

# Beyond Inclusion: Toward Multilayered Representation

By Ashley J Hicks



As an artist with almost ten years of acting experience under my belt, my relationship to entertainment continues to evolve, specifically in terms of representation and inclusive casting. In 2018, I had the pleasure of talking to a casting director with albinism at the NOAH conference. She asked me why I wanted to be an actor. In addition to loving the adrenaline rush of performing, I appreciate importance of actors with albinism being invited to tell our own stories. I want to SEE people with albinism being featured in a more authentic and accurate way. While my motives were applauded, she encouraged me to go even further with my mission. Rather than focus simply on telling more stories about people with albinism, I now look forward to when we're cast as leads in film, headliners in a Broadway show, or reoccurring characters on a major network, without our albinism being the main plot point. This isn't to suggest that our albinism isn't important (it very much is!) but that our identities are multilayered and should be displayed as such in the arts.

Representation matters! The stories we witness being told in entertainment are just

as important as who gets to tell those stories. We are more than our condition and the way in which we are depicted in the arts should not be limited to the hardships we face. We can be the love interest, the scholar, the quirky best friend, the three dimensional villain and much more.

To all the young ones with albinism out there considering a life in the arts, the tide is changing. One day soon, you'll look at the screen and see someone who looks like you and say, "Hey, I wanna do that! I CAN do that!"



Ashley J Hicks is a second year MFA Candidate at the American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco