



Annual Public Assembly 2022

**Speeches by Robert Spickler, Francesca Accinelli, René Bourdages, Marie-Eve
Mainville and Cathy Wong**

Virtual – November 23, 2022

(Priority to the speech delivered)

M. Robert Spickler, Chair of the Board

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear partners in the audiovisual industry,

It's my turn to welcome you to Telefilm Canada's 2022 Annual Public Assembly.

Today's annual meeting, which will report on the Corporation's key accomplishments for the 2021 to 2022 fiscal year, is again being held online, allowing us to reach more people across the country.

Thank you for being here.

The past year has been busy and productive for Telefilm.

We were able to resume our regular activities in a somewhat normal way.

The pandemic faded, and we moved from crisis management to risk management.

Under the circumstances, this is a major advance.

However, even though the health situation had calmed down, other challenges emerged: movie theatres were unable to operate on a permanent basis, festivals were still in hybrid mode, and film shoots experienced significant delays due to the number of cases of infection among the crews. All of these factors aggravated the situation in which the screen industry was plunged, and from which it is struggling to recover.

In this context, it's important that we emphasize and express our deep appreciation to the Canadian government for the sustained support it has provided to the audiovisual community.

The Government of Canada's increased funding to Telefilm has allowed us to proactively engage with the industry.

For instance, the 105 million dollars granted over a three-year period, the recovery and reopening funds and the Short-Term Compensation Fund for

Canadian Productions—the STCF— have saved companies weakened by the health crisis. Overall, the STCF has provided compensation coverage for more than 3.2 billion-dollars worth of audiovisual production budgets.

As a result, the Recovery Fund and Short-Term Compensation Fund have helped stabilize the audiovisual community, encourage audiences to return to theatres and encourage exhibitors to show Canadian films.

I would like to emphasize the Board’s appreciation for the speed with which Telefilm’s staff distributed these funds.

One of Telefilm’s core objectives in fiscal 2021 to 2022 was to maintain an ongoing and open dialogue with the industry.

This close and sustained communication enabled Telefilm to better appreciate the financial assistance needs of creators and companies still suffering from the aftermath of the pandemic.

Telefilm was also able to complete the modernization of its programs and promote equitable access for all screen-based creators.

A proper look back at the 2021 to 2022 period wouldn’t be complete without mentioning some of the outstanding Canadian films released on our screens.

I would like to highlight, among others:

- Ivan Grbovic’s *Les Oiseaux ivres*, produced by micro_scope, represented Canada in the race for Best International Feature film at the 2022 Oscars
- Monia Chokri’s *Babysitter*, produced by Amérique films, was selected at the Sundance Film Festival as well as presented at the Tribeca Film Festival, in addition to winning the Best Film Award at the Monte-Carlo Film Festival
- Shasha Nakhai and Rich Williamson’s *Scarborough*, produced by Compy Films, left a big impression at TIFF by winning an award as well as a special mention. It was also named one of the top 10 Canadian films of 2021 and won eight Canadian Screen Awards

Telefilm's board of directors addressed several key issues in 2022, and of these I would like to highlight the approval of a new short-term strategic plan for the period 2022 to 2024.

This plan is one of continuity in change.

The plan reiterates and reinforces some of the priorities already set out in the previous plan, allowing us to adjust—fine-tune—our support to an industry that is currently changing in so many ways.

Francesca Accinelli, Telefilm's Interim Executive Director and CEO, will provide more details on this plan in a few minutes.

I would like to emphasize that the implementation of Telefilm's strategic plan and the preservation of all our funding programs require the renewal of the additional funding the government has been providing to Telefilm since 2021 to 2022. We sincerely hope that these funds will be made permanent.

I would like to conclude by paying tribute to former Executive Director and CEO Christa Dickenson, who left Telefilm in September. With openness, tact and rigour, Christa brought new life to Telefilm's mission. She passionately supported film creators and artisans and made room for many different voices to be heard.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank her for her dedication to Telefilm and to the film and audiovisual sector.

As the recruitment process for the next Executive Director and CEO follows its course, the Board of Directors continues to offer its full support to Francesca Accinelli.

In closing, I would like to salute and thank the members of the Board of Directors for their ongoing commitment and availability to Telefilm.

And now, I'll turn it over to Francesca.

Francesca Accinelli, Interim Executive Director & CEO

Thank you, Mr. Spickler. I am very happy to be here today, virtually accompanied by my colleagues.

To reflect on a year of continued evolution with a new spirit of collaboration at Telefilm and in the industry. To celebrate all that we accomplished together. And to share opportunities for us to work on together.

I am so proud to be Telefilm Canada's Interim Executive Director and CEO.

Ever since I first walked through its doors 16 years ago, I have loved every minute with this organization. And every opportunity I have had to meet and collaborate with so many of you from coast to coast. I truly feel very lucky.

I am also grateful for the support and confidence entrusted in me by our Board of Directors, led by our Chair Robert Spickler.

And I am incredibly proud of our entire Telefilm team: for the boundless passion, determination, and expertise they bring to the table every day. I am *remarkably privileged* to work alongside each one of you.

Thank you to our industry partners and talent who are joining us today. Welcome!

You will discover in our 2021-22 annual report that Telefilm demonstrated:

- greater access to our funding programs—in both volume and amounts given
- our ability to remain agile and to modernize while distributing additional funds during a global pandemic
- a strengthening of teams to better meet the needs of the industry, and our services and better reflect the diversity in our country
- prioritization of the promotion of Canadian talent and content
- and we highlighted the important work we do administering the Canada Media Fund programs

We recognize the fragility of the film industry and focused our efforts to encourage stability, training, export and, of course, discoverability. We, again,

acknowledge the timely and important additional funds from the Government of Canada and the Department of Canadian Heritage.

We will also touch on where we go from here to further our mission of supporting promotion, distribution and production for our screen-based industry.

Yes, things have really improved, and it is a good time to reflect.

We have been successful by working together and setting common goals.

And I believe we have laid the groundwork for our industry to be more mindful of climate, social and economic impacts.

At Telefilm, we have implemented our EDI action plan by making data collection a priority.

We've continued to consult with our industry partners by engaging in conversations and conducting surveys.

We've revised our processes to improve access and increase transparency.

And now we are working on the next phase of our action plan, which Cathy will tell you about.

We know that a more representative industry depends on creating diverse access for communities seeking equity.

Through these stories—your stories—Canada holds a unique place in the world. We can, and must, be a recognized force on the world stage.

Earlier this year, Telefilm launched its first Eco-responsibility Action Plan.

Indeed, we must reduce our greenhouse-gas emissions.

That is why we are committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

In particular, we are grateful that an Indigenous perspective underlies this plan. It draws on the teachings that history, land and language are linked.

So we lead by example, for example, by greening our international pavilions.

And we are learning more and more about how we can all contribute.

A recent survey of 400 people revealed that a large majority of those employed in our industry believe it is important to incorporate sustainable and environmentally friendly production practices into their workplace.

We're on the right track!

Here, stories are at the centre of what we fund. With nearly 380 projects funded under our Development and Production programs, we are pleased to spotlight some wonderful successes:

A young drag queen, reeling from a breakup, escapes to Prince Edward County to find his grandmother in desperate circumstances, in Phil Connell's breathtaking *Jump, Darling*.

The film was selected by the BFI Flare London LGBTQ Film Festival for its international premiere.

Bretten Hannam's *Wildhood*, about a two-spirit teenager of Mi'kmaw heritage, debuted at the Toronto International Film Festival and received six Canadian Screen Award nominations.

Louis Morissette's *Le Guide de la Famille Parfaite* was a hit in Canada, taking in more than 2 million dollars at the box office. And it's now available internationally on Netflix.

We know the feature films of tomorrow will need a strong and vibrant pipeline of talented filmmakers and creators to keep Canadians coming back to theatres and watching Canadian films wherever they are available.

It goes without saying, Canadian creators make incredible content, and we need to do a better job of ensuring people find and connect with it.

That means investing in discoverability and exports.

The government's recovery and reopening funds allowed us to provide timely top-ups to cinemas and festivals—both of which are vital in the journey of a filmmaker and the film itself.

We also partnered with major streaming platforms—like Apple TV, CBC Gem, Crave and Netflix—to help feature Canadian content as people scroll through their favourite apps.

We created podcasts in French and English, providing Canadians with amazing insights into our talent.

We need to meet Canadians where they are or, more specifically, the screens where they are.

Wherever the film is being played, we will work with partners to ensure those films are seen.

Last year, Telefilm created a digitization initiative called Canadian Cinema - Reignited. This ongoing project is conducted in conjunction with partner festivals.

It allows for the restoration of important Canadian films to be offered on the big screen and on platforms.

Telefilm also continued to rebuild our international pavilions with the return of MIPCOM in 2021. And we have begun to modernize our international programs.

Exports provide another opportunity for our industry to partner and collaborate. Our common goal is to showcase our incredible stories and diverse talents from across Canada.

We are always better—more impactful—together.

In July, we set the stage with our 2022 to 2024 strategic plan, where we shared our values of Integrity, Courage, Respect, Competence and Accountability, and outlined three key priorities.

Number one, continue to support a sustainable and inclusive audiovisual ecosystem.

That's everything from reaching parity in the projects we fund, to now focusing our efforts on increasing applications from many communities working in partnership with the Indigenous Screen Office, Black Screen Office, Racial Equity Screen Office and Disability Screen Office.

Two, use our internal expertise better. Among our staff, we have a wealth of industry experience, linguistic and cultural diversity, and lived experiences.

We have the know-how to find faster, better and more inclusive ways of getting projects off the ground and onto people's screens.

Last but not least, attract new funding sources.

We are proven stewards of public and private funds, and we know how to make every dollar go further with the help of our outstanding team.

A great example is the Talent Fund. A national donation initiative dedicated to the impact and longevity of first-time filmmakers in Canada.

Marking its 10th-year anniversary, the Talent Fund has launched the careers of over 360 filmmakers, with 165 films that have won almost 180 awards.

At this time, we are emerging from trying times. The industry is set for healthy growth.

What happens next?

How do we prepare?

How do we adapt to the current environment?

Inflation, labour shortages and interest rates are adding pressure. Not just for our industry, but for everyone, for all Canadians.

Right now, our country is having a very important conversation about Bill C-11.

When the time comes to modernize the definition of Canadian content, Telefilm will offer its full cooperation to the government.

Accessibility and discoverability must be strengthened.

We must also provide the financial mechanisms necessary to ensure that our Canadian content creators continue to thrive.

And we must protect our intellectual property.

The return to movie theatres also raises the same concerns.

That's why discoverability is a top priority. Telefilm is actively working with all its partners to amplify Canadian content wherever entertainment is offered.

No matter what the new challenges,
No matter what you have to overcome,
The power of the screen guides us!

Our commitment to empowering storytellers *in all languages* has the capacity to *make a difference*.

And we are here to make that difference felt.

Let us continue with open dialogue. To listen. To collaborate and to find a path together to ensure greater access for all voices. And implement change to protect our planet.

I thank you all for your remarkable efforts this past year, for standing up and being *here* for this industry.

I cannot wait to see where we will go in 2023!

And now, I would like to invite Rene Bourdages, VP of Cultural Portfolio Management, to say a few words.

René Bourdages, Vice President, Cultural Portfolio Management

Thank you, Francesca.

Good afternoon to all of you. I'm very happy to see you today.

In fiscal year 2021 to 2022, we continued to modernize Telefilm—and I'd say we've even moved into high gear.

As you are no doubt aware, Telefilm Canada held pan-Canadian industry consultations in 2020 to 2021, which were very well attended. These consultations prompted us to put in place measures to foster an industry that reflects greater equity, diversity and inclusion.

And so, we initiated our funding program modernization, and we reviewed and improved our decision-making processes.

Through all the changes we made to the different funding programs, we put a great deal of effort into eliminating obstacles and improving access for filmmakers traditionally disadvantaged by systemic barriers.

To better mirror Canadian society and to be as transparent as possible, we established advisory committees—composed of external and internal representatives—whose mandate is to assess submitted projects and make recommendations to us.

Our decision-making process contributes to our goal of fostering a diversity of voices in the industry. We aim to fund a balanced production portfolio that invests in a variety of genres, budgets and company sizes, that reflects various perspectives and stories from all regions of the country.

During the year, we also launched a new data-collection process. The purpose of this data collection is, on the one hand, to help us get to know our partners better—that's important—and, on the other hand, identify our blind spots and track our progress going forward.

Furthermore, we funded additional mentoring and training initiatives, and we organized targeted webinars to encourage better representation of our programs.

There's still a lot more work to do.

We've made progress in recent years: more women now hold key creative positions in projects funded by Telefilm.

Indeed, we're very pleased that in 2021 to 2022, production funding was at a five-year high for women directors and screenwriters and at its highest since 2018 to 2019 for women producers. Films directed, written or produced by women accounted for 45% of all films funded by Telefilm this year.

We also continued our efforts to stimulate Indigenous production with the support of people like our colleague Adriana Chartrand, who leads Telefilm's Indigenous initiatives.

Lastly, our Development Stream for Black People and People of Colour give those communities increased access to our programs. We want to support Black filmmakers and filmmakers of colour at every stage of their profession, whether they are emerging, established or in mid-career.

Once again, French-language production has continued to shine. The demand is strong, and the successes achieved show that the projects submitted are well put together.

We continue to have dialogue with industry associations, as well as working groups from Indigenous communities and under-represented groups, because our experience shows that working with the industry is the cornerstone of Telefilm's modernization process.

In closing, I am very grateful to our staff. Our teams are engaged. From teams that design and deliver Telefilm's programs, to those that administer Canada Media Fund programs, our employees and managers have shown agility and resilience in achieving our goals, and that's a credit to them.

Thank you for your attention. I will now turn the floor over to my colleague, Marie-Eve Mainville, Vice President, Talent and Culture.

Marie-Eve Mainville, Vice President, Talent and Culture

Thank you, René. Good afternoon, everyone.

I am happy to be here with you today.

It was important for me to address you at the annual public assembly because we want to recognize the vital contribution of Telefilm's staff and highlight our organization's major modernization effort.

Once again, this year, the pandemic that so heavily affected the audiovisual industry and has also had a significant impact on the organization of work within our institution. In addition to this challenge, there are issues that affect the entire ecosystem of work.

So I would like to thank all Telefilm staff members for the incredible work they accomplished during the year. Thanks to their responsiveness, adaptability and collaboration with the industry, we were able to achieve many objectives, in which we take pride.

Francesca detailed the strategic plan earlier, with one of its focus **areas** being on elevating our internal expertise and optimizing our operational capacity.

The health and well-being of Telefilm's staff is a top priority for us.

Their expertise has been put to great use. What's more, operational emergencies and additional funding have increased workloads.

As such, we have expanded our efforts to provide staff with the necessary support and resources. From health and wellness tools on the intranet to adapted computer equipment, we have given our teams the means to work optimally... and progress continues!

In addition, we have completely revamped the performance management program to further support professional development and have placed an emphasis on flexibility and productivity to encourage work-life balance.

The update of our organization's policies is part of Telefilm's commitment to collaboration, equity, inclusion and diversity for all its staff members.

Our compensation structure has also been revised to better reflect the job market, encourage team contribution, and maintain fairness and equity.

As Telefilm continues to evolve, we made major changes to improve our onboarding process with the intention of enhancing the experience of new staff members.

With the collaboration of all internal sectors, we have updated our policies and processes with the aspiration of fulfilling the mandate to modernize Telefilm.

As my colleagues have already mentioned, collaboration with the industry has been crucial in recent years.

That's why, in addition to our internal modernization efforts, we made sure that our values and processes are reflected externally as well.

That's why we have launched a Code of Conduct for our business partners. This is in keeping with Telefilm's commitment to supporting a healthy ecosystem that thrives in a culture of mutual respect, dignity and inclusiveness, free of all forms of harassment, discrimination and violence.

Considering all these initiatives, we are pleased to say that Telefilm has not only become a partner of choice, but also an employer of choice.

Thank you for your time.

I would now like to turn the floor over to my colleague Cathy Wong, Vice-President, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, and Official Languages.

Cathy Wong, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion and Official Languages

Hi everyone.

It has been just over one year since I joined the team at Telefilm Canada, and has it ever been a busy one!

I have had the pleasure of meeting many members and groups within our film community across the country. We have been listening to their concerns and needs, while working together to find solutions or ways that Telefilm can help create a more equitable and inclusive audiovisual industry.

Telefilm has taken steps to build greater equity in its programs and by evaluating needs through a lens of greater inclusion.

While we still have much work to do, I'd like to share some highlights from the last year:

This was the first year for Telefilm's new self-identification questionnaire as part of several of our portfolio programs.

Progress is being made in collecting much-needed data for better supporting our clients and their film projects, but also our audiovisual industry overall.

Telefilm was also proud to support valuable research such as the Black Screen Office's Being Seen series, Racial Equity Media Collective's Mapping Canada's BIPOC Screen Sector, among others.

We've also better supported more than 25 festivals whose focus are on diversity and inclusion.

We've held on our commitment to supporting gender parity.

Moving forward, we must further our progress by including a more intersectional approach, to better support gender diverse individuals, as well as Indigenous women, and Black and women of colour, and women living with disabilities.

We've begun to lay the foundations for best practices regarding authentic storytelling.

An industry survey was completed at the end of the summer.

We have been reviewing over 150 submissions from industry organizations, guilds, equity seeking groups, and individual members of our audiovisual community.

We will next be forming a subcommittee based on those who participated in the survey, and they will help us as we take our next steps.

These are just some highlights, and the work must continue.

In our next step, Telefilm will be releasing its 2022-2024 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan this afternoon.

Our new plan represents four strong pillars with twenty-five interconnected engagements, developed in collaboration with all departments at Telefilm. Our new Action Plan's four pillars and twenty-five engagements build on progress that has been made.

It integrates new KPIs and initiatives across Telefilm's funding portfolios and promotional activities, to IT and communications, as well as Human Resources, legal and finance.

Pillar one of the Action Plan will strengthen Telefilm Canada's inclusive culture through greater equity in access to all programs and a representative portfolio.

Pillar Two focuses on expanding EDI-informed decision-making based on data and industry knowledge.

In Pillar Three, we will use our position as a public agency to uplift, amplify and empower communities as an Ally of Choice to the industry.

Lastly, as our Fourth pillar, we will support a stronger sense of belonging at Telefilm Canada through leadership accountability.

As a Crown corporation, Telefilm Canada has made it a key goal to work collaboratively with our industry partners to eliminate the racism, discrimination and oppression that exists within the industry. Creating a space for open discussion, learning and growth is vital as we continue to work towards that goal.

The new Action Plan represents Telefilm's next chapter. I invite you to read the Action Plan in full once it is available on our website following this meeting.

Thank you.