What are traditional arts?

Traditional artists are tradition bearers: people who transmit what they believe, know, do, and create with others who share a common heritage, language, religion, occupation, or region. These expressions are deeply rooted in and reflective of a community’s shared standards of beauty, values, or life experiences. Folk and traditional arts are, ultimately, passed on from one generation to the next and express a collective wisdom, rather than a unique personal aesthetic.
20 years, statewide, 3 regional offices

• invested $5.2 million into the folk and traditional arts field
• awarded grants to 590 traditional arts organizations
• supported 314 master artists and their apprentices
• worked in 50 of California’s 58 counties

• served 17 state prisons with our Arts in Corrections traditional arts workshops
Placemaking Placekeeping
Honoring Culture

(The interior dialogue of the program manager or the wallpaper of neurons sparking...)

What is culture; what is tradition, what is ethnic, what is community, who’s an immigrant, who’s a refugee, who’s in power, who is at the table? In-group, out-group, emic, etic, power structure, disruption, cross-culture, multi-cultural, endangerment, narratives, intangible treasure, forgotten histories, engagement, rubric, impact, evaluation, qualitative, quantitative, privacy, fatigue, over-think, anger, policy, lack of funds, lack of funds, lack of funds, deadline, taste-makers, aesthetics, curation, colonial mentality, privilege, zip code, languages, grid, technology, access, profound, heartbreaking beauty, love, hope, renewal, ways of knowing, vulnerability
Placemaking – Home; Memory; Exile
Diaspora as the locus for tradition keepers
Ways of knowing + Ways of belonging
How is leadership negotiated in a collective?
Traditional arts practice is a political act
To be traditional is to be political: environmentalists, storytellers, linguists
Diversity is also aesthetic diversity
The tyranny of “new work” can exclude many cultural communities
The work is slow and the work has to have a long view
Our California reality provides the opportunity to lead with empathy.