Are We American? Canadian Culture in North America

SESSION VIII: OBSERVING CULTURE

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15 FEBRUARY 2008
The *Cultural Observatory* concept

- Originally French / Europe
- Augustin Girard, DEP
- L’Observatoire du Grenoble
- Mark Schuster – “bridging the cultural policy research infrastructure”
- Serving the cultural policy research community
- Collaborating with the community
Welcome to LabforCulture.org
The essential tool for everyone in arts and culture who creates, collaborates, shares and produces across borders in Europe.

Most Recent Items

North-South Centre - European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity
The North-South Centre was the outcome of a process started in 1984, when the Portuguese Parliament hosted a conference held by the Council of Europe...

Virtueel Platform e-Culture Event Agenda
The up to date event agenda of internationally oriented, independent expertise centre Virtueel Platform. VP stimulates innovation a...

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What's in the Blogs

Latinamerica
Contemporary Photography Exhibition tour
Description: "Conferida de Monato" is a project developed and curated by Carlos Puy, one of the most relevant professionals in this area in Cuba...

Jorge Rodriguez | 01 Feb 2008
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Latest Discussions

Latinamerica
Contemporary Photography in Barcelona
Event info - Name: Exposicion Casa America Barcelona
Salmeron-Gorindo Host The Arts and Entertainment Catalog
Types Exhibit Time and Place...

Jorge Rodriguez | 01 Feb 2008
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Cultural Observatories in Canada

- 2 Canadian public sector services have leveraged the Observatory concept ... but in different ways

**Canadian Cultural Observatory**
- Knowledge aggregation and exchange on-line via interactive Culturescope.ca portal and off-line through partnered events
- Managed by Department of Canadian Heritage but collaborative
- Focus on policy research trends, information, no original research

**l’Observatoire de la culture et des communications du Québec**
- Focus on managing data surveys, research and analysis
- Dissemination through traditional research publications
- Part of of the l’Institut de la statistique du Québec
- Draws on expertise of the l’Institut as well as through a number of sector advisory bodies
Sommes-nous américains? La culture canadienne dans le contexte nord-américain
L'Institut d'études canadiennes de McGill, 13e conférence annuelle
du 13 au 15 février 2008
Montréal, Québec

Nouvelles

Manchettes :
- Canadian book industry 'flat' as titles flood market - The Globe and Mail (disponible en anglais seulement) - 2008-02-02
- La musique, une industrie en décroissance - Cyberpresse.ca - 2008-01-29
- Le gouvernement du Canada participe au lancement du Mois de l'histoire des Noirs - Patrimoine canadien - 2008-01-31

Événements

Ajouts récents :
- Appel du Communications : 16e Assemblée générale (ICOMOS) date limite : le 15 février 2008 Ville de Québec (Québec) - 2008-02-15
- Call for Workshop Proposals: 13th International Metropolis Conference Deadline: February 28, 2008 Bonn, Germany (disponible en anglais seulement) - 2008-02-28
- Gouvernance et participation démocratique au sein des minorités linguistiques et nationales 2008-02-19
Is it possible to define and measure the cultural activity of nations?

- to define? No
- to depict? Perhaps
- to measure? Sometimes.
- to observe? Mais oui!
- how to observe? Objectively, except with a bias towards the importance of culture and cultural policy within the broader activities of society and economy and the public agendas.
- what to observe? The plethora of measurements, studies, data, reports, research and analysis, announcements, data and information both qualitative and quantitative
- what perspective? That of the community of practice, who are also the producers of that knowledge.
- Defining user needs? By engaging them and supporting their engagement with each other.
What is the appropriate role of governments in gathering and disseminating information on the cultural sector? (1)

**Gathering information**

- an undeniable public sector activity (e.g. Statistics Canada, performance data or cultural policy and programs, commissioned studies)

  - is not and should not be the only source

**Using information**

- public cultural authorities need it for good policy making and program management

  - cultural sector for good decision making in the delivery of culture

  - The cultural research community to provide new knowledge and analysis

  - the media to critically review
What is the appropriate role of governments in gathering and disseminating information on the cultural sector? (2)

Disseminating information
– a more complex question
- is government directly responsible for disseminating all information, notwithstanding source or should it focus only ‘official’ information?
- what is the proper editorial stance?
- what are informational needs of the community and what type of services are required to meet those needs?
- what degree of interactivity, networking, exchange would a full-service observatory provide?
Cultural Policy Timelines
Revisit cultural policy across the decades

Timeline of Canadian Federal Cultural Policy Milestones – 1849 to 2005

Timeline of U.S. Federal Cultural Policy Milestones – 1787 to 2006
Timeline of Canadian Federal Cultural Policy Milestones – 1849 to 2005

Compiled by Sharon Jeannotte for the Canadian Cultural Observatory

Visit Canadian cultural policy across the decades

Timeline of Canadian Federal Cultural Milestones presents over 150 years of key Canadian cultural legislation, policy decisions, reports, programs and federal management of culture organized into nine sub-themes: Cultural Policy, Arts, Broadcasting, Copyright, Digital Media, and Video, Museums and Heritage, Publishing, and Sound Recording.
Timeline of Canadian Federal Cultural Policy Milestones – 1849 to 2005

Cultural Policy

1990
Business Development Bank of Canada establishes the Cultural Industries Development Fund to support entrepreneurs in book and magazine publishing, sound recording, film and video production, and multimedia

1991
Task Force on Professional Training for the Cultural Sector in Canada (White-Rossignol) releases its report, Art is never a given

1991
Legislation establishing a Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship passes

1992
National Sectoral Council for Culture (later renamed the Cultural Human Resources Council) established

1992
Standing Committee on Communications and Culture releases its report The Ties That Bind recommending a 5% increase in funding for the arts and stable funding for the Canada Council and the CBC

1993
Department of Communications and Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship disbanded and responsibilities transferred to newly-created Department of Canadian Heritage (along with responsibility for national parks, amateur sport, official languages, off-reserve Aboriginal programs and citizen participation)

1994
Canada joins the World Trade Organization and ratifies the Uruguay Round of negotiations on the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) which exempts cultural services (but not
How has the Cultural Observatory movement, often considered a European invention, fared in the Americas?

- it is alive, but often under different alias

- concept easier to embrace in Latin America given a more “European” take-up of culture in general – lots of observatarios

- is as strong or weak as the public cultural sector since in the end, as focus is on on cultural development for public policy-making

- overshadowed by entities that focus more on sectoral representation or advocacy (which can compromise the impartial or neutral stance required of a model observatory)

- works better when there is already some aspects of a cultural information system in place. Otherwise, priority is on primary research or building information systems.

- scoping often a challenge (general or narrow)

- easier at the national, sub-national, local level with public support

- much more difficult across national borders, languages which requires a networking function and supra-national funding.
What are the successes and failures of cultural observatories in North America and elsewhere?

- Canadian observatories exist due to public sector funding, but not without difficulty / mandate / sustainability issues.

- U.S. observatory-like entities are primarily located within academic institutions (Princeton, Chicago) while others that (Center for Arts and Culture) have closed down.

- Latin American Observatories are a mix, suffering due under-developed cultural information systems to draw on.

- Proposal for an “Inter-American Cultural Policy Observatory” has been superseded by CIS efforts.

- UNESCO Network of Cultural Observatories has been moribund for a number of years.

- Observatory function proposed to support the UNESCO cultural diversity convention, but was not adopted due to concerns over costs of a traditional observatory structure.

- European LabforCulture, funded by the rich European Cultural Foundation as well as the EU, Member States and other foundations is, carefully finding its groove.
ervatorio Interamericano de Políticas Cultura
Inter-american Cultural Policy Observatory

Primera Fase Virtual del OIPC, desarrollada por la Unidad de Desarrollo Social y Educación de la OEA
First Virtual Phase of the ICPO, developed by the Unit for Social Development and Education of the OAS