

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Into Abolition: A Guidebook for Liberatory Theatre-making Practices

Edited by Rivka Eckert and Lizbett Bengé

Abstract Proposals due January 7th, 2022

This book project seeks to transform community-based theatre-making by offering a practical and accessible guidebook of tools for healing, creating, relating, and cultivating spaces of understanding, collaboration, empathy, and justice with the goal of abolition.

Abolition, defined by Mariame Kaba, is a “long-term project around creating the conditions that would allow for the dismantling of prisons, policing, and surveillance and the creation of new institutions that actually work to keep us safe.” Safety is a practice and politic of creating conditions that foster an existence grounded in abolition and “freedom to cultivate your own existence” (Night Out for Safety and Liberation). As Maya Schenwar writes, “we don’t need ‘alternatives to incarceration,’ we need a wildly recreated society [which]... will nourish and fuel struggles for transformation.” Abolition means refusing systematic abandonment, demanding and organizing collective care, and committing to community-led endeavors rooted in a vision of collective human and more than human flourishing. This book project works to define theatre’s role in the goals of abolition.

Abolitionist theatre-making demands a grounded understanding/praxis/commitment. We recognize that not all abolitionist aims, practices, and practitioners identify or reveal themselves as such. For this project, we ask for orientation with the work of abolition and transparent alignment with freedom and liberation, broadly understood. Abolitionist theatre-making is theatre that deeply interweaves and is interconnected to decolonization, tribal sovereignty, intersectional feminism, transnational feminism, climate justice, racial justice, reproductive justice, disability justice, anti-capitalism, anti-imperialism, reparations, labor movements, the art, activism, and cultural production of peoples of the global majority, and all freedom & liberation struggles.

Towards that thriving and prosperous vision, we seek contributions from those doing work taking place within the lands known colonially as the United States (and Tribes) of America that both exposes and fuels the ways theatre brings the abolitionist imagination to reality. Our scope currently spans health care systems, prisons, foster care, and K-12 and higher educational systems. Contributions are not limited to academic/formal papers. We encourage the submission of partial scripts, performative texts, exercises, or descriptions of abolitionist theatre-making projects.

Prospective authors are encouraged to consider the following questions as they relate to their own specific practices:

- How does theatre-making reject/unsettle the logics of carceral systems?
- How can the theatre be both a tool and a site for dismantling systems of oppression and building collective care?
- What is on the other side of punishment, and how is theatre, and its collaborative processes, uniquely responsible for living the answers to these questions?
- What does an abolitionist theatre-making practice look like within a hospital? A prison? An institution of higher education? In secondary schools? In foster care systems?

- In what manner do theatre and performance illuminate interconnectedness, reciprocity, repair, truth, and abolitionist notions of time, space, being, and doing otherwise?
- What values and practices drive/undergird abolition and how do these manifest theatrically through time?
- How are abolitionist aims and organizing present within specific processes of theatre-making (e.g., casting, acting/performance, playwriting, dramaturgy, production, costuming, funding, staging, audience participation)?
- How does theatre-making create conditions for the liberation, broadly-defined, of communities? How does theatre support freedom?

Proposal Abstract and Materials: Due January 7, 2022

Please submit (1) a 300-500 word proposal abstract; (2) working reference list; and (3) CV or resume as email attachments (email address below) by January 7, 2022. Full chapters (4,000 to 6,000 words) will be due April 15, 2022.

All inquiries and submissions should be directed to editors Rivka Eckert and Lizbett Bengé via email at intoabolitiontheatrebook@gmail.com