

SOMETHING TO GATHER, SOMETHING TO USE



**EMERGING ARTS PROFESSIONALS FELLOWSHIP
REGENERATIVE PRACTICES**

2019-20

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Affinity Team Bios ~ Page 03

"Internal Landscapes: Grounding & Centering" by **Chanell Stone** ~ Page

05

"A Raised Fist: Advocating for Wellness Through Community

Programming" by **Adrienne Ramsey** ~ Page 09

"In the Comfort of The Silent Eye" by **Tyese Wortham** ~ Page 14

"On the Essential Worker: Classism, Regenerative Practices, and Arts and Culture" by **J Spagnolo** ~ Page 15

REGENERATIVE PRACTICES MISSION STATEMENT

This publication is presented as a result of the 2019-20 Emerging Arts Professionals (SF/BA) Fellowship. In our year together, we explored how we can make arts administration more sustainable and what can we do as individuals to renew our energy and passion, as well as support each other. We also discussed how we as leaders of programs and organizations can encourage a healthier arts and culture ecosystem. As a group, we hosted a January dinner with our team and guest speakers Ericka Huggins, Kija Lucas, Katherin Canton, Yesenia Sanchez, and Shelley Kuang to explore our topic. We also co-developed a February fellowship session with EAP staff and facilitated the majority of the session.

**FRONT AND BACK COVER IMAGE CREDIT: JAMES TURRELL,
"MEETING", 1980-86/2016**



Chanell Stone is a visual artist and independent curator based in Oakland, CA. She graduated from California College of the Arts in May 2019 and has exhibited her artwork in San Francisco and New York. Chanell is invested in diversifying art world conventions both within her practice and systematically. While coming from a background in arts production, Chanell is also excited to follow her passion for social practice and program development. She is eager and motivated to create systems of resource allocation and disbursement for artists living in rapidly gentrified cities. She envisions a future in which the arts and major industry merge in order to provide fiscal support for artists and protect the cultural heartbeat of the community.



Adrienne Ramsey is an arts educator and writer based in the San Francisco Bay Area. She holds a BA in Art History from the University of Southern California. She is the Founder and Editor-in-Chief of *GIRLS Magazine*, a portfolio of interviews with women artists and social activists. She has also previously held positions at the Exploratorium, California African-American Museum, Contemporary Jewish Museum, and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. Her current research interests include: Experimental Photography and Performance Art (1960-present), Relational Art/Social Practice (1990-Present), Institutional Critique, and African-American Art History.



Serving artists and arts organizations through real estate development, **Tyese Wortham** runs Keeping Space – Oakland, a technical and financial assistance initiative, and is the Director of Community Engagement at CAST. Prior to CAST, Tyese honed her social justice lens as a grantmaker in Cultural Equity Grants at the San Francisco Arts Commission, and as a presenter and producer of culture-specific artists with the San Francisco Ethnic Dance Festival. Tyese is currently a leadership fellow with the Association of Performing Arts Professionals (APAP) and is a practicing dance artist specializing in the folkloric spiritual and performative African traditions of Cuba and Peru.



J Spagnolo (they/them) is a poet, activist, teacher, and cultural producer in Berkeley, California. They have produced dozens of successful events, including nonprofit festivals with Resource Generation and Social Media for Nonprofits, intergenerational LGBTQ dinner parties with Freedom Philes, writing workshops with Paris Lit Up and Inprint Houston, and other creative and professional events. Their poetry has been celebrated through numerous radio shows, film festivals, and publications. Spagnolo co-founded and co-directs Poets Reading the News, a nonprofit that bridges journalism with poetry.

INTERNAL LANDSCAPES: GROUNDING & CENTERING

BY CHANELL STONE

A large part of Regenerative Practices is rooted in creating a place of calm inside of our bodies. The body is our spirit's personal dwelling place housing our very being. In essence, it is a site for restoration and unbounded refuge. That being said, we must nurture it from the inside out. A healthy grounding practice for our mind manifests outwardly in every aspect of our lives. An important thing to remember is that there is no "one size fits all" approach to Regenerative Practices and that it is an ever-changing malleable thing. In this section, tips are provided to aid in remaining present, relinquishing control, and envisioning, all of which serve as active parts in re-centering ourselves and remaining grounded. Below are **exercises** one can practice:

Daily Breath: Slow and Steady 7-2-11

Paying attention to our breathing is single-handedly one of the best ways to come into the present. A focus on breath takes us out of our heads and into our bodies, quieting the buzzing thoughts in our minds.

- Inhale quietly through the nose for 7 counts
- Hold that breath for 2 counts
- Make a "whoosh" sound out of the mouth and slowly exhale for 11 counts

* Practice this while sitting up 4 times daily and take note of its relaxing affects.

5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique

Sometimes the best way to feel present is to literally take note of where you are in your body. This exercise asks us to use all five of our senses to feel grounded in our environment. While seated, name out loud:

- 5 things you see
- 4 things you can feel
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste

(feel free to grab a desired snack, taste it, and really savor the flavor)

Waterfalls: Let your thoughts come and go

Often times the hardest task can be getting our thoughts in order. A babbling mind can sometimes prevent us from even beginning. A helpful exercise is to observe these thoughts as an “outsider looking in.” Using your minds eye, look at your thoughts:

- Acknowledge their presence
- What do they look like, what are they saying?
- Do not be angry at yourself for thoughts that seem “negative”
- Now imagine them as leaves going downstream and eventually spilling over the edge of a waterfall.
- They are temporary moments: Let them go

Just Vent: Stream of Consciousness

In order to fully re-center, we must expunge the old and drop our baggage at the door. This requires complete internal honesty. Many of us want to shed old skin but run into the trap of censoring ourselves, even when alone. This weekly exercise will allow you to be more honest and vulnerable with yourself. Instead, make room for clear thought:

- Get some paper and a pen (with no ability to erase)
- Find a quiet area and smooth surface to write on
- Let your thoughts flow on paper without thinking
- Be honest: say whatever. There is no right or wrong
- Do not look back on the writing until you feel finished
- When finished, read the pages without judgment or attachment, thus in turn allowing yourself to process what you have vented

Fill up as many pages as necessary and allow this to be a way to get to know yourself deeper without outside interference. It will help to keep you present and self-aware

Regenerative Practices in Times of Emergency: COVID-19

There is no doubt that in times of emergency, Regenerative Practices must take new shape and embark on new ground. Many of these new forms emerge internally and externally: privately within ourselves and publicly within community. This section explores what we've come to learn and witness collectively.

- Limit your daily intake of the news and social media
- Strengthening Community Connections and Participation
 - This is a time to reach out to loved ones and connections: phone, zoom, email, etc.
 - Also use this to reach out to folks that you don't know but would like to know.
 - Do not isolate yourself completely. A simple conversation can go along way for your overall well being.
- Check in with Yourself: What is this experience teaching you about yourself? What changes do you need to make in your personal life? What do you envision your life to look like post-quarantine?
- Trust your intuition: you know what you need and what feels good to you.

This will guide your self-care journey.

Emergency Grants: A plethora of emergency grants for Artists and Arts workers surfaced as a direct response to COVID-19 to support global arts communities. Many of which were generated for the Bay Area (one of the most expensive regions in the country) as well for the greater nation. This showed us that the money has always “been there” for artists and was finally exercised in a community-driven fashion. Examples include: The Safety Net Fund, Untitled Art: Emergency Grant, Arts Leaders of Color Emergency Fund, Format: The Photographer's Fund, The Creators Fund, The Oakland Food Service Workers COVID-19 Relief fund, COVID-19 Financial Solidarity Entry Support, One Fair Wage Emergency Fund, Women Photograph COVID-19 Emergency Fund, YBCA Artists Now Grant - \$500, Bay Area Arts Worker Relief Funds, Southern Exposure: Alternative Exposures Grant, Creative Capital: Artist Relief

Mutual Aid Funds: Mutual Aid is a grassroots approach to funding individuals in need. Unlike a grant, the money is not generated via a board; corporate donors or stakeholders but rather through direct donations from the community (aka individuals). Also, unlike a grant, selected recipients must donate a portion of what they were awarded back into the “pot” so that the fund is able to sustain itself and support new recipients. Examples include: Critical Resistance Oakland: The Zachary Project. Mutual Aid spreadsheets are also shared online and generated for various cities

Direct Crowdfunding: During COVID-19 we have beared witness to direct peer-to-peer donations via platforms such as: PayPal, Venmo, CashApp, and GoFundMe. The resurgence of “giving to give” and compassion has become enlivened once again. It is refreshing to see vulnerability and asking for help answered and not ignored. Many folks are able to pay rent, buy groceries and cover utilities due to the increase of online activity on social media platforms. This has served as the perfect example of raw unmediated “collective care.”

A RAISED FIST: ADVOCATING FOR WELLNESS THROUGH COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING

BY ADRIANNE RAMSEY

Self-care is usually depicted as a manicure, wine night, bubble bath, and the occasional hike. While those are small acts of self-care that should not be criticized, proper self-care is a much deeper process, particularly for the Black community. There is a centuries-long system in the United States that forces Black citizens to survive in a country that deprives them of their human rights and tells them that their emotional, mental, and physical wellness isn't important. But how can one ultimately survive and sustain if they aren't practicing self-care? Radical self-care is the practice of reclaiming your power over your mind and body and re-energizing your spirit. There is a strong history of Black people creating opportunities for the Black community to practice radical self-care and advocate for healthy living, usually through holistic programming and special events.

In the mid-1960s, the Civil Rights Movement ushered in groundbreaking legislation, thanks in part to its use of nonviolent tactics. But as a younger generation of African-Americans came of age and continued to experience institutionalized racism and state-sanctioned violence, an intensifying call for faster action and more dynamic leadership led to a schism in both politics and style. At the Mississippi March Against Fear in 1966, activist Stokely Carmichael made a rallying cry for nationwide solidarity and a refusal to be cowed by racial violence meant to suppress demands for equality, dubbing this as "Black Power!" His urgent call for action was soon followed with the Black Power salute: a defiant, raised fist. Furthermore, many Black activists called attention to the fact that what the American flag symbolizes – liberty, justice, and equality – rarely extends to African-Americans.

In October of 1966 in Oakland, California, Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale founded The Black Panther Party (BPP) for Self-Defense, demanding the “power to determine the destiny of our Black community.”^[i] The Party’s original directive was to protect African-American residents from police brutality in their own neighborhoods. While the militant movement grew, the BPP developed the Ten-Point Program to address philosophical principles surrounding Black Nationalism and directed Emory Douglas, the party’s Minister of Culture, to produce *The Black Panther Newspaper* (1967-1980), which published content illustrating both struggle and promise. The BPP also focused their energy on their community programs, which embraced Black pride and sought to rectify social and economic inequalities that affect African-Americans. These non-government funded initiatives supported the Black community in a range of ways, from schooling, to food services, to mobile health clinics, and more. Below are a few of the community programs mentioned in an early 1970s edition of *The Black Panther*^[ii]:

- **“The People’s Free Ambulance Service** will provide free transportation 24 hours a day. Often an ambulance will not appear in our community until hours after it is called and then there is a charge for a service that should be a human right.”
- **“Liberation Schools** – Created to give Black children the correct view of their role in the present-day society. The Liberation Schools are designed to become community schools under the larger youth institute.”
- **“Legal Aid Education Program** – To provide the people with free legal first aid (how to prevent and handle arrests), free community legal aid classes and help in obtaining lawyers.”
- **“Free Breakfast Program** – To feed children a free, healthy, hot breakfast before school in the mornings. Children cannot function in a classroom situation if they are hungry. The Free Breakfast Program provides a much needed diet that is adequate in vitamins, iron and protein.”

The BPP is well known for their intensity, but their boldest act by far was stressing the importance of quality of life. Taking care of oneself and their community is a radical act, especially for Black activists. The BPP's various community programs explored how a balanced and vibrant life ultimately demands that we take our needs into consideration and act in their best interest. For example: The BPP's Oakland Community School, which began as the Children's House in 1970 and became a full-time elementary school from 1973 until 1982, received state recognition as a model institution for its commitment to African-American children in the Bay Area and praise from the Black community for being a safe space to foster solidarity.

While their acts of service uplifted the Black community, the BPP received intense government pushback and surveillance, with several Panthers either murdered by police/government agents or imprisoned on bogus charges. The mainstream American press further vilified the Party's leaders and members for their militant rhetoric and dress style, which consisted of black leather jackets, pants, shoes, and berets. The Party dissolved in 1982 due to the corrupt actions of some of the Party leaders and internal disagreements over whether the Party should focus more on police brutality or expanding their community programs. Ultimately the BPP claimed a status for themselves in social, economic, and political circumstances that denied them recognition as human beings. Over 50 years after the Party was founded, their overarching hope for Black people to protect themselves against a world that sets them up to fail still rings true.

There are strong parallels between the BPP's emphasis on advocacy for community outreach and public engagement and a 2018 program that promoted wellness and a healthy outlet for the Black community. Naima Keith, the former Deputy Director and Chief Curator of the California African-American Museum in Los Angeles (2016-2019), founded and curated CAAM's programming series "Reclaiming Our Time: Radical Self-Care Now!" Keith was inspired by Representative Maxine Waters powerfully proclaiming that she was "reclaiming my time" during a House Financial Services Committee Meeting, signaling that not only she, but all of us, should take back our power and refuse to give energy to situations or people that no longer serve us.[iii] Throughout the duration of 2018, the RSC series provided daylong workshops, special events, and talks that covered a plethora of topics, including but not limited to: acupressure massages, plant-based nutrition, meditation and yoga, dance, tai chi chuan, mindful eating, and toxic masculinity. Below are longer descriptions for a couple of the events[iv]:

- **"Unity in Color Panel: Radical Thinking for Radical Self Care:** A panel of diverse and fearless leaders share their methodologies for care while making a major impact in their respective fields. Participants include Lauren Ash of Black Girl In Om, Zarna Surti of Tonal Magazine, and writer/activist Rebecca Walker, plus a special performance from Malia. Moderated by Jasmine Solano, founder of Unity in Color, a global photography series showcasing inclusive solidarity for women's rights."
- **"Hope is the Chorus:** This evening of performance and conversation is dedicated to mental wellness and the significance of hope, help, and community. Curated with the intention of creating a safe space, "Hope is the Chorus" celebrates, discusses, and highlights the necessity of art in the process of healing. Poetry and song come together to proclaim the therapeutic value of creativity in radical self-care in performances by Aziza Barnes, Edwin Bodney, Matthew Hernandez, Tonya Ingram, Poetic Moment, Yesika Salgado, Daniel Summerhill, Rotana Tarabzouni, Runson Willis and Alyesha Wise. The event includes a panel with Fatimah Asghar, Matthew Hernandez, and Tonya Ingram, moderated by Jaha Zainabu."
- **"Terry Crews:** In June 2018, actor Terry Crews appeared in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee alongside Rise founder Amanda Nguyen to share his story as a victim of sexual assault and to advocate for the Sexual Assault Survivors' Bill of Rights. Crews has also spoken publicly this year about growing up with an abusive father and has been vocal about his experiences and in support for the #MeToo movement. Many fans have praised his bravery for speaking out and thanked him for giving a voice to male survivors of sexual assault. Join us for an evening with Crews as he discusses how he harnesses the courage to be so honest about his past."

By curating this series, Keith created a safe, valuable space for the Black community to discuss and practice sustainable self-care and healing. The scope of the program took on various forms and methods by providing a wide range of topics and a diverse array of facilitators and speakers. Another important anecdote was that all of the events took place inside the museum, thereby enhancing its meaning – the museum not only provides opportunities for visitors to learn about art and art history, but also a gathering space to discuss culture and health.

A raised fist has remained a powerful symbol of solidarity and resistance since the Black Power movement. Radical self-care supplies these notions and directly counters the systematic idea that Black people’s voices shouldn’t be heard and that their wellness doesn’t deserve recognition. Black people loving themselves and their community is bold, vital, and much needed today and everyday.

ENDNOTES

[I] Seale, Bobby and Newton, Huey P. “The Ten Point Program: What We Want Now!” in *The Black Panther* (Oakland, CA). 1967, May 15. Volume 1, No. 2, Page 3.

[II] The Black Panther Party. “The People’s Community Survival Programs.” *The Black Panther* (Oakland, CA). 1971, October 30. Page 22.

[III] This information was provided from *CAAM Here and Now – Winter 2018*, Page 14.

[IV] The “Unity in Color Panel” and “Hope in the Chorus” descriptions were both provided from *CAAM Here and Now – Summer 2018*, Page 15. The “Terry Crews” description was provided from *CAAM Here and Now – Fall 2018*, Page 11.

IN THE COMFORT OF THE SILENT EYE

BY TYESE WORTHAM

Tyese channels the spirit of Oya, Orisha of the winds, cemeteries, and marketplaces, representing transformation in the elemental forms of a breeze, storm, and tornado. During these uncertain and unsettling times, Tyese regenerates and finds comfort in silence / "the eye of Her storm," awaiting change for justice and peace.

If you would like to see the video, please visit this link:

https://youtu.be/P8_31QRpOT8



ON THE ESSENTIAL WORKER: CLASSISM, REGENERATIVE PRACTICES, AND ARTS AND CULTURE

BY J SPAGNOLO

I wish there was a wide gulf between how we describe a person's inherent worth and their financial worth. The terms "worth" and "value" are muddled, straddling the interpersonal and the financial and encompassing both the cost of a material good and the stature of a person. Classism is alive and well in the English language and in its usage in the United States of America.

But in this recent pandemic era we have come up with a new term: "essential." Under the harsh light of contagion, mainly working-class people, many earning minimum wage, have been declared "essential" to our collective sense of safety. Delivery drivers, grocery and hardware clerks, warehouse fulfillment workers, janitors, healthcare workers, bus drivers, restaurant workers, meat packers and others continue to go to work, often risking their lives in the process. Many of these essential workers have rightfully protested a lack of hazard pay, personal protective equipment, and depressed wages and benefits. To be underpaid is to be undervalued, and that is especially painful in a time marked by death and uncertainty. While our government has been forced to acknowledge those who do the most important work in this society, that acknowledgement has come empty-handed.

As many of us "non-essential" arts and culture workers are now working from home or newly unemployed, we are reckoning with our futures in this transitional time. I am reminded of this uncertainty as I reach the end of the Emergent Arts Professionals fellowship. Through this work, I've been surrounded by brilliant, ambitious young people making their way through a cutthroat arts pipeline, vying for grants, museum jobs, curatorships, awards, fellowships, and professorships. This work comes with its sacrifices; many of us are underpaid and working second or third jobs to support our arts and culture work.

Of course, it doesn't have to be so. According to 2018 data by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), the arts contribute \$763.6 billion to the U.S. economy, which is more than agriculture or transportation. But while the sector is huge, the arts sector as a whole, and particularly the highest paid positions, are far from models of equity. Nearly four out of every five artists who make a living from their art are white, according to 2012 data from the Census Bureau and BFAMFAPhD, an artist collective. From crowdsourced data on salaries, CEOs and directors of art and culture museums make an average of \$778,000 salary, while their coworkers earn anywhere from 1/7th to 1/53rd of that amount. While to be underpaid is to be undervalued, that doesn't mean the corollary is true: to be overpaid is not to have more value than others. Income inequality, greed, racism, and classism act as the unethical dividers of money and opportunity throughout this sector.

My focus during this fellowship, along with three colleagues, has been on regenerative practices, which we've defined as strategies that support the arts and culture worker to "regenerate" and not just sustain themselves. We've talked about finding wholeness in professional settings that try to compartmentalize us into acting as just workers, as if we don't hold any other identities. We've shared community strategies for grounding yourself, dealing with conflict, and supporting transparency and equity.

As this pandemic inspires us to deeply examine our goals, I'm noting where the drive for success, as defined externally as a drive towards money and access, is perpetrated with values I do not hold and is at odds with my actual search for essential meaning in my career. Knowing what I know about the problems of the arts sector, it is more important than ever to create and audit paths toward equity, work in solidarity with others, be skeptical of power, and speak up when something isn't right. This is grounded work done by calling upon our highest wisdom. And so one concept I'm returning to is this idea of worth --- the essential worth of each person, upheld and felt by all the communities, structures and institutions around them. Isn't envisioning a better world the purview of the creative after all?

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