

## Diversity Statement

Fundamental to a rich education is the exposure, understanding, and participation of multiple perspectives. Diversity of race, class, gender, ability, national origin, culture, and sexual orientation should be internalized philosophically and practiced in everyday life. With the most diverse student enrollment in the history of America, educators need to proactively provide educational programming and foster a global community that considers the heterogeneous student body.

Since college and throughout my educational career as a teaching artist, I have developed and implemented events and programs to foster a more equitable world for marginalized populations. As a young adult in college, I became sensitive to the needs of people with sensory issues physical and cognitive challenges when I helped disabled youth navigate a world that privileges 'normal' bodies and minds. My passion for the arts and advocacy for people with disabilities manifested in designing and directing therapeutic art programming with FECS. The design fostered integration by inviting artists with disabilities to exhibit their work alongside other professional artist in galleries.

My commitment to equity and inclusivity has extended to marginalized youth in the form of socially-engaged art. I designed and implemented a youth media program, Eye to Eye, for young adults from the South Bronx and East New York. This program gave them a voice and empowered them to be active and vital members of the broader community. The students were the writers and producers behind the camera, asking questions and learning through local stories. I brought in speakers from the LGBT Community center. I organized field trips to Black Enterprise, El Museo del Barrio, and Studio Museum of Harlem to expose students to role models that reflect their backgrounds. These students collaborated with me in a community arts performance workshop developed at an Eyebeam art residency. In Urban Attractors, Private Distractors, students created art actions to explore how we use, share, and divide public space.

Working internationally, I learned how to adapt curriculum for economic obstacles while respecting different religious beliefs. In Ethiopia, I developed and directed an AIDS awareness program through the arts with Lifesigns. At Parsons Paris, I taught sustainability through socially-engaged media to undergraduate students from America, Korea, and the Emirates. Recognizing their limited privileged lenses, I organized a field trip to the Goutte d'Or, the poorest neighborhood in Paris with the most significant African community. They interviewed neighbors and researched an area and a population they did not consider when working on sustainability. Including voices often ignored inspired students to explore the diversity of their new home and gain the courage to seek out the

Other. Consequently, the wider research process taught them to broaden their scope to acquire in-depth knowledge.

I advocate for more ethnic, nationality, ability, gender, and economic diversity in selecting faculty and administrators. To support global pedagogy, I include themes and examples addressing humanitarian issues and civil injustice. Socially-engaged art increases empathy, compassion, and productive collaboration and therefore is an effective method to enrich learning and social progress.

Many educational institutions advocate cross-disciplinary learning. I would encourage art students to collaborate in their research and production with students of other disciplines. For example, a sculptor can collaborate with the science department who would like to work with a visual artist to develop interactive museum displays for the blind. A painter can work with a sociologist and a composer to produce audiovisual light displays that target specific groups by age and culture to pay attention to access to clean drinking water.

Teaching for and with people of different abilities, sexual orientations, class, faith, and race in the United States, France, Ethiopia, and China, nourished my strength to be attentive to local stories simultaneously, including global discussions and concerns. If we educators strive to teach critical thinking, we must build programming and foster dialogue that exposes students to a range of perspectives that emphasize the Other. To be a successful educational institution in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we need global classroom conversations with techniques, logic, traditions, and examples representing co-existing pluralistic voices that reflect the world.