



# BULLETIN

Canadian Conference of the Arts ~ Conférence canadienne des arts

## ARTICULATING A VISION FOR A FEDERAL CULTURAL POLICY - CHALMERS CONFERENCE PROVIDES SPRINGBOARD FOR CCA NOVEMBER NATIONAL POLICY CONFERENCE

**Ottawa, April 21, 2005** - With nearly one hundred participants from across the country in attendance, the 6th Canadian Conference of the Arts Chalmers Conference came to a successful conclusion Friday, April 15th. Organized around the theme of "Advocacy and the Parliamentary Process", the one-day conference featured a variety of presentations and panel discussions designed to further equip delegates with the knowledge and information required for ongoing advocacy.

The event opened with a networking breakfast, co-hosted by the National Arts Centre, which was open to both individuals and representatives of cultural organizations. The keynote speaker was Wendy Lill, a playwright and former NDP MP. Drawing on her background as Culture critic and member of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage for seven years, Lill urged attendees to be consistently vigilant in their advocacy efforts; to continue to beat down the doors of parliamentarians with the message that "culture is important", even when it seems this message is not having the desired impact. She indicated that advocacy groups play an essential role in educating MPs as to what questions need to be asked and what issues need to be addressed, and they can have enormous influence in the House of Commons in shaping the debate on a piece of legislation. "Some things stick, and talking to MPs, getting information to MPs, is critical to moving the arts agenda forward in Ottawa," she insisted.

This point was echoed by Members of Parliament of all stripes during an afternoon panel discussion. **Ed Broadbent** (NDP, Ottawa-Centre, ON), **Sarmite Bulte** (Liberal Party, Parkdale-High Park, ON), **Maka Kotto** (Bloc Québécois, Saint-Lambert, PQ), and **Bev Oda** (CPC, Durham, ON), spent over an hour deliberating the merits of various advocacy strategies before opening the floor to questions from the audience. Out of this discussion emerged a consensus shared by all four on the importance of delivering clear messages to key MPs and Standing Committee members, in order to be successful in advocacy initiatives. Of special significance was the general agreement among party representatives about the need for a federal cultural policy; a need which CCA has been working to address for years. On this topic, the MPs stated:

- *"If ever there was a time... we needed to address the aspect of a national cultural policy, it is now. It really is now. And it's serious... The State has a lot of power still in this globalized world and it should be used much more constructively and imaginatively in our country in terms of shaping a new cultural policy...and there should be the broadest participation across the country with a time-limited agenda for development,"* Ed Broadbent.
- *"I think the Minister has clearly indicated that she wants to establish a national cultural policy. That's something that she did when she was the minister in Quebec, she was responsible for the Quebec cultural policy, so I would say...there is that political will indeed...I (also) think it is important to continue to relationship-build with politicians and also with the department (of Canadian Heritage)...The arts are truly positioned right now to become a huge priority on the national landscape and I think we do so with a new partner, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities,"* Sarmite Bulte.
- *"I think that the absence of a cultural policy comes back to what I was saying earlier, it's because we consider culture as the fifth wheel of the cart. It is because of the absence of this policy that the United States, through Hollywood entertainment, has been able to*

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*take such a huge share of the Canadian market...I think it is necessary – we need this type of policy. We have to have this policy but we also have to have vision first. Where is this vision? I think this vision is with you. You have this vision,”* Maka Kotto.

- *“We (the members of the Heritage committee) would love to see an over-arching cultural policy come forward. I think we, as a country, have to reaffirm our commitment to the arts and culture, and that can be done with an over-arching, a clear articulation, of the position on culture in this country, and the role it plays... You can have nice statements on a cultural policy but we also have to ensure that there’s stability. And if we believe that culture is important to this country, we should do more than just saying that we support you on an annual basis,”* Bev Oda.

These comments provide a springboard for CCA’s next National Policy Conference, scheduled to take place November 25-26, 2005, in Toronto (venue to be announced), which will address the need for a Federal Cultural Policy.

Elaborating on the Chalmers Conference theme of advocacy and the parliamentary process at a more general level, presentations were made by consultant **Glen Milne**, and Deputy Principal Clerk of the Committees Directorate for the House of Commons **Tranquillo Marrocco**. Basing his presentation on his book *Making Policy: A Guide to the Federal Government’s Policy Process*, Milne outlined the intricacies of the policy-making process, particularly in the context of today’s minority government, and he provided delegates with a summary of guidelines for gaining access to this milieu. Marrocco’s presentation was even more focused, with particular attention paid to the Parliamentary committees process. Using the newly restructured parliamentary website as a guide, he elaborated on the tools and services available to assist organizations in preparing submissions and presentations.

Finally, the Young Managers Panel, moderated by CCA’s own young manager – Interim Policy Advisor **James Missen** – brought closure to the day with a glimpse into the professional lives of the sector’s future leaders – a recurring theme in past Chalmers Conferences and the subject of CCA’s Creative Management project. **Kristian Clarke**, (CARFAC Ontario), **Shannon Litzenberger**, (Canadian Dance Assembly), **Carole Myre** (Francoscénie) and **Joanne Rycaj Guillemette**, (Ottawa Art Gallery), discussed work/life balance and the advocacy issues that resonate with them. Of particular note for executives in attendance for this panel was the role mentorship has played in fostering the management capacity of this up-and-coming generation. The value of counsel from more senior cultural managers was underscored by the various mentorship models brought to the table by these five individuals.

In reflecting on the success of this year’s Chalmers Conference, CCA National Director Jean Malavoy indicated that, as in the past, CCA will build on the issues that emerged from this year’s conference and use this information to frame the debate for the National Policy Conference in November. “It is clear that there is support at the federal level for a much-needed Federal Cultural Policy,” stated Malavoy. “With the tools and tips brought forth today for improved advocacy, the arts and culture sector is in an excellent position to come together in November and discuss strategies for making this need a policy reality.”

*A full report on the 2005 Chalmers Conference will be available at the beginning of May at [www.ccarts.ca](http://www.ccarts.ca) in the ‘Reports and Publications section’.*

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### **In Appreciation of Canada’s Volunteers**

The week of April 17-23 marks National Volunteer Week – a time set aside annually to honour Canada’s 6.5 million volunteers. As board members, project managers, sports coaches, care-givers, peer mentors and so much more, volunteers selflessly dedicate their time and energy to the service of others. In the spirit of this commitment, Volunteer Canada has chosen this year’s National Volunteer Week theme to be “Volunteers Grow Community”. The Canadian Conference of the Arts would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank all Canadian volunteers and, in particular, those volunteers who



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contribute to Canada's vibrant arts and culture community. Special thanks to our own "community growers" – the sixteen members of the CCA Board, under whose direction the CCA is able to continue advocating on behalf of the Canadian cultural sector.

### **Awards Deadline**

Note: **April 30th** is the deadline to nominate individuals for CCA's Diplôme d'honneur and Keith Kelly Award for Cultural Leadership – both to be presented at the National Policy Conference in November. Nomination forms and details on these awards, including past recipients, are available on CCA's website at [www.ccarts.ca](http://www.ccarts.ca). Send in your nominations asap!