

WIDC 2017...20th Anniversary Year In Summary

President's Report

"When WIDC was first presented at The Banff Centre in 1997 we knew something important had been created. We had no idea how important and relevant WIDC would still be twenty years later." ~

**Carol Whiteman,
President & CEO**

This fiscal WIDC continued to offer professional leadership and story development, awards and production support for Canadian women screen directors. As a result, **23 Canadian women directors** directly benefited from WIDC offerings. These director participants were also supported by some of Canada's most important service and equipment rentals companies, and immersed in the opportunities provided through collaborations with festivals in St John's, Toronto, Vancouver, Winnipeg, and Whistler. Here are some highlights.

June 2016, WIDC hosted our annual **Launch Event** in Toronto this year focusing on launching our 20th Anniversary, with **22 director alumnae** present for the event. The **Annual General Meeting** was held in Toronto, hosted at the Gladstone Hotel. WIDC alumna Mary M. Frymire continues as a Board member taking on the role of Secretary / Treasurer as does E. Jane Thompson who serves as the WIDC Director Alumnae Rep. Kerry Stauffer represents The Banff Centre, and Heather Allin represents ACTRA, with Brian Gromoff (emeritus), all working within a stream-lined CWWA Board led by President & CEO, Carol Whiteman.

OUTREACH: The **WIDC Career Advancement Module (CAM)** supported **12 director participants** in total at the Female Eye Film Festival (June 2016), St John's International Women's Film (October 2016), and the Vancouver International Women In Film Festival (March 2017) with 4 participants at each festival respectively. Facilitated by WIDC Producer, Carol Whiteman, mentors included John Dippong and Dan Lyon (Telefilm), John Galway (HGF), Leslie Grant (Temple Street Productions), Gosia Kamela (Bell Media). Master classes on pitching were led by Marina Cordoni (MCE), and Andra Sheffer (IPF) led two 'Demystifying Web Series Roundtables' for participants in Toronto and Vancouver. Alumnae Mentor Directors included Lulu Keating, Ruth Lawrence, and Karen Lam. CAM Director participants included: *Geraldine Carr, Eva Colmers, Gloria Ui Young Kim, Winnifred Jong, Emily Bridger, Wanda Nolan, Melanie Oates, Carolyn Saunders, Paige Boudreau, Jessica Bradford, Brit Kewin and Shannon Walsh.*

September 2016, also as part of our **OutReach** initiatives, WIDC attended the **Toronto International Film Festival**, and co-presented three successful women-focused events. With **WIFT-Toronto**, WIDC co-presented the film *The 4%: Hollywood's Gender Problem* as well as the *Women In Film Roundtable session*. WIDC also spearheaded a first ever collaboration amongst **12 North American women-focused industry organizations** to co-present an industry cocktail hour at TIFF for industry delegates.

In collaboration with the 1st Weekend Club, a new **WIDC Channel on Canada Screens** was launched in fall 2016 at a special screening of WIDC FF Award winner *Siobhan Devine's The Birdwatcher*. WIDC alumnae will curate the channel of Canadian women-directed feature films that will be paired with NFB shorts. Siobhan was spotlighted as the channel's first curator.

WIDC has been active on Facebook and Twitter this past year. Director Alumnae post updates on the private WIDC Director Alumnae page on a regular basis. In March 2017 the **WIDC Alumnae Directory** was launched as one of the WIDC 20th Anniversary projects. **80% of WIDC alumnae directors** have active profiles in the directory.

Plans are to launch the WIDC 20th Anniversary **Sharing Authentic Voices** initiative, funded by the Canada Council for the Arts, October 2017. Following feedback from our 2014 WIDC Summit, this initiative is aimed at reaching out to regional communities outside the usual centers where WIDC is offered.

STORY DEVELOPMENT: November/December 2016, the second edition of the **Story & Leadership** was delivered in Vancouver to eight women directors developing fiction feature films and web series. Carol Whiteman facilitated S&L, and lead mentors included Dr. Carolyn Mamchur (Instructor), Linda Coffey (Mentor Story Editor) and Lori Triolo (Mentor Actor). WIDC director alumnae were invited to be peer mentors participating in panels and other workshop sessions. Siobhan Devine (Alumnae Mentor Director) mentored at the casting workshop. Rachel Talalay (Mentor Director), Katrin Bowen (Alumnae Mentor Director) and Amy

Belling (Mentor DOP) participated on a panel on the Director/DOP relationship. Blocking for camera sessions were supported by IATSE 669 cinematographer Amy Belling and filmmaker, Katrin Bowen. UBCP/ACTRA actor/filmmaker Garwin Sanford volunteered instruction on action and fight choreography. A generous acting ensemble of 11 ACTRA and UBCP/ACTRA members (*Sofia Banzhaf, Garrett Black, Evelyn Chew, Patrick Currie, Robinne Fanfair, Mary Galloway, Karen Gartner, Mia Fiona Kut, Jenny Mitchell, Dimitris Vantis, Bruno Verdoni*), workshopped the directors' scripts (2 web series and 6 feature films) by director participants: *Virginia Abramovich, Kate Green, Gloria Ui Young Kim, Winnifred Jong, Melanie Oates, Rama Rau, Madison Thomas and Shelley Thompson*.

The **WIDC Whistler Film Festival Industry Immersion** was the culmination of the face-to-face portion of Story & Leadership, offering the director participants full passes to attend festival Summit events and screenings as well as one to one meetings with additional investors, producers and distributors. The directors were prepped for the festival by generous industry experts, Anne Wheeler (Mentor Director), Lael McCall (Principia Productions), and they met with Lauren Davis, Carole Brabbant and Michel Pradier (Telefilm Canada), John Galway (Harold Greenberg Fund), as well as Linda Hay and Lizzy Karp (Telus Optik Local), WIDC alumna Karen Lam (*Mythos*, web series) and Andra Sheffer (IPF) who sponsored a 'Demystifying Web Series Roundtable'.

January 2017, the directors were guided in selecting among a menu of activities to advance their stories with Mentor Story Editor, Linda Coffey. Those who chose to fine tune their project one-sheets and synopses, have been able to use them in their subsequent funding submissions. Those that received feedback on their full scripts have successfully submitted them to Broadcasters, Script Competitions, and funding agencies.

AWARDS: At Whistler Film Festival's women's power breakfast at the top of Whistler Mountain, WIDC presented *Gloria Ui Young Kim* with the 2016 **WIDC Feature Film Award** for her debut feature, *Debra and Mona*. **WIDC's Telefilm MicroBudget Nominees** were *Shelley Thompson* (*Dawn, Her Dad, and the Tractor*, feature film) and *Winnifred Jong* (*Tokens*, digital production) and as part of their follow up mentorships from the S&L, WIDC helped them fine-tune their project proposals, which earned each funding from the MicroBudget program.

WIDC ALUMNAE UPDATES: WIDC Alumnae continued to make us proud this fiscal, earning **over 100 nominations and awards** for their work. In **television series directing**: *Stephanie Morgenstern* directed the two-hour series finale of her hit CBC series *X Company*; *Alison Reid* (*Heartland, Saving Hope*), *Renuka Jayapalan* (*Murdoch Mysteries*), *Jordan Canning* (*Saving Hope, This Hour Has 22 Minutes*), *Deanne Foley* (*Republic of Doyle*) directed episodes respectively. **WIDC Award-winners**, *Jordan Canning's Suck It up* premiered at the 2017 Slamdance Festival, and *Kathleen Hepburn's Never Steady, Never Still* earned a distribution deal with Soda Pictures. And *Ann Marie Fleming's* animated feature *Window Horses* has sweep across the globe winning multiple awards and accolades.

We are extremely grateful to all of our sponsors and collaborators for the success of WIDC. The success of our alumnae is due in no small part to the consistent and ongoing confidence our shown through those important relationships. Here's to connecting with the 220 director alumnae across Canada and celebrating their successes this coming fiscal!

Respectfully submitted,



Carol Whiteman
CWWA President & CEO

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