

MASC Cultural Appropriation Policy



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EFFECTIVE DATE

MASC's Equity and Diversity Policy is effective March 29th, 2021.

INTRODUCTION

Guided by our Mandate and the Equity and Diversity Policy, MASC is committed to offering professional artistic experiences that genuinely represent Canada's diversity in schools and communities. We fully embrace the ethical responsibilities and sensitivities that arise when working with individuals and communities belonging to Indigenous Peoples, Equity-Seeking, and Culturally Diverse Groups¹ in this specific context.

WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS ARTISTS, ELDERS AND CULTURAL KEEPERs

MASC is committed to Honouring the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Actions which provide that "the preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities".

In addition, MASC recognizes the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which provides that *"Indigenous peoples... have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions."*²

MASC recognizes that Indigenous cultural practices belong to the community and not to individuals, and will respectfully engage with First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities in its programming.

WORKING WITH CULTURALLY DIVERSE ARTISTS

MASC embraces the responsibility that comes with offering culturally diverse artistic programming to schools and community venues, which select artists on behalf of impressionable audiences. MASC understands the positive impact for culturally diverse students to have role models in the classroom that belong to their community based on the principle of "NOTHING ABOUT US, WITHOUT US."

¹ See MASC's Equity and Diversity Policy for reference on MASC's definitions of Equity Seeking Communities and Cultural Diversity.

² UN Declaration on The Rights of Indigenous People, Article 31, section 23.

POLICY STATEMENT

1. MASC will rigorously strive to avoid arts programming that is (or appears to be) cultural appropriation.
2. In addition to meeting MASC's artistic merit criteria, artists' programming will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis through an Equity and Diversity lens:
 - a. Indigenous Programming: artistic programming that deals with Indigenous traditional knowledge and cultural practices will be reviewed by an Indigenous Advisory Committee³, unless the artist's program was recommended by an organization, assembly or tribal council acceptable to MASC's Indigenous Advisory Committee.
 - b. Culturally Diverse Programming: MASC will prioritize community members to deliver MASC programming related to their own cultures.
3. MASC will develop a framework for engaging with Indigenous and culturally diverse traditional knowledges with **respect**, developing programs with **responsibility**, treating them with **reverence**, and strengthening their impact with **reciprocity**.⁴

DEFINITIONS

In addition to the definitions in the MASC Equity and Diversity Policy:

Cultural Appropriation is the use of someone else's culture without their informed consent. It usually decontextualizes sacred meanings and stories associated with cultural practices and objects such as traditional dress, music, dances, cuisine, stories, images, symbols, ceremonies, and other artistic and cultural expressions.

Cultural Appreciation is characterized by engaging with other cultural practices and aspects in meaningful and informed ways, incorporating an element of reciprocity and is always offered with permission and acknowledgement of the community of origin.

Cultural Appropriation differs from Cultural Appreciation because it often reflects a power imbalance between the two cultures, where the dominant culture copies, recreates or mimics a cultural practice of an Equity-Seeking Community, and above else, profits from it without meaningful reciprocity that is acceptable to the community.

³ MASC will endeavour to protect the privacy of the Advisory Committee members and the confidentiality of the Committee's deliberations.

⁴ The 4 R's Methodology originally introduced by Kirkness and Barnhardt in 1991, was then adapted by Jo-Ann Archibald, also known as Q'um Q'um Xiiem OC, an Indigenous studies scholar from the Sto:lo First Nation in British Columbia, Canada.