

THE CULTURAL INDUSTRIES IN MEXICO

The film, television and music industries provide the best prospects for market-based exports of Canadian cultural products.

A definition of the cultural industries usually includes film, video and television production, sound recording, book publishing, the visual arts, the performing arts and new media. This market profile deals in depth only with film, television and video production, and music. Although there are many opportunities in the other areas, they tend to be very specialized and some of them are not easily discussed in the specific context of the Mexican market.

Opportunities for book publishing are discussed in other profiles in this series. The principal opportunities are for Canadian publishers to obtain the rights to Spanish-language books, to adapt them to the Mexican culture and style, and to publish them in Mexico. The experience of Canadian book publishers in small-volume publishing and their reputation for cultural sensitivity have created many opportunities for this kind of product. There is a particular demand in Mexico for “how-to” guides and for children’s books.

The visual arts involve many products that are sold through the market process, but in Mexico this market is limited to the very affluent. Since the devaluation of the peso in December 1994, the number of Mexicans who possess the dollar resources that are needed to buy foreign art has fallen drastically. Only about 20 percent of Mexican families have incomes in excess of C \$8,000 per year, and only about 2 percent have incomes of more than C \$80,000. While the latter category accounts for some 400,000 households — a significant market — the very wealthy tend to make their purchases while on trips abroad. Nonetheless, there is a small, specialized market for art sold through upscale art galleries in Mexico City, and to a lesser extent, in Monterrey and Guadalajara.

Opportunities in the performing arts are highly specialized. This subsector is less likely than the others to operate on a market basis, and the usual means of commercial market entry are, therefore, not generally applicable. Contacts for performances or tours in Mexico are, for the most part, arranged privately through the artistic community, typically as part of publicly-supported cultural exchanges.