



**Independent  
Media Arts Alliance**  
Alliance des arts  
médiatiques indépendants

November 21, 2011

Youssef El Jaï  
Head, Media Arts Section  
Canada Council for the Arts  
350 Albert Street, P.O. Box 1047  
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5V8

Dear Youssef,

The IMAA has been made aware through its member organizations that certain independent filmmakers are very upset by the Council's decision to turn down their final payment through the *Grants to Film and Video Artists: Research/Creation Grants, Production Grants and Scriptwriting Grants*. It is our understanding that due to changes in project funding sources that appear to suggest the loss of full creative and editorial control, the Canada Council has deemed certain projects ineligible to receive final payments, as stipulated in initially accepted budgets.

While the IMAA fully reinforces the Canada Council's position on strictly supporting independent works, the IMAA board raised concerns on how the Canada Council sets and communicates limitations, and whether these limitations continue to reflect the reality of the funding infrastructure for today's independent media artists. Given the complexity of this problem, the IMAA is unable to provide a position with regards to each of the projects that were refused, however we feel strongly that the Canada Council must investigate this issue and develop its program accordingly.

There is a regrettable paucity of data that examines the current notion of "independent" within current funding structures for media art production. In a time where artists are encouraged and forced to diversify their funding sources to realize their productions, the Canada Council should examine the framework within which artists are obligated to navigate.

An examination of the media arts production sector is long overdue and we urge the Canada Council to consider the following as part of a study:

- How has the recent and ongoing restructuring of federal funding programs shifted the funding landscape for independent media production?
- Has the intensified federal policy focus on growing Canadian audiences created gaps at the foundation of the independent production sector?
- What sources of funding do independent media artists have access to outside of, and in conjunction with the Canada Council for the production of work?

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- How does the media art section compare to other sections at the Canada Council with regards to its relationship to “industry”?
- Is it possible (and desirable by the sector) for the Canada Council to develop guidelines that permit independent artists to access funds outside of what is currently accepted?

The Canada Council must endeavor to address these questions. We fear that not doing so could impede future artistic and economic growth for the media arts sector.

I look forward to discussing this with you further.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Dorner, National Director

Cc: Robert Sirman, Director, Canada Council for the Arts; Claire McCaughey, Manager of the Research Office, Canada Council for the Arts