

Event Transcript –

September 22, 2020 - *Performance-in-Place: Disappearing Acts @ 50* by LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs

Sara Reisman:

Started.

Brandon Kazen-Maddox:

Yes.

Esraa Warda:

Have we started?

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

We're starting now.

Sara Reisman:

Starting now. Welcome everyone, to *Disappearing Acts @ 50*, in which poet and performance artist LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs will perform a suite of I think five episodes that incorporate video, spoken word, music and dance in collaboration with Esraa Warda. Before we begin, I'd like to point out that this event includes live ASL interpretation and captioning. For closed captioning, when the captioner starts writing, the CC button appears for viewers. I believe it's already visible at the bottom of your screen. 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 right side of the screen. For ASL interpretation during screen sharing, please pin the video of the ASL interpreter, who's named Brandon Kazen-Maddox. You can refer to the chat section for accessibility resources if you have any questions.

A few points of introduction. My name is Sara Reisman. I'm the Executive and Artistic Director of the Shelley and 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. Since 2015 at The 8th Floor, we've been organizing exhibitions and public programs that address themes of social justice and political import. *Disappearing Acts @ 50* is the sixth installment of *Performance-in-Place*, a virtual performance series we launched back in May of this year to comply with current social distancing safety guidelines. These virtual commissions highlight the artistic potentials inherent in our current reality, reflecting the adaptability of artists whose practices are evolving in response to restricted mobility that we're all experiencing around the world.

Recent performances have included Alice Sheppard of Kinetic Light, Nicolás Dumit Estévez Rafal Espejo, Maria Hupfield, Eileen Myles and Aliza Shvarts. Our next *Performance-in-Place*

event is *Baseera Khan: Waste of a Nation* on October 27th. For more information on these upcoming performances, please visit our website at www.the8thfloor.org. I'd like to quickly mention that the Rubin Foundation recently launched our 2021 open call for art and social justice grants in New York City for organizations with a deadline of November 20th. Please visit the Foundation's website for more information on that, www.sdrubin.org. Also note, we'll soon resume in-person exhibitions The 8th Floor with our upcoming show *To Cast Too Bold a Shadow*, which examines entrenched forms of misogyny in our culture to understand how feminism, misogyny and sexism intersect. The exhibition will be open by appointment starting October 15th, on view through January 21st, 2021, presenting works by Aliza Shvarts, Joiri Minaya, Yoko Ono, Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Furen Dai and others.

Tonight's program, *Disappearing Acts @ 50*, is something like a sequel to LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs's 2018 performance at The 8th Floor, *disappearing acts*. Tonight, Diggs revisits a 2018 musical spoken word piece commenting now on how femininity and misogyny manifests in the time of COVID. Hear a meditation combined of bound texts, song lyrics and multiple languages. This performance features Algerian dancer and North African dance educator Esraa Warda. In her poetry, Diggs ruminates on the erasure that black and brown female bodies encounter in society, the temporal nature of identity and what it means to be a woman of color entering her 50s. Before I introduce LaTasha and Esraa, I'd like to take a few minutes to recognize our respective relationships to place.

We are gathered virtually in many locations at once: here in New York City, including Upper Manhattan, Union Square, colleagues in Brooklyn and other places. Most, if not all, are on unceded lands. As this event is organized by the Rubin Foundation, I have chosen to address the specific site where our offices are located, near Union Square, thereby acknowledging the Lenape community, past and present, as well as future generations. The Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation and The 8th Floor acknowledge that we were founded upon exclusions and erasures of many indigenous people, including those on whose land where the Foundation is located. This acknowledgment demonstrates a commitment to beginning the process of working to dismantle the ongoing legacies of settler colonialism, a commitment that I think many of us agree has become all the more poignant in this time of political upheaval that has already resulted in transformative activist engagement across the country and the world.

I'm also adding a virtual land recognition devised by Jill Carter, who teaches in the Indigenous Studies and Drama, Theater and Performance Studies Departments at the University of Toronto. Carter writes, "Zoom has erected 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 are deeply indebted to the Muwekma Ohlone people, as the lands and waters they continue to steward now support the people, pipelines and technologies that carry our breaths, images and words across vast distances to others. Thank you."

Now, to introduce LaTasha and Esraa. A writer, vocalist and performance sound artist, LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs is the author of *TwERK*, published by Belladonna in 2013. Diggs has presented and performed at California Institute of The Arts, El Museo del Barrio, The Museum of Modern

Art and Walker Art Center, and at festivals including *Explore the North Festival*, Leeuwarden, Netherlands, *Hekayeh Festival* in Abu Dhabi, *International Poetry Festival* of Copenhagen, *Ocean Space* in Venice, *International Poetry Festival* in Romania, *Question of Will*, Slovakia, *Poesiefestival* Berlin and the *2015 Venice Biennale*. As an independent curator, artistic director and producer, Diggs has presented events for BAM Café, Black Rock Coalition, El Museo del Barrio, Lincoln Center Out of Doors and the David Rubenstein Atrium.

Diggs has received a 2020 C.D. Wright Award for Poetry from the Foundation of Contemporary Art, a Whiting Award 2016, and a National Endowment for the Arts Literature Fellowship in 2015, as well as grants and fellowships from Cave Canem, Creative Capital, New York Foundation for the Arts, and the US-Japan Friendship Commission among others. She lives in Harlem. So welcome, LaTasha.

Now I'm going to introduce Esraa Warda, a performance and teaching artist who preserves and transmits traditional Moroccan and Algerian dance forms through workshops and performances. A young talent of Algerian origin, Warda is a community-taught dancer under the mentorship of women elders in her family and artists from Morocco and Algeria. She's a firm advocate in the power of intergenerational transmission. Warda honors her women ancestors by humbling herself to the value of power dignity of these distinguished artistic expressions. Warda, whose name means rose in Arabic, is a rebellious spirit who challenges misogyny towards women and neocolonialist impositions of North African culture. She's a cultural warrior, driving North African dance styles out of the margins and into the global dance and culture scene.

Her work has been featured in *Vogue Arabia*, *Al Jazeera Francais*, NBC Asian America, Wada7, and Hesperess, and has taught at the Old Town School of Folk Music in Chicago and the National Algerian Centre in London. She's collaborated with Bnat Houwariyat, Morocco's premier all women percussion ensemble based in Marrakesh, and has performed at places like Hassan Hajjaj's *Mi Casa es Su Casa* Exhibition, New York City's Museum of Modern Art PS1, Cuba's *Havana Habibi Festival*, and Marrakech's *Festival Ghiwane*. Welcome, Esraa. And now we begin. I hope you enjoy this performance. Thank you.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs (Singing):

You. You know. Tides go. Moon shows.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs (Speaking):

Hey, LaTasha. You've made it. You didn't think you would, but by golly, you is here. You alive. You is 50. Bienvenidos! Bom Bini Dushi! Yōkoso! Welkom! Bem-vinda! Osiyo! You have survived in awe, surviving strep throat, sinus infections, yeast infections, migraines, thinning hair, nachos, arroz con habichuelas, carbs, job insecurity, invisibility and something about your age and marital status that reads your game. Like for instance, motherfuckers who never tell you and never told you they're married. And technically speaking, if they have kids, they are fucking a mother, hence a motherfucker. Tick, tick, well, well. The pheromones still making you sniff despite the hormonal changes. You still prefer a fruitier, sweeter musk over someone who consumes a lot of beef, soda, smokes and drinks.

And yes, you wanted to have three babies. Yes. And then you wanted to have two babies. Yes. And then you just wanted one. Yes. But you know what? It's okay. It's cool, really. Art is your baby. You're TiTi Tasha, you're Auntie Tasha. You're an auntie now, so give thanks that should you raise your arm the wrong way and pull a muscle that it was only two days that you were laid out. And while the batteries in your vibrator have died, it's time for an upgrade. Something USB-chargeable. You is 50.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs (Singing):

You know. The sea goes. And the moon shows. You know. Sea goes. And the moon shows. You know. The sea goes. And the tide shows. Shows. Shows. Shows. You know. Sea goes. Tide shows. Shows. Shows. Shows. Shows. Shows.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs (Speaking):

So I'm going to do a little oldie but goodie here from the original *disappearing acts*, so I hope you enjoy.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs (Singing):

Primrose & cohosh.
Evening & black.
Turmeric & ginger.
Stiff joints that snap.
Jars of menthol tiger balm.
Ylang ylang.
These are a few our mutual thangs.

Proposals & deadlines.
Prescription past due.
Tinder meet Minder.
Some say swiping left ain't no use.
Alas we got K-town spa.
Burdock V steam.

These are a few of some mutual things.

Tarot & Obi.
Candles & sage.
Mood lights & Headspace.
Fitbit till I ache.
Foot soaks & green shakes.
Epsom sometimes stings.
These are a few of some mutual things.

neem & fenugreek.
aids hair growth, fights acne.
when I'm swinging mad.
I simply remember these mutual things.
& then I don't feel some so bad, bad, bad, bad, bad, bad, bad.

Primrose & cohosh.
Evening & black.
Turmeric & ginger.
Stiff joints that snap .
Jars of menthol tiger balm.
Ylang ylang.
These are a few our mutual thangs.

Proposals & deadlines.
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These are a few of some mutual things.

neem & fenugreek.
aids hair growth, fights acne.
when I'm swinging mad.
I simply remember these some mutual things.
& then I don't feel some so bad, bad, bad, bad, ay ay ay ay ay aaaaaa.

Then I don't feel so bad.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs (Speaking):

Oh god! Lord. I think somebody is, yeah, I think it's time. Yes it is. For problems. Now we all know talcum powder, a clay mineral composed of hydrating magnesium silicate, an ingredient used in ceramics paints and roofing, but also combined with corn starch it's used as a baby powder to prevent diaper rash and what we big girls call the heat rash. Now, you can see I'm having problems... Ope, took a minute. It's all childproof and shit, had to use my mouth. Oh, but wait up. I need to put on [inaudible 00:18:00]. You know, [inaudible 00:18:04] because airborne shit... Goggle, because American [inaudible 00:18:12], so anyhow... Conflict [inaudible

00:18:27] conflict diamonds. The prophet [inaudible 00:18:30] in [inaudible 00:18:48]. But [inaudible 00:18:51] and [inaudible 00:19:00] tradition envisionist beliefs [inaudible 00:19:08]. Yeah, if you're out of... You have that little breakout. But as you can see, I'm putting it all in there, getting it all in there. You shake it up. Shake up those titties. Shake, shake it up, because we need to make sure we are not 'ffing, chaffing. [inaudible 00:19:38] chaffing. You got to be careful. You put it down there, too, but it's also been linked, talcum [inaudible 00:19:49] ovarian and breast cancer.

In fact, like 1,000 women sued [inaudible 00:19:57] and that's why Johnson & Johnson no longer includes talcum in it. Yeah, so just to let you know, this artist did not use Johnson & Johnson's baby powder that had talcum powder in it. That's lavender-scented baby powder does not have any [inaudible 00:20:17], and just in case [inaudible 00:20:21]. Just to let you know, the CVS brand [inaudible 00:20:24] talcum powder, so you don't mess with that, okay? Yeah, so you want to get it all in there. All in there.

Oh. We are not chaffing today, no. We are not chaffing. We are not chaffing today, no. We are not chaffing. Baby powder, corn starch, Gold Bond, anti-chaffing powder gel, leggings, bike shorts. We are not chaffing today, no. We are done chaffing. We are not chaffing today, no. We are not chaffing. Lycra, wipes, you is 50. We are not chaffing today, no. We are not chaffing. You know you survived your traumatic 20s. You know you survived the acid reflux, Zoloft 30s. We are not chaffing today, no. We are not chaffing. You survived the fuck you I'm 40 40s. Anxiety attacks, late bills, the moment you realized that most of your last remaining single friends are all having one-night stands babies because they're all 40.

We are not chaffing today, no. We are not chaffing. Fuck you 40s was more like this was supposed to be easier. Why do I feel like I'm 18? I'm mad. I'm hurt. I'm happy. I think I'm happy. I'm numb. I'm dumb as fuck. I'm numb to baby showers, I'm numb to weddings. I don't want to go to another wedding. No, I don't want to go to another goddamn toddler birthday party. Hide in the work so no one will know you're there. No one will know just how we are not chaffing today. You is 50. You ain't a size 10. Be grateful you're a fluctuating size 12/14 in Old Navy jeans. You is entering 50 during a pandemic. You is becoming 50 during political unrest. You is entering 50 when your US passport don't mean shit. You is becoming 50 when global warming migration means the cities will get denser, mass evictions are on the rise, food insecurity is real, you will be forced to buy Goya chickpeas because the line is too long at Trader Joe's. But you can still pay your rent doing art, right, at 50?

So we are not chaffing today, no. We are not chaffing. We are not chaffing today, no. We are not chaffing. We are not chaffing today, no. We are not chaffing. You are entering 50 when all the damned stores have run out of Clorox wipes. You are entering 50 when all the damn stores have run out of Clorox wipes, but you're not chaffing. No, no, no. You're not chaffing. You're not chaffing. No chaffing. No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. No chaffing. No, baby. No, baby girl no chaffing.

This is so... Yeah. Okay, so, yeah. Wipes. I got this question about wipes. So what's the difference between a facial wipe and a hand wipe and a makeup remover wipe and a hemorrhoidal wipe and a flushable wipe and a booty wipe if they all contain aloe? I mean, I

could understand tea tree oil infused wipes maybe perhaps not being used down there, but I mean, if I'm sweating and I'm trying to prevent a heat rash, I'm going to grab any wipe that's in my bag, with the exception of disinfectant wipes. So Seventh Generation wipes, no. Clorox Wipes, no. The low budget disinfectant wipes [inaudible 00:25:25], yeah. I won't be using that to wash my hands when I'm mango. And by the way, I've been eating [inaudible 00:25:33] mango because that's become my comfort food in an effort not to gain another 12 pounds during this pandemic. Yeah.

So anyway, I just want to know the difference. If the vaginal wipe has aloe and the hemorrhoidal wipe has aloe and the facial wipe has aloe, can I use it? I mean, I don't think there's a problem. I mean, I'm not going to flush wipes. I don't believe in such a thing as flushable wipes. You're just going to get problems.

Anyhow, how y'all doing? So yes, these are the things you think about when you're 50. What can I say? Now, to my single people. Are you experiencing a COVID bubble with someone right now? Look at Esraa. New costume change. Yes, girl. Okay, let me get back to this. Now, to my single people. Are you experience a COVID bubble with someone right now? You know what I'm talking about. It's like this. There's no sex involved. You ain't even sharing a physical space. You two just vulnerable out there in the equinox. COVID, unbeknownst to you, peeled away all your armor and y'all motherfuckers said, "No." It's like you're on a plane crashing into Mount Kilimanjaro or somewhere in the Andes and the two of y'all are like, "Fuck it." It's like you can't get the brother to socially distance at the post office and that turns into a petty ass argument like one of y'all done ate the last frozen nature's half multigrain waffle. You bought tickets for a hot air balloon ride on Groupon and you are there over yonder and he's down below in the midst of another government overthrow and the balloon pops right before you technically get to know each other, before you get to ask him 101 questions, because even at 50 during a pandemic, you still got to be the one that asks. But y'all like, "Fuck it."

All right, it's like when the humpback whale done breached the shore and slapped the tip of the boat and now the boat is sinking and there are sharks and venomous jellyfish and there ain't even a Somalian pirate to save your ass and y'all are like, "Fuck it." Turning 50 sucks this year. Death is closer than we thought. Neither of us have lamb's blood to mark our doors. Has COVID made you feel your age, made you say to yourself, "I have no one," made you say to yourself, "who would find me if I died? How many days would it take? Where's my life insurance policy in this messy ass apartment? When was the last time I hugged someone? Who did I hug? Who hugged me? Will me editor Erica Stevens ever get this manuscript for the second book for me?" Look like it's time to moisturize.

Yes, baby. It's time to moisturize. Now, why is it important to moisturize? Because you lose that collagen, that elasticity, and so I have a friend who always comments on my, I think she called it a [foreign language 00:30:21], right? That area, the chest area where the boom booms are. But anyhow, I like to put on a dose of vitamin E oil. I get the CVS brand, it's cheaper than Whole Foods. Fuck it. Anyhow, yeah, I put lots and lots and lots of vitamin E oil. I also put it on my forehead, because I have a tendency to frown, so I'm getting ready to do it. See? I just dab it right in and then I rub it in and it's going to soak into all of those little baby, baby, baby, baby, baby, baby frown lines and I get it in.

Normally, I do this every night or every other night or when I'm feeling like, "Oh, I'm going to see somebody tomorrow so I want to think..." Oh, what is that? Oh, they kegel. How you doing, baby? I haven't seen you in a long time. What you doing? Yeah, pull back that fold. Go in there. Yes, baby. Wow. It tickles. It just tickles, you know it does. Anyhow, yeah, and then I slap the face. I don't know why. I guess I think that's going to do something. Then I put on the night cream, and so a lot of these folks are making night cream masks. I don't know the difference, but it just makes me feel like I'm doing something, and so I rub it all in. Don't. Luxury [inaudible 00:33:37] skin. Just get it all in. All in. [

Your mind has put a variety of procedures in place so you can become confident about your so-called maturity. Display kindness and compassion to all members of the black, LatinX, indigenous, LGBTQ+ families, community during this time of hiding the anxiety. Display kindness and compassion during this time of hiding anxiety.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs (Speaking):

Your mind has put a variety of procedures in place so you can be confident about your so-called maturity. Display kindness and compassion to all members of the black, LatinX, indigenous, LGBTQ+ families, community during this time of heightened anxiety. Display kindness and compassion during this time of heightened anxiety.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs (Singing):

This time you've gone too far.
This time you've gone too far.
This time you've gone too far.
I told you I told you I told you I told you.
This time you've gone too far.
This time you've gone too far.
This time you've gone too far.
I told you I told you I told you I told you.

Don't talk back, just drive the car.
Shut your mouth. I know what you are.
Don't say nothing, keep your hands on the wheel.
Don't turn around, this is for real.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs (Speaking):

Your mind has put a variety of procedures in place so you can be confident about your so-called maturity and wokeness.

Display kindness and compassion to all members of the Black, LatinX, Indigenous, LGBTQ+, feminist community during this time of heightened anxiety. Display kindness and compassion during this time of heightened anxiety.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs (Singing):

This time you've gone too far.
This time you've gone too far.
This time you've gone too far.
I told you I told you I told you I told you.
This time you've gone too far.
This time you've gone too far.
This time you've gone too far.
I told you I told you I told you I told you.
Don't talk back, just drive the car.
Shut your mouth. I know what you are.
Don't say nothing, keep your hands on the wheel.
Don't turn around, this is for real. This time...
This time you've gone too far.
This time you've gone too far.
This time you've gone too far.
I told you I told you I told you I told you.
This time you've gone too far.
This time you've gone too far.
This time you've gone too far.
I told you I told you I told you I told you.
I told you I told you I told you I told you.
I told you I told you I told you I told you.
I told you I told you I told you I told you.
I told you I told you I told you I told you.
I told you I told you I told you I told you.
I told you I told you.
Don't talk back, just drive the car.
Shut your mouth. You've gone to far.
Don't say nothing, keep your hands on the wheel.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs (Speaking):

Next video. We're back into the subject of moisturizing, but one thing to understand, bio oil is one of those ancient secrets. We think it works, maybe it works, sometimes it works, but I think it works. I think it does have a tendency to work. I like to put it right there in that area again, the [foreign language 00:44:15]. And sometimes I put it on my face and sometimes I put it on my knees and sometimes I put it other places because we get those little dark areas... Who is that? Hey, where have you been? In my medicine cabinet like 30 years, dude. Hey. I haven't seen you for a minute. Wow. Where are you going? Oh, you're pushing your little case. That's so cute. Adorable. Go back. Hide. Bye. It was nice seeing you.

Anyhow, yeah, bio oil. We don't know what it's made out of. It's like you try to read the ingredients, but they're so, so tiny, so obviously there's some shit in there that we don't know about, but yeah, that's all of the little things that you start to see spill out into the living room

when you're older and you live alone. It's just like, "What the fuck? Why bother?" Bio oil. Who gets down with bio oil? Who hasn't gotten down with bio oil? Don't lie to yourself. Don't lie. Don't lie.

Now, we're going back into the big girl thing, and for some reason the volume is low on the video. I don't know why, but yeah. Calamine lotion, also known as calamine for mild itchininess and insect bites and poison ivy, oak, and yada yada. But it's really good if you do get the heat rash. So if you can't prevent the heat rash, you're going to put this on for the heat rash, which is also called sweat rash, because it's clogged sweat gland ducts. Big girls, it happens. So the areas of concern, the upper chest, the neck, the elbow creases, under the breasts, the skin folds. Those areas of the body that may rub against clothing like the back, the overt abdominal skirt that looks like a pubis apron, that crease underneath the butt cheeks. You know what I'm talking about, ladies. The crease between your pubis and the inner thigh. Oh, those. I won't even bother, y'all can just... They wanted to say hello. They wanted to remind you.

Yeah, but anyway, between the pubis and the inner thigh fat are at times irritated by you insisting to wear those tight ass panties with the elastic. Big girls, you know, we can't do elastic, especially not in panties. We need those, what do you call them? Those panties without the elastic, they're like seamless panties. Yeah, because it will and it can become a wildfire and it's really uncomfortable. Like I'm going back into this OBM mode, this voodoo mode, kind of like an ode to Geoffrey Holder from *Live and Let Die*, and thinking about the island of Dr. Monroe, I wonder, Marlon Brando had the face painted like that and then had a white stocking cap. I wondered, where did he get that from? Did he see a black woman put on calamine lotion or baby powder on their face to say, "Hmm," and then somebody decided to get some white pantyhose and create a head garb? It was really confusing.

And then Val Kilmer put on the white mask and the white pantyhose. But yeah, so if you have a heat rash, you put it on and you want to make sure you have a good coat of it, because then you're going to let it sit and it's going to dry. What it's doing, it's drying out the rash and you're going to be good. It just happens. And then you go back to the bio oil or the cocoa butter or the Neosporin to even out the skin tone. And yeah, they want to make an appearance again. Hey. Bye.

It's so, so so. Anyhow. I think I know what's happening. I think we might have to do somebody's ha. We're all learning the limitations of technology. I feel like Teddy Riley during the Verzuz competition when he was trying to be all fancy, and he just ended up looking like a fool. But I digress.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs (Singing):

How can I make you happy?

Stay with me.

How can I make you happy?

How can I make you happy?

How can I how can I how can I how can I how can I make you happy?

How can I make you stay?

How can I make you happy?
How can I make you stay?
How can I make you happy?
How can I make you stay?
How can I how can I how can I how can I how can I how can I how can I make you happy?
How can I make you stay?
How can I make you happy?
How can I make you stay?
How can I make you happy?
How can I make you stay?
How can I how can I how can I how can I how can I how can I how can I make you happy?
How can I make you stay?
How can I make you happy?
How can I make you stay?
How can I how can I how can I how can I how can I how can I how can I?

improvisational scatting/singing

How can I make you happy?
How can I make you stay?
How can I make you happy?
How can I how can I how can I how can I how can I how can I
How can I how can I how can I how can I how can I how can I
How can I how can I how can I how can I how can I how can I?

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs (Speaking):

And now, a word. Chest hairs. I'm looking forward to that. Aren't you? Chin hairs, chest hairs. I've decided that I'm just going to paint them in. Get me a Crayola and just draw them in. Draw in the stretch marks. The stretch marks that you look at other women and you go, "Do I have those?" And you're like, "Okay. All right. And if I have them, that's what it is," you know? But it also reminds me of my mom's titties. She had really big titties, but she also had kids, so big difference. I wanted to draw them in also because they look like rivers to me. You start to look at them and it's like they look like part of the landscape. They look like when the shore goes out and you see the runs of water in the sand. That's what stretch marks look like, so it's like, "Oh, wow. It looks like the beach," or it looks like a canyon or it looks like rivers and estuaries and streams. They just bleed out. I could say they look like branches, but they don't look like branches. They look like waterways.

Oh, CVS makes a lot of money off of me. Anyhow, bye. Yes, so then I'm inspired by this one particular woman who's a neighborhood friend, who one summer she was out on the poolside bench and tanning, and she just had a chest full of chest hair right in the middle of her titties. I was like, "Wow. Is that going to be me?" What was lovely about her was the fact that it was like, "Okay, it's there. I'm not going to waste my time trying to pluck these shits. It's there." That's what getting older means. It means little chin hairs, it means the mustache that you have that's really faint probably darkening up a little bit, and I'm like, "Okay, this is it. This is who I may be.

This is what I have to look forward to." So I could talk to them and say these are my rivers.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs (Singing):

One day you'll throw away your diva cup.
You'll say farewell. So long silicone.
One day you'll discard all those maxi pads.
In time you'll be ready to say, truly, goodbye.

One month off.
Two months off.
Three months off.
Six months off.
Eight months off.
Ten months off.

One month off.
Two months off.
Three months off.
Six months off.
Eight months off.
Ten months off.

Surprise. Here comes the flood again. Pouring down my thigh like a tragedy.
Soaking through my briefs, such a rich emulsion.

Here it comes again! Here comes the flood again. Pouring down my thighs like a tragedy.
Soaking through my briefs, such a rich emulsion.

Into the cabinet. Under the sink. Aged Ziplock full of OB.
Organic, unbleached, bleached. disregard toxic shock syndrome disclaimers cause
ancient pussy plugs do due diligence.
The All Almighty Tampon. Menstrual pads. Always with wings.

One month off.
Two months off.
Three months off.
Six months off.
Eight months off.
Ten months off.

Surprise. Here comes the flood again. Pouring down my thigh like a tragedy.
Soaking through my briefs, such a rich emulsion.

Here it comes again. Here comes the flood again. Pouring down my thigh like a tragedy.

Soaking through my briefs, such a rich emulsion.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs (Speaking):

Depends. They're getting sexier. Have you seen them? They're starting to look like panties. Serious, serious panties. Depends. They're getting sexier. Incontinence, a new fragrance brought to you by you and you and you, the letter U.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs (Singing):

Here comes the flood again.
Pouring down my thigh like a tragedy.
Soaking through my briefs, such a rich emulsion.

Here it comes again. Here comes the flood again.
]Pouring down my thigh like a tragedy.
Soaking through my briefs, such a rich emulsion.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs (Speaking):

My body, your body, that body. Everybody. Love this body. I'm going to love this body because I ain't got no body but this one. My body. My body. My body. Everybody. Love this body. I'm going to love this body because I ain't got no body but this one. Because I ain't got no body but this one. My body, your body, that body, every body. Love this body. I'm going to love this body because I ain't got no body but this one.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs (Singing):

Come come come. Come come come.

Here comes the flood again. Here comes the flood again.
Here comes the flood again. Here comes the flood again.
Here comes the flood again.
Pouring down my thigh like a tragedy.
Soaking through my briefs, such a rich emulsion.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

Hah. It's done. Thank you guys. Thank you 8th Floor. Whooooo. Thank you, Sara. Thank you William. Thank you ASL, thank you closed caption. Whee. I can. Let me see. Now I can see everybody.

Sara Reisman:

Now you can see a few of us at least, right? That was so dynamic. I'm actually going to host some questions. I see Shaunie Peters is clapping on the side.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

Hey honey.

Sara Reisman:

Yeah. I want to just ask a few questions, and if anyone has questions, you can write into the chat section. Thank you, Esraa, thank you LaTasha, thank you, Brandon. I think Brandon should be... can we request Brandon for every ASL interpretation of a performance?

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

Yeah. Yeah.

Sara Reisman:

I think you guys make a great crew.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

Yeah.

Sara Reisman:

I want to just ask how the two of you, Esraa and LaTasha-

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

Let's do a quick adjustment, all right?

Sara Reisman:

Oh, sure. Yeah. Whatever you say.

Esraa Warda:

[inaudible 01:10:33], right?

Sara Reisman:

Oh yeah. I see what's going to happen. This is like...

Esraa Warda:

Make sure you mute your computer.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

Okay.

Sara Reisman:

A surprise.

Esraa Warda:

Hey, just a second.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

Give us a second. I got you. Push this back. No, push it back. Push it back because I can get it... Push it back. No, this-

Esraa Warda:

Towards you?

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

Yeah, towards me. Okay.

Sara Reisman:

Okay. So I see some cushions.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

All right..

Esraa Warda:

Hey.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

Hey.

Sara Reisman:

Oh look. Are you in a pod together? The two of you are in a pandemic pod.

Esraa Warda:

[inaudible 01:11:25]. [inaudible 01:11:25] stuff all out of here.

Sara Reisman:

So I'm going to put it to the speaker view so I can see you better. Talk to me about how you guys met and how you decided to collaborate.

Esraa Warda:

How did we meet? Actually I was thinking about that while we were performing.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

I took her class.

Esraa Warda:

How did you find out about my class?

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

I found out about your class because you were teaching at Sweet Water Dance and Yoga in the Bronx.

Esraa Warda:

Oh, right.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

Shout out to Yosara Rojillo.

Esraa Warda:

Yosara.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

Superwoman, mom, opened up her own yoga and dance studio and Esraa was teaching there. I took her class and then she said, "What did you think?" And I said, "I think I need a bigger butt."

Sara Reisman:

A bigger butt. A bigger butt.

Esraa Warda:

[inaudible 01:12:19] right here.

Sara Reisman:

I think that's a good outcome. Will you continue to collaborate?

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

I think so, yeah.

Esraa Warda:

I had a lot of fun.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

We had fun. I think. This was our first time collaborating, so I think because it's also because I've taken her class a lot, and so I know her. It's like I know the [inaudible 01:12:43]. I'm aware of how vast her vocabulary is in the traditions that she studies, and so I feel that we need to collaborate more so I could start creating stuff that can highlight more of that vocabulary.

Esraa Warda:

Yeah.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

If that makes sense.

Sara Reisman:

I guess one thing that I noticed when we were previewing the videos that you put together specifically for this, there are titles like *Calamine Lotion*, *Chest Hair and Stretchmarks*, *Bio Oil* and *Big Girl Problems*. When I previewed the videos, I thought this reads like a web series or a television show. Do you see expanding this further?

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

Maybe. I'm going to give a lot of shout-outs to folks because I was in conversation with a lot of people when I was thinking about this, and the one thing that a good friend of mine, [inaudible 01:13:52] said, was that the absurdity of performances having to be Zoomed in just is basically giving you permission to be even more absurd with the technology, how the technology is not perfect. I watched a lot of YouTube tutorials, and I find them hysterical in just the amount of time someone puts into making these tutorials for hair or makeup. I said, "Well, what if I did

tutorials about stretchmarks and chin hairs or moisturizing or bio oil?" Yeah, I could go into my medicine cabinet or go into my bedroom and basically do a video for everything that I put on my skin.

Sara Reisman:

I mean, I think this should be considered a web series. Obviously when we kind of get post-pandemic we can have control over technology, right? It'll be fun. So in the writing, one of the things I love about this format is we do have a captioner, so I can read the subtitles as it's happening, and for me that's one of my favorite ways to watch anything on video with dialogue. But I can see you wrote about the Diva Cup, two months off, six months on, the flood, and these all reference the big change, menopause.

A few years ago, I went to a talk by the poet Eileen Myles, who read from their book *Afterglow: A Dog Memoir*, which was partly about the loss of their dog, kind of that... it was a beautiful reading. They reflected on what the experience of menopause meant. The spoke about bringing them back to who they were as a kid before they were defined externally, and I think in a way it was about the male world and its definition of women. So what has approaching this time meant to you, if you don't mind me asking? It's kind of a personal question, but...

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

Well, I mean, because I got the question earlier and I thought about it. The thing, again about the [inaudible 01:16:25] that I wrote for this, some of the things I'm experiencing and some of the things I'm not experiencing, that through conversations with sister girls of mine, we're all having, depending on the sister girl, we're either having candid conversations about these things or we're having little, minuscule conversations about one item. For me, that personally is not happening yet, but I'm getting an idea through conversations what to look for, and what happens when that does start to begin. Yeah.

Sara Reisman:

I have to say, I almost wish that we were visible as a group so we could dance with you during your performance. That's one of the things we lose in doing the webinar, but it also gives more control. Another layer of this is you're referencing a number of things that refer to rituals and objects of self-care and pleasure, and we're in a time where people of all classes are talking about the need for self-care. I sense both a playfulness and a criticality about both things, self-care and pleasure. What are your thoughts on the rise, we'll focus on self-care, the rise of self-care as a right. And you can both answer. Esraa, you're part of this, too, if you have any thoughts.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

Go for it.

Sara Reisman:

I don't want to make assumptions about...

Esraa Warda:

The rise of self-care as a right.

Sara Reisman:

Yeah.

Esraa Warda:

God.

Sara Reisman:

I mean, in this time, right? It's like we're in a strange time where we need to take care of ourselves.

Esraa Warda:

Yeah. I don't know, I think the whole self-care idea... I think I've discovered with time what self-care really is. So you think you know self-care and then you don't really know.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

Yeah.

Esraa Warda:

And self-care is not really... this is even cliché as a response, but people are like, "Oh, it's all bubbles and chilling," and whatever, but it could be that.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

It could be that.

Esraa Warda:

But I think self-care is about a lot of things. I think it's about saying no to a lot of things you don't want to do, it's about not feeling guilty or ashamed about things from your past. I think it's also about reserving time to just hang out with yourself throughout the day.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

Yeah.

Esraa Warda:

And that's actually a part of your schedule. I hang out with myself a lot throughout the week. I'm like, "I'm busy," they're like, "what you doing?" I'm like, "Hanging out."

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

Yeah.

Esraa Warda:

"With myself."

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

Yeah. I mean, it's funny because I think there's always been a type of ritual that women have done that's about taking care of themselves. I don't think it's...

Esraa Warda:

I don't think it just recently started.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

Yeah, but I think it became more of an urgent reminder for folks. I think the one thing that I really think about, a couple years ago some of the former members, women from the Young Lords had a conversation at The Bronx Museum, and what was so amazing about that conversation, aside from the fact that it was a group of older women talking about their time when they were younger and when they were radical and progressive, and they still are, but a time where they did not take care of themselves that they were so committed and held themselves accountable to making sure that the needs of their community, the needs of children, of men, of other women, of elders, of making sure that the things that needed to be done were taken care of they were not taking care of themselves.

So they were looking back on that time of realizing that they were on 24 hours a day and never taking care of themselves, and realizing that they should have. They should have found the moment. I found that interesting because also I happened to be at, it might have been the 40th anniversary of The Black Panther Party in Oakland, and there was a conversation yet again between the women who were members, and they brought that up again, how they did not take care of themselves. So I think the self-care conversation is an important one to have, especially when we're seeing many of our younger women, and we've seen footage upon footage upon footage, and some of it has terrified me in a way, where they are taking care of these young men.

They are calming down these counter protestors. They are deescalating things that could turn into something catastrophic. I'm looking at them and I'm looking their faces and their expressions and hearing them scream, and I'm looking at their bodies and I'm going, "My God. I hope someone can take them home and sit them in a bathtub."

And also going back to the videos, I mean there is something kind of funny within the social media YouTube universe about self-care videos. I am critical of them, despite the fact I will be up until 3:00 in the morning watching them trying to figure out if rice water can truly make my hair thicker.

Esraa Warda:

I've heard it does.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

Yeah, and then a mutual friend of ours' sister told me Argon oil and vinegar was really good.

Esraa Warda:

Oh yeah?

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

Yeah.

Esraa Warda:

I'm so glad.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

Yeah, a Moroccan girl.

Esraa Warda:

Oh, [inaudible 01:23:31]?

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

Yeah. A mutual friend.

Esraa Warda:

Of us?

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

Yeah.

Esraa Warda:

Who?

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

Louis Havid.

Esraa Warda:

Oh, Havid.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

Yeah. Yeah, his sister.

Esraa Warda:

Oh, his sister.

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

Hooked me up with the original.

Esraa Warda:

The work?

Sara Reisman:

Before we close, I just want to mention that there are two comments from Nicole McJamerson. She says, "This show is wonderful and beautiful and completely bananas. I related so hard, and now I have to go and read the ingredients on the back of the bottle of bio oil." And then Michelle Bishop wrote, "Thank you, LaTasha and all for sharing your voice in art. Welcome to the wonderful club of 50. We're just getting better with time." Do you guys want to say anything about what you're working on next before we say goodnight, like what you have coming up? Anything to point us to?

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

I'm going to order Mexican food.

Sara Reisman:

Say it again?

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

I'm going to order Mexican food.

Sara Reisman:

That's what's next.

Esraa Warda:

What's going on with us these days?

LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs:

What's going on? I mean, I have to resume work on a manuscript that I've been kind of frozen during this moment to work on, and I really hope my editor is watching this so she can know why I didn't send her the first chapter and so you'll understand the [inaudible 01:25:01] motion animation [inaudible 01:25:04].

Sara Reisman:

Which are fantastic. Yeah. Esraa, anything you want to tell us about what you have coming up?

Esraa Warda:

Yeah.

Sara Reisman:

Yeah.

Esraa Warda:

Doing the usual teaching online.

Sara Reisman:

Okay.

Esraa Warda:

I teach Moroccan Algerian dance. Most of what I was doing today was vocabulary from a dance

called [inaudible 01:25:24], Moroccan Chaabi, which is known as the popular dance, or the people's dance of Morocco. So I teach that online and I usually have an international audience all over join in. So you can go check me out, esraawarda.com. You can't really forget that. It's my name.

Sara Reisman:

Great. Thank you both. I want to say thank you to Brandon and also to William Furio who produced this. Thank you, William, and thanks, everyone, for being here. Have a great night.

Esraa Warda:

Thank you.