

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

All Our Aftermaths

Cultural Daily · Wednesday, November 4th, 2020

Cultural Weekly asked writers, poets, producers, and artists for their thoughts following Tuesday's election.

What About U.S.?

It's the day after Elections 2020, in a year like no other in my lifetime. 2020, a reference to perfect vision, is a year that has asked us to look deeply, to see clearly. Covid has killed and infected our fellow Americans in devastating numbers, but if I'm not sick, why should I wear a mask to protect you? Black Lives Matter protesters peacefully rallied across the country, asking us all to see the deep systemic racist history and practices that Black people have struggled through for generations. But if I struggled and worked so hard to get where I am, Black people just need to work harder. Immigrant children are locked in cages and separated from their parents. Rather than look with compassion at why families would embark on a dangerous journey to flee their homes and put themselves and their children in danger for the hope of safety and security, I'm afraid that you are going to come take my job. If the stock market is working for me, what else is there to worry about? Don't regulate my corporation, but it's best for all if we regulate women's bodies. It's easier to fear you than take time to get to know who you are.

Have we squandered this year of disruption and avoided the work of truly seeing the deep pain that our country is in? Can we, as Americans, find the capacity to look beyond our rugged individualism and lean into community?

I'm ok, but what about U.S.?

— *Cynthia Campoy Brophy is a second generation Angeleno and has worked in the arts, education, and community field for many years.*

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What We Know For Certain

In this uncertain moment, we look to what we know must happen in this country regardless of the outcome of this presidential election. We must establish a system of justice and, until then, claim it anywhere and everywhere we are able. Should we burn the Constitution and begin again? Absolutely. This document was created by four white male slave holders who did not acknowledge POC or women as human beings. These men created a system void of democracy, yet claiming it as the cornerstone. If indeed the electoral vote trumps the popular vote, we have a huge problem.

That's only one horrific aspect of this old and binding agreement that prevails as the law of the land. Amendment 13, still to this day, literally protects mass incarceration in that one need not be proven guilty to be considered a criminal and sent to prison. This ill-created document was ratified to allow Black men to vote and later women, who have only been allowed to do so for 100 years. However, fighting to ratify inhumane laws has been our country's continuous battle. It's like asking a bully to stop calling names. The bully will still find another way to torment. This document is endlessly dangerous. In these uncertain hours, due to matters in and outside of this election, what we know to be true is that in this moment people in our country are sick and dying in mass and racism is intrinsic in the very air we breathe. We know we can no longer tolerate this way of life. We know we have reached the end of what we can bear. We know a different world is in order. We know it will not be given to us. We know we have to fight for it no matter who is up inside the "White" House. Our victory isn't in who wins the election, it's in our passionate movement toward justice, starting with individual acts of self-love and the selfless ways we love and support one another, the community and the world entire. It's about being in solidarity and taking a strong stand, regardless of the consequence, for justice. This very act elicits hope.

— *Jesse Bliss, Founder and Artistic Director, The Roots and Wings Project*

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Out My Window

As I look outside my window, I see the sun shining brightly and there isn't a cloud in the sky. It would be a cool day in August but it is a glorious weather day for November. Millions of leaves have turned various shades of red, yellow, brown and orange and have fallen off trees and been raked and bagged or lay decomposing on the ground. Fat squirrels frantically run back and forth eating everything in site and gathering up nesting material. There are pumpkins on the porch of the house across the street. A gaggle of geese fly south in formation overhead. I can hear their loud nasal honking through the window I've cracked to let out some of the heat. And we don't know yet who won last night's presidential election, so we're looking out of the window and taking in a glorious weather day. I'll celebrate or lament tomorrow...or the next day.

— *Larry Woodard is President and CEO of GSA Digital Advertising, a frequent contributor to ABC News and ad industry trade publications, and host of the podcast Admire!*

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Inspiration

Last night I was trying hard to stay calm and ignore the blasting of CNN Live. Yet as I began writing this paragraph about the day after, I wondered simultaneously at what a year it has been and about what more awaits us. As a dancer, dance maker, filmmaker, educator and person involved in creative outreach on so many levels, I am beyond astounded at the level of corruption, greed, insanity and sheer evil we have been exposed to, and the collective ability of so many to be taken in by the lies and deceit. And yet at the same time, I am inspired by the renewed creativity of the dance and arts communities in general to persevere in the face of the pandemic, social distancing, closed stages, depleted finances and more. I don't want to succumb to desperation and despair because in that dark place very little creativity exists for me, and that is something I can't live without. So I focus on this: in spite of the ugliness, the past year has also been filled with incredible inspiration... I'm seeing young people of all races and cultures rise up with creativity, aplomb, and grit to make their voices heard. I'm seeing more people voting than ever before along with dance and music happening to celebrate and cheer them on in long waiting lines. I'm seeing great dance and dance films inspired by issues of social justice, inequity, voting and human rights,

black lives matter, gender, and of course just the simple and still discoverable joy of being alive. And so, as much as I want to go to sleep and just dream till it's all over, I'm choosing to do the latter while still awake... because without hope that comes from dreaming I know I cannot and will not create, and that is for me personally, an unacceptable and un-survivable way to live.

— *Sarah Elgart (sarahelgart.com) is a choreographer and director working under the auspice of Sarah Elgart/Arrogant Elbow (@arrogantelbow), Founder of Dare to Dance in Public Film Festival, and a regularly contributing writer on Screen Dance for Cultural Weekly and DIY Dancer.*

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Our Political Theatre

For centuries, parallels between the stage and political theatre have claimed our attention, but until recently I thought politics still had a lot to learn. Silly me. The past four years — chaotic, risible, terrifying, pompous and exhausting — taught me that politics can sink to levels of mediocrity that the stage could never match. The depth is uncharted and the wait has been torture, but with a little bit of bloomin' luck we may soon end of this Hallowe'en horror show with two magic words: You're fired!

— *Sylvie Drake is a translator, writer, former theatre critic and columnist for the Los Angeles Times and a current contributor to Cultural Weekly; she was born and grew up in Alexandria, Egypt, one of President Trump's many so-called shithole countries.*

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Culture is Change

Politics is incremental, but culture is a force of nature. We need to change the culture, and politics will follow.

Territories need to be redrawn and redefined. Culture is the power and domain of human spirit.

There was a time when art occupied the forward edge of change, uniting a spirit of action, camaraderie, and celebration. It blasted the barriers of geography, class, religion.

Nation is not the answer.

Optimism is a luxury, but hope is necessary for struggle.

— *Stephen Glassman is a visual artist whose works specifically explore the intuitive human gesture on a civic scale. sgstudio.la #stephenglassmanstudio*

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I voted yesterday but there was no magic cure-all in the ballot box. The things I fear, for my daughter and for people that look like me, can't be tallied on Election Day. And while I am constantly disappointed in America in general, and in white men

(and the people of color who hope/dream/aspire to be like them), in particular...I find myself extremely inspired by my friends, comrades and accomplices in my community who speak up, stand up and act out. I look forward to building and destroying with them regardless of who is elected. There is always work to do. I mean, white supremacy isn't going to upend its self.

— *Peter Woods, an LA-based Black literary publisher and space-maker.*

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Beyond

America is great enough for all of us. Beyond this election, there are echos of decency and justice

conspiring for us. Always choose love over hate. Our greater angels are made up of the love we must harness to create the civil society that our children deserve. We can win together and work to erase the culture of contempt that has infected too many of our leaders and institutions. Our Nation is better when we work together.

— *BK Fulton, Chairman & CEO, Soulidify Productions and SoulVision.TV*

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The Day After The Election

Biden wins by a landslide. Trump concedes, is herded away into obscurity and later prison by an overzealous federal agent with a cattle prod. Trump's entire entourage of criminal miscreants follow. The fence around the White House comes down. Then every room is fumigated with copious amounts of sage. The Rose Garden is magically restored to its Jackie Kennedy-esque glory. Lindsey Graham and Mitch McConnell both lose their bids for reelection. The Dems flip the Senate. Increase their control of the House. Dr. Fauci and his crack team of scientists find a cure for Covid 19. Then start on a cure for cancer. Healthcare is a basic right. Tsongasa National Forest is once again protected. Funding for the Arts is increased a hundredfold. Prisons are de-privatized. The War on Drugs is over. The troops come home. The cages are emptied; children are restored to their parents. Trump's "wall" comes down, and the immigration portals are wide open. Once more, America is a haven for the oppressed, and regains the respect of the world community. The stock market holds steady. Climate change is once again a major priority, and there are good paying jobs for all. I do not wake up. This is not a dream.

— *Alexis Rhone Fancher, poetry editor, Cultural Weekly, eternal optimist*

Image by Stephen Glassman, studio walls XXXX

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