

Active Hope - A podcast collaboration

Episode 4, Part 1 Transcript

Marc Bamuthi Joseph My name is Marc Bamuthi Joseph. I am a poet, I'm a dad, I'm an educator.

Kamilah Forbest am Kamilah Forbes. I am a storyteller, a director, a producer, a wife, a mother, a daughter, and the executive producer of the Apollo Theater.

Marc Bamuthi Joseph Yeah. That's excellent Paola, we're returning. When we first started this enterprise, we were just trying to figure out how to tread water in the present, when there was both this idea of we have to survive, we're walking across the sands, we have these creative impulses, not exactly sure what to do with them, if the transactional kind of format, the transactional paradigm isn't available to us. Now here we are nearly on the other side of that particular desert and it's like, "Did we miss it?" Was there an opportunity to design the future and we...

Paola Prestini I think it's great that you're putting it that way, I think we're in it, because when you think about the future, people love to think about technology and AI and we're going to hit some of those things, but actually I was reading a little bit from one of the guests that we have today and futurism is all okay until we talk about social change, right? And then it's like all these divergent truths, all these divergent realities, all these divergent wishes, right? And so that, I think, is where we come in as artists, and as responders to culture as makers. How do we look at this, and how do we thread this

Marc Bamuthi Joseph: Let's grab a listen. Lucky me, lucky us.

Marina Gorbis: Lucky me.

Marc Bamuthi Joseph: We get to hang out with my very good friend, Marina Gorbis. It's such a pleasure to be here with you on the Active Hope Podcast. So I'm wondering maybe if you could start by just telling us a little bit about the Institute for the Future.

Marina Gorbis: Sure. The Institute is a nonprofit organization. We are located in Palo Alto, but we have

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Marina Gorbis: And my favorite one and really the one that's the hardest for people to think about is transformation, where we're really moving into something very, very different. We're not destroying it, but we're transforming into something new and that's the hardest one for people to envision, mostly because when people think about the future, what's difficult about it that they base it on their own personal experience and let's take a lifespan, at most a hundred years, about right. And so we've come to believe that everything that we do and how we behave and how things work, that's the only way to be in the world, right? Like it's almost preordained, this is what it is. We go to work from nine to five, we take vacations for a month, we do this, the school call is followed by maybe college, by work and all of these things. So we think in these sets that are very deterministic in some way. And when you think about transformation, you really have to put yourself into some very other space, and that's why artists are so important. I always say that artists are futurists, just inherently futurist. Because artists are able to envision something that we have not experienced, that may not exist or they have to reformulate it in a very substantial way.

Marc Bamuthi Joseph: It's a little more ethereal, and maybe that's another point of separation, because what you're talking about in terms of a transformative future feels like the result of an ontological exercise, like a transformation of the psyche.

Marina Gorbis: Exactly.

Marc Bamuthi Joseph: How much do you think, or how much do you talk about the psychology of the future, something that's more humanitarian? What are the elements that you play with in thinking about psychology of a transformational future and what do you think we need in the present moment in order to create enough critical mass that we might be positioned towards a transformational future?

Marina Gorbis:When you see these driverless cars driving all around Palo Alto, you feel like you're in the future. It's like you are a participant, but a lot of people don't have that ~~tr~~ they feel like they're victims of the future. So a big part of this exercise, a big reason why future thinking is so important, and

Kamilah Forbes But it's also valuing, there's God, Paola, what you said, that's so brilliant and where we see value of artists' contribution and other countries and Bamuthi, you said this interesting, right? Like, I didn't know the weather patterns in 1600s, but I knew Mozart. I knew those folks, so that was my way in. So if we're putting value in the future, we have to put value in artists.

Marc Bamuthi Joseph:
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