

## ART IS JUSTICE

### Luis Alfaro on the power of art

"When we tell our stories, we are empowering ourselves." Luis Alfaro writes plays about people stuck in systems because he believes art can inspire us to imagine ourselves to be free from them.

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, Perspective, Hope, Change, Beauty...it stops at Powerful. Art Is Powerful.]

**Luis Alfaro, writer, performer, and educator:** Art is powerful. When we tell our stories, we are empowering ourselves. Art can be as simple as inspiring somebody, like a gang member, to imagine themselves living beyond their 20s. Sometimes it's helping someone who has just gotten out of prison imagine how they might live the rest of their life. And then sometimes it's helping a community imagine how it might have a better health or a better way of organizing itself. I write a lot about working class people, people who are trapped in systems, so I write a lot about incarceration, the violence of poverty.

[Actors on stage perform "Mojada: A Medea in Los Angeles." A woman sits at a sewing machine, working; a man stands behind her with his hands on her shoulders.]

**ACTOR 1:** What you do is special, Madea, no matter how they treat us here.

**ACTOR 2:** In this country, special pays the same.

**Luis:** I am always trying to create a narrative that allows people to think about themselves free and in the world. And so there's always a push-pull toward wanting to make change.

[The words "Art Is" appear, followed by scrolling words...Powerful, 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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**End of transcript.**