

THE FUTURE IS IN THE LOBBY



SOW

WHO GET'S TO WORK IN
NYC'S CREATIVE INDUSTRY

2026

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INTRODUCTION



THE FUTURE IS IN THE LOBBY

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**“ ON PAPER, I’M NOT THE
PROBLEM. BUT AFTER SO
MANY REJECTIONS, OR
JUST SILENCE, IT FEELS
LIKE TALKING TO A BLANK
WALL. EVENTUALLY, YOU
START TO THINK:
IS IT ME?”**

ISIS DEARLOVE
SOW MEMBER



For Dearlove, a 25-year-old Jamaican and Haitian writer from Brooklyn, that question has defined the past year of her career. Over the course of a year she applied to more than 100 full-time roles in media, communications, and brand strategy. Six led to interviews. Most applications received no response, and none resulted in an offer.

“I have the qualifications for these roles, and in some cases, I’m overqualified,” she says. “But I’m either not hearing anything back or being told I lack experience.”

Dearlove graduated from Bard College with a degree in Literature and Africana Studies. She had been awarded a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship for independent international research, but the COVID-19 pandemic delayed her plans. In the interim, she pivoted to media production and publishing, writing copy and producing for companies including BOMB Magazine, The Kitchen, and Team Design Studio. It was during this period that she found her way to Scope Of Work (SOW), a New York City-based organization that supports emerging creatives of color pursuing careers in the creative industries. In 2024, Dearlove resumed her fellowship, traveling across Europe, Africa, and Asia to study the globalization of Black American culture. But when she returned to New York City, that momentum did not translate into stable employment.

“The past year has felt like a plateau in my career,” she says. “I’ve definitely thought about money a lot more than I have before—I’m thinking about groceries, basic living expenses, and in the back of my mind, I know I’m about to lose my health insurance.”

Dearlove's experience is not an isolated case. Scope Of Work, which supports 150 Black, Indigenous and people of color creatives ages 17-24 annually, has documented a collapse in employment opportunity across its hundreds of members and alumni over the last two years.

In February 2026, SOW conducted a Community Assessment survey of 201 members and alumni ages 18-30. Respondents span a range of disciplines: photography, film, graphic design, illustration, writing, fashion, and animation, with most identifying as interdisciplinary creatives. Many have experience across advertising, publishing, media, and working in-house at corporations. **Their responses revealed a central demand: access—to jobs, to capital, and to the relationships that shape entry into the industry. Nearly half of the respondents identified job placement and freelance opportunities as their most urgent need.**

As the SOW community searches for work, creative employment across New York City has shrunk. According to a 2025 report by the Center for an Urban Future (CUF), the overall number of people working in New York City's creative economy has declined by 6.1% since 2019.

For those who manage to secure employment, the financial reality is increasingly precarious. The CUF report found that creative workers in New York earn 23% less than the national average after adjusting for the city's rising cost of living. This wage gap has widened significantly from 15% just a decade ago.

The widening gap between preparation and employment reflects a market that is failing its emerging talent. This report argues that this failure stems not from a lack of talent, but from a structural mismatch between creative labor and the conditions required to sustain it. The stakes extend beyond individual careers. The cultural and creative future of New York City is at risk.



ABOUT THIS REPORT

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This report arrives at a critical moment. Scope Of Work has lost funding and paused its programming at a time when the community it was built to serve grapples with the compounding challenges jeopardizing their futures. This moment is critical not only for Scope Of Work and its community, but for New York City's creative economy as a whole.

What follows draws on SOW's eight years of working directly with New York City's creatives of color, including data collected through surveys, interviews, and research.

This report also presents findings from The Center for an Urban Future (CUF), a leading think tank focused on building a stronger and more equitable economy in New York City. Creative New York 2025 is the Center's third report documenting the economic and cultural impact of New York City's artists, cultural organizations, and for-profit creative industries. It documents the current state of the City's creative sector and confirms the lived reality of creatives within Scope Of Work's community.

Together, this report documents the conditions facing New York City's creative sector in 2026. Without targeted intervention, these patterns will continue to dictate who can enter, and who remains in the city's creative sector.



ABOUT SCOPE OF WORK

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Between 2005 and 2020, New York City's creative industries expanded significantly. According to CUF, film and television grew by 113.7%, visual arts by 95.7%, and advertising by 46.1%. Despite this expansion, growth did not create access. In 2015, only 29 percent of New Yorkers employed in creative occupations were non-white (CUF).

In November of 2016, Geneva White and Eda Levenson — artists and educators of color with over a decade of experience in youth development and arts education — co-founded Scope Of Work to address what they saw clearly: a creative sector full of opportunity that remained structurally inaccessible to the young people of color who call New York City home.



GENEVA WHITE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CO-FOUNDER,
SCOPE OF WORK

Since its inception, SOW has supported more than 430 BIPOC creatives ages 17 to 24 through a model built around three interconnected needs.

1

THE SKILLS TO COMPETE



2

THE NETWORKS TO GET IN THE DOOR



3

THE OPPORTUNITIES NECESSARY TO JUMP-START A CAREER





In 2019, New York City's creative workforce reached a new height. Nearly 350,000 people working across film, advertising, design, the performing arts, and beyond (CUF, 2025).

Scope Of Work took advantage of that momentum. Applications to join the organization doubled.

The Fellowship program grew. And for the first time, a major independent advertising agency, Mother New York, signed on as a partner, signaling that the industry was beginning to take notice. The sector was at its peak. SOW was growing into it.

In March 2020, the Covid-19 global pandemic forced the nation into lockdown. SOW quickly began to meet on Zoom and held weekly virtual office hours to stay connected to its members.

THE RECKONING & THE REALITY



PAGES 12 — 16

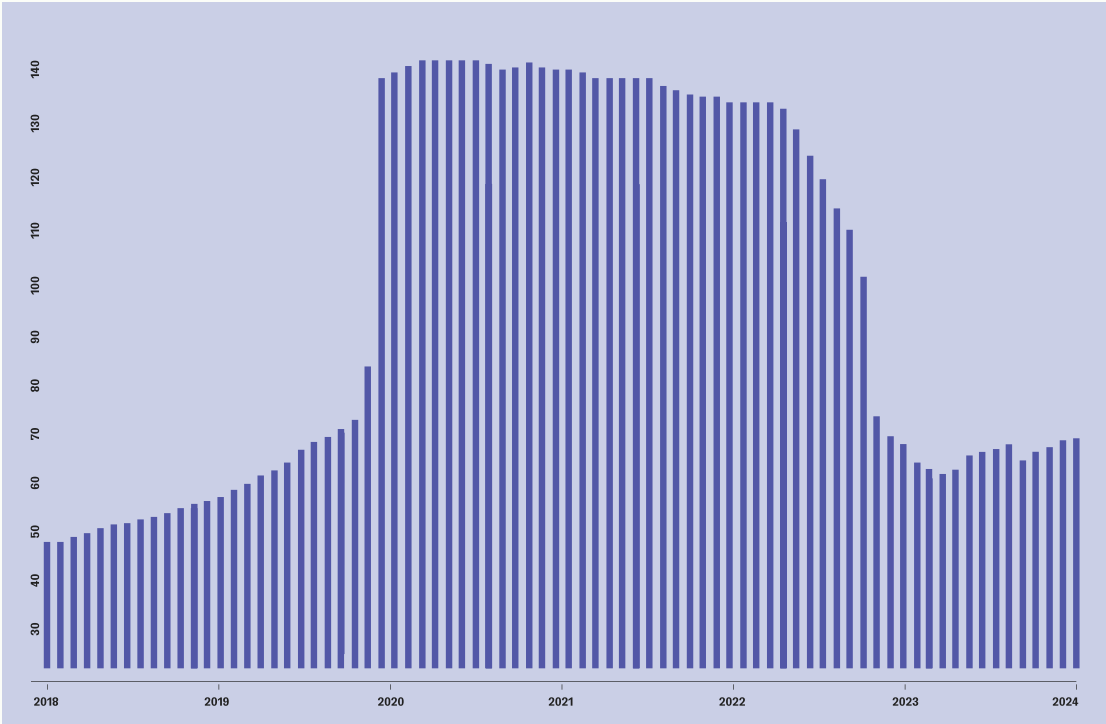
THE FUTURE IS IN THE LOBBY

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd was murdered by a Minneapolis police officer, sparking a nationwide racial reckoning that swept through corporations, brands, and the creative sector.

On June 2, 2020, over 950 major brands and corporations, including Apple, Spotify, Amazon, and Nike, posted black squares on social media to show solidarity with the Black community. Within weeks, America's 50 largest public companies and their foundations collectively committed at least \$49.5 billion to addressing racial inequality. (Washington Post, 2021)

For a moment, it appeared that the scale of public commitment would translate into real support for New York City's young BIPOC creatives. Scope Of Work saw a surge of outreach unlike anything the organization had experienced before. In the months that followed, SOW received a 74% increase in funding and donations from the year prior.

Over the course of the following year, income generated for SOW's community through the Talent Agency and Fellowship nearly doubled. By 2023, that income had dropped by 78%.





In 2023, the media and entertainment industry cut more than 21,000 jobs nationally, a fivefold increase from the year prior. (Forbes, 2023) Major outlets including Vox, NPR, BuzzFeed News, and Condé Nast all made significant cuts. In New York City, the simultaneous actors' and writers' strikes, which lasted nearly four months, compounded the damage. SOW felt the decline as corporate partnerships steadily dwindled.

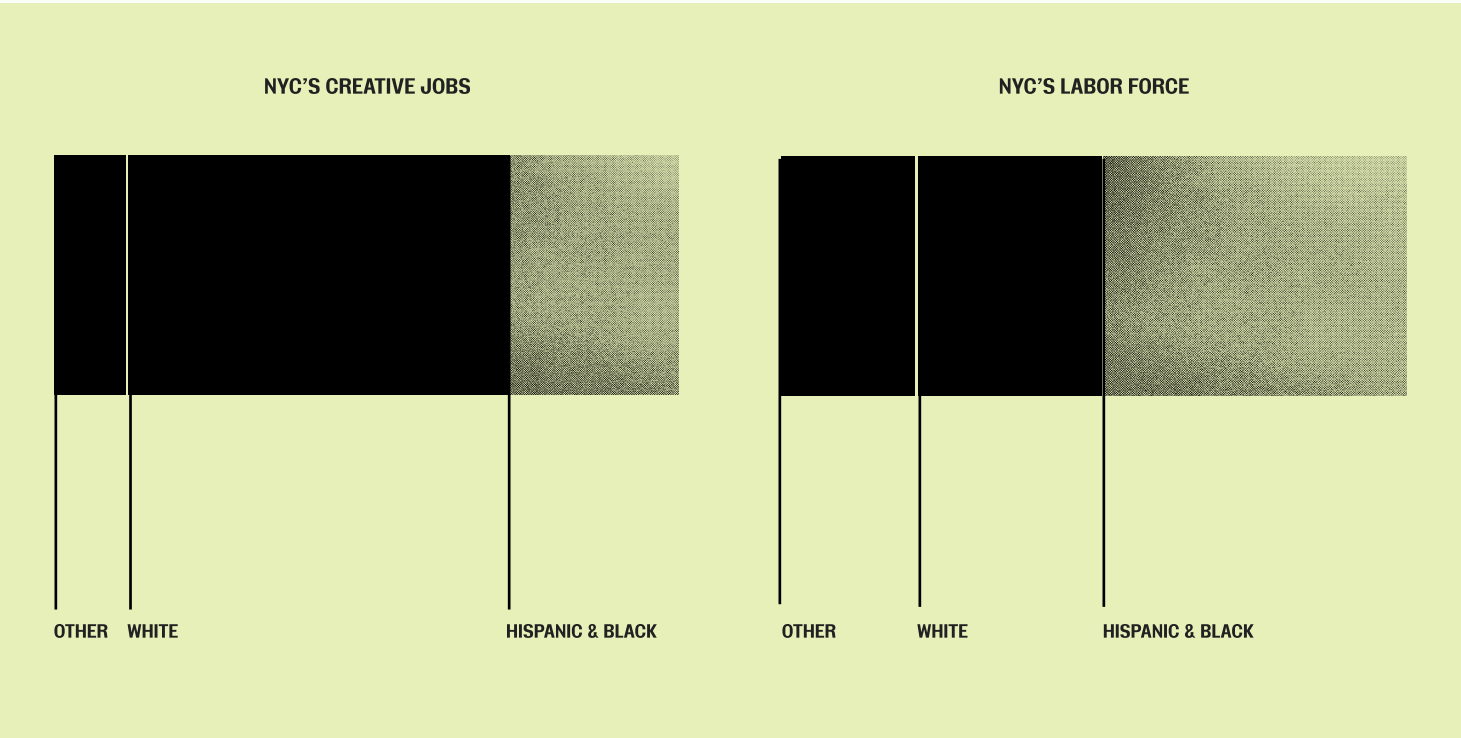
Jonathan Jackson is the Principal and Co-Founder of WeShouldDoltAll, a Black-owned design studio, and a long-term partner of SOW. Over the years, WeShouldDoltAll has hosted four SOW Fellows, two of whom were brought on as full-time staff, and hired an additional team member through Scope Of Work's Talent Agency.

“EVERYONE WAS THROWING UP BLACK SQUARES AND MONEY AT BLACK CREATIVES. IT WAS A MIRAGE. THE REAL MISTAKE WAS THAT NOT ENOUGH MONEY WAS PUT TOWARDS REAL INFRASTRUCTURE. IT NEEDED TO MAINTAIN A CERTAIN LEVEL OF GROWTH.”

JONATHAN JACKSON
PRINCIPAL AND CO-FOUNDER,
WESHOULDDOITALL

From 2013 to 2023, the share of Black workers in the creative sector declined by 1.9% and Hispanic and Asian workers rose by only 0.7% and 1.8% respectively. (CUF, 2025). A decade marked by a 'racial reckoning' still resulted in little to no change. The promises made in 2020 have not been upheld. In many cases, they have been actively unraveled.

By 2025, it had gone back to what it was. And then some. Creative workers were contending with a contracting job market and increasingly unstable economy characterized by hiring freezes, budget cuts, and the active dismantling of corporate DEI departments. As of 2025, white workers hold 61.5% of creative industry jobs in New York City. This compares to 11.8% for Black workers and 14.1% for Hispanic workers in a city where Black and Hispanic New Yorkers together make up nearly half of the labor force. (CUF, 2025).



For the last 8 years, Scope Of Work has helped open the door to creative careers for hundreds of New York City's young people. Of the 201 Members and Alumni who responded to the 2026 Community Assessment survey, SOW found that for every respondent working full time in their creative field, four others are still in pursuit of stable work.

Today, these creatives find themselves in the lobby, restless, exposed, and powerless, having done everything asked of them, waiting for their names to be called up.

WHAT CHANGED

THE FUTURE IS IN THE LOBBY

&

WHAT DIDN'T

PAGES

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Automating The Entry Level

Jobs That
Don't Exist

Promises That
Didn't Hold

Entry-level creative roles are disappearing. As companies adopt AI tools to automate tasks once performed by junior workers, the first rung of the career ladder is being removed. The World Economic Forum identifies graphic design as among the fastest-declining jobs by 2030. (Creative Boom, 2025)

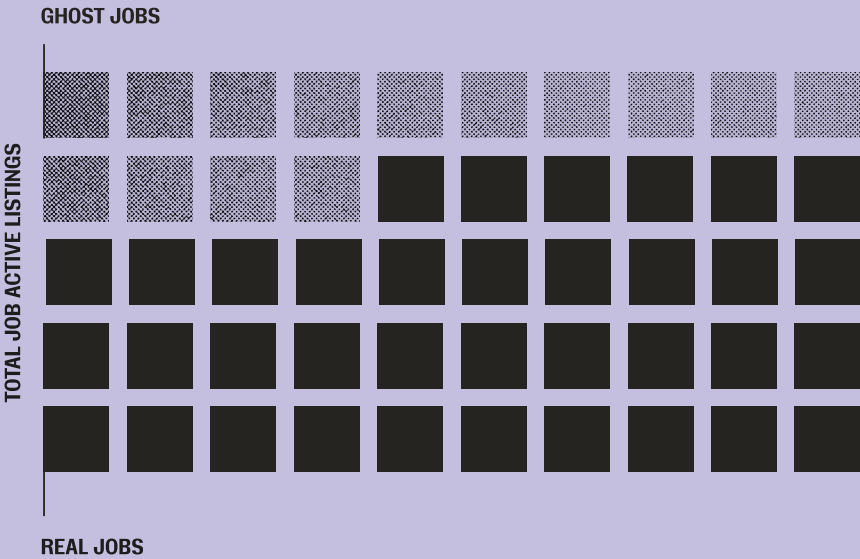
“The way you make a senior employee is not through school,” says Matt Beane, a leading AI researcher. **“It’s by doing the job alongside someone who knows more, and you learn by doing. And that’s where the bulk of our skill comes from.”** (CNBC, 2025) When those junior roles disappear, so does the pipeline that turns the emerging talent into the experienced creative professionals.

Automating
The Entry Level

Jobs That
Don't Exist

Promises That
Didn't Hold

The job market itself is not what it appears. In 2026, an estimated 27% of all active job listings on LinkedIn are ghost jobs; positions posted with no real intention of hiring. (Entrepreneur, 2025) In New York City alone, there are an estimated 23,000 ghost job listings at any given time. For young creatives who are qualified, eager, and ready to work, the opportunities are no longer just hard to come by, they are imaginary.



Automating The Entry Level

Jobs That Don't Exist

Promises That Didn't Hold

The commitments made in 2020 are not just broken. They are being dismantled. Following a thread of backlash on affirmative action in 2023, the Trump administration characterized DEI programs as “illegal and immoral discrimination programs.” The impact was immediate — corporate DEI departments began shutting down, partnerships and funding dissolved, and pledges quietly disappeared.

The language went first. The hiring followed. By July 2025, Black un-employment had climbed to 7.2%, its highest level in nearly five years.

Alixandra Matos, 27, is a second generation Puerto-Rican and Peruvian art director and SOW Alumni from Long Island, New York. She participated in SOW's Fellowship at a global sportswear company in 2022. They hired her full time as Brand Communications Specialist after the program, and has now been with the company for four years. **“I'm the last intern that ever got hired. Since me, there hasn't been a single one.”** Matos shared.

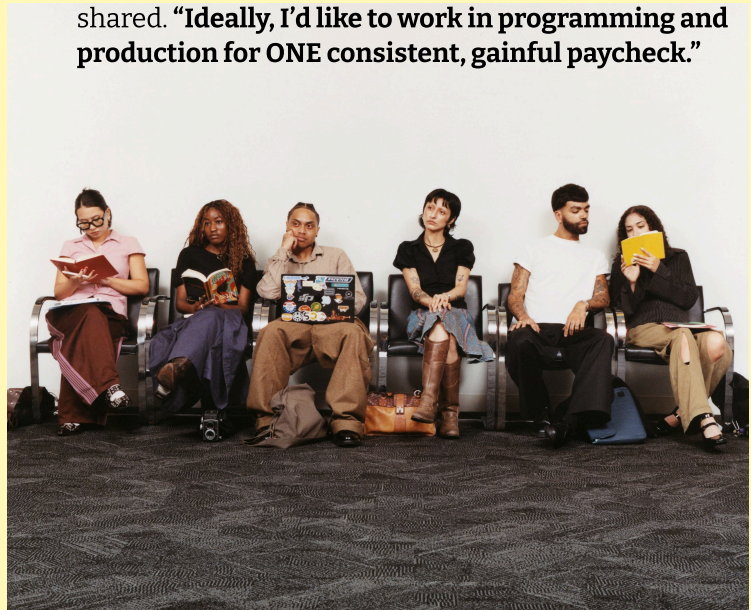
Automating The Entry Level

Jobs That Don't Exist

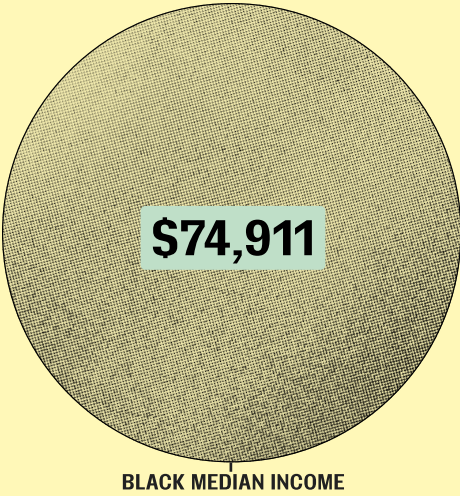
Promises That Didn't Hold

Ky'Naisha Severe, 28, is a writer, multi-disciplinary artist, and SOW Alumni from the Bronx, witnessing the shifting landscape from the outside. **"As a Black woman, I am really experiencing the effects of DEI cuts in real time."** Severe shared.

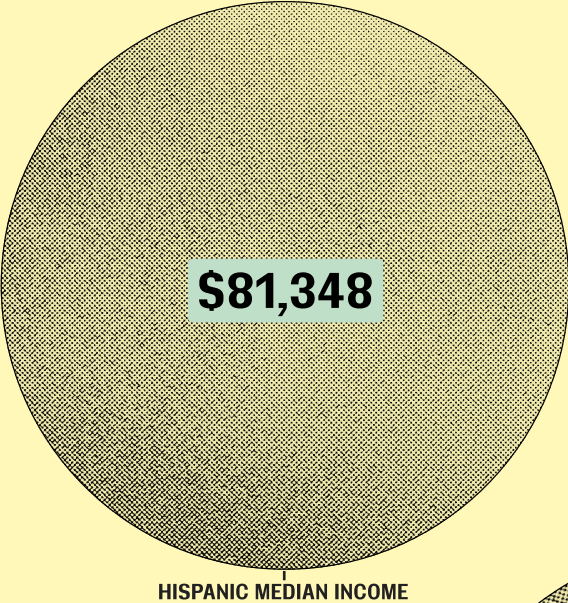
"I'm struggling to maintain stable employment without having to work more than one job." Severe shared. **"Ideally, I'd like to work in programming and production for ONE consistent, gainful paycheck."**



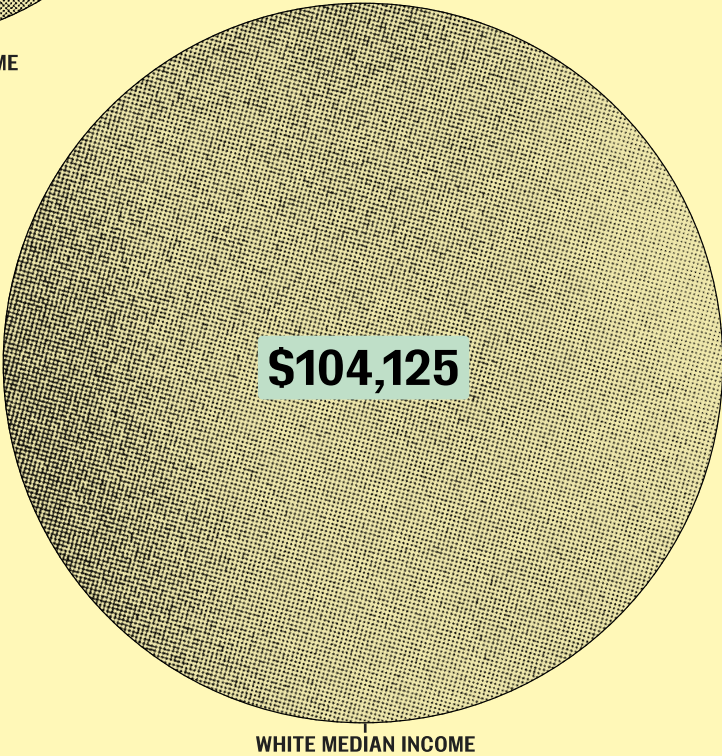
CUF found that across the creative sector broadly, white artists earn an average of \$61,121, while nonwhite artists earn \$44,586 (CUF, 2025). More specifically, in advertising, the median white worker earns \$104,125. That is 39% more than Black workers and 28% more than Hispanic workers.



BLACK MEDIAN INCOME



HISPANIC MEDIAN INCOME



WHITE MEDIAN INCOME

FREELANCING FOR NOW



PAGES 23 — 26

THE FUTURE IS IN THE LOBBY

Across New York City's creative economy, freelance work has shifted from supplemental income to a dominant entry point into the industry. What was once a transitional or auxiliary form of labor now increasingly functions as the primary structure through which early-career creatives access employment.

In 2019, New York City's Freelancing in New York study estimated that 34% of the city's workforce — approximately 1.3 million people — had engaged in freelance work within the previous year. Within media and entertainment specifically, that share rose significantly, with 61% of workers reporting freelance work. The report also noted that nearly half of recent graduates (46%) entered the job market through freelance or contract-based work, signaling a generational shift in how creative labor is first accessed.

Daleelah Saleh, 24, is an Arab American multidisciplinary artist and SOW Member from Queens. After graduating Middlebury College in 2023 with a degree in Film and Media Studies, she entered New York City's media sector through a competitive internship at WNYC. Though she hoped to be hired full-time, WNYC instead offered freelance work amid widespread media layoffs. Despite her prestigious liberal arts college, freelancing felt unfamiliar to her.

“No one ever mentioned freelancing,” Saleh says. “It shows that you can go to one of the top schools for the thing you want to do, and you still aren't getting the resources that you need.”

In the fall of 2024, Saleh joined Scope Of Work. Like many emerging creatives, she joined with a desire to turn her lifelong creative hobbies into a serious profession, but without the industry knowledge to understand what being a freelancer actually meant.

“I don't know if I would have thought it was sustainable to do freelance or to be creative if not for the professional development through SOW,” Saleh shared.

New York City had the largest freelancer population of any major US metro in 2024, with nearly 590,000 skilled independent workers. (Fiverr Freelancer Economic Impact Report, 2025) But the growth is not a reflection of expanding opportunity. Following the corporate restructuring of 2023 and 2024, 69% of employers hired freelancers specifically to fill gaps left by full-time staff rather than rebuild headcount, and over 99% plan to continue doing so. (Fiverr, 2025) The rise of freelancing is not a boom. It is a transfer of risk from employers to workers.

In response to SOW's Community Assessment survey, 25.5% of respondents reported relying on freelance or project-based work as their primary form of employment, even when continuing to seek full-time creative roles. The challenges they named were consistent: unpredictable income, lack of benefits, and the constant pressure to compete.

Luna Alatorre, 26, is a Mexican photographer, graphic designer, and art director who joined SOW in 2019. Over the past year she has balanced retail work with pursuing paid creative opportunities, and is currently freelancing at Teen Vogue.



**“ MY CHOICE TO FREELANCE
WAS BORN OUT OF FAILURE
AND I THINK THAT'S THE
CASE FOR MANY PEOPLE.
IT'S LIKE YOU'RE CHASING
AFTER STABILITY, A
SALARY, AND YOU FIND
YOURSELF HAVING TO DO
THIS FOR SOME SORT OF
SURVIVAL.”**

LUNA ALATORRE
SOW ALUMNI

COMPOUNDING TOLL



PAGES 27 — 29

THE FUTURE IS IN THE LOBBY

The barriers documented in this report do not arrive one at a time. For the young creatives navigating a contracting job market, a broken hiring system, and the collapse of institutional promises simultaneously, the toll is cumulative and it is personal.

Within SOW's survey, more than 1 in 5 respondents described experiences of frustration, exhaustion, shame, or loss of direction. And yet, most are still creating — making work, updating their portfolios, willing their names to be called.

Matthew Beeston, 24, is a Black fashion and graphic designer and current SOW Member from Brooklyn, at the tail end of his studies at Parsons School of Design. Despite five years of experience, he's juggling two part-time roles while also producing his own ready-to-wear collection.

“ I CANNOT KEEP SEWING UNDER THE CONSTANT PRESSURE OF BARELY GETTING BY FINANCIALLY THE WAY I HAVE HAD TO FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS. THE SHAME HAS STARTED TO CATCH UP WITH ME.”

MATTHEW BEESTON
SOW ALUMNI

The emotional toll of this moment takes different shapes: for some it's shame, for others, the exhaustion of constant self-promotion.

Laila AnnMarie Stevens, 25, is a SOW Alumni and photojournalist from Queens whose work has been featured in The New York Times, National Geographic, and Cultured Magazine, among others. She joined SOW in high school and participated annually until aging out at 24. Last year, she left a full-time social media and communications role to freelance full-time.

“I feel spiritually drained by always feeling like I need to say, please, this is the reason why you should hire me. This constant pitching of myself has felt depleting,” Stevens shared. The question of sustainability is becoming as urgent as the question of access.

Alison Mei, 24, is an Asian filmmaker and SOW Alumni from Long Island, New York. Mei graduated from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, where she earned a BFA in Film and Television. Despite her degree and hands-on production experience, she currently works as a barista and takes on temp jobs outside the industry to fund her films.

“I've always wanted to be a part of the film industry,” shared Mei, **“but the unsteadiness of gigs leaves me questioning if I can pursue my dreams as my main form of employment.”**

SOW'S THEORY OF CHANGE

PAGES 31 — 32

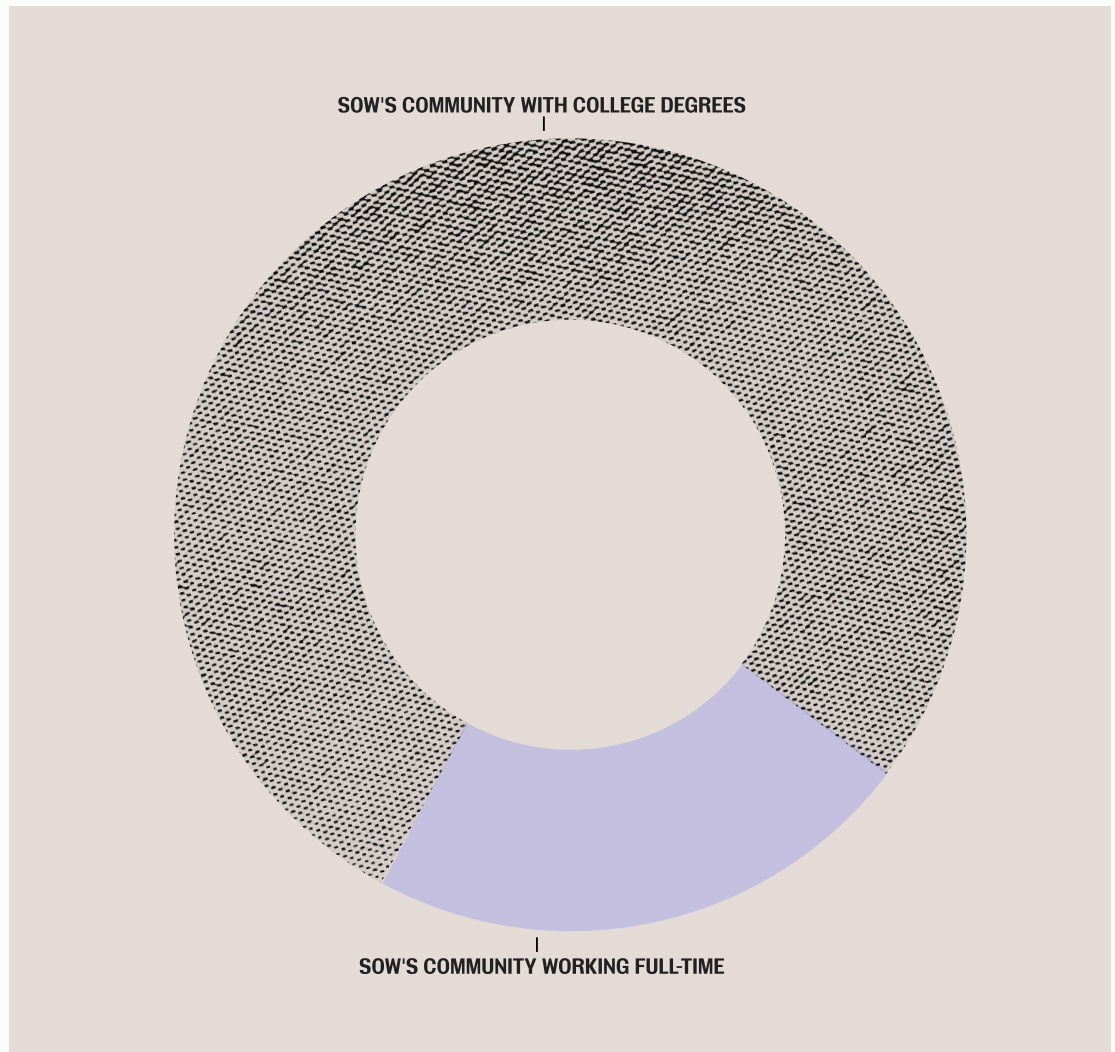
THE FUTURE IS IN THE LOBBY

Talent among New York City's young creatives of color is abundant. What stands between this generation and the creative sector is not ability, but infrastructure. **SOW's theory of change holds that when that infrastructure is provided through sustained investment in skills, networks, and opportunity, careers follow.** Eight years of work has taught SOW one thing above all: talent alone won't get you out of the lobby.

New York City has always been a cultural epicenter. The city's identity was forged by generations of immigrants as a place where people came to start over, create something new, in hopes to achieve something lasting. That legacy didn't disappear. It became the engine of a creative economy now worth \$1.2 trillion, built on cultural influence and the ability to speak to an audience that is increasingly diverse. (BEA/NEA, 2023)



Young adults between 18 and 34 make up 23.2% of New York State's population, with the heaviest concentration here in the city. (NY State Comptroller, 2025) Nationally, they are more diverse than older generations and command \$450 billion in spending power globally, with projections reaching \$12 trillion by 2030. (NielsenIQ, 2025) They are not a future audience. They are the market now.



And yet, among SOW's community assessment survey respondents, despite 68% holding college degrees, only 15.3% are working full-time in their creative field in 2026. They are the city's most valuable and underutilized creative resource, and they remain on the outside of an industry that profits from their culture.

A WAY IN



PAGES

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THE FUTURE IS IN THE LOBBY



Nicole Arroyo, 25, is a Latina illustrator and SOW Alumni from Queens. She graduated from FIT with a BFA in Illustration and currently works as a teacher's assistant at an elementary school. She is still searching for a way into the field she trained for.

“Though I went to art college, I did not feel that my school was well suited for working as an illustrator in the modern era,” Arroyo shared. “It was very helpful to hear from current professionals in the field at SOW.”

SOW intentionally connects Members to working creative professionals from similar backgrounds who share the kind of real industry knowledge that higher education is often slow to integrate.

Edwin Castillo, 25, is a Mexican graphic designer and SOW Alumni from Brooklyn, who now works at Bandit Running. During Portfolio Review Week, a reviewer gave him a single piece of advice: prepare a separate PDF deck to present during interviews, in addition to his portfolio website. That one tip is what

got him his first major placement through Scope Of Work's Fellowship.

“Just having that literal cheat code was really helpful,” Castillo shared. Through SOW's programming, Members learn the things that don't show up in a syllabus: how to talk about their work, how to ask for what they're worth, and how to build the relationships that help open doors.

Joyce Matos, 25, is a Latinx and Asian creative Strategist and SOW Alumni from Queens, currently pursuing a PhD at Brown University. She joined SOW at 17 years old as a senior in high school and that same year became the youngest Fellow in SOW's history. She remained part of SOW's community until heading to Rhode Island for her PhD program at Brown.

“SOW's programming taught me the technical skills to enter into the creative field,” Matos shared. **“But ultimately, what was most important was helping me develop the confidence and sense of self to bring into rooms.”**

Skills and confidence are critical. But without access to real opportunity, they only go so far. Job placement and access to paid opportunities have always been at the center of SOW's model, and remain the community's most urgent need. 46.9% of SOW's 2026 Community Assessment respondents named job placement and freelance opportunities as their top priority. At the center of that work is SOW's Fellowship Program, which places Members in paid roles at partner creative companies for three months. The mentors from those partner companies attend SOW's equity training and monthly check-ins to ensure those mentors feel prepared and equipped to support Fellows effectively alongside their day-to-day responsibilities. Fellows meet bi-weekly as a cohort, creating space to reflect on and process the experience of navigating the industry from the inside for the first time.

Something Special Studios, a creative agency based in New York City and Los Angeles, participated in SOW's Fellowship Program in 2022 and 2023 through which they hosted three Fellows, one of whom was hired full-time. **“I think being a fellowship partner made us more intentional than we would have been otherwise,”** says Michael Goldberg, Founder and CEO of Something Special Studios. **“It pushed us to be better and made us more supportive of the interns because of the way that the program was set up. I would definitely credit SOW with challenging us to offer a better program than we would have without their support.”**



**“ I THINK BEING A
FELLOWSHIP PARTNER
MADE US MORE
INTENTIONAL THAN WE
WOULD HAVE BEEN
OTHERWISE. IT PUSHED US
TO BE BETTER.”**

MICHAEL GOLDBERG
FOUNDER AND CEO,
SOMETHING SPECIAL STUDIOS

Through SOW's programming, Members work toward being industry-ready — the point at which they are connected to paid freelance, part-time, and full-time opportunities. For many, this is where a career actually begins.

Caroline Xia, 27, is a Chinese American photographer and director from Queens who joined SOW in 2021. Through SOW's Talent Agency, she secured an internship at Aimé Leon Dore that converted into a full-time role she held for three years.

Marinique Mora, 30, is a Black, Columbian/Puerto Rican graphic designer and SOW Alumni from Brooklyn. Fresh out of college and months into an unsuccessful job search, SOW's Talent Agency connected her directly to an interview that launched her career. She spent eight years at Combo, a strategy and design studio in New York City.

**“ THAT FINANCIAL STABILITY
ALLOWED ME TO INVEST IN
MY CREATIVE GROWTH, AN
OPPORTUNITY MANY
YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHERS
DON'T HAVE.”**

CAROLINE XIA
SOW ALUMNI

**“ RIGHT OUT THE GATE, THEY
HAD AN OPPORTUNITY FOR
DESIGNERS AND SET ME UP
WITH AN INTERVIEW WITHIN
A WEEK OF CONTACTING
THEM. I JUST GOT
STREAMLINED BY SOW,
IMMEDIATELY.”**

MARINIQUE MORA
SOW ALUMNI

Years later, Edwin Castillo came to Combo as a SOW Fellow. Mora was his mentor. The pipeline SOW built didn't just launch her career. It put her in a position to help the next young creative launch their career. This is what eight years of investment builds. Not just careers, but a community that carries itself forward.

SOW was built around a mission of racial and financial equity, but at its core, it has always been something more. SOW is an organization, but it has become a thirdspace, a network of peers, thought partners, collaborators, and many times, friends. Beyond community, it's a place to begin and come back to for resources, connections, or support.

But Scope Of Work alone cannot restructure an industry. SOW can prepare talent, expand access, and build the relationships that sustain careers, but it cannot beg companies to hire equitably, invest consistently, or champion the talent they bring in once the door finally opens.

This work belongs to everyone. To employers and hiring managers. To mid-level managers and executives. From corporations who made promises in 2020 to those who are just entering the conversation. Change moves in every direction or it doesn't move at all.

Tahira White, Founder and Co-CEO of 1Park9 and 19th & Park, is a veteran MWBE leader in content and experiential production. She reflects on what systemic change actually requires.



**“ ORGANIZATIONS DOING
THIS WELL AREN'T
CHECKING A BOX, THEY'RE
BUILDING TEAMS WHERE
BLACK AND BROWN TALENT
HAVE REAL DECISION-
MAKING POWER, REAL
BUDGETS, AND REAL
ACCOUNTABILITY. THAT'S
THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
A HIRE AND AN
INVESTMENT.”**

TAHIRA WHITE
FOUNDER AND CO-CEO,
1PARK9 AND 19TH & PARK

Teams built on a diversity of thought, experiences, and backgrounds consistently outpace homogenous ones. McKinsey found that companies in the top quartile for ethnic diversity are 36% more likely to financially outperform their less diverse peers. (McKinsey, 2020)

The future of the creative industry depends on who is inside of the rooms making creative decisions. If emerging creatives cannot find a way in, the entire industry loses more than their talent — it loses perspective, authenticity, and relevance.

The answer to Isis Dearlove's question at the top of the report, "is it me?", is no.

The structural barriers and compounding challenges of the current moment left Dearlove, and hundreds of New York City's young creatives like her, on the outside of their field. She has since pivoted to public affairs and secured a fellowship that offers both a stipend and hands-on experience.

The future has already arrived. It is here, brainstorming, pivoting, building. The lobby is not a metaphor for waiting. It is a real place: the liminal, humbling space between readiness and access, where professionals sit until someone decides they are worth the call. To the office. To the desk. To the job. To the table.

What is our vision for the future of New York City's creative sector? What does that future look like if the generation already waiting in the lobby never gets the call? Who do we imagine leading it, shaping its culture, speaking to its audiences, if not the young creatives who call this city home?

**THE
FUTURE
IS
IN
THE
LOBBY**

Appendix

Appendix

1

Dearlove, Isis.
Interview conducted by Scope
Of Work, 2026.

2

Scope Of Work.Community
Assessment Survey.
February 2026.

3

Center for an Urban Future.
Creative New York 2025.
December 2025.

4

Center for an Urban Future.
Creative New York 2025.
December 2025.

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Center for an Urban Future.
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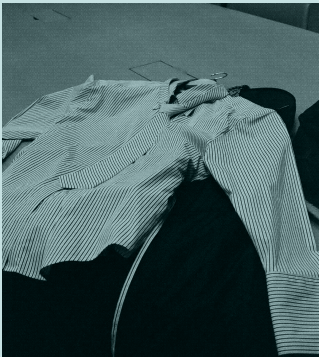
Adgate, Brad. Media Companies
Have Slashed Over 20,000 Jobs In
2023. Forbes, December 19, 2023.

10

Center for an Urban Future.
Creative New York 2025.
December 2025.

11

Center for an Urban Future.
Creative New York 2025.
December 2025.



Appendix

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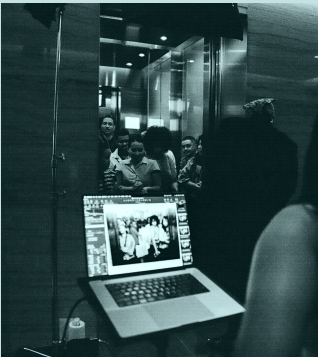
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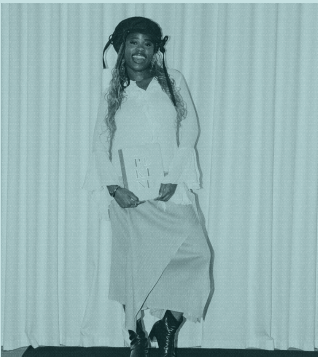
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