

ART IS JUSTICE

Nikky Finney on using art for change

Poet Nikky Finney draws on stories from the past to challenge artists to continue their efforts. "These times that we live in are essential for artists to be doing what they are doing and to be doing it times ten."

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, Healing, Vision, Change, Beauty...it stops at Hope. Art Is Hope.]

Nikky Finney, poet: I feel like I'm a poet of my time. It's important to remember the stories that help make me who I am. I'm reminded of stories of who I call the prophets of my day. People like Elizabeth Catlett and Romare Bearden and Nina Simone and James Baldwin. Those artists and those moments are crystallized in so many of our lives and in our hearts.

[Nikky reads a poem in her home.]

"And there are more new ones of us born every day... Slavish to things we cannot do without."

Nikky: And so now I take those lessons learned from that time and bring them forward. Get your pen out, get your palette out, get your microphone out, and get to work.

[Nikky continues reading poetry.]

"Slaves, he said of them all, as he sat before their limited eyes."

Nikky: These times that we live in are essential for artists to be doing what they are doing, and to be doing it times ten.

[The words "Art is" appear, followed by scrolling words...Hope, Expression, Change, Creativity, Vision...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.