

# CANADIAN NETWORK FOR IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY

## ANNUAL REPORT

2021 – 22

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### Background:

***“Imagination and creativity are foundational for us all as they form the basis of how we learn, enrich our lives, develop new ideas and meet life’s challenges”.***

The above is the opening salutation of the CNIC web-site. The idea of a national network for Canadian energy, dedication and vision for all aspects of the creative process, was originally born in the mind of Dr. Mary Blatherwick, the founding chair of the Atlantic Centre for Creativity (ACC). Her leadership and embrace of colleagues from so many aspects of life, in the Atlantic provinces of Canada, resulted in stunning mutual conversations, discoveries and enrichment, across many disciplines and enterprises, leading to discoveries unlikely with singular research and activity. In 2018, in his observation of the extraordinary exchange provided by so many voices meeting together revealed through ACC, Michael Wilson suggested and encouraged Mary to go ‘nation-wide’ with a similar approach, mandate and vision. With other founding Steering Committee members Gillian Judson, Peter Gamwell, Alexis Milligan, Jessica Sokolowsky, Sandeep Glover, Mingyu-Lin, Stan Baines, Jackie Lawrence and Robin Jenson, in original representation of the Atlantic Centre for Creativity, the University of Ottawa and Simon Fraser University, a national, mostly on-line, network was launched in September of 2020 “ to unleash and promote imagination and creativity across all fields of endeavour – including the arts, sciences, business and education”. Although launched initially as a Canadian platform, it has since welcomed participants from the US, the UK, Australia, Argentina and New Zealand.

As the launch of CNIC coincided with the tragic passing of Sir Ken Robinson, one of our most significant, inspiring gurus, our web-site contains a deeply touching tribute from Peter Gamwell, one of Sir Ken’s friends, sharing a bond of a common birthplace and passion for British football.

CNIC is very expansive in its interpretation of creativity. We embrace all elements of perceptual acuity, play, imagination, the creative process and innovation.

### Year 2021 – 22:

In year two of our existence, we continued to provide the 2 main elements in our first year of existence: 1) platforms for sharing among as wide a circle as we could reach 2) creating occasions for relaxed, intimate, storytelling and dialogue, known as ‘Idea Jams’. In the past year we held 9 of them, each third Thursday of the month, from 7 – 8pm (EST), on the following topics:

1. ***New Beginnings: A creative check-in.*** Hosted by Alexis Milligan
2. ***Are You Having an Aesthetic Moment?*** Hosted by Michael Wilson
3. ***Seeking Opportunities for Growth in a time of Pandemic Darkness.*** Hosted by Jessica Sokolowski.
4. ***Engage Imagination, Engage Emotion: The Role of Feeling.*** Hosted by Gillian Judson.
5. ***Collective Creativity: What we Learn Together.*** Hosted by Mary Blatherwick
6. ***People who make the Extraordinary Happen – And How You Can Too.*** Hosted by Peter Gamwell.

7. ***In Conversation with Jacqueline Lawrence.*** Hosted by Jacqueline Lawrence.
8. ***Creativity as an Innovation Enabler: Metacognition in Dialectical Thinking.*** Hosted by Goran Matic. (closing session of the CNIC contribution to WCIW/D)
- 9.
10. ***Are you Listening?*** Hosted by Mingyu Lin.

#### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS: 2021-22:**

The following represents the Steering Committee assessments of accomplishments and recommendations for the succeeding year.

The Steering Committee had articulated 4 specific goals for our second year:

- 1) To promote research and programming in all elements of imagination and creativity.
- 2) To create and join partnerships with the work of individuals and organizations.
- 3) To initiate and join actual real-life activities.
- 4) To widen our tent of storytellers.

Goals 1 has been well developed toward goal attainment through our ongoing e-mail newsletter and regular additions to our web-site under events and projects. Goal 2 was heightened with our expanded participation in the World Creativity and Innovation week/Day (April 15 – 21,2022), with 2 full evenings (April 20 – 21), facilitated in large part by the Canadian Ambassador to the WCIW, Goran Matic ( a prominent CNIC member). We plan to permanently continue this immensely valuable connection with ‘creatives’ world-wide. Goal 3 included submitting a proposal as part of the program for the annual national conference of the Canadian Society for Education through Art (CSEA), scheduled to be live in Ottawa, (Oct 14 – 16, 2022). Goal 4 continues to be the rationale and driver for the successful Idea Jam sessions that we continued this past year. Here, we seemed to have unearthed deep interest by many to engage in relaxed conversations, to tell stories and to learn from each other in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. So far, this feature remains the unique feature of CNIC. We did ‘widen our tent’ by including storytellers who were not active members of CNIC but introduced to all, at 2 different Idea Jam sessions. We plan to expand our range and type of Idea Jam ‘story leaders’ as we continue these monthly sessions for the year 2022-23. In a new initiative, spearheaded by Mary Blatherwick, CNIC members were highlighted in her edited on-line journal *Creativity Matters* which featured 4 articles and 2 video interviews from the CNIC. We hope to continue to contribute to creativity enrichment through many alternative platforms and venues. In general, we still need to enhance our total effect by: a greater effort to reach participants from all walks of life; a more focused and acknowledgement and sense of inclusion and a greater consistent attempt to intensify the importance of our coming together, encouraging others to feel comfortable in speaking their minds.

#### **Vision for 2022-23:**

We intend to continue our Idea Jam sessions on a monthly basis beginning in September, 2022. We also intend to launch a blog series based on interviews of selected seminal creatives from around Canada and from the wider world.

We intend to grow the breadth and depth of the web-site by reaching new participants on a regular basis and by widening resources, partners and visions as they arise anywhere. We intend to widen and make more effective our presence on several social platforms including Facebook, Twitter and others.

**Vision – Long Term:**

CNIC will strive to be a significant Canadian platform encompassing all spectrums of the creative process, reflecting all aspects of Canadian society. In this way, we will select topics of conversation that are of concern to everyone, from construction workers to the Academy; from teachers to automobile mechanics; from scientists to retail employees; from farmers to artists; from taxi drivers, to radio announcers; from jockeys to sanitary engineers. We will seek to reveal voices from all diverse elements of Canadian society.

In pursuit of the above, we also seek to expose Canadians to the creative world and to provide a window on that world to Canadians. With appropriate financial and human resources, we will consider sponsoring national live and on-line national conferences, symposia and other significant events.

Draft report written by Michael Wilson