



REPORT | SEPTEMBER 2017

Creative Hosts on Airbnb

Vancouver



By Mavis Hamilton, Airbnb Host, Artist, Vancouver

Introduction

Creatives — people who work in visual arts, performing arts, photography, music, film, fashion, or entertainment — have always been an important part of Airbnb’s DNA, and a big part of what makes Airbnb special. Airbnb’s co-founders themselves are creatives, with two graduates of the Rhode Island School of Design, and all three-- Brian, Joe, and Nate-- believing that technology can increase the capacity and confidence of people. An early example of this kind of connection is Airbnb’s own story: while struggling to fund their fledgling company, co-founders Brian and Joe came up with an inventive marketing campaign in 2008, selling limited edition election-themed cereal boxes — Obama O’s and Cap’n McCain’s. The proceeds of the cereal sales kept the company afloat.

We hope that Airbnb can be the “cereal boxes” for other creatives — allowing them to fund their art, personal projects, creative businesses, and livelihoods. Home sharing through Airbnb is an attractive proposition for creatives: the Airbnb host community over-indexes on creatives, from photographers and comedians to musicians and fashion designers to film directors and actors. The creative community, across many sectors, are often early adopters of Airbnb. We love that Airbnb can provide artists with a flexible way to support their craft and contribute to their communities.

The story of creative hosts is repeated across artistic hubs throughout the world — in Berlin, Florence, Los Angeles, New York, Paris, London, Tokyo, Toronto, and beyond. In this report, we showcase the creatives in our host community of Vancouver.

Creative hosts on Airbnb

Vancouver is undoubtedly one of the hubs of Canada’s creative sector. According to the Vancouver Economic Commission, Vancouver is the third largest film and television production centre in North America.¹

As early adopters of Airbnb, creatives in Vancouver helped to establish the sharing economy culture and continue to be disproportionately represented in the Airbnb host community. In 2011, when Airbnb was still new and fledgling, creative hosts made up 14 per cent of the host population.² Creatives have been effectively managing multiple gigs, flexible jobs, self-employment, and alternative income options for ages³ — and home sharing is a natural complement.

¹ Accessed September 18, 2017 at

<http://www.vancouvereconomic.com/film-television/>

² 14% of the host population in Vancouver was employed in art and creative industries, film, visual arts, entertainment, photography, music, or fashion.

³ Accessed August 24, 2017 at

<http://ccarts.ca/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/StatusoftheArtistReport1126101-Copy.pdf>

Today, creative hosts represent 11 per cent of the host community in Vancouver. With a thriving arts and culture scene, Vancouver is a muse to world-renowned artists, writers, dancers and musicians, and home to the highest proportion of creatives in Canada.⁴

Creative hosts in Vancouver are predominantly female (69 per cent) while the remaining 31 per cent are male. All ages are represented in the Vancouver creative host community, with 13 per cent of hosts under 30 years of age, 63 per cent of hosts between the ages of 30 and 50, and 24 per cent over the age of 50.

Why creatives choose home sharing on Airbnb

Home sharing can be a good fit with creatives' lifestyles, where creative work is often project-based, and the time between projects and contracts can be financially uncertain. Given that uncertainty, it's not surprising that 45 per cent of creative hosts in Vancouver juggle multiple jobs or roles. Home sharing through Airbnb can be a way for creatives to generate or supplement income when they need to. The income earned from Airbnb can be an important lifeline for creatives, smoothing out earnings during lulls, supplementing wages, and providing a financial boost that helps creatives pursue work and stay in their communities. The majority of creative hosts on Airbnb, 73 per cent, depend on Airbnb income as important supplemental income to help make ends meet. Approximately four per cent depend on home sharing as their primary income, helping to pursue their passions and build their profiles in this unpredictable and challenging sector.

Along with financial uncertainty, project-based creative work can also require travel — movies are filmed on location; photographers do destination shoots; artists travel to exhibitions; actors, costume, set and lighting designers work in summer theatres around the province — meaning that creatives are sometimes away from home for long periods of time. Among creative hosts who share their home while away, travelling for work is the most commonly reported reason for home sharing. By comparison, among non-creative hosts who share their home while away, the most commonly reported reason for home sharing is travelling for vacation. Of creative hosts who share their primary home while away, 25 per cent⁵ report sharing their home while travelling for work, often hosting medium- and long-term stays. 17 per cent of trips hosted by creative hosts are for extended stays of more than seven nights.

Home sharing through Airbnb is a flexible tool for creatives in Vancouver to generate income when they need it, accommodate an irregular work schedule, financially optimize extended business travel, and invest time in hosting when they can.

The importance of supporting creative communities

A strong creative community makes places more attractive for both residents and visitors. Today, Vancouver is North America's third largest producer of movies, after Los Angeles and

⁴ Accessed September 18, 2017 at <http://www.vancouvereconomic.com/focus/other-sectors/>

⁵ The remaining 75% of hosts share their homes while away for reasons other than business travel, including travelling for vacation (50%) or a combination of these reasons in addition to staying elsewhere with friends and family in the city (25%).

New York, and North America's second largest producer of television shows.⁶ The City of Vancouver was also recently ranked as the best big city in North America to live and work as a moviemaker.⁷ Building vibrant communities that support quality of life is critical to attracting a workforce and allowing areas to grow and prosper. In this way, supporting a creative community contributes to a strong community.

Alongside cultural diversity and community development, a strong artistic community can contribute to tourism. Vancouver is home to world-class symphony orchestras, ballet companies, theatre troupes, comedy clubs, and art galleries; and also emerging artists, small venues, fledgling musical groups, and small-scale fashion production. The presence of these institutions is a major draw for cultural tourists. 54 per cent of Airbnb guests report that they attended cultural events and cultural attractions when they visited Vancouver, apportioning 14 per cent of their travel budgets towards cultural activities and entertainment.

Airbnb recently announced a complement to home sharing in Experiences. Experiences are another way creatives can share their craft and contribute to tourism: 26 per cent of Experiences in Vancouver are creative experiences in the arts, entertainment, fashion, or music, one of two of the largest categories of Experiences, the other being food and drink. We look forward to the way Airbnb Experiences can enhance travel for guests to Vancouver and benefit creative Experience hosts alongside home sharing.

We believe that creative Airbnb hosts, and creatives in Vancouver generally, make important contributions in their communities, helping to make the neighbourhoods of Vancouver great places to live *and* visit.

⁶ Accessed September 18, 2017 at <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/vancouver-tv-pilot-production-1.3706231>

⁷ Accessed September 18, 2017 at <http://dailyhive.com/vancouver/vancouver-best-city-filming-north-america-moviemaker>

Meet our creative hosts in Vancouver

Lucia, Actress



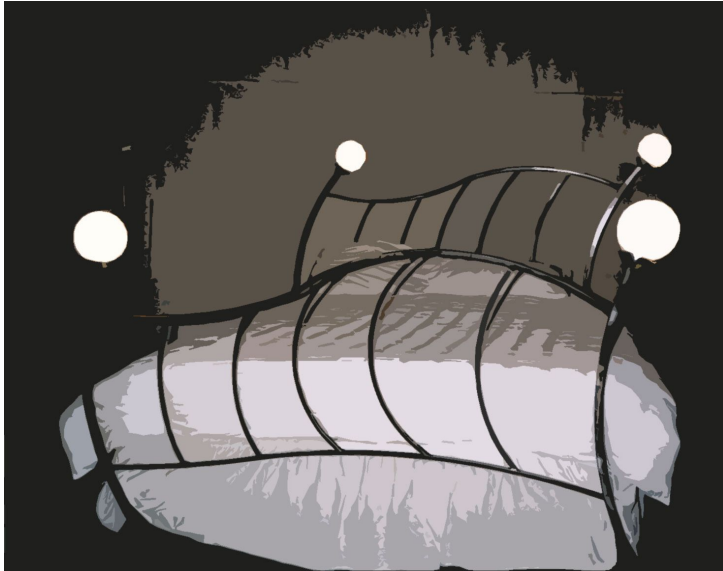
Armed with one acting course, Lucia jumped right into the film industry when American producers started scouting Vancouver in search of talent. She quickly found herself in a booming industry, appearing in productions from television commercials to blockbuster movies. When Lucia is not acting, she works shifts as an obstetrics nurse, all while balancing the demands of a young family. Even before Airbnb, Lucia often and still does welcome friends and family frequently to her home, so hosting came naturally to her.

Hosting allowed Lucia to pursue the creative industries in Vancouver, as it helped her cushion the rising cost of living. It also allows her to stay in her bustling artistic neighbourhood where she works and raises her family. In addition to generating revenue that helps to stabilize her family's income, Airbnb allows Lucia to meet people from all walks of life.

As part of her host duties, she takes pride in her unofficial role as a Vancouver ambassador, directing hosts to local attractions and small businesses in her neighbourhood.

Noah, Mixed Media Artist

While Noah has been pursuing his art for almost three decades, it's only in the last three years that he's added Airbnb to the mix. He decided to start hosting based on the advice of his friends, and hasn't looked back.



"It's been a terrific experience for me," he says. "It helps me pursue my art and I've met some great people who have really inspired me." One of his favourite guests was a fellow artist from Germany who spent many hours chatting with Noah about her landscape installations. "By the end of her stay I think we both looked up to each other!"

Noah works with a variety of metals, wood and concrete that he re-shapes into visually pleasing and functional pieces. For him, art is about making things that can be used and admired.

Airbnb gives him some extra freedom to do what he wants to do, whether that's work on his art pieces, put aside some additional money for his property taxes or go on trips that he wouldn't otherwise be able to. "Home sharing affords me the pleasure of sharing my world and learning about others, while also making some extra money for everyday life," he says.

Michel, Actor

Michel is an athlete turned actor. Originally from France, he moved to Vancouver in 1997 after falling in love with the city while searching for a training base for a round-the-world athletic expedition. Several years later, as his athletic career peaked, he met a director of photography who introduced him to the film industry.



Michel found acting and athletics very similar—both are performance-driven activities where training and discipline were essential—so his transition was easy. However, incomes for actors were sporadic as jobs came and went. After learning about Airbnb from friends, he started listing part of his home to supplement his acting income.

The hosting experience quickly led to interesting connections for Michel. Some years ago, he hosted a guest from the United Kingdom who stopped by Vancouver in transit to Australia.

They kept in touch and co-founded a production company engaged in film and television and are currently in the development stage of a feature film.

Airbnb allowed a French expat in Canada to start a business collaboration with a Briton in Australia.

Mavis, Artist and Designer

After studying theatre design in Quebec and working at The Stratford Theatre, Mavis was awarded a scholarship to study at the Banff Centre for the Arts, where she studied design for musical theatre. In her second year at the Banff Centre, Mavis met her future husband Brian who was studying television production.

The couple moved to Toronto to begin their married lives together. After an awe-inspiring 11-day kayaking trip to the Queen Charlotte Islands in British Columbia, they moved to Vancouver in 1992, where they have lived ever since.



Five years ago, Mavis heard about Airbnb from friends who had used the service on their travels. As their neighbourhood was becoming more expensive, the couple decided to host guests when their in-law suite was not in use by friends and family.

Mavis is an enthusiastic ambassador for her chosen city of Vancouver, and enjoys helping guests discover hidden aspects of Vancouver such as the growing collection of unique art murals in her Main Street neighbourhood that is the result of annual mural festivals organized by the city. Mavis was at the forefront of this trend to beautify local Vancouver neighbourhoods when she designed and painted one of Main Street's first murals 25 years ago.

Mavis was one of the earliest Vancouver hosts to be recognized as a Superhost, and she particularly enjoys welcoming people from artistic and creative backgrounds, including production staff working in film and TV, who often move from site-to-site following the requirements of production. Mavis believes that Airbnb allows visitors to live and breathe the city they work in, which ultimately creates a better final product. Mavis and Brian have hosted creative professionals from as far away as Beijing, China and Bogota, Colombia, as well as many parts of Europe.

James, Visual Artist and Performer



Early in his career James tried the traditional 9 to 5 job and quickly realized it wasn't for him. "Art has been a lifelong pursuit for me," he says. "I need to be creative!"

Airbnb has acted as yet another creative outlet for James, who spent a lot of time staging and designing his home before listing the space. He's had back-to-back bookings ever since he joined in 2012 and loves the positive energy from the guests who visit him. "I love talking to different people - I've been influenced by so many of my guests, and I consider a lot of them friends to this day."

Most recently James was touring the province and acting in the Broadway musical *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. Sharing his home has allowed him to continue doing what he loves. "I can spend more time on the creating and worry less about my income," he says.

Vanessa, Writer

Vanessa is a globe-trotting Vancouver native who brings travel destinations to life on the pages of newspapers, magazines and travel guides as well as online publications. She started her career writing for Vancouver's iconic newsrooms, reporting on travel destinations across the world. She also founded, edited and managed an award-winning magazine. With disruptive technologies affecting everyone in journalism, she transitioned to freelance work two years ago.



Just as she found herself on the tail end of a beleaguered news world, Vanessa attended an Airbnb Open conference, where she quickly discovered that she was at the beginning of a revolutionized home-sharing industry. Whenever she travels for a project or to visit family in Europe, she lists her home on Airbnb to smooth the peaks and valleys of freelance income.

Like many Vancouverites, Vanessa knows that Vancouver is becoming a more expensive city to live in. Despite that, Vancouver remains a strong magnet for tourists in search of a unique and hospitable destination. Airbnb has allowed hosts like Vanessa to tap into a strong tourism sector and share their space and earn supplemental income.