

Internationalization of Culture in China: Implications for CanadaA RoundtableMarch 7, 2003Summary of Discussions

A roundtable meeting on the internationalization of culture in China and its implications for Canada was held in Ottawa on March 7, 2003, sponsored by the China Division and the Arts and Cultural Industries Promotion Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

The meeting was chaired by Michael Brock, Director General of the International Cultural Relations Bureau, and brought together representatives of interested Canadian cultural institutions and agencies with the Heads of Canada's Missions in Beijing (Ambassador Joseph Caron), Shanghai (Consul General Stewart Beck), Guangzhou (Consul General Jim Feir), Hong Kong (Consul General Tony Burger) and Taipei (Executive Director Ted Lipman). A full list of participants is attached as Annex 1.

The purpose of this roundtable was to discuss trends in the internationalization of culture in China, identify current and emerging challenges facing the promotion of Canada-China arts and cultural partnerships, and to determine the most effective means of information-sharing among interested Canadian institutions and organizations. In preparation for the roundtable, the Canadian Embassy in Beijing circulated a background paper.

The roundtable opened with a presentation by Ambassador Caron (Annex 2), describing the process of internationalization of culture in China, the changing role of government, the emergence of private sector and non-governmental partners, the growth of cultural infrastructure investment, the increased opportunities for Canada-China artistic and institutional collaboration, and the commitment by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade to supporting the growth of arts and cultural relations with China as a key means of projecting Canada's identity and increasing Canada's visibility and influence in China. In concluding his remarks, the Ambassador posed three key questions for discussion:

1. In the face of change in China, what new approaches, strategies and contacts are needed to support effectively Canadian artists and performers interested in pursuing projects in China?
2. How can we best promote information-sharing on China's changing cultural policies and market, potential Chinese partners to ensure the success of our projects with China?
3. In light of our respective mandates and priorities, what are the appropriate roles and responsibilities for Canadian institutions and agencies in promoting Canadian arts and culture in China?

Approaches, strategies and contacts:

- The changing institutional environment in China, and the emergence of the non-governmental and private sector, is creating new opportunities and new challenges for Canada.
- We need to understand the implications of this change and develop strategies to ensure that we are in a position to maximize benefits to Canada for the next 5-10 years. Our approach in China should



emphasis collaborative partnerships as the most effective basis for building meaningful activities over the long term.

- China remains a challenging environment in which to do business. For example, several television co-productions have encountered certification problems in China. Intellectual property is often at risk. As in other commercial sectors, success in cultural industries in China requires patience and persistence, but many companies in Canada are not yet convinced that China should be a priority market. Nevertheless, there is a growing consumer demand in China for cultural products with mass appeal.
- China is increasingly a venue for international festivals for the performing and visual arts that provide opportunities for Canadian presence and participation. The 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing and the 2010 World's Fair in Shanghai will stimulate the development of cultural infrastructure and promote capacity-building.
- There is a strong and growing demand in China for institutional strengthening in the arts and cultural sector, including in management, as well as for international artistic partnerships. Enhanced short-term personnel exchanges and visits for training purposes are likely to be the most common approach to address this need. Planning for such exchanges should take into account Canadian visa requirements and, in some cases, labour practices.
- Building effective partnerships requires detailed knowledge of the relevant Chinese institutions, agencies and individuals. Strong personal relationships with Chinese partners remains vital to success.

#### Information-Sharing:

- Strengthening cultural partnerships calls for greater information sharing in several areas: on potential Chinese partners, on Chinese government policies and practices, on planned programs and projects, and on existing and potential sources of funding.
- This meeting was the first step in an ongoing process of strengthening our knowledge and experience with a widening range of existing and emerging Chinese partners across the full spectrum of activities in the arts and cultural sector, and provides the basis for an informal network to share relevant information among interested Canadian organizations and institutions.

#### Roles and Responsibilities:

- Strengthening Canada-China cultural partnerships is a priority for the International Cultural Relations Bureau and the North Asia and Pacific Bureau of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. Arts and culture are an important means of projecting Canada's identity in China and increasing our visibility and our influence in an increasingly competitive environment. DFAIT will reflect this priority in its funding programs and its overseas operations.



- Canada's six Missions in greater China (Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Guangzhou, Taipei and Chongqing) will be proactive in promoting Canadian culture and will provide key services to Canadian clients: information and intelligence on local developments and opportunities; identification of key Chinese contacts; troubleshooting; and media support.
- Interested Canadian federal and provincial institutions and private and non-governmental organizations may draw on these services to explore new opportunities for enhanced Canada-China cultural partnerships, in a manner consistent with their mandates and overall priorities.

#### Conclusions and Next Steps:

- The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade will encourage the growth of diverse Canada-China artistic and institutional partnerships, in response to Canadian client priorities. Priority will be given to implementing the 2002 MoU between the Canada Council and the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles (CFLAC).
- The Canadian Embassy in Beijing will prepare and circulate a bi-annual update on current developments on the internationalization of culture in China. This update will include information on current developments in China, potential partners and planned Canadian programs and projects. Greater China Missions will pro-actively identify new potential Chinese partners, including promoters and impresarios, performance spaces, museums and galleries. The Embassy will seek input from interested Canadian institutions and organizations in preparing this update. More regular updates may be provided to members of this network as appropriate.
- The International Cultural Relations Bureau will prepare and circulate an updated inventory of available public and private funding programs for arts and cultural projects with China.
- The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade will develop a rolling three-year plan of priorities for cultural programming at greater China Missions in support of Canada's public diplomacy objectives in China.
- A second meeting of interested Canadian cultural institutions and organizations will be held in 2005 in China.