



**NATIONAL CULTURE SUMMIT:
THE FUTURE OF ARTS, CULTURE
AND HERITAGE IN CANADA**

May 2, 3, and 4, 2022

Final Report



Canadian
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Canada

Catalogue Publication Information

This publication is available upon request in alternative formats.

This publication is available in PDF and HTML formats
on the Internet at <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/national-culture-summit/final-report.html>

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Catalogue No. CH4-198/2022E-PDF
ISBN 978-0-660-44503-8

National Culture Summit

The Future of Arts, Culture and Heritage in Canada

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Land Acknowledgement

This event was held physically at the National Arts Centre, in Ottawa, which is located on the unceded traditional territory of the Algonquin Nation, and virtually throughout the land now known as Canada and the place that Indigenous people have always called home.

From the Minister

To Canada's artists, creators, performers, and curators – and all those who support you,

Thank you to those who joined me virtually or in person at the *National Culture Summit*, and at regional roundtables in advance of the Summit. I am inspired by your passion and your dedication. I am very grateful during these challenging times for all your work.



One of the reasons that I think we needed to have this Summit was to come together after being kept apart for so long. Canada's cultural landscape has changed a lot since I was last Minister of Canadian Heritage in 2019. We all benefited from a chance to reconnect with one another; to share our challenges, our priorities, and vision for the future; and to collectively chart a path forward. I hope that you found moments during the Summit to debate with old friends and hear from new voices on the big issues we are tackling together, from the precarity of cultural work and the impacts of the digital revolution to the threats posed by climate change.

The Summit was an important opportunity to share my priorities, which revolve around creating the conditions for your future success. I was happy to share my vision for how we can harness the digital revolution and strengthen our culture through the *Online Streaming Act* and the *Online News Act*, while hearing from you about some of the challenges that you are facing, and the opportunities you are building, in digital spaces. The *Online Streaming Act* was recently adopted by the House of Commons and I am hopeful that it will receive Royal Assent soon. I am also working with the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry to amend the *Copyright Act* to further protect creators and copyright holders. Through this legislation, we will ensure a promising future for our artists, our creators, and our storytellers.

Now, as our legislative agenda moves ahead and I look to make progress on other commitments outlined in my [mandate letter](#), I intend to be guided by your voices, raising important questions like: How do we make sure our artists and creative professionals have the supports they need to thrive and innovate? How can we build more equitable access to funding and ensure that our entire cultural landscape reflects Canada's cherished diversity? How can we leverage our shared history and individual experiences to build deeper connections with one another and people around the world? As I read through the Summit's final report, I am captivated by the clarity and ingenuity of your ideas for tackling these important questions.

Other important commitments in my mandate letter were also underscored at the Summit, such as: deepening our efforts toward reconciliation by amplifying Indigenous voices and building opportunities for non-Indigenous communities to educate themselves on Indigenous people and cultures; establishing leadership roles for our arts, culture, and heritage sectors in the fight against climate change; and continuing to promote the growth of Canada's cultural and creative industries at home and abroad.

The Summit's rich discussions will help shape initiatives already underway and pave the way for new ones. I look forward to continuing to build on the Summit's momentum in the coming months as we move ahead on Canada's digital transformation, including by modernizing the institutions and funding tools that support Canada's audio-visual sector. The Government will also consult with diverse communities on new initiatives such as the Changing Narratives Fund announced in Budget 2022, a renewed national museums policy, the future of employment insurance, and a cultural diplomacy strategy for Canada.

I recognize that many who might have liked to join us at the Summit were unable to, so I will look for every opportunity to continue my discussions with you on all the Summit themes and next steps.

As I have said many times, I am grateful for all that you do to enrich our lives and make Canada a creative and forward-looking place, anchored in our values of diversity, inclusion, and sustainability.

The Honourable Pablo Rodriguez, P.C., M.P.

Executive Summary

The *National Culture Summit: The Future of Arts, Culture and Heritage in Canada* was held from May 2 to May 4, 2022. It brought together people from across the country, with approximately 400 in person at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, and 1000 online, for a national conversation on resilience, sustainability and transformation of the arts, culture, and heritage sectors in Canada.

These sectors have been amongst those hit hardest and longest by the COVID-19 pandemic. This has not only affected their economic viability but also their relationship with the public, whose interests, expectations, access and behaviours have shifted dramatically over the last two years. The pandemic accelerated a shift already underway in our society. Polarization, disinformation, an unequal set of rules for the foreign online broadcasters and social media companies challenge social cohesion in Canada. This reality, combined with growing awareness of systemic racism and a greater acceptance of the need to confront the climate crisis have created a need to reimagine policies, principles, and practices to ensure continued long-term, sustainable growth, competitiveness, and vitality of the arts, culture, and heritage sectors in Canada.

Key themes

Throughout the Summit, participants discussed their experiences, ideas, and visions for how to rebuild and transform. The discussions were structured along four key themes, central to the transformation of the arts, culture and heritage sectors in Canada:

- 1. The role of digital platforms in arts, culture and heritage sectors:** These sectors have moved beyond the “digital transition” into a digital-first approach. Participants advocated for further protections of Canada’s arts, culture and heritage sectors, asserting that artists and creators cannot survive on revenue from digital platforms, while organizations and institutions need to make major investments in their digital capacity. They also outlined the importance of increasing the digital literacy of creators and audiences.
- 2. Promoting long-term competitiveness and growth:** For many participants, a stable income is seen as necessary to encourage growth and innovation in the arts, culture and heritage sectors. This is important not just for individual artists and creators, but also for organizations. There is an urgent need to support training and diversity throughout the sectors to increase their sustainability.
- 3. The return of visitors and engaging new audiences:** According to participants, one way of doing this is through engaging audiences at the community level, and by providing secure funding so that creators and organizations can take risks – both in terms of innovation and creativity – when creating and presenting their content. In order to engage new audiences, participants pointed to the need to create more inclusive and representative artistic and cultural content that will speak to historically excluded communities. This can be accomplished through moving beyond content anchored in colonial histories, to reach and connect with newer Canadians and diverse audiences.
- 4. The contribution of cultural sectors to Reconciliation, combatting climate change and building an open and more inclusive society:** This could be accomplished through encouraging diversity at every level of organizational hierarchies, enhancing the representation of racialized communities, and respecting the autonomy of Indigenous people and organizations to make their own decisions. The arts, culture and heritage sectors,

according to participants, also have a leadership role to play in advocating for a greener future.

Areas of Future Action

Participants also articulated specific actions that could help clarify, rectify, and advance the issues identified above, and which cut across the Summit's four themes.

- 1. Regulating digital platforms and supporting innovation:** Overall, there is strong support from the arts, culture and heritage sectors for Bill C-11 (the *Online Streaming Act*). Digital platforms currently operate with few constraints and little accountability for their business decisions, often to the detriment of Canada's creators. Participants stressed that artists cannot survive solely on revenue from digital platforms, and an unregulated digital marketplace will result in a loss of cultural identity.
- 2. Stable financial support:** Stable financial support is essential, particularly for individual artists and arts, culture and heritage organizations who have traditionally not been able to access it. Related to the financial precarity faced by sector workers in light of the evolving economic landscape, the idea of a guaranteed basic income was brought up by many Summit participants. While distinct from a "business model" *per se*, this type of financial and social support was raised as a tool that could help diversify the workforce in the sector and help foster innovation by creators.
- 3. Reflecting Canada as it is today:** Participants highlighted more diversity, inclusion and equity are needed within all aspects of the work. Participants want to see the true make-up of the country reflected in decision-making positions, in artistic production itself, and in audiences. They advocated for new, inclusive approaches to cultural policy.
- 4. Respecting and Uplifting Indigenous voices:** Respecting Indigenous voices is essential, and Reconciliation can take many forms. Participants spoke of Reconciliation through proper funding, increased Indigenous representation in the boardrooms of cultural institutions, and the freedom for Indigenous people and organizations to make their own decisions.
- 5. Raising Canada's profile on the international stage:** Participants said they would like to raise the international profile of Canada's arts, culture and heritage sectors in order to develop a global demand for Canadian talent and artistic production. The importance of cultural diplomacy¹ to champion positive social change and promote Canadian values was also emphasized, alongside the clear contribution of cultural exports to Canada's GDP and economic strength.
- 6. Harnessing the power of art and culture for social change:** There were calls to recognize the contributions of culture to Canada's civic life and harness its power to improve social outcomes. Participants expressed interest in greening the arts, culture, and heritage sectors and indicated that audiences expect leadership in this area. Participants also called for the sectors to be leveraged to improve social outcomes for Indigenous, Black, and other racialized communities.

Participants raised the need to reexamine the fundamentals in arts, culture, and heritage in Canada. Concrete suggestions included a revised National Museum Policy, acknowledging the racist and

¹ A 2019 Senate Report cited former ambassador Cynthia P. Schneider, defining cultural diplomacy as "the exchange of ideas, information, art and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples to foster mutual understanding."

colonial assumptions of the Massey Report and working to eliminate their influence on the future of Canada's cultural policy and programs, modernizing Canada's copyright legislation, regulating online platforms, and revising sometimes overly restrictive eligibility requirements for funding, in particular with a focus on increasing equitable outcomes.

Overview of Engagement

Objectives

The goal of the Summit was to engage participants from the arts, culture and heritage sectors in a discussion on ways to support their post-pandemic recovery and long-term growth and competitiveness.

More specifically, the Summit aimed to:

- chart a path forward and develop plans to restart and position the arts, culture, and heritage sectors for the future;
- allow the Government and the implicated sectors to mutually share and coordinate their priorities;
- strengthen networks and facilitate sharing of best practices.

Themes

Conversation during the Summit centred on four themes:

- The role of digital platforms in arts, culture and heritage sectors: *What is the role of digital platforms and technology? How can they best support innovation and growth in a digital age?*
- Promoting long-term competitiveness and growth: *What are the long-term trends and existing barriers, influencing growth and competitiveness in your sector, both nationally and internationally?*
- The return of visitors and engaging new audiences: *How do we successfully welcome back and reach new audiences and visitors, and create more opportunities for Canadian creators on the global stage?*
- The contribution of cultural sectors to Reconciliation, combatting climate change and building an open and more inclusive society: *How can the cultural sectors contribute more directly to Reconciliation, the fight against climate change, and building a more just, cohesive, and inclusive society? What changes are needed for these sectors to continue to become more diverse, inclusive and equitable?*

Approach

The event design was informed by pre-engagement sessions held across Canada by the Minister of Canadian Heritage. These pre-engagement sessions helped to validate the key themes of discussion during the Summit.

The Summit itself was a hybrid event that featured content and engagement opportunities both in-person and online. Approximately four hundred people attended the Summit in-person at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, and at any given time, between 300 and 400 people participated in the event online via Zoom, with a total of 1050 unique online registrations. Three hundred and fifty people provided feedback through an online engagement tool both during and after the event.

Opening reception

The [Summit](#) began with an opening reception on the evening of May 2nd. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau [addressed attendees](#), sharing his thoughts on the current state and aspirational future of arts, culture and heritage in Canada. The Prime Minister spoke about the sectors, not just as “significant drivers of our economy,” but as an essential social good with a “fundamental role in building a stronger, more cohesive society.” He also noted the widespread excitement over the

Government's announcement of a forthcoming all-Canadian production of *Come From Away*. Finally, the Prime Minister shared new details about the Canada Performing Arts Workers Resilience Fund. The objective of the Fund is to retain Canadian skilled workers through a temporary program that invests in sector-led and delivered initiatives which improve the economic, career, and personal circumstances of independent and self-employed workers in the live performance sector. The program will distribute \$50 million directly to affected self-employed individuals in the sector.

Minister's remarks

At the outset of the second day of the Summit, Minister Rodriguez delivered a [keynote speech](#). His remarks focused on how Canadian culture can flourish in the midst of the digital revolution. In particular, the Minister presented the policy choice facing Canadians today between what he characterized as the unregulated, profit-driven current landscape for digital platforms or a more regulated digital ecosystem that serves the public.

The Minister spoke again on the last day of the Summit, in a "fireside chat" format with moderator Mani Soleymanlou (Director of French Theatre at the National Arts Centre). Throughout the session, the Minister discussed key takeaways from the Summit (including the need for digital regulation, ongoing pandemic recovery support, and support for sectors as they take their place on the international stage) and how they relate to his mandate commitments and the Government's broader agenda.

Plenary sessions

Four plenary sessions were held over the course of the Summit. They consisted of panel discussions with industry leaders, followed by question-and-answer sessions with participants.

The plenary sessions were also streamed online. Online participants could watch the plenaries and participate virtually via a moderated Zoom chat. They could also ask the panel questions through the platform's "Q&A" function. Online participants upvoted their favourite questions, and the most popular questions were brought to the in-person moderators for response by the panelists.

A graphic recording of the plenary sessions – produced by AHA! Graphic facilitation – was captured live, in-person (Appendix A).

An artistic rapportage of the discussions that took place on May 3rd was written and performed on the following day by Danielle Le Saux-Farmer (Appendix B).

The titles of the plenary sessions were:

- Armchair Discussion with Arts, Culture and Heritage Leaders
- Supporting Workers in the Arts, Culture and Heritage Sectors
- Arts, Culture and Heritage as Mirrors and Drivers of Social Change
- The Role of the Digital Platforms and Technology in Arts, Culture and Heritage Landscapes

Breakout sessions

In-person attendees had the opportunity to participate in breakout sessions on six discussion topics (two rounds of three concurrent breakout sessions).

Each session began with a moderator framing the conversation. Participants engaged in dialogue in small groups, based on supplied questions. At the end of the session, tables were invited to share the highlights of their conversation with the rest of the room. The sessions were supported by notetakers for reporting purposes, and some with graphic recording.

The breakout session themes were:

- Innovation and Growth in the Digital Revolution
- Inclusion, Diversity and Accessibility
- Canada on the International Stage
- Advancing Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples through Culture
- Canada's Evolving Audiences and Visitors
- Greening the Arts, Culture and Heritage Sectors

Online engagement tool

An online engagement tool was created to allow people participating in the Summit virtually to contribute their views on the same breakout session topics and questions.

This online engagement tool stayed open until May 11th, providing both virtual and in-person participants the opportunity to further contribute to the discussion on all topics of interest. In total, there were 350 responses to the survey, including 122 complete and 228 partial responses.

Results from the online engagement tool are integrated throughout the body of this report.

Involvement of Indigenous partners

The Summit included Indigenous voices and perspectives. First Nations, Inuit and Métis Elders participated in the Summit in recognition of the knowledge, wisdom and experience that they hold, and the Summit opened and closed with an Elders' reflections. An Indigenous master of ceremonies, artist performance, participation in plenary sessions (as moderator and panelist) and breakout sessions (as moderator and attendees) helped to incorporate Indigenous voices in Summit conversations. The *Ankosé* room was created for Elders and Indigenous attendees to meet among themselves and with non-Indigenous partners alike to foster connectedness. Indigenous protocols, such as smudging and tobacco/tea offerings, were followed with Elders.

There were a number of lessons learned from the Summit. First is the importance of highlighting Indigenous perspectives and thematics throughout the agenda. Moreover, there is a need for greater inclusion of Indigenous youth, Indigenous people who are members of 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities, members of Northern communities, from across all regions and community members who could contribute to discussions and share their worldviews. In addition, creating space for traditional Knowledge Keepers in future engagements will enhance awareness of the differing understanding of the terms "culture and heritage" from an Indigenous perspective and the importance of the land. These lessons will inform future departmental engagements.

Efforts toward equitable engagement

In order to foster robust and inclusive discussions, Summit organizers considered how to ensure equitable engagement from all Summit attendees, including and especially, equity-deserving community members. From early design stages, organizers worked to develop a breadth of representation across Summit roles, from participants, to moderators, to panelists, to MCs, and worked with partners such as the Canada Council for the Arts to diversify and expand the invitation list for the event. With a diverse invitation list in mind, callouts for participants made to PCH branches, the Canada Council for the Arts, and provincial/territorial governments asked respondents to provide an array of information for each person recommended to attend, including their home province/territory, sector of work, and whether they self-identified as an Indigenous person or had an affiliation with other equity-deserving communities.

Organizers also attempted to design sessions so that equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility (IDEA) themes cut across plenaries and breakout sessions, rather than being restricted to one or two dedicated sessions. Summit organizers also engaged a visual artist to create “graphic recordings” of Summit discussions (see Annex A). These recordings provided an alternative format, allowing attendees with a range of learning styles and preferences to feel included and engaged.

There remained a number of shortcomings to the full and equitable participation of equity-deserving communities. The intended diversity of participants was not fully realized. Although the entire sectoral, regional and demographic distribution of participants is unknown due to some data shortcomings, attendance fell short of targets. In particular, participants noted an insufficient degree of inclusion of representatives from Western Canada, as well as at times insufficient engagements of participants who were joining the Summit virtually. For additional information, refer to “Feedback on event format” below.

Participants

A wide variety of participants from across Canada took part in the sessions, ranging from individual artists, creators and heritage workers to administrators, business leaders and philanthropists.

Feedback on event format

The Summit was the first event of its kind, and presented new opportunities and challenges given the hybrid approach. Through the Zoom chats and a post-event questionnaire, participants identified limitations of the event format, content and engagement opportunities:

- There was a perception that event invitations were targeted to arts administrators, not artists;
- Concerns were raised about diversity and representativeness at the Summit, with some noting a strong focus on central Canada and insufficient perspectives from British Columbia, Alberta, and the Prairies.
- Many participants pointed to underrepresentation of equity-deserving groups, as well as a lack of representation of the heritage and visual arts sectors on plenary panels;
- Virtual participants expressed disappointment with the inconsistent content and engagement experience compared to that of in-person participants (for example, the live performances were not streamed due to video quality constraints, and there was no opportunity for online participants to join the breakout room discussions).

The Department of Canadian Heritage will consider this important feedback as well as strategies to improve Indigenous participation and advance equitable engagement when planning future engagement opportunities.

The hybrid-format also provided a number of benefits of the event format including:

- The National Arts Centre was viewed as an excellent physical venue for in-person attendees. The placement of cameras and microphones allowed strong access for virtual attendees, as well.
- The inclusion of graphic summaries for most of the sessions were a strong addition.
- The use of the virtual chat allowed on-line participants to raise ideas, questions, and concerns in real time, enabling a kind of interactivity that was useful.

What was said

How we are now

Key Theme #1: The role of digital platforms in arts, culture and heritage sectors

The digital revolution has been impossible to ignore for the sectors. As the Minister said during his opening remarks, "... what happens online influences what happens everywhere else, on our stages, in festivals, in our museums, public libraries, in the streets, communities, here in Canada and across the world." For some participants, the pandemic was an opportunity to share new and more content and programming digitally. It allowed them to build bridges and reach out to different communities. However, others pointed out the hybrid model is twice the work without twice the support.

"We have to remember one thing: [the Web giants] act like conquerors. They don't play by the rules and they don't respect copyright or the media, who are there to talk about what's going on here in Canada. ... You can't control the digital universe. It's owned by digital giants who don't respect the law or even government authority. During the past two years of the pandemic, they made a fortune; they became richer than ever." (original remarks in French)

Inadequate protection of the public interest

There was a perception among some attendees that, at present, digital platforms operate under minimal regulation. The result, people fear, is an ecosystem that uniquely serves the bottom line with little regard for the public interest. During a dedicated session on the digital revolution, most panelists expressed support for Bill C-11. They applauded the government's work and said the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) must be given more power and more expertise to deal with the new reality of digital platforms.

Others stated that any legislation will need to take the whole ecosystem into account. They stated that regulation ought to be good for artists and for the platforms. They argued it was undesirable for Canadian artists to be disadvantaged on the platforms because of regulation and cautioned that regulators would have to keep in mind the fact that each situation is unique.

Minister Rodriguez also addressed this apparent tension. During his remarks, he contended that Canada's strong culture is no accident, but rather the result of the decision the government made with the *Broadcasting Act* decades ago. In 2022, the Minister argued, the Canadian system should take into account online streaming and actively encourage platforms to invest in the Canadian culture in a way that makes sure we are supporting the next generation of Canadian artists, creators and stories. This, he stated, is the aim of Bill C-11.

Barriers to access

While new mediums allow creators to showcase different perspectives, it was highlighted that not everyone has access to new technologies. Lack of broadband access in Indigenous communities is a barrier, for example. Internet access is limited and slow, inhibiting some communities from sharing their works online the way others might (through streaming, for example).

"For northern communities, Inuit communities, and First Nations, we often don't have access to technology, we don't have stable internet connections." - Comment from an online attendee

The high cost of production equipment and infrastructure as well as accessing talent and building capacity were also highlighted as barriers. Many participants feel the sector is lagging on the digital front. Digital literacy is lacking and for some, it is a matter of resources. To be discovered, creators

and artists need to understand emerging and ever-changing technologies. This is time-consuming and costly.

Insufficient artist remuneration

Participants said that most artists cannot survive on revenue from digital platforms alone. It was also mentioned that artists getting their “big break” on YouTube were the exception, not the rule. One participant pointed out that it is important to distinguish between artists and other kinds of content creators, when talking about digital platforms.

“There’s a very big difference between putting up a ‘how to fix my plumbing’ video and creating a play or a work of art.”

Some participants took issue with the claim that the music industry has become more profitable in the last few years thanks to subscription services. They noted that while more money was being made, it was not going to the artists, but to music companies and platforms.

Erosion of cultural identity

Participants expressed concern that the marketplace does not help Canadians access Canadian content on digital platforms. Several commentators and panelists pointed to the ongoing issue of much of the Canadian media landscape being dominated by foreign content produced in Canada rather than Canadian stories or narratives.

Many Summit participants expressed concern about the cultural ramifications of algorithmic preference-based recommendations that power online content platforms. Some participants expressed concern at how algorithms could influence the consumption of culture online. These impacts could be particularly adversely felt by creators from linguistic and cultural minorities.

An important aspect of the discussion was the reality faced by Francophone markets, including the fragility and relative smallness of Francophone audiences and the ways in which technological platforms may facilitate the expansion of English-language content to the detriment of Francophone content. It was mentioned that in Quebec, only 8% of the music streamed on digital audio platforms is from Quebec.

“We are all fighting for minutes, sometimes seconds of people’s attention.”

One panelist mentioned how this contributed to making French language in North America not a language people seek to express themselves in, and ultimately, may contribute to its decline, especially for official language minority communities in Canada.

“My daughter makes music. She composes in English with friends. I’ve often asked her, ‘Why do you only compose in English?’ And her answer is: ‘We want to write music so we get known around the world. French is for losers.’ It hurts to be told that.” (original remarks in French)

Key Theme #2: Promoting long-term competitiveness and growth

The pandemic affected the arts, culture, and heritage sectors in Canada unevenly.

The live performance sector was devastated, according to panelists in the plenary session on the subject. “The distress was enormous” (original remarks in French) said one panelist. A significant number of artists, technicians, and cultural workers were forced to leave the sector due to financial struggles. Opportunities have evaporated and it is hard to convince new people to join the industry. There was talk of an industry “brain drain.” There was gratitude expressed for the Government of Canada’s emergency income support for individuals (i.e., Canada Emergency Response Benefit,

Canada Recovery Benefit). With these emergency funds, artists felt they were finally being treated fairly in relation to other workers.

Participants also expressed that the emergency funding disbursed by the federal government, including in Budgets 2021 and 2022, were vital. Ongoing supports are still being felt from Budget 2021, which allocated an unprecedented \$1.93 billion to Canadian Heritage and its Portfolio organizations for a variety of programs over five years. The funds ranged from supports to performing arts festivals and community-based cultural events, celebrations and commemorations to support for Canadian musicians, concert venues, producers, and distributors; funding for booksellers to help book stores increase their online sales; funding for magazines and community newspapers to help increase the provision of journalism, including local journalism; funding for arts and heritage institutions to help upgrade their facilities to meet public health guidelines; funding for community sports; and the \$300 million Recovery Fund for Arts, Culture, Heritage and Sport Sectors and the \$200 million Reopening Fund. These significant investments were reinforced by the additional supports introduced in Budget 2022, totalling \$322.3 million over five years for Canadian Heritage and its Portfolio organizations, which will support the arts, culture and heritage sectors hardest hit by the Omicron wave.

Some panelists also further argued that “the pandemic exposed weaknesses in the industry, it didn’t necessarily create them.” Panelists identified those pre-existing weaknesses as:

- issues related to training being under the responsibility of the unions and employers as opposed to provincial governments;
- not having access to employment insurance programs;
- the failure to attract and retain a diverse and inclusive workforce;
- the drain of talent to the United States;
- difficulties in attracting youth to the arts sector as they are also called upon to respond to pressing social justice movements and to confront a planet in decline; and,
- inequities between different sectors of the arts and culture industry (such as between the audio-visual and the performing arts sectors).

There is a sense the live performance sector has lost its sense of purpose, which will take a long time to regain.

“Beyond the economic aspect, there are the notions of the ‘meaning’ of work and the value of artists, which were hit hard during the pandemic.” (original remarks in French)

However, it was also pointed out that other sectors found it easier to adapt, especially thanks to new opportunities brought about by the move to digitization. Digitization has, for some, helped minimize work, manage relationships, and increase the accessibility of content. The screen sector was perhaps one of the most fortunate because they still had ways of reaching audiences during the pandemic, especially compared to the performing arts sector. This is also true for some museums who were able to pivot to offer online exhibitions, tours, or other programming, thereby contributing to making the heritage sector more accessible to a diverse public.

“...museums are really into conservation. Often, the mentality changes more slowly than elsewhere, so the pandemic really shook us up. It pushed us to think differently about how to showcase our content. Digitizing exhibits, virtual visits, we’re really, very much into that vision, and that is a positive legacy of the pandemic...So obviously, for us, to provide access to our content, precisely so we can be an engine of Quebec culture, Indigenous culture, newcomers’ culture, to those who in fact shape our people, our Quebecois and Canadian identity, we have to provide an accessibility pathway to the content that is in our museums, libraries, archives and all that.” (original remarks in French)

Participants discussed how the financial challenges from the pandemic have stunted their creative outputs. “We’re exhausted from the pandemic,” said one. Some people expressed how hard it is for creators to be innovative when they are searching for funds.

“Even today, we’re still in a system that exists, funds itself and consumes itself at the expense of artists. And I think that’s something that has to be changed.” (original remarks in French)

Some participants acknowledged the trauma associated with the pandemic, and how it affected younger people who are already facing generational challenges such as climate change or social justice.

Key Theme #3: The return of visitors and engaging new audiences

According to participants, more needs to be done to promote Canadian content on the world stage. Digital platforms have opened the door to new markets; however, creators require support and tools to be successful internationally. Some examples of the support and tools that would help include dedicated funding to help facilitate access to global markets, stronger regulation of digital platforms, and the marketing of Canada through the arts.

In the breakout discussion about Canada on the international stage, there was concern about a lack of coordination and collaboration between government departments, making it more difficult to break into international markets.

In terms of engaging audiences within Canada, people spoke of the need to reach out to more diverse communities, saying there is still too much focus on content rooted in a colonial worldview. According to one participant of the breakout discussion on Canada’s Evolving Audiences and Visitors, social codes and culture are very much rooted in Western culture, impacting how everyone interacts with the arts and culture space. These traditions and how they shape the way art is consumed can be a deterrent to some communities.

“And that doesn’t represent what art is for many cultures. And the social codes have to be revised. We should be more open.” (original remarks in French)

Participants discussed the importance of being mindful of diversity and understanding that these audiences are situated outside of traditional settings and platforms.

Changing traditional exclusionary practices and reaching diverse audiences will help build the financial sustainability of these sectors.

In the same vein, there was a common perception among participants of this breakout session that there might not be sufficient funding for programming that is not in one of the two official languages and that, therefore, the arts, culture and heritage sectors do not reflect the diversity of Canadian communities.

Several participants felt that more needs to be done to reach out to youth who consume art, culture and heritage differently, especially in trying to engage an audience from culturally diverse groups.

This broadening of content is especially important to attract new audiences and appeal to audiences that reflect the diversity of Canadian communities.

Key Theme #4: The contribution of cultural sectors to Reconciliation, combatting climate change and building an open and more inclusive society

One of the plenary sessions explored the idea of the arts, culture, and heritage as mirror and drivers for social change across a range of topics focusing on systemic racism, Reconciliation with Indigenous people, and climate change.

It was noted that we need to recognize that the arts, culture and heritage sectors have perpetuated colonialism. The Massey Report was mentioned as an example of a historical document that was drafted with a very narrow view of who the arts are for which does not reflect the lived reality of Canadians today.

“[A]rt and design are not neutral, and I do not think that they are intrinsically altruistic. As much as they can create positive social change, I think they can also reinforce really harmful narratives and I know this has been something that we have heard a lot today, but art and design have a history of exclusion and of being class-driven”.

There were many conversations throughout the Summit about the lack of diverse and Indigenous voices in mainstream organizations. Underrepresented artists can feel ostracized, unsafe, and unwelcome. One person said they often hear: “Take a risk. Hire diverse people.” However, they explained that it is not actually a risk. It is only perceived as a risk from a Eurocentric perspective.

People also said the sector needs to make space for Indigenous, Black and other racialized people in decision-making positions and governance. Climate change was also a topic of focused discussion. Participants recognized the urgency of the current environmental crisis and spoke to the demand of audiences for climate action and greening of the sectors.

“There is a huge amount of interest with both audiences and artists in doing this work but sometimes we don’t walk the talk.”

Where we go from here

Many people felt the pandemic has exacerbated fundamental concerns and challenges that already existed before the pandemic.

Post-pandemic recovery is therefore seen as an opportunity to rebuild and transform the arts, culture, and heritage sectors in Canada.

“The post-pandemic situation is no more, no less than the rebuilding of the industry.” (original remarks in French)

While the Summit agenda discussion was structured around the four themes described above, there was significant interplay between the themes that emerged in terms of proposed ways forward.

Potential ways forward identified by participants are listed below, with relevant themes tagged that illustrate how these suggestions intersect with the Summit’s core themes.

Regulating digital platforms and supporting innovation

Supporting the sector through legislation and policy

Many participants spoke about the need for the government to regulate digital platforms. Several panelists and commentators made comparisons with EU regulations similar to Canadian broadcasting modernization efforts. There was strong support expressed for Bill C-11 (the *Online Streaming Act*).

“However, we’ve seen that during the pandemic, the state was quite useful, that the state and its institutions were very useful to the culture over the years, with the creation of the National Film Board, the Canada Council for the Arts and the Quebec one. So the state also has to reclaim a role, and its institutions have to reclaim a role in that. That’s crucial. Otherwise, it’s total deregulation...” (original remarks in French)

Participants want to see robust legislation for digital platforms that will:

- Protect creators' ownership of their work;
- Ensure they are properly compensated;
- Protect Canadian identity—particularly that of francophone minorities.

One participant said regulation is also needed to level the playing field between Canadian-owned broadcasters and media and their digital counterparts. They pointed out that while they are all competing for the same advertising dollars and audiences, at the moment, digital platforms have none of the same regulatory burden imposed upon them.

“If we truly want to move forward in the digital era, we need fair and equitable treatment of Canadian-owned broadcasters and media companies.”

The Minister of Canadian Heritage also emphasized this tension, asking the participants assembled to consider, “how do we continue to harness this digital evolution and protect our culture at the same time?”

Supporting the sector through training

Another area where participants expressed that the government can support the sector is through skills training and partnerships with institutions. There is an opportunity for the government and industry to help creators develop the skills they need to showcase themselves and innovate in the digital world.

Online participants relatedly noted the importance of providing an exchange of information among creators, including through a peer knowledge exchange, development of a digital strategy or provision of equipment.

Partnering with digital platforms

It was suggested that artists and creators could try to adopt a partnership model with digital platforms to promote Canadian culture. Additionally, participants felt the government's COVID financial benefits were very helpful and would like platforms to be required to contribute financially to the sector in times of crisis too. Some participants saw considerable promise in the future of collaboration between digital platforms and creators.

“We see the platforms promoting Canadian artists, promoting Canadian content, working with independent labels ... we see them working with us ... proactively looking to have more and more and more Canadian artists exposed, in this ecosystem of infinite ability of creators to add to platforms.”

Making collections accessible

In the heritage sector, organizations are struggling and require more support and funding to ensure cultural heritage and digital collections are accessible to Canadians. Specific initiatives were mentioned such as support to develop a digital strategy, provision of equipment, and peer knowledge exchange.

Stable financial support

Participants stressed that the way the government prioritizes and distributes funding within the arts, culture, and heritage sectors is a fundamental question that needs to be addressed. Not only do key contributors to these sectors need to be supported, but it must become easier to recruit and retain new talent.

At the opening reception, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau acknowledged the shifting and emerging needs of the sector, stating “We want you to have the tools you need to win back audiences, adapt to new digital platforms, and be part of the conversation for a more open and inclusive society.”

Guaranteed basic income

Throughout the Summit, the concept of guaranteed basic income was raised frequently. The idea that artists and cultural workers should be supported not only when they are creating, but also between projects, was mentioned by both panelists and participants. It was said that there must be the tools in place to ensure that artists and cultural workers can secure an adequate income. Many cited the benefits of emergency support measures as an argument in favour of a guaranteed basic income for artists and cultural workers.

“If you want to do something bold: create a guaranteed annual income for people working in the arts.”

“We saw immense progress during the pandemic because we were able to treat artists and cultural workers like any other unemployed person in Canada...” (original remarks in French)

On a related note, the Government of Canada has also committed, in the mandate letter of the minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, to “bring forward and begin implementing a plan to modernize the Employment Insurance system for the 21st century, building a stronger and more inclusive system that covers all workers, including workers in seasonal employment and persons employed by digital platforms, ensuring the system is simpler and more responsive for workers and employers”. Notably, the mandate letter asks that any reforms consider “the realities of artists and cultural workers.”

Stable funding for equity-deserving communities

Participants emphasized the importance of supporting diversity in arts, culture and heritage sectors by providing stable, multi-year funding for equity-deserving communities and emerging artists. At the moment, it is much easier for established institutions to obtain this kind of funding. This system reinforces historical privilege and exacerbates existing inequalities.

Recognizing the true value of art

There was a call to appreciate the intrinsic value of art, and measure more than economic outcomes. Participants feel that for too long, the value of art has been measured only by its economic impact. Some participants emphasized that the economy should serve the arts, not the other way around.

“Beyond the economic aspect, there are the notions of the ‘meaning’ of work and the value of artists, which were hit hard during the pandemic.” (original remarks in French)

Innovation requires financial stability

For creators to take risks, they need a safety net. There was a call for government and funders in general to provide financial stability for creators so they would be better positioned to take risks and innovate. One participant described it as “Having oxygen to do stuff that’s unique.”

Reflecting Canada as it is today

There were many discussions about the need for more stories that capture Canada’s diversity of culture and language.

“We must ensure that the arts and culture community we foster is reflective of Canadian society.”

Targeted funds and opportunities

Participants insisted that proper representation requires adequate and dedicated funding for Indigenous, Black and other racialized artists. The federal and provincial governments have an opportunity to address the allocation of resources to ensure equity, and goals should be set in these areas to aim for improvement. Racialized voices cannot be amplified if they do not have the funds to create.

“We can only share the stories that get to the point where they get the funding.”

For instance, building capacity may help to build partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations who are not always able to respond accordingly. In this spirit, one participant invited others to consider:

‘What co-design methodologies or consensus building methods can be shared within the arts sector to open pathways between communities and sectoral developments? What can be shared as a process that can be followed?’

Mentorship and training opportunities were also mentioned as ways to diversify the workforce and increase representation of equity-seeking communities in the cultural and heritage sectors.

To address existing barriers to funding and opportunities, participants emphasized the importance of building trust and solidarity across the boundaries that separate different forms of arts, culture and heritage institutions, including between more established ones and more grassroots or diverse organizations.

Power, not tokenism

Conversations on diversity, equity and inclusion frequently returned to the importance of representation. Participants emphasized the need for more diversity at all levels, from the writer’s room to the boardroom.

People also spoke about the risk of tokenization that can accompany big organizational diversity pushes. Racialized individuals in leadership positions often feel forced to come up with solutions to impossible problems. Focusing efforts on increasing representation at every level, beyond a token individual, will help create an arts and culture sector that truly reflects the diversity of Canada.

Data is key to change

There was strong demand for more and better data to be collected to determine how to allocate funding in the arts and culture sector more equitably. Some participants spoke of the importance of collecting disaggregated data as a diagnostic tool to determine gaps and potential solutions. They suggested the government collaborate with Indigenous, Black and other racialized communities in order to come up with data-driven solutions. Others emphasized the importance of transparency during the collection process.

“You cannot talk about social justice if you do not have the knowledge of exactly what you do.”

Engage audiences with diverse content

According to many participants, the best way organizations can reach more diverse audiences is if audiences see themselves reflected. We therefore need more stories that capture Canada’s diversity in terms of culture and language.

A new cultural policy

It was mentioned several times that [the Massey Report](#) is outdated, and that the findings of this 1951 Royal Commission are racist and colonial. Participants argued that it was designed for a very narrow group of people and does not reflect what Canada looks like today. Many participants urged that it is time to replace the current cultural policy framework, which they linked to the Massey Report, with a new and more inclusive approach to cultural policy.

“The Massey Report depicts a Canada that just doesn’t exist and did not exist. [...] it’s a racist document and we need to start from scratch.”

Involving youth

To encourage youth to be part of the arts, culture and heritage sectors- both as patrons and as creators- there needs to be a shift to better appeal to youth and promote strategies to ensure a meaningful livelihood. This could include igniting a sense of purpose in the sector by better aligning it with social justice or societal causes, or opportunities and initiatives that involve youth in the sector. Similarly, more could be done to reach youth and engage them in the arts, heritage and culture sectors (e.g., youth outings, interactive museum content). More outreach is required to address barriers, including financial barriers through rebates on ticket prices, incentives to content promoters and diffusers to make arts, culture, and heritage more affordable and for governments to play a role in supporting venues to offer more affordable prices. Several participants felt that more needs to be done to reach out to youth who consume art, culture and heritage differently, especially in trying to engage an audience from culturally diverse groups.

Respecting Indigenous Voices

A strong theme that emerged throughout the Summit was the importance of ensuring Indigenous voices are front and centre in the arts, culture and heritage sectors in Canada. This was deemed a fundamental step in changing institutional structures so that they provide the financial supports and resources that are required to amplify the Indigenous stories as told by Indigenous creative workers. Indigenous needs were prominently discussed through a breakout session on advancing Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous people through culture and a plenary session on arts, culture and heritage as mirrors and drivers of social change.

Sovereignty and reparations

For many participants, the most important step towards Reconciliation is Indigenous narrative sovereignty and reparations. Indigenous people should not be required to ask for space or funds to tell their stories. Instead, institutional leaders should amplify Indigenous voices. Indigenous artists should be given the freedom to tell their stories in their own way. Some participants advocated for dedicated funding for Indigenous artists, and for the resources necessary for Indigenous organizations to meet the increased demand for partnerships and collaborations.

“I think the first thing to do is to make room, to provide space, for example, for Indigenous cultures in institutions, in governance, in the visual, the physical space, in programming... Many people are soliciting Indigenous organizations, there’s a lot of demand for partnerships. We’re over-solicited in the Indigenous community, for requests for contributions and collaborations of all kinds. Keep in mind that our capacity isn’t always there to respond at the time, because our capacity hasn’t increased in terms of funding and in terms of human resources to respond to that demand, which is getting bigger and bigger.” (original remarks in French)

Several people spoke about the need for institutional organizations to make space for Indigenous artists. They emphasized the importance of making sure Indigenous people are in boardrooms and

decision-making positions and in including Indigenous worldviews and lived experiences in important discussions on topics such as climate change.

The repatriation of Indigenous artefacts and art and the need to provide Indigenous communities funding to support their showcasing and enhancement was an idea that many participants highlighted in their group discussions, as well as the urgent need to archive Indigenous documents.

Non-Indigenous people must take the initiative

There is a strong view that non-Indigenous people must commit to the decolonization process by taking ownership of their education.

“...in some environments, you feel that Indigenous colleagues are tired of educating us on what needs to be done. So the question arises, how do we educate ourselves, take responsibility, basically? Because as we’ve been told, it’s our problem.” (original remarks in French)

Non-Indigenous people can make it possible for Canadians to learn about the history of colonialism by funding museums with Indigenous collections and by placing value in traditional knowledge. Participants want non-Indigenous people to hold each other accountable through funding requirements. For example, unless an organization is committed to Reconciliation, they would not be eligible for certain funding.

Many thought the only way that change could be implemented is through relationship-building and education. For instance, education on Indigenous identity and culture are important steps towards Reconciliation.

Participants also want non-Indigenous people to support and act on applicable calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, including through legislation. Social change requires dismantling structures that support colonialism, and this includes structures in the arts, culture and heritage sectors.

“Reconciliation is not an Indigenous problem. It is a settler problem.”

Reconciliation through relationships

“And if you want to be serious about Reconciliation, you’re going to leave your stereotypical ideas of our Indigenous art behind. You are not going to call someone at the last minute to do a traditional dance for your event. You’re not going to take two days to call someone to partner with you because you need an Indigenous scholarship. And you’re not going to assume that you know more about our arts than we do just because you took a course on Indigenous art in Canada or because you work in a museum in Canada. And this is what Reconciliation is: it’s the recognition of the fact that we have over 14,000 years of art.”

It was said that Reconciliation requires meaningful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Participants expressed the need to create environments for Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people to engage in respectful conversations with each other. Some participants stated that in fact, decolonization cannot be built into policies, it must happen through relationships.

“Reconciliation isn’t going to come from politicians, it will come from storytellers.”

With the aim of decolonization in mind, participants raised several measures that could be enacted by arts, culture and heritage institutions to address Canada’s colonial legacy as it concerns Indigenous people. These initiatives could include identifying personal and systemic bias and removing negative stereotypes in institutions, questioning sector gatekeepers’ privilege and power, and efforts targeted at increasing Indigenous representation at all levels – including in senior ranks

and decision-making positions. These could also include making space for Indigenous knowledge and worldviews in policies and programs, amplifying Indigenous voices through narrative sovereignty and increasing opportunities for self-determination of Indigenous arts, cultural and heritage.

“First, [we need to] be able to shed light on and potentially eliminate our biases in policies, in programming, in how we organize ourselves in institutions, and in our artistic and museum approaches, for example. And at the same time, to make that effort, [we have] to establish contacts.”
(original remarks in French)

Elevating the voices of Indigenous youth

Indigenous youth voices need to be elevated and brought to the forefront in Canada’s arts and culture. Panelists explained that a dedication to making the voices of Indigenous youth heard will help bring their stories to the public. Sharing their stories, for example in a short film format, will inspire people to learn more about Indigenous youth.

“For me and for Wapikoni Mobile, all of our actions are focused on inspiring Indigenous youth, to make them want to get involved, to make their voices heard. Our primary mission is really based on working on taking on more of a leadership role with Indigenous youth, ...the indirect impact we have, it’s really to inspire the general population to know Indigenous people better and to lead them, through viewing films produced by youth from the community, to hear real stories produced by youth, with the words they choose, the visual, the style they choose. It’s inspiring people to know us better, to take the first step, through viewing these short films.”

Ensuring Indigenous communities have access to broadband is necessary to accomplish this.

Drawing on Indigenous worldviews to address climate change

There was a recognition that Indigenous people have unique knowledge and lived experiences with respect to their relationship with the natural world. Some expressed that, in the spirit of addressing climate change and advancing decolonization, arts, culture and heritage institutions should make space for and honour Indigenous people and their worldviews in their organizational and governance structures. Some participants added that doing so should be a requirement for receiving funding.

One Elder remarked that, while he was encouraged by the discussions and the desire for change evident, more needs to be done to incorporate Indigenous worldviews.

“It was indeed a lost opportunity for us to fully participate as the summit gathering was an ideal place to educate the public on Indigenous cultural teachings by Indigenous people who relate to their spiritual connection to Mother Earth, share their songs and dances which respects all forms of creation and through our nation elder’s traditional teachings ... find hope and recognition for a greener world to address our present and future concerns of climate change.”

Raising Canada’s profile on the international stage

Participants said they would like to amplify the international profile of Canada’s arts, culture and heritage sectors in order to develop a global demand for Canadian talent and artistic production.

Showcasing the art of equity-deserving groups

In particular, many people feel it is important to provide greater funding to support the creation and showcasing of work by equity-deserving groups on the international stage. There is an appetite for these stories. Audiences want to see the people who are part of the fabric of contemporary Canada. The importance of doing a better job of listening to equity-deserving communities to understand how to help promote their voices was also highlighted. At the same time, some participants pointed out that the capacity to engage in international markets and to share their work online the way others

might is limited for remote communities, including many First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities, by a lack of access to stable Internet and technology.

“It can be very difficult to break through to international markets. Like so many of the questions, it is an issue of resources. And unfortunately, because of historical inequities, the resources are quite consolidated.”

Cooperation between levels of government, departments, and with Canadian artists

Participants also said they would like to see increased cooperation between different levels of government (i.e., municipal, provincial and federal) to assist in international trade. They said there should be collaboration to ensure consistency between governmental departments, particularly between Canadian Heritage and Global Affairs Canada.

“When we go to the culture arm of government, they say, ‘well you’re a business so go on the business side,’ but when you go to the business side they say, ‘hey you’re from the arts and culture, go on the arts and culture side’.”

It was mentioned that Canadian content sells all over the world but requires support and tools to engage with international markets. Some people spoke of wanting the creation of a soft power strategy by the government that would provide support and guidance on engaging at the international level.

Keeping Canadian talent in Canada

However, as the Canadian market expands, people feel it is important to create an incentive to keep Canadian talent in Canada. Artists and cultural workers should not have to leave the country to become internationally successful. Retaining talent in Canada is essential.

“We would really like to level the playing field, bring up Canadian production, and keep Canadian performers here.”

Harnessing the power of art and culture for social change

The Prime Minister, in his remarks at the opening reception of the Summit, underscored the unique capacity of Canada’s arts, culture, and heritage sectors to “pierce through in a time of so much cynicism, of skepticism, of polarization in some ways, to reach out and grab that common humanity.”

Relatedly, in his opening remarks, the Minister identified one of the questions at the very heart of the Summit to be "How can we position these sectors as mirrors of social change?"

When thinking about the arts with respect to social change, one panelist spoke about how it is important that we see art as something that makes a difference in people’s lives. There were calls to recognize the contributions of culture to Canada’s civic life and harness its power to improve social outcomes.

“Artistic works can certainly be catalysts for change in our societies, and that’s why access to the arts and to cultural products is critical!” (original remarks in French)

Greening arts and culture

During the breakout discussion and in the online engagement tool, participants spoke to the fact that artists can act as role models to inspire greener action. It was mentioned that the arts, culture and heritage sectors could become leaders in environmental sustainability and lead a conversation with Canadians on climate change (e.g., through museum programming and youth engagement).

Participants also said there should be performance indicators so that change can be measured. This could lead to the creation of environmental standards that could then be used to hold individuals and organizations within the sectors accountable.

Some people suggested the government should provide funding and support for organizations to implement green strategies, sustainable practices, and carbon offset measures, including initiatives at a local scale. One participant proposed creating new policies. For example, creating an entirely new culture and museum policy, with a strong environmental sustainability focus.

“What would having an entirely green strategy and policy look like?”

Addressing polarization

During one of the plenary sessions, the idea of live performance as a tool to combat ideological polarization came up in conversation. A few people suggested live performance is particularly well-suited to countering lies, misinformation and the division we see on the Internet, since it brings people together in one place. “It is a meeting place” said one (original remarks in French).

“Do not think of us as people with our hands out [...] think of us as people that can solve huge problems that the digital platforms are in fact creating for us and engage the live performers and live producers to address that and pull the country together.”

Conclusion

Over a day and a half, Summit participants came together to discuss the state of arts, culture and heritage in Canada. They identified a wide array of existing and emerging challenges and spoke with eloquence to the need for innovative solutions. The discussions were rich and varied, cutting across the four Summit themes of promoting long-term competitiveness and growth; the return of visitors and engaging new audiences; the role of digital platforms and technology in arts, culture and heritage sectors; and the contribution of cultural sectors to Reconciliation, combatting climate change and building an open and more inclusive society.

In discussions on avenues for further action, a number of existing policy and legislative tools were identified that can be leveraged to make change. Concrete next steps will include:

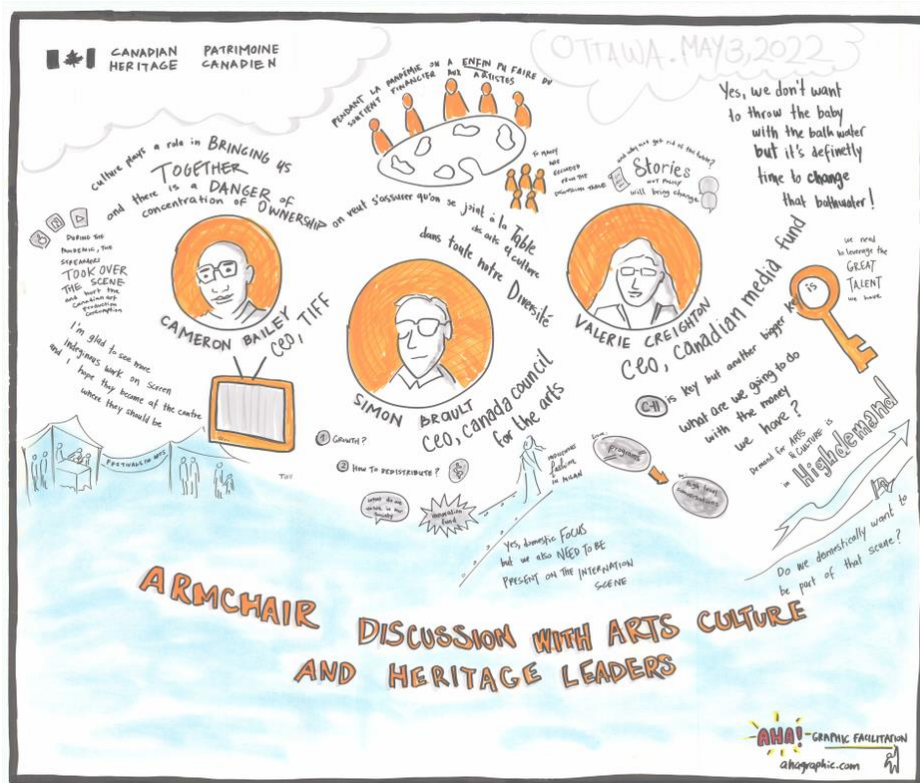
- Continuing to advance the *Online Streaming Act* legislative process when Parliament resumes in Fall 2022, with an aim of getting Royal Assent by the end of the year;
- Ensuring that the socio-economic realities of workers in the arts, culture, and heritage sectors meaningfully inform the modernization of the Employment Insurance system;
- Modernizing the institutions and funding tools that support Canada's audio-visual sector;
- Beginning consultations this fall on a renewed Museums Policy, a cultural diplomacy strategy and the Changing Narratives Fund announced in Budget 2022; and
- Advancing the Government's commitment to amend the *Copyright Act* to further protect artists, creators and copyright holders, including to allow resale rights for artists.

The National Culture Summit provided a long-awaited opportunity to bring together leaders and practitioners from across these sectors for urgent conversations. The discussions that took place will continue to inform the Government's next steps in support of the arts, culture and heritage sectors and for the benefit of all Canadians.

Appendix A: Graphic Recordings by AHA! Graphic Facilitation

This Annex contains artistic renderings of the discussions in the Summit's plenary and breakout sessions. The images were drawn live in the room where each session took place, with the visual notetaker simultaneously recording in written and graphic form what was said in both official languages. These images contain some spelling mistakes; however, these were not corrected in order to preserve the integrity of the image.

Armchair Discussion with Arts, Culture and Heritage Leaders



Source: Aha! Graphic Facilitation – ahagraphic.com

Text description

Title

Armchair Discussion with Arts, Culture and Heritage leaders

Canadian Heritage

Ottawa, May 3, 2022

List of panelists

Cameron Bailey, CEO, Toronto International Film Festival; Simon Brault, CEO, Canada Council for the Arts; and Valerie Creighton, CEO, Canadian Media Fund

Comments in the image

Culture brings a role in bringing us together and there is a danger of concentration of ownership

During the pandemic, the streamers took over the scene and hurt the Canadian art production consumption

I'm glad to see more Indigenous work on screen and I hope they become at the centre where they should be

Festivals for arts

During the pandemic we were finally able to provide financial support to artists*

We want to make sure that we are at the table for arts and culture in all our diversity*

Growth?

How to redistribute?

What do we value in our society

innovation fund

Indigenous fashion in Milan

Yes, domestic focus but we also need to be present on the international scene

Too many are excluded from the discussion table. And why not get rid of the table?

Stories not policy will bring change

Yes, we don't want to throw the baby with the bathwater but it's definitely time to change that bathwater!

We need to leverage the great talent we have

from: programs, to: high-level conversations

C-11 is key but another bigger key is what are we going to do with the money we have?

Demand for Arts and Culture is in High Demand

Do we domestically want to be part of that scene?

Produced by

AHA! Graphic Facilitation, ahagraphic.com, graphic facilitation

* (original comment in French)

Supporting Workers in the Arts, Culture and Heritage Sectors



Source: Aha! Graphic Facilitation – ahagraphic.com

Text description

Title

Supporting Workers in the Arts, Culture and Heritage Sectors

Ottawa, May 3, 2022

Comments in the image

Canadian Heritage

There is no culture without artists!

Gideon Arthurs, Soulpepper Theatre

Eleanor Noble, Alliance of Canadian Cinema[, Television and Radio Artists]

John Lewis, IA [International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees]

Arden Ryshpan, Canadian Actors' Equity Association

CERB recognized our industry workers

Audiovisual supports *

Heroes of the stage *

Well-paid AV and we bounce back *

Performing arts suffered and the gap widened *

Pandemic saw theatre workers cross over to film and not come back

Large human losses

C-11; We applaud its flexibility

The rest of Canada needs to join Quebec in sharing with the world

Just digitizing live performances isn't enough

Heritage dept. listened

Action

And government could: Fund training; Offer universal basic income

We would like to be seen not as beggars asking for money, but rather as actors who come together to provide solutions!*

We need to represent the small players as well as the big ones *

Let's keep our workers here

40% of cultural workers wanted to leave...start of the pandemic

\$

Training

Professionalizing

We don't want 'pandemic streaming' to set low rates affecting pay of artists

Digital helps museums become accessible *

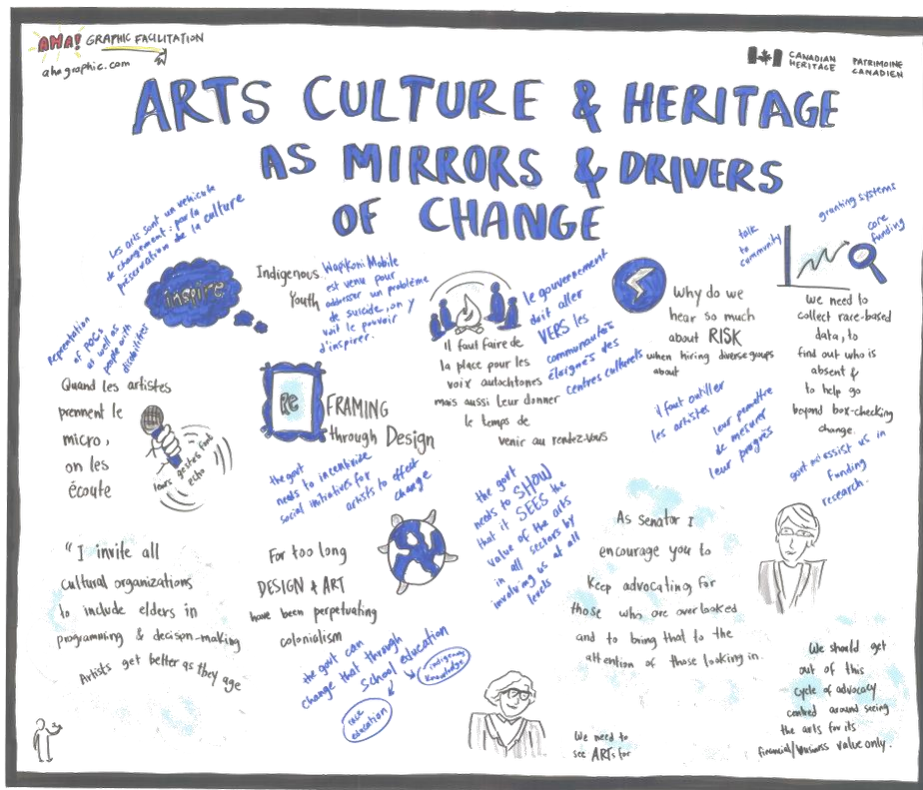
From producing arts to welcoming arts

Produced by:

AHA Graphic Facilitation; ahagraphic.com

* (original comment in French)

Arts, Culture and Heritage as Mirrors and Drivers of Change



Source: Aha! Graphic Facilitation – ahagraphic.com

Text description

Title

Arts, Culture and Heritage as Mirrors and Drivers of Change

Canadian Heritage

Comments in the image

Inspire

Representation of People of Colour as well as people with disabilities

The arts are a vehicle for change: for the preservation of culture*

Indigenous Youth

Wapikoni Mobile came to address a problem of suicide, we see in it the power to inspire*

We need to make room for Indigenous voices but also give them time to come to the meeting*

The Government must go TO communities far from cultural centres*

Why do we hear so much about risk when hiring diverse groups

We need to equip the artists and allow them to measure their progress*

Talk to community

Granting systems

Core funding

We need to collect race-based data, to find out who is absent and to help go beyond box-checking change

When artists take the mike, we list to them*

Their gestures reverberate*

Reframing through design

The government needs to incentivize social initiatives for artists to effect change

The government needs to show that it sees the value of the arts in all sectors by involving us at all levels

As senator I encourage you to keep advocating for those who are overlooked and to bring that to the attention of those looking in

Government must assist us in funding research

I invite all cultural organizations to include elders in programming and decision-making

For too long design and art have been perpetuating colonialism

The government can change that through school education

Race education

Indigenous knowledge

Artists get better as they age

We need to see arts for...

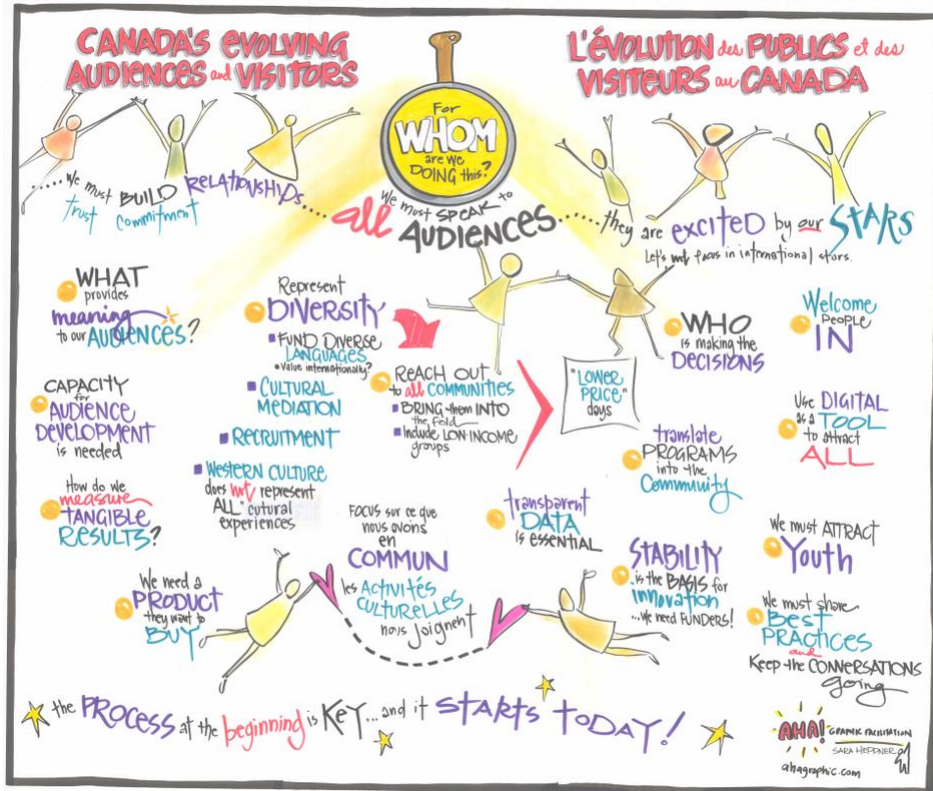
We should get out of this cycle of advocacy centred around seeing the arts for its financial/business value only

Produced by:

AHA! Graphic Facilitation, ahagraphic.com, graphic facilitation

* (original comment in French)

Canada's Evolving Audiences and Visitors



Source: Aha! Graphic Facilitation – ahagraphic.com

Text description

Title

Canada's Evolving Audiences and Visitors

Comments in the image

For Whom are we doing this?

We must speak to all audiences

We must build relationships, trust, commitment

They are excited by our stars

Let's not focus on international stars

What provides meaning to our audiences?

Represent Diversity

Fund Diverse Languages

Value internationally?

Cultural Mediation

Recruitment

Western culture does not represent all cultural experiences

Reach out to all communities

Bring them into the fold

Include low-income groups

“Lower Price” days

Who is Making the Decisions

Welcome People In

Capacity for audience development is needed

How do we measure tangible results?

We need a product they want to buy

Transparent data is essential

Translate programs into the community

Use digital as a tool to attract all

Stability is the basis for innovation... we need funders!

We must attract youth

We must share best practices and keep the conversations going

The process at the beginning is key... and it starts today!

Focus on what we have in common*

Cultural activities bring us together *

Produced by:

AHA! Graphic Facilitation, Sara Heppner

* (original comment in French)

Greening the Arts, Culture and Heritage Sectors



Source: Aha! Graphic Facilitation – ahagraphic.com

Text description

Title

Greening the Arts Culture and Heritage

Ottawa, May 3, 2022

Comments in the image

Growth at what cost? Sacrifices must be made in the sector. Which ones?*

Yes, to centering Indigenous knowledge without burdening communities with asking for solutions to our problems

Internal work as we think about the land

Think Reconciliation!

We have so much to learn from the stewards of the land of indigenous know how

Think big!

For there to be reconciliation there needs to be time to get to know each other but we live in cultures of production and capitalism which relies on speedy and rushed encounters

Artists are also forced into the mold of entrepreneurs when they could be also seen for their cultural and spiritual insights on the human and planet's state

Knowledge into the future

Knowledge of present

Knowledge of the past

As an Inuit man I see that yesterday's knowledge is different from today's: a young man who is on the land daily can tell you better about what ice is safe, due to climate change!

Artists are amplifiers of messages can really create change. What an opportunity for influence!*

Produced by:

AHA Graphic Facilitation, ahagraphic.com

* (original comment in French)

Inclusion, Diversity and Accessibility



Source: Aha! Graphic Facilitation – ahagraphic.com

Text description

Title

Inclusion, Diversity and Accessibility

May 3rd, 2022, Ottawa

Comments in the image

It's time to share solutions

Lets not wait on political fixes.

What power do you have in your context to effect change?

We need to improve support scales *

We need membership cards so that producers can search for visible minority artists in a database*

There is momentum now around change and we have to seize it!

Moving from mentorship to exchange

Moving from patchwork efforts to structured coordinated work

Speaking honestly and paying those who are asked to represent those who are not!*

If you want to tokenize people of color pay them!

Allowing operational funding instead of requiring programs to unlock funds

Risk assessment: Not allowing diversity in or allowing diversity in

Who does this assessment? Need to diversify boards

To avoid making isolated efforts, we need to bring together these initiatives*

Yes, solutions lie in organizations but it's first and foremostly in the hand of people

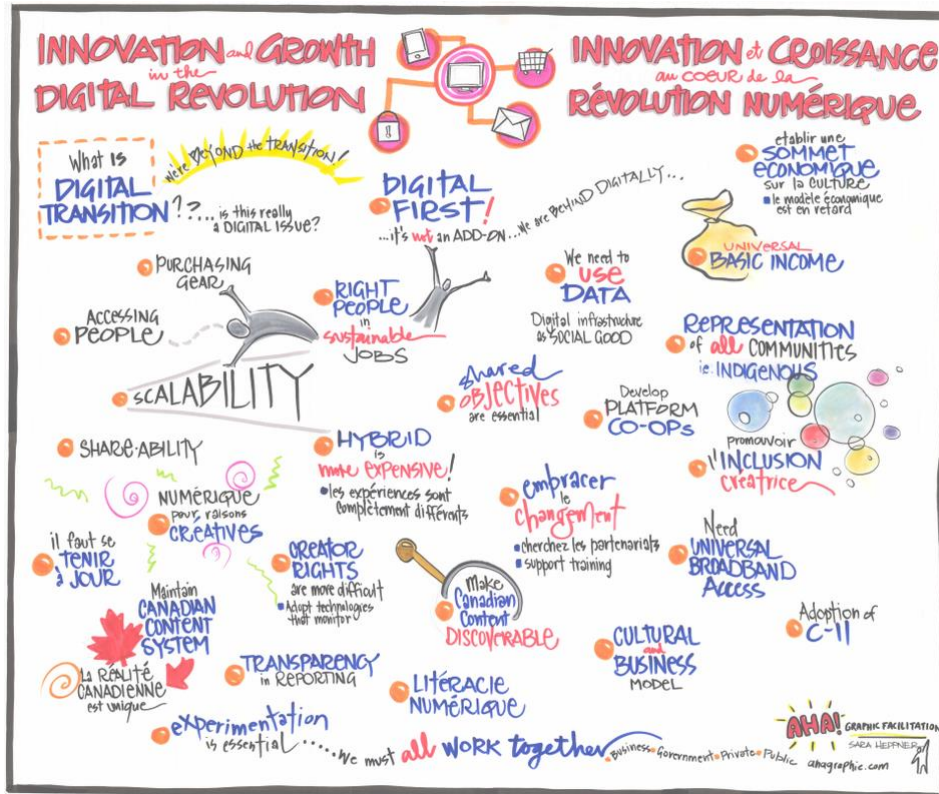
We need to modernize peer assessment

Produced by:

AHA Graphic Facilitation, ahagraphic.com

* (original comment in French)

Innovation and Growth in the Digital Revolution



Source: Aha! Graphic Facilitation – ahagraphic.com

Text description

Title

Innovation and Growth in the Digital Revolution

Comments in the image

What is digital transition??...is this really a digital issue?

We're beyond the transition!

Digital first!...it's not an add-on...we are behind digitally...

Establishing an economic summit on culture*

The economic model is behind*

Purchasing gear

Accessing people

Scalability

Right people in sustainable jobs

We need to use data

Digital infrastructure as social good

Universal basic income

Share-ability

Hybrid is more expensive!

The experiences are completely different*

Shared objectives are essential

Develop platform co-ops

Representation of all communities i.e., Indigenous

Promoting creative inclusion*

Need to keep up to date*

Digital for creative reasons*

Creator rights are more difficult

Adopt technologies that monitor

Make Canadian content discoverable

Embracing change*

Seeking out partnerships*

Support training

Need universal broadband access

Maintain Canadian content system

The Canadian reality is unique*

Transparency in reporting

Digital literacy

Cultural and business model

Adoption of C-11

Experimentation is essential ... we must all work together. Business. Government. Private. Public.

Produced by:

AHA! Graphic Facilitation, Sara Heppner, ahagraphic.com

* (original comment in French)

The role of digital platforms in arts, culture and heritage sectors



Source: Aha! Graphic Facilitation – ahagraphic.com

Text description

Title

The Role of Digital Platforms and Technology in Arts, Culture and Heritage Landscapes

Canadian Heritage

May 4, 2022

List of panelists

Fenwick McKelvey, Professor Concordia University; Helen Messier, CEO of Association québécoise de la production médiatique; Martin Patriquin; Jeannette Patell, head of government affairs and public policy for Canada YouTube; Jeffery Remedios, CEO Universal Music Canada; Alain Saulnier, former Director General of Radio Canada and Professor at the Université de Montréal

Comments in the image

What can government do about the streaming economy?

We need to support creatives on these forums

We have to see fans as creatives too

Stop*

These platforms have grown enormously during the pandemic*

This must be stopped, like efforts in Europe*

European Union has modernized broadcasting rules

Catered content

Archive platforms

We can look at ways YouTube responds and learns about language and local content preference

Support our artists no matter where their viewers are

YouTube isn't the problem, it's a platform*

Canadian fresh local wholesome arts

Always the same song!*

But the problem with these platforms is that they always serve the same thing, just pizza*

Is legislation a solution to artists' financial woes?*

Yes, everything helps for regulation to redistribute the wealth

It needs to work for platforms too

The CRTC has a place/role to play*

There is a place for debate there where we can distinguish and discuss who we want together*

There is a tension between seeing one as content to be monetized versus a space for freedom of expression

Who is the gatekeeper of who hears our stories and arts?

Art Gate

There is a magic to what sells/gets views on these platforms

There's no conspiracy just algorithms which is terrifying

Where are the pubs/bars that bring community around music

As an artist I am tired of being asked to become a programmer to be recognized. We need the Government to support us.*

Even when we have Canadian content it is being erased by American 'market' partnership

Tik Tok is Chinese, so when we talk about freedom of expression, I could go on!*

67% of the content on the internet is in English. The State must take back its role as stakeholder.*

67%

Its where Canadian talent is showcased

Government welcomes professional content. It's not resistant to it

Produced by:

AHA Graphic Facilitation; ahagraphic.com

* (original comment in French)

Appendix B: Artistic Rapportage on May 3rd discussions

The following was written and performed by Danielle Le Saux-Farmer (actor, director, translator and artistic director) at the start of the Summit's proceedings on May 4, 2022, presenting an artistic representation of the discussions that took place on May 3rd. The artist's quotations of other Summit attendees are not exact. The original bilingual version of this text is followed by an English version.

Rapport artistique présenté dans le cadre du
Sommet sur la culture du ministère du Patrimoine canadien, mai 2022
Danielle Le Saux-Farmer

Ottawa, Centre National des arts,
Territoire non cédé algonquin
4 mai 2022, [May the fourth be with you.]

Ma très chère amie,

J'espère que tu vas bien.
Que tu te plais dans ton nouveau travail.
Faut pas dire nouveau travail, en fait. Tu préfères nouvelle vie, c'est ça?
En tout cas, j'espère que tu y trouves ton compte, même si c'est juste une job ben stable, ben tranquille, en comptabilité.

Ce n'est pas pour retourner le fer dans la plaie, pas pour te rendre jalouse, mais je veux te dire d'où je te parle en ce moment.
Ça pourrait te faire mal, que je t'en parle. Je sais que ton départ a été difficile. Que ton choix en a été un de survie.
En fait, je suis en direct du Centre national des arts, devant des centaines de personnes.

As I write to you, en bilingue because why not peanut et aussi parce que je la trouve toujours aussi bonne, la bonne vieille blague du bilinguisme officiel, I'm in Ottawa at the NAC.
I know it's a place that you dreamed of performing in.
The NAC, at the confluence of rivers as I learned yesterday from Elder Verna McGregor, in front of people who are reflecting on arts and culture's future here. In this place, in our communities. In our lives.
I know, I know you hate that expression: arts and culture. Sounds like peas and carrots. Means nothing.

Nonetheless, let me tell you about this Summit on arts and culture, about some of the ideas that I picked up yesterday.
I have no hidden agenda – definitely not to summarize Day 2 proceedings for the participants – just to tell you about my day.

Most of these words are not my own.
I caught them swirling around in the airspace.
Comme on est juste nous deux dans cette missive écrite, je peux me permettre de mémérer sur la soirée du lundi. Attache ta tuque :

Il y avait un 5 à 7, c'était un party « PatCan ». Pour vrai là!
Je te parle pas de ce qu'on faisait ensemble pour finir de rédiger nos maudites demandes de sub.
C'était une ébullition, je te le jure. Tu pourrais penser que c'était sec, mais pas pantoute!
En tout cas, j'imagine que c'était le plus d'action que Patrimoine Canada ait connu depuis... ben, depuis toujours.
Les gens étaient tout émoustillés de se retrouver. Tassés dans comme des sardines, dans une salle de réception trop éclairée – des sardines masquées, bien sûr.
Ça faisait la file sans trop savoir pourquoi : “Ah faut tu choisisses ton drink avant d'acheter le ti-billet”. Ça loadait les petites assiettes des petites boules chaudes du buffet avant le début du vrai party, les discours.

Les discours

Christopher Deacon, président du CNA, a pris la parole et a cristallisé la pandémie comme l'occasion de repenser les arts à long terme. Un accueil digne et chaleureux, et une gracieuse *steppette* autour du mot « infatigable » qui a permis au Premier Ministre de *puncher* la suite, comme une passe au hockey. Il y avait Monsieur le ministre Pablo Rodriguez qui ne se pouvait pu d'excitation d'être là! Content d'être content, comme on dit : « Guys, vous êtes beaux, ah guys, j'suis content, ah guys, j'suis content de vous voir, guys guys guys ».

Le premier ministre nous a rappelé que Culture is Heart.

Il nous a dit, et ça m'a marquée, que « les arts et la culture sont importants, essentiels, sources de rapprochement pour les Canadiennes et les Canadiens, des moteurs économiques, primordiaux, uniques, exceptionnels, lumineux, audacieux, traditionnels, sombres, consubstantiels, troubles, clairs, irremplaçables, sexy, plates, honnêtes, essentiels, et importants pour les Canadiennes et les Canadiens. »

On était surpris d'apprendre que la pandémie de Sophie Prigent a commencé en mars 2019, pauvre elle. Mais elle m'a touchée en parlant de la profonde humanité qui s'est tissée entre nous pendant cette période dévastatrice.

Donc, hier, mon amie, après une journée pleine de discussion, j'ai appris des petites et des grandes choses que je veux te raconter.

J'ai appris des coanimateurs de l'événement, Mani et ShoShona, qu'en fin de discussion en table ronde, les gens ont pas toujours envie d'attendre leurs remarques de conclusions avant de sortir pour la pause santé, et aussi que, même s'il y a des sorties en cas d'incendie dans la Salle Southam, on sait pas trop où elles se trouvent.

Ma conclusion personnelle : on aime tellement parler d'art qu'on préfère rester dans une bâtisse en feu que de vivre sans arts.

Une métaphore pour notre carrière d'artistes d'arts de la scène pendant la pandémie?

En tout cas, toi, tu l'as trouvée, ta sortie de secours.

There were myriad variations on the metaphor of a table as the place of power and storytelling. I'm still trying to sort those out. Honestly, I'd say that today, the table is

tired and wants to be left alone.

I had the chance to see Minister Pablo Rodriguez's TedTalk about the digital revolution, performed in a very attractive fuchsia setting, where we imagined a day without art. Sounded like a platitude to me, but then I thought of you. That you gave up your artistic practice. And also the feeling that came up, when we as performing artists were deemed non-essential.

There was talk of going forward based on our common "Canadian" values. I know, I know, I was pretty skeptical too. I can even feel you shudder at this absurd pretention that there might just be one common set. If there even should be. But the Minister talked of Equity, Solidarity, Responsibility, Social Justice, Compassion.

Really! You and I know, words have weight, and they have meaning, if we choose to use them with integrity.

Also, mention of legislative objectives to further already extensive work on Cultural Policy at the CRTC, that platforms need more government oversight and regulation. To manage this huge and destructive thing for our social fabric called polarization.

Mon amie, c'est en te racontant ces choses que je me rends compte du pourquoi de cette communication. De cette journée, j'ai retiré trois choses qui vont agir, j'espère, à la fois comme un baume et une étincelle pour toi, comme ça a été le cas pour moi.

• Les intersections :

Dans une des séances en petit groupe, menée par Mohammed Hashim de la Fondation canadienne des relations raciales, sa collègue Angela Cassie, francophone du Manitoba, a dit, en se présentant "On vit dans beaucoup d'intersections ».

Ces intersections, qui te tiennent à cœur mon amie, sont le fil rouge de ce sommet. Elles sous-tendent toutes les réflexions.

These are actually the common values that I think permeate all the rest of our thinking about the future of arts and culture.

Fundamental questions were asked:

"What does Canadian heritage look like?

Who holds the power to tell stories?

How do we redistribute attention, power, influence, money?"

Reminders of the guiding light of: Nothing about us, without us.
Self-determination.

Dans plusieurs des séances en petit groupe, et autant dans les plénières, nous étions toujours dans cette posture nécessaire même si parfois inconfortable, de l'intersection.

En art, les institutions et les humains qui les dirigent se doivent d'être au carrefour, en besoin urgent, de décoloniser les structures, d'arriver à la Vérité avant même de pouvoir prétendre à la Réconciliation, de mettre en oeuvre de véritables luttes antiracistes au sein de nos pratiques et milieux artistiques et culturels, et de se positionner SANS ÉQUIVOQUE sur l'enjeu des changements climatiques, autant dans le propos des artistes que dans la manière dont ceux-ci s'expriment.

Encore et toujours, prendre conscience et acte de la vision prédominante coloniale et eurocentriste de nos structures décisionnelles et des approches au financement de la culture.

En tout cas, je me suis dit que ça te rassurerait, de savoir que ces enjeux deviennent acquis chez les leaders culturels, même si le chemin reste long à parcourir.

La voie empruntée semble être la bonne, même si le chemin demeure opaque et sinueux.

- Here, my friend, is my second big take-away: **The Massey Report**

Tu te rappelles le soir où on refaisait le monde autour d'une bouteille de vin?
The night we dissected the Massey Report, that outdated, racist document that serves, thus far, as the cornerstone document for Canadian culture?

Well, my friend, from what I heard, it's high time to get rid of it as a standing document, and start over.

I hope this comes as a take away for others, that there is a need for a new Commission on Culture.

I won't say "Canadian culture" but more like, a Commission on Culture on the unceded territories of the First Nations, Métis and Inuit to begin with, then the rest of the title can come later.

Like, ok, Massey was dates back 1949, but they still held 114 public assemblies in 16 Canadian cities with 1200 witnesses and 450 memoirs.

In 2022, we can do that!

If we de-bureaucratize the process, and just go for it, we can have a new report that tries BETTER to reflect the place we live and share, collectively.

This new commission – mettons, des GRANDS, pas des minis sur deux jours, là, mais de VRAIS États-Généraux sur la Culture qui dureraient des mois, that would allow time to slow down. To have real, truthful consultation, and thoughtful reflection and openness to come up with durable and meaningful and momentous solutions to cyclical problems and broken systems.

- **Revenu minimum garanti**

The Apex of the day.

Le clou. Pas du cercueil, mais bien de la journée.

Ça a été clamé ça et là, en guise de conclusion, ou lancé à la volée dans le cadre des plénières. Mon amie, on a parlé de qualité de vie des artistes!

Je sais, c'est la raison pour laquelle tu es partie.

Fondamentalement, le test-drive social a été fait pendant la pandémie et Sophie Prégent l'a souligné : il y a eu la PCU, la PCRU, la PCTCC...

Ça nous prend une **mesure pérenne**, qui serait la base d'une reconnaissance de ce travail que font les artistes. Même quand ce travail est invisible.

C'est pas simple à réaliser mon amie, mais je sais que tu es d'accord avec moi, que c'est ça que ça prend : une mesure réellement pérenne.

La question de la condition des artistes est capitale, et Simon Brault l'a dit : on compte encore sur un surplus d'artistes pour maintenir une fausse économie. C'est un système qui s'auto-dévore et vit aux dépens des artistes. Tu l'as vécu, et c'est un système qui t'a dévorée.

Au final, mon amie, parce que je sais que tu aimes que j'amène le pot après les fleurs, je te partage une petite chose m'a fait titiller en faisant ce bilan hier soir:

Certaines idées et réflexions radicales ont fusé ici et là hier, et j'ai tenté de les saisir.

Et je ne veux pas avoir la prétention de dire que ça manque totalement de radicalité, mais peut-être un peu.

Dans ce monde « presto » où tout semble près de péter, il faut en avoir des rappels à la pensée et aux solutions radicales. Et qui seront en rupture réelle avec la machine néolibérale et capitaliste qui nous tient tous et toutes à la gorge.

Le premier thème offert par Patrimoine pour ce sommet est le suivant :

1. Promouvoir la compétitivité et la croissance à long terme

Bien sûr, il faut les définir, ces mots, mais si j'avais eu le privilège de m'adresser au Sommet, j'aurais dit : est-ce que compétitivité et croissance riment réellement avec durabilité?

Ne pourrions-nous pas réfléchir à ces notions de **décroissance**, préconisées par ceux qui sonnent l'alarme de la crise climatique?

Gideon Arthurs, directeur de l'École nationale de Théâtre du Canada et Directeur général de Soupepper Theatre, a lancé, comme un cri du coeur qui serait venu de toi, mon amie : il y a une magie dans le théâtre local! Un théâtre qui s'enracine dans nos communautés. WE NEED TO ACCEPT AS A FORM OF EXCELLENCE THE INTIMATE CONVERSATIONS HAPPENING ON A SMALL, LOCAL SCALE.

En ce sens, ne faudrait-il pas ralentir, réellement RALENTIR, pour prendre un recul afin de 1) apprendre à se parler, à se dire la vérité pour réconcilier et rebâtir des relations de confiance avec des communautés marginalisées, et 2) de céder sa place ou en créer de nouvelles?

My friend, it reminds me of things we talked about during the pandemic break from "normal life". The need for slowing down. Radical slowness. Which tends to bring about another thing: radical kindness. Et ça, c'est une radicalité artistique qui peut changer le monde.

Ok, je vais terminer ma missive là, mais je veux juste rajouter une chose, mon amie :

Early on Tuesday, Christopher Deacon said: often, in finding solutions and making us think, it is the artist who is ahead of the curve.

Elder Ferna said Art Changes Minds.

For indigenous people, art holds collective memories.

Ça m'a fait penser à toi.

Christopher Deacon nous a rappelé que nous, les artistes, sommes des Phares.

Celles et ceux qui éclairent, qui servent de guides.

De sentinelles.

Je veux que tu laisses ces mots se déposer en toi :

De par ta présence dans l'oeuvre de la culture, tu jettes une lumière sur le chemin de ceux qui t'entourent.

Tu illumines de sens une vie, une existence, un monde, qui souvent, n'en a pas.

Je sais que tu as fait ce choix pour toi, de quitter le milieu des arts. C'était trop dur, trop incertain.

Mais moi j'ai envie de te dire :

On a besoin de toi, de têtes-lumières comme les tiennes.

Et même si le chemin peut sembler parsemé d'embûches, même plus qu'avant, il y a plein d'espoir ici, au Sommet.

Des coeurs à la bonne place, et du monde investi.

Qui veulent en profiter pour redéfinir.

Parce qu'au fond, on est tous en quête de beauté, de justice, de communion.

En quête d'art.

Je t'embrasse, mon amie,

Danielle

ENGLISH VERSION

Artistic report presented at
Canadian Heritage **National Culture Summit**, May 2022
Danielle Le Saux-Farmer

Ottawa, National Arts Centre
Unceded territory of the Algonquin
May 4, 2022 [May the fourth be with you.]

My dearest friend,

I hope you are doing well.
That you are enjoying your new job.
Actually, I shouldn't say new job. You prefer new life, right?
Anyway, I hope you find what you're looking for, even if it's just a stable, quiet job in accounting.

I don't meant to rub salt in the wound, or make you jealous, but I want to tell you where I'm speaking to you from right now.

It might be painful to you, hearing about it. I know your departure was difficult. That your choice was one of survival.

In fact, I'm at the National Arts Centre, in front of hundreds of people.

As I write to you, bilingually because why not peanut and also because still find it funny, that old joke about official bilingualism, I'm in Ottawa at the NAC.

I know it's a place that you dreamed of performing in.

The NAC, at the confluence of rivers as I learned yesterday from Elder Verna McGregor, in front of people who are reflecting on arts and culture's future here.

In this place, in our communities. In our lives.

I know, I know you hate that expression: arts and culture. Sounds like peas and carrots. Means nothing.

Nonetheless, let me tell you about this Summit on arts and culture, about some of the ideas that I picked up yesterday.

I have no hidden agenda – definitely not to summarize Day 2 proceedings for the participants – just to tell you about my day.

Most of these words are not my own.

I caught them swirling around in the airspace.

Since this written message is just between the two of us, I'll give you all the gossip from Monday evening. Hold on tight:

There was a happy hour, it was a real "PatCan" party! For real!

It wasn't like when we worked together to finish writing our damned grant applications.

I swear to you, it was a hotbed of activity! You may think that it was boring, but it wasn't at all!

Anyway, I guess that was the most action Canadian Heritage had seen since, well, since forever.

The people were all excited to be together. Packed together like sardines in a brightly lit reception room—masked sardines, of course.

They were lining up without really knowing why: "Oh, you have to choose your drink before you buy the little ticket." People loaded their small plates with hot buffet food before the real party started—the speeches.

Speeches

Christopher Deacon, CEO of the NAC, took the floor and depicted the pandemic as the opportunity to rethink the arts in the long term. He gave a proper warm welcome and a gracious little dance around the word “tireless,” allowing the Prime Minister to segue into the next bit, like a perfect hockey pass.

There was Minister Rodriguez, who couldn't contain his excitement about being there! He was happy to be happy, as they say: “Guys, you're great. Oh guys, I'm happy. Oh guys, I'm happy to see you, guys, guys, guys.”

The Prime Minister reminded us that culture is Heart.

He said something that struck me. He said, “Art and culture are significant, essential, sources of connection for Canadians, economic drivers, vital, unique, exceptional, bright, bold, traditional, dark, consubstantial, troubled, clear, irreplaceable, sexy, boring, honest, essential and important for Canadians.”

We were surprised to learn that Sophie Prigent's COVID-19 infection started in March 2019, poor her. But it touched me when she spoke about the deep humanity that developed among us during this devastating period.

So yesterday, my friend, after a full day of discussions, I learned a few things that I'd like to share with you.

I learned from the event's co-hosts, Mani and ShoShona, that at the end of a round table discussion, people don't always want to wait for the closing remarks before taking a health break, and also that even if there are fire exits in Southam Hall, we don't know where they are.

My personal conclusion: we like to talk about art so much that we would rather be in a burning building than live without art.

A metaphor for our career as performing artists during the pandemic?

In any case, you've found your emergency exit.

There were myriad variations on the metaphor of a table as the place of power and storytelling. I'm still trying to sort those out. Honestly, I'd say that today, the table is tired and wants to be left alone.

I had the chance to see Minister Pablo Rodriguez's TedTalk about the digital revolution, performed in a very attractive fuchsia setting, where we imagined a day without art. Sounded like a platitude to me, but then I thought of you. That you gave up your artistic practice. And also the feeling that came up, when we as performing artists were deemed non-essential.

There was talk of going forward based on our common “Canadian” values. I know, I know, I was pretty skeptical too. I can even feel you shudder at this absurd pretention that there might just be one common set. If there even should be. But the Minister talked of Equity, Solidarity, Responsibility, Social Justice, Compassion.

Really! You and I know, words have weight, and they have meaning, if we choose to use them with integrity.

Also, mention of legislative objectives to further already extensive work on Cultural

Policy at the CRTC, that platforms need more government oversight and regulation. To manage this huge and destructive thing for our social fabric called polarization.

My friend, as I'm telling you these things I'm realizing the reason for this message. From this day, I've noted three things that I hope will be both a balm and a spark for you, as it was the case for me.

- **The intersections**

In one of the breakout sessions, led by Mohammed Hashim of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, his colleague Angela Cassie, a Francophone from Manitoba, said "We live in a lot of intersections," while introducing herself.

These intersections, which are close to your heart, my friend, are the common thread of this Summit. They are the foundation of all the reflections. These are actually the common values that I think permeate all the rest of our thinking about the future of arts and culture.

Fundamental questions were asked:

"What does Canadian heritage look like?

Who holds the power to tell stories?

How do we redistribute attention, power, influence, money?"

Reminders of the guiding light of: Nothing about us, without us.
Self-determination.

In many of the breakout and plenary sessions, we were always in the necessary, sometimes uncomfortable, position of the intersections.

In art, the institutions and people who lead them must be at the crossroads, with an urgent need to decolonize structures, to arrive at the Truth before being able to claim Reconciliation, to implement true anti-racist measures within our artistic and cultural practices and communities, and to take an UNEQUIVOCAL position on climate change, as much in the artists' creations as in how they share these.

Again, and always, to be aware of the predominately colonial and Eurocentric vision of our decision-making structures and approaches to cultural funding.

In any case, I thought it would reassure you to know that these issues have moved to the forefront, among cultural leaders, even if there is still a long way to go. The path taken seems to be the right one, even though the how remains unclear and complicated.

- Here, my friend, is my second big take-away: **The Massey Report**

Do you remember the evening when we fixed all of the world's problems over a bottle of wine? The night we dissected the Massey Report, that outdated, racist document that serves, thus far, as the cornerstone document for Canadian culture?

Well, my friend, from what I heard, it's high time to get rid of it as a standing document, and start over.

I hope this comes as a take away for others, that there is a need for a new Commission on Culture.

I won't say "Canadian culture" but more like, a Commission on Culture on the unceded territories of the First Nations, Métis and Inuit to begin with, then the rest of the title can come later.

Like, ok, Massey was dates back 1949, but they still held 114 public assemblies in 16 Canadian cities with 1200 witnesses and 450 memoirs.

In 2022, we can do that!

If we de-bureaucratize the process, and just go for it, we can have a new report that tries BETTER to reflect the place we live and share, collectively.

This new commission –let's say, BIG, not two-day minis, but a REAL general assembly taking place over many months, that would allow time to slow down. To have real, truthful consultation, and thoughtful reflection and openness to come up with durable and meaningful and momentous solutions to cyclical problems and broken systems.

Guaranteed minimum income

The Apex of the day.

The highlight.

The concept was thrown around, here and there, as part of conclusions, or blurted out in the plenary sessions. My friend, we talked about artists' quality of life!

I know, that's the reason why you left.

Basically, the social test drive was done during the pandemic and Sophie Prigent noted that there has been CERB, CRB, CWLB, and so on.

We need a **permanent measure**, which would be the basis for recognizing the work that artists do. Even when the work is invisible.

It's not easy to achieve, my friend, but I know you agree with me that it takes a truly permanent measure.

The status of artists is a major issue and Simon Brault said it well: we are still relying on a surplus of artists to maintain a false economy.

The system is consuming itself and lives at artists' expense.

You experienced it, and it was a system that swallowed you up.

In the end, my friend, this is where the other shoe drops. I'll share a little something that delighted me while putting this overview together last night.

Yesterday, some radical ideas and thoughts popped up here and there and I tried to capture them.

I don't want to say that they completely lack radicalism, but maybe a little bit.

In this "pressure cooker" world, where everything seems to be on the verge of blowing up, there must be some reminders of radical thinking and solutions that completely clash with the neoliberal and capitalist machine that has all of us in a chokehold.

The first theme provided by Canadian Heritage for this Summit is:

1. Promoting competitiveness and long-term growth

Of course, these words have to be defined, but if I'd had the privilege of addressing the Summit, I would've said: Do competitiveness and growth really pair well with sustainability?

Couldn't we reflect on these ideas of **declining growth**, advocated by those who are sounding the climate crisis alarm?

Gideon Arthurs, CEO of the National Theatre School of Canada and Executive Director of Soulpepper Theatre, had an impassioned plea: there's magic in local theatre! A theatre that is putting down roots in our communities. WE NEED TO ACCEPT AS A FORM OF EXCELLENCE THE INTIMATE CONVERSATIONS HAPPENING ON A SMALL, LOCAL SCALE.

In this sense, shouldn't we slow down, truly SLOW DOWN, and take a step back in order to 1) learn to talk to each other and tell each other the truth in order to reconcile and rebuild relationships with marginalized communities and 2) give up their position or create new ones?

My friend, it reminds me of things we talked about during the pandemic break from "normal life". The need for slowing down. Radical slowness. Which tends to bring about another thing: radical kindness. And that is the artistic radicalism that can change the world.

Okay, I'm going to end my message here, but I just want to add one more thing, my friend:

Early on Tuesday, Christopher Deacon said: often, in finding solutions and making us think, it is the artist who is ahead of the curve. Elder Verna said Art Changes Minds. For Indigenous people, art holds collective memories. This reminded me of you.

Christopher Deacon reminded us that we, artists, are beacons. The ones who light the way, who act as guides. As sentinels.

I want you to let these words sink in. Your presence in culture lights the way for those around you. You illuminate with meaning a life, an existence, a world, which often has none.

I know you made the decision to leave the art world for yourself. It's too hard, too uncertain.

But I feel I like telling you that we need you, bright minds like yours.

And even if the road seems to have even more obstacles than before, there's a lot of hope here, at the Summit.

Hearts in the right place, and people who are invested and want to take the opportunity to redefine things.

Because at the centre of all of this, we are all in search of beauty, justice and communion.

In search of art.

Love to you my friend,

Danielle