



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des arts
du Canada

SHAPING A NEW FUTURE

STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-21

ABOUT THE CANADA COUNCIL

The Canada Council for the Arts is Canada's national public arts funder. We champion and invest in artistic excellence so that Canadians may enjoy and participate in a rich cultural life. In 2014-15 we allocated \$155.1 million dollars towards artistic creation and innovation through our grants, prizes and payments. We also conduct research, convene activities and work with partners to advance the sector and help embed the arts more deeply in communities across the country. We are responsible for the Canadian Commission for UNESCO which promotes the values and programs of UNESCO to contribute to a more peaceful, equitable and sustainable future for Canadians. The Canada Council Art Bank operates art rental programs and helps further public engagement with contemporary arts.

April 26th, 2016

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INTRODUCTION

THE ARTS: AN ESSENTIAL PART OF OUR BELONGING

Arts and culture are an essential part of our belonging – to a community, country, society, and to humanity itself. On a personal level, art can reach the loneliest and most lost among us. It can soothe in times of grief, help us find our voice, or show us previously unimagined horizons. Art is how we come together to celebrate and share experiences that free us from the confines of everyday life. It plunges us into imaginative worlds that extend, complement and change our lives.

Artists offer us their creative visions, expressions of hope, challenges to our assumptions and critiques of the status quo. They play an essential role in addressing and helping us to understand the complex challenges of our times. From welcoming refugees to calling for action on climate change, they engage, inspire and stimulate new thinking that can lead to action.

Public Arts Funding

The making and sharing of art have always been fundamental and irreplaceable human activities.

The intrinsic value of creating and sharing art can be complemented by public policy goals. Investing in the arts contributes to economic development, exports, job creation, social well-being and community-building – all measurable goals of a democratic society. And, particularly important in the 21st century economy, the arts nurture innovation.

Ultimately, governments fund the arts to build a creative, compassionate, resilient and prosperous society where people can express themselves fully and freely. To achieve this, citizens need to be able to participate fully and authentically in culture, heritage and the arts. Public arts funding is not based simply on short-term financial needs – even though these are obviously important; it is about building the society we want to live in.

The Government of Canada's announcement (March 22, 2016) to double the Canada Council's budget over five years opens the door to a renaissance in the arts, with concrete results that will benefit Canadians and the world.

This visionary reinvestment will scale up the impact of the Canada Council's work, whether through its grants, prizes or partnerships to develop and share professional arts.

THE CANADA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS

Since its creation in 1957, the Canada Council has promoted, supported, recognized and funded artistic excellence. It has helped to improve conditions for creativity from coast to coast to coast. It has also nurtured Canadians' knowledge and appreciation of the arts. The results can be seen in the proliferation of excellent works of art and literature enjoyed by audiences in Canada and around the world.



This plan sets out a vision for the future of Canada's arts sector.



The Canada of today is profoundly different from that of 1957. It is being transformed by factors

like changing demographics, globalization, the effects of digital technologies and the way we interact with each other. It is also being shaped by an urgency to redefine the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples of Canada, and the aspirations of today's youth.

This plan sets out a vision for the future of Canada's arts sector. In doing so, it is also a vision for the future of our country, a response to our changing social environment and an expression of our shared values.



The doubling of the Canada Council's budget opens the door to a renaissance in the arts.



THE VISION FOR 2021

By 2021, Canadian artists and arts organizations will share their work with a larger and more diverse public, including youth — in person, in print, and online.

Artists and arts organizations will have more resources to experiment and take artistic risks to create excellent work that is shared across the country and around the world.

Young artists in particular will be encouraged to master their art forms and invent new working models for artistic creation and dissemination. Artists and authors will get more recognition and payment for their work, including fees for writers who share their works with readers in public libraries across the country.

The Council believes that the ascendancy of the artistic expression and cultural self-determination of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people will engender a new relationship between Canada's Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Canadians will be able to experience the work of First Nations, Inuit and Métis artists as never before.

Canada's major arts organizations will be models of diversity and innovation. They will contribute to the quest for excellence and renewal in their artistic practices, and to the vitality of their cities and communities. Their programming and institutional decisions will reflect Canada's diversity – including its cultural diversity, Deaf and disability communities, and official language minority communities. They will flourish and reach more Canadians than ever.

Small and mid-sized organizations will grow their capacity to create and experiment with new business models and ways of building new audiences, in part by improving their mastery of digital technologies.

Canada will be more renowned internationally for unique, outstanding art. Canadians will also have the opportunity to experience more

A Focus on Equity and Youth

Canada is one of the most diverse countries in the world. This diversity needs to be reflected in the arts – especially given that the arts sector is publicly funded.

The Canada Council is proud of its past achievements in supporting diversity. It has reached out with targeted support to Indigenous and culturally diverse artists and arts organizations, artists from official language minority communities, and, recently, Deaf and disabled artists. This fundamental commitment to equity and inclusion has helped to shape the professional arts sector Canadians enjoy today.

At the same time, there is still much to be done. Over the next five years, the Council will continue to ensure that all artists have equal access to its programs and that all Canadians can see themselves reflected in the country's arts landscape.

The Council is determined to be a public arts funder that is truly focused on the future. This means it must create more opportunities for the next generation – including for emerging artists, who often face barriers to accessing funding. It must engage young audiences, children and youth in particular, with arts and literature.

Emerging artists and new audiences are the future of our sector and our society. That's why it is so important to give support that meets the realities of today and tomorrow, and to foster inter-generational learning through mentorships and leadership development.

artistic works from other parts of the world. Artists will benefit from reciprocal exchanges and opportunities for co-creation and promotion on a global scale.

The Council will be a partner of choice for other organizations and agencies in the arts and culture and in other sectors. It will be increasingly called upon for its knowledge and expertise, its collaborative capacities, and its willingness to take on new initiatives for the common good. Creative partnerships will open up new opportunities for the arts to play a vital role in Canada's public life.

 **Artists and arts organizations will share their work with a larger and more diverse public.** 

2016-21: A TIME OF RAPID INNOVATION

To achieve this vision, the Council must continue to quickly adapt and transform. A key moment for the Strategic Plan implementation will be the launch of a New Funding Model in 2017, which will give more flexibility and capacity to achieve and demonstrate qualitative and quantitative results.

The New Funding Model will reduce the number and complexity of our granting programs. It will allow the Council to optimize the arts sector's work in research, innovation, creation, production and public engagement in every discipline across the country.



The new programs will address the current realities and trends identified through consultations and a comprehensive survey conducted in 2016. 

The new programs will address the current realities and trends identified through consultations and a comprehensive survey conducted in 2016. They will nurture skills, build capacity, and help artists and arts organizations to realize their visions on their own terms.

The Council will continue to rely on the informed judgment and recommendations of peers to make its funding and prize decisions. Artistic excellence and a duty to foster Canadians' appreciation of art will remain central to the Council's decisions and actions.

In January 2016, the Council conducted a survey that gathered input from 4,220 stakeholders on its vision, directions and objectives for the next five years. This feedback shaped the commitments and actions outlined in this document.

Overall, respondents supported the Strategic Plan directions.

- They were most interested in improving access to the arts and supporting international activities for Canadian artists and arts organizations.
- They were most concerned with issues of funding (calling for both increased direct funding and improved access to funding opportunities).
- They also underscored the value of the independence of artists to create and share their work according to their vision.

COLLABORATION & CONSULTATION

The Council maintains an ongoing dialogue with arts leaders and administrators, including those who serve on its many peer assessment committees. Its staff attends performances, events and other art and literary gatherings to better understand the practices of those the Council serves and to realign its work accordingly.

The Canada Council also benefits from its partnerships and ongoing dialogue with other arts agencies, private foundations and government departments in Canada and around the world.

From 2016-21, the Council will engage in more conversations and collaborations, not only with the arts community and current partners, but also with government, industry, academia, business, and the wider not-for-profit sector.

The Council will identify, based on the commitments set out in the plan, the most promising collaborations for the future. It will look for partners who also see a greater role for the arts in education, the environment, economic development, trade, cultural diplomacy, social cohesion, and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. The Council will also actively promote more investment, engagement and interest in the arts in all parts of society.

OUR COMMITMENTS

The Strategic Plan is structured around four commitments:

- **Increase support to artists, collectives and organizations striving for artistic excellence and greater engagement in the arts by an increasingly diverse public.**
- **Amplify the quality, scale and sharing of Canadian art through digital technology.**
- **Renew the relationship between Indigenous artists, and Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences, for a shared future.**
- **Raise the international profile of Canadian art and artists.**

Each commitment includes specific actions for meeting our equity objectives and supporting next-generation artists and audiences. The commitments will largely be achieved through the six programs to be launched in 2017 as part of the New Funding Model.

The Council will also mark Canada's 150th anniversary with a special program to support artists and organizations to create and share exceptional arts productions. The resulting works will inspire, enlighten, challenge, interpret and imagine the future of Canada by engaging the public and making our country's arts more visible at home and abroad.

INCREASE OUR SUPPORT TO
ARTISTS, COLLECTIVES AND
ORGANIZATIONS STRIVING
FOR ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE AND
GREATER ENGAGEMENT IN THE
ARTS BY AN INCREASINGLY
DIVERSE PUBLIC



The arts and culture contribute to the economy of their community and country. However, the professional arts sector operates with limited financial stability or flexibility, which makes it vulnerable in today's volatile economic environment. Just like other sectors, the arts need sound investment to be able to experiment, take risks and attain the highest level of artistic achievement, while also adapting to periodic economic downturns and challenges.

As the Council considers investments and budget allocations over the next five years, it will focus on areas where it can have the greatest impact. It will prioritize quality over quantity and the consolidation of strengths over fragmentation.

For artists to thrive in the future, the Council must invest in artistic research and development, and support next-generation artists to build sustainable careers. Some artists and organizations, due to geography, cultural and linguistic differences, or disability, will need targeted support to flourish and succeed. The Council must be open to new ways of working, and prepared for

next-generation artists to work differently than their predecessors.

 **Council's investments will prioritize quality over quantity and the consolidation of strengths over fragmentation.** 

Economic resilience for the arts sector isn't just a question of public funding. It's also about new strategies to generate revenue. This means recognizing that audiences are a critical part of the picture, and

that, like today's artists, today's audiences are exponentially more diverse. They have different expectations from audiences of barely a decade ago. To succeed in the future, artists need to strengthen ties with their audiences and reach out to new ones. They need to engage with their communities in new ways and look beyond for other opportunities.



Actions 2016-21

The launch of the Council's New Funding Model in April 2017 will be a major step in its transformation and modernization. It will enable the Council to better track and publicly demonstrate the results of its investments and initiatives.

The doubling of the Council's budget over the five years of this plan will make the arts sector more resilient and its development strategies more sustainable.

With this increase in funding, the Council will gradually:

- 1 Increase direct support to artists, including young artists.** It will do this through increased and more flexible funding for multi-year, collaborative and interdisciplinary projects. Direct payments to authors through the Public Lending Right Program will increase.
- 2 Invest more in arts organizations** to build their capacity to reach new artistic heights, engage a diverse public, leverage support from other sources, and strengthen their role as employers and contributors to their local economies and communities.
- 3 Strive for equity in support and access** for Indigenous and culturally diverse artists, Deaf artists and artists with disabilities, and official language minority community artists, across all regions of the country, including the North.
- 4 Support the development and implementation of new business models for the arts.** It will do this by encouraging ideas and activities that generate new revenue, engage new audiences, and make greater use of digital technologies.
- 5 Maintain informed dialogue** with government and decision-makers about regulatory and legislative issues that affect the remuneration and working conditions of artists. This includes issues such as taxation, copyright, employment insurance and other benefits.

AMPLIFY THE QUALITY,
SCALE AND SHARING OF
CANADIAN ART THROUGH
DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY



The explosive growth of digital technology has changed the way we relate to the arts and culture, and how we connect with each other and the world. It continues to blur the lines between audience and artist, professional and amateur, commercial and not-for-profit. This disruption of traditional forms of arts consumption has not, in general, translated into more money for professional artists. Most do not receive appropriate compensation for the use and distribution of their work. Artistic creation is too often cut off from digital distribution models, which are increasingly globalized, disconnected from arts ecosystems in other countries.



The Canada Council will develop and implement its first digital strategy. 

Canadian art and artists are not as visible in the online world as they could be.

Just as there is a “digital divide” between those who have access to high-speed Internet and those who do not, there is also a digital divide amongst artists. Some see digital technologies as an essential part of their work, while others create work in physical or purely analog forms as a contrast or even an antidote to the digital.

Artists need more resources and support to thrive in this radically changing environment. The support can help them to optimize technology to create new artistic visions and arts experiences. Or, it can ensure that their work is more easily discovered and experienced online. Audiences are increasingly turning to the Internet to seek out digital and traditional works, and artists and organizations need to use every means possible to connect with them.

Actions 2016-21

The Council will develop and implement its first digital strategy. This strategy will guide its additional targeted spending to support the professional arts sector to effectively use digital technologies to create and share its work with audiences here and around the world. The strategy will complement the strategies of the government and other cultural industries and the media. The Council will:

- 1 **Undertake research to establish a detailed understanding** of the needs and challenges facing the professional art sector relating to digital technologies, with a focus on best Canadian and international practices.
- 2 **Build awareness and capacity** within the professional arts sector to optimize digital technologies by convening cross-sectoral discussions (including a major summit in 2017), developing resources and learning opportunities, and by supporting effective partnerships, networks and collaborations.
- 3 **Make sound investments** in initiatives that use digital technologies. Special focus will be given to those that create new art forms, enhance artistic experiences and reach new audiences.

RENEW THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
INDIGENOUS ARTISTS,
AND INDIGENOUS AND
NON-INDIGENOUS AUDIENCES,
FOR A SHARED FUTURE



Canada is at a historic turning point. The relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, and between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian state needs to be radically transformed.

In every region of the country, creative expression can play a vital role in this national reconciliation, providing alternative voices, vehicles, and venues for expressing historical truths and present hopes. Creative expression supports everyday practices of resistance, healing, and commemoration at individual, community, regional, and national levels.

– TRC report (p.287)

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report (June 2015) has raised the general public’s awareness of the urgent need to act.

This is a moment unlike any the country has seen before, and the arts have a critical role to play.

In its report, the TRC called on the Council “to establish, as a funding priority, a strategy for Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists to undertake collaborative projects and produce works that contribute to the reconciliation process.” Even before the report was released, the Council had already embarked on a rethinking of its relationship to Indigenous artists. It had begun

to implement initiatives and strategies for a broader and sustained commitment to the creative and cultural expressions of Canada’s Indigenous peoples in recognition of the vital importance of conciliation and reconciliation at this time.

The Council is supporting a self-determined approach that respects and appreciates First Nations, Inuit and Métis artistic expression, cultural protocols, rights, traditions, and world-views. This will stimulate the work of Indigenous artists, enrich their artistic practices, and give impetus to their communities. This new approach represents a fundamental change in the way the Council funds, supports and acknowledges the Indigenous arts and cultures of Canada. It recognizes the cultural rights of Indigenous peoples and respects the concept of First Nations, Inuit and Métis self-determination.



Actions 2016-21

The Council will build on the direct and positive relationship it has fostered with Indigenous artists and organizations for over 20 years, and on the expertise of its staff and peer assessors with Indigenous heritage, to develop a culturally self-determined approach to a full range of customary and contemporary artistic and cultural practices by First Nations, Inuit and Métis artists and cultural professionals. The Council will:

1 Invest more in Indigenous creation in all forms. Beginning in 2017, the Creating, Knowing and Sharing: The Arts and Cultures of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples program will support a broad range of arts initiatives, travel, projects and organizations. Indigenous artists and organizations will also be eligible to apply to any of the Council's other programs.

Indigenous youth are the fastest growing segment of the Canadian population. That's why the Council will also invest in initiatives that support young Indigenous artists and audiences and favor cultural transmission.

2 Contribute to reconciliation and conciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples through the arts. The Council will continue to work with partners to support projects that engage both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians. This will help to ensure the path to reconciliation remains a national conversation of relevance to us all.

3 Leverage the power of collaboration and knowledge exchange by working with other funders and agencies to exchange and build support for and knowledge of Indigenous arts across the country, particularly under-served areas, such as the North. The Council seeks to play a leadership role in developing new and lasting relationships between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples of Canada. It will continue to work with its colleagues across the country to facilitate national dialogue in this area.

RAISE THE INTERNATIONAL
PROFILE OF CANADIAN
ART AND ARTISTS



The artistic and financial success of a growing number of Canadian artists and arts organizations depends on a solid and sustained presence on the international scene. This gives them the opportunity to share their work with audiences interested in the best of Canadian art.

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Our society is reflected in the work of its artists. They represent Canada as an innovative, open, diverse and interesting society that is aware of its development challenges. To raise our international profile in a sustained way, artists and arts professionals need money, time and resources to create outstanding works and take on significant cultural leadership roles in highly specific contexts and markets.

It is also essential to foster reciprocity by welcoming international artists to Canada, and by supporting bilateral and multilateral co-productions and artistic residencies and exchanges.

Working with government and other partners here and abroad, the Council can make valuable contributions to Canada's international artistic presence while also ensuring that its interventions relate to specific areas of expertise and complement the efforts of other federal funders.

Actions 2016-21

To be successful in meeting its objectives, the Council will build upon existing relationships and agreements and also explore new opportunities, including emerging markets that offer high potential for our artists and arts organizations. The Council will:

- 1 Enhance the presence and profile** of Canadian artists and arts professionals abroad. To do this it will expand the circulation of artistic creations, encourage cross-cultural exchange and cultural leadership, and develop international markets through grants, strategic initiatives, and agreements with international partners.
- 2 Engage in coordinated, long-term strategies** with government departments and other agencies. The Council will look for synergies with their respective approaches to international cultural exports, trade promotion and diplomacy. It will build its capacity to make a greater contribution to strengthening the international presence and image of Canadian artists and their works while supporting the development of Canada's professional arts sector.
- 3 Focus on youth, Indigenous arts and equity in an international context.** The Council will coordinate its efforts with the Canadian Commission for UNESCO (CCUNESCO), especially in areas like cultural diversity, education, social cohesion and sustainable development. It will also call upon CCUNESCO's expertise in working with youth. It will foster connections between Indigenous artists and other countries with Indigenous populations, build on current relationships with the countries of La Francophonie and other countries with linguistic and/or cultural ties to Canadian artists, and support Canadian artists who are Deaf or have disabilities to take their place on the international stage.

FOCUSING AND REPORTING ON OUTCOMES

This Strategic Plan is aligned with the Council's mandate and strategic objectives.

All of the actions described in this document will be tracked over the next five years to demonstrate progress on expected outcomes. A detailed performance measurement framework is being developed and will be made public in 2017 as it is integrated into the Council's operational plans. Results will be shared through Annual Reports and regular reporting online and at public meetings.

THE PATH AHEAD: A COMMITMENT TO EVOLVE

The 2016-21 period will be a time of profound change at the Council as it transforms its grant-ing programs and ways of working to meet the Strategic Plan's commitments. The Council will scale up its capacity to engage in dialogue with stakeholders and partners, as well as in research, program monitoring, reporting and evaluation. It will also make better use of digital technologies to reach artists and the public.

Through this change the Council remains absolutely committed to:

- **supporting artistic excellence and creative risk-taking**
- **recognizing the important role of peers in assessing artistic quality and impact**
- **ensuring equity of access to all of its programs and services so that the arts are reflective of Canada today and tomorrow.**

While change is not always easy, the Council firmly believes it must evolve to achieve its vision of the future. It will adapt, adjust and respond to challenges as they arise and seek out opportunities wherever they exist. It will develop new tools, strategies and ways of working, and will listen attentively to both criticism and encouragement as it monitors its progress towards its objectives.

After all, we are shaping a new future.

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