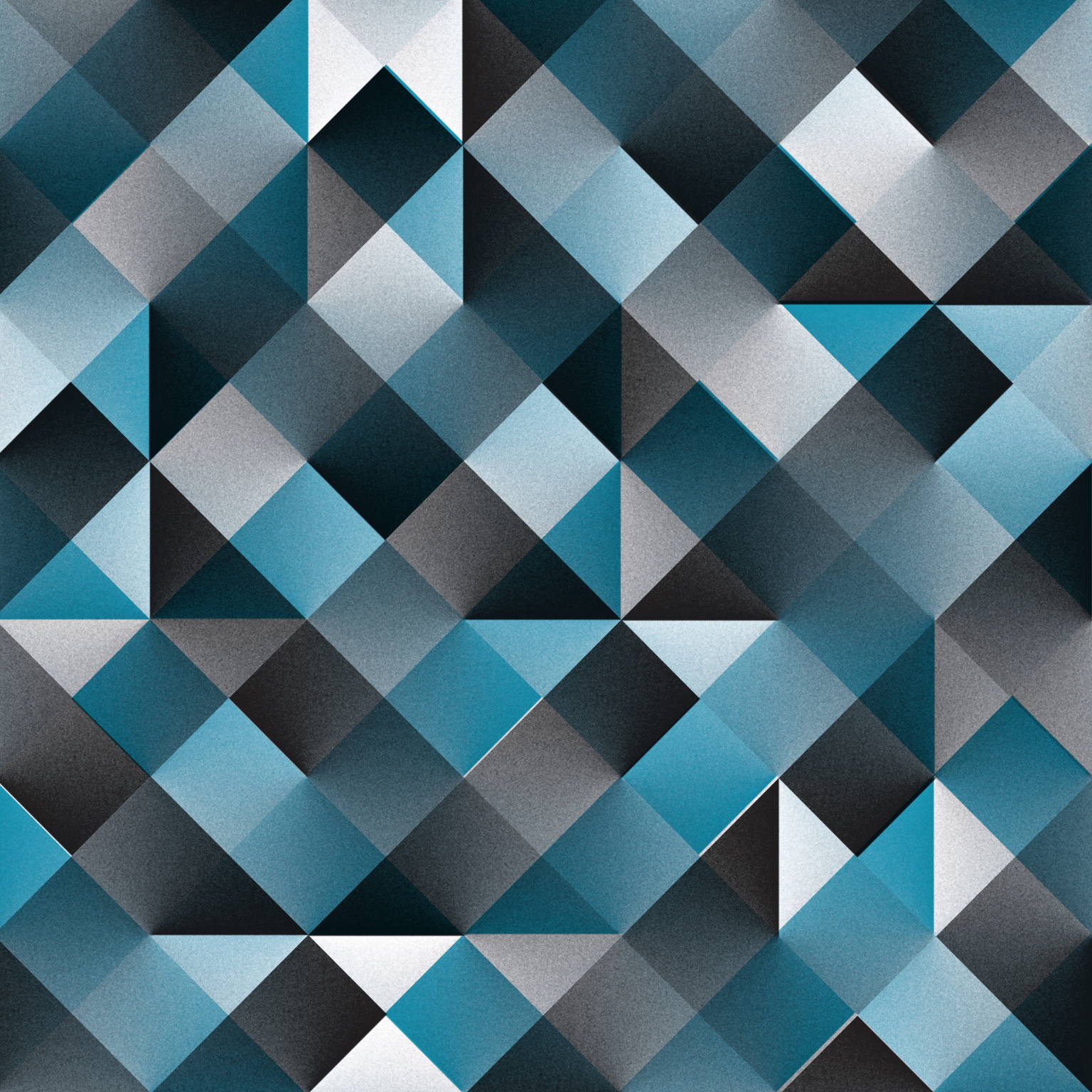


40 YEARS OF
CANADIAN CINEMA

REFLECTING
LIGHT

MAY 6-9, 2015
REFLECTINGLIGHT.CA
@WinnipegFilm #WFG40



From **May 6-9, 2015**, the Winnipeg Cinematheque will host a national forum that uses the Winnipeg Film Group's 40th anniversary as a starting point to explore how the landscape of Canadian cinema has developed over the past decades and how it is currently evolving. This forum will also take a critical look at the role and relevance of the now 40-year-old national film production centre system in fostering filmmaking communities and voices across Canada.

This event will feature panel discussions with leading Canadian filmmakers, programmers and art professionals on topics that examine the evolution of the independent filmmaking practice in Canada, as well as new contexts for supporting creative innovation in the future.

Full Forum Pass: \$70 / \$60 early bird to April 22, 2015
Screenings & Seminar Pass: \$30
40 x 40 Cocktail Party: \$40
Individual Screenings: Regular Cinematheque ticket prices
Panels: Free

Artspace: 100 Arthur Street, at Bannatyne
• Cinematheque: Main floor
• Black Lodge: 3rd floor, right off elevator
• Winnipeg Film Group: 3rd floor, right off elevator
Urban Shaman Gallery: 203 - 290 McDermot Avenue

Forum Producer: Cecilia Araneda
Forum Coordinator: Paula Kelly
Film Programming: Cecilia Araneda, with Jaimz Asmundson, Dave Barber and Paula Kelly
Essay Writers: Andrew Burke and Penny McCann
Technical Coordinator: Alison Davis
For the Cinematheque: Jaimz Asmundson, Alison Davis, Dave Barber, Heidi Phillips and Kristy Muckosky
For the Winnipeg Film Group: Mark Borowski, Kevin Lee Burton, Marcel Kreutzer, Niki Little, Monica Lowe, Ben Williams and Sharon Thiessen-Woods
Design: Guppy Graphic Design
Logo Design: Mike Carroll

Winnipeg Film Group
304 - 100 Arthur Street
Winnipeg MB R3B 1H3
www.winnipegfilmgroup.com
www.winnipegcinematheque.com

QUICK GLANCE CALENDAR

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6	THURSDAY, MAY 7	FRIDAY, MAY 8	SATURDAY, MAY 9
5 PM Cinematheque PANEL: Prairie Postmodernists & New Wave Pioneers: 1980s Cinema PAGE 8	1 PM Winnipeg Film Group WFG Centre Tour PAGE 9	12 Noon Cinematheque PANEL: In Dialogue: Canadian Women Directors PAGE 10	11 AM Cinematheque PANEL: Creative Climates: The Impact of Changing Technologies PAGE 13
7 PM Cinematheque FEATURE: Crime Wave PAGE 8	5 PM Cinematheque PANEL: Fade Up: The Rise of the Film Production Centres PAGE 9	2 PM Winnipeg Film Group WFG Centre Tour PAGE 9	1 PM Black Lodge SEMINAR: Tackling Telefilm's Micro-Budget Program PAGE 10
9 PM Cinematheque Opening Reception PAGE 12	7 PM Cinematheque SHORTS: Pihtâkosiwin (Voice Being Heard) PAGE 12	4 PM Black Lodge 40x40: Anniversary Cocktail Party PAGE 9	1 PM Cinematheque PANEL: Expressions: Indigenous Views of Film Production Centres PAGE 12
	9 PM Cinematheque PANEL: Cross-Currents: Aspects of Winnipeg and Québec Cinema PAGE 11	7 PM Cinematheque FEATURE: Il Ne Faut Pas Mourir Pour Ça (Don't Let it Kill You) PAGE 11	3 PM Cinematheque FEATURE: Tkaronto PAGE 12
		8 PM Urban Shaman Gallery ARTIST TALK & RECEPTION: Darlene Naponse & Alan Syliboy PAGE 12	5 PM Cinematheque SHORTS: Getting Started PAGE 9
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ESSAY: Forty Years @ 24 Frames Per Second: Film Cooperatives in Canada, by Penny McCann / PAGE 14 ESSAY: The WFG at 40, by Andrew Burke / PAGE 18			9 PM Cinematheque SHORTS: Winnipeg, Québec PAGE 11

WELCOME

The Winnipeg Film Group at 40

"The film world is made up of a lot of loose cannons. We argued a lot as the group was forming. It was probably a healthy thing."
 – LEONARD YAKIR, FOUNDER

"It was a great time, very exciting when we started out. We argued constantly, but we did get things done."
 – LEN KLADY, FOUNDER

It heartened me to find these quotes in our paper archives.

While the Winnipeg Film Group is known for a lot of things in the outside world (and these things are reflected upon in more detail in Andrew Burke's essay on *The WFG at 40* featured in this program book), it is also rather well known internally for the amount of arguing that has consistently gone on over the course of years and decades, even as the individual filmmakers involved in the arguing change.

When I found these quotes featured in the *Winnipeg Free Press* in 1999, on the occasion of the WFG's 25th anniversary, it comforted me to know arguing has actually always been part of the magic from the very beginning.

As I've travelled across the country over the years visiting different film production centres, I've come to understand that internal arguing – for better or worse – is an extremely common trait among them. This struggle is created because the central impetus that precipitates the need for these centres is largely logistical: a proportionally significant number of filmmakers in need of resources live in a similar geographic area. While this creates a viable need, there are very real differences that exist among these filmmakers, which include the more obvious things, such as the genres and forms they work in; and the less visible things, such as the ways in which some personalities just don't mix well.

Reflecting Light, a forum intended to reflect on the impact and future of the film production centre system as it enters the 40th anniversary of its beginnings, is timely. The year 2015 will be a landmark for the entire independent media arts sector across the country – including for film and video production centres. This is because the arts funding system that has served as the often-invisible backbone of this system from the very beginning, is itself in the process of radically changing.

Federally, the Canada Council for the Arts last year placed a significant number of media arts organizations on Fair Notice (a warning provided to organizations that they need to improve if they wish to continue receiving funding in the future), and many others received widely variable results. Some received significant cuts and no equipment funding for the first time in their histories, while others received significant increases. Importantly, regional production centres are no longer seen as a given need in their communities.

The lesser-known reality of production centres is that the work they achieve and the resources they are able to provide their communities, has more to do with the policies set by the major arts funders than it has to do with the will of any individual local filmmaking community. This is because production centres generally survive almost solely on arts council and other public funding; they have been less effective, in comparison to their presentation organization siblings, at developing greater community awareness for the importance of their work and at fundraising.

On the occasion of the Winnipeg Film Group's 40th anniversary, we invite our colleagues and peers from across the country to consider (or argue about, if preferred...) why the film production centre system was created in the first place and how it needs to evolve to remain relevant in the future, in light of the significant changes looming before it.

CECILIA ARANEDA

PRODUCER, REFLECTING LIGHT
 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WINNIPEG FILM GROUP



FUNDERS AND PARTNERS

The Winnipeg Film Group acknowledges the funding of the Canada Council for the Arts for this anniversary program.



We additionally acknowledge the partnership support of On Screen Manitoba, Urban Shaman Gallery and the Winnipeg Foundation for our full anniversary year program.



The Winnipeg Film Group acknowledges the ongoing support of the Canada Council for the Arts, the Manitoba Arts Council and the Winnipeg Arts Council.



The Winnipeg Film Group additionally acknowledges the support provided by the entire filmmaking community across Winnipeg and across Canada throughout its 40-year history: from the founders, board members and other volunteers; to the many staff who have worked here; to our filmmaking and organizational colleagues across the country; to the programmers and critics who have contextualized this unique filmmaking community over the decades; and to our many funders, sponsors and donors. *Many hands make light work.*

← Clockwise from top left
Liz Jarvis / Behind the Scenes on Gabriel and Jancarlo Markiw's film "Concertante" / Shereen Jerrett / Stephan Recksiedler on set / The cast and crew of John Kozak's "Dory"



PRAIRIE POSTMODERNISTS & NEW WAVE PIONEERS: 1980s CINEMA

PANEL:

Prairie Postmodernists & New Wave Pioneers: 1980s Cinema / Wednesday, May 6 / 5 pm

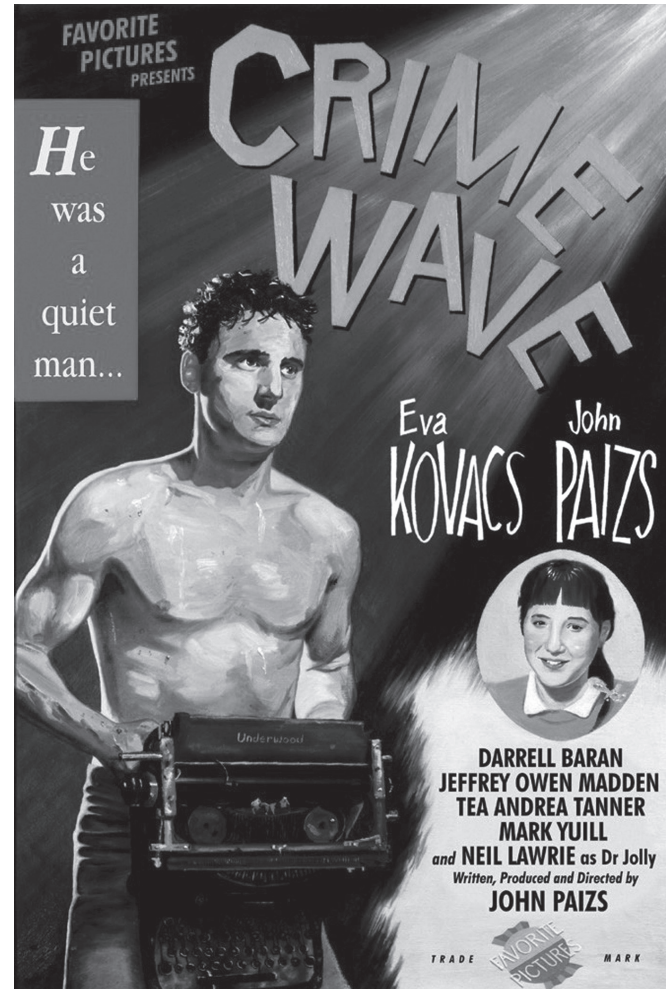
The 1980s were a frontier of new opportunity for Canadian filmmakers. The Toronto New Wave and Prairie Postmodernism emerged as two filmmaking movements that characterize this era in Anglo-Canadian cinema. New funding and programming initiatives promoted the trajectories of these independent Canadian directors, many of whom remained working in Canada. This panel will consider the unique conditions that existed at the time to foster the talents of Anglo-Canadian directors, as well as their collective influence on the generations of filmmakers that came after them.

SPEAKERS: *Dave Barber, Steve Gravestock, Midi Onodera, John Paizs, Geoff Pevere and Jonathan Ball (moderator)*

SCREENING & OPENING RECEPTION:

**Crime Wave / Dir. John Paizs, 1985, Canada, 80 min
Wednesday, May 6 / 7 pm**

"One of the greatest and yet most perversely overlooked debuts in English Canadian movie history, writer-director John Paizs's *Crime Wave* announced the birth of a new genre in Canuck cinema: what cultural critic Geoff Pevere dubbed 'prairie postmodernism.'" (Steve Gravestock, TIFF). The Winnipeg Film Group is pleased to be able to present a newly struck DCP master of this film.



↔ Crime Wave

FADE UP: THE RISE OF THE FILM PRODUCTION CENTRES

WINNIPEG FILM GROUP CENTRE TOURS

Thursday, May 7 / 1 pm

Friday, May 8 / 2 pm

Join Ben Williams, our Production Centre Director, for a tour of the entire Winnipeg Film Group facility. The tour begins in our 3rd floor Production Centre facility and will last approximately 1.5 hours.

PANEL:

Fade Up: The Rise of Film Production Centres / Thursday, May 7 / 5 pm

For 40 years, Canadian independent filmmakers have been sustained in their practice through centres founded by filmmakers in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Without these organizations, the creation of an independent Canadian cinema would have been difficult, if not almost impossible, to achieve. These centres promote the collective use of talent, resources, equipment and training – helping to offset the high cost of production and to develop creative hubs in many cities. They are dynamic cultural intersections that stimulate unique aesthetic approaches and voices in different regions. Yet, they are also often scrutinized for their relevance to the aims of independent filmmakers. This panel examines what's been achieved over time through the production centre system and what its role should be in the future landscape of Canadian filmmaking.

SPEAKERS: *Lulu Keating, Jean Pierre Lefebvre, William D. MacGillivray, Elise Swerhone and Andrew Burke (moderator)*

ANNIVERSARY COCKTAIL PARTY: 40x40

Friday, May 8 / 4 pm

Join us at the Black Lodge (3rd floor, upstairs from the Cinematheque) for the WFG's official 40th anniversary behind-the-scenes cocktail party! This event is a fundraiser for our Production Centre, which has been developing and supporting Manitoba's independent filmmakers for 40 years. Admission is included with a full forum pass, or individual tickets are available at \$40. *Tax receipt of \$25 will be provided.

SCREENING:

Getting Started / Saturday, May 9 / 5 pm

This program of shorts by founders and early members of the Winnipeg Film Group, AFSCOOP (Halifax) and NIFCO (St. John's) reflects on Canadian independent filmmaking as it was just getting started. Works include *Funny Things People Can Do to Themselves* (Lulu Keating), *Sisters of the Silver Scalpel* (Mike Jones), *Getting Started* (Richard Condie), *Havakeen Lunch* (Elise Swerhone) and *Linda Joy* (William D. MacGillivray). Curated by Cecilia Araneda.



→ On the set of "Two 4 One"

IN DIALOGUE: CANADIAN WOMEN DIRECTORS

PANEL:

In Dialogue: Canadian Women Directors
Friday, May 8 / 12 noon

For decades, women have been creating films of significance in a wide range of genres. Yet important questions are often raised about the nature of exposure and support for their aims and achievements. This panel will look at the status of women's filmmaking in different regions across the country and examine how their works have been represented in the broader cultural conversation. Additionally, this panel will consider contexts for the future when it comes to bringing the voices and visions of Canadian women filmmakers to a national and international audience.

SPEAKERS: *Danishka Esterhazy, Steve Gravestock, Lulu Keating, Michelle Latimer, Midi Onodera and Penny McCann (moderator)*

SCREENING:

Pathways / Friday, May 8 / 9 pm

These shorts by Canadian women directors reflect on journeys taken through physical pathways and mindscapes, moments of motion and stasis and the intersection of perception versus reality. Works include *The Red Hood* (Danishka Esterhazy), *Off Route 2* (Amanda Dawn Christie), *The Underground* (Michelle Latimer), *The Grand Design* (Midi Onodera) and *Nose and Tina* (Norma Bailey). Curated by Cecilia Araneda.

SEMINAR:

Tackling Telefilm's Micro-Budget Program
Saturday, May 9 / 1 pm

Walk through all the stages of preparing for a Telefilm Micro-budget application with writer/director Maureen Bradley. View examples of successful Micro-budget pitches, peruse a successful application and brainstorm unique digital release strategies with a past Telefilm Micro-budget recipient.

SCREENING:

Two 4 One / Dir. Maureen Bradley, 2014, Canada, 74 min
Saturday, May 9 / 7 pm

Maureen Bradley's debut feature film, *Two 4 One*, is about a transgendered man wrestling with the state of his life – an unfulfilling job, mixed feelings for his ex, and a mother yearning for grandchildren – when he suddenly finds himself unexpectedly pregnant.



→ Two 4 One

CROSS-CURRENTS: ASPECTS OF WINNIPEG AND QUÉBEC CINEMA

PANEL:

Cross Currents: Aspects of Winnipeg and Québec Cinema
Thursday, May 7 / 9 pm

In the context of a pan-national Canadian cinema, Québec cinema stands out for achieving a dynamic and unique filmmaking culture. Winnipeg filmmakers, too (to a smaller degree), are often recognized for having a profoundly singular aesthetic. What accounts for these distinctive creative milieus and are there parallels in their development? This panel compares the unique contexts of Winnipeg and Québec cinema which have evolved over the past 40 years and investigates the particular influences that have worked to shape them. It also raises the question of how real or significant the role of regional production centres can be in cultivating a recognizable creative aesthetic.

SPEAKERS: *Dave Barber, Jean Pierre Lefebvre, Danny Lennon, Caroline Monnet and Matthew Rankin (moderator)*

SCREENING:

Don't Let it Kill You (Il ne faut pas mourir pour ça)
Dir. Jean Pierre Lefebvre, 1967, Canada, 75 min
Friday, May 8 / 7 pm

The first Canadian film to ever screen at Cannes, director Jean Pierre Lefebvre's *Don't Let it Kill You* is about a child-like man of 30 who dreams of transforming the course of events while living in his little world with a motley collection of insects, comic book cut-outs, miniature planes in birdcages and books in the fridge.

SCREENING:

Winnipeg, Québec / Saturday, May 9 / 9 pm

This program of short films reflects on the largeness and complexity of subject that can at times connect Winnipeg and Québec cinema. Works include *Piwi* (Jean-Claude Lauzon), *Heart of the World* (Guy Maddin), *Hydro-Lévesque* (Matthew Rankin), *Next Floor Noire* (Caroline Monnet and Daniel Watchorn). Curated by Cecilia Araneda.

→ Don't Let it Kill You (Il ne faut pas mourir pour ça) →





↳ Tkaronto

EXPRESSIONS: INDIGENOUS VIEWS OF FILM PRODUCTION CENTRES

SCREENING:

Pihitâkosiwin (Voice Being Heard) / Thursday, May 7 / 7 pm

These recent shorts by Canadian Indigenous filmmakers reflect on the notion of language and written and spoken word as mechanisms of giving voice. Works include *Empty* (Jackie Traverse), *The Amendment* (Kevin Papatie), *Spirit of the Bluebird* (Xstine Cook and Jesse Gouchey), *Burning An Effigy* (Jaimie Isaac), *INDIAN* (Darryl Nepinak), *10* (Dana Claxton) and *Nikamowin (Song)* (Kevin Lee Burton). Curated by Cecilia Araneda.

URBAN SHAMAN ARTIST TALK & RECEPTION:

Friday, May 8 / 8 pm

This artist talk and reception at Urban Shaman Gallery features two artists: Darlene Naponse in the main gallery and Alan Syliboy in the Marvin Francis Media Gallery. Naponse will have her 4-channel video installation, *mooshkamo*; *surface inbetween two worlds*, examining imagery and words between two worlds using the Ojibway language to examine the distance of understanding; and Alan Syliboy's *Recent Mixed Media Work* will show several short animated films and 2D paintings based on the Mi'kmaq petroglyph traditions.

PANEL:

Expressions: Indigenous Views of Film Production Centres Saturday, May 9 / 1 pm

Historically, the film production centre system has had difficulty in adequately fostering diversity. This panel explores what film production centres across the country are doing today to support the work of Indigenous filmmakers. How relevant are those supports at this point in time? Do they actively advance the work of Indigenous filmmakers? Going forward, the question is how production centres and other agencies should anticipate and respond to the significant and expanding presence of Indigenous filmmakers in Canada.

SPEAKERS: *Shane Belcourt, Michelle Latimer, Caroline Monnet, Darryl Nepinak, Jason Ryle and Jenny Western (moderator)*

SCREENING:

Tkaronto / Dir. Shane Belcourt, 2007, Canada, 105 min Saturday, May 9 / 3 pm

Tkaronto is a provocative exploration of two Aboriginal thirty-somethings caught in the urban crossroads. For Jolene and Ray, their chance meeting enables them to reveal their hopes, dreams, fears and failures and realize their common struggle: to stake claim to their urban Aboriginal identity.

CREATIVE CLIMATES: THE IMPACT OF CHANGING TECHNOLOGIES

PANEL:

Creative Climates: The Impact of Changing Technologies Saturday, May 9 / 11 am

Embracing the challenge of changing technologies often places independent filmmakers and their works at the leading edge of artistic innovation. This panel looks at how decades of emergent new technologies in production and presentation have influenced independent filmmaking in regions across Canada – and how well film production centres have responded to change. This panel will also explore the expanding universe of creative platforms that allow filmmakers to experiment with new artistic strategies, alongside the choices that some filmmakers have made to revive and rework older formats and means of production.

SPEAKERS: *Irene Bindi, Maureen Bradley, Matthew Rankin, Jason Ryle and Alicia Smith (moderator)*



From top to bottom →
A winter film shoot /
Behind the scenes on John Barnard's
"Cemetery Love Story"

FORTY YEARS @ 24 FRAMES PER SECOND: FILM COOPERATIVES IN CANADA

ESSAY BY PENNY MCCANN

"The Co-op constantly reinvented itself and carried on, much to the amazement of the older alumni. AFCOOP's independence, energy and ability to give access to new creative artists is what makes it constantly relevant."

— AFCOOP FOUNDING MEMBER, CHUCK CLARK

"We are to look forward, not back. Or, if looking back, we should seek fundamental issues of impetus and desire – a language of the moving image seen apart from the means of its physical or virtual delivery – to address a future (and present) that continues to evolve. To find the best path forward, prepared."

— PEGGY GALE, THINK: FILM EXPERIMENTAL FILM CONGRESS, BERLIN 2012

Forty years ago in 1975, video was in its infancy, celluloid was the industrial standard and independent filmmakers struggled to find the equipment, facilities and resources to create films outside the mainstream. To meet this necessity, three filmmaking cooperatives had been newly formed: ACPAV (Association coopérative de productions audio-visuelles) in Montreal, the Atlantic Filmmakers' Cooperative in Halifax and the Winnipeg Film Group.

AFCOOP's founding story sets the scene. In 1973, 17 artists gathered at the Seahorse Tavern in Halifax to chat about filmmaking. According to AFCOOP's website: "The conversation flowed and someone came up with the idea of establishing a filmmakers' co-operative in Halifax. Thanks to the dedication of these 17 filmmakers, and initial funding provided by the Canada

Council for the Arts, the Atlantic Filmmakers Cooperative was incorporated a year later on June 3rd, 1974."

The Winnipeg Film Group formed as a direct result of the Canadian Film Symposium at the University of Manitoba, an annual event held to screen and discuss independent Canadian films and filmmaking. During this symposium, several local independent filmmakers banded together to approach the government to assist with funding to form the Winnipeg Film Group in 1974.

Funding from the Canada Council for the Arts was instrumental in creating the conditions for film cooperatives to develop. Françoise Picard, who became the Canada Council film officer in 1975, offers insight into the key role the Canada Council played in supporting film coops.

"When I arrived at the Canada Council in 1975, there were three co-ops getting funding, some centres were folding, and the CFDC (Canadian Film Development Corporation, Telefilm's name until 1984) wanted to [take] 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?"

1970s

1971: ACPAV – Association coopérative de productions audio-visuelles (Montreal)

1971–78: Toronto Filmmakers' Coop

1974: AFCOOP – Atlantic Filmmakers Cooperative (Halifax)

1974: Winnipeg Film Group

1975: NIFCO – Newfoundland Independent Filmmakers Co-operative (St. John's)

1977: Spirafilm (Quebec City)

1977: Saskatchewan Filmpool Cooperative (Regina)

1977–1989: The Funnel Experimental Film Theatre (Toronto)

1978: CSIF – Calgary Society of Independent Filmmakers

1979: NBFC – New Brunswick Filmmakers' Co-operative (Fredericton)

What the Canada Council did was to support the creation of film cooperatives, resulting in centres springing up across the country.

The impact of film cooperatives on Canadian film culture is undeniable but not easily quantifiable. Thousands of films of various lengths have been made at film centres over the past four decades. Access to grants, equipment, mentorship, willing hands, as well as distribution and exhibition networks helped form many established Canadian filmmakers. For some, the centres provided an entry into the film and television industry; for others, they facilitated and continue to facilitate the freedom to work independently and/or in opposition to the industry.

Cameron Bailey acknowledges the impact and influence of cooperatives on the establishment of the Toronto New Wave in the 1980s: "When [Bruce] McDonald helped form the Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto (LIFT) in 1980, it gave a home to an artisanal method of making films that had no place at the NFB or under any tax shelter. LIFT became a church for the gospel of do-it-yourself. Edit it yourself. Learn to run the Arri and shoot it yourself. Better yet, get a Bolex. McDonald's early shorts *Knock, Knock* and *Let Me See...* motor along on DIY bravado.... It was through LIFT that young wannabes could become complete filmmakers. They could gain control."

1980s

1980: Cineworks (Vancouver)

1981: LIFT - Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto

1982: Main Film (Montreal)

1982: FAVA - Film and Video Arts Society Alberta (Edmonton)

Now, 40 years later, celluloid has diminished to the point of near extinction and still the centres remain, secured by Canada Council funding and negotiating a path strewn with the wreckage of obsolete technology. Nine years ago, I participated in LIFT's 25th anniversary commissioning program, *Film is Dead... Long Live Film*. Then, as the title of the programme attests, the writing was on the wall for film. Now, the wall is almost completely gone, taken apart brick by brick as industrial support for celluloid literally vanishes. With fewer and fewer film schools engaging with film technology, celluloid production is now a rarefied act and film coops the monasteries in which the devotees toil. Film is now almost entirely a production medium for experimental media artists. DIY processes and expanded cinema practices now find a home at many centres. Akin to the illuminated texts of the Irish monasteries during the Dark Ages, material filmmaking persists in conditions of diminishing expectations.

continued...

1990s

1991: Cinevic Society of Independent Filmmakers (Victoria)

1991: IFCO - Independent Filmmakers Co-operative of Ottawa

A review of programming in 2014 reveals that commitment to celluloid remains an important aspect of most film centres. For instance, four centres, LIFT, the Winnipeg Film Group, Main Film, and Cineworks offer access to darkrooms to support hand-processing; Vancouver's Cineworks has created a DIY studio space called the Annex to support celluloid practices; and LIFT provides comprehensive training and access to film equipment at a level that has been relinquished by most film schools in Canada as well as providing access to film stock and supplies through its popular LIFT Store. In Ottawa IFCO maintains a commitment to shooting on film only, hosts a 16mm training program for women and has plans to build a darkroom. Around the country, film challenges are a key strategy used to spark and retain interest in celluloid; in 2014, eight centres hosted Super 8 or 16mm challenges or commissioning projects. Artist residencies are offered by AFLOOP and LIFT, providing opportunities for artists to make works on film while mentoring others in the community.

Other centres offer master classes and hands-on workshops. Main Film in Montreal promotes a research/creation opportunity to artists through its Film Factory granting program and the Calgary Society of Independent Filmmakers keeps celluloid exhibition alive with its \$100 Film Festival, one of only a few festivals in the world that showcases film exclusively on Super 8 and 16mm. Other media art centres have also embraced film production to differing degrees: the Island Media Arts Cooperation in Charlottetown, PEI and the Yukon Film Society in Whitehorse provide rental access to 16mm and Super 8mm cameras; Faucet Media Arts Centre in Sackville, New Brunswick, and MediaNet in Victoria provide access to film cameras as well as offering Super 8 production and hand-processing workshops.

Any review of current activities at film production centres includes the use of digital technology within the broader definition of filmmaking, a term that is now routinely used to describe digital works. To meet the needs of aspiring and established filmmakers in their regions, the majority of centres have responded by investing in high quality-digital cinema equipment. And so film cooperatives have come back full circle. Their raison d'être remains as it was 40 years ago, to support the independent filmmaker seeking to make work outside the commercial or industrial model. With very few exceptions, the film cooperatives offer independent filmmakers the equipment they require, regardless of the choice of medium.

And therein lies the key to the future of film cooperatives in Canada. Initiated as places of creation, dissemination and inspiration decades ago, those centres that remain vital and responsive to the filmmakers in their communities will be the ones that survive, whether as sites for artisanal and DIY filmmaking, preserving the increasingly rare tools of celluloid production or as facilitators of equitable access to the tools of digital filmmaking. And just as the Canada Council set the stage for the establishment of film cooperatives 40 years ago, so it will again be the arbiter of which centres moves forward into the future.




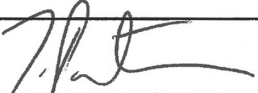
← Penny McCann

¹ ALTHOUGH THE TERM "COOPERATIVE" IS COMMONLY USED TO DESCRIBE CANADIAN FILM PRODUCTION CENTRES, NOT ALL CENTRES ARE LEGALLY CONSTITUTED COOPERATIVES.

² WINNIPEG FILM GROUP WEBSITE.

³ PETER SANDMARK, *INDEPENDENT MEDIA ARTS IN CANADA: ON THE HISTORY OF THE ALLIANCE* (INDEPENDENT MEDIA ARTS ALLIANCE, 2007), p. 15.

⁴ CAMERON BAILEY, *STANDING IN THE KITCHEN ALL NIGHT: A SECRET HISTORY OF THE TORONTO NEW WAVE*, *TAKE ONE*, SUMMER, 2000.

<p>THE CANADA COUNCIL 151 Sparks Street Ottawa, K1P 5V8</p>  <p>CONSEIL DES ARTS DU CANADA 151, rue Sparks Ottawa, K1P 5V8</p>		408-A	A74-1956
<p>Arts Division <i>Division des Arts</i></p> <p>NOTIFICATION OF GRANT <i>ATTRIBUTION DE SUBVENTION</i></p>		<p>DATE OF GRANT <i>DATE D'ATTRIBUTION</i> September 11, 1974</p> <p>AMOUNT REQUESTED <i>MONTANT SOLLICITE</i> \$ 30,000.00</p>	
<p>NAME AND ADDRESS OF RECIPIENT / <i>NOM ET ADRESSE DU BÉNÉFICIAIRE</i></p> <p>Mr. Ken Klady Chairman Winnipeg Film Cooperative 898 McMillan Avenue Winnipeg.</p>		<p>AMOUNT GRANTED <i>MONTANT ACCORDÉ</i></p> <p>\$ 30,000.00</p>	
<p>Purpose of grant / <i>Objet de la subvention</i></p> <p>For their activities in 1974-75</p>			
<p>Terms of payment / <i>Modalités de paiement</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Payment is enclosed in full <i>Ci-joint le montant intégral</i></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Payment will be made as follows <i>Les paiements seront faits selon le calendrier suivant</i></p> <p>1. \$ _____ Date _____ 2. \$ _____ Date _____ 3. \$ _____ Date _____ 4. \$ _____ Date _____ 5. \$ _____ Date _____</p> <p>To be determined</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Upon proof of legal status as a non-profit organization.</p> <p>Before instalment payments can be made, the Canada Council requires progress reports on both program and finances and, at the end of the fiscal year, a full report with a complete financial statement</p> <p><i>Avant de faire un versement, le Conseil des Arts exige un rapport d'étape accompagné d'un rapport financier. A la fin de l'année financière, le bénéficiaire doit présenter un rapport détaillé sur l'emploi de la subvention ainsi qu'un rapport financier complet.</i></p>			
			 Associate Director / <i>Directeur Associé</i>

THE WFG AT 40

ESSAY BY ANDREW BURKE

The story of the Winnipeg Film Group (WFG), like so many of its productions, refuses any simple synopsis. Told in its most conventional way, the story would begin with the group's formation in 1974, chart its development through its initial productions of the late 1970s and early 1980s, and then celebrate the WFG's efflorescence in the 1980s and 1990s. This is when its key figures garnered recognition, first on the national and then on the global cinematic stage. This story would conclude by asserting the WFG's ongoing importance in a digital age dramatically different from the analogue world into which it was born.

Yet, as largely truthful, arguably accurate and deeply satisfying as this kind of conventional narrative arc may be, it nevertheless fails to convey both the complexities of the group's history and the sheer range and invention of the films made under its auspices. As much as "there's only one Winnipeg Film Group!" is true in the sense that the conditions and characters that produced the films over its history are utterly irreproducible, the exact opposite, "there are many Winnipeg Film Groups!" is true as well. There are as many different histories of the WFG as there are people who picked up its cameras, sat at its editing tables, or simply watched its films. To assess the mythologies and meanings of the WFG is to confront the paradox of this singular plurality.

The letter of incorporation, dated December 27, 1974, that officially marks the formation of the WFG is a blandly bureaucratic document, yet it is a momentous one that would dramatically transform the Manitoban and Canadian film landscape. Among the signatories are the legendary Canadian animators Richard Condie and Brad Caslor, whose presence points to the importance of animation to the WFG, as well as Leon Johnson, whose experimental documentaries inaugurated another important strand of WFG production. These early

years of the WFG are often unjustly forgotten, but this also makes them ripe for rediscovery. The films themselves, from the collaborative *Rabbit Pie* (1976) that sets everything in motion to Johnson's *Le Metif Enragé* (1983), a key document of Franco-Manitoban culture, evoke the joy of filmmaking and the possibilities of local, independent filmmaking. And beyond the films, the story of the WFG is fascinating for the way it encapsulates a specific historical moment for the development of the arts in Canada: the development of an independent sector, grounded in the local, and driven by the enthusiasm of a group of individuals rather than guided by the demands of commerce.

For those outside Winnipeg, the WFG remains inextricably associated with the work of John Paizs and Guy Maddin. Paizs' *Crime Wave* (1985), only now becoming widely available after years of legal wrangling, infrequent screenings, and the underground circulation of prized copies on videocassette, forms a key part of both Winnipeg and WFG mythology. The film's inventive re-use of older cinematic forms and styles would shape many WFG productions in the years and decades that followed, while its failure to attract a wide audience — despite its critical celebration and striking originality — further fuelled the Winnipeg cinematic tendency towards self-deprecation and the celebration of isolation.

Since his 1985 WFG debut, *The Dead Father*, Maddin has become one of the key figures of world cinema. He has done so by delving more deeply into the city rather than drifting away from it. His early work consolidated outside visions of the WFG as a hotbed of a still-alive surrealism where fiction and reality could scarcely be distinguished, the unconscious ruled supreme, history weighed heavy on the heads of the living, and everyday life oscillated between dream and nightmare. This self-reflexive and

often self-lacerating civic mythopoeisis forms one tributary that cuts through the WFG's flood plain, from its source in Maddin down through the work of Noam Gonick, Deco Dawson, and Matthew Rankin.

But, by the 1990s, Prairie Postmodernism was by no means the only game in town. The films of Jeffrey Erbach form part of what Solomon Nagler terms the "Winnipeg Secession." Erbach's films stray from the pastiche that characterizes work by Paizs and Maddin in order to craft alluring allegories of adolescence. His short film *Soft Like Me* (1996) and feature-length *The Nature of Nicholas* (2002) are both distinguished by their keen exploitation of the flat expansiveness of the prairie landscape, which he uses not in the service of a stultifying realism but to evoke an erotic sensuousness.

If the transgressive tales of Erbach represent one kind of secession, the work of Sean Garrity represents another. While *Inertia* (2001) and *Lucid* (2003) might be more narratively conventional than the work generally associated with the WFG, they are certainly no less cinematically sophisticated. From his features, you might conclude that Garrity's strength resides primarily in the representation of milieu and the minutiae of relationships, but his short films, such as the moving and melancholic *Buenos Aires Souvenir* (2001) also reveal an energetic, experimental impulse and a sharp sense of the different shapes and forms a narrative can take.

There are many other ways that one can cut through the WFG catalogue and generate a different understanding of both its past and present. Alongside the cinematic surrealism, sensationalism and storytelling represented by the above works, there is also a rich vein of observational works that document the ordinary.

Elise Swerhone's remarkable *Havakeen Lunch* (1979) travels beyond the city's Perimeter to capture the deeply moving final days of a family's ownership of a rural restaurant; Barry Lank's *It's a Hobby for Harvey* (1980) follows its whistling champ lawyer around the city and to a competition in Las Vegas; and Shereen Jerrett's *Dog Stories* (1991) explores the bond between canine and human companion with deft emotional precision.

Animation similarly punctuates the catalogue, from Ed Ackerman and Greg Zbitnew's fun with the WFG photocopier in *5¢ a Copy* (1980) to Mike Maryniuk's distinctive and delirious shorts. Maryniuk's work is a vortex of WFG techniques and obsessions. Combining scratch animation, found footage manipulation and a whole host of other materials, methods and practices, Maryniuk's work points to the influence of Solomon Nagler's hand-processing workshops in the early 2000s, but also to the way in which the WFG of that era especially was a hands-on experimental film laboratory. This low budget, exploratory cinematic adventurousness expanded on the inventiveness and industriousness of the WFG's earliest days, but also set the tone for the digital experiments that would follow.

As much as documentary and animation offer alternative ways to understand and assess the WFG's achievements, scattered throughout the catalogue there are also unique figures who might also be thought of as central to a reimagined collective history. Perhaps most important is the work of Winston Washington Moxam, whose 11 short films and two features are all the more precious as a consequence of his tragically premature death in 2011. Moxam's films are not simply an important contribution to the history of Black Canadian cinema, but demand a rethinking of Canadian film more generally that fully recognizes its elisions and exclusions.

The WFG itself is by no means exempt from this demand. Its commitment to independence has meant that it has long produced and presented films from a wider variety of perspectives than can be found on commercial screens. Nevertheless, the effort to enrich and expand WFG offerings invariably caused tensions and necessitated struggle. Women filmmakers have been fundamental to the WFG from its very beginnings to the present day, from Norma Bailey's deeply moving character studies to Carole O'Brien's absolute command of both tone and technique to Danishka Esterhazy's evocative restagings and estrangings of fairy tale narratives. Yet, despite these successes, the effort to encourage and promote female filmmakers remains, as it does elsewhere in the film industry, frustratingly partial and incomplete.

As it enters its fifth decade, perhaps the strongest initiative and boldest push for the WFG is to foster and support Indigenous filmmakers. In the 2000s, Darryl Nepinak directed a number of shorts that are as sharply comedic as they are incisively political. Caroline Monnet's boldly experimental work bridges the gap between projection and installation and continues the close connection between filmmakers and the visual arts community that threads through the WFG's history. Finally, Kevin Lee Burton's *Meskanahk (My Path)* (2005) is a powerful, personal meditation that traces Burton's own journey from God's Lake First Narrows through Winnipeg and on to Vancouver. Burton's video narrative captures the alienation and anxiety experienced

by contemporary Indigenous youth, but also deftly reveals the threat to First Nations languages and culture that is the deep legacy of colonial racism. As Winnipeg wakes up to the inequities and injustices that structure everyday life in the city, the WFG has worked in concert with Indigenous groups to find new modes of representations and new models of production and distribution that amplify rather than elide Indigenous voices.

The historical force and continuing strength of the WFG resides in the way that it lives up to its own name. The Winnipeg Film Group is a collection of practitioners committed to cinematic independence and dedicated to the development of new talent. The Winnipeg Film Group maintains a fascination with, and an attachment to, the materiality of film itself but has not shied away from the digital possibilities that open up with its disappearance. Finally, the Winnipeg Film Group remains grounded in a landscape and a locale, not shying away from the failures and shortcomings of the city itself, but open to its idiosyncrasies, invested in its mythologies, and hopeful for its future transformations.



← Andrew Burke

NOW THEREFORE KNOW YE that by and under the authority of Part III of The Companies Act, I do by these my letters patent constitute the persons hereinafter named, that is to say:

BRAD CASLOR, Animator, DAVID CHERNIACK, Film Maker, RICHARD CONDIE, Animator, IAN ELKIN, Film Maker, LEON JOHNSON, Film Maker, LEN KLADY, Film Maker, UNO RUUS, Photographer, JANSA VESNA, Film Maker, LEONARD YAKIR, Film Maker, and JOANNE JACKSON JOHNSON, Film Maker,

all of the City of Winnipeg, in the Province of Manitoba.

and all other persons who may become members in the corporation under the provisions of Part III of the said Act, and their successors, a corporation without capital stock, under the name of

WINNIPEG FILM GROUP INC.

and capable forthwith of carrying on without pecuniary gain and subject to the provisions and restrictions applicable thereto, set forth in Part III of the said Act, for the objects following, that is to say:

To encourage the production of films of a social, artistic and educational nature; to make such films; and to enhance the production and appreciation of film making.

SPEAKERS



Jonathan Ball: Jonathan Ball, PhD, is the author of five books, including *John Paizs's Crime Wave*, an academic monograph about the Winnipeg Film Group cult film classic. He teaches literature, film, and writing at the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg.



Dave Barber: Dave Barber has served as programmer for Winnipeg Film Group's Cinematheque for over 30 years. Deeply committed to promoting Canadian independent film he has won several awards for his efforts – Making A Difference Award from the Winnipeg Arts Council (2007) and an Individual Award for Outstanding Support of the Arts (2004) from the Manitoba Foundation for the Arts.



Shane Belcourt: Shane Belcourt is Tony Belcourt's son. Or Christi Belcourt's brother. Or Claire's Dad. He is also an award-winning Métis filmmaker, writer and musician based in Toronto. Notable work includes the feature film *Tkaronto*, and shorts such as *A Common Experience*, *Keeping Quiet*, and *Pookums*.



Irene Bindi: Irene Bindi is a Winnipeg-based multidisciplinary artist and film programmer with an interest in experimental film. Her work has exhibited and screened at various galleries and festivals across Canada and in the U.S. She is a past member of the WNDX curatorial collective and holds an MA in Film and Video from York University.



Maureen Bradley: Award-winning filmmaker Maureen Bradley has created over 40 short films that have screened at festivals around the globe. Her first feature, *Two 4 One*, won the Best Canadian Film Award at the Victoria Film Festival and the Audience Award at the Available Light Film Festival in Yukon. Maureen lives in Victoria, where she is Associate Professor in screenwriting at the University of Victoria.



Andrew Burke: Andrew Burke is an Associate Professor in the Department of English at the University of Winnipeg, where he teaches critical theory and screen studies. His work has appeared in journals such as *Screen*, *Popular Music and Society* and *English Studies in Canada*. His current book project is on film, cultural memory and the Canadian 60s, 70s and 80s.



Danishka Esterhazy: Celebrated for her visually stunning and female-driven films, writer/director Danishka Esterhazy has delighted audiences around the world with her haunting stories. Her debut feature, *Black Field*, won the Best Feature Drama award at Vancouver's Women in Film Festival. She is currently working on her third feature film: *Shadowy Lines*.



Steve Gravestock: Steve Gravestock is Senior Programmer for the Toronto International Film Festival and is responsible for Canadian programming initiatives including Canada's Top Ten Film Festival and the Canadian Open Vault – a selection of Canadian classics. In addition, Gravestock oversees TIFF's series of monographs on Canadian films and filmmakers, which recently partnered with the University of Toronto Press.



Lulu Keating: For over 30 years, Lulu Keating has made approximately a film a year, for screens big and small: fiction, documentary and animation as a writer, director and producer. Keating is developing a feature and producing a television mini-series, both set in the Yukon where she now lives. Keating was connected with AFCCOP and other production centres in the 1980s.



Michelle Latimer: Michelle Latimer is an actor, filmmaker and curator. Her most recent short film *The Underground* premiered at TIFF, was selected as part of Telefilm Canada's "Not Short on Talent" at Cannes Festival 2014 and received the Best Short Film Award at the ImagineNATIVE Film Festival. Michelle has programmed for Hot Docs, Victoria, Dawson City and ImagineNATIVE Film Festivals and is a curatorial advisor to the Winnipeg Cinematheque.



Jean Pierre Lefebvre: Scriptwriter, director and independent producer, Jean Pierre Lefebvre is the creator of 27 feature films and over a dozen videos. Eleven of his films have been officially invited to the Cannes Film Festival where, in 1982, his feature *Les fleurs sauvages (Wild Flowers)* was awarded the International Critic Prize. In 1991, he was a recipient of the Order of Canada.



Danny Lennon: Lennon is founder and director of Prends Ça Court! since 1999, initiator and programmer of Telefilm Canada's: "Not Short on Talent" since 2012, in charge of festivals and sales at Phi Films since 2007, Film Commissioner of Montreal's Phi Centre since 2012 and invited programmer at Cannes Court Métrage / Festival du Cannes / Short Film Corner since 2005. He contributes in every possible way to the promotion, distribution, dissemination and production of short films by independents and professionals.



Penny McCann: Ottawa media artist Penny McCann's body of work spans 20 years and encompasses both dramatic and experimental films and videos. Her work has been exhibited widely in festivals and galleries nationally and internationally. McCann is currently Director at SAW Video.



William D. MacGillivray: William D. MacGillivray has been writing and directing dramatic and documentary films since 1972. He was a founding member and the first president of AFCCOP and was one of a small group of filmmakers who initiated discussions with Telefilm Canada resulting in a Telefilm Canada Atlantic Office. Award-winning works include: *Stations*, *Linda Joy*, *Life Classes*, *Understanding Bliss*, *Reading Alistair Macleod*, and *The Man of a Thousand Songs*.



Caroline Monnet: Caroline Monnet is a self-taught multidisciplinary artist from Outaouais, Québec. Her work has been exhibited in such venues as the Palais de Tokyo (Paris) and Haus der Kulturen (Berlin) for the Rencontres Internationales Paris/Berlin/Madrid, TIFF, Aesthetica (UK), Montréal Museum of Contemporary Art and Arsenal Gallery. Monnet lives in Montréal and is also a founding member of the Aboriginal digital arts collective ITWÉ.



Darlene Naponse: Darlene is an Anishinabe from Atikameksheng Anishnawbek – Northern Ontario. She is a writer, film director and video artist. Her film work has been viewed internationally including at the Sundance Film Festival in 2001, 2002 and 2003. Her latest feature *Every Emotion Costs*, screened worldwide, winning various awards.



Darryl Nepinak: Darryl Nepinak (Seaulteux) belongs to the Skownan First Nation. He was introduced to filmmaking through the Aboriginal Broadcast Training Initiative in 2005, where he made his first short film, *The Last of the Nepinaks*. Since then, he has gone on to make over ten short films that have screened around the world. More recently, retrospectives of his work have been featured at Urban Shaman Gallery (2013), the Images Festival (2014) and shortly upcoming for the WNDX Festival (2015).



Midi Onodera: Midi Onodera is an award-winning filmmaker who has been making films and videos for over 30 years. She has 25+ independent short films to her credit as well as a theatrical feature film and an abundance of short videos. From 2006 to 2014, Midi created almost 500 short videos or "Vidoodles."



John Paizs: John Paizs is a film and television director based in Toronto, Canada. Since 2000, he has also been a Director Mentor at the Canadian Film Centre. Connected to the Winnipeg Film Group since the 1980s, Paizs became a central figure in the movement that Geoff Pevere dubbed "Prairie Postmodernism."



Geoff Pevere: Geoff Pevere is an author, teacher, broadcaster and movie critic. During the 1980s, he was one of the first Canadian critics and programmers to identify that something strange and amazing was happening at the Winnipeg Film Group. He is currently the Program Director for the Rendezvous With Madness film festival in Toronto. Coincidence?



Matthew Rankin: Matthew Rankin studied Québec history at McGill and l'Université Laval before returning into the artistic underclass of his native Winnipeg to become a maker of art films. Working in photochemical hybrids of documentary, experimental drama and animated abstraction, Matthew's work emerges from the formal and thematic confluence of Québec and Winnipeg. Two-time Jutra loser and three-time alumnus of Sundance, Matthew is the winner of IMAA's 2014 National Media Arts Prize.



Jason Ryle: Jason Ryle is the Executive Director at the imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival. He additionally serves on the board of directors for Vtape, an independent video distributor, and is a script reader for The Harold Greenberg Fund, which provides financial aid to Canadian filmmakers. He made his first short film in 2005 and has been programming alongside imagineNATIVE's Programming Team since 2002.



Alicia Smith: Alicia Smith lives in Winnipeg and is a Producer for the NFB, focusing on documentary, animation and interactive audiovisual works. Her work at the NFB – ranging from POV docs by emerging Nunavut filmmakers, to international co-productions with The Guardian UK – has received recognition from the Webby Awards, SXSW and IDFA.



Elise Swerhone: Elise is an award-winning producer, director and writer, and her body of work has screened at film festivals, theatrically and for broadcast around the world. One of the group of filmmakers involved in founding the Winnipeg Film Group in the early 1970s, Swerhone would go on to make the first film directed by an individual director through the organization – *Havakeen Lunch*. Presently she is Program Manager for the National Screen Institute's Drama Prize Program and Co-manager of the NSI Aboriginal Documentary Program.



Alan Syliboy: While a student at NSCAD, Alan Syliboy looked to the Indigenous Mi'kmaq petroglyph tradition for inspiration and developed his own artistic vocabulary out of those forms. His 2010 film *Little Thunder*, an animated collaboration between Syliboy, director Nance Ackerman and animator Paton Francis has been screened at numerous film festivals. In 2011, Alan launched *The Dream Canoe Animation*.



Jenny Western: Jenny Western is a curator, writer and educator based in Winnipeg. She holds a Masters in Art History and Curatorial Practice from York University in Toronto. One of Jenny's most recent projects includes co-curating "Close Encounters: The Next 500 Years," a multi-venue group exhibition of contemporary Indigenous art from around the globe. She is of mixed European/Oneida/Stockbridge-Munsee descent and a member of the Brothertown Indian Nation of Wisconsin.

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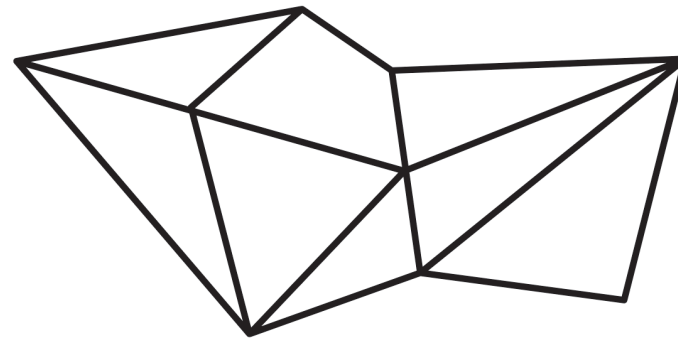
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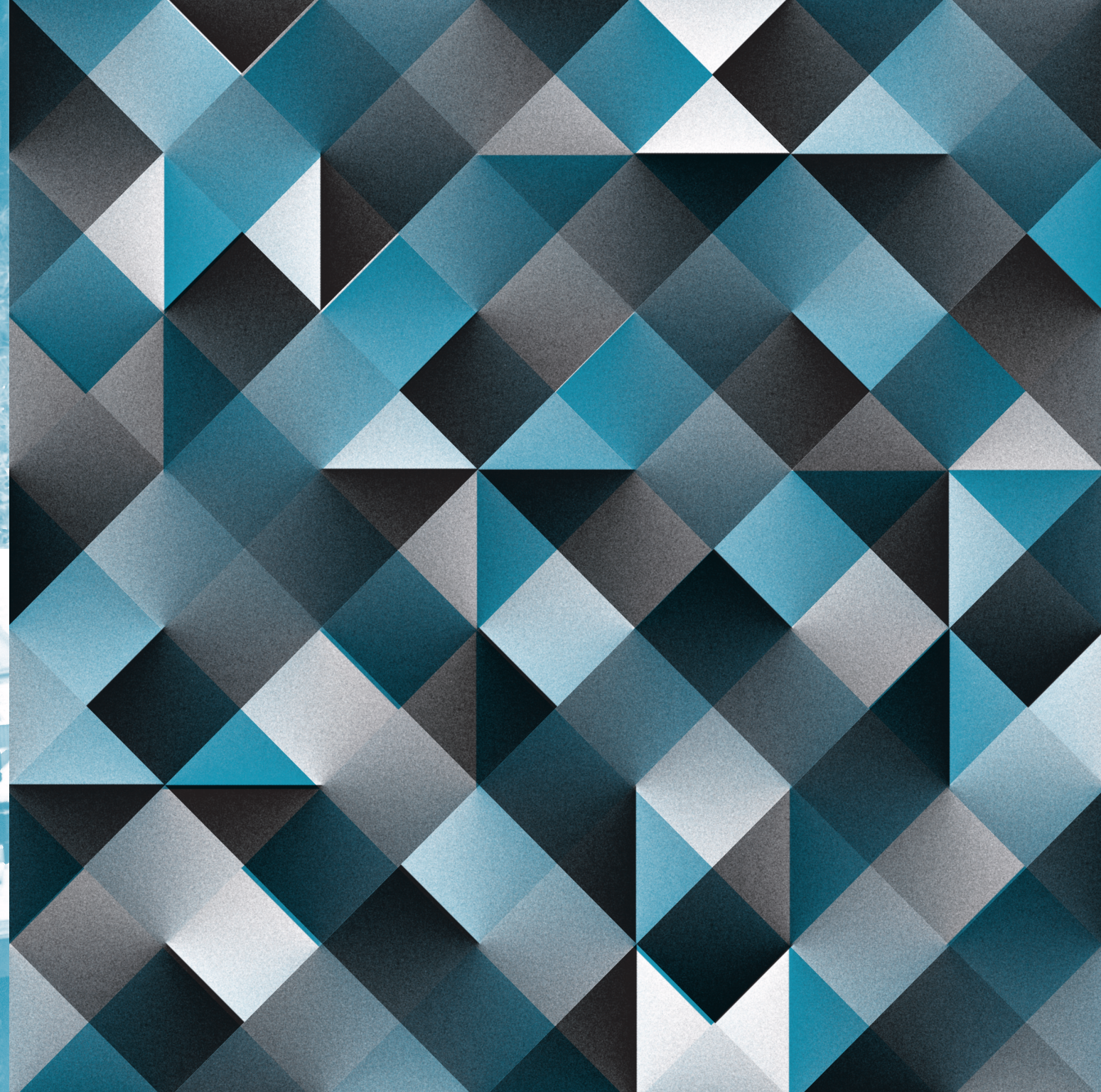
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