

19th Canadian Arts Summit

March 31st – April 2nd, 2016 at Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity

Business for the Arts and Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity

Introduction:

The 19th Canadian Arts Summit was held this spring at Banff Centre and welcomed over 130 delegates and speakers who gathered to consider the important themes for cultural leaders, aspiring leaders and organizations. The Summit welcomed The Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Canadian Heritage, who talked about the growing importance of culture in Canada's identity and future.

A list of attendees, speakers and panelists is attached to this report (Appendices A and B) which is not intended to be a record of all of the proceedings but rather a summary of the top themes. A keynote speaker, Mr. Michael Serbinis an exemplary Canadian entrepreneur and change-maker, urged those present to start with the problems that are the most important—and *just start*. He also urged participants to identify “What are the problems that no one else is trying to solve? Think bigger than your own organization.”

This report seeks to identify those “systems challenges” that the Summit highlighted, and to encourage all Canadians engaged in arts and culture to consider their role in improving those systems.

Key Themes:¹

1. Digital Strategy Does Not Necessarily Equal New Revenue Streams

Everyone at the summit seemed to agree that there is a massive potential for arts organizations in the digital arena, which is dramatically changing the way audiences interact with arts. The Minister of Heritage believes that the impact of digital platforms on the arts will be profound, and within our lifetime—and may cause a monumental shift in the way audiences interact with arts and culture. This can be seen as disruptive to the current model, but also as a captivating opportunity. It is important to note, though, that there were no examples of how digital art content would lead to new revenue models—only to audience development. Audiences are learning to expect digital access to arts when they want, where they want, on their chosen device. They may believe that arts content should be free.

There seems to be a gap between the opportunities arising from digital content and the resources available to actively explore and take advantage of those opportunities, and the federal government would like its funding approach for

¹ The key theme of diversity is explored in a separate paper available at from either Banff Centre or Business for the Arts

the arts to be more active: an investment rather than a handout. When the Stratford Festival wanted to learn about digital content, they sought out the most experienced arts organizations in the world in order to learn from them. The National Theatre was extremely helpful, while one other major organization was less enthusiastic about sharing their successes. The Stratford Festival case study about capturing Shakespeare's canon was captivating, but it suggested that Stratford relies on a multi-partner funding approach and has to be creative to cover the cost of producing and capturing the digital content that it is creating.

Digital strategies allow smaller players to disrupt entire industries. In the arts sector, this could mean that smaller organizations or arts start-ups can disrupt larger arts organizations, but, it also means that the arts (a small player itself) could possibly disrupt other, larger non-profit and private sector players. The Canadian Government sees digital as an opportunity to attract a global audience to Canadian culture.

Most of the arts organizations present at the summit seemed to be focused on defining a digital strategy, exploring models to reach new audiences, and generating new revenue streams. It seems clear from examples given that audiences are being engaged, but new reliable revenue streams are not being generated. There was no example of an arts organization that had created new revenue from digital content that surpassed the cost of creating that content. Of the speakers at the summit, Michael Serbinis was the leading person with experience designing new digital platforms that succeeded at disrupting larger industries, and extracted revenue from more traditional platforms. Tammy Lee's presentation pointed at the possibility of doing so with a new ticket sale business model.

2. The Role of Arts Leaders in the 21st Century: An opportunity for CAS to become a stronger Canadian platform for networking, case studies and narratives on arts leadership.

There are more than 160,000 books on leadership offered by Amazon, as one speaker pointed out, but very few focus on cultural leadership. This could mean the arts leadership community needs a platform to help share successful stories on arts leadership experience, moments of crisis, cases of disruption or innovation, and other noteworthy outcomes. One arts leader at the Summit defined an organization as a group of people who have a mutual goal, with the role of leader as inspiring the group to think creatively, as well as supporting those younger leaders who will succeed them.

Is it possible for CAS to help fulfill this mandate? Inspiring arts leaders to think creatively was an unspoken theme of the Summit. Keynote speaker, Sue Hoyle of the Clore Leadership program in the UK, described how Clore's work has helped with both succession work and with strengthening leaders already heading cultural organizations. One challenge that all speakers agreed on was that their organizations are being faced with the prospect of changing at the pace that our society is changing, while renewing, refreshing, and re-imagining. Much of this may be connected to digital disruption, and a lack of digital strategy as well as a community strategy.

There appears to be a paradoxical challenge for arts leadership in this model: A leader may need to disrupt their own organization to achieve greater impact and sustainability, and in the process alter their own authority at that organization in order to transform it.

3. Learning from Outside: The Arts Sector as a source of lessons, case studies, models of innovation, and leadership development

A variety of speakers made the point that it is valuable for arts leaders to look outside their own “bubbles” for guidance going forward. This could mean that an organization provides a secondment to work in other industries, to learn about different models and ways of thinking, as well as different approaches to challenges occurring cross-sector in government, the private sector, non-profits, and leading entrepreneurs. Cultural leaders are also social entrepreneurs, and should be outward facing in order to be open to new possibilities for creating value. It is essential to learn about the world by seeing it and experiencing it.

To demonstrate sector similarities, the following is an excerpt from a report by the Mowat Institute, which relays many of the same challenges discussed at the Arts Summit, as related to the future of Ontario’s Civil Service, released on August 8, 2016.

Creating a High-Performing Canadian Civil Service against a Backdrop of Disruptive Change

“The civil service model that has existed in Canada for more than 150 years has served Canadians extraordinarily well. It has played an important role in building modern society, social cohesion and economic prosperity. This kind of progress depends on the continued work of a high-performing, adaptable civil service. But as the 21st century moves on, it is equally clear that the civil service – like the citizens it serves – must adapt to changing times. The latest from Mowat in our ongoing Shifting Gears research partnership with KPMG, this paper takes a hard look at Canada’s federal civil service. It argues that failure to sufficiently modernize has slowly eroded the civil service’s ability to meet the needs of Canadians. Historically insulated from disruption and transformation, Canada’s civil service is now facing 21st-century challenges: globalization, digitization, decreased trust in institutions, the polarization of politics, changing demographics and ongoing austerity. And more change is on the horizon. If the civil service is to fulfill its role in delivering public goods and protecting the public interest, it must be more resilient, more efficient and more effective, and it must deliver outstanding results. The good news is that we know that civil servants themselves are eager to adapt and be more nimble in responding to the context in which the civil service operates. The paper outlines the six characteristics of a high-performing civil service and makes recommendations for transformative change.”

Michael Serbinis was an invaluable and strong voice from outside the arts sector, and the reception of his talk would suggest at future Summits an even greater amount of time for constructive Q&A would benefit participants. Fostering interaction with leading minds outside of the arts—to understand, for example, how an entrepreneurial experience such as his could apply to the arts sector.

4. Arts Organizations as Community Spaces and Opportunities for Social Activism

Breaking down barriers and removing walls was a constant theme of the summit, and much of it was connected to the idea of community engagement as an active goal. This means involving the community, rather than merely programming for it. Many examples were delivered, including a Clore Fellow project which engages the homeless population in opera, and the 64 Million Creative Acts endeavour.

In this context of building new audiences, the local approach would be community engagement and the the global approach would be employing digital platforms. They can be connected, and more importantly, can build on each other's momentum. As Michael Serbinis pointed out: think globally, but start with a smaller area as a way to focus the idea. In other words: think globally, design locally. The idea here is that that arts organizations are able to empower their audiences and communities by transforming into community hubs that foster creativity and use arts education as a form of social activism.

Overall, there was a strong sense that arts organizations are striving to find innovative ways to engage with their communities; to attract new and active audiences as well as new talent. In some cases, this means bringing those communities into the organization itself, and in other instances it means removing barriers that the organization has built. Sue Hoyle gave the example of the National Theatre of Scotland: a theatre without walls. This is a metaphor for an approach to physical engagement as well as for digital engagement.

Other powerful engagement approaches include exploring the identity of a city, a region, and a nation, e.g. the UK examples of the Whitworth Art Gallery, the Battersea Arts Centre, and The British Museum (a "museum of the citizen"). These were examples of transformations that succeeded in engaging new audiences through innovative programming, and unlocking the connections around the organization. This new way of viewing the role of an institution or the assets of an organization can be empowering to both the organization and the community.

5. Emerging Arts Leaders vs. Experienced Arts Leaders?

A constant theme at the summit was the need for deeper communication between two generations of arts leadership, with the goal of preparing the next generation to lead arts institutions. As one speaker pointed out, "Leadership is a process, and not a means to an end." Many speakers during the session in some way or another argued against of hierarchy, and openly advocated for disrupting traditional institutions although beyond this point, most of the leaders need those institutions to guide them and provide a framework for success in the arts. One example was the story from Ravi Jain, who started an independent production company in partnership with a community theatre, but with funding from the Toronto Arts Council and with an eye to producing and leveraging the audience and resources of major theatre companies. Another example is speaker Gideon Arthurs, who gained valuable experience from the Fringe Festival in Toronto before becoming the new CEO of the National Theatre School.

This leads to the question: should larger arts institutions foster young arts leaders and entrepreneurs to create their own companies as training opportunities to lead larger and more mature institutions? Some people have the power to transform those around them into dreamers—a skill that innovating leaders possess, but we must be open to refreshing these institutions. Panelist and interim Vice President of Leadership at Banff Centre Russell Willis Taylor cautioned "We can't train tomorrow's leaders to run yesterday's institutions."

6. The Successful Narrative Will Be Key to Attracting Audiences and Talent

A point that one speaker made about creating leadership narratives and arts organizations: Don't make yourself the hero of the narrative every time. As a leader, you must create a narrative about the organization that is compelling; a narrative in which other people can see their own role. The community must see themselves in the story of your organization. This applies as well to attracting talent including leaders. If the next generation doesn't see themselves in the narrative, those younger arts leaders will create their own new organizations or go elsewhere. Whether in digital or bricks-and-mortar, every arts organization must have a compelling story to tell, one in which the CEO should not always be the hero, and especially one where the audience and the community can place themselves within that narrative.

7. Innovation in the Arts and Traditional Revenue Models

There was much discussion about innovation, but when it came to revenue models, the innovators were still seeking funding from the same traditional sources: the government (at all levels), the private sector, and philanthropy. At CAS, there was no featured speaker from the philanthropic world, although there were participants who are donors and sponsors. From government, the highest cultural officer in the country was invited to speak: the Minister of Heritage. A link was made between the ability to innovate and the resources available to do so—and the relationship of innovation to risk and to failure. There was a point made about innovation in the arts: compete or perish. Furthermore, collaboration is the new competition.

Collaboration was an often-used term at the summit. In terms of collaborators, everyone seemed to want access to a network of the best artists and leading organizations. Many of the speakers—including the Minister of Heritage—wanted deeper access to the network of arts leaders and artists. The Canadian Arts Summit itself is an example of one network that could be expanded and made more valuable to its individual members. For example, Tammy Lee was trying to figure out a way to disrupt ticket sale and the ticket revenue model through access to the network of arts organizations. Creating a supporting network of arts leaders could be an excellent opportunity for CAS, and it has the potential to become a powerful resource for arts leaders across the country. This could be one approach to a digital strategy for CAS.

8. Have Arts Organizations Become Risk Averse?

In the arts there is no room for failure. This was a statement made multiple times during the summit, but is this either reality or realistic? There are well-chronicled failures every year: performances, shows and books that are badly reviewed, don't sell, don't connect to their best audiences, or don't generate sufficient revenue to cover the cost of the production. On many levels there are excellent examples of proven failures in the arts. Whether or not those organizations, companies or artists learn from those failures is in dispute. There may be a pattern of small risks being taken—with small rewards such as awards, great reviews, slightly large audiences for a given show—yet not a lot of examples of globally ambitious risks on a large scale that could have the potential of a great reward.

Where are the visionary projects that possess the potential in scale to garner massive rewards, new or huge global audiences, with new revenue opportunities for arts institutions? Tammy Lee, the founder of Culture Creates, focused on an

ambitious, risk-taking endeavor that could result in that scale of reward: a new model of controlling ticket sales, with shared revenue by arts organizations.

Conclusions

The 19th Canadian Arts Summit was characterized by both lively debate and a respect for the work of others. Hearing younger voices added tremendous value, and the diversity of views and experiences helps to advance the field as a whole. The Summit organizers will no doubt explore new themes in future, but may wish to revisit some of the ideas outlined in this report to see if further exploration bears fruit.

Appendix A: List of Attendees

Mr. Adrian Ellis; Director, AEA Consulting

Mrs. Aida Aydinyan; Vice President, Business for the Arts

Mr. Alain Bergeron; Senior VP, Portfolio Manager, Team Lead, Mackenzie Asset Allocation Team

Ms. Alexia McKinnon; Indigenous Community Projects, Programs and Initiatives Lead, The Banff Centre

Mr. Ali Shivji; President, The Shivani Group

Ms. Alicia Rose; Managing Director, Framework

Ms. Alicia Vandermeer; Chief Organization Office & Corporate Secretary, Art Gallery of Ontario

Mrs. Alisa Palmer; Artistic Director of the English Section Director, National Theatre School of Canada

Mr. Ameet Mehta; Co-Founder, The Arts Accelerator

Mr. Amirali Alibhai; Head of Performing Arts, Aga Khan Museum

Mr. Andrew Dunn; Incoming Chair, McMichael Canadian Art Collection

Mrs. Anika Lirette; Artist, Théâtre Alacenne

Ms. Anita Gaffney; Executive Director, Stratford Festival

Mrs. Annemarie Petrov; Executive Director, Edmonton Symphony

Mr. Anthony Kiendl; Executive Director & CEO, MacKenzie Art Gallery

Mr. Anthony Sargent; CEO, Luminato Festival

Ms. Barbara Frum; Executive Director, Sharing Spaces

Mr. Barry Hughson; Executive Director, The National Ballet of Canada

Mr. Bill Millerd; Artistic Director, Arts Club Theatre Company

Ms. Camilla Holland; General Manager, Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre

Ms. Carol Horne; Chief Marketing Officer, Confederation Centre

Ms. Carolyn Warren; Vice President, Arts, The Banff Centre

Ms. Cathryn Gregor; Executive Director, Canada's National Ballet School

Mr. Chad Newcombe; Chair, Theatre Calgary

Ms. Cheryl Hudson; Managing Partner, Strategic Philanthropy, Michael Vukets & Associates

Mr. Chris Lorway; Director, Programming & Marketing, Massey Hall & Roy Thomson Hall

Ms. Christina Loewen; Executive Director, Opera.ca/The Arts Accelerator

Ms. Christine Armstrong; Impact Specialist, Calgary Arts Development

Mr. CJ Hervey; Executive Producer, Secret Location

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Ms. Claire Hopkinson; Director & CEO, Toronto Arts Council & Foundation

Mrs. Claudine Hubert; Co-General Director and Artistic Director, OBORO

Ms. Colleen Sexsmith; Chair, Canadian Opera Company

Ms. Colleen Smith; Executive Director, Theatre Calgary

Mr. David Binet; Chair, The National Ballet of Canada

Mr. Dennis Garnhum; Artistic Director, Theatre Calgary

Ms. Devyani Saltzman; Director, Literary Arts, The Banff Centre

Ms. Donna Livingstone; President & CEO, Glenbow Museum

Ms. Emily Molnar; Artistic Director, Ballet BC

Mr. Félix Marzell

Mr. Frédéric Julien; Director, Research and Development, Canadian Arts Presenting Association (CAPACOA)

Mr. Gideon Arthurs; CEO, National Theatre School of Canada

Mrs. Gillian Smith; Vice President, Membership & Marketing, Toronto Region Board of Trade

Mr. Graham Devlin; Cultural consultant, Graham Devlin

The Honourable Graham Flack; Deputy Minister, Department of Canadian Heritage

Ms. Heather Moore; Producer and Executive Director, Canada Scene, National Arts Centre Corporation

Mr. Henry Kim; Director and CEO, Aga Khan Museum

Mr. Irfhan Rawji; Principal, Totem Capital Corporation

Ms. Jackie Maxwell; Artistic Director, Shaw Festival Theatre

Dr. James Fleck; Chairman of the Board, Business for the Arts

Mr. James Wright; General Director, Vancouver Opera

Mr. Jan-Fryderyk Pleszczyński; Président, Conseil des arts de Montréal

Dr. Jane Brindley; Adjunct Professor, UBC

Mrs. Janelle Lassonde; Not applicable, Janelle Lassonde

Ms. Janice Price; President, The Banff Centre

Miss Jasmine Catudal; Codirector, LA SERRE _arts vivants

Mr. Jeff Herd; Executive Director, Royal Winnipeg Ballet

Mr. Jeffrey Anderson; Executive Director Arts Branch, AB Culture & Tourism, Govt of AB / AFA

Mr. Jesse Wentz; Director, Film Programmes, Toronto International Film Festival

Ms. Jessie Inman; Chief Executive Officer, Confederation Centre

Ms. Jill Price; Vice-Chair, Arts Umbrella

Mr. Jim McLandress; Chair, Board of Trustees, Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre

Ms. Joan Udell; Board Chair, Alberta Foundation for the Arts

Mr. Johann Zietsman; President & CEO, Arts Commons

Dr. John Young; President and CEO, Canadian Human Rights Museum

Mr. Jonathan Tice; Vice President, Global Sales, AudienceView

Mr. Josh MacFadden; Past Chair, MacKenzie Art Gallery

Ms. Joyce Rosario; Associate, Curator

Dr. Kate Cornell; Executive Director, Canadian Dance Assembly

Mr. Kevin Misener; Senior Manager, Global IT - Manufacturing, Kraft Heinz

Mr. Kevin A Ormsby; Artistic Director | KasheDance, Program Manager | CPAMO

Mrs. Laura Adams; Managing Director, Morgan Stanely

Ms. Leslie Lester; Executive Director, Souleppper Theatre Company

Mrs. Lisa Rubin; Artistic and Executive Director, Segal Centre

Ms. Lorna Brown; Assoc. Director/Curator, Morris and Helen Belkin Gallery, UBC

Miss Marah Braye; Chief Executive Officer, Harbourfront Centre

Mr. Marc Lemay; Directeur général, Politique des Arts - Patrimoine Canadien

Mr. Mark Hammond; CEO and Director of Programming, Sony Centre for the Performing Arts

Mr. Mark O'Neill; President and CEO, Canadian Museum of History

Mr. Mark Thompson; Past Chair, Theatre Calgary

Ms. Martha Cooley; Executive Director, Atlantic Filmmakers Cooperative

Mr. Matthew Jocelyn; Artistic & General Director, Canadian Stage Company

Ms. Meegan Guest; VP, Planning and Communications, Cleveland Clinic Canada

The Honourable Mélanie Joly; Minister, Department of Canadian Heritage

Ms. Melissa Gruber; Senior Consultant, Global Public Affairs

Mr. Michael Prosserman; Founder & Executive Director, UNITY Charity

Mr. Michael Rubinoff; Associate Dean, Visual & Performing Arts; Producer, Theatre Sheridan & The Canadian Music Theatre Project, Sheridan College

Mr. Michael Serbinis; Founder, CEO, League Inc.

Ms. Michèle Maheux; Executive Director/COO, Toronto International Film Festival

Mr. Mitchell Marcus; Artistic & Managing Director, Acting Up Stage Company

Mr. Mo Dhaliwal; Director of Strategy, Skyrocket Digital

Ms. Nada Ristich; Director, Corporate Donations, BMO

Ms. Nancy Jain; Board Member, Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery

Ms. Natasha Bood; Executive Director, Toronto Summer Music Festival

Ms. Nichole Anderson; President and CEO, Business for the Arts

Mr. Patrick Foran; Producer / General Manager, Artistic Fraud of Newfoundland

Mr. Paul Larocque; President & CEO, Arts Umbrella

Ms. Penny Ritco; Executive Director, Citadel Theatre

Mr. Peter Cathie White; Executive Director, Arts Club Theatre Company

Mr. Peter Herrndorf; President and CEO, National Arts Centre Corporation

Mr. Peter Jewett; Chair Designate, Shaw Festival Theatre

Mr. Pierre Lassonde; Chair, Board of Directors, Canada Council for the Arts

Mr. Pierre-Olivier Herbert; Press Secretary, Department of Canadian Heritage

Ms. Pip Day; Director/Curator, SBC Gallery of Contemporary Art

Mrs. Rachel Berdan; CMO, VP Sales, Ellipsis Digital, a division of rTraction Canada, Inc.

Ms. Raji Aujla; National Program Development and Marketing Strategy, Business for the Arts

Mr. Ravi Jain; Founding Artistic Director, Why Not Theatre

Mr. Robert Perry; President, MacKenzie Art Gallery

Mr. Robert Walker; Acting Board Chair, The Banff Centre

Ms. Robin Sokoloski; Executive Director, Playwrights Guild of Canada

Dr. Ross Paul; Past Chair, Arts Club Theatre Company

Mx. Roxanne Duncan; Managing Director, PuSh Festival

Ms. Russell Willis Taylor; Interim Vice President, Leadership, Banff Centre

Mr. Ryan Stec; Artistic Director, Artengine

Ms. Sandra Aubé; Issues Manager, Department of Canadian Heritage

Dr. Sara Diamond; President and Vice-Chancellor, OCAD University

Ms. Sarah Iley; Manager of Culture, The City of Calgary

Mr. Sean O'Neill; Associate Director, Adult Programming & Partnerships, Art Gallery of Ontario

Ms. Seema Jethalal; Managing Director, Daniels Spectrum, Artscape

Ms. Shannon Litzenberger; Project Manager, Canadian Arts Summit

Ms. Sheila Witwicky; Chair, Citadel Theatre

Mr. Stephen Williams; Grants, Awards and Support Programs Director, Edmonton Arts Council

Ms. Su Ying Strang; Director, The New Gallery

Ms. Sue Hoyle; Director, Clore Leadership Programme

Mrs. Susan Baxter; Board Member, Business for the Arts

Ms. Tammy Lee; Founder and CEO, Culture Creates

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Mr. Tenio Evangelista; President, Board of Directors, Harbourfront Centre

Mr. Tim Jennings; Executive Director/CEO, Shaw Festival

Mr. Timothy Burt; Chair, Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra

Mr. Upkar Arora; Chair, Board of Trustees, McMichael Canadian Art Collection

Ms. Valerie Morelli; Events Coordinator, Business for the Arts

Mr. Wayne Hambly; Board Chair, Confederation Centre

Mr. William Norris; Managing Director, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir

Appendix B: List of Speakers and Panelists

Mr. Adrian Ellis; Director, AEA Consulting

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Ms. Alicia Rose; Managing Director, Framework

Mr. Ameet Mehta; Co-Founder, The Arts Accelerator

Ms. Christina Loewen; Executive Director, Opera.ca/The Arts Accelerator

Mr. CJ Hervey; Executive Producer, Secret Location

Miss Jasmine Catudal; Codirector, LA SERRE _arts vivants

Mr. Jesse Wente; Director, Film Programmes, Toronto International Film Festival

Mr. Kevin A Ormsby; Artistic Director | KasheDance, Program Manager | CPAMO

Ms. Lorna Brown; Assoc. Director/Curator, Morris and Helen Belkin Gallery, UBC

Mr. Marc Lemay; Directeur général, Politique des Arts - Patrimoine Canadien

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