

In the talk, I found the discussion about what communities we feel accountable for to be the most interesting. These “shared stakes” we have for communities we belong to is something I wasn’t explicitly aware of before I listened, but I completely agree with it. After all, a lot of passion comes from firsthand experience and seeing a need in your own area. In this talk, a lot of the discussion of how arts can help communities centered around needs regarding the pandemic and how it separated us from our communities physically. However, this discussion reminded me of Charleston’s Mother Emmanuel shootings, since it rocked my community; just before I entered high school, the school’s tennis coach passed away. I didn’t personally know her, but during my first year, I saw other students and teachers use art to process this huge loss. Charleston as a whole also used music, art, and writing to process this horrible event, and it was largely done out of love for their neighbors and home. In this process, a lot of the art was done by members of the Gullah-Geechie culture since they are a large part of Charleston’s African American community, and a lot of their art centers around healing from pain, both in the present and the past. This art shows there’s a persisting human spirit that needs to remember pain and loss in order to fully heal and process it. Largely, Charleston allowed church communities and cultural communities to lead the artistic healing, and this relates back to deploying the artists in a really intentional way to maintain and share their culture.

In this sharing, there needed to be people supporting the artists in official capacities, ranging from transporting art to finding sponsors to fund the artists. As tragedies like this and covid occur, there will be a need for more arts administration figures as well as artists as the public and the government realize how important art is in community healing. Of course, there will need to be community figures involved, whether that be in a paid or voluntary capacity. These projects need to rely on tradition and need, and ensuring the representation of communities, especially those most in need of the service, is incredibly important. These are also the figures likely to bring in new, effective ideas since they understand the challenges of the communities in depth. Involving these people also creates the community of “shared stakes” and makes it a truly powerful organization.