

*****DEADLINE EXTENDED**

Britain, Canada, and the Arts: Cultural Exchange as Post-war Renewal

15-17 June 2017

CALL FOR PAPERS

Papers are invited for a major international, interdisciplinary conference to be held at Senate House, London, in collaboration with the School of English, Communication and Philosophy (Cardiff University) and the University of Westminster. Coinciding with and celebrating the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation, this conference will focus on the strong culture of artistic exchange, influence, and dialogue between Canada and Britain, with a particular but not exclusive emphasis on the decades after World War II.

The immediate post-war decades saw both countries look to the arts and cultural institutions as a means to address and redress contemporary post-war realities. Central to the concerns of the moment was the increasing emergence of the United States as a dominant cultural as well as political power. In 1951, the Massey Commission gave formal voice in Canada to a growing instinct, amongst both artists and politicians, simultaneously to recognize a national tradition of cultural excellence and to encourage its development and perpetuation through national institutions. This moment complemented a similar post-war engagement with social and cultural renewal in Britain that was in many respects formalized through the establishment of the Arts Council of Great Britain. It was further developed in the founding of such cultural institutions as the Royal Opera, Sadler's Wells Ballet, the Design Council and later the National Theatre, and in the diversity and expansion of television and film.

While these various initiatives were often instigated by a strong national if not nationalist instinct, they were also informed by an established dynamic of social, political, and cultural dialogue. In the years before the war, that dynamic had been marked primarily by the prominent, indisputably anglophile voices of such influential Canadians in Britain as Beverly Baxter and Lord Beaverbrook. In English-speaking Canada, an established recognition of Britain as a dominant, if not originating, influence on definitions of cultural excellence continued to predominate. In the years following the war, however, that dynamic was to change, and an increased movement of artists, intellectuals, and artistic policy-makers between the two countries saw the reciprocal development of an emphatically modern, confident, and progressive definition of contemporary cultural activity.

This conference aims to expose and explore the breadth of this exchange of social and cultural ideals, artistic talent, intellectual traditions, and aesthetic formulations. We invite papers from a variety of critical and disciplinary perspectives -- and particularly encourage contributions from scholars and practitioners working in theatre, history, literature, politics, music, film and television, cultural studies, design, and visual art.

Some indicative post-war cultural figures and areas of influence:

- Henry Moore and the Art Gallery of Ontario
- John Grierson at the National Film Board
- Leonard Brockington and the CBC
- Sydney Newman, Alvin Rakoff and British and Canadian television drama
- Tyrone Guthrie, Barry Morse, Tanya Moiseiwitch, Alec Guinness, Maggie Smith, John Neville, Christopher Newton, Robin Phillips, Barry Morse, Brian Bedford, Christopher Plummer, Donald Sutherland, and others: developments in staging, acting, repertoire, and theatre-design at the Stratford Festival, the Shaw Festival, the Old Vic, the Chichester Festival Theatre, the National Theatre
- Powys Thomas at the CBC, the Stratford Festival, and the National Theatre School of Canada
- Celia Franca, Gweneth Lloyd, and national ballet
- Robertson Davies as novelist, actor, cultural critic in Britain and Canada; at the Stratford Festival; at the University of Toronto's Massey College
- Yousuf Karsh and the iconography of the mid-twentieth century
- Intellectual exchange and influence: Northrop Frye, Harold Innis, Marshall McLuhan, John Kenneth Galbraith
- Elizabeth Smart and the London literary scene
- Ronald Bryden and theatre criticism in London
- Benjamin Britten and Michael Tippett: Canadian tours and compositions
- Glenn Gould as musical interpreter, recording artist, celebrity personality, documentarian
- Mordecai Richler, the cultural scene in London, and the dramatization of Anglophone Quebec
- Mazo de la Roche and Lucy Maud Montgomery: literary influence and adaptations
- Ben Wicks as cartoonist, journalist, and post-war memoirist

Other areas of exploration include (but are certainly not limited to):

- Quebec and 'French Canada' in the British artistic scene
- The cultural presence and influence of the Governor General
- Publishers and publishing networks
- Newspapers, media magnates, and editorialists from Beaverbrook to Black
- Universities and the 'modernisation' of higher education
- Popular culture and popular music
- Cultural policy-making
- Traditions of humour and satire
- 'Distinct cultures' within the larger nation
- Constructions of indigeneity and native culture
- National culture as anti-Americanism
- Definitions of diversity, audience, and national identity
- Architecture and urban development
- More recent and contemporary exchanges in literature, art, politics, theatre, film, design, television, and the media

Proposals (max. 250 words) for papers of 20 minutes can be sent to the organizers, Irene Morra (Cardiff University) and John Wyver (University of Westminster), at canbritconference@gmail.com by 1 December 2016.



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