

Mid-America College Art Association

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility

Mission and History

Since the 1930's Mid-America College Art Association has provided a forum for the artist/teachers of America to discuss and debate the issues of our profession, to share ideas and information of mutual benefit and to affirm the friendships and collegiality that binds us together. We are made up of art faculty, art historians, independent scholars, artists, museum professionals, and affiliate organizations; our conferences also invite graduate and undergraduate students to participate.

Recent Events & Action Plan

As we navigated a global pandemic at a time when racial justice and gender and sexual minority rights communities (LGBTQIA+ individuals) have come to the forefront of discussions and awareness in our fields, we have become increasingly aware of our responsibility and commitment to becoming an empathetic, multi-cultural, organization that embraces diversity, equity, inclusion and access (DEIA) within our leadership, programming and membership. We come together to work towards new understandings that allow us to gain knowledge, and to forge ahead in new directions.

Increased awareness of past inequalities has given us new opportunities to acknowledge, learn from one another and grow. Our full potential will be realized when we value, embrace and celebrate diverse ideas, perspectives, and experiences at our conferences, exhibitions and online communications.

We acknowledge that this work is ongoing as we embark on a journey that it is fluid and ever changing. We commit ourselves to rising to new moments of interconnectivity. Our current board is committed to revisiting, reevaluating and expanding this plan of action throughout the coming months and years with involvement of the membership. We welcome individual voices and perspectives as we work toward enacting this action plan.

Key Areas of Growth and Change

Diversity – Representation of populations that historically and systematically have been, and remain underrepresented, marginalized, and oppressed.

Equity – Recognize that we come with different ideas, perspectives, and experiences. People have equal value and should have the opportunity to participate fully and with fairness within the procedures, processes, and distribution of resources.

Inclusion – Elevating the voices and creating allies for diverse individuals to participate in all aspects of organizational work, including decision-making.

Accessibility – Actively include, regardless of status, level of education, or physical or cognitive differences, equitable access to programming and membership.

Significant and Current Plans for Action:

1. Identify the barriers to our membership, conferences and speakers.
 - a. Identify and hire a consultant to assist in developing a diversity statement and action plan for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA).
 - b. Inclusion of art faculty, staff, and students at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, independent artists, educators, designers, art historians and scholars.

- c. Recognize past members and include retired faculty, researchers and scholars.
 - d. Expand membership to the wider arts including musicians and poets.
 - e. Include STEM faculty and scientists in conferences at a reduced conference fee.
2. Diverse Membership
- a. Recruit, support, and retain a diverse membership that include
 - i. Black Peoples, Indigenous Peoples, People(s) of Color (POC/BIPOC).
 - ii. Gender and sexual minority rights communities and LGBTQIA+
 - iii. Individuals with apparent and non-apparent disabilities.
 - b. Broadening network and strategies to include colleges of historically black colleges and universities.
 - c. Create partnerships with POC/BIPOC, LGBTQIA+ communities, artists with disabilities, and related organizations.
3. MACAA Board
- a. Plan for new Board Members
 - i. Define ways for Board Members to contribute to the organization.
 - ii. Establish guidelines for years of service.
 - b. Creation of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Inclusion (DEIA) Committee.
 - c. Education and allow time to share and discuss DEIA issues during board meetings.
 - d. Annual review of our Mission and DEIA action plan by our board with the understanding that cultural change is fluid, and we commit to continuing to learn and grow.
 - i. Raise awareness of the meaning of LGBTQIA+ individuals.
 - ii. Black Peoples, Indigenous Peoples, People(s) of Color (POC/BIPOC).
 - iii. Individuals with apparent and non-apparent disabilities.
 - e. Bi-annual review of the Constitution.
 - f. Identify a historian (archivist) and commit to consistent record keeping of meetings, conferences, and exhibitions.
4. Conferences
- a. Include session or speaker that addresses topics of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and/or Accessibility.
 - b. Review past awards for current members and establish new guidelines that align with mission and action plan.
 - i. Online Juried Exhibition Awards.
 - ii. Recognition Award for Outstanding Commitment and Service to MACAA.
 - iii. Create new awards and guidelines that are focused upon member achievements.
 - c. Recognize past members who have made significant contributions to the organization.
 - d. Discussion and plan for continuation of online conferences or in-person conferences.
5. Exhibitions

- a. Identify and recruit jurors from diverse backgrounds and disciplines.
 - b. Continue to expand upon online platform and virtual gallery.
6. Communications (Website, Social Media, Newsletter, and Email)
- a. Create new section on website for MACAA Constitution.
 - b. Create a new section for Diversity statement and approved action plan following the 2022 MACAA Online Conference.
 - c. Develop, use, and maintain style guide that includes use of language, with a particular focus regarding historically marginalized groups and people.
 - d. Create a process for inviting and responding to feedback through MACAA communications and website.

MACAA Progress

1. 2017-18 worked on and updated MACAA Constitution
2. 2017 began Online Juried Exhibitions
3. 2019-2021 Transitioned Website from old platform to Wild Apricot
4. 2021-22
 - a. Developed Virtual Gallery for Online Juried Exhibition
 - b. Created First Virtual Conference
 - c. Created Diversity Action Plan
 - d. Diversity Workshops become part of the Virtual Conference