

For Immediate Release: April 23, 2026

**Experience the Ups and Downs of Grant Funding at the Art Gallery of Regina's new exhibition: *Art\$ Funding* (May 8 – July 4)**

*Art\$ Funding: a playful and provocative exhibition where artists and audiences alike confront the real costs, hidden labour, and unexpected humour behind the quest for arts funding.*

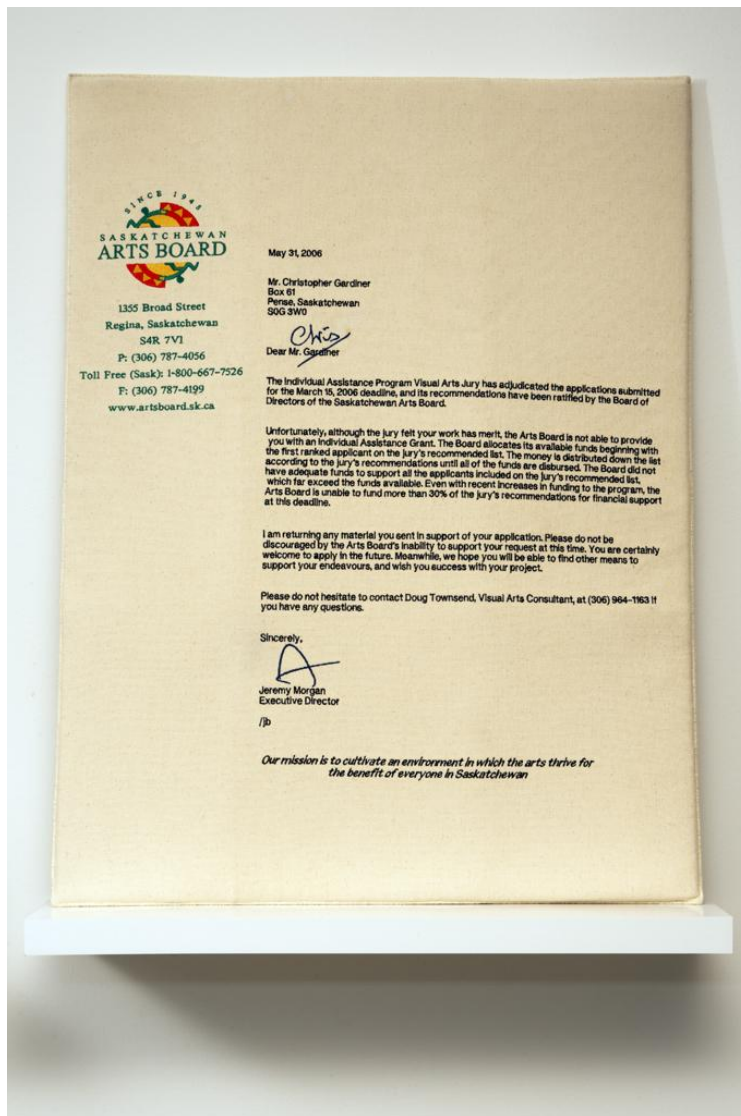


image: Christopher Campbell Gardiner, *Tonglen 2*, 2010-14 & 2023, Arts funding rejection letter(s), canvas, personal concealed items, felt, reclaimed cardboard, threads, shelving. Collection of SK-Arts. Photo: Don Hall.

**Regina, SK:** Constantly applying for grants, facing rejection, and dealing with inadequate funding can make life for artists and arts organizations seem bleak. The Art Gallery of Regina's exhibition *Art\$ Funding*, sponsored by HJ Linnen Associates and running May 8 to July 4, 2026, finds humour—born of exasperation—in these challenges.

*Art\$ Funding* brings together artworks that candidly—and often humorously—expose the painful, perplexing, and sometimes absurd challenges of seeking arts funding. It includes Saskatchewan Beach-based artist Christopher Campbell Gardiner, who transforms failed grant applications and other invisible administrative and emotional labour performed by artists by sealing these artifacts under layers of paint and stitches. The exhibition also invites visitors to participate in interactive installations, including Winnipeg artist Glen Johnson's tongue-in-cheek *Artistic Licence Bureau* and play at garnering grant success in the card game and live performance *culturecapital* by Vancouver's Milton Lim and Patrick Blenkarn.

Lim and Blenkarn have created a high-energy environment of pulsing lights and music within the exhibition, inviting gallery visitors to experience the excitement of their card game, *culturecapital*. Using statistics gathered in collaboration with the [Saskatchewan Arts Alliance](#) and in partnership with [Curtain Razors](#), the artists created a Saskatchewan edition of the game. In this version, players summon real Saskatchewan companies, initiate projects, and roll dice for public funding—all while competing to engage communities.

The artists cite the limited audience and lack of access to existing forums as the reason for creating the game: "Too often, in Canada at least, the only avenues for addressing serious issues in the arts industry are panels, where only a select few are empowered to really speak [...] which usually have little influence on greater public discourse." By creating an enjoyable, engaging and social method of discussing issues like systemic failures and public funding inequity, the game is "an alternative context for discourse about the arts and about how value is determined and shifted in the arts industry." Free, hosted gameplay events throughout May will culminate in *culturecapital:showdown!* presented by Curtain Razors on May 22 at Globe Theatre's black box.

Glen Johnson's *Artistic Licence Bureau* parodies art-world bureaucracy. Visitors apply for a provisional Artistic Licence, mimicking the often baffling experiences of seeking approval from oversight bodies. After waiting for service in the artist-made replica government office—a waiting room filled with satirical pamphlets and posters like "ME, ME, ME, Turn Your Self-Obsession Into a Career as a Performance Artist" and "How Long is This Thing? A Guide to Video Art"—visitors may receive a licence, complete with an unflattering photograph. Johnson's Artistic Licence Bureau lampoons the arbitrary systems of validation that shape contemporary art while offering a meagre reward for navigating these systems.

Although Gardiner's works may appear to be paintings, gilded frames or embroidered textiles, they encase items that arouse pain and shame. His artworks in *Art\$ Funding* contain failed grant applications, unsent letters to curators, a 1993 painting, secrets, medical tests, and

other undisclosed items. Through a time-consuming, repetitive process of coating these unseen artifacts in layers of paint and binding them with stitches, Gardiner heals these tender wounds and transforms administrative labour into art. This process is exemplified by *Tonglen 1-3*, a series of hand-embroidered, larger-than-life replicas of grant rejection letters that enclose the artist's failed applications. By making these epistles larger than life, the artist invites viewers to reflect on the emotional weight of failure. He explains, "Tonglen is a Tibetan Buddhist practice of breathing in suffering and exhaling compassion." Here, the journey to compassion is incomplete, as the pain of rejection remains contained (not dissipated). While shielding his own experiences of trauma, humiliation, and vulnerability, Gardiner's works invite viewers to consider the emotional toll that repeated rejection takes on an artist.

Curator Sandee Moore notes, "This exhibition is a rare space for honest critique of Canadian arts funding. *Art\$ Funding* also provides timely context to understand and champion the critical role of arms-length funding." She adds, "These systems, based on impartial, peer-based adjudication, are designed to keep artistic freedom safe from political and private interests. However, underfunding of arts boards and councils threatens the foundation that upholds free expression as a pillar of our cultural landscape and society."

Through wry, incisive, and delightfully satirical works, *Art\$ Funding* reveals that being an artist, arts administrator, or grant officer isn't about following your bliss. It is about deciphering cryptic grant forms, chasing elusive dollars, and convincing politicians that art is more than pretty pictures—and far from a frivolous expense. All this happens while trying to keep the lights on—with or without funding.

We invite all to experience these revealing and entertaining works for yourself at the Art Gallery of Regina, where admission is always free and join us to celebrate the opening of *Art\$ Funding* at a free, public reception on Friday, May 8 from 5:00 - 8:00 PM. For more information, visit [artgalleryofregina.ca](http://artgalleryofregina.ca).

Visitors can engage further through free resources such as exhibition audio tours sponsored by SaskTel and Indigenous Perspectives events sponsored by Casino Regina.

**Media contact:**

Sandee Moore

Director/Curator, Art Gallery of Regina

306-522-5940

[curator@artgalleryofregina.ca](mailto:curator@artgalleryofregina.ca)

Contact Ms. Moore to arrange English-language interviews with the artists and/or curator in person, by phone or by email.

**Links:**

artists' bios:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-xHQjXvubd\\_7f2sHuD9pqBCz0Vb\\_I\\_olf4t79s2Mn70/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-xHQjXvubd_7f2sHuD9pqBCz0Vb_I_olf4t79s2Mn70/edit?usp=sharing)

reproduction-ready images:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1AA99tAWj\\_9RfBKDYXkzniEQ0N1ogA2xj?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1AA99tAWj_9RfBKDYXkzniEQ0N1ogA2xj?usp=sharing) (files are named with photo caption information)

artists' websites:

[miltonlim.com](http://miltonlim.com)

[patrickblenkarn.com](http://patrickblenkarn.com)

<https://www.culturecapital.cards>

For more information and updates, please visit our website ([www.artgalleryofregina.ca](http://www.artgalleryofregina.ca)) or contact the Art Gallery Regina by calling 306-522-5940.

**For Calendar Listings:**

**Exhibition title:** *Art\$ Funding*

**Artist(s) name(s):** Christopher Campbell Gardiner, Glen Johnson, Milton Lim and Patrick Blenkarn

**Dates:** May 8 - July 4, 2026

**Location:** Art Gallery of Regina, 2420 Elphinstone St., Regina

**Events:**

**Opening Reception:** Friday, May 8, 5:00 – 8:00 PM

**Drop-In Gameplay Events:** Participate in the interactive card game *culturecapital* with experienced hosts.

Monday, May 18 (12:30 - 3:30 PM)

Wednesday, May 20 (5:00 - 7:00 PM)

Thursday, May 21 (5:00 - 7:00 PM)

**Cost:** Free Admission

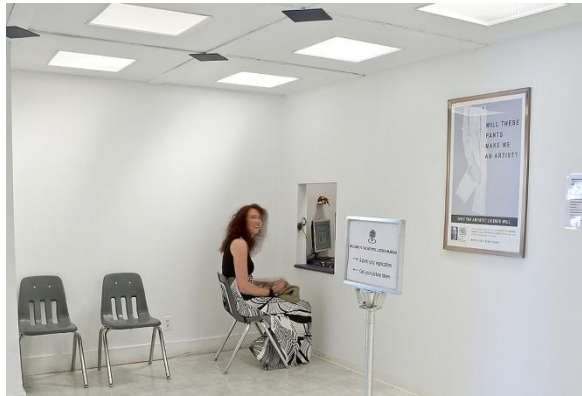
**Website:** <https://www.artgalleryofregina.ca/upcoming-exhibition>

**Special Event:** *culturecapital:showdown!* on May 22 at 7:30 PM at the Globe Theatre Black Box, experience *culturecapital:showdown!*, a live participatory card game performance by Milton Lim and Patrick Blenkarn. Community members compete for grant-winning supremacy in this unique, interactive spectacle. Tickets available at: <https://www.zeffy.com/en-CA/ticketing/culture-capital-showdown>

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Vito Acconci  
DOB: 24/01/1940  
TYPE: Performance  
CLASS: Genius



images (top to bottom): Milton Lim & Patrick Blenkarn, *culturecapital*, artist-made board game, 2020-ongoing. Photo courtesy of the artists; Glen Johnson, *Artistic Licence Bureau* (detail of licence), installation (wood, rigid foam, acrylic sheets, metal, vinyl, paper; includes posters, video, signage, brochures, handbooks, computer system with ID card printer), 2011-2026, variable dimensions. Photo: Leif Norman; Glen Johnson, *Artistic Licence Bureau*, installation (wood, rigid foam, acrylic sheets, metal, vinyl, paper; includes posters, video, signage, brochures, handbooks, computer system with ID card printer), 2011-2026, variable dimensions. Photo: Leif Norman.

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# AGR

1976 / FIFTY YEARS OF  
2026 / ENGAGING  
CONTEMPORARY  
ART

Located on Treaty 4, the traditional territory of the Cree, Saulteaux, Nakota, Lakota and Dakota peoples, and the homeland of the Métis people, the Art Gallery of Regina (AGR) is a dynamic cultural hub, promoting the development and appreciation of contemporary art, primarily created by Saskatchewan artists. AGR provides opportunities for Regina's citizens and visitors to engage with contemporary art through free exhibitions, participatory events, performances, artists' talks, critical writing, and educational programming.





The Art Gallery of Regina gratefully acknowledges the support of its core funders, project funders, partners and sponsors:

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