Centering Indigenous Artists' Well-Being within the Arts Industry

Multidisciplinary Urban Capstone Project
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Land Acknowledgement:

Indigenous knowledge is place-based, and Indigenous artists' practice is inherently connected to their land. To align with Indigenous philosophy and ensure the viability of our recommendations, this report is place-based, mainly focusing on the Indigenous history on the land of Toronto and the opinion of local artists. With the original name of Tkaronto, Toronto is the traditional territory of the Anishnabeg, the Haudenosaunee, the Chippewa, the Mississauga's of the Credit and the Wendat peoples (Toronto Public Art Strategy, p3). The Dish with One Spoon treaty illustrates the nations' local history that peacefully share and protect the land and resources. Along with the western settler, the Toronto area was then covered by two fraudulent agreements: Treaty 13 and the William treaty (Toronto Public Art Strategy, p3). Both ignored Indigenous people's needs and rights and extinguished their relationships with the land. The place-based context section will expand on these treaties and local histories. The authors of this report have histories of migration in their lineage and are grateful to live, work and be on this land. Throughout this report, we embed the history, land, and knowledge of the Anishnabeg and the Haudenosaunee.

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Introduction:

The purpose of this research project is to understand how non-Indigenous organizations and Indigenous artists can create and sustain meaningful and equitable working relationships in a fast-paced grant-based economy. As a multidisciplinary urban capstone project at the School of Cities, we were paired with our client STEPS (Sustainable Thinking and Expression on Public Space) Public Art who is a community-based public art organization headquartered in Tkaronto. Our project developed 10 recommendations for public art organizations, community members and relevant stakeholders to centre Indigenous artists in their operations, and to sustain meaningful, intentional, and long-term relationships with Indigenous artists. This report discusses the place-based context, introducing the confederacies that lived in Ontario, specifically in Tkaronto, and the treaties that covered this area. Tkaronto is the Mohawk word for "the place in the water where the trees are standing", and we will be referring to Toronto as Tkaronto during this report to honour the original meaning (Gray, 2003). This report was developed through centring Indigenous-led theoretical frameworks, reports, policy briefs, and learnings from our interviews and roundtables.

Our positionality is that of four non-Indigenous women of colour students with histories of migration, who have resided in Tkaronto. Our supervisor, Dr. Kwan-Lafond, is a mixed-race woman of colour born in treaty four territory with family and community ties to Anishnaabe, Metis, Chinese, francophone, and queer communities in Tkaronto. We have actively considered and reflected on our positionality throughout this learning journey. According to the "nothing about us, without us" framework developed in disability studies, we chose to centre the knowledge we have learned from Indigenous artists and professionals and propose recommendations as opposed to speaking on their behalf (Charlton, 1998). This project has developed substantially from the original proposal to ensure our principles were embedded and present in our final report.

Place Based Context:

Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe Confederacies:

As mentioned above our research process is grounded in place-based knowledge, and as STEPS Public Art operates mostly in Tkaronto and as we are University of Toronto students, this section will review the context. To begin, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy contains 6 nations: the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondag, Oneida, Mohawk, and Tuscarora (Six Miles Deep, 2015). Haudenosaunee territory ranges from southern Ontario to eastern Quebec (Six Miles Deep, 2015). The Six Nations Reserve is the largest reserve in Canada and only represents 5% of the

original land that was granted and promised to the Haundenosuanee confederacy through the signing of the Haldimand Tract by the British (Six Miles Deep, 2015). The Anishinaabe or Three Fires confederacy comprises the Chippera, Odawa and Pottawatomi (Bell et al, 2010). However, the Anishinaabe Confederacy also includes the Algonquin, Nipissing, Mississaugas, and Oji-cree (Bell et al, 2010). Anishinaabek territory stretches from the Western lakes to Sarnia in the south, and Lake Nipigon in the north (Bell et al, 2010). According to Leroy Little Bear, an elder from Blackfoot Confederacy, a nation is a group or a society with a common culture, customs, and traditions that have a sovereign entity (Little Bear, 2015). The Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe Confederacies have their own nation-to-nation relationships, epistemologies, and worldviews.

The Toronto Purchase, Treaty 13:

Treaties are international legal agreements between nations, recognized by the United Nations (Introduction to Treaties, 2018). The Toronto purchase was a treaty signed between the Mississaugas of the Credit River and the Crown in 1805 (Toronto Purchase Specific Claim, 2014). The Mississaugas won a land claim in 2016 which proved the treaty was fraudulent as there was a copy of the treaty that was forged and included a larger amount of land (Toronto Purchase Specific Claim, 2014). This demonstrates that the Mississaugas did not cede the land to the crown, and still have Indigenous title, hence Tkaronto is on stolen land.

Williams Treaties:

The Williams Treaties were two land-surrender treaties signed in 1923 that cover substantial tracts across Ontario (Surtees, 1986). One treaty covers lands between Georgian Bay and the Ottawa River, while the other covers lands along the north shore of Lake Ontario and lands stretching up to Lake Simcoe (Surtees, 1986). The Williams Commission determined that the value of the land, which covered close to 26,000 square kilometers, was almost incalculable. The treaty attempted to extinguish Indigenous relationships to land by removing hunting and fishing rights. The Williams Treaties were complicit in dispossessing Indigenous land, and in many ways helped perpetuate a system of poverty and dependence on the Canadian government. (Campbell, 2017)

Dish with One Spoon Wampum:

The Dish with One Spoon wampum agreement took place between the Anishinaabe, Mississaugas, and Haudenosaunee nations to promote "peaceful, responsible co-existence" and outline how to share territory while maintaining separate sovereignties (Bell et al, 2010, p. 46). This agreement was established before contact with settlers. The spoon represents peace and the sharing of resources supporting sustainability and mutual cooperation.

Figure 1 [Gä•sweñta', Onondaga Nation]

Kaswentha:

The Kaswentha, known as the TwoRow Wampum is a treaty between the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and Dutch settlers. The Wampum belt symbolizes two vessels traveling together and the continuing mutual recognition that their societies are distinct and should remain so (Ransom & Ettenger, 2001). The three white rows symbolize the Haudenosaunee principles of skennen (peace), kariwiio (good mind), and kasastensera (strength) (Ransom & Ettenger, 2001). The treaty calls for cooperation and the use of the peoples' respective knowledge systems to service common interests while remaining sovereign. The Kaswentha is a living treaty and represents a living relationship as each side has their own responsibilities. This relationship needs to be renewed regularly through ceremony to continue the principles of friendship, peace, and respect (Woons, 2014).

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples:

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was a response to the Kanehsatà:ke resistance, a land dispute where a golf course was built on sacred Mohawk land. Part 1 of the Royal Commission documented the historical stages of Indigenous people: the first stage was that of separate worlds and recognized that Indigenous people already had culture, laws, and ways of life (RCAP, 1996). Stage 2 focused on contact and cooperation between Indigenous people and Europeans who began relationships of trade (RCAP, 1996). The next stage was displacement and assimilation where Indigenous nationhood was denied; reserves the Indian Act, and status were created; the British gained control over land and resources; and nation-to-nation relationships were disrupted (RCAP, 1996). The last stage was negotiation and renewal which supported the adaptation of Indigenous sovereignty and self governance. The Royal Commission had 440 recommendations and called for the complete restructuring of relationships between Indigenous nations and the state (RCAP, 1996).

Truth and Reconciliation Commission:

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established in 2008 to document the history of residential schools in Canada and an executive summary, several volumes and 94 calls to action were published in 2015. The commission revealed the history and legacy of cultural genocide caused by residential schools

and guided 'a process of truth and healing.' (TRC, 2015, p. 23). The Commission protected, archived, and preserved survivors' stories in Canada's national memory and argued for reconciliation as a relational framework. (TRC, 2015). Within the arts industry context, the commission caused a shift towards "reconciliation" projects and increased hiring of Indigenous artists and practitioners in institutional spaces. The Commission bought Indigenous sovereignty and the history of cultural genocide implemented by Canada into the mainstream conversation in Canada. Lastly, according to a study by the Yellowhead Institute, only 9 out of the 94 calls to action have been completed, which does not include the recommendation to monitor, evaluate and report the progress (Pashagumskum, 2020).

Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls:

The National Inquiry investigated the violations and abuses of Indigenous girls, women, and two-spirited people. The report comprised interviews with 2,380 family members and delivered 231 calls for justice for governments, social services, and all Canadians (National Inquiry, 2019). It highlighted that colonization relies on gendered oppression and the dehumanization of Indigenous people (National Inquiry, 2019). The calls for justice demanded a decolonizing approach centering Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination (National Inquiry, 2019).

Situating Indigenous Sovereignty in the Current Landscape:

Indigenous ways of life, languages, and knowledge systems are for all individuals who live on this land. Dr. Aaron Mills, an Anishinaabe legal scholar, suggests that non-Indigenous people need to make space, speak alongside Indigenous people, and live by Indigenous legalities, as to produce reconciliation without the state but between guests and Indigenous people (2017). It is the responsibility of public art organizations and their staff to learn about Indigenous nation's worldviews on the land that they are living on to ensure successful working relationships. As George Erasmus, a Dene politician, during the Kanehsatà:ke resistance stated: "European people and their descendants, and everyone else here that are now Canadians seriously [must] begin to address the basic relationship that they have with this land and the people that were here first" (Cuthland, 2017, pg. 157.)

Context of Canadian Arts Organization:

The Canadian Council for the Arts (CCA) offers a broad range of grants and services to professional Canadian artists and arts organizations. The board is governed by 11 members appointed by the Governor in Council, for fixed terms. The board meets at least three times a year and is responsible for the oversight of the organization's policies, programs, budgets, and grant decisions. The Canada Council works in close cooperation with federal, provincial/territorial, and municipal cultural agencies and departments (Canadian Council for the Arts, 2018). Under the

council, grant applicants are subject to "pre-established eligibility and other entitlement criteria" (Canadian Council for the Arts, 2018). Despite it being well intentioned, research by the Yellowhead Institute (2020) has found the grant-based arts economy to be a precarious industry for vulnerable artists. In 2020, Jesse Wente, Anishinaabe journalist, was appointed the new chair of the Canadian Council for the Arts and will be attempting to reduce the harm caused by Council and its colonial practices (Fricker & Maga, 2020). The CCA will also launch a new participatory planning process for individuals to share what they would like to see out of the council, especially during the rebuilding of the arts and culture sector (Fricker & Maga, 2020).

The Canada Council 2016-21 Strategic Plan includes "renewing the relationship between Indigenous artists and Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences" (Canadian Council for the Arts, 2018). The emphasis on Indigenous artist grants has created a culture of transactional relationships. The capitalist economic structure these organizations are operating within monetizes these relationships for the purpose of obtaining grants. Art organizations are now tasked with finding artists that fit the profile set out by the grant's criteria, thus reinforcing this tokenistic practice where organizations "pretend to give advantage to those groups in society who are often treated unfairly, in order to give the appearance of fairness" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2021). It is also important to take into account that under

this structure, the arts are undervalued to begin with. The majority of the artists are socio-economically disadvantaged, leading a difference in power when negotiating with organizations (Maranda, 2007). Often artists are forced to comply with the terms set out by the organization, even if they were solicited by the organizations themselves. According to research "the contracts that Indigenous artists have been receiving since the 2017 reconciliation year are not enough to sustain them" with only a few hundred dollars per contract and a mere few contracts a month (Nixon, 2020 p.11). Those who seek to pursue individual practices have struggled to receive grants from provincial and federal levels. This is partially due to the westernized definition of art varying from Indigenous practices, making them ineligible to qualify for grants (Nixon, 2020 p.11).

A report published by the Yellowhead Institute presents testimonials by Indigenous artists expressing their frustration with their historical tokenization by art organizations. The cultural ban under the Indian Act in 1885 sought the assimilation of Indigenous Peoples as separate nations into mainstream Canada. The Act suppressed expressions of Indigenous culture like traditional ceremonies and outlawed sacred objects, totem poles, masks, art works and countless more (Facing History and Ourselves, 2021). Much of Indigenous art works and customs were stolen and lost in the process, with repercussions felt to this day. The willful ignorance of art organizations in Canada is an "infringement on cultural

sovereignty" as grant offices frequently do not consider the body of work by the Indigenous community but rather the eligibility criteria for the designated grant (Nixon, 2020 p.11). This leads to a culture of exploitation that will later unravel. In 1994, the Assembly of First Nations and the Canadian Museums Association (CMA) struck *The Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples* with the purpose of increasing involvement of Indigenous peoples in the interpretation of their culture and history by cultural institutions; improving access to museum collections by Indigenous peoples; and the repatriation of artifacts and human remains (Nixon, 2020 p.6). However, "even until this day, no museums encompassed under the CMA have released reports or statements regarding how their institutions have ensured compliance with the recommendations" (Nixon, 2020 p.6). Despite developing an action plan, no one was held accountable for not adhering to these outlines.

The Toronto Public Art Strategy is underpinned by a commitment to embed truth and reconciliation with Indigenous communities as foundational principles for public art (City of Toronto Public Art Strategy, 2020 p.9). The strategy delivers three core public art programs – the City of Toronto Public Art and Monuments Collection, the Percent for Public Art Program, and StreetARToronto (StART) (City of Toronto Public Art Strategy, 2020 p.9). The program focuses primarily on murals, statues and monuments set in public space. Similar to the Canadian Council of the Arts, the program imposes a western criterion onto Indigenous artists. The

issue of tokenism and reconciliation exploitation once again remains unaddressed in the process. The medium of the artworks is imposed despite aiming to spark "dialogue about the legacy of colonialism": the process remains colonizing (City of Toronto Public Art Strategy, 2020 p.3). Furthermore, the existence of an Indigenous advisory committee has proven to be ineffective as pointed out by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The Indigenous advisory committee calls for the integration of "diverse Indigenous peoples and knowledge throughout corporate structures, on both the creative and business side of organizations, and not just in moments of increased fiscal attachment to monetized identity politics" (Nixon, 2020 p.18).

Covid-19 Context:

It is important to contextualize this project in the global COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic and its effects on public health have created more barriers for the different stakeholders. The art industry is often the first to get hit during [economic crises], as it is considered to be non-essential work. In times when people need to be more cautious with their money, they tend to stop investing in the art sector, whether it is going to live - or even virtual - shows, purchasing artwork, or making donations to artists and art organizations. This lack of funding has not only affected organizations, but also the artists themselves. Many freelance artists found themselves no longer receiving commissions and/or having projects cancelled,

leaving them with no source of income. Thus, the pandemic and its effects on the economy have created further barriers for artists, who are often already financially vulnerable (Idaline Conde, 2009).

The stay-at-home orders and social distancing regulations have made it difficult for organizations and artists to meet each other and connect in meaningful ways. While the shift to remote working has been difficult for a majority of people, the transactional, distanced nature of virtual communication is even less natural to Indigenous folks, whose values are rooted in community. These regulations have also impeded on the continuation of public art projects, especially those that include active engagement with the audience such as walking tours. The suspension of art production has decreased the income of organizations, which has in turn decreased the number of employees and human resources.

The Covid-19 pandemic has hit Black, Brown and Indigenous communities the hardest, both in urban centres and in rural/remote contexts. Looking at our provincial context, Public Health Ontario declared that:

> "Ontario neighbourhoods with the highest 'ethnic diversity' rates had the most detrimental COVID-19 outcomes. When compared to the least diverse neighbourhoods, these neighbourhoods had higher hospitalization rates (4 times higher), higher intensive care unit (ICU) admission rates (4 times higher), and higher death rates (2 times higher). In Toronto, racialized communities account for 79% of COVID-19 cases while representing 52% of the city's population" (Addressing health inequities, 2020, p. 1).

In order to create equitable, supportive, and sustainable relationships with Indigenous artists, organizations need to consider the increased importance of implementing accessibility measures in the context of the pandemic.

Stakeholders:

The stakeholders for this project are the University of Toronto' School of Cities, local and national Indigenous artists, the STEPS Public Art (the client), and the students working on the deliverables (the student team). As a facilitator, the University of Toronto's School of Cities plays a crucial role in providing the necessary information for the team to complete their tasks, as well as funding for the team to invite experts in the Canadian art world. This allows the non-Indigenous student team to better understand the problem. The School of Cities benefits from the successful outcome of the project, and from an expanded network. The Indigenous artists engage in consultancy work to address their concerns in their relationship with art organizations. They had the opportunity to share their experiences as vulnerable artists in the current gig economy and help with the work in addressing these concerns going forward. They contributed to shaping the current shortcomings of the western bureaucratic structure from vulnerable artists' point of view and share their history, all while being fairly compensated.

Finally, all artists in collaboration with STEPS will benefit from our strategy. The client will benefit from the final product to further establish and

sustain relationships with Indigenous artists to advance truth and reconciliation within and outside of their upcoming projects. The project team fulfilled the client's requests under the guidance of their supervisor to receive credit for their work and gained knowledge and fulfillment from working towards justice.

Challenge:

Aiming to develop strategies and provide recommendations that integrate principles of indigenization in STEPS' Public Art and other public art organizations operations, our challenge is to analyze their relationships with Indigenous artists in the context of historical power imbalances and the precarious grant economy. Our objective is to determine ways to initiate and sustain meaningful and equitable working relationships between the two groups.

Artists are vulnerable workers "on account of professional contingencies such as underemployment, intermittent and multiple jobs, freelance work, precarious contracts, low salaries in certain categories" (Idaline Conde, 2009, p.3). This vulnerability was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Indigenous artists' culture and values differ from most public art organizations in capitalist society, increasing their vulnerability. We recognize the existence of power imbalances on both national and industry-specific levels that affect relationships between Indigenous artists and non-Indigenous art organizations.

To meet the challenge, we need to understand both the historical and current contexts to analyze the reasons for tokenistic representations and intentional non-integration between art organizations and Indigenous artists. We need to identify the problems and corresponding measures that STEPS and other art organizations can take to build relationships with Indigenous artists, to ensure that artists feel supported, respected, secure and equal.

Guiding Indigenous Conceptualizations:

Throughout our learning journey, we were introduced to Indigenous conceptualizations, particularly philosophies based in Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee tradition to ensure that we are grounded in place-based knowledge. The teachings can be applied to our project and research challenge, as we think through how to build sustainable relationships and restructure the arts industry to support Indigenous artists.

Seven Grandfather Teachings:

The Seven Grandfather teaching is a traditional story within Anishinaabe history, emphasizing the value of interconnectedness. This story is about the spirits of seven grandfathers who want to help people on the turtle island live positively and happily; they decide to give knowledge to a young child. This child has to travel around the world to receive gifts. The child meets spiritual animals and learns the knowledge throughout his journey. These animals are a beaver representing

wisdom, an eagle representing love, a wolf representing humility, a turtle representing truth, a sabe representing honesty, a bear representing courage and a buffalo representing respect (Seven Grandfather Teachings, 2018). The seven grandfathers emphasize that people cannot live well with any of the pieces of knowledge missing; all of the pieces must be used and comprehended together (Seven Grandfather Teachings, 2020). These different pieces of knowledge are interconnected, contributing to the wholeness of a person. This story teaches us that we must develop ourselves spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically to become a better person throughout everyone's life journey (Seven Grandfather Teachings, 2020).

Medicine Wheel:

There are various forms of medicine wheels, spanning across the different Indigenous nations. All forms are sensible and center one value: people should learn, appreciate, respect, and practice interconnectedness and balance in all things (Four Directions Teaching, 2018). Institutions can use medicine wheels as a conceptual guide to identify their roles in supporting Indigenous communities, and to understand the gap they need to overcome to support Indigenous artists' interconnectedness. The following are two examples of the medicine wheel framework suggested by Shannon Winterstein:

Figure 3.a. holds Indigenous artists at the center of the medicine wheel. With their communities surrounding them, the diagram shows artists as being interconnected to their social, familial circles, and broader society. When an organization is working with an Indigenous individual, they are also indirectly working with the individual's communities that hold them accountable. Supporting the artist, means supporting their community and the balance between and throughout the three circles in the medicine wheel. Figure 3.b. shows the four elements [mental, physical, emotional, spiritual] that constitute the person's wholeness. When working with Indigenous artists, art organizations are working with the whole person, never a single aspect. Understanding and respecting these ways of being, and how they manifest in one's

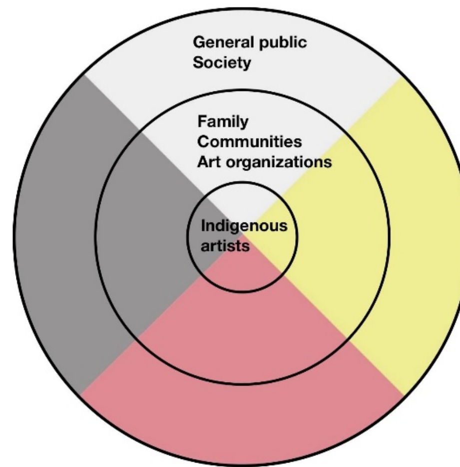

Figure 3.a Medicine Wheel Framework displaying Indigenous artists' connectedness and responsibility to their communities.

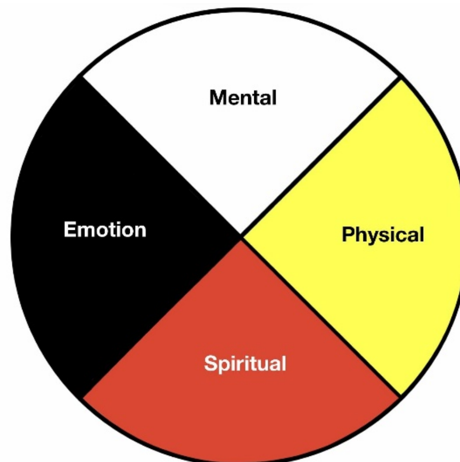

Figure 3.b Medicine Wheel Framework showing the different parts that constitute a person. Indigenous people consider these elements together.

work will allow for better harmony between Indigenous artists and non-Indigenous organizations.

Putting your good mind and good heart forward:

A concept that was raised by an Indigenous artist was "living in a good way" which refers to the Ojibwe philosophy that encourages modesty, humility, and understanding that we are all worthy. The Ojibwe term for "to live a good way" is mino-bimaaduziwin (Kerr, 2017). Indigenous artists are historians, botanists, and so much more than the western definition [of artists].

Furthermore, local artists understand the experiences and histories of the land intimately. Indigenous teachings and culture have survived multiple attempts at eradication, changes in leadership, economic crises and assimilations (Lawson, 2017). The concept of wellness and living in a good way contributes to this resilience. Place-based Indigenous knowledge should be centred (Lawson, 2017); this is the embodiment of "living in a good way".

Guiding Ethics:

We were fortunate enough to be assigned this project, and to receive the opportunity to expand our knowledge on the land we live on and learn from the peoples it belongs to. We recognized our positionality as four non-Indigenous students and made the conscious decision to form our role as researchers and facilitators between Indigenous artists and non-Indigenous public art organizations.

Our ethics and values guided our processes, which were humility, intentionality, and flexibility. When facilitating conversations, we did our 'homework' prior to our conversations with different stakeholders, we did not make assumptions but asked open-ended questions that allowed the interviewees to interpret them and answer in a way that was most authentic to their experiences. We reminded ourselves to *make space* and practice humility, as opposed to taking space and speaking on behalf of Indigenous artists and communities.

Another way that we practice intentionality is fairly compensating the individuals we interviewed and roundtable panelists. We ensured the funding from School of Cities grants to provide honorariums which were by the CARFAC standard. We were clear with the artists and practitioners about our expectations and where we were coming from. Additionally, we were open to adjusting and rerouting our project based on our conversations with Indigenous artists. It was important to be flexible within this project, especially in the context of the pandemic, as we hosted our roundtable virtually.

Methodology:

Reviewing:

In order to start our research and learning journey, we conducted an extensive literature review of Indigenous led strategies, policy briefs, examples of

public art by Indigenous artists and theoretical frameworks. In doing so, we learned about Indigenous epistemological principles that are rooted in the land. Indigenous knowledge is relational, context-based, and dynamic (McGregor, 2004). The knowledge gained from these sources is at the foundation of our report and recommendations. We also reviewed STEPS Public Art's internal documents such as debrief forms and post project reflections, agreements, and evaluations. These documents were reviewed to understand the contractual and administrative aspects of artist-organization relationships.

Listening:

We spoke to our supervisor, Dr. Kwan-Lafond about the best ways to listen, ask the right questions and approach relationships. We, then, spoke to STEPS Public Art to understand our project within their scope, and have a better grasp on their operations and processes. We began approaching Indigenous artists using the referral sampling method, meaning we were connected with our interviewees through our network. We had regular meetings with our supervisor, Dr. Kwan-Lafond, who taught us about Indigenous histories, cultures, and ways of doing; guided our work; generously extended her network to us; and reviewed our deliverables.

After consulting Lindsey Lickers multiple times throughout the year on her work and experiences as an Indigenous artist working with STEPS, we asked her

to review our drafted report to ensure that it aligned with the thoughts, sentiments, and values she had shared with us.

For our interviews, we consulted the following professionals and scholars:

- Ann Macdonald, Director and Curator of Doris McCarthy Gallery (discussion and email correspondence)
- Lindsey Lickers, Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe Artist and Community Organizer who has worked with STEPS Public Art (multiple discussions)
- Naulaq LeDrew, Inuk artist and Traditional Knowledge Keeper (email correspondence)
- Diana Moser, Interim Executive Director of ArtsBuild Ontario (workshop and Q&A)
- Jason Spicer, co-director of the Community Economies Lab and Assistant Professor in Department of Human Geography, University of Toronto (discussions and strategy sessions)
- Heather Dorries, Haudenosaunee Assistant Professor at Centre for Indigenous Studies and Department of Human Geography, University of Toronto (discussion)

Our analytical process was generating findings and recommendations through reviewing our meeting notes, internal documents and scholarly articles. We

discussed these themes and strategies with Dr. Kwan-Lafond, Dr. Spicer, and Lindsey Lickers and revised them according to their feedback.

Roundtable:

We hosted a roundtable, 'Roundtable with Indigenous Artists: changing the arts sector to center Indigenous Artists' wellbeing' with the School of Cities. The roundtable consisted of four Indigenous panelists, there were three artists and one administrator/expert on Indigenous settler relationships. However, all of the panelists were community advocates who addressed the needs of Indigenous artists when working with non-Indigenous organizations. The discussion covered the creation of supportive working environments, compensation, the impact of Covid-19, and the effects of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on the arts sector. The roundtable was recorded and shared on the University of Toronto Schools of Cities platform for the public and to serve as an important source of data moving forward.

The roundtable consisted of the following panelists:

- **Lindsey Lickers** is a Haudenosaune/ Anishinaabe multi-media artist, facilitator, and Indigenous community advocate originally from Six Nations of the Grand River with ancestral roots to the Mississauga's of Credit First Nation. Artistically she specializes in painting, beading, leatherwork. She has also spent much of her career as an arts and culture facilitator as well as

advising in the areas of Indigenous governance, program development and community development.

- **Shannon Winterstein** is an expert in Indigenization strategies and Indigenous curriculum development. She is a Professor and the Indigenous Curriculum Developer in the Centre for Academic Quality, Academic Excellence Unit at Centennial College. Shannon was the Executive Producer and contributing author of the Our Stories: First Peoples in Canada eTextbook, a first of its kind in Canada. Shannon is Indigenous (matrilineal) with Scottish/German ancestry, though she is displaced from her nation as a result of the '60's Scoop'.
- **Nyle Miigizi Johnston's** spirit name is Wiishkoonseh Miigizi'enh means Whistling White Headed Eagle. He grew up in Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation and apprenticed with Storytellers since his youth. A painter, mural artist, traditional storyteller, and traditional helper, Johnston uses his gift of storytelling to connect his peoples' stories of love and healing with the broader world, and offer support to a range of community organizations

- **Annie Beach** is a visual artist, born and based in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Treaty One Territory. Beach is Cree/Saulteaux/Ukrainian, with relations from Peguis First Nation and Brokenhead First Nation. She is a recent graduate with a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree (Honours) from the University of Manitoba's School of Art, where she has sat on the School of Fine Art Student Association as Co-President for a number of years. Beach has curated, designed, and executed over a dozen mural projects throughout the city and works as art instructor with a variety of youth, community arts and cultural-based organizations.

Figure 2. Changing the Arts Sector to Center Indigenous Artists' Well Being: Roundtable with Indigenous Artists

Indigenous Methodology:

Margaret Kovach, a Plains Cree and Saulteaux scholar, argues that qualitative research has space for Indigenous methodologies. However, the relationship with research and Indigenous communities has been one of exploitation as Indigenous communities are observed or examined by non-Indigenous academics utilizing Western methodologies (Kovach, 2010). Keeping this in mind, we consciously re-shaped our role as non-Indigenous researchers utilizing a non extractive research approach that is accountable to the Indigenous artists that we consulted. We also ensured that we were respectful of Indigenous cultural knowledge. Kovach outlines there are fundamental differences between Western and Indigenous epistemologies that cannot be reconciled, and often Western academia has excluded Indigenous methodologies (2010). Additionally, Kovach highlighted how Indigenous epistemologies can be found within qualitative research, however Indigenous researchers need to move beyond dependency in Western concepts. Kovach refers to Indigenous methodologies and qualitative research as an "insider/outsider" relationship shown in Figure 4 below.

Indigenous research methodologies are place-based and specific to a nation (Kovach, 2010). As non-Indigenous student-researchers, we are not using Indigenous methodologies. However, we are using non-extractive research methodologies in order to produce work that is ethical and equitable. However, we approached our research challenge with a reflective thematic analysis with relational and qualitative methodology. Lastly, determining our methodology was a reflective process: we meditated on our perspectives, positionality, values, and ethics as we took on this work (Mauthner & Doucet 2003).

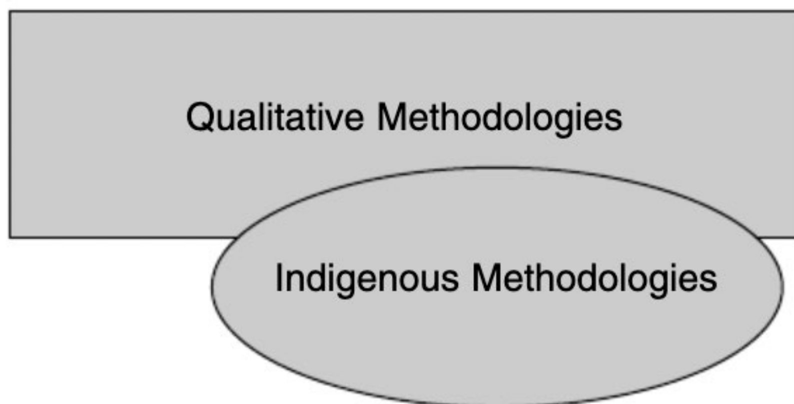

Figure 4. Locating Indigenous methodologies in qualitative research.

Findings:

Our findings section is informed by our roundtables and individual meetings, supplemented by academic sources, where possible. This section highlights issues and challenges which emerged from the current context of Indigenous artists.

1. **Inherent Interconnectedness:**

Indigenous art can take a variety of hands-on forms that focus on the connection with the environment and nature. For example, the Anishinaabe art practice of birchbark biting and creating birchbark baskets is one where people collect bark to bite or weave. These art forms allow Indigenous people to express and preserve the culture and history of their peoples who inhabited the land for thousands of years. Deeply connected, Indigenous communities pass on culture and knowledge through storytelling and art practices, focusing on spiritual connection and wholeness throughout their journey. Therefore, Indigenous art practices are indispensable to their land, culture, history, and spirit.

Indigenous artists believe that everything is interconnected; there is no compartmentalizing between different aspects of a person. For instance, identity with the land, a good spirit and motivation are interconnected. Within institutions, Indigenous artists may be forced to act in Western compartmentalization, which is on the organization to adjust their operations to honour the interconnectedness of

Indigenous artwork. Through our roundtable, the Indigenous artists expressed they would like to see art organizations learn about and respect this interconnectedness in the working environment.

2. **Conflicting Ethics and Values Between Organizations & Artist:**

As mentioned during the methodology section, Indigenous and Western epistemologies are fundamentally different, including their ethics and values (Kovach, 2010). Indigenous artists are accountable to their community and nation and have a responsibility to honour and protect their traditional knowledge and land. Hence, organizations should not expect nor ask artists to share Indigenous knowledge. Furthermore, western organizations compartmentalize knowledge, identity, emotion, and culture, whereases Indigenous artists believe that these various elements are connected. These different epistemologies can come into conflict when Indigenous artists prefer slow work and value the learning process, while western art organizations are often working in a fast-paced manner that is inherent to a capitalist society. Humility is key for organizations, as they are still learning and should honour expertise of Indigenous artists.

3. **Cultural Extraction:**

An artist shared with us a story where an organization realized they were connected to the ceremony. Then the organization began asking for inappropriate activities such as the artists to share their traditional knowledge with them. They were only interested in taking the knowledge without honouring it. It is not the responsibility of the artist to share Indigenous knowledge and if the artist is comfortable, then they should be compensated. Also, if an artist has to return to the community for their art project, they should be additional compensation. The onus is one the organization to educate their staff and not place the responsibility on the artists. Another story shared with us is a situation where organizations ask one Indigenous artist to speak for all Indigenous people, instead of recognizing different Indigenous nations have different values, art practices and knowledge. Indigenous artists are expected to work as emotional and cultural labourers for these organizations and are not provided adequate compensation. Through the attempt to appropriate knowledge from artists, organizations are continuing colonial practices and causing harm to Indigenous artists. Instead, they should honour the knowledge and understand artists' intention of protecting their nation's and their knowledge.

4. **COVID-19 Impact:**

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Indigenous artists was discussed at our roundtable, as an artist shared how the lack of physical space for youth artists has negatively impacted community, so youth have now lost their space to be safe, creative and build relationships. As now, Indigenous artists working with non-Indigenous art galleries cannot be present physically to make deals with the art dealers or vendors. Marginalized communities in particular have suffered from the emergence of remote work and digitization of social activities, due to their lack of access. Furthermore, the issue of digital sovereignty has arisen, as the ownership and control over digital data is another challenge faced by Indigenous practitioners. For instance, organizations could allow for public access to recordings of Indigenous knowledge that were meant to be shared privately. On the other hand, if Indigenous artists could advocate for the open access of their knowledge and work, instead of private knowledge which is "owned" by an institution. This report was researched and written completely during the pandemic, so our own meetings were all virtual which changed the dynamic and relationship we were able to build.

5. Indigenous public art and placemaking:

Non-indigenous people and organizations should be mindful not to make claims to decolonizing as it is perceived as grand and insincere. However, they can support Indigenous communities in these practices by consulting local elders or individuals who have a relationship with the land in question. Typically, public art organizations hire artists to make sculptures or do mural projects. However, Indigenous art encompasses practices beyond visual art in the traditional western mediums (paintings and sculpture). Thus, organizations can rethink public art beyond murals and sculpture: in the case of Tkaronto, they can commission Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe artists to make beadwork and birch bark biting pieces.

An example of Indigenous placemaking is Ian August's *Fetching Water*. August is a Metis artist who designed the following public art piece at Rooster Town or Pakan Town, a Metis settlement which was demolished by the City of Winnipeg.

This public artwork permanently acknowledges the Metis settlement while commenting on the lack of access to water.

Figure 5. Fetching Water, Ian August, Winnipeg

"Reconciliation Exploitation":

Since the publication of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2015, there has been an increase in the demand for tokenistic "reconciliation" work which includes land acknowledgements, smudging ceremonies, and sharing circles. As seasoned artists, some of our interviewees now refuse this work which was coined as "reconciliation exploitation" by the Yellowhead Institute. "Reconciliation exploitation" refers to Indigenous artists receiving unsustainable, short-term

contracts by organizations that take no responsibility in supporting Indigenous communities in the long-term (Nixon, 2020, p. 11). Equitable, ethical relationships with Indigenous artists begin with a long-term commitment.

Recommendations:

Overarching Theme: Building Intentional Relationships

Through reviewing scholarly articles, public art institutions' operations, and our interviews, we learned that the overarching theme of creating a supportive environment for Indigenous artists, is relationship-building. Subjected to the fast-paced grant economy, many organizations reach out to Indigenous artists to superficially benefit their annual reports or to receive a grant. Indigenous artists are thus reduced to tokens, and relationships to transactions. Organizations operating on a grant cycle, often do not maintain these relationships which end when the art project is completed. *Once the grant is completed, the relationships become personal work since institutional support comes to a halt.*

Indigenous artists should be seen as people, not human capital. Relationships are foundational to a supportive, equitable environment not only within the art organization, but beyond it, as well. They should, therefore, be treated as living beings that need to be nurtured, cared for, and respected to stay in good health. A

key governing principle to building long-lasting, sustainable, equitable relationships is intentionality.

This relationship should start before the product or final showcase and continue beyond it. This includes holding space to ensure that the artist's narrative is being listened to and identifying areas of support to build trust. As mentioned earlier in this report, Indigenous artists are holistically interconnected: for the relationship to be sustained, programmatic, ongoing engagement and sharing of resources with artists and their nation is necessary.

However, it must be stated again that Indigenous artists are not homogenous: they come from different nations with different cultural practices, languages, and artistic styles. Artists may also have different financial situations and be at different stages in their career and choose to engage in short-term relationships. Therefore, whether these artists prefer project-based relationships or long-term programmatic relationships, the principles of honesty, care, equity, and support need to be embedded into the relationships that institutions develop with them.

The following recommendations are action items that can be implemented by public and community-based art organizations. Since a key component of these sustainable relationships is time, we recommend that organizations plan for time to foster relationships, before funding applications are considered.

We recognize public art organizations are often over capacity and working towards the next grant deadline; we recommend looking at successful models that include finding operational funding or a funder who directly supports the work over a multi-year commitment. This “extra” time will allow for a healthy relationship that is and should be mutually beneficial. Both parties can learn from each other through an open and free flowing collaboration process rather than a top to bottom approach. This work is honest, slow, intentional, and meaningful.

1. **Onus on the Organization**

It is important for organizations to know and understand the history of the land they are on before they begin to work with Indigenous artists. Members of the organization must understand that by living on Turtle Island, they are treaty people and that they have a responsibility to respect and honour the rights of Indigenous peoples. Educating the members of the organization should not be up to the artist. Without understanding Indigenous history and ways of doing, an institution cannot provide a safe, supportive, welcoming work environment. Learning about Indigenous history does not, however, mean that non-Indigenous folks should appropriate or try to embody Indigeneity. The organization should be clear about their expectations and clearly define what the scope of the work is and what is outside of it (i.e., what they do not expect). Any cultural or community work should be compensated in addition to the artist fee.

2. Approaching Indigenous Artists

There are some key points that organizations should pay attention to when approaching Indigenous artists. First, organizations should be specific about what they ask for and provide Indigenous artists the important pieces of information to consider beforehand. The organizations should approach artists with detailed plans, prepare intake forms, and provide artists with adequate funds, administrative support, and accessibility services, such as laptops, materials, and tools. It is also essential for organizations to get referrals from other organizations who have already worked with the artist they intend to approach. The referral will give the artists a signal that this organization already learned about their work and have a good standing with other organizations. Another way is to approach the artist and be open with the amount of funding available and ask what the artist would like to create, and what the organization can offer. Organizations should find ways to acknowledge the power dynamics and be open to Indigenous artist's thoughts and ideas instead of asking them to insert themselves into a completed plan. Additionally, organizations often approach artists with a grant already secured however they should be mindful of imposing Western deadlines on artists. Organizations should practice placed based work of approaching artists from the nation their project is on and include healers, knowledge keepers, dancers as 'artist' encompassing many professions. Additionally, Indigenous artists have expressed they enjoy working

with other Indigenous individuals on projects, such as medicine keepers for public art projects in local parks and gardens. There should be an attempt to include artists of different nations as well, as artists from one nation cannot speak on behalf of other nations. Furthermore, organizations should use CARFAC, Canadian Artists' Representation, as a standard for fairly compensating artists for their work, copyright and contribution. Lastly, the burden of reconciliation work should not be placed on the artist from the initial email.

3. **Accessibility and Operations in Public Art Organizations:**

We found that public arts organizations, often, are working at/over capacity, as they do not have the core funding to support their operation. As a result, employees are always hustling to identify the next funding opportunity, next project, and next artist. Even the best intentions to maintain and foster relationships can be overtaken by the sheer workload and funding deadlines. Community-engaged art should be flexible for it is shaped by the artist. Furthermore, creating a rigid schedule does not serve a project, relationship, or the artist well. Public art organizations should shift towards long term plans from both an employee and organizational perspective.

Whether ethics of care, statement of legalities, and accommodations for artists with disabilities are implemented in current policies, accessibility can be approached from a variety of lenses. Organizations should consider if they are

speaking about language, cognitive understanding, audio and visual, tactile learning, financial or other. By integrating a more diversified approach, these organizations can be better prepared to support Indigenous artists and create sustainable meaningful relationships.

4. Embedding Principles into Governance Structures

There are various governance structures for public art organizations, including non-profits, grassroots, municipalities, and social enterprises. Social enterprises often do not address systematic social problems due to its framing of social problems which can be solved by private alternatives which still operate for profit or in a hybrid (Ganz et al., 2018). We acknowledge that social issues are complex and cannot be solved by one solution. However, the commitment to Indigenous sovereignty and supporting Indigenous artists need to be outlined in the organization's policy. Without ratified institutional bylaws, there is no way to ensure future directors or boards will uphold these principles. Changing policy documents will allow the sustainability of these efforts. This addition to the organization's policy documents will communicate the organization's values and intentions to the artists considering working with them. Lindsey Lickers shared the principle of checking the temperature of water, which can be applied here, as artists will be able to check these policies before starting a relationship.

5. Creating a Safe Environment

As mentioned above, a safe environment is created through educating the organization's staff. This puts the onus of teaching and emotional labour on the institution and its staff and not on the Indigenous artists. Furthermore, organizations can pre-empt the ethics and values that will guide the relationship and procedures, to manage harm. Our recommendation is to create a remedy and exit process, hence if problems occur, then there is a process to understand and an exit opportunity. This will take the onus off the artist while holding the organization accountable. There should be a structure to protect Indigenous artists with procedures and tools to correct mistakes, in order to pre-empt the perpetuation of trauma and ensure the environment is safe and supportive of Indigenous folks before they enter the organization. Indigenous artists should have the opportunity to consult with law firms to ensure clauses are fair during the negotiation phase. The onus is on the organization to actively schedule feedback mechanisms while acknowledging this is extra work for Indigenous artists in settler organizations. Through the principles of humility, learning and care, this can be a mutually beneficial process. If harm is done to an Indigenous artist, the process of undoing harm will require months, that could last longer grant funding or project deadlines. However, as we recommend organizations should clear policy, processes, and procedures beforehand, so they can pre-empt harm and when harm occurs. This

represents a shift from a western linear timeline to a circular timeline, and thus from a western perspective to an Indigenous one. Hence if organizations complete their policy and procedures beforehand, they can pre-empt harm and when harm occurs because they have a process already in place. Lastly, we recommend that organizations consider having ongoing and regular pay periods instead of project- and piece-based fees, to ensure the long-term support of Indigenous artists.

6. Advocacy & Systemic Change

As the organization is working on restructuring their own processes to centre Indigenous artists' well-being, it is our recommendation that they also advocate for systemic change at the city, provincial and national levels. For public art organizations to work on equitable and intentional relationships with Indigenous artists, they need the support of larger organizations, especially large funding bodies. If a public art organization needs more funding to properly support Indigenous artists, they should lobby the Toronto Arts Council, Canadian Arts Council, and Heritage Canada to put more funding towards these efforts. Heritage Canada is particularly relevant as it is partially funded by Trust Moneys, which is money held by Indigenous Services Canada for the use and benefit of Status First Nations (Government of Canada, 2020). Furthermore, community-based art organizations can further support Indigenous artists through external advocacy. This is a holistic approach that centres on Indigenous artists: they are not simply in a silo, and the

entire structure of arts funding and culture needs to change. This change is moving away from the precarious grant and gig economy for artists and organizations into long term funding structures. Additionally, the judgement and evaluation art proposals should be based on Indigenous evaluation methods and reject the colonial vision of what Indigenous art should be. Furthermore, as recommendation 6 will suggest large funding bodies, especially state ones need to recognize Indigenous sovereignty and self determination. Lastly, community-based art organizations should use their power and networks to advocate for structural change while changing their own operations.

7. Centering Indigenous Sovereignty

Indigenous sovereignty is recognizing Indigenous nations have the right under customary and international law for self governance and self determination. Self determination allows for Indigenous nations to rebuild traditional systems of governance and exist outside of the settler colonial governance structure (Reinders, 2019) The Canadian state needs to recognize self determination of Indigenous nations and aid in creating self governance structures (Native Women's Association, 2011). However, this would include recognizing that Canada is on stolen land to begin with and is a false nation state and require the repatriation of land and trust money. This does not seem like a step that the Canadian government will take, however public art organizations can be advocates for Indigenous self determination,

beyond making a land acknowledgement. Another key point is respecting Indigenous artists 'right to say no' to project activities and expectations, which situated in the larger right of Indigenous peoples to free, prior, and informed consent under UNDRIP (Palmater, 2018)

In order to truly center the well being of Indigenous artists, public art organizations should think through Indigenous Sovereignty and self-determination. For example, there is a difference between having Indigenous advisory councils versus shifting to an Indigenous autonomous governance system. This process is moving away from checking boxes about equity and diversity to an actual recognition of sovereignty. This does not mean non-Indigenous public art organizations should be actors or forces of decolonization, but their support of Indigenous artists should be all-encompassing for it to be meaningful. As discussed in the Canadian Arts Context section, Indigenous advisory committees have been ineffective. According to the 15-point guide from Yellowhead Institute's *"A Culture of Exploitation: "Reconciliation" and the Institutions of Canadian Art"*, point 2 argues against Indigenous advisory committees and instead argues for the integration of Indigenous people in the creative and business structures, in a long term and meaningful way (Nixon, 2020). This gives Indigenous folks the ability and autonomy to make decisions on topics that affect them. The consideration and

creation of spaces for Indigenous artists is fostering a respectful practice that honours all that knowledge.

Further, there also needs to be a push for governmental organizations to recognize Indigenous sovereignty. Through conversation with Lindsey Lickers, we discussed the importance of having an Indigenous arts foundation that is self-sufficient, autonomous, and governed solely by Indigenous practitioners. An example of this is the Six Nations Economic Development Trust which directs revenue from tobacco profits and cannabis commission into infrastructure and arts, culture, and tourism (Six Nations of the Grand River Development Corporation).

8. **New forms of revenue to invest in Indigenous artists and their wellbeing**

The opportunity to include Indigenous artists as co-owners and revenue sharers within public art organizations operations, should be considered. Indigenous artists do retain the right and autonomy over their artistic work, including the final pieces, while working with STEPS Public Art. Community-based art organizations can be a support, a community builder, partner, and collaborator, offering skills and expertise when needed. Through the creation of passive income streama, Indigenous artists can become co-owners or revenue sharing of their work. An income opportunity is the sale of t-shirts and mugs and prints which could be done through sustainable, and union made vendors and building the online platform for the sale.

As Canadian artists are supported by government funding and grants, the majority of their income was found to be from sales, not grants or artist fees (Maranda, 2007 p.7). One aspect to note is online platforms can be inaccessible for rural Indigenous artists and Elders. This platform could be a separate legal entity, and the artists could have a share in it. Furthermore, public art organizations would get a commission, which would add to their revenue so they can support their long-term relationships. Also, this will prevent relationships from ending when a project ends. This will be mutually beneficial for the artist and there is an option for collaborative monetization. This includes utilizing Section 37, community benefit charges. There can also be a community space for Indigenous artists, where regularly scheduled events, such as pop-up vendor space invites clients and artists for a networking event. We also recommend the hiring of an Indigenous advisor due to the awkward positioning of a settler-run organization to complete Indigenous placemaking. However, public art organizations could support Indigenous artist collectives through utilizing their non-profit status to apply for grants and manage the administrative side.

9. Adjusting Evaluation Metrics

When evaluating public art proposals and deciding which one to select for a project, non-Indigenous public art organizations should take into consideration that their typical evaluation criteria and Indigenous approaches do not come from

the same framework. As mentioned in the Indigenous methodology section, welding Indigenous methods to existing Western knowledge leads to confusion and epistemological disruption (Kovach, 2010). Indigenous and Western knowledge are epistemologically different in practice. It is important to maintain accessibility by acknowledging that Indigenous artists may not work in the same ways, and by adapting evaluation systems to Indigenous art and ways of doing.

The jury can grade applications for artist integrity, artistic expression, quality of work and budgeting; but other components are necessary. It's important to note that metricizing evaluations, in itself does not align with Indigenous artists. It would be helpful for councils of Indigenous practitioners, curators to evaluate the evaluation process for public art processes. Furthermore, Annie Beach shared during our roundtable that she recommends instead of having individual artists completing rigorous proposals, there should be an increased effort for collaboration. Indigenous people do not often sit on these juries, and Indigenous artists are always viewed from the perspective of the colonial eye of what Indigenous art should look like. These councils often do not include administrators, Indigenous artists, individuals from community and anyone who is critical of institutions.

Conclusion:

Throughout our report, we have followed a place-based and reflective approach to try to understand our original question: *how can non-Indigenous public art organizations create sustainable, equitable relationships with Indigenous artists?* Our recommendations and findings were developed from our literature review, academic consultations, review of STEPS Public Art documents and qualitative interviews with Indigenous artists. This report is written for general public art and community-based arts organizations, municipalities, social enterprises and grassroots groups. Here is an overview of our findings and recommendations:

Findings:

- Inherent Interconnectedness of Indigenous Artists
- Applying the Medicine Wheel Model
- Conflicting Ethics and Values Between Organizations & Artist
- Extraction of Indigenous Culture
- Putting your Good Mind and Good Heart Forward
- Taking the Time to Build Long Term Meaningful Relationships
- Structurally Changes in Public Art Organizations
- COVID-19 Impact
- Indigenous Placemaking
- Tokenistic Truth and Reconciliation Projects

Recommendations: *Overarching Theme: Building Intentional Relationships*

- Onus on the Organization
- Embedding Principles into Governance Structures
- Creating a Safe Environment
- Honouring the Artist and Their processes
- Advocacy & Long-Term Systemic Change
- Centering Indigenous Sovereignty
- New forms of Revenue to Invest in Indigenous Artists and their Wellbeing
- Adjusting Evaluation Metrics

Our goal for this report to disseminate the knowledge we have accumulated through our reflective research processes and public art organizations can engage with our recommendations in a meaningful and intentional way. Together, our findings and recommendations reveal that to create and sustain meaningful and equitable working relationships between non-Indigenous organizations and Indigenous artists, there needs to be a holistic restructuring of non-Indigenous artist organizations. We learned this shift requires the effort of many actors and does not exist in a silo. The recommendations and steps forward need to be completed with strong and meaningful intent by the public art or community-based organization. As Indigenous artists should not be viewed as "reconciliation actors" and working with Indigenous artists is a privilege, which organizations

should honour. These recommendations should not be taken lightly either, as centering Indigenous artists is important and necessary work. We are grateful for the guidance we received in our learning project and to have been part of this project.

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Figures:

Figure 1. Two Row Wampum – Gä•sweñta'. Onondaga Nation https://www.onondaganation.org/culture/wampum/two-row-wampum-belt-guwenta/

Figure 2. Roundtable with Indigenous Artists: changing the arts sector to center Indigenous Artists' wellbeing

Figure 3a & 3b. Using Medicine Wheel Framework to Support Indigenous Artists, suggested by Shannon Winterstein.

Figure 4. Kovach, M. (2009) Locating Indigenous methodologies in qualitative research. *Indigenous methodologies: characteristics, conversations and contexts.* University of Toronto Press. p. 31

Figure 5. August, I. (2019) Rooster Town Kettle and Fetching Water.. Winnipeg Arts. http://winnipegarts.ca/wac/artwork/rooster-town-kettle