

IMAGINE, ENGAGE, TRANSFORM

A VISION, A PLAN.

2013 - 2018

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“IN DREAMS BEGIN
RESPONSIBILITY.”

— Delmore Schwartz

INTRODUCTION

“THE IMPORTANT THING IS POINT OF VIEW... OUR ROLE IS TO PROVIDE A POINT OF VIEW ON HOW THE WORLD WORKS AND HOW IT’S CHANGING, TO REACT FAIRLY QUICKLY SO WE CAN PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN THIS EVOLUTION. THE CHALLENGE IS TO CONTINUE TO BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER THROUGH WHAT WE DO.”

— *Minutes of in-house Strategic Plan working group meeting*

Our Strategic Plan must be anchored in our mission and be clear about why the NFB exists and why Canadians should continue to pay for the institution. The NFB’s mission takes its starting point in the enabling legislation. The legislation is simple and to the point: the NFB exists to reflect Canada to Canadians and the world. Like any foundational text it is subject to exegesis and interpretation, the latter guided by the lived history of the institution in its relationship to Canadians and the world.

Implicit within the legislation are four fundamental principles that can trace their roots back into the founding and subsequent structure of Canada. They are that:

1. for all the centripetal forces of geography, regional differences, language differences, the divides of rural and urban, north and south, and so on, there is an indivisible unity that binds all Canadians together in the idea of Canada;

2. this unity requires a multifarious exchange amongst and across all the diverse populations of that idea called Canada;

3. the idea of Canada and its unity must find its most characteristic expression in the public sphere given form by this public institution;

4. the Canadian unity is strengthened when projected out into the world and reflected back from the world into Canada.

These principles are important, for they draw the contours within which we must work (what philosopher Charles Taylor has called the “horizons of significance”) and suggest the possibilities for an ongoing relevance when, on the face of it, the reflection of Canada is widely mirrored within the audiovisual industry and, in the digital era, in a host of other ways that do not require mediation.

Based on the above, we can make a number of claims for the NFB:

- a. The NFB must embody the idea of Canada and its essential unity in its structure and in its works;
- b. The job of the NFB is to engage with and explore the potentialities of the idea of Canada and, consequently, who we are as Canadians;
- c. The idea of Canada is not fixed; it is a dynamic and constantly evolving one in which the NFB plays a crucial role by laying out and testing the imaginative possibilities of that idea through works of the imagination;
- d. Where we differ from all other organizations, private or public, who do “reflect Canada to Canadians,” is our ability and necessity to operate at the margins and the leading edges, where defining change happens, uncertainty is greatest and the mainstream is least able to operate;

e. We embody the idea of Canada only to the extent that what we do has meaning and impact. What we do has meaning and impact when it is a felt and lived reality, when it touches the imaginative, emotional and intellectual chords of Canadians and when it pushes beyond the boundaries of received thinking—our own, our creators and our audiences.

These are large claims to make for a small organization, yet, not only are they warranted, they are the only bases on which we can operate and which justify the existence of the NFB. The Strategic Plan elaborates on the implications within these claims and lays out the concrete approach that will give a reality to them.



THE VISION

The NFB will become a major player in the global media landscape.

THE MISSION

The National Film Board's mission is to provide new perspectives on Canada and the world from Canadian points of view, perspectives that are not provided by anyone else and that serve Canadian and global audiences by an imaginative exploration of who we are and what we may be.

We will do this by creating, distributing and engaging audiences with innovative and distinctive audiovisual works and immersive experiences that will find their place in classrooms, communities, and cinemas, and on all the platforms where audiences watch, exchange and network around creative content.

CORE VALUES

The NFB is guided by its core values. Values are the fundamental ethical norms that set the bounds to corporate behaviour and individual behaviour within the corporation. They determine actions, so that even should the organization and its stakeholders benefit from an action, and not performing it would result in harm to the organization, we would refrain from taking that action if it contravenes the ethical norm. This is what we mean by integrity: an adherence to ethical norms. Core values are absolute and of equal standing. They will be our lodestone in our ongoing debates and decision making. These core values are also determinant in all the works that we produce.

HONESTY

We are truthful in action and intent in all our interactions. Truthfulness is fundamental in the work we do as creators and is the only basis for a relationship of trust with our stakeholders and audiences.

RESPECT

We treat everybody with respect and dignity. This imposes on us a duty of openness to others through active listening and imaginative engagement.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences. We are public servants and we have a duty of stewardship in managing public resources and in delivering cultural services that benefit all Canadians.

JUSTNESS

The principle of fairness, or equality of treatment, is fundamental to how we work. The principles, procedures and processes we establish are founded on treating people, both within the organization and outside it, in a just manner.

Note that the core values do not exclude other attributes that are essential to the ways we work. We value innovation, risk taking, excellence, inclusion, passion, teamwork, but they are not ethical norms. They are modes of operating that are central to us and will be evident throughout the Strategic Plan in concrete ways.

STRATEGIC GOALS

“WATCH US, WE ARE DOING SOMETHING DIFFERENT!”

— Minutes of in-house Strategic Plan working group meeting

— 1 —

TO FURTHER THE NFB’S GLOBAL LEADERSHIP IN CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION THROUGHOUT ALL ITS ACTIVITIES AND WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO:

- A. Programming
- B. Digital portals and applications
- C. Technical infrastructures
- D. Discourse on creation and meaning

— 2 —

TO INCREASE THE PRESENCE, AWARENESS AND IMPACT OF THE NFB’S WORKS BY ENHANCING MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS WITH CANADIAN AND WORLD AUDIENCES THROUGH:

- A. Communication
- B. Engagement
- C. Participation
- D. Co-creation

— 3 —

TO STRENGTHEN AND GROW THE NFB’S FINANCIAL CAPACITY OVER THE LONG TERM BY DEVELOPING A NEW ECONOMIC MODEL AND NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES BASED ON:

- A. Understanding the full potential of all its intellectual property
- B. Prototyping and experimentation
- C. Strategic partnerships
- D. Global reach

— 4 —

TO TRANSFORM THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE INTO A FLUID, DYNAMIC, EVOLVING ORGANISM THAT ENHANCES ITS ABILITY TO WORK AND CREATE DIFFERENTLY THROUGH:

- A. A neural organizational model
- B. Networked decision making across the organization
- C. Structures that favour modularity and cross-fertilization
- D. Clarity on mission, goals and objectives

— 5 —

TO REDEFINE THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE PUBLIC SPHERE FOR THE 21st CENTURY THROUGH:

- A. Creative works
- B. Discourse and public debate
- C. National and international partnerships

The strategic goals are not isolated; they are all aspects of the same unified, coherent vision of who we are and what we must do. Consequently, they form a highly interdependent unity in which the functional distinctions necessary at the operational level merge to create a whole that is greater and larger than the sum of the parts. The repetitions within the plan across the goals are deliberate. The five strategic goals are bounded by and integrated through a dense conceptual network comprised of **authenticity, imagination and ethics.**

AUTHENTICITY

We will be precise about the notion of authenticity within the context of a public sector organization; it will be one of the essential tests of the validity of the specific projects we undertake.

For a public producer, authenticity means that what we produce must engage with meaning and the construction of the meaning of the multifarious strands of the Canadian social reality.

It is a complex dance with our artists, whose imaginative pursuits must push against the boundaries of the horizons of significance. It is one where the dictates of the industry cannot be determinant; authenticity must be determined by the ways in which we are of service to society—enlarging the space and potentialities of who we are. Implicitly, this involves a constant drive into the unknown, for if we knew who we are, there would be no need for art.

For a public distributor, authenticity means that the heart of our distribution activities is about dialogic relationship.

Even as we create, say, new economic models, they cannot be conceived of only in instrumental terms. In other words, we cannot take the “easy route” of simple commercialization. Distribution is not a means to an end; it is in its very form and nature determinant of the ways and

modes of engagement. But we must underline that without the revenues we would be unable to fulfill the very tasks with which we are charged. Commercial enterprise is not opposed to authenticity, for it is an activity that is coeval with the human. It is the ways and means with which it is undertaken that matter.

IMAGINATION

Imagination is a much-used but often misconceived or misapplied term in the cultural sector. We must reappropriate and reimagine its meanings and operations.

Imagination must not be confused with the imagined or the imaginative as an undisciplined state in which anything goes. The latter borders on the fanciful or at best the decorative. The imagination is an engaged imagination; it is the hard work of displacement, of pushing beyond the zones of our comfort. It applies as much to thinking about economic models as it does to producing a film or interactive work.

Even a dyed-in-the-wool instrumentalist like the great pragmatist philosopher John Dewey declared that “the idea of a thoroughgoing and deep-seated harmonizing of the self with the Universe... operates only through imagination.” And the self, he notes importantly, is not a self in isolation: “The community of causes and consequences in which we, together with those not born, are

enmeshed is the widest and deepest symbol of the mysterious totality of being the imagination calls the universe.”

Note the emphasis on the present and the future and on community, not the “I” but the “we.” The “mysterious totality” applies equally to ourselves as Canadians as to the universe. The link that joins “the community of causes and consequences” to the imagination is where ethics resides.

ETHICS

Ethics is of a piece with authenticity and imagination. It is an expression of our obligation to that community in which “we, together with those not born, are enmeshed” and is anchored in our core values.

It is an ethics that is recognizant of and responsible to the communities in which we live and serve and by its very nature is in a dynamic relation with the past—those who have formed us—and the future, the generations to come whom we serve best by serving fully in our time. Ethics speaks to our charge of cultural stewardship; the necessity of extending that construction of meaning to allow for the best of the past and the hopes of the future.

**“TOUCH
CANADIANS’
SOULS.”**

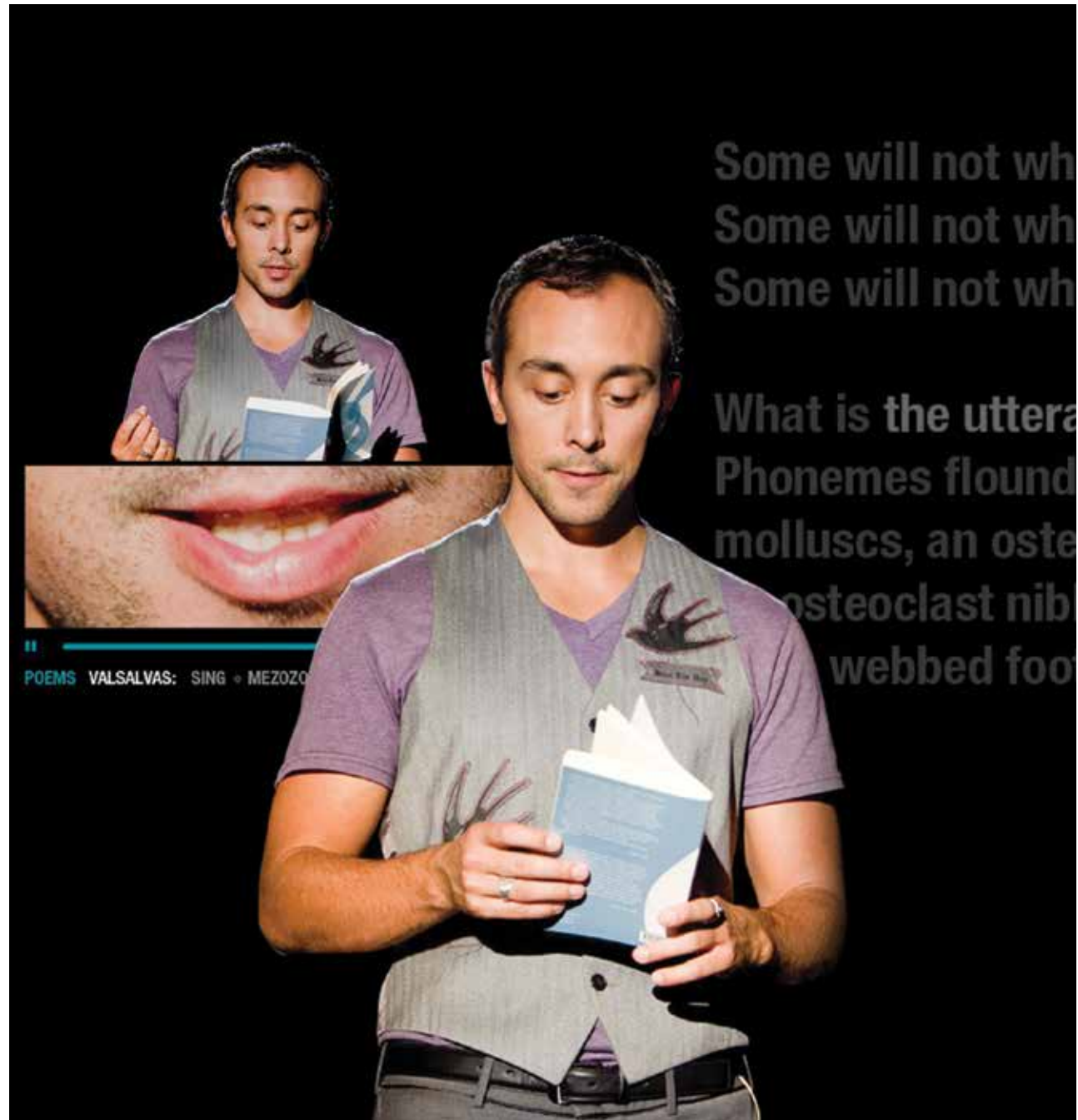
— Minutes of in-house Strategic Plan working group

A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE

Language is the nervous system of authenticity, imagination and ethics. It is at once concrete and tangible: vowels and consonants gliding off our tongues, vibrating in our ears, seen in the gestures of sign language, and touched in the raised pages of braille; and language is metaphoric, our utterances at every moment creating and recreating our world. We conduct the daily mundane transactions of our lives in a particular language; and we dream in language. The ways in which we create and engage are not and cannot be an: "It happens to be in English or French or Inuktitut, and so on..."

Language is about our anchorage in time and place and community. What this means is that we cannot have a true imaginative, ethical space without the constant labour and affirmation of minority languages and the languages that live under threat. The efflorescence of French is of urgent necessity. The support for creation and diffusion in Aboriginal languages is vital. The consciousness of and attention to language is not apart from, or an add-on to, the work of the NFB; it is at the heart and of the essence of the NFB's work and must be rooted in all the activities the NFB undertakes.

The tasks we set ourselves here are hard; to pursue excellence or innovation in and of itself would free us of the burden of engagement and imagining what others dare not, but then we would not be doing the job which is set out for us.



TO FURTHER
THE NFB'S GLOBAL
LEADERSHIP IN
CREATIVITY AND
INNOVATION
THROUGHOUT ALL
ITS ACTIVITIES.

OBJECTIVE



— **A** —
PROGRAMMING

— **B** —
PORTALS
AND APPLICATIONS

— **C** —
TECHNOLOGY

— **D** —
DISCOURSE
ON CREATION
AND MEANING

PROGRAMMING

“WE ARE ENTERING AN ERA WHERE EVERYBODY IS A CREATOR—IT IS IMPORTANT FOR US TO SUSTAIN CREATORS.”

— Minutes of in-house Strategic Plan working group meeting

We begin with acts of creating or making works. “Reflecting Canada to Canadians and the world” does not specify a genre or a method. It specifies an activity and an intent. The activity is to imagine in all its multiplicity the idea of who we are.

The intent is to touch Canadians in our very souls and the nervous systems of who we are through the narrative and cultural fibres of our individual and societal make up. We need to do it in ways that no one else is, otherwise the question arises, Why have Canadians pay for something that is very well done by private producers or public broadcasters?

Our works must stretch the imaginative limits of ourselves, our artists and artisans and our audiences. They are the lightning bolts that will thrill, clarify and electrify.

The imaginative spaces that we will occupy, and within which we will create and work, are the spaces in-between; the marginal worlds where change churns and the future forms.

It is those areas that others discount or set aside because they have no immediate economic value, or because they are not considered mainstream, or because the risks are too great. Yet it is those areas that hold the buried secrets and the unacknowledged realities that will surface in unknown ways over the course of time. Like unexplored geological fields in harsh terrain, they hold the imaginative and creative treasures of our future.

It is an Attawapiskat which makes the headlines but leaves reality buried until an Alanis unearths it.

It is *Stories We Tell* that reconfigures narrative, the documentary and ways of seeing contemporary families.

It is *Trente Tableaux* that fashions a radically different and feminist understanding of the creative process and its inextricable links with a collective history.

It is *ORA* that pushes technology to its limits in an act of literally seeing our human dance differently.

THE SPACES OF CANADA: PLACE

“WE NEED TO THINK OF AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT AND INTERACTIVE OPPORTUNITIES ON ALL OUR PROJECTS THROUGHOUT THE REGIONS. REGIONS DON’T NECESSARILY HAVE TO BE TRADITIONAL PHYSICAL REGIONS, BUT CAN BE INTEREST OR VALUE-SHARING OR CULTURAL COMMUNITIES. WE NEED TO THINK NOT ONLY OF CREATORS, BUT PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND DIALOGUE WITH OUR WORK.”

— Minutes of in-house Strategic Plan working group meeting

In talking of the imaginative spaces, we must talk specifically of the spaces of Canada. We need to change the language we use to speak of this country, that language of “regions” and a “centre.” The regions are not the spaces outside the centre. The centre has dispersed economically and technologically more dramatically than at any other time

in our history. The “regions” are the physical, mental and emotional spaces which we occupy and which occupy us. Our creative works will speak to it out of necessity and out of authenticity.

Let us be clear that this is not about our traditional views of equalization, of check marks and cheque-book balances. It is about anchorage in place, in ways that are so deep and so rooted that it is in and of itself a marvel.

It is a Zacharias Kunuk’s *Atanarjuat* drilling into the very heart of Northern being and exploding into our collective consciousness. It is Pierre Perrault excavating the language and faces of Île-aux-Coudres to create a poetry that changes everything.

It is the visible realities of the urban and the rural; the industrial and the mining landscapes; the northern and the southern—all the dichotomies that form us. Our discovery of each in its specificity will shine a new and different light on what it is to be human in the skin of a Canadian.

THE SPACES OF CANADA: PEOPLE

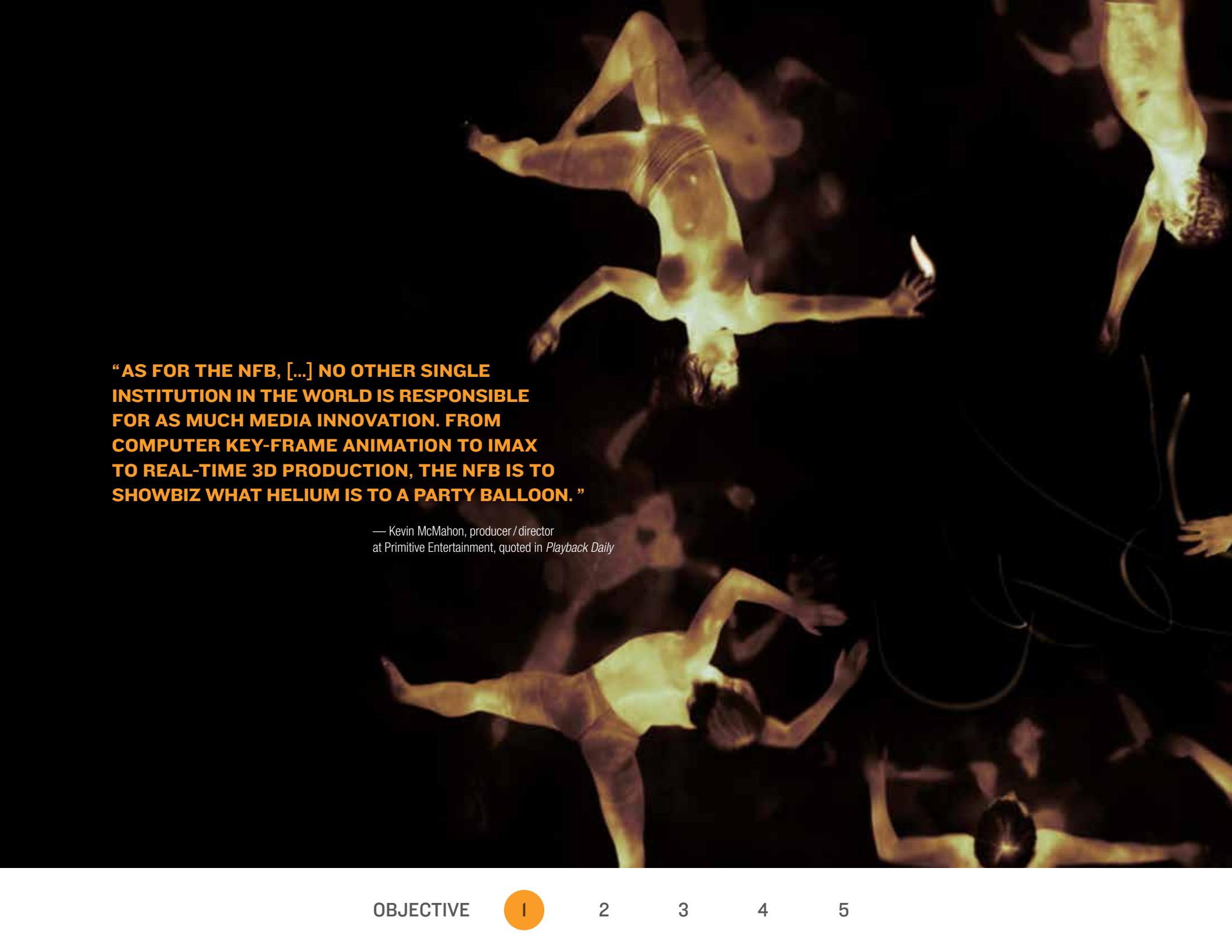
Demographic changes are creating new meanings and new ways of recognizing ourselves in this great Canadian mosaic. Canadian audiovisual culture reflects inadequately the actuality of our demographics and even less its imaginative potential. We must challenge ourselves to undertake modes of creation that arise from ways of seeing and understanding the complex realities of our cultural identities. Stuart Hall has pointed out that cultural identity is a matter of “becoming” as well as “being.” Our ways of belonging, therefore, are linked to the future and to the past, and we need to understand past and future in its multiplicity and in its totality.

The exploration of a civic, inclusive and democratic culture through creative works cannot reside in fixed notions of a common identity. To expostulate about the hardship of *the* immigrant experience (as opposed to *an* experience) is to make the Other a poster child for an issue; it is to deprive our new Canadians of the reality

of their differences as human beings with different life stories; and it is to deprive all of us of the richness of those stories. As Chandra Mohanty noted, when we allow “specific ‘differences’ (of personality, posture, behavior, etc.) of one woman of color [to] stand in for the difference of the whole collective, and a collective voice is assumed in place of an individual voice,” we reduce those people so that in the end we would have learnt nothing and we are no further along. We can create new meaning by committing to opening new doors of creation that do not exist anywhere else in this country, leading to explorations that are creative, dialectical and open-ended about who speaks, who creates, about what, for whom and to what end.

“THE ROLE OF THE NFB IS TO DOCUMENT THE EVOLUTION OF CANADIAN SOCIETY AND TO BUILD BRIDGES AMONG COMMUNITIES.”

— Minutes of in-house Strategic Plan working group meeting



“AS FOR THE NFB, [...] NO OTHER SINGLE INSTITUTION IN THE WORLD IS RESPONSIBLE FOR AS MUCH MEDIA INNOVATION. FROM COMPUTER KEY-FRAME ANIMATION TO IMAX TO REAL-TIME 3D PRODUCTION, THE NFB IS TO SHOWBIZ WHAT HELIUM IS TO A PARTY BALLOON.”

— Kevin McMahon, producer / director
at Primitive Entertainment, quoted in *Playback Daily*

“WE WANT TO INCREASE VISIBILITY AND ENGAGE ACROSS REGIONS AND CULTURES. WE SEE AUDIENCES AS A SPECTRUM.”

— Minutes of in-house Strategic Plan working group

THE NATIONAL AGENDA

We exist in the particularity of our space and time and social nexus. We define ourselves in terms of our geographical placement (easterner, westerner, northerner, and so on) and in terms of our communities of interest. But we also exist in a totality—this quantum space we call Canada. It is quantum because it is in constant dynamic movement, shifting and evolving. We have a responsibility to that totality, to that sum which is greater than its parts, which is why we will continue to pursue and engage with projects of national interest. To say that is only to place us at a starting line. Everything remains to be questioned, to be tested, to be pushed to the limits of our creative interaction. Each act of creative engagement with such projects must be stripped away of all preconceptions and begun anew as a moment of birth, a moment that will allow the possibility of imaginative transformation.

THE FORMS OF CREATION

We will pursue more actively and more critically the POV documentary, establishing a clear, distinguishing identity for an NFB documentary. This goal is not about enforcing a “house style”; rather, that the documentaries, in all their artistic and subject variety, and in all the different ways in which artists and artisans fashion them, should reflect an authenticity that is existential and incontrovertible and an ethics that is invariable.

Innovation will spring from the inner necessity of the drive to authenticity; in that search to find ways to express a sensibility, a view, a relationship to the world that as yet has no language and whose language is formed in the struggle of the making of the work. We set no limits on the range, scope and approach.

We will push ourselves and our creators to step into the unknown zones not

accommodated by formats and pre-determined scripts. Nor will we be content with works that push the content but abjure the form. Form is content and aesthetic values are not adjuncts but at the very heart of the work. They must be deeply thought, felt and made visible. We will be exigent in this matter, for beauty matters, and matters crucially. It means that the talent, whether they be director, editor, writer, or cinematographer, must reach for those objectives. Here is an essential role for the NFB producer.

Quite rightly we place storytelling at the heart of the work we do, but we will question more rigorously the assumption that we understand what is meant by storytelling. We ask about a project, “What is the story?” but we don’t often inquire further into the nature of narrative modes. The Hollywood storytelling structure is so dominant and so successful that it has taken on the appearance of iron-clad

scientific laws of narration. But it is only that—appearance. We need to find new methods and new thinking about storytelling. How can we learn and adapt and explore other models—say, those of the griots of Nigeria or the Songlines of the Australian Aborigines—to give truth to experiences not subsumed within mainstream models? Much of this speaks to animation as well. We will continue to support and explore auteur animation with an openness to new creators and new forms of creation.

We will continue to push the boundaries of interactive creations with the same drive to authenticity, bounded by a deeply committed ethics. Over the last few years, the NFB has defined much of the practice in this area. The world is catching up. Our challenge is to keep forging ahead; to keep alive the startling sense of discovery and awe.

“THE TOTAL FREEDOM OF CREATION THAT I HAD DURING MY RESIDENCY AT THE NFB WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE ELSEWHERE. IT ALLOWED ME TO MAKE THE FILM I’D BEEN WANTING TO MAKE FOR A LONG TIME, IN MY OWN WAY OF MAKING FILMS.”

– Paule Baillargeon, Filmmaker-in-Residence at the NFB and winner of the “2012 Jutra Tribute” award

“THEY MANAGED NEVER TO MAKE ME FEEL PRESSURE. THEIR AGENDA IS THAT YOUR FILM BE AS GOOD AS IT CAN POSSIBLY BE. AND THEY’RE VERY SERIOUS ABOUT THAT AGENDA.”

– Sarah Polley, *The National Post*



We will explore the potential of new forms, such as installation interactive work, as they relate to our mandate. We will also be open to other genres and hybrid forms to the extent that it serves our creative and imaginative purposes and to the extent that we can within the limits of our resources.

In general, what we make will be guided by the large notion of extending the imaginative space of who we are and what we can be. Our ambition must always be to do that which is important but that others cannot do.

Editorial integrity and independence are fundamental and unalterable foundations for our programming.

PROGRAMMING FOR AUDIENCES

We note that awareness of audience is central to our programming. This is different from a ratings-driven approach that strives to cater to audiences. The approach we favour is about creating engaged, authentic relationships with the audience. Given the shifting nature of the digital universe, we will explore the

manifold ways in which audience engages with and plays a role in the programs and the programming. This is about daring to expand our creative horizons in ways that integrate our audiences in a host of ways. One size and one approach do not fit all.

TALENT

Talent is the essential driver of creative activity. We will actively search out and work with as broad a field of talented artists and artisans as we can. We will experiment with multi-disciplinary

approaches to creation from the worlds of all the arts (cinema, music, dance, visual art), science, engineering and so on. We will make particular efforts to engage with talent in under-represented communities, and we will continue to open significant opportunities for emerging talent. We will experiment with new working methods to bring together teams of talent, for example by using the latest communications technologies to set up distributed work groups that are able to collaborate virtually in real time across vast distances.

PORTALS AND APPLICATIONS

The first phase of the NFB's digital revolution was driven by one overriding aim: to make the NFB accessible. There are different ways of making things accessible, and not all those ways are equal. Some might be like giving a person the key to the attic and saying "help yourself" to whatever is up there. It would be a messy, disorganized and uncomfortable way to access material. Accessibility means ease of use and pleasure in the using of it. It is also and most fundamentally about dialogue.

It is in creating networks of interaction that we deliver on the need and the promise of what a public organization must be. The creation of NFB.ca was driven by aesthetic, functional and philosophical considerations. That underlying intent remains as vital and as essential now as it was in 2009. Technical inventiveness, sensitivity to audiences and their needs as they adopt and adapt to new technologies and platforms, and creative flair will continue to be the hallmarks of our work in this area.

We will maintain and continue to develop the existing online Screening Room at NFB.ca, adding functionalities and adapting

it to evolving platforms, whether computer, smartphone, tablet, smart TV or others yet to appear. New functionalities will constantly push to enhance the experience of the consumer through such things as improved search capabilities and the addition of additional language channels reflecting the diversity of the country.

IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES

While the Screening Room remains a standard bearer for NFB content, we need to look to the future and to a very different mode of presentation and interaction with our audiences. The ways in which digital platforms are currently conceived and mainly used are within a paradigm that hasn't shifted—in other words, as different forms of "pipes" for the transmission of content.

We will move away from the notion of platform, which remains at its heart a digital extension of the televisual age, to one that fully explores the intrinsic, *sui generis* possibilities of digital spaces as a wholly other mode of being in the world.

For that reason, we will develop a radical new NFB portal that is predicated on the

digital world as a living organic space whose breath of life is the constant interplay with the audience. It will be a kind of Canadian *spiritus mundi* — a living, pulsating experience that grows and evolves with the moods, thoughts, feelings, insights and knowledge of the audience.

The impetus comes from the pioneering work the NFB has been doing in creating original interactive productions. These works are not extensions of existing audiovisual forms; they are new art forms with their own aesthetic, grammar and logic. The interactive work is no longer distinct from and delivered on a platform; the platform, as it were, is the work, in much the way a piece of architecture is a creative act in itself that determines and affects the ways we exist in “*our interpreted world.*”

It is a double movement. We occupy the space and, in turn, are occupied by the

space. We will explore the meaning of those kinds of shifts that in the doing also create new forms of public space; that space which is inhabited by and inhabits Canadians. It is a move into unknown terrain that will keep shifting in that nexus of evolving technology, an adapting audience and the demands of an authentic, imaginative, ethical public space.

APPLICATIONS TO ENGAGE

We will keep exploring the creative and economic potential of new applications. The NFB Films app was one of the first video apps out of the gate for the iPhone in 2009. Since then, we’ve kept on experimenting and developing new ways of extending our relationship and engaging with our audiences. The animation workshops that the NFB delivers to schools led to PixStop, an application that puts the creative potential of the iPad camera



into the hands of all, enabling them to make their own stop-motion animations. In the process, it also provides a lesson in media literacy, a way of understanding by doing that all media are constructed and that those constructions have particular sets of meanings depending on their creator and the context of creation.

The NFB Advent Calendar app and digital box sets like *Ludovic* and *McLaren* explore new ways of experiencing and working with classic works. We are only at the start of this process, which expands the notion of creative engagement with audiences while building economic value.

THE CREATIVE EDUCATIONAL SPACE

As a public organization, we have a strong and ongoing commitment to the educational sector. Our students

are digital natives who surf the world; all the more essential that they have access to a strong and diverse Canadian perspective on the world, delivered in ways that are meaningful to them.

CAMPUS, our new online educational delivery system, has already proved a success with schools. We will expand CAMPUS’s capabilities with new functionalities to deepen learning possibilities, and that will make Canada a global leader in inventive, thoughtful and impactful ways of integrating digital technology and content into the classroom. In addition, we will expand CAMPUS to create windows of engagement for parents and students at home.



TECHNOLOGY

The public face of the NFB's digital success has been its online Screening Room (NFB.ca), its interactive works and its applications. That success was made possible by the remarkable efforts of the technical resources team in reimagining the technical processes and workflows for the digitization and delivery of works in multiple versions across a multitude of platforms. The result attracted the attention of the technical world, soliciting invitations to speak at major conferences in Hollywood and around the world and offers to publish in major industry journals. The pace of change continues unabated, and we will continue to respond to the challenges of rapidly evolving technologies and the needs of our audiences through the imaginative efforts of our engineers and technicians working in collaboration with all the departments within the NFB.

DIGITAL WORKFLOWS

We will move to entirely digital production flows. Our ability to increase our capacity to integrate new technologies, produce high-quality projects, maintain long-term archiving of all projects and offer our content on the platform required by our customers demands a fully digital production, post-production and accessibility chain.

We will work with the programs, digital enterprises and relevant outside partners to develop industry leadership for an entirely tapefree production and

post-production process. This is about engineering at the service of, and enhancing the work of, production. It is a synergistic partnership that will open new possibilities for our creators.

ADVANCED MEDIA ASSET MANAGEMENT

NFB works are now available on a wide variety of different platforms. In recent years, the number of specific "recipes" for delivering our productions has increased almost exponentially. Through effort and ingenuity, we have successfully met the needs of our various customers seamlessly. The key to our future success lies in our ability to produce new formats on demand and in an automated manner. We will continue to expand and develop our just-in-time delivery system, working with external partners to develop unique solutions for media asset management.

The success of NFB.ca confirms the importance of preserving and maintaining the accessibility of our works on the platforms of choice for our audiences. In this the NFB is a Canadian and global leader. However, even the NFB is only just beginning the preservation of our digital assets. We will be pushing forward aggressively to develop new methods and procedures for the digital preservation of our content. We will look at the particular requirements of interactive works and consider how the organic experience of interactivity may be available to future generations on whatever platforms then exist.

DISCOURSE ON CREATION AND MEANING

Discourse has always been a fundamental component in the evolution of cultural practice. Manifestos, polemics, philosophical tracts, serious critiques and other forms of exchange have been modes of exploration as essential as the creative works themselves. Whether it be the writings of Dziga Vertov or John Grierson, the *Cahiers du Cinéma* of the French New Wave, the Dogme of Lars von Trier, or the critical articles of a Pauline Kael, articulating and questioning the nature of the work enlarged the creative space and provoked further thought and experimentation. Creative practice without a rich bed of discourse is impoverished; it exists in the moment and disappears in the moment.

We need to have forums for conceptualizing and theorizing the nature and impact of new modes of creation that move beyond the immediate demands of production or portals and that can provide the philosophic underpinnings for the work that we do. It is one thing to talk of authenticity and leave implicit its meanings. It is another to engage with it

through exchange, dialogue and analysis that will then be reflected back into the work we are doing. It is the questioning of assumptions that will push us into those territories where others do not go.

We will develop sites of such discourse and exchange both within the NFB and with other individuals and institutions. We have already begun this process through a series of invited speakers, a kind of NFB TED talk. We will continue with the speakers and explore ways of publishing those talks and opening them to large audiences for discussion and exchange. We will form partnerships with institutes that are also working at the cutting edge of creation, for the purposes of exchange and debate.

TO INCREASE THE PRESENCE,
AWARENESS AND IMPACT
OF THE NFB'S WORKS BY
ENHANCING MEANINGFUL
RELATIONSHIPS WITH
CANADIAN AND WORLD
AUDIENCES.

OBJECTIVE

2

— **A** —
CONNECTING ON
THE GROUND

— **B** —
THE IMPORTANCE
OF RESEARCH

— **C** —
THE EDUCATION
SECTOR

— **D** —
MARKETING AND
COMMUNICATIONS

“THE AUDIENCE IS PART OF WHAT WE DO, AND WE ARE PART OF THE AUDIENCE.”

— Minutes of in-house Strategic Plan working group meeting



Our mandate is “to reflect Canada to Canadians and the world.” A work reflects only when someone is looking; it transforms only when someone is engaged. The relationship to the audience is as much a starting point as the act of creating something. We are reflecting to the audience but we are also reflecting about the audience. We ask to whom are we speaking and why. If we render a service to Canadians, it is not as a business to a client; it is not a contractual relationship. It is a relationship of meaning creation. Meaning is constructed in the spaces in between; in that space of dialogue, whether implicit or explicit. It is a dialogue that has different points of entry.

A work like *Pink Ribbons, Inc.* spreads like wildfire through a grassroots structure and fires people up. It speaks to them, and it releases their tongues to speak the unspeakable. *Échos* crosses barriers of space and culture to liberate tongues in a different way. In the space between the audience and the screen is the act of discovery and recovery.

In programming works we must consider what it is we need to program by thinking about our audiences. “Audiences” in plural, for there is not a monolithic, homogenous audience. Our audiences are as varied in age and demographics and cultural background as the country itself. Even as we respond to disparate audiences, we

are also working to bring them together in the cultural meeting places that help construct what a country is. A project like *Ici, Chez Soi/Here At Home*, for example, unites different communities across the country in an exploration of mental health issues and homelessness.

In the digital era, the audience acquires another dimension. We program by considering the audience, but the audience can also become an integral part of the programming and creating process. This is particularly true in interactive works. We will continue to explore the possibilities of co-creation and the ways in which this enriches the dialogic relationship with Canadians and the world. We may note that the new technology allows for a greater degree of sophistication, but the impetus for co-creation is not new; it is anchored in the *Challenge for Change* tradition, when Film Board filmmakers went into communities and trained citizens to make their own media with the newly invented video camera.

In distribution, we need to consider the most effective ways of making audiences aware of and engaged with the works *on their terms*. **We want to expand the possibilities of modes of distribution to give our audiences new and richer experiences, ones that they can appropriate and integrate into their lives in their own fashion.**

“WE ARE A CREATIVE ORGANIZATION THAT WILL NEED TO SHIFT AND PUT OUR AUDIENCE AT THE CENTRE OF OUR INSTITUTION. DUE TO SHIFTING VALUES AS A RESULT OF THE ECONOMY, THIS IS THE PERFECT TIME AND OPPORTUNITY FOR THIS APPROACH: WE HAVE WHAT PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FOR.”

— Minutes of in-house Strategic Plan working group meeting

For example, creating digital box sets of our work for tablets makes for a richer and deeper context for the audience, whether they are preschoolers, as in the case of *Ludovic*, or consummate lovers of animation, as in the case of *McLaren*. We will make specific, targeted efforts to connect with and be informed by non-traditional audiences such as immigrant groups. For example, we will develop minority-language channels on our portals such as Chinese, Punjabi or Spanish.

CONNECTING ON THE GROUND

In thinking deeply about audiences, we understand that virtual connections, as necessary and vital as they have proved to be, are not the be-all and the end-all. Not everyone has the capacity to connect online, and not everyone wants to connect in such a fashion. Or, they may have extensive virtual lives, but still value and want the connection that only live and community screenings or installations can provide. In particular, we are mindful of how crucial this is for smaller or more remote communities, where the variety of alternative, and particularly alternative Canadian, cultural offerings is limited. Such activities continue to remain fundamental, but given our increasingly limited means we will be more creative in the ways in which we partner to ensure that we continue to deliver community events and screenings.

Over the last few years, the Commissioner undertook a cross-Canada tour to connect with Canadians. He met with community leaders and held town halls from Atlantic Canada to the Pacific coast, in the North and in the South, in cities and in rural communities. Those discussions nourish the reflections within the NFB about how best to serve Canadians. The Commissioner will continue to meet with communities on an ongoing basis. The NFB will establish ways to sustain those relationships through community advisory groups.

In addition, senior directors of the NFB will continue to meet with minority-language and other community groups across the country to explore new ways of connecting with and aiding their work, which is instrumental in developing strong, vital, enriched communities.

The Board of Trustees of the NFB is also an important conduit for connecting with communities and audiences. The Board has periodically held their quarterly meetings in different communities across the country, including in Nunavik and Nunavut. This remains important and emphasizes the degree to which, at the highest level, the NFB is committed to all Canadians and all our communities across the country.

In emphasizing the crucial importance of the relationship with the audience, we do not imply that everything is offered for free, for if it were so we would have no possibility of establishing a firm financial foundation for the future of the NFB. (This is elaborated further under the next objective.) It does mean that we are cognizant at all times of the dense, interlocked complex of objectives in our relations with our audiences. There is no one template solution for our distribution activities. Each project or related set of projects must be thought through on its own terms.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH

In order to achieve these goals we must deepen our relationship with and our understanding of our audiences. We cannot base our activities on assumptions, on what we think we know or on anecdotal evidence. We must move to a much more rigorous, data-based analysis. We will invest as necessary, within our means, in leading research from demographers, statisticians and social scientists. We will commission research as and when necessary for our needs. We will partner, as we have begun to do, with universities and research centres to make more effective use of our limited resources.

We will extend the ways in which we work with data, including the latest modes of data visualization, in order to enrich and strengthen all our activities. That means we will invest in training for staff — in programs, digital enterprises, technical services, business affairs and so on — to understand and use research.

THE EDUCATION SECTOR

Young audiences are digitally savvy, and have access to a wealth of content from around the world. What they need is compelling Canadian content delivered in the ways that they are used to consuming and using content. They need works that give them a sense of the world through a multitude of Canadian perspectives and give them a sense of pride in Canadian creativity and innovation. That is a fundamental role for the NFB.

Teachers around the country turn to the NFB as a trusted source of quality Canadian media to enhance learning. It is through this close relationship with teachers that we have expanded beyond content delivery to providing an enriched environment for the education sector. CAMPUS, launched in 2012, is an innovative education portal, a service for teachers, by teachers. It combines award-winning content with functionalities to enrich the classroom experience and

facilitate classroom preparation. A fully bilingual service, it provides much-needed content to teachers working in minority-language and remote communities.

In addition, and to complement CAMPUS, the educational team has done a remarkable job of delivering the products and services that teachers and students need for the future, such as digital storytelling and animation workshops, virtual classrooms and enriched study activities. Now we must go further.

CAMPUS will become the primary media destination for teachers. **We will expand and deepen this relationship with educators, working with them to develop new content, services, functionalities and applications they need to better use media in the classroom. We will push to extend that relationship into the home directly with parents and students.**

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Marketing and communications have a significant role to play in the ways in which we connect and engage with our audiences. Despite the remarkable success the NFB has had in reaching greater audiences and younger demographics, our surveys show that: 1) awareness of

the NFB offer remains limited; 2) when people become aware they are surprised by the range and inventiveness of the offer; and 3) once aware they become avid users and supporters of the NFB. This points to enormous, untapped opportunity for the NFB. But there are challenges.

Advertising remains the most effective way to inform large numbers of people about the availability and benefits of products. However, the scale of advertising required to be effective is well beyond the resources of the NFB. Our marketing and communications departments have proved inventive in responding to these challenges through word of mouth, social media, and partnerships.

We now need to take it a step further and invent modes of marketing and communication that do not yet exist. We will do this based on research, analysis, consultations with the best minds in the field, new kinds of partnerships, testing through a series of pilot projects, and constant feedback mechanisms through performance indicators. This will be a painstaking process, building progressively over the next few years. Throughout it, we expect that we will be developing new kinds of intellectual property, which we will exploit for the benefit of the NFB and Canadians.

“THE GLOBAL VILLAGE IS ABOUT DEBATE, INVOLVEMENT, ENGAGEMENT.”

— Minutes of in-house Strategic Plan working group meeting



TO STRENGTHEN
AND GROW THE NFB'S
FINANCIAL CAPACITY
OVER THE LONG TERM
BY DEVELOPING A NEW
ECONOMIC MODEL
AND NEW BUSINESS
OPPORTUNITIES.

OBJECTIVE

3

— A —
AN ECONOMIC MODEL

“WE HAVE TO BE VERY CREATIVE TO
DIFFERENTIATE OURSELVES FROM
WHAT IS ALREADY OUT THERE; BUT
WE NEED RELEVANT CREATIVITY.”

— Minutes of in-house Strategic Plan
working group meeting

OBJECTIVE

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The NFB is a public institution funded by the Canadian public to undertake important work that cannot be done elsewhere. **The parliamentary allocation is fundamental and necessary. Maintaining that funding at adequate levels is vital if the NFB is to fulfill its mandate. We remain mindful that we are entrusted with taxpayers' dollars and that we must manage our funds well and deliver value for money. We will also continue to work with government and the public service to ensure that this is so.**

“WE CAN CREATE THINGS THAT THE AUDIENCE DOESN'T KNOW THEY WANT.”

— Minutes of in-house Strategic Plan working group meeting

OBJECTIVE

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But a dramatically altered audiovisual universe, driven by relentless technological change that is global in scope, demands ongoing and significant capitalization if the NFB is to continue to be relevant and at the forefront of the digital revolution.

To this end, we must be inventive and supplement the parliamentary allocation with other solutions.

Over the past 15 years, the NFB has experienced ongoing financial erosion with a significant loss of purchasing power. More recently, it has seen a further 10 per cent cut to its parliamentary allocation. Its traditional distribution business of selling point-of-view documentaries and auteur animation has declined as the global television marketplace has increasingly shifted to non-scripted factual entertainment series and reality programming. At the same time, the NFB has had to make significant investments in its digital shift.

To date, the NFB has managed its declining economic fortunes through shrewd management and internal economies, which have allowed it to invest close to \$12 million over the past six years in its digital shift. This has laid the foundations for new forms of creation, new ways of connecting to audiences and new economic models. Going forward, we need to take advantage of the potentially significant new revenue possibilities offered by the digital revolution.

While we will continue to operate on an annual zero-based budgeting system and continue to look for efficiencies, the possibilities of finding important new savings internally are exhausted. For a small organization to achieve what we have done over the past five years is extraordinary. It has, however, meant that we have pushed the machinery of the organization to its very limits. We are overextended in terms of our human and financial resources.

A NEW ECONOMIC MODEL

The good news is that there are real possibilities for revenue growth anchored in the specificity of the NFB and based on innovation, creativity and daring. The latter point is absolutely key. As noted above, the economic objectives are not apart and separate from the creative and public mission of the NFB. They are not a necessary evil or a means to an end. This would be to misunderstand the possibilities and the necessities of operating as economic beings and remove us from the creative potentialities that economic necessity provokes.

We must be clear that pursuing economic objectives does not mean commercialization, or abandoning or distorting our mandate. This is a misleading dichotomy. It would be true if we conceived our financial independence on producing so-called commercial fare, say, factual programming or reality

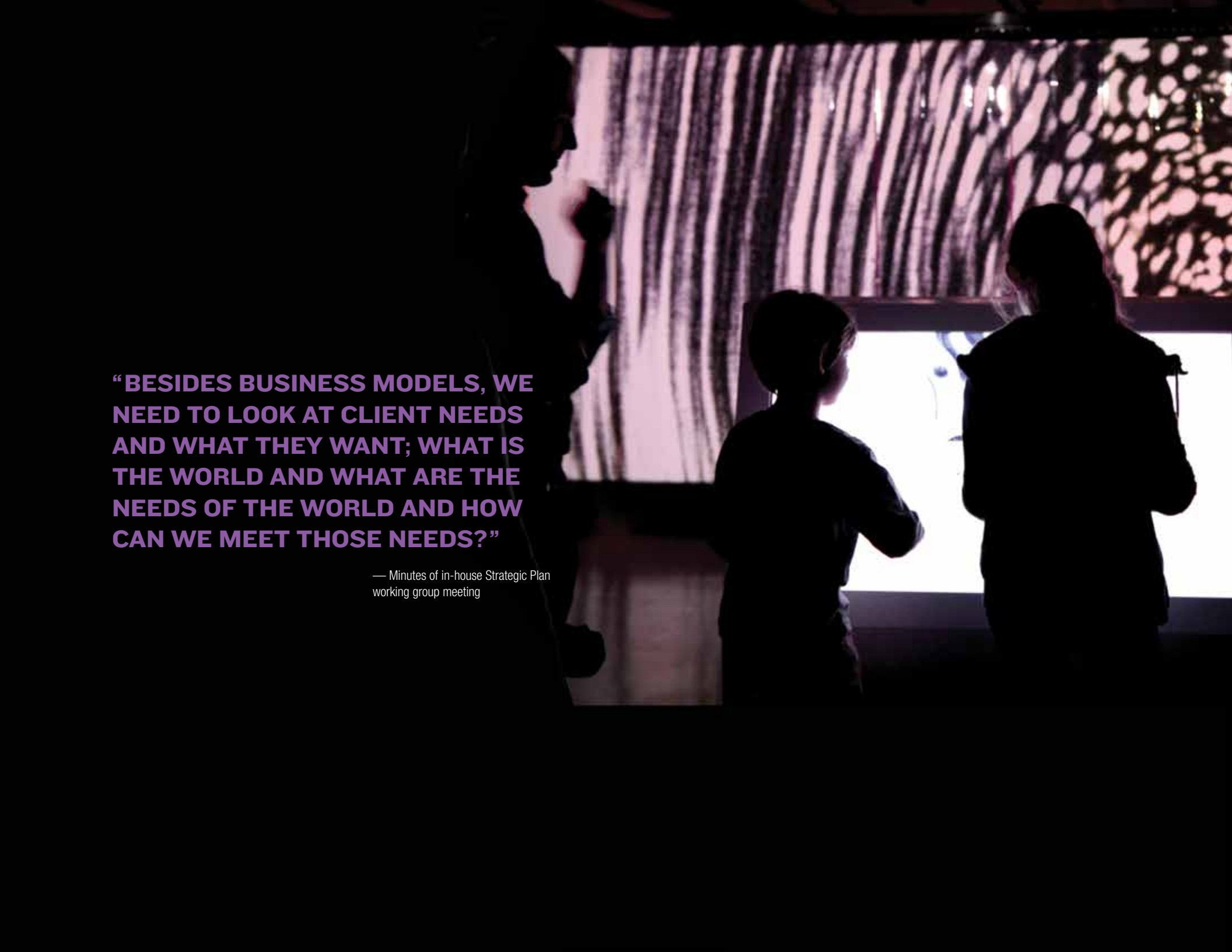
**“SELL
OURSELVES
AS A
CREATIVE
COMPANY.”**

— Minutes of in-house Strategic Plan working group meeting

@mc33me13h

**THE NATIONAL FILM
BOARD OF CANADA FREELY
HOSTS A TRULY FANTASTIC
FILM COLLECTION.
WONDERFUL APP !**

**@thenfb #films #art
<http://www.nfb.ca/apps>**

A dark, atmospheric photograph showing the silhouettes of three people—two adults and one child—gathered around a large, brightly lit digital display. The display shows abstract, colorful patterns. The scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source being the screen, which casts a glow on the silhouettes and creates a pattern of light and shadow on the wall behind them.

**“BESIDES BUSINESS MODELS, WE
NEED TO LOOK AT CLIENT NEEDS
AND WHAT THEY WANT; WHAT IS
THE WORLD AND WHAT ARE THE
NEEDS OF THE WORLD AND HOW
CAN WE MEET THOSE NEEDS?”**

— Minutes of in-house Strategic Plan
working group meeting

“HOW DO WE COME UP WITH SOMETHING BETTER THAN GENERATING REVENUE? WE HAVE TO BE AGGRESSIVE AND COMPLETELY REINVENT THE WAY WE MAKE MONEY.”

— Minutes of in-house Strategic Plan working group meeting

television. Any strategy based on that would be a dismal failure. It is questionable why we would want to do it, or why a public institution should do it. And even if by a stretch of logic we could justify such an approach, we have no expertise in that area; and we would not get the revenues that we think we might. Even making programming choices for point-of-view documentaries based on the belief that they would be revenue generators is wrong-headed and illusory. No one has yet been able to predict what kind of such works will do well in the market place.

We will explore the works, the platforms, the networks, and the partnerships to develop new economic models. We have demonstrated that we have the capacity to do this through our transactional site,

through CAMPUS, and through our apps. Now we must systematize the innovations and join it to an entrepreneurial drive. We will be shrewder about the economic potential of the innovations and intellectual property that are the natural offshoot of our ongoing work.

In the past, the NFB has introduced innovations that have been taken up around the world, but from which the NFB never profited. IMAX was born at the NFB. A new canister system for storing film to minimize degradation was developed at the NFB. Innovative technical processes were invented by the ingenuity of the artists and artisans of the NFB. For the sake of the future of the NFB, we can no longer afford not to exploit such revenue potential.

As in everything we do, we will be driven by vision leavened by pragmatism. Television is not going away anytime soon. We will continue to pursue the market potential of television for our works. However, we will be more selective and more strategic in our decisions.

We will experiment more with the commercial potential of online, whether on our site or our partners' sites, or the potential of different kinds of over-the-top services. We will refine the freemium economic models across all our platforms. We will explore the possibilities inherent in adding value to our content through new kinds of applications. Digital box sets like *Ludovic* or *McLaren* offer interesting models.

We will develop new partnerships with other public institutions that are rich in assets but lack the capacity to exploit them commercially. We will continue to develop partnerships with other government departments as it makes sense for financing essential work.

We will aggressively explore the potential of international partnerships, focused on our digital expertise, particularly in China, Korea, Southeast Asia and Latin America.

Marketing and communications will play a key role in aiding the growth of business. In particular, the more we are able to leverage and make known our leading-edge innovations, from creative interactive works and new portals and apps to new methods of digitization, the more attractive we become as a necessary business partner.

TO TRANSFORM
THE ORGANIZATIONAL
STRUCTURE INTO A FLUID,
DYNAMIC, EVOLVING
ORGANISM THAT
ENHANCES ITS ABILITY
TO WORK AND CREATE
DIFFERENTLY.

OBJECTIVE

4

— A —
THE NEURAL
ORGANIZATION

— B —
MANAGING CONTINUAL
CHANGE

“WE NEED AN OPEN ORGANIZATION
WITH AUTHENTIC VOICES AND
CONSISTENCY—THIS IS HOW WE
ACHIEVE CREDIBILITY.”

— Minutes of in-house Strategic Plan
working group meeting

That we have achieved what we have over the past few years—no less than the radical transformation of a traditional media organization into a global leader in new spheres of creation and engagement with audiences—is in no small part due to the dedication, inventiveness and passion of our employees. They are the necessary and essential foundation on which the future must be built.

We live in a moment of profound and ongoing change. This is a very different state of affairs from the past, when change was shifting from one steady state to another. In addition to everything else we are doing—all the massive transitions made to operate differently, create differently, produce

**“RISK IS TO
CONSTANTLY
INVENT,
REINVENT
AND REFRAME
—ALL NOTIONS
WE SHOULD
EMBRACE IN
OUR PRACTICE.”**

— Minutes of in-house Strategic Plan working group meeting

differently, deliver differently—we are also engaging in a not insubstantial and pioneering effort to re-imagine the nature of organizational structure and behaviour.

THE NEURAL ORGANIZATION

Form follows function; and the form of the NFB of tomorrow must be more supple, more interconnected, with a greater degree of organicity. Given that all the strategic objectives are of a piece and facets of the same overall organic whole, the structure must be responsive to that. More than ever, the hierarchical, linear organizational model of the past is inadequate. The interconnection from the get-go of production, technical services, digital enterprise activity, marketing, distribution, and audience outreach is marked and essential. The neural, feedback-loop structure is a wholly other concept of how organizations can work and the only one, if any, that can be responsive to the demands of continual change. The neural structure is one in which all parts of the organization are in constant intercommunicative flows, where functional structures intersect with cross-divisional modular ones.

Communications is at the heart of a neural model. We will implement a robust communications plan. The key emphasis is on multi-directional “just-in-time” communication flows; in other words,

communication that is relevant and delivered when it is needed and most useful. We will undertake intensive sessions to ensure that everyone is clear about the mission, goals, objectives and priorities (MGOP) of the Strategic Plan. We must foster a culture of open exchange and debate within the context of our MGOP.

We will develop new methods of collaborative working and invest in the resources and training necessary to make it effective. We will continue to implement cross-divisional working groups to solve collective problems. We will invest in new communication tools and new methods of ensuring a greater integration of the regional offices within headquarters and vice versa. We will transform our working methods and develop the tools necessary to ensure that we can work across functional divisions to deliver on strategic goals.

MANAGING CONTINUAL CHANGE

If change imposes demands, we have the capacity to respond to those demands and even control continual change in a human dimension. This means undertaking a more fundamental analysis of change; it is not a homogenous force in response to which we completely alter ourselves from being one thing to becoming something else. It also means creating an organizational structure that supports change, humanizes it and creates value for individuals rather than destabilizing them.

The analysis of change and how it actually operates will help us in redefining how we are working together and reconfiguring the organizational structure. This is ongoing work that is a combination of trial and error (just doing it) and deep thinking about what it is we are doing.

Ongoing change also demands a different form of talent management. The workforce in critical areas such as digital innovation is highly fluid. In addition to training support for existing staff, we need to bring in new talent to challenge us and help to achieve our objectives. We will develop and implement a robust talent management and recruitment strategy to respond to these challenges. We will reach beyond the usual suspects and search out talent for all positions in the NFB from the broadest possible range of sources. We will put in place training and sessions on how to work across cultural differences.

Change puts enormous demands on employees; continual change exponentially more so. We will respond to those demands and manage continual change in a human dimension. Respect for, empowerment of and enrichment for employees must be at the heart of organizational change. Employees will be supported with the proper training and the tools they need to manage change. We will continue to invest at current or higher levels in training for all employees to meet the needs of this Strategic Plan.

TO REDEFINE THE NATURE
AND PURPOSE OF THE
PUBLIC SPHERE FOR
THE 21st CENTURY.

OBJECTIVE

5

— A —
A NEW VISION FOR
THE PUBLIC SPACE

OBJECTIVE

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“WE NEED TO CREATE SPACES THAT THE AUDIENCE CAN CLAIM AND DEVELOP.”

— Minutes of in-house Strategic Plan working group meeting

We are in a time when public cultural institutions are called much into question. It is an erosion that has happened over the last 20 years and more, as a result of profound social, technological and economic changes. We need to refashion the basis on which public institutions, and particularly cultural institutions, operate, if they are to serve the country. It is essential to engage in this discussion (and it is implicit in the strategic objectives outlined above) to reimagine the purpose, identity and modes of operation of public cultural agencies like the NFB. The new ways of thinking about public space and public purpose will release a dynamic burst

of creative energy and innovation. The NFB can and will take a lead in this debate.

The questioning of public institutions is part of a larger movement that, at its extreme, questions the very necessity of any public institutions and, at best, calls for a severe restriction of their role, functions and powers. It is a movement founded on the conviction that the state has encroached too much on our lives. It is not a homogenous movement but brings together many different kinds of groups, some odd bedfellows indeed. For some, limiting the state is not an absolute. It is that the values seen to be

espoused by the modern liberal state are at odds with quite opposing firmly held beliefs. For others, libertarians, it is a matter of absolutes. The state should have at all times the most minimal role in the lives of individuals.

No matter the starting point of the minimalists, they confound two quite different things: the role of the state, and the role of the “public” in civic life. It may seem a nuanced difference but it is fundamental, and the confusion arises when what is public is articulated as an extension of government or state and thus necessarily subject to the same

restrictions one might wish to put on the role of government in our lives.

The fundamental difference is that the role of the state is prescriptive: the “thou shalt” and “thou shalt not” — defining the rules and norms of our social being; while the role of the public is explorative—a dynamic, ongoing exchange to understand the boundaries of who we are as social beings that can form the basis for how we then organize the state or government. The confusion arises when the public role is embedded within government or government-funded institutions.

The questions that are posed, however, are real: *Do we need public cultural institutions? If yes, do they ever need to be supported by the state?*

A NEW VISION FOR THE PUBLIC SPACE

These are important questions that must be taken seriously. They reflect the ways in which society is attempting to come to grips, through public debate and public policy, with the ongoing changes wrought by the global social and technological upheavals of the last two decades.

Public organizations, as a rule, have not kept pace with the changes to articulate a new and reinvigorated argument for the necessity of the public space. The cultural sector has for too long either been defensive or assumed its own necessity without engaging with the issues raised by this questioning. Cultural organizations tend to speak as the defenders or gatekeepers of the public good, and the arbiters of taste. However, the “barbarians” have long stormed the gates and seized control of the instruments of cultural production.

We can neither evade nor dismiss the critiques; to do so would be to dismiss the concerns of a significant part of Canadian society, and it would mean that we would not be alert to the changing requirements asked of public organizations by Canadians. We need to understand on what basis the public space exists in the 21st century and what the relationship of public organizations is to that public space in the age of YouTube and Twitter.

We will become the leaders of a new debate and a new engagement with the notion of the public space and public value of cultural goods. We will do so through the nature and value of the works we create, the discourse we provoke around the works and the ways in which we engage with our audiences, and through an ongoing series of forums, both domestically and internationally. We will work with other organizations and institutions to pursue this debate and make Canada central to an issue that appears in a dispersed way in all developed countries and in many of the emerging countries such as Brazil and India, with whom Canada is building important trade and cultural relations.

“CREATE A ‘SAFE’ NEUTRAL SPACE ONLINE OR OFFLINE WHERE DIFFERENT VIEWS CAN BE EXPRESSED AND SHARED”

— Minutes of in-house Strategic Plan working group meeting

“CANADA IS POISED TO BECOME A MAJOR PLAYER IN DIGITAL STORYTELLING, THANKS TO THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA.”

— Anita Ondine, *The Hollywood Reporter*

**“WE HAVE TO BE
PRESENT IN THE
PUBLIC SPHERE
AND BE PART
OF THE PUBLIC
SPHERE.”**

— Minutes of in-house Strategic Plan
working group meeting



