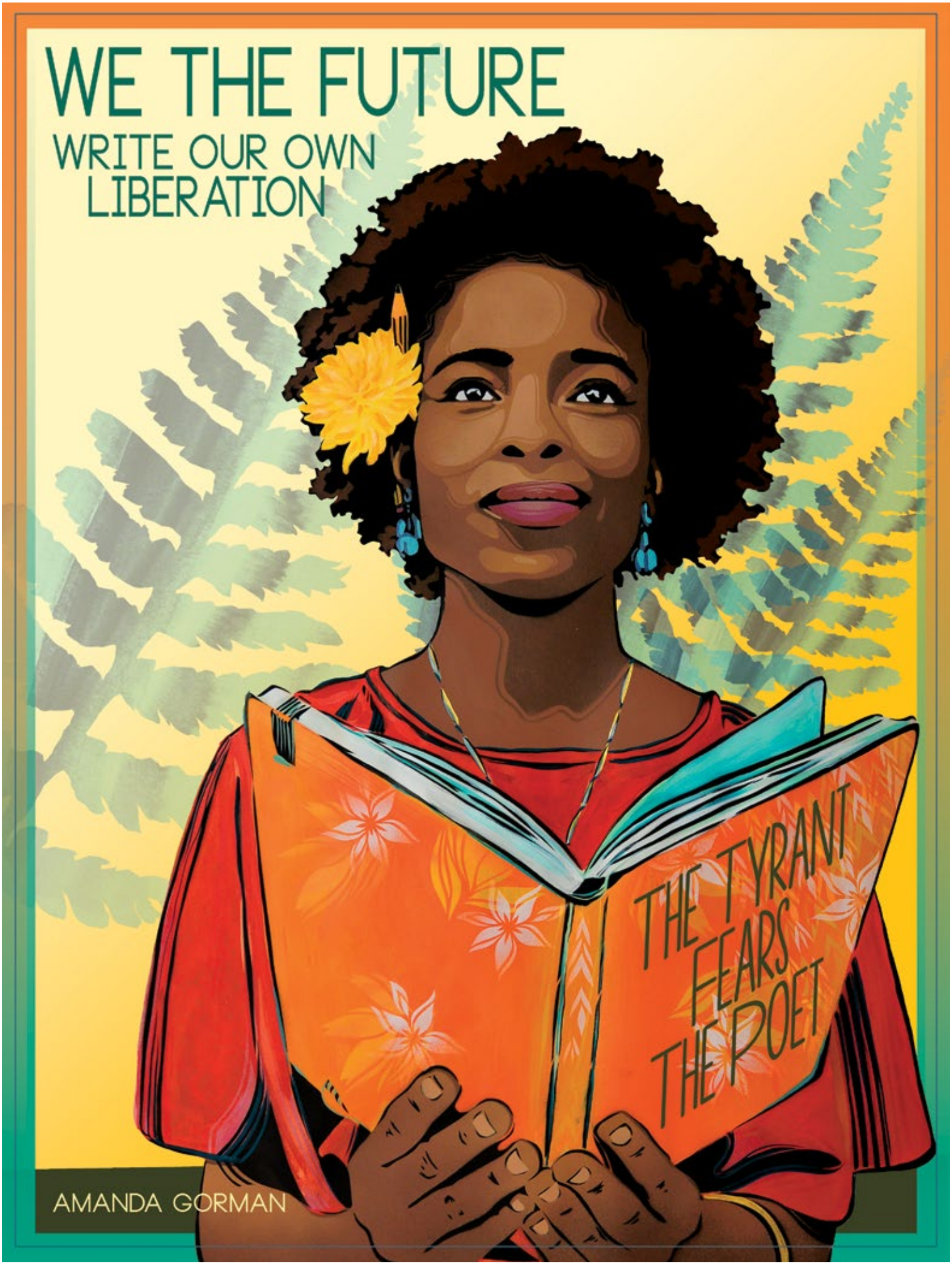
CULTURAL STRATEGY:

AN INTRODUCTION & PRIMER

ART/WORK PRACTICE (AWP) · COMMISSIONED BY POWER CALIFORNIA



Artwork by Kate DeCiccio for Amplifier.org featuring Amanda Gorman.

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ENGAGING ALL ASPECTS OF CULTURAL LIFE AND ALL AVENUES OF SOCIAL CHANGE MAKING TO TRANSFORM SOCIETY FOR A JUST, VIABLE, AND LIBERATORY FUTURE.

99Rootz youth members at November 2018 Election Night Party.

INTRODUCTION

There's a lot of buzz about culture in the arenas of social justice and philanthropy today. You may be hearing terms like "culture shift" and "cultural change" for the first time, and people may be asking you about "Cultural Strategy"—the field of practice that makes cultural change possible.

Cultural Strategy is not new. In order to transform political and social realities—and to ignite radical imaginative possibilities for our future—activists, artists, and movement leaders have been producing and intervening in culture for generations. (Just think of the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s or the LGBTQ arts movement of the 1980s.)

What *is* new is the current interest in formalizing, professionalizing, and resourcing a field of practice with a vibrant network of cultural strategists. Given the increasing opportunities for working in this cross-sectoral field and growing interest in learning about Cultural Strategy, Power California (formerly Mobilize the Immigrant Vote and YVote) has teamed up with Art/Work Practice (AWP) to produce this primer and resource.

As an introduction to key concepts and ideas about Cultural Strategy, this primer pulls together various strands of thought as they relate to this emergent field. This document is the first of two parts; the second is a comprehensive case study on Until We Are All Free, an art- and culture-based initiative on racial justice.

If, in reading this, you'd like to share your experience and feedback, or if you have questions, please reach out to AWP by emailing hello@artworkpractice.com.

WHAT IS CULTURAL STRATEGY?

To understand Cultural Strategy for social justice, we must reframe and reclaim a definition of "culture." When most people speak of culture, they mean *dominant* or *mainstream* culture which prioritizes popular culture and high art. Mainstream culture is made, consumed, and reproduced by institutions like museums, concert halls, media, and Hollywood.

By contrast, our definition of culture is decolonial. It centers the ways historically marginalized communities have maintained and transmitted their values. Our definition includes their traditions, belief systems, ways of living and knowing, and crucially, their ways of reclaiming, healing, and strengthening under conditions of cultural theft, suppression, and erasure.

This interpretation presents culture that is diffused through all parts of life and is incredibly complex and constantly changing. We view culture as a living, flowing, mutating, and responsive phenomena that binds us together and gives our shared lives meaning. This is the culture you find in the food you cook and eat, the languages you speak, the kitchen tables you gather around, the neighborhoods you drive through, the stories your family tells, the faith practices you encounter, and the rituals you have inherited or created. These are the cultural spaces we inhabit daily.

By its nature, culture is messy, nuanced, and highly combinatory. In communities of color as in Indigenous nations, with their histories of colonization, forced migration, and war, our languages and cultures are ripened with resistance, and they bear the marks of our history and trauma. Our cultures and languages also lift up our visions, yearnings, and resilient efforts for liberation. What do you remember learning about the histories of your family or community? Memory—both collective and public—is an important part of culture.

A natural hybrid, culture is dispersed and diffused, and it has *no singular or definitive source*. In other words, just like racial purity, cultural purity is a myth.

By extension, Cultural Strategy is a field of practice and learning which engages *all* aspects of cultural life and all avenues of social change making to transform society for a just, viable, and liberatory future. Cultural Strategy is indispensable to social movement building because it creates conditions for sustainable cultural change, and it fortifies social justice interventions with hope, possibility, and imagination. For those communities most impacted by oppression, Cultural Strategy centers a politic of repair, redress, reclamation, healing, and building power. As a result, dominant cultural conditions can become conducive for all people to thrive and flourish. Since Cultural Strategy is inextricable from *cultural work*, artists, creatives, and cultural workers are key agents and drivers of Cultural Strategy.

For a comprehensive introduction to the field of Cultural Strategy, read The Culture Group's 2013 publication Making Waves: A Guide to Cultural Strategy.

In *Making Waves*, you'll find this definition:

> *Cultural Strategy is the goal of integrating arts and culture into a comprehensive plan designed to shift public sentiment and forge a new collective consensus around a social problem or issue. Cultural Strategy is an umbrella term that fuses the work of producers and organizers, and includes key activities such as long-term planning, campaign design and communications, and dissemination strategies.*

An expansive, ambitious, and emergent field, Cultural Strategy involves a holistic ecosystems approach that intersects with many areas of change making, including organizing, policy, advocacy, media, and narrative shift.

For an overview of how Cultural Strategy connects to its sister practice of narrative strategy, read A Conversation about Cultural Strategy, by Jeff Chang, Liz Manne, and Erin Potts of the Culture Group.

To summarize, the three hallmark features of Cultural Strategy are as follows:

Deep engagement with artists and culture workers in envisioning and articulating a just future.

Building and redistributing power for historically marginalized communities.

Creation of sustainable conditions for social change.

WHAT IS NOT CULTURAL STRATEGY?

SINCE CULTURAL STRATEGY MAY BE CONFUSED OR CONFLATED WITH OTHER ASPECTS OF CHANGE MAKING, HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF WHAT IT IS NOT.

ARTS INTEGRATION

CULTURAL STRATEGY IS NOT JUST ARTS INTEGRATION. Organizations seeking to do Cultural Strategy work must not assume that transactionally bringing artists to the table for projects or, relatedly, producing one-off art builds, performances, and events is the same as producing engaging holistic or integrated Cultural Strategy work. Artists and art-making are central components—drivers of cultural work—but culture is much bigger than art.

Culture infuses all aspects of our lives and is the manifestation of how we enact our values in our everyday interactions. Culture is about social behavior: relationships, community-building, values and prioritization, and worldviews. And much of this social behavior happens *outside* the purview of art-making. In short, Cultural Strategy is not just about art because people's lives are not just about art.

VISIONING AND VALUES

CULTURAL STRATEGY IS ALSO NOT JUST ABOUT VISIONING AND VALUES. An amalgamation of many tools and interventions for social change, Cultural Strategy is neither inherently good or bad, Progressive or Conservative, Leftist or Right Wing. Throughout the political spectrum, activists employ cultural strategies for swaying public opinion. Indeed, we've seen Conservatives deploy cultural strategies with discipline, consistency, and creativity for many issues, including restricting immigration, privatizing schools and prisons, and bailing out corporations.

On the Left, we need to lift up clear visions and values for the change we wish to see, but *visioning and values by themselves do not constitute Cultural Strategy.* Values—such as freedom, family, safety, and resilience—are extremely subjective and are based on people's pre-existing political ideologies.

All values mean different things across political divides and issue areas. For instance, to a fiscal conservative arguing in favor of austerity measures, "responsibility" has a different meaning than it does to an activist on the Left arguing for state-supported social safety nets. Similarly, working for community care and wellness for transwomen of color, an artist has a different understanding of "safety" than a conservative NRA member who believes in gun rights.

Good Cultural Strategy interrogates and exposes political ideas and stances at the core of social issues, reinforcing shared values and vision.

NARRATIVE SHIFT OR STORYTELLING

CULTURAL STRATEGY IS NOT JUST NARRATIVE SHIFT OR STORYTELLING. *Culture is epistemological.* It fundamentally informs the *how, what, and why* of what we know and believe as humans. For this reason, cultural strategists engage in many more tactics than narrative shift alone. In addition to working the levers of narrative change, cultural strategists intervene in law, advocacy, organizing, policy-making, and political education.

If you are engaging in both narrative change and Cultural Strategy, be certain that those two functions work closely together. Because culture encompasses so much more than just narrative, "changing narrative" cannot be synonymous with "moving culture." And, because narratives and stories help shape how people understand the world, narrative is a major, constitutive part of Cultural Strategy.

Here is an apt analogy from A Conversation about Cultural Strategy: Stories are like stars. Narratives are like constellations that connect stars: they reinforce patterns and meaning. And culture is a whole galaxy. In other words, culture is the home for stories and narratives. It provides the contextual framework and basis for meaning-making for all society in the same way that a constellation makes more sense when you understand it in the context of a galaxy.

10 CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURAL STRATEGY

PULLOUT

1 ARTS INTEGRATION

Culture change is impossible without artists and their art. As organizations work toward arts integration, it's important to consider some key questions: Are artists/creatives part of your visioning and planning process right from the beginning? Are you checking for input, ideation, co-creation and advisement from artists along each step of your process? Do you have processes or mechanisms for iteratively engaging artists as stakeholders and as community members? Have you budgeted to pay artists fairly for their time and talent? The right kind of artist is crucial on this last point; well-established and famous artists might help elevate your organization's profile and visibility, but it's far more important to ethically engage artists who are connected to communities you work with - and ideally who are from those communities.

2 VISIONS, VALUES AND WORLDVIEW

Cultural Strategy allows us to be forward facing, to imagine and say what we are for and to envision the future and the values that will get us there. Integral to this work is being able to look back and learn from the past in order to inform our future. And, as we articulate our vision, we must connect it to a clear worldview as well, e.g. Migration is Beautiful and the ambition to do away with borders.

3 POWER SHIFTS

When working in service of liberation, Cultural Strategy catalyzes the transformation of oppressive power structures and hierarchies. It focuses on shifting and redistributing power by populating stories, narratives, art, cultural tropes, practices and ideas that actively disrupt dominant power structures. Cultural strategists understand the holistic ecosystem that supports broad and scalable change, and must work in concert with their allies in the fields of organizing, media, direct action, policy, education, electoral action, narrative change, pop culture, social entrepreneurship, coalition building, and elsewhere.

4 NARRATIVE SHIFTS

Narrative shift is essential to Cultural Strategy, and skillful cultural strategists and workers should understand narrative design. This involves being able to explicitly name dominant frames, identify storylines that advance or disrupt frames, and craft compelling stories that carry the messages for their cause. Narrative is however, one major part of culture change - not all of it. Jeff Chang, Liz Manne, and Erin Potts describe the relationship between stories, narrative, and culture as follows[1]:

Stories are like stars.
Individual, shiny and bright, they move and inspire us.

Narratives (and narrative systems) are a collection of stories in the same way that constellations are a collection of stars.

Stories can be connected together into narratives, like stars can be connected together into constellations, making deeper sense and meaning.

A culture, then, is like a galaxy.
Ever expanding and evolving, a culture is comprised, in part, of narratives as the galaxy is comprised, in part, of constellations. The galaxy is where stars and constellations live—it is their home.

[1] *Chang, Jeff; Liz Manne, and Erin Potts. "Conversation about Cultural Strategy." https://medium.com/@erin_potts/a-conversation-about-cultural-strategy-9e2a28802160.*

DISCOVERY VERSUS DISSEMINATION

Artistic or creative expression and cultural work are central to social change; they allow us to feel at the emotional, physical, and spiritual level. Cultural Strategy focuses on creating conditions for discovery, experiential learning and artistic immersion — versus simply focusing on ideas, stories, or message dissemination.

PREFIGURATION

Prefiguration is the ability to enact and manifest future realities as though they already exist now. This entails practicing living our desired future in the present, e.g. trying out leadership structures that are more inclusive and responsive to team and community needs.

ISSUE DEVELOPMENT AND DEFINITION

Cultural Strategies define and outline issues clearly, shift dominant paradigms, connect audiences, and fundamentally set the terms of the debate. Cultural Strategy is foundational to movement building because in defining an issue, it identifies who the stakeholders and impacted people are, and draws connections between siloed groups in support of structural and systemic change. It helps unite audiences across issues, particularly those wedge issues that are used to divide communities.

NEW NORMALS

Cultural Strategy allows interrogation of questions like: What's 'normal'? Who belongs, who is acceptable? What are the values that underlie the perception of normal? Why? These questions excavate untruths and challenge us to change what's 'normal' when it diminishes, devalues, or leaves anyone behind - especially those pushed to the margins.

STICKINESS AND SUSTAINABILITY

For something to stick and be sustainable, it must be a long-term endeavor. Freedom and liberation and the requisite cultural changes to get us there are not won in a short time frame or via a campaign or policy change. Cultural Strategy requires stamina and adaptability for the long haul. In the fight for LBGTQI+ rights, marriage equality won after a sustained push over at least a decade. And there's more to overcome, e.g. the lack of centering of the experiences of Black and Brown people in the community, as well as the experiences of transgender and gender non-conforming people.

Stickiness and sustainability require: investment in infrastructure, e.g. full compensation and permanent positions for artists and culture workers, and the fostering of deep, durable relationships.

ORGANIZATIONAL INTEGRATION

Many movement people are mounting beautiful, inspiring culture change campaigns or projects often with dissemination plans that allow them to reach far and wide. However, this is not Cultural Strategy — these are external, visible, constituent or member-facing outputs of cultural work, e.g. performances, murals, literature, art events, banners and more. This type of arts integration is a major *component* of Cultural Strategy; however, there's also need for a less sexy, less visible but just as critical component of Cultural Strategy, which is internal organizational change.

Effective Cultural Strategy must be understood, integrated and truly rooted in an organization's operations and practices. How do the values, vision, and change outcomes demonstrated externally manifest internally?

TEN CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURAL STRATEGY

To understand Cultural Strategy and what makes it effective in a complex, ever-changing cultural environment, you must know its key features. Here we'll explore ten characteristics of Cultural Strategy: arts integration; visions, values, and worldview; power shifts; narrative shifts; discovery versus dissemination; prefiguration; issue development and definition; new normals; stickiness and sustainability; and organizational integration.

1. ARTS INTEGRATION

Culture change is impossible without artists and art. Since artists know how to reach people through sensory and emotional immersion, they are the key drivers of Cultural Strategy. Artists are experts in activating audiences and utilizing their genres, disciplines, and training for culture work. Art enables all of us to shift imagination and to influence the emotional realities of large numbers of people. This phenomenon is a constitutive part of changing opinions and belief systems and, therefore, a constitutive part of culture change.

In AWP's "Your Art is Your Weapon" workshop series, we teach artists of color to explore their power and potential to shift imaginations and to interrogate realities. As you examine the role of the artist in cultural change, consider E.L. Doctorow's 1977 essay "False Documents." Doctorow writes:

> *"There is a regime of language that derives its strength from what we are supposed to be and a language of freedom whose power consists in what we threaten to become. The [artist's] opportunity to do their work today is increased by the power of the regime to which they find themselves in opposition. As clowns in the circus imitate the aerialists and tight-rope walkers, first for laughs, and then so it can be seen that they do it better, we have it in us to compose false documents more valid, more real, more truthful than the "true" documents of the politicians or the journalists or the psychologists. Artists know explicitly that the world in which we live is still to be formed, and that reality is amenable to any construction placed upon it.*

To engage Cultural Strategy, movement organizations must work closely, reciprocally, and collaboratively with artists, and recognizing the right kind of artist is key. While well-established and famous artists might elevate your organization's profile and visibility, it's important to ethically engage artists who are from—or connected to—the communities you serve. Parachuting artists in for one-off, transactional projects can be a disservice to your community and to the artists themselves.

Regardless of whether they are local or imported, few artists are adequately trained in appropriate methods for partnering and sharing power with communities on the ground. Organizations such as CultureStrike (Oakland, California), Urban Bush Women (Brooklyn, New York), and the Laundromat Project (New York, New York) are leading the way in this necessary

training by teaching best practices to artists of color who want to co-create art within community for socially engaged or civic-practice art.

Another key in selecting *your* best artist is to identify biases in how you value specific art forms. Rather than prioritizing visual artists who have design- or art-school education and training, seek out local artists who are proficient in the cultural traditions that resonate within your community. These might include cooking, crafting, storytelling, and placekeeping.

The Worker Justice Center of New York organizes agricultural and low-wage workers across New York state. In 2014, the Center partnered with PEN America (New York, New York) to run a poetry and creative-writing program that lifted up undocumented farmworkers' art. Featuring both workshops and performances, the program culminated at the PEN World Voices Festival where these same farmworkers presented their original works before a national audience.

For a deeper exploration of how cultural work, art, and labor relate to each other, read Janet Zandy's 2004 book Hands: Physical Labor, Class, and Cultural Work.

Once you have identified a talented, community-focused artist and brought that person onto your team, the real organizational challenges will begin. For Cultural Strategy to work effectively, you must fully integrate your artists into all aspects of your program work *from the beginning*. Make your artists a part of project ideation, design, implementation, and evaluation.

Frequently, organizers expect artists to produce a mural, a written product, or a design graphic on demand, and without consistent engagement, co-creation, or a deep connection to a network of artists and a community of practice. This practice is both extractive and ineffectual. Artists work within their own communities as well as in relationship with networks of other artists and peers. If you artificially create binaries between "artists" and "communities," you cause needless challenges, and you limit the ability of artists to work with their own people and in their own neighborhoods, where they can have the greatest impact. If you silo your artists inside your organization without adequate infrastructure or support, the result will be attrition and turnover—and less powerful art.

Once you have engaged your artists, trust them. Provide them autonomy and give them creative control over their artistic processes and products. Keep in mind that art-making doesn't involve the same process as writing a press release or op-ed. Your expectations for your communications or development team may not necessarily be appropriate for your cultural organizers or workers. If your organization does not already have an institutional infrastructure for longer term arts-integration, you will need to create one.

For an example, read about Power California's artist residency. (You will find it in the Until We Are All Free case study due for release in Spring 2019.) Begun in 2016, the artist residency led to the creation of a full-time cultural strategist staff position one year later.

Pay equity is a major concern for artists, especially those working alongside social movement organizations. Ethically, you must pay artists living wages for their work—and fund their art-making supplies and materials. Failure to do so constitutes labor exploitation. Art-making is long and intense work. It requires specialized skills, expertise, and training—and there is no excuse for not raising funds to pay artists. In movement spaces, it's also common for organizers to lean on community-based artists to provide additional informal services above and beyond their designated roles. These services may include brokering relationships with their communities, providing access to networks and platforms, engaging stakeholders and members in creative and non-traditional ways, and supporting communications and outreach functions—often by taking on tasks such as designing flyers! When this happens, you must compensate your artists accordingly.

To learn more about appropriate fee structures and processes for paying artists, visit Working Artists for a Greater Economy (W.A.G.E.) online. Consider obtaining W.A.G.E. Certification. This will give you public recognition as a nonprofit arts organization demonstrating a history of, and commitment to, voluntarily paying artist fees that meet industry-wide minimum payment standards.

For a list of tips for engaging artists within organizations, check out "13 Principles for Working with Artists" included in Making Waves: A Guide to Cultural Strategy.

VISIONS, VALUES, AND WORLDVIEW

One of the most fundamental strengths of Cultural Strategy is its infusion of expansive and liberatory visions for the future we want. Arts and cultural interventions are uniquely set up to envision alternate realities to generate hope, possibility, and collective direction—especially when conditions of state control and oppression feel dire and intractable.

In his book Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination, Robin D. G. Kelley writes about this:

> *"When the clouds clear, we shall know the color of the sky. When movements have been unable to clear the clouds, poets have succeeded in imagining the color of the sky, in rendering the kinds of dreams and futures social movements are capable of producing. Knowing the color of the sky is far more important than counting clouds. Or to put it another way, the most radical art is not protest art but works that take us to another place, envision a different way of seeing and feeling.*

Leading with radical vision, Cultural Strategy invites us to unshackle our imaginations to dream, create, and design better, more just futures. Cultural strategies are creative, proactive, and rooted in clearly articulated expectations and conditions for the future. By positing clear visions, cultural interventions also lift up and emphasize key values for our movements and our lives. Think about Cultural Strategy as both forward and backward-looking, like the Ghanaian Sankofa bird. While grounded in looking back, cultural work looks forward to the future—and brings forward lessons from the past. As activists, we know that the future is not guaranteed for our communities.

To manifest our values of liberation, self-determination, democracy, love, and freedom, we must co-create our future through unclouded, unfettered imagination. By themselves, vision and values are not enough. Although we center vision and values in cultural work, the primary influencing factors for enacting or acting out values are *emotions and ideology.* People act when their emotional realities, their political ideologies, and their belief systems align to create *political will.* Emotions and worldview are therefore vital for cultural change.

In broader conversations about vision and values, political ideology—another essential component of Cultural Strategy—is often ignored or subsumed. For example, movement organizations may push for an articulation of values. This is important. But, too often, the discussion does not clarify the underlying worldview, political beliefs, or emotions that must shift before participants can come into alignment with the value.

All people have values. Culture is how communities communicate their values. Individual people activate their values through their political belief systems and their emotional states. But, as we stated earlier, values have many meanings. For example, the value of "safety" is not the same to people on either side of the immigration and border control debate. The value of "family" depends on your stance on either side of the abortion debate or in the LGBTQ

"Black is Beautiful" and Black Power pins from the 1960s (L) and "Migration is Beautiful" (R) by Favianna Rodriguez, via JustSeeds.

rights conversation. In Cultural Strategy work, lifting up values is ineffectual unless we can simultaneously tether them to shifts in underlying political ideology. For Cultural Strategy to be effective, every new vision and every new articulation of the future must have political teeth. Cultural Strategy must always link to a specific political worldview or concept.

Favianna Rodriguez is the executive director of CultureStrike. Inspired by the "Black is Beautiful" campaigns of the 1960s, her work on Migration is Beautiful is a future-facing vision tied to a specific political idea. Rodriguez's viral image of a monarch butterfly flying free speaks to new ways to think about migration. This evocative image is rooted in the natural world, movement, transformation, and captivating grace. It calls forth a specific political stance on the uselessness of borders under late-stage capitalism. The image lifts up values of freedom of movement and humanization, all while engaging a specific political position on borders and immigration control.

2. POWER SHIFTS

When Cultural Strategy works in service of liberation, it supports the transformation of oppressive power structures and hierarchies. It shifts and redistributes power. How? By populating stories, narratives, art, cultural tropes, practices, and ideas that actively disrupt dominant power structures.

For this reason, Cultural Strategy does more than shift representational or demographic diversity of an issue area. Prompted by the #oscarssowhite conversation, we might agitate to see more actors from Native communities and communities of color, and more queer and trans artists of color in Hollywood. Cultural Strategy interventions in the fields of entertainment and

media should also seek to disrupt or supplant the power imbalances perpetuated by decision makers, gatekeepers, and power brokers. Shifting the landscape requires more than diversity on screens. It also requires revisioning decision-making channels all across the entertainment industry from screenwriters' rooms, to production houses and animation studios, to distribution channels, and ultimately to the rooms populated by white men who make decisions about casting, storytelling, resourcing, and marketing.

For examples of how power is actively being interrogated and interrupted in entertainment, read about the Pop Culture Collaborative's work and listen to their Wonderland podcast series on cultural change.

To destabilize power relations, cultural strategists have to engage with all channels for social change. No single approach will do. To acknowledge the deep complexity of culture is to understand that strategies for transforming it will necessarily be complex, manifold, and often quite messy. All roads that lead to social change must be integrated into an ecosystem for culture change.

As a cultural strategist, you must understand the holistic ecosystem that supports broad and scalable change, and you must work in concert with allies within the fields of media, direct action, policy, education, organizing, electoral action, narrative change, pop culture, social entrepreneurship, and coalition building.

A good example of a cultural intervention is "The Yes Men" scamming their way onto a BBC news broadcast. Claiming to represent Dow Jones Chemicals, they issued a fake apology for causing the largest-to-date industrial gas leak, which affected half a million people in Bhopal, India. This intervention highlighted both power and responsibility through the field of media. You can read more on the Beautiful Trouble website.

3. NARRATIVE SHIFTS

All good cultural strategists and workers should have proficiency and aptitude in storytelling and narrative design. Another essential component of Cultural Strategy is narrative shift, which includes being able to explicitly name dominant frames, identify storylines that support or disrupt dominant frames, craft compelling stories, and manipulate story elements of plot, action, characterization, and message.

In the same way that constellations are a part of the galaxy, narratives are part of culture—but narratives do not constitute all of culture. In the social justice field, there's often a conflation of the two, perhaps because activists who engage in Cultural Strategy may also develop stories and/or interface with communications roles and teams. And, because narratives can change without shifts becoming fused or accreted into sustainable cultural change, it's possible to intervene at the level of narratives *without* affecting culture.

Consider, for example, the up tick of the #solidarityisforwhitewomen narrative. This helped create *awareness* of society's continual deprioritizing of women from Indigenous nations and communities of color in favor of a brand of white feminism that centers the comfort and voices of white women. Despite this improved awareness, the overall sexist, racist, and white-supremacist cultural conditions remain intact.

Achieving narrative saturation and diffusion is an important goal for cultural strategists, but ultimately cultural change involves shifting mainstream paradigms, behaviors, and belief systems.

Since narrative and culture are interrelated, changing culture requires destabilizing dominant narratives. Culture includes clothing, religion, food, rituals, traditions, faith practices, public space, monuments, memorials, celebrations, festivals, and media. Remember: Culture also

"The Big Tent of Arts and Culture," Making Waves: A Guide to Cultural Strategy, courtesy of The Culture Group.

includes a range of social aspects of people's lives that are beyond narrative.

Making Waves: A Guide to Cultural Strategy provides us with an image of the "Big Tent of Culture"—a useful depiction of the arenas and institutions that produce culture.

From the granular to the large, culture is in all parts of social life. As you can see, culture is much, much more than narrative. At the organizational level, then, when we conflate Cultural Strategy with narrative strategy, we limit change-making potential. If your organizational strategy for culture shift is living mostly in the domain of storytelling and communications, or narrative work, you may need to clarify and build shared understanding around narrative and culture.

For an article that describes useful distinctions between narrative and Cultural Strategy, read A Conversation about Cultural Strategy by Jeff Chang, Liz Manne, and Erin Potts. For an excellent resource that explains, defines, and describes the field of narrative strategy, read the report Toward New Gravity by the Narrative Initiative.

4. DISCOVERY VERSUS DISSEMINATION

Favianna Rodriguez's butterfly image reminds us that artists know how to create immersive experiences that move people emotionally, physically, and spiritually, helping them to discover

new truths. This component of self-discovery is a core precept of Cultural Strategy, one that makes it qualitatively different from other avenues of change-making such as law or policy work. Cultural Strategy creates conditions for what Brazilian activist Paulo Freire called "*conscientization*" in his seminal book Pedagogy of the Oppressed. [Note: The English term "conscientization" is a translation of the Portuguese term *conscientização*, which means "critical consciousness."] Friere explains that critical consciousness involves achieving an in-depth experiential knowledge of the world, including a deep understanding of social and political contradictions. Once that understanding has illuminated the oppressive elements in your life, your critical consciousness will shift toward action. Having experienced a new perception of the world for yourself, both holistically and emotionally, you will be better able to integrate new information into your identity. Your new perception is a process of internalization which includes encountering ideas in the world and then making them your own through experience. Self-internalization and discovery are essential for enabling change.

Research consistently tells us that people discard facts and data points that don't fit their pre-existing worldviews or paradigms. Yet people do change *within relationships and through experience*. Under the right conditions, people will change themselves. Art creates those conditions and facilitates the change process. Cultural Strategy creates planful, intentional, and holistic pathways for arts-integrated work to change people's minds about social issues. Good Cultural Strategy enables people to grow and learn, and to change themselves, their organizations, and the way they work and play—and agitate for justice.

It is still crucial to support our struggles through dissemination and replication of ideas (historically known as propaganda or agitprop). This communications strategy dovetails with Cultural Strategy. But rather than concentrating on disseminating ideas, stories, or messages, Cultural Strategy focuses on creating conditions for discovery, experiential learning, and artistic immersion. In this way, Cultural Strategy creates leverage opportunities for critical consciousness and collective discovery.

5. PREFIGURATION

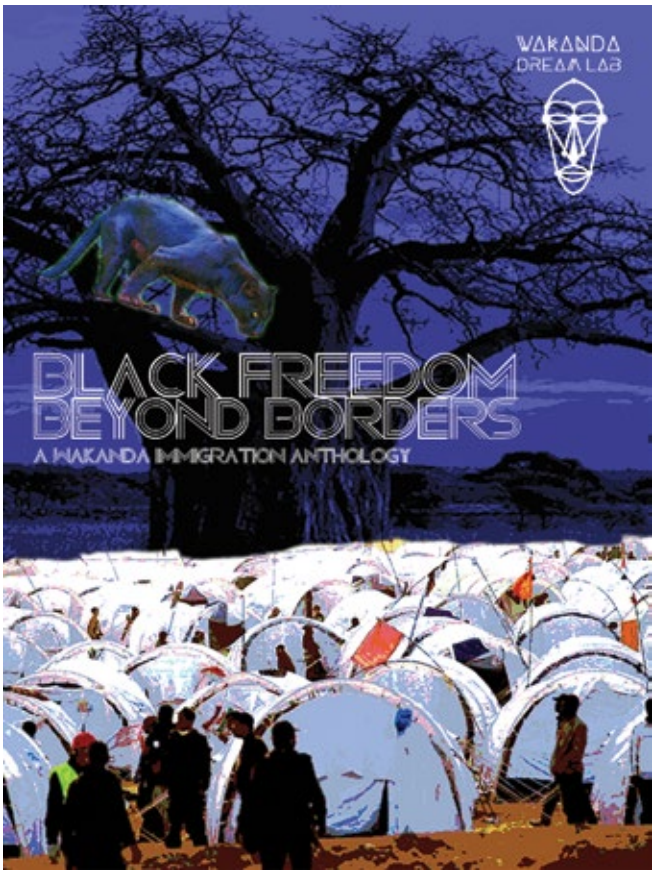
Culture work animates alternate futures for us, making them seem possible and within reach. In the words of the brilliant author Toni Cade Bambara, "the job of the artist is to make revolution irresistible."

Prefiguration is the characteristic of Cultural Strategy that makes revolution irresistible. It is the ability to enact and manifest future realities *as though they already exist.* Prefiguration means that we create possibilities that allow us to live into our values and resist oppression in the present, even as we imagine futures of freedom and liberation.

For example, to imagine living in conditions free from class hierarchies, prefigurative politics would create group processes and structures for disrupting classism now. The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) refers to this as "building a new world in the shell of the old." The Wakanda Dream Lab's speculative fiction anthology Black Freedom Beyond Borders imagines a reality where Wakanda, after generations of self-imposed isolation, opens up its borders to the Black diaspora and welcomes its children home.

Prefiguration breathes hope and possibility into our movements, making realistic futures visible. In other words, it enlivens our visions by showing them to be achievable and concrete. In Mexico, Zapatista communities practice prefiguration by creating visionary and futuristic social conditions: they prioritize Indigenous knowledge; build and maintain their own autonomous health, education, and agricultural systems; and engage horizontal leadership models.

Involving trial and error, prefigurative politics is not always flawless, but Cultural Strategies that



Black Freedom Beyond Borders Anthology Cover by Wakanda Dream Lab.

do not prioritize prefiguration are weakened. When artists and cultural workers enable us to see, hear, feel, and live within those visions today, imagining a radical future becomes possible.

For more examples of prefigurative interventions, check out the Beautiful Trouble's website.

6. ISSUE DEVELOPMENT AND DEFINITION

Cultural strategies have a *definitional* role in issues that impact our lives: They define and delineate issues, shift dominant paradigms, connect audiences, and fundamentally set the parameters and terms of the debate.

"Women's issues" is a good example. Mainstream culture and media in the U.S propose that certain issues—such as abortion, sexual and domestic violence, and the wage gap—are what women should care about, while most other issues are the domain of men. This patriarchal assumption is reinforced by cultural conditions. In truth, though, women are impacted by *every* issue, topic, and challenge—from access to education and public space, to voting and water rights. And, by extension, every issue disparately impacts or creates harm for queer and transwomen of color, Native women, poor women, women with disabilities, and immigrant or refugee women. At the same time, those issues that are framed as "women's issues" also impact and implicate men.

To help set and reinforce boundaries around issues, Cultural Strategy reframes the conversation, illuminating and interrupting dominant paradigms or stories.

In India, sexual and gender-based violence is high, and public spaces are often unsafe for women. There, the campaign *Meet to Sleep* initiated meetups where women took naps in public city parks. The goal was to "create a visual of women who are asleep, defenseless, trusting, and not hurried in public spaces." Blank Noise, the organization which runs *Meet to Sleep*, asserts the right to live free from fear. Their vision statement says, "Sleep is protest. We sleep to create new narratives, new memory from our bodies, and our public environments." Similarly, in Oakland, California, the Deep Water Dance Theater ran a project called The Blessing of the Beds: Black Women Dreaming—a Ritual Rest where Black women slept and rested in private spaces as a way to reclaim their right to dream, imagine, repair, and rejuvenate.

Both of these cultural interventions around women sleeping question dominant cultural norms: *Who's authorized to rest? Whose time and labor for recovery is valued by society? Which bodies are protected in public spaces? Who's allowed to resist through dreaming?* These are questions that help redefine and reframe cultural norms by centering women of color.

Because Cultural Strategy defines what an issue is, describes who the stakeholders and impacted people are, and creates connections between siloed groups in support of structural and systemic change, it is foundational to movement building. Cultural Strategy unites audiences *across* issues, particularly wedge issues that are depicted as divisive. It animates history, memory, and lost stories of resistance as a pedagogical tool to bridge divides.

For example, while dominant media talks of the need for surveillance, policing, and entrapment of Muslim communities under the guise of national security or "safety," history and cultural memory tell us that the U.S. infrastructure for intrusion and roll-backs of privacy emerges *not* from national security or "safety" but from anti-Blackness and state-sponsored surveillance of Black activists and agitators like the Black Panthers.

There are historical and institutional links between the current push to create a registry of Muslims under the Trump administration, the infiltration of COINTELPRO agents in the Civil Rights movement, and the registration and internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. By illuminating linkages through time and across issues, Cultural Strategy can disrupt the implicit racial wedge used by the Right to pit Black, Muslim, Latinx, Native, and Asian and Pacific Islander communities against each other.

7. NEW NORMALS

Another powerful feature of Cultural Strategy is that it can illuminate pre-existing cultural norms, interrupt them, and in many cases, normalize alternatives. Cultural strategists ask questions about what we take to be true in mainstream culture: *What do we value and why? What is normal and why? Who is acceptable? Who belongs here? What truths or lies do we believe? How can we change?*

The release and resounding success of the film *Black Panther* shows how a cultural intervention through pop culture and Hollywood can reorient our assumptions about what's successful, desirable, profitable, and valuable for audiences. *Black Panther* not only generated record profits at the box office, earning $667 million in 2018, it did so by building a world made for and by Black people. *Black Panther* incisively disrupted dominant paradigms of anti-Blackness by highlighting Black excellence, technology, culture, and art—and by showing us what's possible for Black liberation.

Artwork by Kate DeCiccio for Amplifier.org featuring Lydia X. Z. Brown.

Informed in large part by the U.S. context, *Black Panther* also interrogated a historical reality that colors our understanding of what's normal today: a global history of colonization and enslavement perpetuated by anti-Blackness. In the fictional country of Wakanda in *Black Panther*, Indigenous African communities—unlike other Black communities on the continent and across the world—have not been enslaved or colonized by whites. The Wakandans, therefore, don't have the historical burdens of slavery and colonization or present-day challenges faced by Black people across the globe. *Black Panther* asks us to question the normalcy of anti-Black racism.

Cultural Strategy expands the Overton Window, a concept that describes the range of viable ideas that are tolerated socially, cultural, and politically. By pushing at the edges of the Overton Window, Cultural Strategy normalizes marginalized ideas and makes them socially acceptable.

8. STICKINESS AND SUSTAINABILITY

Cultural Strategy is not focused on short term or medium term wins but aims instead to create sticky conditions to cement and institutionalize those wins for the long haul. To do that, Cultural Strategy imagines, creates, and *sustains* just and equitable long-term conditions. This feature is informed by the knowledge of backlash and retrenchment—or *backsliding*—that often comes after preliminary shifts in narrative and culture.

History—and our present day reality under the Trump administration—shows us that the Conservative status quos can bounce back and reestablish dominant socio-political realities. This is why cultural strategists must focus on building sticky and sustainable conditions for change. Campaigns, policies, interventions, pivots, and short term organizing for wins are by no means unimportant, but since culture is conditionally entrenched, Cultural Strategy requires a focus on the long term.

There are two prerequisites for creating conditions for sticky, sustainable, and adaptive change for cultural shifts: infrastructure and durable relationships.

To be effective, our movements need well resourced, goal oriented infrastructure for supporting cultural strategies and cultural workers. At present, there is a dearth of infrastructure in all the interrelated sectors of art, organizing, policymaking, and movement-building. Under investing in skills building, political education, and capacity for Cultural Strategy and cultural work is common across the nonprofit industrial complex.

Our movements need prolonged infrastructure for funding and resourcing long term Cultural Strategy work, including processes and programs for paying artists, educating artists and movement practitioners to work strategically with each other, and anchoring organizations like CultureStrike that help bridge the gaps between social movements and the arts.

Building out infrastructure for Cultural Strategy includes but is not limited to: increasing resources and general operating funding, educating activists and movement professionals about how cultural change happens, creating pipeline programs to train artists in political education and movement work, developing organizational change programs to help movement groups become artist-friendly, and, creating internal infrastructure for integrating cultural work into all areas of organizational life.

For a useful explanation of the problems and limitations of infrastructure for narrative change on the Left, read this brilliant piece: Changing Our Narrative about Narrative by Rashad Robinson of Color of Change, written for the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society (Berkeley, California).

In order to stick, cultural work has to be rooted in sustained, accountable, and trusting durable relationships. No movement-oriented artist or cultural worker wants to engage with an organization—whether it is a museum or a gallery or a movement organization—in an extractive, exploitative, or transactional relationship. The practice of sporadically bringing cultural workers to the table, then not compensating or paying them but expecting them to "plug and play" is exploitative. This practice should be rooted out of liberatory movement work.

Too many organizers assume that an artist's primary role will be to design or illustrate graphics or banners or support communications and outreach. This assumption contributes to transactional relationships that don't honor the contributions of cultural workers and artists. The success of Cultural Strategy relies on long-term, authentic, reciprocal, and responsive relationships with activists and artists—who should be engaged right from the beginning. These artists can then co-create strategies that involve their own work. Trust them to know how their art can be best used. Good cultural strategists center reciprocal learning and relationships, and they understand the labor and talent required to create rigorous political art. Organizations and leaders who do good cultural work invest in long-term relationships, and they deliberately weave cross-sectoral networks of artists, activists, organizers, cultural workers, and policy makers.

9. ORGANIZATIONAL INTEGRATION

Until We Are All Free logo by Rommy Torrico.

Often, culture change campaigns or projects that involve highly visible art, music, or beautifully designed products and productions are lifted up as evidence of Cultural Strategy. Many movement organizations focus on the external, visible, constituent- or member-facing *outputs or products* of cultural work, such as arts-integrated campaigns and events. End products may be performances, murals, literature, art events, and banners. Indeed, art-making and art-producing are essential to cultural work, but another critical component of Cultural Strategy is less sexy and less visible—and that is *internal organizational change processes*.

Effective Cultural Strategy requires deep internal diffusion, operationalization, and integration of cultural work *inside* movement organizations. To transform your social justice group into a hospitable, strategic, and holistically integrated space where artists from Indigenous communities and communities of color can thrive and produce their best work, you must apply an organizational change lens.

This transformation of organizational processes and protocols—as well as *organizational culture*—is an often-overlooked aspect of Cultural Strategy. Internally, cultural strategists must show the organization how to adjust practices in all areas of mission-critical organizational life, from program design and development to evaluation, communications, stakeholder engagement, and fundraising—and even to governance.

These questions can support internal alignment:

- Does the leadership and the Board of the organization understand Cultural Strategy and its integral relationship to social change?
- Does the organization value the creativity, imagination, and art-making skills of staff—and encourage cultural practices as a part of their social-change work?
- Do the fundraisers and grant writers understand how to write about and advocate for Cultural Strategy in grants and proposals?
- Does the organization have internal processes for hiring and retaining underrepresented artists, connecting them to resources and networks, and elevating their leadership?
- Does the organization have processes for paying artists, especially undocumented artists who may not be able to supply W9s and Social Security numbers?
- Do the organizers and field staff understand—and value—the role of cultural workers?
- If the framework of Cultural Strategy is applied in the organization, how will staff collaborate and lead differently? What norms in their respective fields will they need to rethink or reframe?

At the time of this writing, Art/Work Practice has been working with Power California for more than a year, experimenting with organizational change strategies that profoundly operationalize and embed Cultural Strategy across their departments, teams, and projects.

By Micah Bazant for the 2019 Oakland, CA Teachers Strike.

This challenging work involves creating cross-team alignment, buy-in and shared language, and a commitment to engage in long-term cultural organizing in the midst of requirements to show short-term impact and wins (as is often the case in the field of electoral organizing and civic engagement). The strategy here also involves creating protocols for shared work and differentiated expectations across staff who work on communications, field campaigns, fundraising, and culture work.

When Power California partnered with CultureStrike and Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI) to create *Until We Are All Free*, they learned ways to cohere their membership base around the centrality of culture change. As a result, they created a Cultural Strategy department headed by two Black immigrant women. Consequently, their internal staffing structure, processes, and culture are shifting and growing.

When done well, Cultural Strategy causes ripple effects for change inside the internal mechanisms of organizations. Since the purpose of Cultural Strategy is to transform norms, values, and conditions, it should necessarily transform the ways in which we work, ideate, collaborate, and prioritize *within* our organizations.

WHAT'S INCOMPATIBLE WITH CULTURAL STRATEGY?

THE FOUR CS

CLARITY, COMPARTMENTALIZATION, CLOSURE, AND CATHARSIS

Whether you are new to Cultural Strategy work or have been doing it for ages, you will run into pitfalls. There are many ways to do bad Cultural Strategy, including making the decision not to compensate artists, or focusing exclusively on social media or communications strategies at the expense of arts integrated, vision-focused cultural work. Practices for cultural work can always be improved. Our list of resources and readings at the end of this primer will help you succeed.

In collaboration with Power California, we have been reviewing some broader conceptual or philosophical pitfalls that cause tension and produce challenges for good Cultural Strategy. In our experience, there are four "Cs" that are discordant with Cultural Strategy. These are *Clarity, Compartmentalization, Closure, and Catharsis.*

CLARITY

When it comes to cultural transformation, *clarity* is not always the best goal. Culture is incredibly complex, and mechanisms for cultural production, reproduction, and dissemination are messy and highly distributed. Communities constantly and organically create cultures of their own—just think of the culture of your own organization and your own department!—and communities also inherit practices and belief systems.

Strategies for cultural change are not always clear and concrete; in fact, clarity is pretty rare in culture work, and causality is just as hard to prove. Consider this: Will increased representation of Black people's stories on television improve socio-political conditions for Black communities on the ground? We certainly hope so, but we can't easily assign cause and effect to cultural interventions.

Practitioners of cultural change must be comfortable navigating conditions that are murky, unclear, diffuse, and highly complex. Adaptive leaders for Cultural Strategy share an essential ability to negotiate uncertain conditions—and to experiment with a range of tactics and tools. Instead of seeking clarity and resolution, cultural strategists benefit from pursuing a diversity of tactics that support experimentation, testing, replication, reframing, and scaling of their ideas.

COMPARTMENTALIZATION

As The Culture Group reports in Making Waves: A Guide to Cultural Strategy, culture—not politics—is where people spend most of their time. Culture is not compartmentalized. It is not just art, not just storytelling, and not just communications. For this reason, Cultural Strategy must be diffused across all departments and teams. Led by artists and cultural workers, Cultural Strategy should also touch and engage all the stakeholders in your organization or network.

More importantly, you must understand that Cultural Strategy is a constitutive and critical part of *all* change strategies. The Culture Group reminds us that *nothing changes without culture change*. Policy shifts require cultural shifts. Grassroots mobilization requires cultural shifts. And institutional change requires culture shifts.

As a capacity building function within your organization, Cultural Strategy should connect to all of your programmatic areas. When you silo and compartmentalize cultural work, you create an artificial split which may result in relegating culture work to one or two artists or staff members. This compartmentalization produces problematic inefficiencies within teams, and it can cause tensions or confusions between communications and culture work, both of which operate within the space of narrative change. Remember: Communications teams are typically set up to be rapid response, while cultural work teams are not.

CLOSURE

As a principle, *closure* is incompatible with Cultural Strategy.

Since our imperative is to dismantle intractable systems of oppression like racism and patriarchy, our culture work needs to be visionary, future-facing, highly iterative, and resilient. Our creativity fortifies our efforts and gives us the strength and skills to stay in the fight.

We also know that oppression mutates and transforms with time. For example, white supremacist ideology keeps rearing its ugly head in different forms; it changes in response to culture changes. Engagement with cultural work is a lifelong journey. To thrive, our artists and activists need to develop flexibility, adaptability, responsiveness, and dogged persistence. And they must have the resources needed to heal from trauma and cultivate pathways to thrive. While we may achieve closure in the short-term through organizing and policy wins, Cultural Strategy demands we keep building momentum and fighting.

CATHARSIS

In a play, a novel, or a movie—or through a policy or campaign win—*catharsis* creates a sense of satisfactory closure. We may not necessarily feel *good* at the end of a story, but we do feel when strands of the plot have been tied into neat knots, the script has reached its denouement, and resolution has been achieved. By expunging strong emotions, catharsis releases something in us. Often times, that something is responsibility.

Since Cultural Strategy must build and iterate towards the long haul, neither catharsis—nor closure—is a useful element for it. Augusto Boal, the creator of Theatre of the Oppressed, rejects catharsis for a similar reason. He says, “People don’t experience a vicarious revolution as a substitute for real revolution.” We must not stop and enjoy a cathartic release until we have achieved justice. In this sense, Cultural Strategy develops our muscles, capacities, and resilience for continuously engaging in repeated and often morphing fights—until we are truly all free.

UNDERSTANDING AND MEASURING CULTURAL IMPACT

Artist-activists, like the Black Panthers, have engaged in culture work for generations. Today, across the fields of movement building and progressive philanthropy, Cultural Strategy is becoming a popular idea, in part because concepts periodically become trendy, causing resources and funding to flow more easily for a while. There is now a reasonable need to evaluate and measure impacts of Cultural Strategy work—especially when resources, funding, and staff time are being invested in it. In evaluating impact for Cultural Strategy, there are several challenges, but there is also some valuable advice for making more effective cultural impact assessments.

Although it has a long informal movement history, Cultural Strategy is just now becoming an acknowledged field within the nonprofit sector. Innovation and experimentation are happening across collectives, organizations, and networks. One immediate challenge is that entrenched ideas of evaluation, impact, and traditional data collection methods in the nonprofit field delegitimize deep innovation and collaborative, emergent learning.

A second challenge is that replicable models for sustainable, responsive, and well-supported Cultural Strategy initiatives are few and far between. Artists and cultural workers within movement organizations are disadvantaged in that they have to negotiate a range of institutional barriers in order to produce measurable impacts.

The third challenge is posed by conflation and confusion around what Cultural Strategy is and isn't. Organizations engaging narrative or communications strategies with intermittent engagement of art and artists will apply evaluation methodologies and metrics related to those areas. While number of retweets, click-throughs, downloads, and unique visitors are all metrics that are suitable for establishing goals for communications strategy and dissemination, they cannot effectively measure shifting worldviews and cultures over time.

The long-term imperative of Cultural Strategy presents a significant fourth challenge for evaluation. Because cultural change is complex and diffuse and requires large numbers of people relative to location to adaptively change, Cultural Strategy takes a long time to materialize and demonstrate systemic impact. Meanwhile, most funding that flows to nonprofit social justice organizations is project based, time bound, and heavily contingent on showing transformative impact within a limited timeframe. This makes proving shifts in cultural conditions extremely challenging for artists and practitioners.

For example, it's typical for practitioners to be required to prove how vast systems of oppression in public housing, education, and the electoral landscape were transformed within a single year of their grant-funded project work. In reality, the structure of money in the nonprofit industrial complex, and the reliance on impact assessments on a quarterly, annual, or biennial time frame actively runs counter to the long-term, systems change imperatives of Cultural Strategy. Currently, cultural strategists must fight to seed, scale, and resource their cultural work.

"Walk Out, Organize, Vote" Poster Series by Oree Original (L) and Robert Liu-Trujillo (R) for Mobilize the Immigrant Vote / YVote.

As in any other field, impact evaluation in Cultural Strategy is essential to understand progress, regression, and retrenchment. Unfortunately, current expectations and traditional models for evaluating Cultural Strategy impacts fall woefully short. Expecting shifts in cultural conditions for their issue specific grantmaking portfolios, funders present obstacles for cultural workers who are engaged at the intersections of multiple issues and in need of infrastructure and support for long-term changemaking. Some funders, though, are courageously investing in innovative, developmental methodologies for research and evaluation for Cultural Strategy. This is encouraging. The field needs both more models and more funders for sustainable cultural work.

To help you focus and strengthen evaluation strategies for your cultural work, we've included a set of preliminary tips as well as resources. In general, you should employ a range of different data collection or research methodologies for evaluating cultural impact. Focus on collecting long-term, longitudinal, and qualitative data through storytelling.

Evaluation strategies for culture change should clearly and consistently delineate between organizational inputs and goals that are for shifting narrative and those that are for integrating artists. The first requires an understanding that narrative is only one component of culture change, and the second requires understanding that art is only one component of culture change. Cultural Strategy outputs should indicate which narrative frames and stories were disrupted and how; and which artists were engaged and how.

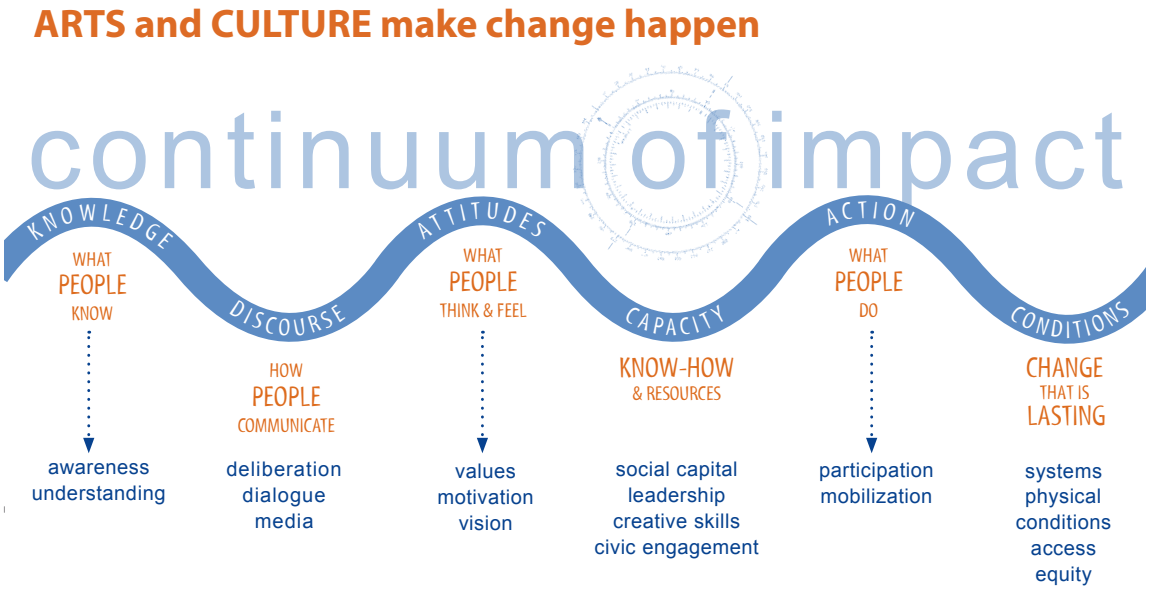
Your evaluation strategies should capture and understand shifts in quantity and quality of relationships and networks over time. You will discover that tools for mapping network density, partnerships, and collaborations, and measuring new and deepening connections can be helpful because they capture the impacts of network weaving. Artists, organizers, and activists are all working, learning, and producing in communities of practice, and they are all networked locally within their own cities and towns—and are connected internationally. In our own work, both network theory and network-mapping tools have proved useful.

For a list of readings and tools on network mapping, visit the Interaction Institute website.

To assess cultural impact, the most appropriate longitudinal evaluation strategies are those that measure long-term future-facing, visionary, and proactive framing, stories, and ideas. There are many measurement tools that are good for retrospective analysis and short- to medium-term impact assessment and planning. To understand cultural shifts, though, you need indicators that point to changes in the cultural pulse of your community. Those indicators should identify proactive, visionary frames—rather than reactive responses. In your work, look for data points that demonstrate how shifts in language and behaviors are being picked up, disseminated, internalized, and validated across echo chambers and encapsulated spaces such as regions or states.

When producing evaluation data for project-specific grants and reports, identify and document inputs and outputs. Animating Democracy (Washington, D.C.) has published an important resource: Continuum of Impact. This guide defines six families of social and civic outcomes that arts practitioners and their partners commonly aspire to and achieve through creative work. These outcome families articulate ways the arts contribute to making change happen. Knowing them will help you in naming and claiming outputs for Cultural Strategy work.

Cultural Strategy ultimately aims for the last family set of changes in this graphic: that is, long-lasting changes in conditions, norms, and systems.



How do ARTS & CULTURE make a difference? Continuum of Impact: A guide to defining SOCIAL & CIVIC OUTCOMES & INDICATORS, courtesy of Americans for the Arts.

The University of Pennsylvania's Social Impact of the Arts Project is a research outfit that asks questions and develops methods for the impact of the arts and culture on urban communities. The Project's research focuses on the relationship of the arts to community change with a particular interest in strategies for neighborhood revitalization, social inclusion, and community well-being.

This set of resources on impact evaluation for Cultural Strategy is by no means definitive or comprehensive. If you encounter additional useful evaluation strategies and methods in your work, we welcome you to share your thoughts with us by emailing hello@artworkpractice.com.

RESOURCES AND ADDITIONAL READING

LINKS TO RESOURCES BY TOPIC

CULTURAL STRATEGY

- Animating Democracy.
- Arts and Democracy.
- Beautiful Trouble.
- Center for Artistic Activism. (Reading List).
- Chang, Jeff. "Hope, Change, and How Culture Can Shape Politics."
- Chang, Jeff; Liz Manne; and Erin Potts. Conversation about Cultural Strategy.
- Culture Group. Culture Matters Report.
- Culture Group. Making Waves: A Guide to Cultural Strategy.
- CultureStrike. (Resources Page).
- Movement Strategy Center.
- Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts of New York.
- Opportunity Agenda. Communications, and Culture for Narrative Change.
- Pop Culture Collaborative's Blog.
- Race Forward. Narrative, and Cultural Strategies Program.
- Roadside Theater. A General Theory of Cultural Organizing.
- Rodriguez, Favianna. Change the Culture, Change the World.
- Wonderland. (Podcast Series).

NARRATIVE STRATEGY

- Bell, Madison Smart. Narrative Design: Working with Imagination, Craft, and Form.
- The Narrative Initiative. (Report). Toward New Gravity.
- Robinson, Rashad. Changing our Narrative about Narrative.

ARTS INTEGRATION

- Alternate ROOTS.
- ArtPlace America.
- Boal, Augusto. Aesthetics of the Oppressed.
- Sen, Nayantara. Creative Transformations: Arts, Culture, and Public Housing Communities.
- Springboard for the Arts / CSA (Community Supported Arts).
- Cultural Impact Evaluation
- Animating Democracy. Continuum of Impact Guide.
- Social Impact of the Arts Project.

NETWORK THEORY AND MAPPING

- Interaction Institute for Social Change. Network Building Resources.

DECOLONIZING ART AND MOVEMENTS

- The Bodhi Project.
- Decolonize This Place.

LINKS TO ORGANIZATIONS ENGAGED IN CULTURAL STRATEGY

(LIST NOT EXHAUSTIVE)

- **Alternate ROOTS** (Atlanta, GA)
  404-577-1079 | alternateroots.org
- **Animating Democracy** (Washington, D.C.)
  202-371-2830 | animatingdemocracy@artsusa.org | animatingdemocracy.org
- **Another Gulf is Possible** | anothergulf.com
- **Art/Work Practice** (Oakland, CA; New York, NY)
  hello@artworkpractice.com | artworkpractice.com
- **ArtPlace America** (Brooklyn, NY)
  347-853-7818 | artplaceamerica.org
- **Arts and Democracy**
  info@artsanddemocracy.org | artsanddemocracy.org
- **Beautiful Trouble**
  beautifultrouble.org
- **Center for Media Justice**
  centerformediajustice.org
- **Color of Change**
  colorofchange.org
- **The Culture Group**
  theculturegroup.org
- **CultureStrike**
  culturestrike.org
- **Decolonize This Place**
  decolonizethisplace.org
- **First Peoples Fund**
  firstpeoplesfund.org
- **Forward Together**
  forwardtogether.org
- **Hibulb Cultural Center and Natural History Preserve**
  hibulbculturalcenter.org
- **Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence**
  idvsa.org
- **Intelligent Mischief**
  intelligentmischief.com
- **Interaction Institute for Social Change**
  interactioninstitute.org/network-building-resources
- **Mijente**
  mijente.net

- **Movement Strategy Center** (Oakland, CA)
  510-444-0640 | movementstrategy.org
- **National Domestic Workers Alliance**
  domesticworkers.org
- **Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts of New York**
  nocdny.org
- **Pop Culture Collaborative**
  info@popcollab.org | popcollab.org
- **Postcommodity**
  postcommodity.com
- **Power California**
  powercalifornia.org
- **Race Forward** (Oakland, CA; New York, NY)
  510.653.3415 or 212.513.7925 | raceforward.org
- **Resonance Network**
  resonance-network.org
- **Springboard for the Arts/CSA-Community Supported Arts** (St. Paul, MN; Fergus Falls, MN)
  springboardforthearts.org/jobs-opportunities/csa-community-supported-art
- **United We Dream**
  unitedwedream.org

LINKS TO ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Animating Democracy. “Continuum of Impact Guide.” animatingdemocracy.org/continuum-impact-guide.
- Bell, Madison Smart. Narrative Design: Working with Imagination, Craft, and Form. books.google.com/books/about/Narrative_Design.html?id=XSyUY-orMlQC
- Boal, Augusto. Aesthetics of the Oppressed. cal-xl.nl/media/uploads/files/Boal_The_aesthetics_of_the_opressed.pdf
- Bodhi Project. ourbodhiproject.squarespace.com/home.
- Broken Boxes Podcast. brokenboxespodcast.com.
- Center for Artistic Activism (Reading List). c4aa.org/2017/02/reading-list-activism.
- Chang, Jeff; Liz Manne, and Erin Potts. “Conversation about Cultural Strategy.” medium.com/@erin_potts/a-conversation-about-cultural-strategy-9e2a28802160.
- Chang, Jeff. “Hope, Change, and How Culture Can Shape Politics.” colorlines.com/articles/jeff-chang-hope-change-and-how-culture-can-shape-politics.
- Cook, Dudley. “A General Theory of Cultural Organizing.” roadside.org/asset/general-theory-cultural-organizing.
- The Culture Group. Making Waves: A Guide to Cultural Strategy. theculturegroup.org/2013/08/31/making-waves.
- CultureStrike (Resources Page). culturestrike.org/resources.
- Doctorow, E.L. “False Documents.” 1977. Reprinted in E.L. Doctorow: Essays and Conversations. Ontario Review Press, New York: 1983. amazon.com/L-Doctorow-Conversations-Ontario-Critical/dp/0865380244.
- Mobilize the Immigrant Vote, CultureStrike, and BAJI. Until We Are All Free. untilweareallfree.com.
- The Narrative Initiative. Toward New Gravity. (Downloadable Report) narrativeinitiative.org.
- Opportunity Agenda. “Communications and Culture for Narrative Change.” opportunityagenda.org/approach/communications-culture-narrative-change.
- PEN World Voices Festival. pen.org/world-voices-festival.
- Pop Culture Collaborative (Blog). popcollab.org/blog.
- Redwood Voice. redwoodvoice.org.
- Robinson, Rashad. “Changing our Narrative about Narrative: The Infrastructure Required for Building Narrative Power.” haasinstitute.berkeley.edu/changing-our-narrative-about-narrative.
- Rodriguez, Favianna. “Change the Culture, Change the World.” creativetimereports.org/2013/04/01/change-the-culture-change-the-world.
- Sen, Nayantara. Creative Transformations: Arts, Culture and Public Housing Communities. nocdny.org/2016/07/25/creative-transformation-arts-culture-and-public-housing-communities.
- Social Impact of the Arts Project. repository.upenn.edu/siap.
- Wonderland (Podcast Series). thisiswonderland.us.
- Zandy, Janet. Hands: Physical Labor, Class, and Cultural Work. amazon.com/Hands-Physical-Labor-Class-Cultural/dp/0813534356.

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This primer features ideas and content sourced from conversations, and interviews with the following people:

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"Defend the Sacred" by Jackie Red Fawn for Amplifier.org

Power California is a statewide multi-racial civic engagement organization that convenes on-the-ground community partners in urban, suburban and rural communities throughout California. Together we are building a movement of young people as informed, regular voters to create an equitable and inclusive state for all.

POWERCALIFORNIA.ORG