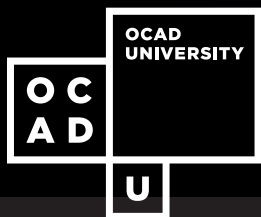




# **Arts & Culture in Local Economic Development AMO Conference**

August 18, 2025

Presented by: Miriam Kramer, Executive Director,  
Government Relations & Public Policy, OCAD University



**CULTURAL  
POLICY HUB**



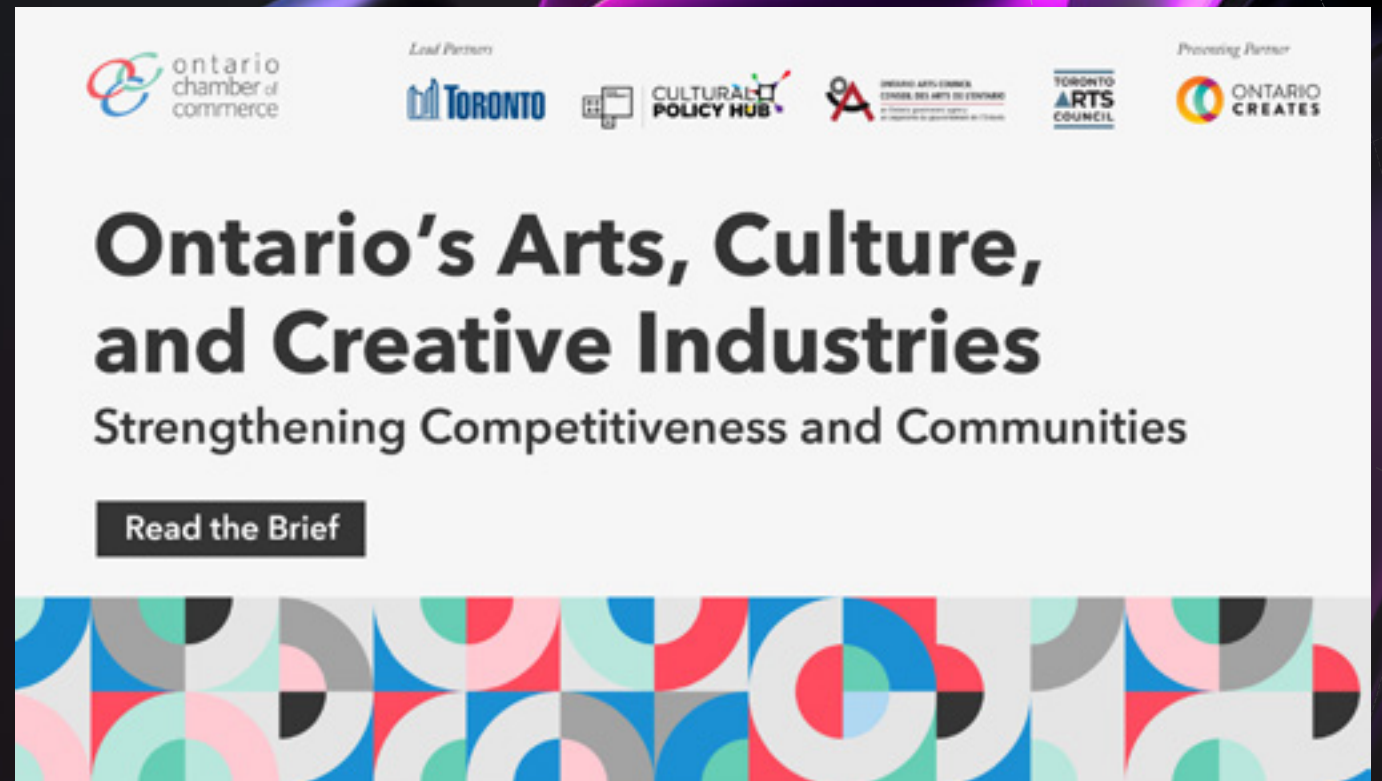
Ontario's cultural economy  
generates approximately \$27  
billion annually, more than  
254,000 jobs and almost  
49% of Canada's culture GDP.

CULTURE'S IMPACT



A record-breaking 419 film and television productions generated \$3.15 billion in economic activity in 2022, creating over 45,000 direct and spin-off jobs.

The Government of Ontario's 2021-22 Celebrate Ontario Blockbuster and Reconnect funding generated an estimated \$1 billion in economic impact across the province, with every dollar of provincial funding driving nearly \$21 of visitor spending.



# CULTURE'S IMPACT



Ontario's only and Canada's oldest,  
largest and most comprehensive art  
and design university.

Prepares students for leading  
roles across Ontario's economy  
with more than 25,000 alumni.

OCAD U graduates generate  
local IP, jobs, and cultural  
exports, reinforcing the  
province's ability to build and  
retain domestic value in the  
creative and innovation sectors.

# OCAD UNIVERSITY

OCAD UNIVERSITY | AMO



The majority (84%) of alumni reside in Ontario.

87% live in Toronto and the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA).

58% of Ontario-based alumni work in a field related to arts or design.



# OCAD U AND ONTARIO

OCAD UNIVERSITY | AMO



**A combined 26.5% work in fields requiring scientific knowledge, technical skills, and/or numeracy: health care, social assistance, life sciences, information and communications technologies, financial services, scientific and technical services.**

**More than 12% of Ontario graduates working outside of arts and design fields work in educational services.**

**A combined 12.5% work in consumer-facing fields, like retail and hospitality.**



# OCAD U AND ONTARIO



In 2024, OCAD U contributed more than \$520 million in direct economic impact to Ontario.

A degree from OCAD U increases a graduate's value, productivity, and earning potential in the job market.

Nearly one-third (29%) of graduates have been nominated for or won at least one award since completing their education at OCAD U.



# OCAD U | ECONOMIC AND SECTOR IMPACT



# OCAD U Supporting Local Economies

- GradEx
- OCAD U LIVE
- CLIC







OCAD U's annual graduate show and Toronto's largest free art and design exhibition.

In 2025, GradEx:

- Attracted 42,500 attendees, including more than 10,500 from outside Toronto
- Created 170 jobs
- Contributed \$1.39 million to Ontario's GDP

**GRADEX**



Hands-on training program for video content creation.

Since its inception in 2020, LiVE has:

- Employed more than 200 students
- Provided mentorship and content creation training
- Generated more than \$300,000 in revenue through its production house, creating videos for businesses and non-profits.





The Centre for Local Innovation and Collaboration (CLIC) is a partnership between OCAD U and the City of Richmond Hill in which design students use their skills to solve business challenges.

StoryBee, a free, open-access digital library of more than 1,000 original, curriculum-based educational picture books, is one of the companies that benefited from the OCAD U students' design strategy and problem-solving skills.

OCAD U students and graduates added a “gamification” product to this experience in which learners can colour in and customize book characters through daily interaction, making the habit of reading fun.

Increased the number of initial and return users for the product.





# steps

**STEPS Public Art is a Canadian charity and social enterprise.**

**Offers services in public art management, hoarding exhibits, cultural planning, and artist capacity building.**

**Runs programs that support artists and foster vibrant and inclusive communities.**





Mixed-media quilted and public art project by mixed Kanyen'kehà:ka artist Raechel Wastesicoot that incorporates intricate beadwork, textiles and quilting to depict shared memories and moments of personal and traditional ceremony.

The blanket and its accompanying poem explore the idea of place, and what makes something, somewhere, or someone feel like home – including special sentiments from the lives of Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

Exhibited in the Town Hall in Port Hope (ON) and featured in Cultivate Festival.

# ÁHSIRE: CEREMONY IS WHERE YOU ARE, PORT HOPE TOWNHALL





In partnership with the Downtown Barrie BIA.

The artwork, The Land Knows You, was created by Alanah Astehtsi Otsistohkwa (Morningstar) Jewell and Sarain Fox.

The intention was to help people who are in urban spaces connect to the land and their surroundings. The artists are local.



# THE LAND KNOWS YOU, CITY OF BARRIE



Town of Stouffville hired STEPS for two projects that animated two public spaces—a welcoming landmark in a parking lot and a nearby ground mural that provides wayfinding between the urban and rural communities.

These placemaking installations have been used as creative backdrops for festival activities

# PLACEMAKING INSTALLATIONS, TOWN OF STOUFFVILLE





# steps

More than 85% of respondents report that the art:

- Improves the appearance of the area
- Improves their experience of the area
- Makes them want to spend more time in the area
- Makes them feel happier

# STEPS IMPACT







# THANK YOU

## Questions, comments, follow up

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