

Krystyna Sadej, Transformation  
(Ugly Duckling), 2014, Woven tapestry, 20x20  
SELECTIONS JURORS CHOICE AWARD 2014

# AOE ARTS COUNCIL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2015-2020

**Building a thriving  
Ottawa arts community**



**“On the canvass or on the drawing board... in the theatre or in the marketplace... our artists and entrepreneurs tell the story of Ottawa we all know and love. A city that is dynamic, progressive and capable of great things.”**

*Mayor Jim Watson,  
2015 Ottawa State of the City Address*

## AOE Arts Council

AOE Arts Council has been working with Ottawa's arts community for 28 years to build a vibrant and sustainable sector. As a dynamic, bilingual arts service organization, the Arts Council works with the community to support, promote and develop the vitality of the arts in Ottawa by creating opportunities for artists, providing promotional, professional development and shared resources and an informed voice for the Arts. The over 400 individual and organization members reflect all arts disciplines and levels of practice. 50% of members are based in the Eastern part of the City and the other 50% are from across the capital region. It is a leader in city-wide projects/partnerships, a catalyst for collaborative initiatives and a proud advocate

of the importance of the arts to Ottawa's economic and social well-being.

The Arts Council has stable resources from earned revenue, fundraising, the City of Ottawa and the Province of Ontario. The Council plays a leadership role in contributing to the development and implementation of policies such as the *City's 2013-18 Renewed Arts, Heritage and Culture Plan*. Following on accomplishments such as the co-creation of the Shenkman Arts Centre and the ARTicipate Endowment Fund, the Arts Council is renewing its relationship with the community it exists to serve in order to take leadership and respond to the evolving Ottawa regional arts scene.

## Our City of Ottawa

- Canada's largest geographic city and one whose diversity is in many ways a microcosm of the country. A growing urban, suburban and rural population of 900,000 where 60% speak English, 36% speak English and French and 20% have a maternal language other than the official languages, whose changing demographic make-up is following the national trend to a greater proportion of seniors, newcomers to Canada and cultural diversity.
- City government is in the middle of implementing a unanimously approved *2013-18 Renewed Arts, Heritage and Cultural Plan* that recognizes the arts sector as a priority that drives innovation, creativity and contributes to our City's quality of life. Arts funding continues to grow approaching per capita levels of other major Canadian cities in response to ever increasing demands for resources from a growing number of artists and arts groups. Necessary investments are being made in arts facility infrastructure.
- City research shows these to be good investments with each City dollar leveraging between \$6 and \$12 from the private sector and other funders.
- Ottawa's cultural workforce represents 4.7% of Ottawa jobs and the cultural sector makes up 3.7% of Ontario's GDP. Ottawa is #1 in the Martin Prosperity Rankings for 'Rise of the Creative Class' and both Invest Ottawa and Ottawa Tourism cite cultural assets as reasons to visit or do business in Ottawa. Our city is full of entrepreneurs many of whom are artists.
- Ottawa residents had the highest per-capita spending on cultural activities in 2007 and attendance at local arts, heritage and festival activities was 4.1 million in 2010.
- In 2017, Ottawa will help to host Canada's 150th birthday and this offers unique opportunities for the local arts community to raise its profile and to continue its investments in the arts.

## Our Arts Community

- The Arts Council's 2015 survey of the local arts community identified the primary strengths of the community to be solid talent, quality and professionalism. The community's priority needs consistently remain: better tools to promote and reach audiences; more and diverse sources of funds; more affordable spaces to work and present artistic works; and more opportunities to collaborate.
- The local arts in Ottawa are maturing and starting to be noticed which is important given the predominance of national institutions in the city. Many local arts groups have passed the age of 30 and some have new facilities. Artistic activity is growing beyond the downtown core. The arts are also transforming neighbourhoods by engaging in partnership with local BIAs even as the fundraising dollars shrinks due to increased competition.
- Despite increased interest in the arts, artists' earnings remain 54% below the earnings of average Ontarians which is a real concern as artists are at the heart of the 'creative chain'. The next generation is struggling with a limited Ottawa arts job market and the burden of student debt.
- The economy remains fragile and the arts sector is leaner than ever so new business models are emerging. This shift to new models is uneasy in

a fast-moving digital society where promotional channels are seriously fragmented and consumer behavior is moving toward more choice and less commitment.

- There is an increasing trend towards entrepreneurship in the arts with many independent companies and collectives operating outside of the traditional non-profit model and working in partnerships. Artists are looking for networking and professional development to improve their chance at success.
- Inter-active forms of arts engagement and participation are gaining favour in Ontario with their ability to connect people through shared experiences. Community engaged art is growing.

According to the Toronto Arts Council, there has been a “huge increase” in the number of artists working in this developing art form.

- Collaborative goodwill exists between arts service organizations in Ottawa with two well-established arts councils and Ottawa Festivals actively serving their members. Many discipline-specific service organizations are in Ontario with the majority of Francophone organizations in Ottawa and the majority of the Anglophone organizations in Toronto. Opportunities to collaborate and avoid duplication exist in this market.

*Primary Sources: Hill Strategies Research, City of Ottawa 2013-18 Renewal Action Plan for Arts, Heritage and Culture, City of Ottawa cultural reports, Invest Ottawa, Ontario Arts Council 2013 Environmental Scan and 2014 Strategic Plan*

## Planning Process

The development of this 2015-2020 Strategic Plan was comprehensive including research led by a consulting team in conjunction with a new Executive Director and the Planning Committee of the Board of Directors and staff. Members of the Arts Council and the broader Ottawa arts community participated in stages of the development of the plan. The research phase was completed with a diagnosis report covering the following elements:

- An assessment of the environment in which the Arts Council operates identifying opportunities and challenges and an assessment of the organization’s strengths and weaknesses
- Results of Stakeholder Consultations – over 300 people participated in one-on-one interviews, 4 group community consultations held across the city and an online survey (one third being members and two-thirds being the broader arts community)
- Key findings and options to be considered for the future

Research results showed the Arts Council to be a sound, open organization with a solid 28 year track record, respected by those familiar with its work. However, the environment in which the Arts Council is operating in 2015 is notably different than before it decided to co-create the Shenkman Arts Centre a decade ago with new players across the region. With many new initiatives and issues to address in advancing the health of the arts in Ottawa and being one of several arts service organizations in the market, the Arts Council has an opportunity to redefine and clarify the key role that it plays in the arts infrastructure of the city.

With this information, the consultants led the Planning Committee through two facilitated and idea-generating strategic planning retreats resulting in the framework outlined herein for the period of 2015 through 2020.

The AOE Arts Council wishes to thank the City of Ottawa for their support of the planning process, the consultants Éric Dubeau and Manjit Basi, the Planning Committee (Kathy MacLellan, Victoria Steele, Don Roy, John Cook, Cristiane Doherty), Cassandra Olsthoorn, Rachel Crossan, the other members of the Arts Council Board of Directors, the over 300 people who responded to our request to consult either in person or online. Our hosts for sessions: Canada Council for the Arts, Great Canadian Theatre Company, Shenkman Arts Centre, Knox Presbyterian Church and the Saint-Louis Residence Bruyère Continuing Care. And a special thank you to Nicole Hurtubise who helped to compile the survey results!

AOE Arts Council is supported by these funders and many other sponsors and donors  
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# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR 2015-2020

*The Strategic Framework has a foundation with a clear set of values and a vision that indicates where the organization is headed over the next five years. There are four pillars of strategic direction that outline the priorities and desired outcomes.*

## OVERARCHING VISION

*We believe that Ottawa is a dynamic cultural capital where the practice of art is meaningful and contributes positively to the development of the city and the quality of life of its citizens.*

**MISSION:** To connect, champion and collaborate to bring resources together that build a thriving Ottawa arts community.

**VISION:** By 2020, the Arts Council is at the heart of a vibrant, diverse and thriving Ottawa arts scene.

## VALUES—OUR WORK IS GUIDED BY THESE PRINCIPLES:

- **Respect for artists:** We value and honour the work of artists. We believe the practice of any and all art is meaningful, and raises the quality of life in the city.
- **Integrity:** We provide sound and transparent stewardship. We lead by example in the way we work and communicate. We are accountable to the arts community, to governments and to the public.
- **Inclusiveness:** We believe in equity and accessibility for everyone. We listen to and respond to the diverse and evolving needs of the arts community and the public.
- **Engagement:** We value opportunities that bring local artists together with each other and the broader community to share ideas, raise understanding and foster support for the arts.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES WITH DESIRED OUTCOMES:

### ACT AS AN ADVOCATE TO AMPLIFY THE LOCAL ARTS IN OTTAWA

1. The Arts Council is seen as an informed leading voice for the arts
2. The Arts Council participates in and influences decisions affecting the arts.
3. Citizens have a greater understanding of and engagement with the local arts community.
4. The Arts Council has increased support for local arts activity from the public, private and non-profit sectors.

### ACT AS A CONNECTOR FOR THE COMMUNITY

1. A pool of expertise is created and accessible to the arts community.
2. The Arts Council is an informed source of resources, services and information.
3. The Arts Council has active affiliations both inside and outside the arts to best serve the arts community.
4. The Arts Council hosts platforms (both virtual and physical) where the arts community can share.

### ACT AS A CATALYST FOR ARTS AND COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

1. The arts community collaborates successfully to maximize impact and efficiency.
2. Community partnerships exist to fuel arts initiatives.
3. The Arts Council convenes, facilitates and drives new initiatives and shared decision making.

### ACT TO INCREASE ORGANIZATION CAPACITY TO HAVE THE NECESSARY RESOURCES AND EXPERTISE

1. Sustainable revenues are in place from diverse sources (public, private, in-kind).
2. Adequate human resources (paid and volunteer) are in place to achieve our goals.
3. Members and supporters that reflect the community are active and engaged.
4. Technology, tools and spaces are in place to meet the needs of the community.

## NEXT STEPS:

Based on this Strategic Framework, we are designing specific strategies and annual business plans to achieve these goals with measurable key performance indicators.

A copy of this document is available at [www.artsoe.ca](http://www.artsoe.ca)  
To obtain a printed copy contact AOE Arts Council:

**INFO** WWW.ARTSOE.CA  
INFO@ARTSOE.CA  
613.580.2767

**FOLLOW | SUIVRE**  
WWW.ARTSACCOLADE.CA



## STRATEGIES IN DEVELOPMENT FOR 2015-16

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Act as an advocate to amplify the local arts in Ottawa</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Act as a connector for the community</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Act as a catalyst for arts and community collaborations</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Act to increase organization capacity to have the necessary resources and expertise</b></p>
<p>Proactively monitor City's Arts and Culture Plan and work toward completion of its implementation</p> <p>Keep on top of issues affecting the arts in Ottawa</p> <p>Modify the investment strategy for the ARTicipate Endowment Fund to enhance its annual returns to invest in the arts community that uses the Shenkman Arts Centre</p> <p>Advocate for local arts community presence in the 2017 celebrations and upcoming major downtown developments</p> <p>Build relationships with strategic organizations to build the case for the arts (Chambers of Commerce, Community Foundation, United Way, Invest Ottawa, etc.)</p> <p>Augment the Art Place program in year two, to eight projects supported by major donor gifts</p>	<p>Report back to stakeholders about our progress on development of the new strategic direction</p> <p>Keep consulting with the arts community to be responsive and identify their needs</p> <p>Develop and implement strategies for ongoing engagement and relationship building with the arts community</p> <p>Increase and broaden membership to be more representative of the diversity of the arts in the city</p> <p>Enhance the experience of members beyond current services to redefine the value proposition and member models</p> <p>Develop a more participative and collaborative relationship with our members engaging them to build a shared network connecting people with resources and the creation of member circles/working groups</p> <p>Reach out to universities and colleges</p> <p>Reach out to the West end arts community</p> <p>Identify spaces across the city to convene gatherings, networking events and programs</p>	<p>Develop a protocol for collaborations and partnerships</p> <p>Build/strengthen relationships with arts service organizations in Ottawa to work much more collaboratively, especially discussions with Ottawa Arts Council and Ottawa Festivals</p> <p>Explore new collaborations such as an Ottawa cultural alliance for advocacy</p> <p>Lead a working group to define projects for 2017</p> <p>Define a new relationship with the Shenkman Arts Centre</p> <p>Leverage the strengths and knowledge in the community to develop tools and services and share professional development and networking opportunities</p> <p>Explore shared community resources/platforms such as databases for spaces, listings, jobs, professional development and professional resources</p>	<p>Rebrand to better define the organization and reflect new direction</p> <p>Build responsive website with current technology</p> <p>Develop Communications Strategy and revise how we tell our story to engage stakeholders - build a case for support and Elevator speech</p> <p>Develop new volunteer program</p> <p>Recruit new board members with specific roles including engaging members, supporters, collaborators and volunteers</p> <p>Develop strategy to shift to more private sector revenue generation</p> <p>Develop performance indicators to demonstrate forward progress</p>