



**CREATIVE
WOMEN
WORKSHOPS
ASSOCIATION**

2015 – 2016 Annual Report

Creative Women Workshops Association
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WIDC 2016...Year In Summary

President's Report

"The CWWA Board is very excited about the evolution at WIDC, particularly in the face of the growing number and volume of conversations about women screen directors and women leaders in general across the globe." ~ Carol Whiteman, President & CEO

In response to the changing funding landscape, timed with identity and evolution exercises being conducted by both The Banff Centre and WIDC, the CWWA Board decided to set aside the WIDC production program in Banff this year. Following on a successful collaboration with the *Whistler Film Festival* in 2014, WIDC launched a new program called **Story & Leadership** designed to focus on tailoring mentorships for women screen directors by combining elements of our successful WIDC Banff programs and adding a new 3-month follow up to conduct story polish and project and career advancing strategies.

There are many strategic advantages of this collaboration. The Whistler Film Festival provides an A-List networking opportunity for the women directors attending WIDC and the calendar timing even dovetailed perfectly at the end of November.

23 women directors were selected for WIDC programs and Awards this past year! They worked with invited industry experts from across Canada, including 14 ACTRA actors, 2 IATSE cinematographers, 18 mentors, instructors, and industry representatives from funding agencies, broadcasters, individuals, and production companies. They were supported by some of Canada's most important service and equipment rentals companies, and immersed in the opportunities provided by festivals in St John's, Toronto, Vancouver, Winnipeg, and Whistler. Outreach activities included hosting WIDC information and networking sessions; moderating panels and roundtables and presenting the Honourary Director Award to Lea Pool (*L'Augustine*) at the Female Eye Film Festival. Continuing attention was also extended to the now **200+ women directors** across Canada and abroad who are WIDC alumnae; offered in the form of support letters, private coaching, informal introductions, executive producing, and social media promotions.

Following are some highlights....

The **WIDC Career Advancement Module (CAM)** supported twelve director participants at the *Female Eye Film Festival*, *St John's International Women's Film*, and the *Vancouver International Women In Film Festival*, respectively. Mentors included *Anne Frank*, *John Dippong* (Telefilm), *Karryn Austin* (White Pine Pictures), *Marguerite Pigott* (CMPA), *Lea Pool*; *Marina Cordon* (MCE) who led master classes on pitching; and *Andra Sheffer* (IPF) who led two 'Demystifying Web Series Roundtables' for participants in Toronto and Vancouver.

CAM Director participants included: *Jackie English*, *Maryam Najafi*, *Nadine Valcin*, *Ruth Lawrence*, *Jenna Marks*, *Jenina McGillrory*, *Tamara Segura*, *Kate Green*, *Julia Hutchings*, *Fumiko Kiyooka*, *Sara McIntyre*, *Adelina Suvagau*. A WIDC tailored 3-month mentorship was offer to *Christine Buijs*.

September 2015, as part of the **OutReach Initiative**, WIDC attended the *Toronto International Film Festival*, participated in the Caribbean Tales Industry Brunch. WIDC

producer, Carol Whiteman supported WIDC alumnae who were attending the festival, including Pitch this! Participants: *Sharon Lewis* (Brown Girl In the Ring: The Prequel), *Jordan Canning* (Suck It Up), and *Kathleen Hepburn* whose concept short (Never Steady, Never Still) premiered at the festival) and was selected among the TIFF Top Ten Shorts for 2015.

June 2015, the **Annual General Meeting** was held in Toronto, hosted at the offices of Actra Fraternal Benefit Society. WIDC alumna *Mary M. Frymire* was welcomed as a returning Board member taking on the role of Secretary / Treasurer. Returning for two-year terms: *E. Jane Thompson* now 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*.

November/December 2015, the pilot edition of the **Story & Leadership** was delivered in Vancouver to eight women directors developing fiction feature films and web series. Facilitated by Carol Whiteman, mentors included Instructor, *Dr. Carolyn Mamchur*, Mentor Story Editor, *Linda Coffey*, Mentor Actor, *Lori Triolo*, and Mentor Director, *Rachel Talalay*. WIDC director alumnae were invited to be peer mentors participating in panels and roundtables about low budget feature filmmaking (*Siobhan Devine*, *The Birdwatcher*) and web series (*Karen Lam*, *Mythos*) A generous acting ensemble of fourteen ACTRA and UBCP/ACTRA members workshopped the directors' scripts. The S&L program was also ably supported by Program Manager, *Michelle Morris* and Program Coordinator, *Rena Kawabata*, and facilitated by WIDC producer, *Carol Whiteman*.

S&L Director participants included: *Jordan Canning*, *Marie Clements*, *Ana de Lara*, *Nicole Dorsey*, *Maya Gallus*, *Anita Reilly McGee*, *Frances-Anne Solomon*, and *Mary Walsh*.

WIDC and the **Whistler Film Festival** collaborated to deliver an *Industry Immersion* as a culmination of the face to face portion of Story & Leadership. The Immersion offered 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, Lauren Davis (Telefilm Canada), Maureen Levitt (Super Channel), Alan Bacchus (Harold Greenberg Fund), Lael McCall (Principia Productions), and Kim Guise and Linda Hay (Telus Optik Local) who sponsored a 'Demystifying Web Series Roundtable'. Blocking for camera sessions were supported by IATSE 669 cinematographers Peter Woeste, Tony Mirza, and actor/filmmaker, Garwin Sanford who offered instruction on action and fight choreography.

At Whistler Film Festival's Filmmaker's Industry Luncheon WIDC presented **Jordan Canning** with the 2015 **WIDC Feature Film Award** for her sophomore feature, *Suck It Up*. At this time we were also proud to announce the Harold Greenberg Fund committed \$35,000 cash equity investment along with a cash sponsorship towards the Story & Leadership program. We also welcomed a new audio post production sponsorship valued at \$35,000 in kind from Tattersall Sound & Picture in Toronto.

January 2016, 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-tuned 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. Follow up also included directors working on character profiles and story arcs with Dr. Carolyn Mamchur, private working with actors sessions with Lori Triolo, script and career consulting with Carol Whiteman, and budget breakdowns with program manager Michelle Morris, who will now be producing feature films by two of the participants: Marie Clements (*Red Snow*) and Ana de Lara (*Virgin Mary Had a Little Lamb*).

Adelina Suvagau (*Box of Freedom*, feature film) and Kate Green (*NarcoLeap*, digital production) won **WIDC's Telefilm MicroBudget Nominations** and as part of their follow up mentorships from the CAM, WIDC helped them fine-tune their project proposals.

WIDC Alumnae Updates continued to make us proud this fiscal, and we will be showcasing them and their work through a special 20th Anniversary project in the next fiscal. Some highlights of WIDC alumnae accomplishments this year include, **WIDC Award-winners**, **Siobhan Devine's** *The Birdwatcher* premiered at the 2015 Whistler Film Festival, and **Ana Valine's** *Sitting on the Edge of Marlene* was sold in Europe. Valine also secured Telefilm funding for her second feature film, *Once There Was a Winter*. WIDC alumnae were nominated for thirteen 2015 Leo Awards: **Karen Lam's** (2009) web series, *Mythos* won Leo Awards; **Mairzee Almas** (2003) was nominated for two Leo awards for directing television series. **Danishka Esterhazy** and **Michelle Latimer** participated in Ingrid Veniger's Femmes Lab to write a feature length script and make it for \$1,000. ACTRA Toronto member **Stephanie Morgenstern** and her partner Mark Ellis are going into production on season three of the hit CBC series *X Company*. Stephanie is slated to direct the season 3, 2-hr closer. Another ACTRA Toronto member **Sharon Lewis** is completing post-production on her debut feature *Brown Girl In the Ring: The Prequel*. Sharon was selected for the Telefilm Pitch This! competition at TIFF 2015 where she generated Executive Producer interest to help get the film made. The WIDC Feature Film Award film *Never Steady, Never Still* (dir, **Kathleen Hepburn**) went to camera in February 2016.

WIDC has been active on Facebook and Twitter this past year. Alumnae post updates on the WIDC Director Alumnae page on a regular basis. A call for updates was issued to director alumnae this spring with the aim of compiling an up to date directory of WIDC director alumnae as one of the WIDC 20th Anniversary projects, as noted above.

Plans for the WIDC 20th Anniversary are underway, in addition to regular program offerings. 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

WIDC
Women In the Director's Chair



Since 1997, **200+ women screen directors** from across Canada have benefited from WIDC programs, mentorships, and awards. WIDC alumnae have gone on to create / show run **7 television series**; directing **37 feature films** and hundreds of hours of quality screen entertainment.

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