

# Diversity in 25 Canadian Arts Organizations

Pilot project for the Canada Council for the Arts



## Report Summary

November 2019



Canada Council  
for the Arts

Conseil des arts  
du Canada



**FORUM**  
RESEARCH



[www.hillstrategies.com](http://www.hillstrategies.com)

**Cover image:**

Opera de Montreal

*Champion*, 2019

Aubrey Allicock as Young Emile Griffith (front) and Arthur Woodley as Emile Griffith (back)

Photo: Yves Renaud

**This report is also available in French on our website:**

<https://conseildesarts.ca/recherche/repertoire-des-recherches/2020/02/collecte-de-donnees-demographiques>

The images used in the report and on the website were voluntarily collected from the 25 organizations that participated in the pilot project. The Canada Council received permission from each organization to use the images.



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## Appendices / Resources

Available on the Canada Council's website:

<https://canadacouncil.ca/research/research-library/2020/02/collecting-demographic-data>

Pilot project survey tool questionnaire (PDF)

List of 25 pilot group organizations (PDF)

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Segal Centre for Performing Arts

*Prom Queen: the Musical*, 2016

Photo: Andrée Lanthier

## Development

This report is the culmination of several years of preparation toward developing a demographics tool that will provide arts organizations with a snapshot of the diversity represented by their staff and board members. This project aligns with the Canada Council's commitment to promoting equity, diversity and inclusion by assisting arts organizations with being proactive in reflecting the diversity of their communities.

The Canada Council commissioned [Forum Research](#) and [Hill Strategies Research](#) to undertake the pilot stage of this project, which included developing a voluntary online survey to collect demographic data from staff and board members at the 25 organizations that agreed to participate.

The pilot stage of this project supports multiple objectives:

- To engage the arts community in developing a tool that will support their efforts to build diversity in their workforces.
- To provide participating organizations with data on their own workforces which they can analyze within their specific contexts (e.g. region, language, field of practice) in order to determine what they may wish to address over time.
- To increase the Canada Council's understanding of how to collect workforce demographic data.
- To increase the Canada Council's understanding of the demographic makeup, at an aggregate level, of the organizations it funds.

The Council is exploring the following three dimensions of diversity and inclusion:

- Representation: who are the artistic staff, administrators and Board members?
- Programming: whose stories are being told?
- Participation: who has access? Who is the public?

This project focuses on the first dimension – a demographic portrait of the workforce (both staff and Board) within organizations.

## Methodology

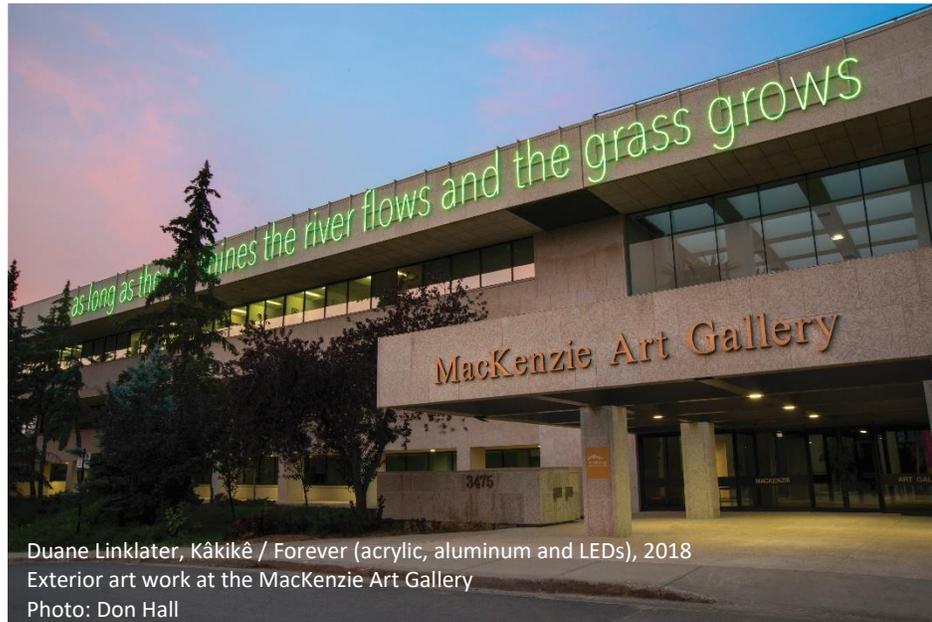
Every effort was made to design an inclusive and accessible survey. To ensure that the pilot survey respectfully collected demographic information, Forum Research and Hill Strategies Research conducted a literature review that produced many options for inclusive approaches to collecting demographic data on identity and workplace experiences. The review examined surveys that collected demographic data within the arts, human resources, universities, and health care, covering academic articles and non-academic work from Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia.

A key finding of the literature review was that all questions in the pilot survey should allow respondents to self-identify, in two senses: 1) asking individual staff about their identities, rather than asking organizations to respond on their behalf; and 2) ensuring that the respondents were provided a wide range of options to choose from when answering the survey questions. Given the complexity of individuals' identity profiles, many of the demographic questions in the survey allowed respondents to choose more than one answer.

While the research team attempted to use the most inclusive language possible, the terminology associated with identity is quickly evolving. To be consistent with other surveying bodies, some

questions have been phrased using terminology from Statistics Canada, for example. Feedback on the draft survey was provided by a consultation committee comprised of members of the arts community.<sup>1</sup>

In some cases, more than one answer option is applicable to a respondent. Multiple mention questions allow respondents to select more than one answer category for a question. For questions that ask for multiple mentions (e.g., “Please select the language(s) you speak and understand. Please select all that apply.”), it is important to note that the percentages typically add to over 100%.



Duane Linklater, Kâkikê / Forever (acrylic, aluminum and LEDs), 2018  
Exterior art work at the MacKenzie Art Gallery  
Photo: Don Hall

The information in the survey, collected on behalf of the Canada Council, was subject to the obligations of the [Privacy Act](#), [Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act](#) (“PIPEDA”), Alberta’s [Personal Information Protection Act](#) (PIPA) and Quebec’s [Act Respecting the Protection of Personal Information in the Private Sector](#). The Canada Council received legal advice throughout the survey process.

With 1,080 respondents, the survey had a response rate of 37%. In the report, the term “respondents” refers to the analysis of all survey respondents, including both staff and board members. Separate analyses of “staff” (or “staff members”, 81% of all respondents) and “board members” (19% of all respondents) are noted as such. There were 134 respondents who chose not to disclose their role (either staff or board member). Of the 946 respondents who did, 768 were identified as staff members and 178 identified as board members. For analysis purposes, the 134 non-disclosing respondents were grouped as staff members as they would have responded to the same set of questions.

The survey is limited in its scope, in that only staff and board members at a select group of 25 organizations were invited to participate. The survey asked “Do you currently work for an arts organization or serve as a board member in an arts organization?” and stated “You should respond “yes” if you are, a permanent, contract or seasonal worker working full or part-time, or a board member. You should respond “no” if you are commissioned or engaged for a single performance or show, or if you volunteer in a role other than as a Board member.” As a result, the findings should not be taken to reflect the situation of all arts organization staff and board members. In addition, because

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<sup>1</sup> The members of this consultation committee were Amir Ali Alibhai, Thérèse Boutin, Kate Cornell, Jan Derbyshire, Howard Jang, Zab Maboungou, Lori Marchand, Moira McCaffrey, and Christopher Wilkinson. The Canada Council and research team thank them for their valuable input.

respondents self-selected whether to participate, there is uncertainty as to whether the respondents provide a representative sample of all staff and board members in the 25 organizations.

## Process

The recruitment process sought to ensure that a range of organizations were represented in the pilot group, which is evidenced by the range of fields of practice (five), provinces (eight), and languages (five Francophone and 20 Anglophone organizations).

Within each organization, a volunteer “champion” was recruited to distribute the survey among staff and board members at the organization. The research team provided the 25 champions with an online survey link that was then distributed to all staff (with a company email address) and board members.

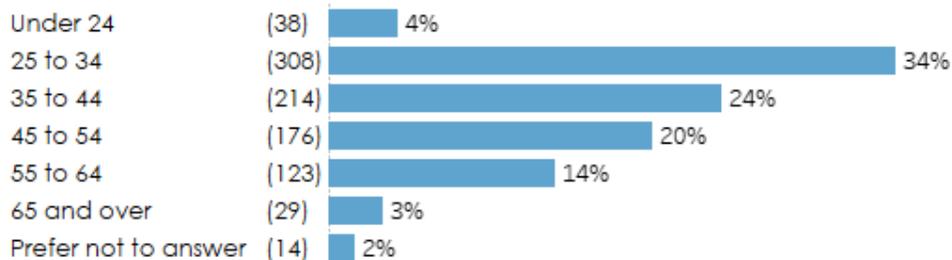
The 25 champions and survey respondents themselves were instructed that the survey should be completed by board members as well as permanent, contract or seasonal workers working either full-time or part-time for their organization in the following areas: administration, artistic and technical. The survey was not sent to individuals that were commissioned or engaged for a single performance or show, or volunteers in a role other than as a Board member.



## Profile of respondents / Who responded to the survey

### Staff members

- Staff members work in organizations from eight provinces and various fields of practice.
- Responding staff members represent a range of ages:



There are notable differences in the age distributions of the staff members in this survey and of cultural workers surveyed in the 2016 Canadian Census. The 2016 Census indicates that there were fewer cultural workers in Canada 34 years of age and under (10% between ages 15 to 24 and 27% between 25

to 34), similar proportions between 35 to 44 (23%), 45 to 54 (20%), and 55 to 64 (15%), and higher proportions of those 65 years of age and over (5%) than those reported on in this pilot survey.<sup>2</sup>

Staff members work for organizations based in eight provinces:

- 7 organizations in Quebec
- 5 in Ontario
- 3 each in British Columbia, Alberta, and Manitoba
- 2 in Nova Scotia
- 1 each in Saskatchewan and Newfoundland and Labrador

### Board Members

Board members also responded to the survey and provided a variety of demographic information including job tenure, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, languages spoken, cultural diversity, and citizenship.

## Findings

### Employment:

- The largest proportion of staff members work as administrative staff (50%) followed by those that work in an artistic/creative role (26%), technical/production role (19%), and “Other role” (15%)
- 25% (194) of staff members identify as senior managers
- 33% of respondents were from Visual Arts organizations, followed by Theatre (23%), Music and Sound (23%) and Dance and Multidisciplinary Activities (20%)
- The largest proportion of staff members earned between \$40,000 and \$79,999 at their organization in 2018 (47%). According to the 2016 Census, cultural workers earn an average individual income of \$48,833<sup>3</sup>

### Demographic:

- Women account for 66% of staff, men 31%, and trans and gender-variant individuals 3% (compared with cultural workers in Canada 51% are women and 49% are men)
- 23% of staff members identify as LGBTQ+
- Staff represent a range of ages, with the largest segment aged 25 to 34 (34%), followed by those aged 35-44 (24%) and those aged 45-54 (20%)
- Staff members at the 25 pilot organizations are highly educated: 70% have completed at least a bachelor’s degree (compared with 43% of all cultural workers in Canada)
- 81% of staff members identify as white. Many other responses were also received (e.g., Chinese, Black, South Asian, Latin American/Hispanic, etc.)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The source of data for all cultural workers in this summary is [A Statistical Profile of Artists in Canada in 2016 \(With Summary Information about Cultural Workers\)](#), Hill Strategies Research, November 2019. For detailed definition of culture workers please consult the report methodology.

<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that staff were asked the annual income in their role at their organization before taxes in 2018, not their total income.

<sup>4</sup> The question asked “Do you identify with any of the following group(s)? Please select all that apply.” The list to select from was based on Statistics Canada census questions and appeared in the same order. The selections were: White, Indigenous (Status and Non-Status First Nations, Inuit, Métis), South Asian (e.g. East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan), Chinese, Black (e.g., Caribbean, African descent), Filipino, Latin American/Hispanic, Arab, Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai), West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan), Korean, Japanese.

- 17% of staff members identify as culturally diverse and 3% identify as Indigenous. The Indigenous population in Canada’s labour force matches the survey (3%)<sup>5</sup>
- 8% of staff members identify as a person with a disability but who is not Deaf and 2% of staff members identify as someone who is Deaf but does not have a disability (compared with the 2017 employed labour force aged 25 to 64 in Canada, 15.6% of the have a disability and 3.6% of Canadians aged 25 to 64 report a disability related to hearing)<sup>6</sup>
- 76% of staff members learned English as their first official language, while 20% learned French as their first official language, and 4% learned both (compared to the 2016 Census, 75% of Canadians learned English as their first official language, while 22% learned French first and 1% learned both)<sup>7</sup>

Cross-Analysis with Gender:

- A higher proportion of senior managers are men (31%) compared to women (23%), however there are more women (115) in senior management roles than men (76).
- Collectively, the trans and gender-variant staff members reported a lower average income than their women counterparts, who in turn reported a lower average income than their men counterparts.
- More staff members who identify as women are highly educated than those who identify as men or trans and gender-variant.



Sector Experience:

The survey closed with three broader questions related to respondents’ perceptions of equity within the Canadian arts sector and their own organization.

- The majority of staff members indicate that they perceive the Canadian arts sector to be equitable, inclusive, and reflective of society (62%).

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<sup>5</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0365-01, [Labour force characteristics by region and detailed Aboriginal group](#).

<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 13-10-0377-01, [Labour force status of persons with and without disabilities aged 25 to 64 years, by age group and sex, Canada, provinces and territories](#) and [A demographic, employment and income profile of Canadians with disabilities aged 15 years and over, 2017](#), November 28, 2018.

Please note that this is not a perfect comparison, but the closest data available.

<sup>7</sup> Statistics Canada. [2016 Census of Population](#), Catalogue no. 98-400-X2016348.

A complex question asked respondents: “Regarding equity and diversity, how important do you think the following are to the capacity of [your organization] in meeting its mandate and goals?” While a majority of staff members believe that each of six dimensions identified in the survey are important to the capacity of their organizations, the results vary by dimension:

- Inclusion of culturally diverse people: 73% indicate that it is somewhat or very important.
- Reconciliation with Indigenous people: 70% say somewhat or very important.
- Gender diversity and sexual identity: 64% indicate somewhat or very important.
- Inclusion of linguistic diversity: 51% say somewhat or very important.

Board member key findings:

- 85% (152) of board members identify as white, 7% (12) as Asian, and 4% (8) identify with another ethnicity.
- The majority of board members are between 55 and 64 (38%) or 65 years of age and over (20%).
- 54% (96) of board members identify as women, and 46% (81) identify as men. None of the board members surveyed identify as trans or gender-variant.
- The largest group of responding board members reported total annual incomes of \$200,000 or more in 2018 (45%).