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Statement of Solidarity with the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Community

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Statement of Solidarity with the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Community

Abstract

The VRA Executive Board and Equitable Action Committee stand in solidarity with the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community in the field of visual resources and beyond. It is critical that white people recognize that the United States was founded in white supremacy, and that anti-AAPI racism and violence are one painful part of our legacy. We must learn from the past, acknowledge what is going on today, and collectively act to bring about change for a better tomorrow. Anti-racist practices need to be embedded in visual resource work, as well, including but not limited to anti-racist hiring and retention practices, collections development, cataloging and description, curation, and programming and outreach.

The VRA Executive Board sincerely thanks the members of the VRA Equitable Action Committee for articulating such a difficult message and providing actionable measures we can take as a community and individuals.

Keywords

visual resources, Equitable Action Committee, diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, antiracism, Asian American Pacific Islander community

Author Bio & Acknowledgements

The Equitable Action Committee is charged with advancing and supporting an equitable, diverse, accessible, and inclusive association. With critical reflection and a steady eye on the future, this committee seeks to strengthen the association's membership by welcoming, embracing, and supporting historically marginalized people, voices, and narratives. The committee also aims to educate and empower the association's membership on issues of accessibility and disability inclusion opportunities. This committee will advise the Executive Board on creating equitable and inclusive practices.

The VRA Executive Board and Equitable Action Committee (EAC) stand in solidarity with the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community in the field of visual resources and beyond. Anti-AAPI racism is not new to the United States, but it has seen an ugly increase since the beginning of 2020. With the onset of COVID-19, [reported](#) anti-Asian and anti-AAPI hate crimes have risen by 149% percent even while overall reported hate crimes have decreased by 7%. The organization Stop AAPI Hate [reported](#) on 3,795 incidents from March 19, 2020 to February 28, 2021, which included verbal harassment, physical assault, civil rights violations, and online harassment. The Pew Center [found](#) in July 2020 that “three-in-ten Asian adults (31%) say they have been subject to slurs or jokes because of their race or ethnicity since the outbreak began” and “majority of Asian adults (58%) say it is more common for people to express racist or racially insensitive views about people who are Asian than it was before the coronavirus outbreak.”

On March 16, 2021, eight massage parlor workers, six of whom were Asian women, were murdered as a result of white supremacist and misogynist violence: Xiaojie Tan, Daoyou Feng, Soon Chung Park, Hyun Grant, Suncha Kim, Yong Ae Yue, Delaina Ashley Yaun Gonzalez, and Paul Andre Michels. The VRA condemns this hate crime and sends its condolences to the family members and friends of those who were slain, and all those in the AAPI community who are mourning this loss. We understand that this violence, combined with the events of the last year, may have an understandably negative impact on the health and well-being of our AAPI colleagues. A non-exhaustive list of mental health resources for the AAPI community can be found below; please let VRA know if there are additional ways we may support you. You can email the Board at conduct@vraweb.org to report incidents that occurred at any VRA conferences, affiliated events, or online forums. You may also always use this [form](#) to let the EAC know your concerns related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. Or, you can write the Board directly at board@vraweb.org or the EAC at ea@vraweb.org.

It is critical that white people recognize that the United States was founded in white supremacy, and that anti-AAPI racism and violence are one painful part of our legacy. Read about a select handful of this history in [this article](#). For more in-depth analysis of anti-Asian racism, see [this reading list](#), and for information on Asian history, solidarity, and feminism, see [this reading list](#). We must learn from the past, acknowledge what is going on today, and collectively act to bring about change for a better tomorrow. Anti-racist practices need to be embedded in visual resource work as well, including but not limited to anti-racist hiring and retention practices, collection development, cataloging and description, curation, and programming and outreach. For those outside the AAPI community, please see opportunities for bystander intervention and financial support below.

For the complete statement with links to resources and references see: <http://vraweb.org/eac-aapi-community-message/>. The VRA Executive Board sincerely thanks the members of the VRA Equitable Action Committee for articulating such a difficult message and providing actionable measures we can take as a community and individuals.