



JUXTAPOSITION ARTS

Wednesday, April 21, 2021

Dear JXTA community,

We are still processing the news of Derek Chauvin's conviction. While we can breathe a sigh of relief, we also acknowledge that this is just a small first step towards accountability. George Floyd should still be alive today—he did not die a martyr, he was murdered. His death is not a representation of social change, and we must recognize this truth. His murder was yielded by a system that concedes violence and terror against Black and brown bodies time and time again; especially young ones like those of Daunte Wright, Adam Toledo, and Ma'Khia Bryant, just within the last ten days.

It is vital, now more than ever, to hold space for grief, anger, and support as a community. This has been especially difficult during this pandemic which has kept us isolated, our campus partially closed, and our programming in ever-changing adjustments in response to updated protocols. These limitations have affected us deeply, even as we try to continue to support our young people. We hold physical space for them and each other as we try to imagine a less violent, oppressive, and trauma-filled future. We understand that maintaining a consistent pathway to liberation begins through dreaming, and by extension, through creativity and imagination. We will continue to provide this opportunity for young folks at JXTA, now and forever.

We know that it can be difficult to process this all. It is layered and complex. We also know that for us, anti-Black violence is not new. Unfortunately, we will continue to experience these acts of racism as a community even as we begin to slowly sift through the generationally embolizing acts of exploitation against Black and brown bodies.

As we acknowledge a guilty conviction, grieve more lost lives at the hands of police, and stumble through the lingering effects of a global pandemic, we move forward. In this spirit, we will be holding a candlelight vigil and community gathering space on our skate-able art plaza this Thursday during Daunte Wright's funeral at Shiloh Baptist Church just down the street. The funeral begins at noon, and we will hold space between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. All are welcome to join us, but please keep in mind that this will be a sacred space and a time to gather and support each other.

As Jesse Jackson said in response to slow building and consistency in the work, "You can't plant a seed and pick the fruit the next morning..." This will take time, and we at JXTA are here to continue creating pathways for creativity and imagination for young people so they can be the direction for our future, our city, and Minnesota.

In solidarity,

Gabrielle Grier, Managing Director + Roger Cummings, Founding Director