



CULTURE DAYS ANNOUNCES TWO NEW CULTURAL AWARDS AT INAUGURAL NATIONAL CONGRESS EVENT

Toronto, May 27, 2013 – **Culture Days** wrapped up its highly successful, first-ever annual **National Congress on Culture** on May 24 at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel in Toronto, by announcing the first two awards in a new program to be unveiled in the coming weeks: the **Culture Days Leadership Award** presented to Antoni Cimolino, Artistic Director of the Stratford Festival and national chairperson of Culture Days, and the **Culture Days Business Visionary Award**, presented to Sun Life Financial for its unfailing contribution and commitment to arts and culture and Culture Days as its Founding Visionary Partner since inception.

The day-long, sold-out **National Congress** event offered in-depth panels and sessions, bringing together a diversity of leading experts, artists and cultural organizations, to address vital topics affecting public engagement with the arts, including funding, marketing and sustenance of the cultural sector and best practices exemplified through Culture Days. Panel sessions are available to view online at culturedays.ca.

“We were absolutely delighted with the response to this first-ever National Congress on Culture. The sold-out event, followed by over 700 people from across Canada and beyond on the live stream underscored a real thirst to elevate an on-going discussion about Public Engagement and the vital role that arts and culture plays in the lives of all Canadians,” commented David Moss, National Director of Culture Days.

National Congress sessions included a keynote address by **Ellis Jacob**, CEO of Cineplex. Other high profile speakers and panelists included **Gabe Gonda** (Arts and Life Editor, The Globe and Mail), **Eli Singer** (Founder and CEO of Entrinsic), Antoni Cimolino (Artistic Director, Stratford Festival), **Lorne Manly** (Deputy Editor of the Culture Department, The New York Times), **Branislav Henselmann** (Executive Director, Ballet BC), **Marc Lemay** (Director General, Arts Policy Branch, Canadian Heritage), **Che Kothari** (Photographer and Executive Director of Manifesto Community Projects), **Robin Mirsky** (Executive Director, Rogers Group of Funds), **Janice Price** (CEO, Luminato), **Barry Avrich** (Partner, BT/A), **Louise Sicuro** (President & CEO, Culture pour tous) and **Robert Sirman**, Director and CEO of the Canada Council for the Arts.

Culture Days announced the next National Congress will be held in Winnipeg in the spring of 2014.

Paul Calandra, MP (Oak Ridges – Markham) and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, James Moore also announced \$1 million funding over the next two years in support of new Culture Days online initiatives. With this funding, Culture Days will provide artists and cultural organizations with free resources, tools and training in digital



marketing and for developing skills and know how in building more effective relationships with the private sector.

As part of this initiative and furthering its commitment to the cultural celebration year-round, Culture Days launched a new blog called [Culture365](#) at the National Congress. Culture365 is an interactive, year-round online forum for best practice and resource sharing, inspiring stories and for lively discussion on issues related to arts and culture in Canada and around the world. Content that showcases unique or innovative examples of the impact that arts and culture has on individuals, communities and society in general is welcome. This includes stories and accompanying photos or video links that show how artists, organizations and cities are connecting and engaging with the public, or how the public is mobilizing around arts and culture for their own enjoyment and benefit of others. For more information and a summary of the National Congress, visit [culturedays.ca/blog](#).

About Culture Days

Culture Days offers an open invitation for all individuals, organizations, groups and municipalities to register free interactive arts or cultural activities in communities during Culture Days, **September 27, 28 and 29, 2013**. There is no fee to register. Everyone is encouraged to get involved: professional or amateur cultural artists, educators, historians, curators, choreographers, architects and designers. If individuals wish to register a free participatory or interactive arts or cultural activity during the upcoming fourth annual Culture Days weekend, visit [culturedays.ca](#).

Culture Days is committed to reaching the goal of having all Canadians in every community declaring "I Love Culture" and making culture a daily habit. Founded in 2009, Culture Days is a non-profit organization dedicated to building a national network of cultural connections devoted to providing Canadians with opportunities to participate in, and appreciate, all forms of arts and culture. Through an annual three-day national celebration each September, hundreds of thousands of artists and cultural organizations in hundreds of cities and towns come together and invite Canadians to participate in free interactive and "behind the scenes" activities to discover their cultural spirit and passion.

Since its launch in 2010, there has been a 47 per cent increase in registered activities for the annual Culture Days weekend with an estimated 600,000 artists and cultural organizations voluntarily welcoming 1.6 million Canadians to their 7,000 registered Culture Days activities in 850 cities and towns across the country during the 2012 event. This year's Culture Days weekend will take place **September 27, 28 and 29, 2013**. As a leading national voice for the active and engaged cultural life of all Canadians, Culture Days provides support, tools and resources to a wide variety of artists and cultural organizations to help them unite the country through engagement in culture.



CULTURE DAYS PARTNERS

National partners: Sun Life Financial and The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation.
National Marketing Partner: BTA. Official Host Hotel: Fairmont Hotels and Resorts.
Government support is provided by Canadian Heritage. Provincial Partners: Government of British Columbia, Government of Alberta, SaskCulture, Government of Manitoba, Government of Ontario, Ontario Arts Council, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Government of Québec, Government of New Brunswick, Government of Nova Scotia, Government of Prince Edward Island, Government of Newfoundland & Labrador, Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council and the Government of Northwest Territories. Culture Days was initiated by four Founding Partners: The Canadian Arts Summit, Culture pour tous (producer of Journées de la culture), Canada Council for the Arts and The Banff Centre.

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