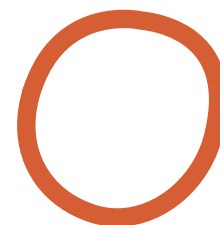


# INDEPENDENT MEDIA ARTS IN CANADA

On the History of the Alliance

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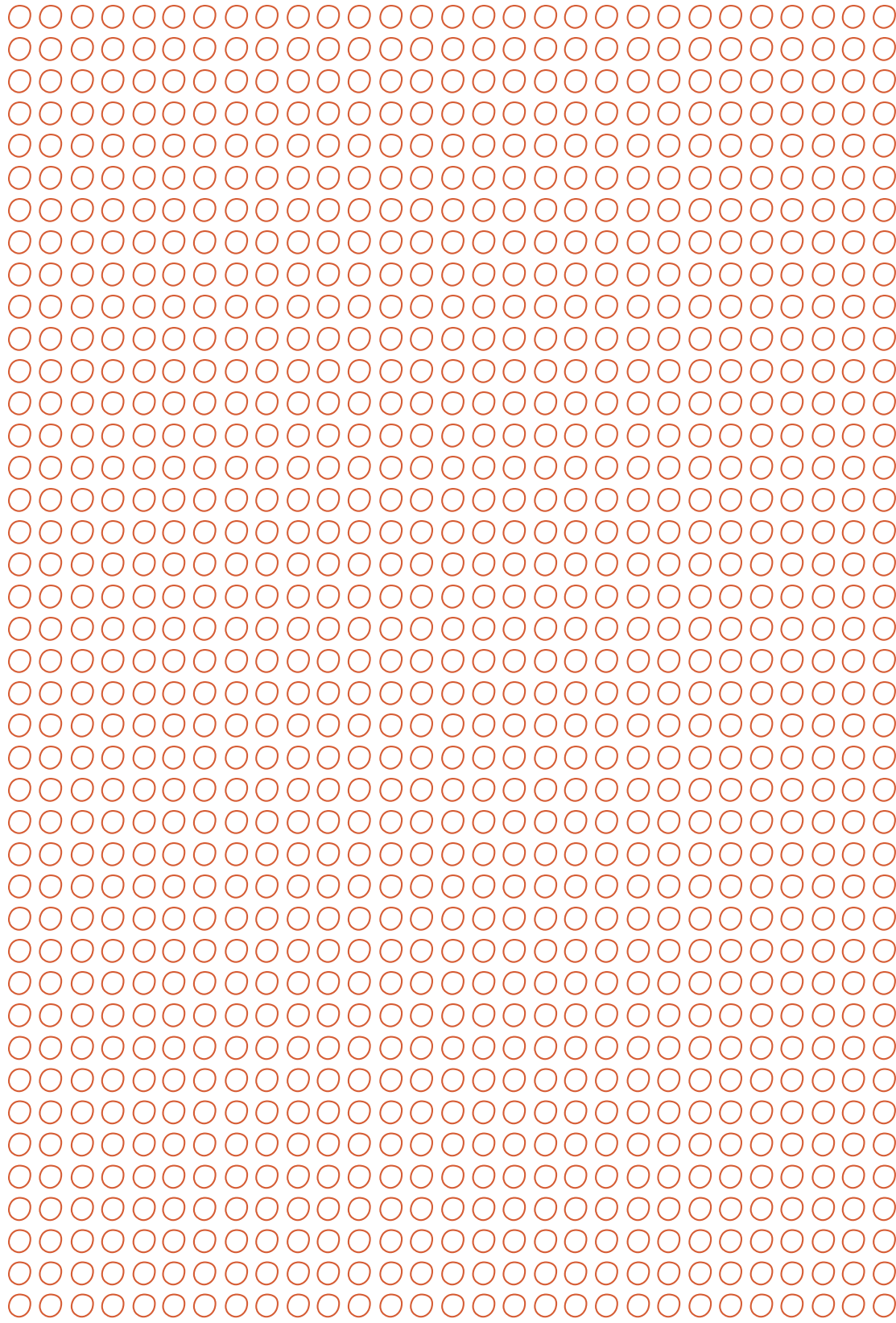


**Independent  
Media Arts Alliance**  
**Alliance des arts  
médiatiques indépendants**

The Independent Media Arts Alliance 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, we serve over 12,000 independent media artists and cultural workers.

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## Preface

Artist-run culture in Canada has had a significant role in the shaping of this country's sense of cultural identity over the past few decades. Artist-run organizations and collectives have given voice to the individual and have deliberately worked outside of the mainstream commercial industry in order to present an alternative view, whether it be aesthetic, theoretical or political. The impact that independent works have had on our society is immeasurable. These works have challenged our notions of beauty, technology, politics, and social value and in the process have influenced Canada's understanding of diversity, inclusiveness, and multiculturalism, inspiring new ways of looking at our world.

However, in stepping outside of the conventions of the moving-image entertainment industry, artists struggle to realize their works, and support for independent media art production, exhibition and distribution is minimal. The success of these works cannot be measured in box-office totals or by the number of visitors to an exhibition space or by the number of hits on a website. As a result the small, not for profit organizations that do support independent media artists are challenged. Dedicated staff and volunteers work tirelessly to make sure that artists get paid for their work, that the tools and equipment are accessible and affordable, and that workshops and training are provided so that all aspiring artists have an opportunity to create. They also work to disseminate these productions to the broader community, to reach diverse audiences and to engage their local communities.

The Independent Media Arts Alliance was born more than 25 years ago out of a collective desire to strengthen artist-run organizations and to improve the means and access for independent media artists. The following essay delineates this history, researched and written by Peter Sandmark, who contributed more than ten years to the Alliance in the role of National Director from 1994-2005. The text outlines the key issues from the past two and a half decades and shows a clear evolution from the early days of film to current new media practices. "This lineage reminds us not only of past gatherings and passionate discussions, but of the true grassroots motivation that first inspired the cause to which we give so much of our effort." (Mireille Bourgeois, IMAA President 2006 – 2007)

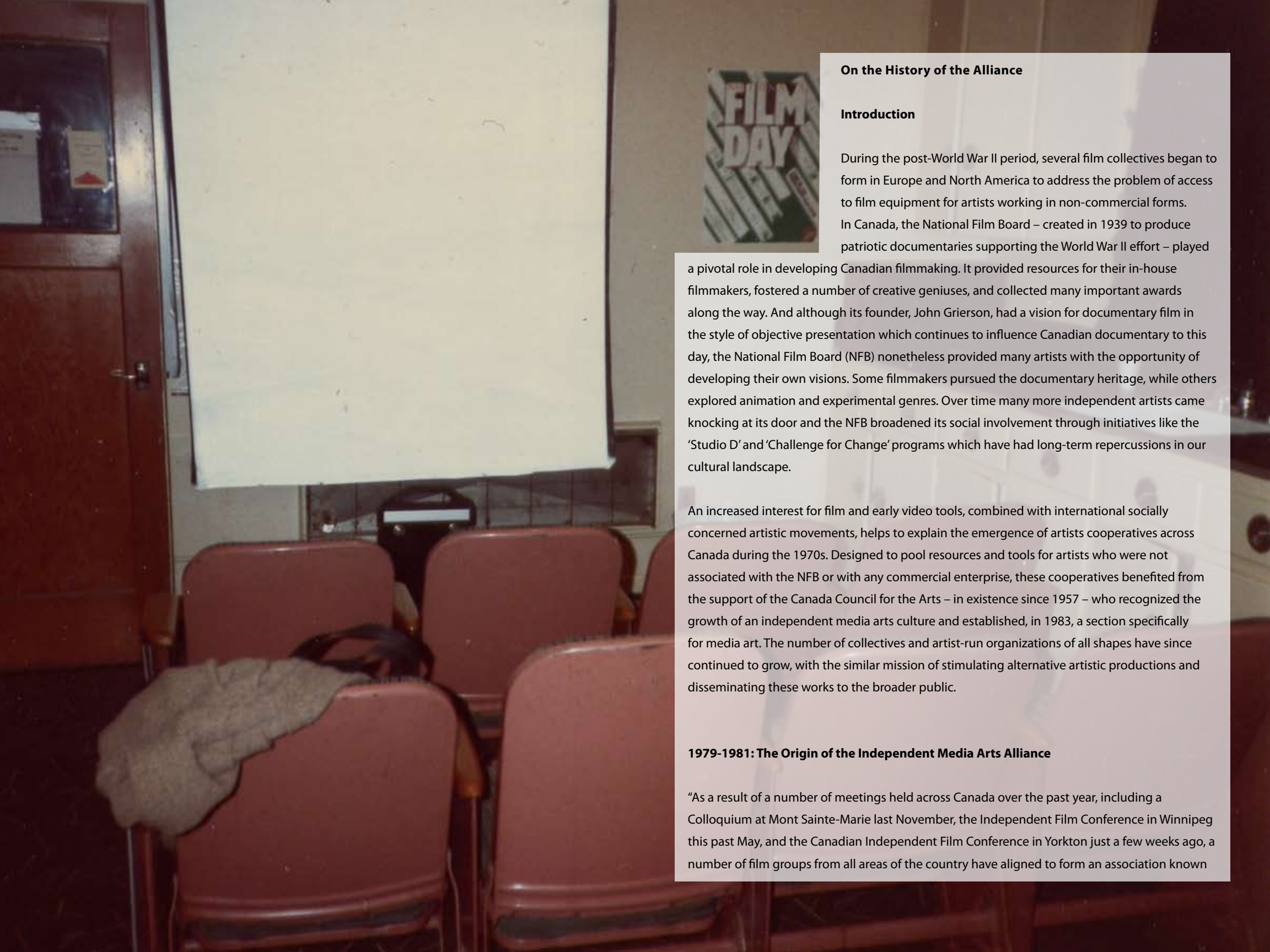
The history of the IMAA attests to the fact that the independent media arts sector has evolved tremendously and has many accomplishments to acknowledge. As we are in a position to examine our history, we must thank the many individuals who have dedicated so much of their time and energy to promoting and advancing the interests of a vibrant media arts community.

Jennifer Dorner



## Acknowledgements

Peter Sandmark and the Alliance team would like to thank the following people for their generous contributions to this text; David Zeglen, former intern at the Alliance, whose invaluable research into the Alliance archives provided a great deal of material for its history, Jennifer Dorner and François-Xavier Tremblay, current Director and Coordinator of the Alliance who carried the torch to see this project to completion, Katherine Jerkovic, former Coordinator of the Alliance who assisted with the editing of the text and provided the French translation, Stefania Colantonio who revised the French text, as well as the following media arts pioneers who each played a key role in the history of the Alliance, and who agreed to be interviewed for this article; John Doyle, Mike Jones, Peg Campbell, Su Ditta, David Poole, Penny McCann and Françoise Picard. We would also like to underline the support and guidance of Linda Norstrom, former President of the Alliance and of the publication subcommittee including Mireille Bourgeois, Walter Forsyth, Anne-Marie Walsh and Kevin Allen.



## **On the History of the Alliance**

### **Introduction**

During the post-World War II period, several film collectives began to form in Europe and North America to address the problem of access to film equipment for artists working in non-commercial forms. In Canada, the National Film Board – created in 1939 to produce patriotic documentaries supporting the World War II effort – played

a pivotal role in developing Canadian filmmaking. It provided resources for their in-house filmmakers, fostered a number of creative geniuses, and collected many important awards along the way. And although its founder, John Grierson, had a vision for documentary film in the style of objective presentation which continues to influence Canadian documentary to this day, the National Film Board (NFB) nonetheless provided many artists with the opportunity of developing their own visions. Some filmmakers pursued the documentary heritage, while others explored animation and experimental genres. Over time many more independent artists came knocking at its door and the NFB broadened its social involvement through initiatives like the 'Studio D' and 'Challenge for Change' programs which have had long-term repercussions in our cultural landscape.

An increased interest for film and early video tools, combined with international socially concerned artistic movements, helps to explain the emergence of artists cooperatives across Canada during the 1970s. Designed to pool resources and tools for artists who were not associated with the NFB or with any commercial enterprise, these cooperatives benefited from the support of the Canada Council for the Arts – in existence since 1957 – who recognized the growth of an independent media arts culture and established, in 1983, a section specifically for media art. The number of collectives and artist-run organizations of all shapes have since continued to grow, with the similar mission of stimulating alternative artistic productions and disseminating these works to the broader public.

### **1979-1981: The Origin of the Independent Media Arts Alliance**

"As a result of a number of meetings held across Canada over the past year, including a Colloquium at Mont Sainte-Marie last November, the Independent Film Conference in Winnipeg this past May, and the Canadian Independent Film Conference in Yorkton just a few weeks ago, a number of film groups from all areas of the country have aligned to form an association known



as the Independent Film Alliance du Cinéma Independant (IFACI)”, writes David Demchuk in late November 1980, in a letter to prospective members. Demchuk, from the Winnipeg Film Group, had been the secretary at the founding meeting of the Alliance, and John Doyle, a filmmaker from St. John’s, Newfoundland, who later became Chair of the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council, was elected the first President of the Alliance.

### May 1980, Winnipeg

The founding meeting of the Alliance was held from November 2 to the 6th, 1980, in Yorkton, Saskatchewan, during the Yorkton Short Film Festival. It had been preceded by a meeting in May, the Independent Film Conference in Winnipeg, Manitoba, funded by a \$3000 grant from the Canada Council for the Arts. Each region had presented position papers regarding the eventual formation of a national alliance of independent film co-operatives.

Filmmakers François Dupuis and Louis Dussault, who were members of l’AVECQ (Association de la vidéo et du cinéma du Québec), presented Quebec’s position: **“Any association, whatever its concrete structure is, must be founded on the recognition of the two nations making up Canada.”** The Quebec delegates felt that the Alliance should be a federation of Quebec and Canadian associations, and “that the federation could include three, four or even five provincial associations which could be distinct and independent.”

Leila Sujir from the Calgary Society of Independent Filmmakers presented the Prairie’s paper: **“The Prairie region is in favour of working towards a national organization of independent filmmakers.”** They felt that an alliance would provide benefits to make the individual groups stronger, such as “moral support, the sharing of work in lobbying and formation of film policy, communications via newsletter, travel to remove the sense of isolation we feel within our community (city), sharing of work in distribution and exhibition...” and that “a national association active in these areas could increase recognition of the potential benefits.”

As John Doyle recalls: **“A lot of the delegates weren’t sure they wanted to see another level of bureaucracy on top of their own.”** The Pacific position, presented by Cineworks’ Peg Campbell, expressed that while they felt it was important to stand together with “a strong voice on issues that concern all of us,” they could still see pitfalls in the creation of a national group, posing questions such as “How much will it cost - in time, energy and money?... Where will this money come from? If [the money comes] from the Canada Council, will this be taken from money that could be used for production or for film co-ops?”

Moreover, some saw potential “difficulty in coming to a consensus on issues when the groups within the association are so diverse in their interests and needs.” Cineworks came out against a formal national association, unless the points they made in their position paper were answered. They also suggested looking at a few models of similar organizations, such as ANNPAC/RACA (Association of National Non-Profit Artists’ Centres/Regroupement d’artistes des centres alternatives), CARFAC (Canadian Artists Representation/Le front des artistes canadiens) and the U.S. NAMAC (National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture).

The Pacific groups like Cineworks weren’t the only ones skeptical of the costs of an alliance. Toronto experimental filmmaker Bruce Elder attended the Winnipeg conference as a delegate from the Ontario region and expressed doubts in the paper he presented: “Certainly I believe that some form of national association would benefit independent filmmakers and, indeed, will be almost essential to our survival during the next several years... I must state, however, that I do feel some concern about the form such an association might take. We know that funds are limited. In the face of this to establish a second-order administrative structure to oversee the activities of the organizations which exist presently and to furnish it with an office, a director, a telephone and, perhaps, some clerical support, would strike me as an act of irresponsibility.” He added a further word of caution, “... to be effective we would have to become part of some larger alliance of artists and/or filmmakers. With whom these alliances should be formed is a topic which, I believe demands immediate discussions.”

Elder prefaced his comments by stating they were his personally and that they didn’t necessarily represent the opinion of Ontario independent filmmakers. He felt that Ontario was “under-organized” and that “because Toronto is seen as a national film production centre, filmmakers from Ontario tend, as a group, to be unconcerned with regional issues,” and that this crippled the independent film scene in Ontario, as “the urge to create a regional cinema has been one of the forces behind the development of the independent cinema.”

Recapping positions, Quebec felt a national association could not represent their interests, the Prairies were for it, the Pacific didn’t support it, and Ontario reps like Elder felt it would be “irresponsible” given the costs it would incur. The Atlantic region had a broader view which eventually had a big impact on the foundation of the Alliance.

Between the original meetings where an independent film association was discussed—the “Colloquium on Independent Film” of November 1979 in Mont Sainte-Marie, Quebec, and the Winnipeg meeting of May 1980, where the different position papers were presented—the Atlantic groups met during the Atlantic Film Festival in Halifax. John Doyle remembers that

while people were concerned, like Ontario was, about another level of bureaucracy on top of their own co-ops, they still “bought into a vision of what the Alliance could be without a heavy structure. I would attribute a lot to Mike Jones’ personal charm and magnetism. He felt it was important to do, to get this alliance going, but on the right terms, with minimal organization.” The Atlantic Independent Film Presence (AIFP) was born out of that meeting in Halifax. In the Atlantic region paper, presented at the Winnipeg meeting several key points in the Atlantic “manifesto” strongly influenced the Alliance’s 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 organizations 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 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 which underlie the vast majority of commercial and institutional messages.<sup>1</sup>*

The statement presented by the Atlantic region was accepted at the Winnipeg meeting as a working basis for future affiliation between the centres. With concerns aired and support thrown behind the Atlantic’s set of principles, the stage was set for the meeting in November 1980, in Yorkton, where the issue of a national alliance of independent film co-ops would be decided.

#### **November 1980, Yorkton**

Mike Jones from the Newfoundland Independent Filmmakers Co-op (NIFCO) remembers: “We didn’t want another institution with a head office in central Canada. At the time I was opposed to lobbying because in my mind it meant we’d be forced to speak the language of the bureaucratic masters, accept their definitions, absorb their mindset. In other words, we’d have to abandon our own language, not good for effective communication. We should just be artists, just dance in the halls of government, that’s how I felt. It was a fairly naive position but there was some truth in it.”

Together with John Doyle, Mike developed the name. “I sat next to John Doyle at the Yorkton meeting. I remember that we were struck by the size of the room, thinking it a real Prairie meeting: our conference table situated in the middle of a vast space easily the size of a gymnasium. John and I were passing a notepad back and forth, writing down possible names





for the emerging organization, and we came up with a bilingual one, Independent Film Alliance du Cinéma Indépendant. We thought it very clever that you switched from English to French half way through the middle word. We proposed it and it was accepted.”

The agenda of that first meeting in Yorkton included a number of issues: structural concerns<sup>2</sup>, distribution and exposition, professional development, funding/lobbying, communications and a recent short film study.

“The Atlantic Film Presence was to some extent a parody, obviously, says Mike Jones. We designed it in Halifax and brought it to Winnipeg and I think that the main reason we put it forward as a model for a new national body was to make the argument again that we didn’t want the standard structure national groups usually adopted, a head office in Toronto with satellites in the regions. Bruce Elder was confounded by our proposal’s lack of a pragmatic or bureaucratically feasible structure and I recall some heated words at the Winnipeg meeting. Some of the Prairie groups identified with our rebelliousness and humour, however, and I remember feeling that east and west came together that day, briefly at least. There was a great party that night and I had a great chat with

Bruce there. Did we dance together? It was the night of the Lévesque referendum and I distinctly recall the Quebec delegates arriving late to the party and looking very disappointed. At the time I shared their sadness. [...] I can’t remember all the details so I can’t identify a key defining moment in the creation of the Alliance. I know it took a series of meetings to make it happen and I know that as Canada Council’s Film Officer Françoise Picard organized and funded them. All along she desperately wanted to see a national alliance formed but she was wise enough not to force it on us. She remained patient, worked behind the scenes, stayed in touch with all sectors, watched and waited. Eventually it happened and the resulting benefits are in large measure due to her vision, patience and diplomacy. For that I’ve always regarded her as a hero.”

Françoise Picard became a film officer at the Canada Council for the Arts in 1975, and felt that the funding for film was very insecure. Françoise recalls, “When I arrived at the Council in 1975, there were three co-ops getting funding [Winnipeg Film group, Atlantic Filmmakers Co-operative and ACPAV in Montreal], some centres were folding, and the CFDC [Canadian Film Development Corporation, Telefilm’s name until 1984] wanted to get film funding back from the Council. We wanted to fund auteurs, film directors, and not necessarily the centres of production in Toronto and Montreal that the CFDC was identifying. We feared that the government would say no for funding film at the Canada Council, and wondered what could we do to be distinct?” The Canada Council was helping film co-operatives to start up, and between 1976 and 1979 the Newfoundland Independent Filmmakers Co-op (NIFCO), the New Brunswick Film Co-op (NB CO-OP), the Calgary Society of Independent Filmmakers (CSIF), Sask Film Pool, the Funnel and Cineworks all started.

“There wasn’t enough funding for equipment,” Françoise recalls, “so I was on the phone with different provinces offering a one shot matching grant for getting a Steenbeck. We really needed to get organized and the centres had to be truly independent.” Independent meant that they had to take charge of their own interests and be self-determining. **“The moment it clicked was when the delegates took over the meeting, it was when the other art associations were supposed to make a presentation...I remember when the delegates asked us not to sit in on the meeting. At Mont Ste-Marie there was almost a revolt, which is what I wanted, as they had to decide what to do themselves.”**

Peg Campbell, now head of the Media Arts Program at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, represented Cineworks in Vancouver at the formative meetings. “The main thing was that Toronto always thought they were the centre, that they should have all the money... the independents involved from LIFT [Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto] weren’t like that. I think that a big part of it was that we were so compatible. We were able to accomplish so



much because we had so much fun together. We went to meetings several times a year. I got a sense that there was, across the country, a community of like minded people and that together we could accomplish more." The Alliance was legally incorporated in March of 1981.

David Poole, Section Head of the Media Arts at the Canada Council, worked for the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre in the early 80's and recalls his first meeting at Halifax in '82, which he attended as a representative for the CFMDC: "The discussion in Halifax centered on whether to set up a permanent fixed structure or a rotating virtual structure for the organization. There were those who didn't want a fixed structure, myself included, he recalls. Françoise was still involved in bringing people together at the Halifax meeting. There was a strong sense that the community wanted to get organized, to meet with the Council. [...] Françoise was interested in building infrastructure, not just grants to artists, first developing film co-ops and then an association. So that this milieu would not be lost for lack of a voice."

#### 1981-1985: Advocating for an Alternative

One of the first advocacy efforts the Alliance undertook was to write letters contesting cases of censorship, such as the threat from Ontario authorities to shut down a screening of Michael Snow's film *Rameau's Nephew*. David Poole recalls, "Censorship was an issue then... a number of Bruce Elder films... *Not a Love Story*<sup>3</sup>, *Rameau's Nephew* by Michael Snow, *Message From Our Sponsor* by Al Razutis... were being censored. I was involved with a group at the time, the Ontario Film and Video Appreciation Society. We did one of the first Charter [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms] based challenges after the declarations of the Charter in 1982."

While a collective of film co-operatives had formed the Alliance in 1981, the early 80's saw the integration of video art groups into the association. In the 70's a wide chasm existed between the film and video groups, with little equipment overlap, the film centres still editing on 16 mm flatbed Steenbecks. But the video centres had graduated from the Sony reel-to-reel portable decks, and by then were working with higher quality 3/4" decks, and special effects generators. By the mid-80's the integration of video and film in the film co-ops across the country stepped up, as filmmakers explored video technology for special effects, often filming video monitors for a final product on film. Video was still seen by many in the film community as a second priority to film, however, its uses were growing. In spite of the particularities of each medium, members wanted the Alliance to lead the way into the future as users of both media interchangeably. This debate ultimately led to a ratified name change to the Independent Film and Video Alliance, by 1984.

Another development for the Alliance in the early 80's was a deepening of involvement from Québécois centres, a result of video groups like Productions et réalisations indépendantes de Montréal (PRIM), the Groupe intervention vidéo (GIV) and the Association coopérative de productions audiovisuelles (ACPAV) joining the Alliance, and the creation of Main Film in 1982, joining the Alliance in 1983. As late as 1980 the Québécois centres could not support the formation of a national association with the idea that it would represent Quebec interests, but the atmosphere had changed and a spirit of co-operation and mutual support had grown by the mid-80's.

## Film groups form alliance

YORKTON, Sask. (CP) — A group of independent film organizations from across Canada have formed an alliance as a result of four days of meetings in Yorkton last week.

The new organization, the Independent Film Alliance du Cinema Independent, will deal with issues affecting independent filmmakers, says John Doyle, chairman of the eight-member steering committee.

Doyle said the organization, formed during a conference of Canadian independent filmmakers, will operate on little money and lots of energy.

"We want it to be effective, to let us communicate and lobby, but be loose enough so no one would feel crushed by a central authority," Doyle said.

The need for political action and a lobbying body like the Alliance was accented by Revenue Canada's attack on the artist, as many artists reported being audited and having their legitimacy as an artist (and hence their right to deduct expenses from their taxable income) undermined by Revenue Canada evaluations of independent artists as "hobbyists". The Alliance joined with other arts groups in contesting this label.

Members wanted the Alliance to be a coast-to-coast communications network acting as a lobbying force to advocate the interests of independent alternative film. A motion was passed that established both networking and advocacy as crucially important. Still, many were skeptical that the Alliance could work with the member groups at such a distance from each other; and groups sought a commitment to a regional base for the promotion and production of

#### INDEPENDENT FILM ALLIANCE DU CINEMA INDEPENDANT

##### FOUNDING PRINCIPLES

APPROVED DECEMBER 4 1981.

1. Our groups are distinct and different from each other, and we value these differences. Just as we, as individuals are able to pool our resources to mutual advantage in organizations which protect and promote individual free expression, it is possible and desirable to unite film groups, each with its own character, in an alliance.
2. The Alliance does not limit its support to one genre, ideology, or aesthetic; but furthers diversity of vision in artistic and social consciousness.
3. The structure of the Alliance is the simplest possible one, in order to allow for growth, change, and the introduction of new structural elements as they are required.
4. The Alliance believes that independent film is a valuable and vital expression of our cultures, which can uncover the prevailing illusions and expose the formulas which underlie the vast majority of commercial and institutional messages.

##### OBJECTS

##### THE OBJECTIVES OF THE ALLIANCE SHALL BE:

1. to encourage and protect the free and direct expression of independent filmmakers and to develop audiences through creative and alternative means of distribution and exhibition;
2. to provide for continued communication in the form of a general assembly of representatives of member groups at least once a year;
3. to promote personal contact and communication of ideas among its members;
4. to respond to the social and economic forces which shape the independent's working environment
5. to co-ordinate its members' work in the above areas.

independent film, stating that it was the co-ops who must take a position, then bring it to other members at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

On the federal level, the release of the Applebaum-Hébert<sup>4</sup> report in 1982 showed that the government confused independent filmmakers with film producers and lumped commercial works with artist-driven ones. The Canada Council defined independent filmmakers as ones who retain all rights and editorial control. The federal government had created the CFDC with a mandate: to develop an industry, leaving the NFB—with a reputation of being rooted in independent filmmaking—to cover the cultural aspects of film in Canada. However the Alliance found itself at ideological odds with the NFB, as the Film Board would keep rights for themselves and make co-productions difficult. To this day, the Alliance continues to lobby for a policy of co-production with the National Film Board where the independent producer would have creative control, as well as it tries to preserve the two NFB programs for independents: FAP (Filmmaker Assistance Program) and ACIC (Aide au cinéma indépendant).

With a recession on, the government announced budget cuts to the Canada Council. After protests from artists, the Department of Communications (the forerunner to Heritage Canada) made recommendations to the Finance Minister to hold off making changes to the Canada Council funding. As it was, the visual and media arts sections were the smallest in terms of funding at the Council.

On a positive note, the harassment of artists by the tax department had led to the need for a comprehensive policy, out of which came the Status of the Artist Act. Even Conservative MP Joe Clark made a speech to the House of Commons concerning the artists' tax dilemma.

Meanwhile the Minister of Communications, Frances Fox publicized statements on cultural policy, suggesting support for the development of centres of excellence; a notion based on what Alliance members felt was an inappropriate U.S. model, transgressing Canadian ideals of multi-culturalism, democratization, and de-centralization, that the wide diversity of artist-run centres in Canada aimed to offer. In various statements the Alliance declared itself against the homogenization of film production co-ops.

While the battle played out on the federal level, there was still little or no film policy development on the provincial level, and the disparity between regions highlighted the fight for more equitable regional distribution of government cultural funds. Within the Alliance, the desire for strong regional representation continued, with changes made so that the board of directors elected each year at the AGM was composed to represent all the regions. The regional



caucuses elected two representatives each. The General Assembly of members nominated and elected two floating members to ensure that the production, distribution and exhibition sectors were represented on the board of directors. Alliance conferences were also addressing the needs of women artists by holding women's caucus meetings, alongside the regional and film and video caucuses.

With film co-ops still existing in most provinces, and video centres emerging, the production of independent film and video work had gained a substantial toehold in the Canadian media landscape. But opportunities to see the work were few and far between, often limited to one-off screenings organized by the co-ops themselves, or exchanges between co-ops. Discussion around the need for a circuit for exhibition/distribution of independent Canadian film arose within the Alliance, including the idea of national tour of Alliance member centres' films. Indeed the centres were looking to establish a national independent distribution network. The Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre had been in existence since 1967, and with other centres like V tape in Toronto forming, independent distribution began to get off the ground. The issue became a major concern at the 1984 Annual General Meeting, which saw the establishment of the "National Co-op Film Festival" during the AGMs, later called the Alliance Showcase of Independent Film and Video.

It is worth noting that NFB policy of offering its works for free to educational institutions, was undercutting the distribution of independent works. The educational market was very important for independent distributors, but they could not compete with the NFB. The Alliance lobbied Telefilm and the Department of Communications to give status to non-profit distributors within the criteria for administering the Feature Film Fund.

The Alliance lobbied the Minister of Communications to direct more funds or a larger proportion of funds to cultural festivals that support the exhibition of Canadian independent film, and lobbied the Canada Council for more funding for cultural film and video festivals, stressing that the festivals must pay artists' fees. With distribution under discussion, the versioning of Canadian films for distribution within Canada also became a key issue. The Alliance wanted to make films available for dubbing or sub-titling to bridge the gap linguistically between Francophone and Anglophone artists.

The Alliance began its foray into television politics by actively lobbying the CRTC (Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission) for more Canadian independent programming in the newly created cable channels.<sup>5</sup>

## 1986-1990: Free Trade, Censorship, Telefilm and Television

In 1986 the Free Trade issue came to the forefront, as the Mulroney government began negotiating with the US. Two year later, the issue was front and centre in the federal election. A key concern with Free Trade was the selective preference of commercial interests in the cultural industries versus artistic and creative expression. Moreover, people were concerned about American domination of the domestic cultural sector and that Free Trade would undermine Canadian cultural production and subsidies.

Generally, Alliance members were in strong opposition to Free Trade, and opinions rose against it in *Composition* (the Alliance's magazine). In the Summer '87 issue, Glenn Cassie wrote: "Canadian filmmakers suffer hardest from three main issues: dumping, distribution and political apathy. Dumping is a sort of mass-market ploy that allows an expensive product into Canada on a subsidy, so to speak. For example, an episode of *Dallas* is produced on a budget of \$1,000,000 which, to scale, should cost Canadian stations \$300,000 per episode. Through the magical distribution of television conglomerates it is sold at a mere \$30,000 network wide per episode: a most remarkable saving. Not unlike the chain-store retailer that may buy bulk supplies and undermine the local shop-owners, Canadian filmmakers are squashed along the way."

Ultimately Free Trade passed, but in the negotiations, Canada retained the right to protect its cultural industries and such sectors as education and health care.

Copyright infringement also became a hot issue with video piracy; the Alliance paid for a bilingual poster warning against infringement. The Alliance also lobbied that new legislation Bill C-60 should recognize the rights of a creator of audio-visual material; film and video was not explicitly included in definitions of art for the purposes of the amendments to the copyright act.

Telefilm was also a lobby target during this period : **"We must look forward to changing the attitudes of the powers that be, of forcing a recognition that throwing money at the creation of pseudo-Hollywood shit is no way to build a strong 'industry'. Only by fostering an environment where film and video artists can work through their notions of what it is to live and create in this country will we see strong distinctive time-based art that is clearly identifiable as Canadian"**, writes Alliance President Ross Turnbull in the Summer '88 edition of *Composition*.

Alliance members had such grave concerns over Telefilm's lack of support for film and video productions with cultural, social, and artistic value, that Alliance reps sought to meet with Communications Minister Flora MacDonald to acquaint her with the distinct qualities inherent in



the production, exhibition, and distribution of independent film and video.

In August 1988, Flora MacDonald announced \$200 million in new funds for the Canadian film industry to be administered by Telefilm, the NFB, and the Department of Supply and Services<sup>6</sup>. The response from the Alliance was that there was no provision for the media arts section of the Canada Council. Alliance Vice-president Peg Campbell expressed the Alliance position in a press release: "The National Film Board, the Department of Supply and Services and Telefilm Canada must finally make funds accessible to the cultural independent film and video makers. This is new money and it has a regional and cultural mandate. The D.O.C. [Department of Communications] has expressed its intent to fund independents and we won't be satisfied until we have the dollars in our budgets."

Concurrently, the government was discussing changes to the Broadcast Act. Lisa Steele voiced her concerns in the February 1989 issue of the *Alliance Bulletin*: "If Telefilm needs to strengthen the 'cultural' component of its mandate, and if the Broadcast Act legislates the existence of 'alternative programming' we just might be in business."

By 1989 the Alliance had grown from approximately twelve films co-ops<sup>7</sup> to an organization of 50 centres with the inclusion of video centres, distributors and exhibitors. Fittingly, there was a desire to strengthen communication within the Alliance and to raise the profile of the Alliance as a viable lobby for non-commercial film and video. There was some resistance from members who feared the development of a top-down centralist organization would detract from the independence of the member groups. Thus it was agreed that while lobbying would be of primary importance, advocacy positions would be brought up by the membership through a series of regional meetings to be held twice a year. Policies debated and vetted in the regions would then be proposed at the national assembly.

Alliance President, Ed Riche, addressed these concerns in his 1989 open letter in the *Alliance Bulletin*: "There's always a danger that when organizations like ours mature they become self-justifying and lose touch with their original objectives. The groups that founded the Alliance ten years ago were very aware of that danger.... The Annual General Meeting in Halifax dispelled any worries. We remain peers, and friends, united in what seems often a struggle to have our genuine voices heard.... The Alliance's actions remain motivated by a shared desire to set the imagination free, to make and exhibit our films and video tapes."

These words are echoed by Lisa Steele, the subsequent Alliance President: "As we enter 'the Year of the Deficit', we would be wise to remember that as independent film and video



makers, our boat is a small one, we may be tempted to turn on each other, to allow some to perish so that others can merely survive. This would be a grave tactical error. Our only strength is in our numbers. Our only effect comes from collective action”.

On the television broadcasting front, the Alliance encouraged greater regional autonomy for CBC regional stations in terms of: issuing broadcast letters regionally, controlling regional budgets, broadcast schedules, and participation in independent productions. By the end of the 80's, the Mulroney government went into deficit spending, and cuts to cultural funding seemed imminent.

### 1991-1995: Defining Independence

The American government wanted to bring culture back to the Free Trade talks; Canadian independent filmmakers did not feel that culture should be classified as a trade commodity. The US suggested reprisals against [Canadian] policies of support to the arts, which could be considered unfair trading. The Alliance encouraged participation at the National Day of Protest against the North American Free Trade Agreement, stating that it was not free, not about trade, and that culture should NOT be on the table.

In the June 1991 issue of the *Alliance Bulletin*, then President Claude Ouellet reiterated the principles the association stood for: **“Whenever representing the Alliance I have always remembered that I am representing the film AND video communities and that despite our differences we do have the same goals and ideals: the right of the artist to freedom of expression, the right to speak for ourselves through our images and words with outside interference and the right to true recognition of the crucial role we play in Quebecoise and Canadian culture.”**

After many years of discussion, the Status of the Artist (Bill C-7) came into law—thus, strengthening the rights of artists—with two parts: 1) declaration and policy on the status of the artist, acknowledging that artists are important to the culture of a country, and 2) establishing a legal framework for professional relations between artists and producers.

Penny McCann, from SAW Video in Ottawa, recalls, “The 1993 AGM in Vancouver was the first one I attended. I found it very exciting to go to this gathering of film and video makers. I was very impressed by the way the delegates on the floor took ownership of the Alliance. They cared. That was at the heart of it. At the Newfoundland AGM [in 1995] there was a feeling that





we should stick together... there was a lot at stake. We didn't want to go the way of ANNPAC [the Association of National Non-Profit Artists' Centres had collapsed the year before]. We were vulnerable, and yet we saw what we could do."

Another focus for the Alliance was the definition of independent creation and its significance for the cultural landscape. Although the Alliance's definition of "independent production" was included in the Broadcasting Act of 1991, the Alliance argued that independent work had never been perceived as part of the broadcasting system in Canada. In March 1993, the Alliance made a presentation to the CRTC Structural Hearings. Alliance President Ali Kazimi stated that the Canadian broadcasting system must take into account independent film/video; "independent" meaning the creator is the principal agent and keeps complete creative control over all stages of the production. He wrote that "...our ideal model is Channel 4 in Britain. While it would have to be modified for the Canadian context, it would allow for artist-driven work to be produced and seen by a wide audience."

Letters were sent to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Michel Dupuy, and Tony Manera, President of CBC, in 1994, stating that the CBC could better accomplish their mandate by programming more independently produced films and videos. The Alliance argument was that the works from Canada's film and video centres come from the grassroots and are representative of Canada's diverse cultural communities.

The Alliance also lobbied within the Canada Council for a larger share of funding, arguing that as the newest artistic discipline at Council, the Media Arts section struggled to get an equitable share of the Council's budget. In March of 1992, President Premika Ratnam voiced a strong

opinion to the Council Director, Joyce Zemans: "Well known artists such as Lisa Steele and Kim Tomczak, Paul Wong and Leila Sujir would be hard pressed to produce work without backing from the Media Arts [programme]. Celebrated feature film directors such as Atom Egoyan and Patricia Rozema made their beginnings with support from the Council and ironically put the Canadian film industry on the world map. The reality is that, in spite of the success of the Media Arts programme, it continues to be severely under-funded. Innovative work at the edge of film and the electronic media is inherently expensive to produce. One could also argue that it is by far the most relevant and immediate art form in our present society."

The Alliance continued its opposition to censorship or any attempt at censorship; meanwhile, festival preview tapes had been stopped at the BC border with the U.S. and sent directly to the Classifications Board despite BC's government agreement of exemption status.

In 1992 the Alliance organized a meeting in Banff for People of Colour and Aboriginal People to discuss their place and their actions in the fields of film and video, called *About Face about Frame*. Cultural equity issues had come to the fore of Alliance concerns, that many centres were not doing outreach. So in 1994 members passed a resolution acknowledging that the Alliance had no practical policies for the implementation of racial and cultural equity measures for its own operations or as role model samples for members, but should set an example, assuring diverse representation on its own Board of Directors. A series of cultural equity workshops were organized, one for each region, and also a handbook was developed, edited by Ian Reid. The Alliance followed their internal gestures with lobby letters to Telefilm, CBC and NFB, stating that they should have review processes and clearly articulated cultural equity policies.

As the Mulroney government lurched through its last years, it struggled with the deficit and proposed budget cuts, including a 10% cut to the Canada Council. The Alliance organized a press conference (and even made a T-shirt) denouncing the cuts, and managed to get their message to the Parliament through sympathetic MPs: **"Mr. Simon de Jong: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. I prefer going to the Prime Minister. The Independent Film and Video Alliance represents 7000 independent film and video producers in Canada. Its budget has also been cut because of the cutbacks to the Canada Council. Most of the independent producers live well below the poverty line and the cutbacks will force many on to UIC or welfare. Can the Minister explain to the House what is the economic sense in cutting funding to the arts if the net result is greater cost to the public Treasury in UI and welfare payments?"**

Lisa Steele and Kim Tomczak, Toronto videomakers: "We urge you to fully consider the destruction that will occur throughout the country when the most recent 10% reduction to the



Canada Council's budget is implemented. The losses will be staggering and will be felt for years. When you and your government are considering the future for Canada's children, we hope that the Canada Council's importance within the national landscape is taken into account. Please do not lightly continue to destroy this priceless cultural institution."

The Conservatives lost the election, the Liberals came to power, and the specter of the deficit was raised high to justify sweeping budget cuts, under Finance Minister Paul Martin. The Department of Canadian Heritage was cut by 14%, resulting in cuts to cultural agencies under its control: the NFB, Telefilm and the Canada Council for the Arts. The Alliance joined an intense lobby to protect the Council's funding, which was only cut by 2.5% as a consequence. The Alliance undertook a lobby effort to increase and improve NFB support to media artists, sending letters to Sandra MacDonald, meeting with her, making a brief to the Juneau commission, and expressing concern for the fragility of NFB assistance to independent film and video makers. The results of lobby effort were mixed, as the NFB lab closed but the NFB services for independent filmmakers remained.

In the late 80's a video association had been formed for Quebec video centres (Association de la vidéo indépendante du Québec) and the Quebec caucus wondered whether AVIQ could represent the video groups within the Alliance—was there a potential for the Alliance to become a federation? Ultimately AVIQ failed to secure stable operating funding and folded. Quebec video groups began to return to the Alliance in the mid-90's, starting with Vidéographe. Vidéo Femmes, la Bande vidéo and others followed.

The early 90's saw the onset of the digital revolution. At the 1994 Alliance Conference Robert Kozinuk facilitated a Digital Media Caucus, with a resolution adding electronic media to the

Alliance's mandate, and inviting electronic media groups to become members of the Alliance. The next few years saw evolving technologies impact members. Editing, whether for film or video, was carried out on non-linear editing systems that were computer based. Distribution would also change with the advent of CD-ROM technology and Internet. The Alliance participated in the CRTC's "Information Highway" hearings, calling for the Internet to be left unregulated, to ensure free access to the Net for all parties.

At the Canada Council for the Arts funding for film and video had been kept separate due to technical differences, but these differences were now questioned, under the overarching term of "convergence." The impact of digitization on these media would be profound and irreversible.

### 1996 - 2000: Battling Budget Cuts

By 1996, as a result of budget cuts initiated under the Chrétien government, Heritage had been cut by 14%, while the Canada Council had been somewhat spared, only absorbing a 2.5% reduction in funding. Jean-Louis Roux, a well known Quebec playwright, was a Senator at the time (he later became Chairman of the Board of the Canada Council) and gave a speech in the Senate in defense of the Council.

The Alliance also lobbied against cuts to the Canada Council, arguing that many of the most notable filmmakers in the film and television industry got their start with a Canada Council grant. Independent filmmaker Atom Egoyan wrote a letter for the Alliance in which he stated: "The Canada Council has been instrumental in the development of most filmmakers currently working in this country. I would not be making films today without the Council's support."

For its part, the Canada Council strove to not cut programs to artists or art centres, but cut back its administrative staff. Unfortunately they did decide to entirely cut funding for national arts service organizations like the Alliance. Told they would get 50% of their previous funding, and 0% the next year, the Alliance staff and Board scrambled to find solutions, and used project funding to survive.

In 1997 the Alliance organized a national protest against cuts to the arts, called "Cultural Emergency", with artists staging events in Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver, decrying the negative impact that cuts to the arts have on society. Penny McCann, who had become President of the Alliance in 1996, recalls, "The Cultural Emergency protest got onto the national news. Ontario was under siege at that time, with the Harris government. We

**FUNDING / Ottawa promotes military expansion and expects culture to subsidize it — this would be laughable if it weren't so alarming**

## Karen Kain versus the anti-submarine helicopters

BY ARTHUR GELBER

WHERE is the arts community in the wake of Ottawa's announced \$80-million cut to culture? Scarcely a voice has been raised. Year-end reviews were devoted to marketing, multicultural concerns and access, but no advocate came forward to tackle the fundamental issue of public funding.

Where are the leaders who convinced this country to sponsor the Massey Commission, to establish the Canada Council, to create the CBC and the National Film Board? Where are the Peter Dinkovs, John Ghera and Leonard Beekings who spearheaded such enterprise? Is that kind of pads now outmoded?

Government priorities were clear in the December mini-budget. The Department of Defence received a cutback of 1.9 per cent — after real growth over the past eight years of 39 per cent. In the same round, culture, with a budget of \$2.9 billion, was cut by 10 per cent — after suffering a real decline since 1984-85 of 24 per cent in direct and indirect funding.

Since taking office, the current federal government has chopped close to \$500 million from the cultural budget in cuts to the CBC, the Canada Council, the NFB, Telefilm Canada and other cultural agencies

to protect its constitutional commitment during the Charlottetown debate. The cuts come both in the reduction of direct grants and the removal of indirect benefits such as postal exemption and the tax on reading materials.

Ottawa cites the Gulf War, international relations and employment as a rationale for military expansion. Meanwhile, culture, at token savings, is being asked to help subsidize our military strength. It would be laughable if it weren't so alarming.

A government that believes that what cannot be measured cannot be managed — despite its recent loss in constitutional negotiations — a cut at home with intangible evidence. How do you measure a performance by Karen Kain, a play by Michel Tremblay, an opera by Harry Somers, a painting by Mary Pratt, or a book by Michel Ondaatje? How can you estimate the worth of the Canada Council, the artistic support system that feeds our entire creative industry?

How do you validate the returns on this investment of about 32 cents a month for every Canadian, where the payoff is in international acclaim, a sense of our own worth and the achievement of young artists who are trained in our own cultural institutions? Certainly not by Ottawa's current bottom line standards, where arts funding

Based on its research on government findings, the Canadian Conference of the Arts, the lobbying arm of the sector, recently translated some cultural abstracts into measurable terms. What jumps to the eye is the rapid growth, financial impact and high return on an investment in the arts and cultural industries over a 20-year period.

In this time, the cultural labour force grew by 122 per cent to its present direct employment figure of 346,000, currently generating a direct yearly return to the federal treasury of \$650 million, along with an annual return to the Canadian economy of \$17-billion or 2.7 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product.

THE cost of creating a job in the arts is less than \$20,000, as compared with light industry at \$200,000. The sector does not require expensive retraining programs or massive infusions of start-up money, and arts organizations, on average, pay 60 per cent of their own way through marketing and fund-raising initiatives.

Yet, in the past decade, the Canada Council's operating budget has not been increased by a penny, and in 1992 its funding power was 20 per cent less than in 1986.

Already the cost of this underfunding is apparent in the struggles of arts organiza-

tions, productions cut and tours cancelled, and an \$84-million loss to the Canadian economy is estimated over the next two years as a result of lost jobs.

Most seriously, the Canada Council no longer has the capacity to finance new creation and innovation — essential priorities for our cultural development. Add to this the further cuts to cultural institutions, diminishing provincial support programs, the perilous condition of our cultural industries and the impact of the current recession on funding from the corporate and private sectors. Why worry about U.S. takeovers when we have already scotched our own earth?

Trimming the defence budget by 3.9 per cent instead of 1.9 per cent would eliminate the need to cut any subsidy in the cultural community — and leave enough to cushion cuts in other sectors as well. As it is, a government that decides that an ultramodern anti-submarine helicopter is more to be valued than a performance by the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, that a new warship is more important than the production of *Dry Lip* (Ogdenia Mow is Kapuskasing) and that the latest model of military gun is a greater priority than the next novel by Robertson Min-istry, poses one final question: What do we have to defend?

Arthur Gelber is a former chairman of the

were in a real cultural emergency in Ontario!"

In Halifax, protesters carried coffins depicting the death of art; in Montreal, protesters "endorsed" the back of a large imitation government cheque made out to artists for the amount that had been cut from Heritage, over \$200 million. "At the time cuts to the Canada Council, which led to cuts to the Alliance, overshadowed everything," says McCann. In the end the Liberal government made a mid-campaign election promise to increase funding for the Canada Council by \$25 million, which they honored when they were re-elected.

Nevertheless, the Alliance rode out rocky years of financial difficulty in the late 90's by cutting costs, applying to project funding and seeing its membership revenue rise, due to increasing membership. Lobby efforts like presentations and briefs to Heritage for its feature film policy review in 1998 were eventually fruitful, when the government accepted the Alliance recommendations for the creation of a low-budget independent feature film fund at Telefilm, and an increase of \$1 million to the Canada Council funding for media arts organizations.

The year 1998 also saw Quebec member centres of the Alliance vote to create a provincial association for Quebec media arts centres, the "Conseil québécois des arts médiatiques." In 1999 Ontario media art centres organized a conference discussing the viability of forming their own provincial association, but did not take the plunge. That year the Alliance presented briefs and presentations to the CRTC supporting the creation of an independent film channel on one of the new digital specialty channels to be licensed by the CRTC. But new media also dominated the discussions within the Alliance, as members debated whether to put energy into forming an independent channel or to jump into web casting on the Internet. The 1999 AGM featured a significant presentation of new media work by artists on Internet websites. The Alliance office expanded its website and in 1999-2000 undertook a web casting experiment. The year 2000 also marked the first year for the Governor General's Awards for Visual and Media Arts.

### **2001 - 2005: Increased Support and Outreach to Indigenous Artists**

The Independent Film Channel Canada proposed by Salter Street was licensed by the CRTC in 2001, then bought by commercial broadcaster and production company, Alliance Atlantis, a move that was contested by the Independent Film and Video Alliance, in a letter proposing conditions be put on the sale that would guarantee the station would remain committed to presenting truly independent work.

# Girls Go Digital:

## Studio XX ensures women's contribution to the technological revolution

BY MELANIE TAKEFMAN

The people behind Studio XX don't just facilitate women's entry into high tech, they demand it. The media arts centre for women provides the resources and girl power necessary for success in this very male-dominated field.

Started in 1995 with the Internet boom, Studio XX combines web art instruction, community access and unbridled activism. The centre is the perfect place for women to increase their computer savvy or for practiced artists to hone their skills.

Director Lise Gagnon says Studio XX's programs focus on the realization of projects. "We want women to arrive with an idea and go through the entire process to start at 0 and to leave with a finished product," says Gagnon.

With 9 employees and 11 volunteers, Studio XX subsists almost entirely on government grants. Besides accessibility, the most important aspect of the centre is community spirit. "People acquire skills to be able to share them later," Gagnon says. "No question is ever too stupid," she adds.

Moreover, all instruction is available in English and French.

The studio offers a 7-month course on web site creation through four separate workshops, from HTML to interactivity. Each workshop includes 18 hours of instruction and 54 hours of lab time. Classes are limited to 6 people; the personal attention makes the workshops unique, Gagnon says.

Studio XX also offers free introductory computer workshops to the public. Moreover, the computer lab is open to members (membership costs \$20) from Monday to Thursday. Online user groups allow experienced users to share and boost their knowledge of a particular program.

The studio also collaborates with community groups, like a contingent of young mothers who built a web site for women in similar situations.

Similarly, activism is the backbone of Studio XX. "We want to contaminate cyberspace, to modify and influence it... We want to colour it and use it in a way that will promote feminism," Gagnon says.

This spirit was evident at a recent Femmes Branchées, a regular "show and tell" event, where artists share the inspiration and methodology behind their completed works. That night, four women showcased their politically-motivated web art, prepared as part of a residency at Studio XX and Groupe Intervention Vidéo.

Participant Mara Verna didn't know anything about the Web when she applied for the residency. Her project, Hottentotvenus.com, included private instruction in web design programs Dreamweaver, Photoshop, Flash and Final Cut Pro. Now, Verna's web site diffuses the story of Saartjie Baartman, a South African woman who was exhibited as the missing link between the

After several years of lobbying Heritage, the new funding at the Canada Council led to widespread operating grant increases for media arts centres, and the Canada Council finally provided extra funding for distributors to upgrade their equipment.

For the 2001 Alliance Annual General Meeting, then President Deborah McInnes requested each region of the Alliance to invite representatives of aboriginal run media arts centres. After several meetings during the AGM, a distinct section within the Alliance for aboriginal media arts groups was created, with representation on the Board. It was first called AMAUC (Aboriginal Media Arts



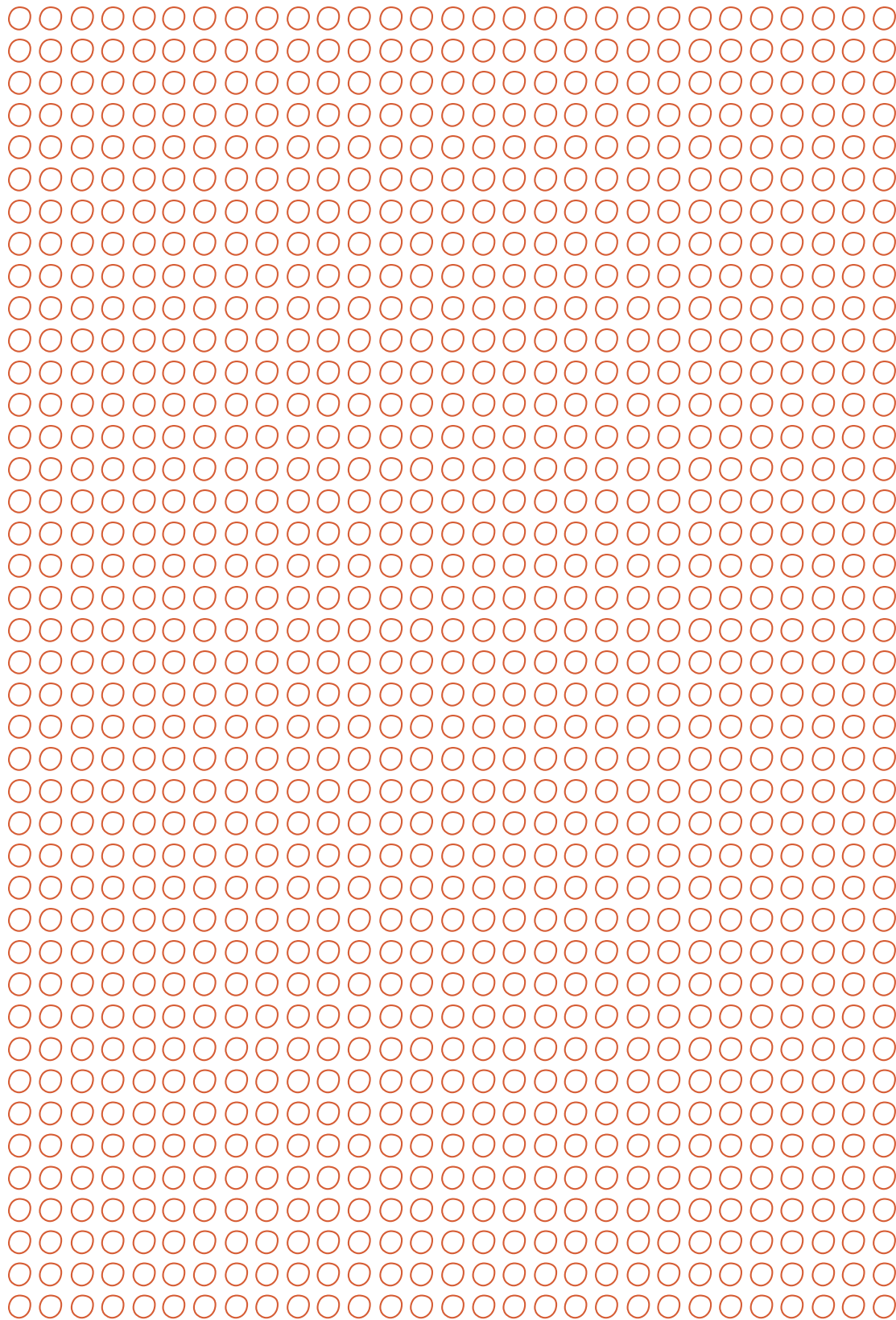
United Collective), later changed to NAMAC (National Aboriginal Media Arts Coalition) and finally to NIMAC (National Indigenous Media Arts Coalition). After a few years of provisional status, the region was ratified as a permanent section of the Alliance in 2005.

Alliance issues like its own structure, distribution and exhibition, training and funding, which were already present in the early days, continued to be important. Many new exhibition groups, such as independent film and video festivals, joined the Alliance, seeking support for defending their funding, threatened with cuts from Telefilm. The Alliance and its annual conference grew considerably, reaching 80 groups by 2004 – thus representing about 12.000 artists and cultural workers.

As we close this final chapter in our 25th year, the Alliance is still lobbying for increased support for the arts, most recently calling for a doubling of funding to the Canada Council for the Arts. To a degree, the federal government is recognizing our efforts marked recently by a decision to award an additional \$30 million to the Canada Council's annual funding.

The Alliances enters into this next period motivated to continue its work to advance and promote a vibrant media arts community.

Peter Sandmark  
September 2007



#### Notes:

1. These Founding Principles later changed to include video, audio and electronic media.
2. Literally from the agenda, meaning: concerns about the structure of the new association.
3. Not a Love Story: A Film about Pornography, a polemic NFB documentary directed by Bonnie Sherr Klein in 1981.
4. Officially called Report of the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee. Appointed by the Liberal government in 1980, this Committee was co-chaired by Jacques Hébert and Louis Applebaum.
5. The first television lobby in the 80s targeted SuperChannel/FirstChoice for lack of independent Canadian content
6. Created in 1969, this ministerial department was later amalgamated with the Department of Public Works, becoming the actual Department of Public Works and Government Services.
7. The number is approximate since the founding meeting did not establish a formal membership criteria, remaining open and flexible during its formative period. The scanned document appearing on pages 18 and 19 is the original list of participants, although it doesn't specify their status.

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## Alphabetical List of Acronyms :

- ACPAV** Association coopérative de productions audiovisuelles (Montreal)
- AFCOOP** Atlantic Filmmakers Co-operative (Halifax)
- AGM / AGA** Annual General Meeting / Assemblée générale annuelle
- AIFP** Atlantic Independent Film Presence
- AMAUC** Aboriginal Media Arts United Collective, renamed National Aboriginal Media Arts Coalition (**NAMAC**), renamed again **NIMAC** (National Indigenous Media Arts Coalition)
- ANNPAC / RACA** Association of National Non-Profit Artists Centres / Regroupement d'artistes des centres alternatives
- IFVA / AVCI** Alliance de la vidéo et du cinéma indépendants / Independent Film and Video Alliance
- IMAA / AAMI** Independent Media Arts Alliance / Alliance des arts médiatiques indépendants
- AVECQ** Association de la Vidéo et du Cinéma du Québec
- AVIQ** Association de la vidéo indépendante du Québec
- CARFAC** Canadian Artists Representation / Front des artistes canadiens
- CBC** Canadian Broadcast Corporation (nom anglais de Radio-Canada)
- CFMDC** Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre (Toronto)
- CRTC** Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission/ Conseil de la radiodiffusion et des télécommunications canadiennes
- CSIF** Calgary Society of Independent Filmmakers
- GIV** Groupe Intervention Vidéo (Montreal)
- IFACI** Independent Film Alliance du cinéma indépendant
- LIFT** Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto
- NAMAC** National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture (United States)
- NB CO-OP** New-Brunswick Co-operative (Fredericton)
- NFB / ONF** National Film Office / Office national du film
- NIFCO** Newfoundland Filmmakers Co-operative (St. John's)
- CFDC / SDICC** Canadian Film Development Corporation (actual Telefilm) / Société de développement de l'industrie cinématographique canadienne
- WFG** Winnipeg Film Group

### **Brief Chronology of Canadian Cultural Policy related to Media Arts:**

- 1932 Formation of the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission, superceded by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in 1936
- 1939 Creation of the National Film Board
- 1949-1951 Appointment of the Massey-Lévesque Commission, officially known as Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences
- 1957 Creation of the Canada Council for the Arts
- 1967 Creation of the Canadian Film Development Corporation (Telefilm Canada)
- 1974 Capital Cost Allowance established
- 1980-1982 Appointment of Applebaum-Hébert Committee, officially named the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee
- 1986 Feature Film Fund created
- 1992 Status of the Artist Act
- 1995 Canadian Film or Video Production Tax Credit Program replaced the Capital Cost Allowance program
- 1996 Canada Television and Cable Production Fund created
- 1997 Creation of the Film or Video Production Services Tax Credit
- 2000 Implementation of Canadian Heritage's new policy for feature films "From Script to Screen"





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Independent Media Arts Alliance

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Canada Council  
for the Arts

Conseil des Arts  
du Canada