Cultural Power to Change Society

Favianna Rodriguez August 2022
Art and culture shape our understanding of the world around us.
STOLEN LAND
STOLEN LABOR
Between 1525 and 1866, an estimated 12.5 million people were forcibly taken from Africa.

Between 1492 and 1600, 90% of Indigenous people in the Americas were murdered.
Artists bring the vision and creations for a new paradigm
If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair.

Shirley Chisholm
We are world building.
Culture change precedes political change

Culture

Politics

Economics
Culture Shapes Worldview

#MeToo
survivors' march
Culture moves faster than politics
Marriage Equality
The AIDS Epidemic
Although they comprise less than 5% of the world population, Indigenous peoples protect 80% of the Earth's biodiversity.
Climate Justice Movement
Understand the power of artists to advance culture change.
The roots of my organization:
1. The power of the story
Stories lead to other stories. Stories help us make sense of the world.
Narrative Pyramid Tool

Deep Narrative
- values, worldviews, ideology

Narrative
- collection of stories and messages that point to emotion + action

Story, Art, Images
- characters, plot, telos

Message
- slogans, taglines, hashtags
STATUS QUO

WHITE SUPREMACY

LAW & ORDER

SCARCITY

HUMAN VALUE = ECONOMIC VALUE

ANTI-BLACKNESS ANTI-INDIGENITY

DANGEROUS WORLD

INDIVIDUALISM
Deep Narratives Example

We steward the past and the future
We are interdependent
We all belong
We thrive when we care for each other
Our survival depends on balance
We determine our lives and our future
**Narrative System for our FUTURE**

**Interdependence**
We recognize our interdependence with each other and with all life. We recognize that our fate is interconnected with each other’s, and so we practice mutuality.

**Abundance**
We recognize that there is enough for all if we live in alignment and the right relationship with the world around us, practicing love, care, community, and regeneration. When we center mindsets of sufficiency and generosity, resources can flourish into abundance. We call people toward an abundance of imagination, to make a leap with us toward our shared future.

**Belonging**
We see each other, welcome each other, and call each other into community. We recognize and respect the diversity of our peoples and communities, acknowledging differences as invigorating and powerful assets that push us toward transformation. We see each other’s joys and struggles with clear eyes, and care for each other as if our own. We recognize the ways that systems have oppressed and harmed people differently and make equity our central practice.

**Safety**
We collaborate as communities to ensure collective wellbeing and peace with justice. We build these solutions in community and use equity as our guiding principle, seeking to repair the harm against those most impacted.

**Dignity**
We believe in the inherent value and dignity of all life that exists. All should be able to exist and express their pride in being, practicing and transmitting their identities, such as their cultures, languages, and spiritual beliefs, as long as they do not harm or debase the dignity of others.

**Freedom to Thrive**
We believe all beings should thrive and that communities and cultures should have equal agency to make decisions about their lives, relationships, communities, and futures. In balance and alignment with our world, we should be able to pursue our dreams, engage in quality and fulfilling work, and live with joy, dignity, and love, regardless of race, national origin, gender identity, class, caste, religion, and ability.
1. The power of the ARTIST
Culture change precedes political change
Artists shape what we see and give us a lens of interpretation.
ARTIST
DISRUPTOR

Transformative Creative Practice

Dismantling Systems of Oppression
Artist
Superpowers

Creator
Maker

Audience
Platform

Cultural
Institutions
Cultural Strategy is a practice that leverages the catalytic and emotional power of culture and the arts to shift attitudes, behaviors, resources, narratives, and power.
Lesson Integration Activity

Create a **Culture & Politics Timeline** for your country, map out a particular issue that has changed.

Create a draft Deep Narratives list for your organization. What are 3-5 narrative pillars to explore?

Sketch out a program can you create for artists activists. What would they have to learn? How can they practice their ideas in the field?
I am healing for myself and for past generations.
My Body Decisions

Art by Favianna Rodriguez
migration is beautiful
THE EVOLUTION WILL BE JOYFUL!
NO GOING BACK
The moment calls for systemic solutions.
Our Core Strategies

**Artist Leadership**
Builds the power of artists to advance social change.

**Intersectional Storytelling**
Activates artists and movement groups to create inspiring stories on issues of migration, climate, and gender justice that uplift directly impacted communities.

**Field Building**
Builds a field of BIPOC practitioners at the intersection of arts and social justice who create the narrative strategy needed to realize a more just and equitable world.
Our values based narratives shift world views from domination to collaboration and empathy.

From the ground up