

Radical IMAGINATION



Transportation

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Leaders-in-Residence Overview

The Othering & Belonging Institute (OBI) at UC Berkeley's Community Power and Policy Partnership team partners with community-based organizations and public agencies to advance strategies through which all members of marginalized communities have the resources, tools, and power to be meaningfully involved in transforming the structures that shape community wellbeing and belonging. We facilitate, and advise our partners in facilitating, participatory processes in which residents most impacted by issues of concern lead transformative change.

OBI has been engaged by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to build the capacity of the State and communities across California to advance equitable transportation planning. Our current work with CARB focuses on supporting and building capacity for equitable transportation planning. What that looks like is a little different in each community, based on the needs and visions grantees are articulating.

A core priority for us is to support the transportation justice field more broadly by amplifying the voices and work of its leaders, holding spaces for sharing knowledge and co-creating, and supporting the development of tools and resources with the primary audience being communities most impacted by transportation injustices. The Leaders in Residence process is anchored in this goal.

The Leader-in-Residence program is designed for individuals who have deep experience working in and with equity seeking communities, including low-income, immigrant, and/or communities of color, to develop and advance strategies related to equitable transportation.

The Leaders-in-Residence program is a program that convened transportation equity experts from across California to create a tool that center and support communities impacted by transportation injustices. After a year-long process the LIRs underwent discussions and activities rooted in a Radical Imagination process, this zine is a reflection of those activities and the discussions generated from that process.



How To Use This Zine



This zine is meant to be a reflection of a Radical Imagination (RI) process. When the Leaders-in-Residence got together to brainstorm through this project, the team concluded that we couldn't write about RI without going through an internal process.

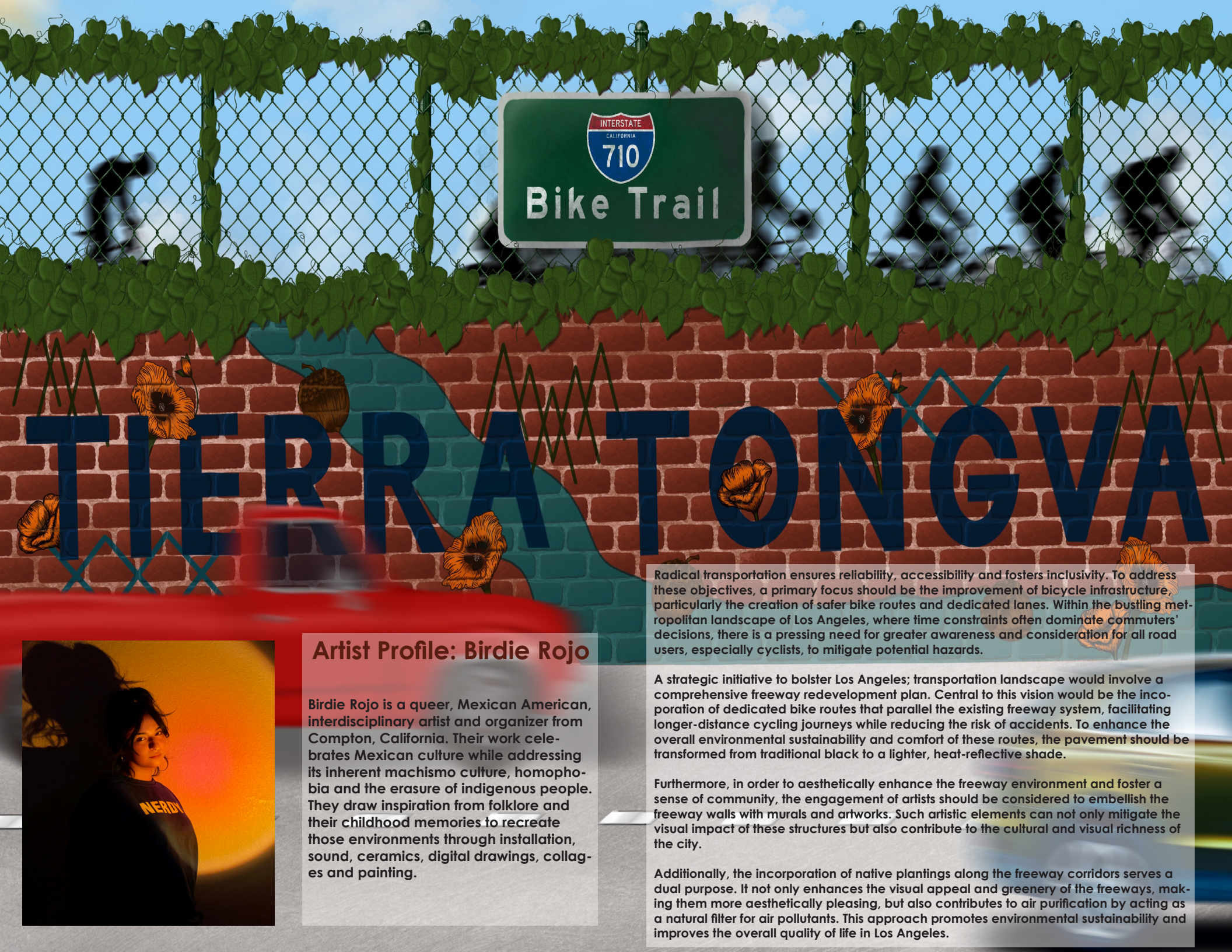
This zine is the manifestation of that process. Included you will find a working definition of Radical Imagination, activities that used in our internal process, prompts for you to use and imagine, and original works of art from community members who were prompted with the task to radically imagine transportation in their community.



Table of Contents

Artist Profile: Birdie Rojo	2
Defining Radical Imagination	5
Artist Profile: Deidre Weinberg	12
Peoplehood Matrix	15
Artist Profile: Sage Alucero Juarez	28
Visionary Fiction	31
Artist Profile: Gemma Jimenez	38





TIERRA TONGVA

Radical transportation ensures reliability, accessibility and fosters inclusivity. To address these objectives, a primary focus should be the improvement of bicycle infrastructure, particularly the creation of safer bike routes and dedicated lanes. Within the bustling metropolitan landscape of Los Angeles, where time constraints often dominate commuters' decisions, there is a pressing need for greater awareness and consideration for all road users, especially cyclists, to mitigate potential hazards.

A strategic initiative to bolster Los Angeles' transportation landscape would involve a comprehensive freeway redevelopment plan. Central to this vision would be the incorporation of dedicated bike routes that parallel the existing freeway system, facilitating longer-distance cycling journeys while reducing the risk of accidents. To enhance the overall environmental sustainability and comfort of these routes, the pavement should be transformed from traditional black to a lighter, heat-reflective shade.

Furthermore, in order to aesthetically enhance the freeway environment and foster a sense of community, the engagement of artists should be considered to embellish the freeway walls with murals and artworks. Such artistic elements can not only mitigate the visual impact of these structures but also contribute to the cultural and visual richness of the city.

Additionally, the incorporation of native plantings along the freeway corridors serves a dual purpose. It not only enhances the visual appeal and greenery of the freeways, making them more aesthetically pleasing, but also contributes to air purification by acting as a natural filter for air pollutants. This approach promotes environmental sustainability and improves the overall quality of life in Los Angeles.

Artist Profile: Birdie Rojo

Birdie Rojo is a queer, Mexican American, interdisciplinary artist and organizer from Compton, California. Their work celebrates Mexican culture while addressing its inherent machismo culture, homophobia and the erasure of indigenous people. They draw inspiration from folklore and their childhood memories to recreate those environments through installation, sound, ceramics, digital drawings, collages and painting.



Radical Imagination of Transportation

Transportation may be the sector most in need of radical transformation. As the largest contributor of greenhouse gas, and a fundamental resource for people to access their basic needs, transportation is in urgent need of transformation for both stabilizing the climate and achieving equitable communities.

Transportation has had various interventions made to reimagine it, yet these interventions have been largely driven by wealthy individuals and corporations. The communities that have been marginalized by transportation systems, and have the most at stake in the climate crisis, have also been marginalized in the research and planning of solutions. Yet for transportation solutions to work for all, they must include those who have the direct experience of inequities, lest these inequities be reproduced.

In the words of poet and activist Amiri Baraka, "There is no distance between art and life." Radical imagination is an opportunity to co-create a shared language between government agencies, community-based institutions, and community members through the creativity that is innate to all human beings. Establishing a shared language between diverse parties with a variety of needs and resources can transform the way we identify priorities, develop solutions, and implement actions/policies. A shared language means a new narrative can be co-created. This promises to open up alternative avenues to engage in transportation planning that remove barriers that have kept communities out.

Origins of the term 'radical' stem from the Latin word for "root." Radical is defined as relating to or affecting the fundamental nature of something. Essentially, it means returning to the origins or "root causes" of an outcome. The purpose and promise of utilizing radical imagination as the foundation for strategic interventions is largely tied to its incorporation of creative and artistic expression. It's applicable to community engagement, rebuilding and establishing trust, increasing local involvement and ownership, organizational capacity building and sustainability, etc.



Co-Creating a Definition of Radical Imagination

Trying to arrive at a single definition of imagination is nearly impossible, and works against the potential of “endless possibilities” that imagination calls us to invoke. As a group, we soon discovered that imagination was informed by our respective lived experiences and since our experiences are uniquely ours, our own definition of imagination will be radically different.

As a result, we decided that as a group we had to honor each of our lived experiences. Thus, we ensured that we incorporated a co-creation ethos into our process. Before reaching a consensus on the definition of imagination within Transportation Planning, the Leaders-in-Residence (LIR) participants first engaged in a discussion with the aim of defining “radical imagination.”

This activity is primarily based on storytelling and memory. Participants were asked a series of questions that progressively led to a roundtable discussion on radical imagination and its potential application within Transportation Planning.

Type of knowledge or evidence it generates/intended outcome of the activity

The main source of knowledge for this activity is based on the lived experience of each of the participants, their memory, and creative power to imagine new possibilities. Additionally, through a consensus-based decision making process, participants used the aforementioned sources of knowledge to generate a working definition of “radical imagination in transportation planning.”

Time, capacity & resources, tools needed

The activity is set for 90 mins. (Allow for flexibility, meaning try to end your workshop 10 minutes before the scheduled end time so you can make “wiggle room” for any unforeseen logistical issues or for discussions that require more time.)

If conducting the activity digitally, here's a list of tools:

- Jamboard - or similar platform that can allow for collective brainstorming
- Pen and paper - or similar tools for participants to individually document their thoughts
- Zoom - or similar platform used for group convening (should also know how to use breakout rooms for small group discussions)

If conducting the activity in person, here's a list of tools:

- Whiteboard/Butcher Paper - used to take collective notes based on the group discussions
- Pen and paper - used by participants to individually document their thoughts/responses/reflections
- Crayons/Markers/Construction Paper - or other tools/materials that could be used for imagination and play during the discussion (other examples: pipe cleaners, scissors, rubix cubes, fidget toys, etc.)

Take some time to set everything up, whether in person or digitally.

Process and Facilitation

Start off with a check-in question:

- **What was your first memory of imagination?**

Give participants five minutes to write down their initial thoughts. After five minutes, invite them to share with the rest of the group their responses.

Here are some of the initial responses from participants:

- **“During my childhood I used to pretend to be the anime-character Sailor Moon. So much of queer coding comes from her. Fighting evil by moonlight, winning love by daylight.”**
- **“I have dark memories in my imagination. I’ve thought of my imagination as fantastical and magical, but I also had to imagine ‘how will I survive.’”**

- “I’ve always thought of imagination as playful and fun and magical. I never thought about the survival tactics I have imagined in my brain as well.”
- “My dad used to tell me stories,...he would always start it with, ‘I was walking down the street one day’... the story would unfold. I also like reflecting on it. Now I love that prompt.”
- “ I remember creating stories with others.”

After taking the time to hear responses from participants, invite participants to answer the following prompt inspired by the book, *Black Imagination: Black Voices on Black Futures*, curated by Natasha Marin. The second prompt is: **what does the world look like where you feel safe, valued and seen?**

Here are some of the initial responses from participants:

- “dance floor as an allegory for belonging.”
- “universal health care, pensions for all, not just state workers. Affordable housing, immigration reform affordable college”
- “no gatekeepers...[they] Don’t let us come in and infiltrate places that normally have been established for only certain people.”
- “clean water, clean air, zero waste on this planet and that everybody’s 100% behind that”

Now that we’ve asked a general version of the question above, we invite participants to specifically think about transportation planning by asking: **what does a transportation system look like where you feel safe, valued and seen?**

Participants’ responses:

- **“We don’t talk enough, often, like what happened, instead of having our seats facing the front, and facing the city, and redesigning our buses so that people experience the city and have more of a relationship to place.”**
- **“There’s not enough bathrooms, you know, in the city, and when people are with their families, moms are with their children and if your child has to go to the bathroom, like, that’s real, you know, where do you go?”**

- **“I think that we need to bring humanity back to transportation. I think that when we have these opportunities to be able to travel, it should be like you said safe, but also humanistic.”**

Discussion and Lessons Learned

Based on the participants’ reflections and with the hopes of arriving at a cohesive definition of radical imagination and its application to transportation planning, below are some initial thoughts:

- Memories of imagination begin to surface the essence and environment in which imagination can thrive. All of the participants invoked childhood memories that were rooted in play. For some participants imagination is a place of embodiment—imagination allows you to become Sailor Moon. While for other participants, imagination invites possibilities. Imagination is something that is cultivated and practiced, yet there is no correct way of doing it. Imagination best happens in community, it’s a multiplicity of possibilities.
- While imagination can fuel creativity and be rooted in joy and play, sometimes imagination is an escape from reality, a way to disassociate from the adversities we face. Imagination can then become a tool for liberation, allowing participants to imagine beyond adverse conditions. Note: the process and practice of imagination is not easy, it requires commitment and trust in the process. It can take anywhere from 3 months to 30 years to peel back the layers to be able to truly imagine.
- It is unfair for communities facing inequities to be seen as the sole architects of the improvements needed in these communities. Without imagination, communities might find it difficult to picture life without the issues they face, and it can be difficult to conjure solutions to a problem, or construct/employ new narratives.

Discussions and Lessons Learned - contd.

- Working definition of radical imagination - radical imagination is a framework for envisioning new ways of being, relating and arranging social systems that do not reproduce persistent inequities of the past and present.
- Why imagination in transportation - The purpose and promise of utilizing radical imagination as a resource for transforming transportation is tied to its incorporation of creative and artistic expression, and community led change. It is also an opportunity to create a venue for those who may not be steeped in transportation planning or policy to bring forth their expertise and ideas while also being valued and treated with dignity. Radical imagination calls on people to bring forward their best, most expansive thinking of what the future could be. It's about vision and co-creating, rather than resisting change.

Feel free to reflect, and share your thoughts on the following page.



What was your first memory of imagination?



What does a world look like where you feel safe, valued, and seen?



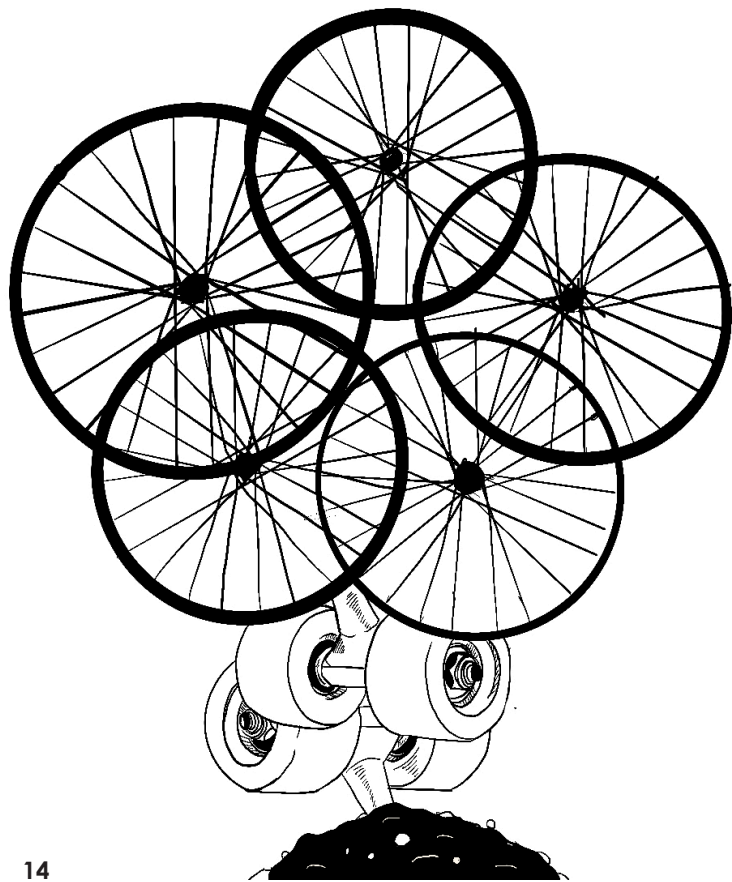
Artist Profile: Deirdre Weinberg

If you could choose to ride the bus because it was so much fun, so inspiring, and so engaging, wouldn't you? What if Muni dedicated various bus stops in different parts of town to local well known people who made a difference, and stocked those stops with books (for a bus stop honoring Maya Angelou, a Mission HS attendee), musical instruments and people playing them (for Carlos Santana who also attended Mission HS) and Jerry Garcia, with dance equipment and instructors for the many Bay choreographers and dancers, food bus stops featuring local chefs, etc. And the same on the buses. Would you board a bus where people were singing and playing music and they invited you to join in? Or reading works from local authors and doing open mikes? Or painting the exterior of the bus in the bus yard? The possibilities and the inspiration could be endless.



Deirdre is a longtime Bay muralist, painter and printmaker and seeks out projects which engage people, create discussion and communities. Among many jobs, she worked as a transportation planner with the SFMTA and rode the bus every day. Her relatives also worked for MUNI in various capacities and that gave her some ideas about how to re-imagine what a great transportation system could be like. She loves zines too!





Peoplehood Matrix



PeopleHood Matrix and Radically Imagining Transportation.

The peoplehood matrix is a model developed by American Indian Studies. The peoplehood matrix uses the categories of Ceremony, Place/Territory, Language, and Sacred History to help build an understanding of groups of people and group experiences. This model argues that each category is interrelated and not one is more important than the other. Using the peoplehood matrix participants reflect on their experiences and community experiences of transportation.

Type of knowledge or evidence it generates (?)

Participants examine their experiences of transit through this model to identify places, ceremonies, languages, and histories regarding transit. In taking a look at transit experiences through the peoplehood matrix and examining the interconnectedness of these categories, participants are able to generate new knowledge and understandings about their experiences and understandings of transit. Additionally, a deeper empathy for/understanding of experiences outside of their own that comes with listening to stories/knowledge generated by those impacted by transportation inequities

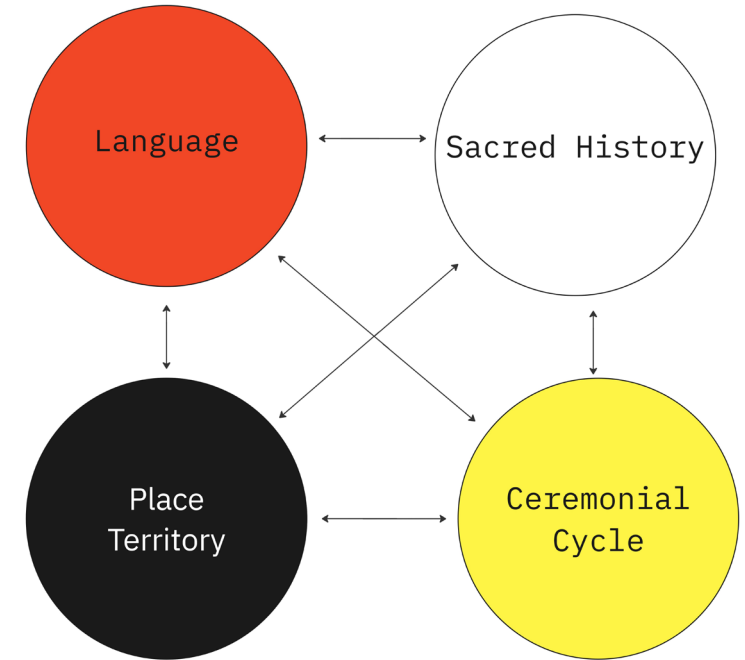
Time, capacity & resources, and tools needed

The process of engaging with the peoplehood matrix consists of a 45 min to 60 min workshop. The first part of the workshop allows participants to learn about the model. The second part of the workshop is designated for participants to engage with the model through a reflection activity. When engaging in the activity, participants used an online platform, such as Miro or Jamboard, to write and share their reflections. Finally, participants have a group discussion about reflections, new learnings, and perspectives when using the model to think about transportation.

When conducting this activity via Zoom, here's a list of tools: Mirro - or a similar platform that can allow for collective brainstorming

NOTE: Using Miro for those who have never used it, can be a bit difficult to navigate or understand at first, so finding a platform that is a bit more user-friendly is something to keep in mind for future uses of this activity

What are we talking about?



Peoplehood Matrix

Peoplehood is used to transcend the notions of statehood, nationalism, gender, ethnicity, and sectarian membership (religious, political, cultural)

A people, united by a common **language** and having a particular **ceremonial cycle**, a unique **sacred history**, and knowledge of a **territory** necessarily possess inherent sovereignty.

No single factor is more important than the others, and all support each other and a particular group's larger sense of identity; the four categories are interrelated.

What is Ceremony?

Ceremony: looks different in our lives and across cultures; it is informed by place, language, and history; it is actions that are done at specific moments in time for specific purposes; "It makes up a group's "world" and directly affects its world-view."- Deloria, God is Red

Peoplehood Matrix as a Tool for Radically Imagining Transportation (25 min)

So what? Why does this matter? (5 min)

How does this relate to radically imagining transit?

AIS has developed a model for understanding groups of people and building an understanding of group experiences, which we can use when examining and acknowledging the current transportation challenges concerning language, ceremony, place, and history.

AIS has also developed a tool that can help us reflect on how settler colonialism and other isms, and urban planning have shaped how a group experiences transportation.

In order to understand our experiences of transit using the peoplehood matrix, we need to call on our memory to remember what we have experienced, learned, studied and how we understand power.

Here is where memory, the peoplehood matrix, and reflection come in before we begin to radically imagine.....

Activity: Remembering and Reflecting on Experiences of Transportation (20 minutes)

Instructions (5 min)

Speaker Script:

Within the context of transit, we are going to explore what's been happening, and what hasn't been happening, that we need to take action on, or radically imagine before we take action?

Using the Peoplehood Matrix, I want to invite us to some questions:

Reflect:

What are your community's or your experiences of transit?

How has your community or your experiences with transit evolved?

How has transportation shaped/informed your ceremonial practices, language, histories, and places?

Respond to the following questions:

What are your ceremonial practices around transit?

What is your language and history around transit?

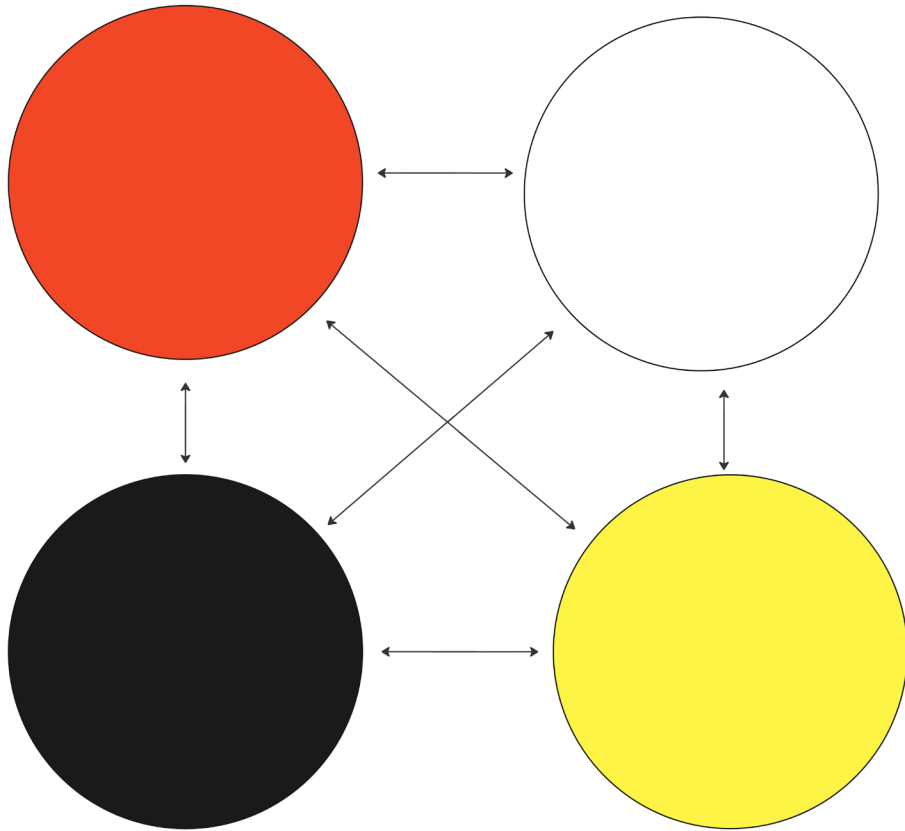
How has transit impacted or shaped place?

How are these interrelated?

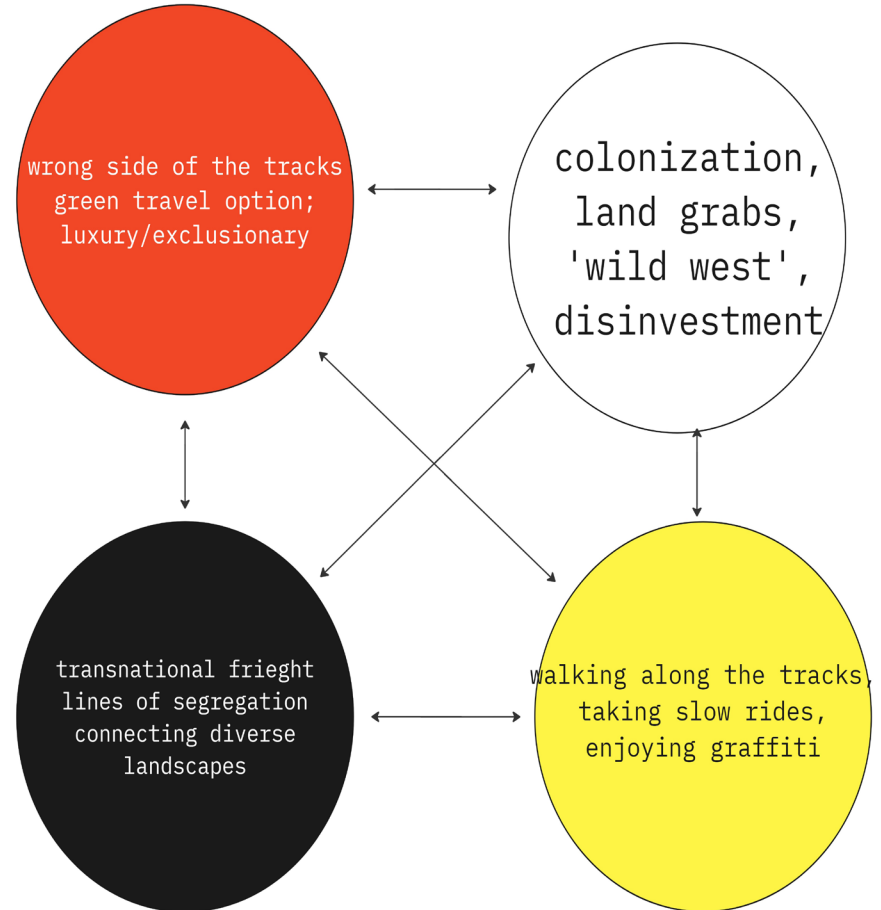
Speaker Script: You all will answer the questions, and your responses will be color-coordinated according to the sections of the peoplehood matrix. For example, if you wanna talk about language around walking, and you want to use jay-walking as an example you would write jay-walking, or if you want to look at how place/territory/ceremonial cycle/history and its connection to jaywalking and transit, you can branch out and reflect on how this all interconnected. For example, because in my community (hypothetical scenario) we have long streets and little crosswalks, my personal ceremony of getting to the bus is jaywalking and my communities relationship to jaywalking is x,y,z the history of jaywalking is x,y,z... this needs to be radically imagined so that x,y,z...

Note: The next couple of pages will include examples from the Leaders-in-Residence and will also include prompts for you to complete

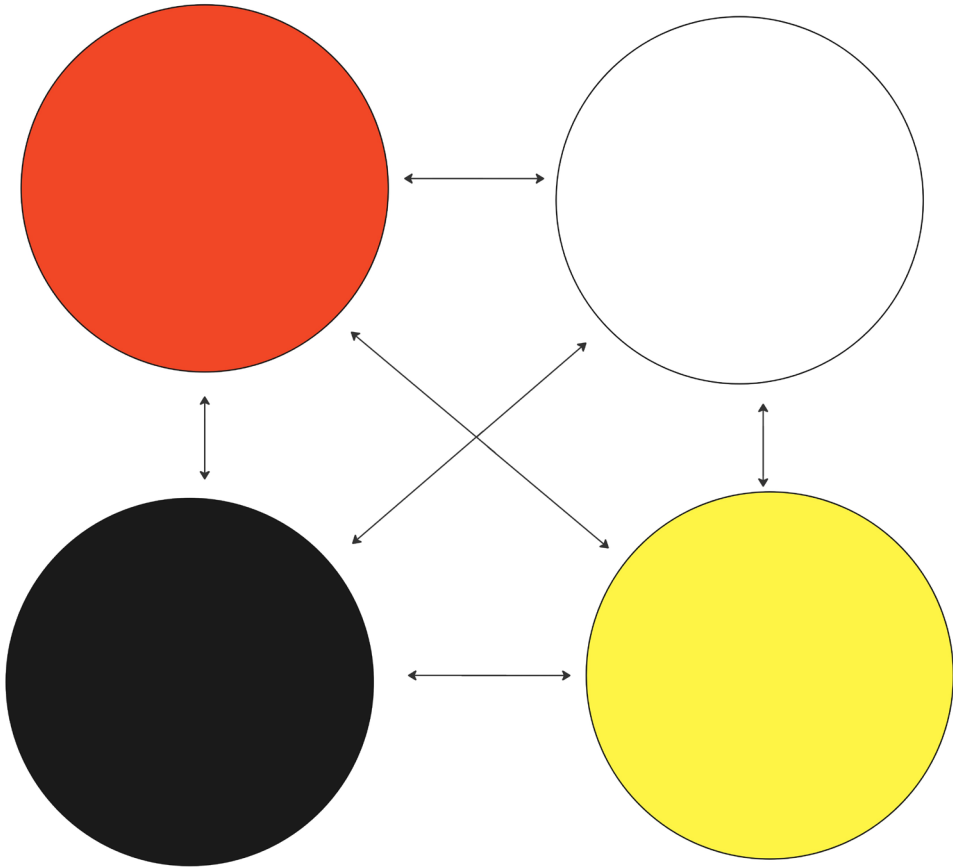
Transit Topic



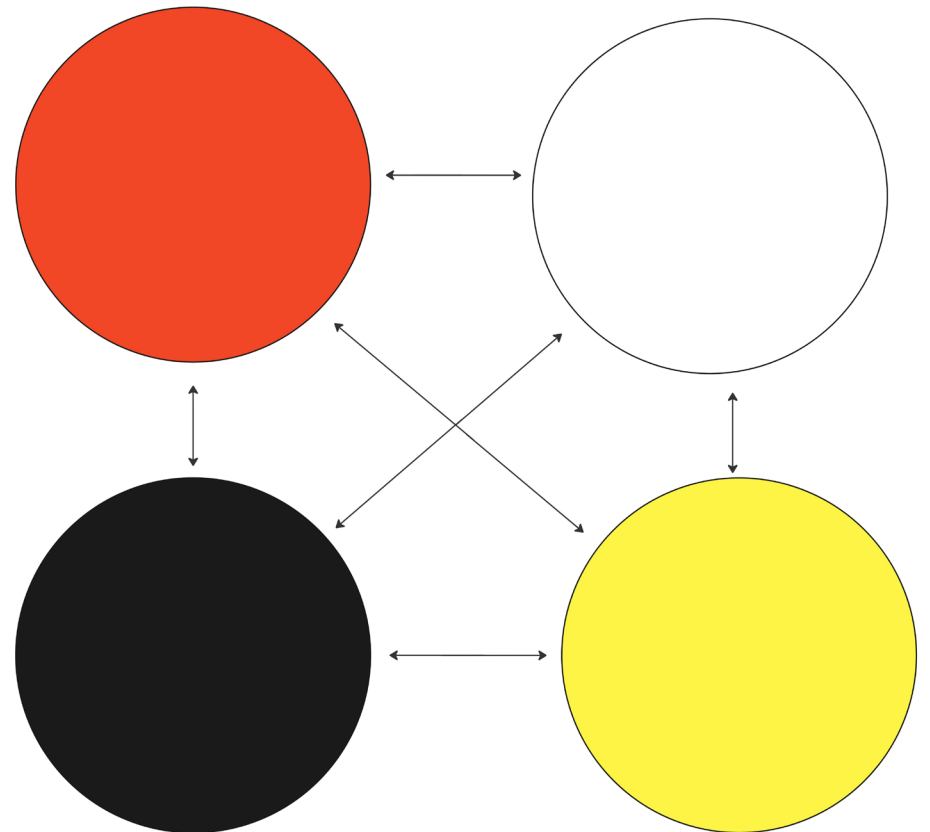
Trains

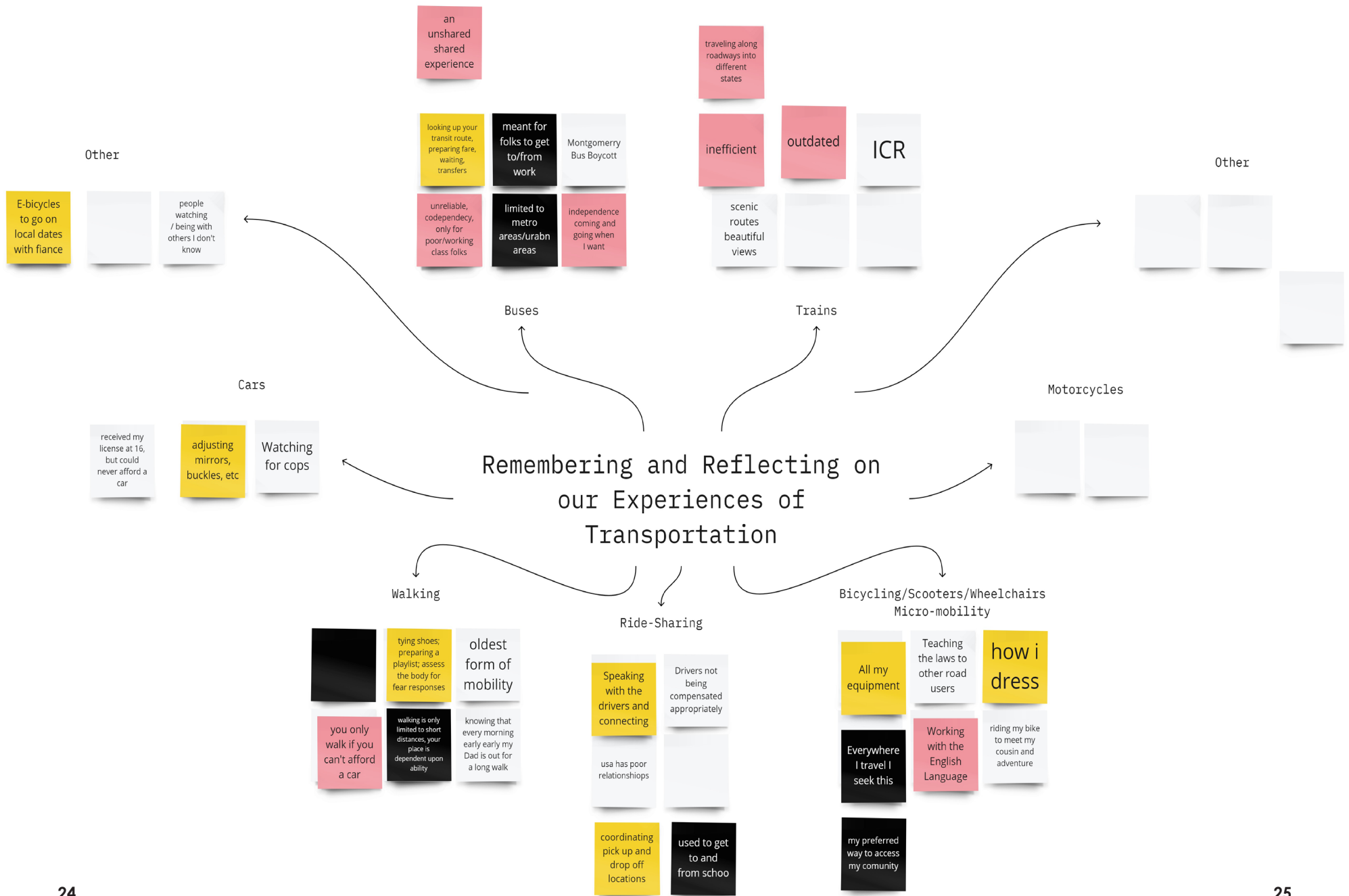


Riding the Bus to School



Family Car





Break out (10 min)

Using the peoplehood matrix, participants will engage with memory and reflection to name what needs to be reimagined regarding transit

Reflection (10 min)

Speaker Script: Take some time to reflect on the activity, did you find it hard to articulate some of the aspects of the Peoplehood Matrix? like ceremonies, language, history, land/territories?

Which of the aspects of the matrix make the most sense to you?

Which of the aspects of the matrix sparked the most curiosities?

How did this activity make you rethink about your approach to thinking about transportation systems? Is anything missing?



**Our puma relatives deserve Wildlife Corridors
for safe travel through Ancestral Pathways.**

Envision transportation with consideration for life!

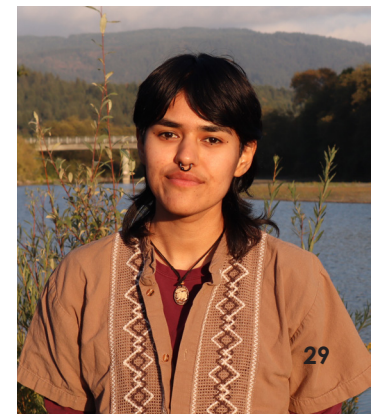
Artist Profile: Sage Alucero Juarez

To create an equitable transportation system, the infrastructure itself must reflect a value for life. Whether it is wildlife migrating across generations-old pathways or humans walking through their communities, safety should not be compromised. Highways prioritize cars and scar the land. In a radically re-imagined system this disconnection can be mended by developing wildlife crossings to ensure that animals are not a casualty of convenience.

For humans, improving pedestrian paths includes the cultivation and protection of native plants. White sage and california yarrow growing throughout walkable cities would enliven our everyday experiences and provide grounding spiritual medicine.

Rather than being an afterthought, the Earth can inspire us to create transportation systems that bring us closer to the land, our wildlife neighbors, and one another.

Sage Alucero is a multimedia artist based in Northern California. Their work is rooted in belonging, herbalism, mycology, and mexica visual culture. Alucero considers flora, fauna, and funga in a metaphoric and mythological light. They bring forth their art as a form of prayer and contribution to the visual, spiritual, and political movements to protect earth, mitigate climate crisis, and envision regenerative futures.



**Visionary
fiction**

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LATE NIGHT

Description of Visionary Fiction

For this activity, we engage with Visionary Fiction, a term coined by Walidah Imarisha, who is a science fiction writer. Visionary Fiction is a form of sci-fi that merges other disciplines/genres, as Imarisha states, "It is any fantastical art that helps us to understand existing power structures, and supports us in imagining ways to build more just futures." For this workshop participants engaged with reflection questions and writing prompts to help identify what grounds their visions for the future of transportation and wrote letters that were based in the future to discuss what transportation looked like 50 years after 2023.

Time, capacity & resources, and tools needed

The process of engaging with the visionary fiction activity consists of a 45 min to 60 min workshop. The first part of the workshop allows participants to learn about visionary fiction. The second part of the workshop is designated for participants to engage in a prompt to practice visionary fiction. When engaging in the activity, participants used their own materials to write their visions for transportation. Finally, participants had a group discussion to share out their visions for radically imagining transportation.

Visionary Fiction: Radically Imagining Transportation (90 min) Objectives

Participants will learn about visionary fiction and its relation to the process of radically imagining transportation
Participants will use what they named (as needed to be radically re-imagined in regards to transportation) to practice radically imagining transportation using visionary fiction

Warm-up (10 min)

Imagination warm-up: Imagine a Lemon in your hand.....

What is the scent, color, and texture, and now imagine preparing it to eat... how will you prepare it... Will you peel it, cut it, bite into it, or try a different way? Like poking a straw into it.... Now taste the lemon... put it in your mouth...what does it feel like on your tongue and what does it taste like and feel like inside your mouth... and where do you feel sensations in your body thinking about this?

Think about how your physical body responded to this.

5 minutes of sharing back

Tips to keep in mind as we begin to think about this and its psychosomatic responses at large:

- What bodily sensations do we want to tap into and amplify or protect when we are out in the world?
- Our mind is powerful and helps transform our thoughts into something tangible, something we can hold and experience physically, collectively, or individually

What is Visionary Fiction? (10 min)

- Visionary fiction is a form of sci-fi that merges other disciplines/genres. What inspired visionary fiction and what it has been used for is to envision worlds beyond the prison industrial complex and beyond policing
- Rooted in Black futures/ afro-futurism and Black resistance like BLM
- "When we talk about a world without prisons; a world without police violence; a world where everyone has food, clothing, shelter, quality education; a world free of white supremacy, patriarchy, capitalism, heterosexism; we are talking about a world that doesn't currently exist. But collectively dreaming up one means we can begin building it into existence."- Walidah Imarisha

- “Visionary fiction offers social justice movements a process to explore creating those new worlds (although not a solution—that’s where sustained mass community organizing comes in). “Visionary fiction is any fantastical art that helps us to understand existing power structures, and supports us in imagining ways to build more just futures”- Walidah Imarisha
- “I came up with the term “visionary fiction” to encompass the fantastical cross-genre creations that help us bring about those new worlds. This term reminds us to be utterly unrealistic in our organizing, because it is only through imagining the so-called impossible that we can begin to concretely build it. When we free our imaginations, we question everything. We recognize none of this is fixed, everything is stardust, and we have the strength to cast it however we will. To paraphrase Arundhati Roy, other worlds are not only possible, but are on their way—and we can already hear them breathing. That is why decolonization of the imagination is the most dangerous and subversive decolonization process of all.”- Walidah Imarisha”

Activity: Visionary Fiction (20 min)

Script: The follow activity is all from Walidah Imarisha and I've just adapted it to fit our topic of transportation, some of the questions are mine, but it's all been developed by Imarisha.

Answer the following questions:

What needs to be radically re-imagined regarding transit?

What is the transportation and mobility we/you want?

What grounds your vision for just transportation and/or mobility?

What is your vision for transportation and/or mobility? (Take some time to close your eyes and imagine this)

A few years ago BLM put out a call to answer the prompt, “in a world where Black lives matter, I imagine...”

In a world where transportation/mobility is _____, I imagine _____

Imarisha prompt adapted to transportation:

So try this: Imagine it's 50 years in the future, and social justice movements have continued winning and advancing liberation. What would transit be like? What would your everyday transit and mobility be? You could write out your daily schedule, you could write a journal entry from the year 2070. You could write a letter to a loved one talking about the changes that have occurred regarding transit and mobility.

Reflection (10 min)

Please share out what you wrote and envisioned

Discussion

- When participants shared their visions for transportation, many of the stories they wrote out and shared, discussed the future of transportation as incorporated within an ecosystem of built environments, people, and its interconnectedness with struggles across safety, housing, and pollution. Radically imagining transit for participants meant fewer cars and more sustainable forms of transportation such as tuk-tuks, and air gondolas, allowing communities to shape and design buses, and creating a sense of safety that was linked to transit riders having their basic needs met such as housing, mental health services, and hygienic needs. Ecosystems, sustainability, safety, and interconnectedness were words used to describe the themes present within participants' visions of the future of transit.

How does this activity build on the radical imagination of transportation planning

- In having participants engage in this activity, we begin to practice our imagination and share these visions to inspire and develop new questions, and new tactics for achieving visions for transportation justice.

Imagine it's 50 years in the future, and social justice movements have continued winning and advancing liberation. What would transit be like? What would your everyday transit and mobility be? You could write out your daily schedule, you could write a journal entry from the year 2070. You could write a letter to a loved one talking about the changes that have occurred regarding transit and mobility.



Artist Profile: Gemma Jimenez

A friend once told me in her ideal dream, she does not own a car. She doesn't have to drive far to see loved ones or grab a bite. We both shared mutual dreams and encouraged each other to pursue them and imagine further no matter how unreal that may seem currently. That to me is one aspect of what it takes to radically imagine transportation systems. Sitting with a friend or two and wishfully dreaming together about how different our worlds can be and supporting each other to make it possible.

Gemma Jimenez Gonzalez is a multimedia artist, educator, and community-based urban planner raised in Los Angeles with roots in Veracruz, Mexico. Her transdisciplinary practices bridge urban studies and visual arts to explore community relations, urban ecologies, and mobility. As an avid public transit rider and cyclist Gemma moves through lands envisioning a reality that fosters wonder, connection, and resilience.





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