

**THE FUTURE IS
BEAUTIFUL WHEN WE
CREATE IT TOGETHER.**

LAND BACK
HEALTHCARE
QUEER LIBERATION
SOLIDARITY
EDUCATION
ABUNDANCE
REGENERATION
INTERDEPENDENCE
COMMUNITY CARE



Kayla Kosaki

THE POWER OF CULTURE TO CREATE A MORE JUST & EQUITABLE WORLD

2023 End-of-Year Report



THE CENTER FOR
**CULTURAL
POWER**

CULTURE IS POWER.

Art moves us. Artists shape our imagination and make the impossible tangible. To borrow from artist and scholar Toni Cade Bambara, they **make the revolution irresistible**. That's why The Center for Cultural Power organizes BIPOC Artist Disruptors, Culture Bearers, and movement partners to tap into **their superpowers**, leading us from a world of domination and extraction toward a world of justice and collaboration. Thank you for creating with us!

This time of destruction, violence and chaos is also one of **radical hope** that comes from holding imagination, care, connection and action together. Amidst economic and climate chaos, divisive politics, and sweeping legislation that erodes bodily autonomy, we are doubling down on the power of artistic and cultural practices to uplift stories of hope. **Our intersectional stories shift culture towards collectivity, care and community.**

As multiple, interrelated crises unfold, we have found that **building narratives of joy, hope and urgency, and creating communities of practice—especially ones that encourage exploration, risk taking, and surfacing the expertise of all of the folks in a room—are powerful ways to advance narrative change** in moments of fear, isolation and grief.



KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2023



We built the power of more than **1K artists**, and moved millions into the arts and culture sector through trainings, events, fellowships and awards.



In 2023 **Constellations** Culture Change Fund & Initiative, housed at Cultural Power, **regranted over \$7M** to BIPOC Artist Disruptors, Culture Bearers, and movement partners to build power, nourish an ecosystem and grow mindsets for positive social change.



As part of our **Borders Futures** project, the New Mexico Immigrant Law Center **collaborated with artists to help pass legislation** protecting undocumented youth, with the lead organizer saying they could not have succeeded without artists.



Launched an 18 month fellowship that **provided artists with a monthly salary and health benefits**, as well as regrants and participatory awards through our multimillion-dollar [Constellations Culture Change Fund & Initiative](#).



Published three field-wide reports: [Building Narratives of Joy: Experimenting with Transformational Narratives](#), [The Border Futures Narrative Project](#), and the [Gender Justice Report](#). **Our findings were shared on national and international stages** and explored how we create art and stories from core narratives, build power, move audiences, and ramp up civic engagement.





Polled an audience of 9K to test artistic assets and stories in randomized control trials.



Amplified thought leadership through appearances at film festivals, AfroTech, CareFest, Sundance, and NYC Climate Week and **reached an audience of 18M** through digital platforms.



Featured in Vogue, Philanthropy News Digest, Chronicle of Philanthropy, Stanford Social Innovation Review, Green Matters, GIA, Panorama Global, and Movement For Black Lives’ “The Tea”.



Forbes, Philanthropy News Digest, Refinery29, and Vogue

In 2023 we faced major headwinds. We lived through economic chaos, divisive politics, and laws that stole educational opportunities and our right to control our bodies. Added to that—ecocide and genocide.

Our artists and movement partners answered with aligned narratives that reached millions and inspired action. **We nourished an ecosystem and a mindset for positive social change in both artists and audiences.** By building power and harnessing it through campaigns, we achieved positive results including a policy win in New Mexico, and national recognition.

Our lens remains intersectional. Art and stories about climate chaos, for example, show how it disproportionately impacts communities by race, class, and gender. They creatively convey complexity and connectedness of the challenges AND how **we are all interconnected.** We are honored to be in relation with changemakers whose aim is to replace harmful narratives of extraction and white supremacy **with stories of justice and care.**

We continue to capture the magic through our in-house research team so that **we honor the labor of artists and organizers and share lessons with the field.**



OUR PROGRAMS



ARTIST
LEADERSHIP



INTERSECTIONAL
STORYTELLING



FIELD
BUILDING

Across all three of our programs—**Artist Leadership**, **Intersectional Storytelling** and **Field Building**—our goal is to build the power of Artist Disruptors and Culture Bearers to create inspiring stories that move audiences, rooted in the wisdom of their communities. **We drive change** through:

- Participatory narrative research captured in **creative briefs**.
- A talented team of **BIPOC culture makers**.
- **Art and stories** that measurably persuade audiences.
- **Cohorts and workshops** that measurably build power of BIPOC creatives and organizers.
- Place-based **events that build cultural narratives**, cross-sector collaborations and coalitions, and actionable campaigns.

We savor being able to **commune and collaborate** in person and hold our togetherness with a gratitude that comes from having lost communal spaces in the pandemic, from not doing what comes naturally to organizers—gathering.



Noemi A. Gonzalez



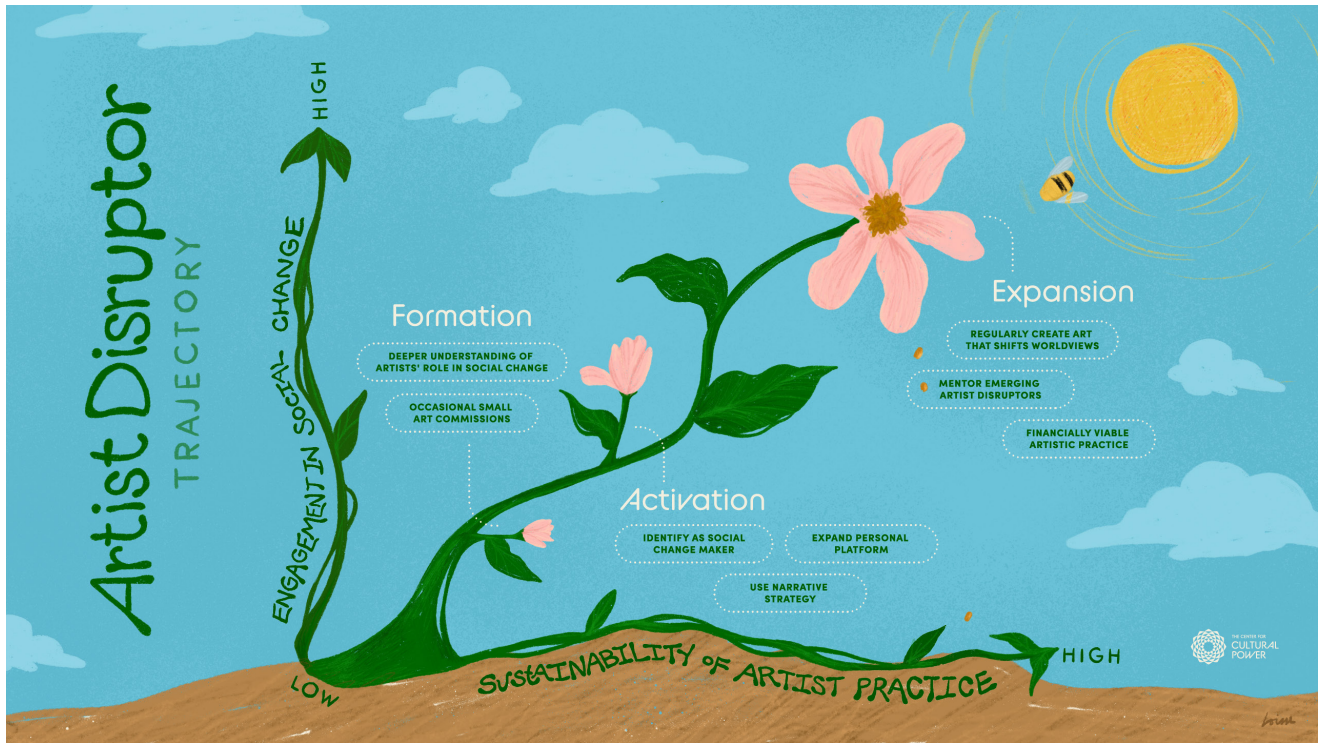


ARTIST LEADERSHIP

Builds the power of artists to bring their superpowers to accelerate social change.

Our culturally responsive workshops and cohorts build and resource the leadership of BIPOC Artist Disruptors and Culture Bearers.





A Model of Power Building

From its roots in **migrant storytelling** and **activism**, Cultural Power has grown a **model of power building** to boost narrative collaborations between BIPOC Artists Disruptors, Culture Bearers, and social justice movements. Participants and community and cultural organizers **build the knowledge and skills** necessary to become trainers themselves, thereby **sharing our power building model beyond our own networks**. Our national offerings have gained the notice and support of major funders, such as the Ford Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the California Endowment, and the Hewlett Foundation, among others.

- > Led more than **30 workshops** for more than **500 artists** and awarded close to **\$250K** in awards to participants.

11.29.23 **WORKSHOP** 2PM PST

HOW TO GET YOUR MESSAGE TO THE PEOPLE

RSVP

@LISAREVOLVING

WITH LISA BEASLEY

In this workshop, learn how to uplift your performance skills by adding strategies to optimize your digital footprint. It's bigger than "growing your audience" and "gaining impressions." Learn how to use tools to create real life change in the offline world.

THE CENTER FOR CULTURAL POWER

Chanel Tyson



- > With the support of the California Arts Council, moved **\$1.1M in awards** to 72 Artist Disruptors and Culture Bearers for projects advancing public health, water and energy conservation.
- > Presented impact findings report to funders and partners including data showing **positive audience responses to art and stories** from the three-year Ford Foundation project to preserve and grow stories showing the Border region on its own terms.
- > Measurably built **skills and a mindset** for financial sustainability through the **Creative Entrepreneur** series, dispelling the myth of the “starving artist”. 64 artists participated in four workshops, creating business plans, reflecting their individual goals that serve their art, vision and communities.

“(Artists) can build generational wealth and be empowered to see themselves as artists, as professionals and that they can be all that and an activist ALL IN ONE and not feel shame or guilt for wanting to live a life where their work is valued monetarily while being a part of a movement or doing social change work.”

-Creative Entrepreneur Artist

- > Our free **Artist Workshop** Series inspires and equips artists everywhere with **tools and practical applications** on topics ranging from entrepreneurship to research design and fighting for Gender Justice, reaching 370 audience members to date. Our attendees continually share positive feedback in post workshop surveys.

“I thought the workshop was amazing, and potentially one of the best workshops I have ever attended. The presenter was so knowledgeable, fun, and genuine.”

-Audience Member

- > Built intergenerational and youth power by **training youth artists and art activists** within the New York Metropolitan area in cultural and narrative strategy. We found that there is a need for artists and art activists to be in one physical space together.

“Thank you for bringing such inspired vision to this work. Please know that any time you’re on this side of the map, you can come through. Our door is always open!!! ”

-Austin Greene



The Disruptors Fellowship

Designed to disrupt Hollywood and provide breakthrough opportunities to shape culture and accelerate social change, the Fellowship builds the power of 10 **BIPOC screenwriters** annually who identify as **trans** and/or **non-binary**, **disabled**, **undocumented** and/or formerly undocumented **immigrants**.

- > Alumni **Fellows have joined writers rooms** at HBO, AppleTV, CW, and Hulu as well as other competitive industry fellowships such as CBS Leadership Pipeline Challenge, Disney Writing Program, and the National Hispanic Media Coalition.
- > Continued to **financially support BIPOC Fellows during the writers' strike** and invested in building a stronger relationship and connection with the Writers Guild of America.
- > Affiliation with **masterclass teachers and mentors**: Disney's *Diary of a Future President* and *Bunk'd*, Peacock's *The Amber Ruffin Show*, Netflix's *Q-Force*, *One Day At A Time*, *Up Here*, NBC's *The New Place* and *30 Rock*, ABC's *Station 19*, CBS' *CSI:NY*, Apple TV's *WeCrashed*, Hulu's *Kindred*, HBO's *Gossip Girl*, AMC's *Tales Of The Walking Dead*, Starz' *Vida*.
- > Welcomed The Disruptors with our first ever in-person **industry kick off** party and showcase in LA.



Loissee Ledres

- > Presented the Fellowship on the **Sundance** Film Festival stage and at **Outfest**.
- > Learned from Fellows that they are invested in **reaching wide audiences** to **topple dominant narratives** about their communities.
- > Fellows appreciate the **structure and support** for honing their craft, building professional skills, making connections to further their careers, and developing creative community with like-minded television writers.
- > Closed the 2023 Disruptors Fellowship series with an **in-person performance** of 10 min **writing samples** of The Disruptors at The Broadway Theater.





INTERSECTIONAL STORYTELLING

Through campaigns, we **activate artists and movement groups to create inspiring intersectional stories** on issues like migration, climate, and gender justice, and to uplift directly impacted communities. We found the power of intersectional stories inspire and move audiences.



Climate Justice

Our collective work supports communities who bear the brunt of climate change in telling stories on their terms, **amplifying narratives to unlock climate solutions**. This year, we grew collaborations with key partners and funders, amplified the presence of BIPOC stories and storytellers in influential spheres, and activated audiences.

- > Almost **\$120K resourced** to 27 artists for 43 commissions and engagements.
- > Convened and collaborated through **26 workshops and events**.
- > Screened the **Climate Woke** film *The Aunties: From the North Star to the Poplar*, a story of Black land stewards and Culture Bearers, at Patagonia stores, **BlackStar** Film Fest, **SF Queer** Film Fest, **The Bush** Films, and **OutSouth** Queer Film Fest. The film and our partnership with Black Girl Entertainment made the pages of Movement for Black Lives' *The Tea* and *Teen Vogue*.

- > Led a climate storytelling panel for the third year at the **Sundance** Film Festival and hosted a groundbreaking panel that **connected the dots** between abortion rights and climate change.



Danny Moloshok

- > Partnered with **Black Girl Environmentalist** for an online workshop on **collaborating with digital influencers**, attended by Southern Environmental Law Center, The Free Store Project, Climate Justice Alliance, Sustain The Culture, Earth Commons, Zero-waste & Fair-trade Advocate, Youth Climate Collaborative, Hip Hop Caucus, and Hollywood Climate Summit.



Beverly Price





Sonja John

> Dispatched a seven-person team to **NYC Climate Week**, engaging with global **Indigenous leaders** and **artist organizers** heavily impacted by climate catastrophe. Cultural Power commissioned an original mural by [Sonja John](#) and partnered on advocacy events with [Hip Hop Caucus](#), [If Not Us Then Who](#), [Yea Impact](#), and [Hoopbus](#).



Ana Gomulka

> Working within Indigenous communities and Culture Bearers, the **Indigenous Women and Queer Led Climate Solutions** campaign produced three music-based videos. Atlanta-based illustrator Angela Calvin created **Earth Month Rapid Response** using six images to honor the lives and legacies of **Black** and **Indigenous land** and **water protectors** from around the world.



Felicia Ghee



Angela Calvin



Gender Justice

This year, network artists and organizers made clear that **control of our bodies should not be up for debate**, much less fall under state and court control.

- > **4M+** reached with **Disrupting Cycles of Violence** Campaign, a series of 12 images on healing, prevention, and root cause solutions to domestic violence **amplified by micro-influencers**.
- > **Medication Abortion Rapid Response:** Commissioned a [rapid response illustration](#) by artist Caitlin Blunnie uplifting abortion pills, given Supreme Court rulings on mifepristone.



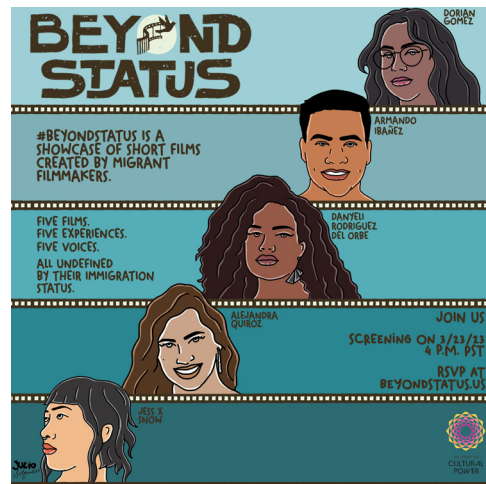
Ashley Lukashovsky

Migrant Storytelling

Deepening our work in social impact documentaries, [Beyond Status](#) is a showcase of short films created by **migrant filmmakers** unbound by their immigration status. This year's approach incorporated close curation and consultation with Cultural Power staff to grow in **confidence, artistry, imagination,** and **trust** in themselves as storytellers who know they are **worthy of being visible**.

- > Online festival reached **700+** online viewers, including viewing parties.
- > **97%** surveyed strongly agreed they would **want to see another showcase**.
- > Piqued interest in **curriculum integration** from universities.

- > **Screened a live event** with Movimiento de Arte y Cultura Latino Americana (MACLA) museum in San Jose with **80% of audience completing surveys**, 79% gave the showcase "5 stars."



Julio Salgado





Kayla Kosaki

Civic Engagement

> **Movement to the Ballot Box** 2023-24 campaign launched on election day, gearing up for next year’s election cycle in key states: **Georgia, Arizona, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Michigan,** and **Wisconsin.** With partners BLD PWR, AVOW Texas, First Friday Las Vegas and others, we published art and stories and will test for audience response by year’s end to **inform our 2024 commissions.** We aim to build on our learnings from our 2022 commissions where half of our

stories showed **measurable effects on audience persuasion,** putting them in the top tier of all advocacy content tested on Swayable.

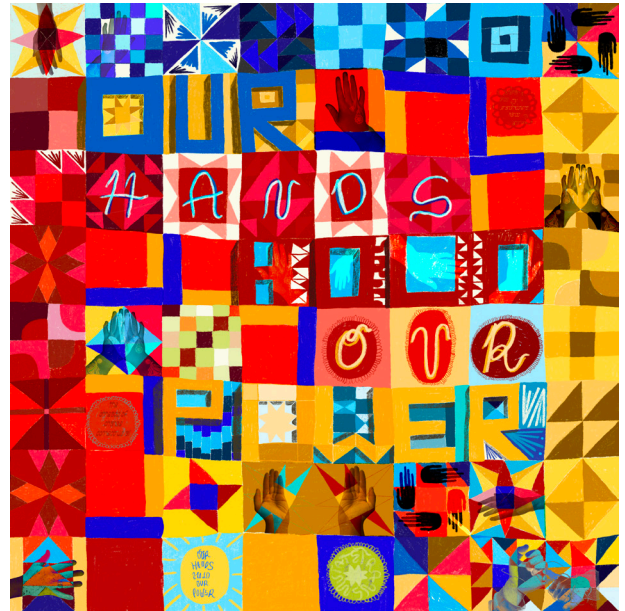
> **SCOTUS Rapid Response Commissions:** Cultural Power commissioned a series of satire cartoons by artist Julia Salgado in response to SCOTUS rulings on the **Voting Rights Act** in Alabama, **Affirmative Action,** and the **Indian Child Welfare Act.**



Other Place-Based Activation

> **Featured at CareFest** in LA in partnership with Caring Across Generations (CAG) with “When We Grow Older,” installation. Six original art commissions conveyed love and strength embodied in **caregiving** and the **beauty of aging** with grace and dignity. Initial surveys show overwhelming positive responses and **new and renewed partnerships**, including with Moms Rising.

> **Partnered with AfroTech**, the largest Black tech conference, to host a Mixed Media Mixer to showcase artwork from 19 artists, merging **civic engagement**, **cultural strategy** and **technology**



saylem celeste

at the 2023 convening in Austin, Texas. **450+ festival participants** attended the Mixer, with more than **80%** of survey respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that the art **increased their awareness** of the connection between art, tech and civic engagement. The mixer garnered stories from [Axios Austin](#), [The Griot](#) and Austin’s Fox7 affiliate.



CeCe Carpio



Lamar Metcalf





FIELD BUILDING

Constellations Culture Change Fund & Initiative is a network designed by BIPOC grassroots cultural practitioners from the ground up **to support an emerging cultural strategy ecosystem and advance a values-aligned, BIPOC-led approach to narrative strategy.**



The first priority in **trust-based resourcing** is to provide **unrestricted funds**.

In 2023 the focus of **Constellations Culture Change Fund & Initiative** was to recognize artistic and cultural labor, and to **organize and support** the thriving of over 135 **BIPOC network partners**.

Constellations built and implemented a **collaborative** and **participatory grantmaking** infrastructure and successfully **redistributed 7M+** to the BIPOC-led narrative and cultural strategy field in under-resourced communities across the country, including the Southern Border Region, the South, the Midwest, Non-continental United States, including Puerto Rico and Guam, and Indigenous Communities (Sovereign, Tribal, and Indigenous Nations and Territories).

- Provided **multi-year general operating support** re grants to 15 cultural strategy organizations.
- Supported a **full-time paid Fellowship with benefits** for 10 fellows and general operating support re grants to 10 fellow partner organizations.
- Awarded participatory awards to 30 Artist Disruptors and traditional and **tradition-based** Culture Bearers for their **cultural knowledge** and practice, language revitalization, intergenerational knowledge transmission, and artist disruption work.



Noemi A. Gonzalez

- Provided **Narrative Design** Lab awards to two cultural practitioners, as well as one **emergent** and two **mutual aid** awards to network partners in response to the increasingly devastating **effects of climate change**, and to **resource rebuilding efforts** in Maui and Guam.
- **Redistribution** was scaffolded by a deep and iterative **participatory** resourcing and decision-making approach that **centered** the **wisdom, connections**, and **expertise** of the Constellations network partners.
- Developed an **Evaluation Plan** in collaboration with **ORS Impact** that focuses on **research justice** and **data sovereignty** with collective sense-making and story collection. The plan included one-on-one courageous conversations with our narrative design lab partners to further understand our learnings, repair and reweave our programmatic intentions.



- > Amplified our learnings on the front page of [Panorama Global's](#) October 2023 report on the **transformative power of collaborative funds**.
- > Our **narrative power building** focus was featured in the June 2023 edition of [Grantmakers in the Arts Reader](#) and named by [JustFund](#) as a key funder that *“saves their applicants valuable time, gives their applicants access to additional funding opportunities, and centers equity and trust in their grantmaking process.”*
- > Supported fellows and grantee partner organizations with **new opportunities**, including **fellowships**, support with leadership **transitions**, and **holistic support**, including **counseling** sessions and **mentors** to assist in their **career development**.
- > Media hits in *The New York Times*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, and *El Paso Matters* to name a few (complete list [here](#)).
- > Organized **imaginative spaces** for learning, disruption, and connection, include a **Funder Learning Circle** in collaboration with the Kresge Foundation, our annual Pleiades Convening for the network, and six masterclasses to provide **key strategy** and **financial support**.
- > **Secured \$12.3M** (94%) of \$13M fundraising goal for Constellations 1.0 and are **seeking investments** for **Constellations 2.0** in 2024.

What we're hearing about our trust-based approach

[Constellations] is challenging the way that foundations operate by being thoughtful and intentional about the organizations they fund and work in collaboration with. It is a beautiful model that we are so proud to be a part of and learn from. The flexible funding is able to meet our organization where it's currently at. We are also learning about, and are inspired by, the approach that Constellations is taking with its grantees.

—Angie Reza Tures, [Femme Frontera](#)

[Constellations] has put trust at the forefront of their granting process. We feel understood, empowered and sovereign as we continue the work of our ancestors. We are able to be courageous, intuitive and grounded because we know that we are connected by our seas in our knowing that we have enough.

—Emma Broderick, [Pu'uhonua Society](#)



Thought Leadership

Cultural Power is a leading thinker and practitioner in evaluating **cultural** and **narrative strategy**. Members of our in-house **Learning & Impact** team contributed to The University of Southern California Norman Lear Center's narrative impact study and presented to the Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment Conference this year. We were invited to participate in a **field-wide narrative strategy research** convening organized by ORS Impact, and interviewed for a study on **Decolonizing Evaluation Methodologies** at the University of North Carolina Greensboro.

Since March, we have distributed our groundbreaking **Building Narratives of Joy** impact report through social media and a webinar with philanthropists, artists, movement leaders and narrative strategists. We also published a report and hosted a webinar on the **Border Futures** report. And, we are near completion of our fourth annual study of The Disruptors Fellowship.

We are **learning about ourselves** and how to be responsive. Walking the liberation talk means **aligning our own operations with our values**. We created 20 new policies, including Whistleblower protection, Data Governance, and an AI policy in our Development operations.


We revised our contracts to reflect intellectual property rights for artists, and continue offering our staff fellowships



to move them on their journey as Artist Disruptors. Operations staff share their practices with the field. They participated in Ford Foundation's BUILD for Growth and are quoted in **The Chronicle of Philanthropy**. To learn better ways to support Culture Bearers, we built Culture Tuning Sessions with ArtChangeUS.

Our Operations Team is the soil that nourishes all that we do, and we are grateful to the beautiful community the team has nurtured for our staff, and our Artists Disruptors, Culture Bearers, and movement partners **working together** to usher in the world **we imagine** and we all deserve.





**Thank you
for creating
with us**

Acton Family Giving

The American Council of Learned Societies

Blue Shield of California Foundation

The California Arts Council

The California Department of Public Health

The California Endowment

The California Wellness Foundation

The Compton Foundation

The David Rockefeller Fund

Quinn Delaney

Donors of Color Network

The Ford Foundation

General Service Foundation

The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation

Ken Grossinger

Groundswell Action Fund

The Hearthland Foundation

The Hive Fund for Climate & Gender Justice

The JPB Foundation

The Kenneth Rainin Foundation

The Kresge Foundation

The Libra Foundation

The MacArthur Foundation

Maghally Giving Fund

Mertz Gilmore Foundation

Mission Telecom

The Nathan Cummings Foundation

NBC Universal Launch

The Panta Rhea Foundation

The Pop Culture Collaborative

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

The San Francisco Foundation

The Surdna Foundation

The Tides Foundation

Unbound Philanthropy

The W. K. Kellogg Foundation

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

The Women's Foundation of California

Youth Organizing Culture Change Fund



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@TheCultureStrike/videos