

Baltimore Watercolor Society Standards of Behavior Policy

Introduction

Founded in 1885, the third oldest watercolor society in the United States, the Baltimore Watercolor Society (“BWS”) is an institution with a venerable history. It has always been recognized as an institution of sterling caliber, well respected among its peers. In everything we do, individual BWS members and members of the Board of Governors should continue to hold themselves to the highest standards of ethical conduct; doing the business of the organization with unimpeachable integrity; and each respecting one another and treating others as we ourselves would wish to be treated, in words and by actions.

Each member of the BWS Community has a personal responsibility to fulfill our organizational mission of “encouraging the development of excellence in original works of art.” To do that we must respect and encourage every artist in a safe environment. All non-BWS members who participate and work with us are also held to these high standards.

BWS sponsors or hosts in person and virtual workshops, conferences, demonstrations, virtual and physical meetings, exhibits, receptions, and virtual communications channels such as our Facebook group and Page and Youtube channel. (the “Venues”)

The Standards of Behavior Policy is comprised of the Policy and Procedure on Harassment and Discrimination and the Event Etiquette Code of Conduct and is applicable to members of the BWS Community that participate in the Venues. The BWS Community is comprised of the BWS Board of Governors, members, vendors, exhibitors, guest instructors, and non-member attendees and guests. This Policy helps to promote the realization of BWS’s mission to encourage the development of excellence in original works of art.

Event Etiquette Code of Conduct

Out of respect for fellow attendees, and so that all may have an enjoyable and productive experience, members of the BWS Community who attend BWS workshops, conferences, or meetings, whether in person or virtually, are asked to follow these etiquette guidelines:

1. Be on time for the event and when returning from breaks.
2. Let the instructor be the sole instructor. Don't take on the role of assistant or deputy workshop instructor.
3. Avoid comparing the current teacher's methods to other workshop instructors' methods. Listen and follow the current instructor's advice, and then take or leave what works for you. Don't offer other approaches.

4. Don't let your materials sprawl beyond your own painting space.
5. Leave your area as clean as you found it, and follow instructions for proper disposal of paint water according to the host venue's requirements.
6. Don't monopolize the session with too many questions. With many students who all have questions and need time from the instructor, be sure you are not using more "air time" than should be allocated to one person.
7. Never give advice or critique to the other students without their direct solicitation of your input.
8. Be sensitive to your neighbor's desire to stay focused and avoid interrupting them with your questions and comments, or excessive off-topic conversations during working time.
9. Side conversations should not occur during presentations.
10. Never argue with the teacher. Even if you learned something in an entirely different way, or if you think your instructor is mistaken, it's best to stay quiet while in the group. If you want to voice a disagreement with the instructor, do it later- one on one.
11. Turn off or silence your mobile phone. To take a call or make a call, please exit the instruction room and take your conversation where it will not be heard by others. If you're in a Zoom workshop, be sure you are muted.
12. Take turns sitting in the front row of the demo area. If you had a front seat the first day, move to the back on a subsequent day so everyone can have an opportunity to get a close-up.
13. Please do not wear strong fragrances or perfumes to workshops or events, out of consideration for those with allergies and chemical sensitivities.
14. In a Zoom workshop or program, please keep yourself muted unless you are called on to speak. If you need to take a call, eat, or do anything else that may be distracting to the presenter or other students, please turn your camera off. Please do not carry on side conversations using the chat function in Zoom.
15. Do not take, use, or borrow someone else's materials, supplies or property without their express permission. Theft or vandalism of another individual's property will not be tolerated.
16. Event attendees must follow any health and safety guidelines that Baltimore Watercolor Society has implemented at the time of the event. In the event of current and future disease outbreaks, BWS may specify and enforce CDC recommendations of masks, vaccinations/proof of vaccination/negative testing, social distancing, etc. Specific guidelines may change based on the public health situation and will be announced in conjunction with the specific event. Failure to abide by these guidelines may result in ejection from the event with no refund.
17. Remember that you are there to listen, learn and make art...not to impress someone! Please be kind, respectful, and supportive of your fellow students.

Policy and Procedure on Harassment and Discrimination

BWS is dedicated to assuring that the use of and access to the BWS sponsored or hosted Venues is free of all forms of harassment, intimidation, discrimination or bullying.

Definitions

Harassment proscribed by this Policy includes:

1. Harassment or intimidation based on race, age, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, ancestry, disability, medical condition, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, marital/domestic partnership status, or citizenship.
2. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other physical, verbal or written conduct of a sexual nature.
3. Creating an intimidating, hostile, or sexually offensive environment by severe or pervasive conduct. Written conduct includes postings or similar conduct in online or electronic venues. Sexual harassment may occur in hierarchical relationships or between peers, and between persons of the same sex or different sexes.

Discrimination is the unjust or prejudicial treatment of others based on race, age, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, ancestry, disability, medical condition, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, marital/domestic partnership status, or citizenship.

Bullying is seeking to harm, intimidate, or coerce someone perceived as vulnerable using unwanted or aggressive behavior.

A hostile environment can be created by, among other things, unwanted jokes, gestures, and unwelcome comments and repartee; touching and any other bodily contact such as scratching, rubbing, or patting a person's back, backside, or chest, grabbing another person around the waist, or deliberately interfering with a person's ability to move, or written conduct referring to same; repeated requests for dates or sex that are turned down, or other unwanted flirting; filming, transmitting or posting any communication (such as chats, direct messages, and emails, etc.) or video and/or pictures of a sexual or other harassment-related nature.

This Policy is implicated when the harassment, intimidation, discrimination, or bullying is sufficiently severe or pervasive to deny or limit a person's ability to participate in or benefit from BWS's Venues. It is not necessary that the harassment, intimidation, discrimination, or bullying have been directed specifically at any complaining party.

Free Speech and Artistic Freedom

As participants in creative industry, most members of the BWS Community are particularly cognizant of the free speech protections guaranteed by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. However, freedom of speech and artistic and creative freedom are not limitless and do not protect speech or expressive conduct that violates federal, state law, or BWS's policies.

The purpose of this Policy is intended to discourage harassment, intimidation and discrimination in BWS Venues. Therefore, this Policy shall be implemented in a manner that recognizes the importance of the freedom of speech and expression: no provision of this Policy shall be interpreted to prohibit conduct that is legitimately related to visual art, teaching methods, or public commentary of an individual member or the educational, political, artistic expression of members in artistic and public Venues.

Reporting Procedures

If the situation is safe, and the person experiencing harassment, discrimination, or bullying feels comfortable to do so, they should communicate with the individual engaging in the offensive behavior to let them know that the behavior is inappropriate and request that it immediately cease.

If such behavior does not immediately cease, or if direct communication is insufficient, unsafe, or uncomfortable, the behavior may be reported to the BWS President or BWS Event Organizer. In addition to notifying the individuals identified above, a complainant may also request assistance from any Board of Governors member or volunteer. Such report should include the substance of the complaint, date(s), a list of witnesses and/or, when appropriate, reference URLs.

Non-Retaliation

This Policy prohibits retaliation against a member of the BWS Community for reporting harassment, intimidation or discrimination and for participating in an investigation relating to same. The sanctions for retaliation are the same sanctions available to address any other violation of this Policy.

False Allegations

It is a violation of this Policy for a member of the BWS Community to knowingly or with reckless disregard for the truth make a false claim of harassment, intimidation or discrimination. Failure to prove a claim of unlawful harassment is not, by itself, equivalent to a false claim.

Sanctions for Violation of Policy

Harassment, intimidation, or discrimination in violation of this Policy is materially and seriously

prejudicial to the purposes and interests of BWS. When it has been determined that a violation of this Policy has occurred, the BWS Board of Governors will determine, in its sole discretion, the appropriate sanction.

Should conduct believed to be in violation of this Policy occur at a BWS Venue, the BWS Board members or volunteers in charge of the Venue at the time of the conduct may take reasonable action to stop the apparent harassment and ensure the safety of participants.

Reasonable action may include, but is not limited to, verbal notification to the individual that the behavior believed to be in violation of this Policy should be discontinued immediately, and/or removal of the individual from the Venue. If action is taken, the person taking the action shall deliver a written report on the event incident (including a detailed narrative of the incident and the names of all persons involved and of any witnesses) to the BWS President, who shall submit the report to the Board so it can consider taking further action in the matter.

The BWS Board of Governors is responsible for the implementation of this Policy and the administration of the associated procedures including investigation. Upon receiving a report of a violation of this Policy, the BWS President shall provide formal notice (the "Notice") of such conduct to the Board. As supplements or alternatives to the sanctions of suspension or expulsion, the Board may also take one or more of the following non-exclusive actions:

- Warning one or more parties involved that specified behavior is inappropriate
- Requiring a formal apology on behalf of the complainant(s)
- Ejecting the offending party from the premises
- Suspension or expulsion of the offending party's membership in BWS
- Removing access to BWS spaces or Venues on a temporary or permanent basis
- Barring a non-member from future membership
- Removal of a Member from the Board of Governors

The Board may pursue an investigation in cases when the complainant is reluctant to proceed.

Confidentiality

The BWS Board of Governors will make every reasonable effort to conduct all investigations into allegations of harassment, intimidation or discrimination in a manner that will protect the confidentiality of all parties. Notwithstanding the above, confidentiality is not absolute, and those with a legitimate business reason to know and to be informed of the allegations will be so informed. Parties to the complaint should treat the matter under investigation with discretion and respect for the reputation of all parties involved.