
ARTS Day

at the Legislative Assembly
of New Brunswick

FREDERICTON, DECEMBER 11, 2012
**Arts + Culture = innovation,
prosperity and quality of life**

New Brunswick has priceless artistic treasures and a cultural heritage that helped build the province into a privileged place to live. The cultural and artistic fabric of New Brunswick is made of multiple threads; but deep down, whatever the language or community of origin, artists share similar realities and similar challenges and are actively involved, with their work and community involvement, in the development of our province and the well-being of its population.

We all have the same concern: to leverage the great contribution of arts and culture in New Brunswick, for the well-being of all citizens, whether in the field of education, economy, collective identity or provincial influence beyond our borders.

In 2009, we adopted a *Strategy for the Integration of Arts and Culture into Acadian Society of New Brunswick*. This strategy aims to ensure the well-being of the population, attract new residents, and increase the ingenuity and creativity of New Brunswickers.



RECOGNITION OF THE PROFESSION OF ARTIST

Why recognize the profession of artist in New Brunswick?

- According to census data, the **average income of artists in New Brunswick was \$ 15,600 in 2006**, well below the average personal income of \$ 28,656 for all New Brunswickers.
- The government and the province's producers are not required to comply with the minimum wages recommended by national associations.
- Bankers stare at us when the time comes to ask for a loan or mortgage. "You're an artist?" The artist is often not recognized as an independent worker.
- UNESCO considers the artistic profession as essential and valuable to the functioning of a society, the same as the professions of nursing, teaching, engineering and architecture.

A strong artistic community can support our collective cultural life, it can encourage highly qualified individuals to stay or move here, it can attract other artistic creators in New Brunswick. Do not forget that the arts are a real engine: it supports government efforts to improve the well-being of the population and is a provider of essential services to the community and the province. For example, the integration of arts and culture in the school produces a reduction in dropout rates and youth violence.

Recognition of the profession of artist exists in other Canadian provinces: Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia. **We believe it is high time that New Brunswick adopts a law and, social, legal and tax measures to improve and recognize the profession and the socioeconomic status of the professional artist.** It requires a commitment on the part of artists, from other cultural professionals and from the government.

The government can implement tax measures such as the non-taxation of copyright and creation grants and income averaging over several years for tax purposes. The government may propose measures to improve professional development skills of the artists. The government may also adopt legislation that would require producers to comply with the fees recommended by artistic unions and associations.

The government has promised the establishment of a committee to define such measures for New Brunswick artists.



Atlantic Ballet Theatre Of Canada. (Photo: Aleksandr Onyshchenko)

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ARTS AND CULTURE: AN INVESTMENT

Arts and culture play a leading role in the economic contribution of the country and our province.

The Conference Board of Canada estimates that the economic footprint of the arts and cultural industries in Canada is estimated at **\$ 84.6 billion** in 2007, representing **7.4% of Canada's GDP**, while the cultural sector represents more than one million jobs in the Canadian economy. This economic contribution is the fourth largest industry, surpassing other sectors such as the extraction of oil and gas resources, agriculture, forestry and fishing. (Valuing Culture: Measuring and Understanding Canada's Creative Economy, 2008. <http://bit.ly/Vm8USZ>)

In the Atlantic Provinces, cultural industries represent a contribution of \$ 2.1 billion to GDP and create about 34,558 jobs. (ACOA, The Culture Sector in Atlantic Canada: Its Economic Impact and Export Potential, 2004. <http://bit.ly/UpK9X9>)

In addition to the economic benefits, the arts and culture play a vital role in increasing citizen's **ingenuity, innovation, creativity and imagination** and brings them to collaborate on goals and joint projects. We believe that art transcends all sectors of society. It is a

fundamental vehicle that must be found in all spheres: economy, education, technology, health, etc.

In this economic downturn, we recommend that the government **invest in arts and culture to enable us to be a key partner in the development of the province and provide a solution to these challenges.**

AN INSPIRING AND EFFICIENT CULTURAL POLICY

We are busy at the moment renewing the provincial cultural policy adopted in 2002. It is time to update it but also to rethink the way we approach the place of the arts in New Brunswick society. An important point of this new cultural policy should aim at sustainable development and the integration of arts and culture in all future projects in New Brunswick, from social to economic projects.

We must consider the specificities of New Brunswick: a relatively small, largely rural population, immigration that is gaining importance and that must be integrated into our communities, a relatively peaceful pace of life and a great sense of community. An interesting environment, exciting

even, but the culture cannot be left to market forces. Not only because the most creative art does not always meet market standards, but also because the creative and distribution services and infrastructure must serve a limited pool of spectators, because the people who need a cultural life the most are often denied access.

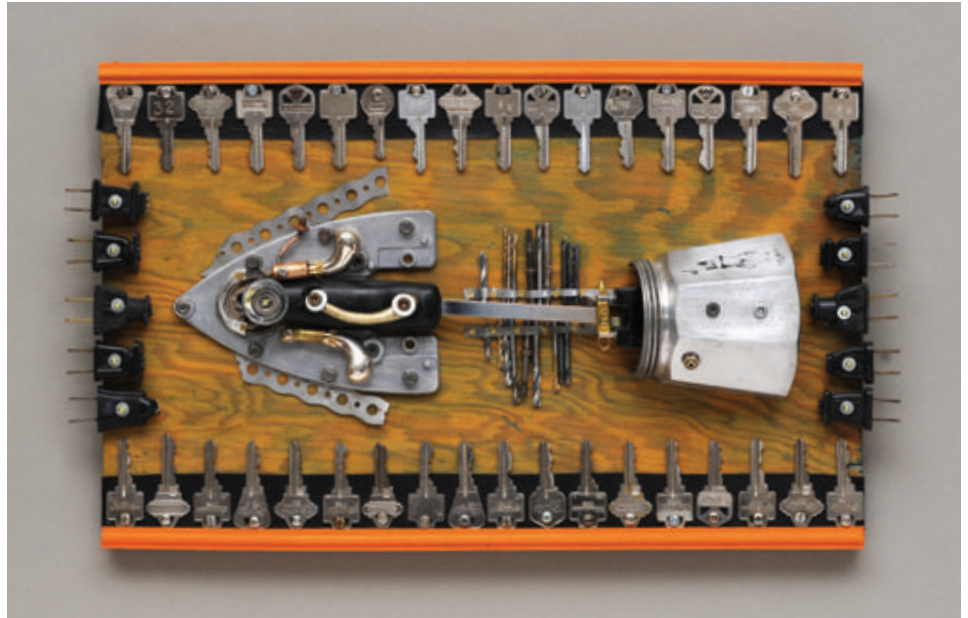
So we need to develop ways to operate that will be our own. Leveraging on ingenious and lightweight structures and ensuring respect and development to all parts of the ecosystem, and integrate arts and culture in all aspects of our collective lives.

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IT IS IN THE PRESENT THAT ONE DEVELOPS THE HERITAGE OF THE FUTURE

We share this present. We also have a common future. To build and develop it we need a vibrant artistic and cultural life, creative and accessible to all. It is through the arts that we think about whom we are, as we explore what we could be, we imagine new opportunities and other ways to innovate.

To thrive in the creative economy and to be competitive today, the New Brunswick government must continue to find new ways to contribute to the prosperity of the province, to retain the population, to attract and integrate new citizens and new businesses, while improving the quality of life of New Brunswickers.



Choix du Capitaine, Anne-Marie Sirois, 2012, Récipiendaire Prix Éloizes 2012 (Photo: Marc-Xavier LeBlanc)

The arts and culture sector can meet these challenges.



20, Hazen Avenue
Saint-Jean, NB, E2L 5A5
506 977-1491
www.artlinksnb.com



140, rue Botsford, bureau 29
Moncton, NB, E1C 4X5
506 852-3313
www.aaapnb.ca



61, Carleton Street
Fredericton, NB, E3B 3T2
506 444-4444
www.artsnb.ca