

# RADA

## Anti-racism and Allyship in Stage Lighting Design

Created by the Students and Staff of the RADA Lighting Department in June 2020.

With thanks to Max Johns, the Graduates of RADA and the ALD for helping to create this resource.

This is a working document and it will grow.

Version 7: 23rd June 2020

Update detail: vocabulary aligned with [this guidance](#) from the Civil Service.

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### In Life

- We will challenge racism when we see it at all levels, in all contexts, no matter how small.
- We will listen to the colleagues from ethnic minorities we are working with and learn from them. But it is not their job to educate us. We will read and learn and educate ourselves.
- We will teach ourselves about the concept of white fragility and better understand it.
- We will make space for under-represented voices and listen.

### At Work/Drama School

- We will demand that lighting manufacturers remove the terminology “master and slave” as a reference to stand alone/daisy-chained operation of DMX intelligent lighting fixtures.
- We will reassess what we mean when we talk about gel colours that promote “skin tones”.
- We will reassess what we mean when we talk about gel colours that are “flesh coloured”.
- We will reject the premise that “darker skin tones are harder to light”.
- We recognise that lighting designers and cinematographers have been studying how light responds to different skin tones for years and been talking about it more openly than others, but we also recognise that this information is hard to find and often given as a footnote. We will educate ourselves that colours react differently to different skin tones and bring this to the forefront of our study.
- We will educate ourselves that reflectivity is key. We will work with designers, make-up artists and costume supervisors to ensure that a reflective base is used on darker skin tones.
- We will work with designers and costume supervisors to ensure a balance in costume leads to a balance in lighting and presence of different skin tones.
- We will call it out when we see an actor of colour is not being lit properly on stage. We recognise that using the same lighting and stage design as you do for white actors puts actors of colour at a disadvantage.
- We will work to promote the idea of “calling someone out” on a microaggression or mis-step as an act of kindness and collaboration, not a criticism or shaming.
- As future production electricians or lighting designers, we have influence in employing practitioners who specialise in programming, electrics, and rigging. We are able to actively widen our pool of contacts and recruit production artists from ethnic minorities to these roles.
- We will reflect the diversity of the casts we are working with in our 3D renders and design references.
- We will respect that sometimes the rehearsal room may need to be a closed, safe space for artists of colour to work on traumatic or triggering material and white presence might not be helpful.
- We will use the term “conical” when talking about cone-shaped light shades.
- Our course lacks representation and diversity. We will help to actively encourage people from minority backgrounds to work in the arts and choose the production arts as a career - offering to lead workshops with young people and getting behind projects promoted by our Widening Participation dept.

### When We Engage with Industry

- We will actively encourage theatres and companies to provide personal support to actors, artists and technicians from ethnic minorities when employing them to work on productions that require them to draw on their lived experience of racism and trauma.

- We will stand with artists from ethnic minorities when they call out venues and companies for institutional racism: we can add our voices to theirs and ask to be informed of what action is being taken to address it.
- We will read reviews by Black critics and bloggers, particularly when it comes to plays about Black culture, which are often misunderstood by white critics writing for major publications.
- We will read reviews and editorial by culturally diverse and relevant bloggers.
- We can donate money and offer our time to support projects set up by practitioners from ethnic minorities to make our profession fairer and more representative.
- We will take more time to work with and watch Black performers and shows about Black history.
- We will take more time to work with and promote culturally diverse artists and non Euro-centric history.
- We will take time listen to the stories and experiences of artists from ethnic minorities in our industry if they are willing to offer them.
- We can support and engage with the theatres and companies that have a long history of supporting minority ethnicity voices.
- We will take inspiration from and promote the work of minority ethnic artists; painters, photographers, sculptors, film-makers, poets, activists, designers, writers, performers, musicians.



The ALD support the development of this document and agree that it is a great first step in the right direction to make positive change.

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### Resources (by no means an exclusive list)

#### Specifically on lighting:

- Lighting different skin tones; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=grDY2Rq8N0w>
- Lighting darker skin tones; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XRVMFqb1Y2I>
- Lighting Black faces in film: <https://www.mic.com/articles/184244/keeping-insecure-lit-hbo-cinematographer-ava-berkofsky-on-properly-lighting-black-faces#.shzAu6F49>
- Racial bias in photography: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/25/lens/sarah-lewis-racial-bias-photography.html?auth=login-google>
- Photographing darker skin tones: [https://create.adobe.com/2017/11/28/\\_10\\_tips\\_for\\_photographing\\_darker\\_skin\\_tones.html](https://create.adobe.com/2017/11/28/_10_tips_for_photographing_darker_skin_tones.html)
- Lighting darker skin tones in film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W8M3LyywI8k>

#### Wider industry:

- Black Theatre Live <https://www.blacktheatreive.co.uk/>
- Inc Arts UK: diversity and inclusion in the arts <https://incarts.uk/>
- Stage Sight [www.stagesight.org/](http://www.stagesight.org/)
- Black Ticket Project <https://www.patreon.com/blackticketproject>
- Black Plays Archive [www.blackplaysarchive.org.uk](http://www.blackplaysarchive.org.uk)
- Creative Mentor Network: <https://www.creativementornetwork.org/>
- Creative Access: <https://creativeaccess.org.uk/>
- NPR Code Switch <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/>
- Black Theatre Club <https://twitter.com/blcktheatreclub>
- Theatre Call to Action: Theatres Pull Up or Shut Up <https://theatrealltoaction.wordpress.com/2020/06/10/theatre-call-to-action-proposal/>
- Gal Dem: online publication committed to sharing perspectives from women and non-binary people of colour <https://gal-dem.com/>
- Design Can: Active resource platform for inclusive and representative design: <https://design-can.com/>
- Afridiziak Theatre News [www.afridiziak.com](http://www.afridiziak.com)
- Critics of Colour <https://criticsofcolour.tumblr.com/>
- Telegraph article: 'Traditional' theatre lighting and stage design discriminates against black and Asian actors: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/08/12/traditional-theatre-lighting-stage-design-discriminates-against/>
- Ngugi wa Thiong'o - Enactments of Power: The Politics of Performance Space <http://hemi.nyu.edu/courses/sp2016-performance-and-activism/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2016/01/02102016-Thiongo.pdf>
- James Baldwin: The American Dream and the American Negro <http://movies2.nytimes.com/books/98/03/29/specials/baldwin-dream.html>
- Pat McGrath Desert Island Discs - make up artist Pat McGrath talks about her career and the historical lack of [make-up products for Black skin](https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m00057px) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m00057px>
- Colorism: <https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2019/apr/09/colorism-racism-why-black-people-discriminate-among-ourselves>

- 100 years of beauty - men <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z36GQylnzhk>
- 100 years of Black American fashion <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mwzFxo0dAkY>
- Black Fashion Through the Ages <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5YEp9CSVp3o>
- Inspiring the Future <https://www.inspiringthefuture.org/>

Some UK based Black-led theatre companies (see Ellie King's post on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CA8czNFHs9M/?igshid=pbjt7a0ldhpu>)

Talawa <http://www.talawa.com/>  
 Eclipse <https://eclipsetheatre.org.uk/>  
 Ballet Black <https://balletblack.co.uk/>  
 Hidden Gem productions <http://www.hiddengemsproductions.co.uk/>  
 Beyond Face <https://www.beyondface.co.uk/>

Some companies with a history of supporting and promoting Black and Minority Ethnicity voices:

Kiln <https://kilnthatre.com/>  
 Young Vic <https://www.youngvic.org/>  
 Clean Break <https://www.cleanbreak.org.uk/>  
 Synergy <http://www.synergytheatreproject.co.uk/>  
 Brixtonhouse (formerly Ovalhouse) <https://brixtonhouse.co.uk/>  
 Theatre Peckham <https://www.theatrepeckham.co.uk/>  
 Fuel <https://fueltheatre.com/>  
 Tangle <https://www.tangletheatre.co.uk/>

Some more companies: (thank you Matthew Xia and Sean Brooks for adding these)

The Albany <https://www.thealbany.org.uk/>  
 Tiata Fahodzi <http://www.tiatafahodzi.com/>  
 The Bush <https://www.bushtheatre.co.uk/?>  
 NitroBEAT <http://www.nitrobeat.co.uk/>  
 Utopia <https://utopiatheatre.co.uk/>  
 Stratford East <https://www.stratfordeast.com/>

Intermission Youth Theatre <https://www.intermissionyouththeatre.co.uk/> (thank you Emma Tompkins)

More companies: (thank you Ameer Choudrie)

Rifco Theatre Company <https://www.rifcotheatre.com/>  
 Tamasha Theatre Company <http://www.tamasha.org.uk/>  
 Tara Arts <https://www.tara-arts.com/>