

# Final Report for the **Fall 2024 PEI Arts Grants**



*Promotional photo from Emilea May's debut album Unwreck Me.  
Photo: Justyn Thyme*



Economic  
Development  
Innovation & Trade

---

January 3, 2024

This funding program was designed to support the development of artistic practice of PEI 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 20 projects.

## Stats

Number of eligible applications received: 74

Number of projects funded: 20

Total amount requested: \$393,013.70

Total amount available for the Fall 2024 PEI Arts Grants: \$100,000.00

## By Discipline

Visual Arts: 5

Interdisciplinary: 1

Film and Media Arts: 3

Music: 6

Writing and Publishing: 3

Theatre: 1

Crafts: 1

## By Artist Type

Established: 11

Emerging: 9

## By Grant Type

Create (Creation): 17

Share (Dissemination): 2

Learn (Professional Development): 1

# Successful Applicants

## Adam Hill

**Music, \$6,500**

Through this project, the Charlottetown Improvisation Laboratory and Library presents and documents a series of concerts in which bassist Adam Hill leads an ensemble through 'structured improvisations' composed specifically for the event. Each concert includes a unique group of musicians who have never made music together before with the intention of building community through the creation of a shared musical language.

## Adedotun Adedoyin

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

Sonder is a limited series by Adedotun Adedoyin that delves into the unspoken realities and daily struggles of People of Color (POC) in today's society, highlighting the nuanced experiences of immigrant POC. Through five 12-minute episodes, each story within the series explores a different aspect of identity, belonging, and the silent battles faced by those on the margins. The pilot episode, titled "Sound of Silence," will set the tone, using sound - or its absence - to reflect the internal world of its characters.

## Bren Simmers

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

Between January and December 2025, author Bren Simmers will draft a new poetry manuscript about "letting in the good".

## Brian Pollard

**Film and Media Arts, \$7,500**

Brian Pollard will create a short documentary film about The Roll Bay Fiddle Festival. The film will be a visual and musical celebration of the traditional Atlantic Canadian fiddle, in the unique Rollo Bay venue, with its classical and universal stage, its gorgeous outdoor sound, and its wildly enthusiastic audience, all amid the rolling hills and greenery of rural Prince Edward Island.

## Chanel Briggs

### Writing and Publishing, \$5,000

Chanel Briggs will create a poetry collection that explores the complexities of being a Black Queer person and the challenges of navigating these intersecting identities. It will compile poems performed over the past two years alongside new work that aligns with these themes. The collection's central metaphor is the jester, a figure who entertains those in power. It examines the emotional labor demanded of marginalized individuals, particularly Black femmes, who are expected to maintain a cheerful demeanor despite it all.

## Daniel Brown

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

With the support of this grant, Daniel Brown will write and produce a sci-fi audio series called "Tales of the Arcane" stylized after the pulp radio serials of the 1930s, and tying into the artist's feature film project.

## Emily MacLellan (Emilea May)

### Music, \$5,000

Emilea May's debut album "Unwreck Me" delves deep into the intricacies of love, the mysteries of creation and the power of self-discovery. This collection presents a raw and heartfelt exploration of vulnerability and personal findings through poignant storytelling, evocative lyrics and memorable melodies. With its reflective themes and dynamic sound, "Unwreck Me" serves as a powerful anthem for anyone facing the common and disheartening challenges of life.

## Erin Arsenault

### Visual Arts, \$5,000

Using the metaphor of water, Erin Arsenault surreally depicts the journey of returning to her art practice as her children grow more independent, allowing time to focus on her work, and herself, once again. Dive in, jump in the deep end, just keep swimming, make waves; there are so many expressions we use daily that have to do with our relationship to water. This series follows the artist from floating to emerging; an exploration of self through watercolour, ink, and oil based pencils on paper.

## Gary Gallant

**Music, \$5,000**

Gary Gallant will produce a full-length album of original songs, including one or two instrumental tunes. All songs will be original compositions, reflecting the Acadian culture of PEI and the Island's unique musical traditions. The album will include collaborations with well-known musicians and producers. This project will result in a professionally produced collection of songs that showcase Gary's personal artistic voice and the cultural heritage of the Acadian community.

## Trudy Spooner

**Visual Arts, \$2,000**

In "Come On In, The Water's Fine", Trudy Spooner invites the viewers to imagine themselves immersed in bodies of water, entering another world. The soft embrace of water isolates us from the noise and busyness of daily life, allowing our thoughts to quiet and our senses to heighten. This collection is an exploration of the realm of water, specifically focusing on the gentle undulations of the surface, how it distorts our surroundings, and transforms familiar sights into abstract shapes.

## Julie Bull

**Writing and Publishing, \$3,500**

This Poet-in-Residence position at The Gallery Coffee House & Bistro in Charlottetown will offer poetry-related activities throughout winter 2025 leading up to National Poetry Month in April. Julie Bull will provide an immersive poetry experience that is free and open to the public, including instruction time, writing workshops, and spoken-word art. The culmination of the project will conclude with a community booklet, combining poetic works from participants throughout the winter.

## L. Jay Whitehead

**Theatre, \$4,000**

Camp, queerness and cabaret combine in East Meets Breast! Theatre artist L. Jay Whitehead will present a drag variety show featuring original music, sketch comedy, special guests, and more, all with a local Island flair. This July at The Guild, PEI's summer theatre landscape gets a whole lot more inclusive with this offering for queers and allies alike.

## Melissa Peter-Paul (Epekwitk Quill Sisters)

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

From January to March 2025, the Epekwitk Quill Sisters (Melissa Peter-Paul, Kay Sark and Cheryl Simon) will come together to collaborate on two short residencies at the Aboriginal Women's Association of PEI Resiliency Centre. The artists will share and learn from the latest research undertaken on Mi'kmaw quillwork's history and Mi'kmawe'l Tplu'taqann and produce nine new pieces of original quillwork to be exhibited collectively. The completed works will be presented at the Bonavista Biennale in Newfoundland from August 16 to September 14, 2025.

## Patricia Bourque

**Visual Arts, \$500**

As a photographer, Patricia Bourque's journey takes her to various events, which offers her opportunities to capture beautiful photos that are used as stock images, promotional materials, and even in publications. With this Share grant, the photography artist will print images of her photos for distribution. Having professionally printed physical copies of her work will allow her to distribute her work more widely.

## Rilla Marshall

**Crafts, \$2,500**

This grant will support Rilla Marshall's participation in the Craft Alliance Atlantic exhibition Here & Now: Connecting Culture + Landscape through Water at Collect 2025 in London, UK. Marshall's handwoven artwork will be exhibited alongside 17 other contemporary fine craft artists from Atlantic Canada. Taking place from February 28 to March 2, 2025, the Collect Art Fair is an exhibition of contemporary fine craft, featuring new works by international artists and makers.

## Sandy Kowalik

**Interdisciplinary, \$7,000**

The Alexander Drive Project is a social history of the creation and on-going life of a post-WW2 neighbourhood compiled from archival research, literature review, personal interviews, and an annual series of assemblages, using found objects recovered from one small property. The first part of this project, "What the Garden Couldn't Swallow", will be mounted as a visual arts exhibition of these assemblages, complete with archeological descriptions of the found objects. The second part of the project will be the creation of a book, including images of the assemblages and a written history of the Alexander Drive neighbourhood throughout the last 75 years.

## Sarah Hagen

**Visual Arts, \$5,000**

Sarah Hagen is writing and illustrating an art book highlighting the outstanding life and career of Cécile Chaminade. A prolific French composer living from 1857 to 1944, Chaminade is considered the first woman to make her living from composition. Wildly popular in her time, her music has largely been overlooked and forgotten. Through a carefully crafted and researched book, Sarah aims to bring Chaminade back to life by sharing her tale of tenacity and verve.

## Sean Ferris

**Music, \$5,000**

Sean Ferris, with the support of the PEI Arts Grants, will record several of his compositions and original arrangements. This project involves creating instrumental music focused on a traditional piano trio, with additional instruments as needed. Although rooted in jazz, Sean aims to explore and expand the genre's boundaries. This recording will be a welcome addition to our cultural tapestry and shine a light on a heretofore much-underrepresented part of our island's musical identity.

## Sean Kemp

**Music, \$6,500**

"Remembrances" will be an 11-track solo violin album written and performed by Sean Kemp. Each track will be dedicated to someone who has passed. It will be released on the November 11, 2025 and the 11th track of the album will be dedicated to veterans across the world.

## Tanya Davis (The Botany Band)

**Music, \$7,500**

The Botany Band (PEI Poet Laureate Tanya Davis, composer Carlie Howell, and songwriters Mathias Kom & Ariel Sharratt of The Burning Hell) will research and co-create new work, inspired by the past, present, and possible futures of island plant and birdlife, through self-directed residencies and with guidance from professional botanists and biologists in Australia and PEI.

# Process for Selection of Grant Awards

The Director of Cultural Development oversees the administration of this funding program. A contracted program officer coordinated the grant applications and peer assessment selection process. The program uses a peer assessment model where a committee of six peers reviewed all applications and then were brought together to assess each application 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 etc?
- What is my arts practice about (a general statement that speaks to an overarching vision?)
- Where is this project situated within my practice and does it demonstrate the growth of my practice?
- Other things to consider—are the concepts in language that is understandable (not too jargon filled, 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?
- Does the artist have a well-thought-out timeline?

## Impact: 10 points

This criteria relates to 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, 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 Fall 2024 PEI Arts Grants were:

Jeana MacIsaac: theatre, film and media arts

Dawn Ward: theatre, dance and music

Catherine MacLellan: music

Arlene MacAusland: textile, fine crafts

Grace Kimpinski: theatre

Richard Pellissier-Lush: multidisciplinary arts, arts education, Indigenous arts

# Timeline for the Spring 2024 PEI Arts Grants

- September 23: Call for applications and peer assessors opens
- October 21: Call for applications closes
- October 24 – November 15: Peer assessors review eligible applications
- December 4: The Peer Assessment Committee meets in person for the adjudication process
- December 5 – December 9: Results are communicated to applicants