

A United Cultural Front: Strengthening Canadian Identity in the Face of Economic Challenges



Executive Summary. *In response to recent US tariffs on Canadian goods, ARABELLA and ArtBridgeCanada are launching a nationwide initiative to strengthen our cultural sector. The following outlines our strategy to unite Canadians through arts and culture, presenting concrete actions for community engagement and sector sustainability.*

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Recent developments in Canadian-US relations, including the US imposition of steep tariffs on all Canadian goods, have tested our longstanding tradition of neighbourly cooperation. While our two countries have historically forged strong economic, social, and cultural bonds, these new economic measures threaten to undermine the values that Canadians hold dear.

The cultural sector contributes over \$53.1 billion annually to Canada's GDP and employs more than 650,000 Canadians. Today's economic challenges threaten this vibrant ecosystem, but they also present an opportunity to reinforce our cultural sovereignty.

We at **ARABELLA** and **ArtBridgeCanada** believe that a resilient Canadian identity - rooted in a shared sense of pride, creativity, and community - is essential to withstand and rise above such challenges. Art and culture lie at the heart of this identity, serving as both a reflection of our collective experiences and a beacon of hope for our future.

The Power of Culture in Uncertain Times

1. **Fostering Unity:** The arts transcend politics and economics, reminding us of our shared humanity. By celebrating our diverse cultural heritage, we strengthen our social fabric and stand together with greater resolve.
2. **Inspiring Innovation and Adaptability:** From gallery walls to performance stages, creative expression showcases our capacity to adapt, evolve, and forge new pathways - even in the face of adversity.
3. **Preserving Our Heritage:** The richness of Canadian culture is built on the mosaic of our Indigenous roots and the contributions of immigrants from around the world. Protecting and amplifying these voices ensures that our stories endure and continue to shape our identity.

Our Call to Action

1. **Support the Arts:** Attend local exhibitions, festivals, and performances. By purchasing tickets, artworks, or merchandise, you directly contribute to sustaining the creators who tell Canada's stories.
2. **Encourage Collaboration:** Foster partnerships between artists, businesses, and community groups. When we pool our resources and knowledge, we create a vibrant ecosystem that amplifies Canadian voices at home and abroad.
3. **Advocate for Policy and Funding:** Engage with local representatives and decision-makers. Let them know that the arts are not a luxury but a fundamental pillar of our national identity and a crucial driver of socio-economic resilience.
4. **Spread the Word:** Use social media, community forums, and personal networks to champion Canadian culture. Share the success stories of local artists and organizations, and encourage others to do the same.

Moving Forward Together

By strengthening our collective cultural voice, we can navigate today's economic challenges with unity and confidence. Let's channel our creativity and passion into sustaining the rich tapestry of Canadian arts, ensuring it remains a source of pride, resilience, and inspiration for generations to come.

Thank you for standing with us in support of Canadian culture. Together, we will continue to celebrate our shared heritage, nurture new creative talents, and safeguard our identity - even when faced with external pressures.

In solidarity and with gratitude,

The Teams at

ARABELLA and ArtBridgeCanada

dr.brian.usher@artbridgecanada.ca