

Observatoire du documentaire Documentary Network

FORUM 2004

FILMING REALITY: WHAT TRAINING FOR WHAT SKILL?

REPORT

February 2005

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FILMING REALITY: WHAT TRAINING FOR WHAT SKILL?

In November 2004, the Documentary Network invited the community to take part in a reflection on how documentary filmmakers are trained, with the aim of connecting the professional community to the next generation of filmmakers.

What are the ideal conditions for knowledge transmission, to ensure that creative documentary will flourish? What makes a good documentarian? Is the training now available doing the job? Or do we need to take another look at how documentary filmmakers are trained?

The conclusions from the 2004 Forum are available on the Documentary Network Web site; they contribute to keeping the community's thinking on the issue up to date. The Documentary Network also takes part in the follow-up to the NFB/Telefilm Summit on Documentary, which will propose a review of federal policy on documentary film to Liza Frulla, Minister of Canadian Heritage.

More than 150 people participated to the Forum 2004, which took place on November 15, 2004, at the NFB Cinema, in Montréal. Here is the Forum Report.

REPORT

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PROGRAM

- 9:00** **GUEST SPEAKER: Michel Venne**, Executive Director of the *Institut du Nouveau Monde*, an independent, non-aligned, non-profit institute designed to stimulate new ideas and encourage public debate in Quebec.
- 10:30** **INTERNATIONAL PANEL:** Three filmmakers involved in training emerging documentarians in Europe and the United States share their visions of how to communicate the desire to tell the story. **Claire Simon** (France) (*Mimi*, 2002), director, producer, and instructor at FEMIS (*École nationale supérieure des métiers de l'image et du son*) and the *Ateliers Varan* Training Centre for Documentary Film; **Noemie Mendelle** (Scotland) (*Solange*, 2003), director, producer, Executive Director of the Scottish Documentary Institute and Head of Film and TV at the Edinburgh College of Art; **Jim De Sève** (United States) (*Tying the Knot*, 2004), director.
- 12:00** Networking Buffet.
- 1:00** **PRESENTATION OF A INTERIM REPORT** on the training of documentary filmmakers. **Susan Annis**, Executive Director of the Cultural Human Resources Council (Canada), presents an interim report on the study commissioned by the Documentary Organization of Canada (DOC) on the needs and resources of documentary training.
- 1:30** **NATIONAL PANEL:** Three documentary filmmakers from Quebec and Canada : **Philippe Baylaucq**, (*Sables émouvants*, 2003), filmmaker, **Monique Simard**, producer, Productions Virage and **John Walker**, (*Men of the Deeps*, 2003) director, open the debate by sharing their ideas on establishing links between emerging and professional filmmakers.
- 2:45** **REVIEW AND DISCUSSION** with the audience. **Michel Venne** (guest speaker and observer), **Jean-Daniel Lafond** (chair of the Documentary Network) and **Carmen Garcia** (conference secretary) present a summary of the day's discussion, and invite participants to comment and identify priorities.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The documentary filmmaker is by turn a gatherer, a curator, an interpreter, a border-crosser, a storyteller—but above all, a creator. How do you train a creator? How do you teach someone to look, to grasp moments of life while respecting life's rhythms? How do you prepare someone to have something to say?
- The documentarian's basic tool is intellectual education: "We must give him the intellectual tools to be able to forge a strong, credible interpretation and present it as truth." Studies in the social sciences, such as sociology and political science, are one important element. Another is mastering the language of cinema. "The documentary filmmaker must constantly go out in search of the Other. He must have the tools to make contact with the Other and draw the lessons he can impart to the world."—Michel Venne.
- To many participants, the idea of professionalism does not seem relevant; there is no automatic link between the desire to make films and the possibility of earning a living from it.
- For several speakers, the first step in training is to identify the passion, the drive, and the enthusiasm and find ways of maintaining them. We must teach attentive listening; the scriptwriting stage is seen as important in that it compels a moment of reflection.
- Several people spoke of transmitting knowledge, in contrast to teaching, but teaching is also a form of transmission. Documentary cannot be taught like mathematics—it's an art form and training should be provided by fine art schools.
- Acquiring experience in the field—learning by doing, listening, and observing—emerged as one of the key elements in training documentary filmmakers. The basics of the profession are passed on through the sharing of experience as trade guilds do, particularly through mentoring. This leads to another question: how should such mentoring be organized?
- On the forms such mentoring might take, suggestions included the creation of a documentary academy (modelled on painting academies), mutual organizations, a resource centre for filmmakers, personalized workshops, seminars, and discovery sessions (of filmmakers and works); and the addition of a new item in the documentary production budget, that of "filmmaker-in-training." As for production, the creation of producer training programs within companies is seen as increasingly important.
- There is strong resistance to the institutionalization of training.
- Documentary cinema is located somewhere between architecture and poetry. The documentary is a form of poetic expression, in line with the oral tradition of storytelling. We must resist the tyranny of those who compel documentary filmmakers to write scripts before shooting.
- The classification grid was met with considerable scepticism, especially because it did not include "passion." However, the problem remains: even if passion is seen

as the point of departure for documentary creation, people still need to learn how to make films. And that requires an element of institutionalization.

- Several participants commented on the filmmaker-producer-broadcaster pyramid, and expressed a desire to see it returned to its original form. On the same issue, there was discussion of the need to educate the programming directors at television networks.
- We should consider the creation of an international documentary channel along the lines of CNN that could broadcast over the Internet, and envision new modes of distribution for documentary, such as a network of digital theatres, following the example of CinemaNetEurope.

The last word went to Jean-Daniel Lafond, chair of the Documentary Network. He expressed concern for the working conditions of creative documentary filmmakers, and suggested that they are dependent on a funding system that is not always in their interests.

As for the day's theme, he believes that it's time to go farther and prepare proposals for the institutions, but first, a little more reflection is needed.

What's the use of a filmmaker today?

Lecture by

MICHEL VENNE

Executive director of the Institut du Nouveau Monde

The Documentarian : a gatherer, a curator, an interpreter, a border-crosser, a storyteller.

I am a journalist, but that doesn't stop me from looking at the newspaper in the morning, especially on Saturdays when it's as big as a phone book, and asking myself, what's the use of this profusion of words? Has not everything already been said about what is essential? How does reading this help me to live?

It seems to me that the question before us today is of the same order. In the question "What training for what skill?" the key term is the second, for it defines the first. What skills we are talking about, what profession? What's the use of a filmmaker today? What's the point of producing more images when they already proliferate, when the communications channels are saturated? And, since we are talking about training, why do we want to bring new converts into the profession? Are there so many things left to say that have not been said?

On top of that, the new lightweight technologies can be used by just about anyone. User-friendly, widely available software lets you make your own films on your PC, and soon you'll be able to shoot them on a cellphone without your subjects' knowledge. On the Internet, all the world's images are just one click away; they can be downloaded and manipulated at the touch of a key.

The answer, of course, is that in today's world, the task of a documentary filmmaker cannot simply be that of an image and sound technician. The filmmaker's "usefulness" is of a whole other order.

Like all communications professionals, filmmakers hold a certain power and responsibility: that of making sense of reality. For reality to be communicated, it must first be interpreted then shaped around a central message. In his film *À hauteur d'homme*, Jean-Claude Labrecque decided to focus on the relation between Bernard Landry and journalists. That meant he had to set aside several aspects of Bernard Landry's reality as a politician—Landry is not nearly as defined by his relationship with reporters as it seemed. But Labrecque captured a moment and presented it in a way that had a certain impact. Similarly, Michael Moore's films are not neutral, because neither is reality. It all depends on point of view.

* * *

A point of view: that's precisely what a documentarian brings to a subject, as does any filmmaker, writer or journalist. A vision of the world that, in turn, causes viewers to define their own positions, reflect on their prejudices, attitudes, and ways of seeing life, society, the world. By being confronted with the filmmaker's point of view, viewers are led to define their own, in agreement with or opposition to that of the director or writer. The ensuing dialogue between the audience and a professional who has taken the time to study a particular question in depth is even more valuable in that the world is ever more complex.

The world has become more complex, partly because the means of communications have made us all aware of its diversity, but especially because our most basic and familiar reference points, the ones we name spontaneously, have been called into question and are either in decline or on trial. As Gérard Bouchard has shown, this is true in terms of symbols (tradition, rituals, identity), society (family, work, community), and politics (globalization, the growth of judicial power, the cynical attitude of citizens towards institutions). The great founding myths of contemporary Quebec, born of the Quiet Revolution, seem dated today and have not yet been replaced by others.

One reason why ethics is in fashion today is that we are searching for a new frame of reference. Ethics helps answer two questions: what do we have in common that helps us to live? Where do we draw the line between right and wrong?

We are deeply affected by a triple loss: loss of reference points, loss of memory, and loss of meaning. These losses stem from a crisis in transmission. Once, everything was simple. Family, church and school instilled in us our values, history, culture and conduct. Today, we are living in a world where no higher authority can tell us what to do. We refuse all dictatorships, even those that claim to be enlightened. It's true that in parts of the world—even in the United States, as we have seen—religion continues to play that defining role, sometimes with greater proselytizing fervour than before. But in general, we have entered an era of perpetual deliberation. We can no longer readily define right and wrong. Citizens even deny their elected representatives a monopoly on how the public interest should be defined: they demand public consultations, commissions, inquiries, hearings, the right to speak.

Michel Serres caught the spirit of the times, I think, when he described the changing face of work: from the farmer to the blacksmith to the messenger today. All day long, we carry—not hammers and sickles, but countless messages, like angels. We live in an enormous message centre, he claims. We have gone from the field to the factory and now, to the spaces of communication in which we build our world. We are now connected not just to our own community, tribe, or co-workers, but to the rest of the world. Can this work result in utopian solidarity between peoples? Will we see the end of class struggle? Instead, Serres sees the dawn of a sort of war, a competitive fight to the death on the market of signs: the strongest gets talked about most; power is measured in terms of noise.

The old issues of the agricultural era and the industrial era have been superseded by the empire of signs and its hold over the world. The goal of the powerful is to control and dictate the meaning of messages and to that end, take charge of the channels, from local to global, from private to public, to planet-wide. And that puts the future of truth at stake. In the era of angels/messengers, truth is often reduced to what circulates, to what gets the spotlight, to what is staged in words and music, before the world. In other words, to advertising.

In this theatre of meaning, documentary filmmakers have a role to play.

* * *

What do we expect of them? That they help us find the truth. That they help us rediscover a frame of reference. That they help us regain memory.

The filmmaker—not only in documentary—acts in several capacities.

He is a gatherer, a curator, an interpreter, a border-crosser, a storyteller.

A gatherer of reality, of life, of key moments, of clues in the form of images and sound—clues to the world going by, the one that is slowly disappearing and the one that is coming into being before our eyes, though we may not realize it. The gatherer must be diplomatic, sensitive, discerning. And extremely curious! The filmmaker does his or her gathering primarily through the outlook he or she has on life.

A curator of our history, our words, our laughter, our suffering, the signs of our progress. A guardian of our heritage. The curator seeks the meaning of duration, respects life as it unfolds, knows history and is aware of the importance of what came before. And the curator is skilled at recording what is disappearing to enlighten the present.

An interpreter. Because rarely do things and people reveal themselves before us and even less often, before the camera. A picture may be worth a thousand words, but rarely do those thousand words alone sum up the meaning of a life, a man, a people, a changing reality. In the war of signs described by Michel Serres, the interpreter is a fighter who, armed with knowledge of the people, places, and facts, seeks to make his understanding of the world prevail. That is why like any work, a documentary cannot be neutral. And if one claims to be able to interpret life, one needs a few intellectual tools: a filmmaker must be something of a philosopher, sociologist, historian, psychologist and no doubt several other things I could have mentioned.

Border-crosser. His main task is one of transmission. So that must be his main motivation. He is not there to entertain or inform, nor to do good, heal wounds or advance a cause. All the better if indirectly—and no doubt necessarily in the competitive world of signs and images—a documentary makes us laugh or cry or want to fight or speak out. But above all, a documentary is a tool for knowing and understanding, for appropriating, through images and sound, a reality that we discover and explore more fully.

Lastly, the filmmaker is a storyteller. Reality rarely lets itself be captured as is. It must be staged in order to be communicated. The skill of the storyteller lies in attracting and holding attention, in arousing emotion. The storyteller knows he must keep a few surprises in store to boost interest or provoke reflection. He knows how to use the audience's own words. Some save a moral for the end. It's not always necessary; sometimes the images, words, and facts speak for themselves.

* * *

A documentary is a creation. So how do you train a creator?

Documentary starts with looking. How do you learn to look? To absorb reality, get to know that which starts out being unknown, let yourself be immersed, grasp what is real? How do you learn to admit that you don't know in advance what you will find? Not to limit yourself to looking for proof of what you think you already know?

A documentary captures a moment of life. How do you train people to respect the rhythms of life, to take it slowly?

A documentary is an interpretation of the world. Interpreters must be trained to understand the intellectual process by which we zero in on a particular reality, to recognize that it can be described, understood, given meaning. Filmmakers say things. How do we prepare them to have something to say?

These considerations apply to several categories of communicators. Documentary and film have their own rules. Before being a technique, cinema is a language. A good documentarian, if he intends to use that language to describe reality, must learn its rules and master it as thoroughly as possible. Only once he has mastered its syntax, vocabulary, and grammar can he decide when and on what subject that language is the best means of communicating with the world. In other words, only if a filmmaker masters his language, the language of cinema, can he know whether or not a film can be made from a subject that interests him. Nothing is more damaging to documentary than a bad documentary.

* * *

What's the use of a filmmaker today? What's the point of making more images in an era marked by the proliferation of images?

The point, precisely, is that our world now defines itself through images, through signs that travel by all channels to the four corners of the world, in a context of perpetual deliberation. To one vision of the world can and must be opposed another, built from the points of view and interpretations proposed by the storytellers of our time. The filmmaker is a fighter in the war for control over truth, which brings messengers and their visions of the world into conflict all over the planet.

The filmmaker's role is crucial. Particularly when it is broadcast on television, film is the medium through which most people grasp realities that are distant from their own and even, sometimes—through the eyes of the filmmaker and the words of real or fictional characters—succeed in comprehending an intimate reality they had previously refused to explore.

The documentary filmmaker is a *provocateur*—not an agitator; someone who provokes reflection, emotion, interest and change in the viewer's mind.

The filmmaker-to-be must first learn to observe the world, to grasp its crucial aspects. We must give him and her the intellectual tools to be able to forge a strong, credible interpretation and present it as truth. We must encourage him to develop sensitivity to time and to people.

Lastly, we must teach the filmmaker the rudiments of a new language, that of cinema. He has to master the language. But that doesn't mean becoming a hotshot digital editor. Our purpose is to train creators. Creators who are perceptive, curious, and open to others. That last characteristic is important. The documentary filmmaker must constantly go out in search of the Other. He must have the tools to make contact with the Other and draw the lessons he can impart to the world.

Thank you.

Michel Venne
Executive Director, Institut du Nouveau Monde
November 15, 2004

REPORT

THE DOCUMENTARY NETWORK – 2004 FORUM *FILMING REALITY: WHAT TRAINING FOR WHAT SKILL?*

Report drawn up by Carmen Garcia, secretary of the Forum

Opening remarks by Jean-Daniel Lafond, chair of the Documentary Network

For Jean-Daniel Lafond, it was time that the Documentary Network turned its attention to the question of training and the profession of documentary filmmaker (whom he prefers to call a *cinéaste du réel*). Before discussing training, he believes it would be appropriate to define more precisely the profession we are talking about when we speak of filmmakers who take reality as the raw material and final object of their practice.

The Forum should serve as both an investigation into and a reflection on the issue of training documentary filmmakers. Little has been said on the subject, as it is difficult to establish the link between the profession and the necessary training.

What is presently done around the world, here in Quebec and in Canada? Do students come out of schools, workshops and other places of training properly outfitted, better armed than before? What actions are needed to meet the needs of those working in the field of documentary cinema?

Welcoming remarks by Lucette Lupien, director of the Documentary Network

Speaking before a full house, Lucette Lupien expressed delight at the large number of participants in the 2004 Forum. She introduced the Documentary Network, created under the auspices of the Rencontres internationales du documentaire de Montreal (RIDM) by the professional audiovisual associations (APFTQ, ARRQ, DOC, CFTPA, NFB, AQTIS and DGC-QC¹). The 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.

In the documentary community, filmmaker training is a major concern. Young filmmakers feel they lack skills; the institutions that receive their projects are expressing concern. DOC recently asked the Cultural Human Resources Council (Canada) to conduct a study, which was presented during the Forum, on documentarians' training needs and resources. At the same time, Jean-Marie Barbe, representative of the États généraux du documentaire in Lussas, France, put forward a proposal for a partnership to offer training workshops for documentary filmmakers in Quebec. These are among the factors that spurred the Documentary Network to put the subject up for discussion. The 2004 Forum will attempt to answer the following questions:

¹ APFTQ: Association des producteurs de films et de télévision du Québec; ARRQ: Association des réalisateurs et réalisatrices du Québec; DOC: Documentary Organization of Canada; CFTPA: Canadian Film and Television Production Association; NFB: National Film Board of Canada; AQTIS: Association québécoise des techniciens de l'image et du son; and DGC-QC: Directors Guild of Canada—Quebec Chapter.

- What are the ideal conditions for transmitting knowledge so that creative documentary can thrive?
- How do you train a good documentary filmmaker?
- Is existing training adequate?
- Or, on the contrary, should the training of documentary filmmakers be reconsidered?

LECTURE: WHAT'S THE USE OF A FILMMAKER TODAY?

Guest speaker: Michel Venne, executive director of the Institut du Nouveau Monde (<http://www.inm.qc.ca/>).

In his lecture, given in French, Michel Venne² started with the following question: "What's the use of a filmmaker today?" His answer was, "Like all communications professionals, filmmakers hold a certain power and responsibility: **that of making sense of reality.**"

He added, "A **point of view**: that's precisely what a documentarian brings to a subject, as does any filmmaker, writer or journalist. A vision of the world that, in turn, causes viewers to define their own positions, reflect on their prejudices, attitudes, and ways of seeing life, society, the world. By being confronted with the filmmaker's point of view, viewers are led to define their own, in agreement with or opposition to that of the director or writer."

To fulfill that role, the documentary filmmaker is by turn a gatherer, a curator, an interpreter, a border-crosser, a storyteller—but above all, a creator. How do you train a creator, asks Michel Venne? How do you teach someone to look, to grasp moments of life while respecting life's rhythms? How do you prepare someone to have something to say?

In his view, the first essential tool of the documentarian is intellectual education: "We must give him the intellectual tools to be able to forge a strong, credible interpretation and present it as truth." The second is mastering the language of cinema: "The documentary filmmaker must constantly go out in search of the Other. He must have the tools to make contact with the Other and draw the lessons he can impart to the world."

See the full text of Michel Venne's lecture.

Audience comments and discussion

- In response to a question by Jean-Pierre Lefebvre (moderator of the round tables scheduled for later in the day) on the training of journalists, Michel Venne emphasized the need for communicators to have access to studies in the humanities and social sciences, such as sociology and political science. Communicators must go beyond the mere expression of opinions to offer ideas and an understanding of the world.

- Noemie Mendelle, speaking as a training instructor, took the floor to note the importance of not scaring off young people with excessive training requirements.

² Short biographies of the speakers and panellists are included in the appendix.

Older filmmakers should let themselves be called into question by the arrogance of their younger peers, which can encourage creativity.

-Jean Daniel Lafond suggested that Michel Venne had composed the frontispiece of the Virtual Academy of Documentary: "No one who enters here is neutral!" He also noted the need to break down the barriers between generations.

- Michel Venne stressed that experimentation and spontaneity should not be excluded. He admitted that it was not good to scare off young people, but it was necessary to be demanding. Voicing one's opinion as a journalist or documentarian is a privilege that must be taken seriously.

- A participant commented on the importance of teaching audiences to develop a critical sense. Michel Venne responded that he believed that was up to the schools. No doubt schools will have to go farther in improving the media literacy of future citizens.

- For Claire Simon, the question of training documentary filmmakers is pernicious in the sense that making documentary films is not a profession. Documentarians can barely eke out a living. For every three documentary filmmakers who succeed in making a film, 500 others can't get their projects off the ground. Making documentaries is a question of wanting to badly enough, and that can't be taught at school. You can't teach someone how to be creative.

- In response to a question on objectivity as taught in communications courses, Michel Venne said that you always speak from a personal point of view. In his view, objectivity means examining the points of view of others and taking them into account.

- For Daniel Cross, being a documentary filmmaker means being subjective. He denounced the commercial production model and one-hour format imposed on filmmakers by broadcasters and such institutions as the English program of the National Film Board. As for training, he would like to see more reflection on the role of mentor that more experienced filmmakers can play towards emerging filmmakers.

- While agreeing on the potential role of the mentor, Michel Venne directed criticism at the public institutions. Politicians, he claimed, hate the unknown and eschew funding things they are not familiar with. Public television produces less and less, depriving us of a rich heritage. The very essence of high-quality production—having time to undertake research and experimentation—is eliminated, he complained. We must call into question our cultural institutions.

- Referring to the line from Michel Serres ("a competitive fight to the death on the market of signs") quoted by Michel Venne in his speech, a member of the audience wondered whether the new light-weight technology was not a weapon in the hands of filmmakers: was it not a way to bypass the broadcasters' monopoly?

- Michel Venne answered that while it was important to explore new avenues of distribution, we must also demand that the public authorities support high-quality production. "We must attempt to convince those who have the money and who sometimes think."

INTERNATIONAL PANEL

Three filmmakers involved in training emerging documentarians in Europe and the United States share their visions of how to communicate the desire to tell the story.

Panelists

Claire Simon (France), director, producer and instructor at the École nationale supérieure des métiers de l'image et du son (FEMIS) and the Ateliers de documentaire Varan.

Jim De Sève (United States), director and teacher at Film Video Arts, New York (<http://www.fva.com/>).

Noemie Mendelle (Scotland), director, producer, executive director of the Scottish Documentary Institute and head of film and TV at the Edinburgh College of Art (<http://www.eca.ac.uk/>)

Presentation by Claire Simon

Although Claire Simon gives workshops at FÉMIS (<http://www.femis.fr/>), at the Ateliers Varan (<http://www.ateliersvaran.com/>) and at several faculties in Paris, she does not at all see herself as a teacher. In fact, she considers that documentary cannot be taught. At FÉMIS, she notes, there are no professors; since the 1980s, the workshops have been given by audiovisual professionals. To her, the question of training, in whatever shape it takes, requires the creator to examine the relation between the desire to make a film and the world. She asks, can that desire be taught?

She regrets that over the past twenty years, documentary production and funding have become almost totally dependent on broadcasters.

She stresses the importance of events like LUSSAS in France (<http://www.lussasdoc.com/>). The event is held annually during the month of August and includes seminars, meetings, profiles of major filmmakers and introductions to key works. "It's a place where you look at films and learn how to make them," she commented.

She believes that the concept of training and learning how to make documentaries is not relevant. The main thing is to show films and reflect on how they are viewed. We must recognize the creativity of the spectator and to the extent possible, blend the watching of films and the making of films. We must reflect on the distance between the self and the world.

Presentation by Jim De Sève

Jim De Sève studied psychology to better understand people, but he wonders to what extent we can really understand people and the world. Does reality even exist? If we close our eyes, does it not disappear? Existence seems to be real, but to what extent? In light of that, how can we speak of objectivity? When we show reality, we show what is reality to us. We always end up expressing a point of view, so at what point does that become propaganda? It's a valid question. Must we always show both sides of the story? If I speak of slavery, will someone ask me to take the pro-slavery point of view into account?

To Jim De Sève, we are at a turning point in the history of humanity that is both intriguing and dangerous and, in that context, he believes that artists must take a stand and express what they feel is right.

He agrees with Claire Simon when she says that making documentaries is not a profession—he has said the same thing to his own students. However, he tries to teach them not to panic. Documentary filmmakers can be seized with absolute panic when they don't work within a pre-established narrative model. Although we can't teach documentary cinema, we can teach how to avoid panicking, how to understand the stories and lives with which we want to make a film, and how to define our own position in relation to those stories and lives. It's a lot of work, but the result can be gratifying.

Jim De Sève recognizes that new technologies have made documentary more accessible and as a result, more and more films are being made. But technology does not solve everything: we still have to think about how to tell the story, how to keep the audience's attention, how to show respect for our subject, how to obtain the necessary funding for the project.

To be a documentary filmmaker, you have to be able to wear many hats—producer, researcher, etc.—and be diplomatic enough to submit to the demands of broadcasters while remaining creative. The only advice Jim De Sève can offer filmmakers is to stay relaxed and keep an open mind in order to move easily from one role to another.

Presentation by Noemie Mendelle

A sociologist and anthropologist by training, Noemie Mendelle fell in love with shooting and editing after being asked to give courses in cinema, and she started making films. At the time, there were few women in the field—she had to put up with the mockery of film crews and hold fast to her ideas. Wanting to make life easier for other women, she decided to organize workshops aimed at them.

For many years in Britain, the profession of filmmaker was an exclusive preserve. Focused on protecting its members, the film union of the time was hostile to emerging filmmakers and women. In her campaign against unions, Margaret Thatcher pulled the rug out from under the union's feet: this opened up the profession of filmmaker to a wider range of people. Around the same time, the universities set up programs in communications and media arts. Today, there are more than 300 media production departments in Britain. Every year, thousands of recent graduates start looking for work—and given that the market is not big enough to support everyone, there is considerable frustration.

The program headed by Noemie Mendelle at the Scottish Documentary Institute, based at the Edinburgh College of Art, departs from the traditional university model. The Institute has three levels of study and accepts around a dozen students per year, including ten foreign students. Noemie Mendelle stresses the importance of training international storytellers in order to inform Britons about the world.

In the program she directs, the goal is to provide structure and transmit knowledge. The program aims to train storytellers—the distinction between fiction and documentary is not immediately established. The students work in Super 8, because

it offers the possibility of developing an interesting relation between medium and creator. Industry professionals—"heroes and heroines of cinema"—come to share their passion and pass on their knowledge: where to place the camera, how to reproduce the sound I hear in my head when I close my eyes... The students do experiments such as working with light in darkness, without lights but using their imagination.

Through the workshops, Noemie Mendelle aims to create a community of filmmakers. The competition is fierce: only one project out of nine hundred is produced. This makes the need to establish a community even greater.

Noemie Mendelle predicts that the coming generations will rebel against the power of broadcasters. In the meantime, the Documentary Institute intends to educate the directors of television stations by offering them master classes so they can discover documentary, about which they often know nothing.

In closing, she thanked the audience for its attention, noting that careful listening is also something she is trying to teach.

Audience comments and discussion

- One audience member asked Noemie Mendelle to describe the process of scriptwriting in her workshops.
- Noemie Mendelle answered that scriptwriting plays an important role in the workshops, and no distinction is made between documentary and fiction. The students are told to write freely and creatively, with no constraints as to presentation, but they often arrive with texts and scripts "formatted" according to standard practice. Cinema is a collective activity; students are encouraged to find their own voice. Many question the need for scriptwriting during the creative process of documentary filmmaking, but Noemie Mendelle believes it constitutes an important moment for reflection. She has noticed that people often write better than they realize.
- A film professor noted that in the United States, some 30,000 filmmakers per year are trained. That reality, combined with easier access to new technologies, makes him wonder whether there really is a need for training. Should not the schools redefine themselves as places for the development of thought?
- Claire Simon went even further, declaring that in her view, there is no longer any obligation to do technical training: the department stores can take care of that. Instead, we should create new experiences and expand opportunities for the new DV technologies. The usefulness of schools, in her opinion, is in teaching future spectators and as a place of research, where questions such as "what is language?" can be asked.
- For Jean-Marie Barbe of Lussas, the fundamental question to be asked in terms of training is, "Should we teach or pass on knowledge?" Is knowledge passed on from generation to generation, or do older filmmakers prevent their younger peers from gaining access? He believes that training for documentarians should be offered in art schools, not in communications departments.

- An audience member expressed surprise on hearing participants say that training documentary filmmakers amounts to little more than spending a day learning how to manipulate the new cameras. Documentary is an art; does it make sense to minimize the training of an artist to such an extent? The audience member also noted that it would be a good idea to build bridges between the generations.

- Another audience member raised the issue of how long it takes to make a documentary. Claire Simon agreed that this is an essential aspect of production.

- Jean-Daniel Lafond noted that, although new technologies offer interesting possibilities, the training of filmmakers cannot be left to salespeople and dealers. Cinema is above all a team effort: the director of photography and editor contribute to and enrich the director's ideas, which is not the case with technique or new technologies.

- Jim De Sève went further, noting that ideas are more important than technology. Directors must know the technical aspects of filmmaking to be able to get along with the film crew, but the key remains the story they want to tell.

Presentation by Susan Annis, executive director of the Cultural Human Resources Council (Canada), of an interim report on the training of documentary filmmakers, commissioned by the Documentary Organization of Canada (DOC).

For the purposes of the study, the Cultural Human Resources Council (Canada) brought together filmmakers, directors, and producers to draw up an extensive list of general and occupational skills involved in practising the profession of documentary filmmaker. The first stage of the study ended with the writing up of a chart listing skills over ten categories, from the initial idea to the release of the film, from ability to communicate to personal qualities.

The next stage of the study will involve assessing the training needs related to the various skills identified³.

National Panel on a proposal to establish links between emerging and professional filmmakers.

Panelists

Philippe Baylaucq, filmmaker; **Monique Simard**, producer and **John Walker**, filmmaker.

Presentation by Philippe Baylaucq

Philippe Baylaucq says he resists any kind of formula. He tries not to repeat himself. Every film represents a new adventure. He believes that when you create, you operate on two levels: the intuitive and the applied. In terms of training, he finds it difficult to pass on what falls under the intuitive. How can you provide training that achieves a balance between intuition and analysis? Documentary cannot be taught: "either you have it or you don't." Being a documentary filmmaker means keeping the

³ The report is expected to be completed and released in March 2005.

fire of passion burning. In teaching experiences, it is easy to distinguish between the students "who have it" and those "who don't."

Documentary involves teamwork; you can't do everything alone. Ideally, as a director you should know 10% of the job of each of your crew members, so you are able to express your needs.

Presentation by John Walker

John Walker came to documentary following in the footsteps of Michel Brault, Pierre Perrault and Jean-Claude Labrecque. He believes it is important for documentary filmmakers to know their roots. People complain that it's hard to produce today, but conditions have never looked so bright and Oscar Wilde complained about the conditions of production back in his day! One interesting factor today is access to technology—but technology has its limits. Having access to paper and pen does not make you a writer. The same thing goes for technology: it's not enough to make you a filmmaker.

For John Walker, documentary cinema is located somewhere between architecture and poetry. The documentary is a form of poetic expression. Walker sees himself as working within the oral tradition of storytelling, and he strongly resists the tyranny of those who compel documentary filmmakers to write scripts before shooting.

Documentary filmmakers are like camels in the desert: they can go far with little (little money in the first case, little water in the second).

John Walker has adopted the advice of filmmaker Donald Brittain, who suggested that you should make the most of your own strengths—such as powerful narration or visual research.

Documentary is based on a team effort involving the producer, director of photography, editor, director and all the other crew members.

John Walker considers that it takes at least ten years to become a good filmmaker or a good editor. He learned his trade by working with mentors. He believes that having mentors is the key to training.

Presentation by Monique Simard

More and more documentary projects are landing on the desks of producers and broadcasters. At the moment, there is a genuine infatuation with documentary, particularly among young filmmakers. But you can't just decide to become a documentarian. There is very little training aimed specifically at documentary. You often hear that you learn documentary by doing it. Could not the institutions active in documentary production encourage more direct collaboration between the younger generation and more experienced film people? We could envision creating a budget item that would make it possible to add a filmmaker-in-training to the production crew. For the moment, no specific program supports such an undertaking. New programs could be created to accommodate young filmmakers; the broadcasters and institutions should do their part to make that happen. Mentoring by experienced filmmakers of their younger colleagues is certainly an avenue to be explored.

Audience comments and discussion

- Jean-Marie Barbe of Lussas commented on the classification grid drawn up by the Cultural Human Resources Council, which he describes as Ubuesque. Attempting to define the sociological profile of the documentary filmmaker contradicts the very idea of creation, which is above all a matter of passion. And where is passion on the chart? Training touches on less objective areas. Above all, it offers young people who dream of creating the chance to overcome their fears and actually do something. They gain experience and more importantly, they identify what they really want to do.

Jean-Marie Barbe attributed documentarians' "life pains" to the excessive power of broadcasters, who always want the same film, the same format. He spoke of reversing the pyramid. A decade ago, projects would travel from filmmaker to producer to broadcaster. Today, the broadcaster commissions films from the producer. In Barbe's view, the situation is self-destructive because the passion at the heart of creation cannot be commissioned. He believes in potential alliances between filmmakers at the international level.

- Pierre Morin defended the evaluation grid that he presented with Susan Annis. Although it may seem off-putting at first, it has its uses. The grid should not be seen as the basis of a training program, but as an extensive inventory. For the moment, the relative importance of each element has not been indicated, but this will be done eventually: for example, general skills are more important than occupational skills.

- Claire Simon also questioned the usefulness of an inventory of skills.

- Audience member Benoît Dubois noted that the 1% that companies are obliged to spend on training could be better used. He suggested creating mutual organizations dedicated to training.

- Another audience member wondered if filmmakers would be willing to open their sets to young filmmakers-in-training. Is that advisable, given the style of shooting in documentary?

- Philippe Baylaucq answered that he thinks it is more feasible to have mentors participate in younger filmmakers' projects. He himself has had experience with that.

- Jean Pierre Lefebvre noted that mentoring could start with the screening of films: you have to know the works in order to learn the profession.

**Recapitulation and discussion with the audience.
Michel Venne and Jean-Daniel Lafond review the day's discussions.**

Michel Venne

Michel Venne reviews the highlights of the day's discussions.

- 1) To many participants, the idea of professionalism does not seem relevant; is there a correlation between the desire to make films and the possibility of earning a living from it?
- 2) Several people spoke of transmitting knowledge, in contrast to teaching, but is not teaching also a form of transmission? Documentary cannot be taught like mathematics—it's an art form and training should be provided by fine art schools.
- 3) For several participants, the first step in training is to identify the passion, the drive, and the enthusiasm and to find ways of maintaining them.
- 4) Acquiring experience in the field—learning by doing, listening, and observing—emerged as one of the key elements in training documentary filmmakers. The basics of the profession are passed on through the sharing of experience, particularly through mentoring. This leads to another question: how should such mentoring be organized? Should we rely on institutions like the NFB or create mutual organizations and personalized workshops, and turn veteran filmmakers into mentors?
- 5) All day, we heard strong resistance to the institutionalization of training.
- 6) The classification grid was met with considerable scepticism, especially because it did not include "passion." However, the problem remains: even if passion is seen as the point of departure for documentary creation, people still need to learn how to make films. Can basic training be organized without an element of institutionalization?
- 7) As for reversing the filmmaker-producer-broadcaster pyramid that several participants mentioned, Michel Venne wondered if it was not possible to reverse it once again. There was also discussion of the need to educate the programming directors at television networks. To have an optimistic outlook, you have to be pro-active. Are there not partners in the institutions with whom alliances are possible?
- 8) In conclusion, Michel Venne returned to three key aspects of training that emerged from the discussions: 1) identifying the passion; 2) experimentation through mentoring; 3) passing on the specific skills needed to make a film. He invited those present to transform the industry so that it corresponds more closely to their ambitions.

Jean-Daniel Lafond

Jean-Daniel Lafond returned to the classification grid drawn up by the Cultural Human Resources Council, describing it as a flatline EEG that could be dangerous in the hands of the institutions. Nonetheless, it remains a useful tool that filmmakers could turn to their advantage. He emphasized one point: "The filmmaker must be able to break the rules."

To Jean-Daniel Lafond, there is no doubt that the profession of documentary filmmaker exists, despite what we heard over the course of the day. He himself makes a living from it (how good a living is another question). It's a profession that can be very human or very inhuman, but it's undoubtedly a profession. One that can be learned through observation and listening, and through struggle waged with a hint of detachment.

He concluded by giving the floor to members of the audience, saying he wanted to hear what emerging filmmakers had to say.

Audience comments and discussion

- Jean-Marie Barbe suggested the creation of an international documentary channel along the lines of CNN that could be broadcast over the Internet. He emphasized the important role that could be played by new modes of distribution for documentaries.

- Daniel Cross commented on the dangers posed by the development of reality TV and the considerable space it occupies in programming schedules. He feels we must keep true documentary alive.

- An audience member pointed to the importance of alternatives in film production and distribution. She mentioned the work of artist collectives such as *Kino* and *Les Lucioles*, a group of activist videomakers; the possibilities offered by Internet distribution and screenings in bars; the experience of events like Lussas; and other efforts such as the filler programming at Télé-Québec.

- Jean Pierre Lefebvre denounced the disappearance of in-house production at the NFB, Radio-Canada and Télé-Québec.

- Jean-Daniel Lafond reminded the audience that places like the NFB used to be spaces where filmmakers could go against the grain. Such spaces have virtually disappeared. We should consider devising filmmakers' workshops as sites of resistance and knowledge-sharing across the generations. Broadcasters are risk-averse; they are uncomfortable with documentary but always on the lookout for new ideas. It's quite possible that one day they might draw on experiences like *Kino* to fill their programming slots.

- An audience member recalled the work of *Docspace* in the UK and *Docuzone* (CinemaNetEurope), a network of digitally equipped cinemas that screen documentaries. He wondered why no similar undertaking exists in Quebec and Canada.

- Lucette Lupien pointed out that a study commissioned by the NFB and Telefilm Canada is presently underway to examine the potential of digitally equipped cinemas for film distribution in Canada.

- Jean Pierre Lefebvre suggested that young directors join professional organizations like the Association des réalisateurs et réalisatrices du Québec.

- Mireille Dansereau noted the value of organizing artist residencies and workshops to bring filmmakers together. Works have to struggle to exist, she claimed. She spoke of collaborating with young film technicians, necessary for budgetary reasons but nonetheless enriching. Working with a small budget, she was obliged to hire less experienced people, who benefit enormously from working with an experienced filmmaker. The intergenerational dialogue and mentoring has turned out to be very stimulating.

- A young filmmaker in training with an independent producer described her experience. The system is not working. Instead of teaching us how to make films, the producer is swamped with paperwork. There should be funding programs that make in-house training possible; the institutions should take responsibility for this kind of training.

The same person said she would like to see the implementation of a system to tax American films at the box office and use the money to fund local cinema. She also criticized the CRTC for not doing its job and allowing cable channels like Canal D to program anything but documentary, although that was its promise of performance.

- Jean-Daniel Lafond agreed about the poor-quality programming at Canal D and criticized the way it turns filmmakers into soldiers. It's shameful that by allowing the situation to continue, the CRTC is depriving Quebec of a true documentary channel.

- Returning to the notion of profession, Catherine Drolet said she preferred to speak of documentary artisans rather than filmmakers, because a documentarian works as part of a team. She supports the idea of mentoring, noting that some kind of platform or resource centre for filmmakers should be created. A place where workshops could be given and reflections could be shared. Despite what she heard over the course of the day, she remains convinced that it's necessary to train new filmmakers.

- Francis Xavier Tremblay said he was not opposed to mentoring or its financing, but he was concerned about the institutionalization of the process. In his view, mentoring should ideally remain spontaneous and not involve payment.

- Jean-Daniel Lafond said he hopes the opportunities for emerging filmmakers to work with their more experienced peers will include real positions—paid positions—within a production crew. He is opposed to the use of unpaid trainees. Rather than the word "mentoring," he prefers "compagnonnage," which refers to the traditional French apprenticeship system.

- Jean Pierre Lefebvre suggested that young filmmakers approach those whose work they enjoy. It's flattering for a filmmaker to be recognized in that manner and it could result in a fruitful exchange.

- John Walker agreed with the idea, but felt that experienced filmmakers should be contacted with a specific request, not just to discuss a hypothetical project. For example, you could ask a veteran filmmaker to analyse a first edit. The mentor should help the younger filmmaker fight for his or her project. Writers are at the heart of creation. They must remain vigilant in the face of comments on their work

and not lose sight of what they have to say. Their loyalty should be towards the subject, not towards broadcasters or any other authority, whose word is not gospel. A word of advice: you should be happy and proud of what you do.

- Louise Spickler of the Institut national de l'image et du son (INIS) took the floor to reiterate INIS's efforts in terms of training, both within its walls and in collaboration with other schools. She gave the example of *Portraits croisés*. She added that INIS is open to all those who make documentaries.

- The last word went to Jean-Daniel Lafond, who expressed concern about the working conditions of creative documentary filmmakers. He feels they are dependent on a funding system that is not always in their interests. As for the day's theme, he believes that it's time to go farther and prepare proposals for the institutions, but first, a little more reflection is needed.

Recapitulation by the conference secretary, Carmen Garcia

The question posed at this year's Forum had two parts: the profession of documentary filmmaker, and training. The guest speakers and participants devoted a lot of time to the notion of profession, going so far as to question its very existence. Many spoke of a passion rather than a profession, a desire to meet the Other, fuelled by poetic vision and dialogue between collaborators.

The debate on training documentary filmmakers had a harder time getting off the ground. Perhaps the meat of the question lay elsewhere, in the power of broadcasters over documentary and the impossibility of surviving as a practising documentary filmmaker.

We heard mostly from experienced filmmakers, who often learned in the field and no longer need training. The younger filmmakers, who are more directly concerned by the need for training, were less present in the debate. Several took the floor to express surprise at the way certain speakers brushed aside the issue of training, even questioning its pertinence and necessity.

In terms of training, two aspects drew the attention of a number of participants:

- 1) New technologies make the practice of documentary more accessible. They alone are not enough to make you a good filmmaker overnight, but they do make low-cost experimentation possible.
- 2) Transmitting knowledge across the generations is the key element in training. We must give ourselves the means and create the spaces to make such transmission possible. More concretely, we should demand that a budget item be created to allow a young filmmaker to collaborate on a production by an experienced filmmaker.

Carmen Garcia, secretary of the Forum
November 2004

BIOGRAPHIES

Michel Venne



Journalist Michel Venne is co-founder and director of the Institut du Nouveau Monde www.inm.qc.ca and director of the *Annuaire du Québec* (Éditions Fides). He writes a column in the Montreal daily *Le Devoir*, where he was previously a political reporter at the National Assembly, editorialist, and news editor. He studied communications at UQÀM and political science at Laval University and has worked as a journalist for twenty years. He received the Judith-Jasmin Award (special mention, print media) in 1993 and the Michener Award in 1997. Michel Venne is the author of *Souverainistes, que faire?*, published in fall 2002; *Les Porteurs de liberté*, published in fall 2001 (VLB Éditeur); *Ces fascinantes inforoutes* (IQRC, 1995) and *Vie privée et démocratie à l'ère de l'informatique* (IQRC, 1994). Mr. Venne has also edited several volumes of essays including *Justice, prospérité et démocratie. L'Avenir du modèle québécois* (Québec Amérique, 2003), *Penser la nation québécoise* (Québec Amérique, 2000), *La Révolution génétique* (PUM, 2001), and *Santé: Une thérapie de choc* (PUM, 2001). Mr. Venne has examined various aspects of governance, such as the impact of new information technologies, relations with Aboriginal peoples, connections between Quebec and the French-speaking minorities in Canada, the influence of law on politics, the status and role of nations in the context of globalization, local development, and the workings of democratic institutions. He is a member of the planning committee at the Assemblée des évêques du Québec.

Claire Simon



currently preparing a fiction feature, *Ça brûle*. Photo : Marion Stalens

Born in London and raised in the Var region of France, Claire Simon studied ethnology, Classical Arabic and Berber. She began her career in cinema as an editor. At the same time, she directed several short films, including the series *Scènes de ménage* with Miou Miou. She discovered direct cinema at Ateliers Varan and directed several documentaries. Her films *Les Patients*, *Récréations* and *Coûte que coûte* won several awards, including at the Festival du Réel. The latter two were released theatrically and were part of an upsurge in documentary production within French cinema. In 1997, in the Perspectives section at Cannes, she screened her first fiction feature: *Sinon Oui*, the story of a woman who simulates pregnancy and steals a child. For Arte, she directed a film with TNS students at the European Parliament, *Ça c'est vraiment toi*. Part fiction, part documentary, the film received top awards at the Belfast Festival for both documentary and fiction. After a stint in theatre, she returned to documentary with *800KM de différence /romance* and *Mimi*. She is

Noemie Mendelle



Noemie Mendelle, born in a Portuguese family, grew up in Paris and then graduated in sociology from York university (England) where she caught the film bug and became a founding member of Steel Bank Films, a film workshop based in Sheffield. She has produced and directed (*Solange*, 2003) over 25 films, mainly for British and French television. *Fellini, I'm a born liar* (2002) has won many awards and was nominated for Best European Documentary. She is now living in Edinburgh and shares her time between running the Film & TV department at Edinburgh College of Art (ECA), directing the Scottish Documentary Institute www.scottishdocinstitute.com, directing and producing. Photo : Laurent Fénart

Jim de Sève



Working from the frontlines of independent filmmaking, Jim de Sève is the chronicler of America's new culture war - the divisive battle over marriage. Based in Brooklyn, NYC, de Sève has shot and produced work for Nickelodeon, the American Museum of Natural History and the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. His documentary, *Burying the Saints*, is a personal portrait of his eccentric aunts' search for lost history. De Sève was the Director of Photography for the doc *Seeds*, about a revolutionary summer camp for ethnic enemies. De Sève teaches courses in digital filmmaking and directing documentaries at Film Video Arts in New York. *Tying the Knot* www.1049films.com takes "activist filmmaking" back to its roots of affecting lasting change, and building a community network through the filmmaker's vision of social justice. Photo : Matthew Pond

John Walker



John Walker lives in Halifax. He began his career as a photographer in Montreal. His shift to filmmaking began in 1975, when the legendary "Budge" Crawley handed him a motion picture camera and sent him underground to film *A Song for a Miner*. Since then he has received numerous nominations and awards including a Genie for best feature documentary *Strand - Under the dark Cloth*, a personal portrait of his mentor, the photographer Paul Strand. He directed and photographed *The Hand of Stalin*, which addressed the devastating human suffering under Stalin's regime. *Hidden Children*, a film about children who concealed their Jewish identity to survive the Holocaust. *Orphans of Manchuria* dealt with the plight of Japanese children orphaned in China at the end of the WWII. With the award winning *Utshimassits : Place of the Boss*, Walker told the painful story of the nomadic Innu. His feature length films include the Genie nominated *The Fairy Faith* and

Tough Assignment. His most recent film *Men of the Deep*s won several audience awards at film festivals across the country and has been nominated for three Gemini awards including Best Documentary Director, Best Photography and Best Performing Arts.

Monique Simard



A producer and executive director of Virage Productions www.virage.ca, one of Quebec's major production companies, Monique Simard sits on several boards. She is vice-chair of the board of directors of the Cinémathèque Québécoise; board member and chair of the documentary section of the Association des producteurs de films et de télévision du Québec (APFTQ); founding member and vice-chair of the Documentary Network; and chair of the board of directors of the international solidarity organization Alternatives. Since 1998, she has produced more than 25 documentaries. Among the directors she has worked with are Jean-Claude Labrecque, Manon Barbeau, Jean-Philippe Duval, and Érica Pomerance.

Philippe Baylaucq



Philippe Baylaucq studied sculpture and cinema at the Hornsey College of Art and St. Martin's School of Art in London. He has worked in film, television and video as an independent director; his work spans several genres including documentary, fiction and experimental film. Among his recent works are *Lodola* (1996), which won the Telefilm Canada Award at the 15th Festival of Films on Art; *Mystère B.* (1997) which won the same award at the 16th FIFA; and *Les Couleurs du sang* (2001), selected to official competition at the 2001 edition of FIFA. In early 2001, he was awarded the Lumières 2001 prize for his contribution to the promotion of the status of director in Quebec, which he accomplished during his 1996 to 2000 stint as chair of the Association des réalisateurs et réalisatrices du Québec (ARRQ). In 2004, he completed *Moving Sands*, selected to official competition at FIFA 2004 and broadcast on Télé-Québec, CBC (The Nature of Things) and TV5. www.arrq.qc.ca

Susan Annis

Susan Annis is the Executive Director of the Cultural Human Resources Council (CHRC) www.culturalhrc.ca. CHRC is a national not for profit organization with a Board of Directors that includes representatives from all the arts disciplines and cultural industries. It manages projects on human resource issues such as training and professional development, compensation, HR management, career planning and competency development. CHRC produces career development tools such as: *The Art of Managing Your Career* (for self employed artists); competency charts and profiles for Export Marketing of cultural goods and services, for Information Resource Management Specialists, for New Media Content Creators, and for Documentary Filmmakers; and *Careers in Culture*, a series of books describing career opportunities in all the cultural sub sectors.

Jean Pierre Lefebvre, moderator of the Forum



Jean-Pierre Lefebvre has made 26 feature films since 1965, as well as a dozen videos since 1991. Over the past four decades, he has been active in promoting Quebec independent film. Presently, he is chair of the Association des réalisateurs et réalisatrices du Québec (ARRQ). www.arrq.qc.ca

Carmen Garcia, secretary of the Forum



After immigrating to Montreal in 1973, Carmen spent several years studying and working in publishing, journalism and communications. She began working in documentary production in 1983 and became a producer, while continuing to be involved in documentary research and scriptwriting. In 1988, she co-founded the production company Argus Films Inc. Since 1994, she has worked as a director (*L'École symphonique*, 2004), scriptwriter, and producer (*Qui a tiré sur mon frère?*, 2004). www.arrq.qc.ca Photo: Céline Lalonde

Jean-Daniel Lafond, Chair of the Documentary Network



An acute observer of Quebec society, the world, and his time, Jean-Daniel Lafond is a filmmaker, writer and former professor of philosophy. His films are moving, provocative accounts that take viewers on journeys and encourage reflection on the destiny of individuals and peoples. They include *Les Traces du rêve* (1986), *Le Voyage au bout de la route ou La Ballade du pays qui attend* (1987), *La Manière Nègre* (1991), *Tropique Nord* (1993) *La Liberté en colère* (1994), *Haïti dans tous nos rêves* (1996), *L'Heure de Cuba* (1999), *Le Temps des barbares* (1999), *Salam Iran une lettre persane* (2002), *Le Faiseur de théâtre* (2002), and *Le Cabinet du Docteur Ferron* (2003). All fall within the definition of creative documentary cinema, which Lafond has always defended. Parallel to his film career, Jean-Daniel Lafond has developed an original body of radio work, worked in theatre, and published several books. He was awarded the Lumières prize in 1999. He is a co-founder of the Rencontres Internationales du Documentaire de Montréal and has been its chair from 1998 to 2004. He is also chair of the Documentary Network. www.arrq.qc.ca Photo: Michel La Veaux

Lucette Lupien



Executive director of the Documentary Network.
Coordinator of the 2004 Forum: *Filming Reality: What Training for What Skill ?*

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