



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
September 29, 2020

CONTACT: Alicia Chick,
Development/Communications Officer - Eliot School of Fine & Applied Arts
617-524-3313 x18 achick@eliotsschool.org

Whose Standards? Racial Equity in Craft and Design Parts 1 and 2
Eliot School Salon Series in collaboration with Boston Design Week

As society wakes up to racial injustice, leaders in craft and design struggle with their own racial reckoning. Institutions in the field of craft and design continue cultures of elitism through gatekeeping and hierarchies of knowledge and aesthetics, which have resulted in white-dominated canons and histories.

There is a growing awareness that representation must be racially diverse – from artists whose works enter collections or hang on walls, to staff and faculty hired as decision-makers and thought leaders. Yet, when racial equity is discussed in these overlapping fields, community and education are devalued in favor of established (and often exclusionary) academic and curatorial benchmarks. The structures that support them -- themselves built on entrenched modes of white supremacy -- are rarely, if ever, interrogated.

Join the [Eliot School of Fine and Applied Arts](#) supported by [Haystack Mountain School of Crafts](#) in collaboration with [Boston Design Week](#) for *Whose Standards? Racial Equity in Craft and Design* a salon series event and two-part discussion.

PART 1

Whose standards are we working within and towards? How must they be disrupted and dismantled to truly move forward racial equity? How can we be honest about the historic exclusion of people of color, *and specifically black people*, from all aspects of the field? What do we need to embrace, give up, and change, in order to gain true anti-racist transformation within craft and design?

Moderator [Michelle Millar Fisher](#), the Ronald C. and Anita L. Wornick Curator of Contemporary Decorative Arts at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston will facilitate an authentic conversation with panelists as they respond to the questions at hand.

PANEL –

[Alison Croney Moses](#), artist, craftsperson, and Program Director at the Eliot School of Fine & Applied Arts.

[Matthew Shenoda](#), writer, Associate Provost for Social Equity & Inclusion (SEI), Professor of Literary Arts & Studies at Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), and SEI Advisor to the President at RISD.

[Namita Gupta Wiggers](#), artist, curator, writer, Founding Director of the MA in Critical Craft Studies at Warren Wilson College and Director/co-founder, Critical Craft Forum.

[Paul Sacaridiz](#), artist and Executive Director of Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, will set the scene a respondent for an open audience Q&A about how racial equity has traditionally been (mis)understood in institutions of craft and design, and what a more effective and truly equitable future roadmap looks like.

PART 2

Many arts and culture institutions have begun to invest in creating “pipelines” for people of underrepresented identities to access employment and exposure in the fields of craft and design. In the past six months, as the COVID-19 crisis has combined with a newly galvanized urgency to address racial equity, gaps and tensions have been exposed in these “pipeline” structures, showing places where pathways in the field simply fail to exist.

As we rebuild post-pandemic, what new systems need to be put in place to support the contemporary craft field as a truly equitable space? What effective models can be amplified and envisioned to build access and success for those who have been historically excluded from institutions of craft and design?

This panel brings together four practitioners actively grounded in racial justice who work daily to enact institutional structural change and empower black and brown young people to flourish over long careers as artists, makers, designers, teachers, and arts administrators.

PANEL –

[Anthony Romero](#) -- artist, writer, and organizer committed to documenting and supporting artists and communities of color, as well as Professor in the Practice at SMFA Tufts University and co-author of Boston Arts for Black Lives Letter.

[Jabari Peddie](#) – Director of Leadership Development at Build Excel Sustain (BES) and Co-founder of The Teachers’ Lounge.

[Polly Carpenter](#) – Director of Public Programs, Boston Society for Architecture and Fellow of The American Institute of Architects.

Alison Croney Moses, artist, craftsperson, and Director of School & Community Partnership Programs at the Eliot School of Fine & Applied Arts, will moderate a lively conversation that will also include quick-fire respondents:

- **Steph Foster**, Interdisciplinary Artist & Assistant Professor in the Dept. of Photography at The University of the Arts in Philadelphia, PA
- **Isaac Madeira-Cepeda**, teen artist at Eliot School of Fine & Applied Arts' Teen Bridge Program, and a senior at Boston Collegiate Charter School.

###

About the Eliot School of Fine & Applied Arts

The Eliot School inspires lifelong learning in craftsmanship and creativity for all. It sends artists and artisans to teach visual arts and woodworking to young people in schools and community centers throughout Boston, and offers classes for all ages in its two Jamaica Plain locations. Artisans' talks, an annual artist's residency, a multi-year teen program and family events round out its programs.

About Haystack Mountain School of Crafts

The Haystack Mountain School of Crafts is an international craft school founded in 1950 as a research and studio program in the arts. Haystack offers one and two-week studio workshops to participants of all skill levels as well as the two-week, Open Studio Residency program, exhibitions, tours, auctions, artist presentations, and shorter workshops for Maine residents and high school students.

Boston Design Week

Boston Design Week seeks to increase public awareness and appreciation of all aspects of design, foster recognition of the vital role design plays in our lives, and bring new audiences to a wide array of design industries and organizations. It's vision is to encourage the public to explore all aspects of design.