



Rev. Jé Exodus Hooper, PhD (them/they) is an Ethical Culture clergy Leader, arts and cultural community curator, and public theologian who serves the Ethical Culture Movement, Unitarian Universalist and other congregational Humanist spaces alike. Dr. Hooper refers to their practice of Humanism as ‘neo-mannerism,’ a term inspired by the artistic work of Ernie Barnes, a Black American artist who depicted Black life and their liberation during the 1970s. Philosophically and ethically, they define Neomannerism within the thoughts of Larry Neal Jones saying, “aesthetic and ethics are one”. Like the delightful, disproportionate figurines found in Neomannerist paintings, Dr. Hooper’s posture of joyful resistance does not shy away from discomfort, dysfunction, and disorder. Dr. Hooper finds a way to cultivate a social elegance using obscure techniques of creative-tension, finesse, and



aliveness that the status quo cannot imagine under disproportionate circumstances.

Dr. Hooper as Ethical Culture Leadership pans across the country ranging from Riverdale Yonkers Society for Ethical Culture to First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis

amidst the tenure of Rev. Dr. David Breeden. By using organizational viewpoints informed by cultural institutions, such theatre, arts museum, and educational programs. Their work is not only found within the confines of academic and religious institutions—they are most alive as a griot of digital spaces, an activist of studios and stages, a public theologian of dance-halls and clubs, and a provocateur of embodied preaching. Dr. Hooper dares their audience to, in the words of James Baldwin, “take off the mask” and to live as cultural archetypes of “... quest and daring and growth,” so that others may find a home in their humanity. These transaesthetic and transdisciplinary approaches console and agitate communities by re-imagining and re-claiming narratives that honor the inherited worth and dignity within all people—a he[art] work that Jé is committed to!

To best decolonize the thinking of those around Dr. Hooper, they use the skill of word-working as a love language—a type of folk-talk that cultivates free-thinking ecosystems through embodiment, intuition, imagination, and a socio-practice of improvisation. Here, power is traded for posture, privilege is exchanged for purpose, and prejudice is displaced by the activism of pleasure. Dr. Hooper has collaborated and advised on multiple projects such as UU 30 days of Love, “Care Without God”: Humanist Chaplaincy for Sankofa CPE, Pride and the Pews, Ethics Unplugged, and the Destigmatization of HIV/AIDS with Interfaith America. Their articles include Leading Edge: Public Theologian Jé Exodus Hooper in UU World Magazine (Spring 2022) and New Black Equation: A Review on Spirit in the Dark Body: Black Queer Expression of the Im/material with Elyse Ambrose. Their production portfolio includes the direction and creation of their film, Humanitas: A Conscious Coloring of Kindness, which is based on the relationship between W.E.B. DuBois and Felix Adler. This project was sponsored and funded by American Ethical Union’s Mossler Fellowship that debuted in New York City. Other produced works include Moving Upon the Face of the Deep, featuring Dr. Cornel West; The Black Sacred Communion, and a collaboration with storæe michele entitled, [the listening heart]. Dr. Hooper’s portfolio has congregated around subject matter such as polyamory, trans and non-binary queer identities and possibilities, race, art, and organizational development.

When time and distance permit, Dr. Hooper enjoys spending quality time with their life companion, Maij Vu Mai (they/them), a MFA candidate for Creative Writing and Publishing Art at University of Baltimore. The two of them care for their fur babies, Xerxes and Lorde. In addition, Dr. Hooper carries the love and support of their mother (Mama Hooper) and late father into this venture.