

AIA Honolulu and Equity Diversity and Inclusion Committee Statement of Solidarity and Commitment to Racial Justice



AIA Honolulu stands in solidarity with the Black community and the Black Lives Matter movement. The murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, and Ahmaud Arbery among countless more Black lives have, once again, uncovered inequities of police brutality and systemic racism in our society that stem from roots in white supremacy. We support the efforts to protest against systemic racism and ongoing threats to Black lives. We were wrong to not speak on these topics openly and explicitly. We acknowledge our comfort in silence and that not looking at these issues head-on is rooted in our own privilege.

Our communities in Hawaii are often regarded as a racial paradise, free from the racism of the United States of America, citing our ethnic diversity as evidence for this claim. However, we know that even in our islands, we see pervasive inequities in our Black, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and other communities of color. We see parallels in the struggles of these communities in a shared history of oppression by colonization, the ongoing pandemic of racism, and anti-Blackness.

We often use the “aloha spirit” as a reason to avoid conflict and the discomfort of confrontation, doing a disservice to us all. Let us instead think about true aloha as a commitment to equity and positive change that demands justice for all. We call on our AIA Honolulu community to recognize all of our privileges, internalized racism, and unconscious biases. Our commitment to justice requires a parallel commitment to discomfort and courage as we work together toward a just world.

AIA Honolulu commits to inclusive spaces for conversation and education and to utilize our skills and resources to create true equity. We commit to listen to and amplify the voices of Black leadership and the next generation who have historically led revolutionary movements for a better world.

Our Commitment:

EDUCATION

- + Host Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion educational events
- + Establish and maintain an accessible list of resources
- + Provide framework for grassroots educational series within firms

ADVOCACY

- + Work with state council leaders to track legislation at the intersection of racial justice and the built environment
- + Call for juries to include underrepresented professionals

ACTION

- + Create programs to expose underrepresented youth to the design profession
- + Highlight underrepresented voices in media
- + Build relationships with organizations committed to social justice

Our Collective Challenge:

Our industry requires us to be radically imaginative, solve complex problems, and advocate for our clients and communities. Intrinsicly, design professionals know when to lead and when to listen. We honor our Black Architects and challenge our Architecture community to:

- + seize all opportunities to speak up against injustice and promote open dialogue
- + engage in conversations led by our Black peers and colleagues about equitable design
- + engage with Black thought by reading and researching work from Black creators
- + do the introspective work to identify and leverage our privilege to amplify work of our Black colleagues
- + invest in organizations leading the charge against systemic racism

As creators of the built environment we have a responsibility to prioritize public safety and welfare. We must advocate for racial justice with the same fervor that we advocate for environmental justice, affordable housing, and equitable building codes.

— 2020 AIA Honolulu Board and Equity Diversity and Inclusion Committee