

Transcript of Interview with Gyre by Kit Heintzman

Interviewee: Gyre

Interviewer: Kit Heintzman

Date: 03/31/2021

Location (Interviewee): Johannesburg, South Africa

Location (Interviewer):

Transcribed By: Angelica S Ramos

Some of the things we discussed include:

“What happens at the top is just politics, what happens at the bottom is real life.” Thinking about the term “pandemic”. Listening to the body. The pandemic exposing state corruption. Having written a song called “Quarantine” in 2018. The inadequacies and privileges of Medical Aid in South Africa, having aged out of Medical Aid before COVID, the personal impact of worse-health insurance during pandemic, the importance of demonetizing health care. Pre-COVID keeping busy: organizing, walking, collaborating. Transit during COVID, sub/urban and outskirt disparities. Canceling shows and taking dance classes and rethinking what it means to be productive. Global Americanization and the impact of Trump’s pandemic denialism on South African health. Moving out of disbelief about the severity of COVID after losing a loved one in the first wave. Gratitude for the global influence of the Black Lives Matter movement, and sadness that tragedy in the diaspora brings neocolonialism to the fore. The importance of social media for queer counter-violence and activist fractures among LGBTQA+. Feeling allyship with the #metoo movement. How homophobia intersects with everyday altercations about social distancing. The anxieties of hooking up during the pandemic. The importance that scientists learn to speak in lay terms about climate change and vaccines. Existence as resistance and creating art. “Spread love not tolerance”

Kit Heintzman 00:01

Hello.

Gyre 00:03

Hello, how are you?

Kit Heintzman 00:05

I'm well how are you?

Gyre 00:07

I'm good. Thank you.

Kit Heintzman 00:09

Would you please start by telling me your full name, the date, the time and your location.

Gyre 00:16

So my name is Wanda Lisa Nene. But I go by the monicar Gyre. Thats G Y R E (speaking Zulu) I am in Johannesburg is 16 14 months that for 14 minutes past four o'clock in the afternoon? And is that everything got everything?

Kit Heintzman 00:37

You say the day? I don't remember the day?

Gyre 00:38

Oh, yes. It's it's actually the 31st of March, which incidentally, is trans visibility day. I don't know if it's worldwide or just today in South Africa. Sorry. But yeah, it's that.

Kit Heintzman 00:51

Tell me what that is.

Gyre 00:53

So trans visibility today is the day which we recognize and we champion the importance of trans visibility not only in our mainstream spaces, importantly in a meeting spaces, but also particularly in our domestic spaces in a more intimate spaces, because I believe that the forwarding of trans visibility is most important in the most intimate of settings, because that's where the sentiments that are then permeated into society, and therefore constitutions and any other legislative legislative work begins. So that's what today's about in terms of the day itself, you know, I mean, every day I'm so sorry about that. My brother and I, yeah. No, no.

Kit Heintzman 01:47

This is part of the real documentation of life through zoom now.

Gyre 01:52

Oh, yeah. Okay, yeah, I'm back.

Kit Heintzman 01:57

Perfect. And do you consent to having this interview recorded, digitally uploaded and publicly released under Creative Commons License attribution noncommercial sharealike?

Gyre 02:10

Yes, I con I consent to all of that.

Kit Heintzman 02:15

Would you please start by introducing yourself to anyone who might find themselves listening to this? What might you want them to understand about you and the position you're speaking from?

Gyre 02:26

Well, like I said, my name is Gyre. I am a multidisciplinary artist based in South Africa with global ambitions. I specialize in music, but I also work as a writer, freelance writer, as well as dance, I'm a dancer and then into choreograph. But we're gonna put that on the back burner for now to say that. What else I mean, political commentator, particularly with regards to LGBTQ plus community, I identify as queer, I am homoromantic and

homosexual. And at this point in my life, you never know. It's a spectrum. So yeah, that's about it. I think that you need to know from now I, I had a my first venture into artistic expression that is rooted in queer rights and queer understanding and sweet queer theory. That's where I'm looking forwards my debut album, titled queer nomics, which was a documented audio visual book about the contemporary experiences of black, South African, male, black, queer, African male. And that has gotten me into the positions that I live in express myself in both out of passion and out of profession. And yeah, Gyre, Inkosi Yenkonkoni which means the gay King in my native language, this is Zulu yeah.

Kit Heintzman 04:10

Well, that's lovely. Um, would you please start by telling me what pandemic means to you?

Gyre 04:19

Oh, Cha COVID That's what it means. It means COVID It means shut down.

Kit Heintzman 04:27

Yes, sound is breaking a lot

Gyre 04:30

in need of a to kill ourselves. I think a lot of you because if it is a virus Okay, is it and now, kind of, yeah.

Kit Heintzman 04:42

Yeah. So what I heard was what I heard was COVID and the world being locked down.

Gyre 04:56

Yeah. So what I'm saying is pandemic means more than that, in the sense that like, it's not just about the virus and the fact that the implications health implications, I think, if anything, that pandemic also exposes the social structures that are or rather the social institutions that are, that have been found one thing in this time, and perhaps exposed, bigger pandemic, of corruption amongst many acum a country and the state. And I feel like that pandemic is just a word that now means far more than just that which speaks to human biology and health and whatever the study of viruses biology, or if that's not the word I just made about.

Kit Heintzman 05:49

Ah, I'm curious to the extent that you're comfortable sharing, what were some of your experiences, like with regard to health and healthcare infrastructure before COVID-19 hit?

Gyre 06:03

Well, before COVID-19 hit, I think I had my situations a bit different because I was younger before COVID, obviously, because it was a few years ago, what was a year ago, and I had medical aid at the time, which is really good, because I was qualified for it. But obviously, I got older. And then I got older, I couldn't afford a certain type of medical aid. And so I needed to get to a different kind of medical aid, which then, of course, wasn't as good as the previous one. So when the COVID Mother, the pandemic hit, I will find myself in a position where, where, at first, not being able to access the best health care facilities wasn't too strenuous. Like suddenly, it was like fearful because once COVID hits in you the possibility of you getting COVID met COVID meant you're not going to the best private hospital, you potentially need to go to the nearest one that your medical aid allows. And I

mean, that's such a privileged position to be in the fact that I'm even speaking of medical aid in my country, you know, like a lot of people don't even have that I can afford that. Some people have hospital plans. And that's that also just like, insufficient, you know, and so I think before it was before COVID, it was okay, it was good. It was fine. It was adequate. It said that adequate. And since then, it's adequate, suddenly has dropped on a tear and is now suddenly not good enough. And this is all coming from a privileged position of being able to even have the access to some form of health care that at least has some semblance of privatized hospital care.

Kit Heintzman 07:50

Staying in the pre pandemic world, what was your day to day looking like before,

Gyre 07:56

Hustle. Ah, I just walk the streets of Johannesburg. Of course, because I'm a musician. And because I'm getting like my name out there, I should do SCTV I pick it up like it used to be pretty epic. Rather, I used to wake up in the morning, if I had a task to do go to that task. usually take the taxis and ethical way of taxis but not like not like Uber taxi, like a taxi taxi, like a mini bus, which takes like a lot of us. So I take a minibus taxi and go wherever I need to go, whether that's to do a video shoot or photoshoot. studio time, conducting different form of interviews, I guess. And I was, I guess, in a way just before COVID, I had a job. But I mean, I was only working on the weekends. So that was really nice. Then I spent most of my days indoors, really. And so I never really, I ended up not leaving as much as most people would. But whenever I leave the house, I leave the house with a very particular agenda and a particular purpose to fulfill. And so a lot of times I spent walking, like engaging with people meeting up with people organizing events, organizing different ways in which we can collaborate with other artists in and around Johannesburg.

Kit Heintzman 09:25

What are some of the ways that you've been having to adapt that in a post or mid pandemic world?

Gyre 09:33

Well, the adaptation has come in the fact that there can't there's no places to go collaborate to like in fact, actually think about it. Like a lot of people who are getting gigs and jobs right now in the artistic field are DJs because everybody wants to have a good time. And DJs are easy, good time. You know, you just stood up and did it go but with performance Now, firstly, like the important cog, forget performance and young, upcoming performance. In the sea underground scene, at least we're the underground event organizers who were constantly trying to put events together all of a Sunday. Now, they don't have the means to put anything together. And so we find ourself in a position where, like, there's nowhere to go really, like I now it's the matter of just going back again, at a dance school. That's because I put myself in dance clothes, like, you know, I need something to do in the day. I can't sit down every day in my house anymore. It's just, it's crazy. You know. And so that was my means of trying to do something, but And so that has given me a semblance of like normality, because I have now I take the bus and go to go to school and Sunninghill and it's nice and dance all day, come back exhausted as fuck, but it's fine. It's better than being exhausted from, you know, being Tom doing nothing, because that's the worst. But that's another story for another day. But anyway, it's just been quite, it's been, it's been hard to adapt, because it's, it's hard to find a sense of productive productivity, and also understanding what can what you consider as productive, because suddenly, you know, because there has been a shortage of that economic stimulus within the industry. Cons now put your success only on how much you earn, make over the weekend from the get go, whatever. Because you got to find a different way in which you can understand and quantify your growth, and use that to

motivate you to continue to go so hard, but doable. But hard yet again, I must say, from a privileged position, I happen to live in the first suburb outside of the city, you know, suburbs outside of the cities are just nice, because it's easy access, I just take one taxi, and I'm in the city and I can walk around the city walk around to other neighboring neighborhoods amongst the other around the city. You know, there's people who are in the outskirts of Johannesburg, who are in Soweto, which is like a township. Which fine, yes, there are taxis as well going there. But, of course, with a greater distance comes greater expenditure with regards to transport, you know, so there's that. But yeah, it's been quite a transition. Now, figuring out what one can do on a day to day basis.

Kit Heintzman 12:37

I'd be interested in hearing about your initial reactions to COVID-19 in the beginning.

Gyre 12:46

I mean, I keep, I always try to think about the moment I first heard about it. And I'm just like, why can't I remember, like i bet It just shows how nonchalant I was to it. Like, I remember hearing about, okay, the virus in the city called Wuhan in China. And everybody locked up, and I'm just like, okay, sweetie. That's cute. Let's keep it in China. Don't get it here. And then it got here, you know, and then it got very scary, because in the numbers, particularly, of course, because of the Western world, and how influenced we are by the Western world and South Africa, you start hearing particularly at the US, and the numbers were spiking in those old Trump denialism, you know, happening at the time. So that as well was contributing causes like, I mean, they may consider taking says the, Surely there is nothing to do with this, and then the numbers spiked. And then that was scary, you know, and I think that's when it's like I had an event I had to go to a week before we had our first lockdown. And I was totally going until, like, it started getting scary. The numbers were rising worldwide. And like, I think it was just or was about to be made classified as a pandemic. And then that's when I even went online. I was like, Guys, Salto, my friends. I'm not coming like, ain't they, honey? I'm sorry. But there'll be another opportunity. I can't risk it, you know. And so yeah, I think it was a matter of disbelief at first. And then when eventually hit the country. It was all like, Okay, well, we're in lockdown. And I think it really hit home when someone close to me passed from it. And then that's when you're like, oh, shit, like, this isn't real. Like this is real, real, like people are dying for real. You know? So I'd say disbelief.

Kit Heintzman 14:45

You'd be willing to say a bit more about how that reaction has changed over time.

Gyre 14:53

I think it fluctuates. My reaction differently changes. Like with every season, we've had different kinds of lockdown since we've been in the initial lockdown. And of course we've had the first and the second wave, which has like influenced us, I think the first wave hit. And that's when I read this when I lost someone close to me. And then second wave from the second wave hits, just before the second wave hit. Like the country's opening up a bit. And I was like, still very like, no, no, no, no, no, I don't, I don't play with COVID. Like, I'm not leaving my house. I don't want to be seen outside of my house. Until eventually, like, it just lasted a bit longer, and like the country was open. So then I was like, okay, cool. Maybe I'm overreacting, went back into the field. It was cool. It was fun. And then we'd like the second wave. And then it was like, Oh, shit, needs to get back. So I thought back and he since then, that was opened up again. And I think now I'm, I think I'm as at ease as I've ever been with regards to the, the virus, that because I don't feel the virus, but because I just am in desperate need to live my life. And it's just, it's, it's so hard not to. So how to be alive and not feel like you're living. And I just, that's what it felt

like, I just felt like I was alive. But I wasn't living. I was literally waking up currency that I said, Bad habits for me of smoking. And like, I just didn't want to I don't want that perpetual sense of nothingness. You know, and so that it's just, I think it always fluctuates, you know, and until the last time and again, close to me, like two people close to me no matter what week, and it hits you again. So I just think it, it goes on and off. Really, and it depends on the day, it depends on the day depends on how much the media is feeding us and what they're saying the media. And that informs how much I feel as well, quite honestly, as well as the fact that even when I'm not tiny, engage with the media, there are friends who are and so that news trickles to you and you have your going, brother, your attitudes become informed by that invariably, by the fact that you deal with people who are engaging with the media. So it's up and down, up and down.

Kit Heintzman 17:32

So 2020 has been a pretty big year, with many things, not limited to the pandemic, I was wondering if you'd say something about what some of the biggest issues on your mind have been over the last year?

Gyre 17:48

Well, the first that comes to mind, of course, is the BLM Movement, which was just, it just engulf the world really. Which is the Big Island, like, building you infuriating for two reasons. You know, it's like a catch 22. For me, I'm happy at the fact that actors movement, and like there's great conversations that have been had and changes happening. infuriated by the fact that it's just it's always has to be triggered by tragedy, like, Why does it always have to be triggered by tragedy? You know, and particularly in my country, you know, I'm in a country of dominance black people. I, it's, it's so frustrating to have a movement, or rather, the plight of black people become a conversation only when people in the diaspora are speaking up about it, like white Americans have to speak about it, because Africans suddenly pay attention to the fact that like, oh, wait, we're black too. We're also suffering from a lot of Neo apartheid, Neo colonialist, Neo liberal agendas that are really not actually beneficial to the day to day black person. And so that in and of itself is a bit frustrating, but as a whole, the Black Lives Matter movement, and the momentum that it that it gained in the past year was very, very encouraging. With regards to queer issues in this country, we spoke about it I've written about it, you know, just just, I don't want to say it was the were more heightened or spoken about a bit more interesting. the queer community in South Africa has become a bit more has, has found a way to, to counter the violence that we experience by finding their own form of violence in the sense that it's not physical, but they're able to call people out on social media and being able to pin a sense of consequence, you know, for anti queer or, or very duality or straight up hate speech. You know, that gets Again, people fired, people are losing the jobs, and the streets are hating it. And it's like, I mean, really, dude, what do you expect us to do, that's the least we can do, like, get you fired, so that you don't do this to another queer person and kill their destiny to do it online. You know. So that was very encouraging to see where people find a way to counter the violence that we experience on the day to day in the country. However, I don't think it's enough, it's never has been enough. And largely, it's the gay community, I say that LGBT plus the queer community, but the larger the gig community, I feel there's lots of intersectional work that still needs to be done with regards to dsbn, trans bisexual communities, in our own community, and how we engage with them and how the work we do to make sure that they are as protected as we are, because as much as there is protection, while the lack not enough protection for queer people and gay people, there's more for gay people by the virtue of the fact that the male, first of all, in the is for a lot of other demographics within the queer demographic. So that was also a very encouraging movement that was very touching, I think those are the two that really come to mind. On my end, you know, at least ones that I can speak of the ones that another that I can speak of that I'm also an ally, or am an ally to, of course, ramifications of either the spreading of the attitudes that have pushed through the me to

movement, you know, and but that has done for a feminist cause and being in light, the issues that women are facing in the world today, and how they are still the same archaic things, people will find info like that 20 years ago, so not even 50 years ago, you know, and so I think that was also very, very, very encouraging. But it's just, I think more than anything, if there was a movement that is still being shunned, despite all of this is still movements that catered towards the promotion of women's rights. And I think that still needs work, but strides were taken London is, and like I said, I'm an ally, so I can't really speak too much on it, but I recognize the changes. And I also recognize the shortcomings and recognize the need to continue all these movements. which pertain to women.

Kit Heintzman 22:48

I'm curious, what does health mean to you?

Gyre 22:57

It's a very hard question. Funnily enough, I think, if I was to keep it basic, and think about it too much help for me means I can wake up, and I can do what I need to do get done on that day, and I can rest and wake up and do it again. You know, one that actually is so invested in my health, which is works to my detriment other times, because I find my body always ends up saying, nah, sit down, bro. Like, you've, you're tired. You know, and that's another thing I think the pandemic helped with. It's like, it just showed you how much we don't take care of ourselves. We'll just showed me as well, how much I don't take care of myself, did I learn? I mean, helps out. But I don't know, I think it's something that I think I still take for granted. And I because I just keep it at that minimal place of, okay, I can wake up and breathe, and get ready to get done. Done. And that's enough. Perhaps I should widen the scope of that. But genuinely, honestly, health means I can wake up, get my day to day life done, and move on sleep and do it again.

Kit Heintzman 24:17

What are some of the changes you think we would need to see for people to have access to that kind of help that you just described?

Gyre 24:28

We need a revolution. I mean, genuinely, we need a revolution, you know, because access to health is a human rights, but unfortunately, it's in its own right, that has just been afforded to few and not the masses, you know, so that I think we need to one T monetize healthcare. That's the first thing like and people like, I mean, how can you do that the state needs to be able to keep itself going and But I mean, it just needs to be the certain things that just can't You can't pay for and we can't, we can't pay for education, and you shouldn't pay for education. And you shouldn't pay for your health care, because we need healthy humans and educated humans to keep building more. You know, like, as you know, recently, I just been thinking, because I had a discussion with some people in there was speaking about colonialism and speaking about conquest. And you know, how, prior to the age we live in, the age people lived in was like an Age of Conquest with people were taking over each other's countries and everything like that. And I was like, Yeah, whatever. But I was thinking, I wonder if like, maybe a century from now, maybe later, that don't look back. And the same way we look at conquest, culture and slavery, culture, is the way that they look at us for being so complicit in capitalism. You know, because I think at the core of it, is that is the issue, like, the capitalist model requires commodification of everything, as simple as healthcare, you know, and I mean, I'm opening a big can of worms, which I definitely cannot, like, get into in this moment. But truly, we need a revolution, we need a revolution, we need a change in ideology, and then an end, and a humanitarian

awakening. Another one, because I think it's been a century now. And all we live off is human rights. But we know now that there's certain people that can get away with not affording others the human rights that they are deserving of. And that lies that therein lies the problem therein lies the fundamental issue that we suffer from. We don't have access to healthcare, because we don't have money to access that healthcare to go back to my earlier example, like, I had to downgrade the kind of medical aid I had, because I didn't have I didn't have enough money. I mean, that in itself just is indicative of it. And that's from it again, from a coverage position. So I think, really, that's what we need a revolution, I see a want to break it down and say, more palatable times. But really, that's the only practical we need radical change, that the commodifies the human experience, and roots in humanity so that we all can access the basic needs, we need to keep alive and use a capitalist term to grow.

Kit Heintzman 27:59

What does safety mean to you.

Gyre 28:07

I'm safety. Tired. It's hard to describe safety. Safety is being able to live my day to day life without feeling a sense of anxiety in whatever action that I take in that day. That's what safety means to me. I'm actually watching posts for the first time. And it's a bit triggering. It's fun, because the stack guard crew people, but it's that triggering because it's like, man, like I totally get the sense of not feeling safe in the space. Because it's like, I can feel the antagonism I can see the eyes, I can feel the eyes, I can feel that I'm wanted here. And it's just that's just so scary. So scary. So safety is being able to self Express without feeling a sense of anxiety that there will be consequences that are adverse to my existence

Kit Heintzman 29:25

There's been a very narrow description of safety under COVID-19 in relationship to the virus. I'm wondering what how you've been negotiating with others needs around safety at that mark micro scale

Gyre 29:49

Um, I live in a country that actually is doing well because to the basics that wearing masks that I think everyone is okay with that you seldom find someone fighting the need to wear a mask. social distancing is a bit of an issue because South Africans are just so like, touchy. And the close to you, you know, I had one application, in which I asked male to step aside to give me some space to social distance. And he was very antagonized by that, and he was completely aggressive towards me, but that had also a lot of, you know, homophobic undertones, you could sense that in the way that is spoken the words that he said to me. So I think that's all that's been hard about an effort to put it in the lens of myself as queer person, that whenever I feel like enforcing the safety guidelines, to a person who is adverse to them, I get a very two pronged that means of a response from them, which is not only a, you can't tell me what to do, it's, you can't tell me what to do. You gay man, you know. And so that's been, I think that's been the hardest part of it all. Otherwise, I think, and in the small in the small ways of it all, it's been more doable. But it's also harder when you add like events because they, I mean, South Africans, like, we party in a different way. And like, there's definitely news like, I thought, social pressure, where I've had a mask on in the space where everyone didn't have the mask on. And the first time some of that take off that mask contact, okay. And then someone was like, don't fall for that, that social pressure. So when someone said, take off the ball, I was gonna say, No, I won't. And then they didn't. And then a few minutes data as I really feeling the social pressure, like now because like, I feel stupid, and took off the mask, you know, so it's been hard to deal with. But it's been doable, but it's been hard. It's just also like, what do you quantify as safe sometimes outside of what I just spoke

about, you know what I mean, actually, in the lens of what I spoke about, I figured out that I have an anxiety I had an anxiety about, about life and death and death itself. Because then if we I was I was thinking, Oh, my God, I'm going to get the virus this way. Oh, my God, that person in the taxi just sneezed. Why did you sneeze bro, they could have never afford it. You know. So that is that anxiety that speak of different my day to day life without feeling a sense of anxiety. So that's also been hard because the con micromanage everyone. And all you can do is do the best for yourself.

Kit Heintzman 32:33

I wanted to follow up on something you had said earlier, which is, How is your relationship to touch changed over the course of the pandemic?

Gyre 32:45

How personal can I get

Kit Heintzman 32:48

As personal as you're comfortable with

Gyre 32:50

Okay, I'm pretty open book. So funny. It's a funny story. I tell everyone, not everyone, but I don't mind telling the story. So I had my first hook up, like in November, the first couple of the oh, it was an anxious experience. Cuz, like I remember, I met up with this guy I met online. And we're talking right and was socially distance. And like, it's cool. We're talking, we're talking, we're talking. And I'm just like, Oh my God, I don't know what to do about the situation. And then I think it's now time that I wasn't, I was Alfia. But I wasn't really feeling it. I was like, whatever man I could move on. But he unbeknownst to me, because he didn't look it was actually really feeling it. And so he said that for a second. Hello, my things about to go give me the longest hug and I'm like, oh my god, I haven't thought someone so close to me. That's a long time. But that's like, okay, it's just a hug, not gonna die from COVID. Then he leans over to kiss me. And I was like, Oh my God. And then, like, he asked me for like the first 30 seconds. And then he stepped outside to go check something else again. And I was losing my shirt. Oh my god, oh my god, he took us out some big news for Apple. And then he came back and then I was like, okay, should access to next to tech, this is normal. It's okay, you're not going to die. And then there is this too. It's R rated. I'm not going to get into that. But I love that moment was so funny because like, it just showed me how much I like how anxious I become, to like, the idea of being touched and being intimate with anyone. You know, like I think touching physical touching. Like I never really got too close to anyone to be able to because like I said, I took a very long time to get back into black life and doing day to day things anyway, so I was hardly in contact with people. So when I was it was like, okay, but that was the first time I really got into contact with someone like up close and got them per No, and it was very, initially very uncomfortable. And like I said, that peer pressured myself into the whole engagement, because I was just like, dude, like really 2020 is gonna go by and nothing. I'm asking your girl do it, you can tell that. Oh God and it was a bit of a it was about a long weekend I told my friends a binary virus G virus, black God on my side, surely God understands my human needs. So that was pretty interesting. Other than that, I also find it hard. Because like, I'm, I'm a very affectionate person as well generally, and I don't mind anything, but like, some people just like, didn't understand that like, now it's COVID. So you can't actually do that. So I suffered a lot from sort of social pressure you gain from not handshakes, but has people want to hug you and just be like, No, like I like also recently I was out from a performance and someone obviously recognized me, someone who's a supporter of my work, and they were so excited. And like

that, not in a in a romantic way or anything, but they just wanted to kiss me. And I was like, Oh, hey, hi, ha, and the like. And I'm like, No, oh, my God. I rise. So Well, the thing is just like, it's, it's so hard to be able to stand your ground and sometimes with people who are more blase with it of types. Other than that, like, I mean, I've always just also just kept my knees up, no one touches me inappropriately, generally, generally. So that was like, whatever. But like, I do think those particularly two examples, particularly the first speak to how my relationship to touch has changed. Like, it was like, such a sensational moment, like, not in that, like, sexual way. But like, it was just like, the sensation felt so new to me to have someone so close that it was like, Okay, I didn't really understand that. I definitely don't need to do this. Like, not even every month. And I haven't hooked up with it. No, I have not actually. I don't mind though, because it's like, my basis to touch has really changed. Like, I'm really like, No, I let go should be destiny. But let's socially use this today, you know? So, yeah, my relationship has changed drastically.

Kit Heintzman 37:34

How are you feeling about the immediate future?

Gyre 37:41

It's hard not to think about it from a point of view who am at right now, because I've had a shitty two days. But I think that's part and parcel of just that life, you have some pretty shitty days. But I'm optimistic. I'm very optimistic about the near future. Because I think outside of the health things that have happened, because COVID, like I said, many things that come to light, as a result of the pandemic, in terms of like, social movements, in terms of like, social needs, as well. And opportunities as well, as I always say to people that like COVID has been the biggest reset button, it's been in a minute, you know, and you can just start again and figure things out. And so it's x, I'm excited because we're literally walking into a new, completely new world, like you feel it in the a seat, and how people engage, and how you engage as an individual to the world around you. And I think that that has been very, for me encouraging. I like change. I like change. I see that all the time, that change happens, and I'm back. But I like change. I really like change, I hate still things I hate, not being able to I'm going to create a sudden insight, and I like to flow with the air. So I'm optimistic about the near future. I'm optimistic.

Kit Heintzman 39:16

What are some of your hopes for the more long term future?

Gyre 39:24

My hopes for the long term future I mean, as a race, human race, the size of in the things that we undertake, because I think that's what COVID is also showing us when you have heartedly do things, you get half hearted results, like the universe doesn't give you 10 out of 10 for a two out of 10 commitment to a task, you know, so I'm hoping that in the long term future that When we say that we are working towards getting better rights for women, and queer people, that people and other minority groups, we are doing it and not saying it, because karma will bite our butts, if we don't, because the universe will put us in a position where we have no choice but to confront all these issues. And I think, if we haven't taken that out of this whole situation, then I think we have not learned from this. And God knows how many waves I believe when you don't know this in your role, you will experience it a billion times and if the human race and the the people of this time have not learned that lesson, I fear that COVID is just the start of a barrage of tragedies, or in the hope of teaching us truth humanity

Kit Heintzman 40:59

What are some of the ways that you've been taking care of yourself over the last year?

Gyre 41:07

I think I've taken more care of my mental health, so suck at it. But I've I've been recognize the importance of also recognize truly recognize the importance of rest. You know, it against capitalist world we live in just doesn't allow you to rest. It just wants you to keep keep at it, keep at it, but like I've learned the value of waste. And I think that's the probably the best way I can take care of myself, because that's the one thing I probably wouldn't wasn't doing enough of pre pandemic black as always on a row always busy with something. I mean, until this day mother's always busy with something. Are you doing? A lot? am I even doing? Good question. You know, of course got advance, of course, we get into that, but first is important, and then that rest is important. And don't I see. I just need to find out what my medical aid allows me to get in terms of enough my mental health, or love, and I made for my brain coming up my brain. And the importance of that, and the necessity, that that that has actually, over my productivity, not only for the sake of the external things I need to get done. But as well, for my special wealth, for my mental wealth, and for my level of self feeling.

Kit Heintzman 43:01

So I'm at the penultimate question. So we know we're in this moment of a flurry of biomedical and scientific research. I'm wondering what you think people in the humanities and the social sciences could be doing to help us understand this moment?

Gyre 43:26

I think perhaps they need to learn too much. Speak above us and speak to us learn how to speak in lay. Like, how do you tell the layperson what's happening in the importance of what's happening? The same way? I think climate change activists, I think they need to do more in this country, at least to explain to the layperson, what's going on to our planet, you know, because I think in terms of fancy, but they like, they stick they stay and they vote for academic discourse, whereas the word needs to be done on the ground, you know, and so I think they need to learn to rather not even learn, they must quickly apply to the job, how to speak to the lay person about what's happening, the importance of what's happening, the decisions they taking, why they're making those decisions, the ration now of those decisions, to the day to day person, because then that gives perspective, and gives them time as well to fully develop things without the pressure like, it's like if they knew how to explain how you get a vaccine, maybe people wouldn't be so panicked and rushed to get a vaccine, you know, or rather than make many so many mistakes about vaccine vaccine rollouts, how do those work? You know, I think I think be able to communicate to people on a very, like, basic human level that be able to give themselves time to do the work without the pressure and without unnecessary or educated views being filtered or manipulated by either states or partisan desires within the political realm. So that's what does that make sense?

Kit Heintzman 45:25

It does. Yes. So this is my last question. This is an oral history interview. And I come to that with some assumptions as a historian, and one of them is that historians of my moment are taught to pay very dedicated to attention to what our historical actors thought was important at the time. So what they deemed as important really matters to us. I'm wondering if you could speak to historians of the future. What kinds of stories would you tell them not to forget?

Gyre 46:05

Whooo. Simple actually, do not forget the story of queer, black, differently abled