

Annual Report 2012-2013





ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

After almost two decades, SAVAC (South Asian Visual Arts Centre) remains the only artist-run centre in Canada dedicated to the development and presentation of contemporary visual art by South Asian artists. Our mission is to produce innovative programs that critically explore issues and ideas shaping South Asian identities and experiences within a larger Canadian context. We encourage work that is challenging, experimental and engaged in critical discussions of visual forms and processes, and which offer new perspectives on contemporary art.

SAVAC develops and produces exhibitions, interventions and education and outreach programs. SAVAC works without a gallery space, and typically in collaboration with other artist-run centres, public galleries, and visual arts and educational organizations. This collaborative process of working allows us to foster important ties with the mainstream art community, encouraging an exchange of ideas and perspectives, and increase our organizational reach and visibility.

SAVAC's programming is national in scope, but we are actively engaged with regional and international discussions informing the development of contemporary South Asian art. SAVAC plays a vital role in the visual arts sector in Canada by advocating for South Asian artists and culturally diverse issues and practices. The term South Asian is fluid, implying a self-identification within our mandate.

SAVAC receives operating funding from all levels of government: The Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, and the Toronto Arts Council. SAVAC gratefully acknowledges the support of these funding agencies. SAVAC flourishes because of the energy, commitment and enthusiasm of its members and volunteers.

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FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

It is my pleasure, on behalf of the SAVAC Board of Directors, to provide a brief overview of Board activities in 2012.

This past year SAVAC's Board of Directors continued to work on meeting goals outlined in the Strategic Plan passed in the previous year, with a special focus on income diversification, development and the revision of our by-laws.

In the fall of 2012, SAVAC's Executive Director Amberenn Siddiqui resigned. The Human Resource committee began an executive search, appointing Indu Vashist in January 2013 as SAVAC's next Executive Director. In addition, the board updated SAVAC's organizational structure by adding the new position of Artistic Director, to which the current programming coordinator, Sharlene Bamboat, was promoted too.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the following donors for their financial support of our exhibitions and publications program: aftermodern.Lab, Hans Bathija, Surendra Lawoti, Afshin Matlabi, Julia Ouellete, Shelly Sarkar, and Ketan Vegda.

As this is my last year as Chair and as a member of the board, I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to the membership for giving me this opportunity to serve them in this capacity over the last four years. I would also like to acknowledge the hard work of the SAVAC team, and my fellow board colleagues, both past and present. Finally, on behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank our membership for their ongoing support and participation.

FAYIAZ CHUNARA, *Board Chairman*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

SAVAC is currently undergoing immense changes: Ambereen Siddiqui, the previous Executive Director has moved on; many of our long standing board members, including the Chair of the Board have served their terms. I thank Ambereen and these board members for the time, effort, labour and love that they have contributed to SAVAC over the years.

It has scarcely been two months since I have taken the post of ED, while I know that I have big shoes to fill, I am feeling excited about the potential of this organization. We are preparing to enter into our 20th year of existence and the next year will be the 10th edition of *Monitor*. These milestones present perfect opportunities to reflect on the past and imagine the future. We will be engaging in processes at both the board and the organizational level that does exactly that. We are hoping to initiate ongoing public conversations about the history of identity-based arts organisations and their manifestations and relevance today. The world has shifted dramatically in the last two decades; SAVAC and its predecessors have always had their fingers on the pulse of global and local issues, and trends in contemporary art. We aim to continue in the footsteps of our colleagues.

Concretely, in the coming year, I am excited to bring creative energy into the organization by growing our membership. I expect our membership to double in the next two years. We are in a unique position to facilitate intergenerational and transnational conversations between South Asian artists. I hope to be able to do this through international partnerships with organisations in the London, New York, Delhi, Bombay, Karachi and Bangalore. We are aiming to screen *Monitor X* in these cities as well as launch our *Monitor X* publication there. Locally, in Toronto, we hope to have regular social events with food and great conversation.

SAVAC started as a collective. Collectives are characterised by attempts to share and exercise power and to make decisions on a consensus-driven and egalitarian basis. I am interested in reviving the sentiments behind this history and merging them with the structures that exist currently. In this exciting time, I am looking forward to working with our dedicated remaining board members and the new additions who will bring fresh eyes and energy. In partnership with the board, I hope to attend some internal housekeeping like revising our bylaws and mandate so that they reflect the ways that we function. I hope that the staff along with the board can pull in various elements of the South Asian community both here and elsewhere because an organization like SAVAC is in a unique position to engage with multiple communities.

In this 20th year of its existence, I would like to grow our membership as well as provide even more support to our existing members. In sum, I am looking to draw strength and inspiration from our own history.

Some things to look forward to in the coming year:

- Regular member social events
- 10th Anniversary Monitor with on-screen and off-screen programming
- *Monitor X* publication with launches in North America, UK and South Asia
- Professional development help for artists: portfolio reviews and hands-on workshops

Lots of great programming including *Other Asias* in September and Annual Juried Show in April 20th Anniversary events that commemorate SAVAC and its predecessor organisations.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT cont'd

This year we achieved a long-standing goal to tour Monitor, our annual film and video screening program. Programs from recent years have been screened in St. Catharines, at the Niagara Arts Centre, in Kingston at Modern Fuel in Montreal at La Centrale (in collaboration with MAI and articule), and in Mississauga at the Living Arts Centre. We have made a concerted effort to extend the dialogue generated to an academic context through organizing guest lectures at universities in conjunction with screenings. We hope to bring Monitor to more cities, including London, England, Hamilton and one more stop in Ontario leading up to Monitor's 10th anniversary in 2014. SAVAC board and staff are also fundraising for a publication that will serve as a collection of writings about, and a catalogue of, the works from the past ten years.

The year also saw the first visit by British artists Karen Mirza and Brad Butler to Toronto/Mississauga, which culminated in a month-long residency at the Blackwood Gallery in September 2012. The House of the Unexpected, an extension of Karen and Brad's ongoing project, The Museum of Non-Participation, allowed for screenings, artist talks, reading groups, and workshops that led to collaborations with incredible artists in Toronto and Mississauga. An essay by curator Haema Sivanesan was printed and published as part of the exhibition. I would like to acknowledge Blackwood's Director Christof Migone, and Exhibition Coordinator Juliana Zalucky for their patience and exactitude during the residency and exhibition. I would also like to thank Board Member, Noni Kaur for hosting Karen and Brad for part of their stay in Mississauga.

SAVAC's unique model of operating in collaboration for exhibitions has led to many successful partnerships revisited. The Doris McCarthy Gallery hosted us once again, for a discussion following the screening of Acting Upon a Needle: Tamil Short Films, a selection of film and video from the last five years of the Toronto Tamil Film Festival. We also like to see the relationships we have fostered with our volunteers and community members extend into our programming. Photographs created by Rekha Ramachandran, previously an intern at SAVAC, were mounted in the vitrines of the Doris McCarthy Gallery as the artist's response to her own identity of growing up within the Tamil diaspora in Canada.

In the past year our outreach programming has proudly partnered with the Regent Park Film Festival, The Toronto Nepali Film Festival, Planet in Focus, and Positive Space Ryerson. We have made strategic links with communities at Cedar Ridge Creative Centre and East Scarborough Storefront. The Arts Investment Fund through the Ontario Arts Council has allowed us to maintain education programming, and we have presented workshops for artists at Toronto Image Works, Mississauga Central Library, and at the Art Gallery of Mississauga.

Over the past few years SAVAC has maintained a strong presence online through our website, Facebook page and twitter feed. We use social media to keep our collaborators, audiences, members and arts community informed of programming and upcoming opportunities. Our website also provides links for members and supporters to donate and help raise funds for SAVAC in its efforts in promoting contemporary South Asian art. SAVAC maintains its Charitable Status, and donations can be made by clicking on the Canada Helps button on our website, or by visiting www.canadahelps.org.

We wouldn't be able to achieve all that we do without people who generously volunteer their time, talent and expertise. In particular, I would like to thank Trevor Embury of aftermodern.lab for designing the catalogue for our annual juried members show, Methodical Mergers. I would also like to thank Oliver Husain for creating an opportunity for us to screen Amit Duttas *Nainsukh* in collaboration with TIFF Free Screen.

I am ever-grateful to members who have served on our programming committee and finance committee for their insightful feedback and their always-willing help.

SAVAC's work rests on the enthusiasm and support of those who work here. I would like to thank Sharlene Bamboat, our Artistic Director; Aliya Pabani, our Communications and Outreach Coordinator; and Ghufra Sallay, our bookkeeper. Their patience and love, especially in this time of transition is invaluable. In a sector where work quickly seeps into home life, and play easily becomes part of the job, I would also like to thank family and friends who support SAVAC by association.

Lastly, I would like to thank our Board of Directors Fayiaz Chunara, Chair; Ananya Ohri, Treasurer; Preethy Sivakumar, Secretary; Jit Dhaliwal; and Noni Kaur.

PROGRAMMING REPORT

2012/13 has been an exciting year for SAVAC with programming, as well as staff transitions. We built significant partnerships with prestigious institutions that increased the visibility and profile of our organization across Canada and internationally. We succeeded in accessing broader audiences locally, regionally and nationally, and engaged different communities outside our regular audience base. As we steadily increase the profile of our programs we stay committed to our mandate to promote, produce and develop innovative and critical art practices by South Asian identified artists in our membership and beyond.

Here are some highlights from last year's artistic programs:

The House of the Unexpected (September-October 2012)

This multi-faceted, one month long program was a joint venture between SAVAC and the Blackwood Gallery, UTM. Together we hosted UK based artists, Karen Mirza & Brad Butler in screenings, workshops and public interventions throughout the month of September.

Art Toronto: Focus Asia (October 2012)

SAVAC was asked to participate in the Toronto Art Fair's Focus Asia themed show in October at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. We programmed 4 artists from our membership, Heidi McKenzie, Joshua Vettivelu, Meera Margaret Singh & Eshan Rafi. All artists have since then, received other exhibitions as well as sold their work to private collectors.

Monitor 8 Tour

SAVAC has slowly been building its profile through Monitor: New South Asian Short Film & Video program. Each year, we premiere Monitor in Toronto in March, and subsequently take it on tour to other cities across Canada. Monitor 8 traveled to Montreal, Kingston, Ottawa & Mississauga. This has allowed us to build a profile for the program, and the organization, expanding our network, membership and the discussions that emanate from it.

Upcoming Exhibitions include:

Monitor 9: New South Asian Short Film & Video

SAVAC's annual experimental short film and video program is curated by a different artists/curator each year. 2013 brings long time SAVAC member artist, Nahed Mansour to the program. Monitor 9 will also be touring to Vancouver & Montreal subsequent to its premiere in Toronto in March.

The 7th Register: A Juried Members Exhibition

SAVAC's annual juried members show is taking place in Montreal in April 2013, in partnership with the MAI (Montreal Arts Interculturels). SAVAC is extremely pleased to have forged this partnership and to be adding to the discourse of diasporic, intercultural art in Quebec. Two artists from Ontario Sarindar Dhaliwal & Atanas Bozdarov, and two from Quebec, Mona Sharma & Khadija Baker have been programmed.

Untitled Abbas Akhavan (June-Sept 2013)

After years of construction delays, SAVAC's long running partnership with the Peel Art Museum & Archives, Brampton is going forward. SAVAC and PAMA are working together to present a solo show by internationally acclaimed artist, Abbas Akhavan. Akhavan's exhibition unearths the history of Brampton's flower trade, tracing the patterns of migration in the area.

OUTREACH AND MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITIES

We're pleased to announce that in the coming year, SAVAC is going to be focused on growing our membership in the GTA and downtown core by providing more opportunities for members and our broader community to get together for casual social events, revolving around sharing work and food, and hopefully, some laughter as well. Additionally, we're planning on holding SAVAC information sessions around the GTA to introduce potential member artists to SAVAC's programming and activities. We'll also be presenting events for member artists to develop their careers through free and discounted workshops and free portfolio reviews. We'd like to thank out generous partners for lending their time and energies to our various outreach activities, as well as all the members and supporters for their attendance.

Past Outreach and Membership Activities:

EAHR Presents, "Diasporic Convergences: Intersecting narratives of migration within South Asia, Africa, and Canada" (December 2012)

SAVAC's Artistic Director, Sharlene Bamboat, opened up the *Monitor* archives from the last 7 years to speak about the shifting nature of identity markers within the diaspora, as well as shifts in politics within a global context. Her discussion also addressed the challenges programmers face within a specific South Asian context in Toronto, as well as the ways in which her curatorial and art practices attempt to push the boundaries of conceptual art.

Tracing Language: A drawing workshop (August 2012)

Workshops were focused on experiences with the use of multiple languages. Using visual art, we focused discussions around the role of language within and beyond an immigrant experience.

Co-presentation of documentary, "Bitter Seeds" at Planet in Focus film festival (October 2012)

SAVAC Co-presented a Marathi and English feature-length documentary film about the biotech industry and the struggles of local farmers in a region of Western India, at the *Planet in Focus* film festival

What do you know about Access? (February - March 2013)

In partnership with Trinity Square Video, SAVAC presented an information session with the Ontario Arts Council's, Bushra Junaid, introducing arts professionals to the Access and Career Development Grant, was followed by a two-part grantwriting workshop for people who are interested in applying for the grant with instructor Tina Hahn.

Upcoming Outreach and Membership Activities:

"Generating an online audience for your art" - tentative title (July 2013)

Bento Miso's Business Director, Henry Faber, will guide participants through a half-day of guided hands-on instruction, through which they'll become acquainted with a range of free publishing and promotion platforms currently available, and how to leverage them to generate and maintain an online audience for their work.

Members' Portfolio Review Session (April 2013)

SAVAC members will be selected to present a portfolio of their work to a jury consisting of SAVAC's Artistic Director as well as two experienced SAVAC member artists, and to an audience of member artists for critical feedback and discussion.

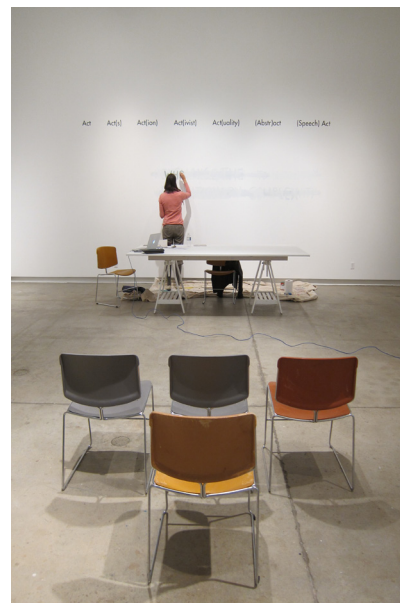
SAVAC Socials (approximately every other month)

SAVAC is pleased to announce that we'll be hosting regular social events as an opportunity for SAVAC members to meet one another, share work and have fun. These socials will be free to attend (bring your friends!), and will involve food, oral storytelling, performances, dancing and trivia! Have ideas for events? Feel free to contact us.

SAVAC Information Sessions in Brampton and Mississauga (TBD)

SAVAC will head to Brampton and Mississauga to introduce local artists to our various programs and activities in an effort to expand our membership and reach new audiences

The House of the Unexpected



Opening reception of Karen Mirza and Brad Butler's residency at Blackwood Gallery (images courtesy of the artists)

Methodical Mergers, A Juried Members' Exhibition



Opening reception of SAVAC's members' exhibition at Gallery 1313. (credit: Kyle Burton)

Art Toronto: Focus Asia 2013



SAVAC's booth at Art Toronto: Focus Asia 2013, featuring the work of Eshan Rafi, Heidi McKenzie, Josh Vettivelu and Meera Margaret Singh (credit: Elise Victoria Louise)



Opening of *Tracing Language: A drawing workshop* at Cedar Ridge Creative Centre



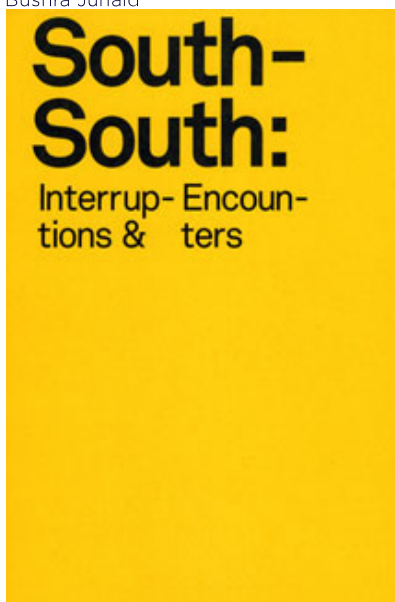
Tracing Language: A drawing workshop



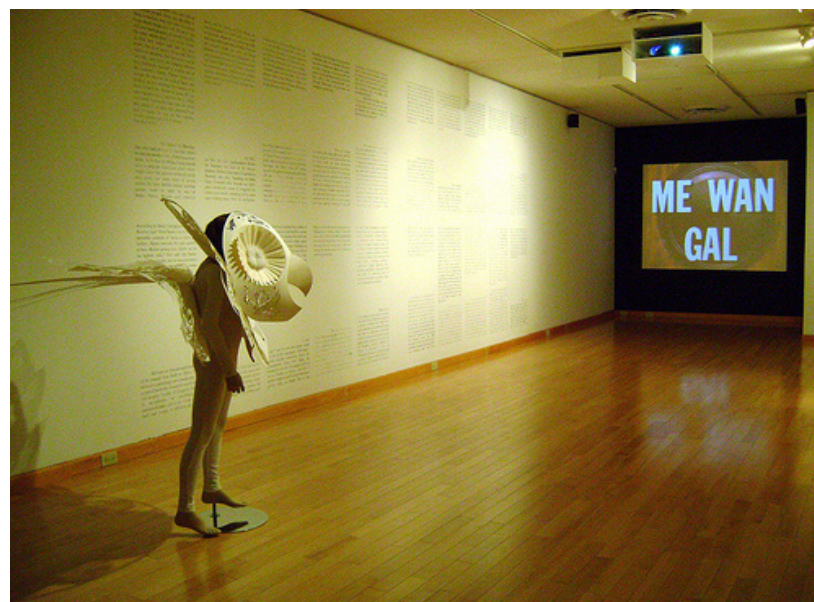
Grantwriting workshop with Tina Hahn (with member artist Reeta Saeed), and Access Grant info session with OAC officer Bushra Junaid



What do you know about Access?



Sharlene Bamboat and Jon Soske talk about SAVAC past projects at the Ethnocultural Art Histories Research Project, Concordia



EAHR Presents, "*Dia-sporic Convergences: Intersecting narratives of migration within South Asia, Africa, and Canada*"

TREASURER'S REPORT

2012 has been a year of continued transition, with a high turn over of staff, which has come to stabilize in 2013. With new individuals in our ED and Communications roles, and the growth of the Programming Coordinator role, to Programming Director there has been much impetus to re-examine resource management as it has been set in previous years. This re-examination includes setting up regular financial reporting mechanisms, key in the sound financial management of this organization as it readies itself to generate revenue from diverse private sources, and identify expenditures in accordance with its current goals and priorities.

Overall SAVAC remains in a stable financial position, but recognizes the urgent need to develop new sources of revenue. The staff and the Board are acutely aware of the general decline in the funds available through the government funding bodies, and are seeking to diversify and broaden our funding base by embarking on a multi-level plan involving foundations, individual donor cultivation and sponsorships.

In 2012, SAVAC's funding from Trillium ended and this is the primary cause of decline in revenues for the year. This year we also worked to develop Workshop and Co-presentations as a revenue stream.

In 2012, SAVAC has an excess of revenues over expenses of \$9,701. This revenue is due to a dip in salary expenses, not incurred during interim period between Executive Directors, as well as tight financial spending. A portion of this surplus is being put towards the 10th anniversary of Monitor in 2014, and towards communications and fundraising areas of the organization to develop new revenue sources that ensure the organization's stability.

At the end of the 2011/2012 fiscal year, SAVAC is positioned well, with financial resources and a strong team, to continue to raise its reputation for excellent programming and, towards its new stage of growth.

SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

REVENUE

	2011	2012
Grants	\$186 616	\$151 843
Private Sector	\$10 957	\$3 852
Donations	\$3 420	\$6 719
TOTAL	\$200 982	\$162 414

EXPENSES

Programs	\$128 900	\$85 311
Administration	\$67 234	\$69 444
TOTAL	\$196 134	\$154 755

Excess of expenses
over revenue

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Excess of revenue
over expenses

\$4 847

\$9 701