

Arts Chats #4

Established on Shifting Sands

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HOST

Claire Hopkinson

MODERATOR

Zainab Amadhy

PANELIST

Augusto Bitter, Claudia Moore, Greg Staats

Claire Hopkinson 00:00

Well, good afternoon. I just wanted to say welcome to you all. I'm Claire Hopkinson. I'm the Director and CEO of Toronto Arts Council and Toronto Arts Foundation. I'm really excited to have you join us in this new discussion that centers the voices of artists and arts workers. I also recognize that these are stressful times and I hope that you're all able to take care of yourself. This is part of Toronto Arts Foundation's ongoing research into the importance of the arts in city building and community building. These Arts Chats have and continue today to bring together a diverse array of speakers from a variety of disciplines throughout this month of March. Together these artists have been discussing timely and understudied issues that affect them, their practice and the impact their work has on audiences, consumers, and communities. Collectively, these discussions will help guide our Foundation's research strategy towards better supporting advocacy, programming and community building efforts across Toronto, as well as the art sector as a whole. I'd like to acknowledge on behalf of Toronto Arts Foundation, the diversity of the First Peoples of this area and recognize the territories of the Wendat, the Anishnaabe Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Today, Toronto is still the home to many Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island and around the world. And we are very grateful to have the opportunity to work, to live and to meet on this territory. Arts Chats is made possible and available to you through the generosity of our donors, we are really super grateful for their ongoing support of our work. We invite you all to join us at Toronto Arts

Foundation. After this session, you'll receive a follow up email with a link to a feedback survey, as well as information on how you can be part of Toronto Arts Foundation's community based work and our growing suite of COVID-19 Response effort initiatives. Arts Chats is one of these initiatives. We're trying to help artists and arts organizations with mitigation, resilience and recovery during the pandemic. In this final Arts Chats session of March 2021, it's called Established on Shifting Sands, we turn to some of Toronto's most established artists to discuss how they have navigated change in our sector and their visions for the future of the arts in our city. Leading this discussion is Zainab Amadhy. Zainab's mixed race heritage, which includes African-American Cherokee Seminole and European informs her work as an author of futures fiction and nonfiction. Zainab currently sits on the advisory council of Muskrat magazine, and in her role at Children's Peace Theatre works with BIPOC youth to explore the role of arts in social change, relationship building and personal transformation. I am really very grateful to our exceptional panelists for their insights today, Zainab will introduce them. And thank you so much. And over to you.

Zainab Amadhy 03:47

Thank you, Claire, welcome, everybody. I'm very honored to be moderating this session. And I just want to start out by introducing our esteemed and established panelists. A lot of wisdom on this panel, so I'm really happy about that. We'll start with Claudia Moore. Claudia has been a force on the Canadian dance scene since the late 1970s. She's performed with the National Ballet of Canada, and as a featured performer with both Toronto Dance Theatre, and the Desrosiers Dance Theatre. In 1996, she founded Moonhorse Dance Theater, where she continues to perform commissioned works and teach movement to seniors. In 2000, Moore established the internationally acclaimed series Older and Reckless to connect seasoned dance artists to the public in workshops, community projects and live performances. Moore has received the Jacqueline Lemieux Award for Excellence in dance and was a finalist for the 2017 Premier's Award for Excellence in the arts. Welcome, Claudia. Greg Staats is (Skarù:rę?[Tuscarora] Kanien'kehá:ka [Mohawk]) Hodinohso:ni; born in 1963. Greg if I've mispronounced anything, please correct me later on. He was born in Ohsweken, Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. A Toronto-based artist whose Hodinohso:ni: restorative aesthetic employs the mnemonics of condolence articulated in diverse visual forms including photography, sculpture, installation and video. Staats' practice conceptualizes Land as Monument embodied with relational placemaking. On his on-reserve lived experience and the explorations of ceremonial orality. His upcoming solo exhibitions, the AGO Contact Photography Festival at Todmorden Mills, and the Art Gallery of Ontario as well. Greg has been nominated for the Scotiabank Photography award, and has been shortlisted for the Robert Gardner Fellowship in Photography of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography at Harvard University. Welcome Greg. Augusto Bitter is a Dora award winning performer, writer, producer and facilitator, based in Toronto, originally from Venezuela. They've been a resident artist at Canadian Stage, Aluna Theatre, Theatre Passe Muraille and Hub 14. Augusto has been an artist educator with Soulpepper and Paprika festival, and facilitates creative writing

workshops with Story Planet. Food is Augusto's love language. I can relate there. So welcome, everyone. Thanks. Are you guys on video? Maybe you can activate your video so folks can see you. That's great. Okay, so I've got a number of questions here. I don't know if we'll get through them all. And if we do, if we have time left over, then we'll go to the chat box and maybe take some questions or comments there. But the first question that I have for you is, what are the new challenges of this moment for Toronto's artists and organizations, and what patterns from the past are resurfacing, so the new challenges and the resurfacing patterns? For anyone who wants to speak to that?

Claudia Moore 08:06

I could say that staying alive might be the first challenge that we are considering right now. Of course, health is top of the agenda. Everyone's health is what really needs addressing and health brings me to equality, brings me to so many of the issues that are being revealed. I think that it's been a terrific shake up for us in a very positive way to reveal the cracks, to reveal the vulnerabilities, to reveal the weaknesses. And I think a real call to action, which I believe we've all tried to respond to in our best possible way. I commend the Toronto Arts Foundation for the work that you're doing with bringing people together in discussions and the many other organizations that have done that to reach out and to listen. I think listening is high on the list. I think it's been clear that the arts are an essential service. And that we've been able to do so much for people, to lift people's spirits and to keep people alive and to keep people connected and to keep people happy in a very, very difficult and challenging time. So out of tragedy and extreme challenge, I think some really wonderful things are happening. And I just think that out of need, we've connected with each other in a way that's also been encouraging. I have such great admiration for my colleagues who are all doing terrific things to keep their art alive to stay connected with the public. As far as patterns that are resurfacing, I won't address that right now. But I pass it over to either Greg or Augusto. Thank you.

Augusto Bitter 10:42

Thanks, Claudia. I think one of the challenges that I think both artists and institutions or groups and collectives found during life, particularly this last year is an identity crisis in a way, particularly for organizations who suddenly had to cancel full seasons and had to cancel a lot of programming and artists had to cancel tours or performances and have to shift online or, those organizations suddenly found themselves asking if they're not programming artists, if they're not showing live work in the example of live performance spaces, then what are we? What am I, what purpose do we serve in this community? And I think we've seen a lot of different collectives, groups, organizations, and artists try to answer that question and try to connect with their immediate local communities in a way that wasn't happening before, to the same extent, and questions around accessibility, which is a pattern that has been around for a while, both financial both, you know, all the different kinds of when you think about accessibility in these spaces. Yeah, so it's a matter of, I think, redefining what our purpose is, as artists in the city.

Greg Staats 12:33

There's always been what we all do is in terms of... we're always in service to each other, and the work that we produce. And sometimes that can change quite a bit, depending on where the work is coming from, and who's making the work and who's deciding who's going to be shown and programmed. So I think the biggest thing is, the new challenge for this moment, in terms of Indigenous visual art, and all the disciplines they're in, is that we have to redefine the word "inclusion," without "enclosure." So this whole idea of, bringing in, and then sometimes in terms of resource extraction, this has all come up in the last four or five years now. And people are very, very much.. we're all aware of these things, how we treat each other, and then how we treat the work. So in terms of the restorative aesthetic that I use from Hodinohso:ni: from the condolence, it's all about pre-empting chaos. And we do that by: we communicate, we follow a protocol that everyone knows what's going on and how things are going to work for the event and in Hodinohso:ni, there's even a runner, who has a notch stick with some wampum on it. And everyone has to touch that stick so that they know they've received that message. So I think the fact is that when we look at Toronto for example, and the patterns of the past I mean, it's inherent in artist-run centre culture and regional galleries that, there is a memory, there's a human memory, but there seems to be no archival memory of interactions between people. There is of course, a memory of the website and what was shown but there is no, you know, this was a breakthrough moment because we invited these artists and we had this gathering, but there's not really much of that. So that makes it very difficult for people who are coming forward and taking up these new positions to sort of find out what were the past values, what were the roles and responsibilities that this particular organization had. Because I'm hearing a lot of that, too, from people who are, I'm working with Qaag right now and they just had their 40 I think, and Kamloops. And there's this whole overview of what's been happening, and there's a lot of holes that were never filled with information. So I think that's one of the biggest challenges.

Zainab Amadhy 15:59

In terms of our process, too, I just wanted to encourage any of you panelists who, if you want to pick up on something that anybody else has raised, or further the conversation around that question, please do that. And I don't mind being interrupted at all. So go ahead and do that. Yeah, so Greg, you pre-answered one of the questions that I have here, which is that organizations are increasingly, even prior to the pandemic, we're increasingly seeing the need to decolonize and center historically marginalized voices in all facets of their work. And now, it feels like, because of the pandemic has (shown that) organizations are a reflection of society. And, everything that's going on in society has been mirrored in our organizations; is reflected in our organizations. And so, a lot of people from these communities are being called on now to come in as resources of one kind or another, as you have mentioned. So how do we ensure that we're not further burdening, further re-traumatizing folks who are already the most negatively impacted by this moment that we're in right now?

Greg Staats 17:35

In the past, there was a series when I worked in the 90s, I actually identified like-minded people, community, people, non-native community, people who were organizers who were curators, and decided to work with them. Because I knew that we had this fundamental, foundational way of working that, it was reciprocal. And over the years, of course, academia has taken over that role of bringing voices together, a lot has been lost. And, I think the fact that I never went to art school, and my on-reserve lived experience sort of hyper-sensitized myself to the inadequacies of getting people together and sharing. You know, in my case, the Hodinohso:ni, the Great Love teaches peace, which is a universal document to be shared with all. But now, there's a larger hurdle for me to do that. And it has a lot to do with language, it has a lot to do with guilt and shame of Canada. So I think the fact that doing these types of things and speaking how I speak to my friends and colleagues, this is the time to really, not only listen, but actively listen, to have these working relationships that are inclusive without enclosure. We all saw what happened with (Canada) 150 and everyone was scurrying around and "Let's find somebody right away" and a lot of the protocols were not followed and people were upset and rightly so. So, I think, when those types of things happen with organizations, I can speak for myself, but there's a whole gambit of things that happen. You feel humiliated, you feel, you know, "here we go again." And so I think the fact that if organizations truly wanted to work with people, there has to be more grassroots and what I mean by that is: let's work with the Native Women's Resource Center, let's work with people on the ground; Anishnabe Health, let's bring in Council Fire. I grew up on the reserve and in service to older people, and then when I came here, I was at Anishnabe Health on the board there. And the Native Center, I worked at Trinity St. Paul's community center. So I know what that looks like. And I think that a lot of people don't. So nowadays, as I said before, there's the barriers of social media and electronic communication where a lot is constantly being lost. We don't pick up the phone, we don't, (talk) back and forth, and then there's lots of room for those protocols to slip by. But I think the fact that, you know, myself, I'm not sure if I can, I'm going to be doing these things much longer. Because I am tired. And it is quite exhausting. However, there are other people who do. It's the organizations' responsibility to find those people and have an intergenerational representation. So just not the youngest but the older people. I mean, Maria Campbell, and Ellen (East?) they have this book called Give Back, and they were always talking about: we always have to have the older women at the table. I think that methodology can also transfer to non-native people too, like intergenerational input on on some of these sports. Anyways, I have spoken.

Zainab Amadhy 22:31

Thank you.

Augusto Bitter 22:37

Do you mind repeating the original question because my internet cut out as you were speaking?

Zainab Amadhy 22:45

So I'll just read it as I'm seeing it here. "As organizations increasingly see the need to decolonize and center historically marginalized voices in their work, how can we ensure that we're not further burdening and re-traumatizing those who are already the most negatively impacted?"

Augusto Bitter 23:06

Yes, thank you. Thank you, Greg. It really resonated a lot with what: a lot has been lost. And I think about a lot of the students, a lot of young artists going through their training program of choice. And those artists who are culturally diverse, who do experience some kind of disability, who are different in some way. And so many of those artists have been lost because they haven't been supported in the right ways. And they haven't been allowed to connect: they haven't been allowed to celebrate their communities that they're coming from and to investigate that and to show them mentors that look like them, that think like them that have similar goals. And I think a way, potentially, to try to avoid some of that harm that has happened and continues to happen, is treating it like a holistic ecosystem. It's all part of the same body. So straining programs and organizations and event spaces, galleries, theatre and dance companies, things like that. Speaking to that generational spirit that you're talking about, Greg trying to reduce the harm not just immediately by a solidarity statement, or by suddenly hiring an artistic director of color, but by really focusing on as much of the community as we can. And by going from the older generation to the newest artists to try to get them in contact and try to get this cross pollination that I think can only make us stronger and better artists, richer artists and humans also at the end of the day

Greg Staats 25:12

And I think that a lot of curators and directors of organizations forget that Indigenous artists and the younger generation and those of us who are my age: our lived experience is part of our work, it's part of our identity, it's constantly changing. So at one point we may say yes and at one point we say no, depending on that. But yes when you have those two worlds, those jagged worlds - two worldviews colliding, it can be pretty devastating for younger students. And then, even within organizations who have laid out all these statements of inclusivity and equity: there's a lot of language there that is performative. And there's not really any subsequent action, I mean people say they're gonna do these things but: okay, where is that workshop with 20 Indigenous youth? Did you actually go to Gabriel Dumont and do this? No. And then on top of that sometimes you have people of color who are not Indigenous who are making decisions or vote who's going to be let in, with their programming Indigenous activities, and I resigned from my membership of a said organization just recently because of that. And it was done on the fly, and it was not thought about, and it was insulting, actually. So I told them so. A lot of people have these mini manifestos of inclusion that, when people see that, especially young people, (they respond) "Oh My God, Here We Go Again." We take these things very seriously;

please hold the line, till we can find one of your own, or we can actually hop in a cab and go to the Native Women's Resource Center and talk to them and discuss what their needs are and how, if and when we can help them. Just to let people know that they're there, that organizations are there to help. But yeah I do agree with you it is a holistic conundrum and (in) a lot of the cases it's my responsibility to point that out to people, and remind them that, (to) take a step back and remind people that this is an emotional time, this is a heavily emotional time and I think that what Indigenous people have been experiencing for many years and and even since the TRC and all of this evidence... you see it's the the evidence that's there now and for all Canadians to see and to feel and, what are you going to do with that? Because their methodologies aren't working so it's a whole reset and a redefinition of what inclusiveness is and redefinition. As I said, there is a tendency to still group people together in BIPOC or you know these types of anagrams that are more easy to roll off the tongue of our non-native people, so if they can't say the whole thing... but anyways yeah that's what i wanted to say on that question.

Zainab Amadhy 29:34

I just feel like there's some issues with the question and I was part of.. well I developed these questions based on previous conversations that we've had but I really feel like this idea that organizations sometimes think they're doing communities a favor by including, or that they're ticking off a funder box or whatever, without thinking for themselves about how much they can grow from taking direction and taking guidance from folks that they are developing relationships with basically. And I think that's key in terms of how people become included or invited into a place, it's about building those relationships, and deepening those relationships. And I think that we're all in a position of growing, we're all in a position of expanding our consciousness and expanding our creative capacities, when we come at it from the relationship point of view. So thanks, folks for that.

Greg Staats 30:48

Just a quick question. If you look at placemaking and space and ...having a dancer come into a space in a variety of different sizes. And the people in charge at the front desk, or booking them into a space too small, that's not adequate for them to express themselves. And then there's a shortened time period on top of that: "you can only have the space for this long, and then you have to clean up and then you have to wash the floors, and you have to do all this stuff for the next person." And, you know, that's the sort of analogy ideas.

Zainab Amadhy 31:35

Thanks. Yeah. In our previous discussions, we've talked about how many spaces - very nice segue that you've given me, Greg, even though it was an analogy, but we are losing a lot of our art spaces in Toronto. And so I'm wondering if you all have any thoughts about how we can recover what's been lost and retain what we have left?

Claudia Moore 32:17

Greg's preempt chaos really sparked something for me, because the pandemic... so many of our dance spaces are closing. We're losing important studios, where many people and groups of all backgrounds have been working together. And don't ask me why it came as a shock. And again, you know, I refer to Greg, I experienced humiliation, I experienced embarrassment. Why the hell didn't we look at this earlier? We were so ...we got so complacent with existing on the bare minimum, with the least possible resources, and I think I'm speaking for mostly the dance community, that's what I know right now. But I think that, we were so busy keeping that balance between our work and our life and our space, and it was all kind of working okay. And then suddenly, suddenly, the spaces are gone. And we feel completely ridiculous to be honest, I feel ridiculous. Why did we not take this earlier to the Councils? Why did we not look at, for example, the Dovercourt House, which is an important dance space for the community. Why did we not look at that? Why did we not know that there wasn't a lease? Why did we not? Why did we not know that suddenly that the rent went up so high, that the tenant who had so diligently kept that space working for us for so many years had to leave and hence the thing fell apart. It's very interesting that just yesterday, or the day before on Facebook, dear Jessa, Agilo, who is a wonderful arts worker and creative thinker posted the fact that in the UK, where they kind of get the arts and there I have to say there's a lot more support and stability for artists there. They just acquired a huge space. It's got 1000, affordable workspaces for London's artists and makers for making space for art. And they've got a lease that's 999 years. So, you know, this is this is the kind of thing that I think we're really missing here in Toronto. The established companies have their homes and their associated challenges, I know that it's extremely challenging to be able to maintain a space at this point. But, but we do need to protect our spaces. Artists are just managing, they're just managing to keep their lives in balance. And when our space is taken away, then we can't even do our work. So anyway, it's just something that absolutely needs to be addressed. I think we need to advocate, we need to raise our voices, we need to get many people involved in this conversation. Otherwise, yeah, Toronto's just going to be that city that's too expensive to live in, and there's not going to be an art scene at all. So a lot of work needs to be done in that area, as far as I can see.

Zainab Amadhy 35:42

Thank you.

Augusto Bitter 35:43

I think there's also room for I think, you know, Claudia mentioned Dovercourt House, and what I always loved about Dovercourt house was the variety of people and groups and the way that space shifted, depending on who was in there and what they were doing, and many different disciplines and people colliding all the time. And I think there's an opportunity for those organizations and companies, or whoever's making these decisions that have spaces to create more of that collaboration, more of that

space sharing. And on a multidisciplinary level, too. I think, you know, there's so many, like old, old Canadian-owned theatres, for example, that have giant spaces that don't share it. And I know, that's expensive. I know, there's so many other things that I as an independent artist have no clue how that works. But I think in imbuing these spaces with a greater variety of artists and disciplines, like I said in the first thing, I think can only improve the ecosystem of artists and ... try to bridge across different disciplines that feel so disparate in a city like Toronto.

Zainab Amadhy 37:11

Okay, thanks. Yeah, I'm appreciating this idea of bringing in other folks as well. There's all kinds of other groups that are working in other sectors that we could be sharing our concerns with, and we could be working together on these issues so, for sure. I'm also thinking too, because when I worked in community services, Toronto owns a lot of space, a lot of buildings, you know, and I don't want to take anything away from housing at all, but there are some buildings that are more suitable to arts practices and to housing, and I'm wondering what kinds of arrangements can be made to make those spaces available to arts organizations and artists? So thanks for that, folks. Anything?

Greg Staats 38:04

I think the fact that too, longtime in the '90s. I mean, I've been exhibiting full time since '88. So our friend Jini Stolk always used to tell me that there are really good arts administrators are out there that have to be nurtured and brought forward. And that it all can't be left on the shoulders of artists, to run organizations. So that these people who are, you know, what she did with the Theatre Alliance and elsewhere, really, the advocacy was the main thing. And here we are, we're trying to leave it to the MPs or MPP here, and then we have Lisker happen, and that all blew up. And so if there's nobody in our corner as workers and artists, we're busy doing our thing. I mean, we're exhausted enough. So I think the fact that for organizations and artists too to really foster younger people who are like-minded, who are born advocates to take on these positions in small and large arts organizations, that have experience outside of academia, in the community, in the disciplines, and it just can't be a resume, it has to be a presence, that has to be nurtured and felt in the community.

Zainab Amadhy 39:53

Yeah, for sure, Okay.

Claudia Moore 39:57

Absolutely, Greg. I just want to second that emotion, you know, I would still rather be working on a performance right now. And, you know, I'm a grown up with my art and I have been asking myself why over so many years, why dance, why arts and at this stage, we have a concrete understanding of why we're doing what we're doing, and also for the importance of it in society. But absolutely, we weren't trained to advocate. We were trained for all kinds of things, and we're got huge discipline and, and lots

of energy, that's for sure, and a lot of good ideas. But we absolutely need people to advocate and people to help us make these connections, create these bridges, with other communities, and also with those who can help to solidify the very basic elements that we need in order to do our work. Yeah.

Greg Staats 41:07

Also for Indigenous people I grew up on Six Nations on reserve, and grew up around a lot of older people, and there was a constant push to be in service, to be helping. To just even to go to the neighbors saying, "Do you need anything done today?" This type of service coupled with the fact that the Hodinoshoni Great Law of Peace requires us to go out and do and share this message of elevating each other's minds for mental health. There's a huge pull, as Hodinoshoni to do that. However, you throw in some lateral violence, trauma, some really bad stuff that happens to us, including myself, and it just creates this huge conflict within me to sort of like, to be hyper vigilant. And, I mean, if I was to write policy, I probably would be very good at it, but because I would know, I already know bad things can happen. And I think as artists, we're constantly dealing with the fact that, our bodies or our minds, bad things are going to happen. So, we're, we're responding to that; responding to the COVID. Our minds go back to the Spanish flu This constant back and forth. I call it the return, this constant state of return. So that's sort of my makeup, so that if you can take what I just said, and apply to a lot of different Indigenous peoples when we're called upon to do these types of things where we're speaking... a lot of us can't do it. We can, but at a price. And for a period of time. So our advocacy is, is dependent on largely our state of mind and our mental health and our life's journey. So I think that that's what people have to remember when they're going through their little Rolodex of "Pick a [Scor?]" Try to find the Indigenous person to do this, then. I mean, that's where the networking comes in. That's where outreach comes in. I mean, you could dial Bev Jacobs on Six Nations, who's a lawyer and started the Missing and Murdered women 16 years ago, and she would talk, she does these great talks. There are people out there, so it's about networking. And then those of us who are artists can get on with what we have to do. Which is difficult enough. Tough Enough.

Zainab Amadhy 44:21

Okay, thanks. Um, I'm gonna skip a few questions here because I want to get to, you know, since this is sponsored by Toronto Arts Council, and it's part of their research work. If we have time to go back to the other questions, I'll do that. But I want to make sure this question comes in and that is: Where do funders and donors most need to focus their energy and resources at this time and in the near future? Any thoughts? You've spoken to some of it

Greg Staats 45:14

There's a tendency for funders and donors just to only focus on awards and where I come from that's another worldview and what I mean by that is that if I could see funders and donors focusing their energies and resources on collaborations between organizations. Not necessarily singling out one

person to be the hero of that effort. So if there are more funders - I've always talked about outreach even back in 1990 with Ontario Arts Council; it's always been like "What's Outreach?" And I've always (said) there are prerequisites for outreach but if the funders and donors could actually take a look at - okay well these are the things we need to do in terms of broadening and including on a reciprocal racial relationship. These activities, this sharing in the spirit of sharing, not really heavy on the outcome but more along the lines of what did we share and people can then go away to think about it and then they can start doing more work. Yeah that's what I would suggest.

Augusto Bitter 47:04

I agree Greg, I think focusing on developing and incubating, I think all these statements or the goals or intentions of these funding programs or donors or organizations; a lot of it is already, at least verbally, at least on page, saying that, "prioritizing underrepresented voices" BIPOC whatever, all of those different labels and monikers. But I think we're in serious need of some healing and not everyone is. That for me as an (individual) feels like a really big task obviously and it's something that has to be done collectively. But I think queer and trans communities, Indigenous communities, Black communities have found ways to sustain their communities and to find, and to sustain their ways of healing and their ways of connecting with each other and I think infusing these organizations with that kind of community support and community advocacy and you know I have a dream where it's like this giant space where there's theatre and there's film and there's dance and there's a community organization that deals with young families, who knows? And there's a photography studio and there's... so having that kind ... I'm really stuck on this idea of not siloing ourselves and creating more opportunities to relate to each other and kind of meet each other more honestly as human beings and not just ... I think I really resonated to what you spoke about Greg about the sharing and the process, and not so much the product. So using these community organizations within these artistic spaces to really focus on our well-being so that our art is better but that our lives are better our communities are better our relationships are better too

Claudia Moore 49:20

Yeah I totally second what both of you are saying, but the idea of funds that support processes of collaboration, so it's not just a box that you tick off, but it is an actual project that connects two organizations over a period of time. I think it's really the only way that we're going to start to really hear each other, understand each other and to begin the kind of sharing and the kind of community focus that needs to happen. So for instance, I had a lovely, Older and Reckless edition two years ago in 2019, we had magnificent Indigenous performers on the program. We had talks, we had workshops, and it was fantastic. But there weren't that many Indigenous audience members. Try as we might to reach out, it's not just invitation, it does need to be a process, I believe. And so wouldn't it be great if around a project like that, there was also funding to support conversations in Indigenous organizations,

community organizations to actually stimulate interest, and desire to come together and share. So yeah, funding process would be great.

Greg Staats 50:58

I mean, exactly it's those placemaking projects, where you take the collaboration to someone else's home and space, where they know that they are safe, this is their space, this is where all their memories are in that organization. So, to have these visitors come and collaborate in that meaningful.. and it stays in that space, too, it really does. I was just thinking, even if it's a satellite, like what Emily Philip did at AGYU, and it took three, almost three or four years to have a strong working relationship with the Mississaugas of the New Credits, just part of Six Nations. So they had this whole long... where they would go and meet with the community and vice versa. And that way the spaces became the Reserve space, from New Credit, was then transferred to the AGYU. And there's this welcoming, feeling that was created in terms of expressing themselves and including people from New Credit to work with visiting artists from Brazil and from all over the world. So, I mean, that's ideally, but even if it was just a small, artist run center or dance or theatre that could go to some small artist or small Native organization, because what's been happening is, obviously, that most of the artists run centers are now institutionalized. And that's a problem. Because there's a whole model there and their whole identity is quite tight. So anyhow..

Zainab Amadhy 53:15

Okay, so, yeah, our time is up here. But I just want to thank you all, I just feel like, it's been a really rich discussion. So yeah, thank you for sharing your time and your thoughts. And thank you, to all the viewers as well, I'm going to kick it over to Claire to close us out here.

Claire Hopkinson 53:40

Thank you so much, Zainab for leading this important discussion. I've been listening intently and jotting down notes, and it really, really resonates. And I want to thank Greg, Claudia and Augusto for contributing really incredibly insightful perspectives and ideas. It's a privilege to hear from you about what's happening and how you're feeling and how you're seeing things. So this was the final session in our March 2021, Arts Chats series. We've really been delighted to start this series. And I've been very excited to listen to all the conversations. And perhaps it's also because I've been missing those casual conversations that I was always party to in a normal course of time. And it truly is fabulous to have such exceptional groups of creative minds here over the last four weeks, (I) learned a lot and really appreciate the range of knowledge and perspectives that our contributors have brought. So I want to thank you all, and all of our panelists and moderators over the last month. I want to thank you most sincerely. I also want to give a bit of a shout out to Dr. Shawn Newman who started this series. It's his brainchild, and to the Foundation team for their great good work in making this series come to life. I hope it has a future. So for any of you out there, I want to thank you for coming and joining us. We're

going to share these sessions. An announcement will come out, so if you've missed one you can participate or listen to it in the future and you can share it with others who you think it would be interesting to hear. It is part of a larger research initiative. Well I'll just say thank you again everyone, thank you for joining us, thank you to Marcia, you've been fabulous in helping us out this last month and... yeah don't show up next week okay? Thanks, and all of you we'll see you again hopefully sooner rather than later. Stay safe stay healthy stay positive, thank you.

Zainab Amadhy 56:13

Bye everyone.