

The 35//50 Initiative

September 1, 2020

To our colleagues in the artistic industry,

Inspired by our colleagues south of us in Mohkinstsis (also known as Calgary) we, a coalition of [BIPOC](#) artists of Amiskwacîwâskahikan (also known as Edmonton) with the close support of other local artists echo the values expressed in the 35//50 Initiative letter circulated earlier this month. Just like our cousins to the south, we the undersigned members of the Edmonton theatre and dance community, recognize and appreciate the various statements, commitments, and initiatives you have taken on in response to the [Black Lives Matter Movement](#).

Our goal in this work is to offer a meaningful action for our artistic community to take steps towards a more equitable, diverse, inclusive and accessible future in the performing arts. In the spirit of ongoing engagement, we would like to invite you to commit to the 35//50 Initiative.

The 35//50 Initiative is based on two facts:

- **[37% - 43%](#) of our city are BIPOC and rising.**
- **It is evident that Employed Professionals in Edmonton's artistic Community does not reflect those numbers.**

We are grateful to be working in the spirit of collaboration with the founders of this initiative and look forward to sharing the discoveries of this movement. We recognize that Calgary and Edmonton are different cities with different challenges, but we believe that working together we can create an Alberta arts industry that is representative of the people that live here.

COLLECTIVE ACTION ITEMS

*identical actions as the founding initiative.

Over the next three years, we are committed to have our civic landscape more equitably reflected in our professional landscape: **a minimum of 35% BIPOC and 50% women or and gender minorities in paid, professional positions.** While our main focus is on BIPOC representation within our city we hold a firm belief in intersectionality and believe this inclusive work can also benefit gender equity. Hence the 35//50 initiative.

To successfully shift this discrepancy by 2024-2025 we need your ongoing commitment. We would like to welcome you into this initiative to hold Edmonton organizations mutually accountable to reflect the city in which we work and live. We believe it will lead to a stronger, more diverse community of artistic leaders, performers, and audiences.

We've selected the 2024-2025 season as a target date as it aligns with the [next census cycle](#) of the City of Edmonton. That allows three years to respond to the changing data regarding the demographics of our city, and presents an opportunity for Edmonton's artistic sector to prove ourselves as cultural leaders; leaders who create profound and lasting change via short- to long-term implementation of actionable programs, initiatives, and interventions that will serve to grow and broaden our community.

In the short term, we would like each organization to track the numbers of their administrative and artistic teams who identify as BIPOC, and those who identify as women or gender minorities. In the spirit of

transparency, we ask that this demographic information be gathered and made publicly available at the end of each artistic season in order to present an ongoing narrative of our organizational efforts. We aim to display a shift both qualitatively and quantitatively, and will differentiate decision making positions and boards of governance from onstage performers and other artistic contributors. The members of the 35//50 Initiative will synthesize this data to demonstrate our collective shift over time.

In the long term, we are also calling for a fundamental shift in how artistic organizations and projects are funded. We are offering a similar call to sponsors, investors, and funding bodies to uphold a similar mandate by 2024-2025, and offering proactive solutions for them to shift their processes. At this time, our hope is that **an organization that does not meet a minimum of 30% BIPOC - lower than our shared belief of 35% - sees its access to funds restricted.**

To this end, we have prepared a template set of 'organizational beliefs'. Please feel free to share this template with your Board of Directors, and consider adopting a version of it for use within your organization.

35//50 Initiative - Organizational Beliefs (Template)

We value equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.

We recognize that our community is made up of approximately 35% BIPOC and 50% women and gender minorities.

We recognize the artistic community has not reflected the make-up of our community.

We believe that representation within our organization will lead to a greater equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility within our community.

We understand to achieve this goal, significant investment in the following will be required to ensure equitable hiring practices and a healthy work environment for BIPOC staff, contractors and mentees:

- Anti-racism organizational transformation
- Establishment of
 - Equitable Hiring Policies
 - Anti-Harassment Policies
 - HR procedures (onboarding and offboarding policies)
 - Harassment reporting (third party) mechanism
- Ongoing Anti-oppression training for all permanent staff and board

We are committed to our organization reflecting our community.

This includes our:

Organization

- *Artistic Leadership (Artistic Director, Executive Director, etc.)*
- *Producer / Curator*
- *Educational Director*
- *Board of Directors*
- *Administrative Staff*

Programming

- *Writer / Choreographers / Creators*
- *Directors / Designers*
- *Stage Managers*

- *On-stage performers*
- *Technical / Backstage artists*

We aim to have our organization be made of a minimum 35% BIPOC and 50% women and gender minorities by the 2024-2025 season. We are committed to tracking and reporting on our progress towards this goal.

We believe that organizations who cannot commit to a certain level of representation should receive restricted or probationary funding.

Data collection is an actionable item that all organizations can do moving forward. This tangible work aligns with our shared values of planning for an increasingly accountable community that is open to stakeholders, practitioners, and audiences alike.

By providing equitable opportunities we can have our professional landscape better reflect our civil landscape. This is a community effort and we invite you to join the 35//50 Initiative. It is informed by the [Black Lives Matter Movement](#) and the [Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#).

We believe that the 35//50 Initiative is an actionable plan. We also recognize this work is difficult. It offers unique challenges to organizations who are often met with a huge variety of difficulties. However, together we are capable of bringing positive change to Alberta through these transparent actions and making our workplace safer for a wider range of artists. This work is underway across Canada and we hope you will be part of the change.

Please post a public response by October 1st, 2020 acknowledging receipt of this letter and outlining your next steps with regard to your organizational participation in the 35//50 Initiative.

As signatories, we are committed to prioritizing work with organizations who share in these beliefs and strive to uphold them at every opportunity.

35//50YEG Co-contributors (listed alphabetically):

Patrick Beagan
Amber Borotsik
Patricia Cerra
Oscar Derkx
Todd Houseman
Elise Jason
Andrés Moreno
Gina Puntill
Gianna Vacirca
Morgan Yamada

*35//50 YEG Co-Contributors: 70% BIPOC, 60% women or gender minorities

[See attached document for signatories](#)

[g=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=4811061&Geo2=CD&Code2=4811&SearchText=edmonton&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=Visible%20minority&TABID=1&type=1](https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=4811061&Geo2=CD&Code2=4811&SearchText=edmonton&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=Visible%20minority&TABID=1&type=1) - 22.9% in 2006, 30% in 2011, 37.1% Visible Minority in 2016.

- INDIGENOUS Population
<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=4811061&Geo2=PR&Code2=48&SearchText=Edmonton&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=Aboriginal%20peoples&TABID=1&type=1> 5.5% Indigenous in 2016 (StatCan uses the term Aboriginal)
 - Overall Census Information
[Census Profile, 2016 Census - Edmonton, City \[Census subdivision\], Alberta and Division No. 11, Census division \[Census division\], Alberta](#) Population Total
- The next census is occurring in [May 2021](#), the following census will occur in 2026. The 2024-2025 guideline allows for more accurate and measurable change within the professional theatre companies seasons which can be measured by the census cycle of 2026.

35//50YEG Signatories

Individual signatories of the 35//50 Initiative who agree to prioritize work with organizations who share these beliefs and strive to uphold them at every opportunity

(Listed Below in Alphabetical Order. Last Updated Sept. 12)

| | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Adam Mitchell | Edmund Stapleton | Madelaine Knight |
| Ainsley Hillyard | Elena Eli Belyea | Maggie Barton Baird |
| Al Gadowsky | Elise Dextraze | Maralyn Ryan |
| Alison MacDonald | Ellen Chorley | Marguerite Lawler |
| Alyson Dicey | Emily Howard | Marina Mair-Sánchez |
| Amanda Bergen | Emily Siobhan McCourt | Matthew "Gus" Gusul |
| Andrea Murphy | Emma Fowler Houghton | Megan Dart |
| Andrés Moreno | Eric Rice | Megan Koshka |
| Andrew MacDonald-Smith | Erin Voaklander | Melanie Bahniuk |
| Andrew Ritchie | Farren Timoteo | Michelle Diaz |
| Annette Loisel | Garett Ross | Michelle Todd |
| Anonymous | Gaylynne Fell | Mieko Ouchi |
| Anonymous | gerry morita | Moe |
| Anonymous | Graham Mothersill | Morgan Yamada |
| Anonymous | Greg Dowler-Coltman | Moses Kouyaté |
| Anonymous | Griffin Cork | Nadien Chu |
| Anonymous | Heather Cornick | Nancy McAlear |
| Anonymous | Helen Belay | Neil Bye-Kuefler |
| Anonymous | Hengameh Kharaghani | Nicole Moeller |
| Anonymous | Isabelle Rousseau | Nicole St. Martin |
| Anonymous | Izzy Bergquist | NIUBOI |
| Anonymous | Jana O'Connor | Oscar Derkx |
| Anonymous | Janine Waddell | Patricia Cerra |
| Belinda Cornish | Jennifer Spencer | Patrick Beagan |
| Ben Stevens | Jenny McKillop | Patrick Lundeen |
| Beth Dart | Jesse Gervais | Paul Gareau |
| Beyata Hackborn | Jessica Glover | Paula Humby |
| Billy Brown | Jessica Peverett | Philip -pH(Lin)- Hackborn |
| Braydon Dowler-Coltman | Jessie van Rijn | Priya Narine |
| Brenley Charkow | Jessy Arden | Rebecca John |
| Brianna Kolybaba | Jim Guedo | Richard Lee (Richard Lee Hsi under CAEA) |
| Brianne Jang | Josh Languedoc | Rory Turner |
| Brooke Leifso | Julien Arnold | Sang Sang Lee |
| Byron Martin | Kai Villneff | Sara Campos-Silvius |
| Carly Neis | Karen Youngberg | Sarah J Culkin |
| Cat Walsh | Kate Ryan | Sarah Ormandy |
| Cayley Thomas | Keri Mitchell | Shannon Blanchet |
| Chris Bullough | Kerry Johnson | Shawn Tse |
| Chris dela Cruz | Kiindra Duhault | Sheiny Satanove |
| Chris Pereira | Krista Lin | Shirley Tran |
| Chris Scott | Kristi Hansen | Steven Greenfield |
| Christa Hoefling | Kunji Mark Ikeda | Steven Sobolewski |
| Christine Lesiak | Lana Michelle Hughes | Sue Goberdhan |
| Cole Humeny | Laura Raboud | Suzie Martin |
| Connor Yuzwenko-Martin | Lauren Hughes | Sydney Parcey |
| Corben Kushneryk | Leila Raye-Crofton | Todd Houseman |
| Cynthia Jimenez-Hicks | Lianna Makuch | Tori Morrison |
| Daniela Fernandez | Lin Snelling | Wayne Paquette |
| David Gagnon Walker | Lore Green | Zoe Glassman |
| David van Belle | Luc Tellier | |
| Delia Barnett/ LeTabby Lexington | Mac Brock | |

Individuals within organizations are still welcome to add their support here: <https://forms.gle/zvoEsoGS2btf66wP7>