We the People: Practicing Belonging in a Period of Deep Anxiety
HOW DO WE THINK ABOUT, TALK ABOUT, AND GIVE BIRTH TO A WORLD WHERE ALL BELONG?
Who are we? Who we be? “We”?

“It was we, the people; not we, the white male citizens; nor yet we, the male citizens; but we, the whole people, who formed the Union... Men, their rights and nothing more; women, their rights and nothing less.”

— SUSAN B. ANTHONY, 1873

We don't believe you 'cause we the people
Are still here in the rear, ayo, we don't need you
You in the killing-off-good-young-nigga mood

— A TRIBE CALLED QUEST, 2017
The problem of “Othering” is the problem of the 21st century
We live in a deeply divided America:

“More accurately, it is the interaction of these three forces—race, region, and movements—that have overwhelmingly shaped the evolution of American politics from 1960 to the present. We begin with race. Virtually all of the major movements that will take their turn center stage in our narrative—civil rights, white backlash, New Left, Tax Revolt, Christian Right, Tea Party—bear the very strong, if variable, imprint of race.”

McAdam, Doug; Kloos, Karina (2014-07-22). Deeply Divided
As diversity grows, so does anxiety:

- Increase in diversity
- Increase in anxiety
- Empathy, belonging, inclusion
- Fear, anger, In-group identity

Bonding

Bridging
As diversity grows, so does anxiety:

- Increase in diversity
- Increase in anxiety
- Leadership, Meta-Narrative, Structures, Organizing
- Fear, anger, Othering
- Empathy, belonging, inclusion

Breaking
Bridging
“Exposure to the changing demographics of the United States evokes the expression of greater explicit and implicit racial bias.”

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Direct Response</th>
<th>Indirect Response</th>
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<td>Not born-again Christian</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. Increase in diversity
What’s going on in 2017?

1. Increase in **diversity**
2. Increase in **anxiety**
What’s going on in 2017?

1. Increase in diversity
2. Increase in anxiety
3. Look to leadership to set meta-narrative
What’s going on in 2017?

1. Increase in diversity
2. Increase in anxiety
3. Look to leadership to set meta-narrative that...
   a. bridge communities.

   EMPATHY
   INCLUSION
   BELONGING
What’s going on in 2017?

1. Increase in diversity
2. Increase in anxiety
3. Look to leadership to set meta-narrative that...
   
a. **bridge** communities.
   - EMPATHY
   - INCLUSION
   - BELONGING

b. **breaks** communities.
   - FEAR
   - ANGER
   - OTHERING
**Othering** is a generalized set of common processes that engender marginality and persistent inequality across any of the full range of human differences.
What’s different about now?
What’s different about now?

“[Mexican immigrants] are bringing drugs, they're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people.”

“You’re living in your poverty, your schools are no good, you have no jobs, 58 percent of your (black) youth is unemployed — what the hell do you have to lose?”

“Grab them by the pussy. You can do anything.”
Demagoguery in a global perspective — From Europe...

VOTES FOR TOTALITARIAN AND AUTHORITARIAN POPULIST PARTIES AS % OF VOTES IN MOST RECENT NATIONAL ELECTIONS*

* 33 European countries. See “Drawbridges up,” The Economist, July 30, 2016.
Demagoguery in a global perspective — From Europe... to Asia

“We both like to swear. One little thing, we curse right away, we’re the same.”

Rodrigo Duterte on Trump
Demagoguery does not bridge — it breaks.
1851 poster warns "colored people" of Boston about watchmen acting as slave catchers.
2010 print poster warns migrant workers about police officers acting as deporters, in response to Arizona SB-1070.

What has changed?
Household income in 2014 dollars (% of adults)

1971

FT graphic Alan Smith, Source: Pew Research Center
Shift away from political moderation contributes to rising inequality and threats to democracy.

From *Deeply Divided: Racial Politics and Social Movements in Post-War America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014)
Inequality, if it keeps growing, can be more accurately described as a type of expulsion.
Who’s in the circle of human concern?
What about immigrants & refugees?

In-Group members: “more human”

Esteemed  Pitied  Envied  Despised

Belonging connotes something fundamental about both how groups are structurally positioned within society as well as how they are perceived and regarded.
Solutions? Recognizing the problem is not the same thing as solving it.
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1. **Suffer** together, starting at home.
2. Build **common vision**.
3. Moving from **movement to strategy to politics to community**
4. **Strategy – politics – community.**
We are all androgynous, not only because we are all born of a woman impregnated by the seed of a man but because each of us, helplessly and forever, contains the other — male in female, female in male, white in black and black in white. We are a part of each other. Many of my countrymen appear to find this fact exceedingly inconvenient and even unfair, and so, very often, do I. But none of us can do anything about it.

James Baldwin
WE TOO BELONG

Building Power at the Intersection of Immigration and Incarceration

Artwork featuring community members, activists, attorneys, and scholars working on justice in the immigration and incarceration systems by Robert Trujillo
#CommitTo