
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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May 1, 2021

Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport

Island and Coastal artists, organizations pivot through the pandemic

VICTORIA – On Vancouver Island and the Coast, 60 artists and arts and culture organizations are getting support to adapt to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“People in the arts have used their ingenuity to find new ways to keep creating despite the pandemic,” said Melanie Mark, Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport. “Artists are so vital to our social and cultural fabric. These grants are empowering artists and organizations throughout B.C. to adapt their platforms so they can continue inspiring us.”

Faced with temporary closures of venues and restricted audience sizes, artists and organizations have found ways to keep creating and reaching their audiences. To support these necessary pivots, the B.C. government is providing a total of \$1.26 million in grants to 60 artists and organizations on the Island and Coast.

For example, Puente Theatre in Victoria received a grant to create a digital version of its international collaboration 43, enabling the company to employ artists and reach their audience while theatres are closed. It will also create opportunities for artists of colour in the community. Victoria artist Farheen HaQ also got a grant to learn sound editing, composition and vocal work with other South Asian and Indigenous female artists.

These grants to support arts and culture organizations’ recovery are made possible in part through \$5.3 million from StrongerBC: BC’s Economic Recovery Plan. The BC Arts Council administered the grants, which are now fully distributed. More than 135 artists and 155 organizations throughout B.C. have received a total of \$6.6 million to support their adaptations.

Quotes:

Bob D’Eith, Parliamentary Secretary for Arts and Film –

“We know artists and arts and culture organizations have struggled this past year because they can’t welcome live audiences. We’ve worked closely with the sector to understand their needs and support them to pivot. It’s encouraging to see these projects take shape and to hear these stories of resilience.”

Michele Babchuk, MLA for North Island –

“We have all had to learn and adapt to new ways of doing things during the pandemic, and this has been a particular challenge for the arts and culture community that relies heavily on in-person exposition. I’m so pleased to see continued support for our local community arts festivals and artists through these challenging times and look forward to being able to see their work in person when we’re all able to gather again.”

Mercedes Bádiz-Benét, artistic director, Puente Theatre –

“This grant turns a challenge into an opportunity, enabling us to connect with our audiences using exciting new digital tools and helping us to learn new skills that we can use even when the pandemic is over. We’re enormously grateful to the BC Arts Council for its faith in us.”

Farheen HaQ, artist –

“I appreciate the opportunity to expand my skill set so that I can still create in this difficult pandemic time. Getting to collaborate and learn from fellow South Asian and Indigenous artists is exciting, because it strengthens our community and our practices.”

Quick Facts:

- Through StrongerBC, the B.C. government has provided \$35 million in targeted recovery funding to the arts and culture sector through the BC Arts Council.
- From April 2020 to March 2021, the BC Arts Council distributed more than 3,000 grants provincewide - the most grants the council has ever distributed.
- Thanks to investments from the B.C. government, the BC Arts Council’s budget for 2021-22 is \$39.6 million, a record high.

Learn More:

To see the full list of Pivot grant recipients: <https://www.bcartscouncil.ca/funding/recipient/>

Follow BC Arts Council on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BCArtsCouncil>

Or Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BritishColumbiaArtsCouncil>

A backgrounder follows.

Contact:

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BACKGROUND

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Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport

Provincial relief, recovery support for B.C. arts and culture

The Province has provided a range of relief and recovery support to artists and arts and culture organizations since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Through StrongerBC: BC's Economic Recovery Plan, the provincial government is providing \$35 million in targeted recovery funding through the BC Arts Council, including:

- \$14 million in supplemental funding in March 2021 to 588 organizations that receive annual funding or project grants to help keep their lights on;
- \$15.7 million in supplemental funding in fall 2020 to 556 organizations that receive annual funding or project grants to help keep their lights on; and
- \$5.3 million to help 155 arts and culture organizations adapt to the challenges of the pandemic through the Pivot Program.

In addition to this targeted funding, the B.C. government, through the BC Arts Council, has provided or is providing:

- \$1.3 million to help professional artists adapt to the challenges of the pandemic in the new Pivot for Individuals program;
- a \$3-million supplement to arts and culture organizations in spring 2020;
- \$15 million in accelerated 2020-21 operating funding to BC Arts Council clients to help with their cash flow;
- \$4 million to 97 arts and culture organizations to improve their existing arts spaces and buy special equipment through the council's new Arts Infrastructure program;
- \$150,000 in micro grants to 108 artists to help them adapt to changes in the sector (in partnership with Yosef Wosk Family Foundation and City of Vancouver);
- \$200,000 to the Vancouver Foundation to support its Community Response Fund; and
- \$123,000 to the BC Museums Association for micro grants to 49 small and medium-sized museums to help them meet their immediate needs.

The BC Arts Council has also extended grant deadlines and changed reporting requirements to make it easier for grant recipients during the pandemic.

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