

CASE STUDY: CONTACT Photography Festival / Thematic Programming (2013)



ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION:

Scotiabank CONTACT Photography Festival is an annual event in May with well over 1500 Canadian and international artists and photographers exhibiting at more than 175 venues throughout the Greater Toronto Area. Founded as a not-for-profit organization in 1997 and now a charitable organization, the Festival is devoted to celebrating, and fostering the art and profession of photography, through a diverse range of programmes.

As a leading proponent of photography, the Festival increases exposure and recognition for local, Canadian and international artists and is committed to advancing knowledge, creativity and innovation in photography. It stimulates excitement and discussion among a diverse audience that has grown to over 1.8 million. CONTACT is the largest photography event in the world, and a premiere cultural event in Canada.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The Primary Exhibition Program expanded from six to nine projects in 2013 and included two new venues: the Ryerson Image Centre, with an exhibition of Arnaud Maggs; and the TIFF Bell Lightbox that explored artistic practices that converge the moving and the still image in photography and film. Curatorial partners in 2013 included: Sebastio Salgado (Brazil) at the ROM; the Archive of Modern Conflict (London, UK) at the University of Toronto Art Centre, (3) The International Center of Photography (New York) at The Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, and (4) David Adjaye / the Design Museum (London, UK) at the Design Exchange.

OCAF CONTRIBUTION:

\$200,000 (\$60,000 repaid, 30% of contribution)

HOW OCAF HELPED:

"OCAF helped to stimulate audience participation and general brand awareness by implementing an inaugural comprehensive marketing campaign with local and international reach. The campaign included street banners, a brochure and poster campaign, festival documentation, online enhancements such as social media contests and engagement, print advertising in cultural publications and with media sponsors such as The Globe and Mail, The Grid, Toronto Life, Maclean's, and more. The campaign aided in creating a robust, steady stream of media coverage both leading up to and during the festival. Thus, establishing considerable buzz for key openings and CONTACT thematic programming, increasing attendance.

Due to a larger marketing budget we were able to increase the international exposure of the Festival through buy-ins with 10 major arts and culture publications. This put CONTACT on the global map and increased visitors from outside Toronto.

Additionally, the increase in outdoor advertising stimulated buzz and participation. Pattison Signs provided a series of billboards for advertising. For the first time festival street banners were hung in key neighbourhoods such as Queen West, King and Spadina, University and Bloor.

Finally, our media sponsorship value increased in 2013 and our existing sponsors invested more resources into programming and activations, enhancing their ROI. The OCAF grant increased our overall revenue and allowed us to operate with a marketing budget, which was seen as a great asset to our stakeholders."

TOTAL ATTENDANCE FOR THE 2013 FESTIVAL = 788,000

ATTENDANCE INCREASE OVER PREVIOUS YEAR = 10.9%

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE PROJECT, NOT INCLUDING TOURIST SPENDING (BASED ON THE TREIM MODEL):

GDP GENERATED = \$1,622,135

LABOUR INCOME GENERATED = \$1,130,504

DIRECT PROVINCIAL TAXES GENERATED = \$431,933

TOTAL PROVINCIAL TAXES GENERATED = \$655,855