

ACCORD ARTISTS TOOL KIT

WHAT IS ACCORD?

ACCORD was a 2-year pilot project (2011- 2013).

Artists are always seeking new audiences. Communities and schools around Quebec appreciate performances and presentations by live artists. ACCORD connected artists and communities in new and diverse ways.

The launch of the ACCORD website marked the beginning of the active part of the ACCORD Project. In Year 2, ACCORD worked with regional partners to kickstart pilot events in communities around the province, while continuing efforts to develop the online Tool Kit and to recruit new artists and presenters to join the network.

The ACCORD project wrapped in 2013. Some of the information contained in this tool kit may be out of date, but much of the advice is still pertinent. If you have any questions about this document, please contact admin@quebec-elan.org.

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ARTISTS - WHY TOUR?

There are many reasons why you, as an artist, might choose to tour. You may want to perform more, meet fans, generate extra income, develop your reputation, or all of the above. Regardless of your incentives, touring enriches host communities and is definitely a worthwhile endeavour.

The ACCORD project was intended to facilitate connecting presenters across Quebec with artists wishing to tour. In this Tool Kit, you will find practical information about touring basics such as presenter relations, production, promotion, and finances.

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PRESENTER RELATIONS

Negotiating Fees

Whether you are an artist or a presenter, successful negotiations are key to ensuring your needs are met. Typically, the negotiation process begins with the presenter contacting the artist (or representative) to make an offer. It is during this initial stage when details such as dates and artist fees are agreed upon.

Visiting non-metropolitan regions can very rewarding for artists; however, it is important to recall that presenters in these communities may not be able to afford standard artist fees. To help cover your costs, you may wish to request a percentage of the profits, take part in value-adding activities, or present your show in several neighbouring communities while you are in the region.

Following negotiations, the presenter will produce a contract that includes all the previously agreed upon terms, in addition to any other pertinent details. After it is presented to the artist, they have until the stipulated expiration date to accept, decline, or amend the offer.

Please check out our [sample contract](#).

For more information on contracts, please refer to the Canada Council's [Touring Handbook](#).

Contracts

A basic contract should include:

- The names and addresses of the parties involved.
- What you want the artist to do.
- Where the event will be held.
- When (date and time) the presentation will take place.
- The length of the performance and intermission periods.
- How much the artist will be paid and any expenses that will be covered.
- When the payment will be processed (as many artists require a portion in advance).
- What type promotion you plan to do.
- Whether the artist will be required to do interviews.
- The type of promotional materials required from the artist (headshot, bio, etc.).
- Pertinent venue details (are there dressing rooms? private washrooms?).
- What technical equipment you can provide.
- An act of God clause
- A language clause
- Any other important details

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Adding Value

Touring can be expensive and visiting small communities may be seen as less-than lucrative engagement. However, this does not have to be the case! There are many value-adding activities that you can engage in independently, or in partnership with the presenter to help boost earnings and minimize expenses.

Adding value is the act of taking part in a variety of different activities while you are presenting your work in a community. Visiting a school (see [culture in schools](#)), hosting a workshops or teaching a master classes are common value-adding activities, but these are not exclusive. Value-adding activities need only be limited by your imagination.

Speak to the presenter about the possibility of arranging this type of value-adding activity. If they are unable, ask if they could recommend any local organizations that may be interested. This will allow you to earn extra income while you are visiting, and the partnering organization may agree to cover some of your presenter's costs - making it a worthwhile arrangement for everyone!

PRODUCTION/TECHNICAL

Production Considerations

It is likely you already have some experience of producing an event or performance, and hence, have knowledge of what is involved. Nevertheless, it is a good idea to maintain an awareness of what is involved from the presenter's side, as it will give you an idea of what may be required of you at various stages, in the lead up to an event. For more info see the [ACCORD Touring Project Resources: Event Planning Schedule](#).

As (an) artist(s) working with a regional presenter, who may have not have as much experience as you from a technical standpoint, it will be even more important that you be methodical in outlining your production requirements in your technical rider (see below). When touring, consider scaling down your production needs so you can adapt to smaller or less technically sophisticated venues. As a general rule, the simpler the better!

Stay in communication with the presenter, to ensure that they understand what is required and that you can assist in clarifying or offering support where necessary.

Setting up before the event

Make sure you provide all that has been requested / negotiated between the presenter and yourself as presenter, according to the technical rider. Give yourself plenty of time to set up any technical equipment, musical gear or set elements you will be using, as well as for your own personal preparation (such as warming up or getting into costume). Will you need a tech run or just a basic sound check in the space? How many hours (or days) you decide to allocate will depend the complexity of the show and your own technical experience (along with that of the presenter) as well as venue availability. It is recommended that all this work be completed at least 30 minutes to 1 hour before doors open to the public, according to the presenter's guidelines.

The Technical Rider

The Technical Rider (tech rider) is a document provided to the presenter by the artist or tour manager, which specifies the technical production requirements (e.g. playing area, lighting equipment, audio mixers, cables, microphones, staging, etc.) for a given show. This should be provided *before the contract is drawn up*, so that both artist and presenter have a common understanding of the show requirements, as well as whose responsibility it is to provide what equipment and/or production crew. It is important that this information be up to date and show specific.

The tech rider will outline the staging, lighting, sound, projection and personnel requirements, along with other needs such as dressing rooms, water, etc. It may include basic set elements such as a table, chairs, etc. It should also outline company information such as the show's running time and any crew members and equipment that the company will be providing.

Since, you may not be performing in a professional venue with onsite technical assistance, if you have special tech requirements for a particular show (such as a follow spot, a gunshot, use of a fog machine, video projections, etc.) you should expect to provide the specialized knowledge and/or a trained technician to handle the set up and operation of these elements.

As an artist, you are responsible for providing whatever technical elements have been agreed upon in the rider, as well as clarifying any technical needs with the presenter in a timely manner, in the lead up to a show.

FINANCES

Budgeting

Once you've decided to go on tour, it's crucial that you prepare a tour budget. This should include a conservative estimate of your revenues, along with all of your potential expenses. This will help protect you from running out of funds mid-way through your trip.

As an artist you may generate revenue on the road through artist fees for performances and workshops, merchandise sales, sponsorships, donations, and government grants. If you are unsure of how much to charge for your presentations, check out CARFAC's [minimum fee schedule](#), or find out what other comparable artists charge. The [Canada Council for the Arts](#) and the [Conseil des arts et des lettres](#) offer many financial awards for touring artists.

Your expenses will include not only basic travel expenses, but also rehearsal expenses, sales costs, salaries, and post-touring expenses. Don't forget to save your receipts when you are travelling, as many of your costs may be tax deductible. In order to maximize your revenues relative to your costs, consider asking presenters about the possibility of organizing [value-adding activities](#) for while you are in community.

RESOURCES

Further resources, example documents, and other useful information is available on ELAN's website in the Resources section.