

## Interim Report on the Activities of the Kingston Arts Council

5 March 2026

Danika Lochhead  
Director, Arts & Culture Services  
City of Kingston  
216 Ontario Street  
Kingston, ON K7L 2Z3

Dear Danika,

We wish to thank you and the City of Kingston for your ongoing support of the Kingston Arts Council (KAC) and continued investment in vital programs and services which support the arts sector in Kingston. Please find our year-end report on our activities in 2024, submitted as per the Service Level Agreement (Section 13) between the City of Kingston and the KAC. This report provides updates on the work described in Sections 2, 3, 4, 7, and 10 of the SLA, as well as an overview of the KAC's services and programs in 2025.

### City of Kingston Arts Fund 2025

The Kingston Arts Council delivered the City of Kingston Arts Fund (CKAF) in 2025 in accordance with the 2025 CKAF Transition Plan approved by Kingston City Council in May 2025. As reported in the *Report from the Kingston Arts Council on the Adjudication of Applications to the 2025 City of Kingston Arts Fund*, KAC additionally referred to relevant sections of the 2024 Plan for Administration (*Kingston Arts Council Plan for Administration of Arts Funding for the Corporation of the City of Kingston*) when addressing procedural details and policies.

KAC distributed notifications and required documents to the 11 Operating Grant recipients and 4 Project Grant recipients identified in the Transition Plan on 3 July 2025. Grants were issued in full following the fulfilment of the conditions required for the dissemination of funds. To date, cheques have been issued to all of the identified recipients except for SpiderWebShow Performance, who withdrew their grant.

Project Grant applications were launched on 26 June 2025, with a deadline of 31 July 2025. All application forms, guidelines, and associated documents were publicly available on the KAC website throughout the duration of the application period, and the program was advertised via email outreach, the KAC website, the KAC Newsletter, the KAC Members Newsletter, and through public relations and social media. Additionally, the KAC office remained open to the public for regular office hours throughout 2025, welcoming walk-in visits, inquiries, and requests from potential applicants and community members. Meetings were held with potential and returning applicants in person and virtually, depending on their preference. In alignment with the Transition Plan, the 2025 Project Grants program offered a streamlined application process and

prioritized applicants who did not receive CKAF funding in the past two years. A total of 46 applications were received, of which 35 were adjudicated, and 17 were successful in receiving funding. Of the 17 recipients, 12 had not received CKAF funding in the past two years.

The total funding awarded through CKAF 2025 was \$612,790. Of this funding, \$434,745 was allocated to Operating Grants, \$60,000 to Project Grants awarded directly to festivals via the Transition plan, and \$118,045 to Project Grants awarded through the public applications process. A complete list of recipients and funding amounts can be found on the [KAC website](#).

The KAC continues to provide quarterly reports to the City with updates on the progression of the CKAF program and maintains a separate, interest-earning account for CKAF funds.

### **City of Kingston Arts Fund 2026**

KAC's Executive Director has been meeting regularly with City staff Danika Lochhead and Megan Sirett to develop the CKAF 2026 program under the new CKAF Framework approved in November 2025. Following the approval of the CKAF Framework, an implementation plan and draft operational budgets were presented to City staff in December 2025. KAC onboarded Shamara Peart in the role of Grants Administrator in December 2025, supported by the additional investment of \$80,000 in implementation funding, to advance work on CKAF 2026.

KAC staff also engaged in advocacy with members of City Council and Mayor Paterson, as well as providing regular updates to key CKAF recipients and industry leaders, to advocate for increased investment into the CKAF 2026 allocation in alignment with the investment scenarios outlined in the CKAF Review Report. At the 2026 City Budget meetings, an amendment was moved and unanimously passed to provide an additional one-time investment of \$100,000 to the CKAF 2026 allocation. Combined with the base investment of \$612,790 and returned grant funds and interest, the total amount available through CKAF 2026 is \$738,372.

KAC continues to work on the CKAF 2026 program and is preparing to launch Operating Grants and Festival Grants in March 2026, with a deadline in May 2026. The Adjudication Report and ratification of funds for these programs is targeted for July 2026, maintaining consistency for organizations relying on operational funding. Project Grants and Creation & Development Grants are set to launch in August 2026, with a deadline in September 2026 and reporting and ratification targeted for December 2025 to ensure all funds are approved and ready for distribution within the 2025 calendar year.

KAC has revamped the guidelines, assessment criteria, application forms, and associated documents for the Operating Grant program, in alignment with the CKAF Framework and in collaboration with City Staff. Additional requirements are being introduced for Operating Grant recipients, including new budget forms, statistics forms, and board and staff lists. KAC has additionally built the new Festival Grant stream, which allows for two application types to accommodate renewable grants for Established Festivals, and one-time grants for Emerging Festivals, and created separate forms and guidelines for each type.

Funding allocated to KAC via the Amending Agreement has been utilized to support staffing costs to advance work on CKAF 2026, primarily to support the role of Grants Administrator. KAC continues to communicate with City staff on the use of these funds, and has notified staff that the majority of the implementation funds (over 75% minimum) will be deferred to the 2026-2027 fiscal year, due to delays in the project timeline, staffing, and receipt of funds. The final amount to be deferred will be confirmed following the conclusion of the 2025-2026 fiscal year, but at present is projected at \$64,000 based on staffing cost projections.

## **Mayor's Arts Awards**

KAC continued to collaborate with City Staff on the annual Mayor's Arts Awards, with KAC's Executive Director acting as Chair of the Nominations Subcommittee. In 2025, KAC additionally administered the public nominations process. Four award recipients were selected, and recipient profile videos were developed with Little Friday Productions and presented at the Mayor's Arts Awards ceremony on 24 November 2025. The 2025 recipient profile videos were longer than in previous years — around 3-4 minutes each — in an effort to encapsulate a fuller picture of recipients' practices. The KAC Executive Director presented the 2025 Mayor's Arts Awards Nominations Subcommittee minutes to the Arts, Culture, and Heritage Advisory Committee on 26 November 2025.

## **Programming — City of Kingston Supported**

The KAC provided programming in support of CKAF in accordance with the SLA. KAC Executive Director, Nicole Daniels, hosted a CKAF Project Grants Information Session on 10 July 2025. The Information Session was hosted virtually via Zoom at no cost for participants, with ASL interpretation provided. The session reviewed the CKAF objectives, eligibility criteria, application process, application details, adjudication process, assessment criteria, timeline, and general grant writing tips. 17 individuals attended and KAC staff were present to support as needed. The CKAF Information Session was promoted through targeted email outreach, the KAC Newsletter, social media, and the press releases issued during the CKAF launch in June. No programming took place in support of the City's Public Art Master Plan or the Creative Industries Strategy in 2025, due to the need to prioritize CKAF in the allocation of staff capacity and resources, but the KAC did have a chance to offer brief presentations to attendees of the Creative Cities Summit in October 2025. We look forward to potential collaboration opportunities with the City in future years.

## **Programming — KAC Programs**

The KAC continues to provide programming in support of artists, arts organizations, and arts workers in Kingston and the surrounding region. KAC programming aims to create opportunities for networking, collaboration, professional development, and access to much-needed professional resources. Our programs are offered free of charge, with embedded

accommodations and/or the option to request additional accommodations, based on the event. Throughout 2025, the KAC has worked to enhance its presence and impact in the community, and has significantly increased audience engagement.

KAC has engaged approximately 4,200 people in 2025 through programming and presentations both onsite at the KAC office and offsite. Some highlights:

- Over 3,000 visitors/attendees at KAC exhibitions (formerly UNIT 115, now Pocket Gallery), including over 250 attendees at exhibition receptions.
- KAC's Executive Director presented and sat on panels at 6 events and workshops hosted by external organizations, with cumulative audiences of over 200.
- The Artist Prosperity Survey received 240 responses

Programming in 2025 included:

***Creating More Inclusive Practices workshop:  
Enhancing Workplace Accessibility Through Disability Disclosure, Accommodation, and Inclusive Practices — 27 February 2025***

Creating More Inclusive Practices is a professional development workshop series designed for artists and arts workers. The series supports participants in developing and implementing more inclusive practices in their workspaces, events, and artistic practices, with a specific focus on accessibility. The workshop was presented by Leah Riddell of SignAble Vi5ion, and focused on strategies to make arts organizations more accessible to those who are Deaf and hard of hearing. Leah additionally offered an introduction to ASL. This workshop was presented in person at the Tett Centre for Creativity and Learning, in ASL with English interpretation, and had 17 attendees.

***UNIT 115 Exhibitions — January-June***

KAC presented its final UNIT 115 Exhibitions in 2025:

- *Digital Community Whiteboard*, KAC ^
- *The Shape of Meaning*, Jabra Mitwasi \*\*
- *Colour Theory*, Queen's Black Fashion Association \*\*

^ Participatory installation

\* Exhibition reception hosted

\*\* Exhibition reception and artist talk hosted

***Pocket Gallery — June-December (and ongoing)***

KAC introduced the Pocket Gallery program along with the Membership Program in 2025. The Pocket Gallery offers paid exhibition opportunities for KAC Members. 2025 Pocket Gallery exhibitions included:

- *Climate in Turmoil*, Joanne Gervais \*
- *So What Do You Eat?*, Lola Posy \*
- *Cluster Beings*, James Greatrex ^\*
- *RETROGRADE 2025*, Bayani Catapang \*\*
- *Intersections*, Shanique Peart \*\*

- *The Weight of Heritage*, Tania Craan <sup>^\*</sup>
- *Listening Homes*, Sumera Khan <sup>^\*</sup>

<sup>^</sup> Participatory installation

<sup>\*</sup> Exhibition reception hosted

<sup>\*\*</sup> Exhibition reception and artist talk hosted

### ***KAC Membership Program — launched May 2025***

In an effort to strengthen and build new relationships with artists and arts workers throughout the region, KAC launched a non-voting Membership program in May 2025. To date, 120 members have registered and over \$3,000 have been paid in member dues and optional donations. Membership is offered at a general rate of \$40/year, with PWYC and free options offered with equal benefits and no questions asked. Membership benefits include:

- Eligibility for health and dental insurance via the Arts & Entertainment Plan;
- Eligibility to apply for paid exhibitions in the Pocket Gallery;
- Profile on the KAC Member Directory, where members can list their services, availability, upcoming events, share photos, and more;
- Discounts at Kingston Frameworks, Great Lakes Museum (venue rental), Centre culturel Frontenac (Le Sésame venue rental), Amaranth Stoneware, Art Noise, Studio 330, Improbable Escapes, and Panera Bread;
- Quarterly Membership Newsletter; and
- Member Events (forthcoming).

### ***Artist Prosperity Project***

The Artist Prosperity Project (APP) was a research initiative aimed at better understanding the economic realities, demographics, and creative practices of artists in Katarokwi/Kingston and the surrounding region. The APP focused on artists working in three disciplinary categories: visual arts, music, and performing arts. The APP Survey collected data from 240 respondents, and the final report compared collected data with research on comparable reports and industry standards. The report also provided insight into some of the systemic barriers and challenges that artists encountered during 2024.

### ***Tett @ 10 Anniversary Event — 4 October 2025***

Tett Centre tenant organizations collaborated on a building-wide event celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Tett Centre for Creativity and Learning, and were all featured in the 10th anniversary mini documentary commissioned by the Tett. KAC participated in the event, offering a “quiet reflections” sensory break space for attendees.

### ***Community Engagement Activities***

The KAC continued to emphasize and execute community engagement initiatives throughout 2024. Examples include:

- Skeleton Park Arts Festival, 25-26 June 2024 — KAC hosted a community booth, at which we invited visitors to complete the APP survey, distributed information about CKAF and other KAC programs and services, and promoted the KAC Membership

program.

- Nan Yeomans open office hours — offered in lieu of the Drop in Day
- Family Day 2025
- Individual meetings with artists, arts workers, CKAF applicants, Nan Yeomans applicants
- Participation in programming (as a presenter, speaker, or panelist) for external organizations, including:
  - Grants and Loans Workshop, KEYS' CEO Program — 5 May 2025 and 24 November 2025
  - FUSION Conference — 30 May 2025
  - Mentorship Café, Spring Reverb — 31 May 2025
  - Creative Cities Conference (Tett Centre tours) — 8-9 October 2025
  - Presentations to visiting tour groups throughout the year

## **Nan Yeomans Grant for Artistic Development**

The KAC administers the Nan Yeomans Grant for Artistic Development in partnership with the Community Foundation for Kingston & Area. The grant is used to support the career development, focused training, and education for one artist annually (aged 17-40). The 2025 recipient was Lee Jones, a multidisciplinary artist working primarily in e-textiles.

## **Communications**

KAC continued to administer key communications resources for the arts sector in Kingston throughout 2025, striving to strengthen our role as Kingston's go-to resource for all things arts. Such resources include the Arts Events Calendar, Arts Job Board, Opportunities Board, and Grants Board.

The KAC Newsletter — formerly ArtsBuzz — was revamped in 2025, offering a new look, utilizing a new platform to increase engagement and improve functionality and insights. An additional quarterly newsletter was introduced for KAC Members. KAC Staff additionally developed a new outreach list to enhance communications and outreach efforts, with emphasis on equity-deserving groups. We will continue to strive to expand and enhance our communications efforts, engage new audiences, and strengthen regional ties in 2026.

## **KAC Staff and Volunteers**

Nicole Daniels (Executive Director, FTE, March 2023-present), B.C. Gorrie (Program and Communications Coordinator, FTE, July 2024-present), and Katherine Dionne (Administrative Assistant, PTE, January 2023-present) have remained on staff. Shamara Peart was additionally hired in the role of Program Administration (FTE, June-October 2025) supported by Canada Summer Jobs and charitable gaming funds.

To support the implementation of the new CKAF Framework, Shamara Peart was onboarded in

the role of Grants Administrator in December 2025 on a short-term contract, which has since been extended to March 2027. Shamara is presently focusing exclusively on CKAF 2026 implementation, while Katherine's work is focused on the administration of previous CKAF years (collecting final reports, agreements, etc.). Nicole is also focused primarily on CKAF 2026 administration, while also balancing key executive duties including strategic planning, operational planning, financial management, and staffing. B.C. is primarily responsible for KAC programs and communications, with oversight and direction from Nicole.

KAC strengthened its volunteer program in 2025, maintaining 6 core volunteers supporting administrative tasks, bingo shifts, and public events.

## **KAC Board**

The KAC Board continues to work to strengthen the organization and provide key operational, financial, and strategic guidance. As of 2025, the Executive Committee consists of Joe Pagnan (Interim Chair), Amanda Baker (Vice Chair), Nevena Martinović (Secretary), and Megan Morris (Treasurer). Clelia Scala and Diane Black stepped down from their executive positions but remain on the board. Rae McDonald and Brett Christopher completed their terms and stepped down from the board, and both now sit on the Advisory Committee. Patrick Cameron terminated his role on the Board in July 2025. We additionally onboarded four new members: Sol Castañeda, Alex McLean, Caroline Hogan, and Megan Morris. We now have a total of nine board members and two Advisory Committee members. Additional prospective board members have been interviewed, with a goal of onboarding new members in staggered succession. The search for a permanent Chair continues.

## **Additional Funding**

Additional funding received by the KAC to support the 2025-2025 fiscal year includes:

- \$12,146 — Ontario Arts Council, Operating Grant (Year 1 of three-year funding cycle)
- \$5,406 — EDSC, Canada Summer Jobs
- \$6,000 — Community Foundation for Kingston and Area (Nan Yeomans program)
- \$10,871 — Play! Gaming and Entertainment (charitable gaming funds)
- \$4,599 — Membership dues, donations, and other earned revenue

## **Thank you!**

We deeply appreciate the support, trust, and investment in the KAC demonstrated by the City of Kingston throughout 2025 and our many years of collaboration. Your ongoing support is essential to ensuring we can continue to offer critical, high-quality programs and services to artists and their organizations in Kingston. Many thanks to City staff for their tireless work in support of our local arts sector! We look forward to continuing and growing our working

relationship, and are excited to see what the next two years will bring to the City of Kingston Arts Fund and the broader Kingston community. Should you have any questions about this report, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicole Daniels', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Nicole Daniels  
Executive Director  
Kingston Arts Council

Attached:

Trial Balance, 1 April 2025 – 5 March 2026

Profit and Loss Statement, 1 April 2025 – 5 March 2026

Audited Financial Statements, 2024-2025

KAC Annual Report, 2024-2025