***Who gets to make the new world…***

***Please turn to the other person, and I want you to take two minutes to consider this question***

***--how is my labor generating the culture I want to see in the world…***

So I’d hypothesize that since everyone in this room seemed to be able to reflect upon and respond to the question of culture generation, in this room culture isn’t something you GO to, it’s something you make. It is one of the end products of your labor …

Well…

Here I am, undivorced from my other selves.

I am in my body as artist, as children of migration, and as staff at a large contemporary arts center in San Francisco…

You can imagine that YBCA is positioned to work like many cultural institutions, connecting to its environment through the primacy of its own aesthetics, driven by a mission to provide socially engaging content, less than intentionally ***impacting*** its social environment through active energetic reciprocity.

But when I was hired at my home institution no one mandated me to STOP being myself. Everything we are is everywhere we’ve been. So that doesn’t just mean that we could continue to make objects like dances or plays or poems, it means from an administrative perch, APPLY an artist’s thinking to curation, engagement, and administration. And the real life mission of the place that we’re supposed to administer is : generate culture that moves people…

With a ridiculously talented staff…

With a particularly intuitive leader...

Make culture, not harbor it…not watch it go by… generate culture…

So what happens when you’ve been trained in dialogue and creative, inclusive community investment alongside people like Theaster Gates and Jeff Chang and Roberta Uno, and can’t get their voices out of your head? What questions are you then responsible to answer as you and your team begin pulling the levers of a place like this? And at the same time you’re dreaming a theater piece that accesses childhood memory and global pathology in the construction of a freedom suite for stage

You ask Can we imagine the artistic curation of community activation?

Is it possible to pedagogically choreograph social justice?

YBCA asks itself,

“Can we design a ***social practice*** built on the instigations of a curated few? Can we manage the life cycle of an idea, build an ecosystem of creative individuals to respond to that idea, nurture those responses with artistic interactions, and then harvest the results in the form of public policy?”

*Consider the life cycle of a law…*

Imagine it cynically and insinuate that few ***ideas*** become law nowadays without first being tampered with by moneyed interests. That said, perhaps the only thing more powerful than private funds is public will. When YBCA describes its mission as generating culture that ***moves*** people, the bet that we are making is that we can activate ***how*** art influences the public imagination, that we can design a process whereby highly dynamic inquiry spawns culture, and as Jeff Chang so eloquently distills, “culture precedes policy.”

So our new curatorial design begins with the BELIEF that social change begins with the artists that are ASKING the ***right catalytic*** questions, and we can ORGANIZE our community to refine, reframe, and respond to those questions in a way that can seduce the public will.

We do this in SIX parts…

**--**As a Staff, members, board, we nominate and decide upon a list of culture makers that we call the YBCA100. We bring key members of this group together in a summit that looks like this [VIDEO]

**--**From all the questions that are put out there through the YBCA100 process, a key group of YBCA staff distills them down to 3.

**--**We solicit responses to these questions from our multiple publics, and we eventually invite 90 YBCA Fellows to each undergo a year’s worth of curated experience and meetings. Over the course of the year our fellows break into small working groups and use YBCA's curated events and curated artists as the 'complicating ground' to digest the inquiry in an art-framed way.

**--**public response --> YBCA extends resources to our working groups that enable them to prototype physical or participatory responses to the original questions as a public square

**--**public affirmation--> YBCA integrates these responses and the process into its brand profile to HEIGHTEN the visibility of our creative ecosystem in the public imagination.

--public practice--> if culture precedes policy, this cycle of asking, refining, prototyping, and celebrating begins to take root in the public will, impacting public/private partnerships and eventually inspiring shifts in local law.

What does it look like? I don’t know…

I have no idea…

But I can imagine…

So yes, as arts center we bring together activists, philanthropists, artists, technologists, and humanitarians, but WHO we curate for our stages is based on the belief that the burning questions these people are asking are the fertile ground for the world we want to make. We are inviting our multiple publics to refine the questions of these instigators, to essentialize them down to digestible and publicly actionable components, to join us in our building and around our region in a shared exercise of art-framed civic curiosity.

Miss me with art that doesn’t bleed or sweat or cry. And miss me with hermetically sealed art spaces full of objects you love but don’t reach out to touch you back. I believe that art isn’t other, it is OF us, and must be integrated into the cycle of social progress in a systemic way.

We offer an idea… a program structure that moves intentionally from inquiry to impact…Our adversaries have designed systems that effectively incarcerate and deport us. We are literally wondering aloud, can we design freedom?