

RFK in EKY
Reflections by Shannon M. Turner
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In August of this year, I entered a new program here at Virginia Tech called MFA in Directing & Public Dialogue. I am here to learn about the intersection of art and community and how they can create each other with synergy and power.

I came to RFK without a lot of understanding of what it would be. It had been recommended to me by my professor, Bob Leonard, as a great way to introduce myself to the field of community-based art making. Right away, I realized that it was far more than that.

As I began to meet the different players involved and experience the scope of the activities, I was awed at the work, skill, and vision involved in the putting together a project of this nature.

From Nell to Tony to Michael, I kept meeting people who were totally on-fire about it and what it could mean.

I remember standing and cooking sausage on that first morning, and suddenly this joy and connection started to build up in me, so much so that I started singing out loud even though I was on camera!

From there on out, I was just filled with emotion the entire time.

I had the great pleasure of being recruited into performing as a “bag” at the Fleming-Neon High School re-enactment. I stood there and yelled “anger” at the top of my lungs, and inside I felt equally enraged on behalf of the people and their stories that were being told there.

By the time we reached our reflection period in that beautiful little downtown, I understood that the project was about more than “community-based art making.” It was truly an experience in “art-based community making.”