

Transcript: Mayor's Arts Lunch - At Home

September 24, 2020

Timestamp	Speaking	Transcript
0:00:00 - 00:01:45	Jesse Wenté	<p>Welcome everyone, to the 2020 Mayor's arts "lunch" - at home! I have to say, the crudités is a little bit disappointing but who do I have to blame but myself? My name is Jesse Wenté and I am delighted to be here hosting the Mayor's arts awards once again.</p> <p>I would like to acknowledge that we are on the Dish with One Spoon treaty territory. This treaty between the Haudenosaunee and my folks, the Anishinaabe, reminds us that this place is the dish and we only ever bring one spoon. We are all responsible for making sure that the dish is always full for the next spoon.</p> <p>As some of you will know - this is the fifth year I have hosted the lunch. I have to say, the venue this year is just terrific. I mean, you really decorated this thing exactly like my basement! I would never have imagined we could be in such a ballroom! And I'm going to go out on a limb here - of all the 5 years I have hosted, I bet it will be the strangest. But - strange or not - it is a real thrill to know that awards to artists are still being given out.</p> <p>It is a huge pleasure for me to be here today with the multi-talented writer and broadcaster Errol Nazareth. Many of you will be familiar with Errol as the host of the popular Saturday afternoon CBC Radio program, "Big City Small World". I'm pretty sure he's attended a few of these lunches in the past - and I'm so grateful that he's here. Welcome, Errol!</p>
00:01:45 - 00:03:11	Errol Nazareth	<p>Thanks Jesse - it is a pleasure to be co-hosting with you today! I've attended many of these awards and this is one of the awards shows that I really care about because they really care about the local music scene, arts scene, and especially youth groups. I'm all about that. And congratulations on the TIFF's People's Choice Documentary award for Michelle Latimer's "The Inconvenient Indian" and I also wanted to congratulate you on your recent appointment as chair of the Canada Council for the Arts!</p> <p>This year is the 15th annual Mayor's Arts Lunch - a really terrific event close to my heart. Over the next 60 minutes (fingers crossed) we will have the opportunity to hear about and celebrate some of Toronto's most exceptional talent.</p> <p>For the duration of the program you will see Gaitrie Persaud on screen providing ASL interpretation. We also have closed captioning enabled for this event. This can be accessed by clicking on the closed captioning icon at the bottom of your zoom screen. If you have any issues with tech, please indicate this in the chat function and one of our tech team will private message you with assistance.</p>
00:03:11 - 00:04:48	Jesse	<p>So - we have been introduced to you, and I know that some of you are wondering who else is here. Unlike the live event it's slightly harder to introduce yourselves. But - there is a function on your screen called "chat" - please use it to say who you are and if you represent an organization. And - please - don't just let the panelists know - make sure you're writing it to everyone.</p>

		<p>Everyone with us today - you are all deserving of celebration and acknowledgment! You've all been through a lot. This year, we have a number of you who are celebrating big organizational anniversaries and milestones – At least 8 that I know of! Perhaps the longest-running of which is the National Ballet School, who is celebrating 60 years. Amazing! Second-longest is a tie at 50 years of operation for Factory Theatre and Open Studio. I know there are more of you out there though - drop us a comment in the chat function to tell everyone what you are celebrating this year!</p> <p>And now it is time to welcome Gaëtane Verna, the president of the board of Toronto Arts Council and member of the Toronto Arts Foundation board of directors.</p>
<p>00:04:48 - 00:07:05</p>	<p>Gaëtane Verna</p>	<p>Thank you, Jesse and Errol, for being our hosts today!</p> <p>On behalf of both the Toronto Arts Council and Toronto Arts Foundation boards of directors, I want to thank you all for joining us today to celebrate an incredible list of finalists for these awards. As an arts professional myself who spends most of her life working directly with artists, I know how challenging it can be to maintain your artistic practice in a changing world, and I want to extend my deepest congratulations for everyone being recognized today. You are truly the lifeblood of this city, and I am honoured to be here with you all this afternoon.</p> <p>There are also many of you in this room who are sponsors, donors, and partners in our programming. I want to thank you too, for your incredible investment of time, funding and on-the-ground-effort in shaping Toronto as an arts city. We also have many arts lovers who volunteer their time to keep our organizations strong.</p> <p>On that note, I'd like to recognize Foundation board chair Kathleen Sharpe and Council board chair Dina Graser. As well as all of the staff members of both organizations, for their tireless effort and dedication to artists and the community.</p> <p>And while we are on the subject of on-the-ground support... It is my absolute pleasure to introduce Mayor John Tory to say a few words. Mayor Tory, as a citizen of this City, you have been an invaluable champion of the arts in Toronto, which I know all too well as I run the Powerplant Contemporary Art Gallery at Harbourfront Centre. Thank you for all of your ongoing and tireless support and your leadership in such difficult times and thank you for being here with us today.</p>
<p>00:07:05 - 00:16:49</p>	<p>Mayor John Tory</p>	<p>Gaëtane thank you, and thank you to Jesse and Errol for hosting today. Thank you everybody for coming - I think it's a real tribute to the event that people have showed up in such large numbers.</p> <p>I am very happy to be joined by some Councillors who are also steadfast supporters of the arts and that's why they're here: Councillor Ainslie, Deputy Mayor Bailao, Councillor Gary Crawford, Councillor Joe Cressy, Councillor John Fillion, Councillor Mike Layton, Councillor Josh Matlow, Councillor James Pasternak, and Deputy Mayor Michael Thompson, so thank you to them and all members of City Council are all very supportive of what we are trying to do here and every day in support of a vibrant arts community. I also want to say welcome to the honourable Lisa MacLeod;</p>

the Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Cultural Industries. Lisa would tell you that when she got that appointment I told her that this was the best job you could ever get in government - to be the Minister of Culture in particular. I think she's discovered that's true and she has thrown herself in with her customary enthusiasm and energy to this job. She has become a real supporter of this sector in Toronto and across the province of course.

As also the Federal MPs have been: Julie Dzerowicz, Julie Dabrusin and Adam Vaughan, who are here today. And Provincial MPP's Peter Tabuns and Mitzie Hunter. We need all the advocates and supports we can get in the public service and I am happy that those people are here today. I am very proud that Al Moritz, our Poet Laureate and Michele Pearson Clarke, our Photo Laureate are here with us as well.

This is one of my favourite events every year, and I was saying earlier that the energy you get from people being in the same room physically is something extraordinary. But nonetheless we are gathered here today in spite of COVID-19. I had an opportunity to visit a few of the Reception breakout rooms before this, and to say thank you to a few of the artists here today. Artists were among the hardest hit - people don't focus on the fact that artists are largely self-employed and that when there's no place to perform or show your work then you are put in a position of great difficulty. Notwithstanding that, artists were the ones who were the first to show up, raise money for others and to bring a sense of joy that got people and their mental health through this.

Now, the task in front of all of us is first of all to get through the pandemic. I encourage you all to continue to wash your hands, wear face coverings, keep your distance, not go to parties that you don't need to go to, or holding parties you don't need to hold. This kind of stuff is going to really help us get through. And then we're going to have to work hard in collaboration with one another to get the arts community fully back on its feet. To get exhibitions going, theatres up and running, concerts to be held and so on - there are come "green chutes" as I like to say, that are showing themselves. I was commenting earlier on the conservatories slowly getting back to business, the film industry is coming back to life - but we have a long way to go. What this shows us is that the arts and artists are resilient. I think we knew that before, but this has been the ultimate test.

It bears repetition that in this City the arts are important because they allow people to tell the incredible number of stories that exist in a city like this and those stories have to be told especially now when we have so many issues to deal with on account of systemic racism. I was so proud, for example, to be out in Etobicoke at Montgomery's Inn and to have a wonderful sculpture that we unveiled there that is going to tell quite a story of the Underground Railroad and some of the things that we have to come to grips with here in Toronto in terms of our history. The Toronto sign just outside my office window here has a wonderful wrap around the new sign that is a tribute to the decade of people of African descent. Again, you can learn from looking at it and I hope everyone comes to see it. But the arts are also an extremely important industry, as we look at the economy coming back so that we can provide for everybody's wellbeing in the city, it is important that people be employed and be back at work. The arts are going to play a hugely important role in our recovery - not the least of

		<p>which is the factor of beginning hope and joy to people. Those concerts that were on television, the pop-up performances in neighbourhoods, those events kept people literally sane of mind in a time when they were under huge stress during the worst of the lockdown. And that just shows again the importance of the arts.</p> <p>We have maintained our annual funding and Gary Crawford, Budget Chief, and I will maintain and hopefully enhance our funding of \$34.29 million dollars including \$25 million to the Toronto Arts Council itself. That's important to maintain and to enhance if at all possible, notwithstanding some of the challenges that we face because the sector has to move forward. During the early stages I am proud to say that the Council and Foundation also disbursed over \$836,000 to artists before the Emergency Benefit (CERB) kicked in; and the city distributed \$500,000 in a Cultural Festivals Recovery Program. So this was taking some of the money that otherwise might have been invested and saying "we're going to invest in helping those Festivals recover". because they have got to come back bigger and better than ever next year. We have also helped the music sector (and hats-off to Councillors Joe Cressy and Gary Crawford and others on this) by expanding the creative co-location tax subclass to include live music venues and offer 48 venues almost \$2 million in tax relief. We also heard from many of you how we have to do a better job of supporting black and indigenous artists and organizations.</p> <p>In our own recovery program for the City, which we are proceeding with cautiously, but you'll notice that they all have a substantial component of artistry and support for local artists. Through programs like StrollTO, HistoricTO, or BigArtTO, we can all experience our city's thriving public arts, and help local businesses recover from the impacts of covid-19. I encourage all of you to take part in these new programs so you can experience new moments in our city and support our thriving arts community who need it now more than ever. Looking ahead, there is more work to be done. and ensure inclusion and equity are at the heart of everything we are doing moving forward. Beyond funding, we are doing our part through the #ShowLoveTO, a campaign we launched that will allow Torontonians to safely re-engage with their city.</p> <p>Finally, I wanted to mention the year of public art called ArtWorxTO happens with the contributions of so many of you at this lunch. I want to mention the leadership taken on this initiative by the tremendous Sara Diamond, but also by our own City staff in putting that together.</p> <p>I'd like to by saying thank you to Kathleen Sharpe, Gaëtane Verna, Dina Graser, and of course Claire Hopkinson and her team for their leadership and hard work. Finally, I'd like to thank you, the artists, the originals, the creators and your support teams for continuing to find ways to make meaning and connect us all whether online or outdoors, through your generosity, persistence, collaboration and creative visions. Let's not lose sight of the arts...it will help us get through this pandemic and I am confident we will be stronger than ever. Please stay healthy and safe.</p> <p>Thank you for this opportunity to say a few words.</p>
<p>00:16:49 - 00:17:42</p>	<p>Errol</p>	<p>Thank you, Mayor Tory. I agree that artists are resilient. I know many artists, musicians, actors, playwrights and many of them are really hurting financially and mentally. I hope they are holding tight and I hope that the</p>

		<p>City will continue to keep them on their radar. They are very important to us, and that is why we need these events that show love to them.</p> <p>I always like awards events where the winner is secret until the event. We in this room will be the first to find out who has won each award. To be followed a nanosecond later by the social media universe. For those of you tweeting and instagramming, please use the hashtag #TOArtsAwards</p> <p>Before we get to the finalists, all sitting on the edge of their seats (or perhaps pacing nervously around their basements?), we have a number of people in this room to celebrate...</p>
00:17:42 - 00:18:26	Jesse	<p>Our award nominators! Let's face it, we can't celebrate exceptional accomplishments if people don't take the time to nominate the people who inspire them! Nominators, thank you for your generosity in taking the time to put these stellar finalists in the spotlight.</p> <p>I would be remiss if I didn't also mention the incredible team of 20 award panelists who have come together to help select this year's finalists. Each panelist has a bio in our program book... the link has been posted in chat and I encourage you to look them all up.</p>
00:18:26 - 00:18:34	Errol	<p>And now I would like to welcome the Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, the honourable Lisa MacLeod.</p>
00:18:34 - 00:20:37	Minister MacLeod	<p>Thank you Errol and congratulations again Jesse. Thank you Mayor Tory you were right a year ago telling me that this is the best job in Government. However, as you have noted we have been hit with a real triple-threat for our double bottom line. As I often say, we are responsible in this industry, as well as all of you, for driving a wonderful cultural fabric in the province of Ontario, our country, and your city in Particular. And at the same time, creating thousands of jobs and representing over \$74billion in the province's economy. We have obviously been hit by a health pandemic which created an economic crisis, and of course all of you are on the frontlines of the social crisis. Throughout the pandemic, we recognized how hard you have been hit and that's why we will continue to make strategic investments to support the efforts. I believe that the next creative revolution will happen during this period of time and that the cultural industries will help lead the recovery.</p> <p>I also wanted to be here today to help celebrate Toronto's great art and artists. It is my privilege today to introduce a specially commissioned performance from the incomparable Molly Johnson. I know you all know Molly – one of Canada's greatest voices. She is also the force behind Toronto's Kensington Jazz Festival – entering its 5th year – and winner of many awards, including a 2004 Toronto Arts Foundation Award.</p> <p>As we go through the second wave - and we've seen some pretty devastating numbers - it's really important that we continue to gather as we are today and to listen to the hopeful messages from the artists in Toronto and abroad, including Molly Johnson here doing what she does best. Please join me in welcoming Molly Johnson. Enjoy!</p>
00:20:37 - 00:24:00	Molly Johnson	<p>Hey John, and the rest of y'all. Toronto arts community, I am so thankful you are here supporting the arts. Thank you.</p>

		<i>(Performance by Molly Johnson)</i>
00:24:00 - 00:27:44	Claire	<p>Wasn't that beautiful? A big thanks goes out to Molly and her band for that brilliant performance!</p> <p>Hello everyone - my name is Claire Hopkinson, and I am the Director and CEO of Toronto Arts Foundation and Toronto Arts Council. Thank you Mayor, thank you Minister, and all of our esteemed guests. It's great to see so many of you online to support Toronto's great artists.</p> <p>This is truly a strange moment in time, but I am energized by the opportunity to be with you all here today. Like many of you, I have been craving the connection that comes so naturally at live arts events. Galleries, exhibitions, performances, you name it – the arts bring Torontonians together. Thank you to all our Foundation donors and sponsors who make today's awards and event happen. I'd also like to note, with gratitude, the wonderful generosity of donors (artists and non-artists alike) who contributed to our covid19 response fund, making it possible to help out all artists who applied due to cancelled contracts.</p> <p>In normal years as I stand before this audience, I am inspired by the leadership, commitment and talent looking back up at me from every table. While this year I may not be able to see all of your faces, I am proud to say that everyone invited to be with us today... is an inspiration to our community. As we've seen in the chat – those here today include incoming and outgoing leadership, artists recently recognized for their achievements, and past recipients who have won awards from Toronto Arts Foundation over our 25 year history.</p> <p>At last year's lunch, I spoke about the "changing of the guard" that was occurring with so many exciting new voices stepping into artistic leadership positions across the city. Now, as the world continues to grapple with the effects of the covid-19 pandemic, I watch as all of you, our arts leaders, incoming and outgoing solidify their position as true champions in their communities. You are not standing in the wings. You have paused, adapted, pivoted, digitized, amplified, and improvised. You have listened and learned. You have done what artists do best, and you have helped countless Torontonians cope with the changing reality throughout this process. I truly cannot express the gratitude I have for each one of you. From the bottom of my heart, and on behalf of both the Toronto Arts Council and Toronto Arts Foundation - thank you for your tireless efforts.</p> <p>And to remind all of us of some of our greatest stage moments I am pleased to take this opportunity to launch a 'sizzle reel' for the "missing live theatre" campaign, which has been gaining so much attention this week. Thank you to TAPA and the live event community for reminding us of the gap left in our lives when performing arts spaces shut down - and encouraging audiences to return once our performance companies start to reopen. Please watch this "sizzle reel" now which asks the question: what is my favourite moment of live theatre?</p>
00:27:44 - 00:28:40	Video:	<i>(Sizzle Reel: Missing Live Theatre)</i>
00:28:40 -	Errol	Thank you, Claire. And thanks to all of you at Toronto Arts Council and

00:30:18		<p>the Foundation for working so hard to keep the community strong. Speaking of community - my word man, you should see the chat section in here. It's just lit up with so much love and great energy. Let's keep that positive energy going!</p> <p>And now, moving on to the Toronto Arts Foundation Awards! Some of these awards date back to 1991, some are presented only once every two years, and all are very special recognition with great meaning for the individual and organizations. You can see a list of the remarkable people and organizations that have been honoured by Toronto Arts Foundation in the past in the program. For 11 years now, the Foundation has been commissioning an exceptional work of art from a Toronto artist as the award. This year's awards plate was created by Luis Jacob who is in the zoom room with us today. The plate shows the artist's hand in the act of opening a book. The book is Jesse Edgar Middleton's "<i>The Municipality of Toronto: a History</i>", published in 1923. Printed words on both the book and the awards plate almost a century later read: "to the citizens of Toronto - past and present." What a poignant and lovely work. Thank you, Luis.</p> <p>And doesn't that line encapsulate the value of Toronto's artists - their work creates an ongoing gift to the citizens of Toronto. In celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Toronto Arts Foundation, we have created a look back at the history of these awards and former recipients. Let's take a look!</p>
00:30:18 - 00:33:40	VIDEO	(Congratulations from Past Recipients)
00:33:40 - 00:35:35	Errol	<p>What an incredible group of past recipients - I think I'm ready to add a few new ones to that list... Let's begin. Our finalists will be joining us onscreen as I introduce the award.</p> <p>The Celebration of Cultural Life awards embrace the spirit of Toronto Arts Council founding president William Kilbourn and recognize excellence in three of Toronto's senior arts practitioners. The awards celebrate individual performers, teachers, administrators and/or creators in any arts discipline, including architecture and design, whose work is a celebration of life through the arts. The awards were re-established in 2017 by Arthur Dalfen who sponsors both the recipient prize of \$10,000 and the finalist awards of \$2,000 each. In addition to the prize money, the 2019 recipient will receive a complimentary weeklong stay at Valleyview Artist Retreat. The finalists are...</p> <p>First up we have Karen and Allen Kaeja. Co-artistic directors of kaeja d'dance for over 30 years. Our awards panel called them "legends" who have had a "huge impact on Toronto".</p> <p>Next is Sandra Laronde the Executive and Artistic Director of red sky performance, a leader in contemporary indigenous performance. Our panelists were impressed with her "amazing work and amazing career as a mentor and educator who has committed her life to the arts."</p> <p>And finally, we have Ryan Rice, an independent curator and an associate dean at OCAD university whose career spans 25 years in the curatorial field. The panelists called him "an enabler of others and their careers".</p>

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		As our finalists leave your screen, Mayor John Tory will introduce our first presenter.
00:35:35 - 00:35:50	Mayor John Tory	Please welcome live from New Orleans, Juno Award-winning trumpeter and recipient of the 2016 William Kilbourn Award, David Buchbinder to present the celebration of cultural life award on behalf of Arthur Dalfen.
00:35:50 - 00:36:14	David Buchbinder	Thank you Mayor Tory - it is with a great deal of love and hope that I am delighted to announce that the recipient of the Celebration of Cultural Life Award is - Sandra Laronde!
00:36:14 - 00:38:52	Sandra Laronde	<p>Wow - I wasn't expecting that. Thank you so much. I am so surprised!</p> <p>I just want to whole-heartedly say chi-miigwech and thank you to the Toronto Arts Foundation and Toronto Arts Council for celebrating artists during a time of devastating impact on our industry. We have all had to endure a lot of anxiety and darkness in the covid-19 pandemic. In spite of all this, so many artists have been resourceful and resilient and remarkable in their will to keep moving forward. I applaud artists for doing that.</p> <p>As I stand here on the Dish with One Spoon Territory; the territory of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Mississaugas of New Credit, I would like to take the opportunity to say chi-miigwech and thank <i>you</i> for being a shining example of the incandescent lives of the indigenous people who've come before us. I would also like to acknowledge all of the indigenous people who continue to work and thrive in this great city of Toronto. I know many of you and I am so so proud of you.</p> <p>I also want to say a huge thank you to my artistic collaborators, thought-leaders, movers and shakers, all of whom are integral to Red Sky's distinct productions. Cultural elders as well - we have accomplished so much in our 20 short years. I am thrilled to be mentioned along with the phenomenal talents of Karen and Allen Kaeja and Ryan Rice, all of whom I deeply respect as fellow colleagues. Congratulations to you!</p> <p>Thank you to the Toronto Arts Foundation and the Toronto Arts Council for celebrating us as artists, as arts and cultural leaders, and as people who care deeply as arts and culture in the city, as well as bringing Toronto - as we do - to the world. We are a world-class city in Toronto, and I know Toronto has supported my career deeply. I have been able to make things happen along with so many others in this great city of Toronto. I want to say chi-miigwech and thank you to everyone. I am deeply, deeply moved.</p>
00:38:52 - 00:40:21	Jesse	<p>Yay Sandra - way to go! And congratulations to all of our finalists. I am so happy for you. The finalists for our second award are now appearing on screen.</p> <p>The Emerging Artist Award, created to support the development or</p>

		<p>completion of new work. This \$10,000 cash prize was established in 2006 and is sponsored by Susan Crocker and John Hunkin. And the two finalists will each receive \$2,000 thanks to the support of the Bulmash-Siegel fund.</p> <p>Our first finalist is Britta B. - a Toronto-based poet, spoken word performer, emcee and artist educator. The assessment panel was very impressed with her work, commenting that it is "timely and empowering".</p> <p>Next up we have Leila Fatemi- an emerging artist, curator and community arts worker. Fatemi's work forges understanding and appreciation for Islamic culture and traditions - the assessment panel called it "gorgeous".</p> <p>Our third finalist is jes sachse, an artist, writer and choreographer who often combines poetry with large scale sculptural forms. The assessment panel was impressed by their body of work and extensive portfolio.</p> <p>As our finalists leave your screen, over to Mayor Tory to introduce our presenter.</p>
<p>00:40:21 - 00:40:41</p>	<p>Mayor John Tory</p>	<p>Thank you Jesse. Congratulations to all 3 finalists of the Emerging Artist Award. I'd like to invite past Chair of Toronto Arts Foundation and Toronto Arts Council, and arts philanthropist par excellence, Susan Crocker to announce the recipient.</p>
<p>00:40:41 - 00:41:33</p>	<p>Susan Crocker</p>	<p>Thank you Mayor Tory - it is very nice to see you. This award offers a really important vote of confidence in the early stages of an artist's career, and my husband John Hunkin and I have been very proud to support emerging artists through this award. All of the nominees this year are incredibly talented and will go on to have a powerful impact on their artistic practices. I hope they are all very proud to be on the stage here today. I am delighted to announce that the recipient of the Emerging Artist Award for this year is - jes sachse!</p>
<p>00:41:33 - 00:49:00</p>	<p>jes sachse</p>	<p>I would like to thank my stunning co-finalists. I could not be in better company. I look forward to growing alongside you and your practices greatly.</p> <p>We have been asked by the Toronto Arts Foundation to keep our speaking time to 2 minutes. While wanting to respect everyone's time, including our wonderful interpreters Marcia and Gaitrie, to whom I was unable to produce my words ahead of time, it is my intention by way of spoons and disabled time to go slow. I believe institutions and Sir Robert calls this a filibuster, however I would like to ask... "what is time?" right here and right now.</p> <p>Disability takes time. Spoons are a calculation of time that disabled folks use. We all have bodies and we have all learned to place blame and harm on our bodies. We haven't nurtured self-trust in our bodies and instead plant faith in institutions. But we are in a pandemic and I know that explaining spoons is time I can take right now because you will all understand. And for those of you who don't, perhaps you will open yourselves up to something now far more legible to you, as the earth has</p>

spoken loud interruptions into our ideas of infrastructure of even now "business as usual". Spoons are a calculation of energy. It doesn't assume that we all wake up in a day with the same reservoir. It is a way to communicate that isn't static. Some activities cost more spoons than others. Attending this luncheon in my booty shorts and tank top from home is less spoons than schmoozing at a place of wealth like the King Edward Hotel, and it is collaborative and collective. We check in and share spoons where we can. Does this make sense?

I feel gratitude for a world where I can be comfortable at home with ASL and closed captioning and treated with dignity at an event like this. Grateful to folks hosting this and learning how to host accessible events. Zoom and translation and frameworks are not new. Disability justice has been making space in the digital and in the real for decades. We are all lucky beneficiaries of this legacy of labour that centres bodies and pain. With these pains and waves and fires, I'd like to thank the land that we are on for the pandemic. This is not a land acknowledgement frankly, because I have not personally earned those relationships and their names. But I can thank the planet for what it is doing to make our attention drawn toward a host of preventable destruction. The planet has replenished some spoons.

I feel grateful to be up here at all because of my communities. Because of the histories of deaf, mad and disables folks that this country has a very deep history of punishing and excluding and erasing. This isn't a painful acknowledgement, it is a joyful one. In the ten years that have gone by since I was visible at all artistically, I have met and connected with so many wonderful humans like me, in search of people like me, wanting what humans do so well when they can let go of ego and get out of their own fear-riddled clutch towards fallacies of control - and that is connection.

I wish I could tell you all of the stories of all of those connections that I hold in my tiny body, but I know that that is not the point, and I know that you all have your own. The notion of "visibility" in the arts has been a temporary and at times violent necessity because of the container that bears it. Awards like this follow suit. The only reason we need awards and acknowledgement at all is because we are neglecting to do that in our day-to-day. I have no better words than what is shared in your program by Unit 2 "without the support of our community, we would not have survived." Unit 2 has also survived me. They are my neighbours just up the street in the West End in a collective apartment that I have been living in for 8 years. Housing in Toronto is becoming a heartbreak. I would like you to know that especially, John Tory. And to deeply consider funding the rent of such a space as Unit 2, which is caring for and helping to house your city's youth in perpetuity.

Last night I sat on the warm asphalt of Queen Street East, around the

		<p>impromptu flatbed-truck podium of the Encampment Support Network listening to residents of Moss Park and their allies talk so fervently about the city that they love and what they need to live with dignity.</p> <p>With this award, I know the only real thanks owed are to the mass that creates money. The true gratitude I feel with community is already there. It's already in gardens and kitchens and zines and demo's and fart-laughs in back alleys. It's not window dressing - it's late-night phone calls that you can't tell are meetings, or friendships, or crisis-intervention support. I am not grateful to the institution of art, but to my peers and to the work itself of being here and being alive and to grow old enough to be an elder disabled artist. That is air in my lungs that I could never pay back.</p> <p>Ten years ago this May 2020, where I would have met all of your "luncheon" people in the real, I met a 16-year old over Facebook DM with the very same and very rare condition I have because I made art and now I was the second thing to come up on google other than our condition's shitty Wikipedia. I remember feeling such connection with someone just like me: queer, trans, disabled, in butt-fuck nowhere Michigan. But mostly at 25, I felt an awe in my body at what it would have meant to meet a "me" at 16. I didn't get paid to be in CONTACT Photography Festival, for that work they had found that I had curated ten years ago that went very viral and very violently experienced first exposure into what you all call tan arts community. I was a Diane Arbus joke at best - even though I didn't know who the heck that was. It reflected the viral elitism that still congratulates itself in the arts.</p> <p>However, I would like to share that it is not all that is here and not all that has been here. Carley Eversol, my friend, now 26, has performed with me at the Art Gallery of Ontario, through the invitation of <i>Life of a Craphead</i> in a performance that quite frankly went up in flames. But, much like how 2 minutes is not enough to tell every story, it is I hope time enough to pause and to hold connection with Carley, with art, and with all of you.</p> <p>Thank you everyone - and thank you for this small pie.</p>
<p>00:49:00 - 00:50:37</p>	<p>Errol</p>	<p>Congratulations jes - that's a really good pie. I had one yesterday! Someone in the chat said "thank you for sharing such powerful words and reflections. a lot for us to think about." A wonderful, wonderful speech.</p> <p>The finalists for our third award are now appearing on screen. The Community Arts Award is a \$10,000 cash prize presented by Toronto Arts Foundation's Neighbourhood Arts Network. This award celebrates an arts organization that has made a significant contribution in Toronto by working with, in and for communities, while creating access and inclusion to arts and culture. Let's meet the finalists!</p> <p>First up - Since 2011, the esplanade has been enlivened by the local arts</p>

		<p>group Jamii, which means “community” in swahili. The assessment panel was particularly impressed with their clever programming and by the high calibre production quality of their programs - which remarkably have been carrying on, despite the pandemic.</p> <p>Next, we have Muse Arts which works to increase support, access and visibility to immigrant, refugee and newcomer artists and their communities. The assessment panel was impressed with their approach to youth which focuses on giving them creative skills needed to succeed.</p> <p>Finally, Unit 2. They are a D.I.T. (do it together) space run by a collective of artist-activists who span the queer, trans, two-spirit, bipoc, mad, and crip communities. The assessment panel valued their intentional creation of anti-oppressive space that centres self-determination.</p> <p>As our finalists leave your screen, over to Mayor Tory to introduce our presenter.</p>
<p>00:50:37 - 00:50:48</p>	<p>Mayor John Tory</p>	<p>Again, congratulations to all of the finalists. I am very pleased to welcome the CEO of MOD Developments and sponsor of the award, Gary Switzer to present the community arts award.</p>
<p>00:50:48 - 00:51:05</p>	<p>Gary Switzer</p>	<p>Thank you Mayor. We are very proud and honoured to be presenting this award for the second time to the community. I am pleased to announce that the winner is - and I'll open the envelope... Jamii!</p>
<p>00:51:05 00:54:00</p>	<p>Jamii</p>	<p>Sharon McMillan: Wow - thank you Toronto Arts Foundation and Toronto Arts Council! We are so proud that Jamii was selected as a finalist with such outstanding organizations: Muse Arts and Unit-2. Congratulations for the exceptional work you are all doing!</p> <p>This award goes to the hundreds of artists who define Jamii; To the hundreds of Toronto's Esplanadians who have participated in arts-making with us; To those who have worked with us through the years, paid or unpaid, including directors of our board, and; To those who kept on encouraging us in their own way during our journey. We are grateful and I hope that, today, everyone who has ever added a brick to build the Jamii house feels the butterflies that I do.</p> <p>Isorine Marc: In 2021, we will be celebrating our 10-year anniversary and this award feels like a recognition for and appreciation of the artistic quality, the depth of our social contract, and our commitment to the Esplanade community and beyond. Thank you.</p> <p>When I go home tonight, my two daughters will be back from school and I will tell them with pride about the award and what it means for me. They watch me working day in and day out; they attend most of the Jamii events; they listen to the “Jamii conversation” again and again; I share with them my crazy ideas, my challenges, and my happy moments. They will feel in their hearts their mother's pride in winning this award. And with this award, my hope is that I will inspire them. Inspire them to express their crazy ideas, to face challenges and to celebrate happy moments. If I inspire them, chances are that Jamii will inspire countless other girls and boys. And this would be the ultimate goal so that the work carries on to the next generation.</p>

Transcript: Mayor's Arts Lunch - At Home

September 24, 2020

		<p>This award is the most welcomed, energizing wind blowing our sails as we look ahead to the next 10 years, while pursuing our work to enhance social cohesion through the arts in the Esplanade community and beyond. May the Jamii house continue to shelter creativity. Thank you so much!</p>
00:54:00 - 00:54:26	Jesse	<p>And now onto our fourth award - the Toronto Arts and Business award, celebrates businesses that make important contributions to the arts in Toronto through innovative and transformative partnerships. Established in 2006, this award is presented in partnership with Toronto Arts Foundation, Business Arts, and the Toronto star.</p> <p>To introduce our presenter please welcome Mayor Tory.</p>
00:54:26 - 00:54:40	Mayor Tory	<p>Thank you Jesse - the assessment panel for this award has selected one recipient and I am delighted to invite Toronto Star book editor, Deborah Dundas to join us and present the award.</p>
00:54:40 - 00:55:20	Deborah Dundas	<p>Thank you so much, Mayor Tory. It is my pleasure to announce that this year's Toronto arts and business award recipient is... Concord Adex! This company has been building Canadian urban communities for over 30 years with a focus on urban planning, city parks and privately funded public art. In their own words "public art helps us give a sense of personality to our developments and to be part of the cultural growth of Toronto."</p> <p>Please welcome Terry Hui president and CEO of Concord Pacific Developments to accept this award.</p>
00:55:20 - 00:58:00	Terry Hui	<p>Thank you Deborah and The Star for being supportive of us. Here before Mayor Tory, City Councillors and representatives from different levels of government, the Toronto art community, panelists, artists and media - We are honoured to receive this award on behalf of everyone involved in public art programs across Canada. Concord has been building Canada's largest urban communities for decades in Toronto, Vancouver and numerous cities across Canada. Art within our parks and public spaces has always been a part of our overall community plans.</p> <p>Public art is work generated for the public by a public process for public spaces. The creator of the art piece is not just the artist but also the people involved in the public process. The art is the unity of the work itself, the context of public space, and how people interact with it.</p> <p>If we believe art serves the purpose of communicating the culture and the social substrate of our time, I can't think of anything more inclusive than the public art process itself to tell the cultural stories of our cities.</p> <p>Concord has had the pleasure to work with first nations, Canadian, and international artists. A big part of our public art program is the support of local emerging artists. A few got their start with large format public art in our communities and have gone on to represent Canada internationally. I look forward to our future involvement in significant pieces that will become international landmarks in Canada.</p> <p>I knew nothing about public art when I started as a builder of communities a few decades ago. Today, our primary curator boasts to us that our public art collection is Canada's largest. It has been an inspiring journey</p>

		<p>for me and my team to witness this process.</p> <p>Again, thank you to Mayor Tory and to the panelists for the award and because it's public art, we share it with all the artists, the Toronto public art committee, consultants and city planners who worked with us on them. Thank you.</p>
00:58:00 - 00:59:40	Errol	<p>Thanks Terry. The contribution of public art to city life is important and topical, particularly given the upcoming year of public art in 2021 called ArtWorxTO! The finalists for our next award are now appearing on screen.</p> <p>This is another award for emerging artists. In this case - the emerging jazz artist award - a \$10,000 cash prize and in pre-covid times, the opportunity to perform at the TD Toronto Jazz Festival. Finalists each receive \$1,000. The award, so generously sponsored by Manuel and Cheryl Buchwald, furthers the career of an outstanding emerging jazz artist (of which there are many in Toronto - trust me!) and is intended to support the pre-production, production, and/or recording of original music composed by the recipient.</p> <p>Our first finalist is Canadian bassist & composer Lauren Falls who has made a big impact on the jazz scene. In her own words, Lauren encapsulates the value of an award for any emerging artist when she says: "the importance of recognition and support cannot be overstated."</p> <p>Next, we have Matt Lagan - a saxophonist, composer and bandleader who has toured to 12 countries with the Shuffle Demons. The assessment panel really appreciated Matt's passion for music and noted that he stands out as someone taking jazz in new places.</p> <p>And finally, Jesse Ryan, a Trinidad-born saxophonist and composer who has been praised as a fresh new voice, with a unique perspective on the music of today. The assessment panel were very impressed by his writing, saying it was brilliant and complex without being overwhelming.</p> <p>As our finalists leave your screen, over to Mayor Tory to introduce our presenter.</p>
00:59:40 - 00:59:50	Mayor John Tory	Please welcome sponsor and jazz enthusiast Manuel Buchwald to present the emerging jazz artist award.
00:59:50 - 01:00:34	Manuel Buchwald	Thank you, Mayor Tory. Cheryl and I are pleased and honoured to be able to announce this winner for the seventh year of the Emerging Jazz Artist Award. I will do the honour of opening the envelope and announcing the winner for this year who is... Jesse Ryan! Congratulations Jesse and congratulations also Lauren and Matt!
01:00:34 - 01:02:50	Jesse Ryan	Thank you so much. This is really overwhelming - my heart is beating so fast right now, but I wanted to start off by saying good afternoon to everyone! It's great to be here with you all virtually and I'd like to begin with some acknowledgements. His Worship John Tory, Mayor of Toronto, it's an honour and thank you for all the work you do in Toronto, especially during these challenging times. I'd like to say a special thank you to Claire Hopkinson the Director and CEO of the Foundation along

		<p>with the Foundation's Board of Directors, and civic leaders.</p> <p>Last year I had the opportunity to meet Cheryl and Manuel Buchwald and hear their heart for supporting artists like myself. Thank you so much for your support, this award means more than you can imagine, especially this year. To my fellow finalists, a heartfelt congratulations to you as well. We all know how much being recognized for our creative contributions means to us. It truly is an honour to be part of such a creative and prestigious event and I'm even more honoured to be elected as the recipient of this year's Emerging Jazz Artist Award. As a musician and composer my journey has often been filled with moments of reaching deep within to try to find the next thing that's worth sharing that can impact the lives of the people I can reach positively. My search for artistic direction has been always paired with questions of self-doubt, "is this possible?", "Can I do it?", "Do I have what I need to succeed?"</p> <p>In the past, I've received the answers to these questions by trusting the process, by tuning in to positive voices within my community, by asking for help from mentors or colleagues and most importantly by relying on my faith in God. Well, today is really special because now I can add The Toronto Arts Foundation to that list. "is this possible?", "Can I do it?", "Do I have what I need to succeed?" Yes! This award, especially this year, makes it possible for artists like myself to create more, to dream more, to inspire more and most of all to live a little more. Thanks again to the Toronto Arts Foundation and everyone that made the moment possible. May God bless you all.</p>
<p>01:02:50 - 01:04:39</p>	<p>Jesse Wentz</p>	<p>Congratulations Jesse - it is always great to see Jesse's win awards because the chat is just saying "Congrats Jesse" all over the place! From one Jesse to another - I love it.</p> <p>It's hard to believe that we are already through five awards! We might be breaking some records in timing today... Or not - it doesn't matter - I've lost all track of time! So let's keep it going. The finalists for our sixth award of the afternoon are now appearing on screen.</p> <p>The Roy Thomson Hall award of recognition is a \$10,000 cash prize presented to an individual, ensemble, or organization to recognize creative, performing, administrative, volunteer or philanthropic contributions to Toronto's musical life.</p> <p>Our first finalist is Murray Foster, professor of music at Seneca College and Juno-nominated former member of Moxy Fruvous and Great Big Sea. Our panel was particularly impressed with his work as a community leader and inspirational speaker and noted that he creates opportunities for other artists.</p> <p>Next, Nagata Shachu - a Japanese taiko drumming and music group that has performed throughout Canada and abroad. The panel particularly liked their collaborative approach and considered them very important for Toronto.</p>

		<p>Finally, we have Phemphat Entertainment Group, which produces Honey Jam. This programme for young female artists of all cultures and musical genres offers mentoring, networking, educational and performance opportunities. The panel called them “a disrupter in a beautiful way, offering a brilliant program for young, female artists.”</p> <p>As our finalists leave your screen, Mayor Tory please introduce our next presenter.</p>
01:04:39 - 01:04:56	Mayor John Tory	<p>A disrupter in a beautiful way, like you Jesse! Welcome to all of our incredible finalists. Here to present the Roy Thomson Award of recognition we have Education and Outreach Manager of the Corporation of Massey Hall and Roy Thomson Hall, Vanessa Smith.</p>
01:04:56 - 01:05:30	Vanessa Smith	<p>Thank you, Mayor Tory! And thank you to Toronto Arts Foundation for having me be a part of this exciting digital event. It is now my pleasure to announce the recipient of the 2020 Roy Thompson Hall Award of Recognition - Phemphat Entertainment Group!</p>
01:05:30 - 01:08:10	Ebonnie Rowe	<p>Hi! Oh my gosh. I am so surprised and grateful I didn't write a speech but one thing I really want to say is... When I say “Honey” you say “Jam”! Honey - JAM! Honey - JAM!</p> <p>These are some of the artists in our safe bubble getting ready for our concert. This has been such an amazing honour. I want to congratulate all of the other nominees and the other winners today. I want to thank the Toronto Arts Council and Toronto Arts Foundation. Thank you to Wendy Vincent for nominating me. We are celebrating our 25th anniversary - as is the Toronto Arts Foundation so this must be fate to have this happen! Thank you for all of the support that you give to artists and to organizations like us. It is a lot of hard work and dedication to be in this space and to keep going despite any obstacles. I have to big-up everyone else who does that. It's a real passion project and we love what we do. So thank you again - I am blown away. We didn't know what was going to happen but our artists came to support. We are having our big show on October 1st at the El Mocambo. Please tune in and follow us @TheHoneyJam.</p> <p>Errol, you have supported us for 25 years from the very beginning - we love you and it's great to see you. Thank you Claire. Thank you Wendy Vincent for nominating us. Thanks to everyone who ever believed in us and supported us - all of our sponsors. Wow - this is amazing. For everyone who thinks now I'm gonna go and take them for dinner with \$10,000 - it's not for me it's for the organization so we'll be putting it toward great programming for our artists. That is who we serve, so I will exit with the same chant we began with...</p> <p>When I say “Honey” you say “Jam”! Honey - JAM! Honey - JAM!</p>
01:08:10 - 01:10:43	Errol	<p>Yes Ebonnie and PhemPhat - beyond thrilled for you! As you've said I have been supporting you guys on the airways and in print over the last 20-odd years. You are a trooper and you do so much for young women artists in the community. I am so thrilled for you guys.</p> <p>The finalists for our final award are now joining us on screen.</p>

		<p>In 2007, Martha Burns, Jim Fleck, and Sandra and Jim Pitblado recognized that an event celebrating the arts in our city could not be complete unless we recognized the dynamic contributions of and for our youth. So, they created the Arts for Youth Award! This award offers our biggest cash prize: \$20,000 to celebrate an individual, collective or organization that has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to engaging youth in Toronto in the arts. A generous donation from Diana Bennett and Spencer Lanthier ensures that everyone goes away happy in this category, with \$2,000 to go to each of the two finalists.</p> <p>JAYU is a charity committed to sharing human rights stories through the arts. Their year-round programming includes the human rights film festival, the hum podcast, and iam, an arts & social-justice training program for underserved youth in Toronto. According to the panel, JAYU's programs epitomize what arts for youth is: youth-led, youth-focused and youth-advocacy.</p> <p>NIA Centre for the Arts is a charitable organization that strives to build the creative capacities and support the development of healthy identity in black youth by connecting them to mentorship, employment opportunities and artistic experiences. The panel considered the work they are doing with the black community to be amazing and their commitment to youth outstanding.</p> <p>And our last finalist of the day - the Truth & Dare Project provides free visual art workshops, self-care retreats, pop-ups, and an annual exhibit for young Muslim women in the GTA. They offer safe spaces for participants to collaborate with others and to explore the visual arts as a creative Outlet. Our panel said they "love this group and love what they are doing".</p> <p>So do I - I love what all of you are doing! As our finalists leave your screen, Mayor Tory please introduce our next presenter.</p>
<p>01:10:43 - 01:11:03</p>	<p>Mayor John Tory</p>	<p>What 3 fabulous nominees. There can only be one winner, but they are all winners here today! Please welcome award sponsors and well-known arts champions Jim & Sandra Pitblado to present the Arts for Youth Award.</p>
<p>01:11:03 - 01:11:34</p>	<p>Jim & Sandra Pitblado</p>	<p>Jim Pitblado: Thank you John. Throughout the years it has been our privilege to attend on a number of occasions these award ceremonies. They have always left us feeling proud and innovative, and today is no exception!</p> <p>Sandra Pitblado: I have the envelope - here we go! The recipient of the 2020 Arts for Youth Award is... JAYU!</p>
<p>01:11:34 - 01:14:49</p>	<p>Gilad Cohen</p>	<p>Oh my gosh - What an honour it is for us to win this prize! First, please help me extend this honour with the other finalists we share this category with: Nia Centre for the Arts and The Truth and Dare Project. We have so much respect for you and the good work that you are doing. Thank you so much to the Toronto Arts Foundation for this prestigious award and recognition. This means a lot for us at JAYU. Thank you to JAYU's staff, our board, all the volunteers and artists, and of course the brilliant youth</p>

		<p>who have contributed to this initiative over the years -- you inspire us so much every day.</p> <p>My name is Gilad Cohen and I am with JAYU, a charity that shares human rights stories through the arts. Much of our programming is rooted in providing free arts and social justice mentorship to equity seeking youth. I encourage everyone to visit our website at www.jayu.ca to learn more about our youth programming, because I want to use this space to talk about how the good work that all of us are doing is not enough.</p> <p>Not too long ago, JAYU was fortunate to bring iAM Programming to Wapekeka First Nations, a community in Northern Ontario that recently called a state of emergency due to a hike in youth suicides. The youth in Wapekeka, like many others across this province, don't have access to post-secondary education, healthcare, adequate housing, proper nutrition or clean drinking water. The youth here are also reeling from decades and decades of inter-generational trauma due to settler violence. I want to be very clear that all of this is as a result of colonization.</p> <p>As an immigrant to Canada, I've learned that what we refer to as "underserved" here in Toronto with grants, arts programming and access, is essentially what defines invisibility when it comes to Indigenous youth across this nation. We can and must do better to support First Nations, Metis and Inuit youth. I ask each of us here today - including us at JAYU — but also the artists, arts organizations, businesses, and members of Council and Mayor John Tory... what leadership are we willing to forfeit so that Indigenous people can see themselves, their identities, their lives, leadership and ideas reflected in a decolonized future? Maybe that means supporting the Indigenous-led organizations like Native Women in the Arts, Native Earth Performing Arts, Red Sky Performance, and so many more than have been doing this work for so long. How are you committed to supporting them not just during crisis or when the hashtag is trending, but every single day? What will each of us do to truly build equity not just in our city, but in this country we all share and call home?</p> <p>Finally, I just want to say that this is a very special year for us. This December, in our 9th year as an organization and during the month of human rights, we will be launching the 9th annual Human Rights Film Festival, a week-long digital event that celebrates the intersection of the arts with social justice. We will be screening films, setting the stage for a variety of important discussions and performances and handing out awards, which will include for the first time an Indigenous Artist award. There is still time to nominate the artists and I encourage everyone to do so by visiting www.jayu.ca to learn more. Thank you again.</p>
<p>01:14:49 - 01:15:10</p>	<p>Jesse</p>	<p>Thank you Gilad and thank you for your words as well. This is why I love this community - to see the speeches and the solidarity today has made this event fantastic even though we can't all be together. Now please welcome Kathleen Sharpe and Claire Hopkinson for some final words.</p>
<p>01:15:10 - 01:17:17</p>	<p>Kathleen Sharpe</p>	<p>Hi. I'm Kathleen Sharpe, Chair of the board of the Toronto Arts Foundation, and I just want to add my congratulations to all of our finalists today! What an incredible group of people. I am overwhelmed by all of the poetry, music, art and theatre that I am missing now and I have to see once you all start doing all of that again.</p>

		<p>We are going to pull all of today's award recipients back on screen to get a digital group photo of everyone, so while they are re-populating your screens I want to take a moment to thank our incredible hosts. Errol and Jesse, this has been a historic year and hosting an award show in digital format is no easy task - thank you as always for your seamless work, your enthusiasm, and your genuine championship of Toronto artists. It has been such a pleasure to work with you on this event, and we are honoured to have had you as our terrific hosts. Although I have to say it seems Jesse is at home, and I was really hoping we would see his cute dogs sitting on the couch with him - Maybe next time!</p> <p>And thank you Mayor Tory for taking the time to celebrate all of our finalists and recipients. You are one of the biggest arts fans in town and we are very very lucky to have you on our side. To all of our nominators, sponsors, and award presenters - you are all truly incredible.</p> <p>Last but not least, before I turn it over to Claire - a huge huge thank you to Claire and all of the staff for pulling this together. It's been almost seamless as far as I can tell, but of course I'm not a techie. It's gone really well and I am thrilled that we have been able to honour these talented people at a time when it's just been so difficult to do that. Over to you, Claire!</p>
<p>01:17:17 - 01:18:38</p>	<p>Claire Hopkinson</p>	<p>Thank you Kathleen for those lovely words. I will echo your thanks and add a particularly big shout-out to Erroll and Jesse for carrying the show. congratulations to all of our finalists and recipients - your work is amazing! I also want to say thank you to everyone who worked on, supported and participated in today's unique celebration - it was a big leap into the unknown and was a big nerve wracking! But we are all in this together.</p> <p>With that, I will conclude our official 2020 Mayor's arts lunch award ceremony - please feel free to stick around as we take a group shot, and leave some more love for our fantastic finalists in the chat function or on the social media hashtag #TOArtsAwards ! Thank you for joining us - bye!</p>

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Transcript: Mayor's Arts Lunch - At Home

September 24, 2020

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