



# 2019-20 Annual Report



The Canadian Network for Arts & Learning  
Le Réseau canadien pour les arts et l'apprentissage

The **Canadian Network for Arts & Learning (CNAL)** envisions a world in which the arts and creativity are recognized as integral to the learning process, both at school and throughout life. By connecting Canada's diverse arts and learning communities, we will increase access to meaningful arts experiences for all Canadians, laying the foundation for social, economic and cultural transformation. Our mission is to unite local, regional and national arts and learning communities in a network for exchange, research and collaboration, cultivating a more creative, innovative and prosperous Canada.

Le **Réseau canadien pour les arts et l'apprentissage** imagine un monde où les arts et la créativité font partie intégrante du processus d'apprentissage à l'école et au long de la vie. Le rapprochement des diverses communautés artistiques d'apprentissage du pays favorise des façons de voir l'éducation artistique en donnant accès à tous les Canadiens et les Canadiennes à des expériences significatives qui contribuent à des transformations sociales, économiques et culturelles. Notre Mission : unir les communautés artistiques d'apprentissage au niveau local, régional et national au sein d'un réseau d'échange, de recherche et de collaboration en vue de prendre part à un Canada plus créatif, innovateur et prospère.

## **THANK YOU TO THIS YEAR'S INCREDIBLE TEAM! MERCI À L'INCROYABLE ÉQUIPE DE CETTE ANNÉE!**

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Our mission to unite and support the arts and learning sector assumed particular urgency over the past year as the impact of pandemic restrictions disrupted the plans of artists and educators across the country. Many programs were cancelled outright while others have been retooled to connect with participants online.

How fortunate we are to have access to communications technology at a time when in-person gatherings are not possible. At the same time, the transition to learning online has introduced its own set of challenges. What elements of our art form are conducive to remote learning? What platforms are available can best accommodate learning in the arts? What skills are needed to navigate the format of each platform? How can we engage learners who are already fatigued from several hours in front of a screen? How can learners collaborate online and how can we evaluate this work? How will we transition arts and learning into a “new normal” when conditions permit? How much of our current commitment to online learning will survive the pandemic? How much will be abandoned?

Fortunately, the Canadian Network for Arts and Learning was particularly well-positioned to offer support to the sector when the pandemic struck because we were already well invested in communications technology long before March of 2020. Thanks to the support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Canadian Internet Registration Authority, [Canada's digital map of arts and learning](#) had been informing the public and connecting arts educators for over four years at that point. We were also well into a three-year project, supported by a digital strategy grant from the Canada Council for the Arts.

As a result, we were able to quickly pivot from a plan to hold in-person networking Hubs across the country, to an online roundtable format through which we have been able to consult with hundreds of artist and educators in Canadian provinces and territories. We have held the first of a series of webinars addressing the issues that have arisen in these roundtables.



Importantly, we have posted a large and ever-expanding collection of resources for online learning on our website.

Valuable though these digital resources are, our Network is, by no means, exclusively focussed on the application of digital technology. In October of 2019, our national conference, Creative Convergence, held in Winnipeg, brought together delegates from across the country and from several other parts of the world to imagine the future of arts and learning in the face of emerging disruptions due to climate change,

income inequity and political instability. Our projections did not extend to a global pandemic, but we were convinced that change was on the way and we wanted the arts and learning to be prepared to respond to whatever might come – not only to survive, but to thrive in a new environment.

An important outcome of those conversations was a call to action ([The Winnipeg Vision](#)) That highlighted the enduring importance of universal access to the arts, of ensuring the highest quality in our work, and of applying arts learning to the social-cultural issues facing our communities. This appeal has since been endorsed by a significant number of individuals and organizations.

The annual report will provide further details of our operations. I wish to thank our members, advisory council and champions for supporting and contributing to our initiatives, our sponsors for making these efforts possible, our dedicated staff for their expertise and productivity at a challenging time, and to our extraordinarily talented Board Members whose good will and passionate commitment to the arts and learning has allowed our organization to find its collective voice and to flourish even under the most adverse of conditions.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Larry".

Larry O'Farrell

# A PIVOTAL YEAR

This fiscal year began as any other with our activities clearly laid out - an Eduarts Hub in Ottawa in May 2019 marking the end of a three-year Grow grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the commencement of a three-year Canada Council Digital Strategy Project with an international conference in Winnipeg in October and three national Eduarts Hubs in April.

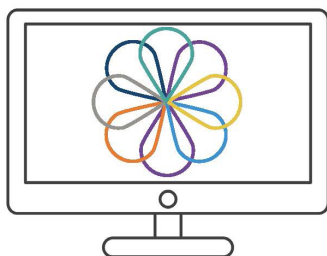
We were looking forward to connecting with the arts and learning communities in Whitehorse, Regina and Windsor through those three in-person Hubs. Never could we have foreseen that our reach and impact would ripple far beyond the confines of those geographical regions. When the pandemic struck, those three Hubs were cancelled and The Network immediately changed course to offer much-needed support to desperate and struggling arts education practitioners.

From March 23 - April 3, The Canadian Network for Arts & Learning hosted a series of 10 digital roundtable discussions to gain a better understanding of participants' experiences at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. We were proud to be the first organization to offer this much-needed support to the sector and continue to develop this new line of networking and exchange to inform our work.



**"It was the first time that I heard other people agree that the time after the pandemic will not be the same as before. Until then I felt very lonely in my feeling of lack of direction in knowing what to work towards."**

*- Manitoba Roundtable Discussion Participant*



## EDUARTS DIGITAL ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

**"It was good to hear about the problems everyone's facing and trying to solve them together."**

*- National Roundtable Discussion Participant*

## LEADERSHIP IN A TIME OF CRISIS

In response to the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the arts and learning sector, The Network launched a series of 10 digital roundtable discussions attracting more than 300 arts and learning practitioners from 11 provinces and territories. Through regional and national discussions, we provided opportunities for struggling professionals to be able to share their experiences, learn methods and techniques that others are using to sustain their practice, as well as deepen and establish connections with colleagues in their region and across the country. We developed a report and advocacy tools as a result of these sessions, and have developed additional series of roundtable discussions.



# A YEAR OF INCREDIBLE GROWTH AND CONNECTION

This year The Network experienced exponential growth and deepened connections throughout the arts and learning sector. Through promotion of the conference as well as the Digital Roundtable Discussions, we more than doubled our website traffic from the previous year and saw huge increased engagement through our social media platforms.

Through our signature project [Canada's Map of Arts & Learning](#), we continued to inspire artist-educators and arts organizations to add and enhance their profiles to attract new students and share the important work that they are doing across the sector. The Map is poised to reach 10,000 profiles in the near future offering Canadians an important resource for connecting with national arts and learning practitioners for virtual instruction, as well as local contacts for when in-person activities resume.

## NEW INITIATIVES THIS YEAR

As a result of consultations with practitioners in Canada's arts and learning sector, we launched several new initiatives and resources to support the sector this year, including:

- [Listings of funding opportunities](#) across Canada, filterable by art forms, region and more
- Digital Roundtable Discussion Series, nationally and by region
- A [Directory of Online Arts Instruction](#) listing virtual arts lessons and classes
- A searchable directory of national arts and learning [Featured Projects](#)
- A [list of resources](#) in response to COVID-19, including funding, digital platforms, and more
- Launched [A Call to Action on Arts Education](#)

## Mapped Contacts: 8700+

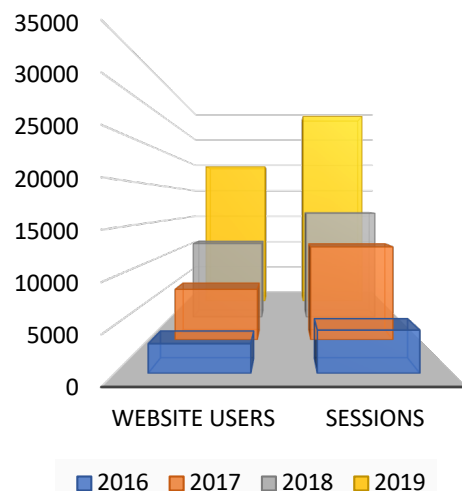
# of Individuals: 4350+

# of Organizations: 3250+

# of Schools: 1100+



## WEBSITE ANALYTICS





From October 24 - 26, 2019, The Network hosted our eighth biennial conference, Creative Convergence, in Winnipeg. We welcomed almost 200 delegates from across Canada and around the world to take part in a creative exchange around the themes of Digital Innovation & Communication, Health & Wellbeing, and Social Justice & Reconciliation.

**"I enjoyed the diversity of presentations and the inter-mingling of art and theory."**

### Conference Highlights

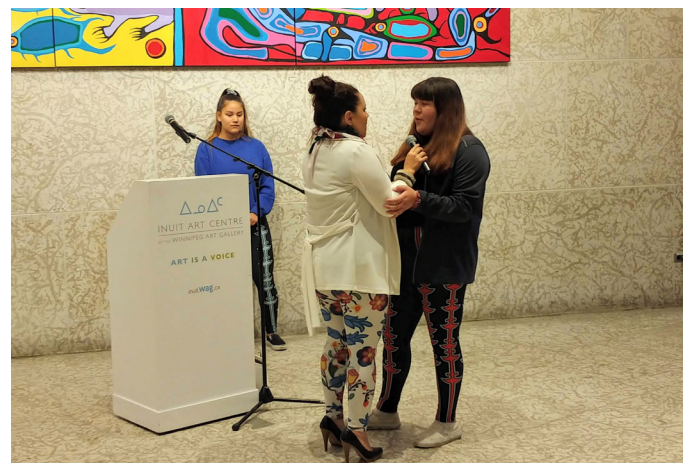
The conference featured more than 50 breakout sessions with presenters from seven provinces and even 12 countries, due to a partnership with UNESCO's UNITWIN network. The Network hosted high profile events and networking opportunities showcasing the ground-breaking work being done in Winnipeg's culture scene, including a reception at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, a gala awards dinner at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, and tours of local arts organizations. There were also thought-provoking keynote speeches and panel discussions from leaders in the field.



Randell Adjei (R.I.S.E) and Heather Russell-Smith (Manitoba Theatre for Young People) in a youth panel discussion.



International delegates at a UNITWIN meeting.



Inuit throat singer Nikki Komaksiutiksak and her daughter perform at the Winnipeg Art Gallery reception.



*Performance by singer-songwriter William Prince at the Gala Awards Dinner.*



*Board Vice-Chair John Hobday presents the Visionary Leadership Award to Gail Asper.*



*Senator Patricia Bovey presents the Community Builders Award to John and Bonnie Buhler.*



*Board members Angela Elster and Tim Borlase present the Lifetime Achievement Award to Dr. Judith Marcuse.*

## CELEBRATING CANADIAN EXCELLENCE IN ARTS AND LEARNING

On October 25, we held our biennial Gala Awards Dinner at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights where we honoured some of the most respected contributors to arts and learning across Canada, with a specific focus on Manitoba.

Here are the award winners:

Visionary Leadership Award - Gail Asper, OC, OM

Impact of Learning Award - Wanda Koop, CM, OM  
(accepted by Eddie Ayoub, Artistic Director of Art City)

Lifetime Achievement Award - Dr. Judith Marcuse

Community Builders Award - John and Bonnie Buhler



We are grateful for the support of this year's funders.



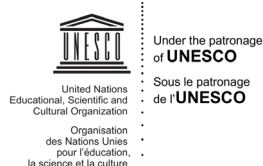
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Thank you!



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