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## Toronto incubator aims to bridge gap between art and business

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The Globe and Mail

Published Friday, Apr. 21, 2017 4:24PM EDT

Last updated Saturday, Apr. 22, 2017 5:16PM EDT

Years ago, Tim Jones never would have called himself a businessman, even though he co-ordinated the grants and ticket sales that allowed his indie theatre productions to go on.

Now the CEO of Artscape, a Toronto-based non-profit that supports creativity in communities, Mr. Jones says that many artists see a divide between the arts and the business world, and that their poor understanding of entrepreneurship disadvantages them in an expensive city like Toronto.

“Business training is often framed around values and aspirations that don’t necessarily relate to what creative people want to do. They’re not necessarily interested in just making money. A lot of them think and act like social entrepreneurs.”

Artscape revealed plans for its newest project on Friday, an incubator designed to bridge this gap called the Artscape Daniels Launchpad.

Still under construction, the 30,000-square-foot space will overlook Toronto’s harbour from the fourth floor of the Daniels Waterfront-City of the Arts Centre. Its neighbours will be George Brown College and OCAD University’s upcoming Campus for the Connected World. It will focus on providing tools, business training and opportunity to make professional connections for all sorts of artists.

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The idea was 10 years in the making. For the past four, staff at Artscape researched business creation and the arts and consulted with local industry leaders on how to best shape the program. They expect that facilitating these artists will create 3,800 jobs over the next decade.

While most arts incubators focus on one discipline, Launchpad plans to offer collaborative spaces for artists to work together, and specialized programs like jewellery, music and video-game design.

Catherine Moore, adjunct music and business professor at the University of Toronto, says that collaboration is essential for young artists. Many people are practising more than one art form – she points to an acquaintance who’s both a jazz musician and a clothing designer – and the sooner artists learn to work together across disciplines, the better.

Dr. Moore has seen several students benefit from incubator programs – but only from the right ones. The best incubators have the most competitive membership programs, she says.

“It’s one thing to have an idea – and everyone has ideas – it’s a whole other thing to transform the idea into a business model and then into a business.”

Launchpad is still deciding what its membership program will involve.

The incubator is funded by donations, and the largest of these – at more than \$5-million – came from Daniels Corp. Don Pugh is the development company’s vice-president. He pictures the waterfront growing into a neighbourhood where arts and residential areas intersect. Supporting artists has a lot in common with building condos, he says; both grow a community.

Launchpad won’t open until fall 2018, but the leadership plans to offer mentorship programs as early as this September.

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