



November 25, 2016

The Honourable Mélanie Joly, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Canadian Heritage  
Department of Canadian Heritage  
15 Eddy Street  
Gatineau, Quebec  
K1A 0M5

Dear Minister Joly,

On behalf of the Vancouver chapter of Women in Film and Television, I would like to thank you for inviting us to participate in the Canadian Content consultations and the roundtable held in Vancouver on September 26<sup>th</sup> of this year. It has been our honour to discuss issues of gender in Canadian content production with the Minister, including on a previous occasion in May 2016. We are heartened by the Minister's commitment to gender equity for all women in the funding of Canadian content programming.

As we have said to you previously, we very much appreciate your interest in exploring in more depth the causes of this problem and in finding solutions. We also appreciate your interest in ensuring that any solutions to the problem also take into consideration diversity and the special status of First Nations women.

That, perhaps, was our most significant take-away from the roundtable held in Vancouver. Every table, in their turn, put forth their belief in the strength and breadth of unique voices in this country, and that our creative talent was our strongest asset. It was acknowledged more than once that there needed to be more diversity in the system and that the system needed to support our creative talent. This included ensuring more opportunities for women to advance in the system and thus approach parity in the key creative positions.

As is currently being discussed at Telefilm and the Canada Media Fund, gender balance in production funding needs to be addressed with a clear and focused plan, with measurable objectives and a specific timeline. Nothing less than a full commitment by our federal and provincial funding agencies and our broadcasters will turn the tide on this long-lasting and difficult-to-address systemic bias in Canadian content production. An approach from the top down for the key creative positions is a priority, as is looking for a bottom-up approach to expand the pool of women working in key crew positions. It is frighteningly often that women directors and/or producers are the only females on a production set. This is no longer an acceptable way of doing things.

We appreciated the opportunity to provide our input at the roundtable and hear from others that gender parity needed to be addressed and was not in conflict with the overall goal of supporting our creative talent. It is critical to ensure that our voices are heard, all of our voices. To be discovered we



have to tell unique stories from a diversity of sources in Canada and be open to new ways of sharing our storytelling with the world.

We respectfully offer our thoughts and look forward to participating in further discussions on Canadian content and discoverability in the digital world.

Sincerely,

Sarah Kalil  
President, Women in Film and Television - Vancouver

*Women In Film + Television Vancouver (WIFTV) is an internationally affiliated not-for-profit society committed to advancing and celebrating women in screen-based media since 1989.*