

Daniela Alvarez
Roberta Uno
Elizabeth M. Webb
EDITORS

**ARTS IN
A CHANGING
AMERICA**

**PRESENT
FUTURE!**

FUTURE/PRESENT

BUY

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**ARTS IN A
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This book honors our cultural wellsprings, including:

Julia Bogany
Grace Lee Boggs
Elinor Bowles
Claudine Brown
Judy Heumann
C. Bernard Jackson
Yuri Kochiyama
Michelle Materre
Sam Miller
José Esteban Muñoz
John O'Neal
Diane Rodriguez
Randy Ross
Fred Tillis
Urvashi Vaid
Keith Wade
Keo Woolford

And is dedicated to the water carriers of our future.



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INTRODUCTION

Roberta Uno

Roberta Uno is a theater director and the founder of Arts in a Changing America. She was formerly senior program officer for arts and culture at the Ford Foundation, the founder and artistic director of the New WORLD Theater, and professor of directing and dramaturgy at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

Think about how much blood has been shed for America to exist
in our heads.

—**Lyla June**, Indigenous musician and community organizer of Diné
(Navajo) and Tsétséhéstâhese (Cheyenne) lineages, Taos, New Mexico

What are you saying with your body that you can't say with
your words?

What do we say together as a group that you can't say as
an individual?

—**Nobuko Miyamoto**, singer and choreographer, Los Angeles, California

Creativity provides meaning when all else fails. The work is alive.

—**Spel**, artist, State Correctional Institution at Dallas, Luzerne County,
Pennsylvania

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This book is the resonance of a five-year cultural organizing journey across America.¹ Through words, images, sound, movement, and actions, its contributors speak a collective text that is an echo from within, directions home, instructions from the future, and the whispered wayfinding of ancestors. This text is the weaving forward of deep listening and revelation. It is the joy, fury, and balm of uncanceled lives, land that remembers, bodies refusing to be mapped. It is the assertion that our future is in our presence now.

The seeds for this book were planted in 2014 when I gathered twelve artists, academics, and cultural organizers, working across geography, disciplines, races, and generations to imagine how we could lift up cultural leadership in communities on the ground, connect our networks, and embody cultural equity in practice.² My work as the artistic director of the New WORLD Theater (1979–2002) and later programming the US arts portfolio for the Ford Foundation (2002–15), had a through line of calling us to the watershed moment of the US demographic shift. Demographers project that by the year 2042, Black, Latine, Asian, and Native American people in aggregate will eclipse the historic majority Caucasian population. This flip is rolling up from the next generation; it has already happened for the nation's children under eighteen, the majority of metropolitan centers, and in the states of California, Hawai'i, New Mexico, and New York.³

Our gathering was not of sociologists, funders, or policy makers, but of culture makers, most of us peoples of color—Global Majority, artists. We were not looking at demography as a science, but as a window exposing inequities in funding, and structural racism, as well as bringing into sharper focus legacies of ongoing resistance and social movement building. In 2014, nativist opposition to the browning of the country promoted racism and xenophobia, peddling nostalgia for a “real America”—a delusional construct denying the history of genocidal wars against Native Americans, the enslavement of Africans, racist laws and institutionalized practices, and discriminatory immigration policies. An unmasked, violent reality conflated past and present in ways that writers like Octavia Butler and Leslie Marmon Silko had forewarned. But at the time, many were in denial that the extreme right would become the center of American governmental power: rolling back hard-earned civil rights, environmental, and gender advancements; isolating the United States globally, promoting lies, insurrection, and civil discord through the elevation and normalization of white supremacy, and grossly warping American character. In retrospect, the 2014 rhetoric seems almost quaint compared to the ensuing escalation of racism and terrorism promulgated by the forty-fifth presidency.

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When we came together, we saw the ascending majority of peoples of color, not as threat, but as the possibility of narrative and power change; not as a monolith, but as the potential for a shared future. Our communities, long excluded from the bounty of our labor, had always been sources of generational wisdom and courage, self-sustainability, creativity and genius work-arounds, and the anchoring of spirit and humanity. Aware of our abundance, we began with two simple questions:

How can we be resources to each other?

What can we do together that we cannot do individually?

The result, Arts in a Changing America or ArtChangeUS, was originally a five-year, time-bound project launched to lift up demographic change as a cultural asset, validating artists and organizers on the forefront of cultural equity and racial justice, in communities on the ground. ArtChangeUS was envisioned as a national platform, a collaborative, and a connector. This radical notion of a horizontal table of equity nurtured the possibility that arts organizing could move across disciplines, geographies, and organizational budget size. ArtChangeUS was prescient in its call as an artist-led, Global Majority-driven, antiracist model of partnership, intergenerational leadership development, and network organizing.⁴ We planned to sunset in 2020.

And then the world changed.

The Compass

Our ancestors laid the foundation for this work and this moment. So many movements are running parallel that ripples are becoming waves. Decolonizing work, Movement for Black Lives, visionary organizing continue.
—Halima Cassells, artist and community advocate, Detroit, Michigan

Through the arts people are able to hear truths that they're never able to unhear. . . . We are in a period of regaining our languages, but the bigger picture is helping other people remember.

—Brenda Toineeta Pipestem, associate justice of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, in conversation with Lori Lea Pourier and Roberta Uno, December 19, 2021

Over the course of five years, ArtChangeUS collaborated with our Core Partners to produce intersectional gatherings called REMAP. Modeled after the Intersections program I had produced at New WORLD Theater, REMAPs started with participatory arts workshops where participants could

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connect interpersonally and through their senses by art making, moving, singing, writing, cooking, beat making, and putting their bodies into the work.⁵ Workshop leaders were encouraged to also be participants, especially outside their disciplines, and gain exposure to their peers' methodology.⁶ Once grounded in art processes, REMAP expanded to art-centered convenings and Future Conversations, the seeds of cultural strategy. REMAPS took place in the San Francisco Bay Area; Detroit; Los Angeles; Pine Ridge Lakota Territory and Rapid City, South Dakota; Richmond, Virginia; and the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota. We followed the compass of our relationships, only going where invited, by partners who were working on the ground long before and after our presence. Our planning methods were organic and responsive, usually a year long, but Los Angeles, due to its extensive geography, was a protracted process of nearly four years.

We avoided the convention of summoning stakeholders around a table to discuss our project. Instead we went to individual people, learning context and practice in workplaces, in studios, in neighborhoods, in homes, and over meals. Those visits led to introductions to others. We practiced exchange instead of extractive listening. As artists, we could bring a workshop and mutually share methodologies or offer an event to grow participants. Conversations were moored by exploring how we, as an outside national entity, could bring greater visibility, amplify voices, and expose wider publics to the challenges of cultural communities of color, as well as focus on their robust artistic leadership. We listened for issues, priorities, methodologies, resources, while strengthening relationships.

As we traversed the country, we documented the work in real time by commissioning thought pieces, essays, and interviews and publishing them on REFRAME, our e-journal, conceptualized by folklorist and cultural producer Maribel Alvarez, with Daniela Alvarez serving as editor. Our target audience was practitioners, but also policy makers and the academy. We sought accessible language, images, and audio/visual links from artists, scholars, and organizers. These notes from the field serve as the spine of this collection; the content was expanded to a widened array of voices from thirty-three states and Washington, DC. Coeditors Daniela Alvarez and Elizabeth Webb conceptualized the book's parts, drawing from the topics that surfaced in the REMAPS: "Cultural Presence: Placekeeping and Belonging"; "Dismantling Borders, Building Bridges: Migration and Diasporas"; "Creating a World without Prisons: Culture and the Carceral State"; "Embodied Cartographies: Renegotiating Relationships with Land"; "Living Our Legacy: Ancestral Knowledge as Radical Futurity"; and "Currents Beyond: Artists Shifting Paradigms of Inequity." In every location

we worked, we saw the overarching failure of public and private funding structures to equitably invest in communities of color.

Faces of Power

What we think of as neutral is often just a mask of normality over the horrific inequalities and injustices that the most privileged few want us to buy into, for their benefit.

—adrienne maree brown, Afrofuturist writer, Detroit, Michigan

Racism is a national emergency.

—Eleanor Savage, artist and program director, Jerome Foundation, Minneapolis, Minnesota

In 2016, in the wake of #OscarsSoWhite, the *New York Times* published “Faces of Power,” a stunning full-page graphic representation of the most powerful people in US business, government, education, the arts, and sports.⁷ Of five hundred faces, there were only forty-four people of color. As ArtChangeUS organized in different locations, we adapted the graphic to give a snapshot of arts leadership in the different cities of our work. For example, in 2018 in Minneapolis, we looked at organizations with budgets over \$10 million and found one leader of color out of twelve. In Los Angeles in 2020, zero out of eight, in a city and a state that had shifted to a Latine majority in 2018.

Of course, facile representation is not a solution; a rainbow of gatekeepers can uphold the status quo. But the “Faces of Power” graphic underscored inequity in arts funding and our absence at decision-making tables. Funding inequity was significantly quantified in Holly Sidford’s 2011 landmark study for the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy.⁸ The report validated what was obvious empirically. The biggest organizations, those with budgets larger than \$5 million, make up just 2 percent of the sector, but they receive the majority—more than half—of all arts funding. And only 10 percent of arts grant dollars go to supporting arts that explicitly benefit communities of color.

Self-assessments by concerned public arts agencies have disaggregated and given local detail to this national data. Cultural strategist Debra Padilla, a member of the 2017 Los Angeles County Arts Commission Cultural Equity and Inclusion report, pointed out that \$88 million in public funding went to four organizations, while \$4 million went to two hundred-plus organizations in competitive application processes.⁹ These self-studies, in Los Angeles, New York, Seattle, and other cities, have given a baseline for public officials to pilot strategies to achieve equity. For example, the New

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York Department of Cultural Affairs collaborated with the Metropolitan Museum of Art to introduce an admission ticket for out-of-town visitors with one-third of the revenue added to support for organizations of color and lower-income areas. The City of Seattle's Office of Arts and Culture provided antiracism training to grant reviewers prior to their panel service; they assert that this tactic has transformed award results.¹⁰

As more Global Majority, queer, and disabled grant makers and their allies have come into philanthropic spaces, pressure to effect change from within has grown. In 2008, arts and social justice trailblazer Claudine Brown started the Grantmakers in the Arts (GIA) Social Justice Funders Group.¹¹ In 2015, under the leadership of Eddie Torres, GIA adapted a Racial Equity Statement of Purpose built on ongoing racial equity self-audits, publications, and conversations with the field.¹² Significant presidential leadership shifts, including Darren Walker at the Ford Foundation, Elizabeth Alexander at Mellon, Don Chen at Surdna, and Angelique Power at Skillman, have elevated foundation presidents who, from their bully pulpits, have advanced and deepened commitments to social justice.

This book replaces the *New York Times* "Faces of Power" with the perspectives of individuals whose work revolutionizes the center, redefining culture, power, and agency. They include choreographer Antoine Hunter, founder of the Bay Area International Deaf Dance Festival; Samara Gaev, founder and artistic director of Truthworker Theatre Company, a hip-hop company for youth impacted by mass incarceration; Dareen Hussein, creator of the digital space *A Partial Restoration of the Palestine Archaeological Museum*; Patricia Berne and Nomy Lamm, directors of Sins Invalid, a disability justice-based performance project; Scott Oshima, artist and former director of community arts at the Japanese American Cultural & Community Center; Aaron McIntosh, creator of *Invasive Queer Kudzu*, an ongoing community storytelling and archive project across the LGBTQ+ South; and Faith Bartley, Courtney Bowles, and Mark Strandquist of People's Paper Co-op, an arts advocacy project led by incarcerated women in reentry.

The Arts Understory

People like to refer to these communities as food deserts, but . . . deserts are thriving complete ecosystems. What we are experiencing in our community . . . is food apartheid, where some communities have and others don't, mostly based on race and class.

—Carlton Turner, performing artist and founder of the Mississippi Center for Cultural Production (Sipp Culture), Utica, Mississippi

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Arts policy discussions for years have referred to an arts ecology, a term that implies a symbiosis between the diversity of organizations that make up the arts sector. However, the enduring funding paradigm more accurately resembles 1980s trickle-down Reaganomics, presuming benefit to those at the grassroots level by philanthropic and individual donor support to large-budget, historically white-led and -serving organizations. As the arts sector has become increasingly corporatized, community-based organizations have been treated like research and development nodes, where artists and ideas are incubated, and the best products rise to the attention of elite spaces that then exacerbate inequities by hiring talent away from communities of color and co-opting their work. At worst, concentrating resources in white flagships has upheld values and practices of white supremacy and settler colonialism, where communities of color, far from the wealth of the anointed cultural metropole, are places of extraction or token charity. These critiques are long-standing. In 1996, playwright August Wilson created a firestorm when he railed against the white regional theater system, where he had found a career without finding home. In “The Ground on Which I Stand,” he also objected to grant incentives to white theaters for ancillary diversity programming, instead of supporting theaters of color, particularly Black theaters, themselves.¹³

A true arts ecology might better be equated with the layers of a forest, where the health of the understory, the place where the teeming diversity of flora and fauna is found, is critical to a flourishing woodland. The practice of replacing forests with monocultural planting not only prevents other vegetation from growing back, it creates vulnerability for all.¹⁴ In her Mother Tree Project, ecologist Suzanne Simard describes mother trees in the forest that act as hubs, supporting a “large, interconnected community creating a vast below ground network with their own and other species.”¹⁵ The cultural mother tree organizations of communities of color, most born out of Civil Rights-era activism, represent so many others that have fallen by the wayside due to underinvestment. In 1981, Elinor Bowles produced a milestone report for the National Endowment for the Arts, *Cultural Centers of Color: Report on a National Survey*, that documented 551 vibrant cultural organizations of color.¹⁶ Prepandemic, only 287 in the report were still active. Director and playwright Dominic Taylor posed a parallel question: “What if more organizations that started as a result of the Black Arts Movement survived?”¹⁷ Queen Quet Marquette L. Goodwine, elected chieftess of the Gullah/Geechee Nation on St. Helena Island, South Carolina, provides an answer in her question, “How do you live in such a way that creates the future you want when you must survive today?”

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This collection includes mother tree-voices of iconic artists, fearless cultural organizers, and tireless policy advocates like Carol Bebel, Ofelia Esparza, Hinalimoana Kwai Kong Wong-Kalu (Kumu Hina), Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Nobuko Miyamoto, Cleo Parker Robinson, Vicky Holt Taka-mine, Carrie Mae Weems, and Ofelia Zepeda. Intergenerational dialogues with younger artists mine the interconnectedness of generations, including conversations between Aloha ‘Āina educator and spoken-word poet Jamaica Heolimeleikalani Osorio and her father, musician and educator Jon Kamakawiwo‘ole Osorio; singer and choreographer Nobuko Miyamoto, her son Kamau Ayubbi, and granddaughter Sufi musician Asiyah Ayubbi; gender-nonconforming writer and performance artist Alok Vaid-Menon and their aunt, LGBT activist Urvashi Vaid; and Sadie Barnette, whose installation project is in artistic dialogue with her father, the proprietor of San Francisco’s first Black-owned gay bar.

Trust US

This is a calling-in to institutions and entities with power and privilege to relinquish it. . . . This is a calling-in to the philanthropic, nonprofit, and education sectors to expand their circles of trust beyond white or white-adjacent executive leadership, to loosen their grip on time and space, in order to water the roots. This is how to support and elevate Black and Brown leadership, and (finally!) take a nonstop journey toward an anti-racist future. It’s time.

—**Quanice Floyd**, founder, Arts Administrators of Color, Washington, DC, “The Failure of Arts Organizations to Move toward Racial Equity”

The best part about bad policy is that it can be changed.

—**Linda Campbell**, Detroit activist and director, Detroit People’s Platform, quoted in Halima Afi Cassells, “Collectively Directing the Current”

Conventional cultural maps of cities focus on real estate: museums, theaters, galleries—places that exist through brick and mortar. But how does one map the ephemeral, the longitudinal, the actual ways that culture lives in communities? City Lore and the Alliance for California Traditional Arts have done extraordinary work to make visible places that matter—spaces like El Maestro, a Bronx boxing gym that is an informal cultural center, with a boxing ring that transforms into a stage for music and poetry events.¹⁸ Large-budget white organizations have been equated with the mainstream and the canonical center of critical discourse. So often, Global Majority artists and organizations are characterized as new, emerging, next generation, and lack-

ing in capacity. But in parallel universes, culture exists at scale, particularly in Indigenous and immigrant communities. Festivals and parades like the Brooklyn West Indian Day parade, which draws an estimated two million people annually, half of which are participants; the Tribal Canoe Journeys of the Pacific Northwest, associations of Native American basketweavers, and hālau hula are examples of widespread cultural activity, often nestled within language revitalization, traditional knowledge, and land stewardship. In this volume, the rhythm of language also courses from the cultural movements of hip-hop rap artists and beat makers, poets, and spoken-word artists like Dahlak Brathwaite, Tani Ikeda, Douglas Kearney, Devin Kenny, Talon Bazille Ducheneaux (Cheyenne River Lakota/Crow Creek Dakota), Tanaya Winder (Duckwater Shoshone), Kondwani Fidel, Alison Akootchook Warden (Iñupiaq), and Yosimar Reyes. These voices represent influential cultures at scale, often unhoused, but fearlessly defying, repurposing, and expanding far beyond the limits of institutionalized spaces.

So what would it mean for large-budget white institutions, recognizing a transformed majority population, to assume the role of learners, not leaders, on issues of cultural equity? How would their positionality realign and their practices transcend performative solidarity? And what if public and private funding radically shifted to recognize leadership on the ground—if the forests were truly tended at the roots? In 2021, MacKenzie Scott made a breathtaking set of grants totaling \$2.74 billion to 286 arts organizations, the majority of which are Global Majority–led and grassroots.¹⁹ This book includes numerous contributors whose leadership organizations were recognized by the Scott grants: Jeanette Lee, Allied Media Projects; Carol Bebel, Ashé Cultural Arts Center; Favianna Rodriguez, Center for Cultural Power; Lori Lea Pourier, First Peoples Fund; Vicky Holt Takamine, PA'I Foundation; Jeff Chang, formerly with Race Forward; Patricia Berne and Nomy Lamm, Sins Invalid; Carlton Turner, Sipp Culture; Maribel Alvarez, Southwest Folklife Alliance; Faith Bartley, Courtney Bowles, and Mark Strandquist, the People's Paper Co-op at the Village of Arts and Humanities; and Yanina Chicas and Belise Nishimwe, poets from the Youth Speaks Brave New Voices Network. The Scott investment sent a simple, brilliant message to philanthropy and the art world: trust and invest in those doing the work.

But it doesn't take being the third wealthiest woman in the world to radically reverse the long-standing egregious practice of rewarding those with the most dollars by giving them even more money as incentive to engage with diversity. Redressing the chronic underfunding of Native America, the Northwest Area Foundation committed to invest 40 percent of their annual grant dollars in support of Native-led organizations. From 2012 to 2020, they invested nearly \$63.4 million in Native-led organizations—45.6

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percent of their \$139 million in awarded grants during that period.²⁰ This collection trusts in those who move beyond research and case making, beyond unmaking, to the bold work of iterating the future.

A Multiverse of Change

Given that the universe is infinite, everyone is in the center of it.

—Talon Bazille Ducheneaux (Cheyenne River Lakota/Crow Creek Dakota), rap artist and poet, Fort Thompson, South Dakota, in conversation with Genevieve Fowler, January 2021

How did I find my own home, from which I endeavored to build other homes?

—Marlène Ramírez-Cancio, cultural producer, Brooklyn, New York

In 2020, when the world was newly in pandemic lockdown, millions of people became virtual bystanders to the Minneapolis police murder of George Floyd. For nine minutes and twenty-nine seconds, a curtain was parted to the unabated lynching and violence against Black people, stretching far back in history and reaching widely into the present. In all of the communities where we worked, the issue of police profiling and brutality, and the impact of the carceral state, was named. A few weeks after we started our planning work for our REMAP in Minneapolis, Philando Castile was murdered by police in front of his girlfriend and child. The week we produced the REMAP there, his killer was acquitted, and the city arose in rebellion.

Activist-philosopher Grace Lee Boggs, who passed away at one hundred the year we began, said, “Change takes place in living systems, not from above, but from within, from many local actions occurring simultaneously.”²¹ The contributors to this book are enacting reverberating change from the centers of multiple locations; collectively they speak to a groundswell of connecting movements for justice. Artist Aydinaneth Ortiz’s epicenter is the collision of mental illness and the police state; architect Teddy Cruz and theorist Fonna Forman imagine a cross-border citizenship spanning the militarized San Diego/Tijuana border; bassoonist Garrett McQueen confronts being the sole Black body in white orchestras as impetus to build a community of instrumentalists of color; fashion designer Sky Cubacub celebrates Radical Visibility for Queer and Disabled people in their accessible clothing designs; artist Favianna Rodriguez turns to her Oakland neighborhood and migrant roots to awaken a relationship to the environment; and Arshia Fatima Haq’s project invokes the concept

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of azadi (freedom), writing in Urdu script across the sky above detention centers.

ArtChangeUS exists at the intersection between these different centers—personal, communitarian, geographic, and disciplinary. Jeff Chang opens this book with a catalytic Call and series of questions, urging the responses that follow. Similarly, in March 2020, as the early pandemic lockdown set in, Chang called to ArtChangeUS partners to join together on a cultural front line to challenge a postpandemic recovery of the status quo. In an email to artist Favianna Rodriguez and me, he imagined “a national call at this time when many of our organizations and artists of color are suffering from the closure of our doors, the loss of work and jobs, and the potential flagging of momentum around field-wide equity efforts. Funding and jobs may be the main issues of the art sector when quarantines end, but what about cultural equity? Can artists of color and arts organizations of color drive the agenda this time around?” We reached out to ArtChangeUS Core Partners: María López De León, National Association of Arts and Culture; Lori Lea Pourier, First Peoples Fund; and Carlton Turner, Sipp Culture. From our vantage points in Oakland, New York, San Antonio, Lakota Territory, and Utica, Mississippi, we invited other colleagues and collaboratively crafted the Cultural New Deal for Cultural and Racial Justice (CND).²²

Part call to action, part arts manifesto, and part road map, the CND urges a transformation of our personal, institutional, and global thinking and actions to address racism and inequality from within the cultural sector. Prioritizing communities of color, it forwards artists and culture bearers as the first responders to the soul of our communities as stewards of the imagination and as healers of society.²³ It is a living and evolving collaborative body of work that ultimately seeks accountability and transformation in the arts and culture field, and connection to justice movements beyond. Contributors like choreographer Ananya Chatterjea embody this change on the ground. Her company is aesthetically “flexing hope,” making dynamic choreographic work adapting to the ongoing uprisings in the Twin Cities. Mel D. Cole’s powerful *Ballers* image shows the reclamation of a Confederate monument as communal space, expunging the statue through the presence of free Black bodies. Jeanette Lee, writing about Allied Media Projects and capturing the relationship of cultural and political change writ large, states, “These are human evolutionary changes, which unfold in the realm of culture through practices of creativity. They may materialize as policy change eventually, but that will be the evidence of change that has already occurred.”²⁴

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A Future That Is Already Here

You are the living representative of your ancestral lines. You are the ancestor from the future, peering back through time and forward through time with your intent gaze and wisdom. As an artist, cultivate these ancestral spaces and make work for not only your great-great-grandchildren, but also for your great-great-grandparents. You are the connective portal in the now. Cultivate a space for your song to come through.

—Allison Akootchook Warden, New Genre artist, Kaktovik, Alaska

In the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, a monumental Supreme Court decision was made July 9, 2021. Writing the majority opinion for *McGirt v. Oklahoma*, Associate Justice Neil M. Gorsuch, an avowed conservative textualist, affirmed tribal sovereignty and territorial boundaries by recognizing the integrity of a US government-to-government document signed 154 years ago with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. The decision begins, “On the far end of the Trail of Tears was a promise. . . . We hold the government to its word.”²⁵ This recognition that about half of Oklahoma is Native land, based on treaties which established the Muscogee (Creek) reservation before the founding of the state of Oklahoma, has far-reaching implications. *McGirt*, a landmark decision resting on the tireless efforts of Native American legal champions, came at a moment of national reckoning about racism and accountability.

Throughout the country, individuals and communities are grappling with righting historical and structural wrongs. Evanston, Illinois, became the first US city to pay reparations to its Black residents; white supremacist statues have been removed from the heart of the former Confederacy and in public squares around the world; and in the arts field, leadership is being held accountable. In 2021, Americans for the Arts, a national arts advocacy organization, finally heeded field protests and retired its founder, a steadfast arts advocate who nonetheless had failed to build inclusive leadership and racial equity within the organization. But in this time of unveiled assault, meaningful change in the arts sector is tied with urgency to larger battles as legislators double down on voter suppression, the Supreme Court reversal of *Roe v. Wade* strips women of our most basic rights, white supremacists promulgate replacement theory, and critical race theory becomes the latest lightning rod in the culture wars. Organizing—beyond ally statements; diversity, equity, and inclusion plans; and land acknowledgments—must move reckoning from rhetoric to accountability and resistance.

Thus, the many contributions to this book are creative actions, subversions, and reframing propositions that exist in resistance to the present moment but ultimately draw a connection to long lineages of embodied and

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ancestral knowledge. All constitute a radical shift in values, power, and perspective. Hawaiian navigator and filmmaker Nā‘ālehu Anthony expresses a relationship to the stars, winds, and currents that is both cosmological and scientific, predating Western contact: “These wa‘a were moving throughout the Pacific a full one thousand years before Westerners would figure out how to use the compass and sextant to leave the sight of land. By the time Westerners got here, the millions of square miles of ocean and islands in Polynesia were already fully cultivated by Pacific Islanders.” Artist Wendy Red Star proposes an “Apsáalooke feminism” grounded in the matrilineality of the Crow Nation. Artist Silvi Naçi centers healing as a decolonizing act: drinking tea together, and making the tea bags into bricks—a form that dates back to 7000 BCE as one of the oldest building materials. Ruben Ulises Rodriguez Montoya’s sculptures reach simultaneously to a primordial past and to a mythic future, conjured from detritus found along the US-Mexico border. He writes, “*Sopa de Ostión* is a being of a future that is already here, as well as a creature of a time when desert used to be ocean and our hands were not hands but a thick foot of a muscle leaving behind glutinous slime over an already ancient rock.” Similarly manifesting a Sankofa vision, Kenyatta A. C. Hinkle’s project, *The Evanesced Series* (2016–), is an expression of the #SayHerName movement, asking, “What would it look like to emerge from erasure?”

It is our hope that, just as we began our journey with two questions, the readers of this book will hear and respond to the call of the many explicit and implicit questions embedded here, and that they come away with new questions that draw us closer to a thriving future that is not beyond our imaginations. Most people stand at the shore and see the ocean as a barrier that separates us. But these cultural navigators see the waters’ pathways and possibilities, connecting the guidance of the stars above and the currents ahead.

Notes

1. Epigraphs come from the contributions in this book, unless otherwise noted.

2. The twelve original Core Partners were Maribel Alvarez, founder of the Southwest Folklore Alliance at the University of Arizona; artist Marc Bamuthi Joseph, then director of performing arts at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts; James Kass, cofounder of Youth Speaks; writer Jeff Chang, then executive director of the Institute for Diversity in the Arts at Stanford University; Teddy Cruz, codirector of the Cross-Border Initiative at UC San Diego; Vicky Holt Takamine, kumu hula and executive director of the PA‘I Foundation; María López De León, executive director of the National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures; Lori

Lea Pourier (Oglala/Mnicoujou Lakota), president of First Peoples Fund; artist Favianna Rodriguez, then executive director of CultureStrike; Diana Taylor, founding director of the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics, New York University; artist Carlton Turner, then executive director of Alternate ROOTS; and Clyde Valentin, director of Ignite/ArtsDallas at SMU Meadows School of the Arts.

3. Hawai'i has never had a white majority; it is the only officially bilingual state, with English and 'Ōlelo Hawai'i.

4. In 2015 when ArtChangeUS launched, I was questioning my sanity to do another start-up at sixty, having founded New WORLD Theater in my twenties. I worked the first three months alone, unpaid, before raising funds to hire actor and playwright Kristen Calhoun as program director. Steven Lavine, president of the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), persuaded me to bring the project to CalArts. He posited that if artists and aesthetics were central to the project, it should be located at an arts school in a city like Los Angeles, with a majority Latine and people of color population. The student population was demographically shifting, but administration and faculty were predominantly white. CalArts provided half of my salary, office space, and freedom to work across schools by developing an ArtChangeUS Fellows program for graduate students from different métiers, who entered a leadership pipeline. Three became ArtChangeUS staff; others are ongoing collaborators of mine in the theater; and several made significant contributions to this collection, including as coeditors. With CalArts as an institutional base and with a fiscal agent, eventually NEO Philanthropy, as the infrastructural home providing back office, we were able to start a five-year heavy slog of fundraising, which enabled us to evolve into a national team of seven, all working up to 80 percent time, with medical and retirement benefits, while also pursuing our arts practices. Kristen left ArtChangeUS to become the first program manager for the Intercultural Leadership Institute, and I stepped down as director in 2022. Kapena Alapa'i and Kassandra L. Khalil became co-directors, joined by Daniela Alvarez, REFRAME and research manager; Michele Kumi Baer, CND manager; Genevieve Fowler, program associate; and Elizabeth M. Webb, senior creative producer. I tell this part of the story because programming is public facing, but infrastructure and process are often where the real equity issues lie. One needs only look at diversity reporting from predominantly white institutions to see that racial diversity is typically concentrated in support staff, adjunct, contracted and part-time workers, interns, and fellows, and, cutting across many of these categories, the undercompensated and unbenefited.

5. The legacy of the New WORLD Theater is examined in Chinua Thelwell, ed., *Theater and Cultural Politics for a New World* (London: Routledge, 2017).

6. REMAP workshops included "Hula as Resistance," Vicky Holt Takamine; "Social Justice Comedy," Negin Farsad; "FLEXn Your Story: The Art of Social Justice," Reggie "Regg Roc" Gray; "Listening to Our Landscape: Voice, Movement, Story," Sayda Trujillo; "The Aadizookaan: Beat Work, Beading with Beats," Sacramento Knox and Christy B.; "The Push and Pull: Screen Printing," Ron Watters and Elijah Ford; "The Freedom Chamber," Ron Ragin and Rebecca Mwase; "Lakota Game Making," Mike Marshall; "Loomworking and Beadwork-

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ing,” Molina Parker and Tasha Abourezk; “Counting Coup,” Cannupa Hanska Luger; “Heart and Hearth: Bread Making for Community Strength,” Seitu Jones; “Decolonizing Our Culture with Collective Songwriting and Dance Making,” Nobuko Miyamoto and Quetzal Flores; and “Embodying Justice,” Gabrielle Civil and Tamica Washington-Miller.

7. Haeyoun Park, Josh Keller, and Josh Williams, “The Faces of American Power, Nearly as White as the Oscar Nominees,” *New York Times*, February 26, 2016.

8. Holly Sidford, *Fusing Arts, Culture and Social Change* (Washington, DC: National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, 2011), <http://www.ncrp.org/paib/arts-culture-philanthropy>.

9. T. Dang, H. Hernandez, and M. R. Jackson, *LA County Arts Report: Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Arts Commission, April 2017), https://www.lacountyarts.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/lacaci7_ceiireport_final.pdf; Debra J. T. Padilla, “Our LA,” Arts in a Changing America: LA Cultural Equity Summit Remarks, April 17, 2019.

10. ArtChangeUS REMAP: LA Cultural Equity Summit Recap, April 17, 2019, <https://artsinachangingamerica.org/remap-la-recap-2/>.

11. A debt of gratitude to Claudine Brown, Tomas Ybarra Frausto, and arts philanthropy change makers, especially Maurine Knighton, Joan Shigekawa, Sam Miller, Emiko Ono, Denise Brown, Eddie Torres, F. Javier Torres-Campos, Margaret Morton, Taryn Higashi, Vickie Benson, Eleanor Savage, Arleta Little, and Regina Smith.

12. “Outline of GIA’s Work in Equity, 2008–Present,” Grantmakers in the Arts, July 17, 2021, <https://www.giarts.org/outline-gia-work-equity-2008-present>.

13. August Wilson, “The Ground on Which I Stand,” transcript of speech delivered at the Eleventh Biennial Theatre Communications Group national conference, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey, June 1996.

14. Forest fires rage on the US West Coast and in Australia, regions where fire season is now year round. But fire has also been an invaluable tool in the hands of peoples who steward a diverse ecosystem. According to ABC Adelaide Face-book, May 13, 2021, Aboriginal elders say history was made May 2021 in Tartanya (Adelaide), which held the first Aboriginal cultural burn in two centuries. “The Kaurna people used fire to manage the Adelaide plains for millennia. It has shaped our ecosystems and it is a very important cultural practice for the Kaurna people,” according to Adelaide Lord Mayor Sandy Verschoor. In a Zoom conversation on July 14, 2021, with Lori Lea Pourier and Menominee musician Wade Fernandez, he described his nation’s forests, a vast area so green NASA astronauts have observed them from space. He notes that Menominee forest keepers’ practices ensure a cycle of replenishing: “It goes on forever.”

15. “About Mother Trees in the Forest,” Mother Tree Project, accessed November 23, 2022, <https://mothertreeproject.org/about-mother-trees-in-the-forest/>.

16. Elinor Bowles, *Cultural Centers of Color: Report on a National Survey* (Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts, December 1989), 129, <https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/reports-and-data/legislation-policy/naappd/cultural-centers-of-color-report-on-a-national-survey>.

17. Dominic Taylor, “What If . . . More Theatres from the Black Arts Movement Survived?,” *TCG Circle*. Published as part of the 2011 TCG National Conference, TCG at 50: What if . . . ? (Los Angeles, CA, June 16–18).
18. City Lore’s Community Anchor report, *Community Anchors: Sustaining Religious Institutions, Social Clubs, and Small Businesses That Serve as Cultural Centers for Their Communities*, 2016, <https://citylore.org/place-matters/community-anchors/>; Place Matters, “The Census Map,” accessed November 23, 2022, <https://place-matters.net/>; Alliance for California Traditional Arts, *Building Healthy Communities: Approaching Community Health through Heritage and Culture in Boyle Heights*, <https://actaonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/BH-Cultural-Report-2017.pdf>.
19. Laurel Wamsley, “MacKenzie Scott Is Giving Another 2.67 Billion to 286 Organizations,” NPR, June 15, 2021.
20. “Northwest Area Foundation: Native-Led Work,” Northwest Area Foundation, 2021, <https://www.nwaf.org/approach/native-led-work/>.
21. Grace Lee Boggs, “Seeds of Change,” *Bill Moyers Journal*, August 31, 2007, http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/blog/2007/08/seeds_of_change.html.
22. See part 6 of this book for greater detail.
23. In 2022, ArtChangeUS was tapped by the CND partners to manage its next phase. They pivoted from the original calling-out of a white-led/serving arts sector to a calling-in of the Global Majority-led field. The Cultural New Deal elevates the learning, challenges, and culture of collaboration between our communities, while still pressing for accountability and equity. It has infused and expanded ArtChangeUS’s work in cultural community benefits, a methodology grounded in the work of our Detroit partners, adapted from the powerful organizing history and ongoing efforts to legislate community benefits, ordinances, and agreements to ensure that for-profit real estate developers, using public monies, provide benefit to the people and neighborhoods of Detroit. For more information, see Detroit People’s Platform, <https://www.detroitpeoplesplatform.org/>.
24. Jeanette Lee, idea lab speech, Grantmakers in the Arts Conference, Detroit, MI, October 29, 2017.
25. Neil M. Gorsuch, *McGirt v. Oklahoma*, 591 US (2020).

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