



BELONGING AT REALTIME ARTS

We've found over time that the work we make and the processes we use to make it aren't separable from our values regarding inclusion, equity, access and belonging. Read on to learn more:

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

We believe that the inclusion of voices from individuals of all races, genders, sexual orientations, ages, and abilities in our work is vital to our creation of relevant, meaningful highest-caliber productions. We also believe diversity isn't just about identification by race, gender, orientation, age, or ability. It's about the constellation of forces and influences that make you you. We strive to explore these intricacies in what we do, who we do it with and how we do it.

Examples:

Here are some ways this belief has been/is demonstrated in our work:

Self-Identification. We invite our board, leadership, staff, and sometimes our project creatives, to write nuanced self-identification statements that illustrate the forces that they feel have made them who they are, not limited to simple demographic categories. You can read these statements [here](#). Through these personal statements, we know each other better, becoming more aware of each other's backgrounds so that we can learn from each other better and make our working environment more welcoming and respectful.

Artists we work with. We create specific programming that centers and uplifts BIPOC/Global Majority artists, like our shows THE SAINTS TOUR: GREATER BRADDOCK, ASSOCIATE, INSPIRE, SHARON, and KHURAKI. Creative teams for our projects intentionally include members of the Global Majority, disabled, age-diverse, class-diverse and gender-diverse participants. At times, our Artistic Directors step out of the creative process completely to support the work of underrepresented artists absent of our influence as white artists, as in INSPIRE and our upcoming People of Pittsburgh series. In addition, we make casting choices for all our work based on representing a multitude of bodies and lived experiences onstage.

The work we create. We create shows based on the self-disclosed lived experience of the human beings around us. From The Saints Tour to Sharon to Khuraki to People of Pittsburgh, our artistic efforts are often rooted in the desire to celebrate the many facets of "extraordinary, ordinary" human beings, inspired by their own unique telling of their own unique stories.

Our process and content. We often work in communities to which we may not fully belong. We engage in deep research into others' self-disclosed lived experience at every level of creation. But research is only the beginning. We hold to the adage, "Nothing about us without us." If the content of our work includes a member or members of a group to which we don't belong, we seek out, employ and/or creatively partner with members of that group to help build the work appropriately, to avoid cultural misappropriation, generalization, and "othering," to help determine which stories need to be told, and to advise on who should be in charge of telling them.

There are times when we abandon a project, realizing that it is not our story to tell; that is an acceptable and sometimes necessary outcome of our process.

Example: For *Khuraki*, we were in a geographical location in which we were not able to find East Asian female actors to depict our Afghan subjects. So in order to create a cast and casting experience that was as inclusive and authentic as possible for both our Afghan collaborators and our performers, we brought together a powerful pool of diverse female actors, our Afghan group, and an interpreter, and asked the actors to tell stories of what "home" means to them, instead of performing audition monologues which might contain less relatable content for our collaborators. Everyone in the room had the chance to hear each other's stories, creating a sense of connection and warmth among the actors and Afghan subjects alike. From this experience, each Afghan woman chose actors she wanted to "play" her in the show, and we ended up with an incredibly diverse and "true-to-life" cast.

We have much to learn about how to honor members of our myriad, intersectional communities with our creative work, and are continually learning how to better serve existing and potential audience members, artists and community partners from all backgrounds. We welcome your feedback, suggestions, and ideas. **Please click here to connect with RealTime's email.**

EQUITY

People come to the theater with different experiences of live art; some have had season tickets to regional theaters all their adult lives but have never been to a site-specific show, for example, while some have never set foot in a building designed for performance, although they've been attending Church programs their whole lives. Through pre-show emails, introductory comments, programs, etc, we bake into our shows a "road map" for our patrons, designed to make their experience legible, comfortable and enjoyable, regardless of their background as live-arts audience members.

We believe people should be paid fairly for their work, shared talents, and time, and we create pay structures that support this belief, regardless of if a person is contributing a performance or a personal story to a RealTime production.

Example: When we make work that utilizes the stories of living human beings, as in *Khuraki* or *People of Pittsburgh*, we pay for subjects' interview and collaboration time as

part of the initial production, at a rate comparable to performers' rates. But we also pay "personal story royalties" to the subjects each time the piece is produced, beyond the initial production.

We are still learning how to identify our blind spots when it comes to creating an equitable arts experience for all, and welcome suggestions and ideas from our patrons on how to meet their needs better. **Please click here to connect with RealTime's email.**

ACCESS

Live art is for everyone. As a performance company, it's our responsibility to transform that string of words into a reality for all audience members who wish to engage in the magic of theatrical experiences, and for all artistic collaborators with whom we create that magic.

One of our criteria for choosing a site for rehearsal or production is its ADA accessibility. And for each show we ask artistic collaborators and patrons with accessibility concerns to contact us directly with their access needs so that we can meet them as effectively as possible. This includes working to create accessible seating, use of audio devices, use of audio-description services and, in the future, ASL-translated performances.

Example: For our audience-interactive show *People of Pittsburgh: The Alchemist of Sharpsburg*, our team created Braille, tactile and raised-character props for blind patrons' use, as well as PDF programs. We also began relationships with the Audio Description Services around the city, to be employed in future shows.

Although one of our founders/Artistic Directors lives with a disability, this doesn't mean we are fully versed in all aspects of accessibility, understand other individual experiences of disability, or are experts in other disabilities. We are still learning how to best serve audience members of all abilities and welcome suggestions and ideas from our patrons on how to meet their access needs. **Please click here to connect with our Access Liaison, Molly Rice.**

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