

en piste

REGROUPEMENT NATIONAL DES ARTS DU CIRQUE
NATIONAL CIRCUS ARTS ALLIANCE



AGM—FORUM 2022
NEW REALITIES, NEW PARADIGMS

Participant's Workbook

April 11, 2022

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Cover photo credit: The 7 Fingers & TOHU, Brume show, photo by JFSAVARIA

COORDINATES AND VIRTUAL LINK TO THE EVENT

Location: Le Monastère, located at 1439 Sainte-Catherine Street W, Montreal, QC
Entrance at the corner of Bishop and Sainte-Catherine streets.

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88110850502?pwd=ZUtkRCs0WXJjQWVtRkNoakV3UzNEUT09>

Secret code : cirque

ID de réunion : 881 1085 0502

PROGRAM OF THE DAY

8:30 a.m. to 9 a.m.: Participants arrival

9 a.m.: Annual General Meeting

10:15 am: Break

10:30 a.m.: Opening of the Forum and various presentations

11:45 a.m.: Members speak

12:30 pm: Networking lunch

1:30 to 4:00 p.m.: Working group sessions

4:00 to 5:00 p.m.: Plenary session

5:00 p.m.: 5@Cirque to celebrate En Piste's 25 year-anniversary

AGENDA OF THE AGM

1. Call to order
2. Appointment of a chairperson
3. Appointment of a secretary
4. Declaration of quorum
5. Acceptance of visitors
6. Reading and adoption of the agenda
7. Reading and approval of the minutes from the annual general meeting held on April 8, 2021
8. Presentation of the annual report for the fiscal year 2021 and the outlook for 2022
9. Presentation of the audited financial statements for the fiscal year 2021
10. Appointment of an accounting firm for the fiscal year 2021
11. Presentation of the 2021-2022 Board of Directors following the election results
12. Other business
13. Adjournment

MENU

A sandwich box, snacks, beverages and appetizers will be offered by En Piste to those present at the event.

BREAKFAST

Self-serve coffee, tea and snacks

LUNCH

Choice of one of the following 3 box lunches:

- Sandwich - Classic Roast Beef
- Sandwich - Vietnamese Chicken
- Sandwich - Roasted Tofu with lemon and fresh herbs

(Accompanied by a Mediterranean Orzo Salad)

COCKTAIL

An alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverage will be offered to guests to toast the 25th anniversary of En Piste!

Bites will be offered during the 5@Cirque:

- Salmon Gravlax with Quebec Gin and Beetroot, Dill-infused Cream Cheese and Pumpernickel Bread Crouton
- Jumbo shrimp sautéed with tandoori spices and sprinkled with coconut
- Duck confit rolls with caramelized onions and orange coulis
- Skewered watermelon with Baladi cheese and tarragon balsamic reduction (vegetarian)
- Smoked carrot bruschetta with fresh herb pesto on a crouton (Vegan)
- Assorted macaroons

CONSULTATION WORKBOOK

NEW REALITIES, NEW PARADIGMS FORUM

TOWARDS THE SUCCESSFUL AND SUSTAINABLE RECOVERY OF A WORLD-
CLASS INDUSTRY

INTRODUCTION

Reflecting on our recovery and truly bringing the circus to the heart of people's lives: this is our invitation to you at this forum, *New Realities, New Paradigms*.

Through this consultation, we hope to update our collective advocacy strategies and pursue two objectives:

1. Ensure that the circus is a government priority during the post-pandemic recovery period and is recognized as a world-class industry.
2. Have the circus recognized as a mature sector whose ecosystem must be reworked and better supported, given the new situation and its international stature.

It is important to stress that barely one third of companies across all categories have access to financial assistance. Outside of major centres like Montréal and Québec City, there is still much work to be done in Quebec's regions and elsewhere in Canada to develop and support training, creation, dissemination and social circus. The number of specialized circus venues—venues that are designed specifically for the discipline and are properly equipped—can be counted on the fingers of one hand, and some even require additional investments.

A comparative analysis of the past five years (see Appendix) shows the breakdown of grants awarded to the performing arts and illustrates the funding gap between various art forms. Furthermore, the fact that programs are shifting towards practices rather than disciplines not only shows that the circus is poorly understood, but that it is ill-suited and ill-equipped to increase its share of funding.

We are facing a paradox. On the one hand, the community is calling for more financial assistance to support both non-profit and for-profit organizations and is highlighting the inequity and historic imbalance in the way grants are awarded. On the other hand, government agencies claim to receive a small number of funding applications for circus initiatives and to approve a high percentage of applications received compared to other cultural sectors.

In accordance with cultural policies, the general population should be able to access, take part in and contribute to cultural life. These policies should also ensure that circus is accessible at all levels. In addition, many youth, artists and cultural workers currently work in or wish to pursue a career in the circus sector, whether on stage, behind the scenes, as a trainer, in social circus, or in technical, administrative or management positions. They should be able to have confidence in their professional future.

We are very proud of the collective measures obtained by En Piste over the last two years and of the results of our advocacy work:

- Offering paid training programs (PACME) and expanding our individualized training programs (Individualized Training Support and Individualized Career Support programs)
- Introducing a reimbursement assistance program for training expenses
- Protecting circus artists during supervised training sessions in the event of occupational injuries thanks to an agreement between the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST) and the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec (CALQ)
- Creating *Destination cirque*, a program that aims to increase circus arts dissemination in Quebec
- Taking part in the creation residency program administered by RIDEAU
- Obtaining \$21.8 million in assistance from the Quebec government to support the recovery of the circus sector

These outstanding collective achievements and the progress we've made give us hope for the future. However, many of these initiatives are only short term. Additionally, other initiatives, while essential (collective circus promotional campaign, pan-Canadian symposium, individualized training program for Canadian provinces outside of Quebec), have not received government assistance.

This means we will need to do more to overcome recovery-related challenges and continue to develop our community here in Canada. What resources will we need and what should our priorities be?

Reinvesting in culture as we emerge from the pandemic appears to be conducive to supporting our recovery and the expansion of our sector across Canada.

As such, we believe that there is an urgent need for an inter-ministerial action plan, since our sector's position in its own market remains fragile despite its economic prosperity and successes of the last 30 years. According to the most recent survey on the impact of the pandemic, which was conducted by En Piste last fall, revenue fell by an estimated 70% in 2021. In addition, one in two workers is considering leaving the profession.

Given this extremely worrying situation, it is vital for our sector to come together to identify priorities, courses of action and solutions to make a strong comeback. The recovery of the circus arts concerns us all. Consequently, it is important to discuss it among us and with you and agree on how to proceed. We are counting on the strength of our community to make a successful comeback that will propel us to new heights.

FINDINGS

The circus has developed thanks to exportability, its achievements and its economic power. Its development has followed a different path than that of other cultural communities. Generally, a sector establishes itself locally before expanding

internationally. Our development here at home has not followed the same growth trajectory as it has on the international stage, as the findings below demonstrate:

- An underdeveloped ecosystem in Canada to support a multinational corporation, major companies and world-renowned schools
- Underrepresentation of schools, companies, presenters, festivals and artists in government assistance programs
- High training, creation, production, dissemination and touring costs due to the circus's characteristics and risk management
- Unstructured dissemination networks in Canada
- Audiences still have very little access to the circus in Canada and are unaware of its diversity, artists and talents
- Infrastructure needs are growing and awaiting funding

Development challenges and the impact of the pandemic have placed companies and artists in a precarious situation that is increasingly untenable.

APPROACH

This consultation workbook is designed to spark reflection. It begins by outlining facts and principles to guide our reflections. It then identifies a number of themes and issues to take into consideration. Each theme is accompanied by a series of questions to help identify priorities during work sessions and the plenary session.

In addition to our meeting today, other consultations will be held to take equity, inclusion and diversity into account. The findings from the consultation will be shared with the community and with government partners.

NEW REALITIES, NEW PARADIGMS

In May 2017, our sector set out a 10-year vision for the national development of the circus arts in its 2017-2027 sector development plan, *Extending Our Reach*. Given the new realities and new paradigms we are facing, our practices and organizations must be agile and adaptable.

Today's themes for discussion are largely drawn from the sector development plan and from three surveys conducted during the pandemic, which garnered responses from over 400 of you. Thank you to everyone who participated.

Before tackling the themes of the consultation, it is worth taking a brief look at current and future needs that have been documented in these studies, as well as the impact of the pandemic on the sector:

[Needs identified by the sector prior to the pandemic](#)

- Developing and establishing a training pathway
- Launching the performance market in Canada
- Developing and mediating audiences and social circus
- Developing infrastructure for creation, residencies and dissemination
- Promoting and asserting the value of artists and of the sector
- Sharing our heritage
- Structuring the community at the national level by establishing collective services
- Increasing public and private funding

Impact of the pandemic

- Show cancellations and postponements, severely disrupting the performance market for several years and causing most of the circus arts sector's revenue to dry up (70% in 2021)
- Fewer jobs and deteriorating working conditions for artists and cultural workers; one in two respondents is thinking about leaving the sector
- Reorganization of organizations due to working from home and the impact of the pandemic.
- High psychological distress
- High workload and employee turnover
- Shortage of skilled labour (trainers, technicians, etc.)
- Uncertainty about the future and how long it will take the sector to recover
- Logistical challenges and rising costs for existing tours
- Greater presence of circus at the local level due to more creative initiatives, experimentation, residencies, etc.
- New collective initiatives (free access to studios, reimbursement assistant for training expenses, CNESST, circulation support, etc.)
- Accelerated digital transformation, which is having an impact on business and working arrangements.

Recovery-related needs already identified

- Helping schools make up for lost own-source revenue and develop a training pathway
- Increasing operating assistance for all types of companies and welcoming new companies while taking specific creation, production and touring costs into account
- Awarding more grants and helping artists draft applications
- Employment assistance to be competitive and address the labour shortages and scarcity
- Support to resume tours and shows and re-enter international markets
- Training support for artists
- Support for technicians and trainers skills development
- Establishing a social safety net for artists and self-employed workers
- Adjusting SODEC tax credits to be in line with the audiovisual and video game sectors

SEVEN THEMES

To develop an effective action plan to support the sector's recovery and long-term viability, it is important to identify concrete steps to take, prioritize them and determine how much they will cost. It is also crucial to avoid overly long lists.

Proposals should not only take the form of funding applications. They could also include technical support, resources, facilities, equipment, professional development opportunities, research and studies, market exploration, incentives for new partnerships, experimentation with new business models, etc. Let your imaginations run wild!

THEME 1 – CIRCUS AND OUR REACH

It is essential to reinforce, extend and strengthen the presence of circus throughout Canada. What should our priorities be to strengthen the position of the circus arts over the next five years in terms of:

- A. Creation and innovation
- B. Exportation
- C. Dissemination
- D. Mediation and social circus
- E. Infrastructure?

Identify provinces, cities and regions that require special attention. What will we need? How can we take action? Who can we talk to in order to achieve our goals? How can they help us? What should we ask them?

THEME 2 – INITIAL TRAINING AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

In Quebec, a development plan for preparatory and recreational training was drawn up in 2021 and presented to the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications. In your opinion, what actions should be prioritized to implement this plan?

Are there issues or needs that will require us to develop a new training program?

In addition to prioritizing work on this plan, more up-to-date information is needed on professional skill development. En Piste will begin work to update its needs assessment in the coming weeks.

In your opinion, when it comes to skill development, what should our priorities be when it comes to:

- A. Artists
- B. Artisans
- C. Trainers
- D. Cultural workers
- E. Organizations
- F. Other?

THEME 3 – CIRCUS AND RECOVERY

There are various government measures currently in place to support the sector's recovery. Which of your needs are not being met by these measures and are essential to ensure that you are supported during the recovery period? Please note that these measures are expected to be temporary.

- A. For artists, artisans and cultural workers
- B. For schools
- C. For companies
- D. For presenters
- E. Other

THEME 4 – PROMOTING AND ASSERTING THE VALUE OF THE CIRCUS

The circus is still poorly represented in traditional and online media. It is not well known to the general public.

What should we prioritize to better promote it and assert its value?

Be specific. Who will do what? How? What resources will be required?

THEME 5 – CIRCUS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Digital technology is a government policy priority and has experienced rapid growth. It affects all areas of organizations' professional lives. En Piste will be holding a digital work session in the fall of 2022.

Are there any concerns or topics you'd like to address? Some examples include:

- Monetization platform
- Artificial intelligence
- Creation and innovation
- Exportation
- Dissemination and audience mediation
- Social circus
- Organizational development
- Career development
- Discoverability
- Other?

THEME 6 – ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITIES

Whether non-profit or for-profit, all types of organizations in our community have suffered substantial losses during the pandemic. Many have had to adjust their business models.

Are there specific organizational needs that have not been identified in the previous sections in order to cope with these changes and new realities?

THEME 7 – COLLECTIVE ACTION

In recent years, En Piste has established programs to support individuals and organizations:

- A. Group workshops
- B. Individualized training: Individualized Career Support
- C. *Destination cirque*—Circulation support measure
- D. Group insurance program
- E. Reimbursement assistance program for training expenses

Are there other support measures that the alliance should introduce?

Additionally, some of these measures are not available to everyone in Canada due to a lack of funding.

We will need to identify the provinces that wish to have access to these measures.