

MILLENNIUM FILM WORKSHOP INC.
New York State Council of the Arts Grant (Excerpts)
50x50 Festival & Millennium Film Journal
(Awarded in full for 2018)

50x50 FESTIVAL
Past, Present, Future

On May 17th, 2017 the Millennium Film Workshop celebrates 50 years of non-profit incorporation. In commemoration of this important milestone, we have designed a festival that emphasizes the cultural significance of artist run workspaces. *MFW 50 x 50: Past, Present, Future* will take place in New York City with a firm commitment to its original mission of providing low cost or free resources for the non-commercial image artist. As a tribute to our 50 years of operation, Millennium will host an event that honors our rich educational and curatorial mission. Our talented officers, volunteers, and members will facilitate all of the 50 planned events.

While we are proud of our past achievements, MFW 50 x 50 seeks to expand the margins of motion image expression. We will meet this objective by offering educational workshops that build upon the last 50 years of recorded image reproduction. Participants will have the opportunity to explore various portals of emerging visual technology, including virtual and augmented reality, digital video, and visual computer programming. The festival will also include workshops in traditional media, such as photography, film, and video production.

In addition to teaching alternative forms of media, the festival will place an emphasis on exhibiting a wide array of image-based works. Along with screenings that are traditionally curated, the festival will feature visual projects that were developed in connection with our media workshops. In an attempt to empower our members, festival participants will have a legitimate opportunity to share their creative output and receive audience feedback. This approach departs from the traditional festival model in which attendees serve as passive consumers of an exclusive program. For MFW 50 x 50, participants will act as producers, curators, and spectators of media content. The purpose of this approach is to reinforce the ongoing egalitarian spirit of our organization.

Both workshops and screenings will take place in the New York City area. Through collaborations with our longstanding partners, we will have access to spaces that enhance the festival experience. In addition to the screening series/festival, we will collaborate with the Millennium Film Journal to offer cross-disciplinary documentation of this momentous anniversary. The Journal has maintained a lasting presence throughout years of transition. During 2016, Millennium was fortunate to welcome an innovative and dependable management team. As we sketch a blueprint for our next 50 years of operation, we are optimistic that MFW 50 x 50 will properly initiate this new era of workshop production.

CONTENT/FORMAT

For the MFW 50x50 Festival: Past, Present, Future, all kinds of film, video and mixed media formats will be represented under the general heading of experimental or avant-garde cinema. We plan to offer a wide-array of programming options, including curated film screenings, educational workshops, audience-based screenings, and speaking panels. Through these events, participants will have the opportunity to engage with various portals of audiovisual media. A sample of proposed workshops includes:

Virtual reality production, augmented reality production, glitch image making, visual computer programming, projection mapping, 3D printing, data visualization, e-literature, digital video production, digital still photography, 8/16mm filmmaking, expanded cinema, video art, alternative photographic processing, sonic art, audio/visual performance, zine making, podcast recording, DIY distribution.

For curated screening events, efforts will be made to ensure in person participation of the filmmakers, which has been a hallmark feature of ours for 50 years and deeply important to our belief in personal expression. Discussion, critical commentary and open dialogue follow our screenings in a relaxed format. For the past few years, we have hosted screenings with partnering organizations such as Silent Barn, The Filmmakers Coop, Microscope Gallery, The New School, Anthology Film Archives, MoMA, Spectacle Theater and UnionDocs. All our events and workshops will be heavily promoted through our website and social media accounts, as well as traditional outreach via mailing list and printed materials.

MARKETING/OUTREACH

Millennium's audience and users naturally pull from the creative community of media makers in NYC. As younger artists embrace what is now considered "artisanal" filmmaking, MFW is poised to take advantage of this surge of interest in non-commercial filmmaking. As a 50-year-old organization, modernization has been essential in reaching new constituents. For years, we have successfully promoted all our screening events, workshops and publications through social media and on our website. After reconstituting paper lists, we now have an online mailing list that is over 1000 strong and growing. Last month, we introduced a monthly newsletter to highlight upcoming events and developments. Our recent Board Elections were facilitated by our leap into the modern age with an online proxy voting system for members. Looking ahead, our outreach and marketing goals will be focused on:

Partnerships – The MFW has a longstanding history of partnering with allied institutions – the Anthology Film Archives, Microscope Gallery, MoMA, UnionDocs and Spectacle Theater, to name a few. We are presently reaching out to a wider net of organizations to forge a long-term relationship that will improve our visibility, while also extending and diversifying our constituency.

Fundraising – Millennium is in the process of organizing a grand-scale event that will serve to reinvigorate our organization and also promote the Journal and upcoming Festival. Having sold our Archive to MoMA, we are currently in talks to have a combination Archive show/screening event there. As we lead up to our planned 50x50 series event, we plan to initiate a crowd-funding campaign that will sync with an end of year fundraising push.

THE MILLENNIUM FILM JOURNAL

First published in 1978, The Millennium Film Journal is the oldest continuously published journal devoted to artists' moving image, including experimental film, video art, new media, independent, avant-garde cinema, in installation, screening room, or personal screens. Currently under the directorship of Grahame Weinbren, with editors Kenneth White, and Josh Guildford, picture editor Angela Ferraiolo, and designer Shona Masarin Hurst, the Journal's domestic and international subscribers include media arts centers, university libraries, film departments, scholars and individual artists and the general public, with a subscription list of over 700. Published bi-annually, each issue focuses on a particular theme or concern, for example; Politics and Landscape, Feminism, New Technology, Surrealism, Autobiography and Experiments in Documentary.

The release of each issue is celebrated with a special screening in New York City with the contributors and/or artists often in attendance for discussion. In 2016 the Polish scholar NY resident Andrzej Jachmiczyk contributed an article on Polish avant-garde film to the journal, and programmed a showcase of Polish Avant-Garde films from the 1930s to the 1990s, courtesy of the Polish National Film Archive and in collaboration with The Polish Cultural Institute New York. In 2014, the Museum of Modern Art celebrated the 35th anniversary of the Journal with a special screening in the Titus 2 Theatre, followed by a party in the MoMA restaurant. Both screening and party were very well attended, and the issue commemorating the anniversary found a large readership.

This process of exchange can also work in reverse when film-talks are documented and published in the Journal. One of our most popular publications is the special issue entitled, "Brakhage at the Millennium" (2008), which chronicles Stan Brakhage's film talks at the Millennium over a thirty-year period with transcriptions, letters, and photographs from Millennium's extensive artist archive. Another is the Fall 2011 "Focus on Carolee Schneeman" of which all the copies were quickly acquired and is now a valuable collector's item.

The past few years have seen an expansion of the Journal's network of subscribers, advertisers, and retailers, both on an international and a domestic level. PDF purchases and back issue orders have also been on the rise. For the proposed granting cycle, the Millennium Film Journal seeks to modernize into the digital age while extending readership and expanding its yearly slate of NYC events. Funds would be used in conjunction with the publication of two Journals, including the 67th, which will celebrate the Millennium Film Workshop's 50th anniversary with a special edition 50 x 50 issue - one writer per film spanning 50 years. There are five areas we are seeking support:

Format - Currently the Journal's page size is 7x10, which we would like to increase to 8x10 to better accommodate the wider 16x9 standard used in digital video. This will increase printing costs by 10-15%. As we are committed to our current price structure through 2018, we request funding to offset this higher production cost.

Highlights Videos - Our new "Highlights" YouTube videos add background and content to articles in the Journal, focusing on local writers and/or local filmmakers. Our first 4-minute "Highlight #1" featured New York writer and artist Ellen Zweig, whose MFJ 63 article reports on the Video Bureau, a grassroots organization based in China, which supports moving image artists. Ellen programmed our fall 2016 Anthology screening, bringing works to our local community that otherwise would not be seen. This first video was made with no money through the good will of professional filmmakers.

Launch Screenings - We bring international film and video works to our Anthology Film Archives "launch" screenings to celebrate the publication of each new MFJ issue. MFJ reviewers regularly attend international experimental film and video festivals, and the programming is partly based on their reviews. As a result, the programs are often the only opportunity for our NYC audience to see these films. So far we have managed to beg or borrow copies for the launch screenings, since our 50% share of the gate does not nearly cover the rental fees. We need funding so we can program without limitation, and compensate the artists who provide their films. It would also be valuable to add a second screening of the same works.

Digital Publication - Many of our writers are New York based, and much of the work discussed in the Journal, particularly in the review section, is exhibited in NYC galleries, museums, micro-cinemas and art houses. We are get frequent requests for an EBook version of the Journal. In order to do this, we need to commission a designer to set up a template for ePub formatting, advise on the software required, and develop EBook distribution strategies.

Subscription Manager - We need a part-time subscription/distribution manager to help increase the MFJ circulation.