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**IMAA**AAMI

BASIS OF UNITY

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## Independent Media Arts Alliance

### BASIS OF UNITY

The Basis of Unity states the Independent Media Arts Alliance (IMAA)'s position on and commitment to anti-oppression principles. This document is a first attempt to capture, for IMAA's membership and community, IMAA's perspective on how to build a more equitable, robust, abundant and interconnected sector.

IMAA is located in Tiohtiá:ke, also known as Mooniyang or Montreal, the unceded traditional land of the Kanien'kehà:ka/Mohawk Nation and meeting place for many First Nations including the Huron-Wendat, Abenaki, and Anishinaabeg. IMAA's work and membership takes place across the land of so-called Canada across treated and unceded lands. IMAA is in solidarity with Indigenous sovereignty across Turtle Island and actively contends with how to honor and materially uphold it throughout all our activities.

In advocating for more resources to all media arts practitioners, workers, and organizations, IMAA recognizes that systemic oppression exists in and operates throughout arts communities to disempower individuals because of their ability, age, economic status, gender, nationality, race, religion, and sexuality amongst other factors. The shapes these intersecting forms of marginalization take include: unequal access to opportunity and resources, exploitative demands of labour, exploitation of lived experience, cultural appropriation, psychological or physical harassment, ableism, ageism, sexism, cissexism, racism, microaggression, homophobia, tokenization, and transmisogyny. Systemic inequities compound and are compounded by personal biases, which can include affinity bias, attribution bias, confirmation bias, and stereotype bias. Systemic inequities and personal biases operate across all levels of work in the media arts and must be recognized and understood to allow us to move forward in solidarity.

IMAA recognizes that artist-run centres and collectives are responsive grass-roots spaces that have emerged as an alternative to dominant systems and institutional forms of art. The work of moving these spaces towards greater equity has historically been led by people from equity-seeking groups, drawing strength from a multiplicity of movements and communities. This work has not received the support it deserves, which has made it difficult to sustain and has led to repeated erosion of momentum, loss of history, and repetition of work. Critically aware that IMAA has participated in the perpetuation of systems of oppression, we commit to addressing power inequities by consistently allocating funds and resources to ongoing anti-oppression work.

To achieve substantive equity within the media arts sector, IMAA is working towards operating within anti-oppression, disability justice, and anti-racist frameworks for all work between team, board members and membership.

### **Working against a climate of austerity, we seek:**

- To centre resource reprioritization
- The amplification of equity-seeking voices
- Emotional and ecological sustainability
- Self-reflexivity and accountability towards capacity
- Job stability and security as bases of being able to meaningfully shift our sector towards equity.

The Basis of Unity provides a lens and a foundation for IMAA's work; it will guide IMAA's board, staff, and members and inform all of IMAA's governance, operations, and activities.

The Basis of Unity is a living document and will be reviewed and updated annually. IMAA's membership and community are encouraged to engage with the Basis of Unity by submitting feedback, comments, and questions regarding the content, form or language of the document. Feedback collected will be reviewed and discussed by IMAA's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee\* every three months. At the end of a one-year period, the EDI Committee will review and update the policy, and provide an account of the changes made and the rationale for each change.

### **Date of Ratification: 2023-09-08**

The Statement of Unity was drafted by IMAA's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) committee which includes both staff, board, and community members (Yun-Jou Chang, Martha Cooley, Eusebio Lopez-Aguilar, Barbora Racevičiūtė, Danielle Wintrip, and Leyla Sutherland (previously)) as a working document which will be updated, specified, and expanded upon as the organization moves forward in its Equity, Diversity and Inclusion work. IMAA is at the beginning of this process and seeks to move beyond it: a strategic planning process will follow the publication of this document and will be the basis for long term work at the organization.

IMAA referred to many resources in outlining this document including Article's statement. The committee is currently working on a resource list to provide context to the Basis of Unity.