REPORT

The Distinct Role of Artist-Run Centres in the Canadian Visual Arts Ecology

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Acknowledgements

We wish to acknowledge the many representatives of Artist-Run Centres, public galleries, commercial galleries and professional associations who gave generously of their time to participate in this study through the online survey and in selected interviews. Their valuable insights and perspectives have helped us construct a portrait of the important role that Artist-Run Centres play in the visual arts ecology.

We also wish to thank the Canada Council for its support and guidance in the development of this report.

Executive Summary

1. Goal of the Study

The overall goal of this study, conducted on behalf of the Canada Council for the Arts was to document the role and place of Artist-Run Centres (ARCs) in the larger ecology of the Visual Arts today.[1] Within this overall context, the study sought to:

1. Identify the distinct role of ARCs in the visual arts ecosystem;

2. Summarize the distinct role within the context of: place of artists, artistic practices and public engagement;

3. Incorporate the interpretation of ARCs as understood by the centres themselves;

4. Categorize Artist-Run Centre activity into 6-8 categories and identify outliers and any gaps or other issues;

5. Examine the situation of multiple ARCs in one city;

6. Review and present the data on ARC funding levels from Provincial, Municipal and other Federal funders.

2. Approach and Methodology

In order to address the study's objectives, the consultants used several lines of inquiry, including a document and literature review, primary research in the form of an online questionnaire and in-depth interviews with a range of stakeholders.

The purpose of the literature review was to locate contemporary Artist-Run Centres within a critical history and discourse, and to identify how these centres perceive themselves and the role they are seen to play in the visual arts ecology, as described by ARCs through their publications, or in other critical publications, and documentation provided by the Canada Council for the Arts.

The consultants then developed an online questionnaire directed at organizations both funded and not funded by the Canada Council. A total of 110 organizations were invited to respond to the survey, of which 79 currently receive funding for their operations from the Canada Council for the Arts.[2] 85 organizations completed the survey, for a total response rate of 77%.[3] The response rate among recipients of the Canada Council for the Arts' *Assistance to Artist-Run Centres Program,* which provides operations funding to ARCs operating in the visual arts, was 77%. The rate of response among recipients varied by language. 85% of English-language respondents and 61% of French-language organizations responded to the survey.

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[1] The Visual Arts Section provides operating grants to museums, public galleries, Artist-Run Centres and National Visual Arts Service Organizations.

[2]

[3] Further analysis regarding the composition of the pool of respondents is provided in the body of the report.

Finally, the consultants conducted an analysis of financial data provided by the Canada Council for the Arts regarding funded organizations, as well as data on activities as collected through the CADAC online system.

<u>Scope and limitations</u>

This study is aimed at understanding the role of Artist-Run Centres in the Visual Arts, including organizations currently receiving operations funding from the Canada Council and others that are not receiving such assistance, but which may be receiving assistance through other programs of the Canada Council or other provincial or territorial arts funders. Artist-Run Centres with a mandate in other artistic disciplines were not included in this study.

We should note that this study does not represent an exhaustive review of all ARCs in Canada, nor does not it provide a full historical analysis or deep interpretation of the field.

The study was also limited in scope in terms of the consultants' capacity to measure the perception of the public vis-à-vis their awareness of ARCs within their communities.

3. Key Findings

3.1. Findings from a Literature Review: Four Key Characteristics that Define the Unique Role of the ARCs

The overall ecology comprises many players, including artists, arts professionals, ARCs, public galleries, commercial dealers, university and college art departments, other university and college departments, art fairs, festivals and biennales and major international events. Within this ecology, ARCs play a central role, supporting the production and critical advancement of emergent artistic practices and contributing to the development of the careers of artists and arts administrators.

The result of the literature review reveals that over the course of their evolution, four key characteristics have defined the unique role played by Artist-Run Centres in the visual arts ecology:

1) Self determination and artistic experimentation

2) Collaboration and networking

3) A grounding in larger social movements and

4) A more recent trend towards increasing professional capacity

3.2 Findings from a Review of Mandate Statements of ARCs

<u>3.2.1 Seven "Categories" Can Be Identified</u>

An analysis of the mandate statements of 103 Artist-Run Centres allows us to identify seven categories through which the activities of Artist-Run Centres may be understood, as follows:

1) Organizations with a general mandate to advance the contemporary arts without specific reference to a narrower field of intervention;

2) Organizations dedicated to specific artistic practices;

3) Organizations operating production facilities;

4) Organizations with a mandate to serve multiple disciplines and/or multidisciplinary arts;

5) Organizations with a mandate to serve a particular identity-based community;

6) Organizations dedicated to politically or socially engaged art; and

7) Organizations dedicated to serving emerging artists.

We note that though ARCs may identify specific orientations in their mandates, they also recognize their mandate to be the advancement of contemporary art.

3.3. Key Findings from our Consultations: Characteristics that Define and Differentiate Artist-Run Centres

3.3.1 Five Characteristics that Define the Role Played by ARCs

In addition to identifying seven categories or orientations of Artist-Run Centres, a key finding of this study is the extent to which ARCs also share a number of common characteristics through which they define themselves and that differentiate them overall from other players in the environment. The five characteristics, which are developed in greater detail in the report, are as follows:

1) Self-determination, which is at the heart of the unique role played by ARCs and shapes their artist-driven governance model.

2) Support for artistic experimentation, through which ARCs make a key contribution to the overall ecology by providing support to artists to realize their vision and advance emergent artistic practices and the contemporary arts.

3) The provision of a range of services that are similar in nature, which are recognized by other stakeholders as making a unique contribution to the overall ecology. These are 1) support for exhibition 2) support for artistic production 3) support for professional development and 4) advancing contemporary art discourse through critical publications and learned activities.

4) The delivery of services through a membership structure. Overall, memberships in ARCs are accessible both to artists and non-artists as are many of the opportunities provided.

5) A professional entry point for emerging artists, curators and administrators, who benefit from the freedom to develop their vision and professional networks in a highly collaborative environment.

3.3.2 Trends in the Evolution of ARCs

ARCs today attract a significant audience for a diverse range and number of programming activities, including art exhibitions and performances, publications, production of new works and professional development activities.

Overall, Artist-Run Centres percieve their audience to be artists and the general public and participation levels in ARCs are high. Audience development is a top priority for ARCs and virtually all ARCs undertook audience development and/or engagement activities in the past five years. For the most part, organizations sought to develop their audience through a collaboration or partnership with another organization, through their choice of programming or by developing a greater online presence.

ARCs are moving towards increased professional capacity consistent with the evolving environment. For example, while ARCs continue to solicit artists' participation through open calls, half of all ARCs surveyed also indicated employing curators or Artistic Directors to develop their programming. ARCs are also engaged in critical reflection, but note the increasing difficulty in accessing resources to produce critical publications.

ARCs continue to be highly collaborative with each other, and are increasingly collaborating with larger organizations in the visual arts ecology such as public galleries and post-secondary institutions. These organizations would like to undertake greater collaboration with ARCs and note that this would be easier if they had access to resources.

ARCs are also developing their international networks through touring, collaborative exchanges and online.

As the number of ARCs has increased over time, 75% of ARCs are located in the same city as other ARCs. There are more benefits than disadvantages perceived in having multiple ARCs in the same city, such as more partnership opportunities, increased visibility and impact. Far fewer disadvantages are perceived, the most common one identified as competition for limited resources.

Overall, while most ARCs say they actively solicit the participation of Aboriginal and culturally diverse artists, these communities are more often participating in English-language organizations. Those French-language organizations that are receiving funding through the Assistance to Artist-Run Centres Program of the Canada Council for the Arts have a higher participation rate by culturally diverse and Aboriginal artists than those that are not receiving this funding.

The disparity between funded and non-funded French-language organizations may be attributed in part to the greater emphasis placed by the Canada Council on cultural diversity in its programs, and the greater concentration of Aboriginal and culturally diverse artists in Montreal, where most funded ARCs are located, as compared to the regions in Quebec.

Five organizations reviewed for this report have an expressed mandate to serve Aboriginal communities and three serve other culturally diverse communities for a total of 11% of ARCs examined for this study.

Younger artists are working both within and outside ARCs, in some cases preferring the spontaneity of artist-run initiatives over the bureaucratic processes of ARCs.

20% of ARCs examined for this study eschew the operation of an exhibition facility in favour of partnering with existing venues to extend their reach.

4. Concluding Observations and Future Considerations for the Canada Council

4.1. ARCs Play a Distinct Role in the Overall Visual Arts Ecology

Our review reveals that ARCs play a central role in the overall ecology, supporting the production and critical advancement of emergent artistic practices and contributing to the development of the careers of artists.

4.2. The Evolution of ARCs is Towards Increased Visibility and Impact

ARCs today provide a diverse range of programming activities attracting significant audiences. Programming in ARCs is benefitting from increasing professional capacity and

collaborations extend to larger organizations such as public galleries and post-secondary institutions working in the visual arts, as well as to international networks.

Participation levels by culturally diverse and Aboriginal artists and audiences are high, through as noted above they differ by language, with the lowest level of participation noted in French-language ARCs not currently supported by the Canada Council for the Arts' *Assistance to Artist-Run Centres Program*.

4.3. Strengthening the Role of ARCs in the Visual Arts Ecology: Considerations for the Future

Increasing financial resources has been identified as a top priority for ARCs for the near future. The most pressing concern is to seek out additional funding to support the growth and sustainability of Artist-Run Centres. ARCs expressed their difficulty in simply trying to keep pace with increases in operating costs due to lack of funding, which is said to be impacting negatively on programming resources.

Resources are also needed to support the development of new Artist-Run Centres, particularly in the regions, where most ARCs not currently funded by the Canada Council for the Arts' *Assistance to Artist-Run Centres Program* are located.

Thirty-one Artist-Run Centres (almost 30%) examined for this study do not currently receive funding through the *Assistance to Artist Run Centres Program* of the Canada Council for the Arts. Of these, 75% are located outside the five major Canadian urban centres.[4]

Increasing financial resources could encourage the production of critical publications, increase collaborations and support more artistic residencies and professional development.

It is interesting to note that ARCs are seeking new avenues of funding, such as endowments or developing new business models. However, they require additional forms of expertise to succeed with these models.

The overall challenge of increased funding for ARCs remains at the heart of their future development and growth in the visual arts ecology.

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[4] Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal

... then, it was natural to call upon our national attributes - the bureaucratic tendency and the protestant work ethic - and working together, and working sometimes not together we laboured to structure, or rather to untangle from the messy post-Sixties spaghetti of our minds, artist-run galleries, artists' video, and artist-run magazines. And that allowed us to allow ourselves to see ourselves as an art scene. And we did.[5]

- AA Bronson

Introduction

1. Objectives of the Study

The overall goal of this study, conducted on behalf of the Canada Council for the Arts, is to document the role and place of Artist-Run Centres (ARCs) in the larger ecology of the Visual Arts today.[6] As stated in the Canada Council's Request for Proposal (RFP), key to this study is understanding the disparity of roles and mandates of ARCs. The RFP states that ideally the research will help identify how ARCs see themselves: as artist centres/galleries or artist service centres.

Within this overall context, the study seeks to:

1. Identify the distinct role of ARCs in the visual arts ecosystem.

2. Summarize the distinct role within the context of: place of artists, artistic practices and public engagement.

3. Incorporate the interpretation of ARCs as understood by the centres themselves

4. Categorize Artist-Run Centre activity into 6-8 categories and identify outliers and any gaps or other issues;

5. Examine the situation of multiple ARCs in one city;

6. Review and present the data on ARC funding levels from Provincial, Municipal and other Federal funders.

2. Approach and Methodology

In order to address the study's objectives, the consultants used several lines of inquiry, including a document and literature review, primary research in the form of an online questionnaire and in-depth interviews with a range of stakeholders.

The purpose of the literature review was to locate contemporary Artist-Run Centres within a critical history and discourse, and to identify how these centres perceive themselves and the role they are seen to play in the visual arts ecology, as put forward by ARCs through their

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[5] AA Bronson, "The Humiliation of the Bureaucrat: Artist-Run Centres as Museums by Artists," in *Museums by Artists*, AA Bronson and Peggy Gale, eds., Art Metropole: Toronto, 1983

[6] The Visual Arts Section provides operating grants to museums, public galleries, Artist-Run Centres and National Visual Arts Service Organizations.

publications, or in other critical publications, and documentation provided by the Canada Council for the Arts. It was also intended to provide information on the existing thinking around how the various "categories" of artist run centres are viewed by others in the ecology. A bibliography is listed in Annex 1.

The consultants undertook a document review, and in particular an analysis of the mandates of 103 ARCs as indicated in their most recent funding applications to the Canada Counci for the Art's *Assistance to Artist-Run Centres Program*. The consultants considered the activities of ARCs into 6 to 8 categories, identifying any outliers.

These results were used to compare and contrast the findings of the other lines of inquiry to arrive at a complete as possible understanding of the distinct role of the ARCs in the visual arts ecology in Canada.

The consultants then developed an online questionnaire targeted at ARCs and designed to capture information on respondents' mandates, activities, services provided, accessibility to artists, levels of cultural diversity, how they perceive themselves in relation to other Visual Arts organizations, their outreach efforts and their publics. The online survey was directed at organizations both funded and not-funded by the Canada Council, and included older, more established as well as newer organizations from all regions, representing both official language groups, Aboriginal and culturally diverse organizations.

A total of 110 organizations were invited to respond to the survey, of which 79 currently receive funding for their operations from the Canada Council for the Arts. The list of invited organizations was developed in consultation with the Canada Council for the Arts and represents Canadian ARCs with a visual arts mandate currently operating on an ongoing basis in Canada. Of these, 39% are located in Quebec, followed by 24% in Ontario and 10% in British Columbia. Seventy-nine ARCs in total (72%) are currently funded by the Canada Council for the Arts through its *Assistance to Artist Run Centres Program*. Thirty-one ARCs included in this study (28%) are not currently receiving assistance through this program. (The list of organizations included in the survey can be found in Annex 4. A breakdown of ARCs by province is included in Annex 2.)

A total of 85 organizations completed the survey, for a total response rate of 77%. These included 51 English-language organizations, representing 61% of all respondents, and 33 French-language organizations, representing 39% of all respondents. (All but one French-language organization responding to the survey are located in Quebec. One French-language organization is located in Nova Scotia.) The regional distribution of ARCs responding to the survey closely resembles their actual distribution, and an analysis has been provided in Annex 2).

A majority of respondents (77%) indicated receiving operating assistance from the Canada Council for the Arts' *Assistance to Artist-Run Centres Program.* The rate of response among recipients varied by language. 85% of English-language respondents and 61% of French-language respondents were recipient organizations.

In order to complement the findings of these lines of inquiry and to seek out the perspectives of other stakeholders in the visual arts ecology, the consultants conducted interviews with Artist-Run Centres, public galleries, commercial dealers, professional associations representing artists and curators, and the Canada Council Visual Arts Section. In all, 25 interviews were conducted. (A list of interviewees can be found in Annex 3.)

Finally, the consultants conducted an analysis of financial data provided by the Canada Council for the Arts regarding funded organizations, as well as data on activities as collected through the CADAC online system.

Scope and limitations

This study is aimed at understanding the role of Artist-Run Centres in the Visual Arts, including organizations currently receiving operations funding from the Canada Council and others that are not receiving such assistance, but which may be receiving assistance through other programs of the Canada Council or other provincial or territorial arts funders. Artist-Run Centres with a mandate in other artistic disciplines were not included in this study.

We should note that this study does not represent an exhaustive review of all ARCs in Canada, nor does not it provide a full historical analysis or deep interpretation of the field.

The study was also limited in scope in terms of the consultants' capacity to measure the perception of the public vis-à-vis their awareness of ARCs within their communities.

3. Structure of this Report

This report is divided into the following three sections:

- Section A provides a historical overview of the role of Artist-Run Centres in the Canadian visual arts ecology as represented in the literature reviewed for this study from the perspectives of the ARCs themselves as well as critical historians;

- Section B presents the findings of our review including the results of a document review of the mandates of Canada Council-funded ARCs, an online survey, and telephone interviews with stakeholders.

- Section C concludes with summary observations and considerations with respect to the future development of Artist-Run Centres.

"...artist run culture is the production of network affinities..."[7]

A. A History of the Role of Artist- Run Centres in the Visual Arts Ecology in Canada

1. Preamble

This section begins with a framing of the role of Artist-Run Centres in the visual arts ecology in Canada based on a review of the literature, as provided by the Canada Council for the Arts or selected by the consultants to gain an understanding of how ARCs perceive themselves and their role in the ecology of the Visual Arts. A bibliography is included in Annex 1.

The consultants undertook a document review, and in particular an analysis of the mandates of 103 ARCs as indicated in their most recent funding applications to the Canada Counci for the Art's *Assistance to Artist-Run Centres Program*. The consultants considered the activities of ARCs into 6 to 8 categories, identifying any outliers. A number of distinguishing characteristics of ARCs are identified, forged through their historical development and which continue to define them today.

2. Role of Artist-Run Centres in the Visual Arts Ecology

The artist-run centre movement in Canada is over 40 years old, having evolved from a few organizations, that rapidly took hold across the country in the late 1960's and early 1970's: on the west coast the short-lived Intermedia founded in Vancouver in 1968, A Space founded in Toronto in 1971, Eye Level Gallery founded in 1972 in Halifax, Véhicule Art founded in 1972 and Véhicule Press in 1973 in Montreal and the Western Front in Vancouver, in 1973.

The Canadian network of Artist-Run Centres operating in the visual arts environment now includes well over 100 organizations[8] across the country and into the Territories, run by artists of all generations, from diverse communities and with varied artistic concerns.

As can be seen in Figure 1 on the next page, ARCs play a central role in the overall ecology, supporting the production and critical advancement of emergent artistic practices and contributing to the development of the careers of artists. The overall ecology comprises many players, including artists, arts professionals, art going public, ARCs, public galleries, commercial dealers, university and college art departments, other university and college departments, art fairs, festivals and biennales (such as Swarm, Nuit Blanche, Nocturne, Mois de la Photo, Photopolis, and the Toronto Biennial Forum) and major international events such as the Havana and Venice Biennales.

3. Distinguishing Characteristics of Artist-Run Centres

A review of the literature identified for this study reveals four key characteristics that have helped to shape and that continue to determine the unique role played by Artist-Run Centres in the visual arts ecology: 1) self determination and artistic experimentation 2) collaboration and networking 3) a grounding in larger social movements and 4) a more recent trend to-

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[7] Clive Robertson, *Policy Matters: Administrations of Art and Culture*, YYZ Books: Toronto, 2006 p. 26

[8] As noted in the previous section, this represents Canadian Artist-Run Centres dedicated to the Visual Arts and operating on an ongoing basis, with a mandate aligned to the Assistance to Artist-Run Centres Program of the Canada Council for the Arts.

wards increasing professional capacity. These are discussed below in relation to their historical emergence, as well as to their ongoing relevance for ARCs today.

3.1 The Early 1970's - Towards Self-Determination and Artistic Experimentation

Artist-Run Centres first emerged in Canada to provide much needed opportunities for contemporary artists, at the vanguard of dematerializing practices such as performance art, conceptual art or video art, to develop and show their work as the visual arts ecology of the day was considered too closed to the radical arts experiments increasingly attracting Canadian artists.[9] In the words of Ried Sheir, "Fundamental to the founders of most artist-run centres was a wish to provide opportunities and a voice to artists."[10]

Figure 1: Role of Artist-Run Centres in the Visual Arts Ecology[11]

Artist-Run Centres offered artists the space to create and exhibit art outside commercial
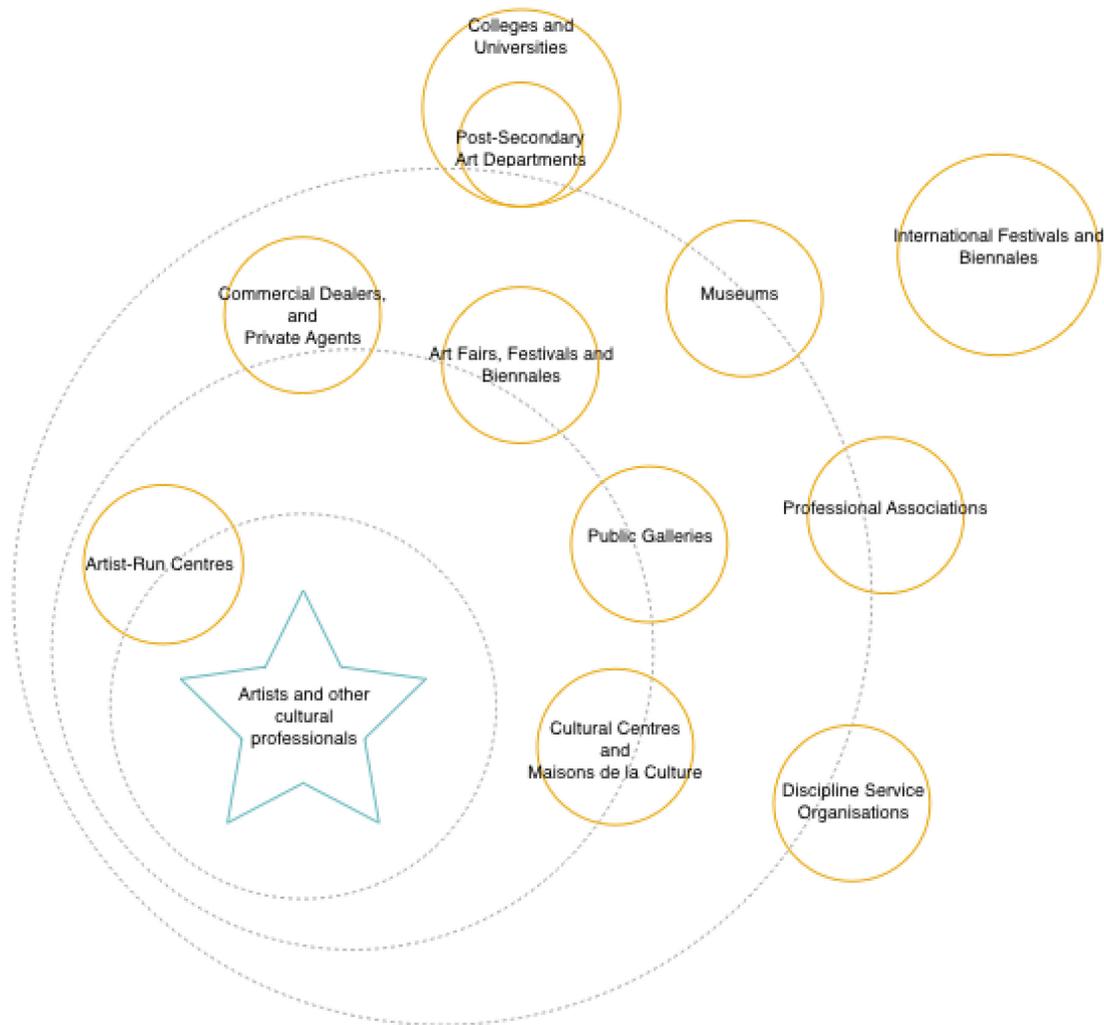
[9] AA Bronson, Op. Cit., Clive Robertson, Op. Cit; *Decentre: concerning artist-run culture*, Toronto: YYZ Books, 2008

[10] Sheir, Reid, "Do Artists Need Artist-Run Centres?" in *Vancouver Art & Economies,* Melanie O'Brian, Ed., Arsenal Pulp Press/Artspeak: Vancouver, 2007

[11] Adapted from *Les Arts Numériques à Montréal*, by Marie Michele Cron January 2007

structures, away from the dictates of an art market, often working in forms not recognized outside artist-run culture. In so doing, Artist-Run Centres gave rise, as AA Bronson so vividly recalls it, to "a scene" through which contemporary art in Canada could develop.

In a letter of support written to Suzie Lake in the earliest days of Vehicule Art in Montreal, American artist Donald Judd sums up the perspective of artists vis-à-vis the visual arts environment at the beginning of the 1970's.

> "It's obvious that some alternative to the present gallery situation is needed. Galleries exist primarily as businesses, not as support for art. While they offer some support, they get more out of art than they put into it. Anyway, galleries are only one factor of the support and are not sufficient. There should be a lot more financial support from the government and artists should decide how the money is used."[12]

In Quebec, the emergence of artist-run centres has similarly been tied to the wave of unstructured art happenings.

> The principal characteristic of parallel art in this period is the absence of structure: art events, sculptures and happenings express this ebullient period in anarchic, spontaneous, unorganized fashion. [Translated by author.][13]

Felicity Taylor observes, "In the late 1960s and early '70's, artists created alternative spaces for production and exhibition and used publishing as an extension of these spaces and their mandates of self-determination."[14]

The desire for self-determination among artists is ongoing, and a common theme in contemporary publications about artist-run centres. It typically refers to organizations governed by artists for artists who join as members with the purpose of developing and presenting artistic work of importance to artists. An example of the ongoing theme of self-determination can be found in the conference proceedings of the In Fest International Symposium on Artist Run Culture held in Vancouver in 2004 state that,

> "There is a need for spaces that nurture the emergence of art forms and discourses that might not initially garner the support of private or public art institutions...In addition, with the opportunities that new media and internet technology provide, the traditional institutions aren't always necessary as spaces to disseminate and validate the work."[15]

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[12] Letter from Donald Judd to Suzie Lake in support of funding application developed by Vehicule Art, circa 1971. In *Documentary Protocols (1967 – 1975),* Vincent Bonin and Michele Theriault, eds., Leonard and Binal Ellen Art Gallery : Montreal, circa 2008 p. 131

[13] Guy Sioui Durand, *L'art comme alternative : Réseaux et pratiques d'art parallèle au Québec 1976-1996,* Éditions Intervention : Montreal, 1997, p. 52. The original French reads: "La caractéristique principale de l'art parallèle de cette période est l'absence de structure: les évènements d'art, les sculptures et les happenings expriment cette période d'ébullition de façon anarchique, spontanée, inorganisée."

[14] In this sense, the programming in artist-run centres is seen to be fundamentally different from other visual arts organizations. Felicity Taylor, "Publishing as Alternative Space," in *Documentary Protocols*, Op. Cit., p. 306

[15] In Fest conference proceedings, cited in *Policy Matters,* Op. Cit., p7

Writing in 2007, Paul Wong states, "There is always a need to make space for fresher, more diverse, more radical forms of artist-run initiatives. In a shifting world we need different models for artists' collectives that continue to push for freedom of creative expression in all forms."[16]

3.2. The latter 1970's - Emergence of the Network of "Living Museums" also known as "Parallel" Galleries

Artist-Run Centres exhibit a particular desire for networking and early on imagined themselves as a network. By 1977, the notion of artist-run centres as a network of "living museums" or "museums by artists" took hold. As Glenn Lewis declared,

> "The Parallel Galleries and other centres, in their programs and touring networks through ANNPAC, actually constitute a decentralized, living-artist, cultural heritage Institution or Museum – or more simply – the "Living Museum Network of Canada."[17]

Writing about Quebec, Guy Sioui Durand identifies networked artistic practices ["pratiques artistiques organisées en réseaux"][18] as one of three defining characteristics of artist-run culture:

> "Three broad elements define the phenomenon of Quebecois parallel art: organized networks, a counter-cultural ideology and original artistic practices implying an alternative." [Translated by author.][19]

Intrinsic to the early success of artist-run centres was their focus on a "the flow of people and information."[20] As discussed by Felicity Taylor,

> "The alternative spaces established by Canadian artists were the physical manifestations, or nodes, in an intangible network that stretched across the country and the world, bridging geographic isolation....Production and exhibition spaces were created by artists as environments for interaction and exchange, just as communications media used to parallel and extend existing art information sources."[21]

The Artist-Run Centre network is today a network of networks, organized around regions, languages, identities and artistic practices. It is instructive in this regard to consider the formation of the Artist-Run Centres and Collectives Conference (ARCCC), which defines itself as 'a coalition of regional associations and specific caucuses."[22] It is a scene where experiences and ideas are exchanged, collaborations developed, where the paths of travelling artists intersect to form new connections, and where festivals and conferences and events celebrate the scene's many points of intersection.

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[16] Paul Wong, in *De Centre*, Op. Cit., p. 263.

[17] Glenn Lewis, "ANNPAC Report on Parallel Galleries, Their Problems, Their Value and Possible Future Directions," 1977, cited in *Policy Matters,* Op. Cit, p 68.

[18] *L'art comme alternative*, Op. Cit., p. 13

[19] *L'art comme alternative*, Op. Cit., p. 14, The original French reads, « Trois grandes composantes définissent le phénomène québécois de l'art parallèle: des réseaux organisés, une idéologie porteuse d'un contre-projet de société et des pratiques artistiques originales impliquant une alternative. »

[20] Felicity Taylor, Op. Cit., p. 307

[21] Felicity Taylor, Op. Cit., p. 306,

[22] http://www.arccc-cccaa.org/en/arca

As described in a recent report of a meeting of the Visual Arts Advisory Committee at the Canada Council for the Arts, the value of the network is seen to be in its function as a major vehicle in the advancement of the careers of artists and in the circulation of their works. ARCs also continue to contribute to the development of a critical discourse through the ongoing circulation of artists and ideas, in what is described as "an expanded and evolving network of dialogues, partnerships and exchanges in urban centres, small and rural communities in Canada and abroad."[23]

3.3 The 1980's and Early 1990's - Political Transformations: From Oppositional to Identity Politics

Both Clive Robertson and Guy Sioui Durand have linked the appearance of ARCs and key moments in their evolution to larger social movements, and in particular to moments in the formation of oppositional collective identities.

As Durand remarks, the fact that Artist-Run Centres evolved as a network is to be understood as fundamental to their opposition to the hierarchical nature of the Visual Arts officialdom.

> Parallel networks occupy a new and singular place in the field of art...What does this other organizational model signify, the network, with respect to the structure of official institutions where the model obeys more to a hierarchical structuring? [Translated by author.] [24]

Although the Artist-Run Centre movement had confronted feminism and demands for gender inclusiveness early on, pressure from other marginalized groups intensified throughout the 1980's and '90's as contestations around a politics of identity – articulated around race, class, gender and sexual politics, swept through the ARC culture.[25] Due to divisions from within, the Association of National Non-Profit Artists Centres (ANNPAC) dissolved at this time.

New Aboriginal and culturally diverse Artist-Run Centres emerged in the mid-1990's, such as Urban Shaman in Winnipeg, Tribe in Saskatoon and SAVAC in Toronto. In the pages of *Fuse Magazine,* and in exhibitions and festivals focused on the art of culturally diverse artists, some challenged the cultural hegemony of the Canadian contemporary art scene. Aboriginal artists, such as performance and installation artist Rebecca Belmore, and curators, such as Ryan Rice, took their places in mainstream visual arts institutions. New Aboriginal artists' collectives also emerged, such as Nation to Nation, which pioneered Aboriginal territories in cyberspace with their multi-community online *Cyber Powwow*.

The early 1990's were also a time of contested identities in the arts in Quebec, where the politically engaged art and contestations around marginal identities of the 1970's were reformulated in international, ethnic and disciplinary terms.[26] Durand describes a resurgence of Aboriginal arts following the events at Akwesasne and Kanesetake in 1990. The impact of

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[23] *Report of the Canada Council for the Arts Meeting of Artist Run Centres Advisory Committee, 14-15 September,* 2009

[24] *L'art comme alternative*, Op. Cit.,, p. 26. Original French text reads : "Les réseaux parallèles…occupent (dans le champ de l'art) une place nouvelle et singulière…Que signifie cet autre modèle organisationnel, le réseau, par rapport à la structure des institutions officielles dont le modèle organisationnel obéit davantage à une structuration hiérarchique?"

[25] *Policy Matters,* Op. Cit, p. 82

[26] *L'art comme alternative*, Op. Cit.,, p. 207

these events is said to have been considerable, notably thanks to the work of Aboriginal artists working in Artist-Run Centres in the North American northeast. [27]

Today, Artist-Run Centres continue to embrace the challenge of diversity and inclusiveness. As Elaine Chang notes "... artist-run centres have worked as crucial yet paradoxical alternatives or supplements to this kind of closed circuit, exposing yet also compensating for what totalizing structures may lack." [28]

3.4. 1990's and 2000's: Increasing Professional Capacity

By the 1990's, the overall ecology of the Visual Arts had changed substantially, profoundly influenced by autonomous artistic practices. It was becoming common to find video, installation and other contemporary practices exhibited in public galleries and museums, and common also to find artists who may have begun their careers in Artist-Run-Centres exhibiting in them.

As the environment evolved, so too did Artist-Run Centres. Curation became another site of evolution, as a tradition of in-house curators was cultivated, notably by Vancouver's ARCs, where it emerged at Artspeak, and was later emulated by others.[29]

It was in this decade as well that the Canada Council for the Arts made strategic investments in increasing organizational health of its client organizations through a number of initiatives and policies. Resources were made available and a new focus was placed on employment standards, equipment resources, organizational networking and Board development.

Some have argued that the evolution of some ARCs towards a model of in-house director/curators, was somewhat natural, fueled by "committed long-term professional staff with growing institutional ambitions," operating in an environment of stable access to funding. For Reid Sheir, this "natural" trajectory includes the successful conversion to public galleries of ICA Plug In in Winnipeg, and the Contemporary Art Gallery in Vancouver.[30]

A discussion held in recent years at the Canada Council for the Arts in the context of an Advisory Committee revealed a number of viewpoints with respect to the role of curators and the function of curating in Artist-Run Centres. While concerns about the increasing importance of curatorship and other forms of professional development of the Visual Arts in artist-run centres had been expressed a decade earlier,[31] it was seen more positively in 2009, in a report on a Canada Council for the Arts meeting of the Artist Run Centres Advisory Committee. The report notes the increase in the number of curatorially driven ARCs, of which participants

[27] *L'art comme alternative*, Op. Cit.,, p. 198

[28] *Reel Asian: Asian Canada on Screen*, Toronto: Coach House Books, 2007. A discussion of the engagement by culturally diverse and aboriginal artists and curators in contemporary artist-run centres is developed more fully in the following section of the report. The intention here is to signal the ongoing relevance of the issue.

[29] Reid Sheir, Op Cit.

[30] Reid Sheir, Op Cit.

[31] *Minutes of Meeting, Working Committee for Artist-Run Centres, June 2, 2000, Canada Council for the Arts*

commented that "the new generation of artists expects to be curated and that ARCs stimulate interesting discussion between curators and artists."[32]

4. Summary Observations

The position of artist-run-centres in the Canadian visual arts ecology has been shaped through the more than 40 year evolution of artist-run culture. From the very beginning of their existence, ARCs have had a desire for self-determination, a vast and expanding collaborative network or organizations and individual artists, as well as a grounding in major transformative social movements. From their beginning, the artist-run centre network has addressed questions of gender and cultural diversity, while the various incarnations of ARC associations have sought to develop inclusive strategies, eventually giving way to new ARCs with dedicated mandates to promote artists from various communities.

The distinguishing characteristics of ARCs identified in this chapter continue to define their capacity to evolve and respond to the needs of new generations of artists. New activities and concerns such as curatorship are a reflection of the changing ecology and the capacity of Artist-Run Centres to adapt to changing needs and circumstances, while also revealing their maturity as institutions in their own right.

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[32] *Report of the Canada Council for the Arts Meeting of Artist Run Centres Advisory Committee, 14-15 September,* 2009. As we see in the following section, this view is borne out by the consultations with stakeholders.

B. Key Findings

1. Preamble

Against the backdrop of Section A in which we document the historical evolution of the ARCs within the visual arts ecology in Canada based on a review of literature, in this section, we present the findings of our document review, online survey and telephone interviews.

The findings reported in this section integrate the results of an online survey directed at 110 ARCs working in the Visual Arts across the country, to which 85 organizations responded, as well as of a select number of interviews (25 in all) with ARCs, public and private galleries, professional associations representing artists and curators, as well as the Canada Council.

This section also integrates the findings from our review of Canada Council documentation, including statistical information and mandate statements of organizations as found in their most recent funding application to the Canada Council for the Arts *Assistance to Artist-Run Centres Program*.

Our analysis is focused on understanding:

- The mandates, activities, and services provided by ARCs,
- Their accessibility to artists and levels of engagement by culturally diverse and Aboriginal communities,
- The collaboration of ARCs with other visual arts organizations, and
- Their outreach efforts and their publics.

2. Key Findings from a Document Review of Mandate Statements

2.1 Within the Ecology of the ARCs, Seven "Categories" Can Be Identified

An analysis of the mandate statements of 103 Artist-Run Centres allows us to identify seven categories through which the activities of Artist-Run Centres may be understood, as follows:

- Organizations with a general mandate to advance the contemporary arts without specific reference to a narrower field of intervention.
- Organizations dedicated to specific artistic practices.
- Organizations operating production facilities.
- Organizations with a mandate to serve multiple disciplines and/or multidisciplinary arts.
- Organizations with a mandate to serve a particular identity-based community.
- Organizations dedicated to politically or socially engaged art.
- Organizations dedicated to serving emerging artists.

Figure 2 below shows the breakdown of ARCs reviewed for this analysis within the proposed framework. While care has been taken in this exercise to isolate the categories as much as

possible, it is important to keep in mind that some ARCs may fit into more than one catego-ry.[33]

Figure 2: Organization of ARCs into Seven Categories.

	PROPOSED CATEGORY	# ORGAN-IZATIONS	% ORGAN-IZATIONS	OBSERVATIONS
1	Organizations with a general mandate to advance the contemporary arts without specific reference to a narrower field of intervention.	42 organiza-tions	56%	The majority are located in the regions - Over 90% of organizations surveyed indicated advancing the contemporary arts as a part of their mandate.
2	Organizations dedicated to specific artistic practices.	27	36%	12 dedicated to printmaking 8 dedicated to lens based arts 2 dedicated to performance art 5 dedicated to other practices (Crafts, In Situ Installation Art[34], Architecture, Fibre Arts, and one centre is dedicated to both Visual Art and Writing.)
3	Organizations operating production facili-ties. (A sub-set of organizations dedicated to specific artistic practices)	15	21%	12 printmaking facilities 3 lens-based production facilities
4	Organizations with a mandate to serve multiple disciplines and/or multidisciplinary arts.	12	16%	11 organizations located in a region 1 organization is located in a major centre
5	Organizations with a mandate to serve a particular identity-based community.	12	16%	5 serve Aboriginal communities 3 serve women artists 2 serve Franco-Canadian artists 1 serves South Asian artists. 1 serves culturally diverse artists, writ-ers and curators.
6	Organizations dedicated to politically or socially engaged art.	5	7%	All are dedicated to advancing profes-sional contemporary art.
7	Organizations dedicated to serving emerg-ing artists.	4	5%	1 organization dedicated to cultural diversity 1 organization located in a region - Interview findings suggest there is a trend towards ARCs and artist-led initiatives serving emerging artists - ARCs in Atlantic Canada are said to serve primarily emerging artists.

<u>Organizations with a general mandate to advance the contemporary arts without specific reference to a narrower field of intervention:</u> More than half or 56% (42 organizations in all) of all ARCs have a general mandate to support the advancement of the contemporary arts, without reference to other specific orientations. These organizations are located in both large and small communities across the country, with a greater tendency to be in a regional loca-

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[33] It is interesting to note in this regard that all of the production centres identified in category 3 are in fact a sub-set of the second category of organizations dedicated to specific artistic practices.

[34] La Chambre Blanche is unique in that it is the only organization dedicated exclusively to exhibiting art-works created through hosted artistic residencies.

tion. 33% of all organizations (25 organizations located in a region) have a general mandate to support the advancement of the contemporary arts, compared to 23% (17 in all) located in one of Canada's five major centres.[35]

Organizations dedicated to specific artistic practices: Almost all centres included in the survey of Artist-Run Centres indicated that they primarily serve the Visual Arts. The exceptions are FADO, which serves primarily Performance Art, and the Maison de l'architecture du Quebec, which serves the discipline of architecture.

In addition, 36% (27 organizations in all) have mandates dedicated to specific artistic practices. 16% of the total number of mandate statements analyzed (12 organizations in all) are dedicated to printmaking. 11% (8 organizations in all) are dedicated to screen-based or lens-based (photographic) arts. Two organizations are dedicated to performance art (of which one is also dedicated to media arts practices). Single organizations have mandates with respect to the following: Crafts, In Situ Installation Art, Architecture, Fibre Arts, and one centre is dedicated to both Visual Art and Writing.

Organizations whose mandates served a particular discipline include 20 % of organizations (15 in all) operate production facilities. This includes all 12 ARCs with a mandate to serve printmaking, as well as three lens-based ARCs (Gallery 44 in Toronto, PAVED Arts in Saskatoon and Espace F in Rimouski).

Organizations serving multiple disciplines: 16% of organizations examined, 12 in all, have a mandate expressed in terms of serving any discipline, multiple disciplines or multidisciplinary art. With one exception (Stride in Calgary), organizations with mandates expressed as serving multiple disciplines are located regionally.

Organizations whose mandates are to serve a particular identity-based community include 16% of all ARCs examined (12 organizations). Five organizations serve Aboriginal communities. Three have mandates to serve women artists while two organizations are dedicated to providing support to Franco-Canadian artists, and one organization serves South Asian artists. Another organization (VOX in Montreal) has a mandate to serve culturally diverse artists, writers and curators.

7% (5 organizations) are focused on socially or politically engaged art. These are the Alternator Centre for Contemporary Art located in the Okanagan region of British Columbia, Toronto Free Gallery, the Helen Pitt Gallery in Vancouver and A Space Gallery in Toronto, and Le Grave serving the central Quebec region. All are dedicated to advancing professional contemporary art with a political or social orientation.

According to its mandate, the Alternator Centre "seeks to engage with our history and our community, and particularly our presence in unceded Syilx territory." Toronto Free is "dedicated to providing a forum for social justice, cultural, environmental and sustainability issues expressed through all media." The Helen Pitt Gallery is "dedicated to the promotion of experimental contemporary art that addresses social, political, cultural and critical issues. The mandate of A Space focusses on "work that is politically engaged [and] oriented around non-dominant communities." Le Grave is a pioneer of recycling practices in art.

5% (4 organizations) serve primarily or solely emerging artists. One of these organizations (Aceartinc. in Winnipeg) is dedicated to cultural diversity in its programs and encourages applications from contemporary artists and curators identifying as Aboriginal, gay-lesbian-

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[35] Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal.

bisexual-transgendered (GLBT) or from diverse cultures. Another organization is located in a region (Caravansérail in Rimouski). It was also noted that ARCs in Atlantic Canada tend to serve emerging artists.

Overall, our analysis of the mandate statements of ARCs shows that the majority supports the advancement of contemporary arts without reference to other specific orientations with the majority being located in regions. Some are dedicated to specific practices. A lesser proportion operate production facilities, and a still lesser proportion serve multiple disciplines and/or multidisciplinary arts or have a mandate to serve a particular identity-based community.

3. Key Findings from Stakeholder Consultations

3.1 ARCs Also Share a Number of Defining Characteristics That Differentiate Them Overall From Other Actors in the Environment

The results of our online survey and telephone interviews support the proposed categorizing of ARCs into their differing orientations. At the same time, we note that over and above these differences, there are a number of defining characteristics of the ARCs that differentiate them from other actors in the visual arts ecology. This finding is also supported by the results of our literature review as described in Section A.

3.1.1 Self-determination at the heart of the unique role played by ARCs

As mentioned above, self-determination in ARCs refers to the unique organizing principle of ARCs – that they are governed by artists and serve memberships of artists, for the purpose of supporting artistic development and presenting programming of importance to artists.

Those representing public galleries commented on how the notion of self-governance in ARCs gives rise to programming that is fundamentally different from other organizations in the visual arts ecology. It is where artists have the greatest influence and the greatest role to play. The core of their mandate is seen to be the presentation and production of work in a peer-to-peer context.

For the artists and curators working in ARCs, self-determination has a direct bearing on the primary orientation of ARCs toward the artist, in support of their creative research and experimentation and professional development. Associations representing artists and curators note the artistic freedom afforded by ARCs compared to other organizations.

The fundamental importance of self-determination to ARCs discussed in Section A, was confirmed through our consultations with ARCs and other stakeholders.

The perspective from commercial dealers is that by their peer system, ARCs make a unique contribution to the overall Visual Arts, "contributing to the conversation," and of greatest importance to the development of the artistic community.

3.1.2 ARCs make a key contribution to the overall ecology by advancing the comtemporary arts through their support for artistic experimentation

We should note that virtually all ARCs offer exhibition opportunities to visual artists and consider their broad mandate to be the advancement of the contemporary arts. (Two centres uniquely provide opportunities to related disciplines: Fado, which is dedicated to the presentation of Performance Art, and Maison de l'architecture du Québec, which presents the work of architects.)

It must be recalled as noted above that over 90% of ARCs surveyed responded that their mandate comprises advancing the contemporary arts, suggesting that while some ARCs' have a dedicated purpose, they also recognize their mandate to be the advancement of contemporary art.

The four different stakeholder groups interviewed for this report agree on the unique role of Artist-Run Centres in supporting the artistic development of individual artists and contemporary art more generally by serving as a platform for artistic research and experimentation.

ARCs see their programming as distinct from that of other types of galleries, by programming emergent arts practices with greater immediacy and risk-taking. They see their role as supporting artists, providing the necessary conditions for emerging and established artists to experiment and create.

As can be seen in Figure 3, these findings are confirmed by the online survey, in which more than 90% of respondents identified advancing the contemporary arts and artistic experimentation as part of their mandate, while more than 80% also identified support for emerging artistic practices and critical engagement. We note that this finding supports the results of our categorizing exercise, which shows that most ARCs have a general mandate to advance contemporary arts in Canada.[36]

We also note that ARCs interpret their mandates broadly. 90% of English-language ARCs and 97% (all but one) French-language ARCs selected all 15 choices in the table on the following page to describe their mandates.

Professional associations representing artists and curators note the credibility that ARCs have in the environment, due to their distinct role in experimentation.

From the perspective of public galleries, ARCs are primarily a place for research and experimentation, and are acknowledged to be the only organizations contributing to the development of the contemporary arts in some cities. They are seen to have a role to play in supporting artistic production and are acknowledged as doing a better job of artistic residencies than other organizations. They are also acknowledged to have a critical role to play in fostering new works, and are often the first venue for presentation of works. ARCs are perceived as unique also with respect to the opportunities they provide for engagement with art through curatorial and other types of projects.

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[36] More than half of all respondents also indicated that their mandates include support for artistic production, professional development, research and public engagement. Some organizations also mentioned critical writing, publishing, and advocacy as part of their mandate.

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Figure 3: How ARCs View Their Mandates[37]
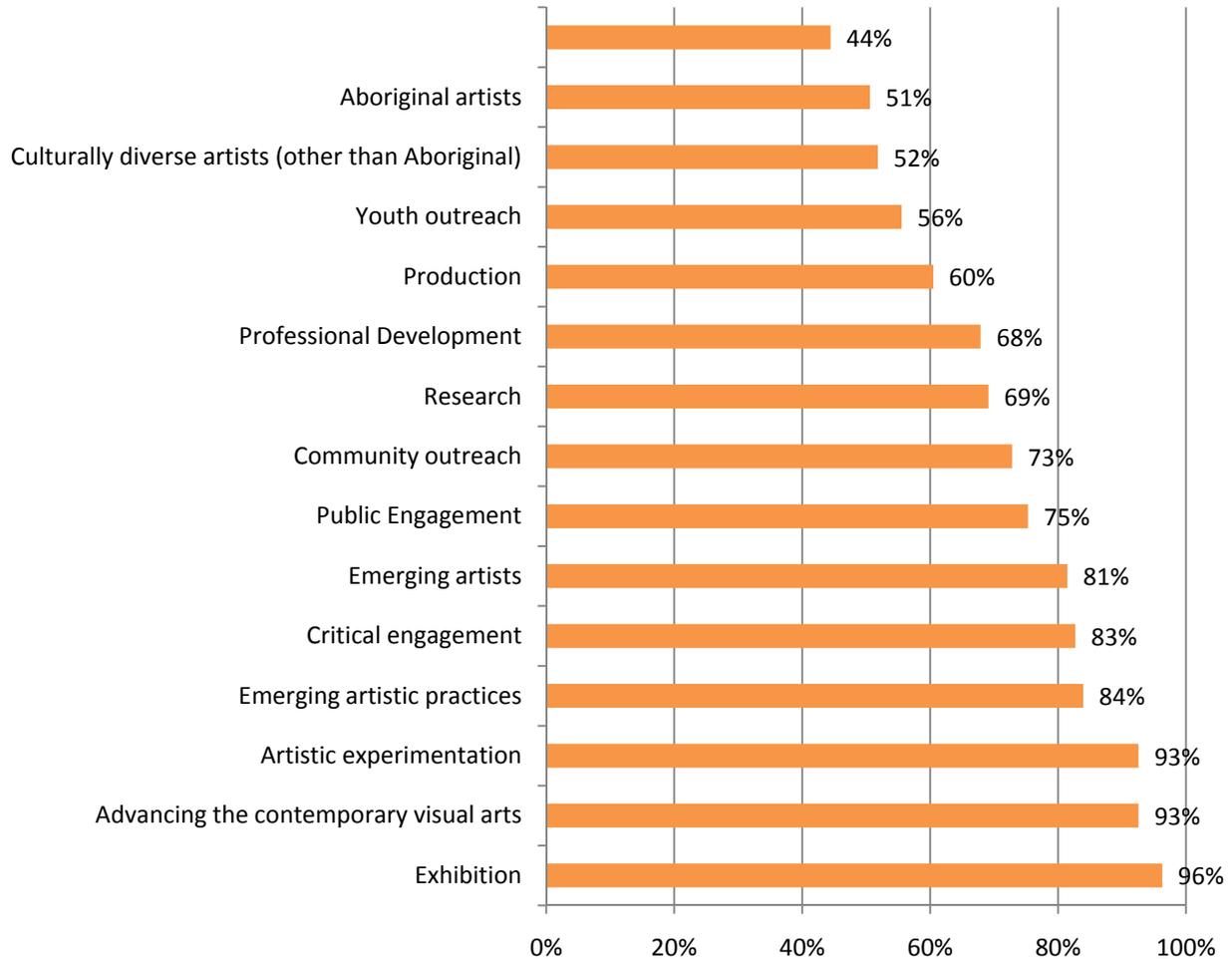
Source: Based on survey responses of Artist-Run Centres

The role of ARCs in this regard is seen as critical to the overall arts ecology. As one curator in a public gallery stated, "the question is what would happen without ARCs. The whole scene would unravel. We would have no more artistic development, far fewer artists, no more contemporary arts in some regions." Another curator stated that, "the most interesting ARCs are truly experimental, with an engaging program."

Figure 3 above indicates the high levels of importance to the mandates that ARCs have given themselves to support critical engagement, emerging artistic practices, artistic experimentation and advancing the contemporary visual arts. 'Critical engagement' activities are those professional practices that advance a critical understanding of the visual arts, such as publications, conferences, and artists' talks. 'Emerging artistic practices' refers to support being provided to artists to experiment with visual arts forms and modes of expression that are not yet established. 'Artistic experimentation' refers to the freedom afforded to artists to try new things without the constraints of the market place. 'Advancing the contemporary visual arts'

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refers to activities undertaken by ARCs to support the development of the contemporary visual arts, through support to artistic production, exhibition and dissemination.

Other stakeholders in the visual arts ecology recognize this unique contribution of ARCs to the overall environment, and its importance. Public galleries expressed the wish that this role of ARCs be recognized and strengthened. Commercial dealers also perceive ARCs as alternative spaces for experimental practices and work.

3.1.3 ARCs Provide Similar Services, which make a Unique Contribution to the Overall Ecology

ARCs provide similar services, which are recognized by other stakeholders as unique to ARCs and of critical importance to the overall health and development of the visual arts ecology. These can be grouped according to four broad themes: exhibition, production, professional development and training and critical activities.

1. Exhibition activities extend to producing exhibitions with the assistance of the ARC and local, regional, national and international dissemination through touring, collaborative exchange and online activities.

2. Support for artistic production includes creative residencies and use of specialized production facilities. Professional associations representing artists and curators note the unique support provided by ARCs for production, including pooling resources in order to provide artists with access to production resources that they would not otherwise have access to.

3. Professional development and training services extend to workshops; training activities; mentorships; and opportunities to serve in different capacities in the administration and governance of ARCs.

4. Critical activities includes hosting artists' talks, conferences, panels, publishing critical essays and books.

Figure 4 on the following page shows the importance of these activities for ARCs. Almost all organizations responding to the online survey said their programming involves exhibitions, followed by publications and artistic production. Over two thirds of organizations said their programming involves workshops and residencies. About half of all respondents said their programming includes conferences, roundtables, international dissemination and training.[38] Some ARCs are active in disseminating works online,[39] others engage in international collaborative exchanges, while others collaborate with post-secondary institutions in conferences.

ARCs perceive their role as initiating discussion of new practices and promoting a critical language around them, while professional associations see the important contribution made by critical publications produced by ARCs in advancing the discussion around contemporary art.

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[38] Other programming mentioned by ARCs includes arts advocacy, scholarships and fellowships, programming in other disciplines such as writing, music and media arts, panel discussions, community outreach and participation in art fairs.

[39] ARCs interviewed for this report indicated that overall, ARCs are using the Internet to varying degrees to promote themselves as well as to disseminate work. The trend is towards greater and greater use of the Internet and other online networking tools, as resources allow.

Figure 4: Types of Programming Undertaken by ARCs
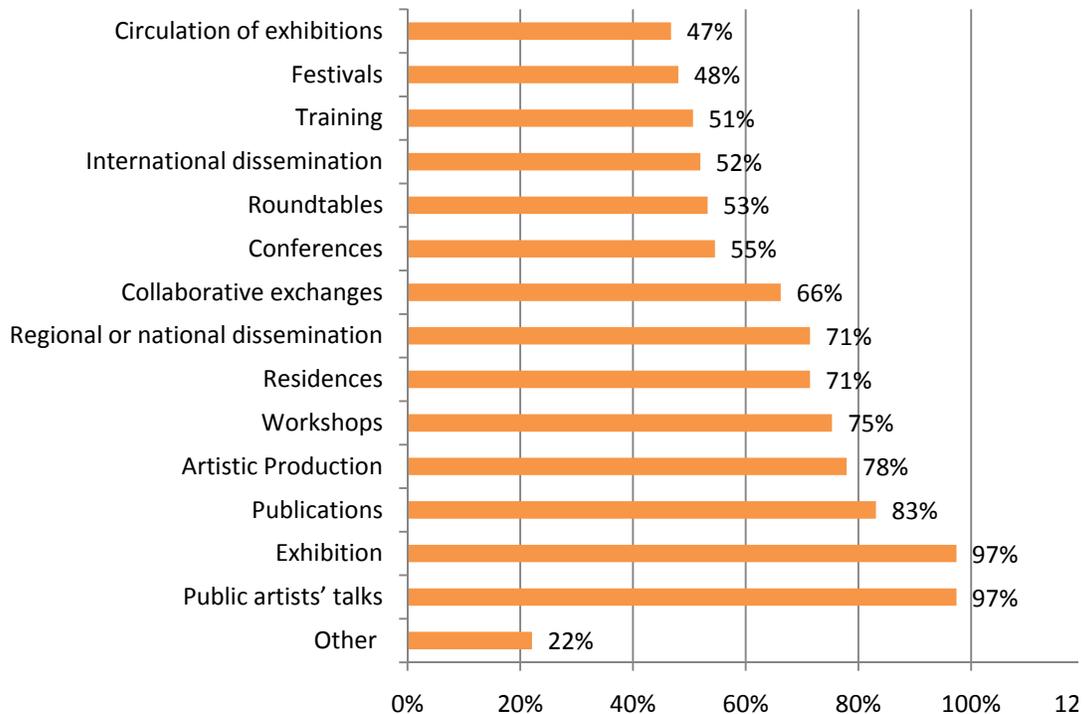
Source: Based on survey responses of Artist-Run Centres

3.1.4 Membership Structures Define Access to Services

With the exception of access to exhibitions and some training opportunities, the services provided by ARCs are primarily aimed at their members. Typically, ARC members are individuals invited to join the organization based on a membership fee and volunteer contribution to the running of the organization. Some memberships are based exclusively on a small fee in exchange for receiving mailouts of upcoming activities.

All but one ARC surveyed for this report indicated having a membership structure. All ARC memberships are open to artists, and 70% of ARCs surveyed said they also offer memberships to non-artists. These include students, academics, writers, critics, curators, international artists, architects, patrons, art collectors, hobbyists and members of the general public.

According to the CADAC database, 59 Artist-Run Centres funded by the Canada Council reported a total of 9,698 members.[40] Such a high number could in part be explained by the double counting that could be expected to occur for ARCs in the same city, where individuals join more than one organization.[41] Notwithstanding the possibility of double-counting, it is estimated that the membership base of ARCs nationally is in the thousands.

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[40] Source: CADAC, Canada Council for the Arts

[41] Individuals may elect to join more than one organization in order to broaden their networks, extend their access to production facilities or to be more actively engaged in the development of the arts.

Overall, 87% of ARCs say they provide some level of services to non-members in the community at large. These most often include professional development (76%) and access to exhibition facilities (60%).

Other services to non-members include participation in governance and access to production facilities, access to electronic mailings, production services such as large scale printing, education, participation in workshops and engagement activities, access to screenings, talks, lectures, and other events, community access to the space, access to library and archives.

Some services are reserved for members, notably professional development opportunities such as participating in the organization's governance or other decision-making (84%), followed by other targeted opportunities for professional development (74%). 75% of organizations said they provide these exclusive services to members. Some ARCs also provide access to exhibition opportunities as a benefit of membership.

Overall, 28% of organizations surveyed said they place restrictions on their membership, particularly with respect to limiting access to professional artists or arts professionals, and limiting access to production facilities, which in some cases are reserved for experienced users.[42]

3.1.5 ARCs provide a professional entry point for emerging artists, curators and administrators

Stakeholders agree on the role played by ARCs in supporting the careers of arts professionals by providing professional entry points and development opportunities for artists, curators and administrators, to have their first professional experiences and develop their professional networks. The peer system of decision-making is considered by some other stakeholders to be very important to the overall ecology of the Visual Arts, providing artists with opportunities to gain experience, to work, and to be curated by their peers.

Stakeholders percieve ARCs as welcoming to emerging artists. Governed by artists and comprised of memberships drawn from the artistic community, ARCs may seem more approachable to emerging artists, whose own networks may extend to them. Over 80% of ARCs surveyed said they actively recruit emerging artists and count them amongst their members and believe providing support for emerging artists to be part of their mandate (Figure 3, above).[43]

Professional development can take a number of forms such as providing access to professional production and exhibition opportunities to emerging artists or providing opportunities for technical training and mentoring.[44]

A number of ARCs interviewed for this report said they work with local art colleges and university departments, providing opportunities for young artists and recent graduates through scholarships, residencies and mentorships.

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[42] Other restrictions mentioned were memberships reserved for those who are active in the arts community or to those who are members of a particular community, such as Aboriginal.

[43] Among the methods employed to recruit new members we note scholarships and fellowships to emerging artists, collaborations with post-secondary art training institutions, and through the use of existing member networks.

[44] See also, Haema Sivanesan, in *Decentre*, Op. Cit., p. 88

Public and private galleries perceive ARCs to have entry points for emerging artists. By creating a collegial context for production, exhibition and dissemination of their work, ARCs also provide a unique context for the professional training of artists. They are seen as particularly useful for younger artists and provide a bridge towards exhibiting in public galleries. Through their experiences in ARCs, emerging artists gain experience in proposing exhibitions and showing their work in a professional setting.

The primary contribution of ARCs to the regional ecology of Atlantic Canada is perceived to be in providing professional development opportunities for emerging artists.

Professional curators and a curator association see ARCs as providing professional opportunities that might not otherwise be available to emerging curators, and are often the first venues for their work.[45] For emerging curators, ARCs offer a degree of autonomy not available in other organizations, providing opportunities to develop a range of experiences and skills.

ARCs also provide opportunities to develop emerging arts administrators. One public gallery representative noted the unrecognized service to the community that ARCs bring in training arts administrators.

Findings from the interviews with other stakeholders suggest that the trend towards ARCs which have a mandate to support emerging artists is broader than indicated by the review of mandates conducted for this study and extends beyond ARCs to less formal initiatives. For example, public and private galleries in Alberta and Atlantic Canada noted the existence of artist-initiated and spontaneous efforts by younger generations of artists to show their work. Similarly, Robin Metcalfe points out in a recent publication that the current generation of artist-run culture in Halifax is located in marginal or temporary spaces, in guerrilla performances and backyard screenings. As he states, "Models based on public funding, marketing and DIY alternatives co-exist in contemporary artist-run culture."[46]

From the perspective of commercial galleries, ARCs serve a critical function in introducing the market to new work and new artists and play a crucial role in allowing commercial dealers to discover new artists and new works.

3.2. Trends in the Evolution of Artist-Run Centres

3.2.1 ARCs Today Attract a Significant Audience for a Diverse Range and Number of Programming Activities

Figure 5 provides a snapshot of the quantity of programming undertaken in 2010 by artist-run centres. Across the country, over 4,000 artists exhibited their work in more than 800 exhibitions programmed by ARCs. A similar number of publications were also created in various formats.

The total number of public activities was almost 2,500, and the number of new works produced or exhibited by artist-run centres was over 4,300.

There were over 1,200 professional development activities and almost 2,800 educational activities hosted by ARCs in 2010, involving over 61,000 participants.

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[45] The Aboriginal Curatorial Collective, Robin Metcalfe, Melanie O'Brian and Kitty Scott were interviewed for this report.

[46] Robin Metcalfe, in *Decentre*, Op. Cit., p. 184. No further discussion of DIY initiatives.

Figure 5: Activities in Artist-Run Centres in 2010 (74 organizations reporting)

TYPE OF ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY ARTIST-RUN CENTRES	COUNT OF ACTIVITY	NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS REPORTING
Exhibitions	Total Number of Exhibitions Organized and Curated by the Organization	840	72
	Total Number of Artists Exhibited	4,028	74
Other pro-gramming activities	Total Number of Public Performances and Literary Readings *produced* by your organization	720	51
	Total Number of Public Performances and Literary Readings *presented* by your organization	131	18
	Total Number of Film / Video / Media Screenings	377	46
	Total Number of Community Arts Activities	226	46
	Number of catalogues, CDs and DVDs produced	157	39
New Works	Total number of new works	4,345	57
Other	Total number of artists in residence	289	44
	Total number of arts education activities	2,798	67
	Total Number of Arts Service and Professional Development Activities	1,211	43

Source: As reported in the CADAC database by organizations funded in 2011 competitions, as at March 1, 2011

As can be seen in Figure 6, attendance and participation levels at artist-run centres are high.[47]

Overall, Artist-Run Centres perceive their audience to be artists and the general public. Other audiences identified by survey respondents included artists, students, youth, people online, and other arts professionals. The majority of ARCs (84%) believe their reach to be local, regional and national, largely as a result of touring activities and collaborative exchanges with other organizations in Canada.

65% of ARCs say their reach is international. In some cases, this is because of dissemination relationships with similar organizations internationally, for most ARCs it is because of the ways in which the Internet is extending their reach. A higher proportion of organizations funded through the Canada Council for the Arts' *Assistance to Artist-Run Centre Program*

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[47] Though audience numbers for the years of existence of ARCs is not available, it is safe to assume that the audience for ARC programming is growing as the number of ARCs increases and their ability to reach out to audiences through increasingly formal collaborations with larger arts organizations and online.

indicate being involved in international dissemination (51% of English-language funded organizations and 79% of French-language funded organizations[48]).

Figure 6: Public Attendance and Participation at Artist-Run Centres in 2010

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION AT ARTIST-RUN CENTRES	COUNT OF ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION	COUNT OF ORGANIZATIONS
Total Attendance at Exhibitions[49]	2,088,370	66
Total attendance at Public Performances and Literary Readings	152,351	58
Total Attendance at Public Performances and Literary Readings produced by other artists/organizations	10,105	25
Total Attendance at Film / Video / Media Screenings	49,429	44
Total Number of Participants in Community Arts Activities	21,763	33
Total Attendance at Community Arts Activities	110,686	25
Total Attendance/ Participants[50]	**2,432,704**	**75**
Number of hours gallery / exhibition space open to the public annually	111,499	70
Total attendance at / number of participants in arts education activities	61,757	65
Number of attendees at professional development activities	2,423	15

Source: As reported in the CADAC database by organizations funded in 2011 competitions, as at March 1, 2011

3.2.2 Audience Development is a Top Priority for ARCs

Audience development and increased visibility was identified as a priority for many ARCs in both smaller and larger cities interviewed for this study, who said they would do more to develop their audiences if they had the resources.

The results of the online survey suggest that this preoccupation is shared by most ARCs. 84% of survey respondents identified increasing their visibility to the community at large as a priority and 94% said they engaged in audience development or public engagement activities in the past five years.

As is shown in Figure 7, organizations for the most part sought to develop their audience through a collaboration or partnership with another organization, through their choice of programming or by developing a greater online presence. The majority of activities were targeted locally (89%), in line with programming activities. Almost half (44%) of initiatives were

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[48] The higher proportion of Quebec organizations involved in international dissemination can be attributed at least in part to the focus of the Conseil des arts et lettres du Québec on international dissemination.

[49] Includes organizations reporting attendance for programming in public spaces.

[50] Includes organizations reporting attendance for programming in public spaces.

aimed at international audiences, in large part via the Internet. The proportion of ARCs en-gaged in interational audience development is higher for organizations funded through the Canada Council's *Assistance to Artist-Run Centre Program* (49% of English language funded organizations and 84% of French-language funded organizations[51]).

ARCs interviewed discussed using online social networking sites to continue the engagement with audiences they develop. This is consistent with over 90% of ARCs surveyed who said they use a website, Facebook and other social media platforms to promote or disseminate their activities. 77% publish electronic newsletters, and 32% publish a blog.

ARCs interviewed report working closely with schools to encourage greater engagement on the part of youth.

Other audience development or engagement activities mentioned by respondents included travelling exhibition, participation in Ontario Interior Design Show, hiring a programming, marketing and communications consultants, hiring an arts educator, development of a stra-tegic positioning plan, partnering with other organizations, paid advertising in targetted pub-lications, international programming, and interactive publication.

Stakeholders differed somewhat on their perspectives with respect to the role of ARCs in de-veloping the public for contemporary Visual Art. From the perspective of artists and a cura-tor association, it was stated that ARCs should create greater ties with the public.

Public galleries note how successful ARCs are in engaging their local communities, and communities of peers (artists, art students and faculty) as well as wider audiences, for exam-ple through a strategic or association with other visual arts organizations. Noting the dispari-ty in funding between ARCs and public galleries, the latter also commented that ARCs should not be expected to fulfill this mandate.

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[51] The higher focus in Quebec organizations may be attributed at least in part to the Quebec government's strategic orientation toward international dissemination.

Figure 7: Types of audience development activities undertaken
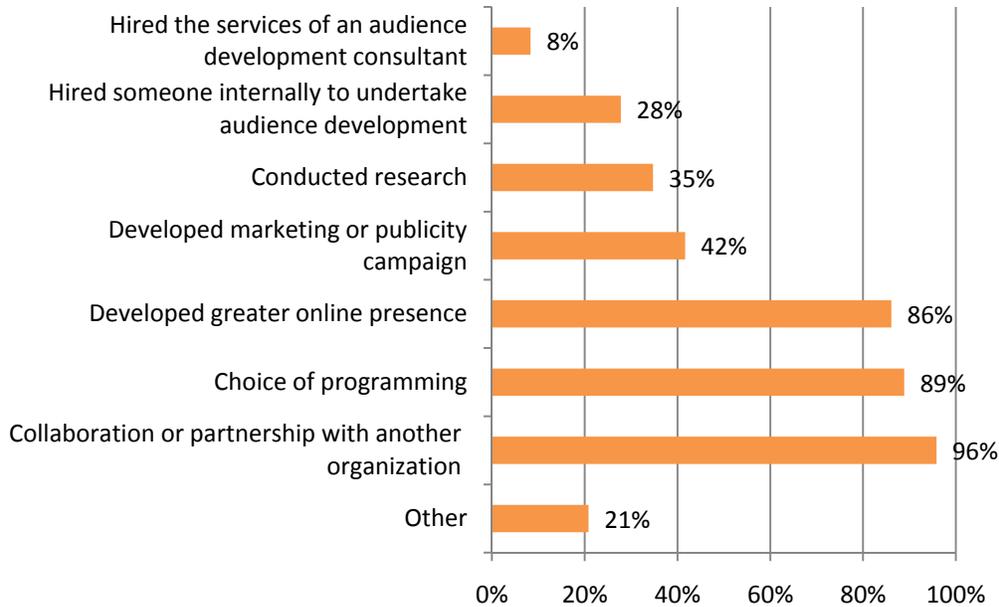
Source: Based on survey responses of Artist-Run Centres

3.2.3 ARCs are Increasing their Professional Capacity with Respect to Programming

<u>Almost half of ARCs surveyed said they employ curators or Artistic Directors</u>

As is demonstrated in the results of our literature review, ARCs are increasing their organizational capacity, a development supported by the Canada Council. In some instances, ARCs are being managed today by professional administrators, artistic directors and others.

As is shown in Figure 8, about half of organizations responding to the survey also indicated that artists' work may be selected for exhibition by a curator. The proportion of curated exhibitions is higher in English-language organizations (62% compared to 23% in French-language organizations).[52]

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[52] Programming is also arrived at using open calls, via invitation, through the use of programming committees, and with the help of staff participation.

*Figure 8: How ARCs Originate Their Programming*
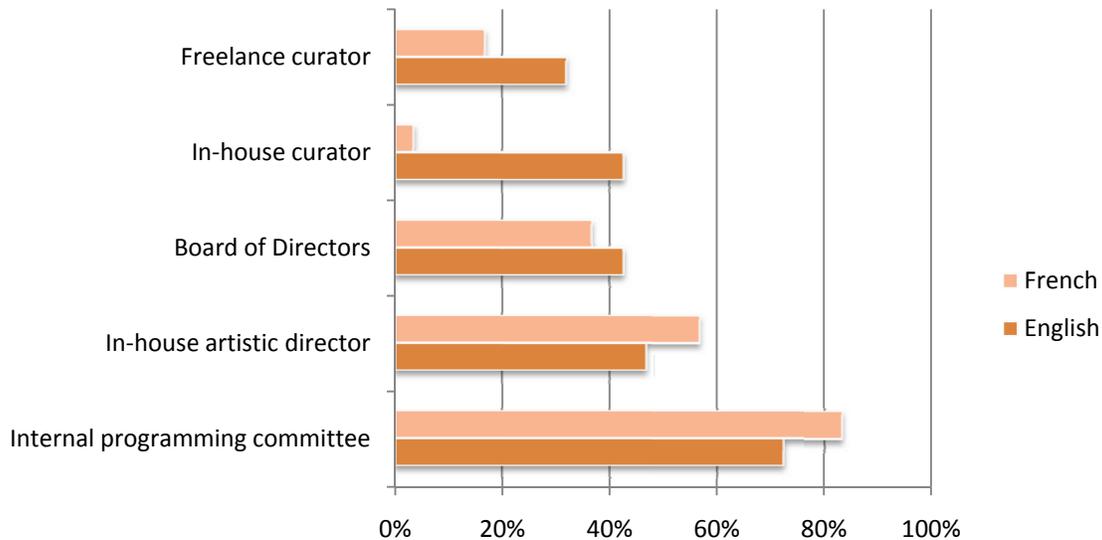
Source: Based on survey responses of Artist-Run Centres

40% of organizations surveyed also indicated that exhibitions can be selected by an Artistic Director. As shown on Figure 9, the proportion was higher in English (45%) than in French (33%). A slightly higher proportion of organisations funded by the Canada Council through the *Assistance to Artist Run Centres Program* employ Artistic Directors than non-funded organizations (48% of English-language funded organizations and 64 of French-language funded organizations).[53]

There is a consensus amongst commercial dealers and public galleries interviewed for this report that this is a positive development, in which ARCs are meeting the changing needs of the art community, where artists too are developing their careers and continuing to show in ARCs after they are established. A number of representatives of public galleries had in fact started their own careers in ARCs and perceived it as a natural trend, though it is important not to generalize the tendency to all ARCs.

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[53] The greater trend towards Artistic Directors in Quebec organizations can be attributed in part to greater opportunities for career development of arts professionals in the province, due to funding levels and the large number of visual arts exhibiting organizations. Amongst other means of selecting exhibitions were cited membership committees, external academic advisors, programming committees, jurys and via submission deadlines.

Figure 9: Selection of Exhibitions in ARCs
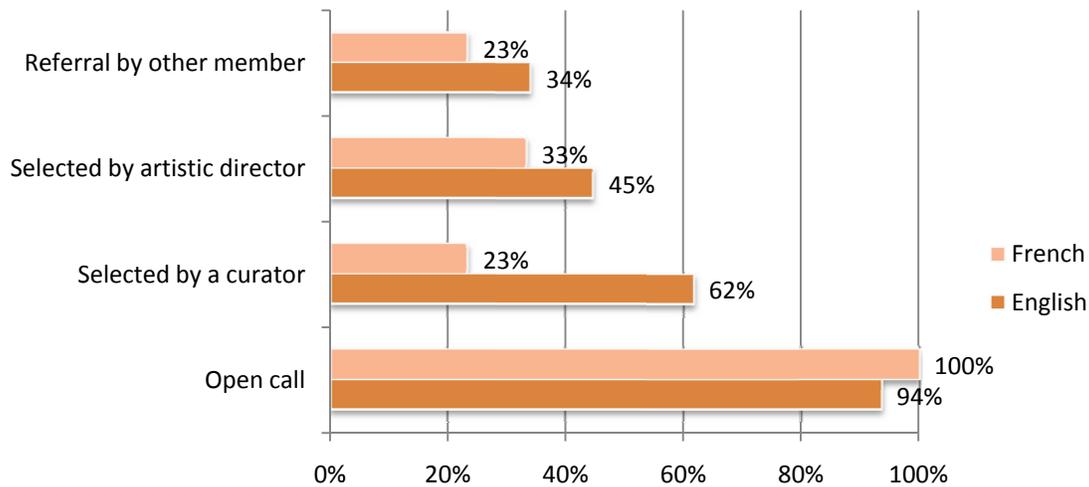
Source: Based on survey responses of Artist-Run Centres

3.2.4 ARCs are highly collaborative with each other, and to a certain extent, with larger organizations in the visual arts ecology such as public galleries and post-secondary institutions

Networking amongst ARCs is still fundamental to Artist-Run culture, but the nature of collaborations and partners reveals a changed landscape and the broader role played by ARCs today, who collaborate with a range of partners, such as public galleries, universities, private dealers and internationally.

A high rate of collaboration, primarily with other ARCs

90% of Artist-Run Centres surveyed reported that they had collaborated with another organization at least once in the past five years, though the proportion is higher amongst English-language respondents (98%), compared to French-language respondents (77%). Almost all of them (94% of respondents) indicated that they had collaborated or partnered with another artist-run centre in the past five years.

ARCs interviewed for the study noted it is easier to partner with other artist-run organizations and some see other ARCs and festivals as their natural partners because of their similar size and scope.

A high proportion of ARCs collaborate with public and university galleries

At the same time, ARCs also seek out collaborations with public galleries, museums, colleges and universities, and non-arts organizations. As shown in Figure 10, approximately two thirds of organizations surveyed responded that they had collaborated or partnered with a public university or college gallery. The lowest rate of collaboration is with museums. Collaboration need not necessarily happen within the same city. One ARC located in a region collaborates with other visual arts organizations in major Canadian cities.

ARCs are also collaborating internationally with other artist-run organizations and initiatives or with other visual arts organizations, notably in France, India, Brazil, Poland, Cuba, Ger-

many, Italy and Japan. One ARC indicated collaborating regionally and internationally on-line.

Other collaborators included libraries, community centres, provincial artist-run centre organization, major festivals, art publisher, commercial dealers, symposia, local charities, unions, social justice agencies, professional association of designers, community, health and volunteer organizations, Maisons de la culture and schools. ARCs interviewed discussed their collaborations with high-profile partners such as public galleries and festivals as helping to forge new ties with other communities and audiences, for example by partnering with culturally diverse arts festivals or by helping public galleries to exhibit interactive or other media or technology based installations.

Figure 10: Types of Organizations with which ARCs have collaborated in the past five years)
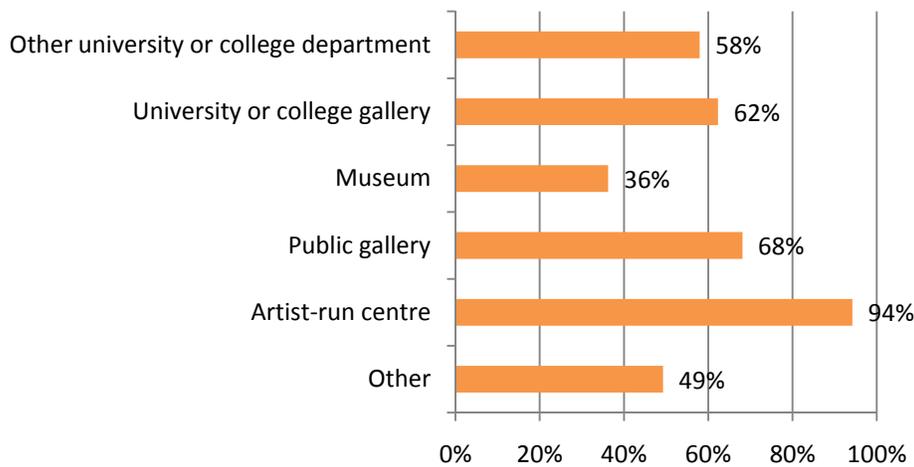
Source: Based on survey responses of Artist-Run Centres

Collaborations Increase the Capacity and Reach of ARCs

The reasons for partnering are varied and largely driven by programming considerations, including access to facilities, or pooling of resources to do projects of larger scale, or for greater visibility. Over 80% of survey respondents said collaborations enabled them to access more resources and to share knowledge.

The majority of collaborations involved the co-production of an exhibition or professional development initiatives, such as conferences and panel discussions, as can be seen in Figure 11. The most oft-mentioned other form of collaboration was to co-produce a publication.

Other collaborations included co-production of artistic residencies, co-publishing, organizing a conference, audience outreach, production exchanges, book launches, collaborating on an artmaking fest, collaboration with a commercial gallery, and co-hosting a booth at an international art fair.

Figure 11: Nature of Collaborations by ARCs
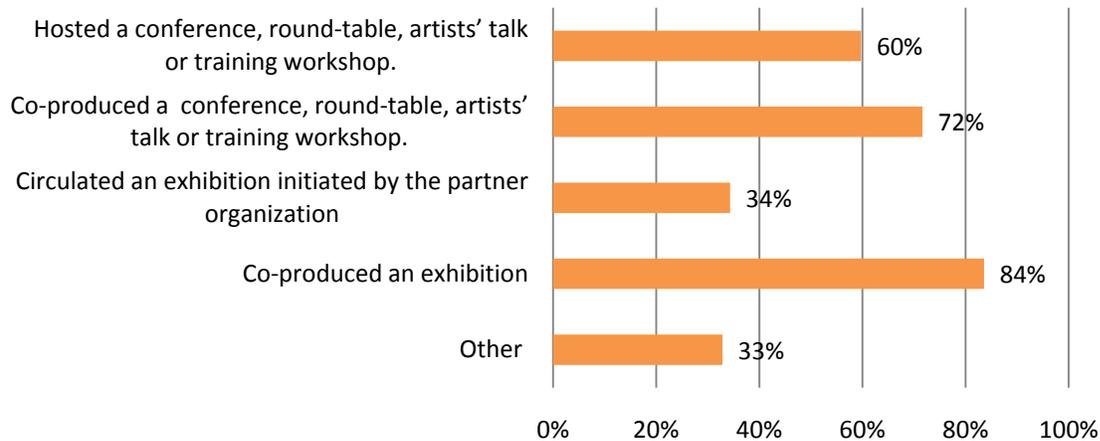
Source: Based on survey responses of Artist-Run Centres

The small number of public galleries interviewed for this report indicated that they do from time to time undertake collaborations with ARCs. There appears to be a higher amount of collaboration in Atlantic Canada, where partnerships bring mutual benefits of access to resources, technical equipment and expertise and increased audience reach and visibility. A consortium of public galleries and ARCs – Halifax Inc – takes a shared approach to marketing and securing a table for the New York Art Book Fair. A number of Halifax art festivals also involve both public galleries and ARCs.

On the whole, public galleries interviewed for this report are interested in collaborating more with ARCs to work more closely with the art community but admit that it would be easier with funding intended for this purpose.

Collaboration with commercial dealers is reportedly minimal and for the most part informal. Commercial dealers are open to collaboration, but are profit driven so it is difficult to find the opportunities. In some cases, they have been able to cross-promote artists showing in ARCs that they represent. In addition, they see value in collaboration in larger contexts, such as large events.

ARCs are developing their international networks

ARCs are active in both local and international networks, a fact supported by the survey findings as well as the interviews conducted for this report.

Less than half of respondents indicated that there were disadvantages in terms of collaborations. The most oft-mentioned disadvantage was having less control over scheduling (42%). 22% of respondents also indicated a lack of fit between organizations.

3.2.5. There are Multiple ARCs in One City

75% of ARCs are located in the same city as other ARCs.

Over time, the number of ARCs has increased and the consultants considered the impact of having multiple ARCs in one city, primarily through the online survey of ARCs. 75% of survey respondents said there was more than one ARC in their city or town.

12 Canadian cities are home to at least two English-language Artist-Run Centres serving the Visual Arts. 22% of English-language respondents are located in Toronto (11 in all), followed by 16% in Vancouver (8 in all).

4 Canadian cities are home to at least two French-language Artist-Run Centres serving the Visual Arts. 41% of French-language Visual Arts ARCs are located in Montreal (13 in all).

ARCs perceive more benefits than disadvantages of having Multiple ARCs in Same City, such as more Partnership Opportunities, Increased Visibility and Impact. The most common disadvantage perceived with respect to having multiple ARCs in one city is competition for limited resources.

As can be seen in Figure 12, from the perspective of ARCs surveyed, the greatest advantage to having more than one ARC in a community are the opportunities to raise visibility and have impact, followed by increased access to resources.

For most of these (84% of respondents), having more than one ARC provides opportunities to partner and collaborate together. 82% see the positive effect of increasing their overall visibility and impact. 71% said they benefited from increased visibility by inhabiting the same neighborhood as other ARCs as well as opportunities to partner to gain greater access to resources, including increased access to expertise.[54]

Figure 12: Perceived Benefits of Multiple ARCs in the Same City
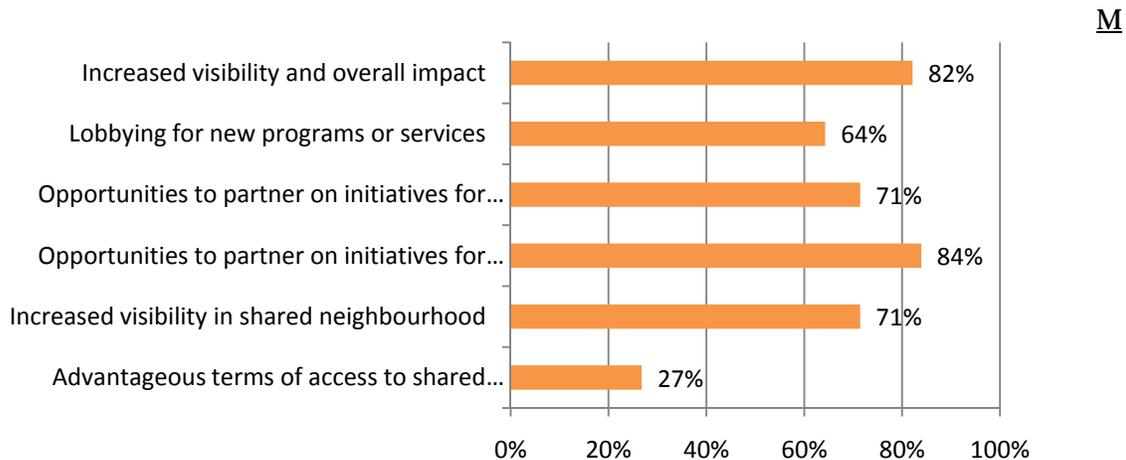
Source: Based on survey responses of Artist-Run Centres

Artist-Run Centres perceive far fewer disadvantages to having more than one centre in their community. About 50% identified increased competition for limited resources (staff, space and funding), as can be seen in Figure 13 on the following page.

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[54] Other benefits mentioned included information and expertise sharing, coordinating event schedules, sharing financial resources and an increased diversity of programming.

Figure 13: Perceived disadvantages to having multiple ARCs in the same city or town
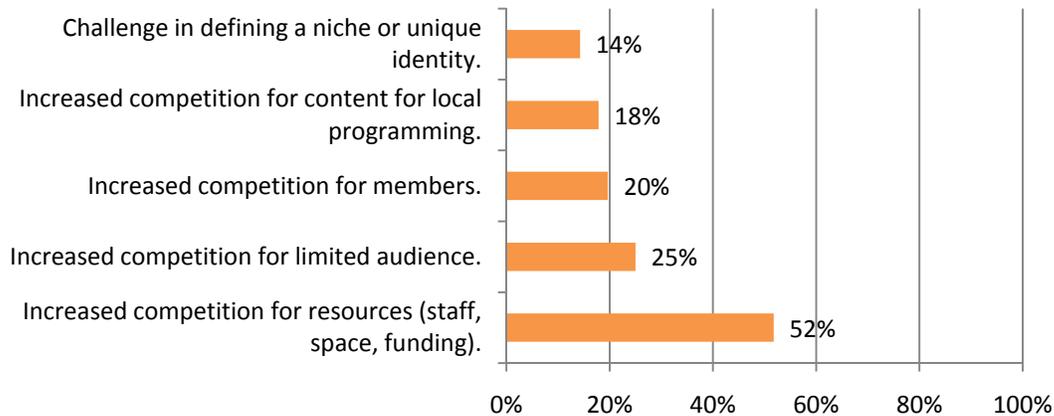
Source: Based on survey resonses of Artist-Run Centres

<u>Notions of the community served by ARCs differ somewhat according to different situations of single or multiple ARCs in a same city</u>

Where ARCs are the sole artist-run gallery in their community, they perceive their role as introducing audiences to contemporary art and engaging them. As such they engage widely with a range of organizations, including educational establishments, businesses and community organizations.

For ARCs that co-exist with other ARCs in the same city, there is a sense of serving the community in which they are based, and participating in the life of the neighbourhood, and seeking out relationships with other local establishments. One member of an ARC noted that, "by their very structure ARCs demand community involvement and engagement."[55]

3.2.6 Diversity of Organizational Models

We note the diversity of organizational models being employed by ARCs today. A number of these are evidence of the changing ecology and place of ARCs within it.

<u>Younger Artists Are Working Both Within and Outside of ARCs</u>

A number of commercial and public galleries observed that younger artists are working both inside and outside of ARCs.

Some note the ways in which younger artists prefer to design their own initiatives, developing alternative exhibition opportunities. For example, the public exhibition efforts of younger generations of artists are characterized as artist-initiated and spontaneous. It was noted by one commercial dealer that there is a new phenomenon of "garage galleries" in Calgary, where younger artists are exhibiting in their garages as there are only so many galleries to show in. These self-funded alternative spaces are adding to the mix of parallel galleries.

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[55] For example, ARCs rely on volunteers to deliver on their mandates.

Stakeholders noted the adaptability of ARCs and expressed confidence in their ability to adapt and to be revitalized by new generations of artists currently working outside ARCs but very much in the spirit of Artist-Run Culture – self-determined, based on emergent artistic practices, in collaboration with others, providing opportunities for emerging artists and curators, and in step with the social movements of their day.

While ARCs continue to create opportunities for artists and provide an essential service to young artists, there is room also for less institutional, experimental spaces.

Some Organizations Do Not Operate an Exhibition Facility

There is no doubt that there is a trend towards organizations eschewing the operation of their own exhibition facility.[56]

20% of ARCs surveyed for this report said they do not operate an exhibition facility. The proportion is higher for French-language ARCs (31%). In some cases ARCs without facilities of their own partner in order to produce their programming, others extend their programming through partnerships with satellite venues. One ARC without a facility is dedicated to performance art. Another is dedicated to present the work of South Asian artists.

Strategies to Attract New Funding

ARCs are also interested in new strategies to address funding challenges. Some are developing endowments with a view to owning their own buildings, perhaps with other ARCs.

Some ARCs spoke of the need to develop business models to support artists. In this regard, there is a perception, particularly on the part of professional associations, that ARCs could be doing more to develop the art market and that they should evolve to assume more responsibility to get works sold and accelerate the careers of artists so they can be less dependent on grants. The challenge as seen by professional associations is how to encourage ARCs to effectively conduct outreach for artists to place their work in private collections.

This discussion is also present in the literature in the visual arts sector. In a document published by the Regroupement des artistes en arts visuels (RAAV) in Quebec in 2008, the organization called for the Visual Arts to be supported as a cultural industry in order to address head-on the poor economic conditions faced by most artists.

It has been recognized that artists want to sell their work and that printmaking studios have a long history of facilitating artists' sales and sharing in revenues with artists to subsidize the printmaking studio's operations. At one Artist-Run Centre in Quebec, sales activities were described as adhoc, acting as representatives for artists when the market is not there.[57]

These strategies continue to be debated and at the present time, there is no evidence of a trend in this direction. It is interesting to note that the Pacific Association of Artist Run Centres (PAARC) has issued a Call for Topics "to deliberate, explore, and advance the common and mutual interests of international artist-run centres, collectives, and cultures in a multi-

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[56] Just over half of survey respondents (55%) said they operate a library or archives. In interviews with ARCs, many indicated the difficulty they have in accessing resources to digitize their archives to make them available online.

[57] *Report of the Canada Council for the Arts Meeting of Artist Run Centres Advisory Committee, 14-15 September,* 2009

day convention dedicated to the question: Is there a space for art outside of the market and of the state?"[58]

3.2.7. Level of Engagement by Culturally Diverse and Aboriginal Artists Differs by Language Market[59]

5 organizations reviewed for this report have an expressed mandate to serve Aboriginal communities and 3 serve other culturally diverse communities (Franco-Canadian, South Asian and culturally diverse artists in general, respectively). At the same time, 71% of English-language ARCs surveyed, and 22% of French-language ARCs said they support Aboriginal or culturally diverse artists.

The findings of the online survey suggest that overall, access by Aboriginal and culturally diverse artists is happening more often in English-language organizations. Those French-language organizations that are receiving funding through the Assistance to Artist-Run Centres Program of the Canada Council for the Arts have a higher participation rate by culturally diverse and Aboriginal artists than those that are not receiving this funding. (68% of French-language organizations funded in operations by the Canada Council program the work of Aboriginal artists and 90% of funded organizations program the work of culturally diverse artists.)

The disparity between funded and non-funded French-language organizations may be attributed in part to the greater emphasis placed by the Canada Council on cultural diversity in its programs, and the greater concentration of Aboriginal and culturally diverse artists in Montreal, where most funded ARCs are located, as compared to the regions in Quebec.

With respect to governance, 44 % of Artist-run Centres include culturally diverse representation in their governance. As can be seen in Figure 14, representation from culturally diverse and Aboriginal artists is higher in English-language organizations.

Figure 14: Representation in governance structures
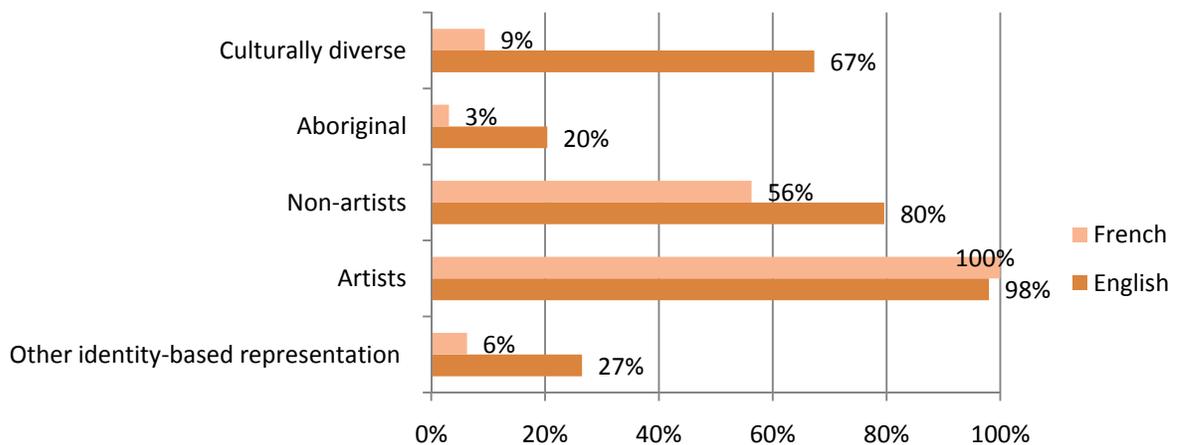
Source: Based on survey responses of Artist-Run Centres

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[58] http://www.arccc-cccaa.org/en/news_2009/call-for-topics-01112010

[59] The term "culturally diverse" was not defined in the survey of Artist-Run Centres and as a result, some figures may be more inclusive than others.

Both French and English-language organizations solicit the participation of Aboriginal and culturally diverse artists. 71% of English-language and 67 % of French-language ARCs solicit culturally diverse and Aboriginal members. However, greater representation is being achieved in English-language organizations. Amongst survey respondents, the proportion of Aboriginal members was four times higher for English-language organizations, while the proportion of culturally diverse members was three times higher.

This may in part be attributed to the different nature of identity politics in Quebec, which are, centred on language rather than ethnicity. In addition, the culturally diverse population of major centres is highest in Vancouver and Toronto, proportionally, as compared to Montreal.[60] (Other groups mentioned as having Board representation were women, linguistic minorities, queer, disabled, South Asian and students.)

84% of ARCs surveyed indicated they program the work of culturally diverse artists, with a higher proportion amongst English-language organizations (94% compared to 70% of French-language organizations). Similarly, 96% of English-language organizations said they program the work of Aboriginal artists compared to 50% of French-language organizations.

Figure 15 shows that over half of all respondents consider culturally diverse communities amongst their public, followed by 40% who consider their public to include Aboriginal communities. The proportion is once again higher in English-language ARCs spread across the country and in French-language ARCs funded through the Canada Council for their operations. (68% of French-language funded organizations said their primary audience included Aboriginal communities, and 81% said it included culturally diverse communities.)

Other audiences mentioned were students, other arts professionals, youth, online audiences, political activists and tourists.

Figure 15: Primary Audiences for Artist-Run Centres
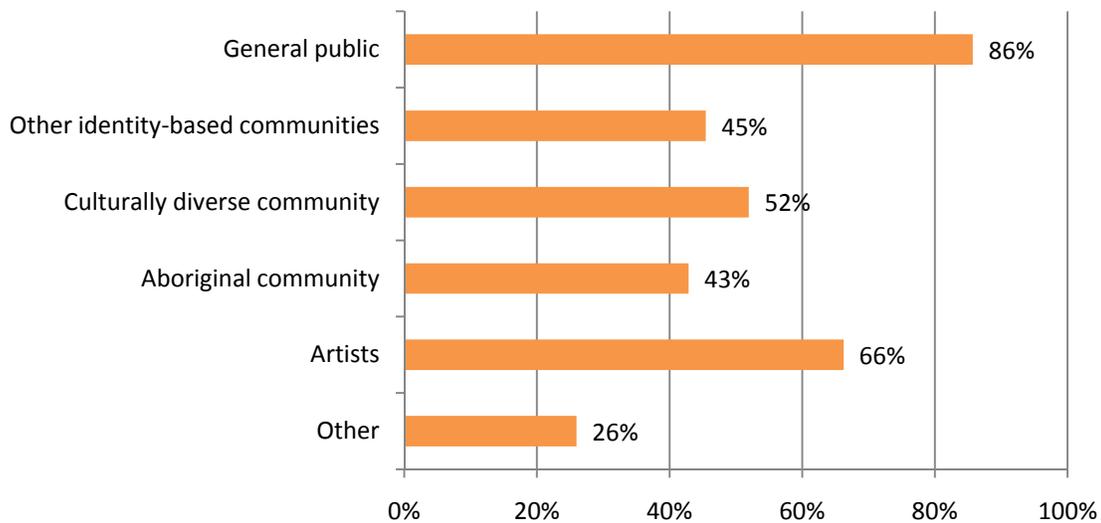
Source: Based on survey of Artist-Run Centres

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[60] Statistics Canada population data.

3.2.7 Trends in Access to Funding by ARCs

Many Artist-Run Centres Currently Access the Canada Council's *Assistance to Artist-Run Centres Program*

In the 2011-2014 operating cycle, there are 79 Artist-Run Centres funded by the Canada Council for the Arts through its *Assistance to Artist-Run Centres Program*. One third of funded organizations are located in Quebec, followed by one quarter, which are in Ontario. 11% of organizations are in British Columbia. The distribution of ARCs supported by the Canada Council is shown in Figure 16.

Figure 16: Number of ARCs funded through the Canada Council's Operating Assistance to Artist-Run Centres program, by province and territory

PROVINCE	NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS
Newfoundland and Labrador	2
Nova Scotia	3
New Brunswick	4
Quebec	26
Ontario	20
Manitoba	4
Saskatchewan	5
Alberta	5
British Columbia	9
Northwest Territories	1
Total	**79**

Older Organizations have Greater Access to Canada Council Funding

Amongst the ARCs surveyed for this report, 88% of English-language respondents (44 in all) indicated they are currently receiving assistance through the *Artist-Run Centre Program* of the Canada Council for the Arts, compared to 61% of French-language ARCs (20 in all).

With the exception of one English-language and two French- language organizations, ARCs accessing the Canada Council's *Assistance to Artist-Run Centres Program* have been in existence at least 10 years, with over 80% in existence for at least 20 years.

58% of survey respondents indicated having acessed a Flying Squad grant from the Canada Council, primarily for organizational research and planning (83%).

<u>ARCs Continue to Rely Heavily on Public Sector Revenues</u>

Artist-Run Centres applying to the Canada Council for funding rely heavily on public sector revenues. As shown in Figure 17, applicants rely on public sector revenues for about 75% of their budgets.

Figure 17: Breakdown of Revenues of ARCs in 2010 as Reported in CADAC Database

All Applicants

Total Earned Revenue 12%

Total Private Sector Revenue 12%

Total Public Sector Revenue 75%

Successful Applicants

Total Earned Revenue 9.6%

Total Private Sector Revenue 12.6%

Total Public Sector Revenue 77.4%
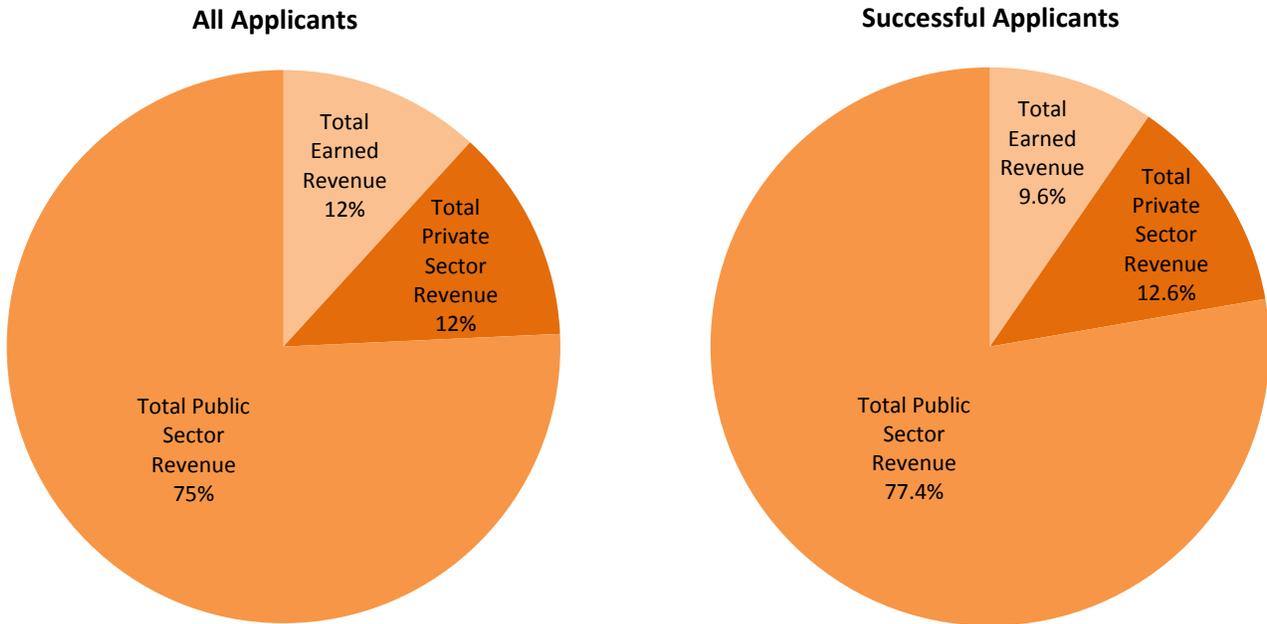
<u>Overall, ARCs Have Greatest Access to Provincial Funding</u>

As shown in Figure 18 on the following page, respondents to the survey indicated accessing $14,352,107 in funding in the past year. Overall, average funding obtained from public sources was highest for organizations in Quebec, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Nova Scotia organizations had the lowest average funding at $66,658 from all public sources.

The table in Annex 6 (provided at the end of this report) shows that overall, survey respondents reported having higher access to provincial funding, for both operating and project grants. Provincial operating grants totalled $4,719,517, compared to $4,238,380 for Canada Council operating grants. (Organizations in Newfoundland, Quebec, Manitoba and Alberta received more in provincial operating funding than from the Canada Council's operating grants.) Municipal grants totalled less than half these respective amounts, at $1,848,999. Project grants were highest at the provincial level, for a total of $1,465,347. (A breakdown of funding levels is provided in Annex 6: Supplementary Tables.)

The highest sources of funding were reportedly from other private and public sector funding, which included self-generated revenues, sales, private foundations and donations, education grants, internship support and employment grants and other public project grants.

Figure 18: Total Public Sector Revenues and Average Public Sector Revenues, by Province in 2010 (78 organizations reporting)

PROVINCE	NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS	TOTAL PUBLIC SECTOR REVENUES	AVERAGE PUBLIC SECTOR REVENUES
Newfoundland and Labrador	2	$184,214	$92,107
Nova Scotia	3	$199,974	$66,658
New Brunswick	4	$451,732	$112,933
Quebec	26	$5,904,451	$227,094
Ontario	20	$3,338,213	$166,911
Manitoba	3	$592,632	$197,544
Saskatchewan	5	$1,118,228	$223,646
Alberta	5	$862,986	$172,597
British Columbia	9	$1,554,870	$172,763
Northwest Territories	1	$144,807	$144,807
Total	**78**	**$14,352,107**	**$184,001**

Source: 2010-11 CADAC financial data based on 78 organizations funded in 2011 competitions (reconciled and unreconciled data as of March 2011)

There are regional factors to consider in the funding of ARCs. In particular, the low funding levels to ARCs in Atlantic Canada limits their ability to play a more significant role in the local ecology. Recent and drastic funding cuts to the arts in British Columbia are expected to impact severely on organizational capacity in that province. These cuts were both unprecedented and unique in Canada, and have left the province's cultural industry in crisis. [61]

The uneven access to funding was also noted in the Canada Council's recent Advisory Committee meeting notes, resulting in different mandates for ARCs in different locations.[62]

Lack of funding in Atlantic Canada was also tied to lack of development of ARCs. One view is that there is a role for ARCs in serving specific communities, and in this regard, it was noted that Atlantic Canada lacks an Aboriginal ARC. Similarly, there is no Acadian art institution in Halifax, and it is believed that an Acadian ARC would help advance the discourse and be good for artists and the communities.

Another regional consideration is the number of Aboriginal ARCs in western Canada. Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the Northwest Territories each have Aboriginal ARCs (Sâkèawêwak First Nations Artists Collective Inc., Tribe Centre for Evolving Aboriginal Media, Visual & Performing Arts Inc., Urban Shaman Inc., and Open Sky Creative Society).

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[61] Request for Research Proposal: Employment Standards in Canadian Artist-Run Organizations, Independent Media Arts Alliance, November 2010

[62] *Report of the Canada Council for the Arts Meeting of Artist Run Centres Advisory Committee, 14-15 September,* 2009

Artistic Expenses Make up Half of All Spending in ARCs

It is interesting to note the proportion of expenditures in ARCs overall. As the figure below illustrates, half of all spending in ARCs is related to artistic activities. (Figure 19).[63]

Figure 19: Total Expenses by ARCs in 2010 as reported to the CADAC database
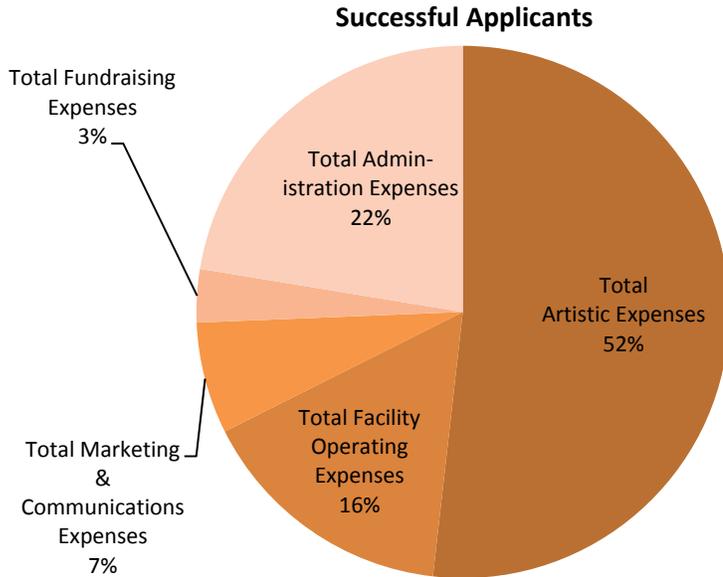
Successful Applicants

Total Fundraising Expenses 3%

Total Admin-istration Expenses 22%

Total Artistic Expenses 52%

Total Marketing & Communications Expenses 7%

Total Facility Operating Expenses 16%

Source: 2010-11 CADAC Financial Data based on 78 organizations (reconciled and unreconciled data as of March 2011)

4.

All Applicants

Total Fundraising Expenses 3%

Total Admin-istration Expenses 23%

Total Artistic Expenses 51%

Total Marketing & Communications Expenses 7%

Total Facility Operating Expenses 17%
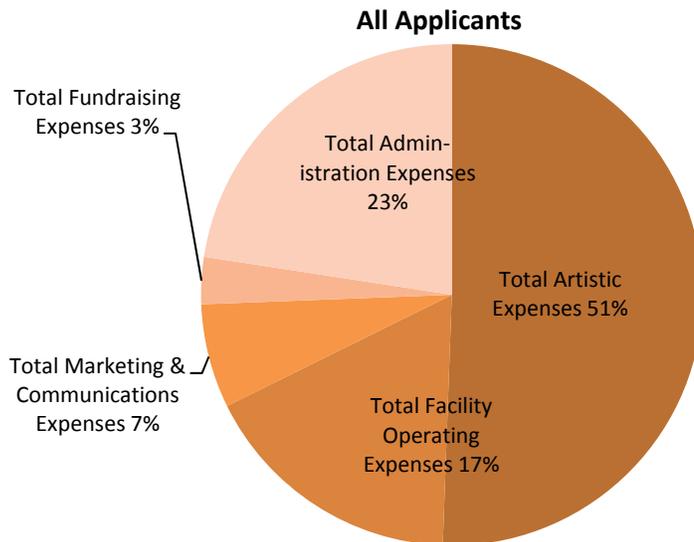
Source: 2010-11 CADAC Financial Data based on 103 organizations (reconciled and unreconciled data as of March 2011)

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[63] Insufficient data exists to establish whether the amount of spending on artistic activities indicates a trend.

Summary Observations

We note that ARCs understand their mandates in broad terms, as virtually all ARCs surveyed for this report consider their mandates to also encompass exhibiting and advancing the contemporary arts.

Our consultations show that ARCs share a number of common characteristics through which they define themselves and through which sector stakeholders consider they make a unique contribution to the visual arts ecology in Canada.

There is general consensus about the uniqueness and importance of the "artist-run" nature of ARCs, that is, organizations that allow artists the freedom to determine their own artistic development are seen as adding significantly to the development of the contemporary Visual Arts in the current ecology.

Stakeholders interviewed agree on the distinct contribution of ARCs in providing support for artistic experimentation and production, a role not generally played by other visual arts organizations. They are seen as supporting emergent artistic practices and as contributing to their critical understanding through activities such as publishing and public events like artists' talks and conferences.

ARCs are also seen to provide career development opportunities for emerging artists, curators and administrators, characterized by a freedom to develop their vision and extend their professional networks in a dynamic and highly collaborative environment nationally and to a certain extent, internationally.

The services provided by ARCs are similar in nature and are recognized by other stakeholders as unique to ARCs and of critical importance to the overall health and development of the visual arts. These have been grouped as 1) exhibition and dissemination; 2) support to artistic production; 3) providing opportunities for professional development and training; and 4) advancing critical discourse through learned gatherings and critical publications.

In large part these services are provided to members of ARCs, drawn from amongst artists, other arts professionals, students and the general public. The majority of ARCs also provide some services to non-members, notably access to training and exhibition facilities.

Most ARCs provide some opportunities to their members, primarily to participate in governance and management, as well as professional development. Less than a third of ARCs place some form of restriction on membership, primarily with respect to restricting access to artists and with respect to limiting access to production facilities to trained individuals.

ARCs have evolved into a national network of organizations offering a range of programming activities and attracting a significant audience. Audience development and increasing their visibility is a priority for ARCs and most engage in some form of audience development and youth engagement initiatives.

As the overall visual arts milieu in Canada evolves to greater professional capacity, there is no question that ARCs are evolving along with it. Almost half of all ARCs today employ curators or Artistic Directors to develop their programming, combined with open calls to select artists, which continues to be the dominant approach to programming employed by ARCs.

Overall, the visual arts environment is highly collaborative, driven primarily by the collaborative nature of ARCs, which engage in a high level of collaboration with other ARCs and to a

lesser extent with larger institutions in the visual arts ecology such as public galleries, museums and post-secondary institutions. For their part, public galleries would like to partner more with ARCs, and commercial dealers are open to the idea in the right context. However, both these groups said it would be easier to collaborate with ARCs with direct funding. ARCs continue to be involved in international dissemination and collaborative exchange, and some other stakeholders view this as an area of potential growth and development for ARCs.

The growing number of ARCs over the decades has resulted in three quarters of ARCs functioning alongside other ARCs in their city or town. Overall, having more than one ARC in the same city is seen as a benefit by ARCs, who note increased opportunities for collaboration, greater visibility and overall impact. The most common disadvantage perceived with respect to having multiple ARCs in one city is competition for limited resources.

In situations where ARCs are the only contemporary art establishment in their city or town, they play a larger role, catering to a wider audience and representing a greater number of artistic disciplines. In addition, ARCs in the regions are more likely to have general mandates to support the contemporary arts as well as to have a mandate to serve multiple disciplines. They are also less likely to be receiving support from the *Assistance to Artist Run Centres Program* of the Canada Council for the Arts.

We note the diversity of organizational models being employed by ARCs today. A number of these are evidence of the changing ecology and place of ARCs within it.

Organizational models in ARCs have evolved somewhat to include organizations that do not operate their own exhibition facility in favor of partnering with other organizations for maximum reach. Some ARCs are adopting new funding models such as operating a foundation through which to fund an endowment. While ARCs are highly accessible to emerging artists, we note that some younger artists are choosing to work both within and outside ARCs, in some cases preferring the spontaneity of their own initiatives to the more bureaucratic operation of ARCs.

Some stakeholders would like to see ARCs take on more of a role in promoting sales by visual artists in order to speed the development of artists' careers and diversify their sources of income.

It has been noted that Aboriginal artists in some parts of the country may today see themselves better served by public galleries or commercial dealers. The findings of the online survey suggest that overall, access by Aboriginal and culturally diverse artists is happening more often in English-language organizations and in French-language organizations that are receiving funding through the *Assistance to Artist-Run Centres Program of the Canada Council for the Arts.* It is considered critical to find more opportunities for the growing number of Aboriginal curators within visual arts organizations.[64]

ARCs continue to rely heavily on public sector revenues to support their activities, accessing the greatest proportion of resources from provincial sources. Increasing their financial resources is a top priority for ARCs. Organizations accessing the Canada Council for the Arts *Assistance to Artist-Run Centres Program* tend to be more established, having been in existence for longer periods of time.

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[64] The development efforts of the Aboriginal curatorial residency program of the CCA, and the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective founded in 2002 were noted in the *Report of the Canada Council for the Arts Meeting of Artist Run Centres Advisory Committee, 14-15 September,* 2009.

"The focus in Artist-Run Centres is the artist and the importance of artistic production, same as it was 40 years ago."

- Interview Findings

C. Concluding Observations and Future Considerations for the Canada Council

1. ARCs Play a Distinct Role in the Overall Visual Arts Ecology

Our review has shown that ARCs play a central role in the overall ecology, supporting the production and critical advancement of emergent artistic practices and contributing to the development of the careers of artists.

The analysis of the mandates of ARCs reveals seven different expressed orientations. At the same time, while ARCs may have some expressed differences, overall, they share a similar mandate to advance and exhibit contemporary art and are distinguished by a number of shared characteristics through which they make a unique contribution to the overall visual arts ecology in Canada.

These characteristics include a) <u>artistic self-determination</u> b) <u>support for the advancement of the contemporary arts through artistic experimentation and production</u> c) <u>provision of a range of similar services, which are recognized by other stakeholders as unique to ARCs and of critical importance to the overall health and development of the visual arts ecology</u> d) <u>membership structures that define access to services</u> and e) <u>support for career development of emerging artists, curators and administrators.</u>

Overall, ARCs are unique in the visual arts environment by providing professional opportunities for emerging and established artists to experiment and develop their creative expression, supported by access to production facilities, residencies and exhibition opportunities. They also provide a professional entrypoint for emerging artists and arts professionals, providing them with critical opportunities to develop their vision and their professional networks.

In large part, the services provided to members of ARCs are aimed at artists, other arts professionals, students and the general public. The majority of ARCs also provide some services to non-members, notably access to exhibition facilities and training.

2. The Evolution of ARCs is Towards Increased Visibility and Impact

ARCs today provide a diverse range of programming activities attracting significant audiences. Audience development and youth engagement are high priorities for ARCs, who seek to increase their visibility with the public.

Almost half of all ARCs surveyed said they employ curators or artistic directors to develop their programming. At the same time, ARCs maintain an openness and also program works through open calls to artists.

ARCs continue to be highly collaborative and their networks and partners now extend to larger organizations such as public galleries and post-secondary institutions working in the visual arts, as well as to international networks.

The proliferation of ARCs over the decades has resulted in the existence of more than one ARC in the same city for three quarters of ARCs working in the visual arts. Overall, this multiplication of organizations is seen as beneficial, as it provides additional opportunities to partner and increase the overall visibility and impact of ARCs.

The organizational model of ARCs is evolving to include more organizations that do not operate an exhibition facility, often working in collaboration with other organizations.

The level of engagement by emerging and established artists is almost equal, and a majority of ARCs overall are accessible to Aboriginal and culturally diverse artists and arts professionals. As noted above, participation levels by culturally diverse and Aboriginal artists and audiences differ by languages, with the lowest level of participation noted in French-language ARCs not currently supported by the Canada Council for the Arts' *Assistance to Artist-Run Centres Program*.

3. Strengthening the Role of the ARCs in the Visual Arts Ecology: Considerations for the Future

3.1 Resources Needed for Programming, Operational Needs and Growth in Regions

Increasing financial resources has been identified as a top priority for ARCs for the near future. The most pressing concern is to seek out additional funding to support the growth and sustainability of Artist-Run Centres. ARCs expressed the impact of lack of funding to simply keep pace with increases in operating costs, which are said to be impacting negatively on programming resources.

Some ARCs described how underresourced they were with respect to their staffing requirement. This view has recently been documented in a recent report comissioned by the Artist Run Centres Association[65] which found that there were low compensation levels in ARCs contributing to high staff turnover levels. At least three Artist-Run Centres interviewed for the report indicated their desire to attract additional resources in order to build staff capacity. Similarly, a study published by the Regroupement des artistes en arts visuels (RAAV) in 2008 noted the lack of funding available to ARCs to fully deliver on their mandate.[66]

ARCs are also facing funding challenges with respect to operating their facilities. Some note it is easier to find resources to renovate a space than to buy one, with the result that some ARCs are forced to relocate as rents go up. Still others are challenged in finding adequate resources for their facilities needs.

Lack of funding may be slowing the growth of ARCs in the regions. Thirty-one Artist-Run Centres examined for this study do not currently receive funding through the *Assistance to*

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[65] A recent study on compensation levels and working conditions in artist-run organizations conducted by the Artist Run Centres and Collectives Conference (ARCA)65 together with the Independent Media Arts Alliance (IMAA) uncovered a number of pressing issues with respect to the current employment realities for cultural workers in this sector. The study showed that, while there are regional differences, the average hourly wage was low and corresponds to approximately $500 per week or $26,000 per year for those working 30 hours per week, with a high rate of uncompensated overtime work. The study also revealed a high rate of staff turnover. Source: Employment Standards in Canadian Artist-Run Centres and Independent Media Arts Centres, Fall 2009, ARCA, IMAA, October 2010

[66] *Développer la filière des arts visuels: Pour une meilleure implication de l'État québecois dans l'industrie des arts visuels*, Regroupement des artistes en arts visuels du Québec, April 2008

Artist Run Centres Program of the Canada Council for the Arts, which represents almost 30% of all ARCs examined for this study. Of these, 75% are located outside the five major Canadian urban centres.[67] These ARCs seek additional resources to increase their capacity and visibility, which would allow them to recruit more members, invest in new equipment and exploit more opportunities to collaborate with other visual arts organizations.

The impact of the lack of funding available to ARCs in Atlantic Canada limited their ability to play a more significant role in the local ecology.

3.2 Access to Grants Needed to Support Publications, Greater Collaborations, Residencies and Professional Development

Some ARCs noted the difficulty of operating without access to project grants and the loss of access to grants to support critical publications and artists' travel. Some ARCs noted that it is more difficult to publish, including for online. Some expressed their challenge in digitizing their archives. One ARC noted that it is using its archives to create new opportunities and new work, but funding online archives is a significant challenge.

While networking and collaboration are highly valued by Artist-Run Centres, it may be easier to achieve in some locations than others. ARCs in the regions noted that it is expensive to bring in artists to some locations. Organizations participating in the Visual Arts Advisory Committee meeting in 2009 at the Canada Council noted challenges associated with the collaborations, such as lack of resources, high staff turnovers and loss of organizational memory.[68]

ARCs interviewed for this report described numerous initiatives they would undertake with access to additional funding, such as developing more residencies and more professional development opportunities, including mentorship programs.

ARCs are employing creative methods to increase their overall funding. Some ARCs are developing endowments with a view to owning their own buildings. Some are looking to develop new business models that would for example help artists to sell their work.

The overall challenge of increased funding for the ARCs remains at the heart of their future development and growth in the visual arts ecology.

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[67] Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal

[68] *Report of the Canada Council for the Arts Meeting of Artist Run Centres Advisory Committee, 14-15 September,* 2009

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Annex 2: Distribution of ARCs Across Canada and Distribution of Survey Respondents

Distribution of ARCs Across Canada

There are 110 Artist-run Centres operating in the visual arts ecology in Canada, 39% of which are located in Quebec, followed by 24% in Ontario and 10% in British Columbia. A breakdown of the location of these ARCs by province is shown in Figure 1, below.

Figure 1: Distribution of Artist-Run Centres Operating in the Visual Arts, by Province

Source: Canada Council for the Arts, based on 110 Artist-Run Centres
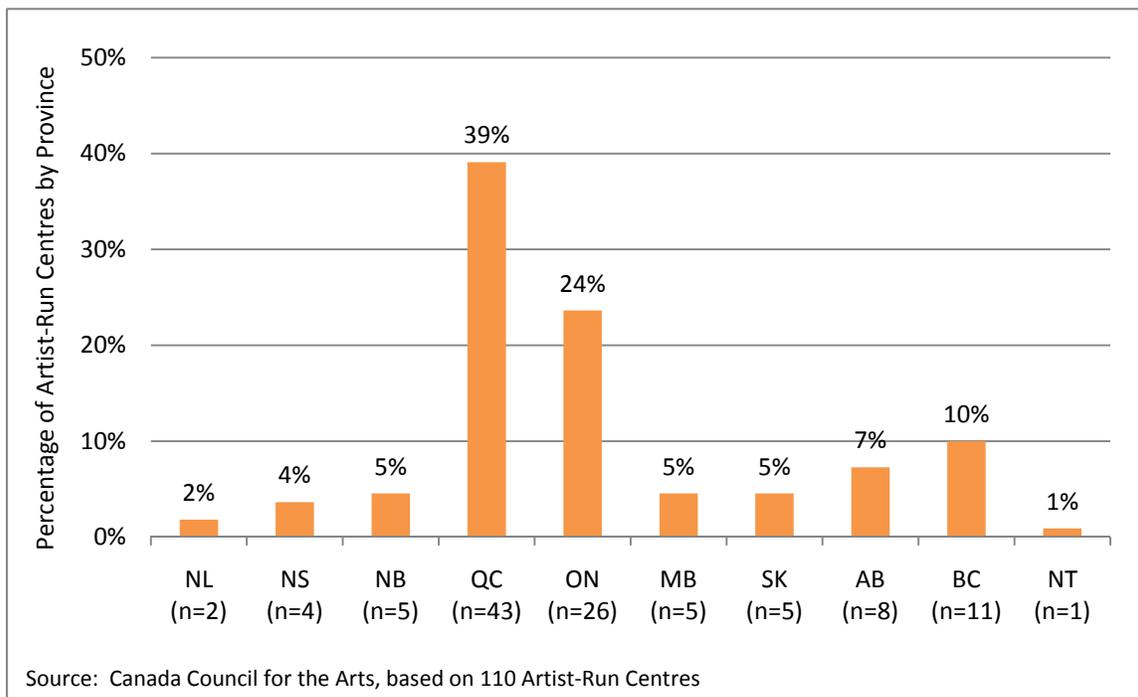
Distribution of Survey Respondents resembles distribution of ARCs overall.

Figure 2 shows the distribution of survey respondents by province, which resembles that of the artist-run centre population identified for inclusion in the study.

Figure 2: Distribution of survey respondents by province (proportion of responses)

Source: Based on survey responses of 82 Artist-Run Centres
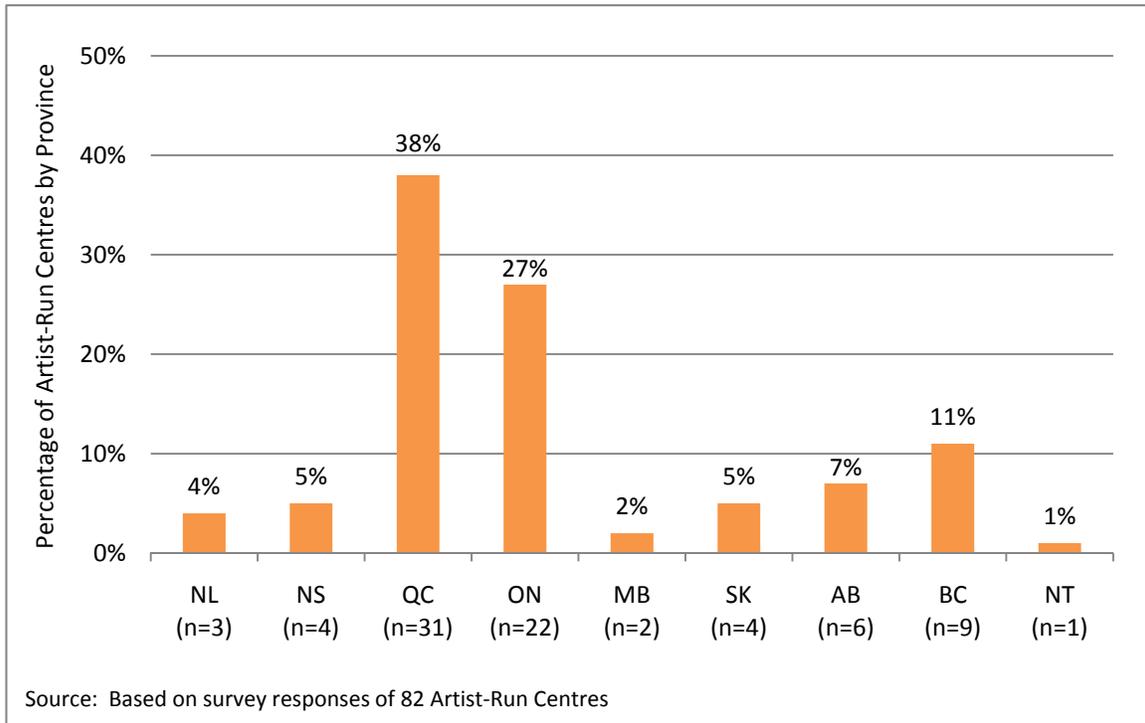
Annex 3: List of Interviewees

Glen Alteen, Programming Director, Grunt Gallery, Vancouver

Jason Baerg, Chair, Aboriginal Curatorial Collective, Toronto

Christian Bedard, General Director, RAAV: Regroupement des Arts Visuels du Québec, Montreal

Michael Blyth, Open Sky Creative Society, Fort Simpson

Jessica Bradley, Jessica Bradley Art + Projects, Toronto

April Britski, Executive Director, CARFAC, Ottawa

Michelle Bush, Eastern Edge, St. John's

Shauna Dempsey, Mentoring Artists for Women's Art, Winnipeg

Daniel Dion, General and Artistic Co-Director, and Claudine Hubert: General and Artistic Co-director, Oboro, Montreal

François Dion, Visual Arts Program Officer, Canada Council for the Arts

Marie Fraser, Artistic and Education Director, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

Sophie Gironnay, President, Maison de l'architecture du Québec, Montreal

Anthony Kiendl, Director, Plug In ICA, Winnipeg

Gulaine Langlois, General Director, and Louis Couturier, Artistic Coordinator, Centre d'artistes Vaste et Vague, Carleton-sur-mer

York Lethbridge, Director of Operations and Development and Sarah Robayo Sheridan, Director of Exhibitions and Publications, Mercer Union, Toronto

Jim Logan, Visual Arts Program Officer, Canada Council for the Arts

Helen Marzolf, Open Space, Victoria

Robin Metcalfe, Director/Curator, St. Mary's University Art Gallery, Halifax

Michael McCormack, Eye Level Gallery Society, Halifax

Srimoyee Mitra, Programming Coordindator; Haema Sivanesan, Executive Director, South Asian Visual Arts Collective, Toronto

Melanie O'Brian, Curator and Head of Programs, The Power Plant, Toronto

Daniel Roy, Director, ARCA: Artist Run Centres and Collectives Conference, Montreal

Kitty Scott, Director of Visual Arts, and curator, dOCUMENTA, Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff

Doug Sigurdson, Head of the Visual Arts Section, Canada Council for the Arts

Anna-Karolina Szul, Society of Northern Alberta Printmakers, Edmonton

Yves Trépanier, Trépanier-Baer, Calgary

François Vallée, La chambre blanche, Quebec City

Annex 4: List of ARCs Surveyed Online

(* Indicates funded through the Canada Council for the Arts' *Assistance to Artist-Run Centres Program*)

*3e Impérial, Centre d'essai en arts visuels	GRANBY	QC
*A Space Gallery	TORONTO	ON
*A.K.A. Gallery	SASKATOON	SK
*Ace Art Inc.	WINNIPEG	MB
*Action Art Actuel	SAINT-JEAN-SUR-RICHELIEU	QC
Admare, Centre d'artistes en art actuel	CALGARY	QC
Alberta Printmakers Society	CALGARY	AB
*Annapolis Regional Community Arts Council	ANNAPOLIS ROYAL	NS
*Art Metropole Inc.	TORONTO	ON
*Artcite Inc.	WINDSOR	ON
*Articule	MONTRÉAL	QC
Association Presse Papier Inc.	TROIS-RIVIERES	QC
Atelier Circulaire	MONTRÉAL	QC
*Atelier D'Estampe Imago Inc.	MONCTON	NB
*Atelier d'estampe Sagamie	ALMA	QC
Atelier Graff inc.	MONTRÉAL	QC
*AXENÉO7	GATINEAU	QC
*Centre d'art et de diffusion Clark	MONTRÉAL	QC
*Centre d'artistes Caravansérail	RIMOUSKI	QC
Centre d'artistes Espace Virtuel	CHICOUTIMI	QC
*Centre d'artistes Vaste et Vague	CARLETON-SUR-MER	QC
Centre d'artistes Voix Visuelle	OTTAWA	ON
Centre d'exposition Circa	MONTRÉAL	QC
Centre de l'image et de l'estampe de Mirabel	MIRABEL	QC
*Centre des artistes en arts visuels de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue	ROUYN-NORANDA	QC
*Centre des arts actuels Skol	MONTRÉAL	QC
*Centre Est-Nord-Est	SAINT-JEAN PORT JOLI	QC
Centre MATERIA	QUEBEC	QC
*Dare-Dare, centre de diffusion d'art multidisciplinaire de Montréal	MONTRÉAL	QC
*Dazibao, centre de photographie actuelles	MONTRÉAL	QC
*Definitely Superior Art Gallery of Thunder Bay	THUNDER BAY	ON
Diagonale, Centre des arts et des fibres du Québec	MONTRÉAL	QC
*Eastern Edge Gallery Inc.	ST. JOHN'S	NL
*Engramme	QUÉBEC	QC
Espace F	MATANE	QC
*Eye Level Gallery Society	HALIFAX	NS
*Fado Performance Inc.	TORONTO	ON
*Forest City Gallery	LONDON	ON
*Galerie 101 Gallery	OTTAWA	ON
*Galerie B-312	MONTRÉAL	QC
*Galerie du Nouvel-Ontario, Centre d'artistes	SUDBURY	ON
*Galerie Sans Nom Co-op Ltée	MONCTON	NB
*Galerie SAW Gallery	OTTAWA	ON
Galerie Verticale	LAVAL	QC
*Gallery 44, Centre for Contemporary Photography	TORONTO	ON

List of ARCs surveyed online (continued)

*Gallery Connexion	FREDERICTON	NB
Gallery Gachet Society	VANCOUVER	BC
*Gallery TPW	TORONTO	ON
Groupement des arts visuels de Victoriaville	VICTORIAVILLE	QC
*Grunt Gallery	VANCOUVER	BC
Hamilton Artists Inc.	HAMILTON	ON
*Helen Pitt Gallery	VANCOUVER	BC
*Khyber Arts Society	HALIFAX	NS
*L'Oeil de Poisson	QUÉBEC	QC
*La Centrale/Galerie Powerhouse	MONTRÉAL	QC
*La Chambre Blanche Inc.	QUÉBEC	QC
*La Galerie Séquence Inc.	CHICOUTIMI	QC
*Langage Plus	ALMA	QC
*Latitude 53 Contemporary Visual Culture	EDMONTON	AB
*Le Lieu, Centre en art actuel - Les Editions Intervention Inc.	QUÉBEC	QC
Le LOBE	CHICOUTIMI	QC
La Manivelle, atelier d'estampe	POINTE-DE-L'EGLISE	NS
*Maison de l'architecture du Québec-Monopoli	MONTRÉAL	QC
Maison des cultures amérindiennes	ST-HILAIRE	QC
*Malaspina Printmakers' Society	VANCOUVER	BC
*Manitoba Printmakers' Association	WINNIPEG	MB
*Mentoring Artists for Women's Art	WINNIPEG	MB
*Mercer Union A Centre for Contemporary Art	TORONTO	ON
Ministry of Casual Living Association	VICTORIA	BC
*Modern Fuel Artist-Run Centre	KINGSTON	ON
*Neutral Ground Inc.	REGINA	SK
*Niagara Artists' Company	ST CATHARINES	ON
*Oboro	MONTRÉAL	QC
Occurrence espace d'art et d'essai contemporains	MONTRÉAL	QC
*Okanagan Artists Alternative Association	KELOWNA	BC
*Open Sky Creative Society	FORT SIMPSON	NT
*Open Space Arts Society	VICTORIA	BC
*Open Studio	TORONTO	ON
*Optica	MONTRÉAL	QC
*Or Gallery	VANCOUVER	BC
*Paved Arts + New Media	SASKATOON	SK
*Peterborough Artists Inc.	PETERBOROUGH	ON
Platform: Centre for Photographic & Digital Arts	WINNIPEG	MB
Praxis Art Actuel	STE-THERESE-DE-BLAINVILLE	QC
Propeller Centre for Visual Arts	TORONTO	ON
*Sâkêwêwak First Nations Artists' Collective Inc.	REGINA	SK
*Second Story Art Society	CALGARY	AB
*Society of Northern Alberta Print Artists	EDMONTON	AB
*South Asian Visual Arts Collective	TORONTO	ON
Sporobole Centre en art actuel	SHERBROOKE	QC
*St. Michael's Artists & Printmakers Association	ST. JOHN'S	NL
*Stride Art Gallery Association	CALGARY	AB
*Struts Gallery Inc.	SACKVILLE	NB

List of ARCs surveyed online (continued)

IThe I.E. Artspeak Gallery Society	VANCOUVER	BC
*The New Gallery	CALGARY	AB
The Print Studio	HAMILTON	ON
Third Space Gallery	SAINT JOHN	NB
*Toronto Free Gallery	TORONTO	ON
Trap/door Artist-Run Centre	LETHBRIDGE	AB
*Tribe, A Centre for Evolving Aboriginal Media, Visual & Performing Arts Inc	SASKATOON	SK
*Urban Shaman Inc.	WINNIPEG	MB
*Vancouver Access Artist Run Centre	VANCOUVER	BC
*Vox, centre de l'image contemporaine	MONTRÉAL	QC
*Vu, centre de diffusion et de production de la photographie	QUÉBEC	QC
WECAN Society	EDMONTON	AB
*Western Front Society	VANCOUVER	BC
Whippersnapper Gallery Inc.	TORONTO	ON
White Water Gallery	NORTH BAY	ON
*Women's Art Resource Centre	TORONTO	ON
*YYZ Artists' Outlet	TORONTO	ON

Annex 5: Summary Analysis of Responses to Online Survey

Response rate

A total of 110 organizations were invited to respond to the survey, representing established and emerging organizations in all regions of the country, in both official languages, and including Aboriginal and culturally diverse organizations.

A total of 85 organizations completed the survey, for a total response rate of 77%. These included 51 English-language organizations, representing 61% of all respondents, and 33 French-language organizations, representing 39% of all respondents.

Profile of Respondents

Profile of English-language Respondents

The majority (44%) of English-language respondents are based in Ontario, followed by 18% in British Columbia, 12% in Alberta and 6% in Newfoundland.

22% of respondents said they are based in Toronto, followed by 16% in Vancouver, and 8% in Calgary. The remaining English-language ARCs are spread across 18 Canadian cities.

English-language respondents to the survey tended to be at least 10 to 20 years old. A total of 40 ARCs (80%) said they had been in existence more than twenty years. None said they were less than five years old.

Profile of French-language Respondents

97% of French-language respondents are based in Quebec. 3% are based in Nova Scotia.

41% of French-language respondents are based in Montreal. The percentage of French-language respondents in other Canadian cities was between 3% and 6%.

A slightly higher proportion of younger organizations responded to the French-language survey. In all, 5 organizations (8%) indicated they were less than 10 years old. 82% were at least 10 years old, and of these, 77% were at least 20 years old.

Summary Analysis of Responses

Access to Canada Council Funding

88% of English-language respondents (44 in all) indicated they are currently receiving assistance through the Artist-Run Centre Program of the Canada Council for the Arts, compared to 61% of French-language ARCs (20 in all).

With the exception of one English-language and two French- language organizations, ARCs accessing the Canada Council's Artist-Run Centre program have been in existence at least 10 years, with over 80% in existence for at least 20 years.

Of the eighteen organizations not currently accessing the program, all but one said they intended to do so in the next three years.

58% of respondents indicated having acessed a Flying Squad grant from the Canada Council, primarily for organizational research and planning (83%).

Organization Mandates

When asked about their activities, all but two organizations said they serve primarily the Visual Arts. In addition, 54% of organizations said they serve Performance art, followed by 21% who said they served Print-making. When asked about other disciplines, 35% of organizations indicated that they also serve the Media Arts. 5 organizations (6%) indicated publishing and experimental music/audio art, respectively. 4 organizations indicated literature, including writing and spoken word.

90% or more of ARCs have a mandate to present exhibitions, advance the contemporary arts and support artistic experimentation.

80% or more of ARCs have a mandate to support emerging artistic practices, critical engagement and emerging artists.

The proportion of respondents with a mandate to support Aboriginal or culturally diverse artists is higher amongst English-language respondents (71%), compared to 22% and 19%, respectively, for French-language respondents.

Artist run centres reported a broad range of mandates. Among the other mandates cited were critical writing, publishing, education, international dissemination and engagement, training and advocacy.

To fulfil their mandates, 80% of organizations said they operate an exhibition facility. The proportion was higher in English (86%), compared to 69% in French. The most common facilities indicated were exhibition space (97% of respondents) and an office (88%). 55% of respondents also said they operate a library or archives.

Structure and Governance

All but one responding organization (99%) has artist representation on their Board of Directors. 70% also have non-artists, and 44% have culturally diverse representation. (67% in English and 10% in French.) The most often mentioned other form of representation was gender balance or women (9%).

99% of organizations (all but one) have membership structures. 94% of responding organizations said their memberships included established and emerging artists. 69% said they have culturally diverse members and 56% said their members are also Aboriginal. The proportion of Aboriginal members was four times higher for English-language organizations, while the proportion of culturally diverse members was three times higher.

56% identified others amongst their memberships, including non-artists, students, academics, writers, critics, curators, international artists, architects, patrons, art collectors, hobbyists and members of the general public.

81% of ARCs said they actively solicit memberships from established and emerging artists. About two thirds (71% and 67%, respectively) solicit culturally diverse and Aboriginal members. 41% of organizations also indicated they solicit members from amongst other groups, including students, non-artists, members of the general public, intellectuals, patrons, firms and corporations, youth and other cultural workers (critics, curators, donors, academics, etc).

72% of respondents do not place restrictions on their memberships. The proportion who do place restrictions is higher in French-language ARCs (41%) compared to 19% in English-language ARCs.

Among the restrictions placed by 19% of respondents who have them, are that members must be active in the arts community, members must complete training and volunteer their time, or they must have previous experience to use facilities.

75% of organizations provide exclusive services to members. The most ofted cited exclusive service was participation in the organization's governance or other decision-making (84%), followed by opportunities for professional development (74%).

(41%) indicated other exclusive services, such as opportunities to propose programming, technical orientations to facilities, access to equipment and discounts.

87% said they provide services to non-members in the community at large. Most often, these include professional development (76%) and access to exhibition facilities (60%).

Programming

97% of responding organizations said their programming involves exhibitions and public artists' talks. This was followed by publication (83%) and artistic production (78%).

About two thirds of organizations, 75% to 66%, respectively, said their programming involves workshops, residencies, regional or national dissemination and collaborative exchanges.

About half of all respondents (55% to 47%, respectively) said their programming includes conferences, roundtables, international dissemination, training, festivals and the circulation of exhibitions.

Access to Exhibition Opportunities

Programming is undertaken via an open call for 96% of respondents. In addition, artists' work can be selected for exhibition by a curator for 47% of respondents, though the proportion is higher in English-language organizations (62% compared to 23% in French-language organizations).

It is interesting to note that 40% of organizations also indicated that exhibitions can be selected by an Artistic Director. The proportion was again higher in English (45%) than in French (33%).

Among other means of artists' access to exhibition opportunities were by invitation and as a benefit of membership.

97% of respondents said they program the work of emerging artists. 84% program the work of culturally diverse artists, with a higher proportion amongst English-language organizations (94% compared to 70%). 96% of English-language organizations program the work of Aboriginal artists compared to 50% of French-language organizations.

Reach

While all English-language ARCs identified the general public (100%) and other artists (97%) as their primary audience, French-language ARCs were more specific about their publics. 63% of French-language organizations consider their public to be general, and only 17% identified it as other artists. Among the publics identified for French-language organizations were professional and amateur art lovers, historians, critics, cultural workers, culturally diverse communities, art students, tourists, families and youth.

83% of English language organizations identified culturally diverse communities as amongst their audience, while 70% also identified Aboriginal communities.

84% of organizations believe their reach to be local, regional and national, while 65% believe it to be international. 49% of ARCs believe their primary audience is local, compared to 34% who consider it to be regional. Only 17% consider their primary audience to be national or international.

99% of respondents said they use a website, and 94% said they use Facebook and other social media platforms to promote or disseminate their activities. 77% publish electronic newsletters, and only 32% publish a blog.

Audience Development/Engagement Activities

94% of organizations said they engaged in audience development or public engagement activities in the past five years. All respondents said their purpose was to develop new audiences, while 74% also sought to strengthen ties with existing audiences. 26% of respondents indicated other reasons, including to better identify their audience, and to promote contemporary art.

For the most part (96% of respondents), organizations sought to extend their reach through a collaboration or partnership with another organization, followed by 89% wh0 sought to develop their audience through their choice of programming. 86% said they developed a greater online presence.

The majority of activities were targeted locally (89%), compared to 71% that were aimed regionally, and 50% that were aimed nationally. 44% of initiatives were aimed at international audiences.

Collaboration and Partnerships

94% of respondents indicated that they had collaborated or partnered with another artist-run centre in the past five years.

In addition, 68% said they had collaborated or partnered with a public gallery and 62% said so in relation to a university or college gallery. 58% collaborated with another college or university department while 36% said they worked with a museum. The proportion of organizations collaborating with public galleries, and university and college galleries or other departments was up to 25% higher in English-language organizations.

Other collaborators included libraries, community centres, provincial artist-run centre organization, major festivals, art publisher, commercial dealers, symposia, local charities, unions, social justice agencies, professional association of designers, community, health and volunteer organizations, Maisons de la culture and schools.

The majority of collaborations were to co-produce an exhibition (84% of respondents), followed by 72% who said they collaborated to co-produce a professional development opportunity. 60% hosted a professional development event such as a conference or round-table initiated by the partner organization.

Over 90% of respondents collaborated in order to gain access to a wider public and increased visibility. Over 80% of respondents said it enabled them to access more resources and to knowledge share.

Less than half of respondents indicated any disadvantages with collaborations. The most oft-mentioned disadvantage was having less control over scheduling (42%). 22% of respondents also indicated a lack of fit between organizations.

Multiple Artist-Run Centres in the Same City or Town

75% of respondents said there was more than one ARC in their city or town. For most of these (84%) of respondents, having more than one ARC provides opportunities to partner and collaborate together. 82% see the positive effect of increasing their overall visibility and impact. 71% said they benefited from increased visibility by inhabiting the same neighbourhood as other ARCs as well as opportunities to partner to gain greater access to resources.

The most often mentioned disadvantage was increased competition for resources (staff, space and funding) (52% of respondents).

Future Priorities

All respondent organizations identified increasing their financial resources as a priority for the future on which the organization is acting. 84% identified increaseing their visibility to the community at large as a priority. 76% said increasing the audience for the organization. The need to increase their membership was twice as high for English-language respondents (71%) compared to French-language respondents (35%).

The Distinct Role of Artist-Run Centres

95% of respondent organizations agreed that the role of artist-run centres is distinct from that of other organizations in the visual arts ecology. Primarily, this involves their focus on emergent artist practices and their independent development of the contemporary Visual Arts (91% of respondents, respectively).

In addition, a majority of ARCs indicated that their focus on research and experimentation (89%), absence of commercial intention (87%) as well as their provision of production opportunities for artists (83%) sets them apart from other types of organizations in the visual arts ecology.

Among other elements that make them distinct was their artist-led governance, and recognition that they support public galleries and museums by providing artists with opportunities for professional development, advancing contemporary discourse on the arts and putting artists at the centre of their focus.

Sources of Funding

Respondents indicated accessing $11,257,068 in funding in the past year.

Respondents have higher access to provincial funding, for both operating and project grants. Provincial operating grants totalled $3,637,128, compared to $3,203,821 for Canada Council operating grants. Municipal grants totalled about half these respective amounts, at $1,535,370. Project grants were highest at the provincial level, for a total of $694,411.

93% of respondents have access to provincial operating grants, followed by 78% who have access to municipal and Canada Council operating grants, respectively. The highest access to project grants was also at the provincial level (49%), compared to 34% of organizations who said they accessed a municipal or Canada Council project grant, respectively.

The average amount of funding was highest for organizations in Manitoba, at $244,650, followed by Saskatchewan at $202,750 and the Northwest Territories, at $197,644.

Annex 6: Supplementary Table: Analysis of Access to Funding

Figure 1: Breakdown of Public Sector Revenues, by Province in 2010 (78 organizations reporting)

Province	Canada Council Operating Grants	%	Canada Council Project and Other Grants	%	Department of Canadian Heritage and other Federal Grants	%	Provincial Operating Grants	%	Provincial Project and Other Grants	%	Municipal Operating Grants	%	Municipal Project and Other Grants	%	Other public sector grants including in-kind contributions	%	Total Public Sector Revenues
NL	58,500	32%	-	0%	29,844	16%	61,687	33%	13,620	7%	10,000	5%	1,099	1%	9,464	5%	184,214
NS	101,000	51%	3,200	2%	13,237	7%	54,000	27%	17,793	9%	-	0%	10,744	5%	-	0%	199,974
NB	190,500	42%	93,858	21%	36,100	8%	72,550	16%	28,966	6%	5,798	1%	2,500	1%	21,460	5%	451,732
QC	1,399,100	24%	197,671	3%	96,139	2%	2,766,791	47%	582,558	10%	457,777	8%	282,834	5%	121,581	2%	5,904,451
ON	1,174,351	35%	192,626	6%	103,326	3%	735,909	22%	251,442	8%	819,426	25%	39,742	1%	21,391	1%	3,338,213
MB	146,250	25%	6,550	1%	4,900	1%	229,000	39%	55,532	9%	102,200	17%	46,700	8%	1,500	0%	592,632
SK	382,710	34%	182,957	16%	42,361	4%	372,072	33%	82,975	7%	29,673	3%	25,480	2%	-	0%	1,118,228
AB	194,500	23%	89,450	10%	31,067	4%	266,644	31%	86,741	10%	187,084	22%	7,500	1%	-	0%	862,986
BC	571,388	37%	91,740	6%	85,924	6%	160,864	10%	271,232	17%	237,041	15%	131,408	8%	5,273	0%	1,554,870
NT	20,081	14%	23,638	16%	25,000	17%	-	0%	74,488	51%	-	0%	-	0%	1,600	1%	144,807
TOTAL	**4,238,380**	**30%**	**881,690**	**6%**	**467,898**	**3%**	**4,719,517**	**33%**	**1,465,347**	**10%**	**1,848,999**	**13%**	**548,007**	**4%**	**182,269**	**1%**	**14,352,107**