



INDIGENOUS
FASHION ARTS

APPLICATION GUIDEBOOK

IFA Festival / 2024

Inside

PROGRAMS

Learn about the programs you can apply to participate in

ASSESSMENT

Understand IFA eligibility terms and the artistic policies

WHAT TO EXPECT

Learn the commitment of applying and participating at IFA





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A guide to participating at Indigenous Fashion Arts, from application to stage or booth.



Application Deadline

IFA accepts applications in two programs, including Mainstage Runway and Marketplace. Eligible applicants can submit works in each program. [Apply Now](#)

5 May 2023

Application Deadline

\$20

Fee per application

30 May - 2 Jun 2024

Festival

About IFA

Mission

Indigenous Fashion Arts (IFA) is a non-profit arts organization that sustains Indigenous practices in fashion, craft and textiles through designer-focused initiatives, public engagement and sector innovation.

We are committed to nurturing the deep connections between mainstream fashion, Indigenous art and traditional practice. Led by Indigenous women, we at IFA support each other and our communities to foster, illuminate perceptions of and celebrate Indigenous cultures.

IFA's largest program is the biennial Indigenous Fashion Arts Festival in Toronto, presenting over 100 Indigenous artists and designers from across Turtle Island and around the world in runway shows, a marketplace, panel discussions, hands-on workshops and an art exhibition.

"[IFAF] is currently one of the biggest showcases of Indigenous design in North America."

- Christian Allaire, Vogue Magazine, 2021



Mandate

The purpose of Indigenous Fashion Arts is to

- * Advance Indigenous artists in textile, fashion and craft, particularly women;
- * Showcase innovation in contemporary Indigenous art and cultural expression;
- * Celebrate the resilience and vitality of Indigenous people, art and cultures;
- * Foster relationships between Indigenous artists and industry;
- * Champion Indigenous methods of producing, sharing and presenting textile art and craft;
- * Create economic and professional development opportunities for artists and designers.

“Something magical happens when the Indigenous design community comes together like this. I have had the privilege to show collections on many runways but this stage is very special for how it demonstrates and highlights Indigenous art on such an evolved level.”

- Dusty LeGrande of Mobilize for ELLE Canada, 2022

Values

Artistic Sovereignty & Excellence

- Indigenous-made fashion exists at the intersection of fashion, art and commerce.
- Artists and their work are valued and valuable
- Protection of individual, familial & cultural intellectual property
- Freedom of expression & pride in one's work
- Thought-provoking, skilled, and innovative work
- Artist access to knowledge, materials, industry & training
- A culturally relevant, global community of artists and designers in exchange with one another

Healthy Working Culture

- Stable Funding
- Committed, Experienced Full-Time Staff
- Safe and functional working standards
- Committed and trusting Board of Directors
- Happy, cooperative and functional work environment
- Majority Indigenous governance & senior staff leadership

Systemic Equity

- Engaged advisors and allies from the arts, economic & fashion sectors
- Activities and industries that cultivate healthy relations between humans, animals, land, water and air
- Public funders support the study and enjoyment of, and the production of fashion, craft and textiles works
- Artists and arts workers earn a living wage
- Retailers and buyers produce or acquire at least 10% Indigenous fashion, craft or textiles
- Access to industry resources for Indigenous creators

Generous & Knowledgeable Communities

- Safe and welcoming events
- Happy artists, audiences and partners
- Educated and aware audiences and customers
- Exchange and gift-giving
- Thriving and healthy communities

About IFA

“From start to finish, IFAF was a true celebration of the artistry, beauty and brilliance of Indigenous people everywhere.”

- Riley Yesno, CBC Life, 2022



Guiding Principals

Individuals in IFA spaces agree to the following

- * To maintain a relationship that values nation-to-nation protocols, including inter-tribal trade alliances, peace, friendship, safe passage, and access to shared resources;
- * To acknowledge that traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions are innate parts of Indigenous Fashion Arts' operations and programming;
- * Traditional knowledge includes the know-how, skills, innovations and practices developed by Indigenous peoples and local communities;
- * Traditional Cultural Expressions are tangible and intangible forms in which traditional knowledge and cultures are expressed;

- * Indigenous nations hold their respective rights to traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions;
- * Indigenous Fashion Arts is committed to protecting those rights but does not have authority to control or is not liable for any instance of appropriation;
- * Indigenous Fashion Arts is composed of members of many Indigenous nations;
- * No individual or group shall use traditional knowledge or traditional cultural expressions shared at Indigenous Fashion Arts beyond its intended purpose at Indigenous Fashion Arts without explicit consent;
- * It is understood that traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions are respected and shared to foster collaborative success at Indigenous Fashion Arts and, more broadly, the sustenance of Indigenous communities





Code of Conduct

Indigenous Fashion Arts is committed to providing a friendly, safe, respectful and welcoming environment for all, regardless of age, ancestry, colour, race, citizenship, ethnic origin, place of origin, creed, ability, family status, marital status (including single status), gender identity, gender expression, sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding), and sexual orientation.

The Indigenous Fashion Arts Code of Conduct will ensure that all festival collaborators have positive experiences working with IFA, with IFA collaborators and at our events. All individuals will be treated with dignity and respect, including:

Guests
Artists
Staff
Volunteers
Partners
Sponsors
Media

Read the [Code of Conduct](#)

“[IFAF] felt like a four-day master class in Indigenous material culture ... ”

- Nigel Lezama, Fashion Studies Journal, Volume 3 Issue 2 Article 1 2021



Programming



Mainstage Runway

The Mainstage Runway includes four group runway shows for designers who wish to present a theatrical production of their collection alongside other Indigenous designers. In IFA history, all Mainstage Runway shows have sold out in advance, with few rush tickets available on the day of the show.



Marketplace

The Marketplace is a retail exhibition space for designers and brands who wish to sell their goods and reach new markets. The Marketplace happens the last three days of the Festival (Friday - Sunday). There are 64 booths in the marketplace. In 2022, vendors made \$10,000 - \$45,000 CAD in sales. IFA is committed to increasing designer sales as we continue to grow.

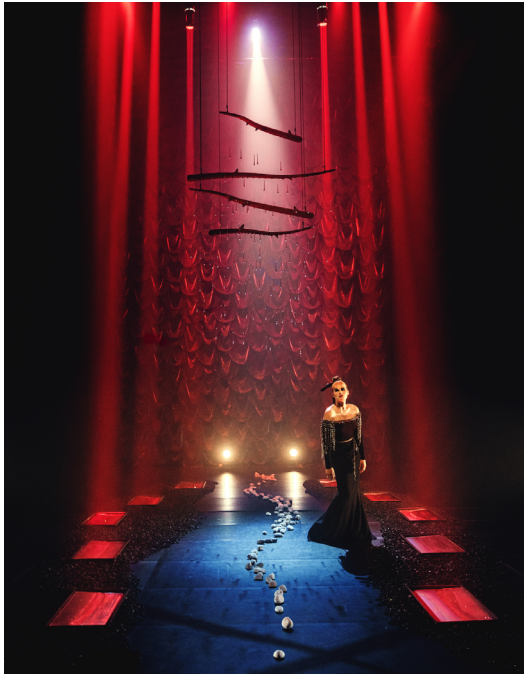


Demographics

IFA audiences are primarily women between 25 and 45 years in age. The IFA Festival attracts audiences and customers from Indigenous communities across North America, fashion and arts industry professionals from across Canada and worldwide, including buyers, curators, retailers, stylists, galleries and fashion lovers, and tourists.



Mainstage Runway



Mainstage Runway

The Mainstage Runway features 26 designers and includes four group runway shows. The Mainstage Runway is a curated theatrical production of Indigenous fashion. In IFA history, all Mainstage Runway shows have sold out in advance, with few rush tickets available on the day of the show.

Goals & Benefits

The Mainstage Runway aims to provide a professional artistic presentation of Indigenous-made fashion work. Designers gain access to the Festivals most popular event and the industry who attend. Designers gain the opportunity to be featured in a highly produced fashion show. Designers also receive incredible media coverage and social media presence. Designers can take orders following their show.

The Mainstage Runway is a juried program. Selected applicants are paid an artist fee.



Marketplace



Marketplace

The Marketplace is a retail exhibition space for designers and brands who wish to sell their goods and reach new markets. The Marketplace happens the last three days of the Festival (Friday - Sunday) and features individuals, collectives and companies. There are 64 booths in the marketplace. In 2022, vendors made \$10,000 - \$45,000 CAD in sales. We are committed to increasing designer sales as IFA continues to grow.

Goals & Benefits

The Marketplace aims to develop and grow space in fashion and art markets for Indigenous artists. Designers gain access to audiences and industry and the opportunity to be featured at a professional marketplace that general customers, buyers and gallery curators attend. The Marketplace receive media coverage and social media presence and is anticipated for by the public.

The Marketplace is a juried program. A jury makes selections and selected applicants pay a booth fee to participate.





Juried Programs

Juried programs are adjudicated through a scoring system that considers artistic merit, viability and impact. The Artistic Director assembles the jury and is also a juror. Decisions are made by consensus, with considerable thought and discussion during deliberations. Jurors consider available programming slots, scheduling, curatorial arcs, and the priority areas. If a designer is not selected, it is not a comment on individual achievements, relationships, or the work's artistic value.

Curated Programs

Artists in a curated program, like an art exhibition or spotlight program, are selected through a curatorial process including research and solicitation. The Artistic Director curates the programmed works or appoints a guest curator, advisor or selection committee to make decisions. Programming selections align with a distinguishing curatorial vision and the priority areas listed above.



Lottery Programs

Lottery Programs are non-juried and non-curated; Artists are selected randomly in a draw. Applicants are not researched, evaluated or juried in a formal process – all applicants have the same chance of earning a programmed spot.

Artistic Policy

Designer or Artist?

IFA uses the words “artist” and “designer” interchangeably.

Whether a person identifies as an artist or designer or both will not influence the programming decision of submitted works.

What does IFA program?

IFA programs Indigenous-made fashion, craft and textile works for artistic, commercial, educational and public programming for all audiences. Programmed works must be fashion, craft or textile. All runway works must be wearable. IFA art exhibitions may also include alternate mediums and installation of works. Considering the priority areas, IFA selects works for any size or gender of a person.

Assessment feedback

Accepting and declining work is required but emotional for everyone involved. We understand how overwhelming it can be to receive such news. While deliberations are confidential, we welcome feedback on our processes and an IFA staff can review your application with you.

Unsuccessful applicants are strongly encouraged to attend the festival, meet their peers and reapply in the future

Priority Areas

All programming at Indigenous Fashion Arts is selected with great consideration including the following priority areas

- Majority representation of Indigenous women-identified and gender diverse artists
- A vibrant range of artistic expression and practice
- Diverse Indigenous representation
- Artists and designers who have not had a public presentation



Eligibility

Indigenous

Applicants must be Indigenous.

Who is Indigenous?

IFA recognizes Indigenous people as [outlined by the United Nations](#).

Emerging & Established

Emerging, mid-career and established artists and designers are equally considered.

Collectives, Brands & Companies

Collectives, brands and companies that are at least 51% Indigenous owned or led are eligible to apply to any program.

We strongly encourage regional artists and designers to apply as a collective in the marketplace program.

Applications

Applicants can submit one application per body of works per runway program. Applicants can submit one application to the marketplace program.



Assessment

IFA is committed to managing a transparent selection process, presenting a high level of excellence and maintaining artistic integrity that mutually benefits programmed artists, IFA and audiences. Due to high submission volumes and limited programming spots, an eligible applicant is not guaranteed acceptance.

Reviewing Your Application



Mainstage Runway

An appointed jury selects artists for the mainstage runway. The Artistic Director assembles the jury and is a juror. Jury members follow a rubric that considers artistic merit, viability and impact. Once the applications have been scored and tallied, the jury deliberates and makes curatorial decisions. The jury undertakes a considerable and equal review of each applicant.



Marketplace

An appointed jury programs artists for the marketplace. The Artistic Director assembles the jury and is a juror. Jury members follow a rubric that considers artistic merit, viability and impact. Once the applications have been scored and tallied, the jury deliberates and makes curatorial decisions. The jury undertakes a considerable and equal review of each applicant.

Assessment

The IFA selections committees are diligent in their review of all applications. Each application is reviewed by each committee member, with each committee member submitting points in each area of artistic merit, viability and impact. Once applications are individually reviewed, the selection committee programs each show based on consensus.

Scoring Rubric



Artistic Merit

Scored out of five points:

- Artistic vision
- Craftsmanship
- Innovation



Viability

Scored out of five points:

- Ability to complete and exhibit the proposed work

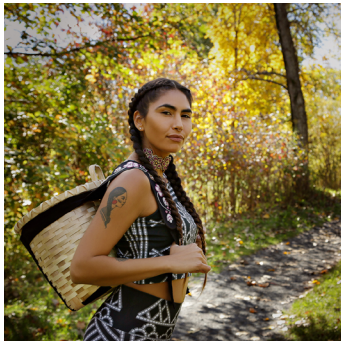


Impact

Scored out of five points:

- Advancement for the artist
- Sustenance of traditional knowledge and cultural expressions
- Engaged audiences

Conflicts of Interest



Transparency

We pay close attention to potential conflicts of interest (direct, indirect and perceived) to ensure transparency. When there is any question of conflict, a discussion and objective decision is made for whether a selection committee member can judge an application to guarantee fair judging of all applicants.

Direct, Indirect & Perceived Conflicts

A direct conflict of interest occurs when a juror or their immediate family member (spouse or partner, parent, child, sibling, or member of their immediate household) will benefit financially from the success of an application.

Indirect and perceived conflicts of interest occur when some factor makes it difficult for or it might appear that an assessor cannot objectively evaluate an application.



Artists that work for IFA

Given our small but growing community of Indigenous designers, we believe we cannot disadvantage Indigenous artists who give their time to IFA (e.g. staff, board member, juror or contractor) by excluding them from artistic presentation opportunities. Sometimes these applicants are eligible to submit their work to IFA, however, they do not influence programming decisions. In cases where their work is being considered, they are not present for discussions or decisions about their work, nor do they have input into the scheduling of it.

To maintain public confidence in our jury process, we have outlined our practices and policies that ensure all applications are considered fairly, even if an applicant is unsuccessful. In considering a conflict of interest, we identify direct, indirect, and perceived conflicts and manage them individually.



Ask for Help

Contact programming@indigenousfashionarts.com if you need more information about applying to or participating in IFA programming.

We strongly encourage all applicants and participants to reach out to their peers for support. Some ways peers can support each other are:

Ask and share about past experiences at IFA; Hire and share a marketplace sales rep; Share footwear for a Mainstage Runway show; or, Hire a shared makeup team for a Fringe Runway show.

What to Expect

The following will help to understand what to expect at IFA, from the moment you receive a response about your application until show day.



Notification

IFA will notify all applicants of their application's success by email.

Mainstage Runway notifications are sent out by email on June 1, about one year before the festival. The lineup announcement is made on July 1.

The Fringe Runway draw occurs online and participants are notified on June 1, about one year before the festival. The lineup announcement is also made on June 1.

Marketplace notifications are sent out by email on June 1, about one year before the festival. The exhibitor announcement is made on July 1.

Artist Fees

IFA pays an artist fee to programmed runway designers.

IFA sets artist fees based on the CARFAC minimum fee schedule.

If an artist is incorporated, an HST/GST number must be provided by the artist. Artists are responsible for their reporting for income tax purposes.

Marketplace Fees

Marketplace designers pay a booth rental fee to IFA to exhibit in the marketplace. Prices vary from \$200 - \$400 per booth.



Festival Access

Programmed artists will receive an Artist Pass that grants the following access:

- 2 X tickets to one Mainstage Runway show
- Priority access to panel discussions
- Exclusive access to networking receptions
- Exclusive access to the Industry Series
- Discounted registration for hands-on workshop

Marketing & PR

IFA provides branded content to artists for their personal use.

IFA pitches the festival and all programmed artists to the media. Although we do not promote individual artists for fairness, the media makes specific requests to interview individuals.

We strongly encourage designers to promote their inclusion at IFA to their media lists and social media.



Marketing & PR

IFA undertakes a marketing strategy that includes the following:

- Print and digital assets
- National publicity
- A social media strategy
- Local outreach to Indigenous communities and organizations
- Marketing and advertising collaborations and partnerships





Deliverables

If selected for IFA programming, the artist is required to deliver and approve materials.

- Biography
- Artistic or brand ethos statement
- 2 high-resolution editorial images (JPG)
- 2 high-resolution product flat lay images (JPG)
- 1 high-resolution headshot (JPG)
- If available, brand logo (EPS)

Information you provide will be used for print, digital and promotional purposes.

IFA reserves the right to request additional information or photography if needed.



Runway Preparation

- Document all bust, waist and hip measurements in inches for each of your looks with a description of the fit (i.e: fitted, loose) with a corresponding image (the image does not need to be professional)
- Identify looks that require more than 60 seconds to change into or out of
- Label and organize each look in individual garment bags with styling directions
- Prepare a kit for the day of your show, which should include safety pins, sewing needles, thread, extra notions (buttons, clasps, etc), trimming scissors, double sided tape, lint roller, insoles and a hand-held steamer
- Complete an editorial photoshoot 6 - 8 months prior to show day
- Complete the production of your collection 6 - 10 months before show day

Marketplace Preparation

- Prepare enough inventory for three days of sales.
- Stock at least \$10,000 (retail) worth of products.
- Goods valued at \$100-\$200 per sell consistently at IFA. However, items above and below that average price point also sell at the IFA marketplace.
- Obtain one-time exhibitor liability insurance
- Prepare your point-of-sale technology
- Design your booth to align with your brand image, which could include lighting, flooring, booth display and furniture, signage and promotional materials.
- Prepare for your customers to want to try on your work, which could include hand-held mirrors or a small changing station.
- Prepare packaging that aligns with your brand image
- Coordinate a team and a plan to load-in and load-out
- Ensure your products have been tested for quality control
- Create a sales plan and hire a great sales representative to manage your booth
- If you are your sales representative, research and ask for advice from your peers about sales approaches to selling out



Mainstage Runway Production

Designers provide completely styled looks and music for their show. Designers provide choreography notes on show day. Designers can set up a showroom booth at the theatre to take orders post-show.

IFA directs the Mainstage Runway, producing one set design, lighting design, and hair and makeup look per show for all featured artists. A gobo projects the designer's name and logo during their show.

IFA casts models as per designer requests. IFA pays model honourariums. Approximately 20 models are cast per show for all designers. Models undertake rehearsals with the choreographer.

Designers will be scheduled to work with models for fittings and choreography. Any instruction must work with choreography in place.

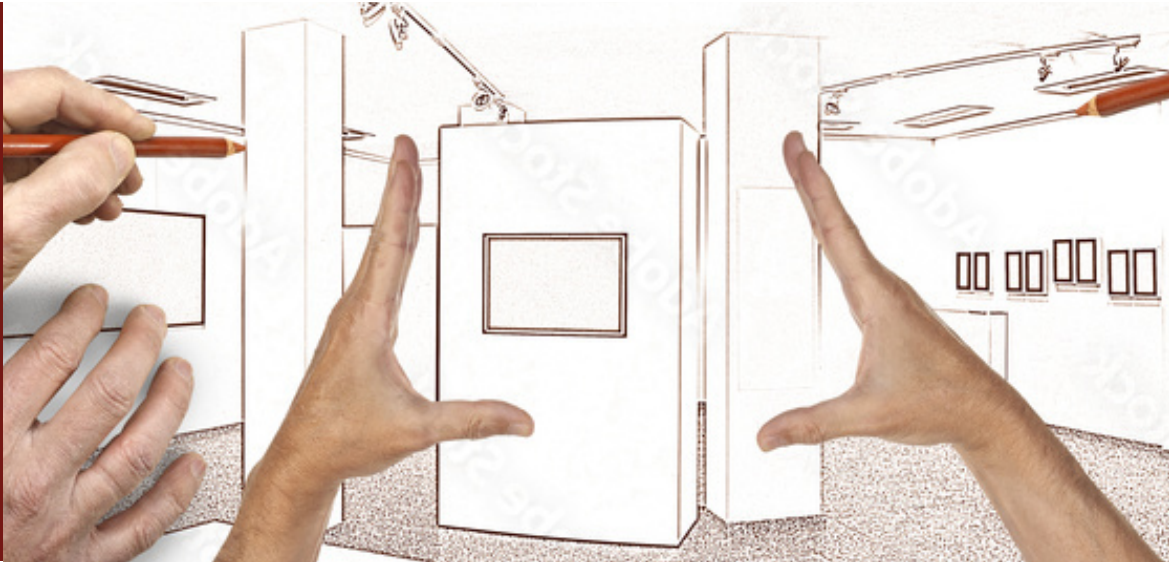
If a designer is not able to be in attendance, the designer must ship their collection to IFA prior to show day, organized and labeled, with accessories and footwear.

IFA does not provide travel, accommodation or per diem.

IFA Provides

- Venue, staging, set design and lighting design
- Production team
- Models
- Full hair & makeup
- Choreography
- Shared steamer
- Rolling racks





Marketplace Production

Designers are responsible for their staffing, shipping expenses and booth design. IFA will provide a schedule of load-in and load-out times.

Designers must detail electrical or large display equipment on the application form, including wattage requirements. Exhibitor booths are located under outdoor tents and electrical supply is limited. We encourage all vendors to ensure backup wifi connection in case of outages, such as mobile data.

Vendors (and/or their staff) must monitor their booth for the entire duration of the marketplace. IFA is not responsible for any lost or stolen products.

Vendors' must set-up and tear-down a professional presentation of their booth Exhibitor fees must be made by November 1. If fees are not paid on time, vendor booths will be given to "next in line."

IFA Provides

- Exhibition booth with table(s) and chair(s)
- Access to a power source at an extra cost
- Onsite and overnight security staff
- On-site wi-fi
- A discounted parking pass
- A marketplace coordinator







Guidebook Photos

All photo credits: Nadya Kwandibens, except the images listed with a asterick below

- *Coverpage: Catherine Blackburn, Designer
- *Page 2: Tania Larsson, Designer
- Page 3: Sho Sho Esquiro
- *Page 4: Sage Paul, Designer
- Page 9: Evan Ducharme, Designer (Top), Curtis Oland (Middle), Livia Manywound (Bottom)
- Page 10: IamAnishinaabe, Designer (Top)
- *Page 12: Jennifer Younger, Designer (Top), Kara's Beadwork, Designer (Bottom)
- *Page 13: Jean Marshall, Artist (Top), Amy Malbeuf, Artist (Middle), Section 35 (Bottom)
- Page 15: Mobilize, Designer (Top, Bottom)
- *Page 16: stock image (Bottom Left), MDW Jewelry (Bottom Middle)
- *Page 17: Niio Perkins Designs (Top)
- *Page 18: Only Chid Handicrafts, Artist
- *Page 19: stock image
- *Page 22: stock images
- *Page 23: IFA (Top)
- Page 23: Mobilize, Designer (Bottom)
- *Page 24: IFA (Top)
- Page 24: Catherine Blackburn, Designer (Bottom)
- *Page 25: stock image (Top)
- *Page 27: RS Gustafson, Artist
- *Back Cover Page: Jean Marshall, Artist



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