



To the We See You White American Theatre organizers and the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color theatre community:

We at PlayCo thank you for the statement you released in June, calling out long standing harmful and exclusionary practices in our industry. We thank you for the subsequent declaration of Demands detailing how these practices must change. We recognize and honor your work, as well as the history of BIPOC artist advocacy for equity and accountability in the American theatre.

We've taken the past six months to reflect on the Demands document line by line. We understand the urgency, and the scope, of this call on white American theatre for fundamental change in all areas of our industry, from hiring and compensation to artistic collaboration and curation, to leadership and governance. The work is vast.

PlayCo was founded in part to address inequitable representation in the American theatre. It is our mission to seek out those different from ourselves, value their differences and represent their perspectives on stage. We consistently collaborate with BIPOC artists who represent cultures and values from around the world as well as this country. We honor the cultural specificity of the plays we produce. We yield authority of this specificity to the artists in the rehearsal room who share a cultural context with the project.

That is the heart and soul of PlayCo's work.

But we understand that PlayCo, as a historically and predominantly white organization, has been complicit in, and benefitted from, the white supremacist culture and systems that harm our BIPOC colleagues and friends. Change is necessary and long overdue. We must do better. We will do better.

We have substantial work to do to dismantle white supremacy systems and culture that are deeply internalized within our own organization, American theatre and society at large. We will uproot oppressive systems and behaviors, and anchor every aspect of our organization in anti-racist, equitable practice. This progress report - the first of many - publicly demonstrates our commitments, and holds us accountable, to support the well-being and needs - both artistic and human - of artists, production staff, administrative staff, audiences, community partners, and all who interact with PlayCo.



This first report, written in consultation with PlayCo staff, board, and BIPOC artists from our creative community (who are compensated for this work), includes the steps we can and will take right now. Other demands require a longer process of learning to identify how we can implement them effectively and sustainably. These actions are part of our ongoing process to dismantle practices that cause direct and systemic harm, rebuild with structures and systems that center equity and care, and sustain an organizational culture that uplifts creativity, learning and joy for all.

- We will publish semi-annual progress reports for a minimum of three years. We recognize that this work will continue to evolve as PlayCo and the rest of the theatre industry navigate how to dismantle long standing practices and assumptions. Sustaining a just, equitable, anti-racist and anti-oppression organizational culture will remain an ongoing, foundational part of PlayCo's daily life. We look forward to all the learning and change this will bring to PlayCo, the theatre field and our society.
- We will form a dedicated council of BIPOC artists, staff, and community stakeholders to hold PlayCo accountable to our commitments, and advise on areas of needed development and improvement. Council members will be compensated for their service.
- We are embedding land and peoples acknowledgements into PlayCo practice, including staff meetings, first rehearsals, and at our productions. We recognize that these public acknowledgements are only the first step in the ongoing process of honoring and supporting indigenous, and all, BIPOC communities.
- We will build predominant BIPOC representation in the artists and production staff of all creative projects, without falling into any practice that upholds tokenism. Fostering new, healthy, long-term relationships with BIPOC artists who haven't yet worked with PlayCo is a priority. We will enact qualitative measures and strategies in the hiring of all projects to expand BIPOC representation. These include: (1) Having transparent and explicit discussions regarding PlayCo's commitment to predominant BIPOC representation when onboarding primary artists, and production staff who have control over other artistic or production hires. We will require an affirmative mutual commitment to these practices from all primary artists and production staff before any work begins. (2) Dismantling the sense of toxic urgency when making hiring decisions by creating a new planning process that allows both the PlayCo staff and primary artists the time to conduct searches that align with our values and commitments.



- We will hold ourselves accountable by instituting annual assessment practices that measure our progress in representation. These findings will be published on our website. Assessments will be conducted by leadership in tandem with the BIPOC council of artists, staff, and community stakeholders. These strategies and measures will continue to evolve as we learn from these assessments.
- Our practices will center the well-being of the artists, production staff, and administrative staff at PlayCo. We have ended all unpaid internships, script evaluation and other positions that lacked financial compensation. And we are immediately eliminating 10 out of 12 rehearsals. We are abandoning the “show must go on” culture by building necessary time, flexibility and financial planning into our production process so that we always pause and address human needs.
- We commit to the professional, personal, and creative development of PlayCo staff members. This includes 360 annual reviews of all staff and leadership, the career development of entry level staff members - including systems trainings, networking opportunities, and meaningful projects that build upon their professional skills and knowledge - and equitable compensation for all who work at PlayCo.
- We commit to transparency, equity, and inclusion in our recruitment, hiring, and onboarding of all staff members, contractors, artists, and production staff. Job descriptions shall explicitly state the needs of the position rather than rely on biased, generic language such as educational requirements or years of experience. Salary ranges shall be publicly listed on all job postings. We will focus our recruitment practices on building meaningful, ongoing relationships with BIPOC communities so that all job searches provide easy access to BIPOC professionals. All formal searches shall have more than 50% BIPOC candidates in the finalist pool.
- We now include a dedicated line for Anti-racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Social Justice development in our annual operating budget. This includes mandatory, ongoing anti-racist and DEIJ learning for all staff, artists, and crew. The operating budget will be published annually on our website.
- PlayCo supports a dedicated BIPOC staff affinity space that meets during paid work hours with full support from white colleagues.



PlayCo Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Progress Report

December 10, 2020

Future progress reports will detail (or continue to detail) PlayCo's development, re-envisioning, and re-centering of cultural competency; healthy working conditions; equitable hiring practices including recruitment, onboarding, and retention; leadership structures; curation and season planning; building access and inclusion for BIPOC and other underrepresented communities and audiences; budget transparency; board culture, practice, and recruitment; and how we will remain accountable to these shifts in PlayCo's daily and ongoing practice.

Our next progress report will be published in July 2021 and will include:

- board culture, practice, and recruitment
- artistic curation model
- budget transparency

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate".

Kate Loewald
Founding Producer

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rob".

Robert G. Bradshaw
Managing Director