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Shakespeare and Race in Performance
Description: Dialogue with Tyler Fauntleroy, Rosa Joshi, Farah Karim-Cooper, and Kathleen Lynch
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KATHLEEN LYNCH: Welcome to Critical Race Conversations. This is a series of monthly discussions hosted by the Folger Institute and funded by an Andrew W. Mellon grant for collaborative research. I'm Kathleen Lynch, Executive Director of the Folger Institute. We are delighted to gather so many friends, old and new, for these conversations, which we recognize as addressing our most urgent business today and that is whether we're thinking professionally, personally, politically, socially.

LYNCH: For the Institute an overdue reckoning with ongoing social and racial injustice this summer coincided with our 50th anniversary. It was immediately clear to us that we had to commit on drawing on work from all of our areas of programming and across early modern studies to foster a sustained and collective examination of the enduring legacies of pre-modern racialized thinking and racism. Our speakers throughout these sessions are acknowledging deeper and more complex roots to enduring social challenges.

LYNCH: They're conducting more inclusive investigations of our contested pasts with the goal of creating a more just and more inclusive academy and society. The Institute is providing the framework and the platform. We are setting the stage as it were. But as is our practice, we turn to experts across disciplines and career stages to lead discussions from their own experiences and expertise. We recognize that we should allow others who are more knowledgeable about the field and of critical race studies to create these conversations.

LYNCH: We have much to learn and we're grateful for what we're learning so far. One of the reasons Shakespeare studies are so vital today is that the incorporate so many perspectives, theory, history, close textural study, performance, all of these with their own long afterlives, influences, and authorities. Today as we ask how to commit to antiracist practices, we focus on the tools and methods of performance.

And I want to say that as I've been waiting eagerly for this conversation, I've been thinking about the power of the word practice.

LYNCH: We could think of it. We could expand it to notions of rehearsal as iteration to performance and performativity if we'd like but what these concepts all have in common is the knowledge carried deep in our bodies that behaviors, ways of living, are produced and reproduced, rehearsed and practiced. And if we want to change those behaviors, we have to practice new ways and find new directions. So today we've got three practitioners I'm going to introduce you to to help us understand how important that kind of practice can be.

LYNCH: And let me say also how delighted we are to be able to introduce these friends of The Folger to each other in this session. We're meeting across time and space and we're really grateful for the three of you to give us this time. So let me start with these introductions. Tyler Fauntleroy is a New York based actor and singer. Folger Theater goers will remember Tyler's Hotspur in a 2019 production of *1 Henry IV*. In addition to roles in other regional theaters, Tyler has made appearances in television shows such as that great dynastic Shakespearean drama, *Succession, FBI,* and *The Oath*.

LYNCH: Tyler recently originated a lead role in New Federal Theater's production of *Looking for Leroy*, for which he received an AUDELCO Viv Award. This is an award celebrating excellence in black theater in New York City. Rosa Joshi is a Director, Producer, and educator. She's one of the newest members of The Folger's Board of Governors. Rosa's directing work spans from Shakespeare to modern classics to contemporary plays. In 2006 she cofounded Upstart Crow Collective, a company committed to presenting classical plays with diverse female and non-binary casts.

LYNCH: Joshi is currently the Chair of Performing Arts and Arts Leadership at Seattle University. She has also taught, among other places, at Hong Kong University, Hong Kong Academy of the Performing Arts. We met Rosa at The Folger when she directed that 2019 production of *1 Henry IV*. And Doctor Farah Karim-Cooper joins this conversation. Karim-Cooper is Professor of Shakespeare Studies, Kings College London, and Head of Higher Education and Research at Shakespeare's Globe.

LYNCH: At The Globe, she oversees research into the architecture of early modern theaters, including the reconstruction of the theaters at The Globe itself. Her scholarship includes a book on theatrical cosmetics, another on gesture, touch, and dismemberment. That one must have been hard to write, [LAUGH] Farah. And a current project on Shakespeare and race. She organized The Globe's first Shakespeare and Race Festival. And among her many professional services is on the Executive Board of Race Before Race, a collective of scholars and institutions, and as creating the first ever Scholars of Color Network in the UK.

LYNCH: So a word about technology. We are meeting in different time zones and spaces and even technological vehicles. So you're with us here on YouTube and if you are here on YouTube in real time, please note live chat is enabled and we encourage you to use that chat function and contribute to the conversation and submit your questions through there. We will have time for questions and answers. Our speakers also welcome live tweeting with the #FolgerCRC and you can also submit questions through Twitter.

LYNCH: We'll be scooping them up and bringing them into the conversation a little bit later. This session is being recorded. It will be posted on The Folger's YouTube channel as soon as it is processed, and that's gonna include closed captioning being enabled and a verified transcript produced and uploaded next week. So I know some of you will be joining us in days to come but we especially welcome those of you who are here with us in real time. And now I turn it over to our crew here. And I think you are gonna get the conversation started, Rosa.

ROSA JOSHI: I am indeed. Thank you so much, Kathleen, and thank you also to the Folger Institute for hosting this conversation. So I, this is very much going to be a conversation. I volunteered to get us started off. I know Tyler from having worked with Tyler on *Henry IV, 1.* Farah and I this is, this was our introduction, I think also for Tyler and Farah. And although I joke that if there was like a Match dot com for Shakespeare scholars and artists that we would [LAUGH] have made a really great match on that medium.

JOSHI: So we began our conversation, as we were talking about this we realized that we were all coming from a place of practice, as Kathleen spoke about, and how deeply imbedded that that was for us that in our conversation one of the things that we wanted to get to know about each other was really our individual history with Shakespeare and our positionality in that. 'Cause I think that that's really important when we're talking about issues of race.

JOSHI: So I'm just gonna start by asking Farah to share a little bit about your history with Shakespeare, your first encounter with it, your relationship, and what are things, perhaps that, 'cause this is something we've talked about, is what we've learned and maybe had to unlearn in our process of training and our relationship with the work?

FARAH KARIM-COOPER: Sure. Thank you so much. And thank you to The Folger for organizing this. It's such a great series and I'm just honored to be a part of it. Just a warning that there may be a scrappy looking cat that jumps up behind me but don't be alarmed, at some point, he's getting a bit restless. [LAUGH] So your question is really good. And the first thing that I should say is that I'm kind of an interloper in some ways and I don't think of myself as a practitioner *per se* because I work very closely with practitioners and I've obviously, for the last 16 years of so my career has been, I've been imbedded in a performing arts organization with two really amazing theaters.

KARIM-COOPER: So from that point of view I suppose I might qualify. But practice is definitely something that's really, really dear to my heart and I cannot imagine analyzing Shakespeare and thinking about Shakespeare without that element. My own first, my history with Shakespeare is, you know, very much, very similar to many people's. And I was taught Shakespeare in high school and didn't really connect with it properly until later. And when I got to University I realized actually this is something that I really want to do. And I'm writing a book about Shakespeare and race which is kind of enfolded in that is a lot of the history my, of training, my history of training.

KARIM-COOPER: And I went to a really, you know, cool state university in California and I had some really inspiring Shakespeare professors who sort of got me on my feet. And then I came to England to study Milton and Shakespeare. And unfortunately I felt like I was out of my depth. And I realized that I felt sort of misplaced here. And looking back there's a lot of reasons for that. Whether it was my gender or, you know, just the difference in training in America versus the UK in English departments. And in the UK they specialize really, really early whereas in the US we don't.

KARIM-COOPER: So I felt behind on a number of fronts. But I had to use a lot of [LAUGH] tenacity and hard work to get through the system because, unfortunately, as much as I love British academia, British academia is still very, it was very exclusionary. And I didn't feel as though I was right for the field. I had a couple of professors who were really extremely inspiring and supportive and helpful and, you know, fellow post-graduates.

KARIM-COOPER: I was the only person of color in the department doing Shakespeare and there were no scholars of color teaching in the department at all. And that was pretty much widely my experience in the UK. So I was trained largely through this sort of white lens of, you know, of Shakespeare studies. And although my thesis was about cosmetics and, of course, the beauty standard. And what that means in the 16th century is the centralization of whiteness and the elevation of whiteness and, you know, Kim Hall's work was really central to my thinking as a grad student.

KARIM-COOPER: So thank God I, you know, I discovered her work. But I wasn't centralizing race in my thinking. And if I had, 'cause in my thesis I wanted to think about it much more deeply. And I remember being dissuaded from that and that it wasn't necessarily a popular or trendy topic. Wasn't something that you should necessarily think about. And actually that the minute you start talking about race then, you know, people start to get a little bit nervous about where are you gonna go with it? [LAUGH]

KARIM-COOPER: And the implications that has for Shakespeare and Shakespeare studies more widely I think was quite threatening in the '90s. And even, you know, I

think now the tide is changing. But I'm gonna just cut to 2018 when I was organizing the Shakespeare and Race Festival at The Globe and discovered, you know, I really wanted to platform the voices of scholars and actors of color and really just get a different perspective into The Globe, which we hadn't had really in our conference series.

KARIM-COOPER: And in the UK there were just very few. And I had to, you know, raise money to bring people over from the US and various other places. And that then set me on a journey thinking about what it is about British academia, what it is about the way we teach Shakespeare or the way Shakespeare is staged in theaters in the UK and how reviewers write about it and who are the reviewers, who are the gatekeepers [LAUGH] in academia and in theater and why is there a kind of chokehold on the pipeline into Shakespeare studies, right?

KARIM-COOPER: So that's kind of where that, all of that has led me. And I was trained in that system of thinking, of centralizing the sort of the white perspective of Shakespeare. I know that I had internalized a lot of that growing up in, where I grew up in America. So I had to unlearn a lot of that. And that's been a really, really important process for me. And I think it's kind of a reckoning. It's almost this, it's, what's happening on a macro level where people are looking at the past and reckoning with the sort of embeddedness of the cannon in race and empire.

KARIM-COOPER: There's this sort of micro reckoning that, you know, scholars of color, like myself, might be doing that have been trained in a place where whiteness is really the kind of lens through which to see everything. So it's been an interesting process trying to sort of separate from that and be really, try to be as objective about it as possible but that's really difficult. So yeah, I guess that's how I would answer that question. But I'm just really curious about your history, Rosa, and how you came to Shakespeare and what kinds of things have you had to learn and unlearn?

KARIM-COOPER: You're doing practice, right? I write about practice. I talk to practitioners about practice but you're actually in the skin of these plays.

JOSHI: Yeah. It's really interesting what you talk about of what you had to, you know, my history is similar and different in some ways that I, everyone I learned Shakespeare from was white. And so everything that I learned was from that perspective. But interesting, so I was also introduced to Shakespeare in middle school but I was living in Kuwait as an expat like in an international school with a minority of white people. All the professors were white. It was an English private school, international school.

JOSHI: So I read *The Tempest* and I had a great teacher, Phil Climber who introduced me to it. And I fell in, I actually fell in love with it in middle school and high school. I didn't, we didn't put on Shakespeare but just reading it and analyzing. And we would do scenes in class. It's interesting 'cause I've been reflecting a lot about how I've learned and what I've learned and I realized that it was in college

where I felt like I didn't know enough. Because I went to a very white college where people didn't look like me.

JOSHI: And then all of a sudden I felt like I became intimidated by it. Whereas I'd sort of really like soaked it up as a 14 year old, you know, 15 year old, in college I was too intimidated that even I took an advanced acting class and you could do a Shakespeare piece and I just thought I can't do that. And I did a Greek instead 'cause I somehow thought that would be easier. [LAUGH] Right? Like that would be much easier. But that's, it wasn't until after I graduated from college, I mean I took a lot of English classes in Shakespeare, right?

JOSHI: So I felt comfortable in that world of it. But actually doing it or directing it, I just felt like it was not within my reach. And it was after I graduated and I knew that I really wanted to do it and I had interned at the Julliard School and I was watching sort of master directors, white directors, do it and I thought, I want to be that good. I want to know how to do that. And so I sort of sought technique and I, you know, I watched all those John Barton tapes.

KARIM-COOPER: Yes. [LAUGH]

JOSHI: Because that was my ideal, right? Like those, like I thought about the Shakespeare that I had seen where I really understood it. 'Cause I felt like if we can, if an audience can understand it then they won't be intimidated by it. And I felt like oh, I can, like I want to make it understood. But what's interesting is that, so getting that training, like I've been thinking about it and I realized that having done that I felt like I was part of this elite group. Like I felt like I was in the club, right? Like, I had learned how to do this.

JOSHI: And I think back to my younger self, I would look down on other people who were like, oh that verse, it's spoken so badly, you know? Like because I had gotten this training that I had wanted so badly. And it also, that did open doors somewhat, right? Because I think that because, I mean I've been doing a lot reflecting, reckoning as you're speaking about also in terms of my own process through it. 'Cause I think, it did make me feel special, right?

JOSHI: Like I had risen through the ranks. Or like, and I was good enough. Because there was no, 'cause I think to myself, what made me think I could do this? 'Cause there was no one that looked like me doing this. There were women, and I related to women who were doing it. And I think that's also what took me into the work that I did with Upstart Crow. I came to race through the intersection of gender. Because doing that work I was, at some point we realized we hadn't paid enough attention to racial equity in our casting.

JOSHI: And we started, we realized we actually needed to be more intentional about it. Because at first everyone I was working with were people I knew and they were all white women, right? Because I had been in this white space all the time and I

was always thankful if there was another woman in the space with me and I was sort of just not aware. 'Cause I was just so hard, I think it was because I was just trying to prove I could do this work, right? That I could do this work as well as any white man. Because those were the, and I think back on gatekeeping and I think back on how my attitude towards training and technique was a form of gatekeeping.

JOSHI: And that, how that's changed for me in the, in my practice or how I think about it that anyone can learn this and anyone should be able to have access to it. And that this idea that you can't have is, it comes from a very white supremacist approach to holding onto the work as it were so that only a certain few who can rise to it can get to do it.

JOSHI: So I've been thinking a lot about how my training got me in the door. And it's made me wonder if people therefore didn't see my color in that colorblind way, right? They saw me as someone with the training. And so I've been thinking about what does it mean to have good speech in Shakespeare? What does that mean and why, because, and to me again, it's in practice, right, in practice it's about clarity. It's, and it's about access to me.

JOSHI: An audience, if they can understand the text, they will get drawn into the story. It's often because they feel like they can't understand it. So that's to, like repositioning technique to be like, oh this is about learning to play your instrument for the purpose of clarity, for the purpose of reaching an audience. As opposed to showing off your technique or being in the club. And that your voice is good enough. I don't mean good enough. It, your voice is enough, right?

JOSHI: Like I had recently did an audition where a young black actor, a young woman, was doing a piece and I was like, is she doing an English accent? I think she's doing an English accent. Because when she introduced herself she wasn't speaking like that. And so I asked her, like, "It sounds to me like you're doing an English accent. Is that so? Is that, and, you know, and it doesn't sound like when you're just speaking to me." And I asked her why she was doing that and she stopped to think. And I realized she hadn't maybe thought about it. And she said, "It just seemed like it was more proper."

JOSHI: And that really struck me. It was more proper. Like because Shakespeare should be spoken in a proper way. And so it was a great conversation to be had about what is it to speak from your authentic self and in your voice. And if you did this over and didn't think about it having to be done in a certain way that you've received however through the culture, you know. What does that mean to speak from our authentic selves? And how does that open the door and remove the sort of gatekeeping towards that?

JOSHI: Which is a great way to talk to you, to pass the ball to you, Tyler, because I'm really curious about how, if some of the things I've been talking about like resonate

for you in terms of your training or your experience. As someone, like I direct people who perform, but you actually perform it.

TYLER FAUNTLEROY: Yeah, no. As you were speaking I was your little Amen corner over here just, you know, you were really hitting on some pertinent points. I, it's so great to hear both of you and your experiences and to see how similar our, you know, introductions to Shakespeare were. Rosa, what you said, you wonder what good speech is. Like that idea. 'Cause I think that's been a huge, I would say, kind of like overarching theme that's been kind of my journey with Shakespeare. I, just like you all, I got introduced into Shakespeare in high school, freshman year of high school. So I was about 14.

FAUNTLEROY: And, you know, in this society, in this world we live in, you know, we look at things like African-American vernacular English and how that's looked down upon as less intelligent or things like that. And so like as a young black kid growing up, when society constantly tells you that your slang is less than then we're met with Shakespeare with, you know, this verse, this text, the pentameter, and it's just so lofty and you're just like I, what am I supposed to do with this, you know. So it can be very frustrating I think for a lot of young students.

FAUNTLEROY: And I think it wasn't until my junior year of high school when I actually got to do a production of *Romeo and Juliet* that I really kind of fell in love with the story and the language of, you know, of what Shakespeare's working with. And from there I think I still internally battled that, you know, well I have to sound a certain way, you know. I think because obviously like working in the American theater and then, you know, just what this society will tell you when it comes to theater, which is obviously very whitewashed. You know, you have to sound a certain way.

FAUNTLEROY: You have to look a certain way, you know. And so as a person of color you strip away those things that make you you. And so when it comes back to African-American vernacular English you can find in Shakespeare the musicality, the rhythm, you know, the emphasis. All those things that I'm told to strip away are the things that are gonna help me the most when it comes to verse, when it comes to understanding scansion, when it comes to speaking in my own voice, like you were saying, Rosa. So it's, the irony of that is insane to me. My junior year of college, that was like the big Shakespeare year.

FAUNTLEROY: We had one semester just learning the language and getting a survey of like the text, learning scansion, learning all the rules that come with scansion. Then the second half was on our feet acting it. And I was talking to a classmate of mine who's a black woman and she, I had a conversation with her because our professor that led us through, you know, that taught us acting Shakespeare was a black man himself, you know. And so I said to her, I said, "You know, I wonder how much we don't have to unlearn because he was there to

navigate us through that." Something that in hindsight I realized, oh wow, I didn't realize the blessing of that. You know what I mean?

FAUNTLEROY: I didn't realize how great that was that he was there because already like I was saying, you, there's so much to unlearn, you know, just with any college program you go to, especially as an artist of color. But I'm just like, man, I wonder how many bullets did I dodge having him, you know, there to facilitate that for me? And, you know, he was, my professor, he was someone who was a huge stickler about speaking in our real voice, speaking in our authentic voice, you know. So he was, he wouldn't let anything like that slide, which, you know, is a huge blessing.

FAUNTLEROY: But even still when I graduated, right, and then looking back on productions of Shakespeare I had seen, you know, where people didn't really look like me in those casts or people didn't, people sounded a certain way or at least what I perceived them to sound like, you know. Even when I got out of college, one of my first auditions was, once again, *Romeo and Juliet*, which I thought was hilarious. And so I went to the audition, I went in for Benvolio. And I went into the audition, and I remember, you know, I was like, okay, I feel like my school equipped me to handle Shakespeare but I didn't have the confidence in myself to do it.

FAUNTLEROY: So I remember I literally pulled out my notes from college for my audition. Like I found my notes and was like, okay, scansion, there we go. You know, I was doing all that. Then I ended up booking it. And I think there I was kind of like, okay. So now that I know that I'm enough in this arena. You know, what I bring to the table is enough and so now I think this new world of Shakespeare for me has kind of been opened even more. And that's why I'm so glad I got to do *Henry IV* here at Folger, you know, with you, Rosa, because I think that really kicked the door wide open for me.

FAUNTLEROY: And like my love for Shakespeare, that grew even more because now I get to see myself. And then, you know, we have productions like *Much Ado*, you know, that was just in the park, you know, that Jazmine Stewart was in, somebody who was in our cast as well. You know, getting to see just, you know, black excellence in these stories, in this world is so inspiring. And I think, you know, it's just an amazing thing. Because knowing that all of those actors went through training programs where they had to unlearn things, you know what I mean?

FAUNTLEROY: But then for them to come together and then create something beautiful in their, you know, authentic selves, you know, with, in a celebration of culture, you know, is just a beautiful thing. So I'm really excited to see like, you know, where more of these conversations happen and like where this goes from here. Farah, I did want to ask you, I'm so, when I first started being like a Shakespeare nerd, I was so fascinated by The Globe. So I'm just geeking out on like the kind of work you do.

FAUNTLEROY: But I'm curious, and you mentioned it a little bit earlier, but I'm curious just how like considerations of race have, you know, impacted your work with The Globe, with what you do with your day to day?

KARIM-COOPER: Yeah, thank you. Your, gosh, your journey is so interesting. I just wanted to comment on the fact that you had that professor and that, you know, that's so amazing. That just stresses the importance of representation in universities, in drama schools, in theaters. It's just so important. Yeah, so I mean The Globe is, you know, it's [LAUGH] in many ways, I mean I've been there for 16 years. And for most of that time I've been in charge, obviously, of our, you know, academic programming and our research strategy and conferences and, you know, events and those kinds of things.

KARIM-COOPER: And race was not a sort of conscious consideration at The Globe for years and years and years. But there have always, there has always been an intention since the first day it opened to have people of all backgrounds onstage. And, but that hasn't always been consistent. But now it's very much part of the agenda.

KARIM-COOPER: So my work was largely around, it started around this sort of academic discussions around race because I was, you know, part of a kind of scholarly community where those discussions were becoming amplified for the first time really. And I was thinking about my responsibility as someone who is at an iconic Shakespeare institution with this iconic building or two buildings and what kind of, that's quite a platform really.

KARIM-COOPER: And, you know, Shakespeare is a platform itself. And so how should I use this platform actually? Should I use it just to sort of talk about theater history? Theater history's important but I need, I felt like it wasn't doing enough. So I wanted to leverage that position and to sort of amplify the voices of scholars of color and try to get the research that's been going on for years on race studies centralized in our field. And also that work is so important to a consideration of performance.

KARIM-COOPER: Because you're gonna have, I know we're gonna talk about this at some point, but you know, you've got directors who are, you know, not thinking about race when they're casting and you've got designers who are not thinking about race when they're designing clothes and sets and lights. And actually the scholarship is something that can underpin a lot of that thinking. And it just, The Globe is a really interesting site because it's the place where scholarship and practice meet often. And what I've always been really proud of working there is that, is bringing those constituents together in a way that is productive.

KARIM-COOPER: So yeah, the focus at The Globe is, for the last few years at least, has been trying to sort of bring those discussions to the fore to give them a public platform. So running festivals which involve the, you know, talking to actors of color

and talking to directors and doing workshops, looking at lighting and unconscious bias in directing and designing.

KARIM-COOPER: And then, you know, performances that showcase the work of people of color. And then symposia, you know, conferences where we can actually sit and just kind of talk about this subject and have really difficult conversations and bring practitioners into those conversations as well. That's kind of been the focus for the last couple of years through our festivals. But also we have a podcast series and we've used that a lot to talk about race.

KARIM-COOPER: And we did recently a podcast series on whiteness. And wanted to think about the, how whiteness is centralized not just in Shakespeare studies but also in education. And drama school training in the UK we were thinking about mainly. And how there's a real issue there with, you know, many black students and students of color just not feeling as though this is a world for them. And that's, there's been quite a bit of reckoning within the drama school community in the UK. And so we wanted to sort of try to host some of those conversations as well.

KARIM-COOPER: And then, of course, our Artistic Director, Michelle Terry, is really just beautifully so invested in all of this. And invested in a kind of ethos of anti-oppression and social justice and that The Globe's platform should be a place where questions around race and climate and gender and disability, those are questions that should be unpacked on The Globe's stage. And whether that's in our conference arena or our podcasts or in our performances.

KARIM-COOPER: And of course, you know, since the pandemic the theater industry is in, you know, it's in trauma at the moment. And our freelance community is in trauma at the moment. And so there's a lot that theaters have to be thinking about right now. But what's really nice to hear is that a lot of them at the forefront is, you know, coming back with a kind of antiracist agenda. And I think that if theaters don't do that they'll, there's gonna, they'll have trouble. They'll struggle. I really do. And it's really, really important to The Globe.

KARIM-COOPER: And The Globe has been thinking about this for more than just 2020. And so that's kind of sort of how race is coming into our thinking there. It's not just about this sort of presentation of people of all backgrounds on stage. It's about making sure that that representation is backstage and in the staffing and in the leadership as well. Because if you don't have that then it's just a presentation, isn't it? So those, I suppose those are the kinds of things that we're thinking about.

KARIM-COOPER: And there's just so much more to discover as we go on this journey and as we come back. And it's certainly one of the things that we've been thinking about too is how you have conversations about Shakespeare and race in a rehearsal room, right? 'Cause if you're gonna diversify your cast then you're gonna have to make sure that there's a kind of belongingness index within your theater as well. So don't just, you know, cast people of color in your shows but also, you know,

show hospitality. Make them feel like they belong there. And so you've got to make sure that everyone has a voice in the rehearsal room too.

KARIM-COOPER: And that's a really important part of the ethos, I think, at The Globe. But I was just wondering, you know, Tyler your, you know, I'm not an actor. [LAUGH]
You're an actor and so you actually, you know, you have to get inside these characters and you have to be in a rehearsal room with a director and you have to sometimes probably say words that you don't want to say or words that feel harmful. So I just wonder, if you could talk a little bit about your, you know, your approach to character and the rehearsal process and, you know, what is your process basically as an artist?

FAUNTLEROY: That's such a great question. I think it goes a lot in line with what you were saying about how it's great that we are having, you know, actors of color in telling these stories. But now that we've gotten that, now we see the nuance of what it means to have, you know, these bodies on stage, right? So I think for myself, I think specifically when it comes to, you know, the character of Hotspur. Like when I think back to working on that. The one thing that I felt really compelled by with that character is, you know, his strong sense of justice, right?

FAUNTLEROY: Like that's, that is what drives him at the end of the day, you know, is his strong sense of justice. And myself as a black man living in America in the year 2020, you know, 2019 at the time, but I don't have to reach far for that experience of knowing what injustice feels like. To, you know, to you know, really like rage against, you know, where we're at in this current climate, you know. And to use my voice to resist that, you know. Hotspur leading that resistance, that rebellion, you know, that is something that, you know, my identity, that's everything, right?

FAUNTLEROY: So it's so funny how, you know, when it comes to questions of like identity and process of building a character, in Shakespeare especially I couldn't forget my identity. I couldn't forget my blackness even if I wanted to when it comes to Shakespeare, right? Like there'll be things in the text that I, you know, I can't ignore, you know. That's, well, that sounds different now that I'm here, you know. For example like we had, there's a line in *Henry IV* where Kate, you know, it's the scene between Hotspur and Kate and they're, she calls Hotspur an ape.

FAUNTLEROY: And so we had to have that conversation of like, you know, hey this means, this is different now that, you know, Hotspur is being played by a black man. And so having an atmosphere where these conversations can take place is, you know, paramount, you know. Because a lot of times, you know, especially in white institutions actors of color don't always feel, you know, that they have the floor. That they have the space to, you know, talk about these things. Because they might be, you know, gaslit or, you know, they'll just, it'll be to no avail, you know. You don't know what'll, the repercussions. You don't want to be labeled as difficult to work with because you tried to stand up for yourself.

FAUNTLEROY: 'Cause you know that happens [LAUGH], you know, as we all know. But yeah, so I would say, like I said, identity and, you know, who I am, that's everything when it comes to building a character. Because even outside of, you know, just that, I think of like all those, you know, actors of color that came before me. Like when you look at, you know, what happened with like the African Grove, you know, Theater and how, you know, those actors of color were like literally thrown in jail for doing a production of Shakespeare. And it, and when I think about, you know, where they came from and where I am, you know, today, I'm like, well wow. That is, that in and of itself is, you know, a form of protest, right?

FAUNTLEROY: Like that is something that is, you know, me being in this space, telling these stories, you know, and being like my full self, you know, exhibiting black excellence, that is protest, you know. Especially at a place like The Folger, you know, in Washington, D.C. on Capitol Hill of all places, right? Like that's, that is, it doesn't, you, it doesn't get much more [LAUGH], you know, more of a protest than that. So I think that are all, those are all the things that really drive me. And I think it really came to a head especially when we did *Henry IV* because, you know, I think about that scene where I'm, where Hotspur is talking to the king, you know, in the very beginning, you know.

FAUNTLEROY: And I have that scene with Peter Crook who is amazing and how I'm looking the king dead in the face and squaring off against him and I just am like, like I said, I don't have to reach that far for that as a black man of this country. I know what it's like to, you know, to look oppression in the face. You know, to scream out and rage out against it. You know, to no avail or to avail, right, you know. I know what that's like so I don't have to, so yeah, it's everything. That is everything in how I build a character. And I find it especially the case in Shakespeare. But, you know, that's my end of things as the actor.

FAUNTLEROY: But, you know, as, you know, from a director's standpoint, Rosa, I mean I was blessed to work with you and that was such a great, great, great time we had doing that show. And, you know, I'm grateful that you are a director where we were able to have conversations like that, you know, when things arose. So I'm curious, you know, when it goes, when it comes to the rehearsal process and, you know, we're have, when we're talking about, you know, things of this nature, what goes into that? What goes into casting? You know, what's kind of your mindset on that?

JOSHI: Yeah. It's a huge question, you know. And I'm trying to think where to start. I'm just really struck by you talking about your presence on stage being a form of protest in this work and that, and the risk it takes to do this work. Because I also think of like artists of color I know who don't want to do the work, right? Who reject the work. And I think, you know, over the years I think to myself that it doesn't have to be for everyone. I think that the saying, you know, I've been

thinking a lot about how we as artists are led to believe that Shakespeare is not just a sign of excellence, but the sign of excellence, right?

JOSHI: And I think Shakespeare is a sign of excellence in the same way that August Wilson is or that José Navarro is or that Suzan-Lori Parks is, right? There are, you know, how, why do we hold this as the sign of excellence? At the same time like, 'cause I live in this space that is difficult for me in this time I think sometimes because I think also, but I love Shakespeare. [LAUGH] I genuinely, genuinely love Shakespeare. And I see how problematic Shakespeare can be. And I like to think that my love has developed from just beyond infatuation perhaps into something that is really deep and lived.

JOSHI: Where you can really, have to grapple with what's ugly in it and have to grapple with what's difficult in it if you really do love the work. Just in the same way that I might have to grapple with somebody, you know, someone that I'm having a relationship with and I, and they say something racist [LAUGH] to me, right? I'd, like I love them and I have to grapple with them and not just pretend that it's not there. So that's what I feel like we have to do with Shakespeare. Like that moment of saying the word ape, calling you an ape.

JOSHI: And I remember that Maribel, the actor who played it, just came right out and said, "I'm not saying this word to a black man." She's a black woman. And I was like, great. 'Cause I had, it had escaped me in the cutting, right? Because I probably hadn't, I didn't know who I was casting at that point. And then after it was cast I hadn't gone back to look at it. I think I was really lucky to work at Oregon Shakespeare Festival before I'd come to The Folger also where I had this experience of working on *Henry V* with 10, there was a cast of 12 and there were 10 actors of color.

JOSHI: And we joked about there being two token white men in the cast. And I got to see what that was when I was in a space. I mean working with Upstart Crow was really revelatory to me to be in a space with women and non-binary folk and be like, oh, I'm used to being one of three women in the room. But I was so used to being the only person of color often or one of three people of color that it wasn't until I had that experience working on *Henry V* that I was like, I looked around the room and I was like, there are like four white people in this room. [LAUGH]

JOSHI: And that was a revelation to me about what was possible in this space. And when, and with my own company, with Upstart Crow, we talk a lot about like in casting, as you said, Farah, it's not enough to just put, you know, a multicultural cast onstage because it's that difference between colorblind and color conscious. And I, you know, I don't necessarily go into something saying this character must be a person of color and this character…

JOSHI: Like I'm usually wanting to have as many people of color as I can onstage and then thinking about, okay, what are the implications though, right? When we

did *Henry IV* I got to work with an incredible actor, Ed Gero, who was playing Falstaff. And I knew I had a white Falstaff. And so then as I'm thinking about equity across the cast I'm thinking about, you know, what are, what kind of agency do the actors of color have in, the characters that are played by actors of color, right?

JOSHI: What status? Is it that all the young people are people of color and all the older people are white? Is it that all the servants are, you know, like, or all the people that have no power in the play? So I was, I sort of wanted to have two actors of color play Hal and Hotspur knowing that I had this great actor. So it does mean you have to be conscious about it, right? Like, you have to be intentional.

JOSHI: And we, and I was lucky enough to like be able to audition all over. And we, and in New York, you know, I think we saw 98, over 100 actors. And I'd say like there were 70 actors of color. So this idea also that you can't find actor, you know, 'cause there's all kinds of reasons why you'll be told that you, you know, there, but there are. You, it just might take a little bit more work for us to catch up, right? And for us to make sure that Tyler continues to get work in Shakespeare so he doesn't leave.

JOSHI: So that when I'm looking for that person, if I live long enough, that 50 year old, incredible, black actor, there won't be like two in the, you know, that we can think of. There, that there will be this pool of talent that we've invested in. And so what does equity, equity shouldn't just be like visual, right? 'Cause I'm also then thinking like who has the equity contracts? What are the, you know, what are people getting [paid?]? 'Cause equity, like as you were saying, Farah, is like who's working behind, right?

JOSHI: Who's on my, the design team? Which took me a longer time to get, come around to I have to say, right? Like because it's a process. And as you were saying, Farah, it's a reckoning, right? So I, as someone who came up in a very white system and took a lot of those things for granted, didn't question it. I was assimilated. I mean to some extent I am still assimilated, right? So it makes me so happy to be in a space with someone like Tyler who is, from the get go, out the gate thinking about things that took me years to think about.

JOSHI: So I see we have some, we have a question in here. How has this call been, oh, so should I read the question out maybe? "In recent months We See You, White American Theatre, a community of BIPOC theatermakers has demanded antiracist change across the profession. Over 100 case signatures have joined their statement. How has this call been received? Are changes now in motion?" Does, do either of you have…

KARIM-COOPER: Well, I'm very familiar with that letter. In fact I gave a talk several months ago and I incorporated it because I was actually thinking about the British theater industry 'cause that letter, so much of what was said in that letter actually applies to the British theater industry. It's an incredible, it's a pamphlet,

which is, you know, a kind of guide on, you know, this is, these are the kinds of changes that need to happen. And there's no sort of debate. It's just, you need to do this. And I don't know, maybe you can speak better to how it's been received in America and how the American theater industry is responding to this.

KARIM-COOPER: We've had a very, we've had similar challenges to the British theater industry through a campaign called Pull Up or Shut Up, which is, was really about asking theaters and other organizations to put, you know, post their stats in terms of what the, their racial diversity stats were. And yeah, some theaters were, and organizations were brave enough to do this. And what we saw were, you know, a disproportionate number of [LAUGH], you know, there were backstage staff, boards, executive leaderships were like 85 to, 75 to 85 percent white.

KARIM-COOPER: Sometimes 90 percent white. And then you had, you know, casts that were quite diverse actually. And that was kind of the trend that you saw. And that, what that whole campaign was about was drawing attention to it and raising awareness about it. But I don't know. Maybe you could speak to how it was, it's been received in the U.S.

JOSHI: I think, I can speak personally what I know from people that I've talked to. I don't know enough about the larger movement. But in Seattle, where I'm based, there are, there have been meetings of Seattle theater leaders to talk about what to do, an action plan in response. So unpacking a lot, and using that statement as a jumping board. And I agree with you that there's no question about, it's not being contested in any way. It's just like, we have to do this and what are we going to do.

JOSHI: So I do think that theaters are taking it seriously and talking about how to uplift BIPOC communities and theater artists and what it means to actually share resources and what it means, you know, and how we are. And so I haven't been able to attend all of these meetings but I've, as part of Upstart Crow Collective I've been attending meetings also.

JOSHI: And I think that it, you know, as a reckoning I remember at some meeting people saying like, "Oh, there is this time" because we're in this time of pandemic. And one artist, black artist, spoke and said, "You know, it's hard to hear that because whether there's a pandemic or not I live in this body and I go out and I confront this all the time. And I don't have the luxury of thinking about whether like oh it's because I have the time now to think about it. Whether I have the time or not this is, I confront this."

JOSHI: And that was really, you know, painful to hear and really, you know, because I'm really grateful that people are thinking about it and it's this awful thing that we're able to think about it because of this awful thing that's going on that has allowed us to stop to think about it also. And that for years, you know, many of us have had to deal with it whether we have the time to stop and think about it or not. Yeah. I wonder for you, Tyler, what you're…

FAUNTLEROY: Yeah I think, you know, the, just to echo what both of you said earlier, what I was seeing a lot, you know, when the letter came out and We See You White American Theatre, you know they've had a very heavy presence on social media. And the thing that, you know, what you were saying, Farah, that about, you know, you, both of you were saying about, you know, it's not enough to have just the diverse cast. It's not enough to, but who's behind the scenes? And, you know, on Instagram especially We See You White American Theatre, they've been showing, here are these big theaters. This is their staff, you know.

FAUNTLEROY: And you see who is behind the scenes, you know, making the decisions, who's in the meetings. And it's mostly, you know, white people. Which to me, you know, as an actor, you know, you know these big theaters but you don't always get to see or maybe you don't always know off the top of your head, you know, who are the people making these decisions. And, of course, you know, like American theater is obviously like mostly whitewashed. But like to see it like that, to see just, you know, headshot after headshot of staff member, you know, and to not see yourself represented in the decision making process back there, let alone, you know, just, so and then it's all the more to say like wow.

FAUNTLEROY: Okay. So, you have these shows but when is that going to happen back there, you know, back behind the front desk, you know? When is that going to, you know, like you said, equity. Like when is that going to then, you know, when are we gonna have that conversation about arts administration, you know, and that field, you know? And opening up the doors for that? But it's great to see, you know, organizations like that. And I know Broadway Advocacy Coalition, you know, the work that they've been doing. You know, just to have these conversations, you know, if for nothing else that, you know, actors of color finally feel like we can at least say it, you know?

FAUNTLEROY: 'Cause I know, like I was saying earlier, for the longest time, you know, there's that thing of let me pick my battles, you know?

JOSHI: Mm-hmm.

FAUNTLEROY: Because if this isn't something that's gonna, you know, that's life or death or it's like, you know, I guess like the overt racism and the implicit bias. You know, you want to pick your battle of which am I gonna complain about? Which am I gonna raise, you know, awareness for, you know. But now the conversation, you know, is for all incidents, all, you know, anything that can make us, you know, feel excluded. Which is great, you know. So I think, and like you both were saying, I haven't really seen any pushback from theaters. You know, the speed at which they do that is a different conversation but like I think for the most part, yeah. Everybody's just kind of been like, okay that, this needs to be something we look at and talk about.

JOSHI: I'm thinking about what you're saying about being in the room and picking your battles and like speaking in a room. And I'm reminded when we did *Henry IV,* Tyler, if you remember, one day we shot, The Folger is so wonderful because you rehearse in this, you, we rehearsed on the stage. That's incredible. Like, we're not in a rehearsal room. We were on the stage, on the set. And then it's, the gallery is open so there's people coming by and watching the process. And we left it open most of the time.

JOSHI: But one day we closed because, a question came up about a staging, a moment of staging. And it was a really interesting thing for me to clock because, you know, as a director, you're really busy. You're in tech and you're like, okay. You got, I'm doing this and this. And then I saw Ed Gero, the wonderful actor I was talking about, working with Tyler and, because Tyler, the, Hotspur has to get taken off stage by Falstaff. The actor playing Falstaff it's like a Lear Cordelia moment. You can never carry the, you know, the actual actor off so you have to figure something out.

JOSHI: So they were figuring it out and I saw Ed saying, "Okay lift your legs and lift your butt" and drag him offstage. And in my mind I was like thank goodness Ed is taking care of that. That's so great and I'm gonna focus on this. And then somebody brought up, you know, there's a large white man dragging a black body offstage. And I hadn't clocked that, right? Like so we shut down and we talked about, that led to an opportunity to talk about other things.

JOSHI: And I just want to say that on my part, like it's easy as a director, as an artist, to get defensive about it or to feel that you've done something wrong. And I had, right, 'cause I hadn't seen it. But I just want to point out that the grace with which the actors gave me the space to grapple with that and say, "Yeah, I didn't see that and I, and we need to do something different clearly." But like to talk about it instead of just being like, oh yeah, I'll fix that.

JOSHI: It wasn't just about fixing the moment. It was about like let's talk about what this is. And then we came up with something that I liked much better, right? Like we came up with something that was more symbolic in the storytelling and more theatrical as a way of getting Hotspur offstage. But those moments, those conversations take time and I think that's what I feel like we need to make sure that we build into our process. Because it's so easy to just be like, we don't have time. We got to get the show up.

JOSHI: The show has to get up and that's the priority. So we don't have time for that conversation.

FAUNTLEROY: Right.

JOSHI: But I think that's changing. We have to make time for those conversations.

FAUNTLEROY: And I would agree. I mean I just think about just how as an actor I feel like there's a vulnerability that Shakespeare requires that is unique to Shakespeare I feel like as a performer. So when it comes to these kinds of conversations, I agree with you, Rosa, in that we have to take the time to do it. 'Cause I remember we, it's like, you know, we're trying to stage this three hour epic, you know, and in this short amount of time, you know. But it means, it makes all the difference when we actually intentionally stop to have these conversations. Because, you know, your actors are, you know, we're all pouring out of ourselves to tell this story.

FAUNTLEROY: And like I said, Shakespeare's, is, it's hard to do [LAUGH], you know. It can be hard, you know. And so but to pour out in that way artistically but then to be poured back into, you know, as an artist to have these kinds of conversations like we had, it makes all the difference, you know. It certainly does. And I'm so glad we got to have that conversation. And, you know, we were actually, like you said, able to craft something that was even cooler, even better, even, you know, that told a stronger story, you know.

KARIM-COOPER: That's one of the things that the letter kind of outlines isn't it? Is making sure that those kinds of conversations, that your, the actors feel safe in a rehearsal room to have those conversations. I'm lucky enough to get in there sometimes in The Globe. And we did a production of *Midsummer Night's Dream* 2019. [LAUGH] Feels like ages ago now. And, you know, we, there were quite, there was a large number of actors of color in that cast.

KARIM-COOPER: And, you know, there's some really difficult lines that a lot of, you know, that Shakes and race scholars have talked about many times in that scene in the forest when Lysander is rejecting Hermia and he weaponizes the, you know, racialized language.

JOSHI: Mm-hmm.

KARIM-COOPER: In order to spurn her. And so I was kind of giving them a talk about race and Shakespeare and a couple of the actors were kind of like, no, she didn't just go there did she? Are we allowed to have this conversation? Or is she going there? She's going there. And so then they were just like, oh my God. We get to have this conversation. And the director was amazing. He was, you know, really intent on objectifying that scene.

KARIM-COOPER: Because actually what often happens is it's either omitted, and sometimes the actors are not consulted about that, you know, that exchange, or it's just kind of, it just happens so quickly nobody actually pays in, you know, to the racial language that comes out. And so what they did was that because Lysander was under the influence of the drug, *per se*, they kind of had it when he said the word, Ethiope, he kind of stopped. And it was a black actor himself. And he kind of stopped and went [MAKES NOISE].

KARIM-COOPER: And the whole audience just went [MAKES NOISE]. Like they all heard racism in that moment just because of that one expression. What he did with that line. And I just thought that was amazing because for the first time the audience was kind of really aware that there was a racial undercurrent, a racial punch in that play. And that was because of a really careful conversation that the director enabled in the space with the actors.

JOSHI: I love when that happens. When you can really point out and continue, but continue the story also, right? So that it was part of the storytelling of the piece also. And I think that is, that's really exciting to me because it's keeping the audience engaged with the story. But also bringing up race in a very potent way and that it exists in the text in a way that sometimes we don't want to acknowledge, right? There's a question here, Shakespeare is a sign of excellence, doesn't have to be the sign of excellence.

JOSHI: "Does Shakespeare help us to understand race in ways that other white male dramatists do not?" That is a fascinating question and makes me feel like I need to go away and think about it [LAUGH] for half an hour before I could properly answer it. I mean I would say I don't know if Shakespeare intentionally does that, right?

JOSHI: Like I don't know that whoever Shakespeare was or whoever wrote these plays was necessarily wanting to help us understand race [LAUGH] more in the writing of it. But I just feel like because, I think there's an, for me, and I'm interested to hear what you both think, but for me there's an opportunity to think more intentionally about it because everyone says this is humanity, right?

JOSHI: Everyone says, because it's classical work, because it's Shakespeare that this is, it gets to something core that is human. And so to me what is, what I think a lot about what universal is code for, [LAUGH] right? And whenever someone says "that's a universal feeling" I'm just like, universal for who? In what context? In what space? And so I feel like Shakespeare has the opportunity because of how revered Shakespeare is and because he's seen as this great humanist for us to question our understanding of race maybe

KARIM-COOPER: I totally agree. I think that it's rather that he's, that Shakespeare's work is a great site for, he's a vehicle rather. I don't think he's the be all in this discussion. But I think it's a great site for a sort of exploration of racial thinking and race making in this time period, in the pre-modern period. Because it's so much of what was made then we are living with now. We're living with the consequences of now.

KARIM-COOPER: And because of Shakespeare's iconicity and his canonicity as you say that his, you know, the idea of Shakespeare as this great humanist and all of those other certain Bardic things that we say about Shakespeare are, you know, the

reason why that's a really great space. Because then, you know, everyone will, people will hear it hopefully if they open their minds.

FAUNTLEROY: Yeah. I would agree with both of what you said. I think, like I was saying earlier, as an actor, or really, 'cause what you were saying when you were sharing the story, Farah, with what Lysander has to say, you know, in *Midsummer* and how when you had that conversation the students were like, oh, are, is this where we're going? I think as an actor there have been moments, you know, in the text where I'm like, oh wow. We're here. Okay. [LAUGH] You know, these are, here we, here, okay. Like I said, when it comes to my identity, my blackness, I couldn't forget even if I wanted to. You know, the text makes, the text will remind me, you know, the text will remind me who am I in this cast and what does the rest of the cast look like, you know?

FAUNTLEROY: So yeah, I would agree in that yes it's, I don't believe he's the end all be all but I think if nothing else in myself, you know, I'm like, oh wow. Okay. We're, we, at least, yes. Like you were saying Farah, just to echo that. He's the vehicle, you know, but he's not the end all be all.

JOSHI: Last question. When we, I'll just read it out. "When we gather together in theatrical space in real time there's a special kind of presence that we all value. What lessons are we learning about theatrical presence in the absence of live theater?" I'm gonna cry. [LAUGH] Who wants to start with that? Like what…

KARIM-COOPER: I can, I won't speak for a long time 'cause it, yeah, it's kind of a big emotional question isn't it? And, you know, we're coming to the end of our year. We had a big staff meeting online today and just sort of reflecting on the past few months and what's been going on. What lesson are we learning about theatrical presence? It, I think the big lesson is its absolute necessity. It's like air for many of us, right?

KARIM-COOPER: It's not just being able to be in the same space with others but it's also just the art of storytelling and listening to stories with real bodies in the room. It's an embodied, lived experience. And particularly, you know, from my position at The Globe. The Globe is one of the most visceral theater experiences ever. It's an unmediated sensescape. It's, you know, bodies and voices and it's just an incredible, incredible experience.

KARIM-COOPER: And so I think that we all need art. We all need theater. And I think that's what's been one of the biggest lessons, apart from, you know, everything we've been talking [LAUGH] about tonight as well.

JOSHI: Yeah. What about you, Tyler?

FAUNTLEROY: Yeah, no. I think that, you know, one thing I found in this time is that storytelling always finds a way. And I think with these conversations we're

having I think, I agree with you, Farah, in that there's really nothing as visceral as live theater, as in your face as live theater can be. And I think these conversations that we're having and the kind of art and storytelling that is still finding a way, you know, even on these virtual platforms. [CLEARS THROAT]

FAUNTLEROY: When we do get that presence back, when we do get that live theater aspect experience back, I'm very excited to see, you know, the kind of stories we tell and the things that do change. Because we do have, you know, the, this vehicle back. So I think, yes, I'm learning and just, it's being reiterated and the necessity of it, but also, and also the sense of community, you know? And how there's nothing quite like, you know, coming together, whether you're sitting in the dark watching the show together or you're the community of making something together.

FAUNTLEROY: There's nothing that really replaces that. Yeah, this is one of those things where you could go for days and days and days but I'll pass it to you, Rosa.

JOSHI: It's a hard one, right? It's so hard because I'm also an educator, right? And so I, throughout this year I'm continuing to teach theater. I'm continuing to try to make some kind of theater with my students, right? So that I, in some ways I, you know, I thought to myself, what am I gonna do? Just stop teaching theater for a year? Or stop teaching? I have, like so there's something great about being an educator in this moment that makes you have to stay hopeful. That makes you have to like say like, okay. What are the possibilities of this forum that we're in?

JOSHI: And so I'm sure we're, maybe we are all really sick of Zoom theater [LAUGH] but it is the medium that we have right now, right? So how will that theatrical, I don't know that its presence but element of storytelling, how will we keep that alive so that we are like our skills are there, our hunger is ripe, you know, for when we come back. We're not going to have just been like, oh we're not doing anything for a year. We're gonna have worked on how to tell story through this imperfect, obstructive medium some might say, [LAUGH] you know.

JOSHI: And what it has been for me though is that it's made me go like, okay. What is theater and what is theatrical? And I love a challenge, right? So I'm like, how am I gonna make theater on Zoom? Not like a poor version of theater but how can Zoom be theatrical? What does it mean to make theater on this and not say, oh it's really film or it's video or it's recorded, right? Like, so I've been thinking about imagination. I've been thinking about what I love to do in theater which is expose artifice. So I'm like, okay. 'Cause I kind of love a Brechtian approach to theater

JOSHI: I'm like okay. Brechtian Zoom theater. What does that mean [LAUGH]? To try and still keep that alive but for sure, as soon as we are able to be in person again, I think like all the work that I do is pretty physical already. But like I just want everybody to like slap and touch and spit on each other and lick each, and do like all the visceral, corporeal things that we have just not been able to do.

JOSHI: I'm thinking about how much the theater is about the body and about how we interact physically with each other as much as, you know, the spoken word. Because the thing is, if we say Shakespeare is all the spoken word, then like spoken word we can just do it here, right? We still have the spoken word. But it's not. It's that, you know, that theatrical, I mean in space, in time, and but it really is because you might spit on me. [LAUGH]

JOSHI: That, you know, like that's the thing about The Globe I think. You might actually get spit on, right?

LYNCH: We might be together again. Someday we will be together again.

JOSHI: We will.

LYNCH: In the meantime, thank you so much. This has been, you have given us more than we could have asked for from this Zoom translated into YouTube conversation. I've been sitting here nodding, you know. And I know I'm nodding in community with others even though I can't see them. But I'm pretty sure I speak for many others when I say thank you so much for these bracing insights that showed your vulnerabilities and are all totally grounded in lived experience.

LYNCH: It has been such an important set of reminders of how we can go in a different direction in a different way. I came into this conversation this afternoon for some reason thinking of Arthur Miller. Arthur Miller's words were in my head, "Attention must be paid." But I'm actually leaving it thinking about *Coriolanus*, "There is a world elsewhere." I don't care what kind of world he had in mind. We've got a better world that we're gonna get to. And you guys have really helped us understand why we need to change that world and how we could get there.

LYNCH: How different it will be if there's a lot less that we have to unlearn about racial attitudes and blind spots. And really appreciate the work you've done today and what you've given us. Thank you to everybody else who's out there with us on YouTube. Thank you, again, to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for their support of this series. To close, I want to say, you've also given us at The Folger so much to think about.

LYNCH: You've illuminated our own opportunities and our own responsibilities and you've given us fresh eyes and new dedication to get back to our work. During the construction process and now, of course, amplified by the pandemic, we are closed. But we're working hard. We've got the time. We've got the energy. We've got the commitment to think trough new ways of serving our audiences, expanding our audiences, diversifying them, and also bringing them together.

LYNCH: So that it's not just a set of researchers over here, a set of theater goers over there, high school teachers here. But really thinking through how we can bring

all of our audiences together. It's exciting work. We're proud to be doing it. And here's my pitch [LAUGH]. If you out there could help us with some support we'd really be grateful. This is all about if and to the extent you are in a position to contribute we'll be grateful. Our institution, like so many others, is founded on philanthropy.

LYNCH: And again, you can help us continue to serve our audiences, integrate our audiences, expand them and diversify them. I hope you'll come back. Next month's episode is on race and the archive. And it will feature Urvashi Chakravarty from the University of Toronto and Marisa Fuentes from Rutgers University. That session is January 28th, again at 3:00 PM Eastern time. Thank you all for joining us. Thank you panelists for inspiring us. Take care, everybody. Bye.