

KINGSTON VOTES 2026:
Candidate Survey on the Arts and Culture in Kingston

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How do you see the role of arts and culture in Kingston?

Arts and culture are fundamental to Kingston's identity and character. They include music, theatre, performing arts, graphic arts, crafts, and film production – which is a growing industry here with our heritage buildings and landscape. There are so many creatives, makers, and musicians in this town, and it's a long-time, fundamental piece of who we are as Kingstonians. From Zal to the Hip, to Miss Emily, Kasador, and Luella (and many many more!!), we've got an incredible multi-generational music scene, with fans from here in town, across the province, the country, and around the world. Kingston is also an amazing cultural city. That's layered on our arts and music history, on being an international, intellectual, and educated city because of our institutions of higher learning, and on being the most gender-diverse city in Ontario. Plus we have the layer of Indigenous cultures, languages, and reconciliation.

What role should the City of Kingston play in supporting a sustainable arts and culture sector?

We have remarkable artistic institutions, and a strong philanthropic structure supporting many of them. Right in my own Sydenham District we have multiple sites of arts and culture.

Agnes Etherington gifted her home and art collection to Queen's, and it opened as the Agnes Etherington Art Centre in 1957. The Bader family has given a collection of more than 200 paintings, including four Rembrandts. With ongoing support from the Baders, The Agnes is under major renovations now, set to become the largest public



university-affiliated museum in Canada, and its Indigenous Art Collection includes First Nations, Métis, and Inuit work. (At the same time the loss of the Fine Arts program is a heartbreaker.)

The City-owned Tett Centre for Creativity and Learning is a beacon for arts, music, dance education, curation, and gallery shows, with ceramic arts and jewellery making, and a music instrument lending library, too.

The Isabel is a concert hall that hosts local and internationally known artists, and is a site of learning for music, drama, film, and the visual arts at Queen's.
Our public art goes back at least to the 1970s with landmark waterfront (ALCAN aluminum!) sculptures: Time in Breakwater Park, and Tetra at the Portsmouth Olympic Harbour; and continues with a new sculpture, Consonance, scheduled for installation at the Isabel later this year.

Outside the district, the City owns and operates the Grand Theatre, alongside dozens of independent music venues (from the RCHA and the Broom, to the Toucan and the Mansion, et al!), plus galleries, jewellers, market seller-makers, and more.
We should continue to value and support the sector and our creatives with financial investment, expanded availability of spaces for learning, making, and presentation, plus marketing and publicity support, and partnerships with our Tourism and Economic Development sectors.

If elected, are there any actions you would take to help strengthen Kingston's arts and culture sector?

I'd continue to support arts and culture through programs the City already has: The City of Kingston Arts Fund, run by the Kingston Arts Council, has put over $10 million into local arts since 2007, with this year's total investment at over $738,000. The Heritage Fund has given $1.5 million since 2013, and the City owns the Tett and the Grand Theatre and runs public art programming. There are lots of things we do well, but I'd love to hear more from you about where the gaps are, and how we can fill them!

Additional Comments



To Kingston's artists, musicians, and makers: thank you for what you give this city. I see you, I appreciate you, and I'm listening.