

# ARTS AND FINE CRAFTS

*The arts and fine crafts sector, in combination with the traditional economy (hunting, fishing, etc.) are very important to the subsistence of residents. This is especially true in the smaller communities in the NWT.*

Arts and fine crafts make an important contribution to our economy as an export industry as well as a cultural identifier. This sector provides incomes for residents who rely on their talents and artistic design to maintain their way of life and spiritual connection to the land. Success for many artists is important to their livelihood and well-being.

According to the 2008/2009 Household Survey conducted by the NWT Bureau of Statistics, there were more than 3,000 NWT residents over the age of 15 who participated in producing some form of art or craft.

The North Slave region is by far the leader when it comes to the number of people who produce arts and crafts in the territory. The North Slave region is followed by the Beaufort Delta, Dehcho, South Slave and Sahtu regions.

The survey also identified people who sold arts and crafts items in the NWT. It was reported that 924 producers in the NWT sold items they produced. Most artisans earned revenue of less than \$1,000.

The NWT arts and fine crafts sector is quite diverse, characterized by a wide range of traditional and modern activities. Production is primarily cottage-based. Individuals often produce and sell products independently, frequently out of their homes. Products are also sold to local retailers and cooperatives.

Artists may produce more than one type of art or craft, however most are involved with sewing or needle craft products.



Dene Cultural Institute Hay River - Dan Westman

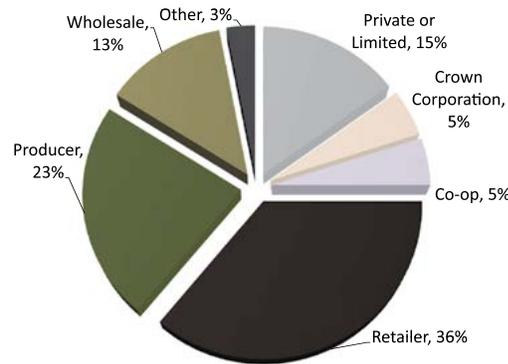
## Type of Business

There is a strong correlation between the retail and producer categories. This highlights the strong presence of self-producing businesses. A predominant number of respondents are artists and their retail business is operated around their own art or fine craft products.

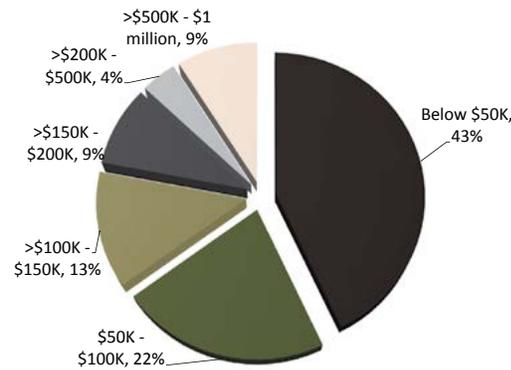
Arts and fine crafts retailers in the NWT are well established long term businesses. The majority have been in business between three and 10 years. The vast majority of retailers in the NWT (43per cent) are relatively small businesses, with annual gross revenues of less than \$50,000.

Another 22 per cent reported annual gross revenues from \$50,000 - \$100,000, and there were many that reported significantly higher sales. In fact, 35 per cent of all retail business surveyed in 2008 reported gross revenues in excess of \$100,000.

## Type of Business



## Annual Sales by Threshold

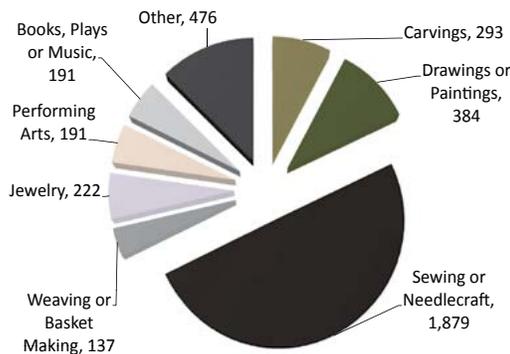


Source: GNWT 2008 Arts Retail Survey

## Industry Outlook

With tourism anticipated to increase by an average of 2.8 per cent per year over the next five years, the outlook for the arts and fine crafts sector is positive, with continued modest growth on a year over year basis.

## Type of Art or Craft



## Arts and Fine Crafts SWOT Analysis

### Strengths

- Sector benefits from a long history of traditional skills.
- Income opportunities for under-employed sector of our workforce (aboriginal women).

### Weaknesses

- Diminishing supply of raw materials.
- Lack of a distinct brand image for products.
- Access to e-markets limited in many small communities and aboriginal households.

### Opportunities

- Tourism demand for locally made goods is strong.
- E-commerce offers broader market.

### Threats

- Cheap knock-off reproductions of similar goods produced outside the NWT.
- Traditional skill loss among younger people.
- Modern clothing, which has been designed for the Arctic, has replaced the traditional need for home sewn clothes.
- High paying job opportunities in other sectors.





# FILM AND PRODUCTION

*Film, video, and digital media are the centre of a growing and dynamic industry in the NWT. Participation from local residents in the NWT is increasing and there are a number of projects currently in production. Experienced television and film professionals are available to offer their services and expertise to visiting production companies.*

While statistics on the NWT film industry are limited, the growing economic force of the NWT film and media arts industry was documented in a 2011 sector study, A Review of Film Commission Mandates (Outcrop Communications Ltd., 2011). The study found that film and digital media activities, including website design, annually contribute about \$9 million to the NWT economy. This includes about \$5 million in wages. More than 100 people are estimated to be employed full time in the NWT film and media arts industry.

The NWT has also enjoyed some notable successes in attracting investment.

Documentaries and television based reality shows make up the majority of filming activity in the NWT for out-of-territory productions; however, in recent years there has been an

increase in interest from television drama series and feature length film productions. These types of productions have very positive impacts on several sectors of the NWT economy, and create employment and training opportunities for local film industry members.

The most recent production and the first ever drama series to be filmed in the NWT is CBC's newest drama series, *Arctic Air* (Omni Film Productions Ltd.). The storyline is set in Yellowknife and makes reference to multiple communities throughout the territory. It drew the largest audience for the premiere of a new drama series in the last decade for CBC, with a total viewership of 1.05 million. It is estimated that in excess of \$1 million has been spent on goods and services while filming on location in the NWT.



Filming Arctic Air in Yellowknife - Black Swan Films taken by Coal Photography

Both the Native Communications Society and the Inuvialuit Communications Society (ICS) develop a variety of productions each year for the national Aboriginal People's Television Network. They currently produce four to six documentaries annually and estimate costs at \$60,000 per documentary.

It is difficult to predict future investment, but the NWT Film Commission will continue to promote and encourage filming activity in the Northwest Territories.

*Ice Road Truckers* (Original Productions Ltd.) was the first reality television series filmed in the NWT. In 2007, 3.4 million viewers tuned in to the series premiere, which made it the most-watched original telecast in the History Channel's 12-year history. The series filmed two successful seasons in the NWT and aired in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, the United States, Australia and the Netherlands.

Gemini Award winning *Ice Pilots NWT* (Omni Film Productions Ltd.) is still going strong into its third season. It was also credited as being one of the History Channels highest-ever ratings for a Canadian series.

Additionally, Discovery Channel's *Mighty Ships* and *License to Drill* (Exploration Production Inc.) documentary series used various locations in the northern NWT for filming.



Arctic Air - Omni Film Productions Ltd.

Conservative estimates place the value to the NWT of these types of productions at approximately \$100,000 in direct expenditures each year, per production. This does not include private contracts whereby a monetary sum may be paid to an individual or business to participate in a show under an agreement made between the production company and the individual or business.

Other productions include the award-winning Tropicana commercial Brighter Mornings for Brighter Days campaign that was filmed in Inuvik. It was estimated the filming of the Tropicana television spot in January 2010 contributed \$350,000 to the local economy.

## The Film Industry - SWOT Analysis

### Strengths

- Unique characters, colourful history and unique geography.
- Northern personalities (old and new).
- Northern and Aboriginal culture.
- Success and legacy of *Ice Pilots NWT*; *Ice Road Truckers*, *License to Drill* and *Arctic Air*.
- Small, but highly skilled, resource of professional film people and performers.
- Ice roads, vintage planes, etc.

### Weaknesses

- High costs but comparable with larger southern centres.
- Shipping and transportation logistics.
- Limited support services.
- Limited resources for assisting film development - small population and economies to scale.
- Distance and remoteness.
- Uncertain market conditions for local industry.
- Limited range of capacity and limited opportunities for local industry.

### Opportunities

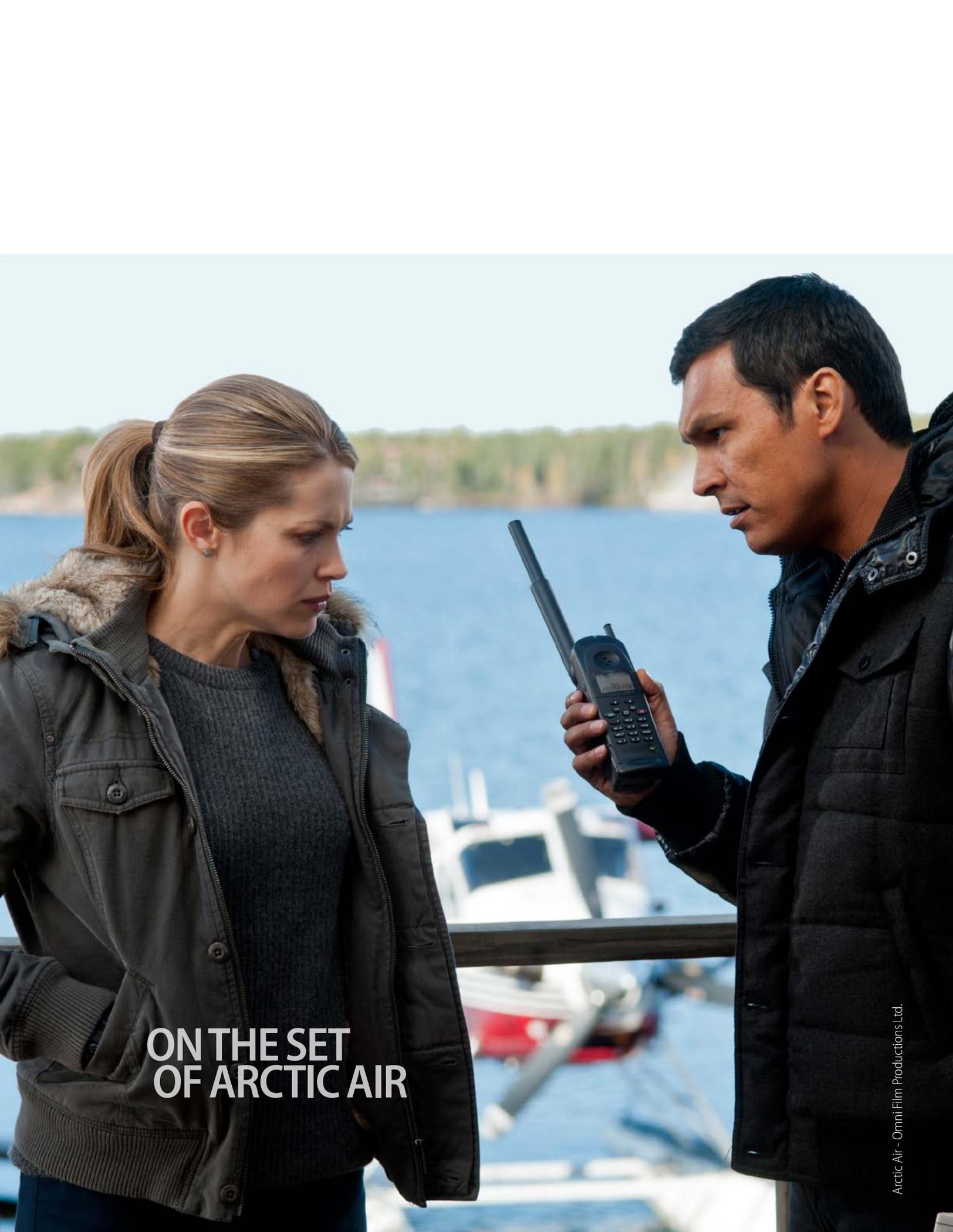
- Increased interest in the North and Arctic especially with regard to:
  - Features;
  - Series;
  - Commercials;
  - Reality shows (eg: Jesse James);
  - Lifestyle media.
- Cold weather testing - Porche and Land Rover.
- North pole and sea ice interest.
- Historical connections - Franklin (traveled the Western Arctic as well); Mad Trapper; Canol Trail; Hudson Bay Company, etc.

### Threats

- Competing locations.
- Other locations have better incentive programs.
- Waning interest in the Arctic.
- Lack of production funding.



Ice Road Trucker Returning from a Mine Haul - Jiri Hermann



**ON THE SET  
OF ARCTIC AIR**