

# Community Arts Council of Vancouver

## Strategic Plan 2023-2026

Community Arts Council of Vancouver (CACV) is North America's first Arts Council and has been supporting local artists since 1946. We advance our vision in Vancouver through community arts programs that address social exclusion and accessibility to creative opportunities, Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships, sustainability in the arts sector, and our collective resilience in the face of growing social and environmental challenges. This Strategic Plan for 2023-2026 outlines our intentions for building recognition of CACV in our communities, deepening our relationships with arts and community organizations, expanding supportive programming, and strengthening our internal systems to best support our teams.

### **Goal 1: Build Brand Recognition**

*Strengthen CACV's brand recognition to foster a deeper understanding of our role in the community, while honoring our rich history and legacy.*

### **Goal 2: Deepen Relationships with Arts and Community Organizations**

*Deepen and expand CACV's relationships with arts and community organizations to foster collaboration and expand our collective impact.*

### **Goal 3: Expand Supportive Programming to Artists**

*Expand CACV's supportive programming for artists, providing them with opportunities, resources, and a platform for growth and success.*

### **Goal 4: Expand Organizational and Staff Capacity**

*Strengthen the capacity of CACV and its staff to effectively meet current and future demands and drive sustainable growth.*

## Executive Summary

The Community Arts Council of Vancouver (CACV) is North America's first Arts Council and has been supporting local artists since 1946. We advance our vision in Vancouver through community arts programs that address social exclusion and accessibility to creative opportunities, Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships, sustainability in the arts sector, and our collective resilience in the face of growing social and environmental challenges.

CACV has experienced many transitions through the past 75 years. In its most recent history, the organization moved into the Woodwards building in 2015 and has been led by various dedicated Board, staff and volunteers. The organization is always evolving as the arts climate changes and is moving towards more stable funding with expanded staff, programming, and resources.

In 2020, the pandemic drastically shifted much of the programming and how the Board, staff and volunteers were able to operate. As a small and nimble organization, CACV was able to quickly adjust and slowly grow despite the COVID-19 challenges.

This current phase of the organization is focused on learning to support both internally (board and staff) and externally (community artists).

Developing this strategic plan has grounded us in our community and provided space to dream for the next few years. With the support of Roots & Rivers Consulting, who stewarded the development of our Strategic Plan, we utilized engagement strategies that enabled us to hear from diverse perspectives to inform this process.

In preparation for our strategic planning work, we gathered input from the CACV community through a survey distributed to our mailing list. We heard from 39 community members, including past and current volunteers, VOAF artists, donors, and funding recipients, who shared their reflections about the organization and their hopes for the future. We also gathered insights from our Board and Staff teams through a future-focused survey and 1-1 interviews, to understand our current context and perspectives on the future. Our team built on these insights in our Strategic Planning day, where we gathered for an afternoon of planning and connection.

This Strategic Plan outlines our intentions for building recognition of CACV in our communities, deepening our relationships with arts and community organizations, expanding supportive programming, and strengthening our internal systems to best support our teams.

# Strategic Plan 2023-2026

## Vision

An inclusive, vibrant city alive with community arts.

## Mission

To create opportunities for individuals and organizations to develop community art in Vancouver.

## 2023-2026 Goals and Objectives

### Goal 1: Build Brand Recognition

*Strengthen CACV's brand recognition to foster a deeper understanding of our role in the community, while honoring our rich history and legacy.*

#### Objectives

1.1 Develop a comprehensive communications strategy to position CACV as an organization where artists can seek support and opportunities.

1.2 Build a brand ambassador program to promote CACV in our communities.

1.3 Generate and communicate meaningful stories about the organization.

#### Key Next Steps

- Develop a communications strategy to increase brand awareness and recognition.
  - Update website for accessibility and readability, to effectively communicate how community members can be involved in current initiatives.
  - Identify clear communication channels for our key communities and partners.
- Identify artists and partners interested in taking on an ambassador role.
- Explore rebranding.

#### What Does Success Look Like?

- We have a distinct story that we effectively communicate about who we are and what we do.
- Funders, artists, volunteers, and program attendees know who we are.
- We engage a larger audience in CACV programs.

## Goal 2: Deepen Relationships with Arts and Community Organizations

*Deepen and expand CACV's relationships with arts and community organizations to foster collaboration and expand our collective impact.*

### Objectives

- 2.1 Leverage our position to empower and support grassroots organizations and arts collectives.
- 2.2 Foster partnerships with other organizations to co-design and facilitate programming for artists.
- 2.3 Act as a convener in the arts space to facilitate knowledge sharing, connection, and reciprocity.
- 2.4 Develop a workshop series for local organizers and artists to share in learning and practice.

### Key Next Steps

- Identify areas where joint efforts with arts and community organizations can create a greater impact.
- Develop collaborative projects, initiatives, or events that address shared community needs or advance common goals.
- Seek opportunities for cross-promotion, resource-sharing, and joint grant applications to expand collective impact.

### What Does Success Look Like?

- We act as a producer organization that uplifts other arts organizations and groups.
- We provide community support and referrals to other organizations when we're not the right fit.

## Goal 3: Expand Supportive Programming to Artists

*Expand CACV's supportive programming for artists, providing them with opportunities, resources, and a platform for growth and success.*

### Objectives

- 3.1 Continue to offer accessible and low-barrier programming to artists and community members.
- 3.2 Deliver a regular performance event series for our community to promote community engagement and a space for performing artists to share their practice.

3.3 Explore the feasibility of a publicly accessible physical space through a collaborative model of sharing space.

#### Key Next Steps

- Engage with artists in our community to understand their specific needs, challenges, and aspirations.
- Design and implement a comprehensive program that addresses the identified needs of artists.
- Explore pursuing a “pay what you can” membership model.
- Host internal conversations about CACV’s positionality to host the Reframing Relations program.

#### What Does Success Look Like?

- We have a physical space.
- We have increased our programming and collaborators in our network.
- There’s an increased diversity of people accessing our programming.
- Increase in membership.

### **Goal 4: Expand Organizational and Staff Capacity**

*Strengthen the capacity of CACV and its staff to effectively meet current and future demands and drive sustainable growth.*

#### Objectives

4.1 Solidify internal systems to promote clear workflows.

4.2 Strengthen financial systems and diversify funding sources.

4.3 Strengthen our lens and practices around equity and decolonization across all our programs and policies.

#### Key Next Steps

- Assess operational processes, workflows, and systems to identify bottlenecks and areas for streamlining.
- Identify key competencies and skills required from staff and board to best support CACV.
- Improve the onboarding process for board and staff.

- Engage external consultants to strengthen our equity practices in the organization.
- Strengthen financial analysis and reporting systems.

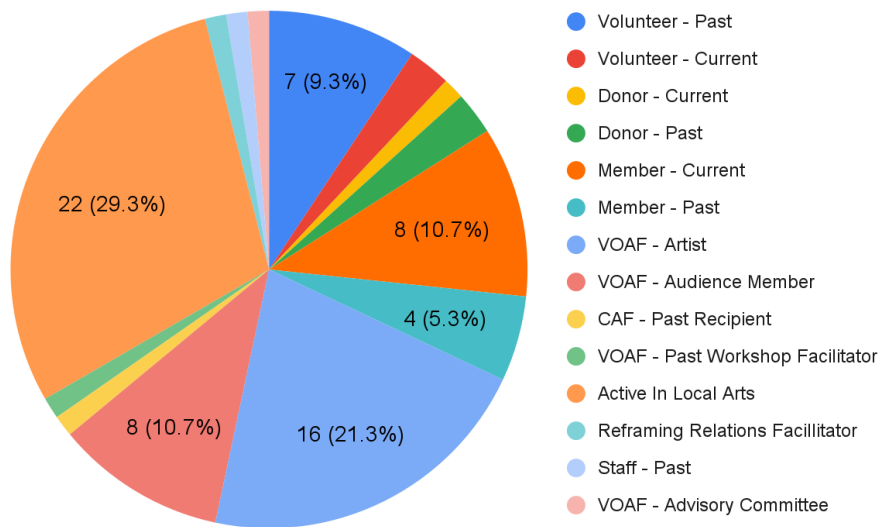
#### What Does Success Look Like?

- Alignment between program needs and staff capacity and resourcing.
- Less staff time spent navigating legacy systems.

## Appendix A: CACV Community Survey Insights

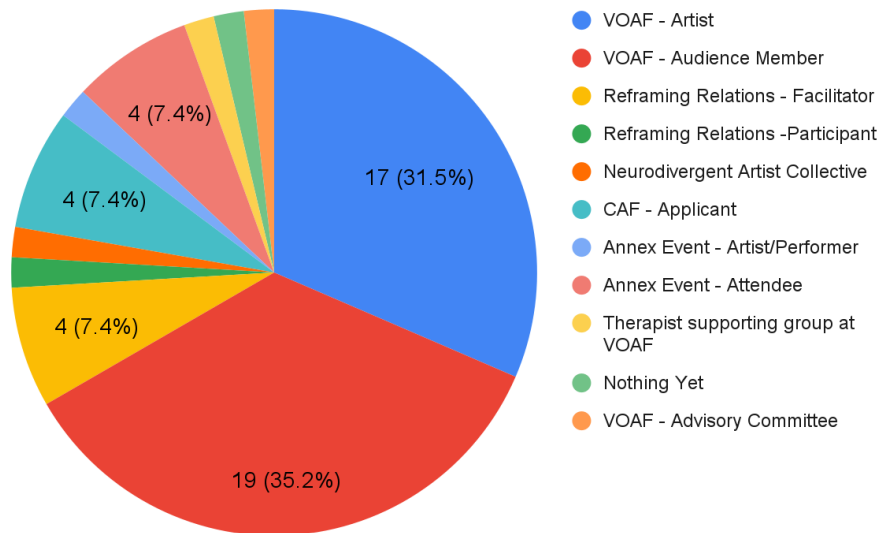
In preparation for our strategic planning work, Roots & Rivers gathered input from the CACV community by distributing a survey to CACV's mailing list. Thirty-nine respondents shared their insights. Below are synthesized responses and key themes from across the engagement.

### Respondent relationship to CACV (39 responses)





## CACV programs or initiatives respondents have engaged with (39 responses)



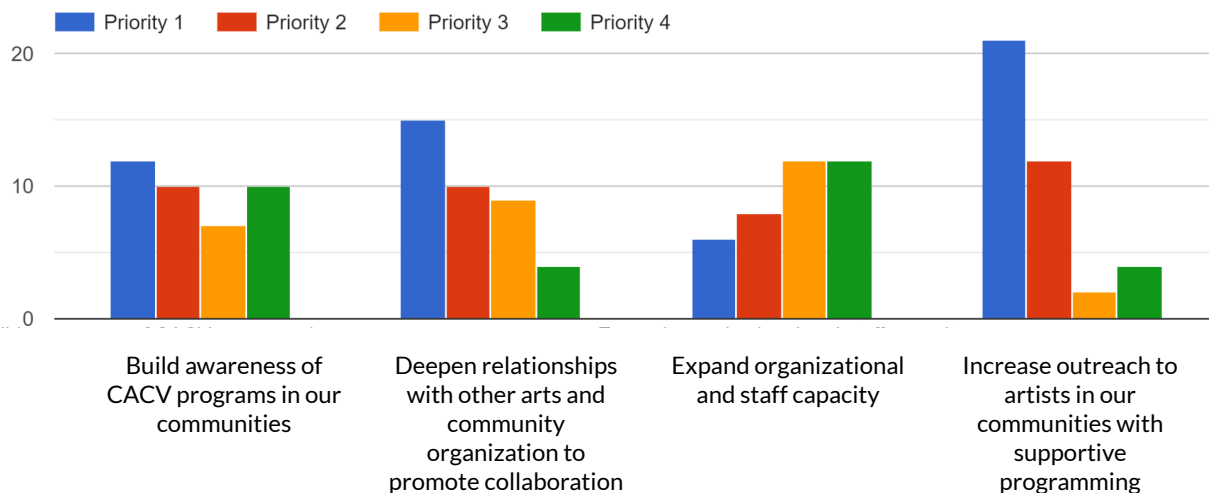
## What keeps you connected to CACV? (37 responses)

- Interest in supporting the arts (6, 16%)
- Newsletter (6, 16%)
- VOAF (5, 13%)
- History of the organization (4, 11%)
- Possibility to participate in exhibitions and/or events as an artist (3, 8%)
- Accessibility of programs (3, 8%)
- Opportunities to connect with other artists (3, 8%)
- Focus on marginalized artists (3, 8%)
- Volunteering (3, 8%)
- Community events (2, 5%)
- Advocacy (2, 5%)
- VAG exhibitions (1, 2%)
- Lack of connection due to lack of updates on Reframing Relations (1, 2%)

In one word, describe the value you feel that CACV brings to community (35 responses)



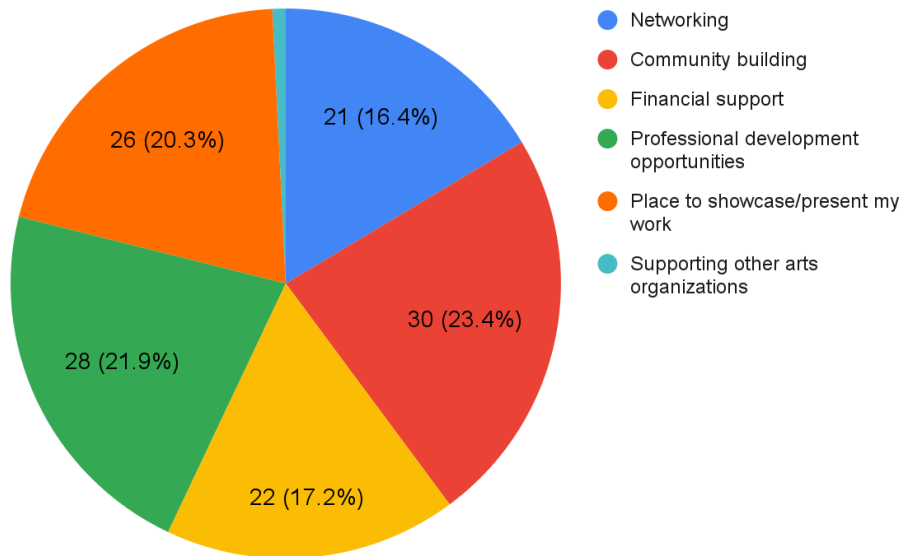
Please rank these priorities from initial consultations with CACV staff and board (35 responses)



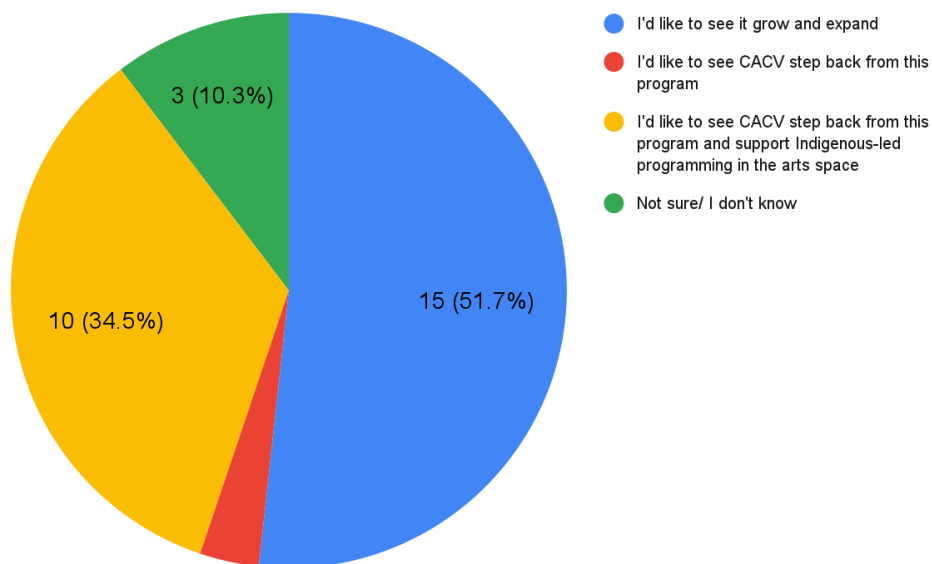
## What is one key area you think CACV should focus on in the next year? (30 responses)

- Exhibition opportunities for artists (4, 13%)
- Relationship/networking events for artists (4, 13%)
- Community outreach (3, 10%)
- Events programming (3, 10%)
- Workshops (2, 6%)
- Partnerships (2, 6%)
- Promotion (2, 6%)
- Grant funding (2, 6%)
- Expanding VOAF(2, 6%)
- Inclusive events (1, 3%)
- Building staff capacity (1, 3%)
- Involving artists in program design (1, 3%)
- Continue to explore viability of a public space (1, 3%)
- Program evaluation (1, 3%)

## Given the current arts landscape and your needs, what offerings would you like to see from CACV? (39 responses)

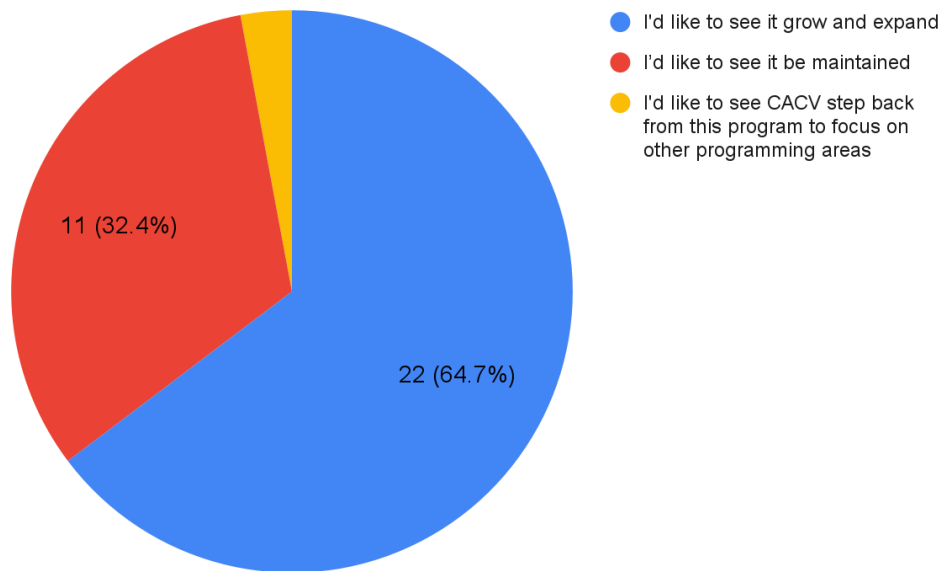


## How would you like to see Reframing Relations evolve over the next 3 years? (39 responses)

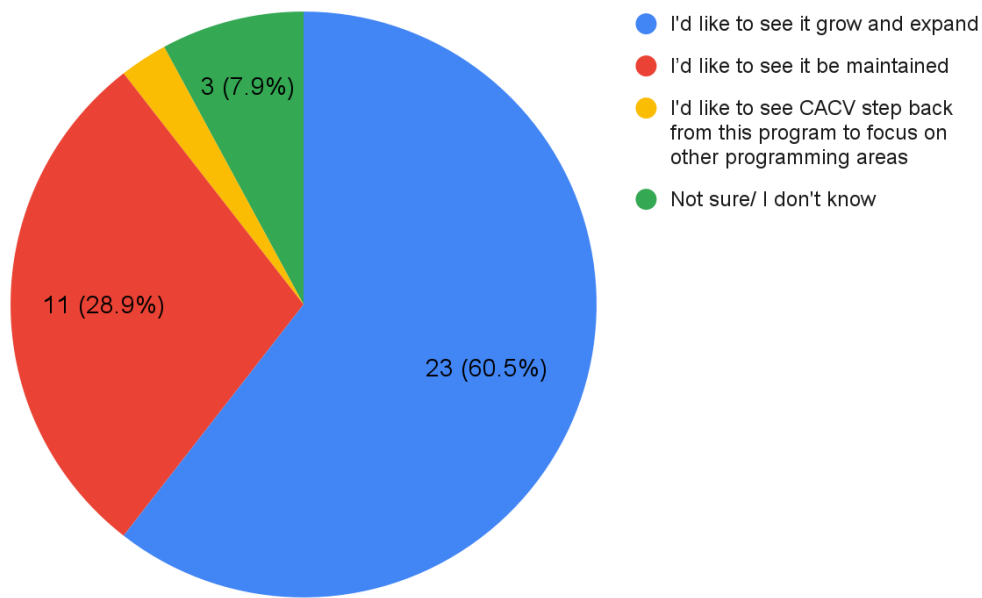


“Other” responses focused on providing programming for artists across identities and supporting Indigenous artists in other ways.

## How would you like to see Vancouver Outsider Arts Festival evolve over the next 3 years? (39 responses)



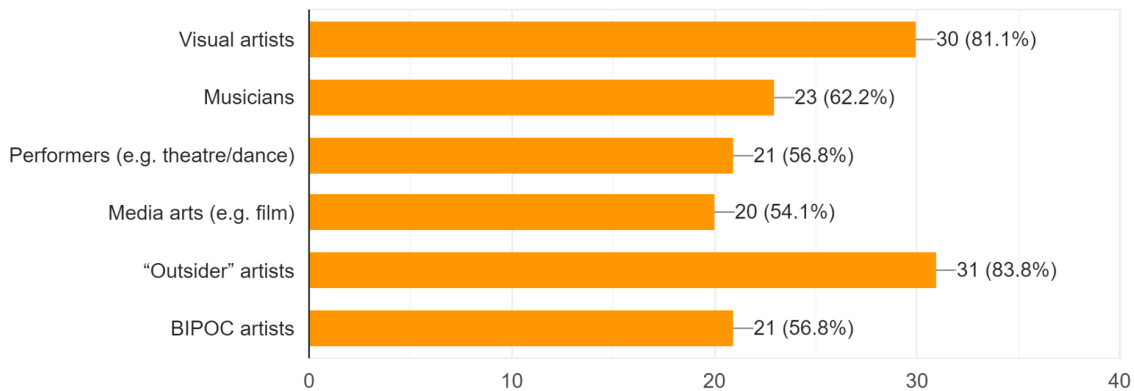
## How would you like to see the Community Arts Fund evolve over the next 3 years? (39 responses)



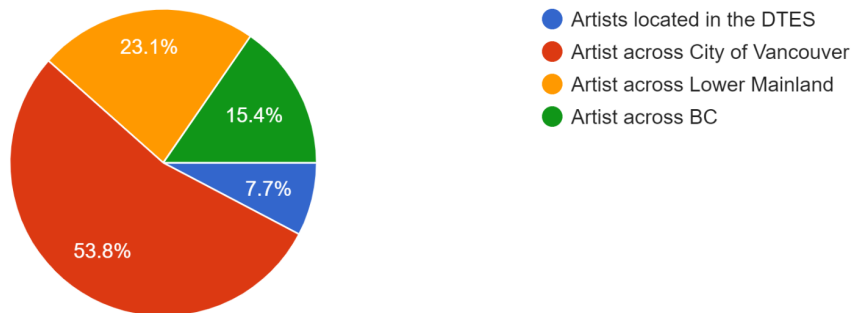
### What is a gap in the arts that you feel CACV can fill? (Ex.programming for musicians, opportunities for artists to showcase their art, or providing a physical space for artists) (32 responses)

- Physical space for artists (10, 31%)
- More opportunities for artists to showcase their art (9, 28%)
- Collaborative exhibitions/events (3, 9%)
- Education and skill building for artists (3, 9%)
- Professional development to move artists into the next stage of their development (3, 9%)
- Leadership opportunities for artists within CACV (2, 6%)
- Financial support for artists (2, 6%)
- Space for quality contemporary art from blind, deaf, special, neurodiverse individuals (1, 3%)
- Advocacy (1,3%)

## What community groups do you feel CACV should serve over the next few years? (37 responses)



## What geographic communities do you feel CACV should serve over the next few years? (39 responses)



## Is there anything else you would like to share around your hopes for the future of CACV? (22 responses)

- Keep up the good works!
- I hope CACV remains funded enough to grow and maintain this fantastic opportunity for marginalized artists.
- expanding exhibition opportunities

- Hope you survive
- Keep up with the great newsletters
- I think there should be support to create small projects that generate funds
- Contemporary Art alternative, new, propositive
- Thank you for your good work
- Funded cooperative space for folks to gather, create, socialize and learn from each other.
- I'd like to see CACV step away from politics based decision making (e.g. gender politics) and concentrate on promoting artists based on their merits.
- CACV is already doing a fantastic job.
- Go big, find a distinctive role, or perhaps realise that the organization is redundant.
- I'm really excited that y'all are taking on the task of receiving community feedback, and reflecting on what you want CACV programming and values to be in the future.
- opportunities for artists in DTES for outreach
- There was a big shift in how i was being engaged as an artist when the leadership change happened, and the lack of space to connect with the other artists, & space for us to lead the direction of the program is lost. Unsure i want to continue w CACV
- My hope is that CACV is successful in securing the first of many permanent facilities throughout BC. together with the required funding to maintain all the programming with room to grow.
- Consider symposia on the health of the arts in vancouver
- expansion of the team, and deeper engagement with COV- CACV could be a stronger bridge between Vancouver and the orgs here.
- I am so thankful for all the support and opportunities that CACV has provided to me in the past and hope to be able to continue to have more exhibits opportunities.
- Build on success, constantly test its principles and capacity, and be unafraid of evolving with the times.