



SSHRC  CRSH

On the value-added of an Innovative evaluation process: Designing and conducting the Research/Creation in Fine Arts program evaluation

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Overview

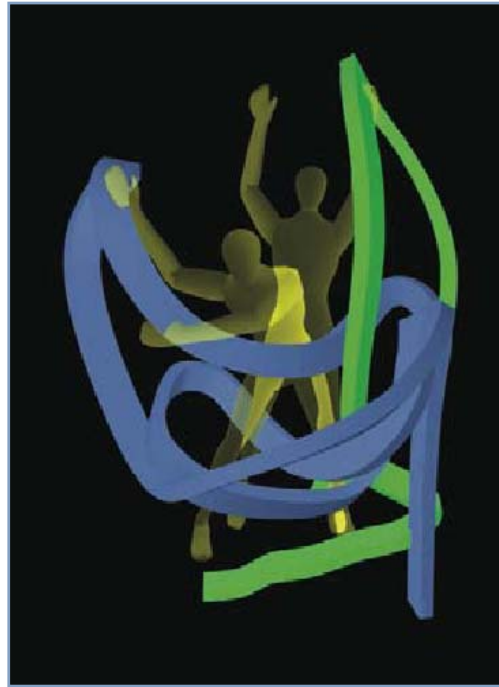
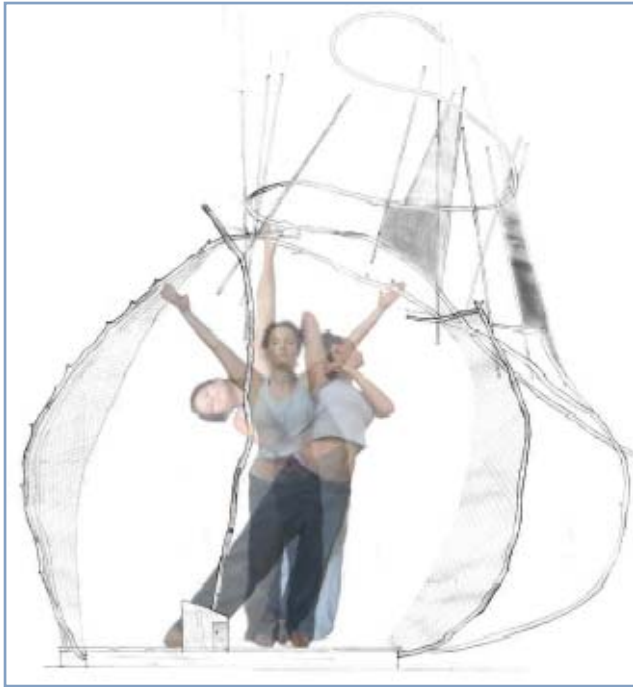
- Research-Creation Grants in Fine Arts Pilot Program
- Evaluation
 - Purpose
 - Main Evaluation Issues / Questions
 - Challenges of Evaluating the Pilot Program
 - Opportunities & Innovations
 - Designing the evaluation
 - Conducting the evaluation
 - Following up on the evaluation
- Lessons Learned
 - SSHRC perspective
 - Evaluation perspective

What is Research/Creation?

- Any research activity or approach to research that forms an essential part of a creative process or artistic discipline and that directly fosters the creation of literary/artistic works.
 - The research must address clear research questions, offer theoretical contextualization within the relevant field or fields of literary/artistic inquiry, and present a well considered methodological approach.
 - Both the research and the resulting literary/artistic works must meet peer standards of excellence and be suitable for publication, public performance or viewing.

SSHRC Definitions, www.sshrc.ca

Funded Project Example: **Architecture in motion**



Bonnemaison, Sarah (*Dalhousie University*)

Funded Project Example: **Scenography development for new plays**



Gardiner, Robert (*University of British Columbia*)

Research/Creation Grants in Fine Arts Pilot Program Overview

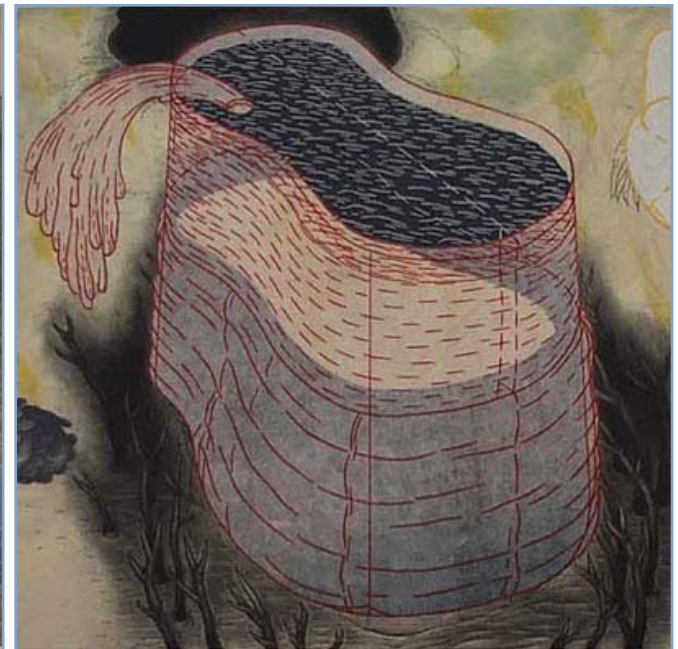
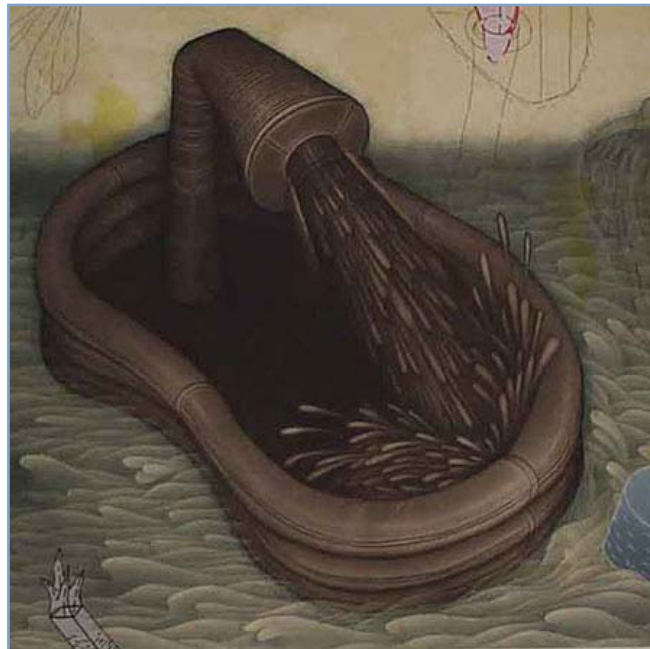
Context

- Funding initiative in research/creation launched in order to:
 - Bridge the gap between fine arts disciplines and link the humanities more closely with the arts communities (e.g., Canada Council for the Arts)
 - Address lack of federal funding for this community
 - Tap into potentially transformative nature of research
- Close collaboration with Canada Council for the Arts, the Fonds québécois de la recherche sur la société et la culture (FQRSC) and the Canadian Association of Fine Arts Deans (CAFAD)
- Pilot Program launched in September 2003
 - “Small scale, experimental program that makes use of new methods and can serve as an example”, in order to:
 - Test an innovative program mechanism or type of program
 - Reduce risk inherent to launching a full-scale, long-term regular program

Research/Creation Grants in Fine Arts Pilot Program Overview

- Pilot Program designed to support research within all Fine Arts disciplines to:
 - Support high-quality *research/creation* in projects that advance knowledge in the fine arts and artistic production in Canadian postsecondary institutions;
 - Develop graduate and undergraduate art students' research skills;
 - Facilitate the dissemination and presentation of high quality work to a broad public; and
 - Foster collaboration among university- and college-based *artist-researchers*, other academic researchers, and professional artists
- Three competitions between 2004 and 2007
 - A total of 91 grants awarded for a total of \$13.8M (on average, \$250K/award)
- Program to be evaluated during, and at the end of its Pilot phase

Funded Project Example: **Exploring the interface of digital and traditional printmaking**



Caulfield, Sean T. (University of Alberta)

Evaluation

- **Purpose**
 - To provide appropriate, timely and useful information to facilitate discussions about the renewal of the Pilot program
 - Assess program design and delivery: activities, program outputs and immediate outcomes, program risks and opportunities, and continued relevance and priorities
 - Gain an understanding of learnings/challenges arising from the Pilot program

Evaluation

- **Main evaluation issues/questions**
 - Pilot program design and processes
 - Effectiveness of mechanisms in achieving objectives (grant types, relevance/adjudication committees)
 - Appropriateness of required institutional/partnership agreements
 - Extent to which application procedures adapted to the needs of community
 - Pilot program activities, outputs and outcomes
 - Evidence of what artists/researchers produced
 - Success in productivity, artist development as a result of the grant
 - Does application process itself help applicants in clarifying their ideas or plans
 - Evidence of movement towards achievement of objectives
 - Overall relevance

Evaluation

- **Challenges of Evaluating the Pilot Program**
 - Addressing specific mandate of research-creation: new clientele / new disciplines
 - Focusing on appropriate evaluation questions/methods given the pilot program's life-cycle
 - To cover both formative and summative elements, including measurable immediate outcomes
 - Timing of the evaluation
 - Final research reports of funded projects were not available
 - Outcomes/impacts often not yet known or available

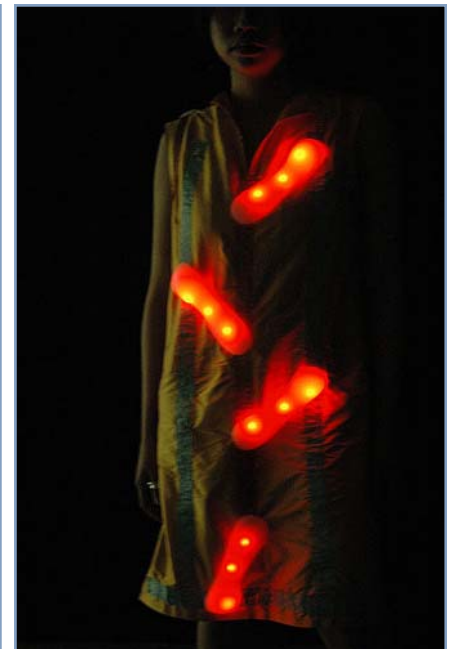
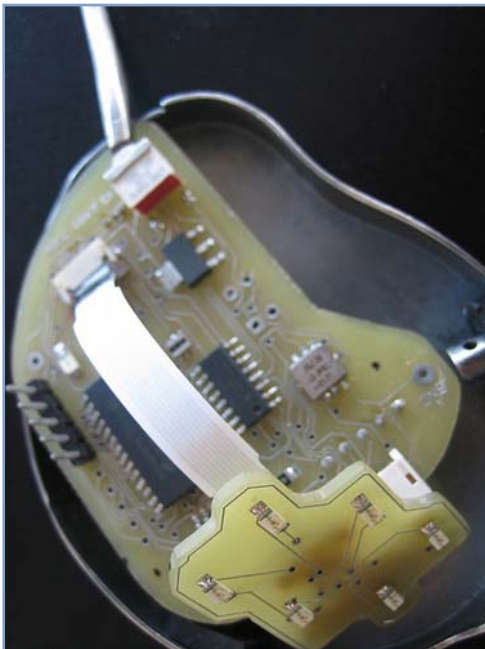
Evaluation: Opportunities & Innovations

Designing the Evaluation

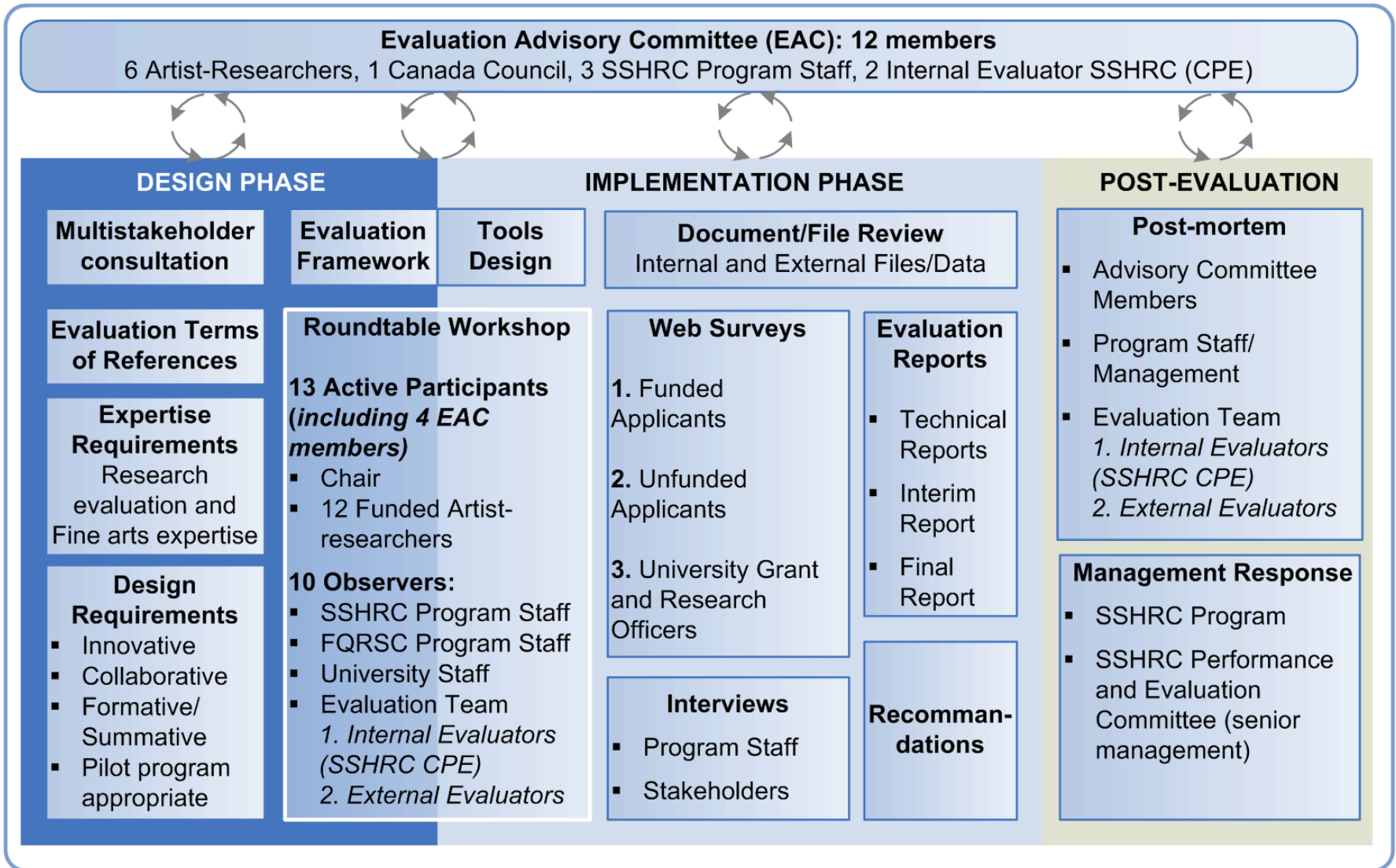
**Evaluation seen
as an
opportunity to
continue
dialogue with
research-
creation
stakeholders**

- Planning of the evaluation
 - Consultations with internal and external stakeholders
 - Development of Terms of Reference
 - Creation of the Evaluation Advisory Committee composed of artists and scholars involved in research/creation
 - Hiring of consulting team, with experience in evaluation of research and Fine Arts
- Evaluation framework developed jointly with Evaluation Advisory Committee through highly consultative process
 - Formalized process and flexibility for input from evaluation advisory committee
 - Review of documentation, data, interviews with SSHRC staff and other stakeholders
 - Roundtable workshop was a key and timely element in the evaluation process

Funded Project Example: **Animated quilts and distributed textile networks**



Berzowska, Joanna (*Hexagram Institute for Research/Creation in Media Arts and Technologies, Montreal*)



Evaluation: Opportunities & Innovations

Conducting the Evaluation

- Use of appropriate methods / data sources
 - Program Document Review and Environmental Scan
 - Interviews and on-going discussions with SSHRC staff and other stakeholders
 - Roundtable Workshop
 - Web Surveys of funded and non-funded applicants
 - Web survey of research managers / grant officers
- Regular, structured interactions with advisory committee
 - Flexibility with coordination of interactions and communications
 - Strong record keeping and follow-up
 - Ambiance of mutual respect, openness, and professionalism

Conducted in highly collaborative and creative manner, while maintaining rigorous approach

Evaluation Overview: Opportunities & Innovations

Following-up on the Evaluation

- Regular updates during development of management response
- Tabling report and management response at Senior Management Table
- Evaluation post-mortem involving:
 - Members of evaluation team
 - Members of evaluation advisory committee
 - New SSHRC staff (program and evaluation)
- Communication of findings (e.g., posting of report and summary management response on SSHRC website; dissemination to stakeholders, ongoing discussion)
- Formal monitoring of implementation of management response

**Keeping
program
and
evaluation
on the radar
screen!**



Lessons Learned: SSHRC Perspective

Corporate & Programs

- Value of evaluation process in building understanding, knowledge of the program, and of evaluation for stakeholders
- Better appreciation of what evaluation can realistically say about the performance of pilot programs
- Reinforcement of value of consultative, collaborative processes, in designing, implementing, and evaluating programs

Lessons Learned: Evaluation Perspective

External Evaluators

- Importance of maintaining balance between sensitivity to stakeholders and maintaining neutrality and objectivity
- Importance of managing client expectations regarding summative aspects
- Value of consultative process and Round Table workshop as an incentive for stakeholders' participation

Internal Evaluators

- Importance of project admin coordination
- Importance of working closely with evaluation advisory committee to maintain engagement and buy-in, importance of valuing their perspective
- Importance of clarifying program vs. evaluation roles and maintaining firm stance
- Value of taking back seat at Round Table to allow for open discussion



Lessons Learned: Evaluation Perspective

Overall

- Value of team approach between internal and external evaluators – communication, collaboration, partnership
- Appreciation of the use of Round Tables as a bridge between framework and launch of study, and as means to build confidence and ownership of the process
- Pay off of involvement of experts at the level of the evaluation team and advisory committee, and of the continuity created by involving individuals who had been with the program since its inception
- Postmortem workshop to validate initial observations and build on lessons learned for future evaluations

Funded Project Example: **Art and cold cash**



Mahon, Patrick L. (University of Western Ontario)



Questions?

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Thank you for your time