

American Indian Artists Inc. (AMERINDA)
**New York City Should Live Up to the Promise of Equality for all by providing Cultural Equity to
Native Americans in the New York City Cultural Plan**

Our paper sets forth the theme that the New York City Native American federally-recognized artists exist within context of the indigenous peoples of the world, specifically within the “government-to-government” legal framework as it currently exists within the United States. And New York City is legally obligated to support the aspirations and needs within our Native community specifically within the framework of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of 2007, Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990, as well as understand the legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery as it pertains to the ongoing paradigm that was established toward Native American people since that initiation of that Doctrine. The reality of this context is that the urgent needs for support in New York City, has never been equitably promulgated in light of the overt pronouncements that New York is concerned with social justice.

With the recent severe down-sizing of the American Indian Community House, (AICH), American Indian Artists, Inc. (AMERINDA) est. in 1987, has assumed even more of a political leadership role within the Native American grassroots arts community. American Indian Artists, Inc. was started by a group of Native American Artists, who emerged from the civil rights and social justice movements and migrated to New York City to study and work because of its reputation for incubating the most progressive cultural movements in the country. These artists formed the core of the **New York Movement in Contemporary Native American Arts stretching from the 1920’s to the present. Outside of Santa Fe, New Mexico the New York Movement is the only such contemporary Native American multi arts movement in the United States. By making visible Native American contemporary forms of expression; the work of these visual, theater, literary and media artists has helped restore and strengthen our communities against continuing marginalization and discrimination.**

Native American Nations with our cultures and histories serve as sort of the National “myth” or grand stereotype. Over the course of the centuries, Natives at first were feared, then falsely lauded, then marginalized as children. Stereotypes ranging from Hollywood images to sporting team mascots, Native Americans as a whole and artists in particular carry heavy baggage in this regard. Because of neglect and outright disenfranchisement, we must frame our position in terms of the overall legal framework by which the City of New York, Department of Cultural Affairs and the general arts community must recognize that they can no longer ignore the existence of the Native arts community in this city without consequence; that Native American indigenous rights reach back before the very founding of this city and country, and we must finally be treated equitably and fairly within the New York City Cultural Plan.

Three Selected Articles from UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Rights, 2007 applicable to Native Americans and other Indigenous Peoples:

Article 8: refers to indigenous peoples having rights against forced assimilation as a distinct people. (Manifested by the New York City Council or DCA’s non-recognition or non-equitable recognition of the tribally-enrolled Native arts community in New York City, as well as using budget size as the primary criteria for worthiness of support.)

Article 11: Implies that the New York City Indigenous peoples' art community has the right to maintain and strengthen their "visual and performing arts and literature", and that redress should be forthcoming from the "States" e.g. New York City in the form of recognition and support.

Article 13: implies New York City's lack of recognition and support of Native arts inhibits the individual Native artist and AMERINDA's opportunities to express and therefore, diminishes the Native artist community's right to transmit its artistic legacy to future generations – art reflecting the histories, oral traditional philosophies etc. inherent in Native traditional and contemporary arts.

Article 15: can be taken to mean that because of New York City's lack of artistic recognition and support, and lack of consultation, the Native artistic communities "dignity and diversity" cannot be appropriately reflected in education and public information.

Doctrine of Discovery: This is where the long held justification for the taking of lands of indigenous peoples originated which held that actions were justified because those taking were "Christians" and those losing were "Pagans".

Native American Artistic Community Needs and Recommendations:

1. A new paradigm through targeted approach be established by the City using longevity, innovation, context, quality of work, value to community, service to City be used as funding criteria rather than just size of budget.
2. Observe Federal statutes (Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990) implementing Federal criteria for Native American definition, thereby prohibiting misrepresentation from individuals and organizations.
3. Prohibit financial support from City funds to non-Native organizations or individuals who create racist depictions specifically 'red face' (Native equivalent to 'black face') including mascots.
4. Require an equitable percentage of Native New York City residents be used in Native programming and events presented by institutions and organizations receiving City funds.
5. Assist AMERINDA in locating and then donation of a City-owned property (for a \$1.00 as they have done for so many European American arts organizations in particular) for an AMERINDA multi-art arts center which would include space for presentation of traditional and contemporary arts, affordable housing, subsidized work space for artists and arts-related micro-business, internships and training programs.
6. Provide equitable direct core operational support to AMERINDA
7. Create cultural capital for individual artists through a fellowship program in multiple disciplines similar to the Urban Artist Initiative (2009-2011) for all artists of color, with the Native American component to be administrated as a re-grant program through AMERINDA.
8. Provide direct support for community based arts related micro-businesses.
9. Create employment training similar the earlier Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) and Works Investment Act (WIA) to provide artists with employment and/training in community based organizations serving artists of color.
10. Require the New York City Department of Education to teach students that the Doctrine of Discovery