



Gender Parity in Key Creative Roles

Progress Report

January 31, 2025

Introduction

On December 13, 2018, Corus was pleased to participate in the CRTC's Women in Production Summit, alongside Canada's largest public and private sector broadcasters.

During the Summit, all participants agreed that, although there had been some progress in the preceding years, the data indicated that women continued to face barriers to career advancement in the Canadian film and television production industry. Gender under-representation in key creative positions needed to be addressed. Progress on this front is not only good for women and society in general, but it also makes good business sense. Corus is committed to creating and fostering lasting solutions to ensure more women play leading roles in our industry.

In this report, we provide Corus' F2024 progress report on our commitment to achieve gender parity in key creative roles for all big budget drama series by 2025, and the work we have done to achieve greater gender representation across other genres, across our portfolio of services.

Diversity Matters and Corus is Closing the Gap

Corus has been promoting diversity for many years as an important part of our content strategy. We have made it our mission to purposefully seek out projects led by women and have made important progress on expanding roles for women in our commissioned productions. Additionally, we have made concerted efforts to support greater diversity, equity, and inclusion across all of our original content, providing new opportunities for women of color. Our series are populated with strong female voices, both in front of and behind the camera.

As we have seen in previous years, production levels as well as genres of programs produced fluctuate over time along with revenue levels. For example, while one year may see several new drama series being produced, other years will see limited drama series produced and perhaps increases in lifestyle factual reality or other programming. As production fluctuates so too will the breakdown of creative roles and those who fill those roles. Additionally, it should be noted that in many cases, there may be only one hire in any particular creative role of a production, which can greatly sway calculations one way or the other. Accordingly, we must look at progress over time as a whole as opposed to any individual year or production.

In broadcast year 2023-24 Corus did not produce any big budget¹ original production English-language dramas but did produce two big budget French-language dramas. Having said that, Corus is pleased to report that of all English-language original

¹ TV over \$900k; Films over \$2.5M

Canadian productions 45% of all key creative positions were held by women for the 2023-24 broadcast year, and 43% of all English and French-language combined production positions included women in key creative roles (more detailed information is provided in the appendix to this report).

At Corus, we are purposeful in bringing gender balance to all our commissioned properties. We take a focused approach to seek out storytelling that amplifies diverse voices. Working in concert with Corus' DEI team on a Creative Diversity Strategy ensures that clear measures and objectives are in place as we collaborate with existing and new content creators. Together, we work with our production partners to train, hire, and promote women and persons from diverse communities and to work towards gender equity in all key creative roles. We work to ensure that our scripts reflect the diversity of Canadian society, and do not exploit or condone violence, racism, or sexism.

Women in Production at Corus

Corus is committed to fostering a strong, vibrant, and sustainable media industry that is both domestically successful and globally competitive. Empowering women leaders is an integral part of this vision. Led by a team of talented women, over the past years Corus' original programming team has expanded from delivering hit series to our domestic channels, to becoming a leader in developing, producing, and selling unscripted content in Canada and around the world.

While original commissions were down from the previous year Corus continued its commitment to creating content that succeeded both at home and abroad. The company's original programming team delivered hit series for several Corus undertakings and worked hand in hand with the female led Corus Studios team to continue our legacy of being a leader in developing, producing and selling unscripted content in Canada and around the world.

Corus' original programming team includes industry veterans Rachel Nelson, Vice President, Original Programming and Head of Corus Studios, Lynne Carter, Director, Original Programming, and two long-time senior production executives, Debbie Brown and Dora Fong. The percentage of women on the original production team at Corus is 100%. This group works closely with production partners to ensure an increasing number of women are hired in key roles and that those currently in more junior positions are mentored and provided with an inclusive and dynamic experience while working on Corus series.

While Corus' French-language original programming side also saw a reduction in production, Corus produced two big budget drama programs with Canadian independent production partners. In our continued efforts to ensure women are present in key creative roles the request was put forward to each of these productions to appoint female directors. Corus' request was not granted, which underscores that

while we continue to do our part to drive change, we have limited control over our independent production partners' final decisions regarding a production. Despite this, both series were led by female characters (Nuit Blanche season 2 with France Castel and Rose-Marie Perreault; Bête Noire season 2 with Sophie Cadieux and Charlotte Aubin) and scripted mostly by women.

Julie Godon, Head of French Specialty Channels, continues to lead our French-language original production team. She is supported by production executive, Maria Luisa Todaro, who with over 20-years' experience in the media industry, helps oversee drama productions for Séries Plus and multiple documentaries for Historia. Julie and her team make a point of strongly encouraging producers to include diversity and reach gender parity within their productions. The French-language creative services team also includes Anik Salas, the President of Réalisatrices Équitables, a non-profit organization that promotes the necessity to appoint more female directors in productions.

Off-Screen Initiatives

Corus recognizes that in order to ensure gender parity in key creative roles of production, we must ensure that we support women in all phases of their career and help to provide a path. Corus' ongoing off-screen initiatives to address the gender gap in the past year have included:

- **Women in Communications and Technology (WCT)** - Corus continues to support WCT, by sponsoring the Corus mentorship program, which is designed to help women advance to senior roles within communications industries.
- **Corus.Futures Scholarship Program** – Launched in 2022, the Corus.Futures Scholarship program supports Canadian students from underrepresented communities in their final year of post-secondary studies. The Susannah Therrien Radio Scholarship and Internship is specific to supporting individuals who identify as female pursuing Radio studies through financial assistance, a three-month paid internship and mentorship opportunities. In 2023, we launched the so.da Social Marketing Scholarship and Internship which also includes support for female-identifying students in the social media space.
- **Women in Film and Television – Toronto Chapter (WIFT-Toronto)** – Corus continued its support with WIFT+ Toronto as sponsor of the Corus Media Management Accelerator program, which is designed for screen-based professionals and entrepreneurs with less than five years of management experience. Developed in conjunction with the G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education at Toronto Metropolitan University, this program focuses on essential management principles required for future leaders. Sara

Chan, Corus' Vice President and Associate General Counsel, Programming, Rights and Revenue, sits on the Board of WIFT+ Toronto.

- **Black Women Directors Accelerator Program** – Corus has partnered with the Directors Guild of Canada and the Black Screen Office to offer training and mentoring to five experienced Black women Directors culminating in the opportunity to direct an episodic TV show as a guest director.
- **Forward Together** – Corus is a founding partner of Forward Together, a movement forged out of a vision to bring companies and professional women together to share best practices and resources internal to one organization with all women, to enable best in class learning across industries. Whether it is world-class training, top-notch speakers, or excellent facilities, companies leverage their internal resources that, when shared broadly, are used to benefits and impact significantly more women in our greater community.
- **OYA Black Arts Coalition** - Corus has partnered with OYA Black Arts Coalition to facilitate the *Corus Unscripted Internship Program*, a training, networking, and mentorship opportunity for recently graduated Black students interested in pursuing a television career in the lifestyle and factual genres. The *Corus Unscripted Internship Program* also provides two students with an eight-week paid internship placement on a Corus-supported unscripted production in 2024 (internships to date have supported students identifying as female).
- **Plan International Canada** – As part of Plan International's *Girls Belong Here* program, Corus welcomed two youth ambassadors to partake in seat shares with the company's female senior leaders. Together they discussed all things career-related, including goal setting and overcoming challenges. Youth ambassadors and Corus leaders engaged in discussions about diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), as well as the importance of creating room for the voices of young people to be heard – especially the voices of girls. Additionally, Corus hosted Plan International Canada's 2024 Youth Leadership Celebration.

A Whole-of-Industry Approach to Gender Parity is Needed

Corus remains committed to closing the gap for women in our industry. We will continue to exert our decision-making powers to affect change, continue to support the development of new creative talent through a range of initiatives, and use our power/influence to approve key creative talent in commissioned properties as a means

to affect change in Canadian productions. However, as we have noted in previous years: we cannot do this alone.

While we will continue to do our part to drive the decisions we can control, we must not forget that CRTC regulations require us to purchase the vast majority of our high budget programming from independent Canadian producers, over whom we have limited control (as noted above).

We hope these other parties will join us in this important effort. Only together, with a whole-of-industry approach, which includes Canadian independent producers and digital media broadcasters, can we achieve lasting change for women in our industry.

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