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DEMOCRATIC DANCE | ARTS EDUCATION | SPATIAL JUSTICE
Creating Site Specific Work Since 1985

Heidi Duckler Dance (HDD) Racial Equity Statement

HDD is rooted in Democratic Dance, Arts Education and Spatial Justice

HDD affirms that

- HDD is committed to imbue and honor racial equity through our work in primarily communities of color as we have for the past 35 years.
- We are committed to reflecting and connecting our architectural and cultural history; examining our present tensions and lived experiences; and use this foundation to imagine the poly-cultural and creative future of Los Angeles/Southern California.
- We are committed to being adaptable and responsive to the communities we serve. Taking our communities and dancers through unchartered territory and creating a new kind of dance to be explored, enjoyed and reflective.
- To stay rooted in our values of connecting to our humanity and ultimately garnering a sense of solidarity with the communities we serve.
- With an emphasis on low-income communities, HDD is committed to upholding inclusiveness, consciousness, vulnerability, and connectivity through our craft.
- HDD's participatory and transparent practice in which each project is generated in collaboration with the community it serves will continue. All rehearsals and engagement activities will take place onsite and culminate in landmark performances tailored to foster community bonds.

HDD believes that

- When you look at a place, what do you see? The architecture? The people who inhabit the place? The purpose served by the location? When HDD looks at a place, we see those things, but also the cultures, memories, histories and stories that reside in each locale. Through observations, interactions, and collaboration with the communities of that site, we begin to discover and understand the place and its possibilities. Inherently this is through a cultural equity lens.
- Using a multi-media approach to the performing arts, HDD can reimagine the connection between performers and participants to create site-specific, culturally impactful works of the performing arts. We will look for new, unintended ways to experience space and discover reciprocity. The questions we try to answer are: "What's alive?" "What's buried?" "What's current?" "What's forgotten?" and most importantly, "How can we be of service to the community to feel inspired?"

- Over the life of the company, we have expanded our collaborative, community-based practices to include educational programs and community dialogue. Engagement, access and equity are prime considerations in our creative direction. We see our creative work as a tool of social justice, social change, learning and meaningful civic engagement.

Therefore, the Board of Directors of Heidi Duckler Dance (HDD) has made cultural equity (rooted in Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access) essential to how the organization operates and programs. To this end, HDD will
- Continue to safeguard our legacy of performance practice by strengthening systems to ensure sustainability, to engaging artists and communities of color to be representative of the communities we serve, all towards the aim of building a more imaginative and equitable future.
- Intentionally consider members from underrepresented populations when selecting board, staff and teaching artists whose values include cultural equity.
- Assure that all of HDD's programs and communications are developed using a cultural equity lens.
- Invest more time and resources in promoting professional development opportunities through its programming. HDD has received feedback from its participants that many skills they learned through a dance class or performance have been interpreted and used in different parts of their lives. For example, confidence building was developed with HDD and used in a job interview setting; learning different forms of creative expression has increased a person's mental health and well being.
- Continue to evolve its use of technology (even once the pandemic is over) as a way of creating a more equitable arts platform for audiences and students. Though engaging with people over the internet has been challenging, it has also created a new openness for participants, as people may feel more confident in engaging with HDD because they are in a safe space. It is also a way to provide connection for populations who are systematically isolated and are never given an opportunity to make or watch art, for example, a family being able to watch their loved-ones perform an HDD performance in state-run correctional facilities.

Definitions
HDD utilizes Independent Sector's definitions of equity, diversity, and inclusion, which are based on language from the D5 Coalition, the Racial Equity Tools Glossary, and UC Berkeley:

Equity is the fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. Improving equity involves increasing justice and fairness within the procedures and processes of institutions or systems, as well as in their distribution of resources. Tackling equity issues requires an understanding of the root causes of outcome disparities within our society.

Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ, encompassing the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. While diversity is often used in reference to race, ethnicity, and gender, we embrace a broader definition of diversity that also includes age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance. Our definition also includes diversity of thought: ideas, perspectives, and values. We also recognize that individuals affiliate with multiple identities.

Inclusion is the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people. It's important to note that while an inclusive group is by definition diverse, a diverse group isn't always inclusive. Increasingly, recognition of unconscious or 'implicit bias' helps organizations to be deliberate about addressing issues of inclusivity.

Indicators may include but are not limited to, the presence of some combination of:
- Organizational mission
- Executive, artistic, and governance leadership
- Programmatic content
- Artists