



CATALYST



A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL ACCESSARTS CENTRE



Table of Contents

Letter from the President and Chief Executive Officer	3
About the National accessArts Centre	4
Our History: 1975-1997	6
1998-2016	8
Artist Profile on Jane Cameron	10
2017-2018	12
2019-2020	14
2021-onward	16
Our Home	18
Our Supporters	19

All photos were taken by Calgary-based photographer Neil Zeller unless otherwise indicated.



Cover photos:
Top: Dancers of the Momo Movement ensemble on stage for their production, *The Mind Palace*. Photo: Tim Nguyen.
Middle left: NaAC staff work alongside artist Heather Jackson.
Bottom left: NaAC artist Lynn Johnson.
Bottom right: NaAC artist Joshua Ukrainetz working with fibre piece.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO



Letter from the President and Chief Executive Officer

The National accessArts Centre—like the artists we serve—has always pushed for more. Better. Not only for our artists, but for our community. Throughout our 46-year history, we have overcome adverse conditions and proven time and again the power of art and creativity to enrich the lives of our artists and those who support them. Through it all, one thing has empowered us to steer true: our commitment to helping artists living with disabilities expand their artistic practice and take their creation efforts to the next level.

The organization began in 1975 as a humble arts and crafts studio with the goal of helping individuals with disabilities explore their independence, build community connections, and think about careers in the arts. Today, our programs continue to bring artists together in new and exciting ways to push the boundaries of art-making. And we continue to showcase their works in galleries throughout the country and around the world.

We've made more strides in advancing training, creation, and exhibition opportunities for our artists than ever before in our organization's history. But we still have work to do. As long as barriers exist, we will fight to break them down. It's what we've always done.

Going forward, the NaAC aims to be a national leader in disability arts program design and delivery, ensuring artists across the country have the right support to present their talent. We know now that our work transcends our physical studio space. The NaAC is more than a building, it's who we are as an organization and how we develop our programs. We're leading the way, and we hope others will follow.

Yours sincerely,

Jung-Suk (JS) Ryu
President and Chief Executive Officer
National accessArts Centre

OUR STORY

About the National accessArts Centre

The National accessArts Centre (NaAC) is Canada's oldest and largest disability arts organization. Founded in 1975 as the In-Definite Arts Society, the NaAC has grown to become a national leader in disability arts, enabling artists living with developmental, physical, and acquired disabilities to realize their artistic potential through world-class training, creation, and presentation opportunities.

In 2020, the NaAC became the country's first multidisciplinary disability arts organization with the introduction of literary and performing arts programming. Our programs are self-directed in nature and cover a wide range of artistic disciplines, including: visual arts, literary arts, dance, theatre, and music.

Each week, we welcome 300+ artists to our multimedia studio and gallery space in Calgary, and an even broader community of Canadian artists living with disabilities to our instructional videos and studio sessions online.

With the support of our professional instructors, each of whom is an artist in their own right, NaAC artists can conceptualize their artwork, and develop new skills and acquire new knowledge to accomplish their artistic goals.

OUR PILLARS

We are proud to champion the remarkable talent of Canadian artists living with disabilities. As we further our movement to make arts accessible for all, our pillars guide us every step of the way.

Artistic Training

Artistic training is at the heart of what we do. We provide artists across the age and ability spectrum with excellent learning opportunities to advance their practice. Whether it's through our in-studio supports or online sessions, we steward the artistic direction of our artists in thoughtful, respectful, and responsive ways.

Creation

Key to artistic development is the opportunity to explore new mediums and discover new talents. Through our fully-equipped studio facilities, active industry partnerships, and artist-led workshops, our artists are invited to find new ways of channeling their creativity in all artistic disciplines. Visiting artists have included Lanre Ajayi, Michelle Austen, Teresa Tam, and others.

Exhibition + Presentation

Exhibitions and presentations give our artists an opportunity to showcase their training and creation efforts, both within our gallery spaces and in various venues throughout the community. As we forge new partnerships with international organizations, the NaAC gives artists the opportunity to present and exhibit their work in shows and on stages around the world. Our artists' works have been showcased in galleries throughout Canada, Hong Kong, Dubai, Mexico, and New York.

Sharing

As champions of inclusion, we are called to showcase and demonstrate the extraordinary creativity of our artists locally, nationally, and internationally. The NaAC is a true thought leader and advocate for the inclusion and recognition of disability arts in the contemporary arts world. We will continue to challenge the status quo as we expand our role as proponents of increased access to and inclusion in the broader arts ecosystem.

NaAC artist Michael Robertson working in the NaAC Studio.

“
Art is the great
equalizer.
”

JEFF DE BOER, NAAC BOARD CHAIR
AND PROFESSIONAL ARTIST

VISION

Communities across Canada recognize, celebrate, and proactively include the talents and skills of artists with disabilities.

MISSION

Providing artistic training, creation, exhibition, and presenting opportunities for artists with disabilities, and sharing the power of their creativity through local and global partnerships and advocacy that opens doors for their inclusion in our arts and culture ecosystem.

OUR TEAM

Board of Directors

Jeff de Boer, Chair
Judith Galbraith, Vice-Chair
Robert Roach, Secretary-Treasurer
Anndee King
John Stinson
Kate Abbott
Kate Price
Ken Regan
Lisa Cooke

Leadership Team

Jung-Suk (JS) Ryu, President and CEO
Karly Mortimer, Director, Artist and Program Development
Heather Jones, Manager, Operations

OUR HISTORY

1975 - 1997

Remembering Moments that Shaped the National accessArts Centre

To imagine the great potential of the NaAC's future, we need to understand and appreciate our past.

1975

The In-Definite Arts Society (IDAS) is founded with the mandate to support individuals with physical disabilities over the age of 18. IDAS serves as a community hub for people with physical disabilities to come together and create arts and crafts.

1980

Gene Neel is appointed the first Executive Director of IDAS.

Acclaimed fibre artist Jane Cameron attends IDAS and transforms the way the organization serves people living with disabilities. IDAS begins to welcome artists with developmental disabilities as well as physical disabilities.

Gene Neel

Gene Neel served as Executive Director of the In-Definite Arts Society from 1980 to 2003. At that time, In-Definite Arts served as a community hub for people with physical disabilities to create arts and crafts. A passionate social servant and team-builder, Gene affectionately recalls sitting in on the sessions with artists. "They would tease me about how much better at crafts they were," he laughs. "I was just glad to see everyone come together. For me, it was a pleasure!"

After his semi-retirement in 2002, Gene stayed on as Financial Consultant for one year, helping his predecessor Darlene Murphy adjust to her new role as Executive Director. "Darlene had been working with the organization from the beginning. She started one day after I did. When I told the Board it was time for someone else to do the job, I recommended she be made the Executive Director as quickly as possible."

Looking forward, Gene is excited to see the National accessArts Centre expand its programming into performing arts. "I always suspected we should go that direction!"



Gene Neel, former Executive Director of Indefinite Arts Centre. Photo: NaAC Archives.

“Art is a universal language and is used by each of our artists to share their unique experiences.”

– DARLENE MURPHY,
FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



1985

Previously funded by the City of Calgary's Parks and Recreation department, IDAS instructors are brought in-house as employees thanks to the generosity of donors and funders.

1997

The Government of Alberta develops a funding model to support artists living with developmental disabilities through Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD)—a program that still exists today.

This change in funding means IDAS is no longer able to support artists with physical disabilities. The artists form their own group called Artistic Expressions and continue to share In-Definite Arts's space one day per week.

IDAS begins fundraising to support artists with physical disabilities.

OUR HISTORY

1998 - 2016

Pieces of the National accessArts Centre's Past

2001

The Jane Cameron Archive Committee, the [Canadian Down Syndrome Society](#), and the In-Definite Arts Society establish an annual award for a person with Down Syndrome who displays expertise in the visual arts. The award is given annually until 2017.

2003

After 28 years, Gene Neel officially retires and is awarded the status of Honorary Lifetime Member. Long-time Program Director Darlene Murphy becomes Executive Director at his recommendation.

The Jane Cameron Archive Committee organizes an exhibition of Jane's tapestries at Calgary's Devonian Gardens Art Gallery in downtown TD Square. Called *A Remembrance of a Life in Art: Jane Cameron Opening the Heart to Creativity*, the exhibition coincided with [National Down Syndrome Awareness Week](#).

1998

The Jane Cameron Archive Committee is formed to share, celebrate, and enable the study of Jane's artworks.

Darlene Murphy

Darlene Murphy (1955-2017) was a passionate and dedicated supporter of the In-Definite Arts Society for over 36 years, and served as Executive Director from 2003 to 2017. Her work enabled artists living with disabilities to experience a fuller, richer life by participating in programs that fostered self-expression, communication, and independence.

Darlene was a strong advocate for inclusion in mainstream arts, and worked tirelessly to transform In-Definite Arts's Fairview facility into a fully-functioning and accessible multimedia studio—giving artists living with disabilities the right spaces and stages to create exceptional works.



Darlene Murphy, former Executive Director of Indefinite Arts Centre. Photo: NaAC Archives.

NaAC artist Adeel Sadiq holding artwork created at home from NaAC's artist kits.

2008

IDAS moves to its current location at 8038 Fairmount Drive SE, Calgary.

2010

IDAS offers a four-week long residency in new media. Led by visual artist Sami Ladner-Zech, member artists participate in block-printing workshops and learn how to construct plates, apply ink, and work the press. Printmaking becomes a regular media option in the classroom.

2016

IDAS artists send work to an international juried competition for artists with disabilities in Long Beach, California called CORE 12: *Defining Ourselves*.

2009

Artistic Expressions brings its programming back to In-Definite Arts. In-Definite Arts continues to provide programming to artists living with developmental disabilities through PDD four days per week.

Eleven artists from In-Definite Arts participate in a city-wide collaborative art project that explores what is important in the lives of people with developmental disabilities. The first of its kind in Calgary, the collaboration sparks open dialogue about how people with disabilities can engage meaningfully in their community.

2013

Led by renowned artist—and board member—Jeff de Boer, 24 artists with developmental disabilities engage in a large-scale public art project called *A Meaningful Life* which is installed at the Legislative Assembly of Alberta.

JANE CAMERON

Sewing Seeds of Change



Jane Cameron, former Indefinite Arts Centre artist.
Photo: NaAC Archives.

Jane Cameron (1949-2000) was an exemplary fibre artist and one of the National accessArts Centre's most influential figures.

Diagnosed with Down Syndrome in 1949, Jane's parents were told that her life would amount to little, but through thoughtful education and exposure to many opportunities, Jane's talents flourished. Thanks to an active practice at home and at the In-Definite Arts Society, Jane's paintings, drawings, and textiles were sought out and commissioned by many collectors, including the Office of the Prime Minister.

Her legacy continues to challenge the way we see and support artwork by artists living with disabilities.

In 1980, Jane was the first artist with a developmental disability to attend IDAS. Up until that point, the organization had exclusively supported people living with physical disabilities.

"She made marvelous tapestries," recalls Gene Neel, first Executive Director of the In-Definite Arts Society. "Working with Jane helped us realize we could support people with intellectual disabilities as well as physical disabilities." But bringing the two together under one roof was a radical idea at the time, adds Gene. "We were going against the advice of the specialists in the industry, but we did it anyway—and we did it successfully."

From that time on, IDAS continued to welcome artists with developmental disabilities.

Following her death in 2000, IDAS became the custodian of Jane's original tapestries; each piece a glowing testament to her powerful imagination, love of colour, and vision of life. This moment sparked another significant shift for the organization.

"We realized we should showcase our artists' best work, rather than trying to sell their worst in our storefront," says Jeff de Boer, current Board Chair and professional artist. Jeff has been working or volunteering with the organization since 1985 and recalls many of the works in the store fondly. "Our artists would work on their projects and if they turned out well, take them home to their family or friends. If they were disasters and they turned out really bad, they would put them in the store...I remember the look on people's faces as they shopped these failed experiments," he chuckles.

With the acquisition of Jane's works, IDAS was inspired to transform its storefront into a gallery space, and In-Definite Arts from a craft studio to an arts organization.

Today, Jane's artworks continue to inspire a new generation of artists living with disabilities. Together with the Jane Cameron Archive and the Canadian Down Syndrome Society, the In-Definite Arts Society—now the National access Arts Centre—presented an award each year to a person with Down Syndrome who displayed expertise in the visual arts.



Artwork created by NaAC artist Meg Ohsada. Photo: Emily Exxon.
Meg Ohsada, *Three Sisters* (2017), Felted Wool, 20 x 30.



NaAC Artist Meg Ohsada at the very first LAUNCHPAD event. Photo: Emily Exxon.



NaAC artist Christine Millson at the NaAC studio.



NaAC President and CEO JS Ryu alongside NaAC artist Susie Meredith and her parents at LAUNCHPAD 2.0. Photo: Joanna Jensen.

OUR HISTORY

2017 - 2018

2017

Executive Director Darlene Murphy passes away unexpectedly. The IDAS Board appoints Jung-Suk (JS) Ryu as its first CEO.

The In-Definite Arts Society becomes Indefinite Arts Centre, which reveals its new visual identity and website alongside a new vision, mission, and strategic plan.

Indefinite Arts Centre has a feature exhibition in *Art from the Unknown*, hosted by the former premier of Alberta, Rachel Notley, at the Government of Alberta's McDougall Centre.

The Jane Cameron Archive Committee partners with the Glenbow Museum and curator Mary-Beth Laviolette to present an exhibition of Jane's art in the context of Western Canadian textiles.

Guest artist James Boychuk-Hunter leads a residency on the art of printmaking using intaglio, block-printing, and monotype techniques.

Indefinite Arts Centre becomes a vocal advocate for Albertans with disabilities following inappropriate use of the word "retarded" by a prominent Albertan politician.

Jung-Suk (JS) Ryu

JS Ryu is the first President and CEO of the National accessArts Centre. He is a passionate advocate for the inclusion of artists with disabilities in mainstream contemporary arts. Under his leadership, the NaAC has grown to become Canada's largest disability arts organization, almost doubling in size and actively showcasing Canadian artists with disabilities on the global stage.

A Salzburg Global Fellow and former lobbyist for the Canadian National Institute for the Blind and the Banff Centre, JS is using his expertise in public affairs to put the NaAC on the global stage. In recent years, he has spoken on the importance of diversity and inclusion in the arts at the Canadian Arts Summit, the Senate Special Committee on the Charitable Sector in Ottawa, and the Asia Cultural Institute's Forum for Inclusive Art Education in Gwangju, South Korea.



President and CEO JS Ryu at LAUNCHPAD 2.0 with wife and son. Photo: Joanna Jensen.

"We're going to constantly push the boundaries of what's possible when it comes to providing supports and programs for our artist community – because they deserve nothing less," says JS.

In 2021, JS will lead the organization into its new home, with a vision to create North America's first multidisciplinary arts training and presentation venue for artists with disabilities.

2018

Indefinite Arts Centre moves to a temporary home at the Shane Homes YMCA following the collapse of the Fairview Arena roof. The Centre returns to its location at 8038 Fairmount Drive SE five months later.

Indefinite Arts Centre transforms its basement gallery space into a functioning studio for large-scale projects and photography called the Darlene Murphy Photo Documentation Suite.

The Centre receives a supplemental grant from the Government of Alberta's Community and Social Services to launch Friday programming for the first time in more than a decade.

The Centre launches the first community program conceived by an attending artist: *Art in the Dark*, a workshop that highlights the dynamics of approaching visual arts with vision loss.

A seven-week Craft Beer Night workshop series introduces participants to Calgary-based Dandy Brewing Company's brewing process and products while learning basic ceramic techniques to create a one of a kind beer stein.

Indefinite Arts Centre engages in its first large-scale public art project in partnership with the City of Calgary. [Artists paint over a dozen utility boxes](#) in several communities in southeast Calgary under the mentorship of prominent Calgary artist Andrew Tarrant.

More than 30 artists participate in their first [residency experience at the Leighton Art Centre in Millarville](#) thanks to funding from the Rozsa Foundation. An exhibition of their work called *Pushing Boundaries* welcomes close to 100 guests on opening day.

Indefinite Arts Centre releases its first art book publication, *Volume 1*, thanks to funding from the Calgary Art Development Authority's ArtShare program.

Indefinite Arts Centre becomes one of the first Canadian disability arts organizations to tour internationally with *Albertan Perspectives*. The tour [opens in Hong Kong at the Alberta Hong Kong Office](#) with support from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, Canada Council for the Arts, and CIBC.

Albertan Perspectives tours to the National Disability Art and Culture Centre in Seoul, South Korea. Canadian Ambassador Eric Walsh officially opens the show.

“

We're going to constantly push the boundaries of what's possible when it comes to providing supports and programs for our artist community – because they deserve nothing less.

– JS RYU, PRESIDENT AND
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

”

OUR HISTORY

2019 - 2020

2019

Artists partner with Julia Kansas, founder of Five Art & Merchandise (5AM)—a pop up art space located in Calgary—to adapt their works to various merchandise materials such as hoodies, lapel pins, and mugs—items which are later sold at Market Collective in the city's BMO Centre.

Indefinite Arts Centre artists are given opportunities to lead child, youth, and adult community programming.

Artists participate in a [music visualization residency at the National Music Centre \(NMC\)](#) in Calgary. Their works are exhibited at Studio Bell thanks to support from the NMC and Scotiabank.

Artists partner once again with the City of Calgary to complete a public art installation at Devonian Gardens in downtown Calgary. Through this project, more than \$12,000 in commission cheques are issued to participating artists.

Indefinite Arts Centre is selected as [the first Canadian arts organization to be installed at the Dubai International Airport](#). Fourteen artists showcase their work alongside those of sister organization Mawaheb to more than 6.8 million viewers.

Indefinite Arts Centre exhibits in Dubai's historic district. Consul General Marcy Grossman, British Consul General Andrew Jackson, as well as senior dignitaries representing Dubai and the United Arab Emirates open the show.

Indefinite Arts Centre represents Canada at a global disability arts symposium at the invitation of the British Council called *Trazando Posibilidades or Tracing Possibilities* in Guadalajara, Mexico. Artists Andrew Harding, Susie Meredith, and Brad McCaull participate in this symposium. Their works are also installed as part of an exhibition at Centro Cultural Constitucion, the largest cultural centre in the region of Jalisco.

Thanks to generous support from the Canada Council for the Arts, Indefinite Arts Centre welcomes Pixel Kim, an internationally-acclaimed artist living with Down Syndrome, to his first Canadian tour.

Indefinite Arts Centre CEO JS Ryu is invited to speak to the Senate Special Committee on the Charitable Sector in Ottawa.

The Indefinite Arts Centre opens its show Connections at the Dubai International Airport.
Photo: NaAC Files.





A Momo Movement dancer on stage for *The Mind Palace* production. Photo: Tim Nguyen.

2020

The City of Calgary shares its plans to demolish Indefinite Arts's current facility at 8038 Fairmount Drive SE given the state of disrepair following the roof collapse. Indefinite Arts Centre begins to advocate for a multidisciplinary, accessible arts hub in Calgary.

Indefinite Arts Centre becomes [National accessArts Centre \(NaAC\)](#). The NaAC unveils a new visual identity and website, alongside a new vision, mission, and five-year strategic plan.

The World Health Organization declares Coronavirus (COVID-19) a global pandemic. Governments respond swiftly with health and safety measures. Arts organizations across Canada are forced to close their doors. The NaAC pivots quickly with a new suite of programs that includes daily online studio sessions, instructional guides and videos. The NaAC team of staff and volunteers delivers almost 3,000 at-home artist supply kits to support its community of artists during the lockdown.

Seeing the value of digital program delivery, the NaAC commits to a hybrid delivery model with digital elements that allow for recording, live streaming, and immersive learning experiences for artists. [2021-22 arts](#)

[programming includes both in-person and online studio sessions and workshops.](#)

The NaAC welcomes sister organizations Artistic Expressions and Momo Movement (a celebrated mixed ability dance company) into its fold. The mergers allow the NaAC to provide pan-disability, multidisciplinary arts programming.

The NaAC acquires its first professional performance ensemble as a result of the merger with Momo Movement.

The Global Affairs Visual Art Collection acquires 13 works by NaAC artists to be displayed in Canada's embassies and official residences. They become the first artists with a disability to have works acquired by the Visual Art Collection, a key tool in Canada's cultural diplomacy efforts.

More than 80 artists occupied the newly renovated Contemporary Calgary venue, the former site of the city's planetarium, for a four-week residency called Collider. Throughout the residency, the artists explored the idea of place within an artist context, engaging in conversations about belonging, community, legacy, and residual energy.

OUR HISTORY

2021 - ONWARD



Renderings of new National accessArts Centre building.

2021

[The City of Calgary commits \\$2.5M towards the revitalization of the former Scouts Canada building](#) located on 2140 Brownsea Drive NW. The funds will be invested in building and interior upgrades as the first phase of an ambitious capital plan to build North America's first multidisciplinary, accessible arts hub—a new home for the NaAC.

The NaAC launches a curatorial mentorship program. *Midnight in Space*, curated by Michelle Bennie, features works by 17 artists.

Five artists from the NaAC participate in Artist Connect with BEING Studio and join a cohort made of five Canadian sister organizations to explore what their artistic practices look like in 2021. The artists participate in workshops from grant writing to internet safety.



Jung Suk Ryu, CEO of the National Access Arts Centre in Calgary, says the opportunities and support the organization offers to create art by people with disabilities can be a draw to bring families to Calgary. [@naacnyc](#)

Disability arts organization looks to rebranding for national presence

NaAC has already raised profile with groundbreaking Dubai installation

JASON HERRING

A long-standing community arts centre for Calgaryans with disabilities is hoping a name-change announcement is as nationally renowned organization. The Inclusive Arts Centre is re-branding to become the National Access Arts Centre (NaAC), said Jung Suk Ryu, CEO of the centre. "It was the country's largest and most well-known disability arts organization," Ryu said. "We know that this is the next, most gradual step for our organization to take our ground as a national organization, with the hope that we can then inspire and be a resource for communities of Ca-

nadians with disabilities all across this country." Disability arts organizations cater to individuals with physical and developmental disabilities, providing opportunities and resources to learn and create art. The NaAC receives funding through the province, as well as fundraising and other grants. Ryu said the centre has already been involved with initiatives on a national and international scale. Last year, it became the first disability arts organization to have an installation at the Dubai International Airport, the world's busiest, and a recent partnership with Global Affairs Canada will bring art created by Calgary artists with dis-

abilities to embassies worldwide. He said the NaAC is about 10 times larger than similar organizations in cities like Toronto and Vancouver, something he said could be a significant draw for Calgary. "The fact that Calgary is now positioned to be this national voice and the national leader in arts programming for people with disabilities, on a scale that is unmatched for any other city in this country is actually a huge win for this city as it continues to explore ways of diversifying our economy," Ryu said. "Calgary is going to be a place like no other Canadian city where it will be a great place to live, work and raise a family if you happen to have some kind of personal relationship with a disability, and I'm really proud of that."

The organization has faced challenges over the past few years, having lost much of its home in 2018 when the roof of the Fairview Arena collapsed. The NaAC continued operating out of the space but was set back after missing out on provincial funding to fund a new space. Ryu said the centre's new home will likely be the old Scouts Canada building off Memorial Drive, though he stressed the deal wasn't finalized. While the space will hopefully bring some stability, it presents new challenges, particularly when it comes to accessibility, Ryu said. "If we were to move into the Scouts building tomorrow, half our clients wouldn't be able to get to the front door," he said. In the meantime, Ryu said COVID-19 has led the centre to explore more virtual programming for marginalized Calgaryans. [@naacnyc](#) Twitter: @jasonherring

Photo of President and CEO JS Ryu in the Calgary Herald.

Onward

The NaAC's new digital platform artJourney is under development by local tech firm Northweather thanks to an extraordinary investment made by the Canada Council for the Arts' Digital Strategy Fund. The initiative—the first of its kind in the world—aims to connect and showcase a global community of talented artists living with disabilities.

The professional performance ensemble will perform the piece *Imaginary Spaces* from *The Mind Palace* at Tangente Danse in Montreal.

Le Chat Noir: Performance, Art and Persona of Le Belle Époque will offer both disabled and non-disabled participants opportunities to explore dance, comedy, costume design, and poster design over a period of 12 weeks.

The NaAC will host its first book launch, celebrating artist publications by Adeel Sadiq and David Oppong as well as works created by Nura Ali during her Belonging in Literary Arts residency.

The NaAC will participate in a global community art project that responds to the epic Sufi poem, *The Conference of the Birds*. This 4,500-line poem follows the journey of an assembly of birds through seven valleys to enlightenment during a time of existential crisis. Five artists will travel the valleys and explore the parallels with their own journeys through

COVID-19 through an interdisciplinary theatre project. The final project will be presented virtually and, if appropriate, to a live audience in Calgary.

NaAC artists will participate in [the Sound Col.LAB project](#), funded by the Canada Council for the Arts and presented in partnership with Xenia Concerts. Under the mentorship of the award-winning Rolston String Quartet, they explore the realms of sound, collaboration, and composition.

Thanks to a new partnership with Osaka's renowned Atelier CORNERS, one NaAC artist will be placed in residence and participate in collaborative workshops and exhibitions throughout Osaka, Japan.

The NaAC will partner with Active Art, a disability arts collective based in Seoul, South Korea, to place one NaAC in residence and co-produce a joint exhibition at the renowned Bongeunsa Temple in Seoul.

The NaAC will present *My Imagination is So Many Things* at the Prince Takamado Gallery located within the Embassy of Canada in Japan. The show brings together works by five Canadian artists with developmental disabilities and traces how the legacy of Jane Cameron (1949-2000) continues to shape and challenge the way we comprehend artwork created by artists with disabilities.

NaAC artist Nicholas Lemke and his support sitting and painting in the NaAC Studio.



“ We’ve demonstrated what is possible when we provide world-class platforms for artists living with disabilities. Whether it’s our increasing emphasis on connecting our artists with income generating opportunities through their creativity, or presenting their works to overseas markets and shining a light on art and accessibility in Canada, we have a remarkable legacy to build upon. ”

— JS RYU, PRESIDENT AND
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

OUR HOME

Understanding the Power of Place

Over the years, the National accessArts Centre (NaAC) has seen many shifts that have challenged our understanding of the importance of place. Circumstances beyond our control have caused us to keep moving, both literally and figuratively, and our artists have worked in a warehouse, a two-room studio, a retrofitted community centre, and now (due to COVID-19), in their own homes. Through it all, we’ve come to realize it’s the people that make a place great. The resiliency of our artists inspires us to keep fighting for their place, both at home in the city of Calgary and on stages and in shows around the world.

Work is now underway on [our new home in Calgary, located at 2140 Brownsea Drive NW](#), with development plans that envision a world-class, completely accessible, arts training and presentation venue. We look forward to building an arts hub that will attract the attention of arts enthusiasts, community members, tourists, and of course, our artists and their families. More than that, we eagerly anticipate moving beyond the physical space to providing leadership and support to a national community of artists with disabilities. Our work will no longer be limited to the four walls of our facility.

The NaAC remains a place—a home—for artists to come together and create works of art, which is in and of itself a noble mission that will always be at the heart of our organization. Whether online or in our new home, in Canada or around the world, our programs will continue to bring the most vulnerable and marginalized in our communities together through the power of art.



OUR SUPPORTERS

Recognizing the Donors and Volunteers That Support the NaAC

Today, the National accessArts Centre (NaAC) receives financial support from a variety of different sources, with core operational funding from the Government of Alberta through the Ministry of Community and Social Services, the Calgary Arts Development Authority, and the Alberta Foundation for the Arts. In addition, the Centre receives support through its long-term lease arrangement with the City of Calgary.

“I’m so grateful that the National accessArts Centre is always looking for new ways to promote and encourage us as artists.”

— MEG OHSADA

CONTACT US



@accessArtsCA

403.253.3174

INFO@ACCESSARTS.CA

ACCESSARTS.CA

NATIONAL
accessARTS
CENTRE

National accessArts Centre acknowledges the
following operational partners:

