



25th

REELWORLD
FILM FESTIVAL+SUMMIT
OCT. 14-26, 2025

Canadian films have it all.

Celebrate the richness of Canadian storytelling. Weekly updates deliver fresh releases to inspire, entertain, and immerse you in the vibrant world of Canadian cinema!

seeitall.telefilm.ca

TELEFILM
CANADA



T

**YOUR STORY.
YOUR TRUTH.
OUR SUPPORT.**

LATE BLOOMER

VILLAGE KEEPER

NORTH OF NORTH

CAN I GET AN AMEN?

The Canada Media Fund is here to support bold, courageous voices across the audiovisual industry—from television and web series to documentaries, video games, IDM and immersive projects. Wherever there's a vision and a desire to shine a light, we're there to light the spark.



CANADA
MEDIA FUND

FONDS DES MÉDIAS
DU CANADA

cmf-fmc.ca

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Land Acknowledgement

The land on which Reelworld operates is the traditional territory of many Nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinaabe, and the Chippewa. Our office is located in Toronto, which falls under Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit. These Sovereign Nations have inhabited, protected, and cared for this land since time immemorial. We humbly acknowledge this enduring truth and our responsibilities as guests on this territory.

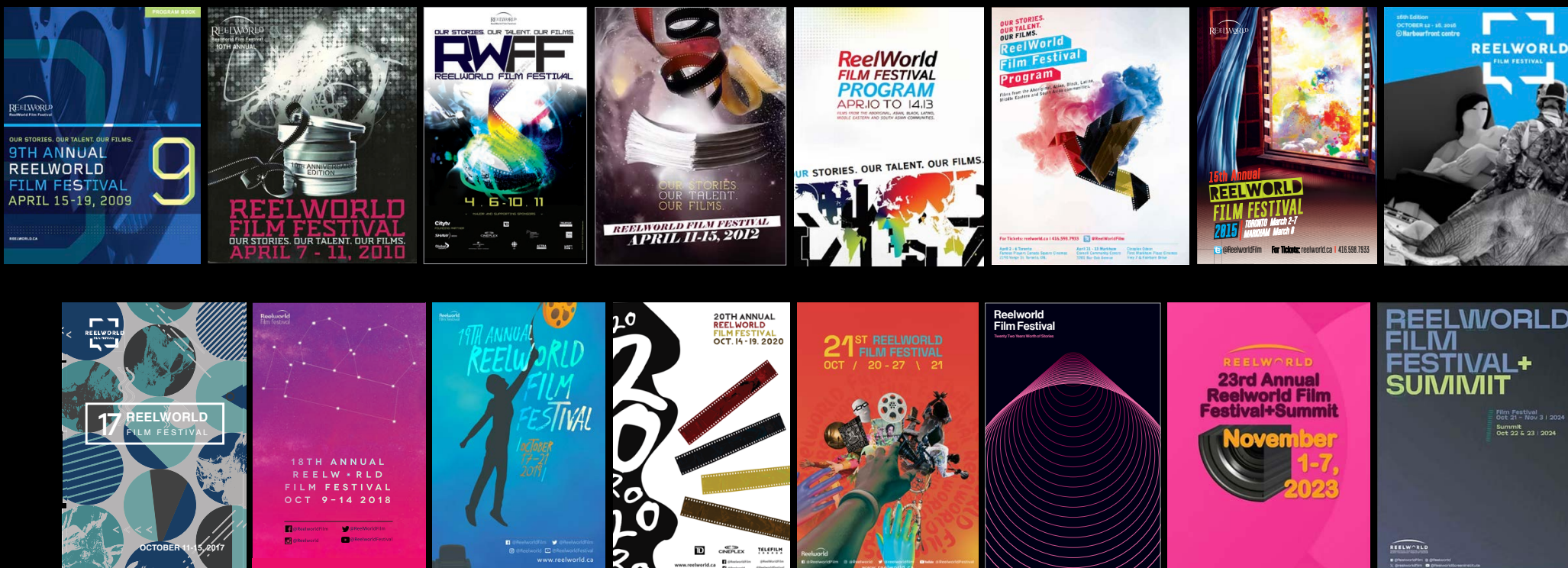
Reelworld recognizes that European colonialism violently dispossessed many Indigenous Peoples of their ancestral lands and continues to erase and marginalize their histories, cultures and sovereignty. As an organization representing artists and communities from many diasporas and scattered lands, we stand in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples in their ongoing struggles for justice and self-determination.

As settlers, immigrants, or descendants of immigrants, we and our ancestors have benefitted from settler colonial systems, laws, and policies that continue to occupy stolen Indigenous lands. We are committed to learning from, with, and alongside Indigenous Peoples, and to working to dismantle white supremacy and settler colonialism in all spheres of cultural, social, political and economic life.

We invite our community to reflect on their relationships to this land, to Indigenous sovereignty, and to take meaningful action toward truth, justice, and reconciliation.



25 Years of Reelworld



What is Reelworld?

Reelworld was founded in 2000 by award-winning actress and producer Tonya Williams to advance opportunities for Black, Indigenous, Asian, South Asian, and People of Colour Canadians in the screen industries. Reelworld advocates for racial equity in Canadian content and production while providing professional development and access to creative career and leadership opportunities.

The acclaimed **Reelworld Film Festival+Summit** welcomes audiences annually to experience the best of Canadian cinema and connect with a diverse network of industry changemakers. To encourage growth and inclusion in the sector, the **Reelworld Screen Institute** supports the creative and career development of Indigenous and racialized professionals with year-round training programs. Through **Access Reelworld**—Canada's largest open directory of Indigenous and racialized crew and talent—and the **Reelworld Foundation**, a registered charity, Reelworld is leading systemic transformation and accountability toward a more equitable and vibrant industry.

For 25 years, Reelworld has fearlessly and boldly amplified the voices of Indigenous and racialized storytellers and changemakers. This milestone is a testament to its impact and sets the stage for a future where all stories matter and everyone has an equal chance to be seen and to thrive.

Reelworld Film Festival+Summit

The **Reelworld Film Festival**, celebrating its 25th anniversary, is Canada's longest-running film festival dedicated to showcasing films by Black, Indigenous, Asian, South Asian, and People of Colour filmmakers. The festival features 100% Canadian content across various genres, including narrative and documentary films, short films, music videos, animation, and episodic series.

This year, the film festival will take place in a hybrid format. In-person events and screenings are scheduled for October 16 to 19, with digital events on October 20. All films will be available online from October 17 to 26, 2025, and geo-blocked to Ontario.

The **Reelworld Summit**, launched in 2023, takes place on October 14 and 15. It features panel discussions, fireside chats with award recipients, workshops, Face2Face pitch sessions, keynote speeches, and networking opportunities. These collective elements foster an environment for Canadian creatives, industry professionals, funders, and stakeholders to engage in important conversations about the current state of the Canadian screen industries.

Welcome Letter



It would be impossible for me to be celebrating the 25th year of Reelworld and not be in a reflective mood. I think of the very first Reelworld Film Festival back in April 4-9, 2001, and the many milestones we've achieved since: the impact we've made to the Canadian filmmakers we've served, the over 2000 alumni who have gone through our training programs, and the hundreds of staff we've trained who continue to strengthen the wider sector, contributing to organizations across the industry.

I remember the lean years when I could barely pay for two part-time staff, and I am proud that Reelworld now employs 10 full-time year-round staff. From our first and only program, the Emerging 20 (E20), we have grown to 7 year round programs, our two day summit, our hiring database Access Reelworld and of course celebrating the 25th anniversary of our film festival.

Along the way we've seen the confidence of our filmmakers grow, and we've seen the industry step up to improve racial equity and access to our screen sector. The great momentum of the past five years may seem to have slowed, but true change takes time. Even if progress sometimes feels like two steps forward and one step back, we are still moving forward. Over the past fifty years we have moved forward many, many steps, and Reelworld has been instrumental in that progress. Let us remember that the challenges of our industry have only made us stronger. Whatever we face in the future years we will prevail.

My hopes and dreams for Reelworld have shifted over the years. Now my desire is that Reelworld lives on long after me, that it grows beyond my wildest dreams and becomes a lasting institution for future generations.

We are so grateful to our allies, our sponsors, our funders and our partners who have never stepped away from us, who continue to inspire and support us with both resources and expertise. Thanks to them and this year's amazing group of filmmakers, speakers and panelists, we are able to celebrate 25 years of incredible film and community.

TONYA WILLIAMS, O.C.

FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
REELWORLD SCREEN INSTITUTE



25th Years



100% CANADIAN FILMS 100% RACIALLY DIVERSE CREATORS

Reelworld launched in 2000

Inaugural film festival held April 9-12, 2001

350,000
Audience Members



8,600+
Reelworld Program
Participants To Date



400+
Reelworld
Awards Given



1,450+ Films
Screened at Reelworld
Film Festival

7,000+
Members on
Access Reelworld





THE GOVERNOR GENERAL · LA GOUVERNEURE GÉNÉRALE

**Message from the Governor General on the
25th anniversary of the Reelworld Screen Institute**

I am pleased to convey my warmest congratulations to the Reelworld Screen Institute on its 25th anniversary.

For a quarter of a century, Reelworld has played a vital role in transforming the Canadian screen industry by amplifying the voices and stories of racialized and Indigenous artists.

Through its unwavering commitment to access and inclusion and with consistent professional development training programs, Reelworld has created opportunities for generations of Canadian creatives, both on screen and behind the scenes. Its impact on shaping a more equitable and representative industry is inspiring.

As you celebrate this important milestone, I commend the Reelworld staff and partners for continuing to champion new perspectives and strengthen the future of Canadian storytelling.

I wish everyone a wonderful celebration!

Mary Simon



PRIME MINISTER · PREMIER MINISTRE

I would like to convey my warmest greetings to everyone attending the 2025 Reelworld Film Festival+Summit.

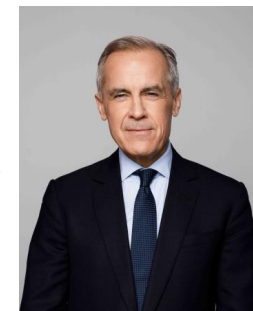
Since it was first held in 2001, this event has provided Canadian filmmakers from diverse backgrounds a platform to showcase their talent and creativity. I am certain that everyone in attendance will enjoy the selection of films being screened during this 25th edition of the festival.

I would like to thank the organizers for bringing this event to the community and for their commitment to celebrating the diversity that enriches our nation.

I wish you all a wonderful experience.

The Right Honourable Mark Carney, P.C., O.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada

Ottawa
2025



Welcome Messages



**THE HONOURABLE STEVEN GUILBEAULT |
MINISTER OF CANADIAN CULTURE AND IDENTITY**

Congratulations to the organizers, volunteers, supporters and artists on Reelworld's silver anniversary. Your work in championing new and emerging voices in diverse communities helps make our country stronger. Here's to many more years of success!



**THE HONOURABLE EDITH DUMONT |
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF ONTARIO**

This remarkable festival has served as a beacon for Canadian creativity, championing the extraordinary talents of Black, Indigenous, Asian, and People of Colour filmmakers. Through its unwavering commitment to showcasing independent voices and diverse perspectives, Reelworld has transformed Ontario's cultural landscape, proving that our diversity truly is our greatest strength.



PREMIER DOUG FORD | PREMIER OF ONTARIO

Congratulations on 25 years of celebrating Canadian creativity! Kudos to the Reelworld Film Festival + Summit team for helping diverse filmmakers hone their craft, bring their stories to the screen and have their moment to shine.



**THE HONOURABLE STAN CHO | MINISTER OF
TOURISM CULTURE AND GAMING OF ONTARIO**

Congratulations to the 2025 Reelworld Film Festival + Summit on 25 years of championing Canadian creativity and advancing inclusion—both on screen and behind the scenes. Your commitment to film in Ontario is truly commendable.



OLIVIA CHOW | MAYOR OF TORONTO

Congratulations, Reelworld, on 25 years of powerful storytelling and impact. Your dedication to championing diverse Canadian voices continues to grow our creative industries and inspire future generations!



VALERIE CREIGHTON, | PRESIDENT AND CEO, CMF

With admiration and appreciation, the Canada Media Fund celebrates Reelworld's 25 years of championing Black, Indigenous, Asian, South Asian, and People of Colour storytellers. We are proud to support the festival and its commitment to creating a more inclusive screen sector. Congratulations on 25 years of sustained and phenomenal success!



**JULIE ROY | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CEO,
TELEFILM CANADA**

Congratulations to Reelworld on your 25th anniversary! Festivals connect Canadian cinema to audiences and provide an important platform for emerging and established creators. At Telefilm Canada, we're proud to celebrate the unifying power of cinema.



**MICHELLE CHAWLA | DIRECTOR AND CEO,
CANADA ARTS COUNCIL**

The Canada Council for the Arts congratulates Reelworld Film Festival on 25 years of championing diverse Canadian voices. Your work strengthens community, fosters inclusion, and showcases the vital role of the arts in society and beyond.



**KAREN THORNE-STONE | PRESIDENT AND CEO
ONTARIO CREATES**

Ontario Creates is proud to support Reelworld Film Festival+Summit as it celebrates 25 years of incredible storytelling and continued efforts to grow the professional development of diverse filmmakers and creatives.



PREM GILL | CEO, CREATIVE BC

Creative BC congratulates Reelworld on 25 years of championing racially diverse Canadian storytellers. Your commitment to inclusion, creativity, and year-round talent development continues to shape and strengthen Canada's motion picture industry.



**ALICIA ROSE | ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT,
SOCIAL IMPACT, SUSTAINABILITY AND
CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP, TD BANK GROUP**

Congratulations to Reelworld on 25 years of impact. Through the TD Ready Commitment, we're proud to support their continued work to amplify diverse voices and build year-round access to opportunities in Canada's screen industry.



**GRACE ANNE MOSS | VP INCLUSION PIPELINE
PROGRAMS, WARNER BROS. DISCOVERY**

WBD Access celebrates Reelworld for their 25 years of service to Canada's creative community. Through workshops, mentorship and professional development programs, Reelworld continues to cultivate emerging talent and uplift the industry.



**VANESSA CASE | VICE PRESIDENT, CONTENT,
PARAMOUNT+ AND PLUTO TV, PARAMOUNT GLOBAL**

Cultivating culture and shared purpose across global media is a priority for Paramount+, and we are honoured to partner with Reelworld to support their mission of nurturing and growing Canadian talent year-round. As sponsors of this year's event, we are proud to support Reelworld's dedication and commitment to professional development that helps foster new opportunities for Canadian creatives.



**CARLYN KLEBUC | GENERAL MANAGER,
ORIGINAL PROGRAMMING, BELL MEDIA**

Bell Media is proud to return as a partner for the 25th edition of the Reelworld Film Festival. Reelworld's commitment to championing representation through storytelling and professional development programs continues to make impactful changes to the Canadian film and television industry. Congratulations!



SIMON FOSTER | CHAIR, ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL

Congratulations to Reelworld on 25 years of showcasing independent films by diverse Canadian filmmakers! Your work has nurtured and expanded Canadian talent both in front of and behind the screen. Bravo!



**ROBIN MIRSKY | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ROGERS
GROUP OF FUNDS**

Rogers is proud to partner with Reelworld Film Festival to support equity-deserving filmmakers in Canada. As the festival celebrates 25 years of incredible impact, we thank them for their continued dedication to help bring important stories to life.



**MARIE-PHILIPPE BOUCHARD | PRESIDENT &
CEO, CBC**

What a pleasure to celebrate Reelworld! Twenty-five years of shaping a richer, more diverse screen industry. Congratulations! CBC/Radio-Canada is proud to support Reelworld's crucial mission.



**MARCIA DOUGLAS | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
BELL FUND**

Over 25 years, Reelworld evolved from a bold vision into a driving force for inclusion, helping transform Canadian screens. Congratulations, Tonya and the Reelworld team, on this legacy and continuing work for the next generation.

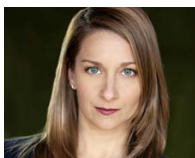

RON ZAMMIT | PRESIDENT & CEO, AFBS

Congratulations to Reelworld on 25 years of championing racially diverse Canadian voices. Your unwavering dedication uplifts talent and continues to build a more inclusive industry.


WARREN P. SONODA | PRESIDENT, DGC NATIONAL

The Directors Guild of Canada is proud to sponsor the Reelworld Film Festival & Summit!

We extend our deep appreciation to the festival for playing such a critical role in supporting, celebration and elevating Canadian BIPOC filmmakers!


ELEANOR NOBLE | NATIONAL PRESIDENT, ACTRA

As proud partners, ACTRA congratulates Reelworld in celebrating 25 years of bold storytelling and unwavering commitment to the voices that need to be heard.


KATE ZIEGLER | PRESIDENT, ACTRA TORONTO

ACTRA Toronto proudly supports Reelworld's 25 years of championing equity, inclusion and racially diverse talent in Canada. Your leadership has helped reshape our screen industry and inspire meaningful change across our sector. Congratulations on this milestone!


VICTORIA SHEN | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WGC

The Writers Guild of Canada is proud to sponsor the Reelworld Film Festival+Summit. Congratulations on 24 years of championing independent Canadian filmmakers identifying as Black, Indigenous, Asian and People of Colour!


SADIA ZAMAN | CEO, INSPIRIT FOUNDATION

Inspirit Foundation congratulates Reelworld on this landmark occasion and twenty-five years of championing the creativity and talent of racially diverse Canadian filmmakers


**MICHAEL MACMILLAN | CEO & CO-FOUNDER
BLUE ANT MEDIA**

Congratulations to the Reelworld Film Festival+Summit on 25 years of impact – championing new diverse voices, fostering inclusivity and positively transforming the Canadian film industry. Blue Ant Media is proud to partner with Reelworld, which helps empower countless creators to share their unique stories.


**CHRISTINA JENNINGS | PRESIDENT & CHAIRMAN,
SHAFTESBURY**

As Reelworld celebrates 25 years, we at Shaftesbury proudly commend founder Tonya Williams, whose vision and passion have built a powerful legacy in our industry. We're honoured to support the Festival+Summit as it brings together creators who will shape the future of storytelling for generations to come.


REYNOLDS MASTIN | PRESIDENT AND CEO, CMPA

Congratulations to Reelworld on 25 years at the forefront of discovering new voices and perspectives and championing diversity and inclusivity in Canada's screen industry. The CMPA is proud to support Reelworld's essential work and undeniable impact.

Welcome Letter



Welcome to the 25th edition of the Reelworld Film Festival+Summit!

On behalf of the Reelworld Screen Institute Board of Directors, we are honoured to celebrate this remarkable milestone with all of you: filmmakers, storytellers, audiences, and industry changemakers.

For 25 years, Reelworld has transformed the Canadian film and media landscape by investing deeply in talent development. Through our year-round programs, workshops, mentorships, industry partnerships, and hiring database—Access Reelworld—we're helping to shape a future where Black, Indigenous, Asian, South Asian, and People of Colour can thrive across every facet of the screen sector.

This year's lineup is a powerful reflection of the vibrant creativity and lived experiences that continue to redefine Canadian storytelling. Our festival exists to spotlight these voices, ensuring they are seen and valued. From bold new features to emerging short films, every project showcased at the festival contributes to a broader, more inclusive national narrative.

The Reelworld Summit complements this vision by offering a platform for dialogue, skill development, and connection. These conversations matter because changing the industry isn't just about who gets to tell the story but also who is in the room helping to shape the systems that support it.

To our audiences, thank you for attending and supporting these filmmakers. To our sponsors, funders, and partners—your ongoing support fuels this movement and strengthens our impact. Whether this is your first Reelworld experience or your twenty-fifth, we invite you to be part of the change: watch boldly, listen deeply, and continue the work long after the credits roll.

With gratitude,

CHERYL HUDSON

CHAIR, REELWORLD SCREEN INSTITUTE BOARD

TORONTO **LOVES** FILM

Ranked the #1 Best Place to Live and Work as a Moviemaker by MovieMaker Magazine



toronto.ca/film

Reelworld Screen Institute

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Founder, Cheryl Hudson
& Co.



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Hollywood Suite



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Producer



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WildBrain



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Operations,
Shaftesbury



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Producer,
White Bear Films



GINA BOWEN

Sr. Director Online
Community Strategy



MARSHA GREENE

Writer, Showrunner



SUPINDER WRAICH

Actor and Filmmaker



KAREN TSANG

VP of Creative Affairs,
Cameron Pictures



LISA MEECHES

President,
Eagle Vision Inc



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Media Producer and
Manager, Voice Actor,
Professor of Creativity,
Sheridan College



ANAND RAMAYYA

Writer, Director, and
Founder of KarmaFilm

Reelworld Foundation

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Director, Finance, and
Business Affairs,
HLP + Partners



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SECRETARY

Senior Associate,
Dentons, Toronto



SHARI KEEN

HR and DEI Advisor,
The Globe and Mail



ANYA MCKENZIE

Manager Unscripted
Programming, Business &
Rights, CBC



ERICA SHAW

Media Producer and Manager,
Voice Actor, Professor of
Creativity, Sheridan College



TONYA WILLIAMS
Founder and Executive
Director



**EMILY-JANE
WILLIAMS**
Development Director



SAFIA ABDIGIR
Program Director



NATALIE NADEEN
Sr. Communications Manager



ZAARIN BUSHRA
Program Manager



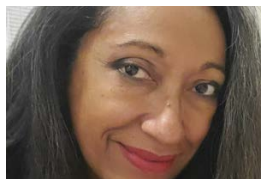
RODNEY V. SMITH
Marketing Manager



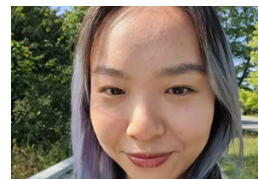
BAL NJOVANA
Finance Manager



JENN PERSAUD
Office Coordinator



YVETTE SUTHERLAND
Finance Coordinator



YANLING SHI
Partnership Coordinator



GEO LAFORME
Programming Coordinator



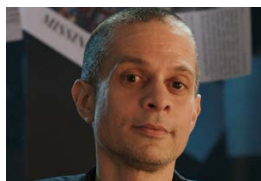
NATALIA MORALES
Social Media Coordinator



ABI MARSHALL
Operation Coordinator



KADON DOUGLAS
Consultant, Strategic
Communications



RICHARD B. PIERRE
Film Programmer



AISHA EVELYNA
Associate Programmer



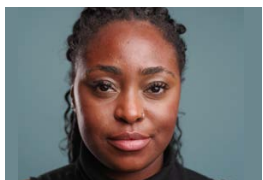
**ALLISON
WILSON-FORBES**
Associate Programmer



DENZEL NOYLANDER
Guest Services Coordinator



JULISA MARCEL
Summit Coordinator



RHEIMA ROBINSON
Events Coordinator

2025 Reelworld Film Festival+ Summit Partners and Funders

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DIAMOND PARTNERS



PLATINUM PARTNERS



GOLD PARTNERS



GOVERNMENT FUNDERS



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des arts
du Canada



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO
an Ontario government agency
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario



ONTARIO
CREATES



SILVER PARTNERS



BRONZE PARTNERS



ASSOCIATE PARTNERS



SUPPORTERS



Writers Guild
of Canada



Canadian Independent Screen Fund
for CISC creators



Fonds Canadien de l'écran
indépendant pour les créateurs
auto-développés et locaux



2025 Year-Round Partners & Funders

DIAMOND PARTNERS



CANADA
MEDIA FUND

FONDS DES MÉDIAS
DU CANADA

GOVERNMENT FUNDERS

Funded by:
Federal Economic Development
Agency for Southern Ontario



Women and Gender
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité
des genres Canada



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des arts
du Canada



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO
an Ontario government agency
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario



ONTARIO
CREATES

GOLD PARTNERS



SILVER PARTNERS



HOW TO FESTIVAL AND SUMMIT

- Visit **Reelworld.ca** website for information on summit speakers, sessions, and film screenings, including dates, times, and ticket purchasing options.
- Bring your ticket with the QR code to the cinema. Seating is on a first-come, first-served basis.
- The Opening Night Film is screening on October 16. The remaining films are screening from October 17 to 19.
- The Reelworld Summit takes place on October 14 and 15. Purchase your Summit Pass online. Once registered on Swapcard—our summit registration platform—you will be able to see the full summit schedule and correspond with other registered delegates.
- Digital Day will take place on October 20 and consist of workshops and panel discussions.
- Digital screenings run from October 17 to 26. All films will be available to watch online, geo-blocked to Ontario.

GET YOUR
PASSES &
TICKETS!

- **Reelworld Summit**

Reelworld Summit: This pass grants access to all summit events on October 14 and 15. The Summit Pass does not provide access to film screenings.

VENUE: Courtyard Marriott Toronto Downtown
(475 Yonge St, Toronto, ON)

PRICE: \$300 + HST

- **Opening Night (in-person)**

A ticket to the Opening Night Film,
It Comes in Waves, on October 16

VENUE: The Royal Theatre (475 College St.,
Toronto, ON)

PRICE: \$25 + HST

- **Individual Film (in-person)**

All remaining film screenings take place
from October 17-19

VENUE: The Paradise Theatre
(1006 Bloor St. W, Toronto, ON)

PRICE: \$12 + HST

- **Online Festival Pass**

This pass grants you online access to all the films screened during this year's festival via the Cinesend digital platform. Films will be available to watch from October 17 to 26. The platform is geo-blocked to Ontario.

PRICE: \$60 + HST

WWW.REELWORLD.CA

8:00 AM	TUES. OCT 14	WED. OCT 15	THURS. OCT 16		FRI. OCT 17	SAT. OCT 18	SUN. OCT 19	8		
8:30 AM										
9:00 AM			COURTYARD MARRIOT TORONTO DOWNTOWN: 475 YONGE ST, TORONTO, ON M4Y 1X7		COURTYARD MARRIOT TORONTO DOWNTOWN: 475 YONGE ST, TORONTO, ON M4Y 1X7	THE OMNI KING EDWARD HOTEL (37 KING ST E) & ROYAL THEATRE (608 COLLEGE ST)	PARADISE THEATRE 1006C BLOOR ST W, TORONTO, ON M6H 1M2	PARADISE THEATRE 1006C BLOOR ST W, TORONTO, ON M6H 1M2	PARADISE THEATRE 1006C BLOOR ST W, TORONTO, ON M6H 1M2	9
9:30 AM										
10:00 AM										10
10:30 AM										
11:00 AM									11	
11:30 AM								Rising Through the Fray (88 min)	Treasure of the Rice Terraces (75 min)	
12:00 PM										12
12:30 PM						THE OMNI KING EDWARD HOTEL, 37 KING ST E				
1:00 PM	REELWORLD SUMMIT	REELWORLD SUMMIT	FILMMAKERS LUNCHEON (Invite only)		Shorts Program: Grief (76 min)			1		
1:30 PM										
2:00 PM						Circo (88 min)	In The Room (75 min)	2		
2:30 PM										
3:00 PM								3		
3:30 PM										
4:00 PM						Shorts Program: Entagnglement (77 min)	Foreigner (82 min)		4	
4:30 PM										
5:00 PM								Montréal, Ma Belle (117 min)	5	
5:30 PM										
6:00 PM							6			
6:30 PM					Shorts Program: Genre Fever (72 min)	Have You Heard Judi Singh? (79 min)		7		
7:00 PM			THE ROYAL THEATRE 608 COLLEGE ST							
7:30 PM			OPENING NIGHT: It Comes in Waves (104 min)					8		
8:00 PM							Designed by Preeti (93 min)			
8:30 PM					Shorts Program: Retrospective (95 min)			9		
9:00 PM						Tribe Called Love (90 min)				
9:30 PM								10		
10:00 PM										
10:30 PM								11		
11:00 PM										
11:30 PM								12		
12:00 AM										
12:30 AM										

Bringing together the power of our people and philanthropy to help foster change, nurture progress, and support local communities.

Proud to support Reelworld Film Festival.

Through the TD Ready Commitment, we aim to support art and culture initiatives that reflect and amplify emerging and underrepresented voices, helping to create space for arts professionals to share stories through the lens of diverse lived experiences.

Learn more at td.com/artsandculture



OPENING NIGHT FILM

7:00 PM @ The Royal
Thursday, Oct. 16

It Comes In Waves



PRESENTED BY



**TD READY
COMMITMENT**

DIRECTED BY FITCH JEAN | ONTARIO



Fitch Jean, with Haitian-Canadian roots, evolved from music and photography to become a filmmaker. His directing debut with *Forgive Me Father* in 2019 led to more narrative and documentary shorts. His films, focusing on underrepresented communities, address mental health and trauma, earning recognition in over 50 film festivals and 7 awards. Fitch's work, including a recent CBC documentary, aims to amplify marginalized voices and foster unity through authentic storytelling.

FILM NOTES

A promising track star who diligently works at a local variety store, Akai (Adrian Walters) is a good kid with a bright future. Until tragedy strikes once again. With no real plan and a limited support system, Akai is forced to do whatever it takes to keep his family together.

Fitch Jean was born in Haiti and clearly feels a kinship with the Rwandan community. He approaches his storytelling with a delicate touch and uncommon visual panache. *It Comes in Waves* is full of compelling performances from a superb cast and anchored by Walters, who shines as a sensitive young man consumed by a past that refuses to stay buried. This is world-class work from an undeniable filmmaker with a bright future.

- RICHARD PIERRE

PRODUCER(S): Amir Zargara

CAST: Adrian Walters, Nendia Lewars,
Olunike Adeliyi, Ryan Rosery

COUNTRY: Canada

PREMIERE STATUS: Canadian

RUN TIME: 1:45:00

LANGUAGE: English

**TD READY
COMMITMENT**



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A Tribe Called Love

DIRECTED BY MOHAMED AHMED | ONTARIO



Mohamed Ahmed grew up in Ottawa, Canada, before moving to Vancouver to pursue his passion for filmmaking at the Vancouver Film School (VFS). After graduating, he relocated to Toronto to immerse himself in the independent content scene. With years of experience working on film and television sets, Mohamed went on to create *Sheeko Sheeko*, a Somali web-based talk show that gained widespread recognition and even featured on Vice's *Huang's World*. It won the Best Podcast at the 2017 Toronto Webfest. His short documentary *Football is our Home*, about a homeless soccer team, earned him the Best Short Documentary Audience Choice Award, at the 2013 Canadian Sports Film Festival. In addition, Mohamed created the web series *Ayan's World*, a vibrant portrayal of Somali culture.

FILM NOTES

Mohamed Ahmed's vibrant debut remixes the classic Shakespearean tale of star-crossed lovers, relocating it to Toronto's Somali community.

The film captures the warmth, humour, and complexity of community life, supported by a pulsing soundtrack. It reimagines Somali tribal conflicts through the lens of a fictional tribe system, creating a rich, mythical framework for this story about love and the community that shapes it.

Featuring performances from Dalmar Abuzeid (*Degrassi*, *Pompeii*)—one of the 2025 Reelworld Trailblazers—and Feaven Abera (*Waywards*, *Sort Of*), the cast is also supported by first-time performers drawn from local Toronto communities. Rich in character, grounded in emotional honesty, and charged with youthful energy, this film is a powerful meditation on the cost of love in a world still divided by history.

- SAFIA ABDIGIR

PRODUCER(S): Andy Marshall

CAST: Dalmar Abuzeid Feaven Abera, Omar Abdi

COUNTRY: Canada

PREMIERE STATUS: World

RUN TIME: 1:29:00

LANGUAGE: English, Somali



Circo

DIRECTED BY LAMIA CHRAIBI | QUEBEC



Lamia Chraibi is a French-Moroccan filmmaker based in Montreal. She is particularly interested in the themes of social justice, identity, family and territory. She also deals with subjects related to body language and social art. The human being is at the heart of her approach. Her studies in social science (Sorbonne, Paris) and in documentary (INIS, Montreal) have shaped her sensitive and committed vision of the world. Her art is nourished by her identity questions, her migratory journey and her travels. Lamia's cinema is based on time and the trust established with the protagonists. With a poetic approach, her camera gives a voice to the forgotten from diverse backgrounds.

FILM NOTES

Director Lamia Chraibi takes us deep into Richard's world—his vibrant drag community, his spiritual connection to Candomblé, and the emotional anchor of his sister, who is fighting for custody of her daughter. These moments, beautifully framed and often bathed in natural light, reveal the poetry of performance as both discipline and escape.

Circo is a portrait of becoming, told through the rhythm of a body in motion. It's a story of resilience shaped as much by dreaming as by enduring.

- SAFIA ABDIGIR

PRODUCER(S): Patricia Bergeron

CAST: N/A

COUNTRY: Canada

PREMIERE STATUS: Ontario

RUN TIME: 1:28:00

LANGUAGE: PORTUGUESE



Designed By Preeti

DIRECTED BY GAYATRI EVERITT BAJPAI | BRITISH COLUMBIA



With roots in New Delhi and Vancouver, **Gayatri Everitt Bajpai**, weaves her multiethnic heritage into intricate stories of identity and belonging. Her short *Halwa* screened at over 100 festivals, and was licensed by HBO and Disney+. The UCLA graduate won Best Director at the Mumbai Indian Cine Film Festival for *Yatra: The Journey* (2023)

FILM NOTES

Preeti Kumar (Rashmi Rustagi) is trapped in an oppressive marriage and begins to reevaluate her life. Though fearful of the response of her conservative community, Preeti is tired of living an unhappy life. Along her journey to reclaiming her sense of self, she forms richly supportive friendships which help give her the confidence to pursue her long-held dream of being a fashion designer. Along the way, Preeti also discovers the possibility of a healthy romance in this inspiring story for personal transformation.

Drawing inspiration from real-life stories and anchored by a standout performance from lead actress and writer Rashmi Rustagi, Gayatri Bajpai's film is an empowering story fortified by richly-layered South Asian characters.

PRODUCER(S): Arati Misro, Priyanka Paranjape, Rashmi Rustagi
CAST: Rashmi Rustagi, Ranjita Chakravarty, Anna Khaj, Sangeeta Agrawa, Jay Charan, Frank Lawson
COUNTRY: United States

PREMIERE STATUS: Canada Premiere
RUN TIME: 1:33:07
LANGUAGE: English



Foreigner

DIRECTED BY AVA MARIA SAFAI | BRITISH COLUMBIA



Ava Maria Safai, a Canadian-Iranian artist from Vancouver, Canada, is a Dean's List graduate from UBC's BFA in Acting program and currently serves as the artistic director of The Harlequin Theatre Society. Her directorial debut, *Zip*, created waves as the first short film in the 24-year history of the Crazy8s Film Festival to receive a standing ovation. *Zip* has garnered acclaim as an Official Selection at multiple Academy Award-qualifying festivals, including Uppsala, CINEQUEST, Athens International Film & Video Festival, and the Calgary International Film Festival. Notably, it recently won Best Short at the Chilliwack Independent Film Festival, received an Honourable Mention for Best Short at the Whistler Film Festival, and earned the prestigious Ryan Nicholson Special FX Makeup Award at Blood in the Snow in Toronto. Ava Maria's feature debut *Foreigner* was kickstarted by Telefilm's Talent to Watch program and funded by over five different funding bodies. She directed, wrote, produced, and edited the project. In the same year as making this film, Ava Maria also voiced a supporting character in an upcoming video game, starred in a documentary reenactment, and shadowed directors Zach Lipovsky and Adam B. Stein on the set of *Final Destination 6*.

FILM NOTES

In *Foreigner*, Ava Maria Safai crafts a wholly original horror film that plays by its own rules, transcending immigration trauma tropes. Safai directed, wrote, produced, and edited the project. Catch this auspicious debut that world premiered at the prestigious Fantasia International Film Festival before it's too late.

- RICHARD PIERRE

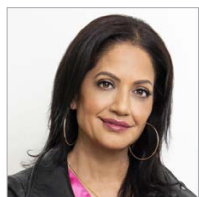
PRODUCER(S): Nicco Graham, Ava Maria Safai
CAST: Rose Dehgan, Chloë Macleod
COUNTRY: Canada
PREMIERE STATUS: World

RUN TIME: 1:20:00
LANGUAGE: English



Have You Heard Judi Singh?

DIRECTED BY BALJIT SANGRAI | BRITISH COLUMBIA



Baljit Sangrai is a Vancouver-based documentary filmmaker known for her compelling explorations of social and cross-cultural issues within the South Asian community. She directed the acclaimed documentary *Because We Are Girls*, which delves into the story of three Punjabi Canadian sisters confronting the trauma of childhood sexual abuse within their family. Sangrai's work often focuses on themes of resilience, identity, and representation, aiming to give voice to underrepresented narratives. Her films have been featured at various international film festivals, highlighting

her commitment to authentic storytelling.

FILM NOTES

The film is food for the soul of any artist, challenging personal motives for artistry, while affirming that the purpose of creativity isn't grandeur; it's connection. Judi Singh's legacy lives not in awards, but in the lives she touched, and the inspiration she continues to spark through her music.

- AISHA EVELYNA

PRODUCER(S): Baljit Sangrai, Brishkay

Ahmed, Selwyn Jacob

CAST: N/A

COUNTRY: Canada

PREMIERE STATUS: Toronto

RUN TIME: 1:19:09

LANGUAGE: English



In The Room

DIRECTED BY BRISHKAY AHMED | BRITISH COLUMBIA



Brishkay Ahmed is known for her feature documentaries *In the Rumbling Belly of Motherland* (2021), *Unveiled: The Kohistan Video Scandal* (2016) and *Story of Burqa* (2012). Throughout her years as a documentary filmmaker, her projects have been supported by the NFB, CBC, Super Channel, RTA, Bravo and Cinema Politica. Her last feature documentary, *In the Rumbling Belly of Motherland*, a nominee for the 2021 DGC Allan King Award for Excellence in Documentary, won the Outstanding Feature Film Award at the 2021 Reelworld Film Festival. Her short film *Fatima in Kabul*

(2021) was a Canadian Screen Award nominee for Best Web Program and a Banff Rockie Award nominee for Short Non-Fiction Program. Beyond documentaries, Brishkay is the creator and co-director of the Afghan prime-time legal drama *Between You and Me* for Tolo TV, Afghanistan. She also worked as a writer and director on several police and legal procedurals in Kabul, Afghanistan (2011–2019). Brishkay studied film production at NYU and is an alumna of the Canadian Film Centre.

FILM NOTES

Brishkay previously explored the resilience of Afghan women in *In the Rumbling Belly of Motherland*, where she followed Kabul's women-run news network during the final months before the Taliban takeover. With *In the Room*, she continues to create space for women to speak truth to power — and for us to listen.

- AISHA EVELYNA

PRODUCER(S): Teri Snelgrove

CAST: N/A

COUNTRY: Canada

PREMIERE STATUS: World

RUN TIME: 1:15:28

LANGUAGE: English, Dari, Farsi

PREMIERE STATUS: World Premiere

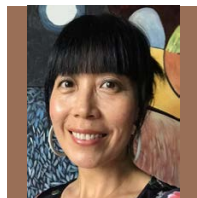
RUN TIME: 1:28:00

LANGUAGE: English



Montréal, Ma Belle

DIRECTED BY XIAODAN HE | QUEBEC



Xiaodan He, a Montreal based Chinese-Canadian filmmaker, studied film production at the Beijing Film Academy of China. In 2013, she founded Red Dawn Productions through which she developed and produced five feature projects, fiction and documentary, financed by major Quebec and Canadian institutions - including *The Dance of the Star*, *Cairo Calling*, *The Fall of Womenland*, *A Touch of Spring* and *My Father's Journey*.

FILM NOTES

Set during a sun-drenched Montreal summer, the film beautifully explores the tension between duty and freedom, exile and identity, repression and release. As Feng Xia chooses to lean into the yearning for the first time, she confronts the emotional toll of breaking free from deep-rooted expectations.

With poetic realism and a rare focus on the middle-aged queer experience, Xiaodan He offers a powerful meditation on belonging, courage, and the steep cost of liberation. A daring, emotionally charged work from a singular voice in Canadian cinema.

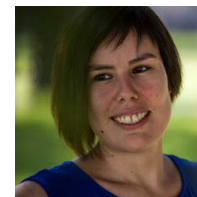
- SAFIA ABDIGIR

PRODUCER(S): Christine Falco
CAST: Joan Chen, Charlotte Aubin
COUNTRY: Canada
PREMIERE STATUS: Ontario
RUN TIME: 1:56:00
LANGUAGE: Chinese, English



Rising Through The Fray

DIRECTED BY COURTNEY MONTOUR | QUEBEC



Courtney Montour is a Kanien'kehá:ka writer and director from Kahnawà:ke whose works have screened at TIFF, Big Sky, and Margaret Mead. Her film *Mary Two-Axe Earley: I Am Indian Again* (2021) won Best Documentary Short (imagineNATIVE and the American Indian Film Festival). A Playback 2024 TV Director of the Year, NDN Collective Changemaker Fellowship (2022) and King Charles III's Coronation Medal, Courtney is a prolific voice in contemporary cinema.

FILM NOTES

Indigenous Rising made history as the first team at the Roller Derby World Cup to represent a single country: the Indigenous peoples throughout Turtle Island. Yet, the heart of the film lies not in the action on the track, but in the intimate interviews where Montour fosters a space for genuine vulnerability. Teammates Sour Cherry, Krispy, and Hawaiian Blaze open up about their struggles with feeling disconnected from their Indigenous heritage—and the profound healing they've experienced through being part of the team.

Through Montour's compelling direction, you can't help but cheer for these athletes—and with the support of her creative team, their journeys leave a lasting impact. *Rising Through the Fray* transcends the confines of a sports film, in Montour's skilful hands, it's a story about identity, trauma, and the transformative power of community.

- RICHARD PIERRE

PRODUCER(S): Jason Brennan
CAST: N/A
COUNTRY: Canada
PREMIERE STATUS: World
RUN TIME: 1:28:00
LANGUAGE: English



Treasure of the Rice Terraces

DIRECTED BY KENT DONGUINES | BRITISH COLUMBIA



Kent Donguines is a Vancouver-based Filipino-Canadian filmmaker, CFC Producers' Lab alum and CEO of Aimer Films Inc. His short films have premiered at internationally renowned festivals and have received awards; *This Ink Runs Deep* (CBC, TIFF 2019) *Kalinga (Care)* (Telus Storyhive, DOXA; winner, Kathleen Shannon Award, Yorkton Film Festival), and *Paco* (CRAVE; grand prize, Stage32 Film Contest 2025). Kent's upcoming projects include: *Error 404* and *Canadian Adobo*.

FILM NOTES

Filipino-Canadian filmmaker Kent Donguines sets out in his filmmaking journey to reclaim an identity he feared was slipping away. What begins as a story of self-discovery unfolds into a powerful meditation on cultural memory and the lasting impact of colonial erasure.

Blending stunning cinematography, rich archival material, and thoughtfully placed interviews, Donguines offers a cinematic act of reclamation. The film is as much about reconnecting with heritage as it is about challenging the narratives imposed on a people. Visually striking and emotionally layered, the film stands as a quiet yet powerful act of decolonization, both personal and collective.

- SAFIA ABDIGIR

PRODUCER(S): Jacob Crawford, Bailey Wood, Kent Donguines, Nicolle Rufino
CAST: Maria "Apo Whang-od" Oggay, Grace Palicas, Michelle Dee, Mark Bumgarner, Kim Atienza, Celeste Cortesi

COUNTRY: Canada/The Philippines
PREMIERE STATUS: Ontario
RUN TIME: 1:15:00
LANGUAGE: English, Filipino, Butbut

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 Documentary Fund

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2025 Reelworld Jurors

Reelworld takes pride in our unwavering commitment to celebrating the accomplishments of outstanding Canadian films and filmmakers. Annually, we present festival awards chosen by an independent jury of filmmakers and industry leaders. Our profound gratitude goes out to our distinguished 2024 jurors for dedicating their time and expertise in handpicking this year's deserving honourees.

FEATURES



ORLA GARRIQUES
Marketing Executive,
Mentor, Producer



DEBRA KOURI
Producer, Founder of
Poutine Studios



VIRINDERPAUL SINGH
Producer

SHORTS



MIMI DEJENE
Producer, Director



**VINUJA
SHANTHASORUBAN**
Director of Development,
Neshama



**GABRIELA OSIO
VANDEN**
Cinematographer

SHORTS PROGRAM GRIEF

FRI. OCT 17
1:00 PM

Grief. The word carries weight. It feels all-encompassing and scary, forcing us to consider what kind of past preceded its use—because, after all, there is no grief without loss. Within grief, we often find melancholy, anger, and fear—big emotions that are easy to suppress.

The seven films in this program invite you to hurt with them—and to be seen in doing so. To cry. To question. To smile. Maybe even laugh. To be brave, and face the enormity of the human condition. Whether grieving a death, a relationship, a place, a way of thinking, a period of time, or an alternate version of the future—these films explore the vast spectrum of grief, and they do so boldly and uniquely.

They remind us that, like loss, bravery exists only in the face of something daunting. There is no courage without fear. These filmmakers ask us to feel deeply—and in doing so, show us what it means to be brave.

- AISHA EVELYNA, ASSOCIATE PROGRAMMER

FILM

BROTHERLY
I AM PLEASED
KNOTS
LOVE LETTER
VITAL
WHAT'S MINE IS YOURS
WITH TIME

DIRECTED BY

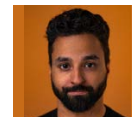
Gavin Seal
Vanessa Magic
Justin F. Lee
Thipika Balakrishnan
Amir Zargara
Haaris Qadri
Jenny Lee-Gilmore



GRIEF

Brotherly

DIRECTED BY GAVIN SEAL



Gavin Seal is a Writers Guild of Canada prize-winning filmmaker whose work tends to explore his pluralistic Indian-Québécois-Canadian identity through characters who challenge expectations. His films have screened internationally at Oscar-qualifying festivals including Fantasia, Hot Docs, Reelworld and Just for Laughs. He is an alumnus of the TIFF Lab, Berlinale EFM's Toolbox, and EAVE Access programs.

SYNOPSIS Nabil learns his mentally ill brother has ordered for euthanasia and is forced to decide whether or not to respect his wishes.

PRODUCER(S): Gavin Seal, Jen Viens
CAST: Aladeen Tawfeek, Viggo Hanvelt, Gryffin Hanvelt, Rahim Bahram
COUNTRY: Canada
PREMIERE STATUS: Canadian
RUN TIME: 8:43
LANGUAGE: English



GRIEF

I Am Pleased

DIRECTED BY VANESSA MAGIC



Vanessa Magic is a Canadian Screen Award-winning director and alumna of Slamdance, WBD Access x the Canadian Academy, and Women In the Director's Chair. Her shorts—*The Absurdity Of The Black Female Experience*, *The Future Above Us*, and *How to Stay Awake*—screened at Brooklyn, Cannes, Entertwine, and Fantasia. Inspired by her dreams, she is eager to create worlds and narratives untold, unseen and filled with magic.

SYNOPSIS A promising high schooler's aspirations of studying abroad are shattered by her father's rejection, forcing her to confront her family's past and find the strength to pursue her dreams in her own surreal way.

PRODUCER(S): Jennifer De Lucia, Daniel Stolfi
CAST: Millie Davis, Chris Locke, Emma Hunter, Rodrigo Fernandez-Stoll, Rebecca Applebaum
COUNTRY: Canada
PREMIERE STATUS: World
RUN TIME: 12:00
LANGUAGE: English



GRIEF

Knots

DIRECTED BY JUSTIN F. LEE



GRIEF

Love Letter

DIRECTED BY THIPIKA BALAKRISHNAN



GRIEF

Vital

DIRECTED BY AMIR ZARGARA



GRIEF

What's Mine is Yours

DIRECTED BY HAARIS QADRI



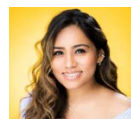
Justin is a filmmaker, playwright, and sailor interested in the evolution of Canadian drama as a building block for a richer national identity. He holds a BFA in theatre from the University of Victoria.

Coming from the theatre he primarily works in Production and Lighting in film. He associate-produced the feature film *Mongrels* which world premiered at Vancouver International Film Festival (DGC Horizon Award) and the short film *SO-RI* part of VAFF's 2023 Mighty Asian Moviemaking Marathon. He was the Project Manager at The Canadian Play Thing Theatre, showrunning the audio drama series *A Way Out* and creating the interview series *Playwright to Playwright* funded through Playwrights Guild Canada.

Knots is his writer/director debut, inspired by his time crewing tall ships in the Maritimes and Washington State.

SYNOPSIS While restoring her derelict sailboat, an old mariner finds her late husband's memory lingering within the cabin.

PRODUCER(S): Sahil Arya, Brian Globus
CAST: Linda Watters, Danielle Klaunti
COUNTRY: Canada
PREMIERE STATUS: World/Ontario
RUN TIME: 15:00
LANGUAGE: English



Thipika Balakrishnan is a driven first-generation Canadian Tamil filmmaker who continues to hone her craft through music videos and narrative films. Her debut short film *BID* (2023) screened at Tolndie, IFFSA, and the New Filmmakers NY Festival. She has since directed *STATIC* (2024), *Love Letter* (2025), and a series of music videos including *Unnaale* and *Senorita*, all of which have gained strong festival and online recognition. Alongside her filmmaking, Thipika brings deep experience from her work in community crisis response in Toronto. Her passion for community development and her own lived experiences led her to found PALAN, a community-led collective advocating for greater representation and opportunities in the film industry. Thipika's work reflects her vision to explore the bicultural experience, illuminating the unique challenges and triumphs of navigating two different worlds. Rooted in both artistry and social impact, her films and advocacy reflect her commitment to amplifying marginalized voices while creating compelling, emotionally resonant stories.

SYNOPSIS Young Thihi is upset by the news that her classmate (and crush) Ryan is moving away so decides to write him a letter in the hopes that it will fly to wherever he is. The film is a love letter to both Ryan, and her Parkdale life.

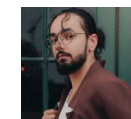
PRODUCER(S): Sobika Ganeshalingam
CAST: Maya Uthayakaran
COUNTRY: Canada
PREMIERE STATUS: World
RUN TIME: 6:06
LANGUAGE: English



Amir Zargara is an award-winning Iranian-Canadian writer and director, whose unique perspective is shaped by the cultural mosaic of Iran and Canada. His journey, characterized by the resilience of an immigrant and the challenges of living with a stutter, deeply influences his approach to filmmaking. An alumnus of prestigious programs at Berlinale, TIFF, Busan, Zurich, and Reykjavik, he explores the moral complexities individuals face in his films.

SYNOPSIS A mother in Iran considers selling her organs to save her daughter, while, in the United States, a doctor faces ethical dilemmas to save his daughter, revealing the complexities of organ trade.

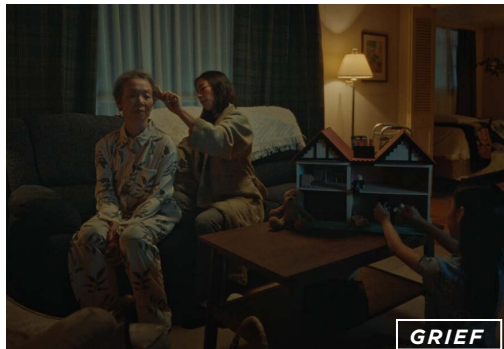
PRODUCER(S): Sahil Arya, Brian Globus
CAST: Mahtab Servati, Reza Akhlaghirad, Hossein Soleimani
COUNTRY: Canada, Iran, Turkey
PREMIERE STATUS: World
RUN TIME: 15:00
LANGUAGE: Farsi, English



Haaris Qadri is a Toronto and London (Ontario)-based filmmaker and York University BFA graduate. His short *majboor-e-mamool* screened at Festival du Nouveau Cinema and won Best Canadian Short at Reel Asian Film Festival. His films explore diasporic identity, intergenerational dynamics, and everyday life with poetic realism, and have screened at TIFF Next Wave and Canadian Film Fest.

SYNOPSIS Feeling inadequate as a father, Naim starts to notice unsettling changes in his wife's behaviour and the increasing visits from his best friend Javed. With his son Talha also sensing that something is wrong, they quietly navigate their suspicions and the complexities of their family relationships.

PRODUCER(S): Weeda Azim, Haaris Qadri, Aman Samra
CAST: Gurui, Aniruth Pakash, Ali Kami, Megha Raina
COUNTRY: Canada
PREMIERE STATUS: World
RUN TIME: 10:00
LANGUAGE: English, Urdu



With Time

DIRECTED BY JENNY LEE-GILMORE



Jenny Lee-Gilmore is a Vancouver-based actor and filmmaker who began as a producer's and director's assistant on projects for Netflix,

Apple, Lionsgate and Disney. Her debut short *Breakaway* was a CBC Short Film Face Off top nine selection, followed by acclaimed documentaries *Overtime* (Telus Originals) and *Little Miss Sleepy* (CBC). An alumna of multiple labs, she received the 2024 WIDC Advantage Award.

SYNOPSIS Alice must confront her unresolved past when her estranged mother, who has dementia, moves in, forcing her to provide the care she never received in her childhood while juggling her own responsibilities as a mother.

PRODUCER(S): Kristyn Stilling, Ellie Cameron-Smith

CAST: Jennifer Khloe, Yayoi Hirano, Avery Chan

COUNTRY: Canada

PREMIERE STATUS: World

RUN TIME: 10:00

LANGUAGE: English

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SHORTS PROGRAM ENTANGLEMENTS

FRI. OCT 17
3:30 PM

These films examine the moments when boundaries blur, when personal choices ripple through larger systems, and when intimacy becomes both a refuge and a complication. Entanglements invites you to contemplate the intricate currents of relations, the way our lives are weaved together through love, community, politics, and circumstance.

Whether it's a story of neighbours drawn together by shared mourning, families navigating the chaos of an uncertain world, or strangers whose lives collide by chance or design, each short offers a glimpse into the beautiful, messy intersections that define us.

No one exists in isolation. History, identity, and social forces continually tug at the threads of individual choices, revealing the deep and often uneasy connections that bind people together in care, in conflict, and in consequence.

— SAFIA ABDIGIR, PROGRAMMER

FILM

FRACTURED ACTS
LOST WAX
MY DAD, THE ROCK STAR
NANI'S KITCHEN
PRISONER
QUEEN MOTHER

DIRECTED BY

Yeimy Daza
Omorose Osagie
Jin Kwan Kim
Stephanie Sonny Hooker
Rame Ibrahim
King Louie Palomo



Fractured Acts

DIRECTED BY YEIMY DAZA



Yeimy Daza, a Colombia-born and Toronto-based filmmaker, has a portfolio that spans documentaries, narrative films, and music videos across Latin America and North America. Yeimy's work, known for its personal and female-centric narratives, has been showcased at numerous national and international festivals. Currently pursuing an MFA in Film at York University, she has also contributed to multiple films and TV series as part of the production team at Hawkeye Pictures.

SYNOPSIS In the intense world of theater, Jason's simmering jealousy, fueled by a script change and real-life betrayal, culminates in a tragic on-stage confrontation that blurs the lines between reality and fiction.

PRODUCER(S): Nicholas Wicht, Geraldine Connolly, Angie Reid, Elle Young, Daryl Ledwon, Sean San Jose
CAST: Tony Nappo, Robert Bazzocchi, Elle Young, Angie Reid, Nick Hendriks
COUNTRY: Canada
PREMIERE STATUS: World
RUN TIME: 12:56
LANGUAGE: English



Lost Wax

DIRECTED BY OMOROSE OSAGIE



Omorose Osagie is a Nigerian-Canadian writer and director. Her work often explores isolation, perception, and power dynamics. She received the jury prize for Best Animation at the Essence Film Festival, and her films have screened at Fantasia and other festivals across North America. Her films have been supported by the National Film Board of Canada, BC Arts Council, Canada Council for the Arts and Experimental Forest Films.

SYNOPSIS When a young girl disappears from her apartment complex, Osas—a craftswoman and outsider within her community—is haunted by her grief for someone she only knew from a distance. In this surrealist drama weaving live action and 2D animation, we follow the thread between the disappearance of an Edo girl from Benin city and the stolen art of the Benin kingdom.

PRODUCER(S): Grace Shutti, Momo Spaine
CAST: Wumi Tuase, Diana Egwuatu, Eyiemi Olivia, Pamilerin Ayodeji
COUNTRY: Canada
PREMIERE STATUS: World
RUN TIME: 14:07
LANGUAGE: English



My Dad, the Rockstar

DIRECTED BY KEVIN JIN KWAN KIM



Kevin Jin Kwan Kim is a Vancouver-based Korean-Canadian director and editor. His series of micro-shorts about his heritage including *What Did They Say?*,

Daniel 'Jun Ho' Lee and *Halmeoni* have been recognized by Cannes, Webby Awards, and CBC. His short film *Sun, Moon and Four Peaks* premiered at VIFF and won Grand Prix RPCE at Festival du Nouveau Cinema.

SYNOPSIS A divorced Dad attempts to impress his daughter as a rockstar over a weekend full of mixed emotions.

PRODUCER(S): Anastasia Itkina, Michael Ren

CAST: Sangbum Kang, Sharon Kang, Kyu Nam Cho

COUNTRY: Canada

PREMIERE STATUS: World

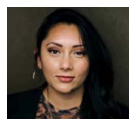
RUN TIME: 12:21

LANGUAGE: English, Korean



Nani's Kitchen

DIRECTED BY STEPHANIE SONNY HOOKER



Stephanie Sonny Hooker is a Toronto-based filmmaker of Trinidadian and British descent who has worked extensively producing feature films

(*Edging*, *Acquainted*, *This Place*), music videos, commercials, and web series. She looks forward to the continuing development on several narrative properties, including her feature film debut as a writer-director, *Wrong End of the Rainbow*.

SYNOPSIS Recently widowed Nani enjoys her freedom until her daughter, Renee, confronts her about a family secret regarding her late husband's queer identity. Nani chooses to protect this secret while navigating grief and embracing her new beginning.

PRODUCER(S): Kirthiga Rajanayagam

CAST: Leela Sithal, Nadine Bhabha

COUNTRY: Canada

PREMIERE STATUS: World

RUN TIME: 10:28

LANGUAGE: English



Prisoner

DIRECTED BY RAME IBRAHIM



Rame Ibrahim is a Palestinian-Canadian filmmaker whose work delves into displacement, politics, and the diaspora. His films have been screened

internationally, with *Prisoner* being shortlisted for the Young Director Awards at Cannes Lions. He holds an MFA from the University of British Columbia (UBC) and is an alumnus of the DOXA and VIFF mentorship programs.

SYNOPSIS *Prisoner* follows Adam, a 12-year-old refugee, confronting the unsettling reality of his father Saeed's past as a political prisoner. Set against a backdrop of intergenerational trauma, the story reveals the psychological toll that Saeed's imprisonment has left on their family.

PRODUCER(S): Rame Ibrahim, Maanvi Chowdhary

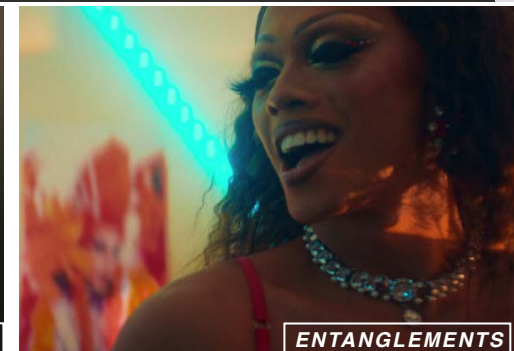
CAST: Rayyan Omar Atie, Rishan Al Agha, Hala Maghamez

COUNTRY: Canada

PREMIERE STATUS: World

RUN TIME: 15:00

LANGUAGE: Arabic, English



Queen Mother

DIRECTED BY KING LOUIE PALOMO



King Louie Palomo is a Vancouver-based queer Filipino-Canadian writer, director, and producer. His short, *Nene*, won Standout Director at Reelworld (2021) and his proof-

of-concept, *Stay*, screened at over 20 festivals, earning awards at Out on Film and Queer North. An alumnus of the CFC Director's Lab, he recently directed *Inang Reyna* and produced *Auganic* (Best Live Action Short, deadCenter 2024).

SYNOPSIS When a mother visits her son, a drag performer, a night of raw confessions forces them to confront the unhealed wounds of their past.

PRODUCER(S): Shaista Roshan, Priyanka Shailendra

CAST: Ma-Anne Dionisio, Aldrin Bundoc

COUNTRY: Canada

PREMIERE STATUS: World

RUN TIME: 13:47

LANGUAGE: English, Tagalog

SHORTS PROGRAM GENRE FEVER

FRI. OCT 17
6:00 PM

Brace yourself for a cinematic rollercoaster so goddamn dangerous, it'll blow your socks clean off—only for you to realize that you were never wearing socks to begin with. Welcome to Genre Fever...

Director Ace Kazkayasi' *Breath* will haunt viewers with a dialogue-free exploration of a woman trapped in an abusive relationship. Two small-time kidnappers face a moral dilemma in Richard Dang's *Ran Som*. If you prefer your fourth wall's broken, then you'll get a kick out of Micaela A. Lozano's *BOOM!* Speaking of which, Director Paul Persic's prodigal son homecoming is utterly absurd and heartwarming all at once, especially if you're into boomstick-wielding grandmothers.

Adrian Bobb is back and better than ever with his stunning sci-fi rebirth *Drifters*. Finally, straight outta Alberta, get ready to get your head blown clean off in Reamonn Joshee and Dallas Soonias's wild send up of retro cop shows: *Renegade Fever: Pilot*

- RICHARD PIERRE, PROGRAMMER

FILM

BOOM!
BREATH
DRIFTERS
LICHUN
RAN SOM
RENEGADE FEVER

DIRECTED BY

Micaela A. Lozano
Ace Kazkayasi
Adrian Bobb
Paul Persic
Richard Dang
Reamonn Joshee
Dallas Soonias



GENRE FEVER

BOOM!

DIRECTED BY MICAELA A. LOZANO



Micaela A. Lozano is a multidisciplinary filmmaker originally from Mexico, now based in Canada. She is known for blending psychological and emotional tension with bold, expressive cinematography. Her work explores themes of identity, personal evolution, and unconventional ways of existing in this beautiful little life.

SYNOPSIS In a desperate attempt at freedom, a couple is thrust into a dangerous situation clouded in mystery and confusion. Just as the tension escalates to irreparable heights, everything unravels into absurd comedy, breaking the fourth wall in a meta twist.

PRODUCER(S): Micaela A. Lozano

CAST: Hazel Wallace, Sydney Sabiston, Hazel Wallace, Keis Joseph

COUNTRY: Canada

PREMIERE STATUS: World

RUN TIME: 4:57

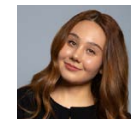
LANGUAGE: English



GENRE FEVER

Breath

DIRECTED BY ACE KAZKAYASI



Ace Kazkayasi is a Turkish writer and director based in Toronto. Starting her career as an assistant director, she quickly transitioned to directing, showcasing a distinct style and captivating storytelling abilities. In 2022, she was named a semi-finalist in the Screencraft screenplay writing competition. Ace was awarded an ARTREACH grant in 2023.

SYNOPSIS On the verge of losing her sense of self, a young woman trapped in an abusive relationship must summon the strength to break free, symbolized by the shattering of a neglected fishbowl, or risk being consumed by her captivity.

PRODUCER(S): Maytham Jbara

CAST: Kalyna Alessandra

COUNTRY: Canada

PREMIERE STATUS: World

RUN TIME: 4:00

LANGUAGE: English



GENRE FEVER

Drifters

DIRECTED BY ADRIAN BOBB



Adrian Bobb is an award-winning Toronto-based writer and director with 15 years experience in VFX. His films have screened internationally at Sitges, Fantasia, Seattle, Urbanworld, Blood in the Snow (BITS), Toronto After Dark, and Hollyshorts. Adrian is an alumnus of multiple labs run by Reelworld, Banff World Media, WarnerMedia, BITS, BIPOC TV & Film, and OYA Black Arts Coalition.

SYNOPSIS A romantic hike through the woods turns to heartbreak after a world-breaking truth leads to both death and a path to rebirth.

PRODUCER(S): Zeus Kontoyannis, Ali Mashayekhi
CAST: Matt Murray, Samora Smallwood
COUNTRY: Canada
PREMIERE STATUS: Toronto
RUN TIME: 14:57
LANGUAGE: English



GENRE FEVER

Lichun

DIRECTED BY PAUL PERSIC



Paul Persic, is an innovative, mixed Chinese Canadian filmmaker with over eight years of experience as a director, writer, editor, and cinematographer.

Driven by resilience and an unwavering passion for storytelling, Paul has served as the director for more than a dozen well-received short films, and two feature films. His dedication to the craft is fuelled by a desire to create films that evoke the same impact as those that shaped his own upbringing.

SYNOPSIS When Thomas visits his Grandmother—the one he's spent years avoiding—for Lunar New Year to make amends, he's met with a shotgun-wielding matriarch, the weight of his past (literally), and a chandelier-shattering secret that threatens to bring the whole house down.

PRODUCER(S): Paul Persic
CAST: Rochelle Avis, Bo Hung Fu
COUNTRY: Canada
PREMIERE STATUS: World
RUN TIME: 14:52
LANGUAGE: English, Mandarin



GENRE FEVER

Ran Som

DIRECTED BY RICHARD DANG



Richard Dang is a Cambodian-Canadian filmmaker, known for his guerrilla-style approach to storytelling—resulting in 20 shorts over two years. He is currently developing a documentary on Cambodian food and identity in Canada. Richard's works have screened at festivals across Canada, and he's an alumnus of the BIPOC TV & Film Directors Masterclass (2023).

SYNOPSIS Two small-time burglars kidnap a wealthy businessman's son for ransom. But when they discover the boy is a victim of abuse, they're forced into a dilemma blurring the line between criminals and protectors.

PRODUCER(S): Dila Dokuzoğlu
CAST: Mike Dara, Brendan Jacob Vitoria Tan, Eliot Dahan, Nicco Lorenzo Garcia
COUNTRY: Canada
PREMIERE STATUS: World
RUN TIME: 12:16
LANGUAGE: English



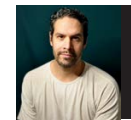
GENRE FEVER

Renegade Fever

DIRECTED BY REAMONN JOSHEE,
DALLAS SOONIAS



Reamonn Joshee is a versatile and award-winning talent in Alberta's film industry. As a writer and director, Reamonn has created award-winning shorts and has directed multiple episodes on the acclaimed series *Abracadavers* (seasons 2 and 3). He currently resides in Cochrane, Alberta, with his wife and two children.



Dallas Soonias is a multi-talented Nehiyaw/Anishinaabe actor who also writes, directs and produces his own various projects. For the 2024 Summer Olympics, Dallas produced and hosted a segment for CBC Olympics. He is registered with The Chippewas of Nawash and has close ties with his father's band, Red Pheasant.

SYNOPSIS The city is teetering on the brink of collapse as the Dagger gang escalates from petty theft to orchestrated violence. With the police paralyzed by fear, the District Attorney makes a desperate decision: reactivate the Renegade Unit—a controversial team of loose-cannon detectives who deliver justice by any means necessary.

PRODUCER(S): Monique Barrie, Griffin Cork, and Morgan Ermtter
CAST: Reamonn Joshee, Dan Ginter, Gabi Velasquez Declan O-Reilly
COUNTRY: Canada
PREMIERE STATUS: Ontario
RUN TIME: 24:05
LANGUAGE: English

SHORTS PROGRAM RETROSPECTIVE

FRI. OCT 17
8:30 PM

Reelworld has shaped the Canadian media landscape for a quarter century. As a pioneering screening platform dedicated to the work of racially diverse creators, Reelworld has provided their most critical tool, space. Space to be seen, to be heard, and to imagine. When DEI had historically meant just three letters, Reelworld was a pillar, a foundation for diverse creatives to spring forward their careers.

Over the years, Reelworld became an Oscar-qualifying festival and a festival on the list to trigger funding from CMF and Telefilm, thus challenging the regulatory status quo. Again creating space. From Music Videos, to shorts, to ACTRA shorts, the festival became a place to explore, launch, and grow, to build strength and adaptability.

This program, A Retrospective of Resilience, is a celebration of a vibrant, intergenerational community of storytellers, audiences and changemakers committed to diverse representation. This is a retrospective of resilience that reflects the "Reel world".

- ALISON WILSON-FORBES, ASSOCIATE PROGRAMMER

FILM

ANATOMY OF ASSISTANCE
I REMEMBER FOOTPRINTS
IN THE SNOW

RUBY'S TUESDAY
SOUVENIRS FROM ASIA
THE WAY IT SHOULD BE
TIME TRAVELER

DIRECTED BY

Corey Bowles
Cazhmer Downey

Supinder Wraich
Joyce Wong
Richard Dang
RT!



Anatomy of Assistance

DIRECTED BY COREY BOWLES



Cory Bowles is a multidisciplinary artist from Nova Scotia, Canada, working as a writer, choreographer, director and producer for stage, television and screen. His first feature *Black Cop* premiered at TIFF 2017, earning multiple prizes, including the John Dunning Best First Feature Award.

SYNOPSIS When 15 year-old Talia challenges the assistance envelope given to her by her school, she's suddenly thrust in a daisy chain of errors that lead her to face a larger system: growing up.

PRODUCER(S): Lauren Corber

CAST: Keeya King

Raven Dauda

Kingslee Christie

Shamier Anderson

Matthew Owen Murray

COUNTRY: Canada

YEAR RELEASED: 2013

RUN TIME: 13:00

LANGUAGE: English



I Remember Footprints In the Snow

DIRECTED BY CAZHMER DOWNEY



Cazhmer Downey is a director with over 20 years of experience in formats ranging from music videos, documentaries to TV. She has directed music videos for national and international artists such as The Backstreet Boys and Kardinal Offishall. In 2018 she retired from music videos to shift her focus to TV. Her most recent works include directing episodes of hit comedy *Shelved* (CTV) and *Murdoch Mysteries*. Cazhmer is also a dynamic storyteller, specializing in developing stories from a provocative, diverse and inclusive POV. One of her series in development, *Out of Pocket* was selected as one of 8 projects to participate in TIFF's 2023 Series Accelerator talent program. The docu-series *Sounds Black*, both written and directed by Cazhmer premiered on the History Channel in 2025.

SYNOPSIS A mother and daughter re-address events in their past that have caused a disconnect in their present relationship through an honest, transparent conversation that reveals overlooked needs and vulnerabilities in them both.

PRODUCER(S): Temilola Adebayo, Kent Donguines

CAST: Nicole Nwokolo, Lisa Michelle Cornelius

COUNTRY: Canada

YEAR RELEASED: 2021

RUN TIME: 14:8

LANGUAGE: English



Ruby's Tuesday

DIRECTED BY SUPINDER WRAICH



Supinder Wraich was born in India and raised just outside Toronto. A graduate of the CFC Conservatory, Supinder earned a Canadian Screen

Award in Emmy Award-winning digital series *Guidestones*. She also created the series *THE 410* (CBC), which was nominated for three Canadian Screen Awards.

Supinder has guest-starred on ABC's *The Good Doctor* and recurred on several series, including *Crawford* (CBC) and the award-winning CBC/HBO Max series *Sort Of*. She's currently gearing up to shoot season three of the hit *Allegiance* (CBC).

SYNOPSIS Ruby's Tuesday is a slow brewing short dramatic film, with light-hearted comedic tones which aim for the heart of everyone who has a mom that needs to loosen up a little.

PRODUCER(S): Matt Power, Supinder Wraich

CAST: Mishu Vellani, Shaun Benson Sugith Varughese, Andy McQueen

COUNTRY: Canada

YEAR RELEASED: 2017

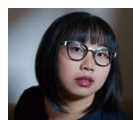
RUN TIME: 12

LANGUAGE: English



Souvenirs From Asia

DIRECTED BY JOYCE WONG



Joyce Wong is an award-winning director and writer who has been described by the LA Times as "a major talent to watch". She is known for her breakout feature, *Wexford Plaza* and has directed over 50 episodes of television on shows such as: *Baroness Von Sketch*, *Sort Of*, *The Sticky*, *Son Of A Critch*, *Workin' Moms* and more.

SYNOPSIS A witty but volatile family drama about the cultural misunderstandings within cross-cultural adoption

PRODUCER(S): S. Brent Martin

CAST: Jennifer Kim, Clemence Wong, Mairy Merkley

COUNTRY: Canada

YEAR RELEASED: 2007

RUN TIME: 12

LANGUAGE: English?



The Way It Should Be

DIRECTED BY JENNIFER PODEMSKI



Jennifer Podemski is a director, writer, producer, and actor. Hailing from Toronto but calling Barrie, Ontario, her home, Jennifer's artistic journey has been shaped by her rich Anishinaabe (First Nation) and Ashkenazi (Jewish) heritage. A registered member of Muscowpetung Saulteux Nation in Saskatchewan, Jennifer has dedicated her career to amplifying authentic Indigenous stories and perspectives through her work as a storyteller.

PRODUCER(S): Jennifer Podemski and PLEX

CAST: Mishu Vellani, Shaun Benson Sugith Varughese, Andy McQueen

COUNTRY: Canada

YEAR RELEASED: 2011

RUN TIME: 5

LANGUAGE: English



Time Traveler

DIRECTED BY RT THORNE



Visionary, award-winning filmmaker **R.T. Thorne** has emerged as one of Canada's most eclectic visual storytellers since debuting on the music video scene over a decade ago. A versatile triple threat, he is a director, screenwriter, and producer focused on telling stories that break new ground representing the unrepresented. His debut feature *40 Acres*, starring Danielle Deadwyler, premiered at TIFF 2024, was selected for Canada's Top Ten (2025) and went on to screen internationally at the Red Sea Film Festival and SXSW before a North American release with Magnolia Pictures. Known for his bold photographic eye, and character-first approach, R.T. has directed acclaimed series for Netflix, Disney, Amazon and CBC, including the Emmy-nominated *The Porter* and Hulu's *Utopia Falls*. With multiple Canadian Screen Awards, DGC nominations, and as Playback's Director of the year in 2023, R.T. continues to develop stories from diverse cultural perspectives.

SYNOPSIS A man with amnesia is forced to remember his past because of an unexpected visit from an old friend.

PRODUCER(S): RT Thorne, Stephanie Hooker, Huse Madhavji

CAST: Huse Madhavji, Emmanuel Kabongo

COUNTRY: Canada

YEAR RELEASED: 2015

RUN TIME: 15

LANGUAGE: English

Reelworld Festival Awards

Reelworld is proud to present cash prizes to the recipients of this year's Festival Awards, including \$15,000 for Outstanding Feature Film and \$10,000 for Outstanding Short Film.

Our gratitude to the 2025 Reelworld Film Festival Jurors for their time and expertise in selecting this year's award recipients, and all the audience members who rate the films they watch and contribute to the selection of the Reelworld Audience Choice Award.

REELWORLD VISIONARY AWARD
REELWORLD AWARD OF EXCELLENCE
AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD FOR
FEATURE FILM



FEATURE FILMS

Outstanding Actress
 Outstanding Actor
 Outstanding Director
 Outstanding Writer
 Outstanding Cinematographer
 Outstanding Producer
 Outstanding Feature Film

SHORT FILMS

Outstanding Actress
 Outstanding Actor
 Outstanding Director
 Outstanding Writer
 Outstanding Cinematographer
 Outstanding Producer
 Outstanding Short Film

★

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★



2025 Reelworld Award of Excellence

The Reelworld Award of Excellence honours individuals whose decades of creative excellence in film and series led to more authentic stories being told on screen, inspiring new generations of young artists in the process.

LIVE AT THE REELWORLD SUMMIT!

Reelspeak Luncheon
and Fireside Chat

**OCT 14, 1-1.45PM
COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT
DOWNTOWN TORONTO**

SPONSORED BY



CLARK JOHNSON

Screenwriter, actor,
director, playwright

Clark Johnson is an American-Canadian actor and director known for his work on series like *Homicide: Life on the Street* and *The Wire*, as well as the Amazon comedy *Alpha House*. He began his career in football before transitioning to film, working as a driver for Lee Majors and contributing to David Cronenberg's projects. Johnson began directing in 1997 on *Homicide* and has worked on notable shows, including *The Shield*, *Sleeper Cell*, and *The Walking Dead*. His film career includes directing HBO's *Boycott* and feature films like *S.W.A.T.* and *The Sentinel*, with his latest project, *Percy*, filmed in Manitoba. In 2016, he made his Broadway debut in *God Bless You, Mr. Rosewater* alongside James Earl Jones. Currently, Johnson is a series regular on Marvel's *Daredevil: Born Again* and recently finished filming the indie movie *Late Fame* with Willem Dafoe.

2025 Reelworld Visionary Award

The Reelworld Visionary Award recognizes individuals whose lifetime of work behind the scenes has shaped the Canadian media industry. Through advocacy, entrepreneurship and leadership, they have contributed to advancing our industry and making it a more inclusive and equitable place for all.

LIVE AT THE REELWORLD SUMMIT!

Reelspeak Luncheon
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COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT
DOWNTOWN TORONTO**

SPONSORED BY



PREM GILL

CEO, Creative BC

Prem Gill is the Chief Executive Officer of Creative BC, the provincial agency that supports the growth of B.C.'s diverse creative industries—including motion picture, music, digital media, and publishing.

A recognized sector leader, Prem has been named one of The Most Powerful Women in Canadian Entertainment by The Hollywood Reporter, featured in Vancouver Magazine's Power 50, and honoured with the Community Catalyst Award by the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade.

She brings over two decades of experience in media and entertainment to her role, previously leading original programming at TELUS, where she launched initiatives like STORYHIVE and Optik Local to support emerging creators.

A passionate advocate for Canadian talent, Prem serves on the boards of The Bell Fund and BC Tech Association, chairs the Association of Provincial and Territorial Funding Agencies, and sits on the City of Vancouver Mayor's Business Growth Task Force.



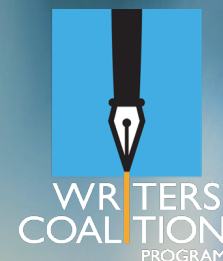
PRESS PLAY

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2025 Reelworld Trailblazers

Each year the Trailblazer Awards recognize outstanding achievements by racially diverse professionals in the Canadian media and entertainment industry. These 6 remarkable individuals inspire others and blaze a trail of excellence through their constant efforts to improve and diversify our vibrant film and television industry.



DALMAR ABUZEIDL | ACTOR

Dalmar Abuzeidl is a Canadian actor who brings emotional depth and authenticity to screen roles spanning drama and thrillers. From his breakout on *Degrassi* to award-winning work in *Anne with an E*, he champions complex, underrepresented characters. His recent projects spotlight his range as both a leading man and a dynamic ensemble performer.



CALEB CHAN | MUSIC COMPOSER

Caleb Chan is an award-winning composer and producer known for his work with Netflix, Nickelodeon, CBC, and DreamWorks, including *My Little Pony: The Movie*. He blends orchestral and contemporary styles, crafting rich cinematic storytelling and has created nearly 250 songs, including arrangements for Beyoncé and SZA in *Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story*.



MRINAL DESAI | CINEMATOGRAPHER

Mrinal is a Toronto-based cinematographer known for his award-winning and Emmy-nominated work on films like *Slumdog Millionaire* and *Court*. His documentaries, broadcast globally, reflect a humanistic lens on urgent narratives. Trained in India, he blends vérité and stylized drama, capturing stories with intimacy and visual poetry.



HUMBERLY GONZÁLEZ | ACTOR

Humberly González is a rising star known for her roles in Netflix's *The Waterfront* and *Ginny & Georgia*. She appeared with Michelle Yeoh in *Star Trek: Section 31* and stars in the hit game *Star Wars: Outlaws*, earning the Best Performance award at the Canadian Game Awards. Born in Venezuela, she is a graduate of the CFC and the National Theatre School of Canada.



KANIEHTIIO HORN | ACTRESS, WRITER, PRODUCER, AND DIRECTOR

Kaniehtiio Horn showcases her creative versatility as an actress, writer, producer, and director whose work centers on Indigenous identity and emotional complexity. Her feature directorial debut, *SEEDS*, premiered at the 2024 Toronto International Film Festival and earned multiple Canadian Screen Award nominations. Horn also starred in *Rutherford Falls* and will appear in FX's *The Lowdown*, as well as voice Wynona Whitecloud in the animated sitcom *Grimsburg*.



GAYLE YE | CINEMATOGRAPHER

Gayle Ye is an Emmy-award-winning director of photography, recognized for their work at Cannes and Tribeca. Notable projects include *Late Bloomer* and *Paying For It*. In 2021, Gayle became the first queer gender-fluid person of colour to win a Daytime Emmy, and in 2025, two Canadian Screen Awards.



25th Years



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REELWORLD SUMMIT

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DAY 1

Tuesday, October 14, 2025

8:00-9:00am	Breakfast Courtyard Foyer
9:00-9:15am	Opening Remarks Courtyard Ballroom
9:20-9:40am	Keynote Speech with Karin Chien Courtyard Ballroom
10:00-10:45am	Empowering Actors: Strategies to Safeguard Your Career Amid the Rise of AI Courtyard Ballroom
10:00-11:00am	Karin Chien Talkback (Private Session) Spadina Room <i>(INVITE ONLY)</i>
10:50-11:05am	NETWORKING BREAK Courtyard Foyer
11:00am-12:30pm	FACE2FACE Group Meetings: Session 1 Alexander Room
11:10-11:55am	Vertical Content 101 Courtyard Ballroom
12:00-12:30pm	Next Up Courtyard Ballroom

1:00-1:45pm	Reelspeak Award Luncheon Fireside Chat with Reelworld Award of Excellence Recipient Clark Johnson Courtyard Ballroom
2:00-3:30pm	FACE2FACE Group Meetings: Session 2 Alexander Room
2:00-2:45pm	From Script to Screen: The Role of Business Affairs Courtyard Ballroom
2:40-3:10pm	Shaping the Industry: CISF Insights & Report Launch Spadina Room
3:00-3:45pm	Revolutionizing Revenue: Meet VEEUU and the Future of Content Monetization Courtyard Ballroom
4:00-6:00pm	CLOSING RECEPTION Courtyard Foyer

DAY 2

Wednesday, October 15, 2025

8:00-9:00am	Breakfast Courtyard Foyer
9:00-10:30am	FACE2FACE 1-on-1: Session 1 Alexander Room

9:00-10:00am	Opening Remarks Courtyard Ballroom
10:00-10:45am	Branding yourself as an Actor - Dos and Don'ts Courtyard Ballroom
10:45-11:15am	Networking Tools with Hollywood Suite Spadina Room
10:55-11:40am	Embracing Volume Production for Creative Innovation Courtyard Ballroom
11:00am-12:30pm	FACE2FACE 1-on-1: Session 2 Alexander Room
11:30am-12:30pm	WGC & Agents: What Writers Need to Know Spadina Room
11:30am-12:30pm	Behind-the-Scenes of the CMF MADE NOUS Campaign Courtyard Ballroom
1:00-1:45pm	Reelspeak Award Luncheon Fireside Chat with Reelworld Visionary Award Recipient Prem Gill
2:00-3:30pm	FACE2FACE 1-on-1: Session 3 Alexander Room
2:00-2:45pm	Tracey Deer Masterclass Courtyard Ballroom

3:30-5:00pm	Canadian Racial Screen Leadership Collective (Private Session) Spadina Room Session <i>(INVITE ONLY)</i>
4:00-5:30pm	FACE2FACE 1-on-1: Session 4 Alexander Room
4:00-4:45pm	So You've Got a Positive Decision Letter from Telefilm Canada, Now What? Courtyard Ballroom
4:45-6:45pm	CLOSING RECEPTION Courtyard Foyer

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PLATFORM FOR BLACK, INDIGENOUS AND
PEOPLE OF COLOUR CREATIVES, CREWS,
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DIGITAL DAY

Monday, October 20th

Filmmaker Distributor Mixer

12:00 - 1:00 PM EST

Airmeet

New Critics, New Perspective Panel

2:00 PM EST

YouTube Channel: Reelworld Screen Institute

2025 Reelworld Trailblazer Panel

4:00 PM EST

YouTube Channel: Reelworld Screen Institute

Festival Alumni Mixer

6:00 - 7:30 PM EST

Airmeet

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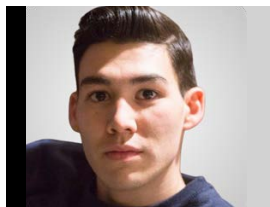
rbc.com/peopleandplanet



2025 Reelworld Emerging 20 (E20) Program

The **Reelworld Emerging 20 Program** is tailored to support writers and is split into two specific streams: Series and Film. There are ten participants in each stream, and each participant is paired with a story editor who helps polish their screenplays into a final draft over the course of the six-month program. The E20 Program wraps with one-on-one pitch sessions designed to hone their pitching skills and expand their professional network.

FILM



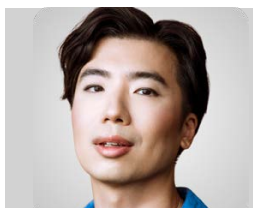
AIDAN CHEEATOW
Project: *Scar Patterns*



ALEX ESKANDARKHAH
Project: *Ain't No Tellin*



AMIR ZARGARA
Project: *A Good Day Will Come*



CHASE LO
Project: *Glimmer*



JAZBA SINGH
Project: *Eating the Other*



JULIAN RITCHIE
Project: *Untitled*



KALPIT PATEL
Project: *Butterfly on High Hills*



KEISHA MONIQUE SIMPSON
Project: *Hummingbird*



PAUL AIHOSHI
Project: *The Sushi Family*



ROANN ENRIQUEZ
Project: *Undertow*

SERIES



ANUMPAM KANT VERMA
Project: *Houses of Horror*



BREE ISLAND
Project: *âniskê*



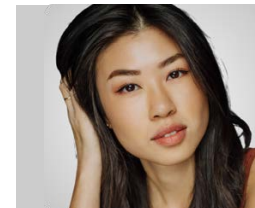
DELLA HADDOCK
Project: *Burn, Baby*



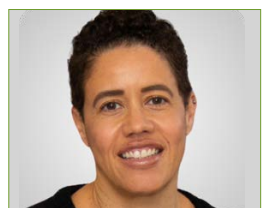
FLEX ALEO
Project: *MBA*



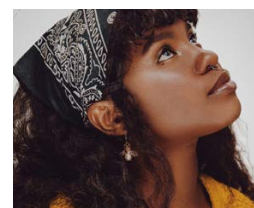
HILSON ROSE
Project: *Unravel*



JACKIE WONG
Project: *The Cause*



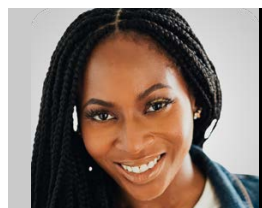
NIKKI MARTIN
Project: *Nova*



ONYEKA ODUH
Project: *Be Kind, F*ck Off!*



RYAN CUNNINGHAM
Project: *Traditional Transplantation*



YEMIE SONUGA
Project: *Sexploration*

Reelworld Producer Program

The **Reelworld Producer Program** is a four-month program designed for emerging producers looking to build their careers in television. Participants will gain a practical understanding of the business side of the industry, including how to form a corporation, retain intellectual property rights, option scripts, draft deal memos, and select key creatives such as casting directors.

Participants will receive hands-on support to develop pitch materials, practice pitching, and review their projects with industry professionals. Also, they will have the opportunity to pitch to broadcast executives and may apply to markets through Reelworld's Market Ready Program.

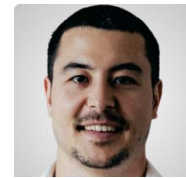
2025 REELWORLD PRODUCERS



KRISHNA
ANABERI



ELISHA BAPTISTE



VINCENT BLAIS



JESSICA BROWN



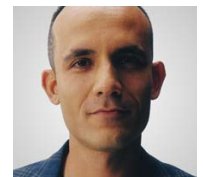
NOÉMIE
FERRON



SOBIKA
GANESHALINGAM



PATRICE
JECROIS



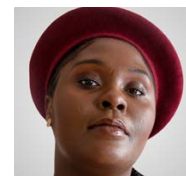
SINA
NAZARIAN



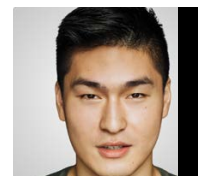
EMAN PATHAN



VAISHNAVI
SAMBHUS



TEMI
SHOBOWALE



JEREMY XU

Jump start your producing career.

Apply to the

Reelworld Producers Program

presented by Bell Media.

www.Reelworld.ca

BellMedia

Reelworld Market Ready

Reelworld's **Market Ready** initiative, in partnership with Warner Bros. Discovery Access Canada, equips Reelworld alumni with the training and access needed to navigate major industry markets, including Prime Time, Cannes, Banff, TIFF, Content Canada, and Content London. These markets offer vital opportunities to pitch projects, establish industry connections, and enhance visibility.

Selected participants undergo a two-month intensive preparation program that covers pitching, sales, financing, marketing, and networking. All pitch materials are refined, and participants are coached to engage in high-level industry conversations confidently. Support for travel, accommodation, and passes may be available. The goal is to help participants advance their projects, build key industry relationships, and strengthen their long-term career trajectory.

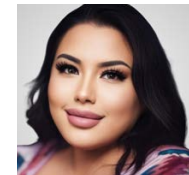
2025 MARKET READY BANFF DOV



PRANEET
AKILLA



FLEX ALEO



JESSICA
BROWN



PATRICIA
CHICA



DAVID COX



BERNARD GRAY



PATRICE
JECROIS



MONIQUEA
MARION



LEILA
KHALILZADEH



ARSHAD KHAN



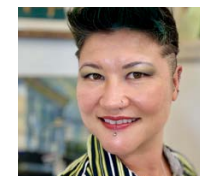
NAUZANIN
KNIGHT



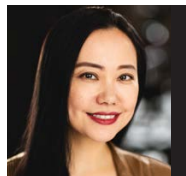
MAGDI OMAR



ADRIAN
NEBLETT



TAMIKO POTTS



MELODY
SHANG 89



Shape Your Story Here.

We congratulate all the nominees and celebrate the breadth of talent across Canada.



2025 MARKET READY PRIMETIME



ADRIAN
NEBLETT



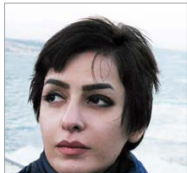
DESIREE
COUTORE



KATHLYN ROSE
GARDINER



ALI KELLOUGH



LEILA
KHALILZADEH



JESSICA TO

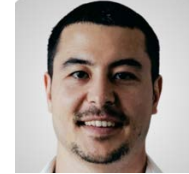
2025 MARKET READY TIFF



KRISHNA
ANABERI



ELISHA
BAPTISTE



VINCENT BLAIS-
SHIOKAWA



JESSICA BROWN



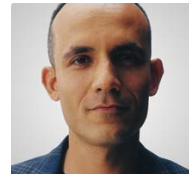
NOÉMIE
FERRON



SOBIKA
GANESHALINGAM



PATRICE
JECROIS



SINA
NAZARIAN



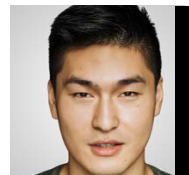
EMAN PATHAN



VAISHNAVI
SAMBHUS



TEMI
SHOBOWALE



JEREMY XU

Access Reelworld Wage Subsidy Program

The **Access Reelworld Wage Subsidy Program** supports the hiring of mid-career professionals who identify as Black, Indigenous or as Persons of Colour. The program provides wage subsidies for mid-level and senior professionals, covering a six-month, full-time position. These placements are designed to offer meaningful industry experience, mentorship, and skill development.

This program is made possible through the Changing Narratives Fund administered by the Canada Media Fund (CMF) on behalf of the Government of Canada.

Introducing the 2025-2026 participating companies and selected participants:



BLINK49
STUDIOS

BLINK49 STUDIOS

Jasleen Powar



**FRONT STREET
PICTURES**

Dianne Wulf



**MUSE
ENTERTAINMENT**

Frances Leigh



les films
re:zolution
pictures
**REZOLUTION
PICTURES**

Angela Hanna Goulene

Reelworld makes more voices heard.

Blue Ant believes that diversity is vital to our industry.
We celebrate Reelworld Film Festival+Summit,
which shines a spotlight on Indigenous and
racialized creators and their stories.

 **blue ant**

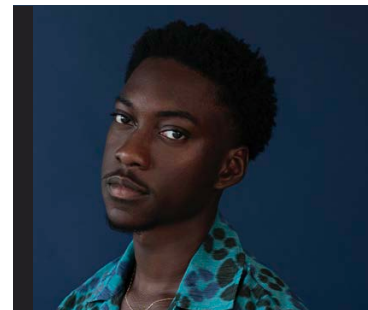
CONGRATULATIONS to REELWORLD

*on 25 years of championing diversity and
inclusion in the Canadian screen industry.*

NBCUniversal

Reelworld Directors Immersion Program

Through a partnership with NBCUniversal, the Future of Storytellers Program spotlights one filmmaker from the Reelworld Directors Immersion Program's 2024 cohort. This year, director Ivan Ossa was selected to film and edit behind-the-scenes content in collaboration with Canada's Walk of Fame (CWF) to highlight the goals of the Future Storyteller Initiative.



IVAN OSSA

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
NBCUniversal

Reelworld Reframe: Women in Leadership

Reelworld Reframe: Women in Leadership is a new initiative dedicated to strengthening the presence of Black, Indigenous, Asian, South Asian, and Women of Colour in leadership roles within Canada's screen industry. Working with unions, guilds, and industry associations, the project looks at the barriers that exist, gathers input from communities, and develops practical strategies for change.

This work includes forming committees within key industry bodies, analyzing research on inequities, and developing policy recommendations that address structural obstacles. The goal is to create a Canada where diverse women can take on leadership positions and contribute fully to shaping the future of our national film and television.

CMF Made Nous

What Makes A Story Canadian?

That's the question at the heart of this documentary. While George Stroumboulopoulos goes on a cross-country journey talking to Canadians about the stories that made us, award-winning filmmaker Gavin Seal leads a BTS crew of Reelworld alumni as they sit down with some of Canada's biggest stars, filmmakers, and digital content creators who are redefining what it means to tell Canadian stories today.

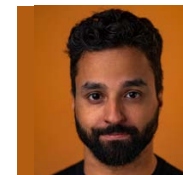
Is it the talent in front of the camera? The creative minds behind it? Or the ownership of intellectual property that determines a story's national identity? Through candid conversations, this film examines the evolving landscape of Canadian storytelling across film, television, and digital platforms.

Featuring prominent voices including Supinder Wraich from CBC's *Allegiance*, Gia Sandhu from *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds*, multi-CSA award-winning actor and filmmaker Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers, content creator Tope Babalola, Gillian McChercher, Mayumi Yoshida, Ian Bawa, Tristin Greyeyes and many more, the documentary reveals how today's most exciting storytellers are challenging traditional narratives in this country.

CREW



GAËLLE ESSOO
Senior Manager,
Growth and Inclusion,
French Market, CMF



GAVIN SEAL



**KATHY-ANN
THOMAS**



25 Years



ACTRA Toronto is proud to support Reelworld and their commitment to developing, nurturing, and celebrating Canadian talent from Black, Indigenous and People of Colour communities.

