



POPUPART

OTTAWA VALLEY COMMUNITY ARTS

Evaluation Report

AUGUST, 2023

Prepared by Community Resource Centre (Killaloe) Inc.





COVER IMAGES:
 Open Studio - Big Art Painting workshop
 Artist Gathering; Sylvia Tennisco,
 Birch basket (detail), 2022

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INTRODUCTION

Executive Summary

The Grow Phase of the Pop Up Art Project (fall 2020 to fall 2023) consisted of a 36-month project to bring local art to people in the Ottawa Valley in their own community spaces through more public art exhibitions, workshops and public art events, in an effort to contribute to the permanency and stability of the arts in the Ottawa Valley. The project brought 785 days of free art exhibitions to three local communities: Eganville, Arnprior and Petawawa. Each semi-permanent art exhibition venue averaged 651 exhibition days at their location. Nine travelling art exhibitions featured artwork from more than 309 local artists/makers.

In addition, the project grew to include 10 art installations in seven communities, 21 Pop Up Art workshops in six communities as well as online, 763 art kits distributed, and the creation of a short film and three digital art events. Seeking to make art even more accessible during the pandemic and beyond, the project also created a permanent virtual art exhibition section on the OV-CAOS website that documents the exhibitions.

The purpose of this evaluation report is to: collect and document project data; share an overall view of the Pop Up Art experience; understand the impact Pop Up Art made in its Grow Phase; and identify recommendations to strengthen the project. Combining information gathered through surveys, focus groups, audience participatory activities and comments, the Community Resource Centre (Killaloe) identified that the Pop Up Art project made the following impacts in the lives of people living in the Ottawa Valley:

1. Pop Up Art contributes positively to individuals, families, and communities. Individually, artists and audience members shared that the project impacted them in a positive way, supporting mental health of artists and community members and allowing people ways to connect with others, nature, and inspiring cultural experiences. People expressed that the project helped them through the challenging times of pandemic lockdown and

increased their feelings of connection to their loved ones and community, as well as to local stories, histories, and the natural world.

- 2. Pop Up Art leaves a legacy of rural arts representation, inclusive art-making, and support for the local arts community.** The project supported local artists to gain visibility and community. It provided opportunities for emerging and established artists and encouraged the greater community to be inspired to explore artistic expression. It showcased various artforms and left a legacy of free and accessible art in the Ottawa Valley.
- 3. Pop Up Art builds visibility of the Ottawa Valley as an arts and culture destination.** With the absence of a public art gallery, this project brings a coordinated focus to sharing local contemporary art across the county. It encourages people to travel within the Ottawa Valley to different locations and showcases a diversity of rural artistic voices.
- 4. Pop Up Art cultivates an ecosystem of partnerships building shared arts and culture infrastructure and potential.** With more than 43 partners in various sectors including business, municipal and government, parks, arts and culture, non-profit, museums, libraries, education and festivals, Pop Up has helped to create a vibrant web of relationships bringing together groups and supporting collaboration and new partnerships.

This report ends with five recommendations for next steps for the Pop Up Art Project. These include: maintaining rural accessibility by continuing mobile art and programming; focusing communication efforts; building internal capacity to monitor the economic impact of arts and culture exhibitions, programming, and events; continuing to cultivate partnerships in support of building a more diverse audience; and strengthening local arts infrastructure by supporting satellite galleries and program spaces to be centrally managed and unified by a new permanent art gallery in the Ottawa Valley.

POPUPART

by the numbers

3
years

785
days of free
art exhibitions

3
semi-permanent
exhibition venues

138
artists

309
artworks

9
travelling
art exhibitions

1170
public contributions
to exhibition
engagement activities

10
art installations

21
pop up art
workshops

763
art kits

4
art videos

43
partnerships

\$378,000 investment from the Ontario Trillium Foundation

PROJECT IMPACT

These data were collected from a sample of 107 participants in Pop up Art Renfrew County, a community arts initiative of Ottawa Valley Community Arts. Data were collected via a digital survey, administered between November 16, 2022 and June 22, 2023.



87% of participants have a strong sense of belonging after participating in Pop Up Art.

87% of participants said their sense of belonging to a local community was strong

13% of participants said their sense of belonging to a local community was weak



100% of participants agreed that everyone is made to feel welcome.

93% of participants said this was very true

7% of participants said this was somewhat true



100% of participants agreed that everyone is valued equally.

91% of participants said this was very true

9% of participants said this was somewhat true



100% of participants agreed that they are treated with respect.

96% of participants said this was very true

4% of participants said this was somewhat true



98% of participants learned something new and interesting.

73% of participants said this was very true

25% of participants said this was somewhat true

2% of participants said this was not true



97% of participants feel inspired to create something.

83% of participants said this was very true

4% of participants said this was somewhat true

3% of participants said this was not true



97% of participants feel inspired to take action.

52% of participants said this was very true

46% of participants said this was somewhat true

3% of participants said this was not true



95% of participants see the world in a different way.

45% of participants said this was very true

50% of participants said this was somewhat true

5% of participants said this was not true

CONTEXT

Background

Established in 2019, Pop Up Art began as a single exhibit called Extra-Ordinary Renfrew County, which travelled to public spaces in six communities across unceded Algonquin Territory in the Ottawa Valley and the Ottawa River Watershed.

The original Pop Up Art locations included two cafes, a sports and recreation centre, a library, a hospital, and a visitor information centre. The project included opening events at each site and community arts workshops in three of the communities.

A total of 262 people were surveyed, with five themes emerging:

- the strength of rural voices,
- the diversity of rural communities,
- the importance of Indigenous perspectives,
- connections with the natural world,
- and art as a tool to support mental health and mental health awareness.

Those surveyed also identified two key project elements that supported the project's success:

- bringing local artists' work into community spaces makes art more accessible to rural people,
- sharing the artists' inspiration and process builds a deeper understanding of the final pieces in the exhibition.

The two main challenges identified were:

- community audiences wanted more time with the exhibition at each location,
- staff identified challenges with the single movable gallery approach due to the time needed to dismantle, transport, and set up both a movable gallery and a travelling exhibition.

Ideas to maintain or add to future projects included:

- expanding to include more time, artists, spaces and art exhibits,
- supporting venues to increase their in-house gallery capacity,
- expanding online,
- connecting and sharing resources across the region,
- maintaining access to free art for community members.

Notes About Language

Throughout the project we have alternated between using "Renfrew County" and "Ottawa Valley" when referring to the geographical area. We defined the geographical area as the watershed of the Ottawa River to be more inclusive and less bound by colonial boundaries. Therefore, Ottawa Valley will mainly be used and references to Renfrew County will be used mainly when referencing government boundaries.

The team at Ottawa Valley Community Arts also learned early on that many people are intimidated by a "call to artists" so the project changed the wording to "call to artists and creative people" to be inclusive of all levels of engagement with the arts. Throughout the report, the term *artists* will also include creative people, makers and those who create but do not feel connected to the term *artists*. Our broad use of the term is meant as inclusive rather than a denial of the complexity of the terms *art* and *artist*.

We recognize these categories are socially constructed and have been shaped by systems of colonialism, white supremacy, classism, patriarchy, ableism, heteronormativity, ageism, and capitalism. The project blurs these boundaries to support all people to be able to access creativity and expression.

Current Project Design

In September 2020, Ottawa Valley Community Arts (OV-CAOS) received a three-year Grow Grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, under the Inspired People action area, to support access to art that expresses the stories of Ottawa Valley life, heritage, and culture to people in their own community spaces. The grant result guiding this project is to increase access to arts-based learning opportunities and compelling artistic, cultural and heritage experiences. Through ongoing exhibits, workshops, and performance art events, the project worked to support Ottawa Valley residents to build on and deepen their connection to the arts.

Initially, the project plan included building four semi-permanent exhibition spaces in public venues, curating six art exhibitions, facilitating 36 art-making workshops, and coordinating 12 Pop Up Art public events. These plans changed in response to the pandemic, which limited community access to public spaces and restricted gathering in groups. The conditions of the pandemic, however, inspired project innovation and new ways of connecting, including engaging communities more outdoors, online and through art kits.

Weathering these challenges, the Pop Up Art project successfully brought 785 days of free art exhibitions to the Ottawa Valley. The project established three semi-permanent art exhibition venues (Eganville, Garrison Petawawa, and Arnprior), with each venue hosting a series of nine travelling art exhibitions featuring local artists. Each community hosted an average of 651 days at their location. In addition, the project grew to include 10 art installations in seven communities, 21 Pop Up Art workshops in six communities as well as online, a series of seven different art kits created and 763 art kits distributed, and the creation of four videos. Seeking to make art even more accessible during the pandemic and beyond, the project also created a permanent virtual art gallery section on the OV-CAOS website that documents the exhibitions and creates space for future projects to also be accessible online.

EXHIBITIONS

Welcome to my World

For this juried mixed media exhibition, Ottawa Valley artists worked with a small, closed wooden box with a door and were asked to share a view into their inner worlds during a time of uncertainty.

Good Ancestor

Reflecting on the question, "What does it mean to be a good ancestor?", Ottawa Valley artists created drinking vessels they imagined sharing with their ancestors and descendants for this juried mixed media exhibition.

Wish You Were Here

Participants of all ages were invited to create a small postcard-sized artwork responding to the statement: Wish You Were Here. The only criteria were that the artwork must come through the postal system and be stamped by the post office.

Tree Story

In this juried mixed media exhibition, Ottawa Valley artists were invited to explore human relationships with trees and imagine the stories they might share.

People and Place

This mixed media tapestry explores the intersection between people and place in the Ottawa Valley and was designed and assembled by artist Genevieve Townsend. It consists of 56 fiber pieces completed by 51 creative people from across the Ottawa Valley.

Honouring Seniors Photographic Portraits

Photographic artist Maureen MacMillan created 50 portraits honouring western Ottawa Valley people aged 65 and older. Through celebrating the diverse experiences of the participants, the portraits challenge stereotypes and preconceptions of what it means to be a senior.

CONTEXT

ARTifacts

During the summer of 2021, a group of artists visited some of the more than 20 museums across the Ottawa Valley, with a mission to find historical objects that spark inspiration. Through contemporary art, ARTifacts honours the intimate and vital role domestic objects play in our everyday lives.

Salvage

In this juried mixed media exhibition, Ottawa Valley artists salvaged discarded items and gave them new meaning by turning would-be garbage into works of art. Each piece tells a unique story about rural communities and life beyond the landfill.

Pop Up Art Reflection

This final Pop Up Art exhibition looks back at each of the Pop Up Art exhibitions. Reflection includes original artwork from the exhibitions and features creative depictions of the public responses to the exhibitions.

ART INSTALLATIONS

Community Book Art Installation

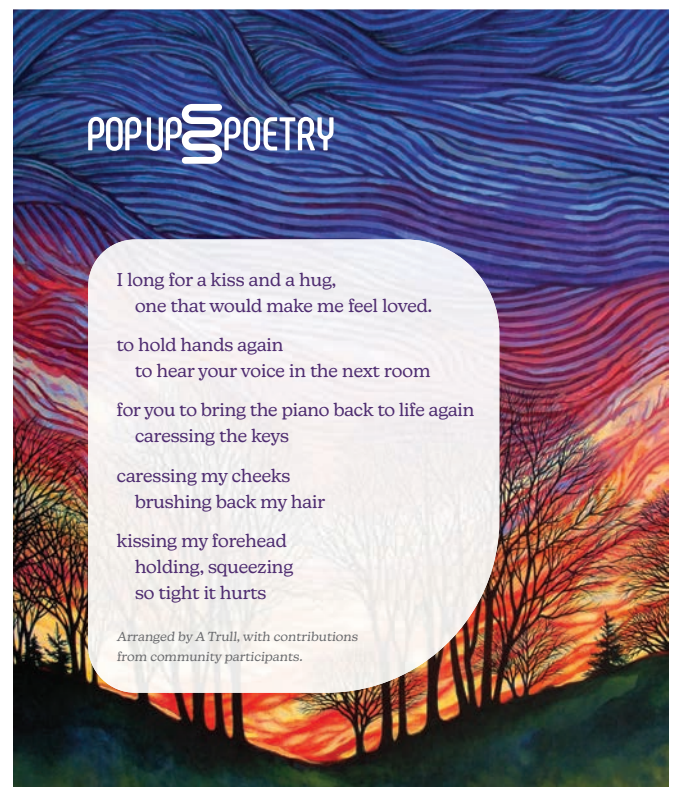
Ottawa Valley library patrons were given the opportunity to create small art pieces from discarded library books. These miniature artworks have come together to create an art installation at the Renfrew Public Library.

The Paper Forest

When libraries acquire new books, less popular books are often culled to make room for the new books. What happens to these books once they are out of circulation? This art installation explored the life cycle of books and the relationship between words, trees and paper.

Installation Series (Riding the Waves, Nesting, Taking Flight, River of Life and Remembering) at Shaw Woods and Kiwanis Trail

Artist-facilitator Tanya Lyons collaborated with community participants to create a series of six



installations in public outdoor spaces exploring the relationship between humans and the natural world. The series included human-sized nests constructed from gathered branches, the River of Life constructed from upcycled materials woven into a chain link fence, and an ephemeral driftwood sculpture exploring the memories of trees.

From Garbage Comes Art

Artist-facilitator Meredith Toivanen created and constructed a recycled mural for the Killaloe Public Library Reading Garden with the help of community participants during the spring and summer of 2022. The mural is made from objects that would otherwise have found their way to landfill or recycling centres.

Poetry Series

In March 2021, the public was invited to contribute words and phrases inspired by the notion of longing. A series of poems were then created by Andy Trull and Sigrid Geddes inspired by the public contributions. Poems were installed in various community locations.

WORKSHOPS

River of Life

Participants were invited to join artist-facilitator Tanya Lyons in the creation of the River of Life installation on the Kiwanis Way Trail in Pembroke.

Tree Story

In this word-inspired workshop, participants met among the tall trees of Gillies Grove, Arnprior to play with words inspired by the trees and winter landscape.

Creative Map-making

Participants learned about the history of Ottawa Valley place names, looked at maps in a new way and created artful custom maps.

From Garbage Comes Art Workshop

Participants attended a series of workshops to help construct the From Garbage Comes Art mural using recycled materials including colourful pop cans.

Honouring Seniors

In conjunction with the Honouring Seniors Exhibition, seniors learned how to take photographic portraits using their own devices.

Open Studio Workshop Series

These five workshops allowed participants to find their inspiration through exploring materials in the creation of miniature worlds and big art painting.

ARTifacts Workshop

Participants got to know historic objects in a new way through artful journaling at a local heritage centre.

Tree Song Workshops

Participants gathered in forest settings to learn and sing songs exploring the relationship between humans and the forest.



Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation report is to:

- Collect and document project data.
- Provide a holistic view of the Pop Up Art experience across exhibits, sites, and partners.
- Share the impact Pop Up Art made in this expanded phase.
- Identify recommendations for next steps.

The goal of the Pop Up Art evaluation is to understand how access to locally created and accessible art exhibitions, workshops and events impact the lives of people living in the Ottawa Valley.

Four main questions helped guide our work:

1. In what ways does ongoing access to art exhibitions, workshops and events impact the lives of residents of rural communities?
2. What is the impact on rural residents of seeing their own stories reflected to them through art exhibitions, workshop and events?
3. Can ongoing access to art exhibitions, workshops, and events in unexpected public spaces demystify preconceived notions about art, artists and art making in rural communities?
4. Can the precedent of ongoing access to art in unconventional places lead to an “art infrastructure” in Renfrew County supported by community and government?

Evaluation Design

We used a mixed methods evaluation approach with artists and makers, workshop attendees, and the public throughout the project. The evaluation activities also included participatory activities at each exhibition that allowed audience members to reflect on and express their feelings and thoughts back to the project. These participatory activities became part of the final exhibition, creatively sharing reflections back to the communities.

The methods used through the project included:

1. **Comment books** available at each location during the exhibitions.
2. **Nine unique participatory activities** created for each exhibit and completed by the public at the time of exhibition.

- Welcome to my World

Artists shared a view into their inner worlds during a time of uncertainty. Visitors were asked to share their inner worlds by completing the following sentences:

- Today I wish I was with...
- Today I feel connected to...
- I take comfort in...
- I feel grounded by...

- Good Ancestor

Ottawa Valley artists created drinking vessels they imagined sharing with their ancestors and descendants. Visitors were asked to imagine having the opportunity to share a drink with an ancestor or descendant. They were invited to share reflections by finishing the statements:

- Dear Ancestor...
- Dear Descendant...

- Wish You Were Here

Responding to the phrase, “Wish you were here” participants created small postcards that were sent through the postal system and stamped at the post office. Visitors were invited to make postcards and share reflections.

- Tree Story

Artists were invited to explore human relationships with trees and imagine the stories they might share. Visitors were invited to share messages to the trees.

- People and Place

Guided by the vision of artist Genevieve Townsend, artists created patchwork squares to create a mixed media tapestry exploring the intersections between people and place in the Ottawa Valley. Visitors were asked to share places that were special to them and comments.

- Honouring Seniors Photographic Portraits

Photographic artist Maureen MacMillan created 50 portraits honouring western Ottawa Valley people aged 65 and older. Visitors were invited to look into a mirror and complete these sentiments:

- In this moment I wish...
- In this moment I know...
- In this moment I am...

- ARTifacts

Artists created artworks inspired by historical objects. Visitors were asked to imagine an object from their history and finish the following ideas:

- My object remembers...
- Now my object...

- Salvage

Artists salvaged discarded items and gave them new meaning by turning the would-be garbage into works of art. Visitors were invited to compost their thoughts into nutrients for the future by writing reflections on strips of paper that were recorded then shared with composting worms.

- Pop Up Art Reflection

Including original artwork from the exhibitions and featuring creative depictions of the public responses to the exhibitions, the final show invited visitors to respond to prompts and display their comments on the wall. Prompts included:

- Pop Up Art Is...
- I wish Pop Up Art...
- I know Pop Up Art...
- Pop Up Art has changed me and/or my community by...
- Pop Up Art supports a sense of belonging by...

3. **An artist survey**, administered throughout the project. *Appendix 1.*
4. **An artist focus group**, held during the final exhibition including artists from various exhibitions. *Appendix 2.*
5. **A community member workshop reflection**, filled out at the end of the workshop. *Appendix 3.*
6. **An online survey**, for anyone who was connected to the project. This was made available for seven months during the final exhibition. The survey was sent to artists and makers, shared on OV-CAOS’ Facebook page and with the membership, shared at workshops and events as well as the final exhibition. *Appendix 4.*

Community Engagement

Through the evaluation activities we were able to gather information from a broad cross-section of stakeholders including exhibition visitors, artists and makers, workshop attendees, and venues. Certain evaluation methods were more successful in engaging different populations. For example, adults of all ages engaged in all methods of data collection, whereas children engaged in the participatory methods onsite at the exhibitions, but no children or youth under 20 completed the online survey.

Overall participation in the evaluation included:

107

visitors completed
the virtual Inspired
People Survey

42

artists completed
the artist feedback
survey

16

artists participated in
the focus group

1170

public contributions
to the exhibit
engagement activities

80

people provided
workshop feedback

Who Did We Reach? Inspired People Survey Data

The following demographic data were collected from a sample of 107 participants in Pop-Up Art Renfrew County, a community arts initiative of Ottawa Valley Creative Arts Open Studio. Data were collected via a digital survey, administered between November 16, 2022 and June 22, 2023.

The average age of visitor respondents was 56 years old. The largest group of visitors who responded were ages 45–64 (44%), the second largest group were adults ages 65+ (20%), visitors ages 25–44 were the next group (17%) and visitors ages 19–24 were the smallest group (1%). No children or youth 18 and under completed the survey.

Based on known numbers of contributions by children and youth 18 and under in exhibitions, interactive evaluation activities and workshop participation, children and youth participated more than 200 times throughout the project. This indicates a possible opportunity to adapt evaluation activities to reach more children, youth, and young adults. Some respondents chose to not share their age.

AGE OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

AGE GROUP	COUNT	%
19–24	1	1%
25–44	21	23%
45–64	40	44%
65+	29	32%
GRAND TOTAL	91	100%

GENDER

The survey indicated that women were by far the largest group to respond to the visitor survey accounting for 91% of people. Non-binary, gender-variant and/or Two Spirit people made up the next largest group (7%), and men were the smallest group (2%).

It should be noted that only 87 of 107 people shared gender information. In addition, most respondents did not identify as transgender (98%), however a small portion of respondents (2%) answered they were unsure.

GENDER	COUNT	%
Woman or girl	79	91%
Man or boy	2	2%
Gender diverse	6	7%
GRAND TOTAL	87	100%

TRANSGENDER	COUNT	%
No	86	98%
Unsure	2	2%
GRAND TOTAL	88	100%

POP UP GROW PHASE

Inspired People Survey Data, cont'd

LOCATION

Most visitors (79%) lived in areas designated as rural Renfrew County, with 19% people representing the areas of Pembroke, Petawawa and Arnprior, and 4% of people from the Ottawa area.

HOME COMMUNITY TYPE	COUNT	%
Rural areas and small towns in the Ottawa Valley	71	77%
Not designated as rural (Arnprior, Pembroke and Petawawa)	17	19%
Ottawa	4	4%
GRAND TOTAL	92	100%

OTHER ASPECTS OF IDENTITY

Other aspects of identity were measured to help us understand how well the survey reached the following communities. Of these communities, 2SLGBTQIA+ people made up 14% of respondents; 10% identified as a person with a disability; First Nations, Inuit or Metis people accounted for 6% of respondents; and Francophone people made up 2% of respondents. No survey respondents identified with the categories Black or Person of Colour.

Efforts can be made in future projects to engage people from more diverse communities throughout the project as artists, participants, and visitors. Partnering with diverse community organizations could support a more diverse audience.

2SLGBTQIA+	COUNT	%
Yes	12	14%
No	95	86%
GRAND TOTAL	107	100%

FRANCOPHONE	COUNT	%
Yes	2	2%
No	105	98%
GRAND TOTAL	107	100%

PERSON WITH A DISABILITY	COUNT	%
Yes	9	10%
No	98	90%
GRAND TOTAL	107	100%

FIRST NATIONS, INUIT OR METIS	COUNT	%
Yes	6	6%
No	101	94%
GRAND TOTAL	107	100%

BLACK	COUNT	%
No	107	100%
GRAND TOTAL	107	100%

PERSON OF COLOUR	COUNT	%
No	107	100%
GRAND TOTAL	107	100%

Artist Survey

The artists who completed the survey ranged from 19-83 years old with an average age of 52.

A few artists chose not to share their age.

AGE GROUP	COUNT	%
19-24	1	2%
25-44	21	42%
45-64	18	36%
65+	10	20%
GRAND TOTAL	50	100%

Artist survey respondents represented 18 different communities throughout the Ottawa Valley.

Most of the artists who completed the survey live in rural areas or small towns (86%) and a smaller group live in non-rural areas including Arnprior, Pembroke and Petawawa (14%).

HOME COMMUNITY TYPE	COUNT	%
Rural areas and small towns	36	86%
Not designated as rural (Arnprior, Pembroke and Petawawa)	6	14%
GRAND TOTAL	42	100%



KEY IMPACTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Project Impacts and Findings

Pop Up Art contributes positively to individuals, families and communities. Based on exhibition activities and survey findings, attendees were an engaged group who were open to connecting with new perspectives, learning opportunities, and ways to actively participate in the arts.

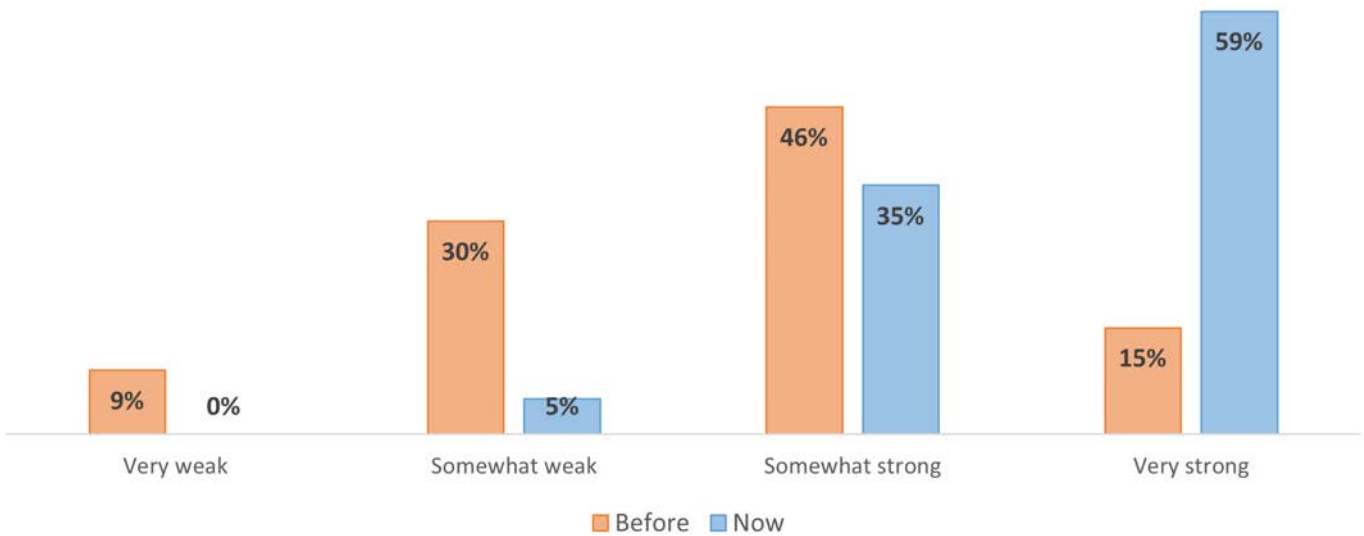
CONNECTION

People enjoyed engaging with art as a means of deepening connections with people, ideas, loved ones near and far, stories, histories and the natural

world. Free art and flexible, often outdoor public programming caused a spark across the county in new and surprising ways, allowing people to connect with others and culturally inspiring experiences during the pandemic and beyond.

Participants who indicated that they had attended more than one event were shown a retrospective question, asking them to rate their sense of belonging to the local community before taking part in Pop Up Art Renfrew County events. They were then asked to rate their sense of belonging 'these days.' This chart compares their retrospective ratings with their ratings of sense of belonging 'these days.'

Sense of belonging to the local community is stronger after participating in program



	VERY WEAK	SOMEWHAT WEAK	SOMEWHAT STRONG	VERY STRONG
BEFORE	5 (9%)	24 (30%)	36 (46%)	12 (15%)
NOW	0 (0%)	4 (5%)	28 (35%)	47 (59%)

KEY IMPACTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, 87% of survey participants said that they feel a strong sense of belonging to the local community. This is much higher than seen in the general population (see this article from Statistics Canada, for context: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220819/dq220819b-eng.htm>).

Although it is a very small sample, it's also notable that 11 of the 12 responses we have from folks identifying as 2SLGBTQIA+ indicate a strong sense of belonging to the local community.

LEVEL OF CONTACT » »	LITTLE CONTACT		SOME CONTACT		MANY CONTACTS		TOTALS	
	COUNT	%	COUNT	%	COUNT	%	TOTAL COUNT	TOTAL PERCENT
Sense of belonging to local community after participating in program (combined categories) ☹								
STRONG	17	63%	22	85%	53	100%	92	87%
WEAK	10	37%	4	15%		0%	14	13%
GRAND TOTAL	27	100%	26	100%	53	100%	106	100%

Individually, Pop Up Art provided moments of learning and enjoyment and on the community level it provided safer ways to connect with other people's ideas and creativity while maintaining distance. In the words of one visitor, "the Pop Up Art in Eganville was one of our first family outings after the first pandemic lockdown... After being so isolated from our friends, family and communities it was really powerful to connect with artists who were sharing a snapshot into their worlds and lives. They were also feeling many of the same things. It felt good to connect through the art and stories."

Another visitor commented, "I will remember the stories shared through art during the pandemic. I could relate to the themes of longing to connect with family, comfort from the land and hopefulness." To be able to exhibit art speaking to relevant social themes in real time is at the heart of the Pop Up Art project in that it benefits people to have access to contemporary art made in their own communities.

The project also provided artists and communities the opportunity to connect with personal and community cultural histories. In speaking about their piece, one artist shared that "it's my dream gallery full of Algonquin artwork. A world full of expression, history, and documented work, a simple way to hold on to our Culture, and yet a simple way to enjoy it."

Another wrote about connecting with motifs that their ancestors would have used and reflecting on the historic and ongoing legacy of settler colonialism in Canada. They shared, "I included a traditional Kashubian embroidery flower to honour my heritage. I also added in an orange heart with a couple of beads... upon hearing and reflecting on the remains of Indigenous children that were unearthed. Those stories sit heavy with me so I decided to put that feeling into my piece. It was a small act, but a way for me to send out love to our Indigenous community and everyone affected by the residential schools in Canada."

KEY IMPACTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

THE NATURAL WORLD

People expressed that the project helped them to channel feelings and thoughts related to the role that the natural world plays in our lives as rural people. One artist shared, "I was thinking about the rich history that is in these hills and the stories they hold." Another artist stated that "the project helped ground me, gave me assurance that there can be great beauty and learning opportunities during times of uncertainty, transience, and loss. That there is still great beauty and strength in the chaos of our universe; that beauty and enduring strength of Mother Earth is what holds me and gives me strength."

Responding to the Tree Story exhibition, visitors contributed more than 126 messages of gratitude and encouraging statements to trees. These statements reflect the relationships people can have with trees. One visitor shared that "as a child climbing trees was my sanctuary. The higher I climbed the wider my view. I never felt small though...only surrounded by friends." This feeling of being connected and supported was also expressed by another visitor who wrote, "Once you find your friends you find your roots and love makes the roots grow." Overwhelmingly, after engaging with the exhibition people left messages of gratitude to the trees, writing messages such as: "Thank you for sheltering us, giving us fruits + holding up our hammocks" and "Thank you. For oxygen, shade, Christmas decor, birch bark canoes, lodging the birds, support our tree houses, beauty, lessons from nature, reminders of home, fruit + syrup, warmth, hiding places."

This gratitude flowed through many of the exhibitions. Artist reflections included sharing "feelings of gratitude to live in such a beautiful natural part of the country. We are so lucky to have so many lakes nearby." Another, working on the People and Place tapestry reflected on their thoughts and "how much the Ottawa Valley means to me; how much the landscape, the

communities, the people all feel like home. How lucky my family has been to grow here, to frolic in the rivers, to walk amongst the pines. I wanted to try to captivate the curves and movement of the waterways, the depths of the tree bark." Another artist commented, "I hope people who feel lost will look to the forest/nature for support and security. I think everyone needs to become more intimate with nature so we will be more likely to protect it!"

INNER LANDSCAPES AND MENTAL HEALTH

In addition to outer landscapes, many people expressed how the project invited them to explore inner landscapes and how making and engaging impacts mental health. Simply stated, one visitor shared "art is good for my mental health." Artists echoed this statement, sharing the challenges of the pandemic and how actively making art helped them to cope and make meaning of their lives in challenging times. One artist shared, "Since March of 2020, I have found my mind obsessing about three main things: food security, hugging folks again, and creating art as an antidote to fear. Through gardening and art-making, I calmed myself to a place where I knew we are all still connected even in our physical isolation. The mediums I chose for this piece are ones I use to relax and be creative, especially when feeling anxiety and depression." Another saw art as a path out of a mundane space. "During the pandemic, I felt so closed in creatively and found it hard to be open to inspiration and keep a sense of fun alive. The Pop Up Art program gave me so many different ideas and challenged me to find a way out of that very grey space. Even just reading/seeing what was going on online on Facebook had a major impact."

Artists shared how creating art helped them as a strategy to support calming, mindfulness and especially grounding. One shared that it was "grounding...I did a lot of my work while sitting on Zoom calls during the pandemic. I was getting so tired

KEY IMPACTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

of focusing on a computer screen and listening. So I started pulling out my embroidery and doing that while I tuned in to whatever meeting or training I had." Another artist shared how art was a resilience practice for them, saying that "this really helped me get through the pandemic and the shift in the way we now work. In addition to grounding, perhaps a good word to describe this experience was survival. Art in all forms helps me survive this wild world." The significance of the Pop Up Art project within the pandemic experience was continuously expressed by artists and visitors. Both expressed a heightened emotional significance of art in challenging times.

Pop Up Art leaves a legacy of rural representation, inclusive art making and supports the local arts community.

The project supported many local artists to gain visibility and community with other artists and makers. Visitors to both the gallery and workshops commented on the atmosphere of openness and support that helped them to endeavour to be creative. One person who attended a workshop shared they will remember "the freedom to create without any judgement." Another recalled "the feeling of a very safe space, making art with others." In addition, more than 97% of visitors agreed that they were inspired to create something after engaging with the Pop Up Art project.

Artists and makers said the project helped to shift preconceived myths about who could be an artist. One person shared, "I was tormented a bit by thoughts of: What if I'm not really an artist? What if this is just crafting? I felt intimidated to be put in the same show as real artists... As soon as I managed to fall into the rhythm and headspace of just allowing myself to create without self-judgment, time sort of slipped away and I enjoyed the process much more. I treated myself the way I treat my children and students when they are creating...with encouragement and patience!"

Others echoed the feelings of being on the growing edge, stating "I have never participated in anything like this before. It was a good experience learning about the work that goes into a proposal as well as the promotional side of things. It was my first time writing an artists' bio." For other more established artists the local element of the Pop Up Art project was a draw as it "sounded interesting and I was eager to apply to a project closer to home. I usually participate in all Canada-wide or international events."

By spotlighting rural artists and commissioning them to make work to be shared locally, this project gave them a freedom to take risks and create art without the pressure of selling it. It also gave them opportunities to develop as artists and build their portfolio and resume, as well as more connections with other artists and creators.

Pop Up Art builds awareness of Renfrew County as an arts and culture destination

Situated between the Ottawa River and the expansive natural beauty of Algonquin Park, the Ottawa Valley is well situated to expand tourism in the region by nurturing arts and culture. The Pop Up Art project plays a leading role in building a local and regional perception of the Ottawa Valley as a destination for rurally created contemporary art. Welcoming art into community spaces breaks down the stereotypes that art is only for the elite, to be found only in large urban galleries. As a visitor stated, "It's a nice surprise to find art in 'non-art' places."

Visitors also commented that the project helped them become more aware of local artists. "I appreciated learning about all the great local talent in the Valley." This was echoed by others, including another visitor who commented on "the great artistic variety present in Renfrew County - so many talented artists, many of whom I had not heard of before. So many unique and inspiring works."

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Stakeholders said the project made art accessible to a range of audiences by leaning into the everyday nature of the spaces where galleries were located. A visitor stated, “I really like the fact that the Pop Up shows through several communities brings art to the general public in an educational, informal, and non threatening way.” This formula benefits both people who live here and those from away. One of the venue hosts commented on how the exhibitions had something for everyone. “Tourists were impressed at the quality of art. Locals were inspired by the collaborative efforts of OV-CAOS, and excited to see their friends’ work in the exhibits, sometimes unexpectedly. Kids loved the interactive components.”

Pop Up Art cultivates an ecosystem of partnerships building shared arts and culture infrastructure, assets, and connections.

Pop Up Art created a vibrant network of more than 43 partnerships during the course of the project, including creative, cultural, programming, promotional, and venue partnerships. Artists shared that these community connections created pathways for a more diverse group of people to access art. One commented that “the magic thing about OV-CAOS Pop Up Art exhibits is that it showcases in public places. I think this allows a chance for anyone/everyone to see something artistic and different without having to make the choice to go into a gallery.” By inhabiting the spaces where people already gather, and sharing the elements needed to have a rich experience engaging with art, the project created something more powerful than what a single space, organization or community could do alone.

The exhibits built on existing feelings of trust in community spaces. Visitors were invited to be vulnerable and express themselves freely. Community members responded by sharing personal reflections that help us understand why community spaces are important and access to art matters. An example

of this is a visitor to the Honoring Seniors exhibit who shared anonymously “I wish I was safe from domestic violence. I know that society does not accept domestic violence survivors. I feel safe. I am in a public library.” By giving space for community members to share in a safer way the project offers a reminder that community spaces are also lifelines that support people to connect with a safe place, kind community members and the potential for information about community services.

One of the staff shared that “this has worked really well with Pop Up Art because we do have community champions. It is also important to think about how this is about people’s lives and communities and those don’t abide by municipal lines. Look at it as Ottawa River Watershed as a whole.” Engaging so many partners expanded the reach of the project and helped to create a regional experience. Working with various groups who do not usually partner with arts-based initiatives created a space to develop new relationships and potential. The partnerships helped the project through the pandemic and created potential to think outside the box, work together in new ways and collaborate to ensure people could connect. These relationships create a strong foundation to continue building sustainability, permanence, and connectivity within the arts and culture sector in the Ottawa Valley.

Recommendations

Maintain rural accessibility when planning future development.

Accessibility is a key element of any project in the Ottawa Valley, where there is a large land area, a low population density and no public transportation. One of the most defining elements of the Pop Up Art

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project is the decentralized and mobile approach that included three galleries located in community spaces over an area of approximately 110 km. In addition, workshops and installations branched off to further expand the geographical footprint of the project. Project stakeholders spoke of the importance of art being accessible to different parts of the county.

One visitor shared the need to think about how rural people can access future projects and art spaces “depending on where it is located, is it still accessible? Pop Up locations make it accessible.” Other challenges were expressed including an artist who shared the difficulty of being without a vehicle and therefore not being able to get out to all of the gallery spaces. Visitors also shared that they experienced challenges travelling to access arts and culture programming and events.

A potential area of growth could be reaching out to organizations such as schools, youth programs, seniors’ active living centres, and other community organizations to see if they can help the groups they serve connect with exhibitions and programming.

Focus communications.

Various stakeholders expressed the need for more publicity and sharing of information about exhibitions, installations, and events. There was a sentiment that the quality of the exhibitions and workshops was excellent and that more people should know about them. Testing different information-sharing strategies could be beneficial for future projects, ensuring that different populations are engaged along the way. This could include schedule sharing, audience response, updates with artists as exhibitions travel to new locations, or creating a sign-up list at exhibitions for the OV-CAOS newsletter.

Another possible idea to further strengthen and support Pop Up Art and other local arts and culture opportunities is the creation of an Ottawa Valley

Cultural Calendar. A regional platform promoting arts and culture events that could be supported and shared by the local municipalities would have the potential to reach a greater audience than any single organization or event could reach on their own.

Build economic impact tracking capacity.

Pop Up Art was always free, unticketed, and located in public spaces where people may happen across the galleries or installations. This strategic decision seeks to reduce barriers that would limit people from attending the sites. The galleries are co-located in community spaces and therefore are not staffed with gallery staff to provide information or track visitors. Considering this, there were challenges tracking visitors to the galleries.

For the next iteration, it would be useful to consider ways of tracking visitors to help accurately reflect the total number of visits and visitors who experienced the Pop Up Art project. More accurately tracking visits would support future use of Ontario’s Tourism Regional Economic Impact Model (TREIM) data analysis simulation tool. This would help simulate tourism-related economic impacts of arts and culture activities and events. Increasing project capacity to accurately track economic impact would help to build a strong case for how municipalities and the county should invest in arts and culture in the Ottawa Valley.

Continue to build a diverse audience.

While the Pop Up Art project was successful in engaging artists from all over the Ottawa Valley, there is always more room to expand to ensure a greater diversity of artists and audiences. The majority of those who completed the visitor survey were women, white, able bodied and middle aged. In contrast, exhibition engagement activities included participation from children and other genders as well. It is worth exploring what strategies could be used to support

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diversifying audiences by engaging with different audience groups and communities. In addition, seeking more thorough demographic data from artists and workshop participants could support a more accurate view of the diversity of those who engage in the project. Visitors requested exhibitions showcasing the 2SLGBTQ+ community and even more workshops aimed at reaching children and youth.

Artists and community members also expressed that art was a way to explore social change. One visitor said, "I like the socio-political connections and making space for people to express community concerns, social justice." The survey reflected this, with 98% of visitors who completed it identifying that Pop Up Art helped them see the world in a new way. Artists also were focused on social issues. One artist hoped to encourage people to be more mindful of the impact of their actions when in nature. "Hopefully everyone who sees [my artwork] will experience a little (or BIG) aha! moment – when they realize just how much we indiscriminately and unthinkingly "trash" food containers and packaging which could be re-used, re-cycled or intentionally composted." Art can support people to approach difference with curiosity rather than fear and cultivating this has the potential to support positive community change.

Strengthen local and permanent arts infrastructure.

While stakeholders were appreciative of the mobile model of the Pop Up Art Project, many expressed a desire for more stability, permanence and sustainability of art and culture in the Ottawa Valley. One way to achieve this that has been recommended by visitors, artists and project staff is the possibility of creating a permanent public gallery in the Ottawa Valley that could act as a hub, providing a stable foundation for future mobile Pop Up Art programming. The "Art Gallery of the Ottawa Valley" could include a collection of satellite galleries

and programming spaces built into already existing facilities in communities across our region, unified under one brand and centrally managed.

Many visitors wanted more Pop Up Art exhibitions, in more communities, with more workshops available at more workshop times, with more for children and youth and more performances and events. As suggested by one visitor, "More and more and more. I am always delighted to see how many people and how many different types of people go to the workshops. I would love to do it more often." Visitors also felt a permanent location would help. "It would be so great if [Pop Up Art] had a permanent physical location for workshops, events and exhibitions." Another visitor commented that "the county needs a permanent gallery with a space so that the weather won't affect events."

Artists also shared that having a permanent gallery and cultural hub in the Ottawa Valley would positively change things for them. Changes they identified include: no longer having to leave the community to exhibit; being able to take inspiration from other artists; arts and cultural events supporting the local economy; creating space for arts and culture to raise the tourism profile of Renfrew County.

Exploring the idea of a permanent gallery and cultural space needs to hold the values of Pop Up Art that made the project successful. As one artist shared, "Holding an event in a public space with youth makes art belong to everyone. It isn't elitist and it brings art into your everyday life... brings young people and adults into an artist community. Very different than walking into a private intimidating art gallery. Accessible art feels like it belongs to you and there is more of a connection." Future growth should be driven by this idea of building connection and accessibility for rural communities.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Artist and Maker Reflection Survey

Thank you for helping us evaluate our project! This is how we learn about the impact of our work together. Participation is voluntary and any questions may be skipped at any time. Participants have a right to confidentiality; all identifying information will be kept private and any quotes used in reports will be attributed to Artist/Makers.

For more information contact Caitlin MacDonald, Project Evaluation, Community Resource Centre, Killaloe, 613-757-3108 or data@crc-renfrewcounty.com.

Name:

Date:

Address:

Postal Code:

Age:

1. Why did you want to take part in this project?
2. What were you thinking about when you participated?
3. What feelings did you have when you were creating your piece?
4. Who do you hope sees the final piece? Who do you think needs to see it? Why?
5. If you had only one word to describe the experience, what would it be?
6. Please share anything else here.

Appendix 2

Artist Focus Group

We shared a quick snapshot of what was accomplished through the project.

Conversation explored two main ideas:

- What happens when rural artists and creative people have the opportunity to make and create personal art in public spaces close to them?
- What can we imagine when considering Integrating art into public spaces?

Questions:

1. How did the pandemic impact what you created?
2. Accessing art in public spaces, how did people react to Pop Up Art?
3. As a viewer, did seeing the gallery concepts and stories affect your mental health?
4. What were the economic impacts of participating in Pop Up Art?
5. Did anybody get contacted as an artist by the public?
6. How does the lack of a public gallery in the Ottawa Valley affect you?
7. How would your professional experience change if there was an art gallery of the Ottawa Valley?
8. What would you remember most about your experience with Pop Up Art?

Appendix 3

Community Member Workshop Reflection

Thank you for helping us evaluate our project! This is how we learn about the impact of our work together. Participation is voluntary and any questions may be skipped at any time. Participants have a right to confidentiality; all identifying information will be kept private and any quotes used in reports will be attributed to Community Members.

For more information contact Caitlin MacDonald, Project Evaluation, Community Resource Centre, Killaloe, 613-757-3108 or data@crc-renfrewcounty.com.

Postal Code:

Age (Optional):

Reflecting on your experience please share the following:

1. A Rose (the best part of the highlight)
2. A Thorn (most challenging part)
3. A Bud (a future hope or something you are inspired to do)
4. Anything else we need to know

Appendix 4

Inspired People: This is an online survey. This version is for review purposes only.

Thank you for filling out this survey. Your answers will help the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) and Ottawa Valley Creative Arts Open Studio to understand, demonstrate and improve the impact of their programs.

This survey is for people taking part in Pop-Up Art Renfrew County.

Before you take this survey you should know:

- You do not have to take this survey – it is your choice.
- The survey should take a few minutes to complete.
- The survey will not ask for your name.
- Your relationship with Ottawa Valley Creative Arts Open Studio will not change in any way if you do not take or finish this survey.
- By taking this survey, you agree to share your survey answers with OTF, LogicalOutcomes (the organization that collects survey data for OTF) and Ottawa Valley Creative Arts Open Studio.
- There is a small chance that someone at Ottawa Valley Creative Arts Open Studio will be able to tell who you are, based on your survey response. Please keep this in mind when filling out your survey.
- There is a chance that Ottawa Valley Creative Arts Open Studio will share anonymous quote(s) from your response in public-facing documents or reports.
- [Click here](#) to learn more about how data are stored and used by OTF, LogicalOutcomes and Ottawa Valley Creative Arts Open Studio.

OTF collects survey information to comply with the Government of Ontario's mandate to support effective service delivery in Ontario. If you have any questions about this survey, please click [here](#) for additional information, or contact Wanying Zhao, OTF's Manager of Measurement Evaluation and Learning, at wzhao@otf.ca.

1. How long have you been attending our events?

Choose one of the following answers

- Never or only one or two times
- For a little while (more than 2 times)
- For a long time (many times over months or years)

2. We want to understand how Pop-Up Art Renfrew County impacts participants.

How true are the following statements for you?

	Very true for me	Somewhat true for me	Not true for me	No response
I learned something new and interesting				
I see the world in a different way				
I learned new skills or improved skills I already had				
I feel more confident in my abilities				
I feel inspired to create something				
I feel inspired to take action				

3. We want to understand what it's like taking part in Pop-Up Art Renfrew County.

Do you agree with the following statements?

	Very true for me	Somewhat true for me	Not true for me	No response
Everyone is made to feel welcome				
Everyone is valued equally				
People help each other				
I am treated with respect				
I get help when I need it				

APPENDICES

We'd like to learn a bit more about your experience with Pop-Up Art Renfrew County. Remember that there is a small chance that someone at Ottawa Valley Creative Arts Open Studio will be able to tell who you are, based on what you say.

4. What is the single thing that you will remember most about your experience with Pop-Up Art Renfrew County?

5. How can we improve our program or services?

6. Think back to when you first joined us. How would you describe your sense of belonging to your local community back then? Would you say it was...

- Very weak
- Somewhat weak
- Somewhat strong
- Very strong
- No answer

7. How would you describe your sense of belonging to your local community these days? Would you say it is...

- Very weak
- Somewhat weak
- Somewhat strong
- Very strong
- No answer

These questions help us understand the people we serve. They are voluntary. If you don't want to answer a question, just skip it or select 'prefer not to answer.'

1. How old are you?

2. Which gender do you identify with most?

Choose one of the following answers

- Woman or girl
- Man or boy
- Non-binary, gender-variant and/or Two Spirit
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say
- Another gender (please describe)

3. Do you identify as transgender?

Choose one of the following answers

- Yes
- No
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

4. Do you consider yourself to be...

Check all that apply

- Black
- Person of Colour
- First Nations, Inuk (Inuit) or Métis
- LGBTQIA2S+
- Person with disability
- Francophone
- None of the above
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

5. What are the first three characters of the postal code where you are living now (skip if you don't know)



POPUPART

ARTifacts

PIJASHIN
WELCOME
BIENVENUE

ATTENTION
Please wear a MASK
or FACE COVERING
at all times.
MAINTAIN
PHYSICAL DISTANCING

POPUPART
OV CALS



People and Place



POP UP ART

OTTAWA VALLEY COMMUNITY ARTS

Evaluation Report

AUGUST 3, 2023

Prepared by Community Resource Centre (Killaloe) Inc.



www.crc-renfrewcounty.com
www.ov-caos.org