

Arts and Culture – Policy Points for Vision Green

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Introduction

While the major contributions made by Arts and Culture to Canada's economy are clearly quantifiable and beneficial, the Green Party of Canada recognizes that the qualitative impact of Arts and Culture to Canadian Society is priceless. At every level of our society, arts and cultural activities help define our identities individually and collectively and share them with the world. From surreal circus to incisive films, renowned performers and musicians, Canadians are experiencing cultural breakthroughs on the international arts scene.

We do not live, work, raise children and do other life-sustaining activities simply to increase the GDP. Nor is individual and collective well-being simply "enhanced" by arts and culture. As a nation, we rely on arts and culture to articulate who we are individually and collectively. We benefit from a better understanding of our diverse histories and stories that are embodied in our arts and culture and we thrive by hearing and acting upon aspirations expressed by the many diverse voices in this country.

Internationally acclaimed Canadian author, Margaret Atwood expressed a point of view we share "*the arts ... are not a frill. They are the heart of the matter.... A society without the arts would have broken its mirror and cut out its heart. It would no longer be what we recognize as human.*"

We live in times of increasing utility and a sea of sameness and mediocrity; strip malls, parking lots and urban sprawl that can crush cultural authenticity and creativity. It would be a fairly dubious notion that government anywhere could actually create *beauty*, but governments can create the right conditions to protect and support those who do.

Context

Canadians clearly recognize the vital role of Arts and Culture.

-75% of Canadians believe the arts are important in enhancing the quality of their lives.

-85% of Canadians agree that governments should provide support for Arts and Culture.

from Decima Research for The Department of Canadian Heritage

Statistics Canada defines “culture” as “creative artistic activity and the goods and services [directly] produced by it and the preservation of human heritage [i.e. museums, libraries, archives, etc.]”

Over the last decade, Canadians have experienced remarkable breakthroughs on the international arts scene. Today over 600,000 Canadians are employed in the cultural sector.

Often taken for granted, placed in precarious financial situations, and significantly under-funded, Canadian artists and cultural workers will prosper and grow as a result of new and innovative financial tools and increased funding. Our future and our sense of who we are as a nation, depends on policies that ensure a thriving, diverse and socially responsible cultural community as part of an inclusive Canada.

The Benefits of a Vibrant Environment for Arts and Culture

“Arts and cultural activities are at the heart of communities – they make communities more attractive places to live, they help bring a community to life, they define a community’s unique characteristics, they attract tourists and they help communities compete economically around the world.”

The Canada Council for the Arts

“People want to live and work in vibrant communities filled with creative people and educational opportunities. An active Arts and Cultural life in a community draws members of the creative class to it. Thus not only for quality of life reasons but also for hard-nosed economic motives it is important to support a vibrant Arts and Cultural life in communities in order to attract talented people and companies to power the economies of those communities.”

Richard Florida, The Rise of the Creative Class

Social Well-being

Arts and Culture give us a sense of who we are. They help us to name, reflect upon and treasure our values; they also give us critical insights into others' concerns, points of view and ways of living.

Arts and Culture are a crucial aspect of developing a harmonious diverse society. The arts teach a variety of crucial life skills from inventive problem solving to discipline to multiple forms of literacy: verbal, visual, musical, kinesthetic, and spatial.

Economics

Arts and Culture have a disproportionately high economic multiplier in terms of dollars returned to the economy and jobs created.

Arts and Culture in Canada include:

- Assets such as our libraries, parks, heritage resources, archives, and museums.
- Endeavours such as arts education and production in the performing arts, visual arts, literary arts, craft, design, film and video, broadcasting, and sound recording
- Investments in multiculturalism and multi-disciplinarity in a host of communities and institutions.

According to Statistics Canada, in 2003-4 (the last year for which comprehensive arts statistics have been published), with an investment of \$7.7 billion from three levels of government, the arts and culture sector directly employed 600,000 people and generated \$40 billion for the Canadian economy. That's a return on investment of more than 500%. Approximately 25% of this gain goes directly back to tax revenue – which is more than the initial investment.

The arts and culture sector employs as many people as the COMBINED sectors of agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, oil, gas and utilities. Yet the levels of public money, industrial incentives and support, and tax breaks that go to these crucial sectors are disproportionately low.

In 2003-04 the \$7.7 billion investment in the arts and culture (including parks, heritage, etc) consisted of:

- \$3.5 billion from the federal government
- \$2.2 billion from the provinces and territories and
- \$2.0 billion from municipal governments

Placing these numbers in perspective reveals that the federal contribution to Arts and Culture amounted to only 1.9% of its total budget in 2003-04.

Total government spending on the arts was \$243 for each Canadian in 2003-04, compared to \$202 in 1990-91. In terms of consistent value, this is not a significantly real increase in funds to the sector in thirteen years. During those thirteen years, the municipal share of arts and culture spending has increased to 26% (from 16%), the provincial and territorial share has decreased to 29% and federal contribution has decreased to 45% from 54%.

Moreover, there are substantial inequities in provincial and municipal funding regimes across Canada thereby compromising and limiting equal access to arts and culture funding, programs and benefits for Canadian citizens.

Meanwhile, exports of Canadian cultural products increased by 80% between 1996 and 2005, reaching \$2.4 billion, with great potential for further growth. The only area where arts and culture posts a trade deficit is in printed matter. All other categories demonstrated consistent growth.

Employment

25% of those who work in the cultural sector are self-employed. Of cultural workers who are “artists” or “creators,” more than **half** or 58%, are self-employed. This means that arts and culture workers, more than perhaps most other workers, are free to elect where they will live and work. Even better, nearly 4 out of 5 of these jobs are full time. Upwards of 83% of arts and culture workers possess a post-secondary degree or diploma.

Arts and Culture jobs are “smart” jobs! An arts education encourages workers to think creatively and inspire innovation – a capacity now in high demand by today’s global, knowledge-based business and industry.

Still Artists and Cultural workers are among the lowest income bracket of workers in the economy, although they are among the most highly educated. In 2000 the average employment income in Canada was \$31,757. Actors that year earned an average of \$21,597, painters and sculptors \$18,666 and musicians and singers \$16,090. By comparison, a senior government manager averaged \$65,020 in 2000.

Because so many Arts and Culture workers are self-employed they do not qualify for EI benefits, CPP or for Worker’s Compensation. To add insult to injury, in a year when an artist does experience a substantial increase in income by gaining a grant, selling an unusual quantity of work or publications, or by winning a prize, the artist is taxed fully on the gain as if it were pure income, with no consideration for averaging the lean years that have preceded or will follow. Sale of a work in one year that required previous years of labour and

investment is not considered a return on a long term investment; instead it's taxed as a windfall.

Without artists and cultural workers there would be no arts and culture in Canada and none of the benefits to the economics and well-being of our communities. What the figures above show is that artists and arts organizations are bearing the brunt of the investment but are receiving none of the financial benefits.

Market Demand and Tourism

Domestic travel involving culture and heritage activities numbered over 14 million leisure trips in 1996 and generated \$3 billion amounting to 25% of total tourist activity. The average Canadian household expenditure for cultural goods and services was \$1,357 in 2001. We know that tourists from abroad also travel to take in cultural activities such as festivals, operas, concerts, and museums. Arts and Culture generate huge collateral revenues for the places where they occur.

Canadian Identity

Arts and Culture activities ranging from live performances, film, television, literature and new media express Canadian identity at home and internationally.

Arts and Culture create places for the voices of our aboriginal peoples, our cultural diversities and our two founding nations.

Arts and Culture are crucial to Canada's reputation internationally. Due in large part to the richness of Canadian performing arts, literature, film, and media Canada is perceived abroad as a cosmopolitan, multi-cultural, creative, tolerant, and dynamic country.

By 2020 it is estimated that immigration will account for Canada's total population growth. Our international reputation and respect for cultural diversity will be crucial in attracting newcomers to this country whose history and future are inextricably tied to immigration. A healthy Arts and Culture sector provides places for the expression of the nation's diverse voices resulting in harmonious co-existence.

Education, Youth, Life-long Learning and Health

Numerous studies show a positive "feed-back" relationship between arts exposure and academic performance. For example, learning to play a musical

instrument tends to reinforce and build math skills; dramatic and visual arts contribute to stronger reading abilities. (www.artsmarts.ca)

Contemporary studies in neuroplasticity demonstrate that senior citizens who undertake an arts activity rejuvenate the brain's neuronal activity by as much as 10% to 15% staving off premature senility as well as causing an overall increase in physical health

Education in the arts teaches team-work, creative problem solving, non-violent expression and self-discipline, and instills a sense of pride in students, their families and their communities. Arts have been shown to be of particular importance to children and adults at risk. They offer opportunities for self-expression and exploration and help to build skills, discipline and pride that lead to fulfilling careers and leisure activities. Arts education builds positive networks and mentoring relationships between practicing artists in a community and young people.

When we consider the contribution of arts and culture to the nation in terms of full cost accounting; the benefits in terms of increased physical and mental health; the reduced risk of social marginalization as well as the substantial economic offshoots of a vibrant arts and culture to a community it only stands to reason that the federal government will yield even greater returns for its citizens from well considered and generous support for arts and cultural organizations and practitioners in Canada.

New Technologies

Arts and Culture in Canada have been and are on the forefront of developing new technologies in order to market, distribute, perform, and create in these new media. New Technologies have allowed many more people to access arts and culture, e.g., virtual gallery tours of Canada's museums. Canadian artists and cultural workers are internationally known for their work in the new media, e.g., Michael Snow and Janet Cardiff. Developments in new technologies made by arts and culture often filter through to other avenues of society such as medical technology. Moreover, arts and culture help to spawn creativity and innovation in technology.

Summary

A savvy economic development strategy recognizes that a healthy environment for Arts and Culture:

- Attracts and retains knowledge industry workers and immigrants
- Increases a sense of well-being among it's citizens

- Generates “clean” industries
- Provides genuine and consistent returns on investment
- Proliferates small enterprises
- Promotes a stronger sense of community; artists live in all of our communities; they are not corporations with international headquarters elsewhere
- Increases people’s pride in the place where they live
- Energizes people and builds and breeds more creativity, which spills over into every domain of our lives
- Supports the tourism industry
- Enhances all levels of education

Green Solutions: Policy Recommendations

Green Party MPs will:

1. Increase funding to all of Canada’s Arts and Culture organizations including The Canada Council for the Arts, Telefilm Canada, orchestras, theatres and publishers. The goal will be to make increases in this sector commensurate with increases in support over the years for other sectors of the economy such as transport, the auto industry, health care, and the oil and gas industry.
2. Provide stable base-funding for the CBC so it can continue to provide quality Canadian content television and radio programming in both official languages to all Canadians.
3. Ensure that the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) reserves more bandwidth for independent and non-profit stations.
4. Enact legislation that requires cinemas and video chains to have at least 20 % Canadian content.
5. Restore and improve arm’s length principles in the governance of arts and cultural institutions and agencies under the federal jurisdiction. In keeping with such a position, we believe that the heads of Canada’s cultural organizations such as the CRTC, Canada Council, CBC and Telefilm Canada should not be appointed by the political party in

power but by an arm's length committee made up of competent people representative of the various diverse stakeholders in Canadian society.

6. Eliminate current legislation before the Senate that would give politically-appointed censors the right to deprive films of the right to a tax credit if their content is deemed "unfit." In such a context films by some of Canada's most internationally celebrated film-makers-- including Egoyan, Cronenberg, and Arcand--would likely never have been made.
7. Increase support for community arts programs and facilities across Canada by establishing stable base-funding at a set percentage of the federal budget.
8. Equalize federal funding for Arts and Culture among provinces, territories and municipalities to make it consistent with the provinces and municipalities that have the highest current standards.
9. Provide incentives to all provinces and territories to restore and improve Arts and Culture components to schools and extra-curricular activities not only in urban but also in rural areas.
10. Extend income tax relief and incentives to artists (on the very successful models established by Ireland and the city of Berlin). Doing so will:
 - encourage artists to settle in Canada and build businesses here
 - result in other (usually) white collar "clean" industries that follow the arts jobs and dollars
 - help to provide meaningful jobs to university and college graduates
 - enrich schools and their offerings thereby attracting immigrants to settle in rural areas
 - revitalize and discover talent in communities where traditional industries are declining and young people are leaving
11. Follow and implement recommendations of Canadian Conference of the Arts in order to enable artists to access various social programs including Employment Insurance, Worker's Compensation and Canada Pension Plan.
12. Change the Canada Revenue Act to allow arts and culture workers to benefit from a tax averaging plan that will take into account the fact that lean years often precede and follow the good year when a show is produced, a book is published and a grant or a prize is won.
13. Protect Canada's cultural identity during trade negotiations.
14. Restore the government provided transport service (eliminated by the Harper government) to allow the transport of exhibitions between museums and galleries;
15. Protect the copyright for artists such that they are not surrendered to museums and galleries in the process of permitting exhibits;

Economic Strategy

The Green Party of Canada applies “Full Cost Accounting” to its understanding of economics. We recognize that compared to other sectors where government support is allocated, the arts and culture sector is under-funded.

We will pay for improved support for this sector by using the tax & subsidy systems available to government to encourage “clean” industries and discourage polluting industries as follows:

1. Given that Arts and Culture provide great quantifiable benefits to health and education, investments in Arts and Culture across communities and educational establishments may fall, in part, under investments in health and education.
2. Taking into consideration Full Cost Accounting, the Green Party of Canada is able to substantiate that investment in the arts rapidly pays for itself many times over.
3. Revenue Neutral Tax Shifting taxes what society does not want, such as pollution, and removes taxes from what society does want, such as employment and creativity. The Green Party of Canada will redistribute funds in a revenue neutral manner, allowing the tax system to favour non-polluting, hi-employment, highly creative, knowledge-based economic activity without increasing personal income taxes. For example, the Green Party of Canada will remove the GST from Arts and Culture products and services while imposing a carbon tax on burning hydrocarbons and releasing their by-products into the atmosphere.
4. The Green Party of Canada will maintain breadth and flexibility in its economic calculations. We are able to think in terms of GDP and quantifiable economics--which can demonstrate that Arts and Culture not only makes an enormous contribution to the economic activity of this country - but also contributes to the Well-being Index, now also used by Statistics Canada.

Green Party Values

1. The sustainability of individual arts and cultural workers depends on making changes to the tax and benefits programs of the nation so that artists and cultural workers may enjoy a standard of living comparable to their fellow working Canadians. This is more than merited by the enormous contributions that they make to the whole of Canadian society.
2. Arts and Culture is vital to the specific areas of youth, culturally diverse communities, and aboriginal peoples. The future of Canada as a culturally vibrant nation requires that our youth, members of

culturally diverse communities and aboriginal peoples are enabled to seek and receive their fair share of incentives and support for their Arts and Culture. As a nation, we will appreciate great benefits from a fully committed and supportive environment that encourages cultural expression from these unique human perspectives and voices.

3. Arts and Culture are at the heart of well- being for the citizens of this nation. The Green Party of Canada is thus committed, by any economic measure, to strong support for the individuals and organizations in Canada who create, produce, consume, perform, distribute, and market Arts and Culture at all levels of society.
4. **Arts workers need a clean, healthy, sustainable, beautiful environment in order to thrive and be inspired. The Green Party of Canada will work to safeguard that environment for them and for all Canadians!**

Statistics & quotes from:

- Stats Canada *Focus on Culture*
Employment by Industry
Income by Occupation
Economic Contribution of the Cultural Sector in Canada
Economic Contribution of the Cultural Sector in Canada – a Provincial Perspective
(see www.statcan.ca/english & follow links)
- Margaret Atwood quote and other useful information may be found in materials prepared by the Canada Council, “Making a Case for the Arts – Advocacy” (www.canadacouncil.ca/aboutus/advocacy)
- See also www.artssmarts.ca for arts education
- On Richard Florida www.creativeclass.org
- Canadian Conference of the Arts www.ccarts.ca/en/fairtax.htm
- Doidge, *How the Brain Changes Itself*
- Creative Community Index, *Cultural Initiatives, Measuring Progress Toward a Vibrant Silicon Valley*