

Other Sights for Artists' Projects Assn.
Statement of Care
June 2024

In recognition that our work takes place within the shared, unceded, ancestral territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, we are guided by their leadership in care for the land, air and water. We are committed to ongoing, respectful relationship with communities by continuous learning, honouring protocols, and foregrounding cultural practices within our programs. We recognize the aims and actions associated with the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the global justice goals inherent in this declaration.

Land Air and Water

We recognize the crisis of ecological systems that are impacted by colonialism and capitalism, and that our work has ecological consequences. We consider the impact of methods and materials of construction, and measure our work in relation to a net zero emission standard. Our work is intentionally a temporary presence on the land and water, and we consider its impact on human and non-human communities. We are selective in our partnerships, applying environmental criteria to the organizations and individuals with whom we collaborate. We understand that air, water and land connect us globally, and seek tangible opportunities to promote the awareness of the agency and rights of the land, air and water in our programs and projects.

Collectivity

While acknowledging that we operate within institutional systems such as the non-profit societies act and the organizational structures of 'board', 'staff', etc., we work to promote non-hierarchical relations within our collective framework. We find ways to articulate and educate about non-hierarchical structures by foregrounding them in mission and vision statements. We make decisions by consensus; acknowledge the volunteer labour of the board members by focusing on their guidance roles over fundraising obligations. We acknowledge the labour of all who are involved in the generation of new ideas, development work, outreach, advocacy and networking and resource sharing.

We work to flatten hierarchies based on identity such as education, race, ethnicity, gender expression, sexuality, class, professionalization, age, and ability in considering succession and hiring, partnerships, and programming. We set time aside to assess and interrogate our work and the temporal, spatial and reciprocal conditions of our relationships. We promote collective ethics by creating spaces of trust where dissent, disagreement or second thoughts can be safely explored, by respecting difference; and by remaining accountable for our actions.

Community

We recognize that the conditions of art in public are troubled by uneven power relations between artists, commissioning bodies, and cultural institutions. We take a position of advocacy in order to redress this situation by thinking carefully about selection and invitation

processes; the needs, levels of public art experience, and lived experiences of artists we work with, including young people, and by offering support in negotiating regulations and constraints.

We acknowledge the needs and expectations of residents, inhabitants, and communities associated with the sites of our projects. While understanding that art will introduce productive friction in public contexts, we recognize that artists need the support of the community to create the work, especially work that is challenging. We commit to listening before acting, to allow for lead time, to ensure clear communication and to take responsibility for the work in its context. We make space available for communities to respond, and to use, and anticipate conflict in advance as best we can.

Care for the art

We demonstrate the transformative value of art by foregrounding the aesthetic, regulatory, economic and social conditions of its presence in shared spaces, making hidden structures visible. Art's impact on public life is seen in how it identifies public space as such, both revealing and questioning who it is for. We make space for interaction and conversation by remaining vulnerable, appealing to curiosity and openness. We provide an alternative to commonly held notions of what art is, away from passive consumption to active engagement. Public discourse around art in shared spaces is enriched by welcoming community members and groups into the discussion through free access to platforms such as events, tours, radio broadcasts, billboards, floating vessels, mobile vehicles, publications and conference presentations.

We attend to the needs of the art itself by thinking through its temporary life span, tying duration to context, led by the artists' intentions. Recognizing that art can galvanize a community, we preserve its integrity and do not abandon it, undertake periods of reassessment, and record, archive and document all aspects of its existence.

We contribute to policy discussions regarding art works in shared spaces as the context of public art changes. In anticipation of such changes, we offer this statement of care as a living document to be shared within conversations and exchanges. We commit to reviewing it regularly with a questioning eye.