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# About the Organization

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 critically 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](http://www.savac.net)  
Twitter  
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# from the Board of Directors

For the past twenty years, SAVAC has been dedicated to being the only not-for-profit artist-run centre in Canada supporting South Asian artists. A brief overview of the Board activities in 2014 will demonstrate a successful year committed to maintaining this mandate and ensuring its longevity.

After successfully obtaining a project grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the SAVAC Board designed a new Outreach Coordinator position to lead the "Mapping Genealogies, Building Futures" project. The Board hired and trained Anna Malla in June 2014 to take the lead on this project. The primary objectives of designing and beginning an oral history project of the vital arts festival and organization, *Desh Pardesh* were well underway at the time of writing this report.

In August 2014, SAVAC's Board of Directors and Staff developed the next Strategic Plan and reviewed the organization's mission and mandate. In efforts to fulfill the goals of the Strategic Plan, we established three new committees comprised of Board and Staff representation. The Fundraising, Organizational Development and Membership Recruitment & External Communications Committees advise and assist with the operations of the organization in order to support the growing demands placed on our staff.

In response to large funding cuts, the Fundraising Committee and Staff spearheaded a fundraiser to maintain necessary income growth. *Take Home the Unknown* took place on December 11, 2014 at the Gladstone Hotel and it was an incredible success in generating funds and engaging new audiences.

Overall, 2014 has been a successful transitional year committed to focusing on diversifying revenue streams, revisiting our mission and mandate, revising responsibilities of the Board, and attracting new membership to the organization.

It is our pleasure to recognize the hard work and dedication of the incredible staff, the vision and guidance of our Board of Directors, the talent that exists within our artistic community and the support of our funders, sponsors and partners. Most importantly, I would like to thank the SAVAC membership, which continues to motivate our work and inspire how we grow in the future.

# Executive Director's Report

This past year has been bittersweet for SAVAC. While it has been successful on multiple levels such as strong programming, audience growth, and increased membership engagement, SAVAC received difficult news that the Canada Council for the Arts cut SAVAC's multi year operating budget by 15% while the Ontario Arts Council cut by 5%, and the Toronto Arts Council moved us from multi year funding to annual funding. This is devastating news for SAVAC as we already operate on a shoestring budget. For the last year, SAVAC's board and staff have shown resilience and perseverance in the face of such news and have engaged in intensive fundraising efforts. This strategy will be revisited during SAVAC's annual board retreat upon election of the new board.

The SAVAC board has been an amazing resource for the organisation. The various committees of the board took their responsibilities seriously and accomplished their goals. The Fundraising Committee deserves a round of applause for pulling together an amazing event called *Take Home the Unknown*; the Organisational Development committee convened a hiring committee which led to the hire of the Outreach Coordinator as well as undertook, long overdue evaluation processes with the staff which led to one-on-one meetings with each of the staff. Other board members provided support to staff in a variety of ways from programming support to providing expertise on moving from analog filing systems to digital ones. From the bottom of my heart, I thank the board for the energy, enthusiasm and support that they have provided to me as the Executive Director as well as SAVAC as a whole.

Over the last year, SAVAC has hosted some incredible programming, which will be detailed in the Programming Activities section. *Monitor*, SAVAC's annual short film and video program shone. We celebrated the tenth edition of *Monitor* with an incredibly strong program curated by Shai Heredia. Additionally, Shai curated a retrospective show called *Monitor Reruns* at A Space gallery, which was part of the 2014 Images Festival. Lastly, V Tape is now the distributor of *Monitor*, which means that *Monitor* can be more widely used and bought by educational institutions. In addition to *Monitor*, SAVAC's Juried Members' Show called *Work It*. had one of the most well-attended openings that SAVAC has hosted in many years. All in all, this past year has been spectacular for its programming, a trend that we hope to continue going into next year.

The same can be said for this year's professional development workshops. This year, SAVAC made professional development workshops free for members. All workshops were well attended and yielded positive results. The popular Access and Career Development workshop *What Do You Know about Access?* resulted in many of the participants being awarded grants. The portfolio review sessions gave members a chance to present their current work for constructive feedback from their peers. SAVAC's Director of Communications engaged with the membership through these dynamic workshops and through Member News.

This year's audit is a testament to ability of the SAVAC's staff to stretch the penny as far as humanly possible. We hustled, we tightened our belts, and still managed to implement a wage restructuring to pay artists and cultural workers a fair living wage. As you will see on this year's audit, we essentially broke even, which mean that we were able to do all of our tremendous programming, professional development activities, and pay our staff within our grants. As noted previously, some major restructuring will need to happen in light of the recent cuts. As a start, this year, we will not have an Annual Juried Members' show in 2015, and we will be cutting one stop on the Monitor tour until we manage to find more funding to be able to do these activities. We are hoping to engage in deep strategic planning in order to find long term solutions to these difficult financial problems.

As SAVAC is a federally incorporated non-profit organisation, we had to go through a process to renew our incorporation under the new Not-for-Profit Act, which required us to revise our bylaws to be in compliance with the new act. Concretely, this meant changes to our membership structure were made. We now have only one class of members with all of the same privileges. As of September, non-South Asian members have voting privileges at Annual General Meetings and can sit on the board of directors. This shift in membership classes was required by the new act. Our new bylaws are posted on our website.

SAVAC moved offices this summer. Our new space has a little more room and a lot more light to enable growth of our team. Over the course of the last year, SAVAC has been extremely lucky to have had incredible, emerging women artists who have worked with SAVAC in various capacities as from paid interns to working for class credits. SAVAC acquired a staff member this year through funding for three years from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

The *Mapping Genealogies, Building Futures* project is in the able hands of the Outreach Coordinator who is currently interviewing members of Desh Pardesh in order to eventually foster an intergenerational dialogue student and emerging artists who are increasingly flocking to SAVAC for support.

For the past two years, SAVAC has been engaged in a process to imagine a co-working space with several other artist run organisations: V Tape, FADO, Reel Asian Film Festival, and ImagineNATIVE Film Festival. I have been working with members of the organisations and representatives from 401 Richmond's property management team UrbanSpace as well the owner of the building to brainstorm how these organisations can resource share in order to strengthen our collective communities as well as reduce overhead costs. Over the past year, we have moved beyond the brainstorming stage towards grant writing. We hope to hear from these granting agencies in the coming months and if successful, we will break ground at some point this year.

SAVAC's public profile has been very high this year. The staff have been asked to do a lot of public speaking and writing by our colleagues in the artist-run sector, public galleries and within academic institutions. I sit on the Executive of the Media Arts Network of Ontario as the Executive Director of SAVAC, Sharlene sits on the board of VTape and Pleasure Dome and has been active in planning of ARCCO's next conference. Additionally, SAVAC has been the subject of much research as the longest running identity-based artist-run centre in Canada and because of our unique mode of operating without a gallery space.

This last year at SAVAC has seen its fair share of high and low moments. We have been able to raise funds to continue our work as we had been doing previously. However, looking ahead, it is quite clear that SAVAC cannot continue as it was. Something will have to change. The exact contours of those changes will begin to take shape with the election of a new board. We hope that members of the SAVAC community will aid us in envisioning a sustainable and productive future which helps us realise our 20 year mandate of supporting and exhibiting South Asian artists.

*Indu Vashist, Executive Director*

# Programming Activities

2014 has been an exciting year for SAVAC with programming, outreach and the addition of a new staff member. We celebrated our 20th anniversary as an organization and did some monumental programming for the entire year. We built significant partnerships with like-minded organizations and institutions that increased the visibility and profile of our organization across Canada and internationally. We succeeded in accessing broader audiences locally, regionally and nationally, and engaged different communities outside our regular audience base. As we steadily increase the profile of our programs, we remain committed to our mandate to promote, produce and develop innovative and critical art practices by South Asian identified artists, and artists of colour in our membership and beyond.

## Past:

### *Monitor 10-Year Anniversary Programming, March - May 2014*

To celebrate the 10 year anniversary of *Monitor: South Asian Experimental Film + Video*, SAVAC, in partnership with A Space Gallery, V Tape and the Images Festival, invited internationally renowned programmer Shai Heredia from Bangalore to curate *Monitor Reruns*, and *Monitor 10*.

*Monitor Reruns* was an exhibition curated by Shai from the Monitor archives and exhibited at A Space gallery. *Monitor Reruns* brought together five Canadian artists whose works represented the last decade of Monitor. Engaging with themes ranging from personal narratives of trauma to accounts of colonial history, migration and queerness, the artists were also asked to write a reflective text to accompany the re-installation of their films/videos.

To create a wider reach for *Monitor*, as well as the artists in the programs, V Tape, Canada's leading video art distributor has acquired *Monitor* and has been selling compilations to educational institutions. This has been extremely fruitful as curators, artists and educators can now access all of the *Monitor* programs through the VTape database. In addition, all the artists who have participated in *Monitor* continue to have their work circulated, and get paid for it. During the Images Festival (2014) V Tape set up a mediatheque for anyone to view all the *Monitor* programs for free.

To speak about *Monitor*, its impact, history and future, SAVAC hosted a panel discussion between Shai Heredia and Srimoyee Mitra who is the current Curator of Contemporary Art at the Art Gallery of Windsor, and previous programming coordinator of SAVAC.

On April 24, SAVAC screened *Monitor 10* at Jackman Hall. Curated by Shai Heredia, *Monitor 10* brought together artists from India, USA, Canada, Singapore and Indonesia to explore how dramatic narratives within the context of artists' moving image connect aesthetic, political and emotional lives, which are derived from radical political and intellectual positions.

### *Women, History and Experimental Film/Video, May 2014*

SAVAC and V tape partnered with the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians and the University of Toronto to present a curated screening program. In keeping with the themes of gender and women's history, the selected films explored the different ways in which the forms and disciplinary methods of experimental film/video and history interact with one another.

### *Work It. Juried Members' Exhibition, June 2014*

SAVAC's annual juried members' exhibition was curated by SAVAC, Min Sook Lee and Amber Landgraaf and in partnership with gallerywest in Toronto. For this exhibition, we decided to issue a thematic call for submissions, as opposed to the open call we'd used in previous years, in order for the exhibition to reflect a more intentional theme. *Work It.* foregrounded issues of art and labour, as the three featured artists (Alize Zorlutuna, Basil AlZeri and Umber Majeed) playfully engaged with the current state of art-affairs: funding cuts to the arts, and discourses around race, gender and community, as they relate to labour. This exhibition opened to a packed gallery, and was reviewed by Natasha Chaykowski in Canadian Art magazine.

### *Goddess Entranced, October 2014*

SAVAC worked with artists Thamilini and Yalini Jothilingam on a site-specific performance, *Goddess Entranced* in the freight elevator at 401 Richmond St, during Nuit Blanche in October 2014. Using sound and performance, the artists explored post-colonial and post-migratory haunts.

### *Fair Play, November 2014*

In partnership with the Reel Asian Film Festival, SAVAC hosted artist Ali Kazimi's new 3D video installation *Fair Play* at OCADU. Through ten quiet vignettes, this 3D installation depicts the lives of ordinary people who were affected by the arrival, detention and departure of the Komagata Maru, providing a view into the private lives of South Asians on shore's of BC during a time of extreme racial tension. The installation was covered by CBC's Metro Morning and Anokhi TV.

Upcoming:

SAVAC has partnered with the Robert McLaughlin Gallery in Oshawa to present the group exhibition *Beyond Measure*. The exhibition runs from September 2015 - January 2016 and is curated by Ambereen Siddiqui. The exhibition investigates reconciling a sense of loss in having moved away from a place. The artists explore acts of clinging and assimilating, resisting and mediating, including and eliminating, through photography, sculpture, installation and painting. They challenge the voids and brims of these dualities by grappling with borders and demarcations and by organizing, categorizing, and defining both bodies and spaces.

In October and November 2015, SAVAC returns to Montreal, this time for an exhibition with La Centrale Galerie. As we continue to return to Montreal each year, our partnerships become stronger and we continue to work with different, like-minded institutions. SAVAC is very pleased to be programming South Asian artists from our Montreal membership at La Centrale.

SAVAC, alongside Gallery 44 is hosting an artist from Nepal, Nayantara Kakshapati to be our artist in residence in October-November 2015. She will be working in Gallery 44's facilities, leading workshops, doing artist talks and creating new work which will be featured in a solo show at Gallery 44 in February 2016.

To work within the funding cuts we recently received, while still remaining true to our membership and programming, we have decided to rotate between Monitor and SAVAC's Juried Members' Exhibition. Due to financial strain, we cannot support both programs each year and therefore in 2015 we will program Monitor 11, and in 2016 have partnered with Trinity Square Video on a juried members' exhibition. This was a hard decision to make, as both programs are very strong and have remained consistently so over the last numerous years, but we had to cut somewhere and these were the only two programs which has the least amount of lead up time to the actual event.

*Sharlene Bamboat, Artistic Director*

# Outreach and Member Activities

This upcoming year, we're pleased to be able to offer more opportunities for engagement, based on the feedback we've received from members over the past couple of years, along with our own observations about how to better support the SAVAC community. Some significant successes over the past year include the development of our new website (at [www.savac.net](http://www.savac.net)), our annual What do You Know about Access? workshop series, our Members' Portfolio Reviews and 5 O'Clocktails socials. This upcoming year, we hope to reconnect with SAVAC members past and present through member feedback, workshops, and events, as well as our Trillium-funded Desh Pardesh archive project, to connect the organization's present moment with its past.

## Past:

### *Members' Portfolio Reviews, February & November 2014*

Last year, 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 facilitators included Tazeen Qayyum, Surendra Lawoti and Oliver Hussain, and 12 members attended our sessions. We will be continuing to hold portfolio review sessions regularly in the upcoming year.

### *What Do You Know About Access?, March 2014*

For the second 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 12 attendees, and out of the 8 who received individual feedback on their submitted grants, 4 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 2015.

### *Free as in Soul: The Anti-Image Politics of Copyright, July 2014*

In partnership with *No Reading After the Internet* and Bento Miso Collaborative Workspace, we hosted a reading group around the theme of citizenship around the internet, speculating on the implications of the corporatization of the internet on artists, using Lawrence Liang's text, "Free as in Soul: The Anti-Image Politics of Copyright" as a catalyst for discussion.

### *How to Get a Project Grant, August 2014*

Based on member feedback, we hosted a free workshop/information session with the Toronto Arts Council's Visual/Media Arts Officer, Peter Kingstone. Peter guided a packed session of over 45 participants through the process of writing a project proposal, including tips and strategies for incorporating storytelling, knowing your audience, articulating your trajectory, and providing effective documentation.

### *Upcoming:*

### *What Do You Know About Access?, March 8 & 29 2015*

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.

### *Taxes for Artists, May 16 2015 (tentative)*

Following in the wake of this year's tax season, this workshop will give artists and freelancers some great tips and tricks for filling taxes as a self-employed creative, to ensure that you pay less tax and don't fall prey to errors in reporting.

### *Members' Portfolio Reviews, Summer & Fall 2015*

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.

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

# mapping Genealogies Building Futures

I am pleased to provide my first report-back as Outreach Coordinator for SAVAC. My position began in June 2014, under the Ontario Trillium Fund project entitled *Mapping Genealogies, Building Futures*. The aim of this project is three-fold: 1) to conduct an oral history project about Desh Pardesh, a multidisciplinary arts festival that took shape in Toronto in the late 1980s and lasted for a decade, and whose existence allowed for SAVAC to take shape in the mid 1990s; 2) to organize and facilitate various outreach activities, including the launch of the oral history archive, public talks and events, in addition to focus group meetings with established artists, aimed both at providing space and opportunities for collective strategizing as artists of colour in Toronto, and also aimed at bringing more people into the SAVAC fold; and 3) to provide mentorship opportunities between emerging and more experienced artists, in order to build intergenerational community collaborations within various visual arts forms.

From June until around August, 2014, I spent a great deal of my time building up the necessary administrative infrastructure for the project, including the establishment of research guidelines and criteria modeled after the Tri-Council Policy Statement on ethical conduct within research. The project has also required that I spend extensive time at the Clara Thomas Archives at York, sifting through old documents, photographs, and videos about Desh Pardesh and SAVAC. This archival research serving as the backbone to the oral history piece, I soon collected over one-hundred and fifty names of organizers, artists, arts administrators, audience members, funders, academics, and advisors to the Desh Pardesh festival and organization, in addition to taking note of thematic and issues that seemed to run throughout the festival's existence. I began conducting interviews in September, and, to date, have completed fifteen interviews with former Desh members in Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, and via Skype internationally. On the research front, I have been invited to speak at OCADU and also at the American Studies Association conference that will take place in Toronto in the Fall of 2015.

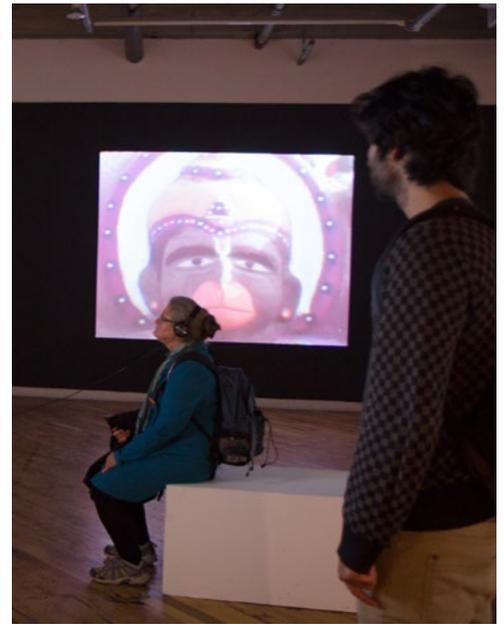
The coming months will see an increase in interviews as well as a concerted effort at broader-based outreach strategies, both for the oral history project and for SAVAC more generally. Starting in the Spring, 2015, I will be working with a York University student intern who will provide support for the oral history project, and I am also currently seeking outside funding to develop a multi-media, interactive website in the coming year. I will be working towards launching the project publically in the Fall of 2015.



Aside from my work on the *Mapping Genealogies, Building Futures* project, I have also been working alongside the Board and Staff in the various programs SAVAC undertakes throughout the year, providing support where needed in programming, fundraising, events, visioning, Board and Staff support, and general day-to-day coordinating work. In particular this Fall I worked with a wonderful team of Board and Staff to put on our very successful fundraiser, *Take Home the Unknown*. Additionally, I am currently on a three-month contract at SAVAC (on top of my work as Outreach Coordinator) doing Administrative and Finance support while our Executive Director is away on leave.

Here's to another year at SAVAC! I look forward to sharing the research project with all of you in the near future.

*Anna Malla, Outreach Coordinator*



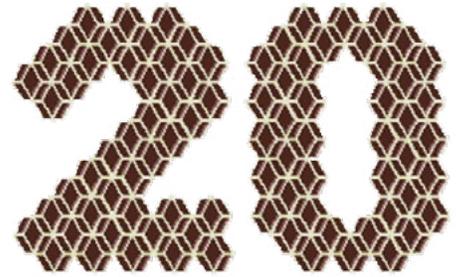
Clockwise from top left:

*Monitor 10: South Asian Experimental Film + Video* (Apr 2014) at Jackman Hall. L to r: Shai Heredia, Sharlene Bamboat, Indu Vashist. Photo: Kyle Burton.

*Monitor Reruns* opening (Apr 2014) at A Space Gallery. Photo: Zinnia Naqvi.

*Members' Portfolio Review* (Feb 2014) at SAVAC with facilitators Tazeen Qayyum and Surendra Lawoti. L to r: Members Virginia Lee and Sumaira Tazeen. Photo: Zinnia Naqvi.

*Work It.*, annual juried members' exhibition (June 2014) at gallerywest. Pictured: Basil AlZeri's *You Do What You Love Because You Do One, Two, and More Than Two*. Photo: Kyle Burton.



YEARS SUPPORTING SOUTH ASIAN VISUAL ART

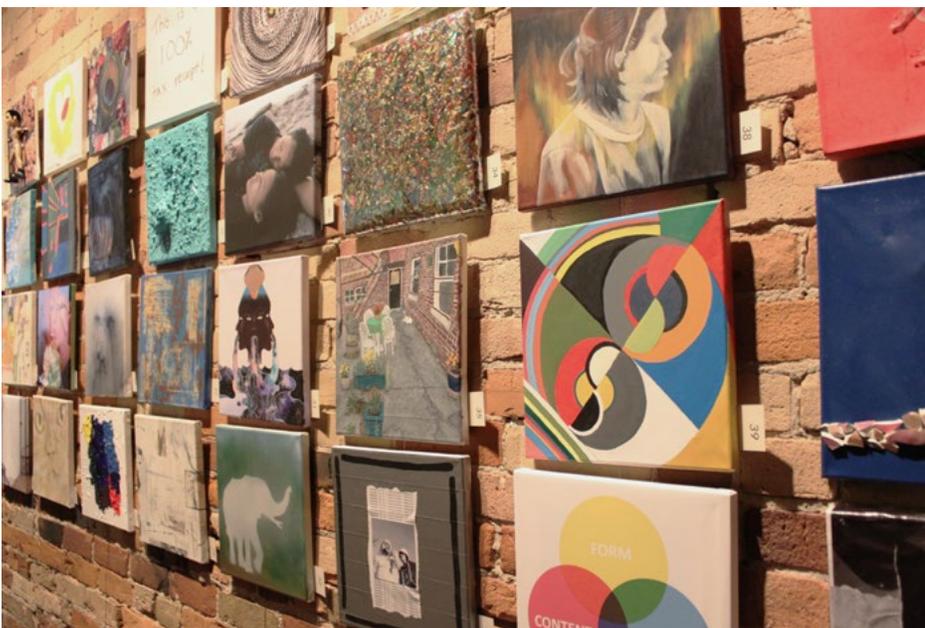
Clockwise from top left:

*Goddess Entranced* by Thamilini & Yalini Jothilingam at 401 Richmond St W for Nuit Blanche (Oct 2014). Photo: Kuru Selvarajah.

SAVAC 20th anniversary logo designed by Aliya Pabani.

*Take Home the Unknown* fundraiser at the Gladstone Hotel (Dec 2014). Photo: Zinnia Naqvi.

*Fair Play* artist talk with Ali Kazimi, part of Reel Asian International Film Festival (Sept 2014). l to r: Indu Vashist, Ali Kazimi. Photo: Angelina Han.



## financial Report

SAVAC continues to grow successfully in many directions and must address this exciting demand with fiscal awareness and organizational responsibility.

It was yet another transitional year due to unexpected funding and budget cuts, the end of a three-year strategic plan and the addition of four new board members. Overall SAVAC remains in a stable financial position, but must continue to establish regular financial reporting mechanisms to address upcoming income gaps.

In 2014, SAVAC faced a \$15,000 grant cut. We must maintain our commitment to diversifying revenue streams through private sector sources and developing new fundraising approaches in order to meet our current goals and priorities.

The Take Home the Unknown Fundraiser was a major success that rose over \$8,000 towards the operations of the organization. The efforts required to produce such an event are enormous. To maintain income growth, it is imperative we also explore meaningful and lasting partnerships with the private sector that align with SAVAC's vision.

In August 2014 SAVAC's Organizational Development Committee re-assessed the employee wage structure in order to align SAVAC's current practices with an equitable scale determined by the Board. Approved for the fiscal year beginning September 2014, salary expenditure saw a modest increase to match the Board's recommended equitable range.

SAVAC's total revenues for 2014 amounted to \$198,161 from government bodies, programming, memberships and donations. Approximately 40% of our budget was disbursed to programming, touring artist works and membership professional development, while remaining expenditures supported administrative and operational costs.

In 2014, SAVAC had an excess of revenues over expenses of \$396. The minimal excess is due to tight financial spending due to funding cuts and a modest increase in salary expenses.

At the end of the 2013/2014 fiscal year, SAVAC is faced with the challenge of sourcing exponentially greater income streams than ever before. SAVAC is positioned well with a strong Staff and Board to address this critical next step in fundraising.

# Summary of Financial Statements

<i>REVENUE</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2013</i>
Grants	\$ 179, 403	151, 664
Workshops	270	170
Memberships	2, 067	2,272
Donations	3, 206	6,048
Other	13, 215	29, 333
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	198, 161	189,487
 <i>EXPENSES</i>	 <hr/>	 <hr/>
Salaries and Benefits	\$ 43, 811	33, 548
Fee for Artists, Curators, Speakers	17, 981	28, 233
Travel	10, 469	14, 474
Promotion	5,250	5,100
Materials and Supplies	2, 371	11, 866
Shipping and Freight	12	12
Venue and Equipment Rental	219	531
Documentation	100	2,107
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	80, 213	95, 871
 <i>ADMINISTRATION</i>	 <hr/>	 <hr/>
Salaries and Benefits	\$ 81, 622	67, 027
Office Supplies and Services	13, 697	12, 144
Computer Equipment	6, 373	125
Professional Fees	7, 551	7, 146
Rent and Utilities	8, 202	8, 806
Fundraising	899	2, 214
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	118, 344	97, 462
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	198, 557	193, 333
 EXCESS OF EXPENSES OVER REVENUE	 396	 3, 846