## Creating Safe Spaces Free of Racism: a Manifesto for the Arts

We want to to create safe spaces free of racism for the Black artist.

Britain is home to many different cultures and experiences, but some are less valued than others. This is unfair, and to change this we need to get rid of all forms of racism. The arts have a key role to play in this. By taking racism out of the creative space, we’ll be able to change things for the better for Black artists.

We need to say no to racism and our leaders need to act now to make this happen. We need to learn how to spot racial inequality in the arts and know what to do when we do notice it.

**What we need to do**

To create safe spaces free of racism in the arts, we need to:

• deal with racial abuse and not ignore it

• ask our organisation to change the way it spends money so it can support black creatives

• change the way we see and hear black people, listen to their stories and value all their different experiences.

**Changing the system**

At the moment we look at life from a mainly white point of view. The term ‘people of colour’ seems to say that White is the norm.

The murder of George Floyd may have helped you understand the cruelty that the Black body experiences. If so, please think about whether you or your organisation have racial ‘blind spots’. It’s important to combat these racial blind spots by talking about the Black experience in your organisation.

We call for:

1. Safe spaces for the Black artist.

2. White and Black cultural leaders to work together to change the way they work. This includes consulting and developing more Black creatives, especially in leadership roles.

3. More training for leaders and staff to raise awareness and help support Black artists in different situations.

4. A new independent body for monitoring racism and developing best practice within the industry, to make sure we treat everyone fairly. The Arts Councils and the unions, including Equity and BECTU, should fund and support this body.

5. The use of a Black therapist when dealing with black subject matter. This will improve the wellbeing of Black artists within White spaces.

6 An anti-racism rider for touring. This could include anything that makes a Black company feel more welcome in your space.

7 An anti-racism policy in every theatre organisation, with protections for those who speak out. It must include ways of measuring the policy’s success.

9 Noticing and speaking up about the racism Black artists experience. Examples would be when they are the only Black person in a space or when their organisation does not support them.

**Conclusion**

We know we have many friends who have worked hard against racism. If you see yourself as a friend, please read this document in full. Only then might we be sure that you hear us. We must continue to work together with determination and for the long term.

We know that not all Black experience is the same. People suffer from racism and prejudice in different ways, but we all share many of the same problems. We hope this manifesto may be helpful as we act together to combat racism of all kinds.

If you support the aims of this manifesto, please sign here by clicking the link:

As an individual: I support this manifesto and promise to play my part in helping to create a safe space, free of racism, for the Black artist and for all.

As an organisation: We support this manifesto and promise to work together to create a safe space, free of racism, for the Black artist and for all.

**How we wrote this manifesto**

During the Covid-19 Lockdown in the spring of 2020 more than 40 freelance creatives took part in a weekly Zoom meeting set up by the touring production company Fuel. The murders of Ahmaud Aubrey, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd started us thinking less about the pandemic and more about the problem of racism in the arts sector. This manifesto reflects our notes from this process, along with comments from other theatre practitioners.