

The HUMAN RIGHTS FILM NETWORK

Source: <http://www.humanrightsfilmnetwork.org/content/charter> (viewed: March 18, 2012)

2.3 Human Rights Films

Though the 'human rights film' may be a fairly recent concept, we believe such films have been made during the entire century of moving pictures history. World-renowned directors as well as local film makers have documented human rights abuses or portrayed human rights issues in feature films, and have striven to give a voice and a face to those who were not heard by the powers that be. Such films have superseded common notions of 'left' or 'right'. They have, implicitly or explicitly, been based on human rights tenets even before the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was established in 1948.

Human rights films, in our view, are films that reflect, inform on and provide understanding of the actual state of past and present human rights violations, or the visions and aspirations concerning ways to redress those violations.

Human rights films can be documentary, fiction, experimental or animation. They can be short, medium or feature length; have a 35mm, 16mm, video or other format; can be experimental through the use of 'new media' or any other artistic and technological visual means.

Human rights films may be harshly realistic, or highly utopian. They may offer gruesome pictures, or show the bliss of peaceful life. They may report, denounce or convey an emotional message. They may forcefully present the views of one group or individual only, or try to convey the opinions of as many of those involved as possible. They may be a highly accurate report of facts, or offer surreal provocation.

We believe that human rights films, whatever their format, contents or character, should be 'truthful'. That is, they should inform the viewers on human rights issues and aspirations, and should not intentionally misrepresent the facts or the views or words of those portrayed. They should not be so biased as to invoke hatred and discrimination against groups and individuals, or serve political or commercial interests only. They should be explorative of the issue rather than propagandistic, and not reproduce stereotypes.

We strive to promote films that have good cinematographic quality in photography, narrative, rhythm, audio and other technical characteristics – films that are 'engaging' in the sense that they keep the attention of a large audience. However, due the difficult circumstances in which many human rights film are made, we recognize that also films that do not come up to standards of optimal cinematic quality can be forceful and convincing testimonies of human rights violations and ideals. The Network promotes films that allow silenced and marginalized voices to be heard, as a contribution to their empowerment.

2.4 Independence of members

The Network recognizes and defends the independence of member festivals from influence and pressure from governmental and non-governmental bodies and individuals, at a local, national and international level. This independence regards the selection and presentation of films, the invitations extended to film professionals and others, the means of publicity, the

raising of funds, and all other areas. The Network upholds the principle of freedom of expression and information, whatever the members' affiliations and sources of funding and assistance. Within this criterion of independence, the Network does not impose on members any directives as to their modus operandi, their selection and presentation of films, or their funding.

2.5 Founding members

[A]lliance Ciné (Paris, France)
Amnesty International Film Festival (Amsterdam, The Netherlands)
Amnesty International Film Festival (Belgium)
Amnesty International Travelling Film Festival (Canada)
Amnesty International Film Festival USA (Los Angeles and other US cities)
DerHumAlc (Buenos Aires, Argentina)
Human Rights in Film (Warsaw, Poland)
Human Rights Nights (Bologna, Italy)
Human Rights Watch International Film Festival (New York, US; London, UK)
International Film Festival of Human Rights (Barcelona, Spain)
International Film Festival on Human Rights (Geneve, Switzerland)
One World (Prague, Czech Republic)
Perspektive: International Human Rights Film Festival (Nuremberg, Germany)
Seoul Human Rights Film Festival (Seoul, South Korea)
Stalker (Moskow, Russia)
3 Continents (Johannesburgh, South Africa; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Bombay, India)
Vermont International Film Festival (Burlington, USA)