

Current partners up with Fader Films

Al Gore's media co. eyes 'Future of Non-Fiction'

By SAM THIELMAN

Al Gore's content-craving Current has partnered with fledgling Fader Films to reach out to Gotham docmakers' community, starting the initiative with Tuesday's symposium "The Future of Non-fiction Film."

The confab, ostensibly divided into one philosophical and one practical session, included a keynote address by newly minted Nobel Peace Prize winner Gore and sessions led by creatives like "Grey Gardens" helmer Albert Maysles and industryites like Magnolia prexy Eamonn Bowles.

Filmmakers discussed their projects and passed around industry tips, but the most pressing concern among the 54 attendees seemed to be on what terms Current was interested in purchasing material from young doc directors.

After circulating briefly to shake hands with the filmmakers, Gore opened his keynote address unequivocally: "We would like your best work," he said. Gore delivered a short speech about his long-term aspiration to democratize the media using Current, and the floor was opened to questions from filmmakers, many of whom wanted to know how their content would be distributed and for how much.

Current execs, who held a pitch session later in the afternoon, were encouraging if vague.

"We have an obligation to build your career and we take that very seriously," said Current prexy of programming David Neuman.

But later Jason Meil, Current senior VP of original programming and acquisitions, emphasized that the cabler is still focused on short-form programming.

"The longest thing we've ever run was 17 minutes," he said.

As to how much the network is prepared to offer helmers, Meil said that the prices ranged from "a couple of hundred dollars" for a project with a short shelf life into "the thousands of dollars" for a piece Current judged to be interesting in the long term. "Think of it as seed money for your larger projects," said Neuman to the crowd.

Aside from the obvious need to generate content for their own companies, Cooperstein, Meil, and Fader Films' Michael Skolnik emphasized the desire to create a community within the fractious world of docmakers competing for few jobs and little money. "We want to know more filmmakers," Skolnik said. The five-year-old entity has produced two films, 2003's "Hooked: The Legend of Demetrius Hook Mitchell," and 2004's "On the Outs," both directed by Skolnik, and has two more pics on the way.



Gore

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