

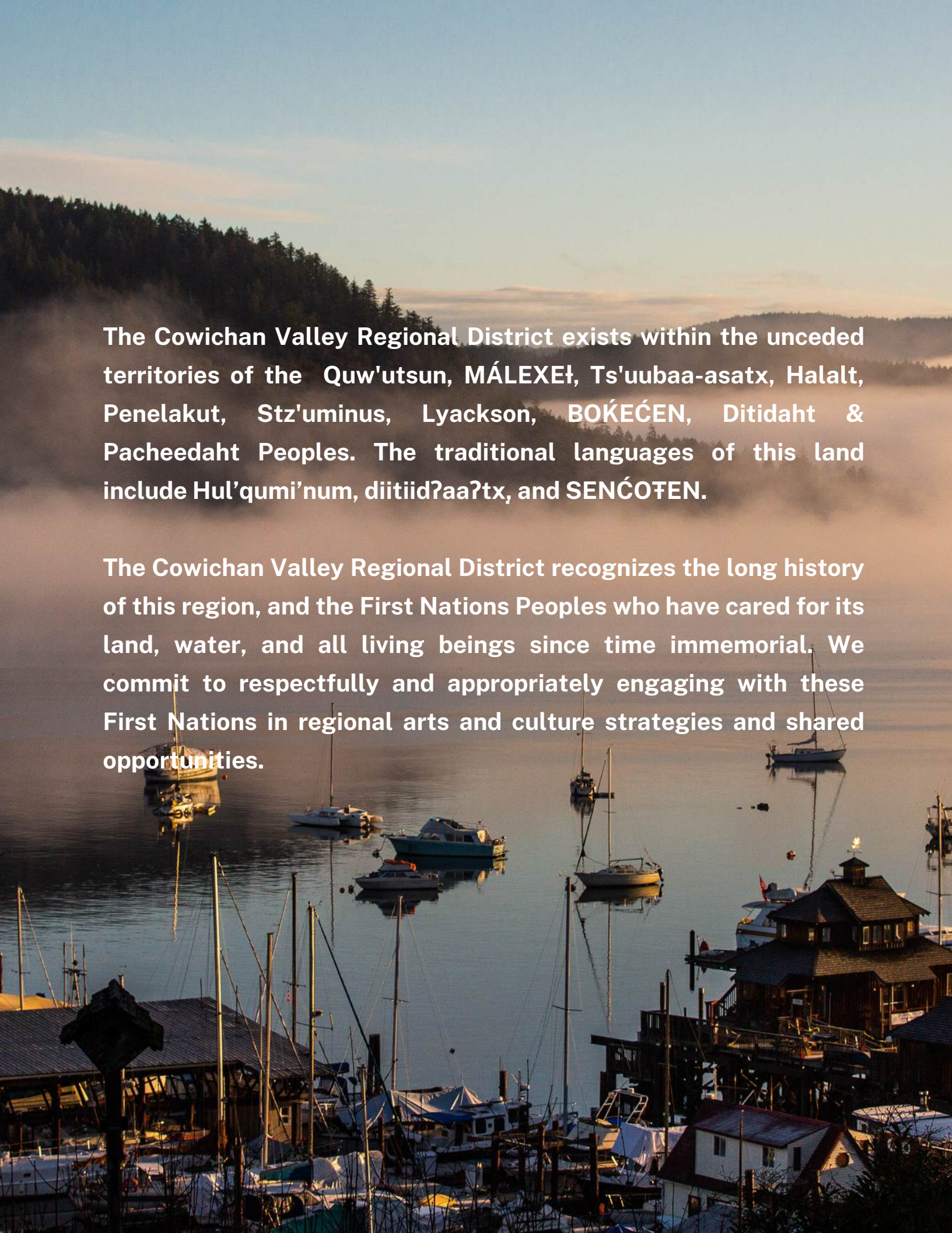
# IMPACT REPORT

# 2024



**ARTS & CULTURE  
DIVISION**





The Cowichan Valley Regional District exists within the unceded territories of the Quw'utsun, MÁLEXEł, Ts'uubaa-asatx, Halalt, Penelakut, Stz'uminus, Lyackson, BÓÉĆEN, Ditidaht & Pacheedaht Peoples. The traditional languages of this land include Hul'qumi'num, diitiidʔaaʔtx, and SENĆOŦEN.

The Cowichan Valley Regional District recognizes the long history of this region, and the First Nations Peoples who have cared for its land, water, and all living beings since time immemorial. We commit to respectfully and appropriately engaging with these First Nations in regional arts and culture strategies and shared opportunities.



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## REPORT PREPARED BY:

**Patrick LeBlanc** | Manager

**Laura Stephenson** | Administration

**ONE OF MANY PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT POP-UPS TO CONNECT ABOUT ARTS & CULTURE**

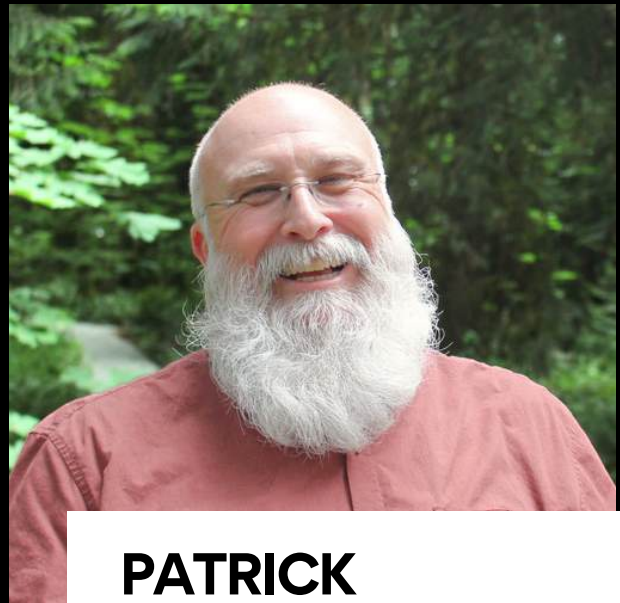
# A MESSAGE

## FROM THE CVRD ARTS & CULTURE DIVISION

The CVRD Arts & Culture Division undertook a milestone achievement in 2024 with the creation of *Creative Cowichan*, the region's first arts and culture master plan. Working with cultural planners, Happy Cities, the foundational document lays the path forward to greater support and development of the creative sectors across the region. The master plan utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative data from interviews and focus groups with quantitative data from surveys and statistical analysis to provide a comprehensive assessment of regional culture.

*Creative Cowichan* recommends an annual cultural impact report to highlight ongoing cultural initiatives and the value of the creative sector. This inaugural report focuses mainly on CVRD-supported cultural organizations and programming. Countless other cultural events took place in 2024, contributing to the economy, enhancing community well-being, attracting tourism, and supporting the high quality of life across the Cowichan Valley Regional District. Understanding the impact of the regional cultural sector is crucial to ensure its long-term sustainability and relevance to the community.

Clearly, cultural experiences are important to our communities. They create and strengthen relationships through sharing experiences, celebrating heritage, and following artistic interests. Relationship building is also about recognition and respect. In my experience, art is one of the best ways to create understanding between people in our communities. Whether it's visual arts, storytelling, music, theatre, or design, artistic expression prompts dialogue and builds relationships – a key to healthy, happy, and safe communities.



**PATRICK  
LEBLANC**

CVRD Arts & Culture Manager



# **CVRD ARTS & CULTURE SERVICES**

## **MISSION**

The CVRD Arts & Culture Division defines its role in the creative sector through providing community services as a venue operator, a grant funder, a program facilitator, and an arts and culture supporter:

- Facilitates annual organizational grant funding
- Facilitates two annual youth scholarships
- Operates the Cowichan Performing Arts Centre (CPAC)
- Operates the CPAC Lobby Art Gallery
- Offers arts and culture programming
- Collaborates with stakeholders to enhance and support arts and culture



# DEVELOPING CREATIVE COWICHAN



Eight Pop-Up  
Community Events

**665 People**



Two Surveys  
Online & Phone

**806 Voices**



Four Stakeholder  
Discussions

**110 People**

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

While developing Creative Cowichan, over 1,500 residents shaped the strategies that aim to meet the communities' arts and culture needs. Highlights of what we heard:

- ★ **Where We Participate in Arts & Culture**  
Outdoors is the preferred venue (74%), followed closely with performance spaces (73%) & community centres (69%)
- ★ **Importance of Creative Placemaking**  
91% agree creating vibrant community spaces should be a CVRD priority
- ★ **Our Awareness of Cultural Activities**  
70% hear about events through social media, while 64% get involved through word of mouth
- ★ **We Want More...**  
Live performances, art classes, public art, family-friendly programming & cinema

## SIX STRATEGIES OF CREATIVE COWICHAN

- Info & Resources
- Collaborations
- Programming
- Funding
- Spaces & Facilities
- Public Art



# ARTS & CULTURE SNAPSHOT

**British Columbia's culture sector contributed \$12.3 billion to the provincial economy in 2022**

More than Tourism (\$7.2 B), Mining (\$5.4 B), Oil & Gas (\$4.5 B), Agriculture & Fishing (\$3.4 B), and Forestry & Logging (\$1.7 B).

**IN 2022,  
ARTS & CULTURE  
PROVIDED  
\$78 M OF OUR  
REGION'S GDP**

**2% OF ALL  
B.C.'S VISUAL &  
PERFORMING  
ARTISTS LIVE  
IN THE CVRD!**

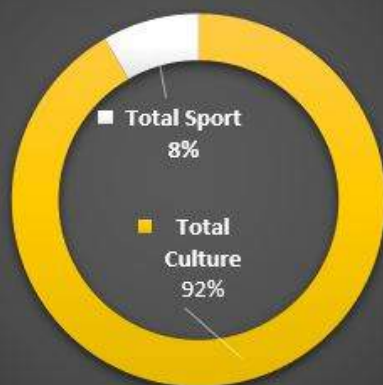
**Canada has over 914,000 workers in arts, culture, and heritage jobs, representing 4.4% of all employment**

With over 40,000 professional artists calling B.C. their home. Cultural workers accounted for 918 jobs in the CVRD in 2022.

*Canada defines culture as “creative, artistic activity and the goods and services produced by it, and the preservation of heritage”*

**– Canadian Framework for Culture Statistics**

## Culture & Sport GDP



## ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE CVRD'S MAJOR CULTURAL SECTORS IN 2022

- ★ **Visual & Applied Arts**  
\$11,518,017 of Regional GDP
- ★ **Performing Arts & Festivals**  
\$8,223,582 of Regional GDP
- ★ **Literature & Other Published Works**  
\$5,731,118 of Regional GDP
- ★ **Film, Media, Broadcasting & Recording**  
\$13,679,323 of Regional GDP

# CVRD CULTURAL FUNDING



## THE CVRD SPENT 2.8% OF THE 2024 TOTAL BUDGET ON CULTURAL SERVICES

CULTURAL SERVICES INCLUDES LIBRARIES, MUSEUMS, GALLERIES, THEATRES, MONUMENTS, FUNDING, PRODUCTION OF EVENTS, ADMINISTRATION & OPERATIONS

*"Public investment is an important part of the arts impact story."*

-Michelle Chawla, CEO  
Canada Council  
of the Arts

The CVRD funds arts and culture initiatives through various streams: regional recreation allocation, Area Director Grant-In-Aid, the Arts & Culture grant, youth scholarships, and division operations. Other funding supports cultural and heritage organizations across the region that program activities, offer tourism attractions, or run venues used for community events and festivals. Library funding supports essential cultural and community services mandated through the *BC Library Act*.



Direct Arts & Culture Funding

**\$1.7 M**



Cultural Support Organizations

**\$216 K**



Heritage Organizations

**\$99 K**



Vancouver Island Regional Library

**\$2.8 M**

## DIRECT ARTS & CULTURE FUNDING BREAKDOWN

- ★ \$1.58 M to Cowichan Performing Arts Centre
- ★ \$49 K to CVRD Arts & Culture Division
- ★ \$50 K shared between five sub-regional arts councils
- ★ \$30 K provided through regional arts and culture grants
- ★ \$1.5 K offered through two youth scholarships
- ★ \$4.5 K provided through Area Director grant-in-aid program
- ★ \$15 K to Economic Development's Film Coordinator program





# GRANT FUNDING IMPACTS

*“The overall health of Canadians is strongly linked to their participation in arts, culture, and heritage activities” - Canada Council of the Arts*

**10** Organizations received Arts & Culture Grant funds

**152** Events, workshops & season productions

**46 K+** Attendees & participants

**46** Full days of festival programming

Available since 2017, the CVRD Arts & Culture Grant program funds local organizations with arts-based mandates. Funding decisions are made by the Arts & Culture Adjudication Committee. Applications open annually in November at [www.cvrld.ca](http://www.cvrld.ca).

## 2024 GRANT AWARDEES

- ✦ Chemainus Classical Concerts
- Cobble Hill Events Society
- Cowichan Musical Society
- Cowichan Folk Guild
- Cowichan Symphony Society
- Cowichan Valley Bluegrass Festival
- Duncan-Cowichan Festival Society
- Kaatza Lakeside Players
- Ladysmith Little Theatre
- Mercury Players

 **23% INCREASE IN GRANT APPLICATIONS SINCE 2023**

 **\$3,000 AVERAGE AMOUNT DISTRIBUTED TO APPLICANTS**

 **\$99 K REQUESTED FUNDS - ONLY \$30K AVAILABLE**

 **\$4.8 M IN ECONOMIC SPINOFF FROM 10 ORGANIZATIONS**



# FILM COWICHAN

*“B.C.’s film industry is essential to our economy and our communities”*

**- Honorable Brenda Bailey, Minister of Finance**

Film Cowichan operates under the umbrella of Economic Development Cowichan, working in collaboration with the South Island Film Commission in Victoria, the North Island Film Commission, and Creative BC to attract film productions to the Island. During the past decade, more than two dozen productions have been filmed here, accounting for more than \$145 million in economic spin-offs for the region.

While the U.S. writers and actors strikes in 2024 reduced the number of greenlit projects in the global film industry, Film Cowichan received many inquiries about future projects in the region.

## 5 PROJECTS

*One Mile (Film)*  
*Lost Wells (Film)*  
*SKY (Nature Film)*  
*Telus Commercial*  
*P. Hoffman (Documentary)*

## 14 DAYS

**Projects spent  
filming in our  
region!**

## 90 JOBS

**Regular positions in  
the film & interactive  
media sector  
in 2022**



# CULTURE AT CVRD CENTRES



## REC COWICHAN OFFERS ESSENTIAL YEAR-ROUND ARTS & CULTURAL PROGRAMMING AT FOUR CENTRES:

- Cowichan Community Centre
- Kerry Park Recreation Centre
- Shawnigan Lake Community Centre
- Cowichan Lake Recreation

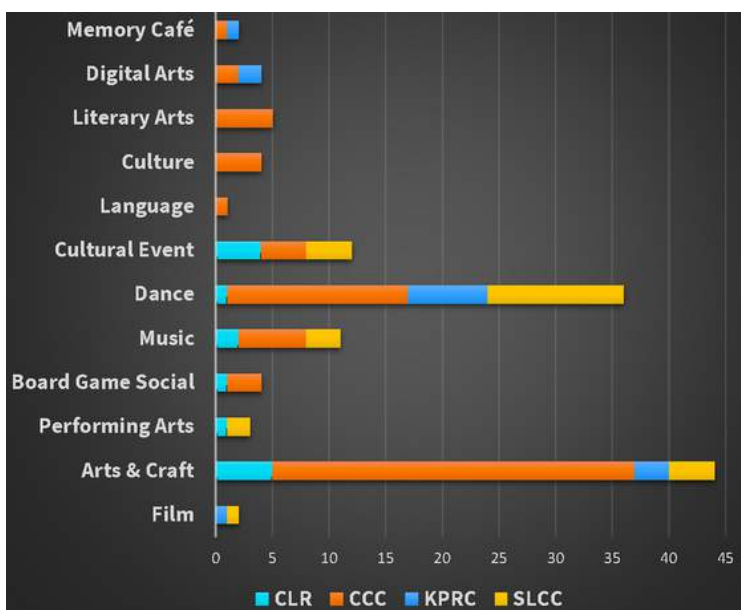
**1,200+**

**Individual classes & events offered in 2024**

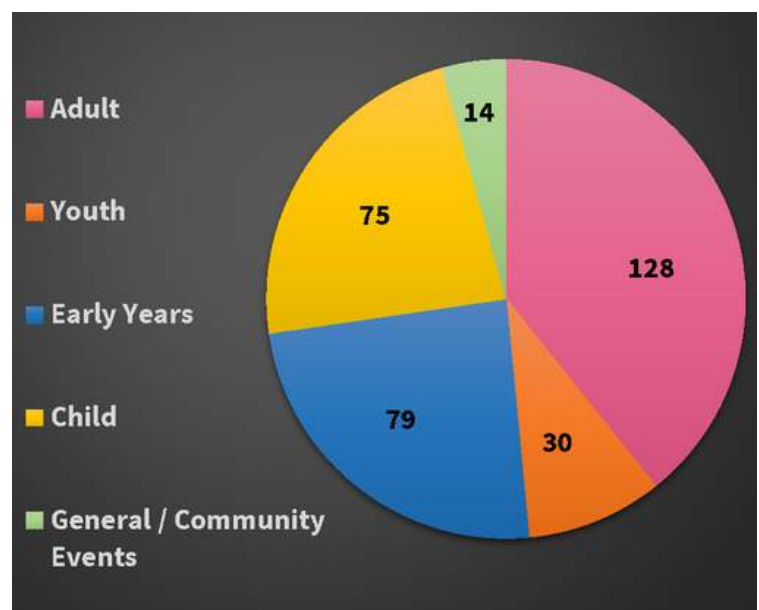
From children's robotics summer camps to adult ballroom dance, the CVRD provides a wide variety of cultural programming. The majority of classes are for adults seeking to enhance their skills, with plenty of music and dance classes for young children. Community events include Christmas Chaos, Canada Day, and Halloween celebrations.

During public engagement for *Creative Cowichan*, we heard a need for more arts & culture programming tailored to youth. Women also noted a need for more family-friendly activities across the region. *Creative Cowichan* encourages broad collaboration with stakeholders to meet these needs.

## VARIETY OF CULTURAL PROGRAMMING



## NUMBER OF CLASSES/EVENTS OFFERED



# REGIONAL ARTS COUNCILS

FIVE  
SUB-REGIONAL  
ARTS COUNCILS  
ACROSS THE  
CVRD

FOUR  
PERMANANT  
GALLERIES &  
ONE TRAVELLING  
POP-UP  
CARAVAN

MUSICAL EVENTS  
WRITER'S FORUMS  
STORYTELLING FEST  
ART MARKETS  
PHOTOGRAPHY  
YOUTH CAMPS

Community arts councils serve and respond to local needs. They act as a bridge between artists and the broad community. Run mostly by dedicated volunteers, these organizations connect diverse people through cultural programming and activate a sense of community pride. Supported by the CVRD since 2016, the sub-regional arts councils provide essential community services from Ladysmith to Malahat to past Lake Cowichan. As a valuable resource for local artists, the community arts councils offer a venue for artists to sell their works, attract cultural tourism, and enhance the region's livability to retain and attract skilled workers.

1,500+ LOCAL  
VISUAL ARTISTS  
SHOWCASED

70+ MUSICAL  
EVENTS & JAMS

9 KIDS POPUPS

18 FESTIVALS

## CONNECT WITH THE COUNCILS

- ✦ **Cowichan Valley Arts Council**  
[www.cowichanvalleyartscouncil.ca](http://www.cowichanvalleyartscouncil.ca)
- ✦ **South Cowichan Arts Guild**  
[www.cowichansouthartsguild.com](http://www.cowichansouthartsguild.com)
- ✦ **Arts Council of Ladysmith & District**  
[www.ladysmitharts.ca](http://www.ladysmitharts.ca)
- ✦ **Cowichan Lake Arts & Culture Society**  
[www.cowichanlakeartsandculture.org](http://www.cowichanlakeartsandculture.org)
- ✦ **Chemainus Valley Cultural Arts Society**  
[www.cvcas.ca](http://www.cvcas.ca)

***“In small towns and rural areas, cultural activities facilitate interaction, build skills & relationships, and help to create a vibrant, forward-looking environment that has the potential to counter the exodus to larger centres”***

**- Community Foundations of Canada**



# COWICHAN PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE

## THE PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE EMPLOYS:

- 7 Full-Time Staff  
Technical & Administration
- 12 Part-Time Staff  
Technical & Front of House
- 3 Auxiliary Departments  
Ticket Centre, Operations, Finance
- 64 Volunteer Ushers  
Contributed 3,400+ hours!

## \$1.5 M

Revenue earned  
through rentals,  
concession, merch,  
& ticket sales



CPAC WELCOMED OVER  
45,000 PATRONS IN 2024!



CPAC BOOKED 166 EVENTS  
INCLUDING REHEARSALS



\$524,000 IN TICKET SALES  
FOR 22 LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS



18% OF PATRONS ATTENDED THEATRE  
16% OF PATRONS ATTENDED FILM

17 DANCE SHOWS

18 FILMS

9 LOCAL SCHOOL  
PRODUCTIONS

6 COMEDY

64 REHEARSALS

36 CONCERTS

16 THEATRE

## CPAC THIRD FLOOR GALLERY

13 local artists showed in the gallery, including group work from the local Francophone community



2024 Exhibits (L to R): Nikki Manzie, Suzanne Dionne-Coster & Françoise Moulin,  
Etsuko Kaji-Holley & Leona Petrak, Craig Richards, Gloria Daly & Lesley Comassar

# ARTS. CULTURE. COMMUNITY.

## 2024 CULTURE DAYS

**75% of first-time participants said that they feel “a lot” more proud of their community and what takes place in it after attending a Culture Days event**

– Community Foundations of Canada

**13** Registered Culture Days events in the CVRD

**8** Hands-on and educational art workshops & exhibits

**2** Theatre performances, including one for youth

**1** Truth & Reconciliation Day event with Indigenous art

In 2024, the CVRD organized its first Culture Days regional initiative. Culture Days, the national celebration of arts, culture, and heritage, runs annually for three weeks in autumn. It encourages public participation and behind-the-scenes opportunities with free, interactive events. Anyone can participate in Culture Days by attending events or hosting their own! Find out more and see this year’s listings at [www.CultureDays.ca](http://www.CultureDays.ca).

**86% agree or strongly agree that a vibrant arts & culture scene is important to them\***

**82% think the CVRD should organize or support arts & culture programming\***

### HOW ATTENDING CULTURE DAYS AFFECTS ATTENDEES’ WELL-BEING\*

**72%** IT IMPROVES MY MOOD

**69%** IT HELPS ME RELAX

**61%** IT CONNECTS ME TO MY COMMUNITY



# SNAPSHOT OF COMMUNITY ARTS

**THE 115<sup>TH</sup> COBBLE HILL  
FAIR CELEBRATED  
SOUTH COWICHAN  
WITH MUSIC, FOOD &  
AGRICULTURAL  
EVENTS**

**COWICHAN TRIBES  
HOSTED CULTURAL  
ARTISTS, DANCERS &  
SINGERS FOR  
NATIONAL INDIGENOUS  
PEOPLES DAY**

**THE 156<sup>TH</sup>  
COWICHAN EXHIBITION  
SHOWCASED VISUAL  
ARTS, PERFORMING  
ARTS, CONCERTS, &  
MAGIC SHOWS ALONG  
WITH CULINARY  
ARTS & CRAFTS**



## **Chemainus Theatre Festival**

- Five shows & 41,000+ patrons
- Full service dining room
- Shop features 100+ artists & lobby gallery space



## **The Hub at Cowichan Station**

- Dance, art & culture classes
- The HUB Film Club
- Home of The Clay Hub
- Collective pottery studio



## **Laketown Ranch**

- Festival venue rentals
- Economic & tourism benefits
- Produced Sunfest & Laketown Shakedown



## **Cowichan Public Art Gallery**

- Five exhibits & 4,000+ patrons
- Run with 50+ volunteers
- Hosts Art in the Alley – outdoor summer art fair



## **Duncan Farmers' Market**

- Weekly cultural meet-up
- Live music & holiday events
- Year-Round Saturday market & summer Thursday evenings



## **MC Visual Poetry Contest**

- Annual youth literary contest
- \$8,000 offered in prizes
- Entries & winners featured in film festival showcase

# 2024 SUMMARY

The cultural sector plays a vital role in supporting a diverse and healthy community with a thriving economy. The arts offer more than just economic benefit by creating opportunities for connection, increasing mental well-being, and enhancing the natural beauty of our Island communities. Art and heritage organizations bridge our past with the possibilities of the future by providing a creative outlet, educating, and inspiring. A celebrated arts and culture sector fosters innovative ideas and honours our cultural identities.

The CVRD's Arts & Culture Division supports, facilitates, and programs cultural activities across our region. With nearly 1,000 cultural sector workers in our communities – not including the countless artists who create part-time or recreationally – the arts cannot be discounted for their role in making the Cowichan Valley and its surrounding areas a preferred place to call home.



## Contact Us

**COWICHAN VALLEY  
REGIONAL DISTRICT**

**ARTS & CULTURE  
DIVISION**

**Phone**

250.746.3428

**Email**

arts@cvrd.bc.ca

**Website**

www.cvrld.ca



***“The arts do something that no other sector can do. They make three impressive contributions all at the same time: build the economy, express uniquely Canadian experiences, and improve quality of life and wellbeing.”***

**- Michelle Chawla, CEO Canada Council**