

## **Black Lives Matter.**

Spirit & Place supports the protesters who are demanding an end to police brutality, a biased criminal justice system, and the systemic racism that is killing Black Americans. We see you. We hear you. We grieve with you. We support you.

For 25 years, Spirit & Place has been a community platform for wrestling with challenging questions. In 2015 we turned the questions inward and began an internal journey to dismantle our complicity in upholding institutional racism and white supremacy.

Through the fearless efforts of Black scholars, artists, and community leaders, we have learned valuable lessons. It is through their labor we have been able to invite you along on this journey and we want to acknowledge that.

The work of [Dr. Keisha Blain](#) on [The Charleston Syllabus](#) is what allowed us to create [Powerful Conversations on Race](#) which asked you to confront the history of anti-Black violence and oppression in the United States.

The words and wisdom of artist/activist [Killer Mike](#) and the Pulitzer Prize winning journalist of the *1619 Project*, [Nikole Hannah-Jones](#), asked you to look deeply into America's past to understand why the American Dream is a myth for many Black people.

Local poet and spoken word artist [Manon Voice](#), IU-Bloomington scholar and poet [Dr. Maria Hamilton Abegunde](#), and author [Maurice Broaddus](#) have pushed recent festival events to truly meaningful places by asking us to consider not only the pain of being Black in the U.S., but to recognize and value the beauty, creativity, and wisdom found in the Black experience.

And the work of our exceptional community partners including the [Kheprw](#)

[Institute](#), [Groundwork Indy](#), [MLK Center](#), and [Child Advocates](#) have allowed us to connect you to other opportunities to wrestle with challenging questions.

We will continue on our journey, knowing that we have much more to learn, knowing that we have made mistakes and will make mistakes, and knowing that we are morally compelled to combat a culture of white supremacy and structural racism that has been centuries in the making and that lies at the foundation of American society.

Spirit & Place will continue to create new connections and conversations that center unheard voices, foster new directions, and imagine a thriving future for all people, especially those who continue to suffer under systems of injustice and oppression.

We will use our three civic tools—the arts, humanities, and religion—to do this work. We need the [arts](#) to help us shift perspectives, the humanities to help us find [connections](#) and [patterns](#) between the [past and present](#), and [spiritual practices and wisdom](#) that promote healing and build community.

### **We can't do this alone and ask you to join us.**

Here are a few things to get you started:

- Do the work it takes to become an anti-racist by [reading more for yourself](#) and the [children](#) in your life.
- Study the [language](#) you're using.
- Actively support [changes to police and criminal justice policy](#).
- Support educational reform efforts to incorporate [racial justice work into the classroom](#).
- Follow the work of groups like [Indy10 Black Lives Matter](#), the [African American Coalition of Indianapolis](#), and [Indy SURJ-Showing Up for Racial](#)

Justice.

- Support Black-owned businesses and media like [\*The Indianapolis Recorder\*](#).
- Learn new skills to dismantle institutional and structural racism from organizations like [Midwest Academy](#) and [Race Forward](#).

Ask the big questions. Sit with the answers you hear. Get ready for a lot of work. Dismantling the racist systems of this country will not be easy and will not be achieved in a single lifetime. But you can move us closer to a better reality.

Because if not you, then who?

In solidarity,

Pam Blevins Hinkle  
and the Spirit & Place Staff