

# SAIR GOETZ

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## Statement of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

I am dedicated in my artistic, political, and pedagogical practices to the application and exploration of intersectional feminist and media theoretical frameworks. These practices are informed primarily by my path through media theory toward my own queer trans\* identity and a critical examination of my white privilege. Intersectional feminism is at the core of my work because it recognizes that the systems of oppression that burden each one of us, burden us all. My community of trans\* and queer people includes those affected by a broad scope of issues - from environmental racism to mass-incarceration to houselessness. The rhetorical and political strides that have brought liberation to my community were made primarily by people of color. Being aware of these facts, I can only envision the future freedom of my community through allyship with all marginalized groups. This solidarity work manifests through constant self-education and enacting change within my pedagogy, community action, and art practice.

I was drawn to teaching new media and moving image technologies specifically for their empowering potential: students can use them immediately to reshape both their world and how they see themselves within it. I work to enfranchise marginalized students in particular to take ownership of image, object, and Internet production. I also see it as a crucial component of new media courses to engage all students in critical conversations about the ethics of representation, economics of content distribution, and forms of cultural appropriation. With these aims in mind, I tailor my classes to provide accessible forms of production, a vocabulary of ethics, and to a diverse canon of contemporary artists and theorist they may not otherwise come across. This methodology has had an important impact in the work my students produce. For example, in an 'Introduction to Digital Imaging' course, I guided one student through the visualization of her environmental biology research to the creation of a game in Processing to simulate and comment on ecosystem dynamics. Spurred by a class conversation about Martine Sim's *Afrofuturist Manifesto*, and Stefano Harney & Fred Moten's *The Undercommons*, another student in a video art course developed a collaborative portraiture of her community.

Much of my pedagogical approach comes from my experience as a member of non-hierarchical intentional communities. In settings such as the School of the Alternative (SotA) at Black Mountain, where I taught a two-week course on memes and texting, all participants were given opportunities to lead 1-3 hour workshops on subjects atypical to classroom settings, prioritizing non-hegemonic forms of knowledge and expression. These workshops gave me great insight into the passions and concerns of my students. I could then respond directly and quickly to the students' interest, occasionally through collaboration with other facilitators on topics well outside my wheelhouse. This resulted in one session combined with a course on freestyle rapping, and another session combined with a course on miming.

In University settings also, I see my classroom as a public and students as citizens. Just as I strive to instill a sense of ownership over media production in my students, I strive to make sure that they are truly enfranchised as citizens in that republic. I achieve this through regular individual check-ins, anonymous polls, and student-driven lessons. Outside of the classroom,

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my role of facilitator does not stop. I have been called upon to be first responder for students in crisis. When my students have been arrested, sexually assaulted, disowned, and emotionally- or financially-distressed, I have often been the first person to whom they turn. In these cases, I've guided students toward University and community resources designed for their immediate needs, and taken an active role in working toward systemic changes to support them long term.

My ability to work collectively towards a larger goal of equity is mostly clearly evident in my current activities as member of CTRL+SHIFT collective. CTRL+SHIFT Collective is an exhibition space and thirteen studios located in West Oakland, CA. We are a completely non-hierarchical group of cis-women, trans-spectrum, gender non-conforming, and PoC members that host workshops, exhibitions, and other community engagements. We focus on providing a platform and a springboard for marginalized artists, performers, curators, and activists. Like SotA, CTRL+SHIFT is an intentional community in which guidelines are co-developed by members specifically to protect the most vulnerable of a group. As a member of this extremely diverse collective, I am constantly engaged in investigating my own white fragility and privilege, as well as learning better ways to contribute to equity in non-leadership positions.

Listening and knowing when to speak are also an important part of my art practice. In an upcoming collaboration with artist Luan Joy Sherman, I will spend June of 2019 facilitating *Respite (Radio) Station*. Housed at Comfort Station, *Respite Radio* will host audio lessons and storytelling workshops designed to create and maintain space for trans\* people to connect and share resources. Over the course of the month, we will be broadcasting stories, auto-ethnographies, audio sourced from a widely circulated open call.

In four locations across the U.S., I have also conducted a social project designed to develop conversation on topics that have no answers, while decentering privileged voices. *Questions & Actions* is an activity in which groups of people discuss difficult topics with the stipulation that only questions may be spoken with the voice, and all other communication must be written or sung. In effect, this process prioritizes those who have thought deeply and critically about a topic, and creates a listening space for those who have not.

My dedication to listening to, being guided by, and amplifying marginalized voices is integral to my artwork, my activism, and my pedagogy. I work within my classrooms, department, and university, as well as through local organizations and my own art practice, to nurture students along the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

\* The use of the asterisk following trans\* is to acknowledge that it is used as an umbrella term attempting to encompass all gender identities not aligned with the gender the person was assigned at birth.