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NATIONAL
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OF CANADA

National Theatre School of Canada's

Centre for Arts and Social Innovation

Action Plan 2022-2025



Table of Contents

The CASI today	3
Mission, vision and values	4
Direction	5
Plan	6
Labs	7
CASI Team	10

The CASI today

In January 2022, the Department of Arts Engagement became the **Centre for Arts and Social Innovation (CASI) at the National Theatre School!** We now have a seat at the executive table and are part of the artistic leadership of the NTS. All of our initiatives are organized into four main programming areas: Dramafest, Public Classes, Community Projects and Research and Creation Labs.

Today, we find our beloved **Dramafest** in hundreds of cities across Canada. Two years of the pandemic kept us apart, but it also allowed us to develop a remarkable online platform for showcasing works and maintaining community ties. We will see how this custom-made online tool will evolve and we are working to expand this festival and bring the theatre experience to more and more young people across the country.

This fall, the **Public Classes** were relaunched and expanded. The entire offering of classes were sold out (250 participants) and the teaching artists have returned with enthusiasm. This winter, we expect to welcome over 300 participants of all ages. We are also finalizing on an online course platform that will be launched in the coming months, as well as a new day camp this summer!

The new component, **Research-Creation Labs**, has the whole team thrilled. We are taking on the challenge of giving space, resources and means to the explorations, research and creations of artists in the milieu. Under three main research themes (art and health, art and technology, art and social justice), you will see a constellation of Labs that will become a driving force for the actions, collaborations and advancement of the CASI.

Finally, our first loves are not forgotten as community theatre projects continue to emerge every week through the efforts of our team. Whether it's setting up a troupe with Innu youth in Pessamit, nurturing a passion for theatre among rural teens, or supporting LGBTQ2+ playwrights, the Centre makes sure to support communities in their projects.

With this Action Plan, we are delighted to share the initiatives leading us to 2025!

- Maude Levasseur
CAIS Director

Mission

- Foster access to theatre
- Build bridges between artists and communities
- Encourage artistic practice for wellness and social and mental health.

Vision

With the CASI, we are moving towards a theatre where space and resources are shared equitably; where stories are heard and woven together; and where the practice of art contributes to a healthier, happier and more united world.

Values

ART | WELLNESS | PROCESS | RESPECT
SHARING | SOLIDARITY | TRUTH
JUSTICE | COLLABORATION | ACCESS

Strategic Direction

Guided by its mission, vision and values, the CASI is moving towards:

- The evolution of the Dramafest with the aim of creating a space for young people to be heard.
- The growth of the general public offering with a societal objective of improving well-being.
- The Labs at the heart of the Centre, as an area of advancement for research-creation and wellness.
- Community theatre projects (engagement) as a space for artistic exchange for and by communities.

To achieve this, we intend to:



Action Plan

	LABS	COMMUNITY PROJECTS	DRAMAFEST	PUBLICS CLASSES
WHAT	Research and creation labs & exploration residencies	Art projects that focus on community engagement	Pan-Canadian festival supporting students in the creation and presentation of their shows	Sharing knowledge with anyone interested in adding a little or a lot of theatre into their lives
GOAL	Participate in developing an understanding of the systemic and artistic issues to which the environment must respond	Use the practice of theatre as a vehicle for social and personal development, self-expression and pleasure	Foster a safe, supportive and creative space for students with a passion for theatre	Use theatre practice for resilience, empathy and community building, improving your well-being
ACTIONS BY 2025	<p>Online space for reflections and creations</p> <p>6 major labs and 12 invited companies</p> <p>Collaboration with artists and researchers across the country</p> <p>Production of 1-2 signature events per year</p>	<p>A "Mobile-CASI" active in 3 communities</p> <p>Art direction intensive program for rural teens</p> <p>40 grant projects per year</p>	<p>Hybridization and revaluation of the online platform</p> <p>Relaunch of the in-person component, recovery of schools and regions. 75th anniversary in Ontario</p> <p>Student forum and impact assessments</p>	<p>700 participants per year</p> <p>400 children at summer camp</p> <p>Online platform with diverse offerings that is revenue generative</p>

The Labs

The NTS Research and Creation program will serve the needs of Canadian theatre by giving artists the time, space and resources to investigate the changes that are shaping the world through 3 axes of research and creation :

- **Social change**
- **Health**
- **Technology**

Our responsibilities in a changing environment and world

Society is undergoing rapid and complex changes and the arts sector has something to offer and could be the motor of change. We hope to help the milieu build its understanding of the systemic issues that we have to tackle with art: systemic racism, colonialism and ableism.

We have the responsibility to amplify the reflections already undertaken by artists surrounding issues that are social, artistic, ethical, aesthetic, and narrative. Artists are natural change makers but lack the resources to weave their art and knowledge to systemic realities.

Serving creation

As a School, we have a vast knowledge and understanding of the ecosystem without the commercial pressure of a producer or a presenter. Organisations, thinkers, creators and makers! NTS has a network intra and extra muros that we will activate around the ideas of the Centre. The Centre is situated in the Monument-National Pavilion but all its initiatives are rooted where the NTS communities and network of artists are.

Research and Creative Labs Framework:

First, a question or a hypothesis is explored by an artist or a group (archives/traces, open source, evolutive).

Then, invited partners will amplify the Centre's objectives or the School's educational project (who present themselves to us or whom we approach).

Inclusive Lab 2022

WHY: The question that Les Muses explored: what can the mix of abilities or types and atypicals bring to the theatre community? For NTS it is about opening and exploring our awareness of art practices adapted to different realities of lived experience.

WHAT:

A 90-hour creative laboratory where 5 neuro-divergent artists (students at Les Muses) and 5 neuro-typical artists (NTS graduates) create together under the guidance of a director and accompanied by a Les Muses facilitator. An intensive week, a series of workshops over several weeks and followed by a presentation.

WHO :

- Claudine Robillard of Les Muses and Director Isabelle Barktoviak
- 5 artists (NTS graduates) chosen after a call for participation
- 5 students from Les Muses
- Mentorship from CASI

WHEN:

- Launch of the call for participation in February 2022
- Public presentation in December 2022

HOW:

The NTS participates with rehearsal space, equipment loan, marketing and a \$5000 financial contribution Les Muses are the real carriers of the project

BUDGET:

- \$30,000 - cachets/salary
- \$5,000 - rehearsal space and technical equipment
- \$5,000 - promotion, documentation, evaluation



Playbright Lab 2022

WHY :

- For youth who identify as LGBTQ2S+ and for whom participation in physical activity is complicated by barriers such as discrimination and exclusion, to be guided in a process of writing, exploration, and liberation from this issue.

WHAT:

The proposed research (12 weeks LGBTQ2S+ youth playwriting program) was designed to answer :

- How do LGBTQ2S+ youth understand and express their experiences with physical activity?
- How do experiences in physical activity influence the ways LGBTQ2S+ youth view themselves and their sense of developing embodiment?
- How do experiences in physical activity spaces influence how LGBTQ2S+ youth feel about physical activity in general?

WHO (all members from the LGBTQ2S+ community) :

- The research is being conducted by Dr. Lindsay Duncan, Associate Professor of Kinesiology and Physical Education at McGill University
- Assisted by Shannon Herrick, a doctoral student in Kinesiology and Physical Education at McGill, under the supervision of Lindsay Duncan
- A group of 6-8 teenage participants

WHEN:

- Call for participation January 2022
- 2 weeks of writing workshops in early July
- Public reading August 2022

HOW :

- A course designed by Lindsay Duncan and Shannon Herrick, NTS provided rental resources, assistants, help with the call
- The CASI did not not participate financially but allocated a \$300 budget for production costs



Regular Team

2022



Maude Levasseur [she/her]
Director



Tova Roy [she/her]
Project Manager



Erika Kierulf [she/her]
Associate Director



Marie Samuel [she/her]
Digital strategies
& E-learning Manager

Positions added to the regular team by 2025:

- Full-time Labs Coordinator/Producer
- Full-time coordinator/producer for Dramafest
- Mobile unit for the CAIS-Mobile
- Summer Camp Coordinator (seasonal position)