SCMS Anti-Racism Statement

The Society for Cinema and Media Studies strongly condemns police violence and acts of hatred against African Americans across the United States. The deaths of George Floyd, Tony McDade, Sean Reed, and Breonna Taylor at the hands of police—and the killing of Ahmaud Arbery by a former police officer—are only just a few of the latest examples of the depths of cruelty and violence by those in power within the United States. These incidents are not isolated nor are they rare. While the brutality looks different country by country and region by region, as a global organization of scholars, we know that the scourge of racism is its own global pandemic.

The pervasive and numerous impacts of white supremacy and white privilege do not stop at the gates of colleges and universities. As educators, we stand in opposition to the militarization of our campuses. But we also stand against the structural racism so deeply embedded into higher education. As scholars of cinema and media, we know the power of the image. Many of our members have studied how film, television, and social media have played roles in the long story of violence against African Americans, as well as the cruelty and violence committed by those in power against Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities. Time and again, when the media focus cameras on peaceful protests for civil rights the story instead turns to damage to property rights. As educators, we can help unpack the impact of racist images and videos of violence against people of color on communities.

As the leadership of SCMS, we reaffirm our commitment to dismantling the systems of oppression within our own organization as well as to support our membership in doing this hard and important work at our colleges and universities. Most recently, in 2018, we established two important task forces that guide leadership on making transformative change: the SCMS Antiracism, Equity, and Diversity Task Force and the SCMS Global Inclusivity Task Force. In January, the Journal of Cinema and Media Studies added two Associate Co-Editors of Outreach and Equity, whose mission is to increase the representation of marginalized voices and media communities in our field. Over the coming weeks, we will be looking for ways to communicate about how we as individuals and as a community can most effectively take action within this moment to work for positive change in our classrooms, in our faculty meetings, and in our lives as community members to stay accountable. We will begin a series of conversations about reconsidering syllabi, turning to member experts, and we will continue to look inward at our own organization to see how we can best support our community members who have been most impacted by these oppressive systems.

We stand in solidarity with Black scholars, educators, and students. We ask you to join us in being a part of this work. We hope that you will help us be the change we as a community know is necessary.