

dreamcatcher

*Towards a Creativity/Innovation Strategic Plan for
British Columbia: A BCreative 2012 Conference Report*



ROWLAND LORIMER

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BACK COVER IMAGES: *Tim Lee: Remakes, Variations (1741–2049)*, exhibition view at Presentation House Gallery, photo by Erik Hood (left); Art installation by Jan Peacock, *Reader by the Window*, photo by Robert Keziere (middle); and conductor Charles Barber with soprano Phoebe MacRae, photo by Adam Abrams, courtesy of City Opera Vancouver (right).

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An easterly view of Mount Cheam
taken from Limbert Mountain.

PHOTO BY STEPHAN BAKER.

COURTESY OF PICTURE BC.

DREAMCATCHER: Towards a Creativity/Innovation Strategic Plan for British Columbia

executive summary

MAY 11 AND 12, 2012, SAW THE convening of a conference, BCreative 2012, initiated by the Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing at Simon Fraser University. The conference was convened to consider the development of the creative economy of British Columbia. Besides encouraging creativity for its own sake and increasing the general benefit of British Columbians, the creative economy has much to offer a relatively non-diverse, resource-based economy in a flat world of low-cost-labour-driven international trade. It also offers other indirect benefits, such as the building of social capital and social cohesion, alongside the strengthening of BC's tourist economy.

The conference revealed a vast array of creative activity throughout the province supported, to some extent, by the province through the BC Arts Council and Community Gaming Grants, and also supported by BC's municipalities at a higher level than is customary in the rest of the country. Conference participants were treated to impressive presentations by well-established creative professionals, such as architects, as well as pleas for recognition from other groups, such as the fashion industry. Participants also learned of initiatives in other jurisdictions, such as Ontario, Paris, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and various cities around the world. Particularly notable were small-city creative economy dynamics as well as a number of studies documenting the notable impact in terms of participation and job creation in such centres as Kamloops, Campbell River, Richmond, and Victoria.

From an official perspective, as of 2012, British Columbia paid little attention to the creative economy. Very few statistical analyses have been undertaken at the provincial level, and support for creative undertakings has been funneled through the BC Arts Council augmented by Community Gaming Grants—these being the two main features of the government's cultural policy. From an economic or industrial perspective, the province has seen fit to invest in sectors that appear to be job- and wealth-creating winners rather than in the sector as a whole. Its emphasis on "screens" (inclusive of film and video, video games, and computer-based media) is a high-risk strategy that does not consider the ecology of creative production where cross-fertilization among creatives can result in a vibrant dynamic.

The relative lack of attention to and of facilitative policy for the economics of the creative sector is somewhat surprising given its estimated employment of 85,000 people (not including volunteers, making it the second largest of BC's six major industrial sectors), its generation of \$4 billion in economic activity (the fifth-largest sector in the BC economy),



The Bella Coola River winds
its way into the waters
of North Bentinck Arm.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL WIGLE.
COURTESY OF PICTURE BC

its current growth trajectory (increasing faster than the general economy), and its potential to strengthen BC's tourism sector. Both BC and the federal government provide low levels of support in comparison to other provinces in Canada. As a PricewaterhouseCoopers study has indicated, "the global entertainment and media markets are poised to undergo rapid transformation and growth that will be driven by rising incomes in the developing world, converging technology platforms, and changing demographics."

The challenges of the BC environment, particularly in Vancouver, were outlined in other presentations, notably those by Vancouver's city planners, who outlined their space agenda, part of the *Culture Plan for Vancouver 2008–2018*. This is an initiative to create low-rent space for artists throughout a very high-rent city. The possibility of a British Columbia Media Development Corporation was also broached, supported by a report calling for its founding. The presence of education and training programs in the province for various creative subsectors was noted, as was world-renowned BC aboriginal artistic production.

In retrospect, despite relative inattention to the sector by government, there is a great deal of creative activity that takes place throughout the province by individuals and within many geographic, ethnic, interest, and age communities. Two sets of actions could assist measurably in British Columbia taking advantage of the potential inherent in such activity.

First is the recognition that, like any sector, the creative sector of British Columbia requires supportive infrastructure investment. In that regard, cultural subsidies to artistic activity not only serve cultural policy; if handled well, they can also serve economic development. As well, in such creative industries as publishing, music, and filmmaking, it is also critical to provide investment for the continued development of stable industries as they transition to the digital world.

Second is the creation of a branded strategic plan consisting of a long-term campaign to organize, recognize, and enhance creative production, in part by tying it to creativity more broadly—which is to say, to innovation. It is proposed that by creating a brand such as *Creative Beautiful British Columbia* and facilitating a very public campaign of recognition and support, creativity in BC could move to the centre of British Columbians' consciousness and become a primary identity element of the province and its society. Were that to happen, creativity itself would be enlivened, participation in artistic and creative events would increase, tourism would be enhanced, and growth of the creative sector over the next decades would be catalyzed.



Conductor Charles Barber rehearses with soprano Phoebe MacRae. **PHOTO BY ADAM ABRAMS. COURTESY OF CITY OPERA VANCOUVER**



Fariba Mirzaie, *Shadow*,
wearable textile art:
newspaper, thread, small
pieces of recycled fabric,
stitched with tight zigzag, 2012.
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.

DREAMCATCHER: Towards a Creativity/Innovation Strategic Plan for British Columbia

FULL REPORT: introduction

THE CREATIVE ECONOMY HAS BEEN RECEIVING INCREASED attention worldwide from economists, planners, policy analysts, and members of the creative community coincident with its growth in both developed and developing economies. Developed nations have been examining potential opportunities in stimulating economic growth in the creative sector in a world where competitive advantage in manufacturing falls to economies with low labour costs and underdeveloped social and environmental controls on the impacts of manufacturing. The examination of the creative economy has been focused on, at times, the knowledge-based industries; at other times, the copyright- and other intellectual-property-based industries; and at still other times, the creative sector. Most analyses note the connection of these sectors to information and communications technologies (ICT) development. Attention to the creative sector has been particularly intense in cities, partly encouraged by awareness and the dynamics of clusters, which has led to increased roles for cities as socio-political sites of action. As well, planners, policy analysts, and innovators have become aware of the advantages of a focus on the creative sector in addressing social cohesion amidst immigration; the challenge of engaging in economic activity with minimal environmental impact; and the provision of services to, and the encouragement of consumption among, the aging baby-boom demographic.

The opportunities for the development of a creative economy in British Columbia are not so much as a replacement for decline in manufacturing but as a means for

- > encouraging creativity for its own sake and for the benefit of society and the human spirit;
- > addressing the opportunities provided by a well-off aging and consuming demographic;
- > addressing the socialization and social cohesion needs of an immigrant population;
- > diversification of a resource economy;
- > building social capital; and
- > strengthening a tourist economy.

This paper reviews the overall nature of the creative sector of BC, pointing out that a strategic plan might benefit from embracing both creativity and innovation. After

summarizing many of the presentations of the BCreative 2012 conference, it then outlines some basic elements for developing a strategic creativity/innovation plan for the province.

BC'S WORKING CREATIVE ECONOMY

Creative activity is a basic existential reality beginning in individuals and families and extending throughout society. It is manifest in talent groups, such as writers, artists, potters, fashion designers, and musicians. It takes on distinctive forms in geographical, ethnocultural, and interest communities. It is nurtured in creativity-based enterprises, such as publishing houses and art galleries, and in Canada by all levels of government. It can also be found in all sizes of businesses, professions, trades, and ethnic and religious institutions and organizations. As a reading of Richard Florida's works makes clear, it is difficult to be aware of the full manifestations of creativity in society, especially as a secondary element within other activities. Consequently, it is difficult to be aware of the many different creator-representing organizations. Creative activities and innovative thinking are ubiquitous and constant—even in our minds as we sleep.

With respect to geographic BC communities, the current membership of Arts BC (formerly the Assembly of BC Arts Councils) includes “90 community and regional arts councils from every region of BC.”¹ With respect to an overlay of talent groups and ethnocultural communities with geographic communities, there are “over 110 individuals and arts organizations engaged in community based arts that span a multitude of artistic disciplines and practices.”² The following listing of BC Arts Council funding programs gives a sense of the many different types of activities that are sufficiently broad to warrant a distinct subcategory of support.³

OPERATING ASSISTANCE

| | |
|---|--|
| Arts and Cultural Service Organizations | Music Organizations |
| Arts Periodicals | Professional Arts Festivals |
| Block Funding for Book Publishers | Professional Arts Training Organizations |
| Community Arts Council Assistance | Public Museums |
| Dance Organizations | Theatre Organizations |
| Media Arts Organizations | Visual Arts Organizations |

PROJECT ASSISTANCE

| | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Aboriginal Arts Development Awards | Capacity and Sustainability |
| Arts Periodicals | Community Arts Development |
| Arts-Based Community Development Program | Community Arts Festivals |

Media Arts Organizations
 Music Commissioning Awards
 Museums and Visual Arts Organizations
 Professional Arts Festivals
 Professional Arts Training
 Professional Dance

Professional Literary
 Professional Music
 Professional Theatre
 Special Project Assistance - Co-op Placements
 Special Project Assistance - Innovations
 Title Assistance for Book Publishers

ARTS AWARDS FOR INDIVIDUALS

Professional Development Assistance
 Project Assistance for Creative Writers
 Project Assistance for Media Artists

Project Assistance for Visual Artists/Crafts
 Artists/Critics/Curators
 Scholarship Awards

TOURING ASSISTANCE

Artists in Education
 Community Presenters Assistance Program

Touring Initiatives

SUSTAINABILITY

Capacity and Sustainability

This list reflects the wide mandate of the BC Arts Council but captures a very limited subsection of the creative sector. Numerous other subsectors, including the professional creative subsector, abound. For instance, the Architectural Institute of British Columbia boasts 1,691 members; has a licensing system for architects; administers fees, fines and charges; and operates under a specific provincial statute.⁴ Landscape architects, on the other hand, have 360 members and they, too, operate under provincial statute.⁵ In contrast, the BC Industrial Design Association lists 34 members.⁶ Looking elsewhere, the Federation of BC Writers has over 750 members.⁷ And actors have three associations to choose from: the Union of BC Performers; the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists;

Vase influenced by the Pine Beetle forest devastation, by Linda Doherty of d bar d studios. **PHOTO BY DENNIS DOHERTY. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.**



[Bernard Momer] reported that the direct, indirect, and induced economic output for which the creative sector in Kelowna could assume responsibility was \$143.8 million in economic activity.

and the Canadian Actors' Equity Association.⁸ These three areas are a mere beginning.

While this vast array of activity is impressive, finding organizational evidence for cross-fertilization among various elements of the creative sector in

British Columbia is more difficult. Yet obviously, it exists in the cognitive and aesthetic contemplations of creators themselves. An online search of activities and organizations of that nature turns up only one sparsely populated personal website called the Creative Sector Council, run by Judi Piggott,⁹ rather than an organization of organizations with a duly ensconced executive director.

A LITERATURE-BASED OVERVIEW OF CREATIVE ACTIVITY IN BC

In trying to gain a comprehensive overview of creative activity within an economic and human-resource framework, we can turn to several helpful studies. The first is Statistics Canada's *Economic Contribution of the Culture Sector to Canada's Provinces*.¹⁰ That study indicates that BC's cultural GDP, as defined by the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS),¹¹ increased each year between 1996 and 2003 and that by 2003, the contribution was 4 percent of GDP. While in 2003, employment was 78,000, in 2010, PricewaterhouseCoopers estimated the sector employed 85,000 people and generated \$4 billion in economic activity,¹² a larger per capita value than in any other province. This growth took place despite an 18 percent cutback in provincial spending on culture over the same period,¹³ bringing BC to the second-lowest place in spending per capita by the provincial government.¹⁴ Adding to this apparent paucity of support, per capita federal spending in BC was also among the lowest in the country (less than half of what the federal government spends in Ontario).¹⁵ On the other hand, BC municipalities spend more per capita on culture than any other province.¹⁶

In 2010, UBC geography professor Bernard Momer undertook an economic-impact assessment of the creative sector in Kelowna,¹⁷ a follow-up study on a 1998 initiative. He reported that the direct, indirect, and induced economic output for which the creative sector in Kelowna could assume responsibility was \$143.8 million in economic activity. Contribution to GDP was \$73.3 million¹⁸ and the sector generated nearly 1,300 jobs and paid out \$57.1 million in wages. This translates into 9.9 creative sector jobs (73 full-time-equivalent jobs) per 1,000 inhabitants in Kelowna (as compared with 7.8 per 1,000 in 1998). As Momer notes (p. 6), while he considers his data reasonably thorough (based on a 27 percent response rate), a preferred method would be comprehensive cultural mapping.

A further understanding of Momer's data can be obtained from the list of categories of individuals and organizations he surveyed, which he expressed in terms of full-time workers:

TABLE 1. FULL-TIME-EQUIVALENT KELOWNA-BASED WORKERS IN ARTS AND CULTURE

| WORK CATEGORY | FTE |
|---|-----|
| Art instruction and education (post-secondary) | 197 |
| Service providers | 175 |
| Commercial arts (graphic and commercial design) | 162 |
| Cultural facilities | 88 |
| Performing arts | 82 |
| Visual arts | 48 |
| Art galleries and dealers | 48 |
| Societies and associations | 37 |
| Events and festivals | 22 |
| Literary arts | 12 |

The manner in which Momer converted part-time jobs into full-time equivalents is a standard procedure of BC Stats even though it may not be entirely justified in reality. Each part-time job was assumed to be 49 percent of full time. Based on provincial wage averages and some reporting, he calculated the average FTE wage to be \$43,426. This, in all probability, is high. As Momer points out, among other things, it reflects the high incomes of graphic and commercial designers, some above \$90,000. It also reflects the relatively high salaries of the numerous (n = 197) post-secondary educators included as cultural workers.

Quite appropriately, given that 3.6 percent of BC's citizens aged over 15 years volunteer for arts organizations,¹⁹ Momer examined data on volunteerism in Kelowna and reported that 4.3 percent of its citizens volunteered, adding \$3,485,476 in labour value.

A parallel economic-impact analysis was carried out in the Vancouver suburb of Richmond, yielding, in direct results, "1,128 person years of employment, \$52 million in wages, \$63 million contribution to GDP, and a \$135 million contribution to the economy."²⁰

Several points are germane in considering these studies. First is that with the exception of the PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) study (discussed in more detail below), their focus is on cultural activities and industries rather than the creative sector as a whole. Following the definition of the United Kingdom's Department for Culture, Media and Sport, PwC expands the focus of its assessment to include "those industries which have their original in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property."²¹ Specifically, the document lists

the following as being included: advertising; architecture; arts and antiques; broadcasting; crafts; design; designer fashion; video, film and photography; interactive leisure software; music; performing arts; publishing; software, computer games and electronic publishing; and radio and TV. Notably, this list does not include the retail sales of items such as CDs and books. This exclusion is consistent with the NAICS classifications. That activity is captured as retail activity.

While more recent figures than the 2003 figures used by StatsCan and PwC are unavailable, it would appear that little has changed in BC to the present day. Certainly spending on the Vancouver Cultural Olympiad in 2010 would show as a blip, but in the aftermath of that extravaganza, severe cuts to arts and cultural funding were so unpopular that the government reversed most of those cuts.^{22,23} Indeed, in the preparation for BCreative 2012, conference organizers were told that the government's interest was in "screens": those of the movies, video players, and computers. As with harvesting trees, the profitability of these subsectors of the creative economy suggests that there is an obvious advantage to such a policy. But in the long run it is hardly a strategic approach given the potential there is in cross-subsectoral fertilization (more to follow on this).

The available data on the nature and extent of the contribution that individuals and institutions involved in creative activity make to British Columbia is sparse indeed. Consistent with this lack of information is the lack of strategic planning documents directed at exploiting this resource, now a significant contributor to jobs and provincial GDP.

The creative sector and other major sectors of the BC economy

The emergence of the overlapping creative, information, and digital economies, as well as employment trends, calls for a new vision of economic and social development in the province. Some comparisons highlight the reasons. Using CANSIM data and PwC projections, PwC identified six major sectors that contribute to provincial GDP.²⁴ From the smallest to the largest in 2007, they are:

- > utilities: ~\$3.3 billion
- > the creative sector: ~\$4 billion
- > wood products and manufacturing: ~\$4.4 billion
- > mining oil and gas extraction: ~\$4.5 billion
- > agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting: ~\$4.6 billion
- > accommodation and food services: ~\$4.6 billion.

It is interesting to see how the creative sector compares in size with BC's other major industries. As we consider the figures, it is important to know that it appears that the



accommodation and food services sector includes the retail element, whereas the creative and other sectors do not.

Also noteworthy is the number of jobs each sector creates. Job creation does not correlate in any significant way with GDP contribution. Here the creative sector shines with the generation of nearly 86,000 jobs (2007 figures). Only one other sector surpasses the creative sector: accommodation and food services. As well, the creative sector is one of only three sectors out of six that generated far more than 75,000 jobs each: the other three each created 20,000 or fewer. They are as follows (listed in the same order and using 2006 figures):

- > utilities: ~\$3.3 billion, 11,250 jobs
- > the creative sector: ~\$4 billion, 85,757 jobs
- > wood products and manufacturing: ~\$4.4 billion, 38,620 jobs
- > mining oil and gas extraction: ~\$4.5 billion, 20,250 jobs
- > agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting: ~\$4.6 billion, 76,485 jobs
- > accommodation and food services: ~\$4.6 billion, 180,060 jobs.²⁵

Given such differences, leaving aside the government provision of transportation infrastructure to remote areas for many resource-based industries, the impact on the environment, and the diminution of non-renewable capital assets of the province in some other sectors, it would be worthwhile to look at government spending in support of each sector. Unfortunately, that information is not readily available and making an estimate would go beyond the resources available for the preparation of this report.

Carol Sawyer's *Book Stack Poems*. A component of *Memory Palace* [3 artists in the library], Vancouver Public Library, 2008. **PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST. BANNER INSTALLATION PHOTO BY ROBERT KEZIERE.**

[The] creative sector represents
an ecosystem in which storytellers
feed filmmakers who inspire
musicians who create events that
find their way into writers
imaginings—and so the wheel turns.

Government spending in support of each sector should also be considered in the context of growth as well as contribution to jobs and GDP. Between 2002 and 2007, new media, radio and TV broadcasting, publishing, advertising, and design all showed growth in GDP contribution with only sound recording, and film and television production trending downward. As well, between 2001 and 2006, all creative industries saw increases in employment.

As the PwC study notes, in reference to BC, “the global entertainment and media markets are poised to undergo rapid transformation and growth that will be driven by rising incomes in the developing world, converging technology platforms, and changing demographics.”²⁶ In short, while favourites can be chosen (for example, digital games or film), and digital media lead the way in terms of growth, to some degree, the creative sector represents an ecosystem in which storytellers feed filmmakers who inspire musicians who create events that find their way into writers imaginings—and so the wheel turns.

Taking into account the physical beauty of the province together with its relatively benign climate, the likelihood of continued migration inflows, the established aesthetics of native culture, and the value of imaginative participation in the modern age, conceiving of the future of British Columbia as one that will be focused on the continuing exploitation of mineral and natural resources and the running of utilities, seems ill advised from societal, environmental, and employment perspectives, to say nothing about the interests of young people entering the workforce. The talent and training foundation, and established participation of young people in established creative sectors, is already in place for virtually all the creative sector. To take full advantage of the creative sector, BC needs a framework of understanding, a strategy, and a plan with a set of achievable goals and objectives that builds on the established strengths and ambitions of the province and its citizens.

The concluding overview of the PwC study identifies two types of creative activity that BC could target. The first is building service exports: exports of professional creative services to foreign investors who themselves are targeting a growing and wealthier world with greater access to technology. An example of this is contributing to foreign films made in BC. The second is a higher-risk option: becoming a provincially based production centre of operating in world markets while maintaining ownership of the means of production as well as the product. An example is producing and owning films. PwC believes an overriding goal must be chosen but that building service exports is essential, as is appropriate policy, to the evolution of ownership and intellectual property exploitation.

These are not the only two possibilities. A third is to embrace creativity and innovation

as a defining element of British Columbia's society and economy to generate internal participation and spending that will lead to locally and globally oriented creative industries as well as multiply tourist visits and spending.

The PwC study also argues that the province needs to distinguish between cultural and economic policy. While superficially, this appears to be obvious and true—because each policy area trends towards a different result—such policies are complementary and both are needed. Moreover, as explained further into this paper, very little analysis exists to indicate whether a cultural strategy might not, in the long term, be the best economic strategy (or vice versa). That said, from an economic perspective, which is the focus of the PwC study, government investment in infrastructure and education to familiarize British Columbians with technology can lead to stimulation of sophisticated demand and an environment fostering innovation.

PwC argues that the family of policies that BC used to build film and television services could assist the interactive games industries. As video game development has faded in the few years since the report, but interactive technology has spread throughout publishing, education, and general internet-based technologies, such a family of policies need not be confined to the restricted and dwindling games market. Indeed, later in its concluding statements, the PwC study advises that the historic distinctions made in BC between the various creative subsectors, with only some receiving favourable treatment, is counterproductive. And showing its perspective clearly, it argues that cultural content regulations should be dropped in favour of what it calls “merit-based public funding” (where “merit” means “economic performance”). Such a view ignores the fact that long-term success is often anchored profoundly in cultural content that the producers know intimately.

The PwC study also points out the importance of successful large anchor companies around which an industry can be built. Even with policy in place, formally defining the sector and measuring its progress is critical to planning. The study notes the need for BC Stats to create a creative sector satellite account. Pointing to instances of local business leaders and their firms achieving some success but being bought out before reaching the highest levels, the study does not address the degree to which cultural content can counteract the temptation for individuals to cash in. It concludes: “While BC currently produces world class content and has the education system to sustain the flow of talent, what it lacks are business leaders capable of taking businesses to a global scale, world leading technology infrastructure, innovative distributors, or a culture of technological adoption.” More recent events in the games industry, including the shuttering of offices in favour of a move to Ontario, suggest that the lack of such business leaders may be traceable to a lack of a provincial creative economy strategy.



Two Rivers Gallery
in Prince George. **PHOTO**
BY RICARDO ALBERTO LIEVA.
COURTESY OF PICTURE BC

conference report:

a sample of activities of the creative economy

THE ABOVE STUDIES REPRESENT A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW mainly of the economic activity of the creative sector. While not methodically representative, the proceedings of BCreative 2012 provide a wide variety of down-to-earth examples of the nature and extent of creative activities within a wide variety of subsectors and are illustrative of the range of activities in which British Columbians are engaged. The following review summarizes some of the main points that the conference/showcase brought forward.

DAY 1 OF BCREATIVE 2012

HootSuite

In the opening plenary session, Ryan Holmes's description of the development of HootSuite, the enormously successful Vancouver-based startup company, pointed to significant parallels with other creative sectors while illustrating the notable difference of having ready access to investment. Holmes observed that there exists in British Columbia a substantial labour pool of skilled and talented people capable of working in teams to create and run a successful enterprise. Although, being Vancouver-based, HootSuite exists outside well-known high-tech clusters such as Silicon Valley, Holmes stated that for HootSuite, the blessings outweigh the disadvantages: HootSuite is distinct in BC, competition in the local labour market is less intense, many British Columbians have made a lifestyle choice to remain in the BC market, and the more limited dynamics of the local market tend to encourage labour continuity rather than firm jumping for financial incentives (which adds costs related to training and loss of productivity). Also parallel with other sectors, Holmes has found that much of his capital has not come from BC but from venture capital located elsewhere. HootSuite's success has certainly been inspiring and its "exception to the rule" status may work well for the firm, but an industry cannot be established based on exceptions.

Small cities

Many see the creative sector as an element of large cities. However, many instances around the world demonstrate the contrary case. In British Columbia, for example, world-renowned aboriginal art is perhaps BC's most well-known creative export that is not a feature of any metropolis but rather of production located throughout the province on and off (Indian) reserves. Recent development of a wide range of creative production in the Okanagan that

builds on the creativity inherent in winemaking, including Canada's signature icewine, has also made a splash inside and outside the province and the country. Similarly, the wide range of creative production on BC's various Gulf Islands in arts and crafts, woodworking, literature, painting, and specialty production of food and drink, is also well known.

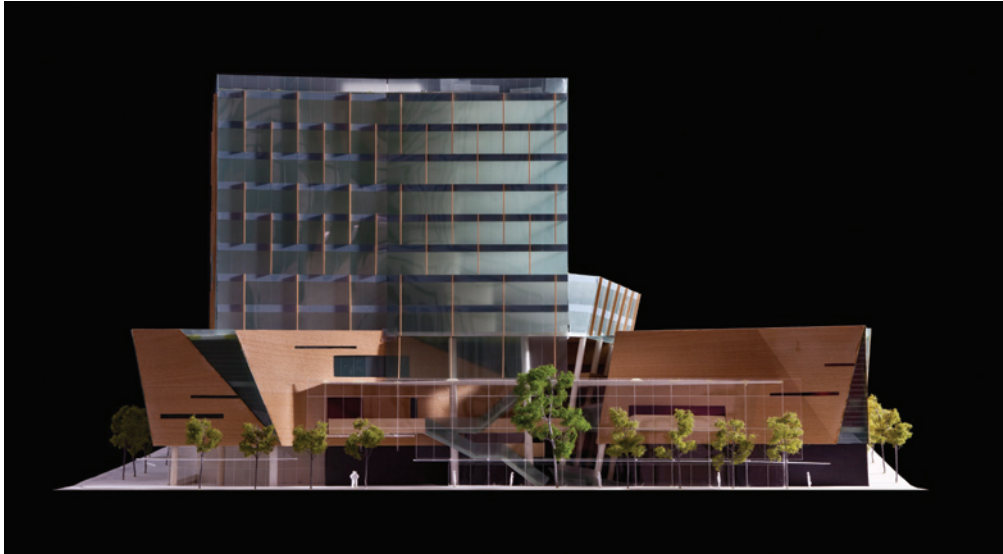
Representative of creative-sector dynamics in many small cities throughout the province were presentations by Walter Jakeway, mayor of Vancouver Island's Campbell River, and Peter Milobar, mayor of Kamloops. Jakeway's presentation, like that of his colleague Milobar, gave conference participants a sense of how closely integrated city-facilitated events were to the life and population of their cities. Most notable in the case of Campbell River was the high participation level of the aboriginal population—particularly appropriate in an area that remains an important site of aboriginal culture. Among other points, Milobar's presentation emphasized strong voter awareness, and participation in the creation and financing of cultural venues and the high level of support that appeared to engender. Both presentations reminded large-city dwellers of the powerful dynamics of coincident geographic and creative communities.

Urban space and architecture

The level of inspiration of the first two sessions was heightened even further by developer Michael Geller and architect Roger Hughes. Geller's round-the-world tour provided a sense of the myriad facets of the human imagination as expressed in buildings and the creation of urban spaces, and of the power of aesthetic concern and such simplicities as applying a coat of paint. His illustrated talk also emphasized how social engagement animates public space once it has been created, while a lack of social engagement can create a net negative. In that context, Roger Hughes's review of some of the public projects of Hughes Condon Marler Architects was a highlight for its illustration of the soaring of the human spirit in creation and of the experience of buildings and spaces that becomes possible for users when design is the starting point of function. In the context of the struggle for recognition of many other creative subsectors, there are substantial lessons that can be learned from the establishment of architecture and design as the beginning point for public buildings and private dwellings and an overall shaping of the built environment. The complement of landscape architecture and interior design should also be noted.

Provincial policy

Perhaps because British Columbians have been blessed with a magnificent geography that has historically made a very strong contribution to defining the province, governing provincial political parties have never developed a cultural strategy let alone a creative



economy strategy. At various points in history, provincial governments have taken an interest in world-level events such as the 1954 British Empire and Commonwealth Games, the Expo 86 World's Fair, and the 2010 Winter Olympics. Provincial policy has also supported book publishing, digital games, and film and music production. But, as noted, no overall conception has informed such support, and hence, an overall strategy and key policies and programs for achieving set goals do not exist. British Columbians were reminded of that lack of a fundamental rationale by the wholesale cuts to arts and culture funding after the 2010 Olympics that were only reversed after months of public pressure.

In 2012, for the first time on record, the NDP brought forward and publicly discussed the possibility of a coordinating agency that would oversee development of certain creative sectors, including the cultural industries. At BCreative 2012, the NDP's cultural critic, Spencer Chandra Herbert, discussed the possible creation of a BC media development corporation that would invest in the development of such cultural industries as music, film, and book and magazine publishing, following the model of the notably successful Ontario Media Development Corporation (OMDC), focused on the creative industries. In a larger, creative sector context, this is a limited, although undoubtedly welcome, change in the political discourse. Such an organization, like the BC Film Commission, would help create a stable infrastructure for the development of at least part of the creative sector in British Columbia.

In a separate session, Ida Chong, British Columbia's Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development, reviewed the manner in which the ministry and the BC government supported both Simon Fraser University (the conference host) and arts and culture, including spending \$53 million on arts funding in 2010/11. Minister Chong also noted that cultural development and the arts play a key role in community success, in part by creating jobs, encouraging tourism, and strengthening local economies. The minister highlighted the roles of the BC Arts Council, Community Gaming Grants, and the ministry itself in supporting film and TV production, museums, and cultural activities and events. With regard to future

Architecture model. **IMAGE**
COURTESY OF HUGHES CONDON
MARLER ARCHITECTS.

plans, Minister Chong noted that the government is engaged in ongoing consultation and plans to pursue a strategic review of BC's screen-based industries and to continue to meet with other sectors on a quarterly basis.

Branding, microeconomic challenges, and the nature of creative production

Brand management consultant Todd Falkowsky reminded participants of the power of branding and the applicability of branding to both Canadian and British Columbian cultural production. Such branding could readily be incorporated into provincial policy.

Knowledge integrator consultant Judi Piggott offered a paper focused on the microeconomics of cultural production, noting that information about how individual artists generate income and sustain themselves is a necessary complement to macroeconomic data. These data are captured to some extent in employment and income studies conducted in recent years, but they tend to be discipline specific. Piggott's paper brought forward an issue that informed the planning of BCreative 2012: whereas the macroeconomics work well for the economy and society in general, the microeconomics of creative production do not work well at all, as the average income of artists and the closure of the Vancouver Playhouse point out in spades.

The early afternoon of the first day gave participants a chance to appreciate a sampling of creative work by artists and others concerned with creativity. In a combination of text and slides, potter Linda Doherty discussed and illustrated the many factors that influence ceramics in British Columbia, including history, technology, the environment, teachers, and mentors, with the most common influence being nature. Quoting Doris Shadbolt, a past curator of the Vancouver Art Gallery, she noted, "There is openness to the environment here (in British Columbia) that makes it freer for people to be open and inventive." Fibre and printmaking artist Julie McIntyre reminded participants of the need for the establishment of a resale right for artists. It is stunning, in these days of patent wars, that artists in Canada still lack any benefit from resale of their work. Within a much different frame, writer Anna Lidstone presented on her program of coaching for creativity.

Digital technology and the creative sector

Various technologies are disrupting and hence transforming established creative practices. Particularly notable are the changes that have been brought to the music industry, video distribution, and publishing. Peter Armstrong, founder of Leanpub.com, outlined the role of Lean Publishing in facilitating self-publishing an in-progress ebook. The operations of the company are based on the idea that, in many ways, publishing a book is parallel to launching a startup. It's a risky, highly creative, and highly speculative process, undertaken by one



Nelson, also known as the “number one small art town” in Canada, is home to the Kootenay School of the Arts, the Capitol Theatre and the Art Walk. **PHOTO BY PHIL BEST, COURTESY OF PICTURE BC.**

or a few people, often in stealth mode, and funded by external parties (venture capitalists for startups, publishers for books). Because of its creative and speculative nature, it is easy to create something that nobody wants. In the startup community, the Customer Development and Lean Startup ideas of entrepreneur Steve Blank and startup methodologist Eric Ries have risen to prominence, offering a roadmap to avoid the common pitfall of extensive investment in the absence of demand. Leanpub offers a similar roadmap to authors. Following the modus operandi of startups, authors can test ideas by publishing early and often, listening to their readers, and being guided by their comments in the development of the work of the author. Given the number of books that fail to pay publishers' costs, let alone return any significant reward to the author—and indeed, given Peter Grant and Chris Wood's contention that across many creative industries (including music, film, and TV shows) “all hits are flukes”—the Leanpub model may offer a promising emergent industry practice.²⁷

Allyson McGrane of Left Right Minds discussed the ins and outs of an online magazine, *Plank Magazine*, the aim of which is to “encourage intelligent, critical dialogue amongst arts enthusiasts, and people working in the cultural sector.” It is focused on Vancouver, Toronto, and Victoria. “Community creator” Angela Crocker explored the power of creativity to foster and nurture a sense of community through shared experiences, collaborative works, and group participation, with a focus on belonging and isolation as related to community in BC and on where sharing and creativity have been effective or ineffective.

Of Paris and the development of infrastructure: Of Toronto as a world creative-sector-affirming city

In the later afternoon of Day 1, May 11, participants were treated to a 200-slide presentation by Patrick Cocquet, CEO of the Paris-based technology firm Cap Digital and Vincent Gollain, chief economic development officer of the Paris Region Economic Development Agency. The two left no doubt about the French government's determination to build creative clusters in the suburbs surrounding Paris, beginning with an inter-cluster transportation system, augmented by municipal regulation, and energized by the opportunities that are being made available—largely in the digital sector—by both the private and public sector. The presentation opened the eyes of participants to public policy focused on the digital creative sector and the advantages of ready capital access and population density.

From Paris to Toronto: While the French presentation gave participants a sense of the life a digerati might expect in Paris, using facts and figures, the Ontario Media Development Corporation's CEO, Karen Thorne-Stone, drew a portrait of the development of Toronto as a world cultural production centre. The creative sector in Ontario is the fifth-largest sector, contributing \$12.2 billion to the province's GDP. This is larger than energy, agriculture and

forestry, and mining; it is smaller than the financial sector, overall manufacturing, ICT, and auto manufacturing, the last contributing \$17.8 billion. The sector's growth between 2000 and 2007 outpaced the growth of the general economy by a factor of more than 2 (38 per cent compared with 17 percent).

The role of the OMDC is to assist with economic development of the sector with emphasis on innovation, cooperation, and the promotion and marketing of Ontario as a world leader in the creative sector; it also serves as a catalyst for R&D. The OMDC delivers a wide range of programs, including \$290 million in tax credits. It directly invests in certain sectors, assists in export development, facilitates film projects through the film commission, provides market intelligence, and supports audience building.

A return to small cities and a plea for labour as a resource

The first day of BCreative 2012 ended on an academic note with English professor and cultural community researcher Will Garrett-Petts reporting on his research into art and the public sphere in shaping the cultural ambience of small cities. Noting the increasing recognition of artists for their role in shaping the idea and identity of cities by giving form to the physical and cultural landscape, Garrett-Petts and his students elucidated the role of artists as key agents in this development. In counterpoint to the ebullience of one of his partners, Kamloops mayor Peter Milobar, Garrett-Petts noted how fragile the link between the arts and perceptions of quality of life can be and how artists can advance cultural knowledge (what the community knows about the arts), cultural trust (the community's support for the value of the arts), and cultural participation (the community's level of arts activity), and in so doing, contribute to the development of a creative community. Taking quite a different perspective, communications professor Will Straw documented the discourse used by public officials over the years in describing nighttime economies. Straw took particular note of the increasing legitimacy of nighttime activities as a jobs and economic-activity generator and of the advantages that can accrue from the provision of services to address and develop nighttime economies in ways that were consistent with the values of citizens. To some extent, Straw's presentation highlighted the general issue underlying much of BC provincial policy: there is a lack of recognition that the return on public investment in creative production across all subsectors reaps a reward that is a multiple of that investment.²⁸

Italian architect Massimo Manzonni ended the first day with an analysis of the advantages of community-inclusive, design-based thinking that incorporates labour availability as a resource rather than treating it as an afterthought to the investment of capital and the creation of wealth for a few.



Art installation by Jan Peacock:
Reader by the Window, 1993.
Presentation House Gallery,
North Vancouver. **PHOTO BY**
ROBERT KEZIERE.

DAY 2

The creative economy and world economies

Economist Edna dos Santos could be described as the mother of worldwide creative economy development as a result of her co-authorship of two major UNCTAD reports, in 2008 and 2010. She reviewed the first report for participants and responded to questions that arose from it. As its title suggests, *Creative Economy Report, 2008 – The Challenge of Assessing the Creative Economy: Towards Informed Policy-making*, the first UNCTAD report addresses the nature of the creative economy, pointing out

- > its ubiquity in all societies, hence the need for informed policy responses;
- > its contribution to international trade of all nations;
- > the inability of some developing nations to harness their creative economy;
- > the need for a multi-sectoral approach to achieve development goals;
- > the importance of intellectual property rights for capitalizing on creative industries;
- > the complementary role of information and communication technology in production and distribution; and,
- > the need for strategic choices.

The second report, *Creative Economy 2010 – Creative Economy: A Feasible Development Option*, explores

- > concepts surrounding and intrinsic to the creative economy;
- > linkages between the creative economy and the green economy;
- > the organizational structure of the creative economy;
- > current methodologies and economic indicators;
- > the extent and dynamics of international trade in creative goods and services;
- > the dynamics of protectionism;
- > the role of information technology and connectivity;
- > the need for nation-specific policies and the role of networking and collaboration;
- > the impact of global trends; and
- > specific policy options.

The creative industries: Contribution and a policy proposal for BC

Mark Jamison, CEO of Magazines Canada, began this session with an illustrative overview of the extensive reach of Canadian magazines and the community-building role of the thousands of titles published in the country.

Jamison conveyed the largely unheralded success of Canada's magazine industry, an industry composed of over 2,000 different titles that share virtually total market penetration

in the sense that nearly every Canadian peruses at least one issue of a Canadian published magazine each year. The story of Canadian magazines is impressive. Just a few of the sector's accomplishments include the following findings:

- eighty-five percent of print subscriptions sold in Canada are for Canadian magazines;
- magazine reading is strong in young demographics;
- overall, Canadians prefer Canadian content platforms;
- magazine media brands drive purchase intent; and
- readers often take action after reading a magazine.

In the face of these and 235 pages of additional facts that reflect the contribution that magazines make to Canadian communities, Jamison noted that Canadian governments could pursue a number of policy initiatives to build maximum benefit for Canadians. They were:

- increase investment in magazines to match the contribution levels that other sectors make to the Canadian economy;
- identify capital tools appropriate to the industry by choosing from among such alternatives as tax credits, backstopped loans, and seed contributions;
- endeavour to augment in-career training in the pursuit of the connection of skills and opportunities to remain at the leading edge of markets and to grow permanent employment;
- align environmental policy with the economic realities of production where imports pay a fair share of recycling programs;
- respect copyright as the legal foundation for media enterprise (fair-dealing practices that undermine media commerce are of no overall benefit to Canada);
- develop information foundations that media industries require to understand their ecosystem and allow them to grow their contribution to Canadian society.

The national priorities of various creative industry subsectors are the foundation for national growth of the creative economy. At the same time, various subsectors within each province can benefit from distinctive programs to address local realities. Just prior to BCreative 2012, four of BC's cultural industries released a joint report, *From the Margins to the Mainstream*, calling for the development of a creative cluster by "creating a climate for business development and sustainability in the creative industries."²⁹ Citing existing literature, and illustrating with examples of BC companies, including digital media companies and individual creators, the report makes several recommendations. It begins with the overall recommendation that the BC government reimagine its commitment to the creative industries and specifically work in partnership with those industries to develop a

cross-sectoral, three-year strategy for the creative industries in BC involving

1. the formation of a secretariat with representation of all relevant ministries and industries to focus on the development of all creative industries;
2. a review of all models from all jurisdictions;
3. the targeting of
 - > R&D,
 - > project development funding,
 - > marketing and export development,
 - > attraction of venture capital,
 - > skills retention, and
 - > entrepreneurial skills and talent development;
4. the founding of a BC Media Development Corporation to serve creative industry clients;
5. the establishment of indicators of success including
 - > contribution to GDP,
 - > job creation,
 - > the enhancement of market share via digital media,
 - > the fostering of innovation,
 - > the improvement of company and tax revenues and wages, and
 - > the incubation of new company creation.

Such goals are consistent with the thrust of this report.

Fashion: An often-neglected creative sector

A lively discussion by various representatives of the fashion industry focused on the means by which this infant industry could be nurtured. World Trade Organization rules have gutted Canada's clothing and textile industry, forcing surviving elements to pursue design-focused, high-end, eco-sensitive markets in which fair labour practice adds value. In response to downsizing by traditional Canadian clothing manufacturers, fashion designers are pursuing niche markets through high-end retail outlets and the internet. Success has come without recent provincial and municipal assistance that would have been welcomed and could have assisted in building industry-wide momentum. While grants and government support were available during the 1990s, when these were cancelled, no other means of funding replaced them. Two separate industry initiatives, Apparel BC (a fashion tips website) and Fashion High (a continuing studies initiative of Kwantlen Polytechnic University), have had difficulty maintaining their operations and hence their assistance to industry building.



Celtic group Celtara (Tami Cooper, flute, and Bonnie Gregory, fiddle).

PHOTO BY RODNEY WILSON.

The industry is not lacking in talent or in its sensitivity to market-attractive practices. Fashion designer Katherine Soucie's embrace of Vancouver's zero-waste concepts and her translation of these concepts into her unique brand not only catalyzed her aesthetics but also influenced other economic elements of her operation as she established herself within a new consumer community. Designer RozeMerie Cuevas has been designing for over 25 years in Vancouver and also operates as a retailer. Having noticed that Canadian menswear designers are not given enough exposure, Jun Ramos decided to pioneer the first Men's Fashion Week in Canada. Already, the effect of the first MFW is being seen: one participating designer closed a deal with a European retailer to carry his brand through his exposure at the event. The focus on menswear designers, right here at home, is both beneficial and essential to the further growth of the industry.

The creative economy and BC's aboriginal artistic community

As noted earlier in this report, the role of artistic production in First Nations BC communities has received attention worldwide. In his paper, author, lawyer, and activist Calvin Helin wove his thesis on the economic dependency trap with the freeing dynamics of artistic production in aboriginal communities.

Education for the creative sector

Education for the creative sector at all levels is far from being a primary emphasis in school and post-secondary curricula. However, it can be found in muted forms throughout the curriculum from the beginnings of a child's life to advanced professional development in such established professions as landscape architecture, interior design, architecture, theatre and performance, dance, various musical forms, and the visual arts. More recently, the entire spectrum of digital media has been added, encompassing everything from hardware engineering to applied animation and game structure. Richard Smith, director of the Masters of Digital Media program at the Great Northern Way Campus, assembled an august panel of five educator professionals—Bonne Zabolotney, dean at Emily Carr University; Patrick Pennefather, Masters of Digital Media faculty member; Howard Donaldson, entrepreneur and president of the Digital Media and Wireless Association of BC; and Owen Underhill, SFU Contemporary Arts director—that discussed existing capabilities, current trends, and emerging opportunities.

The creative arts and the Canada Council in Canadian society

Robert Sirman has a sociological background, and, in working within government, found his way into Ontario's first Ministry of Culture. He spent ten years with the Ontario



Arts Council, followed by a stint at Canada's National Ballet School. Since joining the Canada Council as CEO he has been a tireless bridge-builder between the arts community and the rest of Canadian society. His main emphasis has been to help build a sustainable systemic ecology for artistic production. In his presentation he argued that the establishment of that ecology required policy development that demonstrates the value of the arts and culture in any economic strategy. He sees emerging in Canada new forms of art bolstered by new Council programs, which thrive when they are conceived within a narrative of public benefit. He envisions the translation of the abstract concept of creative hubs into concrete realities throughout the country by each creative hub addressing its immediate cultural specificity.

Economic opportunity

James Lam, manager of the Capital Regional District Arts Development Service in Victoria, reported on a study of the Greater Victoria region that was conducted in parallel with the Kelowna and Richmond economic-impact studies, beginning mid-December 2010 and continuing through to mid-February 2011. It revealed the following:

The *total economic activity* [including direct, indirect and induced effects] generated by the Greater Victoria arts and culture sector in 2010 was \$170 million in net income (GDP) activity, supporting the equivalent of more than 5,400 person years of employment, and \$21 million in property tax revenue. The *local economic activity* generated by the Greater Victoria arts and culture sector in 2010 was \$127 million in net income (GDP) activity, supporting the equivalent of more than 4,600 person years of employment, and almost \$18 million in property tax revenue.³⁰

Of these totals, the pre- and post-event spending by performing arts patrons generated \$65 million in net income (GDP) activity, supporting the equivalent of more than 1,600 person years of employment, and \$6 million in property tax revenue.³¹

To provide some qualitative understanding of activities, the study distinguishes between full-time and part-time artists and art businesses, arts organizations, and part-time hobbyists.

Creative engagement.

**ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF
2010 LEGACIES NOW.**



Duncan Low of SFU's School of Communication provided an assessment of the impact of the Olympics and the Cultural Olympiad of 2010 on arts and cultural groups. In contrast to the promises of Olympic organizers, benefits were thin and sparse. For the creative community, post-Olympic cutbacks and the lack of international press coverage, together with a lack of increased cultural tourism, were notable. Moreover, those arts that benefitted most were "those that concentrated their focus on the Cultural Olympiad's local stage and audience rather than the highly promoted global stage and audience."³² One group used the Cultural Olympiad to launch a contemporary dance series (in the only major Canadian city without such a series in a large-scale venue) but fell on impecunious times in the post-Olympic environment. In terms of cultural tourism, no production had sufficient appeal to tourism officials to create from it a continuing event (as happened in Quebec with a Robert Lepage production).

Sung Van of the Latitude advertising agency pointed out that the presence of a substantial graphic design community in Canada and in BC that often takes the form of entrepreneurial sole proprietorships or boutique agencies and studios is well positioned to seize international opportunities arising in Asian countries, especially with firms focused on serving North American and European markets.

Local initiatives

Several local initiatives were brought forward—local in the sense that they began firmly rooted in specific communities. Geographer Scott Varga gave a lively talk on how planners were beginning to create a magnet for students centred on the University of the Fraser Valley in Abbotsford. Cultural development manager Liesl Jauk reported on the planning and success of Culture Days in Richmond. But by far the most esoteric local example came from author, publisher, and Indian Summer entrepreneur Sirish Rao's powerful story of the founding and development of Tara Books in Chennai, India, a collective of dedicated writers, designers, and artists that trained labour local to the area of the publishing operations and saw their books emerge as successes around the world.³³

City of Vancouver initiatives

Between the time of BCreative 2012 and the initial drafting of this report (some two months)

there was considerable action taken within Vancouver to what everyone agrees is an endemic and worsening problem: the cost of space in Vancouver for artists to both live and work. On June 12, 2012, the City of Vancouver announced that it had acquired two industrial buildings³⁴ that it planned to retrofit and rent out at very low cost to artists. Two days later, it announced that it planned to make vacant field houses in some of Vancouver parks available as artists' workspaces.³⁵ These initiatives are useful and important gestures that address the affordability of living and working space, which is a problem for the vast majority of independent, young, Vancouver-based adults.

In fact, creative spaces are at the heart of vibrant, livable, successful, and caring cities. Most often, however, targeted users face serious issues of affordability, functionality, regulations, and permanence. Amongst North America's major urban centres, Vancouver's real estate context is perhaps the most extreme *vis à vis* its creative sector. Spaces for creation, production, presentation, and support/ancillary activities are disappearing at an advanced rate and infrastructure lost is not easily regained.

Jacqueline Gijssen and Diana Leung, City of Vancouver planners, discussed the city's attempts to address the key issues of affordability, suitability, and tenure in creation space. Since the 2008 adoption of a new plan for Vancouver's cultural spaces/facilities, there has been a focused and heightened level of activities on multiple fronts in the "space agenda." The allocation of the two industrial buildings for artist studios and the field housing initiative (both announced post-conference) are additions to the non-profit spaces already provided to over 40 cultural tenants, including the Alliance for Arts and Culture, the Vancouver Art Gallery, the Vancouver International Film Centre, Art Starts in Schools, and the Firehouse Theatre. In addition, approximately \$3 million in infrastructure grant funds is leveraging over \$17 million in project activities in space development to be used for such activities as training for artists and housing cultural groups. As well, city staff members are available to assist groups through the its regulatory systems.

Kobo: From Toronto to Japan on the flyleaf of an ebook

As big data combined with product digitization (both content and device) come to play an ever-more-prominent role in the marketplace, it becomes easier for global megacorporations such as Google, Apple, and Amazon to achieve market dominance. As part of its survival strategy, Chapters/Indigo first developed ebook software, then hooked it to a proprietary device (which together are called Kobo) and attempted to claim and maintain a position in the ebook marketplace. To do so, it offered greater flexibility and built a network of international partnerships among traditional bookstores. At a certain point, it must have become apparent to both the parent company and to the executive staff of Kobo that the

development and maintenance of a device from a Canadian base would continue to be an extremely difficult proposition. Thus in November 2011, Kobo was sold to Rakuten, a substantial international Japanese electronic commerce and internet company.³⁶ Technological development continues to take place in Canada, and Cameron Drew, director of vendor relations, reviewed the opportunities Kobo saw for itself.

Part of the value of including Kobo in the conference is the relative rarity of Canadian initiatives—especially in the creative economy—surviving and becoming significant players in global markets. Finding ways of maintaining ownership and succeeding in global markets is no mean feat. With Kobo, both technology and market planning were strong; as a result, those elements have been maintained in Canada. However, capital needs, global marketing muscle, and a substantial non-North American base appeared to require a foreign presence.

Developing cultural tourism in Newfoundland

There was one slide in the presentation by Ann Anderson and Eleanor Dawson, Newfoundland and Labrador's arts and cultural tourism officials, that captured the nature of the creative economy as well as it captured the relationship between cultural tourism and cultural production. It was a picture of an iceberg with cultural tourism showing above the water and the many and varied activities involved in artistic creation and production below the water. Anderson and Dawson reviewed the capacity of arts and culture to have built around it an industry of industries that make up cultural tourism. They discussed risk management in building on the vagaries of artistic production and, in general, provided insight into the effort and rewards of cultural tourism. The natural landscape of Gros Morne National Park was the foundation. The plan was to make the area as well known for its cultural as its natural landscape by 2017. The partners are the broader artistic community in Newfoundland and Labrador who were brought to the project through planning, analysis, and incremental development. The results included dramatic growth in culture and tourism occupations that reached 31 percent of the active population in the park area by applying the principles of partnerships, clusters, authenticity of product and story, and sustainability.

Mr. Creative Cities, Charles Landry

The conference closed with a tour-de-force presentation by international urban environmental consultant Charles Landry, who coined the term “creative cities.” Against a backdrop

The natural landscape of Gros Morne National Park was the foundation ... [for] dramatic growth in culture and tourism occupations that reached 31 percent of the active population in the park area ... [through] partnerships, clusters, authenticity of product and story, and sustainability.

of images from around the world of indistinguishable six-lane highways and the same global-brand shops that are found in every major metropolis, the enthusiastic and curious creative urbanist Charles Landry launched into a discourse replete with examples on the art of city-making in which public authorities give back to citizens, who in turn generate social capital. Case in point: to achieve compliance for a bells-on-bicycles law, park rangers offered a fine or free bell for infractions. Facing an insufficient budget for upgrading public housing, the mayor of Tirana repainted existing housing in stock multicolours, inducing in residents a burgeoning pride and self-generated transformation.

These examples were a mere beginning. Landry treated conference participants to a continuing series of juxtapositions of the boring and mundane way it is done versus the way it can be done. The next generation of urban centres, he predicted, will see buildings/roads/sewers, the hardware of cities, working in harmony with the city software of citizens and communities to create cities not *in* but *for* the world.

PROGRAM AND POLICY FOUNDATIONS

As the many contributions that presenters brought to the conference suggest, the foundations for these many and varied creative activities are variously situated in and/or sustained by

- > the determination of individuals;
- > like-minded talent and appreciation groups;
- > geographic and interest communities;
- > community-based governments;
- > age cohorts;
- > ethnocultural identities and communities;
- > such established and emerging creative professions as architecture and web-based designers;
- > creative industries that mediate between creators and the market such as publishing, film production, and art galleries;
- > creative service industries such as advertising;
- > innovators working with technology, particularly new technologies;
- > to a limited extent, provincial support structures.

Beyond the preceding overview, there is a whole other layer of creative activity that derives from the nature of humanity. In building BCreative 2012, we attempted to engage business and industry not as supporters of arts and culture but as participants in the creative process. We reached out to them, for example, not just as industries, but as entities that add value through innovation, such as paper companies creating high-end acid-free paper

products from recycled product or inks free of toxic chemicals. In the competitive markets of a flat world, design married to functionality rises to dominate markets. But, as noted above, signs of an overall commitment to design in BC are weak. Compared with 1,691 architects, a traditional design-based profession, the members of British Columbia's newer, industrial design association number 34. In general, it appears recognition and incubation of creativity outside cultural production is muted and—in certain sectors—is absent in British Columbia.

Yet, the innovation environment recognized as necessary by the PwC study requires not only advanced infrastructure and education to drive demand but also the encouragement and reward of both creativity and entrepreneurship. When combined with an understanding of the heterogeneous foundations of creative activity, the understanding that creativity exists throughout society provides a foundation to policy. Human action generates cognitive reflection; reflection can lead to invention; and recognition of invention, coupled with investment in advanced infrastructure, creates conditions not only for the encouragement of creative expression for its own sake but also for the encouragement of creativity-driven enterprise of all sorts. A manifestation of this dynamic is design-based thinking.

In making a link to innovation, a natural ally would be the BC Innovation Council. While this organization is focused on developing entrepreneurial talent and commercializing technology,³⁷ there is no reason why that mandate could not be advantageously refined to emphasize a wider scope of inputs that encompass aesthetics and design excellence, thereby increasing the potential (as we have seen so clearly with Apple products) for achieving a dominant position worldwide.



Solid Sphere, a sculpture by
Brent Comber. **PHOTO BY**
CARRIE MARSHALL. COURTESY
OF THE ARTIST.

anticipating the sunrise

A GENERAL FRAMEWORK FOR A CREATIVE BRITISH COLUMBIA: TOWARDS A STRATEGIC PLAN

For British Columbia to develop a strategic plan to fully exploit the social and economic potential of the creative sector requires a general framework that takes into account dominant, structuring BC realities (what already exists and will not disappear): the empirical elements that will serve as a foundation for moving forward. It also requires a unifying discourse—what scholars would call a theoretical frame.

With respect to empirical realities, within Canada, British Columbia is unlikely to become the dominant producer of creative products given Ontario's large population and its determination to become a world-stage actor together with Quebec's emphasis on culture and distinctiveness as a foundation to its survival in a North American sea of anglophony. Yet, just as Denmark became notable in the world for modern furniture design in the 1960s, there is no reason why BC cannot make a mark by incubating talent and distinctiveness. This does not imply a casino approach, attempting to pick apparent economic winners such as screen-based media. Doing so is a high-risk strategy that ties BC to the ups and downs of a single industry, not unlike Alberta's ties to petroleum. It is also potentially weakened by the unpredictability of the market success of cultural products. It picks winners and creates losers, thereby undermining social cohesiveness. Moreover, it fails to take into account the ecosystem within which any creative industry exists. At the very least the cross-fertilization that becomes possible in a community in which there is lively creativity being expressed in a whole variety of media offers far more than does the commercialization of a single sector in terms of social capital as well as global presence.

The penetration of creativity into all of human affairs and the heterogeneity of British Columbia also need to be taken into account. Creativity is manifest as innovation in many sectors and is often noticed in the short term and forgotten over the long term. Focusing on innovation, like focusing on the medicinal properties of plants, opens it for harvest and development, and the celebration of both adds considerable heft to any strategic plan. With respect to heterogeneity, assuming that the climate of Metro Vancouver and the social orientation of its residents is typical denies the richness inherent of the population and geography of BC. There are a multitude of geographical formations and predominant weather characteristics in the province, inclusive of its islands, that in structuring human experience lend

their influence to the emergence of manifestations of innovation and creativity. Planning and policies can benefit greatly from taking this plurality of realities into account.

While heterogeneity is important, the inherent attractiveness of BC's major city cannot be ignored. Led by Vancouver's status as a most livable city, there is little doubt that if opportunities were available, many Canadians and foreigners would flock to BC. The recent and current status of the BC video game industry appears to reflect that reality. The development bubble in digital creative production that we have recently lived through saw video-game companies in Vancouver (and BC) grow quickly and substantially. But as that market shakes out, the BC bubble appears to be bursting. During the week of July 11, 2012, the video game company Rockstar closed, laying off 35 people. This closure came two weeks after layoffs of 89 employees at Vancouver's oldest studio, Radical Entertainment. Rockstar cited differential tax credits that in Ontario, at 375 percent, are more than double BC's 175 percent.³⁸ It is not that the jobs have disappeared: some Rockstar employees immediately received job offers from California and Holland. Rather, inter-firm competition has increased, and without a well-articulated plan for a creative sector and attendant policy reflecting a determination to retain or build market share, BC firms are bound to close as wary venture capitalists see firm, long-term commitments in place in other locations.

If the above are the predominant empirical realities, there are also at least four emergent realities that became evident at BCCreative 2012 and should be taken into account in developing an overall strategic plan for the development of a creative dynamic in BC.

1. Digital technology has transformed the dominant dynamic of media engagement from the passive reception of centralized produced entertainment ("one to many") to a much greater emphasis on "many to many" and, hence, interactivity with others via the media.
2. Advantage comes from co-planning for the creation of social capital, GDP growth, contribution to the job economy, and potential in global markets. Analytical frameworks are being established for fully appreciating the contribution of the creative sector beyond its inherent value: to GDP; as an economic driver of other economic sectors; its capacity to create jobs with limited negative environmental impact; and, most importantly, as an element of modern post-industrial, multi-ethnic civilization that generates social capital and social cohesion.
3. While with many cultural activities the negative environmental impact is thankfully slight, other elements in artistic, creative, cultural, and innovative industrial activity can result in negative environmental impact. "Returns" in the magazine and book industries are cases in point.

4. The emergence within half a lifetime of mass culture production that has transformed a few young rebels such as Sir Paul, Sir Mick, and Sir Elton into economic forces as well as members of the nobility parallels the rise of the bourgeoisie in France as a separate “estate” with the emergence of a mercantile economy.

THE NATURE OF SUPPORT

There are four types of support for the creative sector that can be identified and together they lead to a fifth. First is recognition. Second is arts and cultural subsidies, third is organizational or industrial support, and fourth is structural assistance. Out of these comes the potential for stability and sectoral growth.

While **RECOGNITION** in the form of awards ceremonies in Canada is amply represented in support programs by the private sector (the Giller Prize in literature), industry associations (the National Magazine Awards), and government (the Governor General’s Awards), such awards focus on the best of the best. The continuous manifestations of creativity and innovation can thrive and accrue value from a climate of recognition and celebration that maximizes the potential of such a dynamic. Money need not always change hands, although it certainly helps. Recognition itself confers honour and prestige on the recipient that can translate into later earnings or even motivation to continue in a creative vein.

CULTURAL SUBSIDIES are generally directed at both creators and mediators to assist them in producing artistic work for which there is an insufficient market that cannot reasonably be expected to compensate the recipient for the effort and expense of creating a work or making a work public. Cultural subsidies include both public and private patronage of creators of all types but also of such institutions as public art galleries or book and magazine publishers. They help to ensure a continuing production of creative works that, like amateur hockey, foster the emergence of world-recognized talents.

INDUSTRIAL SUPPORT targets business operations and is meant to assist them in building organizational stability and thus to allow organizations to have the financial wherewithal to invest in ambitious projects, perhaps grow their markets, and grow their organizations locally and in whatever environments and markets that are appropriate to them. The investments of governments in the production of film, magazines, books, theatres, art galleries, and so forth are typical. Like cultural subsidies, industrial support draws on the public purse.

In contrast to arts and cultural subsidies, **STRUCTURAL INTERVENTION** involved the formation of laws, policies, and practices that affect the manner of operations rather than the transfer of financial support. Copyright law is an example, as would be an artists’ resale right if Canada had such a law (as Australia and the European Union do). Tax credits recognizing the equivalent of creative R&D also fall under this category.

[W]hile British Columbians are highly active in making and participating in arts and culture, there is little in the way of a unifying discourse and not a great deal of general awareness of the range and amount of creative activity.

These support policies, combined with other regulatory tools such as public ownership, Canadian-content requirements, and cross-subsidies from money-making elements in a chain to elements requiring funds (e.g., radio broadcasters to music production, cable companies to movie producers) create a **STABLE INFRASTRUCTURE** that can be

sufficiently supportive for a creative economy to evolve. Such an infrastructure encourages private investment for the simple reason that it reduces risk.

A word on a “stable infrastructure.” The 1994 Ontario government report *The Business of Culture* emphasized that the cultural industries (and the creative sector as a whole) needed a predictable environment “to fulfill their economic potential, realize their vision and achieve their objectives.”³⁹ The third of three main strategic goals recommended that government and industry should:

Create a stable, equitable operating environment for Canadian cultural industries in Ontario.⁴⁰

This goal translated into continuing support at predictable levels together with an informing framework for government support that gave first consideration to the financial needs for becoming a notable, if not dominant, participant in domestic and international markets and equal consideration to developing new multimedia products and new distribution systems for traditional cultural products.

A UNIFYING DISCOURSE

In the planning for and in the proceedings of BCreative 2012, it became apparent that while British Columbians are highly active in making and participating in arts and culture, there is little in the way of a unifying discourse and not a great deal of general awareness of the range and amount of creative activity. In rooms full of those involved with the creative sector, reference is not made to founding or visionary documents that define BC realities and/or a general approach to development in the creative sector. In part, this is because such documents do not exist; there is no creative industry plan that has been developed by government in consultation with creators and creative industries. Nor is there a cadre of researchers inside and outside universities who have a notable public profile, are interacting with one another, and are focused on either the cultural or creative sector whose research is setting a discourse in place. When important documents have emerged, they seem to

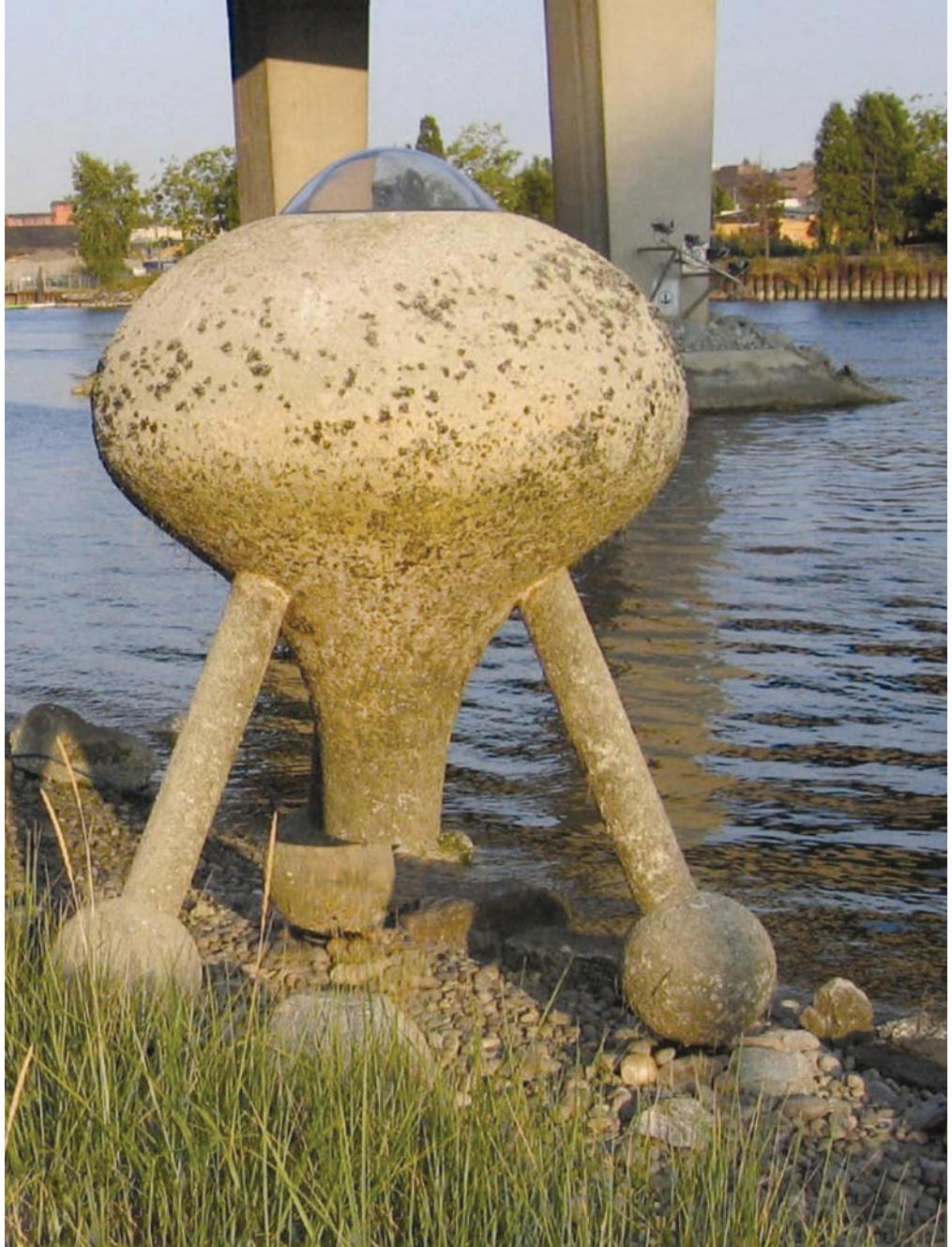
fade from general awareness to become operational plans for particular actors as appears to be the case with the *Culture Plan for Vancouver 2008–2018: Creative City*. Similarly, the PricewaterhouseCoopers paper, written for the BC Business Council's Opportunity BC 2020 discussions, is rarely a touchstone document. Indeed, in the final Business Council discussion of the papers developed for that effort, in the context of future economic development following the 2010 Winter Olympics, only a single passing mention was made of the creative sector.

If neither government nor business, nor the creative sector itself, participates in a common conceptualizing discourse around the nature and potential of the distinctive manifestations of creativity in BC, then it is unlikely that development will occur even if various subsectors are able to benefit from successful initiatives undertaken elsewhere. In other words, most important is the coordinative and collaborative value of singing from the same songsheet—a songsheet that reflects the distinctive elements of British Columbia and thus has sufficient resonance to drive development.

In this choral context, providing incentives to firms can be reductively cast as a race to the bottom of the net revenues gained by governments from these new industries. But they can more productively be cast as necessary investments to grow a vibrant creative sector for the value it adds in the short term and over the long term to become an established development centre. “Show me the money” is a race to the bottom for public bodies. “Show me the plan” brings smart private sector investment to a table of financial incentives.

A further note on plans: research (lacking in BC, and in Canada as well) offers double value. It provides information that can serve as the foundation for decision making. However, over and above the information it produces is the change in understanding that more information makes possible. Thus, towards its end, the PwC study calls for the BC government to separate economic policy from cultural policy in providing support to the creative sector. And in pursuit of economic policy, BC should support those industries that already demonstrate growth and potential contribution. As was pointed out by visiting economist and conference participant Alena Siarheyeva, because both Canada and BC lack a considered definition of what constitutes the creative economy, its dynamics are therefore unknown. Like investment in education, the returns of which are difficult to measure, investment in culture may be far more effective both economically and socially if participation, or jobs, or cultural value itself are the focus rather than current contribution to GDP.

In the context of a unifying discourse as well as BC realities, another document is worthy of note. As the *Culture Plan for Vancouver, 2008–2018: Creative City* points out, we grow up in neighbourhoods that are parts of the larger wholes of towns or cities, provinces, and Canada. While, no doubt, there are interprovincial differences, in this chain of identities,



Jerry Pethick, *Time Top Project*,
permanent public artwork,
Vancouver, 2006. **PHOTO BY**
MAUREEN SMITH.

perhaps the most muted element is that of the province. Only at an interprovincial gathering is the answer to the question, “Where are you from?” at all likely to be “British Columbia” (without modification). Surely this means that the greater participation of municipalities in supporting creative activity than elsewhere in Canada is a strength upon which BC can build. Thinking along different lines, in considering the creative sector in the context of cultural tourism, as any marketer would attest, investment in creative activity and cultural production would be a substantial multiplier of spending given the allure of the natural beauty and the mild climate of the province. And, while choosing winners is high risk, treating traditional forms of creative expression as sacrosanct is also probably ill advised, especially for a neo-European province whose closest western neighbour is Asia.

Finally, in preamble to the coming recommendation to inject greater energy into the creative sector, a few words on process and innovation. An examination of other documents and successful policies suggests that planning demands full participation of the many manifestations of creativity within the sector, the involvement of complementary sectors, the involvement of creative elements of traditional industries, and the involvement of the general public to the extent that they can be enticed to engage. Also, marketing the enterprise, rather than offering involvement opportunities for the highly motivated, would appear to be worthwhile. Relatedly, clarity of purpose can be derived from fully encompassing in outline form the nature of any supportive enterprise. For example, affirming both social participation and artistic excellence is tremendously important. As well, recognizing that more people want a stage than there are sizeable audiences who wish to form the audience, as inevitable, and turning that into a positive, is equally advisable.



Snow-capped Coast Mountains
tower over Vancouver.

**PHOTO BY JOSH M^CULLOCH,
COURTESY OF PICTURE BC**

conceptualizing the beginnings of a strategic creativity/innovation plan for British Columbia

IN THE ABOVE CONTEXT, AND IN THE CONTEXT of what BCreative brought forward, it is useful to take a page from Vancouver's *Creative City* document insofar as that document attempted to build on many elements, institutions, and activities that were already in place. In the same spirit, there are certain take-aways from BCreative 2012. Differing from *Creative City*, it seems wise to employ the strengths that are inherent in the sector itself; to wit, the talents and perspective of the advertising industry to develop a campaign to facilitate the decided-upon initiatives.

WHAT WORKS

Creative City provides a sense of building upon what is already in place. It is not totally inclusive, even of Vancouver, and it lacks signposts, a full set of inspirational goals, and a commitment of identified resources. It can, however, be used as a beginning inventory system.

The conference papers offered more:

- **ROGER HUGHES**'s presentation, built on architecture in general, illustrated the aesthetic and functional richness that can be achieved when design becomes a first step, especially when it is underpinned by an organized profession. **RYAN HOLMES**'s HootSuite demonstrates the possibilities of success by building on talent available in BC and marrying it with an understanding of the business organization and dynamics of start-ups as well as the necessity of reaching out for resources. **MICHAEL GELLER**'s presentation highlighted how whole areas of cities can be transformed visually, sometimes very simply, with a resulting transformation in the social dynamic. Sometimes merely asking for a decision or informing a population can build unexpected social cohesion. **PETER MILOBAR** emphasized the latter; by informing citizens, involvement soared. **WILL GARRETT-PETTS** outlined a continuing role for creators in animating community commitment to creative expression and potential.
- While focusing on the specificities of aboriginal involvement and local resources and circumstances, **WALTER JAKEWAY**'s presentation offered one main take-away among many: the inclusion of groups not normally tapped for the creative expression of their distinctive realities has positive community consequences. **CALVIN HELIN** reinforced this message in his exploration of economic dependency and aboriginal

artistic production. **MASSIMO MANZONI** picked up on the same theme in an entirely different context. Based on his background knowledge of the impact of clusters in northern Italy, he reminded conference participants of the value of conceiving projects inclusive of the creation of wealth and participation throughout the community (as opposed to the business/entrepreneurial class). Relatedly, the education panel underlined the in-place training foundation for creativity and innovation encompassing traditional and emerging digital creative production.

- Especially when considered in the context of the transformation of the position of rock musicians from generators of moral panic to lords of the realm, the panel presentations of fashionistas **KATHERINE SOUCIE**, **ROZEMERIE CUEVAS**, and **JUN RAMOS** illustrated the advantages of inclusivity, even if they take a generation to emerge. **WILL STRAW**'s documentation of the discourse surrounding the nighttime economies made this same point.
- Against **MARK JAMISON**'s background detailing of the degree to which Canada's magazine industry is successful in reaching the vast majority of Canadians within frameworks of interest that Canada's 2,000-plus magazine titles represent (as an illustration), the cultural or creative industries argued their case for the value of infrastructure investments across all industries of their sector and the resulting social and economic advantages that accrue from the investment in stable creator-to-society mediation.
- Several papers (e.g., **JAMES LAM**'s on Victoria) underscored the contributive economics of the arts and culture sector; a contribution that, while important to recognize, is only a portion of the story. Not discussed in these studies is the broader contribution of the creative professions (e.g., advertising, architecture and industrial design) as well as industrial and other forms of innovation. This underplays their contribution.
- The working macroeconomics and problematic microeconomics of the creative sector informed many of the presentations and were addressed head-on by **JUDI PIGGOTT**. At issue behind concerns for living-wage compensation is the desire of human beings to be recognized for innovation and creativity. That desire drives a continuous surplus of expression and a dearth of audiences. This problem might be addressed by adapting the basic models for recognition and development of talent in sports, and for innovation. For example, tiered recognition could introduce a celebratory framework for broader enfranchisement of the creative impulse. Such recognition would have positive social consequences. **DUNCAN LOW**'s cautionary tale of the cultural Olympiad paralleled the call for hard-edged analyses of social benefit, especially

when global franchises come knocking. Some economists in attendance raised this same point in discussion.

- The value of both a conceptual framework and a vision were brought forward in a number of papers. While **MINISTER CHONG**'s review of the level of provincial activity in supporting arts and culture was a useful reminder, especially in the context of recent cuts and restored funding, as well as government commandeering of funding from gaming, the clear sense at the conference was a call for more, in a qualitative as much as a quantitative sense. Opposition cultural critic **SPENCER CHANDRA HERBERT**'s talk of a BC Media Development Corporation injected hope but fell short in its lack of being framed within an overarching vision for BC inclusive of the stimulation of creativity and innovation. **ROBERT SIRMAN** made the point differently in talking of the need to think of the various subsectors of creativity as elements of an ecosystem. That vision came in snippets, for instance in **SIRISH RAO**'s presentation of Tara Books in India. It also came in a deluge of ideas and images offered, in particular, by the Parisians **PATRICK COCQUET** and **VINCENT GOLLAIN** and by **CHARLES LANDRY**.
- Like the Parisians' contribution, **EDNA DOS SANTOS**'s translation of the inspiration of those such as Landry was of tremendous value. Like UNCTAD's reports, on which her presentation was based, dos Santos provided a thoroughgoing understanding of the dynamics of the creative economy as Sirman did from a different perspective. It included an overall framework complete with methods of measurement and action items that address, from a profoundly humanistic standpoint, not only the creative impulse but also global inequalities.
- Although addressed to an extent that fell short of their impact, local/global capitalist economic dynamics were certainly identifiable in **CAMERON DREW**'s presentation on Kobo, the questions Board of Trade CEO **IAIN BLACK** put to **RYAN HOLMES**, and several of the technology presentations. Once any firm takes on public investment, the originators begin to lose control over its future to investors, whoever they may be. Moreover, it is rare to find entrepreneurs in western Canada with greater loyalty to community than to financial gain. The encouragement of such loyalties is a linchpin to development of a creative/innovation-driven economy, as is the management of public investment. Of course, another side of the global issue is opportunity for export, discussed in terms of graphic design by **SUNG VAN**. Manifest as a third force in the many presentations dealing with technology was a clear sense of the fillip that ICT has brought to humanity overall and particularly to the creative and innovation sectors.

- Also under-represented but definitely not absent from the conference was substantial engagement with cultural tourism. Ironically, the main contribution came from BC's opposite coast in the form of a highly informative and nuanced presentation by cultural bureaucrats **ANN ANDERSON** and **ELEANOR DAWSON**. They illustrated the leveraging natural attractions with cultural creativity and the substantial economic and social development that can arise from such a pairing.

recommendation

IN THE CONTEXT OF BCREATIVE 2012, LONG-TERM tangible benefit may be gained from the following:

The interests of all British Columbians and BC's economy could be greatly advanced by a strategic plan consisting of a province-wide initial 10-year campaign focused on creativity and innovation to establish creativity as primary element of the identity of British Columbia and British Columbians, thereby moving creativity in BC to the centre of our consciousness. Such a campaign could begin on the foundation of a brand, such as **CREATIVE BEAUTIFUL BRITISH COLUMBIA**, or it could begin with a focus on naming the brand through public participation. The campaign would have two goals. One would be to add value to current creative initiatives and activities by making them as part of a central social identity element of BC (a larger whole). The second would be to stimulate new creative/innovation activity led by the understanding that investing in creativity is investing in the future social and economic health of British Columbia. In pursuit of both goals, the intent would not be to create a centralized monolith, focused on creativity as a primary social identity element, but rather to lead by example, to encourage myriad other activities by both public bodies and private interests. For example, communities of all types—geographic, ethnic, talent, industries, professions, ages, and genders—and their members could be invited to define how they currently contribute to a Creative Beautiful BC and how they might measurably increase their contribution.

In setting the stage for the 10-year campaign, a central information bank, supported by sponsorship if not advertising, could be created and used to increase public awareness. Submissions could be lodged in this publicly accessible resource and a panel-led call for public comment (crowd-sourced evaluation) could be used to involve a wide selection of British Columbians in the selection for funding of some of the best proposals to measurably increase their contribution.

Key to making this initiative a success would be appropriate recognition and the tiering of that recognition. At a beginning level, attention, praise, and facilitation of further participation (which might require organizational assistance), similar to what happens in sports development, are as important, if not more important, than financial recognition. However, in the end, appropriate financial recognition is important to address a current punishing microeconomics. Such an initiative would become an ongoing program that would form a

growing inventory of initiatives seen to be part of the single, branded, **CREATIVE BEAUTIFUL BRITISH COLUMBIA** effort.

Also important to such a campaign would be the inclusion of marketing, promotion, and organizational activity. Outside-the-box initiatives such as The Cheaper Show, an art event that makes the work of emerging and established artists accessible to collectors at a uniform and affordable price, can have enormous impact on public participation.

Preliminary to such a campaign, and perhaps to consider its viability and design, a substantial advisory panel of notable creators and policy analysts (reflective of all subsectors and the system ecology of the creative sector) could be convened to ensure that the initiative was best conceived and had appropriate breadth into industry, education, ethnic groups, native groups, and so on. Representation from the BC Arts Council would be particularly important given its breadth of responsibility and programs. The orienting brand, as much as anything, could be put forward for consideration.

The point would be to focus on transforming the manner in which British Columbians and hence visitors think about the province as having double value—as equally engaging and enjoyable for its creativity and innovation as for its natural beauty. With that in place and an ongoing program of taking notice of creativity and innovation could gradually build the needed infrastructure of support (such as a BC Media Development Corporation for the creative industries) that, in serving the creative sector and innovation, would serve British Columbians socially and economically. Run by advertising firms indigenous to BC, such a campaign would have enormous potential.

Particularly important to this enterprise would be appealing to distinctiveness while embracing BC realities. For example, within the Canadian islands of the Salish Sea, encouraging each to have a creativity/innovation plan derived from its inherent realities would provide focus for a great deal of intellectual and artistic energy. For instance, celebrating the best methods the residents of Lasqueti Island have developed for living off-grid would provide a foundation for increasing their involvement with each other in a mutually appreciative context and their interaction with other British Columbians. Similarly, focusing on food production or furniture making on Salt Spring Island would offer recognition and identity formation as well as enhance interest in its natural charms. A parallel program focused on inventiveness in mountain towns would also recognize and engender pride, and produce curiosity. In each of these cases, tying recognition to the central image-capturing logo and phrase, as well as creating opportunities for those recognized to share with others, would generate further value.

A focus on creativity/innovation-based exports to Asian countries, as an example, would probably bring together highly disparate initiatives that would be of considerable interest

to all types of entrepreneurs wishing not only to see what works but also to understand the organization necessary for successful export initiatives.

Yet other dynamics could be highlighted such as groups of artists being praised for their role in helping to transform industrial neighbourhoods into more livable areas. Even plans for increasing participation of chronically underemployed groups could be identified and through such recognition these groups could gain access to bridge funding to carry out their plans.

The point of such examples is to demonstrate the breadth of inclusiveness that is possible within a creativity/innovation rubric. Clearly, a place to start would be with the BC and existing community arts councils, with programs of support for cultural industries that are already in place, and to integrate them into an overall plan which becomes an identity constant in British Columbia. It is the creation of that environment and the passing of both the design of programs and their administration to those involved in the sector that appears to be the best foundation for a strategic plan for a creative/innovative British Columbia.

CODA

As the twenty-first century opens, and rapidly developing economies reach out for access to energy and raw materials, and to take control, when possible, of these finite resources; and in the context of a flattening world where information and communication technology and international trading rules force labour competition onto British Columbians; the value of creativity and creative production grows within the context of human ambition, human happiness, and the job-creation economy. Even the manner we have of thinking about this emerging zeitgeist shows a liveliness that is indicative of our intuitive realization of its promise. As UK-based educator and design consultant Kathryn Best notes, in speaking of the contribution that design can make to creativity and innovation:

design's ability to present attractive, practical, and aspirational propositions that can help change people's decision-making processes, behaviours, and mindsets ... [can assist in] stimulating both new value propositions and more human-centered strategies for growth and development.⁴¹



To push forward creatively, we must see how large the universe is. Installation of music, curtains, projections, and the grass by David Burney and Charmaine Carpenter.

PHOTO BY CHARMINE CARPENTER. COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS.

The creation of a primary identity focused on a creativity/innovation consciousness that gets translated into concrete cohesion-building and ambition-affirming opportunity has a great deal to offer. Most likely, it would have a considerable resonance in British Columbia.

To move forward in the direction suggested by this report requires the involvement of those on the front lines of participation in the creativity/innovation economy. Universities as ideas institutions play a secondary role. But as our contribution to the enterprise, should developing interest emerge, Simon Fraser University's Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing will explore the feasibility of developing and publishing an anthology to enrich the discussion of developing a creative/innovative British Columbia.

appendix A

PRESENTERS TO THE CONFERENCE AND SESSION CHAIRS

| | |
|--|--|
| Ann Anderson, Manager, Federal Tourism Partnerships, Newfoundland and Labrador | Cheryl Geisler, Dean, Faculty of Communication, Arts and Technology, SFU |
| Peter Armstrong, Founder, Leanpub; Co-founder, Ruboss | Michael Geller, developer |
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| Iain Black, President and CEO, Vancouver Board of Trade | Calvin Helin, First Nations author, lawyer, and activist |
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| Ida Chong, Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development, British Columbia | Ryan Holmes, Founder and CEO, HootSuite |
| Patrick Cocquet, CEO, Cap Digital, Paris Region | Roger Hughes, Principal, Hughes Condon Marler Architects |
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| Richard Newirth, Managing Director, Cultural Services, | Arts, SFU |
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| Geoff Plant, lawyer; Partner, Heenan Blaikie; former | Director, Owen Bird Law Corporation |
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| and Member Service), Canadian Media | |
| Production Association | |

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