

Surrey Art Gallery Commitment to Anti-Racism and Systemic Change

Systemic racism is deeply rooted in historical, social, material, and economic inequalities, and we understand this is a lived reality for many in our communities. We acknowledge and share a deep respect for people striving to create change within systems that devalue the lives and futures of Black, Indigenous, and racialized peoples. Wholeheartedly, we are motivated by and learning from the Black Lives Matter movement, and its resistance and resilience.

Museums and galleries are not neutral spaces. Through the act of collecting, exhibiting, and interpreting, they have long histories of participating in and perpetrating colonial power that continues to the present. Simultaneously, art exists in a web of relationships. It has the potential to challenge prejudicial and intolerant perspectives, and can serve to generate empathy, compassion, and understanding. By creating intercultural dialogue, art can interrupt and inspire us to think differently about the people and places that surround us.

Surrey Art Gallery has with humility paused to reflect internally, to listen, learn, and accept responsibility to continue to create change. Imagining our collective futures, and as witnesses to this historic movement of social change, we commit ourselves to the following actions:

- Create ongoing opportunities for open, safer conversations within our staff and volunteer teams, requiring anti-racist and anti-bias learning, training, and initiatives;
- Advocate for responsive workplace policies that supports greater inclusion to reflect the demographics of our communities;
- Grow our knowledge and understanding of how to be actively anti-racist in all levels of our institution and workplace and implement solutions to make the Gallery a more welcoming and safer space for racialized communities;
- Invest in and grow our education and engagement programming to reflect the communities we serve;
- Present artworks and exhibitions that better reflect the diversity of our communities and contribute to intersectional understandings, including but not limited to racialization, class, gender, sexuality, and ability;
- Review and strengthen procedures for acquisitions and collecting to ensure cultural diversity and the inclusion of artworks by Black, Indigenous, and racialized artists; and
- Broaden and build institutional relationships and partnerships with Black and Indigenous educators, programmers, and curators, as well as with Black- and Indigenous-focused organizations.

The above actions serve as starting points for our journey, and we will continue to learn along the way. We understand that creating a future where Black, Indigenous, and racialized people are supported to their full potential is a long-term responsibility and we welcome input from our communities.