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Racial Equity Statement

At Heidi Duckler Dance (HDD), we remain steadfast in our commitment to advancing racial equity, a cornerstone guiding our programs and community engagement for over 35 years. Our dedication to this principle is embedded in our core beliefs, endorsed by our Board, shaping the trajectory of our work and interactions.

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 uncharted 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 we observe a place, we see not just its physical aspects but also the cultures, memories, histories, and stories embedded in each locale. Through collaboration and cultural equity lens, we explore and understand the possibilities within the community.
- Utilizing a multi-media approach to the performing arts, HDD reimagines the connection between performers and participants, creating site-specific, culturally impactful works. Our focus is on experiencing space in new, unintended ways, answering crucial questions and being of service to inspire the community.
- Over our company's lifespan, we have expanded collaborative, community-based practices to include educational programs and community dialogues, placing engagement, access, and equity at the forefront of our creative direction.

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 safeguarding our legacy by strengthening systems, engaging artists and communities of color, with the goal of building a more imaginative and equitable future.
- Commit to intentionally considering members from underrepresented populations when selecting board, staff, and teaching artists, ensuring alignment with cultural equity values.
- Pledges to develop all programs and communications using a cultural equity lens, promoting fairness, justice, and inclusivity.

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

In addition to our commitment to racial equity outlined in this statement, Heidi Duckler Dance (HDD) places a strong emphasis on integrating these principles into our internal operations. We recognize that achieving cultural equity requires a holistic approach, encompassing not only our external programs and community engagements but also the internal workings of our organization.

HDD's internal operations are guided by the following principles:

Board and Leadership Representation:

- HDD is committed to intentionally considering members from underrepresented populations when selecting members for our Board of Directors and leadership positions.
- We aim to ensure that our leadership team reflects the diversity and cultural richness we seek to celebrate in the communities we serve.

Staff and Teaching Artist Selection:

- In our hiring processes, HDD prioritizes the inclusion of individuals from diverse backgrounds, with a particular focus on underrepresented communities.
- We recognize the importance of aligning our team with cultural equity values to foster a more inclusive and equitable working environment.

Cultural Equity Lens in Program Development:

- HDD pledges to develop all programs and communications using a cultural equity lens. This involves promoting fairness, justice, and inclusivity in every aspect of our organizational activities.
- We will consistently evaluate and adapt our programs to ensure they align with our commitment to cultural equity, fostering a sense of belonging and representation for all.

Training and Awareness:

- HDD is dedicated to providing ongoing training and awareness programs for our internal stakeholders, including staff, board members, and artists.
- These initiatives aim to deepen understanding and consciousness around cultural equity, promoting a more inclusive organizational culture.

Feedback and Continuous Improvement:

- HDD actively seeks feedback from our internal stakeholders to assess and improve our efforts toward cultural equity.
- We are committed to a continuous improvement process that allows us to adapt our internal operations based on lessons learned and evolving best practices.

By integrating these principles into our internal operations, Heidi Duckler Dance not only upholds its commitment to racial equity externally but also strives to embody these values within the organization itself. We believe that by fostering a diverse, inclusive, and equitable internal environment, we strengthen our ability to authentically connect with and serve the communities we engage with. This internal commitment is integral to our vision for a more imaginative, just, and culturally rich future.