



Jessa Agilo [b. 1969]

Arts, Culture, Placemaking, Technology + Social Change

A social innovator, executive producer, and researcher uprooting systemic precarity in arts and culture for collective impact on-the-ground and in-the-cloud.

🌐 ArtsPond.com | Groundstory.ca | DigitalASO.ca | Agilo.ca

Milestones

- An award-winning arts professional with 31 years of expertise in the performing, literary, visual, community-engaged and media arts as a creator, designer, educator, agent, producer, manager, financier, fundraiser, marketer, keynote speaker, peer assessment committee member, volunteer, mentor, advocate, changemaker, and entrepreneur
- A leading social innovator integrating technology and decentralized models of governance to break-down disciplinary silos and eradicate deep-rooted socioeconomic barriers in Canadian and global arts services
- An outspoken transsexual devoted to empowering radical diversity and inclusion in the arts through ground-breaking collaborations with hundreds of cross-disciplinary stakeholders including non-profits, businesses, government, emerging and established artists, producing and presenting arts organizations, multi-arts services, technologists, youth, seniors, visible minorities, communities with disabilities, queer communities and other racialized groups
- Successfully produced hundreds of performing and integrated arts performances, exhibitions, and festivals at home and on tour across Canada and in the United States, with single-evening attendance up to 7,500
- Raised \$4 million+ for small producers across Canada, increasing earned revenues 220% and individual giving 237%
- An astute financier with strategic planning and management accounting experience up to \$2.5 million annually, including successfully retiring an accumulated deficit equivalent to 35% of total annual revenues within two years
- Supervisory experience up to 75 direct reports including full- and part-time staff and volunteers
- Most recently selected as fellow for 2019 cohort of Toronto Arts Council's Leaders Lab, and joined Advocacy and Diversity Committees at Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts

Professional Experience

Founder, Executive Producer + Research Lead | **Groundstory / Histoire de Terrain** (2017 - present)

- Founder of a collective impact effort to uproot the adverse effects of gentrification on the arts in Ontario
- First arts-led initiative to be funded by Ontario Trillium Foundation's Collective Impact Fund
- Facilitating the convening of 130+ cross-sectoral partners, advisors, and impacted people in the Greater Toronto to Hamilton Area to design a common agenda and shared theory of change to guide collective action long-term
- Leading a comprehensive applied research agenda including international literature review (1,400 sources), regional focus groups and public roundtables (Hamilton, Etobicoke, Downtown Toronto, York Region, and more), **Round the Block** podcast series, and two province-wide surveys of general public and arts industry workers in 2019 funded by Canada Council for the Arts' Sector Innovation & Development Program

Founder + Executive Producer | **Artse United** (2017 - present)

- Founder of an emerging open source, open data platform cooperative providing cloud-based arts management software for small creators and producers in arts and culture, beginning with an alternative to Canadian Arts Data
- Leader of business planning, fundraising, and partnership recruitment for Minimum Viable Platform expected to begin Phase 1 development in the performing, visual, and disability arts between April 2019 to September 2020

Founder, Co-Curator, Executive Producer + Research Lead | **DigitalASO / OSANumériques** (2016 - present)

- Founder of an arts and technology collaboration empowering the transformation of Canadian arts services to the digital world through digital literacy research, training, and alliance-building
- Co-curated and produced two editions of **Digital Arts Services Symposium / Symposium des services d'arts numériques** in Toronto and Ottawa in 2017 and 2019, funded by Ontario Arts Council, Toronto Arts Council, and Canada Council for the Arts' Digital Strategy Fund, featuring keynote speakers from Canada, United States, Australia, United Kingdom, a hackathon competition, inaugural convening of national Digital Arts Services Alliance
- Led design and reporting of first national digital arts services survey, **Managing Creativity in a Digital World 2017 / Gestion de la créativité dans un monde numérique 2017**. Follow-up national surveys planned for 2019 + 2021.

Founder, President + CEO | ArtsPond / Étang d'Arts (2014 - present)

- Founder of a national, multi-arts services organization bolstering the prosperity of the arts for collective impact
- Tripled operating budget in two years, growing to 5 staff, 11 board of directors, 150+ partners, 75 volunteers
- Incubator of new perspectives that reimagine more impactful, innovative roles for the arts services with 8,000+ downloads of shared learning resources and 6,000+ monthly website views
- Major actions including DigitalASO, Groundstory, Artse United (described above)
- Initiated substantial advocacy on the future of Charitable Venture Platforms, including the submission of a 150-page charitable status application rejected by the Canada Revenue Agency that set a critical precedent for the industry

Researcher | Freelance (2011 - present)

- Ground-breaking research and presentations on digital transformation of arts services, platform coops, Charitable Venture Platforms, de-gentrification, demystifying artist-producer relationships, arts revenue diversification, and artist representation funded by Ontario Arts Council, Canada Council for the Arts, CPAMO, Humber College, MagNet 2018 and others including *Digital Shift* (2018), *Strategic Planning for the Dynamic Web: How Arts Mags Can Plan and Grow Online in a Constantly Shifting Environment* (2018), *DigitalGO* (2017-2020), *ProduceYou* (2016-2019), *Gathering Insight* (2017), *The Whole Can* (2017), *Arts Working Group* (2016-2019), *Raising Diversity* (2013), *Just Dance It* (2012), *The Edge of Collaboration* (2012), *Agent Dance* (2011)

Founder, Producer | Agilo Arts (2005 - present)

- Freelance arts manager, producer, agent, educator, graphic/web designer, and development consultant with past clients including ArtsPond, Roseneath Theatre, Ontario Culture Days, lbs/sq" performance, Dreamwalker Dance Company, Anandam Dancetheatre, hum dansoundart, black&blue, Queer Arts Festival, The Chimera Project, Zata Omm, adelheid, Nightswimming, Modern Times, Business for the Arts, Blue Metropolis Foundation, Kaeja d'Dance, Canadian Dance Assembly, Dancer Transition Resource Centre, Dance Ontario, and many others
- Major credits include *The Whole Shebang*, *The Ontario Shebang*, *Beside Each Other* (Dreamwalker Dance), *Art of Peace*, *The Apology Project*, *Canada's National Voice Intensive* (lbs/sq" performance), *CCAFT*, *Body Brake*, *Cascade*, *AiR Audience in Residence* (Anandam), *Shudder* (hum), *20/20 Vision*, *Abattoir*, *Birds Eye View*, *Porch View Dances* (Kaeja d'Dance), *Youth Ambassadors Program*, *2016 Tourism Strategy* with \$8 million impact (Ontario Culture Days)

Other | Various (1999 - present)

- Mid- and senior-level executive management positions at Music @ Banff Centre, Workman Arts, Kaeja d'Dance, Dance Umbrella of Ontario, BiNetBC, Dance Committee member @ Toronto Arts Council, Peer Advisor @ Ontario Arts Council, music instructor at Royal Conservatory of Music and BC Conservatory of Music, integrated artist

Education

- **Cloud Computing and Big Data** | University of Toronto (2017)
- **Impact Accelerator** | Innoweave (2017)
- **Collective Impact** | Tamarack Institute (2017)
- **Entrepreneurship 101** | MaRS (2017)
- **MOOC: Managing the Arts** | Goethe Institute (2016)
- **Arts Administration** | John Molson School of Business @ Concordia University (2006)
- **Fundraising Management** | British Columbia Institute of Technology (2005)
- **Graphic and web design (PHP, MySQL, XML, HTML, CSS), data science, cloud computing, information systems management, other technology courses** | Lynda.com (2000 - present)
- **MMus, Composition, Electroacoustics** | University of British Columbia (1994)
- **BMUS, Composition, Flute** | Queen's University at Kingston (1992)

Honours

Arts Administration

- Toronto Arts Council Leaders Lab (2019)
- Humberto Santos Award in Business and Administration (2006)

Music Composition

- Gaudeamus International Young Composers Competition (1997)
- SOCAN Young Composers Competition (1994)
- Vancouver New Music Young Composers (1992)
- Istvan Anhalt Award in Electroacoustics (1992)
- Maurice Dubin Prize in Composition (1991)

Grants

- **Canada Council for the Arts** (2018, 2017, 2016, 2011, 1996)
- **Ontario Arts Council** (2017, 2016, 2015, 2013, 2011, 2010)
- **Ontario Trillium Foundation** (2018)
- **Toronto Arts Council** (2018)