

# PORTalBurn Art Practices

PORTalBurn has adopted multiple practices to help foster an environment that celebrates Radical Self-Expression and Radical Inclusion through art and Participation. Here is a summary.

## ARTIST'S STATEMENT

We recognize that having an art piece open for interpretation is often part of its glory, and can lead to welcomed discourse and unexpected discoveries. At the same time, we must acknowledge that a misinterpretation of the artist's intention can lead to conflict, or worse, be perceived as threatening to some participants in our community. To help bridge the gap between intent and perception, we will require an 'Artist's Statement' to be posted and visible with all funded and placed art to give participants insight to the artist's intention. For some art projects, the intention may be simple and clear, as some pieces are not open to diverse interpretation. Some projects, however, may be perceived as controversial in nature, and understanding the artist's intention could play a key role in helping participants appreciate the art in a different way. In this way, the Artist's Statement may help foster constructive discourse or alleviate participant concerns.

While all flaming art and funded art requires placement, much of the art at PORTalBurn is not placed. We encourage the creators of art within their camps to also embrace the practice of including an 'Artist's Statement' with their projects. This will be particularly meaningful if they believe there is likelihood of misinterpretation that may cause another participant concern.

## ART COMMITTEE

We have broadened the role of the Art Committee. Previously, the Art Grants Committee was tasked with determining which projects received grant funds. Starting in 2019, the role of the Art Committee will include reviewing requests for art placement as well. The committee will review artist statements to inform their decision making process, and help ensure any funded or placed art is in accordance with state laws (<https://codes.findlaw.com/ny/penal-law/pen-sect-485-05.html>). The Art Committee will function under the guidance of the Art Lead, with a BOD Liaison as a resource should it be needed. All PORTalBurn participants are encouraged and welcomed to volunteer to be part of the committee. Applications to participate on the committee will be posted [here](#).

## DIALOGUE and MEDIATION

Because art can have diverse interpretations, it is imperative that dialogue be part of our process. If a participant interprets any art as being threatening or finds it interferes with their ability to participate in PORTalBurn, we ask that they open a dialogue with the artist if it is reasonable to do so. In turn, we ask that artists be open and willing to engage in these discussions, particularly given that it is their art that sparked the discourse. Our hope is that an open dialogue between Artists and Participants will help us find common ground and grow stronger as a community.

We recognize there may be circumstances where it is not reasonable to expect a participant to engage in that dialogue, particularly if their interpretation leaves them feeling personally threatened. If this occurs, we ask that the participant seek out a Ranger. Rangers are trained in mediation, and through discussion with the Ranger options can be weighed, helping to determine the path forward. That path may include engaging others in the discussion, such as the Art Lead or a BOD member, and the Artist. We will work together to come to an amicable solution.

## **CONDUCT COMMITTEE**

The Conduct Committee provides an opportunity for participants to file a complaint post-event if they encountered a situation where they believe a conduct violation occurred. It is our hope the aforementioned practices will provide tools so that no art is perceived as a conduct violation; however should such a piece of art cause concern regarding a conduct violation, the Conduct Committee provides a vehicle to report the violation, and request follow up investigation. All POrtalBurn participants are welcomed and encouraged to volunteer to be part of the Conduct Committee when the new application cycle opens. The Conduct Guidelines and process are located [here](#).

## **TEN PRINCIPLES**

The [Ten Principles of Burning Man](#) is our guide. The conversation regarding 'toxic or acidic art', and how it relates to the principles, is an active and ongoing discussion (read the '[Too Offensive for Burning Man](#)' series to explore the topic further). At POrtalBurn, we believe Ten Principles acculturation is key to building an expressive, inclusive, and participatory community, and we will continue our acculturation efforts. Pre-event communications will help the community at large understand and embrace them, and onsite activities will help to promote them during the event. We will also more actively engage Theme Camp Leaders in helping to cultivate the principles by providing them with guidelines that highlight their roles in our community.

We are in this together, and together we seek to create an environment where artistic expression is encouraged and celebrated, and inclusion and participation are valued components of our community.

POrtalBurn Board of Directors  
April 23, 2019