



Friday August 26, 2016

Final submission as part of the Quebec Cultural Policy Review Consultations, 2016

Introduction

English-speaking artists have a long history in Quebec. Pre-Quiet Revolution Québec produced many artists who attained national and international recognition, such as Oscar Peterson, Paul Bley, Maynard Ferguson, Leonard Cohen (*compagnon des arts et des lettres du Québec*), Mavis Gallant (*Prix Athanase-David*), the McGarrigle Sisters, Betty Goodwin (*Prix Paul-Émile-Borduas*), Christopher Plummer, Norman McLaren (*Prix Albert-Tessier*), Melvin Charney (*Prix Borduas, compagnon des arts et des lettres du Québec*), John N. Smith, William Shatner, Norma Shearer, Colin Low (*Prix Albert-Tessier*), Alanis Obomsawin (Lifetime Artistic Achievement Award from the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards), Enid Legros-Wise, Irene Whittome (*Prix Borduas*), Vincent Warren (*Prix Denise-Pelletier*), Oliver Jones (*compagnon des arts et des lettres du Québec*), and Henry Saxe (*Prix Borduas*).

Contemporary artists who have made an important mark include: David Solway (*Grand Prix du livre de Montréal*), John Heward (*Borduas*), Anne Carson (Griffin Prize, MacArthur 'Genius' Award), Karen Young (*Prix Félix*), David Fennario (Floyd S. Chalmers Award), Margie Gillis (Lifetime Artistic Achievement Award from the Governor General's Performing Arts Awards), Rawi Hage (Governor General's Award, IMPAC Dublin Literary Award), Louise Penny (Arthur Ellis Award, Agatha Award, Edgar Award), Nadia Myre (Sobey Art Award), Tracey Deer (ACTRA Award for best Canadian multi-cultural program), Heather O'Neill, Brian McKenna, Susie Arioli, Steve Galluccio, Claire Holden Rothman, Kevin Tierney, Coral Egan, Dimitri Nasrallah, Jennifer Gasoi (Grammy Award), and Arcade Fire (Grammy Award).

During the past 20 years we have seen a renaissance of English-language culture in Quebec. This has been most evident in the realm of indie rock, but has also been evident in literature, visual arts, dance, theatre and film. Fewer young English-speakers feel the need to leave Quebec, others are returning

after having lived away, and still others have been drawn to Quebec by its flourishing arts environment. ELAN's Made au Québec website (www.made-au-quebec.ca) documents the success of these artists.

In 2011 Guernica Editions published *Minority Report: An Alternative History of English-Language Arts in Quebec* which documented the pre-Quiet Revolution flourishing of English-language arts in Quebec followed by a massive disruption accompanied by the exodus of more than 300,000 English-speakers. In 1989 La Presse declared: *Le théâtre Anglophone à Montréal: pratiquement mort*. To a greater or lesser extent this decline of fortunes was true for all English-speaking artists who had chosen to stay in Quebec rather than relocate to Toronto or further afield. Audiences had declined, venues had closed, and sponsors were reluctant to support English-language art for fear of being perceived as anti-French.

Quebec's original Cultural Policy was drafted during the early 90s, during the politically volatile years of the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords. There were few English-language interveners for the Cultural Policy hearings yet the third orientation (*Renforcer le dialogue des cultures*) included a section on *Les Québécois d'expression anglaise*, which outlined the situation of Quebec's English-speaking artists and stated that: *Le gouvernement entend favoriser les échanges interculturels au Québec. Il reconnaît la contribution des Québécois d'expression anglaise à la culture québécoise et, en ce sens, il renforcera son soutien à la mise en valeur de leur patrimoine, ainsi que son soutien aux créateurs et organismes culturels anglophones, dans le cadre de ses programmes réguliers.*

During the 20+ years since the publication of the Cultural Policy Quebec's English speaking-artists have felt fully supported by CALQ. The situation with SODEC has been more complex and problematic, while direct interactions with the Ministry of Culture and Communications have, at times, felt political rather than cultural, antagonistic rather than collaborative.

Quebec's English-speaking community is dramatically different than it was in the 1970s, when very few Anglos could speak French. According to the 2010 study by *le Conseil Supérieur de la langue française* (p 50, Conclusions) cited in the Context document for *le Renouvellement de la Politique Culturelle du Québec: Pour les anglophones bilingues (français-anglais) qui résident dans l'île de Montréal -- qui représentent 70% des anglophones de ce territoire -- le français est la langue le plus souvent utilisée dans près de 30% des cas, alors que l'usage à égalité de français et de l'anglais est d'une proportion similaire.*

C'est donc près de 60% des anglophones bilingues de l'île de Montréal qui utilisent le français, seul ou avec l'anglais, dans leurs interactions publiques.

Before discussing arts policy, we want to take a moment to address language, which forever defines our relationship to the French-speaking majority of Quebec. Whenever English-speakers see a study that identifies Quebecers by mother-tongue, they immediately feel alienated. It is impossible for Anglos to change their mother tongue, no matter how much time and effort they devote to perfecting their French-language skills. Surely the language that people choose to use in public interactions is more important for public policy than the language of the mother who gave birth to them? It is a remarkable transformation within the English-speaking community that it has progressed from close to zero levels of bilingualism at the time of Expo to 67.8%* in 2011, and the percentage is increasingly higher in the younger demographics. (**Conseil Supérieur de la langue française* study p 6, Tableau 1.3 'capables de soutenir une conversation en français')

It is refreshing to see a study that attempts to identify *le pourcentage des anglophones bilingues qui utilisent le français, seul ou avec l'anglais, dans leurs interactions publiques*. Surely the state should have no interest in what language its citizens use in their bedrooms (*usage à la maison*) nor should the language used at work (which depends on many complex factors) confuse the question of what language people can and do use *dans leurs interactions publiques*. Most of Quebec's English-speakers have demonstrated that they wish to speak more French, better, and more often. This constitutes one of the great successes of the Quiet Revolution.

Answers to questions listed in the Working Document (Cahier de consultation)

1/ Que pensez-vous de ces principes ? Vous paraissent-ils adéquats pour servir d'assises à la prochaine politique culturelle du Québec?

The **HUIT GRANDS PRINCIPES** enumerated in the *cahier de consultation* will provide a solid foundation for Quebec's revised Cultural Policy. It is important to recognize the role culture plays in the shared identity and values that form the basis of a civil society. Culture should certainly foster intercultural dialogue, a sense of belonging, democracy, and social cohesion. Another important priority for a Cultural Policy is to reflect the diversity of Quebec society and ensure the inclusion of all citizens, from those whose families have inhabited the territory for centuries to more recent arrivals. Every society needs a shared public language in order for citizens to communicate amongst themselves, and to participate in public life. It is of great importance to recognize the importance of Aboriginal culture which does, and should, contribute to the dynamism of Quebec's cultural life. Diversity is also important as is equity for old and young, and people of all genders from a rainbow of different backgrounds.

Given the broad scope and inclusive nature of the **GRANDS PRINCIPES**, ELAN was surprised to find no mention of Quebec's English-speaking artists. The most optimistic interpretation of this silence is that we have become such an integral part of Quebec culture during the past 25 years that the government's commitment to us goes without saying. Not all of our members share this optimism.

Le cahier de consultation makes only two oblique references to Quebec's English-speaking community. The first concerns the promotion of French, and the second concerns the problem of excessive use of English, presumably by Francophones:

1 *La langue française, langue commune de la vie publique, est au coeur de l'identité culturelle québécoise. La politique culturelle contribue à la promotion de la langue française au Québec et à son rayonnement au Canada et à l'étranger. Elle le fait dans le respect des droits des Autochtones et de la communauté québécoise d'expression anglaise.*

2 *Comment concilier l'objectif de promotion et de préservation de la langue française avec la reconnaissance du pluralisme culturel ? Comment se positionner face à la popularité actuelle de la création en langue anglaise ?*

Of course we understand that Quebec is (demographically) a small island surrounded by an ocean of English-speakers, and of course we understand the threat implicit in global English-language cultural product, which is both seductive and invasive. In fact, we are also threatened by Anglo-American culture because we are in direct competition with it? Local English-speaking artists, who reflect different aspects of life within Quebec, should not be confused with English-language culture coming from outside Quebec. This proliferation of Anglo-American culture is a threat to countries as large as Germany and France. It is not unique to Quebec and indeed, if every single English-speaking Québécois citizen were to vanish tonight, the most powerful threats to the French language in Quebec would not be changed in any perceptible way tomorrow.

We find it difficult to understand that our Francophone colleagues, friends and neighbours would not recognize that artists from Leonard Cohen and the McGarrigle Sisters to Susie Arioli and Arcade Fire have been, and continue to be, good ambassadors for Quebec culture. This was, in fact, the object of a unanimous resolution in the National Assembly after Arcade Fire won their Grammy Award in 2011.

The briefing documents for the renewal of Quebec's Cultural Policy are silent about the existence of English-speaking artists. Given the significant efforts by English-speaking artists in the past 25 years to use French as the public language, and to act as ambassadors for Quebec culture here and abroad, this is a puzzling oversight. It would be a disturbing step backwards if the new cultural policy were not able to make an affirmation at least as strong as in 1992: *Le gouvernement ... reconnaît la contribution des Québécois d'expression anglaise à la culture québécoise et, en ce sens, il renforcera son soutien à la mise en valeur de leur patrimoine, ainsi que son soutien aux créateurs et organismes culturels anglophones, dans le cadre de ses programmes réguliers.*

Note: Given that the period of time between learning of this cultural policy review process and the April 8 deadline is too short to prepare a full intervention, we are submitting preliminary thoughts today because we wish to take part in the public hearings on May 2-3. We will continue to consult with our members over the spring and summer in order to make a more complete intervention in August.

1. LA CULTURE DANS UNE PERSPECTIVE DE DÉVELOPPEMENT DURABLE

See other responses

2. L'ÉVOLUTION DES DOMAINES DE LA CULTURE ET DES COMMUNICATIONS ET DE LA PLACE DES CRÉATEURS DANS UN ENVIRONNEMENT NUMÉRIQUE EN TRANSFORMATION CONSTANTE

Emerging artists are not always young. New arts form can be a second career for older artists or citizens who wish to become artists at a later age. While continuing to support young emerging artists, we need to create a space to support older emerging artists.

See other responses

13/ Quels sont, parmi les volets de la chaîne culturelle suivants, ceux qui requerront une attention particulière au cours des prochaines années et pourquoi ?

a. la formation des créateurs, des travailleurs et des entrepreneurs culturels,

Artists are increasingly called upon to be their own producers, promoters and publicists but these skills are infrequently taught at universities or conservatories. A wide range of entrepreneurial skills needs to be included in CEGEP/University curricula and also offered to working artists as part of their on-going professional development. Some of this training is already offered to English-speaking artists by Youth Employment Services (YES) Montreal.

b. la création,

The current creation model usually requires creators to form a company (in the case of theatre and dance) or to be their own producers (music). Creators want to create. CALQ should develop more flexible models to enable creators (particularly emerging artists) to partner with established producers who will present their work.

c. la production,

It would be extremely helpful for CALQ to offer incentives to established theatre or dance companies to host productions by emerging and independent artists.

In the realm of independent music, presenting venues often ask artists to act as their own producers and to rent the performing space and take charge of their own promotion. This DIY culture is wide-spread but the milieu would be stronger if production was taken charge of by specialized producers.

Create production funds to aid in the development of very small production companies that are not associated with broadcasters, i.e. web-series.

Offer more support for independent producers in multiple disciplines (performing arts & film)

d. la diffusion et l'exploitation des oeuvres et des produits culturels,

For many musicians (indie rock and pop) it is near impossible to find physically accessible, affordable, small- and mid-sized venue spaces in Montreal, and rehearsal spaces are fast disappearing. The revised Cultural Policy should develop ways to support accessibility in terms of financial and physical accessibility (inexpensive rehearsal spaces or studios, and physically accessible venues and rehearsal spaces).

Translation of works is an effective way to export Québec culture and to make use of parallel networks for English-speaking and francophone artists. Many novels and plays have been translated during the past 10 years and more could be done with enhanced support.

e. la participation citoyenne,

The citizens least likely to participate in cultural activities are people who are marginalized due to their disadvantaged economic status or because they feel like social, ethnic or linguistic outsiders. Pro-active outreach is required, which exceeds the capacity of a single presenter. It requires a coordinated effort, and long-term commitment.

Citizens living outside the main urban centres also have less access to professional cultural activities, although they often have vibrant community cultural activities. ELAN developed a project called Arts Alive! Québec to assist regional communities present and promote a greater diversity of cultural activities. Urban-rural partnerships can be mutually beneficial: providing new work opportunities for artists and a wider range of cultural activities for citizens.

f. les conditions socioéconomiques des artistes et travailleurs de la culture (filet social, égalité hommes-femmes, etc.),

Declining socio-economic conditions for cultural workers are a matter of concern. The number of artists constantly increases because the graduation rate of new artists exceeds the retirement rate of established artists. Declining or stagnant revenues in many sectors mean a decrease in real income for artists. Declining revenues can be traced to a number of causes including competition with free live programming (including free events at festivals), and competition with free online products.

In addition, unpaid work such as internships is becoming disturbingly common. Organizations and institutions frequently publish calls for entries where artists are requested to create or donate their work. This is an unacceptable practice. Already artists earn a pittance from their work; it is unreasonable to expect them to donate their work to support fundraisers or events with corporate sponsorship. A minimum compensation fee should be introduced to eliminate this practice.

Young people are less inclined see their main goals as becoming professional musicians, or being able to earn enough money from their art to live on. Resources are finite but there needs to be an equitable distribution between artists of all ages.

3. LE RAPPORT DU CITOYEN À LA CULTURE

14/ Comment donner un nouvel élan à l'éducation culturelle et artistique ? Peut-on imaginer un meilleur maillage entre l'école et les milieux culturels ?

Quebec's Culture in the Schools program has many positive effects but the benefits are not equally distributed. It works best in schools where principals value the program and provide direct support to educators. It would benefit all students if best practices were disseminated to schools that currently receive fewer benefits from the program.

Strong links between culture – education – youth are essential to a healthy community. All ministries, and particularly Education, need to work with the Ministry of Culture and Communication to make this a reality.

We will respond to questions 15–21 in August.

4. LA LANGUE FRANÇAISE ET LA DIVERSITÉ ETHNOCULTURELLE

22/ Comment la politique culturelle peut-elle contribuer à la promotion et au renforcement du français comme assise de la vie culturelle québécoise ?

Quebec's population is vastly outnumbered by provinces and states which use a language that is steadily imposing itself as the lingua franca of the 21st century. This is a very different situation to countries with neighbours of similar size speaking various languages. The English language holds a powerful attraction for many citizens of Quebec, no matter what their mother tongue. It is easy to see why this is perceived as a threat to the vitality of the French language in Quebec.

The worst way to promote and reinforce French is to regard other languages (particularly English) as enemies that must be fought and defeated. If people are forced to choose sides, some will turn away from French, perhaps permanently.

It is important to put the problem in perspective. Fifty years ago a large percentage of immigrants were educated in English. There is still considerable debate about whether they rejected Quebec's French-language schools or whether those tightly knit Catholic schools rejected them. Whatever was actually happening prior to Bill 101, almost all immigrants are now educated in French. This is a major improvement. It is important to focus on youth and the future, to create a welcoming environment that will cause them to embrace the beauty of the French language and the culture it expresses. It is totally counter-productive to make a major issue of whether immigrant adults all become fully bilingual. Historically, it takes three generations for immigrants to become fully integrated into their new language and culture. Unrealistic expectations create avoidable friction.

Fifty years ago close to 100% of English speakers were unilingual. It is easy to forget that they were not sealed off in some West-Island ghetto. The English language was extraordinarily prominent in all of the industrial cities of Quebec. Now most Anglos can speak French. This too is a major improvement. Despite some multinational signs in English, the French face of Montreal is immeasurably more prominent than it was in the 1950s, 1930s or 1890s. This transformation is made startlingly clear in archival photographs.

The Cultural Policy should focus on French as a shared public language. The priority, surely, is to bring citizens together around shared cultural activities. Celebrating the increasingly high degree of bilingualism among Allophones and Anglophones will produce far more positive results than criticizing them for speaking other languages in the privacy of their own homes (or workplaces) and for not speaking perfect French with charming accents.

23/ Quelles avenues emprunter pour que la politique culturelle puisse mieux refléter la diversité culturelle québécoise et favoriser l'intégration et la participation à la vie culturelle des personnes issues de l'immigration ?

The Ministry and its institutions should begin by asking how many people from diverse communities participate in paid employment. How well does staff at the Ministry of Culture, CALQ, and SODEC reflect the cultural diversity of Quebec? If staff does not reflect this diversity, why not?" The same exercise should apply to board members and jury members.

The Cultural Policy should strongly encourage all cultural institutions that receive state funding to implement a policy of inclusion: for staff, board members and volunteers. This is the surest way to build bridges that will result in increased audience participation.

We will respond to questions 24–26 in August.

5. LE DÉVELOPPEMENT CULTUREL DES NATIONS AUTOCHTONES3

27/ Quelle devrait être la place du développement culturel autochtone dans la prochaine politique, en tenant compte du contexte propre aux Premières Nations et aux Inuits ?

28/ Qu'est-ce qui pourrait contribuer à la professionnalisation des artistes, des organismes artistiques ou des entrepreneurs culturels autochtones ? Comment favoriser leur intégration aux circuits de création, de production et de diffusion ?

29/ Comment le gouvernement du Québec peut-il appuyer efficacement les communautés autochtones dans leurs efforts de réappropriation et de revitalisation des langues ancestrales ?

Aboriginals have been victims of an abominable program of forced assimilation via residential schools that was intended to strip them of their language and culture, and Aboriginals continue to be victims of misinformation and prejudices that result in frequent disturbing encounters with non-Aboriginals.

Affirmative action in the new Cultural Policy will help address past injustices and indignities.

6. L'ACTION INTERNATIONALE ET LES RELATIONS INTERGOUVERNEMENTALES

We will respond to questions 30–36 in August.

7. LA GOUVERNANCE ET LE FINANCEMENT

36/ Quelles améliorations le gouvernement du Québec peut-il apporter au système actuel de financement de la culture ? Quelles sont les limites des mécanismes de soutien financier en place ? Comment les améliorer ?

Film/Television is a complex world. A few preliminary suggestions are:

Re Télé-Québec

Renew the mandate and funding of Télé-Québec to assure that it continues to provide and procure high-quality socially-valuable productions, that it provides a window for Quebec producers and in both languages.

re SODEC/Revenu Quebec

Assure the tax credits for Quebec production

Assure the preferential tax credit for English-language production

Assure that a certain percentage of funds go toward English-language production

Assure that agents within the SODEC are familiar with the Anglophone community, i.e. Harry Gulkin.

Create production funds to aid in the development of very small production companies that are not associated with broadcasters, i.e. web-series.

re Community television and community radio

Create a competitive fund (with transparent rules) to support projects within the community television and radio communities. Assure that some money would go to English-language projects.

37/ Est-ce que les missions et le fonctionnement de nos organismes d'intervention et de soutien, y compris le ministère de la Culture et des Communications et ses sociétés d'État, sont toujours aussi pertinents après deux décennies ? Quels ajustements seraient nécessaires ?

In the short time we have had to consult our members a few preliminary comments can be mentioned now. They will be more thoroughly developed in August.

One problem with CALQ is that it allows program officers to change or overturn decisions made by peer-assessment juries. One of the criteria for assessment in music is visibility of the artist and prior professional activity. The perceived result is that officers frequently overturn a decision made by a jury who have taken a risk on a younger, less experienced, less visible artist by giving the grant instead to a more established artist who has a larger body of work and more access to publicity and marketing. The result is that the people who get the money are the same people who've been given the money over the past 25 years - same faces, same music. This makes it very hard for entry level artists, whether as an emerging artist, an artist new to Montreal, or an artist whose language skills aren't up to snuff.

CALQ living expenses grants of 1700 per month have not changed in years.

Keep media arts funding at the CALQ and do not move it into SODEC.

Assure that a percentage of members of CALQ juries come from diverse backgrounds, including Anglophones.

Some specific problems involve documentary filmmakers. While the rules at CALQ are less strict than Canada Council, there are certain eligibility criteria that make it increasingly difficult for documentary filmmakers:

1) That artist must be producer with 100% creative control over at least 1 project in the past – “For projects submitted, the artist-auteur must show that he exercises full control over the content and the direction of his work as well as all production and distribution agreements. He holds all reproduction and public exhibition rights for his work and can, by granting a license, extend such rights to a producer or an independent distributor.”

Given the nature of how financing for film and TV productions is put together, and how artists often have to work with several co-producers and other entities to build a viable financial structure for their projects, a criterion that demands the artist have 100% control on a project is sometimes very unrealistic. Many directors and screenwriters are hired by independent production companies that have an idea for a film – or work to develop an idea with a producer from the get-go. This criterion is a huge barrier to entry for many artists.

2) The ineligibility of projects that were commissioned specifically for television. With decreasing venues for showcase films (particularly documentary films) TV is often the first/only method of distribution for many artists' projects.

Distributors and screening venues are the weakest areas in this domain. The internet is increasingly transforming the ways in which people access, experience and watch films. As English-language filmmakers working so close to the United States it is very hard to have one's films reach broader audiences outside of a festival circuit. There are little to no auteur-driven programming spots on television and it is extremely hard to access certain festivals and screening venues without large marketing and distribution budgets or significant industry connections. Helping create venues to connect artists with meaningful distribution and a commitment to Canadian voices in film and TV would go a long way to supporting artists in this field.

40/ Comment soutenir adéquatement l'innovation, l'entrepreneuriat culturel et la relève ?

In the short time we had to consult our members a few preliminary comments from the perspective of visual artists can be mentioned now. They will be more thoroughly developed in August.

Support Venues

Visual artists require opportunities to exhibit their work. While publishing work online is on the rise, it is insufficient for visual arts disciplines such as installation, media art, sculpture, or works where

materiality is central to the aesthetic concept. Accessible exhibition spaces need to be supported, such as artist-run centers, pop-up spaces, and not-for-profit galleries. A financial support structure to encourage commercial galleries to exhibit emerging artists also aids in making artistic practice sustainable. A hybrid commercial/non-profit gallery model also benefits artists working in a post-modern studio practice, where part of their production is for sale while other creative projects (such as audio-visual installations) are not.

The lack of available affordable space for independent English-language theatre companies is a major problem, and has been for more than a decade despite the production of several studies demonstrating the need and feasibility of creating new space suitable for development of new work, rehearsal and production.

Support Community Events

Grassroots community events such as neighborhood art walks and local art festivals are an excellent way to connect the community with its artists. The personal relationships forged during these events are long-lasting and result in ongoing support through private sales and gallery visits.

Support Artist Collectives

Artist collectives (for example The Long Haul) are a great benefit to the visual arts community. As a group they not only provide each other with creative support, but they can also exert pressure to keep studio rents affordable and organize community arts events.

Increasing Rents

Finding affordable studios spaces continues to be a major issue for visual artists. Not only do artists need a place to work, they also require studio spaces for storage and displaying their works during studio visits with collectors and gallerists. Accessible, low-rent studio spaces need to be provided to maintain cultural production. Spaces like the De Gaspé complex and the Belgo building could be subsidized to this end.