



**Independent
Media Arts Alliance**
Alliance des arts
médiatiques indépendants

January 7, 2009

Hon. James Flaherty
Minister of Finance
House of Commons
Parliament Buildings
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Flaherty,

On behalf of the Independent Media Arts Alliance, representing over 80 independent media arts centres and serving 12,000 independent media artists and cultural workers across Canada, I am writing to ask that the federal government consider the following recommendations as it prepares its economic stimulus package as part of its 2009 pre-budget consultations.

The importance of the arts in Canada goes beyond its fundamental role as an agent of personal and national identity building. Cultural production acts as an essential structuring function in today's creative economy. In 2007, with a real value-added output of \$46 billion, an overall economic footprint of \$84.6 billion (7.4 per cent of Canada's total real GDP) and a global contribution of 1.1 million jobs all across the nation, the culture sector was an important contributor to economic activity in Canada.¹

Moreover, all this was accomplished with an estimated contribution from all levels of government (including federal, provincial, and local levels) of only \$7.9 billion, making the arts and culture sector one of the most productive in the country. As we are collectively facing challenging times with the slowing down of the economy, investing in the arts and culture is, more than ever, an important and strategic choice for our governments.

We recommend that the federal government:

- ▶ Develop a multi-year investment initiative at the Department of Canadian Heritage to support Canadian arts organizations in the development of their capacity.
- ▶ Increase the support for existing mentorship/internship programs in the arts and cultural sector.
- ▶ Renew or implement programs in the cultural sector that are supporting the improvement, renovation and construction of facilities, and the acquisition of specialized equipment.

¹ All figures in this paragraph taken from: *Valuing Culture: Measuring and Understanding Canada's Creative Economy*, Conference Board of Canada, August 2008

- ▶ Support the development of the independent new media sector via dedicated R&D funds.
- ▶ Increase funding to the Canada Council for the Arts in order to boost artistic productions that have proven to generate great economic spin-offs.
- ▶ Implement support programs for media arts organizations to promote the cultural vision and creative expression of Canadians here and abroad.

On behalf of our members, thank you for giving us the opportunity to express how investing in the arts will contribute to achieving the government's goal of stimulating economic growth.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Dorner, National Director
Independent Media Arts Alliance

Cc The Right Hon. Stephen Harper, The Hon. James Moore, Mr. Michael Ignatieff, Mr. Jack Layton, M. Gilles Duceppe