
IMAAAMI

BASIS OF UNITY

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Independent Media Arts Alliance

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The Basis of Unity states the Independent Media Arts Alliance (IMAA)'s position on and commitment to anti-oppression principles. It is a living document working towards building a more equitable, robust, abundant and interconnected sector. IMAA's membership and community are encouraged to engage with the Basis of Unity by submitting feedback, comments, and questions regarding the content, form or language of the document. Feedback collected will be reviewed and discussed by IMAA's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee every three months. The Committee reviews and updates the policy yearly in the fall.

IMAA is located in Tiohtiá:ke, also known as Mooniyang or Montreal, the unceded traditional land of the Kanien'kehà:ka/Mohawk Nation and meeting place for many First Nations including the Huron-Wendat, Abenaki, and Anishinaabeg. IMAA's work and membership takes place across the land of so-called Canada across treated and unceded lands. IMAA is in solidarity with Indigenous sovereignty across Turtle Island and actively contends with how to honor and materially uphold it throughout all our activities.

IMAA recognizes that systemic oppression operates throughout arts organizations to disempower individuals because of their ability, age, economic status, gender, nationality, race, religion, and sexuality amongst other factors. Systemic inequities and personal biases operate across all levels of work in the media arts and must be recognized and understood to allow us to move forward in solidarity.

The shapes these intersecting forms of marginalization take include: unequal access to opportunity and resources, exploitative demands of labour, exploitation of lived experience, cultural appropriation, psychological or physical harassment, ableism, ageism, sexism, cissexism, racism, microaggression, homophobia, tokenization, and transmisogyny. Systemic inequities compound and are compounded by personal biases, which can include affinity bias, attribution bias, confirmation bias, and stereotype bias.

Artist-run centres and collectives are responsive grassroots spaces that have emerged as an alternative to dominant systems and institutional forms of art. Moving these spaces towards greater equity has historically been led by people who have been denied that equity, drawing strength from movements and communities. This work has not received the support it deserves: this has made it difficult to sustain and has led to repeated erosion of momentum, repetition, and a loss of history. IMAA is complicit in the perpetuation of systems of oppression. Centering reciprocal relations, all advocacy for more resources must take into consideration existing inequities and be done in an effort to rectify them.

To achieve substantive equity within the media arts sector, IMAA is working towards operating within anti-oppression, disability justice, and anti-racist frameworks for all work between team, board members and membership.

Working against a climate of austerity, IMAA seeks to centre resource reprioritization, to amplify equity-deserving voices, to be emotionally and ecologically sustainable, and to be self-reflexive and accountable towards capacity. We affirm job stability and security as bases of being able to meaningfully shift our sector towards equity.

The Basis of Unity provides a lens and a foundation for IMAA's work; it will guide IMAA's board, staff, and members and inform all of IMAA's governance, operations, and activities.

Date of Ratification: 2023-09-08
Updated: 2024-11-04

This version of the Statement of Unity was drafted by IMAA's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) committee which includes both staff, board, and community members (Yun-Jou Chang, Martha Cooley, Eli Hirtle, Eusebio Lopez-Aguilar, Barbora Racevičiūtė).

IMAA referred to many resources in outlining this document including Article's statement. The committee is currently working on a resource list to provide context to the Basis of Unity.