The Search for Reason in an Unreasonable World

Playing Marisol in Jose Rivera's *Marisol*

by : Kim Hernandez

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Project Description

As my performance-based senior project production, I will be acting in, designing and producing Jose Rivera's *Marisol*, a uniquely absurdist play. I aim for our production to dramatize existentialism through the use of fantastical story elements. Our play will fuse periods to explore the concept of time.

Post WWII, Absurdism shed light on the philosophy of existentialism: the idea that "existence has no pre-determined inherent meaning, and humanity is alone in an irrational and confusing universe." (Jordan Schildcrout). I will explore the way that existentialism resurfaces in our current era where many of us, like Marisol, have been forced to be alone. Where mass death once again has resurgered nationwide to inevitably rip us from our regular 9-5 experiences & make us question our vital existence. Absurdist plays like Marisol take the spotlight away from one character to widen the lens onto the bigger picture to make us feel like the specs in an expanding universe whose irrationality grows alongside it

As an actress in an absurdist play, I am looking forward to challenging my way of thinking about character journey and development. Many stories portray character development as singularly arched with a specific moral/ lesson. Absurdism in this particular play portrays life as beyond comprehensible due to its magnitude therefore leaving the actress to live in this play as JUST living: trying to get by making sense of things that don't make sense . The character of Marisol could be understood as that of the "everyman" or rather the "everywoman". She's a victim of what absurdists believe everyone is a victim of, trying to find their reason for living in an unreasonable world.I want to explore and reconstruct the concept of the everyman and share the play with the audience from the perspective of the person on the other side of the spectrum, a

Latina woman. My goal by doing so will be to challenge the way in which people visualize the average joe

Makeup & costume conceptualizations will help realize the characters as non villainized people (to play someone as good or bad, defies the idea of the world as incomprehensibly complex) . It will fuse today's fashion with the 90's interpretation of the modern 20's. Throughout the play I am also held responsible for creating the setting of New York as a place that becomes less and less recognizable as it begins to drift into an apocalyptic setting. The cast and I will workshop the newly apocalyptic New York and its phases of becoming so. I look forward to bringing my study of Lecoq and other physical practices towards crafting & creating space on stage through the use of physicality.

Statement of Goals and Impact

Our goals for our production include wanting our audience to speculate on the accuracy of Rivera's depiction of our current "apocalyptic" time. The play explores a host of themes: societal collapse at the hands of increased warfare, widespread plague, neglected mental health, white complacency, increased neo-Nazi extremism, mass poverty, and consistent oppression based on race/gender. The way these themes are presented within the world of the play are frighteningly accurate to our current political climate.

I will work to make these performances a place where we can come together and reflect collectively on the hellish years we have just experienced. Despite the isolation that the pandemic has brought, I want our play to let everyone know that they were not alone in that journey. Whether it was the isolation, the brutality, the unwarranted violence, the fear of climate change, we were all still here fighting those battles as well, just socially distanced. The anxiety,

the feeling that the world was ending or going into the apocalypse is something that this play draws out for us to compare what those futures looked like. I want to create a space where we are openly fearful and can think and reflect on those fears as a community that has just undergone trauma nationwide.

Through this project, I hope to fuse my own existentialism into my creative work through my various mediums in a way that isn't dismissive of human purpose. By stepping into the shoes of Marisol, I will learn to find the balance between doing art for myself and doing it for those around me. I will also learn how to create an empathetic character while at the same time preserving and sharing Marisol's unique experiences as a woman of color.

I was shocked by Riveras sharp ability to portray the raw and unglamorized violence against women in NYC & I am grateful that he, as an identifying man of color, is conscious of his role in society and works with his art to create roles for women of color. These roles empower the actor to bring their own pain to the stage being that the violence portrayed is actually one we (women actors of color) can actually empathize with. I want to take this opportunity to bring my own truth to Marisol.

I look forward to exploring physicality and its role in presenting thought and also helping define space and time. Setting is a very important element of this play as a lot of the events are defined/ highly influenced by its environment. One of the main goals is to work through the development of space as it evolves to become completely unrecognizable. Marisol is ripped out of her habitual/ ritualistic lifestyle. One of the main obstacles that allows for this disorientation is when a familiar place becomes unfamiliar. I want to experiment with the way this can take form in the body of my character. How can I also use it to also define the space around me?

As a part of character development, one of the main questions I ask myself is how would this person behave in complete solitude. I want to define what that looks like for Marisol when she's alone at home or when she's on the street. What does her physicality look like in its most natural and animalistic form?

A few years ago I participated in a theater intensive, Broadway for All. One of my mentors would always push me to present a powerful presence. She would constantly give me the note and it was one I always struggled with. Power isn't something that I could turn on consciously. This might have been a product of not yet being in tune with that part of me, not because I lacked it but because of the different responses I've received throughout my life when showing that part of me, especially as a woman and a person of color. I know that this role will give me the space to continue to practice this while finally having the opportunity to bring forth the progress I've made so far over the years. I know that with time, knowledge, care and growth I've been able to find that part of me and develop it and I'm excited to finally apply it to my performance.

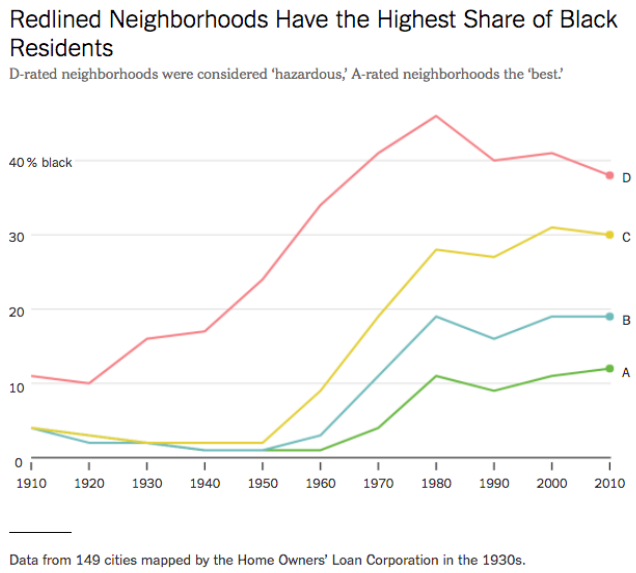
Do You Smell Smoke?

What caused New York, one of the highest acclaimed cities, to allow for one of its burrows to burn to the ground? The Bronx had fallen victim to a number of variables that not only let fires consistently start but rage for years. The decaying of the Bronx as a whole began with a mixture of redlining, urban renewal, and white flight. Almost every one of these variables is directly connected to discrimination as do most of our countries controversies. The Bronx Burnings is another instance of minorities being exploited and getting the short end of the stick.

Around the fifties the demographic of the Bronx began to change drastically. Many of the white people who lived in the city began to notice an increase in diversity in the neighborhood. This in turn caused a large scale of these white people to move from the urban city upward to more suburban areas. As mentioned in the documentary “Decades of Fire ", Robert Moses, an urban planner who was in support of white flight created The Cross Bronx Expressway to facilitate the migration of these white people into their desired suburban homes. And so the ruin commenced. East Tremont was one of the handful of neighborhoods that was completely destroyed by the creation of this highway. Moses excused his power hungry actions by drawing this neighborhood as a slum when in actuality it “was self-sustaining both culturally and materially” (Lbennet 2019) When protests and pushback came from the people of these communities he responded with “New York has too many critics, we ought to get rid of some of them” (Burns 2001) which he did not hesitate to do in the most destructive way possible. Despite having the option to create a less expensive route that would have affected less homes he instead chose to willingly get rid of these “critics" by displacing 1,500 families (Sedensky 2001)

In conjunction to this, redlining also made living and economic stability unreachable for black and brown communities and their future generations to come. The government funded

Home Owners Loan Corporation drew lines all throughout a map of the city dividing neighborhoods, color coding, and grading them on from an A, best to D, “most hazardous”



(Badger 2017). Neighborhoods that were mostly made out of black residents were targeted as declining, which made it impossible for anyone living in these neighborhoods, even those with great credit scores, to get a loan or a mortgage on a home. This crucially and directly affects “‘every dimension of neighborhood life, in terms of the quality of real estate, the willingness of investors to come in, the prices of property, the emergence of predatory practices” said Thomas Sugrue, a historian at New York University’” (Badger 2017) Many black people who still attempted to go beyond this bias fell into the hands of these predatory lenders that wrapped them up in fraudulent contracts with extreme interest rates. It isn't surprising to see that this is still an active practice today (The Housing Trap). In turn, the lender would reclaim these homes once again displacing families and causing even more population instability. Black people that were targeted and discriminated against were trapped by the housing market limiting their chances to stable home investment and in the long term taking away any possibility to develop home equity for future generations to come. Although Redlining, a form of systematic racism, has been banned, it hit the core of generational wealth. Not only did it successfully create a wealth gap, it made sure to maintain it for decades ahead.

Redlining also made it difficult for people who did own homes to get any loan assistance to maintain and repair their structures. Alongside this factor that led to deterioration, slumlords highly factored into the fall of these homes that otherwise would have been under the ownership of families. In “Decades of Fire” we’re shown many anecdotes in which residents describe their horrible living conditions: rat and roach infestations, lead paint exposure which was lethal to the health of children and babies. Slumlords kept their residents from basic services such as access to heat and water. The people responded to empty boilers by heating their homes with electric stoves. Landlords would sell to speculators that would squeeze a ton of people into the same buildings.

Landlords who weren't making sufficient income burned down buildings to collect the insurance money. They would pocket the money and were not obligated to renovate burnt down structures leaving tons of buildings abandoned, a common narrative.According to “Decades of Fire”, over eighty percent of housing in The Bronx was lost. In 1974 State Insurance Pool paid out ten million dollars and by 1980 Lloyds of London paid forty five million in claims.

Joe Flood, author of *The Fires,* goes on the *fivethirtyeight* podcast to speak further on the subject. He redirects the cause of the fires to the cities “best and brightest’ effort to increase government efficiency to in turn decrease wasteful cost as a form of budgeting (Avirgan, 2015). RAND Corporation, a Non Profit funded by the US government and others which is meant to offer research and analysis to the US armed forces, assisted with the collection of data within the fire department. The collection of data was to help spot any “redundancies in service, and close or re-allocate fire stations accordingly.” (Avirgan 2015)

“What resulted, was a perfect storm of bad data: The methodology was flawed, the analysis was rife with biases, and the results were interpreted in a way that stacked the deck

against poorer neighborhoods. The slower response times allowed smaller fires to rage uncontrolled in the city's most vulnerable communities."

While listening to Joe, his narrative seemed as though the government was attempting to do better for its city even before the bankruptcy. Although the goal was efficiency, they still treated New York as what even he calls a "sims'" map. They experimented with shutting down firehouses leaving the people to be but test subjects to a game politicians were playing. He acknowledges that there was bad sampling and manipulation of data that was rather playful such as firemen shortening response times because they felt like they did a good job during the call and deserved it. All of these factors still dont explain why black and brown neighborhoods were the ones to be negatively impacted.

In "Decade of Fire " we follow Vivian Vazquez, director and producer of the documentary, on her investigative journey to uncover what was behind the burnings. The documentary informs us that New York City at the time was approaching bankruptcy therefore many budget cuts took place. John O. Hagen was responsible for closing many firehouses in low income neighborhoods where they were most likely to happen. There was attention on the trend that these firehouses closed when fires were on the rise: "It was a political decision". The narrative of the documentary pointed fingers at the government and pointed it out as malicious neglect.

Vazquez, through her research, brings light to the fact that there were very few fire marshals to investigate. The few who were present would label a lot of the causes as unknown therefore avoiding the need to investigate any further. In one of those years, out of 4,000 suspicious fires only 61 cases were prosecuted for arson. Vazquez comes across a document labeled as *Evaluation of the Fire Department Program for Combating Arson in the City of New*

York : “The city should not implement the proposed fire marshal surveillance program. We do not feel that any increase to the present force of Marshals should be made until the evidence is present”. They are clearly stating that there's no proof that bringing on more marshals would solve the problem of Arson. This obviously sounds absurd being that there are already too many fires for Marshals to investigate. If there is a clear increase in fires why wouldn’t they increase the number of skilled people to assign to these jobs which they were meant to look into anyways. One way or another this data shows that too many heads were turned away from a problem that desperately needed solving, from the departments down to the actual marshals.

In the cases that they did decide to look into, fires were traced back to the hands of kids who, when questioned, confessed they were paid to do the job for someone else. Many teens were arrested and suffered the consequences of trying to make money in a deprived neighborhood. In the eyes of the media, they were targeted as criminals who torched homes for fun. Children, alongside the entire minority population in The Bronx were pointed as the ones to blame for. Vazquez calls attention to this matter as a form of “social pathology”.

Many people viewed the Bronx as a slum and blamed residence for its downfall when the government itself set these people up for failure and actually was the cause of the raging fires. In 1975 deeper cuts were made into Fire Departments located in the South Bronx. Companies would have to come in from other boroughs of the city and naturally they never showed up in time to stop the fires from ferociously spreading. Fires were at an all time high the day of July 13, 1977. New York City had experienced a blackout that led to over a thousand fires (Latson,v 2015).

On October 12th, the Yankees and Dodgers were competing in the 1977 World Series taking place in the Yankee Stadium. While the event was being aired, the camera would cut to

footage being taken by the surrounding helicopter. On thousands of televisions, people saw a local public school burning to the ground next to the stadium. The announcers called attention to the massive size of the fire a few times during the series. This brought eyes toward the burning Bronx. People had finally begun to pay attention to the devastated borough. Promises were made by Carter to change the situation, but like many politicians, his promises were empty. No funding had arrived in attempts to stop the flames. Even after, when Nixon was appointed, more cuts were made, making the situation even worse.

Jose Rivera, a Puerto Rican playwright of New York, wrote *Marisol* in the time that The Bronx burned. The style of the play is highly reflective of the theater of the Absurd which was born post WWII. The style of performance/playwright explores ideas of existentialism : "existence has no pre-determined inherent meaning, and humanity is alone in an irrational and confusing universe." (Jordan Schildcrout) It is no secret that the smoke filled New York City that Marisol attempts to navigate was highly inspired by the same burning New York of the 70's and 80's. It is interesting to see the kind of art that derives from artists after living through a setting and time that faces large communities with what feels like the end of the world. We begin to question the importance of the things around us and what we deem valuable in the grand scheme of things.

The Bronx "was self-sustaining both culturally and materially" and when it was intervened by stronger forces it slowly became the burning battle ground for displaced minorities. The Bronx became less and less recognizable. One technique of absurdism is the setting of the play becoming strange. Setting in a play is one of the very first aspects that ground an audience and very often anxiety derives from a setting becoming unfamiliar. Absurdism becomes an important segway when attempting to portray the transformation of the Bronx from

self sustaining to completely deprived and unrecognizable. No one really knew the real reason for the fires. Things began to happen in ways that would be impossible to understand. No one really knew the real reason for the fires. The Bronx as a whole, along with its people was time and time again neglected after it was left to burn. Jose truly wanted for his audience to experience the loneliness and abandonment that was caused by higher powers. Whether it was God or the government who was turning senile and wanted to take the world down with him, Rivera wanted to hit close to home by making the home of *Marisol*, the everyman, unrecognizable.

In this way we see the inspiration that Rivera takes from Arteud through Theatre of Cruelty. The style was all for inciting chaos arguing that language on its own lacked the catharsis needed to get rid of complacency amongst the audience. A lot of the action that occurs in the play is very physically inclined. The play does an excellent job at drawing out the setting as one which was crippled with inescapable violence by clearly presenting what that violence looked like. To witness a human being attacked is something that is difficult to ignore. Our generation in particular have become experts of complacency due to desensitization. We can easily read or hear about the tragedies of the world but are numb to almost all of it. Due to the speed of media production, we've been psychologically trained to move on to the next thing in a timely manner. The speed of its production also allows for high amounts of these stories to become accessible to us. This in turn, enables a lot of us to become overwhelmed and dismiss all these tragedies as a whole . Like Marisol says "I want my boring nine to five back-my intellectual detachment, my ability to read about the misery of the world and not lose a moment out of my busy day". The everyman in this play portrays how we as people have found it so much easier to become

neglectful of the greater good. Cruelty, rips us and Marisol out of that blind state to show us the product of our ignorance and complacency.

A lot of the research that I found based on the burnings never mentioned the way in which the Bronx went back on its feet after so many false promises made by political figures. What allowed for the Bronx to finally be restored was the coming together of the people who rebuilt it as a home they wanted more for. Despite being forsaken and targeted by the media as vandelizers, the people were the ones to bring The Bronx back up from gruble.

At the start of this year, there was a fire that killed seventeen people, eight of them children, in an apartment building in the Bronx. A lot of the media coverage had very conflicting tones when it came to reporting the tragedy, especially when touching on the cause of the fire. Multiple space heaters were on in the building and although there are claims that the central heat was working, it doesn't explain why residents were using space heaters. Brianna Sacks, a buzzFeed news reporter finds the building reports and notes on the fact that the building had a long history of "serious violations related to heat, ventilation, and other safety issues" and some were still unresolved before/at the time of the fire (Sacks, 2022). Besides finding that the fire had sparked from one of the heaters, it had spread tremendously due to a door being left open. By law, residential city buildings are required to have self-closing doors for fire safety. It is clear that a large part of the cause had a lot to do with negligence. One of the many articles that CNN covered on the topic acknowledged the fact that low income neighborhoods are at a higher risk of fires. "'Many of these buildings are old. Not every apartment has a fire alarm. Most of these buildings have no sprinkler system. And so the risk of a fire is much higher in lower-income neighborhoods in the Bronx than it might be elsewhere in the city or in the country," Torres told MSNBC." (Cullinane, 2022) Ritchie Torres, a congressman who represents residents of the

building continues to express that "'When we allow our affordable housing developments to be plagued by decades of disinvestment, we are putting lives at risk. These buildings are wide open to catastrophic fires that can cost people their lives, including the lives of children.'"

It's disheartening to see the ways in which red flags are beginning to show. The same red flags that history has shown us the by-product of allowing injustices to happen to our communities. It's to no surprise that *Marisol* is beginning to feel relevant despite it being written decades before I was even conceived. I'm looking forward to hearing responses from the adults who lived through this history and who may be witnessing the repetition of historic mistakes we'd hope our society learned from.

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The Experience

Pre Production

Marisol End of the World Fundraiser

During the Summer of 2021, members of the project came into collaboration with Odd Bat, an incredible artist network to host the Marisol End of the World Fundraiser. Mariel and I came up with the idea in early May to host an event with the goal of promoting the performance while also beginning to construct the world of the play. The plan was to bring together a bunch of artistic mediums that helped give life to a world of Angels, God, and skinheads. In attempting to find the perfect name for the event, we wanted a title that was all inclusive being that we were incorporating artists of all mediums such as performance art, spoken word, candles sculptures, jewelry, etc. while also celebrating the start of a significant journey. One of the project's major artistic aims was to produce a play that felt highly relevant to the apocalyptic world we currently live in and so the name “Marisol's End of the World Art Party” was conceived.

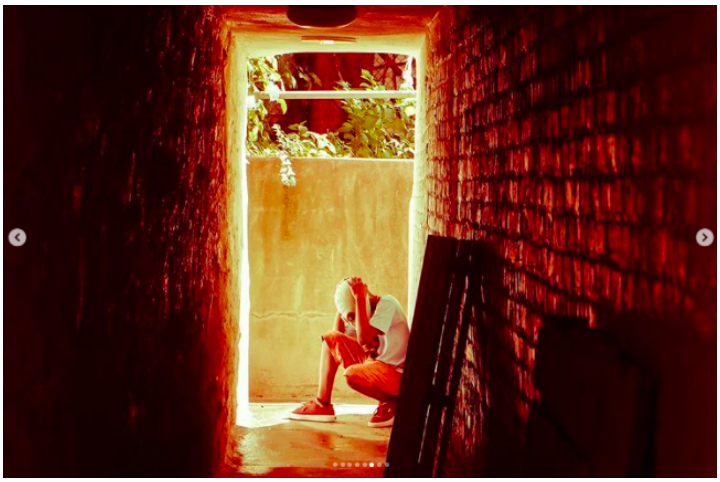
There were many reasons in which we chose the artists that we reached out to. Some being the noticeable parallels in themes and styles that appeared both in their art as well as our creative vision of the play. We put together a document meant for the artist where we described the event and our goals, the role of the artist, and details on funding technicalities. We stayed in touch with the artist and held zoom sessions to answer any questions and discuss the play and the event.

Artist went off to create work inspired by themes of the play. Photoshoots were held, candle molds were made, hats were crocheted, and rugs were trimmed. I also went off to apply some painting skills to continue to develop my visual perspective of the play. When reading *Marisol*, I was always fascinated by Riveras presentation of celestial beings as closer to human

than surreal creatures such as the way that he describes the angel: “a young black woman in ripped jeans, sneakers, and a black tshirt. Crude silver wings hang limply from the back of the Angels diamond studded leather jacket”. Angels in his reality are also very mortal. I created a painting that captured the gore of angels in this play by painting the isolated bones of angel wings. A visual representation of Angles as breakable.

I knew I also wanted to include snippets of the play by performing scenes from it, but it felt too soon. Instead I presented a performance art piece where I explored one of the major absurdists predicaments in the play. I assisted in birthing stuffed animals. I gathered all the bears I have collected over the years from past lovers and performed a rigorous surgery where I sliced into the stomachs of all the bears and stuffed them into each other, in size order. I thought of the idea of rebirth and death and the role it played in the play. I practiced the physicality of holding a baby.

As a viewer at my own event, I learned so much about what our fellow artists took away from the play. Dante for example, an ODD Bat photographer held shoots that drew from the experience of children living in our apocalyptic world:



This image in particular fed into my study on physical language in a space. How do our bodies and the shapes we create communicate fear versus power and how does that also give meaning to and define the space itself?

As Costume Designer

During the fall semester, the team and I met regularly to begin to put together the missing pieces of pre-production. We combed through difficulties of recasting and finding designers to be a part of our team and creating a general structure of our plan going forward. We constantly set goals and deadlines to make sure we were on track. During this time, despite trying to search out a costume designer for Masriosl, I designed, managed wardrobe, and constructed costumes for *A Walrus in the Body of A Crocodile* as well as *How I Learned to Drive.* I couldn't have been more grateful for these experiences as they prepared me well to eventually do costumes for *Marisol.*

Early into the process, I knew that one of the main reasons I wanted to produce this play was due to its relevance to current time despite it being written about 30 years ago. Due to this fact, our artistic aim was to play with the concept of time. We seeked to fuse both eras to visualize the way these themes were prevalent then and now. In our early production meetings, I brought up observations on our generation's way of readapting different eras of fashion. In the past couple of years, a lot of influence came from y2k which seemed to be a happy coincidence. I explored with the 90's forms of aesthetic layering versus our generations ways of layering which gave rise to styles such as basic subversive, avant apocalypse, and neutral maximalism. These styles are made up of deconstructed pieces, asymmetry, knits and neutral tones and wearing clothes in "wrong ways". We've become all about upcycling and thrifted fashion as a means to combat the harmful impacts fast fashion has on our environment. I continued to be amazed by

fashion's ability to tell a lot about an era and its history and current events. Furthermore I looked into edgy styles that were both prevalent then and now. Then, punk fashion was at its rise as a means to present as social outcasts. Vivienne West Wood adapted this style and was then, as is again now, a punk style influencer. They were known for controversies surrounding using swastikas in their designs. This form of adapting made me think a lot about June's journey and the concept of subcultures. The ways in which people who are lost in a terrifying nonsensical world look for safety, comfort, and company in communities that will accept them despite their immoral values and practices.

As Marisol

It started with a Bio. A list of every detail that was given to me from the script. From the things Marisol states to the things others say about her. I looked into what these things say about the way she perceives herself versus the way others perceive her. The way that Marisol is perceived is something she cares a lot about. To be seen as something other than what she wants to be seen as is hard for her to accept as it is something she has worked on controlling for her entire life, to be treated like the middle class citizen she works so hard to present herself as. Yet she is ripped from her 9-5 life and thrown into a reality where no one is safe from mass destruction, war, and hunger. All of this helped inform the choices that she makes as well as her struggle and state of mind. I learned that as a person of color, we have been conditioned to think that to be accepted and successful in this world we have to abide by the values and rules of the great white man. But slapping a suit on and wiping away our culture will never get them to accept us. We try so hard to climb up this hierarchical ladder when we are still in a group they call a minority when everyone knows we are the majority. The play teaches us that there's power in numbers.

Table work seemed like it could have lasted forever, the play brings up so much history, makes so many references and is loaded with imagery and poetry. Having done the research paper over winter break felt like I truly had done myself a favor. Understanding the world that Jose had taken inspiration from was crucial and talking about it during the table read made me realize I had a new level of respect for the Bronx, mainly the people who make up its community.

As I got to know Marisol better, I realized we had a numerous amount of similarities. Although at first I thought this was great because of my ability to empathize with our lived experiences, I still wanted to create a healthy boundary between us. Mari in turn asked me to create a Venn Diagram, brilliant advice. In doing so I still managed to find similarities within our differences. Despite this, I began to bring more attention to our differences and focused on what made us individuals. I made sure to define moments of stepping in and out of the rehearsal room.

As an actor I came across obstacles when trying to understand certain actions as they pertain to Marisol's objective in moments of high stakes and intimacy. In scene eight in particular, Lenny barges into Marisol's apartment demanding her care and loyalty. Despite him being a threat to her safety, at a moment of vulnerability my instinct was to bash his head in immediately. With the help of Mari, Tony, our fight choreographer, and time, I made sense of Marisol as a very tactical person. In act one of the play, Marisol's tactic was to de-escalate situations like these in the smoothest ways possible before having to resort to violence. Such as when the man with the ice cream cone came into her office, she met him with a calm attitude, yet this does not work. As a part of her arch, she begins to change the way she handles moments of distress. She’s slowly becoming characters she thinks low of such as the man with the golf club

in scene one. Because of this she begins to resort to violence a lot faster than before while still tackling with the mentality that she has to prove that she is a “civilized person”.

At the beginning of the process I remember being extremely nervous. I haven't acted in a long time. Despite making the effort to audition for on campus productions my freshman and sophomore year before the chaos struck, I was rejected time and time again. Then my sophomore year I was given the lead in a production which was shut down by Covid a week before it was supposed to go up. I decided to take a break from acting classes because of our move to online classes. Instead I embarked on a journey to learn about different mediums. Coming back, I felt very out of practice. Although I was aware of this, I never allowed myself to indulge in this thought. I was aware that I was taking all the right steps in creating my character, exploring in the rehearsal room, making choices, taking direction, and being present in my mind and body on the side of my team.

Working with an intimacy director as well as a fight choreographer were both great and very necessary experiences. They both created safe spaces by laying down important ground rules. Their depth in knowledge helped me feel confident in my direction. They made vulnerable moments feel respected and guided. I truly don’t know how we could’ve tackled these scenes otherwise.

Some of the most vivid moments I know I will take with me for a long time are the times I performed the closing monologue. At that moment I felt extremely present in my body and in the theater. I took a lot of inspiration from Simon Mcburney and the way he made me feel when storytelling . When performing, I visualized the scene I was painting in front of me. All the different colors I portrayed through volume or tempo or emphasis. I asked myself how I feel in my body right at this moment. In what parts of my body does the pain, the hope, and the passion

live? When memorizing this monologue, I broke it down by first understanding the story. Pointing out the beginning, the rising action, the climax, etc. Once I had the general plot of the story in my head I memorized the lines themselves out loud and held on to the way the words felt rolling off my tongue. The shapes, spaces and movements that my mouth and jaw made when reciting poetic lines with specific rhythms. I played with the musicality of the sentences with the beautiful words Rivera had given me. I became aware of my breath. This must have been the fastest I've ever learned a monologue and now I have found the method that works best for me in terms of memorization.

ACTOR'S PORTFOLIO

Kimberly Hernandez
2019-2022

Just A Ballad
Written by Laila Willson
Spring 2020

A Playwrights Festival Production. Acting in the lead as Sloan. A 40 minute production that was shut down during tech because of covid.

Honeydew Sexdream
Written and Directed by Oliver Pezzano
Spring 2021

A junior film acting in the lead as Demi/Deborah. A 30 minute psychedelic journey through ego death.

La Diablesse
Written by Cherayna Rullow

A senior project production turned into a film. Acting as the Narrator. A retelling of a cultural folk tale.

Marisol
Written by Jose Rivera