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GWDC'S 35//50 RESPONSE

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The 35//50 Initiative has asked arts organizations such as Good Women Dance Collective (GWDC) to do the work of reflecting inward on our past, current and future actions toward dismantling systemic racism and inequity in the arts. GWDC is committed to ongoing and meaningful actions and activism that result in increased representation and equitable distribution of power, experience and resources among BIPOC, women, non-binary and Disabled artists, and other marginalized groups. We want to thank the individuals organizing this initiative; there can be no dialogue or change without this kind of work and we appreciate the labour that has already gone into this initiative.

GWDC's actions toward these commitments have so far included improving accessibility to our spaces and events, prioritizing BIPOC, women, non-binary and Disabled artists in submission calls and programming, and investing in professional development in anti-racist and trauma-informed practices. We are committed to ensuring that the spaces we are creating are safe for BIPOC, women, non-binary and Disabled artists before they enter and will continue to evaluate our processes as needed, consulting with individuals in our community who have lived experiences with/identify with any of the above communities. GWDC commits to the practice of reaching out to individuals within these communities before making decisions that affect them, as we have seen that making decisions in a

bubble can be just as harmful as taking no action. We are committed to asking ourselves what skills we can prepare ourselves with to create spaces that feel safe for marginalized artists to work, create and have their needs heard and met within our organization. We also commit to annually tracking our statistics with a focus on transparency and equitable distribution of impactful opportunities, and to building meaningful and long-lasting relationships with artists from these communities.

In early September, we started compiling our statistics for the past three seasons and immediately had questions about how to compile them, who to include and how to accurately track data moving forward. It is clear that numbers are only part of the story and that reaching a quota of artists hired per season by an organization does not result in all artists having equal opportunity, artistic power or payment. For example, in our 2019/20 season, BIPOC artists made up 45% of the artists GWDC hired and paid professional wages. However, the proportion of artist fees paid out to this group was 23%, and not proportionate to their representation within the collective's programming, meaning that although GWDC is hiring and paying professional wages to BIPOC artists, the contracts are smaller and shorter, with perhaps less meaningful and in-depth engagement. We feel strongly that aspects such as contract duration, artistic engagement and impact should not be ignored when compiling and analyzing data. Although we recognize that increasing the numbers of BIPOC, women, non-binary and Disabled artists hired within arts organizations is a crucial starting point, we are wondering about how we can include a discussion of these artists' humanity and individuality within the context of data tracking and numbers-based goals.

The complexity of the number of individuals hired in comparison to how the money is spent paints a much larger picture, which is why we are wanting to dive deeper into our finances as well as our statistics. We are a smaller organization and need time to put together a more comprehensive document. We realistically have the capacity to release this by the end of October. If you have questions about any preliminary findings or numbers in this response please email ainsley@goodwomen.ca; we are more than happy to answer any questions or share our findings as we gather them.

GWDC collective artists have set internal commitments to forge meaningful, long lasting relationships with individuals in an effort to avoid tokenism or actions that are harmful. We are grateful for the times when we have been called out/in by our community and continue to welcome feedback about how we can grow and change. If you would like to provide feedback to GWDC on our operations, past events or this response you can do so by emailing us, or filling out our anonymous safe(r) spaces form <http://goodwomen.ca/reporting-form/> (<http://goodwomen.ca/reporting-form/>).