

# In Our World We Are Whole

by Related Tactics

Amid dire conditions, Black, Indigenous, and people-of-color communities have been busy organizing and creating spaces among ourselves to heal and build resilient networks of survival—here we are the center, not the margins. What we have learned from that work is that we cannot go back to studios, institutions, and creative workspaces that do not acknowledge and support our wholeness. Injustice and inequity creep into every facet of our lives—especially institutionally—but we also know that those forces are not the sum total of our existence: we are more than whiteness’s lack. A pie chart of demographic data that describes this lack of representation is only a sliver of the infinite creativity, community, and knowledge we contribute to the ecosystem we share. We can imagine a world beyond. If glass institutions and the broader field cannot shift to keep up with our expansiveness, they will be left behind, a small dot in our depths.

**Only within whiteness are people of color on the margins. We are the center of our world.**

**Acknowledge and compensate** the labor and complex economies of Black and Indigenous people, and communities of color. BIPOC artists take on a tremendous amount of professional, physical, personal, emotional, mental, historical, and community labor to advise colleagues and institutions about structural racism and anti-Blackness within the glass community and beyond. Even extracting their expertise and cultural capital through seemingly casual chats or check-ins can have an immense impact.

**Make justice-oriented pathways to artistic and studio resources.** Reassess who has been centered in spaces, who has had the resources and connections to enter into them, and who has been made to belong. Tangibly prioritize BIPOC, women, and trans, queer, and disabled folks and interrogate how your physical space, studio tools, and language reinforce the inequitable distribution of power. Just because you allow access doesn’t mean your hot shops, glass museums, offices, and studios are proactively accessible or inclusive.

**Listen and learn.** Our work is to remain open and adaptive, proactively seeking to redress the areas in which we all have fallen short or perpetuated systems of inequity and exclusion at home, at work, and within glass institutions. Create space to support communities as they build their own power and define their identities and needs—this is an evolving and dynamic process that should be allowed to thrive.

**We are not DEIA stock photography.** Stop using uncredited and uninvited images of our bodies, artwork, and community to position diversity efforts, marketing, and fundraising campaigns.

**Stop policing our presence.** Stop calling police and security on BIPOC doing their work or just trying to live their lives in your university, institutional spaces, studios, and the community. The trauma that comes from the threat and infliction of violence in supposed safe spaces is permanent and irreversible.

**Sustain early career BIPOC leaders.** Do more than just hire emerging BIPOC professionals, especially if they are the first within your organization. Support them with mentorship, livable salaries and benefits, and community. Hiring them into early leadership positions allows you to leverage their community access, drive, and early career affordability; your work is ensuring their sustainability in the field.

**Long-term decision-making is power.** If you do not have BIPOC, women, and trans, queer, and disabled folks on staff, serving on boards, and in leadership positions, your organization is not diverse, inclusive, or equitable. It does not matter how many artists of color you exhibit, include in your studios, and champion in your programs.

**Undo silos.** Hire and retain BIPOC staff and demonstrate your commitment to equity by hiring not just in education and community engagement departments or culturally specific areas within the institution—especially those that are under-resourced.

**Hire and support.** Bringing in BIPOC faculty and staff to put out trash-fire scenarios in moments of organizational and cultural crisis or to carry transformational initiatives that are sapped of commitment and investment only ensures they will leave by choice, or by force, if they don’t burn out of the field entirely. Make sure that BIPOC faculty have permanent, full-time, tenure-track positions and support them with resources, mentorship, and community to ensure their successful tenure.

**Pay a living wage.** Only those within a particular class can work for free or for nominal fees. A living wage should be the baseline; otherwise you are perpetuating a legacy of servitude and disenfranchisement—particularly in a field already destabilized by implicit expectations of educational and early career debt.

**Imagine new possibilities.** You are not beholden to existing modes of structuring our labor. The space of bureaucracy is violent, and structural racism is often inflicted through administrative roadblocks. Provide robust resources of care. Build support for artists who are caregivers. Accommodate flexible modes of working. Create systems to envision what time off and scheduling can look like. Our labor is human. As such it is mutable, alive, and ever-changing. Shouldn’t you change with it?

**Create scaffolded networks of support** with peer glass organizations so that they can develop BIPOC artists and professionals, especially those who are isolated within and across white institutions so that they can continue to grow and find opportunities.

**Power exists not just in people but also in what they create.** Structures like racism are reinforced in the built environment, language, and other discreet but everyday systems. Creating an equitable future is not just about changing how we act, think, and treat one another, but also in how we move through the world or expect people to exist in our glass studios, museums, and organizations.

**To carry forward this work, you have to build trust, no matter your intentions.**