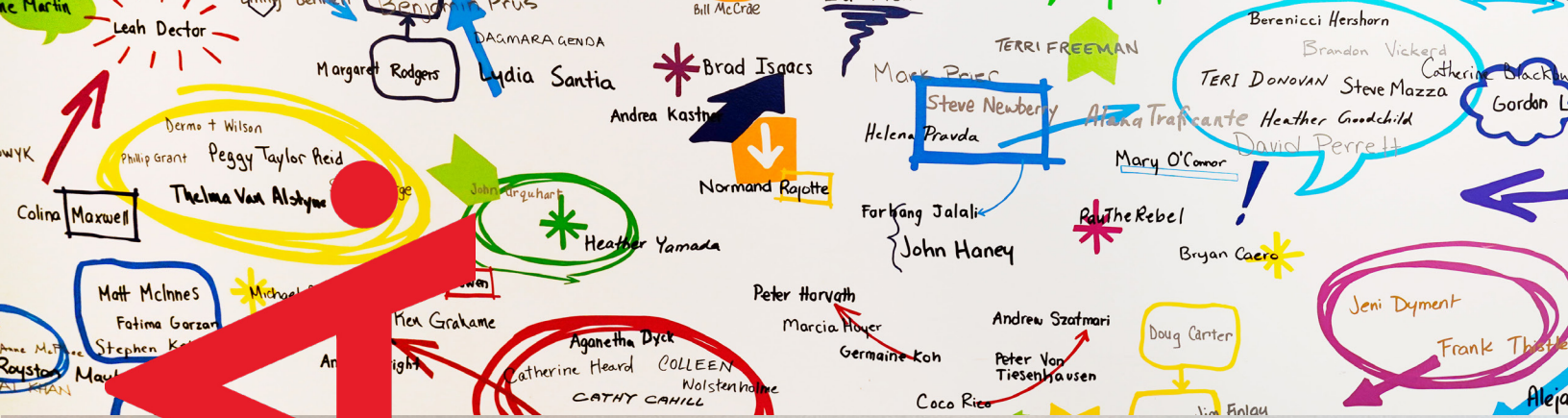




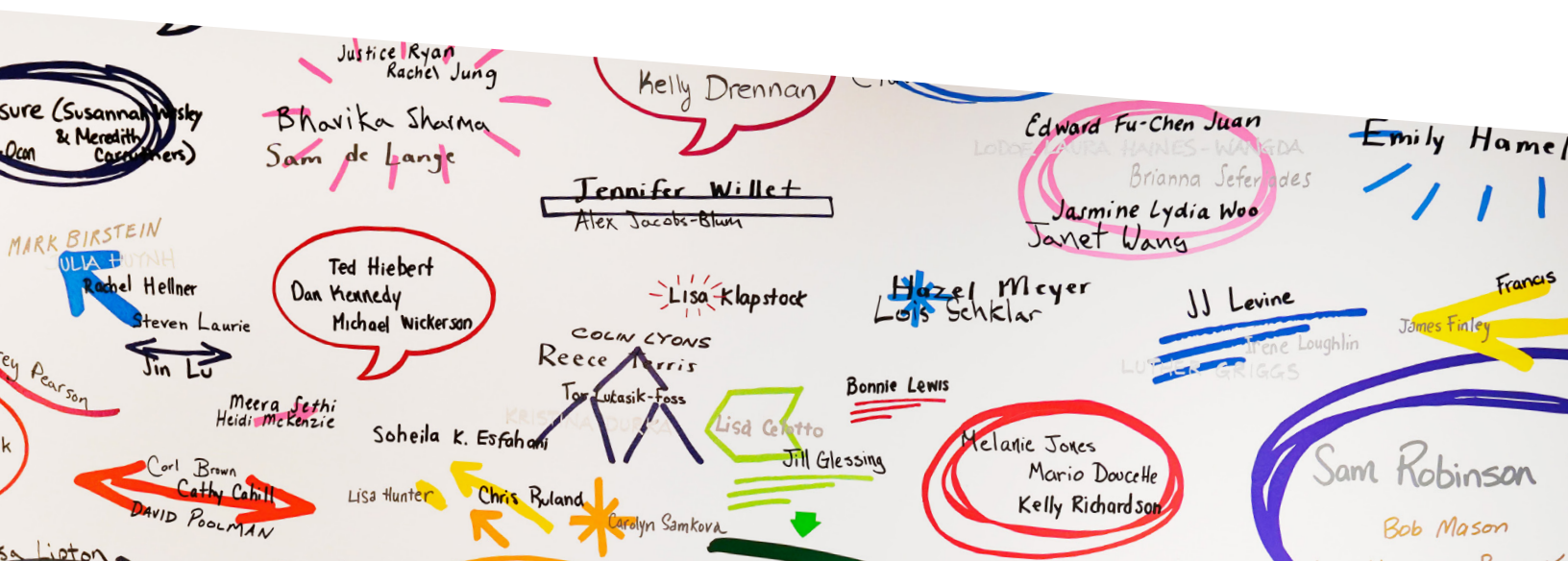
Hamilton Artists Inc.

Strategic Plan 2024-2026



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. The Inc. was awarded the Inaugural Lacey Prize administered by the National Gallery of Canada in 2019 for its critical and ground-breaking work supporting artists and fostering emerging practices as a nationally recognized artist-run centre. In 2021, in support of its values, the Inc. formally introduced a non-hierarchical leadership model between the Executive Director and Artistic Director. In 2025, the Inc. embarks on its 50th anniversary as one of the longest standing artist-run centres in Canada.



examples of recent programming

- “What Moves us in the Middle,” a solo exhibition in the James Gallery by local artist Sahra Soudi
- “êpêkiyokêyân (coming to visit)” an exhibition by Albertan artists Kiona Callihoo Lightvoet and Seth Arcand in the Cannon Gallery, curated by Artistic Director Sanaa Humayun.
- “Trans Lives are Sacred” by Ris Wong, a Cannon Project Wall Billboard launched in partnership with the New Gallery (Calgary), and “To be soft is not to be weak. To be soft is to be resilient.” a mural by local artist Ardyn Gibbs which responded to the transphobic vandalism of Wong’s work.
- Victory Soaring Above Tyranny, a James Wall Banner by Toronto artist Ibrahim Abusitta.
- “I hear you everywhere I go,” an exhibition of tattoo art by Halie Finney & Jalen Frizzel in the Cannon Gallery, curated by Artistic Director Sanaa Humayun.
- The Anti-Gala, a sliding scale fundraiser in December 2024, SWARM, our annual members’ exhibition.
- Bus tours in partnership with the Art Gallery of Burlington, Tangled Disability+Art, and the Workers Arts and Heritage Centre.

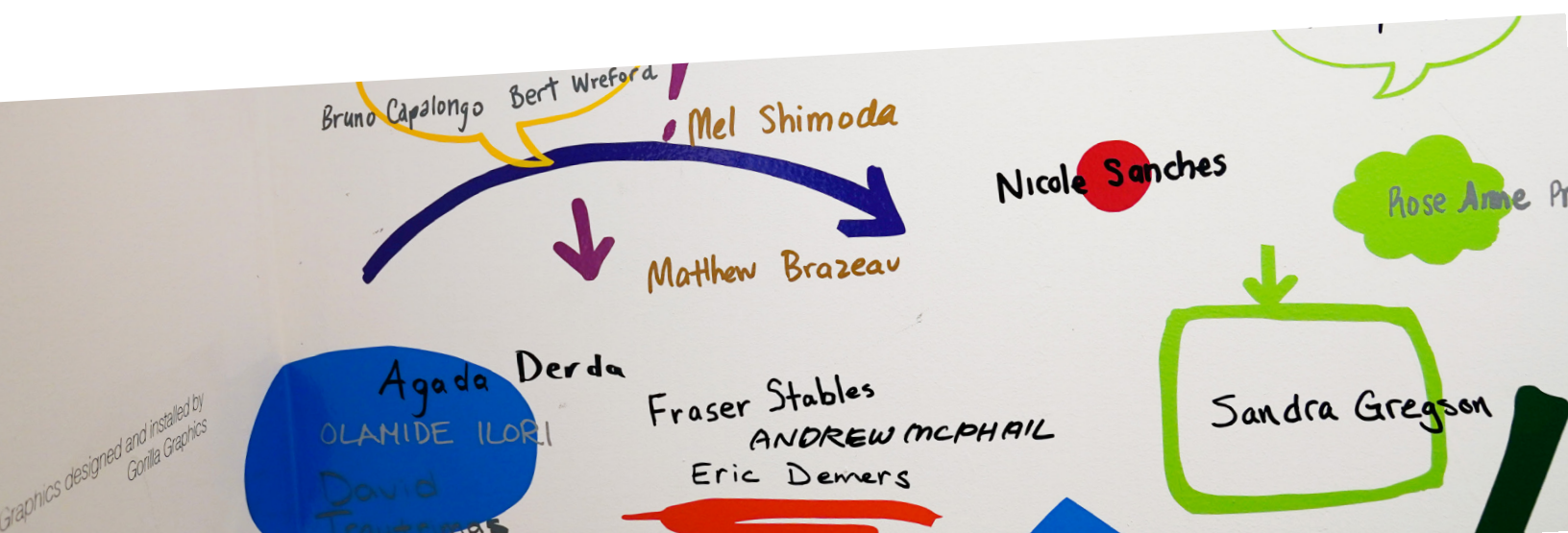


research/process

The Inc. staff and board began the research process by performing an environmental scan of our community, issuing a call for survey responses to members, and encouraging volunteers, committees members, and current and former board and staff to participate. The survey elicited 132 responses across the community. Additionally, short interviews were held with key informants at the provincial and municipal level to gather information and feedback on the strategic priorities of our funders.

In late September 2023, Board and Staff gathered at a retreat to perform a SWOT analysis, identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats to the organization in the coming years. Major strengths identified included programming, accessibility, flexibility, and facilities. Potential weaknesses included financial precarity, staff and board capacity, and marketing. Opportunities included volunteer growth, facility utilization, and a focus on local audiences. Decreased engagement (sometimes attributed to pandemic response) and general financial instability constituted primary threats.

Following this exercise, results of the environmental scan were presented by the Executive Director. Discussion of the results involved weighing the perceptions voiced by Board and Staff during the SWOT analysis against the opinions expressed by community stakeholders. This information was then utilized to draft the Vision, Values, and Strategic Objectives outlined in the new Strategic Plan.



mission

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 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

Hamilton Artists Inc. endeavors to connect with our dynamic communities by taking a complex approach to artistic creation, naming and challenging systemic barriers while supporting artists and art practices that reflect the people of our region. We aim to be a meeting place for critical, unconventional, and exciting contemporary art practices that contribute to regional and national dialogues.



values

The following values speak to our commitment of enriching our local arts communities:

Criticality, Creativity, and Art: We value art that is creative, challenging, and responsive to critical local discourses, providing fruitful connections between local, regional, and national artists and art audiences.

Dismantling Structural Barriers: We are proactively taking actions so that our Board, Staff, and artistic platforms will reflect our diverse and changing communities. We are aware of systemic barriers within the art world, and strive to implement equitable models that provide open engagement and safe access with our programs.

Responsive to Community: 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.

Development and Enrichment: We are committed to providing resources that offer all artists the professional development they need and implementing an outreach strategy that uplifts local communities.

Local-Focus: We believe in collaboration with community partners as a core principle that allows us to serve our shared local communities long-term through reciprocal fostering of creativity, criticality, inclusivity, mentorship, and responsiveness to changing needs.



strategic objectives

Three strategic directions were identified through the strategic planning process. Each unite to advance multiple strategies.

These objectives serve as the basis for our Operational Plan.

- A. Establish stronger communications and transparency with our community by unpacking the systemic barriers and hierarchies within our own structures
- B. Provide responsive engagement with our community rooted in accessibility and collaboration by prioritizing work which speaks to the social and political content of our contemporary climate.
- C. Optimize staff, board, and volunteer capacity to enable sustainable programming that embodies new, inclusive, and critical forms of artist-run organization.

