

FROM REBEL YELL CREATIVE

Your Art: Powered Up

A CREATIVE REVIEW AND
REFRAME WORKBOOK

FOR WRITERS, ARTISTS, MUSICIANS & CREATORS

Welcome!

FEELING STUCK? STRUGGLING TO CREATE WHILE THE WORLD IS ON FIRE?
THIS WORKBOOK CAN HELP YOU BETTER UNDERSTAND YOUR CREATIVE
PRACTICE TODAY. AND FIND THE PATH TO POWER UP.

This workbook is not:

- A dreaded performance review.
- A performative Insta post.

This workbook is:

- A chance for honest reflection and thinking about your creative work, in the context of today's world.

So make it a fulfilling and fun experience! Take this workbook with you to a coffee shop. Gather with your creative teams. Spread out on your table, or curl up on a couch.

Give yourself dedicated time to think about what's working, and what you want to work on. And remember:



ART IS RESISTANCE.

Baseline

Start with a clear perspective. Why are you here today?
What appealed to you about a creative review? Are there
specific things you're concerned or curious about?

Take Stock

THINK ABOUT YOUR CREATIVE WORK AND PROCESS IN THE SECTIONS BELOW. CLICK IN THE BOXES TO TYPE.

What are you proud of?

What frustrates you? Disappoints you?

What do you enjoy about creating?

How do you feel when you think about sitting down to create?

Do you have goals you're working towards? How do you feel about these goals?

When it comes down to it...no one asks us to create things. So why do you do it? What drives you?

Reality Check

IT'S REALLY FUCKING HARD RIGHT NOW.

Empathy is their enemy

We practice empathy as creators. We think deep and critically. We think about the world and what it means.

But in tyrannical times, those in power actively target empathy. They seek to root it out and crush it.

From ridicule to harrassment to detention, the goal: Make people shut their eyes and silence their hearts.

Productivity culture is their buddy

Productivity on the other hand? Grinding away? Slaying all day? That helps them.

Our culture of work work work ignores rigged systems. It says we alone are responsible for our success or failure. If we just work hard enough, we can find safety and success.

Productivity culture helps those in power avoid responsibility for real change. And it tells you these lies:

 I'm not reaching my goals, so I'm a failure

 I'm struggling to create and/or work right now, so I'm broken

 I can't monetize my art, so I'm a fraud

 My body won't let me work as much as others, so I'm useless

THERE'S A REASON...



BOOKS ARE BANNED.

MUSIC IS CENSORED.

MEDIA IS BLAMED.

THE REASON?



STORYTELLING IS POWERFUL.

REPRESENTATION SAVES LIVES.

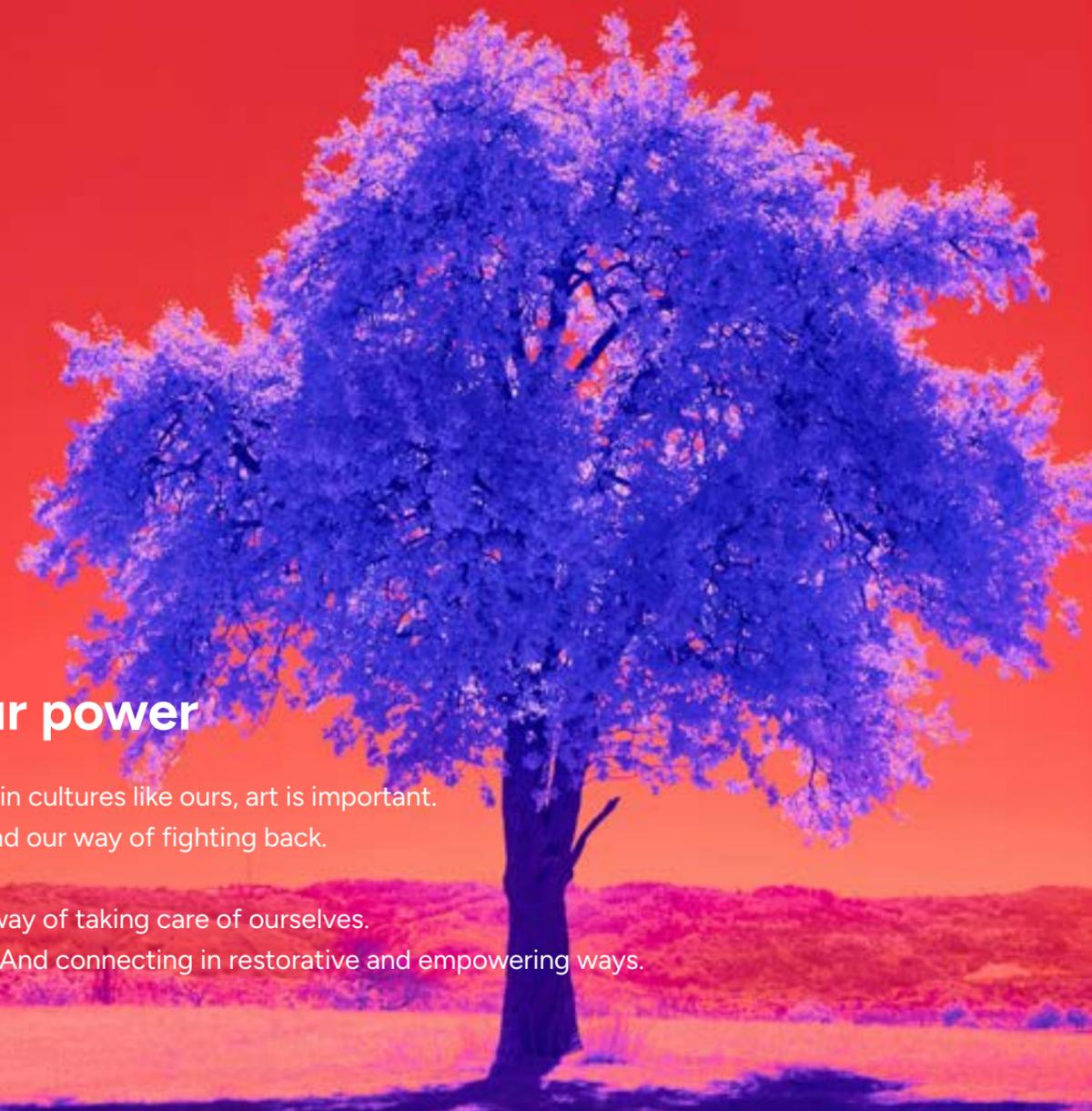
ART IS RESISTANCE.

Art is our power

In terrible times, in cultures like ours, art is important. It's resistance, and our way of fighting back.

But it's also our way of taking care of ourselves. Of staying sane. And connecting in restorative and empowering ways.

So let's reset.



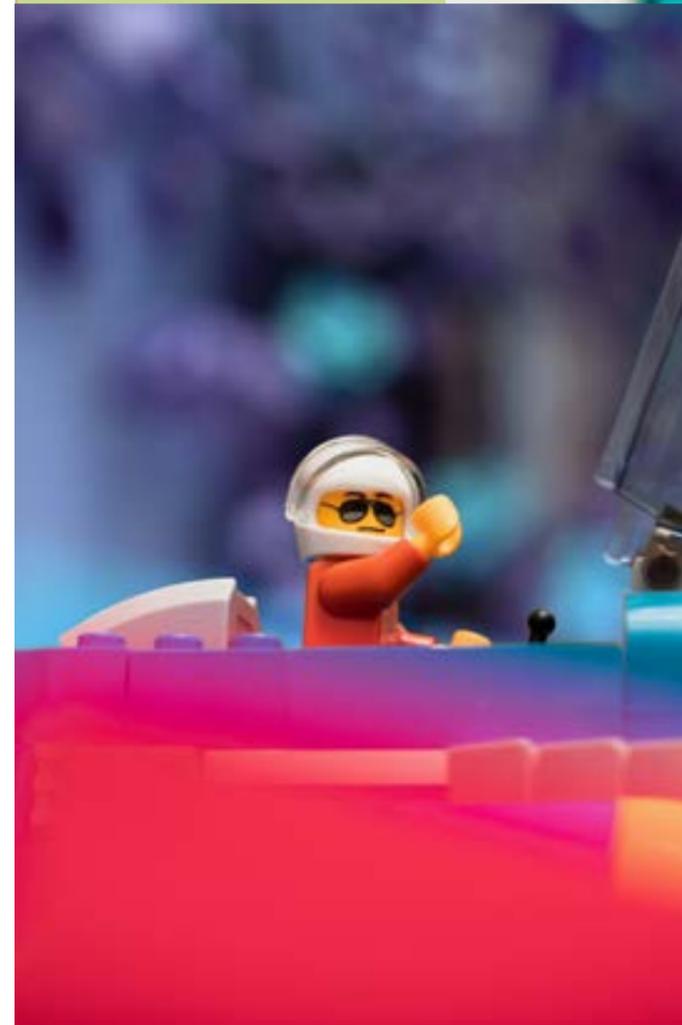
PHASES

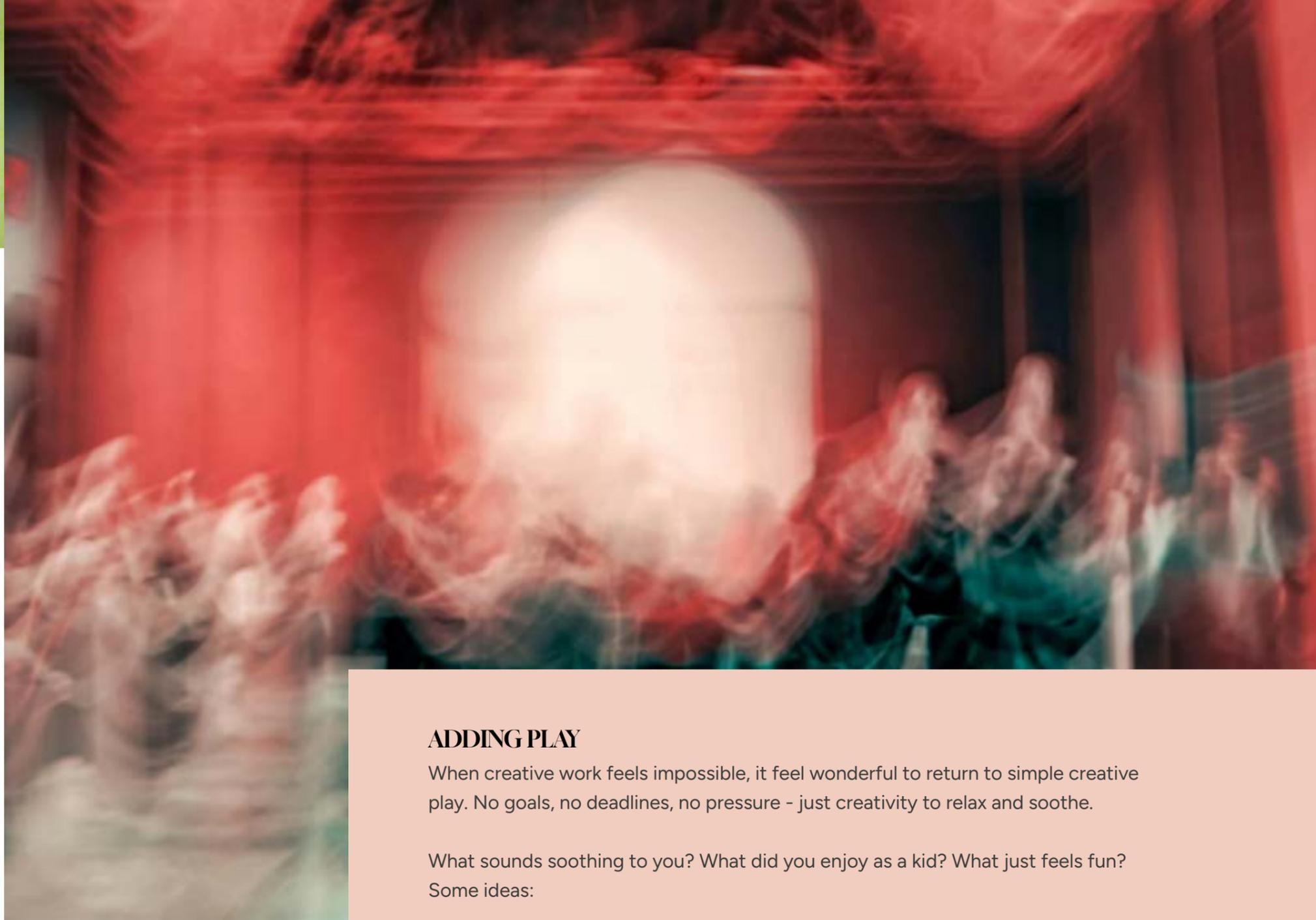
WHAT PHASE ARE YOU FEELING?

WHILE PRODUCTIVITY CULTURE SAYS WE'RE EITHER PRODUCING OR WE'RE FAILING, CREATIVE REALITY IS ONE OF PHASES. ESPECIALLY WHEN THE OUTSIDE WORLD IS TERRIFYING.

WE MOVE THROUGH EACH PHASE AGAIN AND AGAIN. THERE'S NO RIGHT OR WRONG AMOUNT OF TIME TO SPEND IN A PHASE. AND THERE ARE NO BAD PHASES!

ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES, WE'LL EXPLORE EACH PHASE. COMPLETE THE SECTION THAT MATCHES HOW YOU'RE FEELING NOW!





WINTER

THE TIME OF HIBERNATION. CREATIVITY IS A STRUGGLE. AND YOU'RE JUST TRYING TO SURVIVE.

LETTING GO

When creative work feels impossible, it's ok to rest. It's ok to say no to productivity culture. It's ok, and potentially very healing, to let some things go. That could mean taking a break, or setting aside creative projects permanently.

Feels wrong, doesn't it? The sunk cost fallacy is the idea that if we've invested time, energy, emotion, or money into something, we can't stop.

But setting things aside could be far more beneficial to your time, energy, emotion and money.

What can you let go of? Look back at the Take Stock page for ideas...

ADDING PLAY

When creative work feels impossible, it feel wonderful to return to simple creative play. No goals, no deadlines, no pressure - just creativity to relax and soothe.

What sounds soothing to you? What did you enjoy as a kid? What just feels fun?
Some ideas:

- Craft kits (sewing, knitting, etc)
- Free writing (rant away your stress)
- Playing an instrument
- Paint-by-number sets
- What else?



SPRING

THE THAW. YOU MIGHT NOT BE READY TO CREATE AGAIN, BUT YOU'RE FEELING EXCITED TO TRY.

GET INSPIRED

This phase is a great time to remember the power of art. Return to the artists and creators you love, and remind yourself why you love them.

But also look wider. Explore new artists, from the past or present. Some places to look:

- Podcasts, like [The Art of Resistance](#)
- Used bookstores and libraries
- Substack community
- Indie music homes, like Bandcamp
- Re-curated Instagram feed, with art, artists, and joyful accounts



RETHINK GOALS

During the winter phase, you identify things you can let go. In the spring phase, look deeper at your creative work and practice.

What's fun? What's drudgery? What do you wish you could change? What do you want to do different? Look back at the Take Stock page for ideas...





SUMMER

THE HEAT IS ON. THE CREATIVITY IS FLOWING, THE IDEAS ARE EVERYWHERE, AND WORK IS FUN. ENJOY IT, WHILE STILL TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF.

PROCESS

Much is made of the artistic process. But too much is made about the aesthetics of that process.

You don't need a beautifully curated desk and office to write; you don't need a very particular studio setup to make audio and music. You don't need whatever TikTok tells you is needed for making art. So don't let the lack of those things stop you!

What *actually* helps you create? What habits and tools will keep you focused and energized during the summer phase?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



CARING FOR YOURSELF WHILE CREATING

It's easy to push yourself too hard when you're creating. What activities keep you feeling strong and secure? Is it therapy? Walks? Hanging with friends? What will support you during the Summer phase?

FALL

CREATIVITY SLOWS. A GOOD TIME TO THINK ABOUT PARTNERS, AND HOW TO PROTECT YOUR SENSIBILITY.

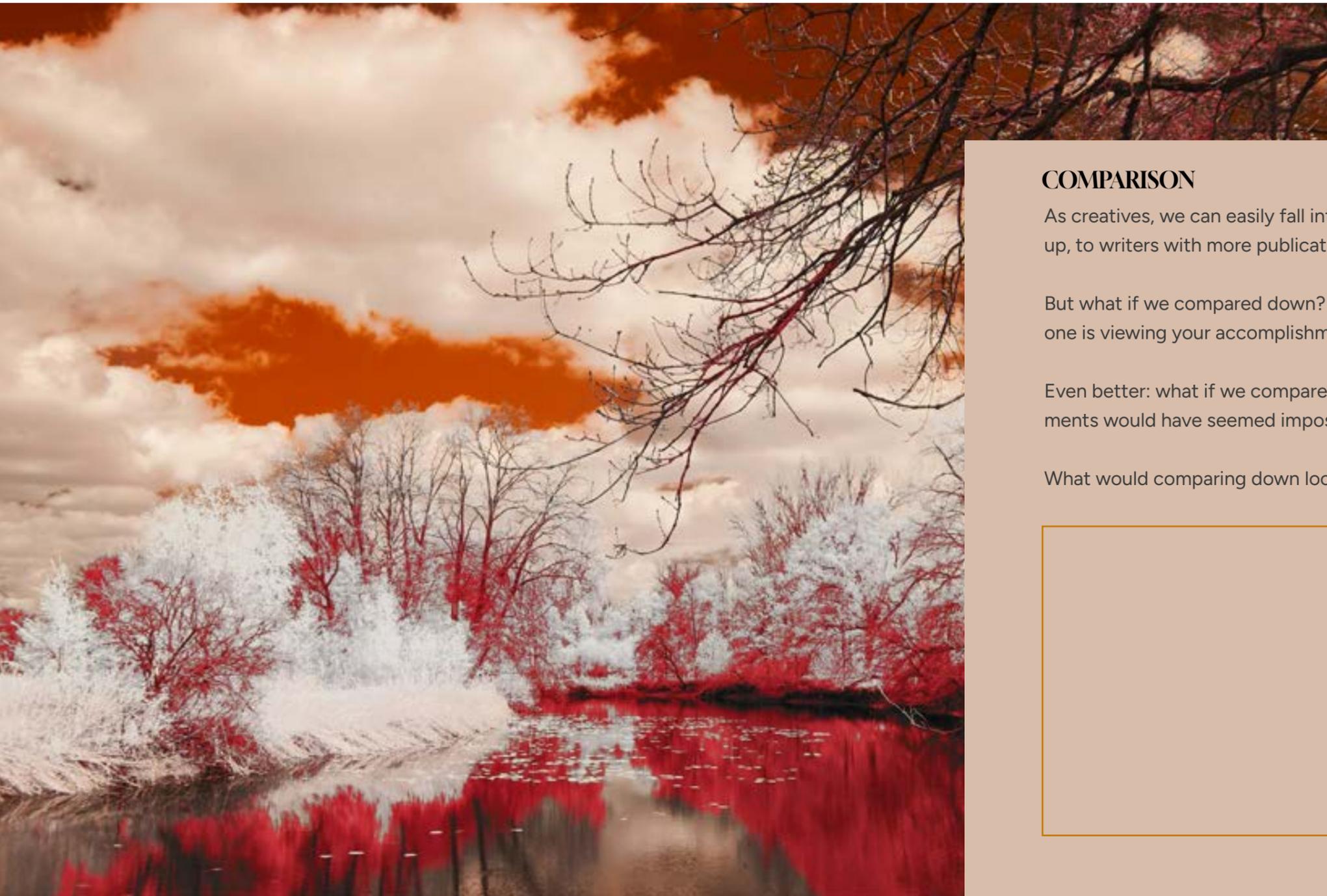


COLLABORATION

What would happen if you partnered with your friends and connections to create something new? How could your art become even more powerful, and act as resistance?

Think about your network - what are your friends really good at? And how might you work together on something cool?

- _____
- _____
- _____
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- _____
- _____



COMPARISON

As creatives, we can easily fall into the trap of comparing ourselves to others. We compare up, to writers with more publications, artists with more shows, creators with more followers.

But what if we compared down? Someone is looking at your work as their inspiration. Someone is viewing your accomplishments as success. Someone has felt seen with your work.

Even better: what if we compared to our past? Maybe five years ago your current achievements would have seemed impossible.

What would comparing down look like for you? How about comparing to your past?

Take 2: Take Stock

TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THESE QUESTIONS. HAS ANYTHING CHANGED?

What are you proud of?

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What do you enjoy about creating?

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Do you have goals you're working towards? How do you feel about these goals?

When it comes down to it...no one asks us to create things. So why do you do it? What drives you?

It's Tradition?

When we decide to make things no one asked for, the goals seem pre-determined:

Writing	→	Book from print publisher
Music	→	Album in Spotify
Visual art	→	Show in gallery
Film	→	Movie distributed by studio
Creator	→	YouTube or TikTok channel with sponsors

But when we limit ourselves to the traditional, to what has come before, to the status quo...we can end up hobbling ourselves.

GATEKEPT

In the writing world, publishers often won't even accept work without a literary agent. Getting an agent is an often inscrutable and impossible process. It's the same for music, visual art, film, performance, comedy, online content... the list goes on.

COMPROMISED

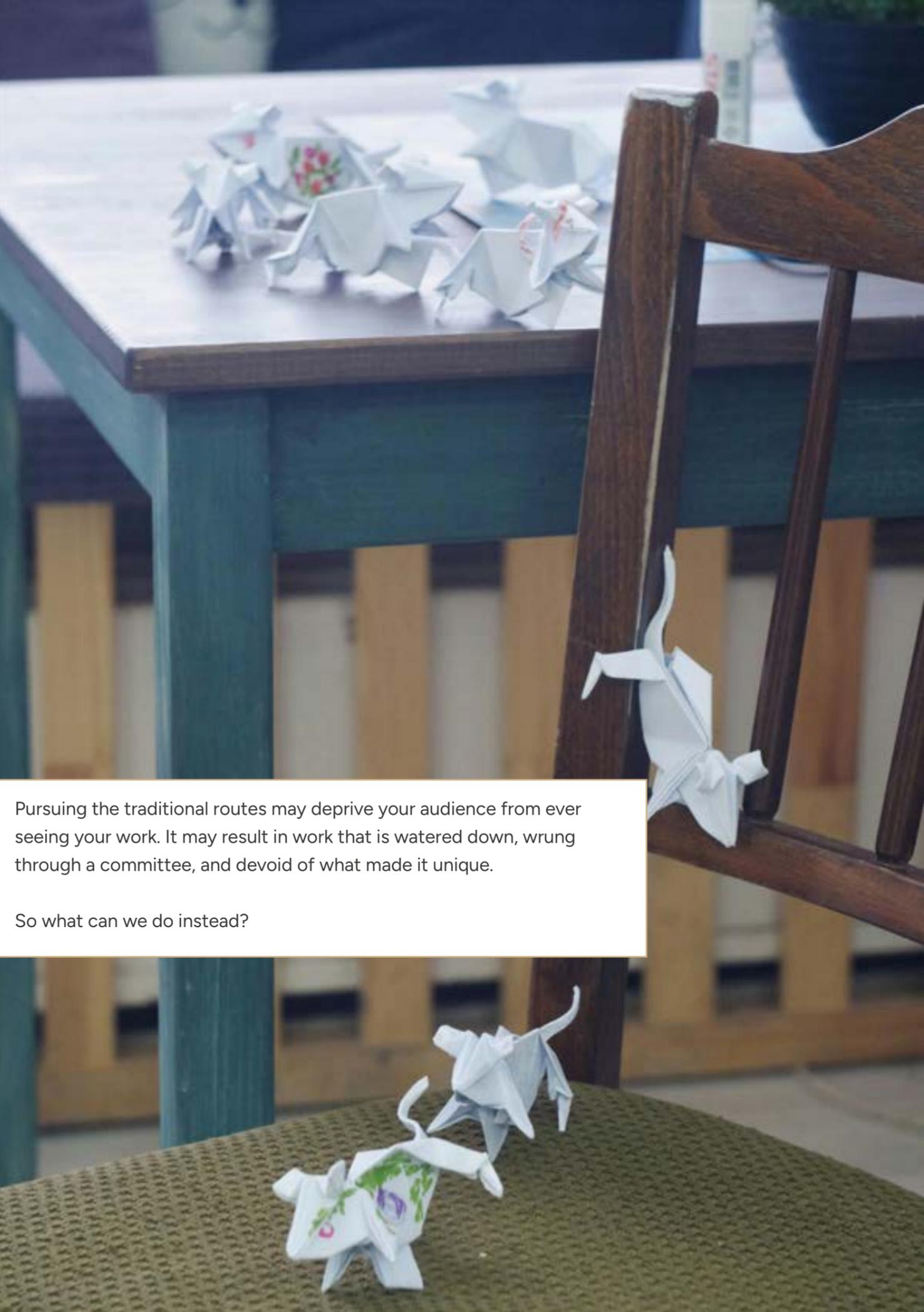
Even if you make it all the way through the gauntlet, and get a book/album/film sold... you may be asked to make compromises on your content. If you get sponsored, you may be asked to soften the edges, and put out the fire.

SLOWED

Getting that agent can take months or years. You may spend years with that agent finalizing the book/music/etc. That's all before submitting to publishers, which can take months and years. So much wasted time.

UNPAID

Authors get tiny royalties from books. They rarely make enough from books for a living. Same for other creators. Money in the traditional paths is rare and limited.



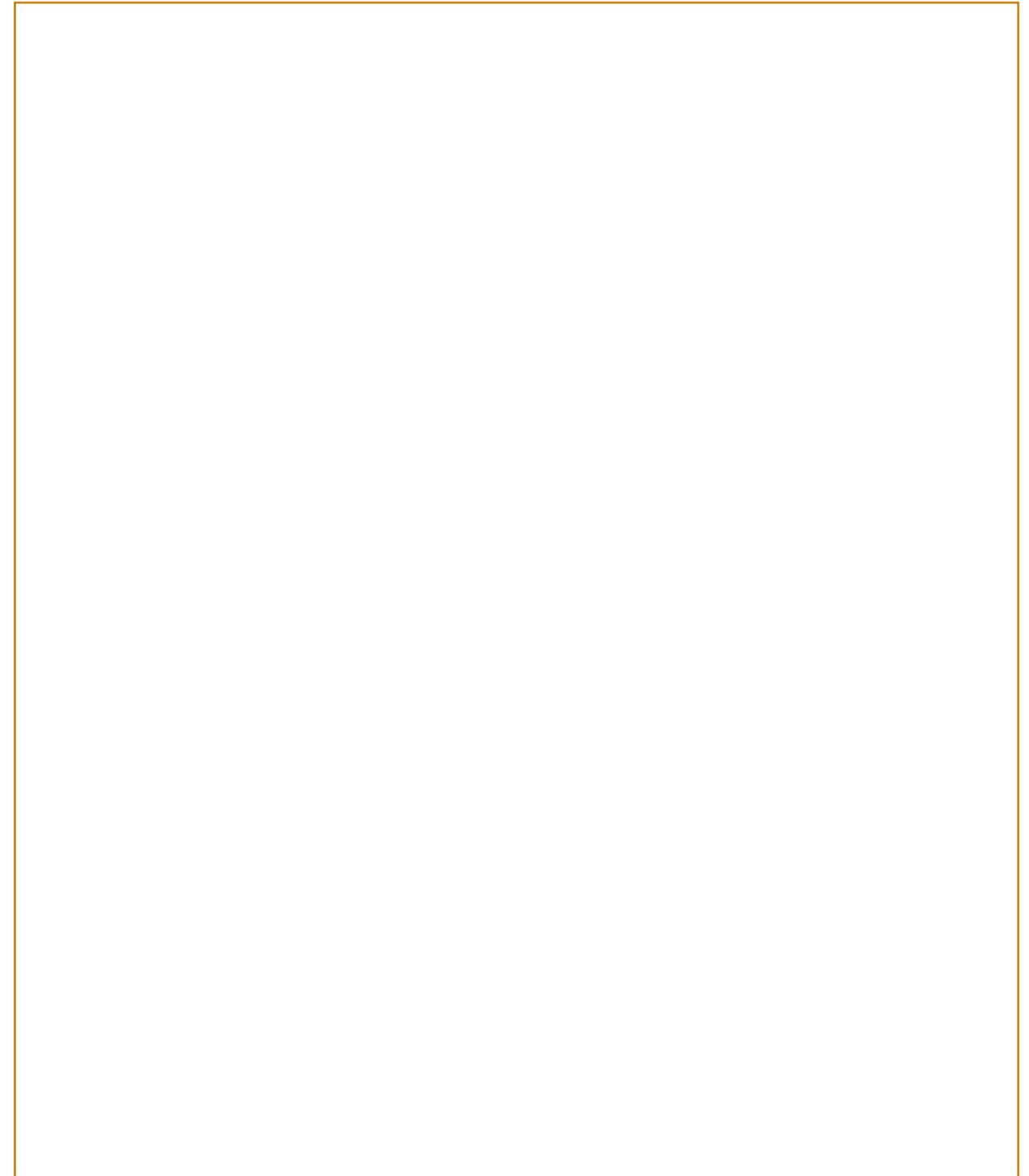
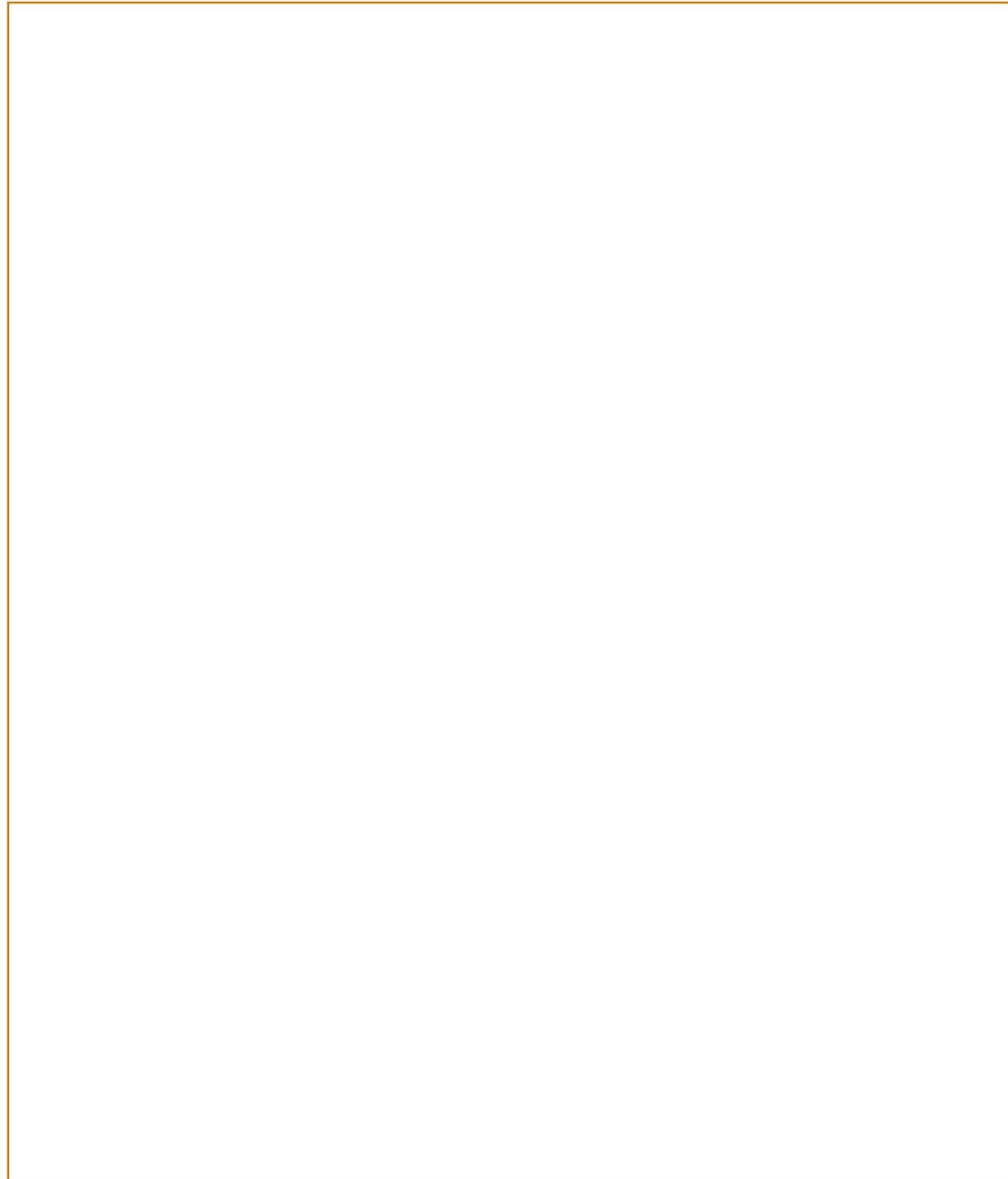
Pursuing the traditional routes may deprive your audience from ever seeing your work. It may result in work that is watered down, wrung through a committee, and devoid of what made it unique.

So what can we do instead?



Let's get weird.

- What makes you *you*?
- How are you different?
- What won't you compromise?
- What makes your art powerful?
- What are the unique and strange things about your work? About you?
- Who would benefit from seeing that unique and strange work?
- How is your art an act of resistance to the tyranny of today?



Reality Check

YOUR VOICE IS IMPORTANT.

Weird is the word

Someone needs to hear your story. Someone needs to know they are not alone. Someone needs to know they're going to be ok, and your voice and your story will help. Your unique way of seeing the world will help.

Truth is the thing

That thing you've been putting off? The story, song, or art that is too weird, or too loud, or too vulnerable? That's what we need right now. That's what will be powerful for your audience, and for you.

Bigger is not better

Another lie productivity culture tells us? Go big or go home. If we don't win it all, if we don't succeed on a grand scale, then what's the point?

But big and splashy means nothing if we don't reach the people who need to hear us. Bigger is not better if we have to compromise ourselves to get there.

Creative Manifesto

- We prize the truth, and we tell the truth.
- We tell our stories. Even the ones that scare us.
- We tell them in our way. Think digital and analog. Get creative and get weird.
- We understand the power of using our voice and making our art for our own survival.
- We look for the people we can collaborate with, create with, commiserate with.
- We lean in to the things we think are drawbacks.
- We embrace our cultures, and create work to honor them.
- We create revolutionary art to reach the people who need to see it and hear it.
- We lean in to unrespectability. We don't owe anyone good behavior.
- We use play, and fun, as a tool.
- We appropriate insults.
- And we make a long-term commitment to making art for a better world.

Bigger, but smaller

It's time to think bigger, and prize the smaller.



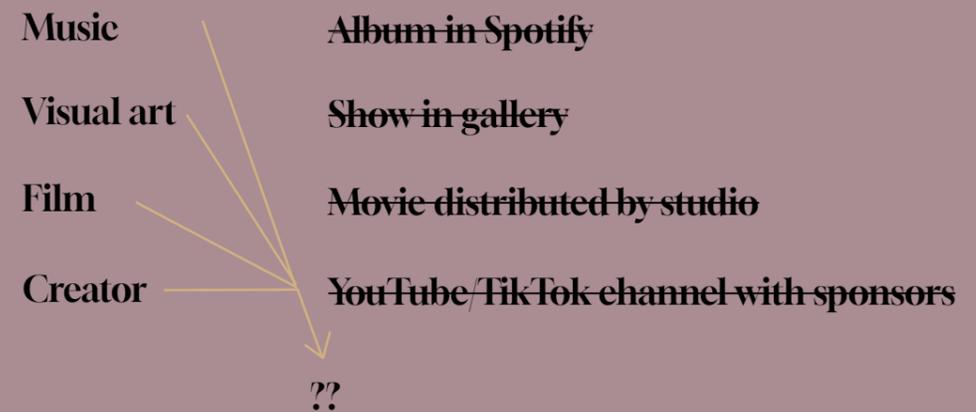
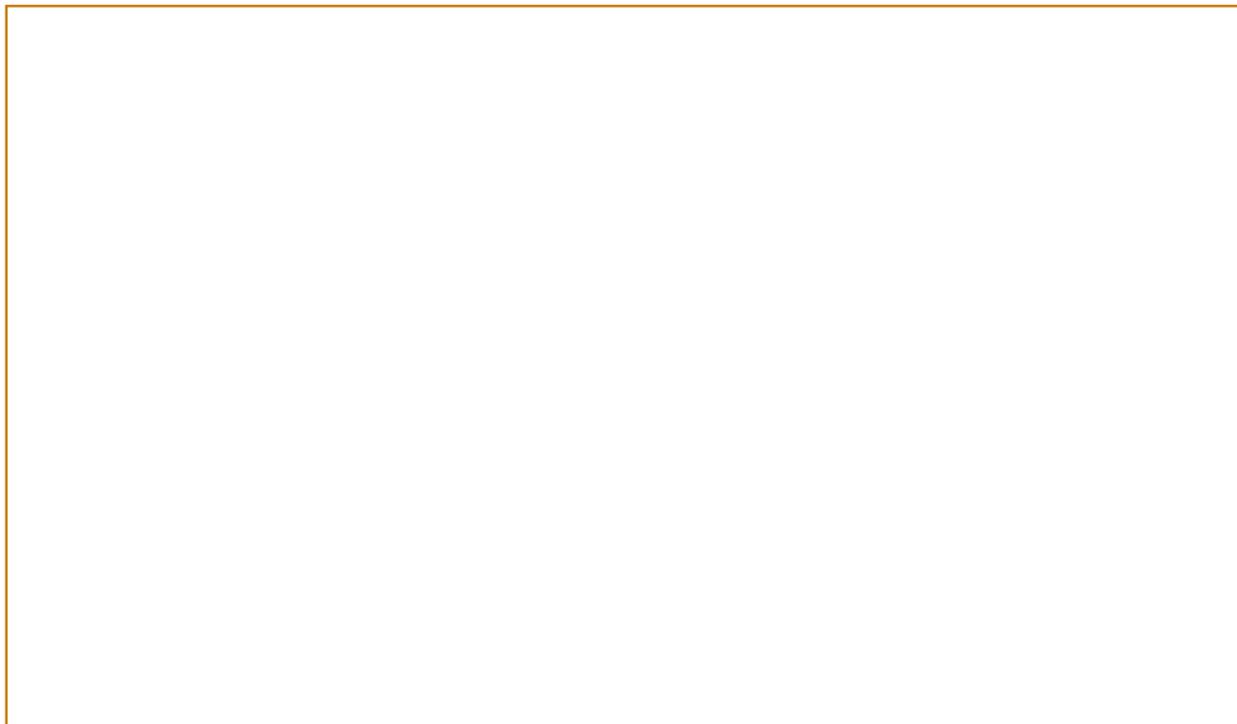
If we rethink our traditional end goals for writing, and prioritize who we are and what we want...what then?

Maybe your end goal becomes:

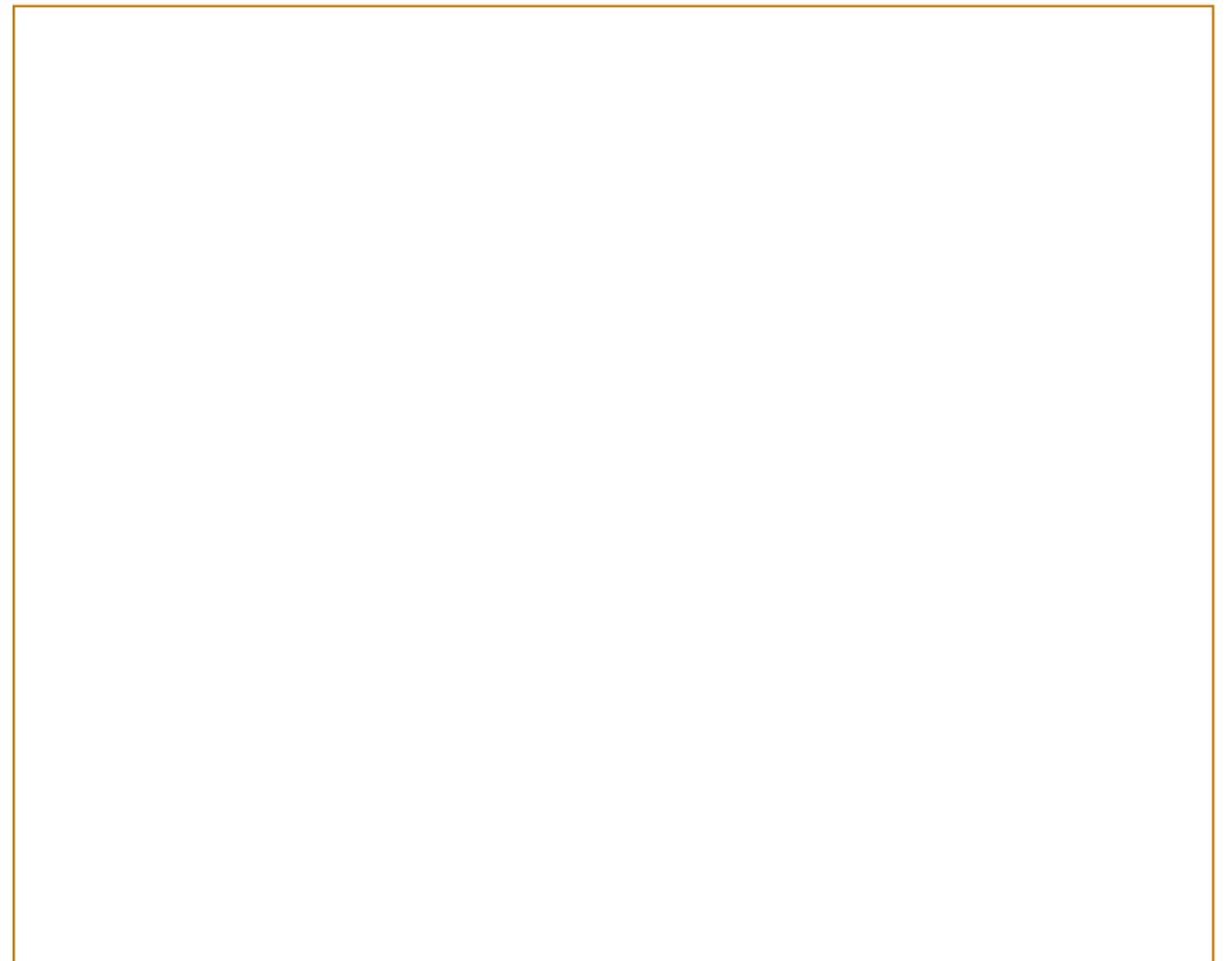
- Creating an audio fiction podcast instead of a novel.
- Serializing your long work into newsletters on Substack or Beehiv.
- Making small, hand-made zines to leave around your community.
- Creating print-on-demand books

The medium can be just as unique and powerful as the message. The medium could be the way you reach your true audience.

So what could your end goal be?



Just like with writing, the medium for other art can be just as unique and powerful as the message. What could your new end goals be?



Take 3: Take Stock

TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THESE QUESTIONS. HAS ANYTHING CHANGED?

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Reality Check

THE COME DOWN.

Spending time thinking about the big picture, and recommitting to creative work, can be super empowering.

So it can always feel a bit frustrating when you hit a wall again. Which you will. Because our creative life moves, again and again, through the phases we discussed earlier. And that's ok.

When you start to feel stuck again, give yourself permission to:

- Change your mind. Maybe the goals you developed here don't work anymore. Time to rethink and reframe!
- Revisit the ideas for weathering the fall and winter phases
- Rework the exercises in this workbook and see what's changed.
- Get some help --->

Partner Up

When you're working towards nontraditional creative goals, you might need to learn new tools and techniques. You might feel out on a ledge and need support. You might want to celebrate wins and chat with others in the same boat.

[Rebel Yell Creative](#) can help:

Create: →

Make your podcast. Build your newsletter. Write your serial stories. And make art as resistance with one-on-one guidance or DIY resources.

Connect: →

Find your people! Join a community that actually works, with free events and monthly memberships.

ARTISTS WHO RESISTED

NEED SOME INSPIRATION? THE ART OF RESISTANCE PODCAST TELLS THE STORIES OF WRITERS, MUSICIANS, DESIGNERS, AND OTHERS USING THEIR ART TO RESIST THE STATUS QUO.

GET THE FULL STORIES AT THEARTOFRESISTANCEPODCAST.COM

EPISODE 01



SILENCE=DEATH

MAKING ART IN A PLAGUE:
GRAN FURY AND ACT UP, 1987-1992

THE ART OF RESISTANCE PODCAST

EPISODE 02

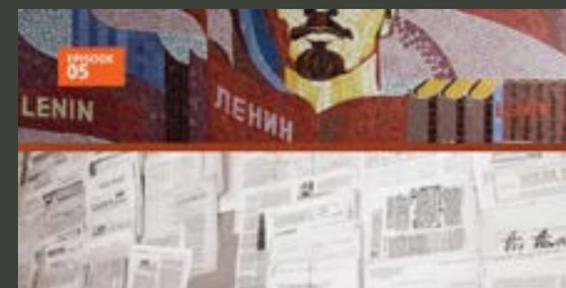


riot
-grrrl

PUNK FEMINISTS AND TEENAGE GIRLS:
THE ART OF RIOT GRRRL IN THE 1990S

THE ART OF RESISTANCE PODCAST

EPISODE 05



LENIN **ЛЕНИН**

WRITERS UNDERGROUND:
SOVIET SAMIZDAT, 1967-1982

THE ART OF RESISTANCE PODCAST

EPISODE 06



UN ENCUENTRO PARA LIBERTAD:
CHICANA ARTIVISTAS + ZAPATISTAS, 1997

THE ART OF RESISTANCE PODCAST

EPISODE 03



QUEER SURREALISTS VS. NAZIS:
THE ART OF CAHUN & MOORE, 1940-1944

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EPISODE 04



POWER
TO THE
PEOPLE

BLACK PRIDE AND REVOLT:
EMORY DOUGLAS AND BLACK PANTHER ART,
1967-1979

THE ART OF RESISTANCE PODCAST

EPISODE 07



INDIGENOUS TRUTHS:
THE ART OF ZITKÁLA-ŠÁ, 1900-1936

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EPISODE 08



WITCH **TITCH**

HEXING THE PATRIARCHY:
THE ART OF W.I.T.C.H., 1968+

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