

ART IS JUSTICE

Carlton Turner on how art transforms culture

Performance artist Carlton Turner outlines the importance of grassroots organizations and activists using art for social change.

This video is part of the #ArtIsJustice series. Throughout U.S. history, artists and cultural leaders have been at the forefront of social change. Today, in the face of growing intolerance and widening inequality, artists stand up to these injustices, reminding us all that Art IS Justice.

Transcript begins.

[The words “Art Is” appear, followed by scrolling words...Empathy, Political, Hope, Powerful, Social Change...it stops at Transformation. Art Is Transformation.]

[A sitting man plays the marimba. Multiracial performers practice group dances.]

Carlton Turner, performing artist and organizer: Art is all about the ways that we practice cultural transformation. Artists are cultural strategists working to eliminate oppression in communities throughout the country, to make sure that those who have been disenfranchised have spaces where their voices can also be heard. Organizations like SpiritHouse in North Carolina, who’s doing work around harm-free zones and building safe spaces for young people, working with the city to shift the way that we think about safety.

[Artists brainstorm at Spirithouse.]

SpiritHouse organizer Mya Hunter: Safety is no strikes you’re out. Safety is knowing that someone else is there who will assist.

Carlton: Those are examples of artists that are taking this community work and engaging in social transformation. We can begin to see our communities shift as a result of artists that are doing really frontline, hardline work and translating it into part of the landscape for social change.

[The words “Art is” appear, followed by scrolling words...Transformation, Expression, Change, Creativity, Healing...it stops at Justice. Hashtag Art Is Justice. Agree? Share this video.]

[Ford Foundation logo: a globe made up of a series of small, varied circles.]

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Alternate Roots B-roll footage shot at

ROOTS week Annual Meeting & Artists' Retreat by Doobious.org

End of transcript.