

30 key events in Canadian Film History

1896	The first public screening of a film in Canada takes place in Montréal.	
	Manitoba farmer James Freer makes Canada's first films. In 1898, he tours England with his "home movies," which depict life on the Prairies. They are so successful the federal government sponsors a second tour in 1902.	1897
1903	The first fictional drama made in Canada, the 15-minute-long <i>Hiawatha, The Messiah of the Ojibway</i> , is produced by the Canadian Bioscope Company to encourage British immigration to Canada. Bioscope also makes the first Canadian feature, <i>Evangeline</i> (1913), based on Longfellow's poem about the expulsion of the Acadians. It is a critical and financial success.	
	The Canadian Government Motion Picture Bureau becomes the first national film production unit in the world. However, it never attempts to develop a domestic film production industry. Following his tenure as the bureau's first director, Bernard E. Norrish states that Canada "had no more use for a large moving picture studio than Hollywood had for a pulp mill."	1918
1919	<i>Back to God's Country</i> , produced by Ernest Shipman and starring his author/actress wife, Nell Shipman, becomes an international hit, earning a 300% profit.	
	The Canadian Motion Picture Distributors Association (CMPDA), a branch office of the Hollywood studios, is formed and begins including Canadian theatre receipts in US box office tallies. In 1923, Famous Players, owned by Paramount Pictures, buys all 53 of the Canadian-owned Allen Theatres and seizes control of the Canadian exhibition market.	1922
1927	The UK's Cinematographic Films Act stipulates that 15 per cent of films shown in Britain must be of British or Commonwealth origin. Over the next ten years, 22 low-budget feature films — or "quota quickies" — are produced in Canada by American-financed companies taking advantage of the quota.	
	The National Film Board (NFB) is created, and John Grierson — who coined the term documentary — is named its first film commissioner.	1939
1947	The federal government asks the CMPDA to invest some of their box-office profits in Canadian production facilities. Instead, under the Canadian Cooperation Project, Hollywood studios agree to shoot some films on location in Canada, include favourable references to Canada in Hollywood movies, and encourage the distribution of NFB films in the US — all to maintain Hollywood's exhibition monopoly in Canada.	
	NFB animator Norman McLaren, Canada's most honoured filmmaker, wins an Academy Award for his short film <i>Neighbours</i> (1952).	1953
late 1950s	Sidney Furie, a young CBC writer, directs two low-budget films that attract international critical attention but are completely ignored in Canada. Furie immigrates to Britain, where he tells the press, "I wanted to start a Canadian film industry, but nobody cared." During this period, Norman Jewison, Arthur Hiller and Ted Kotcheff also leave Canada to pursue careers elsewhere.	
	Filmmakers such as Pierre Perrault, Gilles Carle, Claude Jutra, Michel Brault, Gilles Groulx and Denys Arcand produce works of tremendous importance to the Quiet Revolution and the development of direct cinema. Jutra's <i>À tout prendre</i> (1963), Groulx's <i>Le Chat dans le sac</i> (1964) and Carle's <i>La Vie heureuse de Léopold Z.</i> (1965) are heralded as the first fiction films to truly speak to the Québécois experience.	late 1950s
1964	<i>Nobody Waved Good-bye</i> marks an important first step for the still-nascent English Canadian feature film industry. Hired by the NFB to make a short documentary on juvenile delinquents, Don Owen expands the project into a narrative feature about teenage rebellion.	
	Michael Snow's <i>Wavelength</i> premieres, and quickly becomes one of the most important and influential works in the history of experimental cinema. In 2001, the <i>Village Voice</i> ranks it #85 on its list of the 100 best films of the 20th century.	1967
1967	The federal government creates the Canadian Film Development Corporation (CFDC) to provide government financing for feature fiction film production. It is renamed Telefilm Canada in 1984, when its mandate is broadened to include television.	
	Don Shebib's landmark film <i>Goin' Down the Road</i> becomes an artistic and commercial success in Canada and internationally.	1970
1971	Claude Jutra's <i>Mon oncle Antoine</i> , based on an autobiographical screenplay by Clément Perron, wins more than 20 international prizes and 8 Canadian Film Awards. It goes on to top lists of the greatest Canadian films for decades.	
	IMAX Corporation opens the first permanent IMAX theatre at Ontario Place, after the IMAX process is developed with <i>Labyrinth</i> at Expo 67.	1971
1974	The federal government allows investors to write off 100 per cent of their investment in Canadian feature films, resulting in a massive increase in Canadian production and marking the beginning of the tax-shelter era. Production in Canadian feature films increases from three in 1974 to 77 in 1979. However, many of the films never receive distribution.	
	<i>Saturday Night</i> magazine runs a scathing review of David Cronenberg's <i>Shivers</i> (1974), titled "You Should Know How Bad This Film Is. After All, You Paid For It." The review exclaims, "If using public money to produce films like this is the only way that English Canada can have a film industry, then perhaps English Canada should not have a film industry." A furious debate is sparked in the House of Commons over the use of tax-payer dollars to fund films.	1975
1987	Patricia Rozema's debut feature, <i>I've Heard the Mermaids Singing</i> , wins the Prix de la Jeunesse at the Cannes Film Festival. Made for around \$350,000, it goes on to become one of the most profitable Canadian films ever made, grossing more than \$6 million worldwide.	
	Emboldened by new government funding, the Ontario Film Development Corporation supports such filmmakers as Rozema, Atom Egoyan, Bruce McDonald, Peter Mettler, Ron Mann, John Greyson, Jeremy Podeswa and Don McKellar, resulting in the Toronto New Wave.	mid 1980s
1997	Atom Egoyan's <i>The Sweet Hereafter</i> wins three major awards at Cannes, making it the most honoured Canadian film ever at the festival. It's also nominated for Academy Awards for adapted screenplay and best director — the first for a Canadian director.	
	Zacharias Kunuk's <i>Atanarjuat (The Fast Runner)</i> (2001) becomes the first Inuktitut-language feature film ever made. It wins numerous awards worldwide, including best first feature at Cannes and five Genie Awards. In 2015, it is named the best Canadian film of all time.	2001
2004	Denys Arcand wins the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film for <i>Les Invasions barbares</i> (2003).	
	<i>Bon Cop Bad Cop</i> (2006) becomes the highest-grossing Canadian film of all time, earning more than \$13 million domestically.	2007
2008	Sarah Polley becomes the first woman to win the Genie Award for best director, for her debut feature, <i>Away from Her</i> (2006). Her screenplay adaption of Alice Munro's short story "The Bear Came Over the Mountain" also receives an Oscar nomination.	
	<i>Resident Evil: Afterlife</i> , produced by Don Carmody and shot in Toronto, grosses more than \$280 million internationally and surpasses <i>Porky's</i> (1981), also produced by Carmody, as the most successful Canadian production ever.	2010
2012	Three Québec films are nominated for the Best Foreign Language Film Oscar three years in a row: Denis Villeneuve's <i>Incendies</i> (2010), Philippe Falardeau's <i>Monsieur Lazhar</i> (2011) and Kim Nguyen's <i>Rebelle (War Witch)</i> (2012).	
	Xavier Dolan makes four feature films before turning 25. The first, <i>J'ai tué ma mère</i> (2009), wins three prestigious awards at Cannes. His fifth, <i>Mommy</i> (2014), ties for the Cannes Jury Prize and goes on to win nine Canadian Screen Awards.	2014

