



Toronto Arts Council Visioning Document 2010-2013

Funding Priorities Reaffirmed by Board of Directors

December 2012



TORONTO ARTS COUNCIL VISIONING DOCUMENT 2010–2013

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Introduction and Vision

The arts in Toronto are the expression of our City.

The arts in Toronto cover a broad spectrum of activity from community based programs through professional arts production to major commercial enterprises. TAC values and appreciates the importance of every facet of this spectrum and recognizes the strength the community derives from the whole. TAC invests time to reinforce public understanding of the relationship between our varied artistic experiences, from listening to an indie band on an ipod to practicing for a piano recital to attending a new music concert. TAC invests dollars to support the professional artists and organizations whose well being is pivotal to the success of the entire spectrum.

Toronto Arts Council sees a growing demand from young artists of diverse backgrounds striving to have their voices heard and embraced in a multicultural city. We hear the demands of residents wanting a beautiful city filled with art that is accessible and affordable. We work with mature organizations with the resources to offer city wide programs. We support skilled artists with the passion and desire to connect to Torontonians of every age, in every neighbourhood. We understand the exciting potential of linking local and emerging talent to larger platforms and international exposure. We seed developing talent; we support well established artists and we nurture the links between the two.

The arts offer the best tools we have to connect and communicate with one another and to forge bonds between our neighbourhoods and communities. The arts facilitate self-expression and meaningful social interactions. By celebrating each other's stories and creating a welcoming

environment for newcomers the arts contribute to a city which both celebrates cultural diversity and engenders social cohesion.

As home to Canada's largest population of artists, Toronto has a unique opportunity to define itself through creativity and to broadcast its experiences to the world. As Toronto has grown and diversified, so too has the Toronto Arts Council. In recent years the TAC has broadened its reach and impact across the City, consulting with the arts community and civic leaders and building partnerships with Cultural Services and other City Departments, community organizations and Beautifulcity.ca. TAC has supported artists and arts organizations working in every neighbourhood, launched its highly successful Neighbourhood Arts Network and acted as a catalyst for social and economic development. TAC reflects, through its arts investment, the city's diversity as a leading multicultural centre.

TAC's vision is to connect every Toronto neighbourhood with the transformational power of arts activity. This work has already begun with the expansion of TAC's granting and outreach programs and in partnership with the Toronto Arts Foundation. In 2010, with the prospect of increased funding, TAC was ideally positioned to meet the pent-up demand for increased arts activities across the city and to progress towards this overarching vision.

Supporting the city's artists and arts organizations through an established and effective granting program has been Toronto Arts Council's core business since 1979. As the arts council for the country's leading arts community TAC is committed to being the leading municipal arts funder in both effectiveness and innovation. TAC's volunteer committee and board members reflect the changing demographics of the City and have deep and profound knowledge of arts practice in every discipline and every neighbourhood. From

enhancing street safety to reclaiming parks and street corners for community use, from engagement of disaffected teens to building social cohesiveness, artists infuse fresh, creative energy into Toronto's neighbourhoods. Supporting excellence in the arts will continue to be the *raison d'être* of the council, but city building, community revitalization, and innovation will also be emphasized.

In 2010 a number of changes coalesced at the city to make it essential that TAC reaffirm its vision, its plans and its future:

- ▲ The changing demographic of the city where it was projected that 50% of residents will be visible minorities, as defined by Stats Canada, by 2012; although TAC has long had a commitment to supporting culturally diverse artists and art forms; to date funding has fallen far short of growth
- ▲ the growing financial disparity between the inner suburbs and downtown, leading to under serviced artists, neighbourhoods, and audiences
- ▲ The growth of community engaged art and the huge increase in the number of artists working in this developing art form
- ▲ The growing recognition that artists make a positive contribution to community building
- ▲ Toronto City Council's expressed commitment to fulfilling the financial objectives of the 2003 Culture Plan; with enhanced funding TAC will be able to address the funding priorities outlined in the following document.

Toronto Arts Council cultivates artistic talent, nurtures diverse voices, connects communities and animates neighbourhoods by supporting the creation, presentation and appreciation of great art.

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Introduction and Vision

Mandate

Since 1974, TAC has been mandated by the City of Toronto to support the city's arts community and offer grants programs funded by the City to a broad cross-section of Toronto arts organizations and professional artists. Grants programs are governed by the two key operating principles: arm's length funding and peer review.

Mission Statement

- ▲ TAC invests in artistic talent and organizational capacity to increase the city's vitality and engage Toronto audiences
- ▲ TAC is governed by artists, arts workers, arts supporters and civic leaders who are representative of Toronto's diverse cultural communities and artistic practices
- ▲ TAC creates opportunity for public access, participation and appreciation of art
- ▲ TAC advocates on behalf of the City's artists and works to increase public awareness of the value of art and to educate civic leaders on effective arts policy
- ▲ TAC collaborates through its foundation (Toronto Arts Foundation) with public and private sector partners to increase resources and opportunities for artists
- ▲ TAC supports cultural diversity in arts creation and presentation

Core Values

- ▲ TAC respects and champions the creative spirit and rigour of art making in all its forms
- ▲ In order maximize the impact of its investment TAC directs its funding to the professional arts.
- ▲ TAC supports a positive environment for reflection,

discourse and evaluation and embraces innovation and change.

In all its activities TAC aspires to be:

- accessible
- approachable
- inclusive
- fair and equitable
- transparent

Granting Values

- ▲ Artistic quality is TAC's primary funding priority.
- ▲ In addition to the published assessment criteria for each of its granting programs, TAC Committees bring the following shared values to assessment discussions:
 - Support both:
 - Creation and presentation
 - Established and emerging organizations
 - Established and emerging individual artists
 - Established and emerging art forms
 - Big and small organizations
 - Support growth and development of an organization through its lifespan
 - Recognize the value of building engaged Toronto audiences
 - Recognize the cost to a funded organization of operating a facility that is made available to the community for performance, rehearsal, production and meeting use
 - Fund artistic excellence at an adequate level, even if this results in fewer individuals or organizations being funded
 - Support cultural diversity in arts creation and presentation

Toronto Arts Council Upcoming Priorities

In its 39 year history, Toronto Arts Council has been extremely effective at channeling available resources to support the city's artists and organizations and advising the City on important arts policy issues.

Going forward, we will continue to provide this essential support. TAC's vision of growing a creative city, block by block, reaffirms the vital role of the arts in city building.

By connecting more Toronto neighbourhoods and more Toronto residents to the power of arts activity TAC will serve both the arts community and the city itself.

Toronto Arts Council has made a strong case for a significant funding increase to its grants program. Supported by the Culture Plan, the MPI report on arts funding, the goals of Beautifulcity.ca, the Creative Capital Gains Report and City Council's Strategies for Arts and Culture Funding, TAC has developed a business case requesting a funding increase of \$8.7 million by 2013.

Fulfillment of this funding increase (now anticipated by 2016) opens a world of possibilities for Toronto, its arts community, and its audiences and residents.

Grants Program

Priorities For Financial Investment:

- 3.1. Increase support to Toronto's artists and arts organizations through TAC's established grants programs
- 3.2. Enhance support for community engaged art initiatives with a focus on youth arts and expanded audience access
- 3.3. Develop new and innovative funding programs and partnerships offering artists and organizations the opportunity to embrace new ideas

Operations Program

Priorities For Investment Of Time

- 3.4. Increase public understanding and engagement in the arts;
- 3.5. Evaluate the impact of arts programming and Toronto Arts Council grants programs

Implementation of Priorities

Toronto today is a constellation of major festivals, internationally renowned arts institutions, mature and vibrant mid-size arts organizations and smaller, emerging arts organizations that combine with energetic community arts practices to establish the city as an internationally respected arts centre.

Toronto Arts Council's grants programs support artists and arts organizations and concurrently leverage increased investment from other levels of government, increase local employment in the arts sector, generate more performances, festivals, screenings, readings and exhibitions produced in Toronto and ensure greater arts accessibility for residents of all ages and incomes across Toronto neighbourhoods.

PRIORITIES FOR FINANCIAL INVESTMENT

4.1 Growth and Sustainability

Increase support to Toronto's artists and arts organizations through TAC's established grants programs:

Maintain existing funding and apply 50% of all new funding to current grants envelopes¹:

- ▲ Increase core funding to arts organizations meeting highest standards of excellence; including organizations working in all disciplines, in all neighbourhoods and practicing all art forms
- ▲ Increase project funding to arts organizations and individual artists in all disciplines meeting highest standards of excellence
- ▲ Create and implement strategies to address funding inequities arising from historic causes or divergent growth patterns among arts organizations; recognizing that there have been insufficient funds for those organizations created most recently; many of which are led by artists of colour or based in non-European art practices

Anticipated Results

- ▲ Stronger and more sustainable arts organizations
- ▲ Attraction and retention of talent and expertise
- ▲ More and higher quality arts performances, exhibitions, screenings, festivals, and readings
- ▲ Greater access to high quality arts events and programs for Toronto residents
- ▲ Increased capacity in Toronto arts community
- ▲ Increased and improved physical space in Toronto for arts use – performance, rehearsal, workshop, administrative

4.2 Community Connections

Enhance support for community engaged art initiatives with a focus on youth arts and expanded audience access

Apply 30% of all new funding to support community engaged art initiatives including programs involving youth and diverse communities in all Toronto neighbourhoods, especially the inner suburbs¹

TAC's adjudication process reveals that, while the vast majority of TAC funded organizations (80%) offer outreach and/or youth engagement programs, the scope of this work is limited due to lack of funding. New revenues will mean that TAC is better able to respond to new initiatives, groups and artists as well as be a catalyst for increased activity among existing organizations.

Specifically:

- ▲ Youth led arts projects will be a funding priority
- ▲ Community engaged art projects in inner suburbs will be a funding priority

¹ Percentages for application of new funding are estimates which may vary during implementation; budgets are approved annually by TAC's Board of Directors.

- ▲ Culturally diverse youth arts organizations will be given enhanced opportunities to enter the funding stream
- ▲ Outreach and community revitalization projects will be eligible for additional funding
- ▲ Partnerships with Toronto’s civic institutions (libraries, heritage, housing, parks, tourism, immigrant settlement agencies, education, neighbourhood and community centres) will be forged or strengthened to ensure greater neighbourhood access to arts programming

Anticipated Results

- ▲ increased support to arts groups and artists from inner suburbs
- ▲ increased support for culturally diverse arts groups and individual artists
- ▲ increased youth engagement through the arts
- ▲ increased numbers of arts projects and events outside downtown core
- ▲ increased audience participation rates from communities located in inner suburbs
- ▲ increased free and affordable arts activities

4.3 Innovation and Partnerships

Develop new and innovative funding programs and partnerships offering artists and arts organizations the ability to respond to exceptional opportunities and incubate new ideas, projects and initiatives.

20% of all new grants funds will be directed to developing and implementing new and innovative funding programs and collaborations.

Funds will be strategically allocated to act as a catalyst for increased provincial and national investment in Toronto from all levels of government and the private sector. TAC’s Board of Directors, in consultation with the arts community, will consider options for targeted funding that:

- ▲ responds to exceptional one-time events and opportunities
- ▲ builds local arts community capacity

- ▲ provides opportunity for funding interdisciplinary work
- ▲ provides seed or development funds for new and innovative artistic initiatives
- ▲ develops new platforms for national and international recognition of Toronto artists
- ▲ facilitates mentorship and professional development opportunities for arts professionals
- ▲ stimulates increased investment in Toronto arts through strategic intersectoral partnerships

PRIORITIES FOR INVESTMENT OF TIME

4.4 Increase public understanding and engagement in the arts

Initiatives

- ▲ Work with arts leaders and civic partners (politicians, community organizations, Toronto Civic Action) to advance public understanding of the arts in Toronto
- ▲ Support annual arts awareness campaigns (Culture Days) to emphasize to the public and its political leadership the value of the arts and the role played by public investment
- ▲ Strengthen relationships with municipal and civic leaders
- ▲ Increase the impact of Toronto Arts Online (the free online arts event listing service) to both the arts community and the public
- ▲ Work collaboratively with Toronto Arts Foundation to increase public visibility and accessibility through initiatives such as the Neighbourhood Arts Network
- ▲ Enhance TAC’s communications and outreach capacity and capitalize on the repository of stories and information at TAC
- ▲ Evaluate the impact of arts programming on culturally diverse artists, arts organizations and their communities

Anticipated Results

- ▲ Increased community engagement in arts activities
- ▲ Increased public knowledge of Toronto arts and arts organizations and understanding of the benefits of arts funding

- ▲ Increased public participation in arts advocacy
- ▲ More effective TAC communications instruments and practices
- ▲ Positive impact on municipal political leaders' awareness of arts policy
- ▲ Position Toronto's arts community in the provincial and federal dialogue about arts and funding policies

4.5 Evaluate the impact of arts programming

Initiatives

- ▲ Collaborate with academic partners to research, evaluate and map arts programming
- ▲ Incorporate the research of the neighbourhood arts network to assess the impact of arts in neighbourhoods
- ▲ Analyze archived Toronto Arts Council project reports and draw out trends and best practices
- ▲ Work collaboratively with Toronto Arts Foundation, City of Toronto Cultural Services and other agencies and organizations to pursue and disseminate research and Toronto arts information to policy makers and municipal leadership
- ▲ Work collaboratively with provincial and national arts advocates