

April, 2013

**How do we speak for the arts in Canada today? Join the Conversation.  
Edmonton, April 23 - 25, 2013**

Germinating for more than 70 years, this conversation has flowed and evolved in the face of technological advances, the emergence of new mediums and the development of Canada as a multicultural society. Drawing from its collective creativity, intellect and vision, Canada's arts sector has made our nation a better place not only for artists, but for all Canadians.

Milestones such as the 1941 Kingston Conference of Canadian Arts and the 1944 March on Ottawa were influential in shaping the discourse around and landscape of the arts in Canada. Canadian artists spurred the 1951 Massey Lévesque Commission in addressing what it identified as the sector's main challenges: our proximity to the United States, our small population spread across a massive geography, and our bilingual culture. The impacts of their work are felt to this day.

Today, Canadian artists and their activities are supported nationally through the Canada Council for the Arts and the Department of Canadian Heritage; the provinces, territories and municipalities have structures for supporting artists and integrating arts into the fabric of their regions; and Canadian content regulations have helped Canadian artists reach levels of accomplishment barely imaginable at the time the report was published.

The last large scale federal review of the arts and cultural sectors in Canada happened more than 30 years ago with the Applebaum-Hebért report. New challenges have arisen. Technology has created both opportunities and challenges for artists; the traditional role of the arts in Canadian nation building is under scrutiny, while municipalities turn to culture to attract economic activity and articulate their identities; federal cultural agencies are recognizing an increasing challenge to provide support for new and interesting work.

The arts in Canada are at a crossroads — the recent decision by the Canadian Conference of the Arts (CCA) to end their active operations serves to highlight the erosion of the cultural sector's collective, national voice. It seems that the arts in Canada have lost the ability to paint an accurate, compelling picture to the country and beyond — or have they?

*How do we speak for the arts in Canada today?* brings together artists, arts administrators, funders, commentators, and academics to specifically address the fundamental questions:



## How do we speak for the arts? april 24-25 edmonton, ab

- **Who speaks for the arts today? Who should be speaking for the arts today?**
- **Who are they speaking to? Who should they be speaking to?**
- **What is their message? What should their message be?**
- **What does a relevant, stable and sustainable model look like?**
- **How do they speak for the arts? How do we avoid old patterns as a default reaction?**

This gathering will be a facilitated series of conversations and roundtable discussions. We seek your input, your insights, expertise, and ideas. We believe this summit is a first step in an extended conversation. Our discussions will be facilitated, documented, and disseminated as Canada's artists and cultural organizations forge a new path and plan for bringing our voice to Canadians and the world.

We anticipate a foundational and enlightening conversation in Edmonton — your participation will ensure we lay the groundwork for a productive step forward.

Thank you, and we look forward to welcoming you to Edmonton this April.

Sincerely,



John Mahon  
Executive Director  
Edmonton Arts Council



Claire Hopkinson  
Director & CEO  
Toronto Arts Council