



## **CAPC Statement on Racial Justice**

Now, when awareness of systemic racism, its horrific consequences, its historic origins and its contemporary effects is all around us, it is time for CAPC to make a statement about the colonial state of conservation in Canada.

It is time to acknowledge the colonial framework of the institutions in which we work and of the collections we preserve. It is time to acknowledge the colonial underpinnings of our profession, where the primacy of materials over other values often remains.

It is time to shine a light on the lack of representation in the conservation field in Canada. We need other voices, other knowledge, other cultures in our profession, not just to do a better job of identifying what should be preserved and to determine how best to preserve it, but to share power more equitably. When over 90% of those making conservation decisions in Canada are white with European ancestry, whose vision of art and heritage is being preserved?

Some museums and training programs have begun outreach and found funding to attract a more diverse range of people to the profession. These are important efforts; we applaud and fully support these. But the fact remains that many of the people who should be here have little or no economic safety net and are less likely to embark on a career in a field with low employment prospects and relatively low average salaries compared to other sectors. Advocating for our field to the point where there are positions and salaries commensurate with our training and importance must be part of the plan.

What can CAPC do to help? We plan to start small and work our way towards initiatives with bigger impact.

1. We will be adding the following statement to our website and all communications:

*CAPC is committed to fostering and promoting racial justice in the conservation field and beyond.*

2. We encourage our members to personally examine or re-examine their privilege. The following resources are helpful:

McIntosh, P. (1989, July/August). "White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack." *Peace and Freedom Magazine*, 10–12.

DiAngelo, Robin. *White Privilege: Why It's So Hard to Talk to White People About Racism*. 2018.  
[Note that there are negative critiques of this book, e.g.  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/07/dehumanizing-condescension-white-fragility/614146/>]

Gulati-Partee, Gita and Maggie Potapchuk. "Paying attention to white culture and privilege: a missing link to advancing racial equity" *The Foundation Review*. 2014. Vol 6:1. 25-38.

3. We encourage each of our members, within their various abilities and influences, to advocate for paid internships and to support and create paid pre-program internships.

4. We encourage each of our members, within their various abilities and influences, to engage in and advocate for improved consultation processes with originating communities.

5. We are establishing a biennial Originating Community Consultation Grant of \$1000 to assist CAPC members with expenses related to consultations with originating communities. We encourage our members who are able to do so to donate to this grant so that we can offer it yearly. Details on this grant will be forthcoming.

6. In our work for CAPC and in our conservation practices, we commit to asking the following guiding questions: Whose voices are not being heard? How can we listen in a respectful and positive way (i.e. without asking someone to *give* us their stories, *give* us their time, *give* us their input, which can be unintentionally exploitative even if it is well meaning)? As individuals and as an organization, how can we create opportunities to promote equal access to entering (and succeeding in) the conservation field?

7. We ask each of our members to reflect on these issues and ideas and send any suggestions to the Board through [president@capc-acrp.ca](mailto:president@capc-acrp.ca)

8. We support the anti-racism efforts of our sister organization, the Canadian Association for Conservation of Cultural Property (CAC) and will engage in joint initiatives where possible.

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