

**ON
CULTURE
DAYS**

**2021
YEAR END
REPORT**

ONTARIO CULTURE DAYS 2021 YEAR END REPORT

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A WORD FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

Ontario Culture Days enters this year reflecting on our successes and looking to the future with hope and enthusiasm. In 2021, our organization continued to see significant growth. For a second year in a row, the festival embraced an expanded, month-long format, both in-person and online, under the thematic banner of RE:IMAGINE. Ontarians responded more than ever before, with 10% of residents participating. Looking forward, the festival will maintain its multi-week format. (Save-the-date September 23 to October 16, 2022!) We will continue to support online festival programming while emphasizing the importance of coming together in person for meaningful experiences.



Our organization has become more active than ever in the realm of tourism, a role that we have stepped into as so much of our audience partake in hyperlocal and regional tourism when they participate in our festival. For our public, we now produce a series of travel itineraries, ON Culture Guides, spotlighting unique places to visit all over the province. For our sector colleagues, we are convening symposia, networking opportunities and learning resources to support a robust tourism strategy from the arts and culture sector. This year, we will lead conversations around regenerative tourism and economic recovery.

In 2022, our major focus is on creating a more inclusive landscape through our programming and resources. We look forward to celebrating the diversity of Ontario's regions and its people, and to providing greater access to arts and culture.

We are grateful for the generous and transformative support of our sponsors and funders, who make this work possible. This year brings so many opportunities to enjoy all that our province has to offer. We welcome you to join us as we continue to inspire Ontarians through thoughtful, impactful interaction with local arts and culture.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ruth Burns'.

Ruth Burns, Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gary Filan'.

Gary Filan, Chair and President

2021 OVERVIEW

Ontario Culture Days achieved milestone successes in 2021, despite the continuation of the pandemic.

1 in 10 Ontarians

participated in the Ontario Culture Days festival.
That's more than 1 million people!

30% of participants

travelled beyond their home community to attend festival events.



Jamii, Toronto, Culture Days 2021

In 2021, we:

- ▶ Developed Ontario Culture Days' first **Cultural Tourism Strategy**
- ▶ Created and facilitated a **cross-sectoral advisory group** of arts and tourism professionals province-wide
- ▶ Presented the province's first **cultural tourism symposium**
- ▶ Commissioned a **cultural tourism research study** review from Nanos Research
- ▶ Launched a **new website** for enhanced user experience
- ▶ Produced **four ON Culture Guides**, adding to this digital travel itinerary series
- ▶ Produced **39 original editorial stories**, including things to do, artist profiles, and sector stories
- ▶ Developed Ontario Culture Days first **visual design guidelines**

YEAR-ROUND EDITORIAL CONTENT

Ontario Culture Days produced 39 original editorial stories in 2021, including things to do, artist profiles, and sector stories.

These stories informed and engaged public and sector members through digital advertising, social media, and ONCD email newsletter.

Some of the most popular stories published by our team were:

- ▶ [What Does Reopening Mean?](#)
- ▶ [Staff Picks: Music To Keep On Keeping On](#)
- ▶ [Ontario Reads: Punching Above Our Literary Weight](#)
- ▶ [Ontario On Film: Millbrook](#)
- ▶ [Sun's Out Fun: Art Activities And Tours To Enjoy Across The Province](#)
- ▶ [5 Artistic Activities That Explore Mental Health And Wellbeing](#)



What Does Reopening Mean? *By Chris Hampton*



Staff Picks: Music To Keep On Keeping On
By Breanne Ritchie

YEAR-ROUND EDITORIAL CONTENT



Ontario Reads: Punching Above Our Literary Weight

By Li Robbins



Ontario On Film: Millbrook

By Dave Dymnt



Sun's Out Fun: Art Activities And Tours To Enjoy Across The Province

By Natalie Wee



5 Artistic Activities That Explore Mental Health And Wellbeing

By Lauren Eisen

SYMPOSIUM

Now, Into the Future: Cultural Tourism in Ontario

SYMPOSIUM: JUNE 16-17, 2021

Ontario Culture Days first cultural tourism symposium **Now, into the Future: Cultural Tourism in Ontario** took place June 16 and 17, 2021.

Key people at festivals, cultural destinations, municipalities, and tourism organizations, as well as cultural placemakers, international thought leaders, and research experts, brought insights and expertise

to the current realities and future possibilities for cultural tourism. The symposium provided thoughtful discussion, examples of how cultural tourism has changed amid the pandemic, inspiration, and actionable information as we prepare for what cultural tourism experiences will be like as people resume local, regional, national, and international travel.

SYMPOSIUM ATTENDEES

450+ Attendees

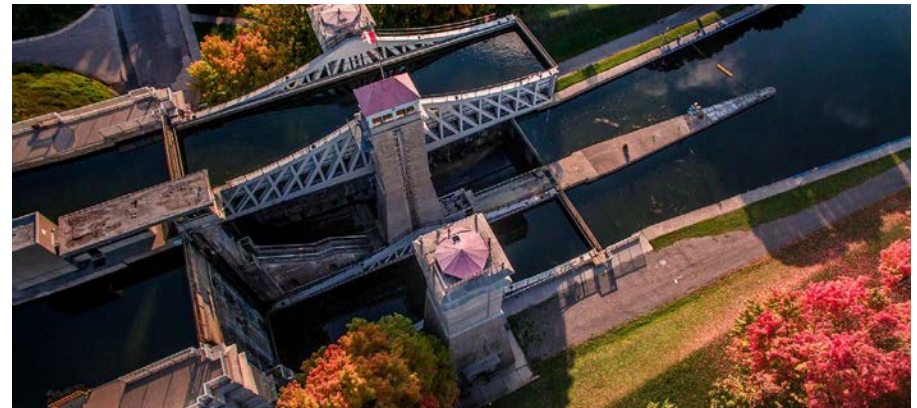
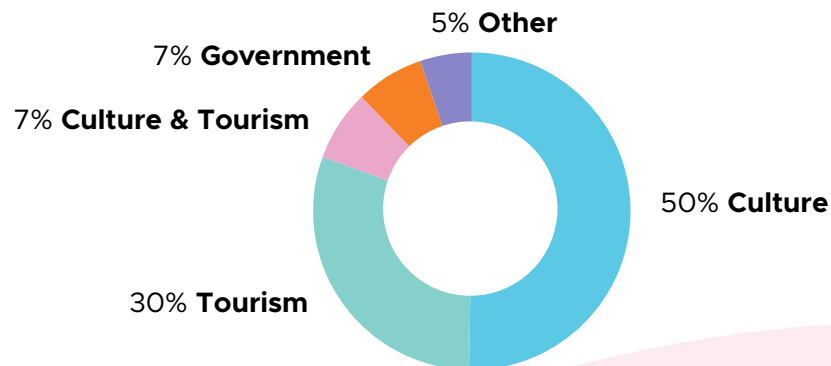
Average time spent watching:
130 minutes

68% of attendees came from
47 large towns

6% of attendees came from
11 medium towns

25% of attendees came from
75 small towns

ATTENDEES SECTORS



Creation of cross-sectoral advisory group

In 2021, in its role as a network facilitator for the sector, Ontario Culture Days convened a **Tourism Advisory Committee**. Comprised of tourism and arts service and advisory groups, the committee supports our sector colleagues through collaboration and problem-solving. The committee advised on our cultural tourism strategic plan, our symposium, and an online course (to be released in 2022).

These volunteers have elected to stay on board another year. In 2022, their focus will be our second symposium. **ON-Ramp: New Horizons in Cultural Tourism** will be held in-person from June 8-9, with key presentations streamed online.

ON CULTURE GUIDES

Ontario Culture Days produced four new ON Culture Guides, including Ottawa–Local, Toronto Public Art, Prince Edward County, and Sault Ste Marie. This brings the roster of travel guides to a total of 14 ON Culture Guides that are now available on the Ontario Culture Days website.



Toronto Public Art

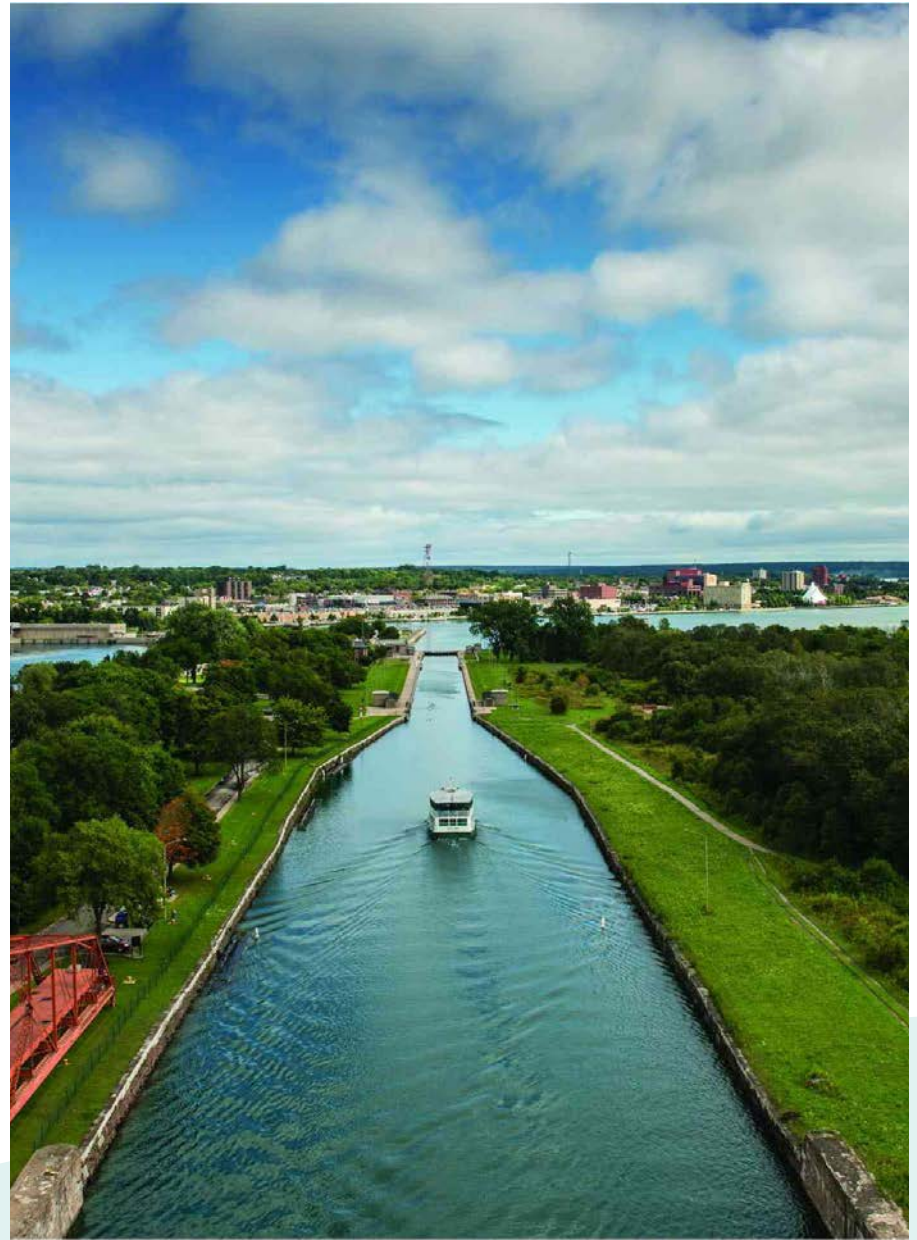


Ottawa – Local

ON CULTURE GUIDES



Prince Edward County



Sault Ste. Marie

ONTARIO CULTURE DAYS FESTIVAL 2021

Nationwide theme: RE:IMAGINE

Ontario Culture Days festival took place **September 24 – October 24, 2021.**

In 2021, we supported over 350 independent organizers in producing their own events for the Ontario Culture Days festival. We also produced key artistic programs to anchor the 4-week festival, and led a marketing and outreach campaign resulting in a record number of Ontarians participating.

Ontario's diverse population was at the heart of the festival. More than 50% of events featured heritage and culture themes.



Mexican Day of the Dead “Cempasuchil”, St. Catharines



The Moccasin Identifier, Halton Hills Public Library

ONTARIO CULTURE DAYS FESTIVAL 2021



Willow Arts Community, St. Catharines



The Dance Class Performs, Milton



Jamii, Toronto

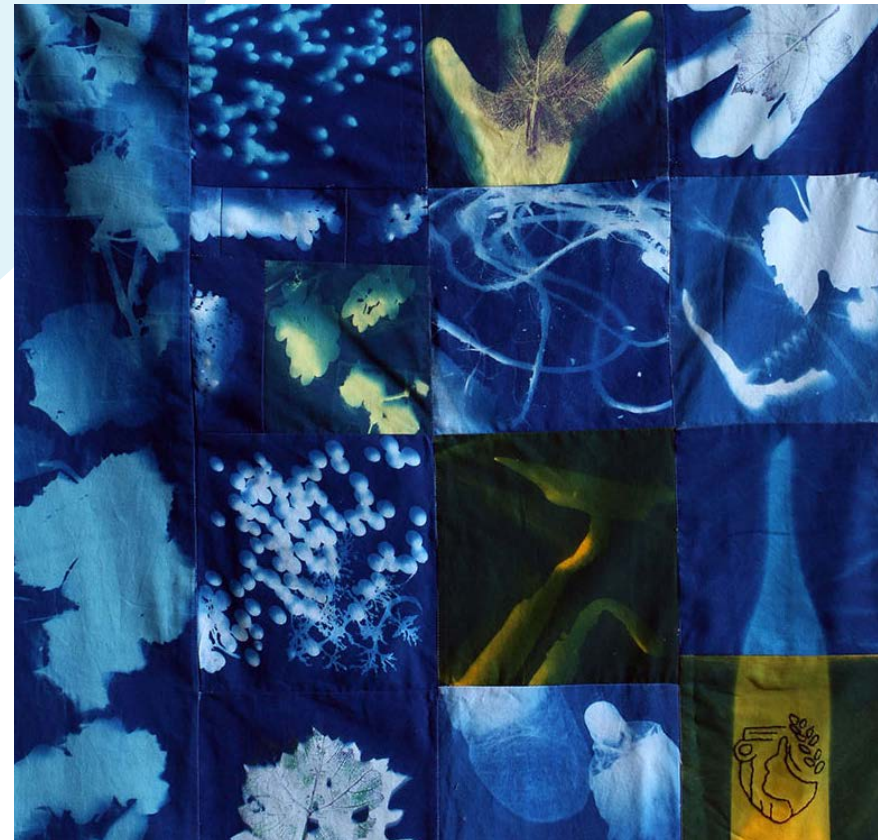


Built On Genocide, Toronto

CREATIVES IN RESIDENCE

Ontario Culture Days engaged and empowered seven creatives to create unique events exclusively for Ontario Culture Days 2021. The Creatives in Residence program highlights the work of Ontario artists and offers the public an in-depth look into their work and creative process. From foraging walks to protest poster-making workshops, this year's programs engaged with ideas of claiming space, community and self-care, connections to (and histories of) land, food sovereignty and security, and migration.

In addition to working with the Creatives In Residence to present public programs that are the signature events of the festival, ONCD published profile articles and supported the program with dedicated emails, social media, and digital advertising support.



Alchemy | *Prince Edward County*

Alchemy's Claire Tallarico and Tonia Di Risio honour seasonal agricultural workers employed at vineyards throughout the region. Di Risio and Tallarico led a group of collaborating artists while they safely prepared meals for the workers, met local farmers, and created site-specific installations that were featured in the Ontario Culture Days festival. A self-guided tour of the eight sites in Prince Edward County was made available on the onculturedays.ca website.

CREATIVES IN RESIDENCE



Hiba Abdallah | *Toronto*

Text and design-based artist Hiba Abdallah's program centered libraries as beacons of community gathering, curiosity, and public importance. She developed a site-specific project at Toronto Public Library's Eatonville Branch that culminated in an online book launch and artist talk during the festival.

This program was also a part of the ON Culture Days @ the Library program (pgs 16-17).



Tamara Green |

Mississauguas of Scugog Island First Nation

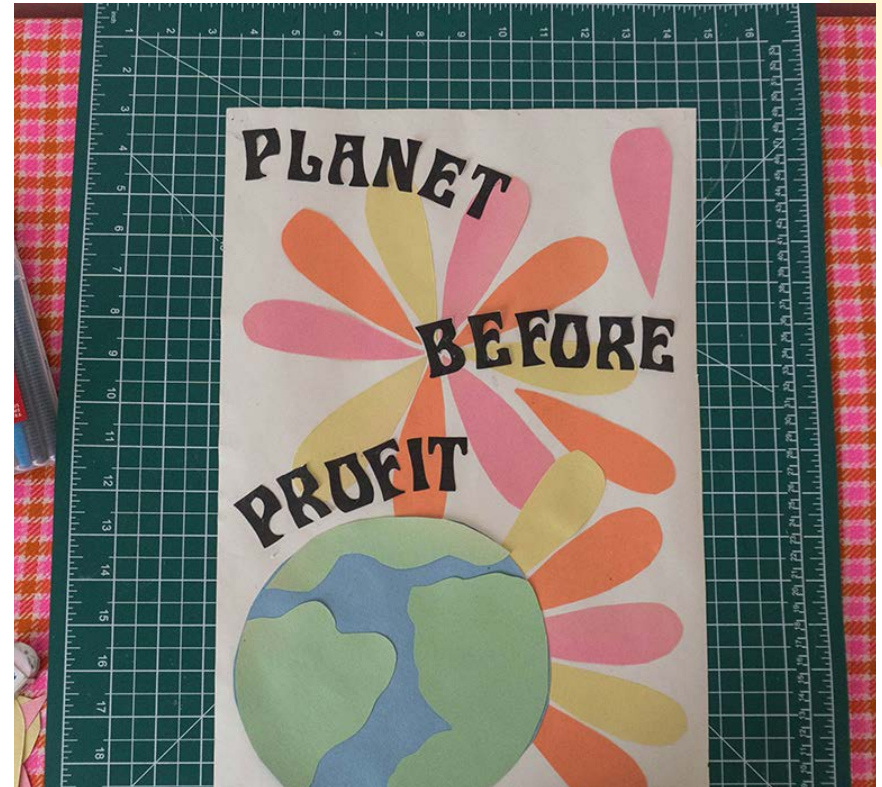
Chef and instructor Tamara Green released a series of videos teaching participants to source and cook with local, wild, edible ingredients. During the festival, she worked with foraging guide Bryan Dowkes to lead a series of walks around the Scugog area. Two of Tamara Green's recipes continue to be available on the onculturedays.ca website.

CREATIVES IN RESIDENCE



Kanika Gupta and Amit Kehar | *Ottawa*

Multimedia artist Kanika Gupta and cinematographer Amit Kehar led a series of online and in-person events reflecting on food waste as a metaphor for resiliency, resourcefulness, and personal care.



Laura Rojas | *Toronto*

Graphic designer Laura Rojas dove into the history of graphic design in activism and led workshops on how to design posters. Her program featured a final postering event where attendees shared their creations in local neighbourhoods and online with a wider public.

This program was also a part of the ON Culture Days @ the Library program (pgs 16-17).

ON CULTURE DAYS @ THE LIBRARY

As part of Ontario Culture Days ongoing partnership with Toronto Public Library, ON Culture Days @ the Library brought artistic programming directly into local neighbourhoods by programming library spaces throughout the festival. The program was expanded in 2021 to include digital engagement pieces including blogs, live streams, videos and activities, supporting new ways to participate and engage with featured artists.

The artists in this series included:

- ▶ Hiba Abdallah, Letters to Eatonville
(see Creatives in Residence, page 14)
- ▶ Jamii, Caring Connections: From My Heart to Yours
- ▶ Diana Nazareth, The Artful Me Selfie Photo Project
- ▶ Lindsay Lickers, Contributing to the Bundle:
Restoration of Relationship
- ▶ Laura Rojas, Solidarity Through Design
(see Creatives in Residence, page 15)



Jamii | *Caring Connections: From My Heart to Yours*

Jamii is on a mission to bring the Esplanade neighbourhood closer together to form greater social cohesion and bonded community. For this event, visual artist Saira Ansari guided participants in the creation of a collective fabric collage, as part of a continued community sharing process between residents of the Esplanade, and those in Pikangikum First Nation in Northern Ontario. The completed piece was then hand-delivered to the Pikangikum community.

ON CULTURE DAYS @ THE LIBRARY



Diana Nazareth | *The Artful Me Selfie Photo Project*

Diana Nazareth hosted online and in-person photography workshops for kids aged 9 to 14, encouraging them to think outside the box to take self-portraits without showing their faces, while incorporating elements of their identity, culture, and interests. The images were displayed at Toronto Public Library's Scarborough Civic Centre Branch and in an online exhibition during the Ontario Culture Days festival.



Lindsay Lickers | *Contributing to the Bundle: Restoration of Relationship*

Haudenosaunee/Anishinaabe multimedia artist Lindsey Lickers hosted a community bead-in focused on the restorative properties of water at Rowntree Mills Park. Community members created small fabric pieces that were added to a collective installation displayed in the Toronto Public Library's Albion Branch. The series included an online talk with Lindsey and Elder Renee Thomas-Hill. The program was a part of "From Weeds We Grow", a series led by the STEPS Initiative to explore Rexdale's history through nature.



DAY IN THE LIFE PRESENTED BY OLG

Our team worked with representatives from 10 different communities across the province. With these facilitators, we produced 10 video guides highlighting the arts and culture opportunities that abound within these communities during the Ontario Culture Days festival. Special thanks to the following organizations in making this series possible.

- ▶ Brampton Library
- ▶ Lincoln Museum and Cultural Centre (Niagara Region)
- ▶ Luminato Festival Toronto
- ▶ Nipissing Culture Days (North Bay)
- ▶ Clearview Public Library (Nottawa + Stayner, Southern Georgian Bay)
- ▶ St. Catharines Public Library
- ▶ Three Sisters Cultural Centre (St. Jacobs, Waterloo Region)
- ▶ Thunder Bay Art Gallery
- ▶ Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts



Brampton



Lincoln



This series was made possible thanks to the sponsorship of OLG.



North Bay



Sault Ste. Marie



Stayner



St. Catharines



St. Jacobs



Thunder Bay



All the City's a Stage in Toronto



Luminato In Toronto



SPOTLIGHT

recognition program

SPOTLIGHT AWARDS

Ontario Culture Days Festival honours local organizers that presented exemplary programming. The Spotlight Recognition Program celebrates the creativity and ingenuity of Ontarians who have created engaging events and activities for local audiences. This year, new Spotlight categories were added to reflect the hybrid model of the festival.



BEST IN-PERSON PROGRAM WINNER

*Pauline Gladstone: ON THE TABLE:
Controlled Collaborative Chaos*

This program provided the public with a unique opportunity to contribute their personal pandemic stories directly on artist Pauline Gladstone's canvas – an 8' long picnic table with over 127 story spots. 30-minute drawing sessions created story images located directly ON THE TABLE. These were private sessions, all about recording and telling a positive pandemic experience. Once ON THE TABLE is completed, the picnic table is being donated to Halton Woman's Place for their February Fundraising Auction.

BEST IN-PERSON PROGRAM RUNNER-UP:

Arts Milton: Saturday Stages



BEST DIGITAL PROGRAM WINNER

*Arts Milton & Grandmother’s Voice:
Healing the Scars of Colonialism*

Grandmother’s Voice is a community of Indigenous elders, knowledge keepers, and educators. Truth and Reconciliation requires Canadians to develop a fundamentally-better understanding of Indigenous culture and history. This documentary looks at the work being done by the ‘Grandmas’ along with other educators and activists, to help heal the scars of colonialism. It is a powerful tool and educational resource that can help share the message of the work being done by Grandmother’s Voice.

BEST DIGITAL PROGRAM RUNNER-UP

*Halton Hills & Chantal Garneau: Becoming Present
in Hungry Hollow*



INCLUSIVE PROGRAMMING WINNER:

*Arts Milton and E.C. Drury School for the
Deaf: Engaging in ASL and Beyond*

Students from E.C. Drury Elementary School for the Deaf committed to this activity by deepening their understanding of Indigenous peoples and residential schools. They then created American Sign Language (ASL) videos, sharing their learning. As an artistic addition, they created an ASL poem to express their feelings. The result was a series of videos with captions which were shared publicly with community members during Milton Culture Days. Students were present, along with an interpreter to ensure all attendees and participants had a full understanding during the videos and following question and answer period.

INCLUSIVE PROGRAMMING RUNNER-UP

*Fall for Dance North: her body as words by Peggy
Baker Dance Projects*



PEOPLE'S CHOICE WINNERS (TIE)

Madeline Fiore:

Honeymoon - My Pocketbook of I Love You's

Honeymoon - My Pocketbook of I Love You's, part one in the four-part series entitled *My Pocketbook of I Love You's*, is a project of artist Madeline Fiore. Created out of a book series of the same name, Madeline decided to turn this project into a film series. Audience members reflected that they were touched by the beautiful words and images expressed throughout the film, exploring themes of vulnerability.



PEOPLE'S CHOICE WINNERS (TIE)

Vaughan International

Music Festival

Vaughan's International Music Festival took place in the heart of the new Vaughan Metropolitan Centre and was a representation of inclusivity and togetherness. The program was a combined effort of community partners bringing together various performances that showcased local talents and musical genres including orchestral performances, African, Asian, Italian and spoken word. The program used music as the mode to bring people together and to learn and understand the many cultures that represent the City of Vaughan.

ENGAGEMENT AND ATTENDANCE

According to independent research conducted by Nanos Research, **1 in 10** Ontarians participated in the free festival and **30%** travelled beyond their home community to do so.

With a total provincial population of **14,789,778**, that translates to **1,478,978** festival attendees, online and in-person across Ontario. There were **1,203** registered festival events presented in **99** municipalities throughout Ontario; **502** in person and **767** online. Economic impact is estimated to be over **70 million dollars**.

More than **1,224,000** people attended the festival in person and there were more than **235,459** views of online events.



Printmaking, St. Catharines

PARTICIPATION IN ONCD

One in ten Ontarians (10%) report participating an arts, culture or heritage activity that is part of the Ontario Culture Days festival. Younger Ontarians are more likely to report participating **(18-34) (14%)** than those 55 plus **(4%)**.

REASON FOR ATTENDING

Ontarians who participated in the ONCD festival most often report attending events because they were interested in the topic **(26%)** or they were invited by and/or going with friends or family **(24%)**.

TRAVELLING TO ONCD EVENTS

Three in ten Ontarians who participated in the ONCD festival report they travelled out of town to attend events **(32%)**. Those who report not travelling most often say they would be encouraged to travel in the future by the pandemic being over/there being less COVID **(34%)**.

PROGRAMMING OF INTEREST IN FUTURE YEARS

Asked what kinds of programming they would like to see at ONCD in future years, Ontarians who did not attend the festival mentioned food **(18%)**, music **(15%)**, visual arts/ painting/photography **(12%)**, and Indigenous culture **(11%)**.



Pumpkin Painting, Milton



Women's Art Association of Canada, Toronto



3,179,202 impressions on Ontario Culture Days social media channels



86,301,288 media impressions achieved through our advertising campaign



Media relations delivered **146** pieces of coverage resulting in **67,310,668** impressions



200 million overall media impressions – ONCD combined national and local Culture Days partners



4744

new social media followers
and email subscribers



149,865 website views



120,000
website views September-November 2021

Events attended and locations

Ontarians who participated in Ontario Culture Days most often mention participating in an art exhibit, and most often report participating in events in Toronto

Q: [IF ATTENDED - STREAM A]

What event(s) did you attend and where? [OPEN-ENDED]

TOP RESPONSES

Events	Frequency (n=47)*
Art exhibit	22.9%
Arts and crafts activities	9.4%
Day in the life	8.0%
Indigenous Food Traditions	5.3%
Luminato in Toronto	4.8%
BPL virtual human library	4.0%
CBC Arts Makes Series	3.6%
Caring Connections: From My Heart to Yours	3.3%
Culture Festival	2.8%
Lumen Lights	2.8%
Outlining Your Story	2.8%

TOP RESPONSES

Locations	Frequency (n=42)*
Toronto	32.7%
Virtual/digital	16.2%
Brampton	7.8%
Ottawa	6.4%
Ontario (unspecified)	4.1%
Burlington	3.2%
South Waterloo	3.2%
Sudbury	2.6%
Belleville	2.5%
Kingsville	2.5%
Windsor	2.5%

*Based on multiple mentions

Source: Nanos Research, online survey, October 28, 2021, n=47 Ontarians who have participated in Ontario Culture Days.

Main reason for attending events

Ontarians who participated in Ontario Culture Days most often say they attended because they were interested in the topic or because they were invited and/or going with friends and family.

Q: [IF ATTENDED - STREAM A]

What was the main reason for attending these events? [OPEN-ENDED]

TOP RESPONSES

Events	Frequency (n=51)
Interested in the topic	25.7%
I was invited and / or going with friends and family	24.0%
To learn something / explore	19.2%
Something to do	14.0%
Curiosity / for fun	8.9%
Other	6.4%

Source: Nanos Research, online survey, October 28, 2021, n=51 Ontarians who have participated in Ontario Culture Days.

COMMUNITIES WITH THE MOST EVENTS IN 2021 (National Rankings)

SMALL-RURAL

Canmore, AB

Scugog, ON

Minto, ON

Yorkton, SK

Flin Flon, MB

The Pas, MB

Prince Albert, SK

Mission, BC

Camrose, AB

Vernon, BC

MID-SIZE

St. Catharines, ON

Oakville, ON

Halton Hills, ON

Milton, ON

Richmond, BC

Sault Ste. Marie, ON

Thunder Bay, ON

Burlington, ON

St. Albert, AB

Saskatoon, SK

Pickering, ON

URBAN CENTRES

Brampton, ON

Calgary, AB

Winnipeg, MB

Toronto, ON

Vancouver, BC

OVERALL

St. Catharines, ON

Brampton, ON

Calgary, AB

Oakville, ON

Winnipeg, MB

Halton Hills, ON

Milton, ON

Toronto, ON

Vancouver, BC

Richmond, BC

Government Funders

Our work is made possible thanks to:



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We are grateful to our corporate and media partners for supporting us in our work, and providing us with the resources to create more impact. They include:



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Culture Days National

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Destination Ontario

Explorers Edge

Grey County

City of Guelph

Indigenous Tourism Ontario

Nanos Research

Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund

Ontario Heritage Trust / Doors Open

Ontario Presents

Ontario Tourism Education Corporation

Prince Edward County

Réseau SPARC Network

STEPS

TO Live

Toronto Alliance for Performing Arts

The Toronto Biennial of Art

Toronto Public Library

Tourism Industry Association of Ontario

WorkInCulture

Staff and Consultants

The Ontario Culture Days Team in 2021

Ruth Burns, Executive Director

Meaghan Froh Metcalf,

Network and Programs Director

Nawal Salim, Program Producer

Heather Kelly / HKC Marketing,

Marketing Strategist & Advisor

Deanne Moser / DM Public, Media Relations

Natalie Wee, Communications Coordinator

Kaitlyn Patience,

Partnerships & Special Projects Lead

Keira Park, Graphic Designer

Li Robbins, ON Culture Guides Writer

Rebel Trail, Website Development

**Dr. Shawn Newman, Dr. Louis-Etienne Dubois
and Dr. Frederic Dimanche**,

Cultural Tourism Consultants

Ontario Culture Days Board Of Directors

Gary Filan, Chair and President

Jasmina Jovanovic, Vice-Chair

Maria Jurewicz, Secretary

Camilo Montoya-Guevara, Treasurer

John Rider, Past Chair

Warren Garrett, Past Chair

Gallant Law

Marnie Lapierre

Thiva Arumarajah

PHOTOGRAPHY:

- Page 3** Photo of Gary Filan by Sara Elizabeth Photography.
- Page 4** Photo by Samantha Beltran.
- Page 5** *Top:* Photo by Dahlia Katz, Canadian Stage. *Bottom:* Promotional photos courtesy of Malaika Khadijaa, The OBGMs.
- Page 6** *Top right:* Film still from Anne of Green Gables. *Bottom left:* painting, Susan Straiton as featured in Art in the County 2020 Juror's Choice Awards. *Bottom right:* Kim Ondaatje, Doors (from the series The House on Picadilly Street).
- Page 8** Photo courtesy of Peterborough & the Kawarthas Economic Development. Photo by Justen Soule.
- Page 9** *Left:* Duane Linklater's "Monsters for Beauty, Permanence and Individuality." Photo by Yuula Benivolski.
Right: Photo courtesy of Ottawa Tourism.
- Page 10** *Left:* Photo courtesy of Meaghan Froh Metcalf. *Right:* Photo courtesy of City of Sault Ste. Marie.
- Page 11** Photos by Shaghayegh Haghdoost.
- Page 12** *Top left:* Photo by Shaghayegh Haghdoost. *Top right:* Photo by Sarah Arfan Photography.
Bottom left: Photo by Jae Yang. *Bottom right:* Photo by Shaghayegh Haghdoost.
- Page 13** Photo by Nawal Salim.
- Page 14** *Left:* Photo by Paula Sofia Morales. *Right:* Photo by Meaghan Froh Metcalf.
- Page 15** *Left:* Photo by Meaghan Froh Metcalf. *Right:* Photo by Laura Rojas.
- Page 16** *Right:* Photo by Samantha Beltran.
- Page 17** *Right:* Photo by Veronica Gomez. *Left:* Photo by Samantha Beltran.
- Page 18** *Top right:* Photo courtesy of Brampton Library. *Bottom right:* Photo courtesy of Olivia Rozema.
- Page 19** *Top left:* Courtesy Nipissing Culture Days. *Top right:* Photo courtesy of Thinking Rock Community Arts.
Bottom left: Photo courtesy of Michele McKenzie. *Bottom right:* Photo courtesy of St. Catharines Public Library.
- Page 20** *Top right:* copyright Calvin Photography. *Top right:* Sharon Hunter Kwewog Giiwednog - Women of the North 2019.
Photo courtesy of Thunder Bay Art Gallery. *Bottom left:* Photo courtesy of Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts.
Bottom right: Luminato photo by Cassandra Popescu.
- Page 21** Photo by Hollingsworth5.
- Page 22** *Right:* Photo courtesy of Arts Milton. *Left:* Photo courtesy of Arts Milton.
- Page 23** *Right:* Photo courtesy of Madeline Fiore. *Left:* Photo by Sandra Yeung Racco.
- Page 24** Photo by Shaghayegh Haghdoost.
- Page 25** Photos by Shaghayegh Haghdoost.

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