AISHA FUKUSHIMA

speaker. singer. raptivist

Thursday February 11th (Snider Hall 7:30pm)
Friday February 12th (3 student engagement sessions)

Aisha Fukushima is public speaker, educator, singer, and 'RAPtivist' (rap activist). Fukushima founded RAPtivism (Rap Activism) a global hip hop project spanning 10 countries and four continents, highlighting the ways culture can contribute to universal efforts for freedom and justice by challenging apathy with awareness, ignorance with intelligence, and oppression with expression. She is a multilingual, multiracial African American Japanese woman whose work is influenced by her global upbringing with roots spanning from her birthplace of Seattle, Washington to her other hometown of Yokohama, Japan.

As a leader of the 'RAPtivism' project, Fukushima has engaged in hip hop communities across the United States and from France to Morocco, Kazakhstan, Japan, Germany, England, South Africa, Senegal, India, Denmark and beyond. Fukushima's 'RAPtivism' work has been featured by Oprah Magazine, KQED Public Television, The Seattle Times, TV 2M Morocco, The Bangalore Mirror, HYPE, South Africa's #1 Hip Hop Magazine, among others.

Growing up behind the scenes of the music industry, Fukushima was exposed

firsthand to legendary artists who inspired the birth of hip hop such as James Brown, Funkadelic and The Stylistics.This eventually led her to create her own unparalleled vocal style blending soulful melodies, poetic lyricism, and beatboxing. Fans compare her music to the likes of renowned artists such as Lauryn Hill, Adele, Nina Simone, Ella Fitzgerald and Jill Scott. Her influences also include Erykah Badu, Lupe Fiasco, Sweet Honey in the Rock, Mos Def, and countless international hip-hop acts. In 2012, Fukushima released her global "RAPtivism" (rap activism) album featuring more than 20 leading political hip hop acts from around the world including Black Noise (South Africa), Positive Black Soul (Senegal) and DJ Noize (Denmark). Additionally she has been featured on a number of albums including MAD lines' "MAD Habits" (2012), Street Poet Inc.'s "Origins" (2012), Ras K'dee's "Cloudwriter" (2011) and Emile YX?'s "Conscious Rhymes for Unconscious Times" (2010).

As a public speaker, Fukushima combines the art of performance and lecture. In her speeches she links themes such as hip-hop, global citizenship, youth engagement and activism in a way that is accessible to audiences of any age and background.

She was the first non-Native person to deliver a keynote address at Montana's 2012 Schools of Promise Conference for Indigenous youth and has presented at such diverse venues as Stanford University, Michigan State University's Asian American conference, People of Color in Independent Schools (POCIS) conferences, UMass Amherst, TEDxSitka, TEDxWhitman, TEDxUWCCR, Rock The School Bells, Osaka University, among others.

Over the last 8 years, her passion for empowering young people through the performing arts has led her to build educational programs such as Turn Off The Stereotypes (2005), Whitman Institute of Summer Enrichment (2006) and SISTARZ, an all-girls hip hop club (2012). She has also been honored with a number of prestigious fellowships for her work from institutions such as Duke University's Ralph Bunche Institute of Summer Enrichment, Humanity in Action's European Program (The Netherlands) and the Thomas J. Watson Foundation. Recipient of a prestigious Watson Fellowship to promote her global Raptivism project, Fukushima holds an honors degree in Rhetoric and Film Studies from Whitman College (2009) with minors in French Literature and Gender Studies. She currently lives in the San Francisco, and when she is not in the Bay Area she can often be found immersed in Copenhagen, Denmark's dynamic hip-hop scene. Fukushima is fluent in French and is building proficiency in Japanese, Arabic and Wolof.