

Heed The Arts Councils

M. Pierre DesRoches
Executive Director
TELEFILM CANADA

Dear Mr. DesRoches,

Having had the chance to review your "Strategy for the Administration of Telefilm Canada Funds", allow me to compliment you and your staff for an excellent piece of work.

This is one of the best documents to come out of Telefilm in recent memory, with a clear outline of the objective of each program, and the appropriate criteria. Congratulations.

In a similar spirit, allow me to make one very simple suggestion with respect to section 4 of your Corporate Priorities. For most of the major budgets considered by Telefilm, it is of course essential to carefully evaluate the track record of the key individuals and companies involved. At the same time, you recognize your responsibility to new talent and you indicate your intention to develop special programs that encourage this course of new creativity for the film community.

I think there is a very easy and effective way to do this. If you look at the backgrounds of filmmakers such as Sandy Wilson, Jack Darcus, Bill MacGillivray, Atom Egoyan, and myself, or films such as *Mermaids*, *Winter Tan*, *A Rustling of Leaves: Inside the Philippine Revolution*, you will find Canada Council funding, or funding from the provincial Arts Councils.

Just as Telefilm carefully evaluates the track record of key individuals for its investment, so do the juries of these Arts Councils evaluate the creative achievements of the individuals seeking funding. The competition is rigorous, and these juries without a doubt spot the best new talent in Canada and encourage their work with the limited production funds available.

Within the current Telefilm policy, there are two "triggers" for investment: either a broadcast license or a distribution guarantee. While this makes perfect sense, the obvious exception has to be the new talent, and new projects, that are not yet seen as "commercial" by the film industry. A different "trigger" seems necessary: recognition by a Federal or Provincial Arts Council Jury and the award of a production grant.

Certainly in some instances Telefilm has already been involved in these projects, but because of "market-driven" criteria designed to suit the industry, it has been an unnecessarily arduous task for all parties, trying to fit square pegs into round holes.

The advantage to you: the time-consuming and difficult work of identifying the most interesting new projects is done at no expense to Telefilm, by the most qualified juries in Canada. Projects would still be vetted by your staff, but the criteria would be consistent with the

developing of an on-going pool of new Canadian talent where artistic risk-taking is encouraged.

According to your document, the combined budget for the TV Fund, the Film Fund, and the production and development of the General Fund amounts to \$106.2 million. An "R & D" allocation of 3% to the development of new talent would amount to \$3.2 million. As these projects, by nature, would be low budget (and would only apply to feature length projects, dramas, narratives, documentaries, and animation), the average Telefilm investment would be in the \$50-200 thousand range.

It's a very simple way to encourage a hotbed of activity, and successes at Cannes and Berlin, as well as at home, prove the validity of these independently-spirited films.

Kirk Tougas
Vancouver

Thanks Susan

Susan Schouten Levine deserves the thanks (and *Cinema Canada* too) of the many hundreds of friends and associates of John Grierson who, saddened and troubled by Joyce Nelson's uncalled for and farfetched piece of Marxist-Leninist revisionist history of his life and work, are pleased to see her distortions put in place by Ms. Levine's authoritative review of *The Colonized Eye*. As one of the many whose lives were affected by Grierson and who knew him as a friend and colleague, his work is certainly open to intelligent appraisal, but not to Joyce Nelson's arrant nonsense which seems to spring from some deep source of vindictiveness well-mixed with a dose of inferiority complex. With her biased work she has marked herself as an object of ridicule for the rest of her career.

Gerald Pratley
Director,
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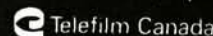
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