

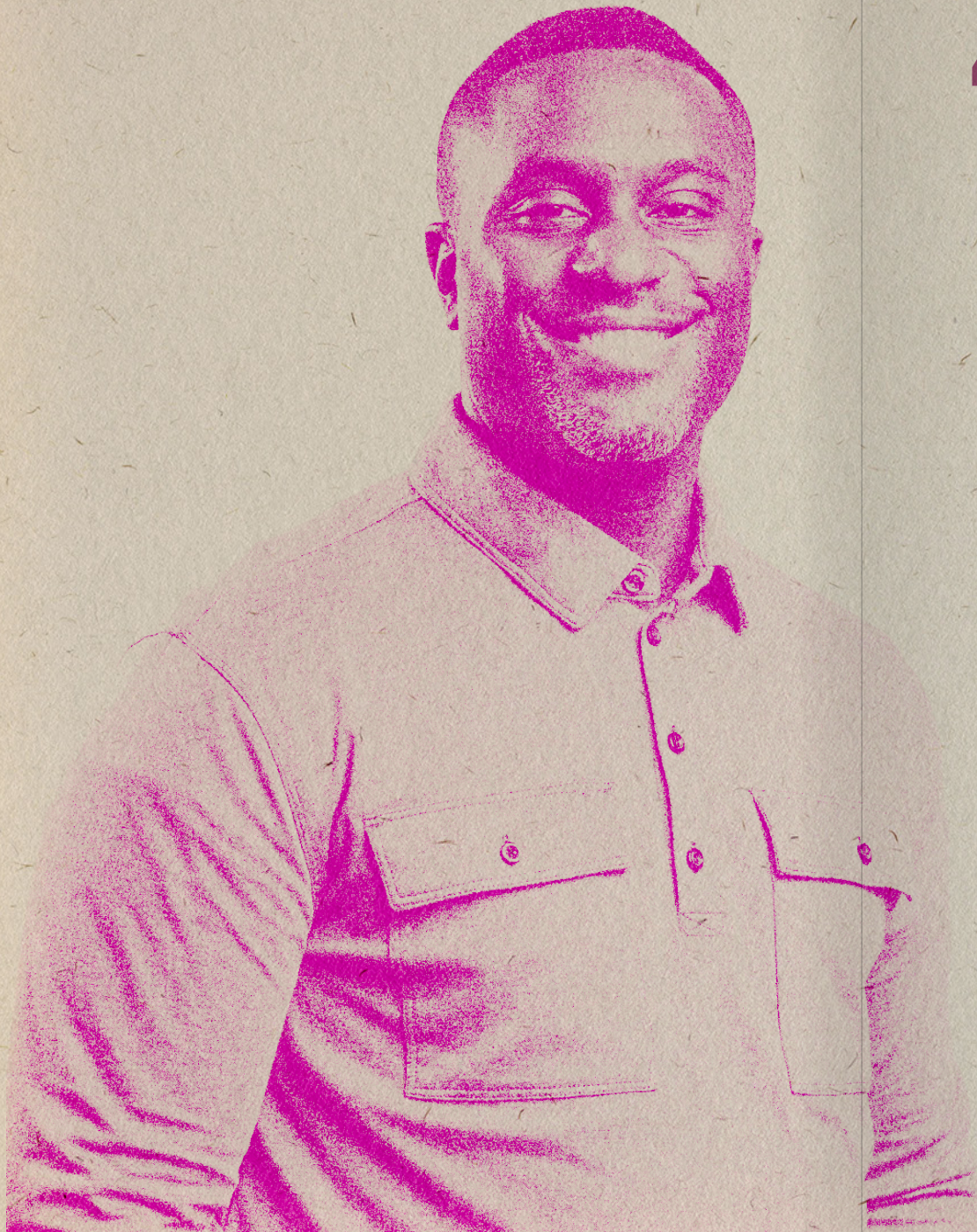
Archive
circa 2022



Pockets of Courage:

A ZINE FILLED WITH
STORIES OF "COMMUNITY
PLURALISTS" DOING THE
HARD WORK OF HEALING
AND TRANSFORMATION





“

THE UNITED STATES HAS NEVER FULLY OWNED THE DIVIDE THAT RACISM HAS CREATED, AND CONTINUES TO DENY THE WAY THESE WOUNDS STILL HARM OUR COUNTRY. I WANT TO BUILD POCKETS OF COURAGE... I HOPE PEOPLE WILL RECKON WITH THEMSELVES AND WITH OUR COLLECTIVE STORY AND THAT DOING SO WILL MOVE THEM TO ACTION.”

Chuck

– Chuck Mingo
Cincinnati, Ohio

4

“

THERE'S SHARED GROUNDING
BELOW AND SHARED ALIGNMENT
UP HIGH—AND THE SPACE IN
BETWEEN IS WHERE THE MAGIC
OF PLURALISM HAPPENS.”

Hi'ilani

– Hi'ilani Shibata
Nānākuli, Hawai'i

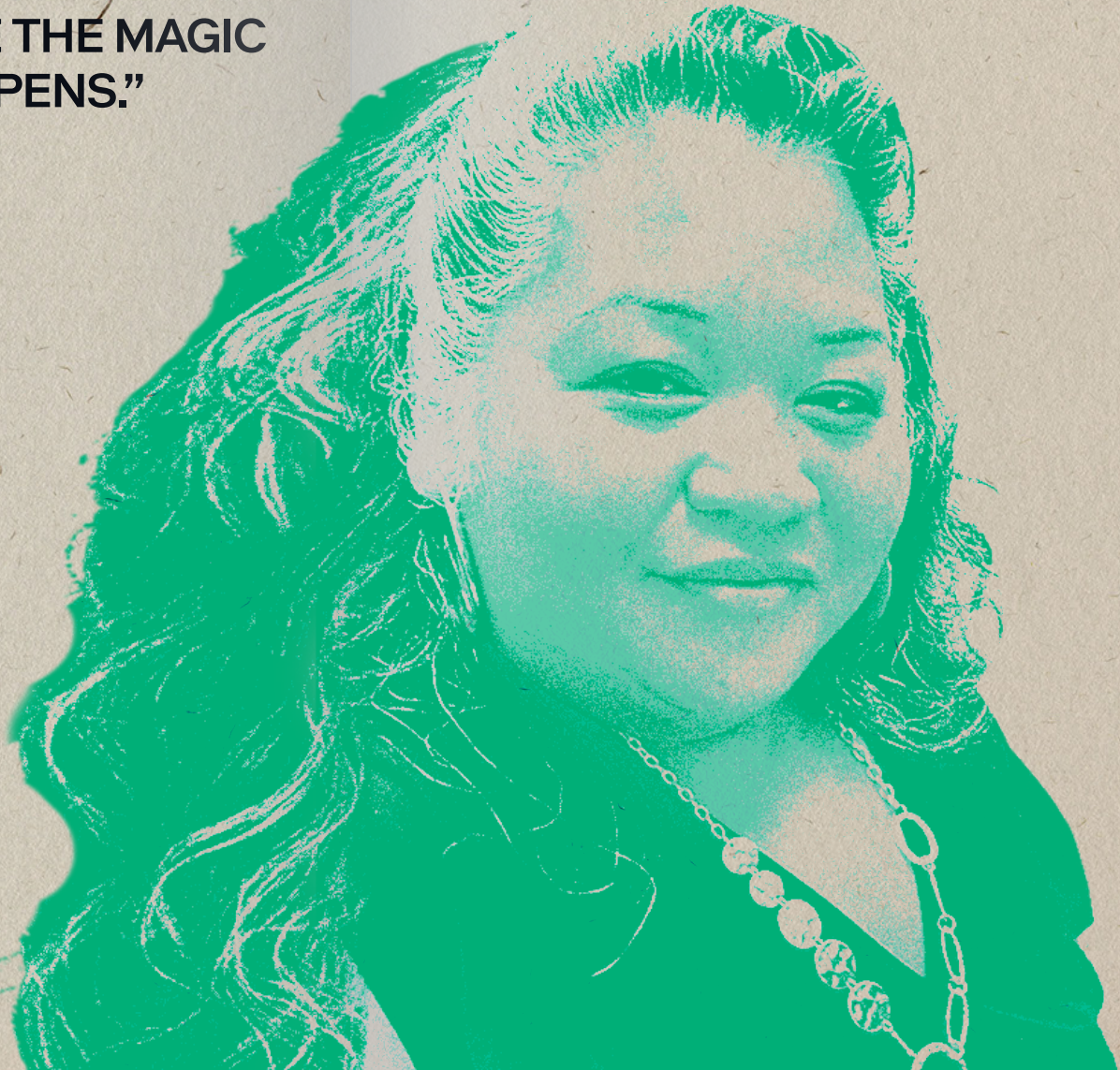


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pening Essay: POCKETS of COURAGE



It seems like in every direction we turn, there's an eruption of conflict and division. It's tearing us apart, sparking fires across our country. Yet across the country, there are everyday people like you and me who are building toward a future where we all belong. We are calling them Community Pluralists.



They have diverse identities and ideologies, and come to this work in many ways. They are religious leaders, small business owners, and artists; young and old; veterans and immigrants; conservative and liberal. They come from all walks of life and are united by a shared belief in the power of healing the fractured relationships in their communities. This work is important but not without risks—it is a courageous practice that anyone, anywhere can be involved in.



We interviewed these Community Pluralists—searching for these everyday people across the country—to look to these individuals as guides for the rest of us. We wanted to start to understand what this work looks like, what stands in their way, what conditions make it possible, and what the future would look like if they were to succeed.

In the pages of this zine, we share highlights of stories and insights from our research. Everyone featured gave their consent to be featured, and were compensated for their time and expertise.

This research project was not an easy endeavor. There's no database with a list of names. This work is often quiet and underreported. "We do it because it's needed, not because of the spotlight," one interviewee said.

Policy change alone will not solve this clash of views and beliefs in our democracy. We need the power of people—those who are transforming the ways we treat each other, make decisions, and create solutions together. They are critical for us to build a pluralistic society where we all belong, and where we can move forward into a better future. The stories of the people in this zine—the pockets of courage—represent the future we'd like to see.



WHAT IS COMMUNITY PLURALISM?



DEFINING COMMUNITY PLURALISM

These are real stories of everyday people who are showing up in their communities: A pastor using the basement of their church in Roanoke to bring about a local healthcare clinic. A veteran in New York City using the power of theater to support other veterans with PTSD. A former gang leader building truces between gangs in Dallas. A churchgoer in western Michigan bringing her congregation together to discuss LGBTQ+ membership. A small business owner in Jonesboro, Arkansas who provides employment and uses her office as a space to support domestic abuse survivors.

This work is difficult for many reasons—which is why it requires enormous courage—yet it is driven by everyday people who made a conscious decision to bring a currency of love to their neighborhoods, towns and cities, which have all been inundated with so much hate.

Strong and trusting relationships are at the heart of this work—it is not possible to “helicopter” into a community. You have to be proximate to the problem, we were told throughout our conversations, which is why every person we feature in the pages of this zine lives, works, prays or plays in the community they’re serving. Community healing is work that’s by the people, for the people.

Many of the folks we interviewed did not use the word “pluralism” to describe what they do. “I haven’t heard that word since high school,” one of them told us. That said, when we define pluralism as “moving forward together as a diverse society across differences and conflict,” many of the folks we interviewed do see their work as part of this broader collective effort. While “pluralism” isn’t a word they use yet, it is ripe with potential in the cultural zeitgeist.

*“moving forward together
as a diverse society across
differences and conflict”*



FIVE ARCHETYPES OF COMMUNITY PLURALISTS

Since no database of people who are doing the work of pluralism exists, our team created 5 “archetypes,” which described characteristics and broad examples of groups that we hoped to reach, to identify Community Pluralists for this research project. From the five archetypes, we recruited 19 people from across the country with diverse identities and divergent ideologies.

Research is messy and imperfect; we realized that some of the people we selected weren’t actually doing the work of Community Pluralism because their work lacked a healing or connecting component, or because it was national rather than local in scale or aspiration.

Still, these archetypes helped give us a blueprint of who is behind the efforts of Community Pluralism.



Archetype 1.

Community Pluralists who **enable healing in the presence of harm, loss, or broken trust**. They work to repair emotional, mental, and physical harm; they work to revive and reclaim traditions for the present-day community.

Archetype 2.

Community Pluralists who **do this work naturally—not out of benevolence but because they have to**. They bring people together to support the immigrant community of which they're a part, to provide the shelter, gatherings, or healthcare they themselves need, to answer a calling, to win soccer games.

Archetype 3.

Community Pluralists who **use their reach and resources to respond to a cultural shift within their community**. They might have a position as a faith leader, a coach, a facilitator, an elder, or a business owner that allows them to reach and support many people in a community and bring disparate groups together.

Archetype 4.

Community Pluralists who **are changing stories and structures about who matters in society—especially in unexpected ways**. They are using powerful stories, indigenous knowledge, proximity, listening, and education to lift people up and create mutual respect.

Archetype 5.

Community Pluralists who **focus on solving community problems by bringing diverse people together**. They see difference as an asset. They know that it's easier to solve problems in community even, or especially, when community means many different perspectives and experiences.

In addition to these Community Pluralist archetypes, we believe artists also play an instrumental role in helping us tap into our imagination to envision a path forward for pluralism in our communities. They experiment and provoke, reauthor narratives and reveal new truths. We think about artists such as Ronald Rael who designed the Teeter-Totter Wall, a trio of pink see-saws at the U.S.-Mexico border wall. The seesaws were installed for just forty minutes but the photos of families and kids seesawing on the Mexico and U.S. sides of the border were seen throughout the nation and generated a broader conversation about belonging. Inspired by artists and with the belief that they're critical to this work, we commissioned four of them to push our thinking and bring new life to our findings—including Lala Openi, who designed the zine itself!

The Pluralists

2022

Digital collage

EJ Baker

This image was created by **EJ Baker**, a commissioned artist for this project. Baker says this piece offers a window into a world where pluralism is a flourishing framework. It imagines the “weird and wonderful ecologies” that might arise from a culture of respect and belonging.





CENTERING THE STORIES OF REAL PEOPLE.

Throughout the zine, we've included real stories of Community Pluralism in action. They turn the archetypes from 2-D to 3-D, bringing this work to life.

Centering and sharing compelling stories is key for this work because we process stories and emotions better than just facts and information. As a culture of pluralism grows in our country, centering story-driven research is critical.

To dip your toes into the water, here are two examples of Community Pluralists you will find throughout the zine.



Antong Lucky

Dallas, Texas

Even amidst what some may consider his darkest moments as the former founding member of the Bloods gang in Dallas, **Antong Lucky** is still indisputably a natural born leader. Today, Antong works to ease tensions between local gangs in Dallas, find common ground, and bring them to truce agreements—reducing violence across his city. He also works with local law enforcement agencies on their internal policing protocols and has built otherwise-impossible bridges that bring community members, gang leaders, and police officers together to openly discuss community concerns. His work takes place at BBQs, in prisons, at police stations, in backyards, and on main stages.

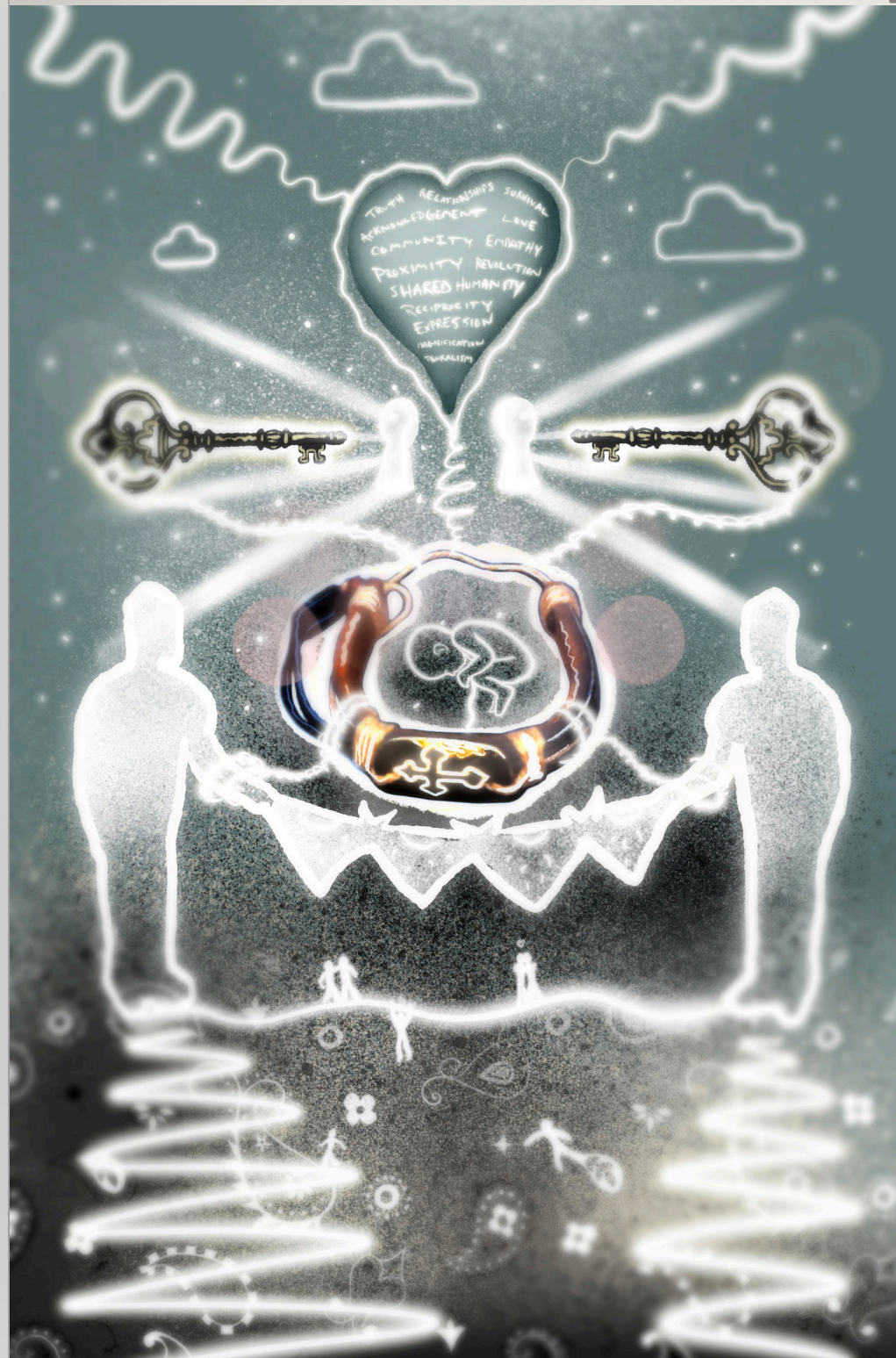
***The Door to Our Self,
The Key to Each Other***

2022

Digital illustration, 5.5" x 8.5"

Jonathan Thunder

Antong Lucky learned to change his world by starting within. His power object sits in the middle of this composition, a bracelet that is securely bound together, much like the network and connections that he works to build.





Chuck Mingo

Cincinnati, Ohio

In 2015, after the shootings of Treyvon Martin and Michael Brown, pastor **Chuck Mingo** was inspired by reading the story of Jesus asking Peter to walk on water. The only Black pastor for his church of 35,000 people, Chuck saw an opportunity to ask his congregation to boldly step out of their comfort zone—to start the process of redressing racial injustices and building solidarity, which he says is at the center of what God calls us to do. He created a six-week curriculum, which he now often leads in predominantly white evangelical faith spaces, where cohorts of people learn the history of race in the United States—from pre-Civil War to today. Using biblical framing and creative exercises, he leads groups to ask questions, process the new perspectives, and consider their personal role in policy change.



**Chuck Mingo:
The Great Work**

2022

Digital Illustration, 5.5" x 8.5"

Jonathan Thunder

This image was also created by Jonathan Thunder, in response to our interview with **Chuck Mingo**. Mingo mentioned his Iroquois roots. The Iroquois Confederacy, which came about as a result of the Great Law of Peace, shaped democratic structure in America by giving equal power to the 5 nations that make up the Iroquois—the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca. Through this piece, Thunder reflected Mingo's message of people being stuck, or sliding backward, while at the same time reaching higher for family and others.

WHY IS THIS WORK NECESSARY?



THROUGHOUT OUR RESEARCH, WE HEARD ONE DEFINING THING ABOUT COMMUNITY PLURALISM:

The work didn't start with a goal to bring people together to navigate differences or conflict. The work often began as a response to a problem or crisis that emerged in the community that required pluralism to move through or solve. Throughout our research conversations, we heard four main issues that sparked these everyday people to advance the work of pluralism across the country.

SOMETHING ISN'T UNDERSTOOD: LACK OF KNOWLEDGE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Being stepped over, ignored, or misunderstood leads communities to be forgotten or feel resentful. That sense of separation and conflict prevents the possibility for solutions. Failure to acknowledge the past or critical gaps in understanding fester and become loneliness, frustration, and disinterest. People from such communities often wonder, if we aren't being acknowledged, if our grievances are ignored or dismissed, what's in it for us to actually work toward being a part of the "us" in the first place?



SOMETHING ISN'T FAIR: INEQUALITY

Not every community has the same access to resources. Inequality can come in many forms—poverty, homelessness, lack of healthcare access, food scarcity, racial wealth gaps, and more—creating systemic disparities that can last generations. From lack of awareness of the gap to intentional structural systems, the tipped scale can lead to anger and upset at the lack of justice.



SOMETHING ISN'T HEALED: HATE AND HURT

Hatred and violence divides, isolates, and harms communities in major ways. Physical violence such as domestic violence, gang violence, and the violence of war can create more than physical scars; the lasting effects of PTSD and unstable/unsafe homes and communities extend far beyond the moment of trauma. Hatred as 'othering'—racial injustice, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia, religious intolerance, contempt for the poor—can lead to physical violence, and those deep-seated fissures can take many generations to uproot.



SOMETHING ISN'T THE SAME: A MAJOR SHIFT

National and global shifts can find their way into the centerstage for a local community. COVID radically and immediately forced communities everywhere to adapt. George Floyd's murder was an inflection point for racial justice nationwide—an ongoing, historical struggle. Immigrants and refugees, driven out of their countries by war, hateful politics and natural disasters, are trying to find their place in their new homes. Economic shifts are rapidly changing how work is done and making it harder for families to make ends meet. While this work is focused deeply on the local, the shifts happening at a national and global level are felt in communities across the country.



THE SEVEN CONDITIONS THAT MAKE COMMUNITY PLURALISM POSSIBLE



WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS THAT ALLOW COMMUNITY PLURALISM TO EXIST AND THRIVE?

There are seven “conditions” that emerged in many of our conversations with Community Pluralists, despite differences in geography, ideology, identities, or approach. These conditions have a significant influence on the success of their work.

It’s important to remember that these conditions are not conclusive, and that this was based on a small sample size. More exploration is needed in this space. However, we are confident in putting forth these conditions as a first step toward understanding and supporting this important work.

CONDITION 1

FOR THE COMMUNITY, BY THE COMMUNITY

The people best positioned to do the work of pluralism in a community are the people from that community. This might be strange to point out, because it seems so simple and obvious, but many efforts in communities—including pluralistic ones—are being driven by “outside actors.” True Community Pluralism work is made possible by a deep and prolonged understanding and connection to one’s own community. This work is often rooted in someone’s personal experience, where they see how their life experiences overlap with those of others. Consuelo, as a domestic abuse survivor, realized she was best positioned to help others who shared that experience, even if women came from different backgrounds from her. Mike Newman, an ESL teacher in Noel, Missouri, realized he could use his gifts and relationships to forge connections between immigrant newcomers and the mostly white long-time residents of his community. Community Pluralists must have deep trust and strong relationships in their communities.

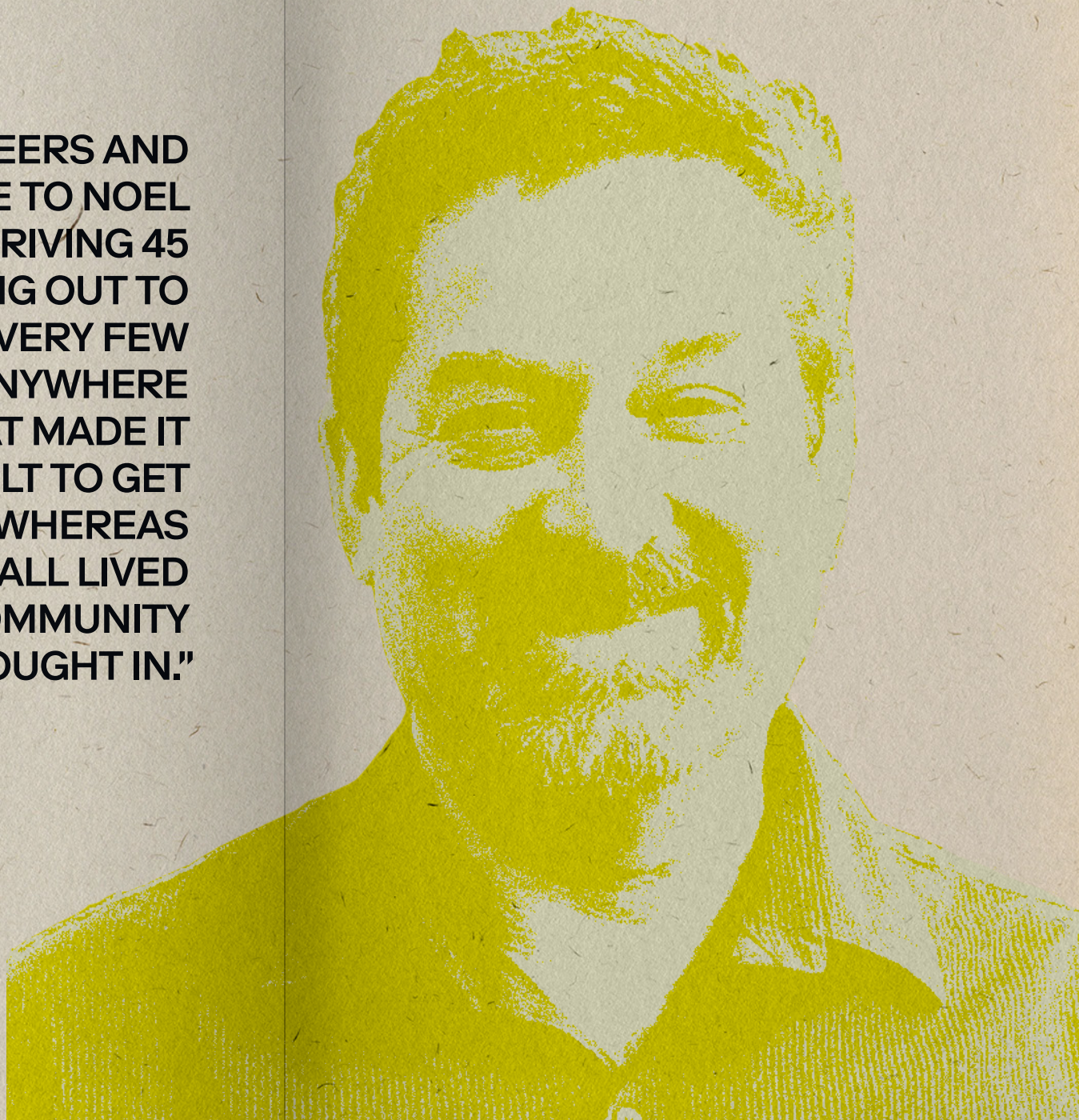


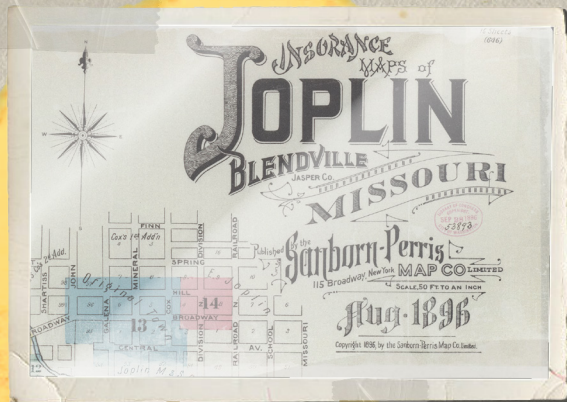
“

ALL THE VOLUNTEERS AND
TEACHERS CAME TO NOEL
FROM JOPLIN, DRIVING 45
MINS, HANGING OUT TO
HELP PEOPLE, BUT VERY FEW
ACTUALLY LIVE ANYWHERE
CLOSE TO NOEL. THAT MADE IT
EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO GET
ANY TREAD GOING. WHEREAS
IN JOPLIN—WE ALL LIVED
THERE—SO THE COMMUNITY
WAS ALREADY BOUGHT IN.”

Mike

– Mike Newman
Joplin, Missouri





Mike Newman

Joplin, Missouri

When the Afghan refugees began arriving in his hometown of Joplin, MO, Mike and his collaborators—all Joplin locals—worked deeply with the entire Joplin community to welcome the newcomers. Each refugee was matched with a family “pod” to help acclimate to their new environment, meet people, and get the support they needed. The effort to create a welcoming environment and reduce tensions was a big success. Similarly, in the nearby town of Noel, MO, refugees and immigrants had been coming into town to work at the local chicken plant for decades, but there was still a sense of tension between the long-time Noel residents



and the foreign-born residents. Mike and his collaborators from Joplin tried to develop community projects to make Noel more welcoming, but they did not have the same success. Mike explained: “People were driving from Joplin to Noel to try to bridge, but since they weren’t part of that community, it was hard to get it working. It did not go well. It is hard to heal something that you are not a part of.” In Joplin, neighbors worked to convince other neighbors that it was important to support the refugees who were resettling. Without the status of living in and being from Noel, welcoming the newcomers and reducing tension was much more difficult.



Bill Lee

Roanoke, Virginia

Throughout his life, Reverend Bill Lee has seen the impacts of a lack of access to medical care. He grew up as a Black kid in a small rural segregated town; his aunt was his mother's midwife. His father got cancer at 64, didn't receive the care he needed because he was 6 months shy of being eligible for Medicare, and died. So when a friend shared that it was hard to access medical care in Roanoke, especially for folks who need to take public transportation, Bill was motivated to take action. He offered the basement of his church as a space to convene a series of conversations with the community to find a solution. Bringing together medical professionals, church goers, and those in need, they devised a plan to support the medically underserved—almost 40% of residents in Roanoke. These community gatherings generated a plan which resulted in what is now a freestanding, federally qualified healthcare center for the area. Bill continued to serve as first board chair for what became Kumbba Health and Wellness Center, now New Horizons Healthcare.

***New Horizons, Past &
Present Visions***

2022

Digital

Rachelle Reichert

Rachelle Reichert, a commissioned artist for this project, created this illustration in response to **Bill Lee's** interview, especially an artifact he brought to the interview. Lee spoke of the need to look at our collective past in order to move forward. To illustrate this, he showed us a wooden Sankofa Bird he owned, which is a Ghanaian symbol that represents looking back at our history to learn about how to best bring forth the future.



SHARED PHYSICAL SPACE

Beyond being in the same locality, face-to-face interaction is a must for Community Pluralism to be successful. And the space itself is important—it must be somewhere that the community members feel comfortable, rather than like guests. Somewhere they can get to easily and where they feel like they belong. While complications might arise to sharing space—such as navigating a widespread pandemic—the power and energy generated from bringing a diverse group of people together in person should not be underestimated. Community Pluralists said that fostering vulnerability was more organic and successful when done in person, which leads to deeper connection, understanding, and opportunities for healing. Sometimes physical space can be more permanent like Consuelo's office for her cleaning business, which serves as a haven for survivors of domestic violence, or Bill Lee's church in Roanoke, which became home to conversations about creating a health care clinic. But it can be fleeting too, like an art installation.



“

NO ONE IS GOING TO STAND
IN LINE FOR A DOMESTIC
ABUSE CLASS, BUT PEOPLE
WILL COME OVER TO DRINK
COFFEE AND, AFTER SOME
CONVERSATION, I'LL STAND
UP AND START TALKING
ABOUT THE TOPIC.”

Consuelo

– Consuelo Rosales
Jonesboro, Arkansas





Consuelo Rosales

Jonesboro, Arkansas

Women gather in Consuelo Rosales' small office in Arkansas, the headquarters for her and her business partners' local business, to talk about job opportunities and to connect over coffee. The conversation doesn't stop there. Since it is a physical space that is outside of their homes, they feel safe to talk about their shared experiences of domestic abuse. When the store was on the brink of closing because of financial issues, she realized it was a worthwhile investment to keep because its back office was the only safe place for survivors to come together, share their experiences, and come up with plans to leave these threatening situations, often with their children.

"We don't sell as many products at the store—I considered closing it—but it is too important of a gathering place for the community."

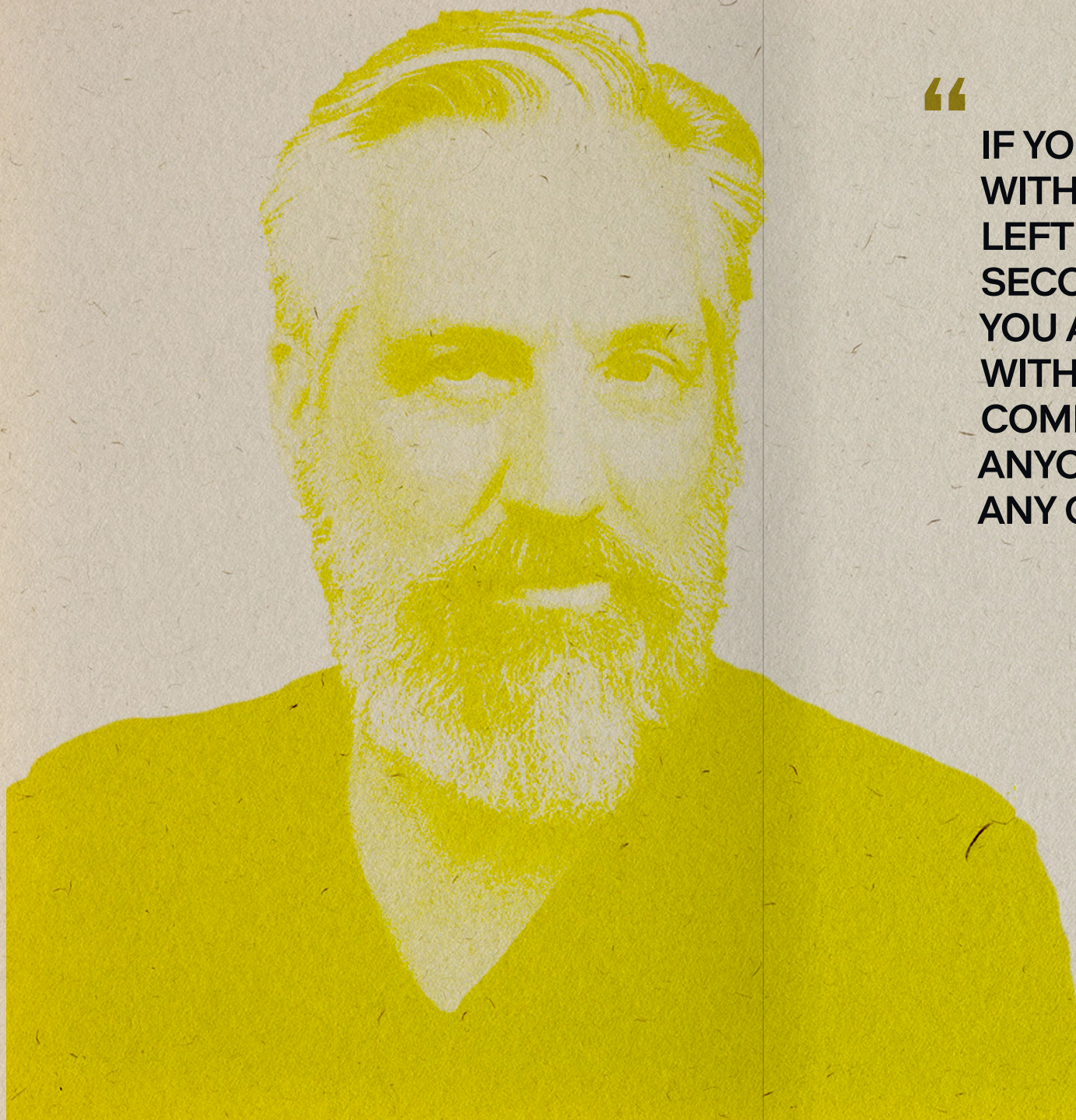
CONDITION 3

PROVIDE EASY WAYS FOR PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE

Not everyone is ready to fully jump into the work of transforming the dynamics of their community because there's so much at stake. We have our own fears and anxieties, limited time and energy, and skepticism. Through our research, we heard from multiple people that providing easy ways for newcomers to participate allowed them to grow their network with more success and enthusiasm. For instance, it feels safe to go over to meet some friends for coffee at Consuelo's office in Arkansas – and it feels safe to tell your partner that, too. However, that easy entry can transform into a powerful conversation, as domestic abuse survivors begin to share their own experiences. Offering a simple way to join the community allows for newcomers to feel comfortable.

multiple entry points for participation



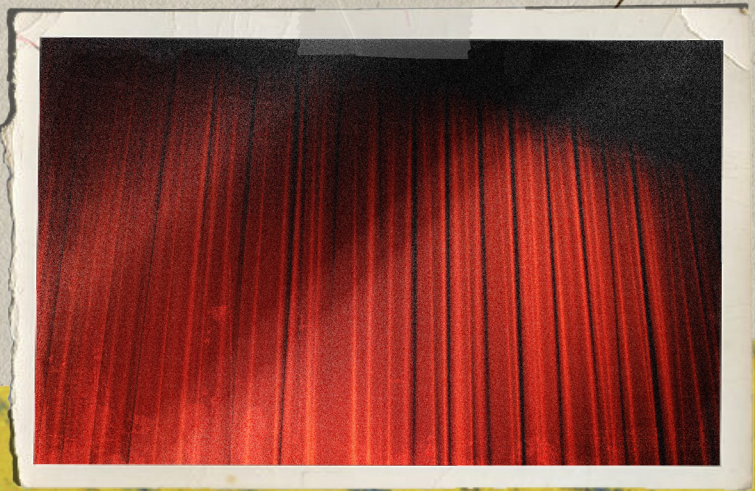


“

IF YOU SHOW UP
WITH ONE MINUTE
LEFT AND LEAVE 30
SECONDS LATER,
YOU ARE WELCOMED
WITH AFFECTION AND
COMPASSION JUST AS
ANYONE ELSE IS AT
ANY OTHER TIME.”

Stephan

– Stephan Wolfert
Nomadic



Stephan Wolfert

Nomadic

In Stephan Wolfert's one-man show, *Cry Havoc*, the second act is always a talkback with the audience. The performance highlights his experiences as a veteran, and how hard it can be for vets to return to civilian life. Allowing for any question or reaction, Stephan often gets asked, "What can I do?" and each time gives an answer specific to the person. Dentists can offer free cleanings to vets, which the VA doesn't cover, for example. During the talk-back, he connects the audience to the local veterans they can support from their community. The show tells the origin story of De-Cruit, a program he created that uses principles of classical actor training (breath and movement) along with Shakespearean texts to address traumatic stress and associated problems encountered by veterans as they navigate the transition from military to civilian life. The program ends in a final presentation that includes the veteran's invited family, friends, and community members—an opportunity for them to witness and participate in this "communalization of trauma." In both the talk-back with the community after his show and De-Cruit classes with a community of veterans, the goal is to create shame-free spaces where people have autonomy over their experience and can "speak what they feel, and not what they ought to say." (King Lear)

CONDITION 4

CONFRONT THE PAST THROUGH SHARED STORIES & ART

To begin the work of moving forward, we must first acknowledge and confront the past. This enables us to reckon with our present in order to heal and strengthen our communities. Stories and art hold a powerful currency to give and take perspectives, and benefit both the sharer and the listener. The way these stories are shared can differ—from working with congregations as a pastor of a church like Chuck Mingo, to an oral storytelling campaign such as the one led by Ry Moran and other Indigenous leaders in Canada for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Or the San Francisco Gay Men's Choir and Oakland Interfaith Gospel Choir, which traveled across the South to perform songs of love and acceptance at churches—as documented in the film by David Charles Rodrigues called *Gay Chorus, Deep South*. This is also a powerful place to leverage the arts like the work of filmmakers Macky Alston and Selina Lewis Davidson, who are holding conversations about healing and repair in regard to slavery and the Native American genocide in the United States.



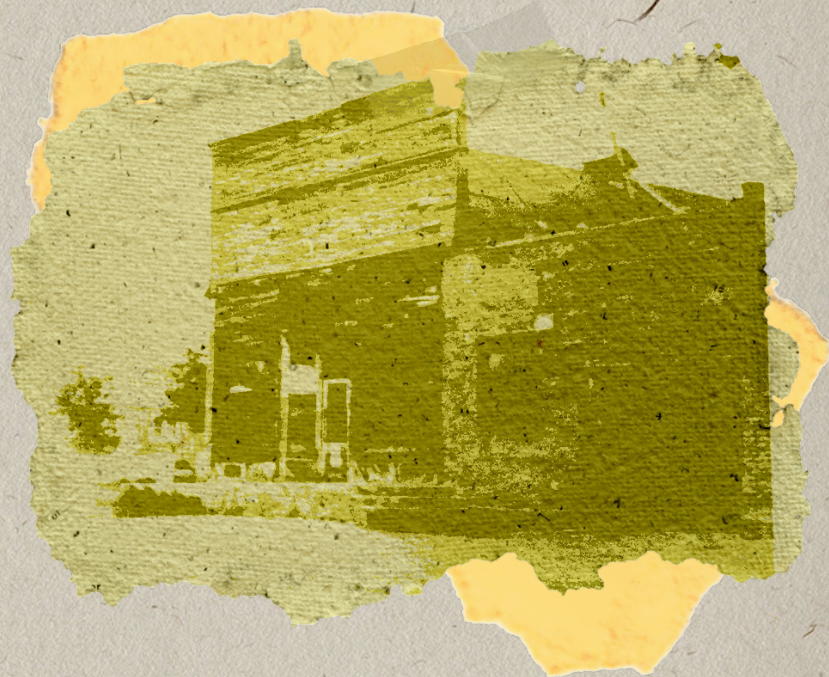
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“
IT WAS ALWAYS
SOMEBODY ELSE
TELLING OUR
STORY – AND WHEN
I INTERVIEWED
ELDERS AND
COMMUNITY
MEMBERS, THEY
DIDN'T AGREE WITH
THOSE STORIES...
SO WE STARTED TO
TELL OUR OWN.”

Isabel

– Isabel Trujillo
Abiquiu, New Mexico





Isabel Trujillo

Abiquiu, New Mexico

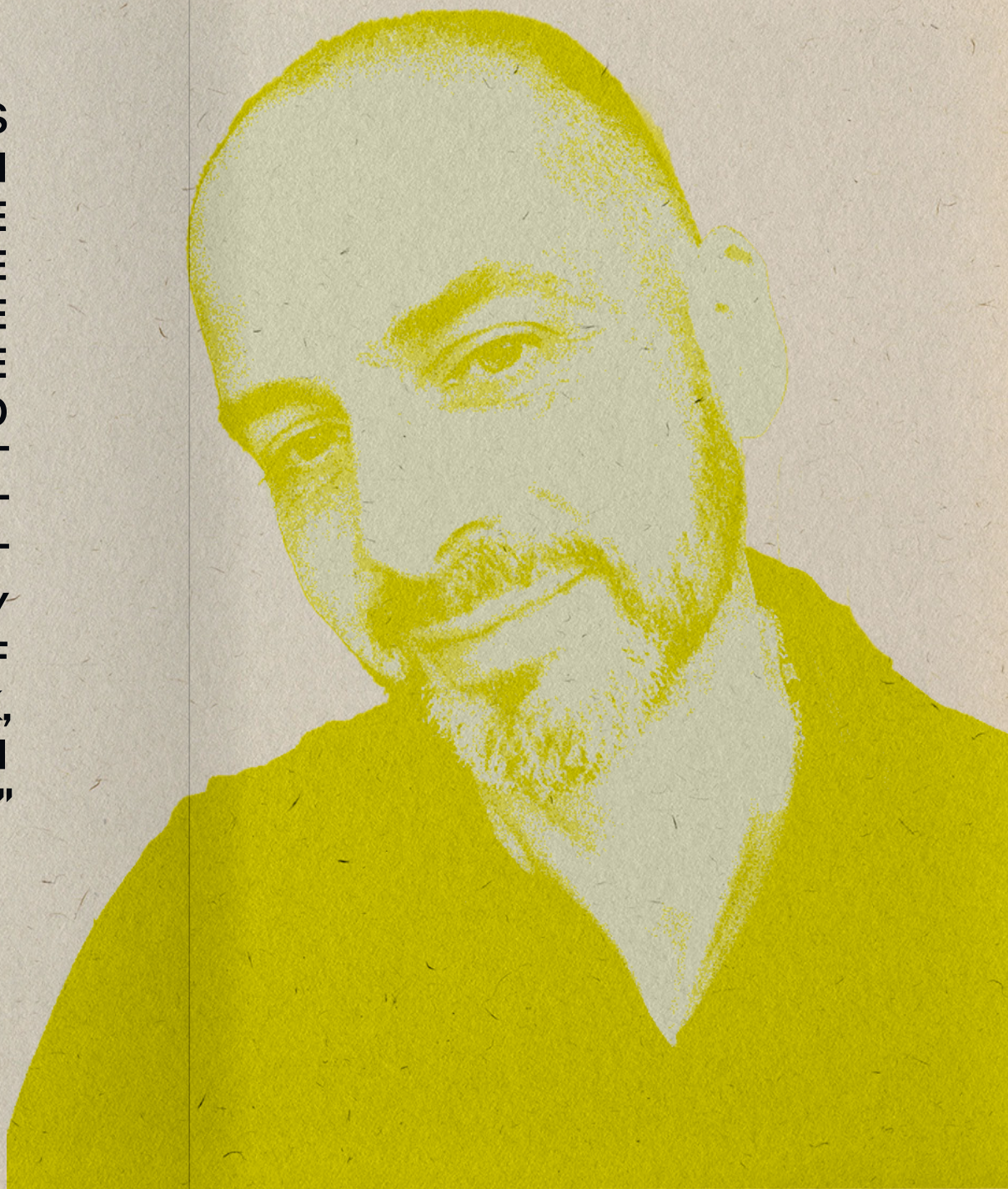
Isabel lives in an Indigenous community that was seen as a Pueblo in early Government history, but lost federal recognition when the Spanish arrived and took people captive to serve as militia in buffer zones that protected what became the first US Capitol as can be read in Senate Memorial 59 for New Mexico. Genizaros—detribalized Native Americans—are said to have made up a third of New Mexico, yet are written off as Hispanicized with no compensation for the native disconnections they suffer still; although said to have acclimated or disappeared, they have actually lived on with oral history traditions in their culture, food, dance, song, etc. As the grant writer and administrator for the El Pueblo de Abiquiu Library and Culture Center, Isabel is working to document, educate, and unearth narratives from her people—working to create more visibility and empowerment in her community. Isabel has been made offers for pro-bono work by attorneys experienced with federal recognition laws, and gathers her people to listen, learn, and decide how to move forward as a community since Federal Recognition is not always seen as a positive move. Isabel hopes to address social issues through intergenerational conversations, and hopes to gain funding for creative career ideas that can keep youth living locally, because land and water needs demand their attention.

“

WHITE PEOPLE'S SOULS
ARE ON THE LINE IN
AMERICA TODAY. THE
ONLY WAY TO TRUE
LIBERATION FOR WHITE
PEOPLE IS IN THE
SUPPORT OF BLACK AND
NATIVE LIBERATION. LET
ME BE CLEAR: I DON'T
MEAN TO SAY THAT
WHITE PEOPLE'S JOY
IS THE PURPOSE OF
REPARATIONS WORK,
BUT I DO THINK IT CAN
BE AN OUTCOME.”

Macky

– Macky Alston
New York, New York





Macky Alston

New York, New York

As a white descendant of enslavers and colonizers in the US, Macky has worked to redistribute his generational wealth to Black- and Native-led organizations and reparation efforts, and to help people with histories like his do the same. As filmmakers, he and his friend and colleague Selina Lewis Davidson, a descendent of African, Native American and European people, wanted to foster conversations about this often-unspoken truth about the past. With different histories as the enslaver and the enslaved, colonized and colonizer, Selina and Macky have set out to create a film that tells the story from multiple perspectives. They are bringing audiences together, descendants of the multiple sides of history, to reckon with the past, transform relationships, advance equity, and create ways of moving forward as a community and a country.

EMBED PLURALISM INTO INSTITUTIONS

Because systems and institutions are so influential, many Community Pluralists are thinking about how to transform institutions that are creating barriers to belonging. These are typically broad systems that impact many kinds of people—such as health care, prison and policing, social services, the corporate world, and banking. Community Pluralists are often searching for radical ways to build belonging by partnering with people within systems and institutions, so that their work can become even more effective and powerful.





Maybe Burke

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Maybe Burke is an educator who connects to and educates cisgender people so that they can better understand and support trans and non-binary people. They work with insiders at small organizations, non-profits, and large corporations—often on the human resources, leadership, and development or talent teams. They work with these organizations to make sure their internal cultures are affirming of the trans and non-binary people, employees or clients, in their work.

Through Maybe's Community Pluralism work, they create the space for people to ask questions and learn more about trans identities without feeling judged or uninformed. Their trainings, in partnership with these organizations, serve as a space for participants to unlearn their existing beliefs around gender, and understand how to be more respectful and affirming of trans and non-binary people.

“

I WANT THEM TO BE AS
INTIMATELY PRESENT
AS POSSIBLE. AND I'LL
SAY TO [THE POLICE
OFFICERS, HEALTHCARE
WORKERS, ETC], I WANT
YOU TO WALK AROUND THIS
NEIGHBORHOOD FOR AN
HOUR, IMAGINING THAT
[THIS STREET] WAS YOUR
BEDROOM LAST NIGHT.”

Michael

– Rabbi Michael Lezak
San Francisco, CA





Michael Lezak

San Francisco, California

Rabbi Michael Lezak is a rabbi who works at a church. He is in the Tenderloin neighborhood of San Francisco, which is ravaged by drug addiction, homelessness, crime, and poverty. Michael bakes challah for people on the streets every Friday, and has built relationships with many people—who have shared their personal struggles, hopes and experiences with him. In order to make a greater impact, he brings groups of curious and engaged police officers and doctors to meet these Tenderloin residents face-to-face, which equips them with the knowledge and the experience to better serve this population in their roles within law enforcement and health care. Since police officers and doctors interact with hundreds of people a day in this community, the conversations and relationships that Michael builds among these disparate groups proactively prevent crimes, reduces harm, and saves lives.

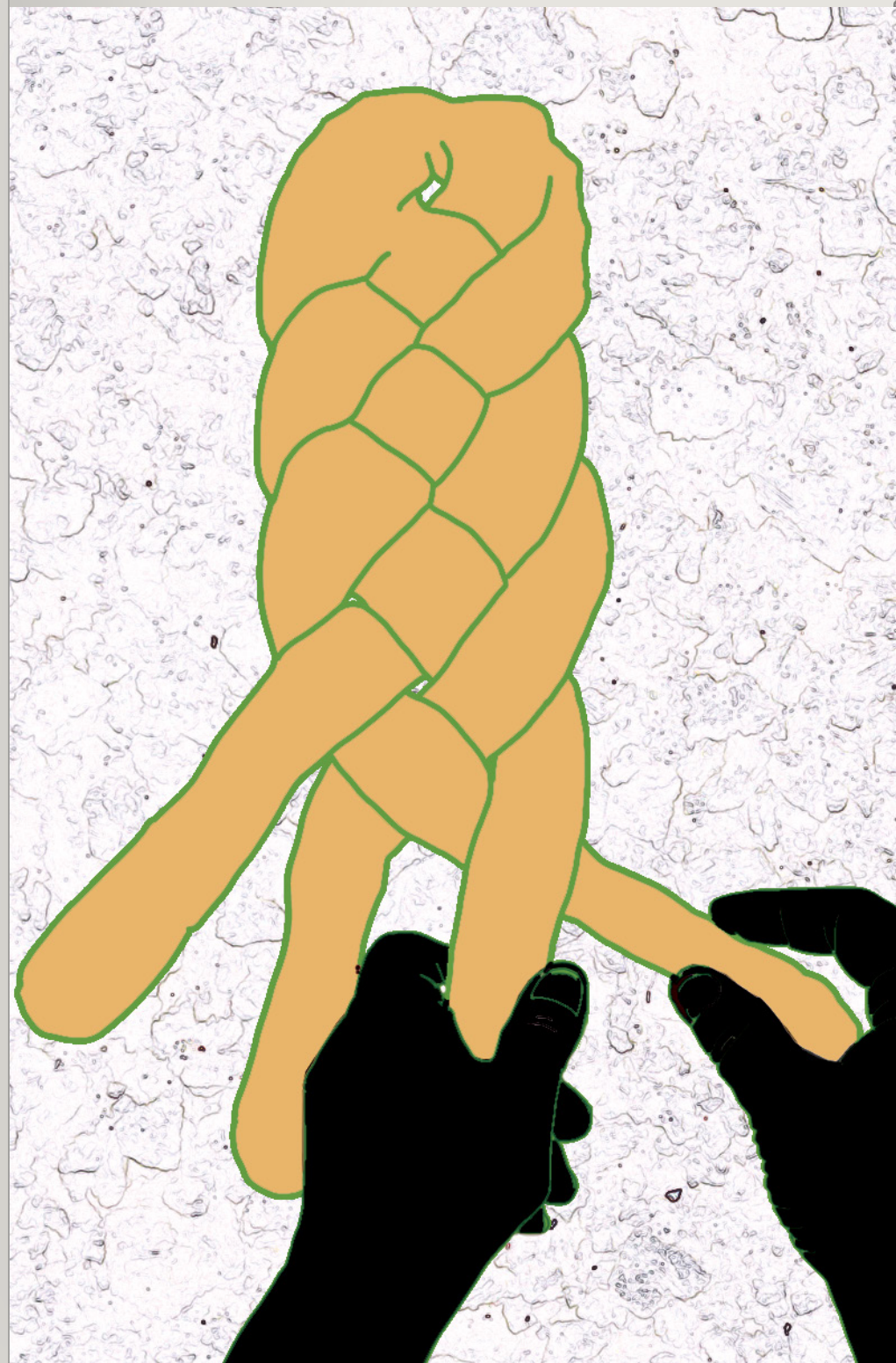
Binder of the Shattered

2022

Digital collage

Rachelle Reichert

This image was created by Rachelle Reichert in response to our interview with **Rabbi Michael Lezak**. Lezak spoke about the power of community to help us heal from our suffering. The challah bread, which Lezak bakes and serves to people living on the streets of San Francisco for Shabbat, is braided with the color green to represent this healing, retying our communities above a shattered background.



CONDITION 6

CREATE AND USE PROVEN TOOLS & FRAMEWORKS

Whether proven through science or grounded experience, tools and frameworks guide the work of Community Pluralists. These can be either pre-existing or created, but tools and frameworks are important to make this work sustainable and replicable. They may look like clear step-by-step curricula, programs, and templates for navigating difficult conversations or effectively bringing diverse groups together to solve problems. We heard in our conversations that when people could draw from these resources, they felt more confident and effective in their work. These resources also gave them credibility in the eyes of authority figures, such as faith leaders or community leaders, which enabled their work. It also attracted more participants because they felt the benefit these tools and frameworks provide: trust and structure.



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AWARENESS OF AN ISSUE,
COURAGE, CONVICTION,
OR EVEN DESIRE AREN'T
ENOUGH. I NEEDED TO
HAVE THE MATERIALS AND
TOOLS TO KNOW HOW TO
NAVIGATE CONFLICT WITH
MY COMMUNITY.”

Sarah

– Sarah Nicholas
Plainwell, Michigan





Sarah Nicholas

Plainwell, Michigan

When Sarah Nicholas was in her small church in Western Michigan, she saw conflict erupt one Sunday. A third-generation member of the church came out as gay, and he was met with opposition by some of the congregation. Although not LGBTQ+ herself, Sarah was a devout churchgoer who was trained in a ten-week curriculum called The Colossian Way, a tested and proven framework that brings people into conversation in a church around heated topics like sexuality. "If I hadn't been aware of the curriculum, I might have had the courage or the conviction or the desire, but I wouldn't have known what to do with all that and how to channel it into a practical application that people could tack onto." This not only shifted the perspectives of people in her church, but her own as well.

CONDITION 7

BUILD FOR THE LONG HAUL

While the issues of today are urgent and pressing, the work of Community Pluralism often requires us to slow down and think about the long-term repercussions of this work. As one Community Pluralist said: “If we don’t think seven generations down the line, then this work is meaningless.” When we do this well, the work by default becomes more responsive to cultural changes, and more sustainable. This allows initial investments to pay off in dividends in the many years to follow. Efforts like prioritizing young people in the work of Community Pluralism and stewarding the environment provide the fertile grounds for future generations to continue this work. Community Pluralism should not just serve the now—it must also attend to the future.





Matthew Wilson

Sicangu Lakota Oyate
(Rosebud Lakota Reservation)

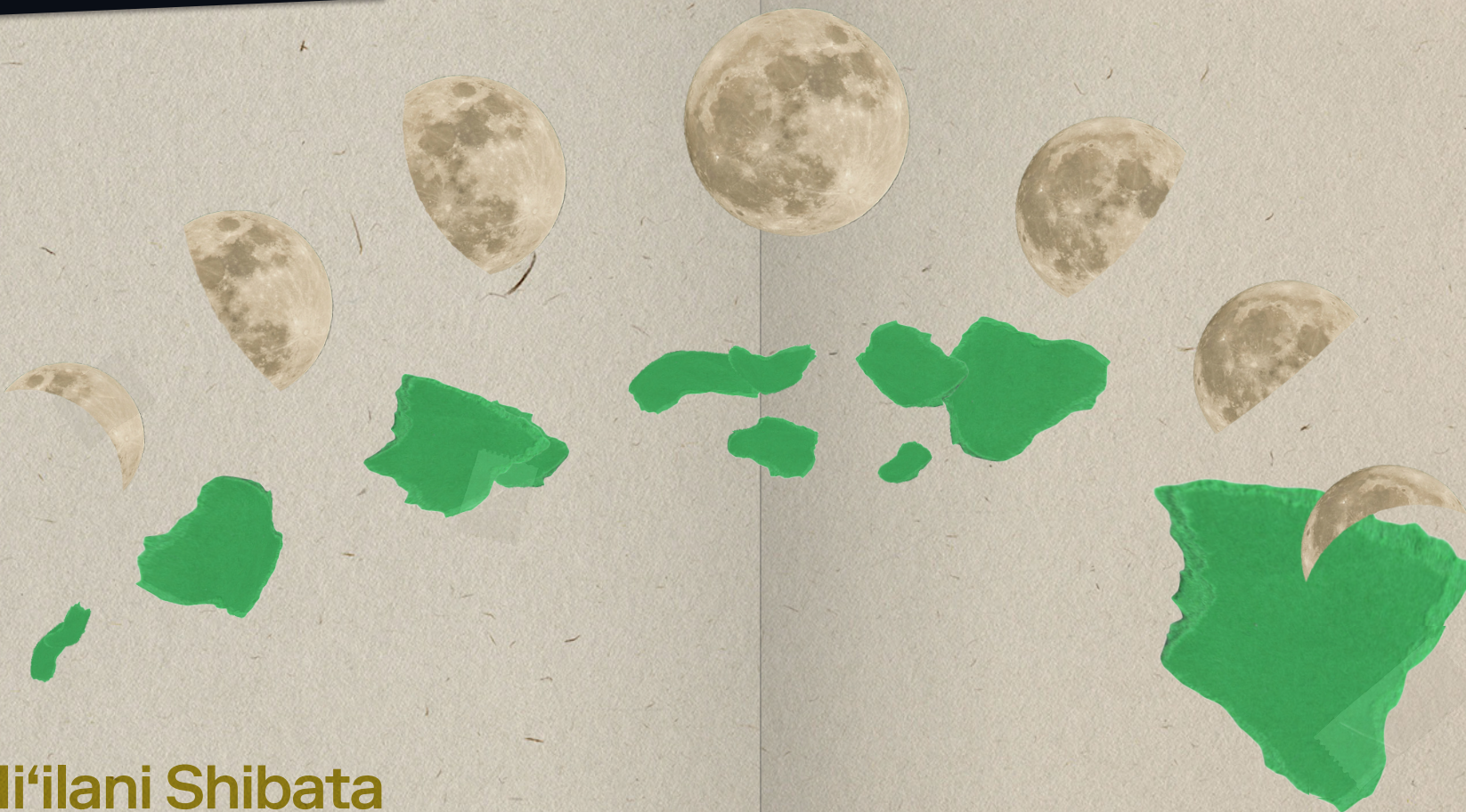
Matthew Wilson of the Sicangu Lakota Oyate (Rosebud Sioux Tribe) of South Dakota works to repair the harm caused by colonization, specifically within Indigenous food systems. He was inspired by the experience of harvesting corn in the fall; his organization would always invite their community members to come up to their farm and harvest—not to sell the corn, but to give it away. The harvest built a bridge between generations. Matthew works within what's called a seven generation food system: doing work in service of seven generations into the future of Lakota people and other indigenous communities. He teaches a 10-week summer program to youth ages 14-24 to pass systems on to the future. "As indigenous people, land conservation is something that we've naturally practiced," Matthew said. "Because it's who we are and our relationship with the land and with the water." Reclaiming their food system is just one step toward their work of ensuring Indigenous people are leading the determination of their own future into a greater, diverse society.

Hi'ilani Shibata

Nānākuli, Hawai'i

Hi'ilani Shibata uses her Indigenous understanding of the moon's phases (called 'ka mahina' in Hawaiian) to tell more compassionate and nuanced stories about prisoners in Hawaii to the public. By aligning to the teaching of the moon, Hi'ilani's work has helped women prisoners feel more healing and connection as they transition from inside the prison's walls to outside in the world as a returning citizen. This moment of re-entry is a critical time for

formerly incarcerated people. In order to reduce recidivism and ensure they have a sense of belonging, helping them to create a plan and form relationships (with themselves, each other, and the broader natural world) is key to re-entering society. By intervening at this stage, sometimes prior to release, Hi'ilani's work has made a lasting impact—creating a ripple of effect for formerly incarcerated women long after they re-enter.



WHAT DO COMMUNITY PLURALISTS NEED?



THIS WORK IS NECESSARY AND
IMPACTFUL, BUT IT NEEDS
FURTHER SUPPORT.

In our conversations with Community Pluralists, a few hopes and needs surfaced that, if met, would support Community Pluralists to do their best work. This list is not exhaustive, but provides a starting point.

NEED 1—

COMMUNITY FOR COMMUNITY PLURALISTS

Community Pluralists are often hiding in plain sight from each other. They may know that many others are doing this kind of work, but aren't particularly networked. Working without support can make problems harder to solve, and takes more energy to carry alone.





“

I FEEL ISOLATED IN WHAT
I'M TRYING TO DO IN MY
COMMUNITY. IT FEELS SO
WONDERFUL JUST TO TALK
TO SOMEONE ABOUT THIS.”

Sarah

– Sarah Nicholas
Plainwell, Michigan

OUTREACH, TRUST & PARTICIPATION FROM FUNDERS

Most Community Pluralists started to do their work, and then realized they needed to create structures such as incorporating a nonprofit or finding a fiscal sponsor. However, since their work is so hyper-local, they're often not connected to sources of funding that could enrich their work. Furthermore, there are few sources of funding that exist that could support this work—we need more funders to join in on this effort. And when they are connected, our research participants often said that funders put constraints on them and their work that dilute the success of it. Community Pluralists are looking for more outreach from funders to connect with them, and they must have flexibility with their funding to do their best work. Often “reporting on the quantitative” came up in most of our conversations as difficult and troubling as a requirement for funding. Many say they exhaust their energies trying to please funders and



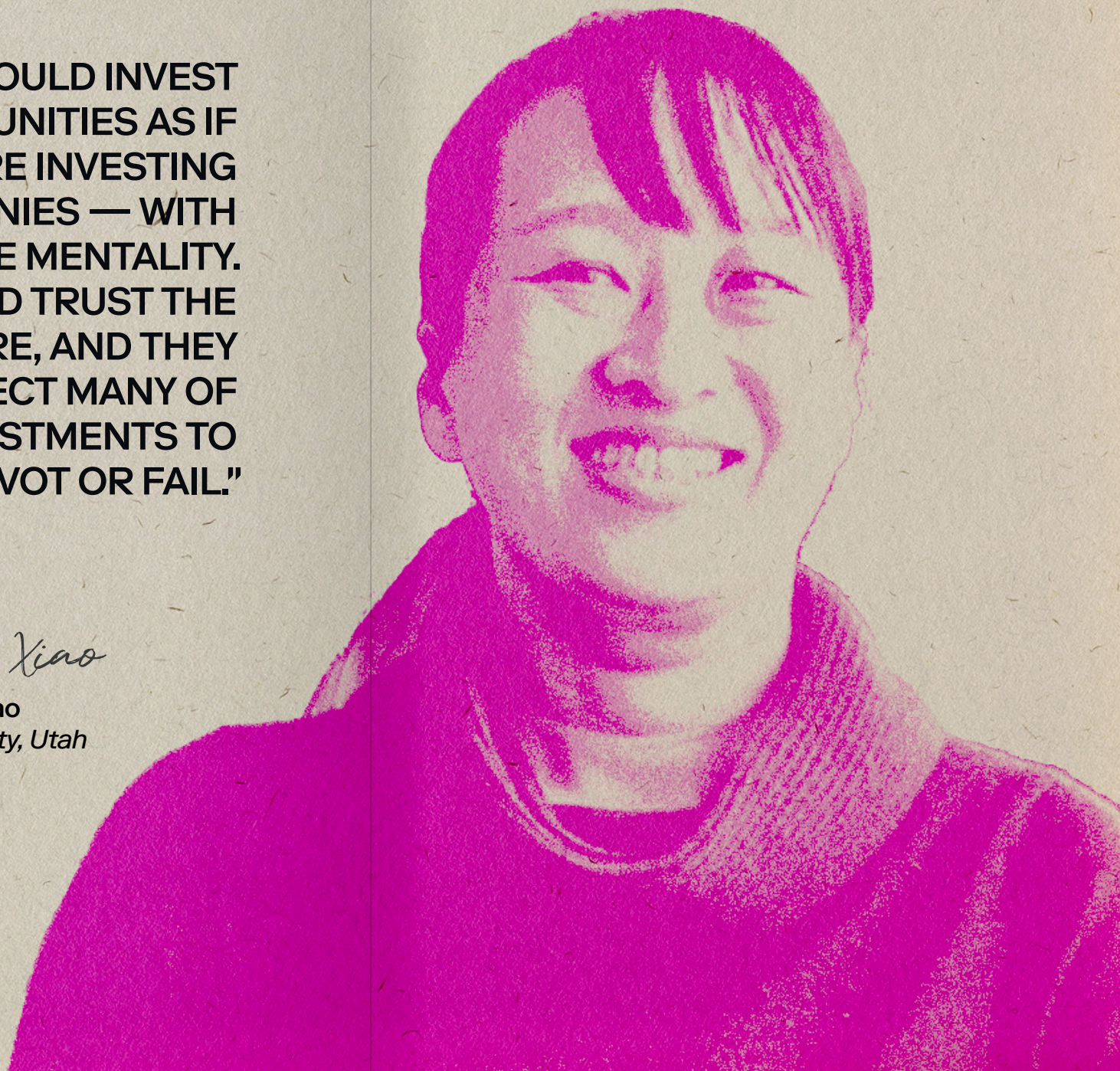
meet their requirements. When there's funding with conditions that don't align with the work, this often takes a toll on their ability to nimbly serve locally. They recognize accountability is important because investments can go awry, but feel this is the minority of cases. “Just like some venture capitalists will invest in shoddy businesses, some philanthropic funders might do the same in this work too—but it is truly the slimmest minority,” one research participant said. Another added: “Trust us that we know what our communities need, and that we're doing this work in service of that need.”

“

FUNDERS SHOULD INVEST
IN COMMUNITIES AS IF
THEY WERE INVESTING
IN COMPANIES — WITH
THE SAME MENTALITY.
THEY SHOULD TRUST THE
PEOPLE MORE, AND THEY
SHOULD EXPECT MANY OF
THEIR INVESTMENTS TO
PIVOT OR FAIL.”

Ze Min Xiao

– Ze Min Xiao
Salt Lake City, Utah

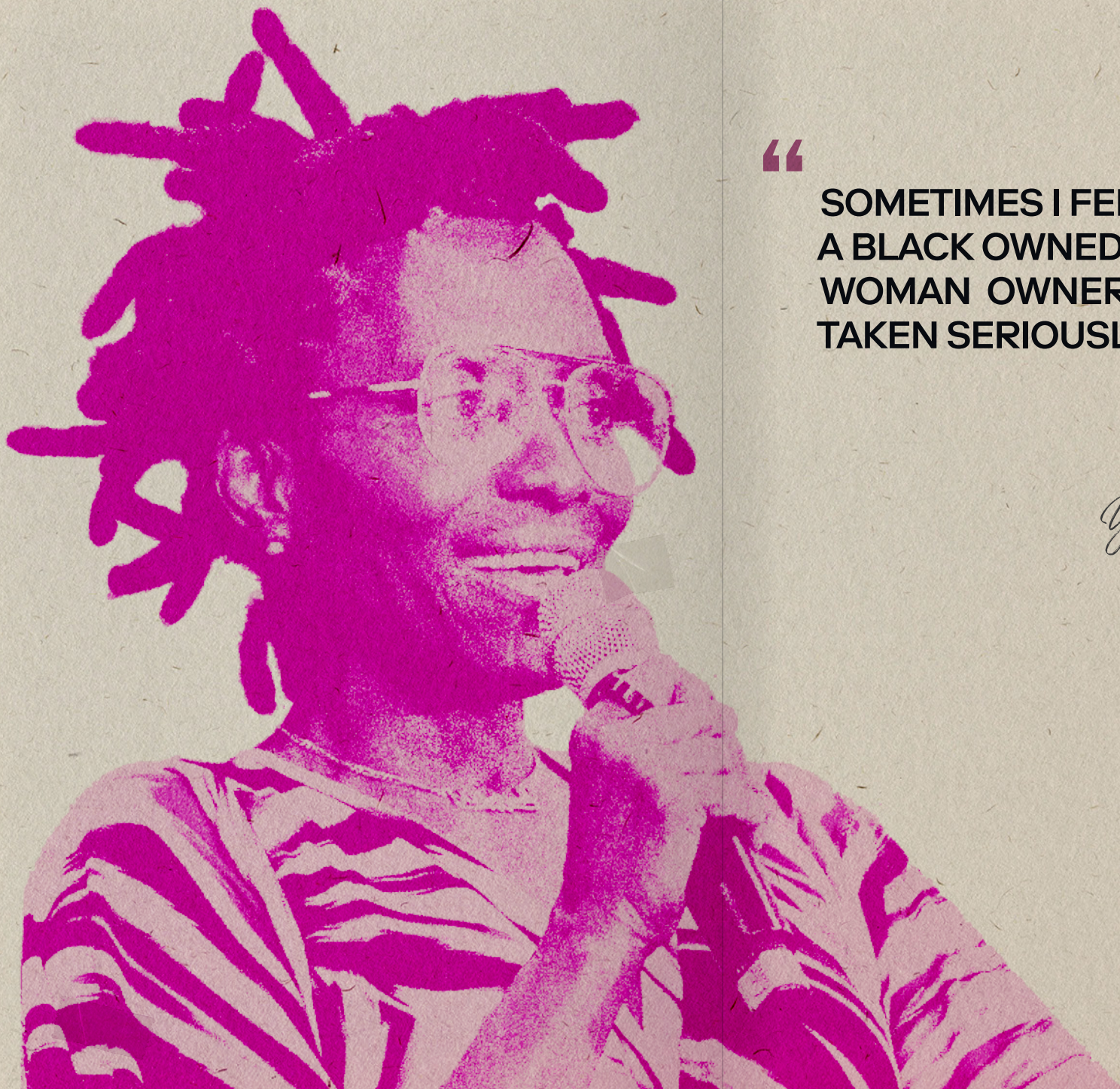


NEED 3 -

TO BE EMBRACED IN THEIR WHOLE, COMPLEX IDENTITIES

Community Pluralists hold many overlapping identities and ideologies—from being conservative to being Black; from being queer to living in a rural community. Often, when trying to do their work, many feel like they're being ignored or tokenized for these identities and ideologies. When we spoke to Community Pluralists, they wanted people to come in with fewer assumptions and more curiosity about the history or issues that make this work so necessary, so people focused on the work they were doing instead of their identities.





“

SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE BEING
A BLACK OWNED BUSINESS
WOMAN OWNER... I DON'T GET
TAKEN SERIOUSLY ENOUGH.”

Yolanda

– Yolanda Owens
Atlanta, Georgia

TO HAVE OTHERS UPLIFT THE WORK & COMMUNITY, NOT JUST THE HEROES

Community Pluralists are just that—in community. They don't want to be seen as heroes or individuals saving people—and this might actually be more problematic than helpful to their work. When we uplift just the heroes, it sometimes makes this work feel inaccessible to others. When we uplift the work itself, and how it gets done in a community, this builds a narrative that anyone anywhere can get started with strengthening pluralism efforts in their communities. It's crucial to resource and honor the growth of the community and to ensure sustainability and to take the pressure off the initiating Community Pluralists themselves. "I love being an example, but I can't be *the* example," one shared in an interview.



PERSONAL SUPPORT & HEALING

When we spoke to Community Pluralists, something that often came up was the emotional and spiritual taxation of this work. It is incredibly draining, and their work often seeps into the other parts of their lives: their relationships with loved ones or their mental and physical health. There are also complications when working within your own local community—many feel that the work they do spills into the relationships they hold with neighbors or other community members. This can affect their lives outside of their work. Having access to personal support in the form of mental, physical and spiritual healing is extremely important to sustain the Community Pluralists' energy in this work.

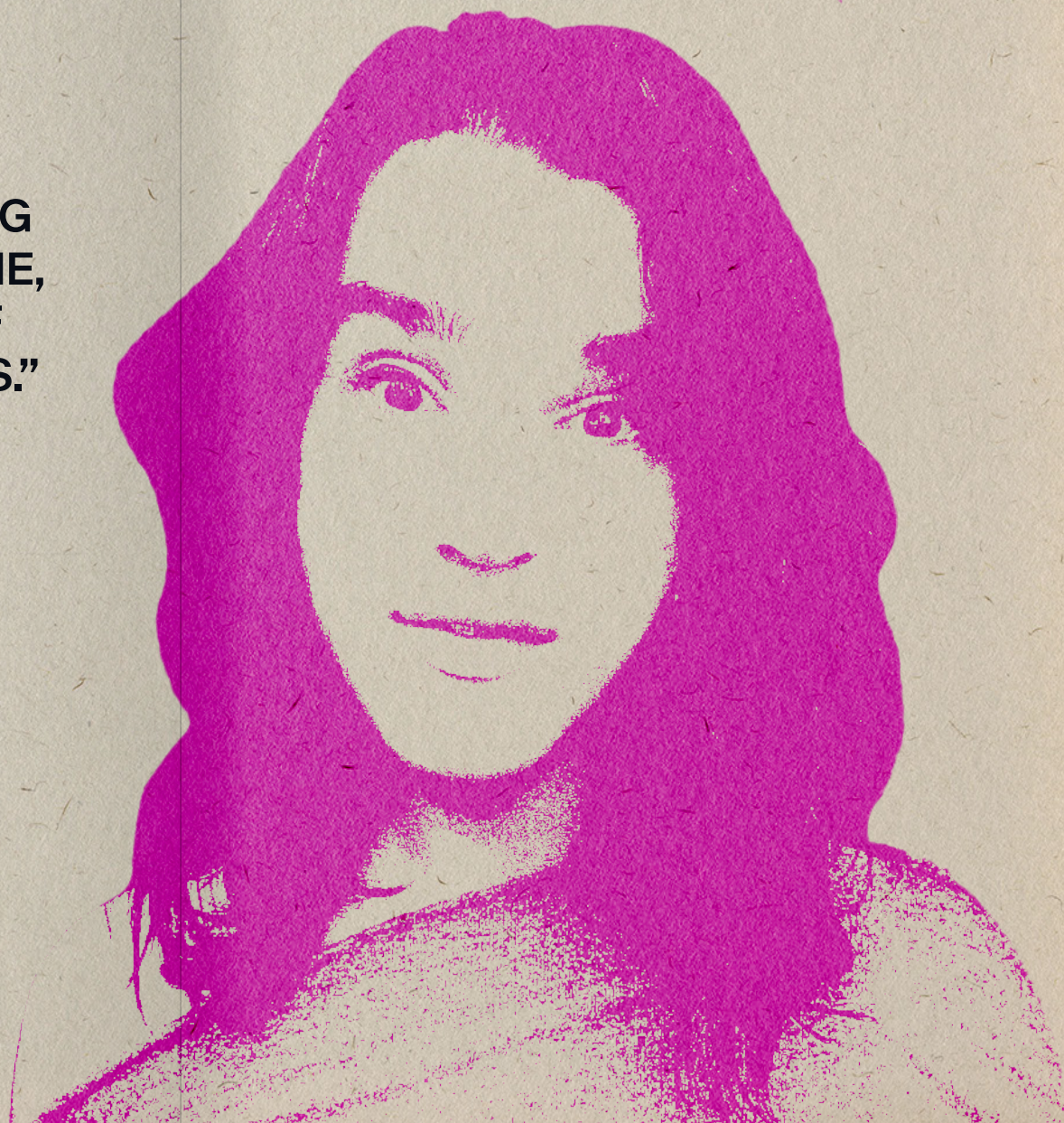


“

ANY TIME THERE'S NEW
LEGISLATION ATTACKING
US IN THE NEWS... OUR
ENTIRE COMPANY IS
TRYING TO FUNCTION
WHILE WE ARE ALL HAVING
A REALLY EMOTIONAL TIME,
FEELING THE IMPACTS OF
THOSE THINGS... IT HURTS.”

Maybe

– Maybe Burke
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



AN INVITATION TO BUILD ON THIS RESEARCH



QU

WHAT IS YOUR VISION OF THE FUTURE IF THIS WORK...

THIS ZINE IS NOT COMPREHENSIVE.
**THERE'S STILL A LOT MORE
WE NEED TO LEARN ABOUT
COMMUNITY PLURALISM.**

We encourage you to build on the knowledge we aggregated in this zine by identifying and conversing with Community Pluralists who are relevant to your work. You can use the archetypes earlier in this zine as a guide, if needed.

By learning more about the realities of these Community Pluralists, you'll be better positioned to see how they are relevant to your work of advancing pluralism, as well as how to support them in their endeavors. If you decide to connect with Community Pluralists, we are providing this list of questions to help you better understand who they are and what they need—some of these questions are even pulled from our own research plan:

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QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY PLURALISTS

WHAT ISSUES MATTER TO YOUR COMMUNITY? WHY DO THEY MATTER TO YOU?



WHAT SCARES YOU?

WHAT DO YOU VALUE THE MOST?

WHAT ARE YOU PROTECTING?

HOW ARE YOU SEEING DIVISION TAKE SHAPE IN YOUR COMMUNITY?
WHERE SPECIFICALLY IS IT BUBBLING UP IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

DO YOU USE THE WORD 'PLURALISM' TO DESCRIBE YOUR WORK? WHY OR WHY NOT?

WHAT DO YOU NEED FOR THIS WORK TO BE POSSIBLE / SUSTAINED?

WHAT PAIN POINTS DO YOU FACE?

WHAT IS YOUR VISION OF THE FUTURE IF THIS WORK IS SUCCESSFUL?

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Closing Essay: WHERE COULD THIS WORK TAKE US?



*Written by Alison Grubbs and Uma
Viswanathan, New Pluralists*



Our country is a tapestry of people who move through our society in vastly different ways. We come from diverse lineages and family traditions. We worship differently or not at all. We think and vote in contradictory ways. Our life experiences, values, and beliefs inform what roles we believe government, business, and religion should play in our lives, how resources should be allocated, and how we want our stories and histories to be told.

People in this country have been holding on to great pain for generations and throughout their lifetimes. Some are afraid of what the future might hold. Our perspectives may be opposed to each other, and this is where we start to clash. These differences, as well as the conflicts they produce, are a design feature of our democracy, not a flaw. And learning how to move forward and build solutions across these differences, without breaking apart, is what it takes to live into the promise of America.

New Pluralists is a national collaborative of funders and field leaders working together to strengthen the culture of respect and belonging in the United States for everyone, everywhere—one where we find strength in our differences, take responsibility to heal what is broken, and respect the dignity of every person we encounter.

We have more work to do. For one, this zine cannot possibly capture the full diversity of Community Pluralists who are leading this kind of work locally. We also need to enable their work to inform and iterate with national-level strategies—the bottom-up and the top-down—so that we can harness the best impulses of both towards this larger vision.

We dream of a world where we can each show up in our full humanity. In this future, we may not always agree with or even like each other, but we strive to respect each other's freedoms while still protecting the common good. We reject the premise that some people's lives or opinions matter more, and we seek to challenge worldviews that make us think that certain groups' opportunities come at the cost of others'.

We believe the work of Community Pluralism is crucial for our survival. And we believe that this culture of respect and belonging begins in communities where Pluralists—like the ones you’ve read about in the pages of this zine—are building bonds of trust and affection among neighbors. That’s why, in our first year as an organization, we wanted to shine a light on those people who are stitching our communities together, demonstrating that a different way of being together is possible. In response to this need, we launched our funding initiative Healing Starts Here: Local Solutions to America’s Divisions, through which we hope to invest \$10,000,000 in people and organizations who are bringing this future to life.

The task can seem overwhelming and scary at times, but it is through these pockets of courage that we are reminded of our power to live into the promise of a vibrant, inclusive, and free democracy—in this moment, and the ones yet to come.



APPENDIX

Research Participants

Macky Alston
New York, NY

Kim Anno
Berkeley, CA

Maybe Burke
Philadelphia, PA

William Lee
Roanoke, VA

Michael Lezak
San Francisco, CA

HB Lozito
Brattleboro, Vermont
(Abenaki Land)

Antong Lucky
Dallas, TX

Consuelo Rosales
Jonesboro, AK

Irshad Manji
Brooklyn, NY

Chuck Mingo
Cincinnati, OH

Mike Newman
Joplin, MO

Sarah Nicholas
Plainwell, MI

Yolanda Owens
Atlanta, GA

Hi'ilani Shibata
Nānākuli, Hawai'i

Ja'Ron Smith
Washington, DC

Isabel Trujillo
Abiquiu, NM

Matthew Wilson
Mission, SD

Stephan Wolfert
Nomadic

Ze Min Xiao
Salt Lake City, UT



Artists and Research Team



EJ Baker (they/them) is a visual designer, artist and strategist. They are a co-founder of Maybe Ventures, an art and strategy collective focused on envisioning more just, sustainable, and beautiful new worlds. EJ's work has been featured in Fast Company, Variety, Typewolf and Fonts in Use. Hailing from the forests of upstate New York, they now live amongst the urban cottontails and sidewalk dandelions of Somerville, MA.



Adrienne M. Benjamin (She/Her/Hers) is an Anishinaabe multifaceted artist, equity advocate, and cultural educator. She utilizes her own vast life experiences as a special needs mother, GBS survivor, and as a modern day Indigenous woman to create meaningful, current, socially relevant, and culturally significant work that intersects with her Anishinaabe values, history, and life ways.



As a nonbinary, 5th-generation San Francisco-born ABC (*"American-Born Chinese"*) sewing seeds in San Antonio, TX, **Lala Openi Cheung 張** (they/them) leverages their perpetual foreignness to both see and *be* the bridge; cross-pollinating questions, resources, and perspectives; across mediums, cultures, and worlds. As a solo artist, creative strategist, and spacemaker, Openi's work is featured in Eastbay Express, SF Weekly, SOMArts, the Honolulu Biennial, and Lei Culture. As co-founder of The House of Malico, TheAbstract.Work, and the Me Time Mindful Makerspace, Openi makes interactive spaces for fellow seekers to tap in and reflect as a means to get free.



Lauren Ito is an American Gosei UX leader, poet, and community organizer committed to advancing equity through art and design. She lives in San Francisco and can almost always be found by the sea.



Emily Lyon is a social impact storyteller living in New York City, committed to using the power of media to make our communities more thoughtful, connected, and sustainable. She is also artistic director of Expand the Canon, founder/executive producer of Future Facing Films, and co-creator of the Environmental Justice Card Game.



Annie Malcolm is an anthropologist and writer, a queer and a Jew. She did ethnographic research in an art village in Shenzhen, China and curates and writes for art exhibitions in the Bay Area. She holds a Ph.D. from UC Berkeley.



Bruno Olmedo Quiroga is a researcher, designer, and strategist in Florida, originally from Cochabamba, Bolivia. His work is focused on emerging technologies, culture change, and strategic storytelling.



Rachelle Reichert is a visual artist, illustrator and art educator based in the San Francisco Bay Area, California (Chochenyo Ohlone territory). Her illustrations have been featured in wine and food packaging such as The Prisoner Wine Company and Grove and Vine Olive Oil. In her fine art, she has exhibited her work nationally and internationally at galleries and art museums and is included in major public and private collections.



Scott Keoni Shigeoka is a curiosity expert, author, and creative consultant based in 29 Palms, CA. His forthcoming book is “SEEK: How Curiosity Can Transform Your Life and Change the World” (Hachette, 2023). He has worked with the New Pluralists, Greater Good Science Center, Encore.org and other local and national efforts to foster healing and connection. He is a former design leader at IDEO.



Jonathan Thunder is known for his surreal paintings, digitally animated films and installations in which he addresses subject matter of personal experience and sociopolitical commentary. He is an enrolled member of the Red Lake Band of Ojibwe, and makes his home and studio in Duluth, MN. Thunder is the recipient of a 2020/21 Pollock-Krasner Foundation Award and has been awarded a McKnight Visual Artist Fellowship for 2022/23.

