

Creative Response Toolkit

Through Tumultuous Times: Reimagining and Rebuilding 'America'

Imagining America 2020 Collective Creative Engagement

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. An Overview of the 2020 IA Collective Creative Engagement**
- 2. Formats for Creative Responses**
- 3. Preparing Your Creative Response**
 - a. Getting Started**
 - b. Registering Your Creative Response**
 - c. Undertaking Your Creative Response**
- 4. Submitting Documentation of Your Creative Response**
- 5. Promoting Your Creative Response**

We are delighted that you are interested in participating in Imagining America's 2020 Collective Creative Engagement! You are part of a vibrant community of artists, designers, scholars, organizers, students, educators, and many others who are working to realize a just and liberatory America and world.

This Creative Response Toolkit is intended to serve as a guide to support you in preparing and submitting documentation of your creative response, which is part of the open call component of the 2020 Collective Creative Engagement. If you still have questions after reviewing this toolkit, please don't hesitate to reach out to Imagining America staff at gathering@imaginingamerica.org.

An Overview Of The 2020 IA Collective Creative Engagement

The coronavirus has laid bare long-standing inequities and vulnerabilities in the institutions and systems that shape our lives: our schools and universities, hospitals, housing, jobs, transportation, and the ways in which we access food and other basic needs. It has reminded us of what is essential, and it has called on us to reflect on our interconnectedness.

This year, in place of an in-person IA National Gathering, Imagining America (IA) invites creative responses that offer opportunities for community reflection, healing, and the creation of spaces and places for a radical reimagining of the world in which we live. This collective creative engagement will explore questions such as:

- What is the role of art, design, and creative culture in reimagining and rebuilding our world in ways that create antiracist institutions, structures, practices and ways of thinking?
- How can we work towards a post-COVID university that lessens rather than deepens inequality in access, pedagogy, and forms of knowledge production? How might we re-imagine our educational systems, and particularly our colleges and universities, in ways that divest from forms of violence and inequality and invest in cultures and communities of care within institutions and as stakeholders in regions? What are the opportunities and imperatives of our moment?
- What are local communities doing to move towards a more caring, just, and liberatory 'America' and world? What are the new and remembered ideas, images, symbols, forms of knowledge, and ways of being that will lead the way?

Please visit IA's website [here](#) to view the full Call for Participation.

IA will showcase open call creative responses on its website and social media channels along with livestreamed programming throughout the month of October 2020.



Formats For Creative Responses

We invite teams of two individuals (or more) to collaborate on a creative project in response to this year's call. Creative responses are welcome in the following formats:

- **Community Memorial Quilt:** These responses invite poems, short stories, and other written or visual reflections on individual and community experiences as impacted by COVID-19 that will be woven together in a digital memorial.
- **Community Meals:** Through one or more community meals, these responses will create space for a facilitated and documented discussion around a community topic, issue, or action related to the theme and questions articulated above. Submitted documentation of the meals, which may take place online or in-person using social distance practices, should include the group's vision of how their community would look if the selected topic/issue was addressed along with an action agenda. Documentation may be in oral, written, visual, or performative formats.
- **Paired Dialogues:** This response pairs individuals located in different communities, cities, or regions in a dialogue in response to the Collective Creative Engagement theme and questions articulated in the call.

We particularly welcome projects and dialogues that envision and open pathways for individuals and communities from diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences to participate in a restructuring of American life.

Preparing Your Creative Response

A Note Before You Get Started. All individuals are welcome to submit a creative response. Membership in the IA consortium is not a requirement to participate (although if you're curious about membership, let us know!). We do, however, have one eligibility requirement. As a values-driven organization, Imagining America seeks to undertake, support, and promote creative work and scholarship that further a just, equitable, and liberatory America and world. To be eligible for inclusion in the October 2020 program for the Collective Creative Engagement, along with meeting the documentation requirements (see below), creative responses and documentation must align with the values of [Imagining America](#) and its collaborating partner institutions [Tulane University](#) and [the Ashé Cultural Arts Center](#). How we listen, speak, and act with each other matters, and while this is a continual learning process for all of us, we strive to lift up practices and work that are also committed to these ethics.

Getting Started

To get started, **there are two immediate items you'll want to determine:** (i) who you'll be inviting to collaborate with you on your creative response, and (ii) the format of your response.

Potential collaborators/partners may be neighbors, colleagues, family, and/or friends. Or a stranger. It's entirely up to you. You may take this step before or after determining the format of your creative response.

Registering Your Creative Response

Once you've found one or more collaborators/partners, let us know you'll be participating. This step isn't mandatory, but it's a great way of letting others around the country (and world) know what you're up to. Plus listing your project is easy: just complete this short [Google form](#) to place your project on the IA 2020 Collective Creative Engagement map.

Undertaking Your Creative Response

Now that you've identified collaborators/partners and selected the format for your creative response, it's time to develop and undertake your response!

We've provided a checklist of key items you'll want to consider as you plan and execute your project. This list is just a starting point. Feel free to use what applies to your response, and to add items that support your vision and context.

Logistics

- If your creative response will be in the form of a visual (e.g. photo, drawing) or written contribution (e.g. poem), please see the section below on Submitting Documentation of Your Creative Response.
- If your creative response will involve an audio or audio-visual recording, you'll want to consider where your creative response will take place and the audio quality of the space.
 - Set up of your camera and lighting. Front facing natural lighting is best to avoid shadowing.
 - If possible, avoid noise from open windows, pets, and other people or children that are not participating in your creative response.
 - If you have one, use a headset or directional microphone. If neither of those are an option and your project is taking place online, earbuds can help sound quality and buffer background noise.
 - If your project is online, you might want to consider muting non-speaking participants to increase the sound quality of your audio or audio-visual recording.
- If you are undertaking a community meal or paired dialogue, will the meal/dialogue be online or in-person?
 - If online, what platform will you use to hold and document your meal/dialogue? Please note, documentation is not required but if you

plan to share your creative response with the IA community, make sure to use a platform that allows recording. Here are some online platform suggestions:

- [Zoom](#) (Basic plan is free)
- [GoToMeeting](#) (free 14-day trial available)
- [ezTalks](#) (Starter plan is free)
- If in-person, make sure to follow public health recommendations as well as state and local guidelines and mandates for small in-person and community convenings. Be safe!

Content

How you chose to structure the content of your response is up to you, but please keep in mind the prompts from the Call for Participation.

- For the Community Meals, we recommend identifying the community topic or issue prior to the meal so that your conversation can build from a few generative prompts specific to the Call and the topic/issue.
- For the Community Memorial Quilt and Paired Dialogues, we recommend identifying one or more prompts that particularly resonate with you before starting to record your response (if recording).

The rest is up to you!

Submitting Documentation Of Your Creative Response

While not required, you are invited to document your creative response in a written, visual, or audio-visual format and share it with IA. Depending on format, these responses will be showcased on IA's event site and other audio-visual platforms throughout the month of October 2020.

Submitted documentation should take the following forms:

- **For written documentation** (e.g. poems, manifestos), submissions should be no longer than one page in length (using your font and spacing of preference).
- **For visual documentation** (e.g. photographs of an event or a visual art piece), submissions are limited to three photographs, which should be uploaded in JPG, PNG, TIFF or PDF format with a minimum size of 800 x 1200 px and a maximum of 1280 x 1920 px.
- **For audio and audio-visual documentation** (e.g. audio recording or film), submissions are limited to one piece no longer than 3:00 minutes in length. These submissions should be in MP3 format for audio and MP4 for video.

If your creative response includes work that is copyrighted by another person or organization, be sure you have permission to use, and let others use, such work.

To share your documentation with IA, please complete the 2020 Collective Creative Engagement [Project Documentation Form](#), which collects basic descriptive information on your project and contains a link to upload your project documentation. This form will also ask you to provide us with permission to share your submission on the IA website and our other distribution channels in connection with the 2020 Collective Creative Engagement. You retain all rights of ownership in your own work.

Project Documentation Forms must be submitted no later than Friday, August 28, 2020, 11:59 PM Pacific Time to be eligible for inclusion in the October 2020 program of creative responses.

Promoting Your Creative Response

The last step is to join us in October to participate in the Collective Creative Engagement's live streamed programming, and to check out the creative responses submitted by others.

As you undertake, document, and submit your creative response, we further invite you to share your response on social media using the **#ReImaginingAmerica20**.

From now on and until our October event, Imagining America will be making a series of posts in social media and other digital platforms promoting our Collective Creative Engagement, please **follow, share, retweet, and like** IA's posts from your Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram accounts:

- Twitter: [@ImaginingAmer](#)
- Facebook: fb.com/ImaginingAmerica
- Instagram: [@imaginingamerica](#)

Further questions? Contact Imagining America staff by email at gathering@imaginingamerica.org. We look forward to dreaming and building an equitable new world with you.

