

# TRAJECTORIES: TOWARDS A JUST ECONOMY

June 7, 2024



Foundation for Leadership,  
Imagination and Place



## Introduction

On June 7, 2024 at *Trajectories of Now Exhibition*, FLIP and MASS Culture co-produced a day of conversation. **45** participants gathered, listened, and contributed to dialogue for shaping our collective path forward. The attendance included cross-sectoral and industry individuals including Artists, Leaders, Funders, Investors/Donors, Financial Advisors, Arts Organizations, Researchers and Government.

After listening to artists telling their stories and participating in discussions of FLIP principles and practices participants contributed their thoughts and reflections on dozens of sticky notes.

We gathered these participants to nourish the power of collaboration, in the strength of diverse voices converging towards a common goal.

The following summary attempts to make sense of the variety and richness of these valuable contributions.



## Participants Notes and Reflections on Artists' Storytelling

Participants reflected on artists' storytelling, emphasizing the need to advance towards a more just economy with artists through shared resources, space, and financial support. They highlighted the importance of enabling residencies that allow artists to pursue long-held projects and noted how the storytelling mode can lead to nuanced insights.



### Key comments included:

- *Creating a Radical Community of Care*: Emphasizing the need for collaborative spaces with flexible timelines that provide holistic support.
- *Support for Change-Makers*: Recognizing that anyone driving change needs support, valuing life experience, and working within an anti-oppressive framework.
- *The Critical Role of Art and Artists*: Questioning the transactional nature of the arts sector and noting that artists reflect our world, and that co-creating with them can disrupt the status quo.

### Reflections on the artists' process included:

- *Cohort and Collaboration:* Building relationships within a cohort shifts the idea of the lone artist to a sense of community, group dialogue, critique, and feedback.
- *Valuable Space:* Creating an environment where participants have a say in structuring their experience, fostering safe and trusting relationships, accommodating changes, and providing exposure to various topics. Stability in this space was seen as leading to further creativity and long-desired projects.

### Several tensions and learnings emerged:

- *Tensions:* Uncertainty about the final product, meeting everyone's needs, balancing being provocative with audience engagement, and managing deadlines in the real world.
- *Learnings:* Trusting the process, addressing the rawness of subject matter with audience reception in mind, accepting changes in deliverables, scope, and timelines, valuing practice and process over perfection, and aligning goals with project rules and funding frameworks.

### Reflections on the importance of adequate and sustainable funding included:

- *Funding Models and Basic Income:* Supporting the idea of guaranteed income for artists, viewing artists as whole persons rather than pricing their work transactionally, and suggesting longer funding cycles (up to eight years).
- *Innovative Structures:* Considering co-op structures for artists, capital fund pools for revolving shares to supplement income or cover expenses, and emergency funds.
- *Innovative Suggestions:* Researching guaranteed income for artists as a public policy program; rethinking how artists are valued within funding models to ensure they are fully resourced with housing, living income, nourishment, artistry time, and community support.

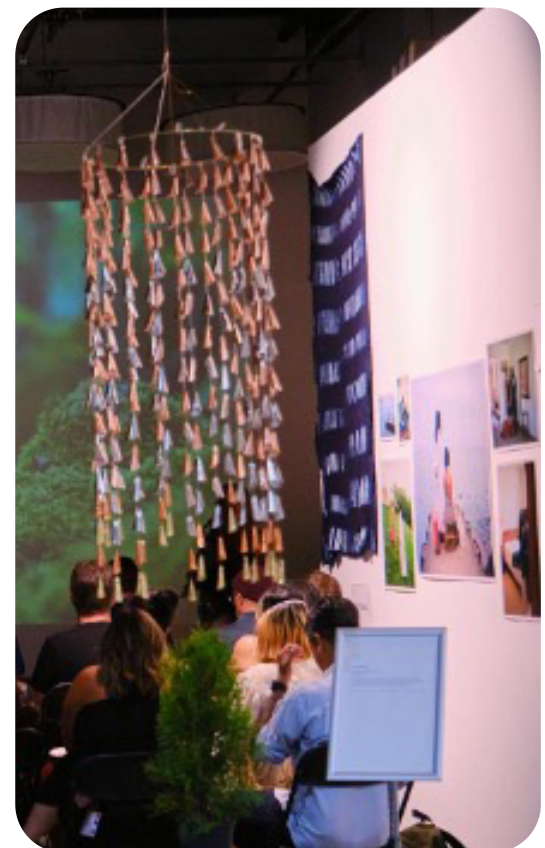


## Participants Notes and Reflections on FLIP Principles

Participants reflected on what they had heard about FLIP principles and practices, indicating what resonated and what issues were especially significant.

### Principles and practices named as especially resonate:

- *Abundance Mindset*: Practicing and promoting abundance thinking to overcome scarcity mentality.
- *Indigenization and Other Ways of Knowing*: Integrating Indigenous perspectives and diverse knowledge systems.
- *Focusing on the Artist, Not Just the Art*: Addressing artists' holistic needs including food, health, money, and transportation.
- *Intersectional; Interconnected and Barriered*: Recognizing and addressing interconnected barriers through an intersectional approach.
- *Anti-Oppressive Work*: Necessity of anti-oppressive practices, even when it's easier to rely on existing structures.
- *Sustained Practice*: Supporting continuous work while being wary of the fantasy of sustained practice.
- *Paying Forward to Community*: Encouraging artists to give back to their communities.
- *Valuing Diverse Learning and Success*: Understanding and appreciating different ways of learning and succeeding.
- *Labour Does Not Define Worth*: Promoting the idea that one's labor does not define their worth.
- *Words Matter*: Emphasizing the importance of language in shaping perceptions and actions.



## Issues named as especially significant:

### *Funding and Basic Income*

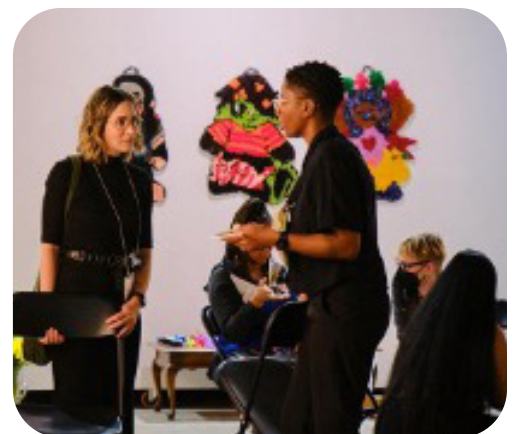
- *Redistribution of Capital:* Advocating for the redistribution of capital within spheres of influence.
- *Guaranteed Basic Income:* Envisioning a just economy with guaranteed basic income, and shifted access to social and financial capital.
- *Radicalizing Youth:* Encouraging young people to adopt radical ideas as they prepare to inherit societal responsibilities.
- *Subsidized Childcare:* Highlighting the need for subsidized childcare to support artists and their families.
- *Public Library Support:* Developing library programs to inform artists about available financial support and simplifying grant applications.
- *Addressing Investor Double Standards:* Critiquing investors and philanthropists for not incorporating Diversity Equity and Inclusion, despite its benefits.

### *Education*

- *Low Barrier Access for QT and BIPOC Individuals:* Promoting low barrier access to education for queer, trans, and Black, Indigenous, People Of Colour communities.
- *Flipping Education Access:* Reimagining who needs access to education.
- *Privilege in Access:* Addressing how access to education and grants often favors those with privilege.

### *Power and Relationships*

- *Shared Power Relationships:* Fostering relationships based on shared power.
- *Empowering Change-Makers:* Giving power to those ready to drive change.
- *Collaborative Methods:* Encouraging mutual aid and two-way mentorship to overcome scarcity mindset.
- *Relational Infrastructure:* Investing in infrastructure that builds networks and opportunities, promoting engagement and decision-making.





## The Role of the Arts

- *Reflecting and Influencing Times:* Recognizing that artists reflect and influence their times.
- *Navigating Difficult Times:* Understanding that artists possess unique skills to navigate challenges.
- *Sector Isolation:* Addressing how the arts and culture sector often talks to itself, limiting broader impact.
- *Transformative Action:* Valuing the knowledge created by the arts for driving transformative action.
- *Improving Arts Appreciation in Canada:* Promoting greater individual appreciation of the arts to support funding and policy changes.



## Many of the same themes emerged in the discussion of “What is Getting in the Way or Missing? What Needs to be Done Differently?”

### Issues and Approaches

- *Ecological Existential Crisis:* Paying explicit attention to the ecological crisis.
- *Human Rights:* Ensuring basic human rights are met.
- *Meritocracy Myth:* Challenging the notion that society is a meritocracy.
- *Scarcity as Fuel:* Recognizing that scarcity can drive creativity but needs to be managed.
- *Social Connection:* Focusing on social connections and redefining what is “enough”.
- *Communication:* Tailoring language to resonate with different groups.
- *Systemic Recognition:* Addressing how systems often fail to recognize individuals, leading to feelings of powerlessness.

### Funding and Basic Income

- *Wealth Partnerships:* Partnering with and critiquing wealth to address obligations.
- *Financial Resources:* Ensuring people have the resources to change their circumstances.
- *Building Capacity:* Developing further resources to build capacity and promote abundance.
- *Flexible Funding:* Trusting in flexible funding to meet artists’ needs.

### Education

- *Access Challenges:* Addressing how even low barrier access to education can feel hierarchical and exclusionary.

### Power and Relationships

- *Expanding Influence Circles:* Expanding circles of influence and promoting skill sharing.
- *Social Capital:* Opening closed circles to broaden access to social capital.
- *Opportunities for Marginalized Individuals:* Encouraging marginalized individuals to seek out opportunities and resources.
- *Interconnectedness:* Fostering interconnectedness through meaning-making and trust-building.



### The Role of the Arts

- *Proving Validity:* Addressing the pressure on artists to prove their validity and productivity.
- *International Models:* Learning from international models where the arts are more valued.

## Next Steps

These key messages and reflections continue to resonate with us, and form the foundation of the **SUSTAIN** pilot we are currently designing.

**We are actively seeking partners and investors to support this work, and look forward to updating you as we grow forward!**



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