

Virtual Love. Virtual Healing.

Episode Transcript

Can't Stop Won't Stop: Making it Happen No Matter What

Thursday, May 14, 2020 from 4-5pm ET

Nandi Comer: Alright, let's go. Hello everyone. Hi. My name is Nandi Comber. I am. I think we just went on. Hi everyone, my name is Nandi Comer. I am the Director of Allied Media Project Speaker's Bureau, and I want to welcome you to the first ever Allied Media Projects Speaker Series. We are calling this the Virtual Love Virtual Healing speaker series, because we really want to send out a personal shout out to all of our community right now as we continue to, to be in the space of us isolation. But I want to go ahead and get started. So first, I want to give us some a couple of guidelines as we get as we do this. We'll be using the chat and Question and Answer tools in the webinar to capture anyone's thoughts and to share important links. So if you all don't mind, if you look in the towards the bottom of the screen, you'll see a chat section. Click on that, and you'll be able to make your comments but we'll also be using the q&a section four for you to post your most burning questions while we start this.

So um, as we begin, we want to make sure that if you have any questions that come up that you definitely use the question and answer space. The other thing that we have while we're doing this is we're going to be doing our question our closed captioning, it is we have some people in the background that are going to go ahead and put that link up. If you need closed captioning. We are using otter AI for that service this time and the link will be available in the chat.

So again, welcome everyone to the virtual love virtual healing. This is our first time that we tried to host something virtually, via our community. And we want to do this as a way to connect to everyone from our larger community, especially our media base



organizers and our people at home, but also the people that are going out every day and risking their lives and their health. I want to also welcome you and thank you for joining us this afternoon.

Before we get started on a very somebody that's very important to us allied media projects is that we are always we always recognize the land of the First Nations people. So it is very important for us, to us and our staff, that you all know that we are working from a location that is originally the Anishinaabe people, and that those people include Ojibwe, Odawa, and about Abadawami. Also known as Chippewa, Ottawa, and Pottawatomie. We also ask that if you would like to acknowledge the land of where you are currently, please place the name in the comment section right now so that we can all do a shout out to the land of the people that we are working on right now.

Now to get started. Today's session is, um, it's a session where we it's brought to you by Allied Media Projects. Allied Media Projects is an organization that believes that our liberation is an ongoing process, a personal collective and systematic transformation. We're a network of people on projects rooted in Detroit, connected to hundreds of other places across the globe. Together, we grow and exchange in ways our ways of using media to create the world we want in the world that we need. So in doing that, we decided to bring two guests today. Diana Nucera and Benito Mav One who they are just these incredible organizers. I'm Diana is an artist and a performer she had is one of the originators of the techzine genre. And Benito is the founder of motor city street dance academy. And he through Motor City street dance academy. He teaches dance and movement rooted in hip hop history and hip hop movements. So I just want to bring you all into today's conversation. Hi, Diana. Hi, Benito.

Diana Nucero: Hello.

Benito Mav One: Hey.Hey.

Nandi: So, um, we just want to acknowledge that we have a couple of technical difficulties where we were able to get the video from myself and for Diana's on, but we couldn't get the we couldn't get the Benito's video working. So he is on the line, but he isn't, we won't be able to see his face. Unfortunately, I really am really sad about that. But we'll get a chance to have some conversation with him. And that's what's most



important. So today we're talking about Can't Stop Won't Stop. And this is a really important conversation to me. I think we were all talking Diana and Mav(Benito) and I, we were talking about this idea that we are kind of subject to our own machines, and that we can only use our tools and the way that they have been designed. And especially Benito was like, hold up. Let's think about that for a minute. Let's change the way we actually think about how we work through history. And so we've been we wanted to talk about the DIY movement. And somewhat sometimes we talk sometimes the hacker movement, sometimes we call it the creatives, but I wanted to go to history for a second. So oftentimes, we think of poor, we think of our poor communities as communities operating out of scarcity. I want you to give us some examples of how our community has used our tools that we have right next to us right with us, where we are being creative and inventive. And we reshape the way that they were originally designed in order to serve the needs that we have. So uhm Mav, do you want to start us off with you, you were talking about how hip hop how we've done that in hip hop? So can you share a little bit about how you see that happening in our culture in our community in history?

Diana? Um, I'm having I'm having a hard time hearing Mav. Can you? Um, Diana, can you come in there and just let us kind of give me your thoughts for a second while we go ahead and check in with Mav to see what's up with his audio.

Diana: Sure. Um, so when we were chatting about this, and came across the title Can't Stop Won't Stop Doing It No Matter What we, we were thinking about how, what the both the microphone and the turntable, separately created, you know, what we know now as a music industry, but when the two were combined is when we got hip hop. And that's when music became a revolutionary tool within, specifically the United States. I know, like music has been used as a way of addressing oppression and creating joy, you know, within community or getting a message out for many, many centuries. But I think it's this moment when the two turntables and a microphone came to be is when we, when people who are not technically supposed to be the innovators then became that. And I remember when we were talking about this we were chatting about and what specifically addresses my work because my work is always about access, and agency. And it was when folks got ahold of that equipment, to me is like a really striking



moment. So initially, there was the, the the blackouts or brownouts in the Bronx. And the looting that happened, and then we have all of a sudden a few people that were able to start DJing and figuring out how to do a Grandmaster Flash and Kool Herc was doing it became a little more and then you had these crews, and then these crews had dancers, and then everything just sort of kind of evolved. So access was interesting. It's at the point of that, but also what's at the point of that access is an intense political tension, and specifically rooted in race. And so I wonder if access happened in a completely different way if Hip Hop or whatever had emerged out of that would be as political as it was? So I think that's, um, or I guess it would have evolved into that, because then hip hop didn't start out for at least my knowledge and being you could totally school me on this. But it started off as a fun time. And then it emerged into this into this political space. And then you know, and then it moved into the West Coast. And we got, you know, like, but that sounds after the Rodney King riots. And so there's another point of which political tension makes access. And then you have the birth of, I guess, at the time, which was the gangster rap, which was the first time in which people were able were telling a story of their environment. And so all of a sudden, now you have like suburban kids, getting the perspective of someone in, you know, like South Compton or whatever in LA dealing with all kinds of issues within their communities. And so it's kind of interesting to me how just simply having access to these, these tools allowed for this generations of organizing and generations of music to emerge. And I think about that a lot specifically within wireless, and internet connectivity, and also technology knowledge. Because it's not until you have the knowledge of what these tools are capable of doing. On top of an imagination of what's possible, that you then begin to sort of change the future. Those are some of my initial thoughts.

Nandi: Awesome, awesome. Thank you, Mav. I think we have you back.

Mav: Yep. Can you hear me now? Yeah, we talk about technology, Murphy's Law. You're definitely trying to like hack us, right?

Nandi: Um, before you comment on that first question about when we've seen us, like, really just reshaping technology to work for us, I wanted to also tell, let the audience know at any time, if you are having any kind of like, finger snaps if you have any questions or anything, don't forget to use the chat or the comments, if you have



something that you really, like wanted to pick up, you can throw an exclamation point, a plus sign in there, just so that we know that you hear us out there.

So back to the question, man, um, how is it that you see us as a community? kind of thing? Yes. tools? Yes. Jump rope. Yes, this, we love you. But we need you to do something else. For us, we actually have this other need. And we have this other desire from our tools. How do you see that happening? For you?

Mav: Um, contemporary, like been in the now? Or do you mean, just to start a click?

Nandi: Well, you know, now, yes, I will talk about the now soon, too. So what's that?

Mav: Yeah, so now, I mean, you know, there's, there's been some, you know, I've been, we have moved all of our stuff, um, digital, you know, we've moved all of our programming digital to what we've been able to do. And, um, you know, just right away, it's like, okay, everybody's like, well, we'll just jump on this, getting everything webcam, zoom meetings, and things like that. But, and, specifically, just because of the neighborhood I serve, we realize that there's a gap in access, and, you know, and be that access to devices or Wi Fi and things like that. So, um, you know, automatically we've lost a really strong pipe, like, we lost a really hard pipeline to our youth, our programming definitely wasn't designed to be in a digital space. But that, you know, like, why we're here is just, we're not going to stop doing it, though. We're just gonna roll with the punches and adapt, um, if that's any testament to what we as me as a dancer, and I know, my other peers, as dancers know, and how we thrive is in adaptability, um, you know, as a freestyler, you know, and when I say freestylers, because a lot of people think that the music is in are like in battles and things like that is selected pre selected, and it's not you have to react and adapt to the music that's going on. Um, you just have you know, sometimes stuff technical stuff happens. And, you know, anytime that the music cuts out, because the DJs equipment, whatever, somebody trips over a cable, like people right away, just starting to stare, hearing a soul clap, and they start going, it doesn't stop, you just keep going. Like, it's just like, Let the DJ figure that out. We don't want to lose this energy. Let's keep moving.



And, you know, and that's kind of in this you know, like, I like, you know, again, just the, you know, that's why this whole can't stop one stop mentality is it's while our programming isn't meant for you know, the digital space, it doesn't mean we're not going to figure out a way to make it accessible, we're not going to connect with our youth on, you know, we talked about, you know, the ideas of hacking and things like that, you know, and accessibility. Um, you know, for us, what I figured out is, everybody's got a neighbor who has xfinity. So I gave a lot of my students my login for xfinity. So that way they have internet, you know what I mean? Like, you know, it's like, so and you're only allowed so many logins, but I have the internet at, at MCSDA as well.

So we figured it out, reached out to a couple different people, they were able to, you know, donate their login to some kids who didn't have access to internet, you know, the devices, we reached out, our community took care of us, as far as creating that access, you know, something we realized, that's, that's always been our biggest strength, my biggest strength and and ours at MCSDA is our what do they call it on the capital and people I'm not creative capital, I'm drawing a blank here. But uh, you know, the capital inside of our people and the in how we rely on each other and how we've always took care of each other. And, you know, when it comes down to the necessity and need, everybody's always got our back. And we realize that because they know, our integrity out here and how we're operating there. Yeah, here's a couple of phones, just throw them back to me when you can. And then, you know, we were able to get our youth fixed access to being able to take our online programming. So again, we just we're not stopping, you know..

Nandi: Mm hmm. Yeah. So, um, I was thinking, Well, actually, I want to mention this. So those that are listening that have logged on and that are listening to this conversation, I don't want to auto forget that the question and answer function is there for you to put as many questions as you like, if you see somebody else putting a question that you really have a strong desire to you want answer, go ahead and vote it up so that we can make sure that it's heard. And I'm going to get to those in just a second. I find this topic really, really interesting to me, because I feel like right now, was spoke to the accessibility, right. And D, I think a lot about your work with the with Zine culture, and I think a lot about how you've been working to make sure that things are more accessible to the community. How do you see this kind of resiliency, and this kind of adventure,



invention, really broadening our space and our understanding of, of happiness, being able to like have what we don't have in our communities, bringing it as saying, like, no, we're gonna just invent it.

Diana: Yeah, um, well, you know, I think this goes back to just like human nature, and our desire to, to create, as well as problem solve, which sort of like, I think sets us apart from other beings on this planet. And I think it's at the core of how we function. And when posed at problem, there're often two directions you can go turn around or become curious and investigate. And I think to me, like at least the work that I do, I'm interested in, like turning people towards the curiosity and then to investigate. Because the moment you do that, and as someone mentioned in the chat, is that then you have the opportunity for creativity to emerge. So even in Detroit, we saw, you know, with, I know, you know, it was a different place decades ago, and specifically when people were throwing block parties, and there was no electricity. So they tapped into the light poles, and created these killer parties. And these parties were just for people to let loose and, you know, socialize, they were creating a techno movement and house movement, which then became embedded in the soil and blood of Detroit.

And, and it all started with people then getting access to this music, right? So there's a push and pull to it, where it's sort of like you have to be curious about what's possible with what you do have access to I think in order to then be curious of what else there is. And we often get inspired by artists and creators, because they show us a particular new perspective and I can see once I got the chat open, I love this multi platform situation. And I'm like, Yeah, like to me that that shows a role of our within a difficult moment is to open new portals for people to either feel free for people to think of new ways of being, which is what COVID is offering us now and back then what basically a decline. And, you know, what was the US dollar on top of the auto industry did for the music of Detroit. And I'm sure every other place has its story. And I think that's what's really interesting is that there's never one way in which people will try to make something happen. And it's such a tendency to want to either scale, or replicate what someone else is doing what I think is, so what's interesting about what I've learned in Detroit, and being a part of the communities that I have been in when thinking about access, and thinking about creativity and opportunity is that it's all, it's all based on



context, and where people are at. So maybe you start in a place of actually, you know, igniting the imagination and the curiosity in order to get someplace, or maybe you start in a place where they've already hacked the grid and are throwing parties, you know, with the light pole, and then you start there from a very different place. So I don't know if that fully answers your question. But these are sort of, I guess, things that popped up to me when I think about the push and pull of access innovation.

Nandi: Yeah, that's, that's beautiful. I love that you brought in the techno movement that is like a sister movement to the hip hop movement to something that kind of came out and branched off of the original kind of electronic music movement. Um, they really have a lot in common in terms of this DIY being originally rebels in the community. Also, how, um, if people, if artists are not given space, how do you make space for people? I don't know, you go outside, and you throw a rave? Are you going tenement and you throw, you know, you throw an illegal party. And so I really, really love that connection that you're making there. Um, so I did want to ask one last question. Before we go to the question answer period in Mav, you kind of referred to this a little bit in your conversation about how we're using it.

Now, I find a lot of people talking that there's a lot of reference to zoom fatigue, there's a lot of reference to tech fatigue, and which is why we're very conscious and talking about tools versus always about neurology. Um, I wanted to think about, like, how we're thinking about it now. Um, especially with like, our current day reliance, do we see a way in which we can really alter our relationship with our technology? In this current pandemic? What are some of the suggestions that you might give folks who really feel isolated and feel like this? is their only way to connect? Are there ways to use this kind of creativity ingenuity that might make them feel not so isolated, but also not so tied to the machine? I mean, we're talking about machines right now. So how do we, how do we get that? Yeah.

Mav: Yeah, that's a get on the that's the singularity working, you know, um, when I when I talk about that, it's, uh, the reliance, the over reliance on technology to the point that it slows us down slows down our development? I think, honestly, I mean, it's, we're, we're in this kind of pigeonhole, not to say that we can't evolve anything, but we have to utilize this technology, we have to put some heart in it. I mean, you can't tell me that



the techno is a is just a piggyback and talk and tie in technology and electronic music. It's all very syncopated, it's very, you know, stuck on some very hard bars, like boom, boom, boom, boom, it's very electronic. But that doesn't mean that it doesn't have soul. That doesn't mean that it doesn't have heart. I think it's on us to utilize this stuff and really breathe some life in those ways. In the same way. I mean, yeah, I understand zoom fatigue, definitely, just with the amount of meetings, check ins, live classes, virtual, like, I'm on my laptop in my care and teaching and doing things and working with live streams more than ever. And it is definitely heavy, but I feel like just being able to, like there's ways to breathe this life in and you know, and the conversations that we have the intention and the space that we create inside of these zoom meetings.

I feel like so many times, it's you know, and I know we're doing that right now, but it feels like we're like so it's just sit here, listen, you rarely get to contribute. You got to sit there and just kind of hear all of this. It's a very, you know, the way that it's all shaped isn't like we're not we're connecting like When you're doing like one on one or personal, you know, with your homie back and forth, that's there. But when you're in like the zoom meetings with like 8 people and 10 people, most of the time you're listening, you know, you're hearing so much and you, you rarely get to share in on that space, you get you lose that personal touch, being able to connect, and collaborate with people. I feel like we just have to really kind of rally around this, that idea that just because it's electronic doesn't mean that it loses its soul. I mean, you know, you get traditional drummers who are mad at people for using mpcs, you know, and they're like, that's not real music, that's, you know, that's playing on that, but you've got somebody like Dilla who threw it off beat, and passes, you know, by just turning the quantizer off, and turned it into a whole movement, you know, just to bring in Detroit and how that all tied in together.

So it's like, there's ways for us to really hack and alter the use of these zoom meetings, like, how do we, how do we shape that? And I guess that could be something, you know, too, for the question. For the question side of things, too. I mean, just in our classes, we try to make sure we leave a lot of space to talk a lot of space to share a lot of things like that, um, we're really questioning the format of, of, you know, of the how our school system inside of our places replicated a school system that was set up post World War II, you know, go in, go out, you know, machine that's just meant to pump us out. And



how do we switch that to something more, that's got more heart and feeling. And so that's what we've been building on like, and I feel like any movement is it starts with youth. So that's why we're watching so much of them, and paying attention to them and just giving them free range to guide us like, that's my solution is I'm just listening to the kids, because they got all the ideas. They keep trying to push me to take that videos, but I'm trying not to. But I'm also understanding that there's something there that they connect with that, you know, is it at the scrolling? Yeah, the amount of scrolling they'll do with it is an issue. But I also understand that there's, there is a language and a common means of communication for them. That's all going, you know, that's all happening with them and this movement, and if we don't pay attention, we'll miss out on a moment.

Nandi: Yeah, yeah. I mean, I've definitely recall my elder saying, rap isn't music, that's just people talking, that's not music. And, and they couldn't have imagined that, that this was something that was going to be influencing the world. You know, and by the time I mean, even, I'm not a part of the originators of hip-hop. But even in that, so, um, I think it's a good time for us to turn to people who have checked in online, who have been listening patiently, I think it's about time that we look at some of these questions that they've given us a little answer. Okay. I see, Diana has been answering some, um, via text through, someone had asked about the Equitable Internet Initiative, and that they're specifically asking about how, we how we've made the internet more accessible to communities. And that happened through the Equitable Internet Initiative, sponsored project of Allied Media Projects. This first question, I'm, I'm not gonna call out names just to kind of protect people's own if you but you can also see their names on the question and answer here. Do you recommend- Do you have recommendations for how you manage to address accessibility gaps, devices, Wi Fi are getting everyone transition to the online world? I know that Mav, you shared the sharing your password, but are there other tools or kind of hints that you might share for people that are trying to assist their neighbors and making sure that they're online?

Mav:Uhm Naija with the Equitable Internet Initiative, right? That's, you know, that was, that's our main, our main goal to when I talked to Najia, they make sure you know, to



any, any questions or anytime I need anything, they take care of it. So that's pretty much like, those are my two ways to cover access to internet and access to technology.

We have a couple others you know, aside from them, and I only speak on our specific demographic, like a specific demographic we serve not everyone out there. But um, you know, we have some private partners who are like in software tech, and he, the person owns a company and they've donated, you know, a little bit of technology to us a couple laptops, couple other phones to help us with some things. And that allowed us to get, you know, some of our more advanced students a little bit more upgraded equipment. So that way they can continue pursuing. They're the ones and it's, they're the ones who have, you know, come to the studio every day, take every DJ class I've showed, you know, that their ability to be to take it seriously to the point where we're, you know, when, when this all happened, we were like, let's get you some equipment. And we figured out how to do that, you know, along with some of our grants support, but as far as I guess, in a city wide or more neighborhood wide ways, is just going to Naija.

Nandi: Um, I, I know that the question was thinking specifically about devices and Wi Fi, I think, as a DJ, I participate in the collective Serafin Collective, which tries to close the gap in terms of accessibility towards DJ equipment, which can be very expensive. And so one of the ways in which our community is really trying to fulfill that need is having shared equipment or rental checkout system, so that if you have someone who is just starting out, maybe they don't know that they want to go digital yet, but it's nice that they have access to a digital kit, and that they can complete with a computer so that they can go ahead and take it home, and try to play around with it. And it's been something that while we're practicing social distancing, I'm definitely we're trying to make sure that it's passed through, we've been like, Lysoling everything down and saying, you know, why you're home, work on your mix, you know, work on your, on your equipment, some data? Diana, do you want to contribute a little bit to that question? And, you know, it's up to you.

Diana: Um, yeah, I wish, you know, it's, it's awesome to hear the equitable internet initiative as like, the answer right now. Cuz like, you know, we see I help see that, like, eight years ago, and people were like, Why? Why are you doing this? And now it's like,



access is like, no question. Everybody needs to be online. And we it's sort of like, Yeah, no, no doubt, let's scale that, or let's, let's grow it. So it's interesting how certain moments just shift so quickly.

And as far as specific recommendations. So, you know, I like found out through my internet provider that like, I could upgrade for the same amount that I was just paying so much more bandwidth. And I was like, well, I might as well do that. And then I put, I got this, it's called a Blackhawk router, that creates a mesh network in my neighborhood, and I share it with my neighbor. And then actually, the Southwest, Equitable Internet Initiative came through and then we're creating a hotspot for the park. And you know, we'll be up there stuff like the Verizon hotspots and stuff like that you could share. But I think at this point, we have to be just really crafty, because it's so it's really about how close you are to a space that has accessible internet. But if you really want to make this something that you want to see happen, like it really is going to require some calls to Congress people, to the governor. And to really because this is the moment to fight for access, and also digital security and privacy. Because all these platforms that we're using are collecting so much data. So like, what we what we believe now is the what was access as the most important thing like that is now passed. And now we're in a whole new world with all this data and all these people online. Now more than ever. And so that's what I've been thinking a lot about is like, how do you make that knowledge accessible?

So it's one thing to get people online, but then once they're online, what? What are you introducing them to what kind of culture? Are they coming on to like, what are? Are they just consuming? Are they producing so there's a lot of layers to access, specifically with the internet that I think is way more complex than we've seen it and I really hope that this moment allows people to sort of question what it means to be sort of stepping into this digital era that we're in now. Like, if we thought we were on the edge like we're through the threshold, and we are here we are sitting in the digital era. We are at the cusp, at the beginning of it.

And so how do you want to shape it that then? how do you want to see access? How do you want to see like different tools be available and what do you want to see hacked? because this is the opportunity to dream and to really think through that because it's



like the beginning stage of something. And because everything is so chaotic, and there's often a moment of create like the most when two opposing forces come together. There's like the most opportunity for creative solution. And so we have an access in this on top of this, like, economic basic be, you know, floating device, which is the internet, kind of, you know, hitting on each other. So, I guess instead of recommending stuff, which, you know, like, I think there's not that many I mean, I'm thinking like this, let's dream of some, let's think about it and make it happen, because that's that's the can't stop won't stop attitude that I think we need to take with the internet right now.

Nandi: And there was some question about the Equitable Internet Initiative Project, I would just ask that our moderators, go ahead and put in the link to the Equitable Internet Initiative so that people can find out more information on it, I think we can give them a link to the sponsor project page.

I'm also thinking about that some of the first ideas in terms of the mesh network, there are a lot of people that use it outside of just using it to gain access, but also a way to communicate with one another. So we've seen stories where when, when there is a mesh network created, there's also a space where people can tell neighborhood stories, where people are allowed are finding inventive ways to create a communication system, especially when there are moments of emergency, we've seen that mesh networks around the country have been used by emergency people who are representing the emergency response community, they're getting on our community, mesh networks in order to communicate with the rest of with the community about what's going on. So these are moments where because the communities are making those moves to establish more connectedness, they are then servicing a much, much broader kind of need.

So I just also wanted to, there was a comment out there that says that a lot of companies will offer free internet if you just call them up and ask. And so it's really important that we, that we also share out those kind of those kind of services. I do want to move on to this next question. There are a couple of questions that are about artists. And so I'm gonna kind of mesh them all together, if you all don't mind. There's a



question about what is the artists role during in this, during this time? And then there was a question about social distancing and public art, how are we thinking about social distancing and public art? And I'm hoping that we can connect those two questions about the artist in this in the roles in this kind of using our own our own way.

Diana: May I jump in?

Nandi: Yeah

Diana: Cool. I think about this, I've been thinking about this a lot, because I've recently moved away from doing more internet organizing into more artistic, creative space. And when COVID happened, and I was in the middle of like, creating a piece. And I just couldn't do it anymore. Like it was really interesting. Like, it just felt like not the right thing to do. And I think it was because it was a panicky moment. But then, about two weeks later, when the dust settled, that became a lifeline for me to be able to create and to think about these this particular time, and the potential future that it brings us and what the moments are. And I think the beautiful thing that artists do, are they they ask a lot of questions. And work is based in really digging through these questions. And this time, I have so many questions, and I'm sure you do, too.

So to me this role, right now for artists, and this is just my personal opinion, is two parts. One part is really thinking about what are the most prolific and important questions for us to be facing at this moment. And how does that look like in a way that allows us to be curious, investigative. And then I also think the role of artists at this moment is to show us perspectives that we are blind to. And that has always been the duty of art in my mind is to be able to sort of unravel some of the simplest things to get into the most complex ways that life can be. And I think art at this moment is extremely important. And it coincided with organizing is like probably what we will hold together, this country moving forward because we must have morale, to rebuild. We must have a vision, to walk towards the future that we want to see. And we must have a practice in order to make these things happen. And I think we could all find that within within the arts and yeah, so that that's sort of where I'm at right now with that. In public spaces, I think this is digital arts moment. And I can't wait to see what comes out of it. Because digital art has been pretty lame. Like, I'm not gonna lie. There's been some really



interesting things from a couple folks like Stephanie Dinkins and Mimi Noah, looking at data and how do you, you know, create data around feelings and such. But, you know, let's, what's next, now that we have people's attention on these platforms, like, I just look forward to how people take advantage of that.

Nandi: Mav, did you want to make any comments on public art, because I know that mostly street dance academy has a very public facing kind of programming, and a lot of that has changed in the recent. So did you have any comments about like, how, what is the role of public art at this time?

Mav: Yeah, I mean, for us, I guess, with our role and public art specifically, I mean, we don't know what it's gonna look like. Because, you know, for us as street performers, that's completely gone. You know, we're not allowed to congregate, we're not allowed to be inside of, you know, where we would be downtown performing, and people would be all around us. I mean, I don't know what that's going to look like for the summer, if it's, you know, all of our contracts are basically canceled as far as us doing street performance. But that doesn't mean we're not still creating our color. You know, sharpening our skills back home, I'm just speaking from my circle of people and artists, it's definitely shifted, you know, from, from us as B boys and B girls constantly traveling all over the country every weekend to compete, judge, a teach workshops, things like that, too. Now we're back home, I've had this conversation with a lot of people is just, you know, this is the time where we need to, the competition side for us breakers is very ego driven. It's just about, you know, it's just very heavily ego driven. That's all shifted because of this. And now it's forcing people to look inward and be like, what else can I do with this time, and with my art, I don't want to just practice just for the sake of practicing, I want to create something.

So we're seeing a lot I'm seeing a lot of people really, not only just pursue different styles inside of street dance, but also a look at, like, Diana was saying about, you know, taking a simple observation of life and adding a whole other perspective and different breath of life into it. People are getting, you know, there's a lot of, you know, my friend, Jade Zuberi, he's you know, Soul, he's out there in Vegas, and he's, you know, he's using this time to really push the platform of all the anti-blackness that's inside of, you know, the dance community and really address it and, and really creating some waves out



there, and he's using his platform, instead of just being able to compete, he has this worldwide influence, and he's using this to, you know, advocate for, you know, his people, for our people. And it's, it's amazing.

Uhm, you know, locally, we have our, you know, people that are, you know, creating and writing their own stories, working on their own narratives behind the dance. So that way, there's some art behind it. It's not just competition driven. It's not just a sideshow act, Oh, that's cool. They're dancing. It's, you know, you're with the, you know, you're looking at some of the art, the, the dance as art. Where I feel like that's where we're really pushing it as, as people in our community is like, the boys be girls, were really pushing that, as breakers were really pushing that to be looked at in a different light. And that's what we're coming in with this. In the situation that we're in, it's really pushing us to, you know, push the art side of it, as opposed to just the competition side.

And I feel like that's I in recent years, that's where I've been, I'm more focused on what I've been more dry, driven with, with my crew Fresh Classics, looking at, you know, social justice issues, and how do we address this through movement and music? you know, how do we, how do we tell our story? How do we, how do we document the moment right now with this movement, you know?

Diana: Yeah, you know, when you were talking to them, you know, I was like, just the adaptation that you have to do as someone who relies on body movement in this digital moment is pretty profound. And that's like, I was just thinking I was like, man, like, you know, this word kinetic technology makes sense. Because I never knew when how it would make sense. I also never thought it would make sense to upload our consciousness to the internet. But maybe it makes sense with a pandemic? I don't know. But it's kind of you know, cuz I just like, you remember those like, Xbox connects, like do the dances. That was like one of my, like, favorite like family moments. It was like, the only time my family like, have fun together. But part of the group, but I was just thinking about that. I was like, after that, I don't remember kinetic technology, having any sort of moment.

Mav: Because they, they like, they just used it as a gimmick, and never tried to breathe anything more into it. You know?



Diana: Yeah, but the problem that you face, like, as a dancer, with all this stuff, like, gives a new breath of life into kinetic tech, which I think it's like, I don't I got I got goosebumps.

Mav: Wheels are definitely turning.

Nandi: So to like play devil's advocate, I'm gonna be I'm gonna bring up two questions, people brought up about surveillance, um, and, and this tech world, we don't necessarily we're not necessarily entering into these spaces without, with this kind of safety that we have in knowing who we're engaging with all the time. So we have some people that are one person asked, how do we play around with surveillance? Digital safety? Is it as a part of the liberation?

Can it be liberation, when we were trying to think about surveillance? Is my add on to it. And then someone else said, where are the touch points where we can focus on flipping, flipping, adapting, hacking within surveillance and security privacy to transform them into liberating protective tools? So are there ways in which we can actually be going against the grain while being watched in these spaces?

Mav: That's one of I've, on one of those things. Like, it's something I'm always just kind of wary of, you know, like the green light initiative and things like that.

Nandi: The Green Light Initiative, is here in Detroit, we have a surveillance of cameras that are, that give a direct feed to the police.

Mav: Yeah. And so like, even with that, I mean, I've had my buddies asked me why I wear my hood when I go near those, you know, and stuff. So I haven't put too much thought into what they're recording. in conversations. I feel like I'm under the radar, because I'm just teaching dance classes, it's not going into anything too wild about how of so where I'm like, I want to be wary of this conversation on a zoom, you know. Like, I'm not in that space with things even that I still keep it person to person. Um, I feel like as far as I, somebody put a comment on there is like, you know, wearing, I don't know where it went, but it was something about, it was something about, like wearing masks or wearing something that you know, to break up the, the, what's been recorded of your



face and stuff like that, and how they identify it and who you're associated with, and stuff like that. So I just feel I personally haven't put in put much into much investment into that because I'm not in any of those spaces to where I'm worried about it at the moment.

But it's something that is on my in the back of my mind, like home like with all of this digital sharing and being on Facebook, our faces being here and things and you know, and IP addresses and geo tracking and things like that. I mean, in our phones are just the number one for that. So..

Nandi: Diana, what do you what is what are your thoughts on surveillance and losing all of this, this new only tech world that we're encountering?

Thank you still muted. There you go. Nope.

Diana: Okay. Sorry about the dog. Who's sleeping until of course the last seven minutes. Yeah, I really appreciate these questions. Because I the word surveillance and liberation in the same sentence just like sent my brain scrambling like this. I'm goo... I don't know guys!

I like the taste of it with the like, the masks and like we're okay. So what we're Here's where my mind's been was going. Is that thinking about like, you know, it's, it's hard enough right now that I think, at least where I'm at, for people to wear masks, I find that there's probably about 60% of people that are not. And then I think about that culture and then the type of culture that's required in order to have an anti-surveillance, like, resistance is, maybe that's what we're learning right now is like wearing these things on our face to be able to do this. But then, if you're going that far, it's sort of like, you were already there you already been, you're already being surveilled. I hate to say it.

Yeah, it's true. I mean, the first thing that the Trump administration turned over was the was a Privacy Act. I mean, this wasn't within like date with his first hundred days. And this, of course, was to get to the knockdown net neutrality to then be able to, like have influence more influence over data control and social media, which then as we see



with disinformation causes a havoc when it comes to elections and a pandemic. And so, I don't know, like, I it's, it's such good questions, because they require me to just really stretch because I think right now, I could just see like, the toilet bowl of like, what we're dealing with when it comes to surveillance. Because you're essentially asking people to give up their comforts. And they're, you're asking them to give up, also, like ease. So I think there needs to be like, a sweeping legislation in order to like, really protect us, I think individual acts, you would literally have to erase yourself off the internet. So the avenue I go down, because it gets a little too, like deep state for me once we

Mav: It's kinda hard to uhm avoid.

Diana: I don't think that's productive. But I do think that we have to kind of wonder about like, okay, like, if, if it was the internet age that gave us data that then gave us AI, which is, you know, what's next? So now that we have AI, and what's next? So instead of looking backwards to like, how do we course correct what surveillance has become now? It's sort of like, how do we catch what it's feeding into? Which I believe is a larger automated system, because you must have all this data in order to basically train artificial intelligence. So then the question for me not to be like, you know, Blade Runner, Cyborg 2035. But I just definitely can't help but wonder like, towards what end? And so I looked towards, I look towards the future for liberation, because I feel like I, that's where I have the most control. But as far as the current surveillance state, like, you know, get yourself a VPN, if you can afford it. Or just sort of like, I don't know, I don't know, I love maybe, you know, we'll go back to the 80s and have these like, angled haircuts and awesome makeup. And maybe that's what Kiss was trying to show us. Like, I don't, you know, like there's, there's the connection, maybe between like glam rock and what we need in the future. So clearly, this boggles my mind and sends me in many directions. So I'll pass it back over to you Nandi.

Nandi: Ok, I'll take it. We're wrapping up in our last couple of minutes of today's session. And I just be I'm going to give you this question before I, before I refresh as I and wrap up, I'm going to throw a question out to you. And that is, what is you know, what is the the one phrase of advice that you give to folks as they make these tech choices? Like what's the one phrase or word that you want to give them, but um, I just want to first thank say thank you to everyone Allied Media Project staff who's helping



me get this running. I also want to remind everybody that is here that's logged on right now, that this is the first session in about four sessions that we have planned for every two weeks in the virtual healing virtual love session. Our next session is going to be with Andrea Ritchie, and Dani McClain. They'll be coming on about black womanhood. And I also want to remind you that we are known for putting on the Allied Media Conference and while we are sad that at this moment we can actually be joined together to hug one another and love on one another and share all of our resources face to face. We have shifted to A virtual conference and we also changed the dates to July 23rd to the 26th. To find out more about the conference, you can go to AMC dot allied mediadot org. And then the last thing I want to do is I want to turn it back over to our guests, what is the like, word or phrase of advice that you want to give people as they're thinking about being creative in these tech choices?

Mav? You want to start us off?

Mav: um, my advice and kind of how you navigate it is, I guess, just don't be scared to put it out there. You know what I mean? You can't be scared to just try it. You know, I just watched so many people like sit there nervously. Just in shit, like, they just started just nervous about even getting started, go get it, like, let it mess up, let them connection, drop that habit, you know, just just start trying it and testing the waters and figuring out what's comfortable. I mean, what works for you and your niche, because I feel like it kind of goes into the work. And I spoke about it earlier about how, you know, I'm not necessarily trying to provide Internet for the whole neighborhood. I don't need to there's someone else who does it. So I have my niche, and I have my group I work with, and that's led me focus and make them strong, because those that's five more well equipped and proficient people out here to go and influence five other people and yada yada, yada, just keep moving from there.

So, you know, everybody's got, you know, a different story. Everybody's got a different platform, and issues and ideas. And I think if they just can put them out there, that's gonna help there's so much good content going on, um, digitally right now, it's, it's kind of overwhelming at times. I always laugh because I look at I gotta like scroll like three, four times before I get past all the live to see people's stories on like Instagram, but I always like kind of just as I started doing, I was like, Oh, let me see where some of these



are. And there's some good conversations I'll just randomly stumble across and be inspired by, and I feel like people just should just do it. Just put it out there. You know, right now is like the perfect time everybody's listening, because everybody's on their phone or laptop isn't. So..

Nandi: Diana?

Diana: I'm like Benito's(Mav) good spirit. I'll be the skeptical one. How's that?

Mav: duality?

Diana: Um, okay, so, one, um, don't repost something until you know it's true. Definitely check your sources. There's a lot of misinformation going around on many levels, that are a part of news agencies that you probably trust, because this is such a sophisticated way of organizing that people have are doing online. So check your sources, if you don't see that same article in at least two other places, then, you know, it might not be right. Two, be kind to each other, the internet is such a hostile space. And I think one thing COVID has offered us is it can be something else, they can be something beautiful, it can be about connectivity, it can be a lifeline, it could be an economy.

So let us remember that, that humans are on the other side. And then number three, I would say read the fine print, if you can. Because if you want to use the tool, go for it, I signed up for all kinds of stuff. But like, you know, spam is real. And that goes into a database that who knows what you know, like where your information is. So I would suggest that you become a little more interested and curious about where these companies and games, what they're doing. So if you find yourself addicted to a game, maybe check out to see if it's take what data it's taking. So I guess I go back to my initial thoughts, which were, I hope that you become curious and investigate, and any issues that you find online?

Nandi: Well, thank you, I want to thank our guests for logging on and sharing their beautiful thoughts and experiences on how our community has used our tools and technology to really reshape the way that we think about the world and movement building. If you want to find out more about the Allied Media Projects, you can go to



Alliedmedia.org. You can also find out more about the Speaker's Bureau on that website as well. And I hope that you all have a really good day and really think about the way that you're interacting and how you can actually reinvent the way you experience your tech. Thank you so much for joining us.

Diana: Bye y'all. Nice to see hear from you.

Nandi: Yeah, gratitudes to you too!

Diana: meow meow meow meow! hehe.

