

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 non-binary people 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 non-binary people. 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 non-binary people.

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 non-binary people 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 Puntil
Gianna Vacirca
Morgan Yamada

*35//50 YEG Co-Contributors: 70% BIPOC, 60% women or non-binary people

[See attached document for signatories](#)

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Co-Contributors of the 35//50 Initiative acknowledge that we are situated on Treaty 6 territory, the home of a diverse range of Indigenous nations including but not limited to: the Cree, Tsuut'ina, Nakota-Sioux, Blackfoot, Saulteaux/Anishinaabe, Inuit and Métis, who have lived here for time immemorial. Amiskwaciwâskahikan / ᐱᑭᑦᑭᑦᑎᑦᑕᑦᑭᑦᑎᑦᑕᑦᑭᑦᑎᑦᑕᑦᑭᑦ continues to be a traditional meeting ground for Indigenous peoples, enriching the land we occupy with their languages, cultures and histories. We extend our gratitude to have the opportunity to live, work and create on this territory.

In the spirit of honour and respect, it is important to recognize that Non-Indigenous people have benefited greatly from Indigenous nations. We strive to move beyond acknowledgement and towards the commitment and support of the original caretakers of this land. Engaging in reconciliation is our collective responsibility; we invite you to reflect and to deepen your efforts towards meaningful change in organizations, institutions and communities. Resource offerings are listed below.

Sources and Additional Information:

- [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action](#): Section: Commemoration: 13, #83. Section: Media and Reconciliation: #84 i., ii. and #85.
- [Black Lives Matter YEG](#)
This work is responding to the inordinate amount of violence on Black and Indigenous people in Canada. This demand for change is necessary as we reckon with the internalized colonial ideology that has continued racism, violence, erasure, and oppressive actions against Black and Indigenous people. The need to move towards a more diverse and inclusive future is palpable in our industry. We are grateful for the work of organizations like Black Lives Matter, [Idle No More](#), and [Black Arts Matter](#) who continue to be a beacon for these voices.
- BIPOC/IBPOC - term stands for 'Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour,' it is meant to unite all people of colour in the work for liberation while intentionally acknowledging that not all people of colour face the same levels of injustice. The term aims to emphasize the historic oppressions of Black and Indigenous people, as does the term IBPOC, which purposefully puts the first people of this land first. (borrowed from founding 35//50 resources)
- <https://yegtheatrestats.wordpress.com/>
These stats do not reflect all theatre professionals within the industry, including leadership positions, administration and other artistic positions involving production. It does not reflect BIPOC representation. However, it does offer insight into the percentage of representation based on gender.
- The percentage of 37%-43% was calculated using the sources below. The percentage referred to "Visible Minority" or in other words, Global Majority regarding population does not include Indigenous people in its calculation. The BIPOC percentage of the population is calculated by combining the population statistics of the Global Majority and Indigenous statistics provided below.
 - GLOBAL MAJORITY Population (Visible Minority)
<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/proof/details/page.cfm?Lan>

[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 Ardern	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>