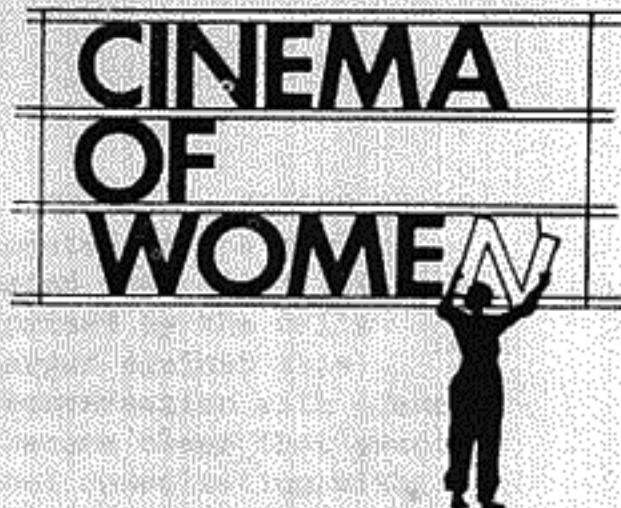


Feminist Film & Video Distribution
31 Clerkenwell Close
London EC1R 0AT
Telephone 01-251 4978



Sarah

Circles Management Committee
Circles
113 Roman Road
London E2

23 April 1991

Dear Circles Management Committee

We are writing to express our deep distress at the events of the last two weeks, and to ask how they came to pass.

As you are aware, Jenny and I have worked closely with both the staff and directors of Circles for more than a year now to ensure the survival of a body of work which we all believe to be important enough to fight for. Over this difficult and trying period, the setting has been, in the main, one of mutual support and co-operation. The period has been one of great strain and personal sacrifice for all of us involved in the struggle with the BFI for recognition and funding for the library of work we jointly hold. For the staff, particularly, the price has been high - lost weekends, lack of time with family and friends, exhaustion and migraines, etc. However, the perceived aim being the merger of our two companies in order to strengthen our ability to be able to distribute women's film and video was deemed to be worth the effort. Certainly, from our point of view, we were glad to work with Circles over the campaign, research and consultancy periods within an atmosphere of respect and support.

We last met with Liane, Sarah and Jill after meeting with the BFI on 28 March. This meeting saw us in agreement with the way forward. Sarah and Liane were to work on redrafted budgets for the BFI, and we were in receipt of these budgets on 9 April, and we understood that the BFI had been sent copies of the same budget that week. When, from 9 April until the end of that week, it was impossible to reach any of the workers at Circles offices to check on the progress with the BFI, we were concerned that they were unwell or, like us, collapsing under the strain of interminable meetings and deadlines. When the silence from the Circles offices continued into a second week, we became increasingly concerned. Despite calls from our directors and ourselves, nobody at any time got back to us to let us know the situation.

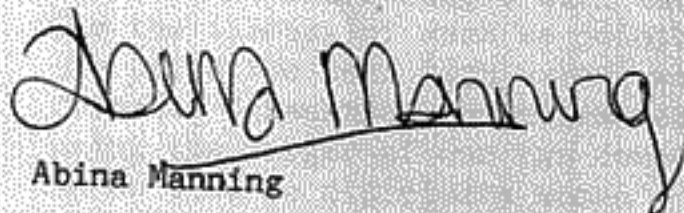
.../

We received a letter yesterday from Irene which offered us £15000 to wind up, and indicated that £30000 had been allocated to the new company, via Circles. The letter further requested that all files be sent to the BFI. We cannot say that we were suprised by the BFI's decision, nor is the purpose of this letter to argue against this decision. Our suprize stems, rather from our conversation with Liane yesterday (after a two week silence), where it became clear that events in the intervening period had been handled without consultation with Cinema of Women's Directors or staff. During this conversation, it became obvious that Circles had been instructed or requested by the BFI to amend the budget which had previously been seen by us.

Our concern is not that the BFI have decided to split the £45000 in the way that they have. Rather, our concern is that after close liaison with Circles involving an incredible amount of work on the subject of merger, neither Sarah nor Liane nor one of Circles' Directors felt it necessary to inform us of the change of events. We are not intimating that we could have in any way had an impact or effect on the decisions which have been made, but we do sincerely feel that good working practices or, at the very least, courtesy, should have led Circles to contact us, even if it had only been a message on our answerphone.

Finally, it seems sad to us that, while final decisions have now been reached, albeit without consultation with us, much of the good will which has been built up over the last year between the two companies, has been disregarded.

Yours sincerely,


Abina Manning


Jenny Shabbaz Wallace