



TORONTO ARTS FOUNDATION

Strategic Direction 2013-2016

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Introduction

The Toronto Arts Foundation was incorporated as a non-profit charitable organization in 1995 to provide individuals, private and public foundations, corporations and government agencies with opportunities to strengthen Toronto through investment in the arts.

In late 2011 the Executive and Board of the Foundation undertook a strategic review to clarify its role and direction. The challenging environment facing the sector and factors specific to the Foundation's situation made this planning effort both necessary and opportune at that time.

Environmental challenges include:

- Underinvestment in arts and culture - Toronto is recognized as a major international cultural centre, and the economic and social case for investing in the arts has been well established, but financial support of Toronto's arts and culture sector continues to lag both inflation and population growth. While spending by the municipal government on the arts has recently increased significantly, Toronto still lags the per capita spending in competing cities.
- Investment gaps - Financial support for the arts sector has traditionally been weighted towards large arts organizations and large events and away from individual artists and smaller arts organizations, including those working at the community level. Capacity building and innovation are also underfunded, as are efforts to engage the public and allow broad realization of the benefits afforded by a thriving arts and culture sector.

Factors specific to the Foundation's situation include:

- The growth of Toronto Arts Foundation initiatives has demonstrated demand and put pressure on organization resources.
- The Foundation is uniquely positioned to complement the work of the Toronto Arts Council (TAC), which distributes arts grants on behalf of the City of Toronto to arts organizations and individual artists, and to leverage TAC's expertise and knowledge.
- It is imperative for the Toronto Arts Foundation to be an expert in arts investment and impact in order to be a credible investment vehicle for private sector donors.
- The organization's profile must be raised in order to secure increased private sector support.

The Executive and Board concluded that the Toronto Arts Foundation is uniquely positioned to play a leadership role in response to these challenges. The Foundation can help Toronto succeed socially and economically through targeted investment in the arts.

The strategic direction for the Toronto Arts Foundation incorporates specific goals and actions to move the Foundation closer to its vision: **Creative City: Block by Block.**

Our Vision

Toronto is a dynamic centre of artistic excellence. Our vision, **Creative City: Block by Block**, is to connect every Toronto neighbourhood with the transformative social and economic benefits of the arts.

Our Guiding Principles

We cultivate creativity and value excellence.

We embrace cultural diversity and reflect it in our programs.

We work from a highly informed and non-partisan position allowing us to communicate, advocate and convene on behalf of the arts sector.

We depend on and maintain the trust of the arts community and our donors.

We measure outcomes and reinvest our learning into our community.

We use partnerships and collaborative models to increase our effectiveness and flexibility.

Our Goals:

To increase private sector investment in the arts and public sector support for the arts.

To encourage artistic excellence, and broader recognition of the high calibre and achievements of Toronto artists.

To increase public engagement with the arts, from creation to participation to appreciation.

Strategic Plan Overview

The Toronto Arts Foundation plan sets out three strategies that reflect the vision, purpose and goals of the organization, as follows:

Connecting Communities to the Arts – leveraging Toronto Arts Foundation knowledge to direct artistic resources to priority areas of the city.

Turning up the spotlight – developing Toronto Arts Foundation awards programs to draw attention to artistic excellence and engage private donors in focused financial support of the sector.

Giving Voice to the Arts – strengthening the knowledge base of Toronto Arts Foundation and sharing knowledge with the broader community.

Connecting Communities to the Arts

The Foundation is unique in having the knowledge and networks, from its research and experience, to identify communities that need to be connected with artistic resources and activities at the regional and neighbourhood level. Current initiatives include the Neighbourhood Arts Network, North York Arts and East End Arts.



Domanique Grant, Singer-Songwriter, Actress, Dancer and Advocate

Neighbourhood Arts Network

Toronto Arts Foundation convenes and connects artists and the public through its Neighbourhood Arts Network (NAN). Prior to the launch of NAN in 2010, with initial financial support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, many community engaged artists were working in isolation. Community centres seeking arts programming found it challenging to access artists.

NAN is now a Toronto-wide network of over 1000 members, including artists, arts organizations, arts workers and community agencies working throughout the City of Toronto. The network focuses on community-engaged arts, which fosters relationships between artists and residents. Private sector investment in NAN is providing resources for growth but more support is needed.

"The Neighbourhood Arts Network is an invaluable tool for artists looking to connect with each other, as well as engage with their communities. The network provides a platform for the next generation of young artists to showcase their talents and aim higher!"

- Domanique Grant



Lila Karim, Managing Director, North York Arts

North York Arts

North York Arts is a planned new arts hub supporting artists, arts organizations and residents of North York. North York Arts is being incubated by the Toronto Arts Foundation, in response to community needs expressed by North York arts groups and residents in 2011. Toronto Arts Foundation is working with North York Councilors and the City's Economic Development and Culture Division. Funding is provided by the private and public sector.

North York Arts has stimulated a new initiative to establish an arts hub in East York. Toronto Arts Foundation has been brought in early in the process to aid in the evaluation and planning.

"North York has an active arts community. We are collaborating with local artists, arts organizations, city agencies, civic leaders, community organizations, residents and businesses to put a spotlight on this creative community."

- Lila Karim, Managing Director, North York Arts

Proposed Actions:

The Neighbourhood Arts Network, must be put on a sustainable footing and strengthened as a vehicle for achieving the Foundation's broader vision through convening and connecting artists and the public;

- Establish ongoing financial resources for NAN, ensuring its sustainability.
- Review needs and terms of engagement with members to maximize participation while maintaining the role of convener, building capacity and providing resources and programs.
- Build the profile of NAN and strengthen its impact through presentations at conferences and symposia.

North York Arts, East End Arts, and other potential hubs, must migrate to sustainable models that equip these organizations to provide quality experiences for youth and other community members.

- Establish **North York Arts** as an independent organization by 2017.
- Act as a trustee and advisor to **East End Arts** in its planning phase
- Continue to develop best practices for arts hub development

Establish Toronto Arts Foundation **Creative City Funds** to enable private sector investors to pair strategic investments with opportunities for city building through the arts.

- Leverage research and knowledge resources to identify populations and areas that are underrepresented and underdeveloped in the arts sector.
- Attract investment, supporters and partners for Creative City Funds.
- Create an annual report card for donors of the Toronto Arts Foundation.



Anusree Roy, RBC Emerging Artist Winner 2009

Turning up the Spotlight

The Toronto Arts Foundation is recognized in the arts sector as an adjudicator of artistic excellence in the city and is strongly positioned to bring attention and investment to the arts sector through its awards programs. Current initiatives include the Toronto Arts Foundation Awards and the Arts Lunch.

Toronto Arts Foundation Awards Program was established in 1995. The Awards are presented annually and celebrate the arts communities' achievements and the contributions that artists, cultural professionals and arts supporters make to the City of Toronto. The Toronto Arts Foundation currently gives seven awards totaling approximately \$49,000. Financial support is provided through a combination of legacies and annual donations from private and corporate donors.

The Arts Lunch has been the signature event for annual presentation of the Toronto Arts Foundation Awards since 2006. This event welcomes and celebrates 350 people from a broad spectrum of Toronto's creative, business and civic leaders, as well as artists of all disciplines. It has proven to be an effective platform for attracting important corporate support.

"Winning the RBC Emerging Artist Award was truly life changing. The award allowed me the time, the opportunity and the financial ability to keep creating and sharing my stories."

- Anusree Roy, Playwright and Actor

Proposed Actions:

The Foundation will create opportunities to work with strategic partners to broaden its awards programs and increase their impact. The Toronto Arts Foundation will undertake the following actions:

- Designate two new categories of awards, in addition to the ***Signature Awards*** presented at the Arts Lunch, to link benefactor and donors to artistic achievement in other forums:
Vision Awards: Presented at high profile events or through partners.
Legacy Awards and Grants: Presented by families or estates.
- Develop a fund-raising plan to increase the size of the Toronto Arts Foundation ***Signature Awards*** and secure commitments to multi-year funding.
- Raise the profile of the Toronto Arts Foundation Awards, focusing attention on the narrative of the finalists and recipients and their impact on the City of Toronto.



Community Liaison & Margo Charlton, Research Manager

Giving Voice to the Arts

Toronto Arts Foundation has played an ongoing communication and non-partisan advocacy role for the arts in Toronto, assuming an organizational and interpretive role to bring the arts community together around key funding and policy issues. Current initiatives include Friends of the Arts and Research.

Friends of the Arts

In 2011 the Toronto Arts Foundation played an instrumental role in protecting the city's arts grants budget from service cuts. Toronto Arts Foundation's informal "Friends of the Arts" evolved at that time into a list of 20,000+ arts supporters, working with the Foundation's network of arts partners to connect Toronto residents and businesses that care about the role that the arts play in the city.

Research

Through its research initiatives the Toronto Arts Foundation has a wealth of in-depth knowledge about the Toronto cultural community and the populations it serves. To date, two Toronto Arts Foundation programs, the Neighbourhood Arts Network and North York Arts were initiated as a result of research, community consultation and evaluation such as: 'Community Engaged Artists and the Creation of the Neighbourhood Arts Network' and 'North York Arts: Fostering Arts Engagement in North York'. Most recently, the Toronto Arts Foundation published the 'Arts and Equity Toolkit' and 'Transforming Communities through the Arts: A Study of Three Toronto Neighbourhoods'.

Proposed Actions:

The Foundation must be viewed as an expert on arts investment and impact if it is to build trust with private sector donors, add value as a convener and champion the economic and social benefits of the arts. The Toronto Arts Foundation will:

- Establish a centre for arts knowledge, that is respected by the arts sector, public and private partners as the leading source of information on the arts in Toronto and a contributor to the growing body of knowledge about the impact of the arts in urban centres in Canada and internationally.
- Develop a visual data arts map of Toronto with partners in the arts sector: a digital mapping application that is: GPS enabled, responsive to multiple user segments (tourists, residents, industry), potentially multi-lingual and populated by data from numerous existing but stratified networks and partners.
- Establish strong ongoing communication and outreach capabilities.
- Strengthen the arts sector by sharing our knowledge and providing networking opportunities and forums for volunteer arts board leaders.
- Establish an Arts Knowledge Symposium “State of the Arts”: convene Toronto Arts Council experts to discuss sector trends and key issues for research with a goal of sharing information with Toronto Arts Foundation partners and the broader community.
- Develop a communications plan for the ‘Friends of the Arts’ group with information of interest to this constituency.
- Develop ongoing arts policy and research fellowships to increase the quality of research in areas important to furthering Toronto Arts Foundation’s vision.



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