



NOTES FOR A SPEECH BY  
**CHRISTA DICKENSON**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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(CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)

Thank you Tim for those kind words.

Good morning everyone and thank you for having me. It's a pleasure to be here at your first Biennial Convention.

It's fitting that my first public address as Executive Director is to you, the very heart and soul of our industry. Having studied film and video production, and then working in documentary film and television early in my career, I understand intimately the vital role that directors play in our cultural sector.

So I'm here today to share some of my thoughts as I begin my mandate, and to have the opportunity to hear some of yours, because Telefilm can only best serve the industry with regular, open dialogue.

## **90 days at the helm**

Today marks 90 days or so since I took the helm at Telefilm. Above all, these past three months have confirmed what I already believed: that indeed this organization is a jewel in Heritage Canada's portfolio, and what an honour it is to sit in this position.

In my first weeks, I found a well-managed organization with an experienced and strong executive team in place, and dedicated employees who are truly passionate about Canadian film, television, and digital media productions.

I also found an organization with a very clear mandate, core values, and a bold vision for the industry. It doesn't get much better than that.

Last year, Telefilm celebrated a milestone anniversary – 50 years of supporting the development of the audiovisual industry. And while the first 40 years were focused on developing technical skills and production capacity, over

the last 10 years, Telefilm, along with the rest of the industry, entered into and embraced a period of change.

Telefilm dared to change, and evolved to become an organization that prioritizes the promotion of Canada's audiovisual content and talent to increase their discoverability by audiences worldwide, their notoriety, their export, and their accolades.

In short, an organization dedicated entirely to the industry's success. And today, Canada's audiovisual industry has achieved global excellence.

These achievements have both changed perceptions at home, and have established our reputation abroad as a country that produces world-class talent and content.

A significant number of Canadian filmmakers have become some of the most sought-after names in the world. And the new generation that is bursting on to the scene is poised to reach summits of success in their own right.

Like **Sophie Dupuis**, whose first feature *Chien de garde* was put forward as Canada's choice in the race for the Best Foreign Language Oscar. No small feat and we all wish her the best of luck!

And yes, challenges remain. However, both Telefilm and the industry, with its maturity and self-confidence, are also poised to seize every opportunity.

## **Priorities for the first year**

In 2018, Telefilm has a new vision to “See Bigger” and I love it! I’m invigorated by this call to action.

And so you might ask: how will we see bigger?

By building on Telefilm’s solid foundation, and by focusing on four areas of action that I believe will strengthen our industry today in preparation for tomorrow.

First, **funding**.

Second, **finding and reaching audiences**.

Third, **diversity and inclusion**.

And fourth, **innovation**.

I think you’ll come to see that these four areas are closely intertwined and inter-related.

## Increasing & rebalancing production funding

As I travelled the country in my first 90 days at Telefilm, one thing became abundantly clear: that there simply isn't enough money in the system. If we want to become one of the world's top producers of independent content, if Telefilm is to play a leadership role in bringing Canadian films to audiences, in exporting and promoting them around the world, it is imperative that we increase and rebalance production funding in Canada.

That is why I was also so pleased to see the leadership of the **Canadian Media Producers Association (CMPA)**, the **Association québécoise de la production médiatique (AQPM)**, the **Directors Guild of Canada**, along with 31 other organizations and provincial agencies, who submitted a formal proposal to Minister Rodriguez to increase Telefilm's Parliamentary Appropriation by \$50 million. Let me take a moment to thank Tim Southam and Dave Forget for your support and enthusiasm on this.

This new money would be dedicated in large part to the production of feature films.

Now, I don't know if the government will increase our budget, but I can tell you that the Minister believes in the central role that this industry plays in Canada's cultural landscape.

I also heard a *cri du cœur* from many in the industry that it's time for Telefilm to institute a coproduction fund.

Overall, the message is clear, if Canada is to compete in this new global media landscape, if Canada is to produce the high-quality films needed to attract big audiences around the world, more production funding is needed.



## Finding & reaching audiences

Which leads me to my next priority: finding and reaching new and bigger audiences.

Every one of us here wants Canadian films seen as much as possible.

More and more, the concept of “discoverability” is being replaced by “**reaching audiences**”. And increasingly that “audience” is the world.

What does that mean precisely for the industry and Telefilm at a time when exports, coproduction, platforms, and new creative partnerships are all part of the equation of reaching audiences worldwide?

To tackle this seemingly simple yet somewhat elusive question, we need to collectively challenge ourselves.

How do we leverage new partnerships with the broadcasters, who already play an important role in reaching Canadian audiences?

How do we grow successful partnerships, and build on achievements like Telefilm's **Rendezvous Canada iTunes** boutiques, where we've seen tens of thousands of transactions for Canadian films; like the **CMF's Encore+ YouTube** channel where classic Canadian film and television series have been watched millions of times; and the **CBC's recently announced Gem**.

And how can the industry more actively engage with new platforms as they enter the marketplace?

One thing I do know: there *is* an appetite for Canadian content. And that this will require **innovation**, but more on that later.

A multipronged approach to diversity & inclusion

I recently read an interview with Stephanie Allain, then head of the Los Angeles Film Festival, who, when asked about diversity in film, said this: “Diversity doesn't just happen. It has to be mined starting from the first set of eyes on the film.”

I think this perfectly describes our approach to building an inclusive audiovisual industry.

In 2016, Telefilm, in partnership with the industry, set an ambitious objective for itself: to build, by 2020, a representative and diversified feature film portfolio that better reflects Canada’s population, including gender parity and Indigenous filmmakers.

Next, Telefilm put into place a **five-point action plan** to achieve gender parity in each of the key roles of director, writer and producer in our financing portfolio.

Now, one year later, we are seeing the change and results indicate that we're moving in the right direction. However, the greatest challenge remains with bigger-budget films, where there is still a significant gap. We are reviewing new incentives aimed at ensuring that more women-led projects budgeted at over \$2.5 million enter the pipeline this year.

Telefilm also significantly increased its support of Indigenous talent, and has increased its financial commitment to the **Indigenous Screen Office**. What's more, we have put in place a jury process with Indigenous representation coordinated by imagineNATIVE, and have hired a young film director, Adam Garnet Jones, as important liaison with the Indigenous community.

Recognizing the success of the **Talent to Watch Program** in discovering new diverse voices from every corner of the country, Telefilm expanded the program to support 50 first projects a year.

The program not only includes targeted streams for Indigenous and official-language minority communities, it has also been especially successful in its support of women and other underrepresented voices, including from visible minority and LGBTQ communities.

It has also opened the door for many directors working in television, helping them to cross-over into feature film.

And from the feedback and anecdotes I've heard after the event to celebrate this year's selection, let me tell you how much enthusiasm and excitement there is from key players in the industry. In the words of director Molly McGlynn:  
"I've been launched into a career that I did not know I could have five years ago."

And now, Eurimages members are approaching us to see how they can implement complimentary programs in their countries. I truly believe that we're on to something.

Now we can build on these experiences to develop a **multifaceted action plan** to address diversity and inclusion, starting with a definition that takes into account the vast array of Canadian communities.

In the words of Dr. Stacy L. Smith: "Our North Star is not diversity, it is not inclusion, it is **belonging.**" For our industry to truly be inclusive, all voices, from all corners of our country, must have the space to express themselves and to tell their stories in their way. It means an equal chance for all; that **everyone** is welcome at the table.

Diverse Canadian films will find and reach new audiences around the world. There are untapped audiences to reach, and we have the talent to do it.

And while we are already seeing more representation on the screen, more is needed among the industry's gatekeepers. Telefilm has already started to include the concepts of diversity and inclusion in its hiring practices. Our aim is to increase the social and cultural diversity of our workforce to better reflect the Canadians we serve and to improve our decision-making.

We all want to see ourselves, our lives, our stories reflected on the screen. And Telefilm has a responsibility in ensuring that our national cinema reflect the rich multiculturalism of our population.

## (Re)Define innovation in the film industry

As someone who comes from interactive milieu, I am no stranger to innovation, and to the struggle to define it and how it applies to an ever-evolving sector.

Many questions remain in order for Telefilm to deliver on its commitment to embrace innovation:

- What does it mean to innovate in today's context?
- What is the future of the film industry?
- What are the jobs of the future?
- How can Telefilm, the CMF, and our other partners better collaborate to finance new kinds of productions?
- How will Canada become a leader in today's multidisciplinary, platform-agnostic world?



Innovation is deeply embedded in Canada's DNA, and we have a great ability to think differently and lead change. It'll be important to continue to measure ourselves, to benchmark. Telefilm is looking at how to improve the **Success Index**, to modernize it to better reflect today's industry. We'll use it to guide our decision-making going forward.

So I say: dare to pilot new ideas, to experiment, to try new things. Telefilm will be there for you, to support you in taking that leap, to help manage the risk. Together, we **can** get ahead of the pack.

We will encourage and support the industry to continue the transformation needed to take full advantage of these opportunities.

Signs of the impact from a global digital shift are evident in the Canadian film industry – from access to funding, to

finding and reaching audiences, opening our industry up to new voices, and finding new ways of doing business.

Today, more than ever before, we must all increase its efforts to nurture and support Canadian talent, to make Canadian films available to audiences everywhere, and to ensure that our productions and talent shine on the world's stage.

As I look to the future, I'm very optimistic. Because, together, we **can** and **will** see bigger.

Thank you.