



**MEDIA ARTS NETWORK
OF ONTARIO
RÉSEAU DES ARTS
MÉDIATIQUES DE L'ONTARIO**

**BEST PRACTICES ON EQUITY:
A GUIDE FOR MEMBERS OF THE
MEDIA ARTS NETWORK OF ONTARIO**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Purpose And Policy	3
2. Guiding Principles	3
3. Strategic Implementation	4
3.1 Organizational Commitment	5
3.2 Community Engagement	7
3.3 Programming/Curatorial Development	8
3.4 Audience Development/Employment	9
4. Examples From The Field	10
5. Why This Is Important Now	11
6. Governance, Human Rights And Conflict Resolution	15
7. A Word About Terminology	15

1. PURPOSE AND POLICY:

Most arts organizations set about their work with some adherence to values that guide them. Mission, vision and artistic statements are some of the parameters these organizations operate within. This is supported by those engaged in the organization as volunteers (e.g., board members) and paid staff (e.g., executive director, administrative support). In working together, these components – written statement and the people who develop and work with them - give life to what an arts organization does, its values and criteria for selection of works, its networks and fields of influence, its strengths and needs, its communities and audiences.

A key issue that is emerging across Ontario and Canada, particularly with the Ontario Arts Council's Equity and Strategic Plans, is what values should guide an arts organization to engage in work that will enable them to be contemporary. By its very nature, this prompts investigation into what the word 'contemporary' signifies, how it is defined and who defines it.

One of the major influences on the definition of what is contemporary comes from historically-marginalized artists and the communities they come from. Whether Indigenous, racialized, deaf, disabled, mad, queer and women, critical perspectives have been put forward that challenge prevailing Eurocentric values, their notions of universality and their systems of artistic creation, production, story-telling and meaning. This is something that the Media-Arts Network of Ontario (MANO) recognizes and, as such, has set about to develop a framework to guide its members in the development of strategic approaches that will enable creation of a more inclusive media arts milieu that that involves a more diverse representation of Indigenous and historically-marginalized artists and communities.

The purpose of this policy is therefore to provide an effective, consistently applied, and transparent method to address the organization as a whole. Such issues may arise in relation to MANO member functions in such areas as: internal operations (staffing), programming, governance, community and volunteer engagement, and audience development.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES:¹

Personal Responsibility and Engagement: The arts organization must take responsibility for leading this initiative. In doing so, there must be agreement between staff and board on its purpose, strategies, timelines, action plans, assessment and evaluation.

Accessibility and Accommodation: It is expected that the equity initiative is fully accessible and provides the necessary accommodations to be consistent with the Ontarians With Disabilities legislation and to address other potential challenges, e.g., languages (including ASL/LSQ), and those grounds included in human rights law.

¹ These principles have been adapted from - <https://www.adralberta.com/Resources/Documents/Policies/ADRIA%20Complaint%20Resolution%20Policy%20June%202015.pdf>

Transparency: The organization will be fully transparent in its development, promotion and implementation of its equity initiatives. Such transparency is meant to engage all aspects of the organization (e.g., staff, board and volunteers) and to provide easy access to artists and communities interested in the organization's intent and initiatives.

Timeliness: The organization should provide reasonable timelines for the implementation of its equity initiatives. This will provide a 'road-map' that will be useful to engage the organization's resources and external interests. Such a 'road-map' will be useful to measuring the success of the initiative in terms of goals met, assessment and development of next steps

Thoroughness: The organization's initiative should include all aspects of its policies and practices from selection of artists, criteria of selection, juries, recruitment of staff/board/volunteers, purchasing of external services, etc.

Accessible and User-Friendly: The process will be easily accessible and communicated to all involved and/or interested. It is designed to be clear and as simple to follow as possible.

Training and Professional Development: The organization will ensure sessions are provided whenever possible and as a central part of annual staff and board training and professional development, and set aside time and resources to do so.

3. STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION - A PARADIGM SHIFT TOWARD CRITICAL EQUITY IMPLEMENTATION:

One of the most significant challenges in navigating paradigm shifts, particularly one that addresses sensitive and historically entrenched patterns, is in the leadership that is provided and its active engagement in both organizational structures and in abilities to understand and articulate the new paradigm, what it is and why it is essential. Leadership by the arts organization is critical to ensuring the vision of the change is communicated, updated regularly, promoted in various forums and provided the resources needed to support its growth.

Democratic leadership, or that which emerges within the organization or from outside its walls, is a critical ingredient. Democratic leadership recognizes the value of those with less or little organizational power but with important knowledge and appeal to others. Such leaders can emerge because they believe the arts organization's commitment to the new values and they come forward to express their support, provide their insights and to encourage others to join in the effort.

The combination of organizational and democratic leadership is an important element of any change effort. While those responsible for the arts organization set forth their vision, it is absolutely critical that this be accepted, nuanced, added to and promoted by others within and outside of the organization. There are many challenges and benefits to taking an approach to leadership that combines both of these elements. For example, organizational leadership sets the tone for the change process and communicates clearly the organization's commitment to it. It recognizes the importance of growth, experimentation, risk in taking on new initiatives, challenges based on conflicting values and in dealing with resistance to the change.

Further, organizational leadership requires ongoing accountability for goal setting, goal achievement, assessment and evaluation. It establishes clear rewards for achievements, promotes those who are championing the initiative and underscores the importance of engagement.

Democratic leadership often times identifies issues to be addressed, challenges old norms, brings forward innovative solutions, provides knowledge and experience that comes from outside the arts' organizations practices. It can use its connections both inside and outside the institution to bring forward change processes that can support and/or accelerate the change processes. Most importantly, it shares its confidence that the organization and its formal leadership is sincerely engaged in the change effort and open to the expression of ideas on how to implement this.

There are several examples of leadership in the arts that have been compiled in **Pluralism in the Arts in Canada: A Change is Gonna Come.**² This link provides access to an annotated bibliography of these examples (https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2012/06/CPAMO_bibliography.pdf). *It also includes reference to the independent Media Arts Alliance and National Indigenous Media Arts Coalition that is included in the CPAMO book.*

The strategies discussed below address such an approach by looking at the key functions of an arts organization and posing several suggested strategies that can be used. Each topic is a hyper-link to the online toolkit that allows users to look at each part in depth. It must be noted, that the first item, **Organizational Commitment**, will require each arts organization to take stock of itself as no two arts organizations are the same and each will have different needs.

The strategies in the CPAMO toolkit are highlighted by a summary of some 'evidence-based practices'. In particular, these strategies address the following areas:

- I) Organizational Commitment
- II) Community Engagement
- III) Programming and Curatorial Development
- IV) Audience Development
- V) Employment and Professional Development

3.1 Organizational Commitment.

These strategies begin with the important element of "**Organizational Commitment**". There is no movement on this or any other issue without the commitment of the organization, from its leadership in particular, to want to make change happen.

Key activities in this area are:

- i. **Looking at who you are.** This requires the organization to do an internal assessment of all of its operations and personnel to determine strengths

2 Charles C. Smith, 2012, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

- and needs. This includes its staff, board, volunteer, programming, promotion/outreach/communications, policies and procedures.
- ii. **Identifying challenges.** Based on the above, this requires the organization to candidly identify its challenges and how to address them.
 - iii. **Communicating Commitment.** This requires the organization to clearly articulate its intentions, the resources committed, the actions that will be taken, the process of engagement, assessment, evaluation and development of next steps.
 - iv. **Policies and Procedures.** This requires the organization to amend and/or develop the appropriate policies and procedures to support the implementation of its equity initiatives.

Given some of the common challenges faced by arts organizations locally and in other parts of the world, organizational commitment might best be followed by reaching out to engage communities.

Examples of this can be found:

- Ontario Presents (Formerly Community Cultural Impresarios) - <http://www.scribd.com/doc/148263202/plowing-the-road-enhancing-opportunities-for-pluralism-in-performing-arts-in-ontario-charles-c-smith-consulting>
- Achilles, Vanessa , Majella Rio, Maria, & Capello, Alexandra. (2008) *The Cultural Diversity Programming Lens Toolkit*. Paris: Unesco. Retrieved from http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/culture/cultural_lens/cdpl_tool-kit_january_2008.pdf
- RTS Council England. (2005). *Respond: A Practical Resource For Developing A Race Equality Action Plan*. London: Arts Council England. Retrieved from http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication_archive/respond-a-practical-resource-for-developing-a-race-equality-action-plan/
- Brown, Stuart, Hawson, Isobel, Graves, Tony, & Barot, Mukesh. (2001). *Eclipse: Developing Strategies To Combat Racism In Theatre*. London: Arts Council England. Retrieved from http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication_archive/eclipse-developing-strategies-to-combat-racism-in-theatre/
- Cliché, Danielle, & Wiesand, Andreas. (2009). *Achieving Intercultural Dialogue Through The Arts And Culture: Concepts, Policies, Programmes, Practices*. Sydney: International Federation Of Arts Councils And Cultural Agencies. Retrieved from <http://media.ifacca.org/files/d/art39final.pdf>
- Helen Denniston Associates. (2003) *Holding Up The Mirror: Addressing Cultural Diversity In London's Museums*. London: London Museum Agency. Retrieved from http://research.mla.gov.uk/evidence/documents/holding_up_the_mirror.pdf

3.2 Community Engagement:

The strategies and processes of **Community Engagement** are varied but each is premised on the notion that the arts, and arts organizations, need to be an integral part of community life as expressed in ways communities organize themselves and share resources as well as network with each other, particularly to ensure valuable

information is actively circulated within communities, providing individuals with invaluable knowledge about what is available to them and how they can access and participate in these opportunities. This section suggests the critical importance for arts organizations, particularly presenters, to become part of that process and become active participants in community life rather than using traditional approaches of marketing and communications and waiting for people to come to see a show.

Key activities in this area are:

- i. **Identifying artists to work with.** This invites the organization to consider artists to reach out to for discussion purposes and possible engagement. It enables the organization to assess its strengths and needs and to begin the process of engaging the former while reaching out to the latter.
- ii. **Exchanging Knowledge and Skills.** Based on the above, this requires the organization to meet with these resources and to begin the process of sharing knowledge and to explore how best to utilize the combined knowledge and skills of those involved.
- iii. **Creating Partnerships.** This requires the organization to consider and engage with external artists/arts organizations to establish mutually-beneficial partnerships and collaborative practices.

Successfully carried out processes of community engagement will undoubtedly open doors for arts organizations to pursue other elements of the tool-kit. For example, having a higher profile in diverse communities can lead to engaging community members and artists in **Programming Decisions and Curatorial Development** of the arts organization.

Some examples in this area are:

- Directorate-General For Education And Culture (Eu). (2006). *Intercultural Dialogue Conference And Exhibition: Best Practices At Community Level*. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/dialogue/index_en.html
- Jennings, Mel. (2003) *A Practical Guide To Working With Arts Ambassadors*. London: Arts Council England. Retrieved from http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication_archive/a-practical-guide-to-working-with-arts-ambassadors/
- Levin, Theodore, And Cooper, Rachel. (2010). *Making A Difference Through The Arts: Strengthening America's Links With Asian Muslim Communities*. Asia Society. Retrieved from http://asiasociety.org/files/pdf/as_making_difference_report.pdf
- Tawadros, Gilane. (2009). *Reading (And Curating) From Right To Left*. Retrieved from http://universes-in-universe.org/eng/nafas/articles/2009/gilane_tawadros
- Tissier, Damian, & Nathoo, Samir Singh. (2004). *Black And Minority Ethnic Engagement With London's Museums: Telling It Like It Is: Non-User Research*. Retrieved from http://research.mla.gov.uk/evidence/documents/telling_it_like_it_is_rpt.pdf

3.3 Programming and Curatorial Development:

This requires processes of empowerment, information sharing and learning about the histories, traditions and contemporary arts practices of Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized communities. It also requires demystifying the process of presentation and the challenges, opportunities and constraints the presenting field must work with to support the arts.

Key activities in this area are:

- i. **Selection of work.** This requires the organization to include diverse voices in the selection of work to be exhibited/shown. Such will include involvement of external artists, review of selection criteria, transparency on budget and opportunities to show new work.
- ii. **Jury and assessment criteria.** This requires the organization to engage external artists in a review of its jury selection processes and assessment criteria
- iii. **Location of events.** This requires an organization to examine how it might take its events to where communities are located and gather regularly.
- iv. **Inviting community input.** This requires an organization to solicit comments and ideas from diverse communities through various methods, e.g., online surveys, outreach, community engagement practices, audience surveys and interviews.

Some examples in this area are:

- Cliché, Danielle, & Wiesand, Andreas. (2009). *Achieving Intercultural Dialogue Through The Arts And Culture: Concepts, Policies, Programmes, Practices*. Sydney: International Federation Of Arts Councils And Cultural Agencies. Retrieved from <http://media.ifacca.org/files/d'art39final.pdf>
- Cope, Bill, Kalantzis, Mary, & Ziguras, Christopher. (2003). *Multimedia, Multiculturalism And The Arts*. Sydney: Australia Council For The Arts. Retrieved from http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/culturally_diverse_arts/reports_and_publications/multimedia,_multiculturalism_and_the_arts
- Achilles, Vanessa , Majella Rio, Maria, & Capello, Alexandra. (2008) *The Cultural Diversity Programming Lens Toolkit*. Paris: Unesco. Retrieved from http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/culture/cultural_lens/cdpl_toolkit_january_2008.pdf
- Freeman, Barry. (2010). *Toward A Postmodern Ethnography Of Intercultural Theatre: An Instrumental Case-study of the Prague-Toronto-Manitoulin Theatre Project*. Retrieved from <https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/handle/1807/24752>

Audience Development and Employment:

Empowering and sharing with communities in this way can build their confidence and trust in the arts organization which, in turn, can lead to **Audience Development** and ensuring individuals from diverse communities are aware of **Employment** and other service opportunities within the arts organization, e.g., volunteering, assisting in an advisory capacity and/or participating on the board of directors.

Please note: while the areas below address staffing, similar methods can be used for recruitment of board and volunteers.

Key activities in this area are:

- i. **Outreach.** This requires the organization to promote itself in communities it has not been part of and/or is interested in connecting with. Such outreach might include attending community meetings, posting information in diverse media, becoming engaged in external community initiatives as a support.
- ii. **Job descriptions.** In hiring for new values, it is important to review job descriptions to remove any potential barriers and to ensure they capture the new knowledge and skills the organization is seeking.
- iii. **Hiring committees and processes.** Such committees should be made up of diverse peoples and interests. This may require the organization to invite external individuals to become involved in this process. Further, all committee members should receive an orientation to the hiring process and the importance of equity values to it. This should include reference to scoring, discussion of candidates performance, etc.
- iv. **Orientation and professional development.** All hires should receive adequate orientation that includes the organization's commitment to equity work and the expectations of all staff, including new hires, for this.

Some examples in these areas are:

- Kapetopoulos, Fotis. (2009). *Adjust Your View, A Toolkit: Developing Multicultural Audiences For The Arts*. Sydney: Australia Council For The Arts. retrieved from <http://www.kape.com.au/adjustyr-view.html>
- Maitland, Heather. (2005). *Navigating Difference: Cultural Diversity And Audience Development*. London: Arts Council England. Retrieved from <http://www.takingpartinthearts.com/content.php?content=1203>
- Smyth, Morton. (2004). *Not For The Likes Of You: How To Reach A Broader Audience*. London: Arts Council England. Retrieved from <http://www.takingpartinthearts.com/content.php?content=943>
- Barry, Jennifer. (2003). *Marketing To Culturally Diverse Audiences*. Sydney: Australia Council For The Arts. Retrieved from http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/arts_marketing/promotion/market-ing_to_culturally_diverse_audiences

In essence, one section leads to the other. However, it is very possible that creative and spontaneous things might happen and arts organizations need to be open to these and to bring them in to the change process. Oftentimes these developments can really ignite the change process as when the artists, presenters and communities are in agreement on needed areas of change and are open with each other about how to change and what each will commit to the process.

At the tool-kit's end is a comprehensive annotated bibliography. The bibliography is included in order to provide artists and arts organizations with sites to look up other examples of change work. This is important because no tool-kit contains all of the answers to any or every organization. Each organization interested in and committed

to the process of change needs to do its own work in order to gain the benefits of the change process. In this regard, the annotated bibliography is a source that can be used to find additional examples of change strategies that might be as relevant as the case studies summarized in each section.

In using this tool-kit as a reference, it must be kept in mind that no community is homogenous; there is diversity within each. Further, there may be particular protocols when working with Indigenous artists and communities. Given this, the suggested activities and case studies will need to be interpreted to fit with the circumstance of each arts organization and the relationships it is attempting to develop or enhance. To do this it is best to make direct connections with groups within these communities. The section on **Community Engagement** addresses this. At the same time, the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council either have offices dedicated to these issues or staff that are very knowledgeable about access points to diverse communities. CPAMO also has this expertise amongst its resources as well as the Aboriginal and ethno-racial artists and arts organizations working with it.

FOR MORE EXAMPLES, PLEASE SEE - https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2012/06/CPAMO_bibliography.pdf

4. EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD:

Several MANO members have some projects/initiatives that would be useful to share within the media arts communities. These should be shared and others added to promote the importance and value of this area and the success members are having in engaging in work on equity and diversity.

Some examples are evident in:

- SAW Videos Indigenous Voices project – mentor program (<http://www.sawvideo.com/news/indigenous-voices-mentorship-program>); curatorial incubator (<http://www.sawvideo.com/event/indigenous-curatorial-incubator-2015>)
- V-Tape Indigenous and Incubator work – with Banff (<http://www.vtape.org/artist?ai=750>); aboriginal digital access program (<http://www.vtape.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Vtape-Aboriginal-Digital-Access-Project-imagineNATIVE-2012.pdf>)
- IMAGINENATIVE - http://www.imagenative.org/2004/in2003/cam_about.html
- IMAGES Festival - <http://www.imagesfestival.com>
- Alucine Latin Film Festival - <http://alucinefestival.com>; Caribbean Bohemia (<http://alucinefestival.com/ctffsept2015/>)
- IMAA/NIMAC Toolkit - IMAA (<http://www.ima.ca/about-us/mandate-and-principles/>); NIMAC (<http://www.nationalimac.org>)
- LIFT – mandate (<http://lift.ca/about/about-liaison-independent-filmmakers-toronto>)

5. WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT NOW:

We pride ourselves in articulating that we live in an egalitarian society. However, this can be defined very differently. From a critical equity perspective, social context and

social construction are important indicators in defining what this term means. In this regard, 'egalitarian' might be seen as truly inclusive and conscious of the historical and contemporary barriers to individuals and groups that experience marginalization and what must be, and is being done to identify and remedy this.

This brings us to the arts in Canada. When public arts funding was set up and the Canada Council for the Arts was created in 1957, the general demographic characteristics of Canada were of a society that had for nearly a century followed patterns of population growth that were restrictive and made it difficult for diverse communities to settle here. Further, Canada was emerging from a period of discriminatory legislation and practices that banned Indigenous cultural activities, e.g., the potlatch and Sun Dance, and had erected barriers to immigration for Asians, South Asians and persons of African descent. Also, Canada had set up and maintained Residential Schools for Indigenous children, ended immigration of Chinese and South Asians, had segregated school systems for African Canadians in Ontario and Nova Scotia and incarcerated persons of Japanese descent during WW II. Human rights laws were only beginning to be established nationally and in some provinces.

At the same time, this was a period in which Indigenous and diverse communities within North America and around the world were pushing back against centuries of European domination, colonialism and hegemonic thought. Independence movements in many lands across East Asia, South Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean were resulting in new nations. As well, there was increased impetus in the Indigenous movement for self-determination and in various human and civil rights struggles concerning racialized peoples, women, and, gays and lesbians, and persons with disabilities. One element of these movements was a clear determination to both recoup and valorize cultural traditions and practices that had been suppressed by European domination.

In many instances, this led to the re-establishment of cultural practices that had different trajectories of education, apprenticeship, practice, myths, icons and artistic standards of excellence quite different from European values. This has been a result of critical changes in Indigenous communities, in immigration legislation/policy, human rights and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, domestic labour needs and the availability/interests of individuals who have chosen to make Canada their home.

Complementing these changes in policy and legislation was the dramatic increase of immigrants from countries in East Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and South Asia. Today, we are all aware that the composition of Ontario has changed dramatically. There was also a resurgence of Indigenous political activism asserting self-determination and arts practices, particularly in visual arts, with the contributions of Daphne Odjig, Norvel Morrisseau and the Indigenous Group of Seven along with the rise of Thomson Highway in theatre and many others in the literary arts. Together, these factors have become fundamental to addressing Canadian identity in the arts and its standards of excellence as these artists, and the communities who support them, draw from historical and contemporary traditions and practices based on those outside of a European framework.

The 1990s witnessed a number of events that brought these factors into public

awareness. These events included the protests against the Royal Ontario Museum's **Into the Heart of Africa** exhibit, the Mirvish production of **Miss Saigon**, the Livent attempt to stage **Showboat**, the demands of several First Nations for the return of ancestral artefacts held in Canadian and international museums, the **Writing Through Race Conference** and other episodes that made the new realities of Canada's cultural landscape abundantly clear.

Today several organizations have taken on this challenge, e.g., The Equity In Theatre Project of the Playwrights Guild of Canada, the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective, SAVAC, imagineNATIVE, Reel Asian, Cultural Pluralism in the Arts Movement Ontario, the Indigenous Performing Arts Alliance, the National Indigenous Media Arts Coalition, Tangled Art+Disability.³ These groups have held seminars, conferences, town halls, workshops and showcased remarkable works. They have contributed significantly to what is now a national conversation concerning self-determination and equity in the arts.

As such, there are ongoing developments to assess this growth and its impact. One of these areas relates to the engagement of communities, their interests and where/how they access/participate in the arts. For example, the recent in-depth Ontario-wide study conducted by WolfBrown and Associates for the Ontario Arts Council provides ample evidence of the interests of Indigenous and racialized communities in the arts. They note:

- racialized communities are more engaged than their White counterparts in arts learning and skills acquisition with persons of African-descent more engaged in community-based arts events;
- Indigenous peoples are more engaged in inventive activities than their White counterparts;⁴
- study respondents connected to their own cultural heritage are more likely to be engaged in arts activities, particularly those interested in other cultures;
- Indigenous peoples are more actively engaged in visiting galleries and museums;⁵
- racialized and Indigenous communities reported higher engagement in community arts events;⁶
- racialized groups are more engaged in media-based arts activities;⁷
- Indigenous and racialized groups are more engaged in inventive activities (i.e., activities that “engages the mind, body and spirit in the act of artistic creation that is unique...”);⁸ and
- racialized and Indigenous communities, particularly persons of African descent, demonstrate a higher interest in their own cultural heritage.⁹

These findings are mostly borne out by a recent Hills Strategies report.¹⁰

3 <http://eit.playwrightsguild.ca/>; <http://www.acc-cca.com/>; <http://savac.net/>; <http://www.imagenative.org/home/>; <http://www.reelasian.com/>; <https://cpamo.wordpress.com/>; <http://ipaa.ca/>; <http://www.oboro.net/en/organisation/national-indigenous-media-arts-coalition-nimac>; <http://tangledarts.org/>;

4 See WolfBrown, **Ontario Arts Engagement Study: Results from a 2011 Province-wide Study of the Arts Engagement Patterns of Ontario Adults**, Ontario Arts Council September 2011 at 5 and 50

5 Ibid at 44

6 Ibid at 46

7 Ibid 1t 48

8 Ibid at 52 and 11 respectively

9 Ibid at 76-77

10 See hills

Another issue is that what's considered 'contemporary' by Indigenous, racialized and other historically marginalized artists are often not considered to be 'contemporary' by the current arts system and peers.¹¹ This likely occurs because of the different evolution of styles, trends and artistic movements in different parts of the world. The contemporary arts milieu is very much based upon the standards of the West and rarely takes into consideration the important histories and artistic practices that had been suppressed during centuries of European domination and its insistence on universal values that were implicit in European systems of thought, governance, economics and civil society. Further, while some of these values have been eschewed by contemporary post-modernist philosophies and its influence on artistic expression, there are divergent perspectives by Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized artists about the value of post-modernism to their work as many of these artists see post-modernism as the latest salvo of European hegemonic thought.

The change in demographics is supplanting traditional notions of Canadian culture as Eurocentric and addressing issues concerning groups marginalized within the Eurocentric, ablest and urban-centric framework. The trend in these areas will increase almost exponentially given the increased sizes of racialized, Indigenous and other historically marginalized communities and artists.

The obvious challenge here is for the arts community generally, and the media arts network in particular, to begin to understand that it is not desirable nor precise to use Western modes to assess the merits of diverse artistic forms and expressions of Indigenous, racialized and other marginalized artists and communities.¹² Long-standing 'standards of excellence only' need to be re-assessed against the measure of a critical capacity, one that considers the 'standpoint' of the presenters, i.e., their relationship to the production of knowledge and their adherence to a selective tradition that honours the notion that universal values in the arts derive from the European systems against which others are then measured. Such an approach cuts short any dialogue about the values and selective traditions of Indigenous and racialized groups and their importance in influencing the creative expressions of artists from these communities.

In this context, WolfBrown asserts:

...arts engagement is generally higher for Ontarians of colour, and highest for Black populations. This is driven primarily by higher engagement in arts learning

11 See Natasha Bakht *Mere Song and Dance: Multicultural Imperative in the Arts*. This paper was first presented in 2009 at the Canada Dance Festival and then has been published by Between the Lines Press in *Unsettling Multiculturalism: Lands, Labours, Bodies*, May Chazan, Lisa Helps, Anna Stanley, And Sonali Thakkar, (Eds.), (2011) and is forthcoming in *Pluralism in the Arts In Canada: A Change is Gonna Come*, compiled, written and edited by Charles C. Smith for the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. See also Kevin A. Ormsby *Between Generations Towards Understanding the Difference in Realities and Aspirations of the First and Second Generation of Culturally Diverse Artists*, and, George Elliot Clarke *The Stage Is Not White —And Neither Is Canada* forthcoming in *Pluralism in the Arts In Canada: A Change is Gonna Come*, compiled, written and edited by Charles C. Smith for the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

12 For a more in-depth discussion on this issue, see Cornell West *The New Cultural Politics of Difference*(1990), Hommi Bhabha *The Location of Culture* (1994), Frances Henry and Carol Tator *Challenging Racism in the Arts* (1998), Althea Prince *Being Black* (2005), Michael M. Ames *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes: the Anthropology of Museums* (1992), Natasha Bakht, *Mere Song and Dance* (2009), Michael Greyeyes *Notions of Indian-ness* (2009), Kevin A. Ormsby *Between Generations: Towards Understanding the Difference in Realities and Aspirations of the First and Second Generation of Culturally Diverse Artists* (2009), Little Pear Garden Theatre Collective *Demystifying Chinese Aesthetics* (2009), Mennaka Thakker Dance Company and Kalannidhi Fine Arts of Canada *Contemporary Choreography in Indian Dance* (2009)

activities and community-based events. (Visible minorities, as a group, have an arts learning index of 25 compared to 13 for whites (12 point difference)...

Patterns of engagement by race are partly driven by age as respondents of colour are, on average, seven years younger than white respondents (41 vs. 48 years old)¹³.

Further, WolfBrown suggests that there are four key “Implications for Arts Providers, Funders and Policymakers” based on the evidence from the research. These are:

- I) “The question of ‘where’ arts participation happens, and how much emphasis should be given to informal vs. formal settings is an essential conversation for arts organizations when considering programming and audience development. (So) (h)ow can arts groups reach people in their homes and in community-based settings? What can policy makers and funders do to address this issue?
- II) “Thinking about engaging diverse audiences means thinking broadly about arts activities in general. Conceiving programs that harness interest in participatory activities, like dancing, playing music, acting and storytelling, could help build relationships with certain populations, such as Indigenous people.
- III) “Findings point to the key role that the arts can play in social bridging and bonding, which are both critical to a healthy arts ecology. Solidifying this message could help to connect the arts to larger community issues, such as the need for tolerance and dialogue amongst diverse communities.”¹⁴

This is the artistic milieu MANO is now addressing and, as such, has developed this policy framework for its members.

6. GOVERNANCE, HUMAN RIGHTS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION:

Clearly, there are overlaps on these issues. There are a number of resources that can assist arts organizations in addressing these matters. As part of this toolkit, there is a power-point file addressing human rights organizational development guidelines in Ontario. This is based on documents developed by the Ontario Human Rights Commission (<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-and-guidelines-racism-and-racial-discrimination>)

As for issues related to governance and board/volunteer diversity, the Maytree Foundation’s work is valuable to this process (<http://diversecitytoronto.ca/get-involved/welcome-to-the-new-diverse-city-onboard-program/>)

7. A WORD ABOUT TERMINOLOGY:

The equity and diversity field is full of terms and concepts that seem to change

¹³ Ibid at 63
¹⁴ Ibid at 89

constantly. Several contemporary texts provide glossaries with definitions for what appear to be a never-ending, exponentially growing minefield of words and phrases, and the ideas associated with them.¹⁵ In perusing some of these resources, it is easy to see commonalities and differences and changes over time. However, it may seem perplexing to some about what these terms mean, how such meanings were constructed and which terms are most appropriate.

This issue is disturbing even to writers and thinkers deeply engaged in this discourse. For example, the poet, novelist, playwright and essayist, Marlene Nourbese Phillip once wrote:

I always thought I was Negro
till I was Coloured,
West Indian, till I was told
that Columbus was wrong
in thinking he was west of India -
that made me Caribbean.
And throughout the '60s, '70s and '80s,
I was sure I was Black.
Now Black is passé,
African de rigeur,
and me a chameleon of labels.¹⁶

One can also see similar scenarios when looking at identifying terms for Indigenous peoples or persons with disabilities. For the former, do we refer to them as nations, people or peoples, Indigenous or Indian or Native or Indigenous; for the latter, do those who are hearing impaired fit here? What about those with mobility challenges, visual impairments or blindness? What commonalities do they share? What is different about each and how might this be considered.

In their glossary of terms, Lopes and Thomas provide an historical context for the terms they employ. They explore the contingent nature of such definitions and why they may change over time. They note several reasons for this, but the most significant likely derive from the binary positions of: (a) state determined categorization; and (b) community processes of self-determination, self-naming and agency.

In both scenarios, naming and definitions have changed and, for the latter, will likely continue to do so. Regarding the government's influence in this area, it can be seen as a process of categorization that contains and limits whereas community processes are much more exploratory and, thereby, expansive. The former often comes without or, at best, with little direct dialogue for those it names and defines; the latter often has little influence in obliging government to accept the process and outcomes of self-definition. Both clearly have social, political, cultural and educational implications.

15 For example, see: *The Colour of Democracy*, Frances Henry, C. Tator, W. Mattis; *Dancing on Live Embers*, Tina Lopes and Barb Thomas, Broadview Press; *Cultural Diversity in the Media Arts*, Independent Media Arts Alliance and National Indigenous Media Arts Coalition in *Pluralism in the Arts in Canada: A Change is Gonna Come* ed. Charles C. Smith, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2012; and *Arts and Equity: A Toolkit for Community Engagement*, Skye Louis and Leah Burns, Neighbourhood Arts Network in *Pluralism in the Arts in Canada: A Change is Gonna Come* ed. Charles C. Smith, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2012; *Figuring the Plural*, Mina Para Matlon et al, Art Institute of Chicago, 2014

16 *What's In A Name?* in *Sad Dances in Field of White*, ed. Charles C. Smith for Is Five Press, p, 36

In her play **Fires in the Mirror: Crown Heights, Brooklyn and Other Identities**, Anna Deveare Smith plays the role of a human rights officer in the New York City administration who shares her perspectives on the conflict between African Americans and Hasidic Jews in Crown Heights Brooklyn. This character says: I think you know the Eskimos have 70 words for snow. We probably have 70 different kinds of bias, prejudice, racism and discrimination, but it's not in our mind-set to be clear about it. So I think that we have sort of a lousy language on the subject, and that is a reflection of our unwillingness to deal with it honestly and to sort it out."¹⁷

As a counter point, Audre Lorde quite clearly and irrevocably defines herself as a Black lesbian feminist socialist mother of two and often challenged feminism for its 'Whiteness' and reliance on patriarchy. In this context, Lorde critiques the Eurocentric philosophical tradition of binaries, explaining that notions of identity and being are much more complex and contingent rather than fixed between oppositions that determine positionality in terms of values, including dominance and subordination.¹⁸

Perhaps this is the starting point for this conversation – the link between power and naming and what this means in society, culture and the arts, and in institutions that are engaged in the arts, particularly educational institutions such as OCAD U that has committed itself to equity and diversity and must, as part of this, engage these notions within academic parameters of freedom of expression, scholarship, artistic practice and standards of excellence.

To reflect on this, it may be useful to review developments in the following areas:

- The Canadian Multiculturalism Policy and Law
- Self-Definition and Identity Movements
- Problematic Terms

Following a discussion of these issues, this document will turn its attention to the benefits and challenges of social and institutional change, including the location of changes within OCAD U to support its equity and diversity initiatives.

7.1 Multiculturalism - Challenges and Changes:

A state project formed in the late 1960s and adopted by Parliament in the early 1970s, multiculturalism in Canada was intended to recognize a pluralistic society within a bilingual/bicultural framework.¹⁹ While this ideology provided a clear demarcation from the past history of assimilation to Western values and norms, it has been roundly critiqued for its focus on cultural celebrations and avoidance of substantive issues of equality in law and practice, including the arts.²⁰ Despite such critiques from mostly Indigenous and racialized peoples, multiculturalism was not only Canadian government

17 p. 63 Anchor Books, 1993

18 See "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Redefining Difference": Also, see Ian Ang "Identity Blues" from **Without Guarantees: In Honour of Stuart Hall**, eds, Gilroy, P. et al, Pp. 1-13, © Verso (London, New York) 2000

19 See **A Just Society**, Pierre Elliot Trudeau, and, **Blackness and Modernity: the colour of Humanity and the Quest for Freedom**, Cecil Foster, Montreal : McGill-Queen's University Press, c2007.

20 See Natasha Bakht, *Mere "Song and Dance": Complicating the Multicultural Imperative in the Arts*, and, George Elliot Clarke, *The Stage is Not White - And Neither is Canada*, in **Pluralism in the Arts in Canada: A Change is Gonna Come** ed. Charles C. Smith, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2012

policy in the 1970s and 1980s, it was enshrined as a Canadian value in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and adopted into legislation in 1988.

However, the codification into law of the multicultural policy did little to curtail the many challenges from community advocates and scholars regarding the limitations of the Canadian government approach to substantive issues of Indigenous and racialized peoples. Further, the advent of the term 'employment equity', while proposing some advances in terminology, presented other challenges in its homogenization of 'designated' groups as 'Indigenous', 'visible minorities', 'persons with disabilities', and 'women'.²¹

Parallel developments in feminist, Indigenous and racialized communities were evident during this time - Indigenous peoples seeking recognition for their inherent right to self-determination, including recognition of their diverse cultures; diverse racialized communities advocating for an understanding of the impact of racism and its historical and systemic traits while feminism was broadening its understanding based on intersections with other identities.

As part of this, both Indigenous and racialized peoples called for reparations for past injustices²² and these along with other challenges to government determination of terms brought about some changes in public discourse. For example, in terms of race, the first break from multiculturalism was the term 'race relations' that quickly changed to 'anti-racism', a term that has in recent years, however, seemingly disappeared in public policy development. Regarding Indigenous peoples, there continues to be demands to recognize the plurality of nations, languages and cultures as well as relationships to land and associated rights.

While one would think that these things might find home in a truly multicultural society, past and present discrimination and its impact on life opportunities for certain groups, has not been addressed adequately. As a result, it was and is not possible to realize the vision of such a society, one full of historically entrenched inequities resulting from subordinating particular groups.

It is for this reason, and others, that Canadian multiculturalism has had little success.²³

7.2 Self-Definition and Identity Movements:

As noted above, there have been considerable efforts by Indigenous and racialized peoples, women, persons with disabilities, the LGBTQ communities and other marginalized groups to articulate their identities and to have this recognized in the broader society, in laws, institutional policies and practices, and artistic disciplines, including standards of excellence, practice, scholarship and adjudication. West describes this as flowing out of the movements for national liberation globally, and civil

21 See Justice R. Abella **Report of the Commission on Equality In Employment**, Government of Canada, 1984. This document proposed these terms that then became codified in Federal employment equity legislation and the Federal Contractors Program.

22 For example, there are the following issues: Japanese Canadian Redress, Black Reparations for Slavery, Chinese Canadian Head Tax, South Asian Komagatu Maru, Hogan's Alley, Africville

23 See Cecil Foster **Blacks and Modernity**

and human rights within Western states, which emerged out of the 1950s and 60s but which he and others acknowledge as having precedent in earlier times.²⁴

Further, we are witnessing in the contemporary a broad range of hybrid ties that address intersectionality and active 'becoming' through awareness/discovery of one's past and 'Blood Memory', the connections to disjointed ancestry and the value of orality as a source of authority. One of the major arguments in these and other writings has been about Western values of homogenization versus the plurality self-identification and creative expression can lead establish.

Equally, within this context notions of 'essentialism' have been strongly critiqued and their boundaries shown to be problematic. Seen as limiting human development, 'essentialist' narratives narrow the scope of influences on identities and their articulations. This, in turn, reduces the possibilities such expression might evoke and is contrary to the values of heterogeneity that engages difference and points to abundant evidence of where it is set in histories and daily life.

This is a far-reaching phenomenon evident in many texts, including the popular ***American Tapestry: The Story of the Black, White and Multiracial Ancestors of Michelle Obama***.²⁵ Because of its subject, this book on the origins of the First Lady of the U.S. commands significant public attention, calling in to question the racialized identity of that nation. Similarly, some Indigenous peoples in Canada speak of their diverse heritage, traced to this land and to those who arrived from other borders. Terms such as 'creolization', 'diasporic', 'syncretism' are at home in this conversation. While each may have its specific origin and meaning, they have come to be adjunct to other identities far beyond that which gave them birth.

As with any paradigm shift, there is the challenge of naming and the construction of meaning. As Said and Fanon suggest, terminology sits within the context of the times in which it is used and is often contested.²⁶ For example, in discussing the transition

in social value of museums, Bennett details how a similarly constructed institution, the museum, can shift over time to reflect the values of those in power. This contestation owes itself to several sources, e.g., generational, educational, privilege and emerging constructs of political-economic interests, creating what is seen as 'the norm'.

Said and Fanon suggest that the times of European hegemony created 'norms' in which sexism, racism and other currently disparaged categories were like breathing air. Therefore, unless these elements of the past have been totally identified, eliminated and remedied, they will find their way into the contemporary, a matter that has been seen in the arts in such contestations around the Royal Ontario Museum's ***Into the***

24 See Cornell West "The New Cultural Politics of Difference" from **Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures**, eds., Ferguson, R. et al Pp. 11-23 © West Publ. 1990. As well, see: ***Petticoats and Prejudice: Women and Law in Nineteenth Century Canada***, Constance Backhouse, Women's Press with Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History, 1991; "**Race**", ***Rights and the Law in the Supreme Court of Canada***, J. Walker, Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2006; ***The Racial Polity***, in **Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race**, Charles W. Mills, Cornell University Press, 1998

25 Rachel Swarns, *Amistad*/HarperCollins . This book was featured across all library systems in North America in 2014 and has been widely reviewed.

26 Edward Said ***Culture and Imperialism of Civilization***, Vintage Books 1994. Frantz Fanon *Racism and Culture*, in **Toward the African Revolution**, Monthly Review Press, 1964

Heart of Africa, The Art Gallery of Ontario's **Barnes Exhibit**, **The Writing Through Race Conference** and in OCAD U's Black arts conference and its follow-up report.

A sign of this difference can be seen in the writings of William Butler Yeats and Chinua Achebe. Yeats wrote *'The Second Coming'*, with its iconic lines:

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of a passionate intensity.

Written as a reflection on the devastation of Europe as a result of World War I, this poem was a cry about the Western world losing hold of itself and falling in to chaos. Taking one of these lines as the title for his first novel, **Things Fall Apart**, it would seem Achebe might agree with this but from an entirely different perspective. What the former sees as the end of what seemed both a desired and homogenous/ordered world, the latter sees as the chaos derived through the force of an homogenizing colonialism, a project that cut off access to things past in the colonized group and clearly evident in residential schools for Indigenous peoples or compelling slaves to speak the languages and adopt the religions and customs of their masters. In both scenarios, any practice of traditional languages and/or customs was punishable. Regarding Indigenous peoples, in particular, this has a legacy in Canadian society that is still unresolved.

For different reasons, the same could be said for the Chinese, South Asians and Blacks, (persons of African descent), the deaf and persons with disabilities; and this difference is pronounced in various sectors and disciplines in the arts and academic education in the arts. Therefore, where equity and diversity is a challenge to a system built on Eurocentric values and standards, it becomes the cry of the 'other'. It is this 'other', acknowledged in fullness, that underlines what it might mean to live in a truly inclusive society, one that educational, particularly post-secondary, institutions should be preparing aspirants to engage in. As part of this, acknowledgement must be given to the emergent field these expansive and expanding entities can and will occupy. As Hall might suggest, this would be the moment of a 'festival of revolution' or what Foster presents as the infinitude and variableness of Blackness in contrast to the idealized and static nature of Whiteness.²⁷

27 See *For Allon White: metaphors of transformation from Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* ed. D. Morley and Chen, K., Routledge, 1996, pp. 287-308; and Cecil Foster **Blacks and Modernity**.

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