

A Blade of Grass

Curriculum for the Future

The Panels: Participants Biographies

March 4, 2021, 6:00 PM

***Making Change: Contextualizing Cancel Culture, Hyper-Partisanship, and the Politics of Progress*
Featuring Activists and Historians Scot Nakagawa and Loretta Ross in conversation**

Scot Nakagawa is a community organizer, activist, cultural worker, and political writer. He has spent the last four decades exploring questions of racial injustice, racial formation, and effective forms of resistance and strategy for change, including community campaigns, cultural organizing, popular education, writing, and direct political advocacy. Nakagawa's primary work has been in the fight against vigilante white supremacist groups, white nationalism, Nativism, and authoritarian evangelical political movements. In this work, he has served as a strategist, organizer, and social movement analyst. He is a past Alston/Bannerman Fellow and the Association of Asian American Studies 2017 Community Leader. He is currently busy at work on a number of projects, including writing a playbook for anti-fascists and a primer on race and power. His writings have been included in *Race, Gender, and Class in the United States: An Integrated Study, 9th Edition*; *Killing Trayvons: An Anthology of American Violence*; and *Eyes Right!: Challenging the Right Wing Backlash*.

Loretta Ross is an award-winning, nationally recognized expert on racism and racial justice, women's rights, and human rights. Her work emphasizes the intersectionality of social justice issues and how intersectionality can fuel transformation. She has co-written three books on reproductive justice: *Undivided Rights: Women of Color Organize for Reproductive Justice*, winner of the Outstanding Book Award by the Gustavus Myers Center for the Study of Bigotry and Human Rights; *Reproductive Justice: An Introduction*, a first-of-its-kind primer that provides a comprehensive yet succinct description of the field and puts the lives and lived experience of women of color at the center of the book; and *Radical Reproductive Justice: Foundations, Theory, Practice, Critique*. Her current book, *Calling In the Calling Out Culture*, is forthcoming in 2021. Ross is a visiting associate professor at Smith College (Northampton, MA) in the Program for the Study of Women and Gender, teaching courses on white supremacy, race and culture in America, human rights, and "calling in the calling out culture". She was recently profiled in the [New York Times](#).

March 17, 2021, 6:00 PM

Practicing the Future, with Ari Melenciano, Samuel F. Reynolds, and Colin Rusch, moderated by Roderick Schrock

Ari Melenciano is an artist, designer, creative technologist, and researcher, who is passionate about exploring the relationships between various forms of design and sentient experiences. She is a creative technologist at Google's Creative Lab, teaching and research fellow at NYU's Interactive Telecommunications Graduate Program, and founder of Afrotectopia, a social institution fostering interdisciplinary innovation across art, design, technology, Black culture, and activism. Her award-winning work has been supported and exhibited by a variety of institutions, including Sundance, New Inc, *New York Times*, and The Studio Museum of Harlem. She often guest lectures at universities around the world.

Samuel F. Reynolds, a former skeptic, had a life changing visit with an astrologer, and has since spent nearly 30 years reading charts and studying astrology. Reynolds consults, writes, and teaches astrology full time. He also serves on a number of organizational boards, including the International Society for Astrological Research, and has written for many publications, including *Ebony*, *New York Magazine*, *MySign.com*, *The Mountain Astrologer*, and *Pride*.

Colin Rusch is Managing Director and Senior Analyst at Oppenheimer. He leads the firm's Sustainable Growth & Resource Optimization franchise. Rusch has extensive experience in the Industrial Efficiency and Clean Tech space. He started his equity research career at Piper Jaffrey and has worked at Northland, ThinkEquity, and Broadpoint Capital. He holds a BA from Wesleyan University, and comes to his work in finance with the perspectives of his previous career as a dancer and choreographer.

Roderick Schrock is an arts executive and curator. He leads the functional capacities of Eyebeam's direct artist support and guides the organization's focus to realign societal relationships with emergent technologies. He currently also teaches in the Curatorial Practice MA Program at the School of Visual Arts. He received an MFA from Mills College and a certificate in nonprofit management at Harvard University. His essays have been published by MIT Press, and he writes regularly for online publications, such as *Hyperallergic*. He is a member of the Guild of Future Architects, sits on the Netherlands America Foundation Cultural Committee, and is a founding board member of Art+Feminism.

March 23, 2021, 6:00 PM

Parallel Fields: Radical Care with Miki Kashtan and Cassie Thornton, moderated by Deborah Fisher

Miki Kashtan is a co-founder of Bay Area Nonviolent Communication. She is the author of *Reweaving Our Human Fabric: Working together to Create a Nonviolent Future*; *Spinning Threads of Radical Aliveness: Transcending the Legacy of Separation in Our Individual Lives*; and *The Little Book of Courageous Living*. She is inspired by the role of visionary leadership in shaping a livable future, and works toward that vision by sharing the principles and practices of Nonviolent Communication through consulting, retreats, and training for organizations. Miki blogs at The Fearless Heart and her articles have appeared in the *New York Times*, *Tikkun* magazine, *Waging Nonviolence*, *Shareable*, *Peace and Conflict*, and elsewhere. She holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from UC Berkeley.

Cassie Thornton is an artist and activist from the US, currently living in Canada. She refers to herself as a feminist economist, a title that frames her work as that of a social scientist actively preparing for the economics of a future society that produces health and life without the tools that reproduce oppression—like money, police, or prisons. She has produced large and small social projects and writings with activist and art organizations, festivals, conferences, and institutions including Transmediale, Bemis Center for the Arts, MoneyLab, Furtherfield Gallery, MayWorks-Halifax, Strike Debt, Headlands Center for the Arts, Cannonball Miami, Volta Fair in Basel, Mass Arts, PS-1, Brooklyn Museum, Flux Factory, Gallery 400 in Chicago, Southern Exposure, SFMoMA, EFA Project Space, and more. She is currently the co-director of the Re-Imagining Value Action Lab in Thunder Bay, an art and social center at Lakehead University in Ontario, Canada.

Kaira Jewel Lingo is a Dharma teacher, who lived as an ordained nun for 15 years during which time she trained closely with Thich Nhat Hanh. She began practicing in 1997 and currently shares Buddhist meditation, secular mindfulness, and compassion internationally, providing spiritual mentoring to

individuals and communities. She works at the intersection of racial, climate, and social justice with a focus on activists, people of color, artists, educators, families, and youth. She is the author of *We Were Made For These Times* (Parallax, forthcoming 2021) and editor of *Thich Nhat Hanh's Planting Seeds: Practicing Mindfulness with Children*. Her website is kairajewel.com. She lives in New York.