

CENTER FOR

LIBRATORY

WEAVING OUR VALUES & PRACTICES

PRACTICE

& POETRY

Center Weavers, Denise Shanté Brown, Lukaza Branfman-Verissimo,
Lizania Cruz, Kearra Amaya Gopee, Katie Giritlian, Lo, Georgia McCandlish,
and Malcolm Peacock, in conversation with Kimi Hanauer and Luz Orozco



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Co-Authored by Center Weavers

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Co-Authored by Center Weavers

THANK YOUS & CREDITS



ONE OF MANY CENTERS

ONE OF MANY CENTERS

A note from Kimi Hanauer, Center Steward

The Center for Liberatory Practice & Poetry is a nomadic and virtually-based education center that gathers a community of learners around ways of being, sensing, and making that enact liberation in everyday life. The Center is an attempt at building a nimble, reflexive, and fluid organizational structure: one that has emerged from and continues to be transformed by its relationships. It's conceived of as an organism that is born, lives and will eventually die. The slow process of initiating this project began in 2020 as a way of honoring the fruits and dreams that have emerged through the personal and collective cultural work I have engaged in alongside many friends, family, and community members [1] and specifically several collectively-authored projects I was involved with during the first two years of the ongoing pandemic. These include *Toolkit for Cooperative, Collective, and Collaborative Cultural Work* co-published by Press Press and Institute for Expanded Research; *Poetry for Persistence* co-organized by Press Press and Printed Matter; and *bless our breath* which I organized in collaboration with Gas. These projects gathered practitioners across Turtle Island who shared essential insights, practices, conversations, artworks, and poetry that became a foundation for this Center-in-process to grow.

In the essay, "Theory as Liberatory Practice," bell hooks speaks to the function of theory as a medium that can intentionally be made liberatory, healing, and revolutionary. [2] hooks' work on the liberatory potential of education has been integral to the initiation of the Center. In the spirit of her teachings, the Center emphasizes the seemingly mundane interactions of

our everyday lives as sacred openings for liberatory practice. It's an invitation to explore liberatory practices in each of our worlds; to trace and unsettle the bodily, social, spiritual, and political borders that have produced sites of dispossession; and, ultimately, to deepen our landscapes of belonging. [3]

The Center is a way of holding space for the perpetually unfinished and unresolved work of liberatory practice and poetry, while intentionally leaving that work open to many others to be remade, reinterpreted, and decentralized across various contexts. This aim requires that we, those who constitute the Center, move beyond presumed boundaries of individual and collective authorship, and instead ask: *What are the anchors of autonomous and liberated communities? What do genuine relations of solidarity require? How do we practice life-sustaining mutual aid and poetry in everyday life?*

While there is much to learn and share, stewardship of the Center thus far has been guided by the understanding that our commitment to recognizing the inherent value in ourselves and others of our pasts, presents, and futures as living beings offers us one initial ground. I hope you'll join us in asking: *How do liberatory practices take shape in your life?*

[1] Specifically, the deep relationships I have been lucky to foster through Press Press, an interdisciplinary publishing initiative I co-organize with Bilphena Yahwon, Lo, Vale Cabezas, as well as many others who flow in and out of the work.

[2] hooks, bell. "Theory as Liberatory Practice." *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. (London: Routledge, 1994), 59–75.

[3] While widely used, I first heard the term landscapes of belonging used in the context of Ella Shohat's teachings. For example, she narrates her own relationship to 'home' and 'belonging' in the interview, *Forget Baghdad: Arabs and Jews, the Iraqi Connection* with Naeim Giladi and Ella Shohat that took place as part of *Anywhere But Now: Landscapes of Belonging* in the Eastern Mediterranean conference and publication.

PROCESS: GATHERING (AS) GRAMMAR

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A note on this process from Center Weavers, Denise Shanté Brown, Lukaza Branfman-Verissimo, Lizania Cruz, Kearra Amaya Gopee, Katie Giritlian, Lo, Georgia McCandlish, Malcolm Peacock, in collaboration with workshop facilitators, Kimi Hanauer and Luz Orozco

Values & Practices is a collectively sourced and living set of agreements. It invites those of us who gather through the Center to ground ourselves in our visions for autonomous and liberated communities. They are meant to be drafted and redrafted every year of the Center's life, with contributions and insights from folks who are part of the Center's community. In sharing this inaugural iteration, we hope you'll join us in naming and practicing liberatory ways of being and working, both within and beyond our emerging Center for Liberatory Practice & Poetry.

The publication we produced includes four parts from a collaborative process between the Center's inaugural team of Weavers. [4] "Slowness is the Movement" and "How do we hold space for Tragedy? In that holding, Who do we Become?" share excerpts from the conversations that our *Values & Practices* emerged from. "Values" offers a vision for how we might gather with one another and "Practices" offers an initial list of resources that have shaped our understanding of the values we propose and prepares us to enact them.

These ideas were developed during a Zoom workshop and a phone call in February 2022 that

gathered the Center's inaugural team of Weavers. The workshop was designed to center contributors' lived experiences as case studies through which a collective political framework may emerge. Our conversations were guided by several questions:

What embodied knowledge, emotional sensibilities, and intuitions offer us guidance in moments of interpersonal tension, conflict, and uncertainty?

What embodied knowledge, emotional sensibilities, and intuitions offer us necessary grounding and moments of joy, pleasure, warmth, relief, and calm?

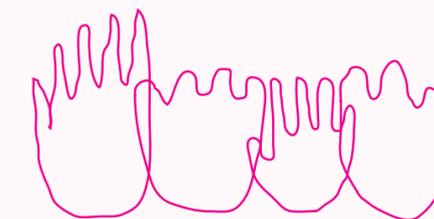
What values do we embody that we struggle with or even desire to unlearn?

What values exist in us that we have yet to give language to?

Who are the people, plants and places shaping what matters to us the most?

The initial conversations that took place were transcribed, synthesized, and edited for clarity throughout the Spring and Summer of 2022. With these values and practices, we are initiating the process of bringing the Center into being. We hope you'll join us in crafting the next iteration.

[4] Weavers is a term defined by Deepa Iyer and Building Movement Project's *Social Change Ecosystem Map*. Learn more at: buildingmovement.org/tools/social-change-ecosystem-map



“
SLOWNESS
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”

“SLOWNESS IS THE MOVEMENT”

The following is an excerpt from the discussion that birthed Values & Practices, which took place on February 19, 2022. Weavers, Denise Shanté Brown, Lukaza Branfman-Verissimo, Lizania Cruz, Kearra Amaya Gopee, Katie Giritlian, Lo, and Georgia McCandlish, sat in conversation with workshop facilitators, Kimi Hanauer and Luz Orozco.

Lukaza: I think it was Katie who brought this up, bodily intuition of pausing to ensure capacity to support others. I just wanted to add to that: slowness and continued ways of showing up. Thinking about how do we center pause to think about doing this work for the long haul, whatever that looks like?

Kimi: What does pause mean? Like, how would we define that?

Katie: I think it can mean different things. I have been learning to listen to my body when that moment happens. In a collective I’m a part of, when we were starting to do projects that didn’t match up with our capacity, when I feel that misalignment, I feel a desire to pause. That [desire] can sometimes cause a feeling of fear or paralysis. So...there’s something [in] my body asking to pause. The value here is seeking more time for thoughtfulness, nurturing, time for rest, and to ensure that the work can happen and sustain. There needs to be time for showing up for it. We also talked about practices for creating time to check in with our bodies.



Lizania: I think the idea of pause relates to the idea of checking in, how do you understand the feeling as information? Does it come from a trigger of trauma or an actual

feeling? If we allow ourselves to have this moment of pause, maybe that’s a way of checking in and dissecting the information.

Katie: I was also reflecting on what values does pause have that I wish to exit from? Perfection or hoarding a process and not inviting a group in, like wanting to think something through before inviting folks in. So I wanted to also name those things that I want to exit from as well.

Denise Shanté: I really appreciate the question of *how do you understand feeling as information?* This is related to a practice I shared where, in asking yourself a series of questions, [when] there’s something you’re really contemplating or holding, and responding with only *uh-huh* or *uh-uh*. Only using those words with their simplicity, you’re tapping into that child intuition, without overthinking or over-analyzing. My experience of using this practice was connected to an intimate relationship I was trying to decide if I needed to end. When I was going through that practice and holding my belly in my home space, literally pacing around in my living room. I really really wanted to hear a yes, but I kept hearing *uh-uh, uh-uh, uh-uh, uh-uh*, and the resistance that comes with that, the pain that comes in that process. Moving from what I desired to what I really knew my body and heart needed in that moment.

Kearra: Is there a term for when a person is reluctant to step into their own personhood? After a long period of time where their needs have had to be minimized? And what does that transition look like? I feel like this is something that has been popping around a lot. And my brain wants to compartmentalize this into a term.

Lizania: I’m not sure if this is a term, maybe this is too intellectual. I have been rereading *Venus in Two*

Acts by Saidiya Hartman and she talks about the “free state” as when you’re actually free. We talked about liberation and freedom, but I honestly don’t know what that feels like in the body, yet. I have been thinking a lot about this term that she [Hartman] puts out. And in relation to – in my work, I have been thinking about the construction of the nation-state – and so, how do those two things feel in relation to one another: the free state of the body and the self versus the free state in which we are overall controlled? That’s something that has been resonating a lot as I have been thinking about unlearning these patterns.

Georgia: I have been thinking about some similar things too, starting a grad program for legal studies and reading about some of the first law codes in ancient Sumer and just what a different notion of an “individual” has been at different points in time. In terms of organizing ourselves around, like, even an idea of being a “free individual,” which is something that could be argued to come from the presence of something like a state that takes the role of a very ineffective caretaker and turns it into a stranger’s infrastructure. I was thinking a lot about what is a feeling that is liberation? And does it even have anything to do with being an individual? Or is it actually about being so deeply woven together with others that your choices and paths are informed by one another so explicitly and in such an interreliant way? And how do we do that when we live in such a density that we have a lot of stranger contact? That’s something that has been coming up for me. If you are ever doing organizing for liberation work, we want to know what it feels like, we don’t really know. Maybe some people do.

We talked about liberation and freedom, but I honestly don't know what that feels like in the body, yet...in my work, I have been thinking about the construction of the nation-state – and so, how do those two things feel in relation to one another: the free state of the body and the self versus the free state in which we are overall controlled?

Katie: These questions make me think about Luz’s question of what are the settings that we need to listen to our bodily intuitions?

Luz: I asked that question in reference to feeling like I was able to tap more into my intuition and trust myself more once I was able to have a deeper connection to land and this earth. To feel the interconnectedness outside of just myself. I was thinking about what do I need around myself in my environment and my setting to feel fully present and feel fully grounded? I am someone who has a hard time connecting with my intuition in that way. I definitely feel like I have learned more lessons by gardening and being out in nature. Once I was able to listen outside of myself, that taught me to listen within myself.

Kimi: I’m reminded of what a friend of mine, Jenné Afiya, said years ago in the very first conversation we hosted at Press Press at our former storefront. It was a brainstorm around what could happen in that space, actually not too dissimilar from the intention around this process. I remember Jenné talking about this similar thing of like, wanting to know what liberation feels like and not knowing. But also saying something about how there is a fear around imagining what a world without oppression would be like, without domination, because that’s also what is most familiar. Imagining that something else could be a reality is also in and of itself scary. I have been sitting with that conversation recently and it’s coming to mind in response to our discussion today.

Georgia: It’s funny to think about these questions in my state of freaked-out-ness and overwhelm, because it’s a process of maturing for someone like me who was socialized as a girl to try to learn the skills to feel your own yeses and nos. In the direct wake of a very hard and traumatizing event, I can’t feel any of that. I can only – I basically feel like I am relying on my kin group to help me do it right now. Partially because the embodiment part is pretty overwhelming. And partially because there is almost a physical hierarchy that happens. Part of your body is so busy with one thing that you can’t really feel the rest of it. It’s hinging on

how not even individual we are, how close the space is between you and others.

Lo: What do we do in community when, as Georgia said, some of us cannot embody fully, be present fully, spiritually, mentally, emotionally? What are the practices that are in place to alleviate the pressure and the guilt that comes with not being able to show up in the ways we want to show up? We can’t always be bright and healthy and energetic, it’s not possible. We are all going to have certain days where we will be flat out dead and don’t actually want to be in community or talk to people that much. When that happens, it’s not in any way dissociation or distancing, it’s actually just part of the process. It should be accounted for as part of the process.

What does it look like when that kind of understanding and caretaking of each other is practiced? Where you feel like you can be part of the work even when you can’t be fully present? It makes me feel like, at different periods of time with Press Press, all of us have had those moments of like, “I really can’t engage in this right now, I need time off.” And all of us always come back from it, and being like, “I’m so sorry, I love you guys, I’m so sorry for not answering texts.”

There’s always that kind of guilt that is attached to it. How do we alleviate that from

I was thinking a lot about what is a feeling that is liberation? And does it even have anything to do with being an individual? Or is it actually about being so deeply woven together with others that your choices and paths are informed by one another so explicitly and in such an interreliant way?

each other while also making sure that we can come back from whatever space it is that we needed to be in?

Kearra: What Lo is saying is making me excited because I was just thinking, why is it that we skip a few steps when we are trying to understand our feelings? What would it look like to cope with the fact that we actually may not feel it [liberation] at this time? What does it look like to set up the groundwork for someone else to feel it [liberation]? And what Lo is describing feels very much tied to that. How do we set up contingency plans for each other? Contingency plans for care? Thinking about ability and disability too. How do we create a foundation for feeling as opposed to getting into feeling itself? Also thinking about a different relationship to time: certain things have to be happening concurrently. And certain things will not be felt by us. But we work to see it felt by other people.

Denise Shanté: There's this quote, I'm not sure if you all are familiar with Alta Starr from Generative Somatics. They talked about cultivating the self and embodied transformation, and I asked that question because of our topic. I have been finding myself in too much of a headspace. I love reflection questions. But I have also been thinking: What does it mean to reflect from a body-centered place? One of the quotes from the essay Alta Starr wrote, they say, "...aliveness itself, if we choose the hard and sometimes scary work of coming home with awareness to our bodies, will nourish our visions of wholeness as well as our work to create the world we want." I think about that a lot and I have reread this essay again and again and how even in the writing, Alta presents a quote or sentence and invites the reader to really consider, as you read this, what's coming up in your body? What are you feeling if you can feel? What are you sensing if you can sense in this moment?

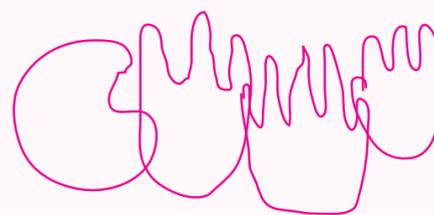
How do we create a foundation for feeling as opposed to getting into feeling itself? Also thinking about a different relationship to time: certain things have to be happening concurrently. And certain things will not be felt by us. But we work to see it felt by other people.

That's something I have been trying to center in the Design Justice Network, who I am also connected to and on the steering committee with, I've had to really push in many ways to integrate care into justice and movement practice. Being this initial like, "Yeah we're in it and we care about this," but when the invitations come and the spaces are available, I see that there's this gap between this desire to really create from the place of aliveness and connectedness and a sense of communal care, and the distance that's between desiring that and what it actually looks like to show up in it with a community of people. That, in and of itself, can be so exhausting as someone who is trying to cultivate those spaces. I still want to do it because I am curious about the ways our bodies can really be a part of our movements.

There's this guy here in Baltimore, I think they're a part of a Black Buddhist community, and something that he said to me that I will always remember is that, "slowness is the movement." And seeing it in multiple

ways: movement as in movement building, movement as in motion, movement in all these different forms.

Lizania: I resonate with what you just said, Denise Shanté. I have been wanting to understand and learn more about Buddhism. The thing I need in my body – I realized how much meditation is actually a practice I need in order to stay true to myself. It has been a guiding force of creating the self that I want, that I embody. Allowing me to be connected to my body. And understand that I am this vessel. Even having consciousness walking, how you walk and how you're connected to the ground. All those things have been learnings from Buddhism. This quote, "slowness is the movement," is so powerful. Even in movement work, we are basically just carrying the movement of our ancestors. If you think about it, it feels like a very slow process of many years.



HOW DO WE HOLD SPACE FOR TRAGEDY? IN THAT HOLD- ING, WHO DO WE BECOME?

HOW DO WE HOLD SPACE FOR TRAGEDY? IN THAT HOLDING, WHO DO WE BECOME?

The following is an excerpt from a phone conversation between Malcolm Peacock and Kimi Hanauer that took place on March 19, 2022, in reflection on the transcribed conversation from the Weaving our Values & Practices workshop.

Kimi: Sometimes it feels like folks don't want to realize that we are permanently changed by everything that's happened over the past few years. It's not a new crisis in a lot of ways, there's just a lot that's more evident in this moment. I feel so permanently changed.

Malcolm: There's no going back, there's only building alternatives.

Kimi: At the workshop, Georgia brought up a quote by Octavia Butler about how things either change or they die.

Malcolm: Change is part of necessary evolution. Kearra said something about creating a framework for noticing feelings – and my friend Taylor reiterated something similar to me the other day – that we have very little control over our feelings. We can talk about them, usually after, but in the moment, it's like, what is happening is happening. It's really hard to grapple with the totality of all those dynamics of why you feel a certain way. There's such a capitalist expectation to respond immediately.

I'm also thinking about all of the notes from the document [notes from the Weavers workshop] as – since

we live in a scarcity mentality, here in the U.S. – you have to train your mind to recognize that things are enough. I think that relates a lot to emotionality. All of our practices are based in scarcity or hoarding or protection, not a good protection, but in a guarding –

Kimi: Guarding, in the sense of, an anxiety to lose?

Malcolm: Yes, which is super punitive, ultimately. It's the state's perspective: something like safety, instead of being shared or native to a place, it's actually something that needs to be defended using force and punishment. For things that are just basic human rights.

Kimi: Yeah, totally. When you and I were texting the other day about folks assuming this perspective of, "We don't like the system but we don't believe anything else is possible." That's exactly the insidious aspect of the systems of domination we live under; it naturalizes this perspective.

Malcolm: It's about getting the body to succumb. It's like a sedative. Getting the body to settle into it. There's these ways that you're convinced the system isn't that bad, because maybe you have some privileges that someone else doesn't have. But then it ramps up again and you lose those. The moment when you're shocked is the moment where you fail to realize that it didn't just overnight become bad for you. It's a slow process. Working in restaurants made that really apparent to me. The types of health problems that folks have that they didn't have the capacity to care for, they didn't seem urgent, until something catastrophic happens one day.

Kimi: Those catastrophic moments that are never separate from the overwhelming contexts of our lives. They grow out of something, slowly, even if it's not always so visible.

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Malcolm: I've been thinking about this Hortense Spillers lecture in relationship to the transcript of this text – also *Uses of the Erotic* – feels like a big thread. The idea that our bodies can be – we can be the marker. We can be the barometer and the sensor for what is necessary for us. On a macro level but also on an individual level. We have that power and we deserve that. To be able to offer ourselves that type of intimacy because it's so rare. People have to go through burnout to realize they are so depressed. Is it because there's no space for someone to feel like they can check in with themselves?

It reminds me of when Saidiya [Hartman] says, if she could "feel deeply then she could feel free." I was writing that line over and over again and then added, "If she could feel deeply then she could feel backwards." Thinking that if you can feel backwards, then

you could start to parse through parts of your past selves and that being a way of seeking refuge and healing.

Kimi: In those moments of grief and undoing, that's maybe when we are closest to the experience of time unraveling; there not being a past, present, and future. It is just a fluid experience.

Malcolm: I want to read some questions that I wrote: *How can one discover and expand the extent to which they are capable of feeling satisfaction and completion? How does living within the fullness felt from true satisfaction cause one to pursue genuine change in their life? Does a discourse that centers feelings as a framework have the ability to orient individuals toward radically different futures? How can I elevate the status of the body from a tool that is expected to be used to a site of possibility? How can I articulate and express my desire for the collapse of status all together?*

Kimi: I don't mean to keep going backwards, but I was just rereading *The Making Of: Publics and Liberation*, the first public conversation we had at the former Press Press storefront before it opened, which you also participated in. There's a quote I'll share from Judith Butler that you're reminding me of, which was included in the introduction of the publication:

"No human can be human alone. And no human can be human without acting in concert with others and on the conditions of equality. I would add the following: The claim of equality is not only spoken or written, but is made precisely when bodies appear together or, rather, when through their action, they bring the space of appearance into being. This space

is a feature and effect of action, and it only works, according to [Hannah] Arendt, when relations of equality are maintained."

Hearing you say this thing of, how do you eliminate status, how do you elevate the body to be more than just a tool, it makes me think back to this quote. How is collectivity something that happens through both the action of gathering and the mining of the meaning of collectivity simultaneously? Like the language can't be separate from the doing itself.

Malcolm: Community via the labor that is community, rather than community for community's sake. It's actually hard and harsh and ugly. It's not amazing. You have to hold space for failure, for illness, for people not showing up in the ways they want to. I'm thinking about the partner section from Octavia. Is community the place where we practice conflict resolution? Maybe that's the home we practice in, so that when we go out into the world, we have a sense of ourselves, we have practice.

Kimi: And community is so much about loss. So much of being in relation with people is also about losing those people and processing the losing of people with others. Loss in various ways, not just loss of life.

Malcolm: That reminds me of a project Ralph Lemon did, where he was working with this man, and the old man kept telling him that he was dying. And one day

Ralph got there and he had passed away. And Ralph said something like, "He kept saying it and I kept not believing it." When we find community, and it's really strong and keeps us safe, it can keep us from facing the reality of loss. Loss is a moment where we are really tested to think of ourselves outside of this system of possession that actually doesn't serve us. How can a memory of a person still be upheld beyond their presence?

Kimi: I'm thinking a lot about how – well, we are always among other people – but there's these moments where I can feel that sense of dissolving into others, into a collective; when there isn't as much of a barrier between our bodies. And then there are moments where I feel that division so clearly.

Malcolm: Yeah, I was thinking about something similar the other day on a run. Where I felt that dissolve. It's so rare, I can count the times. When the space dissolves and the barrier between the forms molds into each other, it feels like two opposite forms of chemistry. It feels like a gas or a liquid, in that it's not containable. But in another way it feels like a rock, because it's so strong. It's beautiful to hear about people stepping into that vulnerability with another [at the workshop]. What does it mean to choose one another, choose ourselves, choose the group? Part of it is the pretense that is disseminated by you, but also that the thing that's actually being discussed in the space is also being practiced in real time.

It brings up a question about beliefs for me. Belief



as a practice, as a ritual. Committing to believing in the power of a group, the power of coming together. What do we do in the holes that are formed through loss? How do we decide as individuals and as a collective, how do we hold space for tragedy? In that holding, who do we become?

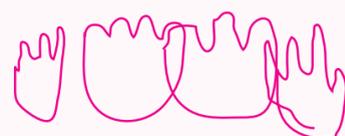
I remember when I got a call from Art Matters that I received a grant and I was in the middle of an evacuation from the hurricane. And I'm on the Zoom call, like, saying I just evacuated. And it was actually a really beautiful moment because they held the space really nicely.

Kimi: There was something else that you said in *The Making Of: Publics & Liberation* that has stayed with me. You talked about how when you're comfortable enough to take in what someone is saying, that's a delightful moment. And that kind of brings me back to this conversation, to ask, well what do you need to be in that state? What do you need to dissolve into others, but also allow yourself to be very much formed as an individual?

Malcolm: Something I think we are lacking as humans is ways of building trust and not having enough measures for what it feels like for us personally, individually. Trust is individual. Trust has to deal with traumas. That dissolving that we are talking about, thinking about it as a dispersion or a dissolve that

spreads out and around, as the borders begin to slip apart and split away. I think trust is the [foundation] for that, it's the mode in which that can begin to take place. There's so much that can come from trust. So much growing and ability to address things like conflict. If you have trust, you can address conflict without shame, without fear of being dismissed. I don't think it looks like something you can bring concrete examples of. But I think just practicing that with each other and ourselves, that alone can bring us into liberating intimate space.

Kimi: Beautiful. Learning to trust our own bodies can also allow us to receive signs of trust from others. Thank you, Malcolm.



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VALUES

OFFER A VISION

FOR HOW WE

MIGHT GATHER

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ANOTHER



VALUES OFFER A VISION FOR HOW WE MIGHT GATHER WITH ONE ANOTHER

The following values & practices, which were gathered through our conversations included above, are offerings that emerge from our day-to-day lives, embodied knowledges, and the histories we carry.

At the Center for Liberatory Practice & Poetry, we strive to embody...

SPEAKING INTO BEING

How do we speak our visionary worlds into being? Naming our experiences, especially when the words do not yet exist, can be a powerful act of world-building.

FLEXIBILITY FOR HOLDING

How can we instill flexibility for holding? Holding different capacities and language for labor, unlearning, and imagination, within our own shifting selves as well as for those with whom we're practicing these values.

PAUSE, SILENCE, LISTENING, AND SLOWNESS

How do we honor pause, silence, listening, and slowness? Observing our own silences can allow others to be listened to.

CONNECTIONS TO MULTIPLE HOMES AND LANDS

How do we name and nourish our connections to multiple homes and lands – both physical, imagined, and interpersonal – and the ways we are interwoven with one another?

FEELINGS AS INFORMATION

How do we center our feelings as information that can shape our futures? We don't know what liberation really feels like in our bodies, but we have felt a glimpse of it in our dreams. That in and of itself is a space to dwell in.

SPACIOUSNESS AND DWELLING

How do we create openings for spaciousness and dwelling inside ourselves and within our relationships? What space might this dwelling be supporting that has otherwise been pushed out?

QUESTIONS AND CURIOSITY

How do we open space for more questions and curiosity while being okay with not having the answers to our questions?

DETOX AND GRACIOUSNESS

How do we hold space for a genuine detox that we all need from the structures of domination we live under? How do we offer graciousness for ourselves and others when we fuck up? It's important to recognize when we might come from a place of

hurt or past experience of violence and that conflict is inevitable.

RECOGNIZING AND PARSING OUT OUR HURT

How can we recognize and parse out our hurt, so we don't recreate dynamics of oppression in the new spaces we are building? We might not know what liberation feels like in our bodies, but we do know what oppression feels like. How do we not internalize the trauma that we have experienced?

PRACTICE FOR THE LONG GAME

How can we practice resisting domination and rehearsing the worlds we want to inhabit in everyday life? When we have small conflicts with friends or in community and we address them with direct, non-violent communication and seek to resolve them truly, we are practicing for when the bigger things come up. The mundanity of life can be practice for the long game; moving the muck out of the way and bringing down our threshold for what's scary to do.

CHECKING IN WITH OURSELVES AS WE CHANGE AND GROW

How can we be open to trusting our own ability to grow and assess new needs for ourselves? Through relationships and being in community, we understand our needs in ways we didn't

anticipate before. How do we check in with ourselves and communicate those needs so that our relationships can feel fulfilling? Not in a capitalist kind of way, but in a "I'm happy to be alive" kind of way.

SENSING AS A SACRED ACT

How do we know and feel the inherent sacredness in ourselves and all that we touch and sense? Sensing in any kind of way is a sacred act. How can we hold that reminder for ourselves in everyday life, and especially, when we are encountering challenges?

WE ARE THE BAROMETER FOR WHAT IS NECESSARY

How do we offer ourselves the intimate space to check in before catastrophe occurs? If we learn to trust and listen to our bodies, we can be the barometer and the sensor for what is necessary for us.

TRUST AS A LIBERATOR OF INTIMATE SPACE

How do we develop measures for knowing what trust feels like for each of us personally, on an individual level? Trust is individual. Trust has to deal with traumas. Trust is the foundation for genuine collectivity. If you have trust, you can address conflict without shame, without fear of being dismissed.



PRACTICES
OFFER
RESOURCES THAT
MIGHT EQUIP US
TO ENACT THE
VALUES WE
PROPOSE

**PRACTICES OFFER
RESOURCES, TOOLS, AND
STRATEGIES THAT MIGHT
EQUIP US TO ENACT THE
VALUES WE PROPOSE**

This is an evolving list of practices that have informed our work and will be updated as time goes on.

Prompts for attuning to collective dynamics, such as asking, “What does the space need?” can be used as a score for prompting artistic improvisation (such as in movement, play, and imagination-building), as well as for facilitating conversation. [5]

“Cultivating the Self: Embodied Transformation for Artists” by Alta Starr, excerpted from *Making & Being: Embodiment, Collaboration, and Circulation in the Visual Arts*, a workbook by Susan Jahoda and Caroline Woolard. [6]

“Venus in Two Acts” by Saidiya Hartman published in *Small Axe*, Number 26 (Volume 12, Number 2). [7]

The Making Of: Publics & Liberation by Press Press. [8]

The Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power by Audre Lorde. [9]

Care Manual: Dreaming Care into Being by kamra sadia hakim. [10]

Mapping Our Roles in Social Change Ecosystems by Deepa Iyer, Building Movement Project. [11]

“Unlearning: From Degrowth to Decolonization” by Jamie Tyberg, published by Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung-NYC. [12]

Undoing Borders: A Queer Manifesto by SF Chapter of Pride At Work / HAVOQ. [13]

“The Short Instructional Manifesto for Relationship Anarchy” by Andie Nordgren published by the Anarchist Library. [14]

“Access Intimacy: The Missing Link” by Mia Mingus, published by Leaving Evidence. [15]

“Anti-Oppression Facilitation for Democratic Process: Making Meetings Awesome for Everyone” by AORTA (Anti-Oppression Resource and Training Alliance). [16]

Accessibility in the Arts: A Promise and a Practice by Carolyn Lazard, commissioned by Recess. [17]

“10 Principles of Disability Justice” by Sins Invalid. [18]

How to Build Language Justice by Antena. [19]

Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants by Robin Wall Kimmerer. [20]

Citizen: An American Lyric by Claudia Rankine. [21]

We hope this list will continue as our work comes into being...

[5] This question was carried by Katie Giritlian from an improvisatory movement workshop led by Jade Manns and Owen Prum with Improv Club at Prospect Park in Fall 2021.

[6] Starr, Alta. “Cultivating the Self: Embodied Transformation for Artists.” *Making & Being: Embodiment, Collaboration, and Circulation in the Visual Arts, a Workbook*, edited by Susan E. Jahoda and Caroline Woolard, Pioneer Works Press, Brooklyn, NY, 2019, 47–63.

[7] Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism* 12, no. 2 (2008): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.1215/-12-2-1>.

[8] Jenné Afiya, Fire Angelou, Emeline Boehringer, Kory Sanders, Sarrita Hunn, and Malcolm Peacock, *The Makings Of: Publics & Liberation*, ed. Kimi Hanauer (Baltimore: Press Press, 2017).

[9] Audre Lorde, *Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power* (Tucson: Kore Press, 2000).

[10] kamra sadia hakim, *Care Manual: Dreaming Care into Being* (Detroit: Flower Press, 2022).

[11] Deepa Iyer, "Mapping Our Roles in Social Change Ecosystem," Deepa Iyer, Building Movement Project, 2018, <http://deepaiyer.com/the-map-social-change-ecosystem/>.

[12] Jamie Tyberg, "Unlearning: From Degrowth to Decolonization," Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, July 3, 2020, <https://rosalux.nyc/degrowth-to-decolonization/>.

[13] *Undoing Borders: A Queer Manifesto*, SF Chapter of Pride At Work / the Horizontal Alliance of Very (or Vaguely or Voraciously) Organized Queers (HAVOQ), April 2011, <https://undoingbordersblog.files.wordpress.com/2011/09/pointsofunityprint.pdf>.

[14] Andie Nordgren, "The Short Instructional Manifesto for Relationship Anarchy," *The Anarchist Library*, July 14, 2012, <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/andie-nordgren-the-short-instructional-manifesto-for-relationship-anarchy>.

[15] Mia Mingus, "Access Intimacy: The Missing Link," *Leaving Evidence* (blog), August 15, 2017, <https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2011/05/05/access-intimacy-the-missing-link/>.

[16] Anti-Oppression Resource and Training Alliance (AORTA), "Anti-Oppression Facilitation for Democratic Process: Making Meetings Awesome for Everyone," June 2017, https://arts-campout-2015.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2019/02/AORTA_Facilitation-Resource-Sheet-JUNE2017.pdf.

[17] Carolyn Lazard, "Accessibility in the Arts: A Promise and a Practice," *Recess Art*, 2019, <https://promiseandpractice.art/>.

[18] "10 Principles of Disability Justice," *Sins Invalid*, September 17, 2015, <https://www.sinsinvalid.org/blog/10-principles-of-disability-justice>.

[19] Antena, *How to Build Language Justice = cómo Construir La Justicia Del Lenguaje* (Houston: Antena Books / Libros Antena, 2013).

[20] Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants* (London: Penguin Books, 2020).

[21] Claudia Rankine, *Citizen: An American Lyric* (London: Penguin Books, 2015).



SHAPING OUR GROUNDS

While holding these in-process values and practices in mind, we will continue to cultivate the materiality of our work: *What shape(s) will our Center take? How do these values and practices take concrete form in our lives and work? What is the ground we are collectively building? What do our values call on us to do?* These are some of the questions that come to mind as we reflect on our conversations thus far. Thank you for moving with us as we begin to form our work into action.

CREDITS & THANK YOU

This first iteration of Center for Liberatory Practice & Poetry's *Values & Practices* is co-authored by our inaugural team of Weavers: Denise Shanté Brown, Lukaza Branfman-Verissimo, Lizania Cruz, Kearra Amaya Gopee, Katie Giritlian, Lo, Georgia McCandlish, and Malcolm Peacock, in collaboration with workshop facilitators, Kimi Hanauer and Luz Orozco. These distilled values surfaced from conversations between co-authors in February

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Center For Liberatory Practice & Poetry aims to gather a community of learners around ways of being, sensing, and making that enact liberation in everyday life. Learn more about our work at liberatorypractice.org or email us at liberatorypractice@gmail.com.

"S&N SINC&

IS A

S&N SACR&N

A&N ACT"

- LUZ OROZCO