



PHASE ONE REPORT

June 2017 - December 2017

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Canada

Introduction

Mass Culture/ Mobilisation Culturelle is a collaborative initiative that strives to support Canadian arts and culture. The intent is to form a network of stakeholders which, through a robust research program, will address cultural policy issues at the organizational, sectoral, and governmental levels. Through the creation and dissemination of community-centred cultural policy research, Mass Culture envisions an arts and culture sector that is well-equipped to communicate and make decisions about cultural policy in Canada.

Since June 2017, the Mass Culture Working Group has met one on one with 100+ stakeholders to share the initiative, explore and build a network, determine existing knowledge gaps, and discover current and historic research efforts in Canadian cultural policy.

The conversations that took place during Phase One of the initiative have been instrumental in informing the design for 20+ nation-wide consultations, which will take place over 2018 and engage over 1000 individuals. These consultations will create spaces to exchange information, identify cultural policy issues in Canada, and discuss the connectedness and sustainability of Canadian cultural policy research.

This Phase One report serves as an overview of Mass Culture's initial stakeholder engagement and early findings. We still have much work to accomplish with the sector. This report leads us into Phase Two, which will run over 2018.

These seven commitments serve as a starting point to inform Mass Culture's values and guide our work:

- **Mutual Respect:** cultural pluralism and diverse perspectives.
- **Access:** an ongoing practice of defining and improving access with our communities.
- **Decent work:** implement and evaluate our own decent work practices in service to our sector, our team(s), and each employee.
- **Truth and Reconciliation:** making collaborative action toward mutually beneficial goals between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.
- **Transformative Power:** deepen relationships and creative approaches that address the needs of the sector across generations.
- **Stability:** ongoing evaluation to improve our work. We commit to sustainable practices in our operations, programming, and projects.
- **Integrity:** conducting ethical research, collecting accurate data, valuing transparency, and embracing debate.

Activities to Date

The following activities were completed from June 2017 to December 2017:

- The Working Group held one-on-one meetings with 100+ stakeholders. These meetings were scheduled through targeted outreach, referrals, happenstance introductions at conference and events, and individuals connecting with Mass Culture directly

- **Strategic partnerships and collaborations for Phase Two. Including with: Culture Days, Humber College, Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD), the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF), and Work in Culture. Other potential partnerships and collaborations were noted for future work**
- **Discovered possible regional hosts for the 20+ nation-wide consultations, which will be held across Canada in 2018**
- **Learned about existing cultural policy research resources and best practices**
- **Hired a short-term contract project coordinator,**
- **who provided Mass Culture with the administrative capacity to get and stay organized, document our efforts, and set up communication platforms**
- **Regular check-ins and shared work amongst the current Mass Culture Working Group**
- **Public launch of the Mass Culture initiative in December 2017, through a presentation at the National Arts Service Organization meeting in Ottawa. This presentation was followed by a public press release**

What We Heard

Since June 2017, the Mass Culture Working Group met with 103 artists, managers, and academics for one-on-one conversations. Key themes that were discussed during these meetings were: cultural policy research, organizational structures, knowledge mobilization/information design, and the broader arts ecology. All one-on-one meetings spanned across Canada and were conducted via video conference, phone and in-person.

Within a few early meetings, the key discussion points for Mass Culture became clear: we exist to fill a gap in Canadian cultural policy research, we do not want to duplicate existing efforts (but rather, support them), and we are in the early days with much still to learn and decide on.

In one meeting, someone reminded us to “always consider three questions: what is it that we don’t know? who is this for? and, why are we doing this?” While the Working Group and early supporters started with a framework of an idea, the 103 meetings and our upcoming Phase Two activities will inform the scope and structure of Mass Culture.

Here are some insights from the meetings, often found with multiple stakeholders:

- There is a desire for the sector to connect and work together to bridge the current cultural policy research gap
- There is a need for cultural policy research creation, synthesis and aggregation, communication and dissemination, and training on research literacy, analysis and use
- Mass Culture can help individuals and groups find the research they are looking for
- Mass Culture has the potential to be a “one stop shop” for cultural policy research
- There is a general feeling that Mass Culture should remain a neutral party
- Many suggested that Mass Culture leave advocacy/lobbying activities to the community. However, individuals were hopeful that Mass Culture could partner with governments in other ways.
- An urge to connect theory and practice throughout the research agenda
- There is good cultural policy research already happening in pockets throughout the country

- There can be a lot of cultural policy research information and potential for how to maintain and use it. Be careful not to burn the sector out!
- It is important to seek to understand the arts ecology, how it works, and then with this knowledge, take a holistic approach to how Mass Culture does its work
- A general feeling that Mass Culture has to be collaborative and well-networked, but there's a challenge in scope and scale. How can Mass Culture build a broad network which takes in the whole of the arts ecology, while still maintaining focused and feasible activities?
- Learn from other cultural policy research efforts that have come before, and research efforts that currently exist in different geographies, sectors, and cultures
- There are a lot of tools already out there that Mass Culture can use. We do not have to reinvent what already exists, but rather discover it.
- Questions about whether or not Mass Culture will house primary and secondary research (*the Working Group currently feels that both are likely*)
- There is a challenge to get good raw data and statistics for a number of reasons (e.g. the capacity of arts organizations to collect and maintain administrative data)
- There is a general expectation that Mass Culture should also be able to take data, derive value from it, and communicate it in a meaningful way
- There is a trend toward open data, and this will have to be a big consideration in Mass Culture's digital infrastructure
- Digital and in-person convening are both important
- The challenge, but also the great diversity, in the vast geographic size of Canada

- The challenge of addressing the ‘multi-market’ nature of many different arts and culture sectors
- General need to bring different kinds of partners together
- Work with the community to develop, analyze and use research indicators
- If Mass Culture is going to happen, make it sustainable!
- Québec is well served on the research front (L’Observatoire de la culture et des communications du Québec)

In all of these meetings, the Working Group members felt they were met with broad enthusiasm, a sense of renewed energy for cultural policy research, and a reasonable level of skepticism. Overall, it was clear that many feel Mass Culture has an ambitious vision, but a vision that is needed.

Meetings by province: Mass Culture originated in Ontario and started with the existing networks of the Working Group members. The Working Group quickly expanded out to other regions and provinces, and continued to meet with a number of national organizations. This list includes scheduled meetings, but not casual conversations at various conferences and events:

PROVINCE	MEETINGS
British Columbia	2
Alberta	4
Saskatchewan	3
Manitoba	2

Ontario	72
Quebec	16
New Brunswick	2
Nova Scotia	1
United States	1

Meetings by sector role:

Cultural Policy Research Topics: the following is a list of research topics that were noted during Mass Culture’s one-on-one meetings. Most likely, this list will expand. Mass Culture will continue to assess the role that it can play in undertaking and disseminating research on these topics:

- An artist’s career trajectory
- Arts in a digital world
- Arts education
- Arts funding models
- Civic engagement
- Creative disruption
- Economic impact
- Ecology of workers/artists
- Gender in arts and culture
- History of cultural policy
- Infrastructure
- Livable cities
- Arts marketing and audiences
- Role of the arts in society
- Social inclusion impact and models
- Volunteerism
- Arts & how it intersects with other sectors

What We Have Yet To Learn

From early-day questions posed by the Working Group, to questions derived from our Phase One meetings, here are some questions that need answering during Phase Two of the initiative:

- A needs assessment to determine the scope of arts and culture disciplines to which Mass culture will address. While its Working Group has originated out of contemporary nonprofit arts and culture, further exploration is needed for heritage, cultural industries, and other sectors which are often defined under arts and culture
- How best to engage a network with a large volunteer labour force? And, in consideration of this, how to make appropriate decisions about paid partners, commissions and contracts, and staff?
- What mechanisms need to be in place to meet the needs of the broader arts sector as well as the more specialized needs of the individual subsectors and regions?
- How, in practice, do we navigate the coexistence of cultural policy research and advocacy/lobbying among individuals and groups who participate in the network?
- How will the research agenda be decided?
- How do we ensure a plurality of perspectives and community involvement in research priorities?
- What are some different research indicators and how can they be developed and used by the community?
- How do we track records of cultural policy research? Both from historical data and

through a digital strategy?

- If Mass Culture is building a digital infrastructure for cultural policy research, what are some considerations to balance privacy and access?
- In our 103 meetings, there was a general feeling that Mass Culture should remain a neutral party. What does it require of an organization or network, in its practices and policies, to remain 'neutral'?
- How do we (and should we) work from common research benchmarks, given the many research cultures and capacities out there?
- How to design partnership models and approaches which consider a wide variety of sector roles (e.g. academics, funders, artists, etc.)
- What revenue models and incorporation structures might keep a research network/hub sustained?
- Should a research hub be centralized? Is "hub" the appropriate framework for something like Mass Culture? Why or why not?

Next Steps

Goals for Phase Two, 2018:

- Develop a creative convening model in partnership with OCAD's SLab graduate students

- Host 20+ nation-wide consultations in various regions across Canada
- Continue to expand the network through regional and multi-discipline stakeholder engagement
- Continue to collect cultural policy resources, reports, and best practices
- Continue to attend and participate in cultural policy related events
- Design a business model that has a high probability of being sustainable. Do this through strategic meetings on subjects such as: partnerships and collaborations, governance, digital infrastructure, and, sponsorships and funding opportunities.
- Develop a network model which includes advisories, working groups and tasks forces, and engage interested individuals in the early development of Mass Culture
- Prepare for a Phase Two report-back and conference, which is planned for early-2019

With the generous support of the Toronto Arts Council, the Mass Culture initiative can host 20+ nation-wide consultations in Canada. These consultations are currently planned for Spring-Summer 2018, but contingent on logistics with regional hosts. Details on dates, locations, and formats will be shared via Mass Culture's newsletter and social media in the coming months.

Email updates can be accessed by 'Joining the Network' at <http://massculture.ca/mass-culture-network/>

Mass Culture's Twitter account is @massculture_ <https://twitter.com/massculture>

Contact

To get in touch with questions, thoughts, information to share, and/or to discuss how you can get involved, you can contact our general email account at info@massculture.ca

The members of our founding and current Working Group are:

Kristian Clarke, Co-Founder of Mass Culture, PhD candidate in Cultural Studies at Queen's University

Kate Cornell, Co-Founder, Executive Director, Canadian Dance Assembly and Co-chair of the Canadian Arts Coalition

Tara Mazurk, Co-Founder, Consultant, Cultural Industries with Global Public Affairs

Robin Sokoloski, Co-Founder, Executive Director, Playwrights Guild of Canada

Clayton Windatt, Co-Founder, Executive Director, Aboriginal Curatorial Collective

Website: <http://massculture.ca>

To view and opt-in to the emerging network, please visit <http://massculture.ca/mass-culture-network/>

APPENDIX

A sampling from our reading list

From resources recommended through our stakeholder meetings.

- [ArtsLink NB Art Stats and Analysis 2017](#)
- [ArtsLink NB Cultural Plan 2013](#)
- [Arts MidWest : Creating Connection cultural Plan 2015](#)
- [Ontario Nonprofit Network: Decent Work Advisory 2017](#)

- [Creative Manitoba: Exchange District Creative Cluster Cataloging Guide](#)
- [Cultural Resources Framework 2011](#)
- [Everyday Creativity: Arts Council England 2016](#)
- [Is Yours a Learning Organization?: Harvard Business review 2008](#)
- [How Change Happens: Interdisciplinary Perspectives for Human Development by Roman Krznaric 2007](#)
- [Calgary Dance Community: SWOT ASSESSMENT 2017](#)
- [Towards Cultural Diversity: King's College London 2017](#)
- [Rethink Leadership. "Simple, Complicated and Complex."](#)
<http://tyndaleblogs.ca/rethinkleadership/blogs/simple-complicated-and-complex/>
- [Understanding the Value and Impacts of Cultural Experiences Arts Council England, 2014](#)
- [Enriching Britain: Culture, Creativity and Growth The Warwick Commission 2015](#)

What are some other cultural policy resources and reports that you know of? Models, practices and organizations that Mass Culture can learn from?