

## Event Transcript

November 5, 2020 – *Performance-in-Place: Waste of A Nation* by Baseera Khan

Sara Reisman:

Right. Well, welcome everybody. Thank you for joining the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation and The 8<sup>th</sup> Floor for *Waste of a Nation*, a performance by the Baseera Khan and guests. You'll find out about those guests shortly. Reflecting on months spent in the confines of their home and studio, which morphed into a classroom, disco, and cafe, Baseera Khan will inhabit multiple performance persona as she code switches between personalities to deconstruct contemporary notions of cancel culture, the appropriation and re-appropriation of language and recently heightened awareness of racist intersections with class and the environment and how cultural capital gain can come from both source and colonizer. The performance will be followed by a discussion or perhaps it is a discussion. Before we begin, please note that this event includes ASL interpretation and captioning. Please refer to the chat section for accessibility to resources. I'll quickly point out that our ASL interpreters include Greyson Van Pelt and Francesca Short.

The two of them will tag team and we have captioner. So if you look for them in the grid that can be helpful. In the meantime, please set your sound to mute until we open the conversation up to your questions at which point we recommend you use the chat function to submit your query. Also, note this event is being recorded in order to be shared with those unable to attend the live performance. A few points of introduction. My name is Sara Reisman, I'm the Executive and Artistic Director of the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation, which is based in New York City, where we've supported art and social justice through grant making for the last 25 years. And since 2015 at The 8<sup>th</sup> Floor we've been organizing exhibitions and public programs that address themes of social justice and political import.

Baseera Khan's *Waste of a Nation* is the eighth installment of *Performance in Place*, a virtual performance series we launched back in May of this year to comply with social distancing safety requirements. These virtual commissions highlight the artistic potentials inherent in this new normal, demonstrating how artists like Baseera Khan and many others have adapted and evolved their practices in response to the restricted mobility being experienced across the world. Recent *Performance in Place* programs have included LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs, Alice Sheppard of Kinetic Light, Nicolás Dumit Estévez, Maria Hupfield, Eileen Myles, Aliza Shvarts, and last week Martha Wilson. I want to point you to the fact that the Rubin Foundation's 2021 open call for art and social justice grants to New York City-based organizations is now live, with a deadline of November 20<sup>th</sup>. Please visit the Foundation's website for more information at [www.sdrubin.org](http://www.sdrubin.org).

A few other news items, our next program will be presented in partnership with the Queens Museum on November 12th at 1:00 PM, titled, *From Touch Sanitation to 'for Forever...': Two works by Mierle Laderman Ukeles Respond to a City in Crisis*. So it's a conversation with Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Sally Tallant who's the Director of the Queens Museum and myself, hope you can join for that. That's at 1:00 PM. Also, noteworthy as the recent opening or reopening of The 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, where our current exhibition *To Cast Too Bold A Shadow* is currently on view by

appointment. *To Cast Too Bold A Shadow* examines entrenched forms of misogyny in our culture to understand how feminism, misogyny and sexism intersect. The exhibition is opened by appointment through January 23rd, featuring works by Aliza Shvarts, Jori Minaya, Yoko Ono, Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Anetta Mona Chisa and Lucia Tkacova, Furen Dai, Maria D. Rapticavoli, Rajkamal Kahlon, Tracey Emin and Betty Tompkins. Appointments can be booked by visiting The 8th Floor website, [www.the8thfloor.org/visit](http://www.the8thfloor.org/visit).

Before I introduced Baseera Khan, I'd like to take a few minutes to recognize our respective relationships to place. We are gathered virtually in many locations at once Manhattan and Brooklyn and elsewhere. Most of which, if not all are unceded lands. Tonight's event is organized by the Rubin Foundation. I've chosen to address a specific site where our offices are located, many of you know that's near Union Square, thereby acknowledging the Lenape community past and present as well as future generations. The Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation and The 8th Floor acknowledge being founded upon the exclusion and erasure of indigenous people, including those whose land is where the Foundation is located. This acknowledgement verbalizes a commitment to beginning the process of working to dismantle the ongoing legacies of settler colonialism, a commitment that's become all the more poignant and urgent in this time of political upheaval and resistance and of course, the presidential election that have already resulted in transformative activist engagement across the country.

I will also add a virtual land recognition device by Jill Carter professor in indigenous studies and the drama theater and performance studies departments at the University of Toronto. Carter writes, quote, "Zoom has a record at its headquarters in San Jose, California while Skype has erected one key arm of its operations in Palo Alto, California. This is a traditional territory of the Muwekma Ohlone tribal nation. Current members of this nation are direct descendants of the many missionized tribal groups from across the region. We who are able to connect with each other via Zoom or Skype or deeply indebted to the Muwekma Ohlone people as the lands and waters they continue to store and now support the people, pipelines and technologies that carry our breaths, images and words across vast distances to others, thank you."

So before we begin, I want to just ask that you please pardon our appearance as we will undoubtedly experience intermittent technical difficulties, we're all working from home. And now for the bios of our three guests, now it is my pleasure to introduce Sadma Lakshmi, an Indian-American heiress who is self-branded as a food activist, ex model and Instagram influencer. Sadma is also a curator of cute beauty rituals and objects she acquires on her travels. Sadma hailed from a lineage of pharmacists and homeopathic professionals that all work for Pfizer. Pfizer is a New York based big pharma company known mostly for products like Advil, Biafra, Xanax, and Zoloft. Sadma grew up using these medications like vitamins. Pfizer is known to be a medical industry giant that has had its fair share of legal troubles and scandal this includes but it's not exclusive to the Lakshmi family and marketing fraud allegations and unapproved clinical trials.

Sadma has dedicated her life to gorgeous things and all-natural products, or at least products that remind her of nature. Currently, Sadma is a cook on her own TV show called Brown Bitches Brew, a unique look at traveling and eating during a pandemic I highly recommend it. Sadma has published many books and is eager to develop her passion project, a perfume of the same

namesake as her cooking show, Brown Bitches Brew. Known professionally to dress over the top and all the wrong places, Sadma's behavior is nevertheless, perfectly delightful. Her essence is brand hoe and narcissist with the best intentions but she's incapable of critical thinking due to her medicinal diet. Welcome Sadma.

And now I'd like to introduce the Baseera Khan. Baseera Khan is an Afro South Asian performance artist who sleeps in most mornings, she sleeps in most mornings and ends most nights with a bottle of wine. Khan's family came from a series of textile workers and vegetable vendors from the mountains of Bangalore India. Khan's family background often appears in the artwork they present. It is rumored that Khan invented the first eggplant emoji to honor their late father, may he rest in power. Other creative ventures, Khan is known for consists of token-twerking and hiding behind large bolts of fabric. This is all based in some amount of fact.

Drinking has now become the biggest secret for Baseera Khan, kept hidden for most family members and friends, but I think we're out with it now. Formerly Baseera kept secrets that consisted of listening to rap and indie rock music late at night, at least while living with their parents. Baseera also quickly realized as long as they lived under the roof of family, they should instead observe Saudi and Egyptian audio recordings of tone deaf men reading the Koran. Other secrets, Baseera has given up for their current vice includes, not exclusively Balenciaga, Gucci, Sex, Gossip, and Envy. Baseera's essence is unrealistic dreamer, one who was attracted to shiny objects and fancy words, always goes over budget and asks for way too much of your time. Welcome Baseera. Welcome.

Baseera Khan:

Hi.

Sara Reisman:

Hi. And now it's my pleasure to introduce Kunda Lamey an Australian-American Asian-passing white lady from Columbus, Ohio who started a variety of shell corporations at very young age. She's also very tan. Kunda Lamey comes from a lineage of siblings that have never had to work and yet she has filed for bankruptcy five times. Despite this misfortune Lamey can still successfully take out any loan necessary to keep dreaming up the next scam. Lamey is mostly known as a yoga instructor from Rishikesh India. Kunda Lamey likes to be referred to as Mrs. Guru Kunda Lamey. Lamey asks you to reach deep within your pockets to pay the \$7,000 fee that will include an 18 hour flight in coach to Rishikesh India. Once you arrive, you'll join a retreat, that promotes starvation and it keeps your arms and hands up in the air for eight hours a day so maybe we can do that while we think about Kunda Lamey's practice.

Kunda is interested in culture spying with a specificity and energy that lies dormant at the base of each person's spinal cord until it is activated. Lamey can help you activate and channel upwards through the chakras, the process is spiritual perfection is only one, Cash App click away. Tonight Kunda Lamey will walk us through a session of energy building through a practice of mantra, tantra, yantra, and Maison Margiela. Kunda Lamey's essence is cult leader and a walking example of ne'er do well a, a pyramid scheming yogi. So welcome Kunda, Baseera and Sadma,

welcome. So I thought we could kick off our discussion by asking you all where you've been, what you've been doing, how you've been doing, where is your head at right now? What are you doing for self-care while we wait for election results and shelter in place, yet again.

Sadma Lakshmi:

I think I should go first.

Sara Reisman:

That's fine.

Sadma Lakshmi:

We're all prepared, don't you think?

Sara Reisman:

I would agree.

Sadma Lakshmi:

The funny thing about these guys and thank you for inviting me is, I mean, where's the camera anyway? Where am I supposed to look? Am I supposed to look there? Sara?

Sara Reisman:

I think you're looking in the right direction.

Sadma Lakshmi:

So let me get my little script because I, unlike other people I'm really well scripted. Everything I say is about my brand, everything. So looking at my lips when I say this, where am I?

Dante Migone-Ojeda:

Right there, my apologies.

Sara Reisman:

Hello?

Sadma Lakshmi:

There I am. I wanted to... You, don't look at that. Okay, we're ready? So I learned that kids that are being born this year have a new generational name, it's like Gen Alpha. It's true. Or basically

after deep research, I learned that the nickname is generation medicinal. I'm a baby boomer but I look like a millennial because I have a breathing technique. Close up, please. Listen, Miss guru Kunda Lamey, I'm speaking. And daily chakra exercises, I can get you there. I'm speaking okay? That's just fine let me finish, okay? If you don't mind, let me finish. We can have a conversation, we can. Please do, people in Australia know better. Now I'll have to clean the air with my Gucci filler.

So, based on the fact that newborn babies right now are being called generation medicinal. I'm working out a business plan. A plan that charts out 20 years, the next 20 years imagine that, you have a baby the baby happens because one night you're cuffing, that's right and you get fucked and then you get pregnant, now you have the medicinal baby. 20 years later my plan is glorious, now let me tell you what that plan is. Number one, no soil gardens. Yeah, that's right no soil gardens will replace all dirt gardens all over the world. There will be no more earthly items such as dirt. Hurricanes are going to wash the earth away, the earth will be underwater anyway, You can basically grow any herbs with any mason jar and fresh water.

Number two, cinnamon detox tea. Can you show the big red image, please? There Dante? Yes, cinnamon detox tea is going to replace alcohol, I guarantee it. Listen, girls, everyone wants to look young, right? Just listen to my 10 step plan that you can get in 20 years and we're going to be good just save your money. So, because everyone, now listen to this logic, because everyone will be so obsessed with what they look like, eventually the alcohol industry, the Seagram's family, The Bronfmans will get what they deserve and go bankrupt, freeing up millions of dollars for my products because people choose their vanity. People choose their vanity over being tipsy, drinking ages you ladies, drinking ages you so much. Plus, I really like being rich. It's also going to replace milk, I guarantee it. Okay. Here's another one, can you please put me back to my Brown Bitches Brew, Dante, please?

Dante Migone-Ojeda:

Sorry, I'm so sorry.

Sadma Lakshmi:

Now listen. Number three, sunscreen deodorant. You heard me sunscreen deodorant made specifically for your hair, your nails and your vagina. Yes, your vagina. Imagine if your top coat for your nails had UV protection, imagine that and it was PH balanced. So all those nasty beach trips where your nails get sunburned, that's not going to happen anymore. Wouldn't that be amazing?

Sara Reisman:

It would be.

Sadma Lakshmi:

We sweat on our nails Sara, do you know that?

Sara Reisman:

I didn't know that I'm-

Sadma Lakshmi:

[inaudible 00:23:03], nails, we sweat in our hair and we sweat down there. Number four, water. Number five is a tricky one. So you see this eye mask?

Sara Reisman:

Yes, I see it. It's hard to miss.

Sadma Lakshmi:

Well, it's also look the camera isn't really focusing on me right now, I'm getting really self-conscious, okay, thank you, Dante. You see this eye mask? So imagine if this eye-mask was filled with toothpaste. Now, why am I saying that? Now, listen, when you sleep at night and you have toothpaste in your eye mask, the mask will be stuffed with the toothpaste so that you can squeeze out the paste onto your brush and brush your teeth at night before you go to bed. It would feel really pillowy and soft and smell good too. It's really important to sleep guys, if you want to be young, you have to sleep. It keeps you young it really does. And when you brush your teeth, you get better sleep. Try it tonight, just try. You're going to have to wait 20 years to get this but if you try to sleep tonight, having brushed your teeth, you're going to wake up in the morning as fabulous moi. Guess what? It also gets rid of the bags under your eyes because you get better sleep at night duh. Listen to this, bitches bringing back old news, the aquarium toilet, please.

Dante Migone-Ojeda:

Of course.

Sadma Lakshmi:

An aquarium toilet, a place where you can use the restroom and watch all the plant life under water. Yeah, I'm bringing this back because why? Because it's a stress reliever. Listen, when you poop, it relieves stress, when you pee, it relieves stress. So it will get rid of those premature wrinkles that you think that your secret little botoxings, really it's just pushing the wrinkles to another place, everybody knows it because everybody sees it. Listen, now that you're unemployed you can't do the Botox. So I recommend you spend that extra money on building an aquarium where you shit. In 20 years, Hoboken will be underwater anyway New Jersey, The Upper Keys, St. Simmons, Georgia. Maybe we can give Georgia to the water gods and get rid of the others.

Sara Reisman:

She said it.

Sadma Lakshmi:

Okay, back out, might as well get your plants in order because the aquarium and the dirt list planting is going to go cute together. Now, number seven, Dante, can you please cue mold making objects.

Dante Migone-Ojeda:

Absolutely Sadma.

Sadma Lakshmi:

This right here is a Mickey Mouse mold of a pumpkin. What am I going to do with that? How am I going to make you a cute object with that? Listen, I have this plan to reshape vegetables into small little name plates. Do you know how they have the little name plates that say Jessica or sometimes they say Alison or sometimes they say Karen, I'm going to do that with vegetables. What'd you see behind me has already been done I'm just going to make it cuter and once I make it cuter, everyone's going to start eating your vegetables and when everybody starts eating their vegetables, everyone's going to get a lot cuter. Number eight, can you cue up my brand please.

Dante Migone-Ojeda:

Absolutely Sadma.

Sadma Lakshmi:

Number eight, actually for number eight. Let's just go back to not virtual, okay?

Dante Migone-Ojeda:

Okay.

Sadma Lakshmi:

Let me get a place because as much as I like you Sara, that's not me, okay? This is me. That's not me, this is me.

Sara Reisman:

Okay.

Sadma Lakshmi:

Come in close because I'm about to show you the key to life, massaging your face. You massage your feet don't you? You massage your toes you also need to massage your nose. And if you do that, I'm guaranteeing you, you're going to breed life. I'm using something that's already been invented but what I plan to do is make a mold of my tea and put the tea in there and somehow crystallize the liquid form into constantly being a solid. And in 20 years, I really do think that we're going to come up with that kind of technology.

Number nine, you know the idea of using whatever ingredients you have in your refrigerator to make your meal like pot roast or stromboli I don't know, is stromboli just a pasta. I don't know. Look, I'm going to put out a book, not a food recipes but of face mask recipes. It's brilliant, for example, now, write this down. I'll give you a second. I know you want to write this down. Do you write things down with your phone?

Dante Migone-Ojeda:

I do.

Sadma Lakshmi:

Do you write things down with a pencil? Write this down. Do it tonight, brush your teeth go to bed but do this first. Go to your refrigerator and take out the yogurt, the oatmeal and then get a spoon of turmeric mixed it all up and then put it on your face and sit there for 30 minutes, snack a little bit. You've done all that you wash it off, it's going to be brilliant your pores are just going to be super satiated. Then you're going to have this other recipe let's just say, I mean, come on let's just say. You go to your refrigerator and you pick out an avocado, strawberries and leftover wine mix it all up. If you don't have wine you can use apple vinegar and you put some honey in it and you stick it on your face. Same thing. Number 10, are you with me? Who's with me?

Sara Reisman:

I'm with you. I'm a hundred percent with you.

Sadma Lakshmi:

I don't really care if other people are with me, Sara because I'm really giving everyone the tools to life. We're about to have a coup.

Sara Reisman:

And we need these tools.

Sadma Lakshmi:

And we need these gorgeous tools. Number 10, vagina tanning, now you might be asking yourself do I have a vagina? Do you have a vagina? Everyone has a vagina. Look deep into your soul and find a vagina. Once you find the vagina the secret to life is tanning it. Now this requires



some sun lotion down there, don't over tan, edulis extract. Edulis extract will do the trick and it's good for the sun in anti-aging, you don't want your vagina to age. It doesn't have to age. You can put some on your face too so it's a, multi-use kind of like shampoo and conditioner in one. Bottom line is after all 10 of these steps in 20 years it'll give you the tools to be able to have sex with a gay man.

Sara Reisman:

That's what it's all about. Well, Sadma thank you so much for such a generous, a gift of these 10 points in your business plan. I'm actually stunned, I don't know how I'm going to integrate all of these right away. Maybe at some point we can let the group know what order to pursue this plan if it's one after the other in a sequence or are we looking at something more kind of wholistic. But while we think about that, I just want to switch gears and maybe engaged Mrs. Guru Kunda Lamey because her work, her practice is very much about self-care as well. Can I ask you what you're doing for self-care at this time Mrs. Guru, Kunda Lamey? Are you there?

Kunda Lamey:

Hi, yeah.

Sara Reisman:

Great to see you.

Kunda Lamey:

I will put my stash around my ass.

Sara Reisman:

Oh.

Kunda Lamey:

No, maybe I'll put it on my [crosstalk 00:37:27]. Now you asked me?

Sara Reisman:

What are you doing for self-care?

Kunda Lamey:

I hear you, okay, listen. Cha, cha, ching. Welcome to your life, welcome to my practice.

Sara Reisman:

Thank you so much.

Kunda Lamey:

All of you are beginners, Sara, all of you, every single one of you in your head. I want to try to start you all off with what I call the addictive meditation. We have this polarity with the earth, a magnet pulling your body this way and that way and this way and that way again, night and day, love and hate, right and wrong is a state. No, it is not fake. Good and bad, this energy is constantly going on which causes a great reaction within our bodies. To be overly obsessed with things outside of our possibilities, ourselves. This is why there's war, this is why there's this polarity. Part of being a person is alone and addictive. We have this polarity with the earth. What can we do?

Overly obsessed with your opposition to bring balance, the earth's polarity is our master. It's terrific really. It's true, it really is. I mean, most people are bipolar. What I want to help you do is be tri polar, tetra polar, hexa hepta polar, I want you to have it all. All the personalities in your head Sara. My training, what I want for you is to be empowered. I teach you a yoga of awareness, I do that work. We become aware in our power to become God. I can take you there. And when you are God that frees us up to embrace indulgence and have, we can have, we can make our own truth. We won't need to worry about what we can't have anymore because we just take. You can take it all. So come with me and I will teach you how to release your habits that are keeping you from your greatness. But wait, I don't know what I should share, let's call my lawyer.

Dante Migone-Ojeda:

Hello?

Kunda Lamey:

Hello. May I speak to Dante and Dante's offices and agency for creative design and integrity?

Dante Migone-Ojeda:

Speaking.

Kunda Lamey:

Dante, darling. How are you?

Dante Migone-Ojeda:

I'm well, how are you?

Kunda Lamey:

I just got in from London. I'm at this talk, this talkie talk and I'm about to reveal my practice and I don't know if it's a good idea, should I ask them for money first?

Dante Migone-Ojeda:

No, absolutely. Just do it. It'll be great publicity.

Kunda Lamey:

Publicity? Okay. So, my gran Daisy told me that I can share this very unique practice with you all but if you would like to send me money, you can send it to where I come from. Catch up at Kunda Lamey on Venmo. First, we're going to get into the pose, we're going to get into the pose and in order to get into the pose, I feel that I need to be immersed in [inaudible 00:45:43]. Immersed darlings, immersed. That's better, that's so better. Now, first I want to encourage you to wear some white.

You can do this along with me. Yes, if you just wear white, sometimes some of the fake gurus tell you to only wear white but that is fake, it's fake news. So, have you found white? Good.

Sara Reisman:

I'll get some white, hang on.

Kunda Lamey:

Well, I'm running out of time so I'm just going to get started. So you wear white to illuminate and magnify your aura. You want your aura to be protected from temptations. People usually look really bad in white though it protects your sense of being, white protects your sense of being. It somehow provides a shield in that way but because all of the light reflects off the color of white, instead of being absorbed by a darker color the magnetism of the world becomes attracted to you. You're protecting yourself but also attracting all of the attractive things. Are you listening?

Sara Reisman:

I am trying.

Kunda Lamey:

Now, if magnetism of the world become attracted to you, yes. Now you don't want any of that to slip out of your head. So cover it up. It looks like they don't have a head but I have head.

Sara Reisman:

I can see it, you're disappearing.

Kunda Lamey:

If you have trouble staying focused just put on that hat. I also like to kennel myself sometimes so I put on a little white noise to block out the other sounds. This is all for you to be able to create the energy that cultivates the best life for you. So begin by putting your hands close to your heart like this and so I chant, breathe in, breathe out. Don't close your eyes because I want you to see me, ready? Did you feel that?

Sara Reisman:

I felt it.

Kunda Lamey:

[inaudible 00:50:34], I feel a presence, I'm crying. Okay, breathe. Basically this means for a small amount of collateral, you are opening up your soul to be God, that's why I'm crying. The teacher, the one you need to know the most as you. God. So, perfect. So now, you're going to take your thumbs and put them sideways. And sometimes if you have a nice pair of Margielas, it can really enhance the thumb. I like to wear white Margielas so here we are, you ready? Place your thumbs at your temples like this and now close your eyes and open them again. Squeeze the back of your molars with your teeth, push the thumbs into your temples or if you have white, Margielas, do that. Push them into your temples. Satanam, true is our identity.

Sara Reisman:

Satanama.

Kunda Lamey:

Now lift up your leg and start to extend your hand from right to left. Touching your nose while you count to five. One, two, three, four, five. Is your leg up?

Sara Reisman:

Yeah.

Kunda Lamey:

What this is doing my children is it's clarifying to the universe that you are indeed sober and it is creating a bond with the universe so that you can operate a moving vehicle if need be. Now, I'm going to skip the rest because I really feel that I'm revealing too much.

Sara Reisman:

I agree with that I think.

Kunda Lamey:

Be love, be light and may the light deep within you guide you to your inner pussy. Venmo, thank you.

Sara Reisman:

So great to hear from you, Kunda, Mrs. Guru Kunda Lamey.

Kunda Lamey:

I have more.

Sara Reisman:

Oh?

Kunda Lamey:

Just a little. Can I?

Sara Reisman:

Bring it, yeah.

Kunda Lamey:

Can I get rid of the emergencies now that we're done with the spiritual work?

Dante Migone-Ojeda:

Of course Kunda Lamey.

Kunda Lamey:

Now, why did I share all that with you guys?

Sara Reisman:

Tell us why.

Kunda Lamey:

Just do this every day, just do this, just add this to your daily life. It's a great beginning, it's a part of a great start. You will fall in love with the practice because it will change your life. I have a daughter named India, I feel like for a really long time I was always saving India from one crisis

or another. When we see a sign of human excellence, a Vanguard, we see a sign of how we can seek to be better. Yes, you can create your own reality. You can choose to not be a victim, you can choose to be God. How do you become God? There was the story of a woman who had a clean, sorry my nose itched. There was a story of a woman who had to clean up after her husband after a long day at work. After she added this practice that I shared with you today, she started to sing while she did her laundry and mopped the floors. What this does is it takes away the addictive patterns to not enjoy our stations in life. Instead, she is trained to serve with happiness.

Sara Reisman:

Hmm.

Kunda Lamey:

While plotting her revenge. We get addictive to sabotage we are trying to get rid of the addictive sabotaging of ourselves and what this practice does is it trains us to sabotage the other because now you are God. [inaudible 00:57:21], my true essence, Venmo me.

Sara Reisman:

Mrs. Guru. I would like to ask if we could shift focus on the Baseera Khan for a moment if you'll allow it.

Kunda Lamey:

I'll allow it.

Sara Reisman:

I'm going to have to give some thought about what it means to be God. I wasn't expecting that but Baseera Khan, what are you doing for self-care while we're sheltering in place and waiting for election results? I think they're there somewhere. Ooh. Hello?

Baseera Khan:

Hey Sara.

Sara Reisman:

Hi.

Baseera Khan:

This moment. Very intense, thank you for having me. I feel like it's been at least an hour since I was able to say anything.

Sara Reisman:

Yeah.

Baseera Khan:

They're talkers. Okay, so my self-help kit is similar to Sadma. Sadma, there you are. I like reading, I like eating, I like drinking and thinking, I like long walks in the park and making art brings me a lot of joy so it does relieve stress because I too want to be ageless. It's interesting being in my apartment, which is my classroom, my studio, my home, my disco, my cafe. I make friends with my knives and I make friends with my vegetables you got to keep a conversation going. I'm at a crossroads, expanding mentally, mentally converting my apartment into a city, a sprawling space. I also talk to myself a lot inventing personalities that keep me entertained off social media, off FaceTime and off Zoom but here we are. I'm learning to spend days and days being myself without human contact. Are we human without contact? If a tree falls in the forest and no one hears it, did it make a sound?

Sara Reisman:

I think so.

Baseera Khan:

The tree will make a sound you're right, Sara. But even if nobody heard it because it could have been heard, I guess there's a little bit of nuance there since sound does not exist without our hearing of it, sound does not exist if we do not hear it. However, when a tree falls, the motion disturbs the air and this sends off wavelengths and I think that my cat can hear those wavelengths. So I have trained myself to start talking to my cat a lot. I don't know where she is. He's usually around my butt. Anyway, I've totally broadened my mind it's kind of funny how when you're in isolation you're able to make it up as you go. So I don't hate you Sadma, I just think that your vibes are totally tone deaf.

Every celebrity can be clueless to a certain degree, Mrs. Kunda Lamey, Mrs. Guru, you were such a grifter, a schemer, and you're not brown. I'm an artist so I'm complicit too in the same ways that you both are to be honest. We are all taught to be white supremacists and the descent from that is the real work, decolonizing our minds doing anti-racist training to live our lives. We cannot assume anyone is immune to this based off the color of one's skin being American is capitalism and capitalism breeds in humanity. We must question what normal behavior really is and why we deserve what we desire and why we desire what we deserve. I have some videos though, because I just got off this big project called By Faith and I did this project at the kitchen. So I put together some clips from like 13 to 14 hours of working with a big, beautiful team and I can share those with you.

Sara Reisman:

That would be great.

Baseera Khan:

So they involve sexuality during COVID, intimacy, race and agency endurance beautification strategies. So, I feel that Sara and William and Dante, if you could play them and then Sara, if you have any questions then we can wrap it up.

Sara Reisman:

Okay, fabulous. What's the first video?

Baseera Khan:

Dante, I'm a little shiny.

William Furio:

I'm going to go into the video.

Baseera Khan:

Okay, I'm sorry I'm ready.

William Furio:

This is called *Brandon Strawberry Moment*.

Brandon:

You can take off. It's not like you actually come see my shit.

Baseera Khan:

That is true, but I did teach you how to use a paring knife on the waffle truck. First you take a strawberry and then you cut it [inaudible 01:04:32].

Brandon:

I knew how to do it, I just wanted a reason to talk to you.

Baseera Khan:

Well, you have a funny way of showing it. So with that, I'm going to take a seat. That was-

Sara Reisman:



Look at your face.

Hello?

Baseera Khan:

Hi, I guess I'm not on the script anymore because [inaudible 01:05:04], so that was Brandon. Who's my friend that I had met on the waffle truck who's actually a trained doctor but we were walking around all night and then we went into this bodega. So what you saw was a scene of the bodega and I'm teaching him and reminding him how to spare a strawberry because basically nobody on the waffle truck knew how to actually take out the little green.

Sara Reisman:

What is this waffle truck that you speak of?

Baseera Khan:

When I first graduated from Cornell university, which is an Ivy League school, I actually started working on a waffle truck. I think I remember when you were working close city hall and I remember bringing you a waffle.

Sara Reisman:

Yeah, you did. You brought me a waffle filled with speculoos.

Baseera Khan:

Speculoos. Do you want to play another one?

Sara Reisman:

Absolutely, William?

William Furio:

Yep, I'm right there. The second video is *Ethan Logan Baseera Tent Moment*. [inaudible 01:06:25].

Speaker 9:

I'm trying to find [inaudible 01:06:26].

Speaker 10:

[inaudible 01:06:31], this one.

Speaker 9:

Oh, it's in my hair. [inaudible 01:06:51].

Speaker 10:

Fish. [inaudible 01:07:27].

Speaker 9:

All right. We're halfway done.

Speaker 10:

Are you enjoying yourself?

Speaker 9:

I'm just trying to fix my glasses?

Speaker 11:

You're stepping on the tar.

Speaker 9:

Let me get out of it first.

Speaker 11:

It's really windy out.

Speaker 9:

Can you hold that? I almost flipped [inaudible 01:08:16].

Baseera Khan:

So just like a beach scene. I mean, all of this stuff that you're going to see is basically me trying to put together 10 episodes that are me quarantining in this apartment by myself. And I'm having these fever dreams because I'm sick and I think that I'm in these places hanging out with my friends and I think that I'm having these conversations with people but I'm actually not. And so I'm going to try to edit things together like that. So go ahead and play the next one.

William Furio:

The next one's called *Rico Book Throwing Moment*.

Speaker 13:

And all of a sudden, all the books came crashing down and it was just it was almost like take these books, throw them on the ground.

Speaker 12:

You just want me to throw these books on the ground?

Speaker 13:

Just throw them on the ground. That's how loud it was. It was more, let me throw this. It was like...

Speaker 12:

Here, maybe it was even louder than that.

Speaker 13:

Oh, you want to try again. It was like... it was a rental.

Speaker 12:

For extra effect, this is by fighting.

Speaker 13:

Oh yeah. Screw you fighting. I can't read Farsi.

Speaker 12:

So all the books fell down.

Speaker 13:

Screw you Thames, Houston, Hudson, Yale.

Speaker 12:

Okay.

Speaker 13:

You want to throw this one?

Speaker 12:

No, you throw it. Screw you Black and white checkered concrete over.

Speaker 13:

You just said threw you.

Speaker 12:

Oh, screw you.

Speaker 13:

Don't throw the ball, okay?

Speaker 12:

Okay. Well that's what happened.

Speaker 13:

That's what happened.

Speaker 12:

The books fell down?

Baseera Khan:

Yeah. So, part of that scene is basically building a relationship around my friend and mentor Rico Gatson and I'm trying to explain to him that my house there is a spiritual presence here and the reason why the whole show is called *By Faith* is because it's based off the fact that I've lived here for so long and there was a spiritualist that lived here before me so I feel like I've always been fighting with that spirit. And so the night before COVID when there was a lockdown, all the books on my shelf can crashing down and no one got hurt. But the fact of it is that I kind of was taking the whole, I'm not going to get sick for granted, but then I like what happens to me? I'm held up in bed for weeks and weeks so, that's what that was. Anyway shall we watched one or two more and then we can wrap up?

Sara Reisman:

Yeah, we can have a few questions too.

Baseera Khan:

Okay.

William Furio:

So this is called *Acrylic Bed Moment*.

Baseera Khan:

So I'm using the *Acrylic Bed Moment* for transitions from reality to different kinds of realities. So it's going to allow for me to signify the transition of me having a fever dream of being with you and talking it's just like, this shit's not happening. So, that's that. And then there's one or two more, if you want to quickly just go through those. And I won't interrupt. You can just play them.

William Furio:

There's about four more actually.

Baseera Khan:

Okay. So how about we play the Tia Mill one and whatever else that you and Sara think are your favorite? We'll just do two more.

William Furio:

Yeah. I'm going to say Vaginal Davis if that's okay.

Baseera Khan:

Okay. We'll end on the vag.

Sara Reisman:

Okay.

William Furio:

This is called *Lia and T Mask Moment*.

Baseera Khan:

Do you like that one Padma, I mean Sadma? I love how in the car you were like, "Should we bring masks?"

Speaker 17:

Mine keeps falling off.

Speaker 18:

[inaudible 01:13:44].

Speaker 16:

It's freezing.

Speaker 17:

I pretended then I realized that's not how you make [inaudible 01:13:56].

Speaker 16:

Aren't you making coffee?

Speaker 17:

I'm making coffee.

Speaker 16:

Why are they so swaggy? [inaudible 01:14:01].

William Furio:

The next one is called *Vaginal Davis and the Airplane Replay*.

Vaginal Davis:

And I kept going back to bathroom so often that I think all the trolley dollies on the flight, I think they were suspicious of me that maybe I was up to something no good because they kept giving me kind of attitude. They didn't say anything but I was going to the bathroom so often maybe they thought I was doing cocaine or I was plotting something.

Manira Lokenwella:

Really?

Vaginal Davis:

I don't know but they were constantly giving me looks. But I was-

Manira Lokenwella:

Maybe they thought you were beautiful.

Vaginal Davis:

I was having the flying cutinis and feeling like I was about to do projectile mudslides and vomitorium and for me to not eat on a plane when the food comes and I always get a kosher meal. And so you can served first then you have a kosher meal.

Manira Lokenwella:

It's true, or a veggie.

Vaginal Davis:

Or veggie and I couldn't even eat the plain food and I was starving but I couldn't eat anything. Oh my God, that feeling was just so horrible, you don't want to be trapped on a tube feeling like that and being sick like that. But I think a lot of it was just because of my hysteria because the minute that the plane landed and I was there on proper New York soil I immediately felt better.

Baseera Khan:

That's a beautiful way to end that series of videos. So, the work that I did with Vaginal Davis and Manira Lockenwella, they were both Zoomed in and they were like the moment where I was really kind of chatting with somebody in the way that we have been chatting instead of them actually jumping into my virtual space. So yeah, that's it.

Sara Reisman:

Well, I'll start with a question, the performance part of this program involved you developing two characters outside of yourself and in some ways, well, we did talk about the idea, is there the performance Baseera and then you Baseera? But anyway, we're looking at mainly three different persona Kunda, Sadma, Baseera, you create created a transparent set where we can see overlapping identities, what do you think Sadma and Kunda have to teach us? Is there anything that you gleaned from inhabiting their persona?

Baseera Khan:

I kind of understand that they are disassociating from their bodies and they're getting into all these truths and starting to unpack the fact that truth is a-

Sara Reisman:

Slippery slope?

Baseera Khan:

It is. It's like there was this, I don't know where the language went in my script but there was this kind of diatribe of Kunda Lamey, she was trying to describe how truth and fact are really separate and that fact actually greets fakeness, it's just so funny because these practices they're based in goodness but then they're kind of like ripped and disassociated and used for entrepreneurialism. And lately I've been watching all these kind of cult following documentaries and things like that and all of these ideas, even GMOs and fracking all this stuff comes from wanting to progress the world and wanting to continue the project of organization. But then there's always like somebody real greedy in the corner who's like, I going to make a bunch of money real quick and I don't care if people die and so this is enabling me to loosen up a little bit not make everything perfect, do something doable and like kind of get into these characters that in a way enables me to say whatever I want, free range. But then I actually do a lot of research trying to understand these practices themselves it just gets me into it.

Sara Reisman:

I think there's something that came to mind when you showed the video of you and Lia Ganjitano and Tea, there's that you mentioned the mirror and I kept thinking as we were preparing for this, how we are living in this strange moment when our lives are mirrored through technology.

Baseera Khan:

Yeah.

Sara Reisman:

View ourselves in a different way. So I wonder if that contributed to the sort of development of these persona but the real question I think is, you developed the framework for Waste of a Nation at a time when our country has been undergoing massive crises at once health, economic, institutional, constitutional. So it's like kind of gravely serious times yet you bring levity into your examination of our current condition. What's your approach to parody and how do you balance the gravitas of this moment with humor? What comes to mind when you do that?

Baseera Khan:

I'm sure that this is everyone right now but I am not well, I didn't do anything wrong. I wash my hands all the time, I'm quarantining, I get my tests but I'm not well I feel sick. My temperature's like what? And I've been sneezing all day, I just think that I am super sensitive to everything and I tend to really close down and isolate myself anyway and I always have done that and I think a lot of you were watching, have known me and have known that things have been hard. And so that's not exactly all of me I'm actually really like, winner have it all kind of spirit, I like comedy, I love laughing. I almost lost my shit literally when I was doing Kunda Lamey. But then doing



this projects or projects like this it just kind of gives me a chance to kind of show everyone that side of me that's kind of what By Faith was doing as well. I liked that part where I basically used the camera as a mirror because that's what they are so I don't know. I feel like your question was so spot on and it kind of said everything that I could say about it, it was like a closed loop sort of.

Sara Reisman:

Okay, maybe I can ask a more open-ended question?

Baseera Khan:

No, but it was a great thing to say because I almost feel like there's nothing to say right now. Just wait for the coup.

Sara Reisman:

Right. Well, we do we are waiting for the outcome of this election. So in the last months we've seen the rise of Sarah Cooper and now has a Netflix special, which I think we both watched. And then also Sacha Baron Cohen's Borat sequel came out. And, I think it's interesting that Cohen and Cooper have both emerged in very public ways with their characters but in different ways. Sarah Cooper's TikTok and then now has a show, Cohen, it's like he takes these characters out in the world and applies them to real life situations. So kind of breaking down that boundary. Do you imagine ever taking Sadma or Kunda out for a spin to an-

Baseera Khan:

Remember Ali G?

Sara Reisman:

Yeah.

Baseera Khan:

So, one of the things I liked about this Borat, this second Borat unlike the other one, the first one is that he went back to his moves from Allie G because he actually invited Rudy Giuliani into a private hotel room where a pretty girl was going to interview him, all that stuff apparently was real. So I think that he went back to his moves from Ali G which I actually really appreciated but I can see over time how people get more savvy with technology and therefore, you can't really do the same moves. But can [inaudible 01:24:00], on these characters out. Well, first of all, it really hurts to embody myself as a white lady from Australia who's trying to be Asian White-passing. So that's going to be a hard one and I might only be able to do that in like studio but I could take Sadma out, I think I could do that.

It would give me an excuse. Part of the reason I was doing Kunda Lamey's is because I really am getting into more intensive bodywork so there's that and so it gives me an excuse to like work on

something for myself but then also bringing it into like some kind of looser gestural practices, in my studio. And then what with Sadma, Padma. I mean, it's honestly just I love gorgeous things too and it enables me to kind of be my own voyeur of like interesting objects.

Sara Reisman:

Right. So [crosstalk 01:25:02], in some ways you appreciate it sounds like you have an appreciation for the Sadma character more than Kunda Lamey. What would you say for that?

Baseera Khan:

Yeah, I think so. I didn't start off by wanting to like Padma but after I learned about her history and also she was married to Salman Rushdi, I kind of felt for her even though I didn't want to.

Sara Reisman:

Yeah. So it's 7:30, I don't know if we want to take a question? QI haven't seen any questions come into the chat area but, you're welcome. Looking around the room, the virtual room-

Baseera Khan:

Oh, wait I want to see the room, I want to see what people look like. Oh, everybody's like-

Sara Reisman:

Everybody's gone.

Baseera Khan:

[inaudible 01:25:51], to watch. Are you guys pretending to watch-

Sara Reisman:

Carmen's waving, Mirov.

Baseera Khan:

Carmen. Oh my God. Let's do this, hello everybody. Hi, Willa, hi Kiki.

Sara Reisman:

Hi.

Baseera Khan:

Hi Shelly.

Sara Reisman:

It's a great group.

Baseera Khan:

Hi Dom.

Sara Reisman:

I feel like you broke the ice Baseera.

Baseera Khan:

Hi Zach, Hi Looney. Looney was my curator at the kitchen. So many cuties, Sasha.

Sara Reisman:

[inaudible 01:26:34].

Baseera Khan:

Cute. Oh, hi, guys. Hello.

Sara Reisman:

So I'm going to take this moment to thank you Baseera for introducing us to Kunda and Sadma and being so open with your process, giving us a transparent view into your production at home and also in the studio with your kitchen residency is a called The Lab? The Kitchen Lab?

Baseera Khan:

The Queens Lab.

Sara Reisman:

The Queens Lab. And I want to thank everybody for coming tonight and also I want to thank William and Dante for making the production work cause it was complicated. We did it, thank you so much. So let's check the news.

Baseera Khan:

[inaudible 01:27:18], the news guys. Thank you for joining and awesome.

Sara Reisman:

Hands up for eight hours. Seven [crosstalk 01:27:29].

Baseera Khan:

No, don't do that. Bye guys.