

New WORLD Theater
Intersection V: Creative UpRising(s)

Youth Aesthetics, Action & Leadership Track

*Youth Speaks-San Francisco and New WORLD Theater's Project 2050 co-hosted a series of sessions for young artists, activists, educators and leaders, including a youth dialogue on **Profits/Prophets in the Arts**, and a collaborative workshop with 2050 and Youth Speaks artists, to create a short performance that was presented during the closing ceremonies a the conference. An **Artist Statement** on Project 2050's featured production, **The Love in Revolution**, is also included below.*

Profits/Prophets in the Arts

Saturday April 5, 2008
3:45 PM—5:45 PM

Youth leaders from NWT's Project 2050 and Youth Speaks San Francisco led a discussion on the role of arts and cultural expression in a corporate world and an election year. How can art be a part of the underground or grassroots movement towards social justice? How is Hip Hop culture being manipulated and co-opted by the mass media? How can we use our art for positive action in our communities?

Co-facilitated by Erika Céspedes Kent & Brandon Santiago of Youth Speaks; and Salomon Moreno, Amina Jordan, Naimah Petigny-Perry & Kinnethia Tolson of New WORLD Theater's *Project 2050*.

37Attendees; 30 young people and 7 adults; 23 women and 14 men.

The dialogue leaders decided on a few topic questions to facilitate the workshop discussion:

How can art be a part of the underground or grassroots movement towards social justice?

How is artistic culture being manipulated and corrupted by mass media?

How can we use our art for positive action in our communities?

By taking your art to a higher level (profiting), are you selling out or expanding?

- Ground rules were set to promote a productive conversation: one mic, agree to disagree, don't yuck my yum, be open, and respect.
- How you use your own artistry to help yourself and community:
 - One person gave the example of stepping. Explained how he used it as a form of resistance and an outlet for frustration. Ultimately started an educational

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program involving stepping. Consisted of two opposing groups that were brought together—no longing fighting through words, issues resolved through stepping.

- What does community art look like?
 - Responses:
 - “Has to be some type of movement.”
 - “I write for myself. I don’t write for my audience.”
 - “Concern/love for community.”
- Introducing art to youth, expanding imagination at an early age.
- Art as a weapon.
- Where do stereotypes come from?
- Media has taken away authentic voice of the artist. Media is being to saturate what artists do.
- Acceptance, identity, security, purpose= what we all want
 - Art is a safe place, art is a life saver.
- What is youth culture in main-stream portrayed as?
 - Responses:
 - Consumer (body image, beauty)
 - Art is easy, manufactured
- What do we want to see?
 - Responses:
 - Real people who look like me
 - Different personalities
 - More projects
 - Less competition
- Art is action, depending on what you do with it. The action is being able to speak for yourself.

Youth Speaks Meets Project 2050: A Youth-only Artistic Workshop
Sunday April 6, 2008
9:30 AM—11:30 AM

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This workshop provided a chance for youth participants to sharpen their skills, explore voice, and, in two hours, create a collaborative performance piece to show at the closing ceremonies!

Facilitated by longtime 2050 and YouthSpeaks teaching-artists: slam poet Mush, stepmaster Kenny Jones, and beatbox/theater artist Baba Israel.

36 youth participants total; 16 women and 11 men.

The goal of this session was artistic collaboration and the creation of a short piece to share at the closing.

- Warm up exercises
- Writing and visual exercise:
 - Free write: “I am not what you think I am...”
 - Acceptance questions:
 - If acceptance was a color, what would it be?
 - If acceptance was an object in nature, what would it be?
 - What does it mean to be accepted?
 - 4 memories (newest to oldest and age)
 - Who is the girl/boy that _____ (finish statement)
- The group learned a step by Kenny
- They finished by putting together words & movements

The Love in Revolution

Created & Performed by Project 2050

Directed by Steven Sapp

Friday, April 4

8 pm, Bowker Auditorium

The Love in Revolution, by New WORLD Theater’s acclaimed youth troupe, *Project 2050*, looks at global and personal revolutions in a high-energy Hip Hop performance blending spoken word, breaking, stepping, video storytelling and more. An updated restaging of last

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summer's sold-out production, the show explores the meaning of "revolution" in history, contemporary world movements and personal experience, including resistance as an act of love and the revolutionary power of nonviolence.

The young people of *Project 2050* ask us to consider important questions: What happens when the word "revolution" gets pimped in everything from music videos to banking ads? What's the difference between revolution, resistance, uprising and independence? How can we reconcile the dual revolutionary credos of "by any means necessary" and nonviolent civil disobedience? What did Che Guevara mean when he said, "Every true revolutionary is driven by a great feeling of love"?

Project 2050 is a multi-year exploration of the year when it is projected that people of color will become the majority in the United States. Addressing the issues compelled by these changing demographics, the project engages professional artists, youth communities, scholars and community activists in civic dialogue and artistic creation. *Project 2050* promotes the creative imagining of a near-future when it will become imperative to address issues of race construction, ethnic balkanization, social equity and power.

Each year, *Project 2050* youth intellectually and creatively engage topics relevant to our social conditions. In the annual Summer Intensives, we have asked questions such as, "What is the connection between the War on Terror and the War on Drugs?" and "How can young people fight the global AIDS epidemic?" as well as "How reliable is the information we get from the media?"

Youth participants in *Project 2050* are nominated by teachers, counselors, peers, parents and community organizations based on their talent, commitment to cross cultural dialogue, and diverse interests. They range in age from 13 to 19 and come from towns and cities throughout the Pioneer Valley of Western Massachusetts, including Amherst, Northampton, Holyoke, Springfield, Hadley and Greenfield.

Everything presented in this performance has been written and created entirely by the youth, drawing on the work and ideas generated from their time spent with *Project 2050* artists and scholars.