

CANNES 1987 • SÉLECTION OFFICIELLE
QUINZAINE DES RÉALISATEURS • DIRECTOR'S FORTNIGHT

UN ZOO LA NUIT

UN FILM DE JEAN-CLAUDE LAUZON



LES PRODUCTIONS OZ EN ASSOCIATION AVEC L'OFFICE NATIONAL DU FILM DU CANADA

PRÉSENTENT

UN FILM DE JEAN-CLAUDE LAUZON

UNE PRODUCTION DE ROGER FRAPPIER ET PIERRE GENDRON

AVEC GILLES MAHEU ET ROGER LE BEL IMAGE GUY DUFAUX MUSIQUE JEAN CORRIVEAU

CINÉ
move

Second key element

The experience of the NFB as a co-producer with private sector companies illuminates a second key element in the Canadian solution for its film industry — because, in addition to the federal and provincial investment schemes, there is a place in the industry for public sector producers working on a co-production basis with independent firms.

Certainly in television, where agencies such as the

Verbal foreplay in Denys
Arcand's *Le Déclin de
l'empire américain*



CBC, the BBC, and the various networks in France are facing reduced budgets for in-house production, this sort of arrangement will become more common. Of increasing interest to British filmmakers are the international co-productions that are being set up by Canadian and overseas companies. A host of alternatives exist for producers wishing to become involved in such projects; these range from equity investment to the sharing of creative and technical expertise, and yield a number of advantages that include broadcast fees, tax exemptions and access to government co-financing schemes.

These benefits have been attractive to producers on both sides of the Atlantic, and were the impetus behind more than £32 million of investment in Canadian production from European sources, on an equity or pre-sales basis from 1983 to the end of September 1986.

A Canadian company called Primedia Productions has been particularly active as a partner with public and private sector UK firms on projects for both television and the cinema. It has been able to draw co-financing from Canadian and English investors, notably Telefilm Canada, the Ontario Film Development Corporation and BBC Wales.

Bustling film industry

From this array of funding and institutional arrangements, there has emerged in Canada a bustling film industry ready to meet any cinematic taste. Currently, production is underway for children's television, animated cartoons, documentary travelogues and full-length drama; and, each of the main centres of business — Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver — has developed a complex network needed to support the finished films.

Rates of film production are, in fact, as high as those seen during the boom that occurred during the Capital Cost Allowance era of the late 1970s, when the industry experience a massive influx of capital, mostly from foreign sources, for the production of low-quality films with little relevance to a Canadian audience.

At the height of that boom the total value of feature film production in Canada was estimated to be £75 million per annum. Today, the industry has Telefilm Canada ready to invest close to that amount on a co-finance basis alone; so the total value of production is several times this figure.

One estimate — made by the Canadian Film and Television Association — puts the total value of production in 1986 at £0.5 billion, and suggests that 35 000 people are employed in the industry.

However, experience from the recent past has shown that a buoyant today is no guarantee of long-term prosperity. The boom of the late 1970s was a bust by the early 1980s, when film producers realised that only a few of the hundreds of films being made were actually drawing an audience.

Without paying attention to the quality of films and to the tastes of the national and international audiences, it is unlikely that Canadian producers will continue to find funding in either the private or public sectors. Hence the on-going search for the right mix of art and commerce that will lead to the production of worthwhile films. ♦