

**Media Release
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Edmonton Arts Council appoints Sanjay Shahani as next executive director

Edmonton... The Edmonton Arts Council (EAC) is pleased to announce that Sanjay Shahani will lead the organization as its next executive director. Mr. Shahani is an arts administrator, filmmaker and theatre producer from Toronto, whose career in the arts has spanned over 25 years.

Regarding the board-led hiring committee's selection, Anne Ferguson-Switzer, EAC Board Chair, said "Sanjay's many years of experience in the arts, along with his deep understanding of community engagement and inclusion, made him the perfect candidate to lead the EAC. We found Sanjay inspiring to speak with, and look forward to working with him to advance the goals of Edmonton's arts and cultural communities for years to come."

Sanjay Shahani has 14 years experience in granting agencies, having worked for the Ontario Arts Council, the Canada Council for the Arts, and most recently, the Ontario Trillium Foundation—an agency of the Government of Ontario, and Canada's largest granting foundation. While working as a Theatre Officer for the Canada Council, Mr. Shahani's file included Edmonton theatre companies, providing him with the opportunity to visit Edmonton on more than one occasion.

Of his move to Edmonton, Sanjay said "I am very excited to become a part of Edmonton's cultural life, where I will have the privilege of working with an amazing community of artists and arts organizations."

Sanjay Shahani also has extensive experience as an artist, and has produced documentaries such as *Don't Pity Me, Jaromír Skrivánek*, and the series *Different, Yet the Same: A Look at Canadian Cultures Today*, as well as community-engaged, professional theatre work such as *Twisted Metal and Mermaids Tears*, which represented the plurality of the South Riverdale neighbourhood in Toronto.

Mr. Shahani, who will officially join the EAC in early July, added that he is "looking forward to supporting our artists and arts organizations as they enliven audiences through diverse artistic programming, unlock the creativity of young people through community-based activities, and engender a sense of belonging through catalytic public art projects."

Sanjay Shahani takes over the position as executive director from Paul Moulton, who led the Edmonton Arts Council from May 2013 to January 2016.

Mr. Shahani will be at the Edmonton Arts Council Annual General Meeting on June 6, 7:00 pm at the Varscona Theatre.

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The Edmonton Arts Council (EAC) is a non-profit society and charitable organization that supports and promotes the arts in Edmonton. The EAC works to increase the profile and involvement of arts and culture in all aspects of community life.

Background

Sanjay Shahani is an arts professional who has worked in the arts for more than 25 years. He has produced documentaries such as *Don't Pity Me*, *Jaromír Skrivánek*, and the series *Different, Yet the Same: A Look at Canadian Cultures Today*. He has also produced theatre and is especially pleased to have contributed to *Twisted Metal and Mermaids Tears*, a community-engaged, professional theatre work that represented the plurality of South Riverdale in Toronto.

Sanjay has also contributed to the growth and development of arts organizations in South Asia and North America, and continues to act as volunteer advisor to culturally diverse performing arts organizations. He is particularly proud of his stint as the founding Chair of the Prismatic Arts Festival in Halifax. Prismatic is multidisciplinary arts festival that is dedicated to advancing the work of artists and arts organizations of colour and of Indigenous descent.

Besides his artistic work, Sanjay has done scholarly work in education and cultural anthropology. As an educator, he has taught at post-secondary institutions in North America.

Most recently, Sanjay was the Strategy Lead for Arts and Culture at the Ontario Trillium Foundation, designing the foundation's arts and culture investment strategy. His duties included managing the foundation's thought leadership, learning, and partnerships to advance sector capacity. Before being appointed to lead the foundation's strategy, he oversaw province-wide granting to the sector.

Prior to joining the foundation, Sanjay was a Theatre Officer at the Canada Council for the Arts and Community and Multidisciplinary Arts Officer at the Ontario Arts Council. During his time at the Canada Council for the Arts, Sanjay worked with colleagues to develop the Extended Projects Program. This program allowed ad-hoc theatre groups long-term funding to create, develop, produce and present new theatrical works. He also worked with colleagues in furthering the Council's understanding and reporting on multidisciplinary and community-engaged practices.

At the Ontario Arts Council, Sanjay designed the Multi-Arts Projects Program and the Integrated Arts Program. The Multi-Arts Projects Program was a response to the growing intercultural creative expression of artists and arts organizations from culturally diverse and Aboriginal backgrounds. Integrated Arts provided a home for creative work that brought artists into close collaboration with professionals from urban planning, science, health and community services.

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