

Canadian Arts Coalition ELECTION TOOLKIT FALL 2008

Preamble

As you review and communicate these key questions, talking points, statistics and messages, remember that it is equally important that you personalize your engagement with political candidates in your riding. **Be prepared to animate your points and questions with your story.** For artists, arts organizations and Board members: What role does you or your organization play in your community? How could new investment help you to be more effective, realize new initiatives, connect to more audiences, explore new ideas, be more innovative, etc.? For business leaders: In addition to the previous questions, you may wish to speak to how you see that adequate funding for arts and culture is essential for Canada's current and future position in the international marketplace.

In your correspondence, remember to identify yourself as a supporter of the Canadian Arts Coalition.

Background

Canadian arts workers, business leaders and volunteers are coming together to call for **enhanced federal investment in the arts.**

We are **united** in the knowledge that **greater public investment in the arts is essential to Canada's future.** We believe that the high quality of life, for which Canada is known, depends in part on the existence of a vibrant and diverse arts and heritage community.

We regret the recent arts cuts announced by the Government of Canada to arts funding programs at the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Canadian Heritage. We are committed to **working with the Government** to demonstrate the value of focused, strategic and adequate investment in the cultural sector, to maximize the impact of public investment.

The cultural sector wants and needs to have a productive and constructive relationship with whatever government is elected into office. **We are calling on all parties to articulate their vision, priorities and plans with respect to the cultural sector** – and this point needs to be raised at all-candidates meetings; local, regional and national debates; in the media; and on the doorsteps of Canadians throughout this election campaign and beyond.

Key Messages

A thriving arts and culture sector, underpinned by adequate investment by the federal government, will place Canada at the forefront of a global society that **values innovation, excellence, social cohesion and economic prosperity.** (Support document: Canadian Arts Coalition's submission to Standing Committee on Finance, August 2008)

93% of Canadians believe that the arts define Canada's national identity
(Source: Ipsos-Reid - Focus on the Arts 2000)

Canadians view the arts as a centre of excellence, innovation and creative leadership in Canada and recognize that these attributes are the contemporary building blocks of an internationally competitive society.

91% of Canadians believe that cultural activities contribute to the vitality and competitiveness of our communities (Source: Ipsos-Reid - Focus on the Arts 2000)

The creative sector is an important part of the economy, and an adequate level of federal investment is necessary to keep it strong, and to ensure that Canadians and the world have access to the work of outstanding Canadian artists.

The government of Canada can strengthen the effectiveness of its support for dance and the arts and culture sector by investing in five key, interdependent areas of activity including:

- 1) the development, production, promotion and dissemination of Canadian works of art (through the Canada Council for the Arts);
- 2) public access;
- 3) organizational health and sustainability;
- 4) physical infrastructure; and
- 5) training.

Questions for candidates for public office

On public investment in the arts

What is your party's stand on federal investment in Canadian arts and culture? What specific financial commitments has your party made to arts and culture, should you form the next government? What does your party plan to do to stimulate and sustain the creative economy in Canada?

On cultural policy

What kinds of arts and culture policies do you believe will effectively nurture Canada's arts and culture sector? How will you work directly with the cultural sector to maximize the effectiveness of your proposed policies and investments? How can the federal government best help to develop domestic and international markets for our arts and culture sector, as it does for other sectors?

On the role of culture on the international stage

What kind of role do you believe that arts and culture plays in representing Canada internationally? Are there programs and policies that your Party will put in place to ensure that artists, creators and intellectuals participate in the Canadian foreign policy strategy? Does your party intend to replace the programs dedicated to the internationalization of Canadian culture (PromArt and Trade Routes)? Please provide specific details.

Other

What is your personal involvement in the arts in our community? Viewing arts and culture as a non-partisan issue, can you speak to your party's interest in cooperating with other parties to enhance the public investment in arts and culture?

Talking Points, Supporting Arguments and Statistics

The arts are an economic driver. In an August 2008 report entitled *Valuing Culture: Measuring and Understanding Canada's Creative Economy*, The Conference Board of Canada estimates that the economic footprint of Canada's culture sector was \$84.6 billion in 2007, or 7.4 per cent of Canada's total real GDP, including direct, indirect, and induced contributions. In comparison, the entire Canadian retail industry contributed just under 6% to the GDP. In 2003, direct employment in the cultural sector was 616,000. In 2007, employment in the cultural sector totaled over 1.1 million jobs.

The arts are efficient. According to a recent study commissioned by Business for the Arts, government investment in the performing arts sector earns a positive return of over 200% based on direct and indirect benefits.

Canada's arts and culture sector gives us a competitive edge. Our business leaders invest in the arts through annual donations, sponsorships and volunteer work because they know that Canada has to be able to compete with world-class cities like London, New York and Chicago. A vibrant arts and cultural sector is a big draw factor for skilled and creative workers. Arts workers and business leaders alike are calling on the government to contribute to this critical and promising investment.

In a report entitled *Use or Ornament?*, researcher François Matarasso states that a range of studies demonstrate that **"the arts innovate, challenge our perspectives, and present new ways of thinking**. They can help improve communication skills and promote creative thinking – key factors in the building of a creative entrepreneurial economy".

Participation in culture and the arts promotes civic engagement: a recent report by Hill Research Strategies demonstrates that arts attendance and engagement promotes voluntarism, philanthropy, the likelihood of doing a favour for a neighbour, a sense of belong to one's province and a sense of belonging to Canada, while at the same time reducing one's sense of being trapped in a daily routine.

While 64% of Canadian cultural industry workers are based in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, arts organizations and artists work in every province, territory, city and community of Canada. **Increased funding for the arts reaches right across Canada.** Moreover, according to Statistics Canada, the cultural workforce has grown by 31% over the last decade, compared to a 20% increase in the total number of employed workers.

Canadians are engaged in culture now more than ever before due to digital technologies, technologies that present new opportunities for creative expression and new pathways for social interaction.