



REELWORLD CALLS ON THE CANADIAN INDUSTRY TO COMMIT AS MENTORS FOR THEIR KEY INITIATIVES SUPPORTING DIVERSE TALENT

"Show me a successful individual and I'll show you someone who had real positive influences in his or her life. I don't care what you do for a living—if you do it well I'm sure there was someone cheering you on or showing the way. A mentor." — Denzel Washington

For more information on how to become a **Reelworld Screen Institute Mentor**, please [click here](#).
Link to **mentor application form**: <https://bit.ly/3Lo0BXX>

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APRIL 28, 2022 (TORONTO, ON) - The **Reelworld Screen Institute** has been fostering the creative talents of Black, Indigenous, Asian, South Asian, and People of Colour across Canada for over 22 years through a multitude of specialized programs. One of the key driving forces behind their continuing success comes from the generosity of industry leaders who offer their time and expertise by stepping into these valuable mentorship roles. The momentum has been building for more than two decades, and while there have been many victories to date, there is more work to be done.

More than ever, with the focus on authentic storytelling front and centre, Reelworld is inviting the industry at large to step up and commit to helping advance emerging talent in mid-level careers. The challenges and barriers that diverse talent has faced have made it difficult for many of them to move into more experienced roles.

"Mentorship has been instrumental to my career growth in a number of ways, but none as important as this: helping me believe that becoming a filmmaker wasn't just possible, it was absolutely achievable," shared **Sasha Leigh Henry, Director and Chair of Reelworld Screen Institute**. "Mentors like Aleya Young (director, *Baroness Von Sketch Show*), Randall Okita (producer, *Bitches Love Brunch*), and R.T. Thorne (director, *The Porter*) have helped me sharpen my skills, open doors that were otherwise closed, and become more mentally prepared to navigate the industry successfully. There's no doubt that their support has made an impact on where I am today in my career."

The key to success for Black, Indigenous, Asian, South Asian, and People of Colour in Canada's screen industries is mentorships which can cultivate a positive and impactful change that is needed within the industry.

Throughout the year, in addition to its annual Film Festival October 12th - 18th, the Reelworld Screen Institute's calendar is chock-full of programs designed to elevate, guide, support and inspire young budding talents in a variety of industry fields including directing, producing and writing. From the long-standing [Emerging 20](#) (E20) to the [Black](#)



Entrepreneurs Program which recently announced the 16 participants chosen for its inaugural year, the need to fulfill these mentorship roles is ongoing and growing.

“Equitable representation within Canada’s audiovisual space is needed to progress the industry forward and Reelworld is dedicated to removing barriers for creatives of colour. Not only are our training programs all free to attend, but we build mentorship into all of our programs to ensure that our members have the best chance of success,” said **Emily-Jane Williams, Director of Development at Reelworld**. “We are so grateful to our mentors and try to make the experience an enriching one for them as well. Many of our mentors return year after year, impressed with the quality of the projects and eager to seek out “new to them” artists and developing talent.”

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Reelworld Screen Institute

Reelworld was founded in 2000 by award-winning actress and producer Tonya Williams to advance opportunities for Canadians who are Black, Indigenous, Asian, South Asian, and People of Colour in the screen industries by providing professional development and advocating for racial equity in Canadian content and production. Reelworld Screen Institute, a non-profit, provides training programs and presents the acclaimed Reelworld Film Festival, which celebrates stories by racialized Canadians. Providing access to opportunities is core to Reelworld, and Access Reelworld is Canada’s leading hiring platform for racialized crews and talent. Reelworld Foundation, a registered charity, is transforming the industry by creating mechanisms that hold systems accountable for greater equity.

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