



April 26, 2013

Claire Hopkinson
Director & CEO
Toronto Arts Council
200-26 Grand Trunk Crescent
Toronto, Ontario M5J 3A9

Dear Claire,

VITAL is an affiliation of visual and media artist-run organizations concerned about the health of the arts in Toronto.

We applaud the Toronto Arts Council for taking the initiative to engage with stakeholders about how new funds from the Third Party Sign Tax might be distributed.

We see three distinct areas that need to be addressed. They are as follows:

1. There is a pressing need to address funding shortfalls that have hampered and restricted the effective operation of its members over the last 15 years. On average, most **VITAL** members have seen their funding increase by a mere two percent from the TAC while their operating costs have steadily increased by 80% in the same period. This new funding would provide an opportunity to address that gap. Our priorities are to provide the best services to artists while remunerating staff for their commitment and contributions to our organizations.

Specifically, **VITAL** recommends that the Toronto Arts Council:

- **Make a 25 percent permanent increase in funding to its current operational clients**
 - **Commit to ongoing inflation-based increases to clients over next four years as part of the implementation plan being developed by the Culture Division, Creative Capital Advisory Committee and BeautifulCity.ca**
2. **VITAL** supports the core recommendations that have been put forward by **Beautiful City.ca**, namely that the funds:

- **Support Toronto's living and practicing artists***
- **Celebrate diverse voices and activate art programs across Toronto**
- **Create and build ownership of vibrant and healthy public spaces**
- **Build the capacity of young adults, youth and children**

*Particular emphasis needs to be placed on the first point. This should manifest itself by:

- Allocating more funds to artist project grants
- Prioritizing funding for public events that budget industry-recognized fees
- Supporting arts organizations so that they can increase the number of local artists that they engage with their programming
- Providing emergency resources for artists in need
- Creating new programs to support training, professional development and mentorship for arts organizations and administrators (for example, the Ontario Arts Council's Compass program and the Canada Council's Capacity Building Grants)

3. **VITAL** is excited that the Toronto Arts Council is making the case that a portion of the increased allocation be used for innovation through special projects that organizations and individuals are undertaking. In order to foster innovation within the artist-run community we would ask that:

- **Opportunities for innovative new organizations to enter the operating funding stream be prioritized and training and professional support offered**
- **Funds for innovation be accessible to clients that receive operational funding from the Toronto Arts Council (for example: Canada Council's Initiatives Grant)**

Through our artist-run organizations, we provide artistic and educational outreach activities to diverse communities across the city. As part of this broad vision for the arts in Toronto, we demonstrate that art and community go hand in hand. Artist-run projects emphasize our role in fostering the development of neighbourhoods and communities, and encompass many aspects that are essential to making our city what it is.

The artist-run community provides opportunities that pave the way for the advancement of Canadian artists' careers and these artists often go on to become nationally and internationally recognized. The grants we receive from the Toronto Arts Council are supplemented by thousands of hours of volunteer labour leveraging donations and grants from other sectors both private and government.

As stakeholders we have a role to play and are willing to contribute to ongoing conversations on the future of arts in the City of Toronto through consultation like

this. We recommend that you make a firm commitment to sustain Toronto's cultural sector and to continue to position Toronto as a leading centre of cultural production.

Artists and cultural workers in Toronto are important citizens. We contribute to the economy at every level, as well as using services such as our transit system, childcare centres and libraries. We have families, we pay rent and mortgages, we pay taxes, and we vote. We are **vital** to the life of the city.

Sincerely,



Kristian Clarke
Executive Director - CARFAC Ontario
(On behalf of **VITAL**)

Cc. Councilor Gary Crawford
Cc. Councilor Adam Vaughan
Cc. Susan Wright

Cc. Devon Ostrom
Cc. Sally Han
Cc. Peter Kingstone



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