



New report examines creative neighbourhoods in Southwestern Ontario and across Canada

Artists by Neighbourhood in Canada, a new report from Hill Strategies Research, highlights creative neighbourhoods across the country – areas where artists interact and help shape the character of their communities. Using mapping technology, the report examines artists as a percentage of the labour force in various postal regions – “neighbourhoods” – based on 2001 census data.

The report demonstrates that there are many significant artistic clusters in urban and rural areas across Canada. The full report and regional summaries of these artistic clusters are available for free from the Hill Strategies Research website (<http://www.hillstrategies.com>).

Nationwide, the “most creative neighbourhood” is H2W in Montreal’s plateau area, which has an artistic concentration of 8.0%, 10 times the national average of 0.8%. The most creative rural area is Nunavut’s X0A region. This area, encompassing Baffin Island (Iqaluit, Cape Dorset, etc.), has an artistic concentration of 3.4%.

Creative neighbourhoods in Southwestern Ontario

With 52,500 artists, Ontario has nearly twice as many artists as any other province. Artists represent 0.8% of the provincial labour force, equal to the national average. Toronto is home to the 17 postal regions with the highest concentrations of artists in Ontario, including three of the 10 neighbourhoods with the highest concentrations of artists in Canada (the Annex, West Queen West and Little Italy).

In southwestern Ontario, four postal areas have artistic concentrations that are at least double the national average of 0.8%:

- North-central London (N6A), with 2.2% of the local labour force in the arts;
- North-central Hamilton (L8R), 1.9%;
- West-central Hamilton (L8P), 1.6%; and
- Stratford (N5A), 1.6%.

Among rural areas, the LOS postal region (north of Lake Erie and west of Niagara Falls, including Pelham), has the highest concentration of artists in Ontario and is tied for 8th among Canadian rural areas with 1.3% of the local labour force in the arts.

Why is it important to track creative neighbourhoods?

The arts contribute to the quality of life as well as the social and economic vitality of communities. Recent research has also examined how the arts help attract talented people, jobs and investment to communities. On a personal level, the arts can stimulate, inspire and entertain.

A strong artistic community can therefore enhance the whole community's well-being. For these reasons, it is important to identify and track creative neighbourhoods – areas that are attractive to artists for a number of reasons: inexpensive housing, access to employment and self-employment opportunities, access to resources (such as studio space, galleries, rehearsal and performance space, artist-run centres and associations), social networks, physical environment, family reasons and more.

Artists by Neighbourhood in Canada can be used by associations, arts funders, policy-makers and others to ensure that programs and services are tailored appropriately to arts communities across the country. Further research could also examine the correlation between creative neighbourhoods and other local attributes that may help attract and retain artists.

Report and data notes

The full report, funded by the Canada Council for the Arts, the Department of Canadian Heritage (Canadian Cultural Observatory and Arts Policy Branch), and the Ontario Arts Council, is available free of charge on the websites of Hill Strategies Research (<http://www.hillstrategies.com>) and the funding organizations. The Hill Strategies Research website also provides detailed tables showing the number and concentration of artists in postal regions across Canada. The report is the twelfth in a *Statistical Insights on the Arts* series by Hill Strategies Research.

The data is drawn from a custom data request from Statistics Canada's 2001 census, conceived of and commissioned by Hill Strategies Research. The census captures information about the occupation at which a person worked the most hours between May 6 and 12, 2001.

Nine arts occupations are included in the analysis:

- actors;
- artisans and craftspersons;
- conductors, composers and arrangers;
- dancers;
- musicians and singers;
- other performers (such as circus performers and puppeteers);
- painters, sculptors and other visual artists;
- producers, directors, choreographers and related occupations; and
- writers.

The occupational categories are not a perfect fit for all artists but do provide a reasonable approximation of arts employment and self-employment. No census data is released for areas below a population size of 40. Postal areas with fewer than 40 artists are noted as "not reliable". Please see the full report for census data limitations.

Hill Strategies Research is a Canadian company that aims to provide top-quality, highly-relevant and insightful research for the arts. For additional information, please contact Hill Strategies Research, info@hillstrategies.com, 905-528-8891, <http://www.hillstrategies.com>.