



**TELEFILM CANADA ANNUAL PUBLIC ASSEMBLY
SPEECH DELIVERED BY CAROLLE BRABANT, C.P.A., C.A., MBA
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NOVEMBER 15, 2012**

Good afternoon, everyone.

I've had the pleasure of meeting with many of you over the last few years, either in the context of Telefilm's consultations or at festivals, markets and other events in which you take part.

I always get a lot out of these meetings. I appreciate your energy and your creativity, which are a major source of motivation for me. Like us, at Telefilm, "you want it to work!"

Today, I'll begin by talking about the major changes we've made during 2011-2012. Then, I'll provide an overview of the efforts we've deployed to ensure that our investments produce the best results.

The changes: a response to our consultations

One word has become a key part of our vocabulary at Telefilm, and that word is "consultation." I can't emphasize this enough, because it *is* important. Consultations are the very foundation of the changes we've made in 2011-2012.

You asked us to be less bureaucratic—to cut the red tape. To recognize your know-how and experience, as well as your successes. To give you more autonomy. To help you diversify your funding sources. And to better promote Canadian content.

We've worked to improve our range of programs and services.

The objective of our Program Redesign was to have a simplified and stronger portfolio of programs that will make your relationships with Telefilm easier to manage, less time-consuming, and less costly.

The Redesign was developed around one key idea: to encourage success, to enhance the value of success, to reward success through all of our programs. And I'm referring here as much to those companies that contribute to our film industry's success as to those creative talent who are just emerging.

Think, for example, of Anne Émond, whose début feature, *Nuit #1*, was a hit in many festivals and then had a successful tour elsewhere around the world. Or *Leone Stars*, by Ngardy Conteh and Allan Tong, the first documentary to win Telefilm's PITCH THIS! at the Toronto International Film Festival.

So there have been major changes. Companies that submit development projects now have more decision-making autonomy. They themselves choose the projects or group of projects they want to put on screen. Industry festivals and events are focusing more and more on actively promoting Canadian talent. And their strategic plan now helps them to diversify their funding sources.

Yes, there have been changes, but rest assured that consultations will continue. Indeed, as far as I'm concerned, the consultative process is not a temporary activity. It's a continuous process.

As Michel Roy said earlier, we're always aiming for a balanced approach. We know that there's a direct link between private investment and a film's performance at the box office. And we recognize that low-budget films often have tremendous cultural impact. The important thing is to maintain critical mass and produce as diverse a portfolio of films as possible.

In 2011-2012, we funded 75 feature films in production and post-production, as well as 62 films at the marketing phase.

We supported 49 Canadian festivals across the country and took part in 14 international audiovisual events.

The Telefilm team responsible for administering the funding programs of the Canada Media Fund has done outstanding work once again this year. They treated 509 television and digital media content projects for the Convergent Stream and 90 interactive digital media projects and software applications for the Experimental Stream.

On the film side, you now have access to new financial tools.

As for our new Talent Fund, I like the fact that individuals and businesses can choose to invest directly in the national and international development of Canadian talent. This is a vote of confidence in our film industry.

The new Micro-Budget Production Program is also a wonderful example of what we can achieve in a partnership, because professional training schools in all regions of the country are providing access to a new wave of creative talent who are plugged into digital media.

You know it as well as I do: there are new audiences to win over, audiences that like different kinds of content and that have alternative ways of consuming cultural content.

In this year of innovation and change, we've managed to keep our administrative costs at a reasonable level. We've cut our professional services by 30%, our publicity and promotion expenses by 20%, and our travel costs by 14%.

Better still, management efficiency has allowed us to free up \$1.2 million, which we invested in our programs. Our program redesign thus generated considerable cost savings.

You can believe me when I say that we will continue to support a wide variety of creative talent, projects, companies and events, everywhere across the country. This is a core part of our mandate.

That said, we constantly want to know whether we're meeting our goals. Put another way, we are fully committed to measuring the results of our efforts.

That's why we launched our new Success Index. It will provide reliable data on how our portfolio is performing from one year to the next, from a commercial, cultural and industrial standpoint.

As such, it will be easier for us to adjust our strategies to stimulate demand for Canadian content. And this brings me to the second topic I'd like to discuss today. I'd like to briefly go over the major initiatives we've deployed to ensure that our investments produce the best results.

Rewarding and effective promotion strategies

The intent is clear: We want a wide variety of audiences, we want bigger audiences, we want new audiences.

We have the international recognition, the talent, the solid infrastructure. But what was missing from our equation was better promotion.

Two years ago, a Telefilm survey revealed that a minority of Canadians agreed that it was important to show and promote Canadian films. A recent survey conducted by Heritage Canada offers more encouraging results.

This survey reveals that 90% of those polled say it's important for Canadians to have access to Canadian films. But only 36% think that Canadian films are well publicized or well promoted.

To stimulate demand for Canadian content, the way ahead is clearly marked out: the key is better promotion.

Our efforts in Canada and internationally complement one another.

We focus a lot on talent—your talent. The Talent to Watch series, launched at the 2011 Toronto International Film Festival, was very successful. And the get-togethers we organized between creative talent and the media were also a big hit—40 reporters took part in a meet-and-greet with Philippe Falardeau at Sundance after it was announced that *Monsieur Lazhar* had been nominated for an Oscar in the Best Foreign Language Film category.

Canada has scored three finalist Oscar nominations for Best Foreign Language Film in two years—a great boost for our efforts to break into the U.S. market! Sales of the 10 most popular Canadian films in the United States have risen 157% in five years.

It's important to break into new markets. I salute the Ontario Media Development Corporation, which invited Telefilm to take part in an exploratory mission to India. And I attended the Shanghai Film Festival, where our industry was represented by 29 films. Micheline Lanctôt's feature *Pour l'amour de Dieu* won the Jury Grand Prize.

At the latest MIPCOM, where Canada was the country of honour, we highlighted the fact that *everything is big* in Canada: our geography, but also our talent, our business opportunities... and our actors. François Arnaud, who plays Cesare in the series *The Borgias*, was at MIPCOM along with several other talent who acted as ambassadors.

Our message was the following: There has never been a better time to connect with Canada. I'm deeply convinced of that.

But we also have to develop new partnerships here at home to make our talent shine forth... and raise our industry's profile.

Two red carpet events were held recently in Calgary and St. John's for Deepa Mehta's wonderful film, *Midnight's Children*. Some 2,500 people attended the screenings. Better still, our ad campaign had a regional audience numbering in the hundreds of thousands. And the movie is still in theatres.

The private sector has been involved in all sorts of ways in the promotion of Canadian talent. At the last Cannes Film Festival, Birks jewellers handed out its inaugural Birks Canadian Diamond awards to two young actresses, Sarah Gadon and Emily Hampshire. And Birks paid tribute to Canadian women directors at TIFF 2012.

During the past year, I've spoken to several business groups around the country, telling them that Telefilm and the audiovisual industry are also in business. I tell them that, just like they do, Telefilm supports small- and medium-sized businesses, headed by entrepreneurs who have the courage to dream and who know how to recognize and take advantage of the right opportunities. Entrepreneurs who may work at very small companies but who want to—and who can—make their mark, who think BIG.

Collectively, you wield considerable economic power. In 2010-2011, total Canadian film and TV production was worth \$5.5 billion a year—an all-time high. The industry also generated \$7.5 billion-worth of GDP for the Canadian economy. And it accounted for some 128,000 high-value, well-paying jobs. There's no such thing as small success. Rather, there are many successes that, more and more, combine to make our film industry a force to be reckoned with.

Raising the profile of our cinema—it's not hard to do, but we need to have more opportunities and more people who can make it happen.

Just like Vinay Virmani, who has been travelling across the country with *Breakaway*, you too can help to promote your stories effectively. Audiences everywhere are waiting to be swept away by your films!

And don't be afraid to be bold, to look ahead. That's the best way to take off!

It's also important to go find audiences where they hang out, on Twitter, on YouTube, on Facebook, for example. The Internet has created an almost infinite marketplace.

In terms of market penetration, however, in terms of awareness and screen time, television continues to be film's best friend. Two-thirds of Canadians watch at least one movie a month on TV, or 12 movies a year.

For Canadian film, therefore, the TV market is a market worth developing. In fact, a Telefilm survey revealed that one respondent in two said they would watch more Canadian films on TV if they were better advertised. As you can tell, it always comes down to promotion!

Michel Roy spoke about the recent symposium on Canadian content organized by Telefilm, the CMF and the CRTC at the International Institute of Communications conference. This event showed that more and more of us believe that we need concerted action to highlight Canadian stories and to build audiences for these stories. You'll hear more about concrete actions during the next few months.

Who knows? An industry-wide promotional strategy might help our film industry take its rightful place across the country.

What's certain is that we now have better tools than we did before to measure all aspects of success.

The first results of our Success Index indicate that the value of our portfolio has risen 24% over one year.

We should all be thrilled by this, we should spread the good news, and continue working... all of us together!

Thank you for having turned out today in such great numbers.