

**TORONTO
ARTS_**

ALL IN FOR THE ARTS

STRATEGIC PLAN — 2026-2030

**CREATIVITY
IS THE BRIDGE
BETWEEN
WHO WE ARE
AND WHAT WE
CAN BECOME.**



JAMI (2024) PHOTO BY JAE YANG

LOOKING BACK, VISIONING FORWARD	06
Why a Joint Plan?	10
Our Responsibility	11
Our Commitment	12
<hr/>	
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE	16
Vision	17
Mission	18
Values	20
<hr/>	
WAYS OF WORKING	26
<hr/>	
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	30
Build for the Future	32
Transform Supports	36
Connect Communities	40
Lead Globally	44
Make the Case	48
<hr/>	
YEAR THREE CHECK-IN	52
Monitoring and Reporting	54
<hr/>	
BACKGROUND + CONSULTATION	55



ALL IN FOR TORONTO'S CREATIVE FUTURE

CRITICAL
DISTANCE
CENTRE
FOR CURATORS.
PHOTO BY TONI
HAFKENSCHIED.

This is the first joint strategic plan of Toronto Arts Council and Toronto Arts Foundation. With this plan, we combine our strengths toward the realization of a shared vision for Toronto: A vibrant global city where life is creative, where artists thrive because they are valued, and where the arts inspire connected communities for all.

Art has a unique and essential power to reveal our hearts and stories, connect across difference, create belonging and opportunity, and build bridges to better futures. In a world beset with uncertainty and looking for hope, advancing this fundamental value of the arts has never been more important.

For this to happen, artists must have access to affordable space and decent work, and vital arts organizations must have the resources and runway to adapt to change and unleash their imagination. The arts sector must be inclusive of and connected to Toronto's diverse communities, and more Torontonians must exercise their right to a creative life in every corner of our city.

Toronto Arts is committed to coming together with a wide array of partners to build for the future, transform our supports, connect communities, lead globally, and make the case for the arts. By doing this, we will secure the long-term vitality of the arts sector and a strong creative future for Toronto.

This plan is both a roadmap and a call to action. We are all in for the arts and we invite you to join us.

LOOKING BACK

MILLO DANCE (2025) PHOTO BY KAT RIZZA



VISIONING FORWARD

For 50 years, Toronto Arts has nurtured the city's vitality with a mission rooted in equity, access, innovation, and a firm belief in the transformative power of the arts.

AS TORONTO HAS GROWN TO BECOME ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST DIVERSE CITIES, SO TOO HAS ITS CULTURAL LANDSCAPE. THE ARTS ARE A CIVIC ANCHOR, REFLECTING THE CITY'S DYNAMIC PLURALISM AND GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS.

They are also a critical provider of economic and social infrastructure, not only as a GDP contributor but as a driver of identity, connection, and human potential.

However, challenges such as income precarity, lack of affordable cultural space, rising costs, declining revenue, and shifting audience behaviors are limiting the viability and reach of the arts. With rapid social, economic, technological, and environmental changes, the arts now face a pivotal moment.

WHY A JOINT PLAN?

**THE ARTS MUST BE
RECOGNIZED AS A VITAL
INVESTMENT IN CREATIVE
SOLUTIONS AND SHARED
PROSPERITY.**

Toronto must protect and better resource its arts sector to continue benefiting from its cultural, social, and economic contributions, as well as the global profile the arts bring to the city. To this end, Toronto Arts Council and Foundation have partnered on a single strategic plan, combining resources to create greater impact for the communities we serve and for the city at large. As Toronto's city-wide independent funding body and charity for the arts, we bring together community, government, business, and philanthropy to activate robust investment and participation in the arts.

This plan marks a new era of city-building through the arts - one that builds on collaborative foundations, fosters new alliances, and embraces innovation to unlock opportunities for Toronto's arts sector.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY

As we move forward, Toronto Arts commits to advancing reconciliation and locating our work in Tkaronto, on Indigenous lands. This means upholding Indigenous self-determination, strengthening relationships with Indigenous artists and communities, deepening support for Indigenous ways of creating, knowing, and sharing, and promoting Indigenous leadership. We will continue to prioritize equity, elevating arts that represent the diversity of this city. Accessibility will be a focus across our work, creating the conditions for all artists and communities in Toronto to thrive. When artists and residents of all lived experiences and abilities are welcomed to participate fully in the arts, our city is more dynamic and reflective of our diversity.

OUR COMMITMENT

Over the next five years, Toronto Arts will work collaboratively with the arts sector and its partners to deepen relationships and direct investments to transformative change and a vibrant creative future for Toronto. We will support the implementation of the City of Toronto's new culture plan, Culture Connects. We will exercise our role as a catalyst, connector, and convenor of community-led solutions. We will be grounded in our belief that the arts transform lives and communities, and we will work to instill this belief in all Torontonians.

IT IS
BELIEVE IN
INVESTING

We will support
the implementation
of the City of Toronto's
new culture plan,
Culture Connects.
We will exercise our role
as a catalyst, connector,
and convenor of
community-led solutions.

TIME TO
OUR CITY BY
IN THE ARTS.

PHOTOS BY
ATALIA CHARLES
SELINA MCCALLUM
KAT RIZZA



THIS STRATEGIC PLAN IS MORE THAN A ROADMAP,
IT IS A CALL TO ACTION TO CO-INVEST IN A STRONGER
ARTS SECTOR THAT CAN REALIZE ITS FULL POTENTIAL,
SUPPORT THE VITAL ARTISTS AND ARTS ORGANIZATIONS
THAT ARE TORONTO'S TREASURED ASSETS, AND MEET
THE CREATIVE NEEDS OF TORONTONIANS.

THIS PLAN IS OURS AND YOURS.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE



SHADOWLAND
THEATRE (2023)
PHOTO BY
HANNAH
MITTELSTAEDT

**TORONTO IS
A VIBRANT
GLOBAL CITY
WHERE LIFE
IS CREATIVE,
WHERE ARTISTS
THRIVE BECAUSE
THEY ARE
VALUED, AND
WHERE THE
ARTS INSPIRE
CONNECTED
COMMUNITIES
FOR ALL.**

VISION

**TORONTO
ARTS_**

**WE FUEL TORONTO'S
VITALITY BY SUPPORTING
THE MAKING AND
SHARING OF ART IN
ITS MANY FORMS,
BY PROVIDING
PATHWAYS FOR ACCESS,
INNOVATION, AND LONG-
TERM SUCCESS, AND BY
ASSERTING THAT THE
ARTS AND CREATIVITY
ARE ESSENTIAL TO THE
WELL-BEING OF OUR CITY
AND ALL ITS RESIDENTS.**

DUSK DANCES (2022) PHOTO BY DAHLIA KATZ



MISSION

OUR

SHARED

MANDATE

TORONTO ARTS _ COUNCIL

FILTHEBLNK (2024) PHOTO BY @FLEENORMALITY.CA



**AS TORONTO'S PUBLIC
FUNDING BODY FOR
THE ARTS, WE
SUPPORT ARTISTS AND
ARTS ORGANIZATIONS
TO FLOURISH THROUGH
ACCESSIBLE GRANTS
AND SERVICES, WE
ADVISE ON ARTS
SECTOR NEEDS
AND OPPORTUNITIES,
AND WE USE OUR
CONVENING
POWER TO FURTHER
THE DEVELOPMENT
OF THE ARTS.**

MISSION

AS TORONTO'S CITY-WIDE CHARITY FOR THE ARTS, WE MOBILIZE PRIVATE PARTNERS AND RESOURCES TO CHAMPION AND STRENGTHEN THE ARTS SECTOR, NURTURE CREATIVE POTENTIAL, CELEBRATE ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENT, AND CONNECT COMMUNITIES TO THE TRANSFORMATIVE BENEFITS OF THE ARTS.

MISSION

**TORONTO
ARTS _ FOUNDATION**



ETHIOPIAN CIRCUS (2025) PHOTO BY KAT RIZZA

CHAMPION ARTISTS Defend artistic freedom and support artists to create and thrive.

DESIGN FOR EQUITY AND ACCESSIBILITY Be inclusive of all abilities and lived experiences.

CENTRE INDIGENOUS SELF-DETERMINATION Uphold First Nations, Inuit and Métis ways of creating, knowing, and sharing, and commit to reconciliation and reciprocity.

BUILD CREATIVE COMMUNITIES Encourage everyone to explore and engage in the arts.

PUT PEOPLE FIRST Value the dignity, care, and well-being of all those we work with.

We are guided by evergreen values that inform our actions, decisions, and aspirations.



VALUES

SHADOWLAND
THEATRE (2023)
PHOTO BY
HANNAH
MITTELSTAEDT



WAYS OF WORKING

We will achieve our priorities by working in ways that generate inclusive and expansive results.



PARTNER + COLLABORATE

We collaborate for greater impact, working with a wide array of community, government, business, and philanthropic partners to bring about shared outcomes.



CONVENE + CONNECT

We foster community and facilitate resource and knowledge sharing within our networks to add value and increase opportunities for those we support.



LEARN + SHARE

We cultivate curiosity and pursue data-driven insights, regularly sharing what we know and learn so that others can use and build on it.



BUILD STRENGTH + OPPORTUNITY

We embrace digital transformation, operational effectiveness, and fiscal strength to optimize our work for long-term success.



THE CHIMERA PROJECT DANCE THEATRE (2025) PHOTO BY DAVID HOU.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Our priorities create a framework for our five-year goals, objectives, and actions.

SUNDAY, ALICIA
K. HARRIS (2025)
PHOTO BY
ROYA DELSOL

BUILD FOR THE FUTURE

Pursue innovative pathways to a robust and inclusive arts sector by supporting stability now while helping artists and arts organizations adapt to current and emerging realities and seize new opportunities.





SHADOWLAND THEATRE (2023)
PHOTO BY HANNAH MITTELSTAEDT

INCREASE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INVESTMENT in the vitality of the sector, determining what is needed for the arts to truly flourish and aligning and diversifying our resources to achieve this future.

CONTRIBUTE TO INNOVATIVE FINANCIAL MODELS AND POLICIES that will improve artists' income potential and support arts organizations to implement effective operating solutions.

INVEST IN THE NEXT GENERATION OF ARTISTS AND CULTURAL LEADERS and increase funding and other supports for artists, arts organizations, and communities that are outside the downtown core.

COLLABORATE WITH THE CITY OF TORONTO AND OTHER PARTNERS to sustain and support affordable community-led spaces for cultural use.



TRANSFORM SUPPORTS

Improve ways
for artists, arts
organizations, and
communities to
access meaningful,
equitable, and
accessible resources
and opportunities
by ensuring that
our programs and
services meet them
where they are.



The image is a composite. On the left, a photo shows people in a gallery setting. On the right, a portrait of Liza Mattimore is shown. Below these is a blue banner with the text 'LET'S TALK GRANTS' in large yellow letters. Underneath, it says 'NOV 5 — 1PM-3PM' and 'OPEN DOOR INFO SESSION'. A yellow speech bubble icon contains the text 'WITH LIZA MATTIMORE'. At the bottom left of the banner, it says 'TORONTO ARTS COUNCIL' and at the bottom right, 'TO A'.

TRANSFORM OUR GRANTING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, ensuring that they are simple to find and use, offer relational value, and extend to those currently under-served.

INCREASE SUPPORT FOR INDIGENOUS ARTS, renewing policies, programs, and services in close consultation with Indigenous artists.

EXPAND ACCESS TO CREATIVE CAREER DEVELOPMENT supports for youth, newcomer, 2SLGBTQIA+, and Indigenous creatives through mentorship and training programs.

EMBRACE DIGITAL TOOLS AND PROCESSES to improve service delivery and report on outcomes.

SHAKESPEARE
IN ACTION (2023)
PHOTO BY
MATT HERTENDY

CONNECT COMMUNITIES

Increase access to the arts
in neighbourhoods and
public spaces across
Toronto by supporting
creative learning,
engagement,
social connection,
cross-cultural dialogue,
and improved mental
health and wellness
through the arts.



**ENHANCE PROGRAMS
AND PARTNERSHIPS**

that connect communities to the arts in libraries, schools, historic sites, and other public spaces.

EXPAND PUBLIC PARKS

PROGRAMMING to involve and benefit communities and partners in more neighbourhoods across the city.

INVEST IN INITIATIVES

that build cross-cultural understanding and deliver social and health outcomes through the arts.

AMPLIFY THE AVAILABILITY

of arts experiences in Toronto, in collaboration with the City of Toronto and other partners.

ARTS IN THE PARKS
(2025) PHOTO BY
KAT RIZZA

**TORONTO
ARTS_**





LEAD GLOBALLY

Create opportunities for exchange, presentation, and promotion of Toronto arts abroad by connecting artists, arts leaders, and arts organizations to international networks, collaborators, and audiences and enhancing Toronto's profile as a global creative city.



PHOTO BY
KAT RIZZA (2025)

INVEST IN INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE and foster creative partnerships that increase international connections and opportunities for artists and arts organizations.

SUPPORT LOCAL ARTS INITIATIVES AND EVENTS that attract cultural tourism and collaborators to Toronto, working with the City of Toronto and other partners.

ENGAGE IN INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS and convenings and develop relationships with funders abroad.

ENHANCE THE FOUNDATION'S AWARDS PROGRAM to create opportunities for international exposure and connection for award finalists and recipients.



MAKE THE CASE

Increase public appreciation for the value of the arts and the role of creativity in quality of life. Embracing our role as advisor and advocate, use compelling data and actions to highlight the positive impacts of the arts on our city.



CELIA SMITH, TAC BOARD CHAIR +
MAYOR OLIVIA CHOW (2025)
ILLUSTRATIONS BY
DANIELLE TASCHEREAU
FOR FUNDING MATTERS.

ENGAGE IN RESEARCH AND STORYTELLING INITIATIVES

that demonstrate the economic, social, cultural, and community impacts of the arts in forms that can be widely used and shared.

CONVENE A DIVERSE RANGE OF INTEREST HOLDERS AND PARTNERS

to join our advocacy efforts and expand our reach, supporting action at the grassroots level.

**OFFER ANALYSIS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS** to the City of Toronto, other levels of government, and private funders and donors, for meaningful public and private investment in the arts.

**INVEST IN GOOD
DATA AND REPORTING
SYSTEMS** that share the full impact of Toronto Arts investments.

YEAR THREE CHECK-IN

Toronto Arts will review this strategic plan in 2028, evaluating progress and renewing or adjusting our priorities and objectives as required. This will ensure that the plan continues to reflect the changing landscape for the arts and responds to the most pressing needs and opportunities in our sector.

MONITORING + REPORTING

Toronto Arts will develop results-based outcomes and a performance measurement framework to monitor and report on the implementation of this strategy. We will provide updates on our progress through our annual reports, websites, and newsletters.

We will continue to consult with our partners and the artists, organizations, and communities we support as we advance our priorities. This is a living strategy that must respond to emerging opportunities and challenges, and that will only be realized through engagement and collaboration with others.

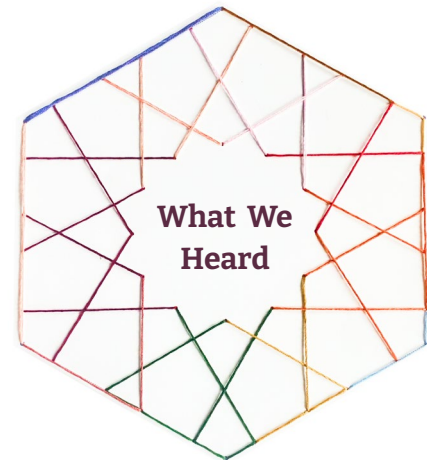
BACKGROUND + CONSULTATION

This plan has been shaped by more than two years of exchange with Toronto artists, arts organizations, and residents, public and private sector partners and colleagues, and Toronto Arts staff and board members.

It began in fall 2023 through our involvement in the development of a new 10-year culture plan for the City of Toronto. The May 2024 report, **What We Heard: A Summary of Feedback from Community Engagement on the Action Plan for Toronto's Culture Sector**, and the City's resulting plan, Culture

Connects: An Action Plan for Culture in Toronto (2025-2035), are key documents informing this strategic plan.

The **What We Heard** report presented findings gathered from over 4,000 Torontonians who participated in community consultations about the state and future of arts and culture in Toronto. Because of the breadth and recency of this process and its insights, Toronto Arts did not conduct a separate community consultation in the shaping of this plan.



*Summary of Feedback from Community Engagement on the Action Plan
for Toronto's Culture Sector*

May 2024

A report submitted to the City of Toronto and Toronto Arts Council

monumental

The journey to create our new strategic plan began decisively in November 2024 with a comprehensive environmental scan. This foundational phase uncovered critical insights and included:

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

A detailed review of internal documents, including previous strategic plans, complemented by interviews and surveys with staff and board members to gather ideas and determine capacity to implement strategic priorities and objectives.

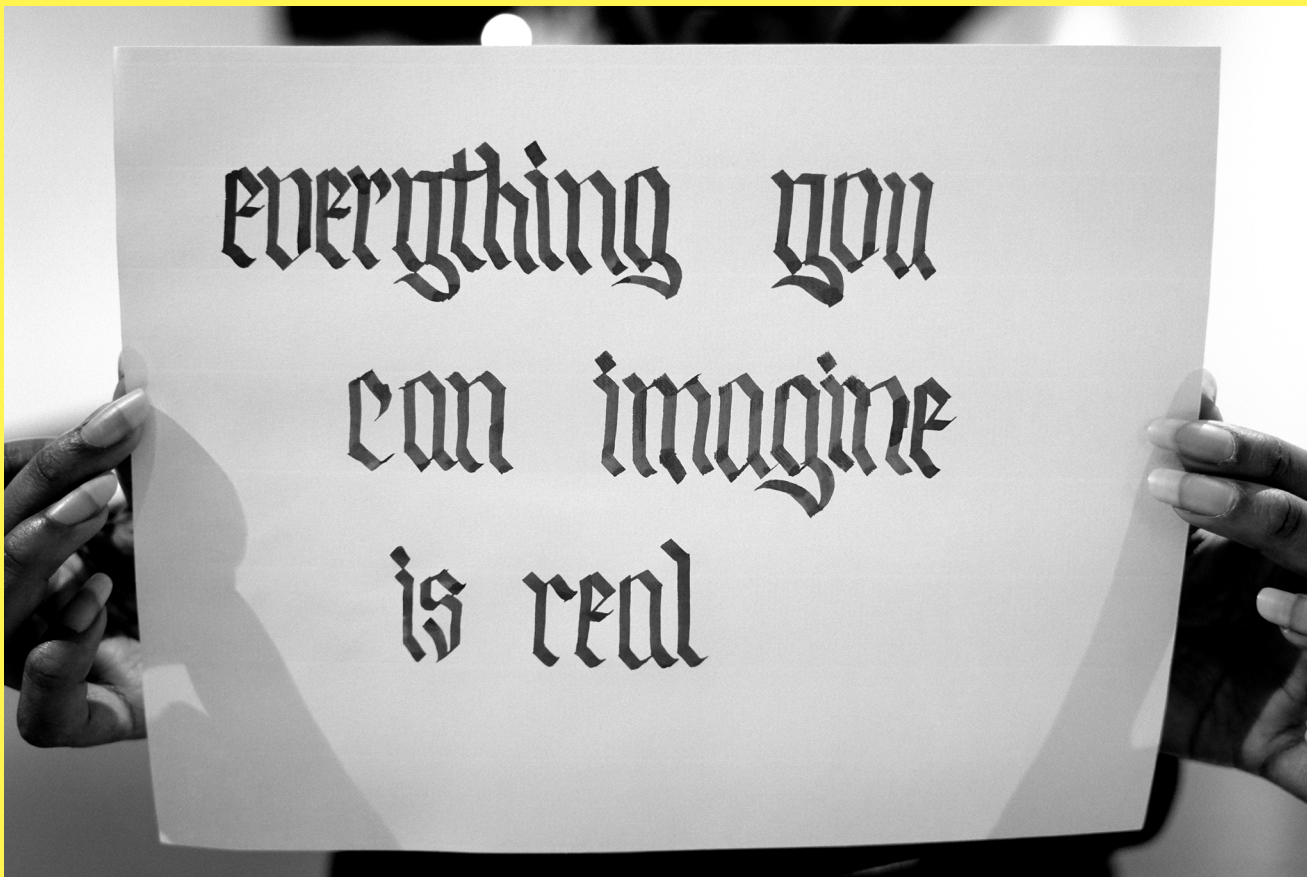
EXTERNAL LANDSCAPE REVIEW

An examination of external drivers to identify macro-level influences on the landscape for the arts in Toronto.

PEER INSIGHTS

A survey of relevant data and reports, including the strategies of other leading arts funders in and outside of Canada, to understand issues and trends and successful responses.

From December 2024 to June 2025, a focused consultation process engaged key interest holders in and beyond the arts sector. The diverse perspectives gleaned from these consultations were instrumental in identifying actionable initiatives and new pathways for sustained growth and impact.



T **○**
A **_**