

## **ARTISTIC STATEMENT**

As a child, I romanticized and dreamed about the stories I heard about our Black ancestors. I grew up to be a playwright who combines my art, and our history, to celebrate the legacy of our people. I consider myself to be an artist activist, like the incredible Nina Simone. Her music intentionally fueled a revolutionary movement about the state of Black life and inspired change. I like to think my work follows in the lineage of Nina Simone's music, with some Moms Mabley mixed in! Grouping these two icons together may seem contradictory, but that's my style and represents me as an artist. Moms Mabley was just as brave, and intentional, in how she used her gift and serves as a great inspiration to me as well.

In my work, I resist being bound by the constraints of any one genre despite tackling difficult subjects. I choose to embrace the complexities and the contradictions of life in my writing because that's what feels real. I love writing realism and romance, but I also love creating sketches, farces and stand-up comedy. So even when trying to tackle very important social issues, I pull from a diverse range of influences and styles that capture that messy, and sometimes contradictory, version of humanity that feels familiar to me. Just because there's an important message, doesn't mean it can't be funny! Writers like Spike Lee, Neil Simon, Lynn Nottage, and Edward Albee serve as inspirations and guides for both capturing those feelings in my writing and presenting it to the audience as incredible entertainment.

As a Black woman, I aim to write the stories I dreamed of as a child from an authentic place, delivered with plenty of truth, love, and laughter. My writer's heart revels in creating period-pieces and romantic comedies centered around the lives of unique and complex Black women. There are countless stories of women, and other marginalized people, that have yet to be given a true voice on stage and screen. Whose voices deserve support and inclusion, and whose stories still resonate with women, like myself, today. I write to amplify their voices and update our written histories to not only properly include them, but to give them the shine they always deserved.