



# The Finnish Cultural Institute for the Benelux

## Principles for safer spaces and collaborations

This document is an agreement that all participants in the Institute's work and projects, including artists, institute and venue staff, producers, guests, are treated respectfully and equally. The Finnish Cultural Institute for the Benelux promotes trust, recognition, active listening, care, and cooperation.

Thus, zero tolerance will be applied regarding behaviours involving any harassment, bullying, or otherwise belittling behaviour in our work. We do not use discriminatory, subordinating, repressive, or offensive terminology (different slurs and invectives), not even in examples or to describe something.

The Finnish Cultural Institute for the Benelux strives to shape cultural spaces that are able to consider and learn from multiple voices, identities, and forms of knowledge. Even though it is not possible to guarantee a fully safe space for any actor in our projects, The Finnish Cultural Institute for the Benelux strives towards making our projects as safe as possible safe for all persons involved, and do expect the same from our collaborators.

## What is discrimination

Discrimination means that a person is treated unfavourably, or that someone's character is slandered due to their:

- Gender
- Transgender identity or non-normative gender expression
- Sexual orientation
- Cultural or ethnic background
- Nationality
- Origin
- Language
- Religion or other conviction
- Functional ability
- Age
- Appearance

Discriminatory practices directly or indirectly exclude different persons and communities from engaging in and attending work, projects, events, activities, discussions, and so on. A commonly indirect practice of discrimination is the act of microaggression. Microaggression is a term used for commonplace daily verbal, behavioural or environmental slights, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative attitudes toward stigmatised or culturally marginalised groups. It is good to remember that your assumptions are rooted in your biases.

## What is harassment

To harass someone is to subject them to hostile or prejudicial remarks or actions, such as pressure or intimidation. Harassment can also be sexual, in forms of unwanted touching, physical and verbal cues, innuendos, as well as remarks. Harassment is an action that offends a person's honour and is tied to one or more of the grounds of discrimination mentioned above. The target of harassment determines whether or not the behaviour is offensive and defamatory. Harassment is not acceptable behaviour in any stages of a project or collaboration, between any partner or actor.

## Safer Spaces Principles

The Finnish Cultural Institute for the Benelux encourages an open dialogue approach to all of our partnerships. We welcome a friendly and relaxed working environment where our visitors, partners, colleagues, and collaborators can feel comfortable to be themselves right from the early stages of collaboration. We need to a safer working environment and collaboration, which is constantly evolving.

In all collaborations, we expect that our collaborators:

- To not discriminate against or harass any parties involved in the collaboration, including fellow artists, staff, organisers, and partners

- To not use derogatory, discriminatory, and offensive language. We appreciate that everyone makes mistakes from time to time, but we do expect that if mistakes are made they are also addressed appropriately, and not repeated
- Avoid defensive responses if someone corrects you for problematic behaviour. Do not let your own emotions cloud your judgement, but listen to the feedback, apologise, and learn why the feedback was made
- Respect opinions of others, and consider that we are all coming from different backgrounds, reasonings, influences, and personal foundations
- Treat your working team with respect, as well as the other partners in the project
- Think about your privilege and acknowledge the privileges that you have
- If the project includes recording, filming, or photography, ensure that all involved are informed of and have agreed to of the use of the image and/or sound
- Inform the Institute of breaches of the Safer Spaces Principles. A contact person can be agreed upon for each project, whose details will be recorded at the end of this document

## Working together - for a successful and respectful collaboration

The Institute is a small organisation working mostly in collaboration with venues and other project partners. This means in practice that the Institute does not necessarily have control over certain aspects of production. However, we may still have some influence, even on larger productions, and in many cases we are able to adapt if we know of any specific requirements in advance. In all collaborations, we therefore ask you kindly to:

- Please inform us if you have preferred pronoun(s)
- Let us know what you need in order to feel safer in the spaces that we provide
- Let us know about any accessibility aspects we need to consider in terms of our collaboration and/or the venue the project will be realised in
- Let us know if you do not wish to be photographed at an event. We cannot guarantee we can follow all activities on site, but we can inform about the wish onsite and in our communication
- Let us know if you have any scheduling preferences, specific working days and contact channels that you prefer to be reached on

In order to best ensure a smooth collaboration, we also ask you to take note in your own working schedule the following important details:

- To send us all marketing and communication materials as soon as you can (bios, images, project descriptions etc). This is to ensure that we can pass on the correct and updated information about you and your work to partners and/or participating venues
- For audience accessibility, please provide us with a simple and straightforward description of the work (e.g. “a performance, including lights, music, and smoke”) in addition to your artistic description of the work
- If travel is involved, let us know dates and preferences of travel as soon as possible. This is to ensure that we can get your bookings made correctly and within budget

- To let us know immediately if there are any issues with the project that we need to be aware of
- To send us a signed copy of our project agreement
- To invoice us in the agreed time
- To ask questions if you are unsure of any of the above mentioned points

The Finnish Cultural Institute for the Benelux ensures the practice of Safer Spaces to its partners and participants by the following approach:

- Active listening and recognition of every bodies, stories and identities
- Active listening and consideration of every witness of harassment and discriminations

## Your support person in this collaboration is:

You can contact your support person with questions about and/or wishes for the safer spaces and accessibility of our collaboration. Your support person will work on making the collaboration safer and accessible for you.

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## Acknowledgements:

Our Principles for Safer Spaces have been based on the [Ethical Guidelines](#) of the Stop Hatred Now festival initiated by UrbanApa, as well as the outcomes of our Safer Spaces workshop. This document has been checked by curator and cultural organiser **Isabelle N'diaye**.

Updated: 14.3.2023

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