

MASS CULTURE'S STRATEGIC PLAN

2021/ 2023



PREPARED BY: MASS CULTURE STAFF

**APPROVED BY:
MASS CULTURE'S WORKING GROUPS IN
SEPTEMBER 2021**

WHY WE CREATED A STRATEGIC PLAN

- To provide clarity to Mass Culture's Network on ongoing and future projects, and key points of engagement
- To conduct effective organizational and programming evaluation to support the health of Mass Culture
- To shape and share Mass Culture's story with the Network and the broader public

MASS culture **MOBILISATION** culturelle



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Mass Culture acknowledges the land on which its offices are located in Toronto on the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

One of Mass Culture's guiding principles is "Reconciliation and Relationship Development: making collaborative action toward mutually beneficial goals between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities." Mass Culture's evolving network has a long way to go. It is not a quick process, but one to pace ourselves in making connections and increasing collective understanding of Indigenous cultural knowledge and experience. In Mass Culture's infancy, we are beginning to honour this principle by better understanding protocol and Indigenous research frameworks, building new relationships and maintaining existing ones in every province and territory, and providing tangible resources for local gatherings and dialogue.

We wish to express gratitude to Mother Earth for the resources we are using, and to honour all the First Nation, Métis and Inuit who have been living on the land since time immemorial. We are grateful, have much more to learn and to move on together.

WHO WE ARE

Mass Culture / Mobilisation culturelle (MC) is a national arts network that strives to generate greater capacity for relevant and engaged research within the arts sector. Mass Culture takes a community based approach providing diverse parties with the context and connections needed to mobilize, in an equitable way, arts and culture research. By convening creative professionals, cultural workers, policy makers and academics, Mass Culture provides a platform for knowledge to be explored, widely understood, and mobilized.

By activating its work through community engagement, Mass Culture is committed to identifying research topics that matter to the arts sector by ensuring that the research is relevant and connected to potential users, and open to multiple perspectives. All of its work is produced into what the network defines as its Research Engagement Strategy (knowledge translation and knowledge mobilization).

Mass Culture is constantly learning and adjusting to the demands of its network. The values of the network and its operations are reflected in its 7 Guiding Principles and its research agenda is designed in collaboration with the arts community.

Whether it be a conversation, sharing communication and media, a gathering, a summit or a formal research project, MC strengthens these activities as an organization that brokers connections and amplifies knowledge derived from intentional engagement.

The arts sector is doing this type of work all the time. Mass Culture, as a part of this landscape of knowledge activity, partners with groups whose curiosities align with the network's research agenda, thus providing the capacity needed to further explore, connect, analyze and amplify information. In doing so, we build an infrastructure for arts research and policy.



2021 - 2023 RESEARCH AGENDA

A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE FOR SECTOR-BASED ARTS RESEARCH

Establishing a Community of Practice for sector-based Arts Research is fundamental to a cohesive arts sector that works in tandem to achieve its goals. A key worry of the arts sector that emerged from Mass Culture's 2018-19 Gatherings was pervasive silos in the creation of arts research, sometimes resulting in incomparable research and / or duplication of work.

By creating access to research and evaluation frameworks and methodologies, Mass Culture supports the arts sector in growing an appetite for evidence-based information, simultaneously building a sense of community and mutual understanding between arts workers.

Mass Culture also aspires to act as a "hub" for arts researchers who are looking to ground their research, working in collaboration with the arts sector. By becoming such, we would organically build a roster of researchers and arts sector consultants interested in doing research that has practical applications for the sector.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES ABOUT THE ARTS SECTOR

In order for the arts sector to adequately communicate the role it plays within society, it must have the capacity to study and understand itself.

Mass Culture works with and supports a sector that is diverse in its strengths, experiences, and needs. The activities we've done to consult the sector established the network's foundation, allowing us to better understand the research topics that matter to the sector. Examples of research that we have done thus far in this area was on the [Role of Arts Service Organizations](#) and [Future of Arts Work: Board Governance in the Arts: Emerging Ideas](#).



2021 - 2023 RESEARCH AGENDA

ARTS' VALUE TO SOCIETY

A comprehensive impact of arts and culture is not yet well understood in Canada. There are numerous measures and various facets of society with which the arts interact that are economic, social, and environmental in nature. When considering tools for communicating the role the arts play in society, Mass Culture is working with the sector and academia to uncover (1) various indicators, (2) what currently exists and might be missing, (3) the potential processes to be used for tracking and researching such impacts, and (4) public communications.

The work we participate in under this heading will, through the assistance of the Research and Network Working Groups, take us beyond the sector, forming new relationships with non-arts communities such as health, climate and social justice groups. We recognize that greater capacity to broker these relationships for the arts sector is needed. As an entity designed to convene people around knowledge creation, Mass Culture feels well-positioned to support these connections.



STRATEGIC STATEMENTS

In collaboration with Mass Culture's Working Groups through 4 working sessions entitled 'Strategizing Mass Culture', the staff created the following Strategic Statements. Through this process, we were able to tease out what some members of our network may hope to gain from working together, and how Mass Culture in turn is best equipped to serve them.

STRATEGIC STATEMENT #1

Through the mobilization and translation of knowledge, Mass Culture will **ensure any research it is engaged with is accessible and understandable**, creating a repertoire of research engagement activities

"Let's better help the sector by applying research in practical contexts...Ensure that a diverse range of artists are included as active collaborators as Mass Culture works to generate and amplify arts research"

2021 - 2023 ACTIVITIES INCLUDED UNDER THIS STATEMENT INCLUDE:

Federal Budget Analysis - We will analyze and create digestible knowledge products to share an arts analysis on the annual federal budget.

MC Minds - We will continue to utilize these different vehicles (blog, podcast, videos) to make sense of content, further tap into the wisdom of the sector and ensure different perspectives are profiled.

Please Note: Each Strategic Statement is accompanied by a quote from one of our Working Group Members and current and upcoming activities that align with the statement.

STRATEGIC STATEMENT #2

By working strategically with arts and non-arts partners, Mass Culture will better **understand and articulate arts' value to society** through at least 4 programmes, events, and activities

"Using arts research to better articulate difficult subject matter with solutions"

2021 - 2023 ACTIVITIES INCLUDED UNDER THIS STATEMENT INCLUDE:

Research in Residence: Arts' Civic Impact - We will work funders, researchers and arts organizations across country in multiple sectors in order to create qualitative impact frameworks.

Arts for Mental Health - We will partner with the Mississauga Arts Council to collate resources and create greater understanding of the impact of the arts on mental health through a datathon and conference.

Arts Value Symposium - In partnership with ASOs, we will convene arts and non-arts participants to showcase and provide an opportunity for exchange for arts' value.



STRATEGIC STATEMENT #3

By developing and testing at least six tools, templates, and methods in collaboration with the arts community and non-arts sector partners, Mass Culture will strengthen the arts sector's ability to create and connect through research. Mass Culture aspires to better explore and substantiate arts based-research methods with artists / researchers, while learning from non-arts partners in sector activities, and developing our relationships with them

"Making research useful and applied by providing templates and resources that are accessible and transferable to the community needs."

2021 - 2023 ACTIVITIES INCLUDED UNDER THIS STATEMENT INCLUDE:

Research in Residence: Arts' Civic Impact - We will distribute the five frameworks that emerge from the project, as well as provide educational tools that assist in their implementation.

Building Narratives Through Data - Employing capitalW's Charity Analytics Platform as a foundational dataset, we will co-design and implement a learning engagement series that will invite a cohort of art organizations to put the data that is currently available to work and collect the relevant non profit data to create a robust national data set of all arts organizations in Canada.

Transformative Knowledge Process - As we generate, amplify and analyze research within the sector, we will build out a developmental evaluation tool to document, engage, learn and share research to action process.

STATEMENT #3 ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

State of Emergence - In partnership with Art of Festivals, we will create a website that provides insight into knowledge gained on what it means to work in collaboration in a virtual setting.



Artifex - A sector sourced research repository created in partnership with the Creative Hubs and Networks Mapping Initiative at University of Toronto Scarborough that will continue to be maintained and grow through various activities such as datathons to both collect and analyze existing resources.



MC Art Researcher Roster / MC Liste des chercheurs en art - We will develop a roster of researchers who are interested in conducting research that is applicable to the arts sector.

STRATEGIC STATEMENT #4

Mass Culture will work with up to 3 arts groups per year to **generate new research or inform existing research** that enables it to further investigate its research agenda

“Build alliances and relationships and build and amass research, Act as conveners/connectors in a diverse ecosystem of arts and culture stakeholders clustering around research topics”

2021 - 2023 ACTIVITIES INCLUDED UNDER THIS STATEMENT INCLUDE:

Future of Arts Work - Upon the release of Board Governance in the Arts: Emerging Ideas, we will work with sector partners to further explore innovation in organizational structures and the role of the arts worker.

Arts Research Partnerships - We will test various engagement strategies to amplify, further inform and generate research in concert with partners within the arts sector.

EXAMPLES OF ARTS RESEARCH PARTNERS:

Thinking Rock Community Arts

What is needed to better support community-engaged arts?

Gros Morne Music Festival

What can the arts sector learn from the video gaming industry on business models and development practices?

Mississauga Arts Council

What does an accessible program for mental health clients engaged in creative experiences appropriate to their needs look like?



STRATEGIC STATEMENT #5

By coalescing strategic partners, Mass Culture will **develop co-designed structures that better support art and cultural policy within the sector**, improving knowledge exchange within a growing arts policy network

“Get policymakers to take the arts more seriously and see its value through workshops and digestible frameworks through universal language and a unique understanding of support needed.”

2021 - 2023 ACTIVITIES INCLUDED UNDER THIS STATEMENT INCLUDE:

Arts Policy Network - We will continue to build relationships and convene discussions on what structures need to be in place to support greater capacity to activate and connect the arts sector to policy.

STRATEGIC STATEMENT #6

In concert with its **five Working Groups (network governance model)**, Mass Culture’s staff will continue to develop and evaluate an organizational model that is healthy, sustainable, and relevant to its growing network

“Become a valuable resource that cannot be ignored”

Network Development | Partnership Protocols | Diversify Revenues

Internal Operations Analysis

COMPANION PIECES

Mass Culture's **2021 / 2023 Strategic Plan** is activated by its **Implementation Plan** and assessed by its **Organizational Evaluation Framework**. Both of these documents can be shared upon request by emailing info@massculture.ca.

Other companion pieces include:

- [Guiding Principles](#)
- [Network Governance Model](#)
- [Mass Culture's Handbook of Policies and Procedures](#)
- [A Multivocal Glossary of Terms](#) - Definitions provided by Mass Culture's Network

Interested in working with Mass Culture to explore your research provocation? Reach out to us!

Info@massculture.ca



HARNESSING THE POWER OF RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE TO LEARN AND GENERATE NEW INSIGHTS, ENABLING THE ARTS COMMUNITY TO BE STRATEGIC, FOCUSED AND ADAPTIVE.



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