

SUSTAINABLE
CREATIVE SPACES
KINGSTON



NOVEMBER 6, 2013 SESSION SUMMARY

HOSTED BY GRAND THEATRE, KINGSTON

ARTS  ONTARIO



ABOUT ARTSBUILD ONTARIO

ArtsBuild Ontario is the only organization in Ontario dedicated to realizing long-term solutions to building, managing and financing the sustainable arts facilities needed in Ontario communities.

Together with industry, non-profit and government partners, ArtsBuild jointly and cost-effectively develops and delivers innovative tools, services and resources to help over 700 arts organizations across Ontario construct and operate the facilities they need.

ArtsBuild's organizational model is one of collaboration and partnership. By forging relationships with leading non-profit and private sector partners, ArtsBuild delivers programs surrounding topics such as capital project planning, facilities management, energy efficiency, sustainability and finance.

In 2012, ArtsBuild Ontario received significant support from the Government of Canada and The Ontario Trillium Foundation to implement a suite of innovative tools, services and resources around capital project planning, facilities management, accessibility, energy efficiency, sustainability, training and professional development and finance.

Questions about this document?

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PREFACE

ARTSBUILD'S 2013 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS ABOUT SUSTAINABLE CREATIVE SPACES

In 2013, ArtsBuild visited eight communities across Ontario to involve local leaders in conversations about the successes they are achieving around creating the spaces they need for vibrant cultural activity in their communities and the challenges they are facing in developing and maintaining these spaces. The sessions were structured around three areas that relate to developing and maintaining arts facilities: Building, Managing and Financing. With provided discussion prompts and seed questions, participants seated at tables of six to eight were encouraged to talk with each other, in a conversational format, and provide their perspectives on each of these topics. As well, ArtsBuild will share the innovative approaches it has been developing and engage the communities in assessing the relevance these hold for local arts organizations.

Hosted by ArtsBuild, and when feasible, local municipal departments supporting culture and community arts councils, these by-invitation community engagement sessions involved leaders from local arts organizations, arts volunteers, libraries, museums, universities and colleges as well as representatives from the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, and the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Community participation was captured in a variety of ways, including a graphic summary and recording with a Livescribe pen. A final report summarizing the session conversations will be distributed to all participants in 2014.

WHY DID ARTSBUILD VISIT KINGSTON?

ArtsBuild Ontario has long been hearing about the new TETT centre project as well as countless other projects that have been underway over recent years.

Kingston is a place of constant arts activity and we wanted to meet the community members in person to learn more about needs, issues and successes of Kingston's arts leaders.

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

ArtsBuild is providing a draft Session Summary for participants in each community to review to ensure we have correctly and completely captured their thoughts. The purpose of this Session Summary is to record the key ideas, needs and wants that were articulated during the session. We have arranged this document by discussion topic: Building, Managing and Financing. Highlights of each discussion can be found starting on page 6 for quick reference. Noteworthy ideas presented by the participants in the full report are indicated with this light bulb



NEXT STEPS

All eight Session Summaries will be available in the ArtsBuild Resource Library, with links to case studies and ArtsBuild programs and services that could assist communities.

In 2014, we will also assemble the Session Summaries into a document that will be presented to funders. It will identify the key themes and common threads amongst all eight communities. This document will allow ArtsBuild to look at the discussions holistically and provide funders with a baseline for the common concerns and needs affecting arts facilities in Ontario.

HOW TO NAVIGATE THIS DOCUMENT

PLEASE READ THROUGH THE IMPORTANT WANTS AND NEEDS EXPRESSED BY THOSE WHO ATTENDED THIS SESSION AS THERE IS VALUABLE INFORMATION FOR ALL INVOLVED WITH ARTS AND CULTURE IN KINGSTON AND THE SURROUNDING AREA.



Great ideas from participants are indicated with this light bulb symbol.

Areas where ArtsBuild programs and services can be of assistance to you are indicated this with this icon and the text is highlighted in blue.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We were confident that the conversation in Kingston would be a robust one, based on the number of organizations and stakeholders that were interested in attending this session. And it was!

Twenty-six individuals attended this session, the largest session that we held.

A key need that evolved from the conversations in Kingston was understanding how to make use of existing resources to support the ongoing need for investment in arts facilities.

During this session ArtsBuild Ontario learned that:



Organizations are keen to take a lead role in finding and acquiring a space for their needs, but are not equipped with the tools for these complex projects.



There are many arts facilities in Kingston that have lots to learn but also lots to teach other arts organizations about their best practices and what works well.



Like many communities we have visited, there is a need for resource sharing, basic skills development and support for revenue generation.

BUILDING: DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

The discussion around BUILDING surfaced many realistic issues/needs/wants that the community CAN act on. How to identify the right/affordable spaces was a key topic within a larger conversation of what facilities are needed in Kingston.

KEY ISSUES/IDEAS



Need a formula for how to build and how to operate for the first five years.



Arts organizations have to work together on a building.



Need some continuity in leadership, if possible.



Spaces may be available but they are not affordable.



North Block – the potential is here, big time.

One place where a lot of things are offered, a real community hub, where everyone goes – where there is always something going on – recreation and cultural programs.

MANAGING: DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

The discussion on MANAGING arts facilities focused mainly on the existing facilities in Kingston. There was a lot of information shared about local spaces and also the resources found in volunteers and the challenges that this can present to a nonprofit.

KEY ISSUES/IDEAS



Don't have time or resources to properly plan.



How do you go from responding to a crisis to building a reserve fund and planning for the future?



Lots of bricks and mortar action going on, but can we maintain it all?

How do you go from responding to a crisis to building a reserve fund and planning for the future?

FINANCING: DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

The discussion of FINANCING was interesting, as the participants did not focus on financing alternatives such as loans; instead they focused on fundraising, alternative sources of revenue and difficulties accessing funding.

KEY ISSUES/IDEAS



See a lack of fundraising expertise within the community.



Consider social impact investment models – community bonds – people make initial investment, get dividends, eventually investment paid back.



We need to build awareness and then buy-in, develop our audiences.

There are challenges with revenue generation for space rental/fees and educating groups about the hard costs needed for facility management.

BEST PRACTICES

Many ideas were put forth in the conversations on BUILDING, MANAGING AND FINANCING arts facilities. We encourage Kingston and the surrounding area arts organizations to continue this discussion and to work on ways of realizing some of the valuable ideas presented.

To assist the participants in the arts sector in connecting with one another and to inform you about great arts facilities in Ontario, ArtsBuild has developed a case study series called Making Spaces for Art. Each study focuses on one organization or a related group of organizations, and highlights the exciting steps they took to realize their capital projects.

We have included links to case studies below that we believe will be helpful for Kingston based on the conversation. We encourage you to visit our website to access the full series at <http://www.artsbuildontario.ca/learning/making-spaces-for-art/>. These case studies could be the first step in understanding how you can make the changes needed in your facility!

You can access ArtsBuild's Resource Library at <http://resourcelibrary.artsbuildontario.ca/>. This free online resource provides you with useful examples, best practices and reference material about creative spaces.

Following are some resources particularly relevant to Kingston participants.



FORMING UNEXPECTED AND UNUSUAL PARTNERSHIPS

The discussion on forming partnerships identified the challenges and benefits of cooperative collectives, alliances, pooling resources and finding funds in a community that struggles with enough to go around. The story of Arraymusic is an interesting model of these types of topics. ArtsBuild Ontario has done a short case study on this project and has featured it in their Making Spaces for Art case study

series. This case study is located in Appendix C and is also available to read on ArtsBuild's website:

<http://www.artsbuildontario.ca/learning/making-spaces-for-art/>



REINVENTING FACILITIES & MULTIUSE SPACES

Registry Theatre, an organization in Kitchener that has repurposed the Waterloo County Registry Office into office, rehearsal, and theatre space, is a great example of reinventing an existing facility and using its space to accommodate a variety of needs. ArtsBuild Ontario has done a short case study on this project and has featured it in Making Spaces for Art case study series. This case study can be found in Appendix D and is also available to read on ArtsBuild's website:

<http://www.artsbuildontario.ca/learning/making-spaces-for-art/>




UNDERSTANDING NEEDS

The urgency to understand what is truly needed in terms of size, type and function of a facility was expressed many times through this conversation. ROCS / Place des arts (Sudbury, ON) and Thunder Bay Art Gallery (Thunder Bay, ON) are two organizations that have gone through lengthy processes to understand their facility and organizational needs and have translated these into potential future projects. Visit <http://www.artsbuildontario.ca/learning/making-spaces-for-art/> to read more.



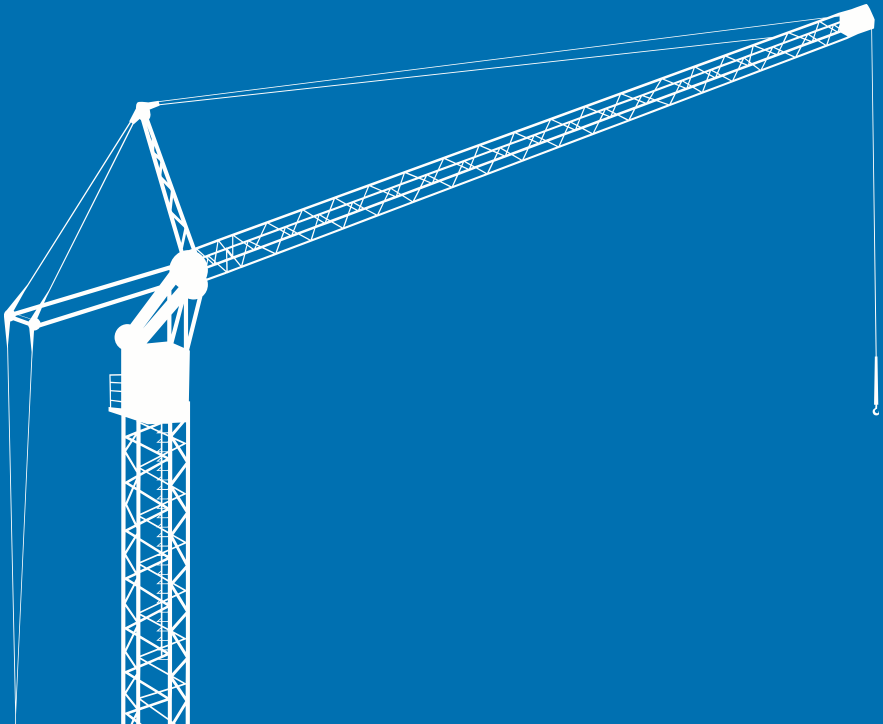
ACCESS RESOURCES FROM ARTSBUILD AND OUR PARTNERS

A common need expressed in all conversations was access to resources. ArtsBuild resources related to Building, Managing and Financing arts facilities can be found in our Resource Library at <http://resourcelibrary.artsbuildontario.ca/>. Details on our programs and services can be found starting on page 30 of this document or you can go directly to www.artsbuildontario.ca. If you have questions and/or are looking to improve your skills in areas related to your arts facility, please contact ArtsBuild directly.



WorkInCulture is the right place to turn to when looking to improve or develop new skills for the arts sector. A partner of ArtsBuild, they provide educational webinars, courses and workshops designed specifically for the cultural sector. Visit them at www.workinculture.ca

Artscape is a resource for arts organizations that are interested in anything related to cultural hubs and community transformation through culture. As a partner of ArtsBuild, they are developing new content and resources available through their DIY website as a source of information and inspiration to support creative placemaking in your community. Visit them at <http://www.artscapediy.org>



BUILDING

BUILDING NEW

- Building arts facilities is risky.
- Is it more cost effective to own or rent?
 - A new build is expensive up front, but renting other people's space is expensive too.
- Takes so many resources and energy to do and manage a building project.
- Renovating heritage building vs. new build is a big decision.
- Are there examples of renovations of heritage building with LEED certification?
- Disconnect when working with architects and construction – don't speak the same language.
- Measured staged approach to facility development needs to be rooted in the content first.
- Vision and momentum get lost when engaged in a long-term build.
- Ideal would be if you build, you would then get a subsidy to carry you through the first five years Need a formula to build and how to operate for the first five years.

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PARTNERSHIPS

- Right now the expectation is that organizations just build things on their own, but they often can't do that.
- In Toronto, Section 37 of Ontario's Planning Act is being used to support arts organizations and community members seeking opportunities to partner with, or at least provide input to, developers – gaining arts space for organizations, more density and relaxed zoning for developers.
- If we're going above six stories, if we're going for 18 stories, what will the city's population receive? So far the requests received in Kingston are: parking garage.
- What about working with a consortium?
- Is there a formula to identify the size of theatre needed?



Arts organizations have to work together on a building.



Might be more successful to use a consortium and connections with developers to build something like a condo building with cultural facilities.



There is an opportunity to persuade a developer to build with increased density and height and incorporate plans from the City. Arts groups haven't gotten involved in Kingston yet.

CHALLENGES TO SPACES

- How do we find the ideal financial formula for what will work and where?
- How do you know what you can spend on building?

- What audience size do you need to support the building and operations?
- Ideally estimates would include paying facility staff/operating costs.
 - Accessing operating funding is very tough
- Money is more available for collaborations than for individual projects.
- How do you engage the community to financially support a large building project?
- How do you start?

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PURCHASING PROPERTY

- One organization looked at every single piece of property available in this city – commercial, churches, etc. With a budget of \$350,000, there was nothing available.
- Zoning challenge – anything currently listed as commercial would require rezoning, extra bureaucratic work to be done, potentially extra costs.
- Fire codes also an impediment to some smaller organizations. The codes are complicated and costs are quite high, unattainable in some cases.
- What's the formula to determine a reasonable price to pay up front for a building, and build a theatre space inside it, and make money, at any size? Across the board, revenues are dipping, say some organizations.

SKILLS NEEDED

- Leadership team tends to excel at launching projects, but then leaves.
 - Need some continuity in leadership, if possible
- How do you help organizations build capacity of strategic planning?
- How to decide on size of venue or cost and the ability to carry all costs on an annual basis?
- What services/professionals do arts groups need?
 - Fundraising
 - Technical expertise for accounting
 - Ongoing facilities maintenance
 - Grant writing
 - Strategic planning
 - Financial planning
 - Marketing
 - Event planning
 - Bookkeeping
- KEDCO wants more artists to learn about entrepreneurship.
- Project management and software is helpful.
- How do you build skills for cultural workers?
- Different kinds of literacy, skills, twenty-first century competencies.

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help!

- Hire a professional fundraiser who will ask for money comfortably – community champions.

BUSINESS AND THE ARTS

- Chamber of Commerce:
 - Creative workshops for businesses
- Business Improvement Association wants more musicians.
- How arts can help businesses?
 - Culture development fund application – possible applicants/partners: Business Improvement Association, Kingston Economic Development Corporation, Kingston Arts Council, Kingston Association of Museums, Galleries and Historic Sites
 - To hire a consultant and add to KAC bottom line for increased workload.
- Queen's Conservatory looking into reaching further into the community.



Business and artists should be working together.



Business for the Arts is a great resource.

SPACES WANTED

- Makerspace
 - Possibly Woolen Mill Building.
 - A place for people to come together, share skills and use tools.
 - This is a more twenty-first century model.
 - You want to have a space to make things and go.
 - Innisfil Public Library is doing a makerspace. Is it more of a tech space than artistic space?
- Interested in learning but don't have the funds to do anything.
 - You can try something without a big investment.
- Cultural hub with civic art gallery.
 - Wally Elmer as potential community hub.
- A cultural recreational hub.
- Live/work spaces.
- Kingston has a desperate need for a medium-sized theatre/performance space.
 - Need space sized for 250-300 seats.
 - Have lots of spaces around 160 seats.
 - Montreal – working on 255-seat and 440-seat theatres. Organizations can move shows. Can bring in community groups, starting in the small spaces to gain experience there before moving up to 440 seats.

- City has dedicated a chunk of money to arts, has provided some grants in the past, but participants feel that it would be difficult, and unlikely, to garner City support for a new initiative to build a new mid-size performance space.
 - Common, shared question: How do you work out the best size and number of seats and how it'll work best financially? Concern about viability of similar venues, e.g. Springer Theatre at Thousand Islands Playhouse, Gananoque.
 - Preliminary investigations into costs and business plan toward operating their own space showed that a 160-seat theatre with 55% occupancy (ticket sales equal to 55% of seats, on average) would be financially sustainable.
 - There are some venues with available space around that size, such as The Kingston Grand Theatre, 400 seat space open to rent, but many organizations find the price too high for them.
- Organizations would like to see a black box theatre that's affordable to rent.
 - Some have tried a design a black box at the back of The Tett Centre, but received minimal interest/support for that initiative.
 - Only other black box that's coming along is the Bader, but it's small – 100 seats – will be used almost exclusively by Queen's University Drama Department.
- Need an art gallery for local artists.
- High schools and arts organizations working together to cut costs.
 - If one of the schools closes, then there is a gold mine – facilities already there.
- People don't have what they want so they try to drive that objective themselves but don't know where to go.



Offer people options to start in small-to-medium-sized space and then work their way up if/when desired.



We should be utilizing already built buildings.



It would be great to have a space that you could just try.

DOWNTOWN FOCUSED

- Mainly just serving the Kings Court area, and not North Kingston, Rideau Heights.
- No arts based programs.
- Facilities have other rooms that could be used – but still downtown.
- Parking is an issue for many arts organizations' sites.
 - Expensive and not accessible (esp. downtown core).
 - Some places have parking, but aren't downtown!

NORTH BLOCK

- Brownfield sites, previously industrial.
- Nobody's pushing for arts spaces here – but there is some growth here.
- Are there City plans to add a theatre?
- Could fit a gallery, museum, or a theatre/performance space, but much of it is City-owned property and the City is looking for ways to save money.
- Many arts organizations and their staff aren't hearing about opportunities and the research that would support such a move. There's a communication breakdown here.
 - City staff is looking now at what to put in the RFP. They came to the Heritage Committee and the Kingston Culture Plan was mentioned – it says an art gallery and museum should be added to Kingston soon – but there was little to no awareness of the Culture Plan. So it's a communication problem.
- Councillors and other interested stakeholder groups are asking what the community would like to see there.
 - Insufficient pressure coming from the City Councillors.
- No noticeable demand coming from general public or arts community.
- Poverty reduction group.
 - Got community discussion going - nothing tangible resulting.
- Plans developed, RFPs out there.



Need pressure to compel developers to incorporate arts spaces. “The citizenry needs to be making a noise.”



The potential is here, big time.

THE ROLE OF THE CITY OF KINGSTON

- Disconnect between City processes and arts groups.
- City focused on The Tett Centre and getting it up and running.
- Noticed tension between sports and arts.
 - Lots of support for sports, but there is always a fight for arts.
 - But there is progress being made.
 - Recreational subsidies are not questioned but what about culture.
- Culture is very tied to tourism.
 - Business mind-set.
- Need to develop understanding that culture is important for the city.
- There's provincial and federal grant money available, but will Kingston apply?
- Election coming – keep cuts on the radar.

CULTURE PLAN

- Kingston Culture Plan called for art gallery and performance space.
- Culture Plan discussion of community cultural hubs: where are we with this?
- The Culture Plan speaks to downtown gallery space and artistic performance space and The Tett Centre being an artistic hub.



Culture needs to be on the election agenda.

HUBS/SHARED SPACES

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- Community cultural hub – Wally Elmer Youth Centre is closest we have.
 - Taking over that whole strip mall; Pathways for Children and Youth is there.
 - At their own volition, building their infrastructure, looking to amalgamate all of their spaces into that structure.
- Real community hub; where everyone goes – there is always something going on, recreation and cultural programs.
 - Doesn't work anymore to have singular destinations to do one thing.
 - Can multi-task and do it all at once, a model that serves so many.
 - Haven't seen that a lot.
- Ottawa and suburbs are trying to cluster more things, but not a lot of examples.
- Music program with non-credit community outreach music program.
 - Looking at trying to reach farther in
 - Put programs into community hubs; is something that they would be interested in doing.
- Youth strategies attached to community cultural hubs.
 - More a place than it is a facility.
 - Existing facility that is welcoming.
 - Fits the "hub" concept.
 - Community is interested in pursuing more.
- One of our problems is community engagement.
- Who we should seek for partnerships in those spaces?
 - Trying to be an art gallery, recital space etc. Trying to be everything; it does not really work.
 - Works for some groups, but others can be cranky about spaces and equipment being inaccessible during certain types of events.
- Clustering idea has advantages.
 - Easier for transit.
 - Easier for programming, if all in same complex. Makes it easier to come to the library.
 - E.g. The Senior Centre, but it's isolated.

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CREATIVE SPACE USES/EXAMPLES FROM BARRIE

- Old storefront available. Can become a permanent tenant in this creative space or just rent on a daily basis. Boardrooms, chill-out space, co-working – highlighting buildings as presentation space but in Kingston maybe best to build a collaborative space instead.
- We were brought up in an age where you went to different areas to do and try different things.
 - The idea of collaboration is a much bigger deal nowadays
- Community spaces used include churches, as well as adapted, converted spaces.

PROFESSIONAL VS. AMATEUR – DIFFERENT NEEDS

- There's a distinction between professional vs. amateur – needs and revenue possibilities differ.
 - There's a recently-built 160-seat theatre in a disused hockey arena, built 2 years ago, building owned by the City. An arts organization leased the space and built a theatre inside. Heritage Canada couldn't help us because we're amateur, but at The Tett, I guess because it's a mix of amateur and professional, Heritage Canada *could* help.
 - Those requirements and challenges are things people don't know until they get into the planning and building process, and then they start to find out what's available.
 - We've never included having to pay anybody, which is *major*. We expect to earn maybe \$5,000 a year. If we make \$5,000 a year we're happy. But then nobody gets paid, ever. To make \$40,000 or \$50,000 a year profit and be able to pay one person, it's just huge. And as amateur, we wouldn't get grants for something like that. As a professional theatre company, there must be formulas. There are a lot of professional theatres.

HERITAGE SITES AND USES

- The Tett Centre renovation in progress, expected to open summer 2014.
 - Formerly part of Morton Brewery and Distillery Company.
 - Includes studios, rental spaces for special events, Kingston School of Dance, Potters' Guild, Theatre Kingston, Kingston Arts Council, Salon Theatre, Modern Fuel Artist-Run Centre, Joe's Musical Instrument Lending Library, and others yet to be announced.
- Service Canada buildings – status?
- Corrections Canada buildings – at one point, a dream of a fine arts campus.
 - What is the plan for the other Corrections Canada facilities by the TETT?
- What is the plan for other buildings Queen's University hasn't bought?
 - Not still in use, moved all to the regional facilities.
 - Waterfront heritage property gathering dust.
- Do you renovate the heritage building or start new?
 - Happens at a cost.

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- Carbon footprint of a heritage building is something to consider.
- Would they need to be declared surplus?
- Surplus of heritage buildings: Rodden Park, 9 North Street, Wartman House.
 - Be great to renovate the building to have solar, etc. but they don't have the budget for it.
 - Restricted with what you can do.
 - Are there examples of renovation projects like this?
- Accessibility is a huge need and challenge for heritage buildings.

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Government buildings that are unused – are they financially viable to be reconfigured and repurposed?

LIBRARIES

- Nature of libraries changing – what considerations in the new library building?
 - What kinds of questions are being asked in terms of use?
- Just approved strategic plans for 2020, wouldn't just build a stand-alone library.
- Rural community here is really underserved from cultural point of view, which is probably the case everywhere.
 - Programming is offered in numerous locations; some are more successful than others.
 - Need to build the audience in those rural areas.
 - Struggling aligning the supply with the demand.
 - Nice that this programming is in some of these rural libraries; maybe expand on that idea.
- They can be more collaborative, flexible spaces.
 - Really need flexibility to move all the shelves and books out of the way so that we can have some sort of arts program or cultural programs, and more collaboration.
- Central Branch of Kingston Frontenac Library needs several millions of dollars of work just in HVAC.
 - Still a dinosaur of a building that does not do what we need it to do.
 - Renovating Hartington Branch with Trillium grant.
- Challenge for us – have a branch in the north end but it doesn't have a separate program booth.



Opportunity with the libraries – they have the reach for cultural programming.



Library's possible role as space for arts – worth considering.

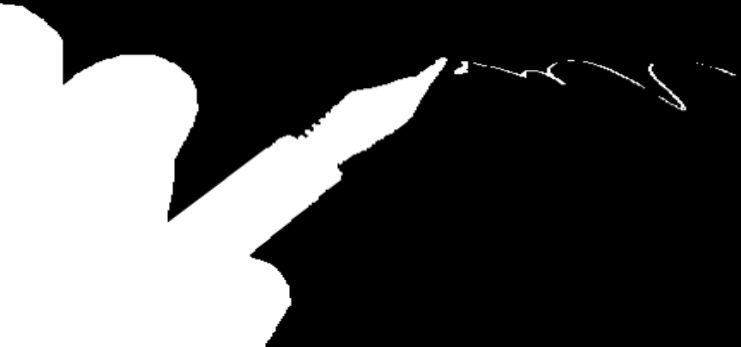
QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

- The University invests in cultural facilities but not facilities accessible to the public.
 - Students graduating and trying to create a space in the community for their art – there is a disconnect there.

- How do we as a community help leverage that transition from university to a more community based, creative activity? To keep recent grads interested?
 - They want a live-work space and there isn't really anything here.
 - There are so many other cities that have these types of work spaces.
 - Queen's is a business that is funded and if you start opening it up to the community, how do you make those programs open up to the community?



University should take on a role in community arts.



MANAGING

RESERVE FUNDS

- How do you go from responding to a crisis, to building a reserve fund, to planning for the future?
- Difficult to set aside funds when having trouble securing operating funding.

OPERATING FUNDING

- Need to replace equipment – if it fails we can't put on production.
- Important for staff to be paid – frustration over lack of operating funding.
 - Not just pay but benefits.
 - If no staff, don't have effective program/facility.
- Don't have time or resources to properly plan.
- Arts organizations are so unique as there is no wealth creation.
- Cost of liability insurance can be a challenge.
- Cost of audited financial statements are also very expensive.
- Be realistic about actual costs.
- With credit cards, Executive Director is often on the line, personally.

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VOLUNTEERS/STAFF RETENTION

- Different skills and energy required to manage a facility.
- Retention and recruitment of volunteers is a significant investment.
 - Takes time to leverage volunteers, make sure they have enough work and supervise them.
- Organizations that rely on volunteers can be fragile/vulnerable.
- What about volunteer benefits and the sustainability of these types of overworked staff models?
- In a small city with limited budget, skilled staff is difficult to attract and retain.
- Often each staff member is juggling so many roles.

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BOARDS

- Volunteer-run boards and lack of capacity are issues, but not just in the arts.
- Board contributes first as a show of commitment and faith.
- Boards can make strong relationships.
- Boards can support knocking on doors and making connections to fundraise, apply and build, but not always able to manage the built facility.
- Concern around capacity of volunteer boards and absence of adequately paid staff.

Can we use skilled volunteers to assist in managing our facilities?

BUILDINGS IN KINGSTON

Lots of bricks and mortar around, but can we maintain it all?

Agnes Etherington Art Centre

- Needs to expand to prepare for the future.
- Storage and program space running out.
- Need to have a good space to have students interacting with art and doing work at the art centre.
- More exhibition space needed.
- Last expansion in 1999 – programming, exhibition space, work spaces were developed.
 - Planning started in early 1990s, nearly a decade in advance.

H'art Centre

- Theatre and rental spaces – want to rent out spaces more.
- Looking more for management piece, and where they fit in Kingston.

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Fort Henry

- Discovery Centre building completed.
- Looking to increase rentals for banquets, weddings, etc.
- Trade Square shopping district – renovations done, looking to manage better.
- What can we do to rent this space for art exhibitions and sales?

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Museums

- Museums have critical needs.
 - Exhibit space
 - Office space
 - Program space
 - Storage space
- Is there an opportunity for a shared storage space to free up room in existing facilities?
 - Purpose-built storage space for museums ideal.
 - Umbrella services for managing collections would help.
 - How would we allocate space?
 - Who would manage it?
- So many are in historic buildings, not purpose-built buildings.
 - Roof collapse problem – where can we move stuff?
- Museums can't expand.



Shared storage facility needed – Nova Scotia has done it. Consider regionalizing museums.

The Tett Centre

- Tension between tenants on fundraising, building and services.
- Ongoing facility management costs.
- Tett Centre looking for building manager. Who do you get? Certified property manager?
- Tett was planning on having a 100-seat rehearsal space for small productions. Still possible?

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Create condo fees for each group to support building.

Kingston Penitentiary

- Future is very uncertain. What are the challenges?
- Historic property.
- Parts that can't be changed (because of designation or integrity of the building).
- High cost of infrastructure to house the artifacts.

6-8 Stone Churches – Too Big For Their Purpose

- Kingston Canadian Film Festival uses this space, as do other social services groups.
- Great example of adaptive reuse.
- Even considering how else to utilize sanctuary space (choirs/theatres).
 - This can be multi-layered. Art gallery and main sanctuary, etc.



Most have large halls that have opportunities to be converted to suit other purposes.

Grand Theatre

- Grand too big and too costly for many organizations.

Baby Grand Theatre

- Professional company can't make it in Baby Grand Theatre.
- High demand.
- Baby Grand is too small.
- Need an extra 50 foot square at least.

Domino Theatre

- Domino Theatre – kept name, moved spaces within a municipal facility, the Harold Harvey Arena.
- Domino experience: no reserve funds.

Centre Culturel Frontenac

-
- French cultural centre, has theatre, offices, space for rent.
 - Octave theatre is affordable and best theatre in French Cultural Section in Ontario. Holds 250 people.
 - French schools can use the theatre; have to have good relationship with the schools.

The Artel

- Innovative, self-described “arts accommodation and venue”
- Self-sufficient.
- Community artist-run centre and live-in gallery.
- Space open to individuals, artists, musicians, promoters, community, etc. – lots of possibilities.



FINANCING

FUNDRAISING

- Need to access a professional fundraiser for advice.
 - You've got an audience = use it!
 - Pledges most common right after performances.
 - Volunteers have to do a *lot* of the work.
- Shifting the way we think about fundraising – many people make small donations and lose receipts.
 - What other incentives can be provided?
- Lack of fundraising expertise within the community.
- When should we have fundraisers or silent auction?
- Fundraising Boards – give, get, get off.
- Bridge more to community and offer advice and direction.



Bring someone in to talk fundraising.



We need to build awareness and then buy-in, develop our audiences.

REVENUE

- Hard to get enough ticket sales.
- One organization says their business plan relies on 55% of house sold in a mid-size venue, based on previous sales in a smaller venue, where they were selling 70-80% capacity.
- Depending on costs, even if you sell out the box office impact is still limited.
- Arts sector is more volatile.

ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF REVENUE

- Crowdfunding – scale of support?
 - Free to be there, but offers low return.
- Social impact investment models – community bonds – people make initial investment, get dividends, eventually the investment is paid back.
- Easier in social services sector where government funding is more secure.
- Rent out spaces to generate revenue.
 - We rent out our space when we are not using it. This is our second full season and our rental guy is getting lots of requests. We're stretched out between our productions to rent the space for weeks between productions and over the summer. It's a busy spot.
 - There are challenges with revenue generation for space rental/fees and educating groups about the hard costs needed for facility management.

ABO can help!
See page 33

FUNDING

- Need shovel-ready projects to secure federal, provincial funding when it becomes available.
- Rented facilities – not eligible for many capital funds.
- Ontario Trillium Foundation – need leveraged funds – needs most of the money on the table already.
 - Biggest challenge to small organizations.
 - Trillium is very good, easy to work with.
- You have a lot better chance of getting operating funding if you're a professional theatre, not amateur.
- Best bets: Canada Council and City of Kingston.
 - It's very competitive, and the funding criteria have changed.
 - Competition among similar organizations – how do you address single-purpose facilities?
 - Performance measures are very challenging.
 - It's hard to break in and be a new theatre company seeking new operational funding grants.
- Few organizations can provide the level of benefit needed to attract funding.
- Never ask for more than you need – be clear.
- Funding tends to go toward established grants.
- Private foundations are important – *if* you can find out who they are in your city.
 - Identifying these funders can be very difficult.
 - They can be very generous.
- Most arts organizations rely on charitable status – it's key.
 - Kingston Association of Museums, Galleries and Historic Sites ineligible for charitable organization status and benefits because of being umbrella organization.
- Relationships with banks can help – can track past financial data more readily, efficiently.
 - Loan financing isn't the way to go – yet.
- Canada Council has changed its funding model and now fewer new companies have access to funding.

ABO can help!
See page 33



TOOLS AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE THROUGH ARTSBUILD ONTARIO

ArtsBuild is a resource for arts organizations in Kingston for issues related to arts facilities. We have programs and services that were developed with the issues surrounding BUILDING, MANAGING AND FINANCING arts facilities in mind, and we encourage you to take a moment and see what we have that can assist you.

We have highlighted programs and services that this discussion identified as being needed that already ArtsBuild offers.

PLAN IT | BUILD IT

ArtsBuild has commissioned senior culture sector capital project managers to develop PLAN IT | BUILD IT, an online step-by-step guide to planning and completing capital projects.

This free guide is designed to help arts organizations going through any of these capital project processes:

1. Major maintenance or green improvement projects
2. Small-to medium-sized renovation projects
3. Large renovations or additions
4. New construction projects

For more details on PLAN IT | BUILD IT and to access this free tool, please visit – www.artsbuildontario.ca/pibi

CREATIVE PLACEMAKING RESOURCES

Cultural development through creative hubs and clusters is transforming our understanding of community spaces for art and artists.

ArtsBuild has partnered with Artscape to develop new creative placemaking resources for Artscape DIY, including:

Creative Placemaking Webinars

1. Developing Sustainable Cultural Space: Multi-Tenant Arts Centres 101
To watch this webinar visit – <http://bit.ly/1rm71rz>
2. Making Space for Creativity: Designing for Collaboration
To watch this webinar visit – <http://bit.ly/1Gf5zT>

3. Shared Spaces, Shared Values: Building Partnerships for Community Cultural Hubs
To watch this webinar visit – <http://bit.ly/1l3bKfU>
4. School's Out: Repurposing Surplus Schools as Cultural Spaces
To watch this webinar visit – <http://bit.ly/1pryLO6>
5. Artspace USA, featuring Colin Hamilton, Senior Vice President, National Advancement
To watch this webinar visit – <http://bit.ly/1f50cci>
6. Project for Public Spaces, featuring Cynthia Nikitin, Senior Vice President
To watch this webinar visit – <http://bit.ly/1fr1Gba>
7. 401 Richmond / Urbanspace Property Group, featuring Margie Zeidler, President and Founder
To watch this webinar visit – <http://bit.ly/1l9xjfl>
8. Evergreen, featuring Geoffrey Cape, CEO
To watch this webinar visit – <http://bit.ly/1nMVSly>

Short Films on Key Aspects of Creative Placemaking

Film #1: Clustering https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_MsYgNRMZE

Film #2: Collaboration <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=knHZTrhQ0y0>

Film #3: Leadership <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xf5QfKLJxz0>

This series is an ongoing project powered by ArtsBuild and delivered in partnership with Artscape. Further short films are being released in 2014. Watch for updates at <http://www.artscapediy.org/Creative-Placemaking/Short-Film-Series.aspx>

BRICKS&MORTAR

The Home for Ontario's First Arts Facilities Census

Make sure that your organization is represented in the first ever ArtsBuild Ontario Arts Facilities Census. You can complete the information by contacting Gina@artsbuildontario.ca who will assist you in entering the information systematically.

To house this crucial information, ArtsBuild has developed Bricks&Mortar, which will collect the information in a dynamic way. Arts organizations registered in Bricks&Mortar are able to search for valuable information about other arts facilities in Ontario and learn about:

- a. Nearby projects
- b. Potential partners
- c. Those who have tackled similar projects



ASSET PLANNER FOR THE ARTS

A robust online facilities management tool and the technical support to get the most from it

Accurate and validated information about the condition of facilities allows organizations to proactively manage their facilities and budget for needed capital improvements. The technical term for this approach to facilities management is ‘asset management’.

ArtsBuild has partnered with Ameresco, a recognized leader in the field of asset management and sustainability, to provide arts organizations with very affordable access to Asset Planner – their acclaimed asset management tool.

Included with each two year Asset Planner for the Arts license is a site visit, where an engineer will document, photograph and input all the data about your facility, and provide the training and support you need to you get the most from it.

Asset Planner for the Arts lets you:

- Create building condition assessments
- Prioritize needed capital improvements and identify funding gaps
- Develop data-driven facilities management plans, budgets and cases for funding
- Identify opportunities for efficiencies and cost savings

With the support of the Government of Canada, ArtsBuild is pleased to offer a subsidy towards the cost of Asset Planner to make it affordable for Ontario arts organizations.

Watch our introductory video at: <http://www.artsbuildontario.ca/managing/asset-planner/>

E-LEARNING WITH WORKINCULTURE

Project Management E-Learning – Newly Released

ArtsBuild has partnered with WorkInCulture to develop a project management E-Learning course tailored to the needs of arts organizations and created by experienced culture sector project managers.

The course is 5-8 hours in length (depending on your timing and retention), can be accessed on demand 24/7 and is affordably priced at \$40.

See more at: <http://www.artsbuildontario.ca/?s=project+management>

RESOURCE LIBRARY – NEW, APRIL 2014

ArtsBuild has compiled an online Resource Library for all things facilities related!

This Resource Library is a current and curated source for guides, templates, examples, case studies, short films and links to related resources to help busy arts organizations manage their learning and knowledge around sustainable facilities.

Visit Resource Library at: <http://resourcelibrary.artsbuildontario.ca/>

ARTS FACILITIES MENTORING NETWORK

ArtsBuild partnered with WorkInCulture to develop the Arts Facilities Mentoring Network. The Network provides established leaders in Ontario's non-profit arts community who are responsible for building, managing and financing facilities with the opportunity of one-on-one learning with experienced topic experts.

The Arts Facilities Mentoring Network is a practical way to build on people's desire to learn and share skills, connections and knowledge. Each mentee identifies a key learning topic, and the Network matches them with a mentor who has tackled a similar challenge. Pairs meet for three hours every month and take part in two in-person workshops that provide the opportunity for Network peers to meet.

Intake for the 2014/2015 Network is open July 2 to September 15, 2014. The program will run January to December 2015. Learn more and apply today at <http://www.artsbuildontario.ca/learning/mentoring-network/>

Susan Cohen from WorkInCulture and Lindsay MacDonald from ArtsBuild Ontario presented the successes from the program in their presentation *Forging a Collaborative Path for Superior Professional Development* at the OMA Conference on November 8th, 2013, in Markham.


Please contact Lindsay MacDonald for any questions, at lindsay@artsbuildontario.ca

LEARN IT | BUILD IT | MANAGE IT

Two-day Workshops to Strengthen Financial and Management Capacity around Art Facilities

LEARN IT | BUILD IT | MANAGE IT is the first province-wide workshop series addressing capacity building around developing, maintaining and funding sustainable facilities for nonprofit arts, culture, heritage, faith and community organizations – including theatres, performing arts and community centres, museums, galleries, libraries and places of worship.

With the support of the Government of Ontario, LEARN IT | BUILD IT | MANAGE IT will be presented in 10 Ontario communities from October 2014 through March 2016. The in-person workshop learning will be complimented by an Online Learning Network.



ArtsBuild Ontario is excited to present LEARN IT | BUILD IT | MANAGE IT in communities across Ontario. The need for this learning was expressed loud and clear at the Sustainable Creative Spaces consultations we held across Ontario in 2013. We envision the workshops as opportunity to bring needed learning directly to communities and a way to facilitate the exploration of possible partnerships and opportunities for shared use of spaces.

Each workshop is two days in length and comprises four modules

1. BUILDING NEW FACILITIES – The Dalton Company

An established contracting and project management firm, The Dalton Company has been involved with significant nonprofit projects including Toronto's Wychwood Barns, and numerous ones for clubs and the faith community. Using ArtsBuild's online guide to capital projects PLAN IT | BUILD IT, The Dalton Company will discuss the planning and decision-making needed to deliver projects on budget and in time.

2. ALTERNATIVE FINANCING OPTIONS FOR CREATIVE SPACES – Community Forward Fund

Community Forward Fund is a nonprofit loan fund serving nonprofits and charities. CFF will present financial review and assessment tools to help participants understand alternatives for financing projects.

3. MANAGING/MAINTAINING SUSTAINABLE FACILITIES – Pinchin Environmental Engineering

A province-wide company, Pinchin identifies and implements systemic initiatives to solve building science challenges and improve building performance. On-site assessor for Asset Planner for the Arts, Pinchin Environmental staff will discuss critical issues and affordable strategies for maintaining facilities in energy efficient and cost-effective manner.

4. ENGAGING YOUR COMMUNITY IN YOUR CREATIVE SPACES – CoBALT Connects

A nonprofit organization that is the connecting element for creative communities, CoBALT Connects helps organizations interact successfully with their municipalities. CoBALT Connects will present ways to engage your community before, during and after with your facilities projects so that community support and involvement is built in from the ground up.


If you are interested in LEARN IT | BUILD IT | MANAGE IT coming to your community, please contact Lindsay MacDonald, lindsay@artsbuildontario.ca.

SPACEFINDER TORONTO

ArtsBuild has partnered with Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts, WorkInCulture, the City of Toronto and Artscape to bring Toronto arts organizations SpaceFinder Toronto. SpaceFinder Toronto is a free, easy to use searchable database of spaces and venues available for rent in the Toronto area. Use SpaceFinder Toronto to find spaces for rehearsals, performances, meetings, launches, corporate events, special events and parties.

Whether you are looking for space or have space to rent, SpaceFinder Toronto is the solution for your needs.

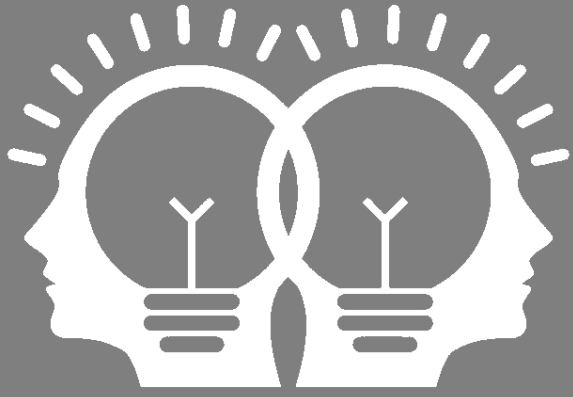
FREE TO LIST. FREE TO SEARCH.



The SpaceFinder system was created by US arts service organization Fractured Atlas. It has been successfully launched in twelve US cities and we are proud to be bringing it to Canada.

Visit SpaceFinder Toronto at <http://www.spacefindertoronto.org/>

ArtsBuild Ontario is piloting SpaceFinder in Toronto to better understand how it works in Canada. If you are interested in a bringing SpaceFinder to your community, please contact Lindsay MacDonald lindsay@artsbuildontario.ca



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANTS INVITED

First Name	Last Name	Job Title	Company
Agathe	Boisset	Artistic Coordinator / Administrative Assistant	Centre Culturel Frontenac
Andrew	Sims	Photographer	Andrew Sims Studios
Ann	Blake	Managing Director	Kingston Association Museums, Art Galleries and Historic Sites
Barbara	Linds	Chair, Board of Directors	Theatre Kingston
Bob	Brooks	VP Board	Domino Theatre
Brett	Christopher		Theatre Kingston
Colin	Wiginton	Acting Cultural Director	City of Kingston
Dana	Webster		Fort Henry
Dianne	Zemba	Manager	Grand Theatre
Jenn		Education/Collections	Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University
Jim	Garrard	Executive Producer	SALON Theatre Productions
Julie	Fossitt	Marketing & Communications	Grand Theatre
Karen	Dolan	Executive Director	Kingston Arts Council
Karma	Tomm	Director	Queen's Conservatory of Music
Katherine	Porter	Executive Director	H'art Centre
Lin	Bennett	President	Kingston Arts Council
Liz	Schell	Councilor, District 5	City of Kingston
Louise	Richer	Regional Advisor	Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport
Lynn	Carlotto	General Manager	Rogers K-Rock Centre/SMG Canada
Megan	McNeil	General Director	Modern Fuel Artist-Run Centre
Murray	Matheson	Executive Director	Kingston Accommodation Partners
Laura	Carter		Kingston Frontenac Public Library
Patty	Petkovich	Board Co-Chair	Tett Centre for Creativity and Learning
Sayyida	Jaffer	Program Manager	Ontario Trillium Foundation
Ted	Worth	Grants Director	Kingston Arts Council - City of Kingston Arts Fund
Valerie	Hopper	Manager, Cultural Development, Arts and Heritage	Canadian Heritage

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANTS IN ATTENDANCE

First Name	Last Name	Job Title	Company
Agathe	Boisset	Artistic Coordinator / Administrative Assistant	Centre Culturel Frontenac
Ann	Blake	Managing Director	Kingston Association Museums, Art Galleries and Historic Sites
Barbara	Linds	Chair, Board of Directors	Theatre Kingston
Bob	Brooks	VP Board	Domino Theatre
Brett	Christopher		Theatre Kingston
Colin	Wiginton	Acting Cultural Director	City of Kingston
Dana	Webster		Fort Henry
Jenn		Education/Collections	Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University
Jim	Garrard	Executive Producer	SALON Theatre Productions
Julie	Fossitt	Marketing & Communications	Grand Theatre
Karen	Dolan	Executive Director	Kingston Arts Council
Karma	Tomm	Director	Queen's Conservatory of Music
Katherine	Porter	Executive Director	H'art Centre
Liz	Schell	Councilor, District 5	City of Kingston
Murray	Matheson	Executive Director	Kingston Accommodation Partners
Laura	Carter		Kingston Frontenac Public Library
Patty	Petkovich	Board Co-Chair	Tett Centre for Creativity and Learning
Sayyida	Jaffer	Program Manager	Ontario Trillium Foundation
Ted	Worth	Grants Director	Kingston Arts Council - City of Kingston Arts Fund
Valerie	Hopper	Manager, Cultural Development, Arts and Heritage	Canadian Heritage

APPENDIX C:

Making Spaces for Art A Case Study: Arraymusic



Artists need centrally located, affordable space.

- Rick Sacks, Artistic Director

Arraymusic never intended to be anything other than a chamber group ensemble. Sometimes however evolution takes over. Arraymusic has been on a journey that Rick Sacks, Artistic Director, and Sandra Bell, General Manager, could not have predicted but that necessity did. A quick visit to their website--one that gets hits from all over the world-- demonstrates their split screen identity. A quick listen to their music reflects the diversity in their instrumentation.

Arraymusic is both a chamber group ensemble (the Array Ensemble) and an affordable space that artists can rent at a reasonable rate, at any time of day, to create, record and produce music. Arraymusic is a one-stop shop where artists can experiment and hone their craft. As such, they are about fostering creative collaborative relationships. And they don't follow a formula. There is no formula for what Arraymusic has created.

Like all good bands, the Array Ensemble started in a cinder block garage on Albany Street resplendent with a tiny washroom in the early 1980's. The Ensemble had already been performing together since 1972 but they needed a cost-effective rehearsal space. Word spread and other groups started asking to use the space. Quickly it became a home for new music improv groups and other creative musicians. Sacks realized that providing affordable space was another way for Arraymusic to realize its mandate of promoting Canadian New Music. Like most success stories, garage days are limited and best remembered with a bittersweet nostalgia. They eventually outgrew their space and moved to the Artscape Liberty Village development at 60 Atlantic Avenue in April of 1992. This represented a big stepping stone moment for the group as their rent more than doubled in the move but they knew the need was there. When Artscape decided ultimately to close the Liberty Village development, Arraymusic started looking for their new, permanent home.

"What we needed was silence, and a space to make good music," says Sacks, "and that is hard to come by in Toronto." From Craigslist to realtors, Arraymusic embarked on a search to find a home that fit their needs. They looked at partnerships with other like-minded arts organizations. They considered another Artscape development but nothing seemed like just the right fit. Just as the situation was starting to look bleak, Sacks stumbled on the Kijiji ad that changed everything. What they found was a turn of the century

building that was actually two buildings fused into one. What could be more perfect for Arraymusic? After all, they too have fused and become something they never intended at the outset.

On one-way Walnut street, smack-dab in the middle of the cultural corridor, in a turn of the century building that was once a factory, is the new home of Arraymusic. Sandra Bell, “knew it was home when [she] walked in.” How they got there is one part serendipity and the kindness of strangers, and an equal part dedication to evolution.

The project was more than a little daunting. The building would require major renovations in order to become a suitable home. They found out the Ontario Trillium Foundation had a capital grant deadline in just three weeks. Could they even pull it off? They worried if they didn’t make the grant deadline and receive the funds, they wouldn’t be able to complete all the necessary renovations. Bell and Sacks turned to ArtsBuild for help and advice. Executive Director Adele Dobkowski encouraged them to go for it. They met with their Board and took the leap of faith. They managed to get their Trillium application in on time.

Using advice from ArtsBuild and a document Artscape published called, “Square Feet: The Artist’s Guide to Renting and Buying Creative Space”, they set about negotiating with their new landlord. It was a learning curve that could only be described as vertical but the negotiations with the landlord went smoothly. Arraymusic has been blessed with the sort of landlord many of us can only dream of. He clearly saw the vision of what Arraymusic is looking to create. They were able to agree to escalating rent over the initial five year rental period which will allow Arraymusic to grow their business in the new location. The landlord also threw in some free rent at the start of their occupancy, has taken on some of the retrofitting work and has made a sizeable donation to the organization. They were off to a good start. Then came the good news that they were to receive the grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation in the amount of \$150,000. Arraymusic moved into their new home in November 2012.

In four short months, so much has changed. Walls went up to partition off offices. Five offices have already been rented to like-minded partners. There is a new floor. The building has been sound proofed. And they have been meeting with contractors about the elevator.

There is lots more to come with a priority list that is both daunting and commendable as it incorporates environmentally friendly choices. A primary capital improvement is an elevator that runs on gravity and not electricity. From cost efficient lighting, to collapsible risers, tables and chairs for cabaret events, a deck for outdoor social receptions, a brand new entrance complete with ramp and eye-catching signage, to key code locks to ensure twenty-four hour access for all, no detail is being overlooked. The board of directors is thrilled and everyone is anticipating greatly increased community use.

Sacks and Bell have an eye to the future and the enormous potential of both the building and what they are building. They invite community participation to their events to make the most of these mutually beneficial relationships. For instance, a frequent user of Arraymusic has offered up his social media savvy. Arraymusic has gone from having twenty-five Twitter followers, to more than five hundred in four months. Another example would be the pan, tilt, and zoom stationary video cameras they are hoping to purchase to record concerts.

One person can operate the system, and handle real time edits. They hope to eventually create a premium subscription series available by video simultaneously increasing their audience and diversifying their funds.

Yet another thing that sets Arraymusic apart from just any rental space is the way they promote their events. A proud feature of their website includes enticing event listings, something they do for all their rental clients. Sacks and Bell acknowledge that is a lot more work on their plates to offer this service for free but they believe the pay off of increased attendance for everyone and the cross-pollination of audiences is well worth the effort.

An ambitious outreach plan is also taking shape, which takes advantage of everything the neighbourhood has to offer. It is a neighbourhood with kids and schools and diverse demographics. They are contemplating offering children's programming in addition to their already full calendar. Arraymusic wants to enmesh itself in this community and become a friendly façade within it as well.

For an organization that never intended to be anything than a music ensemble, they are unquestionably doing a brilliant job, seamlessly incorporating both sides of their split personality. As memories of their garage days fade, a unified new vision for Arraymusic comes into focus and takes the stage. Bravo!

APPENDIX D:

Making Spaces for Art A Case Study: The Registry Theatre



***Let me not to the marriage of true minds
admit impediments - Shakespeare***

The story of The Registry Theatre is intimately and irretrievably entwined with that of J.M. Drama and the City of Kitchener. Originally built in 1939 as the Waterloo County Registry Office, it is one of the few art deco buildings in Waterloo Region. Yet what became The Registry Theatre was the result of its own perfect marriage between the City of Kitchener and J.M. Drama. Like all relationships, they have their own romantic tales and foibles. But make no mistake, this

marriage not only is growing strong, but still has its spark.

J.M. Drama began as a group of alumni sharing an emotional connection. Putting the “J” and “M” in J.M. Drama, graduates of St Jerome’s High School, and St Mary’s High School established this group with the intent to perform in 1984. They performed in various locations throughout Kitchener, ending up at the Victoria Park Pavilion. They quickly realized that an affordable performing arts space was needed for the community as well as themselves. Beyond affordable, it also needed to be financially viable and sustainable. The emotional connection that pulled the group together logically led to a location—the turn of the century buildings of the St. Jerome campus, one of their former high schools.

In the 1990’s, the Mayor’s Committee on Downtown, agreed. A feasibility study determined that a performing arts space for the community was needed and that the St. Jerome’s campus was indeed a good fit. J.M. Drama, whose membership now had expanded beyond alumni, worked together with the WalterFedy Partnership (a top architectural and engineering firm) on the proposal. All good marriages begin with a proposal of course. Alas, rejection. After hundreds of volunteer and donated hours working on the plans, and a significant price tag to boot, the owners of the site refused to sell. Undeterred, the members found another site. That site too, was quickly removed from possibility.

Enter the City of Kitchener. In the 90’s, the City of Kitchener acquired the former Registry Building at 122 Frederick Street in a land deal with the Regional Municipality of Waterloo. They approached J.M. Drama and asked them to see if it suited their needs. Don Bourgeois, and the other members of the Board of

Directors inspected the site. Bourgeois laughs about how he was the only one who didn't see the potential of that first date – but others did. J.M. Drama enthusiastically said yes.....with some conditions.

Wiser with experience, J.M. Drama wanted a “planned, phased approach” and a “long term relationship.” What was to become The Registry Theatre was going to be a relationship built in many steps. To begin, it needed to be feasible. The building itself needed to be converted. And at each step, the negotiations between the City of Kitchener and J.M. Drama allowed for transparency, accountability and the option to “opt out” at any time by either party.

The Registry Theatre is a building that is a public asset with a public purpose. Like a prenuptial agreement, the terms of the contract negotiated between J.M. Drama and the City of Kitchener that gave birth to this space is designed to protect both parties from mutual risk while affording maximum benefit to both parties and, more importantly, the community they serve. “Everything was at risk for J.M. Drama” says Bourgeois. At the time, they were a small non-profit with an annual operating budget of \$15,000-\$20,000 with no staff and no line of credit. If the deal went bad, it would bankrupt the organization and leave them without a space. They were taking a huge risk leaving their (then) current 12,000 square foot space in the former Lang Tannery Building at a monthly cost of three hundred dollars. They negotiated clauses with the City so that they could only be kicked out of the Registry building if they breached the agreement. J.M. Drama would also retain the right to occupy part of the building whether they continued to manage the facility or not. By the same token, the City of Kitchener needed to protect its efforts. The facility had to be sustainable and completed at a reasonable cost to the taxpayer. The City agreed to manage the contracting process and provided financial support with a loan of \$224,000 interest free. They also managed the relationship with the WalterFedy Partnership, the firm retained to complete the designs. The task was daunting, fraught with its own renovation nightmares, and yet simultaneously completely perfect. Soulmates.

An essential element of the project was the timing. An economic downturn and the turn of the millennium gave access to funding that otherwise would not have been available. The business plan for The Registry Theatre stated that funds for the capital improvements would need to be secured through grants and donations and that operating costs would be covered through facility operations.

Additional capital funds were secured through the government's Millennium Fund. Interestingly, timing made the renovations to the building cost so much more. With the recession, contractors were ironically very busy and bids were coming in 20-30% higher than anticipated. Renovations were ultimately completed creating a viable, affordable space for the community to rent. On New Year's Eve, 2001, Don Bourgeois and many other volunteers rang in the new millennium painting at The Registry Theatre.

Once the space was opened, it was an immediate success. In their first six months of operation, 101 days were rented. They were already at two-thirds capacity. In their second and third years of operation, they applied for a Ontario Trillium Foundation grant for part time management to relieve the stress on volunteer time. In 2004, they were able to hire someone to direct programming.

Part of the formula underpinning this success is the philosophy. What started with J.M. Drama wanting a space to perform became a completely successful and distinct brand known as The Registry Theatre. On the books of J.M. Drama, The Registry Theatre is set up as a separate, charitable project of the organization, with its own bank account and mission. The Registry Theatre is dedicated to building

audiences and allowing artists an “affordable place to fail.” Yes, fail. Artists require a space within which they will not be bankrupted by failure—a space where they can mature as artists and learn their craft. At a daily rental rate of \$250-\$300, they do not discriminate between professional and amateur. And as such, they want a space where professionals can flourish, and amateurs can develop by making mistakes, learning and thriving. The Registry is also building audiences for jazz, folk, classics and other forms of art. More recently, The Registry Theatre lobby art gallery was installed for visual artists. J.M. Drama continues to invest in The Registry Theatre, upgrading lighting and sound systems, staging, back of house, and preparing for the next phase of its existence.

The overall vision of the Registry Theatre is to be a place for arts and culture to flourish and to develop. And flourishing is something that The Registry Theatre does consistently. From the “willingness of others to collaborate to achieve a public benefit,” came the beautiful marriage of J.M. Drama and the City of Kitchener. This is one marriage we can’t wait to celebrate the diamond anniversary of!