



Alliance for Arts and Culture

## Presentation to the Standing Committee on Finance

16 October 2009

*Alliance executive director Amir Ali Alibhai presented a brief to the BC Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services on October 16, addressing the cultural community's concerns about this year's drastic cutbacks in cultural sector funding. The following is the text of that brief.*

***“[British Columbia] is the place for local arts and culture. People agree emphatically that funding for the arts should not be left up to private business and foundations, but should get a boost from local governments. Ninety-one per cent of B.C. residents praise the selection of [arts and cultural] events and activities in their community, and it's the only region in Canada where there's complete agreement with the idea that a vibrant cultural scene is great for the local economy.”***

“We Know What You're Thinking”

Darrell Bricker and John Wright of Ipsos Reid

The Alliance for Arts and Culture represents over 350 member arts and cultural organizations and individuals active throughout the Lower Mainland. This membership has an incredible scope and reach. All the arts disciplines are represented and their combined audiences number well over a million people annually in this province. These members employ artists and cultural workers in the thousands; they have many thousands of volunteers that put in hundreds of thousands of hours; they have volunteer boards comprised of citizens from all walks of life, including many influential community and business leaders. Their combined budgets represent tens of millions of dollars, leveraged from the small yet critical investments made by the provincial government through the BC Arts Council (BCAC) and through Gaming grants. With the current cuts to gaming grants and the anticipated cuts to the BCAC indicated in the ministry service plan there is unprecedented fear and instability in our sector. There are examples of organizations shutting their doors, or job losses and of drastic reductions in programming. In the end it is British Columbians that lose out as their access to arts and culture is severely affected.

We feel that this is a time of crisis for the arts and culture sector in British Columbia and that action must be taken to correct the situation.

Our key recommendations are as follows:

- That our government restore arts and culture funding to the \$19.5-million level of the 2008-09 budget; a level that is still well below the recommendations of past Finance Committees;

- That the British Columbia Arts Council's arms-length relationship with the province be maintained by funding it through the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts, not through gaming funds, but rather through legislated appropriations;
- Direct Access Gaming grants must be fully restored and the 33% allotment for arts, culture, and other non-profit and charitable organizations be honoured;
- One-year funding commitments to arts and culture organizations through the Gaming and Policy Enforcement Branch at the Ministry of Housing and Social Development that were rescinded this year should be restored;
- Maintain the multi-year funding program beyond the current three-year commitments.

### **The Current Situation**

After eight years of reasonable evolution of support for the arts under a Liberal government, the arts and culture sector in BC is possibly in the midst of its biggest crisis ever.

Given the global economic situation and sharply reduced revenues, the BC government has been trying desperately to keep its deficit down for this year, and has made a number of controversial moves that affect the arts and culture sector.

Given that health and education take up most of the budget (and most governments understandably can't stomach the outcry from cutting much there) cuts have been made to other areas. The most significant for our purposes has been the cuts to community arts, culture and sports groups.

To make things more complicated, the cuts have not been entirely straightforward. Different numbers, changing funding sources and shrinking budgets has led to a lot of confusion about what the real story is.

While the cuts for this year are argued to be anywhere from 11 to 26 percent, the main focus of the cuts has been at the community level, where they have been the most devastating.

There are fears in the arts and culture community that because of the lack of information or any commitments at this time about the future, the cuts for next year and the year after that could be up to 90 percent.

When the budget was tabled in February 2009, the government was expecting a 40 percent budget shortfall for the arts. Using a \$7 million surplus from the prior fiscal year, funds were advanced to the B.C. Arts Council to disburse, in advance of the cuts, to its client base. Groups were told not to spend that money at that time because they would not be getting as much in the coming year.

With the current budget, the BC Arts Council was cut further. Without core funding for the council's obligations, the government took gaming funds to bring them to their normal budget level, but took that money from the same cash pool that funds the

community gaming funds Direct Access grant program. This has led to a cash crunch in that grant program and a smaller pie for community-based arts, sport and environmental groups to share.

This means that, on the government's books, the projected spending on arts and culture is dropping to \$3.6 million from \$19.5 million. But this was because the \$13.3 million spent by the B.C. Arts Council last year came from general revenue, which is now coming from gaming. The \$3.6 million remaining on the ministry's books pays the salaries and administrative costs of the council.

The gaming grant program was cut to \$131 million from last year's \$156 million, and was forced to absorb the B.C. Arts Council's budget. This meant that funds ran short and hundreds of grant applications were rejected or reduced. Grants to community sports groups shrank from \$29 million to \$19 million, with many groups allotted a fraction of their requested funds.

This year, the province's community gambling grant program approved only 350 of the 953 applications for funds requested by cultural organizations, for a total of \$8.9 million. Last year, 840 applications were approved, totaling \$18 million.

A handful of this year's rejected Direct Access applications were reconsidered and approved by the government because they had been promised three years of stable funding. Cabinet found \$20 million to rescue those multi-year deals to be split between several hundred community arts, sport and environmental groups.

The 130 arts groups with multi-year deals will get about \$3.2 million this year and next, but the rest are out of luck.

According to the *Vancouver Sun*, last year, the gaming grant program and the B.C. Arts Council distributed \$31.3 million combined, along with \$4.2 million in legacy funds for a total of \$35.57 million.

Again, using *the Vancouver Sun's* numbers, this year -- if you include the \$7 million in emergency funds -- the total funds distributed through the gaming grant process, the B.C. Arts Council and other various grant programs will be \$31.65 million.

By the *Vancouver Sun's* numbers, the drop in funding to the arts from last year to this is 11 per cent, about \$3.7 million, but only after the \$3.2-million infusion from the government's contingency accounts, which was the arts community's share of the government's \$20-million two-year rescue. This also deals just with grants to the BC Arts Council and the gaming monies. If you include money for administration, the cut is 26% of the overall investment.

No matter how you slice it, unless something changes, the cuts for next year will be much more devastating than this year.

If we don't succeed in changing the government's course, the cuts will be 85 percent for next year, and 92 percent after that.

## **The case for public investment in arts and culture**

***“I would also like to thank the BC provincial funding for the arts, something that is lacking at the moment if you’ve read your local newspaper... Without that funding, I don’t think that I would be standing here this evening.”***

Kim Cattrall, in accepting her star on Canada’s Walk of Fame

Why should we fund the arts? How does this link to our economic health and vitality?

The best way to frame the answer is to say that public investment in the arts is the “R&D” of cultural spending -- the seed money that stimulates the creative sector.

Many of the skills, attitudes, abilities of people who work in the creative industries depend on this seed money – which has an effect on industries not normally associated directly with arts and culture, such as architecture, design, new media, etc.

Public investment in the arts allows community-based arts organizations to leverage money from other sectors, and also leverages the social capital of thousands of volunteer hours of activity - resulting in healthier, happier, economically competitive, and livable communities.

Creative communities are leading the growth of the knowledge-based economy, and local cultural amenities attract tourists who spend more and stay longer in the communities they visit.

Public investment in the arts has a social impact as well. The arts represent diversity, education, thoughtfulness, creativity, enrichment, dialogue and debate – these are all public goods.

Public investment allows everyone – not just the rich -- to have exposure to first-rate art, ensuring that the arts touch the lives of as many people as possible.

*Learning through the Arts*, a three year national research study conducted by Queen’s University concluded that involvement in the arts contributed to student achievement as much as 11 percentile points higher in math than their peers. Ninety per cent of parents reported that the arts motivated their children to learn. Teachers, parents, artists, and administrators talked about how the arts motivated children, referring to the emotional, physical, cognitive, and social benefits of learning in and through the arts.

According to the Conference Board of Canada, many educators also believe that creative activities provide positive learning experiences, such as:

- Helping to improve communication skills and promoting creative thinking
- Contributing to improved literacy and language development through libraries and reading programs
- Helping to develop information technology skills critical for employment in the knowledge economy as creative activities often involve information and communications technologies

Art programs for youth and seniors measurably improve the lives of participants, visibly fostering healthier communities and innovatively addressing issues of youth at risk and eldercare.

A popular misconception circulates that arts funding supports obscure programs that otherwise would have no audience.

In truth most presenters and companies here have large audiences and a great number of sellout performances. The overall attendance at cultural events in Vancouver alone easily tops 1,000,000 annually.

The challenge that a market economy presents is not insufficient demand, but rather that live performances and high quality artwork by respected professional artists cannot be offered at affordable prices.

So government's role in this scenario is to keep excellent live professional arts performance and the work of artists and cultural workers within reach for the public.

BCAC funding is not a *subsidy of the arts*, **but of the public**, which demonstrates its desire and demand for arts and culture by coming out in the hundreds and hundreds of thousands to performances in communities large and small across British Columbia.

In addition, arts and culture reinforce and serve, in measurable and meaningful ways, the core values of British Columbians as evidenced in your government's Strategic Plan, prioritizing education, literacy, healthy living, support systems, and employment and economic health.

### **Education and Literacy**

We do an excellent job with our mainstream kids. But many kids—too many—are at risk. For one reason or another they are unreachable in the usual ways. So often it is the arts that reach them. I am going to read a quote from a letter written by a young person who was in a school audience for a performance by Judith Marcuse's DanceArts that addressed violence. She said:

"I don't know if anyone will get this, or even take the time to read this, but I really mean every single word I write here. You saved me. I never thought I could be saved, but you did. Who knew that a play could do so much for someone like me?"

Art reaches kids and restores futures.

### **Healthy Living and Support Systems**

Cognitive decline and Alzheimer's affects 25% of Canadians over 65. By 2015, more of us will be over 65 than under 15, and we have one of the highest life expectancies in the world. A Netherlands study indicates that the cost of elder care is a primary determinant of health care costs, exceeding the cost of treating life threatening illnesses like heart disease and cancer by a wide margin<sup>1</sup>.

Keeping our elders vibrant, engaged, sparkling, and living independently impacts their quality of life, but also the public purse. Arts and culture play a vital role here. Studies

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov:80/pmc/articles/PMC28601/>

indicate clear and measurable social and health benefits of cultural engagement for elders, positively affecting their independence<sup>2</sup>. Cutting arts programming will adversely affect the elderly, especially women, who are the majority and great lovers of arts and culture.

## **Jobs and the Economy**

Cultural spending is the ultimate economic stimulant—because you get so much for so little. Truly, every dollar goes so far.

“There is an understanding now that you must have an ability to build a cultural component into development to retain talented and mobile workers. [Culture] is the key to economic development now. Look at any trend analysis and data. Investment follows human capital...and human capital, to a surprisingly large extent, follows the arts.”<sup>3</sup>

When a dancer, musician, or actor takes the stage, it triggers a cascade of seen and unseen dominoes. That million or so people who come to see live performances in Vancouver every year buy meals and drinks, take taxis or buy parking, get manicures, see their hairdressers, use the dry cleaner and pay babysitters. The presenter pays sound technicians, set designers and builders, stage-hands, caterers, ushers, box-office, stage door staff, and janitors. Together the arts organizations keep a small army of contractors employed.

Sponsors purchase marketing and promotion opportunities, and entertain clients.

Has this government measured the loss of jobs, of tax revenue and economic activity occasioned by these cuts? The broken leases and vacancies in commercial real estate? Has this government factored in the value lost to corporate sponsors when programs are scaled back?

***"There's a strong fiscally conservative argument for supporting the arts," says Canadian Heritage Minister James Moore, explaining that writers create things of social and economic value out of little more than their own knowledge and imagination. Moore said the cultural sector employs 650,000 people in Canada, twice the number employed in either forestry or agriculture, and he declared that infrastructure without the kind of activity that artists provide is "culturally and economically soulless."***

- <http://theyee.ca/News/2009/09/28/ArtsCuts/>

- Tough economic times are exactly the times when we should be supporting our communities and investing wisely.
- The economic, social, health and educational benefits to our communities created by investing in arts and culture, by all levels of government, are well documented and supported.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.artshealthnetworkcanada.com/resources/Creativity-and-Aging-Study-Final-Report.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Phil Psilos, Director, Economic and Technology Policy, US National Governors Association: [http://www.nycfuture.org/content/articles/article\\_view.cfm?article\\_id=1060](http://www.nycfuture.org/content/articles/article_view.cfm?article_id=1060)

- Arts, heritage, and culture are recognized as government responsibilities, not a frill, by many nations around the globe and in the current global economic crisis, recognized as a powerful means to recovery and competitiveness in the unfolding future.
- Public investment in the arts allows community-based arts organizations to leverage money from other sectors, and also leverages the social capital of thousands of volunteer hours of activity.
- Public funding for the arts is the “R&D” of cultural spending -- the seed money that stimulates the creative sector. Many of the skills, attitudes, abilities of people that do work in the creative industries depend on this seed money – which has an effect on industries not normally associated directly with arts and culture, like architecture, design, new media, etc.
- Public investment in arts results in healthier, happier, economically competitive, and liveable communities.
- Public investment in the arts results in stronger creative industries, tourism, and social-profit sectors.
- Creative communities are leading the growth of the knowledge-based economy, and local cultural amenities attract tourists who spend more and stay longer in the communities they visit.
- With cultural tourism becoming a key factor, investment in this sector is very important.
- Every dollar invested by the province in arts and cultural organizations returns between \$1.05 and \$1.36 directly to provincial treasuries through tax revenues ([http://www.tsa.gov.bc.ca/arts\\_culture/library.htm](http://www.tsa.gov.bc.ca/arts_culture/library.htm)).
- Of Canada's 10 provinces, BC has the largest percentage of its labour force in arts occupations ([www.hillstrategies.com/docs/Artists](http://www.hillstrategies.com/docs/Artists)).
- As well, the arts and cultural sectors and B.C.'s creative industries generate \$5.2 billion each year and employ 78,000 people. (Ministry of Tourism Arts and Culture Service Plan, 2009).
- Growth in cultural employment in Canada from 1981 to 2001 was 81% higher than the 32% growth in the overall labour force during the same period ([http://artsresearchmonitor.com/arm\\_details.php?armUID=1100](http://artsresearchmonitor.com/arm_details.php?armUID=1100)).

## **Tourism**

We are in the first year of the WHTI, requiring American travelers to carry passports in order to re-enter the US, profoundly curtailing our tourism market.

Global Tourism Watch<sup>4</sup>, a Decima/Harris Research poll of Canada's major international tourism markets has issued some dire findings respecting our image in the US.

To summarize the Global Tourism Watch report, our market share is declining and our unexciting profile increasingly deters US travelers (p36).

The report concludes that "all of the general product weaknesses in the US market relate to culture" (p13).

### **British Columbia in context**

As already mentioned, the arts, culture, and creative sectors are a \$5.2-billion industry in B.C., employing almost 80,000 people. The sector has grown faster than the provincial economy.

Cutting funds to arts and culture of makes no economic or social sense, and we're already one of the worst-funded provinces in Canada. It's time to correct this mistake.

Provincial Government funding in British Columbia from all sources makes up an average of 7% of the operating budgets of performing arts organizations. *This is the lowest in Canada.* The national average is 13%. In Quebec, provincial funding accounts for 26% of a performing arts organization's budget.

To win its bid for the 2010 Olympics, the BC government boasted about the province's vibrant arts and culture scene. It claimed that culture was the "second pillar" of the Games. Now, just five months before the Olympics begin, the government cuts arts funding, and much more dramatically in the future. Not only will this tarnish BC's image in the eyes of the world, it will damage BC's arts sector beyond any chance of easy recovery.

***"People come to BC not just because of the pretty mountains. They come here because they expect a place where society is both different and better. Haven't you noticed that when you say 'Vancouver' to people, their eyes light up? For foolish short-term reasons we're killing that light, and all the money in the world can't buy it back once it's gone. We become a parking lot with mountains and it doesn't have to happen."***

Douglas Coupland, author of *Generation X*

By the Province's own study *Socio – Economic Impacts of Arts and Cultural Organizations in BC: Grant Applicants to the BC Arts Council*, the return on public investment in the arts in the form of tax revenues is \$1.36 for every dollar invested.

Studies (Conference Board of Canada and Vancouver Cultural Plan 2007) conclude that every dollar the municipality spends on arts and cultural activity results in between 7 and 13 dollars in economic activity

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<sup>4</sup>[http://www.corporate.canada.travel/docs/research\\_and\\_statistics/market\\_knowledge/americas/US\\_tourism\\_watch\\_yr\\_2\\_EN.pdf](http://www.corporate.canada.travel/docs/research_and_statistics/market_knowledge/americas/US_tourism_watch_yr_2_EN.pdf)

The BC Ministry's service plan states that we require "culturally rich communities that contribute to making B.C. the best place on earth to live, work and play", and states that "British Columbia's arts, culture and creative sectors are diverse, dynamic and growing". The government's current actions do not support these statements nor recognize that the arts should be looked towards as a key player in troubled and transitional times. The government acknowledges the value of arts when it calls upon arts and culture organizations and artists to promote BC and to attract and secure contracts in economic trade, and this includes international events such as the Olympics.

### **In the government's own words:**

- The government acknowledges the value of arts when it calls upon arts and culture organizations and artists to promote BC and to attract and secure contracts in economic trade, and this includes international events such as the Olympics.
- "The integration of arts, culture and heritage experiences into B.C.'s tourism sector plays a central role in building B.C.'s tourism industry" – BC Tourism, Culture and Arts Service Plan
- To win its bid for the 2010 Olympics, the BC government boasted about the province's vibrant arts and culture scene. It claimed that culture was the "second pillar" of the Games. Now, just five months before the Olympics begin, the government cuts arts funding. Not only will this tarnish BC's image in the eyes of the world, it will damage BC's arts sector beyond any chance of easy recovery.
- BC's own Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts' website notes that the province makes its cultural investment back in direct taxes at a ratio of up to 136 percent.
- Studies (Conference Board of Canada and Vancouver Cultural Plan 2007) conclude that every dollar a municipality spends on arts and cultural activity results in between seven and 13 dollars in economic activity.
- The BC Ministry's service plan states that we require "culturally rich communities that contribute to making B.C. the best place on earth to live, work and play", and states that "British Columbia's arts, culture and creative sectors are diverse, dynamic and growing". The government's current actions do not support these statements nor recognize that the arts should be looked towards as a key player in troubled and transitional times.
- "Thriving arts, culture and heritage sectors not only create a rich place to live and work, but are compelling attractions to visitors. Arts and culture are an integral part of the social fabric of a community, and heritage conservation contributes to environmental sustainability." *BC Tourism, Culture and Arts Service Plan*

- “Our vibrant culture is a vital asset in drawing and retaining an increasingly mobile workforce to our province.” *BC Tourism, Culture and Arts Service Plan*

## **Gaming Revenues**

It simply doesn't work to steal money from Peter to pay Paul in this sector.

That's precisely what's happening with the way that gaming funds have been used to come to the rescue of the BC Arts Council, and how gaming funds that should be earmarked for arts and other community organizations are being used for government general revenues.

Changing the allocation of the Gaming Funds represents a breach of the social contract made to those communities that accepted casinos or slot machines based on the promise that the funds from these organizations would then be funneled back into the arts and their communities.

In 1999, the province of BC entered into a “Memorandum of Understanding” with the BC Association of for Charitable Gaming to commit 1/3 of the annual BC Lottery Corporation revenues for the purpose of supporting licensed charities.

Although gambling profits are steadily rising, the BC government is failing to honour its 1999 promise to distribute 1/3 of the revenues received to non-profit groups and charities. In fact, the distribution to charities has fallen to 19%.

The government has recently claimed that the arts and culture sector were made “whole” by devoting gaming funds to the BC Arts Council.

However, in the current context, everyone in the arts and culture sector knows that it's a financial shell game going on when the Arts Council is funded through gaming revenues, because 44 per cent of arts and culture groups across the province that were funded by gaming last year receiving nothing at all this year

Our current concern is that the social capital and civil society is threatened if current trends in provincial funding continue unabated. Gaming funds must be used appropriately and in accordance with the social and moral contract under which British Columbians gave their government the mandate to generate revenues through gambling.

## **History of the relationship between the gaming industry, the citizens of BC and the government of BC:**

Over the last hundred years, gambling has become generally accepted in Canada as *long* as the revenues are dedicated to charitable purposes that benefit communities.

- 1974 - the lottery program is established in this province with the stated purpose to support amateur sports, heritage activities and culture in BC;

- 1997 – the province’s NDP government tries to take money from the charities to pay for its own tax-revenue funded health and education services; the BC Supreme Court tells them to give the money back to the charities;
- 1999 - the province of BC enters into a “Memorandum of Understanding” with the BC Association for Charitable Gaming to commit 1/3 of the annual BC Lottery Corporation revenues for the purposes of supporting licensed charities;
- 2001 - Although the BC Liberals promise during the 2001 election campaign not to expand gambling, they reverse their promise and allow a massive increase in slot machines in casinos, horse tracks and bingo parlours transformed into “community gaming centres”;
- 2003-2009 - The BC Liberal government receives billions of dollars in gambling revenue, and expands gaming to increase profits, earning record profits – while BC has the highest rates of child poverty in the country due to chronic underfunding and cuts to social programs;
- 2008-2009 - The BC Lottery Corporation earns a gross of \$2.61 billion and net revenue of \$1.1 billion; The BC government’s shrinks its distribution to charities of gaming profits from 30% (2003/04) to 19%;
- 2009 – the BC Lottery Corporation raises its weekly spending limit for on-line bets from \$120 to \$10,000 per week – an increase of 8000%;

Although gambling profits are steadily rising, the BC government is failing to honour its 1999 promise to distribute 1/3 of the revenues received to non-profit groups and charities in order to benefit local economies and community health.

Despite steadily increasing revenues from gaming – and a recent dramatic expansion of internet gaming – the province is breaking the social contract that it assumed with the people of BC when it got into the gaming business. The charities and non-profit organizations that paved the way for wide-spread acceptance of gambling are being squeezed out of the gaming revenues by the provincial government, the biggest beneficiary of gaming revenue.

The investment made through gaming grants in our sector is often leveraged many times over to attract additional resources from other levels of government and the private sector. There is also ample evidence that arts and cultural organizations, like in other social profit sectors, leverage human social capital in the form of volunteers, social networking, and community engagement.

This year, the core investment to our sector provided by gaming grants has been completely withdrawn from 44% of cultural and arts organizations that had received grants in previous years. 370 arts and cultural groups across the province have been affected. For many, this is their only source of funding.

Forty-four percent is a staggering statistic. These groups lost 100% of their funding through gaming grants, and for many, this has meant crippling cuts of anywhere from 30-100% of their total provincial support. We still continue to collect data on the impacts on our sector.

Remember that these groups did not lose their funding due to poor performance or for not meeting criteria, but largely because their applications were received after the government freeze; 41% of regular gaming clients that applied earlier received their funding and the remaining 15% are those with multi-year agreements, which were restored. In the case of the arts and cultural sector, which is funded from gaming revenues as well as through the BC Arts Council, both ministries count the same \$10.9 Million as part of their support. This of course, cannot be true – which is it?

It must be remembered that the arts and cultural groups in this province are funded by these two sources for fundamentally different types of activity. The gaming funds are provided to support activities that engage the public and our communities, and that often make arts and culture accessible to those who would otherwise not have that access, including those with low incomes, at-risk youth and seniors, and those who may not see themselves reflected in mainstream culture.

We are concerned that the provincial government is overlooking the fact that having a strong and healthy civil society, that is, non-profit social and charitable sectors, is especially important during difficult times. It makes our communities healthy, engaged, livable and visit-able. All of which are stated priorities for our government.

At the beginning of the Second World War, it was suggested to Prime Minister Winston Churchill that London's theatres and museums should be closed for the duration of the war. Churchill's response: "Good God, what are we fighting for?"

## **Conclusion**

As the impact of the recent cuts in funding are being dealt with by arts organization boards and administrators, information about the on-the-ground impact of these cuts is coming in.

Even prior to the cuts, arts funding represented 1/20th of one percent of the Province's total \$40 billion budget.

In a recent letter sent to the Music BC offices from Kevin Krueger, Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Arts, the rationale for the cuts was the government having to "devote scarce financial resources primarily to healthcare, education, and social services for the most vulnerable British Columbians".

With due respect, even prior to the cuts, funding to arts and culture represented an insignificant portion of the overall budget. Cutting arts and culture funding will have no visible effect on the overall budget, but will have a catastrophic impact on the arts community and our society.

Some illustrative examples include:

**The Helen Pitt Gallery Artist Run Centre** was denied a grant of \$34,000, representing 50 percent of their operating budget. As a result, the gallery was unable to pay rent beyond October 2009, closed its doors, terminated its director/curator position and cancelled 2009/2010 programming, except for one last CARFAC fee paying exhibition to be hosted by the Or Gallery in December.

**The Seymour Gallery** was denied a grant of \$35,000. As a result, the director/curator and other administrative staff hours have been reduced and the gallery now charges exhibiting artists a \$580 service fee to cover opening reception and promotional costs. This is a cost that many artists cannot afford, which will result in reduced promotion, reduced attendance and loss of sales.

Beyond the realm of gaming fund grants, provincial support for other cultural organizations is also being slashed. Some examples of this include:

**The Association of Book Publishers of British Columbia** was denied a grant of \$45,000, representing 16 percent of our budget.

**BC BookWorld** was denied a grant of \$30,000, representing 15 percent of their budget.

**The BC Association of Magazine Publishers** was denied a grant of \$20,000.

The Standing Committee on Finance has traditionally supported increasing funding to the B.C. Arts Council. Given the social and economic returns the arts sector has clearly demonstrated, we urge the Committee to strongly recommend the 2008-09 levels of funding through the Council and Gaming be maintained.

**CREATIVITY COUNTS!**  
*Restore Arts Funding Now*

*Children, seniors, the poor, the rich, Indigenous people, settlers and immigrants,  
Rural, urban and suburban: all of us need Culture and the Arts. They are basic human needs  
And rights, like access to Health, Education, Water and Air.  
Creativity Counts: Art is for Everyone.*

Amir Ali Alibhai, Executive Director, Alliance for Arts and Culture.