



# FLEX: COLLABORATION

*Festivals Learning Exchange Program*



## TOOLKIT: COLLABORATION WITH ARTISTS



## TOOLKIT: COLLABORATION WITH ARTISTS

### ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT: COLLABORATION WITH ARTISTS

WorkInCulture's [Festivals Learning Exchange \(FLEX\)](#) Toolkit of learning content and resources will help you learn the basics of creating and implementing a collaboration for your festival or organization.

**In this toolkit you will look into the benefits—and pitfalls!—of collaborating more deeper and longer with artists. Beyond tour-based presentation models, how can festivals engage in mutually beneficial, transformative relationships with artists by participating in their creative processes? How can this lead to increased community engagement, better internal collaboration and deeper dialogue with programming peers?**



The following content was developed and curated by Fanny Martin of Art of Festivals, a not-for-profit strategic production agency that partners with artists, institutions and communities to bring more art into everyday life and more life into the arts sector. The original content was developed and delivered as part of a pilot program held between January – May 2022 for arts and heritage festival organizations located in Toronto, Kingston, Ottawa, and Sudbury.



#### Meet our Curriculum Consultant and Facilitator: Fanny Martin



Fanny is an international creative producer & facilitator specialised in festivals, networks, interdisciplinary projects and art in public space. Born and educated in France, she developed an eclectic freelance project portfolio in the UK before moving to Canada and founding [Art of Festivals](#), a creative company that designs transformative events to spark change and enchant everyday life. In collaboration with artists, educators, researchers, technologists and activists, her work focuses on producing memorable shared experiences, shaping change strategies, experimenting with participatory frameworks and designing learning & evaluation programmes.



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# KEY CONCEPTS

## COLLABORATING WITH ARTISTS – STARTING WITH POLICY:

### To consider:

**Policy** is a **deliberate system** of guidelines to **guide decisions** and achieve **rational outcomes**. A policy is a **statement of intent** and is implemented as a **procedure** or **protocol**. Policies can assist in both subjective and objective decision-making.

- Policies used in subjective decision-making usually assist senior management with decisions that must be based on the relative merits of a number of factors, and as a result, are often hard to test objectively, e.g. work–life balance policy...
- Governments and other institutions have policies in the form of laws, regulations, procedures, administrative actions, incentive and voluntary practices.

**Frequently, resource allocations mirror policy decisions.**



## POLICY IN PRACTICE

**Policy** is the normalization of a **practice** → a structure to channel resources in an accumulative manner, to amplify or accelerate a process of change.

- e.g., eligible expenses such as childcare, accessibility costs, grant writing support...
- definitions of terms such as “diversity”, “innovation”, “partnership” ...

Policy is often “evidence-based”: a response to identified needs to ensure a more precise and effective channeling of resources.



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### WORKING WITH ARTISTS

How does this intersect with how we collaborate and work with artist?

*How can we collaborate with artists, with each other, with funders and other partners to create "patterns that cycle upwards"?*

*(adrienne maree brown, Emergent Strategy)*

A policy is a solution to a problem.

A good policy is a solution to future problems.

→ Let's imagine some policies for our dream ways of programming!



**Read this blog article** (*reading time: approximately 10 minutes*); 3 processes to collaborate with artists are presented in this blog post. Consider how the article could inform some preliminary thinking and potential discussions into artist collaborations with you and your team/other collaborators.

**Article:** [Trust the Process: New Approaches to Artistic Development.](#)

Reflect on your answers and consider using the following exercises to start mapping out a strategy or plan towards more effective collaborations with artists.



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# EXERCISES

## COLLABORATING WITH ARTISTS →

*Collaborative exercises to play with, twist and rewrite for your needs.*

The aim of these questions—those suggested below and the ones you make up with and for your own team—is to support deep-dive discussions into artist collaborations. There may be a point that catches your attention, a couple of good questions you can combine, a logical link you can rename in a better way: they're yours to mix up, truncate, augment, try out solo or together. It's an invitation to structure your team discussions, invent new meeting rules, research and create your own ways of working well.



### Questions about Artistic Development

**Question 1** - Of the 3 processes to collaborate with artists presented in the [blog post above](#), which one speaks most to you, and why? What can you “transplant” from it that would work within your own context / at your own scale?



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**Question 2** - How do you start and develop new collaborative relationships with artists? Do you have a system, recipe or set of principles? A few prompts...

- Do you approach specific artists? Do you accept pitches? Do you run open calls?
- How formalized are your selection criteria? Do you (are you able to / willing to) give feedback to unsuccessful applicants?
- How do you collaborate with other festivals, programmers and producers, artistic training programmes, funders, institutions... to spot artists & productions to programme and to co-programme (e.g., coordinating tours), co-produce and co-develop (e.g., residency circuit) new works?



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**Question 3** - What do you need (to do, to learn, to try...) to amplify your collaborative programming and producing processes?



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### The Artist Selection Process

Think of as many factors as possible that play a role in the artist selection process for your festival/organization. List those that are transparent, communicated (e.g. public call for application), and also those that are somehow underlying (e.g. assumed factors).

**Use this template as a printout or digital checklist you can complete on your own or as a team.**

**Optional:** Considering using the Google Jamboard application (or similar 'sticky note' or whiteboard type application) to put up all factors that come to mind as a group. Factors can be submitted anonymously and a summary will be shared with participants.

**1 - Factors of Selection** – Clear, communication ones (e.g. public call for application):





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**2 - Factors of Selection** – Underlying ones (*e.g. assumed factors*):

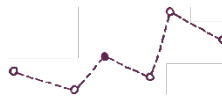
**3 - Factors of Selection** – What factors serve you well? What factors create barriers? What can be done to replicate or address these factors?:



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### PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Continue your learning and application of these collaborative concepts and processes by watching the following **FLEX interview**. Also make sure to check out our **FLEX Spotlight Sessions**, featuring a number of international case studies contextualized for the Canadian sector, and accompanying resources on our website: <https://www.workinculture.ca/flex>



### FLEX COFFEE BREAK SERIES

Also available on [WorkInCulture's YouTube Channel](#), this series features insights from past participants of WorkInCulture's FLeX (Festivals Learning Exchange) Program on the overarching topic of collaboration. Learn from 4 festival leaders located in Kingston, Sudbury, and Toronto about how they approach collaborating with Peers, Artists, and Society.

To complement the key concepts and exercises above, watch these following clips featuring Tricia Knowles of [Calliope Collective](#) in Kingston on how to collaborate more effectively with artists.



[A conversation with Tricia Knowles](#)  
of [Calliope Collective](#) in Kingston.



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# Canada



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**ON CULTURE DAYS**



WorkInCulture would also like to acknowledge and extend our deep thanks to our Curriculum Consultant, Fanny Martin of Art of Festivals, for developing this learning content.

