

## **ArtSeen Summary FY 2021 and into FY 2022**

In July 2020, ARTSPPLACE embarked on a three-year project to build a digital platform to promote and share knowledge about contemporary art with a diverse, intergenerational audience.

“ARTSPPLACE has developed a province-wide and national reputation for being able to generate interesting activities and opportunities within the community,” stated Ted Lind, project lead and Board Member. “This project, called ArtSeen, is an extension of that work and will be an online portal to share contemporary art and artists that have the highest standards of excellence with a regional, national and international community.”

The project is funded by the Digital Strategy Fund of the Canada Council for the Arts with a \$300,000 grant, the largest ever received by the society. ArtSeen will showcase the work of contemporary Canadian artists through live interviews, studio and gallery visits, and virtual conversations. The all-digital content of ArtSeen, coordinated by ARTSPPLACE, will be developed initially in partnership with arts organizations in the Atlantic provinces, and eventually move further west using a national network of artist-run centres.

“Our venture into digital media to present arts and culture is not new. For several years, ARTSPPLACE has used videoconferencing to conduct real-time programs with museums and galleries, most notably the Museum of Modern Art in NYC and the National Gallery of Art in Ottawa,” says Lind. “We also have and continue to use social media and other digital platforms to connect contemporary artists with a growing audience. During the COVID-19 era, digital learning is becoming more significant than it ever was.”

Phase 1 (July 2020 - June 2021) focused on defining the parameters of the project and consulting with other arts centres/galleries. A March 2021 report was submitted by the lead consulting firm, Beck Viau &. The report included feedback from other arts centres/galleries and full set of recommendations for digital technology directions and marketing/publicity. Phase 2 (July 2021 - 2022) is identifying potential pilots and is laying the foundation for implementing models and assessment methods to be undertaken from May - June, 2022.

Andrew Tolson has been enlisted as a videographer to create 3-5 min. ‘docs’ of four artists in our community: Susan Tooke, Bonnie Baker, Phillip Baily, and Lorne Julien. The ‘docs’ will be posted on the ArtSeen platform. Additional ‘docs’ will be created with community artists during Phase 3 of ArtSeen (July 2022 - June 2023).

The ArtSeen website is now complete and we are only expecting a few tweaks to the back end or contributor portal once testers are engaging with the site. The site is extremely user friendly and Jason Alward (tech advisor with Becka Viau) has also created a manual for contributors to refer to as they upload content to share. The manual will be updated once the testing has ended, and will be a useful tool for ArtSeen as more contributing partners join.

Testers are now being onboarded to the beta testing process. We were a bit delayed on this,

The following organizations are beta testing partners:  
ARTSPPLACE (NS)

this town is small (PE)  
Eastern Edge (NL)  
Third Space (NB)  
EyeLevel (NS)  
Centre for Art Tapes (NS)

Testing will continue into the first weeks of May. After that we will soft launch the website to the public as we gather our marketing steam and work towards a launch event in late September. The Marketing plan is currently being developed and frameworks for distribution defined.

Dillon Tonkin (tech advisor here) reports that the testing of the streaming system was completed last year, and went without a hitch. The multi-camera and multi-microphone system proved fully operational. Test streams to Facebook and YouTube have been performed. Network cabling for upstairs Internet access has been installed. The in-house A/V system is now being installed. This includes a new projector screen mounted on the support bar, ceiling-mounted projector, a new full-range speaker system (which can be dismantled for use elsewhere in the gallery), and an access point for playback of HDMI sources (DVD/Blu-ray, computer, camera etc.). A secure storage cabinet for the system has been ordered. Once completed (mid-April is the target) Dillon will test the entire system and write operational guides. He is also currently editing a video around the Richard Rudnicki exhibit, for inclusion in the ArtSeen content.