



# OAKLAND FUTURES



DEVELOPED FOR THE CENTER FOR CULTURAL POWER BY WHOLE STORY GROUP, LLC



# CREATIVE BRIEF FOR COMMISSIONED ARTISTS

Oakland Futures Project is seeking BIPOC artists to create digital content (videos, images, stories) that inspires our city to cherish and invest in Oakland artists and cultural creators.



## ABOUT OAKLAND FUTURES

Oakland Futures is a story-based project of The Center for Cultural Power that uplifts, shares and connects stories about our city's complex history, current moment and future promise, through the lens of BIPOC storytellers in Oakland. Our goal is to create compelling public narratives that inspire our city to invest in Oakland's BIPOC arts and culture communities in unprecedented ways.

**Invest in Oakland culture. Invest in Oakland's culture makers.**



# WHY THIS PROJECT, AND WHY NOW?

“In this moment, we face four major threats to our shared existence: a global pandemic; militarized state and vigilante violence, significantly directed at Black people; environmental degradation; and an economic crisis. All of these have been shaped and exacerbated by racism and white supremacy. BIPOC people are dying of these threats – by disease, police/carceral and racial violence, and the health and social inequities that force us into premature death. The main question that we all confront now is whether we will emerge from this era choosing to maintain the same systems and beliefs that support the current culture of division and death or if we will instead move forward toward a more just, shared future, guided by worldviews that foster collaboration and mutuality.” - the Cultural New Deal

## **We find ourselves in a moment of narrative opportunity.**

We're in, as Arundhati Roy calls it, a portal to change; a gateway between one world and the next. COVID-19 and the movement for Black Lives continue to reveal what many BIPOC artists in Oakland have long known: that the gap in economic and social opportunities for our communities is deep-seated and structural. But this moment also lays bare the essential nature of artists. In the midst of a racial reckoning, a global pandemic and an historic presidential election, Oakland BIPOC artists continue to organize and innovate to help our city “keep the lights on.” Stories of abundance and solidarity—these are our stories, too. They are immeasurably powerful because they have the ability to shift public sentiment and shape the future of arts and culture in Oakland for years to come.

Oakland Futures invites you to help lead a narrative strategy to move the needle on this goal. We have developed four story threads to guide your work. We invite you to create a work of art that builds on any one of the story threads, developed by Oakland BIPOC artists of the Oakland Futures project.



## **Core Audience: Who will the work engage?**

We want to activate a multi-racial, multi-generational base of residents and young people (ages 18-55), primarily in Oakland. We want to appeal to a broad base of Oakland's cultural and political power players: elected officials, new residents, business owners, emergent voters, youth artists, faith leaders and also hope to tell core narratives that inspire BIPOC artists and cultural advocates across the country. Bear in mind that this effort is all about connecting with the audience in ways that are rooted in a celebration of the artist's vision for the future of Oakland.

## **What types of work are we looking for?**

Short scripts or story concepts for digital forms that can be shared on social media. Your work can include video/animation, music, graphic design or illustration, spoken word poem, movement/choreography, mixed-media, storytelling, sketch comedy. Social media platforms that your work may be created for: Tik-Tok, Instagram, FB, Twitch. Creative needs to be based on the core story threads above: You need to be ok with it being promoted digitally and connected to and repurposed for calls-to-action which may include advocacy and organizing on behalf of arts, BIPOC artists and cultural equity.

## **What content is needed?**

We envision three, 60-90 second digital videos that are brief in length, colorful, can act as stand-alone films or live together through a shared theme of futures that double down on artists' wisdom and lived experience. Any still or video images, graphics, or music used must be originally created and/or fully cleared for use.

## **Compensation & Ownership**

As a script writer, you will be compensated for your projects and artists featured in your film will retain full rights to their work. We just ask that you give us license to use it.

## **About The Center for Cultural Power**

The Center for Cultural Power is a women of color, artist-led nonprofit nonpartisan organization, inspiring artists and culture makers to imagine a world where power is distributed equitably and where we live in harmony with nature. We create intersectional stories and content addressing issues of migration, climate, gender, and racial justice. Igniting change at the intersection of art, culture, and social justice.





# EXPLORING STORY THREADS

## STORY THREAD

**Story threads** are narrative throughlines or story ‘topics.’ Story threads help unify a collective message that we, as artists, storytellers and cultural leaders, want to tell in our fight to create a sustainable and just world.

Story threads are powerful storytelling tools for two reasons: 1) threads are expansive enough for an artist to make it their own and 2.) specific enough to hold multiple stories together.

Woven together, the four story threads create a collective narrative about who we are as artists in Oakland, and our shared role in building a future where we’re all celebrated and invested in.

## STORY EXAMPLES

Case studies and stories that advance a story thread. Story examples are not meant to restrict or define your creative work or your personal exploration of story threads. They’re here to remind us that Oakland artists and cultural creators are the ones who are actively living out these story threads in our communities.



# WE ARE INNOVATORS OF NEW ECONOMIES.

Oakland Artists create new economies. We manifest the resources that proliferate creativity. When old social networks and marketplaces stop or collapse (as many have in COVID), we find new ways to reconnect our communities. Our relationships to our neighbors are authentic and built upon collective care. This mutual love and bond allows us to construct marketplaces that celebrate the wisdom and strengths of local communities. Our communities benefit from an exchange of goods and services, circulation of needed resources and aid that keep each other afloat during times of crisis and uncertainty. Our marketplaces reflect abundance, a diversity of skills and knowledge, and opportunities for young artists to learn about community-based economies. We know our city is rich in resources so we build upon our natural ecosystems rather than outsourcing, extracting and creating excess. Oakland Artists hold the power to create new networks when the old ways stop serving the People.



## STORY EXAMPLES



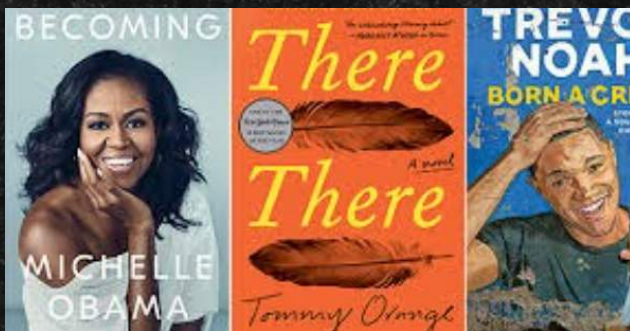
1. [Oakland Art Murmur / First Friday](#) was started by a collective of gallery owners in response to diminishing number of affordable venues for Oakland artists and performers.
2. [Black Cultural Zone](#) a collaborative of Black artists, residents, leaders and organizers formed to keep culture and place for Black folks in East Oakland.
3. [Stockton Strong Marketplace](#) a partnership between local creative business and city government that provides an online market by and for women entrepreneurs in Stockton.



# WE INSPIRE THE WORLD.

Oakland Artists create art that is globally recognized. From the Pointer Sisters, to MC Hammer, to Bruce Lee, to Emory Douglas, to Too \$hort, to En Vogue, to Sheila E., to Ryan Coogler, to Chinaka Hodge, to Raphael Saadiq, to Goapele, to Digital Underground, to Hieroglyphics, to Keyshia Cole, to Zendaya, to Daveed Diggs, to Alphabet Rockers, to Kehlani and every artist of the Oakland Futures project. Oakland Artists are beloved by fans and arts audiences across the world for our power to break and create new molds, while never losing our ethos of radical love and belonging. We overturn a culture of fame that says that in order to succeed we need to exclude, erase or forget our histories and where we've come from. We know the soil we come from and believe it's #allofusornone.

## STORY EXAMPLES



2. Former President Barack Obama lists Tommy Orange's 'There, There' on favorite book list of 2018

3. Bruce Lee, considered "father of mixed martial arts," developed jeet kune do in his Oakland martial arts studio blocks from Oakland Technical High School.



1. Hamilton: An American Musical and artist Daveed Diggs transforms Broadway with spoken word, hip hop theater he developed as a young artist in Oakland, Ca.





# OAKLAND IS FULL OF CULTURAL TREASURE.

The power of this story thread is the belief that Oakland BIPOC artists are precious--we are our city's cultural treasure. In times of peace, as well as in times of crisis, BIPOC artists use our magic to heal the city, and the worlds we touch. We are healers who process because we have not forgotten our sacred sites (Oscar Grant Plaza, Lake Merritt, Fruitvale and MacArthur BART, 27th and Telegraph, International and 35th). We revive Mother Earth with our community gardens and aquaponics.

We have not, however, benefited from our city's economic or political wins. Gentrification, displacement, racial injustice and the whitening of local histories has made it easy to fall into a 'cultural amnesia.' Oakland BIPOC artists dream about what more we might create with real resources, with the trust and backing of city leaders, with the right platforms and venues.

How much more healing could we help affect if a public will to restore and expand opportunities for BIPOC artists in Oakland existed?

When we look at Memphis, we see a city whose infrastructure is built around its cultural treasure, Memphis' artists and musical legacy. In the same way, Oakland must invest in cultural infrastructure that protects its cultural creators. Our call is to everyday Oaklanders. For all of Oakland to 1.) publicly name the preciousness of BIPOC artists and 2.) to invest in BIPOC artists in unprecedented ways as we move into a new future.



1. Chinatown's Tai Chi community at Madison Square Park represents the power of culture embedded in place.



2. Spulu is a Oakland-born Tongan dancer whose choreography derives from the Islands of Tonga, Samoa, Tahiti, Hawaii, Fiji and New Zealand.



3. Interdisciplinary performance artist, Dohee Lee, is known for creating a new form of performance by mixing Korean Shamanism and contemporary art.



4. Asian and Pacific Islander Youth Promoting Advocacy and Leadership (AYPAL) organizers teach Oakland immigrant and refugee families to leverage culture and art for political power.



# CULTURAL POWER IS RACIAL JUSTICE.

One of our greatest powers as BIPOC artists is that we understand that the fight for racial justice cannot be achieved without cultural power. BIPOC artists carry the gift of speaking truth to power. We call out the names of injustices that hope to go unseen. We dance and process in ritual movement on sidewalks where police have beaten Black and Brown bodies. We make a kind of noise the world cannot resist. We call out elitist institutions for their white hubris and gatekeeping. When organizations in our city serving Black and Brown youth are shut down, Oakland Artists are first to advocate for adequate resources and form alternatives.

## STORY EXAMPLES



1. Cat Brooks is a playwright, performance artist and co-founder of the Anti Police-Terror Project.



2. Peace parade in East Oakland led by Oakland artists and city leaders



3. Oakland poet, Sarah O'Neal, and San Francisco poet, Tongo Eisen-Martin, speak at Moms4Housing rally to bring awareness to housing crisis in Oakland, which disproportionately affects African Americans.

4. Grammy-nominated children's hip hop collective, Alphabet Rockers, uses art to teach racial justice.