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## Pluralism Policy

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### **Background: Guiding Principle for the Alberta Foundation for the Arts: Pluralism**

The AFA believes in the full and equal participation of all citizens in the economy, polity, and society. The AFA manifests this belief through its policies and programs that promote inclusive citizenship in two distinct ways: in the arts and through the arts.

To achieve inclusive citizenship requires us to enshrine pluralism in our policies and practises.

Following the lead of The Global Centre for Pluralism, the AFA has adopted the definition of pluralism as recognizing, respecting, and valuing difference.

First – *recognize* all forms of difference.

- Difference is not restricted to what we can see or hear, but the full texture of what shapes our histories, experiences, and perspectives. We may be different in where we live (rural, urban, suburban); how we worship; who we love; where we come from; how we look; how we sound; our ability; our income and wealth; our occupation, our industry, or how we spend our time; the list of potential differences is endless. We wear multiple hats and we each wear different hats in different contexts. At times, one Albertan might come into conflict with another in how they differentially view or experience Alberta resulting in different fears, hopes, and expectations for Alberta's future. The first step to living peacefully together is to recognize those differences exist.

Second – *respect* difference.

- Recognizing difference does not delegitimize our own identity or position. The goal of pluralism is not 'sameness'. We do not need to agree with the other; but we must respect the other's right to exist. In their existence, we respect their unique histories, experiences, and perspectives that shape their being and outlook. Alberta is comprised of a diverse tapestry of uniqueness that can enrich us if we admire the differences among us. To reach that point of admiration, however, we must first nurture a common sense of belonging; doing so requires Albertans to dialogue among differences to better know one another, especially when we disagree.

Third – *value* difference.

- By recognizing and respecting what makes Albertans different, we set the stage to be able to value difference; innovation arises at the nexus of different ideas. Fostering trust and a sense of belonging not only create a

safe space for dialogue, but through dialogue catalyses innovation by bringing together Albertans from any walk of life to collaborate and create a prosperous future for all Albertans.

Diversity vs Pluralism: In contrast to diversity or multiculturalism, which are static observations of fact, pluralism is an active process that helps us value difference by getting to know ourselves and each other, and in doing so, constructively shape the economic, political, and social systems in which we live.

**Policy:**

**AFA Promotion of Pluralism**

Pluralism is a guiding principle underlying all policies in the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.

The AFA promotes pluralism *in* the arts and *through* the arts.

***In the arts*** refers to who participates as artists, arts organisations, and audiences, expressing how the sector accommodates and encourages diversity within the sector. This includes promoting:

- a) equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility of artists, arts administrators, and audiences;
- b) innovative artists practises that blend artistic practises and disciplines in novel ways; and
- c) innovative artistic practises that bring together artists from different backgrounds.

***Through the arts*** refers to the impact of the arts on society, expressing how the arts sector promotes trust, dialogue, curiosity, and sense of belonging among Albertans. Through novel artistic conceptualization, creation, and curation, the arts fosters innovation that constructively shapes and textures the fabric of our society.

Promoting pluralism ‘through the arts’ uses art as a vehicle to help Albertans understand one another without sacrificing their individual identities. Once we understand each other, we can admire and learn from one another and create inclusive citizenship in our economy, polity, and society. This includes artistic practises that:

- a) promote dialogue among different audiences about their differences;
- b) promote trust, sense of belonging, and empathy among their audiences; and
- c) promotes innovation and creates new public value by bridging the arts with other sectors and industries.

**Procedure: AFA funding programs (grants, scholarships, acquisitions) are transformed to incentivize pluralism:**

Incentivize pluralism *in the arts*:

- a) equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility of artists, arts administrators, and audiences;

- b) innovative artists practises that blend artistic practises/disciplines in novel ways; and
- c) innovative artistic practises that bring together artists from different backgrounds.

Incentivize pluralism *through the arts*:

- a) dialogue among different audiences about their differences;
- b) trust, sense of belonging, and empathy among their audiences;
- c) innovation and create new public value by bridging the arts with other sectors and industries.

**The AFA Art Collection is managed to promote pluralism:**

Promote pluralism *in the arts*:

This is achieved by explicit goal-setting and curation of art from a diversity of backgrounds, artistic practises, and contexts (temporal, geographic, social, cultural). This is achieved through:

- a) equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility of artists, arts administrators, and audiences;
- b) innovative artists practises that blend artistic practises/disciplines in novel ways; and
- c) innovative artistic practises that bring together artists from different backgrounds.

Promote pluralism *through the arts*:

This is achieved by explicit goal-setting and reporting how art housed in the collection intrinsically promotes or has potential, through audience experience, to promote:

- a) dialogue among different audiences about their differences;
- b) trust, sense of belonging, and empathy among their audiences;  
and
- c) innovation and the creation of new public value by bridging the arts with other sectors and industries.

**AFA research and engagement activities are conducted to prioritise pluralism:**

Prioritize pluralism *in the arts*:

This is achieved by promoting, supporting, and enabling understanding and measurement of:

- a) equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility of artists, arts administrators, and audiences;
- b) innovative artists practises that blend artistic practises/disciplines in novel ways; and
- c) innovative artistic practises that bring together artists from different backgrounds.

Prioritize pluralism *through the arts*:

This is achieved by promoting, supporting, and enabling best practises to support and measure pluralistic artistic practises by Alberta artists and arts organisations. This is achieved by promoting:

- a) dialogue among different audiences about their differences;
- b) trust, sense of belonging, and empathy among their audiences;  
and
- c) innovation and creativity by bridging the arts with other sectors and industries.

**Operation:** The intent of this policy is to facilitate sustained social impact through the arts and ensure the integrity of the AFA itself as a role model. As such, it functions as an umbrella policy for all AFA work.

The Board, Staff and expert panels are representative of Alberta society. Enhanced understanding of the concepts of pluralism among the Board, Staff, expert panels and Albertans is developed through a variety of learning opportunities.

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**Reviewed:** n/a