



## **2019 Annual Public Meeting**

Speeches delivered by Mr. G. Grant Machum, Mr. Robert Spickler, Ms. Christa Dickenson, Ms. Francesca Accinelli, and Mr. Patrick Bédard

National Arts Centre, Ottawa

December 5, 2019

**Grant Machum, Chair of the Nominating, Evaluation and  
Governance Committee**

Good morning, and welcome to our Annual Public  
Assembly.

Today is an important opportunity to touch base with  
stakeholders, to report on the work that Telefilm has done  
over the past year, and most importantly, to celebrate  
your successes.

In that regard, BRAVO to Sophie Deraspe, whose excellent  
feature, *Antigone*, that not only won the coveted Best  
Canadian Feature award at TIFF but was also chosen to

represent Canada in the race for Best International Feature Film at the 92nd Academy Awards.

In fiscal year 2018-2019, Telefilm Canada focused its efforts on three areas:

- stable and predictable funding,
- innovation in the promotion of Canadian talent and content, and
- value-added customer service.

This year, the Board held meetings in cities right across the country to better connect with you. We also oversaw the modernization of Telefilm's management structure. In addition, the Audit and Finance Committee was mandated to oversee the annual program budgeting process.

And it was a proud moment for us all when Telefilm was recognized by IT World Canada with the **2018 Digital Transformation Award** for the information system redesign project, developed jointly with the Canada Media Fund.

It has been a real honour for me to serve as Interim Chair of Telefilm's Board for 18 months.

It has also been a great privilege to play an active role in the future of this organization and this industry of ours over the past 12 years.

From working with Wayne Clarkson, to working with Carolle Brabant, and most recently Christa Dickenson, I know that Telefilm is moving in the right direction. We

are addressing diversity. We are also focusing on developing the next generation of talent with the success of the Talent Fund.

I am very pleased with the appointment of our new Chair, who I will introduce in a minute. He brings experience, dedication and a passion for the audiovisual industry. I want to thank the strong team at Telefilm for all you do. And of course, all of you who create the great films.

Thank you for your attention.

Now I'd like to invite to the podium Robert Spickler, Chair of the Board.

## **Robert Spickler, Chair of the Board**

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. It's a pleasure to be here in Ottawa for Telefilm Canada's Annual Public Assembly.

First and foremost, I'd like to thank **Grant Machum** for all his work as Interim Chair, for his commitment and generosity, and for making himself so available to the Board of Directors and its committees throughout his three terms, the last of which ends in February. On behalf of the entire Board, I want to express my deep gratitude to you, Grant.

I am proud to have the opportunity to pursue the necessary work of maintaining this strong governance in line with Telefilm's mission to develop, encourage, and promote our audiovisual industry, its creators and talent.

As Chair of Telefilm, I've had the privilege of recently meeting, right here in Ottawa, with other chairs of the board of Crown corporations involved in the cultural portfolio, to discuss challenges and opportunities guiding their strategic directions. This meeting, which will be held annually, is a Canadian Heritage initiative.

These challenges and opportunities are also the subject of many discussions at our Board. On that note, I'm pleased to confirm that it now has a full complement of members.

I'd like to greet two of our newest members: **Karen A. Horcher**, of Vancouver, and **Angèle Beausoleil**, of Toronto.

We also had the pleasure of welcoming new members to Telefilm's executive leadership: **E. J. Alon**, as Director of the Talent Fund, **Marie-Claude Lavigne**, as Director of Government Affairs, and, finally, **René Bourdages**, who has just joined us as Senior Director, Cultural Portfolio Management.



I have worked throughout my career in the arts as a leader of cultural organizations involved in the performing arts and museums.

I'm very pleased that I can now contribute to help Canadian film and audiovisual talent shine brightly. Since the beginning of my mandate, I've come to appreciate our film industry's truly unique voice and outstanding creativity.

To this end, I've attended numerous movie screenings across the country—in Toronto, Halifax, Winnipeg, Vancouver, Montréal and St. John's.

Among the Canadian films that received awards and tributes this year, I'd like to mention, among others, ***The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open***, by Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers and Kathleen Hepburn, produced by Tyler Hagan, Lori Lozinski, Alan R. Milligan. This poignant feature premiered at the 2019 Berlinale, screened at TIFF, and went on to win the prize for best Canadian film at the Festival du Nouveau Cinéma.

As well, the remarkable film ***Murmur***, by Nova Scotian first time filmmaker Heather Young, produced by Martha Cooley, which won the International Federation of Film Critics Award at TIFF, also screened at the opening gala of the FIN Atlantic International Film Festival.

I'd also like to highlight Monia Chokri's first feature, ***La femme de mon frère*** (*A Brother's Love*), produced by Nancy Grant and Sylvain Corbeil. This elegantly told feature was a co-winner of the "Jury Favourite" Award in the Un Certain Regard section at the Cannes Film Festival.

Our films, widely recognized and celebrated throughout the year, have been programmed at some 80 international events.

And in light of this flurry of international activity, I should also mention that Canada will be country of honour at the prestigious Frankfurt Book Fair in 2020 (FBM2020). The kick-off event was held this past October, with a screening of ***Guest of Honour***, the latest film by Atom Egoyan.

In partnership with Canadian Heritage, the Canada Council for the Arts, Global Affairs Canada and Canada FBM2020, Telefilm will be responsible for overseeing the programming and promotion of Canadian audiovisual works during the event.

In closing, I'd like to reiterate that our Board of Directors is committed to serving Telefilm's mission and that, to this end, it intends to fully support Christa Dickenson and her team as they carry out the organization's strategic plan.

We will continue to modernize our governance and help Telefilm to excel, to develop innovative strategies, and to

meet operational challenges in order to ensure its role as a partner of choice to the industry.

Thank you for your attention. I'd now like to turn the floor over to our Executive Director, Christa Dickenson

## **Christa Dickenson, Executive Director**

Thank you, Robert...

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues.

What a pleasure it is for me to be back here in Ottawa, the city where I grew up and which remains so dear to me.

And thank you to the **National Arts Centre** for warmly welcoming us today.

I'm pleased to have the opportunity to talk about Telefilm's priorities and about our strategic vision.

As you already know, we want a greater number of talented Canadians from all backgrounds to be better

represented in our cultural landscape. This is a major priority, and it's engaging the entire organization and requires continuous dedication.

Now I'd like to outline some of our achievements in 2018-2019. In practical terms, we continued our work to support this increasingly-important priority.

**First: our gender parity action plan.**

The most recent results shared with all of you are extremely encouraging. Yes, 2020 is fast approaching and yes, we still have work to do, but we are in the parity zone!

More concretely, in the 2018-2019 fiscal year, overall projects with women in the key creative positions of director, producer, or screenwriter increased both in terms of the amount of funding and the number of projects supported.

A total of **45.5 million dollars** was invested in films with at least one woman in a key creative position. This represents **59%** of Telefilm's total production assistance, a **9%** increase from the previous year.

And how have we gotten here? For projects of equal quality, we prioritize those whose director and/or writer



and/or producer reflect Canada in terms of gender, Indigenous communities or cultural diversity.

All that we are accomplishing wouldn't be possible without the support of the Gender Parity Working Group, made up of various unions and guilds, producer associations and organizations recognized for their leadership in this area, such as Réalisatrices Équitables and Women in View.

Another of our priorities is to increase the representation of Indigenous creative voices to more faithfully reflect the Canadian reality.

To achieve this, Telefilm Canada allocates, on average, **4 million dollars** per year for projects by Indigenous creators from communities across the country. This year, Telefilm supported the production of eight new projects and the development of 17.

What's more, these projects are assessed by an external jury composed exclusively of members of Indigenous communities and coordinated by our partner, imagineNATIVE.

These initiatives represent an unprecedented commitment of resources and include a range of more daring projects and a greater diversity of regions, with projects in Nova

Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, Nunavut and British Columbia, in Mi'kmaq, Inuktitut and Haida.

Several times a year, we actively consult with a national working group of industry members from Indigenous communities across Canada.

In partnership with our sister agencies, we continue to work closely with the Indigenous Screen Office.

Congratulations to **Jesse Wente** and his team for their invaluable leadership.

We were also privileged to support the imagineNATIVE Film and Media Arts Festival in its publication of **On-Screen Protocols and Pathways: A Media Production Guide**, the

first of its kind in Canada and a crucial step towards reconciliation.

This guide sets out, for the first time, an appropriate framework for working with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities, cultures, concepts and stories.

These successes are encouraging, and they demonstrate the need for continued efforts to foster a greater diversity of voices.

**And we can't do it alone.** Our success also depends on the involvement of the entire ecosystem. That means you: producers, distributors, festivals programmers,

broadcasters in joining us in helping more women, Indigenous creators, and creators from all underrepresented communities make films at all budget levels.

Diversity and inclusion are anchored in our priorities, across the organization. Canada is unique in the world, and thus exceptionally positioned. We know that our differences, our diversity is our strength. And now, **inclusion** our North Star.

To this end, we will form an **advisory committee on cultural diversity** in the new year. This committee will be tasked with finalizing definitions and helping Telefilm

identify key steps as we move forward balancing our portfolio.

And because this can't just happen externally, we have begun to embrace diversity and inclusion at the heart of our operations through training in unconscious bias and adapting our hiring process to ensure that Telefilm's employees are representative of our country.

And now I'd like to tell you more about the evolution of our strategic vision, which will be unveiled in detail next year.

After taking the time to study the current strategic plan with the executive leadership team, it became evident that was essential to continue the work begun to see bigger—but to do so more concretely in order to better reflect the current realities of our industry, which, as you know, is undergoing profound change.

While remaining true to our commitment of making Canadian talent shine on the national and international stage, we want to strengthen **Telefilm/Canada as your partner of choice.**

The priorities that we've set for Telefilm are now deeply rooted in our DNA, and they serve as the credo that guides

for our decision-making. They are be a prism through which we assess our institutional initiatives and our projects.

Telefilm is a proud Canadian cultural institution, recognized around the world for its solid history spanning more than 50 years.

I want for Telefilm, for Canada, to be recognized as an enlightened leader; ready to defy convention for the greater good of the industry, for the greater good of our culture.

It's time that we find a sustainable model that rewards talent and cultural expression. We need to **see bigger**.



And none of this can happen through a one-way only approach.

So, of course, Telefilm will further its dialogue with the AQPM and CMPA professional associations on issues of parity, diversity, inclusion and program optimization, just as we'll continue to work with the Indigenous Screen Office on issues relating to Indigenous production.

I believe strongly that Telefilm must continue to be a leader, and to do so, in order to optimize most effectively all of our programs, we must first look at the backbone of our program architecture – **the Success Index**.

The work has already begun, internally and with a small group of industry experts, including Telefilm employees, to develop a modernized version of the Success Index for 2021-2022.

This is an extensive undertaking, but we're making good progress and we'll begin consultations with our partners in the new year to finalize this major overhaul.

**René Bourdages**, who has just joined our team, will ensure that this productive and constructive dialogue continues through consultations on issues that matter to us all.

I would like to personally thank our clients and partners for their proactive participation and for sharing their ideas in such a spirit of openness.

And now, allow me to thank the Board and all 190 employees in all four offices across the country, who have supported me. Together, on a daily basis, we take on the tremendous challenges and opportunities that our industry faces.

Thanks to all of you, we're working to make change happen so that Canadian talent shines brighter and brighter!

Thank you for your attention. Now I'd like to invite to the podium **Francesca Accinelli**, Director of Promotion and Communications, and **Patrick Bédard**, Director of Finance and Interim Director, Administration and Corporate Services.

**Francesca Accinelli, Director of Promotion and  
Communications (FA)**

Thank you, Christa.

Patrick and I will present the highlights from fiscal 2018-2019 and the industry's successes, first on the funding side and then on the promotional side. There'll be lots of numbers to back it up, so get ready!

**Patrick Bédard, Director of Finance and Interim Director,  
Administration and Corporate Services (PB)**

During the last fiscal year, Telefilm provided more than \$108 million in support to the industry, a level unmatched since 2010-2011. Through our funding programs, we invested a total of **\$83.9 million** in production and development.

Relying on its team of dedicated employees, Telefilm contributed:

- to the **production funding of 96 feature films**, of which **23 were feature documentaries**; and

- to an additional **44 feature films and web projects** under the Talent to Watch program (our emerging filmmakers).
- Telefilm also participated in the **development of 301 screenplays.**
- And finally, **every dollar that Telefilm invested in production** generated **\$1.36** in private and foreign investment over the period from 2017 to 2019.

I would like to highlight that the next generation of filmmakers is well represented. In all, first- and second-time filmmakers were behind **66%** of all the films financed by Telefilm last year.

## FA

Congratulations to all the filmmakers who have made 2019 such a successful year: bravo to Louise Archambault, Mélanie Charbonneau, Monia Chokri, Albert Shin, Denis Côté, Sophie Deraspe, Winnifred Jong, Geneviève Dulude-De Celles, Émile Gaudreault, Andrea Dorfman, François Girard —to name but a few. And we can't wait for new projects from Anaïs Barbeau-Lavalette, Jay Baruchel, Sophie Dupuis, Tracey Deer, Philippe Falardeau, Deepa Mehta, Pascal Plante and Caroline Monnet.

## PB

I'd now like to acknowledge the vital contribution of the **Canada Media Fund**—led by Valerie Creighton—to the



production of content and applications on all audiovisual platforms.

In fiscal 2018-2019, Telefilm, with its outstanding team called the Canada Media Fund Programs Administrator, managed **more than 35** funding programs, incentives and partnerships, resulting in the signing of **close to 1,300** contracts worth a total of **\$346.9 million**.

And now, I'd like to highlight the importance of coproduction for Canada.

In 2018-2019, Telefilm recommended **52** feature film and television projects to be recognized as official treaty coproductions with **16** partner countries such as France, Belgium, Italy and Germany, among others. The total combined budget for these productions stood at **\$348 million**.

In terms of its funding activity, Telefilm financed **13 official treaty coproductions** for a total of **\$18 million**.

## **FA**

Many of these projects went on to find success at some of the most prestigious festivals around the world.

For example, ***The Hummingbird Project***, by Oscar-nominated director Kim Nguyen, an official Canada-Belgium coproduction with funding from Eurimages, produced by Pierre Even, had its world premiere at TIFF in 2018 and sold in 25 countries.

Another Canada coproduction supported by Eurimages, ***The Kindness of Strangers*** from Lone Scherfig, produced by Sandra Cunningham, opened the 2019 Berlinale.

Congratulations also to Elia Suleiman, who won a Special Mention award at this year's Cannes Film Festival for ***It Must Be Heaven***, a France-Qatar-Germany-Canada-

Palestine-Turkey coproduction, co-produced by Serge Noël and is Palestine's submission for the Best International Film Oscar.

## **PB**

Turning our attention to documentaries. In 2018-2019, Telefilm supported 23 documentaries under its **Theatrical Documentary Program**.

## **FA**

Three successful documentaries continued Canada's history of tackling social change through film:  
***nîpawistamâsowin: We Will Stand Up***, by Tasha Hubbard that won the Best Canadian Film Award at Hot Docs,

Rencontre Internationales du Documentaire de Montréal and Doxa before a successful theatrical run.

***Anthropocene - The Human Epoch***, from the award-winning team of Jennifer Baichwal, Nicholas de Pencier and Edward Burtynsky, toured the world's most prestigious festivals—Berlin, Hot Docs, Sundance and TIFF. On top of that, to coincide with the U.N. Climate Action Summit and Climate week in New York City, the film also screened in over 100 theatres across U.S.

And, finally, ***Sharkwater Extinction***, by the late Rob Stewart had its world premiere at TIFF, changing the world's perceptions of sharks forever.

## **PB**

As for emerging filmmakers, since its launch, the **Talent to Watch Program** has allowed us to discover new voices from across the country.

This program is partly funded by the **Talent Fund**, which has injected **\$2.7 million** into the industry. Philanthropic donations were up by more than **40%** over the previous fiscal year.

## **FA**

Several films from the 2018-2019 Talent to Watch cohort were very successful—and we're very proud of that!

***Murmur***, which we mentioned earlier, and ***Easy Land***, from director Sanja Zivkovic, are the first of the Talent to Watch projects funded in 2018 to debut—and what a very promising debut it has been!

Both premiered at TIFF as part of the Discovery program, and then went on to screen at the Vancouver and Calgary international film festivals and at the Festival du Nouveau Cinéma in Montréal. ***L.A. Tea Time***, by Sophie Bédard Marcotte, was also presented at the Festival du Nouveau Cinéma this year.

## **PB**

We would like to sincerely thank the **Talent Fund's** key partners, Bell Media and Corus Entertainment, and the generous donors from across Canada, whose support allows emerging creators to propel their careers. The Fund also welcomed Quebecor as a new partner this year.

## **FA**

We'd like to thank **Hartley T. Richardson**, inaugural Chair of the Talent Fund's Advisory Committee, and welcome to **Christine Magee**, Chair as of December 2018, and once again recognize **E.J. Alon**, who joined us as Director of the Talent Fund.



Now it's time for an overview of our promotional activities in 2018-2019.

## **PB**

We invested a total of **\$24.8 million** in national and international film promotion, an increase of more than 10% over the previous fiscal year. With a team of employees dedicated to the promotion of Canadian talent and content:

- Telefilm supported **159** festivals and industry activities across Canada, and contributed to the marketing of **95** feature films.
- Internationally, we supported the Canadian presence at **42** festivals and markets, and supported the

participation of creative teams in the marketing of  
**103** feature films.

## **FA**

In keeping with our vision, our communications strategy focuses on “audiences first” and uses a personalized approach to address various targeted audiences. This approach allows us to showcase Canadian talent nationally and internationally.

We celebrated many of our legendary filmmakers, such as **David Cronenberg**, who received the prestigious Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement at the Venice Film Festival, and **Deepa Mehta**, who was honoured by the Academy of

Canadian Cinema and Television with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

We also showcased Sophie Dupuis and her film ***Chien de garde***, as well as Denis Côté and his ***Répertoire des villes disparues***. And if you haven't already done so, I invite you to check out the interviews with each of them on our Facebook page.

Parallel to TIFF 2018, Telefilm Canada celebrated the storytelling talents of Canadian women at the sixth **Birks Diamond Tribute**: director **Nettie Wild**, actors **Tantoo**

**Cardinal** and **Pascale Bussières**, screenwriter **Susan Coyne**, and emerging directors **Stella Meghie** and **Jeanne Leblanc**.

In April of 2019, during the International Year of Indigenous Languages, in front of a packed theatre here in Ottawa, Minister Rodriguez presented ***SGaawaayK'uuna*** (***Edge of the Knife***), the first-ever feature film in Haida, an endangered language with fewer than 20 fluent speakers. The screening brought together members of Parliament, senators, Indigenous leaders and members of the general public.

## **PB**

Always from a national perspective, we took part in the 50th anniversary celebrations of Canada's Official Languages Act. We showcased the creative talents from official-language minority communities and the organizations that have a positive impact on these communities and their creators, such as the Alliance des producteurs francophones du Canada and the English Language Arts Network.

Internationally, this past year, our initiative **Canada Now** had films screened in over 50 venues in 40 cities as the films travelled to audiences in China, Mexico, the United Kingdom and the United States.

There's also all the work put into our website

**RDVCanada.ca**, which continues to bear fruit in terms of promoting Canadian works and talent as well as international export.

Telefilm Canada continues its work to improve the discoverability and accessibility of Canadian content across all platforms through our innovative partnerships with Apple, Encore+, Via Rail, CBC Gem as well as with the Canada Media Fund through the MADE | NOUS campaign.

Beyond awareness, we are growing Canadians' appetite for our films through social media.

We're continuing our efforts to reach our different audiences wherever they are. Indeed, I invite you to follow us to discover Canadian films and to find out how to watch them.

And finally, thank you to all of our public and private partners, who make it possible for us to see bigger every day and be your partner of choice!

Thank you.