After witnessing and surviving a series of micro-aggressions directed at black audience members at theatres where her plays were being presented, playwright Dominique Morisseau channelled her frustration into positive action for the Off-Broadway run of PIPELINE. She came up with the following guidelines to help combat white supremacy culture in the theatre and ensure that every audience member felt welcomed and able to engage with the story.

Playwright’s Rules of Engagement

• You are allowed to laugh audibly.
• You are allowed to have audible moments of reaction and response.
• My work requires a few “um hmms” and “uhn uhnns” should you need to use them. Just maybe in moderation. Only when you really need to vocalize.
• This can be church for some of us, and testifying is allowed.
• This is also live theatre and the actors need you to engage with them, not distract them or thwart their performance.
• Please be an audience member that joins with others and allows a bit of breathing room. Exhale together. Laugh together. Say “amen” should you need to.
• This is community. Let’s go.