

DIMENSIONS RESEARCH SUMMARY 2022 – 2024

This summary includes data from two surveys, a series of focus groups, and a town hall discussion. Those who responded/participated were primarily SCC members (85% of survey respondents) or partners.

Perceptions of Dimensions

Things that are valued/special about Dimensions

- Hands-on jurying (84.1% very valuable 13.6% somewhat valuable)
- Anonymous review of work (81.1% very valuable 18.9% somewhat valuable)
- Open House showcase of all submitted work (77.9% very valuable 19.8% somewhat valuable)
- Tour of selected pieces (85.6% very valuable 12.2% somewhat valuable)
- Open application process (75% very valuable 23.9% somewhat valuable)
- Profile/prestige of participating (87.6% 'raises awareness of and interest in SK craftspeople and their work', 79.1% 'validates the quality and stature of craft in SK')
- Jury feedback & peer discussion of work – connecting the craft community

Things that are challenging/need improvement

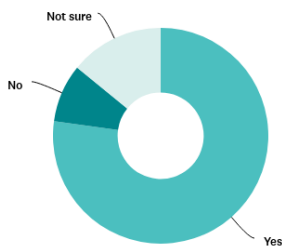
- Juror expertise & critique – jurors knowledgeable about limited craft forms/traditions, critique is not substantial or clear to participants
- Venue for Open House is too small – work is crowded, not showcased well
- Competition aspect doesn't appeal to everyone
- Doesn't include all craft forms and craftspeople in the province (20% 'I do not feel it is for artists like me', 15% 'I have not been aware of the opportunity')
- Access for artists outside of Saskatoon & Regina (20% 'it is not geographically accessible in my location')

What Dimensions Achieves

- 87.6% Raises awareness of/interest in Saskatchewan & their work
- 81% Celebrates the best of craft in Saskatchewan
- 79.1% Provides encouragement to the craftspeople working in Saskatchewan

Relevance

Is Dimensions relevant to you in your practice?



Valued Components of Programming

Weighted Average - Maximum value of 3	
Tour to Multiple Locations	2.83
Open House of all Submitted Work	2.76
Production of Print Catalog	2.55
Public Critique	2.47
Juror's Presentations	2.42

What Respondents Liked

It feels prestigious. For some of us who don't do production work, it seems like a rare chance to exhibit. I always like the jurors critiques, good and bad, whether I'm accepted or not, as it's a great chance to learn how others see and value handmade objects.

I did like the times you tried using a theme for the work, as it was a nice challenge to think about my work differently...and frankly, the themes were so broad almost anything would work.

I believe that an exhibition format like Dimensions raises the level of work for Artists. The Jurors critique is very useful for both the successful and unsuccessful applicants if they have a serious mindset of improving their work. The images of the artworks captured the detail and beauty of each piece. Easy to enjoy online.

The sense of the craft community looking at its own members with interest, respect, enthusiasm, good wishes, and other positive, personal attentions. Many other fields do this, maybe more competitively which is not good, but Dimensions brings out a good feeling of our shared interests.

Because I don't go to the markets or have an opportunity to spend time at the SCC in Saskatoon, this is a chance to connect to other crafters and the work they do. Also, a chance for "show and tell." I like the jurying process. Lots to learn and think about. Overall, nothing but fond memories of all things to do with Dimensions.

What Could Be Improved

I'm not sure the jurors had familiarity with all types of media, but I'm not sure how you would resolve that problem. Also, it's awkward for people to ask questions about their own work in front of everybody else, although it's also instructive for everyone else perhaps. Some private personal feedback might be nice but again I don't know if this is possible because it might take too much time.

I felt there was a lack of meaningful feedback from the jurors. This IS understandable, because they are not an expert in all mediums of art, but it was disappointing because some of the feedback I heard others getting overlooked what were (to me) obvious technical deficiencies.

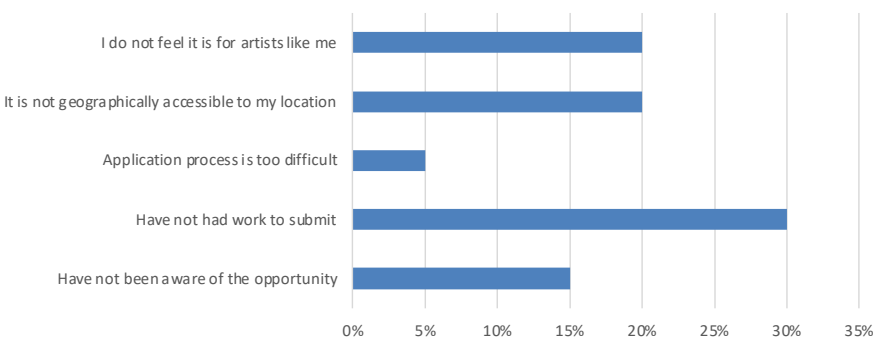
The locations / space (square footage) of the venues are too small. The art pieces are crowded together on the tables and walls. The public has very little space to walk around the displays. Art is to be enjoyed both up close and from a distance if one chooses.

The crowded venue & very long critique where the jurors answered an excess of individual questions that really weren't applicable to anyone but that particular artist. Individual critiques would be more appropriate for them. I think that much more effort could be made to showcase the Dimensions pieces through the 2 years they are on tour. I have been in the show twice, but have not had anyone ever reach out for my work or anything else I create as a result of the exposure at the travelling show.

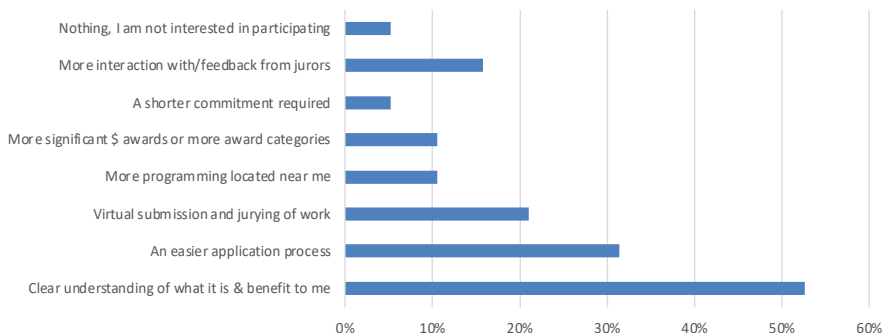
Artists' Experiences

Barriers

Why I have not Submitted Work



What Would Encourage me to Participate



Impact for Artists

Dimensions has helped me grow as a craft artist. Meeting and talking to other artists and learning about their work can and has led me in exciting directions in my work. The jurors critiques are always informative. The times I have had work selected the exhibition and the catalogue were beneficial additions to my artistic CV. Dimensions encouraged me to challenge myself to create a larger piece and to explore new techniques that I wouldn't likely do without some kind of external motivation (client had ordered or competition) It allows me to see all the diversity of work being considered, broadening my knowledge and appreciation of all the talent there is in SK.

Perceptions of Process

Positives & Negatives Perceptions		
	Positive	Negative
Application Process	62%	8%
Dropping off & Picking up Art Works	67%	12%
Jurying Process	42%	31%
Juror's Critique	57%	31%
Exhibition & Tour	70%	6%
Awards Presentation & Celebration	50%	1%
Catalog	71%	5%

45% of respondents did not feel it was important to know who jurors were in advance, 13% felt it was very important to know this information.

81% of respondents value the opportunity to provide a statement about the submitted work for the jurors.

What we Learned...

Jury & Jurying Process

- 62.9% indicated they liked the hybrid approach and would likely submit work, compared to 30.6% indicating the same for a virtual jury process
- 72.2% indicated a direct preference for the hybrid jurying over virtual jurying
- 21.1% of those who had not applied to *Dimensions* would apply with virtual submission & jurying
- Consider knowledge of different craft media, try to balance and fairly represent the range of craft
- Select jurors who have hands-on creative experience, not just administrative roles
- Recognize that no two jurors will have expertise to address all of the work submitted in any competition
 - o Can SCC add a pre-screening of work to identify cultural issues or appropriation?
 - o SCC team engages expert support when needed to consider work that is outside of juror's expertise
- Add more BIPOC jurors/jurors with cultural knowledge diversity to increase inclusivity

Critique

- 52% would participate in a critique program if it were offered
- 34.1% of those interested in critique programs with attend live if it were offered near them, 20% would travel to participate in person, 24.7% would prefer an online program and 21.2% had no preference
- 64.7% would want to participate with a group of varying levels of experience in a critique program, 54.1% feel it is important to be matched with those who practice the same craft form
- 49% would be willing to pay to receive one on one feedback on their work from the *Dimensions* jury
- Generational & cultural differences around the value of jurying and critique

Awards

- 50% preferred award categories that are targeted to recognize artists in specific craft forms, at specific experience levels or from specific regions

Tour

- Demand from Tour Partners has decreased:
 - Have shifted to presenting fewer, longer exhibitions in a year
 - A backlog of work to show – currently booking for 2025 and 2026

Conscious of identity and diversity in what they are programming

No increased funding means they have fewer resources to do more

- Build partnership with tour presenters - not presenting a generic show
- Include a greater diversity of artists, identities
- Make the tour less frequent, more unique/special when it does come around
- Provide tools for ancillary programming – learning guides, visiting artists, virtual programs

Feedback & Suggestions

Dimensions and the Exhibitions program of SCC are extremely valuable and should stand alone as purely artistic programs outside of the marketing and commercial focus of Creative Sask and be funded by SaskArts. The juried versus curated conversation is still not well understood. Sometimes Dimensions feels more one than the other. A hybrid approach of an open jurying followed by a curation of those initially chosen could be interesting. Of the Dimensions I've been part of I would have loved a list of reviews that were done as it toured, for my records and feedback about how it was received by audiences.

Perhaps Dimensions could broaden its focus and include awards [without cash] for products made with low to zero environmental impact, craft that could provide life enhancing innovation, craft that is participatory & immersive, and the very best in craft production, etc. The awards are meaningful for the maker and great for the CV.

I am not convinced that touring exhibitions are that meaningful, but I do not live in a rural setting. Surely more could be done through online exhibitions and perhaps a short-term rented space in a high traffic centre such as Harbourfront or in the Hotel Vancouver, etc.

Embrace new technology to extend outreach to artists, make public programming more accessible, provide multimedia packages to share with schools across the province, and continue to document and highlight the work of Dimensions artists

Take advantage of technology to provide greater access – ie create 3D printed images of work for jurying

Consider a digital catalog format

Create a documentary of the process/artist experience

Tour the work Nationally and Internationally in order to position Saskatchewan Craft more prominently

Currently there is not a lot of exchange between different cultural craft practices in the province. Craft is seen as a very white world.

- *Need to build bridges before there is a level of trust to engage in Dimensions*
- *Need to understand why some makers are not participating*
- *Develop cultural competencies in jurying work and engage more jurors with specific cultural expertise*
- *Indigenous craft artist have their own platforms and there may be little incentive to engage outside of these*
- *Recognize that Dimensions is perceived as a colonial platform and is not appropriate for all work*
- *Newcomers may not self-identify as artists, need to build an understanding of artist identity in Canada*
- *Build critique programs and/or peer groups and media nights into the schedule between Dimensions exhibitions as opportunities to develop critique skills, encourage sharing and dialogue around work*

Add non-juried exhibitions or other opportunities to show and share work in between Dimensions exhibitions

Ensure that call for work and jurying process are open to new ideas, boundary pushing

Create opportunities for artists to hear feedback on a range of work (both selected and not selected) to understand how work is evaluated

Add a category for emerging makers with a more hands-on jurying process to encourage young makers to participate in and benefit from jury feedback

Add a People's Choice award

Develop a communications strategy

- *Multiple platform approach to getting information out*
- *Identify communities of artists who are not currently involved in the Dimensions cycle and start a dialogue about the program and how they might want to engage with it*
- *Use casual videos to explaining terms and processes*
- *Be honest about subjective aspect of jurying*

Consider how we use the juror's time – are there other interactions with the jurors that would add more value?

Could the jurors tour to certain regional hubs to provide in-person engagement