Building a better world: UMass Theater presents *Visionary Futures*

What kind of future are you hoping to see? Coming to UMass Theater in November, *Visionary Futures: Science Fiction Theater for Social Justice Movements* invites you to join us in envisioning the intersection of science fiction and activism. Creator Josh Glenn-Kayden, a third-year MFA directing candidate, encourages his audience’s predictions of the future with this new form of collaboration.

Inspired by “Octavia’s Brood,” a short story anthology named for writer Octavia Butler that explores the connection between radical speculative fiction and movements for social change, this project sits at the intersection of theater and activism. Three professional playwrights — Phaedra Scott (*Good Hair*), M. Sloth Levine (*Interrobangers* was a popular Play Lab entry last spring), and Jaymes Sanchez (*The Cucuy Will Find You*), — have been commissioned to write a 30-minute play and will each be paired with activists (TreaAndrea Russworm, Finn Lefevre, and a third to be announced) whose work intersects with the content of the play. These teams will meet regularly throughout the writing process to create plays that speculate on how societies may reimagine concepts like gender, justice, and identity in the future. (*Visit our website* to read bios of the artists as well as updates about our activists, cast, and play titles.)

“I think there’s something inherently hopeful about *Visionary Futures,*” says Tatiana Godfrey, dramaturg for the project. “Both the activist and the playwright are asking the same question, ‘What does a more just world look like?’”

Glenn-Kayden and Godfrey are also asking these questions, building a new, inclusive process of play creation. This integrative experience allows
the activists to be involved in the writing process and trajectory of the play, rather than being brought in to consult afterward.

“We’re creating a new model of collaboration that includes more voices in the generative process and are excited to develop plays that are imaginative and forward thinking while still having roots in the activism work of our present moment,” says Glenn-Kayden.

Each performance in November will consist of a virtual reading of an in-process draft of the play, along with a post-show discussion where the playwright and activist will talk about their collaborative process. Full digital productions of each play are planned for the spring. Visionary Futures: Science Fiction Theater for Social Justice Movements will be performed over Zoom. Join us as we embark on this imaginative journey into envisioning a new world.

This event is free. Visit the Fine Arts Center Box Office to claim your spot in the virtual audience now.

Support our productions with a donation.

(Image by Tatiana Godfrey)

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Learn more about our Fall 2020 plans on our website.

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Press inquiries: contact agoossen@umass.edu for information or images.