



COMMUNIQUÉ
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**Ottawa Symposium calls for shared commitment to promote
arts and learning**

Ottawa, May 16, 2007 On May 3-4, 2007, the University of Ottawa hosted over 100 arts education specialists, including teachers, academics, artists, researchers and representatives of government and non-governmental organizations from across Canada, at a symposium devoted to arts and learning.

The Ottawa meeting was identified as the first step in a multi-stage response to the first World Conference on Arts Education, held in Lisbon, Portugal, in March 2006. In preparation for that conference, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) carried out a series of consultations across Canada in 2005-2006. The Lisbon conference, where Canadians played an active role, recognized that the cross-disciplinary role of arts teaching is a fundamental element in education, as well as in strengthening the arts and promoting cultural diversity.

The aims of the Ottawa meeting were to build creative capacity in Canadian arts and learning, and strengthen bridges between all interested stakeholders. Conference organizers, led by Michael Wilson of the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa, and Madeleine Aubrey, an Ottawa-based consultant in arts education, structured the Symposium around the four major themes of the Lisbon conference: advocacy; impact of arts education, strategies for promoting arts education policies; and teacher training. A complete report of the Symposium will be available shortly on the symposium web site at www.eduarts.ca

Honorary Chair Michèle S. Jean, President of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, urged participants to “continue the dialogue, consider new fields of endeavour and propose new forms of cooperation” in preparation for the next world conference, to be held in Seoul, Korea, in 2010. The keynote speaker, well-known Montréal author Roch Carrier, explored the connections between formal and non-formal learning in the arts as a lifelong process, emphasizing the valuable contribution these forms of learning make to individual and social development.

Other speakers included: Marie-Josée Berger, Dean of the Faculty of Education of the University of Ottawa; Max Wyman, former President of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO; John Hobday, former Director of the Canada Council for the Arts; Annalee Adair, National Director, ArtsSmarts; Stephen Campbell, Director of Community Partnerships, Ontario Arts Council; and Larry O'Farrell, Chairholder of the recently announced Chair in Arts and Learning at Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario (<http://educ.queensu.ca/unesco/>). The UNESCO Chair will host a second national symposium at Queen's University in autumn 2008.

Special guests at the Ottawa symposium were Yeonhee Jung and Soomin Kwak of the Korea Arts and Culture Education Service (KACES), Seoul, Korea, who are planning the second world conference in 2010.

Besides the University of Ottawa and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, the Symposium's partners included Queen's University, Ontario's Ministry of Education (Direction des politiques et programmes d'éducation en langue française), the Ontario Arts Council, Canadian Public Arts Funders, the Arts Network for Children & Youth (ANCY), ArtsSmarts, and Learning through the Arts.

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Source: Katherine Berg
Special Advisor to the Secretary-General
Canadian Commission for UNESCO
1-800-263-5588 or 613-566-4414, ext. 5207

Web site: www.unesco.ca