

**Executive Directors Report, Rob Fillo, Richmond Arts Coalition, April 2018**

Richmond Arts Coalition's mission is to promote, support & advocate for the Arts in all their various forms in Richmond.

2017 was a banner year for Richmond Arts Coalition (RAC.) It began with the hiring of our first ever executive director (ED), myself Rob Fillo, and ended with an amazing ArtRich 2017 Gala and exhibition of our finest local artists. In between, I did vast amounts of organizational education, board-development workshops and mentor outreach, the knowledge from which I imparted on RAC's board, staff, member base and broader public through our regular monthly eBlast newsletters, our website and regular multi-platform social media updates. With this refreshed knowledge base, we embarked on a massive infrastructure overhaul to bring our digital existence up-to-date and redevelop our membership database for both client and organizational efficiency. One of our main tasks in doing so was to commission the build of an entirely new website, from the ground up. RAC needed to catch up with ever-changing technology and, with the assistance of a grant, from Tourism Richmond we were able to hire a professional web-designer and create a powerful and more accessible website that will help us create more value for our members and public users, as well as sponsorship companies and organizations. Also, this year our board members and staff took on a very important succession planning project. Spearheaded by board secretary Jean Garnett, we created an updated board orientation package, featuring our updated conflict of interest policy and new board commitment pledge. We are firm believers in succession planning and want to know that our organization has the tools to both survive and refresh itself, board term limits are also a very important and celebrated part of our group and we were honoured by the retirement of multiple board members this year and thank them dearly for their service.

RAC continues to advocate for arts of all forms in Richmond and beyond. In 2017, RAC was consulted on a multitude of matters in regards to arts and arts communities in Richmond. Massive community outreach efforts were made this year to grow and solidify our relationships with other communities and organizations. Our board chair, Linda Barnes and myself spoke to council on behalf of the possibility of repurposing the Minoru Activity Centre for arts use to fill community needs. I was also directly interviewed by the Minoru Park Planning Consultants (along with Board member Susan Skemp.) Another advocacy highlight would be the Minoru Activity Centre Repurposing Consultant meeting, where myself and the consultant spent time designing a concept floorpan layout to suit the various local arts needs as part of the consulting process. I and various board members continue to meet with city art staff on a

regular monthly basis, to discuss the ever changing and developing needs of our fast growing city. As ED, I made huge strides in opening up our lines of communications with various cultural organizations and local businesses. One highlight included our media-marketing partnership with the Community Mental Wellness Association of Canada's Gala Fundraiser where I was also a featured performer representing RAC and Richmond's arts community to a largely international audience. I also reached out provincially and have received mentorship from over 10 other executive directors. With regular meetings and communications with these mentors, the Arts BC Insight Team and The BC Arts Council, I have been able to more accurately depict the most appropriate timeline directives for our organizational growth; while continuing to find areas where we can improve and meet our growing fiduciary responsibilities. We are always searching for ways to better serve our membership base and Richmond as a whole with our advocacy and presence.

While building on RAC's previous development and creating our new updated infrastructure, RAC's board, staff and volunteers have also managed to be involved in a wide range of community events. I was asked to be a featured artist in the Richmond Art Galleries, Art at Work series where I spoke about RAC and my career as a multidisciplinary artist and arts administrator. RAC was involved in Richmond's Culture Days festivities, hosting an all day music marathon featuring local artists (including some of our RAC members.) In Winter, RAC partnered with Steveston Historical Society (and other local organizations) to put on Songs in the Snow; A free, family friendly, community building concert series that featured local talent and charities. We had fantastic community engagement and warmed up the holiday season for many, many people; In hopes of recapturing a sense of home and community awareness in such a rapidly changing urban environment.

RAC also put on a workshop to aid those, less digitally inclined, submit their works to our very special biannual flagship event, ArtRich!

ArtRich 2017 was an unprecedented success. This spectacular event featured a rich tapestry of multicultural performing artists, spoken word, food art and a barrage of incredible local talent and their art pieces. This event both energized and motivated the local arts community sparking the interest of many new incredible board member applicants. I am happy to say that Richmond Arts Coalition has welcomed some of those applicants and we now have fresh and incredibly talented new board members.

Richmond Arts Coalition was once again honoured to provide the artists performing during this past years Maritime Festival. And we are happy to announce that, this will be our 8th year receiving the Canadian Heritage grant to assist us in doing so once again.

It was again our honour to serve the arts community by co-hosting the Richmond Arts Awards. We have, officially, set aside a charitable endowment fund with the Richmond Community Foundation and plan to grow it to fruition in the coming years to support the Richmond Arts Awards in perpetuity, among other ambition endeavours.

With the support and networking of local organizations, I am proud to say that we have served a large number of our members of many various communities with our advocacy and community presence. It is truly an honour to be the first, ever, executive director of the Richmond Arts Coalition. I believe we made huge strides this year and with our continuing education and development as an organization, I know we will continue to serve Richmond with assertive advocacy and respectful, inclusive community outreach. Since my hiring in March 2017 we have bolstered a %127 increase in our member base and have implemented a %100 increase in our membership fees to better accommodate our growing population and increase benefits for both our members and Richmond's overall population.

None of this could be done without our many partner organizations and friends in the community and we kindly acknowledge the continued funding and support from the City of Richmond, Canadian Heritage Foundation, Tourism Richmond, Canada 150 Fund, Richmond Art Gallery and many more supporting pillars including our highly appreciated, and steadily increasing membership body. In closing, I would also like to take a moment to thank RAC's unsung heros, the people that keep our digital infrastructure and public information delivery services running; admin assistant Andrew Wade and our social media volunteers Allie McDonald and Wendy Tsui. Not to mention the incredible work from our staff and especially our board member Debbie Tobin, who worked especially hard to make sure that our biannual ArtRich celebration was an amazing success.

In the coming year, we plan to maintain this bold and ambitious trajectory while sewing the seeds of growth with increased community outreach and succession planning. I intend to find our local champions of the arts and empower them to do their best work serving our community through the magical, wonder-filled catalyst of human evolution, the arts.