**August 2020: Arts and Culture and the Provincial Election**

ArtsLink NB represents the interests, concerns, and contributions of anglophone artists and culture workers in New Brunswick. **The cultural sector employs 7,500 people and had a direct economic impact of $550 million in New Brunswick in 2017, according to Statistics Canada**.

Arts and culture generate a sense of identity and a richer quality of life. However, despite the benefit they bring to our economy, our quality of life, and social fabric, artists and cultural workers are plagued by low incomes and the lack of a framework that reflects their needs as professionals.

**During the global crisis of 2020, artists and cultural industries have seen a huge hit to their stability.** Artists and cultural workers, who already face precarious employment, lost an average of $25,189 in income due to cancelled gigs and projects when the pandemic hit, according to ArtsPond’s COVID-19 impact survey.

**We ask that, in response to the ongoing crisis, your party:**

* Position itself as a facilitator and adapt its programs according to the current needs of the individuals and the sector as a whole.
* Give tourism and stakeholders clear guidelines on the production and presentation of artistic and cultural activities. The funds to develop these activities must be allocated to cultural and artistic organizations.
* Hire artists and cultural mediators to create online training modules and content (video, music, graphics, voice over), and to deliver content via videoconference;
* Make available supplementary funds specifically for artists and culture workers, separate from the already existing budgets of Tourism, Heritage, and Culture so ensure the stability of the funds that organizations and individuals currently rely upon.
* Create a stimulus package for the revival of the sector.

**We also ask that under your party, the NB government allocate an additional $5 million to Arts and Culture (which would serve the Cultural Branch of Tourism, Heritage and Culture as well as artsnb).** New Brunswick has an excellent cultural policy, *Creative Futures*, and we are eager to see its important strategic goals fully realized.

*Creative Futures* was revised in 2014, and it aims to secure the place of arts and culture in our everyday lives by supporting creation, preservation, and celebration of present and past cultural heritage and the development of our cultural future.

**Consider these questions when developing your arts and culture platform:**

* Our cultural industries (film, performing arts, etc.) are significant economic drivers. How will you support their further strategic development?
* The New Brunswick Arts Board (artsnb) is the provincial arts council, providing funding to artists and thus encouraging them to live and create in New Brunswick. How will you support and enhance the ability of artsnb to provide adequate funding to its constituents?
* Public art brings the arts into the everyday lives of communities across the province. How will you support the Public Art Policy? What other measures will your party propose to bring more art into the public sphere?
* Many NB artists currently live below the poverty line ($20,200) because the nature of their work does not fit with current criteria for social programs and tax measures. How will you ensure that these programs acknowledge the specific character of creative work?
* Evidence-based research demonstrates that arts education encourages creative problem-solving, collaboration, adaptability, and successful learning in other subjects such as math and science. What specific measures will you enable an outstanding K-12 arts education program?
* The contribution of arts and culture to provincial tourism is widely recognized. What action will you take to further develop cultural tourism in NB?
* What measures will you take to ensure that creators (writers, visual artists, composers, etc.) are fairly compensated for the use of their work in educational settings and elsewhere?
* We know that population decline and youth out-migration pose acute challenges to New Brunswick. What do you consider to be the most important role for arts and culture in addressing these challenges? How will you support new measures aimed at attracting new populations and retaining our youth, especially those in the arts and cultural sectors?
* Many artists live below the poverty line. Promising young artists are leaving the province for opportunities elsewhere. More investment is needed, from support for arts education in the K-12 system to grants for artists to fiscal and other measures needed to recognize the professional status of artists. Will you support $5 million in additional funding for the ongoing implementation of the path laid out by the cultural policy?
* What funds will you put toward creating permanent positions for Indigenous arts administrative staff through the Mawi’art Collective and at artsnb? Presently, these staff work on annual contracts attached to projects that must be renewed every year. This creates undue burden on already lean organizations.

Together with the AAAPNB and artsnb, ArtsLink NB and its members await your response. We will be vigilant to ensure that commitments made during the campaign are commitments kept by our political representatives.