



Acting President's Annual Report La Fab members' Annual General Meeting, June 19, 2018

The past year has been both challenging and rewarding for La Fab Arts Centre. As usual, we have showcased the work of our member artists and strived to give them visibility through various new events, we have tackled some files crucial to the future of La Fab and introduced several improvements, and we have overcome many obstacles, not the least of which being the pipes freezing and bursting in December 2017. However, as we like to say, we have succeeded in turning lemons into lemonade and can be proud of our achievements.

Exhibitions and other events kept us busy

From February to December 2017, La Fab held 11 exhibitions and several other events.

We opened the year with an invitation to meet four of our studio artists in their environment: Hanneke Boadway, Uwe Foehring, Sophie Guindon, and Alisha Reilly-Roe. Then, we presented solo exhibitions by John Marok, Olivier Bonnet, Jenny Walker, Harry Nowell, Geneviève Belzile, Johanne Sylvestre, a dual exhibition by Katharine Fletcher and Heather Lamorie, a group exhibition on printmaking by Ottawa School of Art's scholarship recipients, and an art show by the Chelsea-Wakefield Tour Alumni. And let's not forget our always very popular Summer and Christmas Members' shows.

In December, following a contest, we officially named "Corrid'ARTS" our mini-gallery on the second floor, where all members will be invited to collectively exhibit their works throughout the year.

Also, by way of exciting initiatives, in order to get to know one another better, we started the "Thursdays-at-Six Mix and Mingle", a series of members' talks that was held last summer and early autumn to coincide with the Old Chelsea Market. Artists such as Michael Peterson, Sophie Guindon, Reid McLachlan, Eric Fletcher, Catherine Hart, Alisha Reilly-Rowe, and others gave illustrated short talks, where members and also market visitors enjoyed learning about their work.

La Fab increased its profile by attending several "pop-up" opportunities to showcase artists and their work. Several La Fab members went to the Friends of Gatineau Park's day at the Chelsea Visitors' Centre on July 15, to the Outaouais Gourmet Festival at the Hendrick Farm on August 27, and to the Folk Picnic in Meech Creek Valley on October 1st. In keeping with tradition, La Fab hosted the Christmas Market and greeted Santa Claus with the tree lighting ceremony as part of Noël Magique.

The boutique innovates

In the boutique, we reintroduced the “Artist of the month” feature where we gave prominence to the works of artists such as Lucie Rossignol, Sophie Guindon, Carol Froimovitch, Jennifer Bennett, and Beth McCubbin through a central display, plus an article in our newsletter and on our website.

Also, thanks to a grant from the SODEC, we bought the Square management system and in 2018 will use it for our new inventory. This system will make things easier and more efficient for both workers and artists.

The studios are more popular than ever

Good news regarding revenues from La Fab’s studios: not only are they all rented, but we have a waiting list. This is very important because the rents of the studios allow us to pay the electricity and the heating of the rectory.

In addition to the studios, the gallery space was rented for various events, such as the YogArt workshops, meetings by the municipality, the CLD and the CDROL and private parties.

The Garden: A haven of greenery for our arts centre

A growing initiative is the maintenance of our beautiful garden. We’re hoping to make our garden an asset for La Fab by attracting visitors. For example, we would like to have a relaxing area with bird feeders and a bird bath. We could also have events such as Garden Tea parties, Art in the Garden, and other creative events.

All ideas, pieces of advice and “green thumbs” are welcome!

Joannie LaRoche: Summer Student

We wish to thank our Liberal Pontiac MP, Will Amos, who gave us a grant to cover a summer student’s salary at La Fab. Joannie LaRoche – the student who won our Logo competition in 2017 – worked diligently for us during the summer in our boutique.

La Fab is in the Black!

Although our Treasurer, Danielle Pronovost, will be outlining our financial situation more thoroughly in her report, I’m pleased to say that La Fab has about \$20K in the bank. Now, this sounds wonderful – but we do have responsibilities to pay \$10,000 to the CLD for a loan they offered us two years ago. Plus, we have ongoing expenses as you know. However, we mention that we’re in the black because – it’s excellent news for us as we move forward.

Communications and marketing: more to come!

In addition to the communiqués that are sent regularly to all the media, we use our newsletter, our website and our Facebook page to reach out to La Fab members and friends as well as to regional communities. However, we realise that a lot more needs to be done to enhance La Fab's visibility and increase participation in our events. In the months to come, we'll work on developing a marketing strategy for La Fab. Your help is welcome.

We've also been hard at work developing a new website, where the CLD's Shared Human Resources gave us a matching grant to hire a website developer. The project was put on the back burner because of the December disaster, but we will resume our work this summer.

Finally, a subsidy from SODEC allowed us to create promotional cards, business cards and various signs.

A few setbacks

We accomplished a lot, but we also suffered some significant setbacks, as I think you all know. We were very sorry to accept President Gabriel Bouffard's resignation in September. As many of you know, Gabriel is taking a full-time course in art at Ottawa School of Art, and he simply did not have time to continue as our President. In November, the Board regretfully also accepted Vice-President Michael Peterson's resignation. Jovette Champagne stepped forwards to offer her services as Acting President. And good news: your Board welcomed new members, Jennifer Bennett and Louisette Trottier.

Strategizing, negotiating, restructuring and more

We still have a lot on our plate. In order to hone La Fab's goals, in August 2017, the Board conducted a strategic planning session at Spiritwood studio — members' Katharine and Eric Fletcher's home. We invited members of the CLD and CDROL to join us, as well as members at large. Gabriel Bouffard led the discussion. The retreat was very productive. We came up with a long list of actions that needed to be prioritized. We undertook some of them by force of circumstances, but the whole exercise was interrupted due to the loss of important board members and the lack of volunteers.

Consultations for a renewed commitment

Because La Fab is developing and being challenged by lack of members who offer their time to support the Co-op, your Board decided to ask members how you wish La Fab to continue. Accordingly, we invited members to four meetings in the autumn, where we discussed our operational model and asked how many hours you could commit to, working at La Fab. The word "volunteering" was actively discussed during these meetings. That's because La Fab is a Co-Operative, and, as a co-op, members are required to work to make the business function. During these meetings, facilitated by Jovette Champagne and Jennifer Bennett, members discussed hours, membership levels and fees, and many other details. In the light of the

comments received and of her own research, Jennifer proposed a new operational model.

This is an exciting time for La Fab, as we will be testing a new approach in 2018-2019 based on input from members and a renewed commitment on their part.

Renegotiating La Fab's lease with the Church: a priority

Another important file, which was part of our list of priorities, was the renewal of our lease. Our current lease expires in October 2020, and some of our partners and potential donors have asked us to consolidate our location for the next few years before committing to making grants or donations. We are currently paying a nominal rent of \$ 1 a year and we are responsible for all the cost of maintaining and retrofitting the building. Alas, the freezing of radiators forced us to postpone our presentation to 2018. It will be treated in our next reports.

In summary:

So, in short, as we look back upon this past year, we have many achievements of which we can be extremely proud. We also have challenges – but this is normal and also exciting for us all, as we move forward, together, to create an even more vibrant cultural community centre and Co-operative at La Fab.

Jovette Champagne
Acting President