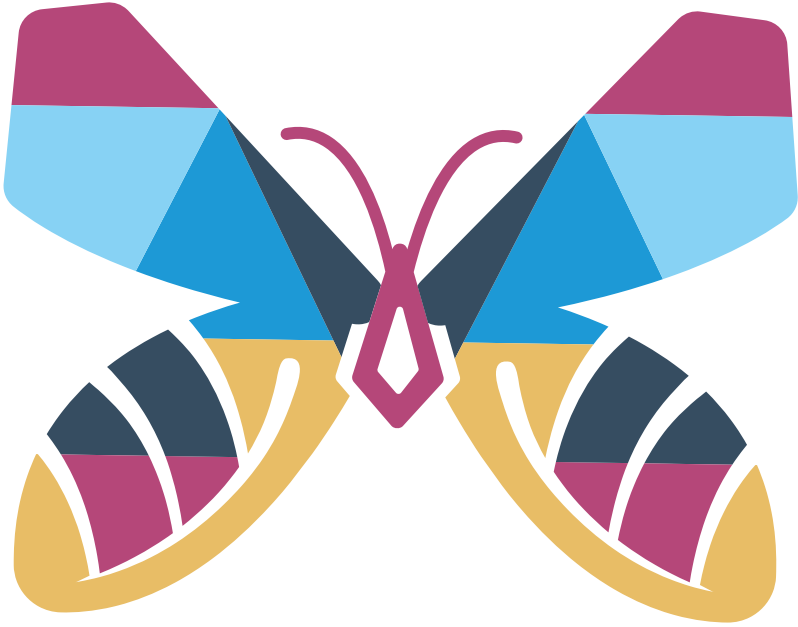




Canada Council  
for the Arts

Conseil des arts  
du Canada



SOMMET DES AMÉRIQUES SUR LA CULTURE  
**AMERICAS CULTURAL SUMMIT**  
CUMBRE CULTURAL DE LAS AMÉRICAS

May 9 to 11, 2018  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

**Post-Event Report**

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“

*Thank you for including me in this extraordinary event. Bravo to you and your teams on this landmark event.*

*Chi miigwetch!* - Jesse Wentz

”



**#CultureCultura18**

# OVERVIEW



Photo: Martin Lipman

## 33 COUNTRIES, 169 DELEGATES

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The inaugural Americas Cultural Summit took place May 9-11, 2018 in Ottawa, Canada, hosted by the Canada Council for the Arts in partnership with the Ministry of Culture, Argentina, and the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA). Participation of cultural leaders and decision-makers from 33 countries (25 in the Americas) spanning five continents resulted in an unforgettable convergence of energy and ideas culminating in a joint Call to Action that will drive exchange and collaboration across the Americas for years to come.

## RICH CONVERSATIONS



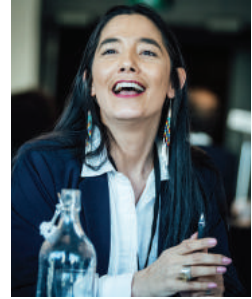
**Mauricio Delfin**

Photo: Martin Lipman

The Americas Cultural Summit launched rich conversations on the theme of cultural citizenship – a concept which emphasizes the expression of diverse cultural practices and identities alongside full participation in cultural life. Leading artists and thinkers inspired public and private funders, institutions, associations and practitioners in the room to consider their role and influence in building more vibrant, prosperous, open and inclusive societies, and to discuss how they could work together to achieve it.

## INSPIRING EXCHANGE

With simultaneous interpretation available in English, French and Spanish, delegates participated in the language of their choice and brought their rich and varied perspectives and experiences to a dynamic cross-cultural exchange. The inspiring exchange that took place during the day continued into the evenings, where delegates had the chance to experience the work of exceptional Canadian artists, performed in landmark venues throughout Canada's capital region.



**Odile Joannette**  
Photo: Martin Lipman

## LASTING RESULTS

Identifying common issues and priorities, such as the need for greater diversity and inclusion in the cultural sector, a vision for digital commons and support of Indigenous rights, delegates endorsed a joint Call to Action that will have lasting results. Among the high number of decision-makers in the room were seven Ministers of Culture and over 70 representatives of public agencies for the arts and culture. Argentina's Minister of Culture, Pablo Avelluto, proposed on the closing day that the second Americas Cultural Summit be hosted by Argentina in 2019, providing a platform to build on the momentum and outcomes of the inaugural summit.

# CALL TO ACTION

*The final Call to Action commits delegates to ongoing dialogue, collaboration and exchange. It reflects our shared values and strategic priorities, and celebrates the rich diversity that unites the Americas region.*



**Left to right: Kiley Arroyo, Helen Yung**  
Photo: Martin Lipman



**Claudia Guzmán**  
Photo: Martin Lipman

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The Call to Action statement proposed at the start of the Americas Cultural Summit was endorsed by delegates on the final day with the addition of references to youth, digital commons and Indigenous rights. Arts and culture funders, investors, organizations and practitioners from across the Americas will use the Call to Action to support their initiatives and collaborations.

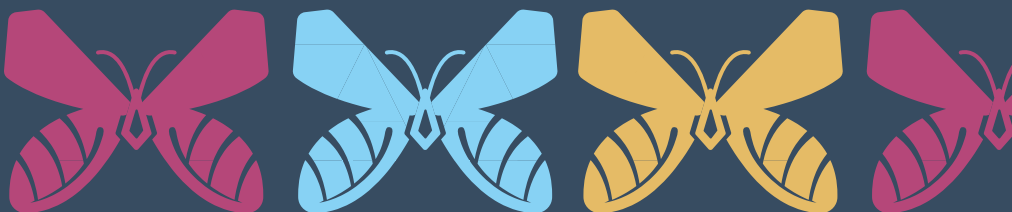
## CALL TO ACTION STATEMENT

*In May 2018 representatives from arts and culture agencies across the Americas and invited guests gathered in Ottawa, Canada to reimagine their role and potential to build more vibrant, prosperous, open and inclusive societies. Delegates addressed issues surrounding cultural citizenship through diverse lenses to interrogate current perspectives, and consider how they may work together towards common objectives.*

*Following these conversations, informed by the vision of the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA) and aspiring to the principles of UNESCO's 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the delegates of the Americas Cultural Summit commit to ongoing dialogue and collaboration with a view to:*

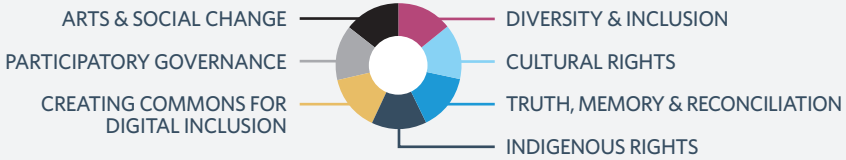
- *promote the relevance and value of arts and culture in public life, and work with state and non-state actors across sectors to ensure that arts and culture are a priority for governments and peoples in our region;*

- *advance and protect the right for all peoples to exercise freedom of artistic expression, and to access and participate in cultural life, be it through creation or appreciation;*
- *foster sustainable, vibrant, prosperous, open and inclusive societies that engage civil society and cross-sector actors, and in which participatory governance thrives;*
- *embrace the spirit of exchange between peoples in our region to share cultural goods, practices and ideas;*
- *acknowledge the “urgent need to respect and promote the inherent rights of indigenous peoples which derive from their political, economic and social structures and from their cultures, spiritual traditions, histories and philosophies” [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007];*
- *cultivate diversity of cultural expressions across our region, ensure that the contributions of youth are valued and supported, acknowledge inequalities and challenges, in particular in the digital era, strive for a digital commons, and realize the strength inherent in our difference.*



# SUMMIT STATISTICS

## CULTURAL CITIZENSHIP 2018 - SUMMIT THEMES



**92%** of post-event survey respondents are motivated to form new collaborations and partnerships

8

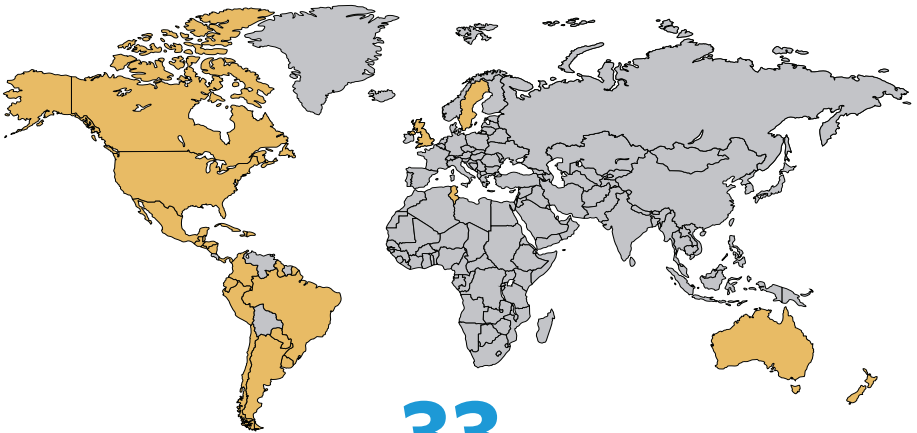
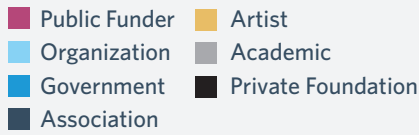
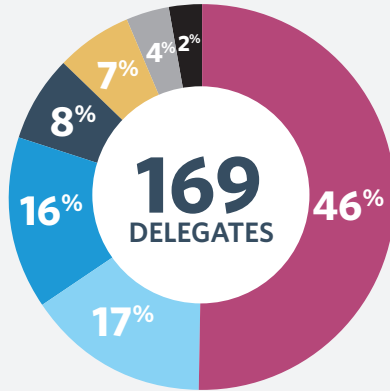
“

*Thank you for the inclusion of different countries in the panel discussions and presentations. I learned a lot and appreciated the diversity yet uniqueness of our cultures. In the end, we all share common goals and concerns.* - **Post-event Survey Respondent**

”



## PARTICIPATION DATA



## COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

Argentina, Australia, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, French Guiana, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Rapa Nui, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, United Kingdom, Uruguay, United States of America

# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## DAY ONE

The Summit opened with the acknowledgement that the event was taking place on the traditional, unceded territory of the Algonquin Nation. Monique Manatch, a Traditional Knowledge Keeper from the Algonquins of Barrier Lake First Nation and the Founder and Executive Director of Indigenous Culture and Media Innovations, offered an official welcome to delegates.



Left to right: Simon Brault, Pablo Avelluto. Photo: Martin Lipman

In their opening remarks, Summit collaborators invited delegates to consider their work in a framework of cultural citizenship and to not be gatekeepers of the past but, rather, to look for inclusive approaches to current global realities which include digital shifts, population migrations, conflict and reconciliation.

In her opening keynote address, United Nations Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, Karima Bennoune, spoke passionately about cultural rights as integral to human rights, and the power of culture to be a bridge between individuals, communities and nations.

*"Culture is like oxygen in its importance to human life".*

– Karima Bennoune



Karima Bennoune. Photo: Martin Lipman



Left to right: Dr. Eliza Chandler, Alonso Salazar, Mauricio Delfin, Simon Brault. Photo: Martin Lipman

The first panel of the day explored substantive elements of cultural citizenship. Open and inclusive decision-making processes alongside creative initiatives can build capacity among citizens to transform public space, affect social change and imagine shared futures. Panelists discussed ‘decolonized thinking’: considering who participates and how, whose needs are privileged and who remains invisible.

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Astra Taylor. Photo: Martin Lipman

In her keynote address, artist-activist Astra Taylor (USA) discussed her participation in, and chronicling of, a wave of recent activism—including the *Occupy Wall Street* movement in the United States and the Tahrir Square uprising in Egypt. In an era of ‘alternative facts’, Taylor urged delegates to consider how art and culture can promote empathy and help us find deeper truths and lasting change.



Left to right: Amor Muñoz, Laura Ruggiero, Michèle Stephenson, Taeyoon Choi. Photo: Martin Lipman

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In a discussion titled *Cultural Connectors: Creating Commons for Digital Inclusion*, the artists on the panel reminded delegates that digital technology is only a tool, and that values determine how these tools are used and the extent to which they advance cultural citizenship, social justice and equity. They presented several initiatives that engage citizens with digital technologies, from Taeyoon Choi’s *School for Poetic Computation*, which presents new ways of exploring technology in learning, to Amor Muñoz’s projects which bring technology to marginal areas of Mexico and promote social change.

In the final discussion on *Truth, Memory and Reconciliation*, panelists called for truth-telling and the acknowledgement of structural and historical inequities as preconditions for reconciliation. By creating opportunities for people with traditional knowledge and lived experience to influence cultural policy, public institutions can share power and promote cultural rights. Jesse Wenthe emphasized that reconciliation between Canada’s Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples has just begun; it will be a long journey to unearth the truth of past injustices and rebuild relationships.



Left to right: Javiera Parada, Jesse Wenthe, Fernando Griffith. Photo: Martin Lipman

## DAY TWO

The morning started with celebrated author Alberto Manguel delivering an eloquent keynote address about the transformative power of the arts for personal and social change.



Alberto Manguel. Photo: Martin Lipman

“

*A work of art that moves us carries within it, for us, several transformative possibilities... It can tell us who we are and teach us to imagine a future in which...we can stay alive, together—but in a balanced way—on this ill-treated planet.*

”

– Alberto Manguel

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The morning’s roundtable discussion, *Creating Participatory Futures*, invited public investors in arts and culture from across the Americas to discuss how each is creating conditions which respect, promote and protect the right of everyone to take part in cultural life. It revealed some of the challenges public agencies face in adopting participatory approaches to cultural policymaking, which compel them to reconsider the accessibility and responsiveness of their processes and structures.



Left to right: Martin Inthalmoussu, Juan Meliá, Magdalena Moreno, Olivia Grange, Leandro Carvalho, Andrea Pereda, Simon Brault, Maria González. Photo: Martin Lipman



Left to right: Cristóbal Bianchi, María Claudia Duran, Angie Pont, Tito Hasbún, Carolyn Warren, Rhodie Désir.  
Photo: Martin Lipman

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The final panel discussion featured *Case Studies in Social Change Through the Arts*. Artists and cultural workers discussed how projects integrating poetry, dance, music and theatre have become platforms for critically reflecting on issues of social justice by empowering individuals and communities and giving voice to their stories. Case studies highlighted that communities which are marginalized often have rich forms of cultural expression and strong creative ambitions—what they need is support to bring those ambitions and expressions to life.

In keeping with the collaborative spirit of the Summit, delegates engaged in small group discussions to build a shared understanding of the main takeaways from the Summit. Strong statements were issued, urging each other to continue to dialogue and engage in critical self-reflection grounded in principles of reciprocity, responsibility and reparation. “*Do everything differently!*” was one group’s response, and others emphasized the importance of the call to action being just that, action, rooted in shared values.



Left to right: Michael Trent, Nic Aziz, Helen Yung.  
Photo: Martin Lipman



Left to right: Guylaine Normandin, Céline DeLaval, Michaël Christophe. Photo: Martin Lipman



*Reimagine the future! Create a cultural commons based on decolonization, intersectionality and justice.*

*Build more presence with shared intentions north to south and south to north in the Americas, building and improving upon existing programs and institutions.*

*Hope and imagination should be sustainable development goals and human rights.*



**- Statements issued by open discussion groups**

In the closing plenary, Simon Brault (Director and CEO, Canada Council for the Arts) and Magdalena Moreno (Executive Director, IFACCA) spoke of the Call to Action — endorsed by IFACCA members in the Americas Chapter meeting earlier in the day. Simon Brault emphasized how it is crucial for delegates to continue the discussion and take action on collective aspirations for positive change. He noted that the work ahead is complex and will take time, but that important networks have been established that will help to move things forward. Monique Manatch, Traditional Knowledge Keeper from the Algonquins of Barrier Lake First Nation, returned to the stage to officially close the Americas Cultural Summit and to send everyone off with a traditional Algonquin blessing.

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## **VIRTUAL REALITY SALON**

In collaboration with the National Film Board of Canada and the US National Endowment for the Arts, a Virtual Reality Salon complemented the Americas Cultural Summit program. Delegates experienced VR programming from both Canadian and American media artists.

# FROM DIALOGUE TO ACTION

With the joint call to action as inspiration, delegates of the Americas Cultural Summit are already moving ahead to make positive change in their networks, communities and countries. Working in partnership across countries and regions, the arts and culture sector is showing its leadership in building greater diversity and inclusion, and in bringing a vision of cultural citizenship to society. In terms of artistic and cultural exchange between countries, Mexico's National Fund for the Arts and Culture (FONCA) will support the travel of four Mexican theatre companies invited to present their work at Toronto's Festival RUTAS (Aluna Theatre) in 2019, as a direct result of relationships built at the Summit. The Americas Cultural Summit also facilitated the revitalization of the Americas Chapter of IFACCA, the members of which have already begun working more closely together to demonstrate the impact that the region has on the world. In October 2019, IFACCA members of the Americas Chapter will meet at *X Performance Arts Encounter* (ENARTES) in Mexico City to develop collaborative initiatives. An agreement signed during the Summit between the Canada Council for the Arts and Paraguay's Ministry of Culture will also result in increased artistic exchange between Canada and Paraguay in the near future. Finally, it was proposed that the second Americas Cultural Summit be hosted in Argentina in 2019, providing a platform to build on the momentum and outcomes of the inaugural event.

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Left to right: Anne-Marie Jean, Jean-Pierre Dion, Louise Sicuro, Saada El-Akhrass  
Photo: Martin Lipman



# EVENING EVENTS

In addition to the day-time sessions, the Americas Cultural Summit was enhanced by evening events at some of the most iconic landmarks in the National Capital region.



**Minister Pablo Avelluto.** Photo: Martin Lipman

The Summit began with a welcome reception at the National Gallery of Canada where delegates received a warm welcome to Ottawa and were able to mix and mingle prior to the start of the Summit. The event was hosted by the Ministry of Culture, Argentina, and the Embassy of Argentina to Canada.

After an engaging and inspiring first day at the Summit, delegates were invited to the grand setting of the Canadian Museum of History with the opportunity to explore the Canadian History hall as well as an amazing performance by Cris Derkson Orchestral Powwow.

After two intense and thought-provoking days, the first-ever Americas Cultural Summit came to a celebratory close with a fun and inclusive evening in the Canada Council for the Arts' *Ajagemo* exhibition space with performances by Les 7 doigts de la main circus collective alongside the Gypsy Kumbia Orchestra with its dance and music influenced by Colombia and Eastern Europe. Friendships, connections and future collaborations were cemented.



**Gypsy Kumbia Orchestra.**

# RELATED MEETINGS

## BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL MEETINGS

The unprecedented gathering of countries and public agencies for the Americas Cultural Summit afforded the opportunity for various bilateral and multilateral meetings before and during the event.

For the first time, numerous funders from Canada, the USA and Mexico met to explore common interests and the potential for trilateral exchange and collaboration. Around the table were representatives from the Canada Council for the Arts, Canadian Heritage, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Mellon Foundation, the Secretaria de Cultura of the United Mexican States, Mexico's National Fund for the Arts and Culture (FONCA) and the British Council. Later that day, the Canada Council and Mexico's Secretaria de Cultura signed a formal Letter of Intent to pursue future collaborative initiatives.



Left to right: Juan Meliá, Jimena Lara, Simon Brault.

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## IFACCA MEETINGS



Bilel Aboudi, Dennis Marita, Simon Brault, Magdalena Moreno, Rosemary Mangope, Staffan Forssell, Jimena Lara, Stephen Wainwright. Photo: Martin Lipman

The International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA) held its board meeting in the two days before the Summit, advancing the important work of this international network, including planning for the 8th World Summit on Arts and Culture, which will be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in March 2019.

IFACCA also welcomed a new board member, Jimena Lara (Director of International, Secretariat of Culture of the United Mexican States) who will strengthen the Americas presence in the IFACCA network.

IFACCA hosted a welcome reception for all of its members attending the Americas Cultural Summit and also organized a meeting of its Americas Chapter, at which the proposed Call to Action was discussed and endorsed, and where the members talked about future opportunities to gather and build on the momentum of their days together in Ottawa.



Participants of the IFACCA Americas Chapter Meeting. Photo: Martin Lipman

## CANADIAN PUBLIC ARTS FUNDERS MEETING

Members of the Canadian Public Arts Funders (CPAF) network also took advantage of their involvement in the Americas Cultural Summit to convene a Strategic Development Meeting, hosted by the Canada Council for the Arts. The theme of the meeting was Public Arts Funding Developments: From Regional to International.



Members of the Canadian Public Arts Funders (CPAF) network.

## MINISTERIAL BREAKFAST

Canada's Minister of Canadian Heritage, the Honourable Mélanie Joly, hosted a ministerial breakfast for representatives from nine countries. Ministers discussed the impact of digital realities on the cultural sector, and Minister Joly stressed the importance of diversity of content online, discoverability and net neutrality. She invited members of the cultural sector to take bold actions that will support diversity of content online.



20 Photo: Canadian Heritage / Patrimoine canadien



**Minister Mélanie Joly.**  
Photo: Canadian Heritage / Patrimoine canadien

“

*Congratulations to Simon Brault, head of the Canada Council, and his team for a great Americas Cultural Summit. Once again, Canada is showing leadership in the arts sector at the international level. We were also able to create allies on the importance of protecting cultural diversity on the internet and creating lasting friendships with our South American friends. [Mélanie Joly, #culturecultura18]*

”

# THANK YOU

*The Canada Council for the Arts, the Ministry of Culture, Argentina, and the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies sincerely thank every delegate, partner and supporter for their participation in the inaugural Americas Cultural Summit in Ottawa, Canada. Your presence and engagement made this event an unqualified success.*

*We look forward to future collaborations and exchanges as we all work towards an inclusive and sustainable arts and culture sector.*

*See you in Argentina next year!*

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## COLLABORATORS

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## PARTNERS

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Musée des beaux-arts  
du Canada





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