

2015/2016 ANNUAL REPORT

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TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Winnipeg Film Group is located on original lands of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation.

We respect the Treaties that were made on these territories; we acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past; and we dedicate ourselves to move forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.

ABOUT THE WINNIPEG FILM GROUP

The Winnipeg Film Group was established in 1974, and is a charitable media arts centre dedicated to promoting the art of cinema. Our organization has three distinct operating wings:

1. A **Cinematheque**, which develops audiences and educates about the artform
2. A **Distribution Centre**, which supports the dissemination of filmmakers' works across Canada and around the world
3. A **Production Centre**, which includes training, equipment resources, facilities, grants, mentorship services and other programs to support artists in the creation and experimentation process

We have served as a resource for Manitoba filmmakers and video artists for 42 years, providing access to affordable training, mentorship, production funding, experimentation opportunities, production and post production equipment and facilities, and local, national and international programming and distribution. While we work in film, including hand-crafted processes and work in small gauges, we also fully support digital and video making practices.

We established our Cinematheque in 1982, to respond to an environment that existed at the time in Winnipeg, which saw an absolute void of professional presentation opportunities for Canadian filmmakers. Through this wing, we promote the art and develop audiences, providing local and Canadian filmmakers opportunities to have their works screened and discussed critically alongside our world cinema series.

Our distribution centre, the least outwardly visible centre within our organization, functions to resolve a service need that is unique to film, video and other moving image art practices. While in the media arts, festivals traditionally take on the role of introducing works and supporting sales (like a gallery would in the visual arts), because the distribution system for film requires individual works to be exhibited at a significant number of venues within the first two years of release, media arts distribution centres directly support artists in managing dissemination activities.

In addition to directly supporting artists and developing the audience, our organization also provides significant technical, facility and equipment support to other media arts organizations and groups that share in our objectives and values, as an extension of how we provide a platform of support for independent film and video practices as a whole in Manitoba and Canada.

Since 1974, we have focused on creating resources in Manitoba that simply did not exist before, with the underlying core belief that artists should not have to leave the province to develop and sustain their careers as filmmakers. In developing the necessary resources for filmmakers in Manitoba, we built out an organizational framework that considered what those self-sustaining resources would be: production and training support, distribution support and a year-long exhibition series (our Cinematheque).

We remain steadfastly an inclusionary organization, focusing on providing resources for Manitoba and Canadian filmmakers to support their artistic visions and to provide a greater understanding of their practices. Importantly, we consciously make room for all artists working in moving image art practices who want to participate in our organization, regardless of the form, format or presentation platform they elect to use and explore. Our organization defines the term "filmmaker" broadly to encompass any artist working in moving image art practices.

TEN YEARS BACK AND TEN YEARS FORWARD

“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, WFG Founder

“It was a great time, very exciting when we started out. We argued constantly, but we did get things done.” ~ Len Klady, WFG Founder

Ten years ago

It was almost ten years ago that a large group of us in the independent filmmaking community participated in a two-day planning retreat at Urban Shaman Gallery. The mid-winter experience was rather cold, but the end result was a road map that set the stage for what we wanted the Winnipeg Film Group to become in the unknown future.

I was appointed the Executive Director of the Winnipeg Film Group ten years ago, almost exactly to the day. I was the fourth person in the role within a span of two years. There were very basic, urgent needs at the time, and the discussions at the planning session months later reflected that sense of urgency.

In the ten years since, I’ve come to learn many things about the personality of the Winnipeg Film Group that I didn’t know before – chief among them, that the organization does not have a long memory of itself. At best, the organization’s collective memory is about two to three years deep, making the process of consciously stopping to remember and taking stock all the more important to being able to move forward in a strategic manner.

What happened in the decade since has been largely the realization of the vision expressed at that planning session, alongside taking advantage of opportunities that presented themselves along the way.

Financial stability

- Since 2006, we’ve received a 33% increase in operating funding, during a period where many other organizations have been flat-lined or cut
- In 2006, the organization had earned revenue total of just under \$230,000. In 2016, earned revenue comprised over \$365,000.
- While Cinematheque’s box office revenue fell in the mid to late 2000s, the organization was able to develop a larger diversification of revenue strategies to make up the gap as the business model was undergoing evolution. In 2016, for the first time in over a decade, Cinematheque’s box office was over \$100,000.
- In 2006, Distribution revenue was at just under \$15,000. That figure doubled by 2010, and by 2016 it quadrupled, now over \$60,000. The advent of the Internet age has enabled filmmakers to effectively self-distribute to non-paying opportunities, freeing the distribution centre to pursue paying markets almost exclusively.

Facilities and equipment

- For those who remember the Cinematheque pre 2006, you will remember the roll-out box office, the lack of space for artist talks, the spotty video projection capacity and the old air conditioning system that didn't function properly. In 2016, after three successive renovations to the theatre in the decade since and a facility investment of totaling over \$200,000, theatre has become a modern and comfortable space with exceptional projection technology and capacity, and with a commercial grade kitchen that serves as an important amenity for events.
- In 2006, the distribution centre maintained is culturally-significant media artwork collection in a small, overheated closet. After an over \$50,000 investment and a technical consultation with the Cinémathèque québécoise, by 2009 the organization was able to develop a professional-grade climate controlled storage vault for these holdings.
- In 2006, beyond core production equipment, the production centre had to support its training programs just an old TV on a rollout trolley connected to a VHS deck that rarely seemed to work. It also had one antique Mac Pro, acquired second-hand in 2002. The production centre had not yet even dared to express the dream of acquiring a Mac lab – for not only was there a lack of money for equipment, but there was also no physical space available at the time to put such a facility.
- In 2010, we acquired the basement office space, the first step in the aspiration to become a fully digital media arts centre. Alongside tapping into funding available specifically for digital technology upgrades, the organization has been able to work-in upgrades to our analogue systems along the way – including now having the best fleet of Super 8 cameras and tools the organization has ever had, supporting analogue screenings and processes like no time ever before in its pre 2006 history.

Online Architectures

- In 2006, the organization was largely pre-Internet. Developing a robust, modern online architecture has required a near \$50,000 investment in direct development costs over the past decade, alongside significant staff attention spanning years. This investment and attention has laid the groundwork for the WFG's website to become an online extension of the organization's physical iteration in the provision of programs and screenings.

Diversity

- Diversity has long been the *Achilles heel* of the Winnipeg Film Group over decades, reflected in the demographics of people who become independent film directors. With dedicated effort and attention, including dedicated programs, the past decade has been unquestionably about the rise of Indigenous filmmakers and of women directing feature films – two things that did not exist prior to 2006. Adopting a organizational culture of equity and reconciliation has not come easy to the organization, but this has been the Winnipeg Film Group's most meaningful measurable success over the past decade

Human resources

- In 2006, nearly every single permanent staff person over all three programming departments reported to the Executive Director. In 2011, each department was assigned its own head who works on actualizing department programs and services that reflect the organization's larger artistic and operational vision. This multi-tiered operational leadership structure has permitted smaller, more autonomous and responsive working groups focused on specific areas. While there have been some adjustments needed along the way, this new structure immediately increased the overall capacity of organization and freed up the Executive Director's time to focus on business development.
- One of the most significant successes of the organization's past ten years is that it now has the longest-tenured staff in its history. Even when permanent staff move on to other opportunities, they do so now typically at the six to eight year mark, which was a previously mostly unheard of tenure. The organization now has four staff who have a tenure of over ten years, three of whom celebrated their 10th anniversaries with the WFG in 2016: myself, Monica Lowe and Sharon Thiessen-Woods.

Ten years forward

Looking forward ten years, there will be a complex mix of matters to address – both to take advantage of opportunities that have recently emerged on the horizon and to plan for new challenges that lie ahead.

The new recent federal government increases to the Canada Council for the Arts represent a significant new opportunity for increased support for the Winnipeg Film Group's longer term aspirations – pending outcome of their assessment of our organization during a procedural six month review period starting in the spring of 2017.

To inform the short and long term operational planning that will now necessarily need to be developed, the organization will be engaging in a new process of comprehensive community consultation in the first few months of 2017.

Cecilia Araneda, MFA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

40TH ANNIVERSARY

Fall of 2015 saw the wrap-up of our 40th anniversary programming highlights, with two retrospective programs commissioned by the Festival du Nouveau Cinema (Montreal) and the Festival International Signes de Nuit (Paris). The programs were curated by Solomon Nagler for the respective festivals.

From the Festival du Nouveau Cinema:

Celebrated internationally, the Winnipeg Film Group produces some of Canada's most original cinema. When traveling the festival circuit with their work, artists from Winnipeg are bombarded with puzzled looks and questions of "what is in the water?" Many have attempted to trace and codify the Winnipeg Aesthetic, struggling to discover a reason for the stream of talent and weirdness that is created from this isolated city.

This year the Winnipeg Film Group celebrates its 40th anniversary. To commemorate this, Solomon Nagler was commissioned to assemble a two-program anthology of work produced over four decades. These screenings are not exhaustive surveys, rather are curated under two thematic threads; experimental portraits with self mythologizing, postmodern stylings often attributed as unique to Winnipeg cinema; and abstract experimental work, emanating from a new wave of Prairie filmmakers.

Many of these artists have been featured at the Festival du Nouveau Cinéma in the past. With this in mind, special attention has been placed on rarely screened work and on archival discoveries that have recently surfaced after the spring thaw of a brutal winter from a frozen city that dreams a remarkable cinema. (curator Solomon Nagler)

WINDY AWARDS

The Windy Awards were held for the first time in 2016, honouring local filmmaking talent with four director and five craft categories. This awards program is open for nominations by works made by a Manitoba independent director. The 2016 edition short-list and award recipients were selected by jury chair film programmer and producer Joy Loewen, and accomplished filmmakers Noam Gonick and Shelagh Carter.

- DIRECTOR: FEATURE FILM – *The Editor* (Adam Brooks, Matthew Kennedy)
- DIRECTOR: FIRST FEATURE FILM – *On the Trail of the Far Fur Company* (Kevin Nikkel)
- DIRECTOR: SHORT FICTION – *Loss of Contact* (BJ Verot, Brad Crawford)
- DIRECTOR: SHORT DOCUMENTARY – *The Healing of Heather Garden* (Judith Morrow)
- SCREENPLAY – *The Editor* (Adam Brooks, Matthew Kennedy, Conor Sweeny)
- CINEMATOGRAPHY – *The Editor* (Adam Brooks, Matthew Kennedy)
- PRODUCTION DESIGN – *The Editor* (Adam Brooks, Matthew Kennedy)
- PICTURE EDITING – *The Editor* (Adam Brooks)
- OVERALL SOUND – *Andrew Milne Dreams of Machines* (Greg Lowe)

NEW MOSAIC FILM PROJECT COMPLETED

Kristin Snowbird's first film, *SWEAT*, commissioned by the WFG through the Mosaic Women's Film Project, was completed in the summer of 2016 and subsequently went on to screen at both the Gimli and WNDX film festivals.

The Mosaic Women's Film Project was initiated in 2008, designed to support Indigenous and culturally diverse women make a first or second short independent film.

The first film completed and released through this program – *IKWÉ*, by 2008 program participant Caroline Monnet – went on to become the first film by a Manitoba Indigenous filmmaker selected for the Toronto International Film Festival.

With her completion of *SWEAT*, Snowbird joins a distinguished group of Mosaic alumnae, who include Columpa Bobb, Gertrude Hambira, Caroline Monnet, Jody Leigh Pacey, Saira Rahman, Miriam Sainnawap, Rhayne Vermette and Shimby Zegeye-Gebrehiwot.

myCINEMATHEQUE LAUNCH

Launched in summer 2016, the new digital platform, *myCinematheque.ca*, is designed to replicate and expand some of our artistic programming for rural Manitoban and online audiences.

myCinematheque.ca will be updated periodically with new content including short film programs featuring interviews with the filmmakers, and documentation of artist talks, events and workshops.

"It's the Rhayne, Jackie, Caroline, Darryl, Kevin and Leonard Show!" is the first program of *myCinematheque.ca*, curated by Jenny Western and featuring work by Rhayne Vermette, Jackie Traverse, Caroline Monnet, Darryl Nepinak, Kevin Lee Burton and Leonard Sumner.

"This program is made up of 6 Manitoban/former Manitoban filmmakers, who also happen to be of Indigenous descent. And while their films are amazing and they can stand on their own and don't necessarily have to be placed in an "Aboriginal themed program" – I think it's interesting that they have been brought together in this way to really reflect the diversity of ways that Indigenous filmmakers can use film as a storytelling means. These six aren't representative of all of the filmmakers out there, but I hope it provides you, the audience, with a great introduction to what's happening in Manitoba with Indigenous film and filmmakers." – Jenny Western, curator

- *Black Rectangle* (dir. Rhayne Vermette, 2013, 1:30 mins)
- *Two Scoops* (dir. Jackie Traverse, 2008, 2:55 mins)
- *Demi Monde* (dir. Caroline Monnet, 2013, 3:30 mins)
- *It's the Norval Morrisseau, Jackson Beardy, Carl Ray, Eddie Cobiness, Daphne Odjig, Joe Sanchez and Alex Janvier Show* (dir. Darryl Nepinak, 2011, 9:13 mins)
- *Nikamowin (Song)* (dir. Kevin Lee Burton, 2007, 11:15 mins)
- *Mikomiing* (dir. Leonard Sumner, 2009, 9 mins)

EDUCATIONAL CATALOGUE

Our distribution department released a new educational catalogue publication highlighting a selection of DVDs and books for schools, public libraries, film schools and community groups.

This catalogue focuses on:

- Canadian Indigenous Films
- History & Community
- Health & Medicine / Food Security
- Film Studies

CINEMATHEQUE RENOVATIONS

The most recent upgrades to the Cinematheque facility and equipment included new seats and a more comfortable layout, a new silver screen, and an upgrade to our projection system to now support 3D.

FUNDING AWARDS

FIRST FILM FUND

Funded by Manitoba Film and Music and the Winnipeg Film Group, this program provides \$3,000 in cash and \$2,000 in services to each of the two program recipients to support the creation of a small first or second short film. This program also provides customized planning support and training, corresponding to the level of need of the individual filmmaker.

- Miles Crossman, *New World Old* - \$5,000
- Matthew Van Ginkel, *Mr. Bitey* - \$5,000

Jury: Sonya Ballantyne, Dinae Robinson, Devon Unrau

Jury Chair: Mark Borowski

MANITOBA FILM HOTHOUSE AWARD

Funded by the Province of Manitoba, the Manitoba Film Hothouse Award for Creative Development supports a mid-career or established Manitoba filmmaker to further develop their careers by providing them with added profile and with funding to support self-directed development work. This award provides \$10,000 in cash and \$5,000 in services, as well as a production membership with the Winnipeg Film Group. Additionally, the award recipient is provided with a special retrospective screening at the Winnipeg Cineamtheque.

- Rhayne Vermette: \$15,000

Jury: Kevin Nikkel, Roger Wilson, Justina Neepin

Jury Chair: Mark Borowski

MOSAIC WOMEN'S FILM PROJECT

The Mosaic Women's Film Project is a special production support and film mentorship program to assist women of Aboriginal or culturally diverse backgrounds to produce first or second independent short films. This program offers awards \$7,500 in cash and services from the Winnipeg Film Group, which can be applied to workshops and equipment and facility rentals. Each award recipient is also provided with the direct assistance of a mentor to see them through to project completion.

- **No Award Deadline in 2015/2016**

MARKETING FUND

Funded by Manitoba Film and Music, the Marketing Fund helps filmmakers market and distribute new works by contributing to the cost of promotional materials and other related marketing expenses. Filmmakers can receive up to a maximum of \$750 contribution per film through this fund.

FALL 2015

- Orlando Braun, *That Mennonite Joke* - \$500.00
- Nilufer Rahman, *Arctic Mosque* - \$750.00
- Aaron Zeghers, *Holland MB* - \$750.00

Jury: Sean Garrity, Charles Konowal, Nyla Innushuk

Jury Chair: Monica Lowe

SPRING 2016

- Teddy Zegeye-Gebrehiwot, *Stories of Decolonization: Land Dispossession and Settlement* - \$250.00
- Rhayne Vermette, *Les Chassis de Lourdes* - \$750.00
- Thayer MacInnis, *For Our Peat's Sake* - \$250.00
- Alain Delannoy, *THE TALK: TRUE STORIES ABOUT THE BIRDS & THE BEES* - \$750.00

Jury: Mike Maryniuk, Anita Lebeau, Lewis Bennet

Jury Chair: Monica Lowe

PRODUCTION FUND

Funded by Manitoba Film and Music, the Production Fund provides cash and service awards to selected recipients. Depending on the scope of the project, the Production Fund can provide full or partial funding for a film.

FALL 2015

- Paul Carvelli, *Nervosa* - \$1,000 cash
- Sebastien Ball, *This Time* - \$1,000 services
- Tyrone Otte, *Manitoba Traditional Indigenous Governance Realities* - \$2,000 cash; \$2,000 services; \$1,250 William F. White award
- Morgan Traa, *Jenny & Jeff* - \$1,000 cash
- Rhayne Vermette, *Les Châssis de Lourdes* - \$2,000 cash

Jury: Noam Gonick, Jenny Ng-Turner, David Zellis

Jury Chair: Mark Borowski

SPRING 2016

- Kelsey Braun, *An Accidental Language* - \$2,000 cash; \$2,000 services
- Charles Beaudette, *Bird* - \$1,250 William F. White award
- Randy Guest, *Lady Frost* - \$2,000 services
- Cody Halcrow, *Remains, Human* - \$2,000 cash
- Jeremiah Milmine, *Ditch People* - \$2,000 services
- Tristin Norenberg-Goodmanson, *Visiting Icelandic-Canadian Folkculture in Manitoba: A Documentary* - \$2,000 cash

Jury: Warren Nightingale, Fabian Velasco, Rhayne Vermette

Jury Chair: Mark Borowski

GOVERNANCE

The Winnipeg Film Group's board of directors consists of three board members elected every year at our AGM from among the membership, appointed for three-year terms, making up a total of nine directors. Three additional board positions are designated for community appointees, allowing for the board to attain specialized experts in areas such as accounting, law, marketing and fundraising, and also to ensure appropriate representation from the diverse cultural communities of Manitoba. No board member, with the exception of the immediate past president, can remain on the board for more than six consecutive years.

The President of the board of directors is elected by the membership at the AGM, along with the three elected positions. Only filmmaker category members are eligible to vote (voting is not available to organizational members nor Cinematheque individual members). The position of President is a one-year term with the eligibility of re-election up to the maximum board tenure. A candidate for President must have had at least one year tenure on the Winnipeg Film Group's board of directors, though this does not have to have been consecutive experience.

The Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer are elected by the board of directors at its first meeting following the AGM. The Vice President and Secretary are required to be selected from among the elected member directors. The Treasurer can be selected from among both the elected directors and the community appointees.

2015 - 2016 BOARD OF DIRECTORS (from AGM 2016)

- RICK GENSIORREK, management / HR specialist and actor – *President (to March 20, 2016)*
- CONNIE WACHSMANN, script supervisor – *Vice President (to March 20, 2016); Acting President (from March 20, 2016)*
- KAYLA JEANSON, filmmaker – *Chair, Board Development Committee; Acting Vice President (from March 20, 2016)*
- GLENN FLEETWOOD, CPA, CGA – *Treasurer; Chair, Finance Committee*
- ERIC J. BUETTNER, lawyer – *Secretary*
- LUTHER ALEXANDER, filmmaker – *Chair, Community Engagement Committee*
- IAIN COATS, MBA (to February 17, 2016)
- ANITA LUBOSH, Sound Recordist (from March 28, 2016)
- RYAN SIMMONS, Filmmaker
- ALLAN TURNER, Writer (from March 28, 2016)

STAFF

- Cecilia Araneda | *Executive Director*
 - Sharon Thiessen-Woods, CGA | *Bookkeeper*
 - Amanda Kindzierski | *Operations Coordinator*

 - Jaimz Asmundson | *Cinematheque Programming Director*
 - Dave Barber | *Cinematheque Programming Coordinator*
 - Kaitlyn McBurney | *Cinematheque Operations Coordinator*
 - Miloš Mitrovic | *Cinematheque Technical Liaison*
 - *House Staff:* Steph Berrington, Mark Borowski, Eric Peterson, Stephanie Poruchnyk-Butler, Sam Sarty

 - Monica Lowe | *Distribution Director*
 - Stephanie Berrington | *Distribution Coordinator*

 - Ben Williams | *Production Centre Director*
 - Mark Borowski | *Production Centre Programs Coordinator*
 - Dylan Baillie | *Production Centre Technical Coordinator*
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We would also like to thank staff members who departed during the year:

- Kevin Lee Burton
- Marcel Kreutzer
- Niki Little
- Kristy Muckosky
- Heidi Phillips