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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2021TACS0031-000789  
May 1, 2021

Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport

### **Interior artists, organizations pivot through the pandemic**

NELSON – More than 30 artists and arts and culture organizations in the Interior 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 nearly \$782,000 in grants to 34 artists and organizations throughout the Interior.

For example, the Oxygen Art Centre in Nelson received a grant to produce a series of demonstration videos and two online workshops for youth to teach them about contemporary art practices and concepts. The project will offer Kootenay youth the opportunity to learn artistic techniques, art history and critical theory. Blackfoot filmmaker Damien Eagle Bear, living in Penticton, also got a grant to collaborate with emerging Indigenous writers developing screenwriting skills.

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.”

##### **Brittney Anderson, MLA for Nelson-Creston –**

“Artists are creative by nature, and their work is helping keep our spirits up throughout the pandemic. When artists had to change how their work is presented, their creativity shone again. I’m inspired by their ingenuity and am encouraged to see artists across the Interior getting the support they need.”

**Julia Prudhomme, executive director, Oxygen Arts Centre –**

“We appreciate this support from the Province so much right now. It’s a vote of confidence that we can find ways to pivot and that the government is helping us maintain our operations. We look forward to being able to continue arts education for youth virtually.”

**Damien Eagle Bear, filmmaker –**

“I’m thankful for this support especially after this last year. It’s great to see more opportunities to support the arts and culture sector from the B.C. government. I’m excited to work with my fellow Indigenous artists in sharpening our screenwriting techniques.”

**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/recipients/>

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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### **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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