

BLACK LIVES MATTER - WE STAND IN SOLIDARITY

TO OUR CALGARY FRINGE FAMILY,

We want you to know where Calgary Fringe stands in regards to the worldwide movements happening for Black Lives Matters. First and foremost, we stand in solidarity with the Black and POC communities who have been fighting against systemic racism. We know there is more to be done, and we want to make sure that we properly identify what we can do for our corner, and how to ensure it is what is right as opposed to what is easy.

As we said at our recent Annual General Meeting, diversity is something that Fringes have struggled with in our colonized society, and this is an issue we want to address head on. Last December, we started the Inclusivity Committee with the goal of engaging the diverse community in Calgary and working out a Terms of Reference as to how we can create meaningful change. This is a positive, if not overdue, first step, and far from the end of what we aim to do. We are examining what barriers are stopping our marginalized communities from participating in Fringe – from artists to volunteers and board members. We are committed to taking this time to listen and learn what the pinch points and oversights are and finding solutions to bridging that divide so that everyone can be welcomed, supported, and feel at home in the Fringe family. It's time to set aside personal feelings, and make sure that the work we do – and how we do it – ensures that everyone's needs are looked after.

There will be changes coming to the Calgary Fringe. These changes may be large or they could be smaller and subtler ways to ensure a zero-tolerance stance towards racism. While we value transparency throughout this process, we are not at a place where we can commit to clear goals with set timelines, and it would be wrong of us to try and rush those decisions. We will be sharing updates along our journey.

We won't be perfect at it, and we will likely make mistakes along the way. However, we give our word that we won't stop trying and putting in the work no matter the discomfort – we will learn and grow and get better along the way. Throughout it all, we remain committed to building a better, more equitable system that actively combats racism. Calgary Fringe is a place for all kinds of expressions through art, and we strive to ensure that everyone feels safe displaying their art through our festival.

AUGUST 10, 2020

35//50 INITIATIVE:

A call to action was put forward to Calgary arts organizations and arts leaders by a coalition of BIPOC artists who are members of the Mohkinstsis (including the City of Calgary) theatre and dance community in response to the Black Lives Matter Movement. In the spirit of ongoing engagement, the Calgary Fringe has been invited to commit to the **35//50 Initiative** (the initiative is reflective of the 35% BIPOC and 50% female and non-binary people in our community) - to take steps towards a more equitable, diverse, inclusive and accessible future in the performing arts with 2024 / 2025 season set as a target date to work towards.

The Calgary Fringe highly values equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. We are committed to meaningful change and are currently working towards developing a plan of action(s) to address the equity imbalance within our organization, and will be posting an outline of our next steps by October, 2020.

We continue to listen, to learn, and to grow - and continually renew our commitment to building a better, more equitable system that actively combats racism.

AUGUST 13, 2020

Blacks Lives Matter Murals Project - we add our voice to CADA's in support of Pink Flamingo and the Black Lives Matter Murals Project. Our disappointment and sorrow that the ensuing fallout even took place. <https://calgaryartsdevelopment.com/announcements/black-lives-matter-murals-project-support/>

