

a blade of grass
nurtures socially engaged art

NAME OF APPLICANT: Joseph Cuillier

Inspired by the Freedom Schools of "Freedom Summer" in 1964, The New Freedom School Journal is an experimental artist's magazine that will use art to educate students on how to become radical agents of social and political change specifically to combat anti-Black racism. The journal will be the first step in the creation of an art initiative that will serve as an alternative to the traditional 19th-Century factory-model for the school. By acknowledging the social role of art and activism in community building the journal seeks to demonstrate the ideal that artists are valuable assets to our communities with the capacity to transform our lives and the lives of people around us. The goal of the NFSJ is to explore how Black Radical artistic practice can be used not only to highlight problems such as the omission of Black contributions in contemporary curricula, and political issues like school re-segregation and the school-to-prison pipeline, but also offer solutions through pedagogical art practices. By establishing a platform for art, poetry, interviews, essays, articles, and course curricula on radical Black thought I will reimagine education as a revolutionary practice of freedom. The theme of the first issue will be "manifestos". Artists, activists, academics, students, educators, designers, writers, poets, curators, and creative practitioners are encouraged to propose ways to engage with idea of creating a manifesto for the Black school today.

The target audience for NFSJ is students and educators teaching in PoC schools. The publication intends to fill a void for educators who not only believe the traditional factory system of education is broken, but broken beyond repair and the answer isn't to equip students to integrate, but instead total dissolution of the system and the creation of a new system based on equity and innovation. I will do community outreach that will utilize social media, email listservs, the project website (newfreedomsschool.org), physical community spaces such as local schools (Boys and Girls High School), after school programs, community centers, and nonprofit organizations. I will also work through my extended network of contributors to spread awareness of the publication and related programming such as workshops and public events.

I believe beauty is a basic service, therefore, I intend to utilize this publication to serve as a practical resource for educators in my community as well as a beautiful object. Utilizing my years of academic and professional practice and my extended network of talented and accomplished Black, POC, and queer artists, writers, activists, and educators in the fields of writing, design, and publishing I will edit, design, print, and publish the publication and online curricular archive over the course of one year through the use of fine art printing and bookbinding and web design.

My primary collaborators will include artists and art educators Shani Peters and Kameelah Janan Rasheed and the administrators at the Boys and Girls High School. I have also created an open call for submissions that I will circulate through my extended network of artists, educators, and activists.