

Black Joy as Resistance



A glimpse of a Queen Mother dancing during the Festival of Masks Procession in Leimert

Much of our work is about claiming public space, making room for people - particularly young people - in the marginalized communities of Los Angeles to assert their identity in a city where they are often rendered invisible.

We believe that art is a powerful tool for bringing these underground stories to light and shifting to a narrative that values everyone. We recognize that it is this demand to be heard that fuels the process that creates change.

It is incredibly inspiring to witness the protests in Los Angeles and across the country and the world, as marchers take over the streets to decry America's policies from the beginning to devalue Black Lives and affirm that Black Lives Matter and change is needed now.

We understand that often the chief failing of our leaders is a failure of the imagination. It is so much easier to maintain the status quo and adhere to old narratives rather than imagine new ones. The contribution of art and artists as leaders in the collaborative creation of the needed transformation is the opportunity to imagine a new story, one that ends well for everyone.

This is our hope for this catalytic moment in which we find ourselves, that it opens the way to a creative process, with artists at the center, in which we come together to envision a city, a country and a world that is more just, healthy and livable for everyone, especially Black people.



Every summer, in our home neighborhood of Leimert Park, the African American cultural center of Los Angeles, we engage in an act of creative, joyful resistance, with an unapologetic display of Blackness that empowers all who participate to fully be themselves in the world.

For Black people, who have frequently paid with their lives for asserting their identity, participation in Day of the Ancestors: Festival of Masks, is a healing exercise, providing a vehicle to experience true joy and permission to deeply connect with the power of our Blackness.

In the midst of this chaotic, but necessary, time, we are humbled to be able to offer us all as part of Day of the Ancestors, the opportunity to connect with Black creators in Los Angeles and across the world in conversation and creation around the struggle to overcome anti-blackness and a vision for the world to come.

Join us in this exploration of the incredible resilience of these cultures that despite such prolonged effort at erasure, represent one of the most vital forces on this earth. Witness the power of Black Joy.