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Ancestra - Part of the Intersections Project

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences

Department of Theatre and Dance

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Abstract

The vision of The Department of Theatre and Dance's Intersection Project was to provide points of intersection between artists and community with experiences that all creative artists share, focusing especially on inter-generational exchanges. One element of the Intersections Project was the collaborative creation of an original performance entitled *Ancestra*. Four student researcher/performers joined twelve Cleveland performance artists, ages 18-73, to create and present the docu-performance, *Ancestra*. Research for this project focused on the transcript of the 1853 National Women's Rights Convention held in Cleveland, OH as well as other primary sources from the Women's Suffrage Movement. The group also examined epigenetic scientific discoveries, which hypothesize that humans are genetically linked to the experiences of ancestors as well as their physical traits. These two lines of research provided the basis for a rich conversation between past and present which was integrated into the performance. Women in the project also researched their personal histories and wrote poetry, prose, and dialogue based on themes, memories, and experiences. These writings, together with the research discoveries were montaged into the final script which was rehearsed and performed in a "work in progress" showing at CSU on August 2nd, followed by a discussion about the work and process.