

# Summary

This is the BATS plan to address our history of white supremacy and transform into an anti-racist theatre.

This version is current as of December 2022.

## Introduction

At BATS, we are working to transform our theatre into an anti-racist organization. This requires dismantling the white supremacist power structures we've developed over the last thirty-five years.

We're grateful that the authors of the Living Document of BIPOC Experiences in Bay Area Theatre Companies have provided an action plan (at <https://www.bipoclivdoc.com/action-plan>) which has guided our process -- without this work, we would be moving much more slowly than we are.

We are fully committed to meeting all of the demands set out in the action plan. Given the length and complexity of the work involved, we are breaking our process up into three parts, which we explain in detail below. We'll update this page monthly with our progress.

Section A: Work in progress. In this section, we'll describe items from the action plan that are currently underway, along with an expected date of completion for each.

Section B: Work to be planned. In this section, we'll describe the items we intend to tackle next, along with an expected date for graduation to section A.

Section C: Completed work. In this section, we'll describe the ways in which BATS has met the action plan's demands.

As items graduate from Section B to Section A, we'll add new items to Section B, until the entire plan has been accounted for. This allows us to begin moving forward on the most critical items immediately.

## Section A: Work in Progress

### Diverse Company Membership

Demands addressed:

- Diversify content of programming to celebrate under-represented artists

- Produce plays\* written by 60% BIPOC, queer, trans, womxn of color, non-binary and/or disabled playwrights in season programming
- Commission plays by 60% BIPOC, queer, trans, womxn of color, non-binary and/or disabled local playwrights

\*BATS shows are completely improvised; we don't employ playwrights. Instead, our shows are all created and directed by the BATS Main Stage Company. This group has very few members in under-represented categories when this equity plan was first published in 2020..

As of January 2020, the BATS Company included 12.5% membership in under-represented groups. At that time, our Artistic Director proposed a five-year timeline for increasing that percentage:

2021: 20%  
2022: 30%  
2023: 40%  
2024: 50%  
2025: 60%

Today, 38% of the BATS Company is from under-represented groups, so we're on track for this goal.

## Indigenous Land Acknowledgement

Demands addressed:

- Generate an Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Statement with consultation and blessings from Indigenous stakeholders.

We've written a land acknowledgement, which has been added to our pre-show slides and included on our website. It will be incorporated into class materials.

## Land Tax

Demands addressed:

- Contribute to the Shuumi Land Tax on behalf of your PWI/O, annually

BATS is working to adjust our annual budget to allow for an annual contribution to the [Yunakin Land Tax - administered by the Ramaytush Ohlone Association](#). (This is the land tax set up to receive repatriation funds for the Ramatush Ohlone whose ancestral homeland includes our location in San Francisco.)

## Section B: Work To Be Planned

The BATS Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee consists of diverse representatives from our leadership, school, board, staff and performing company.

As we complete the plans for these items, we'll bring the remaining items from the action plan into this section.

### Youth Outreach

Demands addressed:

- Launch training and engagement opportunities for Black and Brown youth in the theater

BATS is currently hiring for a community coordinator, who will work with the JEDI committee to build on our existing outreach with Black and Brown youth.

As of Dec 2022, this is supported by our existing provision of youth improv classes, full scholarships for BIPOC students and our commitment to devote up to 1% of earned revenue to deliver pro bono improv activities focussing on BIPOC and low income youth, as well as other underrepresented groups.

### Representation onstage

Demands addressed:

- Offer Director positions in the company's season to 60% BIPOC, queer, trans, womxn of color, non-binary, and/or disabled artists

Our diversity focus over the past two years has been on company membership (rather than directors), and looked at the overall percentage of performers from under-represented groups, rather than examining representation of any specific group.

In the coming year, we plan to do more research on how gender is balanced on our stage, and what percentage of our directors come from under-represented groups, as well as how we can align this with our targets for company membership.

### No Tolerance Policy

Demands addressed:

- Create a No Tolerance Policy for harassment, prejudice, and discrimination towards all Black and Brown artists in the space
- End harmful practices, programs, and contracts with individuals with a history of problematic and racist behaviors
- Release Staff Members within the company who have a history of problematic, racist, and prejudiced behaviors

- Reconfigure culture of interactions from company members to artists leaning towards respect

In Summer 2021 we began work on a new conflict-resolution process grounded in restorative justice, to address harm and to ensure that all members of our community are protected from discrimination. (See <https://www.improv.org/about-us/conflict-process/>.) Parts of this process are currently active, and we are working on fully implementing it.

## Post Mortems

Demands addressed:

- Develop a post-mortem system for all show's teams

This system does not yet exist, but we are working on implementing it.

## Compensation Analysis

Demands addressed:

- Establish a budget that provides equitable artist compensations, at all cost

While we do pay our actors, musicians and technicians for all shows, we plan to revisit details of this arrangement to ensure that the compensation is equitable.

# Section C: Completed Work

BATS is proud to note that we have met several demands from the action plan.

## Fair Ticket Prices

Demands addressed:

- Generate a system of Pay-What-You-Can (PWYC) to all Black and Brown patrons.
- Generate signage of said system posted and visible at the Box Office.
- Create a system to offer underserved Black and Brown youth free or reduced-rate tickets to see shows in your organization

All BATS tickets are now Pay-What-You-Can, both in person and on our web site. We've found that while some patrons choose a more affordable price, this is counter-balanced by patrons who treat their ticket purchase as a spontaneous donation to the theater. The result is that we've increased our access without changing the average price paid by our audience.

## Publish an Action Plan

Demands addressed:

- Publish a thorough plan of actions marked within a timeline with a commitment to creating an equitable, just, and anti-racist theater

- Acknowledge structures and histories of harm to better inform forward progress

This page serves as our plan.

## Fair Compensation

Demands addressed:

- Abolish unpaid artistic internship program
- Abolish culture of free artistic labor at all cost
- For Non-Union performers: provide a timesheet as a system for equitable hourly wage compensation based on the region's cost of living
- Create an artistic mentorship program that is well-compensated based on the region's cost of living

At BATS, we strongly believe in compensating artists from our work. All of our artists, including actors, directors, lighting improvisers, and musicians, as well as teaching-artist coaches are provided compensation based on the timesheets they submit twice per month.

## Fair Board Participation

Demands addressed:

- Question the Board's Give/Get model that has historically barred participation of the BIPOC community
- Create a system in Board Membership that value means of support beyond Capitalism
- Board Membership should include stakeholders that the organization serves
- Board Membership must at least reflect the demographics of the organization's region

Our board includes members from all parts of the BATS community (including company members, coaches, staff, and students) and has 60% BIPOC, queer, trans, womxn of color, and/or non-binary representation. We have never asked BATS board members to contribute anything other than their time and expertise.

## Hiring Process

Demands addressed:

- Hire actively and intentionally BIPOC, queer, trans, womxn of color, non-binary, and/or disabled staff.
- Intentionally recruit, meaningfully include, gainfully employ, and actively support under-represented artists, ranging from content creation to consulting to designing to performing

In April 2021, BATS leadership worked with our JEDI Committee to review our hiring process in an effort to minimize bias from recruitment. Our updated process includes reviewing job descriptions with the JEDI Committee and having at least one committee member on each hiring panel.

## Anti-racism Training

Demand addressed:

- Provide anti-racist and anti-bias training to all departments annually
- Reconfigure culture of interactions from company members to artists leaning towards respect.
- Board Membership must undergo intensive anti-racist training annually

In October 2020, BATS completed a 4 week training course, for all members of the performing company, coaches, staff and board covering Diversity, Equity and Inclusion of underrepresented communities. Topics included: Inclusive Language, Privilege, Critical Allyship & Race and Ethnicity, Upstander Intervention & Gender and Sexuality, Dynamics of Oppression & Power structures and Safe and Brave Space Team Development.

In February and March 2021, we held a series of community meetings facilitated by Dante King ([www.danteking.com](http://www.danteking.com)) to begin to unpack the history of how systemic oppression and discrimination of BIPOC has manifested at BATS. That included affinity groups to unpick and to begin to collectively articulate and address systemic challenges for People with White Privilege and BIPOC at BATS. The intent was to build a more common understanding of shared challenges at BATS.

In May and June 2021 BATS Leadership comprised of Board President and Vice President, Managing Director, Head of School and Acting Artistic Director participated in 'Creating a Culture of Belonging' Training organized by Theatre Bay Area to support Bay Area theatres in becoming anti-racist.

From November 2022 onwards we are arranging for all employees to participate in 'Behaviors of Inclusion' training.

In December 2022, BATS hired John Gebratatos, Director of Diversity for Hugu Theater of Minneapolis, to train the Company on portraying racial diversity onstage.

## Mission and Vision Statements

Demands addressed:

- Readjust Mission, Vision and Values statements reflecting all actions and changes.
- Initiate practice of sharing Mission, Vision and Values and company's history of upholding cultures of White Supremacy to all guest artists

In January 2021, we published an updated Mission, Vision Values statement at <https://www.improv.org/about-us/our-vision/>. In autumn 2021 we removed 'professionalism and excellence' from our organizational values.

In June 2021, we began a practice of distributing a welcome package of information to all guest artists that includes the vision statement along with our community standards. This has since

been updated to include information about our conflict process and company guidelines about how to 'play safely', prevent harm and establish consent when playing with race and other sensitive topics.

## Financial Transparency

Demands addressed:

- Make public your annual fiscal report

These documents are available on our web site.

## Audition Process

Demands addressed:

- Design transparent dialog and communication between Casting-to-Artist pre-audition, post-audition, and post-callback
- Hire a BIPOC Casting Associate that is well-compensated based on the region's cost of living.

In 2022, the BATS Company launched a new casting process that includes regular auditions, with feedback provided to auditioners. We've seen increased diversity on the stage as this process has allowed more people a chance to work with the Company.

We don't use casting associates in our auditions per se, but this new process was co-created by our co-Artistic Director Derek Yee, who is BIPOC.