



Patrick Tobin
Sally Han
Arts & Culture Services
City of Toronto

December 27, 2017

Dear Mr. Tobin and Ms. Han,

Introduction

On behalf of the Board of Interactive Ontario (“IO”) and the over 330 companies that it represents in Ontario’s Interactive Digital Media (“IDM”) sector, we wish to express our support for the Toronto Media Arts Centre and highlight our experience specifically with Gamma Space and Dames Making Games.

Since 2001, IO has been the industry association for the IDM sector in Ontario. We are the leading voice of Ontario digital media companies, which create a wide variety of interactive digital media works including video games, e-Learning, virtual and augmented reality, web series and more. These represent both an important form of cultural expression and an economic driver, generating \$1.4 billion in GDP annually and supporting 16,900 FTEs in Ontario¹ – with the majority of this activity located in Toronto.

Our experience with Gamma Space and Dames Making Games

Gamma Space and Dames Making Games are integral to the interactive digital media ecosystem in Toronto. In their 6 years of existence, they have delivered programs, events and supports that have allowed numerous emerging producers to augment their skill sets and grow their networks. Their members and program participants have, as a direct result of these supports, started companies, created critically acclaimed work, and secured jobs at leading local digital media companies.

Gamma Space and Dames Making Games are providing a pipeline of creators in a sector in need of highly skilled creative and technical talent. We have collaborated with these organizations in many capacities. For example, their directors and members have spoken at our professional development programs and provided expertise during the research phase of our *Diversity & Inclusion Toolkit for the Interactive Digital Media Industry*. Both Gamma Space and Dames Making Games are internationally known in interactive media circles for the strength of their knowledge and keen ability to support cultural expression through interactive media. They are considered examples to emulate by other cities.

We must respectfully disagree with the City’s claims that the organizations that comprise TMAC do not have sufficient program delivery experience, as IO staff and members have personally attended and spoken at many of the hundreds of valuable community building events and programs Gamma Space and Dames Making Games have hosted.

¹ Based on our February 2017 report [Measuring Success: The Impact of the Interactive Digital Media Sector in Ontario](#), prepared by Nordicity, page 2

Toronto's interactive digital media sector is largely composed of small-and-medium enterprises². Gamma Space and Dames Making Games provide the supports and space these creators require – some of Interactive Ontario's own members have created award-winning work from their shared workspace. The uncertainty of this situation is disruptive to the hardworking independent creators whose presence has allowed Toronto to be designated a UNESCO Creative City of Media Arts.

Additionally, Dames Making Games is facilitating a crucial diversification of the interactive digital media field. Traditionally, women, people of colour, and LGBTQ+ communities have been underrepresented in the creation of interactive media³. The work of Dames Making Games is ensuring that underrepresented creators have opportunities to tell their stories through video games and other interactive media – and to participate in the industry through employment in this growing cultural sector.

It is our understanding that the City has voiced concerns that the organizations comprising TMAC have changed since its inception. In a field that is as rapidly evolving as media arts and interactive digital media, this is bound to occur – and should be viewed as a benefit. Gamma Space and Dames Making Games have emerged in response to evolutions in media arts practices and their work has been driven by community demand; as such they are well placed to provide leadership in the field.

Interactive media has the ability to generate empathy and engagement through unique forms of storytelling. We believe there is a need for a dedicated centre for media arts in Toronto in order to support further exploration and growth in the field. Based on our collaborations with Gamma Space and Dames Making Games, we are confident in their expertise and ability to operate Toronto Media Arts Centre in conjunction with Charles Street Video and the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre.

We hope that the City of Toronto will quickly allow TMAC to take possession of the space at 36 Lisgar Street so that they may focus on the community building work that they are so widely known for. Should you wish to further discuss our position, Interactive Ontario would be pleased to meet with you.

Sincerely,



Christa Dickenson
President & CEO
Interactive Ontario

CC Ana Bailão
CC Zaib Shaikh
CC Toronto Media Arts Centre

² Based on our February 2017 report [Measuring Success: The Impact of the Interactive Digital Media Sector in Ontario](#), prepared by Nordicity, page 12

³ Based on our February 2017 report [Measuring Success: The Impact of the Interactive Digital Media Sector in Ontario](#), prepared by Nordicity, page 4