

Final Report for the  
**Spring 2025 PEI Arts Grants**



*Photo from "The Island We Inherit" project by Lucien Lumumba/70sStudio*



Economic  
Development  
Innovation & Trade

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This funding program was designed to support the development of artistic practice of PEI professional artists through a competitive granting system. The evaluation process is modeled after the best practice of using Peer Assessment Committees to select successful projects and award funding amounts. This round of funding competition was able to support a total of 22 projects.

## Stats

Number of eligible applications received: 59

Number of projects funded: 22

Total amount requested: \$288,588.31

Total amount available for the Spring 2025 PEI Arts Grants program: \$100,000.00

## By Discipline

Visual Arts: 6

Interdisciplinary: 2

Film and Media Arts: 3

Music: 6

Writing and Publishing: 2

Theatre: 1

Dance: 1

Crafts: 1

## By Artist Type

Established: 14

Emerging: 8

## By Grant Type

Create (Creation): 16

Share (Dissemination): 3

Learn (Professional Development): 3

# Successful Applicants

## Sara Jane Affleck

**Writing and Publishing, \$3,640**

Writer Sara Jane Affleck will participate in a residency at Fish Factory Creative Centre in Stöðvarfjörður, Iceland, from June 4 to 30, 2025, to complete the draft of a speculative/dystopian novel set on an island after a massive storm.

## Jordan Beaulieu

**Visual Arts, \$8,000**

"The River Doesn't Wait" is a forthcoming graphic novella by Jordan Beaulieu. Blending autobiographical comics with the poetic traditions of nonlinear storytelling, the project follows a first-person account of a transformative year in rural PEI, where personal change and environmental shifts intertwine. Alongside the book, a series of stand-alone drawings and mixed-media works will form the basis of an accompanying exhibition.

## Alexis Bulman

**Visual Arts, \$2,500**

Alexis Bulman will exhibit work from her Framework series in a 2025 group show presented at the Confederation Centre Art Gallery. Using the webbing lawn chair as a metaphor, her drawings explore themes of adaptation and change. The funding will support the custom framing of four artworks to ensure their professional presentation in this exhibition of contemporary Atlantic Canadian artists.

## Hannah Bulman

**Visual Arts, \$2,150**

Hannah Bulman will enroll in art lessons with Katarina McCourt, a realism illustration and painting specialist in PEI. These atelier-based classes will meet weekly for personalized instruction. Hannah aims to draw inspiration from representational artists while enhancing her skills with graphite pencils, charcoal, acrylic, and oil paint to create realistic artworks, deepening her practice and expanding her repertoire to include portraiture and more.

## Brynn Cutcliffe

**Theatre, \$2,500**

PEI playwright Brynn Cutcliffe will tour their play, "THE PRICK", to the Fundy Fringe Festival in Saint John (August 16 to 23, 2025), and the Halifax Fringe Festival (August 27 to September 7, 2025).

## Sarah Nicole Dart

**Film and Media Arts, \$4,610**

Visual artist Sarah Nicole Dart will produce an art film with a series of beautiful dream-like scenes inspired by nature and mindfulness. The short 3-5-minute film will be created using single frame photography printed using both monograms of plants and images taken and printed onto Acetate negatives using cyanotype chemistry.

## Brooke Dingwell

**Writing and Publishing, \$4,800**

Based on requested changes from an editor at a traditional book publisher, writer Brooke Dingwell will be revising a gothic horror novel about four young artists living in a grand, haunted PEI manor with bones in its walls and a host with a disturbing hobby.

## Charlotte Engel

**Film and Media Arts, \$7,000**

"The 9 Lives of Erica Rutherford" will be a vibrant film about the fascinating life and work of PEI artist Erica Rutherford. It will explore themes of metamorphosis, selfhood, trans rights, and art as a mirror of self. Erica's work is now shown at some of the world's most prestigious arts institutions including Tate London, the Venice Biennale, and the NAC. The "Jarvis" Collective behind this project consists of Millefiore Clarkes, Charlotte Engel and Susana Rutherford.

## Adam Gallant

**Music, \$7,000**

Adam Gallant will select public domain music from the early 1900s, dissect it into its instrument layers, re-edit, re-mix and rebuild the material to then compose his own instrumentation on top and alongside the tapestry of old works. The project explores historical music through modern digital tools. At the end of this creation phase, Adam will have between 14 and 24 unique pieces of music under review.

## Nadia Haddad

**Music, \$5,000**

This grant will support the creation of Nadia Haddad's first EP. The artist will record six new songs that feel more personal and rawer than anything she's done before. This bold project captures a deeper, more vulnerable side of Nadia, exploring themes of identity and emotional depth. It will be supported by music videos, promotional photos, and a strategic rollout.

## Sam Langille

**Interdisciplinary, \$2,000**

Racket is a magazine dedicated to showcasing arts and culture in Prince Edward Island. Racket is tangible; a collection of art that readers can hold, explore, and return to, rather than scroll past. Sam Langille believes that presenting Island art using physical media will encourage deeper, more meaningful engagement with Prince Edward Island artists and their work.

## Troy Little

**Visual Arts, \$2,400**

"Levada" is a graphic novella by Troy Little inspired by a solo hiking trip to the island of Madeira, Portugal. It is a quiet story; a reflection and meditation on life and making mistakes told between two hikers (an anthropomorphic young rabbit who is ready to take on the world and a weary old owl who scoffs at the folly of youth) that meet on the trails of this magnificent island. The story is illustrated and presented in a sketchbook format that reflects the spirit of the journey.

## Tiffany Liu

**Music, \$7,500**

"Libertango Reinterpreted: A Cross-Cultural Music Project" reimagines Astor Piazzolla's iconic composition through collaboration with musicians from diverse cultural backgrounds and multimedia storytelling. The project led by musician Tiffany Liu includes a professionally arranged studio recording, a music video filmed in PEI, and live performances. A trio from China, Mexico, and the U.S. blends ancient instruments with modern styles, celebrating the fusion of cultures and connecting with audiences locally and globally.

## Lucien Lumumba

**Interdisciplinary, \$5,000**

"The Island We Inherit" is a photography project by Lucien Lumumba exploring cultural memory and intergenerational legacy on Prince Edward Island. Through 10 to 12 environmental portraits paired with personal reflections, the project captures the lived experiences of diverse Island residents. It will be shared through a public exhibition and printed zine, offering a visual archive of PEI's evolving identity.

## Catherine MacLellan

**Music, \$8,000**

With support from this grant, Catherine MacLellan will create her 8th studio album to be released in 2026. Tentatively titled "Can We Start from Here", this full-length, 12-song album will be recorded with a full band. It is an exploration of relationships, self-realization and letting go through music. The album will be recorded in Summerside, PEI, with Mark Westberg as the engineer and co-producer.

## Kirstie McCallum

**Visual Arts, \$3,500**

Kirstie McCallum will produce a series of clay and plaster replicas of local wildflowers using the techniques of botanical-bas-relief. This series of life-sized images will showcase plants growing in her Pollinator Clock project, a garden installed at Tea Hill Provincial Park. The bas relief work will be shown separately, as a way of documenting the site-specific project.

## Siddhu Sneh Sachidananda

**Film and Media Arts, \$5,000**

Siddhu Sneh will create "i am", a surreal, introspective short film immersing viewers in a fluid, dreamlike journey of a trans person's self-discovery. Through evocative visuals and poetic storytelling, it explores joy, confusion, rage, and resilience in figuring out one's true self; reflecting a facet of their identity: hesitant, bold, lost, hopeful, free. This film captures the nonlinear queer/trans awakening where euphoria and struggle coexist in messy, radiant beauty, providing visuals to Siddhu Sneh's debut tape.

## Reequal Smith

**Dance, \$2,500**

Reequal Smith, Artistic Director of Oshun Dance Studios, will participate in the prestigious Conversation on Performance program at Festival TransAmériques (FTA) in Montreal, May 27–June 3, 2025. This immersive experience connects artists to explore contemporary dance and theatre under the guidance of cultural mediator Leslie Baker. Smith will refine her choreographic skills, expand her creative vision, and enrich Prince Edward Island’s dance community with the insights and skills she gains from this enriching professional development opportunity.

## Patrick Stephen

**Music, \$5,000**

This grant will support PEI band Gizmo in creating a full-length album that expands on their debut EP, blending new sonic textures with themes of travel, love, and growth from two years of touring. Produced by Alex Edkins (METZ, Weird Nightmare) and engineered by Loel Campbell (Wintersleep, Contrived), the album reflects the group's collaborative evolution and aims to reach wider audiences through a vinyl and digital release, a tour, and industry outreach.

## Jane Whitten

**Crafts, \$2,500**

Jane Whitten will participate in the Kvitbrakka Artist Residency in Berlevag, Norway with Norwegian textile artist, Ingrid Larssen. Together, they will experiment with using kelp as textile. Jane has worked with seaweed since the 1990s and shared her knowledge with Ingrid last year. She looks forward to experimenting and creating with seaweed on the coast of northern Norway and to gain an understanding of the impact climate change is having on that area of the world and how it compares to the East Coast of Canada.

## Nathan Wiley

**Music, \$6,900**

With support from this Create grant, Summerside-based singer-songwriter and musician Nathan Wiley will record and mix a six-song EP of original material with producer/engineer Adam Gallant in Charlottetown, PEI.

## Damien Worth

**Visual Arts, \$2,500**

This Create grant will assist visual artist Damien Worth in the production of a new body of multi-disciplinary work that researches themes related to the stability, maintenance, dependence and implementation of infrastructure in Prince Edward Island (Epekwitk)'s rural communities.

# Process for Selection of Grant Awards

The Cultural Development Division oversees the administration of this funding program. A program officer coordinates the submission of grant applications and the peer assessment selection process. The program uses a peer assessment model where a multidisciplinary committee of five to six peers review all eligible applications and assess them on the following criteria:

## Artistic Merit: 25 points

Questions the artist(s) should be able to answer within this section:

- Why do I/we make art? Why am I a musician/filmmaker/visual artist/writer, etc.?
- What is my artistic practice about? (a general statement that speaks to an overarching vision)
- Where is this project situated within my practice, and does it demonstrate artistic growth?
- Other things to consider: Are the concepts written in language that is understandable (not too jargon filled or academic)
- Is this about business or about artistic merit?

## Achievability: 15 points

- Does the artist(s) have a track record of successfully completing projects?
- Does the plan seem reasonable and doable?
- Is the budget sufficient and realistic?
- Does the artist have a well-thought-out timeline?

## Impact: 10 points

This criterion relates to the impact for the PEI arts community. Essentially the question is: Will the project contribute to PEI arts? It can be understood in many ways: growth of the individual artist/group, raising the profile of the artist within the community, contributing to the growth of the arts community, and/or raising the profile of PEI arts outside of the province.

# Selection of Peer Assessors

Peer assessors were solicited from an open call for applications. Peer assessors represented a mix of disciplines and experiences in the artistic community. The assessors for the Spring 2025 PEI Arts Grants were:

Marissa Lad route: dance and multidisciplinary arts

Doug Dumais: visual arts and arts administration

Lindsay Connolly: music and arts administration

Catherine O'Brien: theatre and performing arts

Les Cooper: music

## Timeline for the Spring 2025 PEI Arts Grants

- April 14: Call for applications and peer assessors opens
- May 12: Call for applications closes
- May 14 – June 4: Peer assessors review eligible applications
- June 6: The Peer Assessment Committee meets in person for the adjudication process
- June 9 – June 12: Results are communicated to all applicants

# Final Report for the 2025 Indigenous Arts Grants

The Indigenous Art Grants program was established in 2021 to celebrate, highlight, support and encourage the artistic accomplishments of the Mi'kmaq people of Epekwitk (PEI). Just like the PEI Arts Grants program, the evaluation process is modeled after the best practice of using Peer Assessment Committees to select successful projects and award funding amounts. Each Peer Assessment Committee for the Indigenous Arts Grants consists of a chairperson and an interdisciplinary committee made up of Indigenous members of the arts and culture community. This round of funding competition was able to support a total of 13 projects.

## Stats

Number of eligible applications received: 19

Number of projects funded: 13

Total amount requested: \$75,537.30

Total amount available for the 2025 Indigenous Arts Grants program: \$12,525.00

## By Discipline

Visual Arts: 3

Crafts: 8

Music: 1

Writing and Publishing: 1

## By Artist Type

Established: 4

Emerging: 9

## By Grant Type

Create (Creation): 7

Learn (Professional Development): 2

Visual Arts Materials Microgrant: 4

# 2025 Indigenous Arts Grants Recipients

## Mary Jane Bernard

### Visual Arts, \$750

With this Visual Arts Materials Microgrant, artist Mary Jane Bernard from Abegweit First Nation will purchase more painting supplies to continue creating and exploring self-discovery and healing through her artistic practice. As a self-taught artist, she strives to keep exploring different creation techniques and grow as an artist.

## Barbara Bernard

### Crafts, \$750

With this Visual Arts Materials Microgrant, Mi'kmaw artisan Barbara Bernard of Scotchfort, PEI, will purchase more crafting supplies to bring to life a new collection of Native dolls dressed in handmade regalia.

## Kimberly Bernard

### Crafts, \$1,000

This Create grant will support Mi'kmaq artisan Kimberly Bernard to enhance and expand her candle-making. Funds will go towards purchasing high-quality materials and equipment to make sage healing candles, developing workshops that educate participants on traditional candle-making practices, and creating a welcoming environment where individuals feel culturally safe, valued, and respected. This support will enable Kimberly Bernard to offer unique and memorable experiences that connect visitors with the rich traditions and cultural significance of her candles, fostering a deeper appreciation and understanding of diverse cultural identities.

## Ellie and Sophia Bourque (Sew Deadly by the Wabanaki Sisters)

### Crafts, \$500

Sew Deadly by the Wabanaki Sisters is a non-profit initiative with the sole purpose of giving back to Indigenous communities and efforts. By creating their own products under the name Sew Deadly, Ellie and Sophia Bourque from Oromocto First Nation are able to use funds to purchase materials and accessories that are used to make creations which generate profits that are reinvested into supporting Indigenous peoples and programs.

## Francis Jadis

**Crafts, \$1,000**

With support from this grant, Elder Francis Jadis of Abegweit First Nation will harvest black ash. Funds will cover the costs of mileage, accommodation, and meals. Most of the work involved in harvesting black ash has to be done on site, including cutting, stripping and pounding the logs.

## Brent Jadis

**Music, \$1,000**

This grant will support music artist Brent Jadis of Abegweit First Nation in creating a quality production, one that will set the tone for his upcoming musical projects. Brent aims to produce a catchy beat and chorus, with heavy hitting delivery on the verses along with a music video in 4K resolution.

## Barbara Jadis-Bruised Head

**Writing and Publishing, \$1,000**

Barbara Jadis-Bruised Head of Abegweit First Nation will illustrate a children's book on Little Rock People "Potlatemootj". She will paint 10 canvas pieces to coincide with a story her father Frank Jadis shared with her as a child.

## Annie Martin

**Visual Arts, \$1,000**

With support from this Create grant, visual artist Annie Martin (Rosewolf Creations) of Millbrook First Nation will work on the creation of a large-scale pyrography version of her father's award-winning Mi'kmaw language map. The funds will support research and consultation with Mi'kmaq Elders to verify names and ensure cultural accuracy.

## Shanna Sark

**Visual Arts, \$1,665**

With this Learn grant, Shanna Sark of Lennox Island First Nation will be mentored by Elder Francis Jadis in the art of basketweaving. She will travel multiple times to Elder Francis Jadis' home and workshop, where she will learn from him and pick up new skills thanks to his mentorship and teachings.

## Jillian Sark

**Crafts, \$750**

Craft artisan Jillian Sark from Abegweit First Nation will use this Visual Arts Materials Microgrant to help with the purchase of materials to create a variety of bags, including wool fabric, canvas fabric, thread as well as zippers

## Carolyn Sark

**Crafts, \$750**

Carolyn Sark of Abegweit First Nation is receiving a Visual Arts Materials microgrant to purchase materials that will allow her to design and create ribbon skirts, shawls and regalia worn by the Mi'kmaw people of Epekwitk during cultural events and ceremonies.

## Koady Sock

**Crafts, \$750**

With support from this grant, Koady Sock of Abegweit First Nation will source materials for making mittens, slippers or moccasins in the traditional way. Once created, these items will be used towards educating youth, providing materials for community workshops held in Epekwitk (PEI), and filling a gap in the cultural clothing.

## Morgan Varis

**Crafts, \$1,610**

This grant will support visual artist Morgan Varis of Peguis First Nation in hosting crafting circles where she will provide attendees with a beginner's beading kit, a beginner's ribbon skirt, or a traditional dress making kit, complete with all the necessary materials to bring their own unique creations from the design stage to completion.

# Process for Selection of Grant Awards

The Cultural Development Division oversees the administration of this funding program with support from a member of the Mi'kmaq community. Together, they coordinate the submission of grant applications and the peer assessment selection process. The program uses a peer assessment model where a multidisciplinary committee of Indigenous peers review all eligible applications and assess them on Artistic Merit, Achievability and Impact.

## Selection of Peer Assessors for the Peer Assessment Committee

Peer assessors were solicited by a member of the Mi'kmaq community working in close collaboration with the Cultural Development Division. Peer assessors represented a mix of disciplines and experiences in the artistic community. The assessors for the 2025 Indigenous Arts Grants were:

Richard Lush

Michael R. Denny

Wyonna Bernard

Tian Wigmore

## Timeline for the 2025 Indigenous Arts Grants

- January 20: Call for applications opens
- February 18: Call for applications closes
- February 24 – March 31: Peer assessors review eligible applications
- April 8: The Peer Assessment Committee has a hybrid meeting for the adjudication process
- April 9 and 10: Results are communicated to all applicants