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Diversity Statement
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I was born on the land of the Ohlone and Miwok Tribes in the Bay Area, where my family's migration journey began in the mid-1970s as part of the South Asian diaspora. Growing up in Fremont, California—a vibrant hub for Indian families—offered comfort and contradictions. While I found a nurturing community that felt like a second family, I also grappled with feelings of unfulfillment.

The societal messages I received were a constant pressure, pushing me towards a version of myself that was more 'acceptable' in the eyes of society. This tug-of-war within myself, the struggle to fit into a socially acceptable narrative, often left me feeling that my brown skin marked me as 'other.' It fueled a belief that I would never be enough – a feeling I later realized was shared by many others.

In my 20s, I encountered a moment of liberation while watching a bus, its passengers extending their bodies freely, unburdened by societal expectations. This sparked a desire within me for a similar release.

What began as an exploration of my body transformed into a journey of somatic-based practices, dance, and physical theater. I immersed myself in cultural gestures, rhythms, and storytelling, using the stage as a platform for expression and exploration.

Pursuing a Master of Fine Arts in Theater and Contemporary Performance shifted the focus of my work toward a socially conscious body—one that interrogates values, interests, assumptions, and aspirations. I aimed to discover new strategies that intersect artistic practice with self-liberation and social transformation, embracing authenticity, freedom, and hope.

Today, as the arts and our communal practices face threats from a changing administration and the ongoing challenges of systemic inequities, the transformative power of the arts becomes even more evident. Despite these challenges, the arts hold the potential for transformation and justice. They foster communal spaces rooted in reciprocity, care, and compassion through shared resources and peer collaboration, inspiring hope and resilience in adversity.

As I consider my journey and its implications, I reflect on several essential questions. These questions are theoretical musings and deeply personal reflections that have shaped my understanding of identity, community, and the arts.

In a climate where federal funding threatens the survival of the arts and DEI is under attack, how can we empower local voices to reclaim conversations that dismantle systems of silence and exclusion, ensuring that the narratives of marginalized communities drive the discourse?

As conditioned language and behaviors are weaponized against us, what collaborative methods can we adopt to break these barriers, foster authentic expression, and build resilience within our communities while championing the voices of those historically marginalized?

How can we transform generational dialogue—conversations that embrace multiple perspectives and ways of knowing—into powerful tools for collective self-awareness and action? We can achieve this by mobilizing our communities to advocate for social, political, and educational reforms that counteract systemic inequalities.

Despite efforts to erase diverse cultural narratives, how can we uplift and normalize the values and perspectives of local communities of color, ensuring that these voices are heard and remain

How can we be safe?

Ultimately, diversity, equity, and inclusion are ideals that foster a sense of belonging and fairness for all aspects of our humanity.