

DOCSPACE

A fresh look at documentary audience and screening

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Executive summary

This report is the result of research over a twelve-month period, which was driven by interviews with exhibitors, distributors, broadcasters and producers, both outwith and in Britain. It's context is how documentaries are presented to audiences: how they are distributed in this country, and how the present infrastructure of distributors, exhibitors and broadcasters impacts on what is available to the audience.

It aims to show that there is an untapped audience for documentaries. It draws evidence from international sources to show where these audiences could come from. It analyses present patterns of distribution in Britain to point to opportunities to increase the audiences and number of documentaries screened.

The report utilizes the possibilities thrown up by e-cinema, and discusses the role of the press, and the relationship between Cinema and Television.

It aims to dispel myths about documentary exhibition, and point out unhelpful current practice. It suggests models for increasing the existing audience for Cinema documentary, and for identifying and nurturing audiences entirely new to big screen documentary.

It recommends specific measures to be taken by the Film Council, Pact, a collaboration of Broadcasters, Distributors and Exhibitors and Docspace. All these measures are designed to develop and increase the audiences for documentaries on the big screen.

A pilot to test these recommendations is detailed, which assesses available research, and aims to substantially increase audiences within a specified time frame and geographical area.

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Why are documentaries important?

Documentaries change the way we look at the world:

- ◆ **"Transforming what we look at is what these films do. They do it pragmatically and with the assumption that nowadays audiences will expect and receive sophistication. Sometimes - a rarity among documentaries - they are even funny. However, good work requires sponsors, and it is possible to die of discouragement. It may also be possible in ten years time to look back on this moment, wondering where all the talent went."**

Nick Fraser, Editor Storyville, BBC2

Docspace Argument

The argument of this report is that there is an audience for documentary that is untapped.

This report puts the British situation in 2002 into an international context. It draws on comparative models in the Netherlands, Canada and Sweden, and uses examples from Film Festivals and Specialist Screenings. It challenges the view that the documentary audience is being well served by the hours of factual programme on terrestrial television and the occasional successful Cinema release.

We are at a unique point in the history of documentary film production. They are enjoying an unprecedented popularity in both cinema and television. Changing technology has brought documentary making within the grasp of the untrained hand and the modest purse.

At the same time, the type of film shown on television is narrowing in scope, and few documentaries make money on the big screen. Digital technology and e-cinema are beginning to make it possible to rethink the ways in which these films reach their audience.

This report aims to examine the potential for expanding the existing documentary audience, and identify and nurture new documentary audiences, and sets out specific recommendations, and a detailed pilot to test those recommendations.

It was put together from interviews and meetings with distributors, exhibitors, producers and policy makers held over the last 15 months. It is not comprehensive. It does reflect the challenges, preoccupations and opportunities distilled from the people interviewed, and aims to distill their knowledge into a set of recommendations with practical effect.

Background to Docspace

Docspace came into being when Edinburgh International Film Festival hosted a Documentary Symposium in August 2000. A panel which included Mark Cousins, Kevin MacDonald, Rhona McDonald from STV, Steve McIntyre from Scottish Screen, Kevin McDonald, Murray Grigor and myself as film-makers had been put together by Emma Davies, now EDN (European Documentary Network) U.K. representative, and Tracey Fearnough, former Documentary programmer at EIFF (Edinburgh International Film Festival).

During that discussion it emerged that people did not know who the audience for documentaries were, and which were the optimal screening conditions for documentaries.

A heated argument arose between two camps. One section is those that believe documentaries belong in the cinema, (for their emotional power, aesthetic power, and the political potential of large-scale public gatherings, especially around issue led or political documentaries). The other believe documentaries thrive within television, where in spite of assertions of 'dumbing down' new hybrids such as factual entertainment and reality games shows have increased in ratings.

It was agreed that an investigation of documentary screening and distribution was overdue. Starting with Grierson's intriguing statement from the 1930s, "**documentaries demand their own screening platform**", I agreed to find out what is known about the documentary audience to date.

Methodology

Meetings with Tue Steen Muller, chair of EDN, (European Documentary Network), helped to clarify a working methodology. I would carry out interviews with key players in the documentary distribution and exhibition industry. Jane Balfour, of Jane Balfour Films Ltd, a major documentary sales agent, and Colin Young, former head of the National Film and Television School, and now director of ACE helped steer the questions and which people to ask.

Interviews took place at the Amsterdam Documentary Festival and the Edinburgh International Film Festival. Follow up interviews then took place in London, by telephone and by email. A list of all those interviewed is included in the appendix.

I was joined by Karolina Hubner, and Helen Wright, both recent graduates, as research assistants, and given a small grant by Scottish Screen, Film Focus, Edinburgh, and support in kind from FVA, Edinburgh.

The interviews were free-form, but always covered the following topics:

- changes in documentary form, exhibition, screening and broadcast over the last fifteen years
- models of documentary exhibition that seemed successful
- significance of changing technology: ' e-cinema'
- role of the press
- marketing strategies and budgets
- definitions of documentary
- optimum screening conditions for documentaries

The Specialized Cinema Exhibition and Distribution study currently underway that was initiated by the Film Council in June 2001 proved a

useful source of information, and we received information from their research consultants, KPMG.

Most interviews were recorded, usually on mindisc, and most have been at least partially transcribed.

Docspace is currently undertaking a sample piece of original audience research, with the Sheffield Touring Festival. Summary Results are on page 49.

This report, by its small-scale nature, cannot provide a comprehensive overview, but does reflect preoccupations, research and opportunities in documentary distribution in 2001/2002.

Definitions

Documentaries can be called all sorts of things - reality cinema, real life dramas, reportage, factual programmes, shockumentaries, and can be made in many ways and with many intentions:, including cinema verite, essay, reconstructions, direct cinema, observational, even as thrillers, game shows, web-casts etc. They vary in intention from a desire to entertain, to inform, to shock, to titillate, to explain, to propagandise, to tell stories.

All these terms are acceptable, as are all the numerous categories and genres and crossovers within them: anything that wants to call itself a documentary is a documentary.

This report takes an inclusive definition of documentary. It will be most relevant to those documentaries which fall through the existing strands for television, or find themselves screened at 2 a.m., or fail to qualify as box office appeal for cinema, or would be given a few days screening with no publicity. The sorts of documentaries which are screened at International Film Festivals would often be examples.

The content of this report does not restrict itself to documentaries of any type, subject matter or length. It crosses over with documentaries which have a home at present within cinema and television, but is of more immediate relevance to documentaries that have something to say and are finding it hard to get a platform to say it.

DOCUMENTARY NOW

Why Docspace

Documentary is important because it tells us stories about the world we live in. Although they can be entertaining, comic, grip us like a thriller, amaze us with their narrative flourishes and make us sigh in the pleasure of looking, documentaries are different to fiction films.

The core of the difference is that documentaries arise out of the real world, in response to the real world, and send us back, as Nick Fraser says, "transformed" to the real world.

This could make it sound as though I am defining documentaries as political treatises. I don't mean this, although there can often be a political impetus behind a documentary, and it can often incite political change. I mean that each frame of a documentary contains more than the film-maker has ever been able to control, or even assimilate, both during the shooting, and the editing.

Choosing the form of documentary to tell a particular story means to engage with ways of storytelling that foregrounds real events; real people; finding sequences; accepting and incorporating the unexpected. This is the documentarist's skill and magic.

This means that the sorts of understanding we gain through watching documentaries are unique in one way, and many and various in others. They are unique in that we get a particularly vivid experiential sort of understanding. Which can be "as though we were there", or, with a different genre of documentary, we experience the power of being pulled along someone's emotional or intellectual or aesthetic perception as it is developed into a narrative or a journey or an exposition. These different styles of documentary making affect the sorts of understanding we get, the context we view the film within, and the category we place it in our mind: i.e. journalism; comedy; suspense; concert; celebrity portraits.

The unique understanding that documentaries offer become increasingly important as the World becomes more global. Differences and conflicts of ideology that once took place in fragmented corners are now rocketed onto all our consciousness. Documentaries can help us become informed world

citizens. Documentaries, in the form of television reportage, have already brought images thousands of miles closer, deconstructing propaganda.

- **"It would no longer be possible, as it was only fifty years ago, for thirty odd million people to die of famine without the presence of a video camera, or for apartheid South Africa to be suffused so long with 'official' racist propaganda."**

Nick Fraser, editor Storyville

Of course, documentary can be a tool for propaganda, and a tool to delude. Many of the people interviewed here cited the honesty of documentary as a reason for its value. Any moving image with a reputation for honesty is a powerful tool for fraud and propaganda.

This report concentrates on ways in which documentary, this powerful medium that offers a unique understanding of the world, interfaces with its audience.

The relationship is at root a simple one. The documentary on the screen, the audience watching. The factors affecting that relationship take in our history of television and cinema, the economics of entertainment and the rapidly changing technological potential of digital.

Questions to be answered

The questions to be answered in order for us to assess whether documentaries are achieving their optimal audiences are:

- Who are the present audience for documentaries?
- Does the existing provision for documentaries exclude or prioritise any particular forms or subject matters of documentaries
- Are there indications of an audience beyond this existing cinema and television audience?
- Are there models outside Britain that can point to ways of reaching a new documentary audience?
- What are the critical success factors affecting these models?
- What is the relevance of the technological changes of digital and e cinema in terms of production, distribution and exhibition potential?
- What is the present infrastructure in Britain to finance the production and screening (whether transmission or theatrical) of documentaries?
- What are the strengths of this infrastructure?
- What are its areas of greatest risk?
- Does this infrastructure limit the content and form of documentaries?

An Untapped Audience

The argument of this report is that there are audiences for documentaries which are not satisfied by either the content of the documentaries currently found on television, or the form of television.

They are different to the existing television and T.V audience, and the existing theatrical documentary audience. They are people who want to see documentaries in public places. Market research has still to reach them.

The reasons why these people have not yet identified as an audience who want to see films in public places are:

- The cinematic experience in this country has developed into an opportunity for relaxation, entertainment and escapism - all good things on a Friday night. Current studies show that 18 to 25 year olds go to the Cinema to eat popcorn, date and have their fantasies writ large on the screen. The aim of any existing research is to expand that market. There is little research into the Independent, or Regional Film Theatre or Arthouse Market, and what there is has not been followed through in terms of documentary.
- The assumption is that the audience for documentaries is a television audience. This sector was expressly identified in the research that set up Channel Four. However, the niche documentary audiences that Channel Four and BBC set out to cater for have been sidelined in the present climate of terrestrial television, which elevates ratings as the main criteria of transmission. This audience is considered too small to programme for as prime time viewing.
- The most striking thing about the Dutch research on audiences (2001: Docuzone see appendix) is that the audience for Cinema Documentaries watch less than average television. This fact was backed up by the Scottish audience research (Feb 2002). This means that there is an audience who is willing to pay to see documentaries in the Cinema, and who want to see documentaries that they cannot find on television.

This report suggests taking documentaries out of their existing frame of reference, and looking at potential ways of getting audiences and

documentaries together. The premise is that changes in cinema and television demand a fresh look at the relation between documentary and its audience.

The evidence that this audience exists is taken from the increased popularity of Documentary Film festivals; the increased visibility of the few successful documentaries to make it to the big Screen and the success of specialized screenings. Examples of permanent screening venues and successful distribution strategies from outside Britain point to a common factor of intimate knowledge and nurturing of a specific audience.

The idea of one audience for documentary, and one category for documentary will be shown to be unhelpful and misleading, particularly as regards strategies for distribution, marketing and exhibition.

The Current Climate

Several factors are now coming together to create this new context:

- the increasing fragmentation of television, with terrestrial television focusing on large scale audience pleasers, with the logic that all other audiences will be diverted to digital niche channels.
- the emergence of pay for view and specialist digital channels.
- the digital development of low cost production and exhibition equipment that will lead to changing retail Cinema environments.
- a populace that is accustomed to high quality production values on their screen and increasingly frustrated by the narrow scope of mainstream television and entertainment Cinema.

This audience can be identified and nurtured in order to increase production and screenings of documentaries resulting in enhanced revenue and cultural and economic enrichment.

The international context

Interviews were held with Producers, Distributors and Funding Bodies from France, Belgium, Canada, U.S.A., Germany, the Netherlands, and Eire. Docspace collaborated with people from Spain, Israel, Italy, Norway, Sweden and Denmark.(see list in Appendix). Many more interviews could usefully take place.

Kees Ryninks, the Documentary officer for the **Dutch Film Fund**, starts with a refreshing admission of ignorance:

- ◆ **"We have no idea who loves documentaries and why these people are coming to the cinema, what they are looking for and what do they get out of it."**

Many of the people I spoke to argued that the documentary audience was the same as the independent(aka art-house, or post June - specialized) fiction audience - and in fact, are pulling the fiction audience away:

- ◆ **" For me they are the same..but now we see people are more curious about documentary films than fiction. Fiction has no more surprises ... it tells the same stories, but in a way we've seen often before, so it seems banal... now documentaries are taking the lead"**

Suzette Glenadel, Director of **Cine du Reel**, Documentary Film Festival, Paris.

This can certainly be true, as is demonstrated by films such as **Roger and me**, **When we were Kings**, **Buena Vista Social Club** etc. However, this independent fiction market is not the only audience for documentaries. It is more useful to see it as one of several audiences - the one we have most access to, and knowledge of, because it crosses over into the appeal of fiction narrative.

In France, the public subsidy of documentary distribution is seen as precious, as Suzette Glenadel's impassioned defense of cultural spending shows.

- ◆ **" Documentaries are absolutely necessary to a nation, to a country, for their history, their memories, to look at themselves, to develop...and it must be in the cinema - television is consumption - in the theatre it is personal experience. It can change the individual"**

For **Paul Pauwels**, a producer from Belgium:

- **"I am really convinced that documentary is an essential part of our society and of democracy. ...people will tell about their own communities and these films must be shown abroad so that we understand each other better...and understand ourselves. Documentaries is our way of making people see the world in a different way, it's like is a photo album of our society - somebody said it a few days ago - A country without its documentaries is like a family without a photo album."**

Internationally, what we know about the audiences for documentaries, is that they are growing. Some documentaries on the big screen and some documentaries on television are drawing larger numbers. Documentary Film Festivals have increased dramatically over the last fifteen years – most festivals show approximately 30% increase on ticket sales each year. This is worth considering. Why are they so popular?

Documentary Film Festivals

- ◆ 'They introduce people to the documentary form',

explained **Karen Cirillo**, from **Doubletake**, which is a four day documentary festival, set up two years ago in USA by Nancy Bairiki.

- ◆ 'A festival like this offers a sustained , concentrated exposure to the sheer emotional power of documentary film making, its ability to communicate the drama embedded in human experience. In Durham you could walk into the stately dark of the Carolina Theatre and lose yourself in real life.'

A.O.Scott, The New York Times.

Karen Cirillo thinks that '**culturally liberated people** 'that have 'not really grown up with documentary,' have been able to experience the form of documentary through the festival.

In Canada, one reason given for these increasing audiences is that '**more and more people are getting exposed**,' argues **Peter Wintonick**, a Canadian Producer. In Montreal, at the Rencontres Festival bookings have doubled over the last year.

The established Documentary Festival **IDFA** has increased its audience year on year, for instance, from 188 films and an audience box office of NLG 260.000 in 1998, to 252 films and a box office of NLG380.000 in 2000. Most screenings are sold out, so the potential audience figure is larger again.

There is also a growing audience for spaces such as **Ex Centris** . In Montreal people go to see documentaries at the cinemas as it is a '**theatrical experience**'- '**they like the form.**' **Peter Wintonick** continues:

- ◆ "There is a big public here at the Amsterdam Film Festival - 70,000 people over seven days. I'm not just judging by this Festival, but those are indications - the documentary culture is really exploding...
- ◆ More and more people are getting exposed, I think documentary culture is blossoming in a serious way. you are starting to get all you

need out of documentary.. there are a lot of great story tellers out there."

The emotional power of the documentary on the big screen is a major reason that the experience of watching these documentaries is so rich. The excitement of the social interactions and the networking possibilities must also be a factor in the year on year increase in audience figures.

These Film Festivals are generally programmed by merit, and occasionally around a theme or by director as in retrospectives. They are a main source of big screen viewing for an audience who wants to see documentaries made internationally today. They get sell out audiences in several countries. The limited number of Film Festivals and the competition for screen time mean each documentary will get only about 2 screenings in each country. Have these screenings exhausted the market?

This report argues that the market for these documentaries is insufficiently exploited. We can look at other examples of the big Screen Documentary audience, which include specialist screenings, and a few permanent venues.

Specialist Screenings

Film Societies, and special events fall into this category. Usually arranged around a particular audience, event or subject, these screenings can, but do not need, to take place in Cinemas. A good example of this is **Paul Pawel's** screening of a feature documentary in **Belgium: Welcome to My World**.

- ◆ "We showed it in front of 1500 paying people, it was a fantastic experience, but all these people were interested because they were coming from this world of cycling."

Specialist screenings are a rapidly increasing form of getting a documentary to an audience. They are usually taken on by directors and producers who are impatient with the cumbersome infrastructure of distribution and exhibition in Britain, and who realise their documentaries are unlikely to be picked up by a distributor.

An interesting factor affecting the success of these specialist screenings is the emergence of email and internet promotion, reviews, associated web pages, sites and links, and viral campaigns.

This became an important factor in **Tariq Mahmood's Injustice**, which sustained public appetite for a film that was hard to see. It has been prevented from screening at several cinemas by threatened legal action from the police.

The emergence of the specialist screenings is an important indicator of the potential of documentaries to achieve a new audience who is attracted by the subject matter. They are marketed to an audience that is well known to the exhibitor, and tend to achieve full houses.

At present, specialist screenings are organised on a ad-hoc and individual basis, and often by the Producer or Director, bypassing the present distribution system. But this is beginning to change.

An interesting example of specialist screenings forming an alternative distribution network is the one run by **Cam Haines**, called **the Toronto Film Circuit**. It does a total box office of \$1.2million, by collaborating with volunteer special interest groups throughout Canada, who choose a film through the Toronto Film Circuit, book a screen in their local cinema once a week and sell tickets to an audience they have already identified. Their box office is doubling every two years, with most screenings sold out.

Carlo Cresta -Dina is the Documentary producer with **Fandango Films**, which has distributed over 20 documentaries in the last two years. His current distribution strategy with the feature **'The Hairdresser'** is to:

- ◆ **“put some small amounts into local television advertising, because this is a local film, in a local dialect, of Padua, and arrange screenings just in this area. We will get an audience of 10,000 and that will be enough.”**

The total budget of this film was around 170,000 Euro, and a Cinema audience of 10,000, combined with the television sales, will bring it into profit.

The development of digital technology encourages the ambitions of smaller budget feature documentaries such as this to a Cinema life. The lowered break-even points to a smaller box-office return becoming a viable economic option.

Email and internet promotion is a growing force- allowing an audience to see an excerpt - and could prove useful in pay for view documentaries. It could be developed as a very useful means of directing audiences to Cinema and Special Screenings. It can also point audiences towards relevant research through its links and web pages.

Permanent Venues screening Documentary - some examples.

Although many Cinemas screen documentaries occasionally, few have as sustained and committed an approach **New York's Film Forum**. **Karen Cooper** has been running the successful and prestigious theatre for 28 years now. She screens feature documentaries and independent fictions without distinguishing between documentary and fiction formats. She shows on three screens, regularly playing to full houses. She attributes her success: "**beyond my wildest dreams**" to a combination of several factors

- membership
- critical attention and prestige
- venue, critical mass of intellectuals.

She says that audiences are looking for

- ◆ **"a film of ideas of politics, films that deal with social and cultural history, which is also entertaining but in amore intellectually compelling way. It's a kind of film making that requires an audience to bring a lot of their own interests and imagination and intellect to the relationship - it's an active relation, not a passive one"**

The National Film Board of Canada have had increasing audiences over the ten years since they established their documentary 'robotec' in Quebec. They hold 75,000 hours of documentaries which are available for immediate viewing. This screen-on-demand facility is followed up with the opportunity to buy any of the films on VHS. The popularity of this permanent documentary viewing centre has led to plans to establish similar centres in other Canadian cities. They now have 100,000 annual visitors, close to their total capacity of 120,000.

The National Film Board of Canada are presently undertaking a pilot with Universities to make all 75,000 hours of film available to all Canadians through the internet. They are also exploring a worldwide commercial exhibition circuit.

Across the US, documentaries such as **Startup.com** are increasingly being shown in multiplexes. **Chris Hegedus**, the Producer, sees this as a way of

'de-ghettoising' the documentary and allowing exposure to a wider audience.

According to David Wilkinson of **Guerrilla Films**, documentary feature films can do better in United States. They are shown across the University circuit and the documentaries are sold to the institutions as part of their course work.

Wintonick sees the emergence of '**pleasure palaces of dedicated spaces that you can go into in a city**' to watch documentary film. The Netherlands is aiming to introduce permanent digitally projected screens for documentaries in its ten largest repertory theatres. In Austria, a frustrated group of documentarists banded together and set up screens in the Bahnhof (railway station). They proved increasingly popular.

Heine Deckert, of **D-net** in Germany, looks to the particularly strong tradition of cinema screenings for documentaries in Norway, where three out of last year's top ten grossing features were documentaries. He explains:

- ◆ **"In Norway, the cinemas still belong mainly to the communities and that is the reason why there is the tradition of bringing quality films, Norwegian films, they have a good home market in documentaries for the cinema. But here are not a lot of territories where it is like that. You can get 40 to 50,000 tickets with a documentary which is enormous if you think that the whole of Norway has 4 million inhabitants.**

Peter Wintonick points out that the numbers involved in the documentary industry are substantial:

- ◆ **"we studied (in Canada) a group of 400 film-makers and T.V. If you include documentary production internally by broadcasters the numbers zoom way up there. So on the economic level, on the employment issue, you should count how many people depend on the documentary industry for a livelihood."**

"Feature documentary can create greater access to our people and people appreciate it more than a feature film" says **Paul Pauwels**.

Documentaries cross international boundaries, often in their subject matter, and often in the way they are made. They are often distributed across international boundaries, although less so in Britain than almost any other country. What effect does this isolation from world documentaries have on British culture, on the documentary form, and on the way we see ourselves in Britain?

Carlo Cresta Dina, whose distribution company, Fandango, finds he has been able to distribute his catalogue of feature documentaries in over thirty countries world wide, but not yet in Britain.

Looking at the International context of documentary exhibition and audience development, we can learn take some models of what works and try them out in Britain. For instance:

- Learn re distribution - long exposure necessary to ensure word of mouth audiences. Agnes Varda's **Les Glaneurs et La Glaneuse** played for several months in few cinemas.
- Rights management model of co-productions, acquisitions and pre-sales that allows the producer to retain greater control and cinema screening potential.
- community owned cinemas: their effect on audiences and variety of programming
- university circuits: their success in developing an audience for documentaries
- specialized screenings: existence of audiences other than those we traditionally associate with documentaries in public venues.
- use of digital technology to change bottom line & break-even costs

The Netherlands: a case study

Kees Ryninks of the **Dutch Film Fund** commissioned the first qualitative study into the Cinema documentary audience this spring. It is currently being completed and translated, but he was able to communicate the main points of interest. A copy of the translated sections is included in the appendix.

Dutch Documentary Audience Study.

Main conclusions:

The audience go to see documentaries because of the subject matter. In this sense, the subject matter of the documentary is the equivalent of the celebrity in fiction. It is the hook that draw the audience. The average age of the audience was 43, highly educated, watch less than average amount of television. They would be encouraged to go to cinema documentaries by gala openings with the director present. Their fears are to be bored, or to go through an experience like a school lesson. The director's blurb on the documentary is often the lynch pin of their decision whether to go to the film. They are put off by the term 'documentary', with its school-room connotations.

Kees Ryninks aims to provide "**more chances of keeping documentaries in the cinema.**"

The plan is to equip ten of the largest Independent cinemas with digital video projectors with the help of Sony and JVC. Such projectors will be installed as one side of a two way commitment; cinemas with these screens guarantee a set amount of days per year will be set aside for the screening of documentaries.

Under this system, documentaries will get nation-wide screenings once a week, in addition to six fixed weeks. For example there is one or two weeks scheduled after January and there will be other time after the other two documentary festivals held in Rotterdam and Utrecht. In effect this will mean that a gap is filled in films journey from festival to television.

- ◆ **"One of the biggest problems that documentary screening faces is a combination of the lack of marketing and promotion of the film followed by very few places to play it cinematically after its launch."**

The aims of this strategy are to increase the revenues available to Dutch documentary production, increase the output of Dutch documentaries by 50% over 3 years, and to increase the exposure of Dutch audiences to high quality and foreign feature documentaries.

Sweden: a case study

The Swedish Labour movement have built community houses and parks, Folkets Hus & Parker (FHP), all over Sweden since the early 1900's, mainly because the working-class at that time had no access to hotel ball-rooms in cities and towns. These community houses were designed for meetings, lectures, public dancing, local celebrations and various kinds of entertainment. It early became a must to build a cinema in the houses or in an adjoining building. In the 1940's FHP also became a major film producer, supporting among others the early Ingmar Bergman films.

There are today 700 Folkets Hus, 267 of them equipped with cinemas, most of them single-screens. Since the cinemas are connected to or integrated in the Folkets Hus buildings they are also used for conferences, shows, stage theatre, education, concerts and many other cultural events. Folkets Hus is today Sweden's largest cinema owner in terms of seating capacity (53.958 seats), however not in terms of annual turnover.

FHP cinemas are located in smaller cities and towns, geographically covering the whole country. This creates distribution problems. An average 35 mm film print costs approx. 2.500 Euros to make and weighs some 30 kilos, which add to the freight costs. The total costs causes a limitation of the number of prints being made for a new film title. These prints are first screened in bigger cities with multiplex cinemas and later on released and distributed in the regions. All in all this causes a slowness and sometimes fatal out-of-date status for the repertoire of Folkets Hus cinemas.

E- or d-cinema, digital projection of digital movies, not only brings lower printing costs - approx. 100 Euro for a digital print - but also faster and easier distribution and lower freight costs. In practice this means that each FHP cinema can buy a film print of their own and have first release the same evening as the bigger cities. It furthermore makes it possible to maintain a broader repertoire, including minority interest and art films which would otherwise never have reached the regions.

The possibility of connecting the digital film projector to broadband fiber-optic networks and satellite transmissions further extends the scope of e- and d-cinemas, turning FHP cinemas into "Event Houses".

Folkets Hus & Parker has initiated a two-year e-cinema pilot project in order to test and evaluate new digital presentation and transmission techniques. Digital projectors will be installed in 11 Folkets Hus and

cinemas during the second half of 2001 , digitally interconnected. This project is run in close co-operation with local municipalities and industries as well as the public school system. The universities of Gothenburg and Stockholm and the Royal Institute of Technology will follow, document and evaluate the pilot project.

In order to achieve a European exchange of experiences and ideas the FHP e-cinema project will communicate with similar projects which are now being launched in Finland, Norway, Greece and Spain.

Documentaries in Britain

Television

We are at a time of transition for documentaries in the U.K. Television documentary formats can attract high ratings, but the longer form and 'auteur' documentaries are less visible on terrestrial television.

Nick Fraser, editor *Storyville*, a British feature slot on television, describes the development of documentary over the past five years:

- ◆ **"In Britain documentaries are now made almost exclusively to be shaped by T.V slots. The subjects are narrower and narrower each year. Prisons, police, porn, pedophilia - hundreds of films are made Rolodex-style on the same subject. Aliens and dolphins are high on the list. Why?"**
- ◆ **Because it can be guaranteed that they will get the right numbers. A life spent watching factual shows made exclusively for television in Britain provides an unwinningly lopsided view of the world. It also implies extensive acquaintance with collective delusion. Perhaps there are villages or housing estates where people do nothing but appear on T.V"**

Alan Fountain, ex-Channel Four editor, analyses the reasons for the elevation of ratings as the criteria for primetime transmission:

- ◆ **"All programming now is driven by ITV. It has to get ratings because of advertisers. BBC's traditional response was to say we have to compete in the central ground. If we don't do that we'll be a minority channel and can't get the license. The agenda for all the terrestrials is set by ITV.**
- ◆ **"CH4 and BBC1 and 2 have effectively narrowed the range of programming and taken a big step to reach larger audiences more of the time. With reality TV and entertainment, factual has become hugely important.**
- ◆ **"Ch4 when it first started, was a producer led channel. Jeremy Isaac's set the tone for a place where creative makers of all sorts could make work, and role of commissioning editor was enable these creative people to show their work ad find audiences.**
- ◆ **"After Isaacs left it changed to being an audience and schedule led channel, with a management construction. So commissioning editors devised a schedule to reach a particular audience and producers are brought in to provide that output. That is now**

completely dominant. The role of the producer is to come up with programmes to enable the preconceived policy to work. So turning up with an incredible programme which doesn't fit the slots, the policy - you have to forget it, even if it might be a work of genius.

- ◆ "The classic authored doc has been marginalised because it was perceived as something with a question-mark about whether it delivered to audiences, whether it was part of the past. There was a nineties backlash against the eighties.
- ◆ "So they tried to make Cutting Edge more formula driven, and the Channel discovered that they could get much bigger audiences than they had ever through they could for documentary and they imposed that format on makers - 'these directors, this company, and if not we're not interested'. So there's a whole number of reasons why a documentary that ten years ago we would have thought we must show, suddenly they are saying we're not sure, it doesn't fit what we're doing."

Britain stands out from America and most of Europe as a country with a particularly strong documentary tradition on television. In the last ten years there has been increasing concern over what is seen as the narrowing of scope of documentaries screened by terrestrial television. The quest for ratings has altered the ways in which stories can be told and subjects investigated: Leslie Woodhead argues

- ◆ "things will have to change. Even the government is concerned. We don't need more bubble gum channels - I'm appalled at the cut back on challenging, innovative material"

Although Nick Fraser is cautiously optimistic that his Storyville strand's move from BBC2 to Knowledge, and on to BBC4, will allow him to screen more programmes(52 slots, not 8 - 10), and buy more foreign documentaries, the move is indicative of this trend towards the marginalisation of feature documentaries.

There are very few documentaries distributed cinematically in Britain at present. Most documentaries are seen on television. There are around a dozen companies which sometimes distribute documentaries onto the big screen. Cinema Exhibitors have little experience of screening documentaries, although a few Documentaries such as **Buena Vista Social Club**, **When we were Kings** and **One Day in September**, **Dark Days**, and **Startup.Com** have

been screened. The most successful documentaries distributed in Britain theatrically are heavily weighted towards those produced in the U.S.A., and previously distributed there.

It seems that neither distributors nor broadcasters believe that the British populace will watch feature documentaries.

When Leslie Woodhead completed his documentary **Endurance** (with over a million dollars of funding from Film Four), it was distributed theatrically throughout the USA and Europe, but refused distribution in Britain. The argument is that there is no audience for feature documentaries in Britain, either on prime-time television, or on the big screen.

Barry Dowdall, a producer in Ireland, argued that the broadcasters are out of touch with the viewer:

- ◆ **" I work a lot in communities, people tell me they don't feel anyone is asking them what they would like to see."**

This is echoed by Lucinda Broadbent, a British Producer, who argues

- ◆ **"I think that there is an unmet hunger from people who are interested in the world, interested in something a bit more intelligent, a bit more creative.. to have the world laid open to you."**

Dick Fontaine, head of documentary at **The National Film and Television School** argues that documentaries lose much of their power on the small screen.

- ◆ **"A documentary in the Cinema is quite a different experience to seeing a television documentary in the living-room or kitchen, with all the usual distractions. To release its emotional and aesthetic power a documentary needs to be given its optimal screening conditions. Silence, a big screen, no interruptions. These things cost a lot to make - let's say about the cost of a family house. Shouldn't they be watched as the producer or director intended?"**

Cinema Documentaries

It is useful to gauge the opinions of the producers, sales agents and directors, and ask who they think are the audience for their documentaries on the big screen.

They believed there was a crossover Arthouse audience:

'There is an audience for independent fiction films that is a ripe audience for us. But we can't get to them!'

Who are the "ripe" documentary audience?

In Britain, with its history of television commissions, the audience for documentaries is normally seen as a television audience. The main cinema audience is defined through researches done by the bigger distributors, and focuses on the mainstream Cinema audience, which has been shown to be mainly male, and between 15 and 19 years old.

Neither of these groups are the focus audience for most feature documentaries. The biggest demographic group in Britain are the over 35s. It is from this group that the documentary feature audience would be drawn. This is the audience that the Dutch study found are the Cinema-going documentary audience.

The Dutch study raises several interesting questions for Britain. It is important to note that this is an audience that watches less than average television, and who want to see these documentaries on the big screen, in a public, environment, with the possibility of shared discussion and dialogue with the filmmaker.

Nurturing this audience would be increasing the cinema audience, without competing with the television audience for documentaries. They are substantially older than the audiences that mainstream cinema is aimed at. This would impact on the optimal type of venue, and facilities available. The desire for shared discussion and dialogue should also be a key factor in planning a venue to suit this audience. The age brings in the possibility of the 'grey pound'. This is a discerning audience with a high disposable income.

Important areas to examine immediately are the comparative areas between Britain and the Netherlands: would this be the same audience in the U.K? Are the television, cinema and written media contexts similar comparable?

Documentary Audience

It seems to me there is a gap between the audience the documentary producer imagines they are making the film for, and the present audience for television and mainstream cinema. Many of the producers I spoke to talked about audiences, but they had little opportunity to know much about actual audiences. Their beliefs about audiences were based on television audiences and fiction audiences in the cinema. They had various beliefs, which can be summed up as “same as independent fiction audience”, “more discerning” “older”, “the thinking person”.

Strategies to reach those audiences were few, and those that existed were sometimes inconsistent with the composite picture emerging of documentary audiences. The only time this gap between the imagined, audience and present television and main stream Cinema audience disappears is:

- documentary festivals
- specialist screenings.

These specialist screenings, referred to earlier, take place when someone who is not a distributor (usually the producer or director, or a subject based society), hires an exhibition space to screen one or several films. The screenings are therefore marketed to an audience that is well known to the exhibitor, and tend to achieve full houses.

Why do the Specialist screenings and Film-Festivals attract full houses?

The programmers have closed the gap between audience and the particular documentaries they are showing. They know their audience. This seems to be the key. It is possible there are other factors at play. For instance, it could be that the film-festival audience are going for the excitement of the event, and the networking possibilities.

Certain questions need to be answered. Is the Film Festival audience composed of film-makers and their friends, subjects and relatives? Is the audience sustainable over a longer period than a festival? Is the audience large enough to make distributing documentary features to them financially feasible?

Successfully increasing the distribution of Cinema documentary features in Britain requires answers to these question.

Finances, Marketing and Distribution.

Within the existing distribution of feature documentaries, how much money does a documentary need to recoup its production costs, and make a profit for a distributor and exhibitor? What are the strategies of marketing and distributing feature documentaries?

In Canada, the producer Peter Wintonick pointed out that his

- ◆ **"three hour film on an anarchist was second only to Fatal Attraction at the box office"...I stopped counting how much it grossed when it was more than a million dollars..for a film on Noam Chomsky."**

In USA, the exhibitor Karen Cooper estimates that a documentary that is doing well, but not a big hit, will make \$10,000 a week. **Dark Days** by Mark Singer, a surprise hit about homeless people living in tunnels, made \$47,000 in the first week and \$45,000 in the second week, on one screen.

In France, the producer Marie Clemence reckons that her films make a greater box office return if they continue to play in one screen only for several months, as their Cinema audience is spread by word of mouth. This is echoed by Bertrand Mouillier, of **PACT**, who says:

- ◆ **"you know you will find an audience, but what you need much more than many prints is the length of exposure, you need to hold the film in venues for a period of time to help word of mouth build - these are very word of mouth and very review dependent films "**

In Britain, distributors take on even documentaries they think are unique and wonderful, with reluctance. They have to provide the costs of the 35mm prints, all marketing and advertising, and persuade the cinemas to take the film. The risks are such that it is standard practice to agree to distribute only if they can take the television rights as a guarantee against box office loss.

This makes the producer or sales agent unwilling to pursue a cinema release, since they will be offered an uncertain return, (usually 70% of box office after all costs by exhibitor and distributor have been recouped), with either no advance, or a tiny advance, and the loss of television rights, instead of a guaranteed television sale for around £2K - 30K for a license that specifies a number of screenings over a number of years.

It is usually only the film-maker 's strong desire to see their films in the cinema that will push for a Cinema distribution deal. The standard practice for both feature documentaries and fictions is that a distributor will take all rights in the territories they operate, in order to maximise the revenue potential in all medias, and to cross-promote and cross-collateralise the film. (this means that they can offset the distribution costs across all medias, so for instance, if they don't recoup their costs from the box office, they can use their sales to television to cover their Cinema distribution costs). Of course, since almost all documentaries made in Britain have to be funded by a broadcaster at the outset, most TV rights have already gone.

The costs of the blow-up, from 16mm or DV to 35mm is a large cost (for instance \$100,000). Television, which is the main source of production funding for documentaries in Britain, do not want to include these costs in their production budgets. Distributors don't want to include it in their distribution costs, and will usually only consider a feature documentary if the blow-up to 35mm has already been made, and they can simply order prints (approx. \$2000 per print).

Will Clarke, of Optimum Releasing, would be more willing to distribute documentaries if there was some support given to defray the distributor's initial risk. He looks for television sales of the UK rights, and notes the gap between the sort of funding given if a broadcaster commissions a film, to the amount given for an acquisition.

- ◆ **"CH4 offered me £6K . These are the problems. Why would I want to release a film theatrically when you're getting less than you would just to sell it straight to T.V. the economics just don't work, and for the producer they won't work.**
- ◆ **Now I won't buy a film unless T.V. is involved because that's my safety net - the T.V. rights. Otherwise I'm just doing vanity publishing for the T.V. broadcast. My safety net is T.V. It may be a measly amount of money, but it means that I will at least make a profit some way down the line"**

If T.V. paid more, he argues, he would be cushioned against the possibility of loss at box office over the first few days, and could plan to hold a film on the same screen for an extended run. This strategy has been endorsed by producers, and distributors outside Britain, who argue that this long exposure is essential, and is why they are happy to have fewer prints of their films, but have them held longer in the Cinem

Role of the Press

Why do filmmakers want to see their documentaries in the Cinema? Is it because Cinemas have glamour? Most filmmakers deny this, although some love the feeling of being in the movie business, giving people a good night out. But the incentive common to all the filmmakers is the critical attention a movie gets. A feature documentary on television "simply disappears".

It is this critical dialogue that turns out to be very important in one of the most successful of the independent Cinemas, New York's **Film Forum**. This desire to engage in dialogue through the written media seems both central and requires nurturing. It has been essential in the success of the Film Forum.

Karen Cooper says:

- ◆ **" without a major publication that would cover these films on a regular basis and provide intelligent and enthusiastic responses, it would be impossible to bring this work to a larger public.**
- ◆ **The commercial film industry spends tens of thousands of dollars on the opening week of a film in N.Y. city: it's probably upwards of \$1000,000 to launch a major film in NYC, whereas a documentary feature for which I am giving it a New York opening, I will spend somewhere in the region of \$3000 for advertising...so advertising is very nominal where you can reach a significant audience - what matters is that the important newspapers cover these films with real enthusiasm and regularity."**

This dialogue with the media about documentaries serves the cultural remit of increasing documentary distribution, and is central to the success of nurturing and enlarging the documentary audience in New York. Could it also be essential in Britain? Is the coverage that we do get at present over theatrically screened documentaries different in some way from the New York Times' coverage?

Press coverage seems important also at the outset of any initiative to increase the public audience for Cinema documentaries. The written press, through debate, and sustained coverage, as well as reader offers/reader's poll etc, can become an active campaigner to alter public preconceptions that Cinema is the home of fiction. Some sort of press collaboration seems essential to the

success of any practical initiative in Britain to substantially increase the audience and number of documentaries on the big Screen.

Impact of Cinema Screening on Television Ratings

I was not able to discover a pattern of theatrical sales and their impact on television broadcasts - in terms of increased or decreased audience ratings/cinema attendance and optimal gaps between cinema and television. Producers from France and Germany and Canada reported an increase in video sales and television attention after theatrical release, but British broadcasters were uncertain.

Documentary and Fiction seem to split here - a theatrical screening of a fiction feature is generally welcomed by broadcasters before broadcast, whereas broadcasters have expressed anxiety that a theatrical documentary screening will attract all the critical and journalistic attention, and not be repeated on broadcast. Distributors in Britain complain that broadcasters argue that a theatrical preview will exhaust the audience for its television broadcast, as there will be no press for its broadcast.

Bertrand Mouillier, head of policy at **PACT**, disagrees:

- ◆ **“It has never been the case that if you have a minimum theatrical release it will hurt the T.V. experience. The disadvantages for the broadcasters is an accountancy, you have to wait a while longer for the theatrical window to wear itself out before you can write off your investment, you have less freedom to schedule early.**
- ◆ **“But to suggest that you will have exhausted press interest is not demonstrated at all, in fact, those who will review the documentary in cinema will be different from those who review it when its scheduled for terrestrial broadcast...journalists are always looking for fresh stuff to write about, its unsubstantiated. In fact what is substantiated is that once its had theatrical exposure its made a dent into the consciousness of the audience, into part of that audience, it increases that audience.”**

Will Clarke, a distributor - **Optimum Releasing** takes issue with television:

- ◆ **"They kind of penalise films that are theatrically released because T.V pays so little money for them - I find it incredible really.**
- ◆ **From the simple fact it has had a cinema release, which means publicity, it means the public has a knowledge, so you would think there's a higher value on a theatrically released documentaries than there is for a documentary that goes straight to T.V.**
- ◆ **Its not true (less ratings) because (with a cinema release) you get two hits at publicity. A film is something that people sit up and notice, it gives it a certain kudos, it gives it a certain weight in the market place. "**

A larger sample of case studies would be necessary before the pattern optimising distribution profits and audience figures would emerge. This information would be particularly useful to distributors and boradcasters in their negotiations. It would also help producers plan a funding strategy that included both television and cinema screenings.

Other areas where there are gaps in research are the demographic of those Cinema Documentary viewers. They could be identified in marketing terms: age, income, class, viewing and reading habits etc.

Statistics could be collated that would quantify the economic importance of documentary in terms of production and distribution, and chart the developments and changes in the last five years in terms of broadcast of documentaries, terrestrial and digital, and cinema screenings of documentaries. This could take the form of a detailed map of Documentary Distribution in Britain.

Documentaries Specifics

The evidence thrown up by the interviews seem to suggest that documentaries need to be positioned differently from fiction films, even Arthouse films. The hopeful attitude of many producers that their audience is the same as an art-house audience does not seem to be borne out by facts.

John Battsek, producer of the Oscar winning documentary **One Day In September**, marketed it as a thriller documentary. :

- ◆ "It was a very controversial subject and it got a lot of column inches and it won an Oscar and that is a pretty big deal in terms of making films, and it was a good film.. there was a vast amount of publicity - we had a book come out at the same time. There were things in the film that were regarded as journalistic scoops and as a result it came out on the cover of the Observer Review - it became a big deal in terms of publicity.
- ◆ "The day that they ran that piece on the front page of the observer - the full thing and inside, we won an Oscar that night in Hollywood - so it was a marketing dream in that respect. The reviews were wonderful, the reactions were wonderful but we grossed 130,000 quid - that's what Brigitte Jones did in the first 30 minutes on it's opening Friday!"

He was disappointed. He concluded:

- ◆ "And there is a reason for that, and it sounds a bit simple, and people will disagree with me, but people don't want to see real life in the movies - that's why they go to the movies - they go to see fantasy and not reality ...Any documentary - what ever you case it in , is real life - it is real people being killed and people don't want to go to see that.
- ◆ They will go and see Shindler's List The Movie to the tune of 150 million dollars around the film; if you go and make a documentary to the same standard - no-one is going to go and see it. I'm not sure if that illustrates the point but it really is this simple - the movies are not about reality - documentaries are about reality."

This is a core point and deserves attention. Nick Fraser described documentaries as being films "**which change the way we look at he world**".

A documentary always leads us back to the world. This is why the multiplexes, as they are presently marketed, are problematic for documentaries. Multiplexes are economically sound ways of getting films to audiences, and have high standards of comfort, viewing and sound quality. At present however, are palaces to mainstream escapism, and targeted to (mainly male) teenage fantasies, from the popcorn offered, to the trailers, to the decor. However, multiplexes are evolving, and it is possible that documentaries could find a permanent home as one or two specialist screens, with some sort of designated social area, and focused programming.

Comparing fiction features to documentary features in terms of markets is a flawed comparison, because mainstream cinemas are set up to cater to escapist entertainment. **Bertrand Moullier** of **PACT**:

- ◆ **" The multiplex environment at the moment is not designed to highlight and foreground this type of films they tend to be given the least convenient facilities and to be promoted locally by the multiplex owners far less than they would the features that keep them in business, so that's a function of the way the business structure and the way it chooses to prioritise its marketing.**
- ◆ **Its also a function of the way the multiplexes are perceived as a consumer environment at this point. UCI is escapism - last thing I'll expect is Startup.com if I do I'll be surprised and maybe not prepared for it."**

Its also evident that marketing budgets for documentaries are lower because distributors know they can get the press attention: **Will Clarke**, of **Optimum Releasing**:

- ◆ **"We spend more on marketing fiction because with a documentary we know we'll get the column inches you know you'll get a lot of press. Docs get better reviewed than most fiction films. Reviewers like the honesty."**

Why don't these reviews lead the audience to watch the documentaries in the Cinema? A Producer as talented as John Battsek, working as hard, with "a marketing dream" of Oscars and journalistic scoops, with a thriller documentary **One Day in September** - if this doesn't work, then maybe something is wrong with the infrastructure.

New technologies and e cinema

Technological innovation has always functioned to change content in the history of the moving image. As the complexity and cost of cameras and sound equipment decreased, films have moved out of the studios, out of the television professionals, and into the hands of a huge proportion of the populace. It has been an important tool for democracy .

- ◆ **"An effect of this - one that has crept up on us all - has been the wide availability of a new style of video archive often filmed by unprofessionals opposed to the powerful...It is for these purposes, in opposition to the monopoly of power - as an additional, cheap vehicle for the new journalism of conscience or protest, if you like - that the Internet will prove invaluable."**

Nick Fraser, BBC Storyville

New technologies have created better conditions than ever before in terms of lowered exhibitor and production costs. The use of digital projectors, for instance, would make the blow-up costs of digital or 16mm to 35mm unnecessary.

This cost at present is approximately £25,000, and can be very hard for a producer to find, as it will not be included in either the production budget from television, or the distributor's agreed costs of taking the film on. Digital projectors also make the specifications of screening theatres easier to fulfil, as they do not require the ceiling height of film projectors.

On-line distribution could be a useful adjunct to this audience, and is impacting on television ratings, as television loses its younger audience to the internet. By its very nature, it does not replace the main drive towards shared public screenings. It has been useful as a low cost marketing tool to encourage viewers to attend public screenings.

e-cinema has the potential to change the Cinema retail environment, by altering the costs/revenue equation at the box office.

Neil Watson policy advisor to **Film Council** - predicts:

- ◆ **" e-cinema is not only about theatrical films, about other forms of content, including documentary, live events, interactive gaming as a big money spinner, different kinds of venues - what could you do in a**

town hall, city arts centre, different type of environment, village hall, now we have access to technology (which doesn't offer you quality equivalent to 35mm), but projecting from DVD with a reasonable size screen you'll be able to do it at a reasonable cost. Also simultaneously transmission through fibre-optics is becoming possible."

Niall is looking at a model set up in Sweden, where there are plans to install digital projectors in some of the 270 community arts centres, or 'folkhouses':

- ◆ **"These are community Centres, owned by local authorities, and the plan is to install 60 - 70 digital projectors and transmitter using DVD to screen material."**
- ◆ **"Culturally, e-cinema enables you to do things with the moving image in a much more flexible way and in a higher quality than you can do now . All sorts of people will be using this, a new range of audiences will emerge..."**

E-cinema offers the potential to lower the break-even production costs of digital production. It makes it possible to work with smaller special interest groups and segmented audiences, replicating the dynamic of the specialist screenings mentioned earlier.

The technology has made it possible to bring Cinema into different venues, as part of a sustained and consistent strategy to screen documentaries to a receptive audience who know they can see this material no other way, and are willing to pay for the pleasure.

It is possible to involve this audience in the formation of a screening Programme. It also opens up the field of institutions, where the cost of licencing and DVDs are borne by the institution rather than the audience. These institutions would then become documentary platforms.

Documentary Archive

A discussion with the film archive sector of its possible role in the development of the strategies for non-broadcast documentary is overdue. This could extend to access as well as preservation.

The BFI factual unit are responsible for programming two or three 'InFact' seasons each year at the National Film Theatre. Some of these programmes are based around facets of film history (directors, genres etc), some solely around subject-matter. If the subject has wide enough appeal, the latter tend to be the bigger sellers, again pointing to subject content rather than filmic content being a foremost 'hook' to attract new audiences to documentary screenings.

The BFI collaborate with the regional film Archives, which have a very active film show programmes - generally, taking their mainly non fiction material out to local venues, which tend to attract audiences by their (local) content. These screenings are interesting in this report, particularly because they regularly attract upwards of 70% box-office.

It could be argued that they build on a tradition of the British Documentary Movement, which was particularly successful in the 1930s, with popular theatrical and non-theatrical big-screen audiences for Documentary.

Further studies on this historical background for contemporary comparisons and ideas towards exhibition and distribution of documentaries could prove very useful.

A comparison with the National Film Board of Canada could serve as a useful incentive. Their Quebec Robotec (see page 22) is almost at capacity, with 100,000 viewers annually using their screening and purchasing facilities.

Rights management becomes a major issue here, as the ownership of documentaries is more complicated in Britain than the National Film Board of Canada, who own all 75,000 titles. Working with the archive sector and the BFI might be a fruitful route towards enabling a digital archive of all documentaries produced in Britain.

Barriers in the UK

In terms of television, we're a victim of our own success. From Grierson onwards, the British have a tradition of well crafted factual programme making. The challenge is to predict and engage with the newest technological developments, digital, e-cinema and the internet, and clarify what effect these have on our existing audience / documentary infrastructure, and what opportunities could be ahead.

The main barriers to expanding our existing documentary audience and identifying new documentary audiences for big screen public viewings can be summarised :

television

- Great television tradition that makes audiences see television as the natural home for documentaries, and surprised by documentaries in the cinema.
- Choice of quality newspapers, that make it hard to get the sort of critical mass of response that Film Forum can have with the New York Times.
- Tradition of fully commissioned television that has encouraged producers to rely on the Broadcasters for all funding and a living.
- Insular island mentality. A consequence of many things including the last point, with the effect of alienating Britain from foreign documentaries, who see British finance and British populace as unreachable.

Cinema

- Unresolved issues over rights management and costs/responsibility for ownership of digital projectors are a barrier to putting digital projectors in mainstream Cinemas.

- Cinema distribution and T.V have a poor relationship in documentaries. We are ignorant of the effect cinema exhibition has on ratings. There is no incentive for the producer or the distributor to screen films in the Cinema.
- The exhibitors have no experience of specific needs either in programming or in marketing that documentaries might have, as opposed to fiction. There is a blanket reliance that documentaries get column inches and good reviews. And who can blame the distributor? They are taking all the risk, and for tiny financial rewards, or possible major losses.
- Opportunity for cinema documentaries is confined to films within a narrow range - closest to fiction entertainment, celebrity, music. The received wisdom in British distributors and exhibitors is that documentaries don't get audiences, always attract good reviews and column inches, and do lose money, so they cut their expected losses by slashing the sort of budget they'd spend on fiction P & A, and by planning very short runs.

e cinema

The main barriers here are the speed of the rapidly changing technology - quality is rising all the time, and costs are coming down. Exhibitors and distributors are in no hurry to resolve who should pay in such a volatile situation, where equipment bought now might be obsolete and half the price in two years time. No one knows how the situation will change, how pay for view and digital channels will impact on cinema, not to mention the interactive bigscreen for games. People in the traditional industries fear for their livelihoods. In the face of readily changing job description(the lucky one), the atmosphere is of anxiety and caution, not risk-taking and adventure.

Our affinity to USA means we look to them for a lead. Studios in USA are watching the rise of e-cinema like its their personal grim reaper. It probably is. They're not going to exploit democratic potential of e cinema. Lowered production and distribution costs may mean lowered profits for them, as they are presently set up.

UK Advantages

There are a number of factors in the U.K. which could be harnessed to support the expanding and creation of new audiences for big screen documentaries. These can be summarised as:

- strong talentpool and expertise in the field, particularly of documentary as craft.
- educated and curious audience who have seen their television documentaries narrow in scope.
- strong tradition of bookshops and museum attendance.
- political freedom- people are able to tell if they are being given the fullest possible picture of world events.
- Considerable expertise from Broadcasters and BFI.
- The Film Council's commitment to :
- - “develop a robust and sustainable UK specialised exhibition and distribution infrastructure
 - “ensure that the widest range of British, European and World cinema is screened across the UK
 - “broaden and increase UK audiences”

There are resources we can draw upon, which can be summarised as:

- International models of documentary distribution
- International models of documentary audience research
- Lobbying groups such as EDN (European Documentary Network) which can suggest comparitors internationally.

Conclusions

Developing Documentary Audience

An audience for feature documentaries exists. This is indicated by the increasing success of Film Festivals and specialist screenings. Very little is known about that audience, particularly in Britain. It is not catered for, nor identified in marketing terms by either distributors or exhibitors.

Marketing and programming for this audience needs to start from scratch, as the existing knowledge is gleaned from research into television and main stream fiction Cinema, and does not refer to the audiences in question.

The notion of one audience should be replaced with a sense of the many audiences for documentary.

An opportunity exists to cater to these audiences, expanding the existing Theatrical Documentary audience and attracting new audiences for documentaries by collaborating with special interest groups in the context of the possibilities emerging from e-cinema.

Press attention is vital in overturning the association that Cinemas are only for fiction films. Every effort is necessary to secure press attention at outset and throughout any initial testing out of these recommendations.

Nurturing these audiences will be aided by working closely with sympathetic journalists, critics and feature writers to expand coverage of individual releases and the subjects they deal with, as well as stimulating a wider debate about the documentary form and its role in cultural and public life.

Expanding existing audiences

The opportunity for screening documentaries in the cinema is at present confined to films within a narrow range – those closest to fiction entertainment, i.e. celebrity portraits, music films. The recommendations here are to expand this existing audience.

Distributors have little incentive to take on documentaries, and are worried by the known risks. All available knowledge of marketing comes from studies which do not distinguish between fiction and documentary. Marketing expertise could be developed that focuses on the preferences of Documentary audiences.

From idea to exhibition, the production and distribution of a feature documentary intended for cinema distribution is funded within the industry. The big risk is when it is exposed to the public. It is the point of no control.

The success of screenings are dependent on many factors outwith the exhibitor's influence, such as events happening in the outside world, and even, or especially, the weather. But this point is crucial – it is the point of contact between audience and product. Strategies should aim to cushion and spread that risk, by intensifying resources and directing them towards that moment of contact between audience and product.

This means developing a strategy to build a specifically documentary audience. We may need to use concepts from marketing such as sampling and repeat purchasing, as well as recognising the specific reasons that audiences go to see documentaries. The diversity of documentary genres mean that a strategy that works for one segment of the audience may not work for another.

Documentaries don't become desirable objects in way fictions do. Distributors use the column inches generated by subject matter instead of a fiction marketing. This is understandable, given the record of ticket sales for documentaries in Cinemas. However, promotion is essential. People need to be able to make informed choices over their viewing. Funding comparable to a fiction promotion would provide Advertisements, posters, all the usual accompaniments to fiction exhibition, as well as reviews.

Exhibitors; Broadcasters and Distributors.

Existing patterns of production funding and exhibition/transmission models should be examined within the framework of how the producer navigates the three key players: exhibitors; broadcasters and distributors.

Dialogue between these three players could ensure that television commissioning does not penalise a documentary for Cinematic screening ambitions. Working together, they could develop strategies to:

- Direct resources to spread risk at point of contact with audience, with strategies to enable marketing, promotion and long exposure to allow word of mouth audience attendance.
- Develop a model of collaboration that allows television to put funding towards documentary features at the commissioning stage and level, including blow up costs. This would be done on the understanding that the producer is making a Cinema documentary, and can provide a T.V. cut of the film, with an appropriate window between theatrical release and transmission.
- Test the assumption that cinematic release exhausts press and lowers television ratings. The opposite is argued by distributors and producers.
- Recognise that existing models of good practice of exhibition are based on fiction. Documentary exhibition is different. Documentaries need different programming context and attract a differently segmented audience. Documentaries require specialist policies.
- Examine mechanisms to improve the existing infrastructure including:
 - subsidy to producers or distributors or exhibitors for promotion.
 - seat subsidy paid to producers or distributors or exhibitors for first weeks or box office attendance.
 - Fund specifically for documentary distribution

These mechanisms should be discussed and evaluated, and their findings presented to the Film Council.

Identifying & Nurturing New Audiences

Creating new audiences requires uncoupling documentaries from frame of reference of cinema and television as they are currently constituted.

It involves making full use of the possibilities of e-cinema. Digital production and projection can mean lowered costs throughout, which means that screening to a smaller audience becomes an economic proposition. Digital projectors means that films can be screened in smaller spaces with lower ceilings than needed for 35mm projection.

We need to dismantle the notion of a single, uniform documentary audience. It is crucial to understand how the people interested in watching documentaries in a public space segment and how they cross over within existing small screen and cinema audiences. Each segment needs a separate strategy to contact them, and they have separate optimum viewing preferences.

Historical research into models such as The Other Cinema, Cinema of Women, that aimed to show specialist movies, fiction and non-fiction in non-standard venues could usefully be examined, and their profit-margins assessed in terms of their aims. This requires further investigation.

Original audience research requires collaboration with groups not yet associated with documentary screening: special interest groups; public venues such as art-galleries, museums, art centres, community centres, sports centres, and the exploration of retail environments such as larger bookstores; cafe chains; pubs within the context of the possibilities afforded by e-cinema and digital projection.

Audiences should be segmented by subject interests. This will lead to a model devised to cater to specific interest audiences with public documentary screenings (see pilot)

Working with these audiences is the necessary groundwork supporting a model of what environment for documentaries would provide the viewing experience so often fantasized by documentary producers as the ideal way

their films should be seen. Dothouse (see mission statement in appendix, is working towards this)

The auxiliary functions including research resources, training, festivals, meeting places and think-tank should be considered throughout the period of research outlined above, and all possible avenues of fulfilling those briefs examined outwith one centralised location.

Digital Archive

A digital archive should be created of existing documentaries.

Examine rights management to allow existing and new documentaries to be screened within thatrical and e-cinema venues.

Dothouse is currently working towards this (see appendix)

Map of documentary Distribution

A map of documentary Distribution in Britain is required, which identifies and analyses current documentary distributors and Cinema exhibitors (broken down into categories showing ownership i.e. multiplexes; chains, independents, repertory theatres, Film Clubs). in Britain.

An analysis of which documentaries have been screened over the last five years, in which cinemas and a breakdown of their marketing budgets and box office returns would be part of this. This information is not presently available.

Docspace original Research

DOCSPACE carried out sample research with audiences for three theatrical documentaries: Mahmood Tariq and Ken Faro's **Injustice**, Nick Drake's **A skin Too Few and** : Judith Helfand and Daniel Gold's **Blue Vinyl**.

Total face to face interviews: 97.

Results from Questionnaire about Documentary screening **Injustice**, and **Nick Drake, A skin Too Few** (part of Sheffield Touring Documentary Film Festival) which were both sold out at the Filmhouse, Edinburgh.

Box Office Totals for all Filmhouse Screenings of Sheffield Touring Documentary Film Festival : Total seats available 576. Total seats sold 478. number of screenings of each film 1. Number of films 8 . Gross Box Office takings £1581.50

(**Note** – Sheffield International Documentary Festival had total admissions of 3108 public, and 676 delegates in 2001, an increase in public sales of 30% over the previous year)

Summary: Injustice

Most people go through word of mouth recommendation and Filmhouse Brochure, and because of subject matter (80%). Audience were 90% university educated and watch less than average television (90%). 30% had not seen a documentary at a Cinema before. 95% had been to the venue before. Average age just over thirty. Guardian (33%) and Independent (25%) were most read newspapers. 90% of respondents would like to see more docs on the big screen,

Summary: Nick Drake - A Skin Too Few

Over half respondents learnt about Nick Drake through Filmhouse Brochure, and 75% chose to come to the Cinema because of subject matter. Audience were 95% university educated and 90% watch less than average television. 40% had not seen a documentary at a Cinema before. 95% had been to the venue before. Average age just under thirty. Main subject interest for more Cinema documentaries is music (95%), with international issues, social justice and history all scoring for about 60% of respondents. Guardian (40%) was easily the most read newspapers. 90% of respondents would like to see more documentaries on the big screen.

Summary: Gold and Helfand - Blue Vinyl

Most people went through word of mouth or because of a connection with a relevant organisation (83%). Half the audience was below 30, most were below 40 (83%) and

no one was older than 49. Most viewers were either in full-time employment (39%), students (36%) or part-time employment (22%). The Guardian was the most read newspaper (67%), followed by local newspapers, possibly The Scotsman and The Herald, (47%) and The Independent (22%). The majority watched less than 10 hours TV a week (83%). Satisfaction rates were consistently high in terms of rating the documentary, finding the experience pleasurable and meeting viewers' expectations. The vast majority were likely to attend another documentary screening if one was shown (97%). Most said there were either not enough documentaries in the cinema (47%) or that they had seen them rarely (36%). The main subject interest for cinema documentaries were political (86%), historical (69%), music (61%), artists (56%) and journeys (50%).

Questionnaire : Nick Drake - A Skin Too Few

38 people interviewed 11 February 2002

How did you hear about **Nick Drake A Skin Too Few**?

Email FilmHouse Brochure 25 Review 2 News Friends 7 Film Festival 3 FVA 1

Have you been to this venue before?

No 2 Yes 36

Have you seen a documentary at a cinema before?

No 14 Yes 24

What made you decide to come today?

Subject matter 28 Review 1 Recommend 2 controversy Doc on Screen 3 cafe 1

Which subject interest would bring you to see Cinema documentaries: sport 7

music 34 dance 9 social justice 21 environmental issues/nature 11

family 5 fashion 1 celebrity biopic 12 politics 15 real-life

dramas 14 meditative/reflective 10 travel/journey 17 international issues

21 history 21 prize-winning Festival 7 other (specify) arts 1 experimental 1

AFTER THE FILM: Would you like to meet the director 18 /main film character

12/have a debate afterwards 14 /meet other people in audience over a drink 5 / do

nothing extra? 5

How old are you 15 -25 16 25- 35 13 35-45 3 45 -55 3 55-65 2 over 65

female 16/male 18

University, College Educated? 35 no 3

Which newspapers do you read?

Independent 4 Guardian 17 Scotsman 3 Observer 4 Glasgow Herald 3 None 6 Times
2 Socialist Worker Communist International 1 misc. International 2 Big Issue 1
Daily Mail 1 Telegraph 1

Less than 31 / more than /average 7 hours tv watching?

Like to see more 31/less/existing 3 number of documentaries in cinema?

Would you be willing to have a follow-up phone call about a Cinema documentary
focus group? Agreed 14

Questionnaire: Injustice
2002

23 people interviewed 16th Jan

How did you hear about Injustice?

Email 2 friend 8 FilmHouse Brochure 7 Review 6 News 1

Have you been to this venue before?

No 1 Yes 22

Have you seen a documentary at a cinema before?

No 7 Yes 16

What made you decide to come today?

Subject matter 20 Review 2 Recommend 5 controversy 2 meet filmmaker 1

How old are you 15 -25 9 25- 35 9 35-45 3 45 -55 1 55-65 2 over 65
0

female 8 /male 15

University, College Educated? 22 no 1

Which newspapers do you read?

Economist 1 Independent 7 Metro 2 Guardian 9 Scotsman 5 Observer 3 Glasgow
Herald 3 None 2 Le Monde 2 Times 1 Socialist Worker 2

Less than 20 more than 1 /average 2 hours tv watching?

Like to see more 22 /less/existing 1 number of documentaries in cinema?

Would you be willing to have a follow-up phone call about a Cinema documentary
focus group? 21 agree.

DOCSPACE Questionnaire: Judith Helfand and Daniel Gold - Blue Vinyl.

How did you find out about the documentary today?

Venue's mailing list 3 Venue's box office 0 From a friend/family member 18 Local press 1 Just passing 1 Other 11

Others included: Indymedia Scotland - 3; Edinburgh Mediabase -1; Camcorder Guerilla Weekend- 6; Organiser of the event - 1; Employee at the venue - 1; Flyer - 1.

Are you

Male 14 Female 17

Which age range do you fall into?

Under 30 18 30-39 12 40-49 6 50-59 0 60-69 0 70+ 0

Which of the following best describes your employment?

Full-time employed 14 (*New Deal - 1*) Part-time employed 8 Not in full-time employment (not retired) 4 Retired 0 Student 13

Which of following newspapers do you read regularly?

The Times 1 Financial Times 0 Guardian 24 Independent 8 Daily Telegraph 0 Daily Mail 0 Daily Express 0 The Mirror 0 The Sun 0 Local newspapers 17 (*The Herald - 1*) The Big Issue 1 Morning Star 1 None 2

Do you watch

Less than ten hours TV per week 30 More than ten hours TV per week 5 About average amount of TV 0

The following comment was offered by one respondee who ticked 'less than ten hours':

"Never, except the news and the odd documentary."

AFTER SCREENING

How would you rate the documentary today?

Very good 27 (*One respondee wrote in "Excellent"*) Quite good 3 Quite poor 0 Very poor 0

One respondee ticked no box but wrote 'inspiring'.

Very pleasurable 20 Quite pleasurable 14 Quite disagreeable 0 Very disagreeable 0

One respondee ticked no box but wrote '??'

Overall, has the event met or fallen short of your expectations?

Event surpassed my expectations 22 Event met my expectations 12 Event fell short of my expectations 1

Please indicate to what extent do you agree with the statement 'I am glad I came to this event'.

Agree strongly 32 Agree slightly 4 Disagree slightly 0 Disagree strongly 0

If the venue offered you another opportunity to see a documentary how likely would you be to attend?

Very likely 20 Quite likely 15 Quite unlikely 1 Very unlikely 0

Have you seen documentaries in the cinema before?

Frequently 8 Rarely 13 (*One respondee wrote 'only at festival'*) Not enough 17 Too many 0

Would any of these add to your enjoyment of this documentary?

Reception/social afterwards 16 Q & A with director 23 Public debate afterwards 13 Relevant handouts 14

Which subjects would you go to see documentaries on?

Music 22 Your hobby, specify – 6 (*The following were offered by respondees: Judo / workhammer - 1; football / law - 1; anthropology - 1; social change – 1*)

Dance 9

Journies 18 Architecture 6 Family life 9 Artists 20 Sports, specify 4 (*The following were offered by respondees: Boxing / any violent sport / househunting - 1; football / golf – 1*) History 25 Political 31

Summary conclusions.

Increasing distribution and developing the audiences for documentary films requires that we:

- Challenge audience expectations that Cinemas are home to fiction features.
- Through closer collaboration between exhibitors, television and distributors , and greater awareness of the documentary audience, encourage broadcasters not to penalise documentaries for having Cinematic ambitions.
- Demonstrate to distributors that documentaries need to be positioned differently to fiction features in terms distribution strategy.
- undertake a comparative study of specific infrastructures already in place in initiatives in Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands and Canada that cater to the segmented audiences researched in Britain
- collaborate with these infrastructures, such as , museums, bookshops, pubs, sporting events, to amass knowledge of these segmented audiences
- cater to these audiences with public screenings programmed thematically, in a venue suited to that audience.
- brand the screenings throughout the country so that people know what they're part of
- collaborate with cross media to promote venues and programmes
- build in internet promotion and discussion of films,
- build up research and archive facilities probably using internet
- monitor these screenings in terms of audience profile.
- collect data on audiences
- experiment with simultaneous satellite transmissions
- create a digital archive of contemporary documentarie

Pilot

The aim of this pilot study is to:

- increase the existing audiences for Theatrical documentaries,
- identify and nurture new audiences for documentaries

within a specific location and timeframe. This will allow it to test the measures detailed in the Pilot.

International Network

Convene with other people outwith Britain working on same lines, i.e. Bill Nemtin, National Film Board of Canada; Kees Ryninks, Dutch Film Fund; Karolina Lidin and Kerstin Hagrup of Scandinavian Initiative; Swedish Fokk Hus initiative; successful USA doc distributors (University circuit), Cam Haines, Toronto Film Circuit, D-net Distribution of Germany.

Personnel

An activist advisory group should be set up within Britain, including Funders' representatives; television, distribution and exhibition interests; expertise in events management and marketing/promotion. The pilot should be monitored and evaluated in terms of its stated goals.

Pilot project team should include a director (half time); a marketing manager (full time), administrative back-up and access to specialist consultants as required. Pilot Project team are steered by the advisory group.

Assessing Available Research on Audience development

- The only original research available seems to be Dutch research commissioned by Kees Ryninks. Check if Dutch findings are duplicated in Britain, using their methodology. Evaluate methodology. (This is currently underway with a study on the Sheffield Documentary Touring Festival. It is too early to predict results, but first findings corroborate Dutch i.e. 90% watch less than average T.V.)
- Check out the successful USA distributors on University Circuit. Assess British comparator.

- Test out Toronto Film Circuit business plan. Would a similar circuit work in U.K., and purely for documentaries?

Audience development

Expanding Existing Audience

Challenge is that audiences don't associate documentaries with Cinema. Focus on small geographical area/small number of Film Theatres and aim to change that association. Create unusual market conditions and monitor audience. An intensive publicity /review/promotion campaign is essential.

Strategies of programming and curating to be agreed with advisory committee. Suggestions include:

- slow burn exposure of limited number of prints, to access word of mouth audience
- several prints and simultaneous gala launch to create 'desirable object' status
- target specialist audiences and collaborate with their preferences
- media sponsorship and collaboration to curate several documentary days.

Creating New Audiences.

- Learn from success of specialised screenings. Not one, but many audiences. Group by subject interest. Never before been identified as a specifically documentary audience.
- Collaborate with these special interest groups. Establish optimal level of specialism. What do they want to see, how, and in what venues? What levels of audience, and is this local information or generalisable across Britain?
- Exploit digital projection and e-cinema new opportunities. Don't need high ceilings for 35mm projectors. Explore collaborations with existing retail environments such as pubs, book shops, etc.

- Assess and cost appropriate technical equipment, testing DVDs, projectors and screens.
- Assess present use of e-publicity, including viral campaigns. Role in identifying as well as alerting potential audience through web links etc. Utilise email and internet for publicity.
- Accept that different audiences require different screening solutions. Work from grass-roots.

Nurturing new audiences.

- Use digital technology to create a digital archive. 60% of National Film Board of Canada library revenue comes from selling film they made over 10 years ago. Examine rights management to allow existing and new documentaries to be screened.
- Collect data on new audiences
- Brand viewing experience so that audience know what they're part of, and can find information easily through written media and internet.
- Recognise the gap in provision for rural, ethnic minority and other presently disadvantaged audiences and actively collaborate to programme documentary screenings.
- Establish schools and University Circuit partners for documentary screening, collaborate with existing RFT Education Officers, investigate potential of broadest education sector, including practical workshops.
- Design interactive Docspace website to raise profile and create database for documentary audiences. This will link to press website through press sponsorship

Results

The measures tested during the pilot should be accepted by Industry and Funders as:

- the right measures to target audience development,
- generalisable at a national level
- sustainable financially
- monitored throughout the project to provide audience data.

Press Partnership

One of the critical success factors in reclaiming the big screen for documentaries will be partnership with the written media. The following describes the sort of collaboration required:

AIMS DOCSPACE PILOT to launch Documentary Screenings with extensive media coverage, and initiate sustained coverage of documentaries throughout 18 month duration of pilot.

PRESS To consolidate their readership, giving the readers added value/ to increase their reader numbers with new readers.

METHOD DOCSPACE PILOT chooses a special interest group in collaboration with a Reader's Poll. Liase with special interest group to programme films in a venue and time to suit them.

PRESS runs Readers poll, reader offers, and 16 page supplement to accompany documentary screening day.

DETAILS PRESS will run freephone poll of their readers for one month: Database is created. Focus groups for research start. A programme is curated by Docspace, scheduled in Edinburgh and Glasgow, for five films on a Friday or Saturday, with speakers, discussion, video sales etc. PRESS Documentary Day is launched. A Reader offer, Prize Draw and 16 page supplement, with previews, interviews and issue-led debate are produced by PRESS.

LINK TO WEBSITE

PRESS website linked to DOCSPACE website. Poll can continue on web, with hyperlinks to Exhibiting Docspace Theatres and Special Interest Screenings. Use of SMS messaging to contact 18 - 25 yr olds.

SPONSORSHIP

PRESS will raise the sponsorship required for the costs of the supplement, poll, readers' offers, creative etc. Editorial will be in-kind. Estimated value of sponsorship is £60,000. Sponsor gets exposure through supplement, ticket-sales, poll and Reader offers, as well as presence in websites.

A model such as this, (although still in its early stages), gives the best possible written exposure to the films screened, with in-depth interviews and feature debate around the issues and language of the documentaries. Such a campaign immediately challenges the audience's assumption that Documentaries are not found in the Cinema.

Recommendations

Film Council

- A map should be made of documentary distribution in Britain, with comparative models from USA and selected European countries.
- A digital archive should be created of existing documentaries, and rights management issues investigated.
- Collaboration with the Distributors, Exhibitors and Broadcasters group to examine and implement strategy aimed to increase documentary audience and distribution.
- Should collaborate with DOCSPACE to implement pilot study testing audience development.

PACT

Write a strategy to create collaboration between producer, distributor and broadcaster that allows the producer to retain T.V rights to a version of the cinema film, and creative control over the cinema film, and access to a subsidy for promotion. This would entail rushes for T.V. cut remaining with Producer.

Broadcasters

T.V should not penalise documentaries for theatrical or public screening. Accept that cinema screenings add value and can increase the T.V. ratings.

Distributors, Exhibitors, Broadcasters

Develop a collaborative strategy which addresses the key issues:

- Challenge public association of Cinema and Documentary
- Accept that Documentary Distribution requires a model of distribution that is different to fiction.
- Examine subsidy mechanisms for attendance and promotion designed to spread risk at point of audience contact .
- Prioritise audience development for documentaries.
- Investigate broadcasters paying amounts for a acquisitions comparable to commissioning.

DOCSpace

Should design and implement pilot to test out recommendations detailed in Conclusions: pilot.

c Amy Hardie

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Appendix

Scope of report

This report is a digest of information gained through interviews and meetings and discussions with producers, exhibitors and sales agent in Britain and overseas.

It does not provide a comprehensive overview, but does reflect preoccupations, research and opportunities in documentary distribution now.

International sources:

Gary Pollard, DocFest, USA; Peter Wintonick, producer, Canada; Suzette Glenadel, Cine du Reel, France; Karen Cooper, Film Forum, USA; Marie Clemence and Cesar Paes, producers, Brazil/France; Karen Cirillo, Doubletake, USA; Barrie Dowdall, producer Eire; Heine Deckert, d-net sales agent, Germany; Kees Ryninks, head of documentaries for the Dutch Film Fund, Holland; Paul Pauwels, producer Belgium.

British sources:

Roy Akerman, Diverse Productions, Britain; Kate Blewett; Producer/Director, True Vision, Britain; Tom Roberts, October Films, Britain; and Richard Bradley, Executive Producer, LionTV, Britain; Jon Ronson (documentary maker), Britain; and Fenton Bailey (Managing director), World of Wonder, Lucinda Broadbent, producer, Colin Young, A.C.E.; Nick Fraser, BBC Editor, Storyville, Britain; Leslie Woodhead, producer, Britain; Jane Balfour, Jane BalfourFilms; Bertrand Moullier, PACT; Alan Fountain, Mondiale; Will Clarke, Optimum Releasing; Liz Wrenn, former exhibitor at Electric, Everyman, Scala and Barbican cinemas; Bill Nemptin, Canadian Film Board; Adrian Ruth, KPMG (leading study for Film Council); Neil Watson, e-cinema consultant for Film Council; Alan Hayling, Mentorn Barraclough Carey; Alex Cooke, former programmer Sheffield; Dick Fontaine, head of Documentary NFTS; Leslie Woodhead, director, John Battsek, producer One Day in September. Mahmood Tariq, Ken Faro, producers, Injustice, Robin McPherson, Head of Development, Scottish Screen.

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