

Safe Space

Policy

The purpose of the Safe Space Policy is to ensure that the human rights of every MAWA participant, volunteer, staff, and Board member are respected and treated with dignity regardless of age, gender identity or expression, mental or physical ability, mental health, place of origin, race, caste, class, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, education level, or source or level of income.

MAWA was founded to redress inequality of women in the arts, and, “continues to provide mentorship to women because we have not yet reached equality in the cultural sector nor in society” (see “Why Women?” on the MAWA website). In this spirit, MAWA recognizes that it must actively and intersectionally work to maintain a safe space to undermine systems of oppression that create imbalances of power, such as patriarchy, misogyny, rape culture, capitalism, white supremacy, racism, ageism, sexism, homophobia, queerphobia, whorephobia, cissexism, transmisogyny, ableism (related to all aspects of health and ability), classism, sizeism, and religion-based discrimination. The MAWA Safe Space Policy is a living document and will evolve through ongoing dialogue and education.

MAWA actively opposes oppression by hiring staff, recruiting Board members, and hiring artists and program facilitators who reflect the diverse population of Winnipeg. MAWA creates platforms for underrepresented voices in its programming, fills gaps in underserved communities, and regularly reviews its practices to make sure people feel welcome and safe at MAWA.

MAWA acknowledges the existence of unconscious biases which perpetuate oppressive behaviour. MAWA is committed to ongoing anti-oppression training to illuminate and combat biases MAWA may perpetuate. Representatives of MAWA enjoy a relative position of power within the art community that must not be exploited or leveraged at the expense of others.

MAWA welcomes feedback and criticism. MAWA is a site of growth and learning and believes that dialogue and open communication are the best avenues to achieve positive change. MAWA acknowledges the harmful biases of its past and works actively towards a more just and inclusive present and future.

The following includes anyone attending, performing, creating, or volunteering at MAWA events, on or offsite:

Words or actions that express racism, ageism, sexism, misogyny, homophobia, or any other behaviour or language that may perpetuate oppression, are not acceptable at MAWA. This includes content of artwork produced and shown at/through MAWA.

Violent or threatening behaviour is unacceptable. Weapons are not allowed at MAWA.

Procedure

When an instance of conflict or unsafe behaviour has occurred, MAWA encourages that it be reported to MAWA staff and/or volunteers. The reporting of conflict or unsafe behaviour will be held in confidence. MAWA staff will address the complaint and a corresponding course of action will be determined, in consultation with the Board of Directors if applicable. All complaints will be taken seriously, addressed promptly, and treated with care to the best of MAWA's ability. For further information, see the Code of Conduct – Anti-Harassment and Discrimination and Respect Policy.

Should someone attending MAWA be experiencing a serious personal crisis, MAWA will refer to external emergency resources, respecting the wishes of the individual. MAWA maintains an up-to-date list of emergency contacts in the front office.

Thank you to Synonym Art Consultation, aceartinc. and Centre For Art Tapes for sharing their Safe Spaces policies with MAWA.