

Mr. Robert Sirman, Director
The Canada Council for the Arts
350 Alberta Street PO Box 1047
Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5V8

Montréal, May 31st, 2006

Dear Mr. Sirman:

On behalf of the Independent Media Arts Alliance (IMAA), I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Director of the Canada Council for the Arts. We also congratulate the Canada Council on its upcoming 50th anniversary and sincerely acknowledge the support that has been provided to artists and organizations over the past half-century.

The IMAA was pleased to hear that the May 2nd federal budget included a \$20 million increase to the Canada Council in its parliamentary appropriation for the current fiscal year, rising to \$30 million in 2007-2008. The critical need for increased funding of the Council has been a key message of the IMAA over the past several years and has been included in several briefs and presentations to the Standing Committee on Finance and to the Standing Committee on Heritage. The IMAA membership is composed of over 80 media arts organizations representing approximately 12,000 independent media artists and cultural workers across Canada, many of whom have been active in this lobby. IMAA is also an active member of the Canadian Arts Coalition.

Increased support to Canada's media arts organizations is needed. The growth in the media arts is tremendous, as more and more artists are working in film, video and new media to advance artistic creation and innovation in the 21st century. Along with the many media arts centres that are now over 25 years old, there is also a dramatic increase in many new organizations, collectives and groups working in distribution, exhibition, dissemination, and production.

These are exhilarating times, but media arts organizations struggle to keep pace with changing technologies in order to serve their members. Standards are constantly changing, which dramatically affects the ability for independent film, video, and new media artists to access festivals, distributors, and broadcasters. New Canada Council funding is crucial for audience and market development within the media arts community. The preservation and archiving of film, video and new media work is a major issue amongst all media arts organizations.

These are only some of the examples as to why a funding increase within the media arts sector is vital. The IMAA is eager to work with the Canada Council for the Arts in order to assist you in determining the needs of the media arts community.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Dorner, National Director

CC: Karen Kain, Chair, The Canada Council for the Arts; Simon Brault: Vice-Chair, The Canada Council for the Arts; David Poole, Media Arts Section Head, The Canada Council for the Arts