



For Immediate Release

Federal Stimulus Budget Invests in Arts and Culture

Montreal, January 27th 2009 - The Independent Media Arts Alliance (IMAA) welcomes the injection into the arts and culture sector as part of the 2009 Federal Stimulus Budget. Of this, \$100 million will go into the Arts Presentation Canada program and the Building Communities Through Arts and Heritage program, which support arts festivals. Another \$60 million is dedicated to the Cultural Spaces Canada program, which supports infrastructure projects such as construction and renovation of cultural spaces. Over the next 2 years the Canadian Television Fund will receive \$200 million and the Canada New Media Fund will receive 28.6 million.

Independent media art includes film, video, audio and new media and is one of the fastest growing sectors within the cultural industry, yet historically independent media arts have not been recognized by these Heritage programs, even though independent media arts organizations fit into the Department of Canadian Heritage's mandate. This is a perfect opportunity for the Department to catch up with today's artistic reality.

The IMAA recommends that the Department of Canadian Heritage set aside a substantial portion of the \$100 million for independent media arts festivals that operate in all parts of Canada and collectively contribute a great deal to Canada's labour market and are an essential part of our cultural economy.

The IMAA also hopes that the Cultural Spaces Canada program will increase funding for projects that are initiated by smaller not-for-profit arts organizations. Infrastructure funding is desperately needed by this sector. These groups bring immeasurable value to their communities and are key players in city revitalization projects.

In its recommendations to Minister Flaherty for the pre-budget consultations, the IMAA also added that the acquisition of specialized equipment be included under infrastructure expenditures. Independent media arts production centres lack the necessary funds to be able to purchase adequate, up-to-date equipment to attend to the needs of their artistic communities which has a direct impact on their ability to train young artists to reach industry broadcast standards. Given that a significant amount is being invested into the Canadian Television Fund, the government must supply independent media arts production centres with adequate resources to produce broadcast quality works.

- 30 -

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