

Building Irresistible Movements:

**Best Practices for
Organizations and
Visual Artists**

*by Kemi Alabi, Micah Bazant, Kate DeCiccio, Amir Khadar,
Diana Lugo-Martinez, Monica Trinidad and Kah Yangni
in partnership with Forward Together*



BY AMIR KHADAR WITH BLACK ALLIANCE FOR JUST IMMIGRATION AND FORWARD TOGETHER

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Title inspired by the words of Toni Cade Bambara: “As a culture worker who belongs to an oppressed people my job is to make revolution irresistible” from an interview with Kay Bonetti, 1982.

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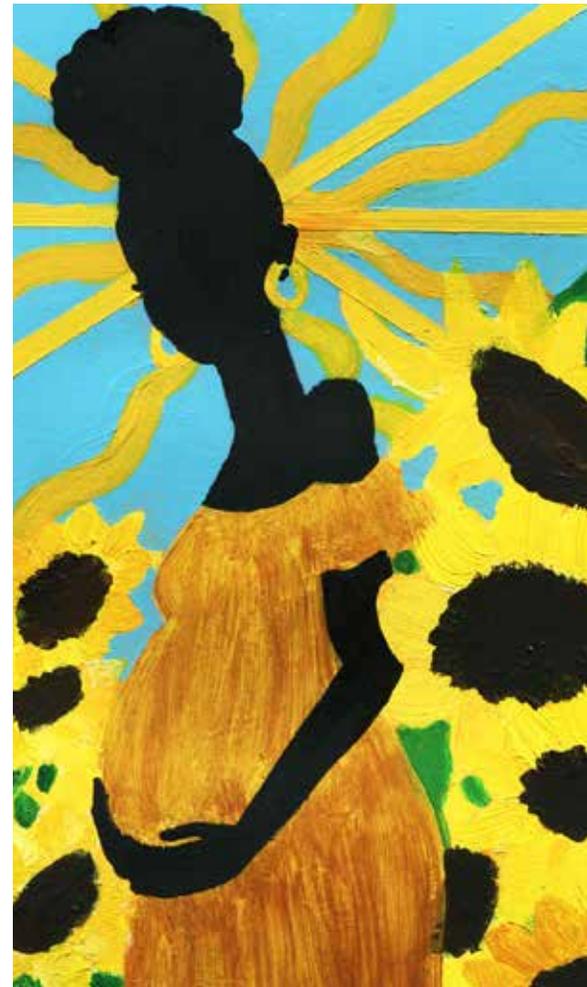
Art and culture have always been central to our freedom struggles.

We use art to keep each other alive, organize, live with joy and imagine freedom. Art has the power to make movements irresistible, understandable and possible.

But how can organizers and artists best work together to harness the power of culture and create a more just world? This guide offers specific practices for **values-aligned collaborations** and **strategic impact**.

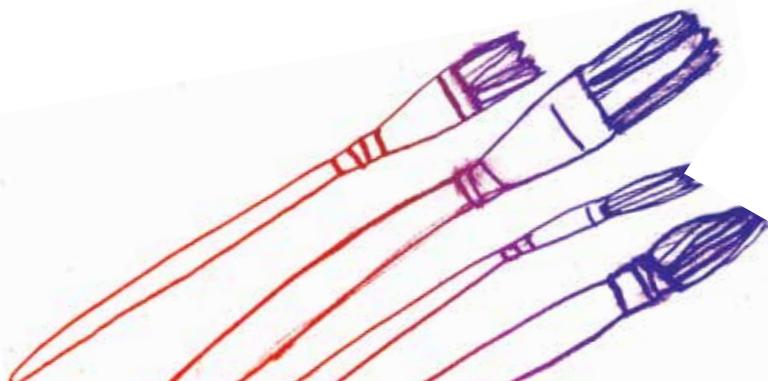
Ready to make magic?

1. **Wrestle** with key questions about ethical artist collaborations.
2. **Identify** your project goals and strategies.
3. **Budget** according to fair fee structures and practices that value artists' labor.
4. **Draft contracts** that protect artists' rights.
5. **Find collaborators** through ethical artist selection, avoiding contests and spec work.
6. **Facilitate a process** that taps into the magic of all involved.
7. **Share** the art where its needed in the world



BY JAMILLA OKOBU WITH FORWARD TOGETHER FOR MAMAS DAY 2018

**Short on time?
Review the
condensed
guide.**



Who is this guide by and for?

We are artists and organizers with decades of experience in liberation movements. **We know art is essential to our freedom struggles**, and we care about how our communities are represented. This document reflects our hopes and shared wisdom for successful cultural strategy interventions.

While primarily written for social justice nonprofits, we hope this document is also a useful tool for grassroots groups, artists and anyone engaged in

movement art collaborations. We hope what we have written keeps the essential and transformative work of movement art anchored in justice and repair while deepening the impact of your creations.

We know the liberation of labor, culture and the earth cannot be achieved through racial capitalism and its non-profit structures. We offer these practices as ways to reduce harm, increase sustainability and **move toward reciprocity as we build new economies and lifeways.**



BY ERNESTO YERENA WITH FORWARD TOGETHER FOR MAMAS DAY 2014

Key Questions

How can organizations ground in cultural strategy to make our movement work more powerful and effective? The Culture Group's *Making Waves* guide uses the following definition.

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

Additional tools like Power California's *Cultural Strategy: An Introduction and Primer* and Forward Together's *How to Reimagine the World* offer opportunities to deepen our understanding of the benefits and potential of having an explicit cultural strategy. We also invite practitioners — funders, founders, staff, and artists—to wrestle with the role of organizations in cultural strategy work. To spur your thinking, we offer the following question.

How can organizations play an effective role in these key areas?

- * repairing systemic harm through creative collaboration
- * building relationships of trust, accountability and reciprocity with marginalized artists and community partners
- * shifting exploitative working conditions and norms so the labor of movement artists is not only cherished, but viable and sustainable.

This is not an abstract question; we are working artists and organizers who wrestle, fail and learn through our practice. We invite you to actively imagine all the ways your organization can transform these dynamics as part of your lifelong commitment to cultural repair.





MOHAMMED FAYAZ WITH FORWARD TOGETHER FOR MAMAS DAY 2015

As we face surging white nationalism, fascism, climate collapse and the continued abandonment of communities deemed disposable, the possibilities of transformation through law and policy narrow. In these times, art, cultural organizing and mutual aid are crucial lifelines for our survival and resistance.

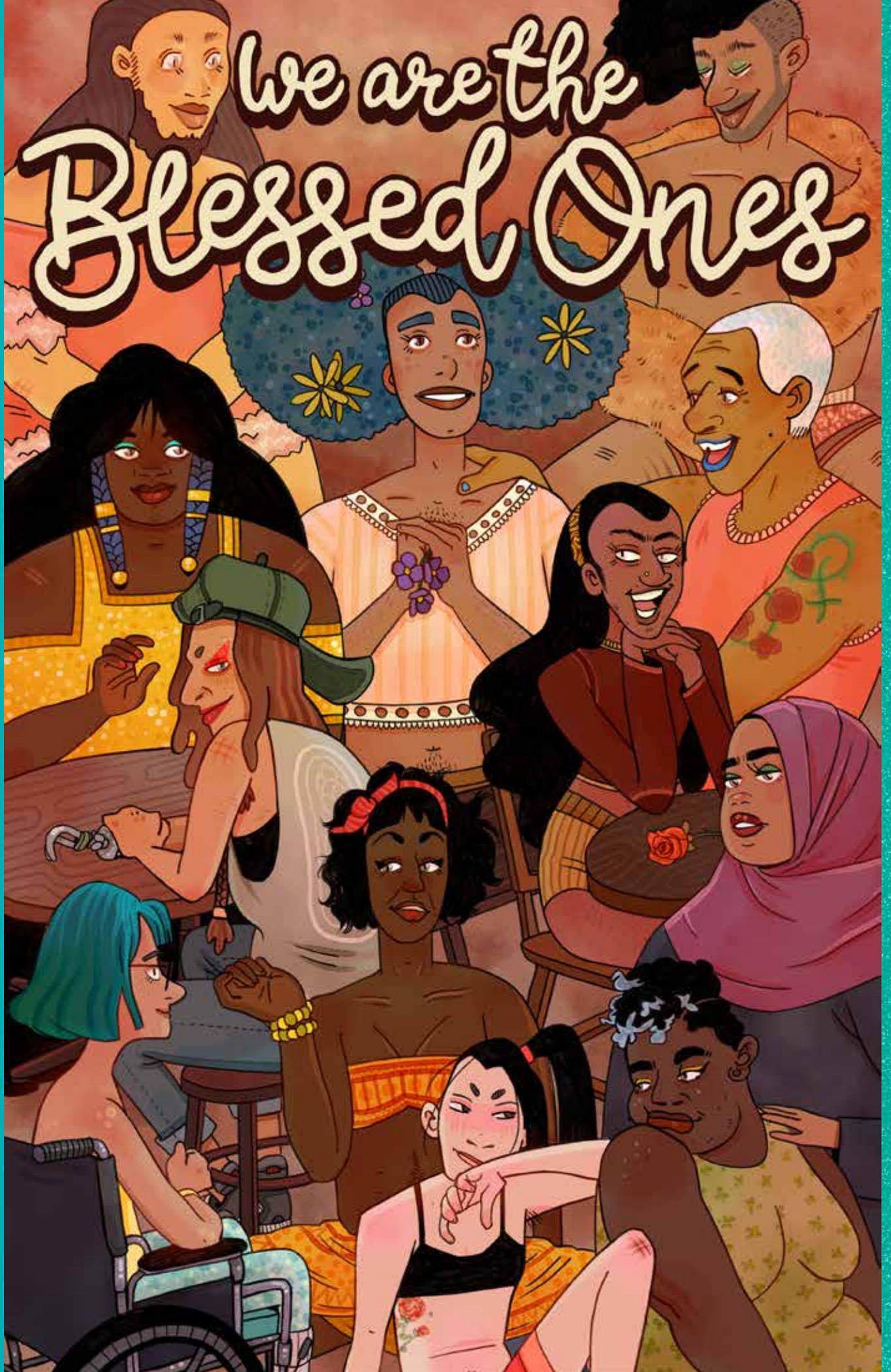
As movement artists, we've always known the gravity and impact of our work. We have been saved by each other's art and taught by generations of revolutionary artist ancestors. In recent years, more organizations and funders have begun to uplift, practice and invest in cultural strategy and cultural organizing. This has been transformative, but we need to go deeper. We need to transform our understanding about when and how we value art, then put those values into practice by engaging with artists differently.

The way organizations work with artists is often acutely exploitive and unsustainable, reflecting deeply held extractive, colonial worldviews. Erasure, exploitation, appropriation and fetishization of cultures has always been central to colonization. Today this is mirrored in the extractive ways organizations work with BIPOC artists, including low/no wages, exploitative contracts, and failure to credit artists.

The meaning of art is inextricable from its context: who made it, how, when and with who.

The power of movement art especially rests in the power of the people, relationships and histories that create it.

We are the Blessed Ones



BY ART TWINK WITH FORWARD TOGETHER FOR TRANS DAY OF RESILIENCE 2017

All art materializes out of particular historical conditions and relationships of power, that may not appear in the artwork, but are responsible for why it exists.

How can we transform not only the relationships of power depicted in the art, but the relationships of power that *bring it into existence?*

Goals and Strategies

Gaining clarity about your project purpose, outcomes and process is an essential step toward successful collaborations with strategic impact. At this phase, consider engaging and paying artists from the communities your cultural strategy is centering as consultants and advisors. Advising artists can play a critical role in collaboratively envisioning the potential role of art in your campaign and goal setting. This goals and strategies framework is based in artist [Kate DeCiccio's](#) work.

Before any artmaking begins, your team should answer the following questions.

1 What are the specific goals?

What specific changes are we trying to make in the world—in material conditions and narratives? Are you trying to free someone from prison? Grow your base? Distribute resources or curricula? Amplify a narrative of sex worker freedom and dignity? Specificity is your friend.

EXAMPLE: In 2015, Forward Together launched the Trans Day of Resilience (TDOR) art project, an annual love offering to trans people of color everywhere. The campaign had two goals:

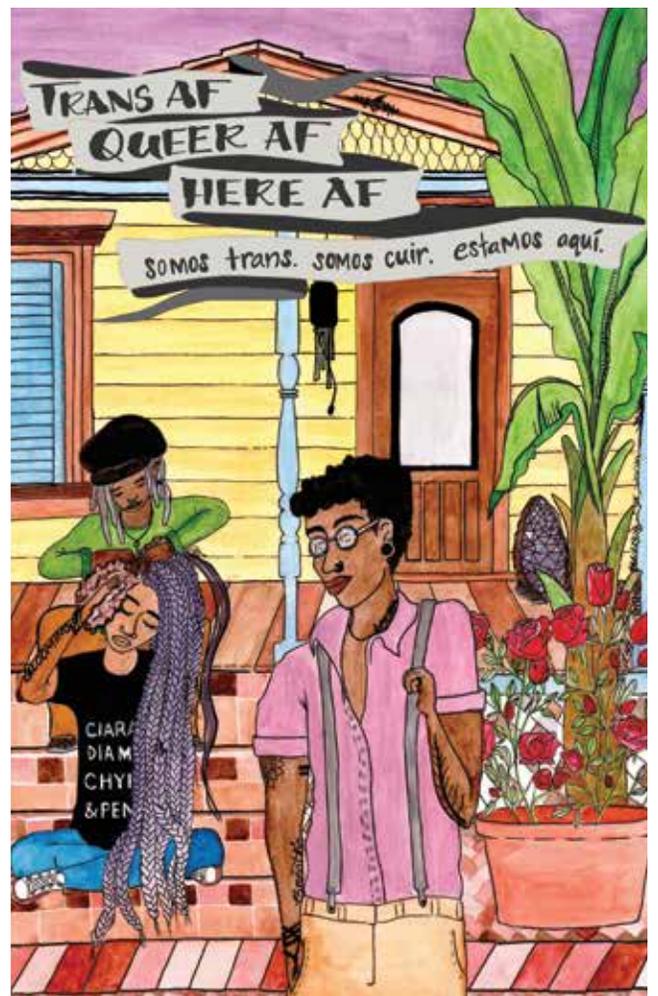
1. Support emerging BIPOC trans artists; and
2. Create and distribute art that changes narratives about trans communities and celebrates trans people of color while they are alive.

2 Who needs to tell the story?

The meaning and impact of art is shaped by the story of who made it and how. Who is most directly impacted by the issues at the heart of the campaign? Who needs to be part of creating the art? As the disability rights movement taught us, “Nothing about us without us.”

EXAMPLE: The TDOR art project nurtured networks of emerging BIPOC trans artists and poets.

BY ASIA-VINAE JAZZREAL PALMER WITH BREAKOUT! AND FORWARD TOGETHER FOR TRANS DAY OF RESILIENCE 2018





Who is the audience?

The art must reach specific groups of people to meet our goals. For example, reaching and influencing decision makers can make desired changes happen. Reaching unorganized folks in our own communities can build support for cultural strategy campaigns and shift culture, which can in turn also influence decision makers. And we can help sustain our own communities and survival by celebrating ourselves with art.

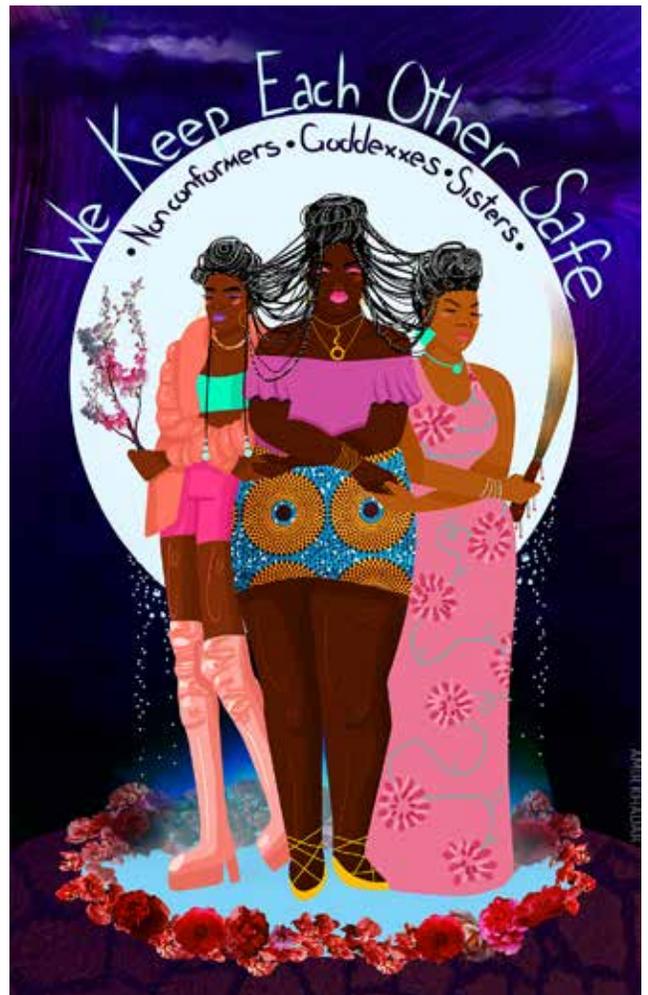
EXAMPLE: The TDOR art project focused on reaching BIPOC trans folks, especially youth and incarcerated folks.



Where and when are the most strategic points of dissemination?

How will you reach the audience? Where are the most impactful places for the art to live in the world? What current events, meaningful history, anniversaries or observances can we connect with to help fuel distribution and create meaning?

EXAMPLE: The TDOR art project coincided with two annual observances: Trans Day of Remembrance and Trans Day of Visibility. A targeted social media campaign, along with strategic influencer and organizational partnerships, helped the art and messaging go viral and reach the intended audience. By hosting the art and poetry on a dedicated website and making it freely available to download, thousands of schools, places of worship, clinics and families could access the art for their own use. The team printed select artwork, created a zine of poetry, assembled them into Trans Liberation Art Kits, and mailed those kits to hundreds of grassroots trans groups in collaboration with Trans Justice Funding Project and Borealis Philanthropy. The team also worked with TGI Justice Project to share the art with thousands of incarcerated trans folks through postcards and newsletters.



BY AMIR KHADAR WITH TGI JUSTICE PROJECT AND FORWARD TOGETHER FOR TRANS DAY OF RESILIENCE 2018

5

How can we move our audiences to action and increase impact?

How can we create continued impact by strategically repurposing the work?

EXAMPLE: In 2020, as attacks on trans and queer youth escalated, the TDOR art project collaborated with GSA Network to expand their national membership. There are thousands of LGBTQ+ student-run clubs in high schools and middle schools across the country, but many operate in isolation. The TDOR art project connected these groups to the GSA Network so they could receive organizing support, training and resources. After offering free posters to clubs that joined the GSA Network, membership doubled.

And because the TDOR art project equitably collaborated with partner organizations, grassroots trans groups co-owned the art, which meant these groups could continue to freely use the art in a number of surprising and impactful ways. For example, the artwork has been adapted for community altars, campaigns to combat anti-trans legislation and support recently freed community members.

6

How can we build relationships of repair, trust and reciprocity?

How can we grow and thrive together through every step of the process—from creative conception to collaboration and dissemination?

EXAMPLE: The TDOR art project worked with new artists who were often surviving anti-trans attacks, precarious housing, lack of healthcare and more—all while meeting creative deadlines and imagining free trans futures. In addition to supporting artists' autonomy and vision in the creative process, the project offered fair pay, fair contracts and promotion in national organizing and social media campaigns, always crediting, tagging and uplifting the artists.

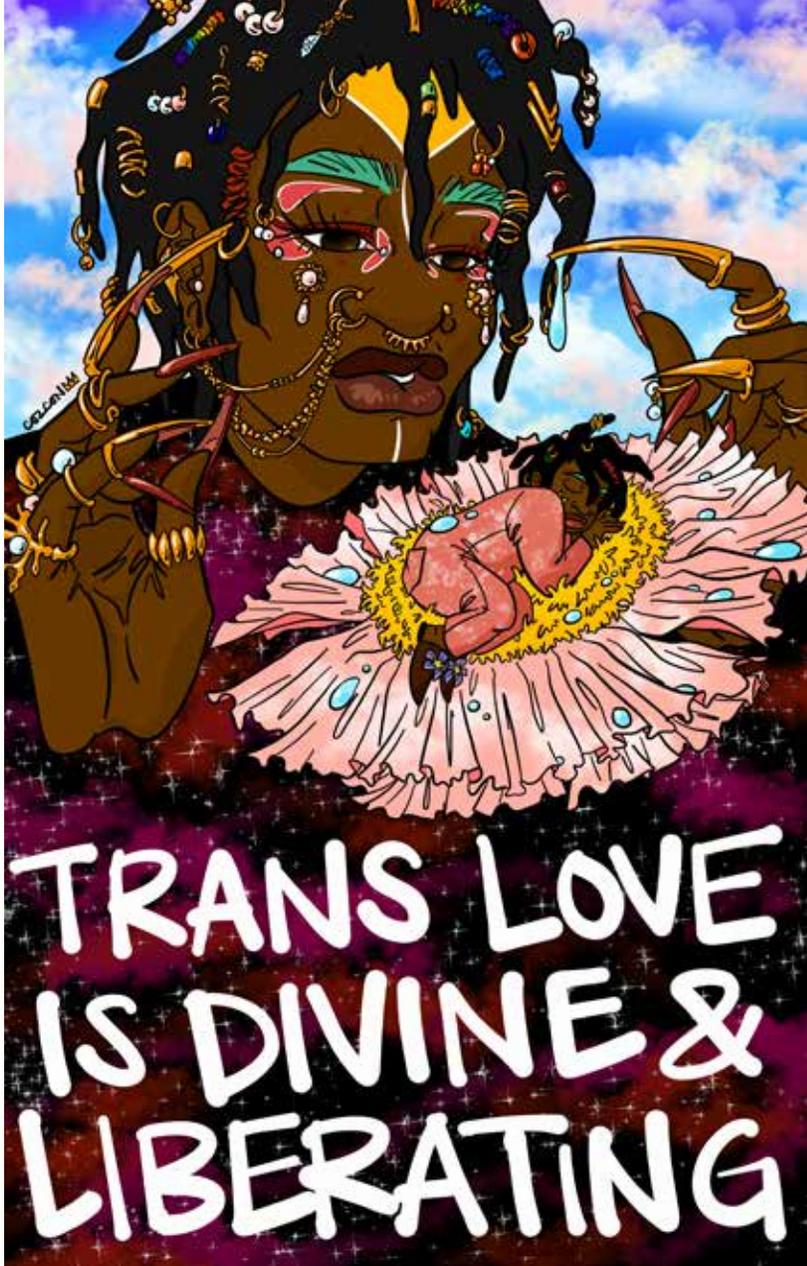
Intentional feedback loops with artists and collaborative partners meant the TDOR art project evolved each year. Whenever the project missed the mark, its organizers practiced accountability by trying to repair harm.

Finally, many of the artists and organizations often maintained relationships beyond the end of the project, sharing opportunities and offering continued support for their work and lives.

“How did you know art was what we needed?”

—a student in a high school GSA club who received the Trans Day Resilience art.





BY COZCON WITH FORWARD TOGETHER FOR TRANS DAY OF RESILIENCE 2022

*"Perhaps the biggest highlight was feeling **THE REACH!** I want my work to allow people to say what they might not have the words for and to see **SO MANY PEOPLE** speak their truth with my work was just more than I can touch right now. It gives me a tingle in my chest to think about."*

— Artist Cozcon, reflecting on being part of the Trans Day of Resilience art project

Fair Fee Structures and Practices

Understanding the Problem

The dominant extractive economy¹ devalues the labor of artists. In social justice movements, artists' work is often widely cherished and impactful, but severely underpaid and unsustainable. Reliance on volunteer and underpaid creative labor reinforces oppressive systems in which only the most privileged artists can afford to do this work. Many brilliant poor and working-class artists whose work is broadly beloved and utilized by our movements are forced out of professional artmaking. Constant financial uncertainty diminishes artists' ability to pour their full creative potential into the long-term skill building, visioning, and ambitious cultural projects our movements need. In the last year, the emergence of AI has created a new crisis of exploitation for all artists. In a statement, illustrator Molly Crabapple says: "A.I. art corporations are poised to destroy illustrators' livelihoods, and they're using illustrators' own stolen images to do it."²



BY FRANCIS MEAD AND FORWARD TOGETHER
FOR MAMAS DAY 2019

Toward Solutions

Social justice organizations can choose to value all labor more equitably—including artists' labor. If an organization centers cultural work in their mission, or if art is the centerpiece of a project, they should embody these values in the ways they work with artists. We call on organizations not to use AI-generated art and to pay artists a living wage in alignment with their social justice values.

For example, it is not unusual for organizations with multi-million dollar budgets to pay graphic and web designers, communications professionals, and other organizational consultants \$150 to \$250 per hour to support projects that nominally center art and cultural work; meanwhile, the actual artists are paid vastly lower rates, sometimes \$500 for a 30-hour commission (about \$16 per hour).

Especially when working with BIPOC, disabled, poor, and other marginalized artists, pay fair wages in alignment with other highly skilled consultant rates.

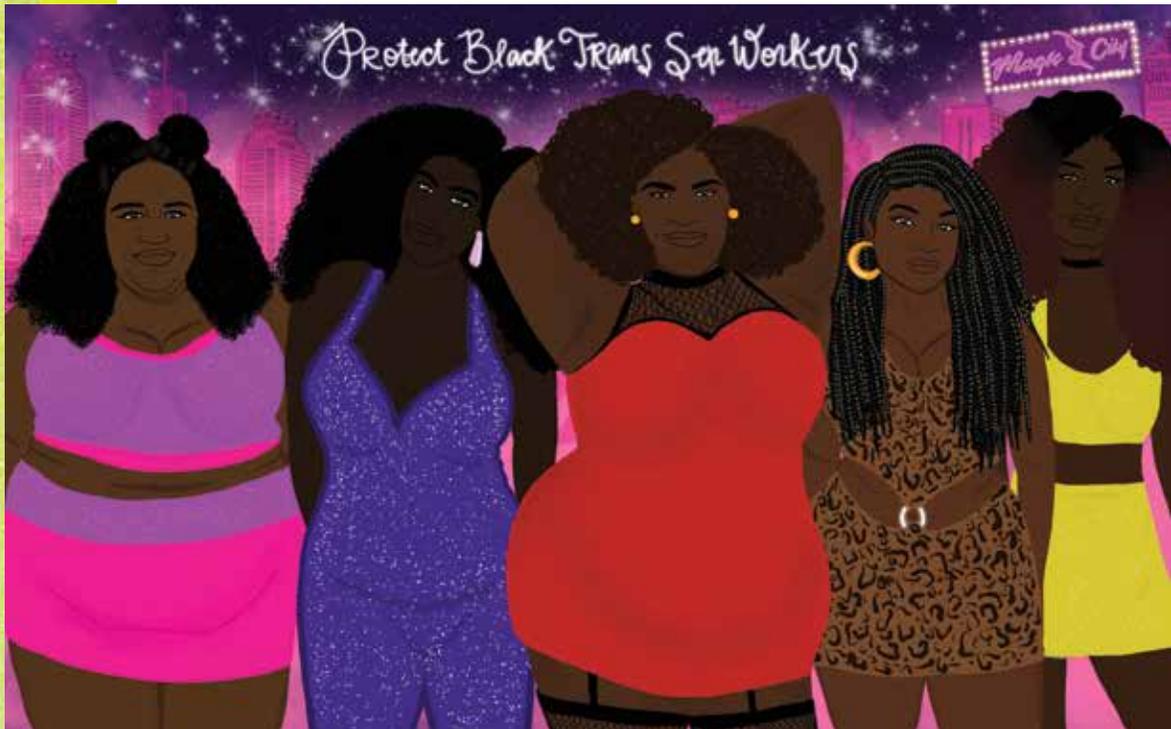
Furthermore, *consistent* living wages and salaried positions at social justice organizations enable us to create in ways that blossom with time, strengthen community relationships and deepen the impact of the work.

- 1 For more on the extractive economy see *From Banks and Tanks to Cooperation and Caring: A Strategic Framework for a Just Transition* by *Movement Generation*.
- 2 Jo Lawson-Tancred, "Molly Crabapple Has Posted an Open Letter by 1,000 Cultural Luminaries Urging Publishers to Restrict the Use of 'Vampirical' A.I.-Generated Images," May 3, 2023, <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/open-letter-urges-publishers-not-to-use-ai-generated-illustrations-2294392>

"This experience not only allowed me to be affirmed, paid ethically, and supported as Black trans artist, it set the bar for the type of care and radical collaboration I deserve in every commission thereafter. The ability to work with people who value you as an expert, pay your worth, and trust your creative vision around your lived experiences should always be the standard. I am forever grateful that this one opportunity became my standard."

— Artist Hunter Shackelford, reflecting on being part of the Trans Day of Resilience art project

BY HUNTER SHACKELFORD WITH SOLUTIONS NOT PUNISHMENT COLLABORATIVE AND FORWARD TOGETHER FOR TRANS DAY OF RESILIENCE 2018



Pricing

Visual art takes many forms—murals, fashion, photography and more—each with their own labor requirements and fee scales. A comprehensive list of fair wages for all art forms is beyond the scope of this document. As a starting point, Forward Together collaborated with the authors to create a fee structure for illustration. Implementing these rates would help transform the field of movement art into a more sustainable occupation for BIPOC, poor, disabled and other oppressed artists.

The fees below offer minimum rates that recognize the actual time and costs of artist labor. Like other independent contractors, when artists work freelance they need to cover everything themselves. This includes paying 25 to 30 percent of their income to taxes for payments over \$600—plus studio rental, art supplies, technology and healthcare costs. Beyond creative work, artist labor also includes administrative tasks, professional social media and communications, skill development and more. Cultural strategists and movement artists also spend years building the skills and relationships that give our work credibility and power.

Fee Structure for Illustration based on Organizational Budget

Organizational Annual Budget	One Original Collaborative Graphic Artwork by a professional graphic artist or illustrator (approximately 30 to 40 hours of work) Usage: Artist retains copyright. Image licensed to organization for unlimited use Includes: One collaborative visioning meeting; one round of major revisions; up to three rounds of minor revisions. Does not include: Rush work, unlimited usage, media promotion, additional revisions or more extensive collaborative process.
Under \$250k	\$1,000 minimum (\$25/hr for 40 hours ³)
\$250k–\$500k	\$1,250 minimum (\$31.25/hr for 40 hours)
\$500k—\$1 million	\$1,500 minimum (\$37.50/hr for 40 hours)
> \$1 million	\$2,000 minimum (\$50/hr for 40 hours)
> \$5 million	\$2,500 minimum (\$62.50/hr for 40 hours)

3 Hourly wage minimums informed by the “Living Wage Calculator”, livingwage.mit.edu, by Dr. Amy K. Glasmeier and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology @2024

If your organization hasn't budgeted for these fees, here are some suggestions to reduce costs and artist work hours.

- * **License or adapt existing work.** There is so much powerful art already created. Sharing existing art with a new audience or context can be equally or more effective than creating new work, and licensing provides artists with an important additional income stream. Reach out to the artist and ask whether they'd be open to licensing an existing image for a flat fee. Licensing fees range from \$150 to \$1,000, depending on organizational budget and usage rights. Adaptations of existing work (adding text or color, etc.) by the original artist require less labor and additional cost. Never alter artwork without the artist's permission.
- * **Reduce revisions and meetings.** Lowering hours spent in revisions and meetings can lower costs. Your artwork may not need intensive collaboration, especially if the artist has a lot of experience and skill and is a member of your target audience.
- * **Create a black-and-white image instead of color.** Creating a black-and-white image takes 50 to 75 percent less time than full color. You may hire the artist to add color later if desired.



BY AMIR KHADAR WITH BLACK ALLIANCE FOR JUST IMMIGRATION AND FORWARD TOGETHER

Better Payment Practices

- * **Never offer exposure as compensation or expect artists to volunteer.** Offering exposure as compensation is insulting. You'd never ask any other worker to work for exposure, so don't expect this from artists. Similarly, unless artists have offered to volunteer, it's not appropriate for nonprofits to ask this of professional working artists. Most movement artists pour incalculable amounts of unpaid work into liberation struggles. When they want to work for free, they reach out to organizations and groups to offer their skills. If they haven't offered to work pro bono, they should be compensated for their work just like everyone else.
- * **Pay artists based on the scope of work, not their fame, reach or follower count.** There is no relationship between fame, follower count and quality. With the right support, emerging artists can produce incredible work that is equal to or surpasses the quality and impact of busier, more established artists.
- * **Rush all payments to artists.** Nonprofits frequently take one to six months to process payments. Slow payment processes make this work nearly impossible for poor and working-class artists.
- * **Pay a deposit.** Pay a 25- to 50-percent deposit after signing the contract at the start of a project, especially if the project is a multi-phase collaboration with a long timeline. This allows artists to take on fewer projects at the same time and focus on your collaboration. Full payment should not be made until the full scope of work is completed as outlined in the contract.
- * **Create a payment and contract process that honors artists' names.** Many artists—especially BIPOC, trans, and undocumented artists—have names that aren't recognized by the government. Some targeted artists go by monikers to stay safe when publicly sharing their work. It is harmful and disrespectful when organizations don't use the right name, especially for trans artists. Only use legal names if absolutely necessary (like on payments and tax forms). For everything else, honor the names artists use. This includes all mentions internally as well, from contracts to file names and database entries). Train your staff, including accounting and operations personnel on this practice.

Artists must work in ways that honor our gifts, sustain our bodyminds and nurture the next generations.

- * **Compensate artists for commissioned social media labor.** Social media is an extractive arena in which artists function as free content creators for tech and surveillance corporations. Maintaining an active social media presence is an unpaid but expected and labor-intensive part of most artists' careers. And like all areas of free labor, this work is easiest for those with the most privilege. For marginalized artists, social media is also a source of harassment, stress, violence and burnout.

Artists with large followings and dedicated fan bases have usually spent years cultivating and defending them, but are often expected to offer social media labor for free while communications professionals are paid for this work. If you would like artists to perform social media labor, everything from creating posts, stories, tweets or videos to sharing the commissioned work on their accounts and participating in Instagram lives or Twitter chats, then include this labor in their paid scope of work.



BY MELANIE CERVANTES WITH FORWARD TOGETHER FOR MAMAS DAY 2016

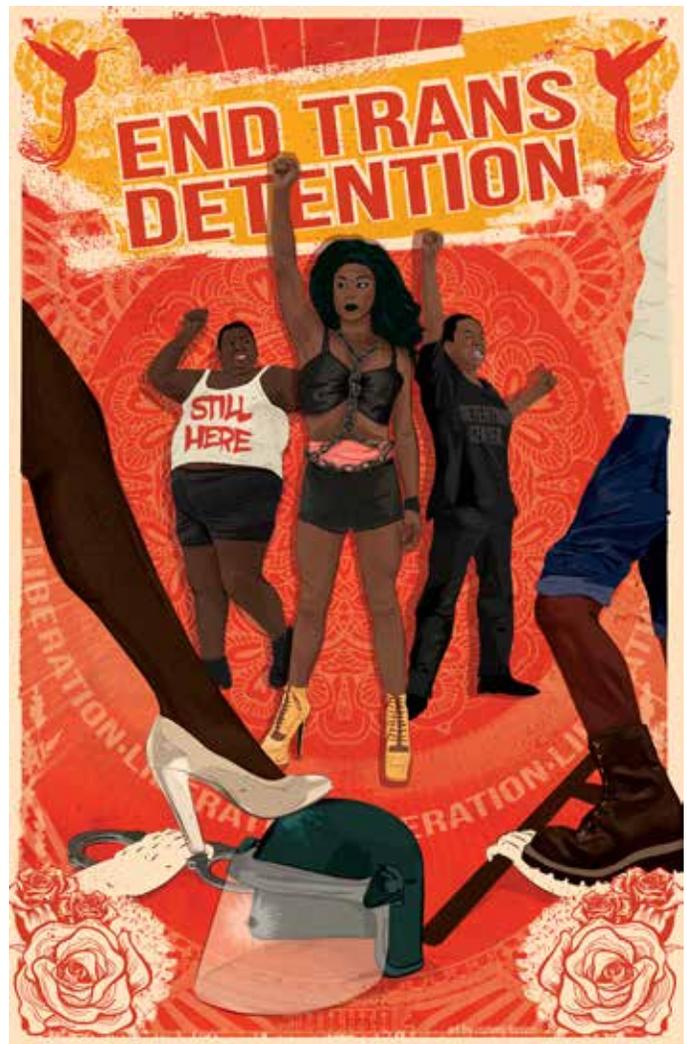
Contracts

Understanding the Problems and Choices

Many organizations use artist contracts that range from unsuitable to predatory. They often demand that artists give up all rights, and desperate artists often agree to these terms. Many artists do not realize they can request changes to the contract and that they do not have to give up their rights in order to be paid to create art that is used and published by a third party. Similarly, many organizations do not realize they can get exactly what they need with a well defined license, allowing the artist to retain ownership of the work.

Predatory contracts that strip artists of rights are not only unfair to artists, they are also much less effective for our movements. When artists retain rights, we can sell and license our work for additional income, share the work with our communities and more broadly benefit our collective movement work. Grassroots groups and activists often approach artists for permission to use their work for community campaigns, and it's important that they have the opportunity to meet this need. In moments of crisis, individuals and small groups are on the ground

taking action, coordinating protests, and defending land and lives, and artists can often move more nimbly and effectively than larger nonprofits. When artists retain the right to share, license, sell and reproduce our work, we can allow the art to flow where it is most needed.



BY ROMMY TORRICO WITH FAMILIA: TRANS QUEER LIBERATION MOVEMENT AND FORWARD TOGETHER FOR TRANS DAY OF RESILIENCE 2016

Key Points for Contracts

We recommend the following guidelines for writing contracts between organizations and graphic artists.

Two Models for Copyright Usage and Rights:

- 1. Co-Ownership by Artist and Organization.** In this model, the commissioning organization and the artist share legal ownership, called copyright. Copyright includes the right to print, sell or license the work to additional entities. This model can be anti-exploitative by ensuring that the contract is clear and explicit about how the artist will equitably benefit and retain power along with the organization.

In a co-ownership, or *joint ownership* model, the contract should clearly state who may use the work and how, and if proceeds are to be shared and shared in what way. Unless there is a different written agreement, in co-ownership both parties have unlimited rights to use the artwork in any way and to license the artwork to third parties, and both parties must share all proceeds from the work with each other. We recommend stating in the contract that if third parties wish to license the artwork, they will negotiate with and pay licensing fees to the artist, not the organization.

- 2. Artist Retains Ownership with License to Organization.** Alternatively, the artist may retain copyright over the work. The commissioning organization is granted a forever, called perpetual, worldwide, non-exclusive, royalty-free license to use the artwork in any way. However, artists may want to write the contract with specifications for how the artwork is used or for royalties that the artist will receive.

Some key elements of usage and rights to be considered by artists and organizations:

- ▷ **Limitation on Use.** It may be important to the artist to understand the reason(s) the organization wants the work and how the work will be used. In this case, the contract can be written to allow the organization to use the work for a stated purpose, but not retain an unlimited use license.
- ▷ **Royalty-Free.** With a “royalty-free” license there is an upfront, flat fee for the life of the license, so there are no accounting responsibilities and ongoing costs for either side when the commissioning organization uses the art in the future or for the length of the license. However, the artist may choose to negotiate a temporary or ongoing royalty, for example, when the projected benefit for the organization of licensing the artwork is to generate immediate or substantial revenue.
- ▷ **Additional Licenses.** In this model, the organization is not be able to license the artwork to third parties without permission from the artist. If third parties wish to license the artwork, they will negotiate with and pay licensing fees to the artist
- ▷ **Including Third Party Community Members.** Any additional collaborating organizations or community members (for example, a partner organization that helped envision the image or a community leader whose image is used) may also be granted or included in the license to the artwork. In this case as well, the contract should clearly reflect who may use the work and how.

Embargoes and Exclusivity

Specify which party can release the artwork first and when, based on your campaign strategy and distribution goals.

Release Rights: For example, organizations may reserve the right to release the art first on social media or through exclusive media coverage in order to direct audiences to a specific action.

- * **Temporary exclusive rights:** If an organization requests exclusive use rights, the parties should consider a license that is exclusive only for a limited and discrete time period, like 6 or 12 months. Exclusive rights should be granted only as necessary to accomplish the goals of the organization but not overreach on the rights of the artist.

Credit

- * The artist will always be credited and named in any uses or reproductions of the art.
 - ▷ Specify what pronouns, name(s) or artist monikers, and social media accounts will be used to credit the artist.
- * Specify whether and how the commissioning organization and any collaborative partners will also always be credited (For example, “The organization is the co-creator/commissioner of the work and will always be credited as follows: _____.”)



BY LOVEIS WISE WITH FORWARD TOGETHER FOR MAMAS DAY 2018

Alterations

- * The organization may crop and resize the artwork, but may not alter the image in any other way without permission of the artist. Depending on the project, add any additional needs for alteration. For example, “The organization may overlay text on the image.”
- * After accepting artwork, if alterations are wanted or required, the organization will consult with the artist and negotiate additional payment.

Indemnification

- * The artist agrees that the artwork they produce is wholly original and does not violate any third party’s rights or copyright. This means there are no unauthorized uses of another person’s image or works in the artwork. For instance, if the image is based on a photograph, the artist has the photographer’s written permission and the permission of any model’s in the photograph. Or if the artwork uses another person’s poetry, the artist must have written permission from the poet.

Artist indemnification regarding originality of their work means that the artist also agrees to pay for (hold the organization harmless against) any third-party claims alleging an unauthorized use or an invasion of third-party rights in the artist’s work.

- * The organization agrees that any text, photos or source materials they provide to the artist for use in the final artwork does not violate any third party’s rights or copyright.

Organization indemnification means the organization (and any collaborative partners) in turn agree to pay for (hold the artist harmless against) any claims resulting from an unauthorized use or an invasion of third-party rights in the materials given to the artist by the organization.

- * The artist, the organization and any collaborative partners all agree to pay the cost of (hold each other harmless against) any and all claims, costs and expenses, including attorney’s fees, related to their contribution to the artwork (i.e., the material the organization gave to the artist or the material the artist gave to the organization).

Scope of Work

Include all the dimensions and file formats for the final artwork, maximum rounds of feedback and revision, and key project meetings. Also include additional deliverables such as headshots, statement, or brief artist bio, and any additional labor such as social media engagement. Have a discrete time period where the work will be “accepted” and the artist will be paid, so that future revisions are not assumed to be available indefinitely and payment is not delayed.

trans is



fREEDOM,

IS ADVENTURE,

IS ENDLESS!



Ethical Artist Selection

End spec work. It's unethical.

No!Spec, an excellent resource for understanding the pitfalls of spec work, offers the following definition of spec work:

Spec work is any kind of creative work, either partial or completed, submitted by designers to prospective clients before designers secure both their work and equitable fees. Under these conditions, designers will often be asked to submit work in the guise of a contest or an entry exam on existing jobs as a “test” of their skill.

As No!Spec illustrates, spec work is often unethical from inception:

The designers work for free and with an often falsely advertised, overinflated promise for future employment; or are given other insufficient forms of compensation. Usually these glorified prizes or “carrots” appear tantalising for designers who are just starting out, accompanied by statements such as “good for your portfolio” or “gain recognition and exposure.”

Associations of graphic artists broadly oppose spec work as both unethical and ineffective.

End contests. They're unethical.

Contests are a form of spec work; they require new, unpaid art submitted for the chance of winning a prize, offers of exposure, and inflated promises of future benefit to the artist. Emerging marginalized artists are especially vulnerable to exploitation through spec work and rarely benefit from contests in any way. Most contests also require artists to relinquish all rights to their work as a condition of entry, and all submissions become property of the contest sponsor.

if you're working for an organization that has decided to run a contest, consider these harm-reduction suggestions by the Graphic Artists Guild: [Suggested Guidelines for Art Competitions and Contests](#).

One reason groups launch contests is to connect with new artists, which is a fabulous goal! Organizations often struggle to find artists who are aligned with their values and often only know about the same overworked handful of artists.

If your goal is to connect with new and emerging artists, we suggest doing an open call instead of a contest (see the following section).





Do not use AI-generated art. It's exploitive.

We call on all organizations to join [this pledge](#) against using AI-generated art. This technology exploits the work of human artists while destroying our livelihoods.

Better Artist Selection Practices

- * **Find artists through open calls.** The terms “open call” and “contest” are sometimes used interchangeably. By “open call” we mean an open request for artists to submit *existing work* for review as a demonstration of skill. Based on these submissions, artists are selected to make new, paid work.

Open calls can be invaluable entryways for marginalized artists to develop their work and connect with each other, organizations and movements. Organizations could ask artists to submit 3 to 5 pieces of existing work and answer a few questions. Based on these submissions, your organization can select the artist(s) you'd like to work with and then pay them to create new work.

If your goal is to engage new visual artists from marginalized communities, we especially recommend keeping any written questions brief and low pressure. This will minimize the amount of unpaid labor, since most emerging, community-based artists will not have an existing bio or artist statements to pull from. If your goal is to support artist development, we recommend including a written bio and/or statement from the artist in the scope of their paid work.

EXAMPLE: The 2015 TDOR art project sought BIPOC trans creators to produce original posters and poetry. At that time, however, the pool of well-known, professional trans artists of color was very small. To help change this, the team created a national open call for BIPOC trans artists and poets, and this became one of the most transformative aspects of the project. Some years, the open call received over a thousand submissions. Emerging and experienced artists applied, from people with no history of professional commissions, including recent high school graduates, to those with years of professional experience. Uniquely, the TDOR art project was often the first space where the artists had the opportunity to be part of a community of other BIPOC trans artists.

The project created a crucible of trans love and support for artists to develop their work together. Over the years, pay rates moved from \$500 to \$2,500 per participant, and organizers learned how to work more deeply with artists, engaging them as cultural strategists and community members who shaped the release and dissemination of their work. From those initial open calls, the project helped launch many artists' careers and formed relationships of mutual support that continue today.



- * **Who the artist is changes what the work does.** Artists' stories, relationships and struggles all shape what their work means to us. For example, knowing the art was made by someone who has struggled with the same oppressions—and who survived and thrived enough to keep creating art—is a powerful layer of meaning. They will know how to represent crucial details that convey that a project is by us and for us to your target audience. Seeing artists in our own oppressed communities make beautiful work can help countless budding artists have role models and see possibilities for themselves. Hiring marginalized artists from the targeted community at a fair rate also supports the economic wellbeing, artistic development and hopefully the long-term career success of artists in that community.

Who is the target audience for your campaign? Who is directly impacted by the issues your organizing work is addressing? Is there an artist from that community who would be a good fit for this work? Is the artist in alignment with the values of your organization? With a little bit of thought and research, finding the right artist for the work can be crucial to its impact.

- * **Find artists through artists.** Movement artists want to lift each other up, share opportunities and support emerging generations. When you have positive experiences working with artists, ask them to recommend other artists in the future. When you have new opportunities, share the scope of work and ask artists to make recommendations about who might be a good fit. Too often the same small group of artists get hired for work, and at times are overworked, simply because the people hiring don't know other artists.
- * **Focus on quality of work, not resumes or follower counts.** With the right art direction and support from organizational staff, emerging and marginalized artists, those without access to formal training or institutional degrees—can build their skills and produce incredible work.

BY AMARYLLIS DEJESUS MOLESKI WITH FORWARD TOGETHER FOR MAMAS DAY 2013



The Process (AKA the Magic)

Getting Started

- * **Train your entire staff on the values of cultural strategy**⁴. When everyone inside your organization understands the possibilities artists bring to movement work, you can shift from transactional artist engagement to true collaboration. Furthermore, a strong orientation to cultural power will help everyone better recognize potential opportunities.

Dream beyond the ways you've seen artists intersect with your organization in the past. Trust that your work will be infinitely more impactful if you were using art and cultural strategy every step of the way.

- * **Include artists from the beginning.** Traditionally, organizations bring graphic artists in to illustrate their materials as a last step, after the campaign strategy and events are fully planned. But including artists in the planning process can transform your campaigns. Most movement artists are not just producers; they have deep knowledge of past and present cultural resistance and the cultural needs of their communities. They know where and how art will be most powerfully received and have their own networks of relationships (with other artists, fans, media makers, organizers and more) that can help launch the work. Furthermore, early inclusion of artists may provide an opportunity to anticipate crucial details from community buy-in around messaging to printing sources. The project will be stronger when artists are invested in the collective vision and meaning.
- * **Set process expectations.** How often will the organization and artist communicate? Balancing, yet also considering, the expertise of all involved, how will final decisions about imagery and messaging be made? Set a maximum number of rounds for feedback and revision. If something changes and the artist needs to edit beyond what was agreed upon, adjust the contract so they are paid for the additional time. The contract can state that the organization will update the agreement as needed if the artwork needs more labor and time to be completed.

⁴ See *Cultural Strategy: An Introduction & Primer*, by Nayantara Sen, Art/Work Practice, Power California, reSet Project, Unbound Philanthropy

* **Decide on text and logos at the start.**

Let the artist know from the start whether you'd like text in the image, and who will decide on that text. Even if the exact text may change, leaving background space for text is important. It can take 8 to 16 hours to reconfigure an image to include text. For a poster, headline text of ten words or less is strongest. If the artist will be adding any logos to the image, provide all of them at the start of the project.

* **Support new artists to develop technical skills.**

Many, possibly most, movement artists learn on the job. Include detailed specifications in the contract *and* review the required specifications for the commission with the artists at the start.

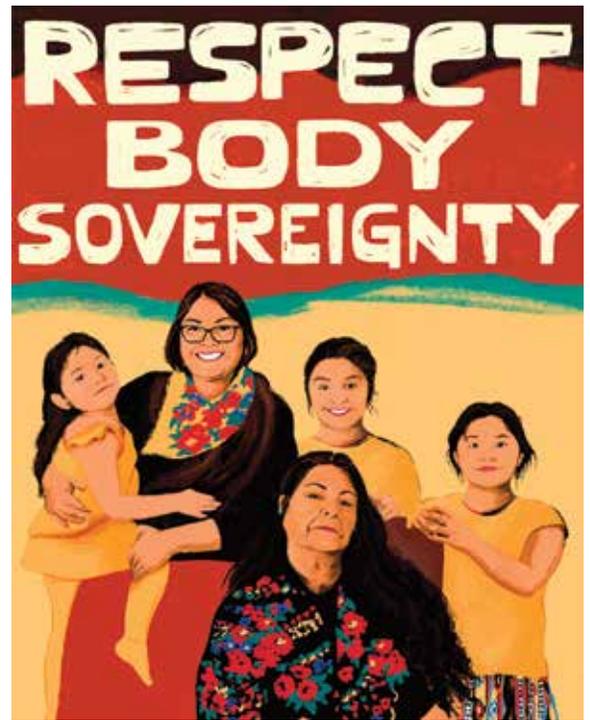
▷ **Dimensions:** Be sure to commission artwork at larger sizes with scalable dimensions for the particular needs of the project. That means knowing the formats and ways the art will be printed and shared before the artist begins creating. It can take 8 to 16 hours to redo a composition to a different size ratio. Digital artwork can always be scaled down but it cannot be enlarged without sacrificing image quality. Even if you are only planning to print 4" x 6" postcards now, your organization may want the artwork much larger in the future. A standard practice is to commission art at two sizes: a poster size (or 11.25" x 17.25") which can later be shrunk for postcards and more, and a square social media size (1080x1080 pixels).

▷ **Resolution:** Digital media must be 300 dpi in order to print cleanly.

▷ **Color Mode:** Digital artwork should be created in CMYK color mode (not RGB) so colors look right in print and on screen.

▷ **Digitization:** Non-digital work (paintings, prints, etc.) should be professionally photographed for reproduction.

* **Copyright and Permissions:** Make sure the artist is not violating copyright by recognizably basing their work on photos without permission of the photographer. Attain permissions from marginalized groups and individuals before directly quoting their campaign slogans or other works.

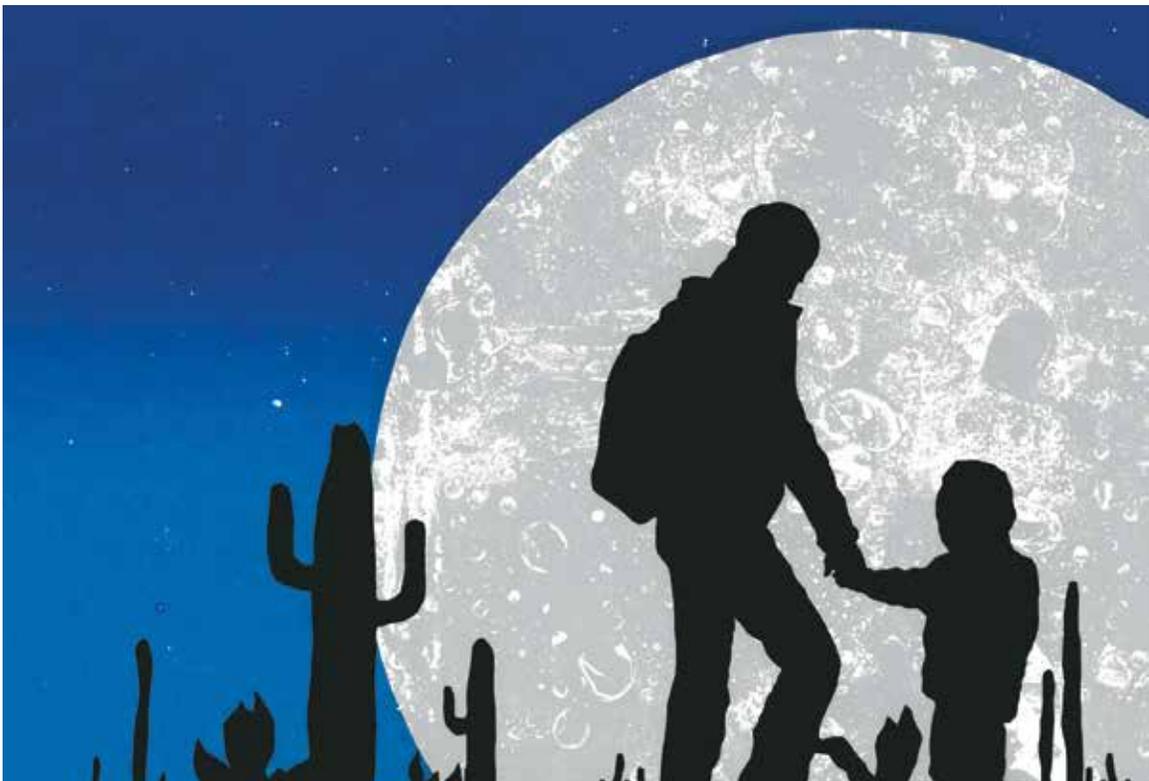


ART BY MICAH BAZANT, ANNA (DINÉ-KIN'YAA'AANII), KRYSTAL, SAGE, KIN'YAA'AANII, ROZARIO AND FORWARD TOGETHER

* **Avoid rush work and allow artists ample time to create.** Our movements have internalized scarcity and urgency. Art is often among the last considerations and squished into a tight timeline. But organizers know trust moves at its own speed. Art, creative collaboration and relationships with artists need that same abundance of time to fully bloom.

Although rapid-response art is sometimes unavoidable due to the nature of disaster capitalism and crises, organizations should strive to avoid rush timelines and always pay an additional fee for rush work. Rush work puts an extra strain on our bodies (wrists, eyes and more) and forces us to put in longer hours in order to honor other contracts we have committed to and must also juggle.

Plan ample time for projects to be completed, from initial visioning to feedback, revisions and dissemination. For example, **a month is a minimum amount of time for an experienced artist to complete a poster commission that is not a rush job. Two months is a fabulous and spacious poster production timeline that can better accommodate newer artists and more collaborative processes.** Especially when working with emerging and marginalized artists, we recommend always scheduling a cushion (for example, an additional week beyond the shared final art deadline) in case last-minute delays or unexpected final revisions arise.



BY CHUCHA MARQUEZ AND FORWARD TOGETHER FOR MAMAS DAY 2016

Sample timeline for one collaborative graphic artwork

Total non-rush production time: 2 months

3/1: Contract signed by artist and organization

3/2: 25-50% Deposit payment to artist within 10 business days

3/6: Initial visioning meeting between artist and key organizer/s. Organization sends all messaging, reference photos, etc. to artist.

3/13: Brief concept description (1-4 sentences) and very rough sketch due from artist

3/15: Organization sends feedback on concept and rough sketch

3/22: First draft due from artist

3/24: Organization sends feedback on first draft

[Contingent] 3/31: 2nd draft due from artist if major revision needed

[Contingent] 4/4: Organization sends feedback on 2nd draft

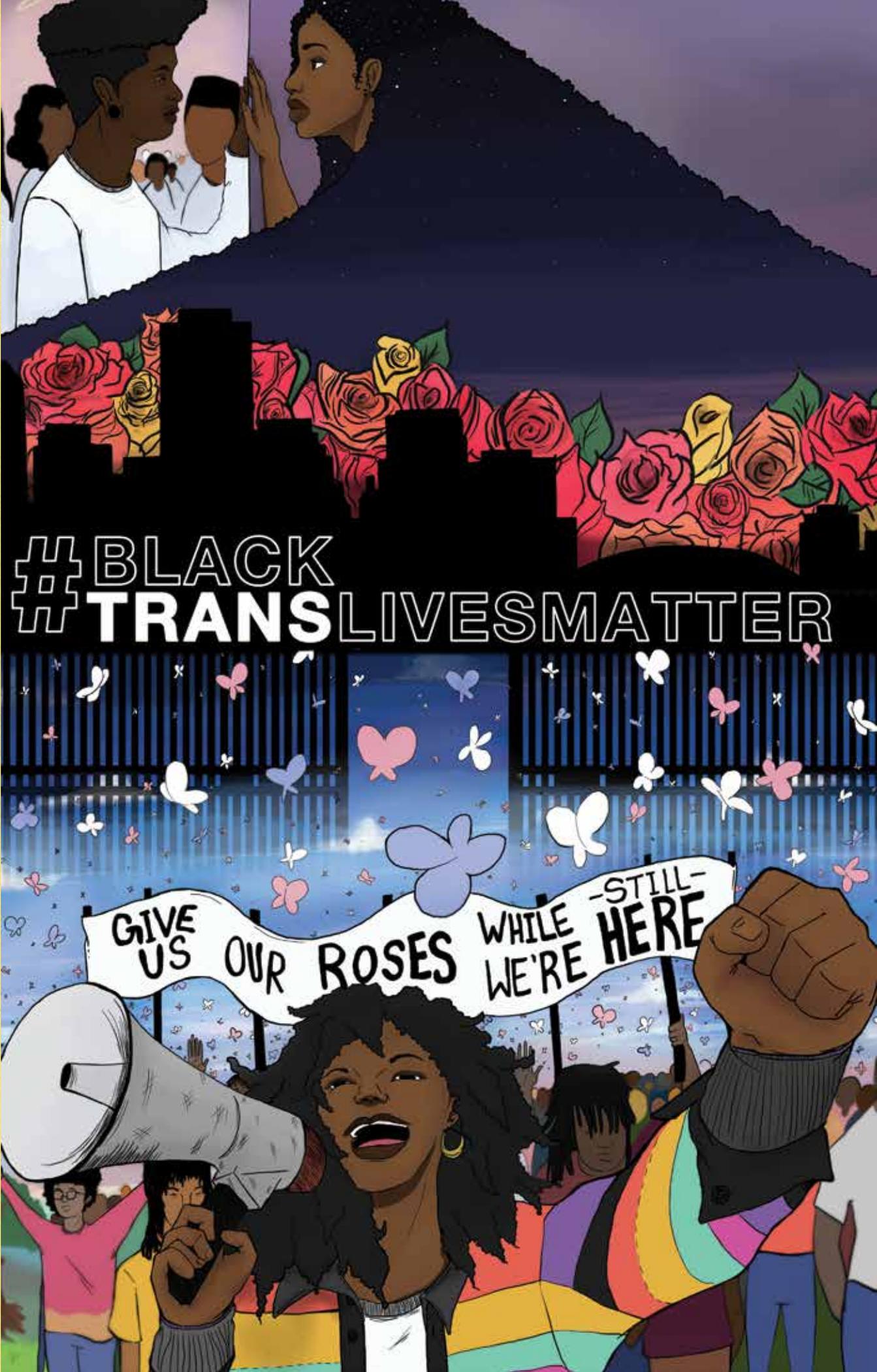
4/14: Full color artwork due

[Contingent] 4/17-4/24: Organization requests up to 3 rounds minor revisions as needed

[Contingent] 4/19-4/26: Revised art due from artist as needed

4/28: Artwork finalized. Final payment to artist within 10 business days.

- * **Discuss power dynamics when collaborating across communities.** As the disability rights movement taught us, “Nothing about us without us.” Make sure you are aligned in the desire for the art to honor, serve and benefit the specific communities it represents.
- ▷ **Is the artist part of a marginalized community that is not in leadership in the organization or project?** For example, are you hiring a Muslim artist to make work against Islamophobia, but your organization has no track record of showing up for Muslim communities and no Muslim people in leadership? If so, be upfront about that power dynamic. Approach the collaboration from a stance of humility, service, listening and learning. Communicate your respect for the artists’ values and visions, and be thoughtful about how and what feedback is given.
- ▷ **Is the artist representing people other than themselves?** Communities are not monoliths, and issues of representation can bring up every internal power fracture (for example, around the specific ways our bodies and images are erased, racialized, gendered, disabled or nationalized). All artists will at times be representing people different than themselves, and having guideposts for ethical cross-community collaboration is key. We recommend the following practices when an artist is centrally depicting a community they are not a part of.
 - ◆ Establish a close and accountable working relationship between the artist and the represented community through people either within or outside your organization. Compensate and credit any external partners for their expertise and collaborative work.
 - ◆ Clarify the process for feedback and revisions both with the artist and collaborators. For example, discuss if the artist will incorporate feedback from specific community members and if the final image must be approved by those community members. Especially for portraits, make sure the art has final approval from anyone depicted (or in the case of memorial portraits, from their family or close community).
 - ◆ Practice care and accountability if an artist is depicting violence, harm or victimization of another community. In general, it’s wise to avoid imagery that is likely to retraumatize communities, but we can’t always predict what brings up trauma. If an image does depict something potentially harmful, consider whether the image needs a content warning, and make sure to have very solid, community-based collaborative partners who will stand by the project if criticism is raised.
 - ◆ Consider the history of art used against marginalized communities in exploitative and harmful ways, including dehumanizing racial caricature, nonconsensual outings of trans and queer people, and use of disabled folks as literal “poster children”, “inspiration porn”, and super villains.



#BLACK #TRANSLIVESMATTER

GIVE US OUR ROSES WHILE WE'RE -STILL- HERE

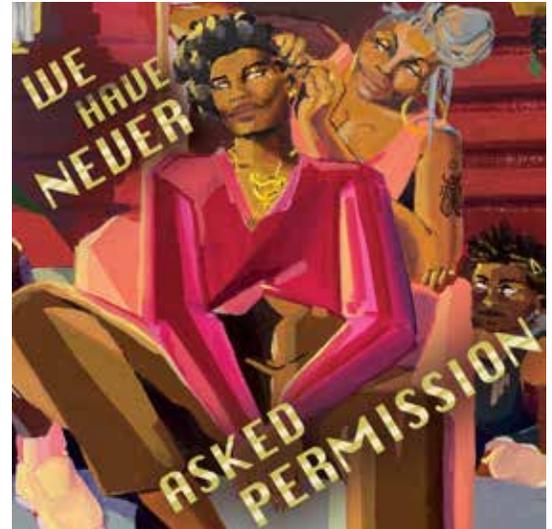
Building Relationships

Just as relationships are the foundation of all movement building and community organizing, they are the keystone of successful cultural organizing.

- * **Create space for artists to connect with each other and the project's purpose.** Artists often work in isolation. Connecting with other artists and sharing skills, support, resources and opportunities is both life-changing and the foundation through which generations of community-based artists have emerged. Too often, social justice organizations commission a group of artists and never connect them with each other or with other folks involved with the organization. If you are working on a project with multiple artists, *at minimum* send an email connecting them. Ideally, bring artists together for an initial meeting and ongoing communication so they can form relationships and support each other on your project and beyond. It can also be meaningful to your board and staff and to the artist(s) you commission to be introduced, again at a minimum by email or in person at an organizational gathering.

Artists create stronger work when they are inspired by the real need, purpose and potential impact of the project. Share specific information about the distribution plan. How many people may see the work? Where will they see it? How will it impact their lives? Share the context of the story you're trying to tell with the art. At the start of the project, you can also inspire artists by sharing information and media. For example, videos, stories, audio, music or photos of relevant community resistance and organizing make rich compost for passionate creation. And make space for artists to ask questions about the campaign work and cultural strategy design.

EXAMPLE: The TDOR art project brought visual artists and poets together for an initial visioning meeting. In this meeting, organizers grounded participants in the project's purpose and possibilities by sharing its history, scope and impact. Visual artists and poets introduced their creative work and responded to visioning prompts, generating imagery and language for a world that cherishes trans people of color. Organizers then experimented with cross-medium pairings and set up a structure for creators to touch base throughout the process; part of this structure included opportunities to share drafts for feedback and in-depth workshopping. In the final meeting, participants shared their gorgeous creations with each other, then helped plan and execute the distribution campaign. Their connection and engagement led them to promote each others' work to their own networks of trans folks, creating high-impact amplification to the project's target audience.



BY AVA TUITT AND BENJI HART WITH FORWARD TOGETHER FOR TRANS DAY OF RESILIENCE 2019

- * **Create community connections.** The meaning and impact of art is shaped by the story of why, how and by whom it was created. Collaboration builds relationships with, love for, and use of the art. It also reduces the risk of one marginalized artist being seen as a spokesperson for a whole community. If you have time and capacity, incorporate a process of community collaboration and feedback, and include this within the scope of work in the artist's contract.

Collaborative processes can range from an initial meeting between one to two community members and the artist to a long-term group process of planning cultural strategy, generating language and imagery, giving feedback on artwork, and distributing and repurposing the art in community.

Art Direction and Feedback

Successful art direction is a delicate balance between the organization, the artist and any collaborative partners. Greater trust allows for stronger art direction. Ideally, we find ways to create gorgeous, powerful art that benefits and honors communities represented, expresses the artists' visions, and meets the needs of the organization. Whether you are a staff member at an organization, a freelance artist, or a community partner you can help cultivate a culture of trust and open and caring collaboration.

First, communicate these goals and values of mutual benefit to all parties and ask for agreement on them before starting a project.

Once the creation process begins, feedback may be largely about supporting the artist to take the ideas, make them their own, and create art that successfully blends their style and creativity with the goals and vision of the organization. Some feedback may also be about campaigners learning and growing through their relationships with movement artists.

- * **Provide concrete art direction.** Great art direction sees what's strong in artists' work—what we are capable of—and lovingly redirects us toward these strengths if we get lost. This works best if, at the start of a project, you let artists know *what specific elements you love in their past work* that you'd like to see in the piece you're creating together. For example: lettering style, color palette, pattern and texture, feeling, metaphor and symbolism.
- * **Share affirmations.** It can be daunting to receive a list of "no's" but have to guess at what is working. Affirmation is extremely important throughout the creative process, especially for emerging artists. Affirmation fuels artists' bodyminds and shows artists in which direction to keep going. Prioritize written affirmation that is as pointed as critiques.

- * **Ask for artist input.** Movement artists have a wealth of knowledge, lived experience, and skills. Artists who are part of the community they are representing may catch hidden project potential or missteps or may see aspects of the cultural strategy in fresh ways at any stage in the process of their work being commissioned.
- * **Micromanagement isn't a creative love language.** Artists produce stronger work when we have more autonomy to pursue our own style and vision.
- * **Let the art live outside your box.** Art is powerful because it is not an exact, literal representation. Allow the art to be unexpected, strange, magical and new. Communicate your needs without squishing the spirit of the art or artist.
- * **Let unfinished work breathe.** Avoid rushing artists toward a finish line. Time can be the secret ingredient.
- * **Clarify which revisions are optional and what is not.** For example, if an actual person or community represented in the art requests changes to their image, that would be non-negotiable.

If you are working with a group of artists, **consider asking the artists to give each other feedback on each others' work**, and include this in the paid scope of work. Offer guidelines for giving and receiving constructive and kind feedback since this is a skill most artists also need to practice. Ask each artist to first let the group know what kinds of feedback they would like to receive or not receive. For example, is the text and messaging set but they want feedback on color and composition? Invite artists to affirm what is working and stroing in the drafts first. And clarify that it is their choice whether or not to incorporate the feedback.



BY KAYAN CHEUNG-MIAW AND FORWARD TOGETHER FOR MAMAS DAY 2013



Strategic and Ethical Distribution

- * **Create a distribution plan by referring back to your key goals and strategy questions:** Where and when are the most strategic points of dissemination? How will you reach the audience? Where are the most impactful places for the art to live in the world? What current events, meaningful history, anniversaries or observances can we connect with to help fuel dissemination and create meaning?
- * **Release the art with your call to action.** Art often has the most impact the first time people see it. They will be moved to take action, donate, make a call, etc. Time the art release until all the action tools are ready, and then make sure that wherever people see the art, they see the call to action.
- * **Make sure the art directly benefits the communities it represents.** Can you offer it for free download? Share printed artwork with grassroots groups? Can you offer the artwork to frontline groups for use in their organizing (postcards, newsletters, social media, banners, fundraising) without a licensing fee? Can you get the artwork to spaces where that community will see it (prisons, schools, hospitals, places of worship, bars, streets)?
- * **Share ownership of the work with those with little or no pathway to compensation for their cultural change labor.** If you are collaborating with directly impacted organizations or people, and the artwork exists in part because of their struggles and lived experiences, share ownership of the work with them (e.g., sharing credit, original files, profits).
- * **Create feedback opportunities.** How can you create feedback loops between communities, organizations and artists? When sharing the artwork, get creative about ways to invite reactions or stories of impact.

EXAMPLE: When people download art from the Trans Day of Resilience art project, a pop-up form asks how they will use the art to benefit their community. Through this feedback loop, staff were able to gather *hundreds* of stories of impact, share the stories anonymously with the artists and on social media (when permission was granted through the form), and gain insight to grow the project's strategy going forward.
- * **Engage artists as outreach partners.** Bringing artists into your outreach strategy can both teach new skills to emerging artists and create more channels of amplification for your project. And if your artists are part of the communities you want to reach, this will help get the work to your target audiences!
- * **Help artists set up the building blocks of their career.** It can be challenging for artists to gain the confidence and time to set up professional assets. If you are working with emerging artists, you can request they submit things like a brief artist bio and headshot,

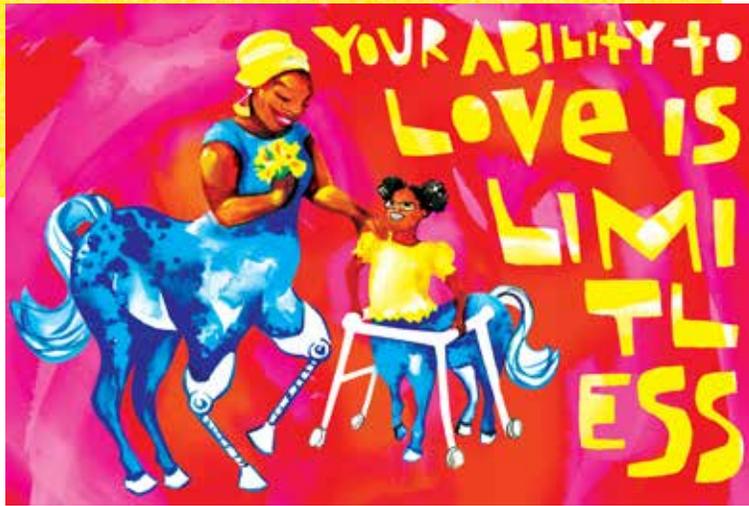
professional website and online store, a brief statement about the artwork and public and professional social media accounts. These materials will also help your organization share and use their work in meaningful ways.

EXAMPLE: The TDOR art project aimed to support new and emerging trans artists of color. For some artists, the project was their first professional commission and helped launch their careers as their work spread among tens of thousands worldwide. Before the project launch, project organizers sometimes helped participants create artist websites and print their work, allowing them to share and sell their work for the first time. This can be a huge step toward building a following, earning income and gaining confidence.

- * **Offer prints to artists.** If you are printing the art, offer extra prints to the artist. Artists can use extra prints in a range of ways that are meaningful to their income, career and joy. The cost of printing each piece goes down when we print in greater quantities, so choosing a higher number print run and having extra prints may actually benefit all parties.
- * **Never alter artwork without permission.** Never add filters or reconfigure the image without consulting the artist and any collaborative partners. Don't crop the artwork in ways that change the meaning of the work. For example, don't crop out key text or central figures. If your organization would like to potentially make changes to the artwork in the future, include these parameters in the contract.
- * **Always credit and uplift artists and creative partners.** Think of this as another relationship-building opportunity. How are you properly acknowledging and creating connections to everyone involved? Remember to include artists, designers, photographers, key community members and collaborators, partner organizations, and translators. Double check with partners that you haven't forgotten anyone. Always tag and credit the relevant contributors when sharing their work on social media. Share the websites, stores and accounts of project partners whenever you can.

BY JULIO SALGADO AND FORWARD TOGETHER FOR MAMAS DAY 2013





BY PATRICIA BERNE, MICAH BAZANT AND FORWARD TOGETHER FOR MAMAS DAY 2020

- * **Make digital images more accessible.** Always add alt text and image descriptions; they are not the same thing, and we must do both to make posts accessible.
 - ▷ **Alt text** is a short description (200 characters) that is embedded in the image online through the “alt” attribute in HTML code. Alt text can be read by some screen readers (accessibility applications that read screen content aloud) used by blind and visually impaired people. Alt text is also used by social media SEO and algorithms, and can make your image more discoverable.
 - ▷ **Image descriptions** are written captions that describe the essential information in an image. They can often be read aloud by screen readers. People may need them for a variety of reasons including blindness, visual impairment, sensory processing disorders, dyslexia, color blindness, cognitive and learning disabilities, and language access. Use image descriptions on websites, social media, emails, etc.
 - ▷ **Learn more about writing alt text and image descriptions:**
 - ◆ [Higher Priestess’s Instagram](#), including “How to Write an Image Description and Alt-Text”
 - ◆ Alex Chen’s “[How to write an image description](#)”
 - ◆ [Alt Text as Poetry](#)

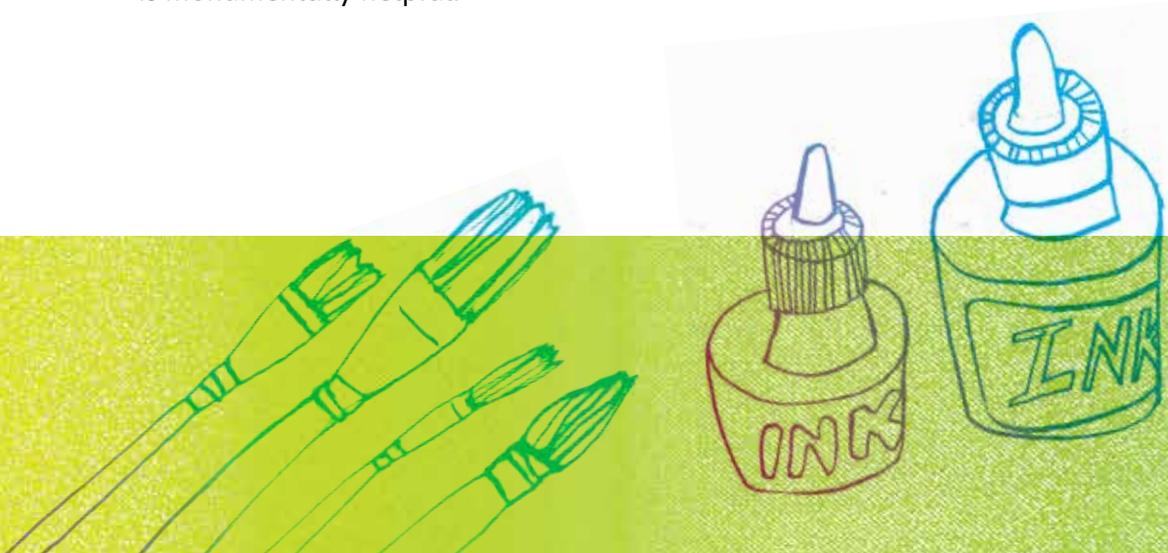
- * **Make printed images more accessible.** For exhibits and events, aim to make the space as accessible as possible. See Sins Invalid’s *Access Suggestions for a Public Event*. When exhibiting visual art:
 - ▷ Print versions of the art on paper that can be held and seen up close. This is important for people who use wheelchairs, little people, people with visual impairments, etc.
 - ▷ Create braille and large-type versions of wall text, labels and other written materials.
 - ▷ Work with a trained audio describer or designate someone who can see and describe the art (without commentary) for informal audio descriptions.

Keep Building

- * **Ask for artists' feedback at the end of the project.** How could the process have gone better? What worked? Factor the artists' time giving feedback into the scope of work.
- * **Let artists know how their work is used in the world.** This builds relationships and trust. Organizations often cut artists out of the loop as soon as they get the final files. Knowing the impact fuels the work; it gives artists purpose and meaning to know our art is reaching communities we care about. Is the artwork on a street banner? In a publication? Sharing the specifics helps artists envision new uses of the work—and helps build our CVs.
- * **Keep amplifying the work.** Take every opportunity to reuse, adapt and share. Think creatively—consider annual and current events, make sketches into coloring pages, etc.
- * **Build ongoing, non-tokenizing relationships with artists.** Artists' work is often in highest demand during specific times of year (Black History Month, Indigenous Peoples Day) or events (high-profile police killings, new wars, trans murders) that relate to our identities. But these times may also be when we are the most attacked, despairing and exhausted.

Build long-term, reciprocal relationships with artists beyond these flashpoints. Consistently engage with marginalized artists throughout all programming, not just for work that pertains to marginality. For example, reach out if you are reusing work in exciting ways, or share moving community feedback you receive about the work. Refer artists to other organizations and potential clients. Share and support artists' other projects and fundraisers. Ask how you can support artists if we or our communities are being attacked.

As visual artist and multi-year TDOR collaborator Amir Khadar said, "Encourage continued collaboration with artists as they develop and grow. Beyond Trans Day of Resilience, Forward Together shared connections and opportunities with me and recommended me to other organizations. This type of long-term relationship is monumentally helpful."

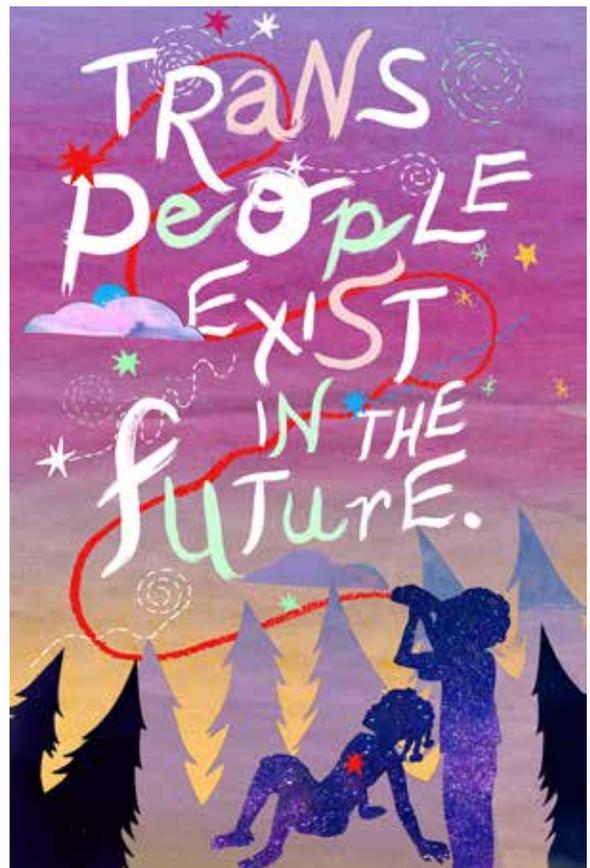


Learn More

Join a community of artists and organizers committed to more impactful collaborations. Email art@forwardtogether.org to stay informed about upcoming workshops, conversations, opportunities and more.

Explore other cultural organizing resources:

- ◆ *Cultural Strategy: An Introduction and Primer*
by Nayantara Sen, Art/Work Practice, Power California, reSet Project, Unbound Philanthropy
- ◆ *Handbook for Artists Working in Community*
by Springboard for the Arts
- ◆ *How to Reimagine the World.*
by Micah Bazant, Forward Together and Center for Cultural Power
- ◆ *Making Waves: A Guide to Cultural Strategy*
by The Culture Group
- ◆ *Narrative Change Strategy Tools*
by The Voices for Economic Opportunity Incubator
- ◆ *Storytellers' Guide to Changing the World 2.0.*
by Culture Surge
- ◆ *Prenups for Partners*
by Active Voice Lab



BY KAH YANGNI AND FORWARD TOGETHER FOR TRANS DAY OF RESILIENCE 2020

Appendix



CONTRACT TEMPLATE FOR ORGANIZATIONS AND ARTISTS

Download a PDF or copy a Google Doc version of this contract [here](#)

THIS AGREEMENT MUST BE SIGNED AND RETURNED BEFORE ARTIST CAN BEGIN THIS JOB

This Agreement is entered into by:

[Name of Organization:] _____

(herein after referred to as the "Organization"),

and [Name of Artist:] _____ (herein after referred to as the "Artist"),

referred to jointly as the "Parties".

Project Point Person who will be the main, ongoing point of contact and support between the Artist and Organization: _____

I. SCOPE OF WORK: Artist agrees to create original artwork (the "Work") for the Organization:

A. Project Title: _____

B. Description of artwork: _____

C. Dimensions and format: [e.g., resolution, color mode, file formats, any other relevant production details]

D. Text or logos to be included: _____

E. Revisions: Depending on feedback from the Organization, the Artist will submit a maximum of _____ rounds of requested major revisions and up to _____ rounds of minor revisions.

F. Additional Deliverables: [e.g., Artist headshot, bio, brief written statement about the artwork, social media engagement or other media promotion, etc.]

G. TIMELINE

1. Duration: The Agreement will begin on _____ and end on _____, unless terminated prior thereto in accordance with the terms of this Agreement. If the Parties desire to negotiate a mutually agreeable extension to this Agreement, the Parties may do so.

2. Key Dates and Deadlines: *[e.g., rough sketch, feedback from Organization, black and white draft, color draft, final artwork, key meetings, events, social media launch, etc.]*

3. Embargo: *[When the artwork can be shared by the artist]* _____

II. ARTIST CONTACT INFORMATION:

A. Mailing address: _____

B. Phone number: _____

C. Preferred contact method: *[e.g., email, text or phone]* _____

III. ARTIST ACCESS NEEDS: Please list any access needs and let your point person know if your access needs change. For a reference list of disabilities, impairments and possible accommodations, visit askjan.org.

IV. CREDIT AND MEDIA PROMOTION. The Organization will always credit the Artist in any use of the Work.

A. Name or Artist Moniker by which the Artist would like to be credited:

B. Pronouns by which the Artist will be credited: _____

The Artist will inform Agency if their name, artist moniker or pronouns change, to make sure they are credited respectfully.

C. Media Interviews: If the Artist is willing to speaking with the media for promotion of this project, initial here: _____

D. Please list any of the Artist's public social media accounts that should be credited and tagged when sharing the artwork:

Instagram: _____ Facebook: _____

TikTok: _____ Others: _____

E. Agency Credit. The Agency and any collaborative partners will be credited as follows in any use of the Work: _____

V. PAYMENT

Artist's total payment will be: \$_____, to be paid as follows:

A. \$_____ Deposit. [e.g., 25-50% of final fee, non-refundable, to be paid to Artist at start of contract]

B. \$_____ Final payment. Final payment is due upon acceptance of all final artwork and completion of scope of work, net 30 days. The Organization's right to use the work is conditioned upon receipt of payment.

C. Any additional payments: [e.g., rush fees or fees for social media engagement]

D. _____

E. Expenses: Organization will not reimburse Artist for any expenses or costs incurred by Artist unless (i) those expenses are agreed upon in writing and approved by Agency prior to incurring such expenses, and (ii) receipts for such expenses are submitted to Agency no later than 30 days after the date of expenditure. **If applicable, list any additional expenses for which the Agency will reimburse the Artist:**

F. Payment Method (please select one):

Check here if the Artist should be paid by direct deposit.

Check here if the Artist should be paid by paper check sent in the mail

If the Artist's bank account is under a different government name, please list it here:

Organization will only use this name when necessary for payment or tax purposes. The Artist will let the Organization know if their name or mailing address changes.

VI. OWNERSHIP AND RIGHTS:

A. Copyright. The Copyright of the Work is and will remain the sole and exclusive property of the Artist. The Artist is free to adapt, exhibit, share, print, distribute, or sell the Work.

B. License. Artist hereby grants to the Organization a perpetual, royalty-free license to use the Work in an unlimited manner, including, but not limited to, the right to display, reproduce, distribute, and sell the Work. The Organization may not alter the image without permission of the artist, except for cropping and: [if applicable, list any allowed modifications to the artwork, such as adding text]

C. Right of Publicity. Organization shall have the right in perpetuity to use the Artist's name, approved image and likeness in connection with its rights under this Agreement.

VII. INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR RELATIONSHIP:

- A. Artist will be an independent contractor and is not an agent, partner, joint venture or employee of Organization. Artist will not be eligible for any of the benefits paid to employees of Organization, including, but not limited to, workers' compensation and health insurance;
- B. Organization will not withhold or pay federal, state or local income taxes or payroll taxes of any kind on behalf of the Artist or any employees of the Artist.
- C. Artist will in good faith, collaborate with the Organization, however, and except as explicitly stated herein, Artist retains sole discretion regarding the design, selection of materials and fabrication of the Work, and will determine the means and methods of performing the duties described herein.
- D. Artist has been commissioned based on their unique skill and expertise;
- E. Artist has complied with all federal, state, and local laws requiring permits, certificates, and licenses required to carry out the services to be performed under this Agreement;
- F. Artist has the right, at their own cost, to use assistants as subcontractors or employees to provide the services required by this Agreement, provided that such use is not inconsistent with any terms of this Agreement.

VIII. WARRANTIES AND INDEMNIFICATION

- A. Artist warrants and represents to Organization that, to the best of Artist's knowledge and belief, the Work created and provided to Organization by Artist will be wholly original, will not infringe on the rights of a third party, will not include defamatory, libelous, or unlawful matter, and it has not been previously published or licensed to any third party. Artist agrees to defend, indemnify, and hold Organization harmless from and against any and all damages, losses, liabilities, costs and expenses (including without limitation, litigation costs and reasonable attorneys' fees) incurred by Organization as a result of any claim, judgment or proceeding against Organization allegedly related to, arising out of or in connection any breach or alleged breach or failure of any of the covenants, representations, warranties, or obligations of Artist under this Agreement.
- B. Organization warrants and represents that any materials it provides to Artist for use in the Work will be either wholly owned by it or licensed to it for use in the Work, and does not include defamatory, libelous, or unlawful matter, and it has not been previously published or licensed to any third party. Organization warrants that it will not use or exploit the Work in any manner not authorized hereunder. Organization agrees to defend, indemnify, and hold Organization harmless from and against any and all damages, losses, liabilities, costs and expenses (including without limitation, litigation costs and reasonable attorneys' fees) incurred by Artist as a result of any claim, judgment or proceeding against Organization allegedly related to, arising out of or in connection any breach or alleged breach or failure of any of the covenants, representations, warranties, or obligations of Organization under this Agreement.

IX. TERMINATION: This Agreement shall continue until the End Date or until earlier terminated either: (i) by Artist or Organization with 10 days' prior written notice; or (ii) by mutual written agreement of the Parties at any time.

X. DISPUTES AND LIMITATION ON DAMAGES

Mediation and Arbitration of Disputes. Mediation and/or arbitration is an option in lieu of, and is always less expensive than litigation. Any dispute or claim arising out of or in connection with any provision of this Agreement, will be first submitted to mediation, and if that is not successful, then submitted to binding arbitration.

A. If in California: All disputes arising out of this agreement will be submitted to mediation in accordance with the rules and procedures of Arts Arbitration and Mediation Services, a program of California Lawyers for the Arts. If mediation is not successful in resolving all disputes arising out of this agreement, those unresolved disputes will be submitted to final and binding arbitration. The arbitrator will be selected in accordance with the rules of Arts Arbitration and Mediation Services, a program of California Lawyers for the Arts. If such services are not available, the dispute will be submitted to arbitration in accordance with the laws of the State of California. The arbitrator's award will be final, and judgment may be entered upon it by any court having jurisdiction thereof.

B. If in any other U.S. state: Any dispute, claim or controversy arising out of or relating to this Agreement or the breach, termination, enforcement, interpretation or validity thereof, including the determination of the scope or applicability of this agreement to arbitrate, will be determined by arbitration in [insert the desired place of arbitration] before [one/three] arbitrator(s). The arbitration will be administered by JAMS pursuant to its Comprehensive Arbitration Rules and Procedures [and in accordance with the Expedited Procedures in those Rules] [or pursuant to JAMS' Streamlined Arbitration Rules and Procedures]. Judgment on the Award may be entered in any court having jurisdiction. This clause will not preclude parties from seeking provisional remedies in aid of arbitration from a court of appropriate jurisdiction.

XI. OTHER

A. In the event that Artist fails to deliver the Work pursuant to the terms of this Agreement, any and all rights to the Work granted under this Agreement to Organization will terminate and revert to Artist and Organization will not be liable to Artist for any unpaid costs, expenses or fees beyond the non-refundable deposit fee.

B. Automatic Reversion of Rights to Artist. If the Artist delivers the Work pursuant to the terms of this Agreement, but Organization either refuses acceptance of the Work or fails to pay Artist all amounts due hereunder, any and all rights to the Work granted under this Agreement to Organization will terminate and revert to Artist.

- C. Assignment.** Artist will not assign, encumber, or otherwise transfer this Agreement or any rights granted hereunder without the prior written consent of Organization, which consent Organization may withhold for any reason. Organization will not assign this Agreement or any rights it has hereunder without the consent of Artist.
- D. Waiver/Modification.** The failure of any of the Parties to exercise any right or option given to it by this Agreement or to insist upon strict adherence to the terms of this Agreement will not constitute a waiver of any terms or conditions of this Agreement with respect to any other or subsequent breach. No waiver or modification will be valid or binding unless in writing and signed by the Parties.
- E. Counterparts.** This Agreement may be executed in one or more counterparts, each of which will be deemed an original but all of which will constitute one and the same instrument. For purposes of this Agreement, use of a facsimile, email, or other electronic medium will have the same force and effect as an original signature.
- F. Severability.** If any provision of this Agreement is held illegal or unenforceable in a judicial proceeding, such provision will be severed and will be inoperative, and the remainder of this Agreement will remain operative and binding on the Parties.

The Parties have read this entire Agreement prior to its execution, understand each of the provisions herein, have had the opportunity to have this Agreement reviewed by independent legal counsel, and agree to be legally bound by it.

Artist Signature/date:

Organization Signature/date:

Name: _____

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

SAMPLE ADDENDUM:

Communication and Conflict Guidelines for Group Cultural Projects

AGREEMENTS FOR COMMUNICATION AND HOW WE SHOW UP

- A. Aim to meet all deadlines and commitments** outlined in the timeline above. Let us know if you can't make a deadline or need a timeline shift.
- B. Give at least 24 hour notice for meeting or deadline changes:** Participate in all required meetings and sessions, or let us know at least 24 hours in advance if you can't make a deadline or meeting and need to reschedule (except in emergencies).
- C. Reply to communications within 72 hours:** Artists and point people will reply to emails within 72 hours, or let each other know within 72 hours if we are unable to reply (because of climate crisis, illness, etc) and need more time.
- D. Let the project point person know if your access needs change** or you need more support to participate in the program.
- E. Speak from our own experiences.**
- F. Move in / move back.** Take note of who's speaking and who's not. Be mindful of our privilege, power, and position and balance our participation so everyone's voice is heard.
- G. Treat each other with care and practice unlearning oppression together.** We all come to this project with good intentions but not everyone is at the same place with social justice language and analysis, perception of oppressive language¹, and experience in social justice movements. We commit to learning together and offering and receiving feedback that is rooted in boundaries and care.
- H. Honor the stories and feedback of any frontline community members we collaborate with and honor artists' agency and leadership.** Collaboration is a delicate balance. It requires moving together with care without dimming our creative vision. Artists agree to receive feedback with care and implement revisions as needed. Organizations agree to give clear, consistent, and constructive feedback, and support artists to implement that feedback in a way that respects their creative agency.

AGREEMENTS TO NAVIGATE CONFLICT WITH CARE AND RESPECT

If there is a misunderstanding, tension, hurt, or conflict we aim to:

- A. Take responsibility for the impact of our words and actions.** Move from a place of acknowledging impact; we often don't intend to harm each other, but what counts is how our actions impact others.

1 We define oppressive language as any words or phrases that bolster the oppression of people based on gender, race, class, sexuality, ability, nationality, religion, or any other category of identity.

- B. Acknowledge the hurt or harm we have caused** and make a genuine apology² to the group or directly.
- C. Call each other in, not out**³. We will offer and receive feedback in ways that are rooted in boundaries and care, not disposal, shaming, and punishment. In alignment with our commitment to abolition and transformative justice, we aim to pursue accountability and repair without calling each other out in public/on social media or creating campaigns against each other. Conflict will happen, and if we are able to move through it together with integrity, without perpetuating harm, it will strengthen our group.
- D. Use your best judgment about when a direct, private conversation might be more helpful** than an email to the whole group. All of us are more likely to go on the defense in front of others, but may be more open if approached directly and privately.
- E. Avoid gossip.** We will check in with our intentions and distinguish between times we need to privately process vs. engage in negative and harmful gossip.
- F. Reach out to your point person individually** if you need support with conflict or experience harm, harassment, oppressive language, or disrespect from other members of the project team.
- G. Reflect on our individual and culturally-based behaviors and motivations.** We are coming from many different backgrounds, experiences, and contexts. Recognize that someone else's frame of reference is likely different from ours. Practice deep listening to ourselves and each other. See if we can learn from another's point of view when conflicts arise.
- H. Work together to identify the structural component** of where a conflict originates from and try to find a solution that aligns with our values.

2 [How To Give A Good Apology](#) by Mia Mingus

3 For definitions of calling in and calling out, and many other essentials of conflict navigation, see [In It Together](#). "Calling-in is a practice used within groups of people who have a shared purpose when a member of the group takes an action that does not reflect the values of the group or breaks the named guidelines of group participation. The call-in is usually a one-on-one conversation in which a supportive member of the group reminds their fellow member that the group has shared values and guidelines, supports them in reflecting on the ways their behaviors may have led to unintended consequences or harms, and continues to work with that person to make amends and change their behavior."

FICTIONAL CONTRACT EXCERPT

This is an example of how you might fill in our sample contract for a fictional art collaboration

THIS AGREEMENT MUST BE SIGNED AND RETURNED BEFORE ARTIST CAN BEGIN THIS JOB

This Agreement is entered into by:

[Name of Organization:] **Forward Together** (herein after referred to as the “Organization”),
and [Name of Artist:] **Laylanni Jackson-Abbas** (herein after referred to as the “Artist”), referred to jointly as the “Parties”.

Project Point Person: **Xochitl Chan-Garcia, Fictitious Forward Together Program Director**

I. SCOPE OF WORK: Artist agrees to create original artwork (the “Work”) for the Organization:

A. Project Title: **Trans Day of Resilience**

B. Description of artwork: Artist will work with Forward Together and the fictional partner organization Trans Families Are Beautiful (TFAB) to create an original image that expresses the power, dignity and love of trans families who are Black, Indigenous and people of color.

C. Dimensions and format: Artist will create two versions of the image:

- One 300dpi 10 x 16” CMYK version for posters, and
- One RGB version for social media that is either vertical 1080x1350 pixels or square 1080x1080 pixels.

D. Text or logos to be included: Artwork should include the text: “We Defend our Trans Family”. Forward Together and TFAB may overlay our logos in a 1.5x1.5” area in the bottom right corner of the poster version.

E. Revisions: Depending on feedback from the Organization, the Artist will submit a maximum of 2 rounds of requested major revisions and up to 4 rounds of minor revisions.

F. Additional Deliverables: Artist will also submit a headshot, brief bio, and brief written statement about the artwork. They will participate in a 1 hour interview with Forward Together, for an artist spotlight feature for email, website and social media. The Artist will also share the artwork on social media.

G. TIMELINE

1. Duration: The Agreement will begin on **August 1, 2022** and end on **November 20, 2022**, unless terminated prior thereto in accordance with the terms of this Agreement. If the Parties desire to negotiate a mutually agreeable extension to this Agreement, the Parties may do so.

2. Key Dates and Deadlines:

8/3, 4pm PT - TDOR Launch meeting with other artist and key staff

8/8 - Artist headshot and bio due

8/15 - Rough sketch and brief written concept description due from Artist

8/18 - Agency sends feedback about concept and sketch

[8/25 - *contingent*: revised concept and rough sketch due if necessary based on Organization's feedback]

9/5 - Black and white draft due

9/8 - Agency sends feedback about draft

[9/19 - *contingent*: revised black and white draft if necessary based on Agency feedback]

10/10 - Color artwork due

[10/17 - *contingent*: revised color artwork if necessary based on Agency feedback]

10/24 - Brief artist statement due

10/26, 4pm PT - Artist interview with Forward Together

11/14 - TDOR launches - Artwork shared online

3. Embargo: All work created for this project is embargoed until the project launch on 11/14/22

PLANNING WORKSHEET for CULTURAL ORGANIZING PROJECTS

Artist/s: _____

Organizational Point Person: _____

- 1. Description:** What will you be creating?

- 2. What are the specific goals of your project?**

- 3. What specific changes are we trying to make in the world**—in material conditions and narratives? Are we trying to free someone from prison? Grow your base? Share resources and information? Shift or amplify a specific narrative? Specificity is your friend.

- 4. Who will create the art?** Are there community members or partners you will collaborate with? Is there an artist accomplice you trust who can work with you to express your message?

- 5. Who is the audience?** The art must reach specific groups of people to meet our goals. (For example, reaching and influencing decision makers can make desired changes happen. Reaching unorganized folks in our own communities can build support for our campaigns and shift culture, which can in turn influence decision makers. And we can help sustain our own communities and survival by celebrating ourselves with art.)

6. Where and when are the most strategic points of distribution? How can we move our audiences to action and increase impact? Please share how this art will be relevant and shared locally as well as nationally. How will you reach the audience? Where are the most impactful places for the art to live in the world? What current events, meaningful places, events or observances can we connect with to help fuel dissemination and create meaning?

7. Rollout: How will the art be strategically and accessibly distributed and used by the target audiences? If the artwork will be displayed physically, what spaces and times are available for the artwork to reach community members? If the artwork will be displayed digitally, what can we do to find ways to reach community members who aren't connected to digital spaces? If the artwork is reproducible (e.g. artwork prints, zines, booklets, small freebies, etc), what considerations should we incorporate into our production/distribution plan?

8. How can we make the artwork and our distribution plan as accessible as possible?

9. How else can we use the art to build deeper repair, trust and reciprocity with the communities these stories come from, the organizational membership, and our other target audiences?

10. Project Timeline and Key Dates:

Acknowledgements

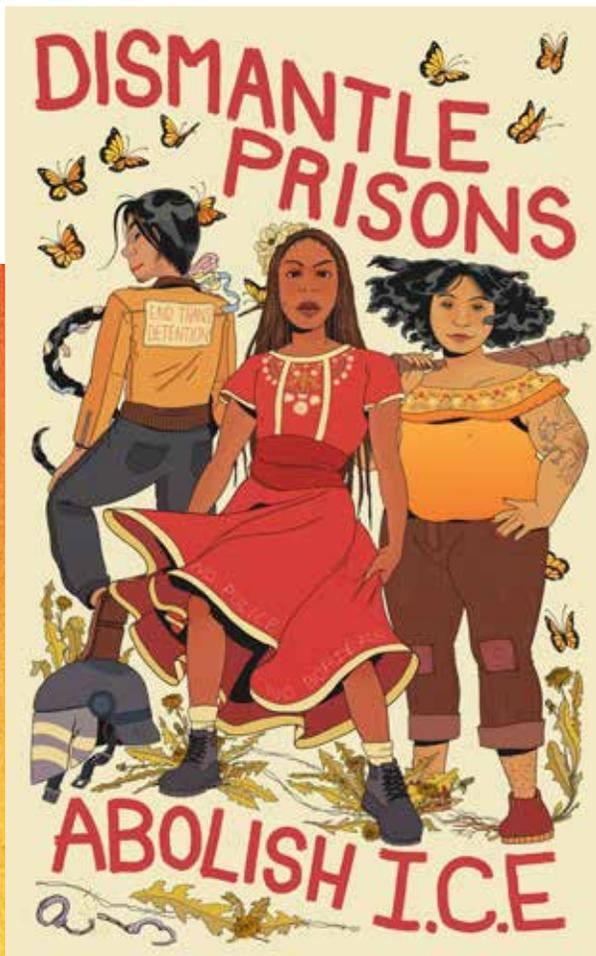
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BY ART TWINK WITH FORWARD TOGETHER FOR TRANS DAY OF RESILIENCE 2018

