

MAKE
(GOOD)
TROUBLE



“Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime. **Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble.** We will find a way to make a way out of no way.”

-- John Lewis

MAKING GOOD TROUBLE TOOLBOX: The Production Proposal

The mission of the Rowan University Department of Theatre and Dance is:

*To transform society through artistic experiences that engage diverse communities, challenge habitual methods, and promote creative collaborations. Through our commitment to theater and dance, we prepare evolving artists/scholars/citizens to express personal and universal stories as catalysts for change. *Approved October 28, 2020 by the Rowan University Department of Theater and Dance.*

In support of our revised department mission, it is timely to revisit *Making Trouble (2010 & 2015 Mainstage Productions)*, an apparatus for the generation of original interdisciplinary performance art. The second installment meditated on modern dance pioneer Isadora Duncan and her 1903 manifesto and was entitled *The Dance of the Future*. This third installment will draw from the inspired societal call from the late United States representative John Lewis.

“Get in good trouble, necessary trouble, and redeem the soul of America.” John Lewis made this statement on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama on March 1, 2020 commemorating the tragic events of Bloody Sunday.

The premise of MAKING GOOD TROUBLE: Each guest choreographer will be given identical “tool boxes” with set, light, costume and sound design concepts. The designers initiate the “trouble” or the parameters that stimulate choreographers and performers to engage in collaborative problem solving and dynamic dialogues about the creation of original hybrid performance art. Choreographers, performers in process with designers are charged to question the usual, recognizable, and familiar ways of making and staging dance performance and bringing to the stage an enthused point of view on “live” theatre as experimentation. Each performance will be different one show to the next – always alive, in process and never business as usual.

Inspired by John Lewis, a revolutionary, ground-breaking mover and shaker who agitated, made trouble, and ultimately changed the way we experience the world, the resulting two unique works (drawn from the same sources) will be risky, thought provoking, and transforming. Each "experiment" explores the question: How do artists begin making dance and what kind of trouble will arise when given the same set, costume, light and sound concepts? For every tool held right can be a weapon – this is the transformational power of ART.

This work insists upon interconnectedness. There is no pre-described casting – All bodies, voices, and talents are invited and encouraged to participate. We must challenge ourselves with innovative methodology in order to dance out of the proverbial boxes and into the FUTURE. It requires a willingness to play together and trust everyone involved in the “game.” This production will give our brave students an opportunity to test their power of communicative tools – sound, action and imagery in true collaboration with BIPOC Choreographers and resident Designers. I trust that the knowledge developed, no matter how ephemeral, will be carried in their bodies and distributed across disciplinary and professional boundaries.

Recognizing that art and culture are our most powerful and under-tapped resource for social change. No longer is passive and sporadic connection to culture effective. For MAKING GOOD TROUBLE to effectively support our efforts of creating a diverse, inclusive, equitable non-racist art community, the collaborating artists must strategically “harness” culture: 1.) Respect and empower culture 2.) Make an authentic connection 3.) Research and rely on insights. Intentional inclusivity will magnify the benefits of the participants and accelerate their

development as well as amplify their impact. By diversifying our stage, we in turn diversify our audiences. Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) are imperative to this equation.

At its core MAKING GOOD TROUBLE is equity-centered qualitative research and experimentation that engages students and artists in collaborative interdisciplinary project-based learning and creative processes. This radical educational and art making model, aims to foster an environment in which the arts and culture flourish; are valued and enabled to undertake a wide range of creative pursuits and investigations while serving as a catalyst for change.

Repurposing and transformation are the main modus operandi for MAKING GOOD TROUBLE. The creative process challenges the collaborating artists to consider the existential possibilities and interconnections of performance and design in rehearsal, on the stage and in the world. Our productions should provide our students skills for future problem solving. This work is larger than the sum of its parts and aims to inspire our students to become informed citizens who advocate radical expression that produces dialogue between artist and spectator, spectator and community, and community and imagined communities.

An important element of this research is the noble goal of creating new work without creating waste. We must not waste our materials, talent or intellect – make informed use of all that is on table and around the table. This innovative work demands *resourceful* collaboration. Nothing “new” will be purchased for the production. It is imperative for our Theatre & Dance community to align the issues that impact our environment with our issues of social injustice. Our collaborating artists and audiences need to see that a new path is possible. Art can lead the way in (re) thinking the world and illuminate what is not so easily seen – caring about the world is caring about its people. The resulting works should embody what a just, sustainable and healthy world can look like.

This has to be a FULL departmental effort to foster interconnectedness. As a design-driven production, the paradigm is shifted to include our Tech/Design faculty, staff and students in the creative process from start to finish – recognizing them as artists/makers not dressers or enhancers. Successful work created with this apparatus has brilliantly included dancers, singers, actors, musicians, visual artists and technicians. In 2015, Making Trouble employed over 70 faculty and students across concentrations and disciplines – a true representation of our Department of Theatre & Dance. Multidisciplinary investigation should not be considered “treason” to the dance but rather a commitment to communicating with audiences by “all means necessary”. MAKING GOOD TROUBLE is to produce highly physical and thoughtful works that forces performer and audience to consider a deeper, if not more valid, spiritual intelligence and activism.



SUSTAINABLE ART
FACING THE NEED FOR REGENERATION,
RESPONSIBILITY AND RELATIONS

by Anna Markowska

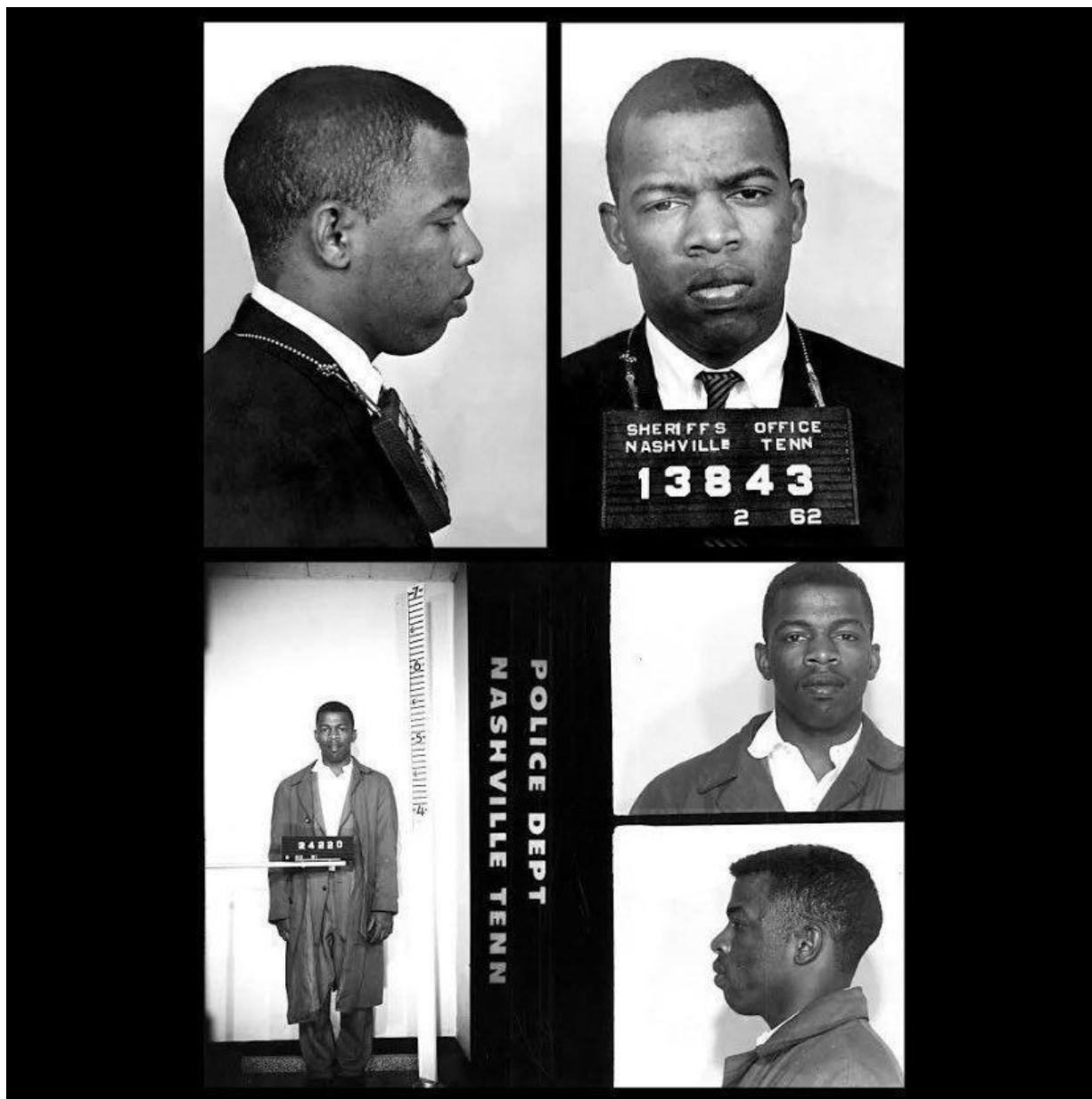
The words sustainability and sustainable development used in political, economic and ecological debates actually reflect historical necessities to consider our planet in terms of global responsibility and not – which has been the case so far – unlimited exploration. Thus, the notion of sustainable art is characterized by social activism.

When analyzing what is covered by the blanket term sustainable art, one must first of all note that rather than including aesthetic guidelines, it will span across various concepts (such as ecological concern, recycling, energy exchange, affective approach to history or political reforms after periods of colonist oppression). Various ideas in turn create new artistic practices.

It is easy to notice that sustainable art is a reaction to the symbolic violence of modernism, its peremptory dividing lines and the cult of an individual, genius, that which is better and more functional. The hierarchy of values based on modernist ethos legitimized violence, actually usurping the moral right to eliminate ruthlessly that which was defined as worse, anachronistic, impractical or simply unreasonable.

Sustainable art reminds us about care, responsibility, harmony; it speaks up for an individual full of empathy for all forms of life, for what is different and incomprehensible. Today, by deposing the genius, the art world chooses community and collective action. So, is sustainable art only wishful thinking, an idealistic project, a pretentious initiative or possibly a dire necessity?

Jimme Lee Jackson (1938 – 1965) <https://www.biography.com/activist/jimmie-lee-jackson>
George Floyd (1973 – 2020) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Floyd



Rep. John Lewis: 'Find A Way To Get In The Way'
Redacted transcript of Rep. John Lewis' speech. July 20, 2020

Good evening, I've been trying to get here. We had a few votes on the floor, not anything that important, really. What you're doing is much more important. I'm so happy and so pleased to be here tonight. Some of you have heard me tell the story, I don't want to tell it. It is just good to be here. I come here to say thank you to all that each one of you do.

When I was growing up in rural Alabama fifty miles from Montgomery, outside of a little town called Troy and I would see those signs that said "white waiting," "colored waiting," "white men," "colored men," "white women," "colored women," when I asked my mother, my father, my grandparents, my great-grandparents, "Why?" And they said "That's the way it is. Don't get in the way. Don't get in trouble." But I was inspired to get in the way, to get in trouble....

I've come to the conclusion that we shouldn't spend more money to build more bombs and guns and missiles, that we need to use our limited resources to take care of basic human needs here at home and around the world and that's what you have been doing....

I said to you tonight, I know you're finished and I'm coming in very late, that you must never give up, you must never give in, you must keep your faith, and keep your eyes on the prize. Carry the message, stand up, speak up, speak out!

That's what you've been doing. Continue to do it; and find a way to get in the way. There are too many people all over our world on this little planet on this spaceship that we call Earth, are depending on you for food, shelter, and education for their minds.

As Dr. King said on one occasion, "We must learn to live together as brothers and sisters or we will perish as fools."

If we can get it right just in some place, maybe it will serve as a model for the rest of humanity. We can do it. I know we can do it.

My first trip to Washington, D.C. was in 1961, 21 years old—had all my hair, a few pounds lighter—the same year that President Barack Obama was born—there was something called a Freedom Ride. They said we couldn't do it. We can't bring down those signs, but we brought them down; you know that the only place that our children and their children will see the signs in America will be in a book, in a museum, on a video.

So when someone tells me that change is impossible and that they cannot bring about change, I say, "Come and walk in my shoes."

They told us that we wouldn't win the right to vote by using the philosophy and the discipline of non-violence, but we did. We had a president by the name of Lyndon Johnson come to the Congress and introduced the Voting Rights Act and close that unbelievable speech with the words of the anthem of the Civil Rights Movement, when he said, "And we shall overcome." We shall overcome, with CARE we will overcome. Thank you very much.

MAKING GOOD TROUBLE TOOLBOX: The Sound Design

“God knows what this piece is. Scenes and performance art pieces, and everyone ends up running for their lives —in an effort to arrive at a new set of conventions to live by, now that the old ones are gone.”

Charles Mee

Note from Sound Designer:

The cheeky VOICEOVER character asked, “Has it been different for you, doing this?” Repurposing is our main modus operandi for the sound design of Making Good Trouble. Please consider the transformative/existential possibilities of performance in rehearsal and the stage product with this sound design. Use it freely as a resource for your own work: that is to say pillage the structure and content and build your piece. All we can aspire to do is begin a dialogue. Dare to cross boundaries (more like membranes than walls) in search of extra freedom, danger...beauty

Sound Design adapted from:

The Rules

By CHARLES L. MEE <https://www.charlesmee.org/about.shtml>

Originally produced under the title of *The Constitutional Convention: A Sequel*

Overture. A long loud crashing wonderful piece followed by silence. Darkness. The sound of water, as of a trickling stream or little fountain, and the occasional sound of a plucked string or other beautiful musical sound (a trojan horse). A scrim fills the back of the stage. The scrim is a delicate pink at the moment.

Over a loudspeaker, we hear several different voices narrating these stories, speaking very quietly, and very slowly, with very long silences between each sentence:

The shriek of a hyrax, the sound of hoopoes and nightjars.

Continuing birdsong. The sound of the musical tapping of ground hornbills.

Silence.

Silence.

Pause.

Silence.

Silence.

(With complete indifference.)

Silence.

Long silence.

Silence.

Silence.

Silence.

Silence. We hear the sound of sobbing, as three chairs descend the stage

A performance piece. This can change from evening to evening so that a number of different performance artists are used, but it ought to be a humorous monologue without any political content, sheer amusement, with a trashy, alienated attitude. The sobbing can continue under this. A deafening piece of rock music slams into the end of the performance piece, and, as the music continues

Birdsong

Silence.

The sounds of a tennis game-the sound of ball against racket, possibly occasional polite applause.

A second performance piece. Or the guy who makes machines that war and destroy one another

A third performance piece

Again, a deafening piece of rock music slams into the end of the performance piece as the three chairs ascend

Silence. The sound of a croquet match

This segues into:
THE INTERROGATION.

VOICEOVER

Has it been different for you, doing this?

Music, with something of the flavor of R&B slams into the middle of the verdict, continues as the three chairs descend, and leads without pause into the running section that follows

Runs. Microphones. Runs in place. Rhythmical running. [Quasi-soft-shoe moves.] Rhythmic chest pounding, double arm slapping [as though to keep himself warm]. Violent slapping and stomping and kicking, sustained. More running, kicking, and so forth—sustained for a very long time, to exhaustion. This segues to

Gospel music. A heart-rending piece, perhaps with a large group, led by a black female singer comes up under the running and extends beyond the end of the running.)

END

Charles Mee's work has been made possible by the support of Richard B. Fisher and Jeanne Donovan Fisher.

MAKING GOOD TROUBLE TOOLBOX: The Set Design



Prop/Set Design: each collaborating group will conceive of a table (dimensions and design are to be determined through conversations and exchange of ideas between choreographers, performers and designers) that is transformed and manipulated in performance: can it be a character, a means of travel, a place of refuge, a portal, a dangerous place, a musical instrument, an island, etc....

“...live, work, and create freely and fearlessly. Here are some dangerous ideas:• The things that made you weird as a kid make you great today.• Work is serious play.• Your ego can't dance.• The struggle is everything.• Freedom is something you take.• There ain't no rules. Take a risk. Try them out. Live dangerously.”

“Feck Perfuction” by **James Victore**

MAKING GOOD TROUBLE TOOLBOX: The Lighting Design

All of the elements below are open for you to use. You can use some of them or all of them, though please feel free to include all of them at first, and edit later. How you use them is up to you.

There will be two separate light boards and operators: downstage right and left.

You will have one moving lighting instrument to use.

At one moment of your piece, you must exploit the use of your dancers' bodies with light.

You must elicit light from the audience at least once.

3 Lighting cues that get triggered at set moments in the piece by an outside force.

3 Lighting cues that get triggered at set moments by an internal force.

1 Lighting cue making use of the stage work lights.

1 Lighting cue making use of the house lights.

A conversation with light.

A moment of chance with light in direct communication with light board operators.

A shared improvisational structure between light board operators and performer(s)

MAKING GOOD TROUBLE TOOLBOX: The Costume Design

1. Reveal



(Art by Es Devlin)

Fabrics are usually used to cover or hide things, such as clothes, curtains... It could also be the beginning of a process of revealing. Fabrics could be used to stop and reject, but what if to use it as an invitation.

2. Transformation

Something must be destroyed and something must build during the process

3. Reflection

Collecting reflective objects in your definition. It could be fabric, accessories, or any other things. It must not be precious items and ready to be repurposed or alternated.

