



April 1, 2025

Invest in Sovereignty Through Creativity

Welcome / Founders' Introduction

Dear Friends of ArtBridgeCanada

It's time to stop treating the arts like an afterthought!

Sovereignty isn't just about borders - it's about values. It's about the choices we make as a nation to define who we are, how we live, and what kind of future we build together.

At ArtBridgeCanada, we believe that one of the most powerful - and overlooked - ways to safeguard our sovereignty is by investing in creativity. Not just art for art's sake, but creativity as a force for community building, economic resilience, and cultural identity.

This isn't a quick fix. It's not a one-election cycle solution. But it is a long-term strategy for national strength.

We live in a moment where global pressures and cultural instability are testing our unity. In response, we must look inward - not with isolationism, but with intention. The creative sector in Canada holds the key to revitalizing not only our sense of self, but also our economic vitality.

What does investing in sovereignty look like?

It means putting resources and trust into projects, people, and organizations that are committed to nurturing Canadian identity through creative practice.

It means moving beyond transactional thinking - beyond short-term ROI - and committing to measurable long-term gains in three essential areas:

- 1. Individual Empowerment** - when artists, creators, and cultural workers are supported, they gain the confidence and capacity to contribute meaningfully to society.



2. **Community Cohesion** - when creative programs are funded locally, they foster connection, pride, and purpose at a grassroots level.
3. **National Resilience** - when culture thrives, so does commerce. A thriving creative economy supports tourism, innovation, education, and exports.

We are not calling for handouts. We are calling for visionary investment - the kind that builds cultural infrastructure, mentorship networks, career pathways, and platforms for Canadian voices to be heard, seen, and celebrated.

Community First – Commerce Follows

This is the principle we stand on. It's not just a slogan - it's a strategy.

Communities that are strong in culture are strong in every other way. When we lead with creativity - when we prioritize relationships, stories, and expression - we naturally create the conditions for economic growth, social innovation, and civic trust.

ArtBridgeCanada is just one piece of a much larger tapestry. But we are committed to being part of the movement that says: we are not waiting for permission to build the future we believe in. We are doing it now.

This is a call - not to arms, but to action.

- A call to invest in creativity.
- To fund the future.
- To strengthen sovereignty by believing in ourselves and what we can create together.

Let's build a Canada where culture is not an afterthought, but a foundation.

Where creativity is not an expense, but an asset.

Where sovereignty is not defended in fear - but declared through confidence, compassion, and bold imagination.

Join us. Support the movement. Invest in Canadian creativity.

Brian Usher, Founder, ArtBridgeCanada®

Contact us for partnerships, interviews, or to join our Advisory Council:

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www.artbridgecanada.ca

ArtBridgeCanada is a passion project with a big vision. As we grow from a start-up to a nationwide resource, we rely on the support of people who believe in the power of the arts to transform lives. Our Advisory Council of artists, educators, community leaders, philanthropists, and industry professionals helps secure resources, and amplify our reach nationwide.

The Power of Art

By Sandrine Piegay, France – Council Advisor

Art is more than just a form of expression - it is a bridge that connects cultures, generations, and emotions beyond words. In this poetic exploration, Sandrine Piegay invites us to reflect on how art transcends language, fuels dialogue, and transforms the world around us. From murals that breathe life into cityscapes to melodies that touch the soul, discover how creativity unites us in ways both seen and unseen. Join us in celebrating art's power to break barriers and reveal new perspectives. All images selected works by Sandrine Piegay – website:

<https://www.sandrinepiegay.com/>



Art as a Universal Language

Since the dawn of time, art has accompanied humanity. It tells, questions, upsets and allows us to translate what is much more than a simple mode of expression. An invisible link between men; a space where emotions intersect and words appear superfluous. Each artistic form, (Painting, Dance, Music, Sculpture, etc.) holds a universal breath, a vibration that crosses the centuries and unites the world. Far from being fixed, art is a movement, an uninterrupted dialogue between the past, the present and the future. It unites cultures, connects generations and invites us to see the world differently, whether in the form of a cry of revolt or an inner refuge, it offers us another way of understanding and feeling.



In this article, let's discover how art creates links, nourishes dialogue and opens up unsuspected paths.

Art: An Intercultural Bridge

There is something magical about art, a unique ability, that of breaking down barriers. There is no need for translation, because it touches the heart without detour or justification. A melody played at the bend of an alley, a sculpture that captures the light from an





unexpected angle. These are all silent languages that touch us, without us having to pronounce a single word.

Imagine also a bright mural on a gray wall, or a gigantic painting placed on the corner of a busy street. Some people will see it as a story set in stone, others as a hidden message, but all will stop, if only for a moment, caught up in the energy that emanates from it. Certainly, art transforms space, invites reflection and creates connection where sometimes everything seems to separate us.

Music is not to be outdone. A universal language, it is sometimes a voice that rises, a melody played on an ancestral instrument, a dance that follows the rhythm of a drum. It doesn't matter, wherever we come from, whatever age we are, the language of sounds and movements speaks to our soul. Music

unites, brings us together and reminds us that we are made of the same emotions.

Art is more than just being seen or heard. Art is lived, art is felt, and above all, it is shared.

Creating, Sharing, Meeting

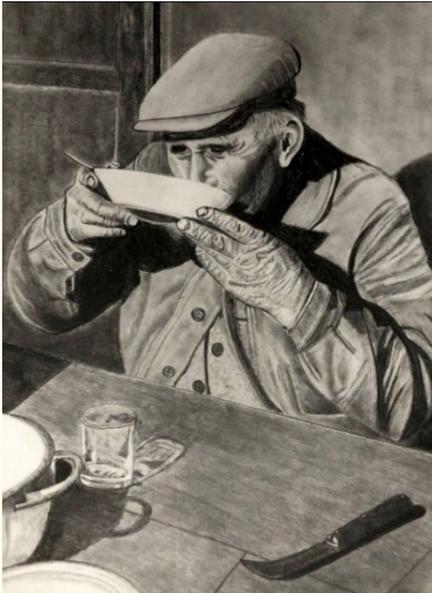
Art only fully exists when it finds a look to welcome it, an ear to listen to it, a heart to receive it. He is never solitary because he feeds on unexpected encounters, unexpected influences or even improbable exchanges.

Let's take the example of a festival or an exhibition, these are places where every moment can become magical. Creation is part of everyday life and is an opportunity for dialogue. The unexpected can arise, exchange can take place, and what we thought was frozen becomes alive. Sometimes all it takes is a gesture, a look at a work, a thrill felt at the same time as a stranger, for a connection to be born.

Although different, artistic residencies are also spaces for cross-fertilization and learning. By changing places, by immersing herself in another universe,



the artist confronts new perceptions, discovers other ways of telling the world. All of this transforms each of the protagonists, because art is above all an open conversation, an echo between different sensibilities.



Art as a Revealer and Driver of Change

Art is not content with bringing people together, it also questions. It sheds light on the shadows, breaks the silences, highlights what we would sometimes prefer not to see. Throughout the centuries, he has witnessed and played a role in the upheavals of the world.

From the committed frescoes of the last century to contemporary works denouncing injustices, art has always had a voice, sometimes soft, sometimes sharp. A painting that disturbs, an installation that challenges, a performance that defies norms. Each creation can be one of the facets of the societal mirror, a silent cry that pushes us to think.

Even today, many artists choose to put their art at the service of a cause. They tell the story of the forgotten, denounce the fractures of the world, ask essential questions. They do not always give answers, but offer another perspective, another way of looking at reality.

Art: A Breath that Connects Us

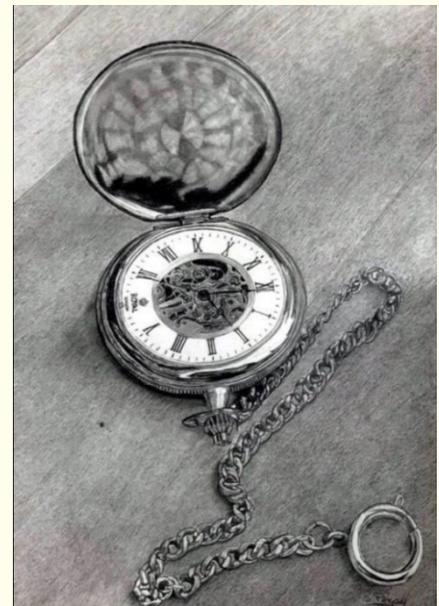
Art is much more than just a creative gesture. It is a common breath, a vibration that unites us beyond languages and origins. He is this hand stretched out



through time, this invisible link between generations, this whisper that crosses borders.

In a world in perpetual change, he remains a landmark. It teaches us to listen differently, to look more attentively, to see diversity as a richness and not an obstacle.

Far from being a simple reflection of reality, art transforms it. It invites us to imagine, to feel, to reinvent what surrounds us. And in this silent dialogue that he establishes between souls, he reminds us of one essential thing: we are all deeply connected.



Unleashing Creativity:

How to Break Through Artist's Block Without Losing Your Mind

By Annette Courtemanche, Council Advisor

<https://www.annetecourtemancheart.com/>

Toronto Artist, Writer, Avid Gardener, and Naturalist

Ah, the dreaded creative block. Every artist knows it, every artist fears it, and - let's be honest - every artist has dramatically declared at some point, *"That's it! I'll never make art again!"*

But before you set fire to your canvas or resign yourself to a life of watching paint dry (literally), take a breath. Creative block is just a speed bump on the road to artistic greatness, not a dead end. Instead of letting it crush your soul, try these strategies to reignite your creative spark - and maybe even have a little fun along the way.



Step One: Embrace the Block (Yes, Really!)

Creative block is like an uninvited guest - it's going to show up whether you like it or not. Instead of fighting it, acknowledge that it's part of the process. Give yourself permission to step back and say, *"Fine, I'm stuck. So what?"* Sometimes, just letting go of the pressure can open the door for inspiration to sneak back in. In the meantime, why not play? Just say, "I am

going to play and have fun today and see what emerges." Scribble nonsense, splatter paint, or doodle with your non-dominant hand. Try saying, *"Today, I'm just going to make something ridiculous and see what happens."* Who knows? That "ridiculous" thing might turn out to be brilliant.

Step Two: Shake Up Your Surroundings

If your studio feels like a creativity black hole, it's time for a change of scenery. Take your art supplies to a park, a café, or even just another room in your house. Fresh surroundings = fresh inspiration.

And if leaving the house isn't an option, try rearranging your space. Move your desk, put up new art, or (gasp!) tidy up a bit. You might just rediscover an old sketch or half-finished painting that sparks



something new. I did that recently and found work on paper or stretched canvas in piles that I had forgot about and was like, wow I want to work on this again. There was no pressure, no expensive canvas to muck up just some small colour studies that I ended up finishing and I love them. One was gifted to friends who just had a new baby boy in February. I got a lovely thank you card saying how much they loved it.

Step Three: Try Something Wildly Different

If your usual medium isn't speaking to you, cheat on it with another one. Painters, try sculpting. Writers, pick up a camera. Musicians, doodle something. The act of creating *anything* - even if it's completely outside your comfort zone - can jolt your brain out of its creative coma. And if that fails? Turn up your favorite music and have a solo dance party. (Seriously, it works. Science probably says so.)



Step Four: Set Tiny, Zero-Pressure Goals

Not every creative session has to result in a masterpiece. Sometimes, the best thing you can do is set a ridiculously small goal. *"I'll mix three new colors today."* *"I'll write one terrible paragraph."* *"I'll make a 10-second sketch of my cat (even if it ends up looking like a potato with legs)."* Small wins add up. And sometimes, a "small, no-pressure" project turns into something unexpectedly wonderful.

Step Five: Talk to Humans (Yes, Even if You're an Introvert)



Creativity isn't just a solo sport. Connect with fellow artists, join a creative group, or just have a chat with a friend. Sometimes, simply hearing someone else's creative struggles can make your own feel less intimidating.

Or, if you're not feeling social, take a walk in nature. Stare at trees. Watch squirrels do weird squirrel things. Let your brain breathe. Inspiration has a

sneaky way of creeping in when you're not actively chasing it.

Step Six: Take Care of the Machine (a.k.a. You)

Sometimes, creative block isn't about art at all - it's about exhaustion, stress, or just forgetting to eat something other than coffee and crackers. (We've all been there.) Sleep. Hydrate. Move your body. Give your brain the fuel it needs to function. Your creativity will thank you.

Final Thoughts: Let Yourself Make Bad Art

Here's a secret: the pressure to create *good* art is often what stops us from creating *any* art at all. So, give yourself permission to make bad, messy, nonsensical art. Throw some paint at a canvas and see what happens. Scribble something ugly. Write nonsense. Creativity is a journey, not a performance.

So, embrace the process - blocks and all. They're not here to stop you; they're just part of the ride. And trust me, your creativity *will* come back. Probably when you least expect it.

And when it does? Enjoy the heck out of it.



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Each monthly edition will feature stories of emerging artists, updates on community-based art projects, and insider news on our advocacy efforts. It's also where we'll highlight new opportunities for partnership, volunteering, and donations.

Navigating the Canadian Art Paint Industry:

Trends, Challenges, & Local Insights

By Juanita Glenn, PEI, Council Advisor

The closure of Stevenson Paint (Scarborough, ON) in 2019 sparked my interest in researching Canadian-made artist paints. The Canadian art paint industry is undergoing significant shifts, driven by economic pressures, sustainability trends, and changing consumer behaviors. Understanding these developments is essential for artists seeking high-quality, locally made materials amid evolving market conditions.



Industry Trends and Challenges

The broader paint and coatings industry in Canada has experienced notable growth, with shipments valued at approximately \$3.8 billion in 2022. However, the art paint segment is seeing particularly strong expansion, with a projected global market growth of 17.3% compound annual growth rate (CAGR) from 2024 to 2033. This surge is fueled by an increasing interest in creative pursuits, DIY projects, and a greater emphasis on sustainability.



Canadian artists are showing a growing preference for eco-friendly materials, aligning with the national push for sustainability. Many manufacturers are responding with environmentally friendly formulas, but challenges such as supply chain disruptions, evolving regulations, and tariff-related economic unpredictability persist.



Canadian-Made Paint Options

Despite these industry-wide shifts, Canadian artists have access to several domestic paint manufacturers committed to producing high-quality materials. This list is a work in progress, and I hope to expand it with contributions from artists and suppliers across the country.

Supporting local manufacturers ensures the availability of high-quality, locally made materials while fostering Canada's artistic community.

The following page presents an overview of the current landscape of Canadian-made paint supplies.

Ontario:

Tri-Art Manufacturing

Based in Kingston, Tri-Art began as a small gallery offering a single line of professional acrylic paints. It has since expanded to produce acrylics, inks, watercolours, tempera, and specialty paints, catering to artists of all levels. Explore their inventory at www.tri-art.ca.



Beam Paints

A 100% Anishnaabe Kwe-owned company, Beam Paints specializes in handmade, lightfast pigments bound with gum Arabic and Manitoulin maple sap. They offer richly saturated colours in inks and watercolours, available in refillable wooden palettes. Discover more at: www.beampaints.com.



Quebec:

Demco EnCouleurs

Located near Montreal, Demco EnCouleurs provides a wide selection of paints, mediums, varnishes, adhesives, and creative dust - a metallic shimmer additive for acrylics - at affordable prices. More information at: www.demcoencouleurs.com



DeSerres

Established in 1907, DeSerres is a well-known name in Canadian art supplies. Their Darryl line offers a variety of student-grade products. More information is available at: www.deserres.ca.



Kama Pigments

Founded in Montreal in 1996, Kama Pigments was created by artists for artists. They offer a range of Canadian-made pigments and high-quality materials. Learn more at: www.kamapigments.com.



British Columbia:

Kroma Paints

Located in Vancouver, Kroma Paints has been manufacturing high-quality, small-batch acrylic paints since 1970. Their paints are formulated, ground, processed, and packaged on Granville Island, within the traditional territories of the Squamish, Musqueam, and Selilwutulh peoples.

A hand-painted colour chart is available upon request at: <https://kromaacrylics.com/?variant=408088609>



The Need to Stay Informed and Proactive

While Canadian artists have strong domestic paint options, the industry remains vulnerable to external pressures such as trade tariffs, supply chain disruptions, and shifting economic policies. Recent U.S.-imposed tariffs have already impacted Canadian galleries and collectors, underscoring the importance of monitoring policy changes and their effects on artist materials.

As the demand for sustainable and locally produced art supplies continues to rise, supporting Canadian manufacturers will be crucial in maintaining access to quality products. By staying informed and advocating for domestic brands, artists can help ensure a resilient and thriving creative industry in Canada.

If you have additional insights into Canadian-made paint manufacturers or industry developments, I would love to hear from you. Let's continue building a comprehensive resource for artists nationwide!

Juanita Glenn

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Don't Miss Our Media Coverage by Coast Connections, B.C.!

"ArtBridge Canada, is under construction. Brushes up! Calling all artists and those who love art. Community is power as Canadian pride and patriotism gains momentum from coast to coast to coast. ArtBridge Canada will empower visual artists with a roadmap to build community, collaboration, mentorship, collegiality to empower collective creativity. Dr.

Brian Usher of New Brunswick is the visionary of this new organization and Pender Island artist Kathleen Theriault is on the advisory council."



YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/QE8oNpmyROs?si=9j3amdXOvSLgrdAo>

Join Our Advisory Council: Help Shape Our Future

Send a brief introduction and CV/resume to dr.brian.usher@artbridgecanada.ca

Thank You / Closing Note

We appreciate your support and can't wait to collaborate with you to enrich Canada's artistic landscape. Stay tuned for more updates, and don't hesitate to reach out with questions, ideas, or just to say hello!

Contact Details: connect@artbridgecanada.ca