

Diversity of Collaboration

Gregg W. Brevoort

"Alone I can do so little, but together we can achieve so much."

- Helen Keller

The overriding vision and objective of my work as a theatre artist is to spark challenging conversations and to collaborate with artists, students, technicians, administrators, community-members and audiences in exploring different perspectives other than our own - sometimes even those outside of our so-called 'comfort zones' - in order to create works of theatrical art that reflect the world in which we live. Diversity, equity and inclusion is critical for this process.

Collaboration is at the core of theatrical art. It is about working together – not just in building something, but in building *from* something. A homogenous crew will build a homogenous lump ... of nothing. A brick wall, perhaps. A diverse and inclusive team will weave together a fabric that is colorful, inviting, enveloping and strong.

Through our differences, we are able to examine and celebrate our shared humanity.

Central to my methodology and aesthetic is the ability - actually, the desire - to work with "What's In The Room." I rarely, if ever, walk into a rehearsal room with "the answers" - not even all of the questions. Even as the director, I am only one voice, one participant in the room. The work that is created is wholly the result of the collaboration of the voices and the participation of those with whom I am working. That collaboration and participation is NEVER exclusionary.

What is in the room, in this context, amounts to who is in the room. My call is to work with every race, creed, identity and degree of able-bodiedness as possible, in order to tell the stories of our world truthfully with dignity and respect. The 'what' also includes the text, the story, the decision to illuminate what has been set down. Whether the work originates from a pre-existing text, or from a new work in development, diversity and inclusion are part of that collaborative equation, as well. Plays by BIPOC writers, by women, by LGBTQ+ (writers living or dead), need to be given voice and attention. Entire continents and sub-continents, literally and figuratively, possess rich, literary histories and legacies that deserve to be shared. They deserve to be lifted up and out of the shadows and confines of Euro-centricity and white supremacy.

Theatre is that place where communities come together to participate, to communicate, to experience and to effect change. We come together to embrace and to bounce off of one another. We come to collaborate and to work together as one, as we all confront something that is much larger than ourselves.

All these practices and principles are actionable. These goals and objectives are obtainable. Because they are the crux of my mission statement, they are also accountable. A theatre artist is a collaborator, by definition. One can't claim to be a Colorist or an Impressionist and only use white paint. The proof is in the work that I help bring to the stage and in the collaborators with whom I work.

Diversity + Equity + Inclusion = **Theatre**.

I am a **theatre** artist.