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How the Industry Can Work Together to Increase the Market Share of Ontario Feature Films

Phase One: Lessons from Quebec

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FilmOntario is a non-partisan, private sector consortium 30,000 strong, of companies, producers, unions, guilds, financial services and organizations within the Ontario screen-based sector (film & television and interactive media), and over \$2.5 billion in direct economic activity annually. Our emphasis is on marketing Ontario as a screen-based content creator and production jurisdiction, and working with all levels of government to ensure the international competitiveness of Ontario's screen-based industry.

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Ontario Feature Films

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INTRODUCTION

Ontario filmmakers are producing theatrical feature films at record levels. The quality of these movies is excellent: many have won prestigious national and international awards. However, despite numerous initiatives by the industry and government agencies over many years, these movies occupy only a small fraction of the Ontario and Canadian theatrical market. By contrast, Québec movies enjoy far more success in cinemas.

Since theatrical revenues and the related marketing and promotion campaigns are an important part of the revenue streams of feature film productions in virtually every country with a major industry, from Hollywood to Bollywood to Europe, **Ontario producers are at a considerable disadvantage. They must rely far more heavily than foreign producers on revenue streams from other markets, such as DVD sales and rental, broadcasting, video-on-demand, etc.** In turn, as new technologies disrupt the historic release and distribution patterns and reduce revenues from some of these markets, there is growing pressure on Ontario producers and distributors.

FilmOntario is exploring new ways the Ontario industry may be able to collaborate to expand the theatrical market for movies produced by Ontario filmmakers. This study will examine the role played by various Québec film industry initiatives in helping to ensure that Québec films are available to, and viewed by, local audiences. Through a literature review, discussion with the FilmOntario Steering Committee, and formal interviews with key players in Ontario and Quebec, **the study will also consider Ontario developments and the potential relevance of the Québec models for Ontario.** In total, there were six comprehensive interviews with individuals in Québec and eight comprehensive interviews with individuals in Ontario. Those interviewed include producers, exhibitors and distributors, and people from key organizations, funding agencies, festivals and film circuits.

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THE NUMBERS AND IMPORTANT TRENDS

Canadians love to go to the cinema. According to *Screen Digest*, while Canada ranks eleventh in the world measured by the number of screens per capita, it ranks third in terms of per capita spending on movies.

According to Canadian Media Production Association's *Profile 2012-13*, there were 59 English-language feature films produced in Canada, with combined budgets of \$258 million. Ontario accounted for \$162 million of activity, or 62.8% of the English-language total. While *Profile* does not provide a provincial breakdown of the number of features produced, it is likely that around 35 Ontario feature films were produced in the province in the reporting period.

Profile reports that 80 Canadian films were among the 883 English-language films shown in theatres in Canada in 2012. The box office receipts for all English-language films in 2012 reached \$951 million, of which 1.5% was earned by the Canadian movies. This is the highest share reached in the six years covered in the report: in the previous five years, box office receipts for Canadian movies fluctuated between 0.8% and 1.4%. Movies from the United States dominate the cinema screens; in 2012 they accounted for 82.4% of the total box office, although this was sharply lower than 2010 when they accounted for 92.6% of the box office receipts.

In 2011, Canadian films played an average of 7.8 weeks in theatres compared with the much longer average run of 15.2 weeks for U.S. films. The average stay of other foreign films in theatres was similar to Canadian films at 7.7 weeks.

Canadian English-language feature films do far better in other exhibition platforms. In 2012, of the total feature film audience for all English-language films, Canadian films had a 6.8% share of pay television, 8.1% of conventional television and 2.9% of specialty television.

French-language Canadian films do better in most markets. According to *Profile*, the French-Canadian share of French-language theatrical box office receipts was 9.0%. French-Canadian films had an 11.3% share of pay television, 7.6% of conventional television and 6.7% of specialty television audiences.

The feature film industry in Ontario, and elsewhere, is dealing with a rapidly changing market.

The traditional sequential process of a feature film through the value chain (theatrical release – home video/DVD – digital delivery and video-on-demand – pay television – network television – cable television) is being disrupted. There are only a handful of independent video stores remaining in Canada; the major chains have all closed. In 2013, the U.S. studios added a new distribution window: the “high definition download”

or “early electronic sell through,” that seeks to recapture the lost profits caused by the decline in physical rental and sales. It typically opens three to four weeks earlier than iTunes and Amazon.

The digital alternatives, including iTunes and Amazon, as well as Over-the-Top services such as Netflix, are rapidly gaining ground. According to Canadian Press, as many as 25% of Anglophones may have signed up for Netflix, and there are an unknown number of additional Canadians who have a U.S. Internet Protocol address in order to obtain U.S. Over-the-Top services. Going forward, more competition is expected from other U.S. services including You Tube channels, Amazon Instant, Target Ticket and Hulu.

People interviewed for this study and a recent study on the Canadian feature film distribution sector undertaken by the Canadian Association of Film Distributors and Exporters (CAFDE) expressed concern that there is an erosion of film slots on television and a decline in the licence fees being paid by broadcasters to distributors. This has an impact both on the total audience for Canadian feature films and the revenues generated for the sector. According to *Profile*, total licence fees paid by all broadcasters for English-language Canadian films fell from roughly \$8 million in 2010 to \$4 million in 2012.

Most respondents welcomed the revised CRTC application by Starlight for a new specialty television service that would highlight Canadian movies. The original application, for a service that all cable and satellite providers would have been required to carry, was denied by the CRTC. Several respondents noted that, if the revised application for a discretionary service is approved, Starlight may have difficulty reaching Canadian audiences because of the lack of mandatory carriage. In its application, Starlight notes Canadian movies accounted for only 5.2% of programming time on English-language pay TV services in 2011.

According to CAFDE, funders and the industry are recognizing that the success of Canadian films should be seen within the context of the independent film market. Canadian filmmakers do not have the budgets to compete directly with Hollywood films, but rather they strive to compete with independent titles from the United States, Europe and elsewhere. Films that fell into the independent film market category captured a 35% share of the 2011 Canadian box office. Canadian films captured a 20% share of this independent film market, although French-language Canadian films represented a disproportionate share of this figure. This compares well with the market share of European films in 2011, which was estimated to be 28.5%. Like Canada, however, Europe’s top 10 films were dominated by U.S. titles.

DEVELOPMENTS IN QUÉBEC

CINÉ-QUÉBEC

1. HISTORY AND MANDATE

Ciné-Québec was launched nine years ago as an “informal conference.” It succeeded a similar, but more modest initiative called Touring Laurentides. Initially, Ciné-Québec was focused on the province’s exhibitors. But, it quickly evolved to represent the full spectrum of the film industry and related businesses involved in making, distributing and marketing Québec movies. The transformation happened organically and progressively. The number of participants grew by word of mouth; most people come year after year and most book their hotel room a year in advance for the next gathering. It now brings together over 600 cinema operators, distributors, producers, broadcasters, unions and guilds, government agencies, service organizations, Internet service providers, communications and public relations agencies, as well as other service providers.

Ciné-Québec’s mandate is to develop and facilitate relations among all sectors of the movie industry (production, distribution, cinema owners, broadcasters, services), with a view to better promoting Québec films and addressing common industry concerns.

2. STRUCTURE AND FINANCING

Ciné-Québec is a not-for-profit organization. It employs a part-time Executive Director and, at the time of the annual event, a number of casual personnel. Its board of directors is made up of volunteer representatives of big corporations and small independent players who, with two exceptions, have remained the same since the launch. Board members are generally co-opted.

Roughly 10-12% of Ciné-Québec’s budget comes from Telefilm and SODEC, the rest is from private sponsors. In the 2013 edition, the registration fee to the three-day event was \$525, and for cinema owners \$250. This covers meals, screening and roundtable, but does not include accommodation.

3. ACTIVITY

Ciné-Québec’s only activity is the annual three day event held in late January, always at Manoir Saint-Sauveur north of Montréal. The event brings together all the parties interested in the Québec movie industry, both in the province and elsewhere in Canada. It is structured around a number of sponsored presentations taking place around meal time; the screening of four movies (normally all from Québec, occasionally one from France), and two recognition evenings, the Hommage and the Coup de chapeau. The Hommage recognizes a person who has distinguished him/herself in promoting the Québec film industry (director, distributor, public servant, etc.) while the Coup de chapeau honours a cinema owner.

Because Ciné-Québec brings together all stakeholders in the Québec film industry, it facilitates formal and informal networking. People who may ordinarily work in their own silo can easily meet with each other, discuss the movies they have just seen, or consider a potential new collaboration over drinks and dinner.

A number of participants previously went to Show Canada, whose meetings are held in different locations each year, this year in Whistler, British Columbia. But, most have given up because of what they believe is the stale formula of seminar after seminar with relatively little opportunity for real networking. Ciné-Québec organizers deliberately limit “serious” events to one panel, well attended and always on a top-of-mind preoccupation of the majority of participants. This pièce de résistance is a two and one-half hour roundtable on one of the most pressing issues for the sector. In 2013, the theme was on the declining audiences in cinemas while the 2014 edition was dedicated to the presentation of the [*Report of the Groupe de travail sur les enjeux du cinéma*](#).

A quick analysis of the participants to the 2013 event lists the following attendees:

- Representatives from distribution agencies – 17 from Alliance Vivafilms, 18 from Films Séville, 11 from Astral (some from the broadcasting side), 10 from Neo Traffic, 3 from Métropole Films, 2 from Niagara Films, 1 from Apple/iTunes, 3 from Distributeurs Films Paris + a number of mixed production/ distribution agencies
- 2 representatives from 20th Century Fox
- Broadcasters/internet providers – 2 Bell Media/Sympatico, 9 from Radio-Canada,
- Communications/publicity agencies – 4 BCP + some others
- From regional film festivals – 4 all Québec based
- Cinema operators Québec and Canada: 33 from Cinéplex, about 30 independents from all over the province
- Provincial and regional film agencies or funders – 14 from SODEC, 10 from Telefilm, 5 from NFB, 6 Régie du cinéma + some Québec regional film offices
- 5 from private or public/private foundations – Québecor, Greenberg, Solidarité FTQ, FICC, Fonds Capital Culture
- 4 from the Fondation Québec Cinéma
- About 20 from the Québec press (limited access)
- 16 from film and television training Centre INIS (some students)
- Sponsors – 8 from Coca-Cola, Banque nationale, CIBC.
- Other industry workers/stakeholders

4. PUBLIC IMPACT

The public does not know about Ciné-Québec and hears about it only incidentally. Ciné-Québec is a private industry event and the organizers deliberately keep it out of public view. That is why they restrict journalists’ access to a period where they can interview participating directors, producers and actors about upcoming movies. This ensures that participants can talk freely and openly about issues of concern to them. Respondents

said that this way, they can say things to funders, producers and distributors which they would never say if they knew their comments could become public.

5. SUCCESSES, CHALLENGES AND VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Ciné-Québec's success is rooted in two realities of the Québec market: the existence of a large number of private cinema owners and the well-oiled Québec star system.

What are the greatest achievements of Ciné-Québec?

According to people interviewed, Ciné-Québec's main achievement has been to create a must-not-miss event for all Québec film industry stakeholders. The event has grown steadily without any effort to promote it, simply through word of mouth. It provides a unique opportunity to look at the whole picture, to share information and views on how to tackle issues of common interest, both through the roundtable and through informal conversations.

There is evidence that Ciné-Québec has helped to define marketing and distribution strategies by providing the time and space to develop initiatives. Many respondents had stories of concrete deals and collaboration on various levels that were enabled by the annual conference, but for competitive business reasons did not wish the information to become public. One example that can be discussed concerns *Polytechnique*. The movie's distributor had intended to make only ten copies, but was overwhelmed by demands from cinema owners after the movie was shown at Ciné-Québec. He ended up making 50 copies and the movie was seen throughout Québec.

In the same vein, Ciné-Québec provides producers and directors with the first opportunity to gauge the reaction of cinema owners to the upcoming films based on the preview.

While the event does not seem to be a place where film projects are developed or discussed at length, it certainly provides opportunities to identify potential partners.

Perhaps most importantly, the event has succeeded in creating a pride in presenting local home-grown films and in making cinema owners members of the family. The local cinema owner can have their picture taken with Québec stars (who often show up at the event) and put it in the lobby of their theatre.

What is the vision for the future?

Everyone interviewed said "more of the same"! The challenge is to ensure that the satisfaction index of participants remains high.

In the words of Ciné-Québec's Chair Jean Colbert, "The main thrust of Ciné-Québec is to be a convener: we create a three day event, a very relaxed context where people can meet, exchange information, talk projects, get sensitized to other people's concerns, which are also their own concerns! Our next step is to open up the meeting to other

platforms and technologies. We must bring people like Ubisoft to meet with other players in the audiovisual sector, because these people will sooner or later expand from video games to feature productions. They have the money, they have talents that are complementary to those of existing stakeholders in the film industry and I am optimistic that we will discover that we have common interests. All in all, I am confident that Ciné-Québec will continue to grow and provide its unique contribution to the Québec film industry.”

QUÉBEC CINÉMA

1. HISTORY AND MANDATE

Québec Cinéma was created two years ago through the merger of two separate organizations, Les Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois and La Grande nuit du cinéma québécois, the former existing since 1982 and the latter since 1997. La Grande nuit which broke away from Les Rendez-vous organizes the televised Jutra Awards for films. The merger arose from the common realization that it was more effective to pool resources to ensure the best promotion possible.

Québec Cinéma’s mission is to promote Québec cinema and its artists and professionals, and to contribute to the advancement of the film community. It focuses on improving access, education and awareness, and it reaches more than one million people in Québec and around the world every year.

2. STRUCTURE AND FINANCING

Québec Cinéma is a not-for-profit grassroots organization with an annual budget of \$4 million. Half the budget is from service contracts (e.g. Radio-Canada, Vision globale, etc.). It receives about 25% of its budget from project grants (nothing for operating) from Société de développement des entreprises culturelles (SODEC) Téléfilm, the Québec Ministry of Culture and Communications, the Canada Council for the Arts, the Montréal Council for the Arts and the City of Montréal. The rest of the budget (approx. \$1.5 million) is from sponsors (e.g. Société des alcools du Québec (SAQ), Loto-Québec; a seven-year financial commitment from Bell Canada as part of the benefit package attached to the acquisition of Astral Media, plus many small sponsors).

Québec Cinéma has nine full-time employees, a number that soars to 40 during its events. It has a board of 13 members, including artists, producers, distributors, a representative from the Fonds d’investissement de la culture et des communications, a public relations firm, etc. It also has a six-member committee of artist representatives (actor, director, music composer, scriptwriter, etc.) and a ten member committee of professional representatives, including Union des artistes (UDA), L’Alliance québécoise des techniciens de l’image et du son (AQTIS), La Société des auteurs de radio, télévision et cinéma (SARTEC), La Société professionnelle des auteurs et des compositeurs du Québec (SPACQ), distributors’ association, etc.

3. ACTIVITIES

This is a relatively young organization and its role is evolving. It is in its initial stage of development, establishing its credentials and finding its proper role as promoters of Québec films, capitalizing on the long-standing work of Les Rendez-vous, La soirée des Jutra and la Tournée des films québécois.

Québec Cinéma is building new and expanded partnerships with all players in the film industry, from producers, distributors, to broadcasters and cinemas. It considers its work to be complementary to Ciné-Québec. Key people from the organization attend the Ciné-Québec event.

Les Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois is a film festival being held for the 32nd time this year. The goal of the festival is to promote Québec films and those involved in making them, in order to support the culture and stimulate the industry. The festival takes place in Montréal in February and coincides with the Prix Jutra film awards. For ten days, some 400 artists and industry professionals join film aficionados and the general public to celebrate the present and future of Québec cinema. With nearly 300 films, including more than 100 premieres and a selection of free activities both serious and festive, the Rendez-vous is an essential event on Québec's busy calendar of festivals and film events.

Les Rendez-vous also offers nine annual awards (best first or second drama; best first or second documentary; best documentary; two separate best short fiction awards; best art/innovation film; best Franco-Canadian film; best student film and; best student film review).

The Gala des Prix Jutra is the annual televised Québec film industry award ceremony. It is co-produced by Québec Cinéma and Radio-Canada and is in its 16th year. The television broadcast attracts roughly 750,000 people.

La Tournée des films québécois. This is a more modest activity. La Tournée started 11 years ago, originally as a partnership between the Rendez-Vous du cinéma québécois and Musique Plus. They developed this project as a way to bring Québec films to screens in places where such films may not normally play. Each film in the tour is accompanied by one person involved in it (director, writer, star, etc.) who will engage in a public conversation after the screening. The tour also visits schools. Initially targeting only Québec communities, it has since been extended to francophone communities outside Québec. In 2013, the 10th Tournée included 16 movies – documentaries, animation, and short and long form dramas.

It promotes Québec movies to younger audiences with presentations in schools and colleges, and holds general public screenings in the evening, sometimes two days in a row. Admission is free or a nominal amount. About a dozen communities in Québec are

visited every year and 15 in the rest of Canada (Maritimes, Ontario, Manitoba, B.C., Northern Territories).

Most of the funding comes from SODEC, Telefilm, Sodexport and Québec Cinéma itself. La Tournée also relies on numerous local partners such as schools, colleges, school boards, hotels and municipalities. Planning and coordination is done centrally, mostly in response to requests. La Tournée has a staff of eight full-time people.

Films are proposed by distributors or are suggested by the participating communities. An absolute condition for a film to be part of La Tournée is that someone from the production team participates in the caravan to meet students and audiences, and to engage in a dialogue around the film. Depending on availability (and people are generally happy to participate if they can), a film could be presented in only three or four localities and be replaced by another one for another leg of La Tournée. There are one hour periods in the classroom where a director will discuss his or her work with students and these presentations can be repeated up to five or six times over a day or two, in the same or several schools, depending on the locality.

Some communities apply each year, others more irregularly, so the planning changes each year.

4. PUBLIC IMPACT

There is a fair level of awareness of the different activities organized by Québec Cinéma among film aficionados, but the challenge is to reach a broader public. The three activities are complementary, but La Soirée des Jutra can definitely contribute directly to the success of a movie. For example, the film *Continental, un film sans fusils* had a second run in movie theatres after it received a number of awards during the televised ceremony. It more than doubled its box office revenues as a result.

La Tournée and its school component play an important role in promoting movies outside Montréal. It is increasingly using social media, local media and other communications tools, including a regular newsletter. There is steady growth in participation, with the young target audience participating increasingly more than adults. Polls are taken regularly and there is a 90% satisfaction rating in most places.

Finally, while concentrated in Montréal, the Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois is an established festival that receives significant coverage from all Montréal media.

5. SUCCESSES, CHALLENGES AND VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Producer Pierre Even was a driving force behind the creation of Québec Cinéma. He believes it will develop into a strong leader in the industry and expand beyond the current reach and impact of the three events. The new organization is attracting all interested parties, but Even believes it must develop new strategies and events to better promote Québec films.

According to Even and to Québec Cinéma Executive Director Ségolène Roeder, the main challenge currently facing the organization is to convince SODEC and Telefilm to grant it a special status as the industry stakeholders' own promotional vehicle and thus to provide an operating grant.

The **Soirée des Jutra** is certainly the event that has the most public impact and Québec Cinéma hopes to build on the success and extend its reach.

The **Rendez-vous** has a long track record. It continues to try to extend its reach beyond the relatively small club of Montréal film aficionados and will start offering free public screenings, initially in Montréal and potentially beyond. Because Québec Cinéma brings the whole industry together under one umbrella, the festival can now count on broader support than previously was the case.

La Tournée des films québécois plays a very important role in audience development and is looking for more funding and partners. Developing new audiences is a necessary long-term investment and more needs to be done to attract young people to Québec movies. There is steady growth in participation, with the young target audience participating increasingly more than adults. The presence of directors and actors is a big draw in most places.

GRUPE DE TRAVAIL SUR LES ENJEUX DU CINÉMA

Motivated by industry concerns about the disruption of the traditional sequential process of a feature film through the value chain, the loss of broadcast windows and a decline in the domestic theatrical box office, in 2012 SODEC and the Ministry of Culture appointed Le Groupe de travail sur les enjeux du cinéma (The Working Group on Cinema Issues). The Working Group reported its findings in November 2013.

The recommendations in the report include:

- That the exclusive rights of a cinema to show a movie should expire when the movie is no longer playing. Similarly, find ways to reduce the “dead zones” in the distribution value chain when a movie may be unavailable for the next window.
- That cinemas consider a “time-sharing” model in which different Québec movies would share the same screen in order to maximize audiences. Also, make Québec movies more widely available in non-traditional settings, such as community halls, museums and cultural centres.
- That the industry and SODEC should work together to better brand and promote Québec films.
- That the contracts between producers, distributors and broadcasters should be reviewed to ensure there is an appropriate sharing of revenues in light of the new media and changing models of distribution.

DEVELOPMENTS IN ONTARIO

Respondents in Ontario were asked specifically to review various programs and initiatives that may be analogous to those in Québec and also to comment on the organizational gaps. Several respondents noted it is difficult to make direct comparisons for many reasons, including these:

- There are important cultural differences. Québec culture does occupy a special role in that society, Québec movies have a distinct language and voice and Québec has a star system. This cultural reality may play a part in the success of Ciné-Québec. English Canadians share a language, idiom and many cultural references with our much larger southern neighbour, whose movies dominate our markets.
- Outside Québec, producers, distributors and other key players, tend to consider the entire domestic Canadian market as a whole, rather than just Ontario. This is a fundamental part of the mandate of the key federal public agencies. The Canadian market is geographically dispersed and covers six time zones. One can travel by road to the key French-language markets in Québec. A tour to the key English-language markets would be substantially more expensive.

The Film Circuit

Film Circuit is the film outreach program of the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) launched in 1989. It brings the best of Canadian and international films and artists to communities across the country. The Film Circuit is an alternate model of grassroots distribution, marketing and exhibition, which now comprises 174 groups in over 155 communities in every province of Canada. Eighty-four of the groups are in Ontario. Many of the groups are based in the local arts community, a gallery or museum and they rely on volunteers to operate. Many volunteers are retirees. Historically, the programming has 30% Canadian films and the remainder is independent productions from abroad, including the U.S., although last year the figure was 26% including both French and English titles.

In 2013, roughly 340,000 people attended the various screenings. Filmmakers or others involved in the films attend some of the events, in 2011 there were 60 such visits. The demographic tends to be 45+ and more female than male. The total box office was more than \$2.5 million, 1/3 of which went to the exhibitors, 1/3 to the distributor and 1/3 was retained locally, often donated to a charity. Despite the fact that these figures are measurable, they are not included in the box office figures reported by *Profile*.

The Film Circuit is currently attempting to raise its profile and to brand itself so that local groups will feel like they are part of an important national program.

ReelCanada

ReelCanada was started nine years ago as a program to bring Canadian movies to high schools, because there was a real appetite among teachers to expose their students to Canadian films. This year ReelCanada expects to have 85 separate events, and reach 40,000 students in eight provinces, in English and French. The program has expanded to include a couple of events at the TIFF Bell Lightbox for new arrivals in Canada who are studying in ESL programs. Every effort is made to bring someone associated with the movie to the school. The response to the actors, directors and others associated with the movies is generally very positive.

Last April 30, ReelCanada organized a National Canadian Film Day. Jack Blum, founder of ReelCanada, wants it to be an annual event and wants to reach 100,000 students each year.

TIFF's Canada Top Ten Film Festival

As part of its mandate to promote Canadian films, TIFF has an annual festival which schedules the top ten Canadian movies, as selected by TIFF. The festival is held at the TIFF Bell Lightbox in January. It is generally well received by the public and media.

First Weekend Club

Founded in 2003, the First Weekend Club encourages people to attend the opening weekend of the screening of selected Canadian movies. The selections are made by the organization's Board of Directors. Since the first weekend can make or break a film, members are encouraged to fill as many seats as possible during the crucial first weekend of a film's release. Through video interviews with filmmakers and actors, contests, premiere parties, and film alerts, First Weekend Club informs members about new films and encourages them to attend.

Canadian Screen Awards

For many years, the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television organized the Genie Awards, an annual program for Canadian films. In part due to a television audience of less than 400,000, in 2013 the Academy launched the Canadian Screen Awards week to celebrate Canadian excellence in film, television and digital media.

Other Film Festivals

There are numerous alternative film festivals around Ontario. The Toronto Film Festivals Association (TFFA) lists more than 50 on its website. The most well-known and successful alternative film festivals in Ontario are these:

- The 18th edition of the **Toronto Reel Asian Film Festival** will be held in November 2014 in Toronto and Richmond Hill. The festival offers contemporary Asian

cinema, as well as work from the Asian Diaspora, including films and videos by East, South and Southeast Asian artists in Canada.

- The 15th edition of **ImagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival**, the world's largest presenter of Indigenous film and media arts, will take place in October 2014. Of the 85 premieres screened in 2013, 20 were Canadian films.
- The **ReelWorld** Film Festival presents films and music videos by filmmakers and artists from Aboriginal, Asian, Black, Latino, Middle Eastern, South Asian and other racially diverse communities. The 14th edition will take place in April 2014. The festival programs dramatic features, documentaries, shorts, and music videos created by emerging and established filmmakers. It offers 50-75% Canadian content each year.

The two key Québec organizations, Ciné-Québec and Québec Cinéma have no parallel in Ontario or elsewhere in Canada. Show Canada is primarily for exhibitors and is focussed on Hollywood Studios. FilmOntario brings together the entire screen-based sector (film & television and interactive media).

NEXT STEPS

All of the Ontario respondents are anxious to find ways to increase the audiences for our movies in every existing and emerging market. Most agree that the quality of the films is excellent, although like every film industry worldwide there is a continuum. Some pointed out that, in terms of its population, geography and the size of its film industry, Ontario is similar to Québec and it may be appropriate for the province's film industry to think in these terms. **In her interview, FilmOntario Co-Chair Jennifer Jonas said that, in the current climate, we need to build the audience one person at a time. Many of those interviewed subsequently agreed with that approach.**

This study was modest in its scope and was intended primarily to find out what the industry in Québec is doing to promote its own films to local audiences. The limited survey of views in Ontario was undertaken merely to provide a preliminary assessment of whether some of these lessons might be useful for the film industry in Ontario.

Findings

The Ontario film industry could embrace the important initiatives that already exist, work together to expand them significantly, consider the opportunities that may come from launching an annual informal event that would bring together all parts of the Ontario film industry, and focus efforts on Ontario films and the Ontario market.

The following activities and initiatives are listed for further consideration by the Ontario feature films industry:

Annual Industry Event

One of the best practices identified in *The Canadian Feature Film Distribution Sector in Review: Trends, Policies and Market Developments* concerning successful promotional campaigns for Canadian films is the extent of collaboration between producers, distributors, broadcasters and exhibitors.

Among its conclusions, the researcher also noted that industry-wide collaboration is needed to experiment with release strategies. The market place for films is changing rapidly and the future distribution model remains in flux. But, it will definitely involve social media and the Internet. Perhaps that will be the way to build the buzz about a movie, and a subsequent specialized release would become the social event. There is no reason that Canadian filmmakers should not be in the forefront of defining these new distribution models.

One respondent pointed out that the Israeli Film Commission has a policy of buying advertising space in bulk, including billboards, newspapers and electronic media. It can then make it available to producers and distributors at lower rates than they would pay on their own.

An annual meeting, modeled on the success of Ciné-Québec, may be the best place to consider such experiments and innovative promotional initiatives.

If FilmOntario wishes to consider the possibility of developing an annual informal meeting of Ontario film industry, key questions to be explored would include:

- Would the event attract as broad a range of participants as Ciné-Québec?
- Would the event attract the key players from each sector of the Ontario film industry?
- Would the federal agencies participate in an Ontario-only event?
- Who would organize the event?
- How would the event be funded?

Film Circuit

There is considerable scope to expand the Film Circuit throughout Ontario, both in smaller communities and major ones. There is also scope to promote the screening of Ontario films particularly where the filmmaker, actors, director or other person involved in the production can accompany the film to the community.

The Ontario film industry should find a way to work more with Film Circuit to expand the program to more Ontario communities and to support the Ontario films it circulates.

Reel Canada

The Ontario film industry should work with ReelCanada to expand its presence in Ontario schools.

Annual Ontario Film Day

The Ontario film industry could consider the potential of collaborating with others in the development of a high profile annual Ontario Film Day, which could be held during the Canadian Screen Awards week.

Dan Lyon, Telefilm's Regional Feature Film Executive for Ontario and Nunavut, used an analogy relating to the development of the Ontario wine industry in the past 20 years. "First we improved the quality of the wines and then we improved the marketing and branding. We now have a critical mass of quality films and it's time to create a brand through improved marketing and promotion."

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