

## **Die Active & Definitely Superior Art Gallery Letter of Apology**

On July 14th, Die Active celebrated ten years of youth arts mentorship, with the Lost & Found Street Art Festival and the Annual Y-Art Sale. The Y-art Sale, for nine years has invited emerging youth artists to sell their work, with no censorship, no table fee and an easy, open sign up process.

We learned this year that our selection process for vendors has to change. In the past, it had always been open to all youth artists to sell what they choose. This openness was our downfall as we saw non-Indigenous artists displaying and selling works that were culturally insensitive.

There are many ways in which artists can choose to express themselves, but the inappropriate or even willfully ignorant adoption of the ideas, customs, or practices of Indigenous peoples is inexcusable. It directly and negatively impacts the sense of safety, access to space, value, perception and positive experiences of Indigenous artists in our community.

Die Active and Definitely Superior Art Gallery give our deepest apologies. This inadequate screening of vendors was an oversight on our part and we regret and apologize for upsetting Indigenous youth, artists, partners, audiences and allies of whom we respect and love.

In past years, the selection process for vendors has entailed: artists submitting a request to participate, with images of their work and links to their online presence. The first 50 to apply were admitted, as long as they were under 30, making items themselves by hand and producing works that were original, of 'good taste' and respectful of copyright. Vendors were selected by a small committee of artist volunteers, based on the images and links provided. This selection process had room for improvement. Artists were not screened for all items they intended to sell.

Apologies are not enough. We intend to show action. We will change the ways in which the gallery, it's youth groups and city wide craft sales select and display artists' work at their events and programming, starting with a brand new plan for vendor selection that Die Active will be using. This document will be available on our website for other organizers to use as well.

Please also look for our new working documents, which will be released early next week. Including a Die Active/DefSup Action Plan, a Call to Action & Education for the Public, a reading list and more.

With festival season currently underway, we intend to provide organizers with information to educate and guide their vendor choices so that we do not see this happen again.

We will continue to work on these documents with input from the community, working closely with Neechee Studio and Indigenous allies, so that the documents and actions reflect a move towards creating a safer space for Indigenous folks. Contact us at anytime for further info, comments, suggestions & questions.  
dieactivedieactive@gmail.com

To our Indigenous friends: We see you, we hear you and we value you. We are truly sorry and we are here to help make change.

- Die Active Art Collective & Definitely Superior Art Gallery