

Art and Wellness Speaker Series
2 October 2020 Transcript
Agnes Etherington Art Centre

So before we begin, I wish to acknowledge that Queen's University and Agnes Etherington Art Centre are situated on traditional Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee territory. To acknowledge this territory is to recognize its longer history, one predating the establishment of the earliest European colonies. It is also to acknowledge this territory's significance for the Indigenous peoples who lived and continue to live upon it. People whose practices and spiritualities were tied to the land and continue to develop in relationship to the territory and its other inhabitants today. The Kingston Indigenous community continues to reflect the area's Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee roots. There's also a significant Métis community and their First peoples from other nations across Turtle Island present here today. This beautiful land, the trees, the three waterways nearby the animals and the birds are an inspiration and a solace. During these difficult times, and we are grateful and privileged to be able to live, work, play, create, celebrate and heal in our communities on this land. I welcome you all to spend some time researching and reflecting on the land that you are coming from and to consider your own positionality and how you can contribute to the work of decolonizing your institutions, communities, bodies and minds. So welcome to the art and wellness speaker series today is art and wellness in communities with Janice Timm-Bottos and Savneet Talwar and a number of Janice's colleagues and students. So the schedule will be such, we will start with this overview. As well, I'll be introducing Janice. Janice will speak to us for about 45 minutes. Then I'll introduce Savneet, Savneet will speak for about 45 minutes and then we'll have about 25 minutes of a Q&A. So if there are any questions that come up to you. Please do put them in the Q&A box and we will be looking at those as we move forward. So I'd like to start by introducing Janice. Janice Timm-Bottos, PhD, ATR-BC, PT, is the founder and director of the archives initiative. She promotes art based social inclusion, through the development of neighbourhood and institutional third spaces of mutual care for all ages. Along with specialized studios for groups, requiring support to gain their participation in society. A former physical therapist, Janice Timm-Bottos is an art therapist, Associate Professor in the Faculty of Fine Arts and the primary investigator for an interdisciplinary FRQ-SC engAGE Living Lab Mall project with and for older adults, the Art Hive network is an open source online community connecting 190 Art Hives worldwide. Welcome to you, Janice. Janice, you have to unmute.

I was going to do that. Hi everyone, it's really nice to be here. Thank you so much. Shannon, thank you to your team. This seems like such an amazing effort that you're putting together such an incredible series, and I'm very, very happy to be a part of it. I'm going to go ahead and share my screen so that I can share my PowerPoint with you. Okay. Am I, is it showing? You can't tell.

It's sort of up in the corner.

Okay. Here we go. That should do it. There we go. Perfect. Okay. Thank you. Alright, so I'm going to your faces here. Okay, so I'm as I said very happy to be here and I'm going to share with you today. The work that we've been doing in primarily Montreal, now it feels like we're pretty much everywhere. I'm, I'm talking to you from the Eastern townships and my colleagues and students here coming from different places as well. So it's, it's an important time that that we're going to be talking today about it seems like both Savneet and I are interested, very much in the connections of people. And so my talk today is

fostering online networks of care and connection. And personally, I'm going to be talking about the engAGE Living Lab that we've been working on for almost a year now. But so much of it was in the COVID times. So we've had to revamp quite a bit and I'm going to be talking to you about our digital era of response, which we call ELLDER. I will be introducing to you my colleagues and students a little bit later they'll be coming in to talk about their projects that were that they designed and in response as well. Okay, so I'm going to start with a quote by Simone Weil to be rooted is perhaps the most important at least recognized need of the soul. I've been thinking a lot about this lately because they feel that my personal life, as well as my professional life has really been uprooted through the pandemic and I'm going to share with you my experience of that a bit in this talk. On March 12 my husband drove himself and I to the hospital to the neuro for for his third brain surgery. And this, this was a pretty emotional time but we've been through it before and really recognize that it was something that needed to happen. The day after on Friday the 13th the lockdown happened in Montreal and in a lot of other places. And we had to close all of our spaces. So it became a moment of really feeling like I was in the twilight zone, my professional, like I said, my professional and personal life just was turned upside down. Pretty much everything that I had been working for, for the past 35 years became kind of like a big problem. We couldn't do it anymore. And even going through my slides and trying to prepare for today. I had a tremendous emotional response to looking at these images and never once would I have thought this would be a contributor to illness just how close we're sitting and and just being together and meeting the way we had been the man in the back, standing there is my husband, he was behind the scenes on pretty much everything that had anything to do with an Art Hive. Art Hives are free and protective spaces, just like our one of our wonderful mentors Dora Kalff taught us. And it becomes a place where people can separate out from their silos and join together with more of themselves that could come forward. They're just extremely comforting and important spaces. So I never thought that practicing a world we want to live in would become so complicated, and suddenly this idea of a geographic space being a primary place to root in so you got to know your neighbours. So you got to exchange and these free and open spaces. Would ever disappear and the way they had when the pandemic occurred. So, you know, in our network that the Art Hives headquarters I've been hosting for a number of years, and my colleague Rachel Cheney has been so much a part of preparing places to to join our network. They started closing. They started falling like dominoes, one after another closed up all very, very quickly, and suddenly. We had to rethink our whole idea about what rootedness really really meant. So included in that was the four Art Hives that we hosted ourselves. So, one of them was, of course, our mothership La Ruche d'Art St Henri, which was the first Art Hive and this Art Hive, of course has a history of being a part of community art studios and then the art houses, they developed really started to initiate a lot of other cascading effects of these types of spaces which which we're very happy to be a part of. La Ruche d'Art was open to the community for free. It provided space for people to gather, make art freely, have art shows, we have a beautiful backyard there. And the setting was quite quite incredible for the work that we were doing. It also hosts the, what we call the Honey Pot, which is where people could get materials and so on. The, the other studios we close with two canvas studios and here is the Concordia University Art Hive. As well as the Loyola campus Art Hive and I've added here, one of our programs that we have besides free artmaking is the science shop which hosted at this time a series of teapot chats for older adults. Then the last studio, there were there was four not not more because it was it's been quite dramatic to close these spaces down was the Creative Living Lab and that

lab had been opened, only two months when the pandemic hit. So it was we had just got going and so the first thing we did with this Creative Living Lab, which is a little different than just an art standalone Art Hive was we did implement an Art Hive right away so that people and that had been going to the mall really for socialization in the food court could have another place to come that did not require money that people could gather and and talk about the world, what mattered to them specifically focused on on people who were in older ages and our hope was with this project was that we were going to decrease isolation. And really help people connect across different barriers, the biggest barrier that we were working with was the barrier that has to do with the university. And that idea that the university and and the community at large can come together and really create a much better result for everyone. So we just got started. We were very, very interested in hearing from the seniors who spent a lot of time in the mall. And so our students. Presented and also heard from from the seniors themselves. This was just really in its beginning stages when we had to close down. We also had some of the older adults that were with us in many of the different Art Hives start some of their projects, they were able to demonstrate and this was an idea that we really wanted to explore more was having older adults initiate projects in this space that they always wanted to do. And this was George and Lorraine's animation lab. It's really incredible work. They were had been working with us in our downtown studio and a little bit at Loyola and we were very excited to to continue with that work. And some of the things that happened when you begin initiatives like this is that they just cascade into other projects. And here's one of our students PhD student who you'll hear from Moh and he's using some of the green screen ideas to create his own own image. So this is the type of things we were really going for this mixing and matching of people learning from each other. And then here is George and Lorraine like like happened several different times with a class of students coming in and sharing what they are we're learning and translating that knowledge to the community at large. And I mean, I think you can see from this that that there's really as an engagement that that's been missed and we need to be fostering this more. In addition to this, and this is one of the aspects that didn't that didn't get going, as well as we would like to have in that first two months and we still have a lot of work to do. But that the researchers each would have a residency in the space and set up with what it is that they were studying what it is that they were interested in and share it with the community, but also listen to the community and have their results around to hear the comments about their research. So we had all the different faculties of Concordia represented there. This is our team. It's a little, a little unnerving when I looked at this and so that's sort of looks like a Zoom, Zoom boxes and this is way before we were in Zoom mode but here we are in our little Hollywood Squares in this picture. And we didn't know what that we were actually going to be in those squares very soon, because before we know it we were. So some of the things that would happen with these researchers is they would have their students with their PhD and masters projects come in and and collect data. So there were many, many seniors and we were very surprised and delighted that seniors really were very interested in participating in university researchers' research. This particular project the students are collecting data around balance issues so a lot of the research that obviously we're connected to the engAGE Living Lab were research projects that related to seniors needs in terms of their health or their mobility in terms of their media needs. We set up a media spa, one of the researchers have a media spa and then hosted film clubs and there was a lot of activities. Here's Linda Dyer there in the middle and she's presenting with her colleague their, their research. Project called there is a woman in my past beautiful project that reclaimed positions for women in

science that hadn't been acknowledged for the work that they did. And so we asked her, she's from the business school, we we challenged her and her colleague bear to consider. Creating an art response to the research that they were doing as they were, they had collected these stories and they were going to continue to collect stories within the mall. And so they did that, they did a version of Judy Chicago's Dinner table and had their the women that they were presenting over the next month because they had just opened their, their residency when we closed down. But I think you can kind of get an idea of where we were going and then all of a sudden it all changed and and suddenly you know, in it was seen as a tough period for me. I was spending a lot of time on trying to contact my husband in the hospital. It was not the easiest thing the technology wasn't the greatest at the hospital. And so, and of course I wasn't allowed to be there. So yes, while I was dealing with that I had an incredible crew and and here's some of it, most of them working with us right now. We usually have a bigger team, but this was our summer team and we would, they did the work. I mean, they figured out how to take what we were doing and I shared as well as I could there in such a few minutes. What we were doing into a format that we could actually offer online. And so this is one of our schedules. This is October schedule and this is the schedule showing the different pieces that were that the different facilitators would host these events different Art Hives were happening online are there's still the film club. There is a Movement Hive. Just really wonderful groupings of different programs. Just to give you a little example Muriel here. She hosts that's called the read whatever you want club. Wonderful opportunity to share books and talk about things that are important to seniors around reading. There's also a Senior Art Hive. That was a continuation of the archive at La Ruche d'Art that that meets all. All this I direct you to Facebook to check out what it is we're doing and there's Momo with her postcard from the kitchen day and Momo is a very important Art Hive headquarters person. She's our technical computer person, she's on with us today and she'll be presenting her project that she's doing with her colleague. So with that, I'd like to go and introduce the students to very briefly, because I'd like them to take the time to share with you their projects. So Ana María García Hernández and Monica Escobedo known as Momo will be presenting La Colmena de Arte, and after, after they present Mohammad Abdolreza-Zadeh, Moh as he's known will talk about his international storytelling project which he developed from the course that I taught with Satoshi Keita this summer. And then Hanieh Tohidi is going to present her project, which is called the Persian Art Hive and several of these students did start their projects through awards that they received from the Art Hives called DeSeve award to test out their research. So I'd like to pass it to them right now.

I think we will start. Okay. Um, hello everyone. We, Momo and Anna, are, are very happy to be here with you and we have been doing an online Art Hive in Spanish. We want to present it to all of you today. Actually, we're going to let the participants through me through my words tell you about our space we created a collective nonjuried exhibit that Momo had the amazing idea and talent to set up as a virtual museum. Our participants chose themselves if they wanted to participate or not, and which artwork they wanted to showcase and Momo will be showing you will be showing it to you while I read the text that we collectively created for you. La Colmena De Arte. La Colmena De Arte is a very special space. It is a space to be free and to be yourself. La Colmena is a place to experiment and have fun, but it is also an informative space, a space to learn about art and of course practice your Spanish. La Colmena is a space to be in harmony with other participants and friends. It is a space where we love to share time together. Where we love to share smiles and art, and that is something very important to us.

It is a space to make friends and share the poetry of art. Here you can express yourself the bad things that have happened to you during the day can be transformed into music, drawing, dance or digital art. And by talking to others you can be inspired to make works of art. La Colmena is a space for everyone to bring people together through art. So as you're looking at the artwork. It's made by our participants. I don't know if Momo would like to say some words about it or about the museum.

Yes. Hello, everybody. Thank you very much for this opportunity and so we, as I mentioned, we asked our participants if they if they wanted to participate with their works of art. So they send us whichever word of art they prefer and then we made we framed them as we would in a museum and they gave us the the labels. And some, I mean all of the titles of the, of the, artworks are incredibly amazing. This one is called happily floating from Soco Itu. And she's a Mexican living in here in Canada and as Janice mentioned, it's very important for us to us as immigrants to root, or for example for me as a Mexican at to root myself or to find again my roots. And I think that that's also one of Ana's objective for a lot of people that leave for example, in the US, but they're from Latin origins. How can we find our roots again? You know, how can we feel rooted and how can we also offer this space, not only for people that are living elsewhere of their origin countries, but also people that are living, of course, in in Latin America. And this was a door for us that open that we could not do it otherwise because geographically we don't live in Latin America and Ana and I, we both love this concept. And it's so inclusive and we wish to bring it to Latin America, but we were not thinking of moving back or at least I wasn't. And this is a way that we could offer these without having to physically move to Latin America, they certainly so for artists. This is all the art that we have done that our participants have done in La Colmena, and we have had the honour to witness and this is how to contact us. Very quickly, we started on May 22 four months ago and we have had 16 meetings until today. It's on Friday evenings and we have had more than 40 participants and like it like 10 participants in the rest of our session. Thank you very much. Thank you everybody.

Hi, everyone. Thank you for this great opportunity. My name is Mo. And let me just, there's a technical problem. Yeah, I want to present screen sharing a weird way, but it works still. Yeah. Fred, and I over Janice and professors to she's the students in the Sikh class. And in this class. I believe it was a kind of the class of reflection, reflection of our outside world during the COVID, Black Life Matters and we could not praise in different ways. And also it was a class of the inside reflection that we were thinking about our body, its relation with food and the relationship between our everyday life and the bigger system that we are living inside. Fred and I for it and I are working with engAGE Living Lab projects and as we are working with other adults. So we were also thinking about generational gaps and asking about this generational gaps we were asking about our own relationship with our grandparents and we were thinking about those stories or those barriers that disconnect us from our grandparents or connect us to our grandparents and we started, having a kind of intergenerational storytelling, finding our stories with our grandparents, for example here, Fred and his grandparents, him and his grandparents are walking in the street and telling some stories to each other. And yeah, and we were thinking about how we can make a an authentic relationship with our grandparents in a way to share our beliefs, ideas, and all of those generational gaps for example here Fred's grandparents and grandparents, until spread that my mom always told me that a cheap buy is an expensive buy, or here in this image you can see that his prejudice thinking about how, what if his grandfather father telling him go beyond your gender role, my dear granddaughter, and we all know that we have some expectations from our Grandpa. And so they

have some expectations from us. And sometimes we don't share it with each other. And you can see this on in discussions. I'm only 96 years old, find happiness in everything. And this is my story with my grandmother that she's so kind and as she also sometimes prioritize boys to girls in her mind and it was a kind of sad and funny story. And while we think and visualize it in a comic way we can understand these gaps much better. Thank you for your attention.

I will go, Hello, everyone. Thank you for being here with us. My name's Hanieh and I had the opportunity to start the Persian Art Hive with the help of Janice. I was when I was doing my research for our therapy graduate degree. So the Persian Art Hive. I wish to just shortly mention what it is, like how who we serve, how we serve them. So we serve all that all diaspora was able to speak Farsi and Persian because there's so many different languages within the borders of countries who speak Persian and regardless of their residential status either international students, refugees, undocumented asylum seekers or like residence permanent residents, citizen, doesn't matter. Countries that speak Persian mostly are Afghanistan, Iran, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, but there are other countries as well. We have different ethnicities within these countries and different religious so it can be diverse even within the same space and why I think it was very important was the idea of the diaspora's mental health as when we get displaced place in a new space the whole idea of I, we, family, friends, neighbourhood, or community. Somehow gets shattered and we have to rebuild them again. So, Janice was saying that's how we get rooted because all of a sudden, everything from about us get unrooted and language also is great barrier in community's mental health as different languages make us express emotions and talk differently and even experience them differently. Plus the idea of collective trauma, because even though we are displaced in Canada or in other places we feel the traumas and things happening in our home country, as we are living there. And the whole idea was to create a new identity, we need to go back to our culture's model and like how Barry introduced introduce how integration is the best for. Thing is for somehow taking like saving some of our values and getting like adapting some of the values of the place is which is hosting us. So that's our goal. Like, we want to create this third space that people still can express who they are and feel safe and then slowly find how they can adapt to this new space. How is it different from the other Art Hives is the idea of culturally sensitive space. So we provide music, literature, language, and we celebrate special dates and events like say our calendar is different from the Western calendar. So even the words we use for months has meaning. So sometimes we just forget about the month that we are born as how it's meaningful for us. So talking about all these can bring up a lot of memories for us. We provide support for people, give them resources. It's a non judgmental space to share and the each one teach one also goes a lot about how we adopted adapted to assist with how we found our way here, or even how we are trying to find our way, even in the present moment. We started suddenly after the plane and car crash and no car crash. Sorry. The Ukrainian plane crash. In January, and he was a very big shock for a lot of Iranians in Canada, because we all took that plane once to come here. So I think I heard it from a lot of people and I experienced that, that it could be so we provided this trauma informed space that they could process, the grief was one week every day. And at the end, the works went to the Department of Geography at Concordia University. They held as ceremony for a student who was lost. And the great thing was that people like non Iranians or people who didn't have friends on the plane could witness the artworks of others and plus that some students could create art there to contain their emotion. So it was very helpful in many ways. And these are the pictures of that time and then we have to go online and COVID it somehow. Challenged like, by the time

we found a little bit of root then getting unrooted again. It was a little bit challenging and survey across Canada showed that's a lot of Iranian diaspora here are very concerned about the families in their home country. So that's an extra level of challenges and they have a lot of financial difficulties. Not only for COVID, but because the whole idea of sanctions like just the money losing value, it was out of control for some people. And what we notice in this group is that it's basically the theme as present or past mostly but the present, it talks about a lot of personal issues and how they can solve these issues, but the past is like going to, but going back to our initial identity as our childhood memories. How were you were. We were coping with hard times, for example, during the war, or what we learned from our grandparents and parents from their or experience going through the hard times. And we talked about foods from different regions tradition traditional forms of art. So we relive a part of our initial identity and we kind of grieve for it. And at the end, I wish to finish with this poem like it's the parts of like not a poem, but somehow a short way of saying like finishing story. And so it says, We came down there was water. We went up, sky until the other stories God protect you. Star was up blossom was down our story finished our story was just this. Thank you for sharing your time. Take care.

Thank you so much. So, Janice you have about five more minutes.

Thank you. Perfect. Okay, so I have a little bit more bad news. And after that wonderful news. Thank you to the students who shared and colleagues that shared your work with us. This work is really very important. So our precious space. Our mothership La Ruche d'Art is closing and it has been closed. Of course, but now the building is going to be demolished and our garden demolished as well. So we're going to be moving out this month. And it's had a good run. We were there for almost 10 years and we hope to regather at another location. We have lots of Art Hives in Montreal and at least 45 on the last count, so as they come alive again. I think we're going to be just fine with a wonderful network. On the other sad piece that I did really want to share because Leo so much a part of the Art Hive and in so many ways my work on this presentation is in honour of his work and his life. So he did pass away, April 7 of this incredibly complex year. I'd like to end by sharing a pie with you. My daughter made it, its art, in my opinion, art is making things special so whatever it is you can do, right, with whatever is around you do it because we have we, it would be great if it was a real one, but it's not hopefully we'll be able to get to that one day again. But we have a lot of work to do. And each one of us is responsible for for bringing into the world our, our heart's desire and our ability to be there for others and hold a space. So as we are in lockdown because we're in full red lockdown again in Montreal. So take the time for yourself and make art and think about how it sustains you and why it sustains you because there's a lot of things I'd like to tell you about that and you could tell me about what's going on with you, but we don't have time. But thank you very much. Yeah, here we are. One day we'll be able to gather again I thank you for attending much very much appreciated. And one last slide to thank our funding funders as well.

Thank you so much. Janice and thank you to Momo, Ana María, Haneih and Moh,. It's really wonderful to see your work and thank you for your presentations. It's very moving as well. So now I would like to hand the microphone over to our next, special guest Savneet Talwar. Savneet is joining us from Chicago. She is a professor, a Professor and the chair of the Graduate Art Therapy and Counseling Program at the School of Art, the Art Institute of Chicago. She received her PhD in American Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland in 2010 and her MA in Art Therapy from Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, Illinois. In 1992. Savneet is a founding member of the Critical Pedagogy in the Arts Therapies think tank. Her current research examines feminist politics and pedagogy critical theories of

difference, social justice and questions of resistance. Using an interdisciplinary approach, she is interested in community based art practices, cultural trauma, performance art and public cultures as they relate to art therapy practice and pedagogy. Talwar is the author of *Art Therapy for Social Justice: Radical Intersection* and has published in *Arts in Psychotherapy*, *Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association* and contributed several book chapters and edited volumes. She is also the founder of the CEW, Creatively Empowered Women Design Studio, a craft sewing and fabrication enterprise for Bosnian and South Asian women at the Hamdard Center in Chicago. She is the past associate editor of *Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association* 2015 to 2018.

Welcome Savneet.

Thank you Shannon. Thank you. So much for that wonderful introduction. Before I start my presentation. I also want to say thank you to Janice and for the wonderful presentation. I've had the privilege to actually be at La Ruche a few years ago. And I'm really sorry to hear that gentrification is having an impact on it and that you know the Art Hive has to be shut down and you have to move out. So I'm really sad about that. Um, but I just wanted to say that it's always wonderful to hear you. Janice and it was so great to hear from your students as well. Because so much of what you're talking about in terms of art and the role of art and I speak most about them. I take it to craft and the idea of wellness and well being and how much of these spaces are really spaces that we're talking about in relationship to belonging, displacement and belonging. That seemed to come through, of course, with all three of the students who presented and some of my ideas are in there in very similar ways. And just also thinking like my, of course, the love of my life is of course my creatively empowered studio and that I will, I hope that I can get to that piece to share a little video about that. And thinking about how you know the joy of making art and yet at the same time how art also becomes a testament to the work that we're doing as well as how we create space, right. So this idea of empowerment that comes through art as well as creating restorative spaces and how we bring hospitality. So a lot of similarities in what Janice is speaking about and what some of my ideas that I will share with you, um, let me begin this whoops. I will screen share I don't know how to. Can people see

Savneet if you want to go back to the tab on the bottom that you had touched it was perfect before just from

Okay, so what is happening is then I can't read my my notes.

Oh I see, I see.

Um, let me see if there is another way to okay I'm so sorry about this, folks. Let me see if I can see. Okay, I will probably have to. Oops. Okay. I apologize for this, folks. I should have tried this out and had my notes in a different place, I've never done this before so let me do a screen share one more time. Okay, so what I'm going to have to do is probably share this screen with you. I'm sorry that you're going to be able to see my other. Here we go. How is that, does that work? Shannon. Does that work?

That's a little better. Yeah.

So we'll try that. So I'm going to talk a little bit about crafting empathy stitch by stitch and I just want to, you know, and Shannon, thank you again for that wonderful introduction. And I want to begin by just a quote from Bell Hooks. What I will do in my, in my presentation is do some reading as well as some talking. Can I ask something a Shannon, what are you seeing right now?

Sure. So we see basically your PowerPoint slide with the orange bar on the top and then just below that I think you have a Word document. Also, we can we can see the Word document, but it's, you know, we're not really looking at that.

Okay. All right, so this works. Okay, I do apologize again. I should have figured this out a little better. Yeah, okay. So I want to begin by this quote by Bell Hooks: I'm speaking specifically to naming one's personal pain is insufficient for we can only make change when it is linked to our overall education for critical consciousness of collective political resistance and I raised this piece specifically because I feel that her work really calls attention to the process of healing and then how change happens and the role of pain in how we are thinking collectively and the kinds of actions that we need to be taking so as part of this. Now when I go next. Okay. So, um, what I want to think about is what is critical pedagogy and as Shannon shared with all of you that I am one of the one of the people who started a group with other creative art therapists around critical pedagogy and I want to talk a little bit right why why critical pedagogy is necessary. And what critical pedagogy is and why we make for others. Why we make together. What is this idea of participatory making and what does it do in terms of generating radical empathy and also this idea of craft and craft as care work. Um, I know that we all have understand this image about COVID-19 masks and cultural production of masks and so these are masks that I have made and I know how important it has been for all of us to make these particular masks and share with other individuals. So when I'm thinking in relationship to this idea of critical pedagogy, or even when I think about this idea of radical empathy. I want to think about you know, the ideas about really for me to disturb the idea of the status quo. Right. What is the making and doing of craft. How is it focused on social problems in terms of systemic inequities. Especially when it comes to issues around racism, around xenophobia, around capitalism around globalization. So I'm thinking about radical in that sense about how things are impacting and especially impacting people of colour and we see that the pandemic has very much exasperated this notion of who really gets impact, who has really been impacted by COVID and who are the vulnerable people in this. So how do we bring, how do we bring critical thinking to this. And how do we begin to think about what is what systematically needs to change. And for me what that idea of craft as care work can do. How does it serve communities. How does it serve ourselves. So for me it once COVID hit, amongst other things, which I want to go into we we all became inundated with this idea of safety and how people just came out of the woodwork. I think crafters came out of the woodwork to create patterns for masks and essentially how these these patterns for masks gets shared so openly through the media. And for me the idea of maskmaking has really become about cultural production as in the fact that, you know, when society doesn't have enough when we know that we can have enough access to something we know that our own, we can tap into our own our own agency as a way to find this so lack of in N95 masks, caps, gowns, etcetera. I'm sure that that is this has been equally important, even in Canada. More so in the United States, given the number of COVID deaths that we have had here and just the a lack of our political our politicians in particular, not wanting to follow CDC guidelines so the common person common people like me and my friends have been creating these masks. So I think of this idea of COVID-19 as a very important, I'm sorry, mask making as a very important idea of care work, care work for ourselves and care for others. I'm, I'm thinking again my friend Sangi Ravichandaran has been making these lovely earrings and she has a little practice called salty brown femmes craft. And all the proceeds from these actually end up going to liberation work. So I asked her for a little quote. So how would you really characterize these earrings that you make. And as

you see, this one says school to prison pipeline and the says crops not cops and she says, pouring some saltiness hope in and a lot of fire into jewelry to raise money for liberation work. So I feel that in in on an everyday basis everyday citizens

are thinking in ways of how the personal and the political is interacting so that's why I posed the question why is critical pedagogy important to care work in participatory making and these patches, you will see a part of the critical pedagogy's think tank in the conferences that we've been holding and when people come we give them swatches. And we give them some material to kind of very slowly sort of process, some heavy material that gets that gets brought up at these conferences. So this is one of the swatches that really speaks about the intricacies of what critical pedagogy is. And so I'm I'm thinking again how we are seeing a rise and fundamentalism across the world across the globe which raises very important questions to us about citizenship belonging and nationality. And I'm sure everybody heard about the Charlottesville rally in 2017 which really spoke to, you know, which was in a way we are attributing in to the rise of a very visible white supremacy movement, not to say that that was ever gone. And starting with of course the election for us here in the United States of Donald Trump. In the United States, we have seen several different hate groups. Canada is not immune from any of this either Quebec has a ban on religious symbols that came about in 2019 which really speaks to us specifically targeting, you know, Muslims, Sikhs, and the Jewish community. And in response, we see again Black Lives Matters, right, which is now a global movement of the UK and the Canada in Canada, as well as the United States. And the whole idea is about eradicating white supremacy and really calling to power. How do we intervene when there is violence inflicted mostly on bodies of colour. And this is again when we are thinking of protests were thinking of protests across the world. We saw the protests in Hong Kong that were for China's back extra, extradition plan. We've had protests in India, which have been very specifically about targeting the Muslims in India in relationship to attaining citizenship. So we're seeing a large majority of a global movement in terms of suppression of religious religion citizenship as well as race and ethnicity, targeting race and ethnicity. So this continued witnessing of an escalation of violence, we see again a human rights violations and during this this this concept. I'm always thinking about this concept of care. What does critical pedagogy bring us? And then what can care work mean and how does craft intersect with that. So it's one person said critical pedagogy is thinking about how we think. Right. How do we how do we bring critical consciousness to what we think and how we are responding in everyday life. And as I want to you know, call to a colleague of mine who's very specifically speaks Misha Germany who has been one of the think tank members and also one of the founding members of our off the critical pedagogy. She speaks very specifically to this idea of response ability, response slash ability and just calling on us to say that, you know, we have really created these very dangerous and false borders between the personal and the political and she's calling on us as educators, creative art therapist, cultural workers and saying, you know, we have to be guided by a social justice vision and it is our ethical mandate to be inclusive. And so another question arises would say the Black Life Matters movements. And as we are seeing even different protests across the country across the globe, across the globe. The speak very specific to the mainstreaming of white supremacy. And we're asking the question, do we have the tools to combat white supremacy. This is becoming increasingly important, even for us as counsellors, as we are working with people. Um, so, essentially, it is important that we shift our conversation to really focus on white supremacy, rather than thinking consistently about this notion of multiculturalism as our centre of analysis. So what if we were to better account for

white supremacy and not just diversity as the problem to solve. And I'll repeat this again because I think it's an important piece because for so long we have placed the responsibility on individuals. As a place for healing as a place for wellness rather than our social and cultural fabric. So I think in some ways, I want to say, you know, the work that's happening with Janice in in ways of creating these spaces is sort of a collective movement and my work may be a little separate because of my work. My work has been more on teaching and creating smaller spaces, given the time that I have. So I speak to this concept of radical empathy and craft care. And I want to go back a little bit into even thinking about how Audre Lorde speaks specifically to the concept of care and we all know that this idea of radical care, we were using this this terminology of self care a lot right now. And this is, of course, a billion dollar industry. For you can get yoga pants to meditation to just about avocado toast for self care, but I want to bring in this notion of self care a little bit different, which is about how much of my own self preservation is an act of political warfare as Audre Lorde says. She says caring for myself is not self indulgence. It is self preservation and that is an act of political warfare. And I think in similar ways there are other theorists who are also been speaking very specifically to how do we begin to grapple with the contradictions of everyday lived experience, right. How do we even engage with our own complicity in these systems because in some ways, we have just learned to live in systems that that we, we see the discrimination, we see the racism and yet at the same time, it is normalized through systems within which we are participants ourselves. So I think that there's a real need for us to think about how we disrupt these very monolithic universalist and positive ideas, not only the creative art therapies, but also how we are thinking about the concept of artmaking and so I think that for me, the artmaking piece has has two different pieces. One, it is a it is political act, two it can produce a certain joy in the very act of making because it is a transformative action. And so I go to Adrienne Maree Brown, who's been talking about pleasure activism and she also speaks about how our imaginations, the radical imagination as a tool for decolonization for reclaiming our right to shape our lived reality. So, moving on. I wanted to just share some examples of this idea of what it means for us to think about craft about craft work and and this is not a new idea. Craft work has existed for a long time and the politics of cloth. And the performing of these particular and performing the political and the personal has been with us forever. And I go back again to the very idea of Indian India's independence in 1947 and Gandhi's I did the you know the popularization of the spinning wheel by Mahatma Gandhi and the Swadeshi Movement. And the Swadeshi movement is about spinning one's own cloth as a form of resistance. So really thinking about the ways in which concepts of resistance have are linked to crafting, as well as to cloth and I think about this piece. Swadeshi means to be self sufficient. And this this movement starts as a movement that actually brings India's independence. And it's in the 30s and the 40s when mass textiles are being made are produced and these textiles are machine made textiles and they're being produced extensively in Lancashire, England, and are being shipped to India and flooding the Indian markets as a way of displacing the local weavers and the mandate from Mahatma Gandhi is to not buy any British made textiles, but to make your own and wear only what you can make. And as the the emblem of the spinning wheel is now the very centre of the, the Indian flag. So this particular spinning wheel it remains a very important part of the history of independence in India and it continues. In various different contexts where people still want to buy this, what we call caddy and as a caddy means very raw cotton and it's also have now become a symbol of class in many ways of by who wears what and as a result of it just shows your political leaning as well. But that said, this, this was an important movement. Um, this is

the grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo. This is an Argentinian group and as many people know that in the 70s, Argentina went through what is now called the Dirty Wars and a number of children disappeared. And the grandmothers began to embroider the names of their children and wear them on their heads. And would come to the square every they still do this every Thursday as a form of protest against the junta and this movement has been a very important movement. In relationship to even thinking about resistance one how the headscarf becomes a form of resistance as well as memorialization and as a way of not forgetting what happened under what happened during this dictatorship. Not to forget the names quilt, which was, you know, we know that this is the probably the largest community, community based project that ever has been on a global level and the the names project by now has 40,000 quilts that are three by six foot quilts at these quilts on one hand, make a very impressive. Impression on people, but I think I'm more interested in the people who actually made it. And these quilts were made by family, friends, lovers. You know, they use, people use stuffed toys to personal memorabilia incorporating names and etcetera and and often what happened. When people didn't know what happened to their loved ones. When loved ones was a strange. Many people have found ways of connecting with people who might have died of the AIDS pandemic through these quilts. So it's become a really lovely way for people even to connect, but also at the same time, I think the names project is so instrumental in bringing together this idea of the politics, identity politics into the forefront and looking at the tragedy in which hundreds and thousands of people were killed. I'm also another thing that I want to point out, but this names quilt was also instrumental in the United States in a finally passing policy to support people who have had AIDS in terms of healthcare, etcetera. So passing instrumental in influencing policy. And I think that has been a remarkable piece that a project like this can do. So just to think again about this idea of critical pedagogy at this time, I think we are all in that moment where we all know the importance and how necessary for it, for us, it is to be thinking critically. And I think I love this piece that says critical pedagogy is necessary in order to cultivate a more equitable place. And so to be thinking about what equity is and what equity means. So I'm, what I'm bringing up is how much of my work actually is about raising questions using craft practice sort of the slow idea of slow processing through the craft practice. About questioning the veiled power structures, how we have power structures that have produced and normalized oppression and inequality. I think this is a world over global phenomenon that we have to grapple with. And then also the other part for me in terms of crafting practices and thinking about critical pedagogy is also how we are implicated in this complicitness right I mean, clearly opposition ality of say people who are here today in terms of listening to our webinar in itself is a is a great privilege. So I'm asking people to think again about craft practices and how can we raise questions about equality and equity. I want to also make a disclaimer here as I go on. I don't believe that art will change the world. And a lot of people would disagree with me there. I believe that art for me what art does is facilitate dialogue. I don't necessarily feel that art has has, in my world, especially changed the world, but it has given me a way of dealing with issues of inequality and the inequity. So, um, so I want to share a project that I did this summer. It's called a clemency quilt. I was invited to teach a class for PhD students, and this goes back to some of the things that Janice and the other presenters brought up about COVID and the impact of COVID in our lives and what I was, again, you know, teaching a class online and this, this was the first time was teaching a class online and I was just stumped about what I was going to do in terms of bringing some form of art to my students because

I was not in the classroom with them. I've been part of the clemency quilt for a while and I have done I've participated in a number of different clemency quilts. So the clemency quilt is actually a campaign that has been started by the National Council for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls and the project is about free a free her as I don't know how many people know this, the United States is home to 5% of the world's population, but about 25% of the population in this country is imprisoned and which is the largest in the world. And this 25% most of them are from, they're people of colour, mostly from black communities, five times, people from black communities are five times more likely to end up in prison than from white communities. And we also know from research that there is no relative positive outcome of incarceration. This kind of punitive punishment does not in any way make people better people. Because what we do is we really take away from people, take away connection from people rather than provide connection. So in wanting to bring in a critical, critical pedagogy and work with my students, I wondered what I could do to bring the reality of not only what was happening politically now. But what is the role of social justice in a environment in a time where there's such apathy and yet at the same time, how much we have normalized things like incarceration. So I asked my students to think about a few different questions. Um, what do we mean when we ask for and speak for justice? How does the creative process and task of the artists or the creative art therapist play a role in facilitating a new vision and forum towards liberation? And what is needed or necessary for us to imagine a balanced and harmonious society? And I realized that these are super large questions. And from that, I decided that I would do this clemency quilt. So I created this little kits for my students and put them in the mail. And I think this might not be the first time I was going to the post office to make a larger, a large you know, being in a public space about mailing something. All my students got the pieces and each person was given 10 different names to embroider on these on these quilted pieces. And so my class really focused on learning about social justice through craft and really thinking about notions of incarceration and in in the United States and what an abolitionists framework would look like. Because so much of what we have done here, at least in the United States is think about incarceration, think about even our practices from a place of order from a place of reinforcing the status quo of what is appropriate citizenship. And so this particular piece then raise questions for my students in different ways about who were they quoting for, what these names mean because the names they could actually Google and find out you know who these women were that they were actually embroidering their names. So, um, so my students began, of course, embroidering these names and you can see I have some incredibly talented people who did some very beautiful work and while while students were enjoying this. And I had some community members as well who actually embroidered as well because we had 121 names. I invariably will get questions. And these are the lovely moments in which I feel that one can disrupt people's ways of thinking and so, for example, I got one saying, and this is not just one I get several people who will ask me this question because we have thought about incarceration as a form of justice. And so, and the question remains justice for whom. So oftentimes when people are embroidering, here's one example of somebody who said hey Savneet. So I have a bit of an ethical dilemma, as I am looking up these women and their crimes, particularly Jamie Rice, Jamie Rice stands out. As a woman in her mid 30s, serving a 24 year sentence after chronically engaging in sexual relationship with a 14 year old boy. She seems to be in good health and will be eligible for parole. I'm not sure, so sure how I feel about advocating for an early release of a woman committing this type of crime. It's a weird place to be wanting to advocate for women's rights and also wanting sex crimes to

have stronger consequences. I'm all about making changes in our law enforcement and getting rid of ridiculous sentences for minor wrongdoings, most drug charges and punishment for marginalized folks fighting for their survival. But this example is a bit more that I am ready to take on. I am very open to learning more about her case and where I am ignorant and standing. Why I should advocate for someone who has committed such atrocious actions. And so this is not the first time I'm getting this kind of a question when you do this sort of work because people often question the very act of, you know, incarceration, why this person. And has there been a crime that is a punishable crime. So my responses and often my response has been in my class when these questions eMERGE, we saw the film 13 so we had a lot of very interesting conversations around systems and systems of power. And how law and ethics have really guided who we are and what our positions in society have been and what our rights as citizens are. And so my response to her is Hello, thanks for your thoughts. There are several issues here. How many middle class white wealthy women end up in jail for 24 years for such a crime? Our society functions from a place of discipline and order, but it's incarceration, the answer really? From a prison abolitionist perspective, we should focus on an on an innumerable traumas in this person's life. I do too I do I do, too I too do not condone sex crimes, but what this woman needs is good therapy, rather than incarceration, where she gets almost nothing. In this work, we have to suspend our discipline and order values in favour of justice and healing. This is not to say that people have not committed terrible crimes, but is incarceration, the right way to go about it. So in any case, I got 101 different pieces back and I put them all together and quilted every, of the each one of them. The quilts were too large. So I had to end up making two; one small one and one large one. So I want to just say that this labor, this idea of care work for me becomes essential, as in not only what my political like what my own what my own feelings are towards bringing community together, but also this idea of care that is linked to political work in my in in in my, in my current practice. Before I was sending the quilt away. I got an email from the person who is the coordinator for this project. And she said, I just want you to know. She was thrilled with these quilts and she said, Can you please put some hearts on Dadra Porter's quilt square, she had just passed away from COVID two days before. So it's one of the sad moments in which we were, we had, you know, we are asking for them. And we all know how COVID has really impacted our prison system and there have been, you know, petitions after petitions asking that people be released and not be kept in such close quarters and here we are with one person that had already lost their lives even before this quilt could go further. Um, here's another quilting project. It is a collaboration with Rachel Wallis. It's called Inheritance: Quilting Across Prison Walls. This is I, my colleague Rachel Wallis is an artist. I collaborate a lot with artists, because I feel like we can bring different pieces of our skills together, so I won't get into this very much. If people want to read more details about this project, they can, this is actually a chapter that she and I just wrote in Lauren Leone's book on craft and power in art therapy and it's a lovely book, so I hope that people will check that out. This particular quilting project, very briefly, was a project that we did in the Cook County Jail and we, there was a group of women. Some who had been incarcerated several times. The unfortunate part was that we were unable to take quilting material into the jails due to several restrictions. So what we did was we asked the women about the idea of inheritance and what they wanted their families to inherit or a loved one to inherit and in this process women actually designed their own quilts and then we found volunteer quilters outside, who then made these quilts and then we mail them to the family members as a way of making connection, as a way for regenerating that idea, like the the the person

that's most harmed through incarceration, especially about women are children and their loved ones and their families. So this is a quote I made I worked with one of the ladies who made it for her grandson and shared with me this very beautiful stories about the Ninja Turtles and how much her grandchild loved it and now her grandchild was older. So when we tried to when we sent the quilt, the quilt actually came back because the daughter had moved and through various different ways. I was able to actually get in touch with the daughter and the daughter called back and was so touched that her mother had actually, you know, sort of commissioned this quilt for the grandson. And here's another couple of quilts that were made by other volunteers. That previous quilt was made by me. I am an amateur quilter compared to many other quilters who are part of our volunteer group. And this person on the left is Rachel Wallis. So, this particular piece was actually, once we had gathered all the stories we took excerpts from those particular from our sessions and we had the community come back and we shared the project with them. And this is a community project with everybody came in and then embroidered some of the text that the women had shared with us then became part of another show called The Envisioning Justice show. So, um critical pedagogy, I believe, is co-created is disruptive and it's hopeful. I'm just watching time. Can you tell me how much more time I have Shannon? Sure you have about seven more minutes. That gets us to 2:30, but feel free to go over a few more minutes if you have. Thank you. Thank you.

So I want to talk a little bit about critical pedagogy. Of discomfort in disruption and this brings me back to my own organization in 2017 where we actually launched a protest. Our organization I don't know how many people know but Karen Pence is our Second Lady, the wife of Vice President Mike Pence and she apparently, our organization very enthusiastically endorsed her because she had been a supporter of the arts and especially our therapy in a couple of different hospital funding spaces. And are, this protest came about as a result of which, you know, partly, our main concern as healthcare providers and for us it was more of an ethical mandate about what we were doing. How is an organization and how as art therapists, we were endorsing somebody who had expressed a negative feelings towards the LGBTQ community and anti abortion policies, especially, you know, around women's rights. I mean, the list sort of goes on and on. And I'm sure people might have heard more. And so this was my first wait a time I had used craft as a form of creating a banner. And while I was creating these banners, my colleagues introduced me to my now colleague who actually works with me Aram, Aram Han Sifuentes who, after the last election began creating something called a protest banner lending library. So this protest, I didn't have enough time to make enough banners. So, you know, this banner lending library actually lent us some banners that we could utilize as a way of protesting at the American Art Therapy Association Conference in 2017 which was quite you know, it was a difficult time for everybody, but it was also a moment in which we felt it was our ethical responsibility and our social responsibility to make ourselves heard because we have only seen what has happened over the last four years in terms of the violation of human rights and so here is these are some of the protest banners that we utilized as a way to peacefully protest. And the impact of these banners was incredible because it did create disruption and it created a lot of discord as well. I have to say I'm I this is another banner that I had made by one of our pioneers, one of our original founders of, Edith Kramer, who's the founder of art therapy and one of her quotes says if our society asked us to stifle our actions and independent thought we should we should be maladapted. And so these were some of it. So I just wanted to throw this in as a way to say that, you know, I don't know how much change we made but we definitely did disrupt many peoples' thinking.

And so, in the sense I think about critical pedagogy as as something that's deep, that's honest. It's a vulnerable interrogation of my role in systems of power. Oops, sorry. Um, and so to move on. I, I want to bring us back in a way to talk about how as much as joy as I get in doing more political kind of crafting work, I've also been part of spaces where people have come generally to to to connect with one another.

And the CEW Design Studio is something that is very dear to my heart and I want to end here because I think that for me. The CEW Design Studio is dear to my heart and a number of different ways because this truly was about working with elders seniors, as I would call, them Bosnian Middle Eastern, many from South Asia, and this is a group of our seniors who were just instrumental in the beautiful work they did. You know, we began very simply and we began by making stuff that you know people were happy to see it, but nobody really wanted to buy it. So this particular project really was a about skill sharing and craft, but also about financial literacy, not that people made a living out of it. But folks, definitely the money that they made from it created a sense of value, a sense of agency for them, and a sense of power that these women began to feel in the in the crafting of their work. And so we went from very simply just making stuff and just making stuff and putting it out there to very soon learning together and collaborating on this idea of colour story and materials and what that meant. And how design actually played into it and we began creating a look book that and collaborating with a fashion designer, as well as another artist and then creating fashion shows as a way to describe it, you know showcase the work that was really happening. And so these are some of our women. I mean, quickly see oops. Okay. I was hoping that this video would work. But I guess it's not. So I will actually share a link to the video and everybody can see that video to really see the kind of joy at the same time this place of restorative practice that we've, that I've been speaking of, how hospitality plays a very important role in this kind of self care practice, which is both empowering, but which is which really became a very rich space for conversations. It's was not a space where trauma was the focus, but being trauma informed was a very important part of this practice. So this particular project is really about well being, really thinking about the central role of crafting as a way to really support people's narratives and people's people's trauma to in this particular video, you will see that the women actually do divulge a little bit about their own histories, as they come to the United before they come to the United States from Bosnia, especially. And the, the their own experiences of, you know, witnessing violence and what that has really done to you know some of their families, but also talking about the sense of belonging that they find within this community space and this particular project. Oh, and I wanted to just throw this in. I know our hearts all sad in the United States with our notorious RBG passing away. Our women are so talented. So one year, we asked one of the women if she would make a collar for RBG. And she did. And we sent it to RBG, and she sent us the most beautiful letter that said, dear soul members. The collar received today is an elegant creation. I will wear it on the bench next time we set with appreciation for a gift I will use again and again and again for thinking of it and I will use again and again and for thinking of me, Ruth Bader Ginsburg. So I will end here. That while there's tremendous joy in showing you this image. There's also tremendous grief for us in the United States, knowing we don't know where our judicial system is going to go and we live in a very polarized society. So, um, as a last slide. I'd like to just say that I think a lot about the concept of artmaking and I want to leave you with two questions. One is, how can artmaking be a collective process, one that is socially conscious open to public discourse and invested in social change? And how can I begin. How can we begin. I'm saying how can we begin to think of art, not just an

object of contemplation, but as a subversive practice that reveals the contradiction of life? Let me say thank you and this little button was given to me when I was in Montreal by Marbella who was this lovely thing woke but tired. I thought that way appropriately sums up where many of us might be today. Thank you so much Savneet. Such a beautiful presentation and just you've left us with so many questions. This is our question and answer time and we are wondering if people would like to send their questions through the question and answer box. There is a box down on the bottom. And we're hoping that you will send us some questions, but until then. I just wanted to just basically say, you know, art is for all and I just feel so moved by both of your presentations and by your students and colleagues Janice. And I guess my first question would be a lot of our viewers here are coming from different backgrounds. Some are art therapists, some are artists themselves, but we also have people who work in community. People who work in the service sectors and people who work in healthcare. And I guess the question is, how, how can we best help those who don't truly understand that that art is for everyone to be able to step into this place when it's very scary. I think in our culture. We still have this misunderstanding that art is only for artists and it's this magical special place that and everything has to be perfect and realistic. There's still this mystery around it. So I just wonder, you know, what have you done in your practice in your world to help people who don't understand or are curious. But, you know, how do we, how can we help everyone to know that art is for all. So I would put that question out to you.

Sure. Yeah. Well, I think it's most necessary to begin with, where people are at. And I don't think there's any reason to try to prove really anything but that's why we have a very strong sense that creating spaces in multiple places by multiple different types of people makes a real difference for people to have an opportunity to at least walk in the door and explore materials. I think it could be as simple as being in the space and actually doing nothing and people over time, get more and more engaged with materials themselves. It's it's important, I think, to begin with, what people's strengths are. And I think that's another area that really works well in the Art Hives, is that the the idea of beginning with where you're at and moving towards your strength and sharing that with others it the wheels start to move and people start to soften between each other. In my opinion, working this way in a strength based way isn't it's tt's a very political act. I think it's very, it's a very radical act. We don't have places where we can bump into people unlike ourselves. So it's always a delight to meet people who are so skeptical and yet they're willing to to come forward and and be in this space with others that are making things.

Yeah, I think I would follow up on that. The very act, the very idea of sometimes thinking about art as something separate from one's life right. So I, So I often, you know, I should just back up and say, as I grew up there wasn't a separation between craft, art and life. Um, you know, I remember as a child, watching my mother and I was fascinated. I get I think those are the moments that I loved my mother, the most was when she was making something and I wanted to make it in, but she thought I was too young and I couldn't touch it. So I understand that place where people begin to think about art as something separate. But I think one of the ways I like to approach it is to talk to, even people about the fact that you know, even cooking is a form of art and Janice and you brought that up, you know. So how creative creative processes, are not something separate from our lives and we are consistently engaged in art in different forms of creative activity, all the time. And I think once you begin to normalize that for people, people generally begin to understand that this is a space for them. This is a space for finding their own potential right. Like in my studio in our studio, I should say. Um, you know we love people,

when they come that just want to learn. You know, often they get intimidated by the fact that, oh, I don't have that skill and we tell people all the time you don't have to. We will teach you. And just learning the basics of knitting. and that's how even we start with it with interns to learn the the mentorship becomes between our, our senior and the intern because interns don't generally, and I must have picked this up from you. Janice. I don't remember when I came, I probably had this thing. Oh my god, this is how I'm going to do this with my interns when I come back, and it works so beautifully. Where this idea of learning never stops. And that's sometimes as service providers, we feel we know more and our knowledge is more and that is art therapists. You know we are experts. So I like to sort of dismantle that a little bit or or disturb that a little bit and how our seniors actually be the ones to be the teachers and we say they are the expert if they weren't there, we wouldn't have anything. But in general, when I think about this idea of art. I try not to separate from everyday life. Try to think about our art, art therapy as a living pedagogy, so I'll stop there.

Great, we have a few more. We have our first question popping in and I think this is interesting because you in your presentation Savneet, you were asking a lot of questions so that our questioner is asking wondering what helps you get into and stay in that questioning space. What are the questions or ways of questioning that inspire you.

You know, I think for me the very act of making is always starts with a particular question and it is those as I say to students all the time. I know for myself. You know sometimes we think we're doing a project because we have to have answers for our questions and I always say a good, a good research project is that leaves you leaves you with more questions than with an answer. Because if you have the answer, then you know the project is done. So I think when I to answer it in different ways. I'm always engaging with everyday life from this place of what is not fitting and congruent in my own life that generates questions for me. And that makes that helps my making. And mind you, I don't do only this kind of making I am also very interested in doing. I have a granddaughter who's two and a half and I do a lot of dressmaking for her. And here is one of my little dresses that I am making for her. So I do all kinds of stuff. So I just wanted to, this little dress that I'm making. So I do all kinds of making but by making happens very specifically for a cause and for people. I very rarely keep my own art. Um, so, you know, it could be a state of inquiry for a person, for a particular political idea or whatever. That's where my questions arise, and as I make the very act of making helps me to then have new questions. I don't know, how do you, what do you think Janice

That's that was good. I like I have a two and a half year old grandson so its nice to hear that. Um, yeah, the artists inquiry. I mean, it's fabulous. And I think, of course we I rely on Pat Allen's work so very much. Art is a way of knowing because it helps us to perhaps define our questions better to figure out what is our intention around the work that we're engaged in in that moment. So yeah, I think that I like what you said about it doesn't always need to have an answer. I really believe that. I think most of the time we don't really know and maybe we won't know. And especially now we've entered into a very. This is new territory. We don't know. So our questions may be very basic and may not have answers at all. It's just very important to stay engaged.

2020 has been a interesting year for all of us. And you're right. There's nothing predictable, nothing that you can hold on to. And so in this moment. The only thing I think I can hold on to is that moment where I am sitting by myself and doing some craft, right, whether it's knitting or whatever I'm doing it helps me

to ground myself. So in that sense, I feel it brings me back to myself. Rather than where my energy is all over the place. So in that sense I love the art and what the art does for me personally.

I'm really glad that you brought that up because I I well I think a lot of it has to do with my grieving process, but I've really come back within myself you know I too have a PhD in American Studies, and it takes you know way outside of yourself and I maybe too far. Sometimes always thinking about things from from a cognitive perspective, but the artmaking brings me back to my heart and brings back to that place where, depending on where I am that's where I can root myself. And I think that's been probably my biggest lesson this year. It doesn't, rooting isn't, it doesn't have to be geographical which I always thought it did. Very much a place based art therapist. I believe now that you know it's really this bridge the bridge from wherever you were to where you, where you are now and and you. Yeah, I agree. The artmaking really helps to find that location

I really liked what what you're saying. In terms of slowing down. And this summer, I know you know this Janice, but I went into the forest, and I just spent 24 hours sitting in the forest, and it was, it felt very radical and I I sat and I listened and I made art and it was something that allowed me to then hear what the birds were saying, and to sense what the wind was bringing up, you know, and to to have a deeper sense of my connection with the planet. And so, you know, a lot of people are saying this, this is the sort of side gift of COVID. It is allowing us to slow down and pay better attention. And it is uncomfortable. It is a very uncomfortable place for many to be there. And just even for myself to acknowledge. Oh my gosh, I've been so distant from nature. And here we are hoping to heal the planet. When we don't even put our feet on the ground, every day. So slowing down is so important, and I loved your talk about, you know, it sounds like the online Art Hive is making you think about roots. Whereas the Hive itself is more of a community with bees coming together and looking at the metaphor. So the metaphor of the bees all buzzing in the same space. But now that we can't buzz in the same space, we're looking at it as roots, instead. There's this metaphor of grounding ourselves and planting ourselves. So we have another question that's come up. It's a little taking a detour here. Art therapy is a battleground right now between those who want it to be more clinical and those who do not. In that sentence, I would like to ask both of you. What is the role of art therapy in your life and what does it mean for you to be an art therapist in your current professional role?

You can start Savneet.

Start there. I can, you know, I think I've been in a therapist. Now for 30 years. And at some point, I feel that professional associations and designation that only designations because my work has changed a lot. This is not to say that I started as a clinical art therapist. My heart always was in community practice but community practice was a luxury back then it was a privilege. Right and so when I could move into community practice. I did, I think, clinical practice has its space, I think community practice has its space. I'm not, you know, I don't particularly think that defining art therapy is something that I want to do, because I think for me the art serves a particular purpose. And I also worked for a very large, I mean, I teach in a very large art school, and there's just so much happening that right. And I feel like i've also been given permission professionally, especially in the institution that I work with that I don't have to be in a particular in a particular box and I can consistently push the box. So I do ask this question, even when I write about, say, the CEW Design Studio is this art therapy? I asked people to define it. I don't define it myself, because I think it is very dangerous when we start to create borders between what is

our therapy and what is not. And I think that that conversation has been happening a lot in our profession. I really believe that we have to have a very holistic, we have to embrace art in a holistic way, just as we are being interdisciplinary to me is an enriching space, I feel that when we are boxed into one particular idea of art therapy it doesn't serve everybody. Like the women that are in my group, the elders in my group, they would never come to individual therapy. But they will come to a space like this for them individual clinical work just does not translate in the same way as community work does. So I do believe that the space for various different things. In this in this world. We also never thought that being online was something that we could do art therapy. Right. And here we are, like, clearly, thinking about things in a very different context about art therapy education. Working with people. And the demand and the need for mental health services is only increasing right now so.

Yes, I really agree with, with all that you said, I believe it's a quote from John Perry. We work according to how we're made and so there I have colleagues that were meant to do clinical work and I have colleagues that were meant to do work in the community. I don't, I wish it was a continuum. I never quite get why we have to choose. But certainly, I'm a very strong supporter of interdisciplinarity. I think that that answers to our big problems come between silos, not in silos, I think, personally, I think it's a luxury to be a clinician myself. To be able to spend time with one person. I mean, it's fantastic. And, you know, but it's doesn't really, in my opinion, cover enough ground and that the lack of accessibility makes it an ethical dilemma for us and my work. I've always felt that it's it's it's it's not replacing anything it's just really there to provide a much bigger container and to make it more cost effective. There's, there's just so many reasons why art therapists should be on the front ground, front leading these initiatives of really making the arts available in such powerful ways to more people. We can't keep this hidden in our, in our kit without being responsible for what's happening. So I do have a very strong stance on on limiting the definition, but I also believe that we work according to how we're made and I respect people that choose to work differently than I do.

Janice and some of the work that I've done with you. You've talked about psychologies of liberation and this holistic and interdisciplinary way that you're speaking and I think that's important to for people who are just coming to this to realize that, you know, we're not separate that when there are people in prisons it's not that they're over there and you're over here. We are one in the same. So thank you for bringing that part up and and sharing that that knowledge and that way of understanding. And that's a book that I still have been meaning to read. So it's on my list of books. There's a couple more wonderful questions here. There's a woman named Tessa Hayes that says hi Savneet and Janice I've spoken to you both at different points in my exploration as a critical therapist and appreciate the gifts that you both bring crucial and ongoing areas of growth. So thank you so much. I have ongoing dilemmas of feeling stuck in where to start with creating an Art Hive and craft as care further complicated by need now for virtual space to engage rather than geographically. I want to engage being mentored from space in which you both practice with American Studies background. But to also step back from getting academically complicated and just work with those around me. I feel pulled to get a PhD in American Studies before being able to fully practice and also laugh at myself for making it so complicated when I can just sit with folks and create learning, connect, start with who I know and want to get to know connect with. Do you hear this from others and what are your thoughts?

Oh, Maddi Andrew says she's going to answer this question live. Maddi?

Maybe, maybe not. I'm not sure if that is I think it's a question for the two of you.

I would like to hear her answer.

Yeah.

That must be a mistake.

Well there you know i think that that's the value of having a network of people who are in that same space of, you know, how do I add this into my life. How do I add this into my practice. And the network, you know, we have an incredible team, the Art Hives' headquarters. You know, is there to help people mentor them into creating space. And it can start very small. This is a very important principle, you know, start small, think really big and think critically, but start just begin in a very small way and it builds and you build it over time. But I think now we have enough people that we're starting to be able to do the big research projects, were able to evaluate what we do. So it. So we have that all to share with you. So I think if that could all be helpful. I really welcome you to go to our website and see the the sharing that does happen there. So, its a good question.

I agree. I think one there are, a lot of things happening, you know, drawing on what's already happening. That's one, very good, excellent way, if you're looking for community. And I think especially your work Janice that is now bringing in community online where you know it's really dissolving that idea of where geographically people are so people can still connect. And I've been part of some of the Art Hives and I, they're very successful. I've been doing some, a couple of times I've been Shelley's Art Hive in St. Louis. Um, it's been it's been a I think we're at a moment in which in my world. I find this to be a lot more approachable, you know, not that time where I have to fly now to Montreal, so I can see that. I can have a conversation in real time. Maybe not physically, but at least virtually with other people. And whether that's mentorship, whether that's support or whatever. I think that's the place to start. I do want to say that sometimes I get caught up with this. I love theory. It oftentimes people will say, can you can you cut that out. Can you cut that out, you know, which is fine, like, yeah, I find that to really energize me on why I do what I do right so I don't think i don't think that theory and practice opposed to each other. I think they inform one another. But, but you don't have to be hugely theoretical sometimes to do the work you know. Our mothers and grandmothers people did this work and have been doing it for generations. This is not a new concept. I think craft and making has been part of generations, you know, and people have done it. Men and I mean I guess across the gender spectrum. People have been doing this work. So I think starting and I just want to share a quick piece, um, you know, when I first started the sole design studio I started with a an intern my the first day we went there. Nobody came and so I told her. Okay. Just stay. Okay. We both will make and we'll see what happens. Next week we came. Nobody came. Third week some of those caseworkers came and they said, what are you doing, and they said, Oh, can we make with you. Sure. And then they are the ones who brought their clients to it. Right. So anyway, I think creating space, intentionality makes all the difference in the world. So good luck. This is a question from Barbara Robinson, who is a friend of mine who works here in Kingston and she says, I'm wondering about the concept of seeing artists not separate from life. So she's continuing on that theme. Do you have any thought about continuing to move our practices into our healthcare system generally rather than through specific therapies. I'm curious about any responses from the group as well, since this oh yeah, she has it in the chat section. So yeah, so moving our practices into the healthcare system generally rather than through specific therapies.

Yeah, I can speak to that, you can start Savneet if you want.

Go ahead. Janice, I'm thinking

Okay. Okay. Yeah. Okay. Yes. Oh wow, this is such such an important piece. And we're we are on the precipice of doing some really important research that needs to happen to demonstrate the value of doing online, in person, whatever it is, but really it's about spreading the Art Hives through the Quebec health system at least through a group of family physicians and we have a family physician who's leading this charge and he's really involved in making sure that the research happens alongside it to demonstrate its, its importance, its cost effectiveness. But I think this is happening. Very much so. Through social prescribing, and I think you'll hear a lot more about it in the next series with Stephen Legari and and his work at the museum. But yes, healthcare is starting to rely on cultural groups to be able to give a baseline of wellbeing for people to decrease emergency room visits and unnecessary health care that's very costly. So I think that absolutely that if art therapists aren't like ready to pounce on this, we as a profession is really losing out. And I and this this means that we have to be. We have to share more. We can't keep our tools to herself and and fall into that idea of expertise and siloed activities because this is really about it's much bigger than even the health care of large groups of people. It's about the Earth itself. So I think the more we talk about health in terms of the Earth's wellbeing and our own will be will be a little bit further ahead to be prepared for the climate crisis that may face everyone. So there's such an importance in becoming ready for what's coming next. Yeah, I, you know, starting to think how social workers have been supporting a lot of initiatives in healthcare right they they're just coming out of organizations here in the United States. Our healthcare system, of course, very different from yours and the kind of initiatives that we are able to start, like, you know, arts are not in some ways are really at the at the very bottom of everything here. Unlike in some ways where Janice, you're able to get money to do the work that you're doing and support your and your research gets supported I find what's happening in the US is small groups just people just feeling, you know, having a commitment to doing something like their mentors in the jail right teaching incarcerated women. Starting to knit this one a social worker who started this, and she's like her 12th through the 15th year and doing that and she initially started and people just hated her. Not everybody loves her, but they're individual initiatives. The only large initiative I know here in the United States was by a Psychiatrist, Mr. Cohen, Gene Cohen, who did work with the elderly who actually did a research project at three different large nursing homes one with music, one with art, and one with movement, I believe and did some very good research and there's very good research outcomes. And there now in the UK I know that doctors are prescribing their clients their patients a pottery class. We don't know, and I think this is the impact of capitalism on our bodies and that's why COVID has become such an interesting moment for us to just pay attention to what has happened to our DNA over this past saying, you know, few decades. Where we have worked incessantly, nonstop and we think that our value is associated with that. So the slowing down, you know, as much as we never thought that we could do anything for this planet, the slowing down of life, of travel and everything has had a huge impact. I would say more on the collective nature globally for all of us. I don't know. We will see where this goes. But I also feel that um, this has been a moment of slowing down. And for me, that's where the art comes in. So in the US. There are lots of programs, but they're individually initiated. I don't know if large scale ones that sort of bring the arts into healthcare, you know, that's where there is the place where there is a studio space where you know kids can come. This is in child oncology, which is very common. But in general, I can't put my finger to it, but there are a lot of well meaning people who are invested in this.

Oh boy. This is a wonderful discussion and I really hope for everyone who's here today, who's joined us that you can continue this discussion with your friends and family and colleagues, a fellow students and it's just been so inspiring really to have you here. So I would like to thank, on behalf of the Agnes Etherington Arts Centre, Queen's University and all of our attendees today. Thank you to Savneet Talwar and Janice Timm-Bottos. Momo Escobedo and Anna María and Hanieh and Moh. Thank you so much for being here with us today. Best of luck with everything you do, please keep in touch and we'll watch for all of your future endeavours. Thank you.

Shannon. Thank you so much.

Bye Janice.

Good to see you.

Talk again soon.

Bye bye, Janice.

Take care, you too.