



MEDIA RELEASE

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Big Ideas and Practical Applications “Radical Rethinking” of Cultural Infrastructure at Ottawa Symposium

Early Bird Registration Deadline February 15

Event: The Creative Construct: Building for Culture and Creativity Symposium

Dates: April 28 to May 01, 2008

Venue: Fairmont Chateau Laurier in Ottawa

Information: www.cultureandcommunities.ca

“There isn’t an educational system on the planet that teaches dance the way they teach mathematics, an hour every day. Why is that?” asks controversial educator Sir Ken Robinson who has made an international reputation challenging the way we are educating our children.

Sir Ken will be among the experts gathering in Ottawa April 28 through May 1, 2008 to take part in the Creative Construct: Building For Culture and Creativity symposium. With the aim of helping transform the way our community planners, educators and elected leaders think about our cultural future, Creative Construct, organized by the Centre of Expertise on Culture and Communities at Simon Fraser University and the City of Ottawa, will bring together noted speakers, experts and artists from across Canada and around to world to examine the role and importance of cultural infrastructure in furthering culture and creativity in cities and communities.

“Creativity is as important as literacy and numeracy, and we should treat it as such, but we don’t.” says Sir Ken. “We need to radically rethink the fundamental principles on which we educate our children. Right now we are educating the creativity out of people, and leaving them unprepared for the world of the future.”

Sir Ken Robinson argues that society isn’t getting the best out of people because we’ve been educated to become good workers, rather than creative thinkers. Students with restless minds and bodies -- far from being cultivated for their energy and curiosity -- are ignored or even stigmatized, with terrible consequences.

Such “radical rethinking” will also be evident in presentations by workshop and panel participants such as Dave Peebles of Birmingham’s hugely successful Custard Factory, said by many to be the most vibrant hub of cultural synergy in Europe today, and Graeme Evans of the Cities Institute at London’s Metropolitan University.

Located on and named for the redeveloped site of what was once a 19th century Birds Custard factory, the Custard Factory is now a five-acre home to hundreds of media companies, artists and small creative enterprises, providing a dynamic environment for creative entrepreneurs.

The presence of this thriving arts and media production centre has enticed two media training agencies to locate nearby. Demonstrating the successful revisioning of an entire neighbourhood, The adjacent old Trades Union Studies Centre is now a media and arts annex of South Birmingham College, and the VIVID media centre moved to a nearby site.

The Custard Factory’s marketing director Dave Peebles will share this success story with delegates at Creative Construct, offering a real-world illustration of what can happen when creativity takes the lead in cultural infrastructure development.

With a background in project and finance management in the transport and municipal government sectors, and hands-on experience managing a youth jazz orchestra, Graeme Evans brings a unique combination of skills to his work as Director of the Cities Institute, which incorporates research in transport, youth homelessness and environment and ageing with major research projects on sustainable urban design, creative clusters and city growth. The goal is to develop practical interventions that make a positive difference to the quality of life in cities and enhance community development and professional practice.

Professor Evans will address Creative Construct on the creation of cultural opportunities for sustainable cities, sharing research findings from the United Kingdom, the European Union and Canada, and presenting a toolkit for planning.

Delegates to Creative Construct will include cultural planners and policy-makers, civic leaders and elected officials. Educators and urban theorists will appreciate the many opportunities for sharing ideas and learning about the latest innovations and developments from around the world.

Workshops and panel discussions on such themes as convergence between culture, industry and science, urban renewal, and alternative financing and partnership solutions will attract cultural sector leaders and entrepreneurs.

"Feedback from the community and our supporters suggests that this could be a turning point in the way we understand the importance of Canada's cultural infrastructure," says Nancy Duxbury, executive director of Creative Construct: Building for Culture and Creativity.

For further information visit www.cultureandcommunities.ca.

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Research References:

Sir Ken Robinson:	www.ted.com/index.php/talks/view/id/66 www.principalvoices.com/voices/ken-robinson-bio.html
The Custard Factory	www.custardfactory.com http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Custard_Factory
Graeme Evans	www.londonmet.ac.uk/about/graeme-evans.cfm www.citiesinstitute.org