



A MESSAGE FROM OUR ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

AANII! BONJOUR! HELLO!

We continued to emerge and balance in 2022-23, thanks to the efforts of our dedicated artistic and staff team members, volunteers, community partners and participants!

Building on our pandemic learning and experiences, and supported by community feedback, we returned - in a big way! - to in-person programs, hosting all-ages Drop-Ins across Algoma and launching our new Communi-Bee program. We also continued hybrid programs, including the *A Stitch in Time* skill-building workshop series, and our beloved Making Nights.

With the assistance of two wonderful summer students, we traveled across Algoma in July and August, hosting outreach and artmaking booths to share the word about our work. We hosted two Open House events at our programming space in Thessalon, TRHQ, and welcomed visitors into an exhibition of our Social Fabric works created to date.

In partnership with NORDIK Institute, we launched *In Service of our Stories*, a community-based research project that will champion the important work by, and needs of, community-engaged artists in the North. The project aims to identify potential organizational models that a community arts-focussed arts service organization, or similar supportive entity, might take.

Contents

A Message from our Artistic Director.....	1
About Thinking Rock Community Arts.....	2
Our Year In Review.....	4
Auditor's Report.....	12
Acknowledging our Community.....	13
of Support	

We shifted our strategic planning process to one of ongoing strategic accountability, working to ensure that justice, equity, diversity and inclusion are embedded in everything we do; we nurtured connections and sought new ways to connect with partners and participants; and we implemented our new ONCA-aligned bylaws.

We're excited to share this snapshot of the year with you! I send my deepest thanks to the staff, artists, volunteers, partners, participants, funders, donors and friends of Thinking Rock who continue to support, attend and champion our heARTful work. Miigwetch, Merci, Thank you!

Miranda Bouchard





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), Neyaashiwan (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.





SOCIAL FABRIC

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.

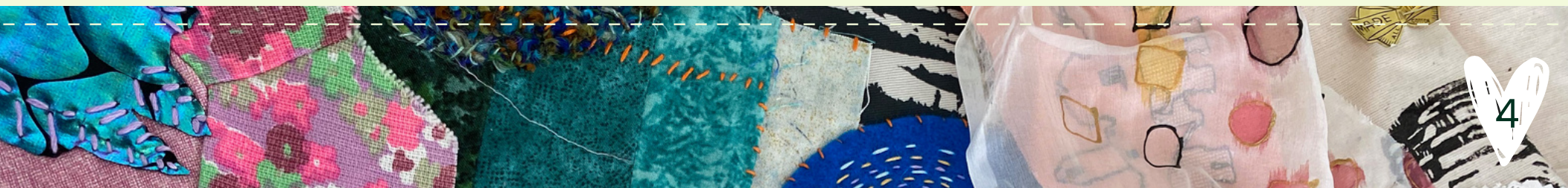
Slowing down with textile-based practice instills a reflective pace in the maker, and creates a connection with the handwork that develops and evolves over time. This echoes the weaving and interweaving of our lives and relationships to each other, which similarly require care, mindfulness, reflection, 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.



SOCIAL FABRIC

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.



MAKING NIGHTS

Launched in Fall 2020, Making Nights are hybrid, co-hosted social spaces where we meet and share - anything from artsy techniques and tricks, to happenings from daily life, and 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. Our 2022-23 program reflected on Social Fabric themes, such as “Giving a Darn”, “HeARTful Strength”, and “Making Traditions.” This year, we hosted 21 Making Nights that created 283 participation opportunities, and we celebrated Making Night #50 on January 31st!

“I’ve met other artists in my community that I wouldn’t have otherwise met.” - 2022-23 programming participant

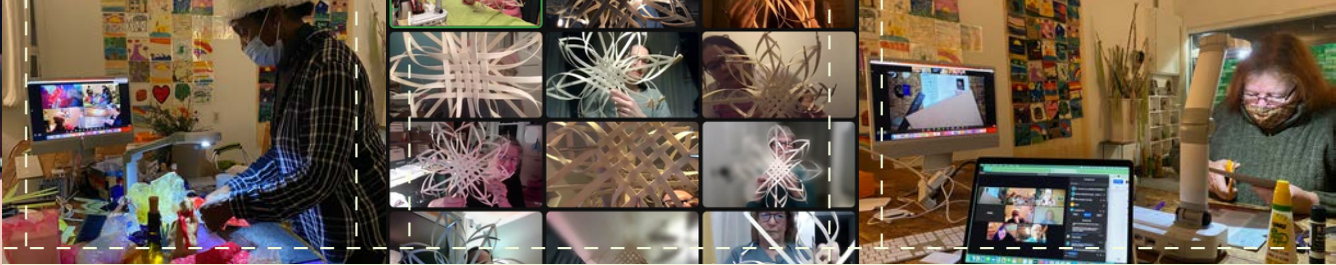
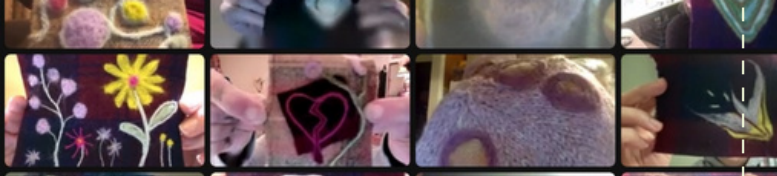


SOCIAL FABRIC DROP-INS

Hosted in community spaces across the North Shore, Social Fabric Drop-Ins welcome intergenerational participants 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 2022-23, we hosted a total of 30 Social Fabric Drop-Ins in partnership with the Thessalon Public Library and the Town of Thessalon’s recreation department, the Ermatinger-Clergue National Historic Site and the Northern Community Centre (Sault Ste. Marie), and Ojibway Park (Ketegaunseebe First Nation). This created 373 participation opportunities for folks across the Algoma District!

“Everyone needs something to be part of and your Programs allow this to happen... keep it going!” - 2022-23 programming participant

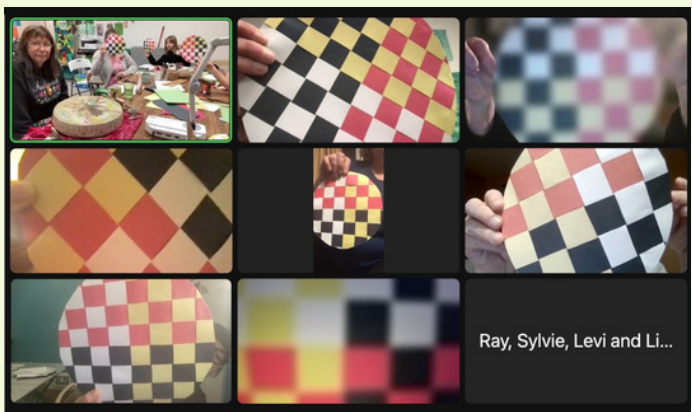




SOCIAL FABRIC WORKSHOPS

Social Fabric workshops are free, low-stakes, hybrid (in-person and online) spaces 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 connections, capacity, knowledge and resiliency. The *A Stitch in Time* series - featuring Elizabeth Creith, Patricia Wynter, Angie Gallop, Betty Carpick, Kimberly Pelletier, Mireille Gagnon Moes, Heather Pepper, Grandmother Marly Day & Gerard Sagassige - shared art-making, craft and mindfulness with multi-generational participants. Altogether, we hosted 10 workshops creating 184 participation opportunities! We are grateful to the New Horizons for Seniors Program for funding the Stitch in Time series.

ELDERS CIRCLES



We strive to work closely with Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers to ensure that our creative community-building work respects, observes and upholds cultural protocols. This year, we hosted circles with our long-time mentors and friends, Grandmother Marly Day (Genaabaajing) and Elder Gerard Sagassige (Curve Lake/Genaabaajing), reflecting on key Social Fabric themes of interweaving and mending in relation to traditional teachings - especially the seven Grandfather teachings, working with spirit, and the notion of reconciliation. In 2022-23, we were honoured to host a circle each with Marly and Gerard.

*"Broadening my understanding of how we as physically embodied sentience can interact with spirit through creativity."
- 2022-23 programming participant*



COMMUNI-BEES

Inspired by working bees of old, Communi-Bee sessions call together folks of all ages, nations, identities, backgrounds and abilities to join us in caring for and completing community-created Social Fabric works-in-process. The stories that emerge around our working table nurture connectedness and creativity that truly craft community and celebrate the magic of collaborative work. We launched Communi-Bees in June 2023, hosting three sessions over the summer and fall, and fostering 82 participation opportunities

"I looked forward to these workshops as if I were meeting up with old friends. The sense of community was felt from the very beginning." - 2022-23 programming participant





OPEN HOUSES



Since moving into the storefront space at 199 Main Street, Thessalon in 2021, we've hosted a number of programs and worked to transform it into a multi-purpose creative studio, gathering and working space. In 2022-23, we also hosted two public Open House events, one coinciding with Thessalon Community Days (complete with a lemonade stand!) and the second marking our year-end exhibition and staff evaluation. It feels wonderful to welcome folks in, share what we've been making together, host meaningful conversations about community, and invite more participation.

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 the community; and chances for folks to participate in current activities.



One of our favourite outreach booths of Summer 2023, in Blind River, connected us with friends both new and well-known, who shared some of their pandemic experiences along with their dreams for community mending. Some folks added to our Gathering Quilt, and offered insight we'll carry as the Social Fabric project moves onwards. We treasure these opportunities for connective conversations, and encourage you to visit our table when you see us out and about!

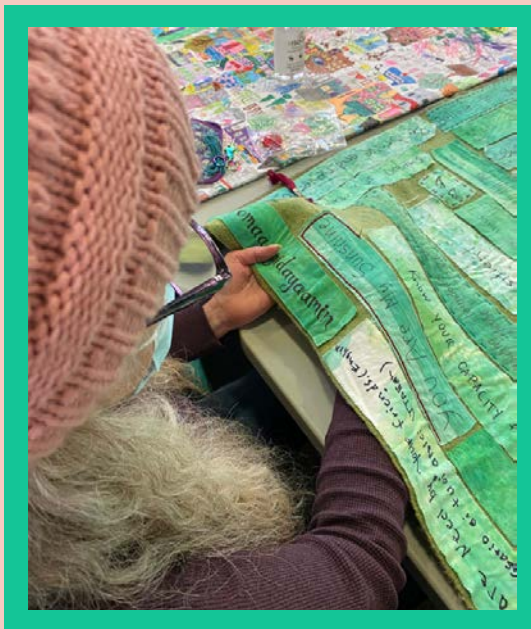




IN SERVICE OF OUR STORIES

In Service of our Stories is a continuation of the work begun between 2018-20 through The Story of our Stories (SOOS) Regional Community-Engaged Research Project, which brought together 30 community-engaged artists from across Northern Ontario to surface the challenges and opportunities they faced in their vital work, and better understand the support, research and policy that might help to make the work easier and more sustainable.

Working in partnership, Thinking Rock Community Arts and NORDIK Institute will research and identify, through a literature review and stakeholder consultations, what a potential organizational model might be for a Northern, community engaged arts-focussed Arts Service Organization (ASO) or similar body.





MAKING THINGS...



We've got several Social Fabrics in development - including (L to R, T to B) our evolving UFO Project, Mending List Blanket, and Surfacing the Sault Artifacts!



...AND MAKING THINGS HAPPEN!

- Recruited three new members to Thinking Rock Community Arts' Board of Directors
- Continued as part of the advisory committee for Ontario Nonprofit Network's Decent Work for Racial Justice, Truth & Reconciliation and Reciprocity in the Nonprofit Sector project
- Provided consultancy services for The KLUB (strategic planning and organisational development consultancy), AlgomaTrad (project evaluation), and partnered with HEARTERRA (community patching and mending workshops)
- Transitioned Strategic Planning process into one of ongoing Strategic Accountability
- Hosted 77 events in total, and created 1100+ participation opportunities, in 2022-23

AUDITOR'S REPORT

REVENUES	2023	2022
Earned	1,646	5,861
Partner	1,000	15,450
Private	0	22,500
Government	183,041	225,574
Donations	2,132	1,300
In-Kind	4,630	13,030
TOTAL REVENUE	192,449	283,715

EXPENSES	2023	2022
ARTISTIC		
Artistic fees/salaries	75,524	87,592
Production fees/salaries	55,633	73,298
Project/production costs	13,009	20,317
Outreach & promotion	1,743	6,770
Travel	1,245	4,801
TOTAL ARTISTIC	147,154	192,778

EXPENSES	2023	2022
OPERATING		
Operating fees/salaries	23,864	56,738
Space & facilities	16,838	14,967
Professional fees	10,706	8,292
Office & Administration	10,582	13,539
TOTAL OPERATING	61,990	93,536
TOTAL EXPENSE	209,144	286,314

Excess of revenues over expenses	(16,695)	(2,599)
Reserves, beginning of year	48,845	51,444
Reserves, end of year	32,150	48,845

ACKNOWLEDGING OUR COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT

Staff & Volunteers

Goldie Barzan
Crystal Bossio-Vine
Brenda & Bob Bouchard
Craig Bouchard
Hal & Liz Bouchard
Jess Bouchard
Miranda Bouchard
Amy Boyer
Jon Cada
Betty Carpick
Matt Ceolin
Elizabeth Creith
Grandmother Marly Day
Hilary Evans
Mireille Gagnon Moes
Angie Gallop
Cassidy Graham
Gord Graham
Lily Graham
Anne Heubi

Katie Huckson
Alicia Hunt
Mary Kline
Cynthia McCutcheon
Lisa Meschino
Krista McCracken
Emily Oskaboose-Meawasige
Gracie-Mae Morden
Gerard Sagassige
Kyenna Sanders
Katina Schell
Áine Schryer-O'Gorman
Robin Sutherland
Kimberly Pelletier
Heather Pepper
Linda Phillips
Samm Pine-Bennett
Bob Przybyla
Ann Marie Wierzbicki
Anna Wilson
Patricia Wynter

Annual Report

Original concept & design - Cassandra Spade
Additional design, copy & edits - Emily Oskaboose-Meawasige & Miranda Bouchard
Photography - Miranda Bouchard, Hilary Evans, Alicia Hunt, Samm Pine-Bennett, Adrienne Marcus Raja,
Hannah Morningstar, Áine Schryer-O'Gorman, Cassandra Spade, Robin Sutherland, Anna Wilson & others

Donors & Supporters

Anonymous Donors
Bob & Brenda Bouchard
Matt Ceolin
Elizabeth Creith
Mireille Gagnon Moes
Mana Goodfellow
Ruth Howard
Jumblies Theatre + Arts
Erin Kitchen
Isabelle Michaud
Northern Credit Union
Heather Pepper
Linda Phillips
Dagmar Plenk
Bob Przybyla
Jacqueline Tett
Peter Welles
Ann Marie Wierzbicki
Anna Wilson
Ashley Young & The Timber
Village Museum

Partners

49th Apparel
4Elements Living Arts
Algoma Fibre to Fabric
Festival
AlgomaTrad
Algoma University
Artbridges/ToileDesArts

GIGANAWENINDIMIN

CatalystsX / The Northern Lights

Collaborative
The City of Sault Ste. Marie
The Creative Basket
Creative Industries
Ermatinger-Clergue National
Historic Site
Fringe North
The International Centre of Art for
Social Change
Jumblies Theatre + Arts
Ketegaunseebee First Nation
Public Library
The Klub
Mass Culture
Myths & Mirrors Community Arts
Near North Mobile Media Lab
NORDIK Institute
The Northern Community Centre
Prologue Performing Arts -
Prologue arts de la scène
The Sault Community Career
Centre
Shabby Motley
Shingwauk Residential Schools
Centre
SKETCH Working Arts
Thessalon First Nation
Thessalon Public Library
Timber Village Museum
The Town of Thessalon
Friends of Wharncliffe Community
Hall & Citizens Committee



Funders

The Algoma Community Foundation
 Canada Council for the Arts |
 Conseil des arts du Canada
 The City of Sault Ste. Marie
 The Government of Canada
 The New Horizons for Seniors
 Program
 Niigaaniin Services & Mamaweswen /
 The North Shore Tribal Council
 Ontario Arts Council -
 Conseil des arts de l'Ontario
 Ontario Trillium Foundation and
 the Government of Ontario



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des arts
du Canada

NIIGAANIIN



Ontario
Trillium
Foundation



Fondation
Trillium
de l'Ontario



New
Horizons
for Seniors
Program



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO

an Ontario government agency
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

Ontario



**ALGOMA
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**

Canada

THINKING ROCK COMMUNITY ARTS



199 Main Street
P.O. Box 29
Thessalon, ON. P0R 1L0
(705) 542-1100

✉ info@thinkingrock.ca
🌐 www.thinkingrock.ca
📷 @thinkingrockca
📺 @thinkingrockarts

