

# A COLLECTIVE STATEMENT FROM BIPOC DESIGNERS IN THE JEWELRY INDUSTRY:

Dear Jewelry Industry:

## **WHO**

We, as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) designers, stand together united as one voice in the jewelry industry. Our skill set and contribution remain valid and equitable to our peers and contemporaries. We choose to be part of the jewelry sector and seek to communicate our combined point of view as BIPOC designers. We create jewelry that impacts our communities, that uplifts our spirits and that inspires the next generation of jewelers. We create heirloom pieces that contribute to excelling the arts; it is our art and how we choose to express ourselves. Our points of view are our pride and joy, we welcome support and an ongoing conversation.

## **WHAT**

BIPOC Jewelers demand equity in the jewelry industry. We propose more long-term commitments to racial equity with the following guidelines, which reflect our ethos and values:

1. Invest in education and new/inclusive curriculum in schools and jewelry design programs.
2. Create more educational opportunities in both technical and artistic training for BIPOC Designers.
3. Offer paid apprenticeships, scholarships and grants, business development and job opportunities. These opportunities apply to university and college sectors as well as the commercial world.
4. Increase the representation of BIPOC-owned businesses in retail shelf space.
5. Employ people of color in your classrooms, retail sales floor, trade show booths, boardrooms, organizational committees, creative roles, merchandising and marketing positions.
6. Increase presence of socially conscious BIPOC on organization committees and corporate Boards of Directors.
7. Ensure there is a fair and equitable representation of people from all backgrounds at exhibitions and luxury fairs worldwide.
8. Support the supply chain across the board. This includes BIPOC bench jewelers, lapidaries, miners, gem dealers, casters, stone setters, and CAD designers; create greater equity in the distribution of profit in the supply chain.
9. Continue finding and supporting BIPOC designers through media interviews, articles, studio visits, jewelry making series, and social media content that provides a platform to amplify BIPOC voices and highlight their talents.
10. Acknowledge the origins of inspiration from BIPOC cultures, traditions, and historical objects.
11. Acknowledge that inclusion means supporting BIPOC designers without having to compromise our authentic identities; we demand the freedom to create art without the threat of our message being co-opted.
12. Acknowledge that social justice is inherently tied to any responsible sourcing and sustainability policies and take actionable steps to ensure that the people in the countries from which the raw materials utilized in the creation of fine jewelry are not marginalized or exploited.
13. Support the creation of a BIPOC Jewelers Association to protect our work and future.
14. Increase art school recruitment of BIPOC talent from high schools, including funding through scholarships, mentorships and mental health support in order to ensure student retention.
15. Showcase support of students and recent graduates through mentorship and incubator programs, as well as realistic access to business development funding and paid internships within industry trade organizations that offer a comprehensive perspective of how the industry works.

## **HOW—A CALL TO ACTION:**

1. Act with grace, resolve and leadership, not defensiveness.
2. Develop expectations for new industry standards by hosting ongoing conversations pertaining to equality, equity and opportunity for BIPOC designers.
3. Integrate both emerging and mid-career BIPOC designers into new and existing Artist Development programs. These programs can help build clientele for their brands, increase exposure, and foster long term growth for their careers. These include the following:
  - a. Artists Talks/ Industry Panels
  - b. Residencies
  - c. Trunk Shows
  - d. Collaborations
  - e. Exhibitions
  - f. Grants
  - g. Pop-ups with discounted costs to emerging BIPOC designers
  - h. Scholarships for BIPOC to continue their education
  - i. Exchange of knowledge and skills through study/internships/apprenticeships abroad; our industry is a global one
  - j. Develop Curricula that includes BIPOC designers
  - k. Develop inclusion and support at trade shows
  - l. Develop mentoring programs and peer-to-peer support
4. Create a Task Force to reinforce guidelines in order to establish accountability.
5. Increase access to raw materials and bench time, pricing strategies, merchandising tools, business marketing and strategy, responsible sourcing and sustainability.
6. Include BIPOC into leadership and curatorial positions and establish funds to create new institutions and opportunities for BIPOC.
7. Help create safe spaces for professional development programs targeted to BIPOC individuals to learn the trade for the future success of the industry.
8. Recognize racism within, acknowledge systemic racism and work to eliminate it
9. Increase representation in editorial in industry-specific media outlets
10. Recognition from major organizations in the industry, and a commitment to these actions

**CLOSING STATEMENT:**

We ask the jewelry industry to contribute to this movement and recognize the vast, historical underrepresentation of BIPOC in the commercial facet of the industry. While most of the resources utilized in the creation of fine jewelry are globally sourced from origins with a majority BIPOC population, and while BIPOC culture is often appropriated and capitalized upon within the jewelry industry, for too long, you have been missing our voices in how the industry is shaped, nor have we had equitable opportunities for advancement in our careers. A swell of change is already taking place and it's time for the jewelry industry to embrace this movement and be accountable by implementing initiatives and programs that can fundamentally affect change.

Sincerely,

Adri Jewelry	AUR Jewelry	Jal Dhanani-Wade	Lorraine West Jewelry	Robin Erfe
Alex P-Begay	CASTRONYC	Julia de Souza	Maggi Simpkins	Sandra Enterline
Andrea Rosales- Balcarcel	Dabin Lee	Latoya Boyd	Melanie Eddy	Sewit Sium
Angely Martinez	Emefa Cole	Lina Krakue	Merva Afshar	Shanel Odum
Ashley Khirea Wahba	Funlola Coker	Karen Smith	Olivia Shih	Soelia
Aziza Handcrafted	Jam and Rico	Kassandra Lauren Gordon	Peggy Portals	Rocio Marsyas

**Industry Supporters:** Jules Kim of Bijules, Bliss Lau, Brian Cook, Dallas Selsey, Dana Bronfman, Danielle Merzatta, Jennifer Gandia, Judi Powers, Pieces of Starr By Starr Miller, MJ Tyson, New York City Jewelry Week, Jewelers Vigilance Committee (JVC), Leslie Shershow, Rebecca Schena, Nicole Mermans, Suna Bonometti, Sara E. Yood, Esq., Monica Stephenson, Muriel Piaser, Christina T. Miller Sustainable Jewelry Consulting, Christina T. Miller, Maggie Gabos, Jackie Andrews, Lauren Eckert, Maddy Michael, Bob Goodman, Ana Brazaityte, Niki Grandics, Melissa Quick, Jared Amadeo Holstein, Wing Yau, Susan Crow, Emily Chelsea Jewelry, Leslie Paige, Andrea Hill, Erin Daily, Brooklyn Metal Works and Specific Gravity, Ada Chen, Asia Nail, Deborah Dolman, Michelle Orman, Leili Kasraie, Julia Turner, Petra Class Studio, Sharon Z Jewelry, Sam Woehrmann, Nancy Edwards, @ThirdCoastGems Benjamin G. Guttery, Mando Bee, Morgan Miller