



Resilient
Futures
in the Arts.
2023

Making the arts work and thrive

Summary Report



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E.J. Alon, Joy Bailey-Bryant, Stéphane Gauthier*

This report is prepared by Art + Public UnLtd,
Programming Lead for the Canadian Arts Summit.

Thanks to David Maggs, Metcalf Fellow on Arts and Society; Christine Loewen, Executive Director, Opera Association of Canada; and Jagroop Mehta, Program Manager Mass Culture for contributing their notes from the sessions.

*Photos by Philip Maglieri.



Resilient Futures in the Arts. 2023

Making the arts work and thrive

People are at the heart of the Canadian arts sector. While needs and practices are evolving, the desire to nurture a strong and collaborative workforce, champion artists, and create resonant experiences for audiences remains constant. At the 2023 Canadian Arts Summit, we envisioned a vibrant and resilient futures through workshops, socials, panels and peer-to-peer sessions. We all want the arts to thrive – *let's work together to make it happen.*

On April 16 to 18, 2023, Business / Arts hosted the **Canadian Arts Summit**, an annual national conference for executive leadership in the arts sector.

In 2023, the event took place across three venues in downtown Toronto, with the opening night events hosted at the **Royal Conservatory of Music**, two Summit days hosted at the **Art Gallery of Ontario**, and closing with a tour of the **Museum of Contemporary Art Toronto**.

Delegates attended from 9 provinces as well as the United States. In total, there were **176 delegates in attendance**, 131 of whom attended all three days of programming. Of the total attendees, 84 had not previously attended a Canadian Arts Summit.

The following report outlines the structure and content of the Summit. Our programming approach sought to draw on the insights and expertise of the Steering Committee, to address key concerns for arts leadership today, with the goal of developing a program that was both inspiring and offered tangible takeaways. This objective ran through the structure of the Summit, which included carefully framed panels and dynamic roster of panelists, as well as action oriented breakout sessions. There was a structural commitment to artists and artistic practices as a core aspect of the work being done, highlighting the work of the artist as essential and the role of the artist in interpreting reality and envisioning change.

The Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity has proudly partnered with Business / Arts to convene the Canadian Arts Summit since its inception in 1998. This longstanding and unique leadership forum provides arts leaders with the opportunity to come together and strategically contribute to the advancement of key issues across the sector. Throughout the years, the Summit has remained a vital platform for bringing together leading voices to help shape the future of arts in Canada.

The 2023 Canadian Arts Summit served as a powerful reminder of the importance of holding these national conversations. The programming and conversations not only reflected the challenging times we are facing but also provided practical insights for moving forward together.

Looking ahead, we are excited to host the 2024 Canadian Arts Summit in Banff. We eagerly anticipate welcoming Summit delegates in March 2024 as we continue our shared journey toward fostering a vibrant and resilient arts and culture sector.



Chris Lowray
President & CEO
Banff Centre for the Arts



Mark Wold
Dean of Arts and Leadership
Banff Centre for the Arts

The 2023 Canadian Arts Summit was a highly anticipated gathering that brought together arts leaders from across Canada. This long-awaited reunion in Toronto served as a catalyst for envisioning **vibrant and resilient futures in the arts**. It provided a platform to come together, reflect on the evolving needs and practices of the arts sector and explore ways to nurture a vibrant and collaborative workforce.

Beyond the enriching professional programming, the Summit provided valuable opportunities to establish new connections and reconnect with colleagues. These connections will continue to drive innovation as we carry the inspiration and ideas generated by the 2023 Summit into our respective organizations and across the sector.

Throughout the Summit, speakers considered how to centre artist voices within our institutions while also keeping audience needs at our core. As we considered the path to the future, there was reflection among the delegation about how to leverage the power, influence and resources of the largest institutions to support the recovery and vitality of the arts and culture sector as a whole.

We thank all the speakers, panelists, facilitators and delegates for participating in this year's Summit and look forward to see you all next year in Banff!



Monica Esteves
Executive Director, Canadian Stage
Steering Committee Co-chair



Maya Choldin
Executive Director, Theatre Calgary
Steering Committee Co-chair

Program Overview with Discussion Takeaways

The following section gives an overview of the 2023 Canadian Arts Summit program, with high level synthesis of the conversations and content of the various panels, workshops and sessions. It is our aim to communicate the main takeaways and highlights of the various conversations throughout the Summit to enable further discussion and inform future programming.

Sunday April 16th

📍 TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning

- Welcome from Anishinaabe Traditional **Grandmother Kim Wheatley**
- Opening remarks from **Maya Choldin** and **Monica Esteves**
- Onstage performance by **The Ostara Project**
- Keynote conversation between **Ken Lum** and **Elamin Abdelmehmoud**
- Opening reception performance by **Ziibiwan**

Grandmother Kim Wheatley celebrated the famous acoustics of Koerner Hall with resounding buffalo calls and welcomed delegates with words about our relations through time and space, and our responsibilities to each other.

In keeping with the desire to foreground the importance of an artist's work and the role artists play in imagining our collective sustainable future, the keynote presentation was a conversation between venerated artist **Ken Lum** and pop culture writer and broadcaster **Elamin Abdelmehmoud**. Lum and Abdelmehmoud discussed public institutions' relationships with their audiences, and opportunities for radical shifts in the relationship between institutional narratives and the lived experiences of the public they serve.



Monica Esteves, Maya Choldin*



Grandmother Kim Wheatley*



Ken Lum, Elamin Abdelmehmoud*

“ Monuments and large public institutions transmit institutionalized memory while everyday life transmits memories that are lived and therefore embodied. ”
Ken Lum

Opening night featured performances both on stage and off, with all-female jazz band **The Ostara Project** and the social cocktail hour was curated with the ambient sounds of **Ziibiwan**, an Anishinaabe electronic music DJ whose own compositions draw on a deep knowledge of global Indigenous musical practices and sounds.



Ziibiwan
Photo courtesy of Ziibiwan.



The Ostara Project*



Members of the CAS Steering Committee, from Left to Right: Monica Esteves, Mark Williams, Mark Wold, John G. Hampton, Aubrey Reeves, Alisa Palmer, Maya Choldin, Robert J. Foster, Anne Chafe*
Committee members not pictured: Angela Cassie, Bruce Munro Wright, Paul Laroque

Monday April 17th

📍 Art Gallery of Ontario

Panel Discussion – Sustainability & Shifting Landscape - Labour

The show doesn't go on without all the people behind the scenes making it happen. There has been a lot of movement in the labour landscape over the past year. This panel looked across the arts sector in Canada to examine HR issues and strategies including retention, health and wellness, equity, and succession.

“ We are seeing an overwhelming trend post-pandemic of employees placing their trust in the organizations where they work, much more so than in government or media. ”

Kimberly Levasseur Puhach

“ This [EDIA] is no longer the responsibility of the HR department - it is a collective responsibility of leadership. ”

Janet Dodge

“ Collective care is important and this comes from understanding each other's work. ”

Jason Murray

“ People are complicated, let's make our frameworks very simple. ”

Janet Dodge

“ Internal changes need to reflect outside changes. ”

Jason Murray

One of the key issues learned from the pandemic is the importance of focusing on the role that human resources plays in the success of an organization. This conversation centered around labour, and more specifically, retention, succession, and equity. There was a focus on the well-being of employees, as core to their performance and retention. With many organizations focusing on cultivating a more diverse complement of staff, panelists spoke about the need to improve access to mentors, opportunities, resources and the need to design and encourage growth paths to senior leadership. Equity, diversity and inclusion efforts are not to be siloed under a human resources department, but rather are the responsibility of the collective leadership team.

Moderator:
Anne Chafe
CEO, The Rooms

Kimberley Levasseur Puhach
Vice President, People, Culture & Growth,
Canadian Museum for Human Rights



Photo by Philip Maglieri

Janet Dodge
Vice President, People & Culture,
MaRS Discovery District

Jason Murray
President & Managing Partner,
BIPOC Executive Search



Panel Discussion – Advocacy & Messaging

The aftershocks of the pandemic are still being felt, unsettling the foundations of our sector. This panel discussed strategies for collective advocacy and championing arts organizations in the face of broader social uncertainties.

“ We're struggling, we're hurting, we need support: That was a very effective message for two years. And I can tell you, we really have heard from government that that's not the right message now. The message we're hearing from government: they are looking for areas to invest in, areas of growth that will return. ”

Michael Murray

“ The pandemic brought about an opportunity to look at structures that were not serving people and...as we think about reframing our messages around rebuilding, can we continue to address those issues and rebuild differently in a stronger way that serves more folks? ”

Alysa Procida

“ The function of reaching consensus is challenging for our sector because our sector grew to be quite broad and our sector grew to have many different voices. And I don't think that's a bad thing. I think, in fact, for the equity conversation, it's fantastic. We have a precedence of having many different voices, disciplined voices, regional voices, and equity-based voices. ”

Michael Murray

For the government the pandemic may be ‘over’ but for arts organizations, especially when looking at audiences, it is not. Organizations are focused on how to build more equitable structures coming out of the pandemic; these changes are some of the positive outcomes of the pandemic. Larger organizations are turning to partnerships and collaborations with emerging, smaller organizations (ex: BIPOC-led, that bring more diverse voices to the table) to co-create, pool resources/funds and amplify programming.

Core challenges within advocacy for arts and culture include ‘speaking with one voice’ as a sector in building advocacy messages, with the acknowledgement that many communities, artists and organizations face unique and distinct challenges. Panelists also stressed that advancing an argument around the value of arts and culture as rooted in economic development terms can be difficult to quantify and at times harmful to some communities if processes become exploitative.

Moderator:
Sean Casey, Managing Director,
Arts & Culture, PAA Advisory | Conseils

Michael Murray
CEO
Ontario Arts Council

Kathleen Sharpe
Executive Director,
Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund



Photo by Philip Maglieri

Joy Bailey-Bryant
President, US, Lord Cultural Resources

Alysa Procida
Executive Director, Inuit Art Foundation



Culture Days Presentation

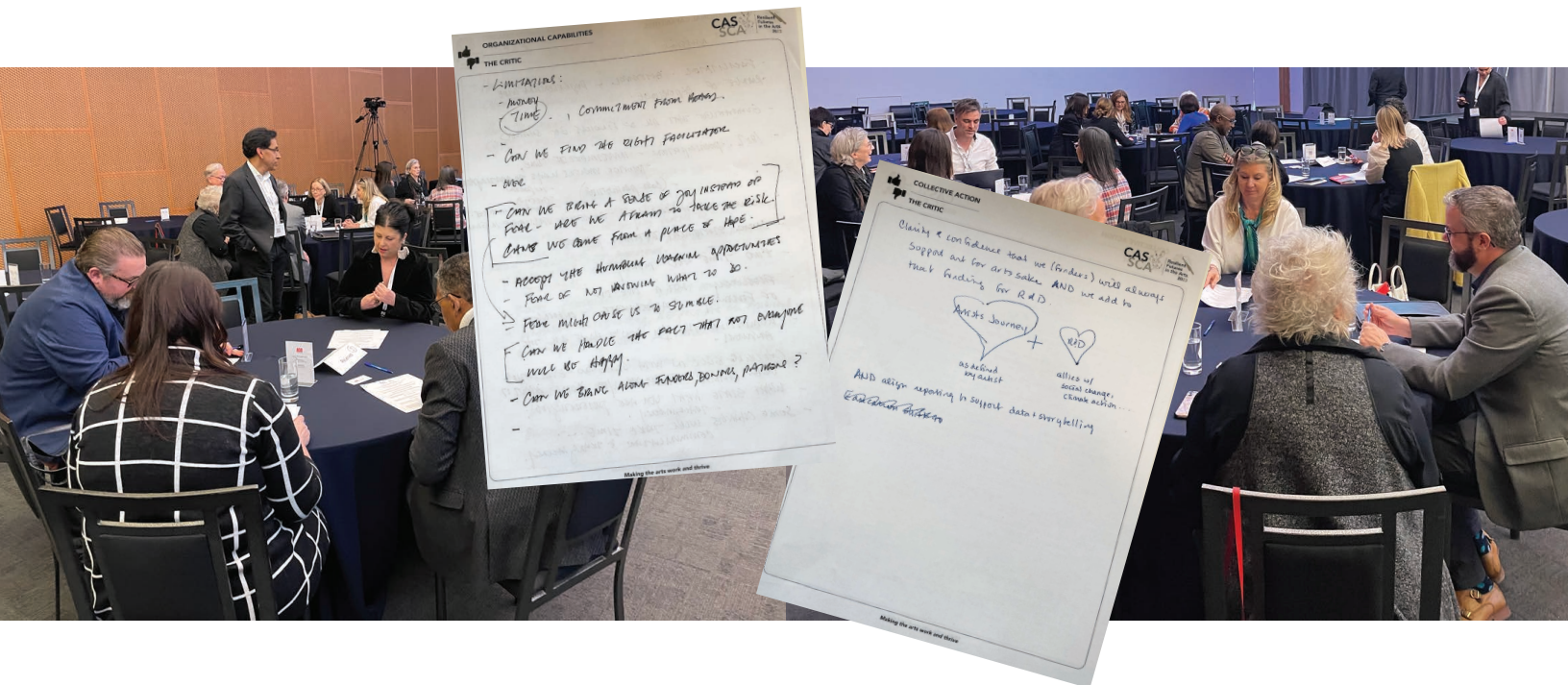
Before the Breakout sessions, Culture Days Executive Director, **Shannon Bowler** and Board member **Mervon Mehta** gave a 10 minute presentation, which included the latest stats and participation data for the national celebration of arts, culture and creativity. With 10% of Canada’s population participating and an increasingly young and diverse audience, they made an open invitation to delegate organizations to tap into this audience development opportunity.

Visioning Breakout Sessions

Delegates were invited to one of four breakout session groups centered on the Canadian Arts Summit guiding pillars: **Collective Action, Advocacy, Organizational Capabilities and Cultural Shifts**. These workshops were facilitated by leaders in the field, guiding groups through a visioning activity to support insightful conversations, creative problem solving and actionable takeaways.

There were moments of working together on an activity and connecting through sharebacks and discussion. It was a unique opportunity in the Summit to think big, connect with peers and generate discourse on some of the most pressing issues in the arts.

Taking inspiration from Walt Disney’s creative strategy, the activity for the breakout sessions encouraged small groups to work together and take turns wearing three ‘hats’: *the Dreamer, the Realist, and the Critic*. Groups worked through provocations related to the theme of the session, generated ideas, strengthened them through creative problem solving and shared takeaways to the wider group.



Key takeaways across the groups included:

COLLECTIVE ACTION

A focus on one major challenge facing the sector and society at large.

Facilitator: Monica Esteves – 2023 Canadian Arts Summit Co-Chair & Executive Director, Canadian Stage

TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ Conversations focused on the need for the arts to appeal to ‘everyday’ Canadians, with deep thinking on reaching a broader public(s) and audiences.
- ✓ Delegates identified a need to increase communications, in a democratic matter, about the ways to participate in the arts. Just as, for example, children are taught to ride bikes widely, so should they be exposed to art and culture as a fundamental ‘value’ or skill in our society.
- ✓ Some lines of inquiry included, *"What if arts and culture was considered as integral as health and education?"*

ADVOCACY

A focus on using our collective voice, as leaders in Canada’s cultural sector to influence public policy.

Facilitators: Tara Mazurk – Director, Arts & Culture, PAA Advisory | Conseils
Andrew Walker – Senior Advisor & Client Director, PAA Advisory | Conseils

TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ Conversations centered around redistribution of power, stability and working together. While participants all seek stability for arts funding, stability does not have to be rigidity. Stability on shifting terrain means moving and being flexible.
- ✓ Topics included the data shift - not just with a focus on KPIs but also on belonging.
- ✓ Questions like *"who is in community?"* were raised, with thinking around how innovative funding approaches with the government could advance arts stability.
- ✓ Endowment assessment, an update of the Massey Commission and Canada Culture Pass ideas surfaced.



ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITIES

A focus on the practical elements of what it takes to be a leader in the arts today.

Facilitator: Upkar Arora – Co-Chair, Why Not Theatre

TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ Building on some of the themes Ken Lum highlighted in the keynote conversation around radical transformation, further developed in the first panel, conversations focused around the need for strong leadership to include honesty, transparent self-reflection and sharing of failures.
- ✓ *Delegates discussed the need for 'more voices at the table' - including those that are outside of the organization, for example through 'reverse mentorship' (pairing youth with leaders to learn about future audiences).*
- ✓ The need to lead with joy and hope rang through as well as the need to communicate arts' value to society, its contribution, as well as its purpose in attracting more diverse leaders to organizations.

CULTURAL SHIFTS

A focus on exploring the rapidly shifting arts & culture landscape.

Facilitator: Maya Choldin – 2023 Canadian Arts Summit Co-Chair & Executive Director, Theatre Calgary

TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ Most of the groups in this breakout session focused on investigating the first prompt - "What motivates new audiences to seek out art and culture experiences?"
- ✓ Conversations focused on developing new audiences and how to make them feel welcome and creating "frictionless" experiences. For example, *creating more access for children and youth to experience art creates future champions for the arts.*
- ✓ The group explored impact investing and creating platforms to pitch ideas to investors, communicating return of capital, tax credit incentives, etc and the overall need for arts to generate new approaches to working with the private sector.





Honorable Minister Rodriguez*

Remarks by the Honorable Minister Rodriguez closed out the day's programming.

Minister Rodriguez began his comments with heartfelt thanks to the arts sector for providing succour during the depth of the pandemic and for continuing to enrich and enliven our communities.

As we move into the future, the Minister expressed that Canadian Heritage wants to work alongside the arts and culture sector for the long-term. His goals include renewing the Canadian museum policy, modernizing employment insurance and moving forward with Bill C11.



Jenn Goodwin Dance Company*



The Monday program ended with a social hour for delegates. Set within the Galleria Italia, this social time also included a site-specific dance performance from **Jenn Goodwin Dance Company** by Jenn Goodwin with Sarah Doucet, Nicola Pantin and Anastasia Delyon. Costumes and styling by Sarah Doucet.

Tuesday April 18th

📍 Art Gallery of Ontario

Diversity Necessity: How to welcome newcomers

Institute for Canadian Citizenship CEO **Daniel Bernhard** kicked off the day with a 15 minute presentation on **Canoo**, their newcomer cultural access pass.

Packed with detailed audience data from the 137,000 members, Daniel's presentation up-ended some common assumptions about newcomer audiences and arts participation.

Canoo members are highly educated, high earners and 92% of Canoo members return to the places that welcomed them via the access pass. His data showed that 80% of users are under the age of 45 and members often bundle activities and build travel plans around arts and culture programming based on access through the Canoo app.

Panel Discussion – Engagement & Representation

The arts thrive when more people have a stake in their success. Creating governance, workforce and programming that is inclusive of new voices leads to a more dynamic conversation, and a more invested workforce and audience. This panel considered how organizations can foster inclusive practices that nurture their organizations, grow their support and cultivate future leaders.

“ There was a thousand people that showed up. And my fellow partner said, those people never come to our shows. Where do they come from? Well, they're new to Sudbury, and if you show someone on stage that they identify with, well, they'll show up. ”

Stephane Gautier

“ The conversation around representation is the beginning of a much broader, deeper conversation. I think that there's a real urgency in terms of a mindset shift from going from this idea of allyship where 'I do because I'm good', to radical solidarity, where 'I do for the collective good'. ”

Seema Jethalal

“ Institutions can't always expect people to come to them. So recently, we've been going out. You go and meet people where they are...we realized if we only do things within the gallery, we're not creating a place of belonging. ”

Sirish Rao

“ We're not even close to reaching the stage of recovery in our community....and we need artists more than ever in this moment to help us make sense of things that make no sense, to help us make meaning of things that appear to not have any meaning. For those of you who center artists in your work, in what you do every day, thank you, and we need you more than ever. ”

Patti Pon

“ A lot of this work in terms of figuring out how to engage new communities, or shift power structures, or reinvent the model, figure out which rules to keep and which ones to throw out the window comes from a lot of deep listening. ”

Seema Jethalal

“ It's about will. Do we have the will to get it wrong and to make mistakes and to go back out there and repair and rebuild trust and to try again? Engagement is about not just the will to engage but the will to invest. ”

Seema Jethalal

The panel touched on engagement from the perspective of internal practices as well as outward facing programming. Changes include accommodations within job descriptions, more targeted outreach, distribution in diverse communities and through channels that reach diverse markets, and making their own learnings public in order to benefit the sector, engaging an Elder in Residence, etc.

The panel referred to Ken Lum's keynote reference to radically reimagining relationships with the public, to think about moving from a place of compliance or good intentions to a place of leading change; going from this idea of allyship to solidarity. From a programming perspective this translates to thinking not just about what an institution is programming, but how it is also able to promote the work of smaller and diverse cultural organizations already working with the audiences you seek to attract. The conversation referred to the advocacy panel of the previous day, suggesting this activity is actually about influencing not elected officials, but the voting public.

Moderator:

E.J. Alon, Executive Lead Creative
Impact, Revenue, Canadian Film Centre

Stéphane Gauthier
Directeur général et culture
Carrefour francophone

Seema Jethalal
Consultant



Photo by Philip Maglieri

Sirish Rao
Director of Public Engagement &
Learning, Vancouver Art Gallery

Patti Pon
President & CEO
Calgary Arts Development



Panel Discussion – Success, Impact & The Future

We're in this together. Drawing on the insights from the past two days, speakers reflected across the different panels' focuses, to discuss strategies for sector collaboration, co-creating and sustaining resilient futures in the arts.

“ There is a thread of thinking about action that is less about doing more, and more about doing it together. ”

John G. Hampton

“ We know the value of culture and what it contributes to our communities. But it ultimately comes down to not convincing government, but to convincing our general taxpayer society about the value of what we bring. ”

Chris Lorway

“ It's not about how we radically transform, but how we respond to the fact that transformation is happening around us. ”

John G. Hampton

“ Arts expediences can be a gateway for new immigrants, where you can define yourself as a Canadian through cultural experience and finding your community within this country. ”

Chris Lorway

“ What if the act of creating becomes as important as breathing? As technology changes the way we see work... what if we find more time? ... the site of purpose will change from what you do to make a living to something else. What if we could will that act of purpose to be the act of making, so that people's meaning comes from the act of making? That's a radical transformation of what we think of as the value of the arts in our society. ”

Ana Serrano

“ There's a barrier that we put up: we exhibit art and then we function as bureaucrats or administrators. And breaking down that barrier because we're talking about this need for radical change within the institution; artists have radical ideas, that is part of their practice. ”

John G. Hampton

Reflecting on the events and panels over the past two days, this final panel shifted to future thinking, asking 'what do delegates carry forward into their work?' There was a continuous through-line from open to closing, of interconnection: from Grandmother Kim welcoming everyone with a reminder of how we all exist in relation to each other and to the world around us, through Ken Lum's talk about radically reimagining our institutions as necessarily heterogeneous, through numerous mentions of collective care and notions of advocacy as a multivocal pursuit.

This final panel reflected on the role of the summit itself, noting a key takeaway from breakout sessions being the necessity to unify efforts in order to have impact, while at the same time acknowledging that a vast number of arts organizations across disciplines and geography are not included in these conversations. While big institutions can assume a certain level of stability and responsibility, there's such fragility across the arts sector. The sector requires thoughtfulness around the degree and manner in which we instrumentalize transformation; to make the change that delegates desire to make, in order to ensure relevance, resilience and sustainability, over the long term.

“ A whole interrogation of how we position our sector is needed. You don't have to go to a conservatory and emerge an artist to be legitimate. This is something we really have to question. ”

Chris Lorway

“ The dream of collectivity with the paradox of trying to unify because we're in this battle for our survival, but we're not a unified front. ”

Owais Lightwala

Moderator:
Owais Lightwala, Assistant Professor,
Production, Toronto Metropolitan University

Chris Lorway
President & CEO,
Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity



Photo by Philip Maglieri

John G. Hampton, Executive
Director & CEO, MacKenzie Art Gallery

Ana Serrano, President &
Vice-Chancellor, OCAD University



CLOSING: MOCA Toronto Tour

Delegates ended the Summit with an optional tour of the current exhibitions at **Museum of Contemporary Art Toronto**, which included a solo exhibition of **Kipwani Kiwanga**, who will be representing Canada at the 2024 Venice Biennale.



Photo courtesy of The Museum of Contemporary Art Toronto
Photo by Laura Findlay.

Thank you our partners

There is power in partnership.

We are grateful to our partners and sponsors for their support of the 2023 Canadian Arts Summit. This year, Canadian Arts Summit delegates returned to an in person gathering for the first time since 2019. Over 175 delegates, all executive leaders, represented the cultural interests of Canadians in communities from Victoria to Charlottetown.

Thank you!

Our partners, sponsors, and corporate members are helping to shape the future of the arts in Canada. If you'd like to learn more, please contact: [Jennifer Green - jennifer@businessforthearts.org](mailto:jennifer@businessforthearts.org)

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