Backgrounder of the Visual Arts Marketplace Engagement Initiative

The Department of Canadian Heritage is currently undertaking a series of activities to better understand the policy issues emerging in the current and future marketplace for visual arts.

Goal of the initiative

The intention is to engage people from across the visual arts ecosystem to explore the issues, tensions and interdependencies within the visual arts market. This is a fact-finding, exploratory initiative that will be complemented by other efforts, including the upcoming Visual Arts Market Survey that is co-led by Canadian Heritage and the Visual Arts Alliance. Both VAMEI and the survey are meant to provide insights about how to promote inclusive growth and benefit the range of visual arts actors.

Engagement platform POL.IS

POL.IS is a digital public engagement platform designed to gather feedback from large groups around a particular topic. It excels at gathering a diversity of opinion without giving priority to any particular aspect of the discussion. It also allows for conversations to evolve on a single platform, regardless of the official language with which a participant prefers to interact.

Questions about the public engagement and its platform

1) How does POL.IS work?

POL.IS is cloud-based, and can be accessed from any device. Participants can build a conversation with each other by "voting" (participant to indicate his choice by selecting agree, disagree or pass/unsure) on a list of tweet-style statements. POL.IS also allows individuals to submit their own statements, on which other participants can vote. As statements are added, the list of experiences and perspectives on which others can vote grows, creating a virtual conversation.

2) I came back to the website and can't find any of the previous statements I voted on. Why?

POL.IS is very efficient and keeps track of which statements you've already voted on, provided you use the same device and browser when you return to visit the

page. In this way you can always see and vote on the new statements that have been added by other participants since your last visit. It also allows you to contribute statements anytime they come to you, just like in a real conversation.

3) Why are you using an automated machine translator?

All initial statements will be translated in both official languages. However, content added by participants, as third parties, will be published in the language in which it is submitted. To facilitate greater understanding, automated translation is offered as a courtesy but we cannot guarantee accuracy. By using the automatic machine translation service, users accept the legal implications of any shortcomings or differences in the translation.

The goal of leveraging automated machine translation directly tied to our desire to have one robust conversation regardless of a participant's chosen official language. In order to engage communities across Canada and avoid having two separate conversations, we have created one channel where participants are free to engage in the official language of their choice.

4) Are statements being monitored?

Content added by participants, as third parties, will be monitored and we reserve the right to remove inappropriate statements including those that have obscene language or sexual content, threaten or defame any person or organization, violate the legal ownership interest of another party, privacy laws, promote commercial services or products, or are not topically related to the discussion. We will also ensure that there are no duplicate statements in order to not dilute the conversation.

5) Should I be worried about my privacy?

Not at all. All statements are submitted anonymously and monitored daily before being posted.

6) I'm interested in the final results. How can I make sure I am kept in the loop?

Sign up to learn about the results, upcoming activities and get the opportunity to further this conversation by attending an event in Ottawa in 2018.