

SKELETON PARK ARTS FESTIVAL

**ANNUAL REPORT
2021**



**SKELETON
PARK ARTS
FESTIVAL**



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The Skeleton Park Arts Festival (SPAF) is a grassroots community organization that engages in collective care by fostering diverse cultural activities that are free, collaborative and accessible to all. We create opportunities for making art and being creative together. SPAF supports a sense of enjoyment and civic belonging for diverse communities in Katarokwi / Kingston, with a particular focus on the Skeleton Park neighbourhood.

OUR VISION:

Contributing to healthy, vibrant communities in Katarokwi / Kingston through celebration of arts and culture with social, racial, and environmental justice as our guide.

*Top: Urban Science Brass Band performing at the Annual Halloween Parade
Photo by Suleimy Rios Aguilar*

Bottom Right: Illustrations by Pierre Collet-Derby



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Marney McDiarmid - *President*

Marney (she/her) is a ceramic artist and longtime resident of the Skeleton Park neighbourhood with an ongoing interest in community engaged art.

Clarke Mackey - *Secretary*

Clarke (he/him) is a Canadian filmmaker, author, and educator. He is also a Director at the Kingston Canadian Film Festival.



Jill Glatt - *Treasurer and Volunteer Coordinator*

Jill (she/her) is a French teacher, printmaker, and arts educator.

Kristin Moriah - *Director at Large*

Kristin (she/her) is an Assistant Professor of English at Queen's University. Her research interests include sound studies and Black feminist performance, particularly the circulation of African American performance and its influence on the formation of national identity.



STAFF



Greg Tilson - *Artistic Director*

Greg (he/him) is a community organizer specializing in cultural programming.

Nicole Daniels - *Assistant Artistic Director*

Nicole (she/her) is an arts professional specializing in programming and communications, with a focus on empowering emerging artists and cultural producers.



PARTNERS + SPONSORS

Our 2021 Sponsors include:

BSE Skate Shop, Canada Council for the Arts, Canadian Heritage, Centre Culturel Frontenac, CFRC 101.9FM, City of Kingston, Daughters General Store, Delta Hotels, Downtown Kingston! BIA, Kingston Arts Council, Kingston Indigenous Languages Nest, Kingston National Indigenous Peoples Day, Kingston Pride, Kingston Symphony, Long & McQuade Musical Instruments, Mulrooney Trucking LTD., Mulberry Waldorf School, Northside Espresso + Kitchen, Novel Idea, Ontario Arts Council, Something Else Records, Providence Manor, St. Vincent de Paul Society of Kingston, Stone City Ales, Sustainable KingstonSwamp Ward and Inner Harbour History Project, Tone Deaf, Visit Kingston

Our 2021 Partners include:



The Elm Café



Reelout Queer Film Festival



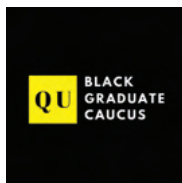
Kingston Indigenous Language Nest



Next Church



Kingston Canadian Film Festival



Queen's Black Graduate Caucus



KEYS Job Centre



Black Luck Collective



Inner Harbour Collective



Movement Market



Kingston WritersFest



Roots & Wings



Central Public School

North King's Town Project



2021 PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

SPAF! On the Boards – 2021 outdoor art installation, featuring an excerpt from *Indian Horse* by Richard Wagamese, with lettering by Floriana Ehninger-Cuervo

Next Door – 2021 temporary public art exhibition, featuring 15 installations by 24 artists + a series of public performances

Workhorse Film Screening – Co-presented with Kingston Canadian Film Festival, featuring a performance by The Limestone Trio

Elm Café Coffeehouse – Virtual series hosted by Gary Rasberry

An Evening of Dance – Local dance showcase co-presented with Inner Harbour Collective + Kingston Canadian Film Festival, featuring performances by Movement Market + Kingston Freestyle Dance + a ballet masterclass taught by Claude Marc Forest demonstrated by Daniel Robertson-Styles

Urban Science Brass Band workshop + Annual Halloween Parade – Co-presented with KEYS Job Centre, Roots & Wings, and Queen's Black Graduate Caucus

Elm Café Gallery – 2021 exhibitions include the *KPP AT 20* project by KPP Concerts + Virginia Maria Meeks; *Back to Nature* by Tracy Olan

No Ordinary Man – Reelout Queer Film Festival co-presentation

Spirit Bear and Children Make History – Co-presented with Kingston Canadian Film Festival

Herbariums: Meditations on Forgotten Flora – Virtual artist talk with Helen Humphreys, co-presented as part of Kingston WritersFest

Skeleton Park Arts Festival

is primarily a program-focused organization that achieves its mandate through seasonal presentations of primarily free, multi-generational and accessible arts activities such as concerts, dances, films, exhibits, parades, readings and workshops. In partnership with a variety of local arts and service organizations, schools and community groups, SPAF brings together diverse groups of neighbourhood residents and visitors to engage with multi-arts programming.

Images, Left to Right:

*The Goat Steppers performing as part of Next Door opening ceremonies. Photo by Suleimy Rios Aguilar
Erin Ball + Jane Kirby performing Friends and Flights as part of Next Door. Photo by Chris Miner
The Kingston Stilts performing as part of Next Door opening ceremonies. Photo by Chris Miner
Urban Science Brass Band at the Annual Halloween Parade. Photo by Suleimy Rios Aguilar*



Next Door Highlights

Next Door is an annual temporary public art exhibition displayed throughout the Skeleton Park neighbourhood. This second iteration of the project offered a series of snapshots into the lives of artists working through a global pandemic, finding time to create, reflect, and simply be.

A number of changes were implemented in the coordination of *Next Door* in 2021 in the interest of improving equitable practices, including the following:

An open call for submissions was presented to artists across Katarokwi/Kingston, advertised by SPAF and community partners KEYS Job Centre, Black Luck Collective, and Central Public School.

A Selection Committee, chaired by *Next Door* Coordinator / Curator Nicole Daniels and consisting of representatives from SPAF + community partners, juried submissions with a priority focus on uplifting equity-seeking groups. Selection Committee members: Kristin Moriah, Jillian Glatt, Joanna Reynolds, Greg Tilson, Nicole Daniels.

Next Door photographer Chris Miner mentored emerging photographer Suleimy Rios Aguilar, who composed the *Next Door* photo essay included in the Skeleton Press.

*Top: Kemi King's live performance of Waterworks as part of Next Door.
Photo by Chris Miner*

24 Artists

Jane Kirby + Erin Ball, Clelia Scala, Chaka Chikodzi, Kemi King, GHY Cheung, John Wright, Abolition City, Willa Molen, Hayden Maynard, Ying Lee + Kate Yüksel, Amelia Glancy + Benjamin Nelson, Nicholas Crombach, Simon Andrew, Jenn E Norton + Matt Rogalsky + Laura Murray + Dorit Naaman, Jane Derby

15 Installations

In a variety of media, including: audio, performance, painting, sculpture, video, augmented reality, poetry, illustration

2 Photographers / Mentorship

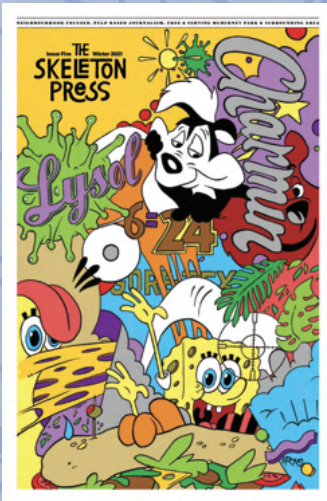
Documentation by Chris Miner, photo essay by mentee Suleimy Rios Aguilar

1 Videographer

3 videos produced by Al Bergeron

10+ Performances

Performances by Jane Kirby + Erin Ball, Kemi King, The Goat Steppers, The Kingston Stilters; sustained actions by GHY Cheung; presentations of *Swimming Upstream*



THE SKELETON PRESS

The Skeleton Press is a free community newspaper established in 2019 which serves the Skeleton Park neighbourhood and surrounding area. The paper is delivered to nearly 3,500 addresses four times per year.

What started as an informal chat about the politics of a neighbourhood in transition led to the founding of this paper. *The Skeleton Press* seeks a broader, more inclusive conversation that captures the vibrancy and diversity of the neighbourhood. We are interested in how an “old school” newspaper can communicate differently than digital publishing, and how the act of distributing the physical ject can aid in building community.

SPAF reaches out to a variety of community members, partner organizations, collectives, artists and writers to contribute to *The Skeleton Press*. We openly invite community members who are interested in contributing to the paper, pitching a story, or providing illustration to reach out to Greg Tilson at spafdirector@gmail.com to be considered for inclusion.

The Skeleton Press is led by Co-Editors Jane Kirby + Greg Tilson and Art Director Vincent Perez, and supported by a variety of community donors in addition to grant funding. To date, SPAF has published eight issues of *The Skeleton Press*.

The Skeleton Press Highlights

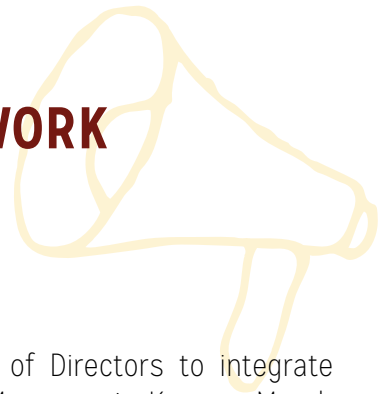
The 2021 issues of *The Skeleton Press* employed over 90 contributors and 11 copy editors, showcasing a variety of writings, poetry, illustrations and photography from community members in Katarokwi/Kingston



Top Left to Top Right: Covers of *The Skeleton Press* issues 5-8
Covers by: Aaron Forsyth, Grace MacDonald, Kingston Fall Fair, Commanda Collective
Bottom Left: Illustration by Pierre Collet-Derby

SUMMARY OF ANTI-OPPRESSION + EQUITY WORK

WRITTEN BY KAMRYN MARSH (THEY/THEM PRONOUNS)



"An artist's duty is to reflect the times." – Nina Simone

Since the summer of 2021, I have been working with SPAF Staff and Board of Directors to integrate anti-oppression, equity, and Indigenization into their organizational practices. My name is Kamryn Marsh (they/them pronouns). I am a trainer, consultant, facilitator, and youth worker in Kingston/Ka'tarohkwi.

Financial accessibility of The Annual Festival has always been a cornerstone of SPAF. Anti-oppression, equity, and Indigenization expand this value to other aspects of the organization. I think of anti-oppression as principles and actions/strategies that name, challenge, and transform multiple forms of oppression with the goal of producing equitable relations. I believe that anti-oppression is essential in community arts. Many members of the Kingston / Ka'tarohkwi community experience unequal access to the opportunities and benefits offered by the Skeleton Park Arts Festival. To counteract these barriers and exclusions, it takes conscious effort. This is equity. This year, the SPAF Board has had a specific focus on addressing how the racism of our society and culture has been (unintentionally) replicated in the organization. This obviously impacts community members, artists, and musicians who are Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Colour (or BIPOC). These conversations have opened up space to talk about the accessibility of the festival for people experiencing marginalization of many forms (in addition to racism).¹

Indigenization is a distinct paradigm that varies in specifics from nation to nation. A broad definition of Indigenization could be meaningful transformation of practices and structures that return power to Indigenous peoples and prioritize Indigenous ways of knowing and being without cultural appropriation.² I identify as a settler (non-Indigenous), brown, queer, gender-fluid, middle-class, and mentally ill. My method to centre Indigenization at SPAF has been to interview at least ten Indigenous community members and to prioritize their feedback. Four interviews have been conducted thus far. Some key insights include:

- 1. Indigenization Is a stand-alone issue and cannot be lumped under anti-oppression + equity.**
- 2. Mentoring initiatives and unique showcasing opportunities for Indigenous artists should be prioritized and well-funded.**
- 3. Building meaningful relationships with the diverse local urban Indigenous community will take time, courage, and humility. It is up to SPAF to ensure these relationships are genuine and specific – as opposed to transactional and exploitative.**
- 4. It is expected that SPAF will create positions of leadership where Indigenous people can enact real change in the organization.**

¹ Including people who experience racism, ableism, classism, heterosexism, and cissexism – which is discrimination based on ethnicity, skin colour, accent, disability, socio-economic access, sexual orientation, and gender expression, respectively.

² Tuck, ven and K. Wayne Yan. "Decolonization is not a metaphor." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1/1 (2012). Available: <https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/18630>

Snelgrove, Corey, Rita Kaur Dhamoon, and Jeff Cornassel. "Unsettling settler colonialism: The discourse and politics of settlers, and solidarity with Indigenous nations." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society* 3/2 (2014): 1-32.

A SUMMARY OF WHAT HAS BEEN COMPLETED IN 2021:



Approved and finalized by the Board of Directors:

- Mission, Vision, and Values statements for the organization
- Comprehensive ‘Curation Guidelines’
- Guidelines on ‘Selection of Contractors and Festival Vendors / Booths’
- Conducted by the Consultant, Kamryn:
- Interviews with four Indigenous consultants
- Completed by the Consultant, Board review process still ongoing:
- Expansion of Volunteer Training Programme for new and returning volunteers
- Volunteer Management Plan that outlines equitable recruitment, selection, training, role assignment, and supervision of volunteers

WHAT WE ARE HOPING TO ACCOMPLISH FOR 2022:

- Interviews with six or more Indigenous consultants
- Summary report on Indigenization at SPAF (based on interviews & to be shared with Indigenous consultants)
- Interview with artists who have expertise regarding disability justice and/or anti-racism
- Hiring policies and guidelines for full-time, part-time, seasonal, or funding-specific staff
- Board annual calendar of activities
- Board governance package
- Communications Strategy
- Programming Guidelines

In my opinion, SPAF is a highly productive organization. The Covid-19 pandemic has forced the organization to pause and reflect on process and how things are done. I think this a beautiful gift that has created space for challenging conversations, deep listening and intense reflections. I am very proud of the SPAF Staff and Board for bravely taking on this work this year. I am looking forward to continuing this work in 2022.

Sincerely,

Kamryn Marsh

Kamryn Marsh (they/them)

Program Coordinator, Youth Mentoring Programs, KEYS Job Centre

Freelance Anti-oppression Consultant and Facilitator

Kamryn.k.marsh@gmail.com

613-770-9476



Top Right: Illustration by Pierre Collet-Derby

2021 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

EXPENSES

Artist Fees, Film, Production	\$57,935.00
The Skeleton Press	\$48,687.19
Total Expenses	\$154,507.00

REVENUES

Canada Heritage	\$49,089.00
Canada Council for the Arts	\$30,743.00
Total Revenues	\$142,777.00

DEFERRED REVENUE

Canada Heritage	\$32,677.00
Canada Council for the Arts	\$7,757.00
Community Foundation of Canada	\$15,700.00
Total Deferment	\$56,134.10

COMMUNICATIONS + AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Social Media Growth

	August 2017	August 2018	November 2018	November 2019	November 2020	November 2021	% Growth in 2021
Facebook	2673	3112	3160	3822	4187	4478	7.0%
Twitter	589	783	810	855	900	934	3.8%
Instagram	529	-	1167	1406	1896	2196	15.8%
Newsletter				729	930	1,012	8.8%

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