



INDIECOLLECT

A Program of the Laboratory for Icon & Idiom, Inc.



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WEISSMAN FAMILY FOUNDATION ENABLES LAUNCH OF INDIECOLLECT FILM SCANNING AND DIGITAL PRESERVATION PROGRAM

New York (November 19, 2015) – The Laboratory for Icon & Idiom, Inc. (LII), a non-profit based in New York City, today announced a watershed grant from the Weissman Family Foundation in the amount of \$100,000 to support LII's IndieCollect program.

The Weissman family, longtime patrons of the Film Society of Lincoln Center, directed that the funds be used to inaugurate a non-profit film scanning service. To be dubbed "IC-Now," this IndieCollect initiative will make available in digital form film treasures that have disappeared from public view and been thought lost. The "IC-Now" services will be available at non-profit rates to filmmakers and educational institutions on a first-come, first-serve basis.

IndieCollect's mission is to document, preserve and make accessible American independent films, particularly the many thousands made since the late 1950s, when portable sync sound recording and compact cameras set off an explosion of Off-Hollywood "indie" filmmaking.

The Weissman Family Foundation grant will support acquisition of a Kinetta multiformat archival film scanner (able to handle 35mm, super 16mm, 16mm, and 8mm material), as well as purchase of technology for audio track capture, file storage, network distribution, and LTO (Linear Tape Open) backups for preservation.

Filmmaker David Leitner, motion picture chair of SMPTE-NY and film preservation expert, oversaw the scanner evaluation process for LII. "The Kinetta was developed by filmmaker Jeff Kreines," said Leitner, "who understands equally the challenge of safeguarding aging film elements during the scanning process and the obligation to honor and preserve their original look. The Kinetta film path is sprocketless and gently curved, featuring a high-dynamic-range CCD sensor that can be swapped as more advanced sensors become available."

Dan Weissman, vice president of the Weissman Family Foundation, said: "My grandfather had a nickelodeon in Odessa. Who knows what he exhibited? Those films are gone forever. Unless all of us in the field engage and take meaningful steps to preserve the full spectrum of existing works, we'll lose ten important indies for every new film produced. It shouldn't be an either/or proposition. As a filmmaker myself, what impresses me about IndieCollect is they're building strong relationships with the major film archives while also giving us the tools to become our own archivists. I urge film financiers and granting organizations to match our commitment to preserve independent cinema for future generations."

Sandra Schulberg, head of IndieCollect and founding director of the Independent Filmmaker Project (IFP), stressed the importance of constructing a variety of preservation protocols and services to help indie filmmakers safeguard their materials, whether film, video or digital. "Digital media," she said, "is like the air;

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it now permeates our environment, so we take it for granted. But it's just a matter of time before a successful, award-winning festival favorite vanishes into the air. That could be the fate of many digital movies if we rely solely on hard drives and the cloud."

The Weissman Family Foundation funds count towards matching the seminal \$200,000 grant that the Ford Foundation made to the organization in 2014. Matching funds have also come from the New York State Council on the Arts, Filmhaus Foundation, HRK Foundation, Ravenal Foundation, Estate of Grace Jackson; from individual donors Lyda Kuth, Gail Gaston, Ken Kroll, Ethan Hawke, Caroline Camougis; and in the form of in-kind support from the Papp family and TechSoup. LII will seek to match the Weissman Family Foundation grant in order to expand the "IC-Now" program in 2016 and serve many more filmmakers.

IndieCollect works in close collaboration with the Academy Film Archive of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The Academy Film Archive's leadership and support has helped IndieCollect establish cooperative relationships with the UCLA Film & Television Archive, Library of Congress, Anthology Film Archives, George Eastman House, and the Museum of Modern Art. In collaboration with IndieCollect, these institutions and forty others are providing long-term cold storage facilities for indie film negatives and prints. Collectively, these institutions have placed approximately 2,500 motion pictures, sourced by IndieCollect, under archive protection. IndieCollect archivists recently completed the final inventory of approximately 2,000 motion picture negatives that remain at DuArt Film & Video, for which it is seeking archive protection, and are now starting to inventory material in the company's video vault. They are also doing on-site inventories of film and video materials in filmmakers' homes or storage facilities, and helping them transfer their materials to an appropriate archive. On-site collection assessments have been completed in the past year for Martine Barrat, the Black Filmmakers Foundation, Rob Nilsson, Jack O'Connell, Alex Rockwell, and Leigh Wharton. In cooperation with New York University's MIAP program, IndieCollect has also begun to assess the voluminous video collection held by the Downtown Community Television Center (DCTV), which materials are in desperate need of preservation.

Since becoming active in the field in 2013, IndieCollect's film rescue efforts have been recognized with several tribute screenings:

- *Solomon Northup's Odyssey* by Gordon Parks, National Archives, May 2013
- *Mass Guide* by Charlie Ahearn & Scott B, NYU/AMPAS Orphan Film Program, April 2014
- *Bitter Sugar* by Leon Ichaso, Museum of the Moving Image/Queens World Film Festival, March 2015

Besides Sandra Schulberg, the IndieCollect team includes Steve Blakely, Collection Assessment & Archive Liaison Director; Israel Ehrisman, Chief Technology Officer; Kirsten Larvick, Audio-Visual Archivist and Co-Chair, Women's Film Preservation Fund; Pamela Vizner Oyarce, Audio-Visual Archivist; Max Chan & Omchand Gee, Archive Assistants; Lucy Obispo, Accountant.

The IndieCollect/LII Board of Directors includes Caroline Camougis, Delphi Partners; Geralyn Dreyfous, Utah Film Center; Nicole Guillemet, OffCenter Films; Ted Hope, Amazon Studios; Lyda Kuth, LEF Foundation; Brian Newman, Sub-Genre Studios.