



The Art for Social Change Network (ASCN)

Overview

To build partnerships and increase capacity at both local levels and for national collaboration, ICASC (the [International Centre of Art for Social Change](#), administered by [Judith Marcuse Projects](#)) is partnering with selected organizations across Canada to create a network of hubs that will serve as focal points for specific local and national activities. This is a significant change from how the sector currently exists; currently, there is no mechanism to connect community-engaged artists across the country. We hope that the network will lead to broad collaboration among artist/practitioners to enhance the wellbeing, impact and profile of our work.

Goals

Create a national network of community engaged arts “hubs” led by representatives from within one established organization in each province and territory to:

- Build bridges between diverse communities of practice, including those in both rural and municipal settings;
- Promote and support local and national initiatives including exchanges and dialogues, advocacy, artist exchanges, professional development and national gatherings; address the challenges of inclusion, equity and diversity.
- Nurture engagement and participation in community-engaged arts, specifically in the development of partnerships within the sector and with non-arts change initiatives such as those focused on environmental and social justice challenges;
- Provide connections with scholars working in community-engaged arts research.

Steering Committee Members:

Northern Arts and Cultural Centre, Yellowknife, NWT

Nakai Theatre, Whitehorse, Yukon

International Centre of Art for Social Change, BC

Calgary Arts Development, City of Calgary, Alberta

Common Weal, Regina/Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Art City, Winnipeg, Manitoba

ArtBridges, Toronto, Ontario

National Theatre School, Montreal, PQ

Wonder'neath, Halifax, Nova Scotia

Multicultural Association of Fredericton, Fredericton, NB

River Clyde Pageant, PEI

Labrador Creative Arts Festival, Labrador and First Light, St. John's, Newfoundland

ICASC/JMP is providing financial support over one year for a staff person in each organization to take on the role of a part-time coordinator or project director. Our intent is to work within each partner's existing infrastructure by supporting a new part-time position or enhancing the scope of an existing position within the organization. We envision the process of setting up and funding the regional hubs as a three-year project in an iterative approach to find the best model for the network, its funding and the development of programming.

Each hub is currently creating a project relating to the goals of the Network. These include planning for a national online conference (January 23-26, 2022), led by a national working committee; a national mapping of ASC organizations; creation of a collection of pandemic stories from the field; a survey of artist residencies; projects with new immigrants, with youth and social service agencies; research on local arts/social innovation initiatives and a video project with Indigenous youth.

Governance

- The Hubs Steering Committee (SC)
 - Each member organization has selected one person who is in a leadership role in that organization (with general decision-making authority); that leader is their rep on the SC. In future, organizations may want to delegate another senior person to this position.
 - The JMP Artistic Producer is interim implementation project lead & SC Chair during Years 1 and 2. After that, the SC elects a Chair from among its members.
 - The SC meets virtually monthly during the implementation phase, phasing to quarterly thereafter; decision making is by consensus, with formal votes when necessary.
- Regional Hub Coordinators
 - Hubs have complete autonomy in region-specific programming and are also responsible for promoting and participating in national-level programming.
 - Each hub prepares a report on activities for each SC meeting; JMP prepares an annual network progress /activity report that will be made public.

Why This Matters

When people make art collectively about what matters to them, new insights, dialogues and actions for change become possible. We passionately believe in the untapped potential of inclusive, arts-infused practices to build and support healthy, sustainable and more just communities. We believe that these practices nourish expression, dialogue, visioning and empowerment, all critically important for our country, especially now. Our beliefs are founded on a substantial worldwide body of evidence that demonstrates the work's positive impacts at the individual, community, and systems change levels. As these approaches become more integrated into a wide range of change agendas, the work will reach many more Canadians, enhancing social cohesion, wellbeing and providing new solutions to often-complex social challenges.