

September 11, 2007

Re: Ann Holmes & Associates

To Whom It May Concern:

In the Spring of 2007 the Art Centre hired Ann Holmes & Associates to facilitate a full-day Strategic Planning session at the University of Toronto Art Centre. The planning session was in response to an External Review of the Art Centre and subsequent changes to the Art Centre's Terms of Reference. The Art Centre staff involved at that time (a Curator, Curatorial Assistant, Collections Manager and Manager of Programs & Facilities) came from diverse backgrounds and had a range of concerns about their own positions, and about the Art Centre's future direction. Information about Ann Holmes, along with a CV were circulated. Staff agreed unanimously that Ms. Holmes training and experience made her an ideal candidate to conduct strategic planning within a non-profit arts environment.

Ms. Holmes made detailed preparations for the planning meeting. She read through numerous documents relating to the mission and mandate of the Art Centre. She interviewed me, each of the staff individually, and me again. She circulated preparatory notes, a detailed agenda, a glossary of terms and useful references. The all-day planning session took place on May 1, 2007. All staff present participated openly and readily. This was for two reasons: first, because they felt that Ms. Holmes had a good grasp of the complexity of the Art Centre's situation and the competing demands made on them, secondly, because her openness of manner encouraged their full participation. A great deal of work was accomplished. At the end of the day all felt very satisfied with the proceedings and voiced their respect for Ms. Holmes' abilities. The staff collectively agreed that we should continue the work with one more half day and requested that Ms. Holmes be invited back to push the work through to completion.

While working with the Art Centre Ms. Holmes acted at all times in a very responsible and professional manner. She took on the project at relatively short notice and made it work with her, and our, busy schedules. I would not hesitate to hire Ann Holmes & Associates again to consult to the Art Centre, and I recommend her most highly as a facilitator for similar institutions and organizations.

Sincerely,

Niamh O'Laoghaire

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