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Give and Take Care

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## Give & Take Care

Jeff Kasper

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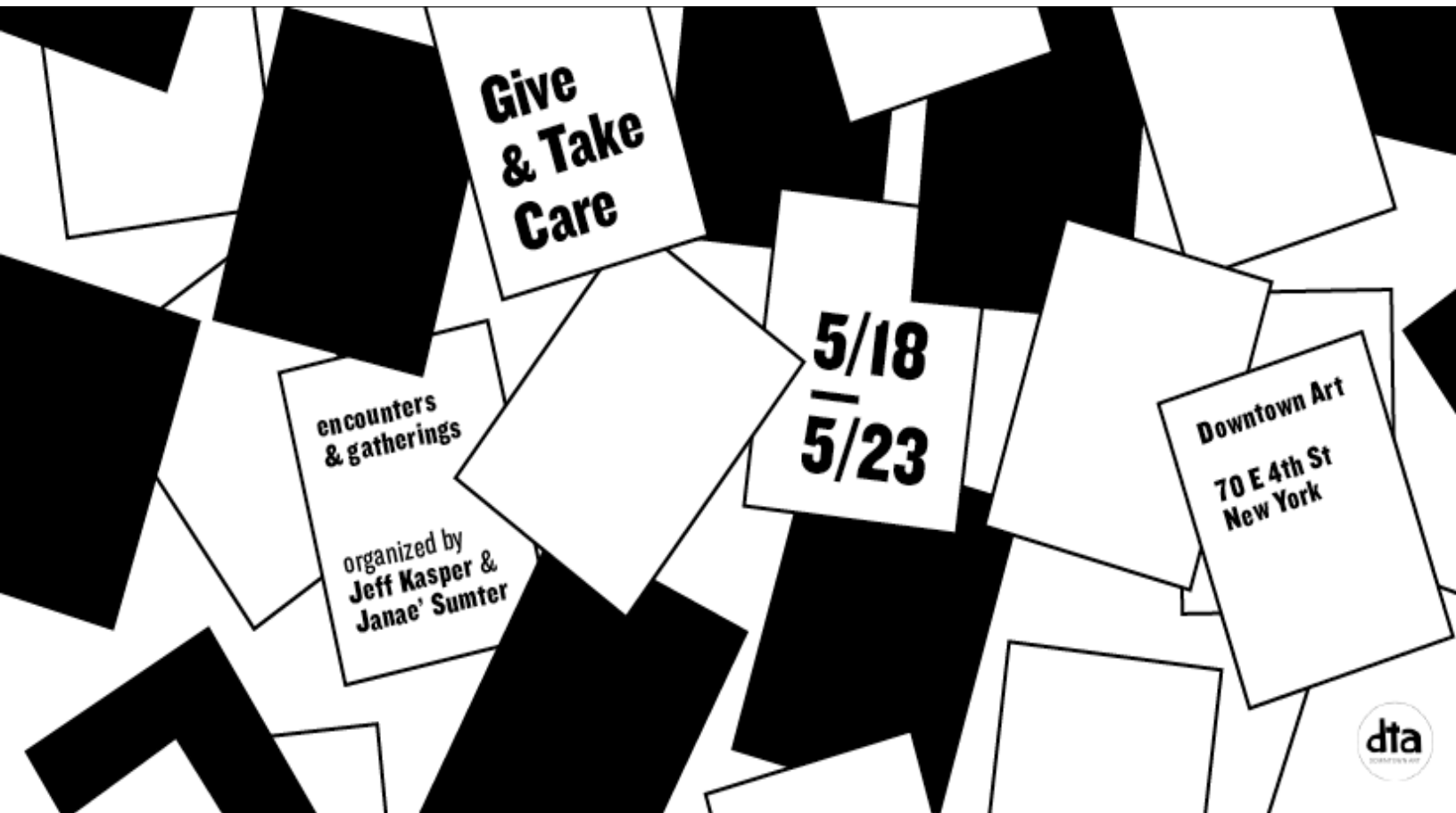
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## **Give & Take Care**

a project by Jeff Kasper, co organized and facilitated  
with Janae' Sumter

**May 18-24, 2019**

Downtown Art

70 East Fourth Street, New York

When will we carve out generative spaces for care, consent, and conflict, in the relationships that shape our everyday lives? How about...now?

**Give & Take Care is a participatory art series that asks visitors to consciously consider and practice the power dynamics inherent in intimate exchanges between two people. Through a series of performative and contemplative exercises in Downtown Art's black box theatre and movement studios, visitors will be encouraged to act out different scenarios using gesture, minimal voice, and spatial proximity, as tools for embodied cooperation and collective biography. Think: the unpredictable nature of improvisation meets the irresistible humor of relationship advice.**

Please bring a partner, friend, colleague, caretaker/giver, or family member, with whom you trust but with whom you have never shared in length what makes you feel safe.

**Give & Take Care** was conceived by Jeff Kasper as a collective anchor-point as he, any may people like him, continue to navigate personal histories and intergenerational legacies of trauma, depression, and queer survivor-hood. This project seeks to pivot from the seemingly all-consuming nature of rape culture and move toward unimagined supportive futures. Give & Take Care is less about sex or sexuality and more about reclaiming intimacy, safety, power, and connection as a form of building queer community and cultures of accessibility. Together we will imagine what we mean when we say the words "consent" and "care". See adrienne marree brown's *Pleasure Activism* (AK Press, 2019) for more brilliant Black feminist thinking on the matter.

Janae' Sumter (she/they), a New Orleans native and Brooklyn based creative, storyteller, healer, and educator who is dedicated to community empowerment and honoring accessibility for emerging communities. This manifest through the energy of material assemblages, peer dialogues, reiki healing, altarwork,

community installations and performances that address the complexity of oppression, intergenerational trauma and systemic patterns. Sumter is a Masters of Fine Arts Candidate in Integrated Practices at Pratt Institute (2019) and Spelman College alumna with a Bachelors of Art in Studio Art (2017)

**The development and research for Open Platform: Give & Take Care was supported by Downtown Art's 2019 Community-Engaged Artist Residency. Earlier incubation was supported in community with the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts SHIFT Residency and in continued iteration with fellow queer survivors from 2016-present.**

### **Is this for me?**

Maybe or maybe not. That is ok! The content of these events may not be for you at this time if you are not comfortable with intimate conversations, sustained contact, and physical touch through trust-building and group contemplative exercises. This space does not presume pairing as primary mode for exchange, nor does it necessitate that relationships are only based in twos, it only encourages exchanges on this scale, this time-around. You are welcome to attend and opt-out of any interactive material you feel unfit for you, at anytime.

### **Note from the artist:**

“Though the therapeutic powers of art are rich, this space is conceptualized outside of clinical therapeutic practices in what I see as today’s medicalized, and at times navel-gazing, trigger-warning preoccupied, commercial self-care culture. I acknowledge that for folks like myself who have experienced trauma and live with the repercussions of violence every day, unguided contemplative activities, such as meditation and movement exercises, can provoke traumatic stress. All the proposed activities and theatrical prompts are based in recommended practices for trauma-informed mindfulness. (See resources like David A. Treleaven, Trauma Sensitive Mindfulness: Practices for Safe and Transformative Healing (Norton, 2018) for further information.)” — Jeff Kasper

You are encouraged to visit the AnxieTEA Lounge & Rest Space with volunteer support and resources by [add organizations] at any time before, during, or after each event. This space was conceived by a queer trauma-survivor, is stewarded by and for queer survivors and disabled folks, but is open to all.

If you identify as a queer/trans/GNC and/or disabled (or if you are not quite sure) and are you interested in writing and performing your own “scores for support,” with a partner, consider joining the Scoring Consent Workshop. Allies and caretaker/givers/doulas are always welcome to join.

**If you or someone you know needs help, Please contact: The NYC Rape, Sexual Assault & Incest Hotline at 212-227-3000 or The National Hotline at 800-656-4673**

## **Consent Culture**

This is a confidential space. Details stay and lessons go.

This is not a safe space. This is a space to articulate what we actually mean when we say, “I feel safe”. Only you can define when you feel safe and when you do not.

All activities in this program follow a strict “opt-out anytime” policy.

In the spirit of full disclosure, all participants are notified of event structure and performance protocol before attending.

Access is less an accommodation of an individual’s needs and more a collective culture of shared responsibility.

Everyone is an active audience member.

Honor confidentiality and non-spectatorship.

Unwanted physical touch is not supported. Always ask first.

## **Accessibility**

Open Platform is set in a quiet, cushioned, low-light, theatre environment with multiple seating options, including spaces to kneel, crawl, lay, and support your head and body.

Downtown Art is accessible to wheelchair users and folks with limited physical mobility via an elevator. There is a gender-neutral ADA-compliant bathroom on the 1st floor theatre lobby. Verbal description is available from our supportive care community. Braille theatre prints are available. You are welcome to bring a caretaker/giver with you if you wish. Youth under the age of 18 are welcome to join as long as they are accompanied at all times by a parent or guardian.

Activities are geared towards adults 18+.

This is a low-scent environment. Please refrain from wearing fragrance or bringing incense into the space. there will be incense at specific scheduled times. Service Dogs are welcome.

## **Give & Take Care Schedule**

Sunday, May 19 (1:00pm—4:30pm)

### **Scoring Consent Workshop**

This is an intentionally confidential space for building practices of consent and mutual support for/by queer folks and allies. There will be guided contemplative exercises, creative writing, and theatre-based activities. Please bring a partner, friend, colleague, caretaker/giver, or family member, with whom you trust but with whom you have never shared in length what makes you feel safe.

Sunday, May 19 (12:30—5:00), May 21, 22, 23 (6:00pm—8:30pm)

### **AnxieTEA Lounge & Rest Spaces**

Sober/time-out space for Queer/Trans/GNC/Disabled folks, Caretakers, and Allies featuring herbal tea, comfy foam seating, floor cushions and sensory anchors +

queer trauma-survivor and mental wellness focused reading material. The artist has curated a collection of herbal teas known to reduce symptoms of anxiety, stress, and depression. Bring your holistic recipes for what makes you feel less anxious. Participants are encouraged to share recipes as well as reading material with the rest of the community throughout the course of the project (and beyond.)

CART transcription will be available on the Sunday May 19 Workshop. If there are any access or comfort needs we have missed and you would like to request, please email [jeffkasper.studio@gmail.com](mailto:jeffkasper.studio@gmail.com) by May 14.

## **Scoring Care Workshop**

Sunday, May 19 (1:00pm—4:30pm)

This is an intentionally confidential space for building practices of consent and mutual support for/by queer folks and allies. There will be guided contemplative exercises, creative writing, and theater-based activities. Please bring a partner, friend, colleague, caretaker/giver, or family

member, with whom you trust but with whom you have never shared in length what makes you feel safe.

The content of this event may not be for you if you are not in the mind/body/emotional space for vulnerable dialogue and soft physical touch through trust-building and mindfulness exercises. You are welcome to attend and opt-out of interactive material.

1:00pm-1:20p	<b>WELCOME &amp; INTRODUCTIONS</b> Workshops Energy Check-In led Jeff Kasper & Janae' Sumter
1:20pm- 1:30pm	<b>MEDITATION / WARM UP</b> Contemplative practices led by Jeff Kasper
1:30pm- 2:30pm	<b>SESSION 1: POD MAPPING</b> led by Ro Garrido
2:30pm- 3:30pm	<b>SESSION 2: SCORES &amp; RECIPES</b> Creative Writing/Prompts led by Jeff Kasper
3:30pm- 4:00pm	<b>SESSION 3: GROUP ACTIVITIES</b> Energy Depletion Activity led by Janae' Sumter
4:00- 4:30pm	<b>SHAREOUTS / CLOSING</b> Talk back and Takeaways

## Workshop Content:

### 1. Workshop Methodology/Transparency

- Access check
- What are we working on today?



- Introduction [name, one important thing, and pronouns]

## **2. Introductory Axioms to Take, Break, or Build From**

- excerpts from “ A Kiss Is Just A Kiss” from Mchardy and Plourde, Making Out Like a Virgin: Sex, Desire, & Intimacy After Sexual Trauma. Animal Mineral Press: 2016

## **3. Introductory question** [track ideas on paper]

What do we mean when we say “consent”?

- Today is about exploring what it means to build cultures of consent.
- care as choreography
- This is part of a longer body of work and need for collective design
- What is a “practice”? How does this change culture? What culture should we change?
- What is a “score”? Today we will be building scores for care, starting to map support networks, and practicing nonviolent communication
- When we are talking about consent, we are talking about...power

**\*To begin let us agree on a non-verbal signal for consent that we all agree to use over the course of our time together \***

## **4. Break out text/discussion** [given to participants Friday to read by Sunday]:

- Audre Lorde, “The Uses of The Erotic” from Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good, written and gathered by adrienne maree brown (AK Press: 2019). [Paper delivered at the Fourth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, Mount Holyoke College, August 25, 1978. Published as a pamphlet by Out & Out Books (available from The Crossing Press). Reprinted in Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde, Crossing Press:1984] [Link](#)

## **5. Warm-Up**

- Energy Check in
- Witnessing/Presence Warm-ups:
  - Extended eye contact
  - Back to back
  - Touch-centered (such as holding hands)

## **6. Paired activities**

- Observing a partner
  - Descriptive journaling
- Switching roles

## **7. Pod Mapping**

- Solo activity then facilitated discussion while building a collective network map

## **8. Scores & Recipes: Blueprints for Practice**

Recipes for support and scores for care written solo then shared with one other person in the room

- Start by visiting rest lounges (10 mins quiet time)
- Return to the studio for a discussion on the idea of “re patterning”
- What is care made of?
  - Jeff reads from his “scores for care” and show on the projector score excerpts from Park McArthur and Constantina Zavitsanos, “Other forms of conviviality,” *Women & Performance*, October 20, 2013
- Write 1-3 scores: one for you receiving care, one for you giving care, one for somewhere in between (focus on description, steps, and texture What

does it feel like? Can you break care down into little bits and pieces...then reassemble)

- A score for refusal (craft this for 2 roles)
  - excerpt from Mchardy and Plourde, Making Out Like a Virgin: Sex, Desire, & Intimacy After Sexual Trauma. Animal Mineral Press: 2016
- Practicing the score together (in studio or in theater)
- Switching roles

### **9. Parallel practices [short text read aloud]:**

Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, “Care As Pleasure” from Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good. written and gathered by adrienne maree brown (AK Press: 2019).

### **Other examples: Reclaiming your power / valuing “no” / tactful turndowns for introverts**

- Excerpt from Marti Olsen Laney, The Introvert Advantage (Workman: 2002).

### **10. Closing Thoughts**

- “Interdependence and decentralization” in Emergent Strategy by adrienne maree brown (AK press: 2019).
- “Three Components of Appreciation” from Nonviolent Communication (Puddle Dancer Press: 2015)

### **11. Share out**

**Post event Jeff invites guests visit the theater to experience “wrestling embrace”**