National Discussion on Paths Forward for the American Arts and Culture Sector

SESSION 1: WHAT ARE YOUR VISIONS FOR OUR SECTOR IN 2045?

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GROUP 1

Group 1 Transcript

Speaker 1: My vision for our sector in the future is that it is fully funded, has cross-sector and cross-institutional interdependency, that it is regarded as an inextricable part of our social and democratic infrastructure, and that it provides a durable resilient, independent safeguard for our American ideals and shared values. I think it's important because for me personally, as a daughter of, granddaughter and great granddaughter of folks from the rural South and industrial Midwest and people that have served our country in different and various ways, fought for our country, I see currently a fracturing, not just fraying, like a fracturing of American identity. And how we talk about ourselves and art and culture have always been the way we metabolize who we are and come back together in shared empathy and understanding across difference, et cetera. And I think more than ever, we're seeing the institutions of arts and culture, and the subtext of arts and culture, be reshaped and that has long-term harm. And so I think, for me, I see we're both at an inflection point, but how we regard arts and culture and what we do with it and who owns it and who stewards it and who gets to consume it versus create it and et cetera, et cetera, on and on. And I see really through the lens of what we were doing at the beginning of the administration, recovering from the pandemic, how important our arts and culture institutions became as co-located service providers of good information and places where people gather and places where people heal and all the things that we know art is, but really got to show itself off in that moment of American crisis. And I just think we're just going to have more of those and it just needs to be one of the things that we care for as Americans.

- **Speaker 2 (Facilitator):** I want to articulate that I'm hearing a lot about the importance of identity, national identity in that. I'm hearing a lot about bringing us together and also all of the ways in which this sector is essential, especially when we think about recovery from major moments of national crisis. So just want to articulate that I'm hearing that and I really appreciate it.

Speaker 3: I envision a world in which people with disabilities of all kinds and of all ages, from birth to death, are included and welcomed into the cultural and artistic space in all the various roles. So not just as guests and audience, but as performers, as staff, etc. I envision that this means that the arts and cultural spaces are fully resourced. So not just money, but staff and time are devoted. And I envision that we are upholding for the nation, the value of human, civil, and cultural rights through the arts. I've spent my entire career in the arts because I love it, and it was incomprehensible to me

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that anyone would be excluded from the experience that I love so much. So, it is important to me both personally and it is important to me for my family and for my community.

Speaker 4: I envision a future where arts and culture and artists are recognized and valued for their integral role in our individual and collective health and well-being. And really want to plus one to everything that [Speaker] and [Speaker] said, but you know, integral part of our infrastructure as a catalyst for both cross-sector collaboration, but as [Speaker] was kind of getting at the end of their statements too, really being a space where we can articulate our shared values, our humanity, build empathy and connection and understanding across differences. I think in our Western cultures, we've seen the arts as something separate from ourselves, and in that separation, there's a cause and effect to the dissolution of valuing in that, and actually that remembering that it's actually integral to our humanity, that it's part of what makes us whole. I think it's important to all of our sense of belonging and meaning in our lives and how we can best resource and lift up our communities and empower our communities.

Speaker 5: I envision in 2045 that the arts will be integrated into all aspects of our lives and that the public will understand the value of the arts in all sectors. And because although they don't, the public doesn't have to think about it, it's not something they have to consciously even be able to realize that they're aware of, but that they value what the arts bring to our community development, our community planning, and the way that the arts connect us, build our sense of community and our sense of who we are as neighborhoods, cities, places, and as a nation. And that the arts create the kind of places where we all want to be, that that will be a natural way of thinking about the arts. And I think this is important because if that's true, then the arts and artists will be incredibly well funded. They will have lots of work to do. And because, in fact, it will make us a more connected, stronger, healthier nation. I think, because if the public understands the arts in this way, whether they have to you know, be reminded from time to time, it's just sort of their natural way of thinking about the role arts play in our lives, then we will be stronger, healthier, but also artists and arts will have lots to do. The funding will be there. We don't have to start with making a case for funding because people assume and believe that supporting the arts through whatever, taxes, volunteer work, going to things is good for all of us.

Speaker 6: I am a teaching artist and Executive Director. I envision a future that is one where there is universal access to sequential arts education that is taught in partnership by certified arts teachers artists and representatives from cultural organizations that is supported by dedicated, adequate, equitable funding, supports for the workforce, including health insurance, as well as structures for accountability and regular reporting as well. And I think to the question of like, why do I think this is important? I think on a personal level, I've seen my students flourish when given access to these

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tools. You see a student speak for the first time because they were exposed to theater or music. It totally changes your perspective on the impact and importance of having access to these opportunities. But as a mentor of mine often says, there is no arts without arts education. Of course, we always hope that these programs are going to seed our future arts workforce and future patrons and supporters. But I think more importantly for me, it is seeding that next generation of critical thinkers, those creative global citizens, those folks that are able to carry empathy for those that have different perspectives for theirs. So that's how I come to this.

Speaker 2 (Facilitator): I also just want to thank everyone who's spoken so far, especially for the diversity of perspectives and focus points, and just remind us all that that is exactly the point of this conversation. We are not trying to come to an answer. We are trying to come to an inventory of pieces of a vision.

Speaker 7: I envision a future where the arts are recognized as essential to health, education, and community life, where creative expression fosters civic healing, emotional resilience, and connection across differences. I see artists as essential workers in the ecosystem of public well-being, not only creating beauty, but building bridges. I see arts institutions working together, aligned in values, unafraid to collaborate, and unafraid to fight for the funding and recognition this work deserves. And this is important to me because excellence and access are not trade-offs, but partners, and the arts are not a luxury. But a public good. For me, it means that everybody *deserves* – I don't really love that word – but that everybody can and should have access to and understand how important the arts are to us as humans. It is a place of connection. It is a place of barriers being broken down. And it is a place where no matter what our differences are, we can all look inside and see that we can come together. I believe that as humans, that's why this is necessary as a public good, because this makes us publicly better.

Speaker 8: I come from a unique background as a former public school music teacher, a former orchestral conductor, and head of education with [Organization], and now running a large cultural destination. I envision a world where the power of creativity is truly leveraged for all as a counterbalance to an AI convergence in all aspects of our life, to invest in humanity, and to do that in a way of finding unique and combination of safe spaces that perhaps are publicly, privately funded. There are spaces that are collaborative, spaces that people can be empowered to find their own intellectual pursuits, places of hope, of aspiration, personal creativity in many ways. And I know this will sound controversial, but replace what the church actually was for at least the Western civilization in the middle of the 20th century. We need to invest in humanity. I envision that the arts are a powerful tool to remind everybody in an overly commercial, fast world that we are human.

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Speaker 9: My vision for the sector is focused on equitable access, access to museums for all people, no matter the geography, abilities, income levels, et cetera, language spoken, equitable access to funding. And it's important too because we're such a diverse country. We live together, we work together, we play together. Most recently, we argued together. But museums can help us to learn about each other so that we can understand each other and connect to our shared humanity. And I think that's incredibly important now.

Speaker 10: I envision many agencies, cross-sector work, on the county, city, federal, state level, having an artist or art thinker. But it's more than that, it's a program there. We had five people, six people working within these large agencies, and I see that by 2045 that we both have the supply of the right people and the demand for it. Not every single agency, but all the appropriate ones. I haven't thought that one through yet, of which agencies, but on all levels of government. And why is this important? Because they have the money. They have so much more money than is given out by cultural organizations. And people there with that kind of thinking affect the organization, and the organization affects the people that are there, the art thinkers, and that's why I think that cross-sector is so important.

Speaker 11: I envision that as a result of so much that's been said about the integration and connection and power of arts and culture in the daily lives of all Americans, that we become a world leader in public-private funding on a per-cap basis. To achieve that goal, among other things, we no longer distinguish deserving recipients of grants and other investments based on their tax status, particularly for-profit versus non-profit, but rather based on their activities. I think that the reason for that is that the sector has so much more economic impact, job impact, career opportunities and so forth, when looked at on a combined basis than when arts and culture organizations are defined as purely nonprofits.

Speaker 2 (Facilitator): I've heard a lot of things about cross-sector. Thinking about ways that arts are essential in other sectors, whether that's health, whether that's transportation, or agency settings. I've heard a lot about education. That's sort of two ways. One is arts education. Actually educating students, adults about art, and giving people access into ways to create art themselves and learn about art themselves. Then also, the ways in which art can be a tool for education, right? Whether that's through museums or other kinds of work, a way that people are able to learn about content, learn about each other. Then I think the other big thing that I've been hearing is art as a tool for empathy and healing. The importance and the essentiality of art in society as a way for people to connect with one another, but also potentially to dig into themselves, and also in order to heal from trauma that has been deepening for many people, especially in recent years. So those are some of the things that I've heard so far in terms of a vision for 2045 as ways to bring those

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kinds of issues to the fore in terms of our vision. I feel like this whole idea of the way that we approach funding, and we approach the sector in terms of the nonprofit versus for-profit dichotomy, and really trying to address that and maybe dispel the way that the funding currently flows and the way that the sector maybe even thinks about itself in terms of this divide between for-profit and non-profit. I would love to hear more. I would love to hear pushback. I would love to hear other perspectives.

Speaker 12: I envision for our sector in 2045 as a creative myself, I want to see arts and culture fully embedded into all of our lived experiences, our human experience, if you will, for us to be seen as essential to the human condition. And regardless of our structure, so as an independent artist as part of a collective running an organization, whether it's nonprofit or for-profit. I certainly agree that it's a false dichotomy that happens and we are pitted against each other as a result of that. A place where we are considered so essential that if we are underfunded collectively, that we see that as a barometer to the health or the sickness, the illness of the society at large. And underfunding is just one of the metrics we would be measuring the society based on our own health. In all of my roles, a creative living in the country, specifically living in [Location], I feel that this is really important because we are a city of many dichotomies. We have so many opposing narratives that coexist. Simultaneously and unnecessarily, I would say, because in [Location], we are simultaneously the first city in North America to be [Location], and up until recently, was the largest poorest city in the country. How can both of those things be true? And they're within walking distance of each other, right? Abject poverty and these cultural sites that people come from around the world to see. I think part of it is changing the narrative, or not so much changing the narrative, expanding the narrative so that ordinary folks, and particularly in a city like [Location], which is still a working class town at its core, despite all the eds and meds, that the average person gets to see not only arts and culture is a part of them and for them, that their inalienable human rights is embedded in the things that we do, both the sublime and the very pedantic. And so, again, as a creative, but also in my role here in [Location], I want every resident to see that we are embedded in just about everything that they do.

Speaker 13: I'm a former theater director and currently an employment attorney in [Location]. I envision a proliferation of artist driven performing arts organizations made up of company members who are rooted in their communities and supported by a more robust amateur performing arts organizations, which themselves are hopefully propelled by significantly expanded creative educational opportunities in the schools. In thinking about why this is important to me, I'm afraid I feel a little bit that the institutionalization of the performing arts has kind of eroded the community connection, the direct connection between artists and the communities they serve. And as far as the amateurism goes, in other countries where there is a more robust amateur participation

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in the arts that usually leads to more audiences. And I think any sports organization could tell you if you don't have amateurs who are playing that sport, you're not going to be able to sustain a professional league. Since we're looking out 20 years and a lot can happen in 20 years. That's how I imagine things going or hope a little bit.

- **Speaker 2 (Facilitator):** That's really interesting. I feel like both insight, vision, and also a little bit of a provocation right around the importance of amateur engagement in the arts and maybe this idea that we've become a little bit over institutionalized and formal in a way that keeps people out. And we've also heard several people talking about access and making arts more accessible, whether that's, again, through participation and attendance, or whether that's through artistic creation directly. I think it's a really interesting thing to think about what it would look like, right? Like the same way that we have the youth soccer leagues, what does that look like to have some kind of infrastructure around more amateur participation in the arts? In some way. It's interesting. I am curious to hear whether other people have thoughts on that or other visions for where we might go.
- **Speaker 14:** I actually have a vision that connects fairly well to that. One of the things I envision for 20 years from now is institutions that are able to support different genres and media in a way that truly undermines the historical connection between class signification and genre and media. I think that is one thing I would love to see evolved. And I also envision this coming from artists, innovators, creating new ways of working, creating new structures, creating new categories of creativity that bridge a community and amateurism divide, professional divide, that engage agency in a different way. These are all things I envision coming really to the fore of the next 20 years. We have a lot of music organizations. I'm a composer, and their ability to present in a tax-advantaged way European classical music versus other things remains this wild gap between different kinds of creativity. And I think that's got to go, to be blunt.

Speaker 15: I spent 12 years at [Organization] as the [Title] and then [Title]. And for the past four years, I've been really taking the learning from my time there, working with a variety of organizations around what it takes to build thriving organizations where people can thrive. Across sectors, B Corps, startups, tech startups, academia, I envision an ecosystem where creativity and artistic expression writ large transcend those borders. Because it's been fascinating. I'm a conservatory trained [Musician]. I grew up in the arts. I worked in arts organizations and have had this opportunity both at [Organization] working with a broad cross sector section of creatives and also now the past four years to realize there's so much wonderful stuff that comes when we recognize human expression, creativity, creative expression that transcends sectors and what the learning can be, and how we often are trying to reinvent the wheel of these constructs that really

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are of the making from 60 years ago, 100 years ago. That's the world I envision in 20 years, or maybe next year. The world's going sideways in a lot of different ways. Let's take advantage of it. It's just more fun, intellectually stimulating, enjoyable, joyful when that happens. And when you see that happen, when you can be a part of that, I think for everyone to have the opportunity to be a part of that, wherever they situate themselves is something I would want to be a part of helping.

Speaker 16: I envision a moment where every human being, and maybe even beings beyond the human world, I don't know, gets to sort of wake up every day and think, what will I create today? And if the answer is absolutely nothing, that's okay, because our livelihoods and our lives are not tied to productivity and hustle culture and the extremities of negative externality, disaster capitalism. But usually, the answer could be maybe today it's a movie with my friend or it's a physical object, an artifact that I don't know how to create. Our lives are more focused around the creating and the sharing of media, of objects, of relationships, of families, like creativity in the broadest sense. And so we actually are, I would love, I would hope in 20 years or beyond, as someone who's worked in the for-profit sector, the nonprofit sector and the barely for-profit sector of music, it would be amazing if we got beyond conversations focused primarily around the materialism or the economics of what it takes to be a living human being on earth. And I actually think a lot of those experiences, living halftime in [Location] and halftime in [Location], for me, has been a really wonderful juxtaposition of the sort of far out weirdness, blending of tech and immersive and multimedia that you see here, and then also the very grounded social and community practice that we see a lot of coming out of places like [Location]. Blending those worlds gets more and more exciting. We think again about – not primarily jobs and funding and who gets funded and who doesn't get funded – and moving back to the actual creative spark of what it means to be a human being on planet Earth and maybe even collaborating and co-creating with the beyond human world, with the environments around us, built and natural.

Speaker 17: I envision a locally grounded, resilient cultural ecosystem where artists and arts workers earn a living wage in the community they call home. Where arts and creative work are considered essential infrastructure for a connected and healthy community, and where artists and arts workers are valued for shaping the character of the community. My joke about the city I live in is that this is the quintessentially American city, and that it is a city that is deeply shaped by the corporate sector. Most people who are transplants to [Location] work for one of three or four [Organizations]. And the [Organizations] have really invested in arts and culture for the purpose of attracting workers that might otherwise be interested in going to [Location] or [Location] or [Location], right? We have this sort of top-down arts and culture ecosystem where we've failed as a community in saying, how do we build an infrastructure that allows an artist to live and thrive here? I talk to artists all the time in my work who have gotten grants through our organization, and that has prompted them to stay

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in this community, whereas before that process started, they may have been looking to move to [Location] or [Location], or that they had to leave [Location] or the city of [Location] to make a living. And I think, too, about some of the other places I visit across the country as a gay person who always spends a week in [Location] every summer, remembering that that's a city that started as an artist community, and today it's impossible to visit or spend the summer there or spend any time there if you're a working artist. And what are [those communities] losing if those artists feel like they no longer belong in those spaces? I think about that a lot.

Speaker 18: I really appreciated science coming up just now, centrally, [Speaker]. Thinking about 20 years from now, my vision is really to personally and professionally and socially in every way adapt to change. So, respond to changing, really respond to how being human is defined in 20 years. What is sacred, what is valued, what do cultural spaces look like, what do public spaces look like? I think about aging, healing, growing in terms of youth. But I also think about, I would love to envision that the categories of science, arts, humanities, culture, that those wouldn't serve us anymore, that there would be just hybrids, which there are in lots of different ways. For me, 20 years from now would be change-driven and community-driven. I think less about empowering communities and more about what will communities look like, and what do those communities have to say about what it means to be human? And what do public and private spaces look like? I mean, that's very, very vague. What does it mean to be me personally? It just means that I've especially come in the past year to value having the space, which is in time to actually respond as opposed to react, and just knowing that our nervous systems cannot stay at crisis level. Is there a way to make friends, for me at least, with change of this kind of level? And I'm not talking about acceptance of unacceptable policies, laws, et cetera. But I am talking about a vision of what does that future look like.

- **Speaker 2 (Facilitator):** I think it's a really interesting provocation. I think one of the things I heard you say, if I understood correctly, was we're thinking at 20 years, it's really about what does it mean to be human? What do our communities look like, and maybe even a call to stop thinking about like separation of sectors. To really start thinking about what we need holistically. I think that's actually a really interesting provocation. Do we agree? Do we feel like there's something useful, necessary in separating out arts and culture in some way? And there have been several calls here to be like, no, we should really be thinking cross-sectorally and what that might look like.

Speaker 19: My perspective or my vision, because of the past, is one shaped by a new standard of leadership training for the arts. That's where the last 10 years of my professional life have unfolded, and it's where I speak from and I envision that the possibilities for training for people like us to be

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interdisciplinary by design, based on what you're all saying, it seems like that's something we're all aware of the importance of. And also a type of training that is informed, if not heavily informed, by arts adjacent fields, particularly social enterprise and social innovation, so that we can borrow from other contexts in which organizations are trying to balance commercial and impact dimension, and see how they're doing it, what we can translate back into our own worlds that's beneficial for our work in the arts. But non-profit, for-profit is just a tax status. And that is something that you can see more clearly in the space of social enterprise when you're thinking of a coffee farm in [Location] and you see their business model and then you think back to some of the assumptions that we work with in the arts purely by replicating models that kind of feel and have the flavor of arts organizations that they've always been. And I think that this is important because, per what's convening us today here, the pressures that we're facing in the arts may only increase at least for the coming years and having leaders who have more tools or who are able to connect dots beyond the arts are going to be increasingly needed.

Group 1 Chat

Not available.

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GROUP 2

Group 2 Transcript

Speaker 1: I really am excited to be here, particularly because I would love to dream about the art sector in 2045 deeply rooted in community. People that know me know that it's really important to my soul, where artists are not only celebrated on stages, but are embedded in schools, neighborhoods, healthcare spaces, and civic life, and where creative work is recognized as an essential public infrastructure, not a luxury. I think that the arts are one of the few forces that consistently build connection across differences to really help us in this traumatic period and to help us sustain some real cultural memory.

Speaker 2: One of the things that I really love about working at [Organization] is the fact that it's an [Organization] that is taking the administrative burden off of about 90 different cultural leaders in the city. And I myself am a former musician. My last time playing the French horn was in 2020. And I often think about the orchestral model where you have an engine, essentially, of musicians, typically close to 100, each of them has a base salary, some endowed chairs here and there. And I think it would be tremendous to see a model like that existing, but through a similar ecosystem that comes from fiscal sponsorship, that comes from these shared services, community-driven spaces where there's an administrative team, again, just taking off the compliance, the board management, like all of these things that it takes to manage and run and uphold an organization so that those organizations can do the work in a deeply community-driven way and do it without having to run themselves to the ground as volunteers or with $20,000 budgets year over year, which is typically the case for community-driven entities. I'd love to see us reshaping and really examining what exists model-wise and what could be, you know, based on what so many folks are looking for and asking for.

Speaker 3: I envision very much from the perspective of the community members and participants rather than from some organization or sector. I envision a time in 20 years from now where people, community members, feel justified in valuing their own creative activities and feel that they are able to make time in their family life, in their community lives, to celebrate their cultural practices and artistic and creative practices. I think that ties into a lot of things of how we prioritize things in our life and who has the freedom to make choices, but that's the future I would like to envision.

- **Speaker 4:** What you said really resonated with me as well because the year-over-year, hand-to-mouth logic of the arts in America can be very hindering.

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Speaker 5: I envision a future where creativity is its own currency, that it is its own capital. I've been doing some exploration on a kind of system that sits between the not-for-profit model and the for-profit model by going back into the genesis of the 501c3. Because I did not know much about its origin story. And for years, I've been in spaces where artists and those of us inside this sector have complained about its transactional and extractive practice. Rather than continuing that analysis, trying to build on the practices of the rooms I've been in where futurists and world builders have been to envision something brand new into a third space. And it's messy and undefined, but rather exciting too, to put new vernacular into a new tax code. What is the new tax code in 2045 that sits in a new realm that is not the 501c3 or something else? Where value is defined by something else than the dollar. How might we look into the practices of the majority of the world to inform what that new tax code might be, and not only into something that exists within the confines of our own US border.

Speaker 6: I envision a future in 2045 when if I walk up to any person on the street, nine out of ten people would know what I meant by nonprofit. If you poll people, there would be robust agreement that the nonprofit sector is a good force for society and that it needs to be politically firewalled from government influence and it's broadly deserving of both government and private support. I wish I could say that now. I don't think we can. I think this is a modest and achievable ambition. It's important because right now, we're seeing a lot of the attacks on the nonprofit sector are making the inroads they are because people are unaware of this vast underwater iceberg that is supporting so much of the quality of their lives that they don't even know exists.

Speaker 4: I cleave very much to the work of David Graeber who constantly reminds us that the economic system under which we labor today, and I'll use that term and phrase, is a very new one, historically speaking. It's maybe 400 or 500 years old. In that regard, it hasn't been reality forever and thus can be changed. Graeber comes at this from a futuristic and optimistic stance that the things that we feel are immovable are in fact very movable because they're not terribly old and they are human inventions. My work comes from the commoning and common pool resource economic space. Commoning is a very ancient practice that is pan-cultural and shows up in in every culture around the world and some folks here on the call know this but my thesis is that you know our current non-profit sector is really a bastardized common sector going back to Justinian's original organization of law, of western legal systems that sits adjacent to government and the private sector and that these three sectors do each have distinct roles to play, but that over the 20th century and to today, the private sector has really encroached and co-opted both the nonprofit sector and government to the detriment of all three sectors and civil society. To slightly modify, I think we need to reform and redesign the nonprofit sector quite radically, going back to its roots. If that is the project, we also have to get the private sector mitts out of it, as we do with government. My vision for the future is that we reorganize not just the arts, but the entire nonprofit sector, as a guild

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construct, as a guild of stewards of public trust resources. And we set aside this kind of corporate architecture that we set up in the early 20th century, which I think was our fatal error. And that corporate infrastructure compels this kind of management versus program dichotomy, which I think is an unfortunate artifice, makes it transactional. A lot of the morbidities that we wrestle with come from that kind of fundamental architecture of how we operate and build our sector and what is conferred tax exemption even. It's an inanimate legal form, not a human being, yet humans are the stewards of all this stuff. I think we've mis-designed the sector quite seriously, going back to its origins, and we need to revisit that. I would see the sector organized as a guild of stewards, of workers, where there isn't a distinction between artist and manager or these various job titles, and that the infrastructure used to manage money and other resources is shared infrastructure, taking a page from the fiscal sponsorship and sort of commons book, and that we see a landscape of commons or commons management across the country supporting artistic communities that are self-determined, self-defined, be that by geography or identity or practice or all the above, and that we really get rid of this unfortunate fragmentation and isolation that the underlying architecture of our sector has begotten and burdened us with. So that's my vision for 2045.

Speaker 7: My vision of 2045 is for a more artful society, but really from the public's consumption and demand side. Some of the great art experiences I keep experiencing now are actually passing through airports or when I was in the hospital, art helping me heal. And the kids in the schools and arts education saved my life unquestionably. And we see more and more of that. One of the interesting things we learned in some of our public opinion studies is, you see the data, three quarters of the population has attended an arts event or a museum or performance festival, something like that in the last year. But we also asked them, the public, if there's a lot of places to have an arts experience. In the last year, did you have an arts experience in the airport, in a hospital, in a public space, or public art in the built environment? And almost the exact same percentage of the American population says they had some kind of experience in what I would say a non-traditional arts venue, the way we often think of it. And you combine that with some of the old research from back in the 80s, and the NEA commissioned some studies on arts and socialization. When we have an arts experience, there's that little transformation that happens every time. You come out, you think a little differently about an issue or a topic or whatever. Over time, the theory is, the more of those experiences you have, the more we're going to want of those experiences. How can we make the arts unavoidable in our communities? Where we have just these sometimes very small, but meaningful arts experiences throughout our communities, because we have those, and we're going to want more. And it creates a virtuous cycle. I think it could create a virtuous cycle. How do we make the arts unavoidable in our communities? That's what I would love to see, where we just have these little art collisions every day.

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Speaker 8: I've been thinking a lot about Sweden and other Nordic countries. Here in [Location], we have great partnerships through our embassy series. I love how they treat the arts and call is essential to public life, these arts collisions that you just talked about, not a discretionary add-on. And they do fund long-term institutional projects. They offer stability to their artists, and they measure cultural investments in terms of public participation and shared well-being, not just ticket sales or commercial venues. There's really a shift in thinking from reactive survival, which I find myself in a lot, to strategic cultivation of culture as civic infrastructure. What I envision in for arts organizations, that our organizations are really stronger and that our artists are more securely supported, and that leaders like me are able to lead with imagination instead of constant crisis management. Where real partnerships that we have, our education, our health partnerships in our community, that they're measured not only in revenue, but really in cultural vitality. We've been talking a lot about belonging, but so it's really this idea that belonging is not just this buzzword, but that we're really living it. I'd love to see artists and community-led organizations have permanent predictable funding. That reflects the true work that we do. So that models like we see in Sweden, where cultural participation and artistic careers are supported as a public good, there's really long-term investment built into policy and just not left to chance.

Speaker 9: I just wanted to say how grateful I am for all of your insights, and I've been taking notes really actively. The other point I wanted to make too was just the issue of, to complement that, yes, your remark about the outdated 501c3 aping the corporate model. My fantasy is that public investment in people in general, including artists, will become such that they're not so reliant upon the next gig, the next employment opportunity, coupled with independent contractors, gig workers, et cetera, in general, so that we have the kind of safety net that allows you to have a creative life where there will be waxing and waning opportunities, and you're still able to have a certain measure of economic security, stability, and dignity, regardless of your employment situation in that moment.

Speaker 10: I envision that we will learn from the lessons of history. That if we are reliving the 1930s now, that there will be some kind of cataclysmic change in our society. It didn't happen during COVID, but I think we're even more near that precipice now. I fervently hope it will be peaceful. And I gain optimism from what happened in New York City this year with the election of Mayor Mamdani. And that the post-World War II era, going back to history, was marked by generosity. And it was marked by collaboration. It was marked by the creation of the UN, NATO, other places. And that we will use collaboration as our mantra in this post-cataclysm age. Art will be central to it. And getting there, when I think about children being born in 2025, they'll be 20 in 2045. And if they have had universal pre-K and the things that are coming from the bottom up rather than the top down, we will be in a much better place socially. I unfortunately don't see this coming from government. And I think it will be very hard to repair the damage that has been done in recent years, but there is so much wealth in this world. I think culling the generosity of the 1% who are parents and have

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children and also want this to be a better, healthier world. I think that the legacy organizations that shaped the 20th century will cease to be as powerful unless they figure out how to get onto this bandwagon and work together with generosity and collaboration and a sense of their civic value in community. I think it's going to look very different, but I think it's going to look healthier.

Speaker 11: I'm going to just reinforce a couple of things that have been on my mind. First, [Speaker], your concept of guilds is also something that I've been thinking about deeply. I've been very frustrated with nonprofit structures for years and trying to think about other models and other ways and other things we haven't even invented yet to think about ways to address the nonprofit issues. I'm excited about the guild model and have been going down a guild rabbit hole. I would love to connect with you, actually, if possible, down the road. Also, I think what you said, [Speaker], is also something that I've been thinking about very deeply, the fact that we are in this crisis management mode. And in fact, I would call it a chronic crisis at this moment. One of the things that I just wanted to say was this: I envision a future where we have ease and where there's the ability to be able to stretch and think and when I was thinking as our team was speaking earlier about our goals today, I was thinking deeply about what are the structures that give us ease? What are the resources that give us ease? Where do we find that? And in that ease becomes the space and the opportunity to do what we're doing today, but over time, and to be able to continue this conversation in a deeper sense, and to create and envision a world where we have the ability to be both creative and then we have the ability to work within those spheres in ways that are supportive in many of the ways that we've already described. I'll just leave that word with us, ease. How do we get there?

Speaker 12: I envision the public and the government at both state and local level recognizing the arts as part of a focused 20-year effort that is citizen-led to heal the social crisis of isolation and divisiveness across the US. I think a citizen-led idea or a human-led idea, should include all people who live here, is essential. I'm inspired by the idea that people actively vote for sales tax appropriations or incentives like the one in Colorado that exists now that fund local arts programs sustainably because it makes their lives better. With this rising tide of public demand, I envision that the vast majority of all people of all ages will participate each year in arts programs in their communities as amateur art makers or as audiences. Then on a national level, which I think is a critically important conversation for the highest level professional artists and institutions in addition to the community-centered discussions that we all are having. I feel this because the commercial market is not going to invest in risk-taking art that launches urgent new ideas and voices. The expense and scale of the professional artist at the highest level needs that federal support, I believe. Nationally, I envision that federal arts funding has been increased and protected with a revitalized cultural arm of the federal government that recognizes the transformative power of culture. Finally, in terms of practice and entrepreneurism, I envision that artists and arts organizations in all

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disciplines are focused on reaching audiences in new and dynamic ways, enabled by technology, and creating a space for the voice of the audience, even in the highest-level professional work. I think this can lead to earned revenue, derived income from fresh demand and new engagement tactics that will balance the contributed revenue that supports our organization and increase resilience and entrepreneurship as a value within our organizations.

Speaker 13: In addition to what a lot of people have said and drawing on it, 2045, and ideally sooner, we're paying a lot of attention to class and to power in a way that we're not now. If the nonprofit sector has replaced the commons, think about who that has left out. People who are not doing this stuff for a living, people for whom words like resilience and vibrancy and futures are nowhere part of their everyday discussions, but people who are extremely creative and have a huge amount to contribute, but are not invited to these conversations, not because people here want to exclude anybody, but because we don't have those relationships and we are not used to valuing that kind of knowledge. And we don't even need to go back 500 years to look for examples of this. Looking at as recently as the 1990s, when you had expansion arts, you had the NEA explicitly investing in rural, poor, working class, and people of color-led arts organizations with a different set of metrics, you're not expecting them to have the level of admin that you expect Lincoln Center to have. And there are these things existed they were killed off for specific reasons. We need to talk about why and that's the point about power. How does power operate in this sector? And if we want it to operate differently, if we want to have a more equitable sector, how are more people not only being funded but also at the decision-making table? Finally, that requires supporting arts work that is explicitly involved in building power. Arts work that is connected to and part of labor organizing, community organizing, faith organizing, neighborhood organizing. Work that is not just activism, not just we know what's right and we're going to loudly tell everybody else, but we are going to make it possible for a whole community to come together and express its creativity through storytelling, through art, through music, and also through public action based on the shared story they recognize that they have in common. Last thing I'll say related to class, I'm very moved by what [Speaker] says about education, which is we don't need to wonder about what works in education, just look what the rich people have. This idea that we need to constantly be justifying the arts based on an economic outcome, it's like, no, look at what the rich people have. If they recognize it as valuable, it's got to be valuable for everybody.

Speaker 4: Having spent much of my career working with artists in the public realm, I would like to echo what [Speaker] said about art being unavoidable and add that I really envision artists being at every table for every conversation and that we value their practice, their creativity and all the possible ways that we approach issues, problems, beauty, joy in our world and coming together. This isn't very articulate, it's not a big, huge vision, but it really is about art being available for all. I think [Speaker] said it very well about education and about that it is available in many communities

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of people who have the access and availability of art to be in their lives and culture to be in their lives. And I wish that for everyone. I do think it takes a new model. I think this nonprofit model that we work with is not sustainable. Right now, I also would say there's such a fear factor in our communities and amongst so many people, fear of even applying to the National Endowment for the Arts. The endowment is our friend. Those are our colleagues who are working there. If we're not in that conversation, then we have no stake in the game. I would like to see that fear be gone. I have also worked in government, both municipal and at the federal level. I considered myself part of the deep state, keeping that work going, keeping the fine arts collection that belongs to the citizens of the US going and employing artists, commissioning artists to make work for everyone. I would like to see those programs continue, the fine arts that belongs to all of us be supported and maintained. And I do think government has a role. I think it's an important role and we shouldn't forget that. We should go back to it. I think that's some of what [Speaker] was talking about in terms of the WPA era. I'd like to see a new WPA era where artists are employed and valued as part of the legacy and heritage and future of our country.

Speaker 15: The thing that I'd like to put forward in the conversation is envisioning a space where creative expression, just that base, rudimentary block of creative expression, is unfettered and uncontested. I think you just mentioned a bit, [Speaker], about fear, the fear factor. I think it's chilling and alarmingly so, the chilling effect that federal policy shifts have had on folks feeling steady and what it is that they feel they can or can't say if they receive dollars from any space, if it's a federal space or if it's from a foundation or philanthropic space that is then beholden to different parts of our charitable code. It's amazing what a few strokes of a pen can do to chill what I would consider rudimentary, fundamental space of creative expression. I'm envisioning a space where that is more resilient, more durable, and not so easily shaken. [Speaker], you mentioned this idea of a sort of pan-cultural framing. I'm thinking about UNESCO's adoption in the 2000s, early 2000s, of a declaration on culture and what that means internationally and how to uphold, again, some of these fundamental principles, just around human dignity and human rights that are associated with being able to express ourselves clearly and freely. So that's what I envision where we don't take that for granted, but that we're also able to fortify it in some very meaningful ways.

Speaker 16: My main lane is very peer-to-peer. It's artist-led, primarily artists of color, and honors the hyperlocal. So, my thinking really goes in that direction. A lot of what's been said already is very resonant. I'm thinking of a future when our sector embraces equity and the liberation of all peoples, so very much in the spirit of civil rights and social movements everywhere in the globe. When there's broader shared literacy about and understanding and embrace of quality of life impacts of arts and culture, I imagine a future when more people seek, have the opportunity to actually gain access to and engage in creative practices and that those practices really highlight the experience of local artists and local communities, their immigrant histories, their languages, their challenges and

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aspirations, where we're really coming to the root of a very plural society and gaining that deep understanding. I think the peer-to-peer networks that exist now have the opportunity to enrich this dialogue. That is a lane that I think needs to be amplified. Also thinking about the current lives of organizations of color and imagining a future where we really have overcome the stranglehold of historic undercapitalization, which is a real thing with tangible impacts in the way we can develop capacity and serve communities and be in dialogue with them. A future of improved awareness of our collective power, like [Speaker] rightly said. We are less vulnerable to systemic oppression, which is real, and dismantling it is hard. Where our practices are genuinely more agile, more valued, and more sustainable. That sustainability has to lean, again, to other forms of peer-to-peer support and mutual aid and ways of understanding how resources are generated and circulated.

Speaker 17 (Facilitator): I think that some of the themes that I've really heard, a lot about the kind of essential nature of the arts. It's not an added bonus and should be part of our civic infrastructure. I loved, [Speaker], how you put it. How can we make the arts unavoidable in our communities? A lot of conversation about exploring new models. Models in ways that the 501c3 structure does not serve our interests, and we need to think about new alternatives that we might create. I think there is also a running theme of just individual creativity and the importance of that beyond just the kind of arts experiences you might purchase to be part of or consume, but that everyone can lead expressive lives and have better lives because of that.

Speaker 18 (Co-Facilitator): There's two things that strike me. One is that, except for [Speaker], nobody mentioned the economic impact of the arts. [Speaker], of course, mentioned it in a in a negative context. One of the things I wonder is, if none of us are doing this because of its economic benefit, and the people we represent aren't doing it, why do we still talk about those economic benefits front and center in so much of our advocacy? The second thing I just wanted to raise was, we know the sort of inherent good of some of the things we're trying to do. So why isn't it happening more widely? What can we change? What are we doing whether it's not talking sufficiently about class and access or anything else. I know what those folks should do, which is give us a lot more support and resources, but what about us?

Speaker 19: The first thing I just wanted to say, I appreciate, as I came in, [Speaker], talking about the WPA. I think my dream is 1% for culture across all branches of federal government, not the 1% for art limited to capital projects with nexus to bond capacity, but 1% that any agency can use in whatever way feels most culturally responsive and appropriate to the work that they do, interior, labor, homeland security, whatever. I think that there's a real opportunity there. I think we have precedent with things like the WPA and the Works Progress era. I think as someone who right now is synthesizing dozens of conversations into a policy roadmap for an incoming mayoral administration, I actually think the economic impact argument has validity. I think it's been way over

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leveraged and way over emphasized over the last 25 years. But worse, we still employ 10s of 1000s of people in creative work in [Location], both nonprofit and for profit. And frankly, none of the economic sort of development infrastructure that governs small business support applies very well either to music venues or to nonprofit theaters, nor certainly to independent art workers and other gig workers. I think that it's great that we can point to how much economy and civic discourse that we drive, but I think that we need to ensure that the tools that sustain that sort of economic and business development universe actually work for the creative sectors that we're all a part of. My favorite turn of phrase is civic imagination, that what culture and arts and creativity do is drive the capacity for cities, communities, counties, federal governments to imagine what they might be differently than they are today. Because most government is a risk management enterprise, and it's not very good at thinking creatively by design. That's where I think creative practice and creative practitioners can advance what whole systems need, what whole societies and communities need via their work.

Speaker 6: That's a great jumping off point for what I had to say. To respond to the question, why are we doubling down on economic impact, I'd like to suggest it's for two reasons. First of all, it's because that's what we're set up to measure. Difficult as it is, it's in some ways relatively simple. It's much harder to wrap our head around measuring things like social impact, which is one thing we're trying to work out at the [Organization], what's a replicable process we can get [Organizations] from measuring and reporting on their social impact. But perhaps more importantly, I think the problem is we're accepting the premise that economic impact is the most important metric. I think the most important thing we can do is question the premise. Because I would say, if you zeroed out all of the economic impact, if you said, well, guess what, theaters and museums and all these things, you could build other things in the same space that would have more economic impact. I'd say, so what? Because the really important and impossible to replicate impact are not financial. It's on the quality of life. It's on cohesion of our communities. It's on fueling imagination. We have to change the dialogue around how to measure success.

- **Speaker 17 (Facilitator):** I would argue that we've kind of trained our authorizers to want the economic data. So, it's a little bit of our own making, but it does work with many of them and it does have an impact.

Speaker 20: I think one reason that we respond economically is because we are in a capitalist society and that's what's valued, so we're constantly seeking value from people that maybe are skeptical of it. I was really encouraged to see what Mamdani did with Under the Radar Festival that's going on right now in New York. He went out, stood in the cold behind a fold-up table, handing out tickets and an opportunity to meet the mayor, saying that affordability for the arts was as important as affordability for childcare, affordability for housing. And that is not something we hear

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very often, but it seems like that's a place to start, to somehow say that more often, because how many times do you hear that said? I mean, we believe it, and I do think many people in government and in corporations believe it too, but you don't say it enough, so it's not reactionary. But anyway, that strikes me as very important. And then all these people that would not have ever thought to go. First of all, they didn't even know about Under the Radar, never heard of it. And then also, well, isn't it too expensive? And then it wasn't. I just think that's a beginning to broaden the audience to reach more people.

Speaker 4: A big question for me, given what I said earlier, I've become very interested in the idea of sector sovereignty, but complementarity. I'm wondering what relationship we should be having as the nonprofit sector and as the arts within that to government. I'm an Xer, so I've grown up largely without a functioning government. If you're born after 1980, you've not experienced a functioning government, right? So I chose this sector over government because I have relatively low faith in government to be a stable source of support in this country. That's been my lived experience. I'm not sure we have a good partner in government and a lot of this was born of the great society moment, right? Nonprofit sector is an implementing partner of the government. I'm not resolved on it, but what does that look like in the future?

Group 2 Chat

1. Given some of these visions, suggesting this recent book that might be of interest: Imagining After Capitalism, by Andy Hines (director of the foresight program at the University of Houston) https://www.imaginingaftercapitalism.com/
2. Throwing in the link to CultureWorks, to better frame up the guild model as shared by Thaddeus. One 501c3, 90+ diverse cultural entities, and shared physical infrastructure. Each city should have an entity like it, imo https://www.cultureworksphila.org/fiscal-sponsorship/fiscally-sponsored-projects
3. Yes, to changing dialogue on how sector measures success of arts and culture. "The arts are not a luxury" is part of Mamdani's message — something many organizations have been saying all along.
4. I think we should also be sure to think about the impact of technology, and how it intersects with creativity (for better and not so better…)
5. Use economic data with people who appreciate it but begin training them up to pay attention to social impact.

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GROUP 3

Group 3 Transcript

Speaker 1: I envision that there is greater collaboration between creative fields and urban planning and civic and political life. I often feel that a degree that married urban planning and creative leadership would help change the world faster than any other degree. So that's what I don't know if I envision or I hope for. Because I personally spent, I think, 30 years working in arts administration and curatorial roles. And I see the work that I'm doing is very much aligned with the work of very good and thoughtful urban planners. And yet the skill sets of urban planning are not taught to people in arts management and vice versa. And I see the impact of urban planning is greater and faster than what arts organizations heretofore have accomplished.

Speaker 2: I envision in 2045 that we'll have universal healthcare for all Americans, but I think it's particularly important to move the needle for the arts and culture sector and field. A $6 million organization may be spending, and this is before the latest prices have increased, but may be spending 5% of their budget on health care and insurance for their employees. And particularly from the world of dance, but I know also many other art forms, they're working on a project basis. And so universal health care would be a move forward that regardless of operating size and environment, could benefit many and give them something else to not worry about while being able to move the art forward.

Speaker 3: I think if we do absolutely nothing, in 2045 we will have a whiter, smaller, less diverse, less imaginative, and less creative arts sector in this country. One that's focused far more on commerce than quality and creativity.

Speaker 4: I would answer the question in two parts. The first may resonate with what [Speaker] just shared, which is that without having to caveat the vision, I envision the museum sector, the arts and cultural sector, 20 years from now, very much as we are today. I believe that the challenges that we're currently facing are no different than the challenges that we have been facing, sometimes self-inflicted, sometimes externally inflicted. But we have indeed been struggling in this space for quite some time. The good news is we're going to be all right. The bad news is that it doesn't quite sound like progress. If you ask me today, to envision something for 2045, I would think to be truly ambitious, I would say that I would see 85% of the US population as a member or patron of some arts and culture organization. It can be any. When I say 85%, I mean 85%. If your seven-year-old child does not have access to your credit card, they're part of the 15% that doesn't have to be in my calculation. I think because what we have the opportunity to do with this intentional seeding of

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attention is to reconnect folks to how important we actually are in back of heart and back of mind, right? It's not that we're not important. I have people who are still coming up to me saying, I'm glad that you all are not being affected by the current environment. Are you kidding? It's in the name of my [Organization]. So folks don't quite get it. You envision this intentional moment for a period of rekindling of inspiration and connection that forces active connection that moves 85% of the population to become a member or a patron of something.

Speaker 5: My vision for our sector in is that our primary delivery system is healthcare and that we have the effect of reforming healthcare to the benefit of American population. Hopefully also, I think it will have global ripple effects, and I'd like to see us do nothing but build on what we already do and are good at. For example, we've got a nice sort of presence in the education arena. Let's talk about what would happen if teaching artists retrained for caregiving and creative aging roles to a wage factor of three, I think, is my estimate. So summary, let's integrate with all our functional sectors in society, lead with healthcare.

Speaker 6: I envision in 2045, that the nonprofit arts sector begins to divide away from the commercial arts sector because of market forces. I believe that the commercial arts sector, that some of the larger organizations may choose to become commercial in that there will be more pressure built into the nonprofit sector to do charitable activities, either as defined by the IRS or defined by people in general, probably both. And that in the future, there will be arts organizations on the nonprofit side that will cause communities to become better off, with better health or better education, lower homelessness, lower all of these things, because the this group of nonprofit arts organizations will use the arts as a tool and not as a product. And no one will care about ticket sales or even donations except to keep the place going. It will be more about delivering to the underserved community among that group and I think it's important.

Speaker 7: In 20 years, I envision that the arts will be understood not as an enrichment on margins of American life, but core as social infrastructure, health infrastructure, economic infrastructure, that it's essential to our health, belonging, and human flourishing, no different than we understand exercise as essential to our health and flourishing. That the public sector, through the centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services, Health and Human Services, has invested in the arts in the way that they have invested in physical activity and movement. And the private sector through employers and commercial health plans have invested in the arts just as they have invested in other forms of well-being and health.

Speaker 8: I would love to see in 20 years a place where we turn over the power that we have as a funder to the artists, communities, and creatives in the United States and allow them to tell us, “These are the programs that we actually need in our community. This is what I need.” And we provide technical support and funding for that. That's pretty much our role, not putting what we

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want to do on top of that. And I think it's important because I think it actually goes back to [Speaker's] thing where only by turning over that power do we create a place where it truly becomes important. It strengthens. It grows. It becomes owned by the people who are making it or by the communities that it's in.

Speaker 9: I envision in 2045 that the arts will be a fundamental civic right for every child in America. And I think that's important for our future, because especially in the performing arts, what we see is that participation in the performing arts is driven by exposure as a young person. And as we know, over the last 45 years, we have disinvested in arts education in our country. This isn't necessarily a vision around arts education. It's actually more a call to action for the whole field to really focus on ensuring every child in America, in every community – rural, urban, doesn't matter – the arts are a fundamental piece of their experience of growing up.

Speaker 10: By 2045, I envision that the arts are sustained as a public good, that they are guaranteed, nonpartisan, and free from the pressures of the market. Artists are no longer asked to soften their truths to survive. They are trusted to observe our world to help us hold up mirrors that may be painful, and to invite the kind of reflection that makes collective growth possible, and that the arts are inseparable from community. They're woven into the life of neighborhoods and cities, helping people belong to a place and to one another, and that they build shared language, deepen empathy, and turn public spaces into common ground. So arts in 2045 don't simply reflect community, they really help create it.

Speaker 11: I'm impressed by the optimism of people's visions, and I think it's great that people are able to construct and attach themselves to such hopeful visions. I think the likelihood is going to be quite different from the heaven on earth that many of us would like to bring around. And I want to go back to two questions that I think are really germane to this inquiry. One is, who is it for? I really liked what [Speaker] said because when she described the accountability being to the people of the community, I think that needs to be true on a national level and of all the sectors too. And right now we have a big dividing line between people whose work reflects that commitment and people who see it as a professional sector where they want to get support for the jobs and well-being of individuals who are creative and talented and so forth. I'm on the it's-for-the-people side, and everybody else gets supported by fulfilling that mission. But I think that if this convocation doesn't address that question outright, it's very hard for me to see how it will move off the stuck place that we're in right now. When I look toward 20 years from now, I see a lot of possible scenarios, good ones, bad ones, whatever. But for a while, I made my living as an organizational consultant, and people were into long-range planning. They'd hire you to do these five and 10-year plans, and then they would be at the recycling center very soon because the world, as it unfolded, did not follow the five and 10-year plans. It would be crazy for us to imagine that we have any clue as to

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what's going to happen. All we have is twenty, thirty, 100 different scenarios. So the most important vision I have for 2045 is readiness, preparedness. And that means everybody needs to look at what could go right, what could go wrong, everything in between, do a lot of scenario planning work, do a lot of dialogue and investigation with people who don't necessarily share your immediate concerns or situation, and ask what has to happen for the sector to be ready to navigate and thrive in whatever comes to pass. And I'm often disappointed that people are still generating these blueprints as if they have any meaning anymore. And as far as I'm concerned, they don't.

Speaker 13: I agree so much with what's been said. I think what I would offer is envisioning, I don't know if I'm putting this the right way, but a consolidated sector. Some communities I visit, even some organizations in my community, it's like some organizations exist for the sake of existing, and there needs to be much more working together and thinking about how instead of creating a fractured sector how we work together. And maybe some organizations need to consolidate and work together and combine resources instead of chasing after an increasingly smaller or at least the same philanthropic pie. I also think we need a rethinking of the business model of how nonprofit arts organizations exist and work and maybe that's pie in the sky, a pipe dream, but I think it works in some circumstances in some cases. But otherwise, it's a broken model that really needs to be rethought. And within that, we need to rethink how we teach arts administration and how we teach our leaders and how we bring our leaders into the fold so that we can mold and meld the best of creativity and passion that our leaders bring with the best business practices and know how to actually run a business. Because as I'm constantly telling people here, nonprofit is a tax designation. It's not a business strategy. We have to approach our work like we're businesses, even though we're in the creative sector.

Speaker 14: I also want to frame that I think a lot of my perspectives on 2045 are rooted in that experience where I live of a very largely rural and somewhat isolated in the national landscape kind of population. I think I see, when I think about 2045, cultural economies and consumption patterns and production patterns that are profoundly shaped between these kind of twin pressures of how artificial intelligence evolves and also climate change and increasingly erratic weather patterns, and the impacts that will have on our built environments among other things. I think I'm interested in envisioning futures, and then by envisioning maybe creating structures to pursue these futures around what would it look like for some of our digital infrastructure to be, for lack of a better word, nationalized in the sense of becoming treated as sort of a public utility, maybe even with some sort of revenue structures that reinvest in the community, like the UK's lottery funding for culture. That is a very, not deeply thought through premise, but just kind of throwing that out there as something we might hope for potentially. I also think that the pressures of climate change and the kind of destructive impacts and necessities to change lifestyles dramatically might increase the true value that people have, which has kind of been lost in this late 20th century era of genuinely hands-on

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skill sets. I think, especially in a place like [Location], it's going to be extremely important that people know how to build, make, design, and envision. I think patterns of destruction and scarcity and disconnection will become a little more normalized. And I think that might feed into how we think about arts education, whether that's called arts education. But I do think that some of these kinds of base needs for hands-on skills that have been somewhat lost will be at a premium. Then I think we're already seeing in maybe the for-profit pop culture sphere, a little bit of a move away from a few mega-stars or a centrally determined taste making machinery, and it's becoming much more disparate. We all have our own algorithm of what music we like and who we discover or whatever. But I do think that there will probably be a more fractured landscape, so maybe that means a more regional or local systems of cultural production and consumption could come out of that.

Speaker 15: My big dream for envisioning is looking at policy and legislation and having that common standard language in the policy and legislation at a local, state, and federal level. So we're not spending years advocating for aid to be put into STEM and for the creative economy to be included in economic or workforce development policy and legislation. Just something that sets a standard and really normalizes it, integrating it into all the other sectors that we know it already has the impacts and outcomes in. And just a plug for integrating that into the whole creative urban planning process.

Speaker 5: Advice for me and us: to grab the *both and there* that our realities are made up of history and future. And I sense something vital in what [Speaker] is offering us about how we utilize information from our past towards those futures. And for me, in very practical terms, it's why I think policy should be appreciative, emergent, and most importantly, integrative. That we need to be working in the functional sectors of society where need is based, that all of us have needs that are based, and it's why I advocate for healthcare. I'm also a huge workforce development person, but I want to acknowledge, as a way to really honor the most recent past, that that policy structure was articulated under Dr. Jackson and certainly was set precedent before with all the creative placemaking work. So we are on record [with] research and healthcare in those cross-sectoral relationships. I want to thumbs up on the urgency of now.

Speaker 2: I would also adopt the *both and*, [Speaker]. And your prompt, [Speaker], or comment that reflected for me was not just coming up with new strategies, but also asking new questions. That might also include a spirit of what would we envision that arts and culture in America would let go by 2045? Some of the conditioning as far as how artists work in this world, so many of them that maybe because of philanthropic structures have been conditioned to just always be chasing: What's the next piece? And that requires some undoing, some bad habits that we have to let go of, and that's why I really love some of the themes that we're developing around arts as infrastructure. I appreciate, even in the workforce development conversation, Keshet Center for the Arts in

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Albuquerque, New Mexico, has really been steadily over 30 years developing, working on it, and they're very mentally flexible about when local policy opportunities for workforce development come up, they go for them and apply for them. Even though what they're doing is not a new program, that's they're able to code switch and say, this is what artist residencies are, but we can get the funds and interweave ourselves with public policy if we call it workforce development.

Speaker 3: I don't want to play the East German judge. Most of you may not get that, but let's be realistic. We are currently in a world where this government got rid of public funding for public television, and we didn't blink an eye. We do not have a collective opinion supporting that every child deserves quality education, public education. We do not have a collective understanding of the importance that every citizen deserves access to quality health care. All of those are connected to the same thing, along with the arts. I'm not saying we shouldn't fight for these things, but we need to be realistic about the challenge that is before us. It is about a changing of minds and hearts of people, some of whom are already patrons of our work, who have not been turned by the very things that we have presented in front of them. All I'm trying to ask us to do is think realistically about how hard it is going to be. I'm [age]. I have seen in my lifetime a shift from the people fighting for the civil rights of people who look like me and other people of color that has led to advancements for women, for LGBTQ community, for every other community that has been able to take advantage of this scope of progress that was fought for, for the improvement of Black lives. And in that lifetime, I have seen a constant attack on those things to the point that many of the things I grew up benefiting from will not be available to my grandchildren if we do absolutely nothing. So I just think that we need to be realistic about the challenge that was set before us. It is hard to get people to focus on the fact that we are all human and that we all have human needs to be supported. And that, yes, arts are part of the infrastructure, but it will not benefit any of us to be Pollyannish about how easy that's going to be to accomplish, because we already have evidence of the dehumanization of certain sectors of our community for the benefit of a small elite.

Speaker 16: I would really love to hear more about how we convince those who are not part of our choir. How do we make (the) arts more relevant to Trump voters? How do we get the rest of the country in this great divide to be together? And this idea that the arts are essential to everyone, to all humans, no matter what they believe. There's a lot of things already mentioned today that maybe could be pointed that way, but I'd really love to hear. Maybe we're moving into more action steps here. How do we do that? Because without that, we're nowhere the way this country is headed.

Speaker 9: My feeling is like the ship has sailed for the people who are over 25 in this country, or maybe even over 15. And why I believe the investment in the youth is the most important thing, if we actually ensured that every child in America, that arts were an actual living part of their existence from the time that they were five or 10. Or probably five is probably better than 10, right? If it is a

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fundamental piece of their life in their society and in their community, wherever they live, in the rural communities, in urban communities and everywhere in between. That's how by 2045, it's too soon, but by 2065, we're actually having a different conversation. Because to me, we're not going to convince people who are in their 40s or 50s or 60s to change their opinion about what we do. We're just not. I don't believe.

Speaker 17: I feel like this is the moment I'm feeling called to speak in because of the conversation that's coming up right now about convening people of different backgrounds and different perspectives. And I think that's something that choirs do and as a collective action. And that ties really closely to the vision that I'm carrying with me today as we're talking, because the vision that I have is a stronger, more unified national voice, where we are advocating as a field together. And I also feel called to share that there's a space in 2045 for a more understood and structurally used concept of the arts as a tool of collective healing. Obviously, we as practitioners all know that and do that, but a common understanding for those who feel they are outside the arts, that it is a tool that can be used in that space productively, that we are a leader in demonstrating to other fields the benefits of shared support models, which again, the arts are a model for. And I know that was mentioned several times in the chat too. And that there is a value in the arts as leaders of a vehicle of civic impact, that we have a major hold on the public and a major investment of people's thoughts and energy. And that that can be used to drive change, and it has. And it has mostly been in grassroots forms. And so my vision for 2045 is to bring more structure to that space. And just re-underline that the arts are spaces where we do bring people of all ages and all backgrounds together to share space and grow in understanding.

Speaker 18: When I think about this, there are a lot of challenges organizationally and as a sector and as workers that we have to handle. But I think none of it will exist without participation from the broader public. I tend to think of it around what will they experience in 2045? What will the experience be like for them? What will arts and culture mean to them? That's the only path to a possibility of relevance for the sector in which people will continue to support it. And very different than the ways that people have supported it in the past. I think it's more on all of our minds that we need broad participation and support of the sector to maintain its sustainability into the future. And that isn't only going to come from wealthy donors, nor is it going to come from government institutions. So speaking to what [Speaker] said at the beginning, unless we have broad-based participation, unless people care, unless people think it's relevant and that it's meaningful to their lives, then these organizations and institutions and careers that we've created will not continue to exist. I think that people across the political spectrum and from all walks of life see art as valuable. They see it in different terms and they are being influenced and acted upon in the society that we have, to categorize everything and think about "what experiences are meaningful to me." Perhaps based on who I am or my identity, what experiences are for other people. There's a lot of sorting.

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Social media and technology have definitely been accelerating this, that these kinds of experiences and these types of art forms and these types of artists and these other things are associated with my group. These other things are associated with that group. I think that we have done some of this in the sector, but when I talk about gathering spaces for connection and dialogue, in particular, when I'm talking about spaces in which people can experience and contend with things that are not defined by their identity or by their demographic alone, by the things that are being handed to them as these are the things that are for you, as opposed to these are the things for others. We need to be able to experience one another, to understand our lives better, our cultures better, in the broadest sense. There are not a lot of spaces in which that actually happens. There are more spaces in which we speak to very particular groups of people, whether we admit that or not.

Speaker 11: I have a friend who used to conduct this ad hoc research where he'd get on a mode of public transportation and strike up a convo with someone, and he'd say, are you into the arts? And 100% said no, right? And then he said, oh, well, do you write poetry? Do you play an instrument? Do you like to dance? And they all said yes to one or another thing like that. I think we have to take responsibility. If there is something called the arts sector, the arts and cultural sector, then its snobbery has to be acknowledged. [Speaker] just said much of what I'm saying in a little bit different frame. The way that they have generated an image that says, this is not for you, has to be taken on board. I don't really use that thing, the arts, because what is the meaning of it? Like, if you say the health sector is the guy who does my acupuncture *and* this brain surgeon at a New York hospital, what are their common interests? What's one doing for the other? In this sector, what often happens is that the people who have the least resources and are working the hardest are asked to come and show and tell the impact of funding to make the agencies that give that funding look good. But actually, they're getting a crumb in comparison with what the client agencies that always get the big grants are getting. That has to stop. The core ethos of the sector is a scarcity-based competition. Every funder that's active in this sector rejects a magnitude – I don't know what number to say, 10, 20, 100 applications if they have application-based funding – for everyone that they approve. So that the actual work of the organization in each of these cases is to employ a lot of people to reject things, to say no, to go through a vetting process that ends up with massive disappointment. How is that good for a sector? How is that good for creating the society that we're talking about having in the future? If there's going to be something called the art sector in reality, not just conceptually, people have to acknowledge what's been wrong for a long time and clean house.

Speaker 19: I'm really enjoying this range of conversation and I appreciate [Speaker's] comments earlier about let's take a reality check too and recognize what a heavy lift many of the people in our community, in our world have already experienced. This kind of change is incredible. But I also really appreciate the reason that we're all here today is trying to reimagine what could be in 20 years. So finding this balance between aspirations and what we would like to see happen in 20 years,

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balanced with the reality check of where we are today. I do like to envision a period where we're not under the same constraints of the challenges and the autocracy that our current administration is trying to lay onto all of us, but in a world where we are able to restore funding, and actually not just restore, but increase funding. The government recognizes that the arts is essential to community and culture in our life, and is willing to invest in it, not in an optional fashion, but in a more robust fashion than we've seen through the NEA, the NEH, and any other federal programs that have been out there. In that same breath, I'd love to see the access to those funds become much more simplified in the future. The bureaucracy and the challenges that state and federal governments put in as roadblocks to accessing funding and the narratives and the statements that you have to come up with, I think are draconian at best. And in 20 years time, I'd love to see an environment in which that is greatly simplified.

Speaker 6: OK, I just want to speak to, again, [Speaker], the East German judge. I get it. You are not the East German judge. If you are, then I've been the East German judge for the last 11 years as I write weekly columns for arts journals that put a lot of the onus on reforming the art structure, the structure for arts organizations. I've said it a million times, there's a difference between art, artists, and arts organizations. These are three completely different things. But it is among the arts organizations that have chosen not to fulfill their requirements, their covenant, the thing they signed to get their IRS letter, that they're supposed to be helping communities. And it is when the arts organizations choose to create a season, not by picking the best plays or picking the best symphonies, but by saying, what do we want to accomplish in the community this year. And now let's pick, let's see what kind of art supports that idea that then there will be success. But until that happens, we're going to have a toxic elitist environment where donors donate so that donors can attend. The donors become their own beneficiaries. And that's the textbook definition of elitism. I also don't see things happening until this particular generation of leaders either comes to terms with that or leaves or becomes a commercial organization and just says, "OK, we're just going to do whatever I want to do." That's where artistic vision comes in. It's been a trap, the idea of an artistic vision, because unless it's a community vision, a community nonprofit has no business with an artistic vision that is separate from the community. When that comes back together, things will be fine. But as they would say in East Germany, nein, it isn't happening. I don't know what it will take to make it happen unless it's that theory that it took 40 years to leave the desert in the Bible because a whole generation of leaders who believe themselves as slaves first had to die off before they could actually take a country or a land unto themselves. That's just apocryphal. But that's where we are. Yeah, art is great. Art is wonderful. Art is essential. It already is. But arts organizations are not fulfilling their duties as community members and until that changes, this is not going to change.

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Group 3 Chat

1. I envision a global society in which there is broad consensus across geography, political bent, cultures, and walks of life that the arts are essential to human health, wellbeing, inspiration to higher ideals, and vital connection between people and nations. As such it becomes obvious the arts must receive support from all sectors.

2. I want to gently add as thought bomb: Ideas, framing of art as essential, art access as a right for all, art as a public good, art building and art creating community, transforming public spaces… are all powerfully beautiful ideas… BUT/AND… these are tried a true mantras of our field… So, if we are not bringing new vision, new ideas… we'd better bring new strategy. That is possible… but self-awareness is key here.

3. I envision greater collaboration between arts & culture orgs and urban planning. Towns should have an arts/culture/ideas position on every council and on Boards of Education. Greater utilization of shared resources among orgs to enable artists, administrators, and partners to work more efficiently and effectively.
    a. I said the "I" word - of arts & culture as full partners in urban planning is a fascinating idea. What if art wasn't the decorative rose on top of the icing, but the eggs that hold the cake batter together? What if arts/culture were as essential to the building project as the funding… e.g., the project does not move forward without it.

4. The nonprofit model was built for a different time. It needs a 21st C[entury] overhaul.

5. There is also the example of a govt arts spending card. Distributed through libraries, spends like cash.

6. Percent for Art policy is a good example of policy integration on a leveled scale.

7. Would love to hear examples of successful integration of the arts into urban planning. Mass MoCA comes to mind.
    a. NYC's High Line is another great example. Independent org, but serve a broad population of residents and visitors.
    b. Maybe… Destination Crenshaw https://destinationcrenshaw.la/

8. We have to recognize that there is a difference between art, artists, and arts organizations. Art is essential, like air. Artists make magic by combining disparate materials and ideas and create a new thing called art. Arts organizations do not create art; they present it, they get people to assemble it, and at best, they promote it. Nonprofit is more than a tax

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designation: it is a covenant made by an organization with specific rules that arts organizations have been ignoring at their own peril.

9. What are we willing to give up? Appreciative = asset-based development = whatever they call it. I have often thought of the US arts workforce as an internal diplomatic core, but we're not trained that way.

10. I would love to hear more about how we convince those who are not us, who are not already "in the choir". How do we make the arts more relevant to those who aren't thinking about the arts. What about those Trump voters? How do we capture their interest? Many ideas already mentioned here can be pointed in this direction, but can we think about this specifically?
    a. I think these things are related because to your point, we're maintaining a reactive stance instead of a responsive/proactive stance.
    b. Yes, you see the fundamental vitality of the arts in Cuba for example where every child plays and instrument, sings, dances.
    c. I disagree because arts engagement doesn't only have to be K-12. Convincing people in their 30s, 40s, and 60s is an opportunity to focus.
        i. I guess I'm not imagining we give up on adults, but if we really want to change the narrative of the arts in the US, the citizens of this country will need to have a fundamental change in their relationship to the arts, and I believe that won't be successful unless we start young. And again, I'm not talking about arts education. I'm talking about making the arts central to civic life in EVERY community.
        ii. Yes. The arts need to be the party boat passing the sinking Titanic. Show another way of being that is joyful, inclusive, and effective.
    d. The current "movement" created a plan without bringing the majority of the country to the table. And then released a plan with such "confidence" and "authority" and a "clear message about how this helps you," that it recruited more and more... What can we learn from that?
    e. Voice! Let's explore voice as a primary metaphor for what we do and why.

11. Experientially speaking, I envision an arts and culture sector that is more defined by gathering spaces for connection, dialogue, and play that is more boldly bridging digital and physical experiences (and demonstrating the value of the latter) and more “cross-cultural” in the broadest sense.

12. I think an essential role of the arts (and its ability to tell stories and offer visuals) to allow us to envision ourselves taking risks and making sacrifices for a higher goal (health, civil

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rights, education). From risks in what we say at a school board meeting to risks in relying on community aid during a period of coordinated mass labor strike. Artistic labor weaves those individual experiences into something larger. Most people only take "risks" and embrace discomfort in a Facebook comment section with someone they went to high school with.

13. I think observing and learning from libraries as one of the most resilient, despite being relentlessly attacked, cultural entities is fascinating. The balance of restraint and laying low, with putting forth bold visions for how people create and connect.

14. I envision a sector in 2045 that is audience-centered, digitally fluent, financially resilient, and structurally equitable. A sector where every institution, no matter its size or budget, has the tools and support to connect deeply with its community, not just through what happens on stage or in the gallery, but through how they listen, engage, and co-create with audiences. I envision an ecosystem where digital platforms are not just used for marketing or fundraising, but as cultural spaces themselves, spaces where storytelling, accessibility, and participation flourish. And I envision a future where long-term investment in innovation, especially in AI and data, allows us to move beyond survival mode and into generational sustainability.

15. Today, funders should pull the full data pool of applicants and figure out how to fund all of them at five years at the scale appropriate for self-determined growth. Funding is YOUR job.
    a. I just wish Foundations would make a longer commitment than 5 years.
    b. While I like long-term funding I like 3 years with an intent to refund. What if the 2nd 3 years was 100% "you've proven yourself, so do what you want with this round”

16. Having worked on both coasts and now in the East Midwest, it's been my experience state arts orgs and funders are more creative/less draconian with their limitations. Maybe we can learn some things from what so-called red and purple states have been doing to navigate those measures.

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GROUP 4

Group 4 Transcript

Speaker 1: I envision a time where the arts in general has taken a place where as we look to the future and solve problems, that we're looking to the arts and the creative fields, not just business or technology. I think that at times like COVID, we saw this resurgence of what the arts can do, but I feel like overall, we pull it in as we look at past societies, we give lip service to, but there's this kind of like, oh, you're the creative cousin that is sort of interesting when we need you.

- **Speaker 2 (Facilitator):** A question is – when you talk about how we discovered some of that during COVID, if you were going to think about one or two of the specific things that arts really sort of claimed our space for during COVID, what would you single out?
- **Speaker 1:** I would single out our ability to connect people across miraculous platforms: Artists that were performing on Zoom, I think of all the things that were shared about the ways that people showed up and did actions in public. I also think about even when there was a creative shift to when people were showing up to support the white coats for doctors. I feel like it was a moment where we all put a creative lens on everything we did in daily life.

Speaker 3: I envision, in 2045, a world in which all arts and cultural organizations see themselves as in the mold of public libraries. The heartbeat of that, I think, is generosity. I spent Saturday in a public library trying to figure this out. First of all, there's the openness of all kinds of resources for anyone who comes. It's cross-generational. It has high expectations for everyone. It has embraced technology where suitable, where humane. The book recommendations come from everybody in the library, assistants as much as directors. I was particularly struck by the forgiveness. There are no longer library fines, at least where my library was. You are simply asked to remember that it's a public resource and to regard it as such. And the data is that libraries that operate in that kind of generous way lose fewer books. I think it's important for all those reasons, inclusive, not exclusive.

Speaker 4: I envision a sector in which arts and culture managers, administrators, executives, whatever terms we want to use, can have a livable and viable career in our field. That includes livable wages, benefits. And this is regardless of geographic location, regardless of gender, regardless of race or culture, that we as a field have viable livable wages and careers in this business.

Speaker 5: By 2045, and it's only 20 years from now-ish, so another generation and a half or so, I would love to see a real value placed on culture and all its diversity. I love what's already been spoken about in terms of moving from a scarce ecosystem to one of abundance. I would say also one of human rights and necessity. The way we think about the utility of the internet, and no one

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at this point questions its value and ability, that we treat our culture, our diverse, grand, incredible universe of experiences in the United States of America as valuable. So that access for young people, for independent artists, for major arts institutions, irrespective of aesthetics and disciplines, can exist because they're necessary and vital to each and every block, community, city, town, state.

Speaker 6: I envision a world 20 years from now where there is a more accurate financial accounting of the contribution of arts and culture and creativity to total GDP. Then that is translated back into funding that puts those dollars or the benefits of those dollars back in the hands of artists and those that are creating it. I don't know how else to say it, but I just feel like there's a lot of leakage in that we create a lot of activity for the nation, but we don't necessarily benefit from that. Then we're not able to recycle that into higher wages or better infrastructure, etc. A lot of that financial benefit ends up going to, for example, for-profit corporations that are benefiting from an artistic environment in their city, or artistic employees, etc. Then we don't get that back, or maybe we get it back in like a $10,000 donation from the company, something like that. So just a more accurate flow of the financial representation of arts in a community. I feel like it's too fragmented. I don't think we have a really good aggregate that everyone can agree upon.

Speaker 7: I just love what has been said and I've really attached to a lot of things that have already come out, but I think agreeing with many who have said that arts and culture in 2045 have gained their place as the value that they contribute to our lives and our communities and are seen as essential ways for us to connect and to find ourselves in each other. I believe and I envision arts sort of winning the attention economy in that way. Making us so visible and easy to find and also having the level of investment that it would require to be valued as central to our society at all levels in the same way that math and English are taught in schools. The essential nature of art and the consummate investment that it would require to be valued for what art is in our culture.

Speaker 8: I'm going to step back for a moment. It's less of a vision specifically for arts and culture for our sector, but I do feel very strongly that we need more collaboration, coordination, and leadership, really, on these ways in which art intersects with other primary fundamental survival areas. What I'm thinking of is sort of like art and democracy, art and climate, and art and technology. I feel like if we don't get those three (points of intersection) right – of course there are others – but if we don't get that right, art will continue to be reactive, responsive, and consistently in survival mode. I think we need to do more thinking about how we thrive as a society and humanity and where arts fit in, and not just fits in, but can really be in that leadership place.

- **Speaker 2 (Facilitator):** If you think about arts organizations versus artists, do you think both groups need to be focused on art environment, art, and democracy, or is one group ahead of the other?

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- **Speaker 8:** I think artists definitely are looking to the organization to provide leadership on that. I think it's really upon the organizations to, especially from policy change and funding. We can provide that voice; the coalition building and really advocate for workers' rights and things like that.

Speaker 9: I envision in 2045, all of our schools across the United States have arts education embedded into the K-12 curriculum, and that we prioritize the professional development of those art teachers in the same way that we do the core academic subjects.

Speaker 10: I'm going to riff off the art education, but I'm going to take it a step further. I believe that in 20 years, we need a radical shift, and we need a radical shift around how we think about arts education. I'm the [Title] of an art [Organization], so this is not just my space. This is all spaces. And we need to move away from teaching art to teaching to think like artists. We are in a crisis, we all know this. We're not supposed to address it, but we, whether it's civil society or AI, how are we teaching creative thinking? Are we leading that effort? I believe in 20 years we will be because we are the best suited to do that work, whether it's through our nonprofit organizations, or if we are changing the nature of education. I love to imagine that in 20 years, we could be like the Reggio Emilia schools. Instead of having specialties where the arts are considered around the edges, it's central to our learning. What we are trying to learn, is to be imaginative thinkers, critical thinkers, so that we are creating the society that we need in the future.

Speaker 11: I'm coming at this from the perspective of representing both for-profit and nonprofit independent stages, independently owned and operated small businesses. My ideal for 2045 is a whole list of things, but in terms of this specific question, I think it's really important to start embedding people that represent and are in the art sector into positions of power. Obviously, that's not potentially in line with everyone's policies, but I think in whatever way possible, my goal would be for the art sector to be less reactive to policies, but instead to actually have a seat at the table where every single policy decision is being made. I think that starts at the local level, the state level, and then it makes its way up to the federal level. Again, so we're brought into the fold before things happen and are not sort of at the will and bend of other sectors that have long been represented in policy for the eternity of the United States.

- **Speaker 2 (Facilitator):** If you were thinking about the kind of position you want, from the arts to be in, do you mean member of city council, member of Congress? Do you mean in a government agency? What are some of the things that you're specifically thinking about?
- **Speaker 11:** From my perspective in my work at [Organization], it's all of the above. In some ways, we'll take what we can get. That means local people being a part of tourism boards, that really granular level. Or it also means people who understand arts education or understand what it means to operate an arts small business making their way up to the

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congressional level. I think the arts are severely underrepresented in terms of legislative power in the country. I think any place that we can start boosting representation is a win.

Speaker 12: I envisioned by 2045, that the performing arts sector will be fighting for survival in ways that we're just now beginning to imagine. I think embodied artificial intelligence in the form of humanoid robots will have radically destabilized the labor market broadly. But I think the arts market will, the arts will face a particular crisis, which is that style itself becomes instantly copyable. Idiosyncratic movement, vocabularies, vocal textures, ineffable...the thingy thinginess of the arts will be immediately copyable and reproducible on demand. Live performance of human bodies, which has always been about presence and un-reproducibility, will lose its economic moat. Liveness itself, which is the last refuge of the irreplaceable, will be mediated into oblivion by virtual reality technologies that simulate co-presence well enough that most audiences won't know the difference or care. I think this crisis is not, of course, unique to the arts as a subsection of a much larger economic collapse, the automation and the hollowing of labor markets is a concern for all of us in lots of different ways. But the arts have always felt these moves first or earliest. I think there is, however, room to lead. To end on an uplifting note, I think there's room here for a coalitional and parasitically collaborative modality that insists on our future, but also some really treacherous bedfellows. I'm thinking in terms of legislative partnerships. I'm thinking of emerging technology or technology companies of all sorts. Those alliances are perilous. I think the alternative is irrelevance. I have some really deep structural concerns, not only, of course, for the arts, but for what emerging technologies of today do to obliterate our field and others.

- **Speaker 2 (Facilitator):** Do the forces that you were talking about, do you think that they impact, affect the arts more or differently than any other sector of society? Or is this sort of your prognosis for everyone, including the arts?
- **Speaker 12**: I think the arts will be particularly adversely affected because the objects, the experiences that we truck in are so precarious already. I think it's not a coincidence that Google has a creative lab, right? These companies thrive by hiring artists, who then have their expertise extracted into a larger corporate Borg that then trucks on their creativity in the form of hardware and software capitalism that makes everybody an artist by hollowing out the arts ecology. So, I think the arts, again, are not unique to those extractive dynamics. But I do think we're going to get hit by it hard.

Speaker 13: I would love to see an accurate historical accounting of this time. I find that a lot of the things that we are dealing with now are cyclical. We have faced pieces of these things before, and as I always tell people, I just want to make new mistakes. An honest accounting of why it has been difficult to have a communal or collective response to some of these things when they were in their snowball going down the hill and not the avalanche phase will better prepare us to one,

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tackle the issues and then be on the lookout for how to protect ourselves in the future. I don't know how much we'll be able to effectively change in those 20 years. But I would love us to take an honest accounting of how we got here.

- **Speaker 2 (Facilitator**): A younger person this morning asked the question about who was sitting around a table in 2005, having a conversation about what was happening in 2025, and how do we grade ourselves? Particularly for anyone who's my age or older who would have potentially been, have we done honest accounting in the past? Have we held ourselves accountable to these visioning things?
- **Speaker 13**: We have not. And I say this as somebody who was in my PhD program reading and unearthing the archives of the creation of the NEA. We didn't take an honest accounting then, which didn't prepare us for the culture wars, and we didn't take an honest accounting then, so it didn't prepare us for the financial cliff. We keep being reintroduced to some of these lessons. We will repeat them Groundhog Day style until we get them correct, and I believe that part of getting them correct is taking an honest stock of how we got there.
- **Speaker 2 (Facilitator):** Does anyone, either you or anyone else, have any examples of a sector that's done that well, or a group of people who have paid attention and had past, informed present, informed future? Does anyone get that right?
- **Speaker 13:** I think a lot of longstanding fields. So, part of my research is in areas in like the professionalization of a field, and we have this quasi-professionalization in our field that doesn't protect us from outside pressures and threats the way that business, law, medicine to a certain extent. There are ways that we could protect ourselves. We just haven't really gotten there. But other professions have done it to varying degrees, levels of success. But it changes the conversation from are we going to survive to how do we do the things.
- **Speaker 6:** I'm reading a biography about John Adams and the first presidential election after Washington. There were talks of foreign influence in terms of dollars from France that were influencing the election. Jefferson apparently owned a large stake in one of the local media companies. I think to your point, [Speaker], we don't learn a lot of these lessons and a lot of them are cyclical, even over long periods of time. I don't know what that means for us in terms of where we go even 20, 50, or 100 years from now. But the writing on the wall says a lot of this will be repeated even if we know it. But it's going to continue to repeat, it will continue to stay here. I don't know if I believe in a wholesale collapse, but maybe just a cycle of this eternal mess that we're in.

Speaker 14: I was just thinking about what I was doing 20 years ago. 20 years ago, I started working at the [Organization] in [Location] overseeing the subway, the public art program for the [Location] subway. That program was a small program that no one could really imagine that we would bring public art into the subway. It was so crazy. Now, it's an expectation that every time there's work

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done in the [Location] subway, there will be public art by world-class artists installed. [Name] just said that it was his favorite art museum in [Location]. The public art program in the [Location] subway really changes the lives of people. When I think now from my new perch here in [Location], a very different place, I'm really looking to ensure that creativity is essential to our civic life in every way. Here we're focusing, and we want to focus on what that means to health and well-being. If we can start thinking not only about art in education with children, as some of my colleagues have talked about earlier, but how it's actually working into the healthcare system and it's embedded into the way that we think universally, intergenerationally about how we are healthy, I think that's the way that we can really bring creativity as a central place, not something on the fringes, but something that's really, really central to the way that we work. I think embedding creatives and artists into governmental and other kinds of organizations, as some other folks have talked about, I think that's a way to create some cross-sector partnerships that could really help to grow that work, just like we did in [Location] in the subway system, in the transportation realm.

Speaker 15: I think that conversation about the center and the fringe really resonates with me. I work at [Organization]. We're [Location]'s nonprofit community design center. We're thinking and working a lot in terms of the public realm, people's spaces, and what role community members, neighborhood leaders play in the creation of the places where they live. I mean we know that the zip code you live in has a profound outcome on every aspect of your health and well-being. And what the role I think in terms of that relationship between the values of the center and the values of the fringe everyday people can have not just in direct actions of the center but in you see a lot online right now about the direct activism. And then there's also just how you behave day to day and every one of your activities and the profound impact that can have on everyone around you, your culture, your neighborhood, the quality of your life. And so when the center is breaking things, we have an ability to counterweight that with our everyday actions and the culture that we build in our communities. I think really understanding that counterweight balance and how we can be mobilizing our everyday actions and values to counterweight the center through the next phase, that really matters to me. Building creativity into everything we can envision through our individual actions I think can have a great counterweight. Although it may be less monetized than we like and it may subvert the visible major works that we're used to seeing very visibly for a while.

Speaker 2 (Facilitator): Yesterday, we had a chance to hear from [Speaker], who's an arts and culture researcher. She pointed out that something like 51% of the arts activity in the United States is amateur hobby. So intentionally not monetized, not the economic frame and that very little national policy, national advocacy conversations bring in what is a majority of the sector. I'm curious if folks have any sort of amateur hobbyist thoughts about 2045. Do we care? Is it our business to dream for them? What do we think folks will be doing in their free time? But just anything on the amateur hobbyist's front moves anyone to add anything to the conversation.

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- **Speaker 15:** To continue on that since I was just right there. I know that me and my friend groups – we've just been embracing the opportunities: host all our friends in collage; do dance parties that aren't even publicized in spaces; just mending parties, all these things. That just continues to build community connection through creativity, and I think can have a powerful moral value above just visible actions.
- **Speaker 1:** I think sports have been able to activate hobbyists, from the kid who plays baseball all the way through to the World Series and monetize that from college up now. I don't know why the arts can't do the same, except one thought is that with lack of adequate funding, I have seen that, at times, the thing that the art world can claim is exclusivity so there is a distancing from all these people that do it as a hobby rather than an embrace of this tiered ladder system all the way up. I don't have a solution on that, but I think that there is a miss somewhere in there for our sector.
- **Speaker 2 (Facilitator):** There's a colleague that pointed out that we tend to feel differently if someone says, "I'm a golfer." If we're just talking with someone at a dinner table who's just a hobbyist golfer than someone who says, "I'm a singer," and particularly because the singer is probably better at singing than the golfer is at golfing, but there is a really interesting difference between sports and the arts, right? Even in the language, we don't say "the sports," but we say "the arts."

Speaker 5: This is a narrative question for me in terms of just understanding. One of the things we learned with [Project], especially in the rural communities where there was abundance of what we're calling here – and it's called amateur artists, church choirs, quilt weavers –f there was a reluctance to refer to what they were doing as art. In some ways, narratively, up until this point, it's sort of separated. I think someone put it in the chat, elitism is a cancer in our field. I don't know if it's exactly elitism, but I could say that my experience, born and raised in [Location], moving from [Location] to the middle of the country, I started to feel that distinction on the coast versus where I am today. We also have a tremendous narrative issue around the role of all of this work, regardless of its professional or amateur status. We can argue via technology that the amateur field is actually growing in terms of people's ability to create and express on some of these digital platforms.

Speaker 8: I think it's a little bit of all of the above. I don't think that there's a real clear distinction between professional and amateur. I know folks that are working as graphic designers, and for fun they do stickers and do arts markets. I think what we are hearing a lot, of course, is that there are a lot of professional artists that have 2, 3, 4, 5 gigs to sustain their livelihood. Some might be at various levels of what we would consider professionalism. How do we think about artists as workers, both in that traditional W-2 salary sense and also as gig workers? How can we support them and have plenty of opportunities, too, for arts and health, arts and education, things that support just creativity very broadly and generally? One thing I'll add is, especially in the AI and technology

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conversation, is I'm hearing a lot of folks saying, oh, with the advent of AI, it's very artificial. People are going to be drawn to things that are more human to human and really hands on. I love hearing that, but I'm also quite skeptical, too, because if you look at the trajectory of big box stores or chains, small town America was kind of like, we don't want those big chains in our town. But unless there were local ordinances of really supporting small businesses, they came and now they're just a part of life and we all go to them, and we shop from them. I think at the local level, the individual level, how much can we resist these technologies and these trends that are just really coming like a tsunami?

Speaker 7: I think that's huge. I just love the comparison to the big box stores that you made. In terms of this sort of creative hobbying and that being so essential to just the practice and the relevance of art in individuals' lives and how we can connect to that and encourage it, there's something that sort of accidentally happened in my field, which is in independent film. That's the creation of Letterboxd. I don't know how many of you are familiar with Letterboxd. But it's a platform where people engage around what films they've seen and talk to each other. It's basically social media for film lovers. It has drawn the 20-somethings like nothing else ever before in our field. We're seeing full cinemas of 22-year-olds who want to be able to say on Letterboxd that they saw this movie on 35mm at the theater. I want to think really critically about it because we know that these platforms will last forever. What is the thing that this has created that didn't exist before? It's the ability to be both collective and individual, to be appreciated and seen for what you have for your participation in something, and then also to identify with something that really makes you who you are, which is the engagement with the arts. I offer that as this is an accident benefiting us right now. How can we think of these things that will give people the thing that they need as technology changes and we move forward? I think it's important for our field to be ahead of those.

- **Speaker 2 (Facilitator):** You may or may not know this, but since you're a film person, are we seeing in-person watching a film go down? Is that a true assumption?
- **Speaker 7:** Macro level, art houses are seeing an incredible success. At a small scale that can't sustain the whole industry. But it really is our own organizations doing well and doing incredible engagement with our community as the broader sector is in total crisis. We're impacted by that crisis too because when Hollywood does really badly, it affects all of us in some way, because everything is interconnected. It's a long story. But yes, the community engagement with exhibition is very strong right now. Letterboxd is a piece of that.
- **Speaker 16:** Of course, major multiplexes, cinemas are closing, but people are definitely reimagining exhibitions. It's something that we've talked about at [Organization] for some time. Even around [Location], for example, libraries were at one point closed on the weekend. These are also a site of exhibition and engagement for cinema and the arts. Imagining how

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to revitalize underused spaces that could both support and advance our work, but also serve the public or for other needs.

- **Speaker 2 (Facilitator):** If you imagine 2045, do you think big corporate cinemas are gone, but art houses are all over the place? Do you think movies and films have moved into libraries? Where are people watching the kind of thing that we now call film in 2045?
- **Speaker 7**: My thought is that the large format movies are also doing really well. I think we just see fewer corporate theaters in general. The ones that still exist are doing big IMAX movies and experiential stuff. That's the direction that we're seeing. But art houses, I think, have a real avenue to continue to thrive if we can keep people wanting to not be sitting on their couches, but wanting to be in community with other people. That's essential.
- **Speaker 16:** It's this loneliness epidemic that everyone writes about, the loss of shared experiences, especially with the decline of popular religions. We need experiences that people can share in common. Cinema being, I'm not going to say it's static, but theater, you get a different experience every time. You might see a different performer not be having the same conversation. With cinema, when it's replicated, reproduced, and re-exhibited, people are typically seeing the same thing, unless it's some artists I work with. We can share those experiences. Internationally, this applies as well with the art house. Places like Indonesia, 300 informal cinemas, they call them screening communities, and that exists in the States as well. Folks like [Organization] are working on mapping, at least for the BIPOC serving exhibition spaces. There's so much opportunity, and I think it's just taking away the power of exhibition from corporations and putting it in the hands of people.

Speaker 6: To my original comment about tracking the dollars, I think the hobbyist is an exact example of where if the nonprofit sector is introducing a group of people to an activity that they then want to take into the hobby space, that hobby group is then spending money that is going into a for-profit community, right? Whether they're buying materials for crafting, or whether they're buying subscriptions, or something to see. But then that money goes away. Then it doesn't go back into the original source of introducing this creative practice into the economy. Where do we get that leakage and how do we capture that? How do we figure out how much money is being lost – beginning with the nonprofit sector, but then not getting funneled back into reinvigorating that sector. That's what I always feel, it would be great to get an accounting of that.

Speaker 13: Another thing that I envision, part of us learning from past mistakes, is to be in more collaboration that is purposeful and meaningful across the various pieces of our sector. Because to [Speaker's] point, there are cultural economists working on those methodologies. The work and the research done on cultural economics in other parts of the world far outpaces what happens in the United States and it's because our economic programs are, by and large, not applied. If we're working with the academic space to create the programs, we can train the people to do those things.

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We largely don't have a lot of connection, direct connection, or direct skin in the game with some of the folks that have these solutions or could be trained to have these solutions. And that's a piece that is often missing from the conversation.

- **Speaker 2 (Facilitator):** You're drawing a distinction between sort of theoretical economists and applied economists, is that right?
- **Speaker 13:** Yeah, or just how they use their training. How they use their training and the ways in which we go about it. I'm thinking specifically of the Association of Cultural Economics International, which doesn't have as much representation in the US and that's where those scholars are having those conversations.

Speaker 12: I love your point here. I want to maybe try and dovetail between your point and [Speaker's]. First, [Speaker], echoing your comments, I think my issue with the virtual reality AI of it all is not so much the corporatization of it per se, but that these mediating technologies are really good at separating artist communities from their intellectual property and separating the communities and audiences that would otherwise endeavor to support or participate in the creative process from their money. The corporatization stands in for a much larger kind of succubus in extraction of both value and IP and money that continues the destabilization of the artists and the people who would otherwise want to support it. That extractive dynamic is endemic. [Speaker], to your earlier point, and I think you put this in the chat, I keep thinking about, and also, sorry, to [Speaker], your prompt about amateur versus professional, I keep thinking about how we define professional is defined on some direct or indirect level on the basis of the 501c3 code, right? So, for the last 70 years, we've been defining professional and professionalizing moves in relation to not-for-profit-dom. I'm thinking here, of course, of INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, who made this point much better than I did. I'm not mad at the idea of an amateurization of our field. But the second and third order effects of that are the dismantling of everything that came before. I'm really concerned for that dismantlement and how we proceed thoughtfully or with care through that process.

Group 4 Chat

1. I envision a cultural sector in 2045 where artists are valued as essential to our communities and supported in ways that are fair, trusting, and sustainable. Organizations work together, share power, and give artists the time and space they need to create, rest, and take risks without burning out. This is important because when artists are cared for and respected, they help our communities stay connected, resilient, and able to imagine a better future.

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2. Over the next 20 years, I envision that unless we are able to match union contracts to market, we will see the collapse of a number of artistic producing institutions. Livable wages will continue to be plagued by the income gap – executive compensation relative to lowest pd employee can't continue to grow. Accessibility of archives will expand so dance, music which is under copyright will hopefully have opportunities for easier access and exploration.

3. Is there a difference between fields that focus on creating something new vs. perfecting/improving? Do the arts and politics (to [Speaker's] comment) emphasize showing something "new" vs. law which is always progressing with the past in mind, even when overturning. Does something in here impede our ability to take an accurate assessment?

4. I think the power structures and dynamics, the nonprofit industrial complex, and inequity, are the biggest barriers to making an honest and accurate accounting of the past to learn from it. I don't think our sector is inherently at a disadvantage for doing this - I think we are socialized to not do it.

5. Creative engagement (hobbies or otherwise) allows for close looking, deep thinking, experimentation, and play. Creative hobbies connect us to communities and give us access material messing about – it impacts our ability to be present. Impacting our mental health and purpose.

6. If the forces we're facing are volatility, extraction, and political pressure, then our practice has to shift from projects to power: engagement becomes governance, cultural knowledge becomes protected assets, pro-bono becomes ethical and sustainable, and we measure success by stewardship and outcomes – not just plans. (NDC - Community Engaged Design of the built environment)

7. Envision a world where we "educate" and recognize — public officials — like mayors — to understand what the arts could do for their communities - AND hold organizations accountable big time for making those contributions in partnership for the good of the people who live in those communities.

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GROUP 5

Group 5 Transcript

Speaker 1: I envision that in 20 years in the United States, creativity is appreciated, supported, and available for all. I use creativity as a sort of umbrella for all the arts.

Speaker 2: I envision stronger support systems for artists. So that might address healthcare, financial stability, access to home equity, live-work space equity, and ownership as opposed to rentals. But the central idea being a stronger formal system of support for artists, their well-being, and their practice. And the second I will offer is that I think there needs (to) be an approach to culture that addresses the needs of a plurality as opposed to a hegemony. I think we come from a period of time in the United States, and this includes culture, when there were central arbiters talking about what was good. And I think what we need are opportunities for various individuals of various tastes to access the culture that reflects their story, their lived experience, our hoped-for future, and things like that. I think this is typified – it's sort of a funny example – but if you look at this story of how the various Coca-Cola tastes were made, there's a really great management story about when Coca-Cola did research into what people like, they learned that people like different things. And so Coca-Cola with lime, Coca-Cola with cherry, Coca-Cola vanilla, all of these different tastes were addressed through a large diversity as opposed to a single, what's the right taste? And I think there's an opportunity to learn from that type of plurality, addressing the needs of the plurality and culture as well.

Speaker 3: It feels like the trajectory that we're on, which I think is a good one, is, and I come from a tech background, so technology is breaking down so many barriers right now for individual artists to be able to create their own worlds without these huge structures and organizations behind them. So I think that I envision, to use the rubric, I envision that there is a rich arts and cultural ecosystem in the United States, which is more sort of self-generating from an artistic perspective, with hopefully interconnectivity between them in order to help them thrive, if that makes sense, as opposed to, to use [Speaker's] term, more plurality, less hegemony.

Speaker 4: I envision a world or country under which we radically shift the way we talk about our sector. That we're not talking about the sector as art as luxury, but art as an essential fabric for community, for a community for a healthy society. And with that essentialism, we're in a moment right now under which philanthropic funding structures, governmental and city and state and federal funding structures are rocking beneath us. And because we are looking at our field as such a luxury, we are leaning far more towards a model of commerce driving our business models versus

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mission. I envision that we reverse that philosophy or reverse that direction in order to really make sure that vision and mission towards art as a transformation tool remains first, primary, and central.

- **Speaker 5 (Facilitator):** Can I push you on this and ask you about the second prompt: what about this is important and because?
- **Speaker 4:** I think it goes back to, I think what [Speaker] was saying, this notion of plurality, right? This notion of when we start to only respond to a commercial reality, our art and ultimately our culture and ultimately our country really starts to begin to look like more of a monolith than reflective of the huge hegemony or the huge, I think, diversity of voice, of aesthetic that lives within our country. And that's quite essential, that if we lose that, we lose the fabric, quite frankly, of America, of what made America great.

Speaker 6: It feels like the most that the role of the cultural experience in a center of community and communion and gathering tends to get lost in the drive towards butts in seats and transactional ways of thinking and entertainment and commodification. If I gave myself the luxury of looking 20 years in the future, I would love to see a shift in the way we talk about our work, the way we think about our work, and really centering community and how cultural organizations and artists – not that their art practice necessarily has to be 100% community based – but how do we think about restructuring the relationship between our cultural organizations, our physical infrastructure and our social architecture, to think about community building, social cohesion, social trust, and providing spaces of possibility where our imagination of the future is not constrained. The thought is that I feel particularly in this moment, both culturally and technologically, that we're experiencing these constraints on our imagination of what is possible. And I feel like there's constraints in in the way the field thinks about itself, about what happens to an audience member in a space. And so I think that we hold this, artists and arts hold this really important role of keeping imagination alive and creating for everybody equitable access and freedom of the imagination to believe that what is not the only way it's ever been and the only way it's ever going to be, and to practice that muscle of imagining the impossible, or what they tell us is impossible, and to feel that as individuals and collectively. It's important because if we're going to change things, we have to maintain the spaces to imagine a different possibility.

Speaker 7: I envision arts organizations in every city sustaining themselves and serving their communities through community collaborations on local issues. And I've been the [Title] of [Organization] for 25 years, but since we started exclusively doing this, we have quadrupled our revenue since before the pandemic. We're now one of the largest theaters in [Location], and we've been showered with new audiences, funding, and awards, including making the New York Times Best of the Year list from [Location]. And I would love to help other people with this everywhere. This is important because we are suffering as a field from declining audiences, funding, and

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community support. And while I certainly hope that there are other ways out there of turning that around, I have one that works really well. So I'd like to share it.

Speaker 8: I would say that we need to, if we talk about plurality, we need to just say cultures, plural. If we're developing an arts and cultures strategy for this country, then we need to say cultures as opposed to saying culture plural. And I'm very excited about this idea of really just starting to name cultures. I also think that around the structure of a pillar of democracy, that arts, cultures, and creativity is that pillar, is one of those foundational pillars, very similar with the First Amendment and very, very similar to having a free press. And I think that we do need to have this undergird civil society and democracy. If we could unite around arts cultures embedded as the foundation for civil society, I get very excited about that. This is important because it's going to go to recalibrating the important role of artists and creative expression and cultural expression, not as a luxury or as a solely entertainment, but as a foundation to who we are as a civil society.

Speaker 9: I would quote Walter Cronkite in a news strip he did for the National Endowment for the Arts a million years ago. I've been around forever. I was part of the culture wars. I've sort of seen it all. I'm very respectful of people's passions about what we're hearing right now, but if I could wish for something years from now, I would love for art to return to art for art's sake. I would love to see words like excellence used in the description of art. I would love to see people have a respect for tradition. And I would say that you don't get anywhere without art education, and that we have to be much more supportive of museums in their educational programs that, in fact, really teach the history of art, not just sociological approaches to art. Now, I realize not everybody would agree with me on that. But I think it's important because I think we've lost a connection with history. You need to know history, so you don't repeat it.

- **Speaker 5 (Facilitator):** Could I just ask you to define, when you said traditional art, if you could just give us your definition of that?
- **Speaker 9:** I would say let's reach back a little further than the 21st century and art of the moment, and to understand how people have built on what has come before. Because, for example, if you look in the 20th century and you talk about abstract expressionists, they were all trained in a traditional manner. I'm not saying that artists need to be trained in a traditional manner, but to have a familiarity with it, I think would only enhance appreciation. And I think it would include more people. I certainly agree with the folks who've talked about plurality. I think that's essential.

Speaker 10: I really was just trying to reinforce [Speaker's] point because I think that the crux of it is the place that culture and art have in the public discourse. And that connects with what [Speaker] was saying, the history, right? The history and education. That there's unfortunately a lack of the right level of education about our history, about our cultures, and I like the plural there. And we've

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always considered them a luxury at the fringes of our lives. I grew up in Europe, and obviously, traditionally there, it's very different. And I think that if we don't balance that and understand and educate others as to what cultures, art, history mean to our lives and to our formation as individuals in a democracy, we can't fully win that battle.

Speaker 11: I envision a world in which we have raised a generation of artistic leaders who embrace new technology and implement radically different funding and operational models. And this is important because in 20 years, in 2045, most of the people on this call will not be or should not be sitting in the seat that they're currently in. And so it's really important for us to invest in our students and college graduates and to help them learn the skills of the future. So our job really, in the next 20 years, is to plant the seed that they will water. And then they will be able to reap the harvest from the sacrifice that we make today.

Speaker 12: I would love to see in the future, a robust and well supported field of arts writing. Back in 2003, I launched a website because I was working for [Organization]. And nobody knew the history and new artists were coming in, they didn't know their legacies and people in the community didn't know anything. But if we're just dreaming, I would love to see a robust arts writing ecosystem that's audience-facing, that doesn't require a PhD to understand or to write. That is really about sort of journeying to New Orleans to see Junebug and celebrate, and then learning about FST and being like, I had no idea. I think I would love to see that if anybody else cares about that. That would be amazing.

Speaker 13: It's so much of a frustration about artists' role in the community and just in the national cultural conversation. We have STEM and science, which is really important, and then artists are over on the side. I wish in our culture that they could be side by side. I wish people could understand that you don't have the iPhone, you don't go from what was beforehand to an iPhone without science and art. That you need art just as much to envision a new world. And you can't go forward as a culture unless you have both side-by-side working going forward. And I think that's critical to our democracy. It's critical to our culture. And the two need to be both valued and appreciated.

Speaker 14: I envision a world where across all political spaces, the arts are valued. So that leadership across the board makes what [Speaker] just said, that everybody believes in how important the arts are, and it's up against and with everything else that is happening, and that the infrastructure for making the importance of arts, a campaign that everybody realizes it's for them, so they can participate. And then to add to what [Speaker] said, because I was going to say that, there has to be a place where people can go to find out about and read about, because currently, we're all doing so much work, and so many things are happening, and there's nothing written about it or much about it. And so history is going to be lost for a huge gap of time for any historian.

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Speaker 15: I would echo what everyone is saying, especially the part about artists' role in community. And a long time ago, 20 years ago at a conference during a financial crisis of the art sector, I had a very big funder turn to me and say, "You know, we are funding essential work. We are only funding hunger and poverty and all this other stuff." And I turned to him and I said "You know, we're the why bother? You want to fund that stuff? But why bother if there aren't artists and culture workers to help interpret that history and what you're doing?" And I still really feel strongly that cultural creation and a broad culture in the broadest sense and cultures in the broadest sense is essential. And I feel like across the political spectrum, as [Speaker] just said, but really we have talked for years about a cabinet position for the arts. We have talked, and I think when [Speaker] mentioned our town and some of the initiatives that cross-sector, I think that's essential. Artists should be at every table, or culture workers should be at every table, because they solve problems. They don't create them. And that's what I believe. Center artists.

Speaker 16: I think that we all have spent a lot of time thinking about this relevance. How do we make a case for our relevance in people's lives? I envision that we really lean into the spaces that we have as civic spaces, that we embrace all of the various things that we could be doing in addition to direct engagement with our art forms, so that our spaces and our organizations live and resonate in people's lives in so many different ways, so that people are not just looking to us for a show or a class, but that we show up in people's lives and in their communities in a broad spectrum of ways, of course, through this cultural lens, but that we really sort of investigate what it means to be civic organizations and create civic spaces.

Speaker 17: I actually would say that the sector is actually creativity. We've been burdened, I think, by focusing – not that institutions aren't important – but I think we've been burdened by focusing too much on institutions and not so much about human creativity. If we have a mission, it's creativity for all Americans, everybody who's here, everybody who's participating. You have to follow up on [Speaker's] comment about cultures. I think we should be the National Endowment for Creativity or whatever. Art is a product of creativity. I think that otherwise we end up in a narrow, narrow box. I think part of us want to go back and live in a narrow box and my suggestion about doing something is to actually create an assessment that looks at the creative health of the nation. The Meringoffs back in the day actually were doing some of that work and really looking at where are people able to exercise their creativity. I think why it's important is it actually has to do with the future of the country. Creativity should be at the core of what we are as Americans. And from creativity, we have human fulfillment. I'm talking about creativity and everyone's everyday creativity. Some people may decide that they want to be professional artists, and hopefully we do as much as we can to support their careers. But I think it should be creativity for everyone. We should be looking at how many guitars were sold last year, right? These are some numbers we should be looking at. How many

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pianos? Who's downloading sheet music? My suggestion is that we should be the creativity sector, not necessarily an arts sector.

Speaker 18: We need to expand our idea of what the role of cultures and creativity is for this country and almost having some sort of annual index so that we can see where the nation's creativity is because it is really tied to our ability to collaborate and communicate and create and innovate. Of course, it's foundational to human thriving and human existence and society being able to not eat itself alive, right? But literally being able to cooperate in large numbers. So, it does really align with a notion of how do we make sure that this country is thriving and specifically its people? To me, there's something really powerful about that that resonates deeply.

Speaker 19: I envision an arts sector that doesn't exist in a bubble. That is truly at the table and aligned with and integrated with all facets of our lives. An art sector that in conjunction with other sectors is able to provide many diverse opportunities for artists to thrive, not just to subsist and make a living, but to thrive. I would hope that the presence of art in all of its manifestations, so a wide spectrum, is strong, protected, and nourished, and that we have ways to be accountable for that, whether it's through measurement or politically or however that those accountability mechanisms need to show up. I think it's important that arts education is core and not in jeopardy. And I think all of this is important because I believe that participation in the arts is to so many of the things that we say we aspire to when we think of building a nation of opportunity and justice. And without it, we can't. And rather than thinking of it as extra, so much of my career has been about repositioning it as foundational, important, arts for arts sake, sure. Important, period. And essential to all of these other things that we say we want to be and accomplish.

Speaker 1: I began intentionally with the word creativity because I know language is so specific, but sometimes arts get overloaded, culture gets overloaded. I don't think people ever want to call themselves not creative. Creativity is the beginning of innovation. Creativity is dance, is writing, it covers all of that. I think creativity is one of the great American strengths because we are a country that has over 10 million patents and patents are about creativity. Creativity invites the sciences in with the arts. Hence, I wanted to put creativity language-wise up front. Also, again, I think we have to appreciate and value creativity. Again, that was a thread I heard many people pull. And again, I think supporting – and we can talk about different mechanisms of support – supporting is funding, but it's other kinds of things. Legislation is supportive. And then again, we use the word accessible, but it's really available to all. And that means from toddlers to seniors and all that. I think creativity is the heart of humanity. So that was my intention in my initial offer of what I'd love to see the country, if not the world, have a greater embrace of creativity.

Speaker 20: I feel like this is the big idea, *creativity*. And I just want to share that it's been interesting to see for the first time OECD measure creative thinking among students around the world and

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their PISA assessment. The US doesn't participate in that, so we don't have a measure, but there are lots of ways to measure creativity, creative potential, creative development. But I've been really excited to see people from outside of our sector highlight the importance of creativity. So, for example, Aneesh Raman, who is with LinkedIn, who's the Chief Economic Opportunity Officer, sort of a futurist on jobs, talking about the importance of creativity, all the things that we know. But I think part of the context of the moment, and I know that the prompt is to look forward, but part of the context is AI's influence and AI permeating every facet of society. And that's not going to go away. And we know that you can't automate human creativity.

Speaker 21: This discussion really resonates the themes of creativity and availability in addition to accessibility and then sustainability. The fact that creativity and all the arts in all audiences and cultures are what make us human. And seeing the studies that are coming out, most recently in the last week, the study about how viewing original works of art actually benefits you health wise, lowering cortisol. We know all of this. I would love to see, I envision a future in which everyone at every level of learning in every socio-economic group in all cultures in this country have access to the arts. It would definitely add cohesion. We need spaces for creativity. We need spaces for beauty. And we need spaces to do that, to witness and to participate and to create together in community. And that's what I would like to see today, tomorrow. And also, AI is training on our human creativity. If we stop creating, and AI only trains on itself, it's a very sad thing.

Speaker 22: I envision a country in which communities' wellness is inextricably linked to creativity and understood broadly. And I think that that kind of positioning is really important because it's about relevance and value in individual lives.

Speaker 23: I really believe that making the arts, articulating the essential nature of the arts is really key as we move forward. And I think that it is such an important part of mental and physical health, and I think that we need to be more articulate in making the case for that. And I know there's new research on the neuro-arts. I think that how we engage with that sector will make a big difference. The other thing that I think about is that I would like for us to move beyond pilot projects and think about scale, that the arts are everywhere, they're essential, they're available to the broadest community, and that that will be meaningful to us as individuals and as cultures and as society.

Speaker 24: I envision a world where the arts and creativity are central to all sectors, that we have developed over time such partnerships and trust between and across sectors, within civic organizations, government organizations, that we are necessary to solve problems, that we are the great connector to people, and that that's a part of life. That's my lofty dream. It's important because I think in some ways, artists and creatives have believed a marginalized narrative and embraced it for too long. And I think that the more we can articulate and make the case, that's important, but that's coming, we have to come from a position of strength. And I think that's the *why*. I think

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without truly believing that and visioning it, it's going to be hard to make it happen. So, it's about changing a mindset.

Speaker 25: Inherent in my comment as well was the enthusiasm for the connection of arts and creativity to wellness and health, because I think it's hugely important. And we're in a context now with the kind of research that credible research that is available and continues to happen to make arguments that we couldn't fully substantiate or make in the past. And I think it's really important to harness that. In addition to wellness and health, of course, cultural participation is key to democracy and so many other things. But I really do see an important opportunity at the intersection of health and wellness.

Speaker 8: I think we need a paradigm shift. Has it been 60 years since the current system was created? Through the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, et cetera, which took arts outside of the individual and put exemplars and reinforced a canon of excellence. Not to say that we don't want to have a canon of excellence, but I think we want to expand the notion of a canon of excellence to include the diverse and absolutely gorgeous forms that are expressed by phenomenal artists of all cultures in this country. But also this notion that it's outside of ourselves and we have to pay a ticket to go see and experience brilliance, but rather to reclaim our human right to be able to utilize our cultures and creativity as tools for life and embedded into our public health systems and our transportation systems and to a core understanding of who we are as a people and as a species.

Speaker 17: I think that it's time to think about ways in which we can actually impact on everybody's lives. The Scottish Ministry of Health recommended a few years ago that every student K-12 should have two swims a quarter. And that required the cities, the municipalities to actually build swimming pools that actually encourage, to provide the opportunity for youth to swim. So if we were a center for creativity, an agency for creativity, that we would have recommendations of visiting a museum once a year or whatever it would be. Don't eat beef. Whatever the things are that we want to suggest as a sector for people. I'm actually realizing that it might be time for me to go re-read Investing in Creativity, which was a paradigm-shifting document for many of us and how we address support for artists and all that. So if we become the Creativity Agency, then we can make recommendations about what things people might do to enhance their creativity.

Speaker 26 (Facilitator): There's definitely been some reoccurring themes in what we've all been talking about, so I'll try to think about those things and talk about them a little bit, and please let me know if there's others that we should be including here. So, one is creativity. Creativity is the basis for the arts, for all of the production that comes from the arts, reframed what we do as creativity as being an important thing to do. Another theme I think is plurality, the idea of cultures instead of culture, the idea of continuing to build on the themes of diversity and inclusion for all to

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participate. And I think that also speaks to the bigger tent, this theme of building a bigger tent. So, we're thinking of the arts expansively, everyone, all types of arts, all types of mediums, et cetera, building that bigger tent and bigger coalition. And another thing that I think is really important is the idea that the arts are integral to everything that we do as humans, not outside of what we're doing, that there needs to be a paradigm shift for us to think of creativity and the arts as being integral to society in ways that are really accepted throughout.

Group 5 Chat

1. I envision the sector being much more atomized (plurality as [Speaker] says) and less about monoliths.
2. [Speaker's] response was right on and very resonant. It is important because if we don't value and lift our cultural and artistic diversity we lose what's unique about our country. Unfortunately, we as a nation have never put culture at the center and (or history).
3. We as a field need to make our product more accessible. I recommend Brian Eno's "What is art for?" which also makes that point (among many other great points. An excellent read)
4. Maria's report Investing in Creativity: https://www.cciarts.org/_Library/docs/Urban_Institue_Investing_in_Creativity.pdf

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GROUP 6

Group 6 Transcript

Speaker 1: In my work 2045 is actually a pretty important year. Brookings Institute for a long time has led work on the fact that the US becomes a minority-majority nation by 2045. That trend is likely to hold. And so, I envision in 2045 an art sector that is truly, true or reflective of the democracy demographics and open to being more agnostic as it comes to genre, approach, experience in the hall and on campuses, and really meeting the moment for when the country's demographics start to truly shift.

Speaker 2: I agree with the previous speaker. However, I also think because of what we're experiencing now over the last decade from this occupant of the White House, that we're going to be dealing with rampant white supremacy. Where it's going to take us a good 10 to 15 years, I think, to dial this back unfortunately. And it's going to come from the left and the right. It's not just the right, because it also has emboldened those on the left who can assert their white supremacy in white spaces. And that's going to take a long time to unravel. I'll just refer us to South African apartheid, and while Black Africans were a majority, they were controlled by a white minority. And I think that is what's going to happen in the United States. I think those are the times that we're getting ready to experience and are experiencing now.

Speaker 3: I envision in 2045, the arts integrated fully into the education system K through 12. I think it's so vital, and I realize there is no need to preach to this room. Arts in schools are integral. I also envision a world where teaching artists are integrated into all sorts of social service organizations. I think there's all kinds of ways for us as artists and artist administrators to support and uplift folks in unexpected places, homeless shelters, et cetera.

Speaker 4: By 2045, I envision a creative sector that's essential to daily life. That's what we believe now, but it will really be accessible to everyone, everywhere, deeply embedded in how we connect and govern. Artists are valued as civic culture bearers, they're earning sustainable livelihoods, thriving while strengthening communities. I love the arts education information that was shared – universal, lifelong learning, creativity that flourishes in schools or neighborhoods or healthcare settings, public spaces, and a public and private investment that's stable, bipartisan, and rooted in the understanding that creativity is about innovation. It's about future. It's about what makes us who we are. Seems a little flowery, but that's what I'm thinking.

Speaker 5: I hope that the arts can lead the way in the preservation of free expression and lack of censorship. The arts have always been on the cutting edge of thinking about new things before

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they can prove it. And I think that's an important role that is under threat now. I think the ability to experiment and be innovative is something I hope in 2045 is restored. I also hope that the relationship of public and private sectors is restored and whenever I travel to other parts of the world one of the elements that people admire about the US is the public-private hybrid support for the arts and humanities. And finally, I hope the humanities and the arts are integrated more fully in the future.

Speaker 6: I am an urban planner, and I often think about the arts and creative sectors as they intersect with public space, with municipal frameworks. I really am excited to envision a 2045 where cities and municipalities have the structure and framework for art and creativity to thrive. In my purview, I'm particularly thinking about zoning and land use and the built environment, because in most cities regulations can make it challenging to run or start an art gallery. For example, you have to go through an extra process and pay $1,000 to apply for a use permit, or you can't have dancing in your establishment, or you can’t have live music or entertainment. Those are all municipal things that could be changed to create areas where arts and creativity can thrive.

Speaker 7: In 2045, we are already in the majority, a majority minority state. And it's hard for me to imagine and be positive about a future in which we've seen all the national support systems for artists, development and communities have basically been ruptured, if not destroyed. And seeing the attack on arts education and the attack on the systems of support in relationship to that. So in order for me to be a visionary imagining a future, my focus is actually on community organizations and recognizing that we do need to invest in our community cultural hubs as presenters, producers, culture bearers, and actually seeing them step into spaces of leadership, seeing them step into places where they are recognized for their community wellness, the connections in relationship to all of these essential components of how we actually are building a community. And I think it’s important to be building support across communities, geographies, and relationships so that we are not investing in a bifurcated future where the elites and our communities are actually separated.

Speaker 8: I think of it internally and externally in terms of the sector and then sort of the greater public will building. One thing I struggle with in terms of policy development and identity for our sector is who are we? I think we dance between creative economy and arts and culture, arts, culture, and humanities, film, TV, entertainment. I'd love by 2045 that we are really clear on who we are and who we're speaking for because I think that from an advocacy perspective, that is a challenge. I also hope that the infrastructure is in place from an advocacy perspective, in 2045 we are well organized. I think this is obviously an attempt to do that here. And there's a number of attempts happening between AFTA and all the acronyms out there and Creative States Coalition and everybody else trying to figure out how we can come together and speak more as an organized voice. I'm hoping there's infrastructure for advocacy and a place for us to influence the systems towards change.

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Because I don't think we really have that power right now. And I think that's where we struggle often. Externally, I hope we're past having to constantly justify why we are an essential workforce in every community, that we have done that paradigm shift of public will-building, which we know is an extremely long game. I feel like we're still at a place where we're trying to convince people that we should be in the rooms and that we should be valued. I hope by 2045, we're way past that.

Speaker 9: I would envision a 2045 where the arts and culture sector is integrated into all sectors and aspects of society as more of a horizontal filter through which policies are made and operations are implemented. The arts sector is usually seen as an independent vertical, an independent sector that silos us and keeps us independent of economic, social, and community initiatives. So, under this current sort of structure, our sector is volatile to economic and social headwinds, competing priorities, and again, always ultimately facing the chopping block. And not only from financial investments, but also just the community will. If arts and culture were thought of more as a tenant in all aspects of society, almost like an underscoring horizontal, they would have investments in education, would have intersectionality with arts and health. We would have investments in arts business and artists as workers. This would also ensure a more visible arts and cultural representation in policymaking environments at the federal, state, and local levels. This could impact things like permitting processes and funding priorities, and also how communities address systematic challenges and priorities, again, at the local level all the way to the federal level. This would be a paradigm shift for arts and culture in the marketplace. This would change and shift our narrative. The question that we always come across is, are arts essential and why? We would prioritize arts-based infrastructure, not just physical infrastructure, but also social and cultural infrastructure as well.

Speaker 10: In 2045, I was hoping that arts would be seen as a critical part of what makes a healthy community, healthy America, that they are essential. And creatives and the creative economy and artists are valued as much as any other worker, as much as farmers, as much as accountants, as much as - you name the sector that everybody loves - and we're seen as just as important as critical parts of what makes a community, but also what makes communities thrive and be strong. In 2045 I'd like the arts and artists to not be seen as *others*, that we are seen as unified and part of a thriving society, economy, and community. Also, I would like the arts themselves to have a more unified voice together, so that we stop fighting ourselves. I'm thinking of arts education where there's the jazz educators versus visual arts educators versus theater educators and music educators. Can we see each other as in this all together?

Speaker 11: In 2045 the arts are seen as integrated in all aspects of society, and that artists are seen as essential to addressing existential challenges that we face as a society, be they climate resilience, health, and wellness, etc. Artists are fairly compensated for their true contributions to

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society and that we honor and uplift cultural traditions in ways that are fully representative and equitable. Given the changing demographics of the country, art and culture is seen as a way that the country really continues to understand and appreciate and grow together as the country changes, that the arts are seen as an essential part of that change that happens through migration, through changing demographics.

Speaker 12: I envision the cultural sector in 2045 to be seen as an organized force of nature. It's already a force of nature. But to be seen as a force of nature, across policy areas, across government, across industry, across society and the economy. I envision a world where it's just natural that we expect every political leader, every leader, to have an arts policy, to view all important policies in the nation, in the world, whether it's economics, transportation, housing, energy, through the lens also of *how will this affect the arts sector?* Or what's the arts sector's view on this? There's a lot of work to be done, and I hope that as part of that we don't limit things, we maintain the dedication to greater accessibility, greater equity, greater openness, and making space for artistic experience on a personal level as well. I would envision a world where our sector is much greater organized and becomes much more of a power source.

Speaker 13: I envision a 2045 in which the arts are really seen by both the private and the public sector as a key component to supporting healthy, thriving communities across this country in many, many spaces, in education spaces, in healthcare spaces, in shelters, in justice spaces, and that the people really see the arts as a core partner addressing challenges that we face as a nation. I also imagine a more integrated ecosystem view of the sector and particularly as we know ecosystems rely on every piece and don't so much privilege some pieces over others, and I think that if we could take more of an ecosystem approach we could look towards more equitable distribution of resources, which seems absolutely essential to advance the work.

Speaker 14: There's so much structurally and in terms of policy that needs to happen, but I'm also thinking about how established arts institutions really need to transform to become more person centered. There's a lot of work that institutions need to do to, in terms of cross-sectoral collaboration, looking at ourselves as a civic entity, as someone that has a role to play in a collective movement in our cities, in our communities, and people and organizations that don't look away from things that we don't know how to do. If we don't do housing, if we don't do food, if we don't do all of these things, what is our role to play in our communities? So really thinking in terms of established organizations, how are we required to change and evolve to be the civic entities, to be the places where all people can experience their lives art, through music? I think that's a really important component, even as we continue to advocate for the arts sector as a whole.

Speaker 15: My thoughts are less around envisioning but thinking about what's happening now. I just have a lot more hesitancy, like how AI is going to impact creative labor. Is it going to devalue

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it? Is it going to increase the value of it? I think it is a great thing that people all now have all kinds of access to creative tools, creative practices, whether it's digital or even a knitting night at my local yarn store. People are not "artists," but they're all sitting there creating together. How much more challenging might it be to organize folks around this idea of "what is an artist?" when it could be that everybody now has some kind of creative practice or access to creative practice. I wonder if in the future everybody is going to have a creative practice. What does it mean to organize around that?

Speaker 16 (Facilitator): Let's move on to maybe a second half of the conversation. What sparked for you in the first half? What do you feel like is unsaid? Do you have a bunch of feelings about something someone said that you really want to respond to? Also the *why* is an important part that we maybe haven't talked about too much. A lot of why the visions that you've shared, what's the fundamentals and values that we should operate within that vision?

Speaker 17: What's coming to mind, and I think about this all the time, is culture eats strategy for breakfast. And the culture of the arts is fear and scarcity and crisis responding and defense. I think it's so important because we've been outplayed for a long time. And we have to be far more disciplined. I think it's important because we are becoming more of a plurality. And we're not disciplined to understand how to stick on-message. We have got to keep going for the greater good: alignment over agreement. I think that's going to be so important. Otherwise, we're going to create this, and then we're going to have to recreate it. But we have to speak to the actual feelings and sentiments. I think it's important because feelings are high. But the thinking and the feeling brain are two different functions. And we have to figure out how do we get a whole community of folks that have big feelings to really align and be disciplined. It's so important, and I have no clue how to do it at scale.

Speaker 18: I think we have to be really clear on what our ask is, and I feel like that is part of where we're missing. What's our North Star? What's our vision? And I know that's just what we're trying to talk about here today, how do we come up with that platform? How can we influence the next governor to really see this sector as essential in our state? We need to write a platform because they're not doing it. They're not coming to the table with a platform. I would love to work towards a platform that we can all say that we agree upon, which is challenging, and to put some stakes in the ground that we can mobilize around.

Speaker 19: I deeply appreciate a vision in which we can have a collective future and how we stand up for each other. However, at the local level I see what damage has been done to organizations and individuals who've been under-resourced, under-recognized, and actually have been sacrificed for the development of major institutions, major ideas, and major policies. It would be great to figure out what does "showing up" actually mean in relationship to this. And as we develop policies

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we work with our grantees, our awardees, our communities, in order to try to understand what does a collective ask look like in this time, and how do we show up when most of these community members and leaders have already been under-resourced, or continue to be under attack, to be under crisis. I'm trying to figure out what does it look like to build a future when all you understand is crisis and all you understand is scarcity? What are we doing to get us out of a scarcity mentality and actually have people experience it instead of just people envision what it could look like?

Speaker 20: I'm interested to know if people in the room think about a golden age where the arts were better appreciated, better supported, better integrated, and whether there's any value in pulling out what worked in the past as we try to create something in the future. I guess I'm talking as a historian. I'm always skeptical when I hear about a "golden age." I don't believe that it is always as great as we may remember it. But there are some elements of where the arts have had greater support and influence and impact. And is there anything we should be bringing forward into the future that worked in the past?

Speaker 21: You bring to mind for me episodes of the Gilded Age and the story of how the Metropolitan Opera came about. To exist as nonprofits and be funded within the system is inherently a challenge. If we are an anchor of communities, we shouldn't have to limit our funding from extras and scraps off to the side. If the US dollar crashes and economically, globally, all the economics of the whole picture really shift, and people are investing so much in tech, and we're getting far, far less of that, the golden age was back when the oil barons were investing in us. I don't think that's going to be the case in the future. People like Musk don't care about the arts. How do we fund and sustain the arts in this shifted economy? I wish we could do away, frankly, with the whole nonprofit structure, and wish nonprofits didn't have to exist. I think that is the original sin that we have to exist with. Our earned revenue drives us versus contributed revenue. I think philanthropy is going to be a really big challenge to sustain.

Speaker 22: Maybe this is sacrilege, but I envision the arts getting out of the way of itself and joining other tables. Because if we think of the crises that are happening right now in our communities, I see artists playing such a vital role in addressing them. And it's not the headline, but they're making it happen. It's the same thing with living wage. It's the same thing with healthcare. I feel like if we were as present and strong as we are on this call in the other conversations that are happening that already have power behind them, what could we do? Because we would be the ones infusing creativity into the real issues of the day that have power and momentum behind them. So that's why a lot of this feels hard to wrap my mind around because it seems insular in a way that other sectors have figured out how to not just be at the table but make the table.

Speaker 23: I really appreciate the point raised about the "good old days" and how that can be detrimental in certain ways, especially when we think about the history of the country. But I think

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that there have been certain interesting moments in our history, and those moments are inflection moments, like the founding of the NEA, the growth of the regional theater movement, certain things that are interesting to think about how these disruptive ideas really took form and grew to be much, much bigger things. I'm mindful of what the analogs are for now? What are some things that seem kind of radical right now? I think about our boards and do we even need nonprofit boards in the same kind of way that we traditionally have, or the nonprofit structure itself. Was there a golden age for the arts and culture in America? I think the answer is probably no. What are some examples of disruption now, and what are the ways that we can re-envision the way the sector does business that we can carry forward to the future that'll help build this new vision?

- **Speaker 16 (Facilitator):** At some point somebody made a decision we needed a National Endowment for the Arts. At some point, somebody made a decision we needed Americans for the Arts. We needed state arts agencies. And people built those things, right? And one of the things I'm really inspired about is trying to get out of a "survive" mindset. What does thriving actually mean for us in the future? What stuff can we build? There is a lot of stuff being built right now, and how do we connect those dots and take the best ideas that are out there? So that's why I think as you get into the next couple of conversations, I encourage you to throw out ideas, dream, or talk about like an awesome example that someone's doing at a local level, that if everyone did something like that, it would be amazing. That's what we want to generate. So I'm just encouraging you to start thinking that way.

Speaker 24: I think about this in the structure of power. And I think about nonprofits and who's in charge. Philanthropy is mostly in charge of nonprofits. And our resources, our structures of how do we build the infrastructure that we need in order to influence the systems towards the vision that we all have. I don't have an answer for that, but I think we've all determined that the nonprofit industrial complex is clearly broken. We need to rethink that structure. What are the ways that we rebuild our sector? We should be creative. We should not just go back to the ways that we've always done it.

Speaker 25: From the perspective of working inside a very large cultural institution, a legacy old building, and having tried to do work that is genuinely in service of lots of different communities for a long time now. I think the other thing I would just say about the nonprofit industrial complex, is it sets up a scenario where there's a lot more incentive around competing than around collaborating. And lots of funders say, oh, yes, we're interested in collaborative projects, but in reality, I have rarely found that to be true. I would also say in relationship to the opportunities around collaboration and collaboration across different levels of power with individuals and organizations that I, in my experience, there really needs to be time and space spent on getting to know each other, on understanding what the genuine shared agenda is, and on trust building,

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because I think that it's very easy to look at a big place and say, you must be horrible. It's just easy to look at each other or to be seen in ways that are, sometimes they are true, and those perspectives have been earned in this country for sure. We do urgently need to find ways of advancing this work together. So how do we do that and how do we build trust and how do we build understanding enabling us to do that?

Speaker 26: I think a lot about how digital disruption has really changed how people consume and produce and make a living with arts and culture. I come from a classical music background, and have classical music training, so I follow a lot of individual musicians on social media. And maybe back when I was in music school, people wanted to do the whole audition route, go to competition, and then get into an orchestra, and then maybe get a full-time job. But now I see people doing their own lessons or really building a community around music. People make a full-time living, but part of their income is through social media, building community around music or art. I follow individual artists who maybe will never present their artwork at MoMA, but they teach watercolor and might have a million subscribers on YouTube and that's how they make a living. I guess the deeper question is are we seeing a point where the nonprofit institutional presenter does not totally lose its purpose, but maybe becomes less necessary as a pass-through for artists to make a living?

Group 6 Chat

1. I am focused on how to model/support the future of world and culture sector of the rising generation of artists. What needs to shift? What needs to be preserved? What structures are necessary?

2. I think that AI will disrupt all that we think we know today. AI will change all performing arts, visual arts, the way that we even think about art and what is good. It will impact our collective ability to evaluate quality. And it may sadly deplete our artistic workforce. On the positive side AI may help our work become better. It will impact the speed in which artists are able to produce. But it will also democratize art. Everyone will consider themselves an artist.
    a. I agree with uplifting the impact of AI on the value of creative labor. I don’t have a specific vision around it, but I do think it’s especially important to call out for 2045.

3. Seconding recent comments on integration of arts in cross-sector verticals. Part of my visioning focused on community naturally recognizing the transformative power of the arts, in building strong people, vibrant neighborhoods and thriving local economies.
    a. Co-sign with [Speaker] (and others) re: integration within other sectors and underscoring horizontal, and [Speaker’s] comment re: embedding in daily life.

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Integration is word coming up for me personally in a future vision. At the SAA level, many of us are seeing traction conceptually and in actuality with Arts and Health.

4. By 2045, I hope the arts sector is a decentralized, resilient ecosystem where artists in cities and communities of every size and geography are uplifted and celebrated. Artists are no longer seen only as performers or makers, but as essential strategic leaders embedded in the social and economic fabric of community life. The arts have also become a primary tool for public health—creative practice is widely recognized and prescribed as a pathway to healthier, more connected communities.

5. More performing arts may be consumed on screens. The live performance will be a premium experience. At a premium cost. Sports realized this a long time ago. The Arts sector is behind. Sports therefore became an endemic part of our collective national identity. Performing arts on screens will help our Performing Arts sector survive and thrive.
    a. We have to figure out a way to make arts as important to Americans as the sports sector. Part of it is that we only own the high arts. We should also point to the fact that Netflix and the film, TV, and media industry are also art. We have to get folks to incorporate arts into the curriculum of our schools in the same way that sports are uplifted and encouraged. It starts there.

6. Arts with power, organized and lobbying for cross-sector issues (broader civic needs vs. self preservation). Death of irrelevant nonprofits that have lost touch with their communities. Surging power and creativity coming from collectives, informal networks.

7. I'm interested in how artists/culture bearers can be empowered to understand (and resourced) in their power/position in repair and rebuilding connectivity/community
    a. We have designed and implemented a 9-month fellowship here in CA for a grassroots artists advocacy program.
    b. Yes - increased interest in participation as we are imperiled on being increasingly disembodied.
    c. We need to show up together!

8. Arts/culture as a part of the solution to collective problems. Convo we are also having locally in cultural sector.

9. Artists and arts organizations can help other sectors pursue the goals they have for their beneficiaries (e.g., healing for those in need).

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10. From an institutional standpoint, I don't believe in a golden age, especially when I consider the harmful practices and exclusion that our arts organizations have embodied in the service of "high art."

11. The best days for Black artists are always the present. Although under Trump IDK. It's hard to function as if we are in normal times. We are not. The country is in crisis.
    a. Also, and honestly, it was building at a table that was less connected to the "greater US economy" – thinking of the Harlem Renaissance.

12. A couple of more recent examples of progress to add - funders shifting to support individual artists, trust-based philanthropy.

13. Opportunity to re-imagine/broaden/change the purpose of these non-profits ...

14. You can be a runner and be an athlete, vs a professional athlete.
    a. But we live in a world now where you can be a professional artist without ever having presented at MoMa or playing in the LA Phil.

15. On the nonprofit conversation; https://emilkang.substack.com/p/stop-starting-nonprofits-a-case-for
    a. Also appreciated this: https://emilkang.substack.com/p/an-open-letter-to-richard-grenell

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GROUP 7

Group 7 Transcript

Speaker 1: I envision a sector in in 2045 is both funded and understood, not by arts philanthropy, but by the sectors in which we have outcomes in. The Mass Cultural Council devotes $28 million worth of funding to the arts, which sounds like a lot, but it is 0.0459% of the state budget, whereas healthcare is more than 40%, education rolls below that, and we have a tremendous amount of data that many people on this meeting have created that supports our existence as a piece of civic infrastructure of public health, of community health, of individual health, of transportation, of housing. I think our future lies in the engagement with those sectors in research-based outcomes in those sectors, and as a partner in those sectors.

Speaker 2: I envision a world where creatives run the show in general. My work is really about a theater-forged operating system that we created called [Organization], and what I envision is theater people are leading the charge when it comes to helping people collaborate and talk to each other and disagree and all those messy things we need in order to be effective together. I see this not just for theatre and the arts, but pretty much I think everyone as we go forward in an AI-enabled world, it's more important that we have these human skills to creatively collaborate. This is important just because I see, as consultants, we work in all different organizations around mostly in the US and Canada, and we are just seeing a lot of disagreement, a lot of silos, a lot of people pushing each other away. And what we're really interested in is things like this, like we're doing right now, and how do we come together and talk about solutions, even if we're different, even if we disagree, and how we can use the arts as a model to do so and also be the people to lead the charge with the right skills and tools at our disposal?

Speaker 3: I have worked in the arts and culture for, I guess, 50 or 60 years now. And I remember a meeting a long time ago for the Screen Actors Guild and someone – it was the new technology office – and someone said, we have to kill AI and technology now because it will take all our jobs. And I left that committee because I realized that screen actors were not going to kill technology as a force moving forward anytime soon. And that to even have that attitude was defeatist in a real way. And the way things are going, unless things change markedly in today's world in 25 years, in 50 years from now, I don't know how many humans will be involved in creating anything, because the powers that be definitely have an agenda that excludes humans from much of the participation.

Speaker 4: I envision a future where more of us are working together on legislative and policy priorities, specifically funding for the arts, including the National Endowment for the Arts, National

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Endowment for the Humanities, and of course, hoping to bring back Corporation for Public Broadcasting. I think this is important for obvious reasons. I think the amount of funding that we need from Congress and at the national level should reflect the value of the arts in our communities. And labor's perspective, of course, is that jobs in the arts should be high quality. So they should pay a good middle-class wage and provide benefits, including health insurance and retirement security.

- **Speaker 5 (Facilitator):** Great collective impact through organizing and policy work. That sounds like a good way to fight the parochialism and the self-segregation that maybe happens in our sector.

Speaker 6: I envision or at least dream about a sector where the infrastructure that organizations have, the real estate, the rules around contracting, payroll, all that kind of stuff is just more flexible and gets in the way less of the actual work of creating and presenting art. Because too often we see that that stuff is a barrier and a needless challenge for organizations, and I think you need to envision a system where artists and art is supported by rather than hindered by all the administrative and infrastructural stuff.

Speaker 7: I envision a place where people will have a living wage, where people can actually live in the cities that they participate in. Also, I am thinking that the disciplines are going to be different than what we know. I think creatively, so many artists are working very cross discipline, and I think there's going to be a lot more fluidity and that will reflect how organizations are structured, how things are presented. And those are some of the changes I see.

- **Speaker 5 (Facilitator):** Multi-hyphenates. Everyone's going to have eight slashes.
- **Speaker 7:** I don't think it's necessarily hyphenated. I think it will just be different. Because as it is now, artists are working in so many different areas and that you wouldn't need to describe yourself in a hyphenated way. It would be understood that that's how people work.
- **Speaker 5 (Facilitator):** My colleague found a statistic that said that 65% of the jobs that our pre-K kids will have when they graduate haven't been created yet.

Speaker 8: I just envision a world where I have to stop using everybody else's words to make them feel like arts and culture makes sense, right? So a world where the arts are understood as essential to civic infrastructure, which has been said before, as fundamental to how communities connect and make meaning. Because I've lived in America since 2005. And since that time, I've just always had to help others understand the *why* of the arts. And I'd love a world where that's flipped.

- **Speaker 5 (Facilitator):** There's a messaging and a brand awareness and a scale and information about consumer behavior that has to be part of the zeitgeist.

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Speaker 9: I'm the [Title] at [Organization] and we fund in multiple areas, but the arts is one of them. And I, along with my colleague [Name] and others, have been leading an initiative over the past several years, funding research, particularly among smaller arts organizations. And through that work, I really would like to envision a future where there's much more. And this builds on comments by [Speaker] and by both [Speaker] and [Speaker] of really formalized collaborations that can coordinate a lot of infrastructural needs and that can both alleviate the burden on lots of organizations as well as start to address some of the advocacy issues that were raised around being able to pay living wages, etc. There's a group in Cincinnati forming – these are smaller organizations, mostly in communities of color – that's looking at forming a collaborative endowment fund, which is really interesting. There are others that are looking at sort of more traditionally at sharing administrative functions. At any rate, I think the *why* is just really about resiliency and the ability to focus on the arts itself. But it also requires a little bit of ego loosening. I think it's a matter of survival in the long run.

Speaker 10: I envision a sector, to echo what some other people have said, where there's more coordination and collaboration across sectors, where the nonprofit sector is more integrated into municipal life, where there are more opportunities for professional training for people working in the nonprofit sector, and where there are more models out there, more structures for arts organizations to operate so that they're more resilient when the winds change, as they inevitably do. I think that's important because I think our sector has periodically been rocked by changes in government, and it's also been undercut, I think, by a sense of exceptionalism in the nonprofit sector. That prevents us from really learning some important lessons from other sectors as well. So I'd like to see it move in that direction.

- **Speaker 5 (Facilitator):** If you don't mind, might you speak a little bit about what you think we need to do to help change that?
- **Speaker 10:** Well, I've noted that for staff members of nonprofit organizations, there was a period about 10-15 years ago, there were more opportunities for people working in arts organizations to be getting professional training in arts management, and that's diminished to some degree. And it's important to recognize that the sector is really fueled by creatives, that when we've done studies of nonprofit arts organizations, fully 90% of the staff members at those organizations have undergraduate degrees in fine arts. So, I think it's really important that there be opportunities for business training so that these organizations can be more resilient and not overly reliant on public funding.
- **Speaker 5 (Facilitator):** There might be some opportunity for us to change the way we prepare people for the workforce and some skills gaps that we have some control over to help us get to the vision in 2045.

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Speaker 11: I envision a sector with robust philanthropic private public investment in each and every sense that treats both professionals and amateur creative makers as stewards of our culture. I've done a lot of research in the amateur space. It's my background, my history, I still consider myself an amateur of many things. So that's really key to me, personally, is that we see those as shared creative makers, essential to our democratic infrastructure, essential to planning and social healing and essential to trusting and ever-living artistic citizenship that can be practiced among many and encouraged among all. And I'd say that this vision is important because it puts professionals and amateurs in dialogue in a way that I think has been under-resourced and under-leveraged to create the type of resilient civic infrastructure for the arts, arts and culture infrastructure. And we really move forward wonderfully with empathy, with resilient communities, and repair of our social fabric if we stick to seeing a middle ground between these two aspects of our creative makers.

Speaker 12: I agree with my peers on their vision and or dreams and the solutions presented. And I would just like to add that I envision a sector in 2045, before, but certainly beyond, that enables artists to create their work without fear or intimidation. A world that respects their creation and where artists can perform, write, speak, dance, sing what they would like to present to audiences, and that hopefully that bridges so much divisiveness and creates a lot more understanding.

Speaker 13: Echoing so many of my colleagues, I envision an arts sector that is actively supported nationwide by not only federal and state structures, but also mainstream business via financial support, increased visibility in the mainstream cultural conversations, and a perspective that understands and underlines the importance of the arts as vital to our evolving social consciousness and ability to thrive as a society. This is important because, as we are experiencing in 2026 now, we are living through the massive effects of disconnection from each other via multiple avenues, and a nationwide shift is necessary to reach the goal of ceasing to justify why the arts are important and begin to simply live with the arts as imperative to reaching our goals as a society.

- **Speaker 5 (Facilitator):** Even if we change the narrative, what do we need to do to make sure that narrative gets expanded and becomes just part of the DNA of society?
- **Speaker 13:** What do we need to do to change the narrative? I feel that everybody on this Zoom and so many people that we work with, and I want to include boards in the conversation, creates such a bigger scope of conversation, right? But I think that as cultural ambassadors, we have so much more work to do to get out there and be just as vocal and visible as so many of our counterparts out there in industry. I think that is one part of it, to make sure people understand why we are relevant. I continue to tell people that during the pandemic, what did everybody turn to? Everybody turned to the arts, to movies, to books, to film. We all tried to get it on virtually so that we could experience that same sort of

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connection together. And I feel like since the pandemic, we've sort of forgotten that aspect of what drove us into that. And I think that we need to get a little bit of that consciousness back about talking about what is it that tied us together during one of the most isolating times we've experienced as a planet.

- **Speaker 5 (Facilitator):** Even during that time, I'm not sure we capitalized on all that love and appreciation of the arts. I think similarly oftentimes the art sector loves to say that if we change the narrative, the problem will be fixed. But what actions are we taking to make sure that narrative becomes part of everything? I personally know in my work, I believe that people do business with people they know. So, if you're not doing business with the arts, I'm going to be in your face talking to you about the arts.

Speaker 14: I envision a sector that is able to overcome the fragmentation and under-resourcing that we currently face. Through the kinds of things that [Speaker] was talking about. We're looking at trying to build some kind of infrastructure commons for nonprofits in [Location], especially those that, like us, are quite small, serve grassroots communities, and therefore struggle because of economies of scale to keep up with the administrative and fundraising burden of operations. I also envision a sector in which artists can afford to live and work in the communities that they are part of. That's a huge force of change that the folks we work most closely with are dealing with. And then finally, I think along with the kind of shifting toward strengthening the sector through more resource sharing, through more infrastructure sharing, I would like to see a sector that shifts away from institution building and is able to recenter artists and the actual work rather than so frequently needing to be concerned with keeping an existing 501c3 alive.

Speaker 15: I envision a future when the arts, creativity, and the humanities are equal voices and influential and valued for all of their benefits, which I won't list, but amongst them include community, the economy, education, health, and so many more. But today I really want to underscore a really important value that I would like to have centered for our sector in 2045, or if not much sooner, and that is the importance of the arts and expression and how they inform freedom of expression and how that enables tolerance of ambiguity and different perspectives and enables and lifts those up. I just feel like that is a cornerstone of what we have valued in the past that has been frayed recently. I would really hope that our sector plays a leading role in lifting that up in its importance, because it is through that that we demonstrate why it's important, and also what is involved in being human today. I want to underscore the importance of storytelling that enables freedom of expression and the opportunity to promote empathy across humanity.

Speaker 5 (Facilitator): I envision a sector where everyone working in the arts has the resources that they want to have to live the life they want to live, where if they want to be wealthy, they have that option. I envision a sector where we are considered an essential health and human service and

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considered infrastructure like roads and schools and parks. I envision a sector where we radically reinvent systems that we designed that are no longer working for us, where schools have changed their curriculum so that everyone getting a degree in art has studied business and politics, where we re-look at our arts management degrees to make sure that when you finish, you have the skills to run a business, where we prioritize entrepreneurship and innovation so that we can always be reinventing ourselves to keep up with modern times, where we don't feel technology is a threat to our existence. Those are some of the dreams I have.

Speaker 16: I echo those of you who've said that it should be simpler to communicate the value proposition so that everyone wants to support it. I envision the sector organizing around a national arts fundraising effort to support the work of artists and organizations.

- **Speaker 5 (Facilitator):** What would our sector look like if arts advocacy was a critical core function of operations like finance and HR and fundraising? And that every student that left and got a degree in art understood how integrated government is to doing business like other sectors? Those sectors that have deep relationships in government are doing the best, right? What happens if we deepen our relationship? What happens if...
- **Speaker 16:** I'm talking about individuals.
- **Speaker 5 (Facilitator):** Yeah, even that too.
- **Speaker 16:** We're entirely supported by the private sector in [Location]. There is no government funding. There's state support. And there used to be federal support. But historically, [Location] has grown up being entirely supported by the public, so we have tens of thousands of donors every year and the average gift is $150, but they go way up and way down. And it's a model that a lot of people consider to be a dinosaur model, but it actually can and does work as sort of an engine of the arts at the grassroots level
- **Speaker 5 (Facilitator):** So what happens if, in 2045, no one gets elected to public office without having an arts platform and they feel so much pressure from this sector, like they do the gun lobby or trucking or manufacturing or agriculture, that they start recommending policies to us because we are a large, massive and mobilized voting body.
- **Speaker 16:** Absolutely, there you go.

Speaker 17: I just want to support so many of the good things that have already been said but want to highlight what's been touched on but not called out directly is the line between nonprofit arts businesses and for-profit arts businesses is really blurring and will continue. The nonprofit model is changing, and so adapting as we grow and, I'll just say, overall resiliency of the art sector over the next several years. You probably know we had a little storm down in [Location] a little over a year ago. Hurricane Helene wreaked devastation in [Location] and after going through COVID

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and then Hurricane Helene, we as a field are not prepared for disaster. And so multiple ways to look at improving the resiliency of the arts field over the next several years.

Speaker 1: I always listen to these conversations and try to find what a friend and colleague, many of you may know, Eric Booth, always talks about: this sort of truth that encompasses all the things that we're talking about. So much of this is wrapped up in narrative change and it's tied to having different people understand to change what they think and to change what they do. My mind goes, and I know this is part of a later conversation, but my mind goes to, how do we affect that? How do we get to that place where there's a different kind of valuing of what we do and there's a different kind of funding of what we do? My job at [Organization] is to work at an arts agency and spend as much time in non-arts rooms as possible. I think that change happens one by one when people do business with people they know. But that means being in rooms with healthcare, being in rooms with government, being in rooms with transportation. I love being in rooms when people say, why are you here? And we say, we're 4% GDP, why are you here? We have a real opportunity in a case to make that way. But that's a behavioral change. It's an educational change that eventually leads to that narrative change that I think so many of us have articulated beautifully.

- **Speaker 12:** I think part of the narrative change is to enable all society to experience arts. I find sometimes that it's hard to articulate that art is essential if folks haven't really experienced the benefits of arts or the way art is not reserved for a professional artist or an enthusiast or someone that's very serious in the world of arts and arts philanthropy. I would love to see a greater focus on children and how they are able to experience art and how parents are able to provide artistic experiences for their children in partnership with communities and the public school system. I often think of my own experience as a recent immigrant in [Location] with parents that were working three jobs and living away from the urban core, I spent all of my years here and never once attended a single artistic institution. It wasn't until I became a professional that I lived, not just worked in the art world, but lived in the art world. And I have that very present with my work now at [Organization]. We serve 125,000 students across our campuses, but so many of our students are first-generation students or Pell Grant recipients. So ensuring that children, our students, K through college can have this experience I think is essential. But also to build this level of advocacy that we are speaking of, if we really want to have a strong lobby and have no politician be able to win an election without a strong arts agenda, well, that takes all of society and it takes a whole generation to really be informed and empowered and to really believe.

Speaker 5 (Facilitator): It sounds like everyone should go back and get their legislation around STEM officially changed to STEAM. Government pays for parks and playgrounds. They can pay for

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the arts. Any other thoughts? What's on your mind? What's your most pressing issue? And how can we maybe iterate what that issue looks like in 2045?

Speaker 18: I've been in higher education for the last 24 years as a what they call a multi arts presenter and did some things before that. I'm at [University] and I've been really quiet and reluctant to speak because I guess I'm just seeing the world so differently. I feel like to imagine what the arts and culture vision can be in 2045 that first we have to imagine what will the world likely be in 2045. I feel like we are really still thinking of 2045 as if it were today. Today is not so great, right? My biggest concern is that we will be a repressive society in 2045. If that happens, there will not be freedom of expression, and artists will be fugitives, and we will be doing our work underground. I know that's very dark, and I'm sorry to have to say it, but I truly believe that that is a possibility. I would like to ask us to consider, to make a scenario for, a world like that as well. That we should maybe make two or three scenarios: a world like today, a world a little more challenged, and a world that is potentially massively changed. But I'm probably, I think I'm very much in the minority, and so I don't want to stress this too much.

- **Speaker 5 (Facilitator):** We have to work on the short term and the long term, and hopefully we can somehow find a way to hold both, because the creativity coming out of the federal government right now is off the chain. We are not able to even keep up. Every single day there's the boom, boom, boom. They are creative. And we've got to figure that out, right? We have to use the skills that we have, the expertise that we have to fight all that.
- **Speaker 2:** I just wanted to say you're not alone. I am always struck by two things. Firstly, how we can be so progressive as artists or people in the arts on stage or in presentation, but behind the scenes, we're so conservative. I think we are already behind now in 2026 of a lot of other sectors. So not a fully formed thought, but just what you're saying, [Speaker]. And then my other thought is around the fact that we've been doing a lot more talking to people outside of the arts, corporate and other organizations, and they hear about theater and the arts and they light up, they're like, "Oh, my sister plays the violin, or I had the piano, or this time when." And it lights them up. And I'm always shocked at how surprised they are that we're not doing well. So there is a disconnect there, but an opportunity there because so many people recognize us as powerful and magical, but they, to someone else's point about organizing around sharing more about what we need and being clearer about what we need and just advocacy and learning, there's much more we can do outside of our creative work.

Speaker 19 (Facilitator): I'm supposed to be listening, but I also am so excited by so many of the comments that people have made today, so I might just butt in if that's OK. And I think to build on several of the comments that have been made today, I keep hearing a through line around art and

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culture being a necessary aspect of our infrastructure, or the thing that undergirds a healthy society, a healthy community, et cetera. And I also want to connect that to something that [Speaker] mentioned around this idea of the skills development required for folks to build durable organizations and practices in the arts. And I think that these things can have the challenge of being at odds if we don't first just recognize that the not-for-profit sector is just one part of arts and culture, and that we need to think really dynamically about how arts and culture is already manifest in people's lives, but maybe not through the not-for-profit sector, or maybe through things that are hybrid to it. And I think that kind of legibility could give us some very, very critical insights around things like training programs and how you build a platform around political advocacy, how you think about infrastructure and structures that connect to what we are expert on, but also sort of name and recognize that these things, if we're successful, are manifest and healthy and generative in lots of different ways.

- **Speaker 5 (Facilitator):** What would happen to our rooms if they were filled with people from the Grammys and the Tonys and Broadway and (the) film and TV industry? Wow, that's a big thought. How much more muscle and influence could we have if that celebrity was in here fighting for the things that we want to fight for?
- **Speaker 6:** Following up on that last thought, we're very active in higher education. And I think that higher education makes arts and culture seem stable and serene, given what's going on there. And I do envision a much closer integration between higher education and arts and culture. Not everywhere, but it does seem like in many communities, both sort of philosophical alignment, mission fit, real estate, back office from the mission to the very pragmatic, I feel like we should be cozying up to higher ed where we can because I feel like we need each other.
- **Speaker 5 (Facilitator):** Well, it's workforce development, right? Higher ed is putting out the workforce every year. The relationship from employers to colleges is critical to our ecosystem.
- **Speaker 15:** I just want to underscore that and that I would like to envision a future in which people that want to work in the arts and humanities are going to have well-paid and funded jobs and career paths with upward mobility. I think that is really core. I find it really depressing when I look at opportunities at major museums where somebody is expected to have a PhD in a dozen years. It's paying like $70,000, which is not a living wage in the state of California. I'm not picking on any institution, I'm just saying that is the plight of our sector. For us to attract and retain top talent, we need to ensure that we have career paths for the future generation, for people that are going to be leading, So that, I think, is a fundamental lifeline for the health and future success of our sector.

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- **Speaker 5 (Facilitator):** There was a time in our world when we were the top paid people in society and people came to us for ideas and thoughts and where we're going in the future. And then we were replaced by philosophy. So, we have to reclaim that, right?

Group 7 Chat

1. Interesting as the government cuts the department of education, cuts access to food and healthcare...I don't see people jumping up and down to support the billions of dollars needed to fully sustain nonprofit arts. It is more than changing the narrative. Even the for-profit arts sector has its issues, Broadway, film, music. Dreaming is very nice but look at the NEH and NEA right now and how hard it will be to get all those funds back.

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GROUP 8

Group 8 Transcript

Speaker 1: I think that by 2045, the not-for-profit arts in the United States will really, truly only be healthy if we understand that the 20th century model is over and deliberately build a new one. I don't know what a new one looks like, I don't know what a new one is, but I think we've come to, I have come to that determination. I went back and I wrote some things because I've been thinking about this really for some time. I've been thinking about this since after COVID. Because COVID for me specifically, both artistically and administratively, was a moment in which I kept thinking this sector is going to change. This was an opportunity for total change in how we produce, how we sell, how we negotiate, how we act. And I am embarrassed to say that I went right back to the past; I went right back to the comfort level. I feel that a vision for 2045 really must start with the artist and not the institution. It's time for transferable benefits, fair pay, a real voice in governance, in all governance, contracts, including AI use and copyright and intellectual property. So, artists are no longer the invisible subsidy and the thing that props up the system, that thing that props up the not-for-profit. We have functioned with this earned and contributed income (structure) that doesn't work anymore. And I feel that we must get to a shared services model where we all come together to reduce shared fixed costs, the way that we function, the way that we operate behind the scenes is much more similar than dissimilar. We need mission-related capital that stays with the arts organization for the long haul. And it is structured to not to be repaid quickly or to perform quickly but really designated to explicitly protect the organization's core purpose. Right now, foundations (are) giving money where we have to act immediately to show that what we've received, we're putting to good use. And I think arts campuses are going to be really important in how we gather as both artists and how we gather as communities. But they have to function less as performing arts centers and more like cities, like universities, places where you go and you learn about the arts, you're exposed to them, and it is really artist-centric and artist-driven. I think joint collection, joint models and collaborative work is going to be critical as we move forward. I think there's strength in numbers. I feel that we're just very, as a sector, we tend to, not all, but tend to, and for different reasons, feel isolated and fragmented is a word that I would use. A lot of it is because we're constantly trying to survive every day, right? We're trying to, we're all starving, so we're trying to survive. So instead of really breaking out and going out into our community, (engaging) our peers, our colleagues, like we're doing now, we hole up and try to make it work. So those are a couple of thoughts that I've had.

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Speaker 2: When I'm envisioning the future of the arts sector, of the world, I'm thinking of a few things. I'm thinking of a more joyful world. I think that the arts are such a great space to promote joy, that we can embed joy into our strategy. And I'm thinking of also how do we create (our way) out of a hard situation? I'm reminded of my family a lot right now. And my family has lived on this farm for six generations. And when my great-great-grandfather and my great-grandfather went to create this farm, the land was not fertile. And they (tilled) the land with a mule so that it could produce crops. And my grandfather and my uncle would always plant sweet potatoes and soybeans as a reminder that land that was not fertile was made so that it could be. And I'm thinking about our sector in the same way of what sweet potatoes and what soybeans are we planning to create fertile ground. I think of joy as a strategy for that. And how do we integrate that into spaces where it doesn't feel like joy is so possible?

Speaker 3: For me, it's really thinking about what does human-centered culture look like across our organizations, both for those that work in our institutions and for our communities? And I think if we lead from that lens, a lot of the other answers will come through (in terms of) how we are caring for each other, supporting each other through transitions, both at the institutional level and the individual level. So, my vision would be an arts and culture sector that's much more vibrant, much more rooted in the arts. I don't know about you, but my arts administration life has felt very Zoom and Google Doc heavy, not very art forward. Another thing to add there is a sector that's much more collaborative. Kind of pushing back against that nonprofit industrial complex. And I love spaces like this, where we are all really coming together and being generative. And I would want to see a sector that does this more regularly as part of our institutional strategies, rather than thinking about our work as intellectual property, but of course, respecting intellectual property of individual artists. But seriously, as arts administrators and nonprofit organizations, so much of our work is public, so much of our strategy should be collaborative. So how do we build those (partnerships) together and see where we can share resources, especially across different sized organizations? So many of us may be a national organization with a staff of one or a national organization with a staff of thousands. So how do we help keep the sector vibrant and diverse so that organizations of different sizes can thrive when we hit times like this where funding is much harder to secure, and we really need that radical collaboration to move through these times? But that can only happen if there's already trust and relationships built to know who you can truly lean on to get through whatever comes at us next. So “collaborative, vibrant and arts forward” would be my vision.

Speaker 4: I couldn't help but jump in when [Speaker] started talking about groundwork and crop rotation and the potential, I think the basic idea that we in our ecosystems have what we need to reclaim barren soil. I had just written down that “fracture inspires growth.” We're certainly in a moment of fracture, but you also can't grow food without turning up the soil. And so, I think what I'll offer is an attempt to attend to both the tools of futurism and working backwards deductively

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from the future that we envision while also attending to the conditions that brought us to where we are and trying to be reparative in the process of moving forward together. You know, one of the things that worries me about this time is that too often in our visions for the future, we envision a future that works for only a portion of the people that we serve. And so, I think we have to be fundamentally inclusive in our vision and really test if it works for everyone regardless of whether they're part of our immediate community in this moment. Towards that end, I'm really interested in a future that both fosters healthy ecosystems of practice across disciplines and allows for fertile growth for excellent practice. If you think about the post-war period of the 20th century, you see the beginnings of whole new bodies of thought in creative practice. I hope that the fracture of this moment can lead to new ways of being in art making and new forms of excellence, like a new creative era of generative art that defines a moment. I hope that there is perhaps even more investment in the everyday person's ability to [access] resources and support in activating their own community. I think that kind of broad creative action engagement and practice at the local, regional, and state level is our only path back to one another. And I think we need to really prioritize those connective pathways that help people see the value in one another and in place and in one another's places. Towards that end, I think we have to acknowledge that we've built really beautiful systems and institutions that we may have to, if not abandon, then repurpose fully. And I think you can't encourage growth, which is evolutionary and emergent while holding tightly to models that no longer allow for that growth. And so, I think we just have to know that these beautiful visions will require difficult moments of decision that [we'll need to] hold one another collectively to, but also hold one another through.

Speaker 5: When I think about a vision for the future, what has really been driving my work in this role for the last three years is about challenging stereotypes about what it means to work in nonprofits and to do this work now, assumptions that I have about how we have to work or how we can't work or what's true and what's not, and behaviors that we or things that we do that are ingrained and entrenched. Because I think half the time when we get stuck, it's because we've gotten stuck on things that have to happen or, "well, this is how it needs to work." And those things are just so unhealthy. I think they're part of what stymies our ability to change. I know I'm in an organization that has had a lot of lives. Recently, one of the biggest things that I have championed here is this idea that [Speaker] referenced, was that we are people first. We can't do this work if our people are burned out and tired and unfocused. We have to prioritize that. And that needs to get elevated to our boards and because our boards can influence a negative people culture and what now feels possible because we found a way to just say, "you're a person first, we care about you, like take PTO, please do not send me emails at 5 a.m. or 11 p.m." And so, I envision a future where we identify, dissect, and I hope in most cases throw out the stereotypes, the entrenchments that are getting in the way at so many levels to identify, with intentionality, new behaviors. Because I

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think so much entrenchment is what keeps us tied to that 20th century model, we're never going to get away from it if we keep operating in those ways with those kinds of rules that are, I think, hamstringing us. And if I'm being honest, I don't want to run an organization and work in a sector that ties its hands in so many ways. I don't want to do that. So how can we build a sector that is [not about doing it only] for the love of the work. We do it because we can be a whole person and do the work at the same time.

Speaker 6: One of the sad things that we used to say during COVID was, "Never waste a good crisis." So as much as this sucks, also, I think that there are things that we, at our peril, miss opportunities and things like this. It's a shame that it takes something so tragic and ridiculous as the times we're living in now to get us all together, right? So, I even wonder, coming out of this meeting today, could we form groups that are [organized] by size or by types of art organization or by interests? By having large groups and small groups together, there's deep power in that connectivity. In the next 20 to 25 years, I would like to envision us even more deeply tied to and telling the story about arts and wellness and the deep connection. Our staff, we've been deeply influenced by the book, *Your Brain on Art*. If you haven't read it, I feel like I should be a publicist for those two women, because we tell everybody, go get the book. The data is all out there. We know how arts and creativity change the neuroscience, changes our brains, and is part of things like social prescribing, which is happening in the UK. Happening over in Europe. I would hope that in the next 25 years, those types of cutting-edge things become part of our mainstream conversations about the arts. And if we truly understand that, then part of this conversation, we've had a little bit about "arts for all," right? Arts not just being viewed as the purview of the elite or the icing on the cake – pick your metaphor – but the understanding that arts and creativity are a vital tool in everybody's toolkits for wellness and for thriving. And I think particularly those of us who are working in areas that are financially, economically challenged, understanding that everybody needs those tools in their toolkit. How do we envision futures where this is possible for everyone? I think it is quite possible. We can do this. It can be done. We just have to think about how we continue to share this and share the resources and support each other in this too. I also envision a future where I think if we do this right then in-person creative experiences and events opportunities are...I don't want to say (an) antidote, to social (strife that) continues to be pervasive because I doubt that we're going to go cold turkey, just cut all this off, even if we probably know in some ways it's what we have to do. But it's too late… the genie's out of the bottle. I think that there's such deep strength in what we do and the connectivity and the belonging that the arts create for people and that there will be a deep longing and a deep need for those types of authentic person-to-person opportunities to connect. And we serve it up already, and I would envision a future where that becomes understood and seen even more clearly.

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Speaker 7: I have to name one of the biggest challenges we are encountering in independent film and in documentaries is the breakdown of distribution. Certainly, the defunding of our public media system has given us a huge hit in the last year. But even before that, we were starting to have trouble getting people to come out in person. And I think some of that has to do with a lack of accessibility and a lack of community space and bringing film into those spaces. And also the distance between the artists and the communities who would be best served by (the film experience) and could engage in it. If we did some work on creating better systems, and some of it's about money, some of it is about location, and some of it is about the engagement tools that are surrounding it. So, I envision a space that is so much more community-based, like bringing film into places where people are already gathering, like wine bars and bookstores, and having screenings in those spaces instead of theaters, so that people can then connect with one another. I also envision, not just in film, but other arts (disciplines) as a place of connection and an antidote to some of these (areas) where we're divided. I think film specifically, but other forms of art can call people into conversations about inclusivity and diversity that can be really polarizing if they happen in a non-top-down way that sets people apart. I think art can bring people into the conversation through empathy and generating stories and space for conversation. And I envision art and film to be so much more accessible and so much more communal that it can be a way of bringing us together again. But again, we have to get (the experience) out of the institutions that feel too far away (from our lived experience), and that are creating some of this fracture and elitism. One last thing I want to say, we're having a huge problem in independent film. I think it's across the art sectors, but this is about the way that artists and filmmakers have traditionally made their money through earned income. It's based on a capitalist model. Because (film has) been underfunded for so long, and public media has, filmmakers just can't keep making their work. They can't sustain their careers. And the earned income is becoming so much more of a problem. So, I'm really envisioning a different model of funding so that filmmakers and other artists can have thriving careers where they get reliable sources of income, and they're valued, and they're not always feeling like they're trading off making their art for being poor.

Speaker 8: I would define my practice as moving ideas between people. I envision in 2045 an art market, a secondary art market, that directly benefits artists, that at least 50% of sales go directly to the artists who originated the works. I envision a strategic approach to the field that is grounded by an understanding that the hyperlocal is critical to addressing the global. And to address the global, it must be grounded in the hyperlocal. Why? Because I think we need to lateralize force around culture, decentralizing financial infrastructure around cities and city cultural institutions so that the force is lateralized in all of the communities around our nation. But I also don't think we should let go of our, I'm not a "burn the theaters down" person. I find those tools useful, but I think we need both, and I think the force needs to be more lateralized. Also, the other why for me is that

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I believe that humans in relationship to land has produced the most complex and dynamic and enriching systems of thought that ever have existed and continue to produce the most enriching, complex, life-affirming centers of thought, humans' relationship to land, hyperlocal, thinking about the global. I envision a cultural sector that serves representative publics. And I think that's about cross-sector arts infrastructure, arts and sports, I dare say commerce, intersecting. The why is that I'm not particularly interested in this form of democracy. I think there are great forms in other places, but it's the form we're doing. And it's built on the Acropolis and the sporting arenas and the theaters. We're next to each other. It is the model of participatory society that we are built on, and there's a reason that people gathered in person where they voted. And so, I think it's about cross-sector arts infrastructure. Let me add to that that I envision an arts sector that continues, perhaps from the 20th century model, to privilege in-person arts exchange. In 2045, I envision a national guaranteed basic income policy that is propelled by new understandings of cultural labor embedded into the systems of the larger labor within this country. I envision a sector that is guided by the intersection of health, art, and art together. I envision a sector that releases the 501(c)3 money laundering development aid corruption, and that understands all financial resources have investment impact and understands itself as the smallest resource in which artists and art institutions are usually working. That is because I hope to extract from institutional permanence as inherently successful and because I believe we must emphasize the impact of our collective resources coming together, and money is usually the smallest resource that we are all worth.

Speaker 9: A lot of my talking [points] in [meeting] spaces for years has been around centralizing resources, decentralizing power, and deconstructing concepts, language, and definitions that are crafted by, steeped in, and uphold colonial and white supremacist infrastructure. From art history, I retained that of the many poisons in our well, one that is centuries old is that elevation of art and artists in the Western world during the Renaissance divorced the ideas of art and craft. We did ourselves a lot of harm, and it in ways that have persisted in arts advocacy efforts for centuries. And through this elevation, it sort of disconnected the arts from the people. This persistent Western idea that beauty and morality are closely linked, that goes all the way back to classical world philosophy, has made our work difficult in ways I see every time I go into a conservative decisionmaker's office and talk about the art on their wall. So I envision a future where we have successfully deconstructed, mended, and rebuilt definitions and concepts pertaining to arts expression and creativity and in cultural ways of knowing and doing, where interdependence and mutual aid are the norm, that the home, educational spaces, and workplaces are creative, vibrant, multi-generational places where the arts and cultural ways of existing are fully integrated and expected. And as a result, these spaces honor the intelligence, talents, and capacities of folks across the spectrum of identities. In this, spaces are more equitable and safe for multicultural and neurodivergent folks and those holding different identities than what our system is safe for

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currently. Public spaces are full of people living out music, dance, art, so much laughter. Sacred spaces are held as such. And we've built an environment of low fear and high freedom through cultural respect, creative expression, and the acceptance of many ways of knowing and being. And the role of nonprofits in this future is that we're not struggling to fulfill the role and responsibility that government should be, but are operating with a sense of abundance where our resources can be spent on paying artists and enriching this sort of environment that we're seeking to create. I feel like the American experiment is a tapestry that is woven with flames and blood and tension. Our work is not to render that into or rewrite that history, but to identify what does a collaborative, beautiful, yet imperfect weaving look like, and what are the threads that we need to pull together to craft that together.

Speaker 10: [For me], part of the "I envision" is not just what I would like but is also looking at where I think things are going. And I think that the elephant that's in the room is that America is rapidly becoming fascist. And I think that we have a tremendous responsibility to fight that. But looking into the future, I'm going to assume that at least it will get as bad as it already is and probably a lot worse before it gets better. And so, the "I envision" is envisioning a period of rebuilding. Right now, at a minimum, national funding for the arts and for National Public Radio is gone. The art centers like the Kennedy Center, or dare I say the Trump Center, are not spaces that are welcoming to the kind of art and culture that I'd like to see in the world. Institutions like the Smithsonian and other institutions are gutted and neutered, and this is going to get worse. They're shooting people in the face, and the President of the United States is saying "she deserved it" because, well, she didn't readily submit to the authority of a random ICE agent. And so I think that the "I envision" is going to include, we're still coming from a period of having to rebuild both funding structures, including support structures and what kind of work is allowed to be shown. And there will have also been some sort of Truth and Reconciliation Commission that will undo the tremendous harm that is currently being done, but it's going to get worse. Imagine trying to build an art sector in Russia right now, or in Hungary, or Turkey. There's interesting art there, but to build the kind of art that I think many of the people in this room want, and to have support for it, they would have to undo a lot of harms (that have persisted) for decades. And that's what we are potentially looking at. And so one of the things that I also envision is that looking at the people in this room, many people have said, "oh, this is going to be more art-centered, we're going to both financially support artists, but we're also going to listen to artists." Well, most of the people in this room aren't artists. I'm an artist, and so if y'all want to actually have a different model of like, "hey, we're going to really listen to artists," well, bring some damn artists into the conversations. Also, if you want to support artists, many of you that are in arts institutions actually have some sort of salary and support, and most of the artists you work with don't. We've got to hustle. We've got a job, even those of us that are doing well. And so is that model going to change? Most of the

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organizations look at the longevity of an organization, five years, 10 years, 20 years. Some of you are with smaller arts organizations. Some of you are with larger ones. Some of you are funding bodies. But all of you are looking at the preservation of that. Artists are looking day-to-day, project-to-project. But coming back to this, "what we want" and "I envision." It's like "I envision that if we win some of the battles that building a culture that is [forward-looking], that risk-taking will be part of it." Artists can see some of [the upside] of that future. And one of the things that I think makes us different than many other people in art is we're willing to actually speak truth and speak truth to power and take risks. Right now we're seeing a lot of people in the cultural sectors very quickly collapse, fold like cards. I mean, Amy Sherrill had the courage to pull her work from the Smithsonian, but it was Lonnie Bunch who was actually a very good person until he made the decision to, yes, we're going to censor Amy Sherrill. So, it's like they're all sorts of colleagues and friends, and I suspect some people here who are trying to figure out, how do we actually have an arts institution survive under fascism? And by that, they end up trimming the sails and censoring and self-censoring, putting in less applications and telling artists that you can't do that now. And I think that's tragic. And so I envision that the artists and some people will continue to have fights with others in the sector about having a radical vision of a liberated future be more possible. And I also envision that it will be more of a global question and that America won't be so much at the damn center of it. There's a lot of really interesting things going on, particularly in performance in Kinshasa and other parts of Africa. And hopefully, people will learn from that. I do think that if we don't root some of what "I envision" in what we're looking at right now, and that is our neighbors and friends being snatched up off the streets and thrown out to countries that they've never been to before, people getting shot in the face, and all sorts of levels of the federal government saying, "that's right, and we're going to do more of that, and we're going to come back even harder," then what we envision is just fantasy. I think we can envision something that is radical and beautiful, but we actually have to encompass where we are also at right now.

Speaker 11: The organization that I represent works on under-imagined futures and we believe that we all too often, we continually under-imagine for the futures that are ahead of us because we're not doing real analysis of where we are today. I appreciate everything that [Speaker] had to say because that is our starting point, that is our starting gun from now. And so my thought was, I envision a future where we're de-centering the sector to focus on the society we want to build and the society we need to rebuild and what is at the core of that social contract. And then how do we bring culture to bear in shaping [society] because I think, fundamentally, we have lost sight (of what) our power is in shaping society. That is what culture does. When we talk about those movements that were very close to how we think and rethink about democracy, we need a new form of deliberative democracy. The challenges that we're facing are existential and planetary, and they didn't just start with one election cycle or two election cycles. And so, we've kind of put Band-Aids

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on it. We've kind of kicked the can. Yes, it's hard for nonprofits to think we have to shoulder the responsibility of that, but I'm also like, the artists are, so why not? Why isn't it all of our work to rebuild the civic imagination around just and equitable futures? And how do we do that through our institutions? How do we do that through our artists? How do we do that by advancing pay equity, not just in our sector, but to think about what is a just economics that anticipates and gets around what's going to happen with AI. We are consistently dumping more people into contingent work, not just as artists so that is the workforce and the labor force of tomorrow, do we have the social safety nets that we need for that? We don't. So this is one of these moments where I want to say yes to talking about arts and culture, but I also really want arts and culture get in the game around climate change, around labor and economics that need to be reshaped, around the future of democracy and what a more just democracy could look like. I do want it to be more trans local organizing because these issues cannot be solved in an American or "America First" (context). It has to be solved globally because these are planetary and existential (challenges). And (I would) just say, I hope we can zoom out from arts and culture and zoom in to how culture comes to shape these other really big issues.

Speaker 12: Right now, I am living to see another day and to understand how the folks who have been there, who still want to support artists, their local community, the larger field, how we can stand there, be there, and I think as we were saying before, how do we break the model? And I think we will have an opportunity in the future to rebuild in a way that is hopefully more sustainable, hopefully artist-centric, hopefully without censorship.

Group 8 Chat

1. https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c865n800d5jo
    a. https://ai-2027.com/
    b. https://www.justflows.agency/
    c. https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2026/01/06/us-artists-fundraising-exhibitions-budget-cuts

2. I envision a future where exposure to arts and culture for children and young people in both practice and attendance is valued as a critical aspect of human development.

3. I envision a future where are sector is highly organized, artists and cultural workers have the resources they need to thrive including GBI, all institutions are deeply embedded in place, and combined we are seen as important to overall community health, the truth tellers, and the go to have the difficult conversations and build empathy to bridge and bond across difference.

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   a. Agree that we are going to have a period of rebuilding what is being broken now also hopefully what was already broken.
   b. Looking at this through the lens of artist rights and ways that the law needs to adapt to reflect the actual environment where artists are making law, I envision a future where we take the lessons we wanted to learn from COVID and the current moment about how to incorporate technology, including AI, in ways that help increase access to arts and respect and protect artists and encourage creative endeavors.
   c. I love "important to community health, truth tellers, and the "go to" place to have difficult conversations and build empathy + bridges".

2. I envision a future where no one has to go more than 15 minutes from where they call home to see, experience, and participate in the arts.

3. I envision a sector that pays its artists AND its administrators. Subsequent to my time at [Organization], and putting myself back out into the job market, I was once again confronted with just how poorly (paid jobs are) across our sector, the job responsibilities/expectations of admin jobs are not met with acceptable pay, whether hourly or salaried. This is not new to our sector. Artists have always struggled and they should not have to; but nor should administrators and other key staff who are all critical to the sector's growth and continued development. Some non-arts staff I know were also looking at their finances day to day, moment to moment. As we think about building strength in the sector, looking at the financial models that guide arts organizations, inclusive of artist and staff salaries, is going to be key for ensuring sector health and sustainability.

4. I envision a future of arts abundance not scarcity, where the Arts are widely accepted as a social good. We need a cross-sector Arts infrastructure" where arts are sustained fully because of how they impact they have on all of our communities. Small community arts organizations serve and engage under-resourced community in a way that large institutions are not able. We need a structure and ecosystem that includes arts on all levels.

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GROUP 9

Group 9 Transcript

Speaker 1: I envision in 2045, a nation and a world where artists are paid fairly, where they own their work or can control their work, and where there is a big broad community of artists of all different kinds, styles, genres, media, who are engaging with the nation in deep and important ways. I think if you look at the ways in which the field of arts is being increasingly corporatized, if you take a look at what's happening to artists at an and how Spotify is paying very little. If you take a look at the ways in which catalogs are being bought, and the, I hate to put it this way, corporatization of some of these fields, and the marginalization of artists in terms of salaries, rights, and compensation, I think that we are looking at an extremely difficult time right now that is going to get worse unless there are things done about it. You can add AI to the mix to make it even more complicated.

I think rather than an artist getting a company, a streaming company making billions of dollars and making significant sums of money off of individual artists' work and the artists getting paid a paltry amount of money in exchange for that property and that creative work, you would see something that was much more in balance. You would see a corporation and a streaming company that would make a healthy profit. And you would see that artists who were being fairly compensated for their work and also have access to a broader, more democratic marketplace.

Speaker 2: I support cultural organizations in advancing their mission. For me, in 20 years time, I would love to see the arts as recognized as a tool for creating a more connected, vibrant, democratic society, a pillar of a civilized society. By democratic, I don't mean political affiliations. Democratic in that a multiplicity of voices are valued and heard. So it is a tool for social development. I'd also love to envision where the arts are a tool for human development and recognized as such broadly. So understanding that the arts help us understand who we are, who we can hope to become, can help us discover something new about ourselves or the people around us. Some of those intrinsic impact measures that I know have been studied in the past. And then third, I'd love to see the arts as being recognized for being an innovation ecosystem. So, a place where that doesn't just reflect culture, but also as a prototype for new ways of thinking, new ways of doing things, new ways of being and connecting with each other.

I think the joy and challenge of being "innovative" is that we're always at a five on a 5 to 10 scale. There's always more opportunity. I think a resilient arts infrastructure by 2045 would encompass some R&D lab for how we'll use the arts as a tool to help navigate some of the things that are happening in society that are affecting all of us, whether it be climate change or technological

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disruption or social fracturing or reorganization. The arts can be a creative tool to help us explore and bring people together around a lot of these really big issues and topics that are facing all of us. And so where are we now? Individual organizations are doing different things, but not really collectively, or maybe we don't have a way to talk about it yet. As a sector, that really demonstrates to funders, supporters, and the public at large about our role in helping people navigate these challenges.

Speaker 3: What I am envisioning is twofold. First, I envision a cultural sector that prioritizes artists, and a society that meaningfully invests in what artists contribute to our democracy and the economy. And the second part is a shared commitment to access to the arts as a fundamental human right. You asked what (does) fair compensation mean? I think that that would be a complex answer. I would say that fair compensation is just one part of the way that we need to support artists. It's also creating the infrastructure, and making sure they have affordable workspace, health care, legal and financial services, and that they're included in decision making within the wider system. At the same time, I'm seeing more fragmentation and division within the arts ecosystem. I'm primarily familiar with the world of the visual arts and these communities within the arts are becoming more fragmented. There's more division between the curators and the artists and the funders. Artists are great community builders. Part of the fundamental problem is that they are not the priority most times. And with that, we have lost the power that they have as community builders and as community conveners and groups that can really catalyze change.

Speaker 4: I envision in 20 years a world where the arts are not just an option for young people, and that we find a way to have a much more robust arts in schools, and that the education system values the arts much more than it does today. And that from a very early age, in this country, children and young people are exposed to creative, fun, cool, artistic experiences and organizations. And that there's not this divide of the art kids and the sport kids, etc. By doing that we can really instill how important the arts are and that it can become a life passion for people by having it be much more a part of the schools.

- **Speaker 5 (Facilitator):** What's really interesting about what you just said is we actually had a long conversation yesterday about sports and the ways in which sports have, especially for youth, a super-duper low barrier for entry. You walk onto a soccer team as a three-year-old even and you are just kicking the ball around and all kinds of other sports that do that. And so, this vision of that being the case for the arts, and even to your point, not optional.

Speaker 6: I am with a statewide arts and advocacy group, so my answer is going to be in that channel. I envision that in 2045, our sector is a top three issue when people go to vote. When people consider voting for a candidate, they will not consider voting for a candidate who does not have a perspective on arts and the creative sector, that has not built out a platform, that does not talk

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about their vision in whatever office that they're running for. When they are talking about a vision for the platform they are running for, they are talking about arts being part of that vision. So not just jobs and education and healthcare – a candidate could get elected if they didn't talk about those things.

Speaker 7: I've been inspired by some of the things other people have said. Going back to the comment about who benefits from artistic work and needing access to markets, some of those natural tensions between wanting more opportunity but also wanting to distribute who benefits from new opportunity: I would say part of my vision for 2045 would be to see cultural activity integrated into the sustainable development goals. Whether or not the US commits to them, it's not there now. And I think it's really important as multilateral cooperation is reset at this moment to speak up for that. And I think there are possibilities there. Someone also mentioned wanting to see access to the arts as a cultural right, which is something that the US never signed on to via UNESCO. I would love to see in some 20 years emergent policies amongst countries that want to cooperate around cultural exchange and start to see some normalization for how that industry works, what we can expect when we're crossing borders. And I think that would be a huge benefit to American arts and culture, as well as to other people in other places. And then lastly – I'm thinking this is a slightly more abstract thought about the politicization of the arts alongside the financialization of the arts – my vision for 2045 would be that we see the arts used instrumentally in other realms. I also feel that we can never control whether we're going to feel good or bad about the ways they are instrumentalized. So, I would also hope to see that the logic of creativity itself or the culture itself is respected as a source of wisdom, a source of knowledge, and it receives investment for its own reasons, not for the reasons that it brings into other bodies of work. But that is not exclusively the way that we think about the arts. It's not just the arts for the arts' sake, but that we can hold both. We can invest in the arts for community development or for community well-being or for many other purposes. But also just respect that the arts have their own way of working within society as a system that does not necessarily need to be financialized.

- **Speaker 5 (Facilitator):** If you think about times or spaces where you've recently seen beautiful non-instrumentalization of the arts, recently, what comes to mind?
- **Speaker 7:** I have the good fortune of working in places where there are many community-level groups, not just the art makers themselves, but their natural communities of affinity or demographics or what have you. Those tend to exist in voluntary organizations. People are gifting space, gifting time, bringing food, doing costumes. I don't know about other places, but I assume that happens in other places as well. So that's one space at the community level. And that tends to be immigrant communities who are thrown together for other life reasons. But I also see it a lot in independent artist networks. Some of them organize as

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cooperatives or self-operated entities, but many of them just function as social networks that really transcend place. And are often more so about aesthetic interests.

Speaker 8: I envision a world where there's a broad-based opinion that the arts are valuable and intrinsic to our lives and to all of our outcomes. I think that we've made the case that they're important for health, education, and our wellbeing generally, so that there's not a question. Speaking from my place in government, that there's not a question that there needs to be public investment in the arts. That extends to not just funding arts organizations, but funding the arts in other areas and making sure that the arts are funded through health, through workforce development, through transportation, that there's an embeddedness of arts throughout. That comes from a general recognition that the arts are valuable, are important, and intrinsic to our well-being.

I think this is all starting and my vision is there is the research behind and evidence for saying that there are health benefits from arts, for example, and that it is so broadly known that it's intrinsic to everybody's understanding of what the arts is and does. So it's not a question. We're not arguing that the arts need funding, that the arts are important, that artists need to be paid a living wage, that we're not arguing that as much, that that is just a common understanding, a core belief, a core part of the fabric of our country or our psyche.

Speaker 9: I work with a planning and placemaking firm, so I envision the arts not being seen as a signifier for gentrification and displacement. Even though gentrification is very complex, arts and culture tends to be associated with rising rents and development pressure from all kinds of sectors. I want artists and creative workers to be able to access creative space and live-work space, housing, etc. And see the arts integrated into neighborhood changes that emphasize equity and work against gentrification.

Speaker 10: I envision in 20 years that rural America will feel seen, invested in, and part of the greater dialogue around the arts. In the heartland of America, there is a great disparity between urban and rural communities. There's a sense of political division, but also about equity and access to the arts. I just want to make sure that the arts in rural America would be a tool for solving real problems, poverty and access to strong educational outcomes and opportunities, issues such as transportation and food sources and just innovation, the unhoused, engineering, science and broader conversations, rather than feeling the arts might be more relevant in urban spaces. Also, seeing the nonprofit and for-profit sectors of the arts being less siloed, working more in tandem. I feel if I get into a space where I'm talking with someone in the for-profit realm, it's "you stay in your lane and I'll stay in my lane," rather than us saying collectively, "let's do something that helps us both." And an "and," not an "or," an "either/or". And then, arts as a diplomacy tool, I feel that on both the local, regional, state level, and nationwide, that the arts could really be a tool of diplomacy

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that would help our nation, not only in terms of elevating the arts, but seeing it as something that brings great opportunity, not only in our nation, but beyond.

[In envisioning the future for rural communities] I think authenticity is the word that comes to mind, that a sense of authentic place, that each place is able to lean in and embrace the arts of that community, whether that's arts that are within academic realms, but then also those that are maybe taught generation to generation in our diverse cultural settings, such as with our Native communities or historic Black towns and beyond. I see it having a sense of authenticity that honors the place and has equal standing to what is happening in our urban spaces. And people are flourishing, whatever industry or walk of life they're in.

Speaker 11: In 20 years, I would love to envision the realignment of the dissociative thinking in the arts, that the arts somehow exists in a cloud that doesn't involve actual workers making it. And an acknowledgment that artists are workers that create the arts. Of course, no one here in this Zoom has that dissociative thinking…

Speaker 12: I am thinking a lot about artists' sustainability and infrastructure, and really appreciate the opportunity to talk about this. I envision a healthy or healthier equitable arts ecosystem that has expanded safety nets, that supports artist sustainability, especially for experimental artists or freelance artists. For me, what that looks are some of the things that popped up during the pandemic, things like unemployment insurance expansion, etc. Also emergency relief that may be coming from the federal or state levels for artists, as well as guaranteed income, which I know a lot of nonprofit, arts nonprofit organizations and government organizations have been looking into. And subsidized housing too. These are things that, for me, are needed in order to create an avenue where artists are not caught up in struggling and starving. Artists are not often seen as workers or treated as workers, and as a result of that, a lot of the safety nets that exist for people who are "traditional workers" tend to be in place already. What's the response for artists who are episodic workers and who need additional safety nets in order to create the level of stability or sustainability within their career journey? So that's why I am envisioning a future where the federal government is really considering the significance of the work of artists, but also the level of stability that's needed to continue that work.

Speaker 1: It is interesting that the political divide, the contentious nature of our society, the fighting, the infighting, the political conflicts, the red versus blue state stuff, hasn't come to the fore yet. I think it's under the surface in some ways. I also think that if we did an analysis of the different things that were discussed, we're not seeing necessarily conflict. I think that the challenge of the paths forward are significantly increased when you start to factor in all the differences: rural, suburban, ex-urban, cities, different types of practices. When you look at policies, health, environment, artists, organizations, commercial, nonprofit, that we have a beauty of the field,

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nonprofit and profit, is in fact, it's kaleidoscopic nature, even within the challenges. But a challenge within the beauty is the diversity of it and how and where you can find universals and coherent policies that become a thread across all of it.

Speaker 6: At the risk of being an alarmist, I think we're in a real, real scary moment because there is an administration that is absolutely leveraging the arts and arts production and arts and creative consumption for its own purposes. And there's an assumption that art is for everybody, or is it only the art that some of us may agree is the "right" art? We're at another moment in history where the leveraging of art for propaganda is happening, and it's happening in the most transparent way I've ever seen. There's no question. And so I don't think it's about leveraging the divide. I think it's about calling that out in real serious ways.

Group 9 Chat

1. Why [are you here?]:
    a. I believe the arts are central to a civilized, connected, and beautiful society.
    b. Here to dream of what can be for the arts in our nation.
    c. Wanting to understand how we can leverage culture to save democracy.
    d. I am concerned about the future of the United States.
    e. I want to build community and encourage greater investment in the arts, which are transforming.
    f. I'm here for the exchange of ideas and hope to hear perspectives different from my own.
    g. Here to listen and looking for ways NOA can work with others in the field to make a difference.
    h. I do strategic planning for our org.
    i. I'm here because a core belief of mine, based on my life experience, is that the arts are important for our individual and communal wellbeing.
    j. I'm here, as the leader of a statewide arts organization and advocacy group.
    k. Interested in conversation on creating a sustainable arts ecosystem.
    l. I want the arts to thrive in our nation.
    m. I want to leverage our sector to make change.
    n. I am here because I think there's a big opportunity to rethink our cultural infrastructure as we embark on a period of rebuilding.
    o. Interested in cultural policy and cultural planning and invested in supporting the creative sector however I can, particularly as an urban planner.
    p. I'm here to support the voices of artists in this complex time.
    q. I want to contribute to a broader awareness of current arts thinking.

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    r. I'm here to help and learn, with particular interest in ensuring and expanding arts access.

2. What [Speaker] is describing in music is happening in all disciplines.

3. We are on the periphery in these discussions, brought in late or at the end. Rarely seen as "essential"
    a. Arts as a human right essential to civic life.
    b. …collective understanding that arts participation is a health behavior, and therefore access to the arts is essential to health equity.

4. I envision an arts sector that has been recalibrated under a new economic model primed for sustainability, service, love, human expression, and a deeply personal relationship with the American public.

5. I'm noting that our comments do not include what I understand to be cultural items emerging from right-wing thought leaders, such as "returns" to specific aesthetic forms and notions of "great" art, and clarification of a national identity and narrative.
    a. To [Speaker's] comment re: right-wing thought leader return to traditional aesthetic forms — As someone who works with a lot of classical arts organizations (opera, theatre, symphonies), I can share that the latest conservative embrace of classical arts has not boosted ticket sales.

6. If our future does indeed include the red vs blue dynamic, it should be acknowledged that while support of the has tended to be somewhat bipartisan in the past, leaders of "red" cities, communities, and states do not, unfortunately, hold the values of sustainability or even reciprocity. Furthermore, the arts are always hanging in the balance of the pendulum of federal office.

7. By framing the arts as infrastructure that strengthens education, economies, workforce development, and community cohesion, support for artists can transcend red–blue divides without compromising artistic freedom. Civic action, when expressed through art, becomes a means of protecting civil rights and freedom of expression by enabling artists to reflect, challenge, and expand democratic participation without political interference.

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GROUP 10

Group 10 Transcript

Speaker 1: My vision would be – and I'm a largely performing arts person, I don't know a lot about visual arts – would be artist driven. We have gone over the past 60 years from an artist-centric culture to an arts institution-centered culture, and I don't think that's been helpful. I think Lincoln Center is great, and Kennedy Center is great, and Dallas Theater Center, all these centers, but I think it's a very old-fashioned idea, and I think we need to de-center, push out outside of Manhattan. And of course, there are other ways to do that nationally, to be community based, to respond to people in your community and to make your organization accessible to that community. And in a way for the theater, perhaps most importantly, to redraw the line between creating art and interacting with the commercial world, which has absolutely corrupted the American theater, at least in New York City. Let's rededicate ourselves to what we intended to do. The structure we created 60 years ago with the NEA in support of the Ford Foundation and other foundations was revolutionary and brilliant 60 years ago. It's an old idea. It's the eight-track tape and the hula hoop. We need to find an entirely new system, in my view.

Speaker 2: I envision that arts are being sought after to address the broader problems and opportunities in society. And I think that's something where there's work that I'm engaged in looking at how arts and science can work together as equals from the start of a proposal to the final published paper or research in a peer-reviewed journal. A lot of times the solutions that will address the core problems are the ones that the arts can address. And having that identity of the arts as, oh, that's how we can address the really hard problems. And I feel like there's an opportunity there also to engage communities of artists, because I feel like a lot of artists look at their practice as a practice of social change and social justice. And I think we can help as a sector, not dictating anything, but giving some lines of effort where if you want to have a strong impact through your art making, these are some ways you can do it.

Speaker 3: I'm representing public media. So obviously, it has a huge hand in the arts and humanities, but we have other concerns. Take what I'm saying with that in mind. In public media specifically, obviously, we lost federal funding a few months ago. But since the pandemic, there's been a trend in individual giving. It's that fewer small gift donors are giving to public media, but more large gift donors are giving to public media. I would say I envision a future where we are able to reverse trend, not that large gift donors shouldn't be able to give, but a future where there's more of an engagement from normal people, the people who would benefit most from public

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media and from the arts and humanities. I also envision a future where we could begin to stretch the timelines of large gifts. A lot of our grants and large gift donors, they're in the timeline of a few months or maybe a year, or if you're lucky, several years. But that's not necessarily a path to sustainability. It's a path to sustainability for those years and maybe for the few after that.

Speaker 4: I'm going to speak from two hats. One, my organization is dedicated to emerging [Discipline] artists and creating pathways. For when I'm looking at what would be great to have happen would be easier pathways for artists to create and present work, additional funding streams for emerging artists. There's not really an entry level way to get into this field in a way that's sustainable for artists. And it's making it difficult for new voices to be showcased and commissioned. Also more visibility for Southern dance artists, decentralizing where people perceive good art is being created. Having voices at the table in government and city planning with budgets and money allocated for artistic activations that can solve problems, but also if we put more money behind X, we might not have Y as a problem. Conversations about gatekeeping and how it's hindering, again, and new voices. And then also trust-based philanthropy as a small nonprofit. Part of why we stay small is because we're not eligible for the same amount of funding as larger organizations. And so the disparity becomes bigger and bigger. As a Black female [Discipline] person, I would like to see continuing efforts behind diversifying that field. And also money talking when it comes to diversity. So, if something isn't diverse, we need to call it out and see the funding also reflected in that.

Speaker 5: I envision a world where artists are robustly supported and building on what [Speaker] just said about decentralization and really making sure that arts are everywhere, a world where every person has access to inspiring arts experiences that help them more deeply connect to themselves, to one another, and to community. I'm dreaming of and hope we can envision together a world where we have a vibrant ecosystem of arts organizations of all sizes, and that also exists all across the country in every different community, and a world where the arts are universally understood as a critical element of both community health and community resilience.

Speaker 6: My vision for 2045 is a space where cultural policy can be shaped by the people who live the culture and not just the institutions. I think that sometimes – I don't know if legitimacy is the right word; it's a very complicated word, but I'll use it in terms of cultural policy – sometimes legitimacy comes from or can come from lived knowledge and not just a positional authority. So I think that people who are involved in other traditional arts, who are culture bearers, tradition keepers, and even people who live in the communities can hold and should hold decision-making power. I envision that as something that is very important for 2045. Another thing that I envision is where traditional arts can be recognized as an essential public infrastructure. And that could look differently in different ways in different parts of the sector. But traditional arts are a thread that can

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keep a lot of communities together. They transmit cultural values that can be important for building resilience within communities, for even helping develop systems of care. And what some of the work that [Organization] has been doing is how traditional arts can help with healing, with mental health or trauma. So there's a lot of ways in which traditional arts can help the public infrastructure in many different ways. So those are my two huge visions for 2045.

Speaker 7: I envision the arts to actually be more valued and appreciated and attended and supported more than ever as AI grows and evolves. When people discover that they really do need to be around people to connect, and to be challenged in an authentic way, as they discover that AI can only interpret what we already know, and it's the arts that help us think beyond, and it really is what keeps humanity human.

Speaker 8: What I envision for 2045 is the ability for us to view the creative sector and creative practice through a multifaceted lens. [Speaker] was speaking about the impacts and the opportunities for the public sector to embrace arts differently. And as a former, or I say, as a recovering city employee, I often would step into rooms in which people expected me to be the creative person to solve whatever macro problem it was, but they never came with dollars. It was, we have this amazing economic development program, now figure out how to make this thing work for $5,000, right? Artists like a little bit of money. And so I think that finding ways to parse out the opportunities for the creative sector to be a little more deeply engaged and embedded within public sector opportunities, I think is essential, not just for the creative sector as a whole at a micro scale, but also the rhetoric that's used around it. And that ties to my second point where I think of the way in which folks at a macro scale discuss the quote creative sector or creative economy as this micro microcosm of what brings in dollars and opportunities for most areas. And yet the cultural nuance of places is what differentiates all of the different cities or towns that we're from. It's what differentiates nations and what provides, I think, ample opportunity for so many people, particularly in times of need. Let's go back to what happened during the pandemic and how so many folks turned to the arts sector. And then once we were back outside, we're like, that's great, thank you for all your service and moved on. I think that capturing those moments and finding ways to tie into the greater scale of economy is going to be really important. I hope that in 2045, we're having a slightly more nuanced discourse and rhetoric around how to change and shift some of that ideology and discussion.

Speaker 9: I envision communities where civic life and cultural life are very deeply integrated, and where arts is really understood and is incorporated as an essential part of civic life and civic infrastructure, more importantly, not seen as a luxury or a volunteer project, and that there's a funding framework that really reflects this as well. And in this vision, there are artists and cultural

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organizations of all sizes and creative practices that are really deeply integrated into public space and urban design and urban development. So it becomes part of the infrastructure of communities, much like transit and housing and other public utilities. And that this is inclusive of both physical spaces, but also creating stable paid opportunities for artists and access to resources like housing and workspaces and community support so that artists can live and survive and work and contribute meaningfully in these places on a long-term basis. So really it's this idea that arts can function as a public good that's accessible and visible, at the core fundamental to how communities gather and why they gather and how they thrive. And that by planning cities and communities in this way, that it's recognized the economic vitality and economic activity that arts generate, that there's funding and revenue that then supports that as well, rather than being just a showpiece for a moment.

Speaker 10: I envision a society where poets – and I say poets in the most expansive sense, viewing them as really artists, dancers, theater performers – but poets are held in the same regard as economists. This is sort of a phrase that I've used over the years. It's built upon a book that has been very impactful, influential in my work called *The Fourth Turning*. I don't know if anybody has read it by Neil Howe. But it's a very involved demographic book on civilizations. But the punchline is that coming into a Renaissance or coming out of a dark period, it's the artists that lead the way. And so in my view, I think I'm looking at this conversation from the bird's eye view of society, how society values the work that we do. And my vision would be that poets are held on par with what society views as those who dictate how the world is run, but that there isn't this disparity, that it is elevated to what I call economists who hold a different regard. So a bit poetic, but I think it is what some of us have been saying, which is that the field and specifically artists have greater value, not just within our circle, obviously we all work here, but in societies in general.

Speaker 11: When I think about a vision for 2045, I really think about an arts and culture sector that is really integrated with a more natural system, a system that much more reflects our Earth systems. I really think that climate is going to be a big thing as we think about 20 years into the future, so how we consider that. I also think that there might be, and this might be slightly controversial, but less specific arts institutions, but more integration and implementation of arts in all sectors, agriculture, economics. I really think that that's going to be a huge piece of the future. I also think that it will be more centralized and localized. There will be global networks, of course, as we continue to see integration. But how do we govern those locally? And what does regenerative skill sharing and resource sharing look like in the arts and culture sector?

Speaker 12: I spend most of my time thinking about structure and how do I make it safe and available for artists to do what they do? So I'm going to put that perspective right now into what I am envisioning because what I hear in our sector are the organizations, small and medium size, and

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even large, that are spending far more of their time finding less money to support them with rising costs with philanthropy changing, with buying trends changing, with just cost of everything rising. And it's about to flip in many areas. And I just envision for the sector that there are areas where these services and whatnot and administration pieces are coordinated. So that a single artist or a small nonprofit or a large nonprofit that have some sort of coordinated access to health care, to legal, to HR, all of these administrative pieces that are going to become not affordable. And an organization itself probably can't carry all of that. There's probably lots of duplication in areas that there should be some consolidation. That's what I'm seeing. And I think that's one way that our sector survives, where there's some real true coordination to allow those services to be cared for.

Speaker 13: I guess it's a little big, hairy, audacious, and it's a little optimistic for 2045. But I envision a future where all people understand and support the value of culture bearers, artists, arts and culture as both a fundamental strategy for national success and a cornerstone of American life. And if we can figure out how to make that happen, then all the other stuff will fall into place.

Speaker 14: I really was joining [Speaker] in that beautiful vision of the future, but also I'm very critical in the sense that I know that all the challenge we are facing. For me, as a person who works a lot with education and exhibitions during all the 20 years I've been working for [Organization], is to change or do revolutionary changes within the education system in [Location], starting from the smallest ones. So when they become the adults, they can be the sensible people, they can be politicians, and they can understand the value of culture and art, because without that, the changes can't be made anyways. And in [Location], we can see that art is discarded sometimes in the schools, some schools have art classes, some don't. Also, I am envisioning working in the interdisciplinary way of integration with different academic areas, not the traditional way of teaching arts like it is done right now. I think that is really, really essential. Also, that makes people understand the value of art and culture with our communities. It's all always linked. So that's the only way to reach a sustainable, vibrant future for the arts and cultures.

Speaker 15: I envision a sector that fearlessly and bravely stands up for the dignity and human rights of all people and advocates for the right of artists, culture bearers, and communities to exercise their constitutional right to free speech and public dissent. And I think this looks like investing long-term in individual artists and culture bearers and artists collectives who are working as change makers and civic leaders to address the most vital issues of our time. And I think this can also look like artists helping communities navigate conflict and address social environmental challenges, heal collective trauma and sustain our democracy.

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Speaker 16: I'm a consultant to arts organizations, usually around strategy and structure. And one of the things that I've run into is the large gap between administrators and the artists. My vision for the 2045 world is one in which arts is a container that does not need to be split. I'm wearing a union t-shirt right now for [Organization] and that says a lot about how rather larger organizations in the performing arts are built, which is confrontational with their artists. And my vision is collaboration. My vision is that we can actually get together in a room and set the strategy and set the structure and set the pay scales and do that all together for the benefit of the people we serve. I think it's really interesting to think about arts organizations as 501c3s because arts isn't a 501c3 reason. It's education. Arts organizations are 501c3s for education. And so that's how they get that status. And so I keep going back to my clients and saying, what are we doing for the communities? What are we doing for our audiences? And how does that align us instead of divide us?

Speaker 17: A cornerstone of the vision for me is deepened cross-collaboration between professional arts organizations and educational institutions. As the prompt mentioned, 2045, that these partnerships could be structural rather than episodic, and that when aligned thoughtfully, collaboration can yield clear cost efficiencies through shared production resources and co-commissions, et cetera, and really that this can strengthen the entire ecosystem while reducing redundancy and financial strain.

Speaker 18: I'm a second-generation artist, now working at a foundation, and I have a six-year-old who inadvertently has been clearly brainwashed by me because her dream is to become an artist. And in thinking about 20 years from now when she will be 26, I would love to see a reality in which she has and all artists have affordable healthcare benefits and have an ability to access affordable housing and are able to save for retirement and have other kind of social safety net protections in place, and where fiscal knowledge building and health is built into artistic training so that artists can really truly thrive and create the conditions that they need for creativity. I've heard some of you talk so eloquently and inspiringly about building the arts into the fabric of this society. And so many of these things, affordable healthcare benefits, affordable housing, right, are wider social issues that artists would benefit from. So I think really putting artists as the culture bearers that they are at the front of fighting for these wider public goods and public needs is one thing that I would love to see and figuring out how to support artists and give them the resources that they need to be the leaders of this movement is deeply on my mind right now.

Speaker 19: My vision for that period is that being an artist is the most desirable and most popular vocation and career because it is impactful and it is financially sustainable, all those pieces are coming together in a way that people see this as a viable career path that is impactful and financially sustainable.

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Speaker 1: I was thinking about how much FDR was able to create in five years in the 1930s. Or once it was clear that the Soviet Union was going to fall apart, when that seemed possible, it fell apart in four years. Partly because of artists like Václav Havel. So it's just personal, but I'm in a hurry, and I'm going to do everything I can to move this along and it's good to think long-term, but let's all press ahead together.

- **Speaker 12:** I agree with [Speaker]. I felt like when I first read 2045, I was thinking, understandably, that things that we might put in place in the next three, four, or five years might take time to institutionalize or organize across the globe. But I agree that it can happen quicker. And I would be guiding us and suggesting us to be coming up with a solution for 2030. What are we really doing? Because otherwise, it's hard to think through that far from now. And also, even any of our strategic planning processes, who can think five years now? And someone mentioned global change that's happening. We don't even know that we can necessarily envision what the planet looks like? So I do think that we are in a little bit more of a hurry.
- **Speaker 16:** In the US at least, we're living day by day, thinking a week ahead is kind of difficult sometimes. But I think there's something really valuable about 2045, it takes us into an ideal. And yes, understanding that it's an ideal allows, I think, the back-end work to begin now. I really felt inspired, not necessarily from the point of view of, oh, I'm going to sit on my hands and wait 20 years for this to all come to fruition, but what more can I do in the work I'm doing? How can I see glimpses of 2045 in the arts now? How can these visions come to life, even if just for a fleeting second?

Speaker 9: [Speaker] was making comments about the sort of arts sector organizing and working together on these broader social priorities. And it just made me think about how sometimes within the arts and cultural sector, we can become, across all disciplines, we can become fragmented or siloed within our specific discipline. And how much stronger we can be when we really think about working together towards a shared vision across all disciplines, performance practices, every type of arts and cultural practice and output that you can think of. Because we really do represent such a large portion of our communities. And sometimes that story is not always told. [Speaker's] comments made me think about that and how strong of a message it can be and how much power the much broader arts and cultural sector really has. And that this is an opportunity to leverage that more.

Speaker 11: I just wanted to share something I heard very recently on the idea of timelines and thinking so far ahead that really resonated with me. So take this if it works for you all. But it was the idea that the actions you take currently are a memory of what you envision in 2045. You're doing

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everything you can to live in that dimension of 2045, that is the ideal, but it's sort of like living in a memory. It's a stretch sometimes, but that's what I think about. And then I also just try to root myself in the indigenous knowledge of seven generations. I work in climate a lot and thinking about seven generations away and trying to make sure that the things that we do now, seven generations will be able to benefit from them.

- **Speaker 2:** One of the things that I feel is the superpower of the arts, and this is what I use in my theater and policy work, is that we allow people to time travel. We build the future. We can put them in a place where they see what they didn't imagine in 2045 as the timeline is placed to our strengths. That's what we do in the arts that's almost unique in any other sector. The second thing, just keying off the mention of Vaclav Havel – I lived in the Czech Republic. He was living in truth, living day by day under horrible situations. And then the wall fell and he had no idea that when he was living day to day, he would be president of a new democracy in a totally changed world. So, envisioning the future, sort of projecting into the future, but then being prepared for that rapid change.

Group 10 Chat

1. Artists at the Center instead of Organizations
   Community-based focus
   Cross Sector
   Artists providing social justice solutions
   General public buy-in and engagement
   Career pathways for artists
   Regional support esp. Southern
   Value of Artists - cornerstone/fundamental
   Diversify the field, especially certain disciplines
   Support of orgs of ALL sizes
   Policy shaped by those living the culture
   Arts as public infrastructure
   Cultural nuance of place
   Social cohesion and real challenges
   Climate and Art
   Arts Education for all + Professional arts orgs and education institutions
   Constitution right to free speech and public dissent
   Artists AND Orgs Collaborating
   Artist social safety nets

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GROUP 11

Group 11 Transcript

Speaker 1 (Facilitator): Don't feel like you have to pick 2045, because we know that a lot of folks may have a two-tiered vision of what do we need to survive now. We need to also be thinking about the future. We realize there's a tension between visioning for the future and responding to a crisis. The answer can be in reference to your creative practice, your organization, your community, your field, however you define the field, the sector, however you define sector.

Speaker 2: The first thing I'm thinking of is what we've seen happen in Ireland. I would love to see it be a reality by 2045 nationwide here, and that is the universal basic income for artists. Many municipal, regional, or state art agencies have a form of this in their fellowship grants that they may offer to some artists, but they're not enough to help add really solid stability for artists in a profession that is not always stable. This would really help with equity. We would see an end, I believe, to some health disparities. I think [we need] dignity in work. We need the artist to support economic development in all areas and facets of our state and municipal and jurisdictional lives. It's sometimes considered to be a secondary economy that really does help the primary economy. This is one of the ways that we can ensure that the artist will be there to do that and be ready when we call upon them. That's the first thing I would say I would love to see by 2045.

Speaker 3: I envision a 2045 or a future where artists' labor is valued, and what that means to me is that they can make a sustainable living off of their creative work and flourish and thrive, and that [their work] is valued also for the contribution that it makes to the health of our communities and seen not as this "nice extra thing," but as something that is essential, artists as essential workers. And I think that's important to the field, the sector at large, because I think that value and how we kind of honor that monetarily and otherwise shows what our values are as a society, as a community.

- **Speaker 1 (Facilitator):** You'll see with all the segments, there'll be some bleed-through. Some of the things we may be talking about as a vision may translate into operational ideas, programs that need to be created or leadership that needs to make them happen.

Speaker 4: [I envision the] changing of the United States to becoming a majority of people of color is actually a transcendent and positive thing. And it's also something that is going to happen no matter how fast the Trump administration tries to deport people. We think that there's a difference now in the makeup of the immigrant population than there was in the 19th and 20th century, and that most of these people are coming from places that have been impacted by American foreign policy. And we think that because of that experience it's a different experience to the German, Irish,

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Italian experience. These are all people that know what happens when the Americans turn on you and so we think there's a small possibility that this could be a way that this multi-racial society that we are creating or that is being created will treat the rest of the world differently. We'll have a different type of American foreign policy that is based on democracy and not on capitalism and not on gunboat diplomacy. I don't think it's a good idea for the United States to give up leadership, but I do think that leadership needs to change very, very drastically. And I think the population shift is maybe one way to look at that. And how do the arts be part of the conversation.

Speaker 5: I envision a sector where local arts agencies are funded at a minimum of 10% of municipal budgets and that it is codified in a way that we can put to rest the need to fight for and defend our purpose and impact. And I say that because of the impact and the work that [local arts agencies] do in funding artists and arts organizations and developing local policies. I want that to be an established way of being by 2045.

Speaker 6: I envision in 2045 or in the future, as some others have said, an arts and culture system that is disengaged from the capitalist structures that have often inadvertently shaped the values and the psyche of our arts and culture ecology. And in this new world, indigenous artists, smaller organizations or unincorporated organizations or artists that are working independently, there will be tremendous appreciation and value placed on the entire ecology. And additionally, and this has been referenced earlier in this conversation, I believe that we can create a better world because of the work that we do. And that sounds very general, but I've also been aware that the arts and culture sector – even with the idealism that we bring and the ability to also be cautious and critical and analytical about the world we live in – that we've also absorbed and adopted a lot of the practices and attitudes and values that we should be not following. We should be carving a new way forward and that becomes especially important as we see what's happening in our country right now. Hopefully, we'll be around in 2045.

Speaker 7: My vision is that the arts will be experienced [on a] lifelong [basis] by a broad public because without that there will ultimately be no justification for the sector, and what we actually have a mission to do is to change lives and sustain the public. And to do that, [we need to navigate] some critical issues like Baumol's Cost Disease and provide alternative employment as opposed to just pure subsidy through our organizations to writers and artists as employees, so they can create concurrently with their careers and that we look upon this idea of experiencing lifelong both as creators and producers and the public being connected with our mission.

Speaker 8: [I'd like to advance] the idea that art and democracy are both verbs. They're things that we do together, that we engage with, that are a practice. My vision is really rooted in this. In 2045, I envision a United States where democracy is no longer experienced as distant, transactional, or episodic, but as a living, shared practice woven into everyday life. I imagine a nation where people

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do not encounter government only in moments of crisis or elections, but through ongoing acts of participation, care, creativity, and collective problem solving. In this future, democracy is not defended only by laws and institutions, but sustained through relationships, trust, and a deeply held sense of belonging. I see a country where artists are recognized as essential civic workers, embedded across public systems, including health, education, housing, climate response, and economic development, helping institutions listen, translate, convene, and heal. Communities shape public priorities through participatory budgeting, citizen assemblies, and culturally grounded engagement that reflect the full linguistic, racial, and regional diversity of the nation. Public spaces, once defined by exclusion and bureaucracy, are transformed into places of welcome, imagination, responsibility. Creative and civic labor are valued, compensated with dignity, and understood as foundational to a healthy democracy.

Speaker 9: I envision a 2045 where artists and arts organizations are stewards of the physical and the tactile and the real, because in 2045 I think the digital AI singularity that we're going to be living in is going to require stewards of originality and of original thought and original ideas. I feel that artists and arts organizations can [serve in] that role in society, some sort of a fractional tax on AI that funds original thought in the form of creative thinking, arts, culture, and creativity. [We can] have this conversation five years into the future rather than 20 years into the future as well, but that's a separate thing.

- **Speaker 1 (Facilitator):** You can make it five years if that's what you'd rather talk about, because we realize that there's a tension between short-term action and long-term action. And I think we came at this in structuring it with a sense that we keep getting bogged down in solving a crisis, and we haven't done a good enough job of creating a bigger, longer-term vision that we can work towards.

Speaker 10: In the short term, we all know that the way we work is going to be radically transformed by AI well before the end of this decade. It's already happening. I don't know how I feel about that, but one thing I'm excited about is that I think this is a massive opportunity to reclaim the way that arts, capital A, and culture, capital C, perform and function within broader culture and community and society. In order to do this, I think we need to reinvent the way we work. The professionalization of the field over the past few decades has been incredible. We need to continue this and probably speed it up. We need to establish a community of care within our teams. I think there's a lot of like, oh, we all suffer together because we believe in the mission. And we've got to stop that. People don't need to suffer just because we believe in the mission. We also need to embrace modern tools and workflows. We're just not using the best tools. Many of you are, all of us are not. And then we need to integrate with the broader cultural landscape. We need to be more fully embedded. Right now, and I think you all know this, it very much feels that arts capital A, culture capital C operate on

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the fringes. My final thing is we need to work more closely with our artists. I'm always stunned by how our institutions and organizations are shaped to serve arts and artists, and yet artists feel like a product of what we do or a client or a customer rather than as leaders and visionaries and voices that guide our every single day.

Speaker 11: When I think about 2045, I hope we've finally been honest with ourselves about how the arts are funded in this country. For most producing organizations, earned revenue is only about 20 to 30% of the budget. The rest is filled in through institutional and individual giving that's increasingly unstable and concentrated amongst fewer donors. But we still think that this is a sustainable model. So, my vision for our sector is that it's treated as essential civic infrastructure, not just as an optional charity. By 2045, I'd like to see strong (and) more consistent government support for producing organizations really drawing from European models but adapted to US contexts in those systems. Public funding doesn't replace ticket sales or philanthropy. It creates more of a stable base so organizations can plan long-term. They can pay people what they're worth. They can take artistic risks and serve the public without constantly operating in crisis mode. That kind of support would really rebalance the ecosystem and take pressure off boards and leaders to fundraise and let us really focus on artistic quality, access, and impact.

Speaker 12: I envision a world where artists and creative workers are a powerful political and civic constituency and where they are instrumental in winning broad-based economic security for artists, but also for everybody else who's also struggling amid precarious conditions, and that those wins then unlock creative expression among many, many, many more people and more communities.

Speaker 13: I envision a future where collaboration, partnering, and collective thinking and action have become much more prevalent, especially among funding organizations, as well as among arts institutions and presenting organizations. And of course, where there are more solid support streams for research and creation, for presentation, and for public access to art. I also envision artists having a stronger position as thought leaders and possibly as drivers of collaborative approaches in this scenario. I think it's important because we have to ensure that our institutions and organizations don't wither. And we also realize that it's no longer feasible for any of us to go it alone.

Speaker 14: My vision goes in four directions: demographics, organizations, digital, and scientific. On the demographics, we need to acknowledge that our population is aging. That is the biggest demographic fact of this country, and we need to make fairly radical changes, both in terms of the creator side, the worker opportunities, and especially in terms of how we serve this aging population. How we can be a factor in accommodating a society where there are more old than young (people). Secondly, organizationally, I think it's time for a field-wide reckoning with the fact that the sort of post-'60s 501c3 nonprofit model is somewhat ossified, and that we need some sort of structural

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diversity of many different forms working together, commercial, nonprofit, and everything in between. Thirdly, digitally, I would like to see some sort of massive cross-sectoral data alliance, whereby we control our data and pool our data so we know it's reliable and that we can come to the AI party in a stronger way. And finally, scientific. I envision a future where the contributions of the arts are confirmed in terms of health and longevity, especially as confirmed by science and where we see new synergies between health, wellness, lifespan, health span and our sector, which opens up tremendous new resources for our future.

Speaker 15: I just wanted to bite off one little, tiny piece of this whole thing, which is I hope for convenings like this to happen on a formalized and embedded basis in the arts and culture community. So, we don't gather [only] in times of crisis like the pandemic and in this extraordinarily serious time of crisis, but on a regular basis throughout the country in some fashion. [Rather than] seeing each other once every five, 10 or 15 years.

Speaker 16: I also am focused on generational change. Aside from everything about proclivities to give, proclivities to attend, the core fact is that Generation X is a drastically smaller generation than the Baby Boomers. It's, to my knowledge, the first time in world history that's happened since the Bubonic Plague. So even if everything in terms of willingness to attend and donate was constant, we would have an incredible pressure on our sector just because there are fewer people able to participate. So, I envision a future where the arts are structurally embedded in our civic life and that the public assumes that they are as essential as schools and parks and libraries, not optional enrichment, but (as) core social infrastructure. I think this is critical because the things that once sustained us – predictability models, stable audience behavior, and cultural consensus – no longer exist. So, if we put the arts more deeply into public life and civic systems, we will avoid the fragility and marginalization of artists, and it will give us artistic freedom, equity, and long-term sustainability.

Speaker 1 (Facilitator): [There are] health conversion foundations that have billions of dollars in assets. Increasingly, they've been focused on social determinants of health and really taking a much broader perspective on health that really embraces the arts as part of what makes for a healthy life. But one of their mantras in terms of what success looks like, it's that race, socioeconomic status, poverty should not be a predictor of your health and wellness. And that's when you've achieved success in healthcare because of the huge disparities that exist. I think there's a corollary to that in the arts. So, I would envision a world where one's race, one's ability, one's gender preference, one's socioeconomic status, rural versus urban, is not a predictor of your access to an engagement in high-quality arts experiences, either as an audience member or a participant.

Speaker 17: I envision a redefinition of prosperity and the insurance that we have resources in a way that is not the cannibalization right now of the economy. And by that, I mean the concentration

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of wealth, of course, in only a few sectors. But I think a few years ago, we used to say, when we spoke of the sector as the creative sector, we would include all the graphic designers and all the media producers and all the architects as part of the creative sector. And the fact is that some of that has not quite, in my opinion, delivered us a richer environment because some of those expanded categories also allowed for an incredible commodification, if you will, of the transactional nature of art making, so that a lot of things look like the arts now that are not what we do. It used to be that to have the honor of producing a folklife festival meant essentially a relational positionality. You had to have relations with the people that you were involved with, otherwise you had no credibility as a folklorist, as a presenter, as a curator. And now every other festival looks like an imitation or a form of multiculturalism in the marketplace. Every other festival. So, I don't even know that the word "festival" anymore is a container, for example, of the relational meaning that we attach to art. I'm struggling a lot with that. And what do we mean when we say "festival" that is not a boost to city and municipal (tax base), (the) economic wine and dine experience. And it's relational to cooks and to artists and to artisans. The vision that I have is one in which, first of all, we're able to have the prosperity and to release that prosperity into a context of greater democratic participation for artists, but also the ability to distinguish, perhaps without being academic or pedantic about it in an elitist way, the sector that produces beauty and meaning and relations versus the sector that produces goods that are necessary, perhaps to sell toothpaste or to sell cars. Those things are important in a prosperous economy, but that's not necessarily where I find relationships that nurture heart, community, trust. And so, I'm both troubled by that, but I also envision a world where it's possible to have those conversations where there's enough for all of us without cannibalizing through the structure of, "I can do that. What they do I can do. I can do it better. I can do it cheaper."

Speaker 18: My vision always is to live in a world where culture and creativity are considered a human right and where we all have the right to our own voice, our own culture, and the expression of our story. Perhaps more practically, I think that would mean a real investment in direct support for creative people, particularly in infrastructure that supports everyday creativity for people in their communities so that everyone feels like they have a right to be an artist and to call themselves an artist and to participate in their culture where they live. Finally, I think the other thing I'd lift up is the support and durability of local hubs and homes for creativity and culture. I think we're living in a moment right now where local organizations are holding it down in all kinds of ways. They are the front line of dealing with some of the most urgent issues that neighborhoods and communities are facing and they're doing it usually with three quarters and a piece of string in their pocket. I think that's a huge part of what the vision for the future needs to include is real focus and investment in the local part of our ecosystem.

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Speaker 19: [I] spend a lot of time thinking about policy and arts and the intersection thereof. It seems like one of the things that has been on my mind a lot lately has been the degree to which the arts are so siloed. And theater, performance, music, all operate super differently from visual art, for example. Y'all have unions? I think that there's a lot of questions around labor that we need to start looking at and I think it'd be great. My dream for this is that we get way more specific and concrete. I've been to so many talks now where people keep saying art is essential and then they don't ground that in anything specific. So, what are the specific policies, local and national and regional, that can really set the conditions for this sector to thrive? But I'm also wondering if in the macro we're in a moment in which [everything] is just shifting on us. Saks just declared bankruptcy. In Boston, there's this interesting initiative where they're mapping cultural spaces, and they're including retail spaces and communities of worship as cultural spaces. I'm starting to wonder if just when we talk about culture, how culture is shifting on us. And I think maybe this will be somewhat generational. Something like Saks, which maybe would never have been considered a cultural space, now we might look at it as where fashion designers got their start and were able to commercialize their business. And does that take on a cultural dimension? There's definitely a question around the business plans of our cultural institutions. So, I'm wondering how that's going to shift and that immediately takes us to AI. And there's going to be the question of how arts institutions respond to the transition of a world inflected by AI, but then also how cultural institutions exist once AI is embedded and we're on that other side. And I think those are not necessarily going to be the same. There's just so much upheaval.

Speaker 8: I studied architecture and that's because I come from a very conservative family. And so, my mom didn't think being an artist was something you studied. It was something you were just naturally, because you couldn't formally be an artist. What is that? And so, I studied architecture. And when I read the news that the Trump administration is making architecture not a profession anymore or not qualified as a profession, which leads to the fact that anyone studying architecture cannot get funding from the federal government to study architecture, it immediately triggered me to think, how can you dehumanize or take away aspects of what has made architects be seen as professionals and as serious people? This in tandem to the notion that we have creative arts therapists across the United States but there's only 11 states where you can get certified as a therapist that uses the arts to support people's mental health. One of my biggest questions has to do with the codification of how do we formalize and professionalize and systematize the arts so that we are considered a profession? It is formalized in a way that is rigorous, that is supported both in the educational process when you're joining in early on, but throughout, because I think so much of it has to do with lifting our understanding of who are the artists, what is the range and the expansiveness and the relationships across all of these people. I recognize that inside of government, I think of artists as creative problem solvers, but there's a very wide range and a very

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broad space that we operate under. And so how do we systematize? How do we think about what needs to be set up in the foundation so that people can live dignified lives and practice across industries because the other element that I am a little bit challenged by is the sector, the arts and culture sector. We are a part of everything. So, thinking about ourselves in the corner as a group is silly when we actually are a part of every aspect of how we communicate, how we think, how we feel, how we heal, all of that's related. And so, how do we really maximize and center what we bring to the table as creatives in a way that feels intentional, purposeful, and that leads us to the change we're seeking?

- **Speaker 3:** I just wanted to lift up that I heard many of us use words like "essential civic infrastructure" and "investment in the arts" from that perspective. Or maybe it's also kind of piggybacking on this interdependence that you were just speaking of, of how art is in everything. And I am curious – it's not solvable here maybe in the remaining five minutes – of how people reflect on that, given the current political climate and the current kind of actions and policies of the administration that we currently exist in. How do we get to a place to envision what that civic infrastructure, that type of civic investment looks like to think of the arts as essential and what's needed? And I understand that's part of our intention here today. But I just wanted to acknowledge that many of us use those words, which feels very interesting to me in the current moment. And how do we get to a place of defining that?
- **Speaker 14**: I think a lot of this really is about the rhetoric of advocacy and how we explain the value of our field. And I think that we have been really struggling with that. And so to reiterate a little bit, I think that we have an opportunity, perhaps, to be a bit more fact-based in explaining our value but also get out of the previous instrumental reasons. We went to economic rationales. And I think that with the advancement of science – I don't know if you know this writer, Daisy Fancourt. She just published a book in London last week about art and health. I think it will be very widely discussed here. But as we begin to see science and can actually demonstrate a quantifiable impact of the arts that is not economic impact, although economic impact has its place, but relates to more fundamental human things like health and wellness and mental health and et cetera, et cetera, it gives us a different way of talking about the impact of the field. And I think that we have to come to terms with the fact that pretty words don't matter a whole lot in today's public discourse. We need to bring facts and data to the table to make this case. We understand that we're essential, or whatever word we like to use, but we have to demonstrate what exactly we mean by that in a factual way.

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Group 11 Chat

1. I envision Universal Basic Income for Artists as a Nationwide reality in 2045. This is important because UBI can reduce poverty – offer economic stability within a profession that is at times not stable.

2. I envision in 2045 State Arts Agencies (SAA) are funded via dedicated tax. This is important because the sector supported by SAAs need an economically stable agency that is positions to bolster the ecosystem!

3. I envision a sector where Local Arts Agencies are funded at a minimum of 10% of municipal budgets and that this is codified in a way that we put to rest the need to fight and defend our purpose and impact.

4. I envision in 2045 a future where artists' labor is valued, such that they are able to make a living exclusively off of their creative work, and such that their contributions are recognized as essential to the health of our communities, our society.

5. I envision an American arts and culture sector in 2045 that functions as critical civic infrastructure, not discretionary enrichment.

6. In 2045 I envision a United States where democracy is no longer experienced as distant, transactional, or episodic, but as a living, shared practice woven into everyday life. I imagine a nation where people do not encounter government only in moments of crisis or elections, but through ongoing acts of participation, care, creativity, and collective problem-solving. In this future, democracy is not defended only by laws and institutions, but sustained through relationships, trust, and a deeply held sense of belonging. I see a country where artists are recognized as essential civic workers – embedded across public systems including health, education, housing, climate response, and economic development – helping institutions listen, translate, convene, and heal. Communities shape public priorities through participatory budgeting, citizen assemblies, and culturally grounded engagement that reflects the full linguistic, racial, and regional diversity of the nation. Public spaces once defined by exclusion and bureaucracy are transformed into places of welcome, imagination, and shared responsibility. Creative and civic labor are valued, compensated with dignity, and understood as foundational to a healthy democracy.

7. In 2045, I envision a world where artists and arts organizations are stewards of the physical and the tactile in a world that will be largely AI dominated. In a similar model to bed tax or dollar for arts programs, the arts could be funded by a fractional tax on AI-generated

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content. These funds would be diverted into a national endowment to support physical, human-performed arts that cannot be automated.

8. I envision in 2045 fully funded art programs in all public schools across the country.
    a. My hunch is that the essential shift that will happen in schools with the proliferation of AI in education means that arts integrated education should be the norm.

9. I envision a future where the arts are structurally embedded in American civic life and assumed by the public to be as essential as schools, parks, and libraries--not as optional enrichment, but as core social infrastructure. This is important because the conditions that once sustained the arts—predictable funding, stable audience behavior, and cultural consensus—no longer exist. Without embedding the arts more deeply into public life and civic systems, the sector risks continued fragility and marginalization. Structural relevance is what allows artistic freedom, equity, and long-term sustainability to endure across political and social change.

10. My vision is a sector that's treated as essential civic infrastructure, not as optional charity. For most producing organizations, earned revenue is only about 20 to 30 percent of the budget. The rest is filled in through institutional and individual giving that's increasingly unstable and concentrated among fewer donors. Yet we keep acting as if this is a sustainable model.

11. I'd like to see much stronger, more consistent government support for producing organizations, drawing from European models but adapted to the US context. In those systems, public funding doesn't replace ticket sales or philanthropy. It creates a stable base so organizations can plan long-term, pay people fairly, take artistic risks, and serve the public without constantly operating in crisis mode.

12. I envision a future where gatherings like these are formalized and embedded in the arts and culture community so we don't simply gather in times of crisis, but with regularity, so that we can strategize and plan in times of strength. My vision is for convenings with a rotating list of attendees from various arts organizations that is curated and administered by a recognized and empowered national arts coalition.

13. Emil Kang just wrote a great essay about how the cultural sector is too often defined by "nonprofits" and how limiting that is — not just structurally, but perceptually, as well: https://emilkang.substack.com/p/stop-starting-nonprofits-a-case-for

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14. Michael Bobbit had some good ideas for culture as civic infrastructure here: https://www.bostonartreview.com/read/michael-j-bobbitt-mass-cultural-council-exit-interview-kim-cordova-pubpolicy

15. https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2026/jan/07/art-could-save-your-life-creative-ways-make-2026-happier-healthier

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GROUP 12

Group 12 Transcript

Speaker 1: I thought about this as I read the notes from the original email, and there's two things that I would put on this visioning list. One, that youth, specifically K through 12, young people, are considered a part of this conversation and dialogue in terms of who it is that we're working for and towards. I find that quite often the arts encompass what's going on in the ecosystem currently and who is being supported, primarily entrepreneurs, and adults that are working in the arts. But while there are several youth arts programs across the country, there's very little conversation around the development outside of those programs and projects in terms of how do we transition those young people who are being developed in those spaces and move them along the continuum so that they become the adults, the artists, the entrepreneurs, the contributors, whether it's in the arts or it's in any other field. How do we introduce the arts to young people in a holistic way that encourages them to continue to do that throughout their life? That's the first thing that I envision. The second thing is that we change collectively as an entire sector, change the narrative around the arts. And by that, I mean that we stop allowing people to frame the arts as an icing on the cake, as something fun to do, as this extra, an extracurricular activity or a special – using K-12 language – as a special in school, that we reframe the narrative around the necessity of the arts as one of an additional social determinants of health. That we reframe the arts as it relates to mental health, wellness, well-being, overall to how people live, breathe, engage with themselves and with one another. So those are the two things, investment in young people and reframing the narrative.

Speaker 2: When I think of 2045, I envision a world that's completely unrecognizable to us, in which we have to fight against machines thinking and creating for us. This is already happening. Of course, we're only at the precipice of what this AI revolution is doing to our society. But I think in terms of how we conceive of a sector that fits the society we want to live in. I think we have to think big and think in totally new realms.

Speaker 3: I would like to envision a world where all artists and creatives have health insurance. I think we all know why. It's crushing our state right now and it's ruining it. The cost of health insurance is making everything else that artists need unattainable, including participation in public school education as part of the curriculum, including housing, including all the things in our state are coming back to health insurance.

Speaker 4: The four words I keep coming back to is I imagine a future where everyone, regardless of context, has access to a creative life, the ability to make things. An expressive life, the ability to

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find their voice and share it. A connected life, the ability to be in context and in connection with other humans that are meaningful to them. And a remembered life, so the ability to both build on and extend the heritage and history of the people you call your group. And making sure that access to those things are not predicted by a particular demographic or educational status or economic status, that in fact you could pick somebody at random and they could say yes I had opportunities for those things whether or not I use them, that's my choice.

Speaker 5: First, I do appreciate the way that you phrased the question that you asked about our sector. I think we oftentimes, which is important, think about arts in the world, arts and culture in the world and in the space. And really, in our sector, in the future it would be wonderful to envision and see a future where artists and arts organizations have a deep network, especially across rural communities, where they are connected to one another. And that things like what we saw in the pandemic, the disconnect and the disassociation and what we actually still now see do not occur again because of that connection. I think that that's where I see the connection being actually really firm and strong.

Speaker 6: I think what I see in the future is a world where the arts have cross-sector relationships with many different parts of society, whether it be civic partners, business partners. Where the arts and culture are the means to achieve what we want to see in our world, that we have built those connections that are trusted and deep so that artists are employed in many different parts of our society, more than we can imagine. It builds on we have to change the narrative.

Speaker 7: I envision for 2045 greater mentorship. Actually, the results of [Program] that we're starting now with students, with people, our community. I came from a for-profit background and fairly new into this nonprofit world. And we talked a lot about, I heard a lot of talk about access and what access meant. And that was lowering a ticket price or giving away tickets and nobody would come and everybody wondered why. And my thought about all that is we have access to these amazing artists and give our community, our students, real access to these artists for not just a week, not just a day of a master class, but three years. Do a whole set where we're inspiring the next generation of ticket buyers. We, as the whole sector, we face a crisis, I think, in where's the next audience coming from and it's now our responsibility, since the education system has somewhat folded on teaching the arts and the importance of the arts, it's now, critically, our responsibility to inspire that next group. Maybe that they're not musicians or artists or whatever, but they're the next ticket buyer, and they see the importance of what we do. And in addition to all of that, I would love to see a much greater collaboration between nonprofit arts organizations and for-profit producers as well. We need to come together and be producing together. We can't do it alone anymore. We've got to do it together.

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Speaker 8: I envision a world where the arts are less defined by the nonprofit industrial complex and are more defined by the complexity, plurality of economic models, structures, systems that artists actually live in. We know that in many cases, artists work and seek the validation of institutions, but we also know that we work across institutions, across sectors. There has to be a way to both account for and validate and support artists as they work across those sectors.

Speaker 9: I envision a future where the arts are not considered an extra, especially for our school systems, where we value what the arts can do for our children moving forward. And I agree with a lot of the statements that have been made. That's our future for our audiences, are sustaining our orchestras and all of the things that so many of us are involved in, but a future where our communities value the arts, where we have public support, private support, and we feel the support from all different sectors in the community. And seeing the arts as part of the business community, not this fluffy extra on the side, but really integral to our communities and definitely our school systems with arts integration and arts enhancement for the schools.

Speaker 10: In 20 years, we have absolutely solved the problem of health care for artists. Every artist that you know and everybody who wants access to arts and creativity fully has access to it. Society understands the power and the impact of arts on democracy and on every aspect of our lives. The White House has appointed an Arts Czar. The NEA is fully funded. The NEH is fully funded. But more importantly, our field is nimble. It is adjusting quickly to the pace of life and it is responsive to the needs of the community that we serve. That we are comfortable with change, and that we are a part of it. We have artists in residency in every foundation, every C-suite, every business. Arts are fully integrated into everyday life in a way that currently we can't imagine.

Speaker 11: I will definitely take up the invite to speak from the first person as an ambiguously brown queer kid from a lower-class family growing up in [Location]. Lots of mixed family, religion and ideas in my household, especially public education, were so important to me. Having free music was critical to me being able to find new communities, play the cello, and not just from the teachers who were there, the official teachers, but also neighbors who the arts were important to their life, but not necessarily their profession. And the theater training that I got as a young person in school helped me learn about new people, learn about history, that were beyond the world that I had just grown up in. So, I envision a world where, especially in the localities outside of the metropolitan, you can be a surviving artist with your healthcare, with being able to make a living. And also, I envision a world where people who don't necessarily think of themselves officially in the arts sector or arts professionals get to continue to cultivate their own artistry, that we all get to show up the artists within us, that that can be something that we call to. And that being a leader in the community, let's say running for office, saying that you're an artist is a real big plus, not just having

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a JD or an MBA, but saying that you're a working artist is something that we turn to in the ways that we lead.

Speaker 12: I'm the [Title] of [Organization] a small advocacy nonprofit in [Location]. And our focus is on K-12 education, so there's been a lot of great comments about education really grasping the arts as a core content area, as essential to education. I also just want to weave in that essential component of mental health for young people and how the arts are going to support young people from a mental health perspective going forward. And then I just wanted to lift up also the arts and cultural sector, really understanding beyond field trips and residencies, a different role for how they see K-12 education within their operations. I'm thinking about collaborative curriculum development with school districts, thinking about really embedding themselves within the school communities in different new and different ways that haven't been thought of before, and a for-profit and nonprofit structure that isn't always tearing each other down, but really working collaboratively to support a vast ecosystem of the arts that's fully integrated across all communities.

Speaker 13: I want this to happen sooner than 2045, but if I have to dream the long dream, then let's place it out there for the horizon line. I want the arts to be recognized as essential to public infrastructure, that artists are understood as thought leaders and change makers who transform culture by shaping how society understands itself in its future. We think it does that now. Apparently it does it in some places. I'm looking at Minneapolis, where I imagine that part of the big fight there is that there are people, they spend a lot of money per capita for their arts engagement. And so people feel like they have an understanding about humanity. We should all take notice. I want artists to operate with authority. I want funding to be structural and protected. I want artists to share and shape vision before policy. I want institutions to support circulation, not control. And I want another generation to lead from cultural clarity. I want to build a container so that they can take over. And whatever it is that their society needs in 20 years when I'm likely not going to be here, I want them to be able to do that because we've left a sturdy ground and a solid foundation for them to move forward from.

- **Speaker 14 (Facilitator):** If you want to make any comments about two weeks from now, two years from now, just want to invite you if there's anything else you want to add for more of the immediate future.
- **Speaker 13:** I want everything to happen right now and tomorrow. But I do I do feel like one of the things that can shift right away is that institutions start to think of their organizations and spaces to support the work of the artist, as opposed to just be a conduit for what they call the audience, which is really just a group of status quo people who can afford the tickets to come into their spaces. And I think part of that is connected to what [Speaker] said, is that we have to really, really begin to evaluate the nonprofit industrial

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system and to really look at whether or not that's serving our society as a whole. Because it doesn't seem to always be serving, because most institutions are more concerned about whether or not their donors are going to be in alignment with them. And rightfully so, because money doesn't grow on trees. And so the thing I'd love the most right now is that institutions support circulation and not control.

Speaker 15: I wanted to plus one on the notion that the arts should not be a standalone, that this should be just part of the fabric of everyday life. And that was said by a number of folks. But I also feel like there's a challenge for the sector internally. And that is a redefinition of what the arts are. And by that, I mean in 2045, I would love to see things like the world of gaming as part of the arts. Designing video games is an art form. By the way, the video game industry is larger than the movie and television industry combined. And those are artists that are divine. I think I would like to see us embrace that the arts are beyond music, beyond fine arts, and really kind of encompass so many other things that build creativity and build dynamics of thought.

Speaker 16: I don't want to repeat what everyone else has said already, but the theme that is arising is not wanting the arts to sit as peripheral to, or as icing on the cake, as somebody said. But I want to push that a little bit further and say, in choral music, we have 55 million people who sing in in the United States, which is an incredible number. And I think about the fact that there are so many people doing it, why don't we literally have a louder voice when it comes to the issues that are on the table? I think we've started to believe our own press, which is that we're not as important as some other things. And yet, the outcomes that I think so many sectors are looking for and not getting, we're actually getting. There are outcomes in the arts. There are stronger communities, better educational outcomes, all these things that have been documented, but there's sort of, there's no one clearinghouse for them and there's no one voice that speaks for the arts, which is a good thing, by the way. But as I envision 2045, I want our public support to be commensurate with the value and the outcomes that we're providing to the communities. I want there to be an arts lobby that can’t be ignored. I want our politicians to know that when the artists make an appointment or knock on their door or are coming for funding, that they're not going to stop. That's what I hope for.

Speaker 17: I'm coming from a different end of the spectrum as I'm thinking about how we're writing our future now, and I live in that institutional space of collecting and preservation, and we really need to protect against the cultural erasure of what's happening now, what's happened in our past, and how easily that's overridden if we don't invest in the structures for preservation and conservation of the cultural. So as the artists are producing, as we work across that continuum from creation, production to preservation, I envision a funding architecture that acknowledges that institutional practices that steward the public trust in perpetuity need to be funded in perpetuity,

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that this needs stable, sustainable resource proportionate to the scale of what's being asked of these institutions that are writing and preserving the cultural.

Speaker 18: I envision the development of a successful co-op model for the backbone of our nonprofit scenario here in [Location]. We're a small state. We have tons of nonprofits and they need support, back-office support, purchasing power, professional and board development. I'm looking at a model in Belgium that is doing amazing work. I think it's transferable here in [region]. Then I also wanted to take advantage of the political discussion, because in [State], issue-based campaigns have been successful on the ground here, getting the press and the campaigns and the candidates on the record before they're elected. I want that to be a powerhouse for arts and culture. [State] can be the laboratory to make the political difference in our country.

- **Speaker 14 (Facilitator):** Do you mind sharing the name of the organization in Belgium you were referring to?
- **Speaker 18:** It's called SMART, S-M-A-R-T.

Speaker 19: I'm speaking from the moment that we're having right now in [Location], which is really violent. Also, it's really disconcerting on lots of different levels. What I'm inspired by is how the community is coming together to fight for relief from what feels like very much an oppressive military takeover of our city. We have families or parents wrapping themselves around schools to prevent ICE going into schools so they don't shoot their kids. There's thousands of ICE vehicles roaming the streets and it's a real, real thing. So one of the things I'm thinking about right now, because I have to in real time, is the role that artists, arts organizations, and people who love the arts have to really be able to be resilient and respond to violence, harm, and trauma in any sort of given space and time, and what tools they need for that. And I sort of remember the days when our biggest issue was just thinking about audience development to get people to buy tickets for venues. I don't think that that is the reality right now for us in this city. Trying to think about how cities work and how power works and how community organizing and advocating together to demand from cities to change – not just funding, but funding is a big part of that – is a really important factor of understanding how arts get supported. I think that [Location] does have a lot of great systems where art is part of the DNA of our city. But there's a new kind of really urgent reality that's happening here that we're just trying to figure out and grapple with. But I'm struck by the fact that the artists and the people who love the arts are on the front lines right now fighting for that new reality. And I don't know what 2045 looks like, but I imagine that whatever systems involve people that every time that an arts event happens or a gathering happens, it reminds people and retrains people about how to love their city again or their community again.

Speaker 20: I come from the museum sector, so I am thinking a lot about cultural erasure. I came to these meeting also in thinking how collectively we can work. And I know it's a pretty ideal position,

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but in thinking about how our institutions should be in 2045: thought of as a bulwark for truth, a space for democracy, a space of convening, and how we are going to be able to go through what is happening and what we have to do right now so that in 2045 we can say that we have been that.

Speaker 1: I think the thing I wanted to drill down or lift up a little bit more was the idea of cross-sector collaboration and investment. We at [Organization] doing the work in [Location] as an intermediary and supporting practitioners and directors of programs, we have started the conversation around how other sectors like healthcare, the auto industry, architecture, whatever, any other industry outside of the traditional arts realm or ecosystem, how their investment would be obviously not only beneficial, but supportive of the work that we're doing, not just because we want them to, but because they should. They benefit greatly from the work of the arts. I don't think a lot of people in these other sectors feel that way, that they are indirectly or even directly receiving the residuals of all of this work that's happening by people who are well-developed, have sound mind, are critical thinkers, are creative thinkers, are innovators. All of these things are what these other for-profit entities are looking for in their workforce. The arts is what produces that. But they don't invest in it in a real way. There is investment, especially in [Location], from the Ford Foundation and all these other big foundations that are doing these big projects. But I don't think overall that other sectors, for-profit sectors, feel like it's their responsibility to support the arts. But they benefit greatly from it. I think in our future, I envision a world where every single sector is pouring resources, funding, support, putting an engine behind the development of particularly young people in the arts, because those are the folks that they're looking for to continue to innovate their work.

- **Speaker 18:** I love that. Where's the head of Airbnb? Why can't we reach out to somebody like that and say your profits, your business model is successful because people travel to go to a festival or a museum or try new wine or whatever the case may be. So perhaps as a positive, productive business and you want support your local arms and legs in the country, create a small 50 cents, a dollar a night investment that goes into a local arts fund or a rural arts fund or something where the local arts community can then reinvest that money and make sure people want to come back to that community.

Speaker 3: I'd be interested also in further conversations around this idea that we hear about a lot, that we need to change how the arts are looked at. I think that conversation has been going on for a long time about this feeling like we're always playing catch up or knocking on doors, trying to find the (CEO of) Airbnb's phone number. That feeling that we're always catching up, behind, knocking on the door. I think I've been really interested in a conversation about why that's not changing. And instead of just naming that we want it to change, identifying some concrete things that will happen to change it. Because we have data, we have talking points, we have meetings, and it's not changing, and it's not changed in the way that I think many of us want to see.

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Speaker 5: A lot of this conversation that we're having, so much of it we're often having is about getting attention, getting eyes on the arts and creative community, right? We have eyes on ourselves. We know how valuable we are. We understand that. I think maybe if there is an opportunity for us – I'm saying these words and I've been trying to figure out the best way in my world and in my practice to make this happen – for us to mobilize ourselves for our communities. So that question of where's Airbnb in this conversation is, how do we mobilize the creatives in our space to benefit the creatives in our space and to benefit the creative communities of the future in our space, period. I'm not wanting us to just look inward, but instead of constantly trying to get the attention of others to recognize our value, proclaim our value, utilize our value, and then move forward. Just continue to do so. It feels like we're continuously beating our heads up against a brick wall if we do not do that.

Speaker 10: Something that also occurs to me is even though I, myself, having participated in Ivy League education and been an attorney and worked in corporate structure and now in the nonprofit world, I'm also really curious as so many of our institutions are dissolving, exploding with violent, mendacious deaths. How are we also envisioning beyond these current systems of capitalism? I often hear, how do we get artists to be able to benefit more from the current structures of capitalism and income and corporate? I'm not opposed to that. That's also very important. Healthcare systems, et cetera. But are we also giving enough? I know many people are doing this. How are we also really investing in seed ideas for new models that go beyond just this capitalist extractive thing that we're all so caught in? How are we really continuing to give ourselves imagination? And I'm not saying that people aren't doing this, but that keeps coming up for me, not just how to get more of the apple of the sector model that we currently have, but also how do we actually give space to push beyond these models that we've currently inherited?

- **Speaker 13:** I completely agree with you that we kind of have to look within. Just thinking about the CEO of Airbnb or any of these other tech firms, having fundraised for a $44 million organization during the pandemic, I can tell you that most of the tech firms don't give a flying F about the arts. And they don't want to sit in the conversation and be convinced that it's something that's important. But we know that they know it's important, because otherwise, they wouldn't have supported the takeover of the Kennedy Center. We already know and they signaled it in these ways to make sure that we understand how important it is, right? I think, again, future casting, it's about convincing another generation of people that having a greater inquiry into how capitalism affects the arts, how people have bought into these notions that the arts sort of shift people's thinking and all of those things. None of that is real, right? Because if it was real, then we'd have a generation of people who were louder than the generation of people who were in these streets doing these terrible things to people in Minneapolis and other cities. We just have to be really conscious of who we're

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asking to involve ourselves with and the cost of that. And how are we going to teach another generation of people that we're still in this revolution and that people still have to stand up and they still have to fight the good fight and look for the right path to move down and convince other people to move down that path, which is actually what the arts does.

Speaker 21: This is such a great conversation and I live in the intersection of art and politics and as many of us do. There is so much money dumped into advertising to reach people. And there are so many people in the political space who have been completely frustrated by the waste of money that has been dumped into that model. We're talking in the billions of dollars. It is a very hot topic within the walls of funders inside of the democracy space on transitioning some of those dollars into more organic and authentic ways of reaching people. It is a very real possibility that if a group of organized people who represent organic ways of reaching people and their hearts and their minds came together and presented an alternative to that source of income, that that could be an available resource moved into our sector. I'm using this as an example. It's one sector that when we come up with and think about a unique way of tapping into more resources, we can. The challenge comes when we don't act or we don't have the body to collectively present to industry and to these revenue sources, easy pathways for investment and participation. Can they move those monies from point A to point B and get results? And is there a clear pathway for them to spend that money? Are we investable as a sector? We are absolutely investable in the granting universe of not offering very much back except for the beautiful democracy that people live inside of in a world full of successful humans and with great mental health and equitable access to all the things that make life wonderful. But that's not what they're looking for, right? There's a reason those tech organizations don't want to give us money. It's because they don't see a return for their investment in the way that that's what they're their thought process was. I want to offer that the idea of alternative means of massive amounts of resources are available to us, but it starts with us understanding where they are and being able to work together to target them and to actually move them. And when we did do that, as you know, the arts, 1% which is crazy that it's only found 1%, great success and scaling that across the country, industry by industry, government by government, local government and municipalities by municipalities. We have to identify these pockets of money and then have the kind of connections between us as leaders of organizations and activists and come together to attack these full on.

Speaker 1: [Speaker] what you said was so spot on about us being grantable versus investable. I love the thinking around that. But just thinking about Detroit in this context as a microcosm of this, that there needs to be a new pot of money that we create ourselves so that we aren't reliant on the whims of an administration. And the funding that we receive from federal dollars are not at the whim of whoever decides in that span of four years whether it's important or not. So there needs to be other resources that we identify – I heard somebody mention co-op – ideas around how we

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pool our money together or pool our resources together in order for everybody to be able to utilize that across the country and not everyone trying to pull from this one entity, from the NEA or from the government in any capacity, because it could change like it has.

Speaker 4: I'm just underscoring, just making sure when we move forward, we're not burying the definition of what we mean when we say the arts. That's a dangerous phrase because it has tended to mean institutional, nonprofit, resourced, cultural institutions. I know a lot of people actually troubled (by) that definition in this conversation, it's fantastic. But I think maybe just being aware that we have often defended a very narrow portion of the ecology in this work and any next chapter has to be open to any and all ways that people find and express and engage and disseminate and critique and discuss and preserve and steward human creative expression. I'm just putting a pin for myself that when I hear the arts, I tend to hear, oh, you mean the institutions of non-profit structure that have resources and governing boards and own facilities. That's not very important, but that's a tiny little sliver of what we're talking about.

- **Speaker 14 (Facilitator):** You should certainly know for the group that is assembled here in NY, we have talked frequently about how limiting descriptors like "the arts", or "sector", or "artist" really does not encompass the big tent I think that we're trying to pitch here.

Speaker 10: I would just say that we spend a lot of time thinking about organizational vibrancy and health, but the sector itself needs stewards beyond organizational work. A lot of organizations come to the table with their own mandates, campaigns, boards, constituents, but sometimes the larger movement that is the people who believe and understand that creativity is vital to human existence need to be engaged as a block, as an audience. And oftentimes when we only think about the individual organizations that are reaching into those communities, we aren't thinking about them as a whole. And so we need to identify where and how we can reach into that larger block. And build the infrastructure that's going to sustain that conversation above our individual organizations.

Group 12 Chat

1. I think the country is big enough for several different pathways and priorities – there is a space for political folks who need to align an administration and there is space for people to be advocating from the outside to change the system in significant ways (and more paths too).

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GROUP 13

Group 13 Transcript

Speaker 1: I envision a country in which we once again have a cultural center, a national cultural center that belongs to the people and celebrates the aesthetic of democracy which is variety, innovation, and diversity, among many other key things that we celebrate as a part of democracy in the arts. The reason why I think this is important is because thinking about what has happened to the Kennedy Center, if we think that freedom of expression is important, and we think that it is something that belongs to everyone, we deserve a place where we can celebrate that as an American people. As much [as those values are] important, it is also incredibly important to have a place. If Jimmy Kimmel is out there celebrating his First Amendment rights, then the Kennedy Center is the place for that exact same fight. I think that it is important to think about how we structure and scaffold getting back to a place where we can have a place like that again.

Speaker 2: My [organization's] mission and work is around creating a community of belonging for youth, with a mission to remove financial barriers to arts education and training in creative careers. I envision a society in 20 years that embraces the arts as an essential part of humanity, and in order to do that, are accessible in every format, whether it's education, experiencing performance or pursuing careers as artists or in creative industries. Right now, there's an elitism to that ability to pursue professionalism or professional life in the arts because it requires a financial safety net that a lot of young people don't have because we do not [compensate] artists in the way that you need to be compensated to live in this world. We don't provide tracks to careers that don't require an intensive four-year college experience that is out of reach for many, many people. Right now, immigrant families and communities are hearing very loudly and clearly that they do not belong in this country. I envision a country where that is not the case. And instead, the arts are a place for them to express the fullness of their cultures and as they relate to their artistic expression, their self-expression, and in meshing with other cultures. I believe [this is how] our country is meant to be. I think what matters in a tactical way is funding. I envision our sector, arts at large, not just arts education, finding the way to fund what we do in a sustainable fashion. I think that's being tugged at in all directions, the threads are being pulled out, and I envision us working together to remit the funding environment to sustain arts as essential in our country.

Speaker 3: [I believe] we need to do our own homework. We need to fix the systemic problems we have. While I completely embrace the decentralized system that we have in the US for cultural policy and creation, production, and presentation of the work, the risk of a decentralized system is the fragmentation that we're experiencing now. Ideally, we would have a cultural governance that is

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coordinated across the sector, that is not only civil society, but government and philanthropy. We all understand our roles and our responsibilities towards the system and that we do it through a common agenda where there's accountability and civic participation with real decision-making power. That's important because it improves the way that we're going to deliver the service to our communities and society. We're going to align the policy with the living needs of the people and communities that we serve. And of course, it reduces uncertainty and makes us so much better in how we work and we measure the impact of our work.

Speaker 4: I envision a national commitment to a model of integrated arts/ wellness/ culinary centers that operate in service to their communities, without paid admission as a barrier to entry. I realize fully that this is a very privileged position to be in. I'm not charging for tickets, so it doesn't matter if we're presenting Taylor Mac and Renee Fleming or an emerging artist. Everything is free to everyone who is registered. We are for students, both undergrad and graduate, faculty, and staff, and most significantly members of the [local] community and beyond. So, I envision this model, and I envision a philanthropic sector that recognizes the importance of such a model and making it sustainable.

Speaker 5: I've been in the field especially around classical music for 25 years. I envision a couple of things. I envision an industry that makes pathways for more arts professionals. I envision that the youth that are right now in ballet and in choruses at 7 and 8 years old will consider the arts as a professional career. A lot of us started there. I want society to make it viable for many of those people that have interest in the arts at a very young age to follow those paths. I envision a world, a more analog world where art is experienced in communities and next to each other, and we can be next, feel the vibration of the music in our bodies. I do believe, I'm saying yes and, I believe digital is very important, but there is a sense of community that is missing when we only think of, oh, what I can see in another country where there is actually an organization near you that is performing, that has artists that need that, and we want that audience vibrating in those spaces. And spaces that could be very different than just a theater. It could be a non-proscenium space, non-traditional spaces of art. And lastly, I envision a way to diversify the funding, that we don't rely as much on philanthropy or even government, that there are other models of investments into the cultural sector that are profitable for all people involved.

Speaker 6: I envision our sector being powered by organizational structures that go completely beyond the traditional sort of nonprofit structure. And I feel like we, as leaders, ought to be able to easily move between entrepreneurship, philanthropy, and we figure out structures and sort of organisms that will support that. Why I think that it's important is I've been in hundreds of convenings over my nonprofit career and it always just boils down to, we need money and spaces and the liberation that comes from having resources.

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Speaker 7: My central concern is sustainability and finding models that, for lack of a better word, build a bigger pie while we recognize that we are both responsible and connected to each other and that we cannot each go it alone. So, I'd add a corollary to what I said about the bigger pie, that each of us recognizes our responsibility and that I'd rather have a smaller piece of a bigger pie than a whole loaf of nothing. I think there is an important role to build bigger constituencies of support when most arts organizations are still so dependent on the government and private foundations, when 85%, or somewhere around there, of all philanthropy in America is individual, and we don't have the capacity to build capacity to increase individual giving. We need to recognize, and so many of them are in this assembly today, anchor institutions have such a key role to play in creating the larger ecosystem. We can't fight large against small, but we must figure out how to leverage might for right, as it were.

Speaker 8: My vision is to create a more just art museum sector by 2030. There's more I can say about that at some point if it's useful to talk about these structures. Because we're a new organization and we've also sort of baked in a sunset for ourselves, we've been really thinking and experimenting a lot with these different governance models, but also the structures within our organization, which won't last forever. I have a lot to say about other financial models, but for the sake of this initial prompt, I'll just share that I envision, at a very basic level, just moving zooming way out, a really just a diverse ecosystem with arts and culture institutions at all the different scales. Because I think, like many other industries and other sectors, we're seeing a middle falling out, which is true in our sector as well. Just to have that diversity of organizations in arts and culture that reflect, honestly, the immense beauty and range of human experience, creation, et cetera. But within this ecosystem, I really envision a thriving workforce where every worker earns a livable wage. I think this is important because I believe that art is essential, full stop. And that this thriving ecosystem I'm imagining really is simply not possible without a sustainable workforce, a stable workforce, really, to sustain it.

Speaker 9: I envision in 2045 that most of us will not be in positions that we're sitting in now, stewarding resources and networks, because in 2045 there'll be a greater need for arts and culture to be ingrained in daily human life, to create purpose as we continue to move into an automated world. And I envision that we'll have an even greater need for networks of care for our artists and for the members of our creative workforce.

Speaker 10: My vision for 2045 is that we're deep, deep into the reconstruction of the nation, laws and norms, which includes and is led by a cultural revolution that reorders the super entrenched geographic, economic, and racial silos of our nation in a super generative way and draws creative talent innovation from all parts of society and produces wholly new sustainable models for the arts, aesthetic forms that can sustain and represent a multiracial democracy that is reconstructed. And

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so, it's both the arts are the engine, but also it is the larger reconstruction of the nation that allows the arts model to be reconstructed and rethought too.

Speaker 11: I envision a greater or let me say a smaller over-representation of whiteness in the leadership and management of the field, and a greater recognition of a culture beyond what we might think of as classic in the Western European sense. I also wanted to say that I really appreciate the conversations that have come up about financial models and equitable philanthropy and ways of thinking about resources, which I would also say need to be beyond thinking about balance sheets or social constructions, right? And we put what we value on them, which is more transactional, but a lot of the cultural sector functions relationally. And I'm not saying that that's always good. That's adaptive behavior because of lack of resources in some cases, but it's also good. I mean, the way in which community has hidden assets and values that we need to be conscious about. I think this is important because there are some functional hegemonies across the field that would be helpful to interrogate and perhaps revisit how we're structured and make sure that power is less asymmetrical than it is now.

Speaker 12: It's so encouraging to see that we are not alone. I think part of what I'm envisioning is that awareness that we are not alone. Also that the difficult conversations that need to be had can be had with a lot of courage and grace, both in our teams, in our community, the engagement of the art sector. (I think that) sustainability (concerns apply) not only for artists and organizations, but also for staff, where in our sector burnout is not assumed to be the norm, maybe the exception. That training and support for those up-and-coming arts organizations and staff are available and accessible and made aware that this is even a thing that you can do with your life. And also that I think for the audiences that we are reaching (is) that fear is not the baseline and it is not also a norm for teachers who are bringing books into schools, and for children who are trying to find books that represent them, and for artists who are unwilling or unable to travel to certain regions in our country just because of certain things. And so that also becomes part of our ethical conversations in a future, hoped-for way that doesn't need to be defaulting to a baseline concern about safety in the ways that it has very quickly become in the last few years. And that as we are connecting, that we are rethinking and re-evolving our own thinking and processes, and that we are also able to feel confident and nimble as the years progress. And as our own experiences progress in passing along information and thinking about longevity for our own selves, for our communities and organizations, and for a hundred years, not just for 20.

Speaker 13: In looking out 20 years, I think the sector must take some significant reality checks and change their perspective on funding structures. I think that there are a lot of barriers in place around sustainability that need to be handled. And the loss of the sort of fourth estate in arts journalism, you know, we talk about demand and whether people are still interested in dance. Are people still

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interested in ballet? And the answer is yes, but I think we're in a scenario where the fragmentation that we've seen across the board of organizations, of journalism, of press, the lack of funders addressing some of these issues in a meaningful way, we've created a situation where ultimately in an algorithmically driven discovery world, it's not that the arts have disengaged from society, but that they can't operate within the algorithms that determine our options when we are looking to spend time, money, and focus on an activity. As long as there is no national infrastructure in place to support this, this is going to continue to be a problem. The other thing is, in terms of digital and accessibility and all of that, what I think also needs to frame part of this conversation is that the US's own kind of abandonment on a policy level, on a national level of digital and technology when compared to the rest of the world. I've been involved in projects supported by Arts Council, with Arts Council England, Canada Council, the Dutch, with governments around Europe. And in 15 years, I don't think I've seen a single meaningful project come out of the US in terms of digital capacity or skill building. These are hard conversations that need to be had in terms of mission, scope, audience. But these are conversations that if we're looking 20 years in the future, maybe this will be a kicking-off point. But it can't just be about funding structures, if you're not doing the skill building, internal capacity audits. So, I think there's a big question of, if you're going to look 20 years in advance, what can be done today? What can be done tomorrow?

Speaker 14: I envision in 2045 a robust network of local and regional mutual aid networks that exist alongside national infrastructure. And the reason why is because I think while we must acknowledge that we exist within a capitalist economy, I think that there are also lots of things that we can learn about access to resources and shared resources from other community grassroots organizations that are building structures alongside and outside of that economy. And I think that there are ways that the arts can benefit from that as well.

Speaker 15: I envision that in 2045 that when we have these big collective conversations that we're looking outside and beyond ourselves, to the power and the opportunities and the experiences that we're creating for people and for communities, and less needing to look internally at our own challenges and needs.

Speaker 16: I think as I'm listening to all the things that we're envisioning from our place of scarcity and from our US perspective, it's so hard to envision a place of abundance where we're talking about, yes, mutual aid societies, mutual aid facilities. This makes sense in a society where the arts aren't valued as a social good and funded by the government. I just think that while the EU is not perfect in the way that it funds the arts in any way, shape, and form, we don't have to start from scratch. There is so much work that's already been done. If you want to know what budgets need to look like, if we want to know what programs work and what doesn't work, there's so many years of work and examples that have been done in other countries that we just have to understand that

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there's examples everywhere, there's models, there's research, it's been done, and it applies to our situations. And whether you're looking at art as a social good or whether you're looking at art as a means of sustainable development, or if you're looking at art as a [human] right, all of this has been elaborately worked on internationally. We can just bring that here. We don't need to start from scratch.

Speaker 17: I don't envision a future for the arts that relies on the government. Where more government funding is the answer. I respect that that exists and works in other countries and have honestly been jealous of it for most of my life living in the US. But I don't think that that's the answer for me. I think that when I envision a sector that is just more creative, honestly, it's about our fundraising model. We're creative about a lot of other things. We're all obviously tackling the same exhausting cycle of old school philanthropy. But meanwhile, especially in America, which is [a different funding environment] than in other countries, there isn't a lack of capital. And so, I really want to envision and believe in our ability to unlock that capital, which has to do with the hearts and minds thing, but it has to do with how we articulate things. And it also has to do with mechanical things that are technically and financially possible that I just feel like we never have the time to think about or try because we're too busy. And the cycles trying to submit our grants, you know what I mean? So, when I imagine 2045, I [project forward to a future where] we have cracked that nut and we have unlocked some of the capital just by working together and frankly, just getting outside of our own old school way of doing things. Maybe the government has a role to play, but I'm [saying this to] spur some disagreement.

- **Speaker 1:** I think that we're witnessing the scary part of what it means to have more government support of the arts right now. And that gives us all great pause. And at the same time, I think that these two ideas might just live in tension with one another and that there are things that we can do to help them sustain one another. How can we build a structure or scaffold a structure that allows for more government support (without that becoming) a threat. And that is something that Hands Off the Arts is working on, at least in the small framing of what is the National Cultural Center. How do we go about taking that out of political hands and making it truly for (the benefit of the) individual people of the country. So I think that there's a way to do both, but I really appreciate what you're saying on both sides.

Speaker 4: It really took me about 15, 20 years to get to that point in my career, (to realize) that there is so much untapped government money (out there for new cultural infrastructure), and most of us don't know how to access it. We actually ended up, it took three years, but the city that I worked in ended up putting a line item of a million dollars to help fund our building on an annual basis, and it wasn't necessarily in perpetuity. And granted, it took an incredible amount of advocacy

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and passion and pressure, but it did ultimately happen and the money was there. And of course, I was very curious to know, well, how do you get into that budget? How do you become a line item? So, I think there's a lot of education that we need on how to access some of this untapped funding, especially for politicians who are quite passionate about the arts.

Speaker 16: I wanted to lift up the great conversation about government funding and different models. I wanted to lift from my perspective and from my place, the voices of small and rural communities and how much capital we have, (when) oftentimes (access to funding) can become inequitable and (operate in favor of) larger cities and larger communities. Oftentimes we find at our arts commission the opportunity to reach very small communities. So, I just want to lift small communities in that (discussion) and the opportunities they have to access government funding.

Group 13 Chat

1. https://www.unesco.org/creativity/en/1980-recommendation-concerning-status-artist

2. Recognizing current challenges and opportunities of the decentralized system in which we operate – one that shapes the creation, production, and presentation of culture and arts – while directly confronting the profound and pervasive fragmentation that undermines its effectiveness. By 2045, cultural governance is coordinated across the sector. Government, philanthropy, and civil society acknowledge their distinct roles and obligations within a shared ecosystem. They share a common agenda, enforce accountability mechanisms, and sustain civic participation through real decision-making power. This matters because it improves service delivery, aligns policy with the lived needs of people and communities, reduces uncertainty, and strengthens the sector's ability to plan strategically and measure impact over time.
    a. Access to capital and sustainable business / creative models is important. Having a financial vocabulary and literacy and a clear philanthropic strategy that is equitable is important.

3. These are the two UNESCO instruments that I am suggesting provide an international legal framework for many (but not all!) of the ideas you are all expressing here. 1980 Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist: https://www.unesco.org/creativity/en/1980-recommendation-concerning-status-artist, Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions: https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/convention-protection-and-promotion-diversity-cultural-expressions.I also think that the German Commission For UNESCO's 2024 project, the Fair Culture Charter, is a fascinating and extremely useful way to envision the

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intersectionality of issues related to the mission for fairness in the global cultural sector: https://www.fair-culture.org/

4. https://culturalfoundation.eu/

5. Break the annual gov't funding cycle with three-year funding cycles.
    a. I am intrigued by steering from the current funding model. How do we activate the capital when it is so largely self-interested? How do we make it of self-interest to the holders of capital?
    b. Yes, to abundance in its many forms (and to learning from folks who operate outside our scarcity-minded structures)

6. One article about foundation total asset management: https://carlz.substack.com/p/notes-from-an-all-in-foundation-president-e4c

7. Other countries have a heritage of state support, whereas in the US, a culture of private philanthropy predominated. My own view is that philanthropy – with all its limitations – has served as a kind of steam valve for democracy. Even if the current regime's actions demanding ideological "purity" challenge that model/belief.

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