

**CREATIVE CONVERGENCE
CNAL CONFERENCE, WINNIPEG
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Thank you, Douglas, John, and all the organizing team -- These events are major undertakings and often veritable paradigm shifts. This one could not be more important. I am honoured and delighted to be here. Thank you!

Merci – c’est un grand honneur pour moi d’être ici aujourd’hui. Bienvenue à Winnipeg à tous et à toutes, tous nos invités de toutes les régions du Canada et du monde entier. C'est un plaisir de vous avoir tous parmi nous pour ces délibérations. Winnipeg est un formidable centre de convergence, ce de transport, d’entreprise, d’éducation, d’innovation et de créativité - une créativité sans précédent, vraiment une créativité révolutionnaire.

“Creative Convergence” -- what a great title and theme. This has been my mantra for years, in my role as a major Gallery Director, as an independent consultant on such issues, as a professor, and now as a member of the Canadian Senate.

On my appointment as a Senator, the Prime Minister made it clear that I was to work on everything, did not have to vote with the government, but was to improve legislation. Given my background in the arts, and being the first art historian and gallery director in the Senate, he said, I was to do it all, the legislative, the investigative and the representative responsibilities, through the lens of arts and culture. That is what I do -- convergence!

What is the present state of 'creative convergence' in society? Shaky? If we are to be ready for the future, it is essential that we initiate creative, critical thinking and collaborative conversations about the whole spectrum of society -- economic and every aspect of human development. We need a solid understanding of the past and present, and that comes in large part from the arts. I firmly believe we can only achieve the much-needed convergences by setting aside attitudes of 'siloisms'. We MUST poke holes in past silos, and allow ideas to flow between sectors.

For too long arts and culture have been set aside as 'leisure' activities. How many of us as children had art on Friday afternoons but only if we had been good all week? That was certainly the case for me in Grosvenor School here those decades ago.

What does convergence mean? Its synonyms include: concurrence, confluence, merging. A word I like to use is 'linkage' and its synonyms include words like relationship, connection, correlation, interconnection, interdependence and similarity.

Je soutiens que tous les aspects de la société, du bien-être social, de la santé et du bien-être individuels sont inextricablement liés. De plus, je crois que les arts, la culture et la langue sont des éléments essentiels de la société. En d'autres termes, comprendre qui nous sommes, ce que nous représentons, et la manière dont nous interagissons dans les multiples domaines dans lesquels nous vivons, travaillons et bougeons. Les arts, la culture et la langue sont également essentiels pour une véritable réconciliation.

All aspects of society, societal and individual health and wellness are inextricably linked. The key binding elements throughout are the arts, culture and language, in other words, understanding who we are, what we stand for and how we interact with each other in the multiple spheres in which we live, work, play and move. Arts, culture and language are essential for true reconciliation, a core pillar for economic and societal health and wellness.

Susan Seifert and Mark Stern's recently published report, *Social Wellbeing of New York's City Neighbourhoods and the Contribution of Culture and the Arts* is illuminating. It tested the many social benefits of the arts. Their ten-dimensional framework of social wellbeing indicators included, firstly, the dimensions of economic wellbeing, seen in income, labour force and educational attainment. The second dimension, was housing, linked in their study to percentage of income for housing and overcrowding; thirdly was ethnic and economic diversity, measured by income and ethnic segregation and integration. The fourth was health access which included health insurance rates; and the fifth, health measurements being birth outcomes, child abuse/neglect and morbidity.

The sixth dimension, school effectiveness was tied to test scores and school environments. Security was the seventh, focusing on major crime rates; then came environmental amenities, parks, land use, and summer heat. Social connections were defined by non-profits; and last, but not least, cultural assets were arts organizations, artists and cultural participants.

Their final conclusion? "The presence of cultural resources in a neighbourhood is significantly associated with improved outcomes."

Art defines our humanness and who we are – our places, our people, our dreams, the beauty around us, and the tough societal issues we face. Culture includes art. It also embraces the concept and reality of land, and the shelter and food land affords. Culture embodies language, and how we communicate. Culture is at the essence of our wider web of issues, as Canadian philosopher, John Ralston Saul, said, “Culture is the motor of any successful society”. Playwright and former Chair of the Canada Council for the Arts, Mavor Moore, discussed the basis of culture, when he said: “The root meaning of culture, as every farmer and chemist knows, is ‘preparation for growth’ - and in our communities we are ‘growing people’.”

Sustainability, of our communities, industries, and our various endeavours, is of concern to us all. The economy is only part of sustainability; a positive balance sheet being only one piece.

Sustainability, if honestly addressed, is the CONVERGENCE of economy, culture, and social wellbeing.

Sustainable communities, described by scholars have four elements, four integrally linked pillars: Social Capital, Human Capital, Natural Capital and Cultural Capital.

When addressing the conference *My City's Still Breathing*, held in Winnipeg in 2010, when Winnipeg was Canada's Cultural Capital, Jon Hawkes of Australia vividly, and aptly, depicted the cultural capital pillar as being:

Creativity = light from the dark

Art = fire from the light

Culture = the warmth from the fire.

That warmth from the fire IS an essential societal link.

Donna Walker Kuhn, who hailed from Harlem, author of *Invitation to the Party*, takes it one step further in her book, noting that “the arts are the best tool we have for social change. ... The arts cultivate non-violence, trust, solidarity, community and breadth of mind”. Surely these are core elements of what it is to be human.

In my own work over many years on the convergences, or connections, of the arts throughout society, I developed an octopus to address the key issues all parties, at all levels of government, deal with. Each tentacle was related to one essential issue. My eight were: Jobs and Job Creation; the Economy; Health; Education & Learning; Crime Prevention; Rural Revival; the Environment; and, lastly, Tourism.

It became quickly apparent from my statistical and anecdotal research that none of these important societal concerns can be resolved, or even effectively addressed, without arts and culture.

The arts are often naively regarded as not important to the economy, in fact a drain on the economy. International research, however, proves the contrary. International studies have shown that those who attend the arts live on average two years longer and cost the health system less and they miss less work, and tend to get out of hospital a day or two earlier after elective surgery – thus positively affecting the economy! I am pleased to see arts in Health and Well-being as a core of your discussions. Twelve years ago, when I started the Buhler Gallery at St Boniface Hospital, Health Ministers often asked what I was working on. My response? “Helping you with hallway medicine”.

I am not going into all my octopus’ tentacles today, but my findings were overwhelming in underlining the arts as a truly positive, seminal factor in each. For instance, its impact in reducing crime, arrest rates and recidivism rates has been substantiated in many jurisdictions, in Canada, US and elsewhere.

Florida's STARS Program, for example, had stunning results. At its outset 75% of the children involved were making less than a C average; after participating 80% of them were making a C average or better; the juvenile crime rate dropped by 28%; and the 11 and 12-year-old rate of recidivism dropped by 64%. These are impressive numbers.

We know the arts improve education results and children's learning abilities -- the connections between music and math, and the import of the visual arts in problem solving in many dimensions. Studies have been done in every western country. We need to heed those results and stop cutting arts curricula. As a former Board Chair of two universities, I am also concerned about the shrinking of arts programs at some post-secondary institutions.

Creative endeavours have also revived 'dying' communities, including BC's Powell River with its international choir festival, and northern Canadian communities of Cape Dorset, Holman Island, Rankin Inlet, and Baker Lake, each with their art focuses.

My travels in recent weeks to Fox Lake Cree Nation, Cape Dorset, Iqaluit, Churchill, The Pas and Brandon, coupled with engagements in various parts of Canada, has enhanced all my earlier conclusions. All

demonstrate how the arts lead in defining who we are, and their importance as an economic generator and positive social determinant. When speaking of the economy, I should underline that arts and culture are the third largest employer in Canada, 3.3% of our workforce, double the number of people in forestry, and more than double the number in banks. 609,000 work in the cultural sector; 135,000 in the automobile industry. Further the arts industries contribute about 7.4% of the country's GDP, and, in 2007, paid in taxes MORE THAN 3 times the \$7.9Billion governments paid directly on culture that year. Interestingly in 2008, the Conference Board of Canada concluded:

The health of that culture economy, and therefore the future economic health of Canada, depends on having a large and diverse pool of professional artists at the very heart of the economy.

You can see this particular linkage, or convergence, in our economic health.

The arts are also critically important for Canada's profile internationally, and positively impact our trade and tourism. Canada's video game creators, for instance, are reaping huge financial gains. And look at Margaret Atwood receiving the Booker prize this month, and Alice

Munro winning the Nobel Prize for Literature those few years ago; or Winnipeg's young actress Andrea Macasaet who right now is heading to the New York stage to play Anne Boleyn.

Newfoundland's *Come From Away* has captured the hearts of both New York and London. I could go on, and cite visual artists Jeff Wall, Jana Sterbak or the Group of Seven and that recent exhibition in London.

These impacts, and more, were very apparent in the Senate Foreign Affairs and International Trade Committee's year-long study and report, released in June, entitled, *Cultural Diplomacy at the Front Stage of Canada's Foreign Policy*. We called for Global Affairs, supported by Canadian Heritage and the Canada Council for the Arts, to take the lead in re-establishing Canada's presence in Cultural Diplomacy. The first training session on culture for Global Affairs staff on took place the day after we released the report.

The Institute for Cultural Diplomacy defines cultural diplomacy as “a course of actions which are based on and utilize the exchange of ideas, values, traditions and other aspects of culture or identity, whether to strengthen relationships, enhance socio-cultural cooperation or promote national interests.”

Culture connects the human in our world – human understanding, human dialogue through international languages of visual art, music and dance. Kirsten Bound, Rachel Briggs, John Holden, and Samuel Jones', 2007 UK Cultural Diplomacy: Report states:

More than ever before, culture has a vital role to play in international relations... Cultural exchange gives us the chance to appreciate points of commonality and, where there are differences, to understand the motivations and humanity that underlie them. ... In the future, alliances are just as likely to be forged along lines of cultural understanding as they are on economic or geographic ones.... The value of cultural activity comes precisely from its independence, its freedom and the fact that it represents and connects people.

Simon Mark a écrit, dans son document intitulé « The Potential of Cultural Diplomacy » :

« La diplomatie culturelle tire sa force du croisement avec la culture nationale, les valeurs nationales, l'identité nationale et la fierté nationale. La culture peut témoigner de la personnalité d'un État d'une manière qui touche autant les adeptes que les auditoires. La "vraie" image projetée par la diplomatie culturelle n'a pas besoin de se limiter

à quelques faits et chiffres, à un refrain ou un slogan de promotion touristique. Il ne faut pas sous-estimer la capacité d'un spectacle culturel, d'un film ou d'une bourse de créer des liens. » [P. 37]

The day after the release of our Cultural Diplomacy Report, the Senate's Special Committee on the Arctic launched its report, following its year-long study: *Northern Lights: A Wake-Up Call for the Future of Canada*. It included issues faced by northern artists -- funding, access to education and training, and the crisis of not having the bandwidth to submit funding requests.

Our Special Committee on the Arctic travelled from Kuujuak to Whitehorse, spent a night in the Meadowbank mine, visited Baker Lake, the research centre at Cambridge Bay, and many communities in between. We met with leaders, with workers, students, researchers, artists, educators, business people - in fact individuals from all walks of life, many cultures and all ages.

Le titre de l'étude reflète l'urgence d'agir après des années de négligence et d'indifférence, ainsi que le profond attachement à la terre et à l'environnement des résidents du Nord, et plus de faire référence aux aurores boréales et à leur lien avec les ancêtres autochtones.

Les enjeux sont urgents. Le Nord est le futur pour le Canada, et complit quarante pourcents du terrain de notre pays. Nos recommandations exigent une action immédiate.

Je suis d'accord avec le titre d'un article du National Post le sept juin : – « Inuit Plan indique que le changement climatique ne peut être dissocié des problèmes sociaux. »

Les problèmes auxquels le nord est confronté sont nombreux et tous interconnectés. The testimonies we heard emphasized the intersection, or linkages, of all these issues, including health care, the mental health crisis, substance abuse and suicide, water, the economy, housing, security, education, food, culture, language, communications, climate change, shipping and conservation. All affect the daily lives of Northerners and Canada's national security and international relations. All are critical.

We concluded that government policies must align with priorities of northerners, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, and empower northerners to create their own programs and initiatives through the eventual devolution of decision-making powers about northern issues

to northern institutions. We agreed decisions FOR the North should be made IN the North and BY the North.

We believe our recommendations should become the pathway going forward, reflecting these myriad concerns with culture and language, including the arts being the point of convergence, or the link.

Les cultures du nord sont primordiales et les langues traditionnelles sont essentielles. Nous avons recommandé que le gouvernement du Canada, en étroite collaboration avec les gouvernements locaux, autochtones et territoriaux, établisse des centres communautaires multifonctionnels pour la pratique des arts, la culture et la langue.

En outre, que le Conseil des arts du Canada, en collaboration avec les établissements des arts autochtone et du Nord, offre un soutien local aux artistes de l'Arctique et du Nord, notamment à l'égard des artistes émergents des communautés.

In my view, these two major reports, those of the Arctic and Foreign Affairs committees, intersect. Further, both converge with issues I am working on. I am developing a Canadian Cultural Bill of Rights for presentation in the Senate, and, as well, an initiative linking art,

wellness and healing. Both are relevant for all Canadians, and both are embedded in reconciliation, or reconciliacion, as I prefer to call it. Indigenous cultures and languages are indispensable and fundamental, and as such, critical in my work.

I am re-introducing the Visual Artists Laureate Bill in the Chamber on our return. Likewise, I will bird-dog the revisions to the Copyright Act, and particularly the call for artists' resale rights, as well as those to the Cultural Property Export and Import Act. Progress is being made for a National Portrait Gallery, a Gallery of Canadian Identity. More than 85% of Canada's senators signed a letter to the Prime Minister for this gallery and we received his subsequent support. I thank the citizens who joined me to form a steering committee for the Gallery, led by Lawson Hunter. The group includes artists, curators, financiers, lawyers, policy and communications experts and more. They have made formal connections with the Ottawa Foundation and the Royal Canadian Academy, and raised sufficient private sector funds to hire Canadian international museum expert, Gail Lord, to do a feasibility study, examining its focus, revenues and possible sites. Her work should be out this fall.

Do all these initiatives, or prongs create the convergences, or synergies needed within society? I certainly hope so. May they be pan-disciplinary enough that it becomes clear to all that action must be multi-faceted, and that arts and culture are central to each and every thread in our communities, our regions and our nation.

Our responsibility is clear; societal need is great; our arts and culture are strong; and the opportunities are exciting. I am confident that your discussions here, and your past and ongoing work will move the convergence needle forward. The arts are vital to the lives of Canadians, and to the future prosperity and wellness of our country and all its citizens. The same is true for all countries, developed and developing. May Canada be on that international stage, with the excellence, honesty, commitment and passion that is so evident in the work of our artists and arts organizations of all disciplines.

Thank you!