



## **LOFT ANTIRACISM COMMITMENT**

The Loft recognizes:

- Racism within the U.S. was developed to provide and sustain social and economic advantages for people of European/white culture and descent (white supremacy)
- Racism has played a definitive role in the history of our country and communities as well as in the development and perpetuation of our institutions. Factors such as anti-Blackness, land theft and genocide, racialized xenophobia, colonization, exploitation of labor and resources, and state sanctioned violence at home and abroad are not only embedded in the country's history, but baked into structures and practices that persist to this day.
- Racism expresses via individual beliefs and actions, institutional policies and practices, as well as cultural norms and societal systems
- Within arts and cultural institutions racism often manifests as biases for European/white aesthetics and cultural expression within institutional programs and operations, policies and practices
- Systemic racism negatively impacts every indicator of quality life for people of color including health, education, economic prosperity, housing, etc.
- Oppression is intersectional and manifests across identities (including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and class) within the systems of white supremacy, patriarchy, heterosexism, and capitalism.
- Racism dehumanizes and traumatizes. The power of language and the cultural practice of sharing stories can restore, heal, and reconcile.

As an antiracist organization, the Loft is committed to:

- Participating in the active, daily practice of dismantling the individual and societal systems, institutions, actions, and beliefs that oppress and marginalize individuals and groups of color, and Indigenous people.



- Ongoing learning and continuing to evolve an analysis of race and racism that informs the equitable\* stewardship of the Loft's resources. This includes rigorously examining and deconstructing existing practices and structures for barriers to participation, especially as they may pertain to people such as American Indian, Pacific Islander, Indigenous, Black, Asian, Latinx, Arab, Middle Eastern, and mixed race people. We recognize this means there is no one size fits all policy that will solve ours or everyone's problems, and that we must remain nimble, proactive, and collaborative.
- Contributing to the development of all writers and to building communities that help them thrive.
- Building capacity and shared understanding to achieve these goals among Loft staff, board, contract artists, and constituents
- Amplifying and celebrating stories from diverse cultural communities, with particular care and commitment to the voices of oppressed peoples
- Generating literary experiences that cultivate belonging, connectedness, wholeness, and an appreciation of the diverse cultures in our community. This includes holding space, whether this be a performance or a class, and define it as a place where challenging ideas and meaningful, respectful debate can happen. At the same time, remaining vigilant to end the harm that can be caused in these spaces, particularly to historically marginalized communities by the dominant white majority.
- Maintaining accountable relationships with our community
- Fostering mutually beneficial collaborations and partnerships that advance the agency and power of oppressed peoples and communities
- Building solidarity with individuals and organizations committed to undoing racism and other systems of oppression

\*The Loft defines equity as the just treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some individuals or groups. Equity does NOT assume everyone is starting from the same place, with the same needs; instead, equity involves trying to understand and meet people where



they are at, and provide them with what they need to succeed, based on their specific needs and lived experience, and the ways in which they and their communities have been marginalized and oppressed.

The Loft's ongoing commitment to being an anti-racist organization means that everyone within the Loft community—staff, board, teaching artists, students, audience members, and other program participants—share the responsibility of cultivating an equitable classroom, conference, festival, and event learning environment. We ask that every Loft community member help to create spaces that reflect our shared anti-racist and equity-based values, as articulated above and in our code of conduct.