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| Topic | Gathering 2 of 2: How do the priorities of a “creative hub” intersect with Indigenous groups/spaces and our work in collaboratively developing spaces of cultural production? | | |
| Date | Thursday, January 31, 2019 | Location | Waterloo Indigenous Student Centre; University of Waterloo |
| Host(s) | ArtsBuild Ontario and Waterloo Indigenous Student Centre; University of Waterloo | | |
| Participants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shawn Johnson, Events Coordinator, Waterloo Indigenous Student Centre ● Heather Majaury, Artistic Associate, MT Space ● Nikita Larter, Artist/Activist ● Luke Swinson, Artist ● JP Longboat, Artistic Director/Founder, Circadia Indigena ● Jenn Cole, Student, Brock University ● Catherine Dallaire, Artist, University of Waterloo ● Crystal Mowry, Senior Curator, KWAG ● Emily Robson, Coordinator, Arts & Creative Industries, City of Kitchener ● Sonya Poweska, Culture Program Specialist, City of Waterloo ● Maxine Byam, Senior Program Advisor, Department of Canadian Heritage ● William Chesney, Board Member, Waterloo Region Arts Fund ● Janis Monture, Director of Tourism & Cultural Initiatives; Six Nations Tourism ● Patricia McKinna, Executive Director, ArtsBuild Ontario ● Alex Glass, Program & Assistant Executive Director, ArtsBuild Ontario | | |
| Notetaker(s) | Alex Glass, Program & Assistant Executive Director, ArtsBuild Ontario | | |
| Facilitator(s) | Janis Monture, Director of Tourism & Cultural Initiatives; Six Nations Tourism | | |
| Invitation | <p>On behalf of ArtsBuild Ontario, the Waterloo Indigenous Student Centre and of the Mass Culture / Mobilisation culturelle initiative, we would like to invite you to join us for a gathering around the topic/question: How do the priorities of a “creative hub” intersect with Indigenous groups/spaces and our work in collaboratively developing spaces of cultural production?</p> <p>Working in partnership with the Waterloo Indigenous Student Centre, we will be hosting two gatherings on this topic.</p> <p>Gathering #1: This meeting will be with artists, activists and academics who identify as Indigenous. The goal of this meeting will be to introduce</p> | | |

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| | <p>Mass Culture, introduce the discussion question, and identify what could be discussed at Gathering #2.</p> <p>Gathering #2: This meeting will be with artists, activists and academics who identify as Indigenous, as well as municipalities, funders, arts leaders, artists and urban planners. The goal of this meeting is to have dialogue around perspectives and thoughts, research, missing voices around the table and resources.</p> <p>The goal of this gathering on January 31 is to have a dialogue around the topic of Indigenous spaces and creative hubs – to share perspectives and thoughts, research, missing voices around the table and resources. We are inviting a group of those who are engaged on this topic at different levels for an informal conversation. This gathering will be facilitated by Janis Monture, Director of Tourism & Cultural Initiatives with Six Nations Tourism.</p> |
| <p>Perspectives and thoughts</p> | <p>RECAP FROM GATHERING #1</p> <p>Defining a creative hub and identifying the need for Indigenous arts space:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A creative hub is inclusive of people, age, and is multidisciplinary - a real community in every sense of the word. The hub should be a place for people to brave. ● There is a lack of an Indigenous space in the community. Currently in KW, specific Indigenous events are held through the universities, which makes it difficult for those outside the school to get connected. <p>If you had a creative space, what would you want there?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The space should present a lot of possibility. It should be flexible, with moveable walls, allowing the space to take on different configurations. There needs to be visibly on our walls, our art. There should also be a good kitchen to support the importance of food, creativity happens around food. ● There needs to be space for gathering and meeting. ● It needs access to natural light. ● It needs to be parent and child friendly. ● Beyond structural integrity, can we build links in places other than us? Travel and exchange also need to be considered – laying seeds and making them grow. <p>How do we make it our space and make it inclusive?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The space should be Indigenous run, not based on a western governance model - and work with other communities that respect our mission. But it is up us. ● To create an accessible space, downtown is optimal. But development is expanding with more condos and increased traffic. We discussed that the hub should include outdoor space, but still located downtown. People should be able access the space. |

What research is needed to move forward?

- Look at whose voices are missing around the table, look at students and youth.
- Research structures that allow us to answer each other, rather than debate and defend.

AFTER SHARING RECAP OF GATHERING #1, DISCUSSION CONTINUED WITH ALL PARTICIPANTS IN GATHERING #2**What are your thoughts on what this creative hub in KW could look like?**

- It can be a place to transfer knowledge and a space made for endangered art forms for moose hair and caribou tufting, birch bark biting, birch bark etching, quilting and more.
- Would appreciate a workspace with resources to teach others. The Harbourfront Centre hosted Indigenous Fashion Week and had a workshop space with equipment for a specific trade. It had a kitchen, it's by the lake and had a large space for dancing/big groups of people.
- It could be a place to empower young people, where they have a space, a voice and where their art is shown.
- There is need for land based retreat space. Real green space that is there for artists to go and connect to the land.
- A hub in the downtown area could have a courtyard or something that has medicines and things growing to keep us connected with the land.
- Imagine that there could be multiple locations for creative spaces to allow for community access and land based retreats. We could have an anchor centre for multidisciplinary purposes and create additional spaces as well.
- It need to be accessible to the community. The WRSC's Annual Feast has gotten so big, they can't fit everyone – there is a need for more space like the Doon Museum in Kitchener, but located somewhere downtown to be accessible.

How can we at the table assist in achieving and supporting this kind of creative hub?**Relationships:**

- Work collaboratively and support Indigenous peers. KWAG is working closely with curator Lisa Myers on continual projects, one of which is rebuilding an artist garden that has fallen outside the Woodland Cultural Centre. It is going to be rebuilt twice; once outside Woodland Cultural Centre and once outside KWAG. It is important to build reciprocity and sustain relationships. It is challenging as a colonial institution, and we are always looking at changing practices that are standardized in a museum space.

- The Waterloo Region Arts Fund is embarking on a provisioning exercise. Hope to increase the impact these funds can have on the community.
- Important to sustain relationships, especially after Canada 150. All relationships just disappeared.
- The hub needs Indigenous governance thinking about the people in the space, and about relationships.
- There is an art space in Peterborough committed to Indigenous programming because they have made it a priority. This space showcases artists in the area, such as Allison Williams' quilts. This exhibition combined quilting and dancing in one space.

Colonial spaces and systemic barriers:

- Municipal and systemic barriers are affecting change. Challenged about use of facility assets and creating a compelling case for impact. Have to demonstrate a creative hub goes beyond recreational value in the community.
- A lot of it comes down to education, understanding what role art plays. In Indigenous culture, we don't separate art and culture. Educating people on the outside that it's not just a creative hub – it's a place where we come together.
- We're going to continue to live together, but how do we find a system that is not monetized?
- Cities and governments are very fearful – more of a political movement rather than a goal of working together.
- Constraining from a municipal perspective. There is investment in this community for specific outcomes. It comes down to a fundamental question which is more valuable.
- It is not possible to change colonial institutions. There is more faith in burning something down and rebuilding. Questions for Indigenous creative spaces: Who benefits? Whose capital project is it? Who is the audience?
- Government generally recreates buildings that are torn down. There is no acknowledgement that space existed pre-Canada. There is work needed around inclusivity and rules.
- The business case is what municipalities need to support projects at a municipal level.

Reclamation of space:

- Colonial spaces can compromise Indigenous art. Odawa Native Friendship Centre in Ottawa operates out of former Rideau High School, which has become a community hub shared by other organizations. It has a 650 seat proscenium theatre. There was consideration to transform it into an Indigenous performance space. We have a lot of reclamation to do. We need to build what we need for our own development. But we are challenged right away and always seeking permission.

- Need space on Indigenous land and to find our places on the land. Space in an urban centre does not serve me as an artist. Home is a colonized space, that's not my traditional territory.
- Working in a circle model – with each other and in governance. We can all share our gifts in a respectful way. Reclamation of space needs to happen in this way.

What role does technology play in Indigenous art and space:

- Technology can help us tell our story. Compliment artistic mediums and work with another. There might be some leadership in this.
- There is a requirement for a brick and mortar space, which has been brought up the question of technology.
- Could there be a way to work in both worlds? More exploration that needs to happen. Is this concept more of a network working with allies, community partners?
- Technology needs to tie back to the traditions and how we move forward.
- Thirty percent of Inuit live outside of the Arctic. Fifty percent of Inuit identify as artists. Obviously, we are going to be based in centres. Tech is not accessible to all Indigenous people. Inuit don't have the same quality of tech, so that right is not upheld.

How do we see an Indigenous led creative hub rolling out?

- There needs to be two spaces, a Friendship Centre and an Indigenous Creative Hub. A Friendship Centre doesn't serve me as an artist, otherwise the space forces artistic work to fit into a non-arts space.
- Having two spaces doesn't serve colonial structures, but they are needed.
- Need a space for work training and a place for culture to happen. Funding for space and training is inaccessible right now. There needs to be an effort around the table to bring these two things together – a circle model governance approach that is different.
- Mention of passing on of knowledge, WRAF's mandate supports that kind art making venture.
- Even funded artists have been challenged financially and been on welfare – something is not working.
- Structure is broken on the inside, People on the inside are working to fix it. There are allies on the inside. We need to question if those systems are not working.
- People are sometimes going to get uncomfortable when there are disagreements in these conversations.

What does the leadership in an Indigenous creative hub look like moving forward?

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There needs to be a regional, small working group who want to create an organization or collective. ● The leadership at its core must be Indigenous, an alliance would not necessarily be understood. ● There needs be a protected space for process. We need to develop it – can't be in other places where there is commerciality. ● Affordable living space and below market rent for artists should be included. <p>Any closing comments are welcome at this time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This gathering is centered around a question, and is a first step in community building – no one is giving us a key to a building. ● Happy to be a champion on many ideas. Hope it can come to fruition. ● Is there something we can do now and soon? ● Allies need to go beyond good intention and incite action. ● Disagreement in these conversations is common. We need to be strategic about bringing people together. ● We need to examine what we would do differently for future conversations, need to be convinced to stay a part of this initiative. ● Tired of investing personal time to provide input on collaborative projects. Many are asking for input. ● No fear, no hate, no anger. ● Would like to see this conversation to continue and materialize. |
| <p>What research would be useful?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Research and analyze the needs of artists in town, trans, marginalized community members ● Research structures that allow us to answer each other, rather than debate and defend. ● Research around implementing Ingenious leadership models instead of Colonial governance models ● Research of existing spaces. Case studies on the development of dedicated Indigenous creative hubs as well as multi-disciplinary creative hubs that house Indigenous arts organizations. |
| <p>Whose voices are missing around the table?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Elders and seniors. ● Artists who are homeless now. ● Incarcerated. ● Mental health advocates/practitioners. ● Students, youth |
| <p>Resources & Links (mentioned during</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inuit Art Centre, Winnipeg ● Woodland Cultural Centre ● Odawa Native Friendship Centre, Ottawa ● Waterloo Region Museum, Kitchener |

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| discussion or shared afterwards) | |
| What next steps were mentioned as a result of the Gathering? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ArtsBuild Ontario and the City of Kitchener are working on Indigenous participation in the reconstruction of 44 Gaukel – an arts and teach hub in downtown Kitchener.• The City of Waterloo and the City of Kitchener has offered free space to Indigenous artists, organizations and groups, giving them priority over others. |