

**June 3rd, 2020**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**We stand with Black communities against white supremacy, police brutality, and systemic oppression.**

We, the undersigned, join with the artists of Newfoundland and Labrador in challenging systems of oppression and systemic racism that endanger members of the Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) communities. We acknowledge Ktaqmkuk as the ancestral homelands of the Beothuk and the Mi'kmaq, and Labrador as the ancestral homelands of the Innu of Nitassinan, the Inuit of Nunatsiavut, and the Inuit of NunatuKavut.

Events that are now unfolding across the United States demonstrate the extent to which Black communities face ongoing police-sanctioned violence. The same has long been true in Canada and we must take action now. Collectively, we need to push towards meaningful change within our organizations both to combat these realities and to support anti-racism initiatives, including those that work against anti-Black racism.

Our organizations adamantly commit to the following:

- Decolonizing systems of oppression through solidarity practices. We will ensure we have structures of accountability in place within our own communities. We refuse to prioritize or maintain cultures of white privilege that reinforce inequity and jeopardize human safety and freedoms in NL and beyond.
- Promoting meaningful and tangible inclusion that addresses exclusionary economic policies impacting BIPOC individuals.
- Acknowledging and addressing existing social constructs that perpetuate racist worldviews that normalize inequality and police brutality. Ideologies of whiteness as default or norm contribute to the dehumanization of BIPOC individuals. We refuse to accept this status quo as it continually puts community members in danger and normalizes police violence on our streets.
- Further increasing diverse publication, production, and programming through our respective fields while challenging ownership and appropriation of voice narratives, ventures, and organizations.
- Using our platforms to dedicate space and uplift BIPOC artists and their stories.
- Leveraging our resources to shift focus on and provide new professional, paid, and equitable opportunities for BIPOC artists throughout our province.

Black Lives Matter. Ending all forms of racism and violence against Indigenous, Asian, Migrant and Newcomer, Muslim, and Latinx people and communities matters. Ending Patriarchy, Islamophobia, Transphobia, Anti-Semitism, Ableism, and Sanism Matters.

These commitments cannot be realized alone. We need to dismantle white privilege, re-learn behaviours, re-imagine systems, and foster critical dialogue with BIPOC communities. We will hold ourselves and our organizations accountable in consultation with BIPOC communities. We will ensure that these actions are effectively implemented and maintained within our organizations.

**We therefore issue the following challenge to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador:**

1. Join us in calling on all levels of government to condemn police brutality targeting BIPOC communities and to commit to work towards decolonizing and dismantling systemic racism and white supremacy embedded within our society.
2. Join us in calling on all other organizations to do the same and to re-publish this statement and/or add their organization to the list of supporters.
3. Join us in committing to hold, and calling on others to hold, anti-oppression workshops and discussions focusing on decolonization and combating racism within our organizations, and to offer free anti-oppression workshops that are open and accessible to all members of our communities.

We recognize that this is an ongoing process and are committed to furthering our knowledge, practicing accountability, and taking all necessary actions to dismantle white supremacy and other systems of colonial violence.

Signed in solidarity by the following creative sector organizations of Newfoundland and Labrador:

Eastern Edge Gallery

Riddle Fence

St. John's International Women's Film Festival

Artistic Fraud

Business and the Arts NL

Neighbourhood Dance Works

Lawnya Vawnya

Union House Arts

Persistence Theatre Company

St. John's Storytelling Festival

St. Michael's Printshop

Resource Centre for the Arts (LSPU Hall)

Wonderbolt Productions

Writers' Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador

Tuckamore Festival

Sound Symposium

Visual Artists of Newfoundland and Labrador

Association of Professional Theatre of Newfoundland and Labrador

Best Kind Productions

Winterset in Summer Literary Festival

The Craft Council of Newfoundland and Labrador

Newfoundland and Labrador Folk Arts Society

First Light St. John's Friendship Centre

Eastern Owl

White Rooster Theatre

**Black Lives Matter-NL:**

<https://www.facebook.com/BLMNewfoundland>

**Anti-Racism Coalition of NL:**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/arcnl/>

[antiracismcoalitionnl@gmail.com](mailto:antiracismcoalitionnl@gmail.com)

**Black Canadian Studies**

[https://www.blackcanadianstudies.com/bcs\\_resources/](https://www.blackcanadianstudies.com/bcs_resources/)