

**CAMDO**  
**16 June 2009**

**Presentation by Doug Sigurdson, Head of the Visual Arts Section  
Canada Council for the Arts**

**News**

Melinda Mollineaux is replacing Doug as officer for the Art Museums and Public Galleries program for the Toronto and West regions.

About CAMDO's funding, in the mini-competition for funding to arts service organizations, CAMDO shines; its excellence is recognized by its peers.

Canada Council is being required by Treasury Board to conduct a "strategic review," which requires that Council identify the weakest 5% of programs, which then may be cut by Treasury or reallocated to higher performing programs. The review criteria are: relevance, effectiveness and efficiency.

Treasury will make no public statements about the process or what Council reports to them. The results of the review will not be known until the government's February 2010 budget.

**Art Museums and Public Galleries program review – results of consultations**

The maximum award cap of \$300,000 will be removed. Relative to other programs at Council, such as in performing arts where as much as \$2 million can go to a single institution, this is a modest program with a total budget of only \$8 million.

The evaluation criteria will be simplified, from eight criteria, which was too complicated:

- artistic excellence is still the dominant criteria
- institutional planning – the expression of financial need must be tied to a plan; but there is no prescribed kind of plan; each organization's interests can be self-identified; each organization will be evaluated in terms of its institutional intelligence – how planning is done – how mindful it is of human, financial and physical resources
- curatorial program – how it advances knowledge and understanding
- dissemination – part of how an institution's program advances knowledge; includes publications but also other media (e.g. online)
- institutional effectiveness – how the institution locates itself in relation to other institutions and how it locates its program in the public imagination

The grant term will continue to be three years.

There is a new system for presenting financial information – CADAC – which enables data to be aggregated and used in research.

### **Other issues**

The funding of Venice Biennale was raised last year at the CAMDO meeting in Calgary. This year Canada Council had to step in to make up for loss of funding from the National Gallery of Canada. Despite NGC and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) not being involved, Canada looked good this year. Council is aware of the need for consistent stewardship of the Biennale program. A new configuration is needed.

Comment: CAMDO members were approached and many helped fundraise for it this year.

DS: It has been suggested that Council should not be involved at all.

Question: Where does Council stand on the peer review process for the Art Museum and Public Galleries program?

DS: It is still unresolved – art museum directors believe jurors must be knowledgeable and sensitive, i.e. art museum directors themselves but to have directors judging themselves suggests a conflict of interest, which used to be dealt with by a process called “managing conflict”. During the consultations, it was suggested that the applicant group might be split into two with jurors selected from one group to judge the other. The problem is how to split the group: collecting vs. non-collecting; autonomous vs. non-autonomous. From the consultations, it was clear that no one wants the group to be divided by type, to avoid hierarchy. This concern about hierarchy among institutions comes out of the experience with the SOFI program, in which certain institutions were accorded status as “key” institutions and received disproportionately higher awards. There was a lack of transparency and slippage in the process. So, this issue remains unresolved but it will be resolved by November this year.

Question: How much room is there for changing the CADAC forms? There are a lot of inconsistencies, errors.

DS: The system is being fine-tuned. It usually takes 2-3 years to work out all the bugs of a new process.

Comment: Found CADAC easy to use; a great advantage to be able to edit information right up to the time you finally submit it.

Question: Is there some way to coordinate advocacy around the strategic review?

DS: It is disconcerting that an outside party is able to make decisions affecting the substance of Council programs. However, the review will be conducted using Council's own strategic plan priorities: focus on artists, support for arts organizations, equity, partnerships, and efficiency.