

**Our Commitment to Anti-Racist Action**  
**a statement from the staff at the Whitworth**

The Whitworth is a gallery for everybody. We know that our foundations were built via systems of Imperialism and Capitalism through industry and colonial exploitation. With that divisions in class, labour, race and gender escalated. We do not shy away from that past but instead we actively and continuously confront it so that we can give a voice to all those who have not been heard. We value your thoughts, your voice, your opinion. We are listening and we hear what you tell us.

The killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis by a US police officer in May 2020 triggered a global call to end all racism in all its forms. This urgency has called upon society's institutions, to rethink, reset and reform.

At the Whitworth we took some time to reflect on ourselves as an organisation, our past, present and future and to think about how we could make real change happen. We paused, we listened, sought and shared resources and now we are moving forward with a plan.

We held an all staff session to start the conversations that would lead to concrete actions and to further, ongoing open dialogue that will maintain this agenda at the heart of our work.

From this we established an Anti-racism Group which is equally representative of all staff and departments to continue the discussions, address issues and shape the decision making of the institution.

This group have presented a list of recommended changes to ensure there is a continuous dialogue between leadership, wider staff and public with regards to decision-making and ensuring that the gallery is actively anti-racist.

We take this list of recommendations seriously. Some of these things we can do straight away, some we cannot do until we re-open, and some will take some time to achieve because the racist structures at the root of these issues reach far and deep into society.

- We committed to changing the way we recruit some time ago and have now made a further commitment to ensure that all future interview panels will be diverse. We are looking at new ways to make applying for a job with us a more inclusive and open process.
- Following an audit of all our internal policies and procedures we are in the process of writing an Anti-racism Policy.
- We have produced a Code of Conduct for our staff, volunteers, partners and visitors that will be made public in the gallery and online when we re-open in September.
- We will be more vocal about issues such as racism and social inequality faced by people locally, nationally and internationally.
- Most staff at the Whitworth have undertaken unconscious bias training but those that haven't have now been asked to complete the University's online course before we re-open in September. Once the building re-opens and restrictions allow we will also undertake additional face-to-face anti-racism training.

- We will offer support to local charities, groups and organisations via our social media platforms and offer free use of our meeting rooms wherever possible.
- We will review the language, look and feel of the gallery to be more accessible and inclusive to all people. This is including the way we run our shop and café, the tone of our communications, the look and feel of the website and the language of our mission and vision, the Anti-racism Group will help to shape this work.
- We will continue our trajectory in the decolonisation of our artistic programme and collections. In 2014 we committed to seek out and collect works that reflect our communities and the world around us today more closely. We understand the importance for all our visitors to be able to see themselves reflected in the work we display, talk and think about. Queer, female and non-white artists are historically under-represented in our collection and we will change this by addressing our collecting habits.
- We commit to actively collecting works that seek to address and redress the legacies of colonialism and the dominant patriarchal past that is so evident in our collections.
- We commit to radically rethinking ethical guidelines UK museums have agreed to follow around removing artworks from collections. We wish to remove not only the offensive, but also the over-represented and disrupt our part in the materiality of racism. This is an active commitment to reparations activity, making space for new collecting and transfers.
- This work will be described in our new Collections Development Policy which will be published on the Whitworth's website.

This section of the website will be the go to space to find and explore the ongoing work we are doing to create positive actions in the cultural and societal shift to ending racism in all forms; however this work should not be contained to this space but should permeate all our work as we use art in the world to make it a better place. For this we should be held to account by our staff, visitors, volunteers and working partners. The Anti-Racism Group exists in order to ensure this happens.