

Connect. Collaborate. Engage.



VA The Visual Arts Centre of Clarington
C 2024-2029 Strategic Plan

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Participatory Performance, Emily DiCarlo "We need to speak in spores," Visual Arts Centre of Clarington, 2022.



Land Acknowledgement

The Visual Arts Centre of Clarington (VAC) is situated on the treaty lands of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation. This has also been the traditional territories of the Michi Saagiiig Nishnaabeg, the signatory communities of the Williams Treaties, and other members of the broader Indigenous and Métis community. This territory is subject to the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe, and allied confederacies to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. We are privileged to continue collaborating in this space—to work, teach, listen, and learn.

Our acknowledgments are an action call to continue recognizing our commitments to each other as treaty partners across Mishiike Minisi. We witness settler institutions and systems of white supremacy continually challenge these agreements. We are responsible for ensuring that these values live and thrive throughout our organization as we work to deconstruct systemic inequities, enact the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's 94 Calls to Action, and platform Indigenous voices within our community.

Participatory Performance, Emily DiCarlo "We need to speak In spores," Visual Arts Centre of Clarington, 2022.



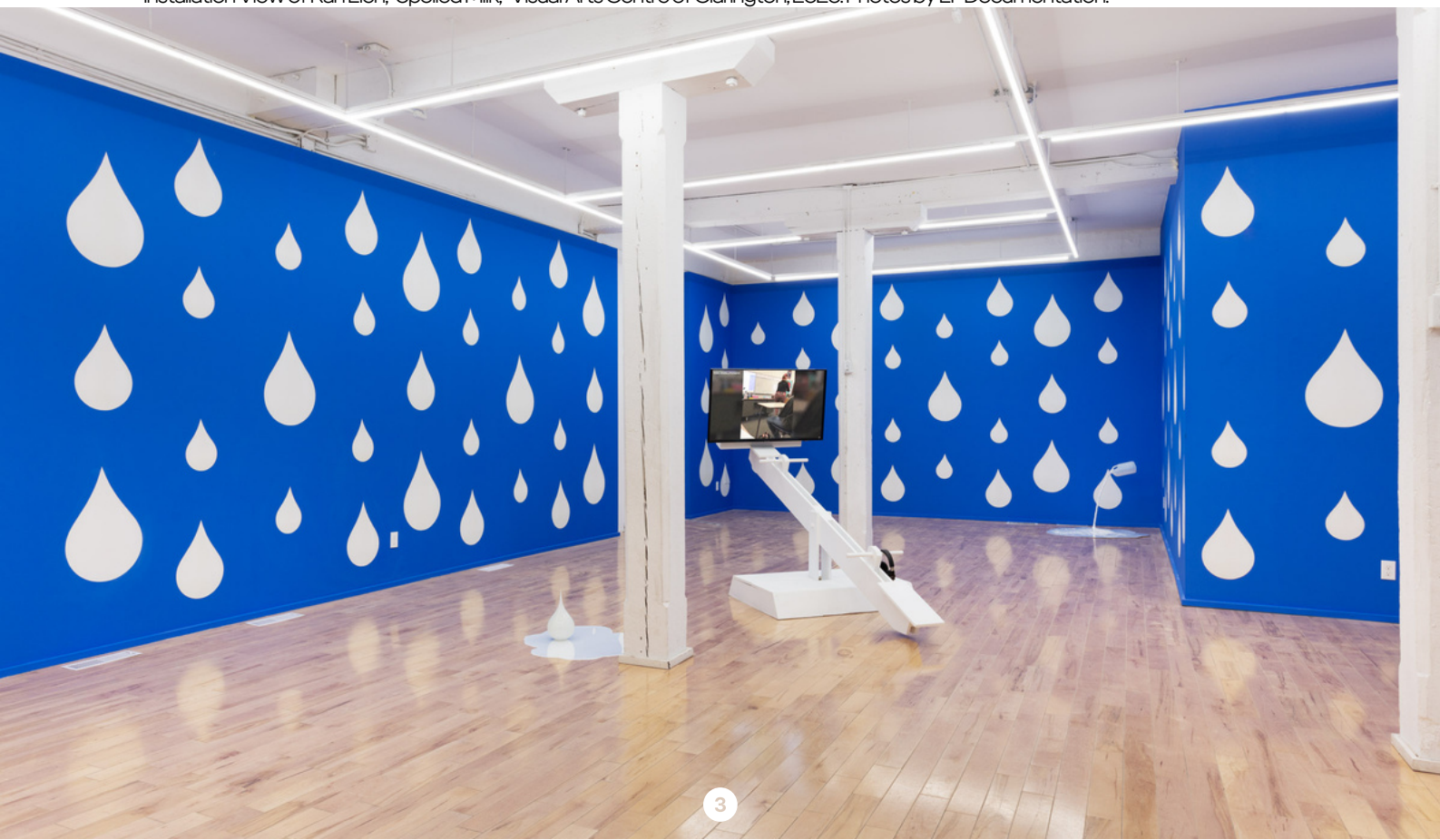
Introduction

The VAC has entered a transformative phase, calling to reevaluate its strategic trajectory from 2024 to 2029. This plan outlines the VAC's fresh vision, mission, values, and strategic pathways for the next five years. Our collaborative plan was cultivated by staff, the Board of Directors, members, volunteers, artists, instructors, partners, and the Clarington community to inform a common understanding of the organization's direction.

The VAC thrives as a gathering space for artists and community members, alongside its adaptability to change. The preceding strategic plan, spanning from 2019 to 2023, outlined a commitment to inclusion and diversity through connectivity and creativity. The revitalized strategic plan propels the VAC toward nurturing connection, collaboration, and engagement through art.

The global COVID-19 pandemic created far-reaching impacts on cultural institutions. It renewed the calls to action addressing social inequities and climate change, further underscoring the growing need for change within our community. These cumulative challenges prompted the VAC's new vision and refined our priorities and objectives. The appointment of a new Curator in March 2020 responded to the VAC's transformations and marked a pivotal point in our programming.

Installation View of Rah Eleh, "Spoiled Milk," Visual Arts Centre of Clarington, 2023. Photos by LF Documentation.



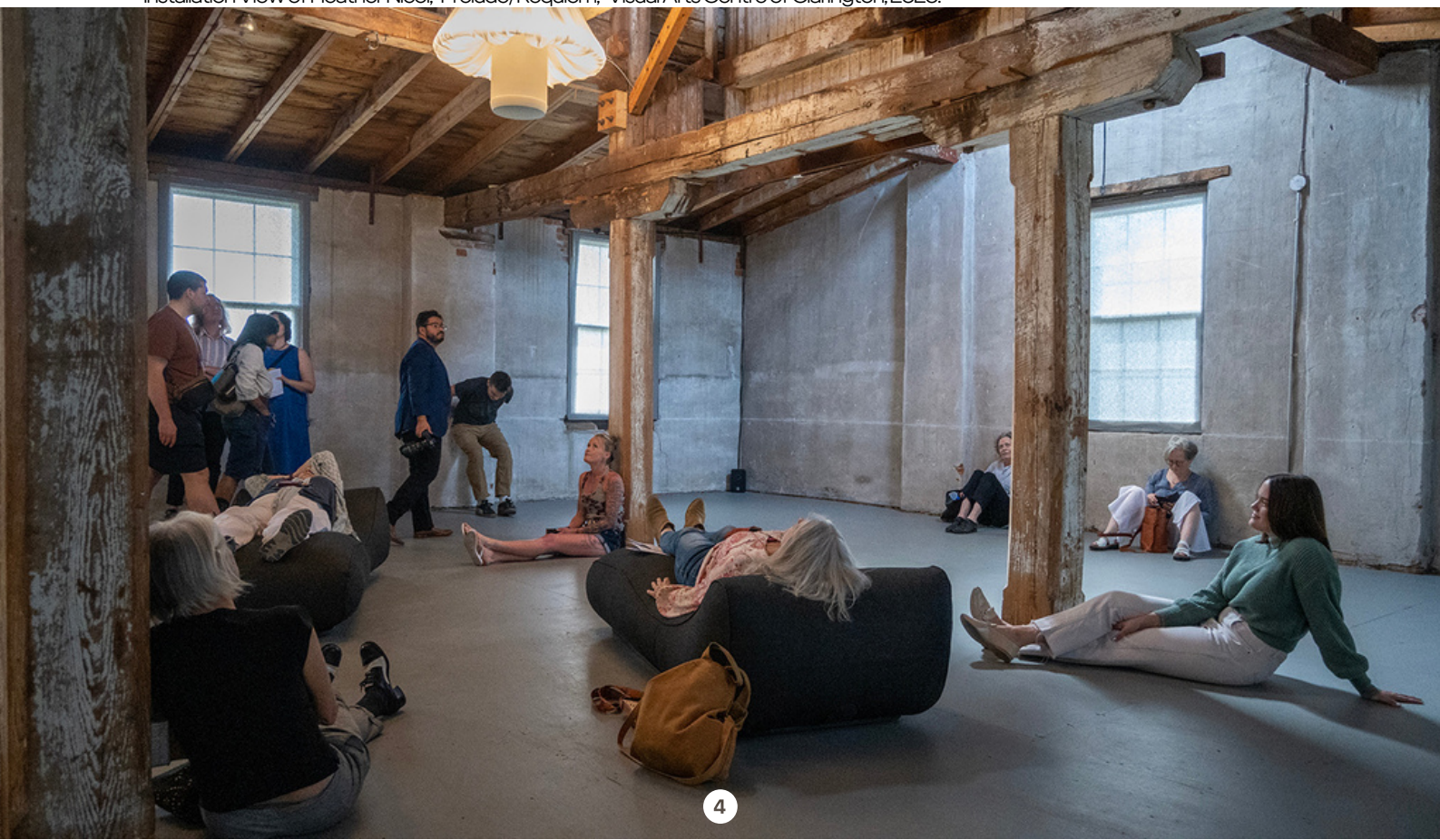
Vision

The VAC prioritizes artistic production and supporting Canadian artists through commissioning new work. Our exhibition and educational programming aim to be wholly inclusive and interdisciplinary, encouraging connection, collaboration and engagement with diverse communities representing varied histories, experiences, and perspectives.

Mission

The VAC centers collaboration to deliver dynamic and inspiring contemporary art exhibitions and educational programs within an environment that champions equity and inclusion.

Installation View of Heather Nicol, "Prelude/Requiem," Visual Arts Centre of Clarington, 2023.



Values

The VAC's values shape its identity and work:

Culture of Care: We are committed to prioritizing the wellness of our community. Compassion and respect form the bedrock of our multi-level relationships.

Artist-Centred, Interdisciplinary and Process-Oriented: We are committed to nurturing artists' growth within an environment conducive to creativity, supporting their art-making processes, commissioning new artwork, and engaging in research and site-specific collaborations. The VAC provides opportunities for the community to explore and innovate through engaged participation in these programs.

Equity, Inclusion and Access: We are committed to ensuring the VAC is a safe, inclusive, and accessible space for all, especially for historically under-recognized communities that face systemic discrimination and oppression, including but not limited to anti-black racism, ableism, homophobia, and transphobia. We will apply equity, accessibility, and anti-racist lenses in all our work and commit to Indigenous Truth and Reconciliation as we ensure that art is accessible to a diverse range of people within and beyond the gallery's walls.

Collaborative Relationship Building: We are committed to building reciprocal, caring, and generous relationships with everyone we work with. Collaboration is embraced as a platform for innovative partnerships and community-building.

Transparent and Accountable: We acknowledge errors, encourage criticism, and nurture an environment of learning, growth and change. The VAC is adaptable while also being fiscally and organizationally responsible and sustainable. We embrace experimentation while ensuring the institutional structure is stable and transparent.

Kids Classes in Painting Studio

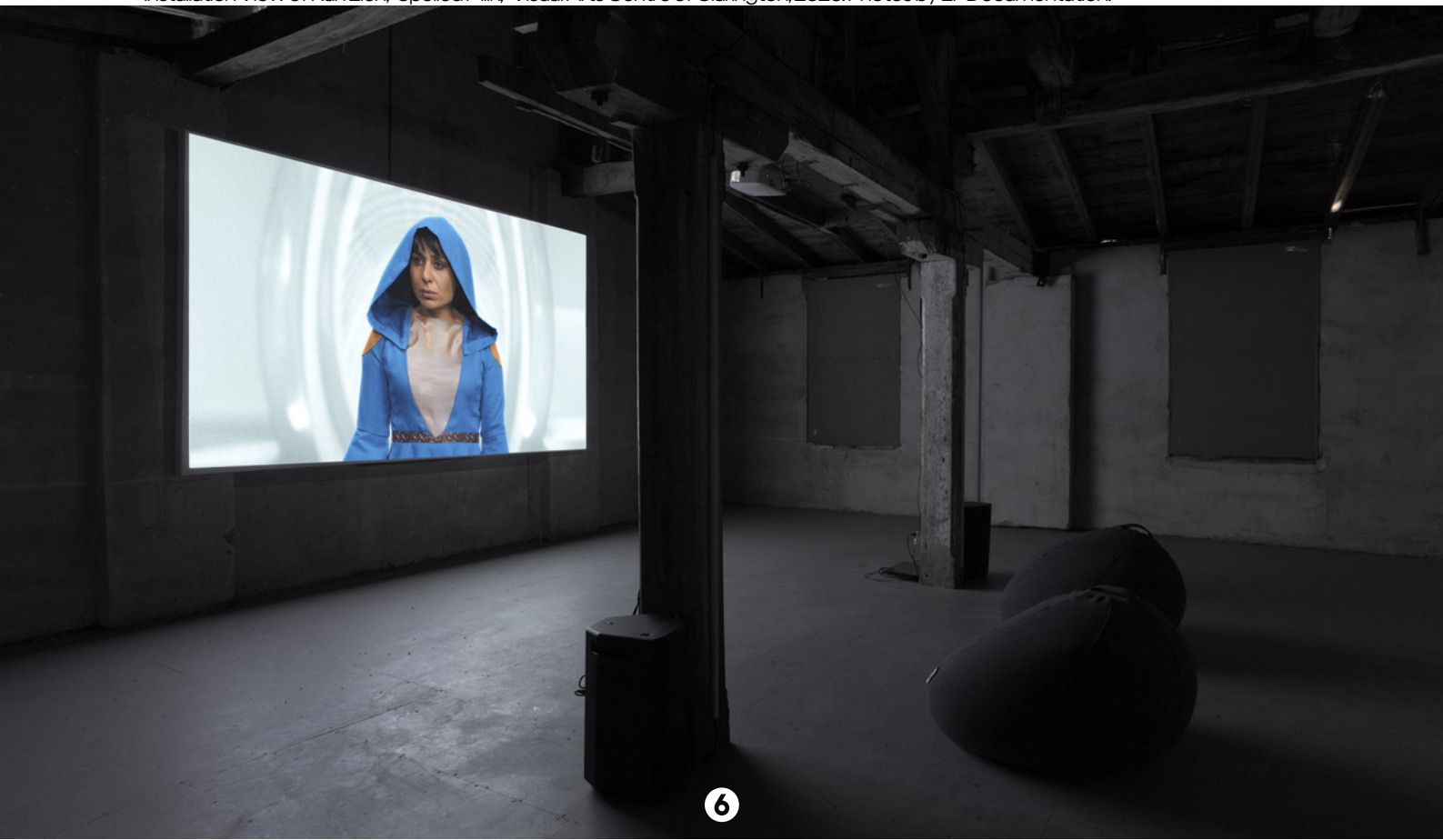


Priority 1: Build Equity and Access

This priority centers on embedding equitable, inclusive, and anti-racist practices into every aspect of VAC's operation, promoting a safe and inclusive space for all individuals, especially those from historically under-recognized communities that face systemic discrimination and oppression.

- Apply an anti-oppressive and anti-racist lens to our work to build a shared understanding of equitable practices.
- Prioritize equity and ensure the development of programs that reflect Clarington's diversity and growth.
- Establish the VAC as an inclusive and accessible space for diverse audiences, artists, staff, and stakeholders.
- Commit to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action in our organizational structure, programs, and exhibitions.

Installation View of Rah Eleh, "Spoiled Milk," Visual Arts Centre of Clarington, 2023. Photos by LF Documentation.



Priority 2: Amplify Artist-Centred Experiences

Exhibition programs lie at the heart of the VAC's initiatives. Our priority is to present a range of exceptional, accessible and innovative artistic programs focusing on diverse, artist-centred, and interdisciplinary experiences that engage various perspectives. This focus extends to digital platforms to amplify VAC's reach.

- Strive for diverse perspectives in our programming by continuing critical discourse, expanding exhibition models, and prioritizing new commissions.
- Foster an artist-centred approach to exhibitions and programs, setting the VAC apart by placing audience relationships at its core.
- Expand accessible and engaging learning opportunities on-site and online by enhancing our virtual programming platforms.
- Collaborate with the arts and culture sector in Clarington, Durham Region, and beyond to empower auxiliary exhibition opportunities for local artists.

Installation View of Maria Simmons "Anoxic Memory," Visual Arts Centre of Clarington, 2023. Photos by LF Documentation.

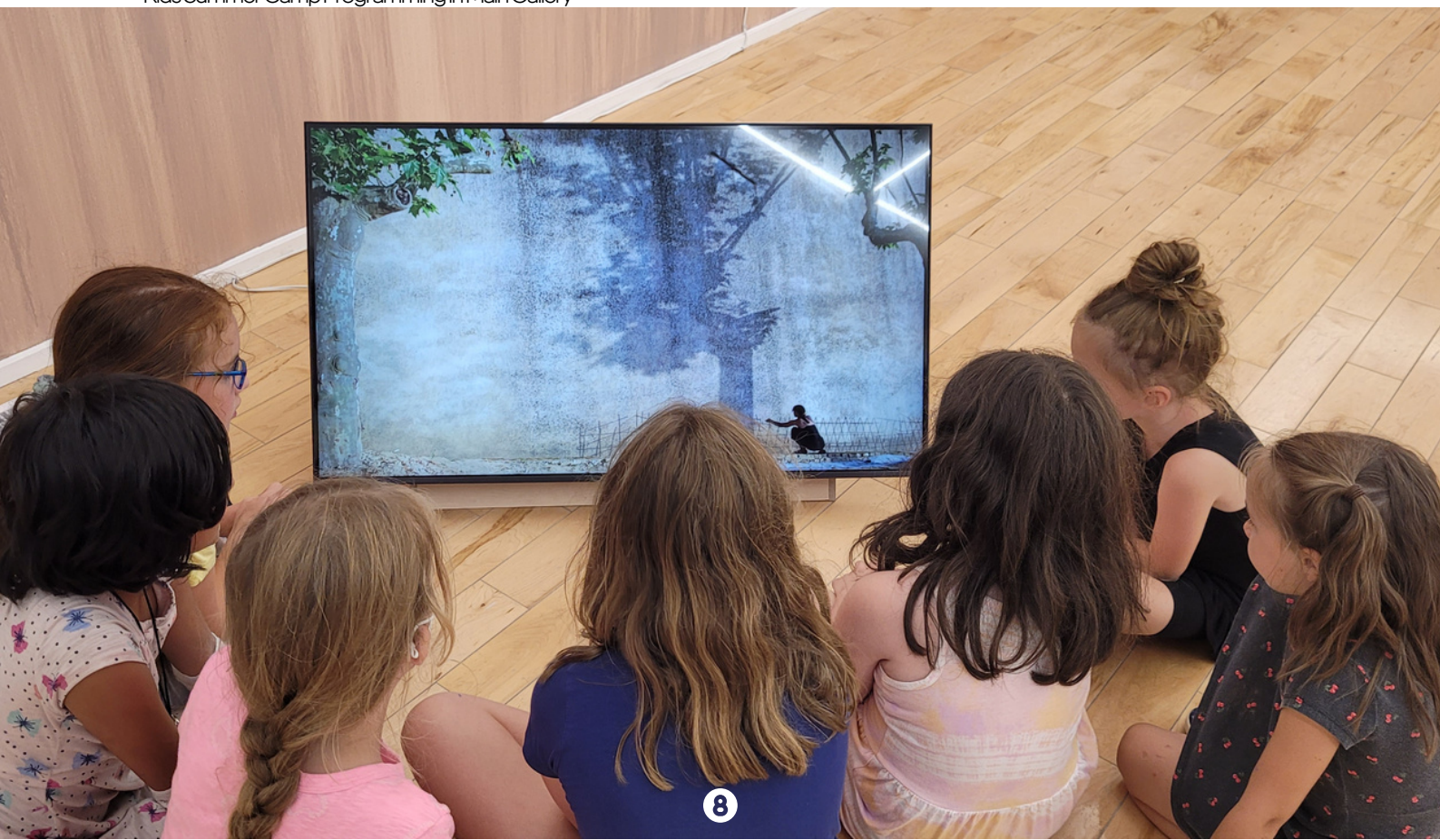


Priority 3: Inspire Curiosity and New Ways of Seeing

The VAC aims to increase its presence and relevance through strategic marketing and communications, amplifying the stories of artists, partners, and community members to broaden its audience base.

- Inspire curiosity by expanding our programs to enhance the VAC's storytelling through digital strategies to reach broad audiences.
- Thoughtfully consider and promote the VAC's role and presence throughout Clarington.
- Continue to develop robust digital tools, including our website, social media accounts, and digital database, to reach and target a range of audiences.
- Elevate our artist and audience perspectives through communications, cross-promotion, and expanded partnership networks.

Kids Summer Camp Programming in Main Gallery

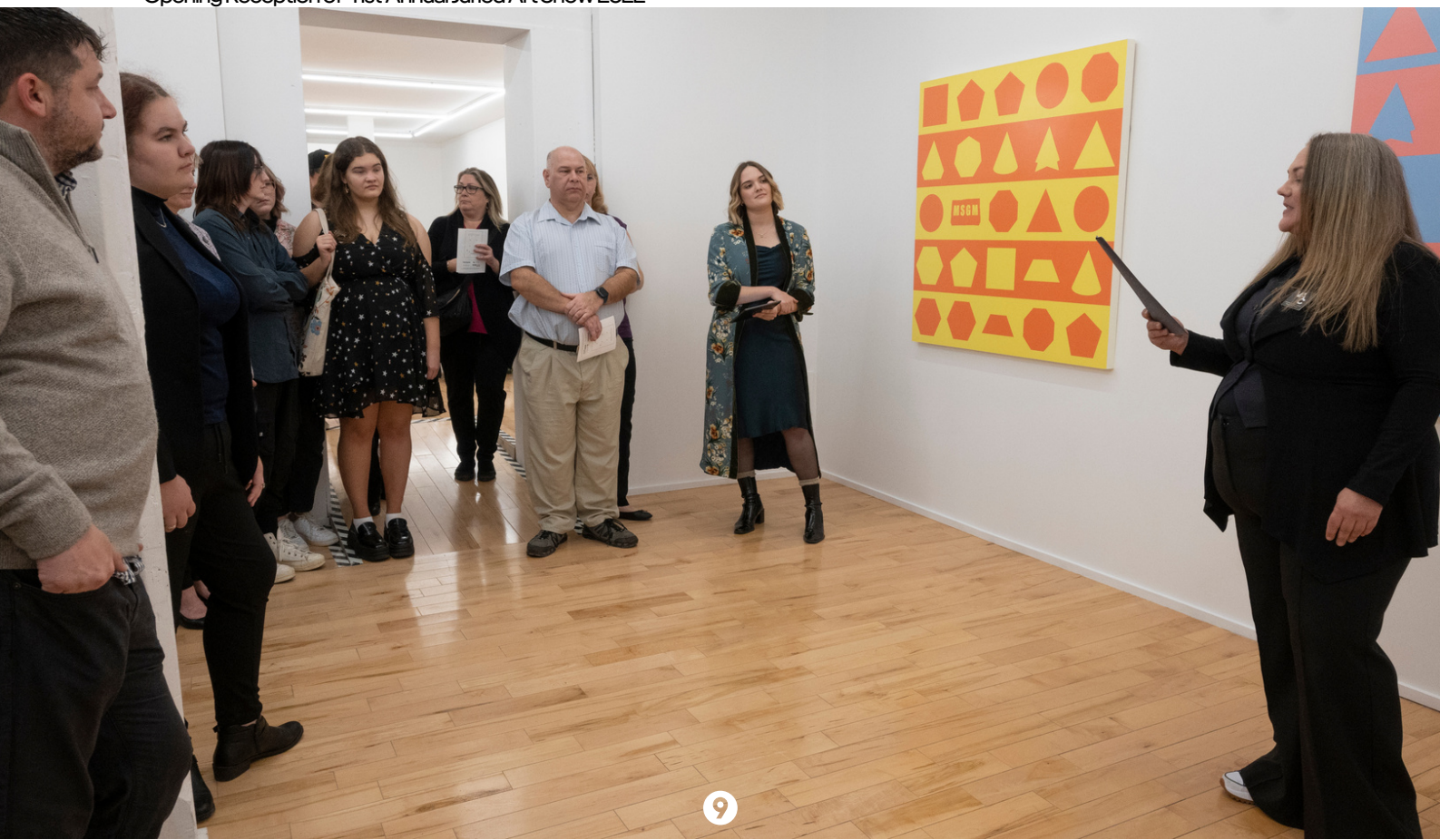


Priority 4: Empower Our Community

The VAC's culture emphasizes resilience, transparency, and responsibility. A collaborative internal culture, strategic Board engagement, visitor experience enhancements, and careful facility planning are vital aspects of this priority.

- Continue to build a supportive, safe and respectful staff culture.
- Maximize opportunities for the Board of Directors to fulfill their roles as ambassadors through strategic fundraising and community advocacy.
- Continue to excel at offering a people-centred visitor experience.
- Strategically evaluate the VAC's future facility requirements to deconstruct accessibility barriers and improve the gallery spaces for all community gatherings.
- Develop a plan to activate the VAC's outdoor spaces through creative programming opportunities.

Opening Reception of 41st Annual Juried Art Show 2022



Priority 5: Engineer Sustainable Financial Futures

Funding is essential to realizing the VAC's vision. This priority deepens fundraising efforts and revenue streams, enhances relationships with supporters, expands memberships, and creates sustainable income sources.

- Build a comprehensive multi-year fundraising plan to expand the VAC's circle of support.
- Expand prospects by leveraging connections and relationships with key constituencies—government, Board, current donors, members, and sponsors.
- Achieve and maintain increases in membership.
- Grow earned-revenue opportunities.
- Align organizational ambitions with financial and human resources.

Installation View of Adam Basanta, "Every Beloved Object," Visual Arts Centre of Clarington, 2023. Photos by LFD Documentation



Measuring Impact

Budget and Metric Development:

- a. The VAC will develop metrics for the annual goals and actions that align for that year.
- b. This will be aligned with the VAC's development of the yearly budget for consistency and reporting purposes.
- c. Staff will gather feedback routinely from members, volunteers, artists, instructors, partners, and the Clarington community to inform goals and initiatives.

Annual Reporting:

- a. Annual reporting on the progress of goals and actions should take place to ensure alignment with the annual budget.
- b. The Board of Directors will review the plan annually to assess the continued relevance of the framework based on activities to date and the next steps.
- c. An annual report will be created and presented at the annual members' meeting.

Installation View of Eve Tagny and Emii Alrai, "Sutures," Visual Arts Centre of Clarington, 2022. Photos by LF Documentation





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