



TORONTO
ARTS
FOUNDATION



ARTS STATS

2019

GOING WITHOUT:
ARTISTS AND ARTS WORKERS
IN OUR CREATIVE CITY

#TOArts



Since 2013, Toronto Arts Foundation has been working with Leger to research public opinion about the arts and document the findings in our popular Toronto Arts Stats booklets.

What has emerged is a record of the appreciation Torontonians feel for the arts and an understanding that the arts add value to their lives and the city far beyond economics. For many, the arts are a defining asset of our city.

This year, for the first time, we examine the city from the perspective of individual artists and arts workers.

The results are sobering...

Toronto's artists are struggling. Bearing disproportionately high costs for both work space and essential training, and burdened by disproportionately low incomes, many of our artists cannot sustain a living. In fact, a large percentage are considering leaving the city. This booklet highlights key factors leading to this reality, but also points to opportunities for improvement.

As with most research undertaken by Toronto Arts Foundation, we will apply the learning gleaned from *Arts Stats 2019* to future planning. Just as we developed Neighbourhood Arts Network to respond to the needs of artists located outside Toronto's core, and Arts in the Parks to offer accessible programming for under-served communities, the Foundation will work with this data, and our partners, to explore solutions.

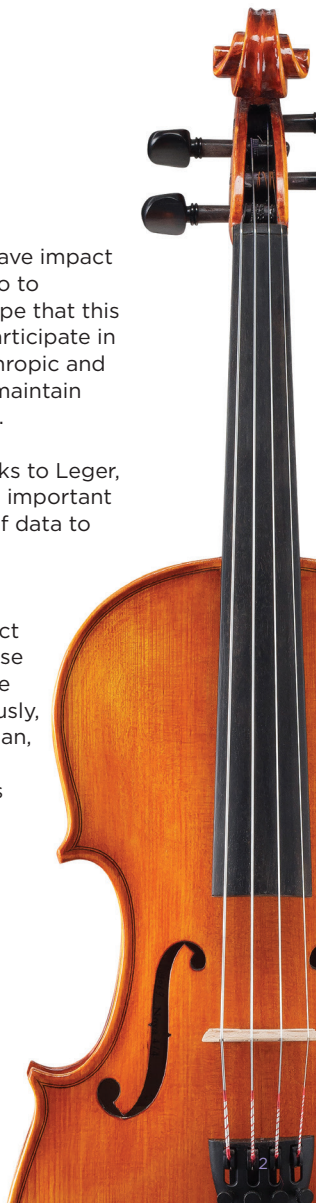
But we also hope that *Arts Stats 2019* will have impact beyond the work that the Foundation will do to address the data presented within it. We hope that this publication will move us all—as a city—to participate in ongoing discussions in the political, philanthropic and civic sectors to develop tools and plans to maintain Toronto as a sustainable home for its artists.

Arts Stats 2019 is published with great thanks to Leger, who worked diligently with us to create this important survey and then sifted through mountains of data to allow us to disseminate the results.

Lastly, I sincerely thank Margo Charlton, Toronto Arts Foundation's Research & Impact Manager, who shepherded the research phase of this project before her departure from the Foundation in September 2019. Simultaneously, I offer a warm welcome to Dr. Shawn Newman, our newly appointed Research & Impact Manager, who guided the publication of this final report.



*Claire Hopkins, M.S.M.
Director & CEO
Toronto Arts Foundation*



KEY FINDINGS

89% of Torontonians believe that the arts make Toronto a better place to live.¹

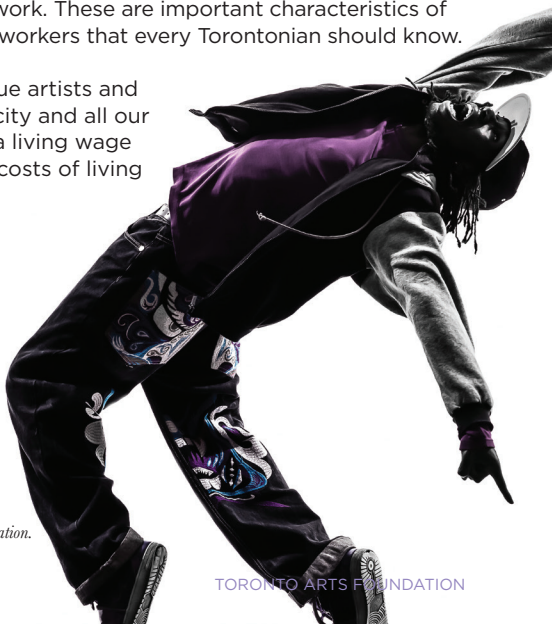
And yet...

- ▶ 80% of Toronto's artists and arts workers believe they cannot make a living wage;
- ▶ Half of our artists make under \$30K per year;
- ▶ Nearly 1 in 5 artists have been renovicted;
- ▶ 73% of artists and arts workers have thought about leaving Toronto.

Toronto's artists and arts workers create a dynamic sector that is reflective of our city's multicultural character. Collectively, they are a highly trained and experienced work force that are integral to creating a city that is welcoming to visitors, a hub for business and a vibrant place to live and work. These are important characteristics of Toronto's artists and arts workers that every Torontonian should know.

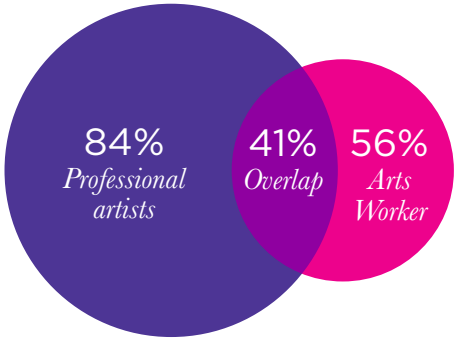
Despite the immense value artists and arts workers give to the city and all our lives, most do not make a living wage and face extremely high costs of living *and* working in Toronto.

¹ Arts Stats 2018. Toronto Arts Foundation.

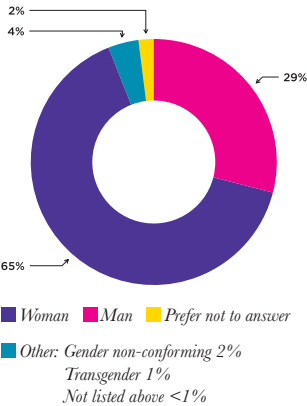


DEMOGRAPHICS

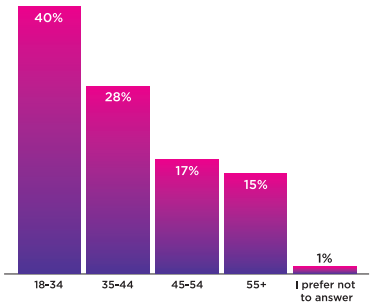
Of 1,508 respondents, 84% (1,269) are artists and 56% (851) are arts workers—41% (612) consider themselves both an artist and an arts worker. 65% are women, and 40% of all respondents are under 35 years of age.

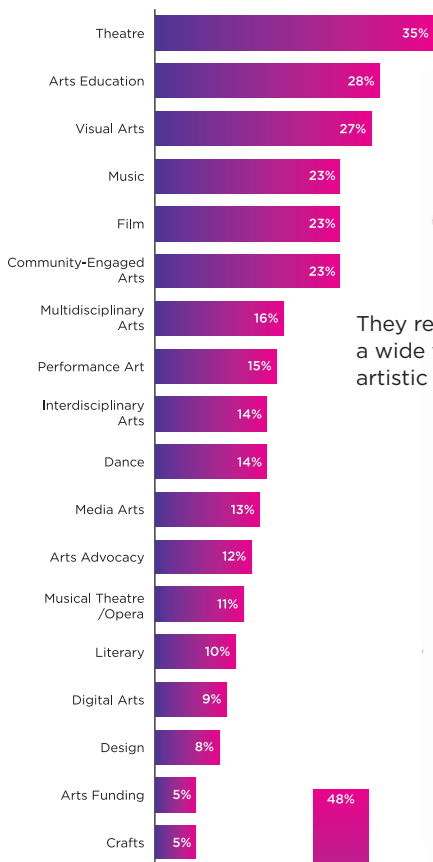


Gender



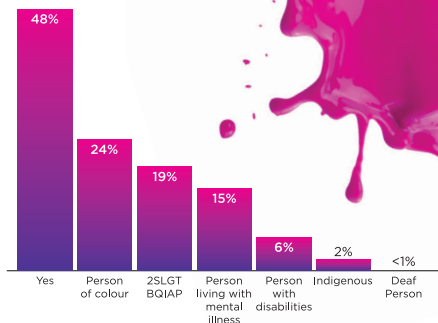
Age





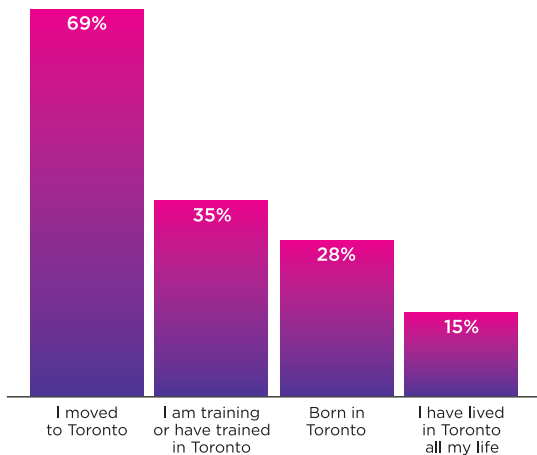
They represent a wide variety of artistic disciplines.

48% of respondents also identify as belonging to at least one equity-seeking community.



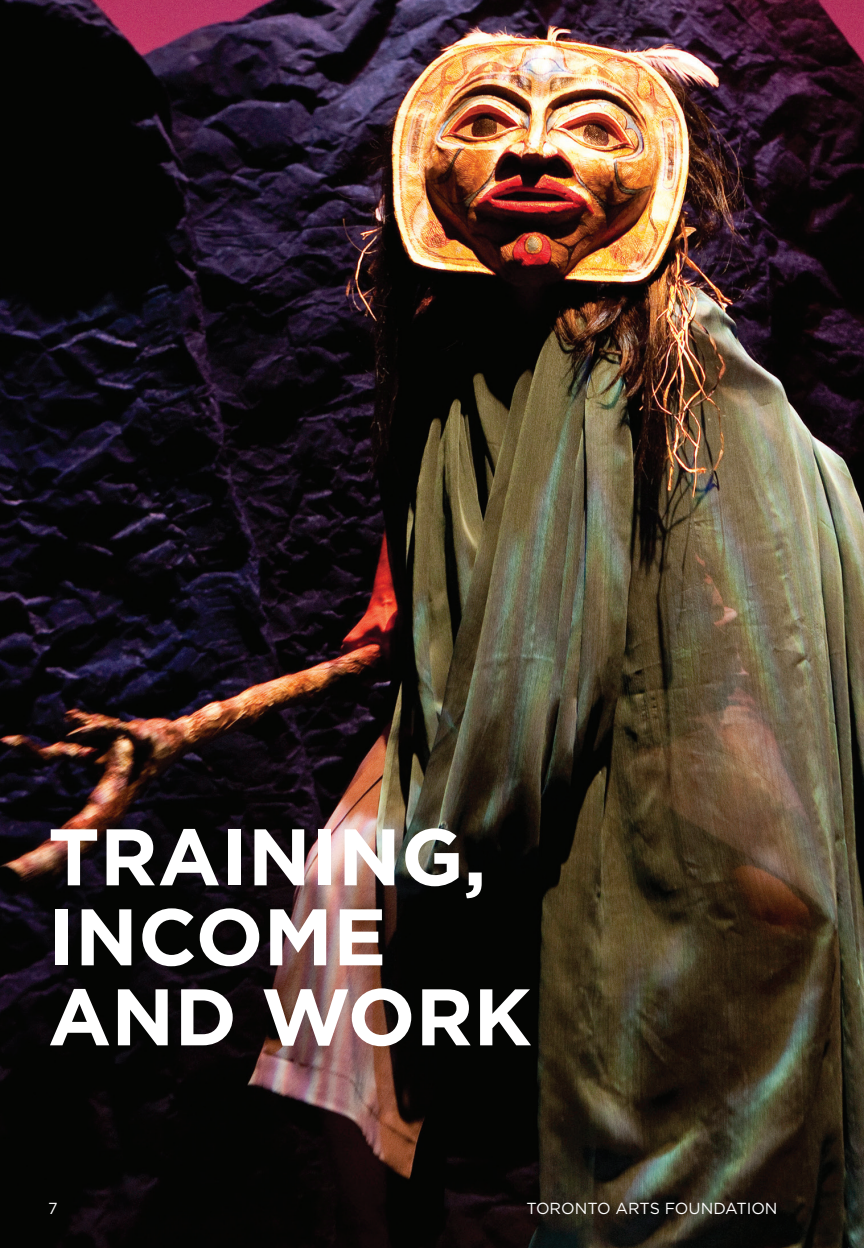
Toronto is a major destination for artists and arts workers to live and build their careers. With almost double any other municipality,² we have the highest number of artists in the country.

69% moved to the city, while only 28% were born here.



“The Toronto arts scene [includes] a vibrant younger generation that has an understanding of our place in an international dialogue: this is helping art and artists.”

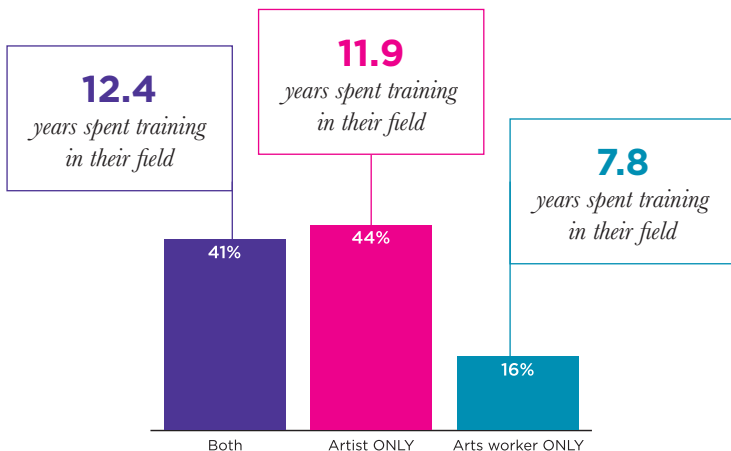
² “Artists and Cultural Workers in Canadian Municipalities.” *Hill Strategies*, 2014: 3.



TRAINING, INCOME AND WORK

Artists heavily invest in their education.

Artists and arts workers train in a variety of ways—apprenticeships, post-secondary education, self-study and more—for a very long time.



With education, training and apprenticing all requiring different levels of financial investment and sacrifice, tackling debt is difficult.

“Art school is expensive, and repaying the student debt as an emerging artist is almost impossible and can take years or decades.”

Despite being very well-educated, our artists and arts workers are poor.

69% of artists make less than Toronto's living wage of \$45K per year,³ and *half* make less than \$30K. Although arts workers are financially better off, half of them also make less than \$45K.

“I have a Master’s degree and a lot of skills. I have a strong reputation and I am sought after for my work. My income last year was \$29K. As well, my partner is also an arts worker (part-time, and also works part-time in non-arts work) and makes slightly less than me.”

While \$45K is the benchmark for a living wage in Toronto, “the typical person needs \$69,520 in income to afford to rent a one-bedroom apartment in the city.”⁴


“Allow self-employed arts workers to access employment insurance and parental benefits, better childcare, and [home care] support.”

Moreover, the median incomes for both artists and arts workers are well below the median income of all Toronto residents.

³ The Ontario Living Wage Network calculates the 2018 living wage for Toronto at \$21.75 per hour.

⁴ Toronto's Vital Signs: Growing Pains amid Narrow Gains. *Toronto Foundation*, 2019: 35.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

An aerial night photograph of the Toronto skyline, showing a dense cluster of illuminated skyscrapers and a vast urban area stretching to the horizon. Three white rectangular callout boxes with thin white lines pointing to specific locations in the city are overlaid on the image. The background is a vibrant display of city lights, with the downtown core being particularly bright.

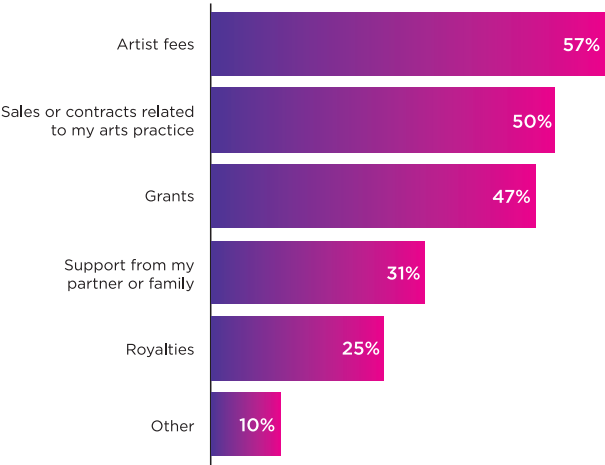
Median artist
income:
\$30,000

Median Toronto
resident income:
\$65,829⁵

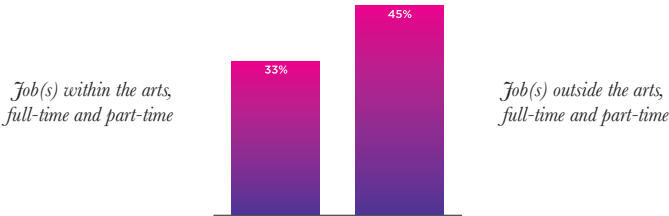
Median arts
worker income:
\$45,000

Artists rely on precarious work.

72% work on a freelance or contract basis and have incomes from multiple arts-related sources.



In addition to revenue from their artistic practice, many artists have additional part- or full-time jobs within the arts. However, an even larger number also have jobs outside the arts.



As a result, artists are overworked.

Artists work 51.4 hours per week on average, with 9 out of every 10 making financial sacrifices in order to remain artists.

Consequently, priorities change:

“We received a Toronto Arts Council project grant as a collective, but one of the collective’s co-founders is currently living out of their car. The other has stepped down in favour of a more lucrative for-profit opportunity.”

“I don’t address health concerns because I can’t afford them—dental, vision, body maintenance...”

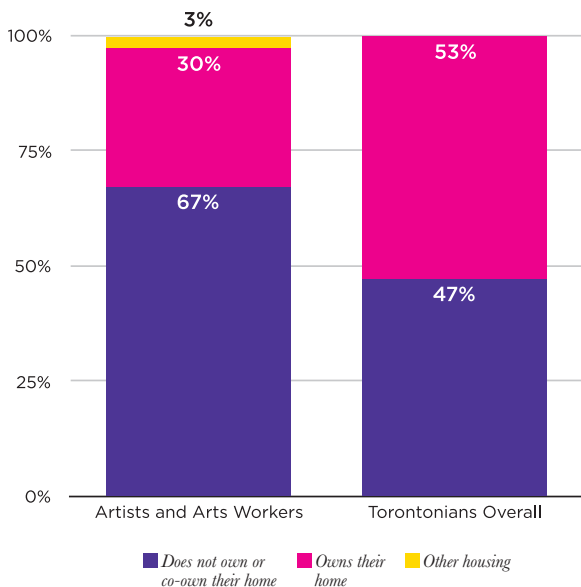
“Mental health of artists is ignored. Mental health resources are needed. Current mental health options are unaffordable for artists.”

80% of artists and arts workers in Toronto believe they cannot make a living wage in our city.



HOUSING AND WORK SPACE

Artists and arts workers mostly live in rental housing, unlike most Torontonians.⁵



Breaking down the rental figures shows us that 3% of artists and arts workers live in a housing co-op, 6% live with their parents or other relatives and 52% rent an apartment or sub-unit.

⁵ Figures for Torontonians Overall from “2016 Census: Housing, Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity, Aboriginal Peoples.” City of Toronto, 26 October 2017.

Many artists and arts workers in Toronto are house-poor.

On average, respondents are paying over \$1,700 per month in housing costs.

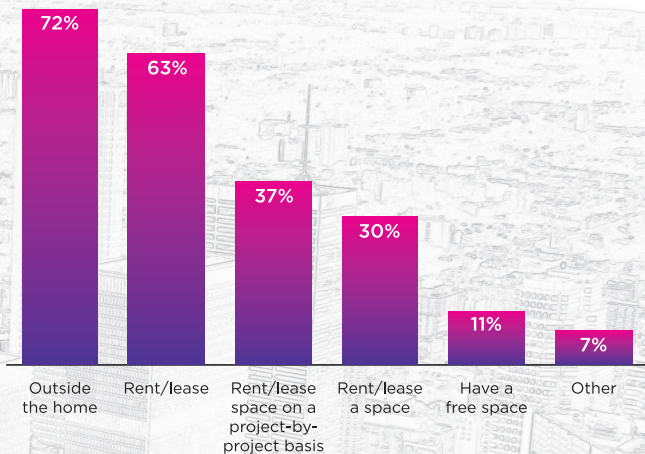
\$1,722.90

*is the average
amount per month*

Moreover, 29% are supporting dependents—44% of those are supporting at least two—leading to increased average housing costs of \$2,275.80.

And respondents have additional costs that other Torontonians do not carry.

48% of artists also maintain a creative space, and for nearly 3/4 of them it's located outside their home.



Respondents with Creative Space

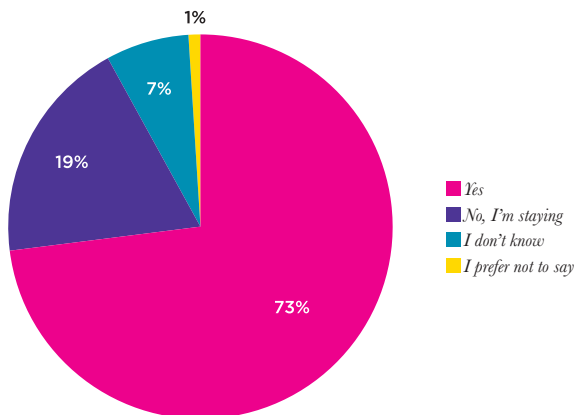
They also have many stories of being renovicted—it happens to nearly every *1 in 5* artists.



STAYING OR GOING?

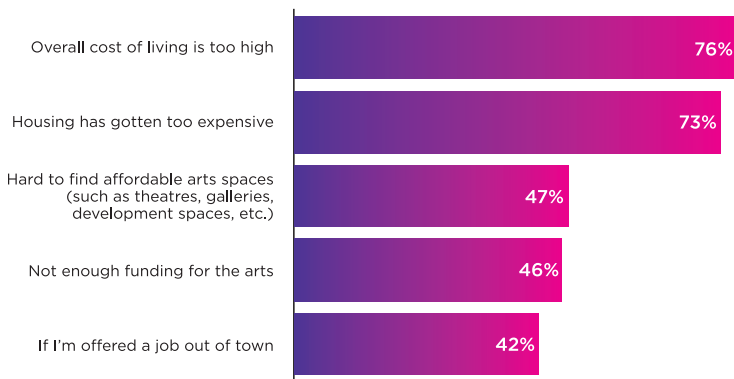
We are at great risk of losing a large portion of this sector.

73% of Toronto's artists and arts workers have thought about leaving.



“My partner and I plan to leave soon due to the high cost of living and mental stress of living here.”

The reasons for leaving are, perhaps, not surprising.



Four of these top five answers were also more likely to be mentioned by those between 18 and 34 years old—the poorest of respondents.

*“Housing costs are the make-or-break issue for every artist I know. There have to be affordable solutions for artists’ housing; it’s simply too precarious and too costly to live in this city and build a career here. It is the **ONLY** reason I am leaving—I have no other choice.”*


Moreover, 52% of those who have already left don't know if they're ever coming back.

“MANY people I know have left the Toronto area because they cannot afford to stay and make work here.”





*“Our city is thriving ... I love that
Toronto is creative, diverse, and healthy!”*



Despite all of this, our artists are committed to their craft, believe strongly in their work and want to be in Toronto. 78% of artists and arts workers say Toronto's cultural diversity makes the city a good place to live and work.

And most importantly, 72% of our artists say they'd do it all over again.

Why is this important?

Artists and arts workers face high costs of education and training, high housing and space costs, insecure incomes as a result of precarious work and low rates of pay. The impact of the arts on the city is nevertheless fundamental to its success.

Torontonians have already told us about the importance of the arts to their lives.⁶

- ▶ We know that 90% believe the arts make Toronto a better and more beautiful place to live.
- ▶ We know that they deeply value how artists make the city a more inclusive place and a welcoming destination for tourists.
- ▶ We know that for nearly half of Torontonians, access to the arts is one of the reasons they live here.

“Cities are creative hubs that attract business because of the vibrancy artists create.”

Across the board, artists and arts workers want the same thing as any Torontonian: to be able to work and live without undue hardship.

“It is increasingly difficult for artists to create their best work while managing multiple [jobs] to pay their living expenses.”

With contributing so much to so many people, artists and arts workers add tremendous depth of spirit to the city. Their work enlivens our spaces and strengthens our communities.

⁶ The figures that follow come from Arts Stats 2018.

A dramatic stage scene with a single spotlight shining down from above, creating a bright, circular pool of light on a dark, smoky floor. The text is centered within this illuminated area.

**Toronto
cannot
afford to
lose its
artists.**

METHODOLOGY

Quantitative Research Instrument

Between June 13 and July 15, 2019, Leger polled 1,508 arts professionals in Toronto through *LegerWeb*. The overall margin of error for this study is +/-2.5%, 19 times out of 20.

Qualitative Research

Respondents were also asked to tell us more about their experiences as artists and arts workers by sharing any ideas they have as to how the City of Toronto could better support them, arts organizations or the arts sector as a whole. Some of these responses have appeared in this publication as quotations.

Quality Control

Stringent quality assurance measures allow Leger to achieve the high-quality standards set by the company. As a result, its methods of data collection and storage outperform the norms set by WAPOR (the World Association for Public Opinion Research). These measures are applied at every stage of the project: from data collection to processing, through to analysis. Leger aims to answer our clients' needs with honesty, total confidentiality and integrity.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Arts Stats 2019 is a publication of Toronto Arts Foundation. The focus on artists and arts workers emerged from a Toronto Arts Council Leaders Lab Alumni meeting. Questions were then developed between Dave Scholz (President, Communications and Public Affairs, Leger) and the Alumni, with revisions by Scholz and Margo Charlton (Toronto Arts Foundation). Analysis of statistical data was completed by Scholz and Patrick Ryan (Research Analyst, Communications and Public Affairs, Leger). Qualitative commentary was reviewed by Charlton and Peter Kingstone (Toronto Arts Council). *Arts Stats 2019* was edited by Dr. Shawn Newman (Toronto Arts Foundation).

Special thanks to Toronto Arts Foundation staff Susan Wright (Deputy Director), Jaclyn Rodrigues (Community Engagement Manager), and Tabassum Siddiqui (Interim Communications Manager).

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