



OTTAWA ARTS
COUNCIL | CONSEIL DES
ARTS D'OTTAWA

ANNUAL REPORT

2021-22



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Ottawa Arts Council is located on the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishnaabeg people, past, present and future caretakers of this land. We respectfully acknowledge our role and meaningful actions in reconciliation and are grateful to be working on this sacred land.

PRESIDENT MESSAGE

While we still navigated the effects of global pandemic in 2021, the Ottawa Arts Council, under the superb leadership of Nicole Milne, continued to persevere, setting a pace that never slowed down.

We featured exciting events like the Ottawa Edition of Red Phone, a great networking program that connected our members and community together, sparking dialogue and new friendships. We presented our annual Arts Awards, showcasing phenomenal artists of all disciplines, showing just how rich and diverse our community is. We also launched a successful fundraising campaign for Giving Tuesday in November over social media and email, garnering a wonderful response from the community.

What a journey we have been on, and what a journey it continues to be. When I look back on the last year, I am simply grateful to Nicole and the staff for their imagination, toughness and relentless energy. Their resilience and willingness to adapt, connect, and advocate for our arts community is tireless. Thank you to the Board for your continued leadership, dedication and encouragement for the staff and the Council's work. It is inspiring to be a part of such a dedicated and supportive group. And lastly, a huge thanks to our members, partners, funders and sponsors. Your support, investment and belief in the Council drives us forward.



Stefani Truant
President

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MESSAGE

The last fiscal year saw a lot of fundamental change at the Council, and another year of operating remotely due to the pandemic. Despite the challenges, we marked the completion of the Council's 3-Year Strategic Plan, which was developed following interviews with external stakeholders, surveys with members and non-members, and strategy sessions with community partners. We're excited to share the outcomes in this report, which details the programs and initiatives developed to meet those goals and objectives, helping map a course for the future of the Council.

This calendar year also marks the Council's 40th anniversary. A chance to reflect on our past, and celebrate four decades of advancing, promoting and advocating for artists and arts organizations in Ottawa. It's been a year of learning, of reflection and of collaboration with members of the community at large. It's been a year of restructuring and rebranding the organization to build awareness and strengthen our capacity. It's been a year of partnerships and new corporate sponsor stewardship, and the onboarding of new staff who are all breathing new life into our operation.

It's also been a year where I received tremendous support from our board of directors. I'd like to especially thank our outgoing President and longstanding OAC board member Stefani Truant for her dedication to the Council and our community. Her support and leadership has been instrumental to me this past year, and her valuable guidance will be greatly missed.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge the Council's incomparable staff, our generous donors and members, and the funders that continue to champion what we do. This is a show of support that we do not take for granted, and we are grateful to all that believe we are making a difference.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicole Milne'.

Nicole Milne
Executive Director

WHO WE ARE

The Ottawa Arts Council (the Council) is an arts service organization that advances, promotes and advocates for the arts in Ottawa.

We are leaders and catalysts in building an engaged, growing and inclusive arts sector. We support artists and arts organizations through leadership, guidance and the provision of opportunities to advance Ottawa's local creative potential. Through collaboration with a wide range of partners, the Council strives to create an environment where equity and diversity are celebrated, and artistic achievement is recognized.

Our values recognize the arts are essential to a fully lived life and make a significant contribution to society. We recognize the

arts should be accessible to all and high standards of excellence in the arts should be fostered and maintained. We believe that artists and arts organizations deserve high standards of service, and that a thriving arts community includes amateur and professional artists.

The Ottawa Arts Council is staffed with arts administrators who are also artists, and is governed by a Board of Directors composed of community-driven volunteers and artists that are ethnically diverse, multilingual and that self-identify from various priority groups. Areas of expertise include Human Resources, legal, financial risk management, communications, strategic management, fundraising, artistic production, performing arts administration, poetry and publishing, Indigenous and First Nations policy and community engagement. The Executive is comprised of a performing arts administrator, a lobbyist, a planning and analysis manager and an actor/film producer.

WHAT WE DO

ADVOCACY FOR ARTISTS

This fiscal year we explored better ways to serve the arts community collectively through joint advocacy campaigns with local arts organizations, encouraging citizens to invest in the arts and champion its value.

We advocated for status reports from the City and the development of a new Cultural Plan to help guide our citizens beyond the pandemic. We responded to the community's need for connection by developing the "Red Phone - Ottawa Edition" program, an informal networking project that brought artists and artist-supporting businesses together to discuss the climate, ways

they can collaborate or simply to learn more about another artist's practice. We invested in strengthening our online resources available to artists and enhanced it to include sources for wellness and emergency funding.

With a municipal and provincial election underway in 2022, we focused on advocating for increasing funding for the local and provincial arts community, addressing accomplishments and gaps. Our joint advocacy campaign, developed with Arts Network Ottawa, is focused on galvanising the arts community to connect with policy leaders and councillors, staying on the pulse of prospective change and ensuring arts funding remains supported and celebrated as we rebuild the city and sector.

CELEBRATE ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE

Since 1988, the Ottawa Arts Council has awarded more than \$375,000 to 215 artists representing disciplines such as visual arts, theatre, music, dance, film, written and spoken word.

The annual Arts Awards were recently adapted to better reflect value for the laureates. In 2021, we partnered with MASC to

create the Community Arts Educator Award, honouring educators who teach art in classrooms and community centres to engage the next generation of artists. Other recent adaptations include designating the Emerging Artist Award to honour Indigenous, Black and Artists of Colour, and partnering with SPAO and OAG to provide an exhibition opportunity for Project X, Photography Award laureates.

CONNECT & COLLABORATE

Calls to address social injustices were amplified this year, and the Council continues to work toward allyship. We addressed this need by developing a multi-year Council-led/ community-driven program entitled the Mandala Project that invests in strengthening Ottawa's IBPOC arts community: addressing gaps in funding, championing creativity and building greater trust.

We secured \$62,000 in funding for a three-year program, however, we are learning that the pilot year needed to be significantly adapted to support the trauma and inequities shared by artists in our community, and much of the first year has been an investment in rebuilding trust, identifying ways the Council can help bridge that trust, and how we can do better to ensure members of racialized and marginalized communities feel seen, welcome and heard.

With the online engagement amplified due to the pandemic, a significant amount of investment has been made in our website, our resources and our eNews communications with stakeholders. In all cases, we champion diversity and invest in stewardship through emails, personal phone calls and awareness campaigns.

In response to COVID-19, Ottawa-based Maya Basudde (Tell Em Girl, Loud Black Girls) and Kingsley Swim (Black Market Creative Agency) developed the Warrior Microgrant series for creatives in the Ottawa-Gatineau area who have demonstrated resilience while simultaneously inspiring others through art expression. Proceeds from our annual Luck! Fundraiser went directly in support of their initiative. Priority was given to 2SLBGQTQ and IBPOC applications, and almost all applicants were able to receive microgrants.

"The Warrior Micro-grants has been an incredible success. We have received incredible feedback from artists who have really been encouraged throughout this entire process. I can't thank you enough for believing in our vision and supporting this initiative and all the warriors who have been blessed by it." Maya Bassude, Tell Em Girl, Loud Black Girls

Artist, Claudia Salguero on representation as a mural artist "I am an immigrant and a mature woman and when it comes to inspiring people, I think this is important. When you say you're a muralist, most people expect you to be a young man, and I'm not and it not only makes me feel proud but is inspiring young and mature immigrant women. It is not easy but yes, you can do it!"

Microgrant recipients:

Kaiya Shunyata
 Gregory Adelson
 Mariama Tani
 Kaytlyn Nadjiwon
 The Moving Art Gallery
 Martin Vuong
 Bernie Gracious
 Lukas Eriksen
 Leila M-T
 Najeeba Ahmed
 Avery Delorme
 Mar Khorkhordina
 Xuan Shine
 Self Saboteur
 Shymar Brewster
 Kevin Metelus
 Jessie Simmons
 Ama Outtara
 Adrienne Row-Smith
 Taylor Robert
 Zarah Willow
 Stefan Bailey

WHAT'S NEXT

The next fiscal year will mark an important milestone in the history of the Ottawa Arts Council: our 40th anniversary.

As we work toward an effective reopening of the sector, we want to channel the energy of the community into a celebration of creative resilience. We also want to build on the important work in the realm of diversified revenue and work internally and externally to improve our organization's services through a more equitable, inclusive and diverse lens.

We are in the development stage of a new project entitled Full Spectrum: Professional Development Seminars for Artists. The video series will be developed by-artists-for-artists at all levels; from project management to video production to marketing and communications. In providing this direct service to self-employed artists, Full Spectrum will be available and disseminated to thousands of artists online for immediate support in growing their practice and providing relief of development losses during the last 2.5 year pandemic period.



Illustration - Dana Van Loon

STRATEGIC PLAN: GOALS & OUTCOMES

In 2018, Ottawa Arts Council engaged a consultant to help develop a 3-year strategic plan.

The Council's Strategic Priorities and Strategies were developed following interviews with external stakeholders, surveys with members and non-members, and strategy sessions with community partners. Based on extensive input from the Ottawa arts community, the Council believed this strategy would enable us to continue our mission to "advance, promote, and advocate for artists and arts organizations in Ottawa", and better serve the community in the years ahead.



Detritus Broken Playing Dead - Joyce Crago



WHO MAKES IT HAPPEN

Our staff, board, members and donors include individuals who are essential creative contributors to our community, and great supporters of the Ottawa Arts Council.

We all know now more than ever the precarity of this time in history. The Ottawa Arts Council is dedicated to advocating for the sustainable future of our creative industries and supporting local artists with professional development opportunities and funding. Artists are bringing our city to life once more - it is time to come together as a community to support the work they do.

Join us today in supporting the Council's advocacy work and growing our microgranting fund. **You can donate online** and receive an instant tax receipt for your generous support.



2 Daly Avenue,
Ottawa, ON
K1N 6E2

OTTAWA
ARTS
COUNCIL