

Observatoire du documentaire Documentary Network

ACTIVITY REPORT 2005-2006

and

ACTION PLAN 2006-2007

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

When I was offered the Documentary Network (Observatoire du documentaire) presidency, I hesitated a little bit. I was afraid the task was beyond my skills. And God knows one has to be skilled to be a good *observer*. However, I didn't hesitate very long. Documentary has always been my passion, and it is a privilege to be able to observe the thing one loves. Thus I've been observing, with peers who are as passionate as I am. It is a pleasure and a responsibility. Documentary is doing well but could do better. It's doing well because more and more people watch it and show interest in it. It's doing well because there's been an acknowledgment of its value and tradition. Documentary is cinema, not a sub-product. It is cinema with capital C; that is, a cinema that can also be popular and for which people even queue!

It isn't necessary to stand very high to observe that documentary could be doing better. It could, if it was allowed to breathe. Instead, it is being squeezed into very restrictive formats, overwhelmed with advertisements which reduce its impact, and it is attributed the lowest budgets which make it look like the poor parent of cinema. Then, when these low budgets are cut, without any warning, it is implicitly stated that documentaries are of little importance. However, documentary is the voice of society. It screams out what needs to be urgently heard in order to prevent society from going off track. It also suggests softly what some are afraid to say aloud. It speaks on behalf of our collective consciousness.

These are the reasons why, from the Documentary Network, twelve organizations are now monitoring the documentary. We meet once a month and together we take the necessary actions and measures. Lucette Lupien, our devoted Director, takes note of everything and, with her usual surveillance, keeps us regularly informed of all that shines and menaces in documentary's horizon. Wishing strongly to remain open to the world, we do what we think has to be done in order to keep going in the right direction. The cause is worthwhile: Documentary is a weapon of massive construction! It works for life, for the evolution and memory of life!



Manon Barbeau
Filmmaker
President

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

This document aims to present the best possible synthesis of the current situation of Canadian Documentary, and the actions undertaken by the Documentary Network throughout 2005-2006 as well as those planned for 2006-2007.

It also comprises a number of statistical data which, he hope, will help to better understand the evolution of Documentary's environment. However, given that the collection of such data is fairly recent, we are unable to provide a global tableau of the situation and we apologize for this. It is nonetheless part of our action plan for the mid term.

This report is presented under the following items:

- General Information
- Reflection and Consultation
- Production
- Diffusion and Distribution
- Training
- Promotion
- Audience Development
- The Forum
- Perspectives for the Future
- Networking
- Management and Finances
- Annex : Events and Highlights 2005-2006
- Annex : New Tendencies

We find it important to note that the Documentary Network operations are financed by its members and by some generous organizations such as the SARTEC (Société des auteurs de radio, télévision et cinéma) and the CIFVF (Canadian Independent Film and Video Fund). The Forum 2005, on the other hand, has benefited from the support of Telefilm Canada, SODEC, the NFB, Montreal Arts Council, Radio-Canada, Télé-Québec and Alternatives. This means that the following activities were carried out with the modest budget of \$54,000 and the members' participation.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Mandate of the Documentary Network

Created in 2003 under the auspices of the Rencontres internationales du documentaire de Montreal (RIDM) by the professional audiovisual associations (APFTQ, ARRQ, DOC, CFTPA and CQGCR2), the Documentary Network acts as a place to come together for reflection and discussion, to ensure that documentary maintains its essential position in the world of cinema.

The Network aims to ensure that documentary plays its rightful role in the defense of democracy, tolerance, and open-mindedness. It encourages speaking out and public debate sparked by films that tackle the issues, aspirations and values of society.

The Network works to improve the conditions that enable Canadian POV documentary creation and production and to facilitate access to POV documentary for all audiences.

The Documentary Network Membership

The Documentary Network is presently composed of 12 organizations (institutions and associations) chosen among the most representative of Canada's professional audiovisual milieu:

- The Independent Media Arts Alliance (IMAA)
- L'Association des producteurs de films et de télévision du Québec (APFTQ)
- L'Association québécoise des techniciens de l'image et du son (AQTIS)
 - L'Association des réalisateurs et réalisatrices du Québec (ARRQ)
- The Canadian Film and Television Production Association (CFTPA)
 - The Quebec Council of the Directors Guild of Canada (CQGCR)
 - Documentary Organisation of Canada (DOC)
 - The National Film Board of Canada (NFB)
- Les Rencontres internationales du documentaire de Montréal (RIDM)
 - Le Vidéographe
 - Télé-Québec
- La Société Radio-Canada/Canadian Broadcasting Television

Board of Directors

Its Board is composed of individual delegates from its member organizations

Manon Barbeau, President (ARRQ)

Monique Simard, Vice-President (APFTQ), Ian McLaren, substitute

Fortner Anderson, Vice-President (CQGCR)

Marie-Anne Raulet, Treasurer (RIDM)

Marie-Dominique Bonmariage, Secretary (Vidéographe), Bernard Claret, substitute

Philippe Baylaucq (RIDM)

Danielle Beaudry (Télé-Québec), Alain Ergas, substitute

Claude Bonin and Tom Perlmutter (ONF) alternatively – assisted by Colette Loumède, Yves Bisailon

Daniel Cross (CFTPA), John Christou, Mila Aung-Thwin, substitutes

Jennifer Dorner (AAMI), François-Xavier Tremblay, substitute

Malcolm Guy (DOC), Sylvie Van Brabant, substitute

Lise Lachapelle, secretary (ARRQ), Magnus Isacson, substitute

Paul Lapointe (RIDM)

Catherine Loumède (AQTIS), Michel Charles Major, substitute

Jean Pelletier (SRC), Luc Paradis, substitute

The Documentary Network Supporters

The Documentary Network is supported by the SARTEC — Société des auteurs de radio, télévision et cinéma (radio, TV and cinema writers association) and the CIFVF — Canadian Independent Film and Video Fund.

Telefilm Canada, SODEC and Montreal Arts Council (and, some years, the Canada Council for the Arts) also bring their precious financial contribution to the Documentary Network projects.

Human Resources

Lucette Lupien is the Executive Director of the Documentary Network.

To organize its **Forum 2005**, the Documentary Network benefited from the generous collaboration of a number of persons, either volunteer or on contract, among which we wish to mention André Pâquet (who was the Forum Secretary), Michel Coulombe (moderator), Ségolène Roederer (moderator), Marie Dietlin (photographer), Christine York and Valerie Vanstone (translators), Marie Boti, Christine Irlinger-Renaud and Linda Ballantyne (interpreters), Jean-François Denis and David Turgeon (website), and the RIDM team directed by Marie-Anne Raulet. Special thanks go to Alfred Dion, Marie-Dominique Lahaise, Nelly Cugnod and Charlotte Selb.

General recommendations from the Board for 2006-2007

The Board of Directors recommends: to prioritize lobby-related activities, to work for preserving and increasing documentary's acquired benefits, to pursue national consultations, to convince the Canadian government of protecting educational networks such as Télé-Québec, TVOntario and the diversity of genres, and to implement a five-year Canadian program for supporting feature-length documentaries intended for theatrical release.

Furthermore, the Documentary Network plans to work towards the creation of alliances with English Canadian associations to unify our voices; to plan an annual event within the frame of Hot Docs in order to promote the Documentary Network in English Canada; to ensure a better presence for documentaries in the media.

The Documentary Network also wishes to develop its website; to have a study made regarding the creation of a Documentary Portal; to create a committee for technological awareness; to publish a biannual bulletin to keep the public and the member organizations informed of its activities – so that these, in turn, can at the same time inform their individual members.

REFLECTION AND CONSULTATION

The Documentary Network is a unique and privileged place for discussion, exchange of information, and for coordinating actions in favor of documentary film. Reflection and consultation certainly are the principal mandate of the organization and its best accomplishment. Since this year, distribution and broadcasting are represented at the Documentary Network Board, contributing to the debates and analyses.

2005-2006

During the year 2005-2006, the Board held eleven regular meetings and a one day orientation meeting in September 2005 called *Let's imagine the future: What would be the ideal situation for documentary?* To these should be added the Annual General Meeting.

Moreover, the Documentary Network participated in meetings of the **Consultative Group on Documentary Policies** conducted by NFB, Telefilm and the CTF and of its **sub-committee for the socio-cultural impact of documentary**; this, with the intention of having the associations' voices heard by the institutions and the government.

2006-2007

The Documentary Network intends to maintain its monthly meetings in order to increase the discussion, the exchange of information and the collective actions for the future of documentary.

The Documentary Network will continue to participate in the works of the Consultative Group on Documentary Policies and to those of the sub-committee for socio-cultural impact, so that its members' points of view are expressed to the concerned institutions.

PRODUCTION

The production of documentaries is increasing substantially, mainly due to the multiplication of specialized TV channels and to the enthusiasm of audiences for this form of cinema. There is also a renewed interest for theatrical presentations of certain types of documentaries such as those about wildlife and, more recently, about social and political issues.

In June 2005, **Telefilm Canada** announced the creation of a new program supporting feature-length documentaries for theatrical release. This one-year program allowed the investment of one million and a half in the development, creation and post-production of feature-length documentaries. One million went to English Canadian projects (to which \$500,000 from CBC must be added), and the other half million went to French Canadian projects.

Also in June, the NFB and the Documentary Channel announced they would contribute an additional amount of \$800,000 for the production of feature-length documentaries.

The numbers published by the **Canadian Television Fund** (CTF) at the Documentary Summit show that in 2006-2007, the CTF amount for documentaries went from \$1,7M to \$39,7M. The CTF revised its system of envelopes for broadcasters and, for the same year, the SRC/CBC enjoys a protected envelope equivalent to 37% of the above mentioned CTF amount (after having deduced administration costs and the Fund for aboriginal productions).

The Documentary Network was happy to learn about these changes. However, after studying the broadcasters' envelopes statistics, we noted that educational broadcasters such as Télé-Québec and TVOntario had suffered substantial cuts in their envelopes – 14% and 30%, respectively.

We shouldn't forget that educational broadcasters give auteur documentary, and particularly feature-length documentary, a privileged place in their timetable.

SODEC has seen a strong increase of documentary projects submitted. It is thus necessary to request an increase in the financial envelope devoted to documentaries.

2005-2006

In April, the Documentary Network (through Monique Simard and Malcolm Guy) publicly presented a Brief to **the Standing Committee on Heritage** called *Documentary Film: Art Form and Projection of Democracy* (2005). This Brief was followed by a document, submitted in September 2005, in which we responded to a series of questions of the *Standing Committee*. The Documentary Network is glad to see that the Standing Committee's final report includes most of our recommendations regarding the recognition, financing and promotion of feature-length documentaries.

Manon Barbeau, Monique Simard and Lucette Lupien also represented the Documentary Network in discussions with **Telefilm Canada** regarding the creation and, later, the renewal of their program for feature-length documentaries.

Numerous meetings and discussions took place in order to make this program permanent, in particular with agents from **Canadian Heritage**: Anne Champoux, main advisor of the Minister Frulla (spring 2005), Jean-Pierre Blais, Cultural Affairs Deputy Secretary, Jean-François Bernier, Director of Cultural Affairs (January 2006), and Jean-Pierre Gauthier, Director of Film & Video Policy.

Finally, the Documentary Network was consulted by Nordicity, the firm in charge of a survey regarding the renewal, every five years, of the feature-length documentaries program. This issue was also addressed in an exchange we had with the Minister Oda.

The Documentary Network intervened vis a vis the **Canadian Television Fund** to protect the financial envelope of broadcasters for the "documentary genre" on the one hand, and the educational and public network envelope – which has suffered enormous cuts – on the other. Regarding this issue, many meetings took place and emails were exchanged with Valerie Creighton, Executive Director of the CTF.

The Documentary Network established links with **TVOntario** to help defending the credits allotted to them by the CTF, and with **CTV** to avoid a greater decrease of their documentary envelope.

2006-2007

The Documentary Network continues its discussions with **Telefilm Canada** and **Canadian Heritage** to ensure the creation of a permanent program supporting feature-length documentary for theatrical release.

We will do a follow-up with the **Canadian Television Fund** to protect the educational television envelopes since these televisions show great interest in auteur documentaries and attribute privileged time slots to feature-length documentaries.

Furthermore, the Documentary Network has started and will pursue discussions with **SODEC** to obtain an increase of their documentary envelope, particularly in the case of feature-length documentaries. We will also work together with the **Ministère de la Culture et des Communications**¹ and request increased support for Télé-Québec – such an increase should help Télé-Québec trigger more documentaries.

Co-production agreements

Canadian Heritage was approached to solve the obstacles that impede co-producing with Belgium. Jean-Pierre Gauthier from Heritage is in charge of following-up.

DIFFUSION AND DISTRIBUTION

Documentary's presence on TV is not proportional to its cultural and educational value. Aside from Télé-Québec, rare are the public or private channels that offer privileged time slots to feature-length documentaries. In general, these time slots should be increased in amount and duration; documentaries should be appropriately promoted and framed (interviews with the filmmakers, debates).

Regarding distribution, in May 2005 the NFB announced at Cannes that an agreement had been reached between the NFB, SODEC and Digiscreen. This agreement envisioned the creation of a **digital distribution network** of 25 venues in Quebec and 25 more in the rest of Canada. However, nothing has happened since.

2005-2006

The Documentary Network met with Michèle Fortin, the new President of **Télé-Québec**, in order to create links and reflect together on ways to improve the documentary production and diffusion conditions.

A delegation from the Documentary Network (Manon Barbeau, Monique Simard, Nathalie Barton and Lucette Lupien) met with Sylvain Lafrance, new Vice-President of **Radio-Canada**. This meeting intended to state the necessity of making room for feature-length documentaries, and to request that *Zone Libre's* actual show time be increased from 44:30 minutes to the international standard of 52 minutes.

CBC's new orientation was articulated as "fewer and bigger documentaries"; which leaves us to believe that there will be a privileged place for "prestigious" TV series but probably not for auteur or point of view documentaries.

¹ Quebec Ministry of Culture and Communications

The Documentary Network believes that documentary's **presence in the movie theatres** is of great importance. And so, not only do we work to improve programs in this sense; we also support the creation of a network of digital movie theatres.

2006-2007

The Documentary Network will continue meeting with the main broadcasters, particularly with **CBC's** Vice-President Mr. Richard Stursberg to remind him that public TV should remain supportive of auteur and point of view documentaries.

TRAINING

Training documentary filmmakers is an on going process. First, universities and specialized schools must include specific courses to documentary; then the milieu must find ways to integrate emerging documentary filmmakers through internships, mentoring and learning programs. Finally, professional filmmakers should have regular access to training and to information about new technologies and new forms of creation and diffusion of documentaries.

2005-2006

Our **Committee on Training** (composed of Lise Lachapelle, Marie-Anne Raulet, Catherine Loumède, Katherine Jerkovic and Sylvie Van Brabant) met many times and a set of recommendations was submitted to INIS (Montreal-based *Institut national de l'image et du son*). This involvement with INIS has contributed to their commitment to implement a training program for documentary filmmakers, starting in September 2006. The Documentary Network helps Francine Allaire, INIS Pedagogical Director, to shape this training.

In 2004-2005, the Documentary Network worked with a committee in charge of making a study about training documentary filmmakers. This study was led under the aegis of the **CHRC (Cultural Human Resources Council)** and its report was made public in the spring 2005.

Daniel Cross, member of our Board, has generously committed to the training program offered by the **CFTPA** (Canadian Film and Television Producers Association). It is worth mentioning that Daniel's investment was publicly recognized at Prime Time.

2006-2007

The Documentary Network follows the works of INIS closely and remains informed of courses offered at UQAM and Concordia University. Daniel Cross continues working with the CFTPA training committee.

PROMOTION

Events aiming at promoting and disseminating documentaries are very important for they help to develop audiences of all ages. That is why the Documentary Network supports activities such as the RIDM (Rencontres internationales du documentaire de Montréal) – including its *Lundis du Doc*² – and Hot Docs, and struggles to see documentaries better represented in cinema-related events and on the web.

2006-2007

On top of supporting festivals, the Documentary Network intends to lead a study on the pertinence of creating a Documentary Portal. This Portal would include data on every canadian documentary with a link to the copyright holders. It would also have a blog and publish a bulletin, among others. Claire Buffet is in charge of making an exploratory study and providing a framework for the content and interest of creating such Portal.

² Public screenings with discussions regularly organized by the RIDM.

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

For the Documentary Network, developing audiences means according special attention to audiences of today and tomorrow: Getting to know documentary audiences well, making sure that kids learn how to decode images (as they do with letters and numbers) and that youth be initiated to a cinematographic culture open to the world and to their own universe.

2005-2006

In collaboration with the NFB, the Documentary Network triggered a **study on documentary audiences** (present and potential audiences).

We support the *Association des cinémas parallèles*, which conceives training courses for cinema teachers and cinema creative workshops for kids.

2006-2007

The Documentary Network will pursue working towards a study on audiences. A first step will be to analyze the RIDM and Hot Docs audiences.

THE FORUM

Each year, in November, the Documentary Network organizes a Forum within the frame of the *Rencontres internationales du documentaire de Montréal (RIDM)*. This annual event allows creators and institutional representatives to discuss and exchange points of view regarding policies and programs – and ways in which these could better respond to the creation and presentation needs of auteur documentaries.

2005-2006

In November 2005, the Documentary Network organized its professional Forum on the theme *Distribution of Documentary Film: Reaching Audiences*. This Forum was mainly addressed to filmmakers, and institutional representatives and managers; its report is available on our website. The Forum 2005 organizing committee was composed of Colette Loumède, Paul Lapointe, Lise Lachapelle and Marie-Anne Raulet.

2006-2007

The Forum 2006 organizing committee is already formed (Manon Barbeau, Paul Lapointe, Yves Bisailon, Luc Paradis and Ian McLaren) and its theme will be *Documentary and Television: From marriage of reason to true love*. It is planned for November 10, 2006.

A committee will explore the idea of an annual event that would take place at Hot Docs to ensure a better presence of the Documentary Network in English Canada.

PERSPECTIVES FOR THE FUTURE

The audiovisual milieu is constantly mutating, mostly regarding technologies.

Broadcasters are following the digital tendency, which forces more and more creators to produce within high standards of digital quality and to plan content for different diffusion platforms (webisodes, mobisodes, etc.). Equipments are becoming less expensive and so more artists are able to produce works of a high technological quality and to diffuse them themselves through web networks.

2005-2006

The Documentary Network was present at a number of workshops and conferences (**Digiscreen**, **FFM**, **Digimart**, etc.) concerning new technologies, in order to better understand their impact on auteur documentary.

A workshop for documentary filmmakers was held in September 2005 with **Amy Hardie**, President of Docspace (Scotland). She helped to implement a network of digital movie theatres in Scotland and she works actively with Docuzone, a European network of digital theatres for documentary.

2006-2007

The Documentary Network plans to create a committee of technological awareness with the mandate of closely watching the technological developments and familiarizing documentary makers with these.

NETWORKING

Since the Documentary Network is concerned with collective action, networking is absolutely essential to its functioning. Unfortunately, the federal institutions as well as organizations from other provinces oftentimes perceive the organization as being representative of Montreal or French Québec only.

At the international level, it is important to maintain relationships with peers from other countries; we should benefit from their experiences and policy developments as well as we should share our experiences with them.

2005-2006

The Documentary Network asked to be part of SODEC's Conseil national du cinéma et de la télévision (CNCT) to contribute – documentary-wise – to their reflection.

At the Canadian level, we made public interventions, after consulting the CFTPA and DOC, at Prime Time and at Hot Docs' Summit. Such collective actions allow the Documentary Network to play its collective role appropriately and to make itself and its views known.

Exploratory meetings were held in **Switzerland** and **France** in views of eventually creating an international network of organizations devoted to lobby for documentary.

2006-2007

In order to rectify the misperception of a Montreal or French Québécois organization, the Documentary Network will organize meetings with colleagues from the CFTPA and DOC, as well as with broadcasters and agents from provincial institutions, which should strengthen relationships and better represent our colleagues' interests.

MANAGEMENT AND FINANCES

2005-2006

As recommended by a Board sub-committee (Lise Lachapelle, Paul Lapointe and Malcolm Guy), a modification was voted at the Annual General Meeting to create three new positions within the Documentary Network Board: two seats were added for broadcasters and one for a distributor. Radio-Canada, Télé-Québec and Vidéographe filled these respective positions for a two-year mandate.

The following changes also took place: Jean-Daniel Lafond left the Board and its Presidency; Manon Barbeau was elected as new President; the IMAA delegate Peter Sandmark, having left his position, was replaced by the new IMAA Director, Jennifer Dorner; André Picard, NFB Director of the French Program, left his position as well and so was replaced by Claudette Viau – who'll be replaced temporarily by Claude Bonin because of a sick-leave.

Regarding the Documentary Network finances, lots of time and energy are used to raise the modest funds required to run the organization and to fulfill its mandate and activities.

The 2005-2006 Budget was marked by: the arrival of a new contributor, the Canadian Independent Film and Video Fund (CIFVF); a considerable decrease in the CQGCR and AQTIS contributions; the loss of the Daniel Langlois Foundation contribution and the refusal of Canada Council to support our Forum 2005 in spite of two requests. All of which has led to a diminution of our revenue.

The financial statements prepared by accountant Berthe Labrie faithfully present the financial situation of the organization up to March 31st, 2006. This year, \$54,437 was raised (as opposed to \$73,666 in 2004-2005) and \$56,996 was spent (\$73,600 in 2004-2005), which leads to a deficit of \$2,559. The previous fiscal year had a neat benefit of \$10,234.

2006-2007

We will continue collecting statistical data in order to monitor the evolution of documentary's situation.

We will go on working to improve the Documentary Network's financial situation.



Lucette Lupien
Executive Director
May 2006

Translation by Katherine Jerkovic and Jennifer Dorner (IMAA)

ANNEXES

Annex 1: 2005-2006 Events and Highlights

Big success of Paul Arcand's film, *Les Voleurs d'enfance*: 1 060 000 TV viewers).
\$ 1,8M in ticket sales

Changes in key positions:

Bev Oda becomes Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Michaëlle Jean is nominated Governor General
Jean-Daniel Lafond becomes «Prince Consort» and, consequently, he resigns from his position as President of the
Documentary Network

Sandra Macdonald, President of the Canadian television Fund, is replaced by Valerie Creighton;
Michelle Fortin becomes Executive Director of Télé-Québec;
Sylvain Lafrance becomes Vice-President of SRC, television, radio and new media.
Peter O'Brian becomes President of TVOntario, and Lisa de Wilde Director General
Michel G. Desjardins becomes Director General of INIS.

Fernand Dansereau is given the Albert-Tessier Award

Birth of Les Films du 3 mars, a non-profit distributor of independent films.

Creation of the Coalition cinéma
Filmmakers worry about the NFB production budgets and the changes in the ACIC and FAP programs (respectively,
the NFB French and English programs for independents). They create a website and organize a one-day forum
during the Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois in February 2006

The project Imago (a building regrouping media arts organizations), in which Marie-Anne Raulet
represents the RIDM and the Documentary Network, pursues its works.

Decease of Louise Spickler, Director General of INIS

Decease of Bernard Gosselin, documentary filmmaker

Annex 2: New Trends

Theatrical success of many sociopolitical documentaries
The theatrical success of documentaries in general used to concern films about animals or in the National
Geographic style; now a new interest for sociopolitical issues seems to arise (e.g.: *The Corporation*, *À hauteur
d'homme* and, this year, *Les Voleurs d'enfance*).

Birth of the "counter-documentary"
In the United States, MacDonald means to protest against the documentary *Supersize Me*
by making another film.
And, in Québec, the Conseil de l'industrie forestière (Council for Forest Industry) had a film made
in response to Desjardins' and Monderie's documentary *L'Erreur boréale*.

There is a general tendency by which more and more documentary filmmakers request to make a
feature-length version of a medium-length TV formatted film.

Public and private broadcasters — as well as directors and producers — are increasingly worried
about the multiplication of diffusion platforms (internet, cellular phones, etc.), because it entails
audiovisual products specific to these platforms and a complex management of copyright.
