



Reelworld founder Tonya Williams to receive 2024 Changemaker Award from the Canadian Academy

Toronto, March 19, 2024 - Reelworld Screen Institute is pleased to announce that its founder and executive director Tonya Williams is being presented with the 2024 Changemaker Award by The Academy of Canadian Cinema & Television (the Canadian Academy).

The Changemaker Award recognizes and honours those in the media community in Canada who are using their voice or platform to call out systemic racism and discrimination, supporting and amplifying the voices of those who are actively engaged in anti-racist work, and seeking structural transformations in media, film, and television in Canada that promote values of equity and inclusion.

“I am truly honoured to be receiving this award! My life's work has always been about breaking down barriers, first as an actress and then through Reelworld,” said Tonya. “I feel privileged that I have been able to use my platform to help others, to make systemic change in our industry, to open doors and shed a light on the challenges that so many equity-deserving and underrepresented communities have struggled with for decades. Thank you Academy for creating this award, and for valuing how important it is not only to create content but to create an inclusive working environment for those in front of and behind our screens.”

Frustrated by the lack of racial diversity on and behind Canadian screens, Tonya founded Reelworld in 2000, to advance the opportunities for Black, Indigenous, Asian, South Asian, and People of Colour, making her instrumental in creating systemic change in the Canadian screen industry. Over the past 48 years, she has contributed to the screen industry in both Canada and the US. She has been recognized as one of the 100 most influential Black Canadians by Afroglobal Television for three consecutive years, including the current year.

Tonya is among the first set of 2024 Special Award recipients announced by the Canadian Academy, presented to trailblazing individuals within Canada's vibrant screen-based industries. All of this year's Special Award honourees will be recognized for their outstanding contributions and successes during Canadian Screen Week 2024, taking place in Toronto from Sunday, May 26 through to Saturday, June 1.



"Tonya Williams is an iconic force in our industry - fighting for change and equality while maintaining a thriving career and creating institutions for stories to be told for years to come," said Tammy Frick, CEO, Academy of Canadian Cinema & Television. "She is the true definition of a change maker, and we are thrilled to celebrate her and all the important work she has accomplished at the 2024 Canadian Screen Awards as this year's Changemaker Award recipient."

"On behalf of the Canadian Academy's Board of Directors, I would like to extend my sincerest congratulations to these outstanding pillars of our industry," said Thomas Santram, Chair, Academy of Canadian Cinema & Television, in the organization's official announcement. "These remarkable individuals embody the term "excellence" with their unwavering dedication, talent, and creativity in everything they do, and we eagerly await the opportunity to honour them during Canadian Screen Week 2024."

Read more about Tonya and the other Special Award honourees [here](#).

About Reelworld

Reelworld was founded in 2000 by award-winning actress and producer Tonya Williams to advance opportunities for Indigenous people and Canadians who are Black, 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. The festival has expanded to include a two-day Summit to shine a spotlight on issues around diversity, inclusion and equity in the Canadian screen landscape. 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. www.reelworld.ca



Reelworld Screen Institute:

Website: www.reelworld.ca

X: [@reelworldfilm](https://twitter.com/reelworldfilm)

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YouTube: [@reelworldscreeninstitute](https://www.youtube.com/reelworldscreeninstitute)

Hashtag: #reelworld #reelworldscreeninstitute #reelworldfilmfestival

Tonya Williams:

X: [@imtonyawilliams](https://twitter.com/imtonyawilliams)

Instagram: [@imtonyawilliams](https://www.instagram.com/imtonyawilliams)

Facebook: [@imtonyawilliams](https://www.facebook.com/imtonyawilliams)

Hashtag: #tonyawilliams

Media Contacts:

Pahull Bains | Communications Director pahull@reelworld.ca

Natalie Nadeen | Communications & Public Engagement Manager natalie@reelworld.ca