

# **BLUE METROPOLIS FESTIVAL - DREAMS & PEACE FORUM**

## **FESTIVAL METROPOLIS BLEU – FORUM RÊVES & PAIX**

**JESSICA JOHNS**

### **1. What are, in your view, the utopian ideas of the moment that may become the reality of tomorrow?**

I don't know if I honestly believe that any utopian ideas of the moment can become the reality of tomorrow. I think that any hope for sustainable existence with the environment, the fall of capitalism, and the destruction of colonial systems of oppression and governance requires widespread action. And the burden of this action isn't solely on the people who are affected most by these things; the action needs to come from people that hold loads of power already. I want to believe in a better tomorrow for future generations to live and thrive, but I also need to be honest about the fragility of that hope.

When I dream about a better future for my future ancestors, I imagine them having their Treaty rights upheld, that they have access to their territory, knowledge, and language, and that they have a sovereign system of governance that centres their wellbeing.

### **2. If we were to introduce but a single important, even radical change to our societies, what would it be?**

The eradication of white supremacy. White supremacy manifests in many aspects of life in so many insidious ways, and is the driving force behind ongoing systems of oppression under colonialism. So the implications for its eradication would be astronomical.

### **3. Where do you find peace in your own life?**

I find a lot of peace in creation. I do a lot of beadwork and make my own kombucha, which are practices that are meditative and calming. They help me ground myself, particularly in difficult times. These are also practices that greatly inform my writing, which is my main creative practice.

Because my writing is often quite emotive, taking a break from that to work on a beading project or to brew kombucha gives me a bit of reprieve. But it also helps my creative process. Often, I'll find great moments of clarity or creative solutions to other work while I'm beading or brewing. Sometimes, these practices inspire creativity when I felt like I'd been tapped out. Beading and brewing are inherently creative, so they require me to put my mind to work in a different way, allowing me to think and consider things differently. Additionally, each practice comes with its own teachings. I've had the amazing opportunity to learn from many talented teachers, and I've incorporated their teachings and practices into much more than beading and kombucha-making.

**4. Reading: What book changed the way you look at one aspect or another of reality? Please provide the name of author, title, publisher, and a brief explanation of your choice.**

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's latest novel *Noopiming: The Cure for White Ladies* (House of Anansi Press, 2020). This novel, like many other works from Leanne Simpson, illustrates the unique experience of time and place for Indigenous (specifically Nishnaabeg) peoples. Though the book is structured into ten parts, the storytelling feels cyclical. It's as if readers can begin anywhere in the book and it will feel like the beginning. Each of the sections is a world of its own, but they also speak to the other sections, creating a webbed narrative that opens up worlds within worlds so carefully. Instead of following a linear timeline, we are following characters, shifting from past to present to future so seamlessly that the colonial construct of time seems to fall away. It's a very refreshing take on the novel, and weaves in Nishnaabeg storytelling practices, centring the importance of relationships over all else.