

# **Kingston Creative Initiative: Investigating the Public Value of the Arts in Kingston**

In collaboration with the Kingston Arts Council  
PhD Community Initiative 2019/2020

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Image by local artist, Maya Jagger, B.Ed.



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We would also like to thank our team mentor, Jane Johnston, whose enthusiasm for this project enriched each meeting. Your dedication, hard work, and passion for the arts was inspiring and we are so grateful to have had you in our corner. Many thanks!

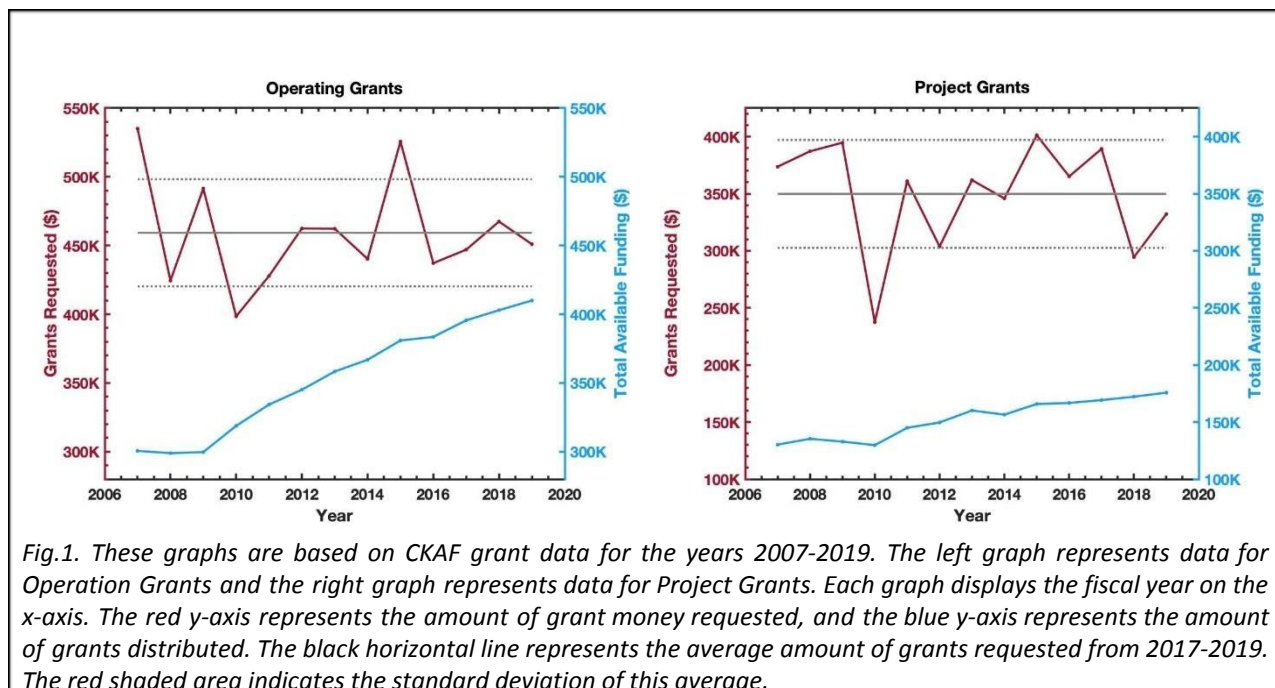
## INTRODUCTION

The Queen's University PhD initiative 2019-2020 partnered interdisciplinary groups of PhD students with community organizations in Kingston to address an issue or topic that they were facing. Our team was assigned to work with the Kingston Arts Council (KAC). They asked our team to assess the economic impact of the arts in Kingston to advocate for a re-examination of the main municipal arts funding source, the City of Kingston Arts Fund (CKAF). This re-examination is prompted by recently proposed funding cuts to the primary provincial arts funding organization, the Ontario Arts Council (OAC) (KAC, 2019). These cuts have affected, and will continue to affect, the many artists living and working in Kingston. Additionally, these cuts will place greater demand on municipal funding sources such as the CKAF. In order to meet these growing demands, the KAC is advocating for a re-evaluation of the CKAF structure to better serve Kingston and its arts community.

### Local Kingston Context

The CKAF is administered by the KAC on an annual basis. It was established in 2007 as a municipal funding source for local arts organizations with the goal of fostering a creative and innovative local arts community. In 2019, total CKAF funds reached \$587,000. Through its current structure, the CKAF allocates 70% of its available funds to assist with operational costs for local arts organizations, and 30% for individual project grants. Currently, individual artists are not eligible to apply for CKAF funding. In 2019, total CKAF funds reached \$587,000. Operating grants are available for incorporated, non-profit art organizations in Kingston that have artistic creation as their primary objective. Project grants are available for unincorporated individual artists or community art collectives.

To assess the local economic context of arts funding in Kingston, our team quantified the current financial demand on the CKAF and its ability to meet this demand. To do this, our team requested CKAF grant data from the KAC for the years 2007-2019. Below is an illustration of the amount of CKAF funds **distributed** compared to the amount of CKAF funds **requested** by local arts organizations.



By examining these graphs, our team notes several observations about the current structure of the CKAF. Firstly, the availability of CKAF operation funds significantly outweighs the availability of CKAF project funds. This is seen by **comparing** the total amount of available funding for **operating grants** in 2019 (about \$400,000) with the total amount of available funding for **project grants** (about \$175,000). Secondly, as of 2019, the CKAF is unable to meet the demand for both operating and project grants. However, this inability to meet demand is much more pronounced for project grants. If the current trajectory of operation fund availability continues, it is set to meet operation fund demand within the next few fiscal years. However, available project funding is currently significantly lower than demand and will not be matched for over 50 years under the current CKAF model.

### What can we do?

One way a re-examination of the CKAF can address this uneven distribution is by changing the allocation of available funds to operating and project grants to ensure that the demand for project grants is met. Other outcomes of a CKAF re-examination could include, but are not limited to:

- **Expanding** eligibility to include individual artists
- **Increasing** the total amount of CKAF funds available to offset recent OAC reductions
- **Applying** a more holistic approach to supporting Kingston’s arts community by implementing professional development services and social support networks

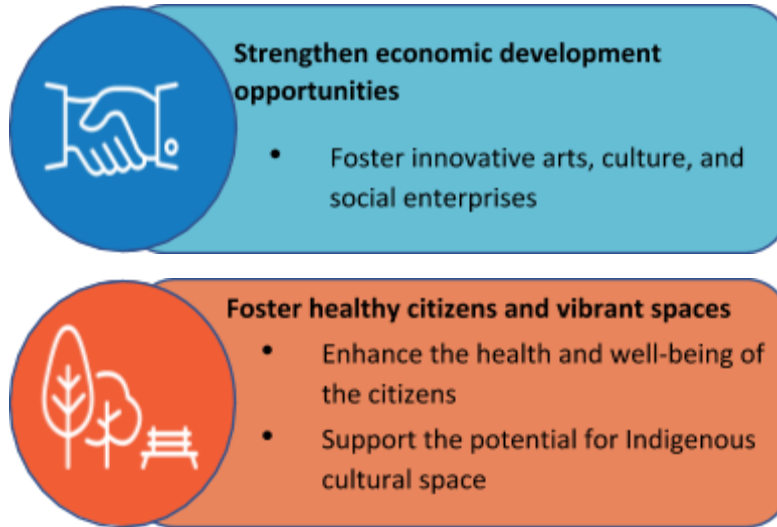
### Plan of Action

Before a re-examination of the CKAF can take place, our team and the KAC recognize that it is vital to assess the public value of funding the arts in Kingston. In consultation with the KAC, our team decided that our methodology would involve conducting interviews with local arts workers as well as an intensive literature review of relevant sources that outline generally

accepted understandings of the economic impact of the arts on various communities. These impacts include art's positive influence on the local economy and the social cohesion, health, and wellness of a community.

Although the literature includes data from other jurisdictions, these findings were used to understand how effective municipal arts funding can help the City of Kingston achieve its Strategic Priorities outlined in the city's Strategic Plan 2019-2022 (City of Kingston, 2019).

This report commits to the following priorities:



Within the context of these Strategic Priorities, this report demonstrates the public value of creating an effective arts funding climate in Kingston through a re-examination of the CKAF.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In order to assess the local economic impact of the arts, our team developed a unique mission statement: “We will develop into an effective, efficient, creative team that utilizes our diverse skillsets to investigate the public value of the arts in Kingston”. These skillsets reflect the wide variety of disciplines from which our team members approached this project, ranging from Physics, Cultural Studies, and Chemical Engineering, to English Literature and Kinesiology. Despite these diverse academic perspectives, we quickly learned that each one of us felt a personal connect to the task at hand, as we had all let art into our lives in one way or another. Thus, this project is the product of both a passion for, and commitment to, the public life of art.

Weekly face to face team meetings complemented by electronic communication; clear agendas and notes; timelines and sensitivity to personal and academic events and pressures enabled our team to complete this project. Our team began this project by discussing how to best approach the concept of “economic impact”. We decided to extend this term to include the ways in which art intersects with other aspects of a given community, including such areas as public

health and community cohesion. Extending the scope of our initial question allowed us to engage in a more comprehensive study of how art positively influences life in Kingston.

After defining our scope, our team consulted with the KAC to clarify and confirm their goals for this project, and we might best work toward achieving them. As a result of this process, we defined our objectives as:

- Understanding the needs of the arts community in Kingston to inform municipal funding
- Assessing the public value of the arts in Kingston

In what follows, we describe our methodology for meeting these objectives.

### Interview Methodology

We believe that in order to understand how municipal funding can assist, encourage, and maintain Kingston's growing artistic community, we must first understand the needs of this community. Our interviews with local artists working in the arts industry provided a space in which artists were able to speak to their work, its' public influence, and how funding structures such as the CKAF can, and do, impact their ability to carry out their work<sup>1</sup>.

Interviews were held in-person in a public space and were 1.5 hours in length. Participants were asked if our group members could use a microphone to capture real-time speech-to-text data. After the interview, the speech-to-text file was saved onto a USB key while the audio recording was deleted. To account for errors in the speech-to-text data, one group member took notes during the interviews. Participants were given a \$20 café gift card for their generous participation.

Our team held six in-person interviews with local artists and arts industry workers from a list of potential participants provided by the KAC. Out of the six interviews, five were structured interviews such that we asked the participant pre-determined questions. The sixth interview was an unstructured conversation that did not follow a pre-determined question and answer structure. We decided to treat the first five interviews as one data set, and to treat the sixth as an informed case study of possible direct economic benefits of the arts industry in Kingston. These benefits are based on the information provided by our sixth participant.

### Literature Review Methodology

In addition to these interviews, our team also conducted a literature review of various interdisciplinary sources that assess the impact of the arts on various communities. This approach aided in our team's understanding of the far-reaching effects of artistry within local contexts. These effects include positive influences on social cohesion, health, and personal

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<sup>1</sup> Interviews were conducted by our team to understand how arts funding affects the work and lives of artists in Kingston. Interview questions were created and revised by our group and the Kingston Arts Council (see Appendix). These questions were approved by the General Research Ethics Board of Queen's University. Potential participants were initially contacted by the KAC and were asked to contact our team if they were interested in participating.

wellbeing. Our literature review demonstrates how investing in the arts can support the City of Kingston's Strategic Priorities.

The first section of the literature review examines the role of art in fostering social cohesion. Searches were conducted on Omni Search by Queen's using key terms such as "arts", "community", and "Canada". These terms were applied to the websites of Statistics Canada and the Government of Ontario wherein a 2016 survey of the Ontario arts sector commissioned by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport outlined public appreciation and evaluation of the arts. This section showcases how art positively influences community engagement as well as public perceptions of the value of art.

The second section of the literature review explores the relationship between art and health. General searches were conducted on Google, Google Scholar, and PubMed using terms such as "art" and "health" (MeSh terms for PubMed) to capture a wide range of sources including reports, surveys, reviews, and peer-reviewed journal articles. Searches conducted on Google and Google Scholar included terms "Canada", "art", and "health". Information was gathered from these search results as well as the reference lists of the reviewed sources. Due to the limited number of sources specific to Canada, this report's review on art and health is heavily supplemented with examples and evidence from other countries. It is therefore not meant to be a comprehensive review of Canadian intersections of art and health; however, this section *is* important in contextualizing the ways in which art influences various sectors of society. It also contains a case study of a local arts initiative that has had a positive effect on mental health: Art Hive at the Agnes Etherington Arts Centre. This example is based on the contents of a report generously provided by the Program Coordinator at the Agnes.

The third section of the literature review investigates the economic value of employment in the arts and arts administration sector in Kingston. The scope for this research was determined through a search of scholarly publications addressing the arts, economics, and public value. Some of the literature in this area discusses creativity very broadly as a factor of industrial growth in non-arts sectors, such as high tech, agribusiness, travel, or professional services. While one of the "spin-off" economic benefits of a thriving arts sector may be a strong tourism economy, the determination of the literature review was to treat employment in the arts and arts administration as the main indicator of economic impact with sectoral spending calculated as a kind of multiplier from arts business. For employment information, Statistics Canada information was used, as recent as we could find specific numbers, population data was used from the official projections of the City of Kingston, and inflation percentages were acquired from the Bank of Canada's official website.



## LITERATURE REVIEWS

### Art & Social Cohesion

#### *Promoting Intercultural Understanding*

The province of Ontario recognizes the arts' central role in promoting intercultural understanding. In a recent study conducted by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport, the arts sector is identified as a main contributor to "fostering inclusion" and "promoting cultural diversity" – two common themes found within arts and culture strategies from other Canadian jurisdictions (Ministry of Tourism, 2016, p. 71). Through festivals, exhibits, and performances, diverse cultural histories and backgrounds can be shared to a wide public audience that may not have prior knowledge of the diverse cultures embedded in their community. Supporting the creation of cultural spaces for Indigenous communities is one way in which the City of Kingston can encourage intercultural understanding and strengthen communal ties. A vibrant and active arts sector can enrich a city's cultural identity.

#### *Creating a Shared Sense of Belonging*

Promoting cultural diversity is also inherently related to a population's shared sense of belonging within a given community. The arts are an underlying contributor to a person's sense of belonging and emotional connection to a particular place. According to the Community Foundations of Canada, "belonging" can be defined as the sense of "being part of a collective we" and is "fundamental to our sense of happiness and well-being" (Community Foundations of Canada, 2019, p. 1). In a 2012 survey conducted by Phoenix Strategic Perspectives, 77% of Canadians agree or strongly agree that arts and heritage experiences help them to feel part of their local community (CFC, 2019 p. 4). A shared sense of belonging is also directly related to feelings of pride about one's community, and this sense of pride helps communities flourish (CFC, 2019, p. 8). Cultivating feelings of belonging and encouraging the expression of this sense of community is one way the city of Kingston can achieve its priority of "fostering healthy citizens".

#### *Inspiring Community Engagement*

Lastly, a city's arts sector inspires community engagement across a diverse populations and neighbourhoods. In 2016, nearly all Canadians 15 years or older (99.5%) participated in some type of arts, culture, or heritage activity (Ministry of Tourism, 2016, p. 24). Community, or public engagement, also characterizes the Canada Council for the Arts' own shift from strictly serving artists to a more holistic approach that focuses on fostering public engagement and enjoyment with the arts (Gattinger, 2017, p 69). More and more, investment in the arts is seen as investing in "public good" (Gattinger, 2017, p. 67). Thus, engagement in the arts inspires creative and critical thinking among community members, whose innovative ideas drive a city's economy (Braman, 1996, p. 194). By supporting its arts community, Kingston can continue to "strengthen economic development opportunities" (City of Kingston, 2019).



## Art & Health

### *Art as an Investment in Health Equity*

Health equity is the removal of modifiable differences in health and its determinants across diverse groups of people (WHO, 2020). This is an important commitment for Kingston since there are large socioeconomic differences across the community with 20.4% of households making an income of \$29,000 or less and 21.8% of households making an income of \$100,000 or more in 2016 (City of Kingston, 2018). There are many examples of art facilitating health equity within communities (Gordon-Nesbitt and Howarth, 2019). For example, a study was conducted by Cobbett on art therapy programs in two social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties (SEBD) schools in London (Cobbett, 2016). These art therapy programs include visual art, music, drama, and dance movement, and encourage students to communicate through art in a psychotherapeutic context (Cobbett, 2016). Students with SEBD who receive art therapy show improvements in emotional regulation, peer relations, conduct, hyperactivity, and prosocial behaviour compared to SEBD students who are on the waitlist for art therapy (Cobbett, 2016). SEBD students who receive art therapy also reported feeling safer and more comfortable communicating through art compared to their verbal psychotherapy experience wherein they felt intimidated, anxious, and stigmatized (Cobbett, 2016, p. 403). In this example, art facilitates health equity by increasing a disadvantaged group's access to emotional and social health. Providing a financial stimulus for the creation of these art therapy programs in Kingston schools is one way that the City of Kingston can improve health equity.

A direct cost-benefit analysis of the SEBD art therapy program was not performed by Cobbett (2016). However, it's been estimated that for every \$1 invested in *quality* early care and education, taxpayers save up to \$13 (Centre for Research in Early Childhood, 2013, p. 15). Participatory arts activities are likely a key component of *quality* early care and education because they generally stimulate cognitive development, linguistic development, social development, emotional development, and school readiness (APPGAHW, 2017). As a result, the integration and provision of art therapies and participatory art spaces within childhood education settings is likely a key component of providing cost-efficient, *quality*, and *equitable* early care and education in Kingston.

### *Art as an Investment in Healthcare Innovation*

The use of art therapy, arts prescription, and participatory arts programs in healthcare settings improves the mental health, physical health, and overall wellbeing of patients (Jensen and Bonde, 2018). For example, Clift and colleagues (2013) found that a weekly group singing program for people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) improved health-related quality of life, lung function, self-rated breathing ability, physical activity levels, and general wellbeing. These improvements were seen over a 10-month period which is significant considering that a decline would normally be expected after 10 months (Clift et al., 2013). The management of COPD is a relevant issue for Kingston hospitals including Kingston General Hospital (KGH) which saw 1259 Emergency Department visits, 585 hospital admissions, and 155 90-day readmissions from COPD patients alone in 2017/2018 (Maloney, 2019).

To overcome these challenges, creating innovative, accessible, and efficient treatment strategies through the integration of art activities into traditional treatments would position Kingston as a leader in healthcare innovation.

The efficiency of leveraging art in healthcare contexts can also be seen in its return on investment. The APPGAHW report discusses the cost benefit analysis of an arts prescription program called Artlift (2017, p. 6). Healthcare professionals can refer a variety of patients to this program including patients with chronic pain, stroke, anxiety, or depression. Patients referred to Artlift complete an 8-week to 6-month course of weekly 2-hour sessions with a professional artist specializing in poetry, ceramics, drawing, mosaic, or painting. After 6 months, an evaluation of Artlift demonstrated that patients experienced a 37% reduction in general practitioner consultations and a 27% reduction in hospital admissions (2017, p. 6). It was estimated that this represented a \$4 - \$11 return for every \$1 invested in Artlift (Opher, 2011).

#### *Art as an Investment in Community Health and Wellness Strategies*

Lastly, investing in art is an effective way for Kingston to develop health and wellness strategies for the general community. There are several longitudinal studies that have examined the relationship between arts participation and various health outcomes. For example, Fancourt and Steptoe found that frequent participation in arts activities (every few months or more), reduced mortality risk over a 14-year period by 31% in 50-year-old men and women (2019)<sup>2</sup>. To test the causal relationship between art and health, Cohen and colleagues randomized participants to a control or art intervention group (2006). The art intervention group included professionally led activities such as painting, pottery, dance, music, poetry, and drama. After 12-months, participants in the art intervention group had self-reported health improvements, increased wellbeing, reduced medical appointments, decreased requests for medication, increased independence, and reduced risk factors for long-term care admission including falls. These changes were significantly greater in the art intervention group compared to the control group, suggesting that increasing access to participatory arts programs in Kingston would be an effective way to improve the health and wellness of the community.

#### *Case study: Art Hive @Agnes*

A local example of a participatory arts program is the Art Hive @Agnes (Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 2019). This program was created because mental health is a significant issue for young adults in Kingston due to stress and uncertainty about the future (Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 2019, p. 1). The goal of Art Hive @Agnes is to create a safe space for young adults, reduce stress, develop a sense of belonging through creative expression, and foster wellness in the Kingston community (Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 2019, p. 3). A pilot project of Art Hive found that all participants (100%) agreed or strongly agreed that Art Hive was a safe space, 98%

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<sup>2</sup> Although this study provides strong observational evidence, it does not prove that there is a causal relationship between arts participation and health. The study by Cohen and colleagues provides evidence of the causal relationship between arts participation and health since it used a randomized controlled trial (2006).

agreed or strongly agreed that Art Hive reduced their stress, and 98% agreed or strongly agreed that Art Hive fostered a sense of belonging (Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 2019, p. 11). One of the key takeaways of this pilot study was that future outreach could aim to improve non-student participation in the Art Hive @Agnes program (Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 2019, p. 13). In terms of cost-effectiveness, a cost benefit analysis of the Art Hive @Agnes was not conducted; however, a similar participatory arts program for people with dementia across long-term care, acute care, and community settings yielded a social return on investment of \$3.20 - \$6.62 for every \$1 invested (Jones et al., 2020).

The positive effect of Art Hive on participant mental health has supported the expansion of the Art Hive @Agnes to include all adult populations for the spring 2020, and has led other organizations to start Art Hives such as Providence Care Hospital and Kingston Frontenac Public Library (Agnes Stories, 2019; Providence Care, 2020; Foley, 2019). Fortunately for Agnes, the organization receives funding from many diverse sources (Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 2020). This means that Art Hive @Agnes has not been affected by the recent Ontario Arts Council funding reductions. However, the potential for this program to grow within other Kingston organizations will likely be affected by a decrease in OAC funding.

### Art & Employment

Counting economic impact as the number of arts and arts administration jobs in a population and averaging the pay for those jobs is one method for assessing the arts' contributions to the local economy. Where data for these jobs and their pay is available, adjustments can be made in accordance with population growth and inflation. A multiplier for the impact of the arts can be included to account for spending by artists and arts organizations beyond their staff. How to measure the direct economic impact of the arts is a question that has been asked by different levels of government. At the municipal level, the Strategic Plan 2019-2022 for the City of Kingston includes cultural planning as well as a more specific ten-year cultural plan that is approaching its time for renewal. At the federal level, there are studies about the legislative framework for cultural production, such as broadcasting rules, intellectual property rights, or direct support to arts producers through the Canada Council for the Arts. Provincially, funding for the arts is supported through public educational programming, the Ontario Media Development Fund, and through the Ontario Arts Council. In 2018, the OAC's planned budget increases were cancelled. This budget faced an additional cut of \$5 million from base funding and \$2.25 million from the Indigenous Culture Fund specifically, out of a total budget of about \$60 million (Global News, 2018). During the tenure of the previous provincial government, there was a "framework for growth" respecting Ontario's entertainment and creative clusters in the economy. This framework emphasized business incubation and tax credits. If we attempt to continue this macro-level approach at the local level, the main direct factor that we are able to measure is employment numbers.

The direct economic impact of the arts in a local area such as Kingston might include many factors that are not captured by this method, such as art as a capital asset privately held in the

region, or even the childcare service provided by content creators for children. Some art may even be the product of artists with an oppositional stance to the policy of encouraging economic growth, perhaps concerned about over-consumption or inequality, for example. However, other indicators exist that measure inequality, such as the GINI coefficient. Some indicators also measure education and healthcare attainment levels. The direct impact of the arts is also something that is studied as a “public good” case, looking at the welfare benefits of the arts as a positive externality of a thriving arts sector. For the purposes of this initial analysis, **direct impact is a measurement of cultural sector employment, the average income for that sector, and the relative size of that measure compared to other municipalities and employment sectors.** Employment in this sector is often precarious, seasonal, or contract, like the gig economy. Support systems for artists could be resources other than direct funding, such as subsidized housing and studio space. Some organizations which have operationalized such structures are Arts Court in Ottawa and Artspace in Toronto.

The most detailed information on actual arts and cultural sector employment comes from a study using data from Statistics Canada from 2011, when Kingston's population was 123,363. At the time, the study found 605 people employed as artists and 2 325 people employed as cultural workers in Kingston. According to a national survey conducted by Hill Strategies, the concentration of cultural workers in the labour force was only 0.95 percent for artists and 3.65% for cultural workers, with average incomes of \$29 971 and \$39 060 respectively (Hill Strategies, 2014). The total income from arts and cultural workers -- their number multiplied by their average respective incomes – totals \$108 946 955 based on data from 2011 (Hill Strategies, 2014). With an average annual population growth of 0.6%, the population in Kingston in 2020 is estimated as 130 187, a 5.5% increase from 2011 (Watson & Associates, 2016). According to the Bank of Canada, the average annual inflation over this period of time was 1.68%, for a total inflation of 16.13%. This brings the adjusted 2020 estimate for the direct economic impact of employment income in Kingston's arts sector in 2020 to \$133 478 704, assuming arts and cultural workers remain steady at a combined 4.6% of the total workforce. Counting economic impact as the number of arts and arts administration jobs in a population and averaging the pay for those jobs is one method for assessing the arts' contributions to the local economy. Where data for these jobs and their pay is available, adjustments can be made in accordance with population growth and inflation. A multiplier for the impact of the arts can be included to account for spending by artists and arts organizations beyond their staff.<sup>3</sup>

#### Case Study: Kingston Film Office

Arts organizations such as the Kingston Film Office bring in hundreds of thousands of dollars of direct economic activity. Examples of recent productions arranged through the Kingston Film Office include television productions such as *Alias Grace*, *Crimson Peak*, and *Titans*. The production team for the Netflix show *Titans* was in town for just 9 days and spent \$250 000

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<sup>3</sup> The concept for creating a multiplier for arts economic impact is taken from a 2019 report by Hills Strategies. See Appendix for formula and reference.

on necessities like hotel rooms, meals, entertainment, and location set modifications. However, the direct economic impact of arts activity includes more than just employment incomes. An economic multiplier that includes other expenses that represent dollars flowing into the local economy can be calculated by dividing Total Expenses of a given arts organization by Staff Expenses.

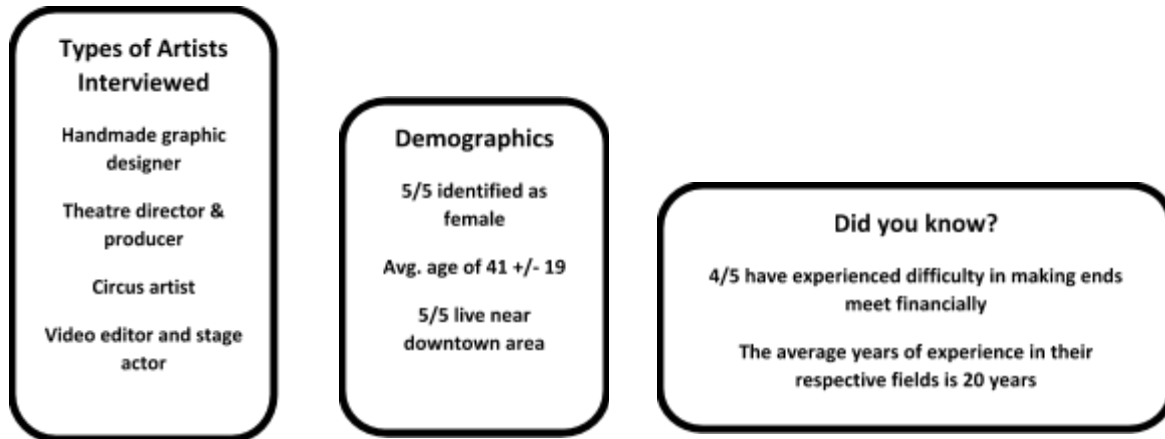
The film office is also developing a labour force whose skills continue to grow and inform the industry. This labour force consists of members of the student community to those networked at all stages of employment within the film industry. The Kingston film office is just one example of an economically profitable local arts organization. Further investment in the Kingston arts community could support the creation of similar organizations for other arts industries such as music, theatre, and photography.

#### Literature Review Conclusion

Considering the provincial government's recently proposed reductions to the Ontario Arts Council funding, our team recommends that the Kingston municipal government review the City of Kingston Arts Fund to ensure it can adequately meet the growing demands of its arts community. This review is needed to determine how the CKAF can be made more accessible and available to all artists in Kingston, thereby generating positive returns on investment while maintaining Kingston's commitments to fostering healthy citizens and vibrant spaces and strengthening economic development opportunities.

## INTERVIEW RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The information gathered from our interviews **reaffirms the invaluable role of the arts** in strengthening a city's sense of community, improving health equity, and generating economic opportunities. The interview responses reflect our literature review findings and support our team's assertion that **investing in the arts is an investment in the city of Kingston's Strategic Priorities.**



**Foster healthy citizens and vibrant spaces**

- Support the potential for Indigenous cultural space
- Encourage public engagement from diverse perspectives

The city has prioritized supporting the creation of Indigenous cultural space, and our interviews reveal that Kingston is home to many artists who are already working to create such a space. One of our participants is creating a board game to teach people in Kingston about our shared history of colonization.

With my work, my goal is to teach people in Kingston about our shared history of colonization and the Indigenous cultures that exist here today.

colonization and the Indigenous cultures that exist here today

The goal of the project is to encourage non-Indigenous community members to learn about the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee cultures that continue to exist here today. Prioritizing the advancement of the city's arts community means prioritizing the city's goal of creating cultural spaces that foster meaningful community engagement.



**Art gives voice to marginalized communities and brings different communities together.**

Each participant viewed their work as contributing to community life in Kingston. When asked if they believed they could achieve their career goals here, the majority of participants responded “yes”, although most noted that this is dependent on CKAF availability. These responses reflect the importance of CKAF funding in light of OAC reductions. Without adequate funding and municipal support, it will be extremely difficult to retain artists in Kingston, thereby reducing a considerably impactful sector of our local community. This impact includes providing adequate representation of the

different populations that make up Kingston. One participant envisioned arts as “giving voice to marginalized communities” with the capacity to “bring different communities together”. Their responses align with the public surveys included in the literature review section that express the general public’s own positive evaluation of the arts. Together, these findings reaffirm the invaluable role of the arts in cultivating social cohesion. Investing in the arts is an investment in the social health of Kingston.



### **Foster healthy citizens and vibrant spaces**

- Enhance the health and well being of the citizens

**I’m a double below the knee amputee... a lot of my art is based around challenging perceptions of disability.**

Our interviewee from Kingston Circus Arts, Erin Ball, empowers individuals with disabilities through circus arts. The goal of her work is to celebrate all bodies, teach people that disability is an asset rather than a hindrance, and show everyone that there

can be life after adversity (Kingston Circus Arts, 2020). In her work as a circus arts educator, she provides a welcoming and accessible environment for all individuals to learn circus arts, and guides others to create accessible and inclusive circus practices. In her work as a circus arts performer, she regularly performs without her prosthetic legs and provides crucial representation for the disability

community. Municipal investment in this work facilitates health equity by improving several determinants of health within the Kingston disability community including social status, education, childhood experiences (for younger individuals), social supports, coping skills, healthy behaviours, and culture (Government of Canada, 2019).

Erin noted that grants are a key stimulus for the existence of Kingston

**Grants are definitely one way for my practice to happen and other similar practices to happen.**

As previously discussed in the literature review on health and art, several studies have demonstrated that attending arts events and participating in art making significantly improves many health outcomes such as reduced mortality risk, decreased risk of dementia, improved self-reported health, and increased wellbeing (Fancourt and Steptoe, 2019; Verghese et al., 2003; Cohen et al., 2006). Modern Fuel is an example of an arts organization which benefits Kingstonians by supporting the presentation, production, and interpretation of a diverse range of contemporary art (Modern Fuel, 2020). They have several free and accessible exhibits on display in their space which grapple with the current questions of our time and raise new questions. They have also supported the development of other

**With an increase in funding, we could afford artist talks which heighten the art and the impact it has on people.**

Circus Arts and similar programs, which would not be possible without support from the OAC and CKAF. Kingston Circus Arts is one of the programs that has been affected by the recent reductions in OAC funding. In light of these recent reductions in OAC funding, Kingston's continued municipal support of Kingston artists like Erin facilitates Kingston's commitment to health equity.

local arts programming organizations such as Tone Deaf and The Artel. However, Modern Fuel's ability to offer diverse arts programming and support other arts organizations has been significantly affected by the recent reductions in OAC funding. As stated in the quote above, our

interviewee from Modern Fuel said that more funding would heighten the impact of the art on the community. Given the relationship between arts attendance and health, continued municipal support of Modern Fuel would allow Kingston to meet its strategic priority of fostering health and wellness in the community in a cost-efficient manner (City of Kingston, 2019, p. 20).

**Funding creates a head space for living.**

Our interviewees repeatedly

discussed the importance of arts funding in supporting their employment, income, and

mental health. They stated that with more funding, they would be able to hire more artists. As a federally recognized determinant of health, offering continued and expanding employment for Kingston artists is important for artist health (Government of Canada, 2019). Regarding income, four out of the five artists who we interviewed expressed difficulty making ends meet despite multiple jobs and long hours. This observation is echoed by a recent report from the Toronto Arts Foundation which found that 69% of artists in Toronto make less than Toronto's living wage of \$45,000 per year (Toronto Arts Foundation, 2019, p. 9). It is well established that income is an extremely important determinant of physical and mental health (Muennig et al., 2007;

Wilkinson and Marmot, 2003). While it is far beyond this report to investigate the physical health of artists, 80% of the artists who we interviewed spoke about the positive effect of funding on their mental health. They also mentioned how funding positively affects their education, housing stability, quality of life, life satisfaction. As one of our interviewees put it, funding "creates a head space for living" and allows them the freedom to create without stress. Therefore, a review of the CKAF to investigate how Kingston artists can be better supported would allow Kingston to foster a healthy Kingston community partially through improving the determinants of health of our local artists.



**Strengthen economic development opportunities**

- Foster innovative arts, culture, and social enterprises

Right now, a lot of my work is "pay by exposure".

A major concern for those working in the arts sector in Kingston is precarious employment, as arts businesses often operate through intermittent gigs and contracts. One of our participants noted that they are often "paid by exposure" – receiving zero monetary compensation for their work –

despite being a professional in their field. Nearly all of our participants hold more than one job in order to maintain an adequate standard of living, and to support their artistry. The City of Kingston's priority of "strengthening economic development" (City of Kingston, 2019) should therefore also consider employment security for artists.

The Kingston Film Office has already begun the process of increasing the economic impact of local artists through their Skills Development Initiative. They are committed to providing more labour development as a way to grow Kingston's capacity for full-cycle production teams. This development strategy increases the amount of time television and film production

teams spend in Kingston, generating a more stable and profitable local economy.



As expressed in the Case Study of this report, the Kingston Film Office is an excellent example of how the arts sector contributes to the local economy. Supporting Kingston's potential as a versatile production site would increase spending in areas such as tourism and hospitality while also generating



new employment opportunities for local arts workers. Creating employment opportunities and stimulating spending are just a few examples of how an arts organization, like the Kingston Film Office, can strengthen Kingston's economy.

## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

Based on the findings of this report, our team has developed some suggestions for how the City of Kingston can better support its arts community period.

### ❖ **Advocate for Restructuring of CKAF**

- **Reallocate operating vs. project funds**

Increasing the percentage of funding for project grants will improve the existing large gap between demand and supply for project funding, providing more support for existing projects and making room for new ones.

- **Expand eligibility to individual artists**

Increase the accessibility of arts funding for individual artists in Kingston to support their artistic work, professional development, and their health and wellness.

- **Increase CKAF budget**

Increasing CKAF funding will assist municipal artists and arts organizations as they adjust their budgets in response to the recent OAC funding reductions.

- **Support Kingston artists through professional development and social support networks**

These support networks will allow artists to achieve their professional goals in Kingston and lead to improved retention of a younger demographic.

### ❖ **Conduct a survey of artists to determine the full impact of OAC funding and proposed reductions**

A future survey could be informed by the interview questions used in this report (see Appendix). A wider survey will further inform municipal investment in the CKAF, as well as CKAF structure. This will also improve our understanding of the relationship between arts funding, arts programs, and community outcomes of interest in Kingston.

### ❖ **Calculate an economic multiplier to measure arts economic activity beyond employment income (see Appendix)**

An economic multiplier will give the City of Kingston an understanding of how local arts organizations stimulate the economy beyond providing employment.

### ❖ **Recognize the potential negative impact of Covid-19 2020 on artists & organizations**

Acknowledging the impact of the pandemic will inform strategies for the protection of local artists and arts organizations in the face of unprecedented restrictions on face-to-face interactions.

## **CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this report is to determine the public value of the arts in Kingston. This report has demonstrated how investing in Kingston's arts community can help the city achieve key priorities identified in the City of Kingston's Strategic Priorities for 2019-2022. It has also suggested various ways in which a re-examination of the current CKAF model can better serve Kingston's artists and the wider community. This report was written in the midst of social isolation brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, we were reminded of the power of the arts to bring communities together.

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## **APPENDIX**

Multiplier for Local Economic Impact of Arts:

$$\text{Multiplier} = \frac{\text{Total Expenses}}{\text{Staff Expenses}}$$

Hill, K., & Hill Research Strategies Inc. (2019, May 31). *Measuring the economic impacts of heritage.* Ontario Heritage Conference, Goderich, Ontario. [https://hillstrategies.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/goderich\\_kellyhill\\_may2019.pdf](https://hillstrategies.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/goderich_kellyhill_may2019.pdf)

Interview Questions:

Question 1. What kind of artistic work do you do?

- Handmade graphic design: lettering, screen printing, design, and workshops.
- Theatre: Director, Producer. Creating a game to demonstrate history of colonization and settler privilege.
- Circus artist: aerial and ground acrobats.
- Concert promoter.
- Free-lance video editor and performs theatrical productions. Currently editing nursing training videos for Queen's. Operates Modern Fuel.

Do you consider yourself to be a pre-professional or a professional artist?

- 5/5 said professional

b. How long have you been doing this work for?

- 10+ years
- 20+ years
- 12 years
- 6-7 years
- 50+ years

c. Does your art connect you to other communities/cultures? This could include religions such as Buddhism, ethnicities such as Scottish, and languages such as Spanish.

- Yes, their nurse video work is used in Africa and South East Asia. Modern Fuel has a mandate to show art from marginalized communities (Indigenous, etc.). Working on

how Modern Fuel can play a bigger activist role through art. It is a big advocate for LGBTQ+ and women's rights.

- No
- Yes, Indigenous cultures.
- Yes, the disability community. Their work challenges perceptions of disability.
- Yes, some artist they bring in are from Quebec and the U.S.

Question 2. What are your career goals?

- Working on a life size board game which incorporates information about teachings from indigenous cultures — hoping to teach people in Kingston more about the history of colonization and more about indigenous cultures.
- To make and share art as much as possible.
- Branch-out and find people that can help run events. Have events in under-utilized spaces. Feature artists who don't have access to funding and offer opportunities for people who wouldn't get them otherwise. Promote more women in music because the corporate side to the music industry as a whole is very male dominated.
- To be the head curator of a contemporary part of a museum. Eventually become the director of a large institution. Still has dreams of being a famous actress.
- Financial security doing their art.

Do you feel that the goals can be achieved in Kingston?

- Is OK in Kingston, but not entirely secure. Thinks they can grow in Kingston, there is not much competition as there are not many other lettering artists. Kingston has a supported arts community which makes it a great place to grow. Eventually they think they will have to move somewhere where more is going on. They would like to have a larger packaging design job or deal, or something with a company where they are not trading hours for money, because with that kind of work you hit a ceiling for income.
- Trying, but the majority of their work is in Mexico, UK, and Tokyo.
- Yes. Kingston is a very busy entertainment wise, and they give smaller artists a boost. KPP and the Grad Club are they only other people that have really made a business out of concert promotion.
- Maybe. Kingston doesn't really need another museum for the population size — one major museum is enough. Modern Fuel and Union Gallery both show contemporary art and together with the Agnes the three of them work together to make sure they're not overlapping content and share resources. Moreover, there are lots of theatre opportunities in Kingston, but the majority is community theatre which nobody gets paid for. Theatre Kingston is the professional theatre company, but space is limited due to 3 shows per year and small casts. There is only one large art institution (Agnes) in Kingston but feels that maybe they could become the director of it. However,

there are more museum opportunities in Toronto, Ottawa, or Montreal. The Kingston film board and tourism are working to bring more productions and opportunities, but limited space and this individual is interested in acting not editing.

- Yes, because of the Indigenous community in Kingston (Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe).

b. If not, what would you need to achieve your goals in Kingston?

- A lot of companies are based in larger places. If you want to get hired by a big name you must go to the places where the opportunities are — not in Kingston. Only plans on staying in Kingston for another 5 years maybe.
- There's not enough money in Kingston. It is always "pay by exposure". There is a lack of space and rigging capabilities (for circus). People here don't have the budget for circus arts or are unaware of what it is and don't see it as an art. The artists here work for free, because they love to do it.
- Currently applying for grant money to get their game working. There needs to be communication between the community and the elders of the Indigenous community for the game to work.
- The industry must be aware of itself. This means more communication with booking agencies, artists, and promoters. It is possible to get funding, but it can only go so far if the people who are receiving the funding are not reliable when it comes to ensuring growth.
- To achieve their goals at Modern Fuel they would need enough money to hire another staff member, because 50% of their time is spent on administrative work (taxes, grant writing, marketing). Only 25% of their time is spent curating, working with artists, and professional development. Too much compromise. Modern Fuel could provide more opportunity for artists with more money.

Question 3. For how many years have you been funded by the KAC?

- 0
- 0 (applying to KAC)
- 1 (first year)
- ~7 (project grants)
- (Number not given) Modern Fuel is funded by KAC (Operational grants — KAC is their biggest funder this year)

a. By the OAC?

- 1 (first year)
- 0
- Multiple years (Operational grants)

- (Number not given) In the past they were funded, but only small amounts.
- 2

b. Has your OAC funding been affected by the recent cuts?

- N/A
- Is unsure of OAC funding for this year yet. Inquiry about funding for next year. Unsure if funding has been affected by recent cuts. It's terrible.
- Last year Modern Fuel funding was cut by 8%. Everyone experienced this. Quite a few organizations ended because of this. The new grant will be based on this 8% cut. When you start the new cycle, you can ask for a 5-10% increase, so I can ask for one that's 8% lower than the previous year. We won't go up. They had to let go of a staff member, now they do all the work. It has affected their mental health. It is hard to work alone and have everything rest on your shoulders. There is only so much you can delegate to board members and interns because they are not here every day. Sometimes I work until midnight. And installing work, you must be here until its up. Last year after the 8% decrease we got \$26,000.
- N/A
- Yes. They didn't receive all their funding. Grants are one way that allow arts to happen, and if there are cuts to the funding then there may not be enough money for staff to get paid.

Question 4. How important is the KAC funding to you in supporting your artistic work within the Kingston community? Feel free to discuss your other funding sources as well.

- N/A
- 92% of Modern Fuel funding comes from grants, so they would not exist without the KAC. Additionally, they get operational funding from CAC and OAC. The rest of their income comes from membership fees (about \$2-3000 a year), fundraising, and private foundations (unstable). Operational funding from granting bodies helps them to do long-term planning and gives stability. They fund salaries, space, rent, artists, and paint and supplies. Alternatively, private foundations will donate for specific projects.
- Adequate funding is important to give you the time and space to actually think about what you're doing rather than just get things done. It gives them the time and space for more creativity and reflectivity to do their PhD.
- KAC funding is extremely important. This funding affects several circus artists in the community. It wouldn't be possible without funding.
- Very important.

Question 5. How do you think your artistic work would be affected if this funding was increased?

- Funding would allow them to seek education to develop their artistic skills. Also, would give them the freedom to try new kinds of projects and explore new possibilities that

are not necessarily proven to make money yet. Funding would definitely help them achieve their artistic goals and get where they want to be. It would be good for their work, because when you are stressed about money what you put out is generally worse, because you are more focused about your work being profitable.

- Would enable them to take their game into other communities and spread their message.
  - It would positively affect them. It would create more opportunities for themselves and other people.
  - They could provide more professional development for artists, more programming around their exhibitions — including bringing the artists in to talk at art openings to help people understand the art which costs \$2-300 (which they can't afford). As well as other programming that heightens art and the impact it has. They do a residency once or twice a year, but artists don't get paid and they use their own supplies. They would like to pay the artists it would make it more impactful. With a serious increase they could hire someone for 1-2 days which would improve the programming, create a job, and improve the current owner's mental health.
  - They need funding to help grow the music industry in Kingston. There should be accountability for the money that one gets. If you're showing growth than you should keep receiving money, so that the industry can make sure that the funding is going into continued growth where it needs to happen. Their niche is to throw all ages punk and metal shows that a typical bar venue may not want to host.
- a. If it was reduced?
- N/A
  - The reduction in funding is causing a lot of artists to say, "don't even bother with applying".
  - Reduces opportunities for artists to make work and make a living.
  - They would do less. Wouldn't do all ages series. Would make venues less accessible and wouldn't be able to get as many venues.
  - Modern Fuel would close without KAC funding. Their operating budget is \$150K/year and they get \$48200/year from KAC. They cannot decrease the exhibitions because that is why they exist and if they had less exhibitions that would affect their funding. Their mandate is to support the production and interpretation of contemporary art, so if those programs get cut, they won't be able to meet their mandate.

Question 6. Do you volunteer your artistic skillset in the community? Can you give us an estimate of how many of your "work" hours are volunteered vs. paid?

- Sometimes for friends. Has volunteered with the arts council as a notetaker. All work hours are paid.
- Often volunteers her artistic skill set. Tries to avoid doing volunteered work.
- Volunteers when it's something meaningful to them. Tries to do only paid work. 25% is volunteered work in a year.

- A few charitable gigs as a musician. Also helps with Kingston festivals throughout the year. About 2 hours a week is volunteered.
- They get paid salary. They volunteer during exhibitions and special events with their writing and production skills.

Question 7. Do you do other volunteering in the community which does not include your artistic skillset? For example, volunteering at a hospital, community group, community events, etc.

- No
- No. No time
- Volunteer at the figure skating club, Tett Centre board member, chair of subtenants committee.
- Yes, largely with the disability community.
- No

a. How would these volunteer hours be impacted by an increase in the amount of arts funding that you receive?

- If I was funded, I would be much more amenable to doing volunteer work.
- N/A
- I would have more money to live on and thus more time to volunteer.
- N/A
- No impact

b. By a reduction in funding?

- N/A
- N/A
- No impact
- N/A
- N/A

Question 8. How would an increase in your funding impact you? You may discuss any issues that are important to you such as income, housing, food security, access to studio space, quality of life, mental health, life satisfaction, physical health, social connections, etc.

- Being funded would help their mental health and ease of living. It would also give them space to seek out more education and training and professional opportunities. They wouldn't spend too much more time with their family if they had funding, because they would have money to do other things.

- Would positively affect their mental health for sure. As they get older it is more important for them to manage their own time. Funding would allow them to manage their own time and give them more free time. It would also allow them to hire more people who could manage things in her absence. Create head space for living.
  - It would make their job easier overall. They could spend less time crunching numbers and applying for grants. They would not give themselves a raise, but instead hire someone else, or pay artists more. That would be a better use of funds.
  - Improve their income and housing stability. Improve their quality of life because they wouldn't be stressed about finishing a production. More life satisfaction, because they could do the work they could focus on meaningful work.
  - Positively affect their mental health. With more money they could take breaks. Of course, funding would help with housing and food security. Also, there are a lot of costs associated with prosthetic legs, and only so much is covered for that.
- a. How would these factors change if your funding was reduced?
- N/A
  - N/A
  - Negatively. They don't think they can work more hours. It would negatively affect their mental health and physical health. Part of their job is training and eating well.
  - N/A
  - N/A

Question 9. The following are basic demographic questions. They are being asked so that we can document whose voices are being represented by these interviews. No data analysis will be performed to determine demographic differences in interview responses. We will also ask some questions about your financial situation and the financial impact that the OAC cuts may have had on you. If you are not comfortable with answering a question, please tell us that you would prefer not to answer, and we will move on to the next question.

a. What is your age? 18-25, 26-40, 41-55, 56-65, 65+?

- 37
- 27
- 27
- 39
- 72

b. How do you self-identify in terms of gender?

- 5/5 identified as female



c. What area of Kingston do you live in (nearest intersection)?

- 1 block north of skeleton park
- Park and Regent
- Inner Harbour — near the Elm Cafe down on Rideau
- Russell and Patrick
- Raglan and Division

d. What's your educational background?

- Fine arts degree from Queen's. Part-time welding courses at St. Lawrence.
- Clown school, theatre of the oppressed, MA. Currently doing a PhD in research creation in cultural studies.
- College diploma, circus training, residencies, intensives
- Bachelor of Music from Queen's
- Bachelor from Concordia in video production and minor in political science. Master's of International Arts Management from Southern Methodist University in Texas.

e. What cultures do you identify with? This could include religions such as Buddhism, ethnicities such as Scottish, and languages such as Spanish.

- German, Columbian, first generation Canadian.
- White settler English
- English of British descent.
- Quebecois, Canadian, French and English.
- English language, non-religious, Caucasian, disabilities

f. Are there other identities or aspects of your life that you'd like to include?

- No
- Canadian
- No
- N/A

g. Could you provide an estimate of your annual household income before tax? (<\$25, 000, 25,000-50,000, 50,000-75,000, 75,000-100,000, >100,000).

- \$16000

- \$30-35000
- \$45000
- N/A
- \$100000

h. On estimate, what percentage of your work is paid in honorarium vs. per hour?

- 0
- 10% honorarium
- Does not think about it like that.
- 20% honorarium
- Does speaking gigs honorarium. Gets paid hourly for theatrical work and video editing.

How much of your work do you think is paid for fairly or at industry standard? Less than 50%, more than

- 50%?
- Most of the time they are paid fairly.
- 5% is paid fairly
- 10% paid fairly
- More than 50% paid fairly
- Modern Fuel salary is within industry standards. Arts work and non-profit pay is low compared to other industries. For video editing they get paid industry average which is quite high. For theatre work they don't get paid at all, performing arts is the hardest area to get paid in.

j. Could you provide an estimate of what percentage of your household income comes from the Kingston Arts Council? Less than 50%, more than 50%?

- 0
- N/A
- <5%
- <5%
- N/A

k. What percentage of your household income comes/came from OAC? Less than 50%, more than 50%?

- N/A

- 0
- <1%
- N/A
- ~7%

l. Do you have other sources of income?

- Part-time server at University Club at Queen's.
- Circus school, teach, performance, and ODSP
- Pension, some inheritance, some scholarships through Queen's
- Piano teacher
- Bartending

m. Do you have difficulty making ends meet financially?

- Sometimes, but never been in debt.
- Some years, but generally OK.
- Yes. Tired of working multiple jobs, wants one job. Would like to be in a place where they don't need to constantly look for different sources of income.
- Yes, enrolment is inconsistent at circus school.
- No

n. Is your housing situation stable?

- Yes
- Generally stable
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes

Question 10. We may profile some of the artists who we interview in the end-of-year report to the KAC and in the PhD Community Initiative presentation to fellow PhD participants and community organizations. The KAC may further use these profiles in a report to the City of Kingston. Would it be alright if we contacted you again in the future to gain more information about your story to create a profile?

- 5/5 said yes

Would you like your name to be attached to this profile?

- 5/5 said yes

## Additional Comments

“I moved from Montreal for MF, I did my Masters of Arts Management and I was finishing in 2018 and I wrote my thesis on artist co-ops, and MF was one of the examples, and they were hiring an Operational Director so I brought my thesis to the interview and they hired me. In a lot of ways, MF works so well because we are the only one in the region. And we partner with the Agnes a lot. Whereas in Montreal, the Museum of MA has no reason to partner with a smaller co-op. I think when governments are doing budgets, arts are always the first to get cut. But if you look at hard data, arts create a ton of economic and social value. And you can't live a day without arts. Try not listening to music, watching tv, consuming zero media or culture. It's going be the worst day of your life. So boring. And the arts that we do, they push social and political issues forward, and in a really important way by giving voice to marginalized communities and bringing communities together. In the way that artist run centres exist, we can't make more income. We can't charge people to come in. some galleries charge artists to put their art up. We pay artists, shipping, accommodations, etc. so the arts are really important to stimulate the population. And it's really sad when they get shafted by their governments.”