

On June 2nd, 2020, Dell'Arte, Inc. posted to social media a statement of solidarity with Black Lives Matter including a commitment to amplify BIPOC voices: "As a Predominantly White Organization (PWO) we are committed to Listening, Learning and Unlearning." Following that, On June 11th, 2020, Dell'Arte, Inc. posted to social media: "We at Dell'Arte International share this letter – signed by 300 Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) theatre makers – because we've been complicit in supporting white supremacy and fragility in our work as theatre makers, educators and community members. As easy as it would be to look the other way, we will no longer do so. We see ourselves and our actions in this letter. We share this to amplify the voices of BIPOC artists and administrators in our field, and to hold ourselves accountable to our actions and community."

It is in response to these statements that we people of color along with our white allies, including both former and current staff at Dell'Arte International, come forward to voice our lived experience within the organization.

**To the executive leadership and board of Dell'Arte, Inc:**

We Believe: Before your solidarity statement needs to come an acknowledgement, apology and a plan of action to redress the harm you have caused the POC and ally staff members who have been working to dismantle "WHITE SUPREMACY CULTURE" (WSC) in this predominantly white organization (PWO). Your unexamined perspective perpetuates the same white supremacist culture that we, POC and ally staff members, are working to dismantle.

We Believe: You have failed to acknowledge how WSC manifests in the organization and have failed to take action to address the concerns brought forward by POCs.

We Believe: You must acknowledge that your leadership's perspective comes from a racially affected framework, and therefore cannot competently lead the organization in matters related to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI).

We Believe: Your inadequacy makes Dell'Arte an unsafe environment for BIPOC, and has caused POC and ally staff members to face hostile work conditions, fear, retaliation, constructive terminations, and mental and physical stress every time we have voiced our concerns.

Your continued engagement in actions like:

- Trickle-down community engagement;
- Misallocation of grant funds allocated for community work;
- Responding to POC concerns with microaggressions in meetings;
- Refusing to commit to structural mechanisms that address the subject of cultural appropriation in an organization that prides itself on its internationalism;
- Categorizing BIPOC students as “problem” students through the lens of your limited white life experience;
- Labelling a POC staff member's frustration as "volatile" behavior while other members in positions of power displayed volatile behavior without consequences;
- Stone-walling POC and white-ally staff members’ attempts to implement EDI practices within the organizational and governance structures so as to create a more equitable, transparent and democratic organization;
- Silencing POC voices that interrupt white equilibrium by using modes of retaliation such as: using institutional power to co-opt EDI conversations, use of diminishing and reprimanding language towards POC, accusing POC of “subversive behavior” and categorizing their behavior via a white lense;
- Refusal to promote POC into leadership positions despite exceptional talent, experience, expertise, and performance;
- Giving token titles to POC staff members without giving them any real power to execute their jobs.

These all cause us to question your solidarity.

The refrain “change takes time” can no longer be an acceptable excuse for why white supremacist culture persists in the organization.

We have seen you operate at super speed and make overnight decisions on freezing budgets and breaking contracts to furlough the same POC staff with whom you claim to stand in solidarity.

We have seen you operate at super speed to move your entire curriculum and programming to online platforms to connect with your audiences digitally.

You have shown us that "change" is not a matter of time, it is a matter of will.

We see you.

We have put much time and energy towards positive change. It is now up to Dell'Arte, Inc. to respond and decide whether it will commit to building a BIPOC safe, equitable, and inclusive culture. We recommend the following actions:

- Complete a racial audit of Dell'Arte, Inc., to be conducted by an outside organization.
- Complete an internal audit, conducted by Dell'Arte staff and in collaboration with an outside organization, to identify specific activities of the Dell'Arte organization that perpetuate white supremacist cultural norms.
- Publically commit to a timeline for completing a historical audit, in collaboration with an outside organization, to determine which Dell'Arte assets were directly or indirectly the result of theft of land and labor from BIPOC (black, indigenous, people of color) and other regionally-specific communities that have suffered from historic exploitation.
- Using findings from all three audits, amend the Board bylaws to reflect a process of dismantling WSC and create a new governance model, operational policies, as well as programmatic and fundraising priorities that will dismantle WSC in all its forms at Dell'Arte International. Hold accountable those in current positions of authority for their contribution to inhibiting change and perpetuating a toxic work environment.
- Ensure that at least 50% of the leadership team and board be comprised of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

Whether or not you are a current/former Dell'Arte student/employee, if you support the recommended actions outlined in this document, we encourage you to voice it at [collectiverespondedai@gmail.com](mailto:collectiverespondedai@gmail.com) and/or share on social media platforms.

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