

Canadian Council for the Arts Overview and Challenges



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des arts
du Canada

Overview

The Canada Council for the Arts contributes to the vibrancy of a creative and diverse arts and literary scene and supports its presence across Canada and around the world. The Council is Canada's public arts funder.

Its grants, services, initiatives, prizes, and payments support Canadian artists, authors, and arts groups and organizations. This support allows them to pursue artistic expression, create works of art, and promote and disseminate the arts.

Through its arts funding, communications, research, and promotion activities, the Council fosters ever-growing engagement of Canadians and international audiences in the arts.

Challenges

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▼ Challenge 1

Digital cultural diplomacy

Like many other sectors, the pandemic is transforming the arts sector. Cultural diplomacy is a key pillar of Canada's public diplomacy goals, and the arts are an essential part of our international relations and strategies. The arts create opportunities for dialogue, intercultural exchanges, exchanges of ideas and values, as well as for debates on central issues of our times such as climate change, decolonization, anti-racism, gender equity and sexual harassment.

As the pandemic forces the closure of international boundaries and creates significant barriers in international arts exchanges, how can a renewed cultural diplomacy approach, focusing on the opportunities provided by digital tools and platforms, enable Canada to play a key role on the international stage?

▼ Challenge 2

Shift to digital

As the global pandemic continues to spread across Canada and the world, artists are facing a significant challenge in showing their work and performing in public venues. Audiences are reluctant to return to their pre-pandemic arts participation habits, and major national and international arts events are either cancelled or shifting to digital events and productions.

How can artists, whose income and livelihood are directly linked to live engagements both in Canada and internationally, adapt to these new circumstances and continue to make their art available to publics, while ensuring they receive fair compensation for their work? What shifts in consumer values and behaviours need to be encouraged to support the sustainability of this model?

▼ Challenge 3

Barrier-free access for BIPOC artists

Many Black artists, racialized artists and Indigenous artists face significant challenges related to racism, colonization, anti-Black racism, discrimination and lack of access to systems of support and decision-making. This inequity, exacerbated by COVID-19 which has revealed these disparities even more starkly, leads to unfair access to funding, access to show or produce their work, access to venues or exhibitions or publishing, etc.

How can arts funding organizations, like the Canada Council, assume responsibility for ensuring fair, equitable and free of racism/discrimination funding support? What kinds of initiatives, partnerships, programs or services can arts funders undertake to combat racism and systemic barriers facing BIPOC artists?

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