Artists on Time



A Timeline of the Making of United States Artists

2005 USA is founded in Los Angeles by then presidents Susan Berresford of the Ford Foundation, Diane Kaplan of the Rasmuson Foundation, Gabriella Morris of the Prudential Foundation, and Judith Rodin of the Rockefeller Foundation. ● Katherine DeShaw is named founding President & CEO.

2006 USA awards its first Fellowship class of fifty awards across eight disciplines and fifteen states. Each Fellow receives $50,000.

2010 USA awards its first Fellow from Puerto Rico, Awilda Sterling-Duprey.

2014 USA relocates its headquarters to Chicago. Carolina Garcia Jayaram is named President & CEO.

2015 Craft and Traditional Arts are made into separate disciplines, bringing the total to nine disciplines. ● USA hosts its first Assembly in Chicago.

2016 USA hosts *Assembly* in Miami.

2017 Deana Haggag begins her tenure as USA's President & CEO. ● USA hosts *Assembly* in Chicago for the next three years.

2019 USA begins offering artist services, such as financial planning, as part of its Fellowship. ● Film and Media are made into separate disciplines, bringing the total to ten disciplines. ● The Berresford Prize is established with Kristy Edmunds as the inaugural recipient. ● USA creates the Initiatives department to collaborate with foundations, philanthropists, and other field leaders to create pathways of support for artists across the nation. ● USA launches Disability Futures, which aims to increase the visibility of disabled creative practitioners across disciplines and geography. It is funded by the Ford Foundation and the Mellon Foundation.

2020 USA co-organizes Artist Relief with the Academy of American Poets, Artadia, Creative Capital, Foundation for Contemporary Arts, MAP Fund, and YoungArts, distributing over $23 million in emergency grants to artists.

2021 The Rainin Arts Fellowship is established to recognize Bay Area–based artists working in Dance, Narrative Film, Public Space, and Theater who push the boundaries of creative expression, anchor local communities, and advance the field. ● The Knight Arts + Tech Fellowship is established to support artists working with innovative approaches to technology and new media in Knight cities.

2022 Judilee Reed begins her tenure as USA's President & CEO. ● USA awards visual artist Peter Williams from Delaware, marking support for Fellows in all fifty states. ● The Maxwell/ Hanrahan Awards in Craft are established to recognize craftspeople for their unique and visionary approach to material-based practice, stewardship of cultural traditions, and craft's potential to connect people, places, and ideas.

2023 USA awards its first Fellow from Guam, Roquin-Jon Quichocho Siongco.

2024 Seed and Bloom: Detroit is established in partnership with the Gilbert Family Foundation, joined by the Kresge Foundation, to support artists growing their practices and increasing access to arts and culture programming in Detroit.

2025 USA launches the National Arts Policy Alliance (NAPA), which builds collective power among creative and cultural workers to win policy reforms establishing economic rights for all. ● USA launches Artists Capital Fund to expand artists' access to working and opportunity capital. ● The Wagner Arts Fellowship is launched to support mid-career and established Greater Boston visual artists whose studio or public practice illuminates issues confronting society and transforms our understanding of social change.

2026 USA co-hosts *Assembly* with Artadia at MASS MoCA in North Adams, MA. ● On behalf of the Joyce Foundation, USA begins a two-year cycle of administering the Joyce Awards, a program supporting Great Lakes artists whose visionary creative practices have a meaningful impact toward advancing racial equity in their communities. ● USA celebrates twenty years of supporting 1,000+ artists with over $50 million. ■



2006 USA Fellows
Ali Akbar Khan
Alonzo King
Amy Hempel
Anna Brown Ehlers
Anna Sew Hoy
Anne Bogart
Antenna Design
Anthony Garcia
Arline Fisch
Basil Twist
Beth Ann Fennelly
Bill Frisell and Jim Woodring
Catherine Opie
Chris Ware
David Isay
Dmae Roberts
Dominique Serrand
Eiko and Koma
George Kuchar and Mike Kuchar
Heather McHugh
Joe Sacco
John Luther Adams
Laylah Ali
Liz Collins
Lourdes Perez
Marc Bamuthi Joseph
Mark Bradford
Mark Handforth
Matthew Stadler
Meredith Monk
Michael Joo
Michael Lesy
Michael Queenland
Natividad Cano
Nick Cave
Phillip Rodriguez
Ping Chong
Ralph Lemon
Ronald K. Brown
Sam Durant
Sandra Benitez
Sarah Jaeger
Sterlin Harjo
Susan Power
Tanya Aguiñiga
Teri Rofkar
Thomas Allen Harris
Victor LaValle
Wesley McNair
William Pope.L

2007 USA Fellows
Alex Rivera
Allan Sekula
Ann Hamilton
Anna Halprin
Aranda/Lasch
Ball-Nogues Studio
Benjamin Millepied
Bill T. Jones
Charles D'Ambrosio
Charles Gaines
Cherríe Moraga
Chris Eyre
Daniel Joseph Martinez
Don Byron
Edgar Arceneaux
Elizabeth LeCompte
Evan Ziporyn
Gary Simmons
Gwendolyn Magee
Helena María Viramontes
Henri Cole
Jason Moran
Joanna Haigood
John Haines
John Santos
Judith Helfand
Julie Dash
Leila Josefowicz
Luis Valdez
Maggie Orth
Marcos Ramirez ERRE
Marilyn Chin
Mat Johnson
Michael Doucet
Michael Sommers
Office dA
Pat Bowie

2007 USA Fellows continued

Paul Chan
Rennie Harris
Rhodessa Jones
Robert Woodruff
Shen Wei
Susan Stone
Susie Silook
Tina Landau
Tommy Joseph
Uta Barth
Virgil Ortiz
William Gay
Zoe Strauss

2008 USA Fellows
A. Van Jordan
Alvin Aningayou
Andrea Bowers
Andrew Okpeaha MacLean
Andrew Zago
Ann Carlson
Barkley L. Hendricks
Barry Hannah
Bill Rauch
Cary Joji Fukunaga
Catherine Sullivan
Chris Jonas and Molly Sturges
Deanna Dikeman
Dianne Walker
Douglas Garofalo
Ela Troyano
Forrest Gander
Harryette Mullen
Henry Threadgill
J. Meejin Yoon
Jawole Willa Jo Zollar
Jay Rosenblatt
Jeff Chang
Jennifer Tipton
Joe Goode
Joy Harjo
Judith Schaechter
Julie Bargmann
Kara Walker
Karen Kandel
Laura Kasischke
Lê Thi Diem Thúy
Lourdes Portillo
Martha Rosler
Mary Jackson
Michael Asher
Muhal Richard Abrams
Pat Graney
Richard Notkin
Robert Cazimero
Rodney McMillian
Rosalba Rolón
Stephen Burks
Stephen Scott
Tayari Jones
Tehching Hsieh
Terry Adkins
Will Power
William Greaves
Wu Man

2009 USA Fellows
Ai Ogawa
Anna Deavere Smith
Anthony Hernandez
Antonya Nelson
Beth Lo
Brian Turner
Charles Burnett
Cruz Angeles
Cyro Baptista
Dan Hurlin
Daniel Plonsey
Danongan Kalanduyan
Dario Robleto
Dave McKenzie
Delores Lewis Garcia and Emma Lewis Mitchell
Diana Al-Hadid
Dona Look
Elizabeth Meister and Dan Collison
Ella Jenkins
Gilbert Hernandez
Hannibal Lokumbe
Heather Courtney
Hokulani Holt-Padilla
Joan Jonas
John O'Neal
Judy Pfaff
Justin Torres
Kate and Laura Mulleavy
Kevin Young
Kim Jones
Kukuli Velarde
Laura Kurgan
Lin Hixson & Matthew Goulish
Lionel Loueke
Martin Mazorra and Michael Houston
Mary Shaffer
Neil Denari
Nilo Cruz
Perry Eaton
Rahim AlHaj
Reggie Wilson
Renée Tajima-Peña
Rick Lowe
Ruth Maleczech
Sapphire
Scott Carrier
Sophiline Cheam Shapiro
Tere O'Connor
Terry Allen
Vija Celmins

2010 USA Fellows
Allison Smith
Almudena Carracedo
Anna Von Mertens
Anne Lewis
Awilda Sterling-Duprey
Barrett Golding
Bebe Miller
Brighde Mullins
Carlyle Brown
Charles Bowden
Cherien Dabis
Danny Hoch
Dara Birnbaum
David Reinfurt
Dayna Hanson
Deborah Hay
Doug Wheeler
Doug Wright
Gabriel Quinn Bauriedel, Dan Rothenberg, and Dito van Reigersberg
Gabriela Lena Frank
Gerard Stropnicky
Glenn Ligon
Greg Lynn
Greg Tate
Guy Klucevsek
Jennifer Heller Zurick
Jeremy Frey
Joyce Scott
Julie Archer
Khaled Mattawa
Laura Poitras
Martin Espada
Mary Lucier
Matthias Pliessnig
Mel Chin

2010 USA Fellows continued

Michael Sherrill
Miguel Gutierrez
Natalia Almada
Quiara Alegría Hudes
Rajiv Joseph
Ramin Bahrani
Renée Green
Rob Ickes
Siah Armajani
Susan Steinberg
Teddy Cruz
Tina Mabry
Trey McIntyre
Uri Caine
W.A. Ehren Tool

2011 USA Fellows
A.E. Stallings
Aaron Yakim
Ada Tolla and Giuseppe Lignano
Akio Takamori
Allen Ruppersberg
Annie Baker
Beth Lipman
Campbell McGrath
Carolee Schneemann
Dee Rees
Donald Byrd
Elena Manferdini
George Lewis
Holcombe Waller
Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle
J. Morgan Puett
James Longley
Jenny E. Sabin
John Collins
John Jasperse
John Jota Leaños
John Outterbridge
Jon Eric Riis
Kara Oehler and Ann Heppermann
Karen Tei Yamashita
Kelly Reichardt
Kirk Lynn
Lar Lubovitch
Lee Breuer
Lila Downs
Liz Lerman
Lorraine O'Grady
Mabel O. Wilson
Manuel Barrueco
Mary Ellen Childs
Michelle Ellsworth
Mike Smith
Morgan Thorson
Nancy Keystone
Nora Chipaumire
Octavio Solis
Roger Shimomura
Sean Shepherd
Sonya Clark
Steve James
Sxip Shirey
Teresa Hernández
Terrance Hayes
Tom Joyce
Tze Chun

2012 USA Fellows
Adrian Castro
Adrienne Kennedy
Aleksandar Hemon
Alison Saar
Annie Proulx
Annie-B Parson
Barry Jenkins
C.E. Morgan
Claire Lynch
Coco Fusco
Colin Jacobsen and Eric Jacobsen
David Hartt
David Henry Hwang
David Thomson
Edgar Heap of Birds
Edward White
Eugene Rodriguez
Guillermo Gomez-Peña
Jack DeJohnette
Jacqueline Goss
Jesse Reiser & Nanako Umemoto
Joanie Madden
John Kelly
Kate Orff
Keith Hennessy
Kerry Tribe
Kurt Weiser
Kyle Abraham
LeAnne Howe
Lee Isaac Chung
Leon Niehues
Luis Camnitzer
Marcelo Spina and Georgina Huljich
Marcus Gardley
Margaret Brown
Micheline Aharonian Marcom
Myra Mimlitsch-Gray
Nicholas Galanin
Nicholas van der Kolk
Phil Solomon
Ranee Ramaswamy
Rania Attieh and Daniel Garcia
Robbie McCauley
Rowland Ricketts
Sibylle Peretti
Stephen Luoni
Theaster Gates
Tony Trischka
Trisha Brown
William Leavitt

2014 USA Fellows
Achy Obejas
Alejandro Cerrudo
Alison Brown
Chris Abani
d. Sabela grimes
Daniel Woodrell
Daoud Haroon
Darryl Montana
Doris Sung
Edouard Duval-Carrié
Einar de la Torre and Jamex de la Torre
Ken Jacobs
Kia Corthron
LaToya Ruby Frazier
Leslie Hewitt
Marcus Amerman
Marlon Blackwell
Mary Heilmann
Meshell Ndegeocello
Natalie Diaz
Peter Bagge
Rigoberto González
RoseAnne Spradlin
Ryan White and Ben Cotner
Sandow Birk
Sibyl Kempson
Sigrid Gilmer
Sydney Freeland
Tip Toland
Wangechi Mutu
Willie Birch
Yowei Shaw

2015 USA Fellows
Adrian Matejka
Amos Paul Kennedy
Anne Wilson
Ayumi Horie
Camille A. Brown
Chat Travieso
Cristina Córdova
Da-ka-xeen Mehner
David Lang
Dawoud Bey
Deborah Stratman
Diego Romero
Frank Big Bear
Invincible ill Weaver
Jackie Sibblies Drury
Jasiri X
Joe Louis Walker
Jonah Bokaer
Jonathan Muecke
Judith Baca
Kade Twist
Kathleen Carlo-Kendall
Mark Hewitt
Mary Louise Defender Wilson
Maya Beiser
Mickalene Thomas
Narcissister
Paul Pfeiffer
Peter Nicks
Rudresh Mahanthappa
Shan Goshorn
Shara Nova
Sidonka Wadina
Teju Cole
Therman Statom
Toni Pierce-Sands and Uri Sands

2016 USA Fellows
Amitava Kumar
Anna Hepler
Annabeth Rosen
April Surgent
Beatriz Santiago Muñoz
Charles Atlas
Cherice Harrison-Nelson
Claudia Rankine
Daniel Alexander Jones
Dianne Reeves
Donna Uchizono
Ernie Marsh
Faye Driscoll
Hirokazu Kosaka
Jacolby Satterwhite
Janet Echelman
Jefferson Pinder
Johnston Marklee
Lauren Fensterstock
Laurie Jo Reynolds
Lynn Hershman Leeson
Michelle Dorrance
Mike Reed
Miranda July
Peggy Shaw
Piper Shepard
Quique Rivera
Randy Weston
Raphael Xavier
Raven Chacon
Roberto Lugo
Rosie Herrera
Senga Nengudi
Shirin Neshat
Stanley Whitney
Steve Paxton
Steven Paul Judd
Teri Greeves
Vicky Holt Takamine
Vijay Iyer
Vivian Beer
Winfred Rembert
Young Jean Lee
yuniya edi kwon
Yvonne Rainer

2018 USA Fellows
Abigail DeVille
Allison Orr
Amanda Williams
Amara Tabor-Smith
Amir ElSaffar
Bill Shannon
Cassils
Cauleen Smith
D.Y. Begay
Danilo Pérez
Dawn Nichols Walden
Dread Scott
Ebony G. Patterson
Elaine McMillion Sheldon
Fred Moten
Julia Galloway
Las Nietas de Nonó
Lileana Blain-Cruz
Lucas Mann
Luis Alfaro
Martinez Studio
Mary Kathryn Nagle
Molly McCully Brown
My Barbarian
Norman Kelley
Oguri
Okwui Okpokwasili
Patti Warashina
Pepón Osorio
Ruthie Foster
Somi
Sonya Kelliher-Combs
Starlee Kine
Susan Muaddi Darraj
Tania León
Tarell Alvin McCraney
Terence Blanchard
Terence Nance
TNEG (Elissa Blount Moorhead, Arthur Jafa, and Malik Sayeed)
Tony Marsh
Toshi Reagon
Tyshawn Sorey
Vanessa German
Warren Newton Seelig
Wayne Shorter

2019 USA Fellows
Aisa Warden
Alice Sheppard
Arthur López
Carole Frances Lung
Cecilia Vicuña
Charlotte Brathwaite
Complex Movements
Coulter Fussell
David Dorfman
Dyani White Hawk
Erin Besler and Ian Besler
Firelei Báez
Frances Ya-Chu Cowhig
Gabriel Frey
Helado Negro
Hyphen-Labs
Janice Lessman-Moss
Jen Shyu
Juan Díes
Julia Reichert and Steven Bognar
Juliana Huxtable
Kaneza Schaal
Keller Easterling
Lenora Lee
Lesley Nneka Arimah
Lisa Armstrong
Lucia Cuba
Lynda Barry
Merián Soto
Michelle Holzapfel
Mitra Kaboli
Nuotama Frances Bodomo
Ramona S. Diaz
Rashida Bumbray
Rebecca Gayle Howell
Reena Esmail
Roscoe Mitchell
Samuel Harvey
Simone Leigh
Susie Ibarra
Tarfia Faizullah
Teo Castellanos
Tunde Olaniran
Wu Tsang
Yara Travieso

2020 USA Fellows
Aaron McIntosh
Abby Zbikowski
Anthony Braxton
Bing Liu
Branden Jacobs-Jenkins
Cameron Rowland
Christina Anderson
Clint Ramos
Courtney Bryan
Crystal Wilkinson
Del Harrow
Delores Churchill
Dianne McIntyre
Dom Flemons, The American Songster
Edwidge Danticat
Elizabeth Streb
Guadalupe Rosales
Hamid Rahmanian
Hanif Abdurraqib
Howardena Pindell
Jaune Quick-to-See Smith
Jennifer Ling Datchuk
Jericho Brown
Jorge Ignacio Cortiñas
Kevin Locke
Lani Strong Hotch
Laurie Woolery
Linda Sikora
Lisa Nelson
Martine Syms
Matthew Angelo Harrison
Melvin Edwards
MOS
Nari Ward
Nathalie Joachim
Nicole Mitchell
Pamela Z
Patty Chang
RaMell Ross
Sara Zewde
Sarah M. Broom
Sharon Olds
Slow and Steady Wins the Race by Mary Ping
Sophia Nahli Allison
Surya Mattu
Sylvie Courvoisier
Tatsu Aoki
Wendy Maruyama
Will Rawls
Yasmin Elayat

2021 USA Fellows
Aki Sasamoto
Alexander Chee
Amber Cowan
Basil Kincaid
Bisa Butler
Cannupa Hanska Luger
Carmelita Tropicana
Carolyn L. Mazloomi
Carolyn Lazard
Christopher Chen
Cynthia Oliver
Danez Smith
Daniel Lind-Ramos
Darius Clark Monroe
Delina White
Diedrick Brackens
Dunya Mikhail
Edward "Kidd" Jordan
Elizabeth McCracken
Emily Johnson
Erin M. Riley
Eve L. Ewing
Faren Humes
Geo Soctomah Neptune
Honorée Fanonne Jeffers
Idris Goodwin
Ishmael Houston-Jones
JanpiStar
Jennifer Bonner / MALL
Jennifer Reeder
Jibz Cameron
Karen Zacarías
Kawika Lum-Nelmida
Lauren Lee McCarthy
Lex Brown
Macha Colón
Maria Gaspar

2021 USA Fellows continued

Martha Gonzalez
Mazz Swift
Mia Katigbak
Morehshin Allahyari
Mother Cyborg
Naima Ramos-Chapman
Natalie Y. Moore
Nathan P Jackson
Ni'Ja Whitson
Njideka Akunyili Crosby
Ocean Vuong
Ofelia Esparza
Olalekan Jeyifous
rafa esparza
Salvador Jiménez-Flores
Sandra Delgado
Sharon Hayes
Stephanie Dinkins
Stephen Maing
Tiff Massey
Tomeka Reid
Wadada Leo Smith
Walter Hood

2022 USA Fellows
Alison Croney Moses
American Artist
Andrea Carlson
Andy Slater
Assia Boundaoui
Brett Ratliff
César Castro, Jarochelo
Chen Chen
Craig Taborn
Critical Design Lab
Dawn Lundy Martin
DeLanna Studi
Design Earth
Diane Paragas
Dream The Combine (Jennifer Newsom and Tom Carruthers)
Ekwa Msangi
Elegance Bratton
Emmy Pérez
Germane Barnes
Grace Talusan
Indira Allegra
Jeff Parker
Jenn Freeman | Po'Chop
Jin Hi Kim
JJJJJerome Ellis
Jordan Nassar
Jordan Weber
Jorge González Santos
Jovencio de la Paz
Karen Ann Hoffman
Keisha Rae Witherspoon
Kenny Endo
Kiese Laymon
Lars America Jan
Las Imaginistas
Laura Ortman
Leroy F. Moore Jr.
Lonnie Holley
luciana achugar
Machine Dazzle
Marga Gomez
Martha Redbone
Marty Two Bulls Jr.
Melissa Cody
Nataki Garrett
Netta Yerushalmy
Nicole Marroquin
Nina Cooke John
Olu Oguibe
Peggie L Hartwell
Peter Williams
Peter Williams
Pramila Vasudevan
Qacung
Robert Andy Coombs
Rosy Simas
Salome Asega
Sharif Bey
Sharif Farrag
SO – IL (Jing Liu and Florian Idenburg)
T. Ayo Alston
Viveca Vázquez
Wondertwins

2023 USA Fellows
Abdu Ali
Alex Marzano-Lesnevich
Alexis Hope
Angela Washko
Angelo Madsen
Antoine Hunter, Purple Fire Crow
Arooj Aftab
Ashwini Bhat
Ayako Kato
Ayodele Casel
Barbara Teller Ornelas
Brenton Jordan
Bryan C. Lee Jr
Bukola Koiki
Carolina Caycedo
Christine Sun Kim
Cristal Chanelle Truscott
Deanna Van Buren
devynn emory
Eduardo Alegría
Eisa Davis
Ernestine Shaankaláxt' Hayes
Grace Lee
Guadalupe Maravilla
Hong Hong
Ilya Kaminsky
Jason Fitzroy Jeffers
Jlin
Kattorris Bang! (Nathalie Nia Faulk and indee mitchell)
Kite
Krystal C. Mack
Leslie Ishii
Loira Limbal
Luis Alvaro Sahagun Nuño
M.G. Evangelista
Marques Hanalei Marzan
Natalie Ball
Noemí Segarra Ramírez
Ofelia Zepeda
Rasheedah Phillips
Roquin-Jon Quichocho Siongco
Sharon Bridgforth
Syd Carpenter
Thaddeus Mosley
Winnie Owens-Hart

2024 USA Fellows
AD–WO (Emanuel Admassu and Jen Wood)
Blackhorse Lowe
Ciara Leina`ala Lacy
Corey Alston
Cristóbal Martinez
Danielle Evans
Dantiel W. Moniz
Diana Oh "Zaza D"
DK Osseo-Asare
EJ Hill
Erin Kilmurray
Farid Matuk
Fronterizx Collective (Gabriela Muñoz and M. Jenea Sanchez)
Garrett Bradley
Helen Lee
Holland Andrews
Ifeoma Ebo
Jeffery U. Darensbourg
Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate
Jerron Herman
John Paul Morabito
Karen Collins
Kelly Church
Kholoud Sawaf
Kira Dominguez Hultgren
Linda Nguyen Lopez
María Magdalena Campos-Pons
Marjani Forté-Saunders
Maya Bird-Murphy
Michael Winograd
Mimi Ọnụọha
Monica Ong
Muriel Miguel
Mythili Prakash
Nafissa Thompson-Spires
New Red Order (Adam Khalil, Jackson Polys, and Zack Khalil)
Petra Bravo
Philip Kan Gotanda
PJ Raval

2024 USA Fellows continued

Samora Pinderhughes
Sarah Hennies
Sean Dorsey
Selina Martinez
Sgwaayaans TJ Young
Sofía Gallisá Muriente
Tammie Rubin
Tanya Crane
Trisha Baga
Val Jeanty aka Val-Inc
Yo-Yo Lin

2025 USA Fellows
Aimee Nezhukumatathil
Angel Bat Dawid
Angie Cruz
Anjali Srinivasan
Anna Martine Whitehead
Aspen Golann
Aysha Upchurch
Bojan Louis
Borderless Studio
Caroline Kent
Cesar Viveros
Christopher Harris
Dalani Tanahy
David Harper Clemons
Deesha Philyaw
dots
Dr. Rashaad Newsome
Ephraim Asili
Finnegan Shannon
Gala Porras-Kim
Geoff Sobelle
Jerome Haferd
Joan Naviyuk Kane
Jocelyne Prince
Kahlil Robert Irving
Karyn Olivier
kekahi wahi (Sancia Miala Shiba Nash and Drew K. Broderick)
Leah Wulfman
Leilehua Lanzilotti
Liz Phillips
Makini
Matthew Salesses
Miya Masaoka
Myles de Bastion
Nami Yamamoto
Nichole Canuso
Raquel Gutiérrez
Rea Tajiri
Rhiana Yazzie
Rodrigo Reyes
Rudi Goblen
Sadie Barnette
Sarah Rosalena
Shayok Misha Chowdhury
Sherrill Roland
Tall Paul
Theresa Secord
Trajal Harrell
Tzu-Ju Chen
X

2026 USA Fellows
Anina Major
Anjali Kamat
Anthony Sonnenberg
Aristotle Jones
Ben LaMar Gay
Chenjerai Kumanyika
Corey Pemberton
Curry J. Hackett
Edra Soto
Eric-Paul Riege
Fawzia Mirza
inti figgis-vizueta
Jason Samuels Smith
Jeanette Oi-Suk Yew
Johanna Hedva
Jules Rosskam
LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs
Lauren Rebecca Weinstein
Layale Chaker
Lily Hope
Macon Reed
Maia Chao

2026 USA Fellows continued

Mame Diarra Speis-Biaye
Margaret Roach Wheeler
Mayukh Sen
Mei Ann Teo
Mendi + Keith Obadike
Mercedes Dorame
Mina Morita
Monica Sorelle
Nancy Baker Cahill
Nat Decker
Nathan Young
Norwood Viviano
Parul Shah
Raheleh Filsoofi
Raven Jackson
Robell Awake
Rosten Woo
Sarah Aziza
Set Hernandez
Shamel Pitts
Sharon Udoh
Sheila Kay Adams
Tanya Orellana
Terri Lyne Carrington
Thaddeus Davis and Tanya Wideman-Davis (Wideman Davis Dance)
Ty Defoe
Willi Carlisle
Xenobia Bailey

2019 Berresford Prize
Kristy Edmunds

2020 Berresford Prize
Linda Goode Bryant

2021 Berresford Prize
Lulani Arquette
Roberto Bedoya

2022 Berresford Prize
Louise Erdrich

2023 Berresford Prize
Maori Karmael Holmes

2024 Berresford Prize
Beth Boone

2026 Berresford Prize
Lori Lea Pourier

2020 Disability Futures Fellows
Alice Sheppard
Alice Wong
Carolyn Lazard
Christine Sun Kim
Eli Clare
Jeffrey Mansfield
Jen Deerinwater
Jerron Herman
Jim LeBrecht
John Lee Clark
Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha
Mia Mingus
Navild (niv) Acosta
Patty Berne
Perel
Riva Lehrer
Rodney Evans
Ryan J. Haddad
Sky Cubacub
Tourmaline

2022 Disability Futures Fellows
Alexandria Wailes
Alison O'Daniel
Antoine Hunter, Purple Fire Crow
Camisha L. Jones
Corbett O'Toole
Dickie Hearts
JJJJJerome Ellis
Kenny Fries
Khadijah Queen
M Eilo
Naomi Ortiz
Nasreen Alkhateeb
NEVE
QuestionATL
Reverend Joyce McDonald
Sandie (Chun-shan) Yi
Sandy Ho
Tee Franklin
Wendy Lu
Yo-Yo Lin

2024 Disability Futures Fellows
Anne Finger
Cara Reedy
Christine Bruno
Cyrée Jarelle Johnson
Day Al-Mohamed
Elliott Fukui
Emily Sara
Finnegan Shannon
Gabriela Cruz
Gaelynn Lea
Johanna Hedva
Kay Ulanday Barrett
Kayla Hamilton
Luz Guerra
Nancy Rourke
Natasha Ofili
Saira Barbaric
Saleem Hue Penny
Walela Nehanda
Warren "Wawa" Snipe

2021 Rainin Arts Fellows
Amara Tabor-Smith
Margo Hall
People's Kitchen Collective
Rodrigo Reyes

2022 Rainin Arts Fellows
Brett Cook
Maria Victoria Ponce
NAKA Dance Theater
RyanNicole Austin

2023 Rainin Arts Fellows
Joanna Haigood
Mohammad Gorjestani
Related Tactics
Sean San José

2024 Rainin Arts Fellows
Adrian L. Burrell
Antoine Hunter, Purple Fire Crow
Ayodele WordSlanger Nzinga
TNT Traysikel

2025 Rainin Arts Fellows
Brenda Wong Aoki
Christy Chan
Kyle Casey Chu
Vanessa Sanchez

2026 Rainin Arts Fellows
Cece Carpio
Cheryl Dunye
Danny Duncan
Sarah Crowell

2021 Knight Arts + Tech Fellows
Black Quantum Futurism
Dr. Rashaad Newsome
Rodolfo Peraza
Sondra Perry
Stephanie Dinkins

2022 Knight Arts + Tech Fellows
Complex Movements
James Allister Sprang
Mary Maggic
Mother Cyborg
Ryan Kuo

2023 Knight Arts + Tech Fellows
American Artist
Kara Güt
Leo Castañeda
Marlena Myles
The Institute of Queer Ecology

2025 Knight Arts + Tech Fellows
Akea Brionne
Antonia Wright
Ash Arder
Matthew Angelo Harrison
Michelle Lopez

2026 Knight Arts + Tech Fellows
LIZN'BOW
Miguel Novelo
Rhonda Holberton
Taeyoon Choi
Wesley Taylor

2022 Maxwell/Hanrahan Awardees in Craft
Antonius-Tín Bui
Christine Lee
Jamie Okuma
Kristina Madsen
Terrol Dew Johnson

2023 Maxwell/Hanrahan Awardees in Craft
Adebunmi Gbadebo
Aspen Golann
Blain Snipstal
Leo Tecosky
Shane R. Hendren

2024 Maxwell/Hanrahan Awardees in Craft
Cristina Córdova
Ibrahim Said
Nisha Bansil
Raul De Lara
Thea Alvin

2025 Maxwell/Hanrahan Awardees in Craft
Jolie Ngo
Kevin Aspaas
Neal Thomas
Robert K. Mills
Teri Greeves

2026 Maxwell/Hanrahan Awardees in Craft
Hong Hong
Loretta Pettway Bennett
Melissa Cody
Paul Andrew Wandless
Roberto Benavidez

2025 Wagner Arts Fellows
Daniela Rivera
L'Merchie Frazier
Wen-ti Tsen

2026 Wagner Arts Fellows
Lucy Kim
Tomashi Jackson
Yu-Wen Wu

2024 Seed and Bloom: Detroit Fellows
Amelia "Fiera" Duran
Asia Hamilton
Danielle Eliska
Halima Afi Cassells
jes allie
Juanita Anderson
Michael Manson
Ryan Myers-Johnson
Tiff Massey
Yvette Rock

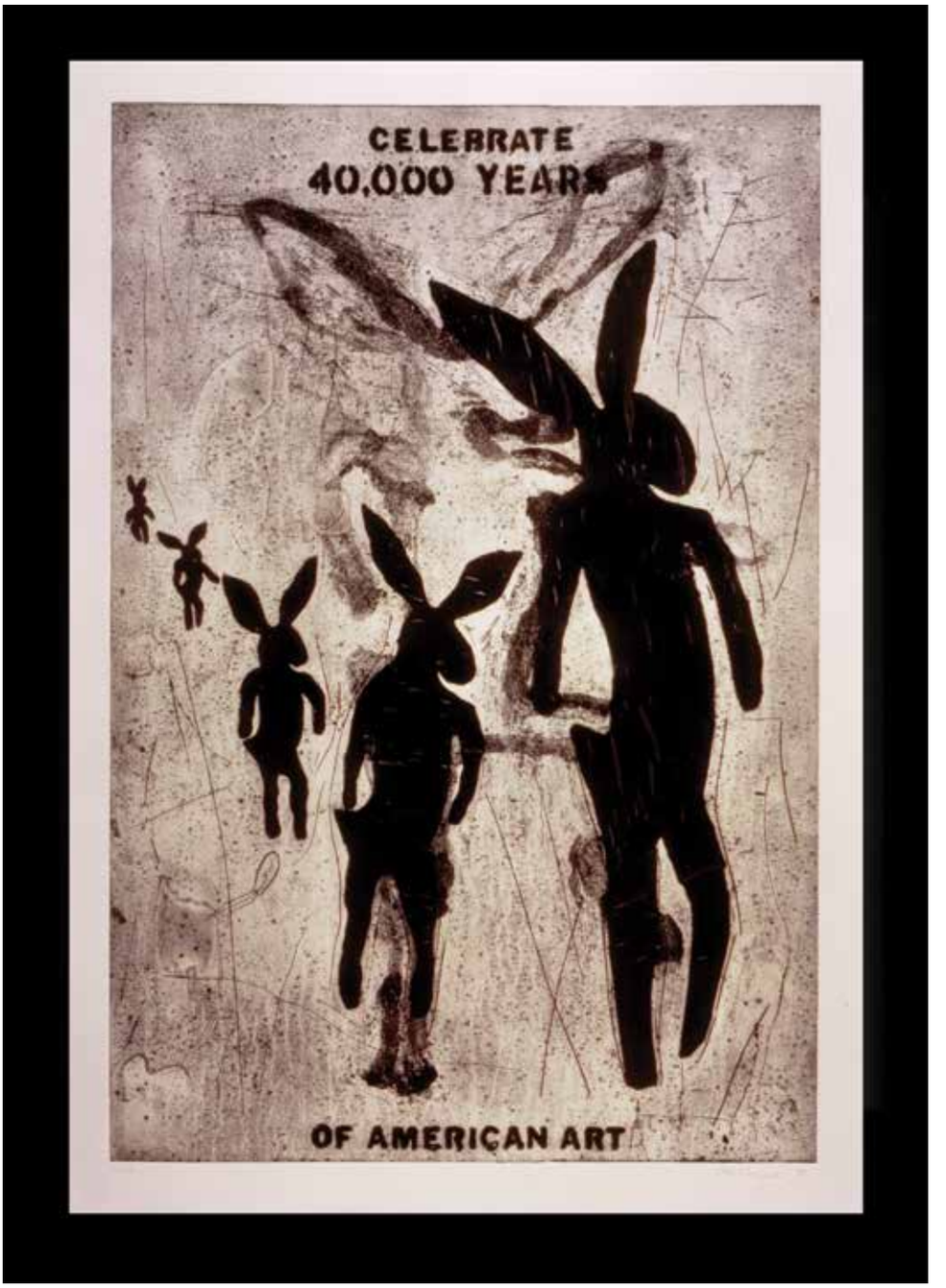
2025 Joyce Foundation Creative Impact Awardees – Individuals
Adela Goldbard
Aja Black
Ananya Chatterjea
Andrea Assaf
Aparna Ramaswamy
Aram Han Sifuentes
Aravind Enrique Adyanthaya
Bryan Thao Worra
Camille A. Brown
Cecilia Smith
Charles Smith
Chinary Ung
Daniel Minter
Edgar Arceneaux
Edra Soto
Emily Johnson
Faheem Majeed
Gabriela Lena Frank
Hannibal Lokumbe
Helado Negro
Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate
jessica Care moore
Jessie Montgomery
John Clayton
Juan Angel Chavez
Julie Tolentino
Kaneza Schaal
Katie Ka Vang
Larissa FastHorse
Lisa Langford
Luis Alfaro
M. Carmen Lane
Marc Bamuthi Joseph
Marcus Elliot
Marisa Morán Jahn
Marlena Myles
Marlina Gonzalez
Mikemansondatbedancin
Nabil Ince
Naomi Iizuka
Onye Ozuzu
Pramila Vasudevan
Regina Agu
Reginald Baylor Studio
Reginald Wilson
Ricardo Gamboa
Roberto Sierra
Rokafella
Rosy Simas
Sandra Delgado
Seitu Jones
Shaun Leonardo
Sonny K. Mehta
Sydney Chatman
Tarell Alvin McCraney
Terry Guest
Trenton Doyle Hancock
Ty Defoe
Tyree Guyton
X

2025 Joyce Foundation Creative Impact Awardees – Organizations
ACCESS/Arab American National Museum
American Composers Forum
ATNSC
Cedar Cultural Center
Chicago Children's Museum
Chicago Children's Theatre
Chicago Public Art Group
Children's Theatre Company
Cleveland Public Theatre
Columbia College Chicago - Dance Center
DANCECleveland
Detroit Parks Coalition
Franconia Sculpture Park
Free Street Theater
Gallery 400
Goodman Theatre
HANA Center
Harrison Center for the Arts
Hyde Park Art Center
Indiana Repertory Theatre
Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra
Joffrey Ballet
Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota
Links Hall
Lynden Sculpture Garden
Mandala Arts
Milwaukee Art Museum
Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra
Minneapolis Institute of Art
Minnesota Center for Book Arts
Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland
Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit
Museum of Contemporary Photography at Columbia College Chicago
National Museum of Mexican Art
National Public Housing Museum
Northrop, University of Minnesota
Old Town School of Folk Music
Penumbra Theatre Company
Pillsbury House Theatre
Public Art St. Paul
Ragamala Dance Company
Ravinia Festival Association
Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra
Smart Museum of Art
SPACES
Sphinx Organization
Steppenwolf Theatre Company
Teatro del Pueblo
Teatro Vista
The Cuyahoga Community College Foundation
The O'Shaughnessy at St. Catherine University
The Sculpture Center
Theater Mu
TRUE Skool
VocalEssence
Walker Art Center
Wayne State University ■

Artists on Time

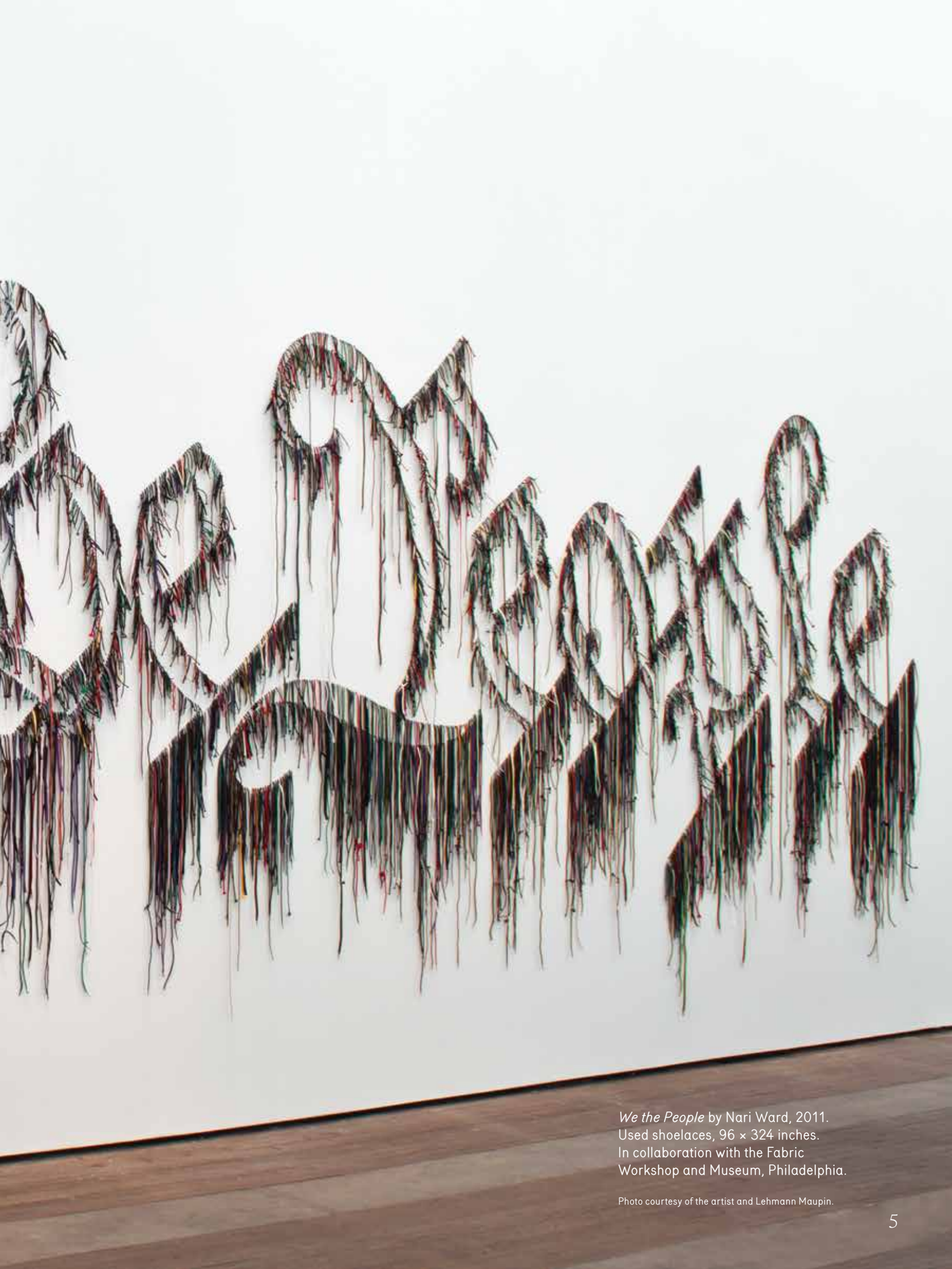
20 Years
of Supporting
Artists

United
States
Artists



Celebrate 40,000 Years of American Art by Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, 1995. Collagraph/etching, 79 × 54 inches.
Photo by Neal Ambrose-Smith.





We the People by Nari Ward, 2011.
Used shoelaces, 96 × 324 inches.
In collaboration with the Fabric
Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia.

Photo courtesy of the artist and Lehmann Maupin.

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Guadalupe Maravilla.

Photo by Sara Morgan, courtesy of the artist, Socrates Sculpture Park, and PPOW.

In Memory Of

We pause to honor the artists in the USA community who are no longer with us but whose impact endures. While their absence is deeply felt, their work continues to move us.

Ai Ogawa
Akio Takamori
Ali Akbar Khan
Alice Wong
Allan Sekula
Anna Halprin
Arline Fisch
Barkley L. Hendricks
Barry Hannah
Carolee Schneemann
Charles Bowden
Danongan Kalanduyan
Daniel Woodrell
Dara Birnbaum
Daoud Haroon
Diana Oh "Zaza D"
Douglas Garofalo
Edward "Kidd" Jordan
Ella Jenkins
Emma Lewis Mitchell
Greg Tate
Guy Klucevsek
Gwendolyn Magee
Jack DeJohnette
Jaune Quick-to-See Smith
Joe Louis Walker
John Haines
John O'Neal
John Outterbridge
Julia Reichert
Ken Jacobs
Kevin Locke
Lee Breuer
Lorraine O'Grady
Lourdes Portillo
Melvin Edwards
Michael Asher
Muhal Richard Abrams
Natividad "Nati" Cano
Patty Berne
Peter Williams
Phil Solomon
Randy Weston
Robbie McCauley
Ruth Maleczech
Sandra Benitez
Shan Goshorn
Siah Armajani
Steve Paxton
Teri Rofkar
Terrol Dew Johnson
Terry Adkins
Thaddeus Mosley
Trisha Brown
Wayne Shorter
William Gay
William Greaves
William Pope.L
Winfred Rembert



¡LOS QUE MUEREN POR LA VIDA, NO PUEDEN LLAMARSE MUERTOS! by Carolina Caycedo. Altar and sunset vigil performance, El Museo del Barrio, in collaboration with the Vera List Center for Art and Politics, September 18, 2021.

Photo by Michael Palma, courtesy of El Museo del Barrio and Vera List Center for Art and Politics.





Introduction

This publication arrives in a moment that asks us to pay closer attention to how time is held, how it passes, and how it is cared for. As United States Artists marks its twentieth year, we wanted to explore a simple question: how do artists keep and spend their time?

Artists on Time gathers conversations, artworks, essays, and ephemera not to define a single answer but to keep company with many. As you move through these pages, you'll encounter artists speaking candidly about the way time stretches and contracts, how it is guarded through boundaries and rituals, how it is spent generously on processes that may never be visible, and how it is reclaimed from urgency and expectation.

Artists on Time is also a quiet celebration of what has been shaped and preserved over twenty years of USA. Not just works completed or careers marked but conditions sustained. Time protected. Space made for artists to remain with their questions, to return to their practices, to imagine futures that unfold slowly and collectively. Room to reflect, practice, rest, and dream. ■

p. 12
Free Radicals by Carolyn Lazard, 2020.
Hourglass, granite dust from McCoy Quarry, Glasgow Inc., King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, 12.5 × 6.25 × 6.25 inches.

Photo courtesy of the artist.

“A major aspect of the archive is the people that we have crossed paths with.”

Liz Lerman



RUN MARY RUN by Rashida Bumbray and the Dance Diaspora Collective.

Whitney Museum of American Art, May 2012, presented as part of BLEED, Jason Moran and Alicia Hall Moran’s five-day residency for the 2012 Whitney Biennial. Photo by John Rogers.

p. 15
Antoine Hunter, Purple Fire Crow.

Photo by RJ Muna.



20 Ways Artists Have Spent $50K

- Created new work
- Bought their first house
- Hired an archivist
- Built a studio
- Gone on sabbatical
- Obtained health insurance
- Set it aside in savings
- Paid off debt
- Set up a retirement fund
- Bought expensive equipment
- Stayed put, i.e., did not have to move for a year
- Paid other artists
- Set up a college fund for their kid(s)
- Purchased their first personal vacation tickets
- Hired an assistant
- Made a significant change in their employment
- Took care of elders
- Established a residency for other artists
- Covered a major medical procedure
- Given themselves some time to reflect, practice, rest, and dream ■

p. 17
Amos Paul Kennedy Jr. in the shop, Detroit, 2019.

Photo by Ruby Western, courtesy of United States Artists.



On Sustainability

We caught up with artist Liz Collins, writer Beth Ann Fennelly, and filmmaker Sterlin Harjo twenty years after they received the USA Fellowship to reflect on how they've sustained their practices and built community over the last two decades.

United States Artists: When you think back to the start of your career, what did you imagine your artistic life would look like twenty years later?

Liz Collins: Twenty years ago, I was two years into teaching full time at RISD and had just been notified that I had won a USA Fellowship! Receiving that recognition and support really lit a fire under me to get a studio and move into doing my artwork full time or, at least, balancing it with the teaching, because I had been doing my own fashion brand and was making a shift into leaving that behind and developing a bigger art practice. The award felt like permission to move forward.

I could not have imagined where I am right now. I have never been someone who can project far into the future. I've hit some major milestones in the past couple years and have been functioning in New York City as an artist with no other job for years. It's a hard journey, but I feel grateful every day that I'm here and get to have so much creative freedom. Being in the Venice Biennale was a really amazing thing that I didn't anticipate happening and have always dreamed of . . . same with having works in a show at MoMA. I don't own real estate and still have housemates in order to live this life, but I'm in it for the long haul and do feel that I am living my dream.

Beth Ann Fennelly: At the beginning of my career, things looked a lot different than they are now, and my practice was different. It was unsustainable. Where did poems come from at that point in my life? Well, I'd wait for some boy to dump me, and then I'd stay up all night drinking red wine and smoking borrowed cigarettes and weeping. Guess what? That ends up not being a sustainable writing life. So the big thing I wouldn't have anticipated is how boringly I treat writing, like a job, but like the best job ever. I think of this line by Flaubert, who said, "Be regular and ordinary in your life, so you can be violent and original in your work." And that is something that has really landed for me over the years.

I just try to go to my desk, be present, not check internet banking, not look at social media about politics, not be hungover, just all the ways that you can be at your desk and not really be at your desk. Be there and clock in. Another expression of Flaubert's is "daily fidelity to the desk." I wouldn't have guessed at the beginning of my career how I would be so methodical and sober and quiet about finding my time and my space to get my work done.

Sterlin Harjo: Twenty years ago, I was a young father to a young kid. I think that my career turned out in a lot of ways better than I thought it would. I wanted to be able to make a living doing what I love doing and not owe too many people too many things and just continue to do the work. I didn't think I would be making nationally seen TV shows, but I thought I'd be making independent films.

In a lot of ways, I'm still trying to figure out the practice of writing. Sometimes it can be really painful to me. I luckily am also a director, and I do production and stuff, so that is a

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Beth Ann Fennelly is a writer and the former Poet Laureate of Mississippi. **Liz Collins** is a multimedia artist based in Brooklyn. **Sterlin Harjo** (Seminole/Muscogee) is a writer and director based in Tulsa.

balance for me. This solitary banging my head against a wall trying to write is balanced out by being around humans and interacting and collaborating with other artists on set. I think I started out like Hank Williams a little bit, where I needed to live . . . I sort of thrived off chaos. Every time I was going through a breakup, a new script would come to me and drinking was also involved. And then, part of it was honing in on that inspiration and learning how to be inspired without wrecking my life. That is still a day-to-day practice. I'm better at it now, but there are times where I'm talking to a therapist now, going, "Yeah, I don't know why . . . . How do I get better but not get rid of what I am good at?" I really love where I'm at as far as my career goes, but there's always work to be done.

USA: What has remained constant in your practice and what has radically changed?

Sterlin: What's remained constant is an internalization and looking in at myself and pulling inspiration from my life. That has been there from the beginning. I think from the first time that I ever thought I might be a writer, I was in college, and I knew how to tell a story, but I didn't know if I could be a writer. I was in a zero-level English course, and the teacher read a personal story that I had written. We all had to do a personal essay. It was our first assignment. And the next day at school, she asked if she could read it to the class, and I was the only one whose work she read to the class. At that point, I was like, "Oh, wow, maybe I can do this."

From that day forward, I've kept that as a part of my work, making sense of my life and the people around me through characters and stories. That's been a very constant thing. And what has radically changed? I think what we were just talking about: I don't have to go through a breakup and my life doesn't have to be upended to be inspired. I find ways to get the chemical balance just right so that I can work and be inspired on my own.

Beth Ann: Well, the thing that stayed the same for me is a belief in the power of language to make a difference in our lives. The thing that's changed is the various forms of expression that I've cycled through, because I was trained in poetry, got my degree in poetry, and I thought that would be all I'd ever want to write. And then I wrote a book of essays on motherhood, and I thought that was a one-off, and then I got tricked into collaborating on a novel with my husband. After that, I started writing in this new form called micro-memoirs, tiny short stories about my life that are true, that are written in sentences. Some pieces are as short as a sentence and some are a paragraph.

Looking back, I see I needed to do all this experimentation in genre to get where I am now. I wouldn't have guessed that I would leave the line break behind and the other facets of poetry that I've spent so much time loving. But I'm also a little greedy and restless. As soon as I felt like I could understand what a Beth Ann poem was, I got less interested in writing that poem. The idea of failing and risking failure appeals to me. Those things have kept my practice open and cycling through different genres. But the one thing that's remained the same, just to circle back to the first question, is I've always believed in the power of literature to transform our lives.

Liz: I'm finding everything so relatable. I could just as easily be saying some of the things that both of you are saying. I wonder if we're all around the same age-ish?

Sterlin: I'm 25. [laughs]

Liz: Yeah, me too. [laughs]

Beth Ann: I'm 13. That's my inside age. But my outer body is 54.

Sterlin: I'm 45.

Liz: I'm in my 50s. There's a lot that's changed in my practice in terms of my relationship to my tools and the different possibilities within what I do, because when I was younger, I had this loyalist streak to one thing or another. I work in textiles and fiber art primarily and within that world, there are so many different ways to make things.

Something that's radically changed is that twenty years ago I was really mining my emotional landscape in this way that was kind of wrenching in terms of working in abstraction. I was trying to talk about my emotional life and states of being through abstraction and was dealing with a lot of angry, violent, upset feelings at the time. Those have shifted and mellowed out. Nothing is so raw anymore. I'm dealing with other kinds of anger and upset that are global and political kinds of things, and less about the personal. And that manifests in aesthetically different ways.

I'm also an independent artist now. I'm not teaching at all. And like you all are talking about, I'm making a living on my work, and that's something that's radically different now.

USA: Is there a through line that has anchored you over the years?

Beth Ann: For me, I would say it's creating community in various ways. The twin stars that lead me forward are curiosity and joy. They're where art comes from for me and what I want to return to the world.

Sterlin: I think mine is also community. My writing is not to just be read. There's such a human element to it and I've tried to create community with the work that I do. I come from a very poor, underrepresented demographic of people . . . . I mean, it's kind of crazy to make a TV show that is the first representation of the people that you come from. That responsibility has also anchored me throughout. I don't live far from where I grew up, and having to answer to everyone from back home is what has anchored me. Being accountable.

Liz: When I made clothing, I was very interested in people having a visceral experience with an object that I made. Through that, I was giving love and a transformational experience of putting that garment on and having it be this thing that was part of them – very intimate. And then I shifted away from the body and moved into space and still thought about how the work connects to people. I love when people acquire my art and live with it, because then it becomes this very integrated experience of being together in daily life, even though I'm not there. There's something really exciting for me about that. Connecting to others through the work has been a through line. Something else I'll probably never leave behind completely is a fixation on pattern and repetition.

USA: What forms of community have sustained you as an artist?

Sterlin: I grew up in a small town with a giant family, so I feel like I'm constantly creating community with everything that I do. In production with a crew, it matters to me so much if they're having a good time. But also, for a while, there was an Indigenous network of artists, filmmakers, and artists that sustained me during a period where I was making films and I did not know if it mattered or if they would ever be seen. I was an independent filmmaker making micro-budget films about my community. There was nothing to keep me going because I didn't know if it ever mattered what I did, but I had this network of Indigenous artists that I could come to, and we would always see each other at a festival or whatever, and it was like checking back in with each other and having a reminder of, "Oh, this is why I do it."

Beth Ann: One thing about community is it's provided an antidote to the myth we have of the solitary genius artist who is separate from everything and views everybody else as competitors. I remember when I was in graduate school, I was there from 1994 to 1998, and the internet was just kicking off. At that point, you learned where to submit your poems or essays or whatever by big posters in the mail room. They would announce the literary contest, and at the bottom of it there'd be a little strip that you would tear off that would tell you the submission details for the magazine. And I would notice when I'd go into the mail room, every once in a while all the tags had been torn off a certain contest poster, and I realized that whoever was submitting to that contest didn't want anyone else to submit to it and was trying to wipe out the competition.

I decided right then and there that I was going to go the other way. I decided every time I came across an interesting contest or a good grant, I would make sure to tell one other person about it. Like, "Don't forget, the Guggenheim deadline is coming up," or "Have you seen this contest? Your new essay would be a great fit." And it's changed the way I've survived in the artistic world because, yes, I'm always obviously hoping that I win the grants, residencies, and fellowships, but

p. 21
Petra Bravo rehearsing *Rancajada Rancajo* with actress Dolores Pedro, 1996.

Photo by Ricardo Alcaraz.



Even if you're not doing something for months, that's okay. If you're true to yourself, the creativity will come back.

if I help someone else get it — well, that feels good, too. Now I can view my peers not as competitors but as collaborators.

Liz: Yeah, I would echo that exact same thing. What's that expression, high tide raises all the ships? I really see that in my creative community. There's not enough to go around in some ways, in terms of the money and support that we creative people need to do our work. We're all competing for the same resources to a degree, but I feel an incredible solidarity with my peers and I'm happy when they win. It's a win for everybody.

One of the reasons I, and many artists, live in New York — despite the insane amounts of rent many of us pay to be here — is because of community. And, by community, I mean not just artist peers, but queer people. That intersection of artist–queer peers is something that's very robust for me in New York City. I'm involved in the Queer | Art Mentorship program that Ira Sachs started, which has been a really beautiful affinity group for me. Plus, there are all these LGBTQIA+ spaces and organizations, like the Leslie–Lohman Museum, that are real anchors and community sites for creative people in New York.

I come from a very fractured family. I've worked pretty hard, and still do, to maintain an expanded chosen family that's always evolving. I've cultivated familial connections to these communities that are important anchors in my life. We need a sense of belonging. When you don't have that, things get harder and more isolated.

USA: I appreciate you all touching on the generosity of having community and building it. If you could redesign the ecosystem for sustaining artists, what would it look like?

Sterlin: I may feel differently about this in an hour or tomorrow, but I wouldn't change anything for what I went through. And some of that was struggle. Some of that was not knowing if I was going to be able to create. Some of that was not knowing if it was sustainable. Right before I sold the script to *Reservation Dogs*, which really changed my life, I was trying to start a nonprofit that involved the outdoors in my community back home. I was one foot out the door. I don't know that I would change that. Some of that felt very unsustainable, but I was able to push to a place that was sustainable, and that kind of made me the artist I am. I feel like I have my values because of that.

Beth Ann: There is a lot I would change. And I think that life already has plenty of struggles, so if we could eliminate some economic struggles for artists, we'd have more art. We could level the playing field and make things easier for artists to work. I mean, look at what other countries are doing: in Denmark, if you are a writer who's hit a certain level of success, the Danish government pays you a living wage. The same thing is true in Ireland and many other countries. So you don't have to go into academia or get a second or third job, you don't have to bifurcate your creative life. The United States is typically listed as the worst country for arts funding or one of the top five, always. And now our current administration is cutting what little funding there is or redirecting it.

About the money part: I don't know how you solve it, but I know that with creative problem-solving, there'd be a way. For example, I'm part of a group that's starting this writing residency at Faulkner's old mule farm, and it's for anybody who has a Mississippi story to tell. If you've ever gone to a writing residency, what you know is you have to pay a lot of money to go. The very best ones, the most prestigious ones, are free — but even so, an applicant has to have a certain degree of wealth to take two weeks or a month off from work. So even the free ones are not really free; you still need wealth to take advantage of them. The residency we're building is going to pay people $1,000 a week to come and get their work done. Artists should get paid for art. That shouldn't be as radical as it is. This project feels like a healthy way to invest my time because it's fixing a systemic problem.

Liz: It's very frustrating to live in a country where art is not seen as something important. I don't think people really have a great enough understanding of what is required in order to produce great art and to do it in a sustainable way over years. I think there's a pocket of middle age in my world where people fall out. There's this middle-aged artist who needs more support because after a certain amount of accomplishment, you don't need less support, you actually need more because the work scales up. That's something that's not always recognized.

I'm very interested in alternative economies right now, in terms of ecosystems and survival. For one, I've been instigating these barter situations, like trading artwork for a work stay in someone's house somewhere beautiful. Many art lovers have real estate that sits empty for months on end. Let

me give them artwork so I can go there and do my work in a focused way and be somewhere I wouldn't normally be able to visit, like the Hamptons, and plug into a network of collectors there, as well as be in nature, which is really good for me.

Somebody pointed out to me that it's not necessarily that there's not enough money for people to buy art. It's that people spend their money on other things. In the US, people spend thousands of dollars going to concerts and sports events, and I have no critique of that. I support that, whatever brings you joy. But I don't think art lands in the same conversation. I feel like there needs to be some paradigm shifts in order for the ecosystem to really be more sustaining.

USA: What advice would you give other artists who are just starting out and are trying to figure out how they might sustain themselves?

Liz: Don't be afraid to do other kinds of jobs to make money while you're getting going. I've waited tables and worked in food service. I think it's important to have a "by any means possible" mentality. Whatever you have to do to get by so that you can carve out time and space for yourself to do the work and keep doing it. Even if you're not doing something for months, that's okay. If you're true to yourself, the creativity will come back.

When I was younger, I had a sense of urgency, like all this stuff has to happen now. As I've gotten older, I've realized this is really about the long game. This isn't about me having my work out there tomorrow. It's about these things happening when they're going to happen. And treating it like a big garden or farm where there are plants growing in all different ways.

Beth Ann: Yeah, I like that, Liz. My idea is similar: let art win. Whatever you're doing as a young person, if it comes in conflict with making art, let art win. Do whatever it is that allows you to get your work done. And I would also extend that to say surround yourself with the people who help you get your work done. Finding supportive partners, people who value your goals and understand your sacrifices. You don't need to align your priorities with American corporate culture. Whenever you can, step out of everyone else's economy and way of viewing the world and instead ask, is art winning with this decision?

Sterlin: Even if it is by any means necessary, also try to do something that's connected to what you want to do. I did that a lot. There's not one way to do it. Some artists don't like community; some artists don't have the best mental health, and they want to do it alone or they're not good at writing proposals. And that will make it harder. Sometimes I think by any means necessary, but it's also up to people who aren't artists to help sustain artists. I think that more education and awareness for people who aren't artists but who can support artists is important. ■



Be With What Is: A Post-Maria Offering by Merián Soto. Conwell Dance Theater, Philadelphia, February 2018.

Photo by Bill Hebert.

Building an Archive

For choreographers Liz Lerman and Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, the process of archiving is no small feat. Construction is laborious and undertaken with great caution and care for its contents. They have spent hours upon hours scouring footage and documentation that they hope future generations will reference and learn from, and still, they are just at the beginning. In the following conversation, they detail their archival journeys and reflect on their ongoing legacies.

Jawole Willa Jo Zollar is a choreographer and the founding artistic director of Urban Bush Women. **Liz Lerman** is a choreographer, performer, writer, teacher, and speaker.

United States Artists: How do you define the archive of your work?

Liz Lerman: A major aspect of the archive is the people that we have crossed paths with — particularly the people who have shared their bodies, their stories, and their lives, and who've been willing to be alongside us while we've tried to construct things that might be purposeful, useful, or thrilling for audiences. The archive is about who we have touched.

Jawole Willa Jo Zollar: I really love that you identified the who, because I think that is the most important. After identifying that, it's about the how and the what, because it's so vast. It is the actual videos. It is the notes. It is the performances, but also how you got to the performances. That's where I think oral histories are really important.

USA: How has your relationship to the idea of legacy changed over time?

Jawole: When I started, I didn't think I was building a legacy. I was just doing the work, but after a while, you start to realize that in order to do the work and transmit it over time, you need documentation. As I entered my third and fourth decades of making, that's when the question of legacy really started to enter the conversation.

Liz: There are two things about the legacy conversation that continue to make me wonder. One is how much of this is about ego: "Please remember me. Please let my time here have been worth it." The other is that I have loved making my own discoveries and I want other people to make their own discoveries. I'm trying to leave things in such a way that the discovery is innate in the materials.

Jawole: A lot of the work that we're doing is building a movement toward inclusion of who can dance and the types of dances being done. With movement building, you want people to take it and run with it. There isn't a desire to own it.

In this time of intellectual property, these complicated conversations of who owns what, why, and where you can access it do us a disservice. And at the same time, copyright is a protection. I often wake up and think, what if I just gave everything away? What if I just made it all available and completely let it go? That's a radical act. What would that mean?

It makes me think of Pete Seeger and how he copyrighted "We Shall Overcome." My understanding is that his approach to copyrighting was protective. Other people may have other thoughts. If it weren't protected, it could be used in ways that weren't intended. Because we're in an ownership model through capitalism, legacy is about who owns what.

Liz: Here's a story with a relevant moment. In the company, people were making duets, and it turned out that there was one set of duets that was quite wonderful. I decided to use the bulk of it at the beginning of a piece. The person who was

part of instigating that particular duet approached me later and said, "I need a special mention in the program note. You need to acknowledge me as the person who made that." I said to her, "Well, yes, you did. But if you remember, someone cracked a joke right before we got up. Maybe it was the fact that we were all so loose that led to the invention that followed." That particular moment has helped me understand the gorgeousness of creativity and the dilemmas of articulating what anybody's contribution is.

USA: What have you chosen to preserve carefully, and what have you allowed to disappear or go un-notated?

Jawole: We have digitized most of the videos and program copies, but not all of them. What we have not yet been able to do are the oral histories. You listen to stories and just start remembering. I think that is where the work happens, and we haven't begun to approach it yet. I don't even know what to do about my papers, letters, and emails, but I've been so inspired reading other people's writings, learning what they were dealing with and where they were stuck.

Liz: In light of all the activity that many of us at our age begin to think about, what are we keeping? What are we not keeping? This question is about what narratives are we supporting and what narratives are we not supporting? What needs to be seen? As Jawole said, it's vast. There's just so much stuff around. Right now, I have all my old emails on hard drives just in case, because some of my best writing is in them. They're so personal.

USA: What are the values or principles you hope will carry forward in your communities?

Jawole: I think there is a lack of understanding around ensemble practice. We're in such a vertical-thinking society; it is hierarchical instead of horizontal. The idea that a group of people can come together to think, create, and it's still led through a directed process is a hard thing for people to wrap their brains around. I didn't think it was at the time of my influence because there were a lot of ensemble theaters in the '60s, '70s, and the '80s. It was a way of making that inspired me.

There seems to be a growing challenge in understanding that there's power in that kind of work. It's not that we all have the same role and responsibility. We are defined through our different roles and responsibilities, but we are all there committed. I think that where we are as a country, we are in danger of losing the idea of the circle.

Liz: Yeah, in many environments, people don't know how to be in a circle. When you sit in a circle, you have the opportunity to speak from experience instead of authority. For a minute, you lose your status or your place in the vertical, and you get to be the person you are. What happens next, how

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Angelo Madsen.
Photo by Brandon Dill.



When you sit in a circle, you have the opportunity to speak from experience instead of authority. For a minute, you lose your status or your place in the vertical, and you get to be the person you are.

you share, and what you bring into that circle is pretty interesting.

Another value is a voracious appetite and curiosity for what's going on. What's happening in other fields? What's happening in our governing world? Jawole's a voracious goer to see things, studier, and reader of all kinds of things. I don't see her holding herself back. I don't see any boundaries in that curiosity. You could say that a valuable question I hold is what are we doing to keep ourselves really curious?

USA: If you could design your own archive without constraints, what would it look like and feel like?

Jawole: It would be inside of a museum for performance, like what I saw with the David Bowie and Alvin Ailey exhibits, where you saw performance in its multiplicity. I saw the David Bowie exhibition in Chicago and I felt like I was in the middle of a concert. It felt so immersive and artist centered; it was just mind-blowing. Same thing with the Ailey exhibit.

Liz: If it was an exhibit, it's not just the videos that could be switched, but the walls would shift depending on your inquiry. For example, what was Jawole doing in the '80s? Suddenly, everything related to that comes together. Then, in another room, there's some way that you could shift the materials around based on the inquiry.

When I teach a course, I go to the library and look up books that might support some of what I'm trying to do, but I don't know if people in other fields look up dance and say, "Gee, what were the dances happening when I'm teaching this particular thing?" What does it take for people to understand dance? If they experience us in any way, like in a workshop, they get the power of it. Now I'm speaking about not just choreography but embodied knowledge. I'm interested in how we can help people get the power of that. Would any of our archival situations help?

Jawole: I think that says something about how dance is not viewed as an important place of study, of understanding something about embodiment and what we're embodying at a particular time. If you were to look within the African American community, and maybe even more specifically in the Midwest or the South, you could see how Black marching majorette traditions have changed, how the embodiment has changed, and what that has to do with some larger societal things that are happening. There's a lack of curiosity about that because what's happening in the body is not considered important. This is something that I think both Liz and I really want to affect.

Liz: Actually, we're working with some other choreographers of our age, in particular, Merián Soto, Joanna Haigood, and Eiko Otake, to figure out how to transfer the knowledge our bodies hold, which gets back to these legacy questions. Although I have worked years to describe it and tried to help people understand it, when I talk to librarians, they're flummoxed. There's no Dewey decimal system for it.

In our country, people are so confused about their relationship to their own body. In many cases, they would prefer to ignore it. Our educational system completely prioritizes mind over body. This, again, is part of the work that we've been doing our whole lives: trying to help people through, to understand and get over that mentality. Helping people see that it's practice, practice, practice. Helping people not be embarrassed. There's a million obstacles. If you get into your body, you might be surprised by what part of your history shows up. Then what do you do? Of course, you dance. That's what you do. ■

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Beach Ritual by Cecilia Vicuña, 2017.
Performance, raw wool, dimensions variable.
Vouliagmeni coast near Athens.

Photo courtesy of the artist.







“Not only do you have to keep going when you make a mistake, but you have to always be working on the edge of what you can do.”

Fred Moten



Brava! by EJ Hill and Skyline Attractions, 2022. Weld-free steel roller coaster, enamel spray paint, wood, and velvet. Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA).

Photo by Kaelan Burkett.





Still from *20-minute workout* by kekahi wahi and Bradley Capello, 2023. Released by Aupuni Space. Starring Josh Tengan, Lise Michelle Suguitan Childers, Maddie Biven, Reise Kochi, and Sean Connelly. Kealakekua, Kaʻawaloa, Kona, Hawaiʻi.

Photo courtesy of the artists.


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WAIKIKI





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Channels by Yo-Yo Lin with Despina and Pelenakeke Brown, 2022. 60-minute performance. The Shed, New York.

Photo by Zack Filkoff.

Roquin-Jon Quichocho Siongco.

Photo by Clay Joshua Aflleje.

Compass (2021)

by Raven Chacon

To be performed (or prepared) in an outdoor open space or field or desert.

For overly amplified electric guitar, distortion options, and wah pedal or tone controls.

Slowly turn up the volume of the amplifier.

Starting with the first prompt circle (Pitch), choose a note/chord type. Sound the tone(s) and sustain them, constantly shaking the guitar if necessary.

Next, choose if this tone is to be I, III, or V of a harmonic progression.

Next, choose a rhythmic/tone-altering technique and perform it while still sustaining the tone.

When the tone is no longer sustainable, choose a transitional gesture and perform it to restart the cycle of prompts.

To choose the next note type and relative harmonic position where the note will occur, pay attention to the direction that the wind is blowing. This will decide for you to choose the option that is clockwise or counter-clockwise to the first choices. Perform the new pitch(es) in their appropriate positions.

To choose the next rhythmic/tone technique, look at the shadows of your surroundings. They will point to the next action. Activate this technique to alter the rhythm/tone.

To choose the next transitional gesture, look for other life, mobile or immobile, and witness how they move. They will teach you and you can use this technique to begin the cycle again.

Continue for as long as you desire, then slowly turn down the volume of the amplifier.

Then turn it off. ■

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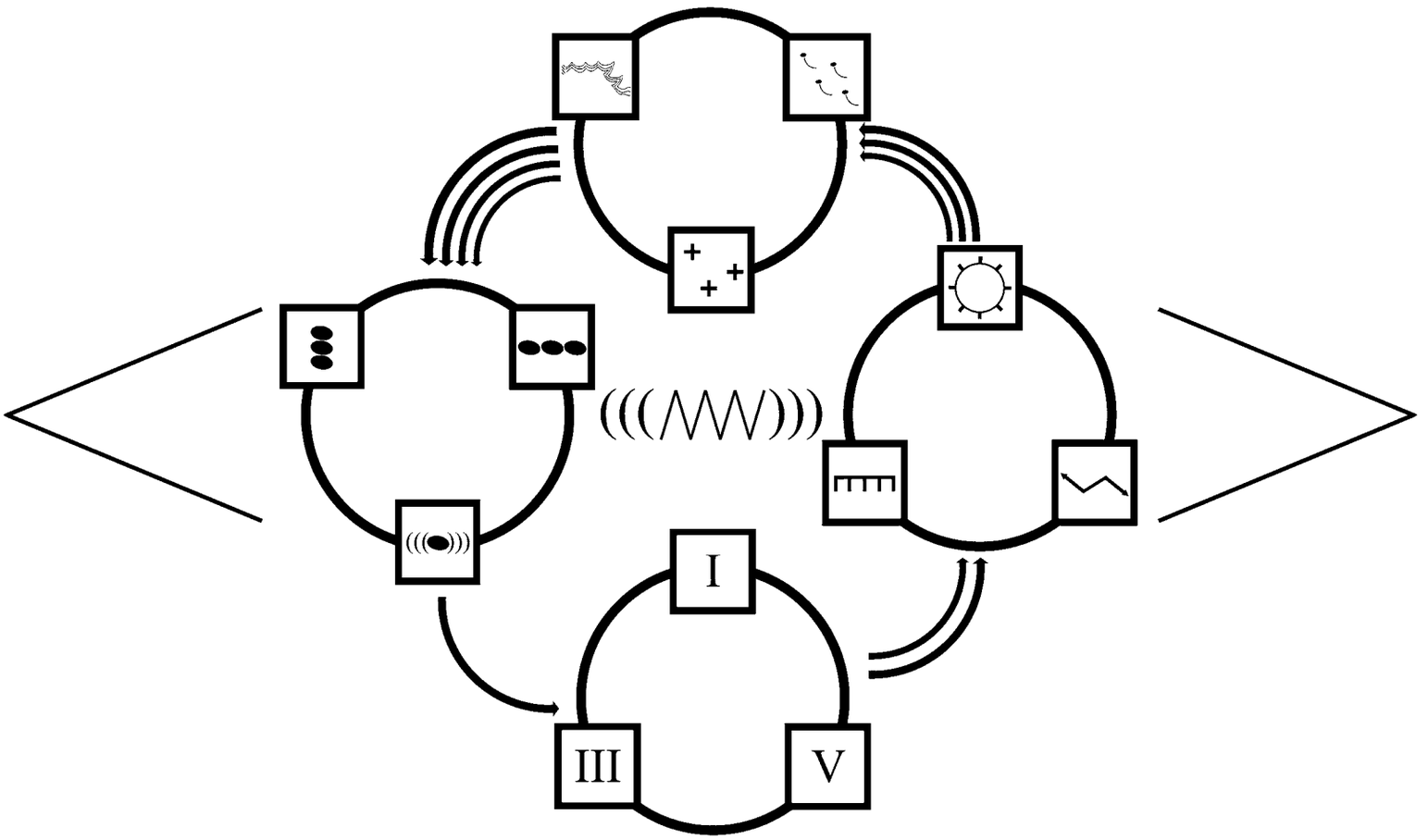
"Compass," 2021. Score by Raven Chacon.

Commissioned by United States Artists. Score © 2021 Raven Chacon.

Raven Chacon is a composer, performer, and installation artist.



Pitch

Induce feedback, resolving and settling on a stable, constant tone.

Pluck a 3-note unison.

Pluck a 3-octave (same pitch class) chord.

Rhythm / Tone

Use the volume knob to effect feedback oscillation. This may also affect the pitch.

Rhythmically switch the toggle switch between all possible settings.

Very slowly press or depress the wah pedal over the course of the prompt.

Progression

I — Any starting pitch class.

III — Any pitch class between I and V.

V — Any pitch class approximately a 5th inverval from the starting pitch class.

Transition

Right-hand or Left-hand hammer-on any 3 notes, one at a time, letting each sustainbefore tapping the next.

Left-hand prepare pre-bend and pluck string while preparing another pre-bend to be played next.

Right-hand slide 3 fingers along 3 strings (over the fret board) to produce harmonic glissandos.

This is an excerpt from a conversation first published in New Suns: Listening with Artists.

Don't Be So Perfect

Educators and writers Eve L. Ewing and Fred Moten share much in common: both use multimodal forms to express their ideas, and both share a passion for Black artistic traditions and pedagogical approaches. The following exchange centers on the generative qualities of making mistakes and teems with anecdotes drawn from the annals of jazz, history, poetry, and beyond. Ewing and Moten also discuss the belief that if we embrace process and forgo perfection, our mistakes can open new and surprising corridors of thought and experience.

Eve L. Ewing is a writer, scholar, and cultural organizer from Chicago. **Fred Moten** is an academic, critic, and poet who lives in New York.

Eve L. Ewing: Do you play any instruments badly? I've played several instruments badly.

Fred Moten: I took piano when I was little, eight or nine, but I was too much into sports. I couldn't be bothered to practice. I totally regret it now. I always wanted to play the bass violin, so I got myself one when I turned fifty, and I took a few lessons. I have all these tapes and books and stuff. I would love to get to the point where I could play with other people and not mess them up or, at least, mess them up in some generative way. But even if I never do, there's a way in which I can just play around with it, and it's very easy to make patterns that sound pleasing. For me, it's a little meditative thing, you find a three- or four-note figure, and then you try to replicate it, and you just make a little pattern. I imagine it's something like what people do when they chant.

Eve: If you ever want to do some ensemble work, I probably play the piano about as well as you play the bass. I'm gonna tease you a little bit, but I think that so much of your work is about giving people the courage to be expansive about what it means to be capable and what it means to learn in collaboration. And I think we still have these kinds of blocks that we have set up. First, you said you can't play any instrument, but I knew you could. That's why I asked about it. I said, "Well, can you play badly?" And then you confess that you do, you can. I've never held an upright bass. You can, in fact, play it! But we have this idea about the minimum level. Like you said, you want to be good enough to play with other people without messing them up. But maybe there's something generative in us messing each other up, you know?

Fred: Once, I was listening to Beethoven – I think I was listening to Glenn Gould, a great Canadian pianist, who I'm semi-obsessed with, playing Beethoven – and I thought to myself, this is extraordinarily beautiful music, but the emphasis on certain notions of musical purity, purity of tone, and the particular modalities of virtuosity that need to be sustained in order for this music to be played "properly," are totally unsustainable. It's ecologically, politically, economically unsustainable to create the conditions that can produce and maintain that level of virtuosity. That level of virtuosity requires radical inequality. It demands it. Most of the music of the world is not structured by the assumption of the necessity of that level of virtuosity. And, in fact, most of the musical world is structured by this other mechanism that you just mentioned, which is this commitment to messing each other up.

Eve: Well, we might call it the ethos of getting in where you fit in.

Fred: Exactly! Okay, so my mom was an educator, and one of her students was a guy named Mike Davis, who basically became like my older brother, because I'm technically an only child. And he used to tell me stories about walking past the

I think that forcing ourselves to learn how to muddle through is such a transferable skill for so many things in life.

clubs on Jackson Street in Las Vegas while he was on his way to school. It would be early in the morning and the musicians would still be playing from the night before. And I just remember him telling me – I put it in a poem somewhere – he said, "Man, that music messed me up." So, when you said that, it made me think of Mike.

Eve: As I said, I love to play music. I'm not a good musician. I'm not a talented musician. But I love to play music, and I cherish times in my life where I've had the opportunity to play music with other people. I like puzzling through something myself, but I really like showing up and trying to muddle through something. I played the cello in elementary school. And then in high school, I took up the clarinet. And the way I picked the clarinet was that, in the first week of class, every day, my teacher would just pick up each instrument, say what it was, and then play it for us. It just assumed no knowledge in the absolute best way, and we got to try out different instruments. Eventually I made second chair, played that badly for three years and didn't practice enough, but I loved having concerts. And my teacher would always say, "All you have to do is start well and finish well. No one will remember anything in between."

Then, when I became a teacher, I took up the guitar because I liked the image of being a teacher who can pull out an acoustic guitar. Now, in the last couple years, I've started learning the piano, and trying to learn piano in your mid-thirties is really interesting. The first time the teacher said, "Okay, now you're gonna do two different things with your two hands, this hand is gonna do this, this hand is gonna do that," it's like they had just told me, "Now we're gonna walk on the ceiling." Like, that feels impossible! But, of course, it's the basic function of playing a piano.

One of the things I've learned is that your music teacher will always say, "If you mess up, you have to keep going." And that's true of learning a language. You learn that in French class or Spanish class. You can't pull up the dictionary every time you're trying to talk to somebody. And that's true of cooking a meal when you've got people coming over in an hour, and you realize that you don't have this ingredient, or you put in too much of this. I really am an advocate for that. I think that forcing ourselves to learn how to muddle through is such a transferable skill for so many things in life. For art and writing and friendship and politics and organizing and trying to clean your house, all those things – if you can learn to kind of muddle through it. It's served me very well, I think. But you have to be comfortable with not being so great. And we're really discouraged from that.

Fred: That reminds me of this story I heard Abbey Lincoln tell at the Jazz Study Group, which the great critic and writer and thinker Robert O'Meally has convened for almost thirty years now at Columbia University. He had Abbey Lincoln come to the study group one year, and she said that while she was recording a beautiful album called *Straight Ahead*, which includes a version of Thelonious Monk's "Blue Monk," Monk happened to be in the studio. And so she played back this version of his song, so he could listen and, I guess, approve. She said he just looked at her, and then walked over and whispered in her ear, "Don't be so perfect."

Not only do you have to keep going when you make a mistake, but you have to always be working on the edge of what you can do. You have to court the mistake; you have to seek out that area that is susceptible to the mistake, because that's how something new can happen. This generativity of the mistake is especially evident, for me, as a reader, in translation. I love mistranslations. My own writing is filled with the resources that emerge from other people's so-called mistranslations. That famous chapter of Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, which, if it were translated literally, would be "the lived experience of the black," was first translated as "the fact of blackness," and there are these real orthodox, heavy-duty Fanonians who are really upset about the fact that that was so loosely translated. But that looseness opens up all kinds of space.

The variations, the imperfections, the rough edges, the things that are both lost in translation, but also found in mistranslation – all those things open up space for people to think and to do things with. I saw this great tenor man named James Carter one time at this club in New York called the Iridium. I'll never forget it. He was playing and he did something that he didn't like, something that showed up for him as a mistake. He's right in the middle of his solo and he hit a bad note or something, and he went "Awww," and somehow that "Awww" was part of the solo! It became part of the music. His reaction to his own mistake was musical, and because he had to keep going, he kept going. It's a beautiful, indispensable lesson to learn. ■



Nicole Mitchell
playing the flute.

Photo by Jim Brock.





What's His Worth by Tanya Crane, 2023. Enameled steel urinal, sgraffito enamel, 24-karat gold leaf.

Photo by Tanya Crane.

This is an excerpt from a conversation first published in New Suns: Listening with Artists.

Crafting Lineages

Artists Tammie Rubin and Tanya Crane draw from their family histories and an ongoing consideration of labor in their work. In the following excerpt, they discuss the significance of mark making and working with one's hands.

United States Artists: Regarding the recurring tick mark motif in your sgraffito work that you've said evokes a sense of time passing, why do you incorporate that kind of notation into your pieces?

Tanya Crane: The tick marks are multifold. They're a way that I get into my work, kind of like a meditation. So the time that's passing, I'm just like, tick, tick, making these marks. It's fun, it's repetitive, I don't have to think at all. My brain just kind of shuts off. It's really nice.

And then on the other hand, when I'm doing tick marks that are intentional, they're stemming from the stories that my uncle and my aunt have told me about my father. He worked as a janitor, I think, in a public school in LA somewhere, and he was incarcerated multiple times. He was a Black man growing up in LA. He wasn't a drug user, but I think the culture in LA at that time in the 1960s was that white policemen did not like Black men, and so they were often just singled out, beaten, taken to prison on charges that were made up, and this actually happened a lot to my father. The tick marks that I make on some of the pieces, like *What's His Worth*, reference when you're incarcerated. You pass the time through those types of tick marks.

That piece also has some other significance. He had ALS, and eventually he was paralyzed, couldn't move, and the tick marks are on the outside of a urinal like those old, enameled urinals in hospitals. The inside is gold leafed and then the whole outside are these one, two, three, four, five tick marks in black and white. It's passing time. It's somebody else's time.

The way I remedied that was to sell one of the pieces that I made to a museum. I gave my uncle the money. I was like, this is your story. This isn't me, you know, the materials are nominal. It's in a museum now, and he's so excited about that. To me, it's this kind of reparations. I'm the intermediary, but these other people, who are predominantly white folks, are paying him now for his labor, you know, so I feel good about that. But yeah, it's the passing of time.

Tammie Rubin: I think that's interesting because I also use a lot of tick marks and repetitiveness, and I always think of them as bodies moving through space. And so this idea of continual shifting through time and space, I love that.

Tanya: Yeah, they're also universal marks. They're very recognizable. I see these marks that I'm making in Aboriginal work and West African work.

Tammie: I think that the visual codes of pattern making are innate and pass through multiple cultures. This idea of mark making — whether it be tattooing or making mandalas or scarification — there's just something about having the physicality of that on a surface. You were saying it's meditative, but I like that we use our bodies to do that action. It's active even if, as you said, you zen out. The motion still has to happen, so I like that idea of a passage of time.

Tammie Rubin is a ceramic sculptor and installation artist based in Austin. **Tanya Crane** is a jewelry artist and object maker.

USA: Both of you have such wonderful attentiveness to surface and texture in your work, but I think what I am especially drawn to is the way that the mark making renders the hand visible. I would love to hear why you think it's important for people to work with their hands.

Tanya: I think it's so you don't forget. You're connected to the materials and history when you're working with your hands – not necessarily the final outcome – but you're connected to a lineage of people who have been engaged in a process, who have been engaged in this labor.

A machine doesn't have the same effect. For instance, I've started making my marks on an iPad, and then making that digital drawing into a screen print and screening that onto my work. And I think the only reason why it looks handmade is because the screen didn't fully wash out, and so it looks more staticky, which I absolutely love. Thank god it didn't actually all render perfectly because it's a different kind of look than my physically going through each mark. It's very important.

Tammie: I feel like there's something about being present, right? When you're working with your hands, you have to be present in the moments of thinking about the work, thinking about the idea of the work, engaging with it. So there's this idea of what I think of in my head versus what comes out through my hands. Often, there may be a gap there, and it's through the repetition of making that I can close that gap to what I'm envisioning versus what is actually happening.

I think it also gives us a sense of other people's labor in the world. I saw something on Threads that said, "Why does this handmade cup cost so much? Why is it $128?" When I have students who are taking clay hand building and wheel throwing, they understand what that means now. They understand all of the things that it takes to make it, because it's not about that one cup! It's about all the hours before, all the prepping. It's about the overhead of the studio. It's about the material. It's about all of that. There's a certain amount of empathy and engagement, but also challenge. Because oftentimes we think, I can do that. You don't know you can do it until you actually do it. Doing it is different than thinking you can do it. And there's a lot to be gained in failure. I feel like we shouldn't lose that. You do something, you're bad at it, and you keep working at it so you get better. The hands can be a part of that labor. ■

I feel like there's something about being present, right? When you're working with your hands, you have to be present in the moments of thinking about the work, thinking about the idea of the work, engaging with it.

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Unknown Ritual Mask by Tammie Rubin, 2023. Red stoneware, underglaze.
I am at my best when I'm escaping exhibition, Big Medium, Austin, Texas.

Photo by Hector Martinez.



This is an excerpt from a conversation first published in Perspectives *on unitedstatesartists.org.*

Sustaining a Public Secret Society

The core contributors of New Red Order (NRO) — Adam Khalil, Jackson Polys, and Zack Khalil — don't finish each other's sentences; they flesh out each other's ideas. Together, they work across media to recruit audiences into their larger aim: confront obstacles to Indigenous growth and help secure a better future for the next generation. Such work could end up feeling overly didactic, but NRO has found a way to be playful, funny even, amidst their uncompromising conceptual grit. To experience this kind of mind meld unfold over a conversation about their practice was a gift and only made more apparent that NRO's work is a boon to us all.

United States Artists: You've been working together for several years now. I'm curious what are the roses and thorns of working as a public secret society?

Adam Khalil: Collaboration means that things go quicker and slower simultaneously, which is both a rose and a thorn of the process, but a meeting of the minds is something that I think is always good in terms of our practices and projects. I haven't worked as an independent artist in over a decade; I've only worked collaboratively under the guise of the public secret society in New Red Order or in other collaborative constellations.

We're really obsessed with not being called an art collective, and I think one of the reasons for that is because it contains you in the realm of art. To define our purpose limits our potential. To not ascribe parameters on what New Red Order could or couldn't be might allow NRO a life that could even potentially exist beyond us.

Jackson Polys: I want to get to the roses, but yes, thorns emerge from the imposed parameters of the label "art collective," given that it can be thought of as something that primarily culminates in art and contributes to the idea of art for art's sake. On the other hand, many Indigenous artists historically and even currently have been pigeonholed by the thinking that for them, for Native artists, in particular, the art must be for something else — it has a certain utility.

We're interested in recapturing and renewing the possibilities of what utility might mean. The kind of flattening that's often projected or imposed on Native artists is something that we can invert or at least reinvigorate to find ways of confronting obstructions to Indigenous growth. One of the primary obstructions to Indigenous growth is people pushing Native people back into the past. We're interested in working through this lineage of secret societies to find ways to garner support for contemporary art and Indigenous contemporary artists and figure out ways to materially shift possibilities for Native people.

We are also continually working through the question, what kind of public secret services can we provide? Native artists are often called upon to be informants on their own culture or on other cultures problematically, so engaging with New Red Order might flip expectations of didacticism that are often imposed on Native artists to instead fold them into the formal qualities of the work to potentially change people's minds.

Zack Khalil: Being a public secret society gives us room to expand and grow even beyond our own lives and practices just like some actual secret societies we're referencing: the Improved Order of Red Men or the Freemasons.

One of New Red Order's foundational public secrets is that almost all of us are living on stolen land on Turtle Island, and so for me, one of the roses of the public secret society is being able to clue people into that reality in a way that actually allows them to do something about it. To feel like they have a sense of agency, and it isn't just a permanent historical condition that can't be talked about, shifted, or transformed into something else.

New Red Order is a public secret society facilitated by core contributors Adam Khalil, Jackson Polys, and Zack Khalil.



Left to right: Jackson Polys, Adam Khalil, and Zack Khalil of New Red Order.

Photo by Cesarin Mateo, courtesy of Creative Time.

I think if people hear an art collective say that you can fundamentally transform the world and create a new one, they might not listen as much. But if it's a public secret society, they have to think a little bit more critically about what that means and learn a little bit more about the history of some of the organizations that we're talking about, and the ways they've transformed the world. But to answer the thorn question, being called an art collective is the biggest thorn of working as a public secret society.

USA: Clearly one of the major roses for you is working together. What is your process like working as collaborators? How distinct are your roles and how many folks besides the founders are typically involved with New Red Order?

Adam: Well, no shade, but we don't use the term "founders." New Red Order found us is one way we like to propose it. The origins of New Red Order are complicated. I was recruited around 2017, but there's a lineage that exists before me that I can't quite speak to.

Jackson: Yeah, for us, it's less founded than found, as a symptom of readymade settler colonial aspirations.

USA: Thanks for clarifying that.

Adam: We use the term core contributors because it leaves room for other interlocutors to enter and exit in a project-


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specific sense. We work through things communally and collectively rather than like traditional film production where it's a hierarchical structure of a director at the top and marching orders that trickle down. It's more fluid and dynamic, which also makes it more confusing sometimes.

Zack: But it can be really liberating, too. Knowing that we have each other to bounce ideas off of makes me a little bit bolder in what I'm willing to propose or try out, which can be really helpful. In terms of people, I think we've collaborated with over a hundred people, but I'm not sure. It feels like scores of people when you include members.

Jackson: It's an exciting opportunity to bring in other collaborators who have ideas and want to contribute to specific projects. Those meetings often bring together new combinations or juxtapositions that go beyond whatever existing authorship assumptions might allow.

USA: The language NRO uses often feels playfully conspiratorial or mysterious. Why is it useful to describe your practice in this way?

Zack: It goes back to the writers and thinkers we reference and how we're trying to make some of their work consumable to a broader audience outside of academia. A lot of that language is pulled directly from those resources. Coming from a video and editing background, so much of that job is making sure that we're keeping an audience with us. Film is amazing because you can make people feel things that they might have a harder time understanding intellectually.

I think we have a lot of fun with language. We try to balance out that academia with deadly serious jokes, and more flippant humor and wordplay. Partially to get us through the day, but also to give the audience something that keeps them on the hook, so to speak.

Jackson: "Informant" is a kind of readymade term from anthropological practice, but it also describes conditions in which we find ourselves as Indigenous artists. In using that term, we're able to point people to a dynamic that, once exposed, doesn't eliminate intrigue, but instead allows for a continual reflection on this charged relationship that may be actually inexhaustible.

This exchange of information is felt as a welcome to participate, but also a warning of how to come correct and situate yourself with reflexivity, in a way that doesn't contribute to the devaluation of Indigenous people while hunting for their epistemologies.

Adam: We're riffing on the structure of secret societies, which uses lingo that allows entry or access to the ideas behind them. To Jackson's point about creating and using language to foreground this dynamic, putting forth ideas into the world is actually about their deployment. That these ideas and dynamics have the potential to become

Knowing that we have each other to bounce ideas off of makes me a little bit bolder in what I'm willing to propose or try out, which can be really helpful.

pp. 50–51
Recruitment Station by New Red Order, Gaile Pranckunaite, Inpatient Press, and Emmett de Muzio, 2020–21. Nylon banners, polyester tablecloth, foam board, video monitors, cut white vinyl over red translucent window covering, dimensions variable.

Photo by Yann Chashanovski, courtesy of EFA Project Space and New Red Order.

material if spoken, which has a real power to it that we're interested in engaging.

Zack: Discourse deploys forces, so this structure of language that Adam and Jackson are talking about is about making this public secret seen and felt and understood on a day-to-day basis by creating a framework for it.

On the other hand, there is a little bit of a tongue-in-cheek acknowledgement of the absurdity of the situation. The absurdity of needing to create this framework to describe something that is so blatantly obvious and in front of us every day. It references some of the absurdity of secret societies or any system claiming to have a comprehensive view of the world that can be easily explained in a few terms.

Jackson: There's always a question: how far do we go to explain everything? How far can we go? What do we need to do? To what lengths do we need to try to convince people who don't yet understand? We aim our language toward something that can be immediately actionable, but still allow for a staying with the project and not always being immediately understood.

USA: What do you feel like you've been able to achieve as a group that you perhaps wouldn't or couldn't have if you worked individually?

Zack: Speaking for myself, what couldn't I achieve individually? Any of it. Go ahead, y'all.

Adam: I was going to say the same thing. Any of it, all of it.

Jackson: I mean, if we were to take New Red Order and imagine what it might be as a project, it would easily be reduced. It could be short-circuited before it really began. But working together has allowed for a head-on approach to some of the shared concerns we're dealing with; as Native people in the so-called United States the numbers are difficult in terms of advocacy. This group formation allows for a kind of expansiveness and an ability to call in people that would not be possible in the same way by an individual. I'm incredibly thankful to be able to work with Adam and Zack and all co-conspirators thus far and excited to be doing it in the future.

Adam: When I saw that question, I just was so appreciative. It's also like family, in some sense. The roses and the thorns of it!

Zack: Super true. Being able to collaborate and support each other has enabled so much more of the back-of-house stuff to happen, in terms of trying to facilitate material and institutional change, and being accountable to that change. I'm super grateful for being able to relay race with each other and be each other's moral backbones and reminders of why we're doing what we're doing. ■

This is an excerpt from a conversation first published in Perspectives *on unitedstatesartists.org.*

Again and Again

Repeating a question over and over can yield a new answer each time; it is in repetition that we might learn something more deeply and feel it more wholly. For composer and percussionist Sarah Hennies and dancer and writer Jerron Herman, this exploration of repetition spans scale, from slowing down to feel the contraction of a muscle or playing a note until it seems to evolve to remounting a performance over years or returning to a learned ritual from childhood. Each iteration brings new discovery, new insight, new answers, and new questions.



Abby Zbikowski in the studio.

Photo by Effy Grey, courtesy of the artist.

United States Artists: Many of your works, Sarah, like *Clock Dies* (2021), incorporate repetition and cyclical loops. And, Jerron, you have similarly explored the unfolding of iterated gestures and movement in works like *LAX* (2023). What does this repetition open up for each of you?

Sarah Hennies: That's a big question. I think basically everything I've made since the *Psalms* (2009) has been repetition based. In college, I was around the composer Herbert Brün, who was really influential. He was this terrifying old German man who was a high modernist and brilliant, but also believed that repetition should never occur in music. He was super dogmatic about it, and I spent a lot of time thinking I needed to write music in a certain way.

Then I made those pieces, and it really stirred something in me. Through repetition, you can feel like you're on the inside of something by doing something over and over again. That is something I've been preoccupied with for a really long time.

The more I looked into repetition as the thing that governs or underlies our lives, the more I kept finding deeper and deeper examples that everything is repetitive, down to synapses and neurons. Breathing and blinking and walking are repetitive, and it's this weird twentieth-century mindset that art isn't supposed to be repetitive, even though it's the thing that we're all engaging with all the time, down to the most basic biological functions.

Jerron Herman: I would totally agree. Ritual breeds a kind of familiarity or necessary catharsis, and repetition is such a beautiful gesture toward embodiment. Literally, you get to feel it as you do it more, and the muscling of the event really seeps in. We have so many layers to us toward sensing, from the most external to the deeper containers that take time to be touched.

Time in and time with gets us deeper into the ritual or space. In my works, repetition has been a way of increasing literacy of a disabled embodiment, so more time with that

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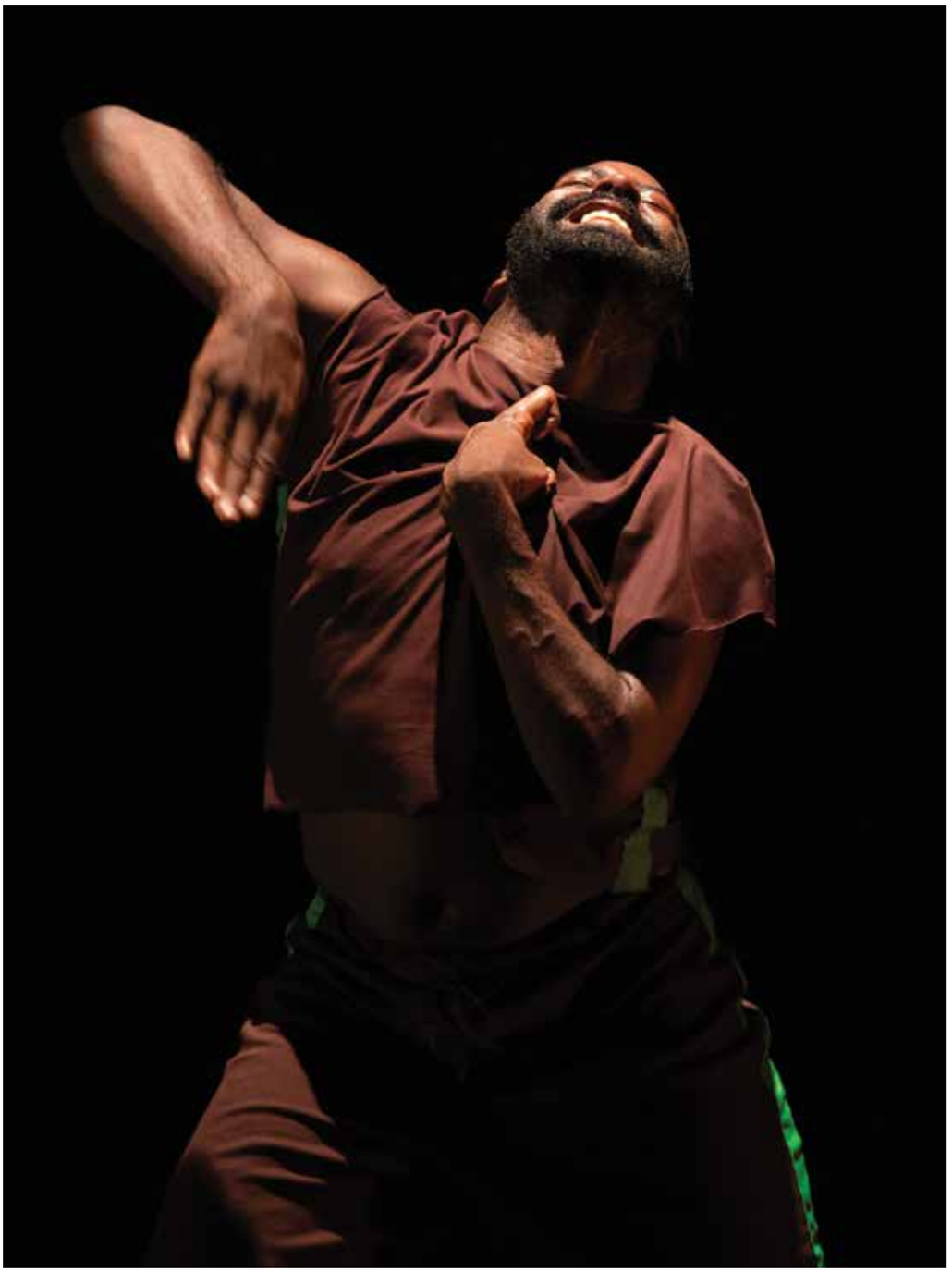
Jerron Herman is a dancer and writer who is compelled to create images of freedom. **Sarah Hennies** is a composer based in upstate New York.

thing allows you to understand the thing and its other contours. We can repeat a word or we can stay in the world of a word, like "lax" or "relaxation," and figure out how it adjusts and changes and makes meaning the longer you're with it. I've been finding it really exciting to give the audience or the witness time to understand their change and variability within this one container.

Sarah: One of my favorite things I've ever written is called *The Reinvention of Romance*. The opening twenty minutes of this piece is just repeating one note over and over again. The notes change, but it's just these slow pulses, and it only changes once every four minutes or so. After we made the recording of that piece, one of the things that was amazing to me was that in the cello, almost immediately, within the first thirty seconds, I started to hear one thing as at least two things. I don't know how other people hear it, but it almost sounds like the pitch that you're hearing and the sound of the bow on the strings almost separate. It's like two people playing.

That's something that's really interesting to me through repetition — the way that things literally open up, perceptually and physically. I am not a dancer, but through playing repetitive percussion music, your body changes in a really direct way, on a small scale. If you do one thing for ten minutes, you're a different person than you were when it started, and the way that you hear has totally changed, even if the work that you're hearing or looking at hasn't changed at all. That feeling of moving, but staying in the same place at the same time, continues to be really exciting. ■



Jerron Herman.

Photo by Robbie Sweeny.

On Mentorship

Artists sometimes work in silos, but more often than not their practices are entwined and their work is strengthened through exchange. In the following conversation, multidisciplinary composer Samora Pinderhughes and actor and playwright Anna Deavere Smith share how mentorship relationships can enrich and deepen one's artistic practice and life over time.

United States Artists: How do you define mentorship?

Samora Pinderhughes: I always think about what Anna says, which is that mentorship is not a candy shop. Mentorship is a relationship over time in which the person who is being mentored is able to engage in a real, in-depth, human way, in both the professional and personal work of what it means to build a life as an artist.

The professional part has a lot to do with craft. So much of the processes that I engage in my artistic practice are things I've learned either from observing and being able to participate in Anna's work, or through the conversations and feedback that I've received from her being so honest and forthcoming about the work that I'm doing over time.

That craft piece is incredibly important to me because it's not just about where your career is going. It's about how to be able to become the best possible artist you can be. That craft piece is the most valuable thing in the world as somebody who wants to make work at the most purposeful level possible. And then the personal piece is just about how to sustain yourself over time emotionally as an artist in the world.

One of the things I think about very often is when I was starting my organization, The Healing Project, Anna told me off the bat that it was going to take ten years or more to do. As a young artist, that was so valuable because it set me up to have the patience and the foresight to know that to create something at that type of scale and detail, I shouldn't expect to be done with it in a year. Often, as young artists, nobody tells you that, and then you have this expectation that if you're not done with something in a year or two, you're failing at it.

Those are the personal elements of mentorship that I'm lucky enough to have had with Anna as a mentor. I feel deeply supported as a person and as an artist trying to build this life of craft.

Anna Deavere Smith: I've taught for fifty years, but I don't have many mentees. A student is very different from a mentee. Education has become so transactional that it is difficult to have relationships. You can't tell students the truth, and I'm forced to inflate all the grades. I never stopped teaching, and I don't think it is less than my other work, but what started as a passion has really become this thing that has to be done with an incredible amount of caution.

You can't really have relationships with your students. It's hard. Maybe with PhDs or something like that. But with a mentee like Samora, I'm able to have a relationship that is about craft, and it's also about caring. I really care about his work. He can't fail as far as I'm concerned. He could stop writing music. I would still be in a relationship with him. And it's its own particular thing that is different from friendship. It's different from siblingship. It's different from love affairs. It's not a family. But it is intimate. It's a special relationship in the myriad of relationships that I have in my life, and it's its own thing. I hope that whatever we're saying here will encourage people who don't have that relationship one way or the other to seek it.

Anna Deavere Smith is an actress, playwright, teacher, and author. **Samora Pinderhughes** is a multidisciplinary composer, pianist, and vocalist.

I think the key word is dialogue. For people who read this who are younger, no matter how iconoclastic and ornery they are — like I was and still am — be open.

USA: How does mentorship give you permission to play?

Anna: One of the things that tickles and delights me about Samora is he doesn't need permission. He can talk about it if he wants, but I don't think he needs permission. And in large part, I feel that's because he's really very fortunate to have had two other very key relationships: his parents – who have high expectations and who are always there for him and who are very interesting, special people in and of themselves – and his sister. I don't think he needs any kind of permission from me, but I have the biggest playground ever because I don't want to fail and I'm not afraid of failure.

The other thing I want to say about him is that he has really high standards, and he doesn't like to fail. There's something about that that gives you, if not permission, then the parameters in which you play. So my experience of Samora is he's going to play because he has very high standards and very high expectations about success. That's my evaluation. Please disagree, sir.

Samora: No, I agree completely. I was going to say I don't know how much I play. I think there are certain projects or circumstances in which I could learn how to play more – from a relational or emotional perspective of the piano in particular. The relationship with the piano is one in which I wish I could play more. There are times I have less joy in relationship to the instrument, but I think that's just indicative of what Anna has said, which is that maybe I'm the wrong person to talk about play because I'm very serious. That doesn't mean that play is opposed to seriousness, but I don't think about that word much.

Anna mentioned failure and that has been very important for me in the mentorship relationship. There have been times, especially early in my work, when I've been able to try things out in a safe space because of Anna's mentorship, her institute, and different structural opportunities. I've been able to try things before they were ready and been able to learn the things that I needed to learn about what the work needed. Being able to have that space has been very important for me.

There are things that I've made that maybe never would have been made if it weren't for Anna's mentorship and Anna believing in the work and knowing the capacity that I had, and making the room for me to be able to work through the initial elements of the pieces. Sometimes, especially when you're a younger artist, people need to believe in you before they have evidence, and sometimes that means that they have to believe in you by proxy of people who actually know what you're capable of.

Anna: There is something that Samora and I have been doing together since around 2013, which is an improvisational process that we have with others in a classroom setting. I think that is a good form of play. It's highly improvisational. It has to do with music, theater, identity, and biography. We work with people ranging from my graduate students at NYU to young people who have no artistic background, and, in fact, many of whom come from very under-resourced communities.

We each bring to that space highly developed skill sets. Samora went to Juilliard. I think that's relevant. He can attract a certain group of musicians to him that also have craft. And I have a lot of experience as a teacher. If you talk about play, you have to talk about trust. And if you talk about trust, you have to be able to talk also about how you can play, in the way that musicians use that word. We can play! And that isn't about fooling around. It's about how we each have two different highly refined skill sets. The fact that we revisit that yearly really since we've known each other is also an important part of our relationship. It's not just sitting down and having coffee. In fact, rarely have we really done that.

USA: How does mentorship show up inside your creative process?

Samora: In so many ways. Anna's own process is very foundational to my own practice. Learning about how foundational and important sound is to the way that she conducts interviews basically changed my life. It's the foundation of how I think about the relationship between music and language, and the relationship between social practice and music. I'm able to see the possibilities in how music and art in general can practically engage in community spaces and be of use because so much of it is centered around relational dialogue, and that's a practice that I learned through observing and talking to Anna.

So much of my process has to do with dialogue and these interview-based practices. It's threaded through pretty much everything I do now, and that really comes from the time that



I was able to spend with Anna, and also from the blessing that she gave me to not just observe that, but to apply it. Another thing that is critically important about mentorship is that it's also about lineage. You're ideally giving permission for the artists that you mentor to not just learn from you, but to take that work and spin it out into their own frameworks. Anna has always been very giving to me, saying, yes, take this and run with it in your own way, to apply it to the different ways that you practice music in all these different formats.

USA: What do you hope future generations inherit from your dialogue with each other?

Anna: I think the key word is dialogue. For people who read this who are younger, no matter how iconoclastic and ornery they are — like I was and still am — be open. Be open to the possibility of finding people on either part of what we're calling the lineage. We think about lineage, and people often say, who do you look up to and what inspired you? I'm more likely to say a cab driver than Toni Morrison, even though, of course, I admire Toni Morrison, because I know that I am actually getting inspired by things that are coming from different directions.

It's about opening yourself to the possibility that you can have a meaningful coupling that is both for the people who have been through it more than you, and for the people who are going through it. It's a very sloppy thing, but I can see it in my mind, like a large map of lines of things moving both forward and backward at the same time.

Don't just be thinking about your agent and the next big opportunity. We have to do that to survive. There are these other enriching relationships that are around you where it's not transactional. Like what Angela Ward says, "Shows come and go. You got to love the people." I think it's about finding the people you can love. It's a life force.

Samora: One hundred percent on all of that. One thing that comes to mind for me that's been a big part of how I see the world, that's been very influenced by Anna's mentorship, and that I do hope for the future, is that more artists make work that expands beyond themselves. I've been very inspired by the fact that Anna's process and her greater project is about this deep listening practice and this common response practice almost with the entire country and the world, and all these people that are a part of the work.

There are so many young artists that want to contribute to this world and be of service, and I fundamentally believe that it is a community practice as well as an artistic practice. That doesn't mean you're an organizer because our effort is different; we are artists first and foremost. But it does mean, going back to dialogue, that you are in dialogue with many people, and that your expression cannot be only yours if it speaks for everyone.

Anna: That's really important because people are trained to develop a singular voice. That's why I have trouble with directors. They're trained to come into a room and take charge. What's your voice? What's your mark? And it does take courage like you have, Samora.

Because every time you step outside of that silo — that silo being about the acquisition of my voice, my mark — every time you step outside that door, you're having to compromise something about your time, about your vision, and certainly about your artistic excellence. Every time you're not practicing that piano eight hours a day, you're giving up something. And I am too. Every time I make these big projects, it's like you are wasting the time you could be using to "refine" your art. And then the question I think you carry, and which you carry in such a more evocative and provocative way than me, is, well, what is my art?

Samora: Indeed. But that's the heart of it for me. And I think that's why it is so important to expand beyond yourself. I have learned that from this relationship and from observing your work.

Anna: And me again from you, because you are willing to give more. You have more patience than I do. I probably had as much patience when I was your age. You have a lot more patience for what's standing in front of you that may not be able to make the mark. I love the differences that we have about that. You just have a lot more patience. I don't have that anymore. And so it's really great to see what happens when you open that door and are more patient about what's going to happen. So what can I say? My technique of that type of openness is rusty, and I'm glad to see it in action with you.

Samora: That is very kind. I love you.

Anna: I love you. ■

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Howardena Pindell and Dawoud Bey
at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago.

Photo by Nathan Keay, courtesy of Howardena Pindell
and Garth Greenan Gallery.



Marques Hanalei Marzan working with coarse coconut fiber rope.

Photo by Jordan Fong.



“Lay on your back in your yard and watch the clouds.”

Rebecca Gayle Howell



Jennifer Ling Datchuk relaxing.

Photo courtesy of the artist.

Charlotte Brathwaite in Barbados.

Photo courtesy of the artist.



An Exercise in Not-Doing

by Rebecca Gayle Howell

This is an exercise in not-doing. Doing not-doing.

Only those who are bad at it need engage.

Some examples are:

Lay on your back in your yard and watch the clouds. (Note: I didn't say paint what you see. I said watch.)
Go to the woods and listen. (Note: I didn't say hike. I said listen.)
Have a Sunday drive. (Note: I didn't say to go somewhere. I said have — receive. Turn off the podcast, the playlist, the map. Roll the windows down.)

I know. This will be difficult. For some, this exercise is even painful. But it's urgent that you learn how to not be urgent.

FAQ

Q: What if I'm so bad at it I can't not-do?

Then you have already succeeded. This is an exercise in failing to succeed. Put down your red pen. Pick up your spy glass.

Q: These examples you've listed are metaphorical, right? You don't actually mean for me to watch the clouds like a bored kid, do you?

I do.

Q: What if I don't have time for this nonsense?

Oh dear. You are more successful than I thought. You have already sold your time! I hope they paid you dearly.

Q: I've been doing well for decades. Is it too late for me?

If you were too late, then you would no longer have breath enough to ask.

Q: What do I do? I mean, not-do? What do I do to not-do? Help me!

Only you can help you, but I have great news: you can.

You possess a secret intraterrestrial power, a spell, buried in your memory's soil. You knew the rune before you knew language — and for a short time after. This was before the soccer tournaments and the algebra tests. Before you learned to be good.

Close your eyes. Walk long into the dark forest of your past. Once you hear the creek, you have arrived. Your magic will be found right there, where you stand. Take your hands and claw the dirt apart from itself. Dig and heap until you are elbow deep in the earth of your being. Once even your head is upside down, you will find the receipt of who you once were. Pull it up into the light. Turn it over. There, written backward, are the words you seek.

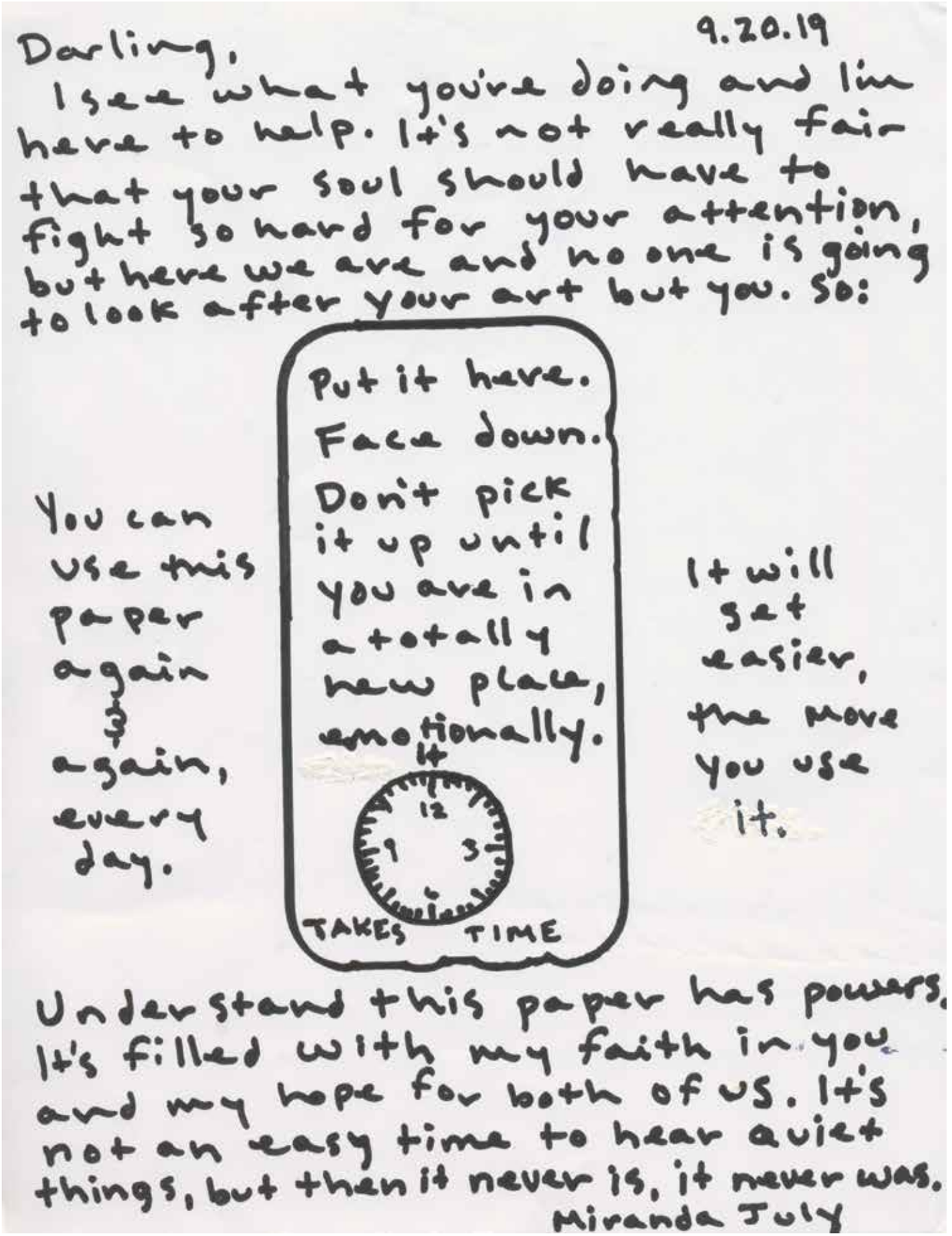
Look around. Find the pin oak with the swing, and sit down on the plank. Take off. As you rise and fall and rise into the air, you will cast your hope. One word, one flight, then the next. That's all you need.

Repeat after me:

Avra kehdabra! Now is now!

Open your eyes. Is that an elephant in the sky? ■

Rebecca Gayle Howell is a genre-rousing writer, translator, librettist, and editor.



Pep Talk by Miranda July, 2019.

Miranda July is a filmmaker, artist, and writer.


OWES
TIME



Time Owes Me Rest Again by Christine Sun Kim, 2022. Mural, dimensions approximately 35 × 100 feet.

Photo by Hai Zhang, courtesy of the Queens Museum.

A Slow Unfolding

In 2019, United States Artists published *A Slow Unfolding*, an anthology of Fellows' self-care rituals. Their responses were reminders to slow down and cultivate presence.

EXCERPTS

When I was a child, I used to revel in washing my hands at my grandparents' house. There was something special to me about their soap. I did not know how to name the smell, but I knew it was unlike anything we ever used at home. It gave me great pleasure, I am not sure I would have used these words then, but now I would say I found the fragrance transporting. No matter how tired or stressed out I am, this smell takes me back to my grandparents' house, to their lawn, to the willow tree, and to a time before I knew how to name complexity. Now, when I travel or when I am deep in rehearsal or in creative process, I pack a bar of sandalwood soap. A long hot shower or a soak in sandalwood Epsom salts takes me out of myself and back home.

Alice Sheppard

I started doing two things when I was about three – writing and playing the piano – that to this day are what ground me and connect me to who I am. ¶ As much as I hated practicing the piano as a child, there still would come a point where I'd master a piece and then could lose myself in the music. I don't play anywhere near as well as I used to, but when I do sit down to play – at the same piano I've had since I was fifteen, that has traveled from Kingston, Jamaica, to Maryland to Brooklyn – I still feel the same bliss. It's part nostalgia, because the books I play from are ones I've had for decades, now worn and in some cases barely held together with tape, and I can remember where I was and what I was doing when I learned the pieces in them. It's also a connection to my present and my past. The piano is marred by tiny pieces of tape that my son stuck to the keys and bench when he was three, and I was teaching him to play. And I have my maternal grandmother's piano books. Since she died when my mother was a child, these books are the only things I have that connect me to her. ¶ But as much joy as I get from playing the piano, I am not really a pianist. I am a writer. I write when I am overwhelmed and need to figure things out. I write when I am angry. I write to document my days, even the most mundane ones. Writing has never just been a thing that I do, it's always been who I am. An empty page is my safe space, a place where I can just be.

Lisa Armstrong

After a particularly tough deadline I'll do my best to reconnect with my family, whom I love more than life itself. Long FaceTime sessions with my nephew or baby niece, and short trips with my sisters to countries we have never been to. I'll watch all the good and bad films I missed, and read all the good and bad articles and books I set aside. Most importantly, I carve out time to make messy, silly, risky experiments in the studio just for myself.

Firelei Báez



2019 Anthology: A Slow Unfolding, publication.

For Julia, digging in the dirt, planting, cultivating, and harvesting her garden takes her hands away from technology and back into soil. The feeling of loamy dirt showering through open fingers is transporting. The sunlight, the sweat, the bugs – it's all therapy. And then cooking food from the garden – nothing like fresh Ohio tomatoes or red peppers in the summer. ¶ For Steven, building things from wood is a deep comfort. No glowing screens, no mouse, no internet. Just the smell of poplar or pine, the feel of a saw in hand, sawdust coating on pants and shoes. ¶ For both of us, traveling to be near a big, expansive body of water is nurturing.

Julia Reichert and Steven Bognar

Walking allows me to experience the natural world and built environment in a direct way. The progressive movement of my body through air reveals a slow unfolding of the world around me, enabling me to connect with something beyond myself. I enjoy discovering details and observing the spectacles exposed through this engagement with the topography of place. ¶ Walking allows me to focus on the present, to put my ideas into a larger context, to provide perspective on my role as an artist through experiencing the immensity of the external environment. ¶ Walking gives me space to think, allowing my mind to wonder and dream. ¶ Walking activates my body and stimulates my mind and senses, as it makes me more receptive to new ideas and relationships, informed by my surroundings, observed, absorbed, or imagined.

Janice Lessman-Moss

Yoga and meditation are a constant six days a week for me. My personal practice is Zen meditation. One of the Zen arts is gardening. Communing with nature is an important part of my creativity as well as my personal well-being. Humans are not separate from nature. The way we treat this planet is as if we were not spurned from the ocean, as if trees don't take our carbon dioxide and feed us back oxygen, not to mention fill our bellies with nourishment. I continue to commune with and cultivate nature. I have created a Zen garden fully equipped with bamboo, pond, stones, and a hammock! This garden is not only an expression of creativity, it is a living work of art, a refuge, and a sanctuary. It took me three years to finish it, about as long as a new theater piece takes me to premiere. And like that theater piece, the garden continues to grow and transform, and I continue to nurture and shape it.

Teo Castellanos

When I turned fifty, I started swimming one hour a day, five days a week at the Belmont Pool in Long Beach. I have enjoyed swimming as recreation my entire life. I love the weightlessness of being in the water. When I turned fifty, I decided I needed a physical activity I could age into, and was inspired by my first art mentor Catherine Mulligan. Catherine was my sculpture and drawing professor at North Dakota State University, and she taught me to be observant and transform those observations into objects. We stayed in communication after I graduated. I have made many a visit to Boulder, Colorado, where Catherine lives, to hike in Rocky Mountain National Park, cook a meal, make artist books, and get up at 5:30 in the morning for a swim and sauna at the YMCA. The time I spend with Catherine (she is a spry eightysomething) are some of the greatest relaxing moments of my life, and she is a poster woman to keep making and moving. With Catherine in mind, I get into the pool those five days a week. I love the solitary time in the water. It is a space for thinking through the to-do list and solving any problems on my mind. The Belmont Pool is a glorious temporary pool, which has been in use for five years, located in a parking lot on the beach. I've been swimming as long as it's been temporary, 25- or 50-meter laps for an hour. I range between 1800 and 2000 meters in an hour, and it's taken me about a year to build up to this. At the end of each swim, I take note of the number of container ships in the harbor, some full, some empty, and report back to Frau Fiber with the morning's statistics.

Carole Frances Lung

A friend recently shared the poem "A Litany for Survival" by Audre Lorde with me. It has become a reminder that my self-care ritual requires that I let my voice be free. That may require me to speak up for myself or for someone else, or just giving myself the permission to stay quiet when I need to reset and refocus my energies. Being quiet in the presence of nature, specifically near water, is deeply healing. Barbados is a place where I can reconnect to my ancestors physically and spiritually, and have the most complete self-care I can.

Charlotte Brathwaite

Don't mind if I do by Finnegan Shannon with Lukaza Branfman-Verissimo, Pelenakeke Brown, Sky Cubacub, Emilie L. Gossiaux, Felicia Griffin, Joselia Rebekah Hughes, and Jeff Kasper, 2023, moCa Cleveland.

Photo by Jacob Koestler.




WE DO WE LINKS IN A CHAIN
WE FLOWING
WE LOOPIN
IN KOOT
EDRIT
UAL

“Dreaming is a technology we all naturally possess, a liberatory spacetime where we become the particle for whom all the possible paths remain available.”

Rasheedah Phillips

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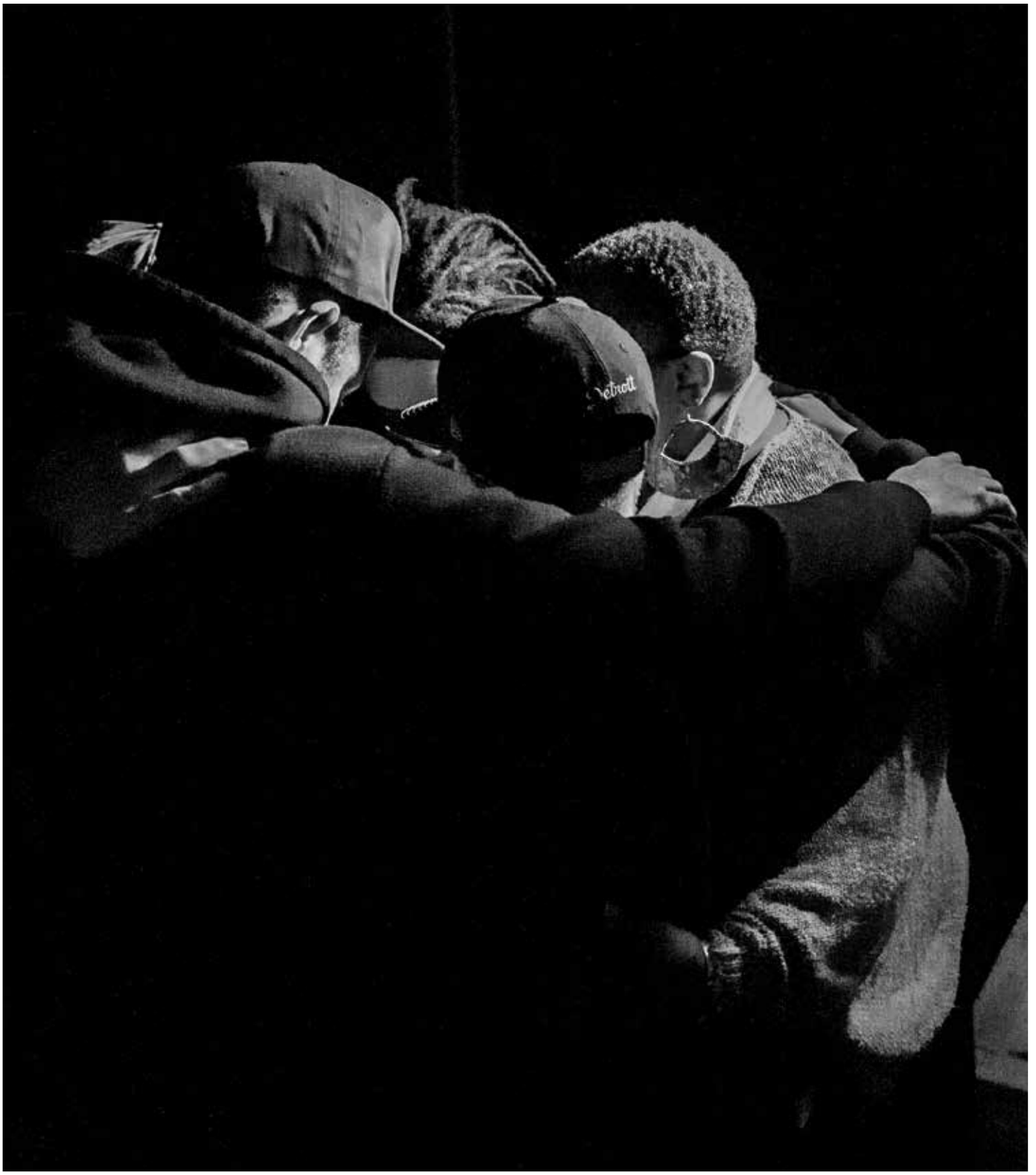
Still from *Afronauts*
by Nuotama Bodomo, 2014.

Photo courtesy of the artist.



Complex Movements gathers
before a performance.

Photo courtesy of the artists.





All the Possible Paths

by Rasheedah Phillips

> […] the conception of a placeless "cosmic time" that transcended and invalidated a spatially conceived temporal regionalism was a misnomer, purchased by means of particular and potentially messy cartographic manipulations of global space.
> – Adam Barrows

> We have bound ourselves to linear unidirectional flows of time with goings-on linked to hand-chosen, or excavated, historic events or practices with the spacetimes between, ahead of, or to the side of these events imagined as inactive or devoid of meaning.
> – James A. Johnson

We often mistake time for events and experiences, just as we confuse the clock with the true representation of time. We rarely think of a wooden ruler or a mile stretching from one point to the next as the embodiment of space itself, but acknowledge it as a limited measurement of some manufactured border we enclose around pieces of space and land. The clock is the same, and even as a measurement, it is a poor representation. Humans have used clocks and watches to hold a little piece of the universe. This gesture toward containment is understandable. If you think about all that time encompasses, how could it ever be contained by what the clock offers?

Clocks, watches, and their kin do not account for the lifeworlds in which time actually unfolds. As it tends to show up in human experience, time is contextual, situated, and shaped through ongoing sense-making and inherent temporal complexities, rather than neutral or inevitable. There are no uniform spacetimes.

> I am not a prisoner of history. I should not seek there for the meaning of my destiny.
> – Frantz Fanon

This distinction between human time and universal time, between measurement and experience, lies at the heart of dismantling colonized time. Colonized time mistakes measurement for fact, requiring that progress move in a straight line, and that seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, and years be divided, quantified, optimized, and extracted. Colonized time is when beginnings lead cleanly to endings and cause neatly to effect. It is always running behind the clock to catch up on the line of progress. Perceiving these patterns exposes how deeply measurement molds our viewpoint.

How do you pinpoint or locate a person on a timeline? You must measure them, collapse them, freeze them in place. Colonized time requires this measurement. It needs the body to be legible, trackable, and for the value to be tied to one's ability to produce. Continued colonization needs time to be surveilled and tightly controlled. The clock is for watching you, and not the other way around. Dismantled colonial time is a refusal to be measured; it creates new forms of relation and ways of being that do not require constant surveillance and verification.

> In the world through which I travel, I am endlessly creating myself.
> – Frantz Fanon

From a quantum perspective, a particle does not simply move along a single predetermined route, it simultaneously explores all possible paths. This means that every potential direction, every route not chosen, is part of the particle's reality, though when observed and measured, it collapses into a singular spacetime. An observer then perceives only one history, only one clear trajectory among the many that exist or have existed. This is the way that light, as a quantum entity, is able to instantaneously choose the most efficient path to its destination, having considered all routes before departing.

This way of being in all moments and parts of all possible paths at once is the ultimate contradiction. Yet contradiction is flattened when observation reveals only one of the paths taken. This phenomenon vividly reflects how we are taught to think about and live in time, with the colonizer's single history marching straight ahead into the future we collapse into based on the observer's gaze, while all the other possibilities are hidden from view.

> In light of their enviable capacity for regeneration and self-refashioning, losing and adding on organs according to the seasons and environmental circumstances, plants are virtuosos of genesis, in the middle of existence, they start each time from the beginning of themselves and of the world. In the continuity of their lives, they keep returning to and reviving the discontinuity of the instant.
> — Michael Marder

For most, embodied time is experienced neither linearly nor singularly. For artists, it might be a plant, a fold, a loop, a stutter, a stare, a serrated edge, or a harvest. It might expand in grief while contracting in joy. We must resist the violent, repeated signals that call for distrust of those ways of knowing.

Often, the results of these experiences blur with endings, with reaching a higher self or some imagined arrival point. Yet results are always happening, simultaneous with every beginning. Ending and becoming constantly collapse into one another.

A flower petal grows, then drops into the dirt where it takes on another possible path. Becoming and beginning get confused. And then there's the happening.

The happening is where decolonized time lives. Not in the before or after but in the ongoingness. In the permission to exist without rushing toward a conclusion or perhaps never reaching one at all. Collapsing predestination. Dismantling determinism. Coexisting in spacetimes where cycles, pauses, spirals, and contradictions are forms of truth. Futures are no longer destinations to reach and pasts are no longer inaccessible plots on a receded timeline. Instead, they are practices we rehearse and experiment with.

> [...] in its function to establish continuity of time, the now is itself a unity. In its function to constitute time via separating moments, it is itself a diversity.
> — Eva Ruhnau

Physicist Eva Ruhnau writes about an "atemporal window within which no earlier or later relation can be measured or observed." In other words, these are spaces in which there is no measurable time. Building on this, artists are constantly experimenting with these windows and slipping into atemporal zones: spacetimes unobserved, unmeasured, unsurveilled, unblocked.

Contradiction arises in that immeasurable space between here, now, and other spatial–temporal configurations such as the future(s). And because decolonized time is not outside of the now, it is often in tension with it. The now is when measurement tries to fix us, but it is also one of the most abundant moments in that the now is always re-occurring, full of contradiction as it flows between presents and pasts, relative, individual, and collective. Thus, the now is always both surveilled and starkly lived. Both collapsed and expansive in all directions and possibilities. Both observed and felt.

Artists have the means to make the tensions of the now into a unity.

> Dreams were thought to be sent by the ancestors [...].
> — Alden Almquist

When time is liberated, futures become relational rather than destination based. Liberated time will provide that spacetime respite without justification, it will give way to play without needing to work hard first, for dreaming without utility. Liberated time is the actualization of futures that do not demand extraction in exchange for our survival and healing. Instead, value is quantified by phenomena such as care, sensation, and transformation.

Liberating time begins with a refusal of the timeline's fatal determinism. In this way, we claim the right to ongoingness and the right to remain unfinished. It is a method of letting the now be in perpetual tension as both unity and diversity.

Dreaming is a technology we all naturally possess, a liberatory spacetime where we become the particle for whom all the possible paths remain available. It is within the artist's power to dissolve those boundaries between dream and reality, to entangle these spacetimes using our bodies, minds, and memories as pure archives. In these archives we are not prisoners of oppressed histories, imperialist presents, or colonized futures nor are we obligated to endlessly labor to reproduce their timelines. ■

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Rasheedah Phillips is a queer housing advocate, parent, writer, interdisciplinary artist, and cultural producer.





Toward a Living Arts Ecosystem

by David Thomson

> No culture can last long without a sustainable way of feeding itself.
> – Wendell Berry

Sankofa is a Ghanaian word that symbolizes the importance of looking back to move forward. Learning from the past to build a better future. Organic systems demonstrate strength, resilience, creativity, and knowledge sharing. They have existed for millennia and continue to adapt. While these systems can be complex, they are based on a series of simple concepts, relationships, and patterns: cooperative work, partnerships, adaptability, decentralization, interconnectedness, and small-scale solutions.

The arts are often described as an ecosystem, but we rarely build them as one. In many cases, our structures mirror extractive economies rather than living systems: isolated organizations that either offer or compete for scarce resources, individuals expected to operate at peak capacity indefinitely, and success measured by outputs rather than by the conditions that made them possible. A sustainable arts ecosystem requires a different orientation grounded in care, circulation, and shared responsibility. Framed as an ecosystem rather than a marketplace, longevity comes from tending conditions – not just producing outcomes. Focusing on maintaining fertile soil yields more possibilities than forced growth that continually drains nutrients from the earth.

work interdependently, not alone

Community is the keystone for a creative ecology. No man is an island. We are interconnected by the nature of what we do. In many cases, artists operate like Swiss Army knives, having to manage a range of skills beyond their creative work – administrative work, social media, contracts, bookkeeping, etc. In a living ecosystem, no single organism does everything alone. Survival depends on interdependence. Translating this to the arts means embracing new values, relationships, and ways of operating that not only shift our actions but also our collective thinking.

We can invest in shared services that reduce duplication and burnout, including accounting, fiscal sponsorship, administrative support, and financial and legal guidance, offered collectively rather than constantly reinvented in isolation. Shared infrastructure allows participants and small organizations to focus their energy on creative work rather than on administrative survival, while also improving the overall health of the system. It reinforces the idea that financial, legal, and governance literacy should be communal knowledge, not gatekept expertise.

Equally important are field-wide norms, particularly around rest, pacing, and consent. Nothing in a living system is meant to operate at peak output forever. Longevity emerges not from constant acceleration but from structures that support life across seasons. The arts have inherited a culture of urgency and overproduction, where exhaustion is mistaken for commitment or a badge of honor. A living ecosystem recognizes that cycles of growth and dormancy are not failures but necessities. In agriculture, leaving a field fallow allows the soil to regain nutrients drained by overplanting. Establishing agreements on workload, timelines, and boundaries creates a culture where people can fully opt in without sacrificing their well-being. This includes permission for artists to step back without disappearing, to rest without losing relevance or access. When the arts ecosystem is built to sustain people – not just projects – it becomes resilient, adaptive, and capable of lasting impact. Ultimately, sustainability is not about doing more. It is about building systems that make it possible to continue.

Within a forest, older trees share resources through mycelium, an underground network that acts as nature's decomposer and nutrient recycler. Circulation keeps the environment alive. Hoarding – whether of money, information, or opportunity – leads to stagnation. One structure of support honors selected artists with substantial funding in recognition of their success and value. How can recipients consider investing some of these funds back into the community? Can success feed into a communal structure of care through intentionally designed pathways that circulate resources where they are most needed, when they are most needed? How might that form of mycelium emerge in the arts?

Transparent communication is the connective tissue of such a system. It is essential in forming trust. When individuals and organizations are clear about their capacities, limits, and needs, resources can be used more intelligently. Transparency also normalizes fluctuation: moments of expansion alongside moments of contraction. This openness makes space for mutual aid funds that address emergencies, healthcare gaps, and life transitions – acknowledging that precarity is often systemic, not a personal failure. Mutual aid is not charity; it is a recognition that survival is based on a necessary network of relationships.

Artists are activists, building new alliances and visions that serve their communities. Support from the field — through layers of microfunding that help artists develop solutions and tend to the conditions around them — can seed growth and insight. Money is not the only funding resource; skills, knowledge, and lived experience are equally valuable and essential to sustaining this work. Horizontal collaborations, rather than vertical power dynamics, distribute agency, knowledge, and responsibility. Learning flows laterally, reciprocity replaces extraction, and practice becomes shared rather than siloed.

Horizontal collaborations, rather than vertical power dynamics, distribute agency, knowledge, and responsibility.

Three Sisters gardening is an ancient, symbiotic Native American method of planting corn, beans, and squash together, where each plant helps the others: corn provides a stalk for beans to climb, beans fix nitrogen in the soil and climb the corn, and squash shades the ground, suppressing weeds and keeping soil moist. The arts environment is a constellation of participants — artists, educators, administrators, technicians, staff, and board members — each contributing to the ongoing dialogue of sustainability. Shifting collective thinking is a shared responsibility that shapes how ideas are enacted and how systems function. While some of these aforementioned practices are already in motion, real transformation depends on letting go of — and composting — outdated power structures. In their place, we can reimagine relationships that support more collaborative interdependencies — systems that can absorb shocks, adapt, and weather financial and sociopolitical shifts, and thus create the capacity to empower communities to care for themselves rather than relying on constant external rescue.

"Oak trees don't set an intention to listen to each other better, or agree to hold tight to each other when the next storm comes. Under the earth, always, they reach for each other, they grow such that their roots are intertwined and create a system of strength that is as resilient on a sunny day as it is in a hurricane."[1] ■

pp. 78–79
Still from *If You Could Know What It Felt Like To Have Been Earth* by Ashwini Bhat, 2023.

Photo courtesy of the artist.

[1] adrienne marie brown, "Emergence," opening speech, Allied Media Conference, Detroit, Michigan, June 2013.

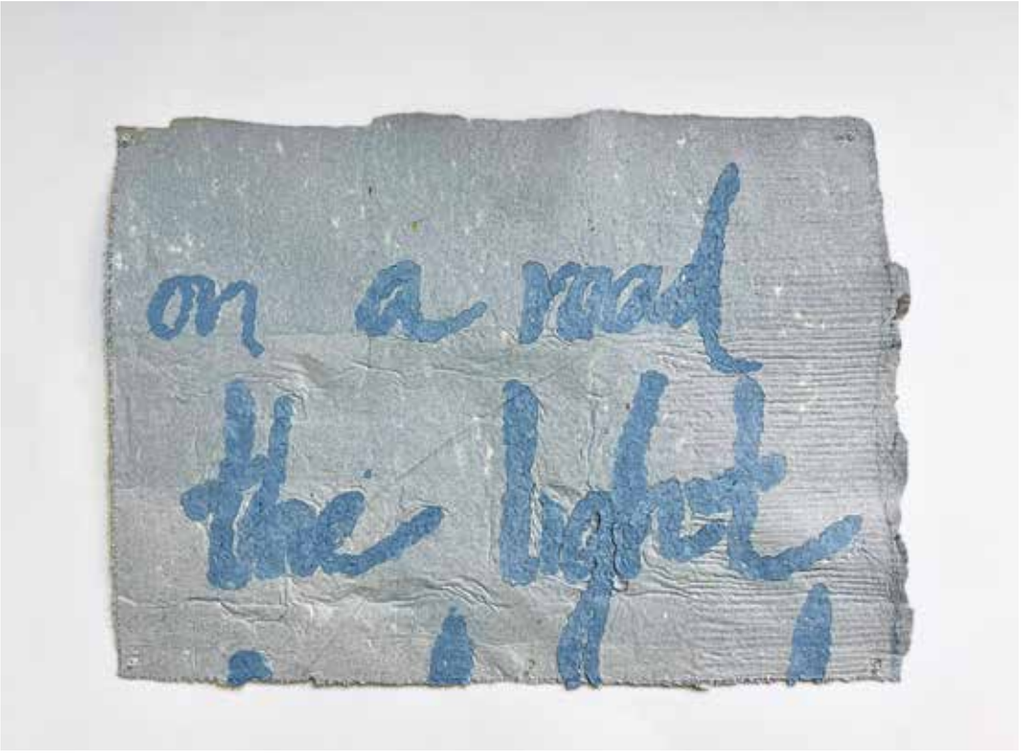
David Thomson is a Brooklyn-based interdisciplinary collaborative and performing artist.

Hong Hong

Real growth is not possible without belief. We persist because we believe in something. We believe in the work. We believe in a dream or a feeling. Maybe we believe in ourselves. But belief requires enormous energy and effort. There are aspects of belief that are logistical. It's not easy to consistently believe in something. In fact, it's very difficult to sustain belief over a long period of time. There are many moments when we falter, when belief fails us. This is when we have to rely on others. I received the USA Fellowship during a moment where my belief was disappearing. This award was one of the first real recognitions of my practice. When I was nominated and then selected, I knew that other people believed in me. They believed in me, for me. They believed in me when I did not or could not believe in me. Their belief helped me to keep going. I'm really grateful for this. I think a lot of the growth that happened in my practice over the last few years occurred because of this injection of belief. ■

Ann Hamilton

I was one of the recipients of one of the early grants, and it was like a rescue. It came at a moment in time when things were thin in lots of ways, but one of the things that was really important about it in addition to the financial recognition was the peer recognition. United States Artists has a program that is really peer-selected, artists recognizing other artists. The kind of confidence, the kind of recognition and permission that that gave was equal to or even larger than the tremendous financial support. So, two different kinds of rescues. ■



On a Road by Hong Hong, 2023.
Hand-formed paper, water
from the Massachusetts Bay,
24 × 32 inches.

Courtesy of the artist.



Safe Space (neon, mirrors, wood) by Wu Tsang, 2015.

Photo courtesy of the artist.

Lar Lubovitch

I received the United States Artists Fellowship on the brink of my dance company's forty-fifth anniversary season. With that unrestricted support, I was able to commission original music and perform my dances with a live orchestra once again, after a number of years in which that had become economically impossible, and to revive my former collaboration with one of New York City's leading contemporary music groups.

United States Artists' support let me know that my lifelong commitment to the art of dance has been valued in the world and has been recognized as remaining pertinent in a largely youth-oriented funding culture. The majority of American arts funding organizations, however well-intentioned, tacitly require control of the content of the artist's work, forcing the applicant to fabricate ideas suitable to the funders' criteria in order to be considered for the support. Under these conditions the artist is not truly a free agent, but is indentured to support through their art the agenda or the philosophy of the granting agency. If the artist in society is not completely free to imagine, to create, to stimulate, to challenge as he or she sees fit, then the culture to which he contributes is inherently less free as well.

United States Artists is among the rarest of funding sources to recognize that the artist must be declared entirely free of any and all restrictions, and to trust the integrity of the artist's use of free will as an agent of truth and progress. Free to venture to the outer frontiers of new thoughts and images, inspiring the possibility that, through freedom, we can think our way to a new and better work of art. And society can, with that same freedom, think its way to a new and better world. ■

Ann Hamilton is a visual artist. **Hong Hong** is a painter and papermaker. **Lar Lubovitch** is a choreographer.





Ayako Kato at Villa Montalvo/Montalvo Arts Center Lookout Point during a sunrise in 2022.

Photo courtesy of the artist.



Watch Night Service by Black Quantum Futurism with Irreversible Entanglements, 2022. documenta 15, Rondell, Kassel.

Photo by Nils Klinger.

pp. 88–89
JJJJJerome Ellis
in a Wyoming field.

Photo by Ryan Landis.

20 Questions from Artists for Artists

What is your favorite, life-giving thing in your studio?

What does the moment when inspiration strikes feel like to you?

Can you paint a picture of the most vivid dream you've ever had that still haunts you to this day?

In a previous life, who were you?

Tell me everything you saw. What do you think it means?

What is the most pleasurable part of the creation process for you?

Where does your courage come from?

How do you make your work accessible?

How can we best continue to support each other?

What collective dreams might we help one another achieve?

What are your best practices for nurturing yourself?

Who do you feel you are making work for and why?

How do you not cry all the time?

What tools do you reach for when confronted with fear?

Who is your favorite poet?

How are you preserving spaces for free expression?

How do you quiet the noise?

How do you make time stand still?

How do you resist?

Do you feel free? ■









Machine Dazzle in residence at Haystack Farm in Sonoma.

Photo courtesy of the artist.

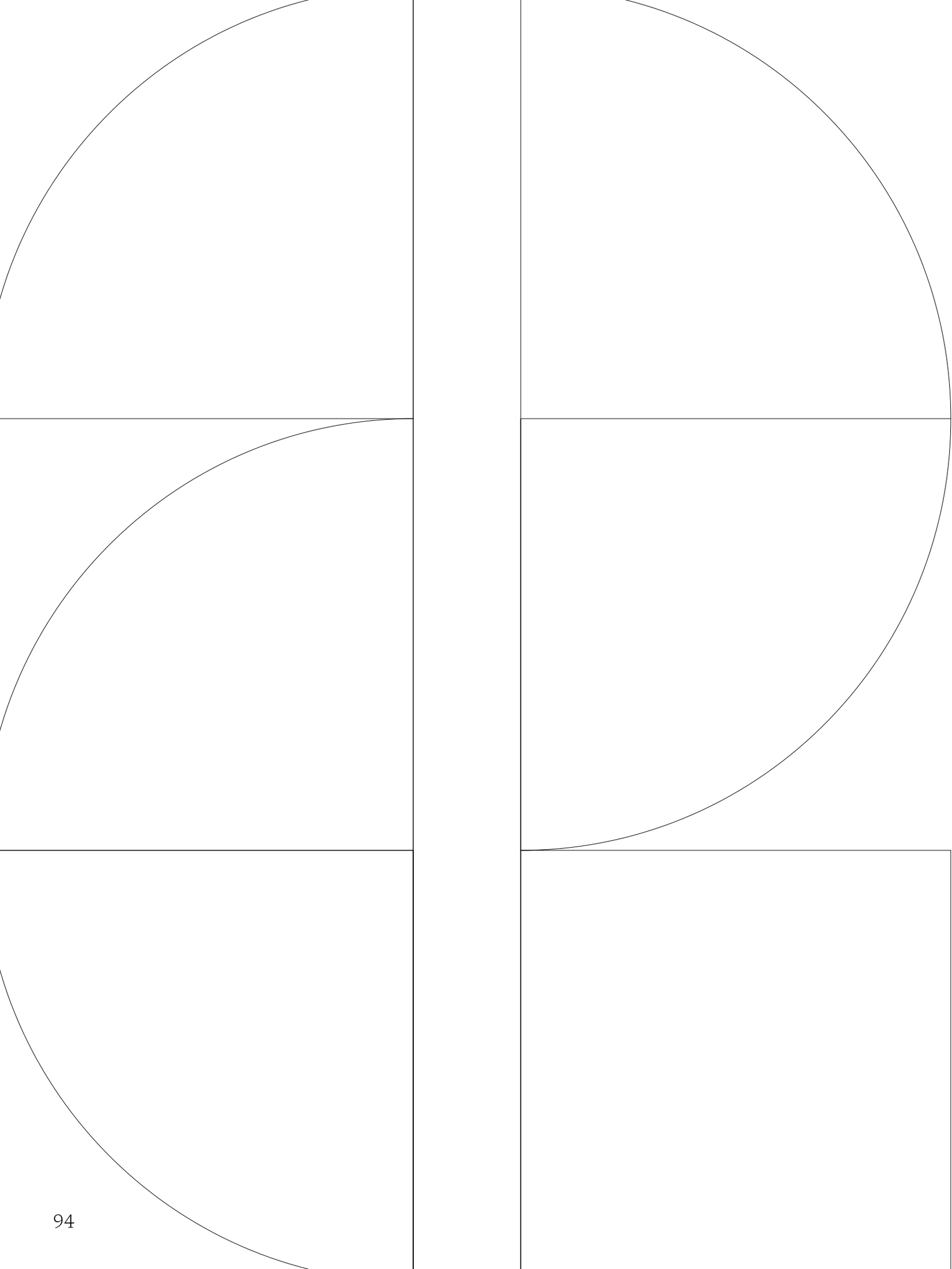
p. 90
Cupboard VIII by Simone Leigh, 2018. Stoneware, steel, raffia, Albany slip, 125 x 120 inches.


Round the World
Flight of
Douglas Planes
1924
New City Hall
Completed
EXIT



City Hall Mural Reframe discussion by Rosten Woo, 2024.

Photo by Kenneth Lopez.



What makes USA important today is what makes it important anytime. And that is that all societies have and need creative artists. And the question is really whether they get nurtured and developed by the society they're in, and that's important because artists help us reflect on our current society, what's good, what's bad, what's ahead, what issues are. That is their job: to have their ideas expressed creatively and powerfully. The question is how well they can be supported doing that.

Susan Berresford
Co-founding Board member,
United States Artists

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