

2022 Fall Forum: Building Futures of Sustainable Presence

> Collaborative Future Building

We believe that decolonization needs to be addressed if we are to create a truly inclusive, safer and equitable Institute that attracts students and faculty of diverse backgrounds and supports the creative and academic empowerment of all individuals alike. This work is a vital expression of Pratt's DEI efforts as expressed in the Strategic Plan and meaningfully grounds efforts in civic engagement, social design, social practice, and social change. We acknowledge and recognize the work done by The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in this regard

During the past year, a group of faculty and staff have been meeting regularly to think about what **decolonization** might look like at Pratt and to take steps in that direction. Organized by Fine Arts' Project Third (P3) and funded through Pratt Strategic Funding (2020-2021), Decolonial Art Pedagogies, organized workshops and public events led by Indigenous artists, activists, and scholars organized by Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD) and held monthly meetings for interested faculty and staff.

Since then, both our thinking and our questions have deepened in terms of what decolonial futures we believe are possible at Pratt. We decided to start with a set of principles similar to some of the other art and design schools in North America. We realize that to develop the principles that are iterative and ongoing, we need an inclusive process. This is the beginning of the process. We realize this is going to take time and requires an authentic, democratic dialogue.

After the Fall Forum we will send the principles (and a summary of the conference feedback) out to a wider audience at Pratt. We hope that you can take some time, discuss, and make suggestions about how to revise and strengthen the principles, so they can ultimately be useful to all of us in our studios and classrooms.

RESOURCES

California College of the Arts: Decolonizing the Curriculum

<https://speakerdeck.com/chhttps://speakerdeck.com/cca/decolonizing-the-curriculum?slide=20ca/decolonizing-the-curriculum?slide=20>

<https://manifold.umn.edu/read/a-third-university-is-possible/section/31623b05-c144-4014-844c-096e4da8827e>

<https://reworlding.creativetime.org/RIDER>

<https://abolitionist.tools/>

<https://reworlding.creativetime.org/>

Decolonizing Art and Design Pedagogies: Set of Principles [DRAFT 9/20]

Decolonization is the unsettling process of acknowledging and dismantling colonial ideologies and structures that uphold white supremacy and racial capitalism. Decolonization recenters Black, Indigenous, and Peoples of Color (BIPOC) lives, modes of sensing, being, and relating. Ultimately, decolonization brings about the repatriation of Indigenous land and reparations for historical and continuing injustices. We recognize that colonialism created transnational networks that reproduced visual and embodied ideologies, transported free and enslaved people, technologies, and resources across the oceans and the Americas, resulting in ontological ruptures. We are laboring within an institution that is composed of eurocentric hierarchical systems, structures, epistemologies, and ontologies that are oppressive by design and that automatically privilege certain bodies and identities over others. The ongoing labor of decolonization is the responsibility of all students, faculty, and staff at Pratt Institute.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

- Pratt Institute is situated on Lenapehoking, the traditional and unceded homeland of the Lenape people, past, present, and future. Over the past two years, students, faculty, and staff in the Pratt community have been working in collaboration with facilitators from the Lenape Center to craft a formal acknowledgement of the Institute's presence on Native American land. We urge a commitment to its principles and its use in as many contexts as possible.
- Pratt Institute is a predominantly white institution located in a historically black—now gentrifying—neighborhood undergoing rapid displacement. Pratt must not be complicit in this process and take a proactive role to support long time BIPOC residents, as well as advocate for future-building, reparative policies and practices.
- Pratt's living land acknowledgement must be realized through institutional and structural accountability and culture.

COLLECTIVE ACTION & RESPONSIBILITY

- Given that aesthetics and affects are significant social forces, we will work to collectively reorient aesthetic materials, particularly those created by BIPOC, queer, trans, and differently-abled peoples, engaging narratives and experiences from the epistemological margins.
- We will support and sustain unlearning and relearning as integral to the process of restorative justice.
- Pratt must continually work to hire and support current and future Indigenous and other BIPOC faculty and staff, and to revise institutional standards of just labor practices and promotion.
- Pratt must continually work to attract and support current and future Indigenous and other BIPOC students, through financial aid, mentorship, institutional structures, student organizational agency, and responsive teaching and learning structures.
- We will build relationships with other art and design schools, colleges, and universities and encourage community conversations beyond Pratt.

CONNECTION

- We invite ease, pleasure, creativity, and play to this work. We believe sustainable, transdisciplinary, non-hierarchical integrated practices are at the heart of decolonizing the curriculum.
- We aim to develop long-term, equitable, and reciprocal partnerships with Indigenous and other BIPOC groups, leaders, artists, and designers, paying these experts for their labor and creating platforms to foreground their histories, knowledge, and values. We consider these community partnerships extremely valuable as we imagine a more inclusive future for the Institute led by BIPOC colleagues.