Public Engagement in the Arts

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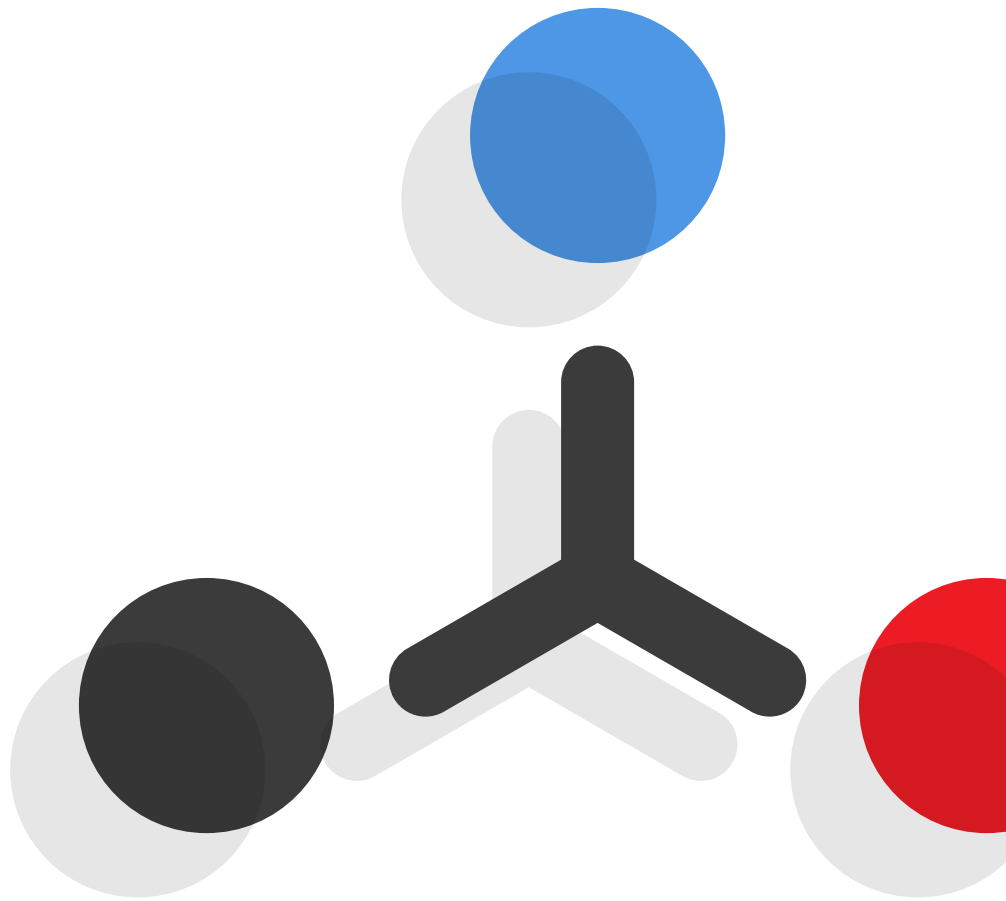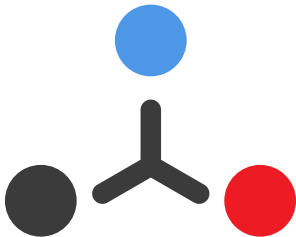
Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des arts
du Canada

Public Engagement in the Arts

Author's Note:

One of the challenges in preparing, and particularly in translating, this paper has been the differences in the conceptual framework for public engagement in the arts between English and French. The paper was originally written in English and is based on a mix of English and French sources. The ideas and vocabulary used in these sources are not easily transferred; for example, the word "engagement" has a subtle but important difference in French, while the terms "public" and "audience" do not translate simply. The Canada Council recognizes this complexity and hopes that the dialogue fostered by this paper will help to bring to the surface common language for Anglophone and Francophone Canadians to share in discussing this important issue.

Contents

Introduction

A version of this paper was prepared to inform a June 2012 strategy session of the Board and Executive Management of the Canada Council on the subject of "public engagement in the arts". The session provided the Canada Council with a high level vision for its actions in advancing this agenda. The Board's deliberations are reflected in this final version of the paper.

Public engagement is identified as a cross-cutting theme in the Canada Council's 2011-2016 Strategic and Corporate Plan. It states:

> *"The theme of public engagement in arts and culture is increasingly on the policy agendas of governments worldwide, including concerns for cultural rights, arts education, expressive life, citizen participation, social cohesion, and cultural diversity. While the Council has had a long and deep commitment to connecting Canadians to the arts, public engagement has a greater currency today than it had in the past."*
>
> *"The Council will respond to the growing priority of public engagement in the arts. It will take a more active role in advancing a public conversation on the expressive needs and aspirations of the citizenry at large, and by broadening its messaging to make clearer how the Council's work in the professional arts sector benefits all Canadians. While staying true to its ongoing focus on professional arts practice, it will highlight the contribution that art and artists make to everyday life, and how its mandate relates to enhancing public engagement in Canada's cultural life. In the process it will find direct and indirect ways to help artists and arts organizations deepen and expand their engagement with audiences."* (Canada Council for the Arts, 2010)

The Canada Council is currently engaged in developing strategies to advance its agenda related to public engagement in the arts for implementation over the remaining 3 years of the current Strategic Plan.

With strong Board leadership, the Canada Council has adopted a broad and inclusive definition of public engagement in the arts. It goes beyond the programs and services the Council currently funds to capture and validate the full range of ways in which people can have enriching artistic experiences, including online participation. The Council will, over the next few years, strengthen the support it provides to a wide array of activities that facilitate these experiences.

Canada Council for the Arts definition of public engagement in the arts:

Actively engaging more people in the artistic life of society notably through attendance, observation, curation, active participation, co-creation, learning, cultural mediation and creative self-expression.

The motivation for public engagement in the arts

> *"In an open and democratic society, it should be possible for everyone, from whatever background or viewpoint, to take part fully in cultural life."*
> *John Holden, "Culture and Class"*

What is public engagement in the arts? Why has this terminology become common currency? What does it mean for citizens, for artists, for policymakers? These are complex questions that have profound implications for the Canada Council and its funding peers across the country and around the world.

The term "public engagement" springs from a broader discourse about democracy, civic responsibility and social capital. It has been adopted in recent years by the arts community in Canada and other countries to encompass a number of ideas around the relationship between art, artist and citizen. However, these ideas are understood quite differently around the world and within Canada.

What is common is a shift from a focus on the art and the artist to the public as the central driver of cultural and arts policy and actions. The Director and CEO of the Canada Council, Robert Sirman, has spoken about the need to recalibrate the arts agenda from "supply" to "demand"(Sirman, 2011). At the strategy session, the Board and Executive Management of the Council examined their motivations to better understand what outcomes they hope to achieve by making that shift. They discussed the range of drivers for fostering engagement including:

- supporting individual and community engagement with culture and arts in all forms;
- providing resources and the possibility for growth for artists and arts organizations through market and audience expansion; and
- demonstrating the legitimacy and value of public funding for the arts as a part of a democratic and inclusive society.

These are obviously interconnected and the Council is already engaged in all of these. The challenge before the Council and the arts community is to determine how to balance these goals, understand their role in moving them forward and advancing this vision. This will, in turn, enable the Canada Council to better fulfill its mandate which is *"To foster the study and enjoyment of, and the production of works in, the arts."*

Defining "Public Engagement in the Arts"

A broad literature review was conducted to inform this paper; upwards of 100 reports, monographs and studies from a variety of sources (government, non-profit, academic etc) were collected, with approximately 30 reviewed in detail. The criteria for selection for final consideration in this paper were that the reports were either written or commissioned by arts agencies or had direct implications and recommendations for them as this was considered the

most relevant starting point for the Council. Strategic plans, mandates and selected programs were examined at national arts agencies, including the Canada Council, to understand the approaches taken by arts funders.

There is no universally accepted or generally followed definition of public engagement in the arts. In fact, the majority of works reviewed for this paper refrain from attempting to define the term. More often, researchers, policymakers and academics design spectrum models through which to frame the subject. They look at whether it is about "audiences" or the "public", about "participation" or "attendance", about "engagement" or "mediation", or about "consumers" or "citizens". Others look at the modes of production and participation such as creating, learning, observing, etc., or where engagement occurs: in the home, online or going out. Each of these terms comes with different societal and ideological implications and each is an imperfect attempt to fully capture the subject.

In English Canada, the United States, United Kingdom and other English-speaking countries, the terminology is generally focused around the idea of arts participation or audience engagement, while in Quebec and France, there is a greater usage of terms such as democratization of culture, cultural citizenship and cultural mediation. Other European countries use a mix of both. Most use these terms to illustrate a commonly desired end result of many publicly funded interventions in the arts: a public engaged with the arts.

The following are definitions of some of the common terms used to describe public engagement:

- "**Arts Engagement**: (...) (is) the entire spectrum of ways that people can be involved in the arts."(Brown, 2010)

- "… "**arts participation**" (is) broadly accepted to imply multiple modes of engagement – including attendance, interactivity through the electronic media, arts learning, and arts creation (McCarthy et al., 2001; NEA, 1995) – and a broader scope of contexts and settings (Brown et al., 2008)." (Brown & Novack, 2011)

- "**Audience engagement** is both educational and participatory. It is about creating opportunities for audiences to interact physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually with the form beyond the role of being an observer. It is about empowering audiences to better appreciate and connect with the meaning and impact of the art experience. Audience engagement practices may be tied to specific performances, but also may occur independently. Some practitioners in the field see audience engagement as blurring the line with the art-making itself.

  Audience engagement transcends and interconnects the conventional activities of marketing, programming, education and outreach in new ways. It deepens relationships with existing audiences and also builds connections among prospective audiences. It is actively two-way rather than presentational, and plans in good faith that a more

knowledgeable and involved audience will lead to better sales or donations and will attract new faces. *The outcomes of engagement practices, however, are not attendance or ticket sales alone, but impacts.*"(Brown, 2008) (Author's emphasis)

- **Cultural democracy**: "(wherein) governments provide citizens with the tools and infrastructure to understand the cultures of the past and create the cultures of the present." (Holden, 2008)

- "...**cultural participation** includes cultural practices that may involve consumption as well as activities that are undertaken within the community, reflecting quality of life, traditions and beliefs. It includes attendance at formal and for-fee events, such as going to a movie or to a concert, as well as informal cultural action, such as participating in community cultural activities and amateur artistic productions or everyday activities like reading a book." (UNESCO, 2009)

- **Cultural vitality**: "evidence of creating, disseminating, validating and supporting arts and culture as a dimension of everyday life in communities." (The Urban Institute)

- "The strategy of **cultural democratization** is based on a comprehensive conception of culture and the idea of a unified social body. (…) The democratization strategy has two phases: on one hand, the conservation and dissemination of inherited forms of 'high' culture, and on the other, support for creation in its popular/populist forms. The democratization of culture is a proselytizing action that involves converting society as a whole to an appreciation of works that are established and accepted or in the process of becoming so. (…)

  The idea of the democratization of culture can be summed up as follows: ensuring that the general population has access to culture – to 'cultivated' or legitimate culture." (Ministère de la culture et des communications, France) (translated)

- "**Expressive life** is the interior space where heritage and free expression operate simultaneously." (Ivey, 2008)

- **Cultural mediation:** "approach(es) aimed at creating new ties between citizens and culture. The term covers a wide body of practices ranging from audience development actions to participatory and community art." (Culture pour tous) (translated)

- Cultural mediation is understood to include a variety of actions that include audience enrichment aimed at deepening the public's understanding of and relationship to art forms and art works as well as activities meant to develop each individual's own sense of self and community through shared and inclusive art making processes. It provides artists, arts organizations and the public with new means to build shared experiences and aesthetic understanding. "Cultural mediation also embraces a wide variety of

professional practices, in keeping with the tendency for cultural mediators to be drawn to approaches that integrate the public's sensibilities and the community's realities." (Lafortune, 2012) (translated)

The common themes running through these definitions include the value of personal participation, holistic impacts on people's lives, encouragement of dialogue between the individual and a work of art, and the role of art in building social capital. The definitions talk about the role of the artist or organization as well as "mediators" in assisting the public in understanding art and attaining greater self-expression and actualization through the transformative power of art. Generally, they make a distinction between audiences and the public at large.

This is important as one of the challenges for arts organizations and funders is determining what their scope of activity and influence is. The field of activity is complex, with numerous actors, and a careful balance is needed to ensure that the right players are intervening with the right set of objectives and tools.

Furthermore, the range of definitions about engagement in the arts is paralleled by the complexity of definitions pertaining to arts and culture. The definition in UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity broadly sets out the anthropological view of culture: "Culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs" (UNESCO, 2001).

The relationship between arts and culture is complex. The legitimacy of a communal cultural life is broadly accepted, as outlined in the UNESCO definition, but not necessarily the legitimacy of an artistic life, which is often seen as a divertissement or entertainment rather than an integral part of individual and community well-being. This is one of the key questions that the arts grapple with as the sector works to build its capacity to foster greater public engagement. The focus of this paper and of the Canada Council's actions is more narrowly on specialized artistic pursuits. It should be noted that culture and art, or the arts, are used somewhat interchangeably in this paper.

Current practices at other arts funders

Public engagement or cultural democratization are central themes at many cultural agencies and arts funders around the world. Most arts funders and cultural agencies have a focus on the public aims of their support. Agencies use a wide range of interventions to stimulate and support engagement and access by the public to the arts. Common approaches include support to community arts, a focus on youth engagement and arts education and targeted funding for audience enrichment programs. However, there have been few evaluations to date which can show effectiveness.

Arts Council England, in a comprehensive literature review, examined strategies including public awareness campaigns, investing in more accessible and democratic art forms (such as public festivals), supporting arts engagement at a local level, touring and collections and use of technology and digital connection. (Bunting, 2010)

The following is a brief survey of vision statements and objectives pertaining to public engagement from selected national agencies along with examples of interventions to stimulate engagement:

Arts Council England (http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/)
- Strategic Framework for the Arts (2011):
  "Goal 2: More people experience and are inspired by the arts
  Goal 5: Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts"
- Examples of strategies and interventions:
  o Goal 2: "Creative People and Places Fund" is a £37 million investment in parts of the country where people's involvement in the arts is significantly below the national average, with the aim of increasing the likelihood of participation.
  o Goal 2: "Audience Focus Fund" helps funded organisations understand, retain and grow their audiences through research, collaborative actions and sharing of best practices.
  o Goal 5: "Music education hubs" targets children aged 5-18 through partnerships with local authorities, schools, music organisations, practitioners and communities to provide quality music education across the whole country.
  o Goal 5: "A Night less Ordinary" was a £500,000 pilot scheme to test whether theatre attendance by those under 26 years could be stimulated through free tickets. An evaluation noted that results were mixed: uptake was less than expected but 92% enjoyed the experience and 81% said they'd go again.

Australia Council for the Arts (http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/)
- Strategic Plan (2010-12): "to promote access to, participation in, and appreciation of the arts"
- Examples of strategies and interventions:
  o "Get Reading!" is a national celebration of books and reading. Working with other government agencies, libraries and booksellers, the Australia Council supports authors' tours and produces an annual "50 books you can't put down" guide. Books for the guide are selected by arts service associations, authors, literary agents, teachers, etc.
  o "Community Partnerships" is a funding program for artists working in community settings, similar to the Canada Council's Artists and Community Collaboration Program. Community Partnerships also has responsibility for delivering the Australia Council's initiatives in the Arts and Education and in particular manages the Artists in Residence program through collaborations with the States and Territories.

- o "What makes me" was an interactive project that profiled twelve Australians talking about what the arts meant to them. Visitors were encouraged to contribute content with the aim of creating a collaborative digital art work.

The recently published review by the Government of Australia of the Australia Council for the Arts recommends that there be a division of responsibilities with the Council responsible only for "excellence" and the ministry responsible for "access". (Angus & Trainor, 2012)

Kulturaddet Sweden (http://www.kulturradet.se/en/In-English/)
- Vision (2009) "to increase access for all who live in Sweden to culture, both via contact with culture of high quality and through creative activity of their own"
- Website does not provide summary of funding initiatives in English.

Ministère de la culture et des communications, France
(http://www.culturecommunication.gouv.fr/)
- The ministry in charge of cultural affairs has the role of making available capital works from humanity, and initially from France, to the greatest possible number of French people, of ensuring the largest audience for our cultural heritage, and of supporting the creation of the spirit and works of art which enrich it. (Decree n° 59-889, known as the "founding decree", of 24 July 1959).
- Last year marked the 50th anniversary of the French cultural ministry. The primary debate around this milestone was the success or not of the cultural democratization agenda.
- Examples of strategies and interventions:
    - o Funding is available to support projects that target participation and access by vulnerable or excluded populations, develop cultural mediation methods and promote cultural diversity.
    - o Funding is also available for arts education and for regional cultural development (*l'aménagement culturel du territoire*).

National Arts Council (South Africa) (http://www.nac.org.za/)
- Strategic Plan (2012-16):
  Goal 5: Focusing on Youth and Audience Development, Participation and Appreciation
- Examples of strategies and interventions:
    - o Arts Education programmes, marketing and communication programmes and grants for arts development.

National Endowment for the Arts (United States) (http://www.nea.gov/)
- Strategic Plan (2012-16):
  "Goal 2: To engage the public with diverse and excellent art.
  Goal 3: To promote public knowledge and understanding about the contributions of the arts."
- Examples of strategies and interventions:

o Goal 2: Grants for organizations target strategies that engage the public with works of artistic excellence; provide Americans of all ages with opportunities for lifelong learning in the arts; and strengthen communities through the arts.
o Goal 3: Create a Research Agenda outlining short- and medium-term (3-5 years) plans and priorities for the NEA Office of Research & Analysis, and vet with internal and external stakeholders; identify strategic Federal and international partners and cultivate relationships with those entities.

Norsk Kulturrad, Norway (http://www.kulturrad.no/toppmeny/english/)
- Culture Fund Objectives:
  "Objective 3: making cultural life accessible to as many people as possible."
- Examples of strategies and interventions:
  o Cultural mediation strategies to stimulate participation.

Other examples of arts participation/engagement initiatives:

- In 2001, the Wallace Foundation in the United States capitalized on growing interest in the arts sector in new ways of engaging the public in the arts by creating a special program entitled START: State Arts Partnerships for Cultural Participation. Thirteen state agencies were given multi-year grants (ranging from $500,000 to $1.1M) to implement new programs designed to broaden, deepen and diversify arts participation. Many did research projects on arts participation or worked on arts advocacy initiatives while others developed funding programs for organizations to design and implement projects to affect their organization's relationship with their audiences. (The Wallace Foundation)
- The James Irvine Foundation (California) has shifted the bulk of its arts funding to supporting engagement. The strategy aims to support arts organizations "to grow and thrive by engaging populations that reflect the demographics of California through active participation in the arts (including participation afforded by new technology) and by using non-traditional venues to present arts experiences." The first grant intake supported a range of community-oriented initiatives. (James Irvine Foundation)

A critical element of some agencies' approach is to set baseline measures through wide-scale participation and engagement studies and to tailor initiatives based on the findings. For example, in the United States, there have been multiple iterations of a national public arts participation study which has informed the development of the NEA's Strategic Plan and its goals. (National Endowment for the Arts, 2008) In England, the continuous "Taking Part" study revealed geographic indicators for low participation, spurring the development of their regional program for stimulating engagement. (Arts Council England, 2011) These studies are discussed in greater length later in this paper.

In Canada, in addition to the data produced by Statistics Canada, there were a number of iterations of a national attitudinal and cultural participation study undertaken by the

Department of Canadian Heritage, entitled "The Arts and Heritage in Canada: Access and Availability", last undertaken in 2007. (Department of Canadian Heritage, 2007)

Cultural policy and public engagement in the arts in Canada

The Canada Council and its sister agencies around the world were developed following the Second World War at a time of great societal change. Unlike in France and some other states where there is a national cultural policy, the cultural policy structure in Canada grew as a patchwork of acts, regulations and policies. In Canada, following the recommendations of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (known as the Massey Commission), the Canada Council for the Arts was established in 1957 by an Act of Parliament.

The central task of the newly formed Council was to stimulate the development of what we now call the "arts ecosystem". The emphasis was on supporting the cultural offer – ensuring that Canada had a cadre of trained artists able to create, produce and disseminate quality art for the public. This was done through support to a growing and diversifying set of artists and organizations in a sector that became more and more professional. Part of the rationale at the time was the need to counteract the influence of American and other cultures, based on the belief that a nation needed to have its own cultural identity, created by its own artists.

Further, the Report of the Massey Commission stated that the overall aim was to engage the public in the works created by Canadian artists: "Our hope is that there will be a widening opportunity for the Canadian public to enjoy works of genuine merit in all fields, but this must be a matter of their own free choice. We believe, however, that the appetite grows by eating." (Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, 1951)

The arts ecosystem supported by the Council and other cultural agencies grew at a time when personal, home-based or vernacular culture was shifting to a consumption model with the rise of mass media, casting the "public" or the "audience" – receivers rather than creators of cultural meaning. Some believe that this separation has resulted in a disengagement and disenfranchisement of the public with their own cultural lives (Mackey, 2010). There are some indications that this is being reversed through the rise of amateur practice, both virtual and actual (discussed below under "emerging trends").

Over time, distinctions both in terms of practice and policy around vernacular, amateur, non-profit and commercial modes of production have evolved. Lines were drawn between these modes and the agencies and policies that support them. Generally, at the federal level, the Department of Canadian Heritage (PCH) has responsibility for the broadest range of cultural policy oversight, including amateur or vernacular cultural expression. The department's mission statement says it "promotes an environment in which all Canadians take full advantage of dynamic cultural experiences, celebrating our history and heritage, and participating in building

creative communities." To do so, they provide a broad range of support to activities such as community celebrations and amateur and professional festivals.

The support to the professional sector and the policy structure that governs it is shared by PCH and its portfolio agencies and with other departments such as Industry and Foreign Affairs and International Trade as well as regulatory and quasi-judicial bodies such as the Canadian Radio and Television Commission and the Canadian Artists and Producers Professional Relations Tribunal. Further, other legislation such as the *Broadcasting Act*, the *Status of the Artist Act* and the *Copyright Act* have an impact on significant areas of cultural activity. An example of the complexity of this system is shown through performing arts presentation and dissemination support which is shared between the Canada Council and Canadian Heritage. This complexity continues with the support offered at the provincial and municipal levels as well as by the private sector which often overlaps and/or complements the federal support. These agencies understandably have different policy objectives and mechanisms, but it is increasingly clear that the public and artists transcend these differences in their interests and practices, posing challenges for the current infrastructure.

One of the critical gaps in the literature reviewed is that most analysis and modelling have been done on the audience or individual experience or of the programming of arts organizations. Very little has looked specifically at the tools and mechanisms of policy and funding agencies, beyond arts education and community arts strategies. What are the interventions that agencies like the Canada Council have available to them to stimulate engagement? How successful are these interventions? Which agencies intervene where and at what level of government? How can the impact of this be measured?

Interventions used by the Canada Council and other funders to foster engagement include:
- Community arts / artist and community collaborations
- Touring, public readings, screenings, exhibitions and other dissemination programs
- Operating grants that allow organizations to do cultural mediation, audience enrichment and outreach
- Market development grants and initiatives
- Art rental programs such as the Art Bank
- Arts Education
- Support for festivals

As a background exercise for this paper, these interventions were mapped against the five modes of participation in a model adapted from that of Alan Brown (Brown, 2004) (Figure 1) as an attempt to illustrate the complexity of this system and to situate the Council within that map. This exercise demonstrated that the "ecosystem" terminology is very apt – as in all systems, all parts are interconnected and changes to one element can have a ripple effect on other components.

Brown's model (modified for this paper) essentially breaks down each mode of participation by individuals. Brown's original model (see Appendix A) is seen as a progression towards greater personal creative control; the adapted version shown here is cyclical. This model helps to understand and validate the complexity of each individual's engagement with art – whether through personal creation and self-expression or attendance or the day-to-day casual encounters with the art that surrounds us. Engagement is not hierarchical or aimed in one direction or another but rather is a cycle of experiences that help us to grow as human beings.

Figure 1 – A model of arts participation
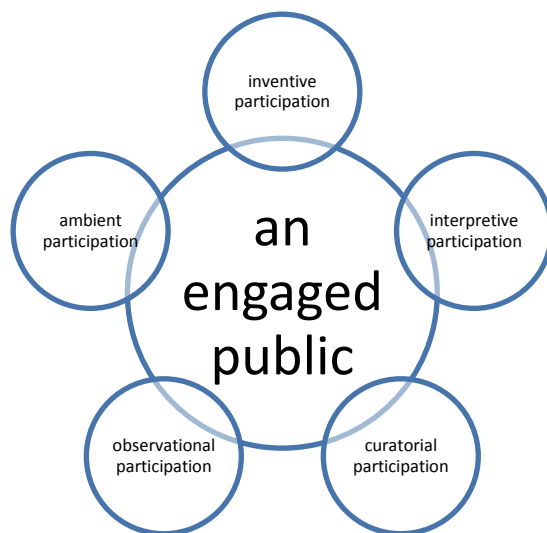
As an example of the complexity of mapping funder interventions in the stimulation of arts engagement, arts education could arguably be an intervention in every mode. Through the regular curriculum and extra-curricular activities, children and youth:

- participate in the arts through writing short stories (inventive),
- learn existing works of music in choir (interpretive),
- select books from the library (curatorial),
- watch plays by visiting theatre for young audience companies (observational), and
- walk past art in the hallways of their schools (ambient).

These layers of participation are critical to developing the full capacity of each individual to engage in a meaningful way with culture.

In the area of arts education, despite the jurisdictional issue that, in Canada, formal education is the responsibility of the provinces, all levels of government and the private sector are engaged, including the Canada Council. At a provincial level, the provincial ministries of education have responsibility for the educational system as a whole and the municipal school boards execute the delivery of curriculum, including arts education. Many provincial and municipal arts councils

have programs that support artists who work directly in the schools with educators. Foundations like the McConnell Foundation support initiatives in arts education. The Canada Council, as well as municipal and provincial funders, supports artists and organizations who tour in schools and provide learning opportunities, in addition to supporting publishers of children's literature, etc.

The Canada Council has long had a commitment to developing the quality and integrity of the artistic work that goes into schools, for example through the support to theatre for young audiences and prizes such as the Governor General's Literary Awards for children's literature. While the Canada Council is not directly implicated in the development of arts education curriculum, many of its funding recipients are through arts in the schools programs. The support given to them through operating programs in particular has been of huge importance in developing their capacity in this regard.

This complexity can be mapped across all modes of engagement and the interventions that stimulate them. More needs to be done to understand this connection between the means that arts funders and policy makers have to support engagement and the ways in which people experience the arts.

In addition to direct funding to artists and arts organizations, many government agencies support wider participation stimulation initiatives. Brown notes in a study on engagement done for the Ontario Arts Council that "Although causality cannot be proven in one direction, a clear symbiosis is evident between participatory engagement and attendance. This only underscores the need for 'ecological thinking' in both policy and practice." (Brown, 2011)

The following looks at two such participatory initiatives, one of which the Council has been involved in supporting, the other funded solely by the Department of Canadian Heritage. These are not broad "ParticipAction" type campaigns but time-limited, targeted initiatives.(ParticipAction) It is difficult to tell if they will have a long-term population wide effect on participation and attitudes but that is the aim.

- Culture Days / Les journées de la culture

Culture Days was established in 2010 to provide a national focus and rallying point for cultural participation. It builds on Quebec's *Les Journées de la culture*, produced annually by Culture pour tous since 1997, an internationally-recognized Canadian model for promoting public participation and engagement. Culture Days is a volunteer-driven, three-day event that promotes hands-on engagement in a huge variety of arts activities. In 2011, 5,843 activities held in nearly 800 communities nationwide with wide participation. The reach of Culture Days is growing and it has significant media and private sector partnerships. The Canada Council provided multi-year seed funding and sits on a number of working committees for the event.

Early indications show that the 2012 edition was even larger and more inclusive, suggesting a great willingness on behalf of arts organizations of all sizes to engage with the public in

meaningful ways as well as the public's hunger for these experiences. (Culture Days / Les Journées de la Culture)

- Cultural Capitals of Canada

The Cultural Capitals concept was first initiated by the European Commission in 1985, early in the days of European unification. The concept was to celebrate the cultural diversity of different European cities and to encourage cultural development and tourism. The first European capital of culture was Athens in 1985.

The Cultural Capitals of Canada Program was established in 2002 under then Minister Sheila Copps and formed part of the growing awareness of the impact of culture on cities. The Creative City Network (http://www.creativecity.ca/) was created the same year to provide a forum for municipal cultural planners. The program is in its final year due to budget restraint.

"Cultural Capitals of Canada recognizes and supports Canadian communities that have a record of harnessing the many benefits of arts and culture in community life. Its objective is to stimulate sustained community support for the arts and heritage." (from Canadian Heritage website)

Each year, up to three municipalities of different size were designated as a cultural capital. The municipalities designed a year-long program to celebrate and leave a legacy of arts and culture in their community. They needed to ensure inclusiveness and participation by professional artists and demonstrate commitment of the municipality to arts, culture and heritage. The program was administered and funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage. (Canadian Heritage)

Cultural participation

Cultural participation snapshot
Canada's cultural participation figures from Statistics Canada are, in general, quite positive. However, the professional arts sector and the Canada Council have difficulty in situating and measuring their work within a very large definition of cultural activities and in differentiating the numerical measures from the qualitative impact that the arts have on those who participate.

The statistics indicate that Canadians are active in the arts but there is a need to know more about the quality and value of the experiences that the public has. The artists and organizations supported through public funding have the capacity to provide rich experiences but there is a lacuna in terms of contextualizing and linking participation data to the benefit accrued. While researchers such as WolfBrown are attempting to make that connection and articulate the value of experiences, more can be done.

Furthermore, if there is a significant increase in attendance and consumption of popular culture while public participation in the activities of most non-profit arts organizations remain relatively stable, does that indicate a possible marginalization of certain kinds of practice and experiences? Given that for arts funders, part of the ultimate outcome is to enhance the quality of lives of their communities, this is a key issue. If the arts are not actively engaging people in meaningful experiences, there is an imbalance in terms of the kinds of opportunities the public can have and, potentially, a cultural value deficit.

The most recent data which report activity for 2010 shows that almost every Canadian 15 or older participated in one of 18 arts, culture and heritage activities[1]. When we drill down, we see that almost three quarters of Canadians attended a performing arts event or a cultural festival and a little over a third visited an art gallery. Just under half of all Canadians attended a theatrical performance and 13% attended a symphonic or classical performance. Participation numbers are also on the rise: between 1992 and 2010, art gallery attendance increased from 20% to 36%, while reading a book rose from 67% to76%.

When we look at mediatised consumption (online or through other electronic media), the rise is much sharper: for example, between 2005 and 2010, listening to downloaded music increased from 29% to 51%.(Hill Strategies, 2012) This follows the trends in the United States which show a large shift from in-person to mediatised participation.(National Endowment for the Arts, 2010)

In addition, almost 700,000 Canadians volunteered in arts and cultural organizations, work valued at $1.1 billion.(Hill Strategies, 2007)

Canadian consumer spending in the cultural sector is also high: The $27.4 billion in consumer spending on culture in Canada represents $841 for every Canadian resident. This is three times larger than consumer spending on hotels, motels and other travel accommodations ($9.2 billion). Spending on books ($1.4 billion) was slightly higher than spending on movie theatre admissions ($1.2 billion) in 2008. (Hill Strategies, 2010)

The Department of Canadian Heritage's "The Arts and Heritage in Canada – Access and Availability" study notes high levels of support for the importance of the arts, culture and heritage as a contributor to quality of life and community vitality. Approximately 60% of respondents are personally involved in at least one artistic activity. The report shows that 86% of respondents "attended at least one type of arts or cultural event in the past year, with the most popular events being live performances (69%)."(Phoenix Strategic Perspectives, 2007)

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[1] The 18 activities are: public art gallery; museums (other than art galleries); theatre; pop music; classical music; cultural festival; cultural or heritage performance; other cultural performance; historic site; zoo; aquarium; botanical garden; conservation area or nature park; newspaper; magazine; book; movie or drive-in; video (rented or purchased VHS or DVD); listen to music on CD, etc; and listen to downloaded music.

The performing arts data was reinforced through the findings of the 2011 Value of Presenting survey, undertaken by the Canadian Arts Presenting Association (CAPACOA), which showed that 86% of respondents have attended a live performing arts event at some time in the past. (CAPACOA, 2012)

As noted before, the majority of national cultural participation figures in Canada focus on consumption or receptive indicators (attendance, purchases etc) and focus on an extremely wide range of activities that includes mainstream popular culture. There have been studies on engagement, participation and value at the provincial and disciplinary level but since the last edition of the "Access and Availability" study, little is available that is national and comprehensive. Statistics on publicly funded activities will gradually be supplemented by information from the Canadian Arts Data/Données sur les arts au Canada (CADAC)[2] but at this time, the data is at a baseline stage.

International participation studies show trends that mirror Canada's. However, "despite advances in survey methodology and data availability, using comparisons to draw conclusions or to make policy and program recommendations is still ill-advised. Not only do data come from countries with often very different institutional and policy environments, they are also generated using different survey instruments." (IFACCA, 2002)

Therefore the following is a look at trends in four other national studies, rather than a comparative look at statistical data. This high level look reveals different patterns in art form consumption and participation but some similar trends in terms of demographics and the shift towards electronic engagement.

- **Australia: More than Bums on Seats**

The Australian participation study looked at both receptive and participatory forms of engagement and found that a majority of Australians are highly engaged with positive attitudes towards the arts. Literature and music were the most popular art forms, both in terms of attendance and personal creativity. Many believe the arts have personal benefits and associate participating with social experiences. As with other countries, there has been a rise in online activities, with older Australians mostly using the internet for information and viewing and younger people more actively creating online. There is growth in the interest in Indigenous art and changing attitudes towards it. Barriers to engagement included linguistic (non-English speakers), regions and health. (Australia Council for the Arts, 2010)

- **US: Survey of Public Participation in the Arts**

This national survey has been undertaken jointly with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and US Census Bureau since 1982.

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[2] CADAC (Canadian Arts Data/Données sur les arts au Canada) is a web based application dedicated to the collection, dissemination and analysis of financial and statistical information about Canadian arts organizations

The most recent study, from 2008, showed a marked decline in attendance for "benchmark events" (such as jazz or classical music concerts) over the last edition of the study. In fact, the NEA said that the figures were "disappointing." The study demonstrated that a key growth area was consumption through electronic media. Literary reading also increased while non-traditional events such as outdoor festivals drew younger and more diverse audiences. Some areas of personal creation, particularly tied to electronic means, grew and more traditional areas such as quilting saw declines. It noted the strong correlations between attendance and personal arts creation and childhood arts experiences. (National Endowment for the Arts, 2008)

The NEA went on to commission other reports to analyse the data and try to grasp the shifting patterns of engagement. These looked at age as a factor in participation, the status of arts education and a broadening understanding of arts participation.

Interestingly, the NEA has done a revision of the survey format for the 2012 edition to capture a more complete picture of participation while continuing to track benchmark data. The report will be released in 2013.

- **France: Pratiques culturelles des Français**

A longitudinal analysis of the French cultural participation study (15 years and older) covering the period from 1973-2008 highlights four major trends:

The study demonstrates the explosive growth of audiovisual consumption and offer over the 35 year period, noting that "screen time" and listening to recorded music have increased substantially. It is worth noting that the last survey was done in 2008, just as a new wave of mobile technology was introduced, sure to have further impact on these numbers.

Countering the rise in mediatised consumption, print consumption (books and newspapers) has diminished considerably. Younger men in particular were less likely to have read books for pleasure while women are far more likely to use libraries than men.

The number of French citizens taking part in cultural activities such as singing in a group, grew over the period studied. Women were again more likely to take part although men were more likely to participate in electronic activities. The study shows that social disparities in participation were lessened over time.

Finally, the analysis shows that, despite the rise in mediatised consumption, the French still continue to go out to consume culture, including cinema, performing arts and museums, albeit on a more occasional basis. However, the average age of attendees for performing arts is increasing. (Donnat, 2011)

- **UK: Taking Part Survey**

The Department of Culture, Media and Sport, in association with the Arts Council England, undertakes continuous studies on Britain's cultural and sporting activities.

The most recent release shows a rise in adult arts participation since 2005-06, with increases in gallery and museum attendance. The oldest respondents (over 75) continued to have the lowest rates of engagement but some other socio-economic disparities have lessened. The study also showed sharp increases in online activities, mostly for information but also for viewing and downloading as well as for improving creative skills. (Arts Council England, 2012)

A more substantive analysis done in 2008 of the 2005-06 data set showed that 84% of respondents rarely or only occasionally participated in the arts. As in other countries education was a key indicator of greater attendance as was social status, a factor which was considered separate from education or income. Gender, ethnicity, age, health and having young children were also important in determining not only frequency but the types of events people participated in. However, there were little distinctions between "high" and "low" culture; those who were frequent attenders went to a wide variety of events. (Bunting, Chan, & Goldthorpe, From Indifference to Enthusiasm, 2008)

Emerging Trends

What are the socio-economic trends that underlie the participation figures; that is, the "demand" side? A recent American analysis was dire, stating that there is "a mismatch between the scale and nature of current provision and the scale of demand for that configuration of provision". (Ellis, 2012) The situation in Canada, based on participation figures and a more robust economic status, is more positive as shown above but we are still seeing great changes in how the public engages with the arts. It would be naïve to imagine that the trends and shifts in engagement patterns from what they term "benchmark" forms to online and non-traditional practices in the US are not being replicated to some extent in Canada. Some of these changes are challenging to the arts ecosystem as it currently stands but should also be seen as opportunities to change how the arts and public interact.

- The face of Canada is changing. The traditional audience for the arts is aging and not being replaced. The new Canadian public is increasingly diverse and does not necessarily have a stake in the existing arts offer. Immigrant and Aboriginal populations are growing rapidly. Diverse publics are engaged in a wide variety of arts and culture that takes place within and outside the mainstream, whether through community-based, digital or commercial culture. For example, the "Access and Availability" study showed that Aboriginal respondents were more likely to take part in activities that were relevant to their culture. (Department of Canadian Heritage, 2007)

This poses a series of interesting questions for arts councils – is the "supply" that we support what is actually "demanded"? How do we ensure that our clients and the work of high artistic merit they produce are able to "meet" the public where they are? As Hopkins says about Aboriginal audiences, "maybe it's not an issue of getting Native people into the gallery but a matter of getting a Native audience to engage with contemporary art on their own terms." (Hopkins, 2004) Many arts funders have longstanding commitments to equity of access to programs by artists and arts organizations; how are funders ensuring that the public also has access to content that is equitable in the sense of being from them and for them, without pandering or diluting the quality of the work?

- Not only is the demographic cultural reality of Canada changing, where people live is shifting dramatically. Over the past century, Canada has urbanized rapidly. This paralleled the rise in cultural production in the 1960s, 70s and 80s. However, more recently, the real growth has been in suburban development and peripheral cities. (Statistics Canada, 2008) These are often the homes to New Canadians and have emerging artistic communities that exist, for the most part, outside the current funding structures and lack recognition in the cultural mainstream.

- There are challenges to equitable and sustained arts education and access for youth and children.(Council of Ministers of Education, Canada and Canadian Commission for UNESCO, 2010) This is critical as study after study has shown that the greatest predictor in lifelong engagement in the arts is early and consistent exposure during childhood.(McCarthy, 2004)

- More people are spending their leisure time online and the experience that they have there can be quite different from that of a more traditional arts activity. In the Web 2.0 environment, they engage in dialogue and have control over how they consume culture. Content is generally free and available when and where they want. They are "empowered consumers" who "have rapidly increasing access to information, are less deferential to traditional forms of authority and expertise and, in some sectors, particularly technology, are starting to take the reins as producers as well as consumers."(Bunting, 2010) Further, the rise of crowdfunding and crowdsourcing (e.g., Kickstarter) can be seen as a harbinger of people's willingness to engage directly with art that is meaningful for them.

- Another technological shift is from an industrial to post-industrial production model – from an economy of atoms to an economy of bytes. This movement from bricks and mortar to endlessly and easily reproducible and transformable content is of great importance to the cultural sector which needs to find ways to assign value to its content, beyond the material costs. In this configuration, content is often co-created and ownership is far more fluid.

Arts organizations of all stripes are quickly learning how to engage with their publics in increasingly open and responsive ways, such as social media. However, there is also reluctance on the part of some to fundamentally change how they communicate and potentially co-create with the public. There are many who struggle with how to maintain artistic quality in a changing relationship with the public.

- People don't necessarily register the distinction between vernacular, amateur, professional and commercial artistic practice. They don't generally care if it was funded by a government agency, created in someone's basement or produced by a multi-national corporation. They are engaged in their own aesthetic experience and, in the words of a jazz critic, only want to know "does it suck or does it swing?" As a facet of this, we observe the rise in what is termed the "Pro-Am" artist (Leadbeater, 2004) – self-taught artists practicing at professional levels, outside the traditional structures. They self-produce and self-publish and generate sometimes considerable followings. This level of activity is good for the cultural field as a whole but poses challenges for the existing structures. These issues have the potential to question the traditional status of the professional artist, one who has devoted his or her life to the difficult and risky task of making art of the highest quality.

Barriers to public engagement in the arts

There are numerous barriers to participation and engagement, some are tangible but many are less easily quantified and dealt with. It is critical to look at the ways in which people are excluded from having full and complete artistic lives. These include accessibility issues, programming and marketing which is not inclusive of the full diversity of Canadian society, and cost and availability. However, we also need to ensure that we are not falling into the "myth of revelation"(Donnat, 2008) – that simply by exposing people to the arts they will want to be involved, without taking into account the appropriateness of the cultural experience on offer. Holden offers the idea that the cultural structures need to help build "cultural confidence". (Holden, 2010)

The Arts Council England literature review stated that: "While lack of time and cost are frequently cited barriers, more in-depth qualitative research finds that psychological barriers are more important overall than practical concerns. Joss observes that the focus on barriers tends to imply that problems with levels of arts engagement stem from the characteristics and attitudes of people themselves, and not the ways in which the arts are created, distributed and communicated. (Joss, 2008)" (Bunting, 2010)

Furthermore, Holden notes: "But non-participation is not the same thing as exclusion, and although 'in addition to exclusion from economic, social and political systems, individuals can also be excluded from cultural systems', they can also simply choose not to take part. The question is: how free is that choice?" (Holden, 2010)

Bunting and Holden point to an issue of equity in terms of engagement. How do arts funders ensure that Canadians of all backgrounds, abilities, regions and socio-economic status have equitable access to the arts activities that engage them? Arts councils must be wary of perpetuating a hierarchy of taste while continuing to ensure that the work they fund is of the best possible quality. As the clients they serve diversify, they will connect with new publics in new ways and through different programming. However, some in the arts community resist this shift towards a new approach to connectedness as they feel that this could weaken artistic standards. This underlines a central tension between excellence and democratization.

"Many, if not most, of the funders that support the arts have the word "excellence" in their mission statements or program guidelines. They want to support, and be associated with, high-quality art. The problem is that high quality *participation* and high quality *art* can't be measured by the same factors. Some informal art is amazing, and some is amateurish in every sense. If the goal is to create a more sustainable arts ecosystem, however, that means encouraging more people to experience the process of art-making, not just consume amazing art." (Wallis, 2012)

The Canada Council is examining how it can play a role in balancing these two poles and ensuring that both aims are well served.

The Canada Council's approach to public engagement

Connecting art and audiences has been central to the work of the Canada Council since its founding in 1957. It has addressed this commitment in various ways. A high-level review of corporate and strategic plans from 1999-2008 has found a number of different statements and approaches which align with the evolution in the general discourse from audience development to public engagement. It is important to state that there are many more examples of how the Council's interventions have an impact on public engagement as shown in resources such as the online "Artist Profiles", Annual Reports and the Funding to Artists and Arts Organizations: Provincial and Territorial Profiles.

In the **1999-2002 Corporate Plan**, the Council prioritized young audiences and the encouragement of "wider and better distribution of the arts in order to increase understanding and appreciation of the works of art generated by the artists and arts organizations supported by the Council, throughout Canada, considering the specific needs of different parts of the country."

The Council did this through a strategic focus on young and new audience initiatives and festivals. It stated that it would undertake a "new effort on programmes designed to promote education and enjoyment of the arts, and to make the work of Canadian artists accessible to as many Canadians of all origins and all ages as possible." This was done through touring, support to public art galleries, festivals and young audience and school programs.

In the **2002-2005 Corporate Plan**, Priority 2 was "Developing and educating new audiences". It stated that "by assuring wider and better access to all the arts for Canadians in urban, rural and remote communities across the country, the Council strengthens Canadian society nation-wide." Strategies included electronic dissemination, reaching audiences in Canada, linking artists with communities and education and attracting world audiences. There was also mention of the need for arts organizations to renew their marketing strategies and diversify their programming and audiences as well as a continued focus on young audiences.

The Artist and Community Collaboration Fund (formally a program since 2006) is a key output of this Corporate Plan. It is "among other funding agencies with similar programs, distinguished by the creation of art at the centre of community collaboration." (Canada Council, 2011) This program provides a structure for meaningful engagements between the public and professional artists that have been termed life-changing for many involved.

The **2005-2008 Corporate Plan** stated as part of Goal 1 that it would focus support to arts organizations on "maximizing audience and readership development". Goal 3 was to "Foster public knowledge and appreciation of Canadian artistic achievement". An analysis of the barriers to greater knowledge and appreciation highlighted the need to celebrate excellence, the role of arts education and the importance of arts promotion.

The one-time $50 million allocation to the Canada Council (split over 2007-08 and 2008-09) had a partial focus on audience development initiatives, including through the Supplementary Operating Funds Initiative. An analysis of that funding showed that approximately $15 million was allocated towards audience development initiatives. Some of this was through directed investment while others were self-determined initiatives from arts organizations.

The **2008-2011 Strategic and Action Plans** were less targeted in their goals regarding audiences; however, for the first time, audiences and public were seen as distinct; that is, that the public does not necessarily equal audiences. In the section entitled "Sustaining the arts infrastructure", it states "For sustainable professional arts practices, a community (however defined) needs excellent individual artists, excellent arts organizations that support, employ, present, exhibit, publish or provide other resources for artists, *engaged audiences, a supportive public*, an enlightened funding and public policy environment, and facilities for the practice of art." (author's emphasis)

Direction 2 recognizes the role of arts organizations as "primary vehicles for audience development (including arts education) and dissemination in the country". Further, the Strategic Plan sees partnerships as a means to "offer new opportunities for the arts and the public's experience of the arts." The Action Plan allocated funds for operating grants as part of the delivery of Direction 2 and established the Partnership Reserve. Operating grants support a wide array of artistic and administrative functions with virtually all organizations directing some part of their support to dissemination, such as exhibitions, performances, readings and screenings. Many also undertake enhancement or mediation activities that help audiences have a greater connection to the art work and to the artists themselves.

Currently, the Council is undergoing a thorough review of its largest investment, operating funding. As part of this, a map of program guidelines was undertaken which reveals how central audiences are to this support. "Although the term 'public engagement' is not explicitly used in the assessment criteria, many operating programs assess applicants (…) under the rubric of public engagement". (Jeffrey, 2011) The map identifies the key aspects of the 2011 Corporate plan with regards to public engagement as "outreach to the public", "engaging the public", "forging new connections" and "highlighting the contribution that art and artists make to everyday life" and notes which criteria in each program relate to these aspects. Essentially, every operating recipient must direct some level of their activities to increasing their engagement with the public. This is done through outreach programs, including school shows and youth-focused activities, audience enrichment such as talk-back sessions and backstage tours and participatory activities such as those presented during Culture Days.

In addition to the activities supported through the operating grant programs, the Council also has targeted granting support through programs such as the Artist and Community Collaboration Program, dissemination programs such as the Literary Readings and Author Residencies program, touring programs in the performing arts, market development support and others.

The challenge is in collecting and measuring the impact of these programs on the lives of Canadians, a challenge shared by all arts funders and arts organizations. This is recognized and significant work is going on to improve the Council's and the community's capacity in this. Projects such as the Value of Presenting study (CAPACOA, 2012) and the Ontario Arts Council's Arts Engagement Study (Brown, 2011) show the sector's efforts in developing its ability to measure and respond to the public.

A number of partnership activities have strengthened the Council's and the arts community's capacity in this area.

The New Brunswick Pilot Project "Building Public Engagement in the Arts" (2008-2011) was a partnership with provincial and federal funders that aimed to facilitate a pooling of resources and expertise to carry out public engagement initiatives; to share and build knowledge of the arts community in New Brunswick; and to collectively develop a public participation model based on input from interested parties. An evaluation of the project stated that the objectives were met and that the design was one which could be emulated.

The Council also works with other funders through the Canadian Public Arts Funders to deepen knowledge around public engagement practices and is currently engaged in a partnership with the corporate sector through Business for the Arts to share learning and grow capacity.

Another current project which demonstrates some of the changes in the Council's approach is the Dance Mapping Study, conducted in partnership with other funders. This holistic research exercise is looking beyond what the Council supports to understand and validate the entire

spectrum of dance practice: from recreational to professional, both commercial and non-profit. (Canada Council for the Arts, 2012) It is an exciting opportunity to forge new connections within a sector and to situate the Council's work within a more inclusive vision of arts practice and participation.

The Council is also undertaking public engagement activities through its Communications and Arts Promotion functions. The Council's communications strategy framework is focused on targeted opportunities that promote public engagement, reach out to underserviced communities or beyond existing networks to maximise limited resources. These include enhanced web capabilities, the launch of the Canada Council Blog, adoption of social media platforms such as Facebook, twitter, FlickR, youtube, the creation of videos to help promote our activities and the artists we support. The recent success of the social media activities tied to the 75th anniversary of the Governor General's Literary Awards show that it is possible to foster the engagement of the public through new methods with "traditional" arts products, such as books.

Further, the Canada Council's Vice-Chair, Simon Brault, in 2009, published *Le Facteur C (No Culture, No Future)* which examined the role of culture in the public arena. This book provoked significant public debate and now plays a central role in the discussions of public engagement, both in the media, academia and the broader civic agenda.

What distinguishes the Council's approach is the focus on ensuring artists remain at the centre of its interventions and that the public has access to the highest quality artistic experience. This focus is important in staking out the territory that the Council can influence directly and allowing it to partner with other stakeholders who intervene in other areas of practice. The Council is not a sole actor in this arena and cannot succeed alone.

Through this brief review, we can see the Council's longstanding commitment to audience development. The question at hand now is the shift from focusing on increasing audiences and greater access to supporting the idea of two-way engagement and dialogue. This means moving from transactions to building relationships – with all the complexities that entails.

Summary of the June 20, 2012 Board Strategy Session

The Board of the Canada Council for the Arts held a one day strategy session in June 2012 to advance the theme of public engagement in the arts and provide a vision for future actions. The Board discussed the need for arts funders to support a deepened relationship between the public and the arts. The Council has significant influence within the community as a trusted and credible institution and will increase its presence in this debate. The Board noted that this work has begun but needs to be framed in a much broader conversation that is not just about the expressive lives of professional artists but of all Canadians. The Board discussed the particular role and capacity of the Council within a larger systems perspective. This helps to demonstrate how the outcomes the Council seeks are affected by decisions elsewhere in the system.

One of the main objectives of the strategy session was to arrive at a shared definition. The definition in this paper is the result of that discussion. It is meant to capture and value the whole range of activities, including online activities, related to public engagement in the arts. It goes beyond those that are directly supported by the Canada Council through its programs and services as the intent is to use it as a platform for a broader conversation on public engagement. It was felt that practitioners in all areas of the arts ecosystem will see themselves within the agreed upon definition, helping to build common language and common cause.

The Board concluded that it was important to reaffirm the Council's role and responsibility as a contributor of public value for Canadians through fostering access, awareness and appreciation of the arts via the programs and activities it supports. They noted that the concepts of excellence and access are intertwined. The Council will continue to have strong support for artistic risk taking and excellence. However, the Council will also strive for better understanding, support and stimulation for the efforts of the arts community to connect with the public and validate this ambition through its programs and assessment processes. As much of its funding goes through the Council's operating grant programs, currently under review, it is timely to examine how public engagement might be advanced through this vehicle.

The Board discussed how the Council could improve its communication around public engagement in the arts. The Council will be more visible and proactive in showing the breadth of the work it supports. It will also work at improving how it captures diverse engagement practices undertaken by artists and arts organizations and will share these back with the community and other stakeholders in order to increase capacity and knowledge.

Conclusion

This paper provides a high-level overview of current thinking and practices in the sphere of public engagement in the arts. The objective of the research was not to determine answers but to open new avenues of investigation, raise awareness of the opportunities and challenges that exist and highlight possible areas of intervention for the Canada Council.

The Canada Council has the capacity to influence the future of public engagement in the arts, assisting Canadians in living artistically full lives. Through the artists and arts organizations it supports, its national perspective and its ability to connect key people and players, the Council can bring both resources and expertise to ensure that the arts remain central to Canadian society and identity.

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