

ART IN THE TIME OF COVID-19 VIDEO TRANSCRIPTION

- Hello everyone, thank you for joining us today, and welcome to this second installment of our series, Art in the Time of COVID. My name is Joshua Dyer. I am the Director of Marketing at Myseum of Toronto. For those of you who are new to Myseum, Myseum is a museum without walls. We share the lesser known histories and narratives of Toronto, and we do this through a variety of exhibits and events both across the Greater Toronto Area and online, as we are today. We have a great panel for you today, all of which are working with organizations or on projects that all of us at Myseum and I myself find super inspiring, especially in these precarious times. So I'd like to thank our panelists for joining us today. Andres Sierra, Tinesha Richards Morris, Randell Adjei, and Mark Marczyk. Also our moderator Adil Dhalla. And with that said, I'd like to hand things off to Adil to start us off today.

- Thanks so much, Josh. And thanks so much to the Myseum team for inviting me to be the moderator of this discussion, and for all of you tuning in. We've had over 300 RSVPs for today. So, it's certainly a huge and really humbling response to this conversation. And just to start, recognizing that many of us, obviously all of us are coming in virtually, so geographically, we may be in different places, but still want to acknowledge, specifically for those who, like myself, are in Turtle Island, on the land known as Turtle Island, we'd like to acknowledge that the land which we are operating on is located on the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat, the Haudenosaunee, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nations, and that it is a privilege for us to be here. And in the context of what's happening right now, I know for myself personally, I've been longing at different times to go back to the way things were. And in some circumstances, that's comforting, but in other circumstances, not all communities have had a just experience. And so, we have an incredible opportunity right now as we are defining new normals to bring justice and to prioritize those voices and those communities, particularly those from Indigenous communities, to the front of our conversation so that as we are collectively rebuilding our cultures, our societies, that we bring forward those voices that have been the most oppressed, historically and traditionally. And so, I for one am doing my best to let go of what the past was, but taking the lessons forward. And I encourage you to bring that same intention as you are doing the same in your own circles and communities. Today, I am joined by an incredible panel of individuals who are respective leaders in their art space organizations. And I'm gonna bring them all out here, but just by way of a quick introduction on myself, I'm an artist, a social entrepreneur, and a community organizer, and right now, my current role is as the Managing Director at Artscape Daniels Launchpad, which creates community spaces for artists and social and creative entrepreneurs. Historically, I've also worked for the Center for Social Innovation, I chair the board of the StopGap Foundation, and I'm also the Volunteer Executive Director for Reset. So I have a lot of experience in the realm of arts, and I have particularly in this moment been witnessing the transformation for artists in arts communities as we collectively respond to the circumstances at an individual level and at a broader level. One may argue that art actually is an essential service right now. Obviously, prioritizing and respecting the work of those on our

front lines, art is playing such a critical role right now for all of us as a tool for connection, as a tool for healing, as a tool for something to do, and it has been really inspiring, and in some cases, hard to witness different conversations and activities happening within the art spaces. And today we're going to have some really exciting conversations with four leaders, all of whom I have some personal contact with and have been personally impacted by, so it's a real privilege to be hosting a conversation with them. The way this is gonna work, I'm gonna introduce each one and invite each one to come up and come up to the proverbial stage right now and share a little bit about themselves. And as an audience, you have the opportunity to also participate in the discussion. There is a Questions feature, and you are encouraged to participate by either contributing a question or upvoting one that's in there. And I'll do my best to keep peeking in there, just to identify how best to bring all those questions to the front, obviously, with as much time that we have. So please do contribute and I'll give you another prompt later. But without further ado, let's bring out our panel. And first I want to bring out... I'm gonna ask all of them, first of all, just to introduce who they are and why their organization exists. And for some of them, the organization existed well before the pandemic, and some are actually pandemic-based creations. So, each one's gonna be a little bit different. So first of all, we'll invite Mark to join us, to introduce who he is and why his organization exists. Hey, Mark.

- Hey man, how's it going?

- Great, how you doing?

- Good to be here. Good, good. I feel like every time that you have this conversation and people ask, anytime I'm on the phone they're like, "Oh, how's it going?" There's a mixed kind of like, "Yeah, everything's good," and then, "Uh, you know, it's kind of weird "and not so normal." But there's a bit of nervous laughter or whatnot and to be honest with you, kind of that sort of feeling of, well, are we good right now or are we not good? What's the space that we're in? Was kind of the place that URGNT came out of. It was an understanding that ultimately, this is a real crisis, and we do need to focus on our front line workers and focus on the essential services and make sure that we, if we're not essential services, that we're doing what we need to step back to give them, I guess, the space and the respect to do what they need to do to get us through this. But at the same time, it's really essential that there's an emotional side to this. There's mental health, there's psychological issues that we're all dealing with, and the arts, in a way, are kind of essential, and in a way, urgent. That we acknowledge that there is this emotional side to the crisis. That's why we created this thing, to sort of let people, let artists, find a way to express what it is that they're going through, and to let people sort of find that platform to connect with those artists. Obviously there's a lot of this stream for relief, kind of these platforms that are coming out where artists will get up and they'll get a little bit of relief from, whether it's the NAC or Music Together or other incredible organizations that are helping artists, and they'll get up and they'll set up their camera and they'll play their 40 minute set, and then a lot of people will watch, and then it'll

be gone from history forever. And our decision was to say, well, we want to do something that's a little bit more sculpted. We want to give artists a chance. If they don't have their band behind them, let's give them the ability to shoot some other footage, use the camera as another voice, edit something together that not only is gonna live for that 30 minutes or that 20 minutes that it's there, but for a long time afterwards as a kind of documentation of what we've been going through. So I'm sure I'll have more chance to talk more about it but I want to give the other panelists a chance to introduce themselves as well.

- Great, thanks so much, Mark. Definitely have some followup questions, but yeah, you're right. Let's move on and I'm sure we'll have more chances to learn more about what URGNT is doing. Next I'd like to introduce Tinesha from Manifesto to introduce who she is and why her organization exists.

- Hi everyone, my name's Tinesha Richards Morris. I'm the Operations and Partnerships at Manifesto, and Manifesto has been around for going on 15 years next year. We were birthed out of necessity that there wasn't really a space for artists, specifically marginalized artists, to have a platform to perform and share their art. Right now, we're continuing to create a platform for artists to share their work on our Instagram Lives right now, is what we're doing, as well as we're currently working on some online festival of some capacity.

- Wonderful, thank you so much, Tinesha. And we'll, again, we'll come back to, I've got some specific questions, having been a part of the Manifesto community for some time now, so thank you. So next up, let's introduce Randell from R.I.S.E.

- Hello, good afternoon, everybody. My name is Randell Adjei. I am the founder and Executive Director of R.I.S.E Edutainment. R.I.S.E stands for Reaching Intelligent Souls Everywhere, and essentially, the whole purpose behind R.I.S.E was looking at my community here in Scarborough that didn't have a place, a platform for people to come and express themselves, or to gather and congregate and build community. And I was just really looking at the hurt and looking at the pain that a lot of people had and I wanted to create a space where we can talk about our pain through creativity. We exist because art is who we are. We are artists. Whether you call yourself an artist or not, you're constantly creating experiences for other people and reality for other people, but I think to be intentional about it and using art therapy has been really important to us. Now we exist because we have created these spaces, but there's also the need to really bridge the gap between emerging and professional artists, similar to the work that Manifesto's been doing for many years. So, yeah, that's why we're here.

- Amazing, thank you so much, Randell. And last we're gonna bring up Andres. And I believe before Andres starts, we're going to start with a bit of a video or something visual.

- [Andres] There's no sound here! Where's the sound? Just imagine rave beats, y'all. This is just a little highlight moment. This is what it looks like at the club.

- [Adil] It doesn't even need the sound. It truly speaks for itself.

- [Andres] Yes! Wild, wild, wild.

- [Mark] I agree, I mean we've gotta comment here. It doesn't even need the sound, Andres. This is an incredible video.

- Ah, it's so crazy!

- Amazing. Wonderful, welcome.

- Yay, hi, welcome. Thank you for having me. My name is Andres Sierra. Pronouns are she/they, and I'm one of the co-founders of Club Quarantine, which exists because we're in quarantine. It was just the first day that we got shut down, that we all had to go into mandatory lockdown in Ontario. We were just kiking on Instagram Video, and it just maxes out at six people, so someone had mentioned Zoom, which we had never used before. We planned to have a party the next day. We're like, "Let's dress up, let's play some music," and someone jokingly made the Instagram that night, and then we all tagged it, and before you know it, it just started taking off, and the community really latched onto it, and here I am.

- Thanks, Andres! Club Quarantine is actually one of my personal favorite pandemic stories so far. Two or three weekends ago, a friend of mine sent me a link, and I thought we were going to some dance party that they were organizing in their bedroom, or their household, and I thought I was meeting them there, and I got the link and I showed up, and I guess they gave me the link for Quarantine, and I showed up and I'd never been in an experience like that. Effectively showed up to the wrong party, but showed up to the right party and was really inspired by that experience. And we'll start a little bit with yourself and Mark, just because I'm interested, both of your organizations have really sprouted up in the last four to six weeks. So, give me a sense. Andres, for you, and then Mark after, what has the response been like so far?

- Yeah, I mean, the response was that it was needed. There was just no way out of this once it had started, because, I mean, as queer people, the club is one of our few safe spaces, so when already, before quarantine, our spaces are always kind of being threatened too, being closed, with everything now being closed, that forced us all at home. And how are we going to find that safe space again and that sense of community with each other in this way? And that's why it started off with the group chat on Instagram, just to connect with friends, and then it grew beyond that.

- Beautiful, thank you. And Mark, what about yourself?

- Yeah, I mean, I think for us, it was kind of like we were just... I'm a musician, I'm not really an organizer of this sort. But when all of my beer's worth of gigs just sort of disappeared, there was a sense of, "Okay, well, what can we do next?" And of course, I'm in close touch with festivals all across the country and also with technicians and everything, and because I didn't have my own festival that I was running, immediately it was like, "Okay, well, let's start to think about "how we can get everybody activated," and came up with the idea of, well, it's not just about for us. It's not just about the artists. It's about the whole community. How do we get the festivals that are really our nation's cultural curators, really important people, to present something that they've already been trying to, or already been organizing? And sort of make that connection with the artist, with the technicians, to put a platform together, because there aren't a lot of... You know, most festivals were dealing with just the fallout of, "What do we do? "We have to lay off people. "Are we gonna be announcing this?" The press side of it, and artists are thinking about, "Well, you know, I've got to apply to the CERB, "and what can I actually play and not play?" And so in the meantime, because we weren't thinking about that, we built this platform. And I do have to say that Tinesha is, like, an exception to the rule. They're kicking ass at Manifesto in terms of getting everything together. But for the most part, there's lots of festivals out there that they want to present content to their audiences, they want to support the artists, but they just don't have the time to put together a platform or a cohesive model. So we reached out to a whole bunch and said let's all do this together.

- Thanks, Mark, yeah. I think one of the things that you noted is the relationship between a more entrepreneurial, grassroots approach and kind of the more institutionalized approach. The larger you are, the harder it is to be nimble, and so seeing platforms like URGNT and Club Quarantine be able to really fill space at a time where there was a deep need, and there was a deep need, has been pretty inspiring and needed. I love the shout-out to Tinesha and the work that Manifesto is doing. So my next question is for you, Tinesha, and for Randell. As two organizations that have existed long before this moment in time, I'm curious to know how you've pivoted. You've both mentioned a little bit about some of your activities, but what was that experience like to all of a sudden be like, "Okay, we need to shift gears in order to be serving "the community we're trying to serve right now"? And Tinesha, we'll start with you, and then Randell.

- Awesome, yeah. So, it was really interesting for us to... We kind of anticipated a lockdown before it happened, so immediately we started researching if anyone had already started planning to do an online festival of some sort and that's how I met Mark. I did give him a call. And we were just trying to figure out, "Okay, how can we re-allocate our funds "that we already have set in place from our funding bodies "and kind of support the artists in need?" So, all of our funding bodies have been really supportive and kind of been like, "Yes, use this money "and support the artists." But it's been very interesting and challenging to kind of be

in an environment where we're used to interaction, face-to-facing people, touching people, to now being like, "Okay, we have to move all this online. "How are we gonna engage the same community "that we've been engaging with?" Definitely, we are continuing to learn more about how to engage the community in a different way.

- Thanks, Tinesha. Also, shout-out to touch. Language of love that I miss dearly.

- 100%.

- 100%. Randell, yourself?

- Yeah, shout-out to touch. I'm a hugger, I like hugs. But for us in terms of pivoting, it's been tough because for the last eight years we've been putting on these open mic events for artists to come out. And so the difficulty for us was creating this grassroots platform for emerging artists to really be able to showcase what they can do, and so we, similar, obviously, have been doing something every week where it's an open mic online, so some people can sign up hours before we actually do the open mic, or we just have people kind of come in live. Some of the live people who just want to request on IG Live and just hop on with us has been a lot of fun. But the pivot has been very challenging and tough, and what we're trying to do is really work with artists so that they can learn how to still engage with the audience in a way that... It's interesting. For a lot of artists, it's like they just want to do the art, but we're teaching them you kind of have to be able to facilitate energy during this time as you're performing so that you're still engaging with the audience and still engaging with them, but you do perform from a very grounded place, which is tough, because people... I don't know. I've seen so many performances, but doing it online has been tough. But yeah, the pivot has really been about that. We've done some workshops with artists in helping them develop, and just having some artists take over our Instagram as well and just curate like an a half an hour session where they can do something. So, yeah, that's been our pivot, and we're just looking at other ways to create educational opportunities for people, like poetry writing workshops, and things of that sort.

- Cool. You know, one thing, just to build on one of the challenges. The majority of us have built our muscles in front of a screen by watching something, and I noticed this in particular, first few weeks of lockdown when we all started rushing to Zoom. You look around the different boxes and everyone kind of had a bit of a zombie face on them, and I think it's just this ingrained habit that we've built over time, just to stare at a screen and not really think about the interaction back, and I do think that's an interesting challenge from an artist's perspective, where you are facilitating an audience and you are sometimes feeding and being fed by the energy of an audience. How do you do that, and given the parameters of a virtual space? I'm just curious if anyone has a specific thought to that? Otherwise, I can go to my next question. Andres, and I see Mark nodding his head as well. So we'll start with you, Andres.

- Yeah, this is where we see the transformation and the birth of a new medium, a new art medium, where you're using the tools that we have, that we're all stuck with right now, to create something more. It's very interesting to see the stay at home benefit concert that had all these A-list celebrities, and we're all using, now, the same production value that everyone is doing at home too, and it was wild to kind of just see how they were using that technology and how pretty, kind of like basic use of the technology where I saw that there wasn't any push to try something different. I'm seeing these rich celebrities in these big homes and none of them thought to make a stage moment or a performance moment. It was all a sit-down Kumbaya moment. But when you're forced online at Club Q, we have seen performers come through with the most insane performance art moments that have just been like... You know, we had a drag performer, Yovska, who did a drag number to Christina Aguilera's "Dirrty" but they were dressed as this mop monster, and they started in the laundry room, and they had a bucket of water, and they put themselves in the water, and then they were cleaning, and it was like, dirty, "Dirrty", like... And then we moved throughout the space into the washroom where Yovska finished in the shower and we're all watching this, and it was just blowing our minds, because we had never a) seen anything like that, and b) seeing people utilize the technology in ways that we hadn't, until we were witnessing, the birth of this new platform, and this new medium.

- Yeah, Andres, I'll just speak to that and then we'll come to you, Mark. The audience has an interesting opportunity to become part of the art, and not to say that that has not previously existed, but again, the playground has changed, and I have noticed that-- What's that?

- Yeah, although we have some big names come through our club, it's never fully all about the person, because we go through all the attendees in the club, and it's about the people. In at least our aspect, it's really about the people and what everyone individually is bringing, which levels this artist/audience hierarchy that always exists, and now it's like artist and audience, we're all in this together and experiencing this moment. So that's really dope.

- Yeah, I like that. Thanks, Andres. Mark, you want to jump in on that?

- Yeah, I love that idea for sure, and I think from our side, we're trying to give, also, artists a chance to say look, you can be more creative than just sitting in front of a screen and playing your instruments. There's a lot of things that you can do. You have some tools at your disposal. Just using your phones, if you have a phone and you live with a partner, now you have two phones. Or a roommate. So automatically, right there, you can do a two-camera shoot. You can do that. Maybe you won't think about it, but you can. And then if you take that, take some footage of your house, you can weave that into your performance and all of a sudden, you are a producer. You're producing your own show. And so what we did is, we built a kind of template, a step-by-step, for artists to say here is what we want you to do for the URGNT platform. We want you to shoot one thing from the front of you, one camera

from beside you, then go around shooting your quarantine experience. Maybe it's a close-up of the piano keys. Maybe it's your trip to the grocery store. Maybe it's the view out your window into the empty woods. Whatever it is. It can be whatever the internal or external feelings you want to communicate, put that all together and then bring it to us, and we'll edit something that is a little bit more of a kind of intimate feeling that people often think, "Well, the only form of intimacy "is one-on-one contact if we're directly live "right in that moment, speaking." But, I mean, we all have enjoyed incredible movies or incredible shaped experiences or paintings or performance pieces that use a lot of different elements to create intimacy. So here, our goal was, if we give a toolkit to an artist, then even beyond the URGNT platform, which is just one little iteration, they can take that and use it in their experiences beyond. And that goes for the festivals, who can take the model and copy it and use it for their audiences. Goes for the artists, who can then take that and continue do it on their own, in their own time in their own living room beyond URGNT. So really, the whole idea was, you know. And I think what I like about what sort of every one of these panelists is saying is the goal is to facilitate. That's the sort of age that we're in right now, and what we all want to do as community leaders is how do we facilitate people expressing widely, voraciously, across not only in our own communities, but across many communities.

- Yeah, thanks for pointing that out. I like that line a lot. The goal is to facilitate. You know, I think it's especially relative to the fact that what we're trying to do is, amongst the feelings, provoke a sense of connection, and I think often, facilitators are trying to connect people to feelings to thoughts and other people. And so how do you use the resources in front of you now to do that is really pertinent. I'm curious if there was any other ideas amongst the four of you in terms of ways that you've seen, creative approaches to using the technology in front of us right now, whether it's to facilitate, to showcase talent, to host people. I'll just give an example. I was actually at a friend's, a friend was holding a birthday party. It was a smaller club to Quarantine, but it was still a club. At one point during the party, I got essentially, I went through a portal by way of use of the breakout room function, and I went into this breakout room, and there was someone there pretending, essentially, to be a side host to the party. And I just thought it was such a creative way to engage me in a different way that I wasn't expecting. And my mind ran to how many different ways it could be applied. So that's just one personal example. Anybody else have any other ways that they've seen the technology being used, whether by yourself or by another artist or organization that's really caught your attention recently?

- Yeah, I mean, last night, we had a Club Q first where a DJ named Lil Data live coded their set. So they shared one screen so that we had the screen of this website portal that you as an attendee could also open up and interact with that website. That website was reacting from the coding that the DJ was coding through. It was wild, it was crazy.

- That's really neat, I wish I'd seen that. Anybody else?

- Yeah, there was an artist, Clairmont the Second, who did this crazy digital dual screen for one of his performances where similar to what Mark was talking about, he had one screen where it caught the side of him, one from the front, and it was this opposite color to what... It was, like, purple, blue. It was amazing, I was so amazed and awed. I was just like, how do we do this? And we still don't know how he did it, but yeah, it's definitely very inspiring to see what he was able to pull together.

- Cool, thank you. Mark?

- Yeah. There's a bunch of stuff that's really cool out there. The thing that I want to point out that just sometimes is a little bit... I feel weird talking about it sometimes because there are things that are going on, too, that are like, they're cool, but I don't know if I would consider them socially responsible. You know, like I'm seeing a lot of cool, for example... This is a weird one, and I'll bring it up, and maybe it'll start a conversation. But Erykah Badu has a really kick-ass livestream, but the thing is, is that it's very clear that there's a crew of 15 working on it. So it's like, it's one of those moments where she's really being creative in bringing people through her house and doing these pared-down things, and it's very high production. But at the same time, you know that there's a huge crew that's involved in it, and maybe everybody has gone through some sort of screening and it's safe. But anyways, I just wanted to bring that up. I like that one a lot, but I have sort of mixed feelings about it. And another one is, there's this one called Alambari that's made by the DAKH Theater in Ukraine, and they brought together four different theater companies that essentially each got a script, and then they went online at a same time and did that script together, and it was a kind of movement piece that was really powerful because people from four different countries were doing the exact same thing. So just a quick example. It started with everyone in bed, and then everybody gets up together and they go and make coffee. And of course, everybody's coffee, way they make coffee, is completely different. But you're seeing everyone make coffee at the same time. And then everyone drinks coffee at the window, and then from there, they do a close-up of their eye, so you see just a eye from everybody, and it was this really... Like, you could see there was a script here and it was very constructed, but everyone was doing it in real time to a soundtrack, without any sound from the individual feeds. So, I thought that was really powerful.

- Thanks, Mark. So, I have a question for all of you that I think there's a number of ways to answer it, and I'm curious to know how you all answer differently. And then after that, I'm gonna start hopping into a couple of the questions I'm seeing within the Q&A, and particularly around money and funding. So just going to preface that, I want to thank those who are already adding questions into the group there, and we're gonna get to them soon, but before we get there, here's my question. Art's role during the pandemic is...

- [Andres] Vital.

- Vital. And if you would like, Andres, and all of you, to expand, you can, or you can just leave it as a strong one or three words. So, yeah, so art's role during the pandemic is. Andres, you said "vital". Do you want to expand at all?

- I said "vital". It's our blood, it's what we need to survive. There's no other way. We would die without it. Even if you're humming a tune, you're still creating art, and like Randell said, you might not think you're an artist, but we're all creators. It's part of our DNA, so if we didn't do it, we would die. That's why it's vital.

- Thanks, Andres. Randell?

- It's so funny 'cause Andres, I was nodding my head to what you're saying, and then you kind of brought it back to me, which is fun. My word would be, it's therapy, you know? It's therapy because for many of us who are home and just aren't able to see certain people, our loved ones, or engage in activities that we love. I think it's therapy because it really gives us an opportunity to look within, and I think art... For me, the best art that I've created was me looking in and then putting it out as opposed to... Yeah, that's the best art. So I think during this time where people are inside, to create art that's meaningful and gives them that opportunity to look inward and share that experience with other people. Like, Lillian Allen has this quote that says "Write for yourself, but edit for others." And I think that kind of applies to all different art forms. You create art for yourself, but you share with other people so that you can create some sort of intimacy, some connection, so people can feel like, "Hey, I can connect to that." So, yeah, that's me, therapy.

- Beautiful, thanks, Randell. Tinesha, do you wanna fill in the blank on that one?

- For sure. I was gonna say vital, oddly enough. But I will say it is life. It is life, just to echo what Randell and Andres had already spoken about. We don't catch... I'm not the traditional sense of the word artist, but I do create, I do enjoy music, I am forever singing, although I'm not a singer. So I'm just gonna echo exactly what Randell and Andres said. Amazing.

- Thanks, Tinesha. Mark?

- Well, the marketing side of me says to say urgent. But I mean I'm on board with everyone. I think I would say, actually, I would use the word essential, because a lot of times, especially in right now, we've been deemed a non-essential service, and that's why everyone is kind of out of work. But I would say that art is incredibly essential in maintaining emotional stability in the world. It's not only for the artists that are expressing, but like Randell and Tinesha said, it's for our audiences, right? It's for those people that are living alone and don't have any connection whatsoever. They can hear a song or they can see, have a kind of a club experience that can give them that reason to want to continue on that next day. We've heard a lot about how cases of domestic abuse have been on the rise during this time, and you

know, maybe if we give these moments for people to connect with when they're having trouble at home, maybe those cases wouldn't be so much on the rise. I don't know, of course, but it feels to me really important. As an artist, there have been so many cases where people have come up to me and said "Your music, or your performance, has changed my life." Or "I met my wife during one of your concerts." We all heard the stories of, "I was feeling down "and I was thinking those negative thoughts "and then you related something to me that I got "and I changed my mind." And that is more important now than anything.

- Thanks, all. Yeah, I would just echo, I was saying I think for me, the word vital, essential, therapy. Necessary. And I think as a tool for healing, as a tool for connection, as a tool for joy, for expression. And the thing is, art always has played these roles, so in some ways, nothing has changed, but what is interesting about this moment is, what has changed for a lot of folks is the isolation. And so what are we doing in isolation? I think the consumption of art is increasing dramatically, and hopefully through that, the appreciation of art is increasing dramatically. Now, the interesting thing is, how does that relate to the financial relationship for art, and how will that, if anything, change going forward? Now, tapping into one of the questions asked, Francis asked, "Can you talk more about "how funding is working for your projects? "Are you getting new funding, donations? "Or is it all free for your participants and programs?" And I'll just, it connects to one of the questions that I provided for you all in advance, which is just, artists have traditionally, historically, been financially undervalued, and it's a really interesting time because we want to put our work out there and we want, obviously, to be valued for it, and we also recognize that many people are facing their own hardships right now. And so yeah, just wondered if anyone here can speak a little bit to what funding is like for your project and just what are you observing as it relates to the financial component? Tinesha, you go first?

- I can talk about funding. So, for funding, Manifesto has been able, because for now we don't have to worry about finding a venue, paying tech or any of that stuff, we've been able to pay artists a higher wage than we traditionally do, so that's been the plus side. We have been approached by corporations as well as I mentioned, our funding bodies have been very flexible as to how we spend the money, or how we reallocate the money, which has been super helpful for us to support the artists that are within our community. It has also allowed us to kind of reach outside of the artists we normally would support, and kind of do call-outs and invite artists who may not have... For example, an artist who's more well-known who is still getting royalties as a means of income, and we're able to now support artists like Lexicon, for example, who is an emerging artist who's maybe not as well-known as someone like Notifi, but we're able to still support him and help him during these hard times, which has been super-amazing and humbling for us.

- Thank you, Tinesha. Randell, and then Andres.

- Sure. For us, very similar to what Tinesha shared with Manifesto. Our funding bodies have been very understanding when it comes to shifting certain things. One in particular, there's just certain parameters that we weren't able to, but I think there's an understanding that this is the time to support artists, and so we've been able to really allocate. And similar to Tinesha, we're paying people a little bit more because we don't have to pay for a venue, we don't have to pay for a tech crew and certain things to ensure that the money is spread like that. But I think for us, yeah, we've been blessed. I think we've been blessed, and it's been helpful to really, really support artists in that way. But I'm also thinking about what the next steps are moving forward, and as we transition back into the, quote unquote, next norm that we're going to experience and what that looks like with... Yeah, I'm really curious about how, how funding bodies, they themselves, will kind of adjust as this goes. So, yeah.

- For us, we didn't exist before the quarantine, so it's been very interesting, and we also didn't go into this to create anything, it just happened, and then we had to quickly put on our business hats and be like, "Okay, I guess this is happening. "We're going right into it." And so for us, we are completely donation-based, and so it's difficult because... I mean, as founders, none of us have made any money, but we're here putting in a lot, a lot of work to run a party every day, two parties on Saturdays. So all the money that has come into us actually goes right back out to the artists who are providing their time to present at Club Q, and it's just like an honorarium of what we can afford based on the donation that we have. Although we've been having conversations with brands and corporations and all that kind of stuff, there seems to also be a little bit of hesitation to jump onto something that is new and people don't know how much longer we're going to be in here, so people don't want to make that commitment. But then June's also rolling around. So they have Pride money that they need to spend, so they come to us, d'you know what I mean? So there's a whole shebang of things, and I'm learning the politics of this as well as we maneuver through this new space that we have never really had before. But our goal has always been to give back to community, and we are ever so blessed. Even when we quote corporations, companies, we make sure that there's money that goes into the community, there's a budget for community, because if we're going to be blessed with money in this pointed situation, we have to share that wealth, know what I mean? So that's where we've been maneuvering and we're kind of just taking it day by day.

- Thanks, Andres. Mark, do you want to chime in on this?

- Yeah, I mean, we're kind of on the edge all the time. We weren't an organization before this all started, and my first idea, the immediate impulse I had was, before the real quarantine took hold, it was, there's all these empty venues in the city. There's all these artists who want to perform. Let's do a series of artists performing in empty venues. And that's when I originally reached out to Tinesha with the idea, and all I did was, I put out a message on Facebook and on Instagram and then started a GoFundMe, and within a few days, I had 10 to 15 grand. That was like, we're into this idea, let's do it. And so we just started running. I

put Measha Brueggergosman in an empty great hall, started with a big artist with a bigger venue, and then the second show we did Moskitto Bar, who's a local, pretty... Just a local best-kept secret of Queen West type of band, in a small Eastern European restaurant called Drom Taberna, so more of a community show. And right after that was done, it was like everybody's got to stay home, essential versus non-essential services, and we started thinking about whether it was socially responsible to actually be doing that kind of a production in these times. And so at that point it was, "Well, we have a bunch of money. "How do we respect the money that came in "for a very specific cause to continue this project?" And the idea that ultimately came to us was, well, let's team up with festivals, with these exact festivals that you see up here, reach out to them and say, "Look, we have a bunch of money left. "We don't have that much, "and then we don't know what's going to happen afterwards. "Can you guys put in some money to pay for the artists? "We can pay for the tech and the admin, "and organize the whole thing "so that we can stretch out the money that we have left "for as long as we can." And then we had Music Together come on board and select us as a curator, as one of the 15 curators that they gave \$10,000 to to pay, directly, artists. So that's happening on May 8th, we're representing 10 artists as part of Music Together. And then from there, our GoFundMe is basically our only source of income, plus reaching out to other organizations, other festivals, and saying, is there any interest in continuing to do it? Because we don't have any organizational funding or anything like that, and the money that's coming into our GoFundMe right now has kind of plateaued, and it's not enough to actually do anything at this point. I mean, that's where we are. We're hoping that we can partner with other festivals. As long as there's a need and a desire for us to continue to do what we're doing, we will, and once there isn't then we'll step aside and let other organizations come in to doing it.

- Thanks, Mark. I think the recommendation for partnership is critical. The more we band together, the louder our voices become. A lot of institutions do have access to those in decision-making positions. And so how does emerging artists, grassroots organizations. How do we be heard in this moment? And fundamentally, it's about coming together and amplifying. So I really like that point. Now, you said something, and I want to connect it a little bit to something Randell said as well. So, I'm going to string together what you were talking about, the great hall, about what you mentioned about Erykah Badu's shows, and about Randell, and I think also Tinesha mentioned about how the cost structure changes. So, there's a group of folks who are kind of the behind-the-scenes folks, and I want to note, part of this questions's inspired from Shazia, who's put this question in here in the Q&A. And Shazia wrote, "What's the role of the behind-the-scenes teams "in this time, who are normally crucial "to bringing art to life? "Lighting, video, audio designers, technicians." In one hand, us not doing performances in big, open spaces brings our cost lower and we can make the art more accessible, but on the other hand, there's a huge group of people who are... How do we best support them right now? And I'm just curious if any of you have any thoughts or experience around that, spoken.

- I wanted to chime in really quickly, if you don't mind. Really, really quickly.

- Yeah, yeah, of course.

- Because it kind of ties in quite a bit. It's interesting, 'cause my team and I, we were looking at, how do we pay artists? Because typically, you're paying artists not just for the rehearsal, the preparation, the actual performance and perhaps transportation. But you're thinking about, yes, you're home, but there's still preparation that goes into it. And so it's been very interesting being a curator, understanding how do you pay people? Because even the artists themselves, some artists, don't know how to gauge the payment themselves, and so it creates this interesting dynamic of understanding your value, whether it's your actual entity in person, versus your entity virtually, and how people kind of gauge that, so that's been a very interesting thing from a curatorial standpoint. But as Tinesha mentioned a little earlier, when you are able to offset certain costs, it helps quite a bit, and even for my staff. My staff that we work with, we're not able to do the work that we do in person, so it's very interesting in gauging and understanding how you mitigate those funds to certain people. But yeah, just wanted to say that, and I think Andres wanted to add to that too.

- Thanks, Randell.

- Yeah. 'Cause I hadn't really thought about the technical production people who aren't the performers and how they would be compensated. I mean, I know that for us with Club Quarantine, there's a lot of work happening behind the scenes to keep that party going and to keep the party safe. I can see... We have big dreams, right? And for us to be able to do all that stuff, we would have to hire a lot of people to be online and to host parties all around the world, and I think that's when people need to figure out a way to adapt. If there really isn't a way for you as a lighting technician to be needed in this time, then what are you gonna do about it? 'Cause at that point, there's just... You have to figure out a new way, because if everyone's home and you don't have any of your equipment, like, that's a really, really serious thing to think about, right? But it's like, looking up other ways to adapt online, and like teaming up, probably, with things that are happening online, because there are a lot of backstage things that happen that maybe a lot of people kind of don't even realize how much is happening behind the scenes.

- Yeah. Thanks, Andres. You know, I'll just add, I have a friend, Wilson, who does a lot of production work for events. Based on my conversation with him, it seems over the last six weeks, Wilson has become a pro at the intersection of audio performances and Zoom. And so just a shout-out to him and to others like him who are, to your point, adapting and evolving at this time. Mark, did you wanna-- Yeah, I mean, it's a really tough question. I agree with everything that's been said, that everybody needs to adapt. I'm a musician and I'm running this URGNT thing. That's part of my adapting. Everybody's figuring that out. I do think, from my standpoint, when we started URGNT, this is how your question started, with

the great hall show. The idea was, okay, rather than just stream from our homes, how do we include the entire industry? For me, I really value all of the different parts of it, and I hope that at some point once we get out of this phase that we can return to that, because the power of a team working together is the power of touch. It's the same thing we were talking about. The same way we crave a single hug, person to person, when you get a lot of people working together, it's incredible, it's a really beautiful thing. And when that thing can happen in a live atmosphere, we all know what that's like. So, part of it is trying to create circumstances where we can have still the semblance of a community in the way that we work. On the URGNT side, we couldn't do these shows that have camera technicians and audio technicians and lighting and stuff like that to produce it, but I mean, you can see, we still have a graphic designer that did this work that's behind us. We still have a production manager who is in charge of, how do we get the video then edited? We have an editor. How does that video that gets edited then go to the stream technician who's in charge of getting it out to the various platforms? Those are people that are generally in a technician job behind the scenes. Artist liaison, there's so many artists to talk to. One person can't do that, you know? And run everything else. There's got to be a little bit of guiding through as we're all learning things. That's a person who's on our team as well. So for us, it's not like... I'm here speaking on behalf of URGNT, but our team is 10 people that are working round the clock, like Andres, at nothing. Just because we really believe in it. But ultimately, there's a philosophy there of we want to do this as a community, and it's important to try to not only adapt, but to try and find ways that we can facilitate other people adapting.

- For sure, and to those who have... Teams, and who are not necessarily sitting at the table. And to that effect, I want to just... A quick shout-out about the questions coming in. There are a ton of them. Thank you so much! To manage expectations, I don't think we'll be able to get through all of them with the time we have left, but please keep sharing them, and particularly, please upvote the ones. You can go into the Q&A. There's a little thumb button there. You can upvote the ones that you want to ensure that we do get to. So, just a call out for that. Now, the question at the top right now, it's been upvoted the most, speaks to this idea about access, and I want to spend a little bit of time around access, equity and justice, and what it means in this moment. And I'm gonna read out Sarah's question. Sarah's question is, "I run a theater company "specifically for performers with disabilities. "I'm curious to know if anyone here "has any insight on addressing access needs "on this new platform in this new way. "Thank you." Thanks, Sarah, for your question. Andres, you wanna start with that?

- Yes, that's a great question, because I can speak for a club-goer, going online exposed how inaccessible the club is, and it was something that was just never on our radar, just because we're able-bodied, and it was like, we're ashamed that we never even thought of y'all when creating this, in terms of that this has never even been thought before, because so many people with disabilities would send us messages being like, for example, the other day, it was a queer person who was like, "I'm chronically ill "and I can never go to the queer club, "and

this is my first experience "and I'm living my life." People with social anxiety who will not, but want to experience the music. What makes a club so special is the music and the DJ that takes you on the journey, right? And so why not have everybody be able to join that? And it doesn't have to be just in that physical space. So as we look at the future of this, beyond quarantine, we're always going to maintain that virtual aspect, because those people are always there, ready to come to the club, you know? And we want everybody to experience this. So, like, that's been really cool that going into quarantine exposed inaccessibilities, and now it's a thriving of making everything accessible.

- Yeah, I'll say as well, and then Mark, we'll come to you. What is interesting about this moment is access provided by time, financially and geographically. You can be anywhere in the world and come to one of your events, regardless of what your ability or where you may be located. With that said, there's also recognition that we all don't have the same technology, the same--

- The world is connected to the internet, right? So that's another conversation about accessibility of internet, you know? I mean, as long as you have an internet connection then that opens you up to a whole world of art.

- Yeah, and then to build on that, when we talk about abilities, there are vary many forms. And so, you know, one of the things I've really been appreciating to see is the love and awareness that's coming towards those who provide interpretation services right now, and seeing that increasingly being seen as a priority and something of valuable. It's always been there, it's always been valuable. It's just actually coming more to the forefront right now. Mark, you want to jump in with something?

- I mean, you guys got to it eventually. I was just thinking that There's this new perspective, at least for me, now, of access. Another sort of type of access is access to internet, and having access to wifi or access to a device is something that not everybody has, and I was really struck by it in my own household when our internet went down for a couple hours, and everyone was freaking out, and what are we gonna do, 'cause we're not connected right now? And just thinking that in this time, when you can't go to a cafe that has wifi, you can't go out, you're supposed to be staying home, and if you don't have access, then the isolation that you're going through is a lot, lot greater. So I think that that's something that may be... I mean, it's something I'm thinking about, anyways. Is that going to be something that in the future is going to be one of those essential, basic needs? I don't know, I'm not sure.

- Yeah, Mark, that's a good point, and while I am slightly reluctant to give a shout-out to large telecommunication companies right now, I do want to acknowledge that I've had many moments where I'm like, wow. The people, certainly on the ground, who are ensuring that I have a stable internet connection are part of my heroes right now, and I'm not sure what I

would do without that. I do want to acknowledge that as well. Tinesha, do you wanna jump in?

- Yeah, I did wanna also mention that I've always thought that internet is a necessity and shouldn't be a luxury. So hopefully this forces the government to kind of see the importance of internet for our world. 'Cause right now, for those who cannot afford internet, and also living alone, I can only imagine what their life has been like, not being able to connect with their community. So hopefully, this kind of sheds light on the importance of internet, and as well as, like phone... Mandatory things that you need to remain connected to your world.

- Thanks, Tinesha. I have two calls to action for our audience here. One is, circling back to where I started my introductions, we have the opportunity to reset norms, and so as we're envisioning the art that we're creating, now and going forward, this is an incredible opportunity to ensure that we bring intention to bring multiple and diversified voices to the table, and to really think about, you know, how do we include those who have not been traditionally included? And so I just wanna plant that seed, and then a second seed I wanna plant is, for obvious reasons, so much of our conversation has dealt with the intersection of art and the online, but we got a whole world out there, and there are multiple ways, going back to something Rendell previously said. We are all artists. We all have the ability to create within us, and there is nothing stopping any of us, if you have the ability to be outside, and go for a stroll, to bring out an instrument, to read a poem. One of the ways I think that we will find connection and healing this moment is by reviving the artist within all of us and bringing it to the world on the outside, and not forgetting how vital that is for our collective growth and healing. So just wanted to put those plugs in. Okay, so I wanna talk a little bit about... Just coming up to one of the questions here. So, there's a question here I've just kind of lost because there's been a bunch of upvoting, which has been really good. But one that I want to make sure we don't lose entirely is just about the relationship between art and justice and equity. So, we've been talking a little bit about that from the perspective who gets to access it, but what about the message? And I'm curious, within your respective spaces, and I know with all of you it's embedded within your DNA, but how are you, and how can you, and how can others bring priority to ensuring that justice and equity are at the forefront of the art that we're accessing right now?

- I mean, I personally have never really been a big fan of art for art's sake. I know art has its purpose just for the sake of creating art, but I think art is deep, deeply rooted in how we even got here in the first place, through text and paintings and all different forms. So for me personally, I think about it that right now, this is a time for artists to be creating, and this is a time for artists to be making stuff that not only documents what's happening right now, and the injustices that are still happening. Because the media's doing a really good job of keeping us informed of COVID, but there's still so much other injustices that are happening in the world, and it's funny how it's almost kind of blanketed all the injustices that were happening prior to in a very weird way. But I think this is a time, as an artist, that we create,

we cultivate. We cultivate self, we cultivate art, and then we share that with other people to let them know that you're not alone and that we see you, we feel you. And so I guess to really answer your question, my call to action is to any artist right now, with whatever isms that we're battling, whatever injustices that we're facing, this is the time to create and really look at it from a different perspective, and I think that perspective is really how people are still dealing with it, although it's not in the forefront of our news and media. Like, how is it that we can still speak to that so people feel like they're not being isolated? 'Cause now we're dealing with quarantine, we're dealing with social isolation, but also dealing with the fact that there's a lot of injustice going on. So I guess it's really creating from that place of just understanding what the world is going through and using it as a form of documentation, to document this moment. A year from now, we wanna be able to look back and say, "Yeah, it wasn't just a time "where we didn't connect with each other, "but it was a time where a lot of great art was created "to also further the causes "that have been happening as well." So I mean, again, my call to action, any artists that are there, now's the time to create when it comes to any injustices that are happening in the world. Any isms that have been affecting your community and your life, create, make it. Make it, and also don't judge. This is the time not to judge whatever art you create. Don't judge it. Never judge the art you're creating right now, because we're vulnerable. We're sensitive, you know? We're inside it, we're really internal, and looking internally right now. So create, be compassionate with your creation, don't judge it, it doesn't have to be perfect. It just has to be something that you can put out there. So, that's my little thing I wanna share with people right now.

- I agree with Randell about just creating, and I know for us, I guess artists are used to a lot of boundaries when they're creating, and we've just been leaving it open. A lot of them like, "So, what should it look like, what?" And we're kind of just like, "You do what you feel like you need to do, "and that's what you can put out into the world." Obviously, respecting the normal stuff, but definitely just create as Randell is speaking to. There are no boundaries right now, is how I feel. It's a time for expression, and changing the way people see and hear things.

- Interesting. And I want to slip in a thought here, and Andres, and then we can come to you. I'm just interested at the intersection of art and political movements right now. Somebody asked, "Is any of your groups "thinking about involving, networking with, "local activist groups to build solidarity efforts "around political movements?" And I think that's so important, as this person asked, as it relates to what's the vision of arts in our city post-COVID. And so I don't know. Andres, I know you were gonna say something, so you don't necessarily have to speak to that, but I'm just curious about where these pieces come together in terms of how we create our new future.

- Yeah. Well, what I wanted just was touch on is the fact that even for all of us to be here having this conversation, even as creatives and all that kind of stuff, it comes with a level of privilege that a lot of people just don't have, because they're just like... You know, how can

you tell people to stay at home if they don't have clean water to drink? Which has existed for so long in indigenous communities in this country. And so I really hope that this collective trauma where we're all having to literally... The camaraderie of people who have more and are financially privileged, literally, we need them to help uplift everyone else, because the governments haven't done enough, and we're seeing a lot of how much marginalization exists, because now the most vulnerable communities are now even more vulnerable through this pandemic, and seeing the lack of acknowledging all of our value as human beings in this world and the whole essential aspect. We have people working minimum wage at an essential work because we need them. And it's just like all these conversations of how we have valued ourselves in this hierarchy that has been built for so long. I hope that crumbles. Because we need to recognize that we are all valuable, and that's the truth at the end of the day. You know, Club Q, when people are just seen, it makes them feel alive and that they belong.

- Adil, you're muted.

- Whoa, all right. Classic Zoom error there. Thanks, Andres. I was just saying, you know what. I didn't accidentally come to Club Q, even though I was accidentally there. I unquestionably felt alive and like I belonged once I understood what was happening. So, I'm just conscious of the time and that there are some great questions still there. If anybody does want to speak any more to this, please do chime in, but I will also... Oh, Mark, you do want to speak to that?

- Yeah, I do.

- Go ahead.

- I just quickly wanted to say, I'm with Randell that art is activism. It always has been for me. The second you open your mouth or paint that stroke, you're making a statement or an expression or reflection of what you're living through or what other people are living through. So essentially, what you can do as an artist is, sorry to use the staid axiom, but be the change you wanna see in the world. All you can do is present the type of artist that you wanna present, or say what you wanna say, and try and make those connections. I think now more than ever, the most important thing is to try and make as many connections. We talked about that earlier. Because the circumstances under which we connect with others have changed, we need to adapt to make those connections. That blank slate doesn't just mean go out and create a piece or a song. It can mean that, but it can also mean, well, look. We, before, we're all focused on our one little thing that we're doing. Our one organization, or our one area. But we can be thinking about all of our stuff. This is the opportunity, if never before. This is the time that we can actually try to work across those boundaries. And some people are into that, and some people are not, and I guess what I would say is just, the biggest part of it for me is to just keep trying. Just keep trying to make those connections and to make that world that you want to see.

- Thanks, Mark. Okay, so we've got time for a couple more questions. I'm gonna take... At the top here for me is from Everybody DJs, which if I'm connecting the dots, that might be DJ Me Time who incidentally does a great little Brunch Boogie. If you wanna learn a little bit more about that, you can find that on Instagram under the hashtag #BrunchBoogie. Everybody DJs has asked, "With the prevalence of livestreaming, "online performances and Zoom parties, "do you think the novelty will wear off "after a few months, and what's next? "And how might we innovate into "new mediums, content and tech?" And so I made the note to mention what I believe this individual's work is doing in terms of the Brunch Boogie, because I think it's a good example where we're starting to see the opportunity to bring in new facets to Zoom, and then a question is, what could happen, if anything, beyond?

- I was actually talking to our team yesterday about this potentially kind of wearing off, or it's now super-oversaturated, where there's a Live happening every hour on the hour. I don't have an answer as to what the new innovative way to communicate and connect with people is, but that is something that we're personally thinking about on a day to day, of how to connect with people on a different level, outside of social media.

- I think it's very interesting, because the reality is, there's a lot more Zoom calls, there's a lot more Instagram that's happening at this time, but just looking at it for those who may have a disability, or have accessibility issues. I think it's still prominent that we actually continue this long after, because I just feel like we are always on our phones anyways, you know? So whether it's now we're more on our phones or more in front of a screen because we kind of quote unquote have to, I think the reality is, this needs to continue. The example I give is, at R.I.S.E, every Monday we do R.I.S.E, and we'll usually post on our Stories. And on our Stories, we get a lot more people watching our Stories on a Monday night as the people that kind of come in on a Monday night. And so you know people are there. They want to engage with that, and I think it's still important that perhaps for us, we're thinking about doing something live in person and then still doing something live for those who can't be there, because that's needed for them too.

- I think that for us, as long as there's a need to connect, we'll always exist. You know, I've talked about earlier about that marriage of the IRL and the virtual needs to happen so that that bridge stays, and that that connection between communities is no longer severed. And yeah, I lost the rest of my thought, so.

- I'm kinda already sick of just the stream, straight, one camera, you just do your show in front of a camera. I see it's like we're in that time right now, but I'm just feeling my mind goes, "If I'm already sick of this, "there are definitely hundreds of thousands "of people out there who are sick of it "10 minutes ago." We just have to adapt, we just have to continue and adapt and look for new things. But I do have to remind everyone that ultimately, touch. We all want to touch. We all wanna get back out there at some point, and if history shows, there will be a

point where we can get back out and experience our art in person and hopefully, this experience will have informed all of the inequalities and injustices and impurities and problems that we had with our live experiences before that we can adapt and make them all the more inclusive once we get out of it.

- And I think fundamentally, that is incumbent on all of us to be loud in ensuring that is the case. And so I think whether you're part of the panel here or as an audience member, what role do we have? And again, going back to what we said earlier. Because we are all artists, and in many cases, because our presence in itself can be a radical act, how can we use that power to affect the change that we want going forward? We only have a few more minutes, so I just want to, before I pass it off back to the Myseum team. So, I just want to acknowledge, there are a number of questions that I was not able to bring forward to the group. And I am sorry to those who I haven't been able to do that to. You can bring your question forward. Some of them I feel like we were able to answer through other questions, and other ones we just didn't have the time for. But of course recognizing that all the folks here on the panel also are accessible online, and I think IG handles have been provided as ways to kind of continue the dialogue. I've basically been saving one question that's kind of my final question for all of you, which is, right now, there is a really interesting... I call it a tension, and the tension is, is now the perfect moment to create your masterpiece, or is now the perfect moment to not do anything? And to not feel the pressure of having to create your masterpiece? You know, I'm a big believer in duality and I feel like there is truth to both, and some days I'm really excited for the time to create, and other days I feel an immense amount of pressure. And I'm just curious for all of you, respectively, as kind of your last question for all of you. How are you reconciling this for yourself and/or your communities?

- I'm trying to be compassionate to myself. Before this quarantine, I suffer from depression and anxiety, and I'm a trans person, so dealing with that already before quarantine was a lot, so then once we got into quarantine, it was kinda nice that Club Q sort of just took over my life so that I was just so invested into something. But then I sort of realized that I was suppressing a lot of my true feelings, and I was realizing, oh my god. I need to take care of myself. That being said, don't feel pressure that you have to create anything, and give yourself the permission to have those moments where you just wanna do nothing. 'Cause we've been kind of blessed with this moment where for the first time, because the whole world is kind of shut down, we've been given this permission to just chill out. And now we're forced to be in the present, and we're forced to look inside ourselves. And so take this moment to feel whatever that is, 'cause this is the time now to maneuver through those feelings and then really hopefully find what makes you really happy from within so then you have now this always strong connection with your higher self, and just like, "Okay, now I can always go back to that." That's kinda been my journey, but that's kinda what I wanted to share.

- Thank you so much, Andres. Tinesha?

- Yeah. So, oddly enough, I was speaking to Randell at the beginning of the year where we were sharing that this year, I'm not one to say new year, new me. But I was saying to him that I felt like this year feels different for whatever reason. This definitely wasn't what I had anticipated, but I knew that something was gonna change to kind of bring us to a new era, and I think it's important that, like you said, that some of us need to learn how to slow down, and some of us needs to learn how to put yourself out there. Me myself, I'm a introvert by nature, so even doing this is something very not like me, so I think it's important . It's very important to challenge ourselves during this time, whether it be to take time for yourself or to kind of put yourself out there a bit more. And like Andres, I also suffer from anxiety and depression, so I think it's important for us to... Yeah, definitely a time to reflect and to just take time. Be patient and gentle with ourselves.

- Thanks, Tinesha.

- I think in a way, I kinda wanna say, it's always the right time to make art. We've had issues and crises before this, and in a lot of ways that were much more destructive than this, and it's important to make art all the time in response to that, and I think that's kinda what makes an artist, is what is that urge to do that, you know? But, that said, I saw this post, this meme or whatever, that was like two comments side-by-side. One was, you know, "When the pandemic is over, "remember who texted you and called you, "and you will know who your friends are "and who checked in." And then right beside that was, "Remember when the pandemic is over "that it was a fucking pandemic, "and that people are dealing with it in their own way, "and don't judge your friends "on how they dealt with it in that moment."

- Amen.

- So, I think that's really important.

- I'm into that. I'm into that.

- Beautiful. Thanks, Mark. Randell, you wanna take us home?

- It's funny, Mark, 'cause when you were saying that first part, I was like, "I hope the other part was this!" I was like, I hope so! 'Cause the reality is--

- I got you, man. I got you.

- Right, thank you. 'Cause there's people I love that in reality, I just haven't checked in on them, because I'm dealing with my own stuff too, you know what I'm saying? It's been a challenging two months for me personally. It's been a challenging year in general, you know? And Adil, it's similar to a conversation we were having. One of the things is, I personally

believe that we all have to make time to reflect and look inward. It's so vital, because we live in a world that's very external about what you can show and present on the outside. I have some of the strongest people I know in my life. When I talk to them one-on-one, I would never know what they're dealing with, right? But we create safe space for each other to talk. And so my form of reconciliation for folks is really, it can be dangerous. You mentioned it, Adil, and I'll never forget what you said, because I have been telling people, make time to look inside. But it can be dangerous to do that. If you don't have the right tools, if you don't have the right mindset, if you're not prepared to see what will come up if you sit still, 'cause there's some things that we've really suppressed so deeply that when you make time to sit, it will come up and it might eat you alive. That's just the reality of it all, you know? But I think what I've been saying to people, and I guess I'm gonna mix all of what we were saying personally, because I think trauma's one of the things that affects all, everything. Every economy, every sector. Trauma affects everything, you know? But what happens is, we're taught that trauma is something that you suppress and you suppress and you take pills and you take different things. But we can only save ourselves. The therapist can help, the pills can help, but we have to be able to make room to save ourselves. And it's tough, because there's a lot of uncertainty in the world at this time, but I think even pre-COVID, life has been uncertain. Everything is uncertain! There's no certainty in anything. Tomorrow is not certain. I'm not guaranteed to be alive. You know what I'm saying? So there's no certainty in anything, but I think at this time, it's teaching me, and I'm also sharing this with my community, is how do you become comfortable with the uncertainty? Because what we think to be certain, of my life should be like this? This year, like the conversation Tinesha and I, it's like, yo, my year's gonna look like this. And so because of that expectation, because I held that expectation, that can cause me so much pain because I held this expectation on. But I released, and I became more comfortable with the uncertainty of whatever happened, because I know that just by leaving it open you might open up the potential for something better than you expected to happen. Yeah, that's kinda what I'm seeing.

- Amen.

- Tell it.

- Thank you. Thank you so much to all of you. You know, in summary, the most important time is now. Our lives are a gift, and love is the greatest medicine, and so thank you to all of those, all 112 people who stayed with us this entire time, to our incredible panel, and I just wanna pass it back for a final two words to our team from Myseum, who I also wanna shout out for being the behind-the-scenes operators of this incredible time. Panel, thank you so much, and the Myseum team, I'll just pass it back to you for some final words. Oh, and put your Instagram handle in there for the panelists in the chat box, so people can connect with you too.

- Thank you, Adil! Just on behalf of Myseum, I really wanna say such a warm thank you to all our panelists, Tinesha, Randell, Andres and Mark, for just the depth of conversation that you've shared with us today, and I really wanna thank you for your work as artists, but also for all you do to really support and facilitate the work of others in the community. So, thank you so much for being with us today. Thank you Adil for helping us navigate this conversation so beautifully, and thank you, of course, to everyone who joined us today and stuck with us through this very engaging conversation. I'd like to invite you all to join us in May for our upcoming programs that kind of continue to explore how communities are experiencing and responding to the COVID pandemic right now, starting with Beyond Our Usual Allies, which is a program that looks at how organizations are partnering in creative ways to respond to community needs. We have another program called Farm Workers are Essential Workers that look at how those workers were vital to feed access, are being impacted and affected right now. And finally, as part of our Interceptions Festival, Quarantine Edition, we have the Images of Resistance program that looks back at the 2009 Gardiner Expressway protests and how that has shaped a generation of Tamil Canadian youth. Please do follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, to find out more about our programs, and thank you all again, and have a wonderful afternoon. Thank you so much.