

# whatspace

Spatial precarity, gentrification,  
and the arts

Part 2

Groundtrust

Jessa Agilo, Series Editor



YOU'VE  
CHANGED

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## On the Cover

1075 Queen Street West, Toronto: "You've Changed" mural by Jesse Harris (WQW Murals),  
completed in October 2012

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## Preface

*What Space: Spatial precarity, gentrification, and the arts* is a research series summarizing insights from **Groundstory Phase 1 (2017-2020)**. For more information about this series, please visit <https://artspond.com/whatspace>.

Incubated by ArtsPond, **Groundstory** is a collective impact effort seeking to boost spatial justice for the arts in the Greater Toronto to Hamilton Area in Ontario, Canada.

Rooted in Davenport's West Queen West (one of the fastest gentrifying areas in Toronto), the mandate of **ArtsPond** is to nurture healthy human ecosystems that promote social, spatial, economic, digital, and equity justice in Canada and beyond by fostering cooperative actions fusing values and practices of social innovation and the arts.

Groundstory Phase 1 was funded by Ontario Trillium Foundation's Collective Impact Fund, Employment and Social Development Canada, and Canada Council for the Arts' Sector Innovation and Development Program in association with **Roseneath Theatre**, a theatre company for young audiences.

Capturing stories and solutions to the effects of spatial precarity and gentrification on the arts, Groundstory Phase 1 research featured an international literature review, national survey, regional human-centered design workshops, focus groups, educational podcasts, and more. Major goals were to better illustrate the root causes, ripple effects, and responses to gentrification in the arts in the Greater Toronto to Hamilton Area plus other rapidly gentrifying communities in Ontario, Canada, and internationally. Reports in this series include:

### Groundstory: Round the Block (Part 1)

Prepared by ArtsPond and Groundstory Founder **Jessa Agilo** in Spring and Summer 2020, Part 1 provides an overview of the stories, activities, resources, and knowledge gathered on spatial precarity, gentrification, and the arts as a part of Groundstory Phase 1 research (pre-coronavirus pandemic) from Spring 2017 to Winter 2020.

### Groundtrust: Primer on Community and Cultural Land Trusts (Part 2)

Prepared by ArtsPond Associate Youth Researcher **Niko Casuncad** in Summer 2020, Part 2 explores pre-pandemic concepts and examples of social purpose real estate solutions to gentrification and spatial precarity for equity-seeking groups in the arts. This youth-led resource serves as an introductory guide to creative and cultural community land trusts for Black, Indigenous, and other racialized groups in arts and culture.

### Annotated Bibliography (Part 3)

Part 3 provides summary annotations for prioritized resources selected from Part 4 Bibliography. Annotations were prepared by ArtsPond Associate Youth Researchers **Felicity Campbell, Cheryll Case, Michael Pereira, Monique Cheung**, and others, edited by **Jessa Agilo**. Most annotations were written between Fall 2018 and Summer 2019. They are grouped according to Groundstory's three overarching research themes: uncovering root causes, ripple effects, and responses to spatial precarity and gentrification in arts and culture.

### Bibliography (Part 4)

Gathered by **Jessa Agilo, Felicity Campbell, Cheryll Case, Michael Pereira, et al**, Part 4 is a compendium of 2,000 public and academic resources applicable to spatial precarity and gentrification in arts and culture communities in Canada and internationally. Two separate bibliographies are provided: rated by relevance to Groundstory research themes (selected sources), and alphabetical (all sources). While older sources have been included for comparison, most were published between 2015 to January 2020. All sources were accessed between Spring 2017 and Winter 2020. The complete bibliography with interactive filtering by category is also available online as a free Zotero public archive. New resources will also be added to the Zotero library on an ongoing basis, accessible at: <https://www.zotero.org/groups/1784394/groundstory/library>.



Groundstory.ca



ArtsPond.com



Roseneath.ca

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## Land Acknowledgement

ArtsPond is rooted in Toronto, the traditional territories of the Huron-Wendat, the Anishnabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

Tkaronto (Mohawk word meaning "the place in the water where the trees are standing") is home to many First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and Afro-Indigenous people from across Turtle Island.

With regards to land use, housing, and urban planning, it is vital to acknowledge the necessity for non-Indigenous people to recognize and uphold Indigenous sovereignty and Land Back.

The arts and culture sector has an important role to play in reconciliation and decolonization in so-called Canada through engagement, practices, compensation, and programs. It will be crucial for non-Indigenous people to avoid the tokenization of Indigenous arts and culture. Instead, the arts and culture industry must prioritize meaningful relationship-building with Indigenous artists, and to respond to the historical, local, and systemic realities and struggles with the impact of settler colonialism on our cities and communities.

We must continuously reflect on our role to play as settlers on Indigenous land. It is essential to consider how we foster and take care of the land, how we live together, and to help those who are underrepresented and underprivileged due to settler colonialism, capitalism, and white supremacy.

## Equity, Access, and Inclusion

In Canada, there are systems of power that grant privilege and access unequally such that inequity and injustice result, and that must be continuously addressed and changed. Cultural equity is critical to the long-term viability of the arts sector to thrive.

At ArtsPond, we believe we must all hold ourselves accountable through acknowledging and challenging our inequities and work with our community partners to make collective change. Everyone deserves equal access to a full, vibrant creative life, which is essential to a healthy and vibrant society. Through social, cultural, economic, physical, and digital spaces and platforms, artists can challenge inequities and encourage, imagine, and realize positive alternatives.

ArtsPond + Groundstory aim to embody equity in our values, policies, and practices to ensure all people are represented; including, yet not limited to, those who have been historically underrepresented based on age, ancestry, colour, ethnic origin, race, citizenship, creed (religion), disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, and socioeconomic status.

We value and prioritize the voices of Indigenous, 2SLGBTQ+, Black, Brown, and other racialized people, people with disabilities, youth, elders, women, New Canadians, official and other language minorities, rural-remote communities, and other equity-seeking groups. We do so with the intention of developing more equitable arts policy, to better empower underserved artists and cultural workers, and to nurture more accessible spaces and the fair distribution of social, physical, economic, cultural, digital, and informational resources.

## Addressing Anti-Black Racism

At ArtsPond, we believe the arts and culture sector has an important role to champion anti-racist practices in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and in response to the growth of anti-Black racism and police brutality in Canada and around the world. As Toronto-based placemaker Jay Pitter states in her [Call to Courage](#) (June 2020) to Canadian urbanists, “urban design is not neutral, it either perpetuates or reduces social inequities”.

Current and future work by the arts and culture industry must center equity and actively minimize and eradicate power imbalances and struggles faced by Black communities in Toronto through equity-based placemaking in both real and virtual communities onsite and online.

In real spaces, Jay Pitter defines equity-based placemaking as “community knowledge and vision to the forefront of public realm design processes, historically going beyond the urbanism status quo and hierarchy. Equity-based placemaking builds on pluralism and recognizes power relations within communities and the place-based histories of exclusion and socio-spatial dynamics that shape the character of public spaces”.

Artists and arts and culture workers must stand against white supremacy, racism, and police brutality.

## Youth-led Social Change

At ArtsPond, we believe youth play a vital role in both enabling and leading positive social change. We are forever inspired by youth who are actively fighting for healthy, sustainable, equitable human ecosystems in brick and mortar neighbourhoods on-the-ground, and in digital communities in-the-cloud. We dedicate ourselves to empowering the dreams of young Canadian changemakers including artists, creators, designers, producers, entrepreneurs, technologists, thought leaders, urban planners, sustainability practitioners, architects, environmentalists, economists, politicians, researchers, educators, and more. Listen well to our youth and be changed. We are, for the better, every day.



## COVID-19 Pandemic

The first edition of *What Space* was published during the global coronavirus pandemic in September 2020. However, most of the activities and resources featured in this series stem from Spring 2017 to Winter 2020, prior to the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic.

*What Space*, therefore, may be most effectively applied as a baseline review of pre-pandemic issues on spatial precarity, gentrification, and the arts. Further research is required to examine whether, and how, the themes and topics discussed in this series may be thwarted, transformed, or sustained by the ripples of COVID-19.

Queen West @ Dovercourt, Toronto  
Pandemic café street closures, Aug 2020

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## Scope



*Creatives do not need to be empowered - in the absence of oppression we will flourish; we are already so well versed at prospering despite it.*

Advisor, Groundtrust Youth Circle, 2020

In this introductory guide, we will discuss the ins-and-outs of **community land trusts** and how to realize their full potential for building and sustaining positive change in diverse communities.

This primer is written for Indigenous, Black, and other racialized youth with the meaningful intent of amplifying awareness of community land trusts and their potential to:

- boost cultural equity
- strengthen the availability of affordable housing and workspaces
- build upon existing struggles for racial and spatial justice in rapidly gentrifying, capitalist cities

Young Indigenous, Black, and other racialized artists and arts workers are already experts in their respective fields. Through collaborative partnerships and community actions, everyone can participate and mutually benefit from leading or supporting the emergence and growth of community land trusts.

This resource was informed through international literature reviews and stakeholder interviews, including members of the Groundtrust Youth Circle, an advisory body of young creators, producers, and equity-focused urbanists from the Greater Toronto to Hamilton Area in Ontario, Canada.

## Context

### Affordability crisis

The Greater Toronto to Hamilton Area is becoming an increasingly expensive region to live in. In 2020, **Demographia** rated Toronto sixth of 309 world cities for housing unaffordability, meaning it is more expensive to find housing in Toronto than London UK, San Francisco, Brisbane, and New York. In 2019, reports released by **Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton** also demonstrate that 45 percent of renters in Hamilton are living in unaffordable housing.

According to **Toronto Arts Foundation 2019 report** on artists housing and workspace, Toronto's arts and culture sector is at a crossroads for the affordability of housing and workspaces. As the report states, Toronto arts workers are living primarily in rental housing, are house-poor, have additional costs than other Torontonians, and have often thought about leaving the city because it is too expensive and due to lack of affordable housing for the arts.

Across all industries, the affordable housing crisis is ultimately driven by a complex array of social, economic, and urban issues that have combined to transform our cities with inequitable densification, redevelopment, and gentrification processes. These include the **undersupply of housing**, increasing **financialization of housing markets**, and the **repositioning of existing housing for higher-income renters and homeowners** by profit-driven corporate landlords and private developers.

As a respondent to ArtsPond's **Groundstory Gentrification Survey** describes below, Toronto's downtown is changing rapidly and impacting artists:



*As an artist and non-profit arts administrator, I have seen the cost of rent rise for housing in our downtown. As an example, the building I used to live in was \$650/month. This building was old and had started as housing for nurses but over the years was a popular building for artists. This building was two blocks from my work. The building was recently sold and renovated and now that same suite is \$1,100. I now live a 45-minute walk away from my work. The cost of rental units has skyrocketed whereas my income has not gone up more than \$0.50 in the same period.*

Respondent, Groundstory Gentrification Survey, 2019

**Toronto Arts Foundation. (2019).** *Arts Stats 2019, Going Without: Artists and Arts Workers in Our Creative City.*

<https://torontoartsfoundation.org/tac/media/taf/Research/2019-TAF-Arts-Stats-booklet-FINAL-web.pdf>

**ArtsPond. (2019).** *Gentrification Stories: Groundstory Gentrification Survey 2019.*

<https://artspond.com/gentrification-survey-stories/>

## Gentrification and displacement

Neighborhoods change all the time. We see change whenever a business closes or when a new condo building is built.

While neighbourhood change in our cities is essentially inevitable, change can negatively impact long-time residents with social and economic roots in the community if proper community planning is not in place to prevent displacement of those who already live in the neighbourhood.

This process is called gentrification where neighborhood change occurs when a lower-income neighbourhood changes due to higher-income people and businesses moving in.

**Public Studio**, an activist design studio in Toronto's gentrifying Parkdale neighbourhood, defines gentrification as:

***“a racialized class project rooted in settler colonialism that disproportionately impacts working class communities of colour and urban Indigenous populations.”***

In a collaborative, community-sourced **Gentrification Glossary**, **GAGED Hamilton** and **Hamilton Artists Inc.** describe gentrification as:

***“a catch-all term used to indicate the changes in a neighbourhood when investment returns to an urban area from which capital was previously withdrawn. [...] Gentrification is not an inevitable or ‘natural’ process in urban areas, nor is it synonymous with investment. Rather, it is a result of policies that prioritize success in real estate and commercial investment over residents and community members.”***

Gentrification impacts precarious and low-income artists and arts workers through housing and workspace displacement schemes such as evictions and renovictions. In Toronto, nearly one in five artists experience renovation when a landlord evicts tenants to renovate the unit and upscale the price, making it no longer affordable.

To tackle gentrification, it is important to integrate disruptive community engagement, anti-racist, feminist, decolonial, and queer work critiquing and combating the negative forces of gentrification.

A local artist explains how gentrification has impacted them:

**The Public Studio. (n.d.).**

*Art, Design, and Gentrification: A Primer.*

[https://thepublicstudio.ca/files/No11\\_Art\\_Design\\_and\\_Gentrification\\_Primer.pdf](https://thepublicstudio.ca/files/No11_Art_Design_and_Gentrification_Primer.pdf)

**Druka, K., Kamgari, A., MacNevin, J., Orasch, A., Peters, C., & Porter, M. (Eds.). (2019).**

*Gentrification Glossary.* Hamilton Artists Inc. / GAGED Hamilton.

[http://www.theinc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/HAI\\_GAGED\\_Gentrification-Glossary-Web.pdf](http://www.theinc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/HAI_GAGED_Gentrification-Glossary-Web.pdf)

**GAGED Hamilton**

*Gathering on Art, Gentrification, and Economic Development, a public forum for the City of Hamilton (Nov 9-10, 2018)*

<https://twitter.com/gagedhamilton>

**Hamilton Artists Inc.**

*Pressure Points: Gentrification and the Arts in Hamilton (Apr 12-13, 2019)*

<http://www.theinc.ca/pressure-points/>



*I live in a house that functions as an artist commune near the city center in an already affluent neighbourhood with six other artists. The rent is more affordable than when I lived alone in a rapidly gentrifying inner city neighbourhood.*

*As a white artist, I feel better about taking low income housing outside of the gentrifying neighbourhood where my presence can also signal the change of tides. The house functions as studio space for four of my roommates, two of us make do with odd spaces in the house, and one of us works outside of the house.*

*As a performance-based artist working from my living room is more challenging, but the costs of space mean I would rather create work on this small scale than pay more to work in a studio or rehearsal hall. This has led to a decline in the amount of work I am creating since moving to a shared home.*

Respondent, Groundstory Gentrification Survey, 2019

Arts and culture leaders have an important role to engage and inform communities on the urgency of the spacing affordability crisis and to put pressure on city planning and neighbourhood development strategies to combat gentrification.

Arts and culture leaders, including youth, can combat gentrification by supporting and facilitating creativity in participatory policy-making and governance.

For example, in Toronto, two community organizations are fighting for community-controlled affordable housing, economic justice, and racial justice in downtown Chinatown:

- **Tea Base**, a community arts space
- **Friends of Chinatown TO (FOCT)**, a grassroots organization comprised of artists, architects, writers, journalists, business owners, residents, and community activists

In the summer of 2019, FOCT and Tea Base transformed the courtyard of Chinatown Centre Mall into a garden they named, **Anti-Displacement Rainbow Garden**.

This volunteer-led initiative was a part of **Chinatown Against Displacement**, a week of actions across North America to “highlight stories of resistance to eviction, exclusion, and cultural loss eroding Chinatowns, and draw connections to other communities facing housing insecurity and gentrification.” In the arts, activist efforts by **Chinatown Art Brigade** in New York have also helped illustrate how art can be used to protest and raise awareness of the pressures of gentrification in these communities.

**Tea Base**

<https://www.myteabase.com/>

**Friends of Chinatown TO**

<https://www.instagram.com/friendsofchinatownto>

**Anti-Displacement Rainbow Garden Ribbon Cutting**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Xnmcjiy3PO>

**Chinatown Against Displacement**

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/chinatown-toronto-gentrification-1.5162626>

**Chinatown Art Brigade (NY)**

<https://www.chinatownartbrigade.org/>

FOCT is currently researching ways to create a community land trust in their neighbourhood in collaboration with the youth-led Toronto design studio, [Reflex Urbanism](#).

In this primer, we will explain how creative and cultural community land trusts can combat gentrification and support initiatives like the Anti-Displacement Rainbow Garden.

## Right to the City and Right to Housing

Neighbourhood change and gentrification can negatively impact those who do not benefit from capitalism and other systems. This leads to the importance of ensuring everyone has access to higher quality of life in cities through such efforts as [Right to the City](#).

Right to the City is an idea that has roots in the works of Henri Lefebvre and Marxism. Advocates for Right to the City demand that cities are built for people and not for profit. Lefebvre argues that workers, women, students, immigrants, and the oppressed could organize and call for equitable and anti-capitalist cities and just forms of life in cities.

Right to the City has led to many social movements fighting for transformative social change in cities around the world. It has inspired organizers who are fighting for climate justice, anti-racism, 2SLGBTQ+ rights, Indigenous sovereignty and rights, anti-displacement activism and labor rights. For example, in Toronto, [Parkdale Organize](#) has been fighting against landlord [Akelius](#) for their renovations of old apartment buildings in gentrifying neighbourhoods.

Additionally, the Right to Housing movement is like Right to the City but has concrete goals derived from the belief that housing is important for people to meaningfully live and participate in cities. When people cannot afford to live in a home, they will struggle to make a livelihood, build social relationships, and engage in democratic participation. A right to housing was established in Article 25 of the United Nations' 1948 [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#). More radical Right to Housing movements seek to address the root causes of housing inequality and to democratize and de-commodify housing through activism.

In Canada, Right to the City and Right to Housing movements helped encourage [Bill-C97](#) to be signed into law, which contains the [National Housing Strategy Act](#) and federal right to housing legislation (Canadian Housing and Renewal Association).

[Reflex Urbanism](#)  
<http://reflexurbanism.wordpress.com>

[Right to the City](#)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right\\_to\\_the\\_city](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Right_to_the_city)

[Parkdale Organize](#)  
<http://parkdaleorganize.ca/>

[Akelius](#)  
<https://www.akelius.com/>

[UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)  
<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23970&LangID=E#:~:text=Article%2025%20of%20the%20Universal,whodhood%2C%20unemployment%20and%20old%20age.>

[Canadian Housing and Renewal Association](#)  
<https://chra-achru.ca/>

# Community land trusts

## Glossary

Before proceeding further, it is useful to provide a basic definition to two related terms: community land trusts and social purpose real estate.

**Community land trusts** (CLT) are non-profit entities that acquire land and develops and stewards it with a social purpose on behalf of a community. Projects can involve a variety of land uses, such as affordable housing, community gardens, civic buildings, commercial spaces, and other community assets.

CLTs strive to balance access to land and security of tenure for individuals with the needs of a community to maintain affordability, economic diversity and wealth-building, retention of public services, and providing solutions to community issues and needs.

CLTs are typically run by a board, staff, and community members in a tripartite governance model. Often created in response to the unaffordability crisis in cities, they focus on acquiring land to hold it permanently in trust outside of the private market for the benefit of the community. They either have land donated or raise funds from the public and private sector through grants and donations. Assets are usually leased out in affordable and long-term agreements.

With 2,600+ homes and growing, the largest CLT in Canada is **Community Land Trust** in Vancouver.

**Social purpose real estate** is

*“property and facilities owned and operated by mission-based organizations and investors for the purpose of community benefit, and to achieve blended value returns.”*

Housing cooperatives, inclusionary zoning, affordable housing, shared housing, community land trusts, and other forms of social purpose real estate are all important strategies for developing land and properties for the benefit of people and communities over profit.

However, we strongly believe community land trusts represent one of the most important and impactful social development tools for social change that addresses the affordability crisis and artists and arts workers needs in Toronto. From this perspective, community land trusts deserve deeper attention. Let us dive into them in more detail now.

**Pedrero, C. (2019). Community land trusts: A model for community-led land stewardship.**

<https://rabble.ca/columnists/2019/04/community-land-trusts-model-community-led-land-stewardship>

**Community Land Trust Vancouver**

<https://www.cltrust.ca/>

**Social Purpose Real Estate Collaborative**

<https://www.socialpurpose realestate.net>

## New Communities Inc.



*NCI was very important to the civil rights movement and even today some of us still talk and preach about the building of a beloved community*

John Lewis, former US representative

Created in 1969 near Albany, Georgia, New Communities Inc. (NCI) is a prototype for the modern-day community land trust.

A product of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, NCI was created by Shirley and Charles Sherrod to help secure economic independence for African American families through the provision of long-term (99-year) ground leases for the development of planned communities and agricultural cooperatives.



*The vision of New Communities is to become a thriving organization that is a global model for community empowerment through agribusiness, education, social awareness and wealth building. Distilled, the vision can be summed in three words: PRESERVE. FARM. CULTURE. In preserving, it will improve and protect the wildlife habitat and preserve a restorative landscape for human meditation and health through hiking, biking, and other low-impact activities.*

New Communities Inc.

For twenty years, NCI cooperatively farmed nearly 6,000 acres of land despite racist attacks and refusals by federal agencies to provide grants or loans. NCI's land was lost to foreclosure in 1985, but 25 years later NCI found a new life after a successful class action lawsuit by hundreds of African American farmers against the US Department of Agriculture resulted in the creation of Resora.

**Resora** is a 1,638-acre former plantation that was originally owned by one of the largest slaveholder estates in Georgia. When NCI purchased this land in 2011, they set out to create a unique headquarters for the organization. As Sherrod put it, Resora is envisioned as "a place where we could both farm the land and also nurture the minds of people."

**Resora**  
<http://www.theresoraexperience.com/>

## Community land trusts in Canada

In Canada, political and economic forces have helped encourage the emergence of community land trusts and other community-based solutions to the affordability crisis.

Over the past several decades, governments have been reducing and dismantling social programs, including withdrawing from the funding and delivery of social housing programs since the 1990s.

As a result, governments have increased their reliance on the private sector for the delivery of housing and have expanded fiscal cutbacks to social services. This approach has resulted in dramatic impacts on housing affordability and the demand for and presence of social and community-based programs, including community land trusts. Bunce and Barndt identify two generations of CLTs in Canada that transition around 2012:

### First generation (1980 to 2012)

Largely focused on the acquisition of land for affordable housing provision, the first generation in Canada consisted of a small group of CLTs arising in the 1980s until 2012. These CLTs took inspiration from CLT model in the USA that traditionally focused on environmental stewardship and conservation.

### Second generation (2012+ )

The second generation emerged since 2012 until today in response to urban gentrification and displacement and a renewed interest in affordable housing development.

In Ontario, these CLTs advocate and aim to respond to the impact of rapid gentrification and displacement, decreases in affordable housing supply, advocate for urban food security, and solidarity with racialized and culturally diverse communities.

This generation of CLTs are distinguished by new approaches to the development and provision of **communal and shared equity housing** (e.g. sector-based CLT development) and by neighbourhood and city-wide **activism and community organizing** (e.g. community-based CLT development).

These models provide a platform for encouraging resident empowerment and participation and for exercising community control over neighbourhood change. Newer community-led CLTs not only focus on acquisition of land and development of housing, but engage in neighbourhood and city-wide activism, social rights advocacy, and community-led planning.

Examples in the Greater Toronto to Hamilton Area include:

**Bunce, S., Barndt, J. (2020).** Origins and Evolution of Urban Community Land Trusts in Canada. In Davis, J.E., Algoed, L., & Hernández-Torrales, M. E. (Eds). *On Common Ground: International Perspectives on the Community Land Trust* (pp. 93-114). Madison, Wisconsin: Terra Nostra Press.

- **Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust** (Toronto)
- **Friends of Chinatown** (Toronto)
- **Friends of Kensington Market** (Toronto)
- **Hamilton Community Land Trust** (Hamilton)

Since 2014, there has been a resurgence of second generation CLTs with nine new CLTs established in Canada. There are currently more than 20 active CLTs in Canada, half of them founded since 2014. This surge in development helped inspire the formation of the **Canadian Network of Community Land Trusts (CNCLT)**, which aims to unite both newer and older CLTs into a cohesive nation-wide movement.

Most recently, Habitat for Humanity, **Build and Better Bloor Dufferin**, City of Toronto, **Capital Developments**, **Metropia**, and others have announced the launch of **\$17 million land trust** to be situated at Bloor-Dufferin in Toronto. This is an important development in Toronto that features affordable housing and a community hub supporting local non-profits and arts groups.

From a Black perspective, one community land trust to follow is **Hogan's Alley Society** in Vancouver. Currently developing government and business partnerships to acquire and develop land and assets as a CLT, Hogan's Alley focuses on daylighting the presence of Black history in Vancouver and throughout British Columbia.



*I want a clinic, farmer's market, theatre, workshop, credit union, forest school, and library all built in to the place I live and practice. Not just in a walkable sense, but in a way that is self-contained and symbiotically beneficial.*

*Art does not happen in isolation, it needs experiences to be conceived, room and references to develop, permission to be shared, exchange to be consumed, and informed perspective to be critiqued.*

*Real estate infrastructure can play a role in each phase of creation by listening, learning, amplifying, and planning buffers for flexibility in the artistic process and by building in continuous feedback loops that respond to when unexpected lessons are uncovered.*

Advisor, Groundtrust Youth Circle, 2020

**Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust**  
<http://www.pnlt.ca/>

**Friends of Chinatown TO**  
<https://www.instagram.com/friendsofchinatownto>

**Friends of Kensington Market**  
<http://www.fokm.ca/>

**Hamilton Community Land Trust**  
<http://hamiltonclt.org/>

**Canadian Network of Community Land Trusts**  
<http://communityland.ca>

**Build a Better Bloor Dufferin**  
<https://buildbloordufferin.ca/>

**Hogan's Alley Society**  
<https://www.hogansalley.society.org/>

## Key elements of community land trusts

The essential elements of CLTs include non-profit status, democratic control, community control and benefit, perpetual affordability of spaces, mutual aid and community care, separating building ownership from land ownership, and more:

- **Non-profit incorporation status**  
It is important to ensure that the Canada Revenue Agency has also approved the non-profit for charity status to help pursue land transfers from government or private landowners
- **Democratic control**  
Governance of the non-profit maintains tripartite board consisting of one-third leaseholders, one-third general community members, and one-third public representatives
- **Community control and benefit**  
The community-led board aims to ensure local decision-making that addresses community needs. Cooperative and community ownership of our built environment requires everyone to participate to ensure everyone has a say. As one Groundtrust Youth Circle Advisor shares:



*I would love to see communities engaging in collective decision-making practices over their own built environments. This practice would provide residents with an opportunity to actually manage the course of their community's development without compromising their values to meet the conditions of planners and private developers who rarely have community interests in mind.*

Advisor, Groundtrust Youth Circle, 2020

- **Perpetual affordability of spaces**  
A family or individual purchases a house or property that sits on land owned by the CLT and leases the land for the long-term (often 99 or 25 years). The owners agree to ensuring that the price to sell is kept at an affordable rate in perpetuity while leasing affordable spaces to community groups, local businesses, and social enterprises.
- **Mutual aid and community care**  
Ensuring that community benefit is at the forefront of the purpose of the CLT.
- **Separating building ownership from land ownership**  
The land will be owned by the community through the nonprofit that is democratically governed to ensure affordability and community serving purposes.

- **Other key elements**
  - Place-based membership
  - Sustainable business plans
  - Strong leadership and administration
  - Community support and social responsibility
  - Education, outreach, and community organizing
  - Community partnerships
  - Opposition to demolition and redevelopment associated to “urban renewal”
  - Funding and capitalization
  - Capacity building
  - National network and technical assistance
  - Different uses of land and space for economic and social purposes
  - Government support

## Lenses for community land trusts



*I want to see care facilities where elders and preschoolers can spark joy in each other’s lives; and see both loneliness and poverty combated by elder-young adult relationships. I want to normalize dorm [suite] living for adults and families who could benefit from shared resources and a close knit community, while still maintaining independence over what happens in their private quarters.*

Advisor, Groundtrust Youth Circle, 2020

When considering the emergence and evolution of community land trusts, we believe it is essential for the arts and culture sector and other groups to adopt a social justice and equity lens, as well as decolonial and abolitionist lens at the heart of internal and public dialogues:

- **Social justice and equity lens**  
It is vital for public art, arts and culture programming, and staff leadership to reflect and prioritize the diversity of Indigenous, Black, Brown, 2SLGBTQ+, New Canadians, and other racialized and equity-seeking communities. Arts and culture workers must address and work to reduce systemic racism by working for cultural equity and redress in their practices.

For example, to help plan and assess shared efforts to deepen equity justice with and for marginalized communities, ArtsPond strives to realize the potential of arts and culture to help further the United Nations’ **2030 Global Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs).

**2030 Global Sustainable Development Goals**  
<https://www.un.org/sustainable-development/sustainable-development-goals/>

ArtsPond’s vision and current strategic plan, **Share well : Live well (2014 to 2023)** [see also inset image right], outlines strategies to prioritize 11 of 17 Global SDGs as a means to deepen social, spatial, economic, digital, and equity justice in arts and culture.

The goals include:

- No poverty (Goal 1)
  - Quality education (Goal 4)
  - Gender equality (Goal 5)
  - Clean water (Goal 6)
  - Decent work and economic growth (Goal 8)
  - Industry, innovation, and infrastructure (Goal 9)
  - Reduced inequalities (Goal 10)
  - Sustainable cities and communities (Goal 11)
  - Climate action (Goal 13)
  - Peace, justice, and strong institutions (Goal 16)
  - Partnerships (Goal 17).
- **Decolonial lens**  
Reconciliation and decolonization will be important for non-Indigenous artists and arts workers to recognize and support Indigenous cultural knowledge and practice through decolonization.

Artists and arts workers can adopt **Two-Eyed Seeing** in their practices. Originating from Mi’kmaq Elders **Albert and Murdena Marshall**, Two-Eyed Seeing embodies both Indigenous and Western world views, acknowledging that no single perspective is better. It encourages people to use good thinking and reflect on our shared histories to move toward recognition and reconciliation.

As one advisor from the Youth Circle says:

“ I think homeownership should be open to everyone -- whether it is a house, an apartment, a condo, a studio, a tent, a collective space, or whatever. We would also have to radically reconsider urban Indigenous land rights within that system.

Advisor, Groundtrust Youth Circle, 2020



Share well : Live well  
(2014 to 2023)  
<https://artspond.com/2020/06/08/connections-to-global-sdgs/>

- Abolitionist lens**

Policing, incarceration, and displacement goes hand in hand with the process of gentrification, and especially impacts Indigenous and Black communities in North America. When applying an abolitionist lens, it is critical that community care, community benefit, and mutual aid should be at the forefront of the CLT work. Recently, the police raid of **Breonna Taylor**'s home that received worldwide media attention was connected to a gentrification plan to "revitalize" the neighbourhood with new housing and business development.
- Intersectional lens**

Artists and arts workers should understand how systematic systems of oppression based on race, gender, sexuality, class, citizenship, and ability create challenges for people. **Kimberlee Crenshaw**, a Black scholar, first coined the term to describe the unjust legal system in the United States. It is now used widely to address how people are affected disproportionately depending on their identities. As described in the following quotes, there are multiple social and economic factors that will determine how people are treated with housing:



*Renting While Black is a legitimate problem that is compounded by discrimination against age, disability, relationship status, credit reports, and boundaries.*



*There is also the matter of anti-racism, anti-misogyny, and overall anti-oppression in housing and workspaces. It is one thing for housing and workspace to be affordable, but if these spaces are not self-managed in the above [inclusive] ways, then people like me end up getting driven out either way.*

Advisors, Groundtrust Youth Circle, 2020

**Holcombe, M. & Snyder, A. (2020).** *Warrant in fatal encounter between Breonna Taylor and police was linked to gentrification plan, family's lawyers claim.* CNN.  
<https://www.cnn.com/2020/07/07/us/breonna-taylor-lawsuit-gentrification/index.html>

## Cultural land trusts: Case studies

### 221A / Vancouver Cultural Land Trust Study



*Capitalistic values of property ownership stunt the progression of arts and culture by tying this sector to profitability and strict views of land stewardship that are barriers to true artistic expression and creativity. Social purpose real estate can create new cultural spaces that are not contingent on the state of the private or rental market. This shift will give artists and cultural workers the long-term stability to pursue their true crafts without having to compromise their creativity just to survive in cities like Toronto.*

Advisor, Groundtrust Youth Circle, 2020

**Creative and cultural land trusts** are an emerging field in Canada. Currently, there is currently no predefined legal form for establishing a creative or cultural land trust.

221A, an artist-run centre in Vancouver, is currently developing a plan for an independent **Vancouver Cultural Land Trust**. In the Canadian context, 221A defines cultural land trusts as

*“based on the concept of community land trusts, with land and assets used for cultural purposes”.*

In a comprehensive **Cultural Land Trust Study**, 221A argues that a cultural land trust should address the decentering of colonial legacies, supporting Indigenous sovereignty, advancing cultural equity, and aligning community priorities with already existing community residents.

Rooted in the second least affordable city on the planet after Hong Kong (Demographia), 221A draws inspiration from land trusts responding to the affordability crisis in other US and European cities, such as Austin Creative Trust (Austin, Texas), **Urban Land Conservancy** (Denver Colorado), **CAST Community Arts Stabilization Trust** (San Francisco), **ACME**, and **Creative Land Trust** (London, UK). CAST and Creative Land Trust are featured in case studies below.

As of April 2020, 221A is preparing to enter the business planning phase in Autumn 2020. The business planning stage will further refine early models developed within the idea validation phase and lead towards the establishment of an independent Vancouver Cultural Land Trust in 2021.

**221A. (2018-2021).**  
*Cultural Land Trust Study*  
<https://221a.ca/research-initiatives/cultural-land-trust-study>

**Urban Land Conservancy**  
<https://www.urbanlandc.org/>

**Community Arts Stabilization Trust**  
<https://cast-sf.org/>

**ACME**  
<https://acme.org.uk/>

**Creative Land Trust**  
<https://www.creativelandtrust.org>

## Benefits and challenges of cultural land trusts

211A has identified five key benefits of cultural lands trusts in Canada, including stabilization, investment, regulation and capacity, long-term security, and sectoral change:

- **Stabilization**

Land trusts freehold ownership and community governance ensures mitigation of speculative real estate market.

Stabilization of affordable workspaces and homes will be greatly beneficial for young Indigenous, Black, Brown, and other racialized, equity-seeking artists and arts workers. Stabilization will ensure youth can focus on their work and excel in their practice.

- **Investment**

The large scope of a land trust acts as accountable “clearing house”, attracting greater impact investing, philanthropic, and government investment.

A cultural land trust will not only provide affordable housing and workspaces. They can potentially attract investment from both regional and national private foundations, local governmental divisions, politicians, and social purpose companies who want to improve living and working conditions for young Indigenous, Black, and other racialized, equity-seeking arts communities and individuals.

This investment can go toward purchasing and maintaining assets owned by the community, as well as ensuring organizational sustainability and investment in the community with a community benefits framework.

- **Regulation & Capacity**

Cultural land trusts advance regulatory updates and taxation policy, and nurtures capacity and literacy in the sector. As a nonprofit rooted in community, a creative and cultural land trust will contribute to how we radically address the affordability crisis in rapidly gentrifying neighbourhoods. It will hopefully contribute to policy change that encourages this type of social purpose real estate tool and inspire other communities around the world.

- **Long-Term Security**

Cultural land trusts will support nonprofit equity with long-term security that can ensure perpetual affordability for the community and organizational capacity.

- **Sectoral Change**

Cultural land trusts support efforts towards Reconciliation & Equity in the arts and culture sector. This greatly

benefits Indigenous, Black, and other racialized, equity-seeking groups as they will be able to collectively work together through partnerships and a bottom-up approach to secure community assets for public good.

Overall, a cultural land trust has immense potential to address long-term affordability issues for precarious, low-income artists and cultural workers. There is potential for nonprofits such as 221A to be involved with business planning and the early stages of fiscal sponsorship to boost awareness and grow investment in the evolution of this form of social purpose real estate.

In Ontario, ArtsPond and other local nonprofits can also help champion and lead the early stages of fiscal and business planning. All while advocating for and educating community members, private developers, and governments on the benefits and steps to establish a creative or cultural land trust centered on Indigenous, Black, and other racialized and equity-seeking artists and arts workers.

Regarding challenges and barriers to establishing a cultural land trust, 221A has also identified such issues barriers as:

- Availability of equity
- Political uncertainty
- Real estate market dynamics
- Municipal government support
- Leveraging opportunities from community self-governance
- Potential partnerships with housing providers.

### Vancouver Cultural Land Trust (Early Model)

As outlined in their *Idea Validation Report*, 221A collected research and input gathered from a variety of stakeholders to inform the design of an early model for the Vancouver Cultural Land Trust. It was defined with the following elements:

- **Launch a cultural land trust that will**
  - Achieve long term security of tenure
  - Empower cultural equity in neighbourhoods
  - Advance sustained cultural employment
- **2050 Vision**  
30 properties secured by the Cultural Land Trust in Vancouver
- **Core purposes**
  - Secure cultural space
  - Advance reconciliation, equity, and access in the built environment
  - Improve economic conditions for low-income artists and nonprofit art and cultural organizations
- **Governance**
  - Independent charitable organization

- 11-person governance with representation from cultural organization tenants
- **Seed Funding**  
\$10M funds + \$10M assets
- **10-Year Projection**  
\$80 to \$120 million investment (\$CAD )

These elements can help provide an idea of what a creative and cultural land trust could look like in Toronto.

### Capital and funding sources for cultural land trusts

221A identifies several capital and funding tools that can sustain a cultural land trust. These tools can be used by community members and the cultural land trust in partnership with governments, foundations, charities and other nonprofit housing and space providers. Capital and funding sources include land transfers / donations, project capital, trade land / opportunity securement funds, social finance and patient capital, partnerships, and operating funds:

- **Land transfers / donations**  
It is important to pursue transfers and gifts of land from government or private landowners to secure land or assets such as buildings or offices/units.
- **Project capital**  
To support the acquisition of property and/or land, cultural land trusts should focus on access to capital sources from all levels of government (municipal, provincial/territorial, and federal), as well as private nonprofit sources,. It will be important to strategically identify government divisions who are working towards the same goals.
- **Trade land / opportunity securement fund**  
Cultural land trusts can set up a reserve to secure strategic assets as funds grows. The trust can save up and invest in their assets to further grow their social impact.
- **Social finance and patient capital**  
It will be important to explore the availability of social financing instruments to support acquisitions of land and buildings. The idea of “patient debt” (Creative Land Trust, London, UK), or long-term capital (**Royal Bank of Canada**), may provide low interest extended term financing for the Trust. With patient capital, the investor is willing to make a financial investment in a business with no expectation of turning a quick profit. Instead, the investor is willing to forgo an immediate return in anticipation of more substantial returns down the road.

**Royal Bank of Canada.**  
*Financing Social Good: A Primer on Impact Investing in Canada.*  
[http://www.rbc.com/community-sustainability/\\_assets-custom/pdf/Financing-Social-Good.pdf](http://www.rbc.com/community-sustainability/_assets-custom/pdf/Financing-Social-Good.pdf)

- **Partnerships**  
Exploring partnerships with nonprofit housing providers, private foundations, charities, and government divisions that focus on low-income affordability where community ownership is shared.
- **Operating funds**  
Cultivate sustainable capacity through the creation of an endowment for operations supported by external sources and additional internal revenues generated by the trust.

## Community Arts Stabilization Trust (CAST)

### Purpose

Based in San Francisco, California, CAST is a nonprofit real estate holding company that secures space and works with community arts organizations to help strengthen their financial and organizational capacity to lease or own property.

CAST serves a mix of cultural organizations, artists and a community of people that is diverse by age, race, gender, economic status, and cultural background.

CAST's **Theory of Change** consists of a 5-Step Model for community empowerment:

- **Subsidize** rent prices
- **Acquire** real estate properties with partners
- **Develop** capacity and financial capacity for arts organizations to ultimately purchase their own space from CAST
- **Structure** multi-tenant leases to sustain affordable rent for arts organizations not ready to buy their own space
- **Activate** spaces.

### How they do it

CAST **subsidizes rent prices** for arts organizations by leveraging grants and tax credits. They also **acquire properties** in collaboration with city departments and real estate developers and create deed covenants to permanently keep the main use and function for arts and culture.

Additionally, they **develop capacity and financial stability** (for example, direct financial grants, one-on-one technical support, and real estate readiness training) so they can purchase or lease their own space from CAST. They also **structure multi-tenant leases** with CAST as the permanent holder to sustain below market rents. Finally, they **activate spaces** with programming, events, and space rentals.

**Community Arts  
Stabilization Trust.**  
*Theory of Change.*  
<https://cast-sf.org/about/ourstory/theory-of-change/>

CAST partners with the Kenneth Rainin Foundation, Community Vision, City of San Francisco, and other major foundations to support their work. They are a nonprofit holding company.

## Key lessons

Key takeaways and transferable knowledge to the Greater Toronto to Hamilton Area includes:

- CAST responds impactfully to the affordability crisis in the Bay Area
- Partnerships are key to success
- They focus on community arts and culture organizations instead of individual community memberships
- They secure spaces for arts organizations and provide capacity building services
- They map nonprofit arts and culture organizations next to potential real estate opportunities that may solve their space issues with **Culture Compass**. There are similar initiatives in the GTHA
- Community activation of the cultural land trust will be significant when ongoing programming, mentorship, and technical assistance is available. It is important for new initiatives to have technical experts and community ambassadors who collaborate with the cultural land trust membership whether at the individual or organizational level.

### Culture Compass

<https://cast-sf.org/strategies/culture-compass>

### Akin Collective

<http://akincollective.com/blog>

With the support of the Canada Council for the Arts' Digital Strategy Fund, Toronto's Akin Collective is currently exploring the creation of digital tools that help match local artists and arts organizations to creative spaces in their neighbourhoods.

## Creative Land Trust

### Purpose

**Creative Land Trust** in London, UK, is a charity created in response to the Greater London Authority's **The Artists Workspace Study**, commissioned by the Mayor of London in 2014.

The study predicted the possible loss of artist workshops and provided evidence that many artists are choosing to move to affordable cities. The study resulted in the creation of Creative Land Trust to provide affordable spaces for artists. The core purpose of the Creative Land Trust is to acquire property and assets to secure long-term affordable space for artists and creatives.

### How they do it

Creative Land Trust rents spaces to expert studio providers who then let to individual artists and creatives. The Trust sets affordable rent levels with a clear guideline on what level of rent is affordable to providing long-term impact.

### Creative Land Trust

<http://creativelandtrust.org>

### The Artists Workspace Study

[https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/artists\\_workspace\\_study\\_september2014\\_reva\\_web\\_0.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/artists_workspace_study_september2014_reva_web_0.pdf)

The Trust aims to work with freehold properties or with long leases upward of 25 years, but preferably no less than 99 years, to secure land in perpetuity. Creative Land Trust has three models for ownership:

- Outright purchase of freehold properties or long leases
- Receipt of properties gifted or transferred to the creative land trust by their public or private partners
- Purchasing building with a studio provider and leased to studio providers or groups of artists

Overall, the innovation represented by the Trust is the evolution of a new funding model that blends philanthropy, grants from trusts and foundations, and the Trust's own operating surplus with investment from patient investors with interests in culture and ESG (environmental, social, and governance factors).

The creation of Creative Land Trust was made possible with the support of Mayor of London, Arts Council England, Bloomberg Philanthropies, and **Outset** Contemporary Art Fund. **Studiomakers** was also integral to the initial setting up of the Trust, though their focus is now on acting as a brokerage service for existing studio providers, property owners, and developers.

## Key lessons

Key takeaways and transferable knowledge to the Greater Toronto to Hamilton Area includes:

- Freehold properties are important for cultural land trusts to be able to provide and control affordability of spaces and housing
- The cultural land trust should be flexible with development and ownership of assets. The trust should provide different lease options for artists and arts workers/organizations
- Long-term impact is important with 25- to 99-year leases.
- Successful advocacy and research can secure more funding
- Success will be based on whether new finance model can be sustained long-term.

**ESG Environmental, Social, Governance Factors**  
<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/e/environmental-social-and-governance-esg-criteria.asp>

**Outset**  
<http://outset.org.uk/>

**Studiomakers**  
<https://createlondon.org/event/studiomakers/>

## Community benefits and supports



*The conversation of how to help is really about creating access and building community care networks that allow people to show up with their whole selves. That means looking at micro engagements or daily interactions (with education, health, food, transportation, recreation, government assistance etc.)*

Advisor, Groundtrust Youth Circle, 2020

### Mutual aid

Mutual aid practices confront and disrupt hierarchical transactions and relationships based on charity that depoliticize survival and care work. Mutual aid identifies the nonprofit and NGO industrial complex as integral to systemic oppression, imperialism, and genocide.

Mutual aid aims to build deep meaning and reciprocal relationships of accountability and solidarity. Mutual aid equips and empowers people to do something when they feel something is wrong and to be able to transform and build deep meaning in relationships.

As one Groundtrust Youth Circle advisor says:



*“Queer people of colour, like myself, who don not have class privilege or generational wealth, are priced out of good housing, have to take on low-wage service jobs or go into corporate work, and we are left with little time to put toward friends, family, and hobbies.”*

Advisor, Groundtrust Youth Circle, 2020

Without adequate and good housing for artists and arts workers, social ties and bonding is left behind. Mutual aid ensures that people can form better relationships together to ensure everyone is doing alright. Mutual aid focuses on radical redistribution and decentralization of resources and power.

Example values and principles from Parkdale Pod’s **Mutual Aid Network** includes: **zero judgement, solidarity not charity, horizontal and reciprocal support, and redistribution of power.**

While working towards the emergence of creative and cultural land trusts in Ontario and beyond, it will be important to ask ourselves:

- Are community land trusts re-distributing power, and if so, how?

### Parkdale Pod’s Mutual Aid Network

<http://parkdalepeopleseconomy.ca/parkdale-pods-mutual-aid-network/>

- What kinds of relationship building practices are reflected in community land trust funding, community ownership, and community control models?

For additional insights, we recommend watching Canadian Network of Community Land Trusts' 90-minute webinar, [Mutual Aid Organizing and Implications for Community Land Trusts](#) (2020).

**Canadian Network of Community Land Trusts**  
*Mutual Aid Organizing and Implications for Community Land Trusts Webinar.*  
[https://youtu.be/64\\_Nn1911K4](https://youtu.be/64_Nn1911K4)

## Community benefits



*I want a retreat space where Black excellence is plastered on the walls, where there is a media database of material that humanizes my existence, where there is a progress meter showing how much we have accomplished and what steps need to be taken until we achieve our next goal in the fight for racial justice, and where there are rules about the conversations and people allowed in the space. And any other community segment facing oppression should have their own similar space as well.*

Advisor, Groundtrust Youth Circle, 2020

In Toronto, community benefits frameworks are a way for governments and institutions to create economic opportunities to benefit people from equity-seeking groups.

Community benefits responds to social and economic issues such as poverty, income inequality, and precarious work by leveraging hiring and training opportunities, economic opportunities, and supporting community priorities.

**Parkdale Peoples Economy** has a **Parkdale Community Benefits Framework** to guide development without displacement which includes equity-based targets for policymakers, politicians, developers, investors, and community advocates. A community benefits framework for a CLT will be important to identify community defined priorities and needs and actions to achieve them.

Additionally, a community benefits framework will aim to improve the lives of everyone in arts and culture so they can focus on what nurtures them instead of overworking to maintain housing.

**Toronto Community Benefits Network**  
<https://www.communitybenefits.ca/>

**Parkdale Peoples Economy**  
<http://parkdalepeoples-economy.ca/>

**Parkdale Community Benefits Framework**  
<https://parkdalecommunityeconomies.files.wordpress.com/2018/11/parkdale-community-benefits-framework1.pdf>

## Community engagement

Working with and for community members is an integral aspect of how community land trusts plan and manage their land and assets.

Meaningful community engagement by successful CLTs can help guide what new CLTs should focus on in their planning and implementation, such as fostering leadership, betterment, and improved quality of life among residents to build community.

The process and result of community engagement by CLTs ultimately promotes civic engagement and ensures resident-driven and organizational planning and decision-making are sustained in a manner that maximizes both organizational capacity and community impact.

**Thaden, E., & Lowe, J.S. (2014).**  
*Resident and Community Engagement in Community Land Trusts*  
<https://www.lincolnst.edu/publications/working-papers/resident-community-engagement-community-land-trusts>

## Next steps



*With social purpose real estate that puts the means of life back into the hands of artists and cultural workers, we would have more time to create and spend in community. In my mind, this is absolutely vital to a truly, radically creative city.*

Advisor, Groundtrust Youth Circle, 2020

This publication only scratches the surface exploring the potential of the creative and cultural land trust model.

This primer has been informed by literature reviews, secondary research by 221A, conversations with other CLT leaders and Groundtrust Youth Circle advisors and attending webinars by the Canadian Network of Community Land Trusts, Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust, and other similar events. We hope this primer has helped you understand the basics of what cultural and community land trusts are and how they can help combat gentrification, displacement, and precarity in arts and culture.

Emerging issues and next steps to be considered in the near future include making connections between community land trusts models and Indigenous sovereignty, anti-racism and policing in Black and other racialized communities, and addressing barriers to youth leadership in visioning and realizing the next generation of social purpose real estate solutions in Ontario and beyond.

## Indigenous sovereignty

Historically, community land trusts in North America have not engaged with Indigenous land rights, although some have worked within African communities.

In the future, it will be vital for CLTs to build relationships and partnerships with urban Indigenous community organizations and surrounding First Nations. In the Greater Toronto to Hamilton Area, next steps could include meeting with Indigenous youth and organizations.

The importance of Indigenous land rights and sovereignty should be a topic of concern for CLTs. At future gatherings between CLT practitioners, artists, arts workers, and Indigenous community leaders, dialogues should focus on how to center CLTs in allyship with Indigenous land rights and sovereignty. Learning is needed on how to decolonize land and social practices in Canadian cities and the potential of a cultural community land trust as a method for Indigenous land sovereignty in Canada.

We need to ask ourselves:

How can we support Indigenous artists and arts workers in our work and what do I need to do to change how I think about land ownership and reconciliation?

## Anti-racism and policing

We need to radically think about how we can change different operational and policy aspects of the CLT that addresses anti-racism, gentrification, and policing in Indigenous, Black, and other racialized and equity-seeking communities.

We need to ask ourselves:

Should there be a change in the tripartite governance model described above? How does the CLT choose who gets to live there? How will the CLT support Indigenous, Black, and other racialized youth artists and arts workers through programming and operations?

## Leadership by Indigenous, Black, and racialized youth

Training the next generation of CLT practitioners and leaders is an important next step. Youth and emerging CLT leaders should be taught or skilled in executive management, real estate finance, fund development, communications, technical assistance, and community planning and economic development. Forming mentorships and partnerships with CLT leaders and practitioners across the USA and Canada can help emerging leaders to learn from their experience and understand where they see the future of community and cultural land trusts in cities.

We need to ask ourselves:

How can we increase CLT literacy for young people in an accessible way? How can non-Indigenous and non-Black youth help fight against systemic racism and gentrification?

## Cultivating creative and cultural land trusts

While inspiration and lessons may be drawn to a certain extent from CAST, Creative Land Trust UK and others, a critical next step will be explore with regional and other government officials on the potential of funding or policy streams that align with the implementation and sustainable support for a cultural land trust. Setting up meetings with Arts and Culture, Economic Development and Culture, City Planning and Housing divisions at the municipality can help start the conversation.

It will also be important to sustain ongoing discussion on creating a cultural land trust with Black, Indigenous, and other racialized and equity-seeking artists and arts organizations who want to change and address affordability and accessibility issues in housing and workspaces for artists and arts workers. Identifying potential key stakeholders should encompass conversations both within and outside the arts and culture sector.

We need to ask ourselves:

What are artists and arts workers already doing to address gentrification, displacement, precarious work? How can we unite everyone to work towards implementing and creating a cultural land trust?

## Strengthening the next generation of land trusts

As a community-driven model, it is essential that future evolutions of community land trusts be guided in close collaboration with stakeholders and networks of other CLTs locally, nationally, and around the world. Where CLTs will go in the future will be based on input and direction from impacted groups and community leaders like yourself.

Now, what questions will you ask of yourself and your community?

## Recommended readings

### Websites

#### USA

Grounded Solutions Network. <https://groundedsolutions.org/>  
Centre for Community Land Trust Innovation. <https://cltweb.org/>

#### Canada

Canadian Network for Community Land Trusts. <http://www.communityland.ca/>

### Books

Davis, J.E. (Ed.) (2020). *The Community Land Trust Reader*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. <https://www.lincolninst.edu/publications/books/community-land-trust-reader>

Davis, J.E., Algoed, L., & Hernandez-Torrales, M.E. (Eds.). (2020). *On Common Ground: International Perspectives on the Community Land Trust*. Terra Nostra Press.  
<https://cltweb.org/terra-nostra-press/on-common-ground/>

### Articles and Resources

Fernando, A. (2017). *How Indigenous Land-Use Practices relate to Community Land Trusts & The Commons*.  
<https://blog.p2pfoundation.net/how-indigenous-land-use-practices-relate-to-community-land-trusts-the-commons/2017/11/13>

Grounded Solutions Network. *Agricultural and Commercial Community Land Trusts*.  
<https://groundedsolutions.org/tools-for-success/resource-library/agricultural-and-commercial-community-land-trusts>

Grounded Solutions Network. *Cities and Community Land Trusts*. <https://groundedsolutions.org/tools-for-success/resource-library/cities-and-community-land-trusts>

Grounded Solutions Network. *Community Land Trust Technical Manual*. <https://groundedsolutions.org/tools-for-success/resource-library/community-land-trust-technical-manual>

Grounded Solutions Network. *Community Organizing*.  
<https://groundedsolutions.org/tools-for-success/resource-library/community-organizing>

Grounded Solutions Network. *Land Banks*.  
<https://groundedsolutions.org/tools-for-success/resource-library/land-banks>

Grounded Solutions Network. *Limited Equity Housing Co-ops by Community Land Trusts*.  
<https://groundedsolutions.org/tools-for-success/resource-library/limited-equity-housing-co-ops-community-land-trusts>

Grounded Solutions Network. *Model Ground Leases*.  
<https://groundedsolutions.org/tools-for-success/resource-library/model-ground-leases>

Grounded Solutions Network. *Renters in Community Land Trusts*.  
<https://groundedsolutions.org/tools-for-success/resource-library/renters-community-land-trusts>

Grounded Solutions Network. *Shared Equity, Transformative Wealth*.  
<https://groundedsolutions.org/tools-for-success/resource-library/shared-equity-transformative-wealth>

Grounded Solutions Network. *Startup Community Land Trust Hub*.  
<https://groundedsolutions.org/start-upclthub>

Grounded Solutions Network. *The Community Land Trust Model and Movement*.

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## Reports

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Parkdale Community Legal Services. (2020). *Demanding The Right To The City And The Right To Housing: Best Practices For Supporting Community Organizing*. <https://www.parkdalelegal.org/news/demanding-the-right-to-the-city/>

The Public Studio. *Art, Design and Gentrification: A Primer*. Toronto, ON.

[https://issuu.com/thepublicstudio/docs/no11\\_art\\_design\\_and\\_gentrification](https://issuu.com/thepublicstudio/docs/no11_art_design_and_gentrification)

United Cities and Local Governments. (2018). *Culture in the sustainable development goals: A guide for local action*.

[https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/culture\\_in\\_the\\_sdgs.pdf](https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/culture_in_the_sdgs.pdf)

## Recommended media and videos

### Introductory webinars

American Planning Association Minnesota Chapter. (2019). *Community Land Trusts 101*. 30 min.

<https://youtu.be/mxE4tjFK0PI>

BRIC TV. (2017). *What is a Community Land Trust? New Yorkers are Owning Land for Economic Empowerment*. 15 min. <https://youtu.be/dNKhMfnFH0Q>

Creative Land Trust. (2020). *Launch Video*. 3 min.

<https://nextshoot.com/video/creative-land-trust-launch-video>

From the Ground Up Conference. (2019). *The Right to Housing and Community Control of Land*. 40 min.

<https://youtu.be/CxqnrANjknY>

Grounded Solutions Network. (2019). *Community Land Trusts Explained (2019)*. 2 mins.

<https://youtu.be/iWzmZjym8d4>

NewCo. (2017). *How Can We Keep Artists in Our Cities*. 5 min.

<https://youtu.be/CD951G6LzWs>

The Laura Flanders Show. (2019). *Community Land Trusts: A Model for Reparations?* 30 min.

<https://youtu.be/qm8ZgDF5WoA>

## In-depth webinars

- Canadian Network of Community Land Trusts. (2020). *Beat the Real Estate Investment Trust (REITs)*. 1.5 hrs. <https://youtu.be/AhEcn2WVb9s>
- Canadian Network of Community Land Trusts. (2020). *Mutual Aid Organizing and Implications for Community Land Trusts*. 1.5 hrs. [https://youtu.be/64\\_Nn1911K4](https://youtu.be/64_Nn1911K4)
- From the Ground Up Conference. (2019). *Communities Transforming the Economy*. 1 hr. <https://youtu.be/dc-H2vg5UeU>
- From the Ground Up Conference. (2019). *Co-op Housing and Community Land Trusts in Canada*. 1.5 hrs. <https://youtu.be/szwzO82gyKo>
- From the Ground Up Conference. (2019). *Democratic Economies and the Commons*. 2 hrs. <https://youtu.be/9BxdmyoGMk4>
- From the Ground Up Conference. (2019). *Indigenous-led Solutions to Displacement & the Story of Homelessness in Toronto*. 1 hr. <https://youtu.be/OFNvyQ2zflQ>
- Iler Campbell LLP. (2019). *Community Land Trusts – Everything You’ve Wanted to Know*. 1 hr. <https://youtu.be/SuzrEeyxg0>
- Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association. (2017). *Preserving Long Term Housing Affordability Through Community Land Trust*. 1 hr. <https://youtu.be/jldmUO6GE1Q>
- PolicyLink. (2019). *Preserving Neighbourhoods with Community Land Trusts*. 1 hr. [https://youtu.be/A5n-3\\_fUtlk](https://youtu.be/A5n-3_fUtlk)
- SFU Continuing Studies. (2016). *Community Land Trusts for Affordable Housing with Brenda Torpy*. 1.5 hrs. <https://youtu.be/Mo0B01ePEpc>
- Toronto Public Library. (2019). *On Civil Society. House Divided: Solving Toronto’s Affordability Crisis*. 50 min. <https://youtu.be/sTB8EUIk6Rw>
- Urban Futures Institute at Concordia University. (2020). *Evicting Our Landlords In Milton Parc And Beyond: Crash Course On Housing Co-Ops And Community Land Trusts*. <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=256651038998571&extid=H4o8sAlvOE9oL9U0>

## Pandemic recovery in arts and culture

- AGYU Art Gallery York University (2020). *Cultural Policies Meet Pandemic Follies: The CERB And Independent Artists*. Toronto. <http://Agyu.Art/Project/Pandemic-Follies/>
- Urban Land Institute (2020). *The Art Of Bouncing Back: How Developers And Artists Are Setting The Stage For Recovery*. Toronto. <https://youtu.be/o-Eam2gHzW4>

## Documentary

- New Communities Inc. *Arc of Justice: The Rise, Fall, and Rebirth of a Beloved Community*. <https://youtu.be/Px-pvXsGI48>

## Profile



***Cultivating progressive ideas and untapped potential in the arts into exceptional, everyday shared realities for collective impact on-the-ground and in-the-cloud.***

ArtsPond is a changemaker of a different sort.

Devoted to radical inclusivity, our mandate is to strengthen the potential of artistic expression to nurture healthy human ecosystems that cultivate equity and social cohesion by **boosting social, spatial, economic, and digital justice** and other urgent systemic issues in under-served communities across Canada and beyond.

Purposefully, we foster cooperative actions fusing values and practices from community-engaged arts, human-centered design, evidence-based action and applied research, social innovation, social finance, and collective impact as a means to uproot intractable systemic issues from gentrification and economic inequality to the digital divide.

Cultivating a more creative and open society, we intentionally adopt collaborative practices **crossing cultural, economic, geographic, political, social, and technological boundaries**. We actively enable and celebrate the perspectives of diverse **interdisciplinary, intergenerational, intercultural, and interability** voices. We do so with the assumption that the full spectrum of humanity is better together than we are apart, and community-engaged creativity is a crucial element to bolster and intertwine the best in us all.

Founded as a grassroots entity in 2014, and federally incorporated as a non-profit in 2016, ArtsPond's major actions currently include **I Lost My Gig Canada** (economic justice), **DigitalASO, Artse United + Hatch Open** (digital justice), and **Groundstory + Groundtrust** (spatial justice).



**Groundstory** is a collective impact effort to uproot the adverse effects of gentrification on the arts in the Greater Toronto to Hamilton Area.

Groundstory asks the question, "What would it take for 75% of arts and culture workers to feel satisfied with their shelter, studios, and spaces of public engagement by 2030?"

Phase 1 activities from 2017 to 2020 included regional focus groups and human-centered design workshops, an international literature review, national impact survey, Round the Block spatial justice podcast, and more.



**Groundtrust** is a youth-led initiative promoting awareness and innovation in the evolution of social purpose real estate solutions in the arts in Toronto and across Ontario through shared learning online.

Phase 1 actions from 2020 to 2022 feature research and dissemination of literacy toolkits, podcasts, webinars and workshops on community land trusts and other models that prioritize public good over profit.

Groundtrust's objectives are to promote the capacity of impacted youth leaders and community groups to envision and realize affordable, arts-led social purpose real estate projects rooted in their communities for public benefit.



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