SSHRC CRSH

Formative Evaluation of SSHRC's Research/Creation in Fine Arts Program

Final Report

October 8, 2007

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada
Canada

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PREFACE & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

RESEARCH/CREATION IN FINE ARTS

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) is the federal agency that promotes and supports university-based research, training and knowledge mobilization in the humanities and social sciences. As expressed in *Framing Our Direction*, research in the social sciences and humanities advances knowledge and builds understanding about individuals, groups and societies – what we think, how we live, and how we interact with each other and in the world around us. Through its programs and policies, SSHRC contributes to the highest level of research excellence in Canada, and facilitates knowledge mobilization across research disciplines, universities and all sectors of society.

The decision to launch a pilot program (2003 – 2008) in the fine arts dates back to October, 2002. At that time, growing evidence suggested that while the numbers of university-based artists were increasing, they were underrepresented in federal funding programs. SSHRC subsequently provided grant funding support to the artist/researcher community in their pursuit of artistic knowledge. What follows is the formative evaluation of the SSHRC pilot – Research/Creation in Fine Arts Program.

The level of risk for this program was considered relatively high given its innovative goal to support the research and training components in the creation of literary and artistic works and to support artist-researchers, a new clientele for SSHRC. This evaluation initiative was part of SSHRC's Risk-based Evaluation Plan for 2006-2007 to 2008-2009.

The objective of this formative evaluation was to provide SSHRC senior management with evidence in which to base a decision on whether to renew the program. The evaluation focused on several themes including: relevance, design and delivery, outputs and immediate outcomes, risks and opportunities, and alternatives.

The evidence presented in the evaluation which follows reveals that SSHRC's Research/Creation in Fine Arts Grants program is highly relevant to the practices and aspirations of artist-researchers, effective (at least in the short-term), and quite unique, even within an international context.

At the same time, the evaluation produced several recommendations aimed at improving the program's efficiency. SSHRC management has agreed to suggested improvements and enhancements to the program. These are contained in the *Summary Management Response*.

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This evaluation was prepared by independent consultants contracted by SSHRC's Corporate Performance, Evaluation and Audit Division. At this time, I would like to thank the external team from Science-Metrix (Éric Archambault, Frédéric Bertrand, Julie Caruso) and Manon Bourgeois. Their professional diligence, dedication and hard work were most appreciated.

It should also be noted that the views expressed in this evaluation are those of the external team. They do not necessarily reflect the views of SSHRC. These can be found in the above mentioned summary management response.

The work of the consulting team was also ably supported and guided by SSHRC's Corporate Performance, Evaluation and Audit staff, who included Courtney Amo, Robert Lalande, Jocelyne Manseau-Mandeville, Michael Bazant, and Nicole Michaud.

Special thanks also goes to staff of the Research/Creation Grants in Fine Arts Program including: Gisèle Yasmeen, Marc Fonda, Craig McNaughton, Laurent Messier, Murielle Gagnon, Tariq Bhatti and Mathieu Ravignat. Their knowledge and cooperation in providing program documentation and data were instrumental to this study.

While too numerous to acknowledge individually, I would also like to thank the many artist researchers within the Fine Arts community who contributed their time and thoughts to this evaluation. In a world where there are many demands for information, their views were most appreciated.

Finally, I should also single out the guidance provided by members of the Research/Creation Grants in Fine Arts Program Evaluation Advisory Committee. Members included Sarah Bonnemaison, Ann Calvert, Sean Caulfield, Lynn Hughes, Monique Régimbald-Zeiber, Geoffrey Rockwell, Claude Schryer, Courtney Amo, Jocelyne Manseau-Mandeville, Sarah Mark, Craig McNaughton, and Laurent Messier. Their knowledge and insight ensured that the study did not go off the track and helped maintain momentum throughout the evaluation. Also special thanks to Lynn Hughes for chairing the Roundtable Workshop.

Taken together, the conscientious and respectful collaboration of all made this evaluation possible.

Wayne MacDonald
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Science-Metrix
& Manon Bourgeois

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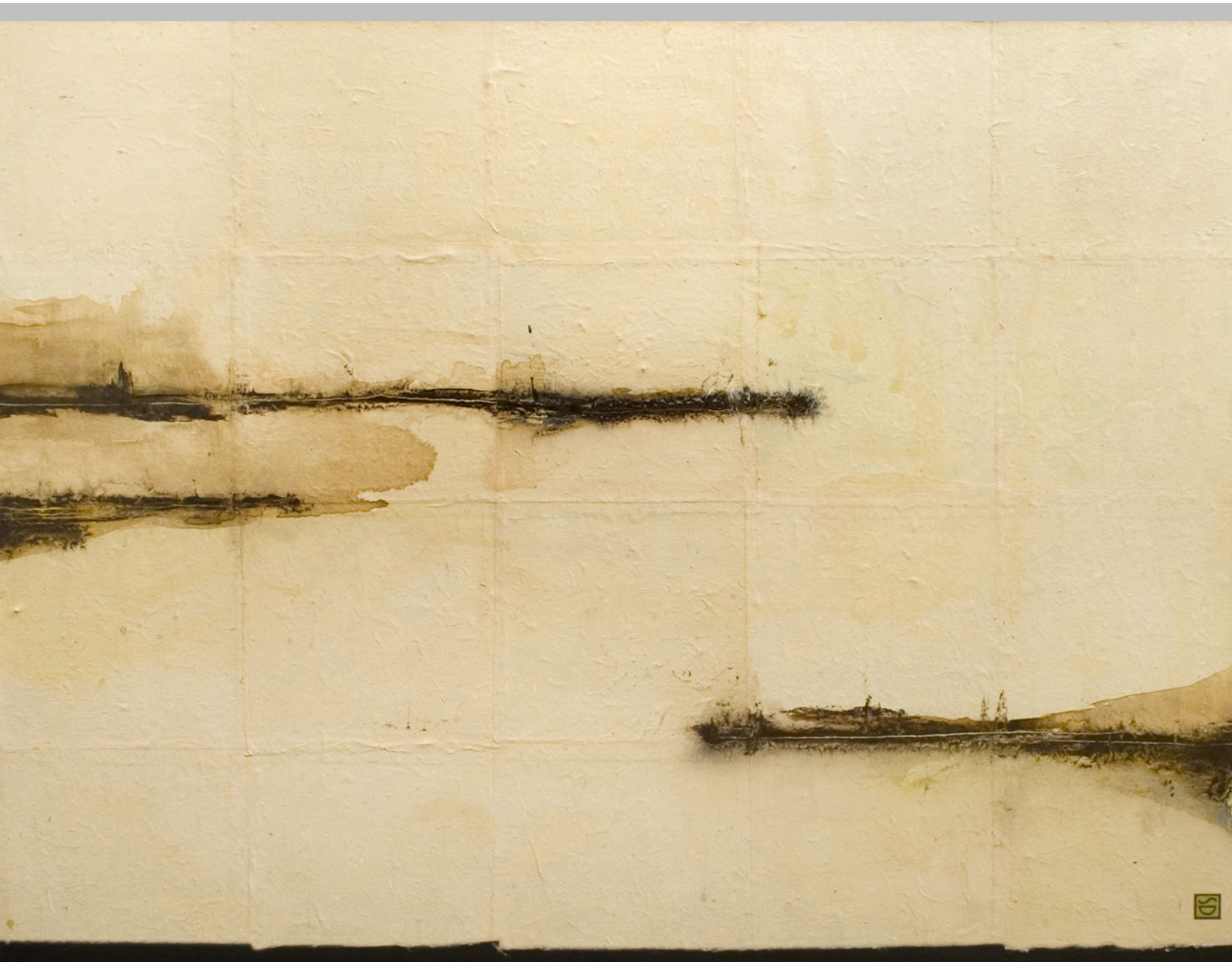

Science-Metrix
& Manon Bourgeois

Formative Evaluation of SSHRC's Research/Creation Grants in Fine Arts Program

Final Report

October 8, 2007

by

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submitted to the

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)

Science-Metrix specializes in the measurement and evaluation of research. We perform program and policy evaluations and performance measurement, benchmarking and sector analyses, market studies and strategic planning. Our data collection and assessment methods include bibliometrics, scientometrics, technometrics, surveys, interviews, environmental scans, monitoring and intelligence gathering.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) is a federal funding agency that promotes and supports university-based research and training in the social sciences and humanities. Based on growing evidence that university-based artists, despite increasing in number, are underrepresented in federal funding programs, SSHRC in 2002 approved the development of a new initiative to support these artist-researchers in their pursuit of artistic knowledge. This three-year pilot program, the Research/Creation Grants in Fine Arts Program, is the subject of the present evaluation.

The formative evaluation (which also has some summative aspects) concentrates on assessing the program's activities and immediate outputs, as well as some initial outcomes. The evaluation is based on the triangulation of evidence obtained with the following methodological instruments: a comprehensive review of files and documents related to the program; a roundtable workshop with grant recipients; and web surveys of three groups: funded applicants, unfunded applicants (comparable group), and post-secondary managers and research or grant officers. These are evaluated in light of the following issues: i) relevance; ii) design and delivery; iii) outputs and immediate outcomes; and iv) risks and opportunities.

Relevance and Alternatives

Relevance: The results strongly point to a consensus among the applicant population that the program objectives are highly relevant to their artistic research activities, particularly those to support high quality research (objective 1) and to facilitate the dissemination of high quality work (objective 3), and most survey respondents felt that objectives should remain unchanged. The fourth objective, to facilitate opportunities for collaboration, was regarded as the least relevant, and roundtable participants believed that it should be de-emphasized relative to the other objectives. It is suggested that SSHRC make a clearer case for the importance of collaboration among artist-researchers.

Alternatives: An environmental scan was conducted to identify similar programs in Canada and abroad. Aside from initiatives by the *Fonds québécois de la recherche sur la société et la culture*, there is no comparable program in terms of total investments in research/creation projects ($13.4 million), size (an award value of up to $250,000 per project), scope (nearly 100 individuals from a wide range of artistic disciplines funded during the five-year pilot phase), and tenure of funding (three years). Survey responses echoed the lack of comparables, but cited provincial government, university, and federal government sources as potential (though not equivalent) resources. Nevertheless, the majority of unfunded respondents did not find alternative sources of funding for their planned research/creation activities, and nearly half mentioned that their projects did not proceed at all.

Design and Delivery

Overall, the program's design and delivery is very adequate for a pilot initiative (this is especially true given its status as a high-risk program) and survey respondents were largely satisfied with most design and delivery elements. Yet, aspects needing improvement were identified in three areas related to the program's design (definition, eligibility requirements, and budget and provision of funds) and delivery (program reach, application process, and adjudication process).

Definition: SSHRC's definition of research/creation was generally considered to be clear and suitable as the basis for the program. Some applicants felt that specific aspects of the terminology used in the definition—in particular, "research question" and "methodological approach"—were, however, more relevant to the context of scientific research in the natural sciences than to research/creation. It is suggested that alternatives to these terms be considered.

Eligibility requirements: The criteria for eligibility to apply appear to be well understood overall. Aspects needing clarification include the fact that some applicants had problems positioning their practices within SSHRC's definition of research/creation, leading to confusion as to what constitutes an eligible project. In addition, the application's listed areas of art research or disciplines were not perceived to be inclusive of all relevant or emergent disciplines. It was suggested that SSHRC provide prospective applicants with examples on the Web.

Budget and provision of funds: The surveyed applicants expressed great satisfaction with the three-year duration of the grants, feeling it to be one of the main advantages of the program. There was a similar level of satisfaction for the value of awards (an average of $148,198 was awarded to grantees during the pilot phase). Due to the program's small total budget and low success rate (19%) relative to other SSHRC programs, some however felt that the maximum grant value was too high, limiting the percentage of successful applicants.

Program Reach: In total, 474 applications were received during the three competitions in the pilot phase. Response to the program was strong and level across all applicant categories, and statistics show no major demographic disparities, with the exception of one: only 9% of applications were submitted in French during the pilot period, due to the low level of participation of French-language artists from the province of Quebec, and the number of French applications declined considerably for the last (2005) competition.

Application process: In general, the application process for this program (in particular, the availability of application forms, the amount of information requested in application form, the time given to complete the application, and the overall SSHRC client support provided to applicants) was found to be highly adequate. The evaluation data revealed that some applicants felt that the framework of the mandatory SSHRC web-based CV could be tailored more specifically to the experiences and competencies of artist-researchers; it is suggested that SSHRC provide artist-researchers with greater flexibility for the inclusion of all types of creative projects in their application.

Adjudication process: One of the priorities of the program involved securing adjudication committee members with an interdisciplinary outlook and a wide spectrum of experience in the creative and fine arts, and every effort was made to do so throughout the pilot period. The difficulties of assembling such a committee are acknowledged, and solutions to difficulties in this area are not straightforward, complicating any efforts to draw conclusions about the appropriateness of the structure of the program's committees. The survey did reveal that two applicant criteria—status of scholar and size of home institution—may not have been given ample consideration during adjudication. Additionally, the quantity and quality of feedback provided emerged as the aspect of the adjudication process with which applicants were the least satisfied.

Outputs and Immediate Outcomes

Four initial program outcomes were identified. The first was a *general change in research quality*, leading to new understandings, research directions, and theoretical frameworks. For the second outcome, *student training and participation*, funded applicants stated that they were able to involve students as co-creators and that they had developed new approaches to teaching. The third outcome was an increase in *collaborative activities* between grantees and the wide spectrum of individuals with whom they established partnerships both within and outside Canada—particularly with artist-researchers from their specific discipline and professional artists practicing outside of academic institutions. The fourth reported outcome involved the *dissemination of research results*: more than 85% of funded respondents believed that the grant has had a positive impact on this dimension of their activities. There were also a number of unexpected results reported, the overwhelming majority of them positive; of these, most involved general beneficial effects of the grant on their practices or their careers. Two negative results were reported: some funded researchers claimed that they were not prepared for the heavy administrative workload that accompanied the position of principal investigator, and some experienced unanticipated difficulties with project collaborators.

Risks and Opportunities

Risks: The program's low success rate has led to a certain level of disappointment within the target population, and the resulting mismatch between expectations and results can be considered a risk factor for SSHRC. There is a resulting need for SSHRC to effectively communicate the projected program orientation or any developments or changes to the program. In addition, the scoring systems used during the pilot phase rely on a set of main criteria that receive an aggregate score based on specific criteria and were simplified at the cost of an increased risk of obtaining more subjective valuation. It is therefore suggested that, given the program's renewal, evaluation criteria and adjudication procedures should be further defined and clarified, both for adjudicators and for applicants, and made more accessible to all.

Opportunities: Funded survey respondents noted that access to other funding opportunities was made possible by the financial support they received through the program, likely due to the increased credibility that accompanies being awarded a SSHRC grant. They also cited a number of socio-economic benefits, impacts, and innovation, particularly regarding the development of information

technology-based innovation, patent pending applications and other forms of intellectual property protection, and a broad range of socio-cultural benefits, with impacts on industries, communities, academic institutions, and students, as well as on other potential users, being perceived.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The evidence presented in this evaluation revealed that SSHRC's Research/Creation in Fine Arts Grants program is highly relevant to the practices and aspirations of artist-researchers, effective (at least in the short-term), and quite unique, even within an international context. The feedback provided by both roundtable workshop participants and by surveyed funded researchers on their experiences of the program was, on the whole, extremely positive. During the period under examination, the program made successful strides towards the accomplishment of all of its stated objectives, and the artist-population that participated in the evaluation expressed their sincere gratitude that SSHRC has recognized and respected their needs and responded with a program that has answered to them so successfully. Furthermore, the program has given these artist-researchers real freedom to pursue their work in research/creation with few of the limitations they would otherwise face. There is therefore every indication that the program should maintained. Although unfunded researchers were clearly disappointed with the outcome of their applications to the program, their comments provided useful insight into potential improvements to the program and are thus reflected in the concluding recommendations of the present report. Within this context, the evaluators make the six following recommendations to SSHRC:

Recommendation 1

Maintain the pilot program for a minimum of two additional rounds, and conduct a summative evaluation following receipt of grants by the successful candidates in the final round of pilot-phase financing. Aspects that would need to be addressed in the summative evaluation are: a model for the program's permanent structure; operation, composition, and evolution of adjudication committee; distribution of funds across language groups, regions, universities and colleges of various sizes, scholar status and stage in career, disciplines, and type of research (i.e., technical vs. less technically-oriented research); and intellectual gains associated with the program.

Recommendation 2

Revise the final report form to obtain richer information on outputs, impacts, and outreach of research/creation activities. In addition to the final report expected six-months after the end of the program, require grantees to submit a mid-term report, at least while the program is still in its pilot phase and therefore requiring close monitoring.

Recommendation 3

A performance management system should be put in place and relevant performance indicators should be collected on a systematic basis.

Recommendation 4

SSHRC should investigate the presence of barriers and determine which of these, if any, are inherent in the program's design. In particular, SSHRC should examine the level of participation and the decline of French-language applications in order to establish whether there is a risk that the program may be considered out of the reach of francophone artist-researchers. Other aspects that should be examined are university size, availability of research students, and regional distribution of grants. Relevant data reflecting these issues should be collected (including retrospectively) and incorporated in the performance management system.

Recommendation 5

Develop a standardized selection and feedback form providing points for detailed selection criteria in addition to detailed qualitative feedback for each application. Make sure that an efficient, user-friendly system is used to collect and tally relevant comments made at every point of the selection process, from the initial analysis of eligibility to the final decisions of the adjudication committee.

Recommendation 6

Within the financial envelope of the program, create a smaller grant scheme to increase accessibility and to cater to the needs of applicants who have less costly or smaller scale research/creation projects.

Additional Suggestions

In addition to these six recommendations, there are three other areas where efficiency could be improved and risks reduced. It is suggested that SSHRC critically examine the list of disciplines that currently serve to determine eligibility after each competition; perform a continual examination of the operational definitions of "research/creation" and "artist-researcher" until a satisfactory level of consensus is reached; and establish a communication strategy, centred on a web portal for research/creation, that would diffuse the results of competitions and provide detail about what was and was not funded, as well as provide a means for internal feedback mechanisms that would allow artist-researchers to voice their opinions.

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Glossary of Acronyms

AHRC:	Arts and Humanities Research Council
AEC	Advisory Evaluation Committee
CAFAD:	Canadian Association of Fine Arts Deans
CPEA:	Corporate Performance, Evaluation and Audit
FQRSC :	Fonds québécois de la recherche sur la société et la culture
NRC:	National Research Council of Canada
NSERC:	Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada
SFCA:	Sub-Committee on the Creative and Fine Arts
SSH:	Social sciences and humanities
SSHRC:	Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

INTRODUCTION

Evaluation Mandate, Scope, and Objectives

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada is a federal funding agency that promotes and supports university-based research and training in the social sciences and humanities. Specifically, the funding provided by SSHRC allows researchers to explore, invent, and develop deep expertise in a wide variety of disciplines and target research to specific social needs, in addition to providing support for research training and research communication activities. SSHRC mandated Science-Metrix and Manon Bourgeois to perform an evaluation of its three-year pilot program, the Research/Creation Grants in Fine Arts Program.

This program has been running for a fairly short period of time; therefore, this evaluation is mainly formative and concentrates on assessing the program's activities and immediate outputs. Because of the nature of pilot programs, and because the decision might be made not to pursue this program after the pilot phase, there are summative aspects to this evaluation. It should be noted, however, that these are fairly limited, as only two final project reports were available at the time of the evaluation and no performance indicators have been collected to date. One of the central aspects of this evaluation is to examine whether it is relevant to pursue the program further (as a pilot or in any other form) or if it would be more appropriate to discontinue it. Should the program be pursued, more time will have elapsed by the next evaluation for results to filter through the arts community; subsequent evaluations, therefore, will more adequately identify and assess intermediate and ultimate outcomes.

This evaluation was overseen by the Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC), which provides project management and consultants with advice on scope, overall quality, timelines, design, execution, analysis, and follow-up (including conclusions and recommendations) of the project to be undertaken, thus ensuring that project objectives are achieved. More specifically, the role of the Committee is to: 1) participate if required in the selection of consultants or consulting firms to conduct the evaluation; 2) attend and participate in Project Advisory Committee meetings; 3) provide feedback on draft documents and reports in a timely manner and ensure that the evaluation takes into account the overall context and objectives of the pilot program; 4) provide additional guidance as required and as appropriate.

The activities, outputs, and initial outcomes of this pilot program will be evaluated in light of the following evaluation issues: i) relevance; ii) design and delivery; iii) outputs and immediate outcomes; and iv) risks and opportunities.

Program Stakeholders

Internal stakeholders for the Research/Creation in Fine Arts program consist of all individuals and units that have worked directly on the program or its evaluation. This group of stakeholders includes (but is not limited to): members of SSHRC management and staff who designed and implemented the program; SSHRC's Governing Council and SSHRC Senior Management; the

Advisory Committee for this evaluation; SSHRC's Standing Committee on Research Support; SSHRC's Standing Committee on Performance and Evaluation; members of the Research/Creation Adjudication Committees; external experts co-opted for the purpose of application assessment; consultants to the program; partners of the program; and the management and staff of SSHRC's Strategic Research Grants program.

External stakeholders are all individuals and units outside of the implementing units that may be affected by the results of the program. This group of stakeholders includes (but is not limited to): the artist-researchers who are awarded grants for their projects; students in all areas of study who collaborate with artist-researchers on their funded projects; other university-based collaborators for funded projects from all fields; artist-researchers who are not awarded grants (but who nevertheless benefit from greater awareness of their contributions and the barriers they face due to the existence of the SSHRC program); professional artists outside of academia who will develop or expand relationships through collaborations with grant holders on various projects (both SSHRC- and non-SSHRC-funded); professional arts associations in Canada; customers and patrons of the arts in Canada; arts departments in Canadian universities; research offices in Canadian universities that liaise between SSHRC and artist-researchers; government bodies (particularly those responsible for spending policies for the arts and culture); and arts departments, organizations, and institutions outside of Canada.

Origins of SSHRC's Research/Creation Grants in Fine Arts Pilot Program

The funding of university-based artists has received increased attention in recent years. Like their colleagues in other disciplines, these artist-researchers are expected to obtain external funding for their research projects from research councils such as SSHRC. Traditionally, when artist-researchers applied for funding in standard programs offered by research councils, they were judged according to the same criteria as researchers from the social sciences and the humanities (SSH). However, equitably comparing their output to that of SSH researchers is difficult, in part because the emphasis in the social sciences on journal articles and monographs is not nearly as prominent in artistic fields, where outputs take a much wider variety of forms, including performances, sculpture, painting, and multimedia presentations, to name just a few.

In October 2000, SSHRC held an important conference on the future of the humanities in Canada. A specially created SSHRC working group, the Sub-Committee on the Creative and Fine Arts (SFCA), which was established in June 2001, was the product of this event and the resulting report. The SCFA concluded that the growing number of university-based artists was underrepresented in federal funding programs and stood little chance of receiving the same level of support as SSH researchers. Indeed, these individuals—tentatively described in the first report to Council (June 2002, p. 5) as those members of faculty "who hold either an MFA or a Ph.D. and cross-over or bridge the worlds of practice, critique and theory"—had comparatively low participation rates in SSHRC funding competitions, likely stemming from their meager chances of success. As noted by the SFCA in the second report (October 2002, p. 2), "By liberating artist-researchers from what has of necessity evolved as an isolated research culture of 'excellence in poverty' and encouraging them to raise their

research expectations and ambitions, SSHRC and its constituency stand to benefit significantly." In the same report, the SFCA presented this diagnosis of the situation facing artist researchers who have innovative approaches and whose research activities are transforming in nature:

- they are more involved in interdisciplinary research and respond to the specific demands of humanities scholars, with whom they work closely;
- the current number of faculty and students working as practicing artists across a wide variety of disciplines in Canadian post-secondary institutions is greater than ever;
- currently only limited research funding (including programs offered by the *Fonds québécois de la recherche sur la société et la culture* [FQRSC], Canada Council for the Arts [CCA], National Research Council Canada [NRC], and Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada [NSERC]) is available to artist-researchers;
- they face a number of frustrations, obstacles, and lost opportunities because they, unlike their university colleagues in all other areas of study, lack a federal research funding agency to which they can apply;
- they have low participation and success rates in existing SSHRC programs, and when they do apply face particular challenges;
- there is a dominant perception among artist-researchers that SSHRC programs, criteria, and committees are not sympathetic to their research.

The situation prevailing in Canada was described in very clear terms by the President of a roundtable workshop organized as a part of the present evaluation:

> *The term research/creation is gaining currency both in Canada and internationally. Until recently, university- and college-based artists had been treated as research "outsiders"—an exotic, and perhaps even a suspicious, breed. Until the FQRSC in Quebec began funding research/creation in 2000, we were the only university sector excluded from the spectrum of funding programs intended for university research and researchers. A few hardy artist-researchers managed to piggyback elements of their research programs on Strategic grants in other disciplines—usually by suppressing important aspects of their activity and describing their practice in language (or with emphases) developed in very different disciplines. While artist-researchers were able to apply to the Canada Council, this was often also awkward, either because the assumptions and setting at the university are different than those for independent artists (student mentoring, for instance) or because university artists were seen as intruding on the very slim percentage of the Council funds available for independent artists' projects. At the same time, university artist-researchers are increasingly involved in interdisciplinary initiatives that cross university disciplines and may also include the participation of artists and organizations beyond the university. For these and other reasons, there is a growing recognition that artist-researchers have something very vital to contribute to the contemporary university research community.*

SSHRC sought to address these problems through the creation of a pilot program that targets faculty members who regularly span the boundaries between the creative arts and traditional academic research. In 2002, SSHRC approved the development of a new initiative to support artist-researchers in their pursuit of artistic knowledge—the Research/Creation Grants in Fine Arts Program. This program was created as a pilot because there was a perception that it entailed greater risks than programs that fall into the historically privileged sectors of SSHRC support. This pilot program constitutes the subject of the present evaluation.

Program Logic Model

The evaluation team and the AEC developed a logic model of the program. Figure 1 depicts the program's influences/external factors, inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes. The model uses a top-down diagrammatic structure to represent the program's composition and process flow. It is important however that the structure should not be seen as representing a solely linear progression or a hierarchy; it is assumed that the various elements are all equally essential parts of the system and that they are influenced by one another in a continuous feedback process. This evaluation largely focuses on the program activities and outputs, though a number of issues related to program inputs and immediate outcomes or impacts will be considered. The elements that will be the focus of the evaluation are indicated in blue in the framed box on the far left-hand side of the figure.

Influences/External Factors—both the dynamics driving the demand for such a program (*Push*) and barriers to the fulfillment of that demand (*Pull*)—were essential to the conception of SSHRC's Research/Creation Grants in Fine Arts program. An overall increase in artist-researchers in post-secondary institutions and global interest in fine arts research have created a heightened requirement for monetary support; however, artist-researchers have limited funding opportunities. The program's *Inputs* represent the resources used to complete its mission and obtain the desired results. In this model, these include all levels of SSHRC governance and the allotted budget for the program, as well as the vital participation of the program's core audience, including arts stakeholders and communities, post-secondary institutions, the CCA, and, of course, artist-researchers.

The major recurring processes involved in program operations comprise the *Activities* section of the model. The left-hand side of the section includes activities undertaken by SSHRC, such as outreach to program clientele, adjudication and peer review management, and performance monitoring and measurement. The right-hand side details the practices of program fund recipients, such as the production and diffusion of high-quality research, and the training and mentoring of students. The program's *Outputs* are the tangible results of these processes—the "products" of the program. On the left-hand side of the model are products that are internal to the program, while the products of the target community, including research and training outputs, are on the right-hand side.

Finally, the section on program outcomes presents the assumed impacts of the program on its clientele, as well as on the broader community. *Immediate outcomes* are changes in the behaviour, knowledge, and skills of artist-researchers and those within their direct realm of influence, such as students, collaborators, and patrons of the arts, due to the grants received. *Longer-term outcomes* include major milestones and lasting changes that are predicted to occur on a broader scale, such as within institutions, organizations, communities, and systems, owing to the existence of SSHRC's Research/Creation Grants in Fine Arts program.

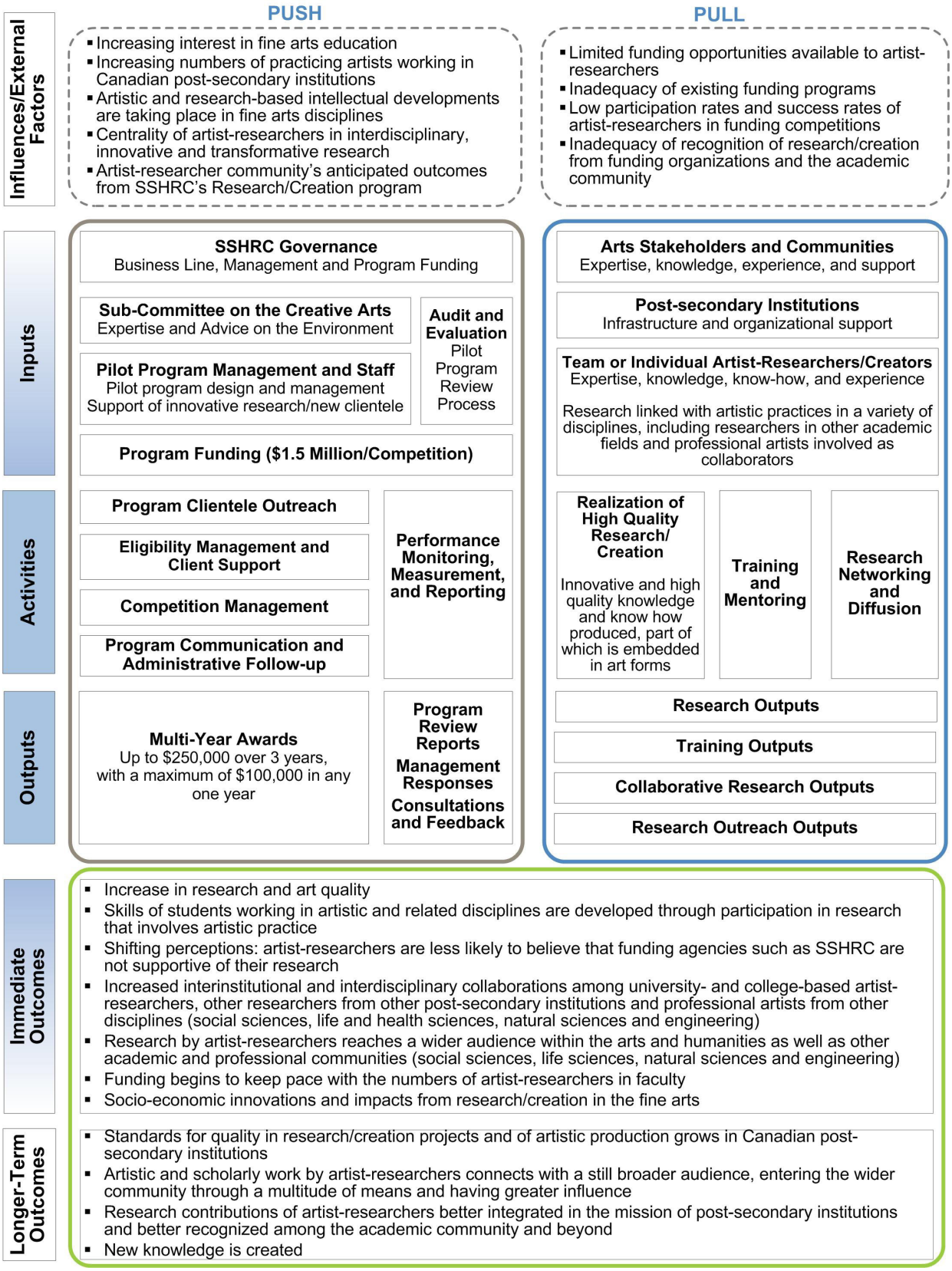

Figure 1 Logic Model for SSHRC's Research/Creation in Fine Arts Pilot Program

Methodological Approach

This evaluation is based on the triangulation of evidence obtained using the following methodological instruments: file and document review, roundtable workshop, and web surveys. (These instruments are described in greater detail in Annex A). An in-depth program document and file review and an environmental scan were conducted to verify whether there are other similar programs or initiatives in Canada and in other countries and to examine issues such as alternative designs and continued relevance. The roundtable workshop with grant recipients constituted an important line of evidence for this evaluation. The workshop proved to be a valuable instrument for confirming, pinpointing, and/or raising unforeseen research questions/hypotheses. It enabled participatory brainstorming and provided considerable input into a wide range of issues of shared concern related to SSHRC's pilot program. The evidence from this event offered insight into the development of the web survey instruments. The roundtable documentation, including the workshop program (which lists the thematic issues and related questions that provided the structure of the discussion, and the workshop attendees), is presented in the Methodological Appendix (Annex B) together with the roundtable feedback (Annex C). Following the roundtable, three web-based surveys were administered to program applicants and university stakeholders: 1) funded applicants; 2) unfunded applicants (comparable group); and 3) post-secondary managers and research or grant officers. The survey questionnaires used in these evaluation instruments can be found in the Methodological Appendix (Annexes D, E, and F). This evaluation uses a dialectical analysis of funded and unfunded applicants. Both populations tend to display inherent biases when they answer polls and surveys relating to grant programs. Grantees often exhibit a positive bias and are more likely to be satisfied with the program, and even if they are not, will often refrain from "biting the hand that feeds them." Unsuccessful applicants, on the other hand, often exhibit frustration and a negative bias. It is important to critically consider the opinions of both populations.

The response rate was 71% for the survey of funded applicants (see Table I) and the margin of error ±6.6% (19 times out of 20). The response rate of unfunded applicants was 32% and the margin of error ±7.9% (19 times out of 20). The overall response rate was 41%, with a corresponding margin of error of ±5.8%. This sample size is appropriate for performing a comparative analysis between funded and unfunded groups.

Table I Response rates of web surveys of funded applicants and unfunded applicants

Web survey	Population (N)	Respondents	Response rate (%)[1]	Margin of Error[2]
Funded applicants	**90**	**64**	**71.1%**	**±6.6%**
Funded applicants (2003/2005)	59	45	76.3%	±7.2%
Funded applicants (2006)	31	19	61.3%	±14.2%
Unfunded applicants	**323**	**104**	**32.2%**	**±7.9%**
Total	**413**	**168**	**40.7%**	**±5.8%**

1 Response rate = Number of completed surveys, divided by the total sample, including unreachable potential respondents.
2 At the 95% confidence level (19 times out of 20).

Limits of this evaluation

The program being evaluated is in the pilot stage and in the early state of existence; therefore, little information is available on program outputs and outcomes and no performance measurement or monitoring data system has been implemented. No baseline measures were available for this evaluation, and only two final project reports had been completed by grantees.

Because this program's clientele is relatively new to SSHRC, and because of the lack of baseline data, the evaluation instruments selected for the evaluation mainly focus on the collection of data and information on applicants. No interviews or surveys of independent key informants or experts without a stake in the program were conducted. Also, case studies could not be used to exemplify program outputs and outcomes; these dimensions will be more easily measurable in future evaluations. Finally, it was determined that a cost-effectiveness analysis was not pertinent to this evaluation exercise.

1 RELEVANCE AND ALTERNATIVES

1.1 RELEVANCE

The overarching goal of the five-year (2003–2008) Research/Creation Grants in Fine Arts pilot program is to foster excellence in research in artistic disciplines. In addition, the program has four specific objectives, established after intensive consultation with the artist-researcher community:

- to support high-quality research/creation in projects that advance knowledge in the fine arts and enhance the quality of artistic production in Canadian post-secondary institutions;
- to develop the research skills of graduate and undergraduate students who are working in artistic and related disciplines through their participation in research involving artistic practice;
- to facilitate the dissemination and presentation of high quality work to a broad public through a diversity of scholarly and artistic means; and,
- to foster opportunities for collaboration among university- and college-based artist-researchers, other university and college researchers, and professional artists.

Overall, the results of this consultation point to a strong consensus within the applicant population that the program objectives are relevant to their artistic research activities (with margins of error ranging from ±2.8% to ±5.4%; 19/20). Moreover, most of the survey population did not feel that the objectives should be modified to better support their research activities and the needs of artist-researchers. This consensus, involving funded and unfunded applicants and also managers/grant officers from the three competition rounds (2003, 2005, and 2006), is reflected in the measurement of their perception of the continued relevance of program objectives (Table II). The greatest consensus was over the relevance of objectives to support high quality research (objective 1) and facilitate the dissemination of high quality work (objective 3). Agreement about the relevance of objectives 2 and 4 was less consensual, but on the whole, the results clearly point to the relevance of the program's objectives.

Table II Applicants' Perceptions of Relevance of Objectives

Program objective	Very relevant/ Relevant	Not very relevant/ Not relevant	N	*Margin of error*[1]
1. Support high-quality research/creation	95%	5%	**167**	*(±2.8%)*
2. Develop the research skills of graduate and undergraduate students	87%	13%	**165**	*(±4.3%)*
3. Facilitate the dissemination and presentation of high quality work	95%	5%	**167**	*(±2.8%)*
4. Foster opportunities for collaboration	76%	24%	**166**	*(±5.4%)*

[1] At the 95% confidence level (19 out of 20); total population 474 applicants.

Applicants generally felt very positively toward the relevance of the program. The following are short summaries that attempt to synopsize responses to open-ended survey questions:

- The program is adequate for all of the needs of artist-researchers; it fills a previously empty niche. (53 comments)
- The program is really beneficial to artist-researchers and their students; keep up the good work; make this program permanent. (38 comments)
- The program encourages multi-/inter-disciplinarity and collaboration. (20 comments)
- The program gives credibility and validation to artist-researchers and helps to improve the stature of this discipline in academia. (16 comments)

However, a number of respondents had some reservations with regard to the current objectives and related aspects of the program, expressed in such terms as:

- Lack of clarity and simplicity concerning eligible projects and program objectives. (24 comments)
- The program must be modified to better reflect the artistic perspective of research. (15 comments)
- The program has enormous potential but still needs to be refined, mostly to make its objectives and criteria clearer and to broaden its scope. (11 comments)

Many of the roundtable workshop participants expressed the opinion that the first program objective (support for high-quality research/creation) to "advance knowledge in their own field" may be too narrow and that it was important that the work and the results of that work do not remain internal to the discipline. As one artist-researcher explained, "I am interested not so much in advancing the discipline than I am in taking methods that are proper to the fine arts and the creative process and allowing other disciplines to see that they *need* our methods. If they could adopt our methods, their work would be far more productive. So we have something that is extremely valuable to offer to other researchers."

Participants in the survey noted that dissemination and presentation practices (objective 3) differ between the arts and the sciences. For example, artists have the opportunity to disseminate their work quickly whereas in the sciences, the process unfolds at a much slower rate. However, the phrase "broad public" confused some participants; as one stated, "It seems to me that we have many publics" or many different audiences at various levels of expertise to which any one piece of art can be shown. This, then, makes it all the more important to distinguish between disseminating work to peers and to the public. "Dissemination to a broad public" may not be possible through the means traditionally used by artists, such as exhibition and performance spaces (galleries and theatres, for example). One participant stated that "The question of dissemination was understood by some of my colleagues as though it had to mean some kind of conference proceedings, writing... and that was one of the things that had them worried." Though multiple forms of dissemination (academic, contextual, etc.) are needed, artists are generally less dependent on modes traditional in the sciences, such as journal articles and conferences. Those in the arts wishing to reach a mass audience are more likely able to use the increasingly popular means of "super distribution", which are typically supported by technologies such as the internet.

Some applicants stated that the program is too rigid in its requirements concerning graduate student training and collaboration (objective 2). More specifically, a number of respondents (22 comments) did not feel that the objective to develop the research skills of students (objective 2) was very relevant; however, most of these respondents were unfunded applicants. Although this dissent has to be taken into account, it should be noted that many survey respondents stressed the importance of training and mentoring. Many indicated that one of the pleasures of being in the position of having their projects funded by SSHRC was being able to see how students responded to their roles in the research projects and how this participation influenced, for example, their artistic development, research skills, creative interests, and career decisions.

The objective on which there was least agreement was facilitation of collaboration (objective 4). This was also echoed at the roundtable discussion; many artist-researchers strongly believe that this aspect should be de-emphasized relative to the other three objectives. Not surprisingly, survey respondents who worked on their funded projects within a team (students and/or other collaborators) ranked the fourth objective more highly than those who worked individually: 87% of team applicants felt that this objective was "relevant" or "very relevant", as opposed to 67% of individual applicants, and 24% of individual as opposed to 7% of team applicants ranked the objective as "not very relevant",. Roundtable participants had had very dissimilar experiences with respect to collaboration. Those who had found it difficult to find collaborators or maintain collaborative relationships felt that this was due to factors such as conflicts in scheduling (especially when collaborators are in different time zones or are professional artists, not working at a university, whose costs of living are not covered by consultancy fees or honoraria, forcing them also to work elsewhere) and that collaborators did not assume ownership of the project, regardless of whether or not their role in it was substantial, if grant monies were distributed to a university other than their own. Many artist/researchers had found it easy to find collaborators, and some had been sought out by interested individuals. It was generally felt that the ease with which collaborative relationships can be formed depends largely on the field(s) involved, but the infrastructure within the arts for supporting collaboration is generally limited. One participant in the roundtable expressed appreciation of the fact that the objective incorporates the possibility of including professional artists as collaborators. The importance of collaborating with other artists or researchers outside of their own discipline was also emphasized.

Although producing and diffusing high quality research and training graduate students, are defining aspects of academic life, there is a need for SSHRC to make a clearer case for why it wants researchers/creators to collaborate. The documentation currently provided by SSHRC makes the implicit assumption that collaboration is worthwhile, but provides little justification for this program objective. It is not enough to state that collaboration is beneficial—the potential advantages from greater collaboration should be explained and substantiated with empirical evidence, using the performance indicators defined. This would make it easier to determine whether increased collaboration has the intended effect; at this stage it seems that the argument is somewhat circular, and the intended effect is simply collaboration as an end in itself.

1.2 Comparable Funding Programs and Alternatives

An environmental scan of research/creation programs reveals that, aside from initiatives by the FQRSC, there has been nothing remotely similar in Canada for this population of scholars. In fact, there is no comparable program in terms of total investments ($13.4 million) in research/creation projects, size (an award value of up to $250,000 per project), scope (nearly 100 individuals from a wide range of artistic disciplines funded during the 5-year pilot phase), and funding tenure (three years).

Despite the relatively rare occurrence of specific programs that support research/creation, the difficulties experienced by artist-researchers in Canada are not unique. For instance, in the UK, the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), in September 2006, implemented a stream (or "route"), replacing the Small Grants in the Creative and Performing Arts Scheme of funding with the Research Grants: Practice-led and Applied Route.[1] In this scheme, research must include practice as an integral component and/or have an application beyond the higher education sector. This scheme gives a maximum grant of GB£20,000 (CDN $42,500) for one year.

The problems faced by artist-researchers in Canada were recognized in Quebec some years ago and a series of investigations in the 1990s concluded that artist-researchers were eligible neither for the traditional funding provided for artists, which is oriented towards independent creators, nor most of the traditional funding for university researchers, who were not expected to have a creative output in the artistic sense. These investigations identified a number of reasons for the low rate of success of artist-researchers in traditional research grant competitions: program objectives were not sufficiently clear to artist-researchers; application forms, selection criteria, and selection committees were not adapted to the specific output of artist-researchers; a doctoral degree was a prerequisite for obtaining a grant, a condition that was too restrictive for that field; and programs often favoured teams, whereas artist-researchers often work alone.[2]

The FQRSC, a Quebec agency with similar objectives to SSHRC, made several attempts to open up its funding process to university-based artists. At first, it simply broadened the mandate of existing programs, but made little effort to adapt its processes and programs to the specific needs of new artist-researchers. This was unsuccessful, and now, having moved to the provision of programs specifically designed for artist-researchers, the FQRSC's experience reveals that substantial time and effort are required for the promotion of such programs to overcome entrenched perceptions that "artists need not apply" and to attract significant numbers of applications. The *Programme d'appui à la recherche-création* offers $60,000 per year for a maximum of $150,000 over three years. This program

[1] http://www.ahrb.ac.uk/apply/research/research_grants/the_practice-led_applied_route.asp (Visited: July 5, 2007)

[2] Fonds québécois de la recherche sur la société et la culture (2003). *Pour changer le monde de la recherche-création : Un dernier virage*. Rapport du comité recherche-création. p. 9.

shows the highest similarities to SSHRC's Research/Creation pilot program in terms of design and delivery and was used by SSHRC as a model.

The objectives of the AHRC and FQRSC programs are similar to those of SSHRC, including the objectives of supporting high quality research and the advancement of knowledge in this field, and the dissemination and transfer of research outcomes to the academic community and to the public at large. However, compared to the AHRC, the FQRSC's program explicitly promotes the training of artist-researchers and offers team- and individual-based researchers distinct levels of funding.

The CCA provides long-term and project grants to visual artists, who are required to demonstrate two out of four principal activity components, including Research/Creation. Long-term grants in the visual arts restrict artists from holding a SSHRC grant and a Canada Council long-term grant at the same time. The CCA, within the Grants to Film and Video Artists in the Media Arts Section and in the Inter-Arts Office, also offer grants specifically for Research/Creation in the context of the production of new work by independent artists. These awards, ranging from $16,000 to $80,000, target professional artists and are not intended specifically to support academic research work.

Hexagram (the Institute for Research/Creation in Media Arts and Technologies), located in Montreal, has established the Hexagram Fund for University Research and Creation in Media Arts and Technologies specifically for academics in that particular field. This disciplinary funding program offers a maximum of $75,000, and the grant duration is variable.

The web surveys of funded and unfunded applicants provided further evidence of the fact that funding alternatives to SSHRC program are sparse in Canada. A sizeable proportion (36%) of funded respondents' comments (36%) on the advantages of the SSHRC Research/Creation program emphasized that no other grant is as adequate and that it fills a previously empty niche, though a much smaller group of unfunded respondents (17%) were of this opinion. Several of the university managers/grant officers surveyed also commented that there is no equivalent program (9 out of 20 comments). Two main sources of funding were identified by funded applicants: the CCA (24%) and the provincial arts councils in British Columbia, Ontario, and New Brunswick (17.5%). In general, alternative funding could be found from provincial government (28% of funded respondents), university (28%), and federal government (20%) sources.

The majority (60%) of unfunded respondents, however, had not found sources of funding for their planned research/creation activities, and 40% mentioned that their project was unable to proceed. A further 20% of projects proceeded almost in their entirety, and 35% proceeded with only a few research program components. The project components mainly affected by lack of funds are those being promoted by the SSHRC pilot program, such as research/creation production, student training, dissemination, and collaboration. This supports the evidence that a large proportion of the alternative funding sources for research/creation are not adequate in terms of specificity, diversity, and monetary value, nor are they available to artists active in Canadian post-secondary institutions.

2 DESIGN AND DELIVERY

This section examines the pilot program's design and delivery. The evaluation of program design focuses on determining levels of satisfaction among the program's stakeholders, identifying which parts work effectively and which require improvement, and revealing any programming or service gaps. The evaluation of program delivery primarily aims to establish whether the individual components of the program's system of delivery responds to and reflects the needs of artist-researchers and are in line with the program objectives. Overall, it appears that design and delivery are adequate for such a young program, although there is room for some fine-tuning.

2.1 PROGRAM DESIGN

Although the program's design was found to be largely satisfactory, especially when its status as novel, high-risk, and experimental is considered, the data gathered for this evaluation identified design issues in three areas: program definitions; eligibility requirements; and budget and provision of funds.

2.1.1 Definitions

The purpose of the program is to support and develop excellence in research in artistic disciplines by providing financial assistance to selected artist-researchers who engage in research/creation; program elements therefore hinge on the definition of artist-researcher and program of research/creation. SSHRC defines the artist-researcher as:

> a member of the faculty of a Canadian postsecondary institution whose work involves research, the creation of works of art, and the training of undergraduate and/or graduate students.

Additionally, artist-researchers' activities must be in line with SSHRC's definition of research/creation:

> any research activity or approach to research that forms an essential part of a creative process or artistic discipline and that directly fosters the creation of literary/artistic works. The research must address clear research questions, offer theoretical contextualization within the relevant field or fields of literary/artistic inquiry, and present a well considered methodological approach. Both the research and the resulting literary/artistic works must meet peer standards of excellence and be suitable for publication, public performance or viewing.

Surveyed applicants and university managers/grant officers generally considered the above definition to be "appropriate" or "very appropriate" as the basis for the program. When asked how the definition could be refined, the most common response of applicants (22 funded respondents and 24 unfunded respondents) involved specific aspects of the terminology used—in particular, "research question" and "methodological approach"—which were perceived as being far more relevant to the context of scientific research in the natural sciences than to research/creation. Both survey respondents and roundtable participants were unhappy with the use of these terms, and a number of alternatives were suggested, including "strategy" and "process of inquiry".

2.1.2 Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants fall into one of two primary categories—applicant/principal investigator (PI), or co-applicant/co-investigator—or one of three secondary categories—research collaborator, student assistant, or other assistants and support staff. Applicants may apply as individuals or as members of a team (which may be composed entirely of artist-researchers or a mixed group including artist-researchers, researchers in other academic fields, and professional artists). On the whole, these criteria for eligibility appear to be very well understood by funded respondents: 86% felt that the description of the categories of eligible applicants/participants was "adequate" or "very adequate". However, this percentage was significantly lower for unfunded respondents (52%). Furthermore, university managers/grant officers stated that "determining applicant eligibility for the program" was the issue that applicants most frequently consulted them about (85% said that they are "always" or "often" asked for advice on this aspect).

Eligible Projects

The data indicate that there is confusion over what constitutes an eligible research/creation project. The responses to the survey questionnaire confirmed this. For example, many unfunded respondents felt there was a lack of clarity and simplicity over what was an eligible project (24 comments), and more university managers/grant officers who contacted SSHRC were seeking clarification on the eligibility of a project than on any other issues (7 comments). Moreover, 77% of university managers/grant officers stated that applicants come to them "always" or "often" for help in modifying proposal aspects to meet eligibility requirements. However, it was acknowledged that eligibility inquiries and the need to make modifications to projects in order to align them with program requirements are certainly not unique to this program.

The program website presents 11 artistic disciplines and disciplinary groups as being eligible for support. The evidence from the survey suggests that applicants often have problems positioning their practices within SSHRC's definition of research/creation, given the fact that the grants are for the pursuit of research and creation in equal measure. Many survey participants expressed the need for clarification regarding eligible projects or disciplines. Several respondents, both funded and unfunded, felt that SSHRC must be more clear and flexible about emergent disciplines that do not fit well within current boundaries (11 comments). Furthermore, 22% of unfunded respondents felt that the application's listed areas of art research or disciplines were not sufficiently comprehensive. Though the list was originally intended to be descriptive rather than prescriptive, it was still felt by some respondents to be exclusionary. Both survey respondents (funded, 9 comments; unfunded, 13 comments; university managers/grant officers, 4 comments) and roundtable participants suggested that SSHRC should reduce the ambiguity by providing prospective applicants with examples (on a website, for example, or through providing links to project sites) showcasing the diversity of funded artist-researchers' work and giving examples of their "methodology" and "research questions."

2.1.3 Program Budget and Distribution of Funds

The total budget of the Research/Creation in Fine Arts program was $13.4 million, spread over five years and three competitions. Recipients could request a maximum of $100,000 per year, but could not receive more than $250,000 in a three-year period. Most awards were for three years, with the option to renew for a fourth year if grant monies remain.

Tenure of Grant

In general, surveyed stakeholders are very satisfied with the three-year duration of the grant: 62% of funded respondents (2003 and 2005 competitions) responded affirmatively when asked whether three years is a suitable period for completing their project; funded (12 comments) and unfunded (3 comments) respondents commented that the length of the grant period is one of the main advantages of the program; and 93% of university managers/grant officers felt that the duration of the award was "adequate" or "very adequate".

Grant Value

In the first competition round, the average amount awarded to successful applicants was $132,212. It had been higher in the second year, reaching $167,764, but had dropped to $145,158 for the most recent round. Successful applicants to all three competitions were awarded an average of $148,198. By most indications, artist-researchers who have been awarded a program grant are satisfied with the value of their awards. When asked whether the amount of money granted to their project was sufficient for their needs, 82% of funded respondents felt it was "sufficient" or "more than sufficient"; 75% of university managers/grant officers also felt the award value was "adequate" or "very adequate". Funded applicants from the 2003 and 2005 competitions stated that the grants covered an average of 76% of the total budgets of their projects.

Some concern has been expressed over the fact that the maximum grant value, $250,000, was set too high, especially given the relatively small total program budget, and that this greatly limits the percentage of successful applicants (an overall success rate of 19%, in contrast to Standard Research Grants' success rates of 32–41% in recent years). It is likely that the program administrators felt that such a high ceiling for individual grants was necessary for artist-researchers because their work frequently requires the use of expensive equipment and resources. However, it is also worth considering how low success rates factor into the perceptions of artist-researchers who, despite the existence of a program that is designed to cater to them, continue to feel blocked from a tangible source of financial support. Unfunded survey respondents made some useful comments: many felt that one of the main disadvantages of the program is that too few researchers receive funding, and this represented lost time for unsuccessful applicants (7 comments); some noted that the distribution of grants should be adjusted so that more individuals are funded (5 comments); and 11 individuals commented that they would not resubmit an application because the time investment was too great compared to the chances of being funded.

Many of the roundtable participants suggested that SSHRC should consider offering smaller grants, under the umbrella of the program. Many research/creation projects do not necessarily require large grants lasting for three years, and the availability of smaller awards would increase the spectrum and overall number of projects funded. Smaller grants would support smaller-scale projects, but they could also help provide artist-researchers with, as one person put it, a "continuum of funding" for larger projects. These grants could take the form of RTS (Research Time Stipend)-only grants, development grants, or publication grants, for instance. One funded respondent suggested that SSHRC should create small, transitory funds for periods between major grants.

Research Time Stipend (RTS)

Data from the surveys, roundtable workshop, and document and file review indicate that the RTS is hugely importance. One roundtable participant described it as being "absolutely critical to the success of the program." Because teaching and workload expectations for members of arts faculties can be considerable, release time is necessary to enable these individuals to make informed decisions about their research and art. While grantees were very appreciative of the fact that SSHRC allowed them to request a RTS in their application, some felt that the amount they were granted was inadequate. Some funded survey respondents stated that stipends need to be larger and funding for course remissions should increase, and that institutions should not be required to match the release time and course remission amounts (3 comments). However, it is important to note that, for all SSHRC programs, the RTS maximum values are preset and must be matched by the institution, so this is not unique to the program.

2.2 Program Delivery

Although the program's delivery appears to be satisfactory overall, the program's reach, the application process, and the adjudication process were seen as slightly problematic.

2.2.1 Program Promotion, Level of Awareness, and Reach

This section examines three factors: how artist-researchers first learned about the funding opportunity; the primary resources they used during the enquiry/application period; and the clientele reached by the program.

Promotional Efforts

Though limited information has been made available to the evaluators on the actual methods used by SSHRC to promote its program, it seems that the efforts were directed primarily towards university research offices and arts departments, though SSHRC did network and publicize through certain other organizations, such as the Canadian Association of Fine Arts Deans and the CCA, in addition to hosting a limited number of workshops and making special presentations at universities; these activities certainly contributed to the promotion of the program. University staff members appear to have been invaluable in liaising between SSHRC and artist-researchers, and in passing information to individuals most likely to be interested in the program. For instance, university

websites and newsletters frequently posted competition announcements and program updates. Perhaps not surprisingly, 56% of university managers/grant officers considered offices or grant office staff to be the most effective means of promoting the program, followed by SSHRC program staff (19%) and the SSHRC program website (11%) (the potential bias is acknowledged). Roundtable participants also felt that university staff promoted the program more aggressively than SSHRC itself. Perhaps this is why a number of university managers/grant officers, when asked about which aspects SSHRC should offer more support for or make improvements in, commented specifically that efforts in promoting, diffusing, and informing university managers/grant officers should be adapted or changed (10 comments).

The evidence indicates that program promotion (and in particular, campaigning directly to individual artist-researchers) was not a top priority for SSHRC during the pilot phase, but more exhaustive efforts at promoting the program may not have been strictly necessary, given the stronger than expected response (particularly for the first competition) and the resulting high participation rate. However, it is not known whether the information reached those most likely to benefit from such a program. Promotion should not be underestimated as an important component of this program's success, as the inability to reach the target population may downgrade SSHRC's influence with artist-researchers and contribute to the perception that SSHRC is not interested in supporting their research.

Sources of Program Information

Having learned of the existence of the program, survey data indicate that most of the interested applicants (59% of funded and 60% of unfunded respondents) went directly to SSRHC for further information, using the program's website as their primary resource. After the website, the second and third most commonly used resources for all respondents were the research office or grant office staff and material provided by the research office or grant office, respectively. In fact, 42% of surveyed university managers/grant officers stated that their university had developed a specific program, activities, or resources (such as personal mentoring from a research manager, university seed money that indirectly helps applicants, and workshops) to support artist-researchers wanting to apply to the Research/Creation in Fine Arts program.

Nevertheless, as previously noted, many university managers/grant officers would like to see SSHRC make more effort at promoting, diffusing, and informing university research office staff who would work with artist-researchers (10 comments). Specifically, many survey respondents (10 funded, 5 unfunded, and 4 university managers/grant officers) commented that workshops and seminars should be used to communicate information about the program to potential applicants and other relevant university staff.

Program Reach

The program received nearly equal numbers of applications from individual- and team-based clientele. However, the balance in awards between the 2003 and the 2006 competitions had increased slightly (by 7%) in favour of individuals. The gender distribution of applicants and funded projects is

fairly well balanced: 40% female and 60% male applicants. Funded females received 47% of the grants and males, 53%.

When looking at institution size (Table III)[3], the distribution of funds over time had changed, particularly for medium-size institutions, which received 43% of program funds in 2006 compared to 21% in 2003. Conversely, large-sized institutions' shares declined from 54% in 2003 to 40% in 2006; a reduction in the number of applications from this institution category is also notable, dropping from 91 to 47 applicants.

Table III Distribution of applications and provision of funds for SSHRC's pilot program

	Distribution of applications				Distribution of funds			
Institution size	**2003**	**2005**	**2006**	**Total**	**2003**	**2005**	**2006**	**Total**
Large	46%	48%	40%	45%	53.5%	65.1%	39.7%	53%
Medium	25%	30%	31%	28%	21.0%	22.5%	42.7%	29%
Small	19%	15%	15%	17%	12.9%	12.4%	7.0%	11%
University College	4%	1%	2%	2%	2.0%	0.0%	4.1%	2%
Community College	2%	2%	3%	2%	3.2%	0.0%	0.0%	1%
Other/Unknown	6%	3%	9%	5%	7.4%	0.0%	6.4%	5%
Total	**200**	**156**	**118**	**474**	**4,495,208**	**4,361,869**	**4,499,904**	**13,356,981**

The distribution of applicants was compared to statistics on the graduation of artists at the master's and doctoral levels to examine the effectiveness of the program in reaching its intended recipients. Also, provincial and institutional patterns of applications were examined to determine how they correspond to the current graduation patterns of artists with masters and doctoral degrees and to identify any weaknesses in the reach of this program. Table IV summarizes the computation of these data on both the demand for the program and its supply.

Using arts graduates as a proxy indicator for the level of demand, post-secondary institutions located in Quebec and Ontario produced 36% and 40%, respectively, of graduate students (master's and doctoral levels) over the three-year period analysed (2003, 2005, and 2006). This level of demand is consistent with the number of applications received from Ontario. The number of applications from Quebec was lower than expected. This could be due in part to the fact that artist-researchers from

[3] The classification of universities into three size categories is based on the following criteria: 1) the amount of expenditures on sponsored research (reported by CAUBO); 2) the proportion of sponsored R&D expenditures as a percentage of general operating expenditures; and 3) the number of doctoral programs. A university is classified as small if its expenditures on sponsored R&D are less than $10 million and less than 10% of general operating, and whose doctoral programs are less than ten in number. A medium size university is one in which the sponsored research dollar range is between $10-30 million, the percentage of general operating is from 10% to less than 20%, and whose doctoral program counts are between 10 and 30. A large university is one whose sponsored research dollar value is greater than $30 million, whose general operating percentage is more than 20%, and whose doctoral programs are greater than 30. It is worthy of note that the final objective is not to create an individual ranking for universities but rather to group them into three size groups to make possible R&D expenditure estimates at the aggregate level (http://www.statcan.ca/english/sdds/document/5109_D1_T9_V2_E.pdf)

Quebec apply to the FQRSC for project funding in lieu of SSHRC. However, the success rate of applications from Quebec is the highest among the Canadian provinces, and the share of funds granted is comparable to that of Ontario, which has one of the lowest success rates in the country. Potential demand from Ontario for funds in research/creation is confirmed by a high number of graduates and applicants to the pilot program, but projects from Ontario were less likely to be successful. While only 12% of graduates in related art programs come from British Columbia (BC) institutions, BC applicants received a larger than expected share of the funds (23%) and had the second highest success rate.

Table IV Distribution of graduates in arts, applications, and provision of funds for SSHRC's pilot program

	% of Graduates in Arts[1]		Demand for fund[2] (2003, 2005 and 2006)		Provision of funds[2] (2003, 2005 and 2006)				
Region	**Graduate (n)**	**%**	**Application (n)[3]**	**%**	**Grant (n)**	**%**	**Success rate**	**Value ($)**	**%**
Atlantic Region	185	3%	37	7%	7	8%	19%	898,061	7%
Québec	1,940	36%	101	20%	26	29%	26%	3,848,782	29%
Ontario	2,152	40%	173	35%	26	29%	15%	3,925,322	29%
Prairies Region	508	9%	69	14%	11	12%	16%	1,502,045	11%
British Columbia	645	12%	93	24%	21	23%	23%	3,182,771	24%
Total	**5,430**	100%	**473**	100%	**91**	100%	**19%**	**13,356,981**	100%

1 Total number of graduate students (master's and doctoral levels) in selected arts and humanities programs for 2001, 2002, and 2003. Source: Postsecondary Student Information System (PSIS), Statistics Canada.
2 SSHRC administrative data.
3 Administering organization and province is unknown for one application.

The language of applications and the primary language of administrative institutions were analysed in order to characterize the level of reach of the program to francophone communities. Of the 474 applications received for all three competitions, 91% (or 430 applications) were English-language applications and only 9% were submitted in French. This is not a balanced linguistic representation of Canadian demographics since roughly 23% of the Canadian population is francophone (according to Canadian Census data from 2001).

Although the difference is not statistically significant (chi-square test, 0.05), English-language applications were more likely to result in a grant than French-language applications—19.8% of all applications for all competitions that were submitted in English were successful, compared to 13.6% of those submitted in French. The low percentage of French applications is certainly due in large part to the low level of participation of French-language artists from the province of Quebec, where more applications were submitted in English (63%) than in French (37%). The reasons for this imbalance are unclear—though the high number of applications from Concordia University, an English language university in Quebec, accounts in large part for the low proportion of French applications from Quebec (indeed, for all competitions combined, there were more applications originating from Concordia than from any other Canadian institution). The number of French-language applications received decreased from 18 and 19 applications in the first two competitions

to only 7 in the 2006 competition. SSHRC should investigate the low level of participation and the decline of French-language applications and examine whether there are risks that the program may be considered as out of reach for the francophone population.

2.2.2 Application Process

Elements of Application Process

The highest percentage of "very adequate" responses to elements of the application process in the surveys of funded (64%) and unfunded (47%) applicants and university managers/grant officers (30%) was for the availability of application forms. Other highly rated ("very adequate") elements were: amount of information requested in application form; time given to complete the application; and overall SSHRC client support provided to applicants.

In spite of this, some concern has been raised that certain elements of the program's application process are not tailored to the experiences and competencies of artist-researchers. Indeed, when asked about the program's main disadvantages, the most frequently mentioned (14 funded respondents and 25 unfunded respondents) was that application requirements and selection criteria were not adequate or flexible enough for many types of creative projects. This perception was endorsed in the roundtable discussion, as well as in the documentation[4]: applicants did not feel that the application and CV forms reflected their activity, and they were therefore forced to amend their projects, presentation of previous research results, and credentials to fit with a form that was designed for the social sciences. Specifically, while the mandatory SSHRC web-based CV form included a special instruction meant to accommodate artist-researchers, some were not satisfied. About 16% of all "not adequate" votes for elements of the application process were for the ease of use of this online CV form and related instruction. Some roundtable participants noted that the form was in some ways not conducive to the inclusion of the kinds of activities that artists engage in. It is suggested that, where possible, SSHRC should provide artist-researchers with greater flexibility within the framework of the CV.

Funded and unfunded survey respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they were required to adapt/modify their research/creation project in their grant application to meet the criteria, requirements, and objectives of the program. The survey results reveal another interesting difference: funded respondents were far less likely than unfunded respondents to have adapted or modified the elements of their project. For example, no more than 6% of funded respondents felt they had to alter any project element "entirely", while as many as 20% of unfunded respondents had to do so. In addition, nearly half (47%) of all unfunded respondents had to alter their creation program/orientation "significantly", while only 8% of funded respondents did so. This suggests that

[4] University of Alberta (2004, Jan. 5) Letter from Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts.

the adjudication process works well in its capacity to select applications that were a "natural fit" for the program.

2.2.3 Adjudication Process

Composition of Adjudication Committee

From the outset, securing adjudication committee members with an interdisciplinary outlook and a wide spectrum of experience in the creative and fine arts was stressed as a priority for the program.[5] While this goal has largely been achieved, and every effort has been made to find committee members that are well-versed in a wide number of fields, on occasion external experts have been used.

Data indicate that some specific issues materialized during the program's pilot phase. Despite the fact that SSHRC officers state that ideally meetings should include at least two members from the same disciplinary field, if the proposals being assessed are from their home institutions, experts are forced to absent themselves from the proceedings which means that only one experts remains and this one does not necessarily master the language used in the grant application. It became clear after the first competition that there was a need to increase the number of individuals who could read abstract French, and efforts were made to remedy this situation.[6] Overall, the lower success rate (13.6%) of French-language applicants compared to English-language applicants (19.8%) should be examined—especially to establish whether it is tied to the committee's lack French language ability or to other fundamental factors such as lower quality of French-language applications.

Due to the concentration of expertise in particular subject areas at specific universities, assessment of these applications is generally not made by those most capable of accurately assessing them, either because of specific expertise[7] or level of French fluency and French Canadian cultural awareness. A roundtable participant noted that being functionally bilingual is not enough to be sufficiently qualified to evaluate the proposals made by French-speaking Canadians, as knowledge of high quality journals, editors, and venues are not derived from ability to read French, but rather from knowledge of this cultural environment. Also, while conflict of interest guidelines have necessitated the directive that requires certain experts to leave adjudication meetings, perhaps having more expertise available would balance out the absence of those experts.

The evaluation revealed a perception prevalent among stakeholders that the constitution of the committee may not allow for adequate specialization, due to its attempt to represent the overwhelming breadth and diversity of applicants' areas of study. However, the difficulties of assembling a committee that can accommodate all applicants and committee members alike were

[5] SSHRC (2003, June 17) Minutes, SSHRC staff orientation meeting.

[6] SSHRC (2004, Apr. 8). Update/Memorandum to Standing Committee on Research Support.

[7] See e.g. Hosington, B. (2005). Research/Creation Grants in Fine Arts Competition Observer's Report.

acknowledged, and solutions are not straightforward. At the present time, given these difficulties, it is not possible to make summative conclusions about the appropriateness of committee structures in the pilot phase.

Adjudication Process

Not surprisingly, unsuccessful respondents viewed the adjudication and peer review process less positively than their successful counterparts: while 87% of funded respondents felt that the process was "adequate" or "very adequate", only 22% of unfunded respondents felt the same. Additionally, while only 2% of funded applicants judged the process to be completely inadequate, 62% of unfunded respondents rated the process as such. Consequently, these data have to be considered with care as they reflect both the frustrations of not having been selected, but also, conversely, the self-satisfactory assertion that the selection process works well for those who have been selected. In this context, neither type of response should be taken completely at face value.

Unfunded respondents' perceptions of the adjudication process as being inadequate were related mostly to the composition of the adjudication committee. These respondents commented that the jury must consist of more specialist experts, and that more consistency is needed in decision-making (13 comments); they also felt that one of the program's main disadvantages was that jury members were not sufficiently well informed about the supported disciplines (9 comments). In addition, some noted that a higher level of bilingualism is needed (9 comments). Respondents constructed their views about the quality of the adjudication committee based on two main sources of information: 1) word of mouth and rumours regarding the committee membership, which probably becomes fairly well known in a close-knit community such as the arts; and 2) the quality of the feedback received by grant applicants. Although nothing can be done to turn unsuccessful applications into successful grants given a set financial budget, providing high quality feedback can certainly alleviate much of the pain and frustration felt by unsuccessful applicants. Evidence obtained in this evaluation suggests that the quality of the feedback was not as high as might be desired.

The survey also revealed that many university managers/grant officers perceived that there was the possibility of bias in the adjudication process with respect to two criteria: scholar's status, and size of home institution. More than half of the university managers/grant officers surveyed felt that being a new scholar was a disadvantage compared to being an established scholar, which 58% felt was, in fact, an advantage. This raises concerns because it has been noted by an impartial observer of the adjudication process that committee members in the most recent competition did not pay heed to scholar status, unlike adjudications in the Standard Research Grants, where most members emphasize the differences between new and established scholars.[8] Furthermore, 26% of university managers believed that applicants coming from a large home institution were at an advantage over those from small institutions. Both new scholars and applicants from small universities face

[8] Hosington, B. (2005). Ibid.

challenges compared to established scholars and those from larger universities. It has been suggested that committee members flag these potentially disadvantaged applicants to remind themselves that expectations and considerations must be different.[9] However, it is beyond the role of this evaluation to determine how these aspects should be dealt with. This is largely a question for SSHRC policy and, to some degree, Canadian politics and values. SSHRC's mission is to promote excellence, but it is clear that it sometimes clashes with Canadian values of fairness and equality of opportunity.

Feedback

The highest percentage of both funded and unfunded respondent "not adequate" survey responses were for quantity of feedback received on applications (21% and 78%, respectively), followed by quality of feedback (20% and 78%, respectively); for university managers, quality of feedback received the most "not adequate" votes (27%). In addition, a large majority of university managers/grant officers have had to contact SSHRC at least once in order to get detailed feedback for unsuccessful and successful applicants respectively. This was confirmed by the roundtable participants, who noted that the feedback on their applications that was received was minimal; indeed, two stated having received no feedback at all. Those who had received feedback felt that the commentary from the evaluation committee was scant and only moderately helpful (one participant used the term "cryptic" to describe the feedback she had received).

Unfunded respondents were particularly concerned about the level of feedback, as it could impact on their chances of making future applications; some (9) responded that there is a need for better creative feedback for applicants, and that committee decisions need to be made more transparent, and 9 stated that they would not be resubmitting an application because they were discouraged by what they felt was the seemingly unpredictable nature of the committee's choices. This suggests that inadequate feedback gives applicants the impression that adjudication committee members do not have the required competencies. This result should be considered with great care because unsuccessful applicants are more likely to exhibit negative reactions. However, it would be unwise to simply dismiss these comments out of hand, as there are multiple lines of evidence suggesting that feedback was poor and not on a par with the considerable efforts required to prepare an application; it fell short of what would be expected from a prestigious national organization such as SSHRC. This is a difficult issue; adjudication committee members give of their time and expertise voluntarily and requiring them to provide detailed feedback on every application would be problematic and perhaps deter commitment. In addition, providing more detailed comments could mean that it would take longer for applicants to receive feedback. However, it is possible that a better trail system could be put in place, which would capture feedback collected at every stage of the adjudication process in a coherent way. It is recommended that SSHRC examine this variable in greater detail.

[9] Idem.

3 OUTPUTS AND IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES

The measurement of excellence, outputs, and outcomes of research activities is never straightforward and is more difficult in the humanities, and even more so in the arts where outputs take on a far wider range of forms than in the natural sciences. Around the world, funding agencies are increasingly investing substantial efforts and financial means in developing systematic approaches to the evaluation of researchers' current and historical credentials, outputs, and the outcomes and impacts of their research. These approaches use metrics for the evaluation of scientific disciplines that have similar cultures and *modus operandi* in the diffusion and use of their research (such as publications in peer reviewed journals indexed in bibliographical databases). However, the various forms of outputs and diffusion modes used by researchers in the social sciences and (particularly) humanities, as well as the creative arts and media, are more challenging for those wanting to collect and benchmark their research activity.[10] This trend towards the quantification of research results is often rejected by university-based artists around the world and there have been strong views expressed about the inadequacies of the metrics and evaluation criteria promoted in United Kingdom[11] by the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), and in Australia[12] [13] by the Research Quality Framework (RQF). In addition to irrelevant quantitative measures of their practice-based research activities, there are concerns over the peer review process in the arts[14], which is not equivalent to that used in other academic disciplines in terms of operational research, outputs, and community impact. Moreover, "peers" often come from outside academia, making artist-researchers uncomfortable with evaluative framework systems geared to research in general.

Consequently, the translation of SSHRC's Research/Creation Pilot program objectives into measures of success presents great challenges. Some of the researchers surveyed were reluctant to pinpoint the outcomes of their grants, stating that the nature of the program and the work of artist-researchers are not conducive to the measurement of products and effects; as one respondent concluded, "It can't really be quantified." Another remarked, "To speak of the project in such terms feels inappropriate. The process, though research-driven, is an exploratory one. Insights have been gained, but not 'knowledge' or 'know-how'." Others, however, felt that the program's impacts *could* be directly perceived and therefore assessed: "These projects have immediate impact on society because of their nature, which is quite different from many other forms of research. This is something to notice and highlight."

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[10] Archambault É. and Vignola-Gagné É. (2004) *The Use of Bibliometrics in the Social Sciences and Humanities*. A Science-Metrix report prepared for SSHRC. 84 pages.

[11] AHRC. (2003 Sept.) *The RAE and Research in the Creative & Performing Arts. AHRC Response to Consultations*. (http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/about/policy/response/the_rae_research_in_the_creative_performing_arts.asp)

[12] Woodrow, R. (2005, Sept. 28-30) The irrelevant consumers of culture. *ACUADS 2005 Conference, Artists, designers and creative communities*. School of Contemporary Arts, Edith Cowan University. Perth. Western Australia.

[13] Schippers, H. (2006 Oct. 4) The measure of creativity. The Australian Higher Education Supplement.

[14] Fournier, M., Gingras, Y. and Mathurin, C. (1989). Création artistique et champ universitaire : qui sont les pairs? *Sociologie et sociétés*. 21(2): 63-74.

This section presents original information about outputs and outcomes of the pilot program, such as quality of research, training of students, collaborative activities, dissemination activities and unexpected outcomes.

3.1 Change in Research Quality

The survey clearly showed that SSHRC-funded projects were responsible for several forms of knowledge and know-how creation. A characterization of the responses revealed that the most important results are balanced between knowledge or know how in research and in creation. In fact, 41% of respondents' comments pointed to the generation of a deeper understanding of their research/creation area and the development of new research directions; 44% of respondents' comments claimed the development of innovative artistic methods and techniques as well as the production of new art works. Experience in communicating art and knowledge and developing collaborative work with other researchers or students were other gains expressed by some respondents.

Funded researchers also reported a general increase in the quality of their research and their creativity. They cited differences in their research approaches and the formation of new theoretical frameworks. They also noted that they were able to combine types of research that were previously thought incongruous. All of these outcomes had led to the consideration of new critical approaches in their fields. Most of all, respondents felt that the program greatly changed the way they performed research because they were suddenly allowed a measure of freedom, which previously that they did not have. They were no longer required to limit their ideas or to consider scaled-down versions of their projects; the funding freed them from the restraints imposed by lack of time, finance, and other resources. It gave them the licence to remain true to their interests.

It emerged that time was the biggest influence on the quality of funded work. Long-term funding allowed researchers, in the words of one grantee, a "deep exploration of the subject matter, that has not been observed before when funded year to year or by short term grants." Many stressed that the three-year span is one of the most welcome elements of the program. The time allotted to projects not only enables these extensive investigations to proceed in an organic, unforced manner (which is one of the crucial elements of success of creative projects), but it frees grantees from having to prepare grant applications or engage in fundraising efforts for a significant length of time.

When asked to rank quantitatively and qualitatively the level of impact the SSHRC grant had on their artistic and research/creation activities, responses were very positive (Table V). The aspect that received the highest ranking is the qualitative nature of research/creation activity, followed by the quantitative dimension of research/creation and the qualitative nature of the artistic activity. It should be noted that respondents working on individual projects tended to rate the impact of funding on their research and artistic activities as null or somewhat negative, while the perceptions of team-based funded respondents were more homogeneous.

Table V Perception of funded artist-researchers on the degree of impact funding has had on their artistic and research/creation activities, by individual or team status

Individual	Cumul*	Very positive	Somewhat positive	No impact	Somewhat negative	Very negative	Not applicable	No answer	N
Qualitative nature of your artistic activity	**85**	71%	13%	8%	4%		4%		**24**
Quantitative nature of your artistic activity	**78**	58%	17%	8%	13%		4%		**24**
Qualitative nature of your research-creation activity	**90**	83%	4%	4%	4%			4%	**24**
Quantitative nature of your research-creation activity	**84**	71%	8%	13%	4%		4%		**24**
Your inter- and cross-disciplinary practices	**74**	46%	21%	25%			4%	4%	**24**

Team	Cumul*	Very positive	Somewhat positive	No impact	Somewhat negative	Very negative	Not applicable	No answer	N
Qualitative nature of your artistic activity	**90**	76%	19%				5%		**21**
Quantitative nature of your artistic activity	**85**	62%	29%		5%		5%		**21**
Qualitative nature of your research-creation activity	**96**	86%	14%						**21**
Quantitative nature of your research-creation activity	**92**	71%	24%	5%					**21**
Your inter- and cross-disciplinary practices	**93**	70%	30%					5%	**21**

* The values are weighted percentages for which 100 was attributed to "Very positive", 75 to "Somewhat positive", 50 to "No impact", 25 to "Somewhat" negative", and 0 to "Very negative".

3.2 Participation and Training of Students

The training and mentoring of students appears to be one of the most tangible results of the Research/Creation pilot program to date. Student training was one of the important focal points of the roundtable workshop discussions, where it was identified as one of the key ways that participants believed their practices changed after being awarded the grant. For these artist-researchers, the traditional roles of instructor and student were somewhat reversed, as working on funded projects allowed those in either role to see the other as more of an equal in creation. In the words of one teacher, where previously students had been regarded as "contract players" they are now "primary creators".

Additionally, because student artists working on SSHRC-funded projects are compensated for their time, participation in projects is far more attractive. Also, it is easier to place students who have worked on SSHRC-funded projects in internships with professional arts companies. Students have more opportunity to receive feedback on a regular basis and practice working in collaboration with others. In addition to theoretical competency in research and creation, they also acquire competencies in project management and activities such as fund raising. For example, one roundtable participant stated that his students had been able to use the money from a project to raise more money from the community and from the federal government, effectively matching the SSHRC funding. Therefore, for this project and these students, the SSHRC grant acted as seed money that eventually multiplied fivefold.

Surveyed funded applicants confirmed that many students participated in or benefited from the grants received. In fact, 45 funded artist-researchers estimated that more than 450 bachelor's level, 400 master's level, and 65 doctorate level students have participated in their funded projects (Figure 2). Interestingly, individual- and team-based projects involved about the same number of students overall.

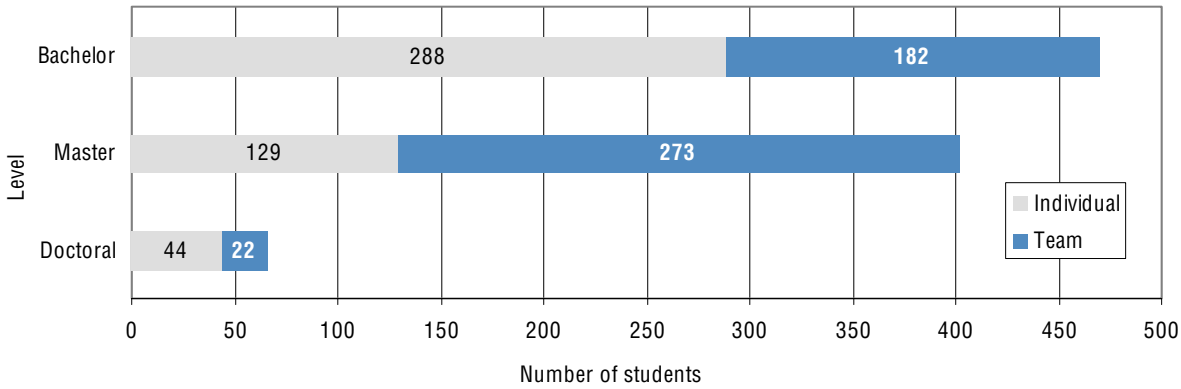

Figure 2 Number of participating students in research/creation projects as declared by funded artist-researchers (n=45), by level of study and team/individual status

N: Number of answers: Bachelor's, Individual: 24/Team: 21; Master's, Individual: 24/Team: 18; Doctoral, Individual: 25/Team: 21.

Finally, the actual perceptions of funded applicants of the impact of SSHRC funding are revealing, and support the notion that the program has had a measurable immediate outcome on their training and mentoring activities. From the perspective of the funded artists surveyed, the program has had a significant positive impact on training (Table VI). The majority of survey respondents rated the impact of funding on their graduate students' training activities (96%) and their research (96%) and creation (91%) skills positively ("somewhat positive" or "very positive"). The impact of the pilot program on the development of academic programs/courses was null for 23% of respondents for initiatives in the fine arts and 32% of respondents outside the fine arts. However, it has likely had significant positive effects for more than 50% of respondents.

Comments from grantees indicate that the pilot program prompted researchers to develop new approaches to teaching that have now materialized in the emergence of programs and course curricula at the master's and doctoral levels. One survey respondent's comment summarizes the importance of these opportunities for training:

> It has enabled so many positive opportunities for dissemination, for prototyping, for funding of top PhD students. [...] However, an unexpected positive impact is the incredible rate of advancement and progress that has emerged due to the fact that several researchers are all working in a synergistic way. [...] This has then led to new courses at the Master's level, so has generated and informed the Master's programs and the way in which I teach. PhD students are now participating in these courses and presenting their work for critical discussion. It is very exciting and a superb educational experience for everyone—faculty and students alike.

Table VI Perception of funded artist-researchers on the degree of impact funding has had on their training and mentoring activities

Training activities aspects	Cumul*	Very positive	Somewhat positive	No impact	Somewhat negative	Very negative	Not applicable	N
Providing graduate students with training and mentoring	**87**	61%	34%	0%	0%	0%	5%	**44**
Providing undergraduate students with training and mentoring	**77**	50%	20%	23%	0%	0%	7%	**44**
Research skills of students who have participated in your project	**88**	52%	45%	2%	0%	0%	0%	**44**
Creation skills of students who have participated in your project	**87**	57%	34%	9%	0%	0%	0%	**44**
Development of academic programs/course in the fine arts	**69**	25%	43%	23%	2%	0%	7%	**44**
Development of academic programs/course outside of the fine arts	**57**	14%	36%	32%	2%	0%	16%	**44**

* The values are weighted percentages for which 100 was attributed to "Very positive", 75 to "Somewhat positive", 50 to "No impact", 25 to "Somewhat" negative", and 0 to "Very negative".

3.3 Collaboration Activities

One of the program's four primary objectives was to "foster opportunities for collaboration among university- and college-based artist-researchers, other university and college researchers, and professional artists." Data collected for this evaluation indicate that the pilot phase of the program has been successful in facilitating collaboration among grantees and a wide spectrum of individuals with whom they have established partnerships. According to the survey of funded applicants (for the 2003 and 2005 competitions), the grant has had a largely positive impact on respondents' collaborative activities. In general, SSHRC-funded projects have led to a greater number of collaborations for the artist-researchers working on them. Many survey respondents felt that, compared to their level and ability to collaborate prior to the grant, the funding expanded their collaboration networks and in turn widened the scope of their projects; as explained by one respondent: "The funding helped the project grow into something very large and substantial; it was an enormous boost in getting the project off the ground and allowed me to collaborate with film artists and researchers on a highly professional level." With the greater number of collaborators came the greater number of "ideas and production process and product."

The biggest percentage of positive responses was for impacts on collaboration with academic artist-researchers within their specific discipline (77%) and professional artists practicing outside of academic institutions (75%). In fact, many respondents and roundtable participants stated their appreciation for the flexibility that SSHRC has granted them regarding the types of collaborators that they are able to work with on funded projects, frequently referring to professional artists, collaborations that "would otherwise have been far more difficult to achieve." This flexibility is especially valuable given that professional artists can often not be incorporated into projects funded by other organizations or programs. Further, many of the surveyed artist-researchers have created collaborative networks with researchers in the natural sciences and engineering: 35% felt that the

grant had a "very positive" impact on their activities with scholars in those fields. The lowest percentage of positive responses was for academic researchers from health science disciplines (20%), and the community that received the most "no impact" responses (37%) was academic researchers from social science disciplines. None of the respondents reported a negative impact for any collaborator type.

Table VII presents number of collaborators, number of surveyed researchers who have collaborated with at least one person, and total number of responses for each collaborator type, for both individual and team researchers. For the surveyed artist-researchers, the highest intensity of Canadian collaboration took place with academic artist-researchers from their particular disciplines and professional artists practicing outside of academia, which corresponds to the level of impact of funding reported previously by these respondents for these specific types of collaborators.

Table VII Funded respondents' levels of national collaboration

	Individual			Team		
Type of national collaborator	**Collaborators**	**Responses with at least one collaborator**	**N**	**Collaborators**	**Responses with at least one collaborator**	**N**
Academic artist-researchers from your specific discipline	60	12	23	44	13	21
Academic artist-researchers from other fine arts disciplines	29	7	23	13	7	21
Academic researchers from humanities disciplines	67	9	23	12	5	21
Academic researchers from social science disciplines	13	6	23	4	3	21
Academic researchers from natural science and engineering disciplines	12	3	23	8	2	21
Academic researchers from health science disciplines	0	0	23	3	2	21
Professional artists practicing outside of academic institutions	82	12	23	31	12	21
Other professionals outside of academic institutions	31	8	23	30	7	21

While Canadian, locally-based partnerships were undoubtedly important for this group of researchers, many of their collaborative networks reached beyond national borders (see Table VIII). Generally, survey respondents mentioned new or increased ability to collaborate, not only "outside the core investigators," but on an international scale. Some have purposely sought out international collaborators.

The money received has allowed grantees to travel more, making it possible to meet and work with professionals abroad, whereas prior to the grant they likely would not have had the means to do so. While some have pursued international contacts, other respondents noted that they had been approached by interested parties from other countries, citing a general intensification of interest in their work from international sources.

Table VIII Funded respondents' levels of international collaboration

	Individual			Team		
Type of international collaborator	**Collaborators**	**Responses with at least one collaborator**	**N**	**Collaborators**	**Responses with at least one collaborator**	**N**
Academic artist-researchers from your specific discipline	219	9	23	39	9	20
Academic artist-researchers from other fine arts disciplines	207	4	23	10	4	20
Academic researchers from humanities disciplines	52	8	23	0	0	20
Academic researchers from social science disciplines	15	5	23	0	0	20
Academic researchers from natural science and engineering disciplines	18	1	23	2	1	20
Academic researchers from health science disciplines	11	1	23	0	0	20
Professional artists practicing outside of academic institutions	74	5	23	11	4	20
Other professionals outside of academic institutions	48	6	24	4	2	20

The data on collaboration for funded respondents show an interesting and unexpected result: those funded for individual projects collaborate about as frequently and with as many (and in many cases, more) collaborators as do those who were funded for team projects. On average, 33% of individual researchers and 32% of team researchers collaborate with Canadian researchers. At the international level, the percentage of funded individual researchers who collaborate is 21% on average, higher than the share of team researchers (13%). Also, individual researchers collaborate more than team researchers with researchers in the social sciences and humanities. These findings clearly indicate that collaboration has little to do with individual or team project orientation. It also raises the possibility that collaborators may be characterized differently by those researchers that undertake projects individually and by those who work in teams.

Interdisciplinary collaboration plays a role in the activities of scholars funded by this program. The survey results and roundtable discussion highlighted the importance of creating and maintaining interdisciplinary collaborations for artist-researchers. Several examples were given of interdisciplinary projects and themes, such as collaborations between the fields of design and medicine or the visual arts and computer science. The essential importance of interdisciplinarity to the program is summed up in the following comment from a survey respondent: "Several researchers are all working in a synergistic way exploring the same kinds of ideas but from distinctly different perspectives and starting points. This has created a potent and powerful milieu for propagating ideas, for learning from each other." According to some of those surveyed, interdisciplinary work has led to further innovation, new critical approaches, and even the launching of new courses taught by artist-researchers. More university managers/grant officers (41%) believe that interdisciplinary projects create an advantage rather than a disadvantage (15%) with respect to funding success, although 44% felt that they were neither advantageous nor disadvantageous.

3.4 Dissemination of Research Results

The dissemination and presentation of artistic work is inherent in and vital to artistic practice. These activities are associated with a number of important outcomes, including artists' financial compensation, peer and audience recognition, and intended direct cultural and sociological impacts on the audience and broader cultural developments. Like professional artists, artists in post-secondary institutions are using both established and more unconventional modes of diffusion to reach their target audiences. The dissemination of artistic creations and the processes of inquiry translated into research results are largely influenced by the artistic community of practice outside academia, and this dissemination is of great importance for both communities. The objective of SSHRC's pilot program to facilitate this important aspect of artistic production has been ranked highly in terms of relevance to its funded and unfunded population.

According to the survey results, more than 85% of grantees believed that SSHRC funding has had a positive impact on this dimension of their activity (Table IX). More particularly, 64% of funded researchers believed that the grant has had a "very positive" impact on the dissemination of their work to the academic community in the fine arts; 62% and 25% believed it has had a "very positive" and "somewhat positive" impact, respectively, on both dissemination to the academic community outside the fine arts and to the broader public. No respondents claimed to have experienced a negative impact, though 7–9% felt there had been no particular impact, either positive or negative.

Table IX Perception of the impact of funding on dissemination activities

Dissemination aspects	Cumul*	Very positive	Somewhat positive	No impact	Somewhat negative	Very negative	Not applicable	N
Dissemination to the academic **community in the fine arts**	**86**	64%	24%	7%	0%	0%	4%	**45**
Dissemination to the academic **community outside of the fine arts**	**83**	62%	22%	9%	0%	0%	7%	**45**
Dissemination to a broad public	**85**	62%	24%	9%	0%	0%	4%	**45**

* The values are weighted percentages for which 100 was attributed to "Very positive", 75 to "Somewhat positive", 50 to "No impact", 25 to "Somewhat" negative", and 0 to "Very negative".

A university manager/grant officer respondent noted that funded artist-researchers "have had a lot of publicity for their projects both within and outside the university." Respondents claimed that their funded projects have allowed for "significant involvement with the general public" and dissemination to "larger groups outside of university environments." Further, many respondents discussed the fact that the grant allowed them to position their research in an international context. One surveyed artist-researcher, for instance, has been granted "two awards for best documentary in national festivals and very wide exposure of the work internationally." Others stated that they had received more international invitations to discuss their work on panels and committees and at conferences since being awarded the grant; for example, one respondent declared, "As a result of this program (or at least in part), I have been invited to give keynotes on arts based educational research in Iceland, Bristol, Seoul, and Brazil in 2007."

3.5 Unexpected Outcomes

Table X summarizes the main unexpected impacts, both positive and negative, as reported by the funded survey respondents. By far the most commonly reported impact involved general beneficial effects of the grant on their creation and research practices or their career, ultimately allowing for greater dissemination of the research results. The unexpected impacts reported by funded researchers were overwhelmingly positive. Many of the immediate outcomes discussed earlier in this section were also cited as unanticipated impacts, such as better avenues for dissemination, new and lasting collaborations, new modes of teaching and incorporating students into arts practices, and more positive perceptions of artist-researchers in the university environment.

Table X Main unexpected impact (positive or negative) of the funding program on funded artist-researchers

Unexpected impact (positive or negative) of the program	Occurrence	% of comments	% of respondents	N
Overall beneficial effects on artistic research and creation, allowed greater dissemination of art	27	40%	60%	45
Increased possibilities for collaboration, input of new ideas	14	21%	31%	45
Positive impact on teaching and creation of new courses, beneficial interaction with graduate students	8	12%	18%	45
Increased credibility and respect within an academic institution, or when participating in community discussions	4	6%	9%	45
Increased stress or loss of time for artistic creation caused by administrative or academic duties	4	6%	9%	45
Provided opportunities for stimulating non-artistic experiences	3	4%	7%	45
Allowed to have a social or cultural impact on the community	2	3%	4%	45
Uncooperative academic institution	2	3%	4%	45
Increased contact with local communities	1	1%	2%	45
Too early in the project to answer	2	3%	4%	45
Total*	**67**	**100%**		**45**

* Greater than the number of respondents because each respondent provided more than one comment

Many of these impacts were stated in general terms, as in the following comment: "I hadn't anticipated the extent to which my practice would be regenerated, reinvigorated and brought to a whole new level through this project." One artist-researcher stated that it was possible to study the impact of the research that had been carried out for the project, an activity that would not have taken place so openly with an SRG or with an NSERC grant, for example, where the measuring of any sort of human impact would likely have been informal and unrecorded. This individual felt that this activity was a fundamental part of the research that was done.

One practical impact of the grant, mentioned by a number of participants, was its effect on their writing ability. The process of writing the research proposal had proved useful, as it allowed them to conceptualize, reconsider, organize, and clarify their activities, giving them valuable guidance

throughout the duration of their project. One participant who had been unsuccessful in the first round believed that the process of writing the proposal had a number of effects: chiefly, writing the proposal allowed her to realize that she was perhaps not ready to proceed with the project at the time, and secondly, it greatly facilitated the writing of the second proposal. As for the program's impact on writing in general, another participant observed a shift in the intended audience for his writing towards a wider, less specialized group.

However, about 18% of the funded researchers claimed that they were not prepared for the heavy administrative workload that came along with being a PI. Specifically, they felt that simply to "manage the project and its budgeting requirements", mostly due to the communication issues and paperwork, the involvement of the university, and the requirements of SSHRC, created stress and allowed less time for creative activity. To improve the administrative process for funded recipients, one suggested that "Research Offices need to be more involved in this process, as many recipients are first-time SSHRC holders and unfamiliar with the requirements."

In addition, as previously mentioned, some of the survey respondents and roundtable participants had experienced unanticipated difficulties with project collaborators. For example, one survey respondent worked with two independent artists who were not used to working collaboratively, but the nature of the project required a great deal of collaboration. This respondent was not experienced in or prepared for mediating in this situation and stated that "If we are to do more collaborative research, these kinds of issues will surely surface."

4 RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

4.1 RISKS

Expectations and Success Rates

The large number of applications received reflects the interest of artist-researchers in the pilot program. However, it also indicates that the expectations of the Canadian academic art community toward this SSHRC initiative are high. The increased interest of this new clientele constitutes a risk for SSHRC if program managers do not effectively communicate projected program orientation, developments, or changes. There are signs of nervousness within the community, reflected in the increase in the number of calls received by SSHRC program officers inquiring about follow ups to the pilot program. In addition, current uncertainties about the future of the program cast doubts on the continued willingness of SSHRC to support research in the arts.

Many respondents stated that one of the negative effects of the program was related to the mismatch between the expectations of artist-researchers who apply to the program and, due to the low success rate, the disappointing results, which produced poor perceptions of the program. The program's success rate of 19% is relatively low compared to other SSHRC programs, which have an average success rate of 37% (2005–2007), and is even lower than that of the Canada Council programs, which have an overall success rate of 22% (1990–1998). Although its success rate is in the same range as that of the Canada Council, it is important to consider that researchers have expectations of funding support that are in line with those of other SSHRC research programs. Thus far, the low success rate is being interpreted as lack of appropriate financial commitment in line with the needs of the community, which has discouraged several potential candidates from submitting applications. This seems to reinforce the risk that SSHRC may be perceived as being not strongly committed to supporting research/creation. Creating a system of smaller grants alongside the large awards would likely increase the availability of funding for artist-researchers and allow those not previously eligible for a grant before the introduction of the research/creation program to begin building a portfolio of funded work.

Competitive Process and Guidelines

The Research/Creation Grants in Fine Arts program was identified as an example of best practice in a 2005 report by Science-Metrix[15], based primarily on the guidelines for its adjudicators, such as scoring and ranking guidelines and procedures (e.g., the score value of each evaluation criterion, the minimum score required for each evaluation criterion, and the minimum overall score for the application). This report highlights the program's scoring/ranking systems for researchers at the

[15] Bertrand, F. and Archambault, E. (2005). Risk-Based Analysis of Documented Competitive Processes Guidelines and Processes: Screening, Assessing, Ranking and Recommending Applications. A Science-Metrix report submitted to SSHRC Corporate Performance, Evaluation and Audit.

start of their careers and for those returning to research: "This commitment is clearly indicated in the Eligibility Criteria section and in the Scoring System section of the manual." In fact, throughout the pilot phase, the program website informed potential applicants of the mitigation procedures to be followed during adjudication, specifically:

> Application of the five criteria will take into account the stage the applicant and any team members have reached in their careers. Emerging scholars will be assessed as much on their promise as artist-researchers as on their achievement to date in research/creation. The committee will also take into consideration circumstances that the applicant demonstrates have justifiably impeded his or her achievements in research/creation. Allowances will be made for applicants from smaller institutions who are not in a position to supervise graduate students.

Despite its best practice status for adjudication-related documentation, the present evaluation turned up a number of issues related to the program's committee and procedures. After the first round of the program, the evaluation criteria were streamlined and the scoring system was simplified (the previous system featured a 60:40 balancing of research/creation record vs. research/creation program). For the second and third rounds, each application was assigned an overall score out of 100 on the basis of the assessed "strength" of the proposal in relation to other proposals. Unfortunately, both systems of scoring, which rely on a set of criteria that receive an aggregate score based on specific aspects, are simplified at the cost of an increased risk of obtaining a more subjective valuation. Most notably, the New Scholar category was removed (though the stage of the researcher's career was purportedly still factored into the assessment of applications).

The present evaluation has revealed that more than one applicant believes the program's selection process is highly subjective, inconsistent, or even biased. Furthermore, applicants have expressed their dissatisfaction with the level of feedback received and how each evaluation criterion was scored. The fact that the program's adjudication process is considered somewhat nebulous by applicants and that this lack of transparency creates distance between the program and the target audience, as well as distrust in the process, is considered a considerable threat to the future of this program. It is therefore suggested that, given the program's renewal, evaluation criteria and adjudication procedures should be further refined and clarified, for both adjudicators and applicants, and made more accessible to all. Also, the evidence obtained for this evaluation suggests that, following the high rejection rate (which means that 81% of applicants are disappointed), insufficient feedback is likely to be the most important contributor to the negative perception of the adjudication process. Consequently, providing clear adjudication rules and robust feedback should be treated as a priority.

4.2 Opportunities

Funding Stability and Opportunities

In the experiences of the funded population from the 2003 and 2005 competitions, financial support from the pilot program has made new funding opportunities possible: 60% of respondents (27 out of 45) stated that the SSHRC grant brought them numerous opportunities for subsequent funding. The most recurrent driver of related funding opportunities was increased credibility for grantees who have received a SSHRC grant, which has enabled them to access other sources of funding (9

comments out of 28). Many of the artist-researchers who participated in the roundtable mentioned that the program's very existence provides justification for what they do and is a facilitator for the recognition of their artistic practice as researchers.

Artist-researchers funded by the pilot program have leveraged their ability to access other funding opportunities through (primarily conventional) sources as a result of the work accomplished. These include:

- additional grants from other federal funding agencies (3 comments)
- revenue or funding stemming from production (3 comments)
- secure industry funding and donations (3 comments)
- additional grants from other funding agencies (not federal) (2 comments)
- university funding (2 comments)
- additional grants from another SSHRC program (2 comments)

These data support indications that the pilot program is likely to foster the financial stability of supported artist-researchers. However, 40% of the funded artists surveyed did not experience or envision additional funding opportunities stemming from their SSHRC funding. A few survey respondents mentioned that it was still too soon to know whether the SSHRC grant would open up opportunities for additional funding (4 comments).

Socio-Economic Benefits, Impacts, and Innovation

The generation of social, economic, and cultural benefits or innovation has been perceived by SSHRC management to be an important effect of the program. This section highlights innovations and socio-economic impacts generated, with a view to illustrating the wide spectrum of disciplines and application domains tackled by funded projects. Funded artist-researchers were asked whether innovations or socio-economic benefits had resulted from their funded research projects. Results revealed that 62% (28 out of 45) of surveyed funded artists (2003 and 2005 competitions) assert that their projects have generated tangible innovations or socio-economic benefits.

The development of information technology-based innovation appears to be important (21% of responses; 6 out of 28). This is not surprising, as the mingling of art and modern technologies—in particular, computer science and technology assisted processes and applications—is well documented and is increasingly incorporated into artistic production and diffusion.[16] [17] [18]. The comments below are illustrative of some examples of technology development stemming from funded projects:

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[16] Chitty, E. ed. (1985) *Artists Talk about Technology; Interfaces: Artists/Techniques*. ANNPAC/RACA. 489 College Street. Toronto. Canada. 55 p. ISBN: 0-919215-04-1.

[17] Singh, G (2005) Digital Art Revolution. *IEEE Computer Graphics and Applications*. 25(2): 4-5.

[18] Stephen Wilson. (2001) Information Arts : Intersections of Art, Science, and Technology. 969 pp. ISBN: 0-262-23209-X.

- "I created an online, collaborative, searchable database, which logs the appearance, timing, and nature of product placements in movies."
- "We have developed innovative design analysis software that also facilitates the generation of new designs based on the geometric structures of designs from artifacts. We have also created a database of designs from historical artifacts."
- "The project has led to an innovative approach to stage lighting in which a small number of digital-light-processor projectors replace a large number of conventional fixtures (moving or static) and all accessories, and a personal computer and video feeds replace present distribution and control devices."

Some projects have led to patent pending applications and other forms of intellectual property protection. This is also evidence that projects funded by the program are generating original inventions that are of interest in particular application areas and could represent economic potential. This could be interpreted as an unusual outcome for a program that supports research/creation, though the broad spectrum of disciplines and interdisciplinary work supported could explain this outcome:

- "Six new inventions, one of which is patent pending: all provide new sculptural freedom to architects, artists and engineers, and potential reductions in materials consumed in construction."
- "We are applying for a patent that a student developed based on some of the research questions that came up in the form of control of synthesis."
- "I am investigating a patent for a weave structure for electronic fabrics as a result of this research."

Socio-cultural benefits are also at the forefront of the benefits deriving from research creation practices. Examples range from impacts on industries, communities, academic institutions, and students, as well as on other potential users:

- "We have found new ways to form sculptural columns, walls, trusses, floors, and roof structures in reinforced concrete that reduce consumption of construction materials. In particular, we now know how to do these things in ways that fit existing techniques used in Canadian construction and that are accessible to both high and low capital building economies and cultures. We have also generated new engineering knowledge in the structural behavior of new light-weight beam geometries. These findings significantly reduce the difference between sculpture and architecture."
- "Through research/creation Canadian community-engaged project, the immigrant families found a way to engage with their community that was not possible before. The socio-cultural impact of this research/creation project was not only evident among the families but also for the viewers in another nation (separate exhibits) and in the Canadian community where members experienced the artworks for up to a year in various venues. In each case, viewers were invited to question taken-for-granted conceptions of place, identity, and culture, and to re-imagine their definitions of home and away."

- "Re-placing First Nations environmental logic into a university curriculum; presenting First Nations art, history, poetry, and poetics to a reluctant university consciousness."

Other general innovations and socio-economic benefits mentioned by survey respondents were the development of collaborative activities and networks, the advancement of creative research theory and related methods, and benefits related to dissemination in publications and other forms of media, and educational materials.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The evidence presented in this evaluation suggests that SSHRC's Research/Creation in Fine Arts Grants program is as relevant as ever, and there is no evidence to suggest that the program should be discontinued at this stage. In fact, the feedback received, on the whole, is extremely positive. It is evident that the community is very satisfied that SSHRC has recognized and respected the specific needs of artist-researchers and has responded with a program that really fulfills those needs. Indeed, all lines of evidence confirm that no other current program is comparable to the Research/Creation Grants in Fine Arts Program in terms of total investments in research/creation projects, award value, scope, and tenure of funding. The results of the survey conducted for this evaluation also strongly point to a consensus within the applicant population that the program objectives are relevant and highly beneficial to their artistic research activities. Additionally, most of the survey population did not feel that the objectives should be modified to better support their research activities and the needs of artist-researchers. This consensus among funded and unfunded applicants and managers/grant officers from the three competition rounds (2003, 2005, and 2006) is a strong indication of the continued relevance of program objectives.

Funded researchers reported a general increase in the quality of both their research and creation, and many also felt that their projects had generated tangible innovations or socio-economic benefits. Most of all, respondents felt that the program had greatly changed the way they perform research, because the funding they had been given freed them in ways they had never before experienced, regardless of whether they had been in receipt of previous grants. For example, they were faced with far fewer limitations and could scale-up their projects to better fit their objectives and modes of creative expression. The restraints imposed by lack of time, funding, and resources were, in large part, reduced or removed entirely. Many respondents stressed the importance of increased project time, stating that the three-year span provided by the grant has added a new dimension of quality, purposefulness, and discovery to their work.

Gaining experience in communicating art and knowledge and developing collaborative work with other researchers or students are additional ways in which many respondents have benefited from the program. Compared to their level and ability to collaborate prior to becoming grantees, the funding has expanded the collaboration networks of artist-researchers and in turn widened the scope of their projects. The money they have received has provided grantees with the means to travel in order to meet and work with professionals abroad. The training and mentoring of students also appears to be one of the most tangible results of the Research/Creation pilot program to date. The grant has allowed instructors to provide a more practical, hands-on, and experiential type of teaching, moving students beyond theory and giving them a greater role as co-creators in projects of all kinds.

Despite all the positive aspects linked to the design and the results of the program, it is probably too soon to make the program permanent. A number of aspects linked to its delivery call for improvements in order to reduce identified risks. There is also a need to reflect on the most relevant structure for the program, as the Standard Research Grants structure may not offer the flexibility required to meet the needs of artist-researchers. It is important to note that at the time of evaluation, project reports were not yet due for most grants; therefore, evaluators had access to only two final reports, making it difficult to determine with precision the outputs and overall impacts of the program. It would also be useful to continue discussions with other agencies involved in arts funding, such as the Canada Council for the Arts, around operational definitions in the arts community of 'research/creation' and 'artist-researcher'. Ascertaining that the program has a tangible effect on the output of artist-researchers is essential before proceeding to the implementation of a permanent program. Consequently, Science-Metrix recommends that the program be continued for at least two more rounds of financing and that a full summative evaluation be performed after the final competition in the pilot phase and following the receipt of monies by that group of grantees. More than two additional rounds may be necessary due to additional considerations such as the need to allow, for example, more time for information on program outputs to emerge. In addition to carefully studying project reports, financial provisions should be made by SSHRC to conduct a number of *in situ* case studies during the summative evaluation to elucidate the outputs and outcomes of the projects.

Recommendation 1

Maintain the pilot program for a minimum of two additional rounds, and conduct a summative evaluation following receipt of the grants by the successful candidates in the final round of pilot-phase financing. Aspects that would need to be addressed in the summative evaluation are:

- a model for the program's permanent structure;
- operation, composition, and evolution of adjudication committee;
- distribution of funds across language groups, regions, universities and colleges of various sizes, scholar status and stage in career, disciplines, and type of research (i.e., technical vs. less technically-oriented research);
- intellectual gains associated with the program.

As noted, there is little information on program achievements, outputs, and impacts. This information is essential, both for evaluation purposes and so that SSHRC can be in a position to judge whether its program is having the intended effects. Moreover, as this program is in the pilot stage, there is a greater need to obtain fine-grained information on a clientele still largely unknown to SSHRC. The final report form seems to be inadequate as a means of providing the level of information required to learn more on the outputs, impacts, and immediate effects of this community on Canadian society and economy. Also, there is a need to systematically tally the data collected thereby, as well as other relevant performance indicators, in a coherent performance management system that will be available for the next evaluation.

Recommendation 2

Revise the final report form to obtain richer information on outputs, impacts, and outreach of research/creation activities. In addition to the final report expected six-months after the end of program, require that grantees submit a mid-term report, at least while the program is still in its pilot phase and therefore requires closer monitoring.

Recommendation 3

A performance management system should be put in place and relevant performance indicators should be collected on a systematic basis.

Questions and comments were raised during the evaluation exercise about the adequacy of the language proficiencies of the adjudication committee members. In addition to these perceptual issues, the evidence clearly shows that the number of French-language applications received decreased from about 20 in the two previous competitions to only 7 in 2006. Additionally, there were indications that barriers to access or to success existed for certain elements of the program's target population, including regional distributions of grants.

Recommendation 4

SSHRC should investigate the presence of barriers and determine which of these, if any, are inherent to the program's design. In particular, SSHRC should examine the level of participation and the decline of French-language applications in order to establish whether there is a risk that the program may be considered beyond the reach of francophone artist-researchers. Other aspects that should be examined are university size, availability of research students, and regional distribution of grants. Relevant data reflecting these issues should be collected (including retrospectively) and incorporated in the performance management system.

The dissatisfaction felt by unsuccessful applicants has been linked to two primary issues: inadequate feedback and a very high proportion of grants being rejected (success rate of less than 20%). Inadequate feedback, both in terms of quality and quantity, was widely mentioned by the unsuccessful applicants surveyed, but it was also mentioned by one-fifth of successful applicants, and university managers voiced strong concerns about this issue. Feedback was also raised as a serious issue at the roundtable discussion. Unfunded respondents were particularly concerned with feedback in as much as it could impact on their chances in future applications. Many surveyed applicants argued for better, more creative feedback and suggested that committee decisions need to be made more transparent.

Another aspect that is intimately linked with insufficient feedback is the perception that the selection process is subjective. Several applicants stated that they would not resubmit an application

due to being discouraged by what they felt was the seemingly unpredictable nature of the jury members' choices. A previous study by Science-Metrix[19] noted that the "Research/Creation Grants in Fine Arts scoring schemes evaluate two criteria: Record of Research Achievement and Program of Research. These two criteria are scored to a maximum of 10 points each. However, they are defined by a set of non-scored detailed specific criteria (six to eight), while in other programs scores are attributed to each specific criterion listed." The report also noted that this simplification came at the cost of greater subjectivity. This scoring system was further simplified after the first competition round, reducing the scoring to more general criteria and likely intensifying the chance of subjectivity in appraisal.

Recommendation 5

Develop a standardized selection and feedback form providing points for detailed selection criteria in addition to detailed qualitative feedback for each application. Make sure that an efficient, user-friendly system is used to collect and tally relevant comments made at every point of the selection process, from the initial analysis of eligibility to the final decisions of the adjudication committee.

As previously noted, a very high proportion of grants were rejected, thus creating a very large number of disappointed applicants. There is evidence, however, that many artist-researchers could conduct smaller scale research/creation projects. In fact, many of the roundtable participants suggested that SSHRC should consider offering, under the umbrella of the program, smaller grants to artist-researchers. In this context, it appears suitable to offer two grant formats: the current one and a smaller grant (e.g., one that would provide up to $25,000 per year for up to $60,000 over three years). Although the structure of the program does not, strictly speaking, limit or prohibit artist-researchers from applying for smaller grants, a program subcomponent that exists solely to fund small-scale research/creation projects would increase artist-researchers' levels of confidence in applying for smaller grants, open up funding to a larger population, and allow a larger number of artist/researchers to be included in the circle of successfully funded SSHRC researchers. This seems to be particularly relevant here, as we know that this clientele has less experience in applying for grants and fewer role models than in other fields traditionally served by SSHRC.

Recommendation 6

Within the financial envelope of the program, create a system of smaller grants to increase accessibility and to cater to the needs of applicants who have less costly or smaller scale research/creation projects.

[19] Bertrand, F. and Archambault, E. (2005). Ibid.

Additional Suggestions

In addition to the six main recommendations set out above, there are a number of suggestions that would help improve the efficiency and lower the risks of the program:

- The list of disciplines that currently serve to determine eligibility should be examined critically after each competition by the selection panel, which should then make recommendations on categories that might be added or removed.
- There is also a need to continuously, and in interaction with the research/creation community, examine the definition of research/creation and of artist-researcher until there is a satisfactory level of consensus reached on these operational definitions.
- Generally, it seems that the program and its clientele would gain from the presence of a more outwardly and inwardly oriented communication strategy. Greater outward orientation would increase the diffusion of the results of the competitions and provide details on what is funded and what is not to a broader audience. Also, results obtained by grantees could be diffused to provide role-models for potential grantees. A greater inward orientation should be directed to internal feedback mechanisms that would allow artist-researchers to voice their opinions. This communication strategy could be centred on a web portal for research/creation.

SSHRC's Research/Creation Grants in Fine Arts program is a highly relevant program that meets the specific needs of a clientele that traditionally has been excluded from research council funding. It has received an enthusiastic response from the arts research community, and despite a number of issues that will require adjustments, it is a well designed and adequately delivered program. The challenge will be to find a delivery mechanism that will continue to meet the specific requirements of the artist-researcher community, should the grant program be made permanent in the future.