
Our Experience at CONfest 2018, and Why It Works

Presented by MaArte Theatre Collective

Who We Are

Mission Statement: To create space for the hyphenated Filipino-American experience through dynamic storytelling.

People:

- Co-Artistic Directors: Christine Nathanson, Ciarlene Coleman
- Organizers: Reanne Acasio, Patrick Mayuyu, Claudette Santiago, Shaun Tuazon

We are all actors, directors, designers, and theatre artists working professionally in the San Diego circuit, all of various Pilipinx-American descent.





Preamble

“In this presentation, we will offer our knowledge and experience of how to manage an effective EDI institution, but will continue to present them in a way that puts our San Diego theatre community under the microscope, through the lense of social justice and activism.”

—

Our Observations from CONfest 2018

Presented by the Consortium of Asian
American Theaters and Artists
(CAATA)

CAATA + CONfest 2018

- CAATA
 - "...envisions a strong and sustainable Asian American theater community that is an integral presence in national culture—evocative of our past, declarative of our present, and innovative towards our future."
- **THEME: Revolutionary Acts**
 - "...engaged people in passionate dialogue about social injustice, inequity and active resistance in American culture and helped us consider what we, as theater practitioners, can do about it."

The Structure of CONfest 2018

- CENTRAL THEME: “Revolutionary Acts”
- Breakout Sessions
 - Several different “tracks” of session types
 - Change-Making Practicums for Transformation
 - Radicals for Dramatic Innovation
 - Futuristic Revolutionists

The Structure of CONfest 2018 (cont.)

- Plenaries “As a Revolutionary Act”
 - Keynote Speakers addressing entirety of conference participants
 - Tammy Haili’ōpua Baker: Language Revitalization
 - Rajiv Joseph: Storytelling
 - David Henry Hwang: Expanding the American Story
- Festival of Shows & Readings
 - Strong grounding in artistic intent



Summary

We found CONfest to be an incredibly stimulating and beneficial event.

- **Clear Theming & Objective**
- **Grounding in Artistry**
- **Community Collaboration**

What We in
San Diego
Can Learn



Inequity as of now

- Current lack of equity, diversity, and inclusion in theatre...
 - *On a national level*
 - Statistical evidence of disproportionate racial representation, on and off stage
 - *Reaching San Diego*
 - Unintentional but harmful habitual practices which exclude artists of color

Special Case: Actors of Color

- The faces we see on our stages
 - Visible minority of performers of color
 - “Why no POC?”
 - Discouragements from the actor of colors’ perspective (“typing out” and show selections, perceived exclusivity of POC, etc.)



Summary

There exists significant evidence showing that there is currently disproportionate power distribution and practice serves as a disadvantage to artists of marginalized groups in the theatre community, both on a national level and here in San Diego.

—

Call to Action: What do we do, and what should we take from this experience?

Combating Inequity by:

Doing our homework.

Social inequity is observed through social science. We need to ensure that we know what we're talking about.

Producing diverse works.

EDI begins by inviting diverse voices, both onstage and off.

Listening.

We are all on the same team, even at different levels of power.



Resources

- <https://www.broadwayleague.com/research/research-reports/>
- <http://lort.org/edi-resources>
- <https://caata.net/resources/>
- <http://howlround.com/ltc-news>
- <http://www.blacktheatrenetwork.org/member-publications/>
- <https://www.americantheatre.org/category/feature/edi/>
- <https://www.tcg.org/EDI/EDInitiative.aspx>