

IMPACT REPORT



ignite
ARTS DALLAS
people + purpose + place

SMU | MEADOWS
SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

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LETTER FROM CLYDE VALENTÍN

Ignite/Arts Dallas at SMU Meadows School of the Arts, Director

THIS REPORT IS A MAP.

A map articulating our trajectory over the last five years from our formal launch as an arts and engagement initiative out of SMU Meadows School of the Arts.

An attempt to convey our aspirations and scope. A way to illustrate the power of new networks, operating within an equity framework and our stated values put into practice. With this report, we hope to answer the question, “What is it you do exactly?,” while also attempting to illustrate the “how” of what we do.

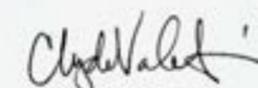
We’ve learned a great deal over the last five years – about the city of Dallas, the great state of Texas and our region – the South. The learning we share in this report is mostly from the vantage point of how to serve as a collaborator and how to follow, while also leading. How to listen and get out of the way of good things happening, how to

augment and support the ideas and approaches of others, while ensuring that our own purpose – artistic practice and artists – remains centered in the work we do and share. Finally, ensuring that learning is accessible to as many as possible and especially our students at SMU Meadows School of the Arts.

Now more than ever, in the age of COVID and our fraught national state, the work we represent here at Ignite/Arts Dallas in this five-year review remains vital, and increasingly so despite the challenges we face in gathering in person or bridging our divides – the very essence of public art and engagement. We cannot stop imagining new possibilities, systems, and ways of being that are more just, inclusive, and equitable. We stand firmly in the belief that Arts, Culture & Creativity are vital to building stronger communities, a better Dallas, and a more robust society.

Our commitment is to keep moving forward and deepen what is working for us organizationally, while staying nimble, flexible, and sustainable in our approach to new programs and projects. In the years to come, we expect to expand our academic offerings to students and individuals, while continuing to collaborate across sectors – including housing, health, economic development, food access, and the environment. As the pandemic and the protests have clearly illustrated, our systems are interconnected and we are well past the point of operating in silos.

Finally, a warm thank you to all of you who have supported our work thus far. Thank you to all the organizations and individual artists who have trusted us to do the right thing in our work together. Thank you to contributors and voices in this report – a trusted group of allies and leaders we draw inspiration from and support. Most especially a thank you to the leadership at SMU and the Meadows School of the Arts who created a space for this work to flourish within the context of this elite and exceptional institution. More to come y’all, best believe it.



CLYDE VALENTÍN



PHOTO: COURTESY OF MPRINT/KIM LEESON

LETTER FROM SAMUEL S. HOLLAND

Algur H. Meadows Dean

Since he arrived on campus in 2013, Clyde Valentin's visionary approach for Ignite/Arts Dallas – an initiative housed at SMU Meadows School of the Arts – has been to engage the community through art. I have had the distinct privilege of seeing Clyde's vision come to fruition over the past several years. Under his leadership, through active listening and retrospection, Ignite/Arts Dallas has forged deep relationships with the broader Dallas community and introduced students to the arts' critical role in social engagement.

Meadows School of the Arts is committed to advancing excellence in education and artistic practice. In turn, Ignite/Arts Dallas uplifts that value through the development – academic, social, and moral – of Meadows students. The initiative has introduced Dallas to a wealth of innovative programming that has challenged traditional forms of community engagement. Public Works Dallas at the Dallas Theater Center remains one of the city's most anticipated annual theater events, bringing together over 200 diverse community members of all ages from across the city and employing SMU students as Public Works Fellows in the areas of community organizing, production, performance, and design. Through this and other original programming, Ignite/Arts Dallas has created meaningful change on SMU's campus and in the community, connecting artists, students, and activists in a progressive narrative.

Ignite/Arts Dallas has been a vital element of the Meadows experience over the past five years and as Meadows looks to the future, the Center will continue to play a pivotal role in creating subsequent generations of students, artists, activists, and arts leaders.

On behalf of SMU Meadows School of the Arts, thank you for taking the time to read this report and getting to know more about the history and future of Ignite/Arts Dallas: An Initiative for People, Purpose + Place.

Warm regards,



SAMUEL S. HOLLAND, PH.D.



OUR STORY

ORIGINS

“
The role of the Artist is to make the revolution irresistible.
”

Toni Cade Bambara

Revolution starts with connections. A personal interaction sparking an idea. A conversation housed in cyberspace. The gravity of a moment drawing energy into a movement. The connection is creation. The creation is change.

This Ignite/Arts Dallas (I/AD) initiative was born from a desire to harness the connective energy of the arts. We were at the core of SMU Meadows School of the Arts' efforts to come together with the city, merging its resources and community with networks across Dallas through SMU Meadows in 2015. Each interdisciplinary connection, every relationship that introduced one organization or individual to another, would contribute to a growing cultural fabric greater than the sum of its parts.

For SMU Meadows, we needed to be a social organism, as malleable and symbiotic as the creative energy it hoped to realize. To achieve this, SMU Meadows built a toolkit, a dynamic collection of proposed budgets that mapped expressions of this work across the arts and culture landscape. Consistent in their thinking was the intent that this initiative occupy an important middle ground. We needed the capacity and resources to be a bridge between

Dallas' large-scale arts institutions, smaller organizations, and artist-led spaces, between individual artists and organizers.

When Clyde Valentin became the first person to hold the director position for Ignite/Arts Dallas, expectations were high. How soon could we impact the city? Eventually, impact would be defined not solely by scale, but by cultivating a practice of experimentation, inclusivity, equity, and collaboration. We listened and observed. We appreciated the dynamic energy around us and imagined ways to join the dance. To create through connection and disruption.

Now, five years later, the focusing of that energy within the city itself, instead of in North Texas or all of Dallas County, has strengthened and grown myriad connections. The creative, connective energy of smaller communities is converging into an intricate nexus. Annually, we produce and support nearly 20 programs, performances, and projects. The draw of a truly social medium, direct connection through culture and purpose, is deepening through the unique network I/AD is helping form.

Prominent artists and creators such as Kamilah Forbes, DJ Spooky, Guillermo Gomez Peña, lauren woods, Aaron Landsman, Darryl Ratcliff, Marc Bamuthi Joseph, Rick Lowe, Jeff Chang, Rachel Chavkin, Bryant Terry, Carlton Turner, Pangea World Theater, Urban Bush Women, Janielle Kastner and Brigham Mosley, Lemon Andersen, Neal Medlyn, and David Lozano have been and continue to stay engaged with Ignite/Arts Dallas at SMU Meadows. We have enabled or facilitated such collaborations and convenings as Dallas Theater Center's Public Works Dallas program, the *New Cities, Future Ruins* Convening, the Alternate ROOTS Regional Meeting, the national tour of Cara Mía Theatre's *Deferred Action*, the development of *Playwrights in the Newsroom* with *The Dallas Morning News*, Community Innovation Lab, and the *Constellations* Convening featuring a national network of arts and social justice organizations.

Programs such as the endowed Meadows Prize have allowed vanguard ideas to be tested. Under Clyde Valentin's guidance, the award has evolved into a unique chance for future-thinking creatives to establish themselves as thought leaders and innovators. It helped Director Lear deBessonet and the Public Theater launch the national roll-out of the Public Works program in partnership with Dallas Theater Center. Other Meadows Prize recipients include arts, culture, and community development investor CultureBank, choreographer Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, the artist collective Complex Movements, and the Southwest regional arts and urbanism initiative *New Cities, Future Ruins*.

Connections are elastic and adaptable. They amplify the kind of dynamic network Ignite/Arts Dallas is helping create, where there's space for uncertainty and risk, and patience when creating the timeline of a project. In this kind of ecosystem, artists and arts organizations can grow, take risks, collaborate, depart, and return at the pace their passion and vision demands.

Whether an idea takes root in Dallas and directly feeds the city or ventures out on the road, the connection remains. Our goals are to help transform our city into a more equitable and just place for all, help shape the role that the arts play in our society at large, and be a leading arts organization in the 21st century, guided by love, compassion, and a burning desire for justice.



PHOTO BY CLYDE VALENTÍN



INSTALLATION BY CAITLIN BERRIGAN
PHOTO: NEW CITIES, FUTURE RUINS BY DAVID LEESON

IGNITE/ARTS DALLAS' MISSION, VISION, & VALUES



PHOTO: FREEDOM MAPS DALLAS VISIONING SESSION BY NATHANIEL WEATHERSBY

Mission

To serve as a nexus of art, creativity, engagement and experimentation.

Vision

To ignite the imaginations of students, artists and citizens to create more just and vibrant systems.

Values

EQUITY

Acknowledge inequity. Recognize and reward multiple forms of value.

INTEGRITY

Adhere to and serve the mission and vision.

ACCESS

Promote inclusion and multiple points of entry.

GENEROSITY

Be forthcoming of knowledge, resources and expertise.

WISDOM

Act and proceed thoughtfully.

TRANSPARENCY

Provide the full picture whenever possible.

AUTHENTICITY

Be guided by mission, vision and values.

CONSISTENCY

Show up. Listen up. Talk up. Walk Your Talk.

QUALITY

Embrace rigor, be exceptional and make great art happen.

RISK

Embrace the unknown. Value failure as a form of learning.

CREATIVITY

Not everyone is an artist, but everyone has an imagination.

ADAPTABILITY

Function as a resilient and flexible organization.

DIFFERENT VOICES.

ONE HOPE.

“ Culturally, the South is a rich and fertile ground for deepening and expanding the artistic and cultural paradigm from a bi-coastal binary to an artistic palette that is, at the same time, foundational, contemporary, and avant-garde. ”

Carlton Turner, Director, Sipp Culture



PHOTO: FREEDOM MAPS IN DALLAS. PHOTO BY NATHANIEL WEATHERSBY

IN THIS REPORT, WE'LL START WITH PEOPLE – STUDENTS, COLLABORATORS, AND THOUGHT LEADERS – LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL.

We commissioned these essays (and one poem) in 2018 and then decided to push our three-year report into a five-year report – to present a greater body of work given our relatively young footprint. The essays (and the poem) – presented now – still stand on their own and speak truth to power from a variety of perspectives. Regardless of where you are, they will resonate.

We present these words and voices as a snapshot of time and, more importantly, to convey how despite the passage of time the challenges and opportunities presented to you in the following pages remain relevant and even more urgent.

The issues raised – from needed new cultural policies, to calls for philanthropy to embrace new approaches, to the challenge of our very own work within I/AD to lean further

into non-traditional collaborations within and beyond Dallas – are laid out for all of us. Above all, a singular acknowledgment and intuitive understanding resonates – the power of art, culture, and creativity and the role they play in making stronger, more cohesive places, cogent narratives, and transformative experiences.

You will also find the voices of the contributors throughout the report, serving as guiding points and principles that underscore our work and values.

Our hope is that you find insight and inspiration in the words of the writers. Also, our hope is that you find some clarity to the question of what Ignite/Arts Dallas does and aspires to do on behalf of our students, the residents of Dallas, our region of the country, and the national arts & culture ecosystem.

Learning Through Doing, SMU Meadows Students and Alumni Reflect By Kaylyn Buckley

Shirley Brice Heath, the architect behind Public Works and my mentor, based the PW model off the concept that “the theater is for everyone.” In a return to the democratic ideals of Grecian society, Public Works incorporates individuals from all socioeconomic, ethnic, gender, and age backgrounds. I could go into the scholarly analysis of the positive effects of the Public Works project (as I have in my contributions to Shirley Heath’s Public Works Seattle report), but the true impact of the project becomes more clear through anecdotes of the people involved. Several individuals in particular, their names changed for anonymity, highlight the overwhelmingly positive possibilities that result from community engagement in the arts.

Alex, a 23-year-old with the literacy skills of an elementary school student, arrived on the first day of Public Works Dallas (henceforth PWD) *The Tempest* rehearsals via train. He’d never considered himself a scholar, an actor, or a Shakespeare connoisseur, but walking into the theater on that first day, he committed to work towards all three of those things. In the next five weeks of rehearsals and performances, he became them. Within the first few days, he began to arrive at the theater one to two hours early with reading assignments from his literacy instruction courses. This caught on among others in the cast, and his peers engaging in the same material began to follow suit. Soon, the lobby of the theater became a place of study before the dancing, singing, and acting began. Once the production had come to a close, Alex continued to attend performances I was involved in. Never having attended a play before, he sought out three in the two months following the PWD process.

Lisa, a 60-year-old woman with severe facial deformities and physical limitations, was placed front and center during a scene in the Public Works Seattle (henceforth PWS) production of *The Odyssey*. She needed additional coaching that other cast members didn’t require, especially since she was the focal point of the scene. At the end of the first full run-through of the show, the cast reflected on the positives from that experience. Lisa raised her hand. “I’m done with a period in my life of being insecure with the way I look and sound and thinking I don’t deserve to be seen,” she said. “After today, I know I do deserve to be seen and heard.” The room was misty-eyed as they

applauded her statement and agreed. Everyone in that room from the cast to the creatives was touched.

The beauty of community engagement in the arts – specifically pertaining to the Public Works model – is that the learning is not one-directional. The cast members are not the only ones changed by their involvement. For example, though I engaged with PWD and PWS from an administrative and research standpoint respectively, I emerged with new skills and perspectives I hadn’t anticipated.

One such measurable metric, my Spanish language ability, improved astronomically as I tried to find better ways to communicate with the ESL members of the cast. Less quantitative is the impact on my empathy and desire to understand the perspectives of marginalized groups across the country.

Benard Cummings, associate professor of acting at Southern Methodist University, once said, “Theater can’t end a war, but it can change the mind of the person ready to start one.” This statement is ultimately why I believe community engagement in the arts and the mission of Public Works are so important. Theater forces individuals to confront sensitive, relevant material with a remarkable amount of compassion. That, combined with an engagement with underserved and underrepresented populations, prompts an incredible broadening of the mind and heart. If one person who believed we should “build a wall” spent a few minutes at rehearsal for PWD’s *The Tempest*, a play ultimately about inclusivity and forgiveness, and learned and performed alongside the kind, hard-working immigrant cast members and their children, I’m confident they would leave less inclined to construct that barrier. Public Works stands as a microcosm for what this country could be: a place of teamwork, hope, friendship, and relationships transcending prejudices. Furthermore, community engagement in the arts is perhaps the single most effective way to inspire this catalyst for expounded empathy. There are few things as powerful and effective as a group of individuals from all walks of life united under one common goal. As Miranda says in *The Tempest*, “Oh brave new world that has such people in it!”

The beauty of community engagement in the arts ... is that the learning is not one-directional.

Kassy Amoi



I started with Public Works Dallas originally as a teaching assistant to Will Power at the Literacy Instruction for Texas rehearsal location. I worked with the bright, enthusiastic citizens of Dallas who in their own way inspired me. Every lesson we led helped me grow as an artist and a human being.



My name is Kassy Mannoua Amoi. I am one of the student participants in the Public Works Dallas production of *The Tempest*. I started with Public Works originally as a teaching assistant to Will Power at the Literacy Instruction for Texas rehearsal location. I was responsible for collecting class attendance and guiding class instruction alongside Power. I worked with the bright, enthusiastic citizens of Dallas who in their own way inspired me. Every lesson we led helped me grow as an artist and a human being.

The days of teaching alongside a master teacher provided me with the understanding of how to apply my craft to the classroom. It put me in the position of creatively conveying how to tell a story as well as possible. Those days also gave me a front row seat to the thoughts that most members of the community harbor when the prospect of acting comes to mind for them. These thoughts were anything from “I don’t think I’m good enough” to “This is all so confusing,” so I responsibly took this load of unprocessed thought and properly sorted it into the necessary areas of the process to brighten the understanding of what acting can be for them.

The stories of their individual obstacles encouraged me to face my own as a student of the theater. After all, this class would soon be auditioned and ready to work on the stage in the Dallas Theater Center production of *The Tempest*. That journey from being the teacher’s assistant to the “sand captain” of the “sand spirits ensemble” was a long and arduous journey full of learning, self-discovery, and growth.

As an artist who aspires to change the community’s understanding of the art of storytelling, I believe that the theater can highly benefit from members of our communities for continued support of the arts. Theater audiences are made up of all walks of life in our society – what better way to shatter misconceptions of acting and theater than to bring community members onto the stage? It’s my aspiration to change the community’s perception that theater would exclude them when, in fact, theater continues to tell stories to which many of them can relate. My ultimate goal was to guide these students into the headspace of owning the power they already have to thrive in the emotion of the words they sang and the music to which they danced. We accomplished this goal. After the second performance, any complaints from these newly trained performers were completely indistinguishable from another professional actor’s on a month-long run of a production. The experience was a lesson that continued to teach everyone involved from start to finish.

Community engagement theater is the medium that will bridge the gap between the modern-day citizen, who is reasonably uninterested, and the budding or experienced artists of theater performance who find their interest abundant thanks to their unbridled passion for the arts. This gap has existed and slowly grown over time as we know it. Theater can look foreign for the average citizen on the outside looking in and this is where community engagement theater creates a bridge.

Overall, the experience showed me that theater really can be for everyone and it would be a shame to think otherwise.

Ignite Hope

Edyka Chilomé

If you truly want to believe in justice,
become intimate with hope.
Know it lives in third space.
Know it needs art to cope.

Know hope lives as difference within unity,
the place of peace within discord,
the beauty of the whole within the broken,
the infinite wealth only creativity can afford.

Watch hope rise over our city
breathing in the promise of daylight
that wakes a lawmaker in Highland Park
and an undocumented student in Junius Heights.

Hear hope’s song sung
in the compassion of a black single mother
who long before dawn has rung
woke in West Dallas singing for her brother.

See hope nestled in the laughter of her child
long after the day is done,
cradled by her grandmother’s prayers
written under an ancient sun.

Feel hope in flirtatious glances
between two Xicanas in Oakcliff
who have found miraculous chances
to sing their love and life through wit.

Witness hope weaving their mother’s music
in vibrant cultural attire
creating alternative futures through song
music that dares ignite a fire.

Learn hope’s rhythm dancing
on top of a native drum
resounding in North Dallas
down Westchester Drive it comes.

Rethink oil and gas, hope pleads.
We all deserve to be alive.
Rethink oil and gas we plead.
We don’t want this earth to die.

Respect the bright colors of hope
spilling across barrio walls
that speak the memory of a living people.
To justice it begs and calls

“We are indigenous to this land.” Hope whispers,
“May you never forget.
Our ancestors live in our hearts and hands.
We have not lost this war yet.”



Edyka Chilomé is an internationally praised queer indigenous mestiza cultural worker. She has been asked to share her poetry and speak on multiple media platforms and in spaces around the country and in Latin America including TEDx, the Tucson Poetry Festival, the American Family Therapy Academy, Cafe Paradiso in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and Lincoln Center in New York. Edyka is a 2018 Macondista and a 2018 - 2019 Intercultural Leadership Institute Fellow. She is currently imagining new futures as a 2020 inaugural fellow in The Black, Indigenous, People of Color Sci-Fi Screenwriting Lab created by LA-based organization Justice For My Sister. Follow her on social media at @edykachilome or learn more about her work at edykachilome.com.

The Role of the Academy in Fostering Cultural Equity in a Municipality

by Vicki Meek

THE HISTORY: DALLAS AS A CULTURAL CASE STUDY

The Dallas cultural landscape has changed tremendously in the 37 years since my East Coast move here. I have been involved in Dallas' cultural community nearly that entire time, starting with my work with the City Arts Program in the 1980s, an agency that would later grow into the Office of Cultural Affairs. My involvement continues with my current status as a retired arts administrator and artist/activist. My experiences in the cultural development of the city of Dallas have been varied and multifaceted.

Like the changing Dallas cultural landscape, I have seen Southern Methodist University evolve from its long-standing tradition of training professional artists to include a program preparing the next generation of arts administrators. The addition of a formalized program designed to investigate possibilities for social practice is SMU's latest effort to expand its reach into the greater North Texas community. Ignite/Arts Dallas, the organization that evolved from the Initiative for Arts & Urbanism, occupies an interesting position in the world of academia. It serves to connect SMU departments while also acting as an intermediary between community-based cultural initiatives and the university. It is in this role as intermediary that I see potential to elevate the conversation on cultural equity.

Dallas has tiptoed around the issue of cultural equity for at least 30 years. In the 1980s, the City Arts Program, under the leadership of Jerry Allen, proposed creating a cultural policy that would ensure inclusion as an anchor principle. The goal was to create access to public funds for more than just the major cultural institutions, all of which, at the time, represented Eurocentric art forms. There would also be funds set aside to specifically embrace ethnic-specific organizations that would be fed with the profits

from the city-owned radio station, WRR. At this time, the notion of cultural equity was not one readily embraced by the mainstream cultural world. Because the cultural hierarchies were almost without exception lily white, the first steps taken were to racially diversify boards and staffs. Incentives were developed to achieve this diversity and we saw some progress.

SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY AND THE DALLAS CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

SMU resides outside the city of Dallas. Consequently, for years it remained insulated from the city's shifting cultural dynamic, leaving most of its arts programs racially homogeneous. Most departments saw few, if any, students of color and even less faculty of color. Although on occasion artists of color were invited to the campus as resident artists, the culture remained primarily Eurocentric. Cultural equity was not an issue except on the rare occasion that someone from the outside brought the topic up as a part of a seminar discussion on funding in the arts. So, as an institution, SMU historically played a very minor role in elevating the conversation around equity within the North Texas cultural community. That is, until the introduction of Ignite/Arts Dallas. In a relatively short period of time, SMU has become a player in the national dialog on cultural equity by hosting symposia/lectures including the topic, having artists in residence whose social practice work engaged heretofore unengaged artists of color, and by partnering with myriad community-based organizations to connect students and faculty to Dallas' communities of color and other marginalized groups.

In 2011, SMU hosted Freedom of the City Symposia: Models of Urban Engagement & Creativity under the banner of the aforementioned Arts & Urbanism Initiative.

One of the speakers invited to share his work was Project Row Houses (PRH) founder Rick Lowe, who arguably is the leader in this burgeoning field of social practice art. In 2014, SMU and Lowe collaborated on Translation Vickery Meadow, a community development project Lowe initiated as a part of the Nasher Xchange Project. This represented a major step by SMU towards community engagement with a demographic new to its outreach efforts—immigrants of color.

THE PROJECT ROW HOUSES MODEL OF THE ACADEMY AS PARTNER

As an artist who has a long-standing relationship with PRH, having been commissioned twice to create an installation for the art houses, I have watched with great interest how PRH expanded its scope. I was particularly interested in the relationships Lowe developed with local universities and those outside Houston as the vision broadened. The first partnership was with Texas Southern University, a historically Black school, located in close proximity to PRH in the city's Third Ward. This relationship was fairly predictable as it consisted primarily of PRH providing intern opportunities for art students. In time, it grew as PRH's vision for the Third Ward grew, going from a simple internship site to a partner in community development initiatives.

PRH's partnership with Rice University grew out of PRH's desire to respond to the community's call for more affordable housing. The Rice School of Architecture's Building Workshop, now known as Construct, became the design team for a group of houses that now comprise several blocks and accommodate both low-income single mothers, low- to moderate-income Third Ward residents, and a few artists. In addition, PRH had the Rice team design and build several tiny houses that are used for visiting artists and scholars invited to participate in the Row Houses program.¹

Although over the years the University of Houston (UH) has played a role in various programs and projects PRH initiated, it wasn't until recently that a formalized relationship was developed that now has Lowe on the faculty of the Center for the Arts teaching a course in social practice. This partnership also led to the creation of a joint fellows program with UH's newly created Center for Art and Social Engagement led by Sixto Wagan. Its mission is to bring together artists, community, faculty, and professionals around policy, research, and best practices in the arts.²

I cite the example of Project Row Houses because I think it provides an effective model for how the academy can be central to a community's effort to bring equity into its cultural life. None of the partnerships and collaborations formed were initiated by a city agency. All grew out of PRH's desire to respond to needs and opportunities as defined by Third Ward residents. Four years ago, with the help of an MIT study, PRH, TSU, and UH were able to create the Emancipation Economic Development Council that seeks to empower Third Ward residents to preserve and revitalize the community on their own terms.³ In a recent conversation with Roberto Bedoya, executive director of the Tucson/Pima Arts Council, during the recent Grantmakers in the Arts (GIA) conference, Lowe stated that he tended to look for opportunities rather than needs in a community.⁴ Ignite/Arts Dallas has the potential to serve as a similar catalyst for Dallas communities in danger of losing their cultural identities through gentrification. To do this, it needs to continue to move away from the stereotypical model of arts collaboration, i.e. working with other cultural entities, and instead partner with other colleges and universities in North Texas that have initiatives already in place that address community needs.

IGNITE/ARTS DALLAS: WHERE TO NOW?

I like the idea Rick Lowe puts forward about need versus opportunity because I think it speaks to how I've always seen Dallas. This is a city that has no shortage of opportunities to lead in the cultural equity arena. If Ignite/Arts Dallas were to be proactive in seeking partnerships with entities like Paul Quinn College Center for Civic Engagement, Entrepreneurship, and Leadership, UTD Institute for Urban Policy Research, and UNT Dallas' Public Leadership Program, and begin to extend its collaborations beyond the arts community to those working on public policy issues like the Texas Tenants' Union, Mothers Against Police Brutality, and the Texas Organizing Project, it would allow the academy to take on a leadership role in making social practice more than a theoretical discussion among artists and cultural leaders. Ignite/Arts Dallas could deepen the issue of cultural equity, taking it from talk to action and making Dallas one of the first cities in the South to do so. As Ignite/Arts Dallas engages in self-reflection and moves into its next phase, I am certain that it is poised to make the academy's role more than simply an investigator of possibilities.

^{1,2} Conversation with Rick Lowe, August 2017

³ <http://emancipationhouston.org/about>

⁴ https://youtu.be/tn-_3cRflnY

Dallas has tiptoed around the issue of cultural equity for at least 30 years.

Beware of the Dandelions by Complex Movements

Mycelium is one of the six emblems, or science-based metaphors applied to social justice movements, that guide Complex Movements' project *Beware of the Dandelions*. In this emblem iconography, the mycelium emblem symbolizes the importance of interdependence and remediation of toxicity in communities working for change.

Mycelium is an underground branching root system of fungus microbes or mycorrhizal threads. Mycelium is said to be the largest organism in the world, and possesses many superpowers including an ability to decompose plant material in order to create healthier soil, and to serve as an underground network of communication between plants.

The mycelium emblem asks these essential questions: What do we need to break down within our social ecosystem in order for life (new ideas, actions, relationships, etc.) to flourish? What toxins do we need to remediate and heal before we can thrive? What relationships and critical connections (especially unexpected ones) are vital for this to occur?

These are some of the questions that guide Complex Movements' approach to cultural organizing, developed through *Beware of the Dandelions*, a mobile art installation that functions as an immersive performance, workshop series, and oral history video archive.

The community engagement strategy developed through *Dandelions* begins with building community cohorts and advisory circles consisting of artists, organizers, and other community members in host cities. Through these community cohorts we listen and learn about local resistance and resilience in the face of injustice. We exchange stories and strategies between each city and Detroit, where Complex Movements is rooted.

Partnering with Ignite/Arts Dallas and the community cohort to bring *Dandelions* to Dallas was exemplary of the experimental model of cultural organizing Complex Movements has been developing to embody a commitment to symbiotic community integrity and artistic rigor.

Relationship building through multiple residencies in the span of more than two years in Dallas was imperative to creating shared ownership and collective visioning of the community engagement process for *Beware of the Dandelions*.

Dallas community members informed and shaped everything from the installation venue location to the community workshop series.

The cohort building process emerged from several conversations and gatherings that allowed foundational relationship building to develop at the pace of storytelling over home-cooked meals. When the search for a proper space to present *Dandelions* kept bumping up against the contradiction of venues that would inevitably perpetuate art-based gentrification, the difficult decision was made to push the timeline back nearly a year. We began to wonder if we would ever find a venue that honored both the technical needs and the community values of the work.

Cohort members Sara Mokuria and Jodi Voice Yellowfish suggested Dallas' Fair Park as a gesture toward reclaiming public parks threatened by privatization. The ongoing tensions around community control of Fair Park resonated deeply with similar struggles in Detroit around the city's largest park, Belle Isle. Fair Park's retrofuturistic compound loaded with faded symbols of colonialism was the perfect setting for a social justice science fiction parable. The extra month we scheduled after the State Fair of Texas to allow for the smell of grease from dozens of deep fryers to clear out of the food court turned art installation venue was well worth the wait. This critical choice, and many others, couldn't have been possible without the place-based insight of our community cohort.

*"Oh water warrior
instead of mourning ya
we plant you like seeds
so many are born from the
vision and resistance
you lived with your existence
connected all the dots
threw away the formula
by the river of Detroit
before the Isle was stolen
your smile is golden
we heed your warning to Wage Love."
Wage Love*

The community cohort identified the toxins that needed to be remediated, and the critical connections that needed to be made and deepened within the Dallas art and social justice

Partnering with Ignite/Arts Dallas and the community cohort to bring *Beware of the Dandelions* to Dallas was exemplary of the experimental model of cultural organizing Complex Movements has been developing to embody a commitment to symbiotic community integrity and artistic rigor. Relationship building through multiple residencies in the span of more than two years in Dallas was imperative to creating shared ownership and collective visioning of the community engagement process.

ecosystem. They envisioned creative methods for resisting the toxins of displacement and police violence. They sought opportunities for transforming the ways community members internalized and perpetuated the values of those systems. They also longed for more intentional relationships between Black, Indigenous, and immigrant communities. These priorities, and many more, were explored through dozens of activities over two-and-a-half years of collaboration.

The parallel between Fair Park and Belle Isle was one of many connections illuminated between Detroit and Dallas throughout the process. For example, Dallas cohort members and Complex Movements organized a citywide strategy session aimed at resisting displacement across neighborhoods. The event was hosted at the Oak Cliff Cultural Center, during the height of impending threats of art-based gentrification by the nearby insidiously dubbed "Bishop Arts District." Residents of South Dallas, Vickery Meadow, and several other neighborhoods exchanged stories and strategy alongside representatives from Susu Eco, American Indian Heritage Day in Texas, the Texas Tenants' Union, Streets Organizing for Liberation, Trans.lation, the North Texas Dream Team, and the Texas Organizing Project. Later that week, we explored similar content at the Young Leaders, Strong City conference, which brought together Dallas youth to learn about social justice issues. In that session, Jodi Voice Yellowfish of American Indian Heritage Day in Texas and Streets Organizing for Liberation highlighted the links between colonization and gentrification. Tisha Crear of Susu Eco invited youth participants to share their visions for a neighborhood-run business in the building she was then working to acquire. Two years later her building has become Recipe OC, a thriving juice bar, vegan restaurant, and community-gathering space.

In Detroit, Complex Movements actively participates in organizing to resist displacement and inequitable development. This takes multiple forms including fighting our neighbors' evictions and foreclosures, and supporting campaigns to hold city government and developers accountable through Community Benefits Agreements.

In addition to these resistance methods, this strategy also takes a visionary shape by rooting in place through cooperative building ownership of an art studio and cultural organizing space, Talking Dolls. This is the venue where *Beware of the Dandelions* was presented in Detroit. The lessons learned from working in partnership with Dallas community members in unique, but similar, contexts are invaluable to us as we grow our ability to resist injustice while staying rooted in vision.

The Dallas cohort shed light on multiple city-to-city correlations at more than a dozen other workshops and events. They also created points of entry for community members to become involved in their local organizing work by speaking at the culmination of each performance experience. And lastly, they documented these dynamics by sharing hyperlocal stories of change as part of *Movement Memory Maps*, the oral history archive video installation portion of *Dandelions*.

The integration of artistic practice with community organizing is vital to this work because it creates an opportunity for low-risk practice of collaborating across communities and silos.

Each interaction, workshop, performance, and story was another mycorrhizal thread in the web of movement mycelium. Gardening is not just about planting seeds; it is about caring for and cultivating healthy and rich soil. Through the process of *Beware of the Dandelions* our proverbial soil in Detroit and Dallas became darker and more fertile. In this dark soil made richer by cultural organizing is where we can seed more radical imagination of possibilities and processes to grow healthier and more just ecosystems of change.

*"Your abundance flows
where the fungus grows
so let the land bless you
this knowledge is ancestral
find your solace be a vessel"
DNA*

Capacity Building: Cara Mía Theatre Company

by David Lozano

I have a good poker face. Some people think I run Cara Mía Theatre with brazen confidence. Our small Latinx theater company in Dallas has achieved many unprecedented successes. Last fall, we completed the largest fundraising campaign in our history and hit the road for our first national tour. Over the past few years, we have become the largest Latinx theater company in Texas and the four surrounding states in the process. Still, “brazen confidence” couldn’t be further from the truth. Cara Mía Theatre, like many Latinx troupes around the country, lives precariously, striving to beat the odds in order to continue growing and establish itself as an institution in the city.

In Dallas, a Latinx theater company has never attained the status of an institution. With an operating budget of \$650,000, Cara Mía may be considered a mid-sized organization in Texas, but we are still a start-up by most standards. In terms of size and resources, there lies a tremendous gulf between our company and the largest theater in the city.

Nevertheless, this is an exciting moment for Cara Mía. Our donor base has recently bloomed with many first-time donors and a handful of foundations have awarded us with one-time equity grants. Yet, like other organizations, we must contend with pending threats. Although we were once the de facto “resident company” of the city of Dallas’ Latino Cultural Center, Cara Mía now struggles to secure space for our full seasons at our home theater. Moreover, over the course of our growth, our core company members have begun to find work at non-culturally specific mainstream theaters that are potentially more profitable.

At this juncture, we have to ask: What is a solution to our organization’s vulnerability? What can serve as a bridge from this state of potential volatility to further growth and stability? One of the most effective ways to find solid ground in this current state of flux has been to engage in collaborations with larger institutions and groups with distinct assets.

Our highest-profile collaboration was the development and co-production of a new play, *Deferred Action*, with the largest and oldest theater in Dallas, the Dallas Theater Center (DTC). Over the course of three years, our ensemble worked with our counterparts at DTC. We learned from their processes as they learned from ours. I had never been through such a thorough development process of a new play. The study of narrative, dialogue, and scene structure was so intensive, I now read scripts with much more critical eyes.

Last fall, Ignite/Arts Dallas from Southern Methodist University’s Meadows School commissioned a touring version of *Deferred Action*. With critical seed funding, production, and marketing resources from Ignite/Arts Dallas, Cara Mía Theatre toured Texas and performed in cities where Latinx theater simply does not exist. In essence, the tour opened new markets for Cara Mía, and created a hunger for more Latinx teatro in the state. The tour culminated in a three-week run at the Los Angeles Theatre Center as part of the Encuentro de las Americas international theater festival, bringing national and international attention to our organization.

These collaborations have created ways for Cara Mía to evolve artistically, develop new audiences and donors, and diversify our business model. Meanwhile, these larger institutions shoulder a significant part of the financial responsibility while the work onstage represents some of the best work our company has ever produced.

Subsequent collaborations continue to build on the previous ones. Currently, Cara Mía is co-producing the world premiere of a new play with the Dallas Children’s Theatre, Yana Wana’s *Legend of the Bluebonnet*. Drawing from the skills I gleaned from the DTC co-pro, I am serving as a dramaturge for the first time in my career and facilitating the development of the new script. Moreover, company members joined the creative team as designers, drawing on the processes we experienced during *Deferred Action*.

Through collaborations, Cara Mía Theatre has been able to stabilize our organization by sharing the financial burdens of producing with larger institutions while also pushing the quality of our work to a higher level. These standards carry over to the rest of our work and we are working hard to sustain them as Cara Mía continues to grow.

The ground isn’t quite solid beneath our feet yet, but our strong partnerships with some of the leading institutions in Dallas are helping Cara Mía bridge our path from a small to a mid-sized theater company in Texas with the hopes of becoming an institution in the region.

“**Ignite/Arts Dallas from Southern Methodist University’s Meadows School commissioned a touring version of *Deferred Action*. With critical seed funding, production, and marketing resources from Ignite/Arts Dallas, Cara Mía Theatre toured Texas and performed in cities where Latinx theater simply does not exist. In essence, the tour opened new markets for Cara Mía, and created a hunger for more Latinx teatro in the state.**”



PHOTO: DEFERRED ACTION TOURING PRODUCTION. PHOTO BY LINDA BLASE

Creating a New Cultural Ecology in Dallas

By Darryl Ratcliff

Dallas can often feel like Frank Herbert's desert planet Arrakis, the titular planet of his soft science fiction masterpiece *Dune*. Like Arrakis, the problem with culture in Dallas is more about its ecology than its people. Ignite/Arts Dallas is helping to evolve the cultural ecology in Dallas, creating an oasis in an aspirational art city.

The current branding slogan for Dallas is "Big things happen here," a campaign run by the Dallas Convention & Visitors Bureau. Throughout Dallas' downtown core, six-foot-tall letters "B" and "G" invite you to make the "I" in BIG for a photo that hopefully gets shared across social media. This is the way Dallas typically engages with culture: a top down blend of centralization, large institutions, and populism all geared towards economic impact.

It is a city where the best museum is arguably a mall, NorthPark Center. Raymond Nasher, the creator of NorthPark Center, would indeed go on to found a museum – the Nasher Sculpture Center – a fine institution but less culturally successful than the art in the mall. Dallas spends a lot of money to import established art world commodities as an expression of wealth and comfort. In this business-driven city, brands and branding are prioritized, which leads to a top-heavy ecosystem of "big things" haphazardly trying to find and bump into other "big things."

What Dallas does not do well – and what is desperately needed – is to grow big things, and not just import them. This is difficult in a city that loves trees but despises acorns. In this case, individual artists are the acorns, as well as small cultural organizations, DIY spaces – even many mid-sized organizations, although there aren't many of those. It is fair to say that historically Dallas has not done a good job valuing its artists, and by Dallas, I mean *big* institutions, *big* money, and *big* powerful families with big wealth. This is why for an individual artist or small cultural organization, Dallas can indeed feel like a desert. There is very little water for these groups, very little monetary resources, training, mentorship, audience development, incubators, and professional development opportunities. The ecosystem at the low and mid-ends is bare, with the vast majority of resources going to support the

"big things." Thus, no matter how promising the acorn, no matter how much potential is contained in its core, most talented creatives have to leave Dallas, die from thirst, or live a stunted creative life never truly fulfilling their full potential.

This makes the work of Ignite/Arts Dallas unique, necessary, and potentially transformational. First, Ignite/Arts Dallas is part of a "big thing" – in this case Southern Methodist University, a private university in one of the wealthiest zip codes of the country. Ignite/Arts Dallas has access to other large organizations and to wealthy donors that few other organizations with similar visions for cultivating Dallas-based talent have access to. Under the leadership of Clyde Valentin, Ignite/Arts Dallas should first be commended for being successful in gathering resources to support its mission. Unlike other organizations who are committed to the status quo, the transformational mission of Ignite/Arts Dallas has required constant education of cultural elites and the donor class, who often do not understand why real engagement with communities and cultivation of Dallas-based talent needs such significant resources.

Ignite/Arts Dallas has been able to leverage university resources to create partnerships with other large institutions to help them shift their resources to new areas. This is most profoundly seen in its partnership with Dallas Theater Center to produce a community version of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. In conjunction with The Public Theater and the city of Dallas, as well as several community groups and nonprofits, this production helped Dallas Theater Center win the Tony for best regional theater.

What is less known are the smaller ways Ignite/Arts Dallas is attempting to fill the gaps in Dallas' creative ecosystem. One way is through providing opportunities to local artists for professional and creative development. Ignite/Arts Dallas has been leveraging the creative skill sets of artists they bring to Dallas to provide workshops and skill-sharing to local artists and students. This is a model that many other cultural organizations could follow. It does take the investment of a few extra days in the city, but is a way to

counter the "fly in, fly out" mentality that many presenters and visiting artists have of Dallas. It helps the visiting artist get a better sense of the artists who make our creative community and helps our artists build their professional networks.

Ignite/Arts Dallas has also sponsored several Creative Capital professional development seminars for local artists. This is important because it is building a cohort of artists in Dallas who are ready for greater opportunities both locally and nationally. Professional development opportunities are extremely limited in Dallas; therefore, it is a critical step to help artists expand their capacities to create the world they imagine.

In addition to professional and creative development opportunities, Ignite/Arts Dallas has partnered and provided funding to both individual artists and small organizations to help them achieve more ambitious projects. Personally, Ignite/Arts Dallas has helped with a range of projects that I have been involved in, including Creating Our Future's *City Under the Influence* events, which helped us achieve the funding of individual artists and cultural equity grants from the city of Dallas. The list goes on: IAD has collaborated with Ash Studios, a POC art space, to host poetry readings and community meetings; it's also partnered with Michelada Think Tank to help fund the production of *DeColonize Dallas*, which worked with artists to make site-specific neighborhood projects outside of the downtown core. Before Ignite/Arts Dallas, the projects would have had great difficulty getting any type of funding in the city.

When Ignite/Arts Dallas is part of a convening with other institutions, as it currently is with the Community

Innovation Lab, which investigates food deserts in Dallas, it tries to invite Dallas-based artists into the project and promote culture being utilized in atypical ways. Without a doubt, Ignite/Arts Dallas has established itself as one of the most innovative, artist-friendly, and community-forward cultural organizations in Dallas. The fact that it has only existed for five years makes this even more impressive. Yet, there is still much work to be done in transforming the cultural ecosystem of Dallas, work that Ignite/Arts Dallas can be a leader in.

One, Dallas needs more artist residencies. This has been at the top of the list for over a decade and in a real estate-driven town, carving out dedicated space for an artist to sleep at night should not be as difficult as it has proven to be. Ignite/Arts Dallas could partner with other organizations to create a residency program for both local artists and visiting artists. Also, since Ignite/Arts Dallas has a great national network, they could create reciprocal residencies in other cities.

Two, Dallas needs to become a culturally equitable city. One of the more difficult things for cultural equity advocates to do is to measure cultural equity. Ignite/Arts Dallas, being part of a university program, is uniquely equipped to have access to knowledge, people, and methodologies to measure cultural equity at our large institutions. A cultural equity scorecard or report card would go a long way to ensuring that large institutions are held accountable for making cultural equity gains. In fact, if Ignite/Arts Dallas partnered with the city of Dallas, and other arts funders, and encouraged them to use the cultural equity scorecard as a metric in their funding decisions to arts organizations, we might finally see some real progress along these lines.

What is less known are the smaller ways Ignite/Arts Dallas is attempting to fill the gaps in Dallas' creative ecosystem. Ignite/Arts Dallas has been leveraging the creative skill sets of artists they bring to Dallas to provide workshops and skill-sharing to local artists and students. This is a model that many other cultural organizations could follow.

Three, Dallas needs more funding opportunities for artists. Ignite/Arts Dallas is quickly becoming seen as a national thought leader in culture, and advocating that more national, regional, and local funders invest in our local arts community would be a great asset. It is impossible to win grants that aren't made available to you. There is a general lack of education about the critical work that is happening in Dallas, and how Dallas is really a city that mirrors and is deeply representative of every major issue of our time. Ignite/Arts Dallas has already taken some of these steps with initiatives like *New Cities*, *Future Ruins*, and should continue its advocacy.

Finally, Dallas needs to attract and retain creative talent. From 2010 to 2015, there was perhaps the greatest boom of young creative talent in Dallas' history. This had to do mostly with the Great Recession and an abundance of cheap space near the city core. However, once that generation of talent reached a certain point in their careers they had no place to go. There were no mid-career opportunities for them; no opportunities in the 10K-50K range; nothing that would help them live for six months or a full year on any single project. There were no jobs, or not enough of them, in the creative fields. As a university institution, Ignite/Arts Dallas is particularly positioned to cultivate and train creatives who can impact

the city. However, if the best creatives all want to leave Dallas or, as happened with the last generation, if the best creatives want to stay in Dallas but find it financially impossible because there aren't avenues for them to make a living with their creativity, then what is the point?

There are great artists and creatives who are in Dallas and have come from Dallas. If you can find success here, you have had to work harder and more creatively in many ways than peers in coastal cities. Like the Fremens of Arrakis, the harsh environment of Dallas makes the survivors strong – you know how to survive in the desert, which not many people are able to do. Yet, culture should not be for the chosen few. Policy should not be made for the exceptional, but for those who need extra help to achieve their potential.

Ignite/Arts Dallas has the opportunity to lead the transformation of Dallas from a top-heavy cultural ecology focused on economic impact to a multitiered cultural ecology focused on community impact. By creating this more balanced cultural ecology, Ignite/Arts Dallas will help showcase to the country what some already know: creatives from Dallas have the capacity to change the world, and with the right environment they will do just that.

To Thrive: The Intersection of Art and Social Justice

By Lauren Embrey

In spite of challenging odds, nonprofit organizations in Dallas are catalyzing change. However, organizations working at the intersection of art and social justice are lacking the financial support to fully implement their goals and achieve their highest value. To achieve this it will require risk-taking, the engagement of national organizations, and the investment of national foundations.

The Embrey Family Foundation's mission—Expand Awareness, Explore Possibilities, and Elevate Consciousness—led us to position ourselves as a seed funder. We looked for the new and innovative and we helped bring it to fruition. This approach led to the creation of treasured partnerships, relationships that exhibit depth, and a scale that reflects the diverse work being created in Dallas, and we believe all of these support the case for national funder engagement.

In 2006, I began a concerted effort to learn about projects and initiatives that aligned with EFF values and were collaborative and bridge-building by nature. Projects that understood the value of differing perspectives, as well as the integral role of art in social justice work. Initiatives that worked towards unity in ways communities could participate and own.

What projects would be a relevant fit for Dallas? Which initiatives would push Dallas to examine itself and be open to alternative approaches?

In 2006, while on a human rights trip to Rwanda led by Dr. Rick Halperin, director of the Embrey Human Rights Program at SMU, I discovered a groundbreaking production called *Truth in Translation*. *Truth in Translation* tells the stories of the interpreters for South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. These interpreters were the voice of victim and perpetrator and their mandate was to "not become involved." Their struggle to remain impervious to what they witnessed led to the growing awareness that they were not that different from the people for whom they interpreted. In 2007, EFF brought this production to SMU Meadows for its U.S. premiere. The content of this production expanded awareness on many issues and opened the door for deeper community conversations.

In 2010, EFF began a relationship with Race Forward to explore and discern elements of implicit bias. Race Forward provided not only research and statistical data around this subject, but also workshops that broadened awareness and elevated understanding of how deeply held belief systems were exhibited in larger community structures. Race Forward understood the importance of using art when dealing with tough subjects that often trigger conflicting feelings, and even trauma.

In 2012, EFF attended Race Forward's Facing Race Conference with plans to bring the conference to Dallas. Through facilitated community conversations with Race Forward and nonprofit leadership, the seed to establish a forum on race was formed: Dallas Faces Race. The mission of Dallas Faces Race is to bring together organizations to actively build their capacity to address racial equity, to move beyond discussion groups on race, cultural awareness, and diversity, and engage those ready to collaborate and make change. But it took time to develop trust. Workshops, gatherings, and events were provided to the organizational partners to deepen learning and foster understanding. EFF's role was to provide support as well as a safe space where people could speak honestly and openly about their experiences. Dallas Faces Race's partners decided how deeply to engage and with whom to collaborate.

In 2014, for the first time ever, Race Forward's national Facing Race Conference was held in the South, and Dallas was the host city.

EFF continued to seed opportunities and in 2013 developed a partnership with Dance Exchange, an organization that collaborates across generations and communities to channel the power of performance as a means for dialogue and critical reflection. Over a three-year period, Dance Exchange built on the relationships established through Dallas Faces Race and the Facing Race Conference to create the production *Bricks and Bones*. *Bricks and Bones* wove movement and storytelling together to facilitate an investigation of differing historical realities and to uncover how race shapes the landscape around us.



Risk-taking is a critical and necessary element to success.

Throughout the development of these partnerships we heard community members talk about trauma, and past history as relates to race. It was clear they needed more. We knew the W. K. Kellogg Foundation had developed curricula on the topic of racial healing. We felt this was a necessary step for the Dallas community. In the aftermath of the police shootings on July 7, 2016, we reached out to the Kellogg Foundation. This was the beginning of the budding relationship between the Kellogg Foundation, city, and community leaders. In 2017, Dallas was officially named one of 14 cities to engage in W. K. Kellogg's Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation (TRHT) work.

All these projects and initiatives have provided a different way of viewing human circumstance, and have built collaborative teams. Each one, through participation or witnessing, has emboldened creativity and helped the community explore a deeper understanding of self and of others. This evolution required a willingness to look at and to see things differently, to engage in the process, and to develop actionable steps for follow through.

As we at EFF have continued to work to expand awareness and explore these possibilities, we've found three types of results: projects that performed for a period of time, projects considered sustainable, and initiatives that evolved into a next phase. Each result exhibits its own form of success, and all require a certain level of risk.

Risk-taking is a critical and necessary element to success. Funding the creation of possibilities requires that the foundation enter into an agreement with that organization. This agreement must be one of belief, trust, and allowance. The foundation must believe in the vision, trust the organization to pursue that vision, and know their resources are necessary to allow the organization the space to create that vision. Seed funding is a time when there are no metrics involved, just a willingness to invest resources in a dream not yet proven.

EFF's investment in change is not limited to traditional forms of funding, but also includes the use of investment

assets in the form of Impact Investing. For the Embrey Family Foundation, Impact Investing means investing to make the world whole.

In 2015, the Embrey Family Foundation partnered with The Real Estate Council Community Fund (TRECCF) to help an artist of color realize her vision as a social entrepreneur: to create a healthy food establishment in the food desert of South Dallas. With seed funding provided by TRECCF and EFF, Recipe Oak Cliff is now a vibrant community business thriving in an area that had not seen development in approximately 60 years. These seeds of exploration have taken root and sprouted, showing other neighborhoods that possibilities exist.

If we look at artists as social entrepreneurs who offer innovative products at a time in history when the cultural trends demand the very type of product that artists produce, we understand that art plays an integral role in creativity and success. If the community invests in and supports such efforts we not only bring dreams to fruition, but also help our city to thrive.

Dallas is filled with opportunities that offer tremendous leverage. A confluence of ideas and efforts has begun, and art is at the core of this effort. As Clyde Valentin, the director of Ignite/Arts Dallas, said in a recent article: "There is success in what you can't see: interactions, bonding, trust building." These interactions are happening in Dallas and they are building trust, but they cannot achieve their highest value without increased investment, collaboration, and risk-taking.

Dallas is on a new path: the path to a new image. We have boundless possibilities, caring and committed communities, creativity, and innovation. What we don't have is the level of investment required to maximize and support all that is happening—all that is possible. I state my case: Invest in Dallas. Take risks. Collaborate. Help us be known as THE city that thrives at the intersection of art and social justice.

Grant Strategy: NEFA's National Theater Project by Quita Sullivan

WHAT IS THE NATIONAL THEATER PROJECT?

The New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA) launched the National Theater Project (NTP) in 2010 to support innovative theater artists and to build a network of organizations committed to strengthening opportunities and cultivating audiences for their work. NTP invests in the creation and touring of artist-led, devised, ensemble theater projects, and provides critical resources to increase visibility and access to artists and ensembles making work that expands the boundaries of theatrical form. NTP was established with the goal of engaging the theater world's diverse players – artists, ensembles, presenters, regional theaters, and others – to support each other and strengthen the national theater ecosystem. It reflects NEFA's value of providing equitable access so that grantees reflect the national theater field and comprise a more diverse pool of artists than is often found in the usual cultural hubs. Application is a two-part process, including a final application, the completion of which is mentored by one of 12 Advisors. NTP Advisors serve three-year terms and are responsible for choosing which projects will receive the Creation and Touring Grant. Advisors are more than a panel; they are also Advisors to the program overall.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A "NATIONAL" FUNDER?

At the very core of the National Theater Project (NTP) is the goal of supporting artists across the country who are creating devised, ensemble theater both in the creation of the work and the extension of its life through touring. Shortly into its life, NTP was faced with this two-fold question: "If NTP is going to live up to the "N" in its name (National), how can it increase the number of artists applying from areas other than New York City and Los Angeles, and when artists from those other areas apply, how do we ensure that they are competitive?"

IN OTHER WORDS, HOW DO YOU PRACTICE PHILANTHROPIC EQUITY, WHILE CONTRIBUTING TO AN EXISTING ECOSYSTEM AND MAKING ROOM FOR OTHERS ALONG THE WAY?

There is already an ecosystem and it is not serving the

interests of all or even most of those who are participating in it. There are both great theater and great theater-makers in places across the country that don't get the same attention as the hubs of New York and California. At the same time, there are a lot of theater artists in those hubs who are competing for the same resources regardless of size or genre. This means that NTP must find a way to serve as many of those artists as possible with its own limited resources. And to do that, it needs to find a way to deal with two issues: equity and aesthetics. If it's not a lack of work (artist, projects), then the issue probably lies with the decision makers.

EQUITY IN THE FACE OF PERCEIVED "ARTISTIC DENSITY" IN PARTICULAR CITIES AND REGIONS

In order to combat the perceived artistic density of "theater hubs," NTP makes a point of traveling to see work and meet both artists and presenters in different areas of the country. When NTP began in 2010, over half of the applicants were from New York. In the last seven years, that percentage has decreased to the 30% range. This decrease is the result of the last seven years of investment in attending conferences, network gatherings, holding info sessions, coffee chats, and any other gathering where NTP is able to raise awareness that this grant is not just for New York or California. However, with a staff of two, it is impossible to be everywhere. This means that we also rely on relationships with our Advisors, other networks, presenters, and artists to keep NTP informed of potential projects and potential presenters. We can then reach out and invite participation from areas that are less represented and less well known to the rest of the country.

VALUING OTHER AESTHETICS

Because Advisors serve three-year terms, NTP builds a relationship with those individuals and they, in turn, feel a real ownership of NTP and a responsibility to the projects they select. Aside from the advising process, it also means that when looking for new Advisors, NTP relies on nominations and suggestions from current and former Advisors and from meeting people in other networks.

Every year, when considering new Advisors, NTP looks at balancing race, gender, ability, geography, organization type, life experience, artists, presenters, and former grantees. While some may seem like the usual gatekeeper suspects (large presenters, universities, and the like), those voices are balanced by the voices of artists, organizations with missions and visions for their community beyond just presenting new work, like Ignite/Arts Dallas, and members of service organizations like Alternate ROOTS, which supports Southern artists of all disciplines, not just theater. It's a complicated puzzle that is never complete. However, each configuration allows NTP to connect with different networks of artists and different potential presenters of NTP-supported projects, and most importantly brings other perspectives and aesthetics into the room when decisions are being made.

GETTING TO EQUITABLE GRANT MAKING

No grant maker can truly consider themselves fully equitable. There are not enough resources in any one funder to address all of the issues created by the current arts ecosystem. However, there are a few considerations that can be included in decision making that can help us become more equitable.

WHAT LEVELS OF TRUST, RISK, AND OPENNESS WHILE EMPHASIZING ADHERENCE TO A VALUE SET (CRITERIA) ARE REQUIRED IN TRULY OPENING THE DOOR TO WORKS FROM BEYOND THE TRADITIONAL EPICENTERS OF CULTURAL PRODUCTION?

As the director of the National Theater Project, there is no way that I could go through the panel process and not have my own favorites. I'm sure that the Advisors also come into the room with their own favorites built on relationships and interests. However, NTP is not about "my cup of tea" or any one person's likes or dislikes. At the beginning of every panel meeting, whether during the preliminary application round or the final application round, Advisors are reminded that this is a national project and that we are trusting them to consider aesthetics other than their own, as well as equity issues. NTP has to trust that the conversations between Advisors will be open and honest and keep any one voice from dominating the conversation. It has to believe that admonitions not to pick projects because s/he/they are interested in presenting them in the near future will be listened to and followed. In return, the Advisors must trust that when NTP staff are delivering feedback, the conversation will be relayed honestly and without attribution so that they, in turn,

can have open and honest deliberation. Conversations about readiness to tour are as common as discussions of the tyranny of white dramaturgy. Advisors often express opinions such as: "This is not my cup of tea but it's really important that this voice be heard"; "I know this artist and they could do so much better because they have so many more resources"; "This is a really important topic; are they the right people to address this issue?"; and "We really need to look at this project because it's the only one we've ever seen coming from this area." In addition, because of the ongoing relationships between Advisors during their NTP service, when disagreements happen, discussion remains possible, even if immediate resolution is not.

TRUST IS ONLY BUILT THROUGH OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPERIENCE, LEARNING, AND COMMUNICATION.

When considering equity in grant making, some major questions need to be asked. One question is how do artists from regions that are not the recognized, well-resourced cultural hubs compete with artists in those places who have more access to those resources? Are they being judged fairly on the basis of their art and not on the video quality of their work sample? How do we, as Advisors and NTP staff, understand how the aesthetics of a region affect the work? One way that NTP has addressed this is through its Regional Convenings.

In 2014, then-Advisor Carlton Turner (ED of Alternate ROOTS) was concerned that Southern artists were being judged by standards that weren't applicable to the work they were creating. Most of the Advisors were from the North and had no experience making work in places like Atlanta, New Orleans, or Jackson, Mississippi. Working with Turner, NTP created the Regional Convening to bring the Advisors to areas where there were fewer applications, perhaps fewer resources, and different aesthetics, more relevant to different cultures and places, than they might have been exposed to, and have them listen and get to know artists from that area. This goes back to social-justice organizing principles, where community activists recognized that they can tell you about their issues, but until you sit down to dinner with the community and experience the effects of the issues on the community, you cannot understand what it means to be a member of that community. These convenings also include performances, to help Advisors get to know possible applicants and see their work firsthand.

“**Trust is only built through opportunities for experience, learning, and communication. When considering equity in grant making, some major questions need to be asked. One question is how do artists from regions that are not the recognized, well-resourced cultural hubs compete with artists in those places who have more access to those resources?**”

The first of these, in 2015, was held in Jackson, Mississippi, and brought NTP Advisors into the room where they listened to artists and arts service organizations, including presenters, talk about challenges and opportunities of making theater in the South. For example, one of those conversations led to a better understanding of the interconnectedness of artists in New Orleans. Because resources are scarce, especially in a post-Katrina New Orleans, artists there have found ways of supporting each other's work while still creating their own distinctive work. They share artists and spaces but have their own very particular identities. Because of the learning from that convening, the Advisors were better equipped to look at applications from New Orleans on their own terms and not whether or not "so-and-so from New York would have done it better." One result of that is that there are more applications from New Orleans making it to the final application round and being awarded Creation and Touring Grants. In turn, artists in New Orleans are reinvesting in the artists and resources in their community.

Since then, NTP has held a second convening in Phoenix, Arizona, hosted by ASU Gammage, and is looking forward to holding its next convening in Dallas, hosted by Ignite/Arts Dallas. In each of those locations, NTP depends on the local host to tap into its networks to bring artists, presenters, and others into the room for meaningful discussion and to raise up the artists in that area. Without that local connection and knowledge, these convenings would be more of a "show and tell" than a true learning opportunity to create more equitable grant making.

WHAT IS THE PLACE OF ANONYMITY?

NTP has elected to have anonymity in only two places during the decision-making process. The first is in the

voting mechanism and the other is in feedback to artists. All other information is publicly available. NTP publishes the names of the Advisors on the web and updates that list whenever there is rotation on and off. This means that at any time, artists know who is in the room when their project is being discussed and can see who the different voices are. They may see someone who is familiar with their work or not; someone who likes their work or not; but, there are clearly 12 different voices and they can be assured that there will be actual discussion.

If the goal is to be transparent, why then anonymity in voting mechanics? Since 2010, NTP has been seeking to counter undue influence of any one individual in the room. All Advisors need to have an equal say in the final decision. Voting that is not anonymous allows advisor "gaming" of the system. It is a good and necessary part of the process to make convincing arguments one way or the other, for or against, particular projects. Those discussions often bring to light aspects that hadn't been considered before and may change an opinion. However, the process of going from 82 applicants to 24 finalists or from 24 finalists to six awardees is a difficult one, as it should be. It requires several rounds of voting. What can happen if the voting is not anonymous is that an Advisor can see the way the votes are going and decide to decline to vote for a particular project that s/he/they see has enough votes to make it to the next voting round and vice versa. This allows the actual voting to influence the decision instead of the discussion influencing the decision. Once the voting is done, the Advisors then look at the effect of the voting – and there is more discussion. It is no longer a question of "quality" because all of the remaining applications are clearly qualified, but a question of whether or not, given the pool of applicants, this is

the best national representation – whether that is in geographic distribution, size, genre, issue, gender, race. Again, Advisors vote based on what they consider during the discussions and not on how the voting is playing out. It's not perfect and NTP has never had a moment where there was 100% agreement, but it is certainly moving towards more equitable decision making.

The other area of conflict between transparency and anonymity is in the feedback process to artists. NTP always offers to provide the actual comments made by Advisors on an artist's application. In this way, the artist can better understand what led to the final votes. NTP is committed to this feedback, not only as a learning opportunity for the artist, but also as a way to hear from the artist about the process and where it could be improved. It is part of the continual self-evaluation NTP engages in, in order to decrease the burden on artists and assess its processes. At the same time, if there is to be open and frank discussion about the applications, if NTP wants honest opinions and decisions, the Advisors need to know that those discussions will not be directly attributable to any one person. There needs to be room for disagreement and the comments given to the artist, which are nearly verbatim, often reflect those disagreements without referencing individuals.



PHOTO: JUÁREZ: A DOCUMENTARY MYTHOLOGY BY THEATER MITU

ONCE THE GRANT HAS BEEN GIVEN

Not all grantees are at the same stage of development or have the same resources. For some grantees, this may be the first grant of this size. How do you ensure the success of all projects when they are so different? The primary way of ensuring success is to have the artist decide what that looks like for themselves. For example, touring success for one early project, *Café Variations*, by SITI Company, meant expanding their touring to universities they had never been able to reach. For Universes Theater Ensemble, the success of *Party People* depended on the participation of the community as well as members of the Black Panthers and Young Lords in its development and touring. This kind of participation is not something presenters are used to accommodating, but it was a necessary part of the artist fee. They used their award to ensure that they would have the full participation they needed to be successful. Because NTP has not defined success for all projects equally as "Project A completed by B date and X number of sites completed by Y date," the artist remains in control of what success means. It is a constant reminder that equality is not the same as equity. From application to award, NTP must consider the resources, needs, and vision of the artists and the projects.

NO ONE WAY

It would not be fair to say that this is the only way of getting to equitable grant making. This is how one grant program is working to achieve that goal. And just as individuals need to adjust to changing demographics, resources, needs, so too does the National Theater Project. What is successful today may not be successful tomorrow and certainly will not be five years from now. Continual evaluation of the field, learning from artists, NTP Advisors, and others, and program evaluation are necessary to ensure that NTP remains a "National" project in service to the entire field and not just the "artistic hubs" in the current arts ecosystem.

The Constantly Changing South by Carlton Turner

*All that you touch
You Change.*

*All that you Change
Changes you.*

*The only lasting truth
is Change.*

Octavia E. Butler

This quote is from one of my favorite books, *Parable of the Sower*, by one of my favorite authors, Octavia E. Butler. In this book, Octavia guides the reader on a journey through a chaotic 21st century shaped by the monoculture of capitalism, its impact on the environment, and the political strife that accompanies a national mentality grounded in scarcity. Octavia got many things right in her vision of the future. The most consistent and apparent lesson from her work is that change is inevitable. The country is always changing, politically, culturally, and demographically, and the South is at the center of these changes.

The 21st century has seen a massive growth spurt in southern urban centers. Population growth is happening in many forms, including a rise in immigration – both documented and not – as well as baby boomers relocating to southern communities with lower costs of living in an attempt to stretch their retirement dollars while still enjoying an acceptable standard of living. These shifts in population will also equal gains in political representation through federal reapportionment in the House of Representatives as a result of the 2020 census. There is power in representation.

The most important conversations on race, post-Civil Rights movement, were sparked by the murders of Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown, and more recently the tragedies in Charlottesville. The South has always played a significant role in informing the national discourse on all things political, financial, and cultural. We, that live in this region, also live within the reality of historic inequity as the foundational building blocks of the development of this country, the South playing the role of economic engine in the startup that was the early United States. It remains so

as the country reaches adolescence, that as a region, the South, as a place of renewed interest and growth, is the lynchpin for tipping the balance of power in the United States.

Culturally, the South is a rich and fertile ground for deepening and expanding the artistic and cultural paradigm from a bi-coastal binary to an artistic palette that is, at the same time, foundational, contemporary, and avant-garde. Despite having an anemic philanthropic infrastructure to support the development of few strong organizations and networks, the South continues to contribute a lion's share to the national cultural fabric. The level of individual and community resilience that it takes to continue contributing disproportionately to the national cultural landscape, without reciprocity, is both remarkable and unfortunate. However, this challenge in infrastructure also offers a unique opportunity to change the nature of support for artists working in the region through the development of strategic funding initiatives organized across the philanthropic sector. Our collective concerns cannot be adequately addressed by single-organizational solutions or a sector filled with silos.

From a regional standpoint, Alternate ROOTS has been a pivotal institution for the development of artist-centered approaches to organizational development while simultaneously knitting a 41-year-old web of artist relationships and extensive support networks. Networks of artists, which have amplified the voices of southern artists as a regional power and as a contributor to the national discourse on issues of cultural policy, cultural equity, and aesthetics, particularly in areas of community engagement. This type of organizational design can be an effective case study and learning tool for unpacking and understanding the needs of next generation institution building.

The time I have spent within the Alternate ROOTS network over the last 16 years has informed the development of the Mississippi Center for Cultural Production (Sipp Culture). Sipp Culture is a new initiative designed to work at the intersection of the production of media and

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Despite having an anemic philanthropic infrastructure to support the development of few strong organizations and networks, the South continues to contribute a lion’s share to the national cultural fabric.
”

food to support the cultural, social, artistic, and economic development of a rural community in Central Mississippi. It is an artist-led vision refined through community engagement that has the potential to inform the design of future southern rural communities. The idea is not unique. It is based on fundamental southern strategies that work towards centering cultural institutions as the backbone of community development. However, trying to launch these initiatives ranges from the difficult to the impossible when they are unable to develop the financial formulas that will allow them to thrive over time. Strong, healthy communities need strong, healthy cultural institutions to play the role of convener, facilitator, and presenter, and be a midwife to birth the dreams of their community. This is one of the major gaps in the philanthropic landscape that must be filled if we are to uplift cultural equity as a field-wide value.

During the writing of this, Hurricane Harvey, the most damaging natural disaster our country has witnessed, has laid siege to Houston, Texas, and the surrounding coastal cities in Texas and Louisiana. This scene is familiar. Around this same time 12 years ago, we saw a similar fury unleashed on the city of New Orleans and the coastal towns of Mississippi. What happened in the aftermath was one of the fastest and most expensive rebuilding efforts the country has ever witnessed. We also witnessed the reshaping of the culture of an ancient American city. Disasters of this scale offer opportunities to reimagine. For certain, there will be millions and millions of dollars directed towards rebuilding many sectors. How those systems get rebuilt to serve the future we want to live in is the grand opportunity for systemic change. Can we move into the challenge to design groundbreaking, forward-thinking approaches to institution building and community development, in lieu of reinforcing the failing systems of our past?

Where the South goes, the nation will follow.



PHOTO: FLOR DE TIERRA BY ANDREA ARROYO

Equity in the Cultural City

By Jeff Chang

Amidst flaring culture wars and deepening social polarization, the American arts world has, as if recoiling in horror, entered a moment of self-examination. Following a long period of negligence, some major arts institutions and organizations are again discussing and debating how to address questions of equity. In New York City and Los Angeles, city officials pressed arts organizations to address long-standing underrepresentation of communities of color. A number of recent research papers—including the Helicon Collaborative’s groundbreaking studies of the nonprofit arts sector, local studies by the New York Office of Cultural Affairs and the Los Angeles Arts Commission, and the Mellon Foundation’s look at the whiteness of museums, dance companies, and theater organizations—reveal what has been long known and neglected: the arts world is fundamentally tipped against communities of color, and things are actually getting worse.

At the same time, artists and arts advocates have positioned themselves as part of a vital, expanding resistance. They have loudly been speaking out on questions of equity—challenging continuing underrepresentation of people of color in positions of power; questioning the meaning of paintings, pieces, and performances; protesting sexual violence against women in the workplace and the industry. These energies, released by vital justice movements from Black Lives Matter to the feminist resistance, have spread throughout the arts world. Community arts are experiencing a resurgence, social practice has gone mainstream, and even political demonstrations are often adopting a theatricality that recalls the intense artist activism of the 1960s and 1980s.

Many of us see the power of the arts as a remedy to the chaos and polarization of this era. Amidst the clamor of know-nothing populism, art calms us. It clarifies. It allows us to see clearly. It allows us to close the gaps again. In its mimicry of life, great art helps us to close the distance between the self and other. Another way to say this is that through art we learn once again how to experience empathy. And we know that empathy is the first step towards equity.

Equity is about justly valuing the production, reproduction, and reception of different communities’ arts and cultures. It means recognizing the ways in which the structures and institutions in the American arts have denied value to or completely devalued some peoples’ arts and cultures.

How far are we from equity? Nearly 90% of American museum leaders, curators, conservators, and educators are white, while more than half of security and facilities workers are non-white. Of the largest museums, theaters, and dance companies in the U.S., none have annual budgets of less than \$23 million. Of the 20 largest African American and Latino museums, theaters, and dance companies in the U.S., only five have annual budgets of more than \$5 million. In Dallas, 75% of the city’s cultural affairs budget goes to the maintenance of a small number of large institutional buildings. A mere 2% of all arts organizations receive 58% of the total gifts, grants, and contributions to the nonprofit arts sector. Inequality in the arts world is literally worse than U.S. income inequality.

The numbers are just the beginning. Behind them are the policies, protocols, and practices that reproduce inequity. Many of these remain unexamined because of colorblindness—which, however well meaning, is really a denial of empathy. One of the most troubling findings in the New York Cultural Affairs report was this: in a survey of over 1,000 New York City arts organizations, 69% of those polled agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “I feel my organization is diverse.” Yet 78% of board members and 79% of leadership staff in these same organizations were white. The city is 33% white. In other words, the reproduction of inequity is cultural; it goes to the heart of how arts organizations not only view themselves but how they blind themselves.

Many of us have chosen to address inequity at the level of content or story. We work to push screenwriters to add a character of color into an all-white cast, or to press decision-makers to add a “race” show to the season. But in doing so, we risk allowing those in power to accept a change in the act of representation for actual representation.



Inequality in the arts world is literally worse than U.S. income inequality.



Some of us who want to go further talk about creating “pipelines” to diversify positions of power. But a recent Harvard Business School study showed that such programs, which date back to the mid-1990s, have largely been unsuccessful in changing the face of American corporate leadership. They fail or prove unsustainable because they are mostly tokenistic. Pipeline programs place an undue burden on the newest employee to represent their race and transform the workplace, and they can ask very little of the institution. When one is left facing a choice of “assimilate or leave,” many choose to leave.

We need to build pipelines, but only if they are part of building new ecosystems of creativity and production. Most successful transformations happen when the culture is changed at the root level. Anything less reproduces inequity. What this means is recognizing different ways of knowing and being and valuing them through fair representation, inclusion and access, and shared power.

Change is about forming a relationship between ourselves and others that is not based in domination, exploitation, or extraction, but in exchange and trust. Such change rises from a relationship of empathy—which often already suggests a power differential—into a relationship of equity. Only then do we have the possibility of the transformation of community.

What I have done above is slightly shift the way we can understand how to use the word “value” in relation to thinking about cultural equity. I began by talking about cultural equity as a way of valuing different cultures more fairly. I moved toward unpacking some of the values inherent in the process of moving toward equity. We must begin with empathy, but move toward understanding representation and power. Finally, we need to move from relationships that reinforce domination, exploitation, or extraction toward relationships that build trust, exchange, and mutuality. Transformation is a two-way street.

What does this have to do with the role of an arts institution in the changing city? The city is a place where

we might work toward transformation and come together or where we might re-segregate and fall into deeper inequality. Even as the arts institution transforms itself into a more equitable place of creativity, it can serve as a catalyst towards the transformation of the city around it.

We live in a period in which the rate of change has accelerated—in many instances due specifically to the presence of arts institutions. Like other “creative cities” in the South, Dallas has seen massive growth and demographic shifts. And as property values have climbed 11% in Dallas in just the past year, low-income communities and communities of color have increasingly been besieged by displacement pressures.

In the 2000s, during boom times, the urban scholar Richard Florida advanced the idea of the “creative class” as the key to urban revitalization. The new city would be one that welcomed optimistic workers to fill new info/tech economy jobs and their progressive values, such as celebrating the arts and diversity. Almost two decades later, after the Great Recession and amidst a period of greater economic volatility, American cities continue to aspire to become “creative cities.” Buyers have taken notice. Developers have taken notice. We have seen these cities gentrified—a word that quite literally signifies the movement of wealth into a place—and metro regions have become racially and economically re-segregated.

A city is a place of creativity, it is a place of difference and diversity. The two are related. Difference, in fact, drives creativity. The city is a place where we begin to encounter each other. Diversity and difference are what define a “cultural city.” By definition, such a city is polycultural—one in which historically white institutions, traditions, and practices are not the only kind that are valued, but one in which many more are as well; it is a city in which we see exchanges based in mutuality and inspiration as a marker of vitality. Thus, a cultural city is one of interdependent creative ecosystems that requires both the presence of diversity and a continual pressing towards equity.

Over the past decade, notions of the “creative city” and the “cultural city”—distinctions Florida never really had to make in his pre-millennium book—have split into opposing visions of the city.

In the “creative city,” communities that are mostly working class and diverse in all the ways that matter have come under serious pressure. From Miami’s Wynwood District to Los Angeles’ Boyle Heights, neighborhoods known as hubs of creativity have also seen the displacement and exodus of many longtime residents. There is a paradox here. Cities are engines for creativity. But the kind of creativity that has been valued has also turned these same cities into machines of inequality and re-segregation.

Communities are complex, living, breathing things that are built upon interdependence. Communities are human ecosystems. Diversity and difference actually increase their sustainability, their adaptability, their creativity. What makes gentrification and re-segregation so deadly is that they uproot these complex systems, they scatter the people who make them.

For the people whom gentrification displaces and disappears, Mindy Thompson Fullilove has described a sense of trauma that results from displacement—she calls it “root shock.” It’s the loss of difference, of connection, of ways, of traditions, of stories, of practices that people form when they make and sustain a community. The economic impulse of “the creative city” is what destroys the difference engine of “the cultural city.”

In recent years, we have heard a lot about the role artists have come to play—whether willingly or naïvely—in real estate development. Many times, the story is triumphal, a victory for the creative class. Artists made the place cool—suddenly the area gets all the restaurants and grocery stores it never had before, property values go up. After decades of negligence, the conditions have become right for capital to flow into these communities.

But all too often the result leaves the same neighborhoods bereft of the people whose creativity and collective effort formed and sustained and made those communities attractive in the first place. They had formed ways, they told each other stories, they passed on traditions, they had cultural practices in that place. There was a creative community there already. They had a cultural ecosystem. It was destroyed.

We are fond of talking, especially in this polarized moment, about how the arts bring people together. But we risk sounding naïve if we don’t at the same time acknowledge emerging facts. Not long into the next decade, the nation’s youth will become “majority minority.” They will be coming of age more segregated than any generation in the past half century. Three-quarters of white students attend 75% white schools. Three-quarters of Black and Latinx students attend majority non-white schools.

One way to understand this dilemma is profoundly distressing: if the arts remain one of the few things bringing us together, our burden will be unlike anything the American arts have had to face in history. But we could also ask of ourselves: How do we support development without destroying the long-standing communities who made those places? Can the presence of the arts and artists be separated from imminent gentrification? Can the arts and artists help us to really see each other, see our communities, see our way toward escaping the cycle of re-segregation?

Dallas, like other cities, is interested in positioning itself as a “cultural city,” and is engaged in the creation of a “cultural plan.” The success of such plans will come down to more than the success they have in revitalizing historic arts institutions, or in attracting creatives from elsewhere to move there. It will come down to how those cities address cultural equity, beginning with the long-standing inequities in their own fields of arts and culture. But the questions must then expand to encompassing the inequities of the cities themselves.

Communities of color and low-income communities are not empty places to be made safe for a creative class to move in, but lively places with structures, webs of relations, traditions, cultures, practices, and problem solvers already in place. Cities that do not value the arts and cultures of different communities in more equitable ways will squander their “creative city” moment, on their way to becoming exclusive monocultural strongholds. They will become dead cities of another sort.

The cultural city is one that helps us to rethink how we see each other, how we relate to each other. We start with empathy, we move to equity, and we come to mutuality, imagination, and sustainability. It is here that the cultural city can become the open city, a place that truly holds up the promise of creativity, joy, and freedom for all.



PHOTO: MAOF



PUBLIC WORKS DALLAS. PHOTO BY KIM LEESON



BEWARE OF THE DANDELIONS.. PHOTO BY DAVID LEESON



PHOTO: RECIPE OC BY KIM LEESON



DETRAS DE CAMERA. PHOTO BY KIM LEESON



PUBLIC WORKS DALLAS. PHOTO BY KIM LEESON

OUR RELATIONSHIPS



PHOTO: DJ SKINPOLITICK BY KIM LEESON

RELATIONSHIP MAPS

In 2011, Creative Time published a report that surveyed the condition of the arts in Dallas. A key finding was that Dallas lacked intermediary and mid-sized arts organizations that had the ability to be programmatically and collaboratively nimble. Influenced by the report, and in an attempt to offer a systematic solution, the Meadows School of the Arts initiated Ignite/Arts Dallas (formerly the Center for Arts and Urbanism) in 2014, announcing Clyde Valentin as its inaugural director.

Valentin spent the first year learning, listening to Dallas artists, building networks, and prototyping on and off campus. Collaborations varied in scale from individual artists to expansive institutions like the AT&T Performing Arts Center. This experimental phase helped lay the groundwork for Ignite/Arts Dallas' current role as local and national producer, collaborator, and arts advocate. After five years of deep and consistent collaborations, I/AD has become a trusted strategic partner and resource, uplifting individual artists and organizations across various sectors

including arts and culture, arts education, healthcare, and urban planning and policy. Programmatically, I/AD is especially committed to serving residents in historically divested communities. Although not comprehensive, the following maps are an attempt to illustrate Ignite/Arts Dallas' core value of building trust with local and national networks and emphasizing the importance of relationships as we look to build a non-traditional arts center housed within a university. One that is organic and responsive to the needs emerging around it, while aligning artistic practice and its mission, vision, and values, alongside the materials of people, purpose, and place.

Upon spending time with these illustrated versions of our relationships (highlights from our five years of programming only and by no means the comprehensive list), please allow your mind to see patterns. Eventually, one will begin to see the continuity and connections I/AD strives to create on a consistent and intentional basis. We hope.

Meadows Prize

Complex Movements

Sara Mokuria
Jodi Voice Yellowfish
Harold Steward
Dallas Park and Recreation
Tisha Crear
Ernest McMillan
Maria Yolisma Garcia

Public Works Dallas

Jubilee Park & Community Center
Literacy Achieves
Dallas Theater Center
Bachman Lake Together
AT&T Performing Arts Center
Literacy Instruction for Texas
Dallas Park and Recreation

New Cities, Future Ruins

Nasher Sculpture Center
Arizona State University Gammage Center
UT El Paso - Rubin Center for the Visual Arts
Jubilee Park & Community Center
The MAC

CultureBank

TACA
Tisha Crear, Recipe OC
Fred Villanueva, Ash Studios
Ofelia Faz-Garza, Semillitas Literary Initiative
Jin-Ya Huang, Break Bread, Break Borders
VET, ArtcycleTX
Sara Cardona, Teatro Dallas

Commissions & Residencies

**Afro Vegan:
Farm Fresh
African,
Caribbean &
Southern
Flavors Remixed**

Bryant Terry (Author)
Oak Cliff Cultural Center
Black Vegetarian Society of Texas
SMU Office of Multicultural
Student Affairs

**Decolonize
Your Diet**

Luz Calvo and
Catriona Rueda Esquibel
(Authors)
Bachman Lake Together
Oak Cliff Cultural Center
Urban Inter-Tribal Cultural Center

**RESPOND:
Puerto Rico**

MAOF (artist collective)
Mariola Rosario
Sheryl Anaya
Sofia Bastidas
SMU Meadows Division of Art
JourneymanINK
Life in Deep Ellum
Make Art with Purpose (MAP)
SMU Pollock Gallery

RiverSols

**Learning
By Doing**

Frank Waln
Tanaya Winder
Jodi Voice Yellowfish
American Indian Heritage Day
in Texas
Urban Inter-Tribal
Cultural Center

Meena Natarajan &
Dipankar Mukherjee
Pangea World Theater
Carlton Turner
Sipp Culture

Co-Presentations & Productions

**The Clothesline
Muse**

Nnenna Freelon
National Performance Network
New England Foundation for the Arts'
National Theater Project
Bishop Arts Theatre Center

Alex Alphaaoh
Brisa Areli Muñoz
Cara Mía Theatre
ArtsEmerson
EST Los Angeles

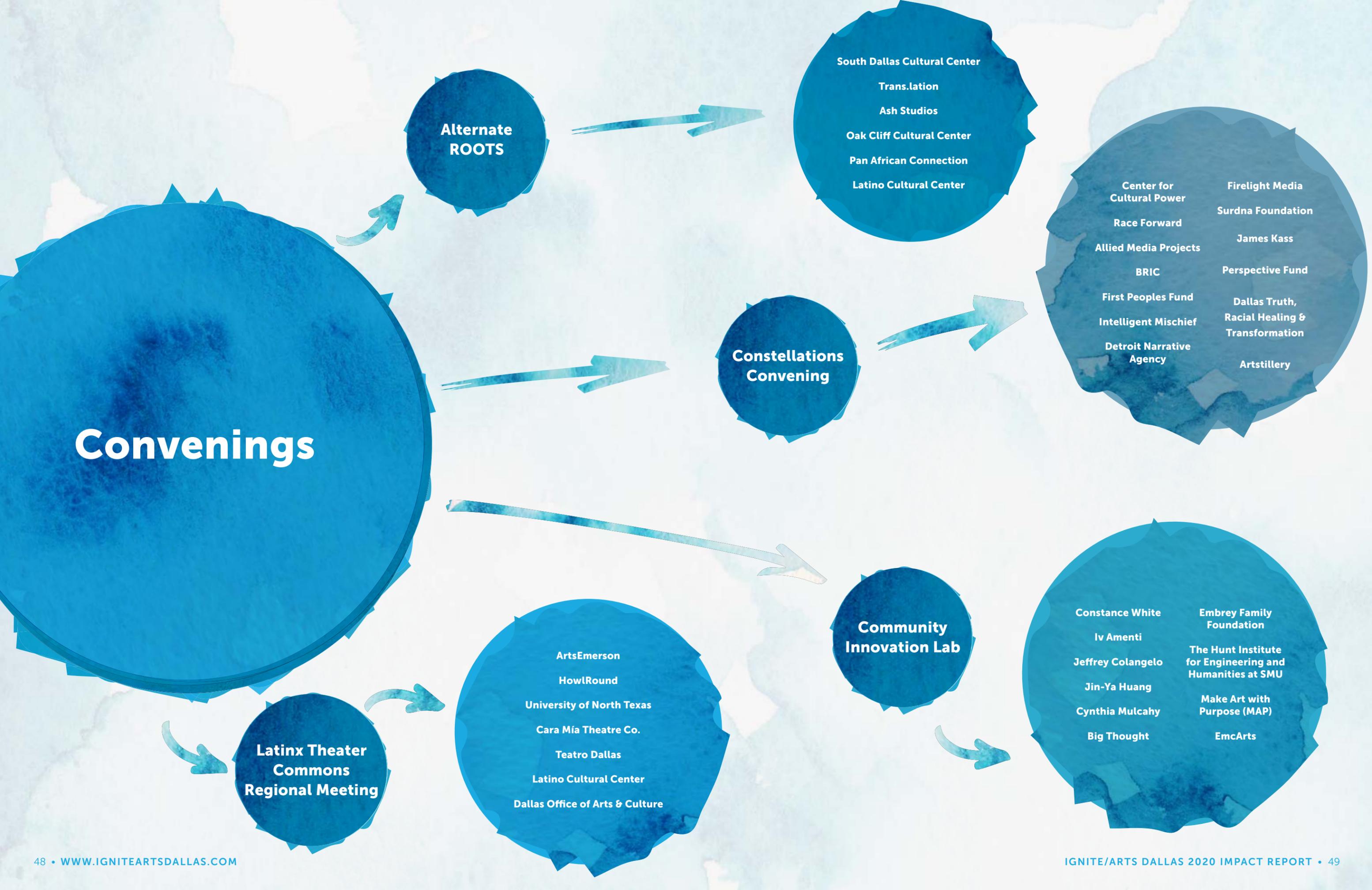
**WET:
A DACamented
Journey**

**Playwrights
in the
Newsroom**

Janielle Kastner & Brigham Mosley
Aaron Landsman
Dallas Morning News
AT&T Performing Arts Center
Dallas Office of Arts & Culture
PEN America

**Rebirth of a
Nation**

DJ Spooky
SMU Meadows SYZGY
SMU Meadows Division of Film and Media
Arts
Dallas VideoFest
Texas Theatre
Video Association of Dallas
Make Art with Purpose (MAP)



Convenings

Alternate ROOTS

South Dallas Cultural Center
 Trans.lation
 Ash Studios
 Oak Cliff Cultural Center
 Pan African Connection
 Latino Cultural Center

Constellations Convening

Center for Cultural Power
 Race Forward
 Allied Media Projects
 BRIC
 First Peoples Fund
 Intelligent Mischief
 Detroit Narrative Agency
 Firelight Media
 Surdna Foundation
 James Kass
 Perspective Fund
 Dallas Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation
 Artstillery

Community Innovation Lab

ArtsEmerson
 HowlRound
 University of North Texas
 Cara Mía Theatre Co.
 Teatro Dallas
 Latino Cultural Center
 Dallas Office of Arts & Culture

Constance White
 Iv Amenti
 Jeffrey Colangelo
 Jin-Ya Huang
 Cynthia Mulcahy
 Big Thought
 Embrey Family Foundation
 The Hunt Institute for Engineering and Humanities at SMU
 Make Art with Purpose (MAP)
 EmcArts

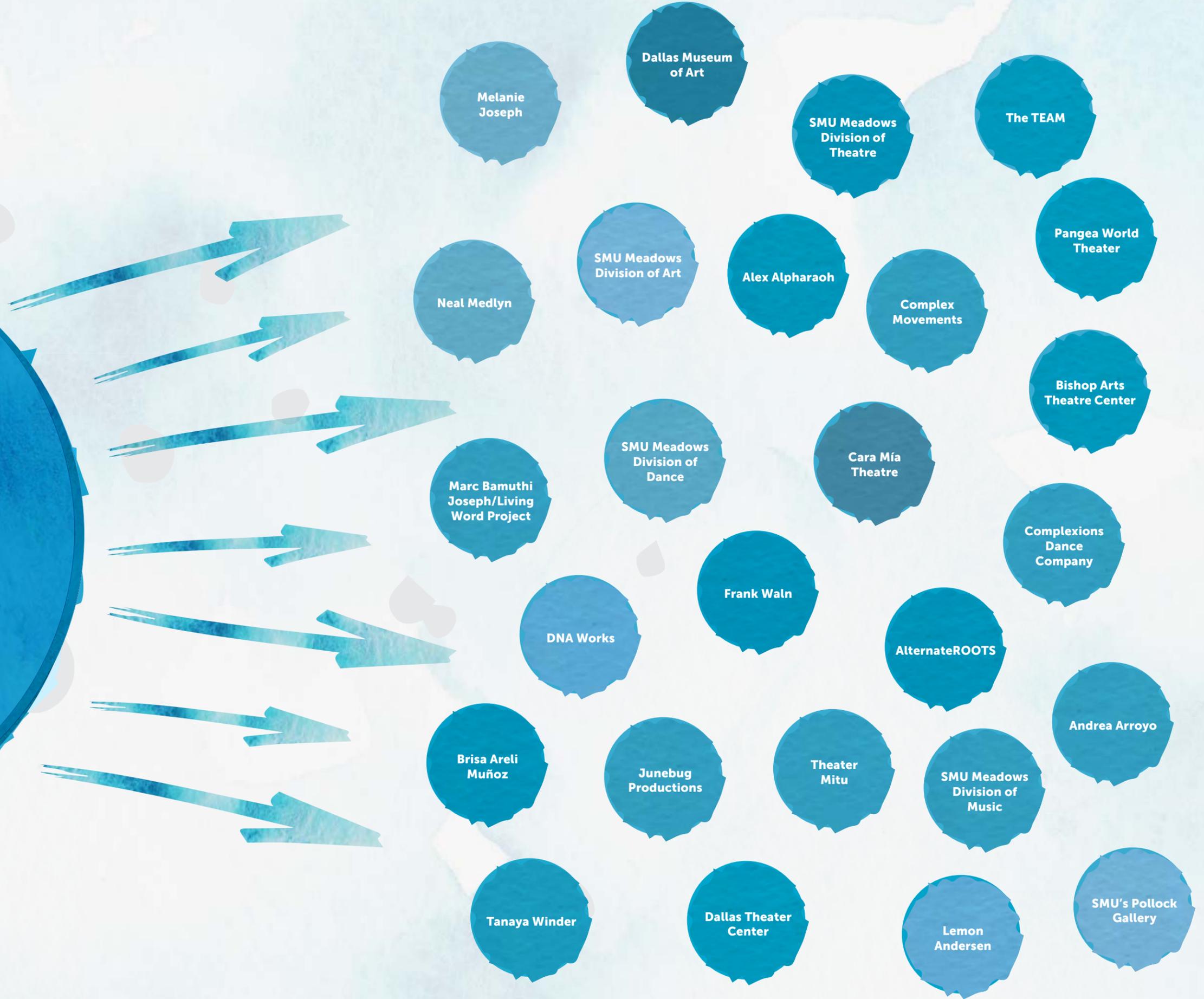
Latinx Theater Commons Regional Meeting



ACE HOUSE

The ACE House (Academic Community Engagement) was built in the early 1990s thru SMU Perkins School of Theology and was the result of an informal initiative driven by a handful of students, principally alumnus Chris Lake.

The 4-bedroom, 2-bath home is located in the Lower Greenville neighborhood in East Dallas. It now serves as a long-term housing alternative for SMU Meadows visiting artists and scholars and local arts groups. It provides a neighborhood experience for folks who are new to Dallas. The ACE House is another example of how Ignite/Arts Dallas has added value to our ecosystem on a practical level through the repurposing of this University-owned residential space.





PROGRAM TIMELINE AND HIGHLIGHTS

TIMELINE & HIGHLIGHTS 2015-2020

Each year, with support from SMU, we design dozens of programs while encouraging individuals and organizations to build meaningful and often new connections. The relationships forged through the auspices of I/AD have resulted in several lauded collaborations. One such partnership was co-producing with Dallas Theater Center and Public Works Dallas a participatory theater experience benefiting members of the city's most diverse neighborhoods. The process formed a core 200-person ensemble of SMU students, Public Works Dallas Fellows, professional actors, community members, and local arts groups. Together, we created a captivating performance of a Shakespeare play enjoyed, and collectively understood, by the masses through musical theater adaptations.

Other notable collaborations included Playwrights in the Newsroom by Janielle Kastner and Brigham Mosley (2020 AT&T PAC Elevator Project) and Community Innovation Lab (CIL), which centered an artistic, ensemble-driven process to build new networks and solutions towards Dallas food security issues. CIL partners included Big Thought, the Embrey Family Foundation, SMU's Hunt Institute for Engineering and Humanity, and Make Art with Purpose, in addition to 40 community leaders across art, education, health care, and urban agriculture.



PHOTO: PUBLIC WORKS DALLAS BY KIM LEESON

In 2018, we produced a film workshop with Bachman Lake Together and members of their parent-led Community Action Network. The resulting film, *Detrás de la Realidad*, became an official selection of KERA's 2019 Frame of Mind. Every two years, we award the Meadows Prize to pioneering creatives with the potential to create lasting change. Winners have included San Francisco-based arts investor CultureBank, director Lear deBessonnet, and Detroit-based artist collective Complex Movements.

The pages that follow represent the breadth and diversity of the work that we have supported over the last five years on a linear timeline. These are all manifestations from connections in our Relationships Map, outlining over time how each of us gather around an artistic or creative endeavor, driven by a sense of purpose, collaborating towards a common goal, making and supporting art and creatively-centered experiences in order to enhance learning, understanding, and new possibilities for Dallas and beyond.



The Clothesline Muse

Performance | April 2015

This multidisciplinary work examined the role of the clothesline in American culture. Through music, dance, and visual art, the project honored the traditions that have emerged out of the act of washing and hanging clothes.



PHOTO: LATINX THEATRE COMMONS

Latinx Theatre Commons (LTC)

Performance | October 2015

This self-organized collective adopted a commons-based approach to advocate for Latina/o theatre as a vital, significant presence in the New American Theatre. The Steering Committee of the LTC was in Dallas for the 2015 LTC Texas Regional Convening.

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS RESIDENCY WITH LEMON ANDERSEN

Performance
July 2015

HELEN SUZMAN: FIGHTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Gallery Exhibition
January 2015

SLIDELUCK

Interdisciplinary
April 2015

A SNAKE GIVES BIRTH TO A SNAKE

Film
April 2015



Complex Movements' Beware of the Dandelions

Interdisciplinary
November 2015

This interactive workshop discussed the connections between science and social movements. Particular focus was given to Detroit-based community organizing efforts and how they may be applicable to other communities.

Creative Capital Professional Development Program

Professional Development Workshop
March 2016

Developed for artists by artists, this workshop helped artists better organize their careers and provided the tools necessary to achieve their own definition of success.

2015

2016



PHOTO: CLYDE VALENTÍN

Food Justice: At the Intersection of Food, Politics, Poverty, and Public Health

Demonstration/Lecture | April 2016

How can we provide healthy food choices for all, regardless of income, geography, or race? In Bryant Terry's interactive presentation, he demonstrated how the food we eat directly affects issues such as poverty, sustainability, and structural racism.

● **LEARNING BY DOING WITH FRANK WALN**
Music
September 2016



Alternate ROOTS

Interdisciplinary | October 2016

ROOTS weekend Dallas was the fourth of six regional gatherings that Alternate ROOTS convened throughout the South from 2015 to 2017. Through the theme of Creating Vibrant Communities, ROOTS Weekend-Dallas gathered artists and activists from throughout Texas whose work cultivates health, safety, and sustainability in and with their communities.



DJ Spooky

Music, Film, Art | October 2016

"Trip-hop" musician DJ Spooky used his 21st-century DJ techniques to remix the classic 1915 film *Birth of a Nation*, upending every aspect of the controversial and racist film. The result is a new cinematic statement that propels the audience into a modern sociopolitical landscape that has evolved beyond all expectations. SMU Meadows' SYZGY new music ensemble performed the live original score, playing a blend of blues, jazz, and gospel.



PHOTO: NEW CITIES, FUTURE RUINS PHOTO BY DAVID LEESON

New Cities, Future Ruins

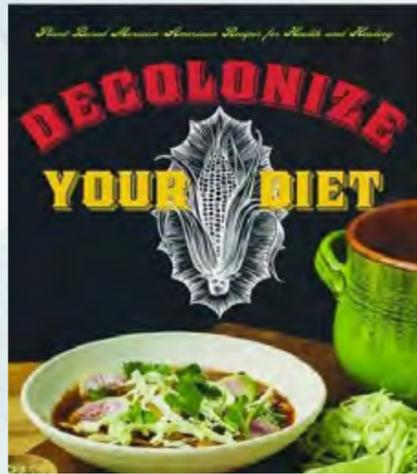
Convening | November 2016

New Cities, Future Ruins, winner of the Meadows Prize in 2016, was a curatorial initiative inviting artists, designers, and thinkers to reimagine the extreme urbanism of the Western Sun Belt.

● **JUÁREZ BY THEATER MITU**
Performance
October 2016

● **FLOR DE TIERRA - HOMAGE TO THE WOMEN OF JUÁREZ II**
Visual Art
October 2016

2016



Decolonize Your Diet

Demonstration/Lecture
March 2017

Life partners Luz Calvo and Catriona Rueda Esquibel undertook extensive research to find the healthiest way to eat when Luz was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2006. As a result of their research, they promoted a diet that is rich in plants indigenous to the Americas such as corn, beans, squash, greens, herbs, and seeds. They argued against the false belief that Mexican food is inherently unhealthy, reclaimed the wisdom of the abuelas, and taught their readers to prepare life-affirming, delicious Mexican meals from scratch.



PHOTO: PUBLIC WORKS DALLAS THE TEMPEST BY KIM LEESON

Public Works Dallas

Performance | March 2017

This musical theater production of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* was a community-participation project conceived by Lear deBessonnet and directed by Kevin Moriarty, with book, music, and lyrics by Todd Almond.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF JUNEBUG PRODUCTIONS



PHOTO: MAOF BY AMARA ABDAL FIGUEROA

RESPOND: Puerto Rico

Interdisciplinary | November 2017

With an information desk, video, and projector, Puerto Rican artist collective MAOF shared about their work post-Hurricane Maria to reestablish ecological balance by utilizing fallen trees. Members of MAOF salvaged discarded tropical trees and other biological goods to design and create art projects, with a focus on fostering a local woodworking culture that is both sustainable and economically feasible.

Gomela/To Return: Movement of Our Mother Tongue

Performance | April 2017

Gomela was developed and produced by Junebug Productions in New Orleans under the direction of Stephanie McKee. This interdisciplinary performance toured nationally with support from the National Performance Network and NEFA's National Theater Project.

DEFERRED ACTION

Performance
September 2017

2017



PHOTO: CLYDE VALENTÍN

Community Innovation Lab

Convening | February 2018

This partnership addressed the complex question: "How can we work collectively to ensure access to healthy food and nourishment for and with all citizens of Dallas, using arts, creativity, and food itself as catalysts?"

CultureBank

Interdisciplinary | May 2018

Recipient of the Meadows Prize in 2018, this San Francisco-based initiative established a new investment model in Dallas to provide support for artistic enterprises that help the community.

FREEDOM MAPS
Publication
April 2018

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS
Visual, performing, and digital arts
June 2018

CHAMBERWORKS YOUTH ORCHESTRA
Music
July 2018



Pancho Villa From a Safe Distance

Music | May 2018

Co-commissioned and premiered in 2016 by the nonprofit cultural arts foundation Ballroom Marfa and the Fusebox Festival in Austin, this project explored the life and lore of Pancho Villa, the enigmatic general, legendary bandit, and hero of the Mexican Revolution. It was the third installment of *The Marfa Triptych*, a trilogy of musical performances by visionary composer Graham Reynolds, which was inspired by his interest in the intermingled populations of the Texas-Mexico border regions.



WET: A DACAmented Journey

Performance | September 2018

This acclaimed one-man show was written and performed by California playwright Alex Alphaaraoh. Originally developed as part of the True Story Program at Ensemble Theatre/Los Angeles, it was based on Alphaaraoh's struggles as a recipient of DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) to become a permanent U.S. resident.

2018



PHOTO: KIM LEESON



Detrás de la Realidad

Film | September 2019

In the spring of 2018, Ignite/Arts Dallas produced a film workshop with Bachman Lake Together's Community Action Network. The resulting film, *Detrás de la Realidad*, became an official selection of KERA's 2019 Frame of Mind.



Constellations Convening

Convening | January 2020

The Center for Cultural Power worked with partners across the nation to produce a national convening centering the role of artists in narrative change across sectors (film, writing, strategic communications, arts). The convening brought together leading organizations, thinkers, and practitioners engaged in the building of cultural and narrative equity, power, and justice.

What Makes a Citizen?

Convening | October 2018

Since the early 1980s, the Dallas Institute has conducted conferences aimed at answering the question "What Makes a City?" The result has been a rich tapestry of urban wisdom. Beginning in 2018, they altered the question to make it focus on the common denominator of the city, state, and republic: "What Makes a Citizen?" This first annual program took an innovative approach to the question, blending genres and weaving together constitutional law, live DJ music scoring, theater, and spoken word poetry.



PHOTO: DAVID LEESON

Playwrights in the Newsroom

Performance | March 2020

This immersive theatrical experience was created by two playwrights, Janielle Kastner and Brigham Mosley, who spent hundreds of hours shadowing and interviewing journalist at *The Dallas Morning News*.

2018

2019

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

Visual, performing, and digital arts
June 2019

CHAMBERWORKS YOUTH ORCHESTRA

Music
July 2019

THE ART OF RESILIENCE

Convening
September 2019

APOLLO DOCUMENTARY

Film
November 2019

ARTS, CULTURE AND COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

Convening
February 2020

2020

IMPACTS & FINANCIALS

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Strong, healthy communities need strong, healthy cultural institutions to play the role of convener, facilitator, and presenter, and be a midwife to birth the dreams of their community. This is one of the major gaps in the philanthropic landscape that must be filled if we are to uplift cultural equity as a field-wide value.

//

Carlton Turner

THERE ARE MYRIAD WAYS TO CREATE VALUE, PROVIDE SERVICES, DEVELOP CONNECTIONS, AND COVER EXPENSES FOR ARTISTS AND IN SUPPORT OF COMMUNITY. HERE ARE A FEW EXAMPLES:

Over
\$200,000
in savings
against hotel and
accommodation
expenses through
the ACE House
asset.

Dozens of new
connections and
opportunities
for students,
alumni, local
artists, and arts
organizations.

Over the past five years,
we have been able to pay

\$475,950
directly to more than
1,140 artists.

Over
\$1.5 million
in leveraged support dollars
through collaborations.

This is in addition to covering the costs of production and various logistical expenses such as lodging and travel. This statistic more than any other represents the tangible, powerful shift towards cultural equity that we are furthering in the city of Dallas.

5-YEAR BUDGET

	FY16 2015-2016	FY17 2016-2017	FY18 2017-2018	FY19 2018-2019	FY20 2019-2020
INCOME					
SMU Meadows	258,896	240,589	7,625	110,407	110,700
Meadows Prize	130,000	130,000	159,462	130,000	142,000
Grants & Gifts	135,000	25,000	190,000	142,000	380,275
Earned Income	-	17,221	35,000	2,250	14,450
Other	-	-	10,910	10,000	-
TOTAL INCOME	523,896	412,810	402,997	394,657	647,425
EXPENSES					
Salaries & Fringe	85,000	181,421	201,141	225,412	289,112
Professional Fees	235,000	212,852	103,653	138,158	236,696
Travel & Accommodations	50,000	54,131	56,072	26,697	77,497
Space Rental/Utilities	23,157	1,000	3,000	3,000	21,648
Equipment Rental/Supplies	6,729	14,774	10,090	7,902	9,564
Advertising/Marketing	15,000	33,762	5,525	14,500	33,817
Other Expenses	436	976	4,938	2,515	1,531
TOTAL EXPENSES	415,322	498,916	384,419	418,184	669,865
SURPLUS/DEFICIT	108,574	(86,106)	18,578	(23,527)	(22,440)

Budget Notes:

Operational Expenses such as Office Rent & Utilities are not included, but covered by SMU Meadows School of the Arts.
 FY20 Grants and Gifts increase includes one new funding source.

//
 The Dallas cohort shed light on multiple city-to-city correlations...created points of entry for community members to become involved in their local organizing work.

//
 Complex Movements

CONTRIBUTORS

OUR STORY IS NOT THAT OF AN ORGANIZATION, BUT ORGANIZING. OUR IMPACT IS FELT MORE IN WHAT WE'VE ENABLED THAN WHAT WE'VE CREATED. PLANTED IN THE FERTILE CREATIVE SOIL OF THE SOUTH, WE SET OUR ROOTS AMONG THE MYRIAD ENDEAVORS AND DREAMS WE'RE STRUGGLING TO GROW.



KASSY AMOI

Kassy Amoi, 26, is an actor, writer, and artist, focused on bridging the gaps of understanding about what it takes to be an artist. A Houston native by way of Ivory Coast, Africa, Kassy is passionately devoted to the craft of acting and storytelling, and how it encourages empathy.



JEFF CHANG

Jeff Chang serves as the vice president of Narrative, Arts, and Culture at Race Forward. He co-founded CultureStr/ke and ColorLines and was formerly the executive director of the Institute for Diversity in the Arts at Stanford University. Jeff has written extensively on culture, politics, the arts, and music.



COMPLEX MOVEMENTS

Complex Movements is a Detroit-based artist collective supporting the transformation of communities by exploring the connections of complex science and social justice movements through multimedia, interactive performance work.



VICKI MEEK

Vicki Meek, a native of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, is a nationally recognized artist who has exhibited widely. She boasts a 40-plus-year career as an arts administrator, working as a state and local arts agency senior administrator as well as executive director of a nonprofit visual arts institution.



DARRYL RATCLIFF

Darryl Ratcliff is an award-winning artist and poet with a writing and curatorial practice based in Dallas whose work engages communities and mobilizes social issues. Darryl is the cofounder of Ash Studios, Creating Our Future, and Michelada Think Tank.



LAUREN EMBREY

Lauren Embrey is president and philanthropic visionary of the Embrey Family Foundation and CEO of Embrey Interests, Ltd. in Dallas. Lauren's passions are theater, dance, film, and human rights work.



KAYLYN BUCKLEY

Kaylyn is an arts professional with experience in film and theatre producing, directing, stage management, company management, production management, and arts research. Currently, she is a New York City-based producer.



DAVID LOZANO

David Lozano serves as the executive artistic director of Cara Mía Theatre and specializes in writing, directing, and producing original bilingual plays for the Latinx community in North Texas.



CARLTON TURNER

Carlton Turner is an artist, agriculturalist, researcher, and founder of the Mississippi Center for Cultural Production (Sipp Culture). Sipp Culture uses food and story to support rural community, cultural, and economic development in rural Mississippi.



QUITA SULLIVAN

Quita Sullivan is senior program director for theater at New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA) where she leads the National Theater Project, supporting the creation and touring of devised, ensemble-based theater.

I/AD TEAM



CLYDE VALENTÍN

DIRECTOR



SOFIA BASTIDAS

MEADOWS CURATORIAL FELLOW & POLLOCK GALLERY DIRECTOR



LIZ RILEY

ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR



LIZ SANKARSINGH

PROGRAM MANAGER

//
**If you truly want to believe in justice, become intimate with hope.
Know it lives in third space. Know it needs art to cope.**
//

Edyka Chilomé



PHOTO: SEMILLITAS LITERACY EVENT BY KIM LEESON



PHOTO: PUBLIC WORKS DALLAS WORKSHOP BY KIM LEESON



PHOTO: PUBLIC WORKS DALLAS WORKSHOP BY KIM LEESON



DETRÁS DE CAMERA WITH PROF. AMBER BEMAK. PHOTO BY KIM LEESON



PHOTO: RECIPE OC BY KIM LEESON

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Among these supporters are The Meadows Foundation, Embrey Family Foundation, Communities Foundation of Texas, New England Foundation for the Arts, The George and Fay Young Foundation, PEN America, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and individual supporters.

The network runs far, wide, and deep and we would be remiss to not recognize, even if not by name, those who have played a crucial role in advancing the work and growth of I/AD. To those of you who have touched our lives and made us strive to do and be better, please accept our deepest gratitude.

Special thanks to the faculty, staff, and students at SMU Meadows School of the Arts, the Brass Tacks Collective team, and the residents of Dallas.

This report was designed by Brass Tacks Collective, a local creative agency serving clients in Dallas and beyond. In addition to being a minority and woman-owned business, Brass Tacks provides a unique, one-year, paid apprenticeship for aspiring creatives. A core team of industry professionals oversees all projects, giving valuable experiences to apprentices while producing beautiful, high-quality work.





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