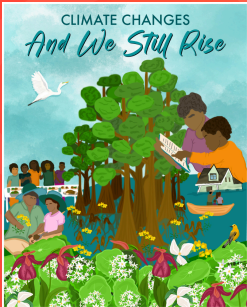


Rooted in Joy

REIMAGINING CLIMATE JUSTICE
THROUGH ART & STORYTELLING



THE CENTER FOR
**CULTURAL
POWER**



Rooted in Joy

**“Joy is not the reward at the end of the fight.
Joy is how we sustain the fight.”**



*Rooted in Joy commissioned artwork The Center for Cultural Power, 2025
Artist from left to right: Kah Yangni, Orion Camero, FKAMONI*

A movement lives not only in policy chambers and protest marches it lives in murals painted on warehouse walls, in music that carries the weight of displacement, in the quiet act of putting a seed into soil and believing a harvest is possible. Rooted in Joy was built on this belief: that cultural storytelling is not supplementary to climate justice. It is climate justice.

What follows is the story of a campaign that asked a simple and radical question: what if we told the story of climate through what we love instead of what we fear? and then spent eighteen months building the answer, one artist commission, one activation, one community at a time.

What We Built Together

Campaign Overview

Rooted in Joy is a multi-state climate narrative initiative launched by The Center for Cultural Power. The campaign began in September 2025 and ran through July 2026 focused across six states and the District of Columbia.

CALIFORNIA

NEW
YORK

GEORGIA

NORTH
CAROLINA

ARIZONA

WASHINGTON
D.C.

At its heart, Rooted in Joy asks a simple and radical question: **What if we told the story of climate through what we love instead of what we fear?**

Climate displacement. Food sovereignty. Frontline resilience. Indigenous land stewardship. These are not abstract policy debates—they are lived realities for Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities across the country. Rooted in Joy commissioned artists, activated communities, built movement partnerships, and distributed art into public spaces to make climate justice feel like something worth protecting—and something worth fighting for.

FIVE NARRATIVE THREADS

The campaign wove together five core themes throughout its eighteen-month arc:

Abundance & Thriving—affirming the fullness of BIPOC communities, not their deficit

Joy & Resurgence—centering celebration and cultural memory as forms of climate resilience

Liberatory Love & Hope—grounding climate justice in care, family, and ancestral wisdom

Solidarity & Interconnectedness—linking climate, labor, food, housing, and civic power

Stewardship & Collective Care—honoring relationships between people, land, and future generations



BY THE NUMBERS

The Numbers Tell Part of the Story

261K

PEOPLE REACHED DIGITALLY

19

ARTIST
PARTNERS

5.4M+

CAMPAIGN IMPRESSIONS

18

MOVEMENT
PARTNERS

45K+

ENGAGED IN PERSON

25

ACTIVATIONS &
EVENTS

19

ORIGINAL ART
COMMISSIONS

35

CAMPAIGN
VIDEOS

These numbers carry names. The 45,000+ people who encountered Rooted in Joy at a pavilion or festival or farmers market or bike ride each left with something: a print, a button, a prompt, a conversation. The 261,000 reached digitally encountered artwork designed not to scroll past but to linger. Every impression was an invitation.

** Some July 2026 platform analytics were unavailable at the time of publication and are therefore not reflected in select digital metrics.*

Fear Captures Attention. Joy Sustains Movements.

Why It Mattered

The dominant frame in climate communication has long been one of urgency and alarm rising seas, record temperatures, catastrophic loss. These facts are real. But fear, deployed alone, exhausts. It narrows imagination. It makes the future feel like something happening to us rather than something we are building together.

Rooted in Joy was built as a direct response to that exhaustion. The campaign's central proposition: people don't stay in movements because they are afraid. They stay because they have something worth protecting. The work of climate justice, done well, must look and feel like the future it is trying to build abundant, connected, joyful, alive.

The Cultural Power Narrative System that guided the campaign's architecture understood narrative not as messaging but as infrastructure. Every artist commission, every community activation, every digital story was designed to do specific work within an interconnected system: shift the emotional register of climate storytelling, expand who sees themselves in climate solutions, and build the shared cultural material that movements need to sustain themselves across time.

This is why the Black Mamas Matter Alliance adopted the framing "*Rooted in Justice & Joy*" as the centerpiece of their 2026 Black Maternal Health Week communications reaching networks far beyond the climate movement. This is likely why the New York City Department of Health used the same framing in their April 2026 communications as did the climate group Intersectional Environmentalist. When the language of a campaign travels into adjacent movements without being pushed, that is evidence of narrative power.

Climate justice is cultural power when we uplift ancestral knowledge, joy, and artistic expression, we reclaim power.

Artists as Partners

The Art & the Artists

The Center for Cultural Power does not use art as decoration for a predetermined message. Artists in the Rooted in Joy ecosystem were commissioned as partners and narrative strategists collaborators who translated complex and systemic issues into images that people could feel, carry, share, and return to.

2025 and 2026 COMMISSIONED ARTISTS & CULTURE BEARERS

Jazz Diaz (2025) — *Movement Partner: Black Zocalo*

Mayanthi Jayawardena (2025) — *Movement Partner: North Carolina Environmental Justice Network (NCEJN)*

Ash Kwak Lukashevsky (2025) — *Movement Partner: Food Access LA*

Breena Nuñez (2025) — *Movement Partner: Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN)*

Julio Salgado (2025) — *Movement Partner: Green Jobs Board*

Rob Trujillo (2025) — *Movement Partner: Movement Generation*

Kah Yangni (2025) — *Movement Partner: Push Buffalo*

Cozcon (2025) — *Movement Partner: Black Oak Collective*

Gabriela Alemán (2025) — *Movement Partner: CEJA / CEJA Action*

Alex Albadree (2025) — *Movement Partner: Feed Black Futures*

Amir Khadar (2026) — *Movement Partner: Soil Generation*

Melissa Govea (2026) — *Movement Partner: Climate Resolve*

Crisantema Gallardo (2026) — *Movement Partner: Black Zocalo*

DiyahNajah (2026) — *Movement Partner: Partnership for Southern Equity*

FKAMONI (2026) — *Movement Partner: Local Clean Energy Alliance*

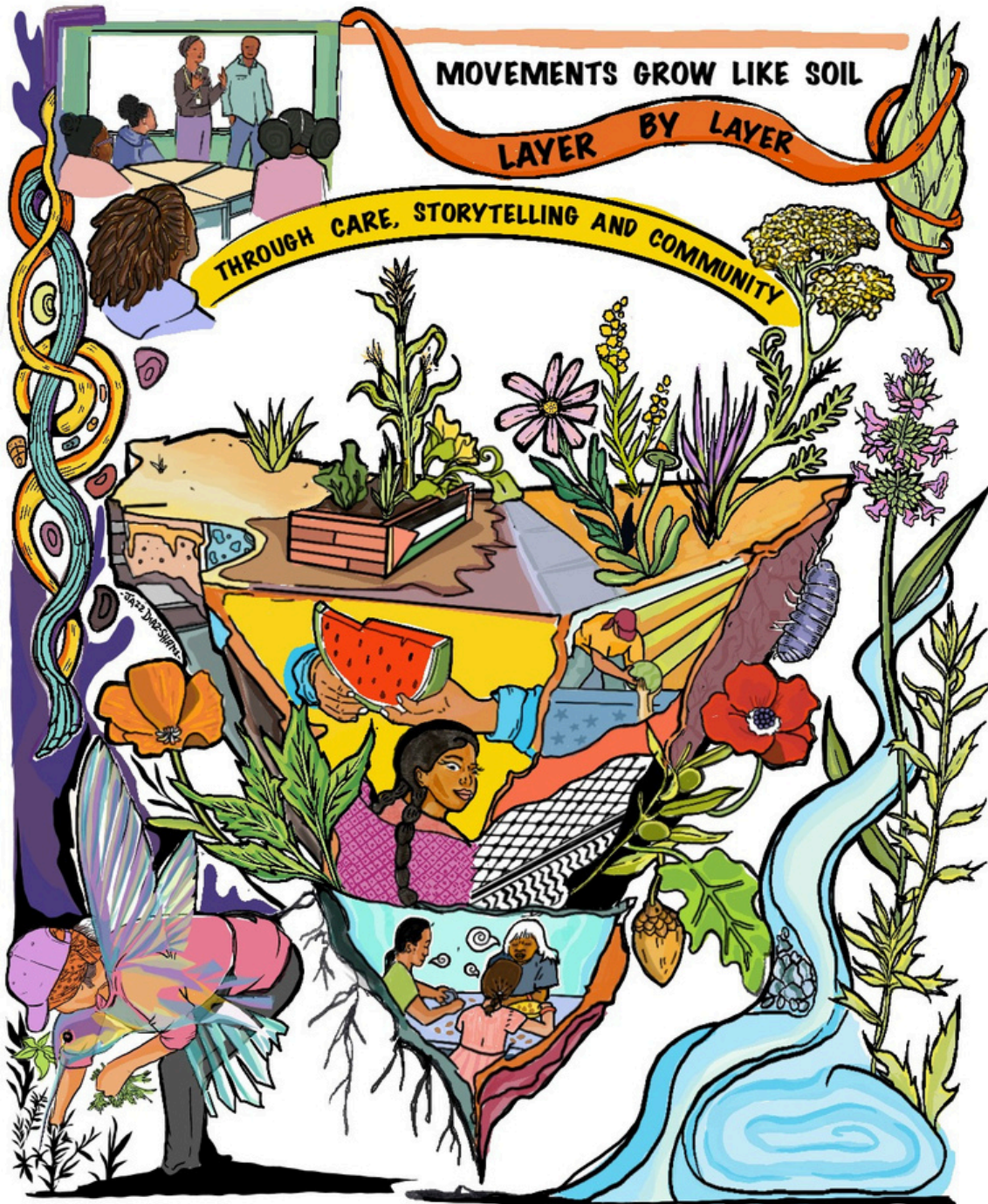
영haejin (2026) — *Movement Partner: Food Access LA*

Jason Raymond (2026) — *Movement Partner: Girl + Environment*

Orion Camero (2026) — *Movement Partner: The Callegory*

Mike Jones (2026) — *Movement Partner: Community Resource Network*

The commissions traveled literally. Art from the campaign was carried by BART riders in the Bay Area, displayed in public pavilions during Climate Week, printed in organizational newsletters, shared at farmers markets, and distributed as prints that participants took home. When you make art that belongs to people, it goes where they go.



Commissioned artwork — Jazz Diaz, "Movements Grow Like Soil," 2025 — Partner: Black Zocalo

Where Art Met Community

Campaign Highlights

From New York to the Central Valley, from Washington D.C. to Oakland, Rooted in Joy built temporary worlds places where climate justice became something you could see, touch, and carry home. These are some of the moments that defined the campaign.



The Cultural Power Ride

Manhattan · September 2025 · Climate Week NYC

In September 2025, The Center for Cultural Power partnered with Citi Bike and New York's cycling communities to bring climate justice out of the conference room and onto the streets of Manhattan. Three guided rides led by Arielle V. King, and the Cultural Power Programs Team took participants through the city's living geography of displacement, resilience, and frontline community. the city's living geography of displacement, resilience, and frontline community.

Stops along the route told a different story at every corner of NYC:

Hudson River Park / Pier 84 — honoring Lenape stewardship and the ongoing relationship between Indigenous water protectors and climate justice

Chelsea Waterside — uplifting BIPOC climate narratives in an arts district that often erases them

High Line / Gansevoort Peninsula — asking who benefits from urban transformation and what active transport means as climate action

South Street Seaport — centering immigrant frontline communities at a site where Hurricane Sandy left its mark

Harlem Piers / 125th Street — connecting the Great Migration to today's climate migration

Riverside South / 72nd Street Pier — exploring redevelopment and who gets to return after displacement

Javits Center Plaza / Hudson Yards — declaring, at Climate Week's hub, that real climate solutions are made in culture, not only in boardrooms

Columbia University / Columbia Dock — beginning and ending where education meets equity, carrying the stories of migration and resilience forward

At each stop, participants were invited to reflect, share, and carry a word forward: joy, migration, displacement, culture, resilience. The ride was not a sightseeing tour. It was a moving conversation about who this city belongs to, and who is fighting to protect it.



Green Jobs Pavilion

NYC Climate Week · September 2025 · New York
LA Climate Week · April 2026 · Los Angeles
SF Climate Week · April 2026 · San Francisco

At the Javits Center during Climate Week NYC, The Center for Cultural Power partnered with the Green Jobs Board to commission original climate justice art and create an interactive pavilion experience. Visitors were invited to engage with commissioned artwork, respond to prompts, and envision themselves in green career pathways.

The pavilion connected two things that rarely appear together in the same room: workforce equity and artistic joy. More than 200 people engaged directly at the pavilion across activations. A second pavilion at LA Climate Week in 2026 drew similar response from a new audience, as did the third event during SF Climate Week.

“The pictures emit very positive energy. I would love to see this artwork all around us! It’s so motivating.”

— Participant, Green Jobs Pavilion



Green Jobs Board Pavilion, NYC Climate Week, New York, 2025 – The Center for Cultural Power

The Art of Disruption

CultureCon · October 2025 · New York

CultureCon is one of the largest cultural gatherings for Black and Brown creatives in the country, drawing more than 10,000 attendees over two days. The Center for Cultural Power built something different inside it: a space designed not to compete with the event's energy, but to offer a meaningful contrast.

The Art of Disruption was a mindful, immersive coloring and viewing experience a space where visitors could sit, breathe, interact with commissioned artwork, and learn about the artists behind it. In an environment of constant stimulation, this activation offered something rarer: stillness. The invitation was to slow down, pick up a colored pencil, and let climate justice land differently.

More than 160 people completed a survey during this activation an exceptionally high completion rate for an event of this scale. Many first-time visitors to Rooted in Joy content became aware of the campaign through this experience. CultureCon 2025 counted as both a Rooted in Joy and Autonomy Is My Joy activation, reflecting the interconnected nature of The Center for Cultural Power's campaign portfolio.

“So much of CultureCon is about showing up big, and we did, but differently. We offered a reprieve. A space where people could slow down, color, breathe, and connect advocacy with creativity.”

— Krystle Edwards



Art of Disruption activation, CultureCon, New York, October 2025 — The Center for Cultural Power

From BART to the Nation

Media & More Campaign Moments

BART & National Paid Media

Bay Area & National · December 2025 – April 2026

In partnership with Dissent Media Group, Rooted in Joy launched a two-phase paid media campaign that brought commissioned artwork into physical and digital public spaces nationwide.

Phase 1 transformed the Bay Area Rapid Transit system into a gallery of BIPOC climate art. Artwork by Rob Trujillo, Mayanthi Jayawardena, Julio Salgado, Jazz Diaz, and Kah Yangni appeared in stations and on trains, reaching commuters across the region and overdelivering by 75% against the target impression volume.

Phase 2 expanded nationally across seven markets: Central Valley (CA), Washington D.C., North Carolina, Arizona, New York, and the Bay Area during San Francisco Climate Week. The campaign reached more than 5.4 million impressions on a \$39,000 budget demonstrating how a modest investment in BIPOC-created climate art can generate national visibility in the geographies where these narratives matter most.



*Rooted in Joy BART station art display, Bay Area, December 2025 —
Artist from left to right: Robert Trujillo, Kah Yangni, Julio Salgado, and Jazz Diaz
Image from Dissent Media Group*

MORE CAMPAIGN MOMENTS

Campaign activities spanned 25 activations across California, New York, Texas, North Carolina, and Washington D.C., including:

BIPOC Climate Justice Summit

September 2025 · New York

Feed Black Futures Autumn Equinox

September 2025 · New York

APEN Lincoln Summer Nights

October 2025 · California

Life Is Living Festival, Youth Speaks

October 2025 · California

AfroTech x BLD PWR x BAJI

October 2025 · Texas

Long Beach Forward Workshop

November 2025 · California

ORALE Workshop

November 2025 · California

LA River Farmers' Market, Food Access LA

November 2025 · California

Climate&Conflict, The Peace Department

September 2025 · New York

Central Valley Activation, The Callegory

December 2025 · California

Just Economy Conference

April 14–15, 2026 · Washington D.C.

LA Climate Week

2026 · California

SF Climate Week

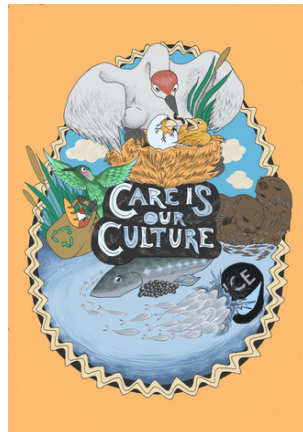
2026 · California

DC Climate Week

2026 · Washington D.C.

Movement Generation Winter Newsletter

2025–2026 · Featuring Rob Trujillo's commission



Rooted in Joy Commissioned artwork, Care is our Culture, Orion Camero, 2026, for partner The Callegory

When the Language Travels

Narrative in Motion

Sometimes the strongest evidence of a narrative campaign's impact is not a click or an impression it is the moment when language you helped create begins to live in the world without you.

In April 2026, during Black Maternal Health Week, the Black Mamas Matter Alliance, one of the country's most respected organizations in the maternal health movement, centered its national communications around the theme: "Rooted in Justice & Joy."

The framing was not a coincidence. It was an adoption a testament to the way Rooted in Joy's language had traveled across movement silos, from climate justice into reproductive and maternal justice.

That same week, the New York City Department of Health used the same framing in their Black Maternal Health Week communications confirmed through April 2026 social media documentation.

This is what narrative infrastructure looks like in practice. A campaign generates not just content but a shared language a set of images, phrases, and frameworks that other movements can pick up, use, and make their own. When joy becomes the shared vocabulary of multiple justice movements at once, something larger than any single campaign is happening.

The framing didn't travel because it was pushed. It traveled because it was true and because it gave other movements a language to name something they had already been feeling.



Black Mamas Matter Alliance "Rooted in Justice & Joy" communications, Black Maternal Health Week, April 2026, & Intersectional Environmentalist, December 2025

Joy is preserving culture in the face of displacement. Joy is the courage to imagine a future that does not yet exist.

The Organizations That Made This Possible

Movement Partners

Rooted in Joy was not a campaign delivered to communities. It was built with them. The 18 movement partners who joined this ecosystem brought their audiences, their trust, their deep roots in specific communities and geographies, and their willingness to try something different: climate justice told through art, cultural memory, and joy.

Asian Pacific Environmental Network

Black Girl Environmentalist

Black Zocalo

BlackOak Collective

CEJA / CEJA Action

Climate Resolve

Feed Black Futures

Food Access LA

Girl Plus Environment

Green Jobs Board

Local Clean Energy Alliance

Movement Generation

National Community Reinvestment Coalition

North Carolina Environmental Justice Network

PUSH Buffalo

Soil Generation

The Callegory

The Solutions Project

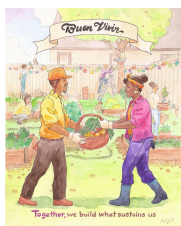
Each partner brought Rooted in Joy into spaces The Center for Cultural Power could not reach alone: farmworker communities in the Central Valley, Indigenous-led climate networks, BIPOC tech gatherings, neighborhood farmers markets, and frontline climate summits. The artwork traveled because the relationships made it welcome.



Autumn Equinox Activation, by Feed Black Futures, Oakland, 2025 – The Center for Cultural Power

What Joy Makes Possible

Reimagining Climate Justice Through Art & Storytelling



Rooted in Joy commissioned artwork, 2025–2026 - Artists from left to right: Robert Trujillo, Julio Salgado, Cozcon, Alex Albadree, Breena Nuñez, Ash Kwak Lukashevsky

What does it mean to build a climate campaign grounded in joy? It means trusting that communities already know what they are fighting for because they live there, grow food there, raise children there, and remember what the land looked like before the floodwaters came. It means using art not as a tool of persuasion but as an act of recognition: you are here, you belong here, and what you are protecting matters.

Over eighteen months, Rooted in Joy built something that is harder to measure but easier to feel: a growing ecosystem of artists, organizations, and community members who share a common language about what climate justice looks, feels, and sounds like. That ecosystem does not disappear when a campaign ends. It produces newsletters and murals and workshops and voter-registration drives long after any formal partnership has closed.

The framing traveled. The art was carried home. The language was borrowed by adjacent movements. And somewhere, in a Green Jobs Pavilion in Manhattan or a farmers market in Los Angeles or a BART station in Oakland, someone stopped in front of a print, read the words, and let themselves imagine for just a moment that the future was worth fighting for.

That is what joy makes possible.

Joy is preserving culture in the face of displacement. Joy is the courage to imagine a future that does not yet exist.

With Gratitude

Acknowledgements

Rooted in Joy was made possible by the artists, movement partners, community participants, and organizational staff who showed up for this work with creativity, care, and commitment. Our deepest thanks to everyone who gave their time, talent, and trust to this campaign.

THE CENTER FOR CULTURAL POWER TEAM

Krystle Edwards • Alexis Posey • Aisha Goss • Eryn Wise, Melanie Meinzer • Maud Alcorn • The Programs Team • Operations Team and Finance Team

ARTISTS & CULTURE BEARERS

Amir Khadar • Ash Kwak Lukashevsky • Breena Nuñez • Crisantema Gallardo • DiyahNajah • Orion Camero FKAMONI • 이방Haejin • Jason Raymond • Jazz Diaz • Julio Salgado • Kah Yangni • Mayanthi Jayawardena • Melissa Govea • Rob Trujillo • Mike Jones • Cozcon • Alex Albadree • Gabriela Alemán

MOVEMENT PARTNERS

APEN • Black Girl Environmentalist • Black Zocalo • BlackOak Collective • CEJA / CEJA Action • Climate Resolve • Feed Black Futures • Food Access LA • Girl Plus Environment • Green Jobs Board • Local Clean Energy Alliance • Movement Generation • National Community Reinvestment Coalition • North Carolina Environmental Justice Network • PUSH Buffalo • Soil Generation • The Callegory • The Solutions Project

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS & MEDIA PARTNERS

Dissent Media Group • The Live Wire Agency • Gazelle Media • Kayla Kosaki

Thank you to every community member who picked up a button, colored a page, signed a mural, or rode the river with us. This belongs to you.



Rooted in Joy is a campaign of The Center for Cultural Power | Reporting period: January 1, 2025 – July 31, 2026. | Some July 2026 platform analytics were unavailable at the time of publication and are therefore not reflected in select digital metrics.