



April 3, 2019

Régine Cadet, President, Board of Directors  
Jacoba Knaapen, Executive Director  
Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts  
401 Richmond St. W., Suite 350  
Toronto, ON M5V 3A8

Dear Ms. Cadet and Ms. Knaapen,

Thank you for your letter of March 12, 2019 regarding issues of regional and cultural equity. As we have discussed with you over the past few months, we share your desire to ensure that Toronto artists and arts organizations benefit fully from the Canada Council's funding programs. We believe this is possible, particularly through the actions we are planning and undertaking in collaboration with municipal and provincial partners. Indeed, we are fully committed to this work, and are pleased to see early positive signs of change.

The Council is Canada's national public arts funder, and is an arm's-length institution of the government. Our programs are nationally competitive and, to a great extent, peer-assessed, as we believe this is the best way to ensure that we are accountable and transparent.

The Council makes investments and provides grants to artists and arts organizations based on demand, in accordance with the applications we receive. There are no predetermined envelopes by discipline, province or region. Not unlike other provincial and municipal arts funders, the Council's funding decisions are based on the recommendations of peers, against published program criteria. While we analyse grant distribution across the country against indicators such as the artistic and cultural labour force of a given province or city, funding decisions are made on the basis of the quality and quantity of applications we receive. The Council's 2016-2021 Strategic Plan has four clear, high-level commitments, which are:

1. **Increasing the support** to artists, collectives and organizations striving for artistic excellence and greater engagement in the arts by an increasingly diverse public. This involves creating a 50/50 balance between core and project funding, as well as allocating 25% of the Council's new funds to first-time recipients.
2. Amplifying the quality, scale and sharing of Canadian art through digital technology. This involves investing \$88.5M through the **Digital Strategy Fund**.
3. Renewing the relationship between Indigenous artists, and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences through a commitment to **triple the Council's support to Indigenous creation**.
4. Raising the international profile of Canadian art and artists, in part through the **doubling of the Council's support for international activities**.

The Council's investments align with our longstanding commitment to the principle of equity. In the context of the doubling of our budget between 2016 and 2021, the Council is using targeted strategic funds for specific equity-seeking groups – namely artists and organizations representing artists who are Deaf and disabled artists, culturally diverse, and official language minority communities. These are used to ensure that our funding reaches groups that face systemic biases or discrimination in the wider society. As one of the most diverse cities in the country, Toronto-based artists benefit from these kinds of strategic measures. In 2017-18, 29 culturally diverse and Deaf and disability arts organizations in Toronto received \$3.0M in core (ongoing, operational) funding, an investment that will continue over the next several years, helping these organizations to scale up their impact in their communities, locally, nationally and internationally.

As stated above, the majority of the Council's funding decisions are based on peer assessment. In composing our peer assessment committees, the Council strives for a diversity of voices – not only by region, but also of factors such as artistic practice, professional experience, gender, cultural diversity, age, official language, Deafness and/or disability, and the participation of Indigenous peoples. We are constantly monitoring the composition of these committees and recruiting new peers to bring their perspectives and expertise to the table. Artists and arts professionals who accept the responsibility of sitting on a peer assessment committee are charged to assess all applications fairly against the published program criteria. They are specifically requested not to play the role of “advocate” – whether for a region or an aesthetic perspective. Program Officers are charged with facilitating and overseeing this process, ensuring that all applications are treated fairly, and that peers are not advocating for particular provinces or fields of practice. The Council's Officers have all received mandatory anti-bias training as part of their professional development and we are considering additional ways of supporting peer committees to make fair, unbiased, and sound funding recommendations.

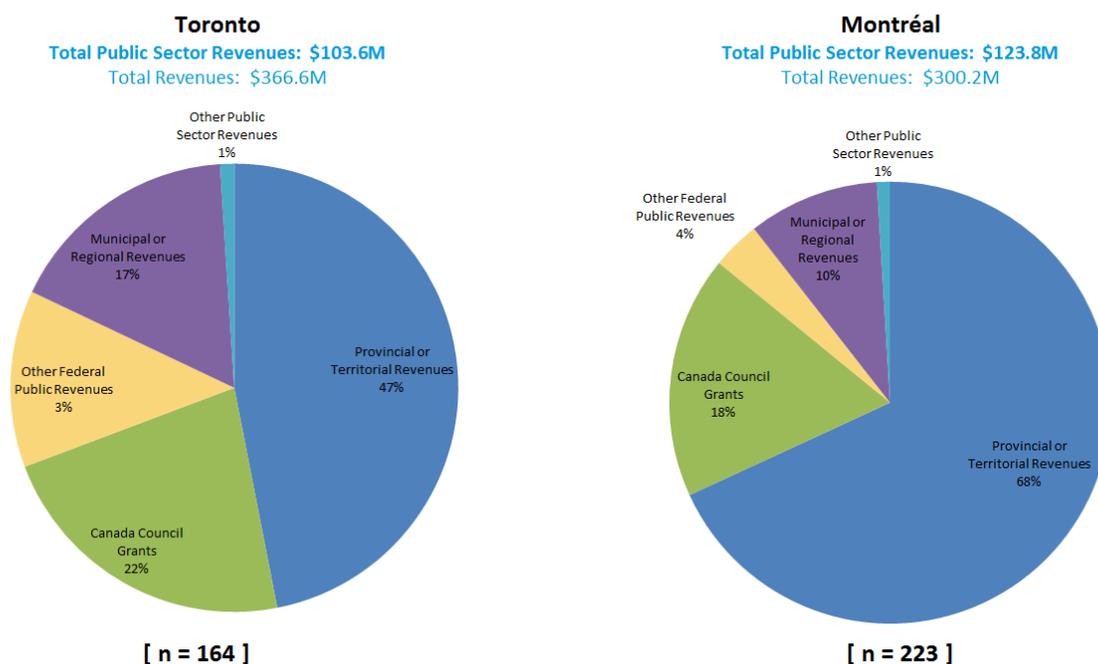
Your letter recommends that the Canada Council move to a system of “multiple equitably weighted scales” rather than a single score. In fact, this has been the case for a long time, and continues under our new funding model programs. Criteria categories are weighted individually and applicants must receive minimum scores in each of the categories to be recommended for a grant, or to receive stable or increased core funding. These weighted categories and minimum scores are transparently stated in all of our published component guidelines and in the portal.

As you know, peers are responsible for scoring applications in the peer assessment committees, and these scores translate into a ranked list of recommended grants. Peers confirm this ranking by signing off at the end of the peer assessment committee meeting. Program Officers follow this ranked order when they propose funding allocations which include consideration of requested amounts, eligible expenses and consistency across multiple peer committees and fields of practice. Program Directors and the Director General, Arts Granting, review all funding allocations. All of this is explained on the Council's [website](#).

Canada Council staff have ongoing, daily conversations with clients across the province of Ontario, including TAPA members, to discuss opportunities for funding through the Council's programs. As one of the most diverse cities in the country, with many young artists, and a strong capacity in digital technology and innovation, we are confident that we will continue to see many success stories from the Toronto community. We are also increasing our focus on outreach and supporting artists and organizations to better understand our programs and criteria and to come forward with their requests. You are no doubt aware of the recently launched [New and Early Career](#) artist profile designed specifically to reach the next wave of artists.

The Canada Council for the Arts is only one part of the arts funding ecosystem in this country, which, in addition to public funding at the municipal, provincial and federal levels, also includes private funding and earned revenues. As such, our investment is only one part of the overall funding portrait. For example, even when looking at public funding of core-funded arts organizations (i.e. those receiving ongoing operating funding), the contribution of the federal level funding partner is less than the overall contribution of the province, which plays a significant role in building the capacity of these organizations. Below is a comparison of CADAC data on public sector revenues for organizations receiving Canada Council grants in Toronto and Montreal in 2016-17. This illustrates the proportions and the differences in the public funding ecosystem – and highlights the fact that that Canada Council funding as a proportion of public sector revenues for these organizations is less in Montreal than in Toronto, in large part due to the greater contribution by the provincial funder in Quebec.

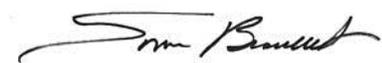
**Breakdown of 2017-18 Public Sector Revenues  
of Canada Council Funded Organizations Receiving Core Grants**



It will take time to change historic trends. The Council is working very closely with the Ontario Arts Council, City of Toronto, Toronto Arts Council and other partners to develop outreach activities to encourage more and high quality applications from Toronto and Ontario. We see great opportunities, particularly for next generation and culturally diverse artists, as well as for those individuals and organizations interested in exploring the potential of technology to expand the reach of their artistic creations. Canada Council staff will be in Toronto, this coming June, both in the downtown and outlying communities to conduct outreach and training sessions on how to apply for our funding programs. This effort, in partnership with Toronto-based arts funders is a follow-up to an outreach tour we undertook in the fall, and represents the Council's ongoing commitment to building capacity in Toronto and Ontario.

We appreciate your interest and engagement in building awareness of the Council's funding programs and opportunities, and we look forward to continuing to work with our partners in Ontario. We invite you to support our efforts, and encourage your membership to also continue your advocacy for strong support for the arts at all levels in the province.

Sincerely,



Simon Brault, O.C., O.Q.  
Director and CEO  
Canada Council for the Arts



Director General, Arts Granting Programs  
Canada Council for the Arts

cc: Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada  
Hon. Pablo Rodriguez, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism  
Hon. Mélanie Joly, Minister of Official Languages and Tourism All Toronto MPs  
Simon Brault, Director & CEO, Canada Council for the Arts  
Pierre Lassonde, Chair, Canada Council for the Arts and all Board members  
Michelle Chawla, Director General, Strategy and Public Affairs, Canada Council for the Arts  
Kate Cornell & Frédéric Julien, Co-Chairs, Canadian Arts Coalition  
Boomer Stacey, Interim Executive Director, PACT (Professional Association of Canadian Theatres)  
Nancy Matthews, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport  
Kevin Finnerty, Assistant Deputy Minister, Culture Division, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport  
Peter Caldwell, Director and CEO, Ontario Arts Council  
Rosslyn Jacob Edwards, Chair, PASO-OPSA Coalition  
Charles Smith, Chair, Ontarians for the Arts  
His Worship Mayor John Tory, City of Toronto  
All City of Toronto Councilors  
Mike Williams, Director, Economic Development and Culture Division, City of Toronto

Patrick Tobin, Director, Arts and Culture Services, City of Toronto  
Claire Hopkinson, Director and CEO, Toronto Arts Council  
TAPA Membership