

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01	INTRODUCTION
03	ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENTS
15	DEMANDS
27	IDEAS FOR CONSIDERATION

INTRODUCTION

“TRANS IN THE ARTS” COHORT FIRST REPORT

Violence against Trans people is on the rise across the world. This shouldn't be a surprise to anyone at this point, especially for the community living in Treaty 7 Territory, where protests against drag events are happening with more frequency. This is not to say that hatred and aggression towards Trans folk is a new thing. Transphobia has been around for as long as there has been a word for it, and hatred towards those who “transgress” society's cisnormative binary goes back centuries. Transphobia can take many forms, many of which are invisible to those who do not experience it, but are nonetheless incredibly harmful. **There are very few “safe spaces” for Trans folk; and this is especially true for the performing arts community in the city called Calgary on land known to the Blackfoot as Moh'kinstsis** . I know this to be true as do the many Trans artists who are a part of this cohort. They are the co-authors of this document.

This cohort brought a multitude of thoughtful considerations and experiences to the space. Their words, their wisdom, have been compiled here. The cohort began a year ago, and throughout our monthly meetings, notes were taken by our scribe and co-facilitator Jordan Baylon. These notes were meticulous in carrying the meaning of what was being shared in the space. This document was created from those notes. At this point in the process the cohort has a remaining three months of meetings (ending May 2023), where we will continue to listen and share, but will additionally use this document as a stepping stone towards the future development of change making.

The structure of the following document has three categories: Accountability, Demands, and Ideas. Within all three you will see issues of Transphobia, Transmisogyny, Racism, and Accessibility being raised. It is apparent that this cohort carries a breadth of intersectionality in experience and knowledge. Even the concept of “identity based” groups, such as this very cohort, was critically discussed.

Please reflect on the following and how the spaces, resources, and opportunities you provide can be made more accessible to all.



1

Violence and harm against trans people is **on the rise** everywhere.

2

Transphobia is rife in the theatre community:

- a. Microaggressions, toxic discourse, erasure, etc.

3

Equity initiatives are taking too long and are **not** serving the community.



4

The Theatre & Performing Arts community is seemingly not interested in discussing and confronting Transmisogyny:

- a. **There has to be a desire to recognize where your organization is failing to meet the needs of the trans community:**
 - i. The implicit hierarchies of knowledge sharing (academic accreditations, etc) make it so those with power in organizations devalue the perspectives or the possibility of learning from those disempowered in their spaces.

5

Serving “2SLGBTQIA+ folk” is **not** serving Trans folk.

6

The arts are not inherently progressive and/or safe:

- a. There is a narrative that queerness naturally thrives in theatre arts that we take for granted the work and intention needed to create safe and affirming spaces for trans folk.
- b. Power in the theatre community is very centred around white cis/gay identities in a way that still displaces and erases and harms trans folk.



7

There are **numerous intersections** of disabled and trans identity when it comes to accessibility.

8

Disabled community continues to be treated as disposable:

- a. "Formal" theatre training is not accessible;
 - i. The curriculums and approaches to theatre training are ableist.
Disabled folk are rarely even allowed to apply to Theatre School.
- b. Ongoing invisibilization, tokenization, and inequity.



9

Trans folk are constantly called upon to be advocates for their own existence and inclusion. **We just want to be ourselves** and yet there is no opportunity for us to just be ourselves - we have to build our own spaces because there are none for us:

- a. However, individual instances of advocacy get siloed and dismissed as whining and complaining.
- b. When we speak out or raise concerns, we are met with immediate opposition, and are the ones who suffer consequences and not the organization.
- c. Trickle Up"/"Bottom up" - **the people most hurt by these systems structures are the ones forced to do the most labour around advocating for transformation** - we need to centre the voices/ perspectives of these people instead of attacking them.
- d. It shouldn't be all on us to hold the brunt of the violence - **why aren't our allies scaling and amplifying our voices?**

MEMORIALS OF CARE



10

We need a network of care and support that is coordinated across multiple organizations:

- a. Having individuals to help coordinate through the network.
- b. This work should be done by more than one person.
- c. Having an organization behind you when you're advocating.
- d. Having someone whose job it is to advocate.

TRANS IN THE ARTS

DEMANDS

15





1

Stop playing “The Devil’s Advocate”. It is giving space to those that have perspectives that are transphobic.

- a. These “opinions” negate the existence and validity of trans folk.
The trans right to live and exist should never be up for debate.

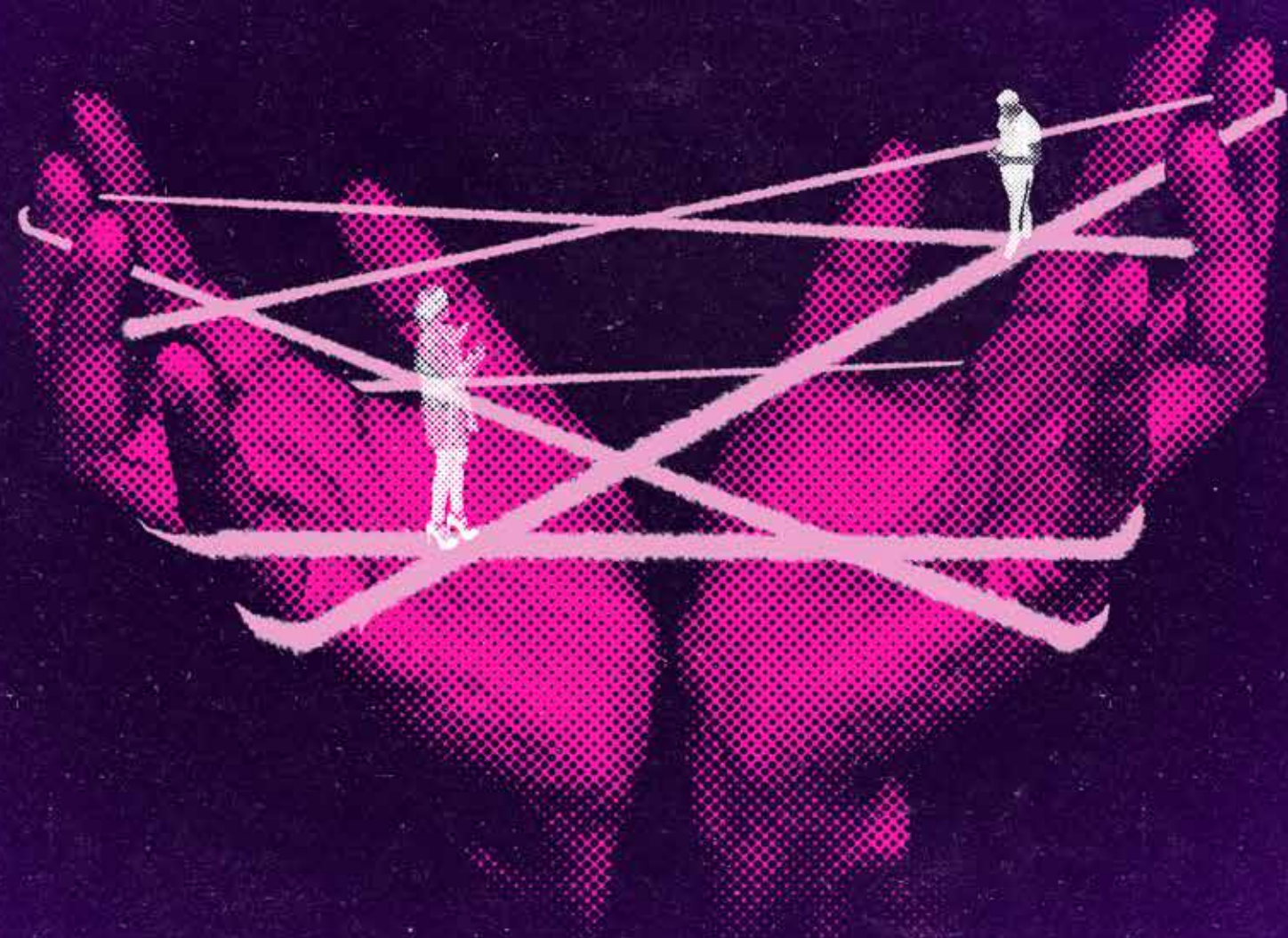
ACCESSIBILITY IN THE ARTS



2

Disability justice needs to be at the heart of any organization that seeks to serve the Trans community.

- a. Folks in authority need to take a “no” as an opportunity to work with our needs and not as an anti-authority action.
 - i. What is unique for us and all of the choices we make to show up should be honoured.
- b. The traditional model for production needs to be changed:
 - i. An extended creative process allows folk to explore different scheduling structures.
 - ii. The rehearsal and tech process needs to be extended to allow for rest, recovery, care, and community-building.
 - iii. Labour expectations such as the 40hr work week, is ableist.
 - iv. Time to close off productions in a good way - post-care, settling, composting, showing gratitude, etc.
- c. Relaxed performances need to be **by and for** disabled folks.
- d. **Make venues physically and meaningfully accessible:**
 - i. Provide FOH staff with the necessary training on the nuances of mobility needs.



We should not be required to “pass” to be cast in a role.

3

Stop making excuses for leaving Trans Folk out:

- a. “There wasn’t time to find a trans actor, none auditioned for the role, etc”.
- b. If you are not willing to put in the labour required for our inclusion than you are not ready to be an ally.

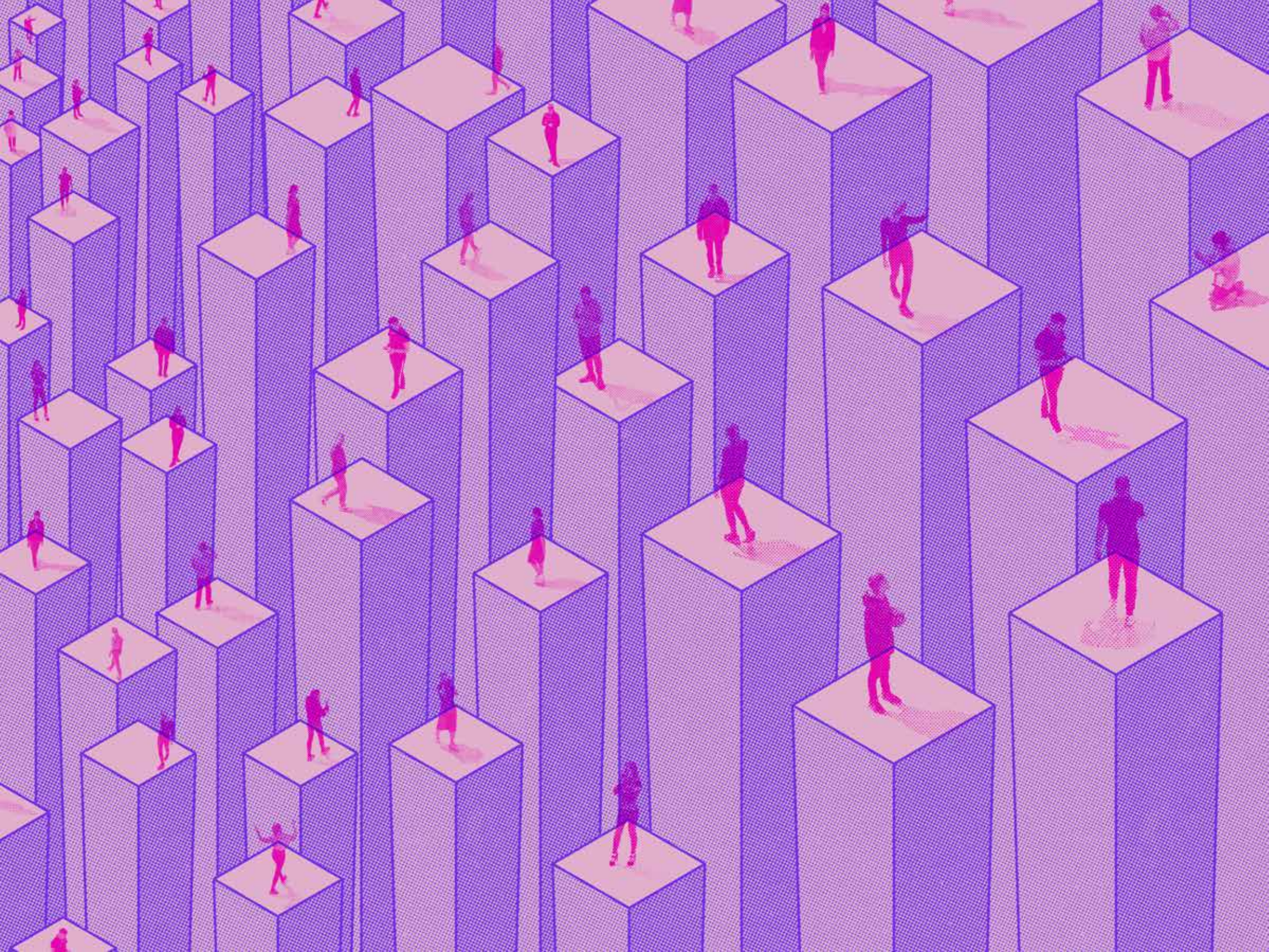
4

Stop using “Queerness” as a shield:

- a. We are not a “box” to be checked off under “the inclusion of 2SLGBTQIA+ folk”, **our needs are unique and intersectional.**

5

We should not be required to “pass” to be cast in a role.



6

The efficacy of the 35/50 project needs to be reviewed:

- a. Where are arts organizations today?

7

We don't push visibility without consulting with the most visible in our community:

- a. "Coming out" doesn't immediately mean safety and belonging and acceptance - "tokenism" is a carceral structure. Being the only _____ (insert: woman of colour, trans person, Indigenous, etc.). When you're tokenized, you're isolated from your own kind.

8

Organizations should seek and participate in "allyship training, queer 101, and other **decolonial workshops aimed at creating anti-oppressive workspaces.**



9

We deserve **the right to choose who we learn from and choose when we lead;**

- a. We need to assume competence. Assume the ability to learn and be part of community.
- b. **Value lived-experience consultants:**
 - i. Very little to no representation of folk doing this job, getting paid.
 - ii. Large institutions and orgs get access to funding but then still rely on Disabled, Trans, and Racialized artists to educate/train them for free.

10

We refuse to sign NDAs that are only meant to silence us to the benefit of continued oppression.

11

This is not a big puzzle to solve, **be brave and bold** in enacting obvious interventions.

12

By-for equity-deserving groups should be able to be **directly funded** to continue to work at a grassroots level and also **be prioritized in funding.**

TRANS IN THE ARTS

IDEAS FOR CONSIDERATION



X TRANS IN THE ARTS X TRANS IN THE ARTS X

X TRANS IN THE ARTS X TRANS IN THE ARTS X

X TRANS IN THE ARTS X TRANS IN THE ARTS X

X TRANS IN THE ARTS X TRANS IN THE ARTS X

X TRANS IN THE ARTS X TRANS IN THE ARTS X

X TRANS IN THE ARTS X TRANS IN THE ARTS X

X TRANS IN THE ARTS X TRANS IN THE ARTS X

X TRANS IN THE ARTS X TRANS IN THE ARTS X

X TRANS IN THE ARTS X TRANS IN THE ARTS X

X TRANS IN THE ARTS X TRANS IN THE ARTS X

X TRANS IN THE ARTS X TRANS IN THE ARTS X

X TRANS IN THE ARTS X TRANS IN THE ARTS X

X TRANS IN THE ARTS X TRANS IN THE ARTS X

X TRANS IN THE ARTS X TRANS IN THE ARTS X

X TRANS IN THE ARTS X TRANS IN THE ARTS X

X TRANS IN THE ARTS X TRANS IN THE ARTS X

COMMUNITY CARE

1

Accessible options were beginning to be explored with great interest during the beginning of the pandemic but were **swiftly** forgotten about when the opportunity arose to return to the capitalist methods of production:

- a. **The rush and urgency in professional productions leads to burnout.**
- b. They are focused on “a product to sell”, and not community.
 - i. This creates class as an access point and makes art only for the elite.
- c. **Money spent on “grandiosity” could be spent in favour of accessibility and care resources.**
- d. Shift attitudes and practices around offering digital options as a way of supporting community.
 - i. Documentation of productions could be a **space for community celebration and gratitude**, not just for archival purposes.

2

“Gender neutral” and/or gender diverse does not equal Woman or Woman-lite.

3

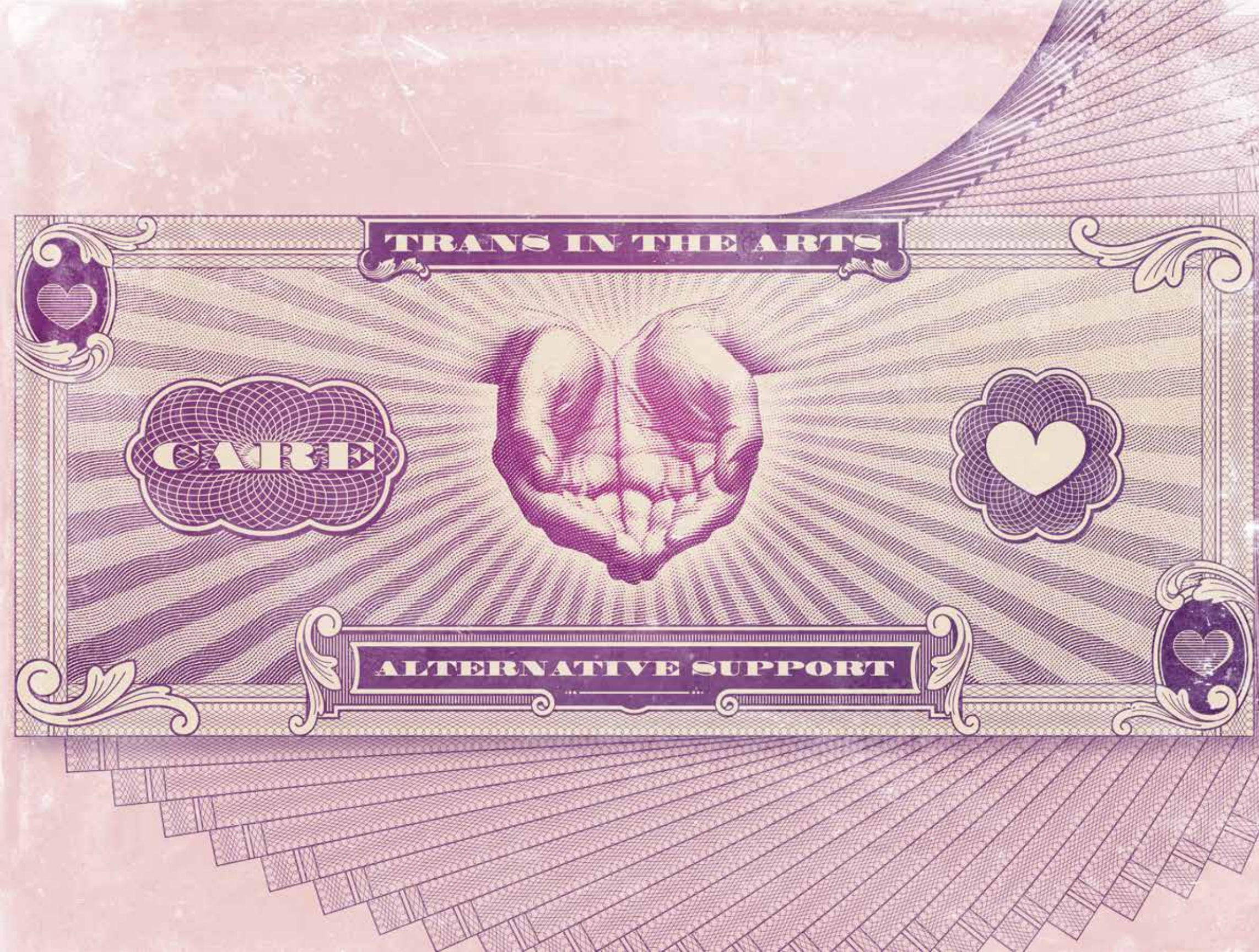
“Leave it at the door”, “the show must go on”, etc. are **toxic concepts that reinforce capitalist ideals of labour extraction.**



4

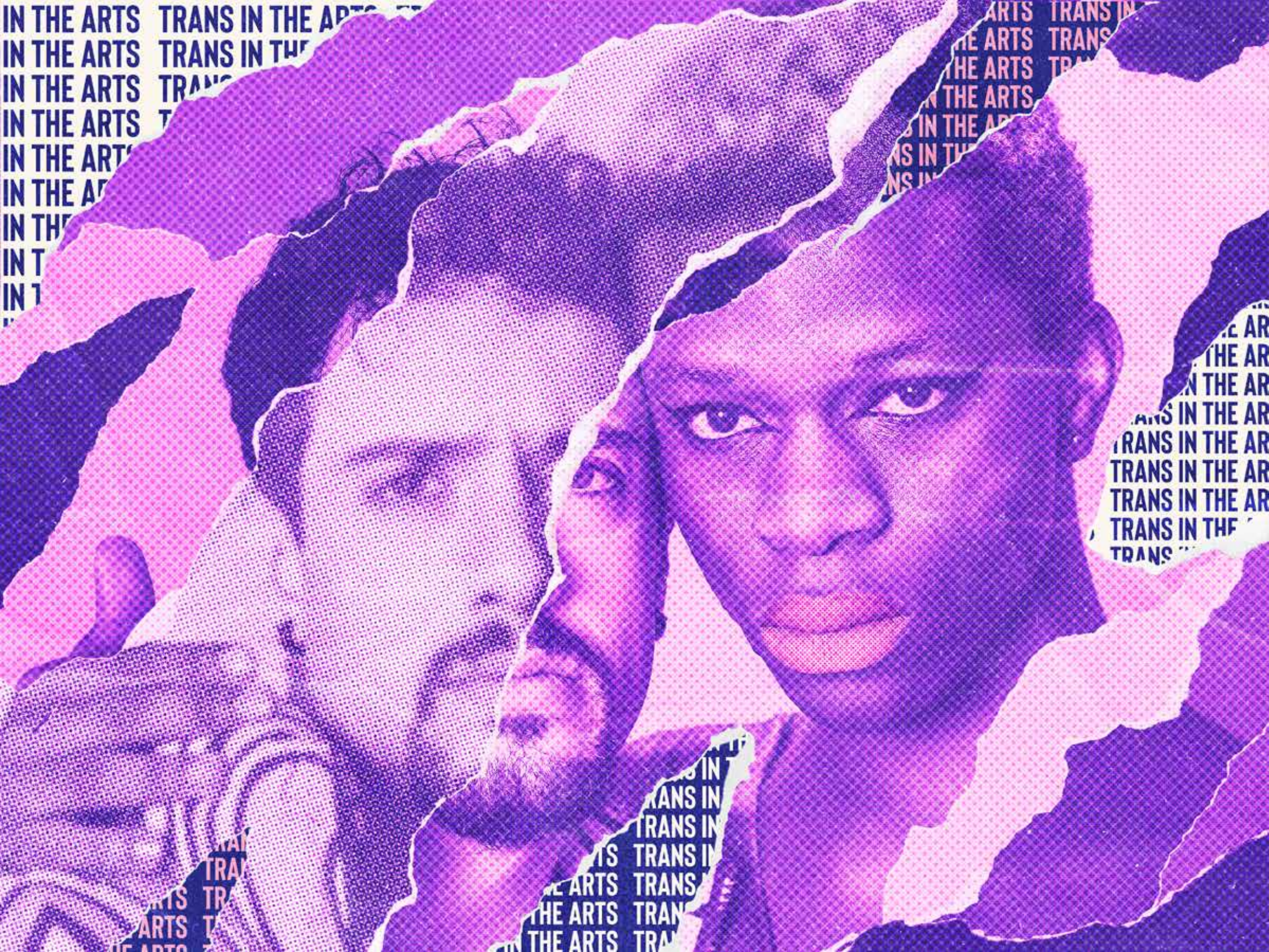
How do we model support for trans artists accessing medical care or going through procedures and/or surgery recovery?

- a. Relaxed rehearsal spaces and performances with **Disability Justice principles**.
- b. Taking multiple months off work can create barriers.
- c. Having to give up on contracts and paid work.
- d. Even with benefits folks often don't receive short-term disability coverage.
- e. "Short-term disability" offerings are often calculated at half of annual income, **which is not enough to live on**, especially considering folks with intersectional identities may not be fully employed throughout the year due to systemic oppression:
 - i. Support based on a calculation of last year's income is inherently inequitable because it **compounds barriers of access** to paid work and jobs.
 1. Basing on partner's income is also inequitable, AISH can target partners for repayment for the other's benefits.
 2. Places incredible stress on low-income, disabled couples.



4

- f. If there is coverage then often it only covers the minimum recovery time/conditions.
- g. **Funding like this should not be counted as taxable income;**
 - i. Creates a tax burden that becomes punitive if folk do find work later.
 - 1. Non-taxable alternatives:
 - a. Giftcards.
 - b. Signing people up for meals-on-wheels and paying up front.
 - c. Honorariums.
 - d. Fund for purchasing surgical supplies so they can be distributed to people in need.
 - e. Surgical recovery kits.
 - f. Direct utility bill payments to the providers.
 - g. Direct payment to landlords.



5

Organizations aren't addressing the "iceberg" that underlies the issues of representation of trans communities:

- a. Why are people not showing up or self-excluding from access points to the arts?
- b. The role of accessible training, artistic, and professional development.
- c. Systemic nature of inequity and inaccessibility.
- d. The false narrative that authentic casting is not possible, whereas we merely need to be willing to try to do this in new ways.

6

We deserve the opportunity to be paid whatever we want to be in projects, spaces, and organizations.



7

We need to create opportunities for **intergenerational knowledge sharing.**