

SAVAC
SOUTH
ASIAN
VITAL
ANALYTICS
CENTRE

2015

2015
2015

JAL

ANNUAL REPORT

2015
2016

2016
2016

CONTENTS

<i>About the Organisation</i>	2
<i>From the Board of Directors</i>	3
<i>Executive Director's Report</i>	4
<i>Programming Activities</i>	6
<i>Outreach Activities</i>	10
<i>Not a Place on a Map: The Desh Pardesh Project</i>	12
<i>Financial Summary</i>	14

ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

SAVAC (South Asian Visual Arts Centre) is the only non-profit, artist-run centre in Canada dedicated to supporting South Asian artists. For over two decades, SAVAC has increased the visibility of culturally diverse artists by curating and exhibiting their work, providing mentorship, and facilitating professional development.

Our mission is to produce programs that explore issues and ideas shaping the identities and experiences of people from the region and its diasporas. We encourage work that is challenging, experimental and engaged in critical discussions that offer new perspectives on the contemporary world.

SAVAC develops and produces a range of contemporary visual art interventions and programs. We work without a gallery space, and typically in collaboration with other artist-run centres, public galleries and visual arts organizations. This unique, collaborative model allows for SAVAC to play a vital role in Canada's visual arts ecology by expanding the frameworks that support culturally diverse perspectives in art.

www.savac.net

[Twitter](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Youtube](#)



FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

This past year was the beginning of SAVAC's third decade. As any individual leaving adolescence for the tumult of adulthood, SAVAC had much to adjust to, but did so with grace and a strong outlook for the future. We lost several board members this year, for a variety of reasons, and their passion, expertise and hard work will be missed. We thank them for all that they've done to help this organization grow. Sharlene Bamboat, SAVAC's Artistic Director and a staple in the arts community in Toronto left her position with SAVAC to pursue the opportunity of a lifetime. We wish her all the best in her residencies in New Mexico and Germany, and we can't wait to see the art work that comes out of this experience.

But as we say goodbye to some, we welcome the new. [Nahed Mansour has been hired](#) as SAVAC's new programming coordinator, and we're excited for her to bring her breadth of experience to bear on this position. We will be onboarding a large number of board members, and with so many new people comes new ideas and unbridled enthusiasm. These changes in personnel will be accompanied by dramatic changes in the way SAVAC carries out its work, both with respect to its physical environment and partnerships.

Keep an eye out for these changes – we can't say much right now, but we're looking forward to them. SAVAC's board is also committed to revisiting the strategic plan this year, and helping the organization think through what it means to be an identity-based artist-run centre. We are also working towards developing transparent policies and processes to make our ability to record and recall the next twenty years of our history much easier.

As always, none of this would be possible without the generous support of our members, sponsors, partners and funders, like Canada Council for the Arts, Toronto Arts Council, Ontario Arts Council and special project funding from Ontario Trillium Foundation. To them we say thank you for helping SAVAC bring out the best in itself and the artists we have worked with this year.

*Sheila Sampath, Asad Moten, Amanda Pileggi,
Michelle Mama & Jeremy Tsang*



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

2015 was a year of introspection for SAVAC. I was away from much of the year due to professional development project for several months at the beginning of the year and then due to a personal tragedy at the end of the year. We have had a lot of turnover in both board and staff over the course of the year due to various reasons. I would like to thank the board members who left in the middle of their tenure: Vijaya Chikermane, Neeru Sekhon and Rajni Perera. We wish them success in their current endeavours.

This year at SAVAC, we instituted doing exit interviews with outgoing board members in order to better understand how the organisation can support board members to do their job with support. One of the recommendations from these exit interviews was that SAVAC needs to engage in strategic planning to ensure that long term vision and goals can be set for board. This will ensure that the long term sustainability of the organisation is possible when there is board and staff turnover.

It was with this feedback that I applied for the Ontario Arts Council Compass grant, a program to assist arts organizations with organizational development projects, to help build administrative and management capacity in the arts. We received this grant and are excited to begin the strategic planning process in the coming months. We will use this grant to map out a long term plan for when we have to apply for our multi-year grants next year.

During this last year, we have also had turnover in staff. I was very sad to see Sharlene Bamboat go, but I am also very excited to see that she is pursuing her art career. I feel very honoured and privileged to be working with Nahed Mansour as SAVAC's Programming Coordinator. After working with Nahed for a little under two months, I know that her fresh energy and perspective will bring SAVAC programming into new terrains.

Over the past year, SAVAC's programming has been as exciting as ever. 2015 started with emerging artist [Zinnia Naqvi's Seaview](#) at the Ryerson Image Centre. Zinnia travelled to her parents' homeland of Karachi to compare childhood memories with lived experience. Combining home video and recent footage along with text, conversations, and testimonials that often contradict the imagery, *Seaview* revealed the complications of translating culture across time and seas. SAVAC hosted an artist talk with Zinnia at the RIC.

Last year, due to funding constraints, we decided to shift Monitor, SAVAC's experimental film and video program from annual to bi-annual. Monitor 10 was screened at Borderlines in Texas. While Monitor 10 and 11 toured to Articule in Montreal. For this new decade of Monitor, we decided to work with curators who collaborate across borders. We chose a local curator who collaborates with someone from abroad. [Monitor 11](#) was curated by Azar Mahmoudian & Leila Pourtavaf. The program titled, *These Monsters are Real*, uses fantasy and humour, and is a meditation on current societal obsession of war and its after effects, environmental disasters, and political crises. We will continue with the experiment in curation for another 2 years.

SAVAC presented [Beyond Measure: Domesticating Distance](#) in collaboration with The Robert McLaughlin Gallery. Curator, and former SAVAC Executive Director, Ambereen Siddiqui brought together the works of five contemporary South Asian artists who looked at their own position as



subjects living in diaspora as well their relationships to the memory of their countries of origin. Tazeen Qayyum, Abdullah M.I. Syed, Asma Sultana, Surendra Lawoti and Meera Margaret Singh worked with performance and installation, photography and sculpture, writing, sewing, moving image, and text to create a multidisciplinary show that we hope to take on the road.

Almost simultaneously, SAVAC co-presented *So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing* with La Centrale Galerie Powerhouse in Montreal. This exhibition by Pavitra Wickramasinghe and Shahir Krishna engaged with discourses on migration and identity, exploring notions of transformation in their work. While Pavitra focused on the sky and water, Shahir explored their/her body in relation to the earth. Through embodied performance and sculpture, this exhibition explored the different ways in which both artists inhabit space and place.

During the course of 2015, SAVAC continues to co-present and co-sponsor with many festivals and organisations across Toronto. Some highlights include screenings of *Imraan c/o Carrom Club* at the Images Festival, *Kyar Kyar Pankha* at the Toronto Nepali Film Festival; an exhibition co-presented with Mayworks by artist Gita Hashemi called *Like Flesh and Blood*, among many others.

In the coming year, SAVAC is expecting some very, very big changes. We will continue to function as an artist run centre without dedicated gallery space; however we will see some shifts in the types of spaces we will be able to access regularly. Unfortunately, this is as much as we can tell you at the present, but do expect some announcements soon.

Last but not least, a big round of thanks to our current board of directors for their tireless dedication and long hours of work. A big round of applause for the outgoing board: Sheila Sampath Michelle Mama, and Jeremy Tsang.

- Indu Vashist, Executive Director



PROGRAMMING ACTIVITIES

Before starting my position at SAVAC on Jan 4, 2016, I received two-weeks of training from outgoing Artistic Director, Sharlene Bamboat. SAVAC has committed to a few programs that run until the fall of 2016, the end of our programming calendar year. Over the past two months, I have not only worked to ensure that these programs are in progress, but have also drafted a programming calendar for our 2016/2017 season which form the base of new activities that SAVAC will pursue. Below is a selection of past, current, and future SAVAC programming, as well as other related activities.

Past

January 2016

Being Nepali: SAVAC and G44 Partnership

SAVAC partnered with Gallery 44 to bring Kathmandu-based artists, NayanTara Gurung Kakshapati to Toronto for a month long artist residency. While Kakshapati was provided with space and support to expand on ideas in process and create new work, her residency also included a solo exhibition at G44 in January 2016 titled Being Nepali. Rooted in a documentary tradition, Kakshapati's work has focused on representing social and political transformations in Nepal. Kakshapati also participated in a panel discussion where she spoke about her work with photo.circle, a photography collective that has created a vibrant platform for emerging and professional photographers in Nepal, and the Nepal Picture Library, a digital photo archive that holds over 50,000 images collected from Nepali individuals and families. The other panelists included SAVAC and G44 member Surendra Lawoti and renowned Nepali writer, Manjushree Thapa. Kakshapati was also invited to interact with other photograph archivists in the city through the Ryerson Image Center, Royal Ontario Museum, and members of SAVAC and Gallery 44. The show and residency was extremely well received, with high audience numbers and lots of engagement with the Nepali community in Toronto.

Current Calls for submissions:

February 2016

Curators Expression of Interest: SAVAC and Trinity Square Video (TSV)

With the intention of supporting curators of colour, TSV and SAVAC are trying something new by asking interested curators from our organizations to send us an expression of interest to select work for and organize a group exhibition of Trinity Square Video and SAVAC members in the summer of 2016. The selected curator will be responsible for making selections from an open call for submissions made to TSV and SAVAC members, writing a short text on the selected work, titling the exhibition, and designing the exhibition layout. The selected curator will receive mentorship from SAVAC's Programming Coordinator Nahed Mansour and TSV's Artistic Director, John Hampton, who will oversee the exhibition budget and logistics in consultation with the selected curator. A call for artworks will be circulated simultaneous to this call for curators.



February 2016*Kapsula Magazine's 'Spaceless Place' Issue*

In partnership with KAPSULA, writers are invited to submit texts that explore the notion of “spaceless place”—an identity unbound to fixed geographical location. This theme was selected collaboratively as it fitting given that KAPSULA is an entirely digital, online publication, and that SAVAC has worked without a gallery space for over 22 years. Writers are asked to engage with SAVAC’s archives in tandem with the theme, and consider topics such as the significance of location and/or belonging to South Asian and diasporic artists, the aesthetics of lost, invisible, or unreachable places, and marginalized spaces as sites of empowerment and resistance.

*Upcoming***May 2016***Not a Place on a Map: The Desh Pardesh Project*

I will providing assistance to the Outreach Coordinator in installing the launch of Not a Place on a Map happening in the spring of 2016 at Artscape Youngplace. The launch will feature an installation of both the archival materials, artistic work as well as a selection of oral interviews.

May - October 2016

Title TBC: Golboo Amani

SAVAC in partnership with The Stop Community Food Centre will work with artist/curator Golboo Amani on a six-month research and creation project. This project will focus on the social and historical context of the intersecting narratives of immigrant settlers and indigenous communities specific to Toronto. The artist will work with indigenous community educators to design and execute a 2-phase seed-to-harvest workshop series. The artist aims to build discussions with community inhabitants about the significance of immigrant and indigenous pedagogy and skill sharing practices on the development of agriculture in the broader sense. Throughout the summer, the workshops and the growing process will be documented and disseminated over social media and a dedicated website. This phase of the project serves to be research for the second part of the project that will continue into the next calendar year.

July 2016

Title TBC: SAVAC and Trinity Square Video Annual Members Show

SAVAC is partnering with Trinity Square Video (TSV) for our annual curated members’ show curated by a selected emerging curator of colour, the exhibition of Trinity Square Video and ! members will be the third exhibition installed in TSV’s new main floor gallery on the first floor of 401 Richmond St. West.



October 2016

KAPSULA's 'Spaceless Place' Issue: SAVAC and Kapsula Partnership

SAVAC and KAPSULA will be launching the issue of "Spaceless Place" at 401 Richmond.

November 2016

Montreal

Hosted by Article Gallery in Montreal, SAVAC will be presenting an artist talk by a Toronto-based artist that we have recently worked with. This presentation maintains a relationship we have been building with Article for the past couple of years.

March 2017

Monitor 12

Monitor 12, SAVAC's annual short film and video program is slated to screen at the end of March 2017. Following the model of Monitor 11, a local curator is partnering with international partners to co-curate Monitor. After SAVAC premieres Monitor in Toronto, SAVAC is planning on touring the program nationally.

Date TBC

Pandi Screening: In partnership with Tangled Art + Disability

SAVAC is planning on partnering with Tangled Art + Disability, a not for profit arts organization that uses the power of art as a transforming medium to enhance the understanding and acceptance that people with disabilities can and do make significant contributions to all aspects of society, in particular the arts and an evolving cultural sector. Our goal is to present the documentary film Pandi in which Maria-Saroja Ponnambalam investigates her uncle Pandi's unexplained death. Pandi, an aspiring film director, only began experiencing symptoms of mental illness after migrating from India to Canada. A mix of home videos, letters and animated scenes from Pandi's last script uncover the disjointed state of his mind towards the final phase of his life.

Related Activities

January 2016

MANO Conference

I attended *Mapping Medias*, a conference organized by Media Arts Network of Toronto (MANO). The conference focused on the rapidly evolving landscape of independent art practice including film, video, sound art, digital media, video games and yet unknown forms of experimentation, providing a space for challenging discussions to develop strategies for navigating the future. Panels that I attended included: Opening Keynote by Deanna Bowen, Funder Forum, Best



Practices in Human Resources / Governance / Access / Equity / Conflict Resolution for Media Arts, The Market of All Things, Beyond Inclusion: The State of Equity, and Multi-Polar Sector: The City and the Regions.

February 2016

Basil AlZeri

The artist talk at this year's AGM will be given by Basil AlZeri a visual artist living and working in Toronto, Canada. AlZeri's practice involves the intersection of art, education, and community engagement, taking multiple forms, such as performance, interventions, gallery and public installation. AlZeri's work examines the socio-political dynamics of the family and its intersection with cultural practices, drawing on the necessities of everyday life and the visibility of labour as sites of exploration. His work aims to facilitate a space for empathy through gestures of inclusivity and generosity.

Ongoing

Monitor Screenings

Given that SAVAC did not have the resources needed to organize Monitor in 2015/2016, there will be an effort to screen a previous Monitor program in the coming year. SAVAC is in contact with galleries and artist-run centres locally and nationally that may be interested in hosting a previous Monitor program. We believe that Monitor is an incredible educational tool that can be used to expand viewers' understanding of experimental film and video work by South Asian artists, diasporic artists, and artists of colour.

Upcoming Co-presentations

SAVAC will be co-presenting a screening of "Boy Across My Window" (March 2016), hosted by the Toronto Nepali Film Festival. SAVAC is also co-presenting a screening of "Behind the Fare" (May 2016), hosted by Mayworks Festival of Working People and the Arts - Toronto.

- *Nahed Mansour, Programming Coordinator*



OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

I'm pleased to be serving SAVAC for a 4th year as Director of Communications, and looking forward to collaborating with staff on many exciting outreach activities in 2016. Between [Not a Place on a Map: The Desh Pardesh Project](#), and our various upcoming calls for submissions, there are plenty of opportunities for SAVAC members of all stripe, as well as the SAVAC community at large, to plug in to what we're doing.

Past

June 2015

[Members Portfolio Review with Sameer Farooq](#)

Two years ago, SAVAC decided to start holding regular, free portfolio reviews for members to have the opportunity to present their work (and work-in-progress) to other SAVAC members and established artist facilitators. Last year's facilitator was Sameer Farooq along with Artistic Director Sharlene Bamboat. We will be holding two portfolio review sessions in the upcoming year, the first with our new Programming Coordinator, Nahed Mansour.

March 2015

[What Do You Know About Access?](#)

For the third consecutive year, we hosted our two-part workshop series, which is designed to assist artists, curators and arts professionals applying to the Ontario Arts Council's Access and Career Development program. The Access program supports Ontario-based Aboriginal arts professionals and arts professionals of colour, for professional-development and skill-building opportunities that advance the applicants' artistic work and careers. The workshop, led by Facilitator Tina Hahn, kicked off with a full-day intensive session, followed by one-on-one meetings to review and discuss applicants' individual applications two weeks later. The workshop had 10 attendees, and out of the 6 who received individual feedback on their submitted grants, 2 were successful in receiving grants. Due to the popularity and success of participants over the last two years, we will be running another workshop, which is free for SAVAC members, in March of 2016.

July 2015

[SAVAC Member's Picnic](#)

We had a blast with SAVAC members in the summer at Christie Pits park with a great spread that included a plethora of wonderful food, a firepit and a healthy dose of cute kids. We hope to do it again this year, weather permitting!

September 2015

Beyond Measure: Domesticating Distance Writing Workshop

In collaboration with Whippersnapper Gallery's PEERS mentorship program for emerging artists and curators, we co-presented a hands-on writing workshop led by longtime SAVAC member Heidi McKenzie. The workshop brought 10 participants out to our exhibition, *Beyond Measure: Domesticating Distance* at Robert McLaughlin Gallery in Oshawa, where they had the opportunity to hear directly from the curator and artists involved in the exhibition. They then attended a follow-up session with Heidi, where they had the opportunity to workshop their written pieces, one of which was published in an online review of the show in Art Asia Pacific!

Upcoming

March 6th & April 29th 2016

Access Grant Writing Bootcamp

Based on the success of this workshop series in previous years, we are hosting another workshop with facilitator Tina Hahn, to assist artists and arts professionals of colour in writing a successful grant application for skill development, through the Ontario Arts Council's Access and Career Development Program. The workshop is free for SAVAC members.

March & November 2016

Members' Portfolio Reviews

This year, there will continue to be ample time for members to share their artistic work in a safe, constructive atmosphere, with fellow SAVAC members and established artist facilitators from the community. The march review will be facilitated by SAVAC's Programming Coordinator, Nahed Mansour.

*We may also schedule a couple of drop-in events over the summer--stay tuned!

- *Aliya Pabani, Director of Communications*



Not a Place on a Map: the Desh Pardesh Project

The *Mapping Genealogies, Building Futures* project has grown in exciting new directions over the past year. This three-year Trillium-funded project has also taken on a new name: *Not a Place on a Map: the Desh Pardesh Project*, is a reference to the ways in which Desh Pardesh, a diasporic arts and culture festival and organization, sought to escape strict geographic, cultural, and linguistic definitions of South Asianness, while simultaneously providing a home away from home for so many.

The oral history archive continues to expand, with local and international participants including Desh Pardesh staff and board, committee members, visiting artists, funders, media representatives, and audience members, as well as founding members of SAVAC. This range of perspectives, continually growing, is building a rich archive that will provide important teachings about community organizing and the arts, artful engagement with social issues, and organizing in times of austerity. Through SAVAC's relationships with both the Clara Thomas Archives at York University, and the Canadian Gay and Lesbian Archives, we have been gathering video, photographic, and print documentation of the festival to showcase alongside the interviews at the upcoming launch.

With the support of three wonderful placement students, outreach and preparation for the mentorship program are well underway, with enthusiastic reception from young/emerging artists of colour. We have made connections with high school students, community organizers, and artists of colour across the GTA who are interested in taking part in an intergenerational arts program grounded in a commitment to social justice. We are also working towards partnerships with Glad Day Bookshop, LGBTQ Artist Residency Gibraltar Point, Feminist Art Collective "Boner Kill," Tangled Art + Disability, Whippersnapper, Sketch Working Arts, A Colour Deep, Ryerson Image Centre, Equity and Diversity Office at OCADU, and more. By hosting workshops and focus groups with young/emerging artists of colour, we have been carving out spaces for socially engaged artists to gather and share ideas, while simultaneously shaping next year's mentorship program. Plans are underway to host the final show for the intergenerational arts program at the Canadian Gay and Lesbian Archives in the Spring of 2017.

Looking ahead to this upcoming Winter/Spring 2016

March Mixer

A social for young/emerging artists of colour to meet potential mentors (March 16, 2016)

Wiki Editathon - Browning Wikipedia!

A chance for artists and activists of all ages to come together and work on Wikipedia articles for current and past artists of colour (April 5, 2016)

Focus Group

geared towards former Desh artists and organizers, we will gather to discuss some of the topics that came out of interviews, and in preparation for the mentorship program (May 3, 2016). Launch and Installation of the Oral History Project: Installation and launch at Artscape Youngplace, Hallway Galleries, First floor (May 26, 2016)

Stay tuned on our Facebook Group: [Not a Place on a Map: the Desh Pardesh Project](#).

- *Anna Malla, Outreach Coordinator*

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

SAVAC has been steadily learning to do more with less. While our grant funding remained approximately the same as 2014, we have begun to diversify our revenue stream, with more funds coming in via donations and fundraising. We will continue our effort to diversify in the next year. 2015 was a pivot year for SAVAC – the first year where we tried our alternating programming cycle, and a chance to re-visit how SAVAC can add value to the arts community. In the end, despite the increasing fiscal challenges of the arts sector, SAVAC closed the year with a small surplus, as compared to a slight deficit in 2014.

The Board's goal in the coming year is to identify new grant and fundraising opportunities and utilize new funding sources to connect with new partners and programming initiatives.

<i>REVENUE</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2014</i>
Grants	\$182,131	\$179,403
Workshop and Co-presentations	-	270
Memberships	1,230	2,067
Donations	4,003	3,206
Other	25,429	13,215
	212,793	198,161

EXPENSES

Program:

Salaries and Benefits	102,047	72,803
Fees for Artists, Curators, Speakers	7,009	17,981
Travel	4,501	10,469
Promotion	2,011	5,250
Materials and Supplies	1,113	2,371
Shipping and Freight	99	12
Venue and Equipment Rental	118	219
Documentation	375	100
	117,273	109,205

Administration:

Salaries and Benefits	56,912	52,630
Office Supplies and Services	11,179	13,697
Computer Equipment	-	6,373
Professional Fees	7,148	7,551
Rent and Utilities	14,595	8,202
Contributed Services	3,215	-
Fundraising	2,360	899
	95,409	89,352
	212,682	198,557

EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES	\$ 111	\$ (396)
--	---------------	-------------------

Thanks to our funders:

