

# “I WANT AN ARTISTIC EXPLOSION.

I WANT ACTING THAT IS POETIC AND PERSONAL, INTIMATE AND COLOSSAL.

I WANT TO USE THE THEATRE TO QUESTION THE LIMITS AND BOUNDARIES OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE.

I WANT TO CREATE THEATRE THAT IS FULL OF TERROR, BEAUTY,  
**AND BELIEF IN THE INNATE HUMAN POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE.”**

**Anne Bogart**

*This manifesto is a living statement that is subject to shift and evolve at any moment.*

*This is Olivia Chant Buss, December 2020.*

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## THE TRUTHS:

HOW LUCKY WE ARE AS A SPECIES TO BE ABLE TO TELL STORIES.

HOW LUCKY WE ARE TO BE ABLE TO TURN A MIRROR ON OURSELVES.

### Human superpowers:

**COLLABORATION/COMMUNICATION/SYNERGY**

**EMPATHY/COMPASSION/UNDERSTANDING**

**PRESENCE/AUTHENTICITY/TRUTH**

**STORYTELLING** utilizes the most valuable, beautiful aspects of being human in order to:

**QUESTION**

**EXPOSE**

**EXPAND**

our understanding of humanity, what we know to be true.

Stories safely transport audiences to alternate dimensions in which they are able to live and witness  
**presently** in circumstances that are different from their own.

Great art takes you out of yourself.

SOCIETY IS SLEEPWALKING, BLINDED BY EGO.

It's the same shit as always:

Selfishness

Greed

Fear

Possessiveness

Overindulgence

Dishonesty

Willful Ignorance

Resistance

Violence

These things are rampant, conventional, and publicly endorsed.  
The more you are focused on yourself, the more these feelings and behaviors become habitual.

GREAT ART TAKES YOU OUT OF YOURSELF.

That means putting you somewhere else.

“YOU”, your mind, your ego.

It grows beyond what you know as yourself for a moment and lets in something new.

**Storytellers have so much power.**

I believe this power must be used wisely and deliberately.

I do not believe storytelling should be propaganda.

I also do not believe storytelling should be echo chambers.

**Everyone** has the right to stories. Stories change lives and worlds.

**Stories must be as accessible to everyone as possible.**

This accessibility is not as much of an issue with television and film as it is with **theatre.**

LIVE THEATRE HAS VALUABLE, SIGNIFICANT POWERS THAT TELEVISION AND  
FILM DO NOT AND NEVER WILL HAVE:

**COMMUNITY -**

gathering of people to witness event, humans crave community, you are not alone

**PRESENCE -**

you can't pause a play or look at your phone, you must pay attention, get out of yourself

**IMMEDIACY -**

live, vibrational relationship between performers and audience that both parties can *literally feel*,  
especially regarding visceral emotions such as laughter or crying

**IMAGINATION -**

both performers and audience must suspend their disbelief and open themselves to the childlike ability to  
trust in something other than the reality they know

**SENSATION -**

opportunity for vivid exploration and provocation of the audience's physical senses

## THE PROBLEMS:

THEATRE IS AN EXCEPTIONALLY INACCESSIBLE ART FORM.

**THIS MUST BE CHANGED.**

This inaccessibility includes but is not limited to:

**Lack of assistance, acceptance, and support for disabled audience members as well as representation of disabled people in theatre.**

(20% of the American population has a disability. Currently 95% of disabled characters are played by non-disabled actors.)

**Ticket prices for theatrical performances are increasingly expensive, more expensive than any other form of storytelling**

(Average paid admission for a Broadway ticket in 2017-18 was \$123.07. Average paid admission for non profit theatre tickets in 2018 was \$41.19. Netflix is \$9, a movie ticket is \$10.)

**The vast majority of theatrical institutions across the country are run by white people, employ mostly white people, and curate their performances for white audiences. The industry was built upon white supremacist ideals and continues to deprioritize and exploit BIPOC artists, their work, and their communities.**

(In just New York in 2017-18, 80% of writers and 85.5% of directors were white.

White actors continue to be the only race to be overrepresented by almost double their respective population size, occupying 66.4% of roles on Broadway and 60.1% on nonprofit stages.

We See You White American Theatre statement August Wilson's "The Ground on Which I Stand"

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MAINSTREAM STORYTELLERS HAVE ALIGNED THEIR INTERESTS, ETHICS, AND BEHAVIORS WITH THE UNDERLYING UNIVERSAL PRESENCE OF WHITE SUPREMACY, AND HAVE THEREFORE **CORRUPTED THEIR OWN ART FORM.**

In the words of Bread and Puppet's "Why Cheap Art" Manifesto:

**PEOPLE have been THINKING too long that ART is a PRIVILEGE of the MUSEUMS & the RICH. ART IS NOT BUSINESS ! It does not belong to banks & fancy investors ART IS FOOD . You cant EAT it BUT it FEEDS you . ART has to be CHEAP & available to EVERYBODY . It needs to be EVERYWHERE because it is the INSIDE of the WORLD .**

## THE PLAN OF ACTION:

No more bullshit.

I am a storyteller because I believe, more than anything else, in the innate power of  
EVERYONE'S VOICE.

**COLLABORATION,  
EMPATHY,  
PRESENCE.**

It is my responsibility to use these superpowers as tools to make profound works of art which, by nature,  
lift voices different from my own,  
and bring those works of art to the people who need to see them.

As a director, producer, and writer, I plan to  
**experiment** with, **innovate**, and **revolutionize** this art form.

As theatre reemerges in the next few years, we have an incredible and rare opportunity to break through  
the boundaries of what we've known and accepted.

We have the opportunity to bring theatre to anyone and everyone,  
publicize, advertise, spread, and use the "Social Dilemma" to our advantage,

Wake people up. Feel together.

Be diligent, intentional, surprising, unpredictable, radical.

CREATE PIECES THAT ARE LIKE DREAMS.

CREATE PIECES WITH A LIFE PULSE,

a flow of familiar energy,

**EXPANSION,  
CONTRACTION.**

Breath.

ENTERTAIN. CAUSE RAUCOUS LAUGHTER. CONFUSE. HARMONIZE.

QUESTION.

EXPOSE.

EXPAND.

This art is so critical to me because I know I will be continuing to  
observe, question, grow, learn, and interpret  
for my entire life, in everything I do.

As an actor, I have no other goal but to do the work whenever I am lucky enough to.  
All humans act every single day.

Acting is something that reaches up and unlocks a far greater, bigger piece of this life on earth than most  
other occupations do.

Through acting, I am able to break down the complex intricacies of my own ego,  
realize that we all have these “characters” that we cling to as “who we are,”  
and let my own go.

Let go of the mind’s desperate need to control.

Live wholly in the PRESENT.

Accept. Surrender.

*I* can not do *it*, but rather I am able to strive to get myself out of the way so that  
*It* can do *me*.

Which is god. Or truth. Or universal consciousness. Or life itself. Or something.  
And it’s magnificent.

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