

WePress

WePress Report for 2017

Acknowledgement

WePress acknowledges that its space is and activities take place on the unceded and occupied territories of the x̱m̱əθkwəy̱əm (Musqueam), Sḵw̱x̱w̱ú7mesh (Squamish), and səli̱lwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

Summary of Activities for 2017

This has been a year of laying foundations and putting down roots even as we carried out a full schedule of activities. It's hard to believe that just over a year-ago last February 2017 we were scraping together the money to extend our lease at Keefer Street and were an entirely volunteer-run as a collective.

Today we have a new, refurbished location that is shared with a wonderful partner, Gallery Gachet, provided for only the cost of maintenance by BC Housing. Through our tremendous partnership with the Powell Street Festival Society, who has been our host sponsor through the process of incorporation and charitable status, for which WePress is extremely grateful, we have received a second major grant from the Vancouver Foundation, which together with other capital and program grants from supportive donors (listed below) are providing a degree of financial security for the immediate future, allowing us to build toward additional financial sustainability. This in turn has enabled us to hire two of the collective members as part-time staff, making a huge difference for the continuity of our work.

Most importantly we are fulfilling our mission of offering a safe and welcoming space in which to make art, working with those who are marginalized by systems of class, sexuality, gender, race, culture, disability, mental health, addictions, and colonization to empower themselves and build community capacity and resilience through art-making.

Highlights

- **In its second year, WePress successfully led over 60 workshops** (37 free; 25 paid on a sliding scale) totaling 156 hours for over 573 participants, which resulted in the hiring of 20 different artists paying them a total of over \$6,500 in artist fees. These workshops covered a variety of topics, including:
 - Letterpress Printing
 - 3D Printing
 - Block Printmaking
 - Crazy Quiltmaking and tote Bag-making
 - Flag-making
 - Queering Selfies (3D printing, and block printmaking, and letterpress)
- **held an Open House for about 25 attendees**

9 W. HASTINGS STREET, VANCOUVER, BC V6B 1G4

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- **Developed new and deepened existing working relationships** with other organizations and individuals in the DTES and beyond, including those listed below.
- **Collaborated on many projects with our partners**, including:
 - Carnegie Community Centre and Oppenheimer on flags for the 2017 'Namwayut Walk for Reconciliation
 - DTES Heart of the City Festival to run 4 workshops for Aboriginal Front Door, Culture Saves Lives, Oppenheimer Park, and the DTES Market Society, and participate in an art show for this year's Festival.
 - Queering Selfies offered workshops combining 3D printing and letterpress to youth in partnership with Qmunity and Broadway Youth Resource Centre.
 - Chinatown organizations to develop *The Art & Stories of Chinese Seniors in Vancouver's Chinatown* project which will be taking place in 2018 and the beginning of 2019.
 - Vancouver Maritime Museum, Nikkei National Museum, Vancouver Japanese Language School & Japanese Hall, Ray-Cam and other organizations to hold block printmaking workshops.
- **Took major steps towards organizational and financial sustainability by:**
 - Obtaining a BC Housing space on the ground floor of The Beacon Hotel (9 W. Hastings Street) with Gallery Gachet;
 - Hiring Lori Baxter Consulting to create a Business Plan and do a Feasibility Study (currently underway);
 - Assembling a great board of directors;
 - Preparation of a continuous evaluation plan with assistance of Cindy Patton From Simon Fraser University;
 - Working with BC Artscape through their Mentorshop Program to develop a Three-Year Strategic Plan 2017 to 2020;
 - Hiring two part-time administrators, Nina Yañez and Kathy Shimizu, and many different artists on contract; and
 - Establishing administrative systems.
- **Helped expand Powell Street Festival Society's (PSFS') year-round presence in the DTES and overall outreach** through shared work and resources between PSFS' Advocacy & Outreach Committee and WePress – collaborating to provide more art workshops and build more connections.

Many Thanks to Everyone Who Supported Us

Special Thanks

Cecily Nicholson, Anthony Meza-Wilson, Kristin Lantz and everyone at Gallery Gachet; Emiko Morita and everyone at the Powell Street Festival Society (PSFS); Chris Gilpin, Eric Rhys Miller, Kely McKerracher, and everyone at the Community Arts Council of Vancouver (CACV); Michael Flanagan, John Breckner, Gordon Reid, Herman Mah and BC Housing; Brian McBay and 221A; and Cindy Patton.

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Thank you to our funders and sponsors

Vancouver Foundation, City of Vancouver (through the DTES Planning Department's DTES Capital Grant and Cultural Services Community Arts Grant), BC Arts Council, and Community Arts Council of Vancouver (CACV).

Thank you for equipment donations

Sam Bradd, Janice Whitehead, Sharyn Yuen, and David Clifford and Blackstone Press. The Community Arts Council of Vancouver sold the letterpress and type collection to WePress for \$1 in January 2017.

Thank you to our 2017 donors

Anonymous, Erica Isomura, Cindy Patton, Lucy Alderson, Gregor Reid, Penelope Bacsfalvi, sharyn yuen, jeanie ow, Jen Quan, Ethel Mays, Diane Kadota, Tannis Sullivan, Sharon Van Volkingburgh, Kristie Bradley, Janice Shimizu.

Thanks to everyone we worked with

Aboriginal Front Door, BC Housing, Carnegie Community Centre & Oppenheimer Park, Chinatown Concern Group, Community Arts Council of Vancouver, Culture Saves Lives, Directions Youth Services, DTES Market Society, Gallery 221A, Gallery Gachet, Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre, Powell Street Festival Society, Qmunity, Queer Arts Festival, SFU's Vancity Office of Community Engagement and Super Cool Tuesdays, Tate Liverpool, Tonari Gumi, Vancouver Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver Japanese Language School & Japanese Hall (VJLS-JH), Vancouver Maritime Museum Vancouver Moving Theatre and DTES Heart of the City Festival, Youth for Chinese Seniors Project, and many others.

Thanks to all our volunteers - Too many to name!

In 2018

Looking ahead

- *Neighbourhood Sketchbook Project & Exhibit* was a great success!
- We have launched *The Art & Stories of Chinese Seniors in Vancouver's Chinatown* project
- WePress has secured two more years of funding from the Vancouver Foundation to continue our work

In conclusion there are three things which make WePress unique and provide a special energy:

1. The mixture of traditional and leading-edge technology in the print arts that make the creation of art accessible, imaginative, and creative – and fun!
2. The partnership between an artist-led programming collective and a board of directors with experience in arts organization and management

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3. The partnership with a kindred community arts organization, Gallery Gachet, sharing a deep commitment to social justice and personal and community empowerment through the arts.

We thank our members and volunteers, our funders and in-kind supporters for making this possible.

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