



**CREATIVE  
WOMEN  
WORKSHOPS  
ASSOCIATION**

# **ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019**

# Summary Report

As at March 31, 2019

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During fiscal 2018-19, Creative Women Workshops Association continued to offer professional leadership and story development, awards and production support for Canadian women screen directors Through the Women In the Director's Chair (WIDC) program, 29 Canadian women directors have directly participated in this fiscal's WIDC offerings, by the end of this fiscal (March 31). A summary follows here:

## OUTREACH:

The WIDC **Career Advancement Module** (CAM) supported 11 director participants, at Female Eye Film Festival (June 2018), St John's International Women's Film (October 2018), and the Vancouver International Women In Film Festival (March 2019). Facilitated by WIDC Producer, Carol Whiteman, industry guests included Lori McCurdy, Dan Lyon, Steve Bates (Telefilm Canada), Mehernaz Lentin (CBC Films), Andra Sheffer (IPF), John Galway (Harold Greenberg Fund), Susan Curran (A-71), Smita Acharyya (TELUS STORYHIVE), Annelise Larson (Veria Search Media Marketing) and Janal Bechthold (Screen Composers Guild); Master classes on pitching were led by Marina Cordoni (MCE). Alumnae Mentor Director Lulu Keating led mini-master classes in St John's. CAM Director participants included: Sibel Guvenc, Meeshelle Neal, Vanessa Shah, Joyce Wong (Toronto session); and Anne Kmetyko, Melanee Murray Hunt, Nicole Steeves (St John's session). Each received 3 hours of post-CAM coaching to advance their projects and career plans.

In May and again in October 2018, also as part of our OutReach initiatives, WIDC supported Board member *Heather Allin* to attend meetings in Cannes and Paris, France to explore international collaboration opportunities for WIDC with the Swedish Film Institute and Women In Entertainment. Board member Nikila Cole created connections with Women In Media and Film Powered in LA which netted membership benefits for WIDC alumnae.

In collaboration with Anita Adams, the 1<sup>st</sup> Weekend Club, the **WIDC-curated Channel** on Canada Screens is currently showcasing 34 short and feature-length films directed by Canadian women. WIDC alumnae are selected to curate the channel and showcase their own films.

The WIDC **Sharing Authentic Voices** initiative, funded by the Canada Council for the Arts, allowed WIDC to deliver a master-class on '*Creating Confidence*' for 25 participants in Winnipeg, led by Carol Whiteman, while also supporting a pilot Short Works Award lab for Winnipeg women filmmakers. In addition, 18 alumnae were scholarshiped to attend the Whistler Film Festival's Women On Top series in Vancouver (June 2018) with key note speaker Geena Davis and Whistler (November 2018) with key note speaker Madeline Di Nonno (executive director) of the Geena Davis Institute for Gender Equality on Screen. These two events were attended by approximately 200 and 400 community members respectively. In Whistler, the WoT event also included reports from industry experts on the state of gender inclusion in Canada and internationally (<https://whistlerfilmfestival.com/events/women-on-top-series/>) WIDC presented the 2019 Feature Film Award at the Whistler WoT event.

## STORY DEVELOPMENT:

**Story & Leadership Part 1:** November/December 2018, the Story & Leadership was offered to eight peer jury selected 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 (Mentor Director) attended casting sessions as well as a panel discussion on the Director/DOP relationship with DOP's Thomas Billingsley and Stirling Bancroft. This led to coaching on blocking for camera sessions with the directors and their casts. UBCP/ACTRA actor/filmmaker Garwin Sanford led an action and fight choreography workshop. A generous acting ensemble of 11 ACTRA and UBCP/ACTRA members (see photo below), workshopped the directors'

scripts (1 web series and 7 feature films) by director participants: Anna Cooley, Pamela Gallant, Jude Klassen, Meeshelle Neal, JJ Neepin, ACTRA Toronto member Penny Eizenga and UBCP/ACTRA members Mia Fiona Kut and Michelle Morgan.

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, Deanne Foley (Mentor Director), Lael McCall (Principia Productions), and they met with Steve Bates (Telefilm Canada), Mehernaz Lentin (CBC Films), Alan Bacchus (Harold Greenberg Fund), Erica Procnier (Canadian Screen Composers Guild), as well as representatives from TELUS STORYHIVE, and Andra Sheffer (IPF). Jennifer Merin (Alliance of Women Film Journalists), Terry Greenlaw (producer) and Susan Curran (distributor, A-72) joined for meet and greets. Through January 2019, the directors are working on Part 3 story polish with Mentor Story Editor, Linda Coffey, followed by Part 4 that included 3 hours each career coaching through to March 2019.

### AWARDS:

**WIDC Feature Film Award:** presented at Whistler Film to Shelley Thompson for her debut feature, *Dawn, Her Dad & the Tractor*, aiming for production summer 2019. A mentorship is also part of the award.

**WIDC's Telefilm Talent to Watch Nominee Mentorship:** the 2018 recipients selected by alumnae peer jury were Elizabeth Lazebnik, Toronto, ON / Vancouver, BC (*Be Still*, feature film), Reem Morsi, Toronto, ON (*Hate*, feature film). Lazebnik and Morsi won Telefilm funding. Nominee Leah Cameron, Toronto, ON (*The Communist's Daughter*, digital production) did not receive the Telefilm funding but did receive funding from IPF and won a number of script and pitch competitions including Just for Laughs. As part of their nominations, WIDC is providing 1-year mentorship to the writer, director, producer teams.

The 2019 Talent to Watch Nominee Mentorship recipients also selected by alumnae peer jury, include: Meeshelle Neal, Vancouver, BC (feature film, *Sweet Release*, a magic realism drama about a modern-day alchemist who stops death to save her daughter ); Paige Boudreau, Calgary, AB (feature film, *Just Off Main Street*, a coming of age drama about a young woman returning to her small hometown to find closure after her parents' death); Ana de Lara, Victoria, BC (web series, *Best Friend Me*, a comedic exploration of the faces of depression and anxiety told from the POV of a young woman's alter-egos ).

The WIDC **Short Works Award** program was launched in Winnipeg and Kamloops. Three finalists were selected for each (Winnipeg and Kamloops). After an intensive story lab, a winner in each city was selected to be immediately green-lit into production. The runners up received mentorship to take their projects to the next stage of development. The winners were: ACTRA Winnipeg member, *Angela Froese* (*A Round Tuit*) The Winnipeg award finalists were also mentored by ACTRA member *Rebecca Gibson* and supported by the Winnipeg Film Group. *Cjay Boisclair* (*Stood Up*) won the Kamloops edition of the Short Works Award which was sponsored by TELUS STORYHIVE. Each project cast union members under ACTRA and UBCP-ACTRA agreements.

### WIDC ALUMNAE HIGHLIGHTS (selected):

WIDC Alumnae earned over 100 nominations and awards for their work, including 28 Canadian Screen Award nominations, 26 Leo Award nominations, and one investiture to the Order of Canada for alumna Shirley Cheechoo (Banff 2002). Past FF Award winners: Kathleen Hepburn's second feature co-written and co-directed with Elle-Maija Tailfeathers *The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open* was selected to world premiere at Berlin. Jordan Canning (*Suck It Up*), directed two episodes multiple episodes of *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* and *Baroness Von Sketch Show*. Siobhan Devine directed a Hallmark MOW *Christmas Pen Pals*. ACTRA member Alison Reid directed the feature documentary *The Woman Who Loves*



Governor General Julie Payette presents the Member insignia of the Order of Canada to Brock University Chancellor Shirley Cheechoo Wednesday, May 8 during a ceremony at Rideau Hall. Photo: Sgt. Johanie Maheu, Rideau Hall.



*Giraffes* now on a theatrical run after festivals. Show-runner Mary M. Frymire (Dr. Keri Prairie Vet) won a 2018 Leo Award for her work. Sonia Bonspille Boileau (*Rustic Oracle*), Rama Rau (*Honey Bee*), Marie Clements (*Red Snow*), Danishka Estherhazy (*Level 16*), Deanne Foley (*An Audience of Chairs*) were each supported by CBC Breaking Barriers Feature Film Fund and completed their films. *Honey Bee*, *Audience of Chairs*, *Belle Ciao!* (dir. Carolyn Combs) and *Into Invisible Light* (dir. Shelagh Carter) screened at the Whistler Film Festival. ACTRA NL members, Mary Walsh's *A Christmas Fury* aired on CBC and Sherry White won Best Original Screenplay for the multiple CSA-winning Maudie. Anita Doron won the 2018 CSA for Best Adapted Screenplay for the 2018 Oscar™ nominated animated feature film, *The Breadwinner*. Heather Allin produced the ACTRA National Women's Committee comedic advocacy short, *Reel Women Seen*, still touring festivals and winning five awards including Audience Choice Award at the Diversity in Cannes Short Film Showcase and most recently Best Foreign Film at the 2019 Artemis Film Festival in LA. It will screen at the 2019 Leo Awards in BC, June 2019. We were saddened to say good-bye to alumna Pepita Ferrari (Banff 1998). Thank you to fellow alumna Naomi McCormack for sharing a [tribute in Pepita's memory](#). For more alumnae go to [www.widc.ca/directory](http://www.widc.ca/directory).

## PHOTO GALLERY

### 2018-19 WIDC STORY & LEADERSHIP:



1<sup>st</sup> Row Photos: Vancouver, ACTRA Members & Directors: Back Row: ACTRA members, UBCP-ACTRA actors, Fred Keating, Mariel Belanger, Michelle Morgan (UBCP-ACTRA member & director, BC), Anna Cooley (director, AB), Philip Steward (UBCP ACTRA), Jennifer Higgin (ACTRA Toronto), Cameron Robertson (UBCP-ACTRA)| Seated: UBCP-ACTRA actors, Joshua Murdoch Havana Guppy; JJ Neepin (director, MB); Jude Klassen (director, ON), Meeshelle Neal (director, BC), Mia Fiona Kut (UBCP-ACTRA member & director, BC), Penny Eizenga (ACTRA member & director, ON), Pamela Gallant (director, PEI)| Kneeling: UBCP-ACTRA actors, Sidika Larbes, Sara Rabey, Michelle Greber, Doralynn Mui, Anna Dickey, Nicole Munoz | Vancouver Mentors & Directors: L-R Thomas Billingsly (IATSE 669, Mentor DOP), Stirling Bancroft (IATSE 669, mentor DOP), Michelle Morgan, Dr. Carolyn Mamchur (instructor), Mickey Mamchur (instructor assistant), Linda Coffey (mentor story editor). Seated: Lori Triolo (UBCP-ACTRA, mentor actor), JJ Neepin, Jude Klassen, Meeshelle Neal, Mia Fiona Kut, Penny Eizenga, Pamela Gallant, Siobhan Devine (mentor director).

2<sup>nd</sup> Row Photos: Actor action workshop, warm-up with volunteer mentor Garwin Sanford (UBCP-ACTRA, at right). Missing from photo: mentors Lori Triolo (UBCP-ACTRA); Dr. Carolyn Mamchur and Linda Coffey who offered additional workshops per the above report summary. | Whistler Film Festival Industry Immersion (PART 2 of Story & Leadership program) L-R: Carol Whiteman, John Galway (HGF), Julie di Crece (WFF), Linda Coffey, Meeshelle Neal, Mehernaz Lentin (CBC Films), JJ Neepin, Jude Klassen, Anna Cooley, Pamela Gallant, Lael McCall (Principia Productions), Mia Fiona Kut, Michelle Morgan, Penny Eizenga, Deanne Foley (NL, mentor director).

## 2018-2019 OUTREACH INITIATIVES:

### Women On Top Event with Geena Davis, Vancouver



Back Row: Director Alumnae, Jules Koostachin, Marie Clements, Shannon Walsh, Heather Allin, Katrin Bowen, Nikila Cole, Patricia Harris Seeley; Front Row: Tammy Bentz, Smita Acharyya, Winnifred Jong, Mary M. Frymire; and WIDC Producer, Carol Whiteman. Missing from photo: Ana Valine

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## CAREER ADVANCEMENT MODULE:



WIDC CAM, Toronto back: Directors, Vanessa Shah (ON), Meeshelle Neal (BC), Joyce Wong (ON), Sibel Guvenc (ON); Seated: Mentors, Marina Cordoni, Dan Lyon, Carol Whiteman | WIDC CAM St John's: Directors, Nicole Steeves (NS), Melanee Murray-Hunt (AB), Anne Kmetyko (QC) | WIDC CAM Vancouver: back: Director, Monique Hurteau (BC), Mentor Susan Curran (A-71), Director Suza Singh (AB); front, Directors Jean Parsons (BC), Michelle Brezinski (UBCP-ACTRA, BC)

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## SHARING AUTHENTIC VOICES / WIDC SHORT WORKS AWARDS:



Winnipeg SAV / SWA: Acting ensemble, Maxine Gibson Bruce (ACTRA MB), Angela Froese (director winner), Shira Newman (director finalist), Lisa Maslik, Veronica Ternopolski, Tom Derek Trapp, Eric Benson (ACTRA MB), Rachel Beaulieu (director, finalist). Missing: Jenny Ng (ACTRA MB, winning project producer), Carol Whiteman (WIDC producer).

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Kamloops SWA: Cast of *Stood Up*, Rekha Sharma, Jason Burkart (UBCP-ACTRA), Cjay Boisclair (director, Kamloops, BC), Tracey Power (UBCP-ACTRA, Kamloops, BC) | Award Finalists Story lab, directors Vesta Gilles (Kamloops, BC); Hayley Gray, (UBCP-ACTRA, Vancouver, BC); Cjay Boisclair; Mavaurneen Jones (UBCP-ACTRA, Kamloops, BC), Linda Coffey, Carol Whiteman (mentors).

#### WIDC FEATURE FILM AWARD:



**WIDC**  
Women In the Director's Chair  
**FEATURE FILM AWARD**



## Shelley Thompson

*Dawn, Her Dad & the Tractor*















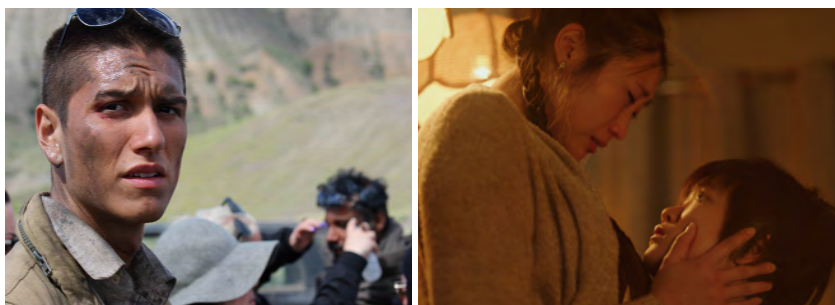



Line 21  
Media

2018 winner, Shelley Thompson (ACTRA AT), presented in Whistler, BC at WFF Women On Top event

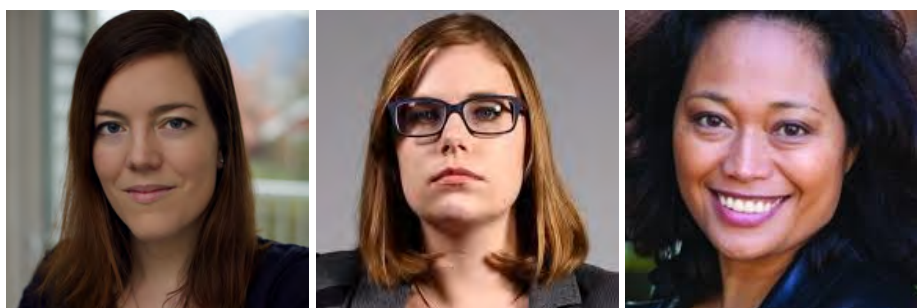


2017 winner, Sonia Bonspille Boileau (at right) with cast member, Donna Jacobs (ACTRA Montreal) on set of *Rustic Oracle* in Oka, Kanasedake | 2012 winner, Marie Clements (at left) on set of *Red Snow* in Cache Creek, BC. | *Queen of the Morning Calm* directed by Gloria Ui Young Kim on set.



Asivak Koostachin (UBCP-ACTRA, playing Dylan) on set of *Red Snow* | Tina Jung (ACTRA Toronto, playing Debra) and Eponine Lee as Mona on set of *Queen of the Morning Calm* (filming to complete in May 2019).

#### WIDC TELEFILM TALENT TO WATCH 2019 MENTORSHIPS:



L-R: Meeshelle Neal, Paige K. Boudreau, Ana de Lara

Outside the WIDC program, CWWA also offered a **Career Accelerator** to four filmmakers in Vernon, BC with the support of TELUS STORYHIVE. Led by Carol Whiteman with Linda Coffey and Siobhan Devine, local emerging content creators *Janalee Budge*, *Veronica Gonsalves*, *Pam Jones* and *Gordon Loverin* developed career strategies and polished their story pitches over a two-day intensive (September, 2018).

On behalf of the Creative Women Workshops Association Board of Directors who oversee the WIDC program, we are extremely grateful to all of our sponsors and collaborators. The success of WIDC and WIDC alumnae is due in no small part to the consistent and ongoing confidence shown through those important relationships. It has been a continuing honor to work with industry and our 250+ 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 authentic voices to be heard!

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Board of Directors,  
Carol Whiteman  
CWWA President & CEO

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**Women In the Director's Chair (WIDC) | Creative Women Workshops Association (CWWA) Board of Directors**  
President & CEO, Carol Whiteman | Secretary / Treasurer, Mary M. Frymire; Alumnae Reps, Nikila Cole, Patricia Harris Seeley | ACTRA Rep., Heather Allin.

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## MENTORSHIP – DEVELOPMENT – PRODUCTION

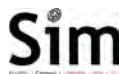
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### Community Collaborators

