

## CINENOVA REVIEW - INTERIM REPORT

First Meeting - Monday February 14, 1994 - 11.00- 2.30  
at LFVDA

### Present:

Helen DeWitt (Cinenova co-worker)  
Kate Norrish (Cinenova co-worker)  
Julia Knight (Cinenova Management)

Sid Brookes (LFVDA Director)  
Marion Doyen (BFI Exhibition)  
Abina Manning (LVA)  
Steve McIntyre (LFVDA)

### Apologies:

Judith Higginbottom (South West Arts)

## 1. Introduction

Cinenova representatives gave an outline of the history and current work of the organisation, focusing on the substantial dislocation caused by the transition from CoW and Circles and subsequently by cuts in funding by the BFI.

Cinenova works in two broad areas

- statutory and voluntary sectors, particularly education
- theatrical and semi-theatrical distribution and exhibition

[semi-theatrical refers to fact that Cinenova titles are not certificated for theatrical distribution although will be shown in RFTs etc.]

As well as promoting films from its own catalogue, Cinenova also promotes and curates work from other distributors that complements and is relevant to its own films and videos.

Last year Cinenova brought back tape despatch in house rather than use Glenbuck for this. 16mm film despatch is still undertaken through Glenbuck. Having all the tapes in one small office is putting office under strain.

Using advice from Tower Hamlets, Cinenova is currently overhauling office, administration and financial systems. At the same time it is systematising and unifying its databases (of films, film makers, users and potential users). [NOTE - more information needed on data base - size, operation, etc.]

Cinenova sees itself as natural partners to other London based organisations such as the Co-op and London Video Access and last year collaborated on joint promotion of new acquisitions. [NOTE - more info on this - possible recommendation about closer working on agreed number of collaborations each year - setting targets?]

Cinenova is the only women's film distributor in Europe.

## Distribution

### Acquisition

Cinenova generally acquires exclusive UK rights including broadcast and non-exclusive world wide rights [*NOTE - how does this relate to possibility of sales to (particularly) European Television?*]. Does not pay to acquire rights. Tends to acquire rights for three years. 75% of sales and 50% of rental income goes to film makers. With sales, money is paid immediately. With rentals, money is paid with annual royalties statement.

*[Recommendation - royalty statements on at least a six month basis.]*

In broad terms, its acquisition policy is determined by a concern for what is likely to be reasonably marketable. It will take on work which staff consider to be of cultural significance even if marketing will be difficult - under these circumstances they will attempt to explain to film maker that she should not expect substantial income from hires or sales.

Selection is primarily undertaken by Helen and Kate - earlier attempts to work via a selection panel proved impractical. *[More detail on selection criteria and selection process.]*

Acquisition is around three broad areas

*[get more detail from Kate N.]*

While space and resources prevent Cinenova from holding a reasonably comprehensive archive of women's work, as Europe's only women's distributor it attempts insofar as it is possible to have as much of the 'canon' of international women's work as it can.

*[For discussion - how can Cinenova properly exploit the fact that it is the only specialised film distributor in Europe?]*

*[For discussion - to what extent should CN attempt to be a comprehensive repository of titles/knowledge/information about international women's work?]*

Kate and Helen attempt to cover all screenings in London and one of the Cinenova Board deals with the British Council [*details*]. Also try to cover UK festivals (Birmingham, Norwich, New Visions (Glasgow)) as well as Feminale.

Because of resources available, Cinenova does not attend on a regular basis international festivals unless invited and paid for.

*[Question - to what extent is Cinenova already part of a pan-Europe network? Recommendation - regular attendance at key international festivals.]*

Cinenova also regularly gets sent unsolicited material. It attempts to maintain links with key UK workshops and training organisations in order to acquire new work [*details needed.*]

### Link to Broadcasters

Hitherto, an underdeveloped area of activity. Cinenova has often tended to be treated as unpaid adviser to broadcasters. Has not found Channel 4 very sympathetic. This year Cinenova hopes to focus energy on building links to National and International broadcasters. One problem is the lack of extensive holdings of primarily visual material which crosses borders easily.

*[Further discussion needed.]*

### Sales and Rentals

*[Need to get more detailed figures about actual levels of hires and sales. Also need explanation for sudden drastic growth in 16mm business.]*

Cinenova's application to the LFVDA gives breakdown of markets in which Cinenova operates - the biggest being Education (32%), Cinema (24%) and Festivals (20%).

*[Questions - are different types of programmes more or less relevant to different markets? Do some primarily take packages or individual films?]*

Attempts to work with Regional Film Theatres have not always been very successful.

*[Recommendations - make more formal contact with COMEX to explore joint working possibilities at early stage of project development.]*

*[Packages for distribution to RFTs and similar venues need good not-too-didactic promotional material to attract audiences.]*

Cinenova also distributes to galleries and museums but on a rather ad hoc basis.

*[Recommendation - devise strategies to systematise contacts and promotional vehicles for work with galleries.]*

*[Recommendation - talk to Regional Film Archives and Film Officers in Regional Arts Boards re possible joint schemes..]*

*[Recommendation - explore possibility of further sales to libraries.]*

Cinenova has a deal with **Dangerous to Know** for the sale of videos (retail price £12.99/£13.99).

*[More detail of the deal with DtoK. What films and videos involved? To what extent does this cream off Cinenova's strongest titles and thereby reduce their rentable value?]*

## Exhibition

Cinenova works with the ICA on a regular [details] programme of women's work in the ICA Cinematheque. Cinenova works with ICA and guest curators (ICA pays £300 per programme for tape/film hires and fee for curator.)

*[Need more detail about how these collaborations work, who does what, benefits to Cinenova, audiences, etc.]*

Cinenova has recently started working with Despite TV on screening of work in the Four Corners cinema. Cinenova hopes that most of the work in arranging this will be undertaken by programming committee.

*[Assessment panel concerned that this activity could end up being very time consuming for Cinenova. Cinenova to explore possibility of funding from Tower Hamlets for this strand of work.]*

Planning screening event/conference with ICA in June (Women Make Movies). This is linked to Guardian (Women's Page), Scarlet Press.

*[Cinenova needs to ensure that it takes the opportunity of this high profile event to raise its own profile internationally, as well as in the UK]*

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General observations -

NEED TO FOCUS - at moment Cinenova deals with many different types of projects (from health to social action to agit prop to artists' film and video) in many different markets (education, self-help groups, ICA/RFT circuit, television) and across a huge geographical spread (Globe Town to the Global Village). Is all of this sustainable?

*[Recommendation: As an exercise Cinenova should identify what specific areas of work it can fully discharge on current resources and then spell out what additional resources might be necessary to undertake the current spread of work. This could be related to job descriptions of workers and clear identification of role(s) if management committee.]*

Cinenova, as the only women's film distributor operating in Europe should explore the possibility of authentically operating at a pan-European level. It should expand real distribution in Europe, sales to European broadcasters, develop partnerships with relevant European organisations.

Relationship to BFI distribution?

Cinenova should explore the possibility of finance from various European schemes via the Media Programme (e.g. EFDO, Babel, EVE, etc.) and the Council of Europe (Kaleidoscope, etc.).

## Operation/Management

[Because of pressure of time, this whole area was only touched on the first meeting]

Cinenova is planning to produce a regular newsletter (at intervals to be decided - between 4/year to 1/year) as a record of activity, as a networking tool and as a mechanism to reassure filmmakers that Cinenova is plugging away on their behalf.

*[Need to discuss this further. Assessment Panel not convinced of this. Overall, feeling was that perhaps Cinenova producing lots of different bits of paper and should review this whole area.]*

Cinenova indicated that it recognised the need to bring new skills and knowledge areas to its Board of Management.

*[Role and function of BofM to be explored in more depth. Especially in relation to supporting staff and helping them to manage tasks and long term planning.]*