

Karen

1 ARTS

From: Colin Hicks [Colin.Hicks@int.mri.gouv.qc.ca]
Sent: 08 September 2004 16:03
To: info
Cc: Catriona Jones; Celine Gagnon
Subject: Message for James Boyle[Scanned]

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Dear Mr Boyle

Please find attached a letter in response to your call for submissions to the Cultural Commission. Do let me know if you require any further information.

Kind regards

Colin Hicks

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08/09/2004



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Mr James Boyle
Chair
Cultural Commission
Broughton High School
Carrington Road
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8th September 2004

Dear Mr Boyle

The Cultural Commission and international work

My office has had the privilege of working with Scottish cultural institutions and artists over the past decade and I was interested to learn of the work of the Cultural Commission during my stay in Edinburgh for the Festivals this year at which many of our artists were yet again honoured.

The remit of the Commission seems clearly framed by domestic concerns so I am not sure if the international fate of work from artists in Scotland is covered. We have however been involved in many projects with Scottish artists in this area over the years, particularly in the performing arts and I was wondering if it would be useful for us to inform the Commission of our view of working internationally with Scotland? Do tell me if this is misplaced interest.

Over the years there has also been much Scottish interest in how the institutions of Québec have been able to export so much culture and of such good quality. We have been invited to contribute to debates in Scotland such as the link between culture and tourism, the creation of a playwrights' centre, the impact of festivals on the local economy. Many people in the Scottish cultural sector ask for information on such issues as Québec's experience in providing training and infrastructure; intercultural projects with our immigrant or First Nation populations; issues of language and broadcasting; supporting a small publishing industry; meeting one's responsibilities for remote and rural communities.

Two of our institutions have been of constant interest: the CEAD playwright's centre in Montréal which has inspired the recent creation of your Playwright's Studio; and the SODEC, our "other Arts Council" that invests solely in the for-profit sector and which is part of the strategy of our

Government to move artists wherever possible from grant to profit. The Cirque du Soleil would be the shining example in this area, being the first cultural body in our history to have been able to return to the Minister the entirety of its public subsidy awarded since 1985.

I thought it might also be of interest to the Commission to know that we enjoy good relations with Wales, with whom we have been able to collaborate on a cultural action plan since 2003 thanks to the creation of a body called Wales Arts International, which is co-funded by the National Assembly, the British Council and Arts Council Wales and to of our Ministries. We are currently running our 44th project in 18 months, half of which have entailed work for Welsh artists in Québec.

What seems to be of interest here for Scotland is that, in the same period, there have in fact been 46 projects with Scotland without a coordinating body your end for us to liaise with. This is some measure of the energy in your sector I feel. However the lack of such a body as WAI has meant that only 8 projects have brought opportunities for Scots in Québec. Scotland is clearly missing out on an investment opportunity here, notwithstanding assistance to the balance sheet of Canongate Books!

If you would like to pursue any points in this brief overview then we should be pleased to provide more information either in written form or by making a presentation to the Commission in due course. In the meantime we can certainly endorse your view that the arts in Scotland are thriving and that there are many very talented people who are certainly good enough to start benefiting from a more secure international profile alongside many artists from other countries.

Best wishes for the work of the Commission.

Yours sincerely,

Colin Hicks
Director of Cultural Services