



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Northwest Film Forum is a Seattle-based nonprofit organization with a decade of experience inspiring, challenging and championing film artists and audiences. Its two-fold mission—to deepen public appreciation of film as an art form and to support and elevate the film artist—has led the organization to the creation of a new center for film in the heart of Seattle. The result of a successful \$550,000 capital campaign, the new space houses two state-of-the-art cinemas, two full edit suites, a lending library and a film vault, as well as ample office and workshop space.

In the fall of this year, the organization undertook a new initiative to retell the story of independent filmmaking: ***The Film Company at Northwest Film Forum***. Led by filmmaker and producer Gregg Lachow and consisting of a core staff of film professionals, ***The Film Company*** is the nation's only non-profit film studio. Dedicated to the investigation of collaborative methods of independent filmmaking, the company will generate, develop, and produce a yearly season of new films and mixed-media projects, and serve as staff and support for innovative creators from near and far.

The idea of a company of film artists working in continuous collaboration is certainly not a new one. The Golden Age of Film owed its success to companies like RKO studios who put out hundreds of movies a year, many of them classics like "Citizen Kane." They understood that combining a talented and efficient team of cinematographers, designers, composers and editors with innovative directors and writers could result in revolutionary films.

It is the aim of ***The Film Company*** to revive that ethic and aesthetic of daring collaboration. Our staff is deeply involved in the artistic steering of the company and forms the core of the production staff for each project. Each company member heads a department—complete with apprentices and affiliated artists—and is ultimately responsible for the quality of output in that specific realm. For example, while our on-staff composer Jason will not be able to write the score for every film, it will be his job to ensure that the guest composer completes her work with the level of professionalism and artistry demanded by the company. These affiliated artists, with whom the company will develop deep and long-term working relationships, will have the opportunity to work in a variety of genres with a wealth of different artists.

Generative artists—such as writers and directors—from the local, national, and international scene are invited into our studio like Orson Welles was welcomed into RKO. Here, they will find the artistic and fiscal support necessary to facilitate work that would have been impractical to do alone in an environment that is both liberating and inspiring.

Forty years ago, some theatre artists in Minneapolis thought it was crazy that one had to move to New York to work in professional theatre. This determined group founded the Guthrie Theatre and consequently launched the regional theatre movement, which has since become an unstoppable national phenomenon, successfully infusing every corner of the country with professional level theatre. Somehow, we still believe you have to live in New York or L.A. to be successful in film. ***The Film Company*** dares to challenge that belief.

Following a three-year plan, ***The Film Company*** plans to develop a *replicable model* for contemporary independent filmmaking. Looking backwards into history and forward towards the new technological and artistic horizons of cinema, we aim to discover a new means of production that could spawn significant systemic change in the film world.

Specifically, **our first year** we have chosen to engage in fearless, prolific production of work. ***The Film Company*** will produce six feature length films, two mixed-media performances, and host over 15 late-night cabarets, which will act as both a sketchbook for new ideas and a proving ground for new artists. We believe that the best way to get better at something is to make a lot of it. Simultaneously working on a multitude of projects in different stages of production cannot help but spur on new ideas and new ways of solving problems. The art of film is by nature meticulous, but we hope that this style of making work will encourage risk-taking and help us grow in ways we might not have otherwise imagined.

Our second year will be the time to investigate the meticulous method. We will make drastically fewer films and give ourselves the time to apply the knowledge gained in the first year. It will be the time to learn from our mistakes and hone our skills, while also allowing us to devote huge amounts of time and momentum to a select number of projects.

In **the third year**, we will have zeroed in on an ideal means of production. We will make a manageable but still audacious amount of work of a quality that makes us proud. Most importantly, we will have a model that we can present to other cities and organizations for a new but proven way of making films.

Success in this endeavor will not only lead to greatly increased filmmaking opportunities locally and nationally, but will also bring into the world a whole genre of artistic film that is not currently being produced. It is always true that the work that gets done in the world is the work for which there are structures in place to facilitate it. Right now there are too few structures through which movies can be made. ***The Film Company*** aims to change that.