



ARTS  
COUNCIL  
**WB**  
WOOD BUFFALO

2016  
**Annual Report**

COVER ARTWORK CREATED BY:

ERIN STINSON

***Under the Surface***

Digital Media

17.5" x 11.5"

**Artist Biography:**

Erin Stinson is a multidisciplinary artist, calling Fort McMurray home since 2003. The journey into committed, full-time artistry flowed from her experience in music and education. Her art practice is driven by concept, which allows her to create as compelled, seeking out the most effective medium, technique and discipline in which to communicate. Erin has exhibited in numerous shows throughout Fort McMurray and Alberta since 2012. Currently, she is working on a selection of commissions and collaborative projects and is looking forward to the summer opening of "Beyond the 'Patch", part of the Art Gallery of Alberta's Traveling Exhibition Program.

**Artist Statement:**

My work is rooted in natural elements. I love the metaphors and the unfolding story in the natural world. And even below the forest floor, there is more to the story - an interconnected system bringing life to the limbs towering high above them. Under the Surface is a digital painting that considers the hidden life giving mechanism that allows us to enjoy the beauty of the forest we walk through. Often taken for granted, I imagined the beauty of this system as a geometric puzzle, connected in its goals and purpose. This serves, to me, as a metaphor for the arts in our communities.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## 2 INTRODUCTION

Message from the Mayor  
Message from the Board  
Message from the Executive Director  
2016 at a Glance

## 6 RECONNECTING

Wildfire, Evacuation, Re-entry

## 8 CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY TO THE ARTS

Communications  
St. Aidan's Society Partnership - Elder Abuse Video Project  
Safe Community Wood Buffalo Partnership - P.A.R.T.Y. Program  
Light Saber Battle Stage Combat Workshop  
Rock Your Mocs  
Suncor Student Art Awards  
Empty Bowls Festival

## 14 CONNECTING THE ARTS COMMUNITY

Words in Motion Workshops  
Photographing Your Artwork Workshop  
Make It Public Workshop  
Membership  
Arts Impact Measurement Project  
Wood Buffalo Excellence in Arts Awards

## 20 CONNECTING ON NEW LEVELS

Arctic Winter Games  
Alberta Foundation for the Arts Redpoll Centre Art Commission  
Alberta Foundation for the Arts Tour

## 23 CONCLUSION

Thank You  
2016 Arts Council Board and Staff  
2016 Financial Statements



## Message from the Mayor

On behalf of Regional Council, I want to congratulate Arts Council Wood Buffalo on your tremendous success in making connections across the arts sector in 2016 and for continuing to serve as a true champion for investment in the arts. Through your many contributions, you demonstrate that art is fundamental to our quality of life and to creating a balanced community.

Among the many highlights in 2016, ACWB held the first annual Wood Buffalo Excellence in Arts Awards. This sold out event helped to build awareness about the contributions that artists make in our region while also recognizing excellence in the local arts community. Once again, ACWB also worked to support the next generation of artists in Wood Buffalo through the Suncor Student Art Awards and Kim Jenkins Student Art Scholarship. Through this exciting collaboration with Suncor Energy, Fort McMurray Public School District, and Fort McMurray Catholic School District, high school students who excel in the visual arts are given an opportunity to exhibit their work, build confidence and receive valuable funds for their post-secondary education.

Thank you for being a strong voice for Wood Buffalo's arts community here at home, provincially, nationally and internationally. In the pages ahead, readers will learn about your great advances in 2016. We wish you continued success as you bridge artists from our region to the wider community and the world beyond.

Melissa Blake  
Mayor





## Message from the Board

As an over-arching body that celebrates and links the diverse artists and art organizations in our region, Arts Council Wood Buffalo works to advocate for the arts because we believe that a thriving arts community is essential to a remarkable quality of life. Wood Buffalo can be proud of the arts sector that persists here, despite natural disasters and economic challenges, and develops Wood Buffalo's reputation as a northern cultural hub. The Board of Directors is proud to champion Wood Buffalo's arts sector because we know that artists connect and build community, as well as the cultural landscape.

Our membership continues to be one of the greatest strengths of our organization; we were very happy to celebrate the achievements of our artists with the inaugural Excellence in Arts Awards Night in October. Another cause for celebration is the member-led Arts Impact Measurement Committee; their work completed in December with an in-depth report on the status of arts in Wood Buffalo. The findings of the report show that Wood Buffalo residents overwhelmingly recognize the value of the arts and desire more opportunities to experience arts and culture activities in our region. With the findings in this report, we will be able to advocate more strongly for the arts sector, helping to assure that the arts community has the resources it needs to thrive.

ACWB experienced a major change in 2016 when Executive Director Constance Scarlett left her post in October. The Board would like to take this opportunity to thank Constance for her leadership and passion; our organization is all the better for having her, and we wish her the best. The Board would also like to thank Interim Executive Director, Diana Moser, who gracefully led us through this transition without missing a step, demonstrating that our organization is strengthened by its exceptional staff. Now the Board looks to the future and is thrilled to welcome our new Executive Director, Liana Wheeldon.

Finally, as we reflect on 2016, the event that is perhaps at the forefront of our memories is the wildfire and evacuation. Arts Council Board of Directors was very proud that ACWB staff was back to work just a week after the evacuation, organizing Wood Buffalo musicians to perform at the debit card pick up centres. In the wake of the wildfire the Board believes that Arts Council's work is more important than ever, as our organization seeks to support the recovery of our arts sector, who in turn provides our region with art experiences that brings our community together and contributes to our wellbeing.

To the members of ACWB: thank you. As you read through this report you can take pride in the way your support has shaped our organization and region.

Nola Antony  
Board Chair



## Message from the Executive Director

Over the past year, Arts Council Wood Buffalo continued to make and deepen connections in our region. Through these efforts, ongoing advocacy, and demonstrated support from our diverse arts community, ACWB is recognized as an influential voice for the arts.

In 2016, ACWB expanded our membership benefits program to include the Local Business Discount program, the Friends category, and the monthly member feature in snapd Wood Buffalo. Even though the wildfire and evacuation in May resulted in many members leaving the community, by the end of the year we still saw Arts Council membership grow by 70%.

ACWB recognized the importance of taking stock of the arts sector in order to provide responsible stewardship, and released the final reports of the Arts Impact Measurement research project. The findings are important data benchmarks for our community that are being used by ACWB, artists, arts organizations, and the wider public to advocate for investment in the arts as essential in creating a balanced community.

Arts Council Wood Buffalo was unable to present important development sessions through the Business of the Arts summit, originally scheduled in June, due to the wildfire and evacuation. However, ACWB sought out other creative partnerships to offer discipline-specific training opportunities and public engagement events within our region. ACWB worked diligently throughout 2016 to ensure that the arts community felt connected and had the resources needed to thrive.

2016 will always be an important milestone in ACWB history as it marked the first presentation of the Wood Buffalo Excellence in Arts Awards. The program recognizes the achievements of the arts community through an awards program and artist showcase. The event, held in October, was a sold out success that connected the arts and the community at a time when we needed it the most. ACWB is grateful for the support of the board, staff, contractors, volunteers, artists, sponsors, partners, and attendees – you are all examples of how the arts are valued and integral to a remarkable quality of life!

2016 was not an easy year. The wildfire and evacuation of our community in May was a time that tested all of us. ACWB staff were back at work within a week working hard to ensure that the arts community felt supported and connected through evacuation, re-entry, and the beginning stages of recovery. We said goodbye to Program Manager Michelle Thorne and Executive Director Constance Scarlett, but we also said hello to new staff that helped support Diana Moser as she led ACWB through a time of transition as Interim Executive Director. We welcomed new board members and the board found a new Executive Director eager to lead ACWB into the future. Thank you to our membership for all of your support.

I would also like to thank the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and the Alberta Foundation for the Arts for their operational support of Arts Council Wood Buffalo. Without champions for the arts such as these, it would be impossible for ACWB to continue meeting the needs of our growing arts sector.

Liana Wheeldon  
Executive Director



13

Excellence in  
Arts Awards  
Given

117

Members

15

Partnerships

4

Art Tours

4

Workshops

9

snapd  
Wood Buffalo  
Member Features

20

YMMarts  
Articles

4

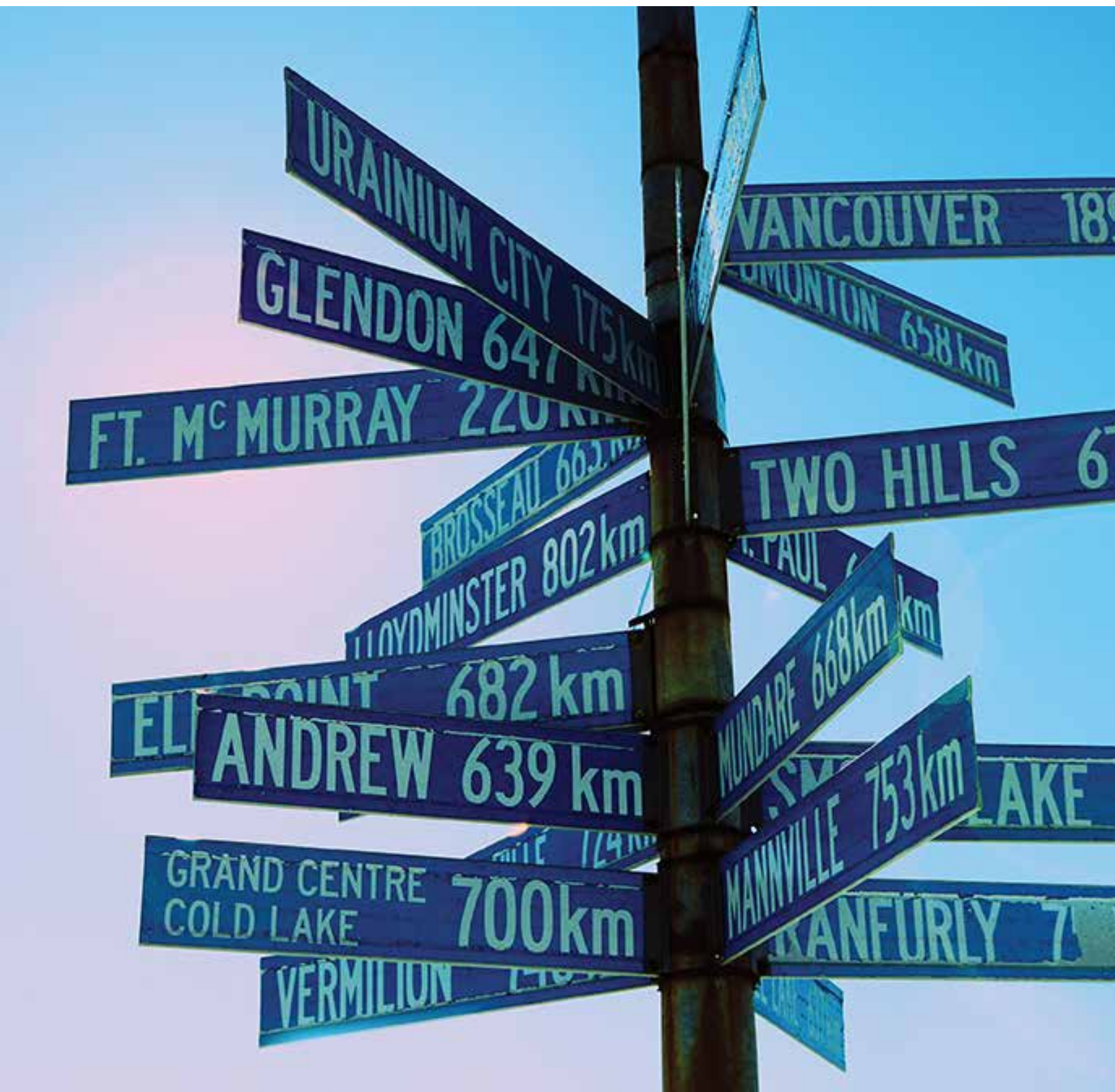
Committee  
Involvement

## 2016 At a Glance

2016 was a year of connections for Arts Council Wood Buffalo – connecting the community to the arts, connecting the arts community to each other, and connecting outside of the region on new levels provincially, nationally, and internationally. Due to the wildfire and evacuation in May, 2016 was also a year of reconnecting our community after a disastrous event. ACWB experienced notable organizational change – Liana Wheeldon came on as the Membership & Engagement Manager, and four new board members were elected to represent Literary Arts, First Nations, Business, and Community. A priority after the wildfire was the debut of a new program, the Wood Buffalo Excellence in Arts Awards. The Arts Awards served to successfully recognize the arts, showcase local artists, and connect the arts with the community in a meaningful way.

The arts and artists of our region help define Wood Buffalo. Only weeks before the mandatory evacuation, ACWB and Hill Strategies Research Inc. completed comprehensive research on the importance of arts and culture in the region. 86% of residents agreed that arts and culture activities make a community a better place to live, and 81% of residents felt that arts and culture are important for their overall quality of life. In the subsequent pages of this report, you will see how ACWB acted as a catalyst for connection in 2016 to ensure that the arts are valued and integral to a remarkable quality of life in our region.





'Where To?' by Matt Salem / Gammazaki Media





# RECONNECTING

The wildfire and evacuation of Fort McMurray and most of the Wood Buffalo region in May 2016 was a life changing event for the community. Arts Council Wood Buffalo's staff went back to work a week after the evacuation knowing that support for our displaced artists and making them feel connected was very important at the time. ACWB sends another huge thank you to the artists and arts organizations across Alberta and Canada for reaching out to support us during that time. Your offers of performance opportunities, equipment, discounts on attending arts events, etc. were incredibly generous and we are all still very grateful.

In May, ACWB worked with the Alberta Foundation for the Arts to organize opportunities for Fort McMurray musicians to perform for line-ups of evacuees at emergency debit card sites. Although these musicians were themselves displaced, they made opportunities to reconnect with their community through music. The healing process was evident as weary evacuees smiled, danced, or simply exchanged hugs and high fives with their favourite McMurray musicians. ACWB staff also managed regular communications pieces to keep the arts community connected by sharing what they all were doing wherever they were displaced.

Unfortunately, two major arts events based in Fort McMurray in 2016 did not happen as a result of the wildfire and evacuation. The Business of the Arts summit, organized and hosted by ACWB, was all set to be a full day

of skill development, learning opportunities, and networking on June 3, 2016 at the Suncor Energy Centre for the Performing Arts. ACWB had to make the hard decision to cancel it and due to the transitions during the re-entry and recovery phases of the rest of the year, no Business of the Arts programming was provided. ACWB was also a presenting partner of the Alberta Drama Festival Association (ADFA) one act play festivals in 2016. For the first time in almost 10 years, Fort McMurray was the host of the provincial level festival, set for May 27-28, 2016. Due to the wildfire, the ADFA had to move the festival to Grande Prairie, who graciously organized and hosted the festival in a very short time frame. Our arts community looks forward to getting the chance again soon to host theatre artists from across Alberta in a future festival year.

ACWB staff were back to work in Fort McMurray by the end of June 2016, continuing our work of ensuring that the arts community is connected and has the resources needed to thrive. The events of May 2016 tested all of us, but they also showed us how deep our connections run – across regions, provinces, and countries.

# CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY TO THE ARTS

Arts Council Wood Buffalo works to ensure that the arts are recognized as essential in creating a balanced community. There were several partnerships and projects in 2016 that met this goal.

## Communications

The Arts Council Wood Buffalo uses several communication streams to connect artists to valuable resources and timely information through our social media platforms, promoting the arts and featuring artists through a partnership with snapd Wood Buffalo, and allowing the arts to be available for everyone in our community through our online arts calendar.

Through the ACWB's social media platforms including Facebook and Twitter, ACWB connects artists with valuable resources such as job postings, residencies, community projects, events and much more. Members also took advantage of using these platforms to promote their art projects, initiatives and events to 2,145 followers.

In 2016 ACWB partnered with snapd Wood Buffalo to promote the arts in a monthly article called Centre Stage with Wood Buffalo. Nine articles were written focusing on member artists and art based organizations covering the diversity of the arts sector in Wood Buffalo and sharing it with the community. Topics that were covered included visual arts, photography, fine art gallery, aboriginal arts, performing arts centre, theatre artists, dance, music, art based business owners and a youth artist.

## St. Aidan's Society Partnership Elder Abuse Video Project

Arts Council Wood Buffalo partnered with St. Aidan's Society to help them with their Elder Abuse video project. ACWB, using the goals and outcomes of the project, created an RFP for video production services. ACWB also consulted with St. Aidan's and Wood Buffalo Productions, the chosen

videography company, on best practices for the creation and management of the artist contract. The project was delayed due to the wildfire and evacuation, and the final video, featuring local seniors, was released in November 2016.



25% of Canadians will be  
over the age of 65 by 2031.  
-Statistics Canada

# Safe Community Wood Buffalo Partnership P.A.R.T.Y. Program

Arts Council Wood Buffalo provided advice on how to create a volunteer actor call for youth and adults, and also recommended a special effects makeup artist for Safe Community Wood Buffalo's annual P.A.R.T.Y. program. This program is designed for all local grade 9 students to "Prevent Alcohol and Risk-related Trauma in Youth." The performance part of the program consisted of a mock motor vehicle collision in the parking lot of the Royal Canadian Legion, where 2 vehicles have been crushed and placed together by a loader as though a collision has already taken place. The actors and makeup artist worked together under the direction of SCWB staff to create a compelling awareness piece that was performed over the span of two weeks in April 2016.



Photography by Ashley Laurenson

# Light Saber Battle Stage Combat Workshop

Arts Council Wood Buffalo, in partnership with Keyano Theatre & Arts Centre, presented a Light Saber Battle workshop with Fight Master Paul G lineau on January 24, 2016. G lineau, Director of the Academy for Fight Directors Canada, choreographed and led an epic battle of good vs. evil in which participants were instructed in introductory stage combat techniques, using "light saber" doweling as weaponry. The workshop topic was so popular that the original time slot in the evening was sold out in one day, prompting the creation of a second afternoon time slot. Participants ranged in age from 14 years to 65 years old, some came dressed to the nines in their best Star Wars costuming, and all had an unforgettable time. The workshop was a tremendous opportunity for local theatre and performance artists to learn the basics of stage combat from an expert, and it was also a chance to engage the wider community in the arts, and the art of stage combat, through a more accessible format – such as the Star Wars franchise.



# Rock Your Mocs

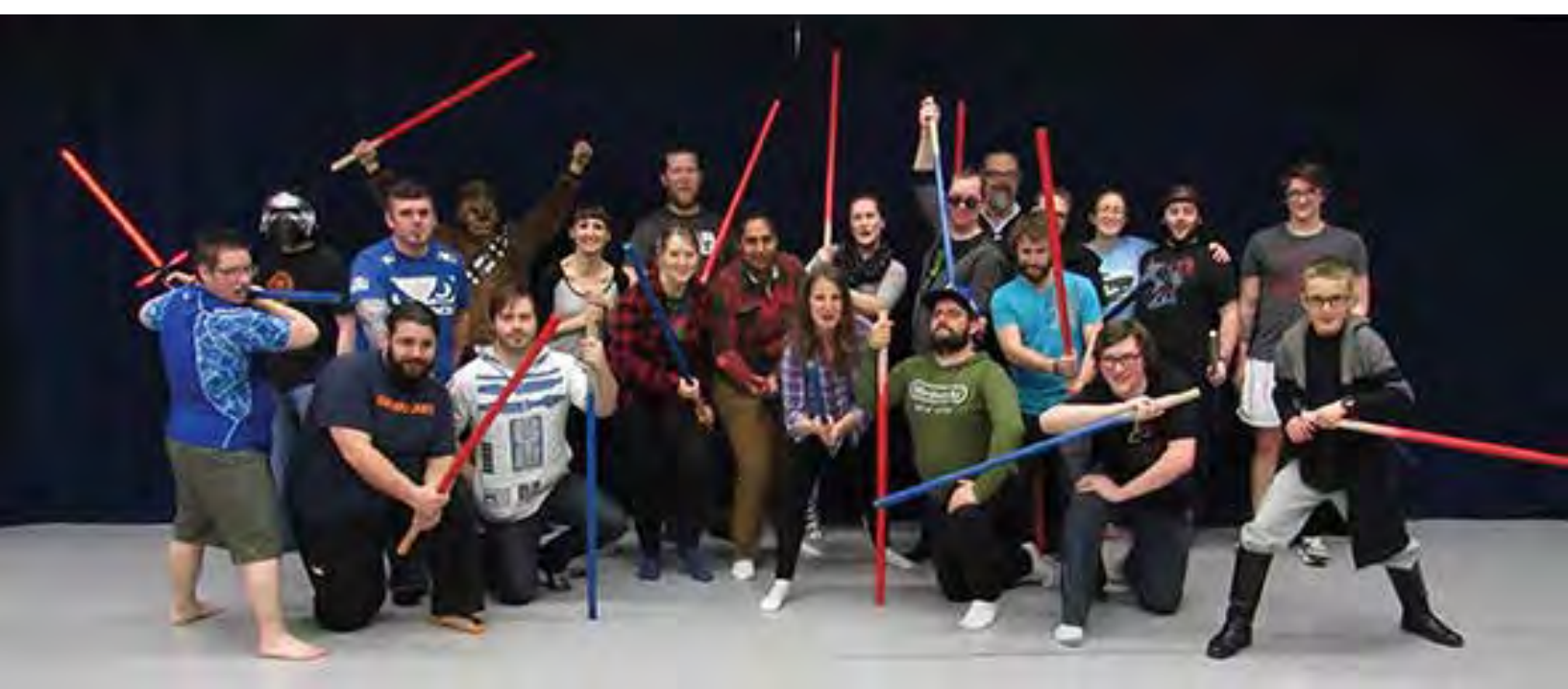
Arts Council Wood Buffalo participated in the first annual Rock Your Mocs event at the Nistawoyou Friendship Centre in downtown Fort McMurray. Rock Your Mocs is a worldwide Native American and Indigenous Peoples movement held annually on November 15. Since its inception six years ago, Rock Your Mocs has expanded to a week long celebration of Indigenous culture. The Nistawoyou Friendship Centre celebrated Rock Your Mocs on November 15, 2016 by holding an event in their facility that included music, food, a round dance, and local crafters, artisans, and artists displaying and selling their creations. ACWB members Kathleen Marsel, Shawn McClure, and Helen Moore each had tables set up with their beautiful hand-crafted work including soapstone sculptures, dream catchers, jewellery, and fabric art pieces. ACWB staff joined in the round dance, assisted the artists and the Friendship Centre and, of course, enjoyed the food and music!







Photography by Ashley Laurenson



## Suncor Student Art Awards

The purpose of the program is to increase the reach and impact of artwork created within the school system, build the confidence of emerging artists to exhibit their work, and engage Suncor employees with visual art. Throughout the year, Suncor hosts three student art exhibitions at their Business Centre: one for Public High Schools, one for Catholic High Schools, and one that includes the Suncor employee voted favourite High School pieces from the first two exhibitions as well as the work of Junior High students from both districts. The program also includes the Kim Jenkins Student Art Scholarship, a \$1500 award given annually to a Grade 12 student pursuing Visual Arts or Design (or similar field) at the post-secondary level upon graduating. Usually the SSAA program is wrapped up in June each year. However, due to the fire and evacuation in 2016, the program was slightly modified. Suncor hosted a reception on September 19, 2016 at the Business Centre to recognize the winners of the 2016 SSAA program prizes. Arts Council Wood Buffalo is grateful to Suncor for their continued dedication to ensuring that the arts community has the resources needed to thrive.



### AWARD RECIPIENTS

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**Kim Jenkins**  
**Student Art Scholarship:**  
Aleksis Agustin

**Public High Schools:**  
Hanna Liashenko  
Brianna Mills  
Shania Waterman  
Jessica Carter

**Catholic High Schools:**  
Wendell Engreso  
Aleksis Agustin  
Jade Cardinal  
Rachel Farrel  
Brooke Freeman

**Junior High Schools:**  
Carissa Fortin  
Shayla Dampier  
Morissa Hendricks  
Devki Patel  
Annica Sencil



# Empty Bowls Festival

On September 17, 2016 ACWB partnered with the Wood Buffalo Food Bank to present the Empty Bowls Festival. The event was a family-friendly celebration of local talent in visual and performing arts and fine crafts that drew the community together and brought awareness to local hunger issues and raised funds for the Wood Buffalo Food Bank. Guests purchased a hand-crafted bowl made by the Fort McMurray Potter's Guild and made their way around the festival sampling creations from several different stations

hosted by local eateries. ACWB managed artist vendors as well as displays and demonstrations of live arts and fine crafts, music and improv performances. Members of the Wood Buffalo Photography Club also generously donated pieces to the silent auction. The event was a sold out success: although all 500 bowls were gone within two hours of the start of the festival, community members continued to spend time at the event enjoying all that artists had to offer.



Photography by Wood Buffalo Photography Club

A series of thin, white, intersecting lines in the top left corner of the page, creating a geometric pattern against the solid yellow background.

# CONNECTING THE ARTS COMMUNITY

Arts Council Wood Buffalo works to ensure that the arts community is connected and has the resources needed to thrive. There were several programs, partnerships, development opportunities, and projects in 2016 that met this goal.



## Words in Motion Workshop

Arts Council Wood Buffalo partnered with the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and the Wood Buffalo Regional Library to host two poetry writing workshops in support of the annual Words in Motion program. These workshops were great opportunities for youth and adults to learn some useful

tips and tricks for exploring their creative writing side. Dr. Ryan J. Cox, English Instructor at Keyano College, facilitated the adult workshop on January 14, 2016 and Pattie Dwyer, local performing artist and instructor, facilitated the youth workshop on January 23, 2016.

## Photographing Your Artwork Workshop

Arts Council Wood Buffalo, FuseSocial, the Regional Recreation Corporation of Wood Buffalo, and Visual Arts Alberta - CARFAC partnered on a workshop on January 30, 2016 that taught local artists simple yet effective techniques for photographing their artwork by using items found in any home to best capture the quality of their art for their portfolios. The workshop came just ahead of the deadline for submissions for

the popular Timeraiser Art Auction, organized by FuseSocial and the Regional Recreation Corporation. Representatives from both groups were on hand at the workshop to answer questions about the Timeraiser submission requirements and provide a tour of the MacDonald Island Gallery presented by the Kirschner Family Corporation.

## Make It Public Workshop

Each year, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo issues a Call to Artists as part of the Public Art Wood Buffalo Program and various other artist programs. These calls extend an invitation for professional artists to submit a proposal for an upcoming project, based on detailed project parameters. Past RMWB Public Art opportunities included the Graffiti Abatement Mural Projects, igNIGHT – Art Illuminated, and the MacDonald Drive Project. The RMWB aims to encourage local representation in Public Art programs, and to draw upon the vast pool of artistic talent within our region. To do this, Arts

Council Wood Buffalo partnered with the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and Public Art Wood Buffalo to create the “Make it Public!” workshop. This was a one-day workshop on April 16, 2016 that was designed to teach local artists the necessary skills to create competitive and compelling applications for upcoming Artist Calls and Requests for Proposals. The skills learned through the workshop are transferable and give regional artists an advantage when applying for Artist Calls: not just locally, but nationally.



# Membership

In 2016, Arts Council Wood Buffalo ended 2016 with 117 members, both individual and organizational. Despite losing a number of members due to new opportunities elsewhere as well as relocation after the events in May, interest in membership stayed strong with a growth in the second half of the year by more than 70% through renewals and new members.

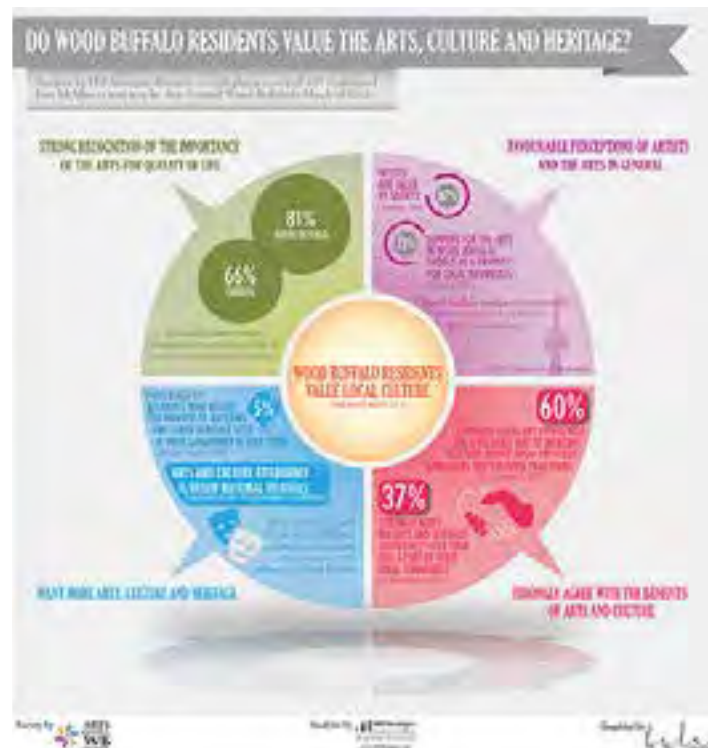
Two new member benefits were launched in 2016: print promotion through snapd Wood Buffalo's arts feature, and the Local Business Discount program. The Centre Stage with Arts Council Wood Buffalo article featured individual members, non-profit and for profit business members, as well as art groups, students, and teachers. The Local Business Discount program is possible through partnerships with Artus 360 Design Studio, Campbell's Music, Cataclysm Productions, Keyano Theatre and Arts Centre, Points North

Gallery, Wee Bounce Art Supplies, and Yogen Fruz. Each business welcomes ACWB Members and Friends with an ongoing incentive to save on certain items and services.

A new category of support was also created in 2016: Friends of Arts Council Wood Buffalo. This membership level connects Friends to the arts community with great benefits such as access to online promotion through ACWB social media and website, print promotion, the Local Business Discount program, and the monthly member newsletter.

# Arts Impact Measurement Reports

The goal of the Arts Impact Measurement project was twofold. One – a committee was struck to provide a summary of the impact of the arts in Wood Buffalo with regards to: quality of life, participation, and economics based on the data currently available; and to supply a road map on the next steps Arts Council Wood Buffalo must take to complete the necessary data, and the best ways to distribute the final results. Two – on the advice of the committee, ACWB contracted Hill Strategies Research Inc. (HSR) to manage the evaluation and data analysis portion of the project. Phase I was an online survey of Wood Buffalo artists, to which 130 artists responded. Phase II was a telephone survey that collected data from the general Wood Buffalo population about arts participation and attendance – motivations, barriers, benefits. Phase I data was collected in November 2015 and Phase II data was collected in March 2016. HSR was analyzing and preparing the final report when the fire and evacuation occurred in May 2016. In response to the disaster, ACWB and HSR developed a strategy to analyze our existing data in a complimentary report, "Creative resilience in Wood Buffalo," that used research from other communities who experienced natural disasters and the role of the arts in recovery and rebuilding to contextualize the Wood Buffalo data collected. The final report of Phases II and II, "Wood Buffalo's arts community viewed from within and without," was completed in December 2016 and rolled out to the community in early 2017.





# WOOD BUFFALO ARTISTS: KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

Analysis by Hill Strategies Research of a survey of 130 artists of Fort McMurray and area for Arts Council Wood Buffalo between November and December of 2015.

Of the 130 respondents, 123 are Wood Buffalo residents (at least part time). All respondents have done artistic work in Wood Buffalo over the past three years.

## WHO ARE WOOD BUFFALO ARTISTS?

**47%**

HAVE A UNIVERSITY DEGREE

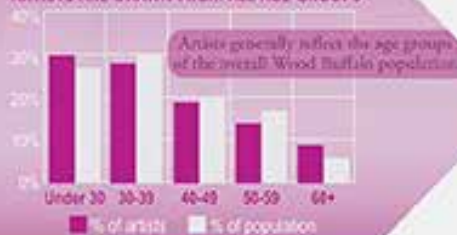
**42%**

OF PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS HAVE WORKED AS AN ARTIST FOR 20 YEARS OR MORE

TWO-THIRDS OF WOOD BUFFALO ARTISTS ARE WOMEN



## ARTISTS ARE DRAWN FROM ALL AGE GROUPS



Wood Buffalo artists are highly educated and have significant training and experience in the arts.

## ARTISTS ARE VERY ACTIVE IN WOOD BUFFALO, ESPECIALLY TEACHING

MOST COMMON ARTS ACTIVITIES IN THE PAST 3 YEARS

**44%**  
MENTORING OTHERS IN ARTS

**42%**  
TEACHING ARTS TO OTHERS



One-third teach art as their primary source of income.

ARTISTS ARE VERY ACTIVE IN CREATING, PERFORMING, PRESENTING DIFFERENT WORKS OF ART.

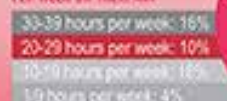


## SELF-EMPLOYMENT IS THE NORM AMONG PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS



**72%**  
OF ARTISTS ALSO VOLUNTEER IN THE ARTS

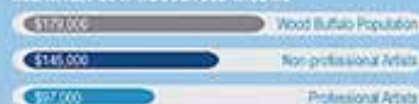
**53%** OF PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS WORK AT LEAST 40 HOURS PER WEEK ON THEIR ART



Over one-half of the professional artists surveyed work 40 hours per week on their art, while 47% of non-professional artists work less than 10 hours per week on their artistic endeavours.

## INCOME AND QUALITY OF LIFE

RELATIVELY LOW HOUSEHOLD INCOME



Professional artists are generally satisfied with their arts activity and their life, but not their finances.

**52%**

OF PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS EARN LESS THAN \$20,000 ANNUALLY FROM THEIR ART

**42%**

OF PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS HAVE DIFFICULTIES MEETING BASIC HOUSEHOLD NEEDS

Cost of living is the greatest challenge for artists followed by art grants and income from their arts practice.

## ACWB IS WORKING TO MEET ARTISTS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

### PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS

- CONNECTING WITH BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY (65%)
- HELP WITH APPLYING FOR GRANTS OR OTHER FUNDING (64%)
- FINDING OR STRENGTHENING ARTIST COMMUNITY (60%)
- MARKETING ADVICE OR EXPERTISE (60%)

70% of artists have never applied for a government arts grant. Only 20% have ever received a government arts grant.

### NON-PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS

- ARTS INSTRUCTION OR TRAINING (63%)
- NETWORKING (53%)
- FINDING OR STRENGTHENING A COMMUNITY OF ARTISTS (51%)

# Wood Buffalo Excellence in Arts Awards

Arts Council Wood Buffalo hosted the inaugural Wood Buffalo Excellence in Arts Awards on October 22, 2016 at the Suncor Energy Centre for the Performing Arts. The Arts Awards, aka “The Buffys”, is an annual program that will continue to recognize the achievement and accomplishments of the arts in the region year to year, invest in the future of the growing arts community, and allow artists to compete and thrive within the region and even beyond the borders of Wood Buffalo. The focus of the Arts Awards is to celebrate the achievements of local artists through an artist showcase and to place tangible value on the essential role the arts play in creating a balanced community. Planning for the awards program and the event began early in the year and although the wildfire put so much on hold, ACWB decided within a week of the evacuation that the Arts Awards must go on. ACWB’s mandate is to champion investment in the arts in our region, and the program does just that. The 2016 Arts Awards connected the general public with the arts in an inclusive event that showcased all artistic disciplines. The sold out “Midnight Circus” themed showcase event included a visual art display, live theatrical performances, film, instrumental music, song, poetry, duets, and collaborations from different performing arts disciplines. The audience was made up of members from all facets of the community, not just the arts.

The Arts Awards was also an opportunity to connect with many generous volunteers in the community. In all, 28 people acted in volunteer roles ranging from setup to discussing wine notes in relation to visual art. There was originally a small crew designated for tear down that grew quickly from 4 to 30 when guests at the Buffys kicked off their dancing shoes and joined in. One knows an event is a success when people want it to go on so much that they help clean up!

Awards were presented to 13 local artists who have shown outstanding achievement and accomplishment in the arts. 12 of the categories were open to nominations from the community, while the Arts Champion recipient was chosen by the ACWB board of directors to acknowledge an individual, small business, corporation, social profit, or foundation which has strengthened arts and culture in Wood Buffalo through their support and commitment to the sector in the past year. Each award was hand crafted by local Aboriginal artist Kathleen Marsel.

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ACWB thanks the 2016 Arts Awards sponsors, the team at SECPA, the event coordinators, various partners, all the artists, the volunteers, ACWB staff and board, and of course, the Wood Buffalo community.

Presenting Sponsors – Suncor, Don Scott McMurray Law Office, McMurray Métis, Flett Manning Moore; Entertainment Sponsor – Birdsong Connections; Media Sponsors – Balsom Communications, Harvard Broadcasting; Supporting Sponsors – Servus Credit Union, Nistawayou Friendship Centre, Jaguar Lounge

## AWARD RECIPIENTS

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### **Arts Administration**

Ana Maria Mendez

### **Arts Education**

Marie Gazzard

### **Creative Collaboration**

“Fanny & Manny Tie the Knot”  
dinner theatre by Theatre; Just  
Because and Waypoints

### **Dance**

Kim Hurley

### **Fine Craft**

Leo Parent

### **Literary Arts**

Kevin Thornton

### **Media Arts**

Sean McLennan

### **Music**

Dan Gillies

### **Theatre**

Michelle Thorne

### **Visual Arts**

Carol Breen

### **Traditional Aboriginal Arts**

Lily Marcel

### **Rising Star**

Avery Rex

### **Arts Champion**

Loraine Humphrey



200

Audience  
Members

10

Event  
Sponsors

36

Performers

28

Volunteers

40

Award  
Nominees

13

Awards  
Presented





# CONNECTING ON NEW LEVELS

In 2016 Arts Council Wood Buffalo continued to grow its role as an influential voice for the arts in our region. Partnerships, special projects, and communications pieces are part of ACWB's advocacy strategy, which gained momentum in 2016.

# Arctic Winter Games

Young artists Camryn Hannigan, Akshaya Lakshmi, and Mat Coté travelled to the 2016 Arctic Winter Games in Nuuk, Greenland as Team Alberta North's cultural contingent. The group represented Alberta from a cultural and artistic perspective at the Games, which took place March 5-12, 2016. Guided by Arts Council Wood Buffalo Program Manager Michelle Thorne, Hannigan, Lakshmi, and Coté created an original multi-disciplinary performance for the Games which incorporated dance, music, and storytelling. The piece was entitled "The Creation of the World" and was based on an Inuit legend about the raven. According to the AWG host society, cultural exchange and social interaction are important parts of the Arctic Winter Games so each participating country or region contributed performances that reflected the traditional as well as the modern cultures of the Arctic. Being asked to participate in this process was extremely exciting

as it demonstrated that when people think about strong arts communities in northern Alberta, they think of Wood Buffalo. This can be attributed to our incredible local artists as well as the work ACWB has been doing to raise the profile of the arts community over the past two years. Hannigan, Lakshmi, and Coté performed their piece alongside contributions from Alaska, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Yukon, Quebec, the Sápmi Region, Russia, and Greenland to hundreds of locals and visitors at a special public showcase as well as two VIP Gala events. The group also attended workshops led by multi-disciplinary performance artists from a variety of countries across the Northern Hemisphere, and attended a special guided tour of The National Theatre of Greenland.



## Alberta Foundation for the Arts Redpoll Centre Art Commission

2016 saw the beginning of a collaboration project between Arts Council Wood Buffalo, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, the Regional Recreation Corporation of Wood Buffalo, and the United Way of Fort McMurray. ACWB received a grant to commission an original work of art which will be publicly displayed in the Redpoll Centre at Shell Place. The piece is to commemorate the opening of this new shared space and community hub which houses sixteen social profit organizations, including ACWB. The chosen piece of art will speak to the values of collaboration, innovation, creativity, courage, and integrity that resonate with the wider Wood Buffalo arts community as well as the tenants in the Redpoll Centre. The artist call to create this commissioned piece

was open only to Alberta residents and the chosen artist, Lucie Bause, is not only a resident of Alberta but, until the wildfire, a resident of Fort McMurray. Lucie has long been a champion of the arts and she helped make the arts a valued and integral component of a remarkable quality of life in the Wood Buffalo region by leading the visual arts programming at MacDonald Island Park, being an advocate for local arts, and maintaining her artistic practice while living here. ACWB is looking forward to connecting with the community through different engagement sessions during the creation of this piece. Installation of the completed artwork is scheduled for Fall 2017.



# Alberta Foundation for the Arts Tour

Arts Council Wood Buffalo welcomed the Alberta Foundation for the Arts (AFA) board members to our region for their 2016 Annual General Meeting. Local visual artist Frederick McDonald was the AFA board representative for Wood Buffalo and joined the other board members for an Arts Tour of Fort McMurray, hosted by ACWB.

The tour commenced at the MacDonald Island Park facility on the newly opened TOTAL Aboriginal Interpretive Trail which features 28 fox sculptures painted by local artists and students,

as well as seven large sculptures created by Aboriginal artists from Alberta and British Columbia representing the Seven Sacred Teachings. The Arts Tour included visiting the Suncor Energy Centre for the Performing Arts and partner organization Theatre; Just Because, as well as visual artist Russell Thomas at Birdsong Studio. The tour culminated with a sizzle reel of local films created by the Fort McMurray Filmmakers Association and a networking mixer at McMurray Experience. ACWB was pleased to host the AFA and connect them with the vibrant arts community in our region.





# THANK YOU

Arts Council Wood Buffalo acknowledges the 2016 operational support of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.



REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY  
OF **WOOD BUFFALO**



Alberta  
**Foundation**  
for the **Arts**

Arts Council Wood Buffalo would also like to thank all our partners, donors, contractors, volunteers, and supporters who championed investment in the arts in 2016.



# 2016 Arts Council Board & Staff

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Christine Burton  
Erin Schwab  
Nola Antony  
Sarah Neiman  
Carmen Wells  
Dave Boutilier  
Theresa Wells  
Buffy Close  
Michael Durocher  
Florence Weber  
Tito Guillen  
Todd “Toddskye” Hillier  
Hanna Fridhed  
Julia McDougall  
Jade Ernst

Chair & Director – Business/Industry *(until September 2016)*  
Chair and Director – Visual Art  
Vice Chair and Director - Dance  
Treasurer and Director - Music  
Secretary and Director – Métis  
Director – Theatre  
Director – Literary Arts *(from September 2016)*  
Director – Literary Arts *(until June 2016)*  
Director – Business/Industry  
Director – Business/Industry *(from September 2016)*  
Director – Video/Filmmaking/Photography  
Director – Community *(until July 2016)*  
Director – Community *(from September 2016)*  
Director – First Nations *(from September 2016)*  
Director – First Nations *(until April 2016)*

## STAFF

Constance Scarlett  
Michelle Thorne  
Diana Moser  
Liana Wheeldon  
Christina Beckman

Executive Director *(until October 2016)*  
Program Manager *(until July 2016)*  
Interim Executive Director *(from October 2016)*  
Membership & Engagement Manager *(from September 2016)*  
Communications & Program Manager *(from October 2016)*



# 2016 Financial Statements

ARTS COUNCIL WOOD BUFFALO

Index to Financial Statements

Year Ended December 31, 2016

(Unaudited)

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REVIEW ENGAGEMENT REPORT

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Statement of Financial Position

Statement of Revenues and Expenditures

Statement of Changes in Net Assets

Statement of Cash Flow

Notes to Financial Statements

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## REVIEW ENGAGEMENT REPORT

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To the Members of Arts Council Wood Buffalo

I have reviewed the statement of financial position of Arts Council Wood Buffalo as at December 31, 2016 and the statements of revenues and expenditures, changes in net assets and cash flow for the year then ended. My review was made in accordance with Canadian generally accepted standards for review engagements and, accordingly, consisted primarily of inquiry, analytical procedures and discussion related to information supplied to me by the Organization.

A review does not constitute an audit and, consequently, I do not express an audit opinion on these financial statements.

Based on my review, nothing has come to my attention that causes me to believe that these financial statements are not, in all material respects, in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Fort McMurray, Alberta  
April 7, 2017



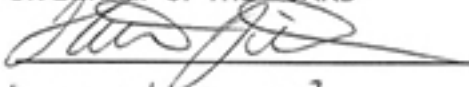

S. Millard Chartered Professional Accountant  
CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANT



**ARTS COUNCIL WOOD BUFFALO**  
**Statement of Financial Position**  
**December 31, 2016**  
*(Unaudited)*

	2016	2015 <i>Revised</i>
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>CURRENT</b>		
Cash	\$ 59,370	\$ 28,575
Restricted cash (Note 4)	75,307	78,012
Prepaid expenses	1,317	2,345
	<u>135,994</u>	<u>108,932</u>
<b>LONG TERM RESTRICTED CASH (Note 4)</b>	<u>8,750</u>	<u>26,250</u>
	<u>\$ 144,744</u>	<u>\$ 135,182</u>
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
<b>CURRENT</b>		
Accounts payable	\$ 5,762	\$ 8,303
Employee deductions payable	-	5,433
Deferred income - unrestricted (Note 5)	2,124	1,091
Deferred income - restricted (Note 6)	41,758	48,750
Grants Repayable (Note 7)	33,549	29,262
	<u>83,193</u>	<u>92,839</u>
<b>DEFERRED INCOME - RESTRICTED (Note 4)</b>	<u>8,750</u>	<u>17,500</u>
	<u>91,943</u>	<u>110,339</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<u>52,801</u>	<u>24,843</u>
	<u>\$ 144,744</u>	<u>\$ 135,182</u>

**ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD**

 Director  
 Director

See notes to financial statements

**ARTS COUNCIL WOOD BUFFALO**  
**Statement of Revenues and Expenditures**  
**Year Ended December 31, 2016**  
*(Unaudited)*

	2016	2015 <i>Revised</i>
<b>INCOME</b>		
Fees for services and event sales	\$ 8,561	\$ 8,821
Grants	415,675	367,117
Membership fees	2,920	854
Other income	1,216	3,970
Partnership projects	9,610	933
Rent in kind	-	25,500
	<u>437,982</u>	<u>407,195</u>
<b>PROGRAM EXPENSES</b>		
Arts Community Needs Assessment	37,270	26,143
Business of the Arts Workshop	480	13,849
Partnership Programs	4,203	25,555
Scholarships and Awards	7,400	4,500
	<u>49,353</u>	<u>70,047</u>
Subtotal	<u>388,629</u>	<u>337,148</u>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Advertising and promotion	17,200	22,137
Artist Fee	15,200	-
Business taxes, licenses and memberships	3,082	542
Employee benefits	6,811	3,873
Honorarium	2,912	3,143
Insurance	2,108	2,307
Interest and bank charges	934	607
Meetings and conventions	15,050	6,746
Memberships	534	928
Office	3,757	6,299
Professional fees	8,008	7,277
Rental	18,365	32,515
Salaries and wages	241,365	203,069
Sub-contracts	17,627	24,440
Telephone	2,825	2,990
Training	1,491	8,110
Travel	3,402	917
Utilities	-	4,661
	<u>360,671</u>	<u>330,561</u>
<b>EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENSES</b>	<u>\$ 27,958</u>	<u>\$ 6,587</u>

**ARTS COUNCIL WOOD BUFFALO**  
**Statement of Changes in Net Assets**  
**Year Ended December 31, 2016**  
*(Unaudited)*

	2016	2015 <i>Revised</i>
<b>NET ASSETS - BEGINNING OF YEAR</b>		
As previously reported	\$ 24,843	\$ -
Prior period adjustments <i>(Note 8)</i>	-	18,256
As restated	24,843	18,256
Excess of income over expenses	27,958	6,587
<b>NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$ 52,801</b>	<b>\$ 24,843</b>

	2016	2015
<b>OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Cash receipts from customers	\$ 430,265	\$ 403,286
Cash paid to suppliers and employees	(418,740)	(461,702)
Interest paid	(935)	(608)
<b>INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH FLOW</b>	<b>10,590</b>	<b>(59,024)</b>
Cash - beginning of year	132,837	191,861
<b>CASH - END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$ 143,427</b>	<b>\$ 132,837</b>
<b>CASH CONSISTS OF:</b>		
Cash	\$ 59,370	\$ 28,575
Restricted Cash	75,307	78,012
Long term restricted cash	8,750	26,250
	<b>\$ 143,427</b>	<b>\$ 132,837</b>



# ARTS COUNCIL WOOD BUFFALO

## Notes to Financial Statements

Year Ended December 31, 2016

(Unaudited)

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### 1. PURPOSE OF THE ORGANIZATION

Arts Council Wood Buffalo (the "Organization") is a not-for-profit organization incorporated provincially under the Companies Act of Alberta. Management has determined that they are exempt from payment of income tax under Section 149(1) of the Income Tax Act.

The Organization champions investment in the arts in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. The organization was established to raise the profile of the arts in the region and to provide support to all facets of the arts community.

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### 2. BASIS OF PRESENTATION

The financial statements were prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations (ASNFPO).

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### 3. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

#### Cash and cash equivalents

Cash is defined as cash on hand, cash on deposit, and short term deposits with maturity dates of less than 90 days, net of cheques issued and outstanding at the report date.

Externally restricted cash and cash equivalents are restricted for specified purposes and are not available for general operations.

Internally restricted cash represents money set aside for specific activities identified by management and approved by the Board of Directors. The funds are not available for general operations.

#### Contributed services

The operations of the organization depend on both the contribution of time by volunteers and donated materials from various sources. The fair value of donated materials and services cannot be reasonably determined and are therefore not reflected in these financial statements.

#### Financial instruments policy

Financial instruments are recorded at fair value when acquired or issued except for non-arm's length transactions. In subsequent periods, financial assets with actively traded markets are reported at fair value, with any unrealized gains and losses reported in income. All other financial instruments are reported at amortized cost, and tested for impairment at each reporting date. Transaction costs on the acquisition, sale, or issue of financial instruments are expensed when incurred.

#### Measurement uncertainty

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amount of assets and liabilities, disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the period. Such estimates are periodically reviewed and any adjustments necessary are reported in earnings in the period in which they become known. Actual results could differ from these estimates.

The main estimates including accrued liabilities and disclosure of contingencies.

(continues)

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# ARTS COUNCIL WOOD BUFFALO

## Notes to Financial Statements

Year Ended December 31, 2016

(Unaudited)

### 3. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

- a) Net assets invested in property and equipment represents the organization's net investment in property and equipment which is comprised of the unamortized amount of property and equipment purchased with restricted funds.
- b) Internally restricted net assets are funds which have been designated for a specific purpose by the organization's Board of Directors.
- c) Unrestricted net assets comprise the excess of revenue over expenses accumulated by the organization each year, not of transfers, and are available for general purposes.

#### Revenue recognition

Arts Council Wood Buffalo follows the deferral method of accounting for grant and sponsorship income.

Restricted contributions are recognized as revenue in the year in which the related expenses are incurred. Unrestricted contributions are recognized as revenue when received or receivable if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.

Restricted investment income is recognized as revenue in the year in which the related expenses are incurred. Unrestricted investment income is recognized as revenue when earned.

Membership fees, registration fees, and other income are recognized as fees for services. When the users receive the services, the fees are recognized as revenue.

The Organization recognizes contributions of gifts in kind only when a fair value can be reasonably estimated and when the materials and services are used in the normal course of the Organization's operations and would otherwise have been purchased.

### 4. RESTRICTED CASH

	2016	2015
<b>Restricted Cash</b>		
Deferred Grants - RMWB	\$ 3,872	\$ -
Deferred Grant - AFA Public Art Com	18,074	-
Arts Award night for 2017	11,062	-
Deferred Grants - Kim Jenkins	8,750	8,750
Funding Repayable	33,549	29,262
Subtotal	75,307	38,012
Kim Jenkins-Long term portion	8,750	17,500
	<u>\$ 84,057</u>	<u>\$ 55,512</u>

The restricted cash includes funding repayable and restricted revenue.

**ARTS COUNCIL WOOD BUFFALO****Notes to Financial Statements****Year Ended December 31, 2016***(Unaudited)***5. DEFERRED REVENUE - UNRESTRICTED**

	2016	2015
Prepaid Membership Fees	\$ 2,124	\$ 1,091
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-
	<u>\$ 2,124</u>	<u>\$ 1,091</u>

The organization has received funds from members as a prepayment of future year's membership dues.

**6. DEFERRED REVENUE - RESTRICTED**

	2016	2015
<b>Deferred Revenue</b>		
Deferred Grant - AFA Public Art Com	\$ 18,074	\$ -
Arts Award night for 2017	11,062	-
Deferred Grants - RMWB	3,872	-
Deferred Grants - RMWB - Arts Asses	-	40,000
Deferred Grants - Kim Jenkins	8,750	8,750
Subtotal	<u>41,758</u>	<u>48,750</u>
Kim Jenkins-Long term portion	8,750	17,500
Total Deferred Revenue	<u>\$ 50,508</u>	<u>\$ 66,250</u>

The Organization has received a grant, referred to as the Kim Jenkins Scholarship, to be used for the specific purpose of issuing post-secondary fine arts scholarships and awarding cash prizes to students participating in art exhibitions. The funds are designated for use by even distribution over the next five years by providing \$3,000 of exhibition prizes, a \$1,500 scholarship, and \$4,250 of administrative costs annually.

The Organization, as a part of its ongoing operations, received a grant from the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo totaling \$285,000 (2015 - \$285,000). The grant agreement states that any uncommitted grant proceeds shall be returned upon the expiration or earlier termination of this agreement. As at December 31, 2016, unspent funding totaling \$3,872 (2015 - \$69,262) was related to this grant. The Organization has requested from the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo to carryforward \$3,872 (2015 - \$40,000) of these contributions for the use by the next fiscal year end of December 31, 2017. Any remaining balance of the contributions that were not spent on applicable expenses by December 31, 2016 must be returned.

The organization also received funds from AFA Public Art Commission and 2017 Art Award nights.



**ARTS COUNCIL WOOD BUFFALO****Notes to Financial Statements****Year Ended December 31, 2016***(Unaudited)***7. GRANTS REPAYABLE**

The Organization received a grant from the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo totaling \$285,000 (2015 - \$285,000). The grant agreement states that any uncommitted grant proceeds shall be returned upon the expiration or earlier termination of this agreement. As at December 31, 2015, unspent funding totaling \$69,262 was related to this grant. Of this, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo allowed the organization to defer \$40,000 towards Arts Needs Assessment and the remaining \$29,262 was set to be repaid. Of the \$40,000, \$4,287 still remain unused at December 31, 2016. The total repayable to the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo relating to the 2015 grant is \$33,549, all of which is expected to be repaid during the 2017 fiscal year.

It is management's opinion that the total amount of deferred contributions of \$3,872 will be spent in the course of operations within the next fiscal year.

The organization receives grants and funding in advance of specific events and the organization defers these amounts from being recorded in revenue until such time that they are used. The amounts are externally restricted.

**8. PRIOR PERIOD ADJUSTEMENT**

The prior period financial statements were adjusted to reflect the following:

	2016	2015
<b>Change in accounts</b>		
Decrease of assets	\$ -	\$ (2,163)
Decrease of deferred revenue	-	(27,006)
Increase in retained earnings	-	18,256
Increase in revenue	-	8,750
Increase in expenses	-	2,163
	-	-
	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

In 2014, the \$2,500 Suncor Heart Award, \$992 Suncor Grant, and \$14,763 from deferred revenues should have been recorded as revenue, therefore, the opening balances of deferred revenues were overstated and the net assets were understated by \$18,256.

In 2015, the Kim Jenken Grants should have been amortized by an amount of \$8,750, therefore, the deferred revenues were overstated and excess of income over expense was understated by \$8,750.

In 2015, the Organization reported a GST receivable balance of 2,163. This amount should have been included in expenses. As a result, the prior year assets were overstated by \$2,163 and expenses were understated by \$2,163.

**ARTS COUNCIL WOOD BUFFALO****Notes to Financial Statements****Year Ended December 31, 2016***(Unaudited)*

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**9. CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS**

The Organization signed an agreement for the rental of premises in the ordinary course of operations. The Organization has agreed to make payments of \$895 plus GST monthly beginning June 1, 2015 plus an additional \$50 for additional occupancy of one office. The amount of rent increases annually on May 1 beginning May 1, 2016 by 4% on the base rent of \$895 and the lease is in place for three years ending May 31, 2018.

Contractual obligation repayment schedule:

2017	\$	12,669
2018		5,385
	\$	<u>18,054</u>

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**10. ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE**

The Organization is economically dependant on the grant received from the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo for its continued existence and ability to carry out its normal activities. The grant received from the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo accounts for 75% (2015 - 88%) of the income generated by the Organization. 75% = 325,000 / \$433,768.

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**11. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS**

The Organization is exposed to various risks through its financial instruments and has a comprehensive risk management framework to monitor, evaluate and manage these risks. The following analysis provides information about the Organization's risk exposure and concentration as of December 31, 2016.

**Liquidity risk**

Liquidity risk is the risk that an entity will encounter difficulty in meeting obligations associated with financial liabilities. The Organization is exposed to this risk mainly in respect of its receipt of funds from its customers and other related sources, long-term debt, obligations under capital leases, contributions to the pension plan, and accounts payable.

**Market risk**

Market Risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. Market risk comprises three types of risk: currency rate risk, interest rate risk and other price risk. The Organization is mainly exposed to interest rate risk.

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[www.ARTSCOUNCILWB.ca](http://www.ARTSCOUNCILWB.ca)