

Artsvote Ontario 2022

Responses from Robert Gibson, Ontario Green Party Candidate

1. How will you and your government support the COVID-19 recovery efforts of arts organizations?

The pandemic is still ongoing. One of the ways the Green government will help is by making the medical officer of health an officer of the legislature so that we can learn from this pandemic to help reduce the risk of future ones along with exiting reports. The pandemic has hit the arts industry the hardest and artists have been undervalued. A Green government recognizes that many artists work in temporary or gig economies. We will develop a program of portable extended health benefits for workers in the gig economy that is tied to the employee even if they were to change employment. This is one part of a Gig workers Bill of rights. The Green party will also include meaningful consultation with people who have lived experience with poverty and existing social assistance programs in the design of all programs and services aimed at client-centred approaches. Additionally, a Green government will have anti racism training for all legislators and will support the work of racialized artists. As well as develop a universal basic income starting with doubling ODSP and Ontario Works. A Green government will also support a staycation tax credit. In addition, a Green government will double ODSP and OW as well as implement a basic income. A basic income has been requested by the arts community. A Green Government will increase the number of provincially-legislated paid sick days from three to ten, and provide small businesses financial support to fund the program.

2. What funding policies and programs do you propose to support the ongoing work of individual artists and arts organizations in Ontario?

The Green party will reinstate 5 million for the Indigenous Culture Fund and will Restore investments in the Ontario Arts Council and the Ontario Trillium Foundation worth 25 million. A lot of art is inspired by the natural environment. There is funding to protect the natural environment that is Indigenous led. The Green party is also committed to all recommendations under the Murdered Missing women and Girls Inquiry and other calls to action.

3. What actions would you and your government take to advance diversity, inclusion and equity for marginalized (including artists with disabilities and Deaf and hard of hearing artists), and racialized artists, including BIPOC (particularly Indigenous artists in our area) and 2SLGBTQ+ artists?

I will point out this is not our area as land was stolen. As a settler running for office, I believe we should empower Indigenous led efforts and strengthen relationship building. The Green party will double ODSP and Ontario works. In addition, it will require the Ontario Public Service to commit to eliminate racism and discrimination, conduct random external audits, data collection and reporting, and establish a safe harassment and discrimination reporting system for staff. This includes access to the arts. A basic wage will also be helpful. The Green party will dedicate resources and funding to directly support 2SLGBTQIA+ youth groups. The Green Party will restore funding for the Indigenous curriculum program and work with Indigenous educators and community leaders to develop a mandatory curriculum on colonialism and residential schools, treaties, and Indigenous histories and experiences. In terms of reaching out I will reach out to the Nogojiwanong Friendship Center and build a relationship with Indigenous artists in this area.

4. What special initiatives might you propose to encourage and support artistic practice in smaller urban centres such as Peterborough and arts activity in rural areas?

First, we need a basic income to support artists. Second, I like tiny libraries. Maybe a tiny museum display would be cool that community groups and artists could rent out for a month. One thing I suggested was for the Peterborough Museum and Archives to have a suggestion box for displays one could be for example related to climate change. Peterborough's arts community is strong and could be strengthened with partnering with each municipality to look into housing for artists as an example. If there is a non profit or community trust that is interested in supporting artists a Green Government would help them out. Improving internet connection in rural areas could help. Radio is something that can reach rural areas. This is also something that should occur with artists.