

# ZOOM

## INTERNATIONAL

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### NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

*This month's ZOOM includes a supplement on film production in France.*

*France's film industry is financed primarily by television networks and producers, and to a lesser degree by the CNC (selective aid, etc.). The aim of this summary document is to provide you with an overview of film financing in France.*

*In addition, we will be forwarding you shortly a list of producers which, though not exhaustive, offers a detailed look at several of France's most active producers. We hope this information will be of use as you undertake new co-production projects with France.*

*On the occasion of the U.K. Industry Immersion, next month's issue will include a similar supplement on film production in Great Britain.*

*The ZOOM team wishes you all the best for the fall season!*

### CANADA IN BERGEN, NORWAY

From September 19-22, Canadian documentary made its mark on the Nordic map thanks to a dynamic group of 14 Canadian documentary producers who traveled to Norway to attend the 7<sup>th</sup> Nordisk Forum. The five-day event provided an opportunity to meet with potential coproducers and to learn about the broadcast and financing landscape in this region. As underlined by Mitch Azaria (Good Earth Productions): "the Nordic Panorama proved how much in common we Canadians have with the Nordic Countries of Europe. It was a real eye opener. I have never been to a forum where the exchange of ideas were so easily understood."

In fact, Canada business at Bergen was brisk. Barbara Barde from Up Front Entertainment pitched her project *The Last Princess* at the Forum and secured both a partnership with a Danish producer and interest from several Nordic commissioning editors. Pauline Heaton from Vancouver gathered interest in her project dealing with sturgeon and Mitch Azaria forged ahead with his Norwegian coproducer on a doc about one of the world's great but unknown aviators. These are just a few of the positive results which came of this initiative, a first of its kind to take place in cooperation with the documentary association FilmKontakt Nord.

As underlined by Chris McDonald, Executive Director of Hot Docs Forum, this event paved the way for expanded future relations: "We brought a very strong team of seasoned Canadian documentary filmmakers to Bergen, each of whom came home with key contacts for future co-productions and a better sense of the European marketplace. The fortunate ones succeeded in locating financing for their next projects. Our meetings with the Nordic Film Institutes and Film Funds were also very productive, as they are very keen to do business with Canada. As a result, we expect a sizeable delegation of filmmakers, broadcasters and agency representatives from Norway, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Denmark at Hot Docs 2001 - as well as some great films".

Hot Docs Forum 2001 will undoubtedly be a "hot" place to do business with the Nordic countries - don't miss your chance!

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**UK INDUSTRY  
IMMERSION**  
*Feature films – Script development  
London – November 20th to 24th*

The final selection of Canadian producers who will be attending this year's *U.K. Industry Immersion* has been made. The Immersion is organized by Telefilm Canada/Europe and the Canadian High Commission in London. Following is a list of the 28 producers who will be flying to the United Kingdom in November:

**Québec**

1. Park Ex Pictures – Kevin Tierney
2. Les Productions Colin Neale Inc. – Colin Neale
3. Les Films Vision 4 – Jacques Bonin
4. Gala Films – Arnie Gelbart
5. In Extremis Images – Bruno Jobin
6. GPA Films – Marcel Giroux
7. Production Bleu Blanc Rouge – Suzanne Girard
8. Les Productions La Fête – Chantale Lafleur

**British Columbia**

18. New City Productions Inc. – Colleen Nystedt
19. Crescent Entertainment – Christine Haebler
20. Briar Patch Productions – Christian Bruyère
21. Subjective Eye – Elizabeth Yake
22. Keatley Macleod Productions Ltd. – Julia Keatley

**Manitoba**

23. Original Pictures Inc. – Kim Todd
24. Buffalo Gal Pictures – Lorne MacPherson

**Ontario**

9. Triptych Media Inc. – Robin Cass or Anna Stratton
10. Savi Media Inc. – Alexandra Raffé
11. Good to Go Films Inc. – Vibika Bianchi
12. New Real Films – Jennifer Jonas
13. The Film Farm Inc. – Simone Urdl
14. The East Side Film Company – Sandra Cunningham
15. Victorious Films – Victoria Hirst
16. Somnapix – Helen du Toit
17. Breakthrough Productions – Ira Levy

**Saskatchewan**

25. Heartland Motion Pictures Inc. – Stephen Onda
26. Minds Eye Pictures – Kevin DeWalt

**Prince Edward Island**

27. Cellar Door Productions – Gretha Rose

**Nova Scotia**

28. Big Motion Pictures Ltd. – Wayne Grigsby

The 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the U.K. immersion is made possible thanks to support from:



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## LES RENDEZ-VOUS DE TVFI

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### Driving foreign sales!

The sixth edition of the Rendez-Vous de TV France International (TVFI) was held in Saint-Tropez from September 4th to 8th. The 47 French companies which exhibited at the Rendez-Vous achieved record sales: this year's figures – representing sales of French productions to foreign buyers — should exceed the previous edition's total of 60 million francs. More than 150 foreign buyers, including many from Scandinavia and Eastern Europe, watched over 3,000 French programs. The buyers showed a strong preference for documentaries and dramas (most notably, *La Trilogie Marseillaise*, a co-production with Canada, was the second-most watched program at the event.)

### 1999: the year in review

The renewed success of this year's Rendez-Vous nevertheless failed to reflect the fact that foreign sales of French productions are declining. In fact, according to an annual study undertaken on the occasion of the Rendez-Vous by TVFI and INA, in collaboration with the CNC, foreign sales increased by only 4.5% in 1999 (for a total of 748 million francs), compared with an increase of 23% in 1998. When considered by production category, the figures showed that animation programs led the field (28.4% of foreign sales), driven largely by sales to North America (22%). Next were sales of dramas (25.6%), the bulk of which were sold to other countries in Western Europe (71%), and documentaries (21.2%). There was also a significant realignment in 1999 of the geographic distribution of sales: of the 66.2% of French programs exported to Western Europe, a significantly higher percentage went to Italy (22.9%) and Scandinavia (14.8%). This was offset by a steep drop in sales to Germany (19.5%) and Spain (7.4%). The study also revealed an increase in sales to North America.

### On the international scene

International contribution to French production through pre-sales and co-productions fell 12.6%, from a total of 1,125 million francs in 1998 to 983 million francs in 1999. Again, animated productions led the field (66.8% of total investments in co-productions and pre-sales), followed at a distant second by dramas, which continue to be produced primarily for audiences in France itself (21.6%). For the most part, these investments originate in Western Europe (47%, or 464 million francs) — with Germany being France's main co-production partner — followed by North America (45.1%, or 443 million francs, compared with 615 million francs in 1998). Total investment from Asia doubled between 1998 and 1999, from 20 million to 38 million francs. Investment from Central Europe increased from eight million to 38 million francs, which represents 3.8% of total international investment in French production.

According to Mathieu Béjot, TVFI's new Managing Director (see the profile on the following page), the decline in international investment can be explained by several factors: lower sales of French productions to countries and territories experiencing severe economic difficulties (Latin America, Asia and Central Europe); changes in the distribution sector, which is targeting more distant and difficult markets; and the stagnant volume of French production. Others have questioned the quality of French

productions, a consequence of poor international investment in France's audiovisual industry. Certain players, such as Jean Rouilly (head of Europe Images International and vice-president of TVFI), have severely criticized the flaws inherent in the country's disjointed and poorly organized distribution system, and have called for increased activity in France's television industry.

#### **TVFI'S NEW DELEGATE-GENERAL**

Mathieu Béjot has succeeded Olivier-René Veillon as Managing Director of TVFI. Prior to his new posting, Béjot was audiovisual attaché in Ottawa (five years), Hong Kong and Tokyo (three years). His posting in Tokyo enabled him to work closely with TVFI through the Tokyo Showcase. Béjot's priorities as TVFI's new leader are to ensure "continuity" and "increase the volume of the organization's activities." His principal goals are: to establish a presence in new geographic territories, especially Latin America (Mexico and Brazil), where the possibility of setting up a new Rendez-Vous is being explored, as well as in Russia, South Africa and China; to strengthen ties with complementary organizations such as CFI and Unifrance, so as to present a "coherent approach vis-à-vis the international scene"; and, lastly, to develop TVFI's Web site, which already provides information about some 10,000 productions.

#### **SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT: FRENCH CULTURE MINISTER ASKED TO INVEST 40MF**

The producer Charles Gassot (Téléma) recently tabled a report commissioned by the Minister of Culture, Catherine Tasca. The report — the result of lengthy consultations with French film-industry professionals — looks at the state of development of French film and offers recommendations on how the situation can be improved. The report concludes that an investment of 40 million francs is required to support the development of French film. The report recommends that three new support mechanisms be introduced:

- First, a grant and an office should be established to provide support for first screenplays, with an annual budget of 1.5 million francs;
- Second, established writers involved in writing or rewriting a screenplay should receive financial support totaling between 80,000 and 150,000 francs per project; annual budget: six million francs;
- Third, a bridge loan for producers should be earmarked for the development of their projects. Support would total a maximum of 500,000 francs (but would not exceed 50% of the production budget), with the amount to be repaid by the producer; annual budget: 30 million francs.

The arguments in favour of these recommendations are buttressed by an analysis which highlights the problems of the current system of development support. In particular, the recommendations underscore the fact that development, a crucial phase of film production, is currently under-funded. Indeed, the report reveals that funding earmarked specifically for writing, which corresponds to the minimum amount

guaranteed to writers of 150 French films produced in 1999, totaled 85.77 million francs out of a total production budget of 3.84 billion francs — a meagre 2.2% of total investments. By comparison, according to the study, other industries devote, on average, 10% of their budgets to research and development. It will be interesting to see what becomes of this report once it has been reviewed by the Minister of Culture and the Centre National de la Cinématographie.

## CANAL PLUS – A NEW ADDRESS FOR DOCUMENTARIES

**Canal Plus  
Direction des Documentaires  
21 rue Leblanc – Ponant B  
75906 Paris Cedex 15**

<b>Reception:</b>	Phone: 01 53 78 67 97		
<b>Catherine Lamour</b> Directeur de la direction des documentaires (director, documentary section)	Phone: 01 58 49 55 37	Fax: 01 58 49 55 36	catherine.lamour@canal-plus.com
<b>Anna Glogowski</b> Directeur adjoint (assistant director)	Phone: 01 58 49 55 34	Fax: 01 58 49 55 32	anna.glogowski@canal-plus.com
<b>Francine Dupraz</b> Administrateur des programmes (program administrator)	Phone: 01 58 49 55 43	Fax: 01 58 49 55 45	francine.dupraz@canal-plus.com
<b>Christine Cauquelin</b> Chargée de programmes (program manager)	Phone: 01 58 49 55 38	Fax: 01 58 49 55 32	christine.cauquelin@canal-plus.com
<b>Françoise Feuillye</b> Responsables du bureau d'ordre	Phone: 01 58 49 55 30	Fax: 01 58 49 55 40	francoise.feuilleye@canal-plus.com
<b>Lou Murrin</b> Chargée de programmes (program manager)	Phone: 01 58 49 55 67	Fax: 01 58 49 55 40	lou.murrin@canal-plus.com
<b>Marie-Antoinette Bebin</b> Assistante de Christine Cauquelin et Anna Glogowsky	Phone: 01 58 49 55 29	Fax: 01 58 49 55 32	marieantoinette.bebin@canal-plus.com
<b>Sandrine Badouard</b> Administrateur adjoint (assistant manager)	Phone: 01 58 49 55 42	Fax: 01 58 49 55 45	sandrine.badouard@canal-plus.com
<b>Aghdas Lamoine</b> Assistante de Catherine Lamour	Phone: 01 58 49 55 35	Fax: 01 58 49 55 36	aghdas.lamoine@canal-plus.com
<b>Hafida Souiri</b> Assistante de Sandrine Badouard et Françoise Feuillye	Phone: 01 58 49 55 46	Fax: 01 58 49 55 45	hafida.souiri@canal-plus.com

### TELEFILM CANADA PITCH THIS !

Congratulations to winning team Anne Masson and Bonnie Anderson for their brilliant pitch for *The Waitress* at the Toronto International Film Festival on September 12. Telefilm Canada would also like to thank the teams from *Honey in the Rock* (Sheila Jordan), *The Happy Couple* (Chris Philpott), *The Red Album* (Marcel Giroux), *Whispering Reign* (Mark de Valk) and *Atlantic Blue* (Rosemary House and Mary Sexton) for their passionate, brave and bold participation in Pitch This 2000 ! Together, you transformed the old-school pitch into provocative and engaging

entertainment. For Kelley Alexander, Director of the Rogers Industry Centre, "The inaugural Telefilm Canada Pitch This ! was a great experience for all involved. We look forward to the next round of talent in 2001 !"

### **CINEFONDATION WELCOMES ITS FIRST RESIDENTS**

La Cinéfondation, launched at Cannes three years ago, opens the doors of its Paris residence on October 15, 2000. Six young filmmakers were selected by a jury, headed by director Olivier Assayas, following a targeted call for applicants. The six applicants, who range in age from 24 to 30, will spend five months at Cinéfondation's residence in Montmartre. The six are Americans Peter Sollet and Caren Hartsfield, both from New York University, the U.K.'s Emily Yound, who studied at the Lodz film school in Poland, Finland's Hanna Miettinen from the University of Art and Design of Finland, and the Hungarian Marcell Ivanyi, from the Hungarian Academy of Theatre, Film and Television. Several French producers have agreed to get involved and assist the six filmmakers to develop contacts which will help them produce their films. The producers are Caroline Benjo and Carole Scotta, Paulo Branco, Yaël Fogiel, Maurice Bernart, Michèle Halberstadt, François Marquis, Philippe Martin, and Annie and Claude Miller. During their stay in Paris, the filmmakers will also have the opportunity to direct a short digital film with "Paris" as its theme; benefit from free access to numerous movie theatres, festivals and other events; be able to take university courses; and perfect their knowledge of English and French. Another benefit of the Cinéfondation's residence program: the filmmakers chosen by Cinéfondation to participate in its activities at Cannes will subsequently be given the use of a Paris studio — for 15 days, on an occasional basis — for their work-related trips to France.

### **AN AWARD FOR SUZY COHEN'S DE L'AUTRE COTE DU COEUR!**

Montréal filmmaker Suzy Cohen won the Prix de la Coopération Féminine for her film *De l'Autre Côté du Coeur*, a Canada-France co-production. The award, which comes with 30,000 francs in prize money, was given to the filmmaker in Paris on September 14, 2000 at a ceremony in her honour. At the ceremony, sociologist Annie Goldman enthusiastically introduced the film: "To the jury of the Prix de la Coopération Féminine, her work quickly stood out from all the other films which had been submitted. Her qualities very clearly distinguish her as a professional filmmaker. [...] we enjoyed this film, which addresses human frailty with subtlety and tenderness. We welcomed it as a film of love and we hope that you will embrace it in the same way, and that you will appreciate its visual beauty, its accurate depiction of both time and place, and its masterly directed cast."

### **"PIEGE EN HAUTE SPHERE" AWARDED AT THE SAINT-TROPEZ FESTIVAL**

*Piège en Haute Sphère* by Aruna Villiers, a film produced for the French Channel M6 by Rendez-Vous Production (a French production company linked to Telefiction), received two awards at the Saint-Tropez Festival, described by its founder Quentin Raspail as "*the Cannes Festival for television*". The event, which is in its second year only, awards the best French TV dramas. The film won the prize for best Director and the "Discovery" prize for the performance of actress Olivia Bonamy.

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**BROADCAST ON FRENCH TELEVISION**


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Peter Svatek's TV movie **Silver, Mon Ami le Loup** was broadcast on Canal +, Saturday, September 9th at 8.40 p.m.

The series **L'Étalon Noir** will be broadcast on M6 on Sunday at 8.10 a.m.

**Des Marelles et des Petites Filles**, a documentary by Marquise Lepage, was broadcast on Festival on Tuesday, September 12th at 10.10 p.m.

The series **Lexx** is being shown on Canal + Thursdays at 10.20 p.m.

The eight episodes of the Canada-France TV movie **Jalna** are being shown Wednesdays at 10.15 p.m. on TV5. The series started airing September 6th and runs until October 25th.

**Les Lapins Crétins** was broadcast on France 3 on September 15 at 7 a.m.

**Les Boys** by Louis Saia was broadcast on Cinestar 2 on September 15 at 9 p.m.

The series **Diva** is being shown on TV5 Fridays at 9.05 p.m.

The series **Rintintin Junior** is being broadcast on M6 Sundays at 9 a.m.

**La Face Cachée du Mal**, a TV movie by Jean Pellerin, was broadcast on M6 on Tuesday, September 19th at 10.45 p.m.

The Canadian series **Straight Up** is being broadcast on MCM Wednesdays at 9 p.m.

The 65 episodes of the Canada-Denmark animated series **Bamboubabulle**, produced by Christian Skjott and directed by Karsten Killerich and Luc Savoie, are being shown Sundays at 7.50 a.m. on La 5° and at 6.50 a.m. on Teletoon.

The Canada-France animated series **Anatole** and **Franklin** are being shown on TF1 Tuesdays at 6.50 a.m. and 7.10 a.m.

**Main Basse sur les Gènes ou Les Aliments Mutants**, a documentary by Karl Parent and Louise Vandelac, was broadcast on Arte on September 28 at 11.15 p.m. as part of an evening of programs on the theme "Can We Eat Without Danger?"

**ON FRENCH MOVIE SCREENS**

**Pascale Bussi eres** stars in **Les Filles Ne Savent Pas Nager**, directed by French filmmaker Anne-Sophie Biroth; the feature was released in France on October 4, 2000.

Denys Arcand's **Stardom** will be released in France on November 22.

**Hathi**, by Philippe Gauthier, produced by Rock Demers (Les Productions La F ete), was released on September 27. The French critics were very enthusiastic about the film and 2,068 tickets were sold after only one week on Parisian screens.