



***Strengthening
the Sector***

**Resources and Best
Practices for the
Visual, Media and
Craft-Based Arts
Sector in Ontario**

**Background
Research
Report**
December 2012



With assistance from Ontario Crafts Council, Artist-Run Centres and Collectives of Ontario, Media Arts Network of Ontario, the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective and the Ontario Association of Art Galleries



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1 Introduction



The Project

CARFAC Ontario is providing leadership on Strengthening the Sector: Resources and Best Practices for the Visual, Media and Craft-Based Arts Sector (hereafter Strengthening the Sector). The initiative is a multi-year project focused on researching and developing resources and tools for the visual, media and craft-based arts sector. The following goals guide the project.

1. **Establishing industry standards in the visual, media and craft-based arts sector.**
2. **Building relationships and trust across the sectors among all stakeholders.**
3. **Supporting professionalization across the sector.**
4. **Developing a basis for the development of policy and legislative initiatives that are to the long-term benefit of the sector.**

The project is being undertaken based on a consultative, consensus building process.

A Steering Committee is guiding the project representing CARFAC Ontario, Ontario Crafts Council, Artist-Run Centres and Collectives of Ontario (ARCCO), Media Arts Network of Ontario and the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective.

The project is being undertaken in three Phases.



Phase 1: Knowledge Building and Community Engagement is focused on building a foundation based on research, data collection and community engagement. This report constitutes part of this foundational research. The approach taken with the Background Research report has been to focus on practical information to inform the project rather than adopting a more academically-oriented literature review.



Best Practice Development

The past decade has seen growing interest in the development of "Best Practices" with early work emerging in countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom. In 2001, the Australian National Association for the Visual Arts, (NAVA) published the first edition of The Code of Practice for the Professional Australian Visual Arts, Craft and Design Sector. Now in its 3rd edition NAVA has provided leadership internationally in advancing the field. Recently, the International Federation of Arts Councils and Cultural Agencies (IFACCA) have also begun to document these developments.

In Canada, Quebec and Saskatchewan have led the country in moving to advance this agenda. CARFAC Saskatchewan launched Best Practices for the Saskatchewan Visual Arts and Crafts Sector in 2009.

Defining Best Practices

One of the challenges in undertaking any project of this sort is establishing a shared vocabulary for the project to ensure that everyone is working with the same set of assumptions. The following are a few basic terms relevant to this phase of the *Strengthening the Sector* project. While a much more extensive glossary will be required as the project moves forward to the development of Best Practices in Phase II, it is useful at the outset to set out the definition of Best Practices used in the two primary bodies of work examined later in this report.

- **BEST PRACTICE** - The most ethical, equitable, and reasonable form of any specific business arrangement between an artist and the user of his/her creative work. Best practices generally address sector issues not addressed formally through legislation and legal provisions (CARFAC Saskatchewan).
- **BEST PRACTICE** - A best practice standard for the visual arts, craft and design sector. It provides a set of practical and ethical guidelines for the conduct of business between arts/craft/design practitioners and galleries, agents, dealers, retailers, buyers, sponsors and partners, commissioners, employees, and the managers of residencies, workshops, competitions, prizes and awards (Australian National Association for the Visual Arts).



2 Examples of Best Practices



As noted, the move to develop best practices and industry standards has gained momentum in recent years in various parts of the world. The following chart provides information on a range of initiatives in Canada and internationally. Of particular relevance to the current project is the list of issues linked to each topic area.

Canadian Initiatives

Organization	Topic or Title	Discipline	Notes	Issues Addressed
CARFAC Saskatchewan	Industry Standards between Commercial Galleries & Artists	Visual Arts Crafts	This document sets out recommended standards for professional practice in the interaction between professional artists and Commercial Art Galleries in Saskatchewan in the visual arts and crafts sector.	Basis for Relationship; Written Agreements Services to the Artist; Frequency of Exhibitions; Territory of Representation; Pricing; Gallery Commission; Consignment; Discounts; Sales, Credit and Returns; Exhibition Arrangements and Costs; Goods and Services Tax; Copyright; Duty of Care; Dispute
	Industry Standards between Public Galleries & Artists	Visual Arts Crafts	This document sets out recommended standards for professional practice in the interaction between professional artists and Public Art Galleries in Saskatchewan in the visual arts and crafts sector.	Basis for Relationship; Contracts and Agreements; Exhibition Costs; Exhibition Fees; Timelines; Artist Obligations; Promotion; Documentation; Copyright; Duty of Care; Acquisition of Artists' Work; Deaccessioning; Sales of Artwork by Public Galleries; Dispute
	Public Art Commissions	Visual Arts Crafts	This document deals with competitions for commissions of public art and the commissions that result from them. It may successfully be applied to the commissioning of artwork in other circumstances, though the guidelines it contains may not always be appropriate or cost-effective for smaller-scale, special purpose, or private commissions.	Definition of Commissioned Works; The Commissioning Process; Stages in a Public Competition for Public Art; Stage 1 – Planning and Preparation; Stage 2 – Project Promotion; Stage 3 – Detailed Project Description; Stage 4 – Acceptance of Images; Stage 5 - Artist Short List, Stage 6 – Design Maquette, Stage 7 – Final Decision; Stage 8 – Contracts; Site; Risk and Insurance; Copyright and Commissions
	Organization of Juried Group Exhibitions	Visual Arts Crafts	This document sets out artist and organizer responsibilities to ensure that the conditions of juried exhibitions meet the artist's expectation for professionalism, expertise, and satisfactory exhibition opportunity, and to carry out participation in a professional manner.	Entry Fees; Exhibition Fees; Use of Contracts; Preferred Submission Formats for Long-Distance Entries; Costs; Artists' Responsibilities; Organizers' Responsibilities; Damaged, Lost, Or Destroyed



Organization	Topic or Title	Discipline	Notes	Issues Addressed
CARFAC Saskatchewan	Use of Artists' Work for Fundraising Purposes	Visual Arts Crafts	This document outlines artists' rights and responsibilities and those of organizers of fundraising events. It provides explanations of Canada Revenue Agency's rules for the charitable donation of artwork and artists' goods. Its intention is to remove uncertainty and exploitation from this financial and presentation resource for both the artist and the user of his or her work.	Donations of Artwork; Donations of Artwork for Charitable Purposes – Canada Revenue Agency; Proceeds Returned to the Artist; Artists' Responsibilities; Organizers' Responsibilities; Delivery and Condition of Artwork; Display of Artwork; No Removal of Artwork
	Aboriginal Arts	Aboriginal Art	Consistent with the vision and approach to Best Practice Development undertaken by the Australian National Association for the Visual Arts, a distinct Best Practice was developed to reflect and address the unique needs and circumstances of Aboriginal Artists as identified by these artists participating in meetings and the community engagement process used for the overall Best Practices project.	Respectful Cultural Exchange: Diversity; Respectful Cultural Exchange: Protocol; Fair and Equitable Treatment: Copyright; Fair and Equitable Treatment: Authorization and Compensation; Advancing Aboriginal Arts: Support for Artists and Arts; Advancing Aboriginal Arts: Collaboration and Networking; Education: Training; Marketing: Market Development
Regroupement des artistes en arts visuels du Québec	Private Commissions for Artworks	Visual Arts Arts and Crafts Literature	This document covers commissions for the creation of artworks made by individuals or firms; with or without competition. It addresses four major topic areas, each with a range of specific issues.	<p>Best practices - Commissioning of artworks:</p> <p>Definition of Commissioned Artwork; Commissioning Process; Duration of the Artwork and the Site; Risks and Insurance; Commissions for Artworks and Copyright; Maintenance and Conservation of an Artwork; and Transfer of an Artwork</p> <p>Main Steps - Commissioning of artworks Without Competition</p> <p>Planning and Preparation; Contact with the Artist; and Contracts</p> <p>Main Steps - Commissioning of artworks With Competition</p> <p>Planning and Preparation; Call for Submissions; Detailed description of the Project; Receipt of the Portfolio; Selection of a Short List of Artists; Submission of Concepts or Maquettes; and Final decisions</p>



Organization	Topic or Title	Discipline	Notes	Issues Addressed
Regroupement des artistes en arts visuels du Québec	Private Commissions for Artworks	Visual Arts Arts and Crafts Literature	This document covers commissions for the creation of artworks made by individuals or firms; with or without competition. It addresses four major topic areas, each with a range of specific issues.	<p>Checklist For Commissioning Artworks</p> <p>Concept or Maquette; Duration of the Artwork and Site; Schedule; Travel; Materials; Equipment; Delivery; and Assistance; Installation; and Payments; Risks and Insurance; Maintenance and Repairs; Relocation; Copyright and Moral Rights; Dispute Settlement</p>
	Commissions for Works of Public Art	Visual Arts Arts and Crafts Literature	This document covers public art competitions and the resulting commissions for artworks. It addresses four major topic areas, each with a range of specific issues.	<p>Best practices - Commissioning of works of public art</p> <p>Definition of Commissioned Artwork; Commissioning Process; Duration of the Artwork and the Site; Risks and Insurance; Commissions for Artworks and Copyright; Maintenance and Conservation of a Work of Public Art; and Disposal and Integrity of an Artwork</p>
	Commissions for Works of Public Art	Visual Arts Arts and Crafts Literature	This document covers public art competitions and the resulting commissions for artworks. It addresses four major topic areas, each with a range of specific issues.	<p>Main Steps - Commissioning A Work Of Public Art</p> <p>Planning and Preparation; Call for Submissions; Detailed Description of the Project; Receipt of the Portfolio; Selection of a Short List of Artists; Submission of Concepts or Maquettes; Final Decision; and Contract</p> <p>Checklist For Commissioning Artworks</p> <p>Concept or Maquette; Duration of the Artwork and Site; Schedule; Travel; Materials; Equipment; Delivery; and Assistance; Installation; Payments; Risks and Insurance; Maintenance and Repairs; Relocation; Copyright and Moral Rights; and Dispute Settlement</p>
	Charitable Donations of Artwork	Visual Arts Arts and Crafts Literature	This document summarizes the rights and responsibilities of artist donors and of donees; especially organizers of art auctions as fund-raising tools. It also discusses general donations of artworks.	<p>Ethical Principles Underlying the Use of Artworks for Fund-Raising Activities:</p> <p>Donations of Artworks; Donations of Artworks to Charities; Donations Of Artworks and The Canada Revenue Agency; Procedure for Donating an Artwork; Donations of Artworks and Copyright; Delivery and Inspection of Artworks; and Exhibition of Artworks</p>



Organization	Topic or Title	Discipline	Notes	Issues Addressed
Professional Writers Association of Canada	Best Practices for Canadian Magazine, Publishing, Editing, and Writing	Publishing	This document was developed for as wide distribution as possible within the industry and related education and training programs with the intention of encouraging the adoption of its underlying, simple principles and practices it lays out to establish professional standards in the everyday work of producing Canadian magazines.	Professional Obligations of Writers; Professional Obligations of Magazine Editors; Professional Obligations of Magazine Publishers; Shared Obligations
Canadian Alliance of Dance Artists - Ontario Chapter (CADA-ON)	Professional Standards for Dance	Dance	This Best Practices guide is intended to promote and support professional standards and conditions of work in dance. It provides basic guidelines intended for the members of CADA-ON in negotiating work agreements - others are welcome to use it. The document provides suggested minimum standards regarding hours of work, fee standards and working conditions and outlines rights and responsibilities in work agreements.	Rights and Responsibilities; Working Conditions; Fees and Payment for Dance Artists; Program and Credits; Publicity/Documentary Photographs & Video Footage; Health; Absence Due to Injury or Illness; Touring; Working Abroad; Copyright; Termination; Sex, Nudity & Obscenity; Discrimination & Personal Harassment; Dispute Resolution Procedure



International Initiatives

The following initiatives represent a mixture of best practices and on-line resources addressing many similar issues to those addressed by best practice topics.

Organization	Topic or Title	Discipline	Notes	Issues Addressed
National Association for the Visual Arts (Australia)	The Code of Practice for the Professional Australian Visual Arts, Craft and Design Sector, 3rd edition	Visual Arts Crafts Design	A further description of this initiative and publication is provided below. Entire chapters in this substantial (160 page) report are devoted to each of the issues listed opposite. The number and depth of issues addressed in each chapter is too extensive to be captured here, or in the next section of the current report. The Code of Practice not only identifies best practices related to each issue, but detailed procedural guidelines related to each area of best practice.	Commercial Galleries – Exhibiting, Selling and Collecting Art, Craft and Design; Best Practice for Artists and Publically Funded Galleries; Commissioning ; Residencies and Workshops’ Competitions, Prizes, Awards and Fundraising Exhibitions; Fees and Wages (specific fees and wages for different practitioners); Copyright, Moral Rights, Resale Royalty, Equal Opportunity, Restrictions on Freedom of Expression; Taxation, Insurance Occupational Health and Safety
	Issues and Protocols Specific to Indigenous Practitioners	Aboriginal Art	These Guidelines are informed by the great diversity of Indigenous culture and expression and refer to the context from which Indigenous Australian art arises. They affirm the right of Indigenous Australians to maintain, control and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and cultural expression. They are also about the recognition and respect that should be accorded Indigenous art, artists, cultures and communities.	Promoting Diversity of Indigenous Art and Cultures; Maintaining Indigenous Control; Communication, Consultation and Consent; Protecting Secret and/or Sacred Material or Restricted Material Dealing in Artworks when the Artist is Deceased; Visiting Aboriginal Art Centres; Visiting Remote Communities; Working in Communities
	Best Practice Guidelines	All	A basic guide to legal issues surrounding the art sector in Australia	Displaying Visual Arts on the Internet; Business Partnership Checklist; Artist Gallery Checklist; Sale of Artwork; Consignment; Image Reproduction; Licence for a Publication; Artist Gallery Agreements (long term)



Organization	Topic or Title	Discipline	Notes	Issues Addressed
Artists Alliance New Zealand	Code of Practice	Visual Arts	A guide for artists and dealers to establish the best practice 'Agreement of representation'.	Copyright; Contracts; Artist's Obligations; Exhibitions; Artwork Sales; Dealer Relationships
	Galleries on Campus	Contemporary Art Design	Addresses issues related to 'what does it mean to be a university gallery?'	Student Art; Campus Galleries; Developing a Program; Funding; Exhibitions in University Space
The Artists Information Company UK	The Code of Practice for Visual Arts	Visual Arts	The Code of Practice for the Visual Arts draws from the experiences of practising artists along with those of commissioners, curators and others with whom artists work to draw out the principles that underpin good practice, and shows how they work in practice.	Commission: Establishing a Charge Rate; Qualifications
	Artists' Fees and Payments	All	The framework takes into account: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The level of remuneration for comparator professionals • The costs specific to freelance working • The artist's particular circumstances and location • How an artist's knowledge and experience level impacts on charges 	The Artist as a Service Supplier; Pricing; Freelance Status; Calculating a Day Rate; Adding on an Employer's Costs; Quoting for the Job
	Curated Space	Artist-Curator	Curated space looks at strategies and interventions within artist-curator practice.	Role of the Curator; Curated Spaces versus Exhibition Spaces; Quality of Curated Spaces
	Good Practice in Paying Artists	All	This Code of Practice for the Visual Arts encourages artists and arts organisers to "contribute confidently" when making professional arrangements. In particular it requires recognising worth and "considering the value of all the resources that are brought to the project".	Payments to Artists; Job Descriptions; Artist Residency; Self-employed Artist; Negotiation; Artist Day Rates
	Good Practice for New Artists	All	Good practice for new artists is an introduction to the wide range of practical and insightful material available to new artists.	Establishing your own Studio; Showcasing your Work; Funding; Self-Employment



Organization	Topic or Title	Discipline	Notes	Issues Addressed
The Artists Information Company UK	Negotiating your Practice	All	The texts in Negotiating your Practice have been selected to indicate the approaches and strategies some artists have taken to define the environment for their individual practices.	Public Art and Compromise; Expectations and Responsibilities; The Artist-Curator Dynamic; Public Commissions; Social Spaces; Negotiation
European Visual Artists	Code of Conduct	Visual Arts	<p>Their main objectives are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Efficient licensing of primary rights, such as reproduction and broadcasting, · Efficient collection of remuneration for secondary rights, · Fair and quick distribution to authors, nationally and internationally, · Facilitating the dissemination of works, without active promotion, · Protecting authors rights, · Promoting further economic and moral interests of their members. 	Standards of good practice; democratic structures; transparency towards all parties involved; fair and effective licensing, collecting, distributing; dispute settlement procedures
City of Melbourne	Code of Practice for galleries and retailers of Indigenous Art	Indigenous Art	<p>The Code of Practice for galleries and retailers of Indigenous Art (the Code) in the City of Melbourne is a guide in appropriate ways to sell and display Indigenous art and work with Indigenous artists.</p> <p>The Code is a developed statement of principles dealing with industry practices designed to set a standard of acceptable industry practice and fair dealing. This code of practice is a guide to best industry practice.</p>	Professionalism, honesty and integrity; promotion of diversity of indigenous arts and cultures; relationships with indigenous; cultural beliefs and practices; representation of indigenous artists; authenticity; fair trading; marketing; copyright; moral rights
ArtsQuest (UK)	Artlaw (online code of practice)	Visual Arts Crafts	ArtsQuest is an extensive web based resource that provides practical support to visual artists and craftspeople.	Copyright; Contracts; Artists Resale Rights; Publications Right; Art after Death; Censorship; Artist-led studios; Fakes, Insurance and Bankruptcy
Public Art Online (UK)	Practical Advice	Public Art	The information here covers all aspects of the commissioning process from developing a public art strategy, finding an artist and funding – to managing a commission as an artist or project manager	Commissioning; Advice; Contracts and Copyright; Funding; Local authorities; Policies and guidance



3 Digging Deeper



The previous chapter dealt at a high level with information related to a range of best practice initiatives. In this chapter, two of these initiatives are described in greater detail, particularly related to the context and goals that shaped each initiative.

Two Leading Initiatives

1. Australian National Association for the Visual Arts

Definitions and Principles

The National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA) has been an international leader in advancing the field of industry standards. The Code of Practice for the Professional Australian Visual Arts, Craft and Design Sectors cited frequently in other literature and work in the field. The publication, now in its 3rd edition, represents more than a decade progressively evolving and expanding work in the field. Given this body of practice, it is useful to review foundational elements of the Code of Practice, including how NAVA defines and conceptualizes the field.

NAVA avoids the language of ‘industry standards’ in favour of the Code of Practice which is defined as:

A best practice standard for the visual arts, craft and design sector provides a set of practical and ethical guidelines for the conduct of business between arts/craft/design practitioners and galleries, agents, dealers, retailers, buyers, sponsors and partners, commissioners, employees, and the managers of residencies, workshops, competitions, prizes and awards.

The principles and practices outlined in the Code of Practice are voluntary and embrace the language of ‘should’ instead of ‘must’ except in those areas addressed by formal legislation (e.g., copyright, moral rights, taxation, etc.). Two underlining purposes are identified for the Code of Practice:

- **To further the professionalization of the sector;**
- **To establish a basis for the development of policy and legislative initiatives that are to the long-term benefit of the sector.**

The second is significant as it suggests the sector will be in a stronger position to influence policy and legislation based on the credibility and legitimacy as a sector and profession that flow from the Code of Practice.



At the outset, the Code of Practice did not address any form of monitoring or evaluation of non-compliance with the standards. Rather the intent was to educate and leverage enhanced capacity in a sector in which there had been too much reliance the knowledge of individuals or institutional ‘corporate memory. In addition to undertaking new work, the Code of Practice was also intended to consolidate existing codes of practice that were not well known or appreciated.

The Code of Practice addresses both practical issues and ethical principles for the conduct of business in the sector: “not merely describing how things are done, but how they should be done. The publication includes a glossary (called ‘Explanation of Terms’) aimed at establishing both clarity and a shared vocabulary across the sector related. The intent in establishing such a shared understanding of terminology is intended not only to support interpretation of issues addressed by the Code of Practice but more broadly to support development and capacity building across the sector.

The Code is intended to be flexible and dynamic, acknowledging changes in technology and an increasingly global economy would require continuous re-examination. Indeed, the publication has been extended and evolved significantly since the first edition.

Issues Addressed

- Commercial Galleries (Exhibiting, Selling and Collecting Art, Craft and Design)
- Best Practice for Artists and Publically Funded Galleries
- Commissioning
- Residencies and Workshops
- Competitions, Prizes, Awards and Fundraising Exhibitions
- Fees and Wages (specific fees and wages for different practitioners)
- Copyright, Moral Rights, Resale Royalty, Equal Opportunity, Restrictions on Freedom of Expression
- Taxation, Insurance Occupational Health and Safety

Indigenous Codes of Practice

Like work in other countries (including Canada) this Code of Practice acknowledges the need for consideration to be given to unique needs and circumstances facing Indigenous practitioners. While maintaining that the existing Code of Practice is intended for the use of all Australian visual arts, craft and design professionals and those with whom they deal, it is acknowledged that specific matters of cultural protocol and cross-cultural exchange are involved when dealing with Indigenous organizations and practitioners. It acknowledges that these considerations will differ between urban-based Indigenous practitioners and those living in more remote communities. Issues requiring attention specific to the needs of Indigenous organizations and practitioners include:

- Group Ownership
- Interpretation



- Appropriation
- Copyright
- Authenticity

2. CARFAC Saskatchewan Best Practices Development Project

Two provinces have completed extensive work in the area of best practices – Quebec and Saskatchewan. Of the two, the one with the closest parallels to the current project is the Best Practices for the Saskatchewan Visual Arts and Crafts Sector led by CARFAC Saskatchewan.

A strong factor shaping the project was the Saskatchewan’s Status of the Artist legislation adopted in 2009. This Act is a much stronger piece of legislation than The Status of Ontario’s Artist Act adopted in 2007. The latter serves more of an advocacy document that recognizes the importance and contributions of artists in the province, and commits the Government of Ontario to a range of (broadly defined) strategies to advance the interests of artists (e.g., marketing and promotion of the arts, training and professional development opportunities, improving access to information, promoting health and safety, developing partnerships and fostering collaboration with various sectors and government bodies, and strengthening the ability of arts and culture organizations to provide support to artists). By contrast the Saskatchewan Status of the Artist legislation addresses a more substantive set of issues such as mandatory contracts and a formal collective bargaining system for professional artists.

The Saskatchewan Visual Arts and Craft Sector project was led by CARFAC Saskatchewan but involved a range of Project Partners including the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance, Saskatchewan Arts Board, Saskatchewan Professional Art Galleries Association, Museums Association of Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Craft Council, Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils, Saskatchewan Cultural Industries Development Council, CARFAC National, SaskCulture, National Association for the Visual Arts (Australia).

An important objective from the outset was to seek formal endorsement of the resulting best practices by these partners as a means of lending weight and legitimacy to project outcomes, and to leveraging higher compliance with resulting best practices. The work in Saskatchewan was also intended to inform later developments country-wide by the national Visual Arts Alliance.

The following framework of project goals, intended outcomes and topics of best practices can inform work in Ontario.

Project Goals

The initiative was guided by three project goals.

- **1. Leadership and Consultation**



- To facilitate engagement of the Saskatchewan Visual Arts and Craft Sector
- To document, recognize and discuss current issues and priorities regarding the relationship between presenters and creators.
- **2. Sector Capacity Development**
 - To encourage sustainable working partnerships, collaboration and relationship building between many diverse stakeholders of the Saskatchewan Visual Arts and Craft Sector
- **3. Education and Advocacy**
 - To share research with the sector to support community in making informed and strategic decisions as well as distribution and engagement of developed resources.
 - To build evidence and understanding of international best practices and issues, building relationships in the international community, learning from expert experience.

Intended Outcomes

In addition to these three project goals, a series of intended outcomes were identified at the outset of the project.

- **Industry Standards Development:** to research, develop, negotiate, and agree upon ethical standards for use in the Saskatchewan Visual Arts and Craft Sector
- **Best Practices Application:** to create several living documents that is in plain language, and are easily used and endorsed by all parties within the sector.
- **Best Practices Support:** to develop and implement education strategies to ensure parties are supported to implement and distribute "Best Practices" and electronic dissemination.
- **United Saskatchewan Visual Arts Sector:** to develop healthy partnerships and relationships within the community that can move the sector forward.

Topics

To date, Best Practice Standards have been developed for the Visual Arts and Crafts sectors in the following areas.

- Commercial Galleries and Artists
- Public Galleries and Artists
- Public Art Commissions
- Organization of Juried Group Exhibitions
- Use of Artists Work for Fundraising Purposes
- Aboriginal Arts



4 Conclusion



The Centrality of the Artist

While the range of topics addressed by the various best practice initiatives reviewed in this document varies widely, a common denominator is that the vast majority pertain to addressing the interests of individual artists and practitioners as they related to a range of institutions, sales and distribution channels and other activities. While this may seem on one level like a self-evident point, it is an important assumption to establish at the outset of the project. For example, a range of potential initial topics to be addressed by the project might include:

- **Best practices related to artists and their interaction with (non-profit) public art galleries, artist-run spaces and co-ops**
- **Best practices related to their interaction with (for-profit) commercial art galleries**
- **Best practices related to the conduct of studio tours as they relate to the interests and treatment of artists in this context)**
- **Best practices related to artists' residencies, public art competitions and commissions, art fairs, alternative exhibition venues, artists live-work spaces – but all focused on the interests and treatment of artists in these contexts**

Drawing on these examples, a best practice would not be considered addressing a range of other operational issues related to public or commercial galleries, general logistical matters and processes related to studio tours, etc.

The focus on the interests and concerns of individual artists is important to recognize for a second reason. The project is assuming a holistic perspective on the sector and the wide range of individuals and institutional actors engaged with that sector. However, its focus is on the centrality of the artist helps communicate the reality that without the work produced by these artists and practitioner the sector would not be viable and the substantial economic impacts benefits generated by the sector could not be generated.

The Growing Significance of Municipalities

While senior levels of government (Federal and Provincial) will continue to play important roles in the health and vitality of the arts and culture in Canada (through funding as well as policy or regulatory support), the reality is that increasingly the most important level of government for the sector is municipalities. In Ontario, there has been a tremendous expansion in the area of municipal cultural planning over the past



half-decade. Municipal cultural plans are intended to put in place strategies and partnerships aimed at building sustainable local cultural sectors and integrating cultural resources and activities more effectively with a wide range of economic and broader community development agendas in communities.

Despite increased attention the majority of Ontario municipalities (outside major urban centres) have relatively weak levels of knowledge and understanding regarding the various disciplines and subsectors that comprise the overall cultural sector. While administrative structures are changing, cultural mandates in many municipalities still fall under the umbrella of Community Services or Parks and Recreation, rather than in 'mainstream' departments such as planning and economic development. There is an opportunity through the Strengthening the Sector project to engage municipalities and develop best practices that provide knowledge and guidance in advancing their cultural plans and mandates.