

Making Space, Making Place: Community-Based Media Arts as a Transformative Force

Sitting at the nexus of art, academia and community, Cinevolution's mission is to decentralize art while connecting people across cultural, political, geographic and linguistic boundaries in order to foster media literacy, stimulate critical discourse, and cultivate creativity.

Based in Richmond, British Columbia, we are committed to bringing contemporary migrant perspectives and experiences into global conversations through film and media arts. By forging new connections between artists, researchers, organizers and the community, we seek to raise awareness about pressing social issues, empower diverse individuals to participate in the public domain, and stimulate critical discourse and innovative thought.

A grassroots, women-run and migrant-led organization founded in 2007, Cinevolution's programs have focused on challenging conventional definitions of identity, facilitating community belonging, and increasing access to media arts amongst marginalized populations from the very beginning. We have a significant history of developing, producing and presenting site-specific, public-engaged arts activities for audiences of all ages, notably:

- **Digital Carnival (2012-2018).** A pivotal platform for showcasing diverse BC artists who use digital media in their artistic practice; exploring the relationships between humans, art, and technology; and exposing emerging artists to the unique challenges of social engagement and presenting public art in an outdoor setting to large, diverse audiences.
- **YOU+ME Youth Media Program (2012, 2013, 2016)** A day-long program for youth interested in an arts career, organized by youth for youth, combining film screenings, discussion forums, keynote presentations, and hands-on workshops led by professional artists.
- **Your Kontinent: Film & Media Arts Festival (2011-2014).** Richmond's first outdoor arts festival, Your Kontinent made independent film and media art more playfully accessible by bringing arts programming into unique public spaces, combining exhibitions with artist talks and workshops.
- **New Asia Film Festival (2008-2010).** Bringing alternative versions of contemporary Asia to the big screen in the Lower Mainland through independent films.
- **DocuAsia Forum:** DocuAsia is a bi-annual film event exploring global implications of current events in Asia, using the documentary format as an art form for dialogue and critical discussion.
- **Art Talking Women:** A co-production between Dragu Workers International (DWI), Cinevolution Media Arts Society and VIVO Media Arts Centre, Art Talking Women is a series of short interviews of Canadian female artists concerning their life, art practice and relationship to technology and community. A total of 13 episodes were produced between 2012-2016, with distribution by Video Out.
- **Underwater Chinatown:** A multiphase, multimedia project documenting and exploring lesser

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known stories of Vancouver's Chinatown. Pairing Chinatown elders with youth to capture relationships to the local community in phase 1 digital storytelling workshops, 11 stories were generated and published to great public acclaim. Phase 2 was an interactive website merging fact with fiction to tell the history of Cantonese Opera theatres in Vancouver's Chinatown. The website was exhibited as part of *Common Voices: The Cultural Legacy of Cantonese and Italian Opera in Vancouver* at the Italian Cultural Centre Museum in 2017.

Over the years, Cinevolution has featured, collaborated with, and commissioned new works from notable Canadian artists and groups such as: Lisa Birke and Terrance Houle, Cindy Mochizuki, Paul Wong, Margaret Dragu, Dana Claxton, Vjeko Sager, prOphecy Sun, Sammy Chien, Hong Kong Exile, Theatre Conspiracy, LocoMotoArt, and many others.

In addition to large scale festivals, Cinevolution has been working closely with the City of Richmond and the Children's Art Festival to program and teach hands-on media workshops for children and youth since 2010. Workshops have included Draw-on-Film Animation, Stop Motion Animation, Claymation, Build a Website, After Effects, Documentary Filmmaking, and Music Video Production.

As a media arts organization committed to fostering artistic excellence while building media literacy and making art accessible to all, we discovered over the years that the most impactful programs were those that involved professional artists who approached education with an artistic lens rather than a pedagogical lens, because they naturally encouraged participants to reflect on the conceptual aspect of the creative process as well as the technical procedures. Thus in 2012, our youth programming shifted focus to emphasize skills-building, mentorship, and professional development opportunities for youth. This involved directly engaging youth in the conceptualization and development of youth programs (e.g. hiring a young filmmaker as Youth Media Coordinator for the 2016 YOU+ME Youth Media Fest, engaging youth as program volunteers or film selection committee members), as well as promotion and outreach to their peer networks. Examples of recent youth programming include:

- **Animation Workshop for Indigenous Youth (2018):** A hands-on animation workshop for Indigenous youth led by multimedia artists Lisa Birke and Terrance Houle which supported youth to share their relationship to the land through a hand-drawn animated avatar and a digital voice recording. Completed works were presented as part of the 2018 Digital Carnival Featured Artist performance and exhibition, and youth were compensated at CARFAC rates for their creative labour.
- **Exploring Nature Through Technology (2015):** 12 youth aged 16-24 from diverse backgrounds participated in a two-week intensive filmmaking workshop led by an independent filmmaker and television producer with additional mentorship and guidance from two emerging filmmakers. Completed films were screened at a Gala presentation. Several participants used their films in their portfolio for post-secondary applications.
- **Media Workshops for Richmond Children's Art Festival (2013-2018):** Cinevolution develops and teaches media workshops for CAF annually. Offerings have included day-long intergenerational filmmaking workshops for children-adult pairs using family memorabilia; 90-minute claymation workshops and draw-on-film animation workshops; as well as drop-in interactive sonic stations.

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