



Artist-Run Centres and
Collectives Conference

Conférence des collectifs
et des centres d'artistes
autogérés

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March 11, 2013

Madame Sylvie Gilbert
Head, Visual Arts Section
Canada Council for the Arts
350 Albert Street, P.O. 1047
Ottawa, ON K1P 5V8

Madame,

As President and Director of the Artist-run Centres and Collectives Conference, we are writing to express our sincere congratulations for your recent appointment as Head of the Visual Arts section. As previously expressed in the media, your long and varied experience in the milieu is an asset to our community at a time when the visual arts are experiencing some of the most extreme swings in popularity in the public opinion, and values in the marketplace.

In a previous letter addressed to Mme Valois, ARCA expresses some of its concerns with the planned Operating program review, and the planned adjustments to our memberships' operating grants. Hopefully, this earlier correspondence was already shared with you for future discussion.

As already discussed while you were still at Artex-te, ARCA is planning to attend the Atlantic Artist-run Centres Association (AARCA) and APAGA joint meeting to take place from June 21-23 in Saint John, NB, including members of AGAVF and hopefully representatives of the Atlantic aboriginal community. I believe you have already received an invitation from the The Sheilagh Hugh Mackay Foundation to speak on a panel during this same meeting. I sincerely hope that you will be available to join us for this expanded visual arts « Atlantic region » gathering, to include, also, a smaller, yet nation-wide Artist-run centres plenary meeting.

During this meeting, ARCA will also participate in supporting a presentation and workshop of the recently launched E-ARTEXTE document repository. ARCA firmly believes that such a service is essential in promoting the visual arts' critical writing for research. The presentation fits well within the Saint-John meeting whose focus will include some skill sharing opportunities for independent art publishers. In a recent compilation of research on the Visual Arts, scholar Guy Bellavance identifies art publishing to be an activity common to all the actors in the VA, an activity that binds, informs and defines artistic practice but that lags in recognition because it is not formally represented as a group. The e-artex-te repository can play an important role in transforming this perception and in raising awareness of canadian artists, curators and arts scholars both within Canada and well beyond our borders.

The artist-run centre is a diverse and dynamic network that ARCA is proud to represent, and whose successes and challenges we look forward to exploring in the context of a meeting with you, the Director Mr. Robert Sirman, and possibly one board member, so that we can start examining some of the strategies that ARCs have already developed in response to the changing economy, and how these practices may reflect, and even inform the changes that Council desires. ARCA will contact your office to schedule a meeting in the next weeks.

En vous souhaitant une excellente rentrée en poste, je vous prie de recevoir, Madame, nos salutations cordiales.

Todd Janes
President,
ARCCC-CCCAA

Anne Bertrand
Director,
ARCCC-CCCAA

c.c. : Michel Gaboury, Office, Visual Arts Section