



THE BIG PICTURE:

Celebrating Resilience in the Arts 2022 Program Report

Proudly presented by the Arts Advisory Commission
Keynote Speaker: Kelly Hill, Hill Strategies
Facilitated by Artist, Layla Staats
Hosted by The Cotton Factory



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ARTS ADVISORY COMMISSION

The Hamilton Arts Advisory Commission (AAC) is a volunteer committee of Hamilton City Council whose mandate is to recommend activities for the stabilization and strengthening of the arts community. AAC informs Council of issues and achievements in the Hamilton arts community, acts as a point of contact for members of the arts community, and monitors and assists with the implementation of the Arts Awards Program, and the Public Art Program.

THE BIG PICTURE

In 2017, 70 members of the arts community in Hamilton gathered at an arts forum in order to reflect on the dramatic growth in the local arts and cultural community. Ideas were shared for finding opportunities for further growth and improvement in the city and seven recommendations were published in a report entitled "The Big Picture 2017 Arts Forum: A Report of the April 2017 Arts Community Consultation". This report was made public on the City of Hamilton's website and served to direct the work of the Arts Advisory Commission for the 2018-2022 term.



The Big Picture 2017 report (right) is [available as a .pdf](#) from the City of Hamilton's website



CELEBRATING RESILIENCE IN THE ARTS

In the summer of 2021, in response to the Covid 19 Pandemic, the Arts Advisory Commission developed a program titled Celebrating Resilience in the Arts, as an opportunity to reconnect with the community and provide both support and encouragement during this difficult time. The AAC partnered with Hamilton Arts Council (HAC) in order to issue an [open call](#) to collect art works and stories from Hamilton artists to showcase how they responded to the Pandemic.

[Eighteen artworks](#) were selected by AAC members from 39 submissions. These artworks are comprised of written, visual and performance works showcasing the various ways in which artists in Hamilton have found hope, strength and courage to pivot, adapt and find healing through their work during these challenging times.

In partnership with Hamilton Arts Council, the AAC followed up by conducting a [survey](#) from October 28 to November 21, 2021, with 107 local artists responding to share how they have been affected by the Pandemic.

At the same time, the AAC began planning for the “Celebrating Resilience in the Arts” [Symposium](#) with a focus on recovery and building a stronger, more resilient arts community. The Symposium was held on November 18, 2022, allowing members of the arts to reconnect in person and review the arts community post-pandemic.

The Symposium was [promoted](#) on the City of Hamilton’s website, The Arty Crowd website (800 account holders, 100,000 views), Hamilton Arts Council’s: newsletter (2,500 subscribers), “Mornings with Megan” (2,000 weekly viewers), and social media channels including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter (collective 27,000 viewers). There were 100 registrants, with 60 members of the arts community in attendance. The Symposium was also advertised with The Hamilton Spectator and Two Row Times.

Arts and funding organizations were invited to set up information [tables with representatives](#) present to engage with participants and provide professional information and advice including:

- Academy of Imagination & Dramatic Arts (AiDa)
- Art Gallery of Hamilton (AGH)
- Al & Malka Green Artists Health Centre
- Hamilton Arts Council
- Hamilton Musicians Guild
- InterNat Alliance of Theatre Stage Employees (IATSE)
- Ontario Arts Council (OAC)
- Vtape
- Women’s Arts Association of Hamilton

Image: Vtape table representative

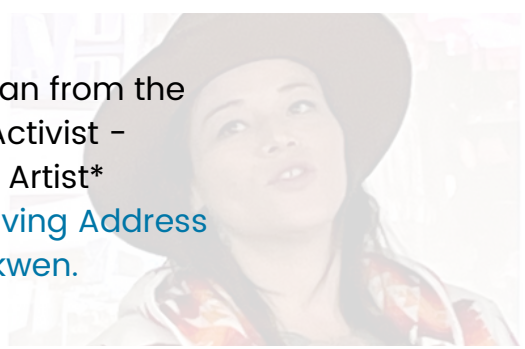
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Participants were welcomed to the Symposium by Annette Paiement, AAC Chair, and Layla Staats, Facilitator:



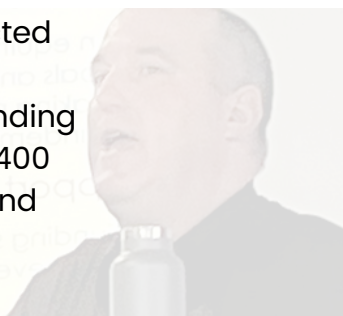
Layla Staats is Mohawk, Turtle Clan from the Six Nations of the Grand River. *Activist - Musician - Film Maker - Change Artist* Layla shared the video, [Thanksgiving Address in Mohawk ohén:ton karihwatéhkwen](#).



The Keynote Speaker followed. Kelly Hill, President and Founder of [Hill Strategies Research Inc.](#), took attendees through, “The Big National Picture: Creative Pandemic Pivots in the Canadian Arts Scene”.



Kelly Hill: Hill Strategies Research is widely respected across Canada and internationally as a leading authority on arts and culture research. Since founding Hill Strategies in 2002, Kelly has prepared nearly 400 research reports and presentations on the arts and culture, giving him a unique perspective on the Canadian arts sector and arts-related statistics.



This national research project included 29 stories, with eight from Ontario, ten from western Canada, and 11 from eastern Canada resulting in 12 key insights. Kelly Hill shared stories and a few statistics illustrating how arts, heritage and entertainment organizations and the creative industries have been innovation leaders since the onset of the Pandemic despite an incredibly challenging environment. Kelly shared stories of how both the Woodland Cultural Centre (Six Nations, Ontario) and Naissance Opera (Vancouver, British Columbia) pivoted using digital technology and innovation during the Pandemic lockdowns.

You may find additional information from the written summary of the resilience project [here](https://hillstrategies.com/cultural-resilience/summary-of-12-key-themes/). (<https://hillstrategies.com/cultural-resilience/summary-of-12-key-themes/>)

Some specific suggestions/observations from Kelly included:

- Continue to innovate for your art form (e.g. Opera bringing in new communities).
- Advocate for flexible funding.
- Some innovations are being maintained and are evolving (e.g. some continuing to include virtual pieces).
- Monetizing online content remains a challenge.



STATUS OF 2017 BIG PICTURE REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

The panel included:

- Annette Paiement – AAC Chair 2021-2022
- Carrie Brooks-Joiner – Director, Tourism & Culture Division, Planning & Economic Development Department, City of Hamilton
- Debbie Spence – Business Development Consultant, Creative Industries, City of Hamilton
- Lisa La Rocca – Director Of Operations, Sonic Unyon Records

It was noted that 11% of the Greater Hamilton Area residents work in the creative industries.

Some available resources include:

- [Musician Support Programs](#)
- Hamilton Musicians Guild (grants available to members) & Conference
- Hamilton Arts Council [Professional Development Series](#)

It was also noted that 74% of the recommendations from the [Mayor’s Task Force on Economic Recovery](#) response from May 2020 are complete.

Annette reminded those attending that the AAC is made up of volunteers, and does not direct City staff.



Image: (Top) An engaged audience (Bottom) Panelists; Spence, Brooks-Joiner, La Rocca and Paiement

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Big Picture Report 2017 Recommended Actions	Status
1. Ensure cultural diversity is reflected in the membership of the Arts Advisory Commission.	2018 Motion to add to Terms of Reference which was approved; procedural error being corrected November 22, 2022
2. Create and broadly communicate a timeline and map of upcoming public art opportunities to allow more lead time for artists to conceive proposals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instagram account established 1,700 followers. • Public Arts Newsletter, including upcoming calls. • Looking at outreach strategies. • Working with Corporate Communication to share through their channels 99,000 followers
3. Coordinate promotional efforts of Tourism Hamilton and Hamilton Arts Council to centralize and jointly promote a single online destination for arts and cultural listings.	"The Arty Crowd" introduced by HAC, with support from Tourism Hamilton
4. Undertake a communications review of City processes impacting the arts, particularly in the areas of adaptive reuse of buildings and festivals and events, with the goal of creating more transparency and understanding of these processes.	Work in progress
5. Engage arts community in a review of City Enrichment Fund processes, particularly in the areas of application language, equity, adjudication and the 30% cap on individual artist grants.	Completed
6. Advocate for fair compensation for artists based on professional standards through public communications and the practice of fair payment for all arts and cultural needs within the City of Hamilton.	Completed for musicians
7. Advocate for transit improvements and equitable ward boundaries as policy issues with strong implications for access to arts and culture.	Does not fall under AAC accountability



PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Topics for the panel discussions were chosen from the survey previously conducted, and were facilitated by Layla Staats. Two additional scheduled panelists were unable to attend due to illness.

LIVING & WORKING IN HAMILTON



JUDY LAM

An experienced professional in public and private industry with a demonstrated history of working in Economic Development, infrastructure lending, business loans and leasing and government administration industry.



MICHAEL VICKERS

An impassioned and experienced arts and culture leader skilled in creative placemaking, strategic partnerships, project management and community outreach. An equitable, creative perspective on city building across disciplines, sectors and stakeholders.

Insights included:

- The City does suggest to developers that they set aside 10% of their budgets for the inclusion of public art.
- Landlords have been open to negotiating regarding work space for the arts.
- There is no specific zoning for arts living and work space; there are properties with commercial ground space and residence space above.
- If tax breaks were available for developers to include affordable housing, there would be a need to intervene before sites are planned, including asking artists what they need before building. It is good business to include the arts.
- A well supported arts council is important.
- Artists are encouraged to:
 - Develop co-operatives
 - Advocate for basic income
 - Partner with each other to act collectively
 - Coordinate a campaign and get in touch with your City Councillor.

Image: Living & Working in Hamilton Panelists; Vickers and Lam, with Facilitator, Layla Staats



DIVERSITY & INCLUSION



TEBA FAISAL

An Iraqi-Canadian interdisciplinary artist and designer holding a BFA in Studio Arts with a minor in Political Science from McMaster University. Her most recent work engages in conversations about the depiction of Arab culture and Islam in the media and the way it mobilizes racism and xenophobia in the Western world. She is currently the chair of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) Committee.



LESLIE DOUGLAS-SHAW

Bringing 20+ years in human resources in the public and private sectors within the healthcare and transportation industries, she is a results-oriented HR Talent Acquisition Management Professional, implementing international foreign recruitment programs. She has completed the City of Toronto's Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit (CABR) Training, as well as the Diversity and Inclusion Lens and Toolkit Training, ensuring hiring practices are both fair and equitable. Her experience also includes developing HR policies through a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens ensuring staffing practices are fair and equitable for organizations.

Insights included:

- For organizations to use a lens of diversity and inclusion when hiring, beyond specific skills sets.
- Organizations show genuine respect in finding diverse artists, instead of just acting to 'check a box'.
- Young people and those who are marginalized need assistance in marketing themselves; there is much trauma in the community and care is required.
- We need to be aware of our own privilege, and know that communities don't have all the answers.
- Within our communities, let's build safe spaces, compensate fairly and train employees to handle sensitive matters.
- Establish Indigenous connections to share callouts.
- Organizations should have diverse and inclusive interview panels, and provide diversity orientation for suppliers.
- Organizations can designate prayer rooms, and establish personal holiday (in addition to vacation) schedules.
- Build feedback into processes to address errors made.
- It's okay not to know, and to ask questions.
- Speak up! And act as allies! (e.g. check in with people)

Image: Diversity & Inclusion Panelists, Douglas-Shaw and Faisal, with Facilitator, Layla Staats



MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS



DR. JOHN CHONG

Medical Director of the Musicians' Clinics of Canada, treating musicians with repetitive strain injuries, motor control problems, anxiety, depression, neuropathic pain, nerve entrapments, and stress-related disorders since 1986. He develops, implements, and evaluates complementary, alternative, and integrative health strategies for improving health and well-being through interdisciplinary and intersectoral partnerships through the Performing Arts Medicine Association in Canada and internationally. His clinical and research interest is regulation of the autonomic nervous system using neurobiofeedback techniques to treat performance traumatic stress disorders. Qualitative and quantitative evaluation is ongoing to assess the impact of cannabis-based medicines as a complementary and alternative treatment.



SONALI MENEZES

An interdisciplinary artist based in Hamilton, holding an Honours BA in Studio Art from the University of Guelph. The youngest of triplets, her work spans many mediums, and is recently focused in video, zines and printmaking. In 2018 her chapbook zine won the Broken Pencil Magazine Zine Award for best literary zine. In 2019 she was the recipient of the City of Hamilton's Emerging Artist Award in Media Arts. She has just quit her day job in art administration so she can focus on making art and spend less time on emails. If you've got any tips on how she can continue paying her bills, please let her know!



SHELLY-ANNE LI

Oversees the research, quality improvement, and community engagement portfolios at the Al & Malka Green Artists' Health Centre (AHC), University Health Network. A community educator and supervisor to medical learners at University of Toronto for their community-based service learning. Sessional faculty at the School of Nursing at McMaster University. Completed her PhD dissertation at University of Toronto. Also specializes in research design and methods, program evaluation, and community engagement. Envisions using research to improve the health and well-being of professional artists, to educate healthcare professionals, and to implement evidence-based practices that have lasting, positive impact on artists' health.

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Insights included:

- Availability of performing arts medical health in Hamilton
- Need to hear artists' stories
- Balance of sharing work to connect with community, and making money; contradiction in switching from art for free to selling
- Put into survival mode which makes it difficult to hold each other up
- Layla shared the term “compare-atitis” which she uses to describe an obsessive need to compare ourselves with each other
- Artistic opportunities model is competitive; a different model: Pay artists for submitting application (estimate completion hours), feedback for declination; use architects model: general call with shortlist paid, or grant writing where time is only required to submit a letter of Interest, with those qualifying be invited to apply
- Include dealing with rejection as part of professional development series; IATSE has a mental health first aid kit course; providing sensitive feedback is a mentorship opportunity
- Trauma informed self-care = uncovering “what has happened to you”
- Prolonged stress (e.g. struggling during COVID) piling on, overwhelming our normal coping skills
- Physical injuries are compounded by stress
- Health care failing or stigma toward addictions
- There is neglect in our community
- Collective action is needed
- Need list of resources
- Free spaces/resources to create art
- Suggestions to watch stress portrait of a killer on YouTube, and to read the ACE Keiser Study



Images: (Top) Facilitator, Layla Staats with Mental Health & Wellness Panelists, Dr. Chong, Menezes and Li (Bottom Left) Jambassadors band, The Buzz, performing (Bottom Right) Art Gallery of Hamilton table representatives engaged with attendees



SYMPOSIUM CLOSING

Annette Paiement let participants know that the current term for the AAC was coming to an end, and that insights from the Symposium would be shared with the new members of the Commission being established in 2023. Those interested in applying to join the next Commission are invited to check the City's website for updates:

Layla Staats closed the meeting with: Onen:ki'wahi - We'll see you on the path again



Images: (Top) all attendees, including panelists and speakers, at The Big Picture Symposium (Bottom Left) HAC staff enjoying lunch (Bottom Right) Lunch vendor, Indonesian's Flavour



ADDENDUM A

Delegations to the Arts Advisory Commission

AAC meetings livestream to the City of Hamilton YouTube Channel, and take place bi-monthly on the fourth Tuesday of the month from 4:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.

The next meeting is January 24, 2023.

Members of the public can participate virtually through Webex via computer or phone. Participation requires pre-registration, with delegations being no longer than five (5) minutes.

Persons wishing to delegate on a matter that is listed on the Committee agenda, shall submit a [Request to Speak](#) form no later than 12:00 P.M. on the business day before the meeting.

If you need clarification or have any questions on how to participate in a statutory public meeting or Standing Committee, please email clerk@hamilton.ca or call 905-546-2424 extension 4408.



ADDENDUM B

How would you describe your experience with the keynote speaker (Kelly Hill)?

Speaker was engaging and information was useful 82%

Comments:

- Utility of the presentation was that Creative City study exists and that flexibility of funding will be key to innovation to the future
- Not sure the subject is relevant - ...resilience (in) the arts nationally needed to be brought back to our city
- Appropriate length, good opening
- Kelly was extremely engaging, well paced and presented the information in a digestive manner
- Overall the breakdown of the study was useful - less applicable to Hamilton, but good for sector wide information
- Good introduction to the event; like the real world examples that were shared from statistics project
- It was very informative to hear about V.R. production
- Would have loved more data - but was good!
- Learned about the positive side of Woodland, that it supports the cultural arts

How would you describe your experience with the Status Review and Community Conversation?

Panelists were engaging and conversation was useful 94%

Comments:

- Could it not be mandated by City Council that developers MUST make space for short term leases for artists/business/people who want to test the waters (so to speak) in their "contract" with the City? Annette P spoke on this, but still the City needs to help advocate for artists. Developers SHOULD put it to PEOPLE (the citizens) of what they want to see, in what they NEED/want i.e. Are there 4 / 5 bedroom units? YOU CAN TELL THEM MANDATE IT!! Before they are allowed to build here do not say City Council CANNOT have a say! If the developer has ANY business sense they will comply!
- A little more moderation/inter-panel discussion would have been useful too
- I enjoyed hearing the perspective of each panelist. I believe the panel could have been even larger to make room for voices from some more varied arts organizations in the city
- Do feel it was mainly focussed on music and not the other areas of the arts in Hamilton: film and fashion
- Great convo - loved hearing the perspective of arts landscape through municipal lens; important to hear
- Discussion was positive in reference to the City's involvement in the arts - happy to hear
- Very music-focused; could have used more info on the other genres
- As someone that has been involved with the Hamilton Music scene, it was good to hear some very positive movement
- Interesting to hear - looking forward to next steps
- Learned about and really want to join Arts Advisory Commission; also learning where to tap into funding for support to get started

Section Continued >



How would you describe your experience with the Living & Working in Hamilton panel discussion?

Panelists were engaging and conversation was useful 86%

Comments:

- Too much of the same talking points
- Great topic - maybe a bit broad? Or needed a larger panel - thankfully had some audience members to support/answer the complicated broader questions that were asked
- Very timely discussion as we are living in a housing crisis in Hamilton - with artists and marginalized communities at the centre of it
- Live and work spaces are needed - great conversation to support artists in affordable living
- I feel like panelists felt out of their element with questions - would developers be a better fit?
- Very interesting discussions
- Least favourite panel; felt like a town hall
- It inspired many thoughts related to tourism and theatre and business ideas for Hamilton
- Unclear what was trying to be accomplished with this session though appreciated speakers' efforts
- Learned about vinyl wraps and how the funding is brought forth from 10% of developers paying into a fund and that the artist who creates the art piece does get paid!

How would you describe your experience with the Diversity & Inclusion panel discussion?

Panelists were engaging and conversation was useful 100%

Comments:

- Very good panel
- I would love to hear more - how to engage everyone
- LGBTQ2S+ should have been included in the conversation and/or panel
- Thank you to the panelists and Layla for being so open and willing to share your stories and encourage the room to be honest about how we can be more inclusive and make room for diversity every day
- Panelists were wonderful - appreciate how open/thoughtful/ well-spoken they all were great intro of people/experiences/backgrounds
- Thank you for sharing your experiences - Wow - what a great range of panelists

Section Continued >



How would you describe your experience with the Mental Health & Wellness panel discussion?

Panelists were engaging and conversation was useful 100%

Comments:

- Ending with mental health was a bit heavy
- Great panelists!! Really well chosen
- My favorite portion. I feel grateful to everyone who shared, and even more grateful that the issues that were once stigmatized are beginning to be seen, recognized, shared and addressed, even in our community.

How would you rate your overall experience of the day?

100% worthwhile or very worthwhile

Comments:

- Was hoping to connect with people over lunch - loved the music, but the interaction became limited - left
- I found the symposium very informative and inspiring. Thank you for having OAC rep available - it helped me greatly
- I found it very informative, but some action plans seemed “wishy-washy”; there needs to be more divisiveness in the announcements
- It was a good symposium, but very long - had to stay engaged; shorten in future years
- Layla was an excellent host
- Some great ideas and opportunities to connect
- Good engagement and ...questions were being asked; good representation of panelists
- Bringing in catering during panel distracting - lunch set up in different spot would be better, if possible; delicious food though! Thanks for hosting. Great concert, but hard to network
- Good day overall
- Fashion growth to be included or maybe a separate half day symposium
- Thank you so much for this - amazing speakers, panelists and environment
- MC/Opening of the day was great - very fitting choice
- Only found out about it by accident - didn't seem to be incredibly visible in the community ahead of time. Please do it again, use the emails collected
- Small thing, but would have liked to have had the names (and maybe a mini bio) of presenters on the daily schedule/itinerary
- This was a great day - having so many people/perspectives/experiences in the same room. Most excellent
- Was a long but certainly a wonderful day! I am glad that, even though a bit late into the morning, we got the traveling microphone going, as it certainly made a huge difference in getting people's attention back
- It was also great to have that much opportunity to network! The breaks worked well and we stayed close to being on time
- Layla was awesome, and so was the band - great choices everyone, and good timing!
- The wifi was very much appreciated.
- As for things to consider, there are only two that I could think of: 1) I wish the coffee/tea could have stuck around until after the last break, and 2) during intermission, I found the music to be a bit too loud. At least for me, and within my conversations, I found people had to strain amongst each other to be heard.

Section Continued >



What recommendation do you think should be included in the next “Big Picture Report”?

- Culture plan needed - City response baffling
- Making fee policy apply to CEF
- We are all struggling, but will survive via partnership
- Disabilities in film
- Continued financial and resource support for innovation as artists and organizations
- Try to find new methods of working as we come out of the pandemic
- Survey of artists’ living experience in Hamilton, specifically how they are doing financially, with the goal to highlight the need for Universal Basic Income
- Flexible funding moving forward
- Further opportunities for discussion and collaboration

Additional comments:

- I enjoyed the day and it was lovely to see people in person and not online. The positivity of the day was so strong and the tone so hopeful. COVID was tough and I was reminded of the resiliency of the cultural community (yes perfect theme). I want to reiterate my appreciation to the cultural community for its unwavering collaborative spirit, imagination, and willingness to partner with, and inspire, the City of Hamilton in its work to serve the public.
- I gained many insights from the event, including but not limited to; hearing directly from City staff regarding cultural planning now and in the years ahead, getting direct insight from arts and culture participants locally on what matters to them most (ongoing funding, affordable housing, more support for the Hamilton Arts Council), gaining new insights from Kelly Hill on the state of the sector and where Hamilton is ahead and behind. I think the more resources we can offer them to address the needs mentioned above the better!
- I think the event was great in that the participants were engaged and were comfortable in speaking up and asking questions. I think that one can determine based on the questions, what is top of mind and may help determine future topics for these events. It was interesting to hear what the concerns are of participants. I agree that artists should investigate such tools as co-ops to protect themselves from rising rents, etc. Perhaps a future session could have a real estate education component to see how this works or to hear from a lender (i.e. credit union, etc. that finances these real estate transactions) so they know what is required.
- It was a wonderful opportunity to gather the arts community in Hamilton, and to learn about the exciting directions at the municipal level and some of the persisting challenges faced by artists in Hamilton. The discussions re the importance of reusing some of the spaces for artistic endeavors, how to draw boundaries for free versus paid contributions from artists and how they could be fairly compensated, and the challenges of artists in marginalized communities were very insightful and have informed my understanding on how we can help artists in the community. There was a lot of interest in the mental health panel from the community, and I felt we could definitely dive deeper into this important aspect if we had a little more time. We discussed some of the problems but we could perhaps also spend time on discussing solutions to identifying and counteracting the unique stressors that affect artists; for instance, ways to build up the artists’ community in Hamilton with a focus on mental health to help artists gain more resiliency, which can help protect them from different levels of adversity.

