

Solidaire Arts & Social Justice Circle Description

Fall 2023

Description:

'Art is our weapon. Culture is a form of resistance.' - Shirin Neshat

A group of us who fund Arts & Social Justice have come together as we've noticed that progressive donor spaces have trouble integrating arts & culture work with social justice giving. Traditionally, these worlds have been bifurcated in philanthropy, and treated as separate and unrelated funding areas. We want to challenge this notion, and instead build awareness of how integrated, interconnected, and strategic arts & culture work are to social movement-building over the long term.

The circle will be a self-organized space for folks already funding arts and SJ, or folks interested in funding arts & SJ, to talk, build community and find shared interests around work we're already doing. We will also build tools and frameworks to level up our ability and comfort-level in organizing new donors and foundations to integrate arts & culture with social justice giving strategies. Come build community with other Solidaire members who share a passion for the beautiful intersection of arts and social justice work, who want to increase that connection in Solidaire and beyond!

Who is this for?

Solidaire members (individuals + institutions) who:

- Are already funding arts and/or social justice work in their giving but seek to do so more significantly or strategically in the future
- Are interested in integrating your arts funding with your SJ giving.
- Are interested in raising the visibility of Arts & SJ work in Solidaire and philanthropy more broadly

What is the format?

The first 2 sessions will be focused on getting to know each other, our roles/interest in arts and social justice work, and building a shared understanding of how arts & SJ work can be mutually connected and reinforcing funding strategies. Together, we'll respond to questions like:

- What is our role and interest in the intersection of arts and social justice?
- What is our shared analysis of how/where the field is currently resourced?
- What narratives around the role of art in social justice work need to be challenged or reframed?

The following 2 sessions will be opportunities for circle members to co-lead & co-design sessions or conversations around areas of arts & SJ work that are significant to them. These sessions could: respond to challenges identified in initial meetings; dive deeper into particular regional contexts of arts/SJ work; share new and promising initiatives for funding arts and culture; or identify larger policy goals that would bring greater equity and sustainability to the sector. If you're interested in co-designing a session for this latter half of the circle, please contact Prerana Reddy & Alex Haber - prerana6@gmail.com & alex@taorising.org.

The final two meetings will be integration sessions to explore potential individual, coordinated, or collective next steps towards better resourcing arts & culture, and potentially, an offering for the broader Solidaire community.

Overview of Possible Sessions:

- Session 1: *Introductions - Who Are We? What's Our Stake in Arts, Culture & Movement Work?*
- Session 2: *Beyond the Divide: How Arts/Culture Work & Movement Work Are Integrated & Intersecting*
- Session 3: *Member-Led Session 1*
- Session 4: *Member-Led Session 2*
- Session 5 & 6: *Integration & Charting a Path Forward - Advocating for Arts/Culture & Movement work in Solidaire & Beyond*

Timeline:

All sessions will be on Wednesdays 12-2 PT/1-3 MT/2-4 CT/3-5 ET. Dates are as follows.

Session 1 Wednesday November 15th

Session 2 Wednesday December 13th

Session 3 Wednesday January 10th

Session 4 Wednesday January 31st

Session 5 Wednesday February 21st

Session 6 Wednesday March 13th

Participants are expected to sign up for the full slate of sessions (though it's okay if you have to miss 1 session), as we're using a cohort model and want to build consistency with each other. There is no cost for joining this circle for Solidaire members.

Facilitator Bio's



Prerana Reddy (she/her) is currently the Artist & Community Fellow at Recess Art in Brooklyn, an abolitionist arts space that welcomes radical and innovative thinkers to imagine new systems of community safety, care, and resilience. Recess also organizes Assembly, an arts- and somatics-based diversion program for systems impacted young adults. In 2022, she participated in the Create Time Think Tank on decolonization strategies for cultural organizations, as well as the Creatives Rebuild New York Think Tank that helped establish the process for distributing funds through both guaranteed income and employment strategies for 2,700 artists across New York State. Prior to that, she was the Director of Programs at A Blade of Grass, which supports socially engaged artists nationally through funding, independent research, and content creation. From 2004-2016, she was the Director of Public Programs and Community Engagement at the Queens Museum of Art, where in addition to organizing their screenings, performances, discussions, and community-based collaborative programs and exhibits both on and offsite, she developed an intensive arts and social justice program for immigrant youth as well as a community development initiative for new immigrants in Corona, Queens.



Alex Haber (he/him) has fifteen years of experience in philanthropy at both local and national organizations and brings a learning-oriented and trust-based approach to his work with donors and grantees. As philanthropy advisor at Tao Rising, a single-family philanthropy office in San Francisco, he leads the philanthropy advisory group, managing a team of staff and consultant advisors to help family members hone their values and implement giving strategies. He has worked with the family to launch new initiatives supporting regenerative agriculture, migrant justice, and cultural self-determination, overseeing over \$18M in grants in 2022. In his previous position as philanthropic advisor at RSF Social Finance from 2013-2019, he worked with clients to more than double annual grantmaking during his tenure and helped to found the Pawanka Fund, a participatory funder collaborative supporting indigenous self-determination around the globe. Prior to RSF, he held positions in the program department at San Francisco Foundation and in grants management at Tides and served as the steering committee chair for the Bay Area chapter of Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy. Alex was a 2018-2019 Just Economy Institute Fellow.



Willa Conway (she/her) Willa is a co-founder of The Weavers Project, a multidisciplinary feminist organization that bridges arts and culture, movement building, and resource mobilization, providing funding Black feminist Southern artists. Over the last 11 years, Willa has developed and facilitated campaigns and donor education programs with Solidaire Network, Resource Generation and Shakti Rising that hold feminism, arts and culture, transformation and sustainable leadership development at the center. Willa believes that it's hard to move anything into action without experiencing it in the body as well as the mind and strives to create work that creates that integration. As a resident of New Orleans, LA and Ellijay, GA, Willa is invested in building sustainable infrastructure to support artists and cultural workers within a changing political and environmental system. Currently,

she is collaborating with various New Orleans and Southern based arts organizations and artists residencies to create a network of evacuation cooperatives that connect and build solidarity between Gulf Coast residents and land stewards in the South. Willa is a dancer, writer, and textile artist.