

**WIDC**  
Women In the Director's Chair



28 CSA Nominations  
for WIDC alumnae & their projects  
**CONGRATULATIONS!**

*Kathleen Hepburn, **Never Steady, Never Still** (8 nominations)*

*Sherry White, **Maudie** (7 nominations)*

*Anita Doron, **The Breadwinner** (6 nominations)*

*Stephanie Morgenstern, **X Company** (3 nominations)*

*Rebecca Gibson, Madison Thomas, **Taken** (2 nominations)*

*Rama Rau, **League of Exotic Dancers** (1 nomination)*

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# 2017-2018 Annual Report

**Creative Women Workshops Association (CWWA)**

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## WIDC 2018... Year In Summary

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*"Shout it from the rooftops! We are so grateful for your contributions. I learned so much .... I felt like there is room for my voice in Canada."*

– **Lindsey Connell**, director participant, Career Advancement Module (CAM)

*"Being with the group of like-minded women directors all supporting each other was such a great feeling."* ~ **Sandi Gisbert**, director participant, Story & Leadership

This fiscal 2017-18, 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 that were also supported by some of Canada's most important agencies, unions, guilds, service and equipment rentals companies (see list at [www.widc.ca/resources](http://www.widc.ca/resources)), from coast to coast. Here are some highlights.

The **Annual General Meeting** was held in St John's, NL. Regular business of annual reporting was undertaken. During Board elections, all directors remained, except E. Jane Thompson, Thank you, Jane for four years of thoughtful and dedicated service on behalf of women directors in Canada.

**OUTREACH:** The **WIDC Career Advancement Module (CAM)** supported **11 director participants**, at Female Eye Film Festival (June 2017), St John's

International Women's Film (October 2017), and Vancouver International Women In Film Festival (March 2018). Facilitated by WIDC Producer, Carol Whiteman, industry guests included John Dippong, Lori McCurdy, and Dan Lyon (Telefilm), Nan McDonald (Royal Bank); 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 Director Lulu Keating led mini-master classes in St John's. CAM Director participants included: *Virginia Abramovich, Katia Café-Febrissy, Elizabeth Lazebnik, Kerry Gamberg, Chris Ross, Christina Ienna, Lorna Kirk, Laura Adkin, Lindsey Connell, Vernonika Kurz, and Alayna Silverberg*, each received 3 hours of post-CAM coaching.

September 2017, also as part of our **OutReach** initiatives, WIDC attended the **Toronto International Film Festival** for the screening of WIDC Feature Film Award winner *Kathleen Hepburn's Never Steady, Never Still*, as well as the Canadian Screen Awards where alumnae and their projects were nodded for 27 awards.

In collaboration with the 1<sup>st</sup> Weekend Club, the **WIDC-curated Channel on Canada Screens** focused on *Ana Valine (Sitting on the Edge of Marlene)* and *Ann Marie Fleming (Window Horses)*. WIDC alumnae curate the channel of Canadian women-directed feature films that are paired with NFB shorts.

This past year WIDC has been active on social media with nearly 1,500 engaged followers on Facebook and over 1,300 actively involved followers on Twitter. Director Alumnae continue to post updates on the private WIDC Director Alumnae page on a regular basis. The **WIDC Alumnae Directory** was launched as one of the WIDC 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary projects and more than **80% of WIDC alumnae directors** have active profiles in the directory. Plans are underway for stage two of the directory, including cross referencing functions (also see alumnae highlights below and at [www.widc.ca/directory](http://www.widc.ca/directory)).

The WIDC 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary **Sharing Authentic Voices** initiative, funded by the Canada Council for the Arts, was launched in October 2017 in St John's with a masterclass on 'Effective Communication' led by *Marina Cordoni*. Other events are planned for Winnipeg and Vancouver during 2018.

**STORY DEVELOPMENT:** November/December 2017, the **Story & Leadership** was delivered in Vancouver to **8 women directors** developing fiction feature films and web series. Carol Whiteman facilitated, with lead mentors 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* mentored at the casting workshop.). She returned with Kathleen Hepburn and DOP's Greg Middleton and Norm Li for a panel on the Director/DOP relationship which led to blocking for camera sessions with the directors and their casts. UBCP/ACTRA actor/filmmaker Garwin Sanford led an action and fight choreography workshop. Casting Director, Judy Lee gave a talk on working with the Casting Director. A generous acting ensemble of 11 ACTRA and UBCP/ACTRA members (*Crystal Balint, Megan Danso, Andrea Drepaal, Jesse Lipscombe, Corale Knowles, Paloma Kwiatkowski, Tommie Amber Pirie, Jaedon Siewert, Zac Siewert, Zoey Siewert, David Tompa,*), workshopped the directors' scripts (2 web series and 6 feature films) by director participants: *Sonia Bonspille Boileau, Jessica Bradford, Katia Café-Frebrissy, Leah Cameron, Sandi Gisbert, Sophie Jarvis, Elizabeth Lazebnik, Shannon Walsh*.

**WIDC Whistler Film Festival Industry Immersion** (Part 2 of Story & Leadership), offered the director participants festival passes to attend the summit, screenings and the festival signature women's networking breakfast. The directors were prepped for the festival by generous industry experts, Gail Harvey (Mentor Director), Lael McCall (Principia Productions), and they met with Lauren Davis (Telefilm Canada), Mehernaz Lentin (CBC, Breaking Barriers Feature Film Fund), Alan Bacchus (Harold Greenberg Fund), as well as Megan Lau and Lizzy Karp (TELUS STORYHIVE), and Andra Sheffer (IPF) who sponsored a 'Demystifying Web Series Roundtable'. Trish Dolman and Christine Haebler (Screen Sirens), Jennifer Merin (Alliance of Women Film Journalists), and Scott Capestany (Media Inc. Magazine) joined for meet and greets. January 2017, the directors were guided in selecting among a menu of activities to advance their stories with Mentor Story Editor, Linda Coffey, followed by 3 hours each career coaching through to March 2018.

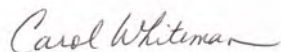
**AWARDS: WIDC Feature Film Award:** presented at Whistler Film to **Sonia Bonspille Boileau** for her 2<sup>nd</sup> feature, *Rustic Oracle*, goes to camera in Quebec, July 2018. A mentorship is also part of the award.

**WIDC's Telefilm Talent to Watch Nominees:** **Elizabeth Lazebnik** (*Be Still*, feature film), **Reem Morsi** (*Hate*, feature film), and **Leah Cameron** (*The Communist's Daughter*, digital production). As part of their nominations, WIDC is providing on-going mentorship to the writer, director, producer teams for the next year.

**WIDC ALUMNAE HIGHLIGHTS:** WIDC Alumnae earned over 100 nominations and awards for their work, including 27 Canadian Screen Award nominations and 29 Leo Award nominations. Past FF Award winners: **Kathleen Hepburn** has earned more than a dozen awards for *Never Steady, Never Still* and is in production on her second feature. **Jordan Canning** (*Suck It Up*), directed two episodes each of *Burden of Truth* and *The Detail*, and along with Kris Booth and fellow WIDC alumnae **Renuka Jeyapalan**, co-directed the feature film *Ordinary Days*. Renuka also directed two episodes of *Kim's Convenience*. **Siobhan Devine** directed 10 episodes of *I Am Frankie* and one episode of *Kim's Convenience* (and was nominated for each series for a Best Direction Leo Award). She also directed on *Nicky, Ricky, Dicky and Dawn*. **Alison Reid** directed three episodes of *Heartland* and two more episodes of *Saving Hope*. **Mary Bissell** (*It Was Him: The Many Murders of Ed Edwards*) and **Mary M. Frymire** (*Tribal Police*; *Dr. Keri Prairie Vet*) have been showrunning television series. **Simone Stock** directed four episodes of web series *Earthling House Huntress*. **Brianne Nord Stewart's** *Dangers of Online Dating* earned Best Comedy at the Vancouver Web Fest and two Leo Award nominations. **Jackie English's** debut feature *Becoming Burlesque* premiered at Whistler Film Festival. **Carolyn Saunders'** feature *The Wasting* released to sold out audiences in Toronto. **Kirsten Carthew's** *The Sun at Midnight* won the juried prize for Best Narrative from the Bentonville Film Festival which connected her with AMC Theatres and Walmart on international distribution. **Sonia Bonspille Boileau** (*Rustic Oracle*), **Rama Rau** (*The Daughter Tree*), **Marie Clements** (*Red Snow*), **Danishka Estherhazy** (*Level 16*), **Deanne Foley** (*An Audience of Chairs*) were each supported by CBC Breaking Barriers Feature Film Fund. **Mary Walsh's** *A Christmas Fury* aired on CBC. **Sherry White** won Best Original Screenplay for the multiple CSA-winning *Maudie*, and **Anita Doron** won the CSA for Best Adapted Screenplay for the Oscar™ nominated animated feature film, *The Breadwinner*. **Heather Allin** produced the ACTRA National Women's Committee comedic advocacy short, *Reel Women Seen*, now touring festivals, and an official selection for Diversity in Cannes Short Film Showcase!

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 shown through those important relationships. It has been an honor to work with industry, the CWWA Board and our 230+ women director alumnae across Canada this past year. Looking forward to celebrating more of their successes this coming fiscal, developing more talent and holding space for those authentic voices to be heard!

Respectfully submitted,



Carol Whiteman  
CWWA President & CEO

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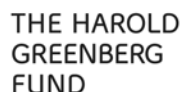
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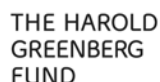
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