

## ARTIST STATEMENT

I'm a social artist, who uses the art of playwriting to evoke conversation and understanding of black people and their plights in society. I give voice to characters whose voices are often silenced in the real world. Those voices are endowed with ethereal language, heartbreaking melodies, and the sheer brazen truth. The characters are unapologetic, and in search of understanding, self love, and empowerment.

Combining elements of historical drama, magical realism, and Southern gothic, my plays tend to pivot between two worlds; one steeped in realism, the other in a nightmare or dream. My plays are an allegory, in reference to African-Americans' desire to learn more about their history, but also a fantasy in which justice and redemption come from a clearer path than they do in real life. When dealing with the black body, I believe that theater and art are far more tangible ways to administer fairness than what American politics or law have historically shown.

My writing is hardly conventional in its narrative structure and is loaded with fantastical elements, such as portraying a purgatory-esque world, or as I call it, "The holding space." It's a metaphor saying, that both physically or mentally, the whole country is stuck. The characters in my plays are often in some "holding space", unable to move forward, because there has been no accounting for the crimes done to the black body in the real world; thus no reconciliation. I like to explore, what does that "holding space" look like in my plays. I ask myself, how is the idea of being "stuck" manifested in my stories? I also like to explore the rules of the holding space through an exploration of the stage directions, inarticulate sounds, music, and how the space in itself is another fully lived character. A character that moves, breathes, changes, and effects the bodied characters as well. The idea of the setting being alive is reminiscent of effective tools employed by the great playwrights I admire such as Eugene O'Neill or Tennessee Williams. I want my worlds to "moan" and I want the audience to see the physicality of that moaning come alive on stage.

The souls of black America are in jagged shards in my plays, just as they are in real life. In my plays, I want to try to piece those souls together.

Sincerely,  
Lekethia Dalcoe  
-Playwright-

