I forged *White Feminist* in the fires of that frustration: frustration with the traditional playwriting model that leaves work frozen in time, the stale fourth wall, and the failures of well-meaning white women. I aimed to make a piece that’s elastic and can refresh as fast as the news cycle can, that capitalizes on the liveness of theater, and that skews and dissects the failings of non-intersectional feminism.

All of my work starts with a discomforting question. With *White Feminist* the question is: How do white women navigate their dual roles as oppressed and oppressor? My work is fueled by a desire to perfect the recipe for urgent, hilarious, and socially conscious work. In order to make *White Feminist*’s cultural critique scorch audiences, I employ a French performance style called *bouffon* clown. The *bouffon* clown is the master of mockery (think Borat or Stephen Colbert.) The story goes that the *bouffon* were the outcasts of Paris society who were only allowed in the city once a year to perform for the King’s amusement. At their performance, the king would laugh and laugh. It was only on the way home in his carriage that he realized: they were making fun of *him*.

Using *bouffon* clown, I weld vital, feminist themes and narratives with audience/performer interactions resulting in work that’s as much a warm embrace as it is a pointed finger. I salivate at the prospect of weaponized comedic, pleasure-filled theater that

turns call-out culture on myself, my audience, and our own ideals. I’m making performance that brings the people in the room to their knees with laughter but then leaves them unable to stand up when they actually get the joke: themselves. *White Feminist* is good intentions, (in)sincere apologies, and liberal guilt, blended in a complex comedy smoothie. If it goes down easier for some more than others; that is only because it reflects the work we have left to do.

— Lee Minora, *writer and performer*

WEAPON OF MASS DESTRUCTION: THE TEARS OF A WHITE WOMAN

by Shay Stewart-Bouley



In this current moment, talking about violence against Black bodies is almost trendy as more non-Black folks awake to the realities and horror of systemic racism — horrors that, frankly, we people of color (especially us Black people) have been telling y'all since the peak of the Civil Rights Era remain a core part of the American experience for Black and other people of color. However, one of the problems is that the main reason so many more white people are waking up to this is because of social media and the ability to see just how shockingly glaring many of these Black experiences are. And so, sadly, a lot of these conversations focus only on the overt violence and trauma, such as when our unarmed bodies are killed and left in the street. Or we are unjustly jailed (or detained for waiting at a Starbucks to meet a professional colleague). Or our teenagers are assaulted or harassed by police officers for hanging out just like white teens do, whether at malls or pool parties.

However, white violence against Black bodies is not always so dramatic. There is a type of violence that is just as deadly as a bullet yet rarely seen in the public eye — yet it touches the Black spirit and lives with us. We carry the scars and yet even amongst ourselves as Black people we don't always talk about it. But it's there.

Perhaps the only thing deadlier to a Black person's soul and well-being than actually being killed or incarcerated are the tears of a white woman — among other weaponized emotions. White women's emotions, particularly their tears, have taken countless lives over the generations. These tears and emotions are weapons of mass destruction and we rarely allow ourselves the chance to have an honest conversation about it. White women tears kill the soul, they make you doubt yourself and your right to exist, and they render you voiceless because an emotionally distraught white woman becomes the priority in whatever space she is in. It doesn't matter if you are right — once her tears are activated, you cease to exist. And few things bring other white people — especially men, and sometimes no matter how misogynist they are — to a white woman's defense than her declaring that she is feeling hurt,

sad, or discomfited by the words, arguments, or actions (no matter how reasonable or nonviolent) of a Black person. Jobs have been lost, friendships ended, and sometimes those tears can send the wrong person to jail. White woman tears are not simply a release, they are a tool.

Last night on Twitter, I saw a few tweets about the weaponization of white women's tears and it prompted me to share a story that until recently I had parked in the deepest recesses of my mind. It is a story that changed the trajectory of my life and yet a few weeks ago, after reconnecting with a childhood friend, I finally had the language and emotional maturity to give the story the context it needed.

In sharing the story, it found resonance with many so I decided to write about it.

As a teenager in the mid-1980s, there were few spaces for awkward Black girls like me. I was a social chameleon who, due to academic success, landed at what at the time was a prestigious public high school in Chicago. It meant that I bounced between the "drama kids," "stoners," and "trendies." My trendy friends were all white kids with a few biracial Black boys — and myself, I was the token Black girl. At the time, I would not have called myself that but by the beginning of our senior year of high school, it was clear to me that I was not a true participant; I was the comic relief and the outward display of how not-racist my "friends" were.

Somewhere between my junior and senior year of high school, my black consciousness started to develop and while I didn't have the vocabulary to articulate the concepts well, I knew that my position within this particular group of friends was not an authentic connection but a racialized existence.

I told one of my friends (a white girl) how I felt, and that conversation ended our friendship. It also ended my high school career since in the aftermath of that conversation, my friend was distraught, and suffice to say, no one heard me. Instead I was suddenly the *mean black girl*. I was also the weird Black girl and when you throw in the mean Black girl and you have a recipe for disaster. So right after I turned 18, I bounced. I never went back to school. I pretty much blocked that year from my memory for decades but 2018 seems to be the year where I am facing my past full force.

A few years ago, this particular friend and I reconnected via Facebook; she is now a professor at a prestigious college in New England. A college where her colleagues have shared some of my very

posts in faculty meetings. We recently met up in Boston for lunch and at the end of our lunch, she apologized for what went down 28 years ago. She told me that my words had sat with her for years and now she understood what she had done to me all those years ago. In choosing not to hear me and centering herself and her whiteness it meant that she did not have to consider the ways in which she and our circle of white friends othered me and turned me into a Black caricature that in a dehumanizing way to me allowed them to be a diverse group of people.

I accepted her apology because, after 28 years — despite dropping out of high school — I have gone on to have a good life. But I am very suspicious of allowing white women to get too close to me. Time and time again, I have learned that white women rarely have the emotional maturity to examine their racist actions and how they harm Black women and other women of color.

Over the years, my experience has been that few white women can sit with emotional discomfort around certain issues (such as race or, especially, the intersection of feminism and race) and when they are confronted or challenged, they take out the one weapon that society has given them. Tears. These tears effectively serve to shut down any constructive conversation and instead in group settings, the goal shifts to soothing the white woman and taking care of her feelings, typically at the complete expense of the Black person's feelings. Even in racial conversations of weighty matters — and even in settings that are meant to be focused on racial issues or anti-racism work — too often tears serve to stop the conversation from moving forward.

To cry is human but not all tears matter. And they particularly shouldn't matter when they come at the expense of someone else. Rarely do the tears of a non-white woman carry any value; instead, society conditions us to not cry and, with tears not having equal value, you create a "strong" Black woman. The damsel in distress is never Black. We are expected to always be strong yet also expected to never show anger or disappointment. To always turn the other cheek and be the calmest person in the room.

White women tears are multipurpose: they derail conversation, they emotionally bully others (particularly people of color), and they are almost never questioned — which only adds to the power of a white woman and her tears.

My colleague, author Debby Irving, speaks honestly in our public dialogues about learning early in life that her tears had value. She has publicly shared being told by her parents as a teenager, that if the cops pull you over, start crying. I have heard other white

women share similar tales of crying to get out tickets. I have never heard of a Black woman crying to successfully get out of a ticket.

In this moment, as more white women wake up to the horrors of racism and choose to make a difference, there are some honest conversations that need to be had: the role of white women in perpetuating and supporting racism, often through the use of tears and emotions, is one of those conversations. A white woman cannot be a real ally or accomplice without examining her own past experiences using emotional manipulation as a deflection tool, especially in cross-racial settings. To be clear, not all white tears are about literal tears, it's about the emotional angst that comes out in settings that derails and dehumanizes by placing white womanhood on a higher pedestal.

White women are uniquely positioned in this society — they are both one of the oppressed and also one of the oppressors, and that duality has long served to keep white women and women of color at odds. White women carry a lifetime "get out of jail card" and moving toward any legitimate racial reconciliation requires examining this phenomenon. It means developing a level of racial literacy that can be faced honestly which also includes looking at when your emotions and tears have been deployed against people of color. When have your emotions harmed others? It means diving deep into white fragility and unearthing it — the work of Robin DiAngelo, who coined the phrase "white fragility," is a good starting point. As James Baldwin wrote, "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

*A Chicago native born on the crossroads of working-class, Black, and female, **Shay Stewart-Bouley's** career since 1997 has focused on weaving these intersections into her daily life and professional work. Since the mid-1990s, she has worked in the non-profit sector, during the earlier years working primarily with marginalized groups in Chicago, including the homeless and women being exploited in sex work. In the early-2000s, she moved from her native Chicago to Maine and, as a Black woman living in one of the least diverse spaces in the US, found herself writing regularly about race relations, social justice, and white supremacy in such publications at the Portland Phoenix (where she had a month column, "Diverse City" for more than a decade), the Portland Press Herald, the Journal Tribune, and DigPortland. It was also in Maine that her work shifted to non-profit administration, working both as an executive director at a small faith-based non-profit in Southern Maine*

and non-profit consultant/grant-writer to other organizations, then later becoming executive director of the oldest continuously operating anti-racism organization in the nation, Community Change Inc. (based in Boston), where she still works today, though she continues to reside in Maine.



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I VOTED TODAY



EE



ETHICAL CONSUMERISM

by Jane Lynch



That what we buy has social consequences as well as the potential to reflect both our values and virtue are not new ideas. Before they were politically enfranchised, British women participated in the anti-slavery movement by

organizing boycotts of slave-produce in the late-18th and early-19th century. In the late-19th century, anti-colonial nationalists in India began advocating for the boycott of British imports and an exclusive reliance on indigenous goods in order to establish India's autonomy. Understanding what was at stake in and made these two cases socially meaningful requires attention to historical context and the cultural specificity of economic activity. Contemporary forms of "ethical consumerism" also call for such attention.

Raymond Williams argues that it was not until the mid-20th century that the term *consumer* entered into general and popular use. The attending relative decline of *customer*, which implies a regular and continuing relationship, is significant. The consumer is a "more abstract figure in a more abstract market," born in part through the development of modern commercial advertising. And yet, the desires, ambitions, and concerns of individuals engaged in the activity of "consumer choice" are not quite so abstract. Histories of particular commodities can help to reveal how major social and economic changes influence what people wanted to buy and why. In the 1950s, polyester's promise to transform modern life by making wash-and-wear fashion both affordable and attractive captured the imagination of middle-class Americans. Synthetic materials — like nylons, orlons, and dacrons — also raised the possibility that middle-class households in the US might dispense with domestic service altogether. However, as anthropologist Jane Schneider has shown, the subsequent retreat of synthetics from popularity coincided with other social and economic changes, including a turn of "gentry" working women to immigrant working women for household help. In other words, the reversal in public taste that transformed polyester from "a fabric of esteem" to "one of contempt" must be understood within the context of transformations in American capitalism and the restratification of American society.

We now live in a historical moment in which

almost anything can be a consumer good. Within this context, not only commodities — as in the case of polyester — but indeed, consumer choices are framed as potentially transformative. We are continually presented with opportunities to indicate the alignments of our politics, values, and identities with how we spend money. Consumer intentions are branded, as in the case of "Fair Trade" goods, but also a site for demonstrating sympathy for causes that seem to exceed the market, as in the case of pink ribbon logos. While heightened attention to how consumer choices intersect with large-scale problems is a hopeful trend, it also raises the questions of whether and in what ways ethical consumerism is primarily an elite social practice. Signaling virtue through consumer behavior is rooted not only in the belief that consumerism has transformative potential, but also in the assumption that we can actively choose our identities through consumer behavior. Such "virtue-signaling" normalizes a privileged perspective that tends to ignore or legitimate social inequalities and class boundaries. For example, we cannot assume that affluent shoppers exhibit heightened reflexivity about social and environmental issues, simply because they have more resources to participate in niche markets. Moreover, consumer behavior has long been a site for policing the values and virtue of others, particularly low-income or racialized communities. And, as in the case of anti-sweatshop activism, our efforts to make consumerism more "ethical" are also entangled with condescension, moralism, and pity towards others. As we imagine the lives we might lead in our new clothing, how much do we meditate on the lives of those who made it? As Lee Minora's work reveals: we are all complicit.

Minora urges us to attend to the inadequacy and ineffectiveness of liberal white feminist privilege in the face of huge social inequality. That Minora locates her critique inside the consumer frame — a television show, punctuated by commercial breaks, in which "Becky" herself is a consumer good — is no coincidence. She reveals how, as one internet blogger put it succinctly, ethical consumerism is "a rich white girl thing." As Minora takes all of us, including herself, to task, we must ask: what responsibility do we have to attend to the failings and dangers of consumerist virtue-signaling? Leaving all of the contradictions of our consumer lives in place, we might explore a world of consumption in which we find ourselves to be —

for better or worse — utterly culpable. As scholar Elizabeth Chin has argued, “nobody is exempt, no matter how smart or critical, and realizing that ought to spur us into action rather than becoming an excuse for complacency or capitulation.”

The task then is not merely to redirect our consumer attention to different commodities. Rather, it is to reflect on what we expect of our consumerism. Two years ago, a couple of undergraduate students at the University of Michigan created an online resource guide “Being Not-Rich at U-M” to help low-income students navigate the unwritten norms, values, and expectations on a wealthy college campus. The resource guide was created in response to specific events on campus but also reflects broader shifts in the American economy and their implications for the financing of higher education. Seated here, at the University of Michigan, a public institution, we might ask: what kind of good is a college education in an increasingly consumer-oriented world? What will it mean for our students? What will it mean for our society? In other words, if consumerism is increasingly the means by which we are expected to articulate our personal values and achieve our collective ones, we ought to stop and deliberate the barriers and inequalities that are being legitimated in the process.

Jane Lynch is a lecturer in the Residential College at the University of Michigan, where she also heads the Social Theory & Practice program. She received her PhD in anthropology from the University of Michigan in 2016 and is currently working on a book, which is based on two years of ethnographic research, *Goods and Goodness: Ethical Practices in India’s Artisanal Textile Industry*. Her research for this project has been supported by fellowships from Fulbright and the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, among others. At the Residential College, she teaches courses on political economy; the poetics and politics of observation and observational writing; the relationships between corporations and communities; how the global economy is made and remade through intense and often, highly unequal exchanges; as well as a course (inspired by the title of her manuscript-in-progress) on “Goods and Goodness.”

ARTISTS

Lee Minora (*writer, performer / she/her*) is a writer, creator, actor, and comedian based in Philadelphia. Her original solo work has been seen in London, San Francisco, Edinburgh, Philadelphia, and New York. She has created work with The Berserker Residents, Applied Mechanics, and Lightning Rod Special where she recently co-created and performed in *The Appointment* (NYTW: Next Door) (*New York Times* Critics Pick and *Time Out NY* Critics Pick). As an actor, her credits include over 20 productions in Philadelphia. She is a Haas Emerging Artist Finalist, a Barrymore Nominee, and a two-time recipient of the Jilline Ringle Performance Grant. She will appear in *Art Perv*, her latest solo creation coming in 2020, and is co-writing *Nosejob*.

Alice Yorke (*director / she/her*) is a Philadelphia-based actor, creator, director, and producer. She is a co-director of Lightning Rod Special and the lead artist on their latest piece, *The Appointment* (NYTW: Next Door) (*New York Times* Critics Pick). With Lightning Rod Special, credits include *Hackles*, *Let the Dog See the Rabbit*, and *Sans Everything*. Performance credits include *The Gap* (Azuka Theatre) (Barrymore nomination, "Outstanding Supporting Performance"), *Down Past Passyunk* (InterAct Theatre), Alex Bechtel's *The West*, and Pig Iron Theatre Company's *99 Breakups* and *Pay Up*. Recent directing credits include *White Feminist* (Ars Nova ANT Fest) and *Art Perv* with Lee Minora (2020). In 2019 she was named the "Best Theatre Talent in Philadelphia" by *Philadelphia Magazine*. She is a proud graduate of the inaugural class of the Pig Iron School for Advanced Performance Training.

Adriano Shaplin (*sound designer*) is a Barrymore Award-winning sound designer, playwright, and performer. He has designed sound for Annie Wilson (*Bilialien*, *At Home with the Humorless Bastard*, *Lovertits*), Ninth Planet (*Homeworld*), Applied Mechanics (*We Are Bandits*, *Some Other Meddle*), Quintessence Theater Group (*The Wild Duck*, *Saint Joan*), Berserker Residents (*It's So Learning*), Mary Tuomanen (*Hello! Sadness!*), and Chris Davis (*Bortle 8*, *One-Man Apocalypse Now*). For more information, visit adrianoshaplin.com.

UMS welcomes Lee Minora as she makes her UMS debut this week.

Making Connections in Our Community

Below is a directory of regional organizations whose work intersects with the themes encountered in No Safety Net. The listing here is by no means comprehensive, but we hope it will provide a starting point for learning more about our local, national, and international communities.

As Far As My Fingertips Take Me // Arab American, Refugee, and Migration Resources

The **Arab Student Association (ASA)** aims to unite and serve the Arab community on campus by organizing educational workshops, cultural events, and service opportunities. ASA represents all Arabs on campus, regardless of nationality.
maizepages.umich.edu/organization/arabstudentassociation

As one of the largest refugee resettlement agencies in the state, **Samaritas** has resettled thousands of people from dozens of countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Central and South America. Samaritas has been the Michigan affiliate of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service since the 1950s.
www.samaritas.org/New-Americans

The nonpartisan **Migration Policy Institute** seeks to improve immigration and integration policies through authoritative research and analysis, opportunities for learning and dialogue, and the development of new ideas to address complex policy questions.
www.migrationpolicy.org

UNICEF works in over 190 countries and territories to save children's lives, to defend their rights, and to help them fulfill their potential, from early childhood through adolescence. And they never give up.
www.unicef.org/appeals/refugee_migrant_europe.html

The Believers Are But Brothers // Internet Safety and Cyber Security Resources

A CALL TO MEN educates men all over the world on healthy, respectful manhood. Embracing and promoting a healthy, respectful manhood prevents violence against women, sexual assault and harassment, bullying, and many other social ills.
www.acalltomen.org

Enough Is Enough (EIE), a non-partisan, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, emerged in 1994 as the national leader on the front lines of making the Internet safer for children and families. Since then, EIE has pioneered and led the effort to confront online pornography, child pornography, child stalking, and sexual predation with innovative initiatives and effective communications.
<https://internetsafety101.org>

The **National Cyber Security Alliance (NCSA)** builds strong public/private partnerships to create and implement broad-reaching education and awareness efforts to empower users at home, work, and school with the information they need to keep themselves, their organizations, their systems, and their sensitive information safe and secure online and encourage a culture of cybersecurity.
<https://staysafeonline.org>

The **Internet Education Foundation** is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization supported by public interest groups, corporations, and associations representative of the diversity of the Internet community. Their mission is to assure informed policymaking on Internet-related issues within both government and the private sector; promote the Internet as a valuable medium for democratic participation, communications, and commerce; educate the public about the challenges and problems presented by the Internet medium and offer potential solutions; raise the awareness and effectiveness of the Internet Caucus Advisory Committee as an educational tool for Congress; encourage coalitions of corporations, industry associations, and public interest groups to work together on addressing important Internet-related policy issues and engaging in educational outreach projects.
www.getnetwise.org

WISE KIDS is a not-for-profit company, founded in October 2002 by Sangeet Bhullar. WISE KIDS provides innovative training programs and consultancy in new media, Internet and mobile technologies, Internet proficiency, literacy, and safety. WISE KIDS believes that individuals and communities need the knowledge, skills, and tools to understand and harness the power of the Internet and mobile technologies. This includes media literacy skills, which include an understanding of how the Internet works, effective and proficient use of the Internet, and the ability to use these technologies to access information, learning, participate online, create and share content and services, and network online. www.wisekids.org.uk

Is This a Room: Reality Winner Verbatim Transcription // International Data and Civil Liberties

The **Center for Computer Security and Society (C2S2)** is an interdisciplinary center based at the University of Michigan. The center is dedicated to the investigation of emerging threats to critical embedded systems and networks, and on the impact of cyber security attacks on critical infrastructure, governments, and sensitive data. www.eecs.umich.edu/security

The **American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)** was founded in 1920 and is our nation's guardian of liberty. The ACLU works in the courts, legislatures, and communities to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties guaranteed to all people in this country by the Constitution and laws of the United States. www.aclu.org/know-your-rights

White Feminist // Gender Equity Resources

Girls for Gender Equity (GGE) is an intergenerational organization committed to the physical, psychological, social, and economic development of girls and women. Through education, organizing, and physical fitness, GGE encourages communities to remove barriers and create opportunities for girls and women to live self-determined lives. www.ggenyc.org

American Association of University Women's (AAUW) policy work connects and rallies advocates at the local, state, national, and global levels to empower women and girls. With the member-voted Public Policy Priorities as their guide, AAUW uses lobbying and grassroots efforts to push forward policies that break through educational and economic barriers for women. www.aauw.org

National Organization for Women focuses on a broad range of women's rights issues, including economic justice, pay equity, racial discrimination, women's health and body image, women with disabilities, reproductive rights and justice, family law, marriage and family formation rights of same-sex couples, representation of women in the media, and global feminist issues. now.org

Michigan National Organization for Women (NOW) Michigan NOW is a chapter of the National Organization for Women. It was established to provide coordination of local chapters and statewide advocacy to advance women's rights in Michigan. Michigan NOW's purpose is to take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men. NOW is the largest multi-issue feminist advocacy group in the US and Michigan. www.michnow.org

THANK YOU TO SUPPORTERS OF NO SAFETY NET 2.0

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MAY WE ALSO RECOMMEND...

2/21–22 Dorrance Dance: *Myelination*
3/18–21 *ANTHEM*
4/3–4 *HOME*

Tickets available at www.ums.org.

ON THE EDUCATION HORIZON...

For more information on activities surrounding No Safety Net, please refer to pages 4–5 of this program book.

2/14 UMS 101: Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlán
(Hill Auditorium Mezzanine Lobby, 6:00–7:30 pm)
Paid registration required at <http://bit.ly/UMSClasses> (case sensitive).

2/22 You Can Dance: Dorrance Dance
(Ann Arbor Y, 400 W. Washington Street, 1:30 pm)
Registration opens 45 minutes prior to the start of the event.

3/13 UMS 101: Tarek Yamani Trio
(Michigan League, Michigan Room, 6:00–7:30 pm)
Paid registration required at <http://bit.ly/UMSClasses> (case sensitive).

Educational events are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.