



# RACIAL EQUITY

## at **ARTIST TRUST**

### **BACKGROUND**

Artist Trust is a nonprofit organization that helps Washington State artists of all disciplines thrive through direct support, community building and advocacy. We believe a fair and just society ensures artists of all background and identities are included in its cultural narratives.

### **ARTIST TRUST'S RACIAL EQUITY STATEMENT**

Artist Trust is committed to becoming an anti-racist organization, and to working against the systems of racism we have inherited, upheld, and perpetuated. We know we are not there yet. Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) have been systemically oppressed, and we are committed to partnering with them to eradicate white supremacy throughout our organization and to support historically marginalized artists across Washington State.

### **HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT**

This document serves to provide baseline context and resources for why we use a racial equity lens in our work as an artist-serving organization. Through the resources provided, we hope to promote learning, common understanding and deeper exploration of how to be an anti-racist organization.

# ARTIST TRUST RACIAL EQUITY FRAMEWORK

## COMMITMENT TO RACIAL EQUITY

Artist Trust is committed to racial equity throughout our organization, working against systems of racism and engaging in partnership with BIPOC artists to truly fulfill our mission to support all artists in Washington State.

## WHY RACE?

Artist Trust recognizes historical and structural barriers to artist funding, resources, and leadership opportunities for Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC). We believe a fair and just society ensures artists of all backgrounds and identities are part of its cultural narratives. We recognize our own practices throughout our organizational history have upheld systems of white supremacy, and we are taking direct action to create new structures where BIPOC artists can thrive.

## RACE and \_\_\_\_.

We lead with race because racial inequities are deep-rooted and persist in art support systems across the country. Race creates barriers to accessing resources and often intersects with other dimensions of artists' identity, such as ability, age, citizenship, discipline, economic status, education, gender, geography, and sexuality. Our work towards racial equity informs the way we address other inequities and helps us take a more intersectional approach.

## OUR GOALS

### Deepen understanding of organizational inequities to advance our mission and values

#### Strategies

Grow Artist Trust's racial equity competency through critical examination, reflection, and systems change.

Continually build knowledge of racial equity best practices and pursue opportunities for peer learning and resource sharing.

Support open dialogue among board and staff to learn and grow, creating a strong anti-racist leadership team.

### Dismantle barriers to access and participation and engage BIPOC artists in our work

#### Strategies

Embed a racial equity lens in decision making throughout our programs, operations, and fundraising.

Develop genuine partnerships with BIPOC artists and BIPOC-serving organizations.

Ensure representation and authentic engagement of BIPOC individuals across the organization at all levels.

## OUR COMMITMENT TO GEOGRAPHIC EQUITY

Artist Trust is dedicated to supporting artists across Washington State, with a focus on those historically excluded from funding and visibility, including artists in rural communities, under-resourced regions, and artists with immigrant status. This is ongoing work, and we are committed to making steady progress toward a more equitable future for all artists.

We recognize that geographic location, especially when combined with other identity factors, profoundly shapes access to resources. Artists across Washington State experience different levels of opportunity depending on the availability of local funding, education, community networks, and institutional support. Artist Trust's history reflects these imbalances, and we are determined to do better.

For us, geographic equity means showing up across the state, listening deeply, and building relationships that last beyond a single program or event. It means naming the real gaps that exist and adapting our work so that artists everywhere can see themselves reflected in Artist Trust's programs, networks, and funding opportunities, including grants, professional development, convenings, and advocacy. We know our impact is strongest when we are in authentic, sustained community with artists, wherever they live and work.

## **ARTIST TRUST'S VALUES**

In 2021, a cohort of six Washington State artists representing multiple disciplines, backgrounds, and geographies were convened to re-envision Artist Trust's values with explicit racial equity and anti-racist language. This process was led by AV Consulting as part of Artist Trust's Racial Equity Audit process as recommended by our community. Thank you to our Racial Equity Artist Cohort: Jiemei Lin, Paige Pettibon, Carl Richardson, Abel Rocha, Gilda Sheppard, and Chris E. Vargas.

We see our values as aspirational. We are already implementing them in our processes and will use them as a guiding tool for policy creation and program development. We are fortunate to be a part of a community that pushes us to be better and are excited to grow with you by our side.

### **WE ARE A COMMUNITY**

With artists at the forefront, we collectively build community at all levels of our organization by being welcoming, sharing space, being transparent, and elevating artists' vision and voice. We show up for artists beyond monetary support through genuine, kind, safe, and joyful actions. Our community includes all who feel a connection with our work, including artists of all disciplines and backgrounds, culture bearers, and creatives, arts enthusiasts, supporters, organizers, and advocates.

### **WE SEE ARTISTS AS LEADERS**

We believe that the leadership of artists has the power to create just, equitable, and vibrant communities. We work to elevate artists as leaders throughout the entirety of Washington State, centering those who identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), LGBTQIA+, live with or have disabilities, or come from rural or less-resourced places. We build stronger relationships with artists by respecting their voice, elevating their expertise, and creating systems that positively impact their development and success. We exist because of artists.

### **WE SHARE POWER & RESOURCES**

To be truly antiracist and respond to the complexities of the nonprofit sector, we must share power, funding, and resources. We meaningfully engage artists to inform our power-sharing strategies, especially for Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), harmed, and underrepresented communities who have been historically shut out. Our fundraising efforts are community-centric and aligned with movement building. We engage our donors as partners and actively work to build relationships between donors and artists.

### **WE EARN TRUST**

We believe that trust is earned through transparency and that our mission is best carried forward through antiracist action. We stay accountable by collaborating with artists to develop and evaluate our goals, ensuring we stay mission-focused and in line with our values. We provide accessible information about our business practices, make clear the processes and rationale for our decision

making, and communicate changes regularly and consistently. We acknowledge the errors and harm to artists who identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) in our former practices and continue to learn from our mistakes.

### **WE ENGAGE IN CONTINUED LEARNING**

Artist Trust is committed to change. We push boundaries and welcome new perspectives by asking artists to analyze, think critically, and actively inform our purpose, actions, and role in the community. We understand that knowledge is not always static. To eliminate the white supremacist roots in the education we have received, we must honor the lived experiences of artists who identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC). We do this with intention by creating accessible and transformative spaces that shape our decision-making and programming.

## **WHY DOES ARTIST TRUST USE THE TERM “BIPOC”?**

Artist Trust recognizes that Black and Indigenous people experience more barriers and less opportunities than other people of color. We use the term BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) to recognize this reality.

## **WHY RACIAL EQUITY MATTERS AT ARTIST TRUST**

Artist Trust recognizes historical and structural barriers to artist funding, resources, and leadership opportunities for Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC). In our work supporting artists, we must acknowledge that our efforts are inherently intertwined with power and the distribution of resources. To be an anti-racist organization, we must actively investigate who has access to opportunities and who doesn't.

We lead with race because racial inequities are deep-rooted and persist in art support systems across the country. Race creates barriers to accessing resources and often intersects with other dimensions of artists' identity, such as ability, age, citizenship, discipline, economic status, education, gender, geography, and sexuality. Our work towards racial equity informs the way we address other inequities and helps us take a more intersectional approach.

As an organization that champions artists, it is imperative that we center race in our work. We must continually work to ensure opportunities for those who have historically been excluded from our work and move from being part of the problem to being a part of the solution.

## **REQUIRED VIEWING FOR ARTIST TRUST BOARD AND STAFF MEMBERS AS PART OF ONBOARDING**

### **[Real and Not Real: A History of Racialization in the United States](#)**

*Grantmakers in the Arts / Race Forward*

This webinar explores the history of racialization in our country and ultimately how that intersects with arts philanthropy.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### [White Supremacy Culture In Organizations](#)

This is a list of characteristics of white supremacy culture that show up in our organizations. Organizational culture is powerful precisely because it is so pervasive, impacting every part of our work; at the same time, it is very difficult to name or identify.

### [Racism Defined](#)

*dRworks*

The definition of racism offered here is grounded in [Critical Race Theory](#), a movement started in the 1970s by activists and scholars committed to the study and transformation of traditional relationships of race to racism and power.

### [Think Impact, Not Intention](#)

*Blinkist Magazine*

In this interview, author and educator Robin DiAngelo discusses white fragility, why it's so hard for white people to talk about race, and the inherent meaning that whiteness has in a racialized world.

### [Grantmaking with a Racial Equity Lens](#)

*Grant Craft*

In this guide, grant makers explain why a focus on racial equity gives them a powerful "lens" for understanding and advancing their work. Drawing on firsthand experiences, the guide offers advice on promoting and deepening your foundation's commitment to racial equity, both internally and in the programs you support.

### [Racial Equity in Creative Placemaking](#)

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As communities across the country grapple with our nation's vast legacy of racism, one that permeates our everyday life today, creative placemaking has a unique role to play in imagining what a more equitable present and future might look like. Bringing together the arts, culture, and creative decision-making in the process of planning and nurturing our future, creative placemaking is a potent tool to tackle inequity today and build a just future. In this recorded webinar, learn how to incorporate racial equity at every turn in your project—from conceiving it, to bringing it to life.