

# A Call to Action for Cultural Equity: *Voices from the Cultural Battlefront's* Los Angeles Forum



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**Wednesday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008 – 1 to 6 pm with reception celebrating cultural equity directly following, location in Los Angeles to be announced**

**Thursday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2008 – 1:30 to 4:00 pm at Imagining America's national conference at University of Southern California**

*Voices from the Cultural Battlefront: Organizing for Equity* is an ongoing 20-year international conversation organized by the Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute about the role of art and culture in the struggle for human rights and a healthy natural environment. The book, *Voices from the Battlefront: Achieving Cultural Equity* (Africa World Press, 1993), documents the spirit and thinking of these initial international discussions about cultural equity. It is a premise of the book that just as W.E.B. Dubois correctly predicted the color line would be a defining issue of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the struggle for cultural equity will be a defining issue of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Defining culture as the distinct intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and material traditions and features of a people or society, *Voices* is dedicated to the proposition that all cultures have an equal right to self-expression and to resources for development.

The *Voices* Call to Action at Imagining America will bring together Los Angeles artists and activists, conference participants, and *Voices* national leaders to share knowledge, to build relationships, and to develop Actions for cultural equity in participants' home communities and in higher education. *Voices'* national leaders planning to attend the Los Angeles forum include **Marta Moreno Vega, Dudley Cocke, Jack (John Kuo Wei) Tchen, Caron Atlas, Carlton Turner, Kalamu ya Salaam, Melody Capote, and Jamie Haft**. LA organizers include **Bernardo Rosa-Lugo Jr., James V. Burks, and Olga Garay**. The older of these leaders began their activist work during the civil rights movement and subsequently founded cultural organizations that joined art to the struggle for social justice.

To begin the discussion about cultural equity, *Voices* postulates that there now exists a form of hyper-capitalism that puts the demands of the free market before a people's spiritual, intellectual, and emotional well-being. Topics to be discussed include the potential for campus partnerships with existing community-based cultural organizations, and how cultural equity can be advanced by the democratic purposes of the arts, humanities, and design.