



## Greetings to the Black Indigenous and People of Color Theatre Community.

This is PlayCo's second progress report on our work to uproot oppressive systems and behaviors, and anchor every aspect of our organization in anti-racist, equitable practice. These reports publicly demonstrate our actions and commitments to support the well-being and needs - artistic and human - of artists, production staff, administrative staff, community partners, audience members, and all people who interact with PlayCo.

In our first report, published last December, we committed to reporting semi-annually for at least three years. We reiterate here that sustaining a just, equitable, anti-racist, and anti-oppression organizational culture will remain an ongoing, foundational part of PlayCo's daily life. We continue to look forward to all the learning and change this work will bring to PlayCo, to the theatre field, and to our society.

This report was written in consultation with the PlayCo staff and board, and PlayCo's newly formed BIPOC Advisory Council (see below in report). It includes updates on items in the December report, new actions, and new steps we're taking to address changes that require a longer learning process to identify actions that will be effective and sustainable. As stated in our December report, all of these actions are part of an ongoing process to dismantle practices that cause direct and systemic harm, and rebuild with structures and systems that center equity and care, nurturing an organizational culture that uplifts creativity, learning, and joy for all.

### UPDATES:

We have completed or implemented the following steps from our initial progress report published [here](#) on December 10, 2020.

- **BIPOC Council:** We've established a dedicated BIPOC Advisory Council to evaluate our progress in cultural competence, and hold us accountable to our public commitments by questioning, challenging or supporting PlayCo's organizational culture and practices. Council members currently hold a term of one year, meet 2 - 4 times within that term, and are compensated for their service. They will have the option to renew for an additional one year term, and we've begun recruitment for the next term commencing in the Summer of 2022.

The Council includes two staff members, two artists, and two community stakeholders. The current Council is:

- Charlene Adhiambo, PlayCo Artistic Associate
- Carolina Đỗ, PlayCo Community Engagement Associate
- Mia Katigbak, Artist
- Ugo Chukwu, Artist



- Victoria Detres, Community Stakeholder
- Ayo Renée Schwartz, Community Stakeholder



**Charlene Adhiambo** is the Artistic Associate at PlayCo. She is a Kenyan American writer currently based in her hometown of Atlanta. Her creative work spans many mediums including (but not limited to), screenplay, stage play, fiction, essay, poetry, and song. She received her B.A. in Creative Writing and English Literature from Columbia University.



**Carolina Đỗ** is the Community Engagement Associate at PlayCo. She is an actor, producer, writer and proud descendant of Vietnamese freedom fighters. She's a community organizer and advocate for art that facilitates healing in marginalized communities. Co-founder and Co-Producing Artistic Leader of The Sóng Collective.



**Mia Katigbak** is the co-founder and actor-manager of NAATCO (National Asian American Theatre Co.). She is a founding director of CAATA (Consortium of Asian American Theaters & Artists) and served as the president of its first board. She has acted extensively with NAATCO, and with PlayCo, LCT3, Transport Group, WP, NYTW, Soho Rep, New Group, Ma-Yi, Target Margin, Clubbed Thumb, Bushwick Starr.



**Ugo Chukwu** is an actor and teacher born and raised in the Bronx. Recent credits include *Lunch Bunch* (Clubbed Thumb/Play Company), *[PORTO]* (WP Theater/Bushwick Starr), *What To Send Up When It Goes Down* (BAM/Public UTR/Movement Theater), and *Do You Feel Anger* (Vineyard Theater). In addition to performing, Ugo is also a teaching artist with Opening Act and New Victory theater.



**Victoria Detres** is a Puerto Rican and Albanian producer and director born and raised in New York City. She is passionate about building a platform for contemporary theatre's innovative voices; particularly those of marginalized communities. Victoria is a graduate from the New York Theatre Workshop 2050 Producing Fellowship for the 2018-2019 season and TPOC's inaugural Producing 101 Course.



**Ayo Renée Schwartz** (they/she) is an Afro-Indigenous Two-Spirit Queer Feminist with a background in theatre operations, event production within film/theatre/media, general management, and human resources. Ayo currently serves as the Head of Human Resources at the National Theatre of Scotland.



- **Land Acknowledgements:** We've embedded land and peoples acknowledgements into PlayCo practice. The staff collaboratively authored a comprehensive acknowledgment that is published on our website [here](#). This acknowledgment is included in all staff meetings, first rehearsals and public events, virtual and in-person. Since January 2021, we've dedicated time at our weekly staff meeting to research and spotlight a new indigenous artist and their practice, to educate ourselves about indigenous artists and their communities. Again, we recognize that these public acknowledgements and learnings are only the first steps in the ongoing process of honoring and supporting indigenous, and all BIPOC, communities.
- **BIPOC Representation:** In December we committed to building predominant BIPOC representation in the artists and production staff of all creative projects, by securing explicit, values-based mutual commitments from all primary artists and those with artistic and production hiring control. Since December PlayCo has produced or co-presented four productions, including *This Is Who I Am*, *Is It Supposed to Last?*, *Ludic Proxy: Fukushima* and *PepTalks*. Each reflects predominantly BIPOC representation.
- **Humane Practices:** We are not returning to “business as usual”. In December we committed to eliminating 10 out of 12 hour technical rehearsal schedules. Now we're resetting more organizational and production practices to create a humane and nurturing work environment that aligns with our values. We're adding one week to the production rehearsal process to establish a 5 day rehearsal week, and adding one week to performance space rentals to establish humane load in and tech schedules for artists and production personnel.
- **Staff Development:** In December, we pledged our intention to implement 360 reviews as part of our overall commitment to the professional, personal and creative development of PlayCo staff members. We completed our first annual 360 reviews for leadership and staff in July, 2021.

Since December, we've added one part time staff position, created one full time associate director position, and hired two paid summer interns. All of these positions were filled with BIPOC professionals and students.

### **NEW ACTIONS:**

- **Equitable Compensation:** PlayCo has been implementing increases to artist and production personnel compensation in incremental steps for a number of years. We are now making significant investments into compensation. This means realigning priorities to center artist and production personnel compensation when we assess our annual programming capacity. We want PlayCo to be a place where all artists want to and can



afford to work. For reference, our current projected annual budget for FY22 is \$1,000,000.

Effective immediately, the following increases from pre-pandemic fees will be implemented for New Work/New World Productions:

| POSITION        | FY20 Rate  | FY22 Rate  | Percentage |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Author          | \$4,000    | \$7,500    | 87.5%      |
| Director        | \$3,500    | \$7,125    | 103%       |
| Designers       | \$2,250    | \$4,500    | 100%       |
| AEA Actors      | \$558/week | \$670/week | 20%        |
| AEA Stage Mgmt  | \$669/week | \$804/week | 20%        |
| Run Crew        | \$500/week | \$600/week | 20%        |
| Production Mgmt | \$6,000    | \$8,000    | 33%        |

• **COMPENSATION NOTES:**

- **Author** fees represent a combined 1-year option and production fee. Additional fees are added if an option extends beyond one year.
  - **Designer** fees are inclusive of assistant compensation.
  - **AEA actor and stage management** compensation has grown over 60% since the passing of compensation legislation in 2016. Fast-tracking these increases slowed our ability to raise other artistic fees, which have increased approximately 20% in the same period. We're now investing more in the other areas to bring them into proportion with the increases made to performers and stage managers. FY22 salaries are estimated according to the Off Broadway Agreement and subject to negotiation with AEA.
  - **Run Crew** salaries estimate an average of 30 hours/week
  - **Production Management** fees are inclusive of associate or assistant compensation.
- **Artistic Curation:** We've taken time as a staff during the pandemic shutdown to imagine how we can push further to fundamentally link artists and the greater community. We've invested in people who will lead this work forward.
    - Annie Jin Wang (she/her/hers), the first-generation Chinese-American dramaturg, writer and designer who first joined PlayCo in 2018 as an Artistic

Intern for a semester while earning her Dramaturgy MFA at Columbia School of the Arts, and then in October, 2020 as Interim Communications & Marketing Manager, has been promoted to Associate Director for Programming & Communications effective July 1, 2021.

- Charlene Adhiambo (she/her/hers), the Kenyan American writer who joined PlayCo as the summer 2020 Literary Intern and continued her tenure with us as Interim Artistic Assistant, has been promoted to Artistic Associate as of July 1, 2021.
- Annie and Charlene are the core artistic team working closely with Founding Producer Kate Loewald (she/her/hers) to curate PlayCo's artistic programming and to develop relationships within our local and international artist communities.
- Carolina Đỗ (she/her/hers), the Vietnamese-American artist, producer and community organizer, joined PlayCo as Community Engagement Associate in November, 2020. She is building a robust year-round programming calendar whose mission is to encourage and remind people of the power of sharing and telling their stories, centering communities that have historically been excluded from the arts in NYC.
- Readers Group members Velani Dibba, Taylor Gaines, Ana Graham, Jeremy Tiang and Antonio Vega are practicing artists from the U.S. and abroad, many of whom speak multiple languages. Dibba, a director and multi-disciplinary artist, joined the group in 2021. Gaines, the Cultural Services Attachée in the Quebec Government NY office, started her association with PlayCo as a 2017 Literary Fellow. Artists Graham and Vega are co-Artistic Directors of Por Piedad Teatro, a theatre based in Mexico City and NYC that has co-produced 3 shows with PlayCo. Tiang, a writer and translator, joined the Readers Group in 2014. The group read scripts submitted to or requested by our staff to expand our knowledge of artists and plays, and to evaluate potential for production at PlayCo, meeting with the core artistic staff on a monthly basis.



**Annie Jin Wang** is the Associate Director for Programming & Communications at PlayCo. She is a Chinese-American dramaturg, writer, and designer whose body of work investigates constructs of race, gender, and citizenship. Annie also serves as the Literary Manager at Ferocious Lotus Theatre Company and the Artistic Associate at Theater Mu; she holds an MFA from Columbia University and BAs from Wellesley College.



**Charlene Adhiambo** is the Artistic Associate at PlayCo. She is a Kenyan American writer currently based in her hometown of Atlanta. Her creative work spans many mediums including (but not limited to), screenplay, stage play, fiction, essay, poetry, and song. She received her B.A. in Creative Writing and English Literature from Columbia University.



**Carolina Đỗ** is the Community Engagement Associate at PlayCo. She is an actor, producer, writer and proud descendant of Vietnamese freedom fighters. She's a community organizer and advocate for art that facilitates healing in marginalized communities. Co-founder and Co-Producing Artistic Leader of The Sóng Collective.



**Velani Dibba** is a director and multidisciplinary artist of Polynesian-West African descent. Her work focuses on the collision of different cultures through design-focused and ensemble-driven work. Her work has been presented at the World Theatre Congress, the Edinburgh Fringe and New Ohio Theater. She holds a BSFS in International Relations from Georgetown University and an MFA in Directing from Columbia University.



**Taylor Gaines** is a translator and arts worker who has been affiliated with PlayCo since her time as a Literary Fellow in 2017. Her translations have received public readings at the Martin Segal Theatre Center at CUNY, Columbia University, and productions at Cherry Arts Space and Carnegie Mellon University. Taylor is currently a Cultural Attachée with the Québec Government Office in New York.



**Ana Graham** is a director, actor, translator and costume designer born in Mexico City, where she studied drama at the Núcleo de Estudios Teatrales. She is Artistic Producer and Founder of the Mexico-based Por Piedad Teatro where she has developed most of her work. She is also on the adviser committee for the US/MEXICO exchange program at The Lark and a recipient of Mexico's National Fund for Culture and Arts performers grant.



**Jeremy Tiang** is a playwright, novelist and translator from Chinese. His plays include *A Dream of Red Pavilions*, *The Last Days of Limehouse*, and *Salesman 之死*. He is also the translator of plays by Chen Si'an, Wei Yu-Chia, Zhan Jie and Quah Sy Ren, as well as novels by Lo Yi-Chin, Chan Ho-Kei, Yan Ge, Zhang Yueran and Yeng Pway Ngon. His novel *State of Emergency* won the Singapore Literature Prize in 2018.



**Antonio Vega** is a director, actor, playwright and translator born in Guadalajara, Jalisco where he graduated from ETX Jalisco School of Theater. Vega became Por Piedad Teatro's Artistic Director in 2012. In 2013, Vega and collaborator Ana Graham partnered with The Play Company to present Ettore Scola's *Working On a Special Day*. In 2015 he created, co-directed and starred in *The Duchamp Syndrome* at The Flea.



### Current/Recent Programming:

- We are currently hosting a 4-month residency program for an international cohort of 4 Black Women Theatremakers, June - September, 2021. [Residency program](#)
- Community programming in the last 6 months includes:
  - **Sponsor a Succulent:** In this initiative connected to PlayCo's production of *Is It Supposed to Last?*, we partnered with three major NYC humanitarian organizations ([Presbyterian Senior Services](#), [Opening Act](#), and [CaringKind](#)) who have been caring for senior citizens, disadvantaged youth and healthcare worker communities severely impacted by the pandemic. Putting the play's theme of care into action, we collaborated to provide over 500 plants to combat isolation and support emotional and mental health.
  - **Month of Rest:** We dedicated February to online community activities promoting rest and self-care, including a group nap, meditation, journaling, and a dance party.
  - **Lunch Table Talks:** We launched a series of free virtual conversations between panelists from a myriad of fields, facilitated by a rotating cast of PlayCo staff members and associated artists. These talks make public the intimate-yet-casual exchange of ideas and inspirations that often come while sharing a meal with others. The inaugural event featured PlayCo summer interns Wesley Ahn and Judy Xie interviewing writers John Keene and Viet Thanh Nguyen about the role of professors, and writers of the global majority, in supporting and shaping the education of young writers of color.
- **Budget Transparency:** PlayCo is committed to budget transparency to hold ourselves accountable to our mission and organizational values. To that end, we will publish a budget report of each fiscal year (July 1 - June 30) on our website on an annual basis, after the completion of an independent audit, no later than February 1 of each year. We will add a copy of our 990 forms once completed, no later than May 15 of each year.

### ONGOING WORK:

As a predominantly white organization, our staff and our board have not historically reflected WSYWAT's exhortation to white theatres to "invest in a multiplicity of cultures". PlayCo's mission aligns with this ideal, but we have fallen short of fulfilling this vision. We are addressing this as we rebuild our staff and board, and reassess our practices, post-pandemic. This section outlines new steps we are taking toward longer-term learning and strategy that will achieve lasting organizational change.



- **Anti-Racism and Cultural Competence:** In December we reported that we had established an ongoing, dedicated line for anti-racism and cultural competency work in our FY21 operating budget. We increased this line from \$25,000 (FY21) to \$35,000 in FY22. FY21 expenses were allocated to an organizational assessment of cultural competence with the staff and board facilitated by [The Raben Group](#), advisory fees for BIPOC professionals, and a discretionary fund for the staff to support community organizations and actions. FY22 expenses will include a continuation of our work with The Raben Group, focusing on board policies and practices (see below); compensation for the BIPOC Advisory Council members; continued trainings for staff and board members, such as bystander intervention, to develop additional skills and tools for anti-racism; and hiring cultural competence, mental health or other professionals on to projects, as determined by PlayCo in consultation with creative team artists.
- **Board:** PlayCo currently has 8 people serving on the board, ranging in age from mid-40s to mid-70s. 37% identify as cis-female and 63% as cis-male. 25% identify as LGBTQ+ . All identify as white. We must achieve inclusive representation across race, gender identity, sexual orientation and ability, that aligns with PlayCo's mission and the population we serve. The board is in the process of overhauling the opportunities, expectations and commitments for membership and will be actively recruiting as soon as these new guidelines are in place.
  - We are eliminating mandatory financial gift minimums, and recentering membership around equally valued contributions of time, wisdom, social and professional circles, and expertise, along with financial support, tailored to each individual.
  - As the next steps to develop a strategic plan for board diversity, we're working with consultants from The Raben Group, who have worked with PlayCo on DEIJ and anti-racism organizational change over the last 2+ years, to redefine board member job descriptions and terms for membership, and establish recruitment guidelines. We're also consulting with the BIPOC Advisory Council on these changes. As new BIPOC members join the board they will contribute to this ongoing process to develop opportunities, commitments and expectations for PlayCo's board.
  - In addition to overall diversity and inclusion, we are prioritizing bringing more artists from underrepresented communities onto the board. Their expertise and perspectives will be essential to the future development and sustainability of the organization. These artists will be invited to serve on the Executive Committee.
  - Board access for production staff is institutionalized in our Code of Conduct, distributed to all who work with PlayCo, wherein a dedicated board contact is named and contact information is provided.
  - When we have elected a first cohort of BIPOC board members we will invite them to join PlayCo's BIPOC Advisory Council.



Our next progress report will be published in February 2022, and will include:

- Board
- Anti-Racism & Cultural Competency Training
- Code of Conduct

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

## DEFINITIONS

**Anti-racism:** (Derived from the Dictionary.com/Random House definition and expanded upon by PlayCo) The practice and belief that recognizes pervasive racism in society, and proactively dismantles racist policies and practices at systemic, institutional, and interpersonal levels. Combats racial prejudice and discrimination in order to promote racial justice and equity.

**360 Annual Review:** A process in which feedback is gathered from a staff member's peers, managers, direct reports, and project collaborators or partners (artists, community partners, co-producers, etc.) to provide a well rounded snapshot of the staff member's professional skills and team impact over the course of the previous year. Feedback is shared with the staff member by the review facilitator with the intention of developing goals for the coming year.

**990 Form:** A comprehensive form 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations use to file their financial and organizational information as required by the IRS. 501 ( C ) 3 organizations are public charities, and the 990 provides the public with access to detailed information on the organization's assets, liabilities, revenue, expenditures, major donor sources, Board of Director or Officer salaries, and other information on the organization's activities.



**BIPOC:** An acronym referring to **B**lack, **I**ndigenous, & **P**eople **O**f **C**olor

**Cultural Competency:** We draw our definition from multiple sources in the health, educational and human services fields. Broadly defined as the ability to understand and interact effectively with people from cultures or belief systems different from one's own. Cultural competence encourages acknowledgement and acceptance of differences in appearance, behavior and culture. "Culture" in this context pertains to the "values, norms and traditions that shape how members of a particular group perceive, think, interact, behave and make judgements about their world."

**Mandatory Financial Gift Minimums:** A practice or policy commonly implemented by 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations that requires board members to give or otherwise secure a set amount of financial support for the organization on an annual basis. This policy is more commonly referred to as a "give/get" policy.

**Code of Conduct:** A document that links PlayCo's mission and organizational values to the standards of professional conduct expected in our offices, rehearsal and performance spaces, and wherever work takes place. It provides detailed procedures for addressing incidents of harassment, discrimination, and bullying. PlayCo's code of conduct was created by the leadership, in consultation with legal advisors, and approved by the board of directors in 2019.

**10 out of 12 Technical Rehearsals:** Refers to an Actors' Equity Association pre-covid mandate regarding technical rehearsals, which states AEA members can work no more than 10 of a 12 hour day. Except where other unions have comparable rules, this mandate typically does not apply to other artistic personnel or crew members. It is common for professional theatres to schedule at least 3 technical rehearsals in the week leading up to performances.