



REMEMBER *the* FUTURE FUND

**Funding
the Art Worlds
We Want!**

Art.coop, in partnership with Movement Strategy Center (MSC), is establishing a \$5M special interest fund — the Remember the Future Fund (RFF) — that places resources directly in the hands of practitioners who are advancing equity in the arts. We are collaboratively raising an initial \$1.5M towards this \$5M pooled fund. This is the first pooled fund in the arts that is focused on the power of arts groups and cooperatives — and is held in a movement-based space like MSC.

Artists and the Solidarity Economy

Currently, our cultural sector reflects the overall economy — where working class, LGBTQIA+, disabled, and BIPOC artists' labor and creativity are exploited for the profit of creative institutions. Artists' work in an economy with intermittent funding, top-down decision making, and exclusionary practices that leave the few (often institutions and funders) to govern how and where resources are allocated.

Artists are building alternatives to the extractive economy by innovating models for self-determination and community wealth building. They are growing the Solidarity Economy movement where those doing the work make the decisions and share the profits; where power is shared; and where art is made with and by — not just for and in — the community. Artists are leading a movement to create hyperlocal initiatives of community ownership and democratic governance to build back political, cultural, and economic power.

Grantmakers, intermediaries, and wealth-holders working within the cultural sector must follow the lead of artists and transition out of the business-as-usual economic paradigm and direct capital towards solutions advancing a more racially just and economically equitable arts world.

Why Artist Co-ops and Groups Now?

Our current global economy, one that is maintained by systems of extraction and exploitation, is the root of many intersecting social, economic, and ecological crises. In our arts sectors, we find that questions of money and economy are separated from art-making. We know that practices of shared money and shared power are rooted in the cultural traditions of working class and QTBIPOC communities. This is because cultural survival and economic survival go hand in hand for communities that must defend against the exploitation of the market, dispossession, and state-sanctioned repression and violence. We must transition away from systems that value power and profit over people and the planet and move towards just futures and an economy that works for all.

Cooperatives (co-ops), where individuals pool resources together for collective benefit, have a long and rich history around the globe. In America, cooperative practices trace back to the late 18th century, when enslaved and free African Americans pulled money together for burials, land, and buying freedom for one another. Cooperative practices, with solidarity at the core, provide ways to spread power and wealth in communities that have been the most harmed by systems of extraction and exploitation.



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There are many examples and a legacy of these practices. A prominent Native artisan co-op, Qualla Arts and Crafts, has been led by culture bearers since 1946. In Boston, a democratically managed investment fund, Boston Ujima Project, places Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) arts and cultural organizing at the heart of its work. A national community loan fund that invests in U.S. worker co-ops, the Working World, was started by artists. Artists in Belgium founded Smart, a co-op that gives 35,000 freelancers the benefits of full-time employees (including unemployment insurance). Smart's model is now being piloted in the U.S. by the U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives' Guilded.

RFF contributes to this rich history of cooperative organizing by directing resources to Solidarity Economy-principled arts groups. This may be the first fund for emerging artist-led cooperatives that are fed up with current extractive systems and are actively building alternatives within the creative economy. We are proud to be part of an ecosystem that includes the Center for Cultural Innovation and the Center for Cultural Power that support individuals and the Culture and Community Power Fund that supports established organizations.

Our Approach

RFF provides unrestricted and multi-year cash investments to working class, LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC-led cooperatives and groups building community control in the arts. Specifically, RFF is a democratically-controlled fund coordinated by artists in the Solidarity Economy movement that places resources directly in the hands of practitioners who are advancing equity in the arts.

About Us

Art.coop is a network of artists and groups who make the Solidarity Economy irresistible. Our Vision: Artists who are fed up with the current system are connected and know their power. There is a hub where artists get money, ideas, and tools to strengthen their communities. Art.coop is part of the movement to remember future Art Worlds with community-control at the core. Our Mission: We are working for a future in which artists closest to the pain of an extractive economy know their power and use it to dismantle the current system. We resource a community of artists committed to building the Art Worlds we deserve. Art.coop is located in the U.S. but is rooted in the international Solidarity Economy movement.

Movement Strategy Center (MSC) is a movement support organization that provides values-aligned, holistic intermediary services enabling access to crucial infrastructure and thought partnership for BIPOC, women, and LGBTQIA+ movement leaders, activists, and communities challenging intersectional issues of systemic racism, rampant environmental destruction, and crippling economic exploitation. Our mission is to cultivate the transformative power necessary to accelerate a Just Transition.

At MSC we know that art and culture shape what we imagine is possible for movements and we are proud to strengthen our arts strategy alongside Art.coop. Together, we are creating this special interest fund because we know racial and economic justice depend on the visions of artists.

Art as activism has played a significant role in ensuring the success of our movements and in affecting lasting social change. From the Black Arts Movements of the 1960s and 1970s, with figures such as Emory Douglas using art to shape the visual imagery of the Black Panther Party's message, to the Zapatista Murals, that tell the history of the Zapatista movement in Mexico, art has continued to play a role in countering historical invisibility, shifting dominant narratives, and in activating civic engagement.

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