

STRATEGIC PLAN 2018

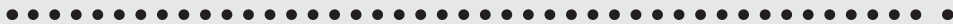


HAMILTON ARTISTS INC.



Introduction

Hamilton Artists Inc. (The Inc.) is a charitable, not-for-profit artist-run centre. It was founded in 1975, incorporated in 1979, and received charitable status in 1981. Since its inception, The Inc. has been committed to the values of artist-run culture, offering an alternative to commercial spaces and established public galleries and museums by providing artists with opportunities for critical engagement, exploration, and risk-taking. We serve members of our community at all stages in their careers by presenting local, national, and international exhibitions, workshops, artist talks, and professional development services. As a member-driven organization, we provide our more than 250 members with an accessible and inclusive forum to address the social and professional needs of artists through workshops, lectures, and our dedicated Members' Gallery. In 2011, with the support of committed members and financial support from public funders and private donors, The Inc. opened the doors to a brand new, fully accessible facility, owned and operated by Hamilton Artists Inc. In 2015, The Inc. celebrated its 40th anniversary and launched the *ArcelorMittal Dofasco Courtyard*. In 2016, The Inc. implemented a new role of Executive Director.



The Inc.

continues to define and disseminate a regional dialogue within a national and international context by presenting challenging contemporary artwork, fostering local artist initiatives, and stimulating critical discourse.

Examples of recent programming include:

- *Into the Wild*, curated by Caitlin Sutherland and featuring Sonny Assu, Jason Brown, Leisure, Duane Linklater, Alex McLeod, Darren Rigo, Elinor Whidden, Young & Giroux, as well as select works from the permanent collections of the Art Gallery of Hamilton and the Workers Arts and Heritage Centre (2015)
- *Tapestry: Queering the Gaze*, a large outdoor photographic installation by JJ Levine (2015/16)
- *Photophobia: Contemporary Moving Image Festival*, an annual festival of short-format contemporary media, film, video, and moving image hosted in partnership with the Art Gallery of Hamilton. Established in 1999, Photophobia was Hamilton's first film and video festival dedicated to the development of experimental time-based media at a time when there were no such platforms in the Hamilton community
- *SWARM*, our annual members' exhibition, currently in its 42nd year
- *Inc. Spots* artist talks, an educational opportunity for our artist members to share their practices with the public
- *Feast*, a micro fundraising event to support local artist initiatives
- *Youth Crawl* school tours presented to over 1000 students annually
- Public tours of exhibitions hosted by the Programming Director and Staff

In 2016/2017, **The New Committee** was developed, an Inc. initiative that organizes events and forms partnerships to increase the representation of Indigenous peoples, visible minorities, and other marginalized groups in the arts and provide anti-oppression resources and educational opportunities for people involved in art and culture in Hamilton.

While **Hamilton Artists Inc.** is an effective organization with many strengths, we recognize the need for change in several areas. The Inc. began in 1975 as a grassroots organization emerging out of an engaged, artistic community. More than 40 years later, we now need to re-engage our current communities with intentional consideration for intersectional strategies of equity and inclusion. In addition, we face an organizational lack of resources that needs to be addressed in order to ensure a healthy and ethical work environment for staff and to build the institutional capacity required to achieve our programming goals. For these reasons, we have undertaken a new Strategic Plan.

Research/Process

In December 2016, **Hamilton Artists Inc.** initiated a strategic planning process to establish a plan for the next 3 years. To guide this process **The Inc.** contracted a strategic planning consultant, Heather Graham. A Strategic Plan Steering Committee was also convened to oversee the development of the plan. Membership included representatives from the Board and Staff.

The first phase of the process was an Environmental Scan that involved consulting with representatives within and outside the organization regarding their understanding of current organizational strengths and challenges, the changing landscape and trends, and future organizational strategies/opportunities. Due to limited resources and capacity, the sample size of this research was relatively constrained, strategically designed to include Board, Staff, Community Members, and other key Stakeholders. (Refer to Appendix A for the complete Environmental Scan Report.)

Environmental Scan findings were presented to the Board and Staff at a planning meeting on February 19, 2017. Key concepts were identified related to the future mission, vision, values, and strategic directions. Following the retreat, the Steering Committee reviewed and suggested revisions to the draft strategic plan statements (vision, mission, values, and strategic directions) based on key concepts identified at the Retreat. (Refer to Appendix B for the HAI Strategic Plan Report that resulted from this process.) Heather Graham's involvement in the process ended at this point.

There has been a significant turnover in Staff and Board since the Strategic Plan report was generated in 2017. Ratification of the Strategic Planning has remained a core objective for the organisation, and the Executive Director and the Treasurer have provided continuity. We have taken steps to ensure that all members of the current Board and Staff are invested and engaged in the process.

In late April of 2018, Board and Staff participated in an anonymous survey to gather objectives that augment the Environmental Scan, and generate responses to the 2017 report. On May 3, 2018, Board and Staff held a second retreat to consolidate our Mission, Vision, Values, and Strategic Objectives. The retreat resulted in a thoroughly updated draft of the Strategic Plan document, as well as the identification of key tactics and actions for an Operational Plan to achieve our stated goals. The updated Strategic Plan was then collaboratively edited and refined by Board and Staff. It was ratified by the Board on May 17, 2018.

Because of delays in our Strategic Planning process, many key tactics and actions are already underway, and some goals have already been achieved. In order to reflect this process with transparency, the Board and Staff have revised the 3-year plan initially conceived in 2016 to a 5-year plan, beginning in 2016, with 3 years still ahead at the moment of ratification in 2018.

Drafting of the Operational Plan is well underway with full participation from the current Board and Staff, and, as mentioned above, many key tactics are already being implemented. The Operational Plan will be finalized and ratified by July 19, 2018.

Mission Statement

As an artist-run centre, **Hamilton Artists Inc.** empowers artists of all career levels to take risks with their contemporary visual arts practices and present their work in a critical context. Our community centred exhibitions, publications, and special projects offer education and mentorship, facilitate regional and national dialogue, and encourage collaboration, conversation, and critical inquiry. Our programs are free and open to everyone.

Vision Statement

Hamilton Artists Inc. aspires to connect with our changing communities by taking an intersectional approach, identifying and removing systemic barriers, and supporting artists and art practices that reflect the people of our region. We aim to be a destination for critical, unconventional, and challenging contemporary art practices that contribute to regional and national discourses.

Statement of Values

Our communities are local, regional, and national in scope. The following values speak to our commitment to these communities in the broadest sense.

- **Criticality, Creativity, and Art:** We value art that is creative, challenging, and responsive to critical discourses, providing fruitful connections between local, regional, and national artists and art audiences.
- **Dismantling Structural Barriers:** We are aware of systemic barriers within the art world, and strive to implement equitable models that provide true access and engagement with our programs. We are proactively taking actions so that our Board, Staff, and artistic platforms will reflect our diverse and changing communities.
- **Responsive to Change:** We are aware of our responsibility to be responsive and informed and we are taking actions to ensure that our operations and programming can meet the emerging needs of our communities on an ongoing basis.
- **Mentorship & Education:** We are committed to providing resources that offer all artists the professional development they need.
- **Collaboration:** We believe in collaboration with community partners as a core principle that allows us to serve our shared communities through reciprocal fostering of creativity, criticality, inclusivity, mentorship, and responsiveness to changing needs.

Strategic Objectives

Three strategic directions have been identified through the strategic planning process. These directions are complementary and interconnected, and efforts to move one strategy will serve to advance multiple strategies. In this way, each is equally important. These objectives serve as the basis for our Operational Plan.

- Engage with our communities
- Foster and facilitate artists' participation in national and international art discourses
- Increase organizational capacity and improve operations to ensure future sustainability and growth



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