

[00:11:34] **Ingrid:** All right, I'm going to open it up now.

Hi everyone. So we're gonna get started. Um, thank you so much for coming tonight. Um, so my name's Ingrid, I'm going to introduce this event on behalf of East Street Arts before handing over to Season. Um, so I am the artist support lead at East Street Arts, and I'm a late twenties woman. Um, I'm a mixed Asian and European person with long dark hair and a black Adidas top on.

Um, so this event is being hosted by Season as part of her associate artist's possession with us at East Street Arts. Um, for those of you that don't know East Street: We're a 30 year old organization, we're artist led, and we're based in Leeds, um, we work locally and nationally to make art accessible for artists, local residents, and our communities. This is through the creation of space for artists, providing support, packages, resources, um, advocacy and campaigning. Um, so Season's associate artist position. Um, we gave her a really open, brief about radical structures and what that meant for the arts. Um, this brief came out of COVID, um, and the overwhelming need from artists to discuss changes in the way the sector is structured and run.

Um, so the brief, um, just asked Season to investigate the practical implications of alternative, radical ways of working, um, which moved away from capitalism and hierarchy, and looked at things like circular economy, counter-cultural approaches and what, um, like anticapitalist approaches would look like in the sector.

Um, alongside this, we have another associate artist working in tandem with Season called Bailey, who is creating an alternative archive of, um, counter-cultural artists experiences during COVID. And we kind of hope that these two will sit scaffold as a resource, um, on our website and for future learning.

Um, just a few housekeeping notes: Um, so East Street Arts operates a safer braver spaces policy, which covers all of our work, all of our events. Um, if anyone would like this policy, I'm happy to pass it out. Um, but the headline notes are, um, we ask everyone to do all they can to ensure the space is accessible and upheld by shared values of active allyship and consent.

Um, that includes myself, any other East Street staff who might attend, uh, panelists and our audience members, any type of discrimination in language or action will not be tolerated. Um, and we do have a procedure, if anything like that happens at this event, which I'm also happy to share.

One, two final housekeeping notes: This event is being recorded - that will sit on our archive and potentially part of it will be published. Um, Your questions might be included in that, but no participants like audience members faces will be in that. So don't worry about that. Um, and the event is six 30 to seven 30. It may run past seven 30, but you're very welcome to leave if you've only planned to stay for that long. Um, but we'd also be really happy if you stayed with us for longer. Um, we will try and keep it to time though.

I think that's it for me. So I'm going to hand over to Season now.

[00:16:04] **Season Butler:** Thanks Ingrid. And thanks everybody for coming out. Um, and a big thank you to the fantastic panel that we've got here for our discussion.

Uh, my name is Season Butler. I am a middle-aged light-skinned black woman with a curly Afro. Uh, I'm in a gray t-shirt in front of a, kind of a pinkish speckled wall from which the wallpaper has been removed. Um, so. I wanted to take a moment to introduce, uh, this discussion. Um, so we're looking at radical structures for how society might change to compassionately support artists and communities more meaningfully.

Um, I've had a few thoughts that I thought might, uh, ground our conversation before I open it up to our esteemed panel. Um, so some things that we kind of pulled as foundational here. There's a certain Overton window of possibilities that gets established mainly in the ruling class' interests. And so I would like this conversation to be focused more on what we need rather than on what we think those in power will give us. Um, because as most of us, uh, hold dear to our hearts, we know that power concedes nothing without demand as Frederick Douglas tells us. Um, this conversation leans away from the idea of artist exceptionalism. And what I mean by that is that, uh, we recognize that the needs of artists and art sector workers, uh, intersect a great deal with the needs of workers in other sectors, um, that our work is no more or less valuable than any other segment of the labor force, but is our focus tonight. And of course that, um, plenty of artists and other cultural sector workers do other jobs outside of their main practice; we're waiters, we're cleaners, couriers, parents, teachers. Um, so there tends to be an interesting construction around, um, wage labour and creative labour at times, uh, that that can become confusing and often reason to, to exploit people who work in the cultural sector, because there's also a sense of love and passion and drive involved. That's not applied evenly across society, right? Like my landlord might really love being a landlord, but, um, most people don't suggest that they should be doing that for free. But that is a suggestion that I'll go ahead and moot. Um, finally, there's a point about ideas

here that I wanted to bring up that, um, we have so many pressing issues that affect our livelihoods, that affect our ability to stay within our homes, within the countries that we call our homes, and within the careers where we've made a home, and at times there can be a real flurry to generate new ideas for how we address some of these issues, and that's important. Uh, but what I also want to touch on is that a lot of really good ideas have already been conceived, um, uh, have been tried and been tested and, um, and maybe they've been put down or, um, suppressed by the ruling class in some areas, but remain really important and valuable. Uh, so there's plenty that we still have to learn from, uh, radical movements and from countercultures that have come before us. Uh, so, so let's, um, hold all of that in mind. Um, while we speak to our panel. Um, rather than going ahead and reading out the bios of everyone, you can see those on the event page. What I'd like to do is to hear, uh, first of all, from each of our panelists in turn. So I'm going to ask the four of you to just please briefly introduce yourself. And, um, and if you can, um, briefly outline what you think is wrong with the arts sector in the UK right now. Um, so I will, uh, be democratic and we'll go, um, alphabetically by first name. So, uh, Dr. Amit Rai, could you get us started?

[00:20:58] **Dr. Amit Rai:** Absolutely. Hello, thank you very much Season for organizing this and really, really excited to be here, um, and to, to speak with you all and to think together. Um, my name is Amit Rai. I teach in, I, I, I'm a uni teacher, I'm a, I'm a lecturer jeeppers Cripe. Now I'm a lecturer. Yes, I'm a lecturer. I teach, uh, in the masters. I convene the masters in creative industries in arts organization.

I teach courses in arts organization and, uh, creative, uh, applied methods. My background is in sort of, uh, literature, film and, and community organizing, anthropology. My work has been focused on, uh, things like, uh, ecologies of everyday hacking in India. I've looked at, uh, forms of organizing, uh, in, in cities, in India, uh, specifically around feminist organizing, uh, in, in Bombay.

Um, So I think, is that, is that good for like who I am? Is that okay? Or should I talk a little bit more about my practice or is that, should I, or should I dive, right. I guess I'll just sorry. I'm being a little bit. Okay. Um, so I think one of the problems in arts and culture today is leadership, not the lack of leaders, but leadership as a practice and concept.

Um, for the past two years, I've been working with a fantastic organization called Something To Aim For, uh, and in a project that we have been calling, Performing Leadership Differently, but it's been about a, um, a thoroughgoing critique of questions of race and class in leadership models and in how

institutional forms of privilege, uh, get reproduced, uh, uh, in, in these sort of leadership structures.

Um, I think of the leader as a kind of fetish, um, uh, a kind of fetish of particular, I would say also a fetish of white culture and a fetish of bourgeois culture. Um, and, and so, and of course the masculinism of the leader is I think a really important aspect of all of this. Um, I think, uh, the leader is always a product of many social, economic, and cultural forces, um, political forces and, and those, those, those dynamics, those processes, those forces are covered over by the fetish of the leader.

So I think this has been really important in my own practice, too, to think about what, uh, you know, a big buzz word today for, uh, with Arts Council England, for instance, is co-creation. And so the idea that, you know, co-creation simply happens or can happen as a way of staying relevant as a way of community engagement.

I think this is we, we really should, um, Reappropriate this word, we need to really need to take this word back, uh, for, for radical organization. Um, I think we need to take it back, uh, and put it in, in a collective organizing context. Um, I practice something, I guess, that I would call intersectional organizing, um, which I've developed with many other people. And I, I think of these as, uh, modes of sort of participatory action research, um, that pose the necessary organizing conditions for the collective and radical transformation of arts and culture, and through them, the transformation of society and economy I'm really was taken with, uh, really, um, uh, wanna sort of amplify something that Season said. And I think it's about questions of work. Uh, it's about questions of labor. It's about, uh, the notion of, uh, that arts and culture is a meritocracy and that the, you know, some recent studies have shown that the leaders in arts and culture are the ones who are most likely to think that it's a meritocracy, and of course, they're the ones who are in fact, uh, in the way of dismantling, for instance, things like institutional racism. Um, so race and class, it continues to be, uh, uh, the inequalities of race and class continue to be, uh, continue to be structuring features of, of the arts. Um, I think the question of how precarity is being, um, I think normalized, um, across arts and culture is, is also something that needs to be addressed through collective action.

Of course, precarity is very difficult when you have, when you, when you're talking about sectors of the economy that have relatively low levels of, of collective bargaining. And of course the mode of work itself, uh, generates problems around, uh, claiming rights and claiming, uh, certain resources through, uh, that collective, uh, that, that form of work.

I think lack of care infrastructures and resourcing for care. Um, and what I mean by care is basically how, uh, people of color black, uh, uh, creatives, uh, working class creatives are not given the resources to be able to, to dream and breathe, uh, in, in arts organizations. And, uh, in the, in the, in the conversations that we've been having with practitioners, uh, at, um, through performing leadership differently, this lack of care is an, is a mental health crisis. It's affecting people's ability. It's separating people from what they can do. This, this is what care, uh, and the lack of care, uh, is doing to the sector. And I think that's really important to, uh, to, to explore. Um, I guess I'm going to leave it there - is that is, that is that I think I've put a lot out there, so that's great. Thank you.

[00:26:35] **Season Butler:** That's perfect. Amit, thank you. Um, before I point to the next panelist, I neglected to mention, uh, everybody who's attending, please feel free to put your comments and questions into the Q & A box and we will, uh, get to, we'll be able to get to some of them as we go. And, um, others towards the end of the conversation.

Um, so Chardine Taylor Stone. Can you take it next?

[00:27:03] **Chardine Taylor Stone:** Hello everyone. And thank you, Season to inviting me to this panel, all these amazing people. So yes, I'm Chardine Taylor Stone and, um, I've been working in the art sector as a programmer, as an organizer, as a creative for 15 years now must be yeah, at least. And, um, I'm also a writer and I'm a musician as well. So there's lots of crossover there in terms of what my practice is. Um, so yeah, that's a little bit about me and what I do, um, currently, um, I'm the Adult Education Programmer at the National Maritime Museum as well. So, um, um, that's another string to my bow. And so yes, the question to, you know, what is wrong with the art sector - completely agree with everything that has been said so far as well, and I think these are important points. And what I'd also like to add to that as well, um, is thinking about how we even think about what is the art sector in the UK, I think, compared to other countries. So obviously being a musician, I spend a lot of time in Europe, touring, traveling, and then you see how people consider arts to be an, uh, a form of labour, which I don't think people see it as in America and the United States. And so what you get there, is you get certain rights and support in the way that any kind of type of labour would be. So currently a friend of mine over there is an actress, and um, in Paris, and she gets a thousand euro a month stipend. Um, as a civil, she's a civil servant, I think technically under French law.

And that means that she can afford to pay for her flat - there's like material things that she can pay for here - pay for her flat monthly, which means she gets, gets time to then do auditions, et cetera, et cetera. So there's like an active encouragement that understands that artists need space, time, getting back to mental health, somewhere to live, be able to pay their rent so that they can actually focus on the work. And also as a musician as well, and the difference in how you sort of treated here for - very sort of basic example, but a lot of musicians talk about it, say like the rider that you might get for a band, you know, the food that they give you, things like that; standard practice in Britain: beer and crisps. When you go to Europe, there's a canteen, there's food, you know, people understand that you've, that you've traveled, that you're providing them a service so that they put that care into there, and also all the staff that are working all the tech and everything like that, so everyone has a meal together and it's just understood that seven o'clock, this is what everyone's doing we're not working, and we're taking that time to look after ourselves, and then we can continue doing the work, and it's a real stark difference there.

So I think when we're getting into the sort of heart of, of what is wrong in the art sector is everything that has been said before. But also I think culturally, within the sort of Anglosphere of how we think about what the arts are, and what their place is within our world, and as a form of work, I think that's something that we really need to start working on challenging, and that can be through fighting for policies that're actually quite similar to what's happening in Europe already on a practical level.

[00:30:32] **Season Butler:** Thanks so much, Chardine. Lena Šimić, was it? Come in next.

[00:30:38] **Lena Šimić:** Hi! Hello, and thank you very much, Susan, for inviting me for this panel. So, uh, I am a middle aged white woman with blonde hair, black rimmed glasses, and in the background I have 'Labour' - um, kind of a poster thing - and also a poster against the arms fair, which was happening in, in Liverpool.

Now I'm Liverpool based and I'm a artist and a scholar, but I'm also a local counselor Labour counselor who came into, into the Labour movement because of Jeremy Corbyn and is now very disillusioned for it, for what is happening with Labour, but that's internal Labour politics. Now, um, I feel, um, because I work in, uh, as an artist activist and as a local counselor as well, and I'm also, um, in education at university. So I kind of feel I have all these different hats as if, as to who I am and how I can approach this question around the art sector and what it is. Um, now I feel that what we really miss in this country - and it is

something that labor would have put in, would have delivered through the last manifesto - which was the arts pupil premium 160 million extra funding into education in arts, and I think that's crucial because we need to really understand that arts is about your whole being creativity as a child, so that the value of arts is kind of ingrained in us, it's put into us because we are creative as young children. And I think that's important that we see this value of what being an artist or what being a creative person means from very early on.

And I think at the moment, art is being very much devalued as, as a profession, because as you can see, uh, with the GCSE, with A-levels and the curriculum, we are having less and less students taking these subjects and, uh, people who are studying them, they can't find work, uh, working, uh, delivering as drama teachers or music teachers and so on.

So I think that's also very important to kind of connect this between, uh, education and, uh, and art sector and kind of how we are devaluing, um, arts as a whole. And yet it's, it's so important that even, you know, when we are little, we are learning how to play instruments, that we are using drama, that we are, uh, have access to galleries to, to go to, to see art as, as, uh, as young children. And I think that's what's wrong as well in terms of, um, the arts, the arts sector. And just because what a Char-, uh, Chardine has mentioned is also, it, it made me think of, um, universal basic income, that that would be something that we could fight for, and that would enable artists to work much more effectively I think.

And another thing is like, because I work as a university lecturer, I'm a reader in drama. Uh, I make it my policy never to pass on any opportunities, volunteer opportunities to my students, but only paid work. And so every time when there is like some kind of opportunity to experience some acting, uh, I always ask, well, is it paid or not? You know, and only those that are paid should be encouraged. And I think that's very important that, you know, uh, we don't, if you have some little power like this, you know, to make sure that we are only, you know, passing those opportunities or even participating in only those things in which we are paid and valued as artists or as cultural workers.

So I'll leave it at that for now. Thank you.

[00:34:35] **Season Butler:** Thanks, Lena. I think that's such an important thing for us to keep in mind, those of us who, um, who are maybe a bit more mid-career and, um, who have some of these relationships with institutions to be able to push back, uh, on behalf of, um, the people who are coming up next. You know, to be able to just ask that question, 'Is, is this really the best you can

do?' or to say, 'no, actually I'm not going to be a conduit for, um, for, for free labor.' Um, and to be able to set that up as a value early in, um, the careers of are like younger in the careers of, uh, people who are starting out.

Um, great. Thank you. There's a lot of food for thought there. Um, Zita can you come in next, please?

[00:35:25] **Zita Holbourne:** Thank you, greetings, good evening everybody, and thank you for inviting me to be on this panel, Season. Um, I'm Zita Holbourne, I'm a multidisciplinary artist and also human rights and equality campaigner, a trade union and community activist.

Um, so I'm a visual artist, a curator, a poet, a writer, an author, and a vocalist. And I hope I haven't left anything out. Um, but yeah, my practice sort of spreads across, um, uh, the, the, the arts, um, and, um, I've been involved in the arts. Yeah, my whole, my whole life, really. Um, and, um, pretty much, uh, been involved as a, an activist and campaigner certainly, you know, um, all of my adult life and, um, you know, when I, from when I was a teenager as well. And so, um, I'm the national chair of BARAC UK, which campaigns, um, against racism and injustice and austerity. And I'm also involved and active in 2 trade unions that represent workers in the arts and culture.

So I'm the joint national chair of the Artists Union England, and I'm also the National Vice-President of the Public and Commercial Services Union, which represents - amongst other workers - workers in the national museums and galleries and historic palaces in the UK. Um, So I effectively campaign for equality, freedom, justice, human rights, and workers' rights through arts and through activism, and so there's a lot of crossover and fusion and interconnection between what I do as an activist and what I do as an artist. And I try and use my platforms as an artist to get those campaigns and messages that I'm involved in as an activist, uh, across.

Um, what's wrong with it, the sector, the arts sector? Well, I'd need like a week to talk about this. Um, so I think there's so many things and, um, you know, as I'm going last, lots of people have already spoken about those things. Um, There is definitely discrimination. Um, uh, if you're intersectional person, then you've got multiple discrimination and barriers that you're facing.

Um, there's, um, particular race discrimination in the sector. Um, it's quite, um, exclusive rather than inclusive. It can be, um, quite snobby and, um, elitist. There's not enough investment, um, in public funded arts. Um, uh, there's issue of precarious work, which has already been mentioned. The fact that people

think that you can work in the arts and live off thin air, and do it for the love of it. And actually you still have people - insultingly when you've been sort of 20 or 30 years in the industry and, um, running your practice - trying to say 'But it will give you a platform!', and you don't need a platform, what you need to do is to put food on the table for your family and pay your gas and electricity bill and your rent.

Um, so it it's, um, it's a very, very strange set up that the way that artists are not valued, um, across, um, uh, across the world, really, I think, um, and not just, um, by people at large, within the industry as well, you know, um, those working in the arts who use artists for their benefit and spit them out when they don't want them anymore.

And as a representative, a trade union representative, I'm representing a lot of people who are facing exploitation, cancellations, failure to pay them. Um, uh, another issue is, uh, art studios, you know, and rogue landlords and the conditions people have and the benefits system in terms of, um, support that people get to continue with their practice. And I think it's already been mentioned, a lot of people who work in the arts cannot survive off what they do as an artist. The majority of, um, artists, uh, members of AUE, um, are socially engaged artists. So the other issue we have is the impact of the pandemic, which has amplified over a decade of austerity, um, and amplified all the worst aspects in terms of, um, cuts, lack of pay, discrimination, all of that has become worse during the pandemic.

Um, so yeah, there is a lot wrong with the sector. And I think the other side of that is the access for audiences to the arts. There's an issue there as well, people being out-priced, um, and it only being for the wealthy, and not affordable, and not free, um, for everybody to access. Um, and art should be for everybody. It should be accessible to everybody, whether you were an audience, um, a service user or practicing artist, and I'll stop there.

[00:41:05] **Season Butler:** Thanks so much Zita. There was what you were saying about, um, the elitism of the arts and, um, the, the kind of closed space that it can often feel like, um, also reminded me of a point that Lena was making, um, about the, um, uh, the arts pupils premium.

I, I started to think about how, um, state schools can really provide a space for like meaningful interclass contact, uh, among young people. And when we take the arts out of schools, uh, we're not just taking them away from, uh, kids who might grow up to like practice those art forms, but we're also taking them away from potential audiences for the arts, um, and or from people who might like to,

you know, sort of have creative hobbies. Um, but I, this, I think, um, it helps to kind of, uh, create, uh, even greater class stratification and also, uh, to keep the arts, this sort of like mystified, rarefied field, um, that as you say, Zita really, um, can and should be for everyone - everyone who's interested, you know, you also have the right to like, not care about the arts, obviously.

Uh, thanks everyone. Um, so I wanted to hear from the panel as well. Um, what are some of the lessons from past or present radical movements or counter-cultures that might usefully address some of the issues that we're facing in the creative sector in the UK right now.

[00:42:47] **Dr. Amit Rai:** Should I?

[00:42:49] **Season Butler:** Yeah, why don't you go ahead and come in on.

[00:42:50] **Dr. Amit Rai:** Okay. Hi. Great. Thank you. Um, so radical movements or consequent cultures that can give us some resources for organizing. I want to. Uh, name of a couple of organizations and movements that I think have been important: Barbican stories I think is doing important work right now, and they're doing it in a way that is, um, enabling us to sort of understand what it means to speak up and organize while still retaining what I would call, like something like a strategic opacity or kind of, well, a guerilla tactic, a guerilla tactic, uh, in terms of, uh, addressing institutional racism. Um, 81 Acts of Exuberance, uh, in, in, in Brixton, um, this sort of bringing to, um, well activating a counter memory of the 1981 riots and engaging with, uh, local communities. I think that they've provided some amazing sort of resources and, and, and, and practices of, of organizing. Um, I wanna sort of just, you know, do a shout out for Asia Art Activism and the work that they've been doing, um, is I think been really, really important, and I know it's been important for a lot of, uh, uh, artists and activists, um, here in the UK, but also trans nationally - I think it's also something really important to put the UK arts and cultural sort of, uh, sector in a transnational frame, uh, and not sort of, um, make it only about the UK in other words, because I think there's a lot of really important connections we can make just in terms of resources, but in terms of contextualization. Uh, Sex With Cancer, I think it's been doing just amazing stuff.

The, the Center for Chinese Contemporary Art and the critique of it, the critique of against white leadership and white fragility of this, of these, of this Chinese organization, uh, Chinese cultural organization that I think movement has also been, I think, important because it's also confronting what I think is another huge problem today in the arts, and that is white fragility.

Um, and, and just, I grew up in the United States and I I've always been really just inspired by the Audrey Lorde Project in, uh, in Brooklyn. Yeah, I'll just stop there. I mean, I've been, well, I also have found like organizing resources and inspiration in, in the work because I also do work in post-colonial, uh, criticism, uh, decolonial movements. Um, so the work of, uh, post-colonial scholars have been an important sort of organizing, uh, resources for me, but I'm also thinking about, uh, the Zapatista movement, uh, the Dalit Panthers, the Dalit Panthers in India, who of course were in solidarity with the Black Panthers in the United States.

Um, yeah, I mean, I think when we think about what kind of resources these, these organizations provide, they don't provide us models. They provide us, I think, with, uh, the inspiration of our own to create our own conditions of revolutionary becoming. Um, and that to me is why these, these organizations, uh, yeah, feed, feed, feed my feed, my activism I'll stop that, stop there.

Thanks.

[00:46:08] **Season Butler:** Thank you so much. Um, lets see, uh, Chardine, would you come in next?

[00:46:15] **Chardine Taylor Stone:** Oh, me. Yes. Um, yeah, I mean, those really sound really amazing and I love the Audrey Lorde Project as well, actually, they're fantastic, I didn't have a chance to visit them last time I was in the States, but hey, for next time! Um, yeah, so I mean, I've actually been reading mostly about pre 1960s activism of black women, particularly who were involved in the communist party, actually, and their kind of organizing which sort of utilized the kind of Harlem Renaissance movement as well. And I think people forget, but this is another thing that's really important when it comes to, um, understanding our history is, is that people forget that these were very political people as well. I think when we look back on those times for like, there's, sometimes there's a tendency, I think for people to separate art and politics, when a lot of artists are, are political organizers or also have a political view as well. I mean, Langston Hughes being an obvious one. Um, any of those, um, artists and creatives during that time. So I've been reading mostly about that actually. And, um, in terms of the lessons that we can think about now, I think the main one really is that real focus on international organizing and international collaboration, I think is something that we need to return to again, they were constantly traveling, they were going over to Russia, quite a lot, which I thought was extremely interesting as well at the time. And you know, that that sort of, understanding of working collectively and how to connect with people as well - this is, the arts is a great way to connect with people politically.

And then that manifests in Claudia Jones doing Notting Hill Carnival as a way to bring communities together, but also to sort of, to bring about a kind of, sort of collective amongst the working-class in terms of things that people can do together, getting people talking, dancing together as well, I think is something that as creatives we are extremely good at.

And, um, I actually think even you know, for the left, at the moment in the UK, um, one of our failings is not actually being, is utilizing the arts enough. Because if you look at any successful movement across the 20th century or even into now actually, the creatives and artists have been quite central to that. People react to things emotionally, people think that people, you know, react to politics in this intellectual way and the same that we do - most people don't do that people react by, through images, through music, through those sorts of things. So I think that's something that we can actually start to sort of bring those back together again. So at the moment, what I see is I see the artists over here, you know, people are talking out things, we're talking about the politics, what have you, and then the organizing by the people who are doing stuff around domestic violence, people who are doing stuff around housing, those sorts of thing is over there. So we need to start bringing these back together again and being like, you know, how can I help you communicate your messages out into the world?

[00:49:37] **Season Butler:** Really good points, I'm jotting loads of followup questions. Um, Zita can we hear from you?

[00:49:46] **Zita Holbourne:** Thank you. Yeah, I think there's, um, lots of different groups and movements and, you know, in the past and in the present, the trade union movement is one thing that I would mention, um, in terms of bringing in, mobilizing, bringing people together to organize, and actually in the present time we've got smaller trade unions, that, you know, come from the grassroots, that're organizing around important issues, impacting on black and migrant workers and precarious work. Um, I think that, you know, over the years, we've had to create safe spaces for ourselves historically, um, as well.

So, um, I really admired the black arts movement in the 1980s, the black power movement, which of course was in the UK as well as in the, um, USA, um, which organized, uh, you know, groups of black people coming together to organize The Black People's Day of Action after the New Cross fire, um, around Mangrove, around Notting hill.

Um, so all of those, um, movements, uh, like really inspire me are really important, um, you know, were able to do mass mobilizations and take like

really important action. I'm um, a trustee of ACTSA, and ACTSA is the successor organization to the Anti-Apartheid Movement. So if we look at that, that became an international movement, um, you know, the, um, led the boycott campaign, which faced a lot of opposition or resistance, including from the Labour party initially, you know. So, um, but you know, it became a global movement of action. Um, And, um, I think that there's lots of socialist movements that I'm part of and have co-founded like BARACUK, um, that campaign around justice and equality and bring people together, but equally important are places that create safe, sacred, supportive structures for us, and they may be smaller, you know, they may be about, so for example, I'm a part of a vocal group called Nawi Collective which is an all black women and femmes, um, singing group, that's that, you know, what's important to us is all coming together to create a safe space, a spiritual space for ourselves, more than the gigs that we do as much as you know, they're, they're enjoyable.

Um, I founded The Roots Culture Identity art exhibition and collective to provide a space and a platform for young black artists to exhibit their art because of the discrimination that they face, so I think there's lots of things like that.

Um, two other things I just want to quickly mention is that when I was growing up sound systems organized dances, because of the racism, meaning that we couldn't get into the mainstream clubs. And I'm, um, came up through the performance, poetry, spoken word circuit, and that was an underground movement again, because we were not seen as real poets. There's real snobbery in the poetry world, and so we organized our own thing. So I was part of collectives and hosted, um, you know, poetry nights and worked with a lot of poets, and we created our own spaces for, um, you know, to cater for our own communities and be able to express ourselves in a way that we wanted to, without being judged and criticized as not being the right kind of poets.

[00:53:29] **Season Butler:** Yeah. I mean, that's, that's such an issue as well when the, um, when the sector's narrow and indeed the preserve of wealthier people than our, our idea of what constitutes art, um, what's a professional practice what's real art, um, ends up being funneled through a very narrow definition that leaves a lot of people out and, um, tends to like replicate this very damaging kind of, uh, market system where there's this like elite cabal saying only this is valuable and this is really valuable, and we have it in our little club to kind of collect and trade amongst ourselves.

Um, thank you. And, uh, Lena, that's your.

[00:54:21] **Lena Šimić:** Thank you. So I'm going to mention just a couple of, uh, because a lot has been already said, and I know we want to get to the audiences as well and their questions. So I want to mention The Artist Placement Group that was from the 1960s and what they've done is like they had artists in government and in, in, in, in the industry so in a way, kind of, uh, artists placed in the organizations, and also, uh, Mierla Laderman Ukeles who was an artist who was working with the sanitation department of New York City. So again, she was placed as a part of, um, of this department and she shook the hands of 8,500 workers, uh, cleaners, uh, sanitation workers in New York. And I, so I think it's quite important that we, as artists are inserting ourselves into, uh, into realities, into, into, uh, council departments in that sense. I mean my head is all kind of local authority because that's where I'm, you know, where I'm based as well.

Now, um, uh, I, I'm a part of Walton, like a constituency, uh, which is, uh, in north Liverpool and as a Labour party group, Constituency Labour Party, they had also, um, events which were political education, but they also involved artists. And so it was kind of coming together of community organizations and of artists and kind of, you know, telling each other, what do we do in our constituency? And I also would like to mention a project that I did with the late Tim Jeeves, uh, who was my good friend who sadly died, um, just the last month. And we did this project, uh, through Live Art Development Agency DIY program, which was about connecting, uh, art and politics. And, uh, it was, um, a project - *The Party Calls You* - and it was about actually at the end, we came up with this idea of a ward artists manifesto, and the ward is like the smallest political unit that exists when you're voting in, uh, in local elections. So each one of us has a local counselor. Right? So what we thought is that if each ward could also have an artist, that would be fantastic, and that would be like good, uh, arts renaissance across the country. So we have this, uh, uh, resident ward artist manifesto that I'm happy to share with you, and maybe if you, if you want to look at it, but in a way it would be about, you know, I'm a local counselor, I have some of the funding that, that is given to me as in my ward, and in a way, what I did last year and I will do again this year is to fund an arts project. So to fund an artist, to do some work in the community. So in a way I think this would be a good, effective way to bring artists into every neighborhood, into every, uh, into every ward because that's the smallest political unit. So I think that's one way how we can kind of infiltrate the arts into, into our ward work as well.

So, um, I think, I think that's, that's enough from me for now.

[00:57:35] **Season Butler:** Uh, no, not so fast. I have a question about that, actually.

[00:57:38] **Lena Šimić:** Okay, okay!

[00:57:39] **Season Butler:** Um, so what, what do you say to people who maybe come back to you with, um, look, you know, my, my kid's school class is packed. Um, I've, I've got, uh, teenagers who, um, might want to do A-levels, but we don't have, uh, EMA anymore. Um, you know, the infrastructure is crumbling. Why an art project, you know, sort of, uh, why, why take some of this budget and, uh, and spend it on the local art project?

[00:58:13] **Lena Šimić:** Right. No, they don't try to me like this, unfortunately, but so, you know, I would, that would be a, probably a lot of money. What I'm talking about is more kind of, because in terms of how a local authority funds things, right, through the wards you get, uh, depends on, uh, what ward it is. If it's in some kind of really uh, richer area you wouldn't get that much money, but if it's in the more deprived area, then there is more funding allocated. Now you can, as ward counselors, you can make decisions, how to, you know, how to spend this money. So arts organizations or community organizations, they don't have to be arts organizations, community organizations. You can encourage community organizations for example, to, you know, work possibly with artists and to bring artists into the community organization and then to create projects which would involve local people. I mean, that was the idea that, that we had and that we kind of piloted a bit, but, you know, I think it, it could be something that can take, take over in a way, because imagine if you had, you know, an artist in every ward, it would be really fantastic. But I think, you know, all of us are residents, we are constituents, we are citizens, and we all have local counselors, so we can write to them and they can ask about something like this - I'm happy to send, you know, our, uh, our manifesto that, that we've, that we've designed.

[00:59:47] **Season Butler:** Thank you. And, uh, thanks for letting me have like another little extra poke there. Um, I want to bring in one question from the audience. Uh, and so, um, this comrade asks, uh, given everything that's wrong in the art sector, in the UK, what keeps you steadfast in forging your own creative paths or radical structures?

So, um, maybe we can take it in turns to, uh, address that quickly. And, um, uh, we haven't heard from Zita first, so I'm gonna see if you'll just give us some brief thoughts about what helps to keep you steadfast in what you're doing.

[01:00:33] **Zita Holbourne:** Okay. Um, yeah. So my belief in myself and the belief in what I'm doing and love of what I'm doing, the passion for what I'm doing, I think that, um, if it can be quite difficult to have faith and belief in yourself in this environment and the discrimination and barriers that we faced.

Um, so that's something that I had to teach myself, um, built over, um, a long period and, um, my quest for equality and rights, um, you know, runs through my blood, my veins. Um, and so I will always fight not just for, um, a better future for the next generation, but I believe that we should have equality, um, in our own lifetime as well.

Um, I think I'm probably fired and fueled by anger a lot of the time. So, you know, some people, when they experience or witness discrimination or injustice, you know, they find it quite traumatising - it is traumatising to me. Um, but I channeled that into anger and that anger turns into action. But the reality is that if there was no audience to look at my art, to read what I write, to watch what I perform, I wouldn't stop doing it because it's something within me. So I'm always going to create art, create creating art for me, you know, when I started to do it, it was never about making money or having an audience, it was about survival, healing, um, self care, um, for myself. Um, but obviously we should get paid for what we do. We shouldn't be expected to do it for free when we're taking it outside to an audience.

[01:02:36] **Season Butler:** Thanks. Chardine?

[01:02:42] **Chardine Taylor Stone:** Um, I was actually looking at, um, Rebecca Week's question. Is that, is it alright if I go and?

[01:02:49] **Season Butler:** Yeah

[01:02:49] **Chardine Taylor Stone:** is that okay?

[01:02:50] **Season Butler:** Absolutely, go for it.

[01:02:51] **Chardine Taylor Stone:** Um, thanks for that Zita, that's really, really interesting and much the same experiences and thoughts and I actually with you. Um, yeah, just to uh get to Rebecca Weeks' question, which I think is really interesting actually, and really gets at the heart of, you know, how can we go about organizing for that equality in our lifetime, as Zita was saying, and, um, looking at other movements and stuff. I think, you know, it goes back to this thing about reinvigorating the sort of radicalness in the arts, cause I feel like

it's become very liberalised in a way, and we've kind of lost our way a bit and I don't know how that's happened.

I mean, there's, you know, it could be a theory about the sort of reliance on funding and what that means. You know, cause we're never actually getting enough funding so that forces us to compete with each other in a way for these sort of scraps, when we could be looking at other models, like I explained in Europe where we have, you know, stipends, that sort of thing where we're actually considered as workers. And, um, the universal basic income as well, could be a way to sort of circumvent that, that need to rely on these government organizations, and we've all got to play the game and we've got all put our sort of very nice sort of safe applications in. And, um, often I feel like I'm doing the same application every time, but with different words, you know, it becomes, it's sort of extreme kind of alienation of what it is that we're supposed to be doing and, you know, sort of chasing that.

But, um, I think something else, um, goes deeper in that as well, and I think it's the kind of the artist relationship to sort of capital. And then when I talk about that, I'm talking about the arts market in particular and how whilst, you know, every other sort of market is sort of, you know, decreasing in some way the arts market continues to grow even during the, um, austerity and the crash, the market continue to rise. And I think, you know, this relationship that we have with patrons and that sort of thing, this is what makes it hard for us. You know, I think Rebecca says here, you know, artists are too polite, et cetera, et cetera. And it's like, we are, we are in that relationship. And then we could tie that in with the whole aura of the artist, everyone you know we're an artist, I'm a musician - music's just as bad, do you know what I mean? Everyone thinks there's something [inaudible] and, you know, I think that's important because you know, we do provide, um, skills and importance, but that aura doesn't pay wages. Do you know what I mean? It doesn't put roofs over our heads and this sort of mystical thing that we put on the arts is on the one side that Lena was saying puts a lot of people off from becoming an artist, cause that's something that, which people do. Or you know, when we we're doing our art history degrees, and our fine art degrees, we learn about all these movements and they're like these sort of groups of mostly white upper-class people sort of flouncing around some big country house somewhere, aren't they? Really, Bauhaus, you know, Bright Young Things, all that sort of stuff. You know, that's not the person from the council estate, that's not what we see.

So, um, I think it's, you know, I think I could go back to that point of looking at, and Rebecca's point here, looking at other movements where there's like a similar precarious relationship with work, and then organising around that way

and actually having some strategy, I think that just goes beyond, you know, let's get more fund government to give us more funding from the arts council because we're having a pay freeze for us arts workers at the moment. Civil servants DM sector that goes beyond that, that actually starts and look at universal basic income. That is something that artists should really be leading on really, particularly, because it is in place in other countries. And actually try to have some concrete policies that then we can present to the Labour party or whatever party and be like, this is what we want. So we can actually have that instead of getting caught in this circle of the performance and the leaders and all that kind of stuff on the social media, cause not really going to do anything.

So that's all I have to say on that one.

[01:07:22] **Season Butler:** Thanks. And I, um, yeah I think that, uh, this contribution from Rebecca Weeks from Performance Platform is really excellent. Um, I just encourage everyone to kind of give this contribution a full read. Um, I wanna take a moment to acknowledge that we are, uh, coming up to seven 30.

Um, I'm really keen to get at least a few minutes in talking about, um, how we overcome some of the barriers to organizing, um, like within the arts, uh, as creative workers or as audiences, um, because like, you know, sort of, I think that that's, that's really where we get our boots on the ground and take some action, um, rather than, you know, kind of continuing to reassure ourselves that we understand the problem.

Um, and I'm hearing a lot of, um, energy in this group. And I, I think that there just really is nothing like the boots on the ground. And also, um, the kind of like joined up understanding of the issues that the panelists have all kind of touched on. Um, but yeah, what would be possible in our lives, um, as artists, as audiences, et cetera, um, if instead of, uh, bombing Yemen, we were redirecting some of those funds. Um, you, what if our creative energy was, um, really looking a little further down the pipeline, um, at why it is that we're being subjected to over a decade now of really brutal austerity. Um, and so could, um, uh, Lena and then Amit, uh, come in with some thoughts about, um, organising.

[01:09:21] **Lena Šimić:** Okay, thank you, thank you, Susan. And sorry, I had a bit of a child emergency there shouting, so that's why I left, left the room, which kind of reminds me, you know, one of the things that I've been involved in for, for a decade was The Institute for the Art and Practice of Dissent at Home. So,

[01:09:38] **Season Butler:** I was gonna ask you about that, I'm really glad that you brought that up.

[01:09:41] **Lena Šimić:** Yeah. So it's basically a kind of a as if your own little Institute at home that you have, but it was funded. It was quite interesting because when we set it up, it was, first of all, it was funded by 10% of our earnings, but our earnings as lecturers, right. So there is, this thing is like a, it reminds me of my, my Grecian uh, friend, artist who asked, who told me, you know, when you're an artist you are asked, 'Well, oh, do you, do you teach or do you sell?' Almost like you either have to then teach or you sell you know, those are the options how you can live. So in a way, when we set it up, we were, we, we teach, right, we don't sell. But then interestingly, because we were, we were very angry at the way, how, you know, like you had to rely on all these little commissions and this little bits of money that people would give you, like almost throw at you like 50 pounds here and there and you can't really live off it. So we said, well, we will give 10% of what we earn away. And, you know, we will be transparent about it. And it wasn't a lot in the beginning. But then as we were earning more at university, the more money was, uh, being raised. But interestingly, then the Institute became like a little beast that started making its own money. So, you know, it would get its own commissions and so on. So then this was the way of how this arts project, which was in the home was starting to make more money itself. So that was like one way of kind of, you know, maybe alternative way of organizing.

But, um, I, I wanted to kind of go back to, um, uh, Chardine's point there. That why, what, how we imagine this artist is always like this kind of, you know, people in these posh houses doing something, you know, that that is not what we do. Now, I represent Anfield, which is one of the most deprived wards in this country. Okay. And in a way, for me to use my MNF it's called, um, Mayoral Neighbourhood Fund money on arts can be, is actually quite risky because that's seen as a total luxury. How, how, why should I spend my money on arts? It's not my money. It's the money of, for the ward of the people of Anfield, but in a way it's like, why are you spending it on that? Why are you not spending it on, you know, on alleyways, on, on cleanup programs, on, you know, of making, um, more kind of visible as if difference to people's lives.

So in a way we really need to get away from this kind of thinking, even. Art is for everyone, it should be part and parcel of who we are. It is, you know, so in a way we must, uh, somehow break from this thinking and, and, and keep thinking, talking about radical arts movements that are, you know, from grassroots, you know, so that it's not seen as this kind of, uh, something that's brought from, from above to us, you know? So I think that's a very important

way of thinking in terms of how do we organize, you know, and we do need to organize in our communities. We must, we must create art on the streets, in, in the places. This is why I think in workplaces where you don't expect it so that it becomes much more part of the everyday.

So that's, that's what I could say.

[01:13:11] **Dr. Amit Rai:** Hi. I think, I think there's a lot of barriers to organizing today. I think the hostile environment is a big one, um, against migrants and refugees. I think the hostile environment permeates everything. Um, and it's not just about the other it's it's about how a certain hostility becomes, what is Britishness.

Um, So I think that's a huge barrier. I think, I think what we need to do is to break down the barriers to collaboration. I think collaboration it's like, there's a good, big celebration of collaborative practice, but they're in concrete sort of terms, collaborations become difficult. How do you actually pay artists and pay community groups, uh, in the organizations that you've been, I teach at a university that makes it very difficult to organize and to, to collaborate with others.

I think, I think that's an important aspect. I think mental health as a collective problem, when we put mental health, when we take mental health out of the individual context and put it back in the social, I think that, uh, and, and, and ways of doing that for me happened through radical administration of arts, the radical administration of arts would foreground, um, uh, would, would, would foreground care and mental health and everything, uh, that an organization does.

I think we need to break away from crisis management and, uh, and, and the crisis management around difference and diversity. Um, that, that is basically, uh, you know, that's how art is administered in this country. And I think that, uh, is, is something that, that, that, that temper, that temporality, that, that breathless rhythm of, of crisis from crisis to crisis to crisis, um, I think is also, uh, basically designed to keep us down.

[01:15:02] **Chardine Taylor Stone:** Can I, can I just come in on, um, Amit's, um, point, cause that last point I thought was really fantastic actually. And I think, you know, what I've been seeing is like the sort of vanguard of activism within the arts sector has been around diversity, which is important. So, you know, we know white artists tend to get more funding than do, but I've actually started to see it increasingly become I don't wanna say polarised cause that sounds silly but like, um, it, because it's becoming more and more about

individual groups and we've forgotten how to work collectively around things. So, um, there was a theater recently where they had this whole big announcement about why they weren't going to use BAME anymore because et cetera, as you know, that was when that was put upon them, and then they were going to have a special fund that was just for black artists of African descent, and this is in Birmingham as well, which I found quite shocking, which has quite a huge south Asian population. So I was like, okay, so how are you going to fund this other community? But... and it was kind of like, one there was a misunderstanding about what, where that term BAME came from. That wasn't a term that we created ourselves, that was a term that came from the government - and Zita can probably explain the history of this more actually - um, and was put on us and then suddenly people were talking about it, like it was some radical grassroots term that came, that came up and it's like, no that term came about because the government was looking at ways, like you said, to crisis manage so that we've got this fu-, this, this is funding specifically for BAME groups, and then you need to apply, but you're going to get these piecemeal funds and you end up in this loop, and everyone, then trying to sort of promote themselves as, you know, solely being about that rather than being about the work that's being produced, which is a problematic thing to be in. But yeah, no, definitely, I think we need to start thinking about ourselves as creatives, and as workers, as laborers, and then what does that mean? And I think then that will actually really broaden our understanding of where it is that we need to go in terms of having those material changes that actually make our work sustainable.

[01:17:28] **Season Butler:** Yeah. I think that's a really, really good point. And, um, I, I wonder about, um, how we organize as workers when, um, we often like, don't necessarily have a workplace. Um, a lot of my work as an artist throughout my career has happened in part of my bedroom. And, um, and so it's a slightly different feeling, uh, from, you know, when you're working on a shop floor and you can see the person next to you being exploited in the same way that you are, and you can feel the way that, you know, if you got together, you can make collective demands. Uh, whereas a lot of the way that we, um, have had to relate to each other as artists are, um, people who compete for tiny pots of money all the time. Um, and so, uh, Zita, I was wondering if you have some thoughts about, um, um, organizing from a kind of trade union perspective and, um, and then if anybody wants to come in after Zita on this point, that'd be great. And, um, I'll have a look and see if there might be one or two questions after this, but we're wrapping up.

[01:18:45] **Zita Holbourne:** Yeah. Thank you for, for that, um, you're completely right yeah, because of the way we, we work as artists, we don't come together, um, in the same way that other workers do, because we're not

showing up and doing a nine to five and being in the same workplace where we can speak and strategize and come together.

Um, and actually that plays into the hands of the sector, the employers in exploiting us, um, and pitting us against each other. So we're competing against each other, um, fighting for scraps effectively. Um, you know, what they do is when somebody makes a noise and challenges what's happening, uh, whether it's discrimination or unfair treatment, not enough pay, um, they'll just get rid of that person and move on to the next one and expect you to be thankful. Um, you know, for the fact that you've got the work and then you haven't got that connection with the person they've just done that to, to know that that's what's happening. So I think actually speaking out about this stuff and exposure is important. Um, yeah? Because if we don't, sometimes we do need to name and shame, um, when somebody has been, you know, an organization has been particularly bad, but what, what I know from my own union or the AUE because it operates in a different way is that we can't expect the workers who are members to come to us, we need to go to where people are, we need to work around their working patterns. We need to find other ways of having conversations. Um, we, um, you know, have to move away from those traditional ways of operating as trade unions. One of the things we've developed is a good practice charter, which we're asking employers to sign up to because we don't have that collective bargaining, um, in place that you have with other trade unions in workplaces, and in some other countries like Canada, they have negotiated, um, collective bargaining rights. And so we're asking employers to sign up to that. Um, we're organizing in a more informal way for artists to come together to discuss their practices, the experiences they're going through, because actually, um, it could be off-putting for some people to operate in the same traditional ways that trade unions have operated for artists and it doesn't work.

So we have to be flexible. We have to look at that, and we need to actually expose what's happening and have those conversations and put that information out. Um, uh, so that people know what's happening and find ways of connecting people. Um, actually in some ways the pandemic has meant because we're meeting virtually in some ways that's been easier now because artists don't work regular shifts, that's the other thing, so you've got to operate in a way that is inclusive of everybody: people who've got caring responsibilities, people who are doing another job, you know, to pay the bills. Um, so there's quite a lot of things to think about. Um, we also organize a solidarity fund. Um, I, um, authored for Public Service International, which is an international trade union body, a manifesto for culture sector recovery, um, which we're asking trade unions to sign up to. So, um, you know, not just trade unions that work with that operate in the arts solely, but have some kind of, um, uh, representation of

people working in the arts. And what we can't do is leave behind the people that clean the museums and galleries, um, that do the security on the door, and loads of the members of my other union, who are precarious workers, the first people out the door during the pandemic have been black women.

So we need to challenge that we need to challenge the discrimination, and actually we need to address the institutional discrimination that has already existed before austerity hit, before the pandemic hit and organize, um, have self-organized structures. That's important as well so people can come together around the particular discrimination or barriers they face and be connected with like-minded people and people who have that same lived experience. Um, so they're in a safe space, but they can also self organize around some of those issues.

[01:23:26] **Season Butler:** Thanks for that. Um, do any of the other panelists want to come back and uh?

[01:23:32] **Zita Holbourne:** Can I mention one other thing quick? Sorry. I meant to say earlier because you, um, universal, um, uh, basic income has come up a few times. Um, so AUE did put a motion to the Trade Union Congress on this issue in September, because we do recognize that that's an issue, and at our AGM earlier this year, we had, um, a workshop on, um, developing, um, something around that. So, yeah, I agree. I just wanted to mention that, that we are trying to form policy on that across the trade union movement.

[01:24:09] **Season Butler:** Thank you. That's, that's so important. I think that universal basic income is one of these ideas that, um, everybody in the arts should be championing, um, because it's not only something that might, um, fill that space where artists, uh, stipends, um, exist in places like France and Belgium and Holland and other places. Um, but it's also, um, extended to everyone. It kind of says to everyone in society, you know, sort of the, the, at the absolute basic level, um, your existence counts in society. Um, you're not allowed to just starve, and work isn't a matter of labour or die. Um, great. So can, uh, can I hear like any, um, final thoughts on this from the rest of the panellists?

[01:25:06] **Lena Šimić:** I can I just please, that just one more thing, like in terms of like joining in other worker's struggles, like, um, back in 2017, we set up a few of us set up this network called artists for Corbyn, and we had a great big red banner and that red banner, we made a petition of, uh, uh, kind of a letter actually that was all these artists supporting Corbyn and there was over 2,500 names that, that did. So we wrote out all, few of us in Liverpool here, and

Manchester wrote out all these names out, and then this banner, which was called artists for Corbyn also after the general election, we were also using it to show solidarity at different picket lines.

So for example, you had a, I've just have it here so I don't forget, the Arriva bus drivers in Liverpool. So we would come with this big banner, a few of us artists, and they would be there with these other workers and showing solidarity, and also the RMT keep the guards on the trade, and then we had with Camill Laird ship builders that are were represented by Unite and, uh, by, uh, Unison as well.

And then also of course, UCU, uh, pension strikes and again, UCU is now balloting for another strike and, uh, action as well. So, you know, I think as artists, especially us that are working in education as well, so UCU is our union as well, you know, we need to be showing support and therefore we are kind of, uh, showing ourselves as a movement as well. Here we are artists, you know, standing without the workers too. So I think that's also important that we do that.

[01:26:48] **Chardine Taylor Stone:** Yeah absolutely, I mean, I think the thing I would say is join a trade union as well, first of all, and also don't be scared to talk about money. I think as artists and creators, we need to talk about money a lot more, this whole you know, sort of thing of like, we're just doing this work because we love it. We do love it, but we also need to eat. So, you know, talk to your, um, collaborators and stuff. When they get that email from the museum or from the arts organization, offer them, offering them some work. What fee are they charging? Just do you know what I mean like things like that, are you undercharging? Those sort of things you're not going to know unless you ask and you speak to people, and I think that's really important. So we need to kind of get over ourselves with that a bit, to be honest.

Um, Also the other thing, um, just relating to someone's question around, um, how they can, you know, they feel that their work isn't getting recognition and not getting the right pay. I actually think, um, you know, I know this might sound like a broken record, but I do actually think collective working is the way forward and that can be loosely and/or that can be officially. So you can officially start a collective or just to think collectively with relating back to the thing that I was talking about where you just speak to your collaborators about how much they're getting paid, et cetera, et cetera, what they're doing.

We need to be supporting each other a lot more and stop seeing each other as competition in the way that the institution wants to see us as competition. And, um, I think, you know, having that sort of one voice that we will be able to push

for better pay. You know, cause some of these heads of these arts, um, organizations are getting paid quite a lot of money, so there is money there cause I do the budgets. So you need to ask for more money, you need to ask for more money because we will be able to find it so it don't be frightened to ask for more money and then negotiate on those things. So I think it's just being a bit like that. And I think particularly within Europe and within Britain, I know many of my American comrades are much, much better at being quite forthright about the financial situation with that, and I think we need to take on a bit of that attitude as well. Um, so yeah, I would just leave it like that. I think working collectively gives you a lot more power and um, practically it also means that you can demand higher wages as one voice.

[01:29:32] **Dr. Amit Rai:** Can I jump in, I just sort of, you know, echo what my comrades have said here. I think self-organization is the key, our capacities to self-organize and how we, how we can nurture them, how we can strengthen them. I think all power to the artist-workers, and, uh, and we need, we need to, we need to make that, uh, a rallying cry.

We need to join unions, but we need to decolonize the union. And, and that's, that's, that's also, you know, a process of struggle. It's a struggle of within and against, I think as well, uh, within, against those powers that, that continue to reproduce privileges. Um, I think, um, yeah, for me, the big lesson of, uh, in the contemporary moment after me too, black lives matter and, and, uh, uh, COVID is, uh, where is solidarity w w whether solidarity in this country, um, how, how do we, uh, re reconnect with practices through practice of solidarity, to the communities that we want to work with. Um, and that to me gets right back to what we mean by authentic co-creation today. But yeah. Thank you.

[01:30:35] **Season Butler:** Thank you. And, uh, thanks to the whole panel, uh, to everybody who's joined us, uh, to everybody who's contributed in the Q&A box.

Um, I'm sorry that we didn't get time to get to everyone's questions. Um, but I think that that is actually a very beautiful and, uh, inspiring place to close, uh, and so, um, uh, Lena Šimić, Zita Holbourne, Chardine Taylor Stone, and Amit Rai, I so appreciate you spending some time and, um, uh, all of your, uh, powerful thoughts and expertise in helping us to think through where we are now and where we can go from here.

So, thank you so much. And I'll hand back over to Ingrid.

[01:31:22] **Ingrid:** Um, thank you, Susan, for hosting that conversation. Um, and thanks for all our panelists. Um, also thanks to the audience for coming. And I just wanted to encourage you to look out, either on Season's socials or East Street's, because there'll be, um, more resources and conversations from this residency coming out shortly.

And I hope you all have a lovely Thursday. I hope you all have a lovely Thursday evening. Thank you.