

mediathatmatters

2018 Conference Report



A consistent goal of *Media that Matters* has been to challenge participants to look at their work and professions from a different angle. We bring innovators on board at the start of the conference to stimulate thinking, and then spend a lot of our time in what we call focus forums: peer learning groups that enable attendees to have the conversations they need to have.

We had a vibrant mix of participants this year, across cultures, ages, and disciplines. Some themes emerged from the group. First, it is becoming apparent that developing new approaches to filmmaking and storytelling are critical for these polarized times. Nettie Wild brilliantly took us into that territory with a case study on her Uninterrupted project, and how thousands of people across the political spectrum were deeply moved by this aural and visual feast. This kind of work bypasses our usual judgements and goes straight to the heart. Learning about the evolution of this outdoor cinematic spectacle helped reframe everyone's thinking about creating substantive change.

"In these controversial times, I am increasingly convinced that art has a crucial role to play. To find poetry in the many sides, knowing that the best poetry can be gnarly as well as full of light. This has led me into the world of digital mapping, public installations, and virtual reality. Its exhilarating but deeply challenging, often overwhelming. Its easy to feel very alone; but at *Media that Matters* I found others who were exploring those same boundaries, chasing that same light. I am one happy filmmaker." — *Nettie Wild*



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A core belief of this conference is that the wisdom is in the room; that everyone who attends has ideas that need to be heard, advice to give, and experience to share. From this comes perspective, wisdom, and fresh approaches. The *Media that Matters* format consistently delivers.



“The workshop was planned with great attention, care and meaning for people who use media to evoke social change. I appreciated the wealth of experience in the gathering, and learned so much through the many interactions I had in the sessions and in the more social times.” — *Tamara Plush, Royal Roads University*



We also featured gaming genius Nick Fortugno, from New York City, who shared some invaluable lessons about creating effective change, and had some provocative critique on the viability of big data; we heard from Livelt, a Victoria-based initiative creating live remote nature learning experiences in classrooms; there was also an ongoing 3D installation by Yukon media artist Marten Berkman.

The conference also included Tracey’s *Story Money Impact* curriculum, concise interviews from various international media funders, an evening of short videos and trailers from participants, and a key session that exposed us to the work and world views of six scholars supported by the Inspirit Foundation.

The big takeaways from this year were important, timely, and uncomfortable truths about privilege, awareness and accountability. Toward the end of our schedule, the facilitators tried to create a space to work through some of these issues as a group. Instead of going into our final afternoon exercise, it was suggested we sit in a circle and listen deeply to one another, sharing, learning, and opening the door to healing. Getting to this place was difficult, often clumsy, but in the end, powerful and humbling.

“At that point, the facilitation team created an environment where we could feel safe to talk about these issues. I’ve always had to deal with and not be able to express the pain to a person outside of my race. I feel like it was the first time we got to be real and say “this is me, take it or leave it”. This is why I will come back to Media that Matters next year.”

— *Audrey Seda, Filmmaker*



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As we absorb the many lessons learned this year, we are dedicated to working hard to fortify the foundations of our gatherings so that they are more culturally empowering.



Since it was founded 1999, the most consistent deliverable from Media that Matters has been the sense of community built among content creators in BC, and across Canada and the United States. There is a network of caring, connected people, across all levels of the documentary filmmaking sector and other forms of storytelling, who have shared this special experience, and as a result, are available to one another for support, advice, and collaboration.

What we have co-created over the years, in this special place on the edge of BC's watery wilderness, is a now a deep part of who we are as a collective. At the same time, we want to keep evolving, and explore new trends, practices and areas of interest that will serve this community. To that end, Across Borders Media is working with Hollyhock on a new theme for Media that Matters that we hope to launch next fall. We will keep you posted.

Many Thanks to our 2018 Supporters for Making it Possible.

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