
Annual Report

MediaNet / FLUX media gallery

October 1, 2019 - September 30, 2020



(FLUX window gallery, at 821 Fort Street, with "ANGEL FOOD" exhibition, July 2020)

Introduction

MediaNet supports artists with the creation and presentation of media art works. We work and offer our services in the Greater Victoria region on Vancouver Island, on the ancestral and un-ceded territories of the Lekwungen peoples, the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations, and also the Wsanec speaking peoples of the Pauquachin, Tsartlip, Tseycum and Tsawout First Nations.

2019-2020 Annual report of activities

It was a most extraordinary year for us all, and yet despite the pandemic, MediaNet's activities increased over the previous year! Overall viewership of exhibitions, screenings and workshops/artist talks was 3818 in 2019-2020, a 64% increase over the 2329 total attendance in 2018-2019.

After operating our FLUX media gallery at 821 Fort street since August 2018, with a larger space and a storefront location, the 2019 fiscal year began well with a screening on November 7th of "Water and Land", a program of short works curated for the FLUX media gallery by Eli Hirtle, featuring contemporary media art works by First Nations artists. Eli had toured the program to 5 different locations in September 2019, visiting media art presentation venues in BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, with the support of a Canada Council for the Arts Touring grant that MediaNet had obtained. Featured artists included Caroline Monnet, Marjorie Beaucage, Conor McNally and Jesse Ray Short.

Then from November 9 - 17, MediaNet sponsored an installation/exhibition by local artists, including members of the Wax Collective, called "Waste Land: A Climate Anxiety Haunted House" co-organized by MediaNet member Kay Gallavin. Our programming was just ramping up, as we followed that with a screening of experimental films from the NFB archives on November 14, then an artist talk, "Exploring Interactivity in LED Art", by California based artist Shawn Silverman on November 20th.



This was followed by a screening in the FLUX media gallery on November 21st of films from Halifax's Handmade Film Collective, part of an exchange with MediaNet (seen at left), which was quickly followed by a workshop, "The Secret Language of Light", led by Justin Love, on using new media tools to create works with lights. We

ended November with a screening of a classic film noir, "Out of the Past", with a talk by Peter Sandmark.

December was busy, as first FLUX hosted the Disability Arts Showcase during the beginning of the month, organized by the Victoria Disability Resource Centre. Then on December 9th, FLUX hosted "Dark Listening: Sounds for Deep Times", a live audio art performance, organized and led by member Tina Pearson on December 9th, and then the following day, on December 10th, FLUX was the venue for the Pacific Peoples Partnership Annual General Meeting, which whom we have partnered for several years.

Program Director, Cat Lewis curated a program of classic experimental films by women filmmakers, such as Maya Deren, screened in FLUX on December 12th, and the day after, on December 13, FLUX's window gallery hosted a live performance art piece by June Yeo, for which a crowd gathered on the downtown sidewalk of Fort Street. For the second year in a row we held a fundraising party in FLUX, on December 19, with guest DJ Bryan Skinner, and featuring a psychedelic light show by local artist, Greg Evans. The event raised \$400, which went towards more programming in FLUX. On January 23, FLUX featured a screening of the films made in MediaNet's Handmade and Analogue program, that were part of the exchange with the Halifax based Handmade Film Collective. Two days later, on January 25, FLUX hosted the "Integrated Dance Films" program, then a screening of Orson Welles' film, "Touch of Evil" on January 30, and on January 31 June Yeo followed up her performance in the FLUX window gallery with "Musik-ofilia II", to a mid-day sidewalk audience.



With so much activity in the FLUX gallery, 2020 looked to be off to a great start with the reception on February 7th, for the exhibition in the full FLUX gallery by local artist Kemi Craig of her show Darkest Light: Explorations of Joy and Futurity, featuring her experimental film, and shadow portraits. (Pictured at left)

But news was already spreading about a virus, soon called COVID-19. In March of 2020, following the BC government's health orders, the MediaNet office and the FLUX media gallery closed, at first we thought it would only be until the end of April, with staff working from home, and offering curb-side equipment rental pick ups. But suddenly all of our planned programming had to be cancelled: June Yeo's follow up to "Musik-ofilia", her video/graphic novel/performance art piece; Justin Love's new media workshop, and an event by Victoria performance art collective, Open Action. We did not know how long the shut down would go on, so we started online video art programming with MediaNet members' videos on the front page of our website, starting with long time MediaNet member, Pamela Miller's iconic video art work about the Blue Bridge. After several weeks, we then began featuring videos from the Wax Collective online, in May, 2020, including films by Jason Lei and Sierra Ritch. (Still from "After Mutation" at right.)



Each show would go on for two weeks, as we paid artists to present their work in what we began calling the FLUX online gallery. The FLUX Quarantine Video challenge was then set up to spur the creation of videos or new media works that we could show online. The BC Arts Council and the Canada Council offered arts organizations special COVID funding, and the MediaNet staff began planning ways to provide other resources online, such as links to tutorials, and interviews with artists. We developed safe protocols that enabled us to continue with equipment rentals, and programming in the Window Gallery, over the rest of the year. The FLUX media window gallery remained busy all year. In June we presented "Gemini" (pictured at right) by recent Artist in Residence for the City of Victoria, Lindsay Delaronde. Her work was followed by Rick Raxlen's "Brand New Triathlon" experimental animation piece, which in turn was followed by two videos, "All that remains" by Grace Salez, and "Bialy" by Judith Price, long time MediaNet members.



By mid summer the COVID cases had receded and with safety protocols in place, we hosted a sidewalk exhibition opening reception with about 30 people on July 9 for the "Angel Food" exhibition in the window gallery (pictured below left), and during July and August, there were about 2700 people that walked by the exhibition, during the hours that the videos were on display in the windows. With the overall increased use of our FLUX window gallery for showing works, we estimate over 22,000 people viewed the shows while they were on this past fiscal year.



We also got the FLUX logo painted onto the awning of our location (see front page picture) while the exhibition was on. In September we presented videos in the window gallery as well as inside the FLUX gallery, for the Pacific Peoples Partnership's One Wave festival, ensuring COVID safety protocols such as wearing of masks, and limiting viewers in the gallery to a maximum of 6 at a time.

Finally in September 2020, we began hosting a national media arts conference online, called DIGITAL SHIFT, in conjunction with the national organization, the Independent Media Arts Alliance (IMAA), and the Media Arts Alliance of the Pacific (MAAP). Cat Lewis, MediaNet's Program Director, also served as the conference coordinator, and Marina Glassford, our Technician helped manage behind the scenes

tech support for the virtual conference. We received a \$50,000 grant from the Canada Council's Digital Strategy Fund for hosting the national media arts gathering, and were able to hire 2 extra staff to help, Joshua Ngenda and Elliot Hearte. IMAA contributed 5 staff to the conference, which saw 233 people participating online from across Canada. DIGITAL SHIFT featured a series of virtual webinar/roundtables with 23 different guest speakers, who addressed issues related to media arts such as: Digital Ethics: AI and Surveillance; Indigenous digital sovereignty; Artists Rights and payments in the digital realm; Accessibility and the Digital Divide; Racial Justice and also a presentation of the history of Indigenous arts in Canada. There were 6 screenings, drawing 1050 viewers, and also individual media art works presented by 11 different artists, with 510 views, and 5 livestream artists walks where artists talked about their work, which drew 597 views. The event ran from Sept 16 to the end of October. (Organizing group Zoom pictured at left)



Financial overview - Our fiscal year from Oct 1, 2019 to Sep 30, 2020 was certainly an unusual one due to the pandemic, however we were fortunate to receive special COVID emergency funds from both the BC Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts and so our financial situation is stable. We lost revenue from equipment rentals, workshop registrations, screenings and general donations, but the special funds filled the gap. Also our landlord applied for the rent subsidy and therefore we saved on rent as well. This past year we received a \$17,240 equipment grant from the Canada Council, to update older computers, purchase new media gear, and lighting, audio and other accessories.

Summary - Overall it was a challenging year as we kept abreast of changing health orders, due to COVID-19, and providing a safe environment for our staff and the public who accessed our programming, in part by moving much of our programming online once the pandemic forced us to close our office and gallery for gatherings. Nonetheless we presented 20 exhibitions to 2837 viewers, 11 screenings for a total audience of 651, and hosted 10 workshops or artist talks to a total of 350 people, for a grand total audience of 3818! We directly supported the creation of 75 media art productions, and our window gallery presented media art works throughout the year, that were viewed by an estimated 22,000 people (the number of people passing by while the videos were actually playing in the windows!)

New space - Finally, to start our new fiscal year, in October 2020, we found a storefront space at 1524 Pandora, at the Oak Bay Junction, that was available, so we have moved, and signed a new lease. While



smaller, the new space is also less expensive, which will contribute to FLUX's long term sustainability. It has enough space for an office, equipment storage and editing stations in the back, and for a small gallery in the front. Importantly, it has a storefront window, so that FLUX can continue presenting works in a window gallery.

This report was prepared by Peter Sandmark, Executive Director for the MediaNet Board of Directors: Justin Love, President, Carol-Lynne Michaels, Vice-President, Holly Pattison, Secretary-Treasurer, Nicholas Vandergugten, Gabby Odowichuk, Sarah Drake, Christina Robev, Michelle Frey, Eric McNiece, and Jason Lei.

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