



NOTES FOR A SPEECH BY
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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Thank you, Mr. Machum.

“Thanks to art, instead of seeing one world only, our own, we see that world multiply itself and we have at our disposal as many worlds as there are original artists”

This quote from the great French writer Marcel Proust speaks to the importance of multiple points of view, voices, creative worlds. In other words, of diversity.

Hello and welcome, everyone.

I’m delighted to have the opportunity today to speak to you about our achievements in the 2016-2017 fiscal year, the challenges facing our industry today, and the strategies that have been put into place to support the industry take them on.

2016-17 was a watershed year. More than ever, we saw women, emerging talent, and Indigenous filmmakers treat audiences to films that were original, entertaining, and quite simply outstanding.

This past year, we saw our creators confirm what we’ve long suspected: that the Canadian audiovisual industry’s greatest asset is the diversity of its voices.

I'm thinking of Ann-Marie Fleming's wonderful film *Window Horses*, which screened in competition at the Festival international du film d'animation d'Annecy, and was recently submitted for Oscar consideration.

The Breadwinner, which opened in theatres this weekend, is also in the race for an Oscar nod.

Or Xavier Dolan's *Juste la fin du monde* [*It's Only the End of the World*], which won the grand prize at the Cannes Film Festival – the second time he has been recognized by the festival – as well as three Césars awards including for Best Director.

In fact, two other Canadian features were also selected at Cannes: Nathan Morlando's *Mean Dreams* and Kim Nguyen's *Two Lovers and a Bear*, starring Canadian actress Tatiana Maslany. This is no small feat!

Maudie, starring the Oscar-nominated actors Sally Hawkins and Ethan Hawke, enjoyed a special screening at the Berlinale.

Or *Snowtime!* [*La guerre des tuques 3D*], which had an outstanding career in China. I had the immense pleasure of attending a screening of the film, and can attest first-hand to the warm reception it received.

And there's Yan England's debut feature *1:54*, a movie with a strong anti-bullying message, which won several awards and

was the subject of a special screening at the United Nations headquarters in New York.

Finally, *Ballerina*. There's no doubt that the animated feature's delightful character Félicie won the hearts of audiences: the production earned more than 150 million dollars worldwide.

And I could go on. I think our entire industry deserves a hearty round of applause on an exceptional year!

[Applause]

These films, the interest and enthusiasm they attracted in Canada and abroad, bring back some good memories. As I travel to festivals and markets around the world, I am both surprised and incredibly proud to see international audiences fall under the spell of distinctly Canadian stories and images.

The way that our productions have been greeted over the years were, for me, a defining experience. They strengthened my already-strong resolve to offer movie-lovers Canadian content that will never stop surprising them, moving them, dazzling them. Stories that will show audiences who we are.

And who are we, exactly?

We could use a dozen words to describe our vast and beautiful country – its values and its culture.

But I'll settle on just one: diverse.

2016-17 was a landmark year for the promotion of this diversity.

On November 11, 2016, Telefilm announced its goal to build, by 2020, a diverse and representative portfolio of productions that reflects **gender parity** in each of the key positions of director, screenwriter, and producer.

2016-17 was a breakout year for women-led films. There are so many success stories to talk about, including Ashley McKenzie with *Werewolf*, Chloé Robichaud and *Pays*, Anne Émond, who directed *Nelly*, Amy Jo Johnson for *The Space Between*, and so many more.

Earlier this month, I was proud to announce that midway point in our current fiscal year, 44% of signed or recommended projects have a woman in the position of director; 46% of projects have a woman screenwriter, and 51% of projects have a woman producer.

The needle is moving and moving in the right direction.

Despite these good early results, a major challenge remains: big-budget films, in which women continue to be under-represented. We are aware of this issue and are working closely with the industry to address it.

There's no doubt in my mind that, with everyone's concerted effort, female talent will command an increasing share of the spotlight in the years ahead.

Last February, Telefilm pledged to increase its funding to **Indigenous filmmakers**. Six months later, in August, we announced support for 11 new feature films for a total investment of 4.7 million dollars – outpacing our original commitment.

Among the funded projects, two will be directed by former recipients of the Micro-Budget Production Program.

Indigenous filmmakers were in the spotlight at home and around the world. Filmmakers like Alethea Arnaquq-Baril, whose documentary *Angry Inuk* was selected at the Berlinale in 2017 and was also a big winner at Hot Docs. Benjamin Ross Hayden's *The Northlander* screened at imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival. And award-winning director Zacharias Kunuk made his return with *Maliglutit*, co-directed by Natar Ungalaaq, which also screened in Berlin and was awarded at the Canadian Screen Awards.

Committed to giving a voice to filmmakers representing Canada's **diversity**, Telefilm is now working to lay the foundation for an action plan aimed at reflecting the rich points of view of the diverse people who make up our country. I hope that shortly we'll be able to make an announcement following

from our discussions with representatives from various communities.

I'd like to thank our industry partners for their significant contribution to the implementation and success of these new measures.

2016 was also a good year to foster **coproduction** opportunities.

I have to admit that I was extremely proud when Canada joined the Council of Europe's cultural support fund. Our membership in Eurimages not only strengthens our reputation as a coproducer of choice, it offers our industry a major new source of funding.

And it hasn't taken long to get results! This past July, the coproduction *1999 (Wish You Were Here)* became the first Canadian project to obtain Eurimages funding.

More recently, just last month in fact – after a fierce competitive round – we learned that the three projects submitted by Telefilm were selected for funding: *the hummingbird project*, Kim Nguyen's next project which has just begun production in Montreal, *Le Suicide d'Emma Peeters*, and *Sweetness in the Belly*.

Added to this very promising start is the fact that Eurimages recognized Canada in a big way by choosing our country as host

of the fund's annual meeting next year. We are honoured by this decision, and will do everything we can to make participants' stay as pleasant as possible.

Still on the topic of international news, you'll soon start to hear about many Canadian productions and companies heading to Berlin for the European Film Market, where Canada is officially the Country of Honour.

Promotion didn't take a break this year, and discoverability was top of mind for us this year. Three major initiatives to connect Canadian consumers with Canadian content in new ways were launched as part of the celebrations to mark Canada 150 and Telefilm's 50th birthday.

The most important of these was Movie Nights Across Canada, a cross-country tour that spotlight the enormous creativity of Canadian cinema, television and digital media. Thank you to our many partners, including broadcasters, distributors, associations, provincial agencies, festivals, private companies, and individual sponsors. Screenings were held in eight cities from coast to coast to coast, drawing some 10,000 attendees in the theatres, connecting with some 9 million Canadians on social media, and generating 780,000 social impressions.

We're also very proud of our partnership with iTunes Canada, confirming that partnerships with the private sector is often a winning formula.

iTunes is already a destination of choice for Canadian consumers. The platform, through our Canada First store, now offers a selection of more than 150 recent titles in both official languages. Garnering 72,000 views in its first six months online, which translated into sales of close to half a million dollars, the initiative's potential has already proved its worth.

We plan to expand this success to other key territories around the world, starting with Germany. The German store will launch in the winter to coincide with the Canadian focus in Berlin.

Finally, travellers were able to discover or rediscover our films for free on Via Rail's onboard entertainment system along the Québec City-Windsor corridor. By making some 200 hours of Canadian content available resulted in 75,000 total views during the first nine months of the year. Thank you to our partner eOne, who helped make this initiative possible.

With results like these, I can say without a doubt that Canadians have a real thirst for Canadian content – a fact that was confirmed by our most recent consumer trend report.

This year being our 50th anniversary provided an ideal opportunity to examine what the future may hold for Telefilm. We asked ourselves some pretty hard questions about our organization's relevance and mandate in a marketplace where sources of funding and content are increasingly global; where the traditional definitions of genre and format no longer apply;

and where anyone can watch just about anything, wherever and whenever they want, with the simple tap of their finger.

In other words, within a context of extraordinary change.

But with change also comes opportunity. And it is apparent to us that an organization such as Telefilm is not only essential, but vital.

Building on the successes accrued over the last few years, Telefilm and the Canadian industry are now in an excellent position to take on these new challenges – to convert them into opportunities.

The growing fame of a significant number of Canadian talents on the international scene, and the quickening pace at which new talent is emerging, have helped to enhance Canada's reputation as a fertile source of talent.

Additionally, our films and TV series already enjoy a well-established international reputation. Now, in 2017, our industry has acquired a level of maturity and confidence to create and produce content that can stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the best in the world.

With these strengths as a foundation, and in line with the current issues we face, Telefilm will focus its future actions around three strategic pillars:

- First, Telefilm will continue **to innovate** when it comes to content, talent promotion, and business models by supporting the creation and distribution of all kinds of content;
- Second, Telefilm will continue **to strengthen** the industry by fostering an entrepreneurial approach in order to reinforce its competitiveness; and finally
- Telefilm will continue with its efforts **to export** Canadian content around the globe, ensuring that the industry remains viable.

In this era of transformation, the discovery and development of the next generation of creators is more important than ever, as demonstrated by the success achieved by the **Micro-Budget Production Program**, an initiative financed mainly by the Talent Fund.

This program is perhaps what I'm most proud of. When first launched, I thought of it as "the right to fail program" – meaning that the recipients would have the financial support to innovate, possibly make mistakes, and above all learn and succeed.

Five years later, the projects that have resulted have surpassed my wildest dreams. To date, we have funded 73 debut feature films and narrative web series that have won about 90 national and international awards.

I'd like to introduce you now to some of these successes.

[Video]

Looking to the future, we want to build on this success.

So today, it gives me great pleasure to introduce the new and improved Talent to Watch program, a more flexible and nimble program that better supports emerging creators from every region of the country.

We will more than double the number of projects we finance. That means, a commitment to support 50 projects per year, marking our 50th anniversary.

We are also adding new designated partners to better reach creators from all regions – creators who have perhaps previously thought it isn't possible to start their careers.

We will foster mentorship, whereby previous recipients will advise and guide new recipients in the aim of fostering success.

We also recognize that not everyone has the same path. In this vein, I am announcing the creation of an automatic stream for successful short filmmakers. Short film directors who have won a prize at a selected list of international festivals will have access to automatic funding for their first feature.

By this same token, I am also pledging to support a greater number of second features with automatic financing for internationally-recognized first feature filmmakers.

To this end, I'm happy to say that we have already confirmed the first two directors: Alethea Arnaquq-Baril and Ashley McKenzie.

Building partnerships has always been a guiding principle at Telefilm. We are stronger together, and are building the industry of tomorrow.

And these changes are a result of feedback from both the industry, our provincial counterparts, and our designated partners, like Ryerson University, the National Screen Institute, the Canadian Film Centre to name a few. I'd like to thank them all for their collaboration and candour.

Matt Johnson, Matt Miller, and Niv Fichman, who are with us today, thank you for our inspiring discussions.

This is a bold move for the organization, but it is one that is absolutely necessary for the longevity of our industry. It will help to develop the next generation of Canadian creators and enrich our portfolio of productions.

I firmly believe that independent film – whether in Canada or elsewhere – will remain vibrant as long as the “Telefilms” of the

world exist to assert and highlight the uniqueness of the stories filmmakers have to tell.

Canadian creativity that shines around the globe: that's our vision.

Unveiling Canadian talent to the world year after year: that's our ambition.

And I have no doubt we will accomplish it, and that this new generation of Canadian talent will beat all expectations.

And this brings to an end the official part of my speech.

My sincere thanks to the members of the Board, and to its outgoing Chair, Mr. Roy, for their continued support and for the confidence they have shown in me.

To Telefilm's employees – a group of skilled, dedicated, and passionate women and men – to those of you in this room and to those watching online: you have been amazing in your support. I am deeply grateful to all of you. Thank you. It was also a sad year at Telefilm, as we lost two of our employees to cancer. I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge Marie-Luce Côté and Sheila de La Varende.

And I'd like to pay special tribute to those in the industry. To the women and men of this country, young and not so young; to the emerging creators and the seasoned talents from all regions of Canada and from all backgrounds: I wish you every success, which you so richly deserve! And you can be sure that I'll be watching and celebrating your successes just as loudly as before. You'll always have a fan in me.

Thank you. Have a good day.