INCLUSIVE

Representation and Participation Policy for Indigenous Queer, Two-Spirit, Black, and People of Colour

PROJECT **REPORT**
2024

HARBOUR COLLECTIVE

Canada Council **Conseil des arts**
for the Arts **du Canada**

About Canada Council for the Arts

The Canada Council for the Arts contributes to the vibrancy of a creative and diverse arts and literary scene and supports its presence across Canada and around the world. The Council is Canada's public arts funder, with a mandate to "foster and promote the study and enjoyment of, and the production of works in, the arts." The Council's grants, services, initiatives, prizes, and payments support Canadian artists, authors, and arts groups and organizations. This support allows them to pursue artistic expression, create works of art, and promote and disseminate the arts and literature. Through its arts funding, communications, research, and promotion activities, the Council fosters ever-growing engagement of Canadians and international audiences in the arts. The Council's Public Lending Right (PLR) program makes annual payments to creators whose works are held in Canadian public libraries. The Council's Art Bank operates art rental programs and helps further public engagement with contemporary arts through exhibition and outreach activities. The Council is responsible for the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, which promotes the values and programs of UNESCO to contribute to a future of peace, reconciliation, equity, and sustainable development.

The act of harbour

intrinsically considers transitions, shorelines, and in-between spaces; it considers shelter as a necessary moment of retreat for safety, rejuvenation and reflection within the process of journey-making; and it considers the state of thinking as reflection and meditation in motion, ready to create transformations.

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Mission

Harbour Collective, an innovative and forward-thinking organization, is dedicated to nurturing and promoting artistic talent with a strong focus on community engagement and cultural enrichment. Our mission is to create a vibrant, inclusive, and dynamic platform where creativity flourishes and diverse artistic voices are celebrated. Central to our mandate is the commitment to uplift and empower Indigenous and marginalized artists working in visual and moving image. A testament to this commitment is the development of our Indigenous LAB series, a pioneering initiative designed specifically for Indigenous artists. This series offers a unique space for creative exploration, skill development, and cultural expression, fostering an environment where Indigenous artists can connect, collaborate, and thrive. At Harbour Collective, we are not just about creating opportunities; we are about cultivating a community where artists of all backgrounds feel valued, supported, and inspired to reach their full potential. Through our continued efforts, we strive to be a beacon of artistic innovation and a catalyst for meaningful cultural dialogue.
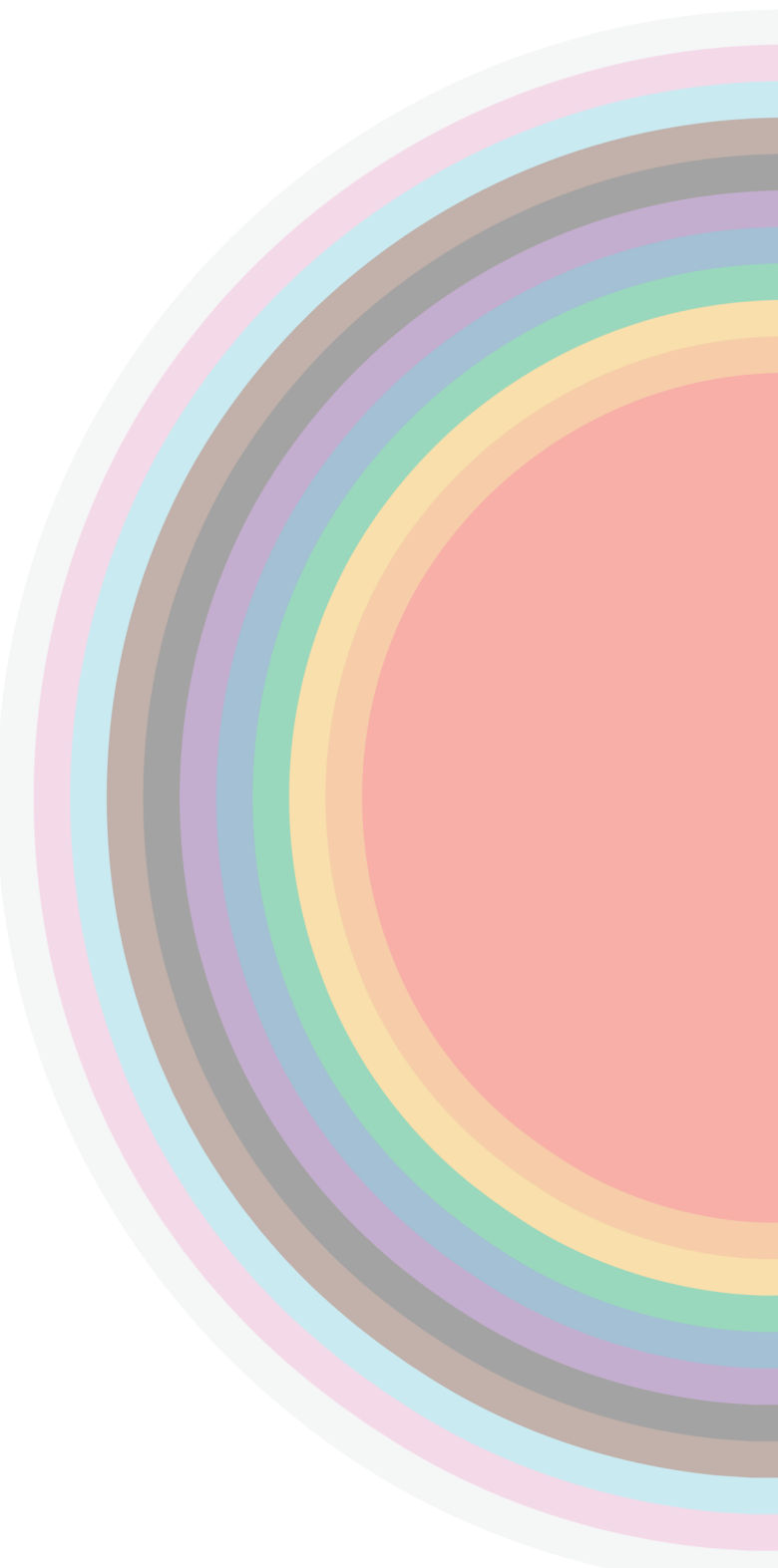
Key Participants

Liz Barron

One of the original founders of Urban Shaman Gallery, a contemporary Indigenous artist run centre based in Winnipeg, Liz Barron has been working within the arts sector for over 20 years. Her skills in managing large scale projects with various Indigenous cultural practices has developed through two major historic initiatives. Barron was the Director for the Métis 10, a Vancouver Olympic project featuring ten Metis artists and a permanent installation and was the program manager for Close Encounters: The next 500 years, an exhibition featuring more than 30 Indigenous artists from around the world and working with four curators. Barron is a registered member of the Manitoba Métis Federation.

Jason Baerg

Jason Baerg is a registered member of the Métis Nation of Ontario. He is currently the Assistant Professor in Indigenous Practices in Contemporary Painting and Media Art at OCAD University. Dedicated to community development, he founded and incorporated the Métis Artist Collective and has served as volunteer Chair for such organizations as the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective and the National Indigenous Media Arts Coalition. Creatively, as a visual artist, he pushes new boundaries in digital interventions in drawing, painting and new media installation. Recent international solo exhibitions include the Illuminato Festival in Toronto, Canada, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in Australia and the Digital Dome at the Institute of the American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Sasha Kucas

Sasha Kucas is a first-generation Canadian with Croatian ancestry, a writer, and a lens-based artist. Her work explores identity, memory, and motivation through movement. She received a Theatre degree from the University of Winnipeg, a Post-Baccalaureate in Education from the Vancouver Island University and a Fine Arts degree with distinction from the University of Manitoba. Kucas has lived in nine different countries and has traveled to over 300 cities. She is the Communications Manager for Harbour Collective and is the sole-proprietor of Bird Uncaged Productions.

Engaging in Conversations

Creating a process for engaging Indigenous and BPOC artists in conversations about racism and identity involves careful planning and sensitivity to the unique experiences and perspectives of these groups. Here's a structured approach to the Harbour process in facilitating these important discussions:

1. Preparation Phase
Understanding and Research:
Gain a deep understanding of the historical and contemporary issues faced by Indigenous and BPOC communities. Research the specific challenges and experiences of Indigenous and BPOC artists in the arts sector.

Building a Team:
Assemble a diverse team that includes members from Indigenous and BPOC communities, preferably with experience in cultural sensitivity and facilitating discussions on race and identity.

2. Engagement Phase
Creating a Safe Space:
Ensure the environment is welcoming and safe for open and honest dialogue. This could be physical or virtual spaces that are accessible and comfortable for all participants. Establish ground rules for respectful and non-judgmental communication.

Facilitating Dialogue:
Use experienced facilitators who are trained in handling sensitive topics around racism and identity.
Implement a variety of formats such as workshops, focus groups, and storytelling sessions to allow for different modes of expression.

3. Discussion Topics
Identity and Experiences:
Encourage discussions about personal and community identity, experiences with racism and discrimination, and the impact of these experiences on their artistic work.

Challenges in the Arts Sector:
Explore specific challenges faced within the arts sector, including representation, access to resources, and recognition.

4. Active Listening and Participation

E*ncouraging Voices:*
Actively encourage participation from all attendees, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to speak and be heard.
Emphasize active listening and understanding, rather than just hearing.

5. Post-Engagement Phase

Feedback and Reflection:
Gather feedback from participants about the discussion and the process.
Reflect on the insights gained and how they can inform future practices and policies.

Actionable Steps:
Identify key takeaways and actionable steps that can be implemented to address the issues raised.
Consider creating a follow-up report or action plan to document the outcomes of the discussions.

6. Ongoing Engagement and Support

Continued Dialogue:
Establish mechanisms for ongoing conversation and engagement on these topics.
Provide resources and support for Indigenous and BPOC artists beyond the discussions.

Policy and Practice Changes:
Use the insights gained to inform and improve organizational policies and practices related to diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism.

7. Collaboration and Networking

Building Networks:
Encourage the formation of networks and support systems among Indigenous and BPOC artists.
Facilitate connections with broader communities and organizations that can provide support and collaboration opportunities.

This process should be flexible and adaptable, taking into consideration the specific contexts and needs of the Indigenous and BPOC artists involved. It's crucial to approach these conversations with empathy, openness, and a commitment to long-term engagement and change.

Indigenous Queer and Two-Spirit
Individuals who identify as part of Indigenous communities and who are non-heterosexual and/or non-cisgender. Two-Spirit is a term used by some Indigenous North American people to describe a traditional third-gender or other gender-variant ceremonial role in their cultures.

Black and People of Colour
Individuals who identify as part of racial or ethnic minority groups, particularly those of African or African diaspora heritage.

Engaging with Indigenous Two-Spirit Artists and BPOC Cultural Workers on Racism

Introduction: Acknowledge the unique experiences and challenges faced by Indigenous Two-Spirit artists and BPOC cultural workers.

Approach: Create a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for open dialogues. This could include workshops, focus groups, or one-on-one meetings.

Content: Discuss both overt and covert forms of racism, and encourage participants to share their experiences and perspectives.

Support: Offer resources and support for individuals who have experienced racism and provide educational resources to those seeking to understand and combat racism in the workplace.

Process for Engaging in Conversations with BIPOC Members

Preparation: Educate organization members on cultural sensitivity and the importance of diversity and inclusion.

Structure: Set clear guidelines for respectful communication and ensure that conversations are led in a way that allows all voices to be heard.

Active Listening: Emphasize the importance of listening to understand, not just to respond.

Follow-Up: Establish a mechanism for ongoing dialogue and continuous improvement in organizational practices regarding diversity and inclusion.

Development of a Bylaw

Purpose: Clarify the objective of the bylaw, specifically how it will support the organization's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and combating racism.

Drafting: Include representatives from diverse backgrounds in the drafting process to ensure that the bylaw is inclusive and considerate of different perspectives.

Review: Have the draft reviewed by legal experts and stakeholders within the organization.

Approval and Implementation: Set a clear process for approving the bylaw within the organization's governance structure and outline steps for its implementation and enforcement.

Monitoring and Revision: Establish a review process to periodically assess the effectiveness of the bylaw and make necessary revisions.

This overview can be adapted and expanded based on the specific context and needs of your organization. Additionally, it may be beneficial to consult with experts in organizational diversity and inclusion, as well as legal advisors, to ensure the effectiveness and appropriateness of these approaches.

Bylaw Title: Bylaw on Inclusion and Representation of Indigenous Queer, Two-Spirit, Black, and People of Colour

Article I: Name and Purpose
This bylaw shall be known as the "Bylaw on Inclusion and Representation of Indigenous Queer, Two-Spirit, Black, and People of Colour" (hereinafter referred to as the "Inclusion Bylaw"). The purpose of the Inclusion Bylaw is to ensure equitable representation, participation, and inclusion of Indigenous Queer, Two-Spirit, Black, and People of Colour in all aspects of [Organization Name]'s activities and governance.

Article II: Definitions
Terms used in this bylaw shall have the same definitions as outlined in the Inclusive Representation and Participation Policy.

Article III: Representation and Leadership
The organization shall strive for diverse representation in its Board of Directors, with at least [Specify Percentage]% of board members identifying as Indigenous Queer, Two-Spirit, Black, or People of Colour. Efforts shall be made to include individuals from these communities in executive and decision-making roles within the organization.

Article IV: Programming and Outreach
The organization commits to featuring a minimum of [Specify Percentage]% of its annual programming to artists and creators who identify as Indigenous Queer, Two-Spirit, Black, or People of Colour. Targeted outreach initiatives shall be developed to engage these communities, ensuring their input and participation in organizational activities.

Article V: Education and Awareness
Mandatory training on race, gender, sexuality, and colonialism shall be conducted annually for all staff and board members, focusing on the experiences of Indigenous Queer, Two-Spirit, Black, and People of Colour.

Article VI: Safe and Inclusive Spaces

The organization shall implement and enforce a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination and harassment, ensuring a safe and inclusive environment for all community members.

Article VII: Accountability

An annual report detailing the organization's progress and activities related to this bylaw shall be prepared by the Diversity and Inclusion Officer and presented to the Board of Directors.

Article VIII: Amendment and Revision

This bylaw may be amended or revised subject to the approval of [Specify Percentage]% of the Board of Directors, provided that any proposed amendments are circulated in writing to all board members at least [Specify Number] days prior to the meeting at which the amendment is to be considered. This bylaw can be adapted to align with the specific structure, goals, and requirements of individual art organizations. It's important to ensure that the bylaw is not only adopted but also actively implemented and monitored for its effectiveness in promoting inclusion and representation.

OUTCOMES
Purpose

This policy aims to foster an inclusive, respectful, and diverse environment within The Independent Media Arts Alliance (IMAA)/ L'Alliance des arts médiatiques indépendants (AAMI) that actively includes and represents Indigenous Queer, Two-Spirit, Black, and People of Colour (BIPOC) in all aspects of our work. It acknowledges the historical and ongoing systemic barriers faced by these communities and commits to proactive measures to address and counteract these challenges.

Scope

This policy applies to all levels of the organization, including board members, staff, volunteers, artists, and participants in any program or activity conducted by the Independent Media Arts Alliance (IMAA)/ L'Alliance des arts médiatiques indépendants (AAMI).

IMAA/ AAMI is committed to recognizing and respecting the unique cultural and spiritual heritage of Two-Spirit and Indigi-Queer individuals. The organization acknowledges their territory and strives to create an inclusive environment that celebrates diversity and fosters equality.

Policy Statements

Representation and Leadership: Ensure that Indigenous Queer, Two-Spirit, Black, and People of Colour are represented in decision-making positions within the organization, including the board of directors, executive roles, and committees.

Programming and Curation: Actively include and highlight the works and voices of Indigenous Queer, Two-Spirit, Black, and People of Colour in exhibitions, performances, and all forms of artistic programming.

Outreach and Engagement: Develop and maintain outreach strategies that effectively engage these communities, ensuring their perspectives and needs are understood and integrated into organizational practices.

Education and Awareness: Provide ongoing education and training for all members of the organization on issues of race, gender, sexuality, and colonialism, focusing on the experiences and perspectives of Indigenous Queer, Two-Spirit, Black, and People of Colour.

Safe and Inclusive Spaces: Foster an environment where individuals from these communities feel safe, respected, and valued, including the implementation of anti-harassment policies and support systems.

Collaboration and Partnerships: Build and maintain collaborative relationships with Indigenous Queer, Two-Spirit, Black, and People of Colour artists, organizations, and communities to support mutual goals and share resources.

Accessibility and Accommodation: Ensure that programs, services, and facilities are accessible to individuals from these communities, taking into account physical, financial, and cultural accessibility.

Accountability and Continuous Improvement: Regularly review and assess the organization's practices and policies regarding inclusion and representation, seeking feedback from Indigenous Queer, Two-Spirit, Black, and People of Colour communities to inform improvements.

Implementation and Monitoring

A designated Diversity and Inclusion Officer will be responsible for implementing this policy, monitoring its effectiveness, and reporting to the board and leadership team.

Regular training and development opportunities will be provided to all staff and volunteers to support the effective implementation of this policy**.**

This policy will be reviewed and updated biennially or as needed to reflect new insights, feedback from the communities we serve, and evolving best practices in diversity and inclusion.

Appendices

Transformative Media Organizing: LGBTQ and Two-Spirit media work in the US shows that despite limited resources, many organizations have an intersectional analysis of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and other identities. They focus on media work that develops critical consciousness and leadership, is accountable to their social base, and is rooted in community action (Costanza-Chock & Schweidler, 2017).

Impacts of Colonization on Indigenous Two-Spirit/LGBTQ Canadians: This study emphasizes understanding the specific and historical context of colonization to better respond to relationship violence experienced by Indigenous Two-Spirit/LGBTQ people (Ristock, Zoccole, Passante, & Potskin, 2019).

Queer Indigenous Studies: This book discusses Indigenous-centered approaches to understanding gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, and Two-Spirit lives and communities, offering insights into Indigenous GLBTQ2 movements and the relationship between colonialism and heteropatriarchy (Snyder, 2013).

Anti-Racism and Indigenous Australians: This article provides an overview of anti-racism approaches focusing on Indigenous Australians, including effective strategies at the cognitive, individual, interpersonal, and societal levels, and recommendations for improving institutional and legal policies (Paradies, 2005).

An Arts Organization Policy Brief on Indigenous Knowledges: This policy brief is designed for an arts organization on the Pacific West Coast in Canada, providing an overview of Indigenous knowledges and contextualizing within the broader arc of commitments to decolonization and decolonial practice (Sy et al., 2021).

Unsettling the GLBT and Queer Coalitions in US Politics: This article critiques the inclusion of diverse groups in the GLBT and Queer coalitions, drawing on Queer Indigenous critiques and examples of Native organizing (Murib, 2018).

Accountability, Intervention, Community: This collaborative article introduces the Indigenous principles of ethics woven into the making of a Two-Spirit music video, addressing social violence directed at Two-Spirit people as a legacy of colonial oppression (Blair & Budde, 2022).

Health Activism Against Barriers to Indigenous Health in Aotearoa New Zealand: This paper reflects on the Stop Institutional Racism (STIR) group's work in challenging racism within the New Zealand public health sector and their partnership approach underpinning the work (Came, McCreanor, & Simpson, 2017).

Disrupting Settler Colonialism and Oppression in Media and Policy-Making: This study discusses the marginalization of diverse communities in media policy-making processes in Canada, emphasizing the need to foreground the experiences of Indigenous,

Stay tuned for more info!

AMPLIFYING
ANTI-RACISM
CAPACITY
IN THE
MEDIA ARTS

Winnipeg / Toronto
Dates: TBD

Call for Indigi Q and 2S Artists

HARBOUR
COLLECTIVE