



## The Delegate Guide

This document is a tool for understanding the principles and operations of the IMAA and the delegates' responsibilities.

### **DEFINITION AND FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES**

The Independent Media Arts Alliance (IMAA) is a non-profit national arts service organization that promotes and advances the interests of a vibrant media arts community. Representing over 80 independent film, video, and new media production, distribution, and exhibition organizations in all parts of Canada, the IMAA serves over 12,000 independent media artists and cultural workers.

The IMAA aims to create links between producers, distributors and event organisers in the media arts. The IMAA defines an independent production as being a work over which the artist maintains full creative and editorial control at all stages, from production to distribution.

The IMAA's aim is to represent the independent community and to promote opportunities for independent media arts to be produced, distributed and presented, where commercial interests are never placed above cultural, social and artistic values. Member groups of the IMAA come from every province of Canada. This gives us credibility, as it reflects a large cross section of the media arts community in this country.

The IMAA adheres to the principle of equality and to its recognition and promotion in all sectors of society. It rejects all forms of discrimination, including discrimination based on race, religion, language, sex and sexual orientation. The IMAA communicates information in both French and English, the official languages, without excluding the use of other languages. It recognises the multiplicity of cultures and its value.

### **THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The members of the Board are the ones who run the IMAA and are legally responsible for the organisation. It is therefore a group of individuals having, in accordance with the law, full powers over the actions of the organisation and who assume full responsibility for the IMAA. The Board must be answerable to its members and it does so when it gives a report at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) following its one-year mandate.

**The Board of Directors fulfils its obligations by doing the following activities:**

1. Directing policy by defining the general orientation of the organisation as well as the basic guidelines of its mandate;
2. Managing projects, enabling the Board to determine the speed that the organisation will work at in order to reach its goals;
3. Financial and personnel management to ensure continuity;
4. Managing promotional activities aimed at asserting the organisations' identity.

This takes on its full meaning in the Board meetings. Given the distances and costs related to this particular function, the Board meets at least three times a year. The Board is in constant contact with the national office to ensure that actions taken are according to the directions voted on at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

## **BOARD COMPOSITION**

### **The President**

- Is elected by all the members at the AGM, and given a mandate directly by the assembly;
- Presides over the Board of Directors, which comprises the eight directors and the three executives named by the Board as vice-president, secretary and treasurer.

### **The Vice-President**

- Must perform the duties and exercise the powers of the president in his or her absence and must also perform the tasks required by the Board.

### **The Treasurer**

- Is responsible for all bank transactions, finances and accountants of the Alliance;
- Must know about the financial statements, budgets and financial arrangements;
- Must give an annual financial report on the operations of the organisation and must give interim reports to the Board;
- Must work in concert with the IMAA's National Director, who is responsible for managing the budget on a daily basis.

### **The Secretary**

- Must make sure that minutes are taken in all meetings and assemblies in which he/she participates;
- Must include all pertinent documents in the minutes or reports;
- Is responsible for calling meetings of the Board;
- Is the guardian of the IMAA's seal;
- Must see to it that members and the Board receive the minutes of the meetings they attended and that these minutes be translated and distributed.

## **The Directors**

- Maintain communication and links with the national office as well as with the members;
- Prepare meetings and attend them, consulting with the centres in their own region on subjects that should be included on the agenda at Board meetings;
- Give written reports called “regional reports” which are annexed to the minutes and to other documents making up the report of the Board meeting;
- Report to the members from their regions the results of the Board meetings and specifically on the subjects of interest to that region;
- Organise two regional meetings a year; which ideally should be held shortly before the Board meetings;
- Ensure that the members of their regions have paid their membership fees;
- See that new members are recruited and make sure that the national office sends information on membership to those who request it;
- Obtain the necessary support from people who might be interested, by recruiting them as allies;
- Make the necessary applications for provincial funds in the name of the IMAA.

These funds, or part of them, could serve to defray the costs of regional meetings and could be managed by the national office upon request.

## **THE NATIONAL OFFICE**

It is the head office of the IMAA, located in Montreal. Two employees work respectively as National Director and Administrative Coordinator. They are under contract with the IMAA. These contracts specify the conditions of their hiring and the roles they must take on.

The national office has in its possession all the documentation on the IMAA activities and guides the projects put forward by the general meeting under the direction of the Board of Directors.

### **What the IMAA is not:**

The IMAA does not meddle in the affairs of member groups; they are entirely responsible for the proper functioning of their operations. The IMAA does not intervene in the relations between members and governments of funding bodies. However, it will intervene when certain decisions or actions are taken that might affect its stand or threaten basic principles. In this spirit the IMAA is absolutely opposed to censorship or any attempt at censorship.

The IMAA sets its policy according to the decisions taken by the members at the Annual General Meetings, and ensures that the general guidelines are followed.

**The AGM** is the IMAA’s most important activity because it is the meeting ground for delegates from all member centres, an opportunity to exchange information, get

updated on the last year and prepare for the coming one. The national office sends a membership renewal and Conference/AGM registration form to each group, thereby inviting them to attend.

### **What happens at the Conference/AGM**

The main parts of this event are: presentation of the activities and financial reports, plenary session, election, but there are also workshops, and roundtable meetings (regional and activity oriented).

Among the reports of activities presented to the delegates there is the President's and the National Director's report. These reports inform the delegates on the activities of the past year, which were decided on at the previous AGM and acted upon by the Board. The Board meets periodically to oversee the actions that are undertaken.

Only one delegate per the IMAA member group may vote and the member group must be in good standing.

Secret ballots only take place on request. The majority plus one is required for the adoption of a resolution or an amendment.

### **THE ROUNDTABLES AND GENERAL CAUCUSES**

At the AGM delegates and observers divide into small groups to discuss and further explore issues of common interest. There are regional and activity roundtables.

#### **Regional caucuses**

The IMAA is formed of six (6) regions.

Five (5) geographic regions:

- Pacific - British Columbia and Yukon
- Prairie & North West Territories - Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Nunavut and the NWT
- Ontario - Ontario
- Quebec - Quebec
- Atlantic - Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, P.E.I., Newfoundland and Labrador,
- NIMAC - The National Indigenous Media Arts Coalition, represents the Indigenous organisations across the country. Any Organisation that belongs to NIMAC also belongs to its geographical region.

Each of these regions has two (2) Regional Directors, thus forming a Board of twelve (12) members and a President. The Regional Directors are entrusted with the directives of the members through the resolutions that are voted on and adopted at the AGM.

### **The role of the regional caucus**

The regional caucuses represent the centres of a given region and are not, as such, a legal entity. This does not rule out the possibility of having a legal status if the caucuses ever wish it. As mentioned above, there are six regional caucuses (Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, Prairies & NTW, Pacific and NIMAC). There is a regional caucus meeting during the AGM and there are others during the year. These caucuses have autonomy in their operations and actions. They can lobby, make representations, to the provincial governments and to organisations that are within their region.

The caucus can take a position on issues that are not of national interest, issues of national interest are discussed at the AGM. The caucus can prepare reports, present briefs and thus act in the interest of the IMAA members on its own territory. The national office and the Board should be informed and consulted when an action is taken in the name of the Alliance.

The IMAA Directors (i.e. the representatives of the regional caucuses) have a mandate to lobby their provincial and other local organisations to obtain the funds needed for their meetings throughout the year. Even though one regional caucus member is a Director, the entire caucus should work towards getting funds.

### **The Showcase**

Showcases are for the public presentation of selected works. These Showcases take place on the same dates as the Conference/AGM and are held in the evenings. The works are selected by a committee of programmers who determine the parameters of their choices and act accordingly. These programmers are chosen by the regional committee in charge of hosting the AGM; they are given the necessary latitude to select and put forward the various programs.

The presentation of these works is not done in a competitive manner and serves no other purpose except to offer the opportunity to screen works in the best possible conditions.

The organising committee therefore has jurisdiction over the unfolding of this event and may choose a theme. The screenings are public and are given adequate publicity. The organising committee publishes a catalogue, in the format of its choice, of the works that are shown.

### **Representation (lobbying)**

Representation may seem to some to be an obscure activity, but to an association such as the IMAA it is of paramount importance. Representation by the IMAA is done in a number of ways and to various organisations. It may be directed at the organisations that fund independent film, video and new media, in order to affect the development of funding policies that will help maintain funding levels and that best reflect the needs of artists. Representation can also be more political, to help maintain a certain visibility for independents to ensure that they are distinguished

from the commercial industry and recognised in their own right. It can also mean the publication of briefs as well as participation on consulting committees to ensure that they are made aware of the current condition of independent production.

Representation by the IMAA is only done at the federal level; regional caucuses act at the provincial level. The actions undertaken by regional caucuses should follow the general Alliance guidelines in a flexible yet consistent manner; this approach seems to produce good results.

### **Communications**

The IMAA produces one information publication:

**The Monthly MEDIA ARTS NEWSLETTER** contains the latest information and developments on issues affecting the IMAA members.

Other documents are published regularly (reports, briefs, letters, press releases) disseminating the IMAA's position on various subjects.

The national office is the depository of all documents published by the IMAA since its founding, and many of the documents are available on the IMAA web site (<http://www.imaa.ca>)

### **THE MEMBERS**

The IMAA membership is comprised of legally constituted groups that have a mandate to encourage, promote and facilitate the production, distribution and presentation of independent video, film and new media under the artistic and editorial control of the creator.

Groups join the IMAA by sending in an application to the IMAA office. The regional representative in their area is then contacted. They are accepted by the Board and presented to the membership at the AGM for ratification. Members must pay their fees before the AGM in order to have voting rights.