Impact of the Research and Creation and Concept to Realization Components 2024-25
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Summary

Summary

Introduction

The Research and Creation and Concept to Realization components of the Explore and Create Program fund Canadian artists, artistic groups, and organizations committed to the creation and dissemination of innovative, vibrant, and diverse art. This analysis focuses on how funds were used, the nature of and inspiration for projects, the projects' contribution to artistic development and practice, and dissemination methods.

Methodology

A sample of 905 cases from the 1,734 successful grant applications was carefully drawn.

Nature of Artistic Work and Sources of Inspiration

Our analysis suggests that these components are being used by many to fund the production of new works (74%).

Artists have many sources of inspiration for their works, but most frequently, artists are inspired to create based on their own lived experiences.

Summary

Expected Contributions to Artistic Practice and Communities

Artists shared how the grant would help with their artistic practice in a variety of ways. A majority of artists (70%) spoke about how this grant would allow them to work in a new medium or blend art forms for the first time. Artists also shared how the funding would allow them to expand their professional networks (48%) and undertake a larger, more ambitious work (38%).

Artists spoke about how their project will encourage experimentation and innovation, including the integration of technology or the blending of traditional art forms with more modern artistic practices and styles. Our analysis shows that another way in which artists will be contributing to artistic practice and benefiting communities is by enhancing accessibility and promoting inclusion within the arts, making the arts available to wider, more diverse audiences.

Dissemination

Recipients outlined plans to showcase their work through a variety of activities, such as live performances, art exhibits, screenings and online video releases, and various launch events.

Objectives & Methodology

Objectives and Methodology

The Research and Creation and Concept to Realization Components of the Explore and Create program fund Canadian artists, artistic groups, and organizations committed to the creation and dissemination of innovative, vibrant, and diverse art.

The Research and Creation component focuses on the initial stage, whereas Concept to Realization offers support for all stages of an artistic project. Composite grants were not included in the analysis.

In 2024, the Council awarded 1,734 grants to artists, arts groups, and organizations through these components with a total investment of over $52 million to projects from coast to coast and in all fields of practice.

The analysis presented in this report is aimed at helping the Council understand how the funds were used, including the nature of and inspiration for projects, the projects' contribution to artistic development and practice, and project timing and method of dissemination.

Objectives and Methodology

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A sample of 905 cases from the 1,734 successful grant applications from 2024-25 was carefully drawn. The sampling plan (described below) replicates the sampling methodology used in 2022 and was developed in consultation with Canada Council staff.

The full database of 1,734 cases was initially assessed using the following four variables: type of recipient, field of practice, region and strategic group. The number of cases for each category within these variables was determined.

Categories with fewer than 30 cases were retained in their entirety in the final sampled database to avoid reducing their size further. This applied to cases from Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, Yukon, and the Northwest Territories.

From the remaining cases, approximately half (905) were randomly sampled using stratification based on the four key variables.

Objectives and Methodology

The results are based on analyses of information contained in 905 grant application forms. Specifically, the responses to the following grant application questions were analyzed:

1. What art form(s), style(s), genre(s) and/or expression(s) are most relevant to this application? (approximately 25 words, 150 characters)

2. Describe your project. Explain the inspiration for your project or why you wish to undertake it at this time. (approximately 750 words, 5,000 characters)

3. How will this project contribute to your, or your group's, artistic development and advance artistic practice? (approximately 500 words, 3,500 characters)

4. Provide a one-sentence summary of your project. If possible, use the format ACTIVITY, EVENT (if relevant) and DATES. (approximately 25 words, 150 characters)

Objectives and Methodology

The analysis consisted of the following 3-step process:

1. The coding scheme from the analysis conducted for the program in 2021 and 2022 was reviewed and refined based on the results of initial coding of the sampled applications for 2024.

2. Minor adjustments were made to the coding scheme in consultation with Canada Council staff.

3. Once the codes were finalized and coding resumed, each response was assigned one or more categories/codes. Multiple codes could be used to analyse responses to grant application questions, except for part of Q5 (online vs. in-person dissemination).

The recipient profiling information contained in the applications (i.e., program component, recipient type and field of practice, strategic group) was linked to the analyzed responses to allow crosstabulations.
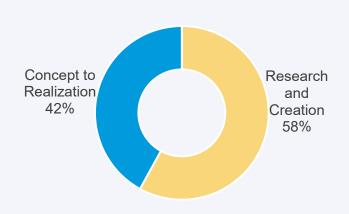
Note: In a few instances, grant recipients did not provide relevant responses to some of the questions or parts of questions. The results presented in this report are based on an analysis of relevant responses only.
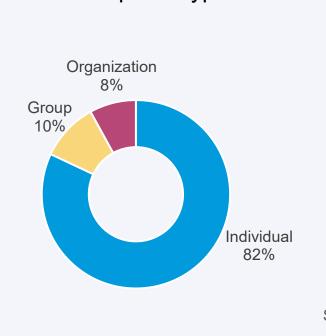
Results

Respondent Profile (based on sample)

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Component Type

Research and Creation 58%

Concept to Realization 42%

Recipient Type

Organization 8%

Group 10%

Individual 82%

Region

Quebec	33%
Ontario	28%
British Columbia	15%
Atlantic Canada	10%
Alberta	7%
Saskatchewan and Manitoba	5%
Outside of Canada	3%

n = 905   margin of error ±1%
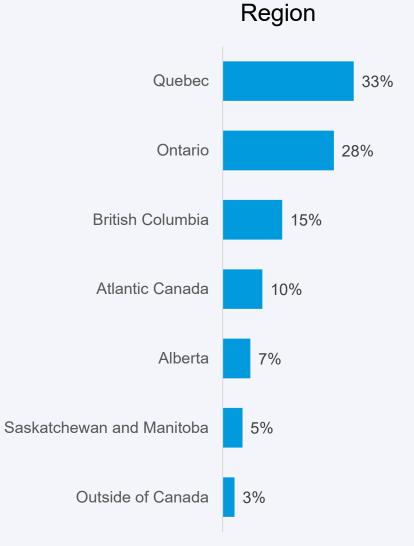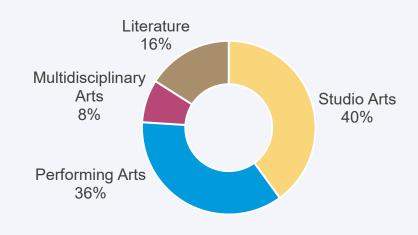
Respondent Profile (based on sample)

Field of Practice

- Literature 16%
- Multidisciplinary Arts 8%
- Performing Arts 36%
- Studio Arts 40%
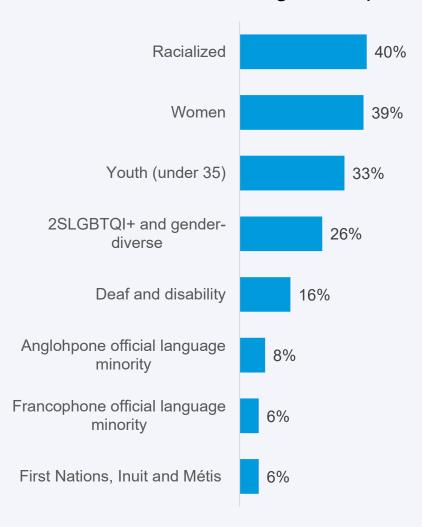
Circus Arts Dance Music and sound Theatre	Performing Arts
Media Arts Visual Arts	Studio Arts
Inter-Arts Multidisciplinary activities Deaf and disability Arts Indigenous Arts Digital Arts	Multidisciplinary Arts

Strategic Group

Racialized	40%
Women	39%
Youth (under 35)	33%
2SLGBTQI+ and gender-diverse	26%
Deaf and disability	16%
Anglohpone official language minority	8%
Francophone official language minority	6%
First Nations, Inuit and Métis	6%

n = 905   margin of error ±1%

Average Grant (based on sample)

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By Component

Overall	Research and Creation	Concept to Realization
$ 29,465	$ 21,224	$ 41,059

By Recipient Type

Individual	Group	Organization
$ 28,220	$ 34,171	$ 36,752

Art forms, Styles, Genres and/or Expressions

What art form(s), style(s), genre(s) and/or expression(s) are most relevant to this application?

Rather than coding the responses to this question individually, a word cloud was generated to provide an indication of the most common themes.

"Film", "music", "installations" and "theatre" emerge as the most common art forms. Other words such as "experimental" and "contemporary" appear as the dominant art styles/genres.

Art forms, Styles, Genres and/or Expressions: Word Cloud

What art form(s), style(s), genre(s) and/or expression(s) are most relevant to this application? (approximately 25 words, 150 characters)   n = 1,734

Project Description and Inspiration

Describe your project. Explain the inspiration for your project or why you wish to undertake it at this time.

For analyses, this question was divided into two parts:

1. Project description
2. Project inspiration

Project Description and Inspiration: Findings
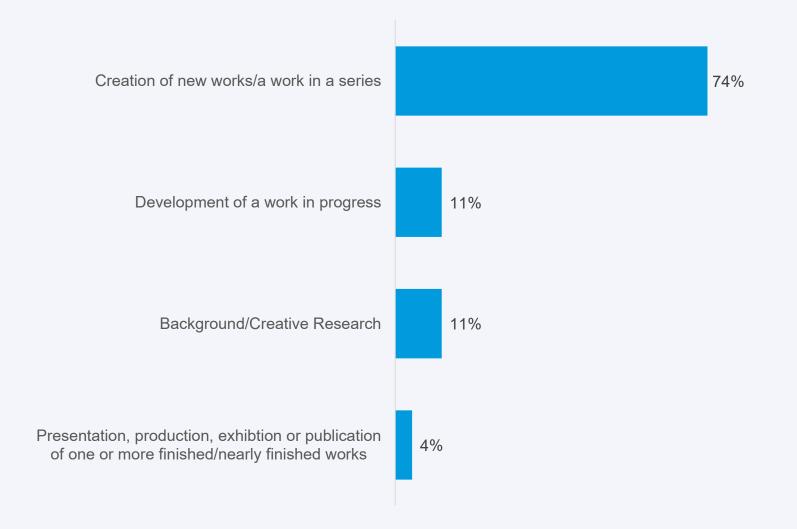
The analysis shows that three quarters (74%) of sampled grants were to be used to **create a new work or add to an existing series**.

Artists were inspired by a wide range of sources. Artists were primarily inspired to create work based on their personal lived experiences (29%). Other sources of inspirations were:

- Creating art from their perspective as part of a racialized community and encouraging cultural diversity (21%)
- Pushing boundaries and artistic growth (20%)
- Artists finding inspiration from other artists (20%).

Project Description and Inspiration: Project Description Results

Creation of new works/a work in a series — 74%

Development of a work in progress — 11%

Background/Creative Research — 11%

Presentation, production, exhibtion or publication of one or more finished/nearly finished works — 4%

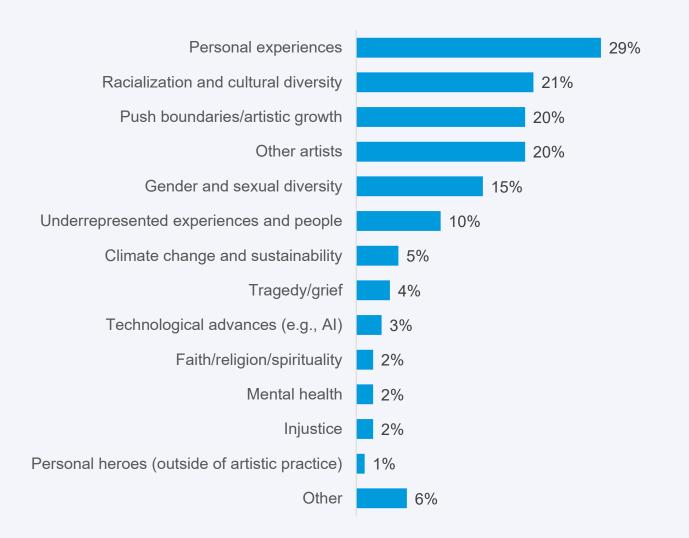**Subgroup Analysis**

- Groups are most likely to be presenting a nearly finished work (10%) while organizations are most likely to be developing a work in progress (21%).

- Those in studio arts are most likely to be conducting background research (15%).

Describe your project. Explain the inspiration for your project or why you wish to undertake it at this time. n = 905

Project Description and Inspiration: Project Inspiration Results

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Category	Percentage
Personal experiences	29%
Racialization and cultural diversity	21%
Push boundaries/artistic growth	20%
Other artists	20%
Gender and sexual diversity	15%
Underrepresented experiences and people	10%
Climate change and sustainability	5%
Tragedy/grief	4%
Technological advances (e.g., AI)	3%
Faith/religion/spirituality	2%
Mental health	2%
Injustice	2%
Personal heroes (outside of artistic practice)	1%
Other	6%

"The inspiration comes from my own internal struggles, through the lenses of someone with Autism and Major depression."
-David Porter

"Utilizing my background as a drag performer, I want to create an experimental video where I will be performing in drag from the point of view of someone in the future born from a forest fire, grown up outside the binary and alongside a collapsing climate."
-Séamus Gallagher

Describe your project. Explain the inspiration for your project or why you wish to undertake it at this time. n = 905
Recipients' responses may apply to more than one category.

Project Description and Inspiration: Project Inspiration Results

Subgroup Analysis

- Individuals are most likely to be inspired by their personal experiences (33%), whereas groups and organizations are more often inspired by other artists (31% and 33% respectively).
- Those in literature are most likely to be inspired by their personal experiences (44%). Those in the performing arts are more often inspired by other artists (34%), while multidisciplinary artists are more frequently inspired by underrepresented experiences and people (27%).
- Artists from different regions of Canada had different inspirations:
  - Artists in British Columbia often reported being inspired by racialization and cultural diversity and under-represented experiences and people (33%).
  - Those in Ontario often reported they were inspired by their personal experiences (38%).
  - Artists in Quebec often reported they were inspired to push boundaries or grow artistically (28%).
- Those from First Nations, Inuit and Métis and racialized communities are most likely to be inspired by racialization and cultural diversity (53% and 40% respectively).
- Those from 2SLGBTQI+ and gender-diverse communities and youth were most likely to be inspired by gender and sexual diversity (30% and 20% respectively).
- Those from Deaf and Disability communities are often inspired by underrepresented experiences and people (21%).
- Those from Anglophone official language minority communities are most likely to be inspired by mental health (7%).

Describe your project. Explain the inspiration for your project or why you wish to undertake it at this time. n = 905
Recipients' responses may apply to more than one category.

Artistic Development and Practice

How will this project:

- contribute to your, or your group's, artistic development
- advance artistic practice?

For analyses, this question was divided into two parts:

1. How will this project: contribute to your, or your group's, artistic development.

For the analysis, "artistic development" was defined as: The artistic development of the artists/Specific to the project /Related to the skills and knowledge of the recipient for the project and for themselves.

2. How will this project: advance artistic practice?

For the analysis, "artistic practice" was defined as: Benefitting the wider community/artistic field of practice (e.g., by bringing something new to practice, pushing boundaries, benefiting other artists).

Artistic Development and Practice:
Artistic Development Findings

Artists shared how the grant would help with their artistic practice in a variety of ways, explaining how this funding would allow them to grow as artists. A majority of artists (70%) spoke about how this grant would allow them to work in a new medium or blend artforms for the first time.

Half of the sampled grant recipients (48%) spoke about how the grant allowed them to expand their professional networks and (38%) reported that they would be undertaking a larger, more ambitious work.

A quarter of artists (24%) shared that this grant provides them with opportunities to learn from their peers while another quarter (24%) explain how, with the grant, they will be able to expand to new market segments (24%).

Artistic Development and Practice:
Artistic Development Results

Work in a different medium, blend artforms for the first time or incorporate a new form(s) — 70%

Expand professional network or engage in collaborations specific to the project — 48%

Development of a larger, more ambitious work — 38%

Learn from peers/mentors — 24%

Opportunity to reach new market segments — 24%

Acquire/improve other technological abilities (outside of digitization) — 12%

(For groups) Professionalizing/solidifying a group — 6%

New online audiences — 4%

Acquire/improve skills for digitization of artistic content — 3%

Financial support to carry out a project — 3%

Complete an unfinished work — 3%

(For organizations) Maintenance or expansion of programs — 2%

Plans to ensure the discoverability of digital content — 2%

Digitize their art/make their work available online — 1%

Other — 5%

"I want to share my vision and voice with the Indigenous and broader arts community in a new way, to stimulate dialogue across the Indigenous/non-Indigenous divide."
-Deantha Edmunds

"This project will help contribute to my artistic development by allowing me time to create a body of work that is more experimental."
-Maura Meng

How will this project contribute to your, or your group's artistic practice? n = 899
Recipients' responses may apply to more than one category.

Artistic Development and Practice:
Artistic Development Results

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Subgroup Analysis

- Groups and organizations are most likely to report expanding their professional networks (69% and 77% respectively)
- Those in performing arts are most likely to report expanding their professional networks (64%), reaching new market segments (33%), solidifying their group/organization (11%), or expanding a program (4%).
- Those in multidisciplinary arts are most likely to report improving their skills for the digitization of their artistic content (10%).
- Artists in Quebec are most likely to report expanding their professional network (58%), and using the opportunity to reach new market segments (35%).

How will this project contribute to your, or your group's artistic practice? n = 899
Recipients' responses may apply to more than one category.

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Artistic Development and Practice: Artistic Practice Key Findings

At the application stage, 119 recipients (13%) articulated how their projects could advance the broader artistic practice, benefiting the field in general and/or other artists.

Recipients reporting advancing artistic practices often mentioned experimentation. This often involves the innovative integration of technology or the blending of traditional and more modern, contemporary artistic practices and styles.

Another approach to advancing artistic practice involves making art more accessible to wider, more diverse audiences and sharing acquired knowledge with the broader community or fellow artists.

Artists mentioned advancing artistic practice by expanding professional networks and increasing engagement in artistic collaborations, ultimately benefiting the whole artistic community.

Artistic Development and Practice: Examples of Artistic Practice

"Introducing Kanai Nation traditional art and culture to audiences through elements they are more familiar with… will contribute to improve our mutual understanding and deliver long-term impact for our society."
-Reuben And The Bullhorn Singers

"By taking artistic risks, exploring traditional practices in new ways, and utilizing innovative technology, we aim to create a pioneering work that advances artistic practice and enriches the contemporary music landscape."
-Felipe Tellez

"Our work models how blending technology, games, and performance culture might create new opportunities for social engagement, and how translation… can ensure contemporary performance… is available everywhere and for everyone."
-Milton Lim and Patrick Blenkarn

"I am dedicated to the field of dance where we can expand the idea of what dance is or can be… and the way we get to make new worlds as we meet each other and audiences in studios and theatres on many scales of encounter."
-Thea Patterson

Project Summary

Provide a one-sentence summary of your project. If possible, use the format ACTIVITY, EVENT (if relevant) and DATES

For analyses, this question was divided into three parts:

1. Expected period of activity
2. Activity
3. Dissemination method
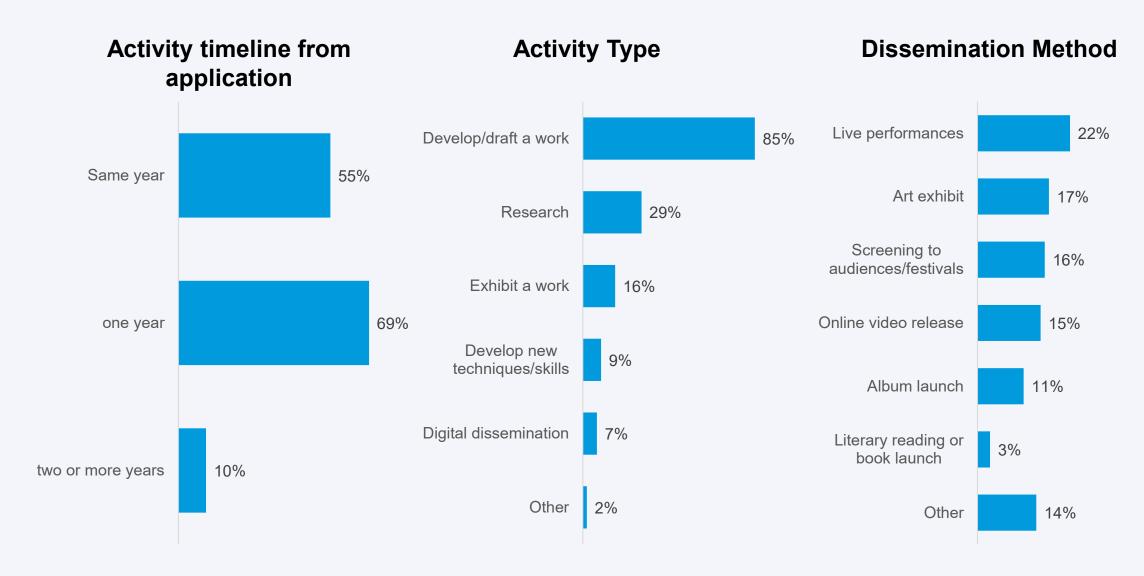
Project Summary: Findings

While not all artists provided a timeline, those who did indicated that their projects will be undertaken within the same year (55%) or in the following year after submitting their grant application (69%).

Almost all artists are using the funding to develop a work of art (85%), and (29%) will be conducting research, which includes researching a new technique or the subject of their work (e.g., a historical figure or time period).

Where applicable, artists described a variety of ways in which their work would be shared with their audiences. Some common methods of dissemination include live performances (22%), art exhibits (17%), screenings (16%) and online video releases (15%).

Project Summary: Results

Activity timeline from application

Same year	55%
one year	69%
two or more years	10%

Activity Type

Develop/draft a work	85%
Research	29%
Exhibit a work	16%
Develop new techniques/skills	9%
Digital dissemination	7%
Other	2%

Dissemination Method

Live performances	22%
Art exhibit	17%
Screening to audiences/festivals	16%
Online video release	15%
Album launch	11%
Literary reading or book launch	3%
Other	14%

Provide a one sentence summary of your project. n = 663-901
Recipients' responses may apply to more than one category.

Project Summary: Results

Subgroup Analysis

Activity
- Individuals are most likely to be doing research (32%).
- Those in studio arts are most likely to develop research (34%), exhibit a work (22%), develop a new technique or skill (13%) and undertake digital dissemination (12%).

Dissemination Method
- Groups and organizations are most likely to be hosting live performances (43% and 71% respectively).
- Individuals are most likely to release a video online (17%) or plan an album launch (24%).
- Youth are most likely to screen to audiences or at festivals (22%).

Provide a one sentence summary of your project. n = 663-901
Recipients' responses may apply to more than one category.

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Conclusions

Conclusions

The analysis of these applications illustrates that these components of the Explore and Create program are a significant catalyst for artists' artistic advancement, mainly through innovation. Overall, artists articulate a clear intent to push creative boundaries, exploring new mediums and undertaking on more ambitious works. This analysis suggests that artists are effectively leveraging this funding to hone their skills, investigate novel processes, and embrace creative risks, precisely as the program was designed to encourage.

These components have a far-reaching impact across the artistic community, benefiting diverse communities throughout Canada. Drawing from their lived experiences and distinct cultural heritages, artists possess powerful stories that the program's funding enables them to share. In this vital role, the program not only fosters the emergence of new artistic voices but also expands the reach of the arts by connecting with broader and more diverse audiences.

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