

The Arts & Equity Project Event Recap

An exciting new initiative that we launched this year was the Arts & Equity Project. The two-year project explores intersectionality, diversity and inclusion to advance equity in the arts in Kingston through workshops, performances and guided discussions. The aim of the project is to introduce artists and arts organizations in Kingston to fundamental equity concepts, tools and frameworks and provide peer-to-peer learning opportunities. The Arts & Equity Project is supported by an Ontario Arts Council Arts Service Project Grant and through collaborative partnerships with the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts, Kingston Immigration Partnership, and H'art Centre.

Throughout the winter and spring we held three workshops that brought together local arts professionals, artists and cultural workers in an attempt to start a conversation about equity in the arts in Kingston. All three workshops were co-facilitated by local facilitators Kayley Marsh, Yasmine Djerbal and Celia Romulus.

Laying the Foundation: Anti-Oppression for Artists and Arts Organizations



The Arts & Equity Project A Kingston Arts Council initiative

Participatory arts-based workshop exploring equity-related issues

Laying the Foundation: Anti-Oppression for Arts Organizations & Artists in Kingston

Thursday, 22 February 2018, 10 am - 1 pm / The Spire, 82 Sydenham St
Pay What You Can

www.artskingston.ca

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The first workshop in this series in February 2018 focused on defining foundational terms and concepts of anti-oppression. Participants took part in a number of activities, like a privilege checklist, designed to help locating oneself in the context of societal oppression & oppression in the arts. The workshop included a talk and performance from artist Randy Johnston, founder of Theatre with a Meal, which is a soup kitchen dinner theatre group designed to bring theatre to those who might not otherwise have the opportunity to participate.



Images:

Right: Participants engaging in an activity focused on defining key concepts. Photo: Liz Cooper

Left: Randy Johnston during his performance. Photo: Liz Cooper

Intersectionality and Kingston's Art Culture



The Arts & Equity Project A Kingston Arts Council initiative

Participatory arts-based workshop exploring equity-related issues

Intersectionality & Kingston's Arts Culture

Thursday, 22 March 2018, 10 am - 1 pm / Tett Centre for Creativity and Learning, 370 King St West / Pay What You Can

www.artskingston.ca



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The second workshop in March 2018 examined the different aspects of social location and identity and featured a performance by artist Erin Ball. Erin is a circus artist, coach and owner of Kingston Circus Arts, who in March 2014, experienced a life changing event that resulted in the loss of her lower legs. Erin delivered a moving aerial performance at the beginning of the workshop and offered her perspective on accessibility as a community-engaged artist.

Throughout the workshop's activities, participants collectively examined different aspects of their identity and analyzed their social location in relation to dominant culture.



Images:

Right: Erin Ball performing in the Malting Tower at the Tett Centre for Creativity and Learning. Photo: Liz Cooper

Left: Facilitator Kayley Marsh setting goals for the second Arts & Equity workshop. Photo: Liz Cooper

Creating a Collective Action Plan



The Arts & Equity Project A Kingston Arts Council initiative

Participatory arts-based workshop exploring equity-related issues
Creating a Collective Action Plan
 Wednesday, 27 June 2018, 10 am - 2 pm / The Spire, 82 Sydenham St
 Pay What You Can

www.artskingston.ca



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The last workshop in the Arts & Equity Project in June 2018 had participants working together to develop a framework for taking action in their work, their organizations, and communities to make the arts more equitable. The workshop featured a collaborative audit activity to identify key areas of development (ex. Audience, Programming, Board, HR, Strategic Planning, etc) and

offer suggestions for how to make these areas more equitable. Participants received a resource package in advance of the workshop that included information on key concepts reviewed in the first two Arts & Equity workshops. Camille Georgeson-Usher was the invited guest artist. Camille is a Coast Salish/Dene/Scottish scholar and artist from Galiano Island, BC. She shared a small portion from an installation she worked on with an artistic partner Asinnajaq.



Images:

Right: Participants at the third Arts & Equity workshop. Photo. Liz Cooper

Left: Snapshot of the art&equity bingo activity. Photo: Liz Cooper

Design:

Vincent Perez, Everlovin Press

In the coming months, participants of the Arts & Equity project will seek to take action in their communities, organizations, and practices, to help advance equity in the arts. Using the learning gained in the workshops, a new peer network, and a commitment made to each other, we hope that collective action is taken. In the fall, we will reconvene the community to share our stories and talk about progress made and challenges faced.