

MORE THAN A MOMENT

Action With & For Black Creatives

Our Pledge

The **More Than A Moment** pledge is the West Midlands arts sector's promise to take radical, bold, and immediate action, to dismantle the systems that have for too long kept Black* artists and creatives from achieving their potential in the arts and cultural industries.

By signing up to the pledge, we promise that as we build our organisation and the wider sector in a world forever changed by a global pandemic, we will do so in a way that can never again perpetuate the systems that stop Black people from thriving within the sector.

Organisations who sign up to the pledge wholeheartedly commit to ensuring equity, investment in, and opportunities with and for Black artists and creatives within their organisation's culture and work, and in doing so, becoming the change we all need to see.

We will set bold and radical goals. We will set specific aims, objectives and actions; and communicate these clearly and publicly. We will meaningfully measure, and honestly and openly report on our progress year on year. Through this, we will proudly be a part of a movement that changes the face/s of the Arts & Culture sector, to reflect and represent the UK of the 21st Century.



This is our promise for radical & permanent change:

- Take radical action now.
- Create opportunities across the sector at all levels.
- Create an anti-racist culture where Black people can thrive and fulfil their potential.
- Be accountable for the change.

This is a long-term commitment to change, and will be prioritised into short, medium and long-term aims, with appropriateness to the scale and capacity of the organisation.

We will carry out the principles and actions outlined on the following pages.

Governance & Leadership

Radical change starts at the top. This is a unique opportunity to reimagine new ways of doing things at every level.

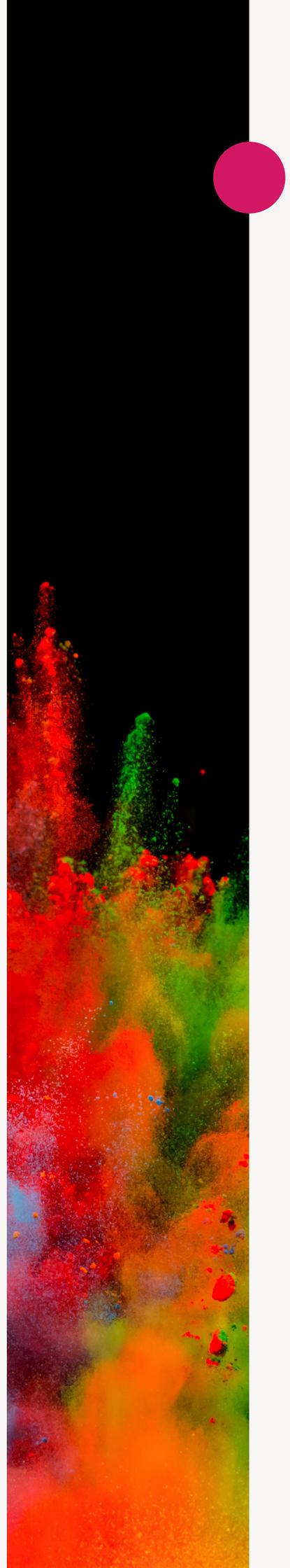
We will ensure that Black people are able to prosper in every part of our organisation, at every level - and that Black people will be able to clearly envisage their future selves thriving in the arts, because people who look like them are already doing so.

Principles:

- The leadership of our organisation will own accountability for driving positive change and banishing tick box attitudes to equality, diversity and inclusion. Instead we will track and act on data to ensure faster and long-lasting progress.
- Have representation from Black professionals on our Board, within decision-making conversations throughout our organisation, and in all areas of our practice.

Actions:

- Capture, monitor, assess and openly communicate data regarding representation, progression and wellbeing of the Black Creative Workforce.
- Have Diversity and Inclusion as an agenda item at all staff, Board and team meetings, including programming.
- Review senior roles and enable processes that continually drive fresh, diverse talent, thinking and vision.
- Progression planning for all of our Black Creative Workforce; and succession planning and mentoring for leadership and governance roles (actively supporting the development of, and opening opportunities for, our Black Creative workforce).
- Practise compassionate leadership: leading with kindness, paying on time, taking time to listen and check in; and developing a culture of transparency and openness, where teams are empowered and supported to perform at their best whilst maintaining a healthy work/life balance.



Recruitment, Pay & Workforce Development

We commit to equity of opportunity.

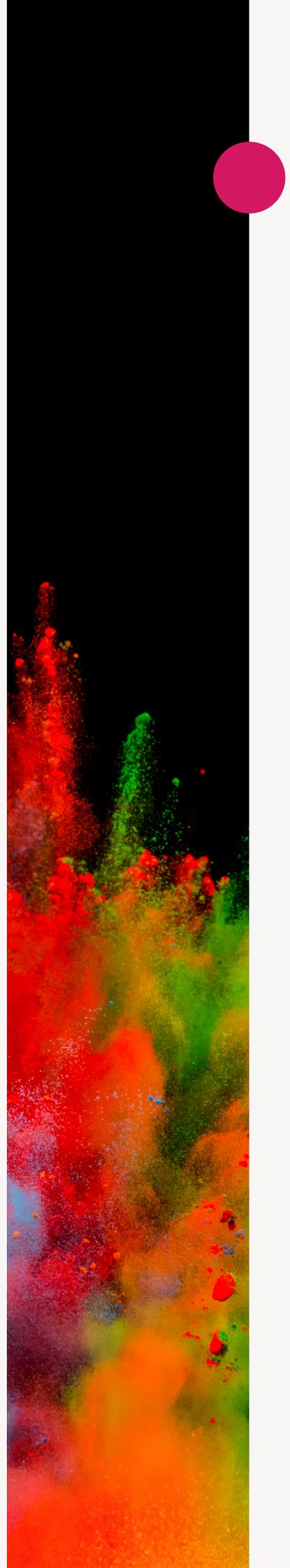
We will radically transform our recruitment practices to make them fair and equitable, and proactively work to dismantle systemic barriers to career progression faced by Black professionals in our organisation and the wider industry.

Principles:

- Ensure fair representation of Black candidates for employment, contracts, commissions and procurement; and ensure fair and equitable pay for Black employees, freelancers and consultants appointed to these roles.
- Commit to increasing representation in all areas of our workforce, at all levels.
- Demonstrate our commitment to career development and artistic development in the Black creative workforce through all of our processes.

Actions:

- Review recruitment policies and practices to remove structural barriers to employment, build trust and encourage applications from Black people, and implement the Rooney Rule* wherever possible (as appropriate to the size of the organisation).
- Review where and how we advertise and raise awareness about roles with our organisation, utilising channels that reach deeply into Black communities.
- End the practice of unpaid work or consultation; ensuring expertise and advice is valued and appropriately paid for.
- To support career and artistic development, ensure we build in time within all interview and application processes to provide direct, constructive feedback.
- Set a minimum percentage of employed roles to be filled by Black people within each level of our organisation, including senior management, Board, leadership.
- Address under-representation through paid internships, secondments, accelerator, apprenticeships or mentorship programmes for Black artists and employees in the culture sector.
- Regularly review future recruitment of senior roles, consider fixed-term appointments with time-specific extension periods, and have clear assessment criteria that meet the principles of this pledge.



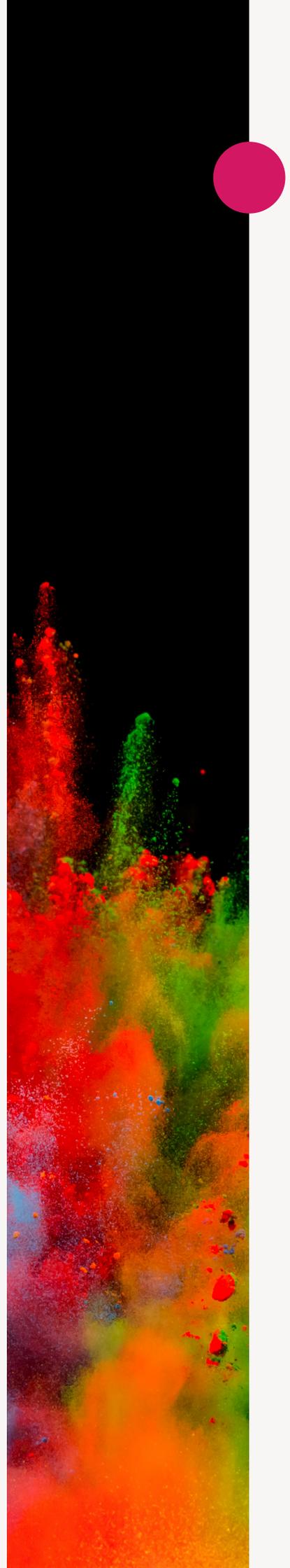
Organisational Culture, Behaviours & Language

An absolute and non-negotiable commitment to active anti-racism will be woven into the fabric of everything we do.

This will be stated publicly and proudly, built into our governance, organisational mission, projects, performances and events. Regardless of the cultural makeup of the communities we serve, we will ensure that our organisation and the spaces in which we operate, are places where Black people can trust that they are safe, can be their whole and authentic selves, and can thrive.

Principles:

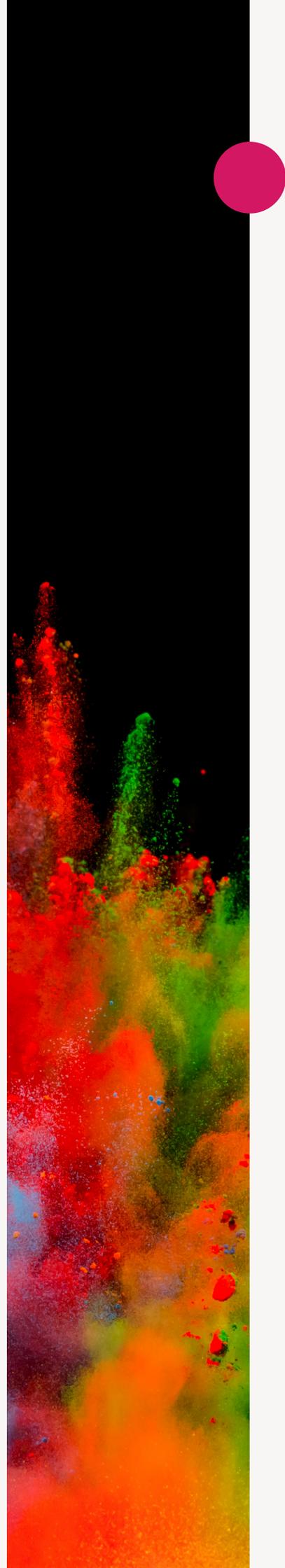
- Commit to rebuilding trust with the Black creative workforce - within and outside of our organisations - by listening, understanding and acting, to deliver tangible progress and solutions; building long term relationships based on worth and contributions.
- Ensure safe spaces for all in this process: encouraging sharing, active listening, non-defensiveness, generosity, curious questions, learning, adaptation and accountability; recognising that this is difficult work and we won't always get it right.
- Enable and empower people to raise concerns safely, with confidence that they will be dealt with appropriately and with care, and without fear of repercussions.
- Recognise that if someone is speaking up, this takes emotional labour and needs to be acknowledged and understood.
- Deal with all reported cases of racism to scale - it's not good enough to say it's a 'misunderstanding'. We will compassionately centre the individual reporting the case in the first instance, to ensure they feel emotionally safe before taking action.
- Acknowledge that language has the power both to include and exclude, and we pledge to be inclusive, welcoming and respectful. Words hold great power, and we will use them with care and compassion.
- Recognise - whether we are based in a city or in more rural / less multi-cultural settings - that we need to work to make Black people feel valued and safe to not only work with us, but come to our spaces and venues as audiences. This applies to the working environment, being a leader and audiences.



Organisational Culture, Behaviours & Language

Actions:

- Equip all staff and Board members with access to resources, training and tools to develop their knowledge, understanding and confidence to be actively anti-racist and make the workplace / boardroom a safe and flourishing space.
- Empower non-Black colleagues to advocate for change alongside the Black creative workforce. Anti-racism is a required and regularly appraised element in job descriptions at all levels. Support and encourage staff to develop their own anti-racism practices both within and outside of the workplace.
- Communicate Anti-racist values, expectations and behaviours through any job descriptions, codes of conduct, visitor / audience charters or similar documents.
- Ensure there is support and wellbeing provision for our Black Creative Workforce.
- Operate a zero-tolerance policy for racism of any kind: within our organisation, and those we work with in any capacity.
- Review our policies and procedures to make them fit for purpose, easy to access and easy to use for all who need them; ensuring they support and protect individuals as well as our organisation.
- Eradicate the use of terms such as BAME, People of Colour, Urban and other acronyms and terms that generalise or cause harm. Be specific in our language and apply this through all of our communications - both internal and external - in written, verbal or any other form.
- Stop using sector jargon that can exclude people who aren't "in the know" from important conversations and decision-making. Create a culture where people can ask if they don't understand.



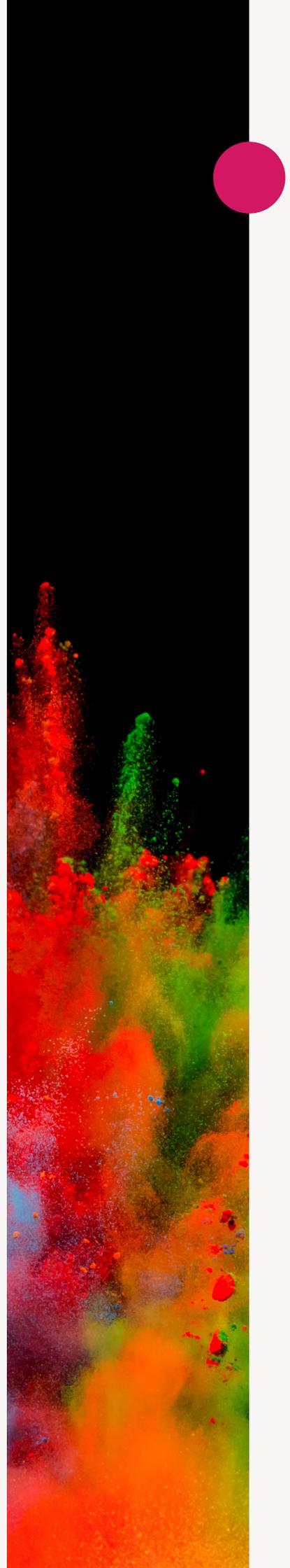
Programming, Audiences, Quality & Value

We recognise, value and respect the Black talent, ambition and creativity that fuels the cultural sector in the region - and we pledge to invest in and support Black artists to thrive, to take centre-stage, to tell their own stories on their own terms in their own words.

We recognise that the perceived quality and value of artistic work has too often been related to its proximity to whiteness. We promise to comprehensively and honestly review how we assign value to artistic work, and ensure that what happens in our spaces and in our communities is valued equally for the relevance, importance and positive impact it has for audiences and participants.

Principles:

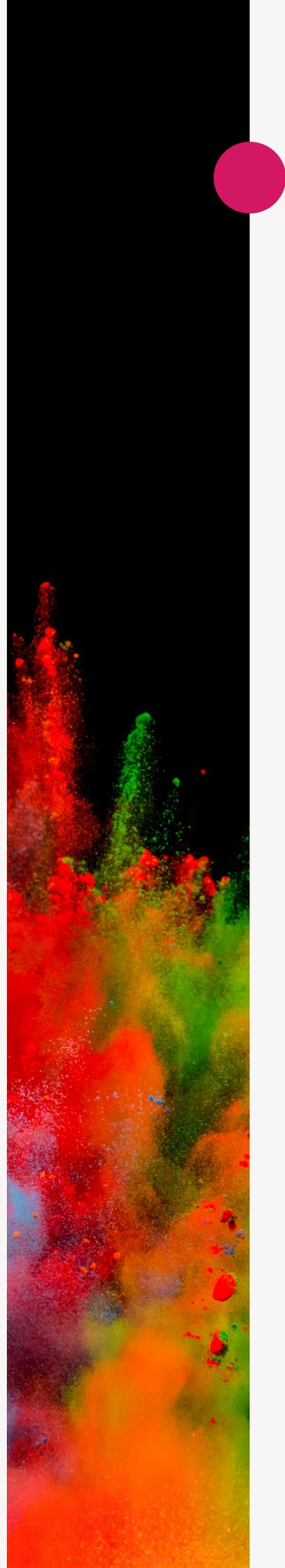
- Change in our spaces and on our stages, in our audiences and public advocates to better represent and connect with our society.
- Make our artistic programming reflective of the communities we serve, including reviewing creative programming and curation procedure.
- Ensure Black people are not excluded from opportunities to grow and develop in their professional practice.
- Commit to Black leadership in the innovation of the creative and cultural sector.



Programming, Audiences, Quality & Value

Actions:

- Connect and engage with Black communities in the region all year round, not only in relation to specific pieces or programmes of work.
- Follow the spirit of the Rooney Rule in other areas of our organisation as well as workforce recruitment, e.g. commissions / productions.
- Offer Associate roles, paid placements and shadowing opportunities wherever possible across our activity, ensuring they are empowered to make decisions, and have time for creative freedom.
- Work with colleagues across the sector to build a directory of Black artists / creatives / producers to ensure that we work with a wide variety of different people and remove the argument that 'we couldn't find Black people to fill those positions'.
- Create long-term meaningful relationships with Black artists, with support to experiment and not to have to 'get it right first time'; developing profile and audiences for their work, recognising this has too often been dismissed as 'community work' or synonymous with 'risk', and not been seen as having sufficient value for the main programme.
- Examine and challenge our artistic decision-making processes to challenge hierarchies, and ensure that perceived 'quality' is not judged on the basis of its proximity to 'whiteness' or European sensibilities; or the value of the rational over feeling / intuition.
- Ensure artistic and associated decision-making related to Black artists or experience is co-designed with Black people, e.g. artist briefs, artwork selection and casting calls being well researched.
- Ensure that Black artists are not only selected to bring in Black audiences/visitors or to make 'Black work'; and that they are valued for their artistry, not simply their skin colour.
- Recognise the importance of space for Black artists and creatives to experiment and develop their practice, away from a traditional Western gaze, and create ways to implement this. Redefine what artistic work is, and empower work that does not conform to traditional Eurocentric and western practice.
- When writing funding bids about Black communities we acknowledge that we must have experience of or be experienced with that particular community. Where we don't have this experience, we will pay for the appropriate expertise and co-design bids together.
- We will not appropriate; we will collaborate. We recognise that when a curator, producer, director or choreographer without lived experience consults with Black artists to gather information or generate ideas but does not involve or credit them in the creation of the work, this is appropriation. Venues or companies making work in this way have appropriated Black culture and whitewashed as a form of research. We recognise that we cannot make work 'in response to Black communities' without genuine, continued, credited partnerships with Black cultural organisations / artists from start to finish.



Targets and Accountability

We will use targets to hold ourselves to account.

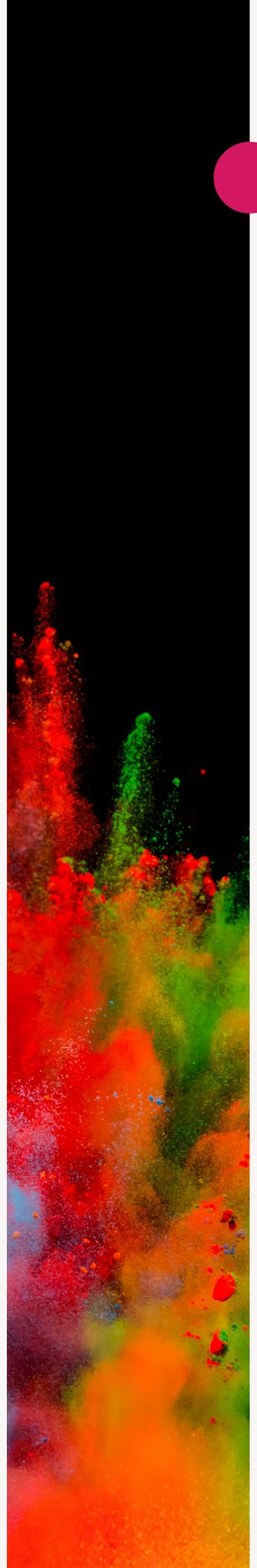
We will set bold, radical, meaningful goals and we'll proudly and publicly measure our progress against them. We'll regularly celebrate the changes that have been made, speak honestly about the work that still needs to be done, and be active and enthusiastic advocates of the **More Than A Moment** movement. Our organisational and individual accountability goes hand in hand with making the cultural sector equitable.

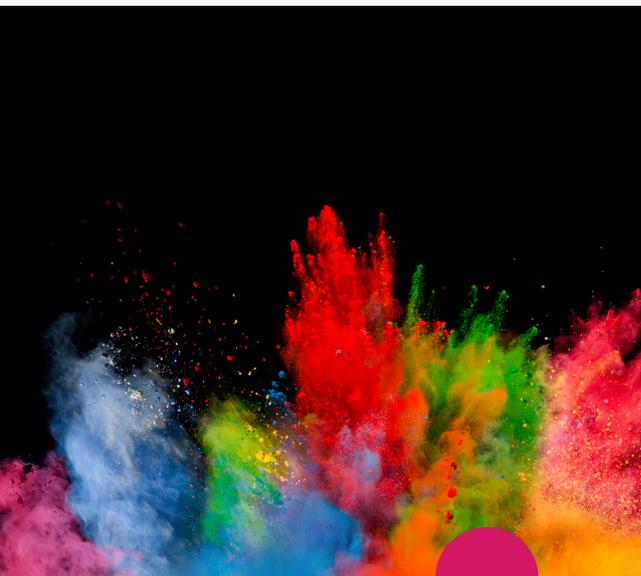
Principles:

- Commit to publicly and positively promoting the action we're taking, the impact it's having, and the work that still needs to be done.
- Commit to cultural cross-sectoral investment, and allocate resource with the core aim to build an equitable and inclusive sector, based on active accountability.

Actions:

- Produce short, medium and long term organisational goals in response to our commitment to the More Than A Moment pledge.
- Publicly publish current diversity data and illustrate the narrative supporting the data with clear plans to address data, or lack thereof.
- Publish a live, transparent diversity action plan that is brave and responsive, and includes a clear statement of intent about what our organisation will look like, demonstrating our commitment to change by physical representation in our staff teams.
- Set specific aims, objectives and actions, meaningfully measuring progress year on year, communicating these clearly and publicly; honestly and openly reporting on our progress.
- Where capacity allows, nominate a senior member of staff to take an active part in the More Than A Moment accountability quarterly learning meeting.
- Commit to a senior leader and Board member attending the annual More Than a Moment Change Summit, where learning can be shared, progress celebrated and collective priorities refreshed and implemented within the workforce.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues across the sector, including Black creatives and employees, to support emerging collective accountability structures.





Accountability - next steps

Over the next six months, the **More than a Moment** working group will further develop an accountability model, including working towards a kite mark and an independent task force as per the recommendations from the Black Creative Workforce and the Radically Listening research.

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Action With & For Black Creatives

Our Pledge Commitment

wholeheartedly commits to adopt the principles and actions contained in this **More Than a Moment** pledge, to bring about positive change with and for Black people in the Arts & Culture sector and in society.

Signed by

Chief Executive

Chair of the Board

Date _____



Footnotes

- We have adopted the Black Ticket Project's definition of 'Black': as of Black African, Caribbean, Afro-Latinx and African-American heritage, including those of mixed-Black heritage who identify as such.
- **What is the Rooney Rule?** The Rooney Rule was first introduced in the US and then implemented here in the UK. It dictated that sporting authorities must interview an ethnically diverse candidate. Initially it was aimed at senior roles but was soon incorporated across all levels. There is no quota or preference given to the candidate and The Rooney Rule or its equivalent is now used in other industries.
- **Positive Action** applies to the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010. It can mean it is not unlawful to take special measures aimed at alleviating disadvantage or under-representation experienced by those defined as having protected characteristics. Please refer to the Equality Act as positive action can apply to training, recruitment and promotion in employment.



Credits and fair usage

This pledge and process was designed and created by the **More Than a Moment** Working Group, in partnership with the Black Creative Workforce and West Midlands Cultural Sector.

We acknowledge and thank all of the Black Creative Workforce for their time, honesty and emotional labour in contributing to meetings and the Radically Listening research.

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The More than a Moment working group is:

Amit Sharma, Birmingham Repertory Theatre – Deputy Artistic Director

Chris Sudworth, Birmingham Hippodrome – Director of Artistic Programme

Corey Campbell, Belgrade Theatre Coventry – Co-Artistic Director, Strictly Arts Theatre – Artistic Director and Founder, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire – Honorary Member, West Midlands Black Collective – Founder

Doreen Foster, Warwick Arts Centre – Director

Elizabeth Lawal, Culture Central – board member

Erica Love, Culture Central – Director

Jay Zorenti-Nakhid, More than a Moment ‘Radically Listening, Reflecting & Moving Forward’ sessions – Facilitator, Tobacco Factory Theatres – RTYDS Resident Assistant Director

Pauline Bailey, Black Arts Forum CIC – Co-Founder and Visual Arts Lead, Legacy Centre of Excellence – Freelance Visual Artist, Daughters of Africa Foundation (Gambia) – Co-Founder, Handsworth Creative CIC – Director

Rachael Thomas, Birmingham Repertory Theatre – Executive Director

Reisz Amos, Birmingham Opera Company – Artistic Associate

Richard Willacy, Birmingham Opera Company – Executive Director

Roisin Caffrey, Culture Central – Interim Chair, Stan's Cafe – Executive Producer

Sophina Jagot, Transforming Narratives – Project Manager, Yugen Arts – board member, Crown Prosecution Service scrutiny panel (hate crime) – board member

Steady Steadman, Yugen Arts – Artistic Director and Founder, Flawless Entertainment – Co-Founder

Stephanie Brown, Culture Central – Digital Marketing, and Freelance Digital Marketing Consultant.





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