

Noah Bunch

Artistic Statement (2022)

For me, my artistry is directly tied to my childhood. When I was four, my dad and I played Star Wars figures, creating stories about what happened after Luke Skywalker destroyed the Empire. Every Saturday morning, when my mom was at work, we played. As I get older, I miss that. I miss when my only responsibility was to play Star Wars with my dad. I am in a constant chase to continue my childhood. I think when we're children we carry unconditional forgiveness, love, and imagination. Unfortunately, it's apparent most of us become conditional on forgiveness and love, and keep very little imagination. In previous conversations about "why art?" I've forced myself onto the great task of wanting to change the world, but I don't think that's true. I don't want to change world; I want to make us all feel like kids again—every artist in the room and every member in the audience. If just for a moment, I want to recapture those unconditional qualities that we've been jaded on, forgot about, or have lost hope in. This starts with accessibility.

I've been doing theatre for fifteen years and it's become apparent to me that theatre can become self-righteous and inaccessible very quickly. Either it feels SNL/Black Box performative or so heady it completely misses the general audience member. I see this reflected in my own family. I want the art that I create and am a part of to reach more than a theatre-loving crowd and offer the chance for my story to *actually* be digested. What's the point of art if you're alone in it? Art is meant for the masses, and we can't alienate them. I'm not saying we need to "dumb things down" but I believe in a healthy balance of understanding and high concept. I find this balance most in film and television, which is why I'm now drawn so much more to that form of expression than theatre.

I go to the movie theater every weekend. It's an escape, it's therapeutic, and it makes me feel like a kid again. The other weekend when I was watching *American Underdog*—a so-so movie—I experienced an older man, in his sixties probably, weeping by the second act. Was the movie Shakespeare or Chekhov, not at all, but it was accessible to this man, and it gave him the permission to experience. I witness, every weekend, the power movies can have on an audience, and it pushes me, even in the days I fear, to move to L.A. to become a Film/Television actor and writer. I want my job, for the rest of my life, to give the world what I want to experience—to help those who are chasing their own childhood a chance to get it back, if only for a few hours.

I had a professor who told me that when he looks for new students, he searches for “good people and good actors.” I think this entire artistic statement could be summed up by this phrase. In this next chapter of my life, as I leave university and enter the industry, if I could tell accessible stories with good people, I'd be living my childhood.