

POLICY PAPER: INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY AT THE STEDELIIJK

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Dutch version of this text is leading.

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1. WHY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION?

The Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam (SMA) pursues four core values: distinctive, accessible, engaged and accountable. Guided by these principles, we are committed to promoting diversity, inclusion and accessibility in the museum.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of artists and activists, diversity and inclusion are ever higher on the agenda of our cultural and creative sector. Over the years, the Stedelijk has implemented various noteworthy projects and initiatives aimed at cultivating diversity and inclusion – from the Blikopeners to the Inclusion and Accessibility Advisory Council*. Yet the change process is still in its early days, and we have a long way to go before these advances are structurally embedded.

Arts and culture in general and, of course, also the Stedelijk, are enriched by the presence of varied perspectives. To promote diversity and inclusion throughout our organization, it is critical that all staff at all levels understand our vision, how we aim to achieve it, why we believe it is important, and are given the support they need to be involved in the process.

Everyone is equal before the law but in practice, inequality and unconscious biases are entrenched in our society and in our museum as well. The Stedelijk has a rich history and an exceptional collection, yet both are also marked by subtle and not so subtle expressions of sexism, racism, ableism and other forms of exclusion. In the past, not everyone was equally represented or made to feel welcome at the Stedelijk. We shall continue working to reverse this, moving away from exclusion and towards inclusion. Moving away from physical and mental barriers, and towards accessibility. Moving away from discrimination, and towards equity.

As a socially responsible museum, we work consistently to ensure that everyone has equal access and opportunities at the Stedelijk. The Stedelijk aims to be a relevant and inspiring place for all artists, employees, partners and potential visitors from Amsterdam, the Netherlands and beyond, with all their different backgrounds, interests, needs and identities. We do our best to make sure that the museum is a space where everyone feels welcome, and a plurality of voices is heard. This is both a matter of fairness, and a condition for quality and relevance. After all, we decide, together, which artists and issues will be given a platform, the context in which they will be presented, and how we will involve audiences, artists and partners. A wide array of perspectives is a prerequisite for staging exhibitions and events that invite a broad and diverse audience to reflect and engage in debate.

Lastly, inclusion and diversity will also benefit the Stedelijk by attracting and retaining talent and responding more effectively to the needs and expectations of a diverse potential audience.

2. AIM OF THE POLICY PAPER

The principal goal of this policy is to work toward a more diverse and inclusive Stedelijk Museum. This policy document clarifies what we mean by diversity and inclusion, why we think it is important, and the steps we are taking to move in the right direction. We have drawn up goals and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to help us chart our progress and see if we are achieving the desired impact. These KPIs are not, of course, exhaustive. They serve as tools that guide our

action during the upcoming policy period and help us to monitor our progress. Our KPIs are based on sub-domains identified in the Diversity and Inclusion Code: Program, Personnel, Public and Partners.

An organization-wide action plan on diversity and inclusion stems from the goals we set out in this policy paper. The directors are responsible for implementing this action plan, which specifies our goals, timelines, and responsibilities. Our principal aim is to anchor diversity policy in current and future tools and structures in a sustainable manner. We want to transition from an organization where diversity and inclusion are addressed on a project-by-project basis into one in which these themes are mainstream, and a continuous improvement process is fully integrated into standard management operations. This includes measures to monitor and evaluate our progress so we can chart our results and make the necessary adjustments.

The actions in this plan are formulated at different levels. We will carry out the plan together. All staff are actively invited and supported to help us reach our goal of making the Stedelijk more inclusive and diverse.

In a broader perspective, this policy paper aligns with the City of Amsterdam's goal of making the arts and culture sector a better reflection of the city. It also ties in with the activities and objectives of collaborations such as Musea Bekenner Kleur. From a global perspective, this action plan contributes to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly #4 quality education, #5 gender equality and #10 reducing inequality.

3. PRECONDITIONS

To ensure that the transition to a structurally more inclusive and diverse Stedelijk takes place responsibly and effectively, a number of preconditions need to be met.

3.1 AWARENESS, SUPPORT AND KNOWLEDGE

People can only contribute to creating an inclusive and diverse museum if they understand what we mean by this, are dedicated to it, and know what is required to make progress. To ensure sufficient support for the necessary changes, it is essential to be aware of the mechanisms and structures that hinder inclusion. Diversity and inclusion training programs are provided regularly to employees at all levels of the organization, and cover topics from bias-free hiring to welcoming visitors who are highly sensitive to stimuli. These courses provide staff with the expertise and resources to support the transition process. Building support for our diversity and inclusion vision throughout the organization means involving everyone in discussing the steps needed to bring about change, and defining what an inclusive Stedelijk looks like.

3.2 INTEGRATED APPROACH

Involving everyone in our transition to a more diverse and inclusive museum requires taking an integrated approach. This means always ensuring that our efforts to promote inclusiveness are closely coordinated across the museum. In the near future the mission, composition, and mandate of the Advisory Board will be redefined, placing this integrated approach at the core of the strategy and working method. This integrated approach focuses on the different segments

and layers of our organization and is critical to generating support for the steps that we intend to take.

3.3 OPEN TO LEARNING

We hold ourselves accountable by reflecting critically on our own actions. We welcome both solicited and unsolicited feedback and are open to reconsidering current practices and accepting fresh insights. We understand that, as in all processes of change, we may encounter temporary difficulties and, if so, will seek advice from both within and outside the organization.

3.4 MEASURING PROGRESS AND IMPACT

A thorough inventory of the nature and scale of our inclusion and diversity challenges is required in order to create realistic targets and track progress. We collect relevant data to see if what we envisioned and implemented is having the desired effect. We review and monitor the course we set out in this policy plan both within the organization and in our social engagement with the public and partners.

3.5 COMMUNICATION

We want to be transparent about our progress. This includes being publicly accountable and reporting regularly on what we have achieved. We evaluate our action plan every year in our annual report and talk about the targets we have defined and any adjustments necessary to reach them on our relevant web page and in this policy paper.

4. ACTION PLAN FOR THE COMING YEARS

Cultivating inclusion and diversity is an evolving process; this work is never finished. It takes time and consistent effort. We must be clear about our vision, establish the actions we need, and implement our goals. Based on the 4 Ps of the Diversity and Inclusion Code, we have formulated the following goals for the 2021 - 2024 strategic plan:

4.1 PROGRAM

We research the intersections between art and society, and perspectives about which we have limited in-house knowledge and that have been historically marginalized in the art world. Such topics and perspectives are actively integrated into the curatorial and research program so that they might be reflected in the collection and program now and in the future. In doing so, we listen to a plurality of voices from inside and outside the organization.

KPIs Program

Acquisitions:

- At least 50% of the acquisition budget will be devoted to non-Western (i.e. not from Western Europe or North America) artists and designers and/or artists and designers who identify as Black, Indigenous or people of color. This includes consideration of overlapping forms of exclusion such as gender.

Exhibitions:

- At least once a year, we stage a major solo exhibition by a non-Western (i.e. not from Western Europe or North America) artist or designer and/or an artist or designer who identifies as Black, Indigenous or a person of color, or a larger thematic group exhibition focusing on diasporas resulting from our

colonial, economic and business activities, that have been historically marginalized within the art world.

4.2 PUBLIC

We must clarify and define who we are and what we offer the public before we can welcome new visitors, deepen connections with regular visitors, and involve all of our staff in the change process. Formulating a clear vision will strengthen the Stedelijk's position in the long term. Our ultimate goal is to maximize our impact, accessibility, and appeal.

We listen and respond to our (potential) visitors' insights and input, and actively ask for their feedback. By immersing ourselves in their needs (from their wants to their frustrations) we can create a genuine authentic connection between their lives and our activities.

Everything – from our online and offline communication, to how we greet everyone who comes through our doors – creates a positive, enriching space where both new and repeat visitors feel at home.

From wheelchair elevators to inclusive language, we work continuously to remove mental and physical barriers.

KPIs Public

Visitors:

- The focus on first time visitors, and younger visitors in particular, is intensified. This results in an increase in the number and percentage of first time visitors bringing us closer to achieving our goal: first time visitors comprise 35% of our total audience.

Appreciation:

- Our audience poll shows that the degree to which our first time visitors enjoy visiting the Stedelijk is increasing.

Participating in culture:

- To expand the accessibility of the museum in the broadest sense of the word, every year we organize programs, guided tours and other activities for special needs visitors.

PERSONNEL

We strive for an open, empathetic and inclusive culture where difference is celebrated, and all employees feel valued. We help colleagues to adopt these attitudes and, in our hiring processes, focus on recruiting and retaining employees with diverse backgrounds, experiences and identities. Conscious and unconscious exclusionary mechanisms are actively countered so that all colleagues can contribute fully and equally to the goals of the Stedelijk.

KPIs Personnel

Inclusion:

- The percentage of employees experiencing exclusion due to illness, disability, gender, skin color, ethnicity, sexual orientation or age is decreasing compared to data gathered in previous years. This is monitored through the bi-annual employee survey.

Diversity:

- Increased diversity among employees. This is monitored through the bi-annual employee survey

Development:

- Every year, staff are offered trainings, workshops and other events relating to inclusion and diversity.

4.3 PARTNERS

We will continue to work with and make space for partners who contribute to both diverse perspectives in the organization and support our commitment to contribute to social justice. We promote equitable and reciprocal relationships in which the partner's autonomy is guaranteed. We include (smaller) Amsterdam partners in these collaborations and help them gain visibility.

KPIs Partners

Partners:

- Every year, we identify 5 to 10 alliances or collaborative partners who have contributed the most to the inclusion goals and what has been accomplished as a result.

5. TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Directors: hold overall responsibility for the museum's inclusivity process and vision, integrating it into policy and directing its implementation by the management team.

Management team: is responsible for departmental plans and budgets. It informs and directs employees in its own department. Ensures that inclusive practices are followed in all sub-areas and is committed to inclusive leadership. The managers create a safe work environment free of discrimination and other forms of exclusion.

Education & Inclusion Manager: has an active advisory role regarding inclusion and accessibility across the full breadth of the organization. Reports to the Directors. Manages the Education & Inclusion team that plays a leading role in creating inclusive programs and knowledge transfer. The Education & Inclusion Manager is a member of the Inclusion & Accessibility Advisory Council.

Inclusion Officer: their core role is to promote awareness and understanding of inclusivity throughout the organization. This role can be either advisory or executive. Serves as chair of the Inclusion & Accessibility Advisory Council and organizes internal training sessions within the organization. Reports to the Education and Inclusion Manager and informs the Directors.

Inclusion & Accessibility Advisory Council: this internal advisory body was appointed in 2016 on behalf of the Directors. This internal employee council provides solicited and unsolicited advice on issues of inclusion and identifies needs in the area of inclusion and accessibility. The inclusion officer is responsible for conveying these opinions to the Directors.

Employees: all personnel, not only those in the above-mentioned roles who lead by example, engage in the inclusivity process.

6. RISKS

Reputation: In order to progress, we must do things differently than in the past, and when you try something new, you may make mistakes. Because the Stedelijk Museum is a public institution, these mistakes may occasionally become the focus of public debate. This is uncomfortable, but it is essential that we don't shy away from it. Showing this vulnerability will take courage.

Workload: Inclusivity is a process of change and employees need time, resources, and knowledge to make progress. Efforts towards achieving

inclusivity must be given the necessary time and attention, and be maintained even when other “standard” priorities arise.

Resistance: While many people in the organization are enthusiastic about inclusion, there is also (unspoken) resistance. We need to make sure we keep the conversation going, even if this might be complicated and uncomfortable at times. Inclusion is also about listening to different perspectives. We can only build a solid foundation and ambitions that everybody shares if we explore and discuss our differences.

7. CONSULTED SOURCES

- Museums-and-the-sustainable-development-goals-2019.pdf
- Hoofdlijnen_kunst_en_cultuur_2021-2024_nieuw (1).pdf
- Kunst & cultuur - Zwart Manifest
- Diversity and Inclusion Code
- Kennisplatform Integratie & Samenleving (2019). Inclusief beleid op de werkplek: factoren die bijdragen aan (het creëren van) een inclusieve werkvloer
- The Dutch Constitution Article 1: Equal treatment and the prohibition of discrimination
- Diversiteit in Bedrijf, <https://diversiteitinbedrijf.nl/kennisplatform/meten-is-weten/>
- Handreiking waarden voor een nieuwe taal, Diversity and Inclusion Code: <https://codedi.nl/artikel-training/handreiking-waarden-voor-een-nieuwe-taal/>
- Zwart Manifest, <https://zwartmanifest.nl/begrippenlijst/>

8. DEFINITION OF TERMS

To establish a healthy discourse about inclusion and accessibility with everyone throughout the organization and beyond, we adopt widely supported definitions of terms formulated by recognized bodies and sources such as the (Dutch) Diversity and Inclusion Code. Not because these are the only correct terms or definitions, but to promote open and empowered communication. Terms such as equality, equity, polyphony are also often used in this context but, for the sake of clarity, the most commonly used terms are briefly explained below.

Diversity (definition taken from the Diversity and Inclusion Code)

We use the term diversity to indicate that people differ from and are similar to one another with regard to a range of visible and non-visible characteristics. Diversity is a given: people are different from one another. The differences hold significance for everyone's position in society and the opportunities available to them. Even though they influence our behavior and our thinking, not everyone is always aware of this. Differences are never absolute or isolated, occurring in unique combinations to form what we know as identities. The Diversity and Inclusion Code initially focused on cultural diversity, but has since been expanded to also apply to differences in other areas, such as gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, socio-economic status, level of education and age. Diversity in the Stedelijk is about the extent to which the diversity of society is represented in the four Ps: Program, Public, Personnel and Partners.

Inclusion (definition taken from the Diversity and Inclusion Code)

The term inclusion refers to how you deal with differences and similarities. The power of diversity and its benefits are harnessed when the uniqueness of each individual is acknowledged, recognized and welcomed. Achieving this means

learning to appreciate one another, not in spite of but because of our differences and similarities. It is essential that everyone is included in the decision-making process and has the opportunity to contribute ideas. Inclusion is the extent to which creators, producers, workers and audience members of all identities – visible or not – can be themselves and feel safe and respected.

Accessibility (definition taken from the Diversity and Inclusion Code)

In this context, this refers to the broad definition of accessibility, which consists of:

- Physical accessibility
- Accessibility of facilities
- Accessibility of information
- Digital accessibility
- Social accessibility
- Financial accessibility

Discrimination (definition taken from the Zwart Manifest):

Discrimination is the unjust or prejudicial treatment, disadvantage or exclusion of people based on personal characteristics. These characteristics are called grounds for discrimination. Equal treatment legislation protect the following personal characteristics, on the basis of which discrimination is prohibited:

- Religion/beliefs
- Political affiliation
- Race
- Gender
- Nationality
- Sexual orientation / gender identity
- Marital status
- Mental/physical disability or chronic illness
- Age
- Working hours (full-time or part-time)
- Type of contract (permanent or temporary employment contract)

Exclusion (definition taken from the Zwart Manifest):

Failure to include a particular group or individual based on its characteristics. Based on stereotypical images, people distinguish the group to which they belong (the ingroup, 'us'), from people who do not belong (the outgroup, 'them'). Based on these socially constructed (self-conceived) boundaries, people often prefer to interact with their own group and exclude 'others'.