

# WE DON'T SETTLE

**A HERITAGE  
MANIFESTO**





## A Heritage Manifesto

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This manifesto is a response to young People of Colour feeling disconnected from traditional heritage spaces, and is an attempt to connect the voices of young people to those in positions of power within the heritage sector. It was created in a collaborative effort between We Don't Settle and 10 young people, coming together to identify the areas where the sector needs to step up and make change. While being reflective of the wants and needs of young People of Colour, this manifesto leaves behind the idea of understanding this group as a monolith. Instead, we recognise the diversity of experience within the group 'People of Colour', and hope to have achieved a snapshot of the diversity in the key areas we focus on throughout the manifesto.



# ACT ON PROMISED NARRATIVES

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The histories of People of Colour are missing from the standard eurocentric histories we come across in heritage spaces. These histories are often told from colonial perspectives, and constantly shared through a lens of oppression. We want to see authentic, accurate and revised narratives built into the heritage sector.

## HOW?

- 1** Prioritise space in your organisation to highlight the untold stories of People of Colour in permanent and temporary collections.
- 2** To move beyond narratives of oppression, give space to highlight the achievements of People of Colour throughout history.



# LET PEOPLE OF COLOUR TELL OUR OWN STORIES

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The appropriation of our stories leads to them being told through a lens of whiteness. We want to see increased opportunities and space for storytelling that is reflective of our diverse lived experiences, giving us agency over our histories and our storytelling.

## HOW?

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- 1** Diversify your workforce on the inside and utilise expert voices from the outside. Ensure the inclusion of curators, designers, researchers, project managers from diverse backgrounds in non-tokenistic approaches.



# **UPDATE & ADAPT YOUR LANGUAGE, UPDATE THE NARRATIVE**

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Recognise how language has been used as a tool for oppression and the importance of embedding this knowledge into your organisation and across the workforce. Complicated jargon and out of date terms can act as a barrier of participation and alienate audiences.

## **HOW?**

- 1** Regularly reflect on the suitability of language within your organisation by keeping up to date with new and upcoming discussions around language used in the context of groups minoritised by society.
- 2** Make sure your tours and interpretations are easy to understand and accessible for all audience members.

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**IF IT'S NOT  
INTERSECTIONAL,  
IT'S NO LONGER  
PROFESSIONAL**

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Understand that young People of Colour are not monoliths. Young People of Colour have different lived experiences that may contribute to barriers when engaging in traditional heritage spaces. In order to effectively decolonise we must approach decolonisation intersectionally, anything else is not decolonisation.

## HOW?

- 1** Be accessible to ALL audiences. When considering the barriers to participation for young People of Colour, include disability, sexuality, class, gender identity and faith into your strategies. Explore what this might mean for your individual organisation.



# **BREAKING DOWN BINARIES**

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Understand the impact colonialism has had on LGBTQIA+ communities in the UK and previously colonised countries. To remove colonial grips on the history we are shown, we must actively take steps to tackle LGBTQIA+ erasure.

## **HOW?**

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- 1** Make steps to ensure heritage spaces are accessible for trans and non-binary folks.
- 2** Highlight LGBTQIA+ narratives in the stories you tell.

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# CHANGE YOUR RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

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To make steps in embedding young voices, you must make attempts to diversify your workforce from the inside, through creating safe spaces for young People of Colour of diverse backgrounds to work in and develop professionally.

## HOW?

- 1 Creating safe, accessible spaces for young People of Colour to work in and increase opportunity for employment.





# **EXPANDING DEFINITIONS OF 'HERITAGE'**

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Deconstruct rigid definitions of heritage and replace them with a more flexible approach. Heritage is multifaceted, and is explored and engaged with in different ways for different people. For many People of Colour, we might engage with our histories through stories told by our grandparents, or recipes that have been passed down generations.

## **HOW?**

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- 1** Adapt these ideas to how we present heritage in heritage spaces, e.g. oral histories, being able to touch, feel, and engage with histories in new yet familiar ways.



# **HISTORY IS NOW: BE RESPONSIVE TO WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE WORLD**

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The past will be indefinitely linked to the present, and Heritage should be a space to tackle it all. The National Youth Trends 'Time and Time again' report has highlighted that Young People have shown they want organisations and brands to engage with what's happening in the world socially, culturally and politically.

## **HOW?**

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- 1** Link your heritage to current social and political conversations, particularly those which young people may be affected by or care deeply about.
- 2** Build connections with young audiences to establish what they want to see from your organisation.

# GLOSSARY

## MONOLITH

Monolith is used in this manifesto to describe how People of Colour are often categorised into one box, with the same lived experience and barriers in society. We know this is not true and that we all have different stories, identities and experiences.

## INTERSECTIONAL

Intersectional/Intersectionality is an approach for understanding how aspects of a person's social and political identities, such as gender identity, sex, race, class, sexuality, religion and disability can overlap to affect the barriers they may face in society and their life experience.

## EUROCENTRIC

When there is a focus on European culture and history, while actively excluding discussions around the culture and history of different continents around the world. This can lead to the idea that European and Western history is more significant than that of the rest of the world.

# GLOSSARY

## **APROPRIATION**

Appropriation is used in this manifesto to describe the displaying or curating of histories by those who are themselves detached from the history in some way, while denying those with a personal connection to those histories a chance to interpret these stories.

## **DECOLONISE**

The ongoing journey of undoing the effects of colonialism in our heritage spaces.

## **COLONIALISM**

The policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically.



**THANK  
YOU**

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