

# ONE VOICE

FOR ARTS + CULTURE

[artsandculturevoice.ca](http://artsandculturevoice.ca)

14 April, 2020

DELIVERED BY EMAIL

Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, PC,  
Prime Minister of Canada

Hon. Chrystia Freeland, PC, MP  
Deputy Prime Minister

Hon. Steven Guilbeault, PC, MP  
Minister of Canadian Heritage

Hon. Bill Morneau, PC, MP  
Minister of Finance

Hon. Melanie Joly, PC, MP  
Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages

Hon. Filomena Tassi, PC, MP  
Minister of Labour

Dear Prime Minister and Ministers:

Thank you for your quick actions to support individuals and organizations across the country as we contend with this infectious disease crisis. You have admirably supported Canadians and organizations, especially our most vulnerable, through measures including the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy and Canadian Emergency Response Benefit. **It is imperative that we now act to help our struggling arts and culture sector where many organizations are facing a threat to their existence today, and all are contending with unprecedented challenges.**

Right now we need the arts more than ever. When we reflect back on this crisis, Canada must feel proud of how we came together as a nation. Canada is a global leader in human rights and compassion; we need artists to keep expressing and exploring this part of our identities and pluralities to help the country unite and heal.

Our working name for this initiative is One Voice for Arts and Culture (OVAC). By way of this letter, we are writing to you today on behalf of Canada's not-for-profit arts and culture organizations. We are actively seeking to organize and expand our membership in every Province and Territory. Our mission is understanding all the diverse members of the arts and culture sector across the country, and of advocating on their behalf. We view our organization and advocacy as complementary to the ongoing work that various Art Service Organizations are undertaking. Together we are seeking to present a single voice and willing partner as we navigate current events together with you.

There is no doubt that in the coming weeks many of the members of our group will face a severe crisis regarding funding. Some may not be able to survive even a short period without emergency relief. Our specific request at this time is to **work directly with the federal government and the elected officials in Parliament to ensure the survival and sustainability of our sector**. We can provide leadership and infrastructure to support this common aim.

We propose that the Federal Government and OVAC enter into purposeful dialogue on the topic of sustainability actions for our sector. Some initial ideas:

- A. We support the creation of equitable **emergency stabilization funding** for organizations that are in the greatest jeopardy, similar to the notion put forward in the Toronto Arts Council's request of \$500+ million;
- B. **Amend the tax rules for charitable donations to incentivize giving** to ameliorate contributed revenues. Potential amendments could include higher tax credits for corporations and individuals or ability to apply current year donations to a prior year;
- C. **Find a way to provide liquidity to not-for-profits**. Many organizations do not qualify for the Canadian Emergency Business Account because their annual payroll is greater than \$1M/yr. At the same time, financial institutions in their underwriting do not ascribe value to pledged donations because gift agreements are not legally binding. Organizations without a permanent collection, or that lease instead of own, do not have hard assets to use as collateral. Through infrastructure such as BDC, financing could be made available to organizations;
- D. **Consider alternative deployments of infrastructure funding**. For example, in addition to building new facilities, find ways to prepay leases, perform upgrades to existing facilities, or other ways to reduce facility costs to reduce ongoing fundraising burdens;
- E. **When the crisis has passed, review the funding formula for organizations in the sector at all scales and increase equitable program funding to help the country heal**. We will come together in celebration with specific programming in recognition of COVID-19 that will also encourage Canadians to be comfortable in crowds again;
- F. **Determine government data needs for decision making about emergency relief**, as well as medium- and longer-term support action needs ; OVAC will support required data gathering;

- G. **OVAC will continue to recruit, dialogue with, and inform the sector** with regular communications on our collective efforts, as well as proactive actions the sector itself can take;
- H. **OVAC will also offer senior professionals as resources** to both government and organizations in our sector in need of support;
- I. **OVAC will work with the federal government and lead a sector-wide strategy to assist during this challenging time.**

As an immediate next step, we would like to propose a discussion in the next week with yourselves and a smaller group of 5-6 representatives from OVAC. Brady Wood has joined our effort as an interim administrative leader; will ask that he coordinate this meeting with you as well as receive and triage correspondence on these matters. He can be reached at brady.wood@gmail.com or +1-647-620-4547.

Thank you for considering this correspondence. We are grateful for your efforts and look forward to collaborating with you to achieve our joint aim — an arts and culture sector that continues to be vibrant for all Canadians and all those who will once again see us as an important destination once this crisis is resolved.

On behalf of OVAC:

Yours sincerely,

---

Brad Keast, Chair  
Museum of Contemporary Art\_Toronto\_Canada

OVAC members in support of this initiative:

<b>Supporting Organization</b>	<b>Home Province</b>	<b>Representative</b>	<b>Position</b>
Contemporary Calgary	Alberta	David Leinster	CEO
Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity	Alberta	Rosemary Thompson	VP Marketing and Development
Southern Alberta Art Gallery	Alberta	Kristy Trinier	Executive Director
Red Deer Museum + Art Gallery	Alberta	Lorna Johnson	Executive Director

Contemporary Art Gallery	British Columbia	Mathew Hyland	Executive Director
Polygon Gallery	British Columbia	Reid Shier	Museum Director
Vancouver Art Gallery	British Columbia	Daina Augaitis	Interim Director
Art Gallery of Greater Victoria	British Columbia	Jon Tupper	Director
Bill Reid Gallery	British Columbia	Allison Andrachuk	Director and CEO
Burrard Arts Foundation	British Columbia	Genevieve Michaels	Program Manager
Museum of Vancouver	British Columbia	Mauro Vescera	CEO
Arts Club Theatre Company	British Columbia	Ashlie Corcoran Peter Cathie White	Artistic Director Executive Director
Arts Umbrella	British Columbia	Paul Larocque	President & CEO
Vancouver Opera	British Columbia	Tom Wright	General Director
Urban Shaman Inc./Urban Shaman Contemporary Aboriginal Art Gallery	Manitoba	Daina Warren	Director
Beaverbrook Art Gallery	New Brunswick	Tom Smart	Director
Owens Art Gallery	New Brunswick	Emily Falvey,	Director
Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre	Northwest Territories	Dr. Scott Marsden	Curator, Museum Collections Culture and Heritage
Art Gallery of Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia	Nancy Noble	Director and CEO
Ross Creek Centre for the Arts	Nova Scotia	Chris O'Neill	Executive Director
The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery	Ontario	Gaëtane Verna	Director and Artistic Director

Toronto Biennial of Art	Ontario	Patrizia Libralato	Executive Director
Theatre Direct	Ontario	Lisa Marie DiLiberto	Artistic Director
Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival	Ontario	Darcy Killeen	Executive Director
Bata Shoe Museum	Ontario	Elizabeth Semmelhack	Creative Director and Senior Curator
Evergreen	Ontario	Will Scott	Chief Advancement Officer
Fixt Point Arts and Media	Ontario	Charles Ketchabaw	Executive Director
OCAD University Onsite Gallery	Ontario	Lisa Deanne Smith	Curator
Art Toronto	Ontario	Mia Nielsen	Executive Director
The Bentway Conservancy	Ontario	David Carey & Ilana Altman	Co-Executive Directors
Hot Docs	Ontario	Brett Hendrie	Executive Director
Canadian Stage	Ontario	Monica Esteves	Executive Director
Crow's Theatre	Ontario	Chris Abraham	Artistic and General Director
Textile Museum of Canada	Ontario	Emma Quin	Executive Director
TO Live	Ontario	Clyde Wagner	Executive Director
Artscape	Ontario	Tim Jones	Chief Executive Officer
Luminato	Ontario	Anthony Sargent	Chief Executive Officer
Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA)	Ontario	Kathleen Bartels	Chief Executive Officer
Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery	Ontario	Shirley Madill	Executive Director
Tapestry Opera	Ontario	Jaime Martino	Executive Director
Native Earth Performing Arts	Ontario	Isaac Thomas	Managing Director
Gallery 1313	Ontario	Phil Anderson	Executive Director

Arts Etobicoke	Ontario	Wendy Rading	Interim Executive Director
Mercer Union	Ontario	Julia Paoli	Director
The Robert McLaughlin Gallery	Ontario	Lauren Gould Cheryl Blackman	CEO Chair
Sketch Working Arts	Ontario	Rudy Ruttimann	Executive Director
DesignTO	Ontario	Jeremy Vandermeij	Executive Director
Gallery TPW - Toronto Photographer's Workshop	Ontario	Asad Raza	Interim Executive Director
Documentary Organization of Canada	Ontario	Michelle van Beusekom	Executive Director
Art Gallery of Northumberland	Ontario	Olinda Casimiro	Executive Director
Cobalt Connects	Ontario	Jeremy Freiburger	Chief Connector and Cultural Strategist
Clay and Paper Theatre	Ontario	David Anderson	Founding Artistic Director
Oakville Galleries	Ontario	Pierre Gagnon	Board Chair
Gardiner Museum	Ontario	Kelvin Browne	Executive Director & CEO
Gallery 44 Centre for Contemporary Photography	Ontario	Alana Traficante	Executive Director
Theatre Aquarius	Ontario	Lorna Zaremba	Executive Director
Indigenous Fashion Week	Ontario	Sage Paul	Artistic Director
Black Artists' Network in Dialogue (BAND)	Ontario	Karen Carter	Co-Founder and Director
Fonderie Darling	Quebec	Caroline Andrieux	Fondatrice et directrice artistique

MOMENTA Biennale de l'image	Quebec	Audrey Genois	Executive Director
Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Québec	Quebec	John Zeppetelli	Director and Chief Curator
Musée d'art de Joliette	Quebec	Jean-François Belisle	Directeur général et conservateur en chef
Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra	Saskatchewan	Mark Turner	Executive Director
Yukon Arts Centre	Yukon	Casey Prescott	CEO
MacBride Museum, Whitehorse	Yukon	Patricia Cunning	Executive Director/Curator

CC: Julie Dzerowicz, MP  
Hon. Jason Kenney  
Hon. Leela Aheer  
Hon. John Horgan  
Hon. Lisa Beare  
Hon. Brian Pallister  
Hon. Cathy Cox  
Hon. Blaine Higgs  
Hon. Bruce Fitch  
Hon. Dwight Ball  
Hon. Bernard Davis  
Hon. Caroline Cochrane  
Hon. R. J. Simpson  
Hon Stephen McNeil  
Hon. Leo A. Glavine  
Hon. Joe Savikataaq  
Hon. David Joanasie  
Hon. Doug Ford  
Hon. Lisa MacLeod  
Hon. Dennis King  
Hon. Matthew MacKay  
Hon. Francois Legault  
Hon. Nathalie Roy  
Hon. Scott Moe  
Hon. Gene Makowsky  
Hon. Sandy Silver  
Hon. Jeanie Dendys