

Sample of “A Call to Action” writing

By Kayleigh M. Stack

Human-rights activist, writer, and ethnographic researcher

<http://kmswritings.pressfolios.com>

To my fierce female allies,

I’m initiating a performance piece on the concept of Female Rage and I invite you to be apart of it.

Like any project, at times it’s difficult to determine where or how to start. In isolation or in community? Alone or together? In my thoughts or on the paper? However, incessant rumination and ceaselessly waiting for the “right time” can become pathological.

Therefore, it is with this knowing that I woke up after months of consideration about the current geography of our societal narrative around women’s voices being heard, when I realized that it was time for me to be apart of the dialogue.

Using the main platform I am best able to articulate my thoughts in- performance art- I have decided to initiate a piece that gathers stories, narratives, and conversations “from women and by women-identified bodies” that are charged by the poignant topics currently affecting our times, while not so new at all.

These may include but are not limited to the #metoo movement, the overt sexism being displayed by those in positions of power in our governance, public female body-shaming in mainstream media by men, the demonization of female sexual empowerment contrasting the praising male promiscuity, injustices in the micromanaging and policing of females gestures, facial expressions, and word-choices, the fetishization and exotization of the female body, male dominated discourse that has perpetuated Female Rage to be seen as “hysterical” and non-justifiable, and much, much more.

This project has been inspired by the #meto movement, the unprecedented global Women's marches, the last two years of our current President’s attempt in “Making America Great Again” where the subtext is seemly that women are inferior, French feminist/activist Simone de Beauvoir, writer/ philanthropist Glennon Doyle’s, Rebecca Traister’s writings on the Revolutionary Power of Female Rage, Italian Social Scientist & radical autonomist feminist marxist Silvia Federici, and many personal conversations

with women in coffee shops, bars, ride shares, customer service encounters, and social media that invoked collective-dissatisfaction in conjunction with inspiration.

On a more personal note- the project really began to get increasingly more fuel for its fire after engaging in a conversation with a friend where we recently discovered that we both had #metoo experiences with a male in a position in power. Neither of us came forward to say anything to his work organization because alone in our own isolated thoughts, we each were unsure what had taken place and whether or not what was done was permissible. Upon further reflection I would say we were in fact systematically disempowered and marginalized by the gender and power structures at play.

About the Project:

Seven years ago I started a project called the ***Community Storytelling Composition Project*** (<https://www.thecommunitystorytellingcompositionproject.com>), a project based on ethnographic storytelling shared through the lens of performance. What does this mean? I wait to be fired up and fueled by a societal, political, and communially charged issue and then put out a cold-call for stories related for that topic in the immediate community I am based out of at the time- hence a “Community storytelling project”, as it can not be done alone- it takes a village.

I request that the stories shared are our own and non-scripted or performed. In the past I have gathered with people one-on-one and had them share their personal stories via conversation over a cup of tea, while a audio-recording device (no camera) was on to capture the story in a very organic way. I believe the raw intonation of delivery in sharing is much more potent than anything performative. All people who have shared always sign a document of release/disclosure knowing that although their personal identity will never be shown, I have no way of disguising their recorded vocals.

After stories have been collected I then work day-and-night boiling down the shared narratives to poignant sound-bytes creating a tapestry of stories that eventually gets overlapped onto a sound-score. This sound-score becomes the soundtrack of the physical performance piece. The performance pieces can be solo or have up to 18 performers, as has been the case in the past.

One adjustment I would like to make in the collecting of stories for this project is that rather than gather with people one-on-one, I would love to have a night of cathartic

sharing and recording. What this would entail is that everyone who identifies as a female and feels & believes their story is meant to be heard for personal and collective reasons, will come together in an evening of voicing. This evening, I imagine, would involve a organic, nonlinear discussion and sharing. Before the evening starts everyone would be required to sign a non-disclosure form and waiver of release requesting that no one's identity that partakes in the evening is shared upon leaving and that everyone is informed that there will be a recording device collecting stories voluntarily shared for the piece.

My intent in collecting the stories together verses in one-on-one environments is two-fold. Storytelling is cathartic and I have always saw and experienced the stage as an excellent outlet for communal release. However, given the charged subject of the project I think that the catharsis can start to happen before taking it to the stage.

I can only hope that with all these performances that the cathartic release is never just isolated to the performance itself, but rather continues to generate conversation beyond the venue. I believe the engagingly provocative outlet of performance can instigate necessary conversation from an informed place in effort to generate change in our personal dynamics and our community social structure.

Making small changes in the micro-systems to effectively transgress and derail injustices in the macro-systems.

If this is something you would like to participate in, and yet do not feel comfortable sharing in front of other women in an intimate evening of storytelling with an audio-recording device, I would still very much love to have your story for the project whether that is one-on one, or something you put in writing as a letter form and record yourself reading and then sending the file to be shared in the project.

You can do this anonymously on the website:

((<https://www.thecommunitystorytellingcompositionproject.com>)).

With respect,
Kayleigh