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Devising: Improving a Perceived Glistening Community!

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**What?**

Theatre for social change has long relied on devising methods to create pieces reflecting current cultural and societal issues. Employing exercises, games and workshops, theatre for social change devising practices are as distinct and numerous as the many different communities they work with. Through leading a performance ensemble comprised of Chapman University peers called Cross the Line, I developed a devising methodology to access critical social issues facing our immediate community in order to create a performance piece.

**Why?**

“Live performance provides a place where people come together, embodied and passionate, to share experiences of meaning and imagination that can describe or capture fleeting intimations of a better world”


Chapman University appears to be a glittering haven of educational bliss. In brochures we are freshly green mowed lawns and shining faces of youth ready to be the global citizens that change the world. But if you make the effort to see the muck brushed under the rug, you find a place that lets micro-aggressions flourish. The fact that this persists in an institution where intelligent individuals are seeking to better themselves is intolerable. If the collective does not notice what is immediately surrounding them, then it will continue to perpetuate and flourish as they move out of their microcosm and into the beyond.

**Conclusion: What the process lead to**

Chapman women were ranked 2nd in this online article. During one of the devising workshops this article was discussed and eagerly decided on as the issue of oppression we wanted to address. From then on we focused our story sessions and scene development on how lookism, or judgments based on physical appearance, affects the Chapman culture.

We then formed performance outcomes:

**The Problem:** Lookism is both created by ourselves and projected onto others by individuals or the community as a whole, causing us to adopt social masks, limiting a person’s worth and identity to appearance and creating a public view of Chapman that can be abrasive exclusive, and intimidating.

**The Goal:** Aiming to bring empathy, examine prejudices and help open eyes and hearts to see people as people first by highlighting the negative and even abusive relationships we have with ourselves and others.

**For the Future:** With our devised scenes a script will be constructed and performed in Spring 2015 for the Chapman community.