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Summary of 44 Gaukel tenant survey results

In late March/early April 2023, 17 tenants or renters of 44 Gaukel responded to a survey prepared by staff, posted on the Blitzen platform and distributed by ArtsBuild Ontario. The survey consisted of a dozen questions about their experiences as users of 44 Gaukel.

Seven respondents were tenants or active renters at the facility since 2020 or earlier. The rest were shorter-term users or only began licencing space over the last couple of years. Most respondents indicated that prior to taking on space at 44 Gaukel, their arts practice or organization was based out of a room in their home or they had no space to operate.

Some questions resulted in answers that are tricky to interpret. For example, given the multidisciplinary and varied nature of 44 Gaukel tenancies, it's difficult to capture the scale of audiences that benefit from what is produced inside. Some respondents said they reach hundreds or thousands of people living in the region, while some are building audiences provincially, nationally or even internationally. Some tenants or renters have organized dozens of events using various areas of the facility, others have only done one or two, others host something nearly every week. The crowds at a series of craft and wellness markets orchestrated by one tenant in 2021 and 2022 brought thousands of people to shop on the Gaukel Block outside the building. At least two current tenants have tens of thousands of Instagram followers. One tenant described their reach as, "millions around the world," which could be corroborated by Spotify streaming details.

Questions that led to insightful responses are summarized by the bullet lists below.

Why artists want to be at 44 Gaukel Creative Workspace

A range of responses with common themes describe users' attraction to the project:

- "The amenities and a space to work beside other like-minded artists."
- "Needed a space to work, heard great things about Gaukel."
- "Location, amenities & price."
- "The affordability of the rental."
- "I really loved the creative vibe of the building, and the affordability was really important as I was just starting my business."
- "As an artist, I wanted to take the art form to families who could not drive...Being a small studio who do not have daily classes, renting a space for the entire month is not affordable...[I try] to keep the costs low to help the families afford to accommodate their expenditure."
- "Affordable studio space, with enough room to work in."
- "Centrally located, low cost for rent, arts-focused"
- "I was very attracted to being in a building with other artists and arts sector workers. It was also highly needed to have access to more affordable spaces that are accessible to my clients. Having moved to Waterloo Region from Toronto, it was the closest I could find to the Artscape model which I was connected to in Toronto through the arts community."

- “At the time: the existing tenants, opportunity for collaboration, and flexibility of the space.”
- “Good facility at an excellent rate”
- “Suitable space at a reasonable price for a non-profit group.”
- “Working in another environment with other creatives. I've spent a lot of time working alone, this space has been wonderful to watch it grow and attract other creatives in the city.”
- “The potential to be an arts hub and rent significantly below commercial rates.”
- “Being a new production holding auditions on a regular basis, cost matters.”

Users were asked how their tenancy or short-term rental(s) has impacted their success:

- 82% said being part of the building provides a greater sense of community
- 76% said their art practice or business is more sustainable and stable
- 65% said their business or practice is easier to manage or has greater capacity
- 59% cited opportunities for collaboration with other facility users
- 53% said being part of a creative workspace downtown benefits their work
- 35% said the size of their audience or visibility within the community has grown
- 35% said their business or practice has found more customers or opportunities

The benefits of affordability

Tenants and renters were asked how the accessible cost of workspace at 44 Gaukel has allowed them to invest more deeply in other areas of their work:

- “The lower rent allows me to invest more in marketing and have the flexibility to take unpaid/pro-bono work.”
- “It allows me to market my business properly, as well as do more hours of outreach instead of needing to cram in too many clients into my schedule. It also allows me to continue to build an equitable arts therapy practice for high-need clients I serve in low-income situations without any insurance to cover their mental health supports.”
- “We would not be able to afford rehearsal space if we were paying market rate, which would make our operations much more challenging and make it harder for us to attract and retain volunteers.”
- “Reduces the cost to record artists and provide a creative space for them to create. Also allows us to invest in gear/essentials.”
- “Supports self-employed female artists like me who do not have a big operational scale due to the exposure of this cultural art form.”
- “It’s allowed me to continue to take care of myself while I run my business, which is really important since there is a really high rate of burnout in my field.”
- “The money saved has allowed us to put more money towards other production costs, allowing us to provide higher production value to our shows. It also allows us to price our tickets competitively to give more families an affordable night out at the theatre.”
- “My business would not otherwise be viable.”
- “Materials, and not having to rent a more expensive space - which would destroy my limited budget.”

- “Paying artists.”
- “I do not sell enough art to make a living wage. This allows me to have a studio.”

The benefits of community

Tenants and renters were asked how other occupants of the facility contribute positively to their experiences of using the space:

- “Great community vibe, supported each other’s events.”
- “Positive feedback, advice and compliments.”
- “They have been friendly.”
- “Having other people around is so nice because I run my business independently and don't have any co-workers! I like being able to attend events with the building and also seeing everyone's art around.”
- “We come across other art forms and have learned about other cultures as well.”
- “A feeling of camaraderie and making friendly connections again after the drought of the pandemic years.”
- “There is a desire to create relationships, collaborations and community which is central to my work as well.”
- “Collaborations/overlaps in clients or services – creating new opportunities for each other, supporting each other through contracts/collaborations.”
- “Students have enjoyed seeing the art work on the windows and the walls as they enter the building.”
- “There is a bit of a university campus vibe developing here. Being able to chat and talk to other artists has kept my motivated... but also I enjoy sharing what I've learned with emerging artists.”
- “Networking and community spirit.”

Users were also asked to articulate their own positive contributions to the workspace:

- “We provide access to equipment and expertise to support other tenants as they expand to reach new audiences, host events, etc. We’ve supported production for their events, managing musicians and talent bookings, event consulting, and opportunities for them to get involved in our work with our audiences.”
- “I'm always available to share information with my neighbours regarding art or entrepreneurship.”
- “I've already within 2 months of moving into the space been able to make connections with other tenants and plan to collaborate on a project as mentor.”
- “They come to experience our rich culturally enriched dance form which they enjoy when they see us.”
- “Connecting artists/musicians and building a community.”
- “Hopefully we bring joyful, youthful energy and are not too noisy.”

The creative hub in broader context

Finally, respondents were given the opportunity to share any further thoughts:

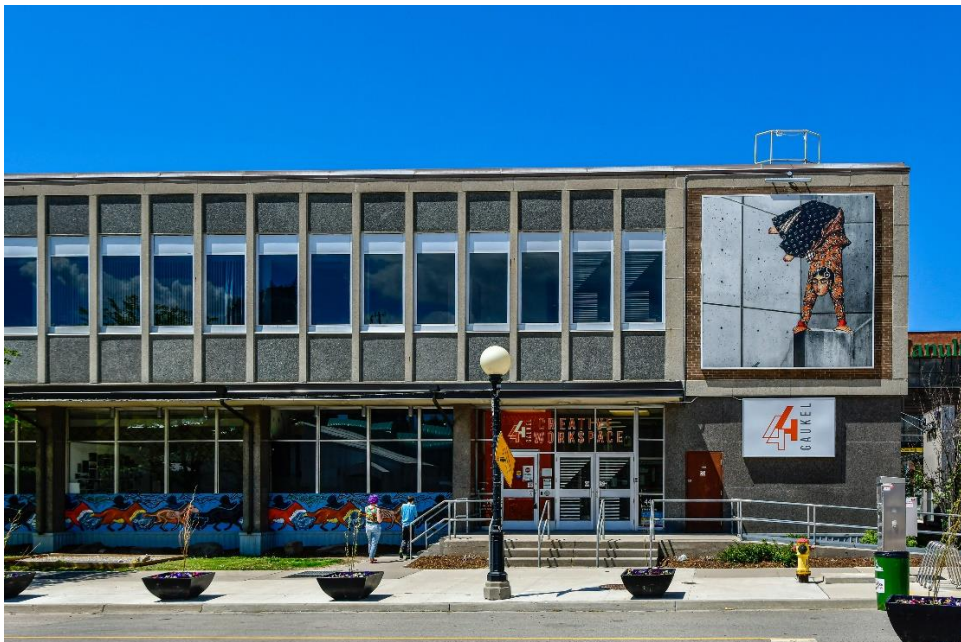
- “It is so incredibly important for cities to offer spaces that are accessible and affordable for arts sector workers. Those of us in the arts sector provide more to

the community, often for free, than many other sectors. Spaces are incredibly difficult to find and often quite isolated from others.”

- “This is the most wonderful building and space I have ever had the opportunity to be a part of. I hope the space is available for years to come.”
- “We genuinely hope the City of Kitchener will continue to support this project to help local artists and community companies like ours afford to continue operating.”
- “Gaukel has been a lifeline for our dance space. We are very grateful for this and hope to have this continue to support small-scale artists/women entrepreneurs.”
- “It is an essential space for artists in the area to be able to create work. I would like there to be more spaces within the building for short-term rentals as I would have hosted more rehearsals there had the room been available.”
- “It’s the perfect space in the perfect location that adds professionalism to a business.”
- “I understand the initial plan was to use 44 Gaukel to support artists via affordable workspace for five years, and that the City has always intended to eventually sell the property for development. While I know the desire for commercial development is significant and potentially wildly profitable in the short term, I want to say that I’ve seen the space transform in the most wonderful way over the past five years, not just internally but the surrounding area. I think Gaukel-Charles has the potential to become a sort of Granville Island, with the old bus terminal turned into a blend of Indigenous Centre and Artisanal Market. 44 Gaukel is responsible for much of the wonderful new vibe that’s been created there and could be the cornerstone of a much more profitable situation for the community in the long term. I sincerely hope City Council will consider this as they make decisions for the future of the property.”

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Summary of skills trade partnerships with 44 Gaukel tenants



The photo above, taken by 44 Gaukel tenant John Spaulding in summer 2021, is a small example of a single output from a skills trade arrangement. It is one of hundreds of photos taken & supplied by John during his tenancy for use on ArtsBuild Ontario's [44 Gaukel website](#) and social media channels, and in other project promotional materials. John has staged shoots in his studio, captured events, coordinated with photo subjects & made a variety of other accommodations to produce photographs upon request.

Other in-kind partnerships have produced other media, including broadcasted interviews with 44 Gaukel tenants and program participants, experiments with a video variety show format (watch GAUKER [episode 1](#), [episode 2](#) & [episode 3](#)) and the online presence of a more elaborate collaborative project called [The Beasting](#). Other partnerships prioritized in-person experiences in or around the building, such as live music performances, visual art exhibits, public workshops and murals in the facility. A couple have focused their output elsewhere, such as community centre programs or public art collection care.

PARTNER	IN-KIND VALUE	SKILLS TRADED
Artshine	\$ 41,000.00	Arts workshops at City facilities
Good Company Productions	\$ 17,500.00	Video & sound production services
Art\$Pay	\$ 12,000.00	Art exhibit curation & production
Vincent Marcone	\$ 10,800.00	Program creation & design services
John Spaulding	\$ 9,250.00	Photography production services
Midtown Radio	\$ 6,500.00	Broadcast production & promotions
Torin Langen	\$ 2,750.00	Installation creation & documentation
Nicholas Rees	\$ 2,200.00	Public art collection maintenance
Alanah Jewell & Luke Swinson	\$ 1,600.00	Mural painting contributions
Andy Wright	\$ 1,100.00	Free photography workshops
Taylor Jones	\$ 500.00	Photography production services
	\$ 105,200.00	

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List of current & former 44 Gaukel tenants working in the arts & culture sector

About 50 different individuals or organizations in the local sector have held tenancy licence agreements with the City of Kitchener or subtenancy agreements with ArtsBuild Ontario. Some predate the pilot period, at which point only a limited portion of the second floor was available to arts tenants. Accelerator Centre and their various tech sector subtenancies, some of which began in 2016, are not included in the list below.

ArtsBuild Ontario	March 2017 - present
Faces that Hide Productions	March 2017 - December 2017
Green Light Arts	March 2017 - December 2017
Hive	March 2017 - December 2017
KWLT (Kitchener Waterloo Little Theatre)	March 2017 - present

Nicole Beno	March 2017 - November 2017
Vincent Marccone (My Pet Skeleton)	March 2017 - present
Artshine & Arts4All	March 2017 - present
Syd Ursa (Binary Forest)	June 2017 - August 2017
Brianna Kestle	November 2018 - present
Juan Lopezdabdoub	December 2018 - present
Jamie Good	December 2018 - March 2019
Eduardo Soto-Falcon (Pilgrim Falcon Productions)	January 2019 - April 2023
Ikenna Ofoha (Tempus Electric Bikes)	October 2019 - September 2020
Inksmith Education Solutions	November 2019 - May 2020
Taylor Jones	December 2019 - January 2021
Pamela Cardases	December 2019 - May 2020
Good Company Productions	January 2020 - present
Just Ideas Inc.	February 2020 - present
Nicholas Rees	July 2020 - present
Alanah Jewell & Luke Swinson	July 2020 - May 2021
John Spaulding	August 2020 - present
Basil Alzeri	October 2020 - November 2020
Midtown Radio	December 2020 - April 2022
Robert Plowman	May 2021 - December 2021
Billy Cochrane (Claypot Records)	June 2021 - present
Eddy Grignon	August 2021 - present
Elizabeth Forrest	August 2021 - present
Yulia Balobanova	September 2021 - present
Blue Moon Photography	September 2021 - December 2021
Somali Canadian Association of Waterloo Region	November 2021 - present
Cody Rogers	December 2021 - November 2022
Mina Vedut	January 2022 - May 2022
Arabyon	January 2022 - present
Sarah Midnight (Midnight Raven Studios)	February 2022 - present
586 Group Inc.	March 2022 - July 2022
Art\$Pay	June 2022 - present
Alix Simpson	July 2022 - January 2023

Matthew Morales	August 2022 - present
Jessika Brubacher	August 2022 - January 2023
Helen Fidler & James Huctwith	September 2022 - present
Mason Daigle	September 2022 - present
Torin Langen	September 2022 - December 2022
Nehad Abdalkader	September 2022 - present
Andy Wright & Claire Donnison	October 2022 - present
Catherine Mellinger	January 2023 - present
Doris Yi	Feb 2023 - present
Zane Fraser	April 2023 - present
Tristan Molina	May 2023 - present

ArtsBuild Ontario has also facilitated temporary rentals of community and rehearsal spaces or other building areas, in some cases either preceding or following tenancies. More than 130 organizations or individuals who have rented spaces are below.

Organizations	Individual Artists
MT Space	Bangishimo Johnston
Laya Lasya Dance Studio	Jaden Bhundar
Kitchener Waterloo Youth Theatre	Michael Masurkevitch
Green Lights Arts	Gillian Laudano
Faces that Hide Productions	Brian Lockyer
Viral 360	Alison Harris
Treehaus Collaborative Workspace	Evelyn Barber
Active Souls Projects	Colleen Derek
Gulce Oral	Sarina Annis
Ring Productions	Ronald Hope
Page 1 Productions	Mira Henderson
Illuminate Youth Theatre Company	Jessica Rediker
Porch View Dances	Gurleen Sidhu
Waterloo Region Small Business Centre	Carolyn Wu
The Making Box	Alexander Wright
KW Poetry Slam	Shanice Wilson
Night\Shift festival	Andrew Blakie

Gwaandak Theatre	Mohamed Kahlil
White Owl Mystic	Yulia Balobanova
Registry Theatre	Catherine Mellinger
Core	Cody Miller
City of Kitchener, Inclusion Services	Paulina Wisniewska
CAFKA	Giulia Pittiglio
Community Justice Initiatives	Vanessa Spence
Kitchener Centre Green Party of Ontario	Nicole Hayes
Theatre Mada	Nada Abusaleh
Theatre on the Edge	Alicia Reid
Doyle Academy of Irish Dance	Kathleen Kamo McHugh
Local Ladies	Vincent Marccone
Pleiads Theatre	Phil Marques
Sienci Labs	Gouri Kundu
Navara Yoga	Alisa Lin
The City Flow Collective	Jesse Reimer-Watts
Tri-City Flow	Tommy Tran
Detour Theatre	Cosmic Ray
JM Drama	Chaenel Mattis
Theatre Mada	Brittany Kennedy
Mavis Productions	Morgan Anderson
Huniper Productions	Jimmy C
AfterSchool Arcade	Melodie Wakefield
Speed Skating Canada	Nicole Nash
Jungto Society	Marioa Morales
Expanded Living	Jessica Davey
The Black Umbrella	
Lichwood Grove	
K Bresser Music	
Golden Astella	
The Everything Studio	
Kitchener Waterloo Little Theatre	
Ontario Association of Social Work	

Echoson Stem Club	
University of Waterloo Black Association for Student Expression	
Sekond Skin Studio	
iSpeak Spanish	
Huxley Talent	
Fastboot	
YLCC	
Mankind Project	
Freedom Marching Project	
The Projecter12	
The Innovative Studio	
Youth Theatre Canada	
National Service Dogs	
Pinch Cabaret	
Friday Empire Band	
Levant for Arts and Culture	
DiverseWorks Dance Co.	
Birds Canada	
20 Below Games	
KW Smash Bros Tournament	
IP Acting Studio	
Lightning Banjo Productions	
Suzuki Talent Education of Waterloo	
Sunflower Swing	
Community On Stage	
Playful Fox Productions	
Kukkiville	
Open Ears	
OAEA	
Ophelia Gardenia	