Land acknowledgement paired with action. Donate to the landtrust.

Cast Introduction: Moy Eng welcomed everyone and introduced the CSA group and the work they did. CSAs affirm how CAST wants to work grounded in community with them. This idea was born out of the last surge of inaffordability. Just to be here is either expensive or prohibitively expensive. We do not take pride in being one of the 15 most expensive places to live and work in the world. Unless we create real long term solutions we will continue to be nomadic.

CAST’s new vision statement: By 2030, we will fortify the cultural soul of the San Francisco Bay Area, serving over 1500 artists and culture bearers—current and future—by creating permanently affordable housing and workspaces in neighborhoods experiencing profound change.

Tyese introduced CSAs past and present
Healing Kitchen Afro Vegan (lunch) caterer
Cafe 15 (breakfast) caterer
Together Pictures (video and photography)

Katherin went through the goals for the day. Stay for the meal to deepen the relationships so we can work together to get this done.

17 guests present at this introduction

Interactive Map of Past Present and Future
An invitation to continue sharing stories together and envision future spaces. We haven’t had a lot of space to mourn past spaces. How do we hold space for that and engage and envision something new to blossom?

Creating a 7th Street Corridor Cultural Zone
Presented by Chi Chi Okonmah & Gregory Jackson
Land Without Landlords, 7th St Cultural Cooperative Corridor in West Oakland
Taking vacancies and turning them into permanently affordable housing.
● There’s a ton of development near the bart station that could push out the culture there
● Name this corridor, map assets, claim space and preserve
● Mapped vacant lots and open spaces for lease or purchase.
● In this session 1) define cultural space 2) identify more assets in this area

Process
● Close eyes, think about cultural space, remember spaces in your life. What did you do to go to that space, what did you wear, did you bring people or food, were you going to be entertained or enjoy music, or were you bringing art. What connected you to that space? What did you feel there? Is it here in Oakland? Could it be?
● Take those feelings images and ideas, then take out a device and tag #culturalspaceis to share it.
● The analog version was to use post its and put them on the map

Discussion
● Oakland Music Festival Block Party is in West Oakland
● An elder black woman had a museum in her home and would open it by appointment
● Mosque and Halal market on 7th near Market
● GROW Incubator at Market and 7th
● What about public land like the huge post office building, that space could be programmable space

Critical Spaces: Neighborhood Cultural Centers as Hubs
Presented by Elena Serrano & Carolyn Johnson
Potential Funding Support for 7 Cultural Hubs
Eastside Arts Bookstore
The Black Cultural Zone

Overview
● Recognizing the cultural, revolutionary history of Oakland. Panthers, Pointer Sisters, one of first Chicano arts collective, we have to continue to uplift and include the arts in determining the future of Oakland
● San Francisco has measures to preserve their culturally specific, but Oakland has not
7 spaces that we feel are the hubs of cultural workers and visionaries to be sustained. Key institutions that will determine the future. Some have been a long time, some are getting ready to be here a long time.

There’s been some rumbling about a bond measure, maybe that will support them.

- Intertribal Friendship House
  - Use culture as a base of power. One of the oldest of its kind

- Malonga Casquelourd Center for the Arts
  - More world recognized than it is here in Oakland. Renowned artists from across the diaspora. This mixed use model is innovative

- Oakland Asian Cultural Center
  - Has everything that any neighborhood should have. Arts, seniors, healthcare, kids

- Eastside Arts Alliance
  - Finally paid off their mortgage and own free and clear
  - Intersection of many culturally specific

- Fruitvale Transit Village
  - Model for maintaining space and culture through transit development without gentrification.

- 7th Street
  - Transit development displacing culture, the opposite of Fruitvale
  - 7th Street Corridor Cultural Zone is working to keep culture in West Oakland

- Black Cultural Zone
  - Businesses have been pushed out of East Oakland. Fire, gentrification, displacement
  - Catalyst neighborhood development system. Culture, business, support services.
  - Must buy commercial real estate to hold power
  - Building out commercial capacity and then anchor residential
  - 40% of Oakland’s black people live in East Oakland below High St
  - Mixed use space: stage, culinary, small retail, maker space, office space, garden space.
  - Catalyst sites will house 10-30,000 square feet.
  - If we don’t control 25% or more of the commercial space we will gentrify ourselves.
Oldest black motorcycle club, last black owned bar, etc. We do control some real estate, but we need to have a bank and access to capital, etc.
- Mix of nonprofit but primarily income generating. Strong black economy so people who live and work here can grow wealth.
- Healthy, safe, and clean. Asset wealth and life wealth!
- blackculturezone.org
- In a 50 block area looking for 10 anchor sites

Culture in the Commons

Presented by Pam Mei Harrison
An American in Chinatown
- What barriers have you experienced or known of that keep you from accessing the culture you want?
- What are the benefits of that culture?
- The first Chinatown in Oakland was near Howard Terminal, Castro and 1st
- Very small in 1882, then boomed in the 1960s with changes in immigration. With the expansion of Bart the boundaries became more constrained
- The backlash of WW2 and anti-Japanese sentiment, and prior to that the Chinese Exclusion act has made a long history of hardship
- Pam Mei grew up in a multi racial family in a rural place
- Always a foreigner
- Learning about living economy vs extractive

Creative Living by Artists and Friends
Presented by Donna Smithey & Ben Burke
- A self-contained village, taking care of themselves
- 5th Avenue Shade Tree saved themselves. They were being evicted but Donna knew housing law and they bought their land.
- A collecting point for people and shared space
- There is an indoor performance space and huge outdoor courtyard for arts
- They need to partner with a developer to buy the remaining land. This partnership will keep them from paving over culture like Jack London. They are recreating the things they paved over. (pop up museum, sculptures, farmers market, etc)
● Their goal is to pioneer and leave legislations, examples, and proof behind to convince people of the value
● We need laws to say if you want to develop here then you must invest in our values: % to arts, % to other things
● The current development has built phase 1, once that fills they’ll go on to phase 2. The hope is to buy phase 3.
  ○ Right now it’s a big field and their plan is to flatten and prep the land then sell to another developer to build
  ○ The scheme is to find a developer ally before they find someone
  ○ Protect the land as a park and cultural space

Lunch Conversation
- How do we reconcile that we are on stolen land when we are also stolen people?
- How can we move towards creative engagement rather than just protesting and throwing rocks?
- How can we be at the table with power rather than as an act of “community outreach” charity?
- The only investment in the black arts corridor is what the CDC has put into it through microgrants. Including a capacity grant to Malonga. District 3 hasn’t done any of what they outlined in their priorities for the black arts.
- Nikki Bas got $75k
- At the Malonga Center they had no capacity to run programming and invited arts organizations to be in residence rent free and present programming
- Culture influences politics and politics influence culture
  - Obama administration stability led to zombies and vampires
  - Trump chaos led to rise of superheros
- The 2020 election was left out of the dialogue today and so was homelessness
  - What dots are we not connecting?
  - How can we responsibly respond to social issues through art?
    - Activate public space with theater work that connects homelessness and police responsibility, PTSD, state sponsored violence, etc
- Issues with encampments are about public space and who gets to use public space
- The challenge with shifting the narrative is that it must be catchy and succinct like the “American Dream”
- How to partner with the market to get it more in touch with need. Homelessness shows that supply is not meeting the demand of the people. No research has supported that all this building will alleviate homelessness.
- When you talk about economic opportunity, who is included?
  - How are we connected to each other as a collective?

**Group Shareout**

- This is a cultural space, it is how we connect and not just about a physical venue where you can watch or see, it’s the environment where we relate to other people, engage with nature. All public space is cultural space. It’s not about transaction, it’s about transformation. We need to think in a capacious way about what cultural space is.
- Collective action, what would it mean to have a regular convening of people and resources? What does it mean to have wellness in our practices, and what does it mean to put our wellness first. We don’t only need to take care of orgs and buildings. The people are also resources.
- Cultural easements are spaces within spaces that can be deemed permanently to an individual or community. Expanding from the black cultural zone we thought about an indigenois space so there could be acknowledgement. Maybe these easements could be in all cultural spaces. Collaborations between cultural centers and specifically developing world centers. Cultural centers can drive gentrification so we must guard against that.
- We need to weaponize culture as a survival mechanism for communities of color but without a silo mentality. We need to interact with each other within that sphere. What about the unsheltered? They need to be part of this conversation and instead of victimizing them for being homeless we need to look at mental health and resources. When it comes to public space and who has claim on it we can’t forget them.
- Culture defines how you feel in that space. It can be consumer culture, capitalism, fear. We want to foster collaboration and creativity over
extraction and violence. When it comes to ownership we are grateful to those who were able to secure it before the skyrocketing prices, and then there are those who don’t realistically see that but choose to stay here for the culture, community, etc.

- Strategies around collective space for multiple orgs and multiple uses. Reimagining business models in the arts, a network of spaces, cultural spaces cooperative that go beyond just a theater or just a studio space. They’ve been funded to continue their design process and will be launching a podcast. Building an ecosystem of cultural spaces.

Closing
Wrapping up the highlights
Lots about collaboration
When we come together and we stay in conversation and share food that is a cultural space, and we can be more strategic in the invitations we get to do that.
More connections between the hubs, spaces, and centers.
We have a goal number! $7 or $70 million. This is a tangible outcome we want to see.
Sustainability, ownership
Culture of co-op and creativity. We are invested in practicing creativity and cooperation.
Our unsheltered community members are very organized and can tell us what they need, how can we be better allies and respond to their calls to action?

What happens now?
The CSAs have been in conversation for a year as a project of Keeping Space – Oakland. This is what was requested and we are getting confirmations that we are on the right track. The CSA’s will debrief this experience today, the convos over the year. Then CAST will launch KSO 2.0 which will have many convenings, collective actions, to save our spaces and ensure that our arts businesses are thriving and not just scraping by. We need to move to a place where we feel nourished and have the reserves to keep going. It’s not easy, we can’t do it alone. We all came with connections and made new ones.