



Artspace
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May 19, 2015

Thank you for giving us an opportunity to address council about our concerns regarding the 30% decrease in community investment funding for Artspace this year. The City of Peterborough's support over the years has been invaluable, and as we are sure you are aware, we rely on an array of funding sources to make ends meet.

By most standards, Artspace runs on a shoestring with over 60% of its total expenses going directly to cultural workers, artists and programming expenses. Rent and utilities represent approximately 21% of our expenses – utility expenses have risen significantly in the last 2 years.

It's important to note that Artspace spent approximately \$9000 less in 2014 than in 2013 and earned an additional \$7700 over 2013 in workshops, memberships, rental fees, donations and other revenue. This year we are not eligible for Trillium funding. A funding cut from OAC was not due to viability - in fact we received their highest rating, but is due to cuts across the board.

All residents of Peterborough should rightfully be proud of how their tax dollars have contributed to support this unique and vital cultural centre. Artspace may be small but we serve an incredibly wide demographic and offer programs, services and resources that are not available elsewhere in the region, with over 17,000 users per year. We've been part of the Peterborough cultural landscape as long as the AGP, longer than Public Energy and are important as part of the downtown urban landscape. Artspace continues to be an important part of the tapestry of attractions that make Peterborough the top tourist destination in the region. A diversity of arts organizations is essential for strong art sector in Peterborough, and as such Artspace plays an important role in the ecology of the local arts community.

Programming

- Artspace has a national reputation, e.g. our current exhibit is listed as a Canadian Art Magazine must-see: its artist Dayna Danger and our director Jonathan Lockyer have been asked to be part of a 3 day international academic conference, Contesting Canada's Future, at Trent in May;
- In fact, our last three shows were all noted by Canadian Art as must-sees, including our successful, interactive 40th Anniversary exhibition which invited community participation to express themselves on the gallery walls..
- As a regional hub for contemporary art it is significant due to its central rural location with proximity to Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal;
- It reflects and presents cross-currents of contemporary and experimental art for the regional arts community.

Appendix C

Education

- Artspace offers substantial educational value with frequent workshops on everything from photography/film to lenticular printing to professional development, unavailable anywhere else locally;
- It is a venue for youth-oriented, ground-breaking exhibitions such as Steve deBruyn's *Wood Push Wood*, an installation with a useable skateboard track made of salvaged materials built within the gallery proper, which reached out to empower and inspire local youth culture; or a low tech stop motion animation workshop with Northern Ontario artist Kerri Flannigan;
- Our on-going, school-age outreach workshops centred around photography, film and recently a scanning/animation workshop in coordination with ReFrame was highly successful.

Community resource

- Our mandate for inclusivity makes Artspace a safe haven for LGBT youth and other marginalized sectors;
- Our agility as a venue is unsurpassed, e.g., structural issues forced the AGP to move Dennis Tourbin exhibit; a Trent University business student presented *Madmen on the Otonabee*, an exhibit of furniture from Trent's architect Ron Thom and other renowned international designers; we function frequently as a community music and performance venue; Artspace has facilitated Artsweek and the 2014 city bus wrap project; we presented an off site talk by Shary Boyle, who represented Canada at the Venice Biennale in 2013; we are an ongoing venue for Trent Film Society;
- Artspace has proven its first class training for cultural workers - Iga Janik is now curator at Cambridge Galleries; Fynn Leitch has gone on to be curator at AGP;
- Artspace provides an important stepping stone for emerging artists, many of whom have gone on to international acclaim such as Dorothy Caldwell;
- Artspace is a repository and preserver of 40 years of Peterborough's cultural memory in archives which are available to the public;
- we are an incubator, e.g. Cinemoetry, Media Arts Peterborough initiatives;
- we contribute to arts advocacy through our associations with AARCO, CARFAC, etc.;
- we offer many kinds of resources – our art and archive library which is searchable through the Sadleir House Alternative Library Catalogue; our media lab offers rentals of film and still cameras, projectors, sound equipment, workstations, software and training; as well as the considerable shared knowledge of members;
- Artspace has a history of successful community collaborations with Trent, AGP, City of Peterborough to name a few.
- Artspace works with local business – recently paired with Publican House Brewery to launch the highly successful Publican Rotarian Beer.
- Chaired a community forum during last fall's municipal election – the conversation was broadly centered around arts funding and how to support cultural workers.

Artspace is listed specifically in our Municipal Cultural Plan as one of Peterborough's Cultural Resources - spaces & facilities, and remains relevant for the fulfillment of our Municipal Cultural Plan, particularly in these areas:

- Strategic Direction 4: Strengthen Downtown as a Cultural Hub

Appendix C

- Strategic Direction 6 Encourage Inclusivity and Facilitate Diversity
- Strategic Direction 7 Build the Capacity of the Arts, Culture, and Heritage Division

We would also like council to clarify for us why the potential for a service grant "was discussed at the sub-committee but not the overall committee level and warrants more investigation." Why was this investigation not completed? We have been seeking the service grant level for several years now. Why do we continue to be put off year after year and why do we keep getting passed up?

Artspace may be small but remains a unique and vital part of Peterborough's arts community. We hope council will reconsider its funding cut or find other sources within its budget to continue to show its support for Artspace.

Thank you,

Patrick Moore
On behalf of the Board of Directors, Artspace