

16 April 2002

Margaret Trotter
Cinenova board of Directors
C/o Four Corners
113 Roman Road
London
E2 0QN

Dear Cinenova,

I am sending a hard copy of this letter to Cinenova c/o Four Corners but as I don't have your home addresses I am also emailing to those directors where I can as this seems the quickest way to make contact.

I have thought long and hard about the advisability of LFVDA putting funds into the current Cinenova operation solely to enable the NOF project to go ahead. It does not make economic sense and I am not convinced of the viability of the project. It doesn't take the organisation in a new direction, and so would simply be shoring up the existing set up. The whole point of the merger discussions was that it was recognised that in the present climate Cinenova could not function with its current remit and catalogue.

Whilst there have been a number of unfortunate events outside anyone's control that have prevented potential mergers taking place, progress has been agonisingly slow. I understand how difficult the last two years have been for a voluntary Board of directors but communication with Cinenova has been difficult and confusing. Therefore in the present circumstances I could not recommend to the LFVDA Board that we continue to support Cinenova as a stand alone body.

The suggestion that I would put to you is relatively simple and should have the full support of LFVDA and its board. That is that the whole collection, including the prints currently held at the BFI, are moved to the company currently working as the Lux holding company (new name to be confirmed). The work would then be available under a sub-distribution deal, with the holding company operating the hire and sales, and those titles in the collection that were considered appropriate could be digitised through the NOF project. There are a number of advantages to this proposal:

- Filmmakers work stays in active independent distribution
- There is no formal closure of the company so work does not have to be returned to filmmakers

- Collection remains intact
- BFI no longer expected to support to Cinenova
- Suitable films and videos can benefit from NOF digitisation
- Framework of Cinenova is still available for projects highlighting women's film/video/new media which could be individually financed.

There is one disadvantage: The holding company is not a women's organisation

Plus two relationships that would have to be worked out:

- The issue of the website ownership needs to be resolved satisfactorily and would have to work in conjunction with the collection at the Lux, especially if digitised work is going to be posted to the site
- The relationship between the legal entity that is responsible for Cinenova and the director and board of the holding company would have to be transparent and simple.

There is a model here as the Other Cinema catalogue is also being sub-distributed by the Lux holding company. Long term this is not the complete solution but it seems to represent the best interests of the filmmakers in the short term. I cannot see another way at this stage of keeping the work together as a collection. LFVDA would be prepared to pay the costs of the removal of materials from Roman Road and the BFI to the offices in Shacklewell Lane. I'd suggest that this proposal should be either considered as soon as possible. The proposal would have to be approved by the new board of the holding company who are now in place. If the board want to remain in Roman Road and attempt to participate in the NOF project as a separate entity then that is your decision to make, but things have to move quickly either way and I could not recommend LFVDA support

What I would like to do is meet with you as matter of urgency to discuss all of this. Cinenova has to move forward from what has been a frustrating and negative period. I had hoped to meet much sooner but it's been impossible to get everyone together. I would appreciate a collective list of suitable dates for a meeting and I will try and clear my diary as much as possible to accommodate this. I'd like to invite Emma Hedditch to attend the meeting because she has been so involved and committed to the process although she is not a formal member of your board.

With best wishes

Gill Henderson