



OTTAWA ARTS  
COUNCIL | CONSEIL DES  
ARTS D'OTTAWA

# ANNUAL REPORT

2023  
2024

# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Ottawa Arts Council is located on the traditional unceded and unsurrendered territory of the Algonquin Anishnaabeg people. Working internally and externally, we are committed to building trust, removing barriers, and consistently learning from the past, present, and future caretakers of Turtle Island.

The Council has been doing work behind the scenes to better engage with and support Indigenous artists and foster an environment where culture and creative practice can thrive together. Through meetings on how to be better Indigenous allies, courses and workshops, the Council is dedicated to serving and uplifting Indigenous artists and communities.



# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

In the heart of our Nation's Capital, the arts pulse with vitality and significance. Here, amidst the dynamic tapestry of Ottawa's cultural landscape, thousands of visionaries and creatives converge, each bearing the potential to shape our city's artistic destiny. It is imperative, therefore, that we foster an environment conducive to the flourishing of our local artists, propelling Ottawa towards its rightful place as a beacon of global artistic excellence.

At the forefront of this endeavor stands the Ottawa Arts Council, an unwavering champion of the arts sector. Through its commitment to nurturing talent, the Council channels its resources into empowering local artists through networking, professional development, micro-grants and awards programs. Furthermore, it tirelessly advocates for sustained governmental support at both municipal and provincial levels, ensuring that the lifeblood of creativity continues to flourish.

Central to the Council's success is its formidable team, led by the visionary Executive Director, Nicole Milne. With a diverse array of talents and expertise, including arts advocacy, community engagement, government relations, and financial acumen, the Council's Board of Directors stands as a testament to its steadfast dedication to the arts.

This year marked a significant milestone in the arts service sector with the announcement of the merger between Arts Network Ottawa and the Council last October. This is the opportune moment to join us on this remarkable journey. Creatives and art enthusiasts alike are invited to rally behind the new organization, uniting in our shared mission and vision. There is much work to be done, and we are grateful the arts community has embraced this vision and is actively participating in its development.

Thank you for your dedication to the Council this year, and enjoy reading about the impact of our work in the pages that follow.



Anne-Marie Brugger  
President, Ottawa Arts Council



# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we reflect on the past year, it fills me with immense pride to share the remarkable achievements and milestones of the Ottawa Arts Council. In 2023, amidst challenges and uncertainties, our unwavering commitment to advocating for, supporting, and celebrating the arts in Ottawa remained steadfast. Together, we embarked on a journey of creativity, collaboration, and community engagement that has left an indelible mark on our cultural landscape.

Throughout the year, the Council mobilized the arts community in anticipation of municipal and provincial elections, amplifying the voices and priorities of our sector on political platforms. Our advocacy efforts, coupled with targeted campaigns and resources, galvanized the community, ensuring that the arts remained a focal point of public discourse and policy development.

One of the highlights of the year was the global launch of the Full Spectrum Series, funded by Canadian Heritage and the Government of Canada, which empowered self-employed artists and organizations with essential professional development resources. Additionally, the annual Awards presentation showcased and celebrated the diverse talents shaping our cultural landscape. Notably, more than 200 artists applied for support through our pilot ActivArt Micro-grant program, with ten successful recipients in this pilot year - a testament to the importance of programs like this that support artists toward their creative practice.



Looking ahead, the merger between the Ottawa Arts Council and Arts Network Ottawa in 2025 marks a landmark initiative for both organizations. The arts community is in crisis, and the pandemic's effects are just a portion of that impact. Now, more than ever, it's essential for non-profits to develop innovative ways to stay relevant, transparent, inclusive and solvent. This strategic partnership will further strengthen our collective impact, leveraging our respective strengths and resources to better serve the needs of our members and stakeholders.

Together, we will continue to advocate for, support, and celebrate the arts, fostering a vibrant and inclusive cultural ecosystem that enriches the lives of all Ottawa residents.



Nicole Milne  
Executive Director



# WHO WE ARE

The Ottawa Arts Council (the Council) is an inclusive arts service organization that advances, promotes and advocates for the arts in Ottawa. We are catalysts in building an engaged, growing and inclusive sector.

We support arts workers through leadership, guidance and providing opportunities to advance Ottawa's local creative potential. Through collaboration with partners, the Council creates an environment where equity and diversity are celebrated, and artistic achievement is recognized.

# WHAT WE DO

Our organization focuses on five essential beliefs: integrity, innovation, inclusion, collaboration and responsiveness. We are transparent and respectful in our efforts to deliver value; we embrace the use of innovation and creative responses to solve problems and find solutions; we are committed to diversity and inclusion to ensure equitable representation and participation of everyone in the arts; we work collectively with others to advance our mandate and impact, and we are adaptive in responding to evolving needs in the arts.



# YEAR IN REVIEW

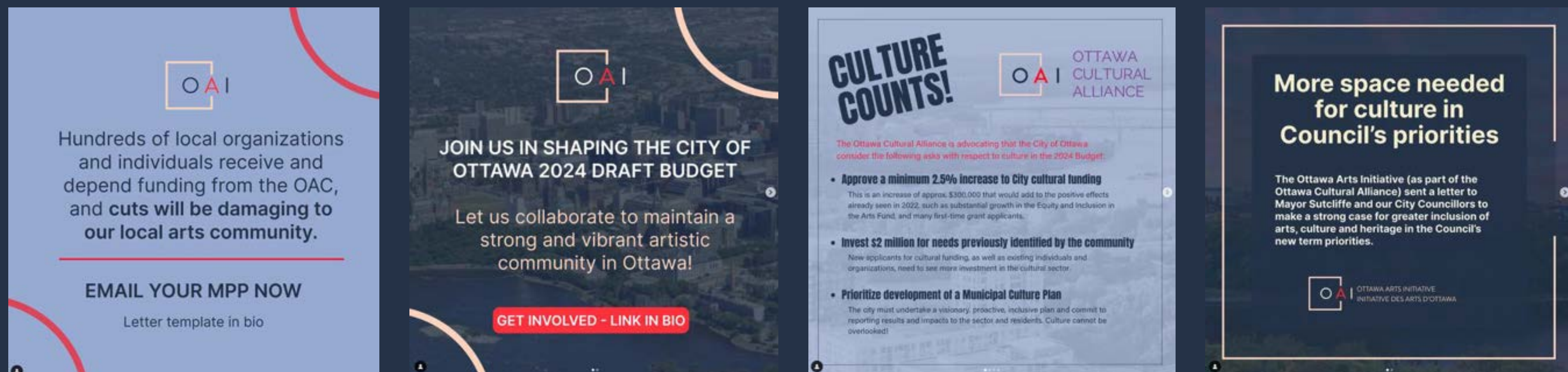
As we reflect on the past year, it's evident that 2023 was a vibrant and transformative period for the Ottawa Arts Council and its dedicated members. From advocating for municipal and provincial election involvement to fostering artistic expression and community engagement, the Council continued to champion the diverse voices and talents within Ottawa's thriving arts community.





# COLLABORATIONS & PARTNERSHIPS

Throughout the year, the Council facilitated monthly meetings, fostering collaboration and dialogue among members. Initiatives like the Ottawa Arts Initiative (OAI) and the Alliance of Arts Councils of Ontario (AACO) provided platforms for sharing knowledge, peer support, and advocacy efforts. Additionally, active participation in the Arts Court Collective and frequent engagements with community partners strengthened the Council's commitment to promoting the social and economic significance of arts and culture in Ottawa.



## ADVOCATING FOR THE ARTS

In anticipation of municipal and provincial elections, the Council spearheaded efforts to engage and support the Ottawa arts community. Through targeted advocacy campaigns, resources were created and shared to encourage active participation in committee meetings and through social media initiatives and web campaigns. By galvanizing the community, the Council amplified the importance of arts advocacy on political platforms - including ensuring greater representation of Arts and Culture in the City Council Terms of Priorities.





# RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE IN THE ARTS

The Council played a pivotal role in adjudicating awards, celebrating the accomplishments of local artists, arts leaders, and community supporters. From the Ottawa Arts Council Awards presentation to the adjudication of various grants and awards, the Council highlighted and honored the diverse talents shaping Ottawa's cultural landscape.

"Receiving the Peter Honeywell Award in 2023 was a much appreciated infusion of recognition and resources for my practice. It marked my graduation from emerging to mid-career! The acknowledgement underlines that while a lot of our work is carried out alone—researching or in studio—we build our best critical and artistic selves in community. As a self-taught, brown and mid-life visual artist, I'm super grateful."

-Marisa Gallemit, Peter Honeywell Mid-Career Artist Award Recipient





Karina Krenzle



Jesse Stewart



Marisa Gallemit



Speaking Vibrations

"I am grateful to have been nominated for Project X last year in a group of such great people. I have received support for my work and connected with fellow artists. An inspiring community, of which I'm happy to be a part!"  
 - AM Dumouchel, Finalist, Project X Award for Photography



Tam-Ca Vo-Van



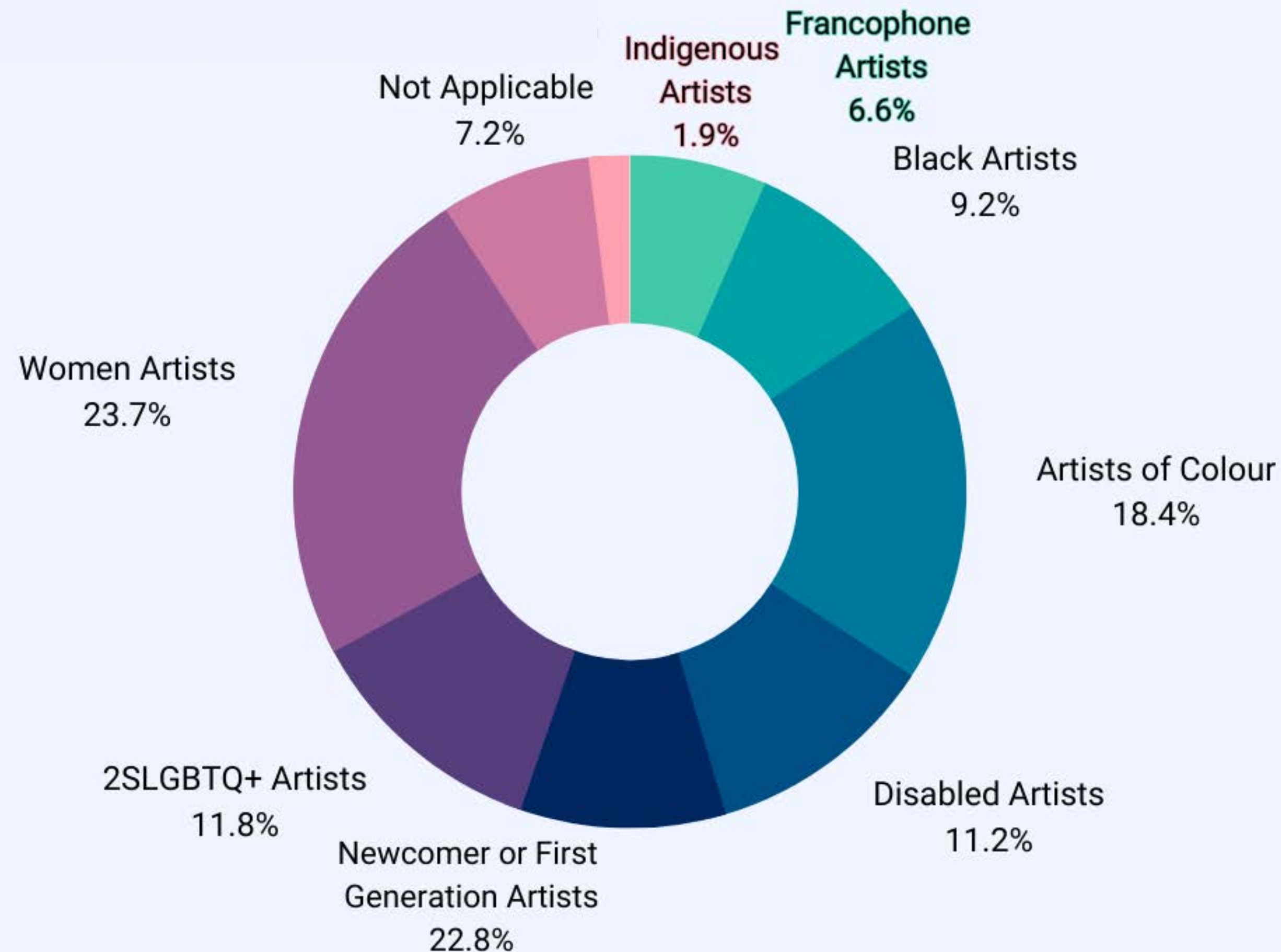
Asha Higginson



Velvet Wells



# SELF-IDENTIFICATION OF ALL APPLICANTS OF ARTS AWARDS 2023





# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EVENTS

From the Bodys Exhibition challenging societal norms to the Mandala Spotlight showcasing IBPOC artists' contributions, the Council continued to foster inclusivity and creativity through various exhibitions and events. Initiatives like the Ottawa BlackJacks Artists of the Game bringing live painting alongside the basketball game, to the WISE Youth Art Event which both provided platforms for emerging artists to showcase their work while engaging with the community.



Credit: Abigail Bailey



Credit: Abigail Bailey





# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EVENTS

**MANDALA SPOTLIGHT**  
An IBPOC Art Celebration      Une célébration d'art PANDC

**09/09/23 • 4:00PM**  
Salon Alma Duncan Salon  
Ottawa Art Gallery/Galerie d'Art d'Ottawa  
Pay What You Can Ticket Options

Sergio Emilio Parra • Jacqui Du Toit • Denis Kashi • Empress Nyiringango • Isaac Byicaza  
Atoumane Diop • Salah Adam • Apollo the Child • Amanda Lowe • Jamaal Amir Akbari  
Husniyah Akbari • Hooshyar Khayam • Elham Manouchehri

OTTAWA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION    CULTUREBREW.ART    OAG GAO    MASC    Fringe





# EDUCATIONAL AND OUTREACH INITIATIVES

The Council remained committed to fostering learning and civic engagement through initiatives like the Synapcity Civics Boot Camp and Arts Awards Public Info Sessions. By providing opportunities for citizens to understand governance structures and arts award processes, the Council empowered individuals to actively participate in shaping their communities' cultural landscape.



# LUCK!

Our popular visual arts fundraiser, LUCK!, returned to an in-person event this year. Over 45 participants donated work, which expanded this year to include other creative arts experiences. We raised more than \$10,000 in support for the Council. Fifty per cent of funds raised are being dedicated to the second year of the ActivArts Micro-grant Program.





# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This year the Council broadened its reach by developing professional development videos, workshops and skill-building tools to support artists' development, offered in English, French, Arabic and Chinese. Alongside this initiative, we partnered with Arts Network Ottawa to develop free Community Conversations events that centred on non-profit leadership and adaptation of the sector.

## FULL SPECTRUM



In March 2023, the Council launched the Full Spectrum Series, featuring eight professionally produced videos addressing artist and organizational support. The Series was distributed to more than 1300 arts organizations globally. This initiative aimed to disseminate valuable insights, empowering self-employed artists and arts organizations with practical professional development topics, from online operations to brand strategy and beyond.



# COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Arts Network Ottawa and the Ottawa Arts Council embarked on a series of co-creation opportunities where the arts sector and community were invited to engage in crucial conversations. The seven presentations, five in English and two in French, shared insights and explored innovative ideas, transformative strategies, and visionary perspectives to spark our thinking and our collective work in the arts.



**Adapting to Change:  
Innovative Models  
with Owais Lightwala**

...

November 27, 12:00 - 2:00PM  
Virtual presentation and workshop



**Adapting to Change:  
Innovative Models with Rudy  
Ruttimann, FLIP Foundation**

...

November 30, 12:00 - 2:00PM  
Incubator 13, 815 St. Laurent Boulevard



**Empowering Voices:  
Indigenous Relations and Self-  
Determination in Arts  
Organizational Development**

...

December 1st 12:00 - 2:00PM  
Nordic Lab, Saw Gallery




**Adapting to Change:  
Innovative Models with  
Tatiana Fraser, Co Director  
of Systems Sanctuary**

...

December 5th, 12:00 - 3:00PM  
Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre Room #14



**Building an  
Inclusive Arts  
Ecosystem**

...

December 6th,  
12:00 - 3:00PM  
Bayview Yards





**Mise en avant  
des Voix d'Artistes :**

*souligner le rôle vital des  
artistes dans la fusion entre le  
Réseau des arts d'Ottawa et le  
Conseil des arts d'Ottawa*

...

14 mars, 12:00 - 15:00h  
En ligne




**Naviguer dans l'avenir des  
ressources humaines  
artistiques :**

*Stratégies pour relever les défis  
post-pandémiques en milieu de  
travail - Une discussion de panel  
virtuelle et un atelier*

...

18 mars, 12:00 - 14:30  
En ligne



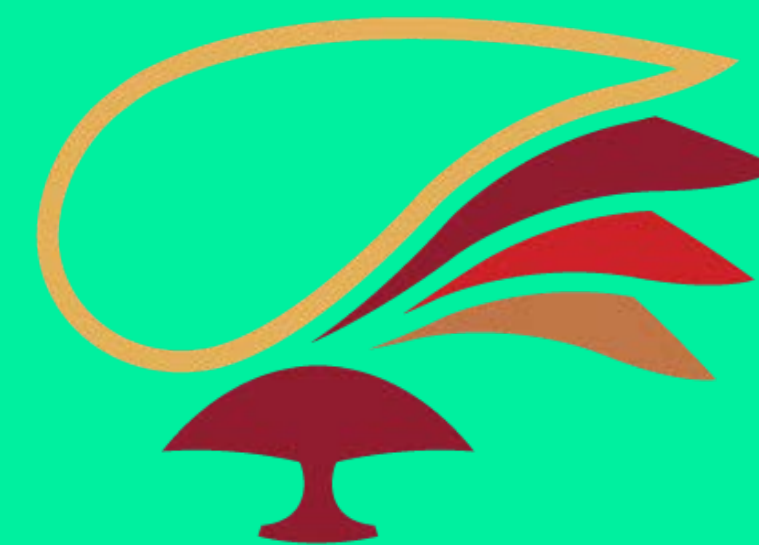



# ACTIVART MICRO-GRANTS

This year marked the pilot year for the development of a micro-grant program. This program was a direct result of community feedback aiming to support artists in their creative endeavors. The ActivArt Micro-Grants program was divided into two funding streams: the ActivArt Artist Grant covers various expenses related to artistic practice, with amounts ranging from \$250 to \$500. The ActivArt Neighbourhood Grant fosters community engagement and social change through arts-based initiatives, offering funding between \$500 and \$1000.

"This small but very pivotal grant came into our organization when we were contemplating closing our doors for lack of funding traction. Just knowing that a recognizable and influential arts organization recognized the grass roots arts and culture work Isaruit is doing with the vulnerable and highly creative Inuit community in Ottawa, gave us the fortitude to continue with our work. Qujannamiiraaluk! Thank you very much Ottawa Arts Council!"

- Beverly Illauq, Inuit Women's Sewing Centre



ΔΨΔC  
isaruit inuit arts  
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# ACTIVART MICRO-GRANTS

More than 200 applications were received in the pilot year. Emphasizing equity and reconciliation, priority was given to projects led by Indigenous, Black, or members of equity-deserving groups, including racialized individuals, persons with disabilities, and members of the 2SLGBTQ+ communities. Ten worthy recipients were awarded the grants, each with unique projects that reflect the creativity of our local arts sector.

## Neighborhood Stream Recipients:

- Inuit Women's Sewing Centre  
Visual Art - Indigenous craft
- Moov Ottawa Dance  
BIPOC Dance

## Artist Stream Recipients:

- Elaine Tamblyn Watts  
Literary Arts - Poetry launch event
- Sarah Ivanco  
Literary Arts - Zine on queer lived experience
- Dominic Bercier  
Francophone disabled artist -  
Graphic zine
- Sidney Paul  
Indigenous craft - Beading
- Anna Coulombe  
Artist with Down syndrome -  
Supplies
- Iyore Edegbe  
Digital arts - Web series
- Geoffrey Dollar  
Dance and disability arts
- Xandria Reece  
Music - Caribbean

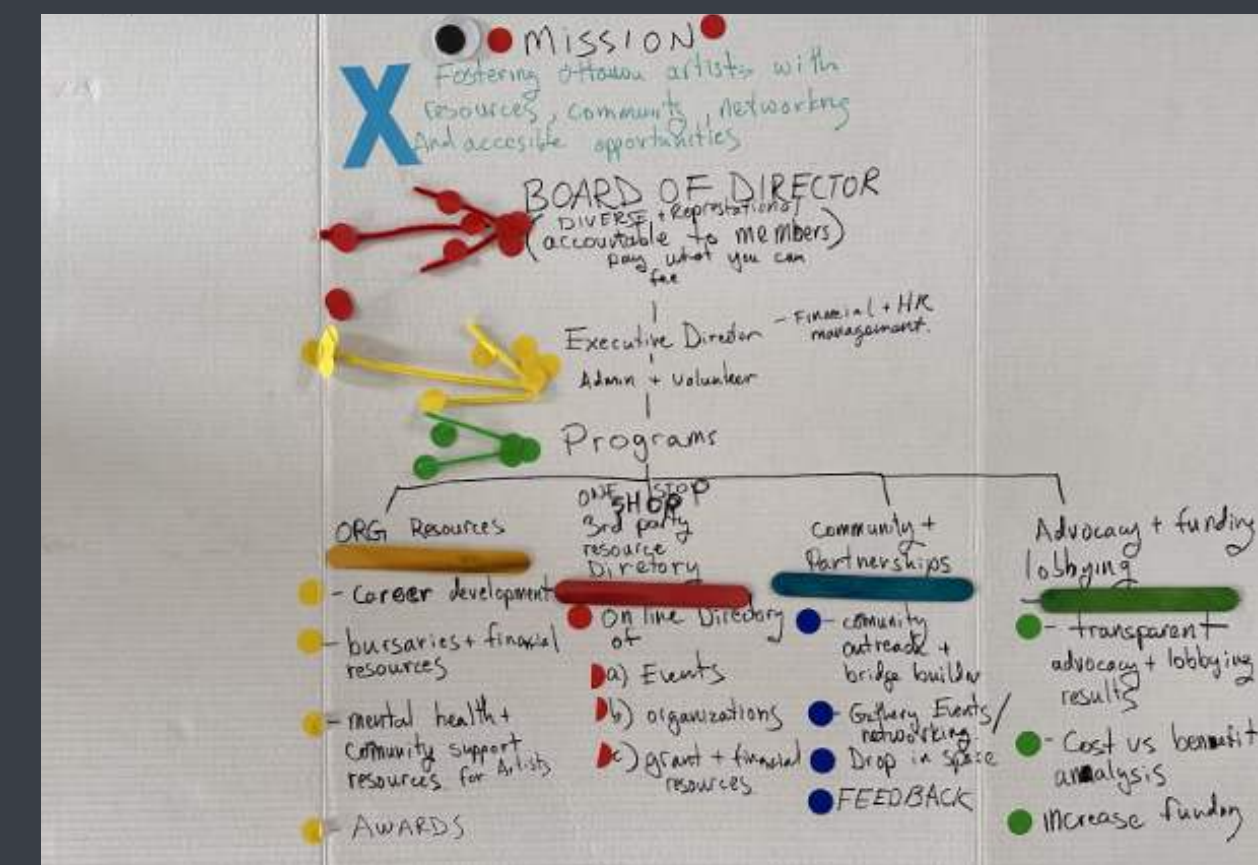




# A SECTOR THAT IS STRONGER TOGETHER

The decision to merge the Ottawa Arts Council and Arts Network Ottawa gained significant momentum in 2023. At the end of 2023, The Ottawa Arts Council and Arts Network Ottawa embarked on a series of co-creation opportunities where the arts sector and community were invited to engage in crucial conversations. More than 400 voices were heard. These presentations shared insights, explored innovative ideas, transformative strategies and visionary perspectives to spark our thinking and our collective work in the arts. Presentations were followed by facilitated workshops geared directly towards the merger process.

Themes from these gatherings, along with community input, shaped the Design-Thinking workshops that took place in March 2024, where more than 40 community members gathered to help shape the heart and vision of the new organization as it relates to governance, decision-making, operations, programs and services.





# STAFF



**Nicole Milne**  
she/her  
Executive  
Director



**Joni Hamlin**  
she/her  
Communications and  
Development Manager



**Axandre Lemours**  
he/him  
Administration and  
Communications  
Assistant



**Rebecca Rama**  
she/her  
Programming  
Assistant



**Vern Martin-Ivie**  
they/them  
Administrative  
Assistant



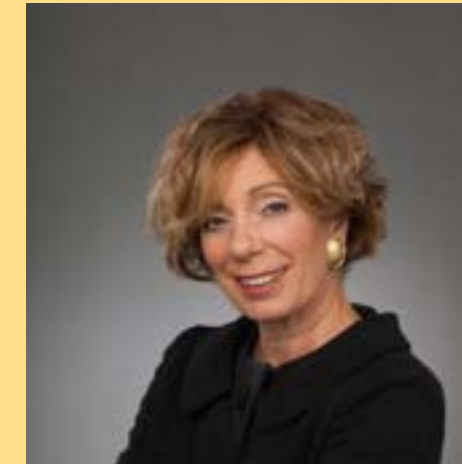
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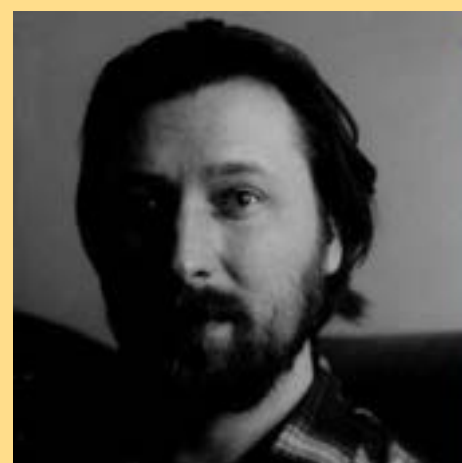
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Group Members

ARC Poetry Society  
Artists & Artisans Study Group  
Arts Network Ottawa | Réseau des arts d'Ottawa  
Association des auteures et auteurs de l'Ontario français (AAOF)  
Burning Passions Theatre  
Digi60 Filmmakers' Festival  
Heritage Ottawa  
Horseshoes & Hand Grenades Theatre  
In Our Tongues  
Mississippi Valley Textile Museum  
Orkidstra  
Ottawa Art Gallery  
Ottawa Children's Choir  
Ottawa Film Society  
Ottawa Gatineau Printmakers Connective  
Ottawa School of Art  
PAL Ottawa  
Propeller Dance  
SPAO Photographic Arts Centre  
The Enriched Bread Artists of Ottawa  
The Improv Embassy  
Théâtre Action  
Upasana (The Spirit of Dance)  
Voices Dance Project  
Vox Théâtre  
West Carleton Arts Society

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Thank you to our funders, members, partners, and supporters for your unwavering dedication and passion for the arts. Together, we will continue to cultivate creativity, celebrate diversity, and elevate the arts in our city and beyond.



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CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO  
an Ontario government agency  
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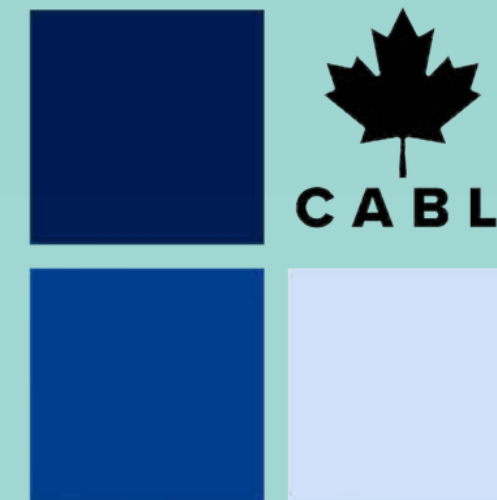
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Ottawa Little Theatre

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