



Introduction

23 program-level staff from CPAF member organizations gathered in Fredericton on September 18th - 20th, 2019 for the annual Professional Development conference.

Every province and territory except Alberta and PEI was represented at the gathering.

The event was divided into four on-site sessions over two days:

Session 1: Innovating and Adapting the Peer Assessment Process

Presentations and Q&A with Kathy Hsieh (Seattle Office of Arts & Culture), Sable Sweetgrass (Calgary Arts Development) and Kelly Hill (Connexion Artist-Run Centre, Fredericton). Facilitated by Enrique Ferreol (Arts Nova Scotia).

Session 2: Towards Braiding

Large group discussion with Elwood Jimmy (Musagetes Foundation, Toronto). Facilitated by Erika Iserhoff (Ontario Arts Council).

Session 3: Building Respectful Relationships with Indigenous Artists and Communities

Large group discussion with current and former artsnb Circle of Elders members Hubert Francis, Mariah Sockabasin and Cynthia Sewell, as well as artsnb staff members Joss Richer and Sarah Beth Parker. Facilitated by Erika Iserhoff (Ontario Arts Council)

Session 4: World Café

Small group roundtable discussions on four themes identified at the start of the session. Facilitated by Michèle Brideau (Michèle Brideau Consulting).

Participants also took part in informal off-site gatherings at two local restaurants, and in guided tours of the Beaverbrook Gallery and the New Brunswick College of Craft and Design.

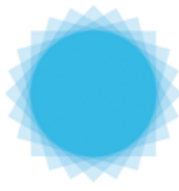
The conference was funded by CPAF and hosted by the New Brunswick Arts Board (artsnb). Planning was carried out by Sarah Beth Parker (artsnb), Enrique Ferreol (Arts Nova Scotia), Erika Iserhoff (Ontario Arts Council) and Roxanne Charlebois (Canada Council for the Arts).

Results

The conference was an invaluable opportunity for the program-level staff of CPAF member organizations to learn, share and grow together. Participants left the event with new connections and new ideas to bring back to their home organizations.

Details on each session, along with the event budget and post-event survey results, are provided on the following pages.

We hope to see these meetings continue into the future!



Session 1 Report

Presenter: Kathy Hsieh
Cultural Partnerships and Grants Manager, Seattle Office of Arts & Culture

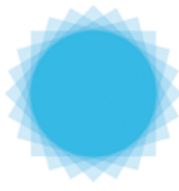
Topic: Racial equity in grantmaking / centering the expertise of communities of color

Slides: [Kathy Hsieh presentation \(slides only\)](#) [Kathy Hsieh presentation \(with notes\)](#)

More info: [Seattle Office of Arts & Culture - Racial Equity programs and resources](#)

Key takeaways:

- Core values of grantmaking need to be explicitly defined; centered in equity, centering the participation of communities of color
- “Equity is about ensuring that the communities most impacted by injustice are the primary decision-makers in deciding who gets the funding, and if that means we need to change the rules to make that happen, then that’s what we do.”
- Spending time within immigrant and diverse communities, particularly with groups who have applied and not received funding, or have never applied before, can reveal specific reasons why existing programs are not structured equitably.
- Application and reporting process can be extremely minimal
 - o Artists of Color Expo & Symposium (ACES) - 2-question application; applicants themselves carry out selection process; short presentation from each awardee on their proposed or in-progress project serves as “reporting” for the grant.
 - o Equitable Development Funding model - staff take on the research work to identify organizations that best fit the criteria of programs, invite applications in the form of a short email message about a proposed project.
- When the process is quick and applicants themselves carry out the selection process, even those not funded leave with a sense of having had a worthwhile experience.
- Create solidarity, not competition. Structural racism is designed to pit minorities against each other.
- “Many funders approach investments in communities of color as if we’re the saviors helping at-risk communities become better. The framework for this funding model is that communities of color have immense expertise and lived experience that we in government can learn from.”
- When panelists in jury meetings have had racial equity / implicit bias training prior to the meeting, they catch issues themselves rather than Program Officers interjecting.



Session 1 Report (cont'd)

Presenter: Sable Sweetgrass
Community Investment Officer, Calgary Arts Development

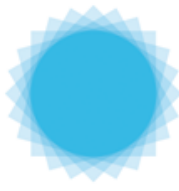
Topic: Original Peoples Investment Program / Community Circle selection process

Slides: [Sable Sweetgrass presentation](#)

More info: [Calgary Arts Development - Original Peoples Investment Program](#)

Key takeaways:

- Work in Indigenizing the granting process should be supported by an advisory of artists, elders and community leaders
- For applicants who have never applied to a funding program before, it is important to have sessions to explain the processes - budget workshop, step by step application walkthrough, etc.
- For applicants who have never had the opportunity to talk about their art practices - info sessions are an opportunity to practice doing so in partners, speaking about their art, giving each other advice on how best to present themselves.
- Provide honouraria to every applicant coming to the info sessions - it makes a difference to be able to help with childcare, fuel, etc. Provide catering.
- Oral/video application option is important, as is accessible and plain language
- Staff can and should provide assistance to applicants (e.g. taking videos for them).
- In the first year of the Original Peoples Investment Program, there was enough money to fund every eligible applicant. In 2020, grant recipients will be selected by the applicants themselves through a Community Circle process.
- Creating a safe space was important for these sessions - Group Agreements can be read together. Address concerns about confidentiality, the sharing of ideas and traditional work/designs.
- Respect oral storytelling traditions; Sharing Circles are one way
- Value participation and labor; compensate participants for their time. Confirm special needs of individual participants is important
- There is value in the process of participants (applicants) being together in a space.
- Elders play an important role in the process; respect their time and offer proper compensation for their knowledge shared.



Session 1 Report (cont'd)

Presenter: Kelly Hill
Executive Director, Connexion Artist-Run Centre (Fredericton)

Topic: Art Kitchen / radically transparent and participatory arts funding

Slides: [Kelly Hill presentation](#)

More info: [Connexion Artist-Run Centre - Art Kitchen](#)

Key takeaways:

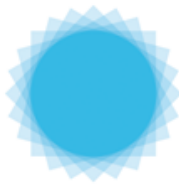
- Art Kitchen was inspired by Sunday Soup in Chicago, FEAST in Brooklyn.
- \$20 tickets to event, attendees get a meal, 4 artists curated by Connexion present their projects as an artist talk over dinner.
- Popular vote decides who receives the funding (from the ticket money).
- Encourages especially emerging artists and those who feel they may not be at a level to apply for grants through traditional funding bodies.
- Possible drawbacks: The person who wins the funding is typically the person who is able to give a well-rehearsed speech - there also may be a correlation between who won the vote and who brought the most people to the event.
- Community is drawn to projects that have a personal connection to the artist.



Pictured: Opening statements from Elders Hubert Francis and Joan Milliea Caravantes



Pictured: Session 1 panel presentations

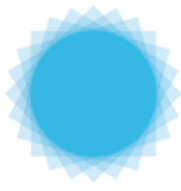


Session 2 Report

- Presenter:** Elwood Jimmy
Coordinator of Indigenous Programs / Cultural and Organizational Change
Catalyst, Musagetes Foundation
- Topic:** Towards Braiding / exploring possibilities of ethical and rigorous engagement across communities in historical dissonance
- More info:** [Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures - Towards Braiding \(book and handouts\)](#)
[On Breathing and Braiding - online platform](#)

Key takeaways:

- Musagetes is a 12-year old arts organization. Used to be an all-white organization, thought that just having an Indigenous body would check the right boxes.
- Trying to interrupt the Western sensibilities, not just graft Indigenous sensibilities onto an existing structure, is a real challenge when you're the only Indigenous person on staff.
- It's not just building a culture within your workspace, it's a culture within your life, it's a lifestyle to deconstruct colonial ideas.
- Canada likes to think of itself as exceptional, but these Indigenous relationships are not in a good place.
- A lot of organizations are calibrated towards Western sensibilities, where modernity is the driver - Indigenous sensibilities are more about keeping things in balance, at zero.
- Elwood's book "Towards Braiding" is available for free download.
- "I keep making the same mistakes so I want to make new mistakes at least."
- Still so far away from having meaningful relationships with Indigenous people - need to talk about different ways of moving forwards, how to develop a space where you're not just recirculating trauma.
- Within the book is a whole section of harm reduction and immediate ways to cut down on harm and exercises to do and work on.
- In the book there is an analogy of bricks and threads (non-Indigenous and Indigenous sensibilities); tries to eliminate emotional barriers and avoid alienating people.
- The whole system is geared towards intellectual knowledge, but a thread sensibility is more about body knowledge. Knowledges that are not privileged by the structure does not mean they're any less valuable.



Session 3 Report

Presenters: Hubert Francis, member of the artsnb Circle of Elders
Mariah Sockabasin, member of the artsnb Circle of Elders
Cynthia Sewell, former member of the artsnb Circle of Elders
Joss Richer, artsnb Executive Director
Sarah Beth Parker, artsnb Program Officer

Topic: Building Respectful Relationships with Indigenous Artists and Communities

Key takeaways:

- “Having a Circle of Elders is really key for the richness in planning your programming.”
- “Reconciliation means ‘let me be who I am’, I’m given the chance to tell the director how I want to be directed.”
- “When you help someone with their gift, you have to follow up, you have to check on them, you can’t just give them the money and go.”
- “Trade is a big part of my community, so I don’t mind doing the work but every relationship is a give and take. If your organization doesn’t have more money to give, what are some resources that you can offer them instead for their services?”
- “It’s so important to build the trust in your relationships with my community - I wouldn’t walk to [another] community and pretend that I know everything. You need to build the trust and follow through on promises and follow-ups.”
- The Equinox Program at artsnb is a flexible funding program for Indigenous artists with all Indigenous jurors. The Circle of Elders was consulted on every aspect of the program’s creation.



Pictured: Session 2 discussion circle



Pictured: Session 3 discussion circle



Session 4 Report

Attendees participated in a roundtable discussion in the World Café format. Themes of interest were identified at the start of the session.

Some topics raised in discussions of each theme included the following:

Theme #1: Peer Assessment Process

- Who owns peer assessment? How can applicants feel empowered in the selection process?
- How do ranking-based systems interact with issues of bias and equity?
- “If you get the same people applying and getting funded every time, that’s how you know the process is getting stagnant and need to look at ways to revitalize”

Theme #2: Equity

- How do we act with discretion in enacting our policies and fulfilling our duties?
- How can we increase transparency and simplicity of our processes?
- How can we identify barriers and what can immediately be done to reduce them?

Theme #3: Risk-taking and Innovation

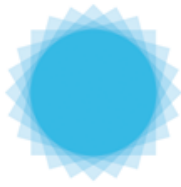
- How can we balance forward-thinking with reflective processes?
- What is the responsibility of a non-profit to introduce or encourage self-reflection?
- We are not all at the same starting line; “risk does not equal being radical”

Theme #4: Transactional vs. Relational

- How can we reconcile the transactional and relational aspects of our work?
- How can we best reconcile meeting the needs of artists with meeting the mandates of government?



Pictured: Session 4 facilitated roundtable discussions



Acknowledgments

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Next Steps

Planning documents and complete survey results will be provided to the planning committee for the next CPAF Professional Development meeting.

There is interest in the possibility of forming a working group from different CPAF member organizations, for the purpose of continuing the conversation about innovative and equitable application and assessment processes.