

Solidarity and recovery in the cultural sector

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SPEAKERS

Maya Goodfellow, Shawab Iqbal, Joon Lynn Goh, Stella Kanu, Season Butler

Season Butler 00:02

And some general rules of engagement. Whether we're online or in physical spaces, The World Transformed is about creating an environment where people can learn and debate with each other. In a spirit of kindness and respect. There are a few rules of engagement to guide our conversation and any comments in the chat. And so yeah, that's where you'll pop any of the questions that you have for the panellists that we'll be able to field towards the end of the session. These rules of engagement are an assumption of goodwill. Even if someone is saying something you disagree with, assume they are doing so with the best interests of the movement at heart and disagree with kindness and respect. Listen more than you talk. Be aware of how much you're talking and make sure that others have a chance to speak. Call out bigotry, This is a pluralist space in which we encourage comradely debate, but bigotry will be challenged. And please be kind to the facilitators. This is all being made possible through the work of many, many volunteers. And so we appreciate you keeping that in mind. I believe with that transcription of the session happening as well. And please do keep in mind that The World Transformed is completely free. But it's only made possible through contributions from supporters. And so if you are able to support this work, The World Transformed deeply appreciates it and you can contribute at theworldtransformed.org/support so with that all being said, Now, I would like to welcome our panel. And so we have our first contribution from the author, Maya Goodfellow, theworldtransformed.org/support.

Maya Goodfellow 02:19

Hi, everyone, and thank you so much for having me and sorry to all of you who are watching. And I just wanted to quickly thank organisers, interpreters, I think it's really, really important that these events are made accessible in this way. So it's really great to see this happening and, but also recognise, I want you to recognise all the unpaid labour that goes into these kinds of events. So I'm really thankful to everyone for putting this on. So I've been asked to talk a bit about the hostile environment. I'm going to try and keep it relatively short because I think some of the other speakers will have much more important and interesting things to say than me about the specifics. The subject of this panel. And the reason I'm going to be talking about the hostile environment is because I'm an academic who primarily works on issues around race and migration in Britain. And as has been said, I am the author of a book

called hostile environment, how immigrants became scapegoats, which looks at the specific hostile environment that we have currently that was brought into the 2014 and 2016 Immigration Act, but also the much longer historic, hostile environment that Britain has been for migrants and people of colour more broadly, for decades. So what I really wanted to very, very quickly do was, I suppose, explain exactly how we might understand the hostile environment in these two, two different but overlapping ways. So some of you may already be familiar with this term, the hostile environment in particular through the so called Windrush scandal. But I just wanted to give a very quick definition so that we're all on the same page. And when we're thinking about the hostile environment, in its contemporary form, as it exists through these, as it was brought in through these two immigration acts that I mentioned, what we're essentially what we essentially mean by that is it's different pieces of legislation that have made what to Theresa May the Home Secretary at the time when these acts were brought in, Um life unbearable for people who don't have the right documentation. That's what she said that she was trying to do with this act. And what that means in specific terms is it means that if you don't have what is seen to be the right documentation, whether you're undocumented, or you're not able to show the papers that you are asked to show you are unable to access things like certain forms of health care, housing, and you're unable to work you're unable to drive and essentially what it means is you can't access some of the very basic basic, basic services that we all need to live. So not even this isn't even about necessarily living a decent life it is just about living a life at all you think about these things are so essential to us that we knew before the pandemic that has been really highlighted during this global health care crisis. And essentially, what the hostile environment has done is it's turned many people, including many public sector workers, into border guards. So the border which was already in much of our life has been brought even more into the public and social sphere. And so the way that liberty the human rights organisation talks about this in the report that they wrote about the hostile environment, is that it's almost this web, to our society that creeps into so much of our life. And the other thing that the hostile environment does is it also sees a lot of data sharing going on between different public bodies and the government or different government departments. And the reason that this matters and the reason that I mentioned this all is that during the pandemic, during lockdown in particular, when healthcare was supposed to be one of the most important things that we could all access. Many people were scared of accessing health care, they were scared to go into their local GP or the local hospital, or they were worried they would either have their data passed on to the home office, or that they would be charged, because although a number of there were a number of stipulations put in place in order for people to be able to go and get tested for Coronavirus, what the government didn't do, which is really important is it didn't suspend the hostile environment in its entirety. So a lot of people will that means is they living in a country that for 10 years, much longer than 10 years at least they've been told they're not welcome in. They've been told they should be scared to go and access public services and then this pandemic happens and there is no big counter message from government telling them that it's okay to go and access health care. And for a lot of people it doesn't feel okay to go and access health care. Because this sort of hostility has been injected into the system. And so I think it's really important to be looking at the specific nature of the hostile environment now. But the reason why I think we should also broaden it out is that unfortunately, this kind of hostility and these kinds of really regressive policies didn't begin with the coalition government in 2010. They didn't begin with the conservatives, they've been sort of ushered in over decades and decades in all different forms. And we really need to look at this broader hostile environment too if we're going to hopefully talk about this in relation to as was mentioned at the start workers rights and thinking about sectors like the the arts and culture sector,

which is already people are already in very precarious positions. And so things that I mean by the sort of broader anti immigration hostility, you can track the debates now we have now and you find just so much similarity between the debates we have now and the debates that were had in the 60s or 70s. And it's really important to know in this history, which I don't have time to go into that race and immigration would not be [recording interrupts] people who are not white so people of colour and so this is at the centre of our immigration system is racism and that is a really really important thing to understand in terms of who is impacted and how, but this broader sort of hostile environment that we have. It has existed well before 2012 before 2010, means things like the things like people are not able to access more broadly access services or come into the country and so this system is classed it's about race it's about gender and one very good example of this is the NHS surcharge and and so this whole issue around charging people double the NHS existed prior to the hostile environment as we know it now, although it's been intensified under the conservative and coalition governments. And I think this debate is a really, really good one to look at I think about how it was sort of constructed during the pandemic, which is that there was a whole critique and unnecessary critique that NHS staff in particular, were having to pay twice over for the NHS because what the surcharge means is you pay into your taxes, like, like everyone does your taxes, your National Insurance, but then you're charged AGAIN, just because of your immigration status. And so the big debate about this, specifically looking at doctors and nurses, and people who work in the NHS, and that has now been gone written off for those people, but it still applies to almost everyone else who has this applied to their immigration status. And so the reason I bring this up that I think that this is really important to think about is because the NHS is about universality. It's supposed to be about universality. The pandemic also sort of gave us this message of universality so when Boris Johnson was in hospital with Coronavirus, a lot of the discourse was people focusing on his humanity, saying he's just human being he has family. Everyone should be concerned about this. The fact that he's in intensive care. And it really made me think, what about all the people who are not treated as human beings all the people who right now cannot access health care because of their immigration status, or all the people who because of the NHS surcharge, are having to pay huge, huge amounts of money, just because they want to be in this country in order to be able to access the NHS and even to be here at all. And this sort of the humanity and the universality of it all seems to be lost, in particular when we get to this issue of immigration. And so I suppose just what I wanted to, I wanted to end on and, and before just before I finish I guess is really to stress that any kind of resistance and any kind of fight has to include everyone. It cannot be about choosing people who are constructed as good migrants versus bad migrants and that's a real risk with the pandemic and the singling out of key workers has been necessary. These are people who have been doing incredibly important work, often people who are dismissed as like the low paid or the low skilled. So it's not just people who work in the NHS it is doctors, nurses, porters, cleaners, but it's also supermarket workers, delivery drivers, all these people who have been doing really, really essential work. There is a sort of discourse that says, These people are the good people. They're the people when they're immigrants. They're the people that we want in the country. But that's a real problem. Because what it does is it separates these groups of people, these sort of key workers out from everyone else, just because of what their job is, or what if they don't have a job. And I think that we want to move beyond that. And this is a real moment for this. And I think that this is really important if we're thinking about a sector like the arts and culture sector, thinking about what it means to have to earn a certain amount of money even to be able to come and stay in the country, what it means when you're having to pay these hugely extortionate immigration fees just to be able to stay here and so if

with any kind of resistance to the hostile environment in its really broad form, I think has to include everyone, everyone, regardless of their, whatever their job happens to be or not to be, but also, regardless of their status, whether they're documented or whether they are undocumented. And so that's just the thing that I really wanted to sort of stress is that it shouldn't matter what your status is, the fight should be for everyone. But I'll end there. And yeah, thank you again, for having me.

Season Butler 12:31

Thank you so much for those remarks. It's so useful to have this basic grounding in what the hostile environment is in order to be able to see on a day to day basis, how this is being rolled out, and these sorts of moving borders that folks are being faced with every day. Our next panellist who's joining us is Stella Kanu, Stella I hope you can introduce yourself to the group and let us know about some of the work that you're doing at the moment.

Stella Kanu 13:15

Thank you, Season. I'll do a really quick introduction to kind of who I am and then kind of talk a little bit about how what I'm doing at the moment kind of connects with the big question around solidarity and what recovery kind of looks like. And so at the moment, my current paid day job is at lift, London International Festival of theatre as the executive director. I also have kind of like a spare time job, where I'm the chair of Eclipse theatre. That's based in Leeds in the north, and is really focused on cultural workers based across the whole of the North including Yorkshire and right up towards Newcastle and is really focused on artist development and touring a national touring of black, black and Asian work, essentially and work from fellow artists who are marginalised for their ethnicities. And so within the context of my day job, I'm kind of in these spaces where all of those kind of people who are currently facing some challenges exist within. But alongside those two day jobs, I also like many people have spent the last few months in really strategic spaces, talking and having conversation in spaces where I'm kind of leading around remembering, making space for building strategies for those who often sit outside those kind of mainstream conversations. And those have been both governmental and sectorial. And, that's presented a really interesting and rich kind of tapestry or landscape in which to view the recovery period and what it could kind of look like for cultural workers. But the big thing about kind of who I am and how I want to link this to this kind of conversation is that I work both inside and outside of organisations, I don't think that we are in a moment in time, or a period of history where we can decide just to work inside organisations or inside the system, or outside the system. I'm really interested in making changes in both of those spheres. So the really important bit of work that kind of lends itself to the advocacy that's really needed right now is my work with something that was created back in 2018. Black women in theatre, which enables me to do the stuff that I kind of can't do within organisations often, which is sometimes to work at pace, essentially, also to bring together those who maybe don't have the authority to voice within a space and to generate To galvanise some myth busting around cultural workers and particularly black and Asian experiences within our sector. And so, being in that space and being around this kind of idea of collectivism, and the democracy that's kind of within that, we definitely work a background in theatre in a kind of collective space. But I clearly, and really purposefully architect the ideas around the concept of how we are building. So at the moment, black women in theatre is not necessarily an organisation. But what we have been doing is building these moments, these pop up moments to kind of mythbust around the black and Asian contribution to culture and to the art sector in particular, sometimes looking at the workforce, but also sometimes

looking at the work. And we've done that in three really distinct ways. So back in 2018, we developed some events that kind of just brought black women in theatre together And was built around this whole idea that if we're going to look about inclusion, and diversity and what that means in its wider context, we cannot start from the current moment that diversity starts at which is, there is a lack. We don't have, let's develop some programmes. Let's talk to a few people. And those of us with really, really long histories, understand and recognise that contribution made by lots of artists, those backstage in organisations, many organisations have been driven for a long time by black and brown people who are hidden and behind the scenes. And so these the development of these kind of events was in recognition of the need to move the gaze away from diversity that is all about how do we create more, how do we create a kind of equitable environment where white sensibilities and black presence kind of meets in the middle and I really wasn't about all of that. I recognised that even intergenerationally, there was a moment where diversity needs to look more inward. And it has to be about the what is the black and brown gaze in that space? What is the ethnic gaze in that space? And so that's really important when thinking about recovery in culture, because it's also about the empowering of a particular voice and a particular point of view, and in architecture and around these ideas around what does it mean to be part of something? What does it mean to democratically and collectively wield our power that looks inward? I think there is a moment at now, thinking about where culture is having this sense that all of our infrastructure is somehow falling is somehow really perilous and fragile, allows us to kind of consider that space. But the most important thing about black women in theatre, which I think has a relevance for now is about You know, the real question for me about cultural recovery isn't who do we save? And I think that that's a misnomer. I think at the moment, this conversation around, let's save the venue's Let's save the organisations let's think about the workforce, but only those were freelance let's think about the workforce but only those who are facing redundancy is a totally wrong question to ask. The question should be how do we save because in demonstrating how we're going to save we either stand with it's all of us and it's everybody, or it's a select few. And my idea around black women in theatre and the events that we've done whether that's the all of us campaign that show up is going to talk about you know, the we are visible campaign that was really saying, how do we visibly show our strength in numbers, and we created this iconic photo shoot at the globe. That just demonstrated, okay, we can have a conversation about lack, but who's talking to these 250 black women are already working on theatre, some who have been working for 30, 40 years, so there's Something about reshaping the conversation around what recovery means, who it's for and what it looks like. And so focusing on the pace of change, and this idea of what we change within organisations and what we change when we collectively build together means that we can run on parallel, almost two different paces of change. Now, one at the moment, lots of organisations are thinking about their restructures. They're thinking about, you know, they're going through redundancies and consultancies around who's going to stay and who isn't going to stay. And that's very, very short term in its thinking, and that there's a potential that the way that we organise and in solidarity together is both short term and long term. So this idea that we can create these pop up moments where we are really laser focused on an outcome, whether that's, I know that my written coach in culture is currently looking at, you know, how do we create an agenda around what was to be the kind of festival in 2022, that speaks to now but also begs the question of how do we need to reorganise the place and the role of culture in the future? And how do we use what was allocated as being something that felt quite alien to the sector, to something that feels quite collective, and that feels like there can be the spaces of solidarity, it's really redefined, to even looking at how we look long term to Black Lives Matters and how

that has really influenced where organisations are looking to in terms of their future in the way that they want to recover. So there's all these things that kind of converge in this space, that to me, don't speak to, who do we save, but speak to how do we save, and I'm really interested in, you know, what do we construct that is both grassroots, and that also looks to the mainstream, both in the short term and the long term. And I've already been developing these kind of structures or structures is not even the right word, but these moments that galvanise people together behind particular mythbusting or themes. And there's a lot of mythbusting to be done around cultural recovery. You know, we can definitely have a conversation about what are the real crown jewels in the cultural sector, we can definitely have a conversation about workplace experiences that people are having in workforces, and how that needs to change. And the big question about not going back to something that we all know, and we all can see now is really broken, and has so many challenges in within it, that there is a real need for reconstruction that isn't just focused on opening buildings, and that isn't just structured on those large scale 25 million pound guzzling organisations getting a big slice of the recovery pot. And so that's kind of the context for me, which is very, very heavily focused around the ethnicities within the cultural groups and making sure that there is a kind of levelling in the hierarchies and that there is this space where we're able to think short and long term.

Season Butler 23:07

So Fantastic. Thank you so much. Stella. Next we're going to hear from Shawab Iqbal. And so if you're here with us, will you just give us a quick introduction and let us know about all of the amazing work you've been up to recently.

Shawab Iqbal 23:26

Thank you Susan. My name is Shawab Iqbal I am the executive producer of Eclipse theatre company an organisation which Stella just mentioned earlier on, essentially a touring company based in North, which focuses primarily on black and Asian work. I'm also the Senior Associate at the bush theatre, which again, focuses on really making sure that we are platforming the work of diverse playwrights and is based in Shepherds Bush. I'm going to spend the next You know, 10 minutes or so talking about two things. First one being the all of us programme, which Stella alluded to just earlier on, and also a kind of very brief but I hope, I hope, impactful comment on Islamophobia, and ensuring that that particular type of prejudice is at the forefront in the conversation during the recovery period that the arts and culture sector finds itself in at the moment. Statistically, I shouldn't be doing the job that I do. I've been doing what I do for about 10 years now, in terms of producing both in theatre and in dance. I started school, not being able to speak English, most of my peers are white. I come from a very, very working class background. I grew up in East London in Newham before gentrification before the 2012 Olympics, so statistically on paper. I shouldn't be doing the job that. I've been doing in the industry, however, because of various organisations, various leadership styles with that have constantly and consistently addressed the inequality in our industry. I was able to kind of get myself into this space and then develop and kind of broaden my horizons and really understand the industry to allow me to sustain some sort of career. That doesn't mean that it wasn't that it was easy that it didn't have various barriers various challenges. 10 years later, we enter the period of Coronavirus, and it became very, very evident during this period where, you know, we we were starting to see more and more announcements from massive organisations of mass redundancies, that nobody was really really thinking long term about protecting black, Asian and ethnically diverse workers who are working in all of these

organisations. Now the arts sector already has quite an abysmal track record in terms of having, you know, sufficient representation of black and Asian workers. So there was a real concern that we were going to lose a whole generation of future leaders who would be decimated. So I talked earlier on about, you know, on a personal level, not statistically not being someone who would be doing these sorts of jobs, it became even more of a concern that this would become even more of an issue, because of Coronavirus and the impact that it's had on us organisations. So myself and Stella currently, who just spoke earlier on very, very quickly, kind of came to the conclusion that we could be in various very strategic conversations with, you know, particular stakeholders and so on and address this issue, but actually, it wasn't going to be responded to because at the time, the mindset was that that was something that should be addressed in in five or six months time, when really this was something that was happening right now in the moment and it was getting worse and worse and worse. So because of that very naturally and very quickly, we kind of galvanised ourselves so myself, Stella, alongside the black women in theatre team, so shout out to Titi, Aninna, Monique and Kim Morgan, very quickly came together to put together a package of, we call it a rescue package, we call it and titled it, the here to save programme which involved, masterclasses, mentoring, career talks, a wellness programme, all and much, much, much more. All the workers of colour who would be made redundant or were facing redundancy. We put this together alongside our full time job. So this was a very, very kind of, you know, grassroots kind of movement that we were kind of doing very independently to kind of rescue the various workers that were going to be affected by a set of redundancies. Alongside that we had very quickly put together a fundraising campaign. So we put out a GoFundMe, which has raised just under 20,000 pounds and alongside that we've had donations from other fundraising sources, and have fundraised around just under 40,000 pounds. This week, we started the here to stay programme and we've had 44 applicants join the programme who all have either been made redundant or are facing redundancy and they have come from across art forms. So we've got people who've worked in theatre and who've worked in dance who've worked in visual arts who've worked in music, and so on and, and then and it's really, really important to say that these aren't people that just worked in the offices. This programme was for everybody, through you know, who identifies as black Asian or ethnically diverse wherever they work in a box office, whether they worked in front of house, whether they were a producer, whether they were an executive in an executive position, it was completely and utterly about protecting uplifting and ensuring that these individuals who'd been made redundant or were facing redundancy would now, would be in a place where they would feel safe, where they would feel. They weren't necessarily going to be cut out the industry, where they've been given opportunities to develop themselves by the various different strands that I talked about. And we're really, really excited about being able to start this programme, literally this week, which will go for the next couple of weeks. We hope that this, that we potentially could do this again in the future. But actually, there will come a time where we have to hand this back to the wider industry and say, you know, this isn't something that we can just do on our own. This is something that has to kind of really be incorporated across across the industry and not be seen as this niche thing that happens in the corner. Because actually, if we take take this as a long term serious issue, we really, really make go back in terms of the small progress that had been made before Coronavirus around making sure that we have a really representative workforce. So that's a quick summary of the all of us programme. And I have to really, again, kind of emphasise that this is, you know, volunteers is a team of volunteers who come together alongside having full time jobs, just to really push through this really, really important programme. If we hadn't done it, would there have been another initiative would there have been another strand of work that might have emerged

maybe but in that moment, we had to make action. And I hope that we have potentially inspired the rest of the sector to do similar things as time goes on. The second thing that I want to very quickly talk about is but very much linked to all of us, you know, we're very, very adamant as you know Stella alluded to earlier on that this is for everyone, you know, we're absolutely looking at people who occupy an intersectional space who might be double or triple minorities, because what's happened in the art sector is that we really, really had, at times a very surface level conversation about representation, and not really looked into the nuances of those different identities within different communities. Which leads me on to the very specific issue around Islamophobia. When I started my career around the same time, I remember Sayeeda Warsi, I think it was to ever sit in the cabinet saying that Islamophobia had passed the dinner table tests across the country in every sector. I.e. it had become a normalised form of prejudice that was kind of brushed under the carpet and I have to say in the In the decade that I've been in the industry, I would be lying if I said that that attitude hasn't hasn't existed in the sector that I'm from, I think is very, very present there. So the only kind of provocation that I want to very quickly make on that is for us to be in this really equitable phase of recovery for our sector, that we absolutely must centre, not just people from Muslim backgrounds, yes, on the specific issue of Islamophobia. Absolutely. But also, the minorities within the minorities, that double and triple minorities, within our different communities, because if we're not centering those voices, those experiences, that pain and that hurt, we really, really risk again, making minimal minimal progress. Thank you very much.

Season Butler 32:51

Such excellent and important and really potent points there. Thank you so, so much. I'm seeing your questions and comments to everybody who's joined us, by the way, these are coming through, and I'm noting them. So thank you so much for all of your engagement. And next, we're going to hear from Joon Lynn Goh.

Joon Lynn Goh 33:19

Hi, everyone. Thank you so much. Maya, Stella and Shawab so far for your excellent contributions. So my name is Joon Lynn. I am a cultural organiser and producer working across Migrant Justice, solidarity, solidarity, econom- economies and popular education. In particular, I'm working with a network called Asia Art Activism that explores experiences of Asian diaspora communities. What next, a sector support organisation that's very much involved in recovery conversations and migrants and culture, which Susan has mentioned which is an unfunded network of migrant cultural workers that have been organising since 2018 for the Safety Agency and solidarity in culture sector for migrants, people of colour and all others impacted by the UK's immigration regime. So we came together migrants and culture, because we began to see patterns in our experiences as migrants working or studying in the culture sector. And beginning to see and pinpoint them to structural policies that Maya has already elaborated on, which is called the hostile environment policy. And the way that we are working now is to think about how do we as migrants in all our intersections, organise a culture, or organise for culture without borders. And in doing so we feel as though we are part of the national movement of migrants who are seeking education, health, family life, housing and the ability to work also without borders. So, just as a just as one of the first actions we took was to actually survey 600 workers across the UK, on what was the impact of the hostile environment on the culture sector. And we found out that 90% of culture workers are feel angry or fearful about the hostile environment. 60% of cultural workers experienced racial profiling or discrimination, and that 59% of senior management do

not have sufficient knowledge about the hostile environment and its implications on cultural production. So this is just to point out that the one of the issues that the cultural sector has, is that often thinks it's very liberal and on the right side of history, and many people do not realise that the hostile environment impacts on all aspects of our life, including the culture sector, and the way in which we are imagining and becoming a society, which is one of the key roles of culture workers and not just artists but everyone working with culture sector. At the start of this year, we organised an activation day to bring together migrant culture workers and migrant organisers outside of the culture sector to think about what are the ways we can respond to this survey. So these like, abysmal statistics that we realised it wasn't just a small group of migrants that were feeling this but very much something that was felt across the culture sector, but also across the country, and we began to build up a set of demands. COVID took place and we then had to do some rethinking about what does recovery mean, which is bringing us to this moment and I just want to like, go back to some amazing points that um, that the past speakers have mentioned. And when we talk about recovery, we are talking about recovery without borders. So we cannot make that discrepancy between the good and bad worker, the key worker and the non key worker, the EU worker, the non EU worker. We have to be thinking about the short and long term change as Stella mentioned and as Shawab said about the cross artform collaboration. This is not an issue just for theatre This is not just an issue for the visual arts or for musicians. It is impacting us all. So, two things that migrants and culture are doing at the moment is trying to like really hold this tension of needing to do two things at exactly the same time. And the first is the mitigation of harmed the most impacted. So black, POC, migrant, working class, disabled colleagues, and at exact same time organising towards not a reform but a transformation of the sector, which as everyone has indicated in their contributions, does not work. And that is where the leadership is. So how are we doing both those things together and how are we distributing that those tasks across all of us, so again, the inside and the outside game, so one thing that migrants and culture are going to do, alongside 22 other migrant led organisations and people colour led organisations Is to launch an advocacy document, which sets out 12 demands that could support a recovery for migrant culture workers. And I know we don't have much time. So I just want to mention six of those demands and you can sign up to the mailing migrants and culture mailing list and we'll be launching it very shortly within the next two weeks. So the first demand is to set up a migrant led working group to provide guidance and legal advice on the direct impact of the hostile environment, Brexit and the immigration bill on the culture sector and its workers. This could happen from DCMS or in a city basis. The second is to ring fence money from culture recovery funding and budgets under the 2020 comprehensive spending review for the legal support of migrant culture workers, including visas, residency documents, citizenship and other Brexit transition costs alongside mental health services to meet the needs of culture work for a culture workforce impacted by trauma, isolation precarity and racialized violence. The third is to proactively recruit and retain migrants people of colour and other impacted communities. So, like many other unions like PCS, we are also calling out for no redundancies to be made while organisations have any staff paid more than 100,000. So you can imagine you can imagine, For instance, the Tate having mass redundancies while their executive board and leadership are still earning 100k plus. So what is that active reform of pay structures within cultural organisations? The fourth is bringing all outsource contracts in house and ending all zero hour contracts. So as the culture sector, we should be leading the way towards an inclusive resourced and supported workforce by ending outsourcing and refusing to be complicit in any discourses around low, high skilled migrant work. The fifth, which is going to become very topical and relevant, is, um, what Stella mentioned the

2022 Festival, aka, the Brexit festival. And really, we are calling out for the public and all cultural workers to lobby for the repurposing of that 120 million pound budget towards an equitable recovery of the sector. And funding things like here to stay and other campaigns that are happening now. Why do we need a nationalistic rebranding when we've got these incredible grassroots initiatives that could do with those resources? And the sixth is to think strategically and structurally and for the arts to support the wider migrant movement advocate for the end of the hostile environment. Because we're not going to, we're always going to be fighting fires unless we, we name what we really want to go and the hostile environment is causing so much pain and violence to this country. So we need the art sector, the culture sector, to use its creative skills networks and resources to really put uh advocate for the end of the hostile environment. So, these are just six things that I know I've spoken very quickly sorry, to. Yeah. Sorry, Nikki. And this is very much in terms of immediate steps of recovery but As everyone has said, we need to simultaneously think about the long term. And we need to think about we need to be able to invest and hold space, for what we want to organise towards, not just against. And if the planning and leadership around the culture sector recovery is privileging the imaginations of white non disabled British citizens in positions of institutional power. I guess the question is, what is our culture New Deal? So this is a big question, right? So what is our culture New Deal? What is that dedicated space for grassroots and allies to shape and influence the culture sector from the bottom up? And with intersectionality at its core, or what would a culture sector look like if communities of colour, migration, disability, queer folk and the working class were leading its recovery? So this is something that we're really grappling with and we know we we understand one part of the equation. But we are hoping as migrants and culture over the next months to really reach out and understand from all these different perspectives. What are those structural root causes of our of experiences that we're having? And what what are the common solutions? So we believe this bottom up and intersectional approach will give us some kind of Route towards a culture New Deal. And we know this is complicated. And we know there are many, many solutions under this. But yeah, this is the moment isn't it? So, you know, as Stella said, this is not a time for competition. This is a moment of convergence. So yeah, that's how that's some thoughts. And I think I might have talked for quite a while so I'll end it there. Thank you, Susan.

Season Butler 44:59

Joon Lynn you did Exactly fine for time it was Yeah, brilliant. In fact, I have set my pocket watch to it. Thank you so much for these really heartening and thought provoking contributions. I think for for some technical ease, we're going to go straight into our conversation and and field some questions. I have some questions, a few have come up from the various platforms where we're streaming, and we have time to add more to the chat. I wanted to reassure you that we'll have a recording of this available and so if you do need to take a moment,inhale and exhale top up your tea, you'll be able to listen to the playback. And I just have so many excellent connections that are coming through. Because this particular platform has been new for me and might be new to some of our panellists. I'll just say that I'm going to repeat the questions that have come up. And, and then kind of verbally, direct them to specific panellists so that our technicians know who to pop on to screen. So that's a bit of tech transparency. And so, one of the one of the questions that popped into my mind was really about the title of this session that we're in now, and the way it points to the notion of recovery. So I was wondering if the panellists Have some thoughts about whether this whether it's too soon to talk about recovery, while we're still kind of mid crisis. So I was wondering if each of you want to speak to that question briefly. And perhaps starting with Maya

Maya Goodfellow 47:24

Yeah, I think it's a good question. And I think I can keep my answer quite short in that. I think it's important to be talking about, it is important to be talking about recovery in the sense that this all vision of what what society and what different sectors can be, needs to be like. I think a lot of the ideas are already there that sort of needs to be solidified. But I do think, at the same time, it's too early in that people are still suffering, we still have a major, major issue in terms of the health crisis. And then also in terms of the economic crisis, I guess that people are in now and so the way I always think about this I think is maybe a useful way to think about is that one you have things that you could do now in order to alleviate the suffering and pain is being caused either by government policy or by the way things are structured and you can try to change those things. So think some of that can be about thinking about in particularly immigration, as to what's being talked about, which I think is really important point is making sure that there are the financial resources available, people who have to pay things like immigration fees, who have to be navigating this really really costly system, using resources, pooling resources in order to support those people now, in the immediate and, and lobbying, for some kind of change, like things like reducing those fees. But at the same time, I think whether with energy and capacity and space for this, also just totally reimagining that system and thinking about a world beyond the borders that we have been thinking about challenging those very borders. And so when we're thinking about recovery in the broadest sense, I would say that it's not a time to hold back. It's not a time to think about what is sort of winnable or palatable to people. It's about thinking about what society can look like what it should look like if everyone is being cared for and treated in the way that we all want to be treated. And for me, that means questioning, questioning the border in all its different forms.

Season Butler 49:26

Thank you. Stella did you want to speak to this question about the timeliness of recovery, per se?

Stella Kanu 49:35

Yes, thank you. I don't know if I've got a really clear answer. And I don't know whether it's too soon or not. What I do know and what I do sense is that there are these continual conversations that are taking place. And part of part of the part of the moment for me has been about disrupting those conversations and focusing on action. You know, there is a close proximity to This moment where COVID, the hostile environment, the pressures of Brexit deal, no deal have all converged in one moment. And also, you know, this other sense, which we've not really spoken about, which is also part of it, which is the sense that climate change and climate justice has meant there's been this relaxing in in, in the moment for people to be in a space of thinking and reflection. And I think that is always a good predicator to change. And I think previously, I talked about, you know, this need for there to be both this short term, medium and long term kind of view. And so I don't know whether it's the right moment, but what I do know is while those conversations are taking place, while people are thinking and planning and recreating both financially, in terms of people and impacting on people's lives, I think and I feel that it's better that there is this real close proximity to the realities of where we are In the UK, but also globally, you know, we should be making decisions based out of real life experiences and experiences that migrant workers across the sector and across the UK are experiencing, that should form part of our decision making. And if it doesn't do so, now, then when is the right time for our lives and our lived experience to actually impact and to make a change to the way that we make decisions about what

needs to happen over in the future and what needs to happen in terms of people's lives. And in terms of policy, and in terms of, you know, what now becomes culture. And you know, this conversation is about arts and culture. Culture is changing and shifting at the moment. You know, we've now got been in a period where for the last four or five months, the connection that people have had with culture has been absolutely profound. You know, it's hadn't involved people going into the Royal Opera House its been I need my Spotify to get me through the next hour because my brain is about to burst I've had to go out and go for a walk. And I'm passing these spaces where culture and cultures, availability is really close and in close proximity. It's the work that parents have been doing with their kids where they've got back in touch with where culture is at. And so the potential that this is the right moment, not just to galvanise the sector, but to galvanise the whole of the UK, behind culture in its recovery. And for me, I don't think about recovery. I say the word recovery, but I actually mean restructure, because we can't, we're not trying to recover and go back to anything. This is the moment if there ever was a moment for us to really build something new. And I think that as time goes on, it will become clearer and clearer. And it will become more finely tuned when those moments of real change and real shifts happen. But while the conversations are taking place, I think now is a really good time. And I think recovery for me means restructure

Season Butler 53:02

That's really powerful. Thank you so much Stella. Shawab do you want to speak to this question of time and so

Shawab Iqbal 53:14

you know what, I don't think it is too soon. Talking about recovery, for me, we must remember that we are in one of the biggest recessions this country has ever seen. We have probably one of the most right wing governments that we have ever had. And fundamentally despite how the art sector might like to view itself as being this kind of, you know, avant garde Maverick kind of section of society, it's still operating within a neoliberal framework and a neoliberal framework, which will do anything to kind of make sure we kind of stay within the status quo. So for me, you know, absolutely. There's short term and long term conversations around recovery but we can't fall into this trap of assuming that it's too soon, we absolutely need to be organising we absolutely need to be having a sense of solidarity, knowing that we're going to hit a time in a few years, or even sooner, where there will be no money in the sector. And what will that mean for the very conventional patterns that happen whenever we see economic upheaval in this country, particularly for the most marginalised in our society. So I don't think this period is going to be an exception, we're already seeing the same patterns of people being disproportionately affected by all aspects of COVID both within cultural centre and outside. So and I say that on the term in terms of various protected characteristics. So if we are going to really utilise and capture this moment, we can't afford to you know assume that it's too soon to be talking about recovery because kind of, you know, the opposing arguments On the right, and I say that not to identify a group of people that are, you know, so far right that they never been in the cultural sector. Actually, some of that thinking is very much in the sector that we all kind of belonging or commenting on. And those individuals are already organising whether they're doing it consciously or unconsciously, to make sure that the status quo remains so we absolutely need to organise as sense of urgency.

Season Butler 54:32

Thank you, again, we have a contribution here on the YouTube stream saying maybe when we feel it's urgent and we need to speak that's the right moment. So thanks comrade for that contribution. Joon Lynn do you have some thoughts on this subject.

Joon Lynn Goh 55:48

Yeah, sure. I think um, what your question points to Susan is almost this some Is it too soon is also related to capacity and fatigue. And the fact that we have just gone through a historic moment or series of moments that has changed everything and exacerbated all the inequalities of the past. And I think I once went on a training programme with NEON, movement organisers. And one really useful thing that they gave me was that actually, we are working in a movement ecology. And we all don't need to do the same thing. If we find our bit in this in the world, and if we do that, well, everyone else's and everyone else is doing that we can achieve something. So again, with that kind of movement ecology, thinking, if we approach recovery as a collective task, what are the things that individually and in smaller groups we can do and push forward knowing that Other people pushing forward towards the same goals. So if if you if you're rooted in harm mitigation into healing in the inside or outside institution game, then do that. But have those moments when we're collectively coming together to make sure we're moving in the same direction. And then maybe in a slightly different way. I've always been inspired by what Adrienne Maree Brown and Walidah Imarisha have talked about in terms of organising, and they talk about organising a science fiction and science fiction is time travelling. And in time travelling, we always know that the present moment is also the past and the future. So we're always going to be working across these multiple generations before us and In front of us, so maybe we can be slightly more relaxed with the question of sooner or later.

Season Butler 58:11

Thanks so much. I would like to bring in a question from a comrade that's come in to us via YouTube. And I'm wanting to maybe direct this to Stella. And if there are any other panellists who feel like you want to chip in something in particular, can you just give me an update on the private chat and I'll make sure to leave you in. But let's see if Stella, if you want to field this one can, can black and brown led arts projects start to counter the right wing culture war narrative, especially older white working class voters who've bought into the demonization of minorities.

Stella Kanu 59:07

I'm not I don't know, I don't know if that's where the fight needs to be for the moment. I. And that's partly to do with where my my my gaze was kind of slightly shifted. I think that there was always 100 and 101 battles, and there is this. There is this. There's a real and haven't been involved in some of those kind of government conversations. It is absolutely mind blowing to me how even with facts, statistics and information, there is an inability to shift from this sense of what culture is, and who culture is for and who is delivering culture. And I I'm not convinced that that war is winnable. And I'm not sure that that is the war that we need. I'm very much interested and focused on how do we empower ourselves to do the things that we need to Do because if there is any shift to come in time is going to come not from those quarters that are signing off these big packages. But actually, you know, it's kind of connected with my real belief that culture is its own power within itself. And that where the where the funding might go may not be where the influence and power really is, because culture is a power unto itself. And so I'm not sure if I, if I see that as a kind of really important line of inquiry right now. Because I think there

is a need to take the gaze away from these people away from these spaces away from the kind of historical mainstream, because there is a sense that, you know, that kind of space, both culturally and with a big C in culture and with a small c has really focused on encouraging all of us to be incredibly individualistic, and even in terms of You know how we tell our stories, instead of the collective story of what it means to be living in the UK right now is undermined, is sidelined is hidden. And so for me, I kind of feel like until we are as individuals empowered and solid solidified in what we bring to the table, we won't be able to have any sense of how we collectively bring that together to organise in a really powerful way, and also in a grassroots way. So for me, I understand the question, I hear the question, I think maybe there is something that can be done. But I guess I throw the question back by saying is that the real priority and the vital question for now? And I think not.

Season Butler 1:01:46

Thank you. And we have another question from a comrade that's coming at us from YouTube. And I'm hoping that we can from perhaps Maya first and then maybe Shawab on this question, and the questioner asks, What are the pinpoints? Where should we collectively focus our energies at the moment to make the biggest impact? And so Maya, could you do have some thoughts on this subject?

Maya Goodfellow 1:02:32

Sorry. Yeah, I still haven't learnt to unmute myself. I think it sort of depends on what the what exactly you're trying to impact and maybe Shawab is better placed to, to answer this in terms of thinking about arts and culture but I guess, there is it brings I think this question actually brings us back to the question that we were already asked about, are we should we be thinking about recovery or not? And I think there's two overlapping ways that others have been speaking about recovery, which is one thinking about like immediate, what are the fights that you could win are winnable now and what is necessary in order in order to sort of focus your energies on? And then what is the way to make an impact in the longer term? And I don't think those two things necessarily separate but I do you think that they, in some ways, are slightly different And so I think that a good example for this more broadly, so maybe I'm unhelpfully broadening out the discussion. But if thinking about the discourse around people crossing the channel, and I think there's, there's sort of two things you can think about there. One is that there's an immediate need, there's an immediate need to sort of counter some of the narrative. Also, there's an immediate need of people making those journeys when they arrive but also people who are still going to make those kinds of journeys. So I think there's things you can do around I mean, giving resources if you have any, but giving time If you have any time to organisations that already exists doing that kind of work and trying to change that narrative, then I think there's a much broader question there about why is it that some people can't move in this way? And so in a sort of broader sense, I think that people, as has already been said, different people can do different things in relation to this. And so I think it's useful to think about it in the way that others have already spoken about is this sort of short, medium and long term. And for me, the long term is something that also really matters here when we're thinking about Hostile Environment, because it is not only those policies that I talked about right at the start it is this much more broader way of understanding movement and understanding borders. And that, for me, is where I think some of the major pushback can and should happen in the longer term, which is to just question question, the legitimacy of these things that we're told are necessary. And the one of the reasons I say that is not because I think we should be doing everything in a sort of reactive way, but I often think about the right and the right Don't frame their arguments in

terms of what they think is winnable, they sort of hammer at it for a very long time. And then achieve, you know, leaving the European Union or whatever it is the Nigel Farage has been wanting to do for the last 20 years. And so for me, some boldness on thinking about borders and challenging the idea of borders is sort of where we could also be focusing energies.

Shawab Iqbal 1:05:30

You know, over the past few years, one of the groups that I've been really, really empowered and energised by was around the time when Jeremy Corbyn became leader of the Labour Party and the influence that Momentum had on particularly the 2017 election. And I think, you know, translating some of that to the to the culture sector, is absolutely something that we should really be focusing our energy on, I think at the moment in terms of any discourse conversation or debate around equity. There's stories of Central fragmentation. And I, you know, for example, I'm not convinced that the theatre sector is always speaking to the dance sector, and, or whether, whether, you know, those two sectors are talking to the music industry. And fundamentally, there's some, there's a common through line amongst all of those parts of the cultural sector that really, absolutely need a common unity to then take on some of those bigger conversations. So I think in this current moment, there absolutely needs to be that kind of priority. But within that, not letting those groups kind of crumble because of inter community dynamics and tensions, I think, absolutely focusing on that kind of wider collective of different art forms and different parts of the sector, but also within that having some real kind of internal conversations that will eventually prevent the breaking down of all of those groups. You know, just going back on what Maya said earlier on about the right. I think the right are very, very good at, you know, uniting despite all the internal divisions that they might have. I think in on the left and particularly within the culture sector, there is a bit of work to be done around that kind of common unity to avoid the breakdown of this particular moment. So, in short, we need a collective group that encompasses all of the cultural industry, but still has internal conversations to avoid breaking them down.

Stella Kanu 1:07:39

Yeah, I just wanted to kind of add that I guess in some ways, I'm kind of expanding on Shawab's comment, and this probably sounds like a weird answer. But I really think that the need for us to galvanise that energies around healing of individuals, and of collective groups is really important. And that isn't just focused on COVID-19 and the impact of death and, and illness and sickness and how that's kind of generated. But this has been both a national and a global moment. And what we've what we've had in our history, to kind of guide us is this sense that between, you know, the 19, the end of the 1950s, to the beginning of the 80s, there were something in the region of 62 to 64 independent countries that gained their independence. And one of the real hindrances has always been, in those early years, this sense of trauma, national trauma, that in some ways wasn't always dealt with, you know, there was this need to organise and democratise and now we've got this space we've, we've got to get into this space. And what we have seen since those years, and where some, some countries are now celebrating 50 plus years, is the impact of that trauma. And that happens in those kind of global and national spaces. And so For me, I also think, which is why I was talking earlier about, you know, the power of culture is that I think there is a need for both national and global healing. And culture needs to be at the heart of that. So I think while we're organising around the issues, as cultural and arts workers, we also understand and know the power of art forms and the culture that we are custodians of or that we're practitioners of, how do we create some conversations that allow us to, to focus on the

arts as being some kind of balm to the nation? And I think that's an important conversation that could get lost, and how do we heal both nationally? And that's all of us who are here in this in the UK right now? How do we use culture to enable us to do that? How do we repurpose and recenter the need for healing so that we don't repeat the mistakes and some of the laborious longevity in terms of the impact and the effects of trauma in the future.

Season Butler 1:10:09

that's brilliant. Thank you so much. I'm, I'm quite interested in the idea of culture without borders that I heard from Joon Lynn and that also comes up in conversations from time to time. So I am I wondered if I could nudge Joon Lynn to tell us a little bit more about what you might mean by being able to be a cultural worker without borders. And, and this also might be something that Maya would like to speak to as well when Joon Lynn is finished

Joon Lynn Goh 1:10:50

Thanks Susan. So I guess when we when we were thinking about as migrants and culture what do we want to move towards rather than against? We always used to talk about ourselves as a group of migrants [inaudible] a hostile environment that was very much our tagline what are we doing we're organising against and, you know, very much provoked by another colleague from [inaudible], from Migrants Organise. She has always said to us, you work in culture make me a new culture. And that has stayed as a simple yet extremely complicated provocation, which I'm trying to understand. And culture without borders is part of that. So, one of the most brilliant things I think we're witnessing is how the abolitionist movement is gaining so much public recognition, not just for something that is about Defending the police getting rid of prisons, detention centres and borders, but very much articulating and practising what is that community centred response? What happens when you place healing and transformative justice in instead of an incarceration form of justice? And so, in my head, I've been thinking about terms around. What does it mean to abolish all citizenship? What does it mean to abolish borders? What do we replace with it? And as culture makers, how are we embedding that, and envisaging, you know, collective well being? Yeah, and I think, again, it's, there is no single answer because I think we're all gifted with a particular task or a particular passion to do something. But I think it is like how can we collectively move towards healing well being, and a culture that gives space for? Yeah, Alliance building as well. There's an amazing author, who is both Jewish disabled, has like African descent. And she talks about radical lineage, lineage lineages, and understanding what it means to be part of so many different histories and to come to terms and reconcile your own histories and what that means for the future. I think maybe what Stella was saying about culture being a balm for for us, this is what we need to be moving towards. That's a slightly convoluted answer.

Maya Goodfellow 1:14:01

Yeah, I think this is it's very good question. I think it's a really good way, starting point to think about some of the things we've been discussing. And I suppose, for me, I actually sometimes feel quite uncomfortable with the word with culture. And in part because of the way that I guess I've engaged with it in my work, which is one of the major arguments that's made against immigration, over the past four or five decades is that it disrupts British culture. So like culture, and I guess maybe this slightly more expansive, vague, difficult to pin down way and I think there's something here about thinking about the fact that culture whatever we mean by that is shifting, it's not static. It's always moved. It's always

different in different places, even for different people, even people who live next door to one another how they conceptualise what culture is going to be really different. And this really punishes argument that immigration is really damaging thing for British culture. I think there's a really useful way it is really useful to think about culture without borders, because that has always been what culture is. And that will always be what culture is although it's used in this to be abused by the right and also the main stream to argue against immigration. To argue for this very static thing actually, it's Always been a shifting thing. It's always been global And so it's quite useful way to think about this is in in the sense that I think what Shawab was talking about in terms of the right are very good at sort of agreeing working together in particular times and working across borders. And so when we're thinking about this and when we're thinking about how we conceptualise a world. Without Borders, we can think about all the ways that that world already exists without downplaying very, very real ways. The borders, people are policed and bordered and the way Their lives are damaged and the violence they encounter because of the borders that do exist. I think at times it's really worth thinking about these moments where Those borders are there or they cease to matter as much and something that I think is useful is thinking about what Paul Gilroy talks about which is what he calls conviviality is this thing that people all over the world can get along with each other and Fallout and not get on and along these over these lines that they're told are impossible to cross these boundaries that are so difficult to cross and so I think we already know that it's there that it's happening. And just looking to these points where it happens, I think is a really really useful way for imagining those worlds in the future

Season Butler 1:16:53

Thank you so much. And it's it's interesting to hear your remarks just then Maya as we were talking I was just I just jotted something down which is for conservatives culture is something we inherit For visionaries culture is something we bequeath Just little pearl that happened to pop out just then. I have to put one last question that's come from YouTube to our panellists, if you could, each offer a thought. That speaks to this question perhaps in closing, and I propose we just use the same running order, Maya then Stella then Shawab then Joon Lynn And the question is about or this questioner expresses the need to develop tools to push back against a return to normal. In an everyday professional context, and so I'm wondering if the Comrades joining us on the panel. Just have some Brief thoughts

Maya Goodfellow 1:18:06

I think the other panellists will be better placed to talk about the specificity of what this panel is about. But I think from this like just the starting point of recognising the things that have shifted and for who and so, sort of the return to normal is that and this question is in an everyday professional context. I think we really need to recognise in this moment that people are experiencing this in very very Different ways and although there is this broader discourse that is suggesting we all need to return to normal, who is being forced to? who has Who is able to push back against that? And where power is in this I think is really important And so if we're even thinking about developing tools, which I don't have an answer to that, I think that the really, really important thing is to centre the very Things that we talked about in this panels and thinking about how power Inequality thinking about who is impacted the most and in what ways in this particular moment And thinking about what that what the The problem with what normal was for different people and in different ways is really, really important. But I think probably other panelists have more concrete things that they can probably speak to on that. So the thing that I really Highlight there is recognising the different ways that normal was a problem for different people

And how different people now even now are being treated differently depending on where they sit in society and what their job is.

Stella Kanu 1:19:39

I think Maya absolutely hit the nail on the head in terms of the context and what that then means is that for the last few months has really revealed to us exactly, where those inequalities lie exactly where those differences and experiences lie. If that means that normality is a high percentage of our sector relying on freelancers and people on Zero Hour contracts. A really high percentage of it is, 80% 76% of the sector is reliant. On a whole group of people who are now in a space where their, their finances and their financial situation is even more precarious. We've got restructuring happening in large scale organisations, which is also holding the bulk of migrant workers and that percentage is also going to shift and change and the experiences within that context. We've also got that in the last few months Black Lives Matters has really shifted and brought into sharp focus you know the whole concept around the very very nature of our organisations and the very nature of the work that we do and how that relates and links to audiences. How do we go back to a normal I cannot envisage a normal that is acceptable with those astounding figures and statistics that we have all been grappling with, and that have been shared with government in some of the oral and written evidence that we've been giving around our sector. I don't know whether a return to normal is feasible. It absolutely isn't feasible. And the fact that the last few months have really highlighted that our normal is both diseased, toxic and absolutely not fit for purpose in so many ways and that's at every scale that's not just laying that down the door of the large scale organisations. That's the way that we work. And so for me a return to normal is absolutely cannot be on the table. What what is on the table I think I kind of alluded to this before is what do we need to build to ensure that all of us remain? What do we need to build to ensure that there is a cultural sector to deliver over the next five and 10 years or and beyond and what does it mean for everybody to be included? Those questions still remain and they have nothing to do with a sense of normality. That is a return to a system that is built on predicated on 200 year old memorandum and articles that loads of charities are working on at the moment and most of our organisations are charities that 200 years old based on prejudices and biases that we know have been exposed, both in our own in our society but also within our day to day working relationships, and it's impossible for us to return to a normal

Shawab Iqbal 1:22:33

Yeah, I kind of agree with what Stella said in terms of, you know, it's really I find it quite difficult to imagine a situation where we go back to normal so to speak in terms of where we were before COVID but within that, I do think there's, you know, kind of spoke about it earlier we're still working within a very neoliberal framework in the culture industry, I still think there'll be some both individuals and institutions that will naturally try to go back to some of that normal and I think within that there will be incidents of institutional violence that will still be presenting themselves perhaps not in the way that they were before. But in a slightly more mutated way that's the new normal whatever that will end up looking like. So I think it's really important that we use this particular moment that we're in today to really make sure that arts workers are unionised. Particularly art workers that you know occupy various spaces in terms of protected characteristics because one of the things that we really, really lack in our industry is the galvanising of people coming together based on you know being workers but particularly by their through their specific intersectional identities. I think in terms of how we fight back, I think that's a really

really important starting point. I think there absolutely needs to be a culture in the industry, which is Open and up for organising around a unionised movement because I still suspect there'll be incidents of institutional violence of the same kind of inequalities not presenting themselves in the same way but to **Still fundamentally kind of trying to creep back in in different shapes and forms. So for me, it's all about unions.**

Joon Lynn Goh 1:25:15

I'm so sorry. Oh gosh, what I would say was that at the this question about the fear of, of like returning back to normal is also that question around energy and and that that fear of not being able to do it by yourself. So as Shawab said, it's really important to be able to organise together and organise with so whether it's a union, workplace union or a community organisation, find your people because they are the ones that you will be able to talk with to strategize. With to heal with to imagine with. That is so fundamental that we will we cannot be isolated again in an industry that is 70 80% freelancers, that is the history of the of the culture sector and cultural production. We've been atomized. So I think the real remedy is like being together Another thing is to remember to just the work is being done out there. So continue to just uplift those those campaigns initiatives, like culture needs diversity, all of us and the demands of the working class, artist, group, etc. You know, there's so much information out there so many campaigns that you can uplift. And I think also to just bridge that short, medium long term journey, we are all being transformed in fundamental ways. And I think we should give ourselves that time and space to really understand how all the dots are connected, how all our struggles are connected. What is the root causes of many of the situations that we face? Regardless of the specificity of our lived experience? A lot of these things are connected. So yeah, I would say yeah, another tool is to do that work of self education, self transformation. Yeah.

Season Butler 1:27:43

Thanks. That's really brilliant. And there, there was a question that came up on Facebook and I think, also on YouTube referring to this question of how trade unions might be able to support some of the specific demands coming through from migrants and culture, and I would say, Please drop us an email. And, and, and let's, let's talk, let's collaborate. But that's time for us. I want to thank everyone for being here with us in this session. Personally, I feel like I have to recover every day. And that the disaster capitalists are remaking the world all the time in every crack and crevice they can find and, and so it is absolutely a privilege and I feel so imperative to be part of this conversation in this moment. So thanks so much to The World Transformed. Thanks so much, to our excellent excellent panel of Maya Goodfellow Stella Kanu, Shawab Iqbal, and Joon Lynn Goh please do check out all of the different movements and and the work that our panellists are doing and see how you can get involved. We all have to be able to give what we can from where we're standing, and also to be able to receive support and in the spirit of mutual aid, which is so heartening in these times. I'd also like to mention the panel on towards an arts utopia, which is happening in about half an hour, which I feel is a really natural progression from this conversation. Now, is definitely a time for us to have an absolutely demanding relationship with with reality with culture, with society And to ensure that we're remaking and healing all the time. I just want to check my notes to make sure that I'm not forgetting any other major points. And I think that'll do it except to say that if you're in a position to contribute to the work that The World Transformed is doing, I hope that you'll consider giving what you can at the World Transformed website with the forward slash support. Thanks, everybody. take really good care