

## FOREWORD

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*How Canadians Communicate: Contexts of Popular Culture* is the third in a series of books meant both to chronicle and to contribute to our understanding of the Canadian experience. The first volume focused on the challenges that Canadian media and communication industries faced as they entered the first years of the twenty-first century. The second volume dealt with the impact of globalization on Canadian media and culture and how Canadians both adapt to and resist these influences. This third volume describes not only the sites of popular culture—social media, video games, art, memory institutions, cinema, sports, and so on—but the seeds and sparks that create these explosions of expression and creativity. But these experiences intersect with gender, social class, language, region, ethnic heritage, and age, among

other factors and conditions to determine how we use and give meaning to popular culture. The book raises critical issues about our uses of myths and stereotypes, how we define beauty, how we deal with our darkest visions, the role of violence in society, how culture is used both to enforce and to push the boundaries of convention and social control and how we express our many identities. The hope is that *Contexts of Popular Culture* will both illuminate this complex and multi-textured landscape, and become a catalyst for research and discussion.

*Contexts of Popular Culture* is a joint undertaking between Athabasca University and the Alberta Global Forum (AGF) at the University of Calgary. The volume emerged out of a conference that brought the authors together for far-reaching discussions and exchanges on the emerging trends and meanings of popular culture. We are grateful to the editors, Bart Beaty, Derek Briton, Gloria Filax, and Rebecca Sullivan, for selecting the contributors, for mapping the intellectual terrain, for being exceptional hosts, and for carrying the project through to completion with the highest professional standards. We owe a special debt to Toby Miller, who came as the CanWest Global Visiting Scholar, for providing leadership, congenial company, and stimulating ideas. Gina Grosenick did much of the organizing work with her usual combination of efficiency, smarts, and good cheer.

The goal of the AGF is to act as a bridge between the University of Calgary and the community by sponsoring and participating in discussions of critical issues and by undertaking focused research and community partnerships. The AGF takes great pride in its partnership with Athabasca University and would like to thank President Frits Pannekoek and the Director of Athabasca University Press, Walter Hildebrandt, for their vision and commitment. We could not have a better partner. The AGF would like to thank the members of its board and especially its chair, Greg Forrest, for their leadership, and Jeannette Nicholls for her wisdom and faith.

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