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 Call to Action

August 31, 2020

Thank you to Michelle Thrush, Makambe K. Simamba, Pamela Tzeng, Gina Puntil, Jenna Rodgers, Kiana Wu, Thomas Geddes, Steve Gin and Kunji Mark Ikeda for offering The 35//50 Initiative (/s/35__50-Initiative.pdf) and to all of the signatories and other supporters of this call to action.

Downstage has two current employees, Clare Preuss and Danielle Whyte. Both of us have signed on as individual signatories and commit to doing our utmost to work with all contract artists, employees and Downstage Board of Directors to uplift the principles and guidelines listed in The 35//50 Initiative.

We deeply value this work. We acknowledge that we have and will continue to make mistakes as we grow. We want to move forward with care, clarity and compassion as well as courage, knowing that this is a process of ongoing and fundamental systemic and personal change.

Downstage is led by two women and has a board with over 50% female representation. Our programming also tends to have good representation of female and non-binary people working in creative positions both on and off stage. As such, our NEXT STEPS outline our desire for more BIPOC focus, while we continue to honour the space for non-binary and female collaborators.

NEXT STEPS:

- The Downstage team is examining the structures of creating, producing and training within a theatre context. We aim to grow into a more inclusive world view and way of working. This is an ongoing and multilayered process that will unfold continually as we engage with other elements of the work, outlined here.
- Staff and board members will engage with ongoing Anti-Racism workshops and paid consultations with local, national and international individuals and organizations.
- Staff and board will redefine our Anti-Harassment policy to include a more specific and nuanced approach to Anti-Racism by the end of 2020. We are accessing AD HOC ASSEMBLY's Voluntary Addendum as a source of inspiration and will also work with BIPOC consultants as we finalize this document focused on EDIA within all facets of the Downstage working environment.
- Downstage is hiring two part-time positions with a focus on these positions being offered to BIPOC individuals and with the goal of growing these positions into full-time leadership positions. We have been working with board member Christopher Butler on these job calls and he will also be included in the interview process. Christopher is dedicated to growing BIPOC representation within arts organizations.

- We will expand board representation from our current state of 30% BIPOC to at least 40% BIPOC representation by the end of 2022.
- We are collaborating with ARTICLE 11 and Chromatic Theatre this season as well as various other BIPOC artists moving forward. Our goal is to continue to grow a culture of centering BIPOC artists, stories and power throughout creation processes.
- During the 2020-21 season, Downstage staff and board of directors will create a comprehensive succession plan for both Artistic Director and Managing Director roles. It is our goal to create an environment that will welcome BIPOC leaders to fill these roles as Clare and Danielle move on from Downstage in coming years.

We are eager to keep learning and being of service in our community as we support real change within the dynamics of theatre creation. For more details about any of these points, please contact Clare Preuss at clare@downstage.ca (mailto:clare@downstage.ca). Thank you

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