

TBA Statement of Accountability

The staff and members of the board of the Toronto Biennial of Art (TBA) have been listening and learning over the past month. We are a young organization, less than a year out from the first edition of TBA. Yet we are all part of a Canadian society, with its colonial roots, that has far too long marginalized and oppressed—and continues to marginalize and oppress—Black and Indigenous peoples and People of Colour.

We affirm our solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and denounce racism in all its guises. We support the dismantling of all systems of oppression. Words are insufficient. Signaling of virtue is not enough. This declaration must be supported by our actions. We will re-focus on the changes required to dismantle oppressive systems that produce and perpetuate white supremacy in all sectors of life.

TBA was created to reflect the diversity of our host city. The first edition of TBA gave voice to artists of difference, and a majority of participating artists were Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC). But that is not enough. We recognize that our board and staff leadership is predominantly white; necessary voices are missing. In addition to facilitating a diversity of perspectives with our exhibitions and programs, TBA will empower and give voice to BIPOC employees, individuals and communities in all that we do.

Specifically, TBA commits to the following:

- We will advocate for equity and inclusivity in arts' funding at all levels of government, and with private gifts, corporate donors and sponsors. As a start to this urgent work, TBA staff and board will deepen our relationships and partnerships with the Black community, while also taking the time to identify and organize donations in support of the community and the Black Lives Matter movement.
- In 2020, we will develop and implement an Equity and Inclusivity Policy for our staff and board that is shaped by principles of anti-racism. The Policy will be supported by funds for on-going training. It will include the necessary steps in building and practicing equity, diversity, and inclusion through a lens of social justice.
- TBA will put out a wide and public call to have a board of diversity. Our board, which currently consists of 40% BIPOC members, will commit to always having a chair or vice-chair from such community. Equity policies will guide how we support current staff as well as how we hire future staff and choose suppliers and partners. This is work we are currently undertaking and we will always ask ourselves how much more we can do.

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- We re-commit to an exhibition program that is inclusive and diverse. We will better support BIPOC artists and participants in future editions of TBA to ensure that the Biennial continues to foster the commissioning and development of new works which challenge the *status quo*.
- To maintain transparency and accountability, we will regularly report back on progress towards achieving these goals.

This is a moment of reckoning. TBA will do whatever is possible to be a part of solutions and not to perpetuate problems. We may make mistakes along that difficult road and are open to constructive feedback, as to how we can continue to grow as an organization.

We look forward to continuing to dialogue with our community of local, national, and international peers, artists, audiences, and partners on the road to a more just and equitable society.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and all Staff at the Toronto Biennial of Art, June 30, 2020.