

For immediate release

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERATOR rings up the U.S.

Montreal, 8 March 2005 — Reviewed as “an enormously imaginative docu... an hour of non-stop visual and intellectual stimulation” by VARIETY magazine, **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERATOR** will have its American premiere this spring at the **New Museum of Modern Art (MoMA)** in New York. This unique montage film, the first independent feature by Montréal filmmaker **CAROLINE MARTEL**, is crafted from almost 150 rarely seen industrial films produced in North America between 1903 and 1989.

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERATOR will be screened as part of **Canadian Front: New Films 2005**, a nine-film programme featuring an eclectic selection of Canada’s brightest filmmaking talent. This prestigious event raises the U.S. visibility of some of the most creative recent Canadian works and provides them with an opportunity to connect with new audiences. Curated by Laurence Kardish, Senior Curator of the Department of Film and Media at MoMA, in collaboration with Telefilm, the inaugural edition last year was a huge success. Its return engagement for 2005 demonstrates that Canadian film has made a name for itself on the international scene.

Adding to the excitement of the last few months, artifact productions is proud to announce it teamed up with **Women Make Movies (WMM)** to distribute the film in the United States. Established in 1972, WMM is the largest distributor of women's films and videos in the world with a catalogue of more than 400 titles including documentary, experimental, animation, dramatic and mixed-genre work.

From April 7th to 10th, **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERATOR** will continue its U.S. tour in competition at the **Full Frame Documentary Film Festival**. Now recognized as the premier documentary film festival in the United States by both *The New York Times* and *indieWIRE*, Full Frame celebrates the power and artistry of documentary film. **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERATOR** will also be honoured to be the closing-night film of the **Tampa International Film Festival** on April 9th. Caroline Martel will be on the panel « Technology, Film & The Future » to discuss how technology has been represented in film, and how in turn those images have impacted the past, present and future of science and technology — *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, 1927) and *Modern Times* (Charlie Chaplin, 1936) will be presented to both anchor and inspire this forum with beautifully-restored 35mm prints.

Splicing together fantastic remnants from our era into a dreamlike documentary, **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERATOR** proposes a wry yet ethereal portrait of human society in a technocratic age. It unveils the little-known history of the telephone operators — an invisible workforce without which the 20th Century would never have been the same. **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERATOR** brings out of the shadows not only the «Voices with a Smile», but also some amazing 20th century corporate films, as well as a strange musical instrument: the **ONDES MARTENOT**, played by **SUZANNE BINET-AUDET**. Adding to the mood, the voice of award-winning actor **PASCALLE MONTPETIT** accompanies us on this voyage of science and fiction.

CAROLINE MARTEL is a documentary artist born in Montréal in 1973. *Hold the Line (Dernier Appel, 52 min, National Film Board of Canada, 2001)* was her début in professional filmmaking. She produced **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERATOR** with the generous support of the Programme d’aide aux jeunes créateurs (SODEC), the Canadian Independent Film & Video Fund, and the Aide au cinéma indépendant of the National Film Board of Canada, thanks to which this unusual production was possible.

Canada, 2004, 65 minutes, Colour and Black and White, English with subtitled French narration.

Canadian Front: New Films 2005 : www.moma.org/exhibitions/film_media/2005/canadian_front_2005.html

www.telefilm.gc.ca/document/fr/07/BrochureMoMA2005.pdf

www.telefilm.gc.ca/data/Communiqués/rel_532.asp?

Full Frame : www.fullframefest.org

Tampa International Film Festival : www.tampafilmfest.com

Women Make Movies : www.wmm.com/about/about.htm

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The **PHANTOM**
of the **OPERATOR**

Le **FANTÔME**
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