

ANNUAL REPORT 2003-2004

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## INDEPENDENT MEDIA ARTS ALLIANCE MANDATE

(From the Letters Patent, March, 1981)

"The Objects of the Corporation are:

- 1) to focus and co-ordinate independent film efforts
- 2) to provide for continued communication in the form of a general assembly (AGM) of representatives of member groups at least once a year

The general assembly (AGM) shall be a:

- forum of communication and discussion among independent film groups
- an opportunity for developing links, personal and filmic, between all cultural elements of the alliance
- a means to promote a positive connection with film agencies and organisations in the government and private sectors."

In 1989 the name was changed to include video, in 1994 the members voted to include electronic media in the Alliance mandate and at the 2003 AGM, the members decided to change the name of the corporation to Independent Media Arts Alliance in order to better suit the diversity of practices that the Alliance represents. The work of the Alliance aims to promote Canadian media arts and to provide a forum of communication and discussion among independent media arts groups. By independent, the Alliance understands an artwork in which the author has kept creative control from beginning to end. By media arts, the Alliance understands all practices related to film, video, electronic media, computer art and audio art.

## ACTIVITY REPORT

### The Independent Media Arts Alliance

*"The Independent Media Arts Alliance is a national arts service organisation that advances the interests of a vibrant media arts community."*

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am presenting the Annual Report of the Independent Media Arts Alliance. The objects of the Alliance, from the Letters patent written in 1981, can be found on the first page of this Report. However, in 1995 the Board of Directors identified the core activities of the Alliance as:

- 1) Advocacy: essentially all the lobby work that the Alliance undertakes, via letters, briefs and presentations at consultation meetings and hearings.
- 2) Community: including the annual meeting, regional meetings, Board meetings, communication between the regions and other gatherings and activities that strengthen ties within the media arts community
- 3) Communication: the development and circulation of information in the form of newsletters, memos, bulletins, reports and so on, to members of the Alliance, government agencies, other associations as well as the general public via our website.

#### ADVOCACY

The past few years have seen growth in the Alliance and in the media arts sector. As a consequence, in our advocacy work for the Alliance, we have stressed to the key funding agencies the need to expand the support for the media arts sector.

#### Department of Canadian Heritage

We met with the Director of Film and Video Policy at Heritage and presented several messages:

- 1) that the Canada Council needs more funding to be able to provide increased stable core funding to media arts centres,
- 2) that independent media arts festivals are under-funded,
- 3) that independent documentary film is not well served by the current funding ecology,
- 4) that the funding for the Canadian Independent Film and Video Fund should be restored,
- 5) and that the media arts milieu is an important source of talent for the Canadian film and television industry and should be supported accordingly.

We have also recently written to Canadian Heritage to present the above ideas, and to underline the case for an increase to the funding of the Canada Council for the Arts.

#### Standing Committee on Finance

For the first time, the Alliance submitted a written brief and made a presentation in person to the Standing Committee on Finance during its pre-budgetary hearings. In that presentation we argued again for an increase in funding for arts and Culture in general and for the Canada Council for the Arts and the Aboriginal community in particular.

## Canada Council for the Arts

In a letter to the new Director, John Hobday, as well as at a meeting of National Arts Service Organisations with the Council, we argued that funding for the media arts should be increased to address the growth that the sector has experienced recently.

The Alliance facilitated comments from its members on production centre funding via an online discussion forum and the IMAA Board has discussed at length issues related to changes to the grants for media arts production centres. The issue was also discussed at numerous Alliance regional meetings. The Board struck a production sub-committee and also had several meetings with representatives of the Media Arts section to discuss what changes to the production centre program could be considered. The Alliance also urged the Council to ensure that it carried out a full consultation with the media arts community regarding any proposed changes to the production centre program. We look forward to fruitful discussions on this issue at the 2004 annual meeting.

## New Media

The Board struck a new media sub-committee, and it has been working on the problems of new media funding, with the aim of developing recommendations for the Council's programs, and for increasing access to other government programs for new media artists and groups.

## Copyright

The Alliance submitted a Brief to the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage for its statutory review of the Copyright Act. In it, the Alliance supported the idea of creating a rule regarding the first ownership of copyright in audio-visual works and that the director of a work should be considered its main author. This idea is in harmony with the Alliance's own definition of an independent media art work as being a work over which the creator maintains complete creative control.

## The Canadian Artists and Producers Professional Relations Tribunal

For the past two years, the Alliance has been investigating the process for becoming a certified association representing media artists. The goal of this process is for the Alliance, and its member centres, to be in the position of establishing the minimum rate scales for artist fees for the presentation of media art works. This will be discussed at length at the 2004 annual general meeting. In brief, this past winter we submitted specific questions regarding the eligibility of the Alliance members. We learned that the idea of becoming a certified association had to be discarded since that status only applies to organisations directly representing individuals. We then looked into being considered a federation of media arts associations.

We met with the Vice-Chair of the Tribunal and the Tribunal's Senior Legal Counsel, and submitted samples of by-laws from 15 member-centres. We discussed the Alliance's situation at length with the Tribunal reps, and they produced an extensive report evaluating the Alliance's eligibility. Their conclusion is that IMAA does not meet the requirements to seek certification as a federation of artists' associations.

Separately, we have met with representatives from CARFAC and they have invited the Alliance to present new rates for artist fees for the presentation of media arts works, which they would put into their new rate schedule for the end of 2004. A Board sub-committee has been active on developing a media arts rate schedule, and has been seeking input from Alliance member-

distributors. A roundtable on copyright has been planned to discuss these and other related copyright issues.

#### Telefilm

We have participated in online consultations, as well as lobbying Telefilm for more funding for documentary films via the Alliance's participation in a coalition of associations with an interest in documentary films called the "Observatoire du documentaire/The Documentary Network". We also participated in the NFB/Telefilm documentary summit in April in Toronto. With regard to the low-budget independent feature film program, we have monitored the films supported by the program and presented research to the Board to evaluate if the program is working. Late in 2003 the Alliance wrote a public letter, published in Montreal's Le Devoir newspaper, supporting 25 independent filmmakers who had criticised Telefilm's automatic funding program through which companies get funding based on the box-office performance of their last project. The Alliance letter pointed out how we had opposed this formula when it had first been introduced several years ago.

#### Community

The Alliance Board decided to increase support for regional meetings, and more were held this year than in past years. All meetings were organised by members of the Alliance Board of Directors.

The Alliance also participated to a 3-day reflection on independent media arts in Quebec, organised by COAM (Conseil québécois des arts médiatiques). Though many issues were regional, many also were general and allowed for a continuation of issues raised in our meetings, such as the Canada Council for the Arts support to centres, the needs of new media groups and so on.

A governance meeting was held by the Board of Directors in February to evaluate the Alliance structure, verify our mandate, and renew the strategic priorities for the Alliance's work. While that work is still on-going, these are some of the points that came from that meeting:

#### PRIORITIES for the Alliance:

- To advocate for increased, sustained funding for the media arts sector.
- To facilitate good communications within the Alliance.
- To ensure the Alliance is a respected participant in government's cultural policy development.

#### Communication

##### Newsletter

The Alliance works hard to foster dynamic and inclusive communications between its elements. The core of its communication is the free monthly Newsletter, sent by email to all members and board, and to about 500 interested subscribers. A more detailed version of the Newsletter is available on the Alliance website.

##### Listserve

We had many listserve, some of them interactive, set on the server of our member Ping. These lists, which were either regional or discussion subject based, are a good tool for having members participating in any lobby issue. Unfortunately, Ping crashed and so we need to rebuild these lists.

Only the Board one has been restored on Yahoo groups. We intend to restore all the others during the summer.

New logo, new website

Last but not least, we have redesigned completely our website, from aesthetics to structure, as it was requested at the 2003 AGM when the Alliance name was changed. The name change also needed a new logo and new business cards, as well as pamphlets promoting the Alliance. All of which has been done.

Peter Sandmark, IMAA National Director  
on behalf of IMAA Board of Directors

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## IMAA FOUNDING PRINCIPLES

Our groups are distinct from one another and we value these differences. Just as we, as individuals, are able to pool our resources to mutual advantage in organisations which protect and promote individual free expression, it is possible and desirable to unite film, video and electronic media groups, each with its own character, in an Alliance. The Alliance does not limit itself to one genre, ideology or aesthetic but furthers diversity of vision in artistic and social consciousness.

The Alliance members make a commitment to take anti-racist, anti-sexist and anti-homophobic positions in terms of hiring, distribution, production and representation. Also they respect and support the autonomy of native cultural representation.

The Alliance believes that independent film, video and electronic media are valuable and vital forms of expression of our respective cultures, which can uncover the prevailing illusions and expose the formulas that underlie the vast majority of commercial and institutional messages.

## HISTORY

As a result of several formative meetings by representatives of a number of film production, distribution and exhibition groups from across Canada, the IMAA/AAMI was founded in Yorkton, Saskatchewan, in November 1980 and subsequently incorporated as a non-profit organisation.

## STRUCTURE

At the Annual General Meeting members meet to set the Alliance's policies and to determine prioritised activities for the organisation. Implementation of AGM decisions is carried out by the National Director, under the direction and supervision of a thirteen-member Board of Directors, elected by the membership to reflect a balanced regional representation. The IMAA is composed of six regions and each of them elects two persons to serve as Regional Directors on IMAA Board. The IMAA president is elected by the General Assembly.

## REVENUES

- The Canada Council
- National Film Board
- Department of Canadian Heritage
- Telefilm Canada
- Membership fees

## ACTIVITIES

- Annual National Conference held in a different city in Canada each year
- Networking, co-ordinated through the national office
- Lobbying (including necessary research)
- Monthly newsletter
- Consultation with federal and provincial government departments and agencies
- Acting as a liaison, exchanging information with other organisations with objectives similar to the Alliance's
- Annual Showcase of independent films and videos

MEMBERSHIP is open to any organisation in Canada whose mandate is to encourage, promote and facilitate the independent production, distribution and exhibition of films, videos and electronic media works. The Alliance defines an independent production as being a work over which the artist maintains full creative and editorial control at all stages, from production to exhibition. Applications are submitted to the national office.

#### FEES

The annual membership fee varies according to the relative size of the organisation's operating budget:

Less than \$100,000	\$ 100.00
\$100,000 - \$300,000	\$ 200.00
Over \$300,000	\$ 300.00

The IMAA - AAMI is firmly committed to actively assuring full participation in the organisation and in access to its resources to all people, regardless of gender, race, language, sexual orientation, age or ability. This commitment will be reflected throughout the organisation in IMAA - AAMI personnel, policies, practices, membership recruitment, recruitment of the Board of Directors, committees and positions of responsibility in the organisation and in all other activities of the organisation. It is the responsibility of the Board of Directors to ensure that members of the organisation understand and adhere to this commitment in all of their activities pertaining to the IMAA - AAMI.