UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Inspired Leadership: Engaging the Voice and Embodying Advocacy

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree Master of Fine Arts

in

Theatre and Dance (Stage Management)

by

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Committee in charge:

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2017
The Thesis of Kamra A. Jacobs is approved and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2017
DEDICATION

To my family for taking that leap of faith with me and believing in my dreams even when I could not see them clearly. All of this is for you!
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my Mom and Dad, thank you for giving me the space to dream.

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To Chuck and Lisa, for teaching me what it means to advocate for myself. You have truly shown me what it means be a teacher, mentor and now friend. Thank you for pushing me to get myself out of the “call center.”
ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Inspired Leadership: Engaging the Voice and Embodying Advocacy

by

Kamra A. Jacobs

Master of Fine Arts in Theatre and Dance (Stage Management)

University of California, San Diego, 2017

Professor Lisa Porter, Chair

The journey of finding my voice has forced me to *show up and be seen* in my work. I silenced my own voice at a dehumanizing call center, as a faceless target for frustrated customers. I discovered the power of connection by embodying advocacy and engaging my voice and body in my work. Primarily, I listen to my gut and trust my intuition. Secondly, I advocate by speaking up for those who cannot advocate for themselves. During the *Streamers* production process, when I felt the twinge in my gut, the stagnation of oxygen flowing to my head, or the tightening in my throat, I paid attention.
In *Streamers*, Carlyle says, “That’s the black man’s problem altogether. Too much feelin’. He too close to everything. He is, man too close to his blood, to his body.” I am close to my body and previously chose to hide so I was not labeled as an “angry black woman.” Fear of that stereotype dominated my work and silenced my voice. I dreaded the dissonance that is necessary for dynamic collaboration. When *Streamers* placed the challenges of race relations, nudity and violence in my lap, I chose to engage by ensuring the actors felt heard and understood. This was a vulnerable place and I was their advocate while continuing to nurture the creativity of the process. Being close to my body and engaging my voice is my key to effective and inspired leadership.