

Onigaman

« The Portage Trails »



«We must open up to the world. People have to talk about us.»

(Roger Wylde, professional actor and Anicinabe cultural bearer)

› Disseminating the performing arts in Anicinabe territory

As part of a pilot project funded by Canadian Heritage, we are conducting a consultation on the presentation of performances in Anicinabe territory. Using the various technologies at our disposal, we are going to meet with the various actors concerned, both within and outside the territory, to take stock of the situation and design a show-booking network adapted to our territory and in line with our values.

The objective of these consultations is to identify the resources, needs and wishes of the various stakeholders (artists, Anicinabe communities, show bookers, etc.); to identify the obstacles that hinder the dissemination of the performing arts in our communities; and to reflect together on possible solutions. It is a matter of bringing movement back to our territory and ensuring that culture circulates with the fluidity of the past.

«*Getting back on track! Walking, portaging is the essence of our identity.*» [Translation]

(Excerpt from the Manifesto for the advancement of Indigenous arts, artists and arts organizations in Quebec)

The specific objectives are:

- To increase access to performing and contemporary arts (performances) in Anicinabe territory;
- To offer dissemination opportunities to Anicinabe artists;
- To create opportunities for Anicinabe artists to meet, — including with our non-indigenous neighbours — create, share and inspire each other;
- To allow the Anicinabe Nation to take part in the indigenous artistic vitality that Quebec and Canada are experiencing.

› Opening the way to movement

Art reveals and expresses the essence of a culture. In all its forms, it is essential to community life because it gives us the means to recognize and express immaterial realities. **Art is a way of affirming, exploring and redefining our identity.** It is important for our people to be exposed to multiple forms of art for the future of our entire culture.

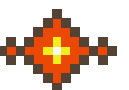
«*The visibility and access to indigenous artistic expression throughout our Nations and on all stages in Quebec is the best medicine against racism and rejection. Indigenous artistic expression is a place of self-determination, affirmation of identity and a pacified place of hope.*» [Translation]

(Yves Sioui Durand, author, actor, director, filmmaker, founder of Productions Ondinnok)

In order for our children to grow up in a creative and innovative environment, we need to establish networks that facilitate the movement of artworks on our territory, to leave traces and open a path for future generations.

Increasing the dissemination of performing art would make it possible to:

- Provide models and professional experiences to emerging artists;
- Create opportunities for cultural mediation to accompany the Anicinabek in their discovery of new art forms;
- Maintain a constant dialogue with the non-indigenous artistic community in order to prepare the ground for our Anicinabe artists;
- Increase the cultural offer in the communities' schools.



> Context

The Canadian and Quebec indigenous artistic community has been in a state of cultural vibrancy for several decades. A number of consultations and research projects have been carried out to understand and support this phenomenon, notably at the initiative of the Canada Council for the Arts (CCA), the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec (CALQ) and the Conseil des arts de Montréal.

Our project is in keeping with these initiatives and aims at complementarity, since the complex and unique situation in our territory is still poorly documented. Artists living in the communities lack resources and have difficulty making themselves known. They are therefore rarely consulted. There is also a **feeling of being excluded**, of not taking part in the artistic boom that is taking place in the big cities.

The Anicinabe territory is very large and fragmented. The 9 communities that inhabit it are not only separated by distance, but also by a linguistic, social and political situation that is not conducive to inter-community mutual assistance. While the traditional language is rapidly losing ground, 6 of the Anicinabe communities in Quebec speak English while the other 3 speak French.

This new consultation tour is also following the one we conducted in the summer of 2019 with artists and cultural bearers throughout the territory, which allowed us to assess our nation's needs in terms of cultural development.



> Consultation stages

- **Consultations in the 9 Anicinabe communities:** we will conduct individual and small group interviews with artists and other concerned stakeholders in all the communities.
- **Meeting of Indigenous show-bookers from Quebec and Northern Ontario:** we will be hosting a major meeting during which workshops will be held for discussion and collective reflection. We want to learn about the needs of indigenous producers and understand the issues they face in order to facilitate the presentation of their shows in the territory.
- **Inventory of available equipment and infrastructures:** we will make an inventory of all the equipment and infrastructures available on the territory, assess their condition and identify the communities' material needs. We will draw up technical data sheets as well as layout plans of the facilities.
- **Report:** we will present our findings in a report that will be distributed to all communities and published on our website.



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