

---

# IFACCA D'ART REPORT N<sup>o</sup> 38

---

## Multidisciplinary Arts: Approaches to Funding

---

NOVEMBER 2009

---

Prepared by Marilyn Burgess and Maria De Rosa

MDR Burgess Consultants, on behalf of the Canada Council for the Arts

[www.ifacca.org](http://www.ifacca.org)

ISSN: 1832-3332

D'Art aims to consolidate and maximise the expertise of the world's arts councils and ministries of culture. For more information visit [www.ifacca.org](http://www.ifacca.org)

**Disclaimer:** This report has been prepared by Marilyn Burgess and Maria De Rosa, MDR Burgess Consultants, for the Canada Council for the Arts.



Errors, omissions and opinions cannot be attributed to the respondents listed in this report or to the Board or members of IFACCA.

IFACCA is interested in hearing from anyone who cites this report.

---



This report is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 2.5 License:  
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/>

You are free to copy, distribute, or display this report on condition that: you attribute the work to the author; the work is not used for commercial purposes; and you do not alter, transform, or add to this report.

Suggested reference: Burgess, M and De Rosa, M, 2009. 'Multidisciplinary Arts: Approaches to Funding', *D'Art Topics in Arts Policy*, No. 38, International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies, Sydney, [www.ifacca.org/topic/multidisciplinary-arts/](http://www.ifacca.org/topic/multidisciplinary-arts/)

---

**CONTENTS**

A. Introduction ..... 1

B. Approach and Methodology ..... 2

C. Analysis of survey responses..... 3

    1. Overview of Support to Multidisciplinary Arts Amongst Survey Respondents ..... 3

    2. Definitions of Multidisciplinary Arts – Approaches to Funding..... 3

    3. Assessment ..... 7

    4. Resources ..... 10

    5. Summary..... 12

D. Selected Bibliography..... 14

Appendix 1: List of Survey Respondents ..... 16

Appendix 1: D’Art question 38: Support for Multidisciplinary Arts ..... 17



# Multidisciplinary Arts: Approaches to Funding

## A. INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the findings of the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies' (IFACCA) 38th D'Art question on approaches to funding multidisciplinary arts, which was developed and conducted jointly by the Canada Council for the Arts (CC) and the Australia Council for the Arts (AC).<sup>1</sup> The survey was distributed via IFACCA to approximately 75 international arts councils and related bodies in early March 2009. Twelve funding bodies responded fully to the survey, including 10 national funding bodies and two municipal funders for a response rate of 16%. Therefore this survey should only be considered as a sample or snapshot of approaches to funding multidisciplinary arts.

The questionnaire, which is available in Annex 2, was divided in five parts: recognition and definition for multidisciplinary arts; grantmaking; organisational structures; other sources of support; and literature and resources.

The term multidisciplinary was used in this survey because it is widely used and, thus, would likely produce dynamic and relevant responses.

The results of this survey were originally compiled on a thematic basis by Dr. Marilyn Burgess and Maria De Rosa, of MDR Burgess Consultants, with input from the CC and the AC, within the context of an internal study on multidisciplinary arts in Canada, *The Shape of Things to Come*, commissioned by the Canadian Public Arts Funders (CPAF)<sup>2</sup> network. The original analysis was limited to responses received from national funders at the time of CPAF study. The present report is based on the complete sample of responses received by the CC.

---

<sup>1</sup> In February 2009, Canada Council for the Arts Inter-Arts Office Coordinator, Claude Schryer, accepted an invitation from Australia Council for the Arts Inter-Arts Office Director, Andrew Donovan, to visit Australia for a series of meetings and exchanges, which included discussions with funders and multidisciplinary arts organizations from Australia, Singapore, South Korea, Hong Kong SAR and China (Taiwan). One of the conclusions from these discussions was that definitions of 'multidisciplinary arts' differ substantially from country to country, and within national boundaries, and that a comparative survey of definitions, granting systems, organizational structures as well as a literature review of research in this field would be a useful learning tool for both funders and artists alike.

As a result of these meetings, a D'Art survey was designed with an open set of questions that could capture a snapshot of approaches to funding multidisciplinary arts. The initiators of the survey knew going into this exercise that 'multidisciplinary arts' was a broad concept and that the results would likely be wide ranging.

<sup>2</sup> Canadian Public Arts Funders (CPAF) is a network that unites and serves the national, provincial and territorial arts councils and equivalent public arts funders in Canada. The national member of the network is the Canada Council for the Arts, which also acts as the CPAF Secretariat.

## **B. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY**

The consultants have based their analysis on the complete sample of responses to D'Art question 38. A total of 13 responses were received from public funders in 10 countries. The *Ministère de la jeunesse, des sports et de la culture* of Burundi reported that it does not provide support to multidisciplinary arts and was therefore excluded from our analysis.

Four of the thirteen survey responses were received from Canadian funding organizations: the CC, the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Toronto Arts Council and the Conseil des arts de Montréal. While other Canadian provincial and territorial arts funders also provide support to multidisciplinary arts, this report includes only those who responded to the survey.

The countries included in the analysis of this report therefore include: Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, England, Finland, Sweden, Cuba, Colombia. (A list of survey respondents is included in Annex 1).

The consultants also supplemented their information through a review of respondents' websites, where information was available in English or French.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> In some cases, respondents included links to their website in their survey responses.

## C. ANALYSIS OF SURVEY RESPONSES

### 1. Overview of Support to Multidisciplinary Arts Amongst Survey Respondents

As can be seen in Figure 1 below, twelve survey respondents indicated that they provide various types of support to multidisciplinary arts. One survey participant, Jean Pierre Gahungu of Burundi's *Ministère de la jeunesse, des sports et de la culture* responded, "The term [multidisciplinary arts] is new to us."<sup>4</sup> As the *Ministère de la jeunesse, des sports et de la culture* of Burundi does not support multidisciplinary arts, it is excluded from further analysis.

Figure 1. Structure of Support to Multidisciplinary Arts – Responses to Survey

QUESTION	RESPONSE	
	Yes	No
Does your agency provide support to multidisciplinary arts?	12	1
Does your agency have dedicated funding programs for multidisciplinary arts?	5	8
Do you have special assessment processes for multidisciplinary arts that differ from the assessment of other art forms?	4	9
Does your agency have a unit or a staff member dedicated to managing support for multidisciplinary arts?	5	8

Of the twelve organizations that do provide support, five funders - the Arts Council of Finland, the AC, the CC, the Secretaría de Cultura, Recreación, y Deporte de Bogotá, Colombia and the Conseil des arts de Montréal - provide targeted support to multidisciplinary arts through dedicated programs.

Four of the funders – the AC, the Arts Council of Finland, the CC, and the Secretaría de Cultura, Recreación, y Deporte de Bogotá, Colombia – employ special assessment processes, different from the assessment process used to assess applications for other grant programs.

Five responding organizations indicated that they have a dedicated staff member to manage support for multidisciplinary arts: Arts Council England, the AC, the CC, the Secretaría de Cultura, Recreación, y Deporte de Bogotá, Colombia and the Conseil des arts de Montréal. These points are discussed further in the following section.

### 2. Definitions of Multidisciplinary Arts – Approaches to Funding

Overall, definitions of multidisciplinary arts are broad and inclusive, with an emphasis on the presence of more than one discipline in an artistic process, product or event. Some funders make a distinction between multidisciplinary arts activity that combines multiple disciplines in one activity, and interdisciplinary arts, which typically describes an emergent practice, exploratory or integrative process, involving multiple artistic disciplines, or arts combined with disciplines outside the arts. The following section details organization-specific definitions and approaches.

#### *Arts Council England*

<sup>4</sup> Survey response provided by Jean Pierre Gahungu, *Ministère de la jeunesse, des sports et de la culture* of Burundi

The mandate of the Arts Council England (ACE) “to put the arts at the heart of national life and people at the heart of the arts” explains in some measure its use of a contemporary definition of the arts, its focus on access and participation by the public, and its openness to new and challenging arts practice. ACE defines multidisciplinary arts in two ways: “combined” and “interdisciplinary” arts. The combined arts policy of the Council is intended to support their strategic objective to develop tourism and sustainable communities. It encourages arts that encompass participatory and celebratory work, festivals and carnival, arts centres and rural touring.<sup>5</sup> The Senior Arts Strategy Officer at the national office works closely with combined arts colleagues across regional offices to implement the program.

Through its interdisciplinary arts policy, ACE recognizes and encourages the development of collaborations between artists and other sectors, such as science, ecology, anthropology, health, industry or philosophy, where artists are often seen to address contemporary critical or social issues. The Council recognizes that interdisciplinary artists also use new media to network, collaborate and distribute their work, and that as a result of their familiarity with technological tools, may move easily between the arts and the creative industries.<sup>6</sup>

ACE provides three different types of support to combined and interdisciplinary arts:

- Multi-art form venues (including the South Bank Centre), festivals, rural touring circuits and agencies
- Carnival and celebratory arts organizations: producing companies and a developing carnival buildings infrastructure
- Interdisciplinary arts: artists and organizations that work across art forms but also cross into other specialised areas, for example art and ecology, or sound art.<sup>7</sup>

All combined arts organizations supported by ACE work with multiple art forms to achieve their aims. The policy provides some insight into its decision to support carnival arts, stating that, “carnival is considered a combined art form as it involves music, design, applied arts and crafts and choreography. Carnival also acts as a catalyst to bring communities together, celebrate difference and aid cultural understanding.”<sup>8</sup>

#### *Australia Council for the Arts*

The AC offers targeted programs of support, many of which are delivered through the AC’s Inter-Arts Office. Projects that involve the presentation or creation of more than one discipline, such as arts festivals and community arts centres, are considered “multi-art form.” New artistic practices that do not fall within the existing funding guidelines are considered “interdisciplinary.” The AC also supports “hybrid art,” where artists explore and combine disciplinary processes, collaborate with practitioners from the arts or other non-arts disciplines, and create new forms of artistic expression.<sup>9</sup> Hybrid arts applications that have a recognized artform outcome (e.g. exhibition, performance) may be presented to the appropriate board.

The AC recognizes that interdisciplinary arts may be exploratory in nature and not yet resolved in terms of their fit within established art forms. They may also involve the use of new technologies such as robotics or biotechnology, and collaboration with these sectors. Interdisciplinary arts also encompass some applications of new media, such as work that

<sup>5</sup> *Combined Arts Policy*, Arts Council England

<sup>6</sup> *Interdisciplinary Arts Policy*, Arts Council England

<sup>7</sup> Arts Council England, D’Art Survey response

<sup>8</sup> *Combined Arts Policy*, Op. cit.

<sup>9</sup> Australia Council for the Arts website, <http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au>



exists only in synthetic, virtual worlds. Notably, the AC supports an artistic residency in Second Life.<sup>10</sup>

### *Canada Council for the Arts*

The CC supports both multidisciplinary art and interdisciplinary art activities.

Overall, a number of CC programs support artists to work collaboratively across disciplines, with other artists, scientists, engineers, environmentalists, and communities and their elders, in order to shape new forms of knowledge and cultural expression. The various definitions applied to multidisciplinary arts within the CC mirror definitions applied by other Canadian funders.

The CC targets its support through the Inter-Arts Office, whose mandate is to develop strategies, policy and manage grant programs that support research, creation, production, dissemination, touring, service and development – and related activities - by Canadian “integrated arts” professional artists and arts organizations.<sup>11</sup>

The Inter-Arts Office defines ‘integrated arts’ as professional artistic activities with a singular artistic vision that combine art forms, or integrate existing art forms into their own distinct form. To be eligible for funding from the Integrated Arts Program, proposed activities must fall outside the framework of existing funding programs offered by the CC’s other discipline-based programs.<sup>12</sup>

The objectives of Inter-Arts Office programs are specific to Integrated Arts and are intended to:

- Increase knowledge, promote and support diversity, plurality and (or) hybridity of practice as demonstrated in the body of work of an individual artist or within an organization’s programming.
- Support both contemporary and traditional work, and (or) the integration of contemporary and traditional work.
- Support artistic excellence in works, processes, professional development and research methodology, while taking into account the local, regional and (or) cultural context.
- Support relationships and collaboration among artists of different disciplinary and cultural backgrounds.

Support to multidisciplinary arts extends to other programs of support in the CC’s Aboriginal Arts and Equity Offices, as well as in the disciplinary sections and the Audience and Market Development Office. Through the Aboriginal Arts and Equity Offices, multidisciplinary artists are supported to work collaboratively, across generations, cultures and disciplines. In Canada, Aboriginal arts are traditionally multidisciplinary, an approach which also extends to ceremonial practices. Multidisciplinary arts are also part and parcel of culturally diverse communities, as the western separation of art forms into discrete disciplines is not always mirrored in non-western traditions. As in Inter-Arts Office programs, support through these programs is directed to both artists and organizations, including support to community arts activities and multidisciplinary festivals.<sup>13</sup>

### *Department of Canadian Heritage*

<sup>10</sup> Definitions are drawn from the Australia Council for the Art’s website, [http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/the\\_arts/Interdisciplinary\\_arts](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/the_arts/Interdisciplinary_arts), [http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/about\\_us/artform\\_boards/inter-arts\\_office](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/about_us/artform_boards/inter-arts_office)

<sup>11</sup> CC website, <http://www.canadacouncil.ca>

<sup>12</sup> CC, D’Art survey response

<sup>13</sup> *The Shape of Things to Come: Multidisciplinary Arts Activity in Canada*, Dr. Marilyn Burgess and Maria De Rosa, op. cit.

The Department of Canadian Heritage reported that one of its funding programs, *Arts Presentation Canada*, which provides support to arts presenters for programming and audience development, indirectly supports multidisciplinary arts.

#### *Other Canadian Funders Responding to the Survey*

Two other Canadian funders responded to the survey stating that they support multidisciplinary arts through their regular programs. The Conseil des arts de Montréal (CAM) recognizes and provides support to organizations for a broad range of multidisciplinary arts. The CAM defines multidisciplinary arts in three ways. They can be “pluridisciplinary” - presentations of programming involving various disciplines, such as venues that present dance on some occasions and theatre on others. They can be “multidisciplinary,” such as when multiple disciplines are assembled together in a single creation. Finally, they can be “interdisciplinary” (or “transdisciplinary”) art, involving artistic practices that integrate and “fuse” together different disciplinary approaches in a single work, having a transformative effect on the disciplines in the finished work. These last are supported through the CAM’s *New Artistic Practices* program. The Toronto Arts Council funds multidisciplinary arts through its regular discipline-based programs. A recent consultation conducted by the Toronto Arts Council found that a significant number of artists would like to see the Council create a multidisciplinary program.

#### *Creative New Zealand*

Creative New Zealand (CNZ) is looking to better define and support what it terms “inter-arts,” as opposed to “multidisciplinary arts,” which appear to be more self-evident. The term “multidisciplinary arts” has been in use at the CNZ for at least a decade and refers to “projects that involve more than two art forms and/or where no primary art form is apparent. An example of a multi-disciplinary project is a regional arts festival seeking funding support to present a programme of work in a variety of art forms, though individual works may not in themselves be multi-disciplinary.”<sup>14</sup>

In the past year, CNZ added the term ‘inter-arts’ to the range of potential art forms it recognizes. (The others are Craft/object arts, Dance, Literature, Moving Image, Maori Performing Arts, Music, Oral Arts, Theatre, and Visual Arts.) Inter-arts in the New Zealand context refers to how artists skilled in one discipline may draw upon the skills or techniques from multiple art forms or cultural traditions to develop work. CNZ retains the notion of an emerging, new practice in its definition, stating that “the resulting creative process and art works may be difficult to categorise in terms of distinct art forms or genres.”<sup>15</sup>

The introduction of the term “inter-arts” by CNZ has in part been driven by the organization’s desire to obtain a clearer sense of how, where and which artists are actively exploring an inter-arts approach to making it work. This is seen as distinctly different from the sometimes incidental use of other art forms in some projects previously described as multi-disciplinary projects. CNZ also wants gather further intelligence, in particular with respect to how interdisciplinary arts are evolving in light of technological change.

#### *Secretaría de Cultura, Recreación, y Deporte de Bogotá, Colombia*

The Secretaría de Cultura, Recreación, y Deporte de Bogotá, Colombia provides targeted support to multidisciplinary arts through a portfolio of funds intended to support artists in the performing arts. Music, dance and dramatic arts program areas reserve funds for multidisciplinary arts proposals that are expected to have an impact on the “home” discipline.

The Secretaría de Cultura, Recreación, y Deporte de Bogotá, Colombia defines multidisciplinary arts as those projects

<sup>14</sup> Creative New Zealand, D’Art Survey response

<sup>15</sup> Creative New Zealand, D’Art Survey response

- that are intended to encourage new trends in contemporary arts, such as finding new ways of storytelling, narrating, interpreting or rethinking the world;
- that encourage dialogue between different artistic disciplines;
- that use new media and new technologies to create their proposals;
- whose contribution transcends the customary scenarios of dance, music, and dramatic arts, such as offering a reflection on the body.

#### *Arts Council of Finland*

The definitions articulated by the Arts Council of Finland (ACF), the National Arts Council Singapore (NACS) and the Swedish Arts Council are more general. At the ACF, projects or events that fall outside the scope of other forms of support are eligible to apply for multidisciplinary arts grants. Multidisciplinary arts are defined as art that cannot be classified in a single art form. The ACF also defines new emerging arts forms as those that don't have their own arts council. Multidisciplinary arts grants are available to individual artists as well as to communities through dedicated programs of support.<sup>16</sup>

#### *National Arts Council Singapore*

Concerned with support to new areas for growth and long-term sustainability, the National Arts Council Singapore approaches the development of the arts through cluster teams working holistically through the entire value chain. Within this approach, productions or individual works featuring more than one art form can be considered multidisciplinary.<sup>17</sup>

#### *Swedish Arts Council*

At the Swedish Arts Council multidisciplinary arts encompass “new art forms or innovative art projects that do not limit themselves to established art forms.”<sup>18</sup> These are supported through the Arts Grants Committee, which oversees four subordinate bodies: Visual Arts Fund, Working Group for composers, Working Group for musicians and singers, and Working Group for theatre, dance and film.

#### *Ministerio de Cultura de la República de Cuba*

In its response, the Ministerio de Cultura de la República de Cuba indicated that the term “multidisciplinary arts” is not used. However, many events that are supported do involve multiple disciplines. This is true for the Digital Arts Fair organized annually by the Pablo de la Torriente Brau Centre, which has as its objective to disseminate and encourage creativity through new information technologies. The Havana Biennale of Fine Arts, which recently celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, is another major event that features visual arts, digital arts, video, dance and other art forms.

### *3. Assessment*

<sup>16</sup> Arts Council of Finland, D'Art Survey response

<sup>17</sup> National Arts Council Singapore, D'Art Survey response

<sup>18</sup> Swedish Arts Council, D'Art Survey response

*Use of Peer Assessors*

With the exception of Cuba, all of the funders responding to the survey indicated that they use assessor committees to evaluate funding applications. Cuban arts grants are decided through the Consejo Nacional de las Artes Plásticas (National Visual Arts Council) and the Consejo Nacional de las Artes Escénicas (National Performing Arts Council). However, it is unclear if these bodies employ peer assessors.

Different funders use different terms to describe their assessors, and show evidence of differing approaches to their employment in the assessment process. For example, Creative New Zealand employs “external assessors,” chosen on the basis of having knowledge and expertise in the area of arts practice of the applicant. The Swedish Arts Council uses “subject experts on its Arts Grants Committee, a senior governing body overseeing specific discipline programs.”<sup>19</sup> The National Arts Council Singapore will deploy an assessor from its pool of “arts assessors” to evaluate arts projects, while at the Secretaría de Cultura, Recreación, y Deporte de Bogotá, Colombia, “external evaluators” are selected through a public application process to carry out the assessment process. Only those who meet the basic profile for evaluators and have a minimum of five years’ experience in a professional artistic or cultural career may be considered as evaluators.

At the CC, assessment of grant applications and prize nominations is made by committees of peers - practicing artists and other professionals working in the arts – who make recommendations to the CC on the awarding of grants. Disciplinary programs are assessed by committees of peer assessors working in that discipline, while multidisciplinary programs are assessed by committees of artists working in a variety of disciplines. The Toronto Arts Council uses committees to assess operating and project applications. The committee appoints volunteer members of the arts community to sit for three years. Grants to individuals are assessed by “juries” of peers (convened at the time of assessment). The Inter-Arts Office of the AC convenes assessment panels of peers with expertise in interdisciplinary or hybrid arts, which makes recommendations to the AC about which applications to support. The recommendations of this panel are approved via the Executive Director of Arts Funding.

At the Arts Council of Finland, multidisciplinary arts decisions are made by the Central Arts Council. The Arts Council of Finland is comprised of nine National Arts Councils representing different artistic fields. The joint body of the National Arts Councils is the Arts Council of Finland (or Central Arts Council), a committee comprised of chairs of each of the nine disciplinary councils and six other members appointed by the Finnish government. The Arts Council of Finland has a number of sub-committees appointed to assess new media art and contemporary circus arts. Multidisciplinary arts as well as new emerging arts forms are assessed by the Central Arts Council. Members of the National Arts Councils must be accomplished artists or experts in their respective fields of art, nominated by major institutions and organizations in their artistic sectors.

*Multidisciplinary Arts Assessment Criteria*

The Arts Council England, the CC, Secretaría de Cultura, Recreación, y Deporte de Bogotá, Colombia, the AC and the Toronto Arts Council discussed their assessment criteria, which in some cases are specially tailored to multidisciplinary arts, while in others they are more general. Overall, respondents use a range of related criteria, including artistic merit, viability, impact, artistic development and strategic considerations.

<sup>19</sup> Merja Heikkinen, ‘The Nordic Model for Supporting Artists – Public Support for Artists in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden’, *Research Reports of the Arts Council of Finland* No. 26, The Arts Council of Finland in cooperation with the Nordic Cultural Institute, Helsinki, 2003

In its assessment of funding applications, Arts Council England considers three dimensions of artistic work:

- idea – the concept or artistic impetus behind the work
- practice – the effectiveness of how the work is put into practice and the impact it has on those experiencing it
- development – the contribution the work makes to the development of the artist, the art form and the arts more widely.<sup>20</sup>

In supporting multidisciplinary arts, the Arts Council England takes a flexible approach, and can work with unconventional organizational structures to support the growth of multidisciplinary arts.<sup>21</sup>

The Inter-Arts Office of the CC uses one set of published criteria for all its programs, focused on artistic merit, impact and viability. As reported by the CC, these criteria are as follows:

#### Artistic Merit (60 percent of score)

- Artistic merit of the *proposed activities*.
- Artistic merit of the proposed *process and strategies*.
- Artistic interest of the proposed *partnership collaborations*, where this applies.
- For programs of work involving *creative research*, the clarity and appropriateness of the methodology and the specific research questions to be addressed.

#### Impact (20 percent of score)

- Potential impact of the proposed activities on the *artistic development* of the artists and organizations involved.
- Potential impact on the *artistic milieu* and (or) disciplinary arts communities.
- Potential impact on the *audiences and communities* for which the activities are intended. Also, where this applies, the extent of community outreach.
- Quality of *engagement* with an audience or audiences.
- Contribution to the *development and evolution* of integrated arts practices.

#### Viability (20 percent of score)

- Strength of *commitment* of the applicant and all partners, and the clarity of the partners' roles, where this applies.
- Reasonable balance of *revenue sources*, considering the nature of the activities.
- *Balanced budget* (total expenses equal total revenues).
- *Financial health* of the applicant or applicants, where this applies.
- *Scale and scope* of activities that are appropriate to the applicant's or applicants' abilities.

Assessment of multidisciplinary arts at the Secretaría de Cultura, Recreación, y Deporte de Bogotá, Colombia (SCRDC), differs from other selection processes of the funder primarily because the evaluation centres on the project, as opposed to assessment of the finished product, as is the case in other programs.

In its assessments of proposed projects, the SCRDC identified the following specific evaluation criteria:

- A proposal's innovation with respect to combining the home discipline (music was given as an example) with other disciplinary approaches, both in the creative process, and in the final expression.
- The pertinence of the project
- Technical and financial viability
- Professional career considerations of the artists belonging to the company or group of artists
- Contribution to audience development

<sup>20</sup> Arts Council England, D'Art Survey response

<sup>21</sup> *Combined Arts Policy*, Arts Council of England

The AC uses dedicated peer assessment committees for multidisciplinary arts. The assessment of multidisciplinary arts at the AC is primarily conducted through the Inter-Arts Office. Some multi-art form activity is also assessed via the Arts Funding Directorate of the AC, while hybrid arts applications that have a recognised artform outcome (e.g. exhibition, performance) may be presented to the appropriate Board. The key determinant is the nature of the proposed project's artistic outcome.<sup>22</sup>

The Toronto Arts Council uses a standard set of assessment criteria for project applications, and another for operating assistance grants. Projects are assessed according to the following criteria:

- the artistic merit of the proposed project and the strength of the applicant's artistic goals and objectives;
- the contribution of the project to the development of the art form in Toronto;
- the contribution of the proposed project to the development of the applicant organization/collective and/or the artists involved;
- the public impact of the project, including the quality and effectiveness of the applicant's outreach, marketing and/or audience development strategies;
- the financial viability of the proposed project and the ability of the applicant to carry it out.

Applications for operating assistance grants are assessed according to their artistic quality associated with the organization, its contribution to the development of the art form, the applicant's role and relevance in the artistic community, the potential for public impact, and the organization's financial and administrative health. Within each of these categories, organizational assessment involves considerations specific to organizations.

The Central Arts Council, which assesses multidisciplinary arts at the Arts Council Finland, considers the viability of proposals, and for community-based projects or events, their significance, extent and general impact as well.<sup>23</sup>

The National Arts Council Singapore's peer assessment committees evaluate all arts projects in accordance with the organization's assessment guidelines and criteria.

#### *Strategic Criteria*

Creative New Zealand and the Swedish Arts Council consider strategic considerations in addition to artistic merit. The Swedish Arts Council "assesses multidisciplinary art projects according to the objectives of the national cultural policy."<sup>24</sup> The objectives of the policy include safeguarding freedom of expression, promoting participation in culture and creativity, and promoting cultural diversity, artistic innovation and quality.<sup>25</sup>

Assessment at the CNZ involves a combination of staff, external and panel assessment. Staff and external assessors consider a standard set of assessment criteria, while panels consider the ability of projects to help the CNZ achieve its strategic objectives. The four current CNZ strategic objectives are for New Zealanders to be engaged in the arts, to develop high quality New Zealand art, for New Zealanders to have access to high quality arts experiences and for New Zealand arts to gain international success. Multi-disciplinary or inter-arts projects are assessed by different external assessors from those applying within a single art form and the composition of panels is multi-disciplinary made up of peers.

#### *4. Resources*

<sup>22</sup> AC website, [www.australiacouncil.gov.au/](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/)

<sup>23</sup> Arts Council of Finland, D'Art Survey response

<sup>24</sup> Swedish Arts Council, D'Art Survey response

<sup>25</sup> Merja Heikkinen, Op. Cit.

Five funders, Arts Council England (ACE), the AC, the CC, Creative New Zealand (CNZ) and the Conseil des arts de Montréal (CAM) dedicate staff to the management of funding for multidisciplinary arts. ACE reported that support programs to combined arts organizations are led by the Head of Combined Arts, supported by staff in London and 8 regional offices.<sup>26</sup> At the AC, the Inter-Arts Office delivers programs in support of new artistic practices that do not fall within the existing funding guidelines of the AC's art form boards. The CC reported that three full-time staff members are assigned to the Inter-Arts Office: one manager, one program officer and one administrator. Other staff may administer multidisciplinary programs as part of a disciplinary section or strategic office. Contractual staff may also be employed on occasion. The Conseil des arts de Montréal reported having one staff member dedicated to administering funding to multidisciplinary arts. The CNZ, which does not currently have any targeted programs of support for multidisciplinary arts, reported that one member of the Programmes staff (Arts Development Team) is responsible for advising on inter-arts practice and funding applications.

The Swedish Arts Council reported having no dedicated multidisciplinary arts staff. In terms of its organization, the Council did indicate that it has a working relationship with the Foundation for the Culture of the Future, mainly concerning assessments of application. The purpose of the foundation is to support long-term innovative culture projects.

The Arts Council of Finland dedicates funding committees to multidisciplinary arts, media arts, circus arts and new emerging art forms.<sup>27</sup>

Five funders reported on the resources allocated to multidisciplinary arts as a percentage of overall funding, based on the most recent year for which their data was available. Figure 2 below illustrates these allocations, which range from 3% to 11% of overall resources. For the sake of comparison, the table shows the amounts allocated in US dollars (USD) as well as in the currencies of the funders.

---

<sup>26</sup> Arts Council England, D'Art Survey response

<sup>27</sup> Merja Heikkinen, Op. Cit.

Figure 2. Amounts allocated to multidisciplinary arts by reporting national arts funders

Funder	Grants to Multidisciplinary Arts		Total Budget		Multidisciplinary grants as percent of total
	Local currency	(USD)	Local currency	(USD)	
Arts Council England (GBP)	£34,500,000	\$57,135,583	£325,000,000 <sup>28</sup>	\$538,154,745	11%
Arts Council of Finland (Euros)	€712,180 <sup>29</sup>	\$1,003,453	€ 25,300,000	\$35,647,407	3%
Australia Council for the Arts (AUD)	\$10,290,000	\$8,315,793	\$146,900,000	\$118,722,911	7%
Canada Council for the Arts (CAD)	\$5,093,601 <sup>30</sup>	\$4,747,955	\$152,800,000	\$142,495,340	3.3%
Creative New Zealand (NZD)	\$1,835,460	\$1,196,157	\$27,802,000	\$18,118,371	7%

In addition, the Secretaría de Cultura, Recreación, y Deporte de Bogotá, Colombia reported allocations to multidisciplinary arts as follows: 3.59% of overall resources to Dance, 5.31% to Dramatic Arts, and 2.54% to Music, although no overall budget was specified.

In Canada, a second organization reported on the allocation of resources. The Conseil des Arts de Montréal reported that in 2008-2009 it allocated a total of \$179,000 CAD (USD \$154,730) to its New Artistic Practices program, or 2% of its total granting budget of \$8,875,000 million CAD (USD \$7,671,647).

Respondents cautioned that, for various reasons relating to how grants are tracked, these figures may not represent the entire allocation of grants to multidisciplinary projects. It is also worth noting that in Canada, for example, multidisciplinary activities such as festivals and presentation programming are also funded by the Government of Canada through the Department of Canadian Heritage and Industry Canada.

## 5. Summary

Twelve funders indicated that they provide support to multidisciplinary arts. Of these, five offer dedicated programs for multidisciplinary arts, four employ special assessment processes, and five dedicate human resources to the administration of multidisciplinary arts programs.

<sup>28</sup> The total annual budget for Combined Arts was not reported in Arts Council England's survey response. ACE has published its investment budget for Combined Arts from 2008-2011 as GBP 1.3 billion. The amount of £ 325 million in Figure 2 represents an approximation of one year of funding, based on one quarter of the total amount. <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/regularfunding.php>

<sup>29</sup> Statistics supplied by Arts Council of Finland, International Survey response. The amount allocated to multidisciplinary arts was arrived at by adding the following: Support for international activities to "other" (Multidisciplinary, unclassified) - 192 180 Euros; Media, circus and multidisciplinary projects - 290 000 Euros; Interaction between art and research - 230 000 Euros.

<sup>30</sup> This figure represents grants that can be considered as having been awarded for 'multidisciplinary arts' in the Council's Arts Tracking System in fiscal year 2007-08



Overall, definitions of multidisciplinary arts are broad and inclusive, with an emphasis on the presence of more than one discipline, which may extend beyond the arts, in a single artistic process, product or a larger event. Some funders make a distinction between multidisciplinary arts activity that combines multiple disciplines in one activity, and interdisciplinary arts, typically describing an emergent practice, exploratory or integrative process.

Some funders are interested in developing sustainable communities, and encourage indigenous and community arts practices, such as Maori or Malay arts or circus arts. Some funders internationally provide support to new media through separate programs, though most acknowledge that interdisciplinary artists may also use new media. In some countries, support for multidisciplinary arts extends as well to new critical practices, and to Aboriginal or other culturally diverse art forms.

Most funders responding to the survey indicated that they use peers to assess funding applications. Assessment criteria can be either specially tailored to multidisciplinary arts, or be more general, and may include artistic merit, viability, impact, artistic development and strategic considerations.

Among responders who reported on their resource allocations, resources earmarked for multidisciplinary arts range from 3% of total granting budgets to 11%. Some funders cautioned that resources allocated to multidisciplinary arts may be greater than reported amounts, which should be considered as conservative.

**D. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Bloom, Dr. Michael et al, *Valuing Culture: Measuring and Understanding Canada's Creative Economy*, Conference Board of Canada, 2008

*Building a Creative Innovation Economy*, Cultural Ministers Council, Creative Innovation Economy Roundtable, Australia, February 2008

Cecchetto, David et al, eds., *Collision: Interarts Practice and Research*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing: Newcastle upon Tyne, 2008

*Creative Britain: New Talents for a New Economy*, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, United Kingdom, 2008

Chang, Woong Jo, *Korean B-Boys and Advent of Audience 2.0*, Presentation to Technology in the Arts Conference, Stratford Ontario, June 2008

*Combined Arts Policy*, Arts Council England

*Creative City Planning Framework: A supporting document to the Agenda for Prosperity: Prospectus for a Great City*, Prepared for the City of Toronto, by Dr. Greg Baeker and Glen Murray

*Crossing Boundaries: The role of cross-art-form and media venues in the age of 'clicks' not 'bricks'*, Presentation prepared by Tom Fleming / creative consultancy for the UK Film Council in association with Arts Council England and the Arts and Humanities Research Council, January 2008

Heikkinen, Merja, *The Nordic Model for Supporting Artists – Public Support for Artists in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden*, Research Reports of the Arts Council of Finland No. 26, The Arts Council of Finland in cooperation with the Nordic Cultural Institute, Helsinki, 2003

*Interdisciplinary Arts Policy*, Arts Council England

Jennings, Pamela, *New Media Arts /New Funding Models*, report prepared for Creativity & Culture, The Rockefeller Foundation, December 2000

*Local Policies for Cultural Diversity*, Study commissioned by the Division of Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue of UNESCO to the Institute for Culture, Barcelona City Council, as Chair of United Cities and Local Governments' Committee on culture, September 2006

Martin, Roger L. and Richard Florida, *Ontario in the Creative Age*, Martin Prosperity Institute, February, 2009

Packer, Randall and Ken Jordon, *Multimedia: From Wagner to Virtual Reality*, Norton: New York, 2001

*Policy Briefing: Entrepreneurship education for the creative industries*, National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts, UK, May 2007

*Promoting Culture: A National Cultural Policy*, Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs, 2001 Statens kulturråd

Rogers, Linda, et al, *Virtual Concerts in the Park*, presentation to Technology in the Arts Conference, Stratford Ontario, June 2008

Schryer, Claude, and Kelly Wilhelm, *The New Artistic Labour Force: Observations from the Canada Council's Consultations*, Canada Council for the Arts. 2007

Schryer, Claude, *Review of the Interdisciplinary Work and Performance Art Program - Final Report (1999)*, Canada Council for the Arts

Stolarick, Kevin et al, *Montreal's Capacity for Creative Connectivity: Outlook and Opportunities*. Study commissioned by nine municipal, provincial and national government partners, including Culture Montreal, and the Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal. January, 2005

*Thinking Big: Australia 2020 Summit Creative Australia*, Australia, April 2008

Van Fossen, Rachel, *Opening Up Space: Toward An Expansive Vision for Multidisciplinary Arts in Canada*, research report prepared for the Multidisciplinary Workgroup of the Canada Council for the Arts, 2007

## Annex 1: List of Survey Respondents

- Arts Council England
- Arts Council of Finland
- Australia Council of the Arts
- Canada Council for the Arts
- Conseil des arts de Montréal (Canada)
- Creative New Zealand
- Department of Canadian Heritage (Canada)
- Ministère de la jeunesse, des sports et de la culture of Burundi
- Ministerio de Cultura de la República de Cuba
- National Arts Council Singapore
- Secretaría de Cultura, Recreación, y Deporte de Bogotá, Colombia
- Swedish Arts Council
- Toronto Arts Council (Canada)

## Annex 2: D'Art question 38: Support for Multidisciplinary Arts

The Australia Council for the Arts (AC) and the Canada Council for the Arts (CC) both manage funding offices called 'Inter-Arts', which share a similar mandate and scope of activity focused on pluralistic, hybrid and interdisciplinary art practices. For the purposes of this survey 'multidisciplinary arts' is defined as *'work that integrates or transforms distinct art forms into a new form and/or the associative presence of more than one artistic discipline'*.

In February 2009, Canada Council Inter-Arts Office coordinator, Claude Schryer, accepted an invitation from Australia Council Inter-Arts Office director, Andrew Donovan, to visit Australia for a series of meetings and exchanges, which included discussions with funders and multidisciplinary arts organizations from Australia, Singapore, South Korea, Hong Kong SAR and China (Taiwan). One of the conclusions from these discussions was that definitions of 'multidisciplinary arts' differ substantially from country to country, and within national boundaries, and that a comparative survey of definitions, granting systems, organizational structures as well as a literature review of research in this field would be a useful learning tool for both funders and artists alike.

This survey was developed collaboratively by the Inter-Arts Office of the Australia Council for the Arts and that of the Canada Council for the Arts.

Additional information, as well as a list of previous research undertaken by the AC and CC on the topic is set out in the 'context' section directly following the questions below.

### QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help map how arts and culture funders manage funding programs for multidisciplinary arts, the nature of that support, their definition of multidisciplinary arts, and some the current issues that they face. Please answer as many of the questions below in as much detail as possible within the deadline. We welcome any attachments or links to provide further detail or context.

**A. Recognition and Definition for Multidisciplinary Arts** (*work that integrates or transforms distinct art forms into a new form and/or the associative presence of more than one artistic discipline*)

A1. Does your agency provide support to multidisciplinary arts? yes no

A2. If you answered 'yes' above, how does your agency define and position multidisciplinary arts? Please supply any comments or supporting materials you wish (attachments or weblinks welcome).

A3. If you answered 'no' to A1, but you know of other government agencies in your country that support multidisciplinary arts, please go to section d or forward this questionnaire to them.

### B. Grantmaking

B1. If your agency provides grants to multidisciplinary arts, does your agency have dedicated funding programs for multidisciplinary arts? Yes No

B2. If you answered yes above, what percentage of your agency's overall grants budget was dedicated to multidisciplinary arts in the last financial year? (Rough estimates will suffice, and data for previous years are welcome) :

- Do you have special assessment processes for multidisciplinary arts that differ from the assessment of other artforms? YES NO
- If yes, please briefly summarise the major differences:
- If you use a peer assessment system to evaluate multidisciplinary arts please describe your peer assessment process

### C. Organisational Structures

C1. Does your agency have a unit or a staff member dedicated to managing support for multidisciplinary arts? Yes No

C2. If you answered yes above, how many staff members are employed in the unit (full time equivalent)?

- Please provide us with the following details on the leader of the unit or the staff member in the space below, or forward this d'art question to them so that they can provide the details themselves.
  - Title (mr, ms, dr, professor, etc.)
  - Given name
  - Family name
  - Position title
  - Organisation name
  - Country
  - Email address
  - Phone number (including country code)

C3. If you answered 'no' to C1 (have dedicated staff), but 'yes' to A1 (agency provides support to multidisciplinary arts), please describe how your agency supports multidisciplinary arts:

### D. Other Sources of Support

D1. Are there other government agencies in your country responsible for supporting multidisciplinary arts? yes no

- If yes, please provide details on these agencies and describe any formal working relationships your agency has with them (name of agency or government department and relationship):

Other comments:

D2. Are there any significant private or public foundations in your country that support multidisciplinary arts? Yes No

- If yes, please provide details of the foundations and provide contact details if possible (foundation and contact):

Other comments:

### E. Literature and Resources

E1. If your agency has produced or commissioned any research, policies, strategies or evaluations of multidisciplinary arts, please either:

- 1) Supply the documents via an email attachment or weblinks; or
- 2) Where applicable, provide the following details for each document:
  - Title

- Author/s
- Year of publication
- Url address if available online
- publishing organization

E2. If you know of any other research or publications that you think would be helpful in supporting the research objectives outlined above, please provide for each:

- Title
- Author/s
- Year of publication
- Url address if available online
- Publishing organization
- Contact name and email

## F. OTHER COMMENTS

Please feel free to provide other information regarding the context for government support to multidisciplinary arts in your country, or any other details, such as success stories or specific challenges you have experienced in funding multidisciplinary arts?

Some of the questions you might want to consider include:

- What are the limits of disciplinary art forms and how do they transform into a new discipline or grouping of disciplines?
- What about bi-disciplinary forms such as dance/theatre or theatre/dance?
- How do digital technologies affect definitions of disciplinary/multidisciplinary work? Is digital art or media art a new arts discipline?
- What are some of the key factors that influence the development of multidisciplinary arts such as arts education and literacy of the media?
- What kind of funding systems exist outside of the disciplinary/multidisciplinary framework?

## Further context for D'Art Question 38 on Multidisciplinary Arts

**1. Australia Council for the Arts, Inter-Arts Office** <http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/inter-arts> and <http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/grants>

Established in 2005, the Inter-Arts Office supports new artistic practice that does not fall within the existing funding guidelines of the Australia Council's artform boards. This includes creative processes such as interdisciplinary and hybrid arts, and cross-disciplinary projects involving artists and practitioners from other fields.

The Inter-Arts Office supports development processes or artistic outcomes that demonstrate a capacity to make conceptual or practical leaps in our knowledge and perception of what constitutes art.

Artists working in this area create works that transform our experience of art – it is challenging, new and as yet unresolved in terms of its position within established artforms.

New artistic practice may not always have broad audience appeal, but it is important as a research and development engine within the arts, influencing and impacting other artforms.

The types of arts projects the inter-arts office supports are necessarily exploratory in nature and fit broadly within a framework of research and development, experimentation and creative development.

The inter-arts office seeks to support artists to create engaging works from concept development through to production.

The Australia Council for the Arts has published the following research documents that provide further information on their work:

- **2006 New media scoping study report**  
[http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/interdisciplinary\\_arts/reports\\_and\\_publications/new\\_media\\_scoping\\_study\\_report](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/interdisciplinary_arts/reports_and_publications/new_media_scoping_study_report)

This report sets a future for media arts at the Australia Council that sees it integrated across the funding programs of the organisation and more broadly through the production and presentation infrastructure in the arts sector in Australia. The Australia Council has endorsed the recommendations of the New Media Arts Scoping Study, which was presented to the Council at its September meeting in 2006. The Scoping Study's recommendations were developed through consultation – by way of interviews, focus groups and written submissions – with more than 100 people and organisations. The Scoping Study includes a 10-year vision for media arts as a vital element of Australian arts, whose artists are internationally recognised and create innovative works based in a strong culture of experimentation, research and creative development, industry partnership, awareness and community engagement.

The Scoping Study identified other recommendations about media arts and contemporary practice that will be developed through further consultation and dialogue with the field.

- **2003 In repertoire: a guide to Australian new media art**  
[http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/interdisciplinary\\_arts/reports\\_and\\_publications/in\\_repertoire\\_a\\_guide\\_to\\_australian\\_new\\_media\\_art](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/interdisciplinary_arts/reports_and_publications/in_repertoire_a_guide_to_australian_new_media_art)

An introduction to new media art practice in Australia. Illustrated throughout with examples of work, In repertoire contains essays on the development of digital art and hybrid art practice in Australia, and the funding, exhibition and educational resources that support practice. The term 'new media art' (sometimes called 'electronic' or 'digital art') includes work that is often, though not always, screen-based and is experienced via computer, on CD-ROM or online, in galleries on screens and in installations, and is increasingly interactive. Hybrid art (sometimes called multi-platform) combines artforms, most prominently in installation and in performance. Australian new media art is realising the creative potential of digital technologies and bringing together traditionally discrete artforms in new permutations. Its ongoing 'new-ness' comes from a sense of adventure, of unfolding possibilities for artist and audience.

## **2. Canada Council for the Arts, Inter-Arts Office** <http://www.canadacouncil.ca/interarts/>

Created in 1999, the Inter-Arts Office exists to develop and manage strategies, policies and grant programs supporting research, creation, production, and dissemination of the integrated arts – and related activities - by professional, Canadian artists and arts organizations.

The Integrated Arts Program is the funding program of the Inter-Arts Office and provides funding to professional artists and organizations for activities and practices that combine or integrate existing art forms into something new or unique in genre. It funds activities that typically place outside the eligible framework of an existing disciplinary funding program of the Canada Council for the Arts.



The objectives of this program are to embrace and support diversity, plurality and (or) hybridism of artistic practice. This program also aims to support the integration of contemporary and traditional approaches to art, all within a framework of assessment responsive to local, regional, and cultural specialties with high artistic excellence as the ultimate benchmark for success at receiving a grant.

The Canada Council for the Arts has published the following research documents that provide further information on issues related to their work:

- **1999 Review of the Interdisciplinary Work and Performance Art Program - Final Report** <http://www.canadacouncil.ca/interarts/rt127241871480000000.htm>

This report led to the creation of the Inter-Arts Office in August 1999 and presents findings of a consultation of Canadian interdisciplinary and performance artists. One of conclusions from this research was that *'the nature and thrust of performance art and interdisciplinary practices are to seek the blurring of boundaries and thus stubbornly resist definition of themselves, or of traditional definitions of art. As a result, "fixed" definitions or permanent categories for these practices are undesirable. Rather, the approach of the Inter-Arts Office is to create flexible frameworks in which these multilayered artistic practices can be recognised and evolve in a dynamic and changing relationship with the established disciplines.'*

- **2006 Rethinking arts funding outside disciplinary boundaries, a speech by Simon Brault, vice-chair of the Canada Council at the Public Forum on Inter-Arts organized by the Québec Interdisciplinary Arts Network, February 11, 2006 in Montréal** <http://canadacouncil.ca/news/speeches/yl127432036045367500.htm>

In February 2006, the vice-chair of the Canada Council, Simon Brault, gave a speech to a group of interdisciplinary artists in Montreal. His speech concludes with the statement that *'interdisciplinary artists, like all artists, must try to influence the vision of arts funding that drives the Council and justifies government investments for which we are the trustees. It is obvious that financing the arts in this country must also, in part, fall between the lines drawn by disciplinary boundaries, both for the future of the disciplines and for the future of interdisciplinarity.'*

- **2007 Opening Up Space: Toward An Expansive Vision for Multidisciplinary Arts in Canada - A research report prepared for the Multidisciplinary Workgroup of the Canada Council for the Arts by Rachael Van Fossen** [http://www.canadacouncil.ca/publications\\_e/research/art\\_disciplines\\_sect/dh128290817209386927.htm](http://www.canadacouncil.ca/publications_e/research/art_disciplines_sect/dh128290817209386927.htm)

This research project into Canada Council for the Arts's history of funding for multi- and cross-disciplinary arts activity began in December 2005 when the Multidisciplinary Workgroup, led by Claude Schryer of the Inter-Arts Office, undertook a mandate *"to analyze and review historical documentation [and to] identify gaps, crossovers, good practices and the interweaving with other discourses,"* and to look at *"the potential impact of multi-disciplinary practice on Canada Council for the Arts' structures."* Historical documentation reveals that Council has shown in its continuing evolution an ongoing ability to examine its programs and to advance institutional changes that better serve artists, arts audiences, the arts as a whole, and Canadian society. The research also demonstrates a recurring need for the Council to be even more flexible and inclusive regarding funding for interdisciplinary work (defined as work that *'integrates and transforms distinct art forms'*), and multidisciplinary arts (implying *'the associative presence of more than one discipline that are combined, but not integrated'*.)

Van Fossen's research concludes that *'the immediacy of needs in certain under- or inadequately served areas of artistic activity has meant focusing on an image of 'closing' or 'filling in' gaps -- gaps where some multidisciplinary arts activities may be seen to be falling through 'cracks.'* An alternative is to conjure an image of opening up space. A program built to meet short-term needs can also be an opportunity to open up conversations, and an invitation to open even wider the doors that allow passage between 'silos'. An open space can embrace changes in art practices in ways that filling gaps cannot: the "catch-as-catch can" nature of ad hoc solutions will usually miss catching the latest developments.'

## **Appendix on Terminology and Definitions from *Opening Up Space: Toward An Expansive Vision for Multidisciplinary Arts in Canada***

### **Preamble**

Both artists and theorists, in discussing art that blurs, crosses over, or simply ignores disciplinary assumptions, emphasize how these practices embrace complexity, fluidity, hybridity, flexibility, and interconnectedness, over separation into distinct categories. An interconnectedness of some kind is implicit to these ways of working, and this is evident in the discourses that attempt to describe the work: inter-disciplinary, multi-disciplinary, cross-disciplinary, trans-disciplinary – each of the terms, despite a constant reference back to the idea of a discipline as a departure point, wishes to convey that the limits of disciplinary thinking cannot apply to these conceptual frameworks and art practices.

The challenge becomes how to formulate clear definitions that can identify or recognize the differences between artists' ways of working, and in so doing allow us to discuss these differences with some precision and nuance, and yet remain open to possibility for even these 'categories' to live, breathe, change, and continue to surprise us with new perspectives, new ways of thinking, and new ways of putting together art that responds to (and with) an ever-transforming world.

As a funding body, the Canada Council provides a framework to determine what will and will not be eligible for funding within a given program, as well as for the criteria which allow for funding decisions to be made by Peer Assessment Committees. Artists and organizations applying also require clarity in order to assess how their project may be articulated and/or perceived in comparison with other applicants. Within Council, Arts Division staff needs to develop common language to discuss applications that require consultation across Sections. The working definitions below, provided to me at the outset of this research project, serve as a point of departure for differentiating between art practices, as well as between different mechanisms for providing funding:

### **Discipline**

The Canada Council Glossary defines discipline as *'a specific art form, such as dance, music or writing. Also referred to as "genre" or "field of specialization" and as "the medium or field of specialization in which an artist works, such as theatre, writing or music art form"*

Art theorist Danielle Boutet (1996) defines an artistic discipline as a *'traditional combination of mediums, methods and signs put to use within specific dimensions and contexts. Basically, a discipline is defined by its tradition, in conjunction with the existing institutions that are built on this tradition.'* Scientist Gavan McDonnell (2000) speaks of disciplines as *'cultural productions, a form of language, a custom of practice, an economy of means, a structure of power, a rule of justice, an archive of narratives of identity and tradition.'*

**Multidisciplinary and Pluri-disciplinary**

A generic term that implies the associative presence of more than one discipline that are combined, but not integrated. Example: In the Inter-Arts Office, multidisciplinary festivals are considered to be *'events featuring a number of artists, where no single artistic discipline or practice predominates.'*

**Interdisciplinary**

Integration and transformation of distinct art forms that creates a new form.

Example : The Canada Council Inter-Arts Program defines interdisciplinary work that *'integrates and transforms distinct art forms. The resulting work is outside the framework of an established program at the Canada Council.'*

**Cross-disciplinary**

A centralised approach to grant delivery that touches more than one discipline, including interdisciplinary work as a field of activity. Example: The Canada Council Audience and Market Development Office provides centralized travel assistance in all disciplines.

**Trans-disciplinary**

A thematic approach to addressing an issue that is beyond disciplinary boundaries.

Example: The Aboriginal Peoples Collaborative Exchange program assists Aboriginal artists (individuals) or artistic groups from Aboriginal communities to travel to other Aboriginal communities to share traditional and/or contemporary knowledge or practices that will foster development of their artistic practice.

Interestingly, from the very early stages of my research a significant number of interviews with Council staff indicated some discomfort with the idea of creating strictly defined 'boxes' – definitions and programs – that will invariably exclude some practices. Concern was repeatedly expressed that the concept of multidisciplinary work as a 'combination' of disciplines still depends on presuming disciplinarity as the norm, and therefore risks excluding other kinds of work that may not refer to this assumption, and that may not recognize 'combining' rather than simply 'making' art. These concerns over exclusively disciplinary language used to describe 'non-disciplinary' practices (see Boutet, 1996) became especially important in discussions about artistic work in many culturally diverse and Aboriginal communities, both of which are identified as strategic priorities for Canada Council.

For the purposes of this report I have therefore adopted an inclusive understanding of what are 'multi- and cross- disciplinary arts', and most often refer to these as 'multi-arts' practices. This open-ended conceptualizing of multidisciplinary is in keeping with trends in inter- and multi- disciplinary discourses, with trends among arts funders, and with an understanding that such work cannot be 'contained' in bureaucratic envelopes.

In other words, defining artistic practices that have little to do with disciplinary distinctions is both impossible and necessary. The recommendations coming out of this research attempt to address this seeming contradiction by proposing a conceptual model for the Multi-Arts program that embraces and values diversity of practice, and allows room for a multiplicity of specific forms that projects and programming may take. This is a complex undertaking, but one that is very much in line with the Council's history of response to the evolution of artistic excellence.

For the purposes of this research report, I have formulated a further set of definitions to assist with a developing terminology relevant to multi-arts:

***Diversity***

In the context of the objectives of a revised Inter-Arts program ‘to embrace and support diversity, plurality and hybridity of practice’, diversity emphasizes distinctiveness: embracing diversity acknowledges that there are many different approaches to art-making. Distinct approaches may have been formed by differences of cultural background, age, gender identity, disciplinary departure points, chosen forms, artist intentions, and so on.

***Hybridity***

In the context of the objectives of a revised Inter-Arts Program ‘to embrace and support diversity, plurality and hybridity of practice’, hybridity acknowledges that even art forms which can be seen as distinct are rarely ‘pure’. One important aspect of supporting a plurality of practices is to recognize, value and encourage interdependence, crossover and mutual influences.

***Plurality***

In the context of the objectives of a revised Inter-Arts Program ‘to embrace and support diversity, plurality and hybridity of practice’, ‘plurality’ emphasizes holistic consideration of these distinct (diverse) approaches. Embracing plurality insists on taking a ‘bigger-picture’ view, whether in reference to a range of modalities in the practice of an individual artist, or when considering the range of practices represented by applications considered together at a particular round of assessment.