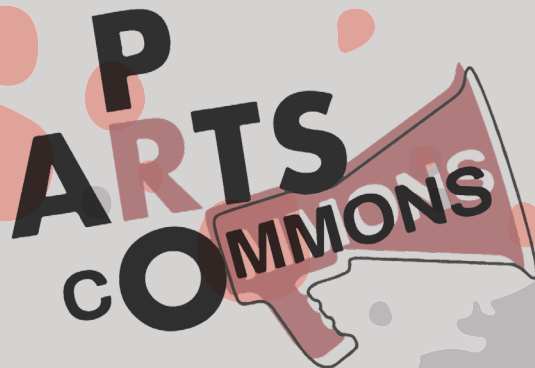
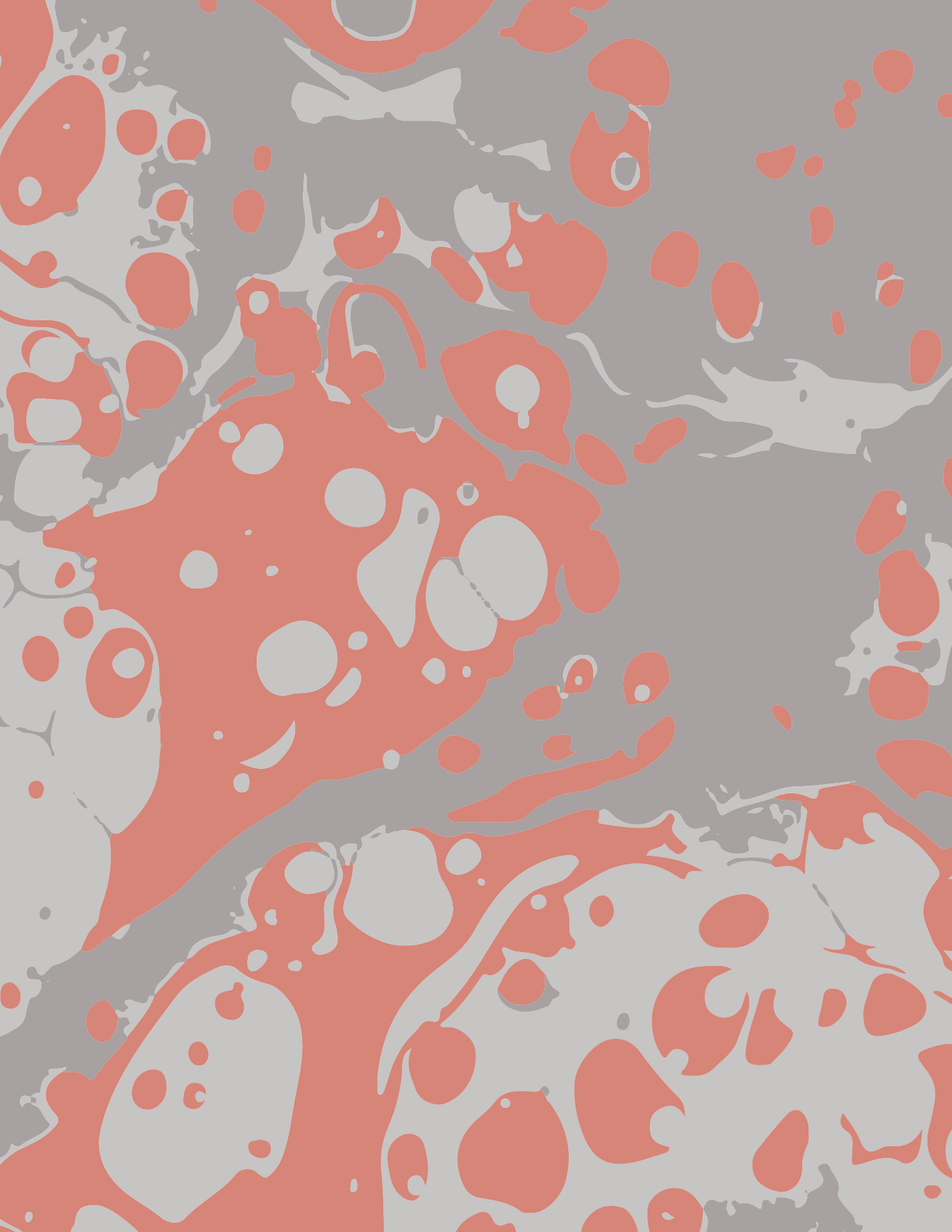


Pro Arts *COMMONS* Reader

Pro Arts &
Music Research
Strategies
Workshops





*You are invited to participate in Warrior Ethos: Performing Political Education on Saturday, September 28th, 2019, 1-3pm at Pro Arts Gallery & COMMONS, Oakland.
Please RSVP directly to this email address before September 15th, 2019 or earlier.*

Thank you in advance for your participation!

Best,

Natalia

WARRIOR ETHOS: PERFORMING POLITICAL EDUCATION

On Wednesday, September 25th, 2019, Music Research Strategies is partnering with Pro Arts Gallery & COMMONS, with support from the Center for Cultural Innovation, to present WARRIOR ETHOS: PERFORMING POLITICAL EDUCATION (TOWARDS A SOLIDARITY ECONOMICS CONDUCTION SYSTEM FOR IMPROVISERS). This participatory workshop invites attendees to critique Capitalism and its machinations through music and improvisation. Participants will leave with an understanding of how we have gotten to the current predicament and how to move towards practices that build Solidarity, Cooperation, Mutualism, Equity, Participatory Democracy, Sustainability, and Pluralism.

On September 28th, 2019, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m., Music Research Strategies (Marshall Trammell) and Pro Arts Gallery & COMMONS (Natalia Mount) will hold a second workshop at Pro Arts Gallery & COMMONS with the aim to engage artists, cultural organizers, and culture bearers in a discourse, centering on the creation of common language and vocabulary that reflect the ethos of a new, creative economy. We will use the medium of the workshop and the collaborative process of writing a pledge letter that represents our collective voice and a stand against current oppressive systems and structures in the arts.

In collaboration with Project Kalahati (Pro Arts COMMONS) this workshop will be recorded and transcribed in workshop-to-text format to be published in November 2019.

Event Details:

Date: Saturday, September 28th, 2019, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Location: Pro Arts Gallery & COMMONS, 150 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Oakland, CA 94612

RSVP: RSVP: This is not a public workshop and as such, space is limited.

Please RSVP to natalia@proartsgallery.org by September 15th, 2019 or earlier.

*Light snacks/coffee & tea served.

Our discussion will center on questions, such as:

Is it possible to address and/or expose oppression, exclusion, and injustice in a fixed system, such as our current creative economy, through the participatory process of writing a pledge letter?

Can we re-frame the value of art and cultural labor through the creation of new pathways to sharing material and immaterial resources that support collective production, independent art spaces, practices, and processes that are based on the ideas of resistance and solidarity?

Are there any current alternatives to organizing in the expanded field of art that work besides, parallel or in direct opposition to the current creative economy model?

Can this workshop and the collaborative process of writing a pledge letter provide a wider platform for engagement, especially if expanded to include global participants, galvanizing thus a larger movement towards the building of a new, creative economy?

What does the act of drafting a pledge letter really mean in more practical terms on both individual and collective level?

How do we continue to enjoy the benefits of this shared activity in the future?

AGENDA (co-facilitated by Marshall Trammell & Natalia Mount)

A. Greetings -12:45 to 1:05

Icebreaker exercise

B. Introductions - 1:05 to 1:15

-- Natalia Mount - Introduction to Pro Arts Gallery & Commons

C. Discuss project framework - 1:15 to 1:20

-- Marshall Trammell - Briefly analyze specific points

D. Transgressive Spaces & Strategies: Conflict vs Safe

-- Natalia Mount

E. Discussion Questions - 1:35 to 2:20 (co-facilitated)

F. Synthesize & Draft - 2:20 to 2:50

G. Conclusions/Next Steps - 2:50 to 3:00

H. Close - 3:00

WORKSHOP ONE



****Music played by all musicians** (1:40)**

Clapping

Before we get started on this project, can you tell me, audience, what you heard just now?

Just raise your hand and I'll call on you.

Do you think this music was improvised, or you think it was written out and that's how it went?

Did it sound like it was performed like it was written?

These are improvisers, they improvise the sound. Have you have of y'all done improvised music bits before?

So one of the things I wanted to point out was as a performing improviser:

What's happening is that they're playing their discipline, the y-axis of their instrument their attention to it, the historical significance of each instrument, all their interest in it, in their fingers and their hands. They're also performing on the x-axis, a horizontal relationship to each other. So they're performing their discipline while they're listening and seeing each other and responding to the changes in the sound.

At that simultaneous moment they're also listening to their individual sound in this space, and the sound is reflected on the z-axis. Well, it's like the voluminous axis. It's the whole 360 degrees of the space they're in, and their sound it's reflecting back immediately. So they're navigating these three dimensions, at once, and whatever other environmental minds.

That's how that kind of works.

We experience this kind of thing all the time, when we're writing something, when we're writing bus, we experience what we know, how it's related to our environment immediately and also in the sense of space.

How did it feel for y'all to perform together? For the first time? Did you hear each other? Which instrument was the softest?

Musicians point to instrument

So soft.

Musicians and participants laugh and mumble

So, my name is Marshall Trammell, I am a self-styled music research strategist, and what I have been doing for decades before I knew what enography was, was critical ethnographic processes, what I was doing as a musician, and then what that had to do with this political climate, that I've been born into, and I spent a lot of years as an organizer, like actually a grass-roots organizer. And there are a few differences, there is a difference between how we organize the virtues of our improvisation here, and then on and beyond the limits of the bandstand. I am interested in like, how our improvisational strategies relate to the virtues of improvisation that naturally occur when we are organizing for sustainable economies, for abolition of the prison industrial complex, and how we organize our communities to respond to changes in them. And these strategies exist to address positive narrative and policy change, how can focus on sounds and collective strategies have any importance to responding to our political climate in any order in any time?
(6:16)

So what I'm doing is looking through history, looking through the anthologies of oppressed people to overcome adversity. How do those strategies work? What can we learn to re-contextualize them in everyday life?

These fine folks agreed to participate in my first ever conduction of this thing. So I call this process indexical momentum. It's an indexical moment we talk about is where we reference our histories, we're playing music and all these relationships, and the momentum that doing that generates. That is the generative process, and creating a new vocabulary for improvisation. That is going to directly relate to movement strategies. As a performer here in this historical area, should I say I've been here since 1993? And I since being a part of free music and improvisation music, and revolutionary approaches to sound and structure, I've always wondered why there wasn't more of a direct relationship between what happens in these technologies, and those operating in those that are similar in potent[ency] to organizing. So I am investigating that through music. So what I've created here is a workshop called Insurgent Learning, and that comes out of communal research, what is the research of those who organize themselves, with

arms, and with indigenous technologies, with the technologies of being, in regarding to society, to feed their grandchildren and grandparents, how they organize, and how groups like that use similar strategies that we employ here, but to deploy those things in the context of rapid change to meet their needs.

Does that make sense to people? Any questions at all?

Cool. So what I decided to do was to create what I call an Art Verse, it's an Archival Multi-Universe, and then as I tour, and collect the data from these interventions, I codify them [to] figure out what is value, what is valuable. I don't know if any of you have ever worked with community based organizations, they often don't have time and support for these type[s] of work, that takes away from their resources to meet the needs of their constituents. It's not enough to name a song or a process about something - if you're intending to work with organizations to solve policy change issues, right, I feel like we should do more than name our work after them, but to actually work with them on issues.

So, you know, if you build a house, or if you have a house built for you by some crew, or you build a house yourself, you have two houses that look exactly the same, like are they the same house? If you know, you're building a house for you to live in. So, we may make music that sounds exactly like something you've heard that has been made on some label, but the idea is that we're embodying the political education process, we are performing political education, we perform research, and then we're going to document (thank you very much) and then I have the joy of listening and indexing their work to be used in the indigenous community archive. To extract the new vocabulary that we one day will introduce.

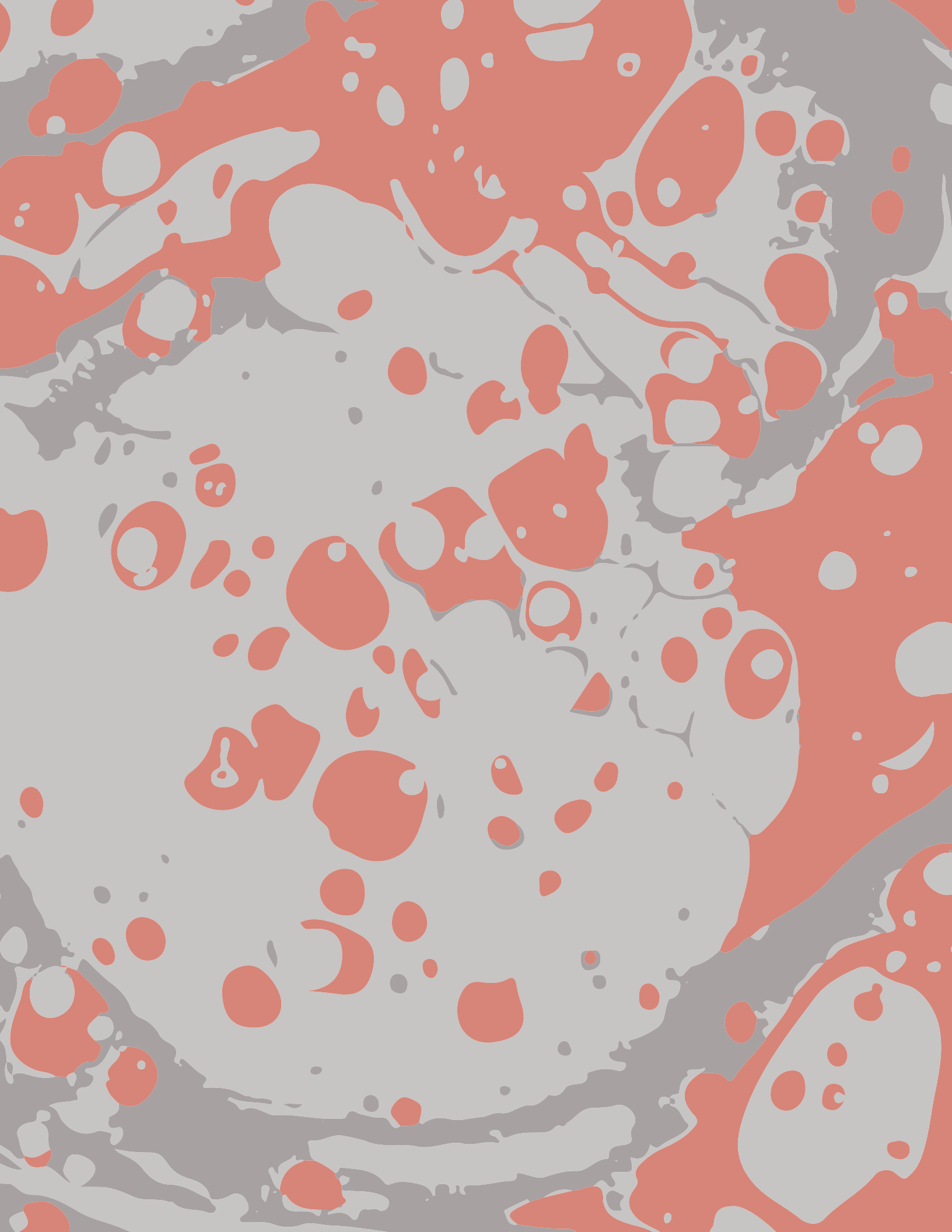
Great, so I'm going to ask you to speak, okay, this is a classroom, and if all of y'all have spoken in classes and you're doing a lecture, and you ask questions, and undergrads sit there and always give you shit like this is a waste of their time. So I'm going to ask you a few things, and check for your understanding throughout, and I am facilitating this thing, so if you have questions or concerns, let me know and then we'll address it. And what we'll be doing is I will introduce the elements of the visual culture of the Underground Railroad quilt codes. Does anyone have any questions of what the Underground Railroad was?

So it was a guerrilla movement, so we'll say from 1680-1860, and in South America fugitive people, or imprisoned people and enslaved people were chattel slaves, like cattle, like animals, and a lot of people organized

themselves and they escaped (or they died, or existed and went through a lot of stuff) ... So, I've been looking at the interculturally situated design of the Underground Railroad quilt codes, interculturally situated design, wherein homeowners, white people most likely, who might have, who had owned quilts, and there were these pre-existing images, these quilts that had different shapes, they had shapes that I will show you, and during that they were transformed into tactical media. Tactical media is what we called using art and art tools to make any social changes. Like AdBusters, remember AdBusters? That was tactical media magazine, where they were recontextualizing existing culture and getting information out in resistance to our world.

And so in this project we will look at the Underground Railroad quilt codes, we will address briefly how these codes were used, and then and how they were recontextualized for the Underground Railroad, and then we'll talk about a solidarity economics framework, that I will introduce to you, I am also going to introduce to you a research methodology.

I'm going to ask you all to work together to redefine existing codes, and give them a new language that has to do with our lives in this place now. We will talk about what these codes mean, then these folks will interpret, in small groups they're going to interpret our newly codified codes, and then they're going to perform them, and then ask you to use your voices to respond to what you heard. What kind of communication is happening? And then reflect in some way the ideas that we are going to embed into these. Does that make sense? Anyone have any questions? Cool.

The background of the slide features an abstract pattern of organic, cell-like shapes in shades of red and grey. These shapes are irregular and interconnected, creating a textured, almost marbled effect. The red shapes are more prominent and vary in size, while the grey shapes fill the spaces between them. The overall composition is dynamic and visually engaging.

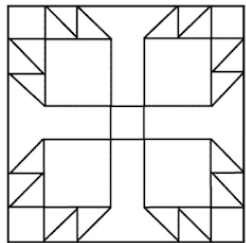
On September 25th and September 28th, 2019, Pro Arts Gallery & COMMONS hosted two workshops that provide context for the work we do here in Oakland, CA to build a just creative economy, in which sharing takes center stage in the art market exchange and value creation.

Notes

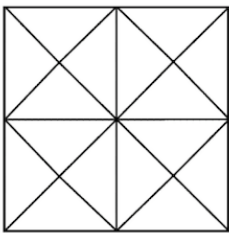
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Workshop | Towards a Solidarity Economics Conduction System

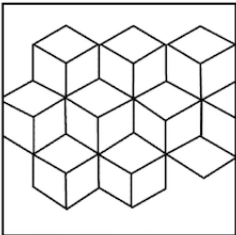
The first workshop, entitled TOWARDS A SOLIDARITY ECONOMICS CONDUCTION SYSTEM took place on September 25th, 2019, at Pro Arts Gallery & COMMONS and in collaboration with self-styled, Music Research Strategist, Marshall Trammell and the Center for Cultural Innovation, CA. This workshop, part of a series of critical learning workshops, developed and led by Marshall Trammell, encourages people to interact and discuss hard topics, through improvised music and visual information. Marshall Trammell believes that at this critical time, artists need to commit to political education practices; centering their energies on community-based organizations at the fore-front of positive narrative and policy changes in our midst, while globally decrying, “the status quo is our enemy!” Through a participatory research process, attendees of the TOWARDS A SOLIDARITY



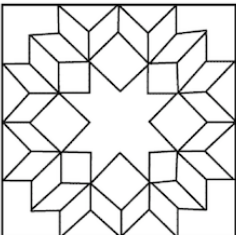
Bear Paw



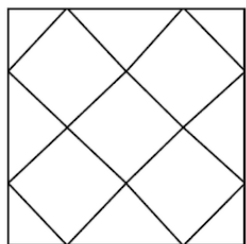
Bow Ties



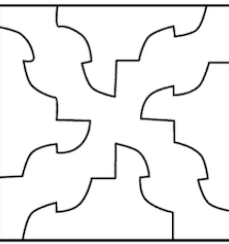
Boxes



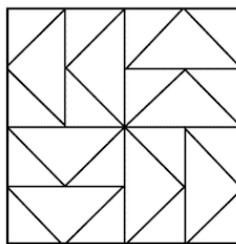
Carpenter's Wheel



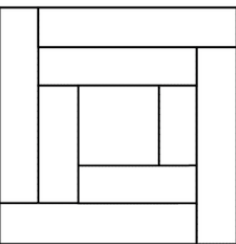
Crossroads



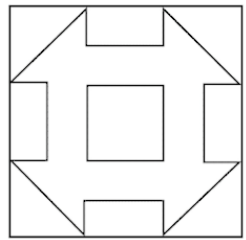
Drunkard's Path



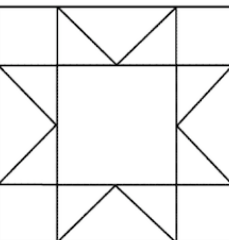
Flying Geese



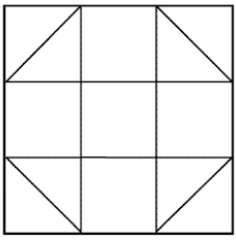
Log Cabin



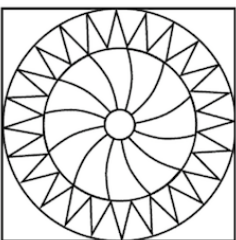
Monkey Wrench



North Star



Shoo Fly



Wagon Wheel

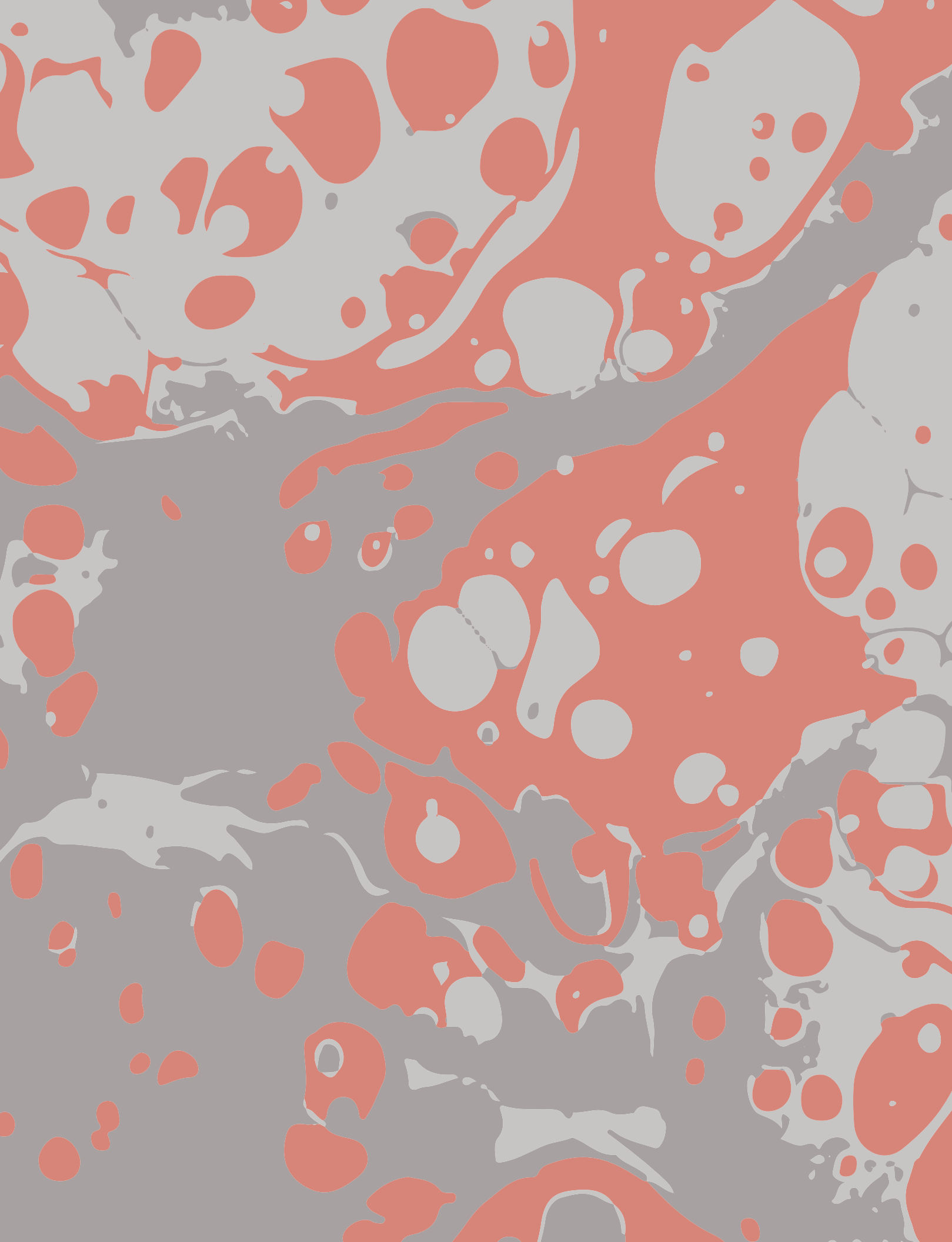
ECONOMICS CONDUCTION SYSTEM workshop re-coded an array of Underground Railroad quilt block codes (a series of quilt block patterns which emblemized actual risk taking and solidarity with fugitives during the period of legal, chattel slavery in the Americas,) thus ultimately rendering a collective, music conduction system practicum and performance.

The workshop included an introduction of timed, small-group collective improvisations, and a group response to narratives of solidarity; an introduction to the Solidarity Economics (SE) framework of concepts; and an introduction to the feminist, Chicana scholar Chela Sandoval's “Five Technologies,” from her seminal book “Methodologies of the Oppressed.”

Marshall Trammell is the experimental archivist+percussionist (ArchiVissionist) known as Music Research Strategies (MRS). The identity of this arts engagement platform began as a critical ethnographic framework bridging obsessions with strategic, or compositional, improvising strategies, organizational improvisation and psychology, street-level social justice, international organizing. MRS navigates the global economy as a touring musician performing research and political education nationally and internationally through a battery of modular, social science-based systems. Producing several works for fellowships, residencies, festivals, and investigations alike. Its organizational strategy mimics scholarship embedded in indigenous technologies, professional development pedagogy (guild), and simultaneous multi-dimensionality (cognitive embodiment/Dr. Anku) to serve as an interlocutor of new language development of Warrior Ethos amongst Warrior Ecologies from the Pacific Northwest, the San Francisco Bay Area, Mexico City, the Southwest, the Midwest, and the Mid-Atlantic. A recent Intercultural Leadership Institute fellow, residencies with East Side Arts Alliance, Prelinger Library, Off Lomas, Southern Exposure, Museum of Human Achievement, and Charlotte Street Foundation, and future engagements in 2019 and 2020 at Rhizome DC, Western Front (Vancouver, BC) and



Rauschenberg (Florida), have yielded a transformation of Trammell's 30+ year vernacular practice. Trammell is known for participation in such music projects as Black Spirituals (Sige), In Defense of Memory, Mutual Aid Project and collaborations with Saul Williams, David Murray, Dohee Lee, Dylan Carlson, Pauline Oliveros, Raven Chacon, Laura Ortman, Aaron Turner, Tongo Eisen-Martin, Hafez Modirzadeh, and Genny Lim. Trammell is affiliated with East Side Arts Alliance, Center for Popular Economics and is a member of Solidarity Research Center.



stem, I propose we co-create a new c

WORKSHOP TWO

Sustainability >> Openness >> Solidarity

Creating Pro Arts Commons for sustainability

- Co-create shared material and immaterial resources and s
- Co-create solidarity bonds with local and global commons co-ops.
- Co-produce art and programs.

we say NO to apartheid

A Declaration of American Artists

Circulated by the American Committee on Africa

Whereas

South Africa is the only country in the world where oppression, denial of civil and human rights, and discrimination in every walk of life -- based on color -- is legally enshrined in the Constitution and the law;

Whereas

The South African policy of apartheid has been attacked by nearly every nation in the world, and in almost every session of the United Nations since 1946, with no response from the South African Government except defiance, and a steady increase in repressive, authoritarian measures;

Whereas

Under apartheid approximately 5,000 political prisoners now sit in South African jail cells;

Under apartheid white miners earn approximately 15 times as much as Africans, and in secondary industry about 5 times as much;

Under apartheid fifty percent of all African children are tubercular at the age of 10, due to malnutrition, and the general infant mortality rate is one of the highest in the world: 200 to 400 per 1,000 for Africans, 27 per 1,000 for whites;

Under apartheid the government subsidy for an African child's education amounts to \$19.67 a year, for a white child's \$196.70;

and Whereas

Under apartheid those non-whites residing (because employed) in urban areas are not permitted to share in the cultural advantages available to whites -- may not visit art galleries, use the main public library, attend lectures, plays, or musical programs, or even the movies except in their own segregated areas, where the cultural fare is almost non-existent:

Let it be known that we

the following, do pledge ourselves to do all within our power --

ARTISTS AND SCULPTORS . . . not to allow our work to be displayed in any South African exhibition;

NOVELISTS, POETS, AND
ESSAYISTS not to permit our books to be published in South Africa;

PLAYWRIGHTS not to permit performances of our plays in South Africa;

PERFORMING ARTISTS not to perform on the stage in South Africa, or to participate in making films in that country;

COMPOSERS, CONDUCTORS, AND
MUSICIANS not to conduct or perform music in South Africa, or to allow performances of our works there;

FILM PRODUCERS to prevent the showing of our films in the Republic of South Africa.

we make the above pledge

in solemn resolve to refuse any encouragement of, or indeed any personal or professional association with, the present Republic of South Africa: this until the day when all its people -- black and white -- shall equally enjoy the educational and cultural advantages of this rich and lovely land. (List complete to October 18, 1965.)

TO THIS SOLEMN PLEDGE WE HEREBY SET OUR HANDS:

| | |
|--|---|
| Conrad Aiken (Author) | Julie Harris (Actress) |
| Joan C. Baez (Singer) | Van Heflin (Actor) |
| Bill and Cora Baird (Marionettes) | Granville Hicks (Writer) |
| Tallulah Bankhead (Actress) | Jerome Hines (Opera Bass) |
| Harry Belafonte (Singer) | Carmen de L. Holder (Dancer) |
| Saul Bellow (Writer) | Lena Horne (Singer) |
| Leonard Bernstein (Conductor-Composer) | Langston Hughes (Author) |
| Leon Bibb (Singer-Actor) | Eartha Kitt (Artist) |
| E. Power Biggs (Musician) | Miriam Makeba (Singer) |
| Victor Borge (Entertainer) | Marya Mannes (Writer) |
| Oscar Brand (Singer-Writer) | Johnny Mathis (Recording Artist) |
| Dave Brubeck (Jazz Musician) | Karl A. Menninger (Psychiatrist) |
| Carol Burnett (Actress) | Burgess Meredith (Actor-Director) |
| Paul Cadmus (Artist) | Arthur Miller (Playwright) |
| Godfrey Cambridge (Actor-Comic) | Warren Miller (Novelist) |
| Carl Carmer (Author) | Ashley Montagu (Anthropologist) |
| Diahanne Carroll (Singer-Actress) | Henry Morgan (Actor-Author) |
| Paddy Chayefsky (Writer) | Patricia Munsel (Singer) |
| Jerome Chodorov (Playwright) | Edmond O'Brien (Actor) |
| John Ciardi (Poet) | Frederick O'Neal (Actor-Lecturer) |
| Marc Connelly (Playwright) | Odetta (Concert Artist) |
| Dorothy Dandridge (deceased)(Actress) | Sidney Poitier (Actor) |
| Ossie Davis (Actor) | John Raitt (Actor-Singer) |
| Sammy Davis, Jr. (Singer-Actor) | Jerome Robbins (Director-Choreographer) |
| Ruby Dee (Actress) | Paul Robeson (Singer-Actor) |
| Leon Fleisher (Pianist) | Peter Seeger (Musician) |
| Henry Fonda (Actor) | George Shirley (Opera Tenor) |
| John Forsythe (Actor) | Nina Simone (Singer-Pianist) |
| James S. Garner (Actor) | Ed Sullivan (TV Personality) |
| William Gibson (Playwright) | Eli Wallach (Actor) |
| E. Y. Harburg (Lyricist) | Poppy Cannon White (Writer) |

Additional copies of this Declaration available from the American Committee on Africa, 211 E. 43rd Street, New York, NY 10017.

Workshop | Towards a Solidarity Economics Conduction System

The second participatory workshop took place on September 28th, 2019 at Pro Arts Gallery & COMMONS. This workshop, a collaboration between Marshall Trammell (MRS) and Natalia Ivanova Mount (Pro Arts Gallery & COMMONS) was held in the format of a closed, speculative session engaging artists, musicians, cultural organizers, and culture-bearers in a discourse, centering on the creation of common language and vocabulary that reflect the ethos of a new, creative economy. Participants discussed the polemics of the art space and emerging organizational formations, such as the commons, creating thus a dialogue about the role of the artist and the independent art space in the context of solidarity economy. Participants also discussed the tenants of transgressive spaces, and specifically in the idea of the 'heterotopic' space, as defined by the French philosopher Michel Foucault. The 'heterotopic' space, as interpreted by the participants in this workshop, is a space that functions as 'the other' – the 'in between' space, the 'counter-space,' a variant and ritualistic space that defies the trappings of institutional categorizations, hierarchies, and the speculation of the art market. These spaces combine both the mythical and the physical, thus creating subtle diversions, micro-cosmos, and counters to the norm. A new space full of imagination and potential, a space that is abundant through conviviality, and mutual-ized production, labor, and collective vision. There

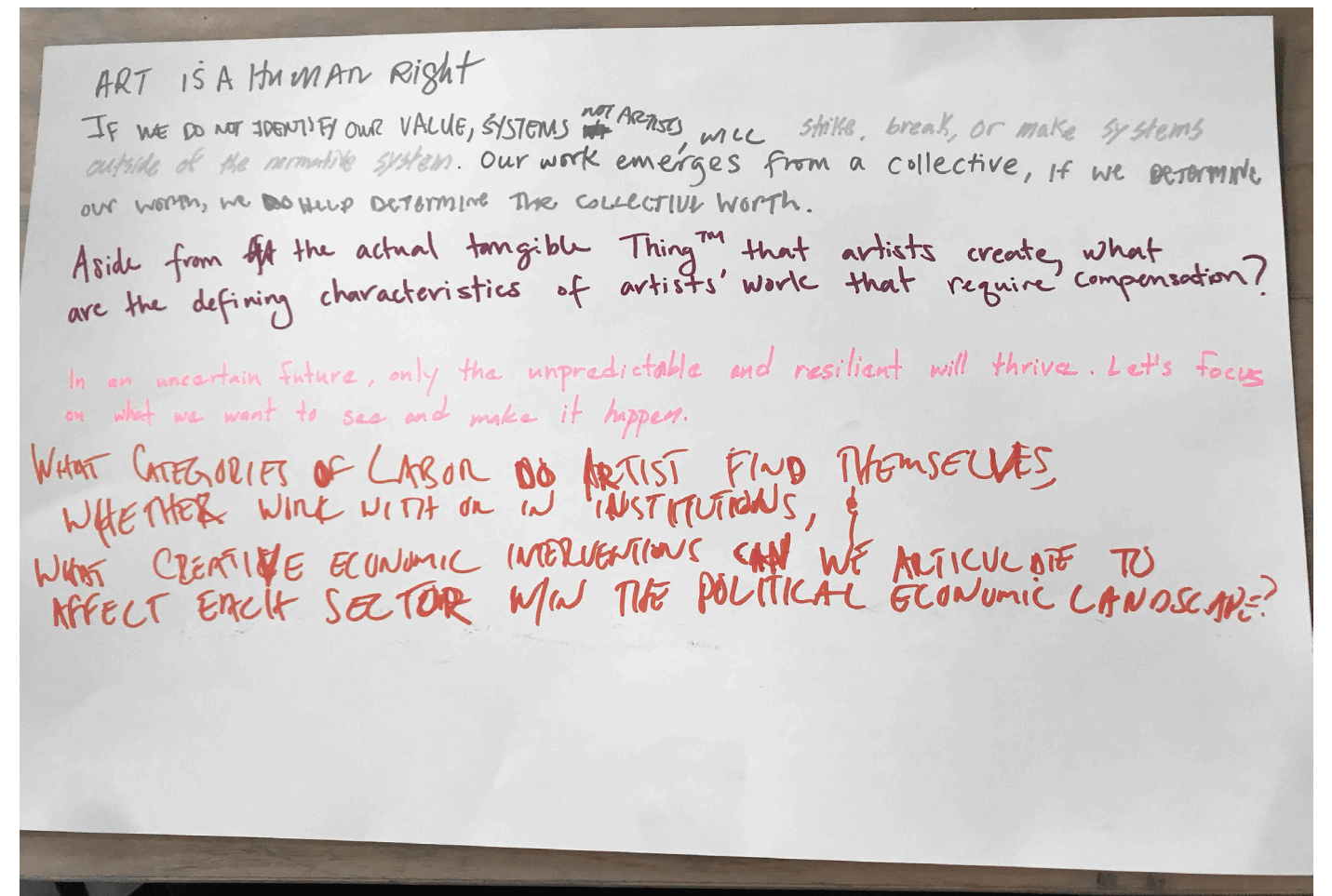


are not many practical examples in America of commons-centered art practice and production in art. Perhaps that is because the art market has such a strong hold over its participants, who seemingly, unconsciously opt into a rigid institutional system that proves very difficult to expand, challenge and change. Artists and art organizations are by necessity welded to authorship and ironically, assert a claim on autonomy, through their participation in the art market system (where, when convenient, they omit the 'market' from their arguments). The generation of 'alternative spaces' or other

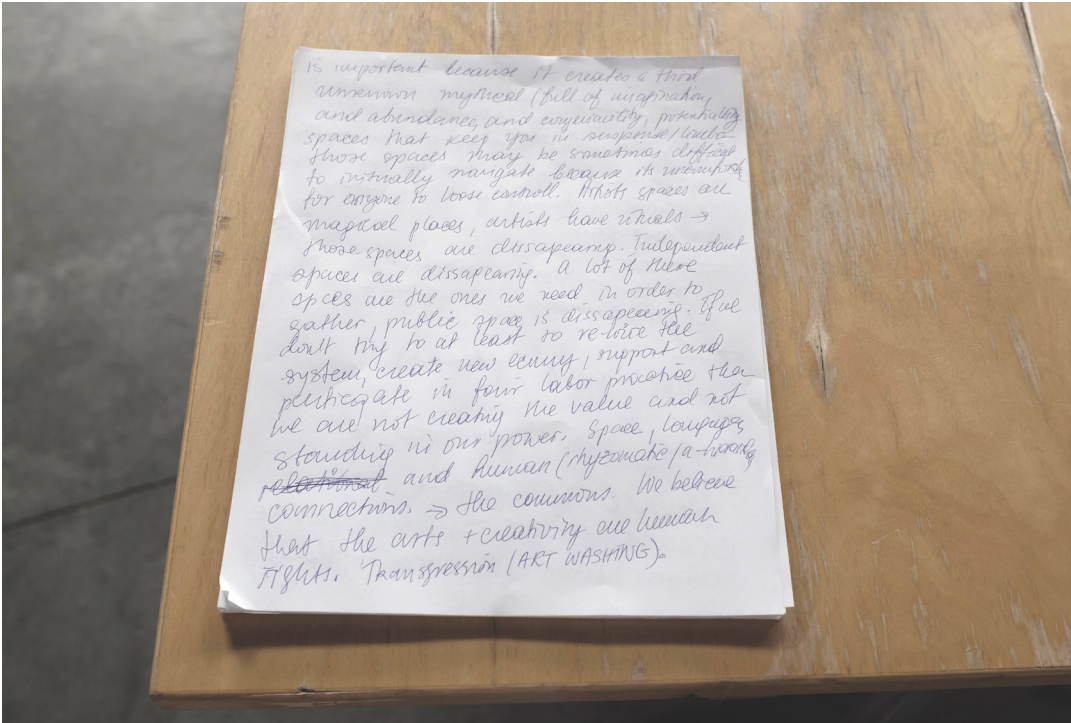
quasi-independent forms of art-presentation is likely where this claim on autonomy resides, but as we know, this is exactly how the patina of the art market system develops, while maintaining the consistency of its superstructure. If we continue to operate on the premise of competition we will continue to create macro-enclosures. These macro-enclosures, i.e. museums, in turn create their own exclusionary power hierarchies that reproduce through exploitive value creation, measured by a perpetual transfer of wealth. However, these macro-enclosures are the reason for the emergence of micro-enclosures, i.e. independent art spaces and their specific avant-garde programs that in turn provide a ground for anti-establishment practices that



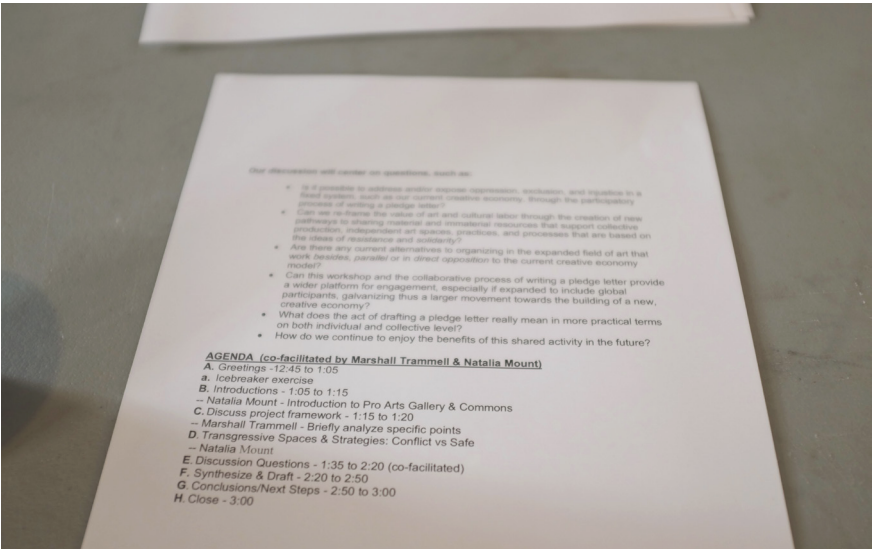
attempt to expose and/or dismantle the status quo. These spaces and the individual artists connected to them are by extension complicit in the creation of even more fragmented micro-enclosures, limited in their formations – i.e. people interested in experimental art, collectors' circles, groups based in identity politics, etc. This is basis for the emergence of semiotics akin to social reform rather than that of a revolution. What happens if these micro-enclosures become transgressive – i.e. conflict driven? What if instead of creating micro-enclosures we begin to create radically open, based in commonality rather than difference spaces and platforms that we can use to expose oppressive systems and injustice? Can we through transgression, reclamation, and re-envisioning broaden the value of our contributions to the commonwealth and create a revolutionary system that is decentralized and just?



At the conclusion of this workshop, participants modeled the visionary "We say NO, A Declaration of American Artists, circulated by the American Committee on Africa" pledge letter by writing their own pledge letter that embodies the collective vision for a better art world. As these two workshops travel to other communities and independent art spaces, both in the U.S. and abroad, Marshall Trammell (MRS) and Natalia Ivanova Mount (Pro Arts Gallery & COMMONS) will continue to challenge artists and cultural activists to rethink the scope and language of the current value system in the arts in order to reclaim it from the logic of capital. Natalia's research is centered on the commons, and reframing the value of art and fair labor in the context of sharing economy. As the Executive Director of Pro Arts, a 45 years-old independent art space in Oakland, she has worked tirelessly over the past four years of tenure with the organization to bring openness, inclusivity, and universal access to art and culture. Her essay, "Reframing the Value of Art and Fair Labor in the Context of Sharing Economy" gave birth to Pro Arts Gallery & COMMONS.



“What category
of *labor* do
artists find
themselves?”





Notes

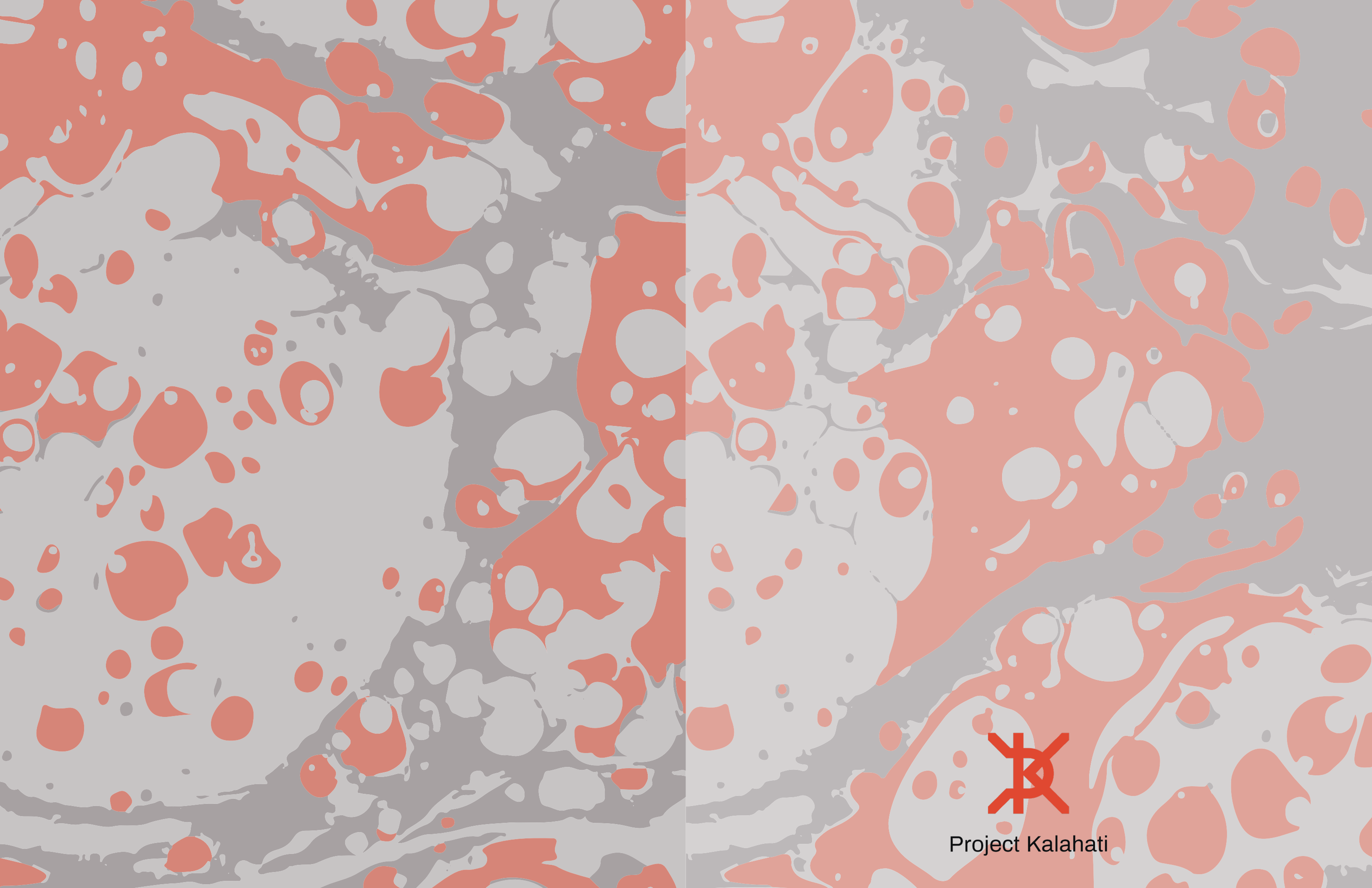
This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.This image shows a full page of blank handwriting practice paper. It features a series of evenly spaced horizontal lines across the entire width of the page. The background color transitions from a light blue at the top to white at the bottom. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.

Pro Arts Commons is a collectively held space in Oakland, California that blurs the line among art, debate, experimentation, and collaboration. Through pulling together and sharing of material and immaterial resources, we reflect the Oakland's existing artistic and cultural fabric, while creating future landscape of other commons-centric spaces that encourage the economic and cultural power of the community.

Our collaborative activities are rooted in mutual values and principles. Currently, we are experimenting with developing a new contributory system that allows for shared governance, participatory budgeting, and community-driven funding mechanisms. Pro Arts COMMONS is also focusing on the way we use language and space to define our mission and practice, specifically in the context of a sharing economy.

Pro Arts Commons Project is a global, peer-to-peer networked community, spearheading a movement towards a post-capitalist art economy. Working together, commoners and affinity groups aim to reframe the value of art and art labor in the context of a sharing economy. We aim to disrupt the logic of capital, through sustaining those commons-centric spaces, practices, and production models that aim to re-wire the broken connections between artist and community and art and everyday life.





Project Kalahati