



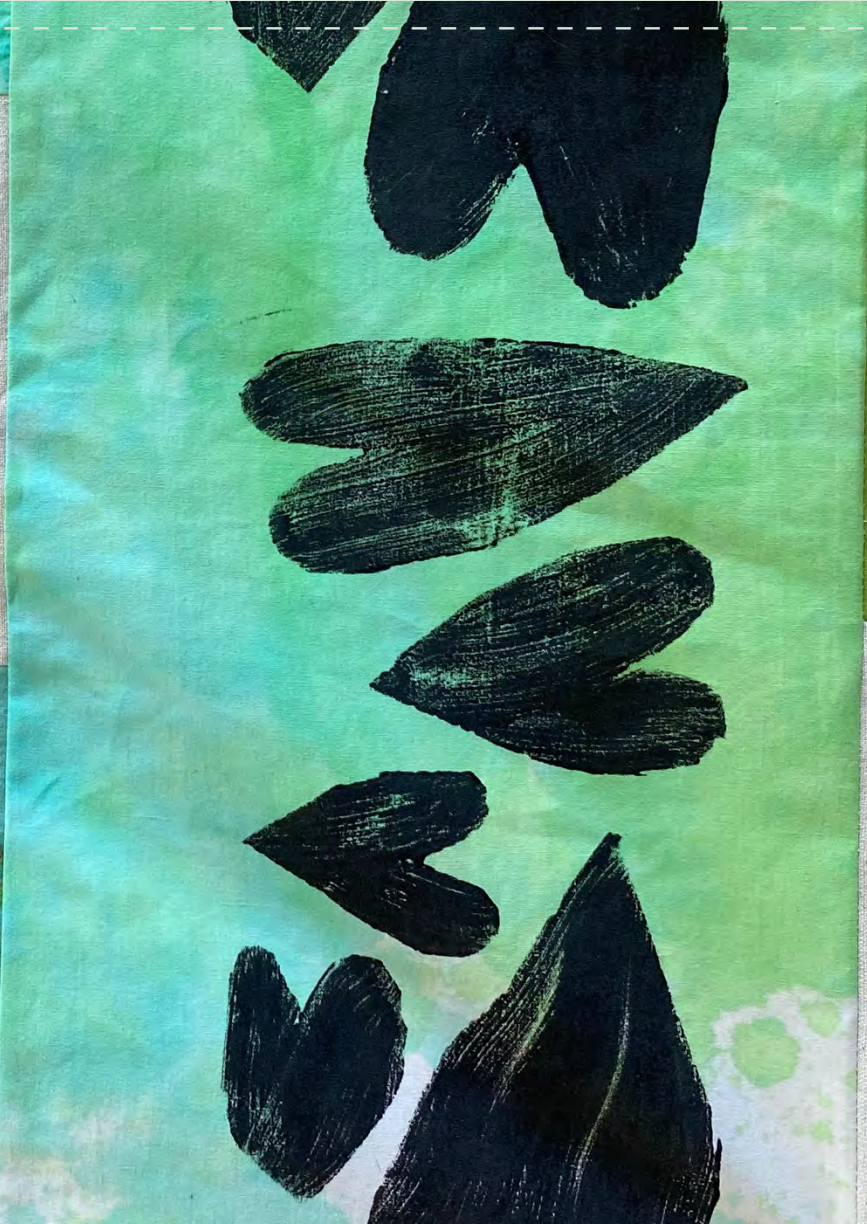
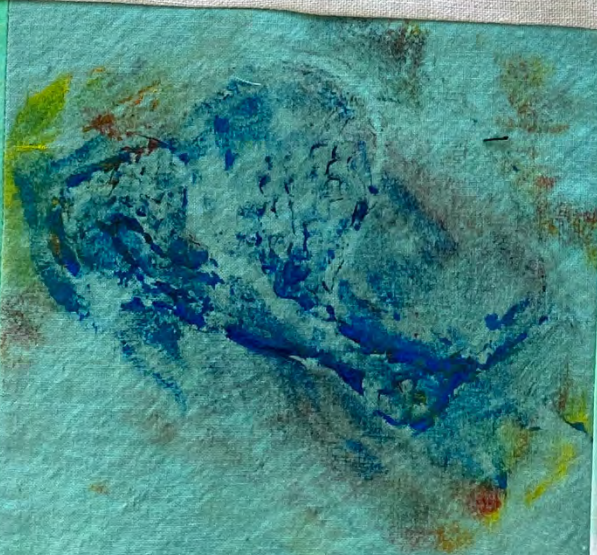
THINKING ROCK COMMUNITY ARTS 2021-2022 ANNUAL REPORT

['tʃɪnks [ɑː, 'wɒl'se]

The homemade
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Traditional



A MESSAGE FROM OUR ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Aanii, Bonjour, Hello!

2021-22 was a year of learning, building and action at Thinking Rock! Supported by one of our largest staff and volunteer teams to date, and informed by community partners and participants, far and wide, we collectively designed, developed and delivered a jam-packed year-full of programs and progress.

We hosted three streams of programming, strengthening our approaches to hybrid workshops and sessions as we went along. We continued community outreach, hand-packed hundreds of art-making kits, and dusted off our outreach booth display to take the word about our work out and about.

We traveled the Social Fabric project to Toronto as Jumblies Artist in Residence, where we had the great pleasure of workshopping the themes of interweaving and mending with a multi-disciplinary crew of artists, frientors and community hearts. Inspired by the four seasons and the five senses, we hosted a year-long children's program.

Behind-the-scenes, we deepened our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion by transitioning our succession planning efforts to an ongoing strategic planning process; we built new and exciting reciprocal partnerships of sharing and learning; and we strengthened our operational systems, building organizational resilience during a tumultuous time.

With fresh re-opening plans and procedures in hand, we welcomed folks into the new TRHQ storefront programming space with an Open House and exhibition celebrating our work to date. It was thrilling to share our community-engaged arts work at two conferences, as well - to peers provincially and internationally.

On behalf of all the Thinking Rockers, I'm excited and proud to share the details of the past year in this edition of our annual report with you. I extend my gratitude to all the staff, artists, volunteers, partners, participants, funders and donors who make our artful, heartfelt work possible!

Miigwetch, Merci, Thank you,

Miranda Bouchard

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ABOUT THE LANDS WHERE WE WORK

The Thinking Rockers live, gather, work, and create across the North Shore region in Robinson-Huron Treaty Territory, on the lands of the Anishinaabek of Baawating (including Ketegaunseebee/Garden River First Nation and Batchewana First Nation); and at Payentanassin (St. Joseph Island), Neyaashiwān (Thessalon First Nation), Misswezhaging (Mississauga First Nation) and Genaabaajing (Serpent River First Nation). The Métis have lived for generations in this region, which is home today to folks of diverse Indigenous Nations from across Turtle Island and the world. Land acknowledgments recognize the relationships between Indigenous Peoples and their territories that have existed since time immemorial. They also acknowledge our relational responsibility, as inhabitants of these territories, to people and the planet. To us, this looks like embracing ongoing learning, and taking informed, heart-led actions in support of reparation relationships and reconciliation in the work we do, everyday.

OUR FOUNDING

Thinking Rock was established in May 2013 by Founding Artistic Director, Robin Sutherland. Gigidoowag Ziibiik | The Rivers Speak was Thinking Rock's first major multi-year project, a community play that drew inspiration from personal stories, memories, myths, tall tales and legends shared by Indigenous and Settler people of Central Algoma about local waterways. The project brought community members together across time, distance and culture to share and animate their stories through a collaborative process, guided by professional, interdisciplinary artist facilitators. Over the course of 5 years (2013-18), more than 4,000 community participants were involved in the project!



WHO WE ARE: OUR MISSION & MANDATE

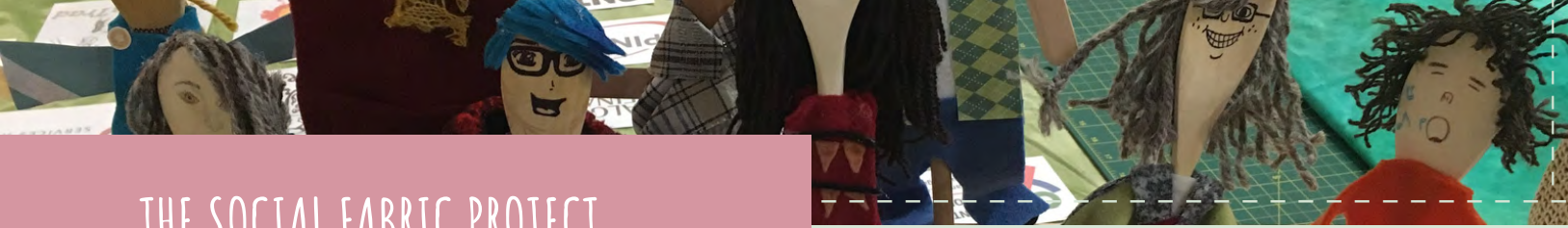
Based in Thessalon, Algoma District, Northern Ontario, we co-create art with and for the people living along the North Shore of Lake Huron, from Genaabaajing (Serpent River First Nation) to Baawaating (Sault Ste. Marie) and all points in between. We're a team of artists, cultural workers and community members of Indigenous, settler and Newcomer descent who co-create spaces for dialogue, mutual understanding and artful social change through multidisciplinary, multi-generational, cross-cultural community arts projects.

Through our free and inclusive artistic programming, we invite people of all Nations, ages, abilities, backgrounds and identities to join us in playing, making and dreaming about this special place we call home – as it was, as it is, and as it might yet be. We learn more everyday about what that invitation, the spaces we hold together, and the ways we show up for each other can and must look like, and we bring this growing understanding to our work.

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

We believe that if Central Algomans of Indigenous, Newcomer and settler descent co-create community arts projects and presentations, then we'll build relationships across cultures and communities, and that opportunities to live, work and play in the arts will increase across the region. Ultimately, this will lead to more inclusive, vibrant and resilient Algoma communities.





THE SOCIAL FABRIC PROJECT



Social Fabric, our current, multi-year community arts project, engages a variety of fabric, fibre and textile-based making practices – some unique and others common to Indigenous, Newcomer and settler traditions in Central Algoma. Many of these handwork practices are deeply embedded in our rural communities, handed down over generations. We're learning together about how things have been made here across time, and sparking cross-cultural, intergenerational conversations about the people, cultures, traditions and territories in this special place.

Slowing down with textile-based practice instills a reflective pace in the maker, and creates a connection with the handwork that develops and evolves over time. This echoes the weaving and interweaving of our lives and relationships to each other, which similarly require care, mindfulness, reflection, practice, and a commitment to ongoing learning. We are reflecting together on two key ideas:

Interweaving - The more we collaborate, the more interwoven we become. We look for and make opportunities to come together to share - about ourselves, our skills, our art-making and our time. We work together to promote and engage in meaningful, actionable social change that weaves our communities, learnings and day-to-day practices together.

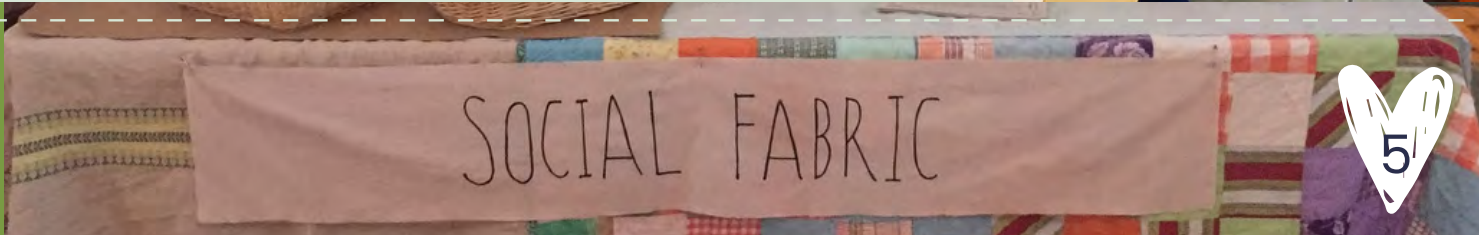

Mending - We are learning about repair, and looking to techniques of mending, patching and darning for inspiration: we're mending our clothes, to keep them present and useful; we're reflecting on our relationship to the environment, our knowledge of our locations on Gidakiiminaang, and mending our ways to leave a lighter, more thankful footprint; and we're learning more everyday about what it means to live in the land now known as Canada, using daily practices of reflecting, connecting and making to mend the tears between us, weave new ways, and heal - as individuals and as a community.



THE SOCIAL FABRIC PROJECT

Local and regional artists, practitioners, knowledge- and skill-holders have been generously sharing their skills and collaborating intergenerationally and cross-culturally with community and artistic team members to weave these approaches together into new, truly community-based works. We will work closely with local Indigenous Elders and knowledge keepers to ensure that the conveyance of these skills respects, observes and upholds cultural protocols.

As Social Fabric continues, we'll weave in popular community art forms such as installation, puppet-making, music, culinary and performing arts. We'll co-create and host culminating presentations at each phase to share and celebrate what we've made together, thank participating communities, and invite folks into the process. The project will wrap up with a multidisciplinary celebration that visually and metaphorically reflects the hundreds of stories, makers and methods that informed our multi-year creative process. We'll imbue the Social Fabric we weave together with a truly Algomian relevance, reflexivity and respect.



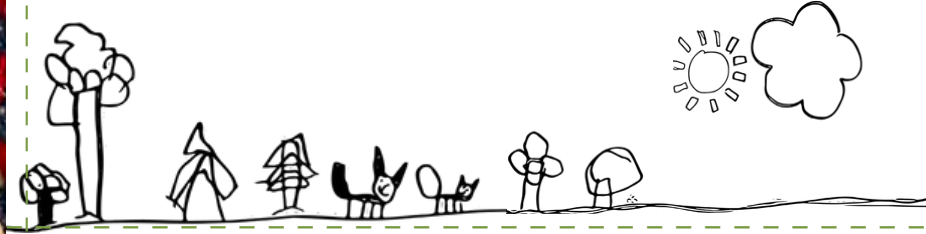
SOCIAL FABRIC






MAKING NIGHTS

Launched in Fall 2020, Making Nights are hybrid (online & in-person), co-hosted social spaces where we meet and share - anything from artsy techniques & tricks, to happenings from daily life, and our reflections on inspired topics and questions. Together, we hold a gentle space for brave, creative conversations that keep our hands busy and our hearts full. Making Nights in 2021-22 featured guest artist hosts (including Josie Weir and Áine Schryer-O’Gorman) and Social Fabric themes, including “Start from Somewhere”, “Fresh Starts/Oshki-Maajitaang, Indooski-Maajitaa”, “Creative Flow” and “Recalculating!” Two very special Making Nights were hosted, including “Maamawi-ozhitamaadiying giganawenindimin: A Special Making Night with Anishinaabemowin,” with Grandmother Marly Day and Auntie Arlene Ash; and “Circle In”, designed and delivered by Betty Carpick for National Indigenous Peoples Day. We hosted Making Night #42 on September 27th!



SOCIAL FABRIC DROP-INS



Hosted in community spaces across the North Shore, drop-ins welcome people of all ages and communities to join free collaborative community arts activities inspired by our Social Fabric project. All materials are provided - come when you can for as long as you're able, to add your voice and creativity to a radically inclusive project! In 2021-22, we happily resumed recurring, in-person drop in artmaking sessions, which had been abruptly suspended during the first COVID-19 lockdown in March 2020. Together with our partners at AlgomaTrad (Richards Landing), and the Ermatinger-Clergue National Historic site and the Northern Community Centre (Sault Ste. Marie), we held 7 regional drop-in sessions that hosted 31 unique participants and created 50 participation opportunities.



THE MAKE, DO & MEND RESIDENCY

In late April and early May 2022, Artistic Director Miranda Bouchard was invited to be artist in residence with the Social Fabric Project at Jumblies Theatre + Arts, Toronto. During her two-week residency, she brought a number of existing, and workshopped new, Social Fabric activities, ideas and artworks with Jumblies' artists, including Ruth Howard, our longtime mentor and the Founding Artistic Director of Jumblies. Along with visual art and craft-based making, Social Fabric themes were woven through song, music and movement. Throughout this unforgettable two-week residency, 4 drop-in art-making sessions, one Making Night, an Artist's Talk, and a Soft Finale Event - all free - were hosted, creating 200+ participation opportunities, lasting memories, and new bridges between Northern and Southern Ontario colleagues and communities.



SKILL-BUILDING WORKSHOPS

Free, low-stakes, hybrid (in-person & online) sessions led by local and regional makers, artists and craftspeople that support, share and celebrate creative skills. Participation from folks of all ages, Nations, backgrounds, abilities and identities is encouraged: learning with and from each other, we build connectedness, capacity, knowledge and resiliency. In 2020-21, as we resumed pre-pandemic programming plans, we hosted two separate workshop series - The Soft Skills Circle (November 2021 - February 2022) and the Hands & Lands Sessions (June - August 2022).



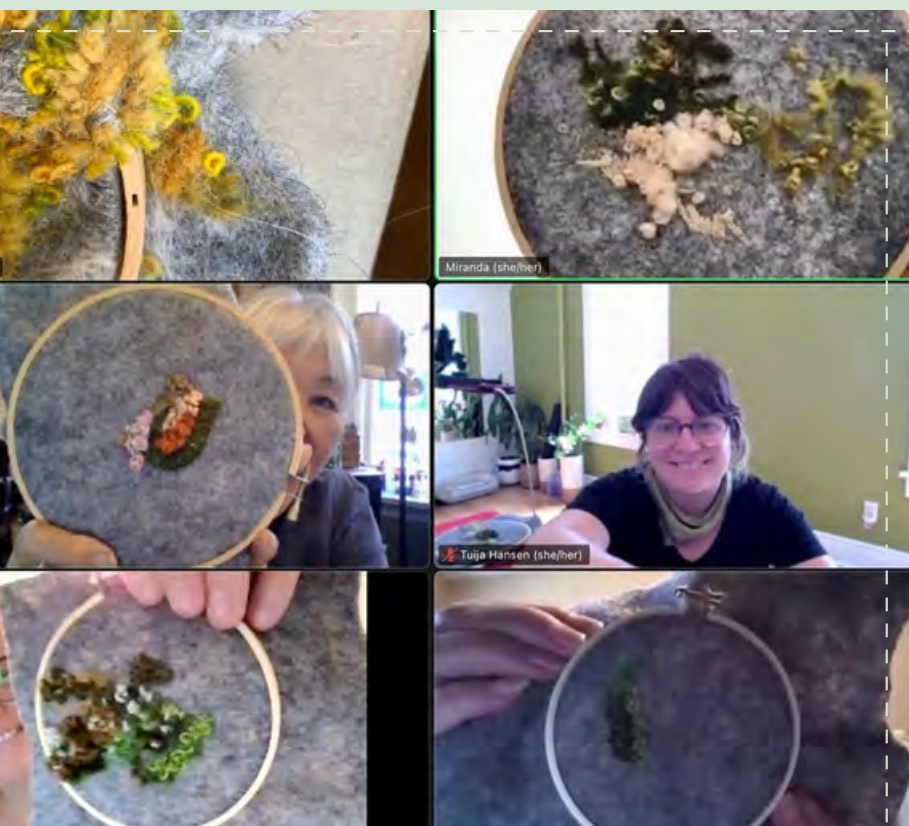
THE SOFT SKILLS CIRCLE

In collaboration with several artist mentors & collaborators (including Eleanor Albanese, Michael Burt, Elizabeth Creith, Mireille Gagnon Moes, Sharon Hamlin, Sharon Hunter, Neslihan Memigüven, Lisa Meschino and Josie Weir) to bring free skill-building workshops highlighting skills in art-making, craft and mindfulness to multi-generational participants. The Soft Skills Circle celebrated healthy aging in community, as well as several key goals of the Social Fabric Project, in artful, heartfelt ways. Together, we hosted 8 workshops between November and February for 52 unique participants of all ages; created 158 unique participation opportunities; and curated, packed and delivered more than 160 artmaking kits. We are grateful to the New Horizons for Seniors Program for funding the Soft Skills Circle project.



THE HANDS & LANDS SESSIONS

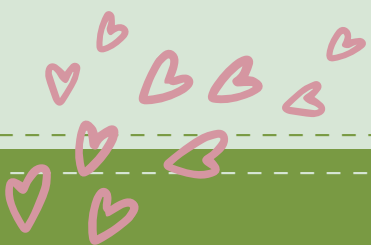
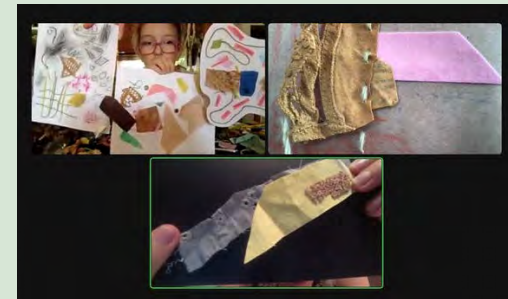
Between June and August, we delivered The Hands & Lands Sessions, a second free workshop series (featuring Dawn Allard, Mireille Gagnon Moes, Tuija Hansen, Jamie Oshkabewisens and Patricia Winter) including 5 public skill-building workshops connecting craft-based community artists with multigenerational participants to share and celebrate regional craft traditions and collaboratively create new works, while exploring and supporting key goals, themes and material concerns of the Social Fabric Project. Together, we hosted 34 unique participants of all ages; created 70 participation opportunities; and curated, packed and delivered more than 100 artmaking kits. We are grateful to the Ontario Arts Council's Craft Projects Program for their support of the Hands & Lands Workshop Series.





CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING

Following a limited children's programming pilot project developed and delivered in Summer 2021, we launched a year-long series of free seasonal programming - The Seasons & Senses Program - for children ages 5 to 10 in Fall 2021. Sessions focused, season-by-season, on artful activation of all five senses, and registrants were provided with curated, hand-packed art kits of materials to spark their creative curiosity. Together, with the company of guest artists, we reflected on our connections to the land, the season at hand, and each other through art-making techniques, movement activities, music and more. We are grateful to have received the support of the Canada Post Community Foundation for this program, which created 37 participation opportunities for 20 unique participants over 24 sessions.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH



Throughout the year, the Thinking Rockers travel far and wide, hosting outreach booths that both show and tell about our work - the best way we've found to share it! Along with putting faces to the name, our tables offer organizational and project information; dates of upcoming programs; email and newsletter sign-ups; give-away items designed with community; and chances for folks to participate in current activities. We hosted outreach & mending booths at events across the region, and are thankful to our project partners and hosts, 49th Apparel (Sault Ste. Marie) and Centre Francophone Sault-Ste-Marie; the St. Joseph Island Lions Club (Hilton Beach); AlgomaTrad (Richards Landing/Desbarats); and the Town of Thessalon.



CELEBRATING OUR NEW SPACE

In August 2021, we moved into the front of the building at 199 Main Street, Thessalon where we've been based since 2016. Since then, we have worked to make this house a home for the Thinking Rockers and our communities. Open Houses open our doors and our heARTs - combining exhibitions of works made with community, with show-and-tell conversations about our artful social change work, and invitations for folks to join in!



OUR FIRST OPEN HOUSE

We excitedly hosted our inaugural Open House on August 20th, featuring drop-in artmaking, an exhibition of Social Fabric works created to date, and - supported by words from Algoma-Manitoulin MPP Michael Mantha - publicly acknowledged the support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Government of Ontario's Community Building Fund.



MAKING THINGS...

We've got several Social Fabrics in development - including the Patchwork of Place, the Surfacing the Sault banner, and a new Gathering Quilt!



...AND MAKING THINGS HAPPEN!

- Developed and implemented COVID-19 re-opening plans, policies and procedures
- Aligned bylaws & articles of incorporation with the new Ontario Nonprofit Corporations Act (ONCA)
- Recognised as a Living Wage Employer by the Ontario Living Wage Network (OLWN)
- Created operating reserve
- Invited to the advisory committee for Ontario Nonprofit Network's Decent Work for Racial Justice, Truth & Reconciliation and Reciprocity in the Nonprofit Sector project
- Partnered with Prologue Performing Arts (Algoma Arts Education Research Project) and Myths & Mirrors Community Arts (Community Arts Mentorship Program for BIPOC Artists)
- Presented at the Ontario Arts Council's (OAC) Raising our Collective Voice Provincial Gathering, and the International Centre of Arts for Social Change's (ICASC) Art for Social Change NOW National Gathering
- Transitioned Succession Planning into a multi-year, ongoing Strategic Planning Process
- Hosted 57 events in total, and created 963 participation opportunities in 2021-22

AUDITOR'S REPORT

REVENUES	2022	2021
Earned	7,161	2,192
Partner	15,450	13,240
Private	22,500	0
Government	225,574	252,407
In-Kind	13,030	3,650
TOTAL REVENUE	283,715	271,489

EXPENSES	2022	2021
ARTISTIC		
Artistic fees/salaries	87,592	99,085
Production fees/salaries	73,448	45,796
Project/production costs	24,968	10,593
Outreach & promotion	6,770	3,880
TOTAL ARTISTIC	192,778	159,357

EXPENSES	2022	2021
OPERATING		
Operating fees/salaries	56,738	54,578
Space & facilities	14,967	7,068
Professional fees	8,292	8,344
Office & Administration	13,539	17,532
TOTAL OPERATING	93,536	87,522
TOTAL EXPENSE	286,314	246,876

Excess of revenues over expenses	(2,599)	24,613
Reserves, beginning of year	51,444	---
Reserves, end of year	48,845	---

PREPARED BY JOE RUSCIO PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION - MARCH 20, 2023



ACKNOWLEDGING OUR COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT

Staff & Volunteers

Abir AbouelSaadat
Eleanor Albanese
Dawn Allard
Arlene Ash
Goldie Barzan
Bimikawe
Crystal Bossio
Brenda & Bob Bouchard
Jessica Bouchard
Miranda Bouchard
Michael Burt
Jon Cada
Betty Carpick
Matt Ceolin
Elizabeth Creith
Marly Day
Hilary Evans
Mireille Gagnon Moes
Sharon Hamlin
Tuija Hansen
Ahmed Hegazy
Katie Huckson
Alicia Hunt
Sharon Hunter
Laura Mayer
Krista McCracken
Quinn Meawasige
Neslihan Memiguven
Lisa Meschino
Isabelle Michaud
Hannah Morningstar

Arlette Ngung
Pat O'Gorman
Gerard Sagassige
Katina Schell
Julie Schryer
Áine Schryer-O'Gorman
Jamie Oshkabewisens
Emily-Jane Oskaboose-
Meawasige
Cassandra Spade
Kimberly Pelletier
Samm Pine-Bennett
Bob Przybyla
Josie Weir
Ann Marie Wierzbicki
Patricia Wynter

Donors & Supporters

Dawn Allard
Bob & Brenda Bouchard
Miranda Bouchard & Matt Ceolin
Elizabeth Creith
Kristen Gauthier
Norma LeBlanc
Chris Lee
Isabelle Michaud
Catherine Moeller
Arlette Ngung
Bob Przybyla
Susan Singleton
Kim Slone
Peter Welles
Daryl Wier & 49th Apparel

Partners

49th Apparel
Algoma Community Foundation
AlgomaTrad
Algoma University
ArtBridges/ToileDesArts
CatalystsX / The Northern Lights
Collaborative
The City of Sault Ste. Marie
Ermatinger-Clergue National Historic Site
Fringe North
The International Centre of Art for Social Change
Jumblies Theatre + Arts
The Klub
Mass Culture
Myths and Mirrors Community Arts
NORDIK Institute
Ontario Nonprofit Network
Ontario Trillium Foundation
Prologue Performing Arts - Prologue
arts de la scène
Sault Community Career Centre
Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre
SKETCH
Thessalon First Nation
Thessalon Public Library
The Town of Thessalon
Friends of Wharncliffe Community Hall &
Citizens Committee

Annual Report

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Funders

- Canada Council for the Arts |
- Conseil des arts du Canada
- Canada Post Community Foundation
- Canadian Red Cross
- The City of Sault Ste. Marie
- The Department of Canadian Heritage
- The Government of Canada
- The New Horizons for Seniors Program
- Ontario Arts Council -
- Conseil des arts de l'Ontario
- Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Government of Ontario
- Young Canada Works



**Canada Council
for the Arts**

**Conseil des arts
du Canada**



**Canadian
Red Cross**



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Community
Foundation**

**Ontario
Trillium
Foundation**



**Fondation
Trillium
de l'Ontario**



**New
Horizons
for Seniors
Program**



**ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
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an Ontario government agency
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

Ontario



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