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# Professional Arts Track PROGRAM

2022 23+BEYOND

SYLLABUS

# Introduction

Dear artist,

In the past few years, the NaAC has undergone a major revamp of its programming – with a clear move away from simply providing a “day program” to developing programs and supports with artistic and creative rigour. All of this work has been done because, fundamentally, we believe that our artists – are indeed artists.

More recently, the NaAC has started to identify an exciting trend in our artist community. A significant portion of our artists – the vast majority of whom have never had any interaction with arts training programs prior to joining the NaAC – have started to significantly advance forward in their artistic practice. Through their initial engagement in many of our recreation/ community-based programs, they’ve developed new bodies of work, experimented and learned new ways of creating, and have had success in mainstream settings where they’ve presented or exhibited their works.

And we’ve responded in recent years to meet this category of artists at their stage of practice. No longer are we approaching our programs as “one size fits all,” but rather, “one size fits one.” This is particularly relevant to our disability community, because we know that there has not been one linear path in your creative journey – nor will there be one in your journey ahead.

We are pleased to expand our Professional Track programs in visual arts, performing arts, and music in 2022/23 and beyond. As Canada’s largest and oldest disability arts organization, we will be partners with you in shaking up our arts and culture scene – with the dream of seeing more equitable representation of your artistic talent and potential in our creative ecosystem.

Thank you for continuing this journey with us, and being the amazing artists that you are.

Yours sincerely,



**Jung-Suk (JS) Ryu**  
President and CEO



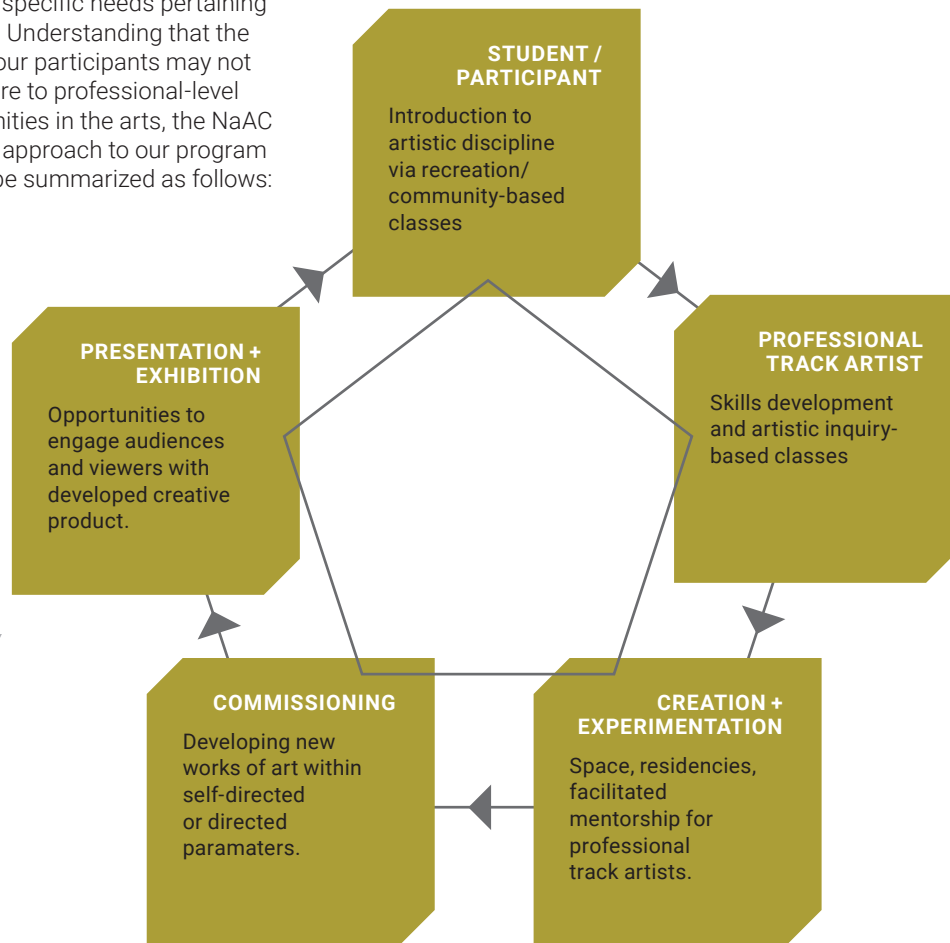
**Karly Mortimer**  
Director, Artist and Program Development

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# Our Approach

The NaAC is unique in the disability arts landscape in opening opportunities for professional growth and development for our participating artists. Programs are designed to be responsive to the needs of our artists who have differing styles of learning, or have specific needs pertaining to their disability. Understanding that the vast majority of our participants may not have had exposure to professional-level training opportunities in the arts, the NaAC utilizes a holistic approach to our program design that can be summarized as follows:

It is important to note that this approach is not always linear, and we welcome participants to move between different stages in their professional track programs.



# Professional Track Programs in Visual Arts

The NaAC's suite of professional track programming critically explores ways that we can position our artists as leaders and innovators within the broader arts and culture ecosystem. We are redefining the metrics of success for artists with disabilities by connecting them to mainstream national and international opportunities for training, networking, and exhibiting. By providing our artists with quality mentorship and support within our visual arts studio, and creating clear pathways to public presenting platforms, we are continuing to push the boundaries of diversity and inclusion in the arts.

## Skills Development

### STUDIO SESSIONS (ONGOING)

*M-F, NaAC Visual Arts Studios*

NaAC's visual arts studios are designed as medium-specific, with supplies and resources available in fibre arts, drawing and painting, ceramics, and digital media. All artists are encouraged to take advantage of their allotted studio time to further their projects or engage in professional track programs such as commissions, creation, and experimentation of works.

### MEDIUM SPECIFIC INTENSIVES (RESPONSIVE)

*Responsive based on individual artist needs, NaAC Visual Arts Studios*

NaAC's medium-specific intensives are developed rapidly in response to emerging artist needs or inquiries. Professional track artists will be partnered with mentors and facilitators who are recognized experts in their field or medium.

## Creation and Experimentation

### LOCAL RESIDENCIES (RESPONSIVE)

*Application-based, residency and location determined on artist needs, NaAC Visual Arts Studios (Calgary) and NaAC x Won Lee Studio (Toronto)*

The NaAC arranges, at minimum, one local residency that is open to professional track artists on an application basis. These residencies are designed rapidly to address emerging needs and interests from our artist community. Previous examples of local residencies include Calgary Allied Arts Foundation, the Leighton Art Centre, Contemporary Calgary, and the National Music Centre.

**INTERNATIONAL RESIDENCIES (ANNUALLY)***Appointment-based, international location (2022: Osaka)*

The NaAC will select artists to participate in one annual international residency, organized in partnership with an international partner (2022: Osaka in partnership with Atelier CORNERS). Artists will receive a stipend and facilitated supports in their international destination, with a focus on creating new works, learning new techniques, and engaging in cultural immersion activities. Previous examples of international residencies include Dubai (in partnership with Mawaheb) and Guadalajara (in partnership with the British Council).

**Commissioning****CREATION INTENSIVE***Application-based, presentation partner-based, NaAC Visual Arts Studios*

The NaAC arranges, at minimum, two creation intensives that are application-based. Professional track artists are invited to create new work within the parameters of a creative brief, with a specific presentation outcome. Artists work over an extended period of time with professional mentorship (and training as required). Previous examples include The City of Calgary Public Art Project, Community-Led Partnerships, and Korea Exchange. Artists are paid commissioning fees for their engagement.

**NEW SCALES OF PRESENTATION***Application-based, location based on partnership opportunities*

The NaAC arranges, at minimum, one project that focuses on scaling-up existing artist works. The program works with the participant in understanding, leading, and executing the scale-up process that is specific to the opportunity presented. Previous examples include The WINDOW Project, and commissions from private sector partners for commercial purposes and reproduction. Artists are paid commissioning fees for their engagement. Selected artists in 2022 will work on their works being scaled up to be displayed at Toronto's Yonge and Dundas Square in 2023.

**Presentation + Exhibition****EXHIBITIONS***Application-based, ongoing, responsive based on artist trends and partnership opportunities, NaAC x Won Lee Studio (Toronto)*

The NaAC arranges ongoing exhibitions that are held in publicly-accessible spaces and with partners who respect the creative intent of our artists' works. Artists are paid CARFAC fees. Previous examples include: My Imagination is So Many Things (Tokyo), The Takeover, What Matters Now, Dolan.Dolan (Seoul), Connections (Dubai), Drawing Power (Guadalajara), Albertan Perspectives (Hong Kong, Seoul).

**CURATORIAL MENTORSHIP INITIATIVE (RESPONSIVE)***Application-based, NaAC Visual Arts Studios*

The NaAC runs an ongoing Curatorial Mentorship Initiative, the first of its kind in Canada, that opens the world of curatorial practice to artists living with disabilities. Artists work with curators who will facilitate and mentor participants through this important process. Previous artist-curated shows include: Midnight in Space, Wild Thing in the City, Magic Land Animation.

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS***Appointment-based, location determined on artist/partnership opportunities*

The NaAC develops public engagement opportunities on an ongoing basis. Artists are invited to showcase their artistic practice through initiatives such as artist talks, panel discussions, and artist-led workshops that invite the public into their world of creativity. The NaAC provides the professional training to develop new public presentation skills and design workshops that are responsive to public engagement requests. Previous examples include: Artist Panel at the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26), Artist Panel at the 2019 Tracing Possibilities Symposium (Guadalajara), Art in the Dark (across multiple locations), Open Studios.

# Professional Track Programs in Performing Arts

In providing a professional Performing Arts track, the work of the NaAC will continue to forge a new path forward and influence change that will aid in the removal of barriers on a rigid, competitive and often exclusionary artistic medium. By delivering industry standard content, practices, experiences and collaborations, previously only available in traditional models, we will not only be advancing our artists individual potential but act as a catalyst for change in the performing arts sector as a whole. We will inspire new ways of expressing and showcasing performing arts and the details of production that have long overlooked our community.

## Skills Development

### **STYLE SPECIFIC TRAINING** (ONGOING)

*M-F, Decidedly Jazz Danceworks*

The NaAC operates instructor-led classes specific to jazz, contemporary, and hip-hop, that includes technical training and individual adaptation. Each session is led by one practicing artist, along with an artist with a disability to further demonstrate the lived experience and movement variation potential. Professional track artists, including members of our professional dance ensemble, are encouraged to participate in these classes to further hone their skills and comprehension of various genres of dance and movement.

### **ANCILLARY CREATION FOCUSED TRAINING** (RESPONSIVE)

*Responsive based on individual artist and presentation, Decidedly Jazz Danceworks*

The NaAC also provides participants with the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the rehearsal process, choreography, delivery of teaching and choreography, and different archival methods.

### **PRODUCTION FOCUSED TRAINING** (RESPONSIVE)

*Responsive based on individual artist and presentation, Decidedly Jazz Danceworks*

Participants in production-focused training programs will gain a better understanding of costume and set design, lighting, sound, and stage theory.

## **ACT ONE: STORYTELLING THROUGH OPERA** (ONGOING)

*Open call, NaAC Multidisciplinary Studio*

The NaAC is continuing a multi-year process in opening the world of opera to neurodiverse artists. The first stage of this project is for NaAC artists to learn the basic building blocks of what comprises an opera, including the development of a storyline and characters. This project will lead to further creation/experimentation, as well as a presentation in the final stages.

## Creation and Experimentation

### **CREATIVE PROCESS INTENSIVES** (RESPONSIVE)

*Application- or appointment-based, residency and location determined on artist needs*

Selected artists are invited to ongoing intensives that are designed in response to opportunities, partnerships, as well as artist needs. These intensives often invite guest instructors (previous example includes ICONIC, featuring Daniel Vais from UK's Drag Syndrome) as well as having participants respond to new ways of working, expanding and refining their repertoire. Intensives can also focus on specific situation-based prompts or realities, such as the realities of working with film and live performances. An ongoing Creation Process Intensive is the Queer Accessible Arts Cabaret (QAAC).

### **MOVEMENT LABS** (ONGOING)

*Appointment-based, residency at Decidedly Jazz Danceworks*

Selected artists will be invited to further explore their movement practice with the provision of accessible space as well as facilitators/mentors as required. These residency-based sessions develop individual approaches and dance vernacular. The goal for these residencies is to encourage participants to prepare their practice for commissioning and public presentation opportunities.

## Commissioning

### **FURTHER STAGES IN QAAC AND OPERA ACT TWO** (TIMING BASED ON PROJECT PROGRESS)

*Continued extension of QAAC and Opera Programs, NaAC and DJD*

The combination of skills-based programs, our QAAC and Opera programs, as well as our Movement Labs will open the door for commissions that will take the two projects to a presentation stage.

### **CHOREOGRAPHY AND PERFORMANCE FOR FILM**

*Application-based, Decidedly Jazz Danceworks*

Following the success of Moving Pictures, Pictures Moving (2022), the NaAC will continue to commission and support its Professional Dance Ensemble in the exploration of dance specifically for the film medium.

## Presentation + Exhibition

### **LIVE PERFORMANCE**

*Appointment-based, ongoing, location based on project and partnership*

The NaAC produces live performances on an ongoing basis, suited to film and theatre. Performances could reflect ongoing work in our skills-based classes and all the way to the productions featuring the NaAC Professional Ensemble, showcasing these works locally and also across Canada. Participants in our Professional Ensemble will be touring a new production at Tangente Danse in Montreal in 2023/24. Members of our Professional Ensemble are paid industry standard fees for rehearsal and performance.

# Professional Track Programs in Music

Music has traditionally been the least accessible of all art forms for artists living with developmental disabilities. Our Professional Track programs aim to change all that, with programs specifically designed for – and often co-designed with – our artist community. Rather than viewing music through a traditional conservatory lens, we are testing all assumptions of sound, audio, and music in ways that are meaningful in the advancement of our participants' practice.

## Skills Development

### **MUSIC PRODUCTION** (ONGOING)

*Open call, NaAC Multidisciplinary Studio*

A series of programs will further train NaAC artists on recording, mixing, performance, and digital audio workstations. These accessible programs will have a specialized focus that ensures artists will develop creative autonomy in their music practice.

### **SOUND AND AUDIO** (RESPONSIVE)

*Responsive based on individual artist and presentation, NaAC Multidisciplinary Studio*

Participants will gain an understanding of sound art, sound sculpture, and other concepts around integrated sound as a way to expand their understanding of sound, audio, and music.

### **GENRE-SPECIFIC CLASSES** (ONGOING)

*Open call, NaAC Multidisciplinary Studio and other locations as required*

These classes are in response to the reality that many current or prospective musicians with disabilities have had no prior exposure or experience in music education. Genre-specific classes will be developed in response to expressed interest from our NaAC artist community.



## Creation and Experimentation

### STUDIO PRACTICE (RESPONSIVE)

*Application- or appointment-based, NaAC Multidisciplinary Studio*

Selected artists will examine and refine their individualized approach to music creation. They will be provided with the tools, space, and guidance required to create and explore new works.

### MUSIC LABS (ONGOING)

*Appointment-based, location based on partnerships*

Selected artists will be invited to further explore their audio practice with the provision of accessible space as well as facilitators/mentors as required. These residency-based sessions develop individual approaches and audio vernacular.

## Commissioning

### SOUND.COLLAB (ONGOING)

*Appointment-based, NaAC Multidisciplinary Studio and other locations as required*

The NaAC will continue its sound.coLLAB initiative, continuing to explore music composition and sound collaboration in partnership with Xenia Concerts, the Royal Conservatory of Music, and the Rolston String Quartet. Participating artists will bring their creative concepts, working with a notation specialist, to transform their ideas to a music composition.

### SOUND.TRANSMISSIONS (ONGOING)

*Appointment-based, NaAC Multidisciplinary Studio and other locations as required*

This is a commissioning opportunity for NaAC artists to create presentation-ready works that will be presented within the context of disability aesthetic, using radio broadcast approaches as a creative medium.

## Presentation + Exhibition

### LIVE PERFORMANCE

*Appointment-based, ongoing, location based on project and partnership*

The NaAC produces live and digital broadcast performances. Performances could reflect ongoing work in our skills-based classes and all the way to the products developed in our various commissioning/creation projects, showcasing these works locally and also across Canada. For example, the composition from sound.coLLAB, *Seven Miniatures* (2022), will be premiered at Meridian Hall in Toronto in July 2022.

# **We have to shake up the arts and culture scene with you. And we will.**

The words “professional track” as it pertains to artists living with disabilities remains a bit of a novel concept in the arts, but we aim to change all that. The NaAC, better than any other arts organization in Canada, understands that individuals with disabilities need specialized, individualized supports because so much of the world around them remains inaccessible. As such, the word “professional” might mean something different for each one of our artists in our professional track programs – and it is important for the NaAC and our partners in the arts to know that this is perfectly normal.

The work ahead for the NaAC is to advocate for and present solutions around changing our arts and culture ecosystem so there are more opportunities for artists to meet more mainstream expectations around the word “professional.” Employers, galleries, performing arts institutions need to work with the NaAC to design more paid opportunities for employment and engagement. Other partners outside of the NaAC need to commission our artists to contribute their creative product. And more partners need to become allies in supporting the critical arts training that takes place within our organization.

NaAC’s Professional Track artists will be at the centre of driving this positive change, and we look forward to all of the incredible work that will come from our community and our programs.

# NaAC Professional Artistic Training

## **CALGARY**

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NaAC Visual Arts + Multidisciplinary Studios  
8038 Fairmount Drive SE  
Calgary, AB

Decidedly Jazz Danceworks  
111 12 Ave SE  
Calgary, AB

## **TORONTO**

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NaAC x Won Lee Studio + Gallery  
1594 Queen Street West  
Toronto, ON

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