

AN ELECTION PRIMER



Making the Case for Museums, Galleries and Cultural Centres in your Community

BCMA Advocacy Committee

The Advocacy Committee is committed to advocating on behalf of the BCMA and its members and to increasing awareness of the BC cultural sector.

The 2017 Provincial Election is an excellent opportunity to generate awareness and support for our sector in communities across BC. This article is meant to provide our members with facts and tips to use to make arts, culture and heritage a central issue now, and in future municipal and federal elections. The BC Museums Association will be advocating for museums and related organizations during and after the election. We ask all BCMA members to become politically engaged and help us make sure that support for museums, art galleries and cultural centres is an election issue and an ongoing priority for elected officials in your communities. Increasing awareness about the value and impact of museums, culture and heritage among decision-makers like elected officials, as well as the general public, is critical to the growth and development of our sector. We need to be strong advocates for the economic, social and cultural impacts of our work – from generating economic returns and tourism revenue to building community participation and connections between generations, meeting the needs of First Nations and multicultural communities and giving children, youth and seniors access to arts and culture.

Our collective voice can ensure that everyone is aware of the broad-reaching benefits of our sector. We hope you find the information included here useful and motivating!

Advocacy Committee

Dr. Scott Marsden, Chair// Executive Director,
The Haida Gwaii Museum

Peter Ord // Managing Director,
The Robert Bateman Centre

Jodi Simkin // Executive Director,
Nuyumbalees Cultural Centre

Lillian Hunt // Director,
Aboriginal Tourism Association of BC

Daniel Smith // Member of the Laich Kwil Tach Nation
and Campbell River Indian Band

Upcoming elections

May 9, 2017: BC provincial election

October 20, 2018: BC municipal government elections

October 21, 2019 Federal election

Political activities: Protecting your charitable status

Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) has rules and guidelines that charitable organizations must follow. Be sure to read up on the rules and regulations that govern charities, non-profits and individuals under the “Political Activities” section of the [CRA website](#).

BCMA Backgrounder

The BC Museums Association, founded in 1957, represents over 400 members across British Columbia, including museums, art galleries, archives, historic sites, Aboriginal cultural centres, science centres, botanical gardens and related organizations located throughout BC. We are a provincially incorporated non-profit society and a registered charitable organization that works to create a bright future for BC's museum, gallery and heritage sector through networking, advocacy, innovation and professional development. The BCMA represents a vibrant community of museum, heritage and cultural professionals and institutions who reach every corner of British Columbia and make an invaluable contribution to our province by providing welcoming, inclusive community spaces for people of all ages and backgrounds, serving as the keepers and presenters of our tangible and intangible cultural, natural and historic treasures.

Facts Supporting Museums, Art Galleries and Cultural Centres as a Vital Sector

Economic Impact:

- ✓ The culture sector is one of the fastest growing sectors in British Columbia's economy, generating a wealth of new revenue, contributing to workforce growth and attracting and training a highly skilled workforce.
- ✓ According to the most recent report by Statistics Canada (2015), culture GDP in BC is \$5.7 billion, making up 3% of the total provincial GDP, and 12% of culture GDP in Canada.
- ✓ There are 88,000 culture jobs in BC, which is equal to 3.8% of all jobs in the province.
- ✓ Culture GDP in British Columbia is 6.33 times that of sport and culture creates 4.31 times more jobs than sport (Statistics Canada 2015). The GDP contributed by culture is greater than agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, utilities, and accommodation and food services industries.

- ✓ Through creative innovation, the culture sector is able to diversify BC's predominantly resource-based economy.
- ✓ A strong culture sector gives British Columbian communities a brand, or "attraction factor," for new workers, residents and tourists, spurring and supporting a vibrant cultural tourism industry.
- ✓ Culture contributes to urban and rural development and revitalization, enhancing communities and providing further opportunities for economic and social growth.
- ✓ In 2010, taxes from Aboriginal cultural tourism spending were approximately \$11.3 million (to all levels of government).

Social and Cultural Impacts

- ✓ British Columbians are "avid cultural participants," engaging in arts and culture activities more than other Canadians.
- ✓ Canadians volunteered 107 million hours for arts and culture organizations in 2013. This is the equivalent to about 56,000 full-time, full-year jobs.
- ✓ Cultural spaces create a symbolic sense of place. More than eight in ten Canadians feel that these spaces foster a sense of community pride and contribute to quality of life in their community.
- ✓ Culture is a spark for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. As a powerful avenue for sharing the truth of our history, it creates a process for fostering understanding, respect and meaningful relationships moving forward.
- ✓ Arts and Heritage have been shown to empower youth, especially at-risk youth, to succeed in school, in work and in later life.
- ✓ 85% of Canadians believe that arts education assists in the emotional and intellectual development of children and consider it is a good reason to support the arts.
- ✓ People who attend arts activities have been shown to be significantly healthier, have lower anxiety and be less subject to depression.

Museums in BC Quick Facts

NUMBER OF BCMA MEMBERS



400+ ACROSS BC

\$213
MILLION
ANNUAL
REVENUE

8.6
MILLION
ANNUAL
VISITORS

21,000
VOLUNTEERS
EACH YEAR

4,000
PEOPLE
EMPLOYED

20,348
SCHOOL
GROUPS



What Museums Need: Points for BCMA Members & Politicians in their Communities

- ✓ Increased investment in museums, art galleries and cultural centres will increase the economic and social impact of arts and culture in communities. Here are a few ways politicians and cultural champions can support our sector:
- ✓ Advocate for more funding for core operations and programming.
- ✓ Advocate for more funding for capital projects and/or facility improvements.
- ✓ Advocate for increases in investment in the cultural sector by providing accessible and plentiful grants and funding opportunities.
- ✓ Increase public appreciation for, and connection with, museums, art galleries, cultural centres and historic sites in BC.
- ✓ Provide stronger and stable support and investment to museums, art galleries, cultural centres from all levels of government.
- ✓ Support the leading role of museums, art galleries, cultural centres and historic sites in strengthening BC's national and international profile.
- ✓ Adopt a "percent for art" program that increases the presence of art in public spaces for all capital development projects.
- ✓ Double the BC Arts Council budget over the next three years, and provide an immediate investment of \$8.1 million to bring the provincial funding level on par with the other Canadian provinces.
- ✓ Increased funding for artistic research and development in the arts and culture sector.

BC COLLECTIONS



663,896
LINEAR METERS OF
TEXTUAL RECORDS



36,307
HOURS
FILM + VIDEO
RECORDINGS



4 MILLION
ARTIFACTS

BC hasn't kept pace with arts funding in other provinces. Compared to other provinces, BC has more artists but some of the lowest funding for the arts per capita in Canada.



What Can You Do?

Knowing who your candidates are, what they stand for and their intentions for arts and culture is instrumental when deciding who to vote for. As your direct link to government, the winning candidate in your riding has the ability to table issues and increase the importance of arts and culture in government decision-making.

- ✓ Find out who is running for elected office in your community.
- ✓ Contact your local candidates and ask them if they support museums, art galleries and cultural centres. If elected what would they do to support museums, art galleries, cultural centres and historic sites?
- ✓ Attend all-candidates meetings and ask questions that relate directly to our sector and the parties' vision of the arts.
- ✓ Follow candidates in the news and on social media to keep in touch with what they are up to. Connect with candidates and make the case for arts and culture at any opportunity that arises. Let them know why they should care about our sector.
- ✓ Make sure support for museums, art galleries and cultural centres is an election topic in your community.

How will Your Candidates Support Culture?

Once you know who is running in your riding, you are ready to start learning about candidates and their views on arts, culture and heritage.

Get the conversation started:

- ✓ What is your vision for arts, culture and heritage in our riding?
- ✓ What role do you see arts and culture playing in our riding under your party? In BC?
- ✓ Learn about their plan for supporting the sector:
- ✓ What specific things will your government do to maintain and improve the contribution that the arts, culture and heritage make in our riding?

After the Election

- ✓ Build relationships with municipal, provincial and federal elected officials and policymakers.
- ✓ Lobby governments to increase funding to museums, galleries and heritage institutions.
- ✓ Work with governments on policy and legislative changes to help strengthen the museums, heritage and cultural sector.
- ✓ Increase awareness about value and impact of the museums, gallery, heritage and culture sector among decision-makers like elected officials
- ✓ Work with governments and stakeholders to increase training and professional development opportunities for the sector.
- ✓ Build coalitions with other organizations (e.g. BCMA members, arts, culture and heritage stakeholders) to advocate on shared issues.
- ✓ Good luck and thanks for helping promote museums, art galleries, cultural centres and historic sites in BC!

Statistics for this article were sourced in the following reports:

Susan Brinton, [*From the Margins to the Mainstream: Moving BC's Creative Industries Forward*](#), 2012.

[*Creative City Network of Canada*](#), 2005c and f.

Statistics Canada, 2013 and 2015.

[*Hill Strategies*](#) 2012, 2014, 2016.

Rowland Lorimer, [*Dreamcatcher: Towards a Creativity/Innovation Strategic Plan for British Columbia*](#), 2013.

[*National Aboriginal Tourism Project-Economic Impact of Aboriginal Tourism in Canada*](#), 2015.

[*EKOS Research Associates*](#), 2012.

[*Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*](#), 2015.

[*National Endowment for the Arts*](#), 2012.

[*Canadian Arts Coalition*](#), 2016.

Note From BC Alliance for Arts and Culture

The arts are often viewed as a luxury, rather than essential to the well-being of our communities. Arts and culture are vital to BC's economy with a cultural GDP in 2014 of \$6.7 billion. This represents 3% of BC's overall economy, and 12.2% of the cultural GDP of the entire country. The arts also have significant social benefits: studies have demonstrated that people who interact with the arts exhibit better mental health, increased empathy, and more active community engagement.

With that in mind, the BC Alliance for Arts + Culture is recommending that the budget of the BC Arts Council be doubled over the next three years, with an immediate increase of \$8.1 million. This would give BC artists access to the same opportunities as other Canadian artists, bringing BC's level of arts council funding on par with that of other provinces. It would mean stable funding for arts, culture and heritage organizations, and would provide BC arts organizations in the regions with the resources they need to participate more fully in the creative economy. It would also provide much needed support for the underserved equity seeking communities in BC.

We need to do more to make our voices heard. Let's all join together to make some noise and make sure that arts and culture are on the provincial election agenda.

Right: Opening night of
Invisible Portraits Exhibit.
Photo credit: Beatty
Biodiversity Museum

