



Mass Culture and Mississauga Arts Council's first virtual Datathon Engages the Arts, Health and Research Communities!

Mississauga, ON - September 21, 2021

[Mass Culture/ Mobilisation culturelle](#) (MC) and [Mississauga Arts Council](#) (MAC) are pleased to announce the successful completion of our first virtual Datathon.

The Datathon, held over three days in early September, brought together thirty-five participants through three Data Parties during the Datathon and collected ninety-three resources, tools, research papers and frameworks on the benefits of arts to mental health. These resources will inform the content for the Arts for Mental Health Conference presented by MC and MAC on October 6, 2021.

“Inviting artists, academics and practitioners to contribute towards a collective literary review of resources on arts and mental health not only greatly assists us in building a repository of information on the subject matter, but demonstrates that there is a keen interest in coming together to exchange, learn about and use research,” says Robin Sokoloski, Mass Culture’s Director of Organizational Development.

More Information About the Datathon:

This Datathon, treated as a collective, sector-sourced literature review, was developed by Alexandra Anisman. Alexandra co-designed the Datathon’s format and facilitated the three Data Parties that took place during it. The Data Parties consisted of great moments of inspiration. Thanks to the Playwrights Guild of Canada’s PlayConnect program, playwrights Catherine Frid and Wren Brian read from their work themed on mental well-being. Aliya Daniels from Move + Mindful and Aaron Richmond, researcher from Mass Culture’s Research in Residence: Arts’ Civic Impact initiative, also joined a Data Party to contribute their experience and knowledge.

The goal of the Datathon was to collect as many resources on arts and mental health as possible. Among the list of resources are a framework titled [“Meditative Live Coding and Musicological Hindrances”](#) by Matthew Tift, a toolkit titled [“Basic Toolkit Handbook: Building and Sustaining Arts in Healthcare Programs”](#) compiled by Jane Jerardi et al, and a paper titled [“Musical Improvisation and Health: A Review”](#) by Raymond AR MacDonald and Graeme B Wilson.

New resources are always welcome! Submit your resource by going to Mass Culture’s [submission page](#). To view current resources, go to the [Airtable page](#). All the collected data will be publicly available on [ArtsCare.ca](#) as well as [Artifex](#), a repository of arts and culture research created in collaboration with the University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC).

Datathon preliminary to Arts for Mental Health Conference

The next step is the Arts for Mental Health Conference on October 6, 2021, 1-5 PM Eastern, produced by Mass Culture for the Mississauga Arts Council. The conference will combine the research from the Datathon with roundtable discussions and impactful presentations to develop a proposal for a pilot social prescription program in Peel Region.

“What would an Arts Care program look like? How much would it save the overstressed health care system? By diverting large numbers of potential patients into beneficial, low-cost creative experiences, we are also able to employ precariously underemployed professional artists.” says Mike Douglas, MAC’s Executive Director.

“MAC envisions a program that would aim to make creative experiences and services available to physicians and community health agencies through a web-based referral system and prescription support service,” Douglas continues. “The diverse resources discovered through this Datathon will be vital to the development of this pilot Arts Care program.”

The Arts for Mental Health Conference is invite-only, but we encourage those interested to contact info@massculture.ca if they wish to attend. Learn more about the Arts for Mental Health conference at www.artscare.ca.

The Arts for Mental Health Conference is funded by a Seed Grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation and co-sponsored by the City of Mississauga, Bell, and Alectra Utilities.

About Mass Culture:

Mass Culture is a collaborative support organization that takes a community based approach to providing diverse parties with the context and connections needed to enhance the equitable mobilization of arts and culture research. By convening cultural workers and academics, Mass Culture provides a platform for knowledge to be explored, widely understood, and mobilized. Learn more: massculture.ca

About Mississauga Arts Council:

The Mississauga Arts Council is a registered charity, dedicated to accelerating progress toward the attainment of our Vision of Mississauga, as a vibrant cultural community where arts and culture thrive! Our mission is to empower the Arts Economy by Creating more opportunities & capacity; Connecting artists to audiences and each other; and Celebrating artists’ achievements. Learn more: mississaugaartscouncil.com

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