

HOW I HAVE GROWN

MASKS FOR GOOD, as a creative endeavor, has without question changed my life by offering me challenges and drawing me closer to my deepest purpose.

At first I was challenged as a mask maker to consider what tools would be made to serve this population and purpose. This made me dig deeper into the importance of masks and art in general that represent the population viewing it.

Then I was challenged to find a way to communicate the richness and technical skills in order to use the tools I had created. As a teacher, I had to condense, make absolutely concise and clarify even more the steps that would DIRECTLY MOVE students into mask play that served play creation. I couldn't be present in Liberia in 2015 to fill in the gaps by presenting my work personally, so my clarity in making an exact pedagogy shaped my practice as a teacher, and helped me know TO LOOK EVEN MORE CLOSELY at the students I was serving in order to make the most effective videos possible.

Now in phase three of this work, I am again brought to task. I will test my pedagogy out first hand, see the masks I made come alive or not first hand, meet the students whose lives will be invested in trying out my ideas through play. This time I also bring my intentions into scrutiny, examining my own reasons for sharing my work in a country far from home.

In creating a one woman masked theatre piece about my journey, "Like you, but totally Different," I will also hold myself accountable as an actor creator, asking questions I don't know how to answer now about my role as teacher in a non-western country. Liberia's history and connection with Maryland is so dense and has influenced the country's path so significantly, there is ample material for me to draw a direct line between myself and the people of Liberia. I have so many questions in service to understanding this connection regarding race and national identity, imperialism and the arts.

Above all, I am thrilled to continue to practice my art in honor of all the people I have met on this journey. MASKS FOR GOOD has been a project of depth and substance.