

SHOWCASE

Saskatchewan Film Timeline

1947—the Yorkton International Documentary Film Festival is founded. Now known as the Yorkton Short Film and Video Festival, it awards the Golden Sheaf to winners in several categories.
1967—Ottawa allocates \$10 million to the newly created Canadian Film Development Corp. (renamed Telefilm in 1984).
1975—The RPL Film Theatre opens, offering patrons an eclectic mix of independent and foreign films.

1977—*Who Has Seen the Wind* is shot in Saskatchewan, giving men like Brock Stevens, Bill Mills and Don List an opportunity to work in film. They were the nucleus of the group that formed the Saskatchewan Filmpool Cooperative, famously described by Gerald Saul in a 20th anniversary essay in 1997 as “an asylum where the inmates regularly exchange keys.” Later, Video Verité is formed in Saskatoon with a similar mandate to foster independent productions.

1983—Canadian Broadcast Program Development Fund is created to kick-start Canadian TV.

1984—U of R Film and Video Dept. is established. With the only film production program between Vancouver and Toronto, it attracts students from across Canada and around the world. Dr. Sheila Petty joins the U of R faculty in 1988 and in collaboration with the Dunlop Gallery, she brings diverse cinematic voices to Regina through programs like *The Archaeology of Origin: Transnational Visions of Africa in a Borderless Cinema*. Other notable faculty members include Richard Kerr, Charlie Fox and Christine Ramsay.
1985—Showcase sponsor Saskatchewan Motion Picture Industry Association (SMPIA) is established. Using Sask Lotteries funds, SMPIA works to create and advance opportunities for the production, promotion and appreciation of motion picture in Saskatchewan.

1986—Minds Eye Pictures is incorporated. Heartland Motion Pictures is formed the next year by Stephen Onda. Fourteen years later, Saskatchewan is home to sixteen production companies.

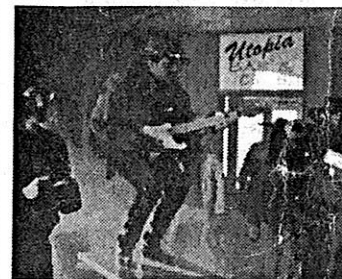
1989—Saskatchewan Film and Video Development Corp. is established to provide support, financial assistance and equity financing to the film and video industry. Under CEO Gerri Cook, SaskFilm implements a skills training program to develop expertise in all facets of film production.

—Saskatchewan Communications Network (SCN) is created to provide provincial residents with increased access to information through satellite and broadcast technology.

1991—*Eli's Lesson*, Saskatchewan's first long-form drama, is produced by Minds Eye. Described as a “milestone” by Kevin DeWalt, the film wins numerous awards.

1993—Heartland begins production on

Guitarman, Saskatchewan's first locally produced dramatic feature. Soon after, SaskFilm shifts its emphasis from training to providing equity financing to ease the burden of moving from project development to production.



1994—*Decoy*, a co-production of L.A.'s Buffalo Films and Minds Eye, is Saskatchewan's first feature film.

1995—Queer City Cinema, a biennial celebration of gay and lesbian film/video curated by Gary Varro, is first held in Regina. Reviews are universally positive, although the third edition in May, 2000 is condemned by right-wing politicians and religious fundamentalists.

1995-96—Aided by SaskFilm, a succession of landmark moments occur. *On My Mind* (Minds Eye and The Film Works) is the first indigenous drama series produced here. *Utopia Cafe* (Heartland) is the first national network series, and *Family Blessings* (Edge Entertainment and Newstar Entertainment for CBS) is the first U.S. movie-of-the-week. SaskFilm also becomes the second provincial film agency, after Ontario, to open an L.A. office to assist filmmakers in international

promotion. Finally, it develops KickStart for beginning filmmakers. Now known as the Winter Initiative, it provides two filmmakers with \$50,000 to produce a half-hour “calling card” drama.

1996—Ottawa announces a \$200 million Canada Television and Cable Production Fund (CTF).

—The first season of the Filmpool series *Splice* TV airs on Cable Regina.

1998—After three years of lobbying spearheaded by SMPIA and the Saskatchewan Film Producers Association, the Saskatchewan Film Employment Tax Credit is introduced to spur growth. After years of uncertainty, the government also commits to stable funding for SaskFilm, although, with the introduction of the credit, its annual budget is reduced from \$1.5 million to \$1 million. One of the first films to benefit from the credit is *Big Bear*.

—Ottawa creates a 5-year, \$30 million multi-media fund.

1999—The Antechamber Art Gallery and Cinematheque opens in Regina with the mandate of exploring the intersection between visual art and film.

2000—Screen Femmes, a festival featuring screenings, panels and workshops designed to celebrate and promote the role of women in film and video, is held in Regina.

—SaskFilm embarks on a restructuring program to reinforce its arms-length relationship with industry and government. CEO Valerie Creighton also plans to revisit the issue of equity investment and to nurture Saskatchewan screenwriting talent so stories unique to the province may be told.