

Event Transcript

December 10, 2020 - *Racial Capitalism: Who Benefits from Cultural Appropriation?*

Sara Reisman:

Welcome, everyone. Thank you for joining us tonight for *Racial Capitalism: Who Benefits From Cultural Appropriation?* A conversation with Jeff Chang, Wendy Red Star, and DJ Rekha, moderated by Hrag Vartanian. This program is presented in partnership between the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation and Asian American Arts Alliance, the 2020 art and social justice grantee of the Rubin Foundation. My name is Sara Reisman. I'm the Executive and Artistic director of the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation based in New York City, where we've supported art and social justice through grantmaking for the last 25 years and since 2015 at The Eighth Floor, where we've been organizing exhibitions and public programs that address themes of social justice and political import.

A quick plug for our current exhibition *To Cast Too Bold A Shadow* is an exhibition on misogyny, feminism, and gender on view by appointment through January 23rd. Viewing of the exhibition adheres to COVID guidelines. We'd love to host you for a distance visit to the gallery, The 8th Floor. To make an appointment, go to www.the8thfloor.org/visit, where you can reserve a spot.

Before we begin, please note this event has closed captioning provided by [inaudible 00:01:10] and ASL interpretation by Jessica Ames and Elanda Alloy. Instructions are in the chat section. For those who wish to access close captioning, when the captioner starts writing, the CC button appears for viewers. Typically, this will be visible at the bottom of your Zoom pane. Viewers can then click on subtitles next to the CC button to show captioning and then choose show full transcript to have the full transcript appear on the side of the screen.

For ASL interpretation. When we're screen-sharing, please click on the visible interpreters box and click the three dots into the corner, then select pin video. If you have questions throughout the conversation, we advise that you use the chat function to submit your query. During the panelist conversation, we'll read off the questions read off by our moderator. After the Q&A begins, you'll be called on and unmuted, I think. If you prefer to have your question read by one of us, please make a note alongside your question in the chat section. Also, note this event will be recorded and will be available early next week on our many social media platforms.

So just some background on tonight's conversation. In an increasingly globalized world and one that is simultaneously global life localized in the context of COVID, parts of our individual sociocultural identities tend to be influenced by cultures that are not our own. So how do we make sense of this phenomenon in our individual creative practices, and what distinguishes appropriation from influence? Who has the right to tell the story of a culture, and who has the right to profit from cultural references? In the last five years or so, these questions have become more and more prevalent. We're lucky that moderator Hrag Vartanian has agreed to lead the discussion with Jeff Chang, Wendy Red Star, and DJ Rekha to unpack the power dynamics and value structures inherent in capitalism, as it relates to culture. This program is the second of a

three-part series presented by the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation and the Asian American Arts Alliance.

Now I'd like to take a few minutes for a land recognition to acknowledge our respective relationships to place. We are gathered virtually in many locations at once. I have no idea where, but I'll note that some of us are in Manhattan. Others are in the boroughs of New York City, places that are mostly, if not all, unceded lands. As this event is co-organized by the Rubin Foundation and Asian American Arts Alliance, I'll address the specific sites where offices are located. So that would be near Union Square and in Dumbo, Brooklyn, as well as the other boroughs of the city, therefore acknowledging the Muncie, Manatee, Canarsie, Matinecock, and the Wappinger communities, past and present as well as future generations.

The Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation and The 8th Floor acknowledge being founded upon exclusions and erasures of indigenous peoples, including those whose land where the foundation is located. This acknowledgement verbalizes a commitment to a process of working to dismantle the ongoing legacies of settler colonialism, a commitment that's become all the more poignant in this time of political upheaval and resistance that have resulted in transformative activist engagement across the country.

To this land acknowledgement, I have to add a paraphrase virtual land recognition using language devised by Jill Carter, a professor in the indigenous studies and the drama theater and performance studies departments at University of Toronto. So Carter explains, "Zoom has erected his headquarters in San Jose, California while Skype has erected one key arm of its operations in Palo Alto, California. This is traditional territory up in the Winnemucca or Lone tribal nation. Current members of this nation are direct descendants of the many missionized travel groups and across the region. We who are able to connect with each other via Zoom and Skype are deeply indebted to the Muwekma Olhone people as the lands and waters, they continue to store now support the people, pipelines, and technologies that carry our breath, images and words across vast distances to others. So thank you."

Now it's my pleasure to introduce Lisa Gold, a long-time friend and colleague, and since 2018, executive director of the Asian American Arts Alliance, A4, is sometimes referred to as A4. In the most recent cycle of Rubin Foundation grantmaking, A4 was awarded support for an anti-racism program geared towards culturally specific communities rather than white-centered organizations. A4 participated in trainings like Race Forward, Racial Equity in the Arts Innovation Labs and Americans for the Arts National Arts Service Organizations working group.

I'm just citing what was in their proposal that some of the participants affiliated with A4 found that these workshops tended to be centered on white leadership, confronting their own unconscious biases and how people of color can confront white supremacy. But the workshops generally didn't address the racism that can take place within and between specific communities of color. For example, anti-blackness in the Asian community and xenophobia towards immigrant communities.

Considering where we are in the year of the global pandemic, Rubin Foundation grantees were encouraged to adapt their original proposals to meet more emergent needs, of course. After

conversations with Lisa over the summer, we decided to organize this virtual series relating to questions raised by A4's project proposal, and here we are in our second session. Having been privy to the discussion leading up to tonight with some of the panelists, I'm very excited to listen in with the whole group, Wendy, Hrag, Rekha, and Jeff altogether. I hope you'll join me in welcoming Asian American Arts Alliance and our panelists, and I'll turn it over to Lisa. Thank you.

Lisa Gold:

Thank you so much, Sara and to everyone at The 8th Floor and the Shelly & Donald Rubin Foundation for this opportunity. Quick accessibility check. I am a hapa woman with half Korean, half white, with dark brown, shoulder-length hair, wearing a red shirt. I am speaking to you from unceded Lenape and Canarsie lands on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. For those of you who aren't familiar with A4, we are a 37-year old nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring greater equity, representation and opportunities for Asian-American artists and arts organizations. We offer events that build community through events, such as our bi-monthly town hall and monthly AAPI arts leaders round tables. We provide professional development programs and access to cultural gatekeepers through events like career workshops, a virtual residency program, career round tables, and we create a platform to discuss issues related to Asian-American identity through our conversation series, of which this is an example.

I'm really thrilled that we are able to present this series with the Foundation and just I wanted to share a little bit more about its genesis. I think Sara did a very nice job of framing it, and I just wanted to say that to reiterate that when we were devising this, that the team, the A4 team found ourselves discussing the issue of bias within our own community and as she stated that almost all of this discussion that was happening around us, the stock of oppression, racial equity, DEI training was very much from the perspective of diversifying white-centered spaces and did not really address the issues that we were experiencing.

So we wanted to bring together Asian Americans and other BIPOC artists and organizations to work together on programs to build mutual understanding and address some of these hard issues. So as Sara noted, then COVID hit. So our programs were appended, and then of course, the brutal murder of George Floyd, which was painful on many levels. But the thing that brought me back to this need for conversation was that I could not escape the fact that one of the officers involved in this extrajudicial killing of George Floyd was an Asian American. So it just reaffirmed the need to have these really challenging conversations.

So I'm so grateful that we have these incredible thought leaders with us tonight to interrogate these really difficult ideas. Before I introduce the panelists, I just wanted to let you know that we'll be sending out a survey to all of the attendees tonight, and we would like you to please respond with your thoughts and comments because we hope that this is just the beginning of a conversation series and that we can continue to explore these concepts that we want to know what you want to know more about, what your thoughts are. So we appreciate your feedback.

Then as Sara stated, we will have a brief Q&A after the panel discussions. So I will field the questions, and you'll be unmuted so you can ask them directly to the panelists if you choose to.

Just so you know, I may group the questions together so that we can get to as many as possible. Now, with great pleasure and immense gratitude, I would like to introduce tonight's panelists.

First off, Jeff Chang is the vice president for Narrative, Arts, and Culture at Race Forward and the co-founder of online publications, culture strike and cultural law, I'm sorry, Colorlines. His books include *Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation*, *Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetics of Hip-Hop*, and *Who We Be: A Cultural History of Race in Post-Civil Rights America*. His latest book, a collection of essays, *We Gon' Be Alright: Notes on Race and Resegregation* was published in September of 2016. It was named the Northern California non-fiction book of the year and The Washington Post declared it the smartest book of the year. I will add that it deeply influenced the development of this discussion series.

Next, raised on the Absaroka Crow Reservation in Montana, Wendy Red Star's work is informed both by her cultural heritage and her engagement with many forms of creative expression, including photography, sculpture, video, fiber arts, and performance. An avid researcher of archives and historical narratives. She seeks to incorporate and recast her research, offering new and unexpected perspectives in work that is at once inquisitive, witty, and unsettling.

Next DJ Rekha is a producer, curator, and activist who pioneered Bhangra music in North America via their long-running monthly nightclubs series Basement Bhangra, which I miss. They are on the board of a Queens-based Chhaya Community Development Corp, serving New Yorkers of South Asian origin, and they produce the weekly podcast Bhangra and beyond.

Now, of course, last but not least, our moderator tonight is the Editor-in-Chief and Co-Founder of Hyperallergic. Hrag Vartanian is an editor, art critic, curator, and lecturer on contemporary art with an expertise on the intersection of art and politics. Hrag co-founded the publication, Hyperallergic in 2009 in response to changes in the art world, the publishing industry, and the distribution of information. I turn it over to you, Hrag.

Hrag Vartanian:

Right. Thank you so much. Thank you for that wonderful introduction in general. I just wanted to say it was really... I think it's the first time I've done an event like this, where it was also acknowledged the technology and the sort of the fact that where the technology is headquartered, which I think is really important for this conversation we're going to have about cultural appropriation because I think there's so much complexity about also the channels that these are being propagated on. So I just want to sort of bring that into the screen or room as it were to sort of just make sure that that's an important part of this conversation.

I also wanted to sort of just build on in the case of George Floyd as someone who's a Middle Easterner or SWANA, for some of you may not know, Southwest Asia, North African, you know. The person who called or the person whose business called the police on George Floyd was a Middle Eastern American. So I think I just want to bring that into the room to sort of understand how the complexity of this issue might sort of bring in, and I hope, Jeff, at some point, we can talk a little bit about the in-between this that comes up in one of your books about race and resegregation and how I think sometimes conversations about cultural appropriation

tend towards the extremes, either it is or it isn't and not understanding how they're much more complicated issues.

So I just want to also sort of bring that in, because I think particularly around issues of anti-blackness and cultural appropriation, there's certainly a lot of in-betweeness that happens with groups that are not black. So I wanted to start a little for those of you who may not know the term "racial capitalism." It's something that perhaps has entered your consciousness more recently. I wanted to read two definitions just to sort of start us off. I also want to invite people. If you have any questions, please feel free to, during our conversation, bring them into the chat so that we can just sort of address them as they come up. So I welcome that.

So the first definition is very short from Nancy Leong from Harvard Law Review. It was an article from the about race and law. The definition she used, racial capitalism, is the process of deriving social and economic value from the racial identity of another person. Just thought that was a very short, clear one. Then another definition by Robin D.G. Kelley, and it's regards to Cedric Robinson's definition, which of course, some of you may know Robinson was the person who came up with the term racial capitalism, and his description of the term, just bear with me, it's a few lines, but I think it's important so we have a starting point for this conversation.

Robinson challenged the Marxist idea that capitalism was a revolutionary negation of feudalism. Instead, capitalism emerged within the feudal order and flowered into the cultural soil of a Western civilization already thoroughly infused with racialism. Capitalism and racism, in other words, and this is what he's challenging, did not break from the old order, rather evolve from it to produce a modern system of racial capitalism, dependent on slavery, violence, imperialism, and genocide. Capitalism was racial, not because of some conspiracy to divide workers or justify slavery and dispossession. But because racialism had already permeated Western feudal society, the first European proletarians were racial subjects, such as Irish Jews, Roma, Gypsies [inaudible 00:16:59] and they were victims of dispossession, enclosure, colonialism, and slavery within Europe. Indeed Robinson suggested that racialization within Europe was very much a colonial process involving invasion, settlement, expropriation, and racial hierarchy.

So I just wanted to start there just so that we have a bit of a ground to start from for those of you who may not know. Again, if there's anything that we've talked about, please feel free to sort of chime in. So I wanted to start with one specific example that I wanted to sort of bring in the room because I think it brings up some of the complexities of what this issue is and why some people don't quite understand when it happens. So I'm going to ask if the image of Kimono Wednesdays could be placed on the screen so people can see them.

So Kimono Wednesdays, for those of you who may not know, occurred at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. This was a case where a very famous Monet painting, which you can see in the background, of the artist's wife wearing a kimono. Well, in this case, one of the interesting things about this is there were a series of protestors. If you can see the other image with the protestors, please. So people were invited to dawn the kimono and sort of take photos or selfies or anything they wanted in front of the painting in the museum. A series of Asian American protestors started a protest movement against this, as you can see right here.

But there was a lot of confusion around this. Why was cultural appropriation, why it's not in. I invite the panelists to address this. But I want to give a little bit of a background, which is the kimono was actually commissioned by a Japanese TV company, NHK. I think the fact that it was coming from Japan initially as the idea, there was this idea that somehow, it was sort of, "Oh well, it came from Japan. It's not cultural appropriation." Not understanding that. Obviously, Asian Americans have a whole different history. Certainly, a lot of them are not from Japan, as well as the fact that in terms of the fact that here, there's a whole different history and a different way that it's presented. But I wanted to read a quote from Ryan Wong who wrote something on Hyperallergic back when the protest was going on that I think sort of encapsulates some of the thinking, which was the protesters decided that this was not cultural exchange but the exotification of an object for publicity.

So I wonder, Jeff, would you like to sort of weigh in a little bit? I'm sure you've probably heard of this instance. But can you sort of aluminiate what you think some of the complexity around this issue and why people have a hesitation around sort of calling out this kind of cultural appropriation. You're on mute. I'm sorry.

Jeff Chang:

That's good. Because I was just repeating the question to myself and posting over. Of course, you start by asking me the hard questions. So thanks, Hrag.

Hrag Vartanian:

So it's because you're so good at this. We want your wisdom.

Jeff Chang:

No, flattery will not get you anywhere at this particular point, sir. First of all, I just want to say I should ground myself and say [foreign language 00:20:29] Jeff Chang [foreign language 00:20:32]. I come originally from Hawaii, which are the lands conquered by the US, taken forcibly. I'm calling in here from [inaudible 00:20:48] land and the Winnemucca or Lone land. So the first thing to say is this is a difficult issue because ideas travel, right? So let's kind of set this up, right? Ideas travel. People are inspired by ideas. They flow, right, especially certainly you talked about technology in this type of environment. They're flowing faster than ever. At the same time, these flows are crisscrossed by power relations.

So appropriation when done by people in power looks very different from appropriation when done by people who have had their cultural practices, their languages erased, marginalized, taken away, right? So I learned everything I think I need to know about appropriation from hip-hop. Hip-hop is a form that really has traversed cultures. The big story, of course, like the DJs Kool Herc, Bambaataa, Flash, taking records from wherever they could and mixing it all up, right? Putting it into this mix, matching the beats, layering them on top of each other, and this sort of being a metaphor for this sort of beautiful, post-racial kind of polyrhythmic, polycultural kind of ideal.

But in this particular case, when you have an exhibition, right, that's traveling from Japan to the US, it's moving into a completely different type of context. It's going to be seen in a different way because of the context that we live in, and it's going to have an impact on people based on the kinds of power relations that have been set up. So it looked, I think, to many of the organizers and activists as an act of cultural injustice, right? This was a way in which the dominant culture could continue to marginalize, could continue to suppress, could continue to erase Asian Americans. I think that that's why you saw the protests occurring. Maybe I'll stop there cause we're going to have a long, rich conversation.

Hrag Vartanian:

That's a great point. I just want to bring to people's attention the Anne Anlin Cheng's book, *Ornamentalism*, for those of you who may want to learn more about sort of the representation of Asiatic femininity and sort of visual culture and sort of all the different sort of tropes that kind of go along with that. I wonder if Rekha or Wendy have anything they want to add about this, because this is also about museum spaces, and maybe the way people feel like they would like to be represented. Or also though, what is challenging and what isn't? Because I think sometimes in cultural spaces, we have this illusion that, "Oh well, nuance is so great because it's going to bring out all these issues," not realizing there is a power dynamic already there. I wonder if either of you like to talk about any of that. Yeah. Rekha, go ahead.

DJ Rekha:

Sure. I think Jeff brings up a really good point about the power, that always fight the power and in terms of context. This exhibit reminds me very much of another activity that happens in New York called Turban day, which is sick Americans gathered in Times Square, and they're tying turban, and anyone can sit there and get a turban tied. It's supposed to be like pride. It's like education. It's cultural education. But the same community post 9/11 was distinguishing their turbans from Muslim Americans or distinguishing themselves from Muslim Americans who do not tie turbans, but perhaps in some contexts do to sort of distinguish themselves. So the idea that this is the only group that ties a turban. It's in Times Square. It's a display. So the context really does matter, and this act happening in a museum space for who is the audience is a question, who's consuming it.

Similarly, it's a shortcut to it. It's fast track to, how do I get to be X, or how do I get to be down with a culture? Well, let me put a piece of physical cloth on myself, or let me eat something or taste something or feel something. It sort of disregards all that baggage that comes with it, or it decontextualizes actually is what it does. So that's my thought on that for us. So I'll stop there.

Hrag Vartanian:

Great point. Great point. Wendy, I know you have an unusual story related to this. So I wonder if you wanted to share that.

Wendy Red Star:

Yeah. I really love hearing the word context, because it's so important, especially when you're working with cultural materials. I often feel that way with any museum that has a collection of native objects, especially me knowing about my culture's objects, which I'm upsell again, and seeing them on display and knowing that whoever is doing that, that doesn't know anything about the solid good people is only getting probably, I don't, 95% of what that object is because it's out of its context.

But yeah. I have an interesting story. I did this piece I was in graduate school called *The Four Seasons*, which I really want to protect it. It's sort of its own entity. So I don't want this to be its story. But because it's taken off so much, it's sort of had all these Epic adventures. So this is one of its adventures. It was in a traveling group show, and it happened to be in a show about land, land, and there were other native artists in it and white artists. The piece is actually talking. It's four dioramas that I made, and I'm sitting in these dioramas in my traditional Crow outfit.

Really, I wanted to sort of capture this feeling I had when I went through the natural history museum when I was in graduate school, looking for some Crow material and realizing that the audience who entered into that space had been set up to think that everything is extinct in there. So I wanted to talk about the way that institutions represent native bodies and objects. So anyways, this piece was in the show at this institution, which is in California. I won't name the institution.

But I went there, and I did a lecture, and the show was happening. I happened to go to sort of a little cocktail hour after my lecture, and there was docents that were there. These were docents for this institution that were really their patrons and then also did docent work. So one of the docents was so excited to talk to me because she said they had recently had their docent training, and they wanted to do something really exciting for this docent training meeting, where they would dress up as the artists.

So she proceeded to show me her image on her cell phone, which wasn't her. It was another docent. This particular docent was an elderly white woman who had dressed up as me. But not like this. She dressed up as me in *The Four Seasons* on a bear skin rug. I'm not even on a bear skin rug for *Four Seasons*. I'm on some AstroTurf. But she dressed up as me. The docent was just so excited to show me, and she said that the woman had won the whole contest. Before I could even really have a reaction, she left. I was supposed to do another program with them the next day.

So frankly, I was really shocked. I'd take a while to process things especially like that. So I went back to my hotel, slept on it, and then I woke up, and I was like, "That was really F'd up." I realized that didn't feel good. So when I was picked up by the museum staff the next day, they asked me how things went last night, and I said, "Well, this interesting thing happened." I mentioned what had happened. The two staff sort of looked at each other and realized they kind of had, excuse my language, an oh, shit moment where they actually knew about it.

Then I realized that they knew about it. I said, "Wait a minute. You knew about this, but you didn't do anything before I came to correct it. I wouldn't have even known about it if you would have recognized that it was an issue." They said, "Well, their docents kind of do their own

thing." That's when I realized that, "Oh, these are patrons to the institution." So it's like their purse strings. Needless to say, sort of the shiny part to the story is that the curator who was traveling that show from a different institution, I told her, and immediately, she had the work removed. But it was so scary situation to have docents who are supposed to be the educators of that particular exhibition, and they're playing red face. So yeah. So I don't know how it's close to that, Hrag, but yeah.

Hrag Vartanian:

Well, I mean, I think that also brings up the point that Jeff made originally about the power, right? The fact is when you realize who these docents were. Things were a little clearer understanding maybe the power relationship there. Now, as the artist in that situation, I guess what kind of... Have you ever thought about what kind of mechanism there should be for this not to happen? I mean, obviously, there we can't go around educating everyone all the time, and it's certainly not your job. But have you thought about what could happen or maybe something you asked for beforehand there has been. Have you thought about those at all?

Wendy Red Star:

Well, I mean, that's not even the worst part of the story. The worst part was that the museum and the director actually asked me if I would come back and I would educate the docents for them.

Hrag Vartanian:

Oh, wow. Okay.

Wendy Red Star:

Yeah. I think it's very traumatizing, that situation. How much does that suck that you'd have to ask an artist of color to sort of think about these things first, just combat them first. This might happen and then approach the institution and say, "Hey, just in case someone wants to play red face, here's the plan to move forward?" No, for me, I just need to really know where the work is showing and being more strategic about that and get to know. In this case, it was a little bit harder because it was a traveling show. So it was showing at multiple institutions.

Hrag Vartanian:

Well, it sort of brings up the issue of even when you're the maker of the object, your objects get deep contextualized often in a way like this. So Rekha, I'd love to bring you into this conversation. We wanted to share your clip.

Jeff, go ahead.

Jeff Chang:

I just want to add something really quick. Right? Which is maybe to do the context thing even more, right? Which is to talk about the rise of museums in the mid to late 19th century in the US, right, as part of a project of preserving whiteness happening at the same time that the so-called Indian wars are happening, happening at the same time that colonialism is happening in the Pacific and in the Caribbean, happening at the same time that the movements that are developing to exclude Chinese are all happening, happening at the same time that a reconstruction is being destroyed and the KKK is rising. Right? All of this is part of a project.

The sort of museum project is a project to preserve whiteness. This is the stuff that gets decontextualized. We can talk about our work being decontextualized. What we don't talk about enough is that this is the context of museums that we're talking about. Right? So now, when I do, for instance, these racial equity, racial justice, cultural justice trainings these days, we have to take people back to this, right? We have to be able to put that back in and say, "Look, this is 400-plus years of the slavery and the genocide and the cultural attacks and the cultural injustices that accompany and justify all of that." Right?

So this is where artists of color, black artists, indigenous artists, artists of color are dealing with this particular kind of situation. So people are like, "Oh, why would these folks show up in the gallery around this kind of stuff to protest a kimono type of thing." We sit here laughing now because we're like, "We know this history. We know this history that's been decontextualized, has been taken off because whiteness is made to be transparent." It's made to be not there. Right? So all of these levels that we have to fight come up, and it's just sort of... It's just, "God, Wendy. That's just-"

Hrag Vartanian:

I know. I know. Great point. Just to build on that, Jeff, I just want to sort of... Recently, this year, Ariella Azoulay's book, *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism*, she makes a great point, that people often talk about museums as if they were inevitable. She says actually often we might want to think about the fact that museums were made because of colonialism, meaning they were made to contain the objects that were looted. There were so many of them, right? They needed to put them somewhere. So that's also another piece to this. So museums aren't some kind of inevitable institution in the way they've sort of been made to sort of encapsulate human knowledge, right? They were done for a specific reason. So Rekha, I'd love to go back to you. If you wanted to show your clip so we could talk a little bit about that.

DJ Rekha:

Sure. Before we go to my clip, back to the museums. I think that protest is a way to interrupt whiteness as well it is to interrupt the art. That is, if I'm not mistaken, the museum where some African-American youth were stopped on a school trip. Museums have become such a focal point or such a... They're so inserted in education as a cultural tool and as artists. Some of us, we talk of... Let's just put the capitalism, and it's like their source of income, and they provide some... So it's a complicated relationship on the artist side as well. But let's get to some music videos, so... (singing)

Hrag Vartanian:

Great.

DJ Rekha:

Great. So there's a lot going on in that video. Just to contextualize it a little bit, the singer and the video is Diljit Dosanjh. If someone knows it can drop it in the chat. He is I would say the biggest Punjabi singer there is. He's huge. He's massive. He's crossed over into Bollywood Punjab, India, to be specific. He's actually been very important here. The world's largest protest is happening right now in India. Over 250 million people are protesting for farmers, which is a whole other topic. But that video is really interesting to me because we have a brotherhood being on display. We have Diljit Dosanjh. He's obviously in Cali. There is a larger history of Punjabis and farming in California.

But there's a lot of misogyny in that video as well, because just to translate one of the lines, it's almost like when he's posing with a white woman, he rhymes like, black cars. We have all these things. He's showing also the tracker for when you're released, the device when you're under house arrest. So I mean, he's touching on all these things, and this video is recent. It came out not that long ago. It really triggered me when I saw it, because very superficially, it's on some brotherhood tip. We're all alike. But then you think about all the complexities within the communities. Also, Jeff, really back to your earlier point about when we think about cultural appropriation, is this appropriation or not? This is a brotherhood. So isn't this a Punjabi singer and hip-hop, and look, he's all up in the community. They're playing dominoes.

But it's complicated because also, the way Punjabis are seen within the context of India and what is their class positioning that they are building this brotherhood, and it's at the exclusion, at the expense of women. So it's invoking misogyny as well. There's a lot of physical capitalism in it. Then there's a desire in that video to draw allegiances. But it's almost as if it's without context, especially in this climate, in this moment in the United States about all the racial justice that's being demanded here with Black Lives Matter. We're nodding towards systemic oppression by acknowledging the effects of incarceration. Showing that object of the prison industrial complex, it's really powerful to see that in a video and who's watching this.

So there's a lot going on there. I think for Bhangra has a history, and it's very complicated in its reliance of hip-hop. There's also the idea that hip-hop has appropriated South Asian sounds. I mean, it goes both ways. I think it's the idea of our two disempowered communities trying to find some common thread, and at whose expense does that happen? Is it at the expense of... Is it the common thread is we conquer white women, which is kind of what the lyric suggests and the visual suggests? So I just put that out there.

Hrag Vartanian:

That's a great point. Jeff, did you want to respond to that? Because you've written so extensively on hip-hop.

Jeff Chang:

No. I just thought these are really... Rekha will know because we were both up in the 2000s. There was a lot of debate in the 2000s when artists like Erick Sermon and DJ Quik, Jay-Z, Timberland were sampling Bollywood music. There was a lot of discussion back then about it. This is where the appropriation argument. There's just maybe two quick points I want to make. One is a lot of times we talk about appropriation, and we actually use the language of racial capitalism. So we actually say this is my culture, and this is your culture, and we're going to draw a little fence around it, right?

We're going to sort of own our culture, whatever we're going to define that culture as and say, "This is our culture, and on the other side of the fence is your culture." Right? I have a problem with actually thinking about culture that way. That's not how cultural practice works. Right? For us to define our culture as property actually reduces the power of it to just what you can buy and sell. We fall into that trap I think logically all the time around these kinds of debates, oh, martial arts me, rapping you. You know what I mean? It's not a real helpful way for us to be able to think about. So that's the first level. But then when we get into the questions of power relations and what it means representationally and then also questions of interpretation, right? Erick Sermon used a lyric. Rekha, you could tell this story better than me. He used the lyric that it was crazy frenzy. He used the word-

DJ Rekha:

Yeah. So basically, just the short abbreviated version is there was a moment in hip-hop where there were a lot of using of Bollywood in South Asian Sounds and most famously the song, addictive two-thirds. Erick Sermon, sampled a Bollywood song not knowing what the lyrics meant and talk about not context. He said, "Oh, I didn't know anyone would know the song." The song was actually a very popular song, and the lyrics I think talks about some sort of suicide or something. So it's very out of context. Similarly, Jay-Z rapping on a Punjabi MC song. His rap lyrics had nothing to do with the song.

So these are mashes. When we talk about, I think you're right, Jeff, about the fences. The fences don't work because culture is fluid. It's not isolated. It's not static. So hip-hop is one blueprint. As much as one could get annoyed and say they took X from us or what, there's a dialogue and a conversation that's happening with art. It's fluid. It's not fixed. You see something, you hear it, you play it. Now, most Punjabi songs, if you took out the vocals would sound to you like just any old pop and hip-hop tracks.

So what does that mean? Is that fair to say that's just... It's not as a polar or as binary is what I'm saying. I think it's far more nuanced than that and complicated. I think the idea of capital and what capital benefit, it serves in the maker creator and is definitely at play here.

Hrag Vartanian:

I also want to point out that it's a lot of the laws around this really benefit those in power, by

which, I mean, even the way these are circulated, one of the examples I like to use, it's sort of image rights. We always talk about fair use example when it comes up. But fair use is only good. If you can go to court and argue it, which is a lot of money. Certainly, most publications can't do that, for instance. So the laws have been situated away. So how do we grapple with that?

Jeff, for instance, what you're bringing in, I mean, is a much more complicated picture. But the way the media sort of works in social media, and all these sort of different conversations, they do get reduced. So how do we resist that tendency to do a territorial sort of discussion of culture as property.

Jeff Chang:

I actually really want to hear what Wendy has to say that?

Hrag Vartanian:

Sure. Wendy, what do you think?

Wendy Red Star:

I really resonate with everything that's been said, especially the fences. That's so great because I really feel like that's a product of, like Hrag said, colonialism and anthropology. Especially, the thing about anthropology with the native people, and I do a lot of research and collections, and I've just been completely humbled where I'll open up a drawer that's of Crow objects, and I'll see something that's maybe black feed or Lakota. As the young Wendy, I was like, "Oh, Crows only do these things." That has to get the hell out of that door.

Then when I started really researching and learning, there's a delegation photo of 1873 of all these Crow chiefs, and they're not wearing a single curl moccasin. They're either Lakota or Cheyenne. My head exploded to realize I was just siloing everything like this, like a white person would do.

So to hear that, it's so true. But on the flip, I guess I kind of want to say for [inaudible 00:48:22] we definitely have a whole rights system. So for instance, I'm wearing this Elk 2 necklace. I can't just go and make this. I actually had to ask my aunt who has the right to make this so I could make it. There are certain designs in the community, where if you made it, and you didn't have the right, and we knew about it, you get in big trouble. There's something kind of really nice about that. But it also can be annoying. But there's a whole policing system. That's pretty contact that was happening for us culturally, within our own art-making, not necessarily if we just really liked a pair of Cheyenne moccasins or something like that. So yeah. I guess I kind of wanted to bring that to just your own cultures way of sort of policing appropriation.

Hrag Vartanian:

So Wendy, now, when you see that object, you open that drawer, and you see an object, that might be Lakota in the Crow drawer. What is your reaction now? How do you deal with that?

Wendy Red Star:

Well, if it's good-looking, then I'm like, "Yeah, we made the right choice." No. I'm like, "No. It's our story now. It's definitely our story. It's part of our story." Let's say it was put in there by a mistake, a museum worker put it in their catalog they were on. That's actually part of the story too, misidentifying native objects. So either way, it's sort of part of the story as well. Or it could be a collector came to the reservation and wanted to buy some things, and we were like, "Here's a pair of Lakota [inaudible 00:50:03]." Then they get tagged in as a Crow, and then I show up. I'm like, "Oh, what's the story behind this."

Jeff Chang:

It's such an interesting thing there that you're saying too, though, right? A white man shows up, says, "Give me some of your things. We're going to..." Whatever. I'm going to take them, or we're going to transact or whatever. I'm collecting this. The Crows say, "You can have the Lakota stuff." Well, we're not giving you our stuff. Right? The thing that I wanted to kind of pull out there is here's where we shortchanged culture when we put the fence around it, right? Cultural practices are actually bodies of knowledge, right? They're ways of preserving and passing on bodies of knowledge.

Hip-hop is actually a way of passing on knowledge, right? Bhangra is a way of passing on knowledge. The work that you're doing, Wendy, with all of your art and that kind of thing as a way of passing on knowledge. We are all actually in that way, passing on these bodies of knowledge. When they get reduced to these objects that go into a drawer in a museum, that's the danger in getting it decontextualized, right? Is that we're actually losing the bodies of knowledge that live around that particular piece, that that piece, when you put it back into its context, it comes alive, and it activates all this other kind of knowledge in a way that a word will within a language.

I think that that's part of the problem here. So going back to the appropriation thing, because I know that we've taken a pretty far field, right, the problem with the kimono exhibit, right? Going back to the kimono exhibit is that it's been taken out of this particular context, and it's now become a commodifiable object that shorn of all the meaning that it had in that. Then when it travels, it lives in a new context. For it not to be relating back to the folks for whom that knowledge around that particular object is happening. But instead used to be able to further erase them. Right? That's what the violation is there. That's the cultural injustice that I think the activists are trying to call out.

Hrag Vartanian:

Yeah. I sort of want also cite the cultural appropriation also works. For instance, people have pointed out that when you type in the word Cherokee, for instance, often it's the car that shows up, right? That's a form of eraser for people often talk about, where it's been so decontextualized,

where the word doesn't even show up anymore, right, in its proper context, even when you're trying to do a preliminary type of search. Wendy, did you want to talk a little bit about the use of native American imagery in terms of the images you want it to show?

Wendy Red Star:

Yeah. We could go ahead and pull those images up. So the image that is the full length image, the photo, these are all two photographs of Chief Joseph who is Nez Perce. The one standing up is actually a trip that he took to meet with President Hayes in 1879. This is pretty much after he fled. He fled from his territory in Washington with his people. He's trying to make it to Canada, and then he got caught.

So then they moved his people to Oklahoma. So he traveled from Oklahoma to meet with the president. So that's what's happening in this delegation photo that was taken by Charles Milton Bell. This was around 1879. Then the photo on the very right side is a photo that was taken in 18... Just want to make sure I get the dates right. 1877, in the Dakota territories. This was right after his people were surrendered to the US, the Bears Paw Mountains in Montana.

Anyways, the reason why I bring these up is the two images, the one that says Chief Joseph Nez Perce that's in color and then Chief Joseph, old-fashioned fine cut, these are actually tobacco trading cards. So pretty shortly after these images were taken in the late 1800s, the tobacco companies started to use them as a trading cards. I found that really fascinating because the two photos actually really represent to me his attempt to really fight on behalf of his people to hold their territory, keep their culture, their language, and then for it to be commercialized in this way to sell these different types of tobacco. It's fascinating to me. It really kind of made me understand, since native people, we're seeing images of them were being used to sell products, and in the case of photography, this is what has happened. So it really kind of put into perspective how the history and how long native images have been used to sell products.

Hrag Vartanian:

Right. Such a great point. Absolutely. Jeff, I know that you wanted to talk a little bit about the notion of cultural justice and what that means. I wonder if you wanted to talk about that.

Jeff Chang:

Sure. So we can maybe show this slide here. This is our definition that we use of cultural justice, and we say that it's essential for racial justice. So we've been talking a lot, I think in terms of the restorative processes that we need to have in order to restore cultural justice. But there's a lot of terminology that's thrown around in the arts world about where we want to go with things. We want to be able to achieve greater cultural equity, and we want to just make sure that folks understand what the stakes are, right? That the reason that we're at this particular point is because, again, cultural injustices have worked alongside slavery, genocide, marginalization, exclusion, segregation to justify them and also to further them, to seal them, right, to seal whiteness as superior and everything else as inferior.

So we've got to heal and remedy what's happened, the injustices that have happened in that respect. What we've been talking about here is being able to restore and create for communities of color ways of living being in sense-making, restoring that, making sure that that's there, right? When you're taking an image of a great leader and putting them on a trading card, that's actually reducing and destroying in so many ways. It's a cultural way of destroying, a way of living, and sense-making, right?

On the other hand, as artists, in the way that that Wendy does and in the way that Rekha does, there's ways to be able to take this and remix it and redo it and be able to express the humanity that's been taken away, right? To be able to have people move together, enjoy, or be able to understand this is what has been done to us. But we're still defiant, and we still are here, right, in all of these different kinds of ways. So it's also about being able to express ourselves and be able to evolve, to innovate, to be able to change, to continue to have our exchanges, to build these bodies of knowledge and to be able to pass them on so that we can be seen and live in our full humanity. That in turn allows us to be able to really have a multiracial democracy. So those I just wanted to kind of throw that out there as something for folks to be able to kind of hook onto.

Hrag Vartanian:

Yeah. Wendy, Rekha, is there anything you'd like to add to that? Any thoughts? All good. I also want to bring in, because we had a question a little earlier. Todd, I haven't forgotten, and I see your question there. But I guess the conversation about monuments affirming whiteness, I think that's certainly been a huge conversation this year. Certainly not a new one, but it's certainly become more mainstream than ever. I mean, does anyone have any thoughts about monuments and the conversation around that rate? Rekha, go ahead.

DJ Rekha:

I mean, we can make a list of things that are from whiteness, many, many things do, the names of sports teams. I mean, turmeric yoga. There's no one thing. I think the museum is a very interesting project, and I think it's interesting that we brought it up, and I work sometimes in museums. Sometimes it's an okay check. Then especially when and especially in cultural spaces, I think, there's an attempt to sort of be diversity and to sort of be inclusive. They do the brown thing one day, and then they'll do this kind of programming.

As an artist, I think I always want to keep the capitalism on the table in the room as well is the necessity, or what is the necessity, or what is the relationship of needing to live in capitalism, in actual capitalism, and what can we do? Thank you, Jeff, for showing that slide. Hopefully, as artists, our attempt to get there and to be there and just the daily challenges and what Wendy had to deal with there is... I mean, you had asked earlier about the strategies and how do you... You can't predict how racism is going to come at you. You can't plan for it. But as with experience, you can try to cut it off at the past sometimes or stick your ground sometimes. But it's challenging. So monuments are important, and they are very physical representations of something. I mean, I just think of Mount Rushmore is the most offensive thing ever created in the United States.

I mean, so much sacred land is dismissed here, is not acknowledged, let alone, and it's unbelievable to learn these histories as an adult or later to think that Mount Rushmore was this idyllic display of leadership or something, and to find out, it's like the history behind that is really like... It's painful. It's horrible. So yeah. There's no shortage of things that affirm or propagate whiteness. That's in many places. So there's gist to that question. That's how I see it.

Hrag Vartanian:

Totally understandable. So now, when it comes to kind of cultural appropriation, have there been any examples anybody would like to cite in terms of that they think were really successfully done in terms of really sort of engaging the community? Because I think we can all agree that cultural appropriation is worse when you're not actually engaging with something beyond the surface. Do you know? Because often, the worst cultural appropriation just sort of deals with things very surface level. Now, is there a way of actually sort of engaging that you thought was probably a very successful use of the sort of crossover where you can respectfully work with material that is not culturally connected to your own history?

Wendy Red Star:

I feel like if you do that, if I was to put myself in that position, whatever culture I'm doing something with, I would want to be in partnership with that community a hundred percent and almost them sort of leading the way on it. Otherwise, I would be too scared.

Hrag Vartanian:

Yeah, absolutely.

DJ Rekha:

Yeah. I'd have to say just, just the point, when I think about cultural partnerships, definitely with a profit motive in mind, but I think about the origins of the club night I did in New York City for 20 years based in Bhangra. It happened because SOBs, which is a venue in downtown Manhattan, they kind of understood early that you do it in partnership, whatever their programming was and let people really curatorially and do all the things that feel comfortable for that community. So they had many successful nights that would not allow it to exist in the city, including our night, and there were a couple of other. There was a Haitian night and just getting those people involved in every aspect of it, not necessarily equitably and all realms, but I think people have to be on the various decision-making levels of the project and not be brought on afterthought, after fact. So it has to be a holistic conversation and the holistic process.

Hrag Vartanian:

I also want to mention for those who may not know SOBs. I believe stood for Sounds Of Brazil. Correct? Just so people know sort of like the context for that a [crosstalk 01:05:12].

DJ Rekha:

Right. Not from a Brazilian, from someone who you know, a Jewish American person who fell in love with Brazilian music on a vision quest. So-

Hrag Vartanian:

A lot to unpack there. Absolutely. Jeff, did you have something that you wanted to add?

Jeff Chang:

Just to say, I mean, I think it really points to having ethical practice. Ultimately, it's really about how you engage that yields the possibility of a true exchange. An exchange that enriches both sides, that's not just sort of transactional, but is transformational. That's actually much more difficult than creating something that'll make money, which is probably hard enough. I don't know. I've never made money. But I think that the ethics of it is what this all kind of points to in the end. We can't stop influence. We can call out ignorance and power that's being utilized to harm people, and we should. I think that that's where Wendy and Rekha are describing it's the beginning of kind of ethical practice.

It's hard. It's easier, I think to be able to draw the fence, to build the fence, or to justify building fences than it is to actually have real engagement. It takes a long time, and it takes a lot of investment, and you put yourself at risk to be completely real. But it has to be done.

Hrag Vartanian:

So before we go to the Q&A, I just want to bring up one more project. If you can put on the slide about Sam Durant's *Scaffold* project. I wanted to bring this project up because I think it's an interesting example of the fact that this is a project where the American artists, Sam Durant, who's white had done this project for documenta, which is a big art exhibition that takes place in Germany every five years. It's sort of closer to the idea of a remix where it brings together different gallows from different executions. The piece was very much about the history of capital punishment and executions.

But one of the one of the executions that's included is of the Mankato hanging, which was the largest public execution in US history by the government, and that killed dozens of, of people in Minnesota, Lakota in Minnesota. The work was purchased by the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. Then when it was sort of ready to be installed, the local community, the local native American community, and many people may not know Minneapolis is a very large urban native American community. They really protested this saying it wasn't correct for him to be exhibiting this really painful unresolved part of their history.

So the museum actually started a process with the artist and the local community about this work. The decision was made that the Dakota would actually not only get the rights to the project so that Sam Durant could not actually remake this piece, but they were allowed to decide whatever happens to the piece itself. So in that way, it was sort of an attempt by a museum, some

may say a clumsy attempt, but an attempt really engage with the material and come up with some kind of resolution. I'm not quite sure if everyone's happy necessarily. I think the Dakota certainly, at least their feelings were respected, and their thoughts of this were respected, and their own community, and in some ways.

But of course, the fact that it had to get to this park is a little obviously a problem. I wonder if anybody has any thoughts on this project in general, because it sort of represents how projects can sort of take on lies. I mean, this project had lived on for years until it got to Minneapolis without any protest. But then when it arrived in Minneapolis, it had a whole different life. Anyone have any thoughts on this and these types of projects where I mean, thankfully, the artist was very open to talking and sort of transforming the project. But it certainly was not ideal, to say the least.

Wendy Red Star:

I think of Lincoln, because Lincoln was the one who said, "Go ahead and hang 38 Dakotas." So that's complicated in itself. Also, I also think of the American Indian Movement, which was birthed there. So I don't know. The institution, that is not the place where you don't want to do something like that for the birthplace of the American Indian Movement. Then I also kind of had a question about, when did the Jimmie Durham show? Is that after that happened or before?

Hrag Vartanian:

It was around that. It was around that, and that's right, right.

Wendy Red Star:

Yeah. I feel that there was a lot of tension around with that institution because of those two things with the native community there. So-

Hrag Vartanian:

Do you want to provide some context for Jimmie Durham, or do you want me to, just because some people may not know?

Wendy Red Star:

Go ahead.

Hrag Vartanian:

Jimmie Durham, for many of us that may not know was a member of the American Indian Movement, of course, the very influential activist group that emerged in the '60s and '70s and also a very prominent artists. There's been a big discussion of whether he actually has any native American heritage. There's been a discussion within the native American community. So there's been a lot of controversy, even though there's been and he exhibits within native American

spaces. But there is no, or at least there appears to be nobody has found any evidence that his family actually were registered native Americans. That was an exhibition that was taking place at the Walker around the same time.

Wendy Red Star:

I also think that's interesting too, because then Jimmie Durham went to Europe and sort of had this flourishing, amazing career there. Didn't the Sam Durant's sculpture show exclusively in Europe and no problems there until context? So yeah. I think it was really necessary, both of those two things that happened. The pipeline, was the pipeline around the same?

Hrag Vartanian:

It was actually right around Standing Rock. I think that's why this... It was right after Standing Rock had been broken up by the authorities. So I think there was heightened tension certainly around the use of native American sort of imagery.

Wendy Red Star:

So yeah. That really kind of provided all this sort of fuel and momentum for the online native voice, which was quite amazing to see that. Then what I noticed being a native artist is that a lot of institutions then started putting on sort of native shows, doing things like that, or if they didn't have native art in their collection, they started collecting work. So the whole thing is super complicated. But I don't know. I have mixed feelings on it, on the whole thing and how the institution sort of went about it. But I'm glad at the end that the community that did was involved and heard.

Hrag Vartanian:

Right. So I'm going to read a couple of the questions. So there's a question here. As Lisa said earlier, there can be discrimination, our own Asian American breed. How can colonial mentality among us colored people be decolonized? Ooh, okay. There's a whole year project right there. Just this conversation going on for a year. But does anybody want to tackle that a little bit?

Wendy Red Star:

Oh my gosh. I will just say that's the most painful thing for me at the moment is having sort of that just lateral violence or lateral discrimination. I think that's when I really realized, especially with my own community of Sholaga, when we sort of beat down each other, then I really realized how well colonialism is winning. So yeah. I feel like I'm in the generation now where it's really pivotal to sort of work that out and figure it out. Because we'll just destroy ourselves.

Hrag Vartanian:

Rekha, did you [crosstalk 01:15:11] you wanted to add.

DJ Rekha:

It's a tall order. I mean, it's tough, and I think, back to Jeff earlier, this is where intersectionality comes place in terms of within communities of things... We look good misogyny and casteism and class oppression. These things all play roles in how we function within communities and cross communities. So yeah. Some part of it is power and being disempowered. That's what capitalism creates is the sense of scarcity and needing to fight for limited resources when we have to think in certain ways of abundance. I mean, culture is abundant, even though. The other question I saw in the chat was like, "Should we get rid of museums, which is always a fun question and definitely... I don't know if it's a fun question, but it's definitely a question because it's just a cataloging of stolen goods at display, and that's a far deeper and more complicated question. I don't know. I think the whole system of the museum is a project needs to be examined and how it's funded and all of that. But it can be re-imagined, I think, in some ways.

Hrag Vartanian:

Right. [crosstalk 01:16:50]-

Wendy Red Star:

Rekha, I just want to say-

Hrag Vartanian:

Yeah [crosstalk 01:16:51]-

Wendy Red Star:

Can I say something real quick? What I said was my defeat itself inside me, and now I'm going to come back, and I'm going to say I think education is so important. Where I grew up on the reservation, I went to a public school, we never talked about native history. We didn't even talk about Crows, and Crows were most of the population owned a school there. I think about my young self. If I would have known things about our community, which I'm learning now as an adult, how much self-esteem I would have had about our community. So I think education, we're only told one side.

Still my daughter, I've got a 13-year-old. She still doesn't learn anything about native people. So education and then having the empathy to step back and understand we're all very wounded people, generations of wounded people and having the empathy to step back and say, "My own Apsáalooke tribal member is doing this to me." But I know why, and I can have empathy for you." That's tough. That's hard, but I think that's where I'd want to go. Just really educating ourselves.

Hrag Vartanian:

Absolutely. I mean, I often say decolonization happens at home. Because colonization is very

much about interrupting intimate relationships. It's not just this kind of structure that was placed only on the outside. It really has sort of seeped into, I mean, frankly, our dreams, our families, our relationships, our lives, every little piece. So when people ask me that question, I'll often say, "Well, it starts at home. Well, look around. How are your relationships formed by colonialism? By what you're studying, where you're working, where you're living." Then start thinking about those processes and go from there. Jeff, did you have anything you wanted to add before we go to the next question?

Jeff Chang:

No, go ahead. Go on to the next question, Hrag.

Hrag Vartanian:

Okay. So now, there's a question. Interesting. This is an interesting question. Where does the notion of self-determination come in. For example, a person who is a quarter of a culture, but identifies as such, how does that manifest in the artist's work, and how does one navigate that space and the in-between this. Context really changes the work itself and how the artist performs it. Now, does anyone want to address that because I think this is becoming more and more of a topic, in terms of who gets to perform a certain kind of culture.

I mean, I can bring in my own sort of cultural heritage as someone who identifies as Armenia. Kim Kardashian is sort of one of the most famous examples. But she is only half Armenian, but there's this sort of idea of what does that mean for someone who hasn't been engaged with the community to then perform a kind of Armenianness, for instance, as opposed to no one ever seems to know she's also this sort of European Mayflower, half of her or something. But there's this idea of who gets to narrate and under what grounds. So does anyone have any thoughts on that aspect, in terms of when people are sort of negotiating that?

Jeff Chang:

Well, setting aside the blood quantum question for now, right? Which we could just go so deep into. I mean, this is where I think the aspect of cultural justice, that's perspective, that's about looking forward comes in, right? So there's an artistic level, and then there's this sort of cultural level. So let me start with the artistic level. In an artistic level, it's about developing your voice. It's about developing your practice, right? It's about finding who it is that you are, and that is going to be your journey, and that's going to be something that you'll have to figure out.

But I don't think that waiting for somebody to tell you have permission to do it is necessarily the best way to kind of approach that particular part of the question. It's your voice. It's the questions that you have. It's the experience and the legacy that you're bringing forward that you bring to your particular practice. So you make that decision, and you shouldn't let anybody else tell you otherwise. On the cultural justice level, we originally thinking about this idea of cultural justice and how to try to define it, mostly what we were thinking about was, how do we restore the injustices that have been done, right? The fact that I grew up as part of sort of the last mass generation under which Hawaiian was not an approved language, right, that literally

Americanization took place for most of the 20th century in Hawaii, and I was the last generation for which people were like, "Forget that. We're restoring Hawaiian as a language."

But I wasn't able to take Hawaiian or to learn Hawaiian the way that my nieces and nephews now can grow up and be fluent in it because of Americanization. Right? So we were concentrating on thinking about cultural justice in terms of restoring. But we were giving a workshop, and we were approached afterwards by a woman of color who is a ballerina. Right? She said, "Well, what about this? I'm a woman of color. I feel like I'm here in what's traditionally been thought of as a European art form, which we could maybe say about a lot of different types of things. Right? How do I even see what cultural justice might mean for me and this?"

That's where we were like, "Wow, we actually have to be able to allow ourselves the space and to think about cultural justice as perspective as well as being able to express ourselves in all the ways, through all the ways that we can and to be able to expand what it means to be who we are." I think that that's something that we have to be able to claim that. There's no formula, and it's ever evolving, and that's where we actually have the chance to be able to make a difference before our time is up.

Hrag Vartanian:

That's great. Any final quick thoughts? Because we're about to wrap up. So just does anybody have a quick something they want to add? I think we're good. Okay. So thank you, Wendy. Thank you, Jeff. Thank you, Rekha. Thank you, everyone for taking part. So Lisa, you have the floor.

Lisa Gold:

Thank you so much, Hrag, Jeff, Rekha, Wendy. That was wonderful. I really appreciate conversation. It was really powerful and so much to continue to think about. Thank you to our interpreters and our captioner as well. Before we close, I just wanted to say that we're going to drop the survey link into the chat box, and we'd appreciate it if you would give us your feedback. We will also email it to you tomorrow in case you do not have time to do that right now.

Also, before we go, quickly, I just want to let you know that the third discussion in this series is actually taking place on January 14th and about this idea of actual capitalism, and as a natural extension of cultural capitalism is talking about the funding mechanisms and philanthropy and the very challenging issues of diversity and marginalization and the language around that. So we have a great panel lined up. So I hope you will RSVP and join us again on the 14th for the combination of this series. So thank you all very, very much. I really enjoyed it.