

# ENTROPY THEATRE

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## Anti-Racism Action Plan

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# Table of Contents

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<a href="#">Introduction</a>	3
<a href="#">Company Structure</a>	4
<a href="#">Education</a>	5
<a href="#">Practices</a>	6
<a href="#">Feedback</a>	8
<a href="#">Values</a>	9
<a href="#">Community</a>	10
<a href="#">Financials</a>	11
<a href="#">Accountability</a>	12
<a href="#">Acknowledgements</a>	13

# Introduction

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Entropy Theatre recognizes that we have been operating in and benefitting from an industry plagued by systemic racism. Part of our mission is to raise up diverse artistic voices and it is clear we still have work to do. We are committing to becoming an anti-racist organization actively committed to opposing racism and calling out oppression within our organization and community.

The following is a living document to record the steps we have taken, and the steps we plan to take, towards making the Boston theatre community more safe, equitable, and empowering for BIPOC artists. We will revisit this document monthly, to check in with our progress and update as needed, and do an in-depth review and reflection twice a year. This is a public document, and will be published on our social media and website. We intend to keep our audience and community informed on this process to help hold us accountable.

**Please Note:** While Entropy Theatre is now returning to in-person events, rehearsals, and performances, we remain committed to the safety of our artists and audiences. Entropy Theatre will be taking steps to minimize the risk of spreading and contracting COVID-19 within our spaces, adhering to CDC guidelines, and actively monitoring any changes.

# Company Structure

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- Entropy Theatre is committed to being a democratic and horizontal organization where power is shared by the group and not concentrated in the hands of a few select individuals. We held two open meetings in September and October 2020 in order to solicit feedback from the community about what organizational structure best facilitates an equitable distribution of power. We then used this feedback to inform our restructuring efforts, as detailed below:
  - As of January 2021, we are retiring titles that suggest a hierarchical structure, such as Executive Director or Artistic Director. Going forward, all members will be called “Company Members.” Company Members can choose to add an additional “Organizer” designation to their title that indicates their area of interest within the company, such as “Company Member - Administrative Organizer” or “Company Member - Community Organizer,” but these designations do not confer any additional power.
  - As of January 2021, Entropy Theatre has begun utilizing anonymous polling to make major decisions. All Company Members have an equal vote and decisions must be unanimous.
- Our next steps include continuing to recruit new Company Members, while also wrestling with the fact that we are not currently able to pay Company Members for their work outside of a specifically contracted position on a production. We recognize that this is a barrier to entry and that any effort to recruit BIPOC Company Members is complicated by the fact that we are asking for their unpaid labor. We recognize that there is likely no perfect solution to this issue, so we are aiming to be thoughtful with our recruitment efforts while also not allowing ourselves to get stuck in a state of inaction.

# Education

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## Training:

- Every Company Member will complete an implicit bias training, a bystander intervention training, and one additional training specific to anti-racism. We will repeat this set of trainings once every year. The training sessions we attend will be listed in our [Anti-Racism Tracker](#), for sake of transparency.
- We will provide all Stage Managers who work with us with an implicit bias training and a bystander intervention training, if they have not already completed these within the past year.
- We will provide all Directors (including Movement Directors and Music Directors) who work with us (and anybody else involved in casting our productions) with an implicit bias training and a bystander intervention training before the casting process begins, if they have not already completed these within the past year.
- We will provide our Cast Representatives with a bystander intervention training, if they have not already completed one within the past year.
- We will keep a public list of the training resources we utilize or recommend, for sake of transparency.

## Resources:

- The Entropy Theatre team has compiled an anti-racism library, which includes books, podcasts, articles, documentaries, plays, and more. These are resources that our Company Members have engaged with and have found to be informative to their anti-racism journeys. We will continue to expand and engage with this [Anti-Racism Library](#), and review the library once a year.
- Anybody who works with us in the future will be introduced to this library, where there is a [sub-folder of required reading](#). The learning goals of the required reading will be to establish a working definition of anti-racism, an understanding of our organization's expectations, and equipping everybody with a basic toolkit for participating in an anti-racist theatre space.

# Practices

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- Company Members have collected resources and are pursuing training in non-white/Western artistic techniques. This is an ongoing effort with the goal of being able to recognize and value a wide range of artistic styles and methods.
- We recognize that many of the “default” American theatre practices and the “show must go on” mindset stem from white supremacy culture and are harmful to the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of our actors. We are committed to disrupting these practices and replacing them with practices that value artist well-being above all else:
  - We encourage our Directors to take the time to explicitly discuss their working styles and expectations with their actors, and allow their actors to discuss their working styles and expectations with the Director.
  - At the first rehearsal, the artists involved on the project will create a group agreement for expected behavior during the production process, and all artists will be expected to abide by this group agreement.
  - The cast of each project will elect a cast representative, who will be given tools and opportunities to advocate on behalf of the cast’s wellbeing and interests.
  - We commit to limiting our tech rehearsals to no more than 6 hours.
  - We will never require artists to engage in activities that constitute free marketing or fundraising for our shows, such as selling tickets, hanging posters, and advertising on social media.
  - We will never require artists to participate in or attend any events primarily held to generate publicity or funding for Entropy Theatre or our productions, such as post-show talk backs and receptions, interviews, marketing performances, and fundraising performances, unless they receive additional compensation for these activities.
  - We will never retaliate against artists for terminating a contract with us early for any reason, including terminating the contract to take a better paying job.
  - We will offer mental health resources to our artists and encourage, but never mandate, practices in the rehearsal room to support mental wellbeing, such as check-ins, meditations, and de-roling practices.
  - We will recognize and emphasize the existing stigma around mental health challenges, and make space for artists to prioritize their mental safety and advocate for their boundaries.

- Entropy Theatre is a consent-based organization, and all of our practices are at the informed and enthusiastic consent of contributing artists.
  - Any Entropy Theatre production involving staged intimacy (a simulated act of a romantic, sexual, or otherwise intimate nature) will require the involvement of an Intimacy Director or Intimacy Choreographer.
  - All Directors will receive a guide outlining the Best Practices for rehearsal rooms that are consent-based and trauma-informed.

# Feedback

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- We have added an anonymous feedback form to our website that is available for anyone to fill out. The opportunity to provide anonymous feedback will be shared explicitly with all creative contributors and audience members, as an addition to our previous reporting structure. We provide this option so others may voice concerns and share experiences without fear of repercussions. We are committed to addressing anonymous feedback in a timely manner.
- As another addition to our previous reporting system, we will create an ensemble-elected Cast Representative role in each project that will have a voice in decision-making and can act as a liaison to the directing team. This ensemble representative will be invited to all production meetings, and we will be providing them with bystander intervention training if they have not completed one in the past year.
- We have updated the Reporting Procedure section of our Anti-Harassment Policy to offer many different levels and methods through which anyone involved with Entropy can report a concern or incident of harassment.
- We have updated the Post-Reporting Procedure section of our Anti-Harassment Policy to more explicitly detail how complaints/concerns will be handled once reported.



# Values

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## Donations:

- Every member of the Entropy Theatre team has individually made donations to Black-led social justice organizations and/or bail funds for jailed activists.
- Entropy Theatre matched \$500 in donations to the Massachusetts Bail Funds, Black Lives Matter: Boston, Violence in Boston, Inc., and The Theater Offensive.
- Entropy Theatre will make an ongoing donation of \$100 per month that will go to anti-racism focused organizations and to supporting BIPOC artists in the Boston community. A full list of organizations we have donated to can be found in our [Anti-Racism Tracker](#).

## Standards:

- We will be sharing our Anti-Racism Plan and our [Anti-Racism Tracker](#) on our website and social media channels, so our audience and those we work with know what action they can expect from us now and in the future.
- We will create a set of standards for all physical spaces we work within to ensure they are safe, equitable, and accessible to all our artists. If spaces are unable to meet those standards, we will terminate our relationship with that space. **We had originally planned to have a draft of this ready by March 2021, but were unable to complete it. We now plan to have these standards ready by March 2022.**
- We have written a new harassment policy, using an anti-racist lens. We will make this available for public viewing on our website, and include it in future calls for collaboration.
- We have revisited and revised our artist contracts with an anti-racist lens. We will make these available for public viewing on our website, and include it in future calls for collaboration. We have created an artist contract addendum for the Cast Representative.
- We will identify Black and POC-owned vendors to purchase from in the future.
- We will publish our budgets for the sake of transparency and to encourage others to be transparent with our community, our donors, our audience, and other theatre organizations.

## Community

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- On our social media channels, we have amplified Black-led protests, learning opportunities, and creative events from BIPOC artists. Our intention with this action (in addition to donating money) is to support these events by spreading the word and providing free event promotion.
- Members of the Entropy Theatre team have been present at multiple Black Lives Matter protests around the greater Boston area. We intend to continually attend creative events by BIPOC artists. This aligns with our personal values, and values we hold as an organization. We also think this is an important step in forming meaningful and supportive artistic relationships with BIPOC artists in our community. We want to make sure we're showing up to their room, when invited, before asking them to show up to ours.
- Company Members will seek out ways to engage with and support MassCreative and StageSource during 2021. Both of these organizations are absolutely essential to Greater Boston theatre and are actively working to create a more equitable and accessible theatre community.

# Financial

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- We will publish all future budgets for the sake of transparency and to encourage similar transparency in other companies.
- We will publish information about where all our funding comes from, for the sake of transparency and to encourage similar transparency in other companies.
- We will continue to pay all our artists equal stipends, and we will continue to incrementally increase artist pay with each project. Artist pay will continue to be our top priority budgetary item.
- We have moved to a non-tiered donation platform, in which all donors receive the same benefits. Our intention with this change is to avoid creating a hierarchical structure based on the wealth of our donors, and avoid a future in which we are held accountable by only our wealthiest audience members.
- We are committing to using general admission seating at all our in-person performances and a “pay-what-you-can” model for all virtual performances, in order to avoid creating a hierarchical structure based on the wealth of our audience members, and improve accessibility to the art we create.
- We are a member of the EBT Card to Culture program, and offer \$5 dollar tickets to our “mainstage” productions for any EBT cardholder with the goal of increasing access to cultural experiences for all Massachusetts residents.
- Entropy Theatre is currently registered as a general partnership in the state of Massachusetts. We do not currently have 501(c)3 status, but instead have fiscal sponsorship through Fractured Atlas.

# Accountability

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- We have created an [Anti-Racism Tracker](#) as a dynamic way to keep the community up-to-date on the progress of the goals outlined in this document.
- We will continue to review this plan every six months, and update it accordingly.
- We have published this plan and many of the documents referenced in this plan on our website and will keep our community up-to-date about new versions via our social media and mailing list.
- We worked with consultant Deidra Montgomery (<https://www.deidramontgomery.com/>) to get an outside perspective on our Anti-Harassment Policy.

# Acknowledgements

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We would like to acknowledge some of the leaders in this field, who have provided invaluable resources.

- Michael Bobbitt and the New Repertory Theatre, for sharing their anti-racism plan
- The StageSource team (as of June 2020): Dawn Simmons, Tonasia Jones, John Meredith, and Geena Forristall; for their resources, leadership, and offer to review this plan
- Company One, Front Porch Arts Collective, The Theater Offensive, for being a model in this work
- Nicole Brewer, for being a leader in anti-racist theatre making
- Dr. Ibram Kendi, for being a leader in anti-racist theory
- Harold Steward, Despoina, Tonasia Jones, and Jonathan McCrory for their contributions to the Boston Globe's *Brides of the Deity* panel
- Dr. Kaja Dunn, for her leadership in anti-racist theatrical intimacy practices