

# Annual Report

## 2013-2014

SOUTH  
ASIAN  
VISUAL  
ARTS  
CENTRE

**SAVAC**



# ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

SAVAC (South Asian Visual Arts Centre) is the only non-profit, 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. We encourage work that is challenging, experimental and engaged in critical discussions on visual forms and processes, and which offer new perspectives on the contemporary world.

SAVAC develops and produces exhibitions, and a range of contemporary visual art interventions and programs. SAVAC works without a gallery space, and typically in collaboration with other artist-run centres, public galleries and visual arts 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 increasing 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.

# FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In 2013, SAVAC's Board of Directors moved towards a flattened structure. In keeping with SAVAC's origins as a consensus-based collective, this restructuring has allowed the team to take on shared responsibilities and to strike up specific programming committees, as well as to take on hiring/employer tasks. The Board also updated SAVAC's organizational structure by promoting Aliya Pabani from Outreach and Programming Coordinator to Director of Communications.

Over 2013, there was considerable fluctuation in board members. This challenged the team to maintain continuity in matters of policy, strategic direction, and governance over this transition period. In the coming year, we look forward to continuing to build a board team with a variety of experiences, skills, and expertise to complement the organization's programming and direction.

The Board would like to thank Trevor Embury, Haema Sivanesan, and Shehnaz Pabani, Pathaks for their financial support of our exhibitions and programming.

## **Financial Review:**

Our financials highlight the new direction in which SAVAC is heading in 2014. We are excited to announce that 23% of our program expenses went to paying artists, curators and speaker in 2013, and that this amount has been increasing each year. Also, there has been a 43% increase of membership since 2012.

Overall, SAVAC remains financially stable, however, with general uncertainty of the arts sector, the staff and board anticipate continuing to work towards diversifying revenue streams in order to remain well-positioned from a financial standpoint. For the 2012/2013 fiscal year, SAVAC has a deficit of revenues over expenses of \$3846. This deficit can be attributed to lower than anticipated fundraising revenues and higher than expected exhibition and programming costs. Co-presentation, sponsorships (e.g, Pathaks) and fundraising events like workshops and 5'Clocktails helped us raise small funds in the past year. We continue to seek to diversify our revenue streams, including restructuring membership options and making fundraising a focus in the upcoming year.

We are looking forward to expanding programming with a three-year Trillium fund grant starting in the Spring of 2014 and staging the 10th edition of Monitor. As we work on boosting our membership goals for 2014, our investment in a brand new website for SAVAC reflects our financials as well; our newly re-designed website will help us effectively build and engage with our membership and audiences.

On behalf of the entire SAVAC team, the Board members would like to thank SAVAC staff, members, volunteers, and supporters for their participation. We are looking forward to celebrating contemporary South Asian art in SAVAC's 20th year.

Lauren Pragg, Ananya Ohri, Zarmina Rafi,  
Tharmila Rajasingam & Neeru Sekhon



INDU VASHIST, Executive Director

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

During this last year, SAVAC has focused a great deal of time and energy on developing administrative focus and direction. This has been especially important because of the staff and board turnover: A new ED was hired, all of the board except for one person finished their terms, which effected organizational memory and continuity, and a bookkeeper was dismissed. There have been immense efforts for the turnover in personnel to be smooth, to ensure that this transition does not affect programming or support for SAVAC members.

The SAVAC team took this time of turnover as an opportunity for re-imagining the potential for SAVAC. One of the key aims of this past year was to engage with our membership and community. We prioritized working with and mentoring young artists and potential arts administrators through an informal internship program; we conducted hands on workshops for artist professional development, we created a spaces for community building and conversation at 5 o'clocktails. All-in-all, the SAVAC team attempted to fuse fun and excitement into artist run culture in order to create a sense of community.

Internally SAVAC has introduced a new staff structure where there are three core positions: Executive Director, Artistic Director and Director of Communications. All three positions are equally important SAVAC's operations. It is with this view that SAVAC promoted the Programming Coordinator to Artistic Director while recognizing that in a high-paced, ever changing, digital world, it is important to value the contribution that a Communications person makes to the life of the organization. Communications people ensure that media, social media and outreach occur. They are responsible for engaging with the audience and potential audience before the programming even occurs. In the last year, we have hired a Communications person who has redesigned SAVAC's website in order to be more aesthetically current, user-friendly and responsive to mobile devices. She has increased our social media presence and devised other communications strategies to engage younger audiences who do not respond to prior methods of communications.

It is with this view that we have promoted our Communications and Outreach Coordinator to Director of Communications. The promotion of this position allows us to have a more integrated approach to engaging with our membership as well interacting with our audiences. These three positions need to work collectively in order to maximize on the potential of the organization. Our goal is to pay our three core directors equally over time.

Generally, SAVAC is in good financial health. As pre-emptive measures, SAVAC's current board is interested in diversifying our funding sources. In addition to funding from the Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council, and Toronto Arts Council, SAVAC has been throwing a monthly fundraiser in the form of a monthly Pop Up Art Bar called 5 O'Clocktails, which is still in its infancy, however could potentially be a lucrative fundraising tool. Further, SAVAC has been approved for receiving matching funding from ARTSvest, an organization that matches funds received from corporate donors. Lastly, the board is interested in cultivating an individual donors database. This database will be compiled with the help of a South Asian fundraising advisory committee.

Looking forward to 2014

2014 is set to be a milestone year in SAVAC's history. SAVAC will celebrate twenty years of existence and its tenth year of Monitor: New South Asian Film and Video. These two important and exciting landmarks in SAVAC's history will serve as moments to pause and reflect on SAVAC's contribution to the contemporary art world in locally, nationally, and internationally. Additionally, this anniversary year will allow SAVAC to draw inspiration from its own history, to plan for the future.

We are proud to announce that the Ontario Trillium Foundation has awarded SAVAC three years of funding for its "Mapping Genealogies, Building Futures" initiative. In its first year, outreach will focus on long-standing/established members of SAVAC and Desh Pradesh, the predecessor to SAVAC, which led to the ideation and formation of SAVAC. This engagement with older members will involve a close exploration of the history of the organisation that has married art, identity formation and social justice for the past twenty years. This will culminate in interviews, which will be used to create an oral archive that explores these themes. The Mapping Genealogies, Building Futures initiative will provide opportunity for meaningful and concrete community engagement making the membership of SAVAC an active artist run community rather than a passive institution. With the aid of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, SAVAC will be hiring an Outreach Coordinator to bring this initiative into fruition.

In sum, SAVAC's 2014 is going to be action packed. Many people involved in SAVAC and its predecessor organisations have been voicing interest in looking back at the lessons learned over the past two decades of identity-based arts production and institutional history in order to give it its rightful place within the history of artist-run culture in Canada, as well as in the city of Toronto. SAVAC's impact in the arts community can be measured by its profile and visibility, the quality of our partnerships and the high standard of the projects that we produce which draw wide attention. This year will be full of reflection and building for the future. We are excited for producing innovative programming as well experimenting with innovative organizational structures.

# PROGRAMMING REPORT

2012/2013 has been an exciting year for SAVAC - with programming as well as staff transitions. We built significant relationships with organizations, galleries and artist-run centres across Canada and internationally. We succeeded in accessing broader audiences locally, nationally and internationally, and engaged in 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. As identity markers, and politics shift and change, so does SAVAC's programming. Over the last year we have been seeing a growing number of members from varying culturally diverse backgrounds, which we have been including in our programming as well.

## Here are some highlights from last year's artistic programming:

### **Karen Mirza & Brad Butler: The House of the Unexpected**

September - October 2012, Blackwood Gallery, University of Toronto, Mississauga Artist Residency, Workshops & Installation  
Karen Mirza & Brad Butler were invited by SAVAC and Blackwood Gallery to participate in a month-long residency in Mississauga. The project was multi-faceted and involved workshops, performances, screenings, talks and an installation at the gallery.

### **Toronto Art Fair: Focus Asia**

October 25-29, 2012, Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Toronto  
SAVAC was asked to participate in the Toronto Art Fair's Focus Asia themed exhibition. We curated 4 diverse member artists to participate in the show - Meera Margaret Singh, Heidi McKenzie, Joshua Vettivelu & Eshan Rafi. SAVAC's booth received hundreds of visitors over the course of the weekend, and many of the artists sold work and met curators who have since exhibited their work.

### **Monitor 9: New South Asian Short Film + Video**

March 14, 2013, Innis Town Hall, Toronto  
Monitor 9 is curated by Nahed Mansour, and juried by local artists and programmers, Alexis Mitchell, Renata Mohammed and Rehab Nazzal. The program explored themes of migration, as is seen through global flows. Works in Monitor 9 hailed from artists residing in Canada, the U.K., Vietnam, Thailand, Nigeria, India, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

### **Monitor 9: Tour**

Each year, SAVAC takes the most current edition of Monitor on tour partnering with various organizations, galleries and educational institutions. This year we screened at the following organizations:

#### **no.w.here (London, UK)**

Articule, Concordia University (Montreal)  
Modern Fuel, Queen's University (Kingston)  
Art Gallery of Mississauga, Bollywood Monster Mash (Mississauga)

#### **The 7th Register, Annual Juried Members' Exhibition**

April - May, 2013, The Montreal Arts Culturels (MAI), Montreal  
For SAVAC's Annual Juried Members' Exhibition we partnered with the MAI in Montreal. The exhibition consisted of 4 artists; 2 from Ontario - Atanas Bozdarov and Sarindar Dhaliwal, and 2 from Quebec, Mona Sharma and Khadija Baker. The jury consisted of artists Pavitra Wickramasinghe and Ali El Darsa, as well as curator and professor of Fine Arts at Concordia University Alice Jim Ming Wai.

Employing various artistic disciplines, ranging from video to performance to installation, all artists challenged ideas of a monolithic multiculturalism, allowing for the simplistic idea of the cultural mosaic to be reconfigured into something that must be constantly renegotiated.

#### **Abbas Akhavan: Study for a Glasshouse**

June - September 2013, Peel Art Museum + Archives (PAMA), Brampton  
SAVAC partnered with PAMA to host the solo show of artist Abbas Akhavan. The exhibition consisted working closely with the archives of Brampton, and examining the history of the city with relation to the flower industry. For over a century the flower industry in Brampton dominated the global flower market. Akhavan's work examined the tenuous relationship between the human and natural worlds.



# OUTREACH AND MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITIES

## Selected Upcoming Events:

### Monitor Reruns

March 22 - May 5, 2014. ASpace Gallery & The Images Festival, Toronto. To celebrate a decade of Monitor programming SAVAC has invited international programmer Shai Heredia to curate an exhibition from the Monitor archives. The works selected are from 9 years of Monitor programming and include the artists P. Mansaram, the Torontonians, Vivek Shraya, Ayesha Hameed and Nurjahan Akhlaq. For this momentous occasion we have partnered with the Images Festival and ASpace Gallery. In addition, VTape has acquired all of the Monitor archives for distribution, and will be setting up a mediatheque during the Images Festival of all 9 years of Monitor programming for viewing.

### Monitor 10: South Asian Experimental Film + Video

April 24, 2014. Jackman Hall, Toronto. SAVAC's annual experimental film and video screening program, Monitor turns 10, and for this occasion we have invited international curator Shai Heredia to program the screening. The artists for Monitor 10 hail from India, Canada, Indonesia and Singapore.

### "Work It." Annual Juried Members' Exhibition

June 1 - 29, 2014. gallerywest and Mayworks Festival, Toronto. For its Annual juried Members' exhibition SAVAC has partnered with gallerywest and the Mayworks Festival to invite artists to submit work around the topic of art and labour. The jury for this exhibition is Evan Tyler (curator of gallerywest), Min Sook Lee (filmmaker) and Amber Landgraff (curator of Xspace).

I'm pleased to announce that in my capacity as Director of Communications, I intend to focus my energies on forging stronger connections with broader audiences, through media outreach (social and traditional media outlets), in order to expand the coverage of SAVAC programming and events, as well as compel greater participation from a variety of publics, locally, nationally and hopefully, transnationally.

To that end, we will be launching a new responsive website at the end of March 2014, which will feature more/larger image galleries, video embeds, a shop feature for catalogues and posters, a separate archive for the *Monitor* program, and perhaps most importantly, a responsiveness across multiple platforms.

Furthermore, we've introduced bi-annual member portfolio reviews and are bringing back the workshop series *What do you know about Access?* in order to provide better supports for and connections between emerging and established SAVAC member artists, to insure that members' artistic goals are met, while galvanizing a stronger community in the process.

## Past Outreach and Membership Activities:

### Workshop: *Art in the time of Internet*

This hands-on workshop was led by Jennie and Henry Faber from Bento Miso collaborative workspace. It demonstrated how to use different publishing tools to feature artwork online and engage new audiences in the process. Artists came away with a solid understanding of how domains, hosts, platforms and content work together to form the basis of their online presence. The workshop presentations were filmed, and will be made available on the new website at the end of March 2014.

### 5 O'Clocktails

This monthly event for SAVAC members and the greater arts community served to provide a convivial atmosphere for people in SAVAC's radar to socialize, while engaging with art installations, and the culinary creations of emerging fusion chef, Chef LeTigre. Held in conjunction with 401 Richmond's after-hours event, *Last Wednesdays*, attendees also had the opportunity to check out the building's various exhibitions. Events will continue (more sporadically) in spring 2014.

ALIYA PABANI, Director of Communications



### Members' Portfolio Review Sessions

The first of these sessions was held on February 10th, 2014, and was structured in a casual environment, where emerging and mid-career artists could show and discuss their works in an intimate setting, along with established artist facilitators and SAVAC staff. A second portfolio review will be scheduled before the end of the year.

### Upcoming Outreach and Member Events:

#### **Workshop: What do you know about Access?**

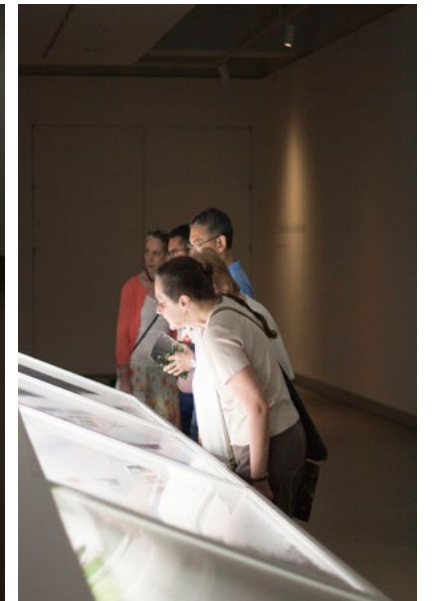
What do you know about Access? is designed to provide artists with information about the *Ontario Arts Council's Access and Career Development Grant*, and to support them through the process of writing an Access grant. The series consists of an information session with OAC officer Bushra Junaid on March 4th 2014, and a two part grantwriting workshop with Tina Hahn on March 15th and April 5th. **All events are free for members, but space is limited.**

#### **No Reading After the Internet**

In summer of 2014, SAVAC will be teaming up with *No Reading After the Internet* a salon series dealing with cultural texts, which are read aloud by participants, to present an event on *Creative Commons* and the arts.

#### **Member-Sourced Surprise Workshop**

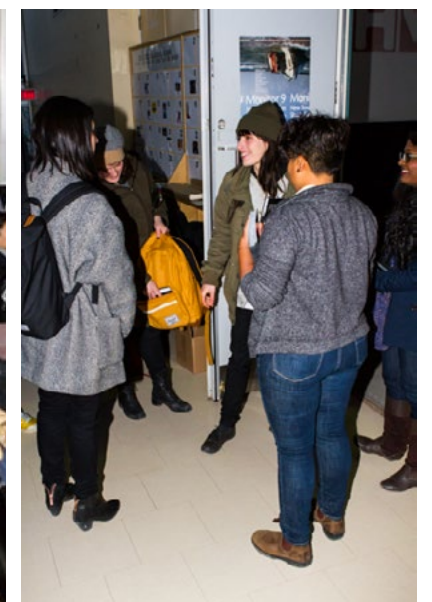
For our final workshop this year, we will be sending out a member survey to see what our members feel will best benefit them in their artistic careers. If you have any suggestions, feel free to let us know!



Abbas Akhavan: Study for a Glasshouse at Peel Museum, Gallery + Archives (PAMA). June 2013



The 7th Register: Annual Juried Member's Exhibition, Montreal, Arts Interculturels (MAI). April 2013



Premiere of Monitor 9: New South Asian Short Film + Video, Innis Town Hall, March 2013

# 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	—	—
Excess of revenue over expenses	\$4 847	\$9 701