

“Artists are the Gatekeepers of Truth”, Paul Roberson Celebration

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

WASHINGTON, DC

Oral History Interview

With

DAN KERR

And

ADRIAN FERGUSON

April 09, 2022

**“Artists are the Gatekeepers of Truth”, Paul Robeson Celebration
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

NARRATOR: Adrian Ferguson

DATE: April 9, 2022

INTERVIEWER: Dan Kerr

PLACE: Washington, D.C.

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Art, activism, DC, Petworth, music, celebration, galleries

Dan Kerr 00:00:04

Okay. All right, uh, we are in..This is Dan Kerr. We're doing interviews for Paul Robeson Memorial event in, uh, Petworth. It's April 9th 2022. Would you mind telling us your name?

Adrian Ferguson 00:00:21

My name is Adrian Ferguson.

Dan Kerr 00:00:23

Thank you. Adrian. Would you, uh, could you tell us how do you like to express yourself through art or culture?

Adrian Ferguson 00:00:33

Yeah. Sure. Thank you for having me, you know as part of the being a gallery owner, I express myself through art and culture by being a facilitator and the galleries in a place to house a facilitate art and artistic expression here in the community. Not just in Petworth, but the greater DMV community. Being that place that intimate in the affordable eccentric space that people can really express themselves in a unique way. You know, I think that's really important.

Dan Kerr 00:01:00

That's fantastic. And for Paul Robeson, and Uzikee Nelson, they really viewed art as integral to community expression and connection. I was wondering how you connect through your..your art and your, uh, your essentially supporting of art to the community and these four and building the community for that.

Adrian Ferguson 00:01:24

So, I mean, my..my goal the one of my passions is introducing the community to Great artist and being that house for these great artists so that the community can come see and experience their art that they don't know. DC is a very transient city. So there's a lot of people moving and moving parts that people don't stay long. But while they're here, we have to do a better job of connecting because DC is a hodgepodge of great talented artists. That a lot of people just don't know about. And we need places scattered throughout the city where people with the community can come and learn about what's in their backyard. And I'm proud to do that.

Dan Kerr 00:02:00

And who do you realize kind of the communities that you're seeking to connect with and that you're part of?

Adrian Ferguson 00:02:06

I mean, as far as the artistic community here. I mean, you know, working the Smithsonian, you know the wonderful American University Humanities truck, you know, and different partners in the neighborhood with the Arts collaborative and different nonprofits and for-profits art organizations with Petworth Library, who are also good friends of ours. You know, and just being and being...and being a place where, you know, a hub for that connects the formal arts here in the city to the underground art scene here, that's also here in the city and being that connector.

Dan Kerr 00:02:42

And where would you like to see yourself continuing to develop your role as a connector like in the future?

Adrian Ferguson 00:02:50

Well, I would like to have several properties and several brick-and-mortar places here in D.C. and throughout the DMV, in different communities outside of DC that can serve as the same purpose.

Dan Kerr 00:03:02

And what are some of those communities you think that might need those hubs?

Adrian Ferguson 00:03:05

I think Northern, Virginia. Is a very tapped place. I mean, you know, we have places like Fredericksburg in Prince William County that are in a lot of people are moving down to but they want to experience this type of culture. You know, you got places like in Howard County and outside and doing further out where people want to experience it, but they don't want to actually have to come to D.C. to get it. And I want to be able to have places in those places that people come to to be that experience.

Dan Kerr 00:03:30

That's great. And if you uh, when you view yourself, as supporting of artists how well what are...who are kind of the target our artists that you'd really like to help build?

Adrian Ferguson 00:03:41

I mean, as far as target, I mean, you know, the whole term of emerging artists is a very widely used term. But, you know, my goal for my gallery is to elevate those emerging artists here in this city who don't get the shine, who haven't got the experience, you know, I mean, I warmly work with seasoned artists who have shown in the gallery, but I'm not opposed to working with people who are talented, who haven't...who don't have gallery experience or who were looking to have gallery experience, so I mean, you know, I work with them all, from established artist to artist who are trying to get their foot in the door. People who are hungry, you know, who want to work with galleries who are teachable and who can teach me a thing or two, because it's a team sport.

Dan Kerr 00:04:27

That's great. Where do you seek out these artists?

Adrian Ferguson 00:04:30

Oh man. We're constantly. We have an open, an open rolling call people, where people can inquire on our website, you know, send us contact information, you know, if they are interested in doing an exhibition of being part of an exhibition, they can reach out to us on our contact information. We also..I'm always on social media looking for different art and artists. I'm going to different art shows and different exhibitions at galleries and museums, different art fairs throughout the area. It's a non-stop process. And then also we have also a lot of wonderful artists who we've exhibited are talking to other artists, who are talking about their positive experiences that they've had at Art of Noise who are then, also, they want to come exhibit as well, word of mouth.

Dan Kerr 00:05:13

And what do you hope, uh, as far as kind of the role you're going to play in terms of furthering community building in these larger regions and where would you like these communities to be?

Adrian Ferguson 00:05:26

I mean, I want to be a vessel, you know, I mean art is international and global, you know, and and and art, you know, it doesn't always have to be in one place, you know. Art is also something that we can't see us everywhere that we go, we should be able to carry that message with us. So whether it's in New York, whether it's in LA, whether it's in Atlanta, we need to be promoting with the spirit of promoting art and artists.

Dan Kerr 00:05:51

Thank you so much. Any last words you'd like to share with us today?

Adrian Ferguson 00:05:54

Paul Robeson is an inspiration. He was what I would like to call a renaissance man. He could do it all, from athleticism to activism. He was the quintessential man. And I think, you know, as a young man like myself, I aspire to be a man as great as Paul Robeson.

Dan Kerr 00:06:13

That's fantastic. Thank you so much

Adrian Ferguson 00:06:15

Thank you. Thank you.