

WIFTV applauds Canadian funding agencies on IWD 2017

Panel at Vancouver International Women in Film Festival was a good place to be to celebrate International Women's Day 2017

Vancouver, March 10, 2017

At the panel ***“Gender and Diversity Initiatives in the Canadian screen-based media industry”*** on the opening day of Vancouver International Women in Film Festival (VIWIFF), audience members heard about federal funding initiatives to address the gender imbalance, as well as the lack of diversity, in Canadian screen-based industries.

The panel featured Claude Joli-Coeur of the National Film Board, Kim Guise (TELUS), Sharon McGowan and Susan Brinton (WIFTV), plus filmmakers Doreen Manuel, Karen Lam, and Amy Belling. Valerie Creighton (Canada Media Fund) and Carolle Brabant (Telefilm Canada) joined the panel via Skype.

WIFTV applauds the work by the agencies to put into place their separate gender parity initiatives – **summarized below** – which together provide a framework for a cohesive national strategy for Canada. This is the kind of approach Amanda Coles outlined in her timely follow-up report last fall for Canadian Unions for Equality on Screen entitled *What's Wrong With This Picture?*

Panel moderator Sharon McGowan, chair of WIFTV's advocacy committee, noted “WIFTV is delighted that the past two years of wide-ranging discussions of principle have resulted in concrete plans from the funding agencies with specific timelines and measurable results. And we look forward to publicly available annual statistics on progress. It is important to have agreed-upon metrics that ensure transparency.”

The feeling in the room was celebratory while at the same time acknowledging that there was still a long way to go to effectively shift the paradigm, as summarized by Val Creighton:

“Triggering opportunity requires a paradigm shift in thinking from an unconscious bias that has become institutionalized in our industry. A collective approach from all parts of the industry will be required if we are serious about shifting this long-held paradigm.”

Doreen Manuel (Secwepemc/Ktunuxa First Nations and Coordinator/Instructor - Indigenous Independent Digital Filmmaking at Capilano University) raised issues of

aboriginal women being included in these national initiatives and the need for mentorship for aboriginal directors. The federal agencies are part of a recently announced plan to develop an Indigenous Screen Office along the lines of the Australia model.

The panel discussion also highlighted the need to ensure that women were able to access employment and funding opportunity at all levels, not just in training or entry-level positions. And it is vital to work toward equity in all crew positions in the industry as well as to ensure that equity also applies to on-screen representation.

McGowan continued, “It was definitely a time to celebrate these agencies’ actions on IWD 2017 and I look forward to seeing the positive impact they will make.

Highlights of Federal Funding Agency Initiatives - 2016 to 2017

National Film Board

At last year’s festival the National Film Board (NFB) announced its commitment that by 2019, 50% of its productions would be directed by women and 50% of all production spending will be allocated to films directed by women. This year, Claude Joli-Coeur returned to update the industry on the NFB’s progress and announce that the NFB is aiming to achieve gender parity (50%) in key creative positions for animated, documentary and interactive works in production as of 2020. The initiative targets editing, cinematography, screenwriting and music composition and includes key creative positions related to animation and immersive/interactive storytelling, where women are decidedly in the minority—positions such as art director, art designer and creative technologist. (link: NFB initiatives)

Telefilm Canada

Carolle Brabant, Executive Director of Telefilm Canada, reviewed their five-point plan announced in November 2016, after consultations with the industry and creative talent. Telefilm aims by 2020 to achieve a balanced production portfolio (at all budget levels) that reflects gender parity in each of the key roles of director, writer and producer. (link: Telefilm initiatives)

Canada Media Fund

Timed to coincide with International Women’s Day, the Canada Media Fund (CMF) announced their new measures aimed at increasing the representation of women working in Canada’s screen-based industries. The CMF announced updates to its

broadcaster performance envelopes, evaluation criteria, achieving gender parity in juries selected to evaluate projects, and other measures. Most significantly, the CMF will require broadcasters to commit to an increasing minimum percentage of the broadcaster envelopes over the next three years to projects with women in key creative positions (producer, writer, showrunner, director, or a combination thereof). If targets are not met, the CMF will amend its policies with a goal of ultimately achieving gender balance in all its programs by 2020. (link: [CMF initiatives](#))

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The **Vancouver International Women in Film Festival (VIWFF)** is presented by WIFTV in partnership with the VIFF Vancity Theatre. WIFTV is grateful for the support of the BC Arts Council, The Province of BC, City of Vancouver, Heritage Canada, Creative BC, Telefilm Canada, Clearline, Telus, CMPA – BC Producer’s Branch, IATSE 891, UBCP, Casting Workbook, SIM Digital, IATSE 669, Pacific Backlot, CCE, Side Street Post, DGC, Finale and 24 Frames.

Women in Film + Television Vancouver

Women In Film + Television Vancouver (WIFTV) is a member-driven not-for-profit society. WIFTV’s membership is multicultural and our main objective is to further the artistic and professional development of all women, regardless of ethnic origin or status, in Canada’s screen-based media production industries. Responding to the limited opportunities for women in leadership positions in the film and television industry, WIFTV was formed in 1989 by a group of professional women working in the industry. WIFTV is one of the 35 worldwide chapters of Women in Film & Television International.