

For Immediate Release

World premiere of début montage documentary
LE FANTÔME DE L'OPÉRATRICE
at the 29th Toronto International Film Festival

Montréal, August 26th — **CAROLINE MARTEL**'s first independently-produced feature **LE FANTÔME DE L'OPÉRATRICE** (*The Phantom of the Operator*, 2004) will screen as part of the Wavelengths programme of the Toronto International Film Festival September 11th and 12th, 2004. This exceptional doc is crafted from almost 150 rarely-seen industrial films produced in North America between 1903 and 1989. It reveals the little-known history of the telephone operators — an invisible workforce without whom the 20th Century would never have been the same.

LE FANTÔME DE L'OPÉRATRICE is an archaeological exploration of the culture of technological progressivism as it was represented in the corporate, scientific, and popular imaginations of the past century. It's not only an ode to the "Voice with a Smile", but also to an unacknowledged form of production : that of *ephemeral* films. Director Caroline Martel and her collaborators spent 50 weeks editing this montage film over a period of four years.

Image editor **ANNIE JEAN** took on this labour of love with flair and tenacity. Talented film artisans, such as **MATHIEU BOUCHARD-MALO** (extra image editing) and **SYLVAIN BELLEMARE** (sound editing), later came on board. Award-winning actor **PASCALE MONTPETIT** is the phantom voice who guides us into a world where science meets fiction. Varying its frequencies along with the complex orchestration of images, the soundtrack features an otherworldly electronic musical instrument: the **ONDES MARTENOT**, invented by Maurice Martenot in 1928, and played by **SUZANNE BINET-AUDET** creating a mood of timelessness and fragility.

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 **LE FANTÔME DE L'OPÉRATRICE** with the vital 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 whom this unusual production was possible.

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

— 30 —

For further information, please contact :
Matthew Hodgins, productions artifact
5449 Saint-Dominique, Suite A
Montréal (Québec) Canada H2T 1V5
matthewhodgins@artifactproductions.ca
514.346.7331

Film images and the latest news about **LE FANTÔME DE L'OPÉRATRICE**: www.artifactproductions.ca

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

Le **FANTÔME**
de l'**OPÉRATRICE**