

BRIEF TO THE SASKATCHEWAN ARTS STRATEGY TASK FORCE

PRESENTED BY

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INTRODUCTION

My name is Patrick Close; I am a Saskatchewan artist, and I appear before you today as the elected representative for the Province of Saskatchewan to the Canadian Conference of the Arts.

The Canadian Conference of the Arts is a national, non-profit, non-governmental association which encourages federal, provincial and municipal governments and the corporate and private sector, to develop policies which will ensure the continued growth and development of the arts and cultural industries in Canada.

I will examine the issue of the status of the artist, and make recommendations specific to the improvement of social, economic and legal status for artists in Saskatchewan.

BACKGROUND : STATUS OF THE ARTIST

Ten years ago, Canada signed the UNESCO-sponsored Belgrade Recommendation on the Status of the Artist.

In 1986, the Report of the Siren-Gelinas Federal Task Force on the Status of the Artist provided the necessary impetus for the federal government to establish the Canadian Advisory Committee on the Status of the Artist. In 1988, that committee released the Canadian Artists Code, which proposed federal legislation on the professional status of the artist.

The principle objective of the Canadian Artists Code is to make it official federal government policy to:

"...recognize the professional status of the artist (and his or her contributions) to the enrichment and continued development of the cultural, political, social and economic fabric of Canada as a nation. "

The proposed Code also defines terms, provides a statement of the fundamental principles governing the status of artists, and contains a section which deals with their professional recognition, economic and social rights. The Code would effect fundamental changes in Canadian federal laws and regulations.

Status of the artist issues have already brought about changes to federal legislation; such as the protection of exhibition rights and choreographers works in the new Copyright Act; the public lending rights program, and revisions to the Income Tax Act and its administration.

Specific federal legislation on the status of the artist will be tabled this year, and is expected to include collective bargaining rights for self-employed artists, revisions to the Income Tax Act and the Anti-competition Act, and the broadening of access for artists to social programs.

However, federal status of the artist legislation will deal with a very limited number of artists, principally those in the broadcast industry. The majority of artists working in theatres, art galleries, dance companies, orchestras, studios and cultural industries work within areas of provincial jurisdiction.

WHAT CAN BE DONE IN SASKATCHEWAN

In essence, the status of the artist issue is about making artists capable of earning a livelihood from their art.

The principle objective of the status of the artist initiative is not to seek special treatment for the artistic profession, but to ensure that the structures and benefits available to other occupational groups are made accessible to professional artists. Such measures would effectively bring an end to the marginalization of the artistic profession and the economy.

Our provincial government has a profound influence on the practice of art in Saskatchewan through laws, regulations, policies and structures which define our social, economic, cultural and professional living environment.

Provincial concerns and regulations include;

- occupational health and safety,
- education and continuing education
- taxation
- collective bargaining
- labour legislation
- funding for the arts
- special interests, such as multiculturalism,
native peoples, affirmative action
- capital costs for cultural facilities

...to name only a few.

Other provinces are taking action on the status of the artist, including legislation and regulation.

The province of Quebec has already passed two bills which will benefit their performing, visual and literary artists, as well as artists from other provinces whose works are performed, produced or published in Quebec.

In order to assist provincial governments to prepare a comprehensive response to the issues involved in the status of the artist, the Canadian Conference of the Arts has prepared a "Provincial Road Map for Status of the Artist Legislation". This information has already been forwarded to the Saskatchewan Department of Culture, Multiculturalism and Recreation.

It is essential that the Government of Saskatchewan implement a plan of action for the improvement of the status of our artists.

(I have provided members of the Task Force with further information on these issues, attached to this brief, and would be pleased to make copies available to others on request.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

I request the Arts Strategy Task Force make the following recommendations to the Minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Recreation, on behalf of all artists in Saskatchewan :

- That the Government of Saskatchewan recognize that the status of the artist is an issue of primary importance to the arts; both creators and presenters.
- That the Government of Saskatchewan recognize the Canadian Artists Code.
- That the Government of Saskatchewan enact comprehensive legislation on the status of the artist; including social, economic and legal rights.
- That the Government of Saskatchewan take action on the status of the artist by providing adequate funding, policy and program support to the arts.

CONCLUSION

I believe that provincial legislation and action on the status of the artist will significantly improve the socio-economic benefits from the practice of art in Saskatchewan.

I believe that the recommendations put forward on the status of the artist are simple, achievable and make sense for the arts, and for our province.

Thank you the opportunity to speak to you today.

I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

ATTACHMENTS

-Canadian Artists Code

**-report of the Canadian Advisory Committee
on the Status of the Artist (1988)**

-Status of the Artist

**-recommendations from the Siren-Gelinas
Task Force on the Status of the Artist (1986)**

-Canadian Conference of the Arts Publications:

-A Status for Artists in Canada

**-Status of the Artist in the Provinces
and Territories**

-Making Culture Count

-ACTRA

-Performers Seek A Performers Rights Act

-UNESCO

**-Belgrade Recommendation
on the Status of the Artist (1980)**

-QUEBEC

- Information Brochure, Bills 78 & 90