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The Evolution of a Multi-Hyphenate Artist

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Gregory, Michael Rishawn

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

The Evolution of a Multi-Hyphenate Artist

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

in

Theatre and Dance (Acting)

by

Michael Rishawn Gregory

Committee in charge:

Richard Robichaux, Chair  
Eva Barnes  
Ursula Meyer

2020

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The Thesis of Michael Rishawn Gregory 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

2020

DEDICATION

Sharon Ann Stewart-Gregory

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File 1. *RAISIN IN THE SUN* Photo 1, gregory\_RAISIN IN THE SUN\_Photo1.jpg

File 2. *RAISIN IN THE SUN* Photo 2, gregory\_RAISIN IN THE SUN\_Photo2.jpg

File 3. *RAISIN IN THE SUN*, Photo 3 gregory\_RAISIN IN THE SUN\_Photo3.jpg

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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To Kim Rubenstein (Acting Faculty/Directing Faculty 2017-2020) and Wesley Fata (Acting Faculty 2017-2018) - thank you to you both for challenging me to be the best artist I can be. You both have left an undeniable imprint upon my level of artistry and development as a young man. All my gratitude.

## ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

The Evolution of a Multi-Hyphenate Artist

by

Michael Rishawn Gregory

Master of Fine Arts in Theatre and Dance (Acting)

University of California San Diego, 2020

Professor Richard Robichaux, Chair

In his interview with Dr. Kenneth Clark, author James Baldwin states *'there are days when you wonder what your role is in this country and what your future is in it.'* This quote is in reference to Baldwin's experience of living as a black man during the volatile era of civil rights in the United States. At 17 years of age, the role I chose to pursue was that of an actor. This decision was made after feeling the rush of connectivity I had with an audience in a one-act play performance in high school. Fast forward to now, that rush is now beginning to wane. It's waning because my artistic soul is hungry for something bigger, something larger, something more expansive.

As an actor, we give people permission to look at us. Our hiring is the expression of someone else's vision. Distilled even further, the actor is used as a marketing tool leaving them with little advocacy in the creation of another's narrative. But what if an actor has a story to tell? Not one, but two, perhaps even three. Well, they transition to becoming an actor-writer as I have done matriculating through the University of California, San Diego Theatre and Dance program (UCSD).

As much as I could speak about the roles I played at UCSD, true artistic growth came in the form of writing. Taking my advocacy back and becoming a creator within the American theatre and television industry. The act of putting pen to paper allowed me to create the diverse rooms I wanted to be in, but also gave me the opportunity to shed light on issues that weren't being spoken about within the American theatre. UCSD was a place that supported that for which I am forever grateful to.

Being a multi-hyphenate artist is my way of service in the world and what I believe to be the new social currency for actors in today's political climate. It is not enough to just exist in someone else's narrative, for your story is just as important. May you find the courage and boldness to tell it.