

WUGAVU EXPANDED

PRESENTING FILM & VIDEO
IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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PROJECT REVIEW
2020-2022

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS VUCAVU EXPANDED?

A digital strategy initiative supported by a grant from the Canada Council for the Arts in 2019, matching funds from the Toronto Arts Council and MITACS Accelerate funding programs as well as many independent programming and content partnerships from 2020–2021.

The primary goal was to broaden access to using the VUCAVU platform by art organizations beyond our 8 founding partners and to diversify the ways we can serve the Canadian arts community and their audiences.

VUCAVU FROM 2016-2020

- A platform offering a shared catalogue of publicly accessible VOD (video on demand) was soft-launched in 2016.
- One of Canada's first national digital bilingual arts organizations.
- Founding partners are: Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre (CFMDC), Groupe Intervention Video (GIV), Les Films du 3 Mars (F3M), Moving Images Distribution, Spira Québec, Video Out Distribution, Video Pool Media Arts Centre (VP), Winnipeg Film Group (WFG). They collectively formed the nonprofit umbrella group the Coalition of Canadian Independent Media Art Distributors (CCIMAD).
- Hosts a shared catalogue of independent video and film from the founding distributors' collections.
- Offers free and time-limited curated online programming for the public where artists are paid through grants.
- Professionals, such as curators and programmers, can apply for special access for their research which allows them to view non-publicly accessible works.

KEY COMPONENTS OF VUCAVU EXPANDED

- Multi-faceted partnership program that involved consultations, business development, technology upgrades and implementation, analysis and expanded dissemination.
- Goal to open up the platform for use by the wider arts and culture sector through curated programming and develop new content partnerships.
- Current and new partners gave feedback to the VUCAVU team.
- Implemented crucial technology upgrades to benefit existing and new partners.

WHO LED THE PROJECT?



JACQUELYN HÉBERT

Program & Community
Manager



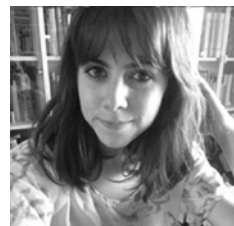
JULIE GENDRON

Digital Strategist



SALLY LEE

Project Manager



EMILY COLLINS

Administrative
Coordinator

ORIGINAL GOALS

- Find other uses for VUCAVU that could benefit the Canadian arts community.
- Reach out to art organizations to survey and assess other possible uses of VUCAVU.
- Provide artist and programming fees in exchange for process feedback and curatorial input by current and new partners.
- Upgrade and create new platform functions features for ongoing partner needs.
- Create financial and resource sustainability.

EFFECTS FROM COVID-19

- VUCAVU was approached by many organizations to help find solutions for online streaming of artworks.
- Festivals that could not show works in theatres approached VUCAVU about online screenings.
- While other art organizations stopped work, COVID-19 increased our workload substantially.
- Instead of looking for partners, the team was fielding inquiries. This was both a benefit and a detriment to the project due to the dramatically increased workload for a group of four part-time contractors.
- VUCAVU required an extended timeline to accomplish the original goals.

COMMUNITY REQUESTS

The following is a list of requests that were made by community members due COVID-19 and the move to digital by many organizations:

- Create online screenings for festivals or art presenters
- Add live streaming for artist panels or talks
- Host collections of work from new content partners that are not part of the founding CCIMAD groups
- Include options to license and stream temporary video titles from outside the existing shared catalogue
- Provide the opportunity for new arts partners to use VUCAVU programming pages to reach new audiences
- Archive past programming as a research reference for artist talks and curatorial essays
- Offer private page screenings for educational and presentation purposes
- Make works from the VUCAVU catalogue accessible for remote teaching and in educational library databases

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TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES

Improved Bundle Pages **NOW CALLED PROGRAM PAGES**

Embedding capacities were added to allow for live-streamed and embedded videos such as artist talks, panels, performances and promotional videos within curated program pages.

Series Landing Page

Presenters with a series of programs can now create a landing page containing many programs in one page.

[CLICK HERE FOR AN EXAMPLE](#)

Archive Page

All curated programs since 2017 are now archived on one page. Essays, artist talks and film selections are preserved for future research. Once the free viewing period has ended, works in VUCAVU's catalogue can be rented VOD.

[CLICK HERE FOR AN EXAMPLE](#)

Private Pages

A special version of the Program Page that is viewable only by a designated group of users with additional expiration capabilities. This can be used, for example, by film festivals with VIP ticket holders or in post-secondary classrooms.

Improved Partner Pages

Programming and content partners have their own pages on the site that are now distinguishable from each other.

[CLICK HERE FOR AN EXAMPLE](#)

Improved Geoblocking

Created better limitations to geoblocking for certain user types.

Improved Homepage header

Improved in-platform advertising and functionalities. Programs and series pages can now be added to the homepage header.

Technology improvements

Major upgrades to the VUCAVU platforms' content management system and changed site hosting for greater efficiency and independence.

EXPANDED PROGRAMS

FROM FOUNDING PARTNERS*

Before VUCAVU Expanded, most of our distribution partners had never put together a online curated program with us. This was a great opportunity to learn about the process and showcase works from their collections on the platform.

Montréal, mon amour

Les Films du 3 Mars (F3M)

June 2020



Unapologetic:

What's Obscene here?

Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre (CFMDC)

November 2020



Between/Us:

Meditations on Distortion,
Desire and Distance

Winnipeg Film Group (WFG)

June 2020



Pieces of the Archive

Video Pool Media Arts Centre (VP)

February 2021



5 Years of Spira

Spira

October 2020



Fragile Propositions:

Where Art Belongs

Video Out (VO)

March 2021



Transparencies

Groupe Intervention Video (GIV)

October 2020



*Founding Partners are the original 8 distributors under the CCIMAD umbrella.

PROGRAMS

A SELECTION OF PROGRAMS FROM NEW CONTENT PARTNERS**

Saskatchewan Home Movies ↗
PAVED Arts
June 2020

Cine Norte / Cine Sur ↗
Latin Canadian New Works
aluCine Latin Film + Media
Arts Festival
October 2020

Festival Stop-Motion Montreal ↗
10 paid programs + 3 master
classes
September 2020

“Quarantine Blues: Workman ↗
Arts Member Films” and “HIND-
SIGHT: A National Film Board of
Canada retrospective”
Rendezvous with Madness
Film Festival
October 2020

Moving Pictures: Phase I and II ↗
Art Gallery of Regina
September - October 2020

Filmmaker in Focus Series: ↗
Marjorie Beaucage Retrospective
RPL Film Theatre, Curator: Lisa
Myers (imagineNATIVE)
November 2020

We are Not a Phase: ↗
Indigenous Screenings and Talks
University of Windsor Turtle Island
Education Centre, St. Clair
College Indigenous Student
Services, and the Arts Council of
Windsor & Region (ACWR)
September 2020 - February 2021

Filmmaker in Focus: ↗
Alison Duke
Mediaqueer, Archive/Counter-Ar-
chive, McGill University
December 2020

Left With Dreams ↗

Cineworks Independent Filmmakers Society, Capture Photo Festival
April 2021

àdisòkàn gaye minawázawin ↗

National Indigenous Media Arts Coalition (NIMAC),
Curator: Carly Brascoupé
October 2021

from here ↗

Images Festival,
Curator: Roxanne Fernandes
May 2021

Story Medicine ↗

Minwaajimo Collective and Media Arts Network of Ontario (MANO/RAMO)
October - November 2021

Unsteady Landscapes ↗

Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto (LIFT)
May 2021

S.P.A.N.E ↗

(Screening of Performance Art in the Natural Environment)
RPL Film Theatre,
Curator: Johannes Zits
July - December 2021

Black Activist Histories ↗

RPL Film Theatre,
Curator: Laurie Townshend
March 2021

Shadows and Light: Six Film Portraits From LIFT Members, 1981 - 2001 ↗

Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto (LIFT),
Curator: Cayley James
January 2022

Routes and Rituals ↗

Toronto International Reel Asian Film Festival in collaboration with Critical Distance Centre for Curators (CDCC)
July 2021 & November 2021

Regent Park in Film ↗

Regent Park Film Festival,
Curator Aashna Thakkar
January 2022

La troisième langue / The Third Tongue ↗

Le Labo, Curator: Carolina Reis
February 2022

** New Programming Partners included those originally part of the VUCAVU Expanded grant; a TAC Open Door grant and/or those who came to VUCAVU through business development.

VUCAVU EXPANDED STATS

JUNE 2020 TO FEBRUARY 2022

50+

253 ARTISTS PAID!

255 new titles were added to VUCAVU

Provided by other rights' holders

Within the course of the Expanded project, VUCAVU hosted 55 programs.

1054

1054 New free users accounts
148% growth

Can watch free programs

2486

2486 new rental users accounts
264% growth

Can watch free programs & rent individual titles

105

105 professional accounts

Note: Professional accounts are time limited & are added & removed on a regular basis.

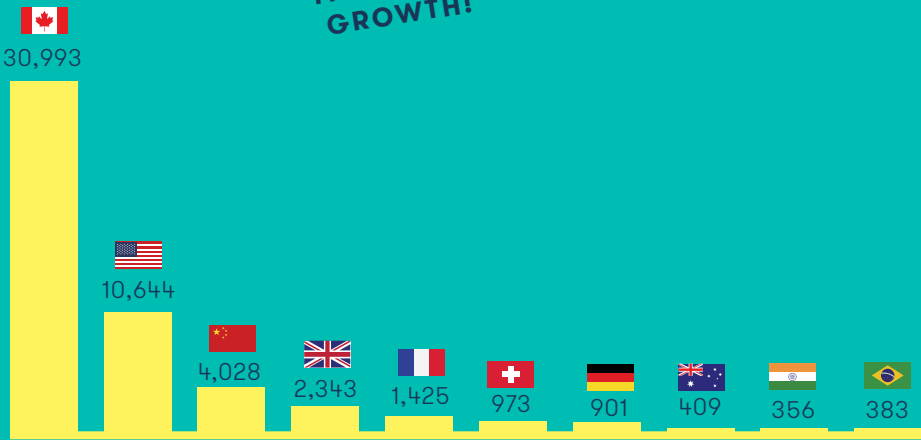
SITE TRAFFIC

JUNE 2020 TO FEBRUARY 2022

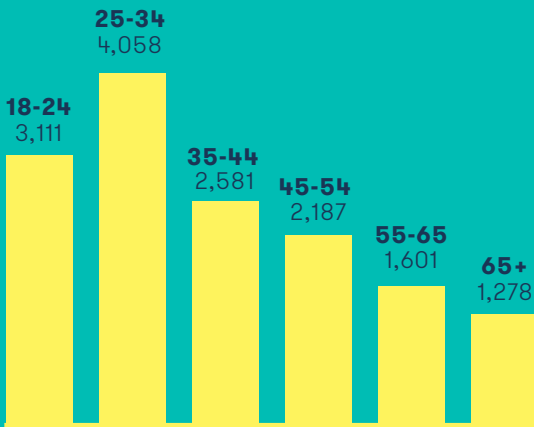
58,273

NEW VISITORS

THAT'S 18% GROWTH!



LOCATION



AGE

+122

NEW followers
Facebook

+131

NEW followers
Twitter

+386

NEW followers
Instagram

“VUCAVU has been doing a lot of work to provide online presentation solutions to film festivals and other arts presenters. Their team is incredibly supportive, providing guidance throughout the process, and we were thrilled to have the opportunity to work with them to host one of our programs on a stable, well-designed platform.”

SAMUEL LA FRANCE

Images Festival

“I approached VUCAVU about presenting a program of films by past members as part of the 40th Anniversary of the Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto. Jacquelyn and her team were very receptive and encouraging of the idea. The resulting program, Unsteady Landscapes, came together in just a few months and it was a wonderful collaborative experience. When I had questions about the platform and process they were answered promptly. If there were any snags we tried to problem solve together to sort things out as quickly as possible. I thought the actual look of the program was wonderful and easily navigable.

It was a really great experience and it was exciting to know that these small films were accessible to those across the country!”

CAYLEY JAMES

Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto (LIFT)

“I had a great experience working with VUCAVU for a recent online screening. They were incredibly accommodating and responsive as the program came together and did a wonderful job promoting it. Having the archived program page remain after the program is such a great feature of the site and super useful for curators. I look forward to partnering on more projects in the future!”

MADELINE BOGOCH

Independent Programmer

“As a partnering organization, VUCAVU was a pleasure to work with. The team really helped with the details of what was required and ensured the program looked fantastic. It's so important to support the arts sector and VUCAVU fills a big void in accessible, streaming platforms that are actually part of the sector it supports. Staying within the sector and expanding our online presence through VUCAVU was definitely the right choice.”

EMMA HENDRIX

Video Pool Media Arts Centre

PARTNERSHIP TYPES

Founding Distributor Partners

- CCIMAD Members

Programming Partners **NEW!**

- VUCAVU programming initiatives with independent groups via programming grants.
- Groups include film festivals, art galleries, artist run centres, university art galleries and research groups, ad-hoc curatorial collectives, library art gallery programming.

Content Partners **NEW!**

- Independent content partners who are not distributors.
- Act as a host organization to represent artists who want to have their works on VUCAVU but aren't in distribution with our partner distributors.
- Content Partners can be small artist run centres, film festivals, collectives who represent a collection of works solely on VUCAVU.

Education **UPCOMING!**

- Classrooms/teachers
- Academic research
- Access to stream certain content via University Libraries

WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

- VUCAVU's VOD sales are outweighed by its curated programming. Curated programs bring in larger audiences due to the themes presented and the context provided by accompanying essays, artist talks and partnerships.
- There is a lot of outreach needed to inform Canadian art organizations about VUCAVU's capabilities.
- VUCAVU is often mistaken as a distributor. Rather, VUCAVU should be considered an online programming venue.
- Many new partners assume that adding content to VUCAVU should be simple and cheap. VUCAVU's small team spend a lot of time managing expectations and content.
- VUCAVU is not suited to running live film festivals. VUCAVU's business model and technology are better for time-based curated programs.
- VUCAVU is useful to film festivals for curated retrospectives, archives and off-season programming. It can bring new audiences to the festivals.
- VUCAVU has established new offerings and value for long term and founding partners.
- VUCAVU's platform is mostly accessible to people with disabilities but needs to do more advocacy to encourage content partners to include closed-captions and audio-described versions of titles in their collections.
- New strategies for reaching out to younger and international audiences is required along with increased funding and resources.

WHERE WE'RE GOING..

VUCAVU is growing and adapting.

Continued programming partnerships with Canadian art organizations across Canada.

Reach out to us if you are interested.

VUCAVU EXPANDED IS BEING FOLLOWED UP BY THESE PROJECTS:

Sector Innovation and Development from the Canada Council for the Arts (CCA):

- Research, facilitate and implement sustainable models to make artist content on the VUCAVU platform discoverable and accessible for learning purposes. A major component of the project is to assess the needs of the current content partners to ensure their viability.

MITACS Accelerate in Partnership with York University:

In-Class Testing of VUCAVU.com in Postsecondary Settings:

- Education intern will assist in the application and beta-testing a new VUCAVU function called Private Pages, which allows users to create personalized, curated pages using our shared catalogue that can be accessed privately online. We will collaborate with educators to develop how the page can be used for assignments, projects, and screenings as the instructor sees fit.

IMAA Digital Skills for Youth Internship, Digital Programming Intern:

- Intern will research accessibility-centred tools and approaches for online film, video and media art programming to improve usability and audience engagement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The VUCAVU Team would like to acknowledge CCIMAD's board members and our founding partners for all their assistance on the VUCAVU Expanded project and the development of this platform.

In particular, we thank Monica Lowe, CCIMAD's former Treasurer and Jennifer Smith, CCIMAD's former President, for their enormous and generous contributions over the years. They contributed many hours of help, consultation and labour to this organization and assisted us greatly with the management and the success of this project and the platform itself. Thank you Jen and Monica!

Contact Us!

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THANK YOU!