



August 21, 2008

The Honourable David Emerson
Minister of Foreign Affairs
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON, Canada
K1A 0G2

Dear Minister Emerson,

I am writing to you with ACTRA's concern about the funding cuts your department is making to the PromArt program.

ACTRA adds our voice to the chorus of arts organizations that are shocked and surprised by the news of this funding cut. Federal government support for Canada's arts and cultural sector is essential and makes good business sense.

As many organizations have already pointed out, in August 2008, the Conference Board of Canada issued a report noting that the cultural sector's contribution to Canada's total GDP has increased to 7.4%. While arts funding is crucial for maintaining Canada's cultural sovereignty, it is also a solid investment. Cultural funding triggers other investments and contributions to Canada's economy.

Canada's film and television industry is worth \$5 billion and employs the equivalent of 127,000 people. According to Profile 2008, an Economic Report on the Canadian Film and Television Production Industry, the export value of the Canadian film and television production industry was worth \$1.7 billion in 2006-2007. This includes foreign presales, distribution advances and foreign location production.

Cancelling funding to PromArt may have an impact on these statistics in the years to come, as the program provided needed exposure to Canadian films and filmmakers by funding buyers to attend Canadian film festivals and assisting Canadian films to travel to international festivals. For example, PromArt made it possible for the Banff Television Festival, the Canadian Film Centre, Hot Docs and the Victoria Independent Film and Video Festival to invite foreign buyers to their festivals. PromArt also made it possible for Telefilm Canada to organize Canadian participation at Berlin's Berlinale and Canadian film screenings at New York City's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA).

Canada takes pride in its role on the international stage such as these past two weeks at the Olympics. We pat ourselves on the back for the success of *Flashpoint*, the first Canadian television program since *Due South* to be simulcast in first run on both Canadian and American networks.

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As in the Olympics, these successes take hard work, training and a long-term commitment to nurture the relationships building toward future opportunities.

ACTRA is concerned about the other cultural programming cuts we've learned of in the past two weeks. These cuts were discovered through postings on various government websites and from calls to the organizations affected. There was no notice or warning and the news trickled out just one week before the submissions deadline for the federal government's pre-budget consultations.

ACTRA has also written to the Minister of Heritage with our concerns about the funding cuts to programs that support our film and television industry: the Trade Routes Program, the Audio-Visual Preservation Trust, the Canadian Independent Film and Video Fund and the National Training Schools Program.

PromArt is a stepping stone and building block for our future filmmakers. It's essential that we promote our artists to the world as part of building our industry domestically. Canada's cultural programs are already woefully underfunded. These cuts will further reduce our ability to foster our vibrant cultural identity here at home and share it with the world.

ACTRA joins in calls that these funding cuts be reconsidered.

Thank you.



Stephen Waddell
National Executive Director

c.c. Leonard Edwards, Deputy Minister, Foreign Affairs
Members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development
Paul Crête, Bloc Québécois Foreign Affairs Critic
Bob Rae, Liberal Foreign Affairs Critic
Paul Dewar, NDP Foreign Affairs Critic