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**Meet  
the 2024  
Participants**



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Serving 100 participants annually—and nearly 600 to date over the course of the program—[the Netflix-BANFF Diversity of Voices Initiative](#) offers a professional springboard for underrepresented creators and producers from across Canada.

The goal of the initiative is to jump-start careers, and help projects move forward, by providing a gateway to the global film and television industry through the [Banff World Media Festival's](#) renowned conference and marketplace. Over the long term, the festival aims to foster a legacy of greenlights and international sales for program participants, and the partners who work with them.

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# Pitch Program Participants 2024



## **Brishkay Ahmed**

Screenwriter | Producer

**Digital Warriors Productions Inc.**

Brishkay Ahmed is an Afghan-Canadian filmmaker. She began her narrative career as an episodic series writer and director for Tolo TV and RTA in Afghanistan. In Canada, she is recognized for the Reelworld 2021 Outstanding Feature winner, 'In the Rumbling Belly of Motherland,' and the Canadian Screen Award- and Banff Rockie Award-nominated 'Fatima In Kabul.' Ahmed is an alumna of the Canadian Film Centre's 2022 Writers' Lab and the E20 Reelworld Series Lab. In 2023, Ahmed received the Best Fresh Voice Award at the Female Eye Film Festival. Ahmed is a member of the WGC and DGC. She is currently in development on the feature film 'Sama', and the half-hour series, 'Open For Discussion', which was supported through the Rogers BSO Script Development Fund.

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## **Tope Babalola**

Creator | Writer | Director | Producer

**Tope Babalola Productions**

Tope Babalola is a Nigerian-Canadian filmmaker and content creator with a passion for storytelling, visual effects and comedy, having amassed over 2.7 million followers across YouTube and TikTok. Tope graduated from Sheridan's Advanced Television and Film Program, where he produced the documentary "They Can't. So I Must". (2022), which was awarded Best Documentary Short Film at the Montreal Black International Film Festival, and the short satirical film "Woke" (2022) which won Best Comedy at the CaribbeanTales International Film Festival. Additionally, he has written and directed a handful of narrative short films. His latest, "The Delivery" (2023) won the award for Excellence in Cinematography at Buffer Film Festival in 2023 and was named an Official Selection at both the Toronto Short Film Festival and Miami Film Festival in 2024.

Tope was named one of Playback Magazine's 10 Filmmakers to Watch in 2022. He has written and directed for the TVOKids preschool series "Tiny & Tall", and is in active development on a coming-of-age young teen mystery series he created called "Benjamin Ojo", which was made a finalist at the MIPJunior Pitch Competition in 2022 and has Little Engine Moving Pictures attached to produce.

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## **Tristan Barrocks**

Director | Writer

### **Mid-Career Productions**

Tristan Barrocks is an internationally recognized, award-winning, Jamaican-Canadian commercial and film director, who lives in Toronto. He focuses on telling human-centred stories. His film “Dear Black Dad,” released digitally, has garnered critical acclaim for its authenticity and truth. His 2023 film, “Wallflower” was featured at the Essence Festival. The Docu-series, “Connecting the Dots” (2019), and “Mother To Mother” (2022) are noteworthy installments in Tristan’s directorial catalogue.

Tristan fuses his rich West-Indian culture and acting background to tell stories that move audiences. His unique directing style is a reflection of his over twenty years of experience creating and shaping stories. He is a seasoned storyteller whose ability to relate to on-screen talent and communicate his technical, creative vision to the production team is his secret sauce.

Tristan desires to tell human stories from a Black perspective authentically and meaningfully. Whether as a writer or director, he aims to create inclusive communities where BIPOC creatives thrive.

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## **Jessica Brown**

Producer

**Ujarak Media Inc.**

Jessica Brown, an esteemed, award-winning Nunatsiavut Inuk filmmaker, is based in St. John's, NL. She takes pride in being the owner of Ujarak Media and is at the forefront of creating groundbreaking content that showcases the rich diversity and cultural heritage of Indigenous communities. As the Founder and CEO of the Northern Film Initiative, she actively works towards providing platforms and opportunities for Indigenous voices to be heard and celebrated. Jessica is a passionate advocate for the representation of Indigenous people in Canada's entertainment industry and has received numerous awards for her exceptional talent and contributions. Her commitment to empowering future generations through meaningful storytelling serves as an inspiration to aspiring filmmakers. Additionally, Jessica holds the position of Newfoundland and Labrador Representative of Doc Atlantic, a chapter of the Documentary Organization of Canada.

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## **Vanessa Caceres**

Producer

**Righteous Pictures**

Vanessa Caceres was born in Colombia, where she studied Industrial Engineering before moving to Canada in 2003 and setting her sights on film production. In 2005, her first production, the short film “Carjacking,” was part of the official selection of the Montreal Film Festival. In 2009, she was the Line Producer on “Transit,” which was released theatrically in Canada by eOne Films. Her first feature film production, “Generation Wolf,” had an extensive film festival run, winning the Best Latin Film at Borrego Springs Film Festival, and being picked up by Samuel Goldwyn Films for the U.S. in 2016. “The Office Games” was her second feature film production and was acquired by Quiver Distribution.

Vanessa has participated in prestigious industry programs, including; The Sundance Collab Producing Program in 2020, the Reelworld Producer Program in 2021-2022, and the SODEC Lab at Hot Docs 2023. She also represented ReelWorld at Content Canada in 2022, and Primetime Ottawa in 2023. Currently, Vanessa is part of the Reelworld Training Lab presented by Amazon MGM Studios.

Her most recent feature film, which she produced and wrote, is “Undocumented,” a drama focusing on the abuse migrant workers endure in North America. It is currently on the festival circuit. She is currently producing the documentary, “My Friend Omar, The Struggles of a Seasonal Worker” with the support of CMF, Radio Canada, and CBC.

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## **Kanja Chen**

**Creative Producer | Writer | Show Creator  
Chensational Productions Inc.**

Kanja Chen is a creative producer, writer, and puppeteer who has worked on numerous high-profile television productions. Kanja is multi-racial (black/Asian father and white mother) and is heavily influenced by his Jamaican heritage, being co-raised by his Jamaican grandmother and family. He actively strives to support BIPOC creatives in the television industry through mentoring and advocacy work.

Kanja stars in the Emmy Award-winning series “Fraggle Rock: Back to the Rock” on AppleTV+. Other recent works include Kanja as a writer and educational consultant on 2 Seasons of “The Fabulous Show with Fay & Fluffy” for Family Jr. and a writer on “Lil’ Stompers”, for Peacock. He’s worked on “Odd Squad” (PBS) and is in development with numerous creators and production companies on several amazing show concepts.

Kanja was honoured to have recently been chosen as a Netflix-Banff Diversity of Voices Fellow. In 2022, Kanja was selected as one of the 25 participants in the BIPOC TV and Film “Writing for Kids TV” intensive. He is the supervising producer and story editor for a new preschool series currently in production for the CBC. Kanja resides in Burlington, Ontario, with his wife, his three awesome kids, and a room filled with puppets and ‘80s toy collectibles.

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## Joan Digba

Writer | Creative | Producer

**JODR Creative**

Joan Digba is a Nigerian-born, British-bred Canadian who uses her multifaceted perspective to craft stories with imaginative visuals, rich world-building, and emotionally connective moments. Her work often explores themes of mental health, rebellion, coming of age, and assessing one's place within oppressive systems. Joan's work spans different genres and demographics from kids to family drama, with credits that include: Jane (Apple TV+), Dino Dex (TVO/Amazon), and Beyond Black Beauty (Amazon Freevee). With a background in producing commercials, Joan is a creative problem solver, skilled at sourcing, leading, and collaborating with the best creative partners. One such partnership she fostered was between United Way and the Pantone Color Institute™ to produce the special colour Unignorable used to highlight social issues in attention-grabbing artistic works, including the most visited exhibit in Nuit Blanche history, "The Ignored Room". When she's not writing, you can find her watching anime, traveling, or rediscovering the beauty of the world with her daughter.

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## **Daniel Foreman**

Creator | Producer | Director | Writer

**Treaty 6 Productions Inc.**

Daniel Foreman is a registered member of the Métis Nation of Alberta. He has been writing, producing, and directing successful films for over 10 years. Genres include; animation, comedy, drama, and virtual reality.

After a run of successful live-action digital shorts that screened around the world, he turned to animation and began exploring Indigenous mythology. This led to a “Best Animation” win at the American Indian Film Festival in 2018 for “Raven Goes Fishing,” which in turn led to being fast-tracked in Telefilm’s Talent to Watch program.

With this seed funding from Telefilm, the suspense thriller feature film, “Abducted” was given life in 2021. Daniel is currently in development for the dramatic episodic television series, “Daughters of the Wolf” and the live-action/animation series “Tales of Wisakedjak.” He is also working on a video game featuring characters from “Raven Goes Fishing”, with the assistance of the federal government program Catalyste+ and the gaming developers Onlea.

With his production partner, Sharlene Millang, they created Edmonton Short Film in 2013 to elevate Alberta’s independent short filmmakers. Since 2018, the vision has expanded to celebrate Canadian and international short filmmakers and has grown in size and reach.

[treaty6productions.ca](http://treaty6productions.ca)

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## **Eva Grant**

Creator

**Tooth and Nail Pictures**

Eva Grant is a collection of stories that will one day belong to the St'at'imc Nation. An Indigenous, South and West Asian, Queer, and Francophone filmmaker and curator, Eva is the owner of Tooth & Nail Pictures. She is a Sundance Native Lab Fellow, a former Reelworld Screen Institute “Emerging 20”, and an alumna of the BIPOC TV & Film Episodic Writers Lab and the Blood in the Snow Horror Development Lab. While working at Eagle Vision, she was the Associate Producer on the Emmy-winning, Madison Thomas-directed biopic entitled, “Buffy Sainte-Marie: Carry it On”. She is the creator of several analog, experimental multimedia works supported by the Art Gallery of Ontario. Her narrative directorial debut, “Forest Echoes”, tells the story of two Indigiqueer Land Defenders reflecting on life after the frontlines; it was supported in its development and production by TELUS Storyhive, CreativeBC, Sundance Institute, and ImagiNATIVE. She is also the creator of three projects in development: “Degrees of Separation”, an Indigiheist miniseries in pre-production, “Entity”; an Indigenous folk horror film developed with Hunter Grant, and “This Will Not Hurt You”, an historical drama in development with Taxam Films. She studied comparative literature, philosophy, and creative writing at Stanford University. She has programmed the Vancouver Queer Film Festival and the Pacific Rim Short Circuit Film Festival and is a member of CINEVIC and the Collective Bunch.

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## **Aretha Greatrix**

Creator | Producer | Director | Writer

**Ready Up Productions Inc.**

Aretha Greatrix, also known as SimplyAretha, is a dynamic force in Indigenous storytelling, proudly representing the Cree community of Kashechewan First Nation. Raised in Edmonton, Alberta, her multifaceted identity informs her creative pursuits. As the founder of Ready Up Productions Inc., Aretha utilizes film to address pressing Indigenous issues, including residential schools and reconciliation, fostering awareness, and education. She also serves as Program Director for the Dreamspeakers Festival Society, overseeing Canada's oldest Indigenous film festival. Amidst the challenges of the pandemic, Aretha fearlessly ventures into online content creation, exploring gaming and streaming to connect with communities and advocate for Indigenous voices. Join her on a journey of amplifying Indigenous narratives, sparking dialogue, and inspiring change through the transformative power of storytelling and digital engagement.

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## **Debra Kouri**

Founder | Producer

**Poutine Studios**

Over the past two decades, Debra Kouri has honed her producing talents in both the English and French screen industries across multiple scripted and unscripted genres. She's particularly passionate about producing socially impactful content that also has mass audience appeal. She stands out as a producer renowned for her compassionate nature, fairness, and intense dedication to the projects she oversees; expertly marrying the creative, financial, and administrative aspects of each production. Selected producer credits include features "Office Games" (tubi) and "The Bend" (SuperChannel), as well as the first season of "The Detectives" (CBC), amongst other award-winning unscripted series and formats. She's recently delivered the documentary films "Trafficked Voices" (CBC Passionate Eye), "Le Défi de l'info" (Bell Media), and is in production on "Butterfly Hunters" (Telus Originals), "La Plaque tournante" (SRC/RDI) while maintaining a development slate that includes "This Changes Everything Canada" in association with the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, "Bled Dry: The High Cost of Women's Pain," as well as the Cli-Fi Drama movie "Whalebone" and the Comedy series "Quality Time." Her company, Poutine Studios, is made up of creative, bold, and determined storytellers who all share in the company's mandate to create thought-provoking entertainment that champions diversity and underrepresented POVs, both on and off camera.

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## **Panta Mosleh**

Producer | Director | Writer  
**PK Studio Productions Inc**

A graduate of Groundlings School of Comedy in Los Angeles and a recipient of the 2021 SNL scholarship, Panta Mosleh is a Queer, Middle Eastern-Canadian Writer-Director, who splits her time between Los Angeles and Vancouver, BC. She is Dual. She is an alumna of the Women in Director's Chair, Reelworld Warner Access and Bell Producing Program, NSI EAVE development program, Sundance Writing for Television program, Sundance Directing program, and Emerging Top 20 Writers in Canada program with Reelworld. She is currently part of the Amazon/MGM series writing program. She has worked in production for a decade as a production coordinator, production manager, producer, and director. She has recently directed three TV movies for A&E, Lifetime, and TF1. Her most recent TV movie was on NBC's Peacock streaming platform. She is currently working on a feature documentary. Panta draws from her personal experiences, struggles, and accomplishments which makes her a very personable and relatable storyteller. She is very passionate about joyful representations of minority groups.

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## **Adrian Neblett**

Creator | Producer | Writer

**EbonySky Productions**

Born in Montreal to Claude and Pamela Neblett, who had emigrated from Barbados in the late 60's, Adrian has been a Vancouver-based actor and producer for over 10 years. His acting credits include; "Snowpiercer", "Riverdale", "Supernatural, Fringe, and the list goes on. His first short film as a producer, "Wytch Craft", was accepted into over 40 film festivals around the world. Since then, Adrian has produced several short films that have punched way above their weight class. Adrian champions both stories of those with similar origins to him and other marginalized peoples to celebrate the humanity that binds us all.

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## Alexander Nunez

Writer | Creator

**Border2Border Entertainment**

Alexander Nunez is an actor and writer of Jamaican and Chilean descent. He is most well-known for his performances in programs like: “Moonshine” (CBC), “Avocado Toast” (OutTV), and “A Teacher” (FX). On “Moonshine”, Alexander stars as Sammy Finley-Cullen and works as a writer on the show’s third season. His other writing credits include: “This Hour has 22 Minutes” (CBC) and the multi-award-winning digital series, “Avocado Toast: The Series” (OutTV). For his work on “This Hour,” Alexander was nominated for a Canadian Screen Award for writing on a sketch comedy/variety series. Alexander’s short, titled, “Diversity Hire” (2019), has since garnered success at several festivals, including 2020’s Just For Laughs Festival. Alexander’s original series, titled, “Well Versed” (OUTtv), is set to premiere in 2024.

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## **Murry Peeters**

Writer | Director | Producer | Actor

**Mugaliyombo Media**

Murry Peeters (she/her) is an award-winning actor, director, and screenwriter. She's a writer and co-producer on the series, "Robyn Hood" (Global). Her acting screen credits include NBC's "Taken", "Far Cry 5", and "See". Peeters' past acting experience has enabled her to write material populated by richly diverse and layered characters. She was selected to participate in the inaugural class of the WarnerMedia Access x Canadian Academy Writers Program. She is also an alumna of the Canadian Film Center's 2018 Writers' Lab, a 2018 Magee TV Diverse Screenwriters Award recipient, and a participant of Netflix-Banff 2019 & 2020 Diversity of Voices, Black Women Film! Big Up Producer's Residency 2023, and Women In the Director's Chair Career Advancement Module 2023. Peeters spearheaded #StartWith8HollywoodNorth, a program aimed at connecting industry leaders and emerging women and non-binary, BIPOC creatives.

Her short film, which she wrote and directed, "Woman Meets Girl", screened at Queer Screen's 30th Mardi Gras Film Festival and BFI Flare, among others. It won Best Canadian Short and "Best Performance" at the Vancouver Short Film Festival and Best Romance and Best LGBT at the Sunday Shorts Festival. It was also nominated for a DGC Award for Outstanding Directorial Achievement: Best Short Film and Best Scripted at the Yorkton Film Festival.

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## **Skye R. Regan**

Writer | Creator | Executive Producer

**Play All Day Productions**

Skye R. Regan is an Indigenous-Irish, Toronto-based writer/performer/producer. As an undergraduate alumna of Harvard University and a recent Quantic MBA graduate, with additional training in writing and improv from Second City, Skye combines her diverse professional, creative, and lived intersectional experience to create unique properties with strategic elements to engage audiences. Skye is honoured to be a 2022 BANFF Spark Accelerator fellow, a recent BIPOC TV & Film Writing for Kids' TV graduate, and selected for the WildBrain Writing Program. She was also selected for the Women in Animation Mentorship Circle and was twice selected for the Jeff Sagansky Harvardwood Writing Program, where she developed her original animated comedy series, "Aux & Echo", and wrote the series pilot. Most recently Skye has worked on "Caillou" (Peacock/WildBrain), "Luna", "Chip & Inkie" (Peacock/ Knowledge), "Miss Persona" (Prime/Teletoon+), "Secrets of the Forest" (TVO), "Gisele's Mashup Adventures" (CBC Kids/CBC Gem), and several development rooms.

In addition to this work, Skye is excited to be developing original properties through Play All Day Productions, which is focused on foregrounding underrepresented voices in media and entertainment. Play All Day develops and produces linear and non-linear content in the kids and family, animated, and adult primetime spaces. She is excited to be developing unique properties that delight audiences to make the world a more joyful place for all!

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## **Sean Smith**

Writer | Producer | Director

**Stingray Pictures Inc.**

Sean Smith is a Film & TV professional working as a director, cinematographer, and editor and has recently performed all three of these roles on APTN's "Red Earth Uncovered" and on several award-winning documentaries, music videos, commercials, and television specials. His short film about his Métis family history, "Mary Mackagonne," which he wrote, produced, and directed, was an official selection of both the 2019 Calgary International Film Festival and the 2020 Edmonton International Festival of Winter Cinema. His feature-length documentary, "Métis Scrip & The Otipemisiwak" (in Pre-Production), explores the history, wrongdoings, and fraud of the failed Métis Scrip system. He has also written and is currently developing a feature-length gritty revenge Western titled, "The Scrip". Set on the Canadian prairies in the late 1880s, it tells the story of Rose, an eighteen-year-old Métis woman who pursues the land speculator who swindled her ailing mother out of the family's government-issued land claim certificate.

Also in development is the dramatic series "Athapescow". In 1800s Canada, when her English cartographer husband is ordered to establish a new trading post, a young Swampy Cree Woman must fight against the lawless Alberta wilderness, racism, and rival trading groups to keep her family together and start a new life. Sean is a graduate of SAIT's Film & Video Production program and lives in Calgary, Alberta, with his wife and two children.

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## **Dallas Soonias**

Writer | Director | Actor  
**Soonias Industries Inc.**

Dallas Soonias is Nehiyaw/Anishinaabe. He is registered with The Chippewas of Nawash.

In 2023, Dallas wrote, directed, and produced his first short film, “Frank Gets The Job Done”, which was commissioned by the ImagineNATIVE Film Festival and Telus Storyhive. He now has a feature film in development with Telefilm Canada and is directing for CBC Olympics as well as being an analyst for CBC Sports covering the 2024 Olympics.

Dallas is proud to be the first male Indigenous person to represent Canada in volleyball. He completed a BA in Psychology at the University of Calgary and then began working on a master’s degree.

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## **Stefan Suplice**

Producer

**Niya Production**

Stefan Suplice is a Haitian Creative Producer and Community Organizer based in Ottawa, Canada. With a background in media production and project planning, Stefan honed his skills as a Producer at Pace Magazine before co-founding Niya Productions, a dynamic media production company dedicated to unveiling the layers of contemporary society through documentary filmmaking. Stefan's passion lies in telling authentic stories that amplify underrepresented voices, a mission he pursues with dedication through impactful projects and collaborations across various mediums. His work aims to spark conversations and inspire change within his community and the festival network.

Recognized for his commitment to storytelling and grassroots engagement, Stefan received the President's Award for "Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion" (EDI) at the University of Ottawa. This accolade underscores his dedication to crafting narratives that resonate profoundly with audiences, emphasizing his role in amplifying marginalized perspectives. Currently, Stefan is thrilled to be producing his first feature documentary and participating in the DOV Pitch Program. With enthusiasm, he aims to forge connections with industry peers and explore distribution opportunities at the Banff World Media Festival. Stefan remains dedicated to making meaningful contributions to the media landscape, driving positive change through film.

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## **Carmen Thompson**

Writer | Creator

**Moon Productions**

Carmen Thompson (Diitiidaht/Kyuquot/Coast Salish) has been costume designing and building costumes for theatre, television, music videos, and feature films for more than 15 years and has over 60 credits to her name. Known for her research and attention to detail with a commitment to cultural authenticity, she is an in-demand member of creative teams in Los Angeles, Vancouver, and Victoria. Carmen signed on to Marvel Studios as the Pacific Northwest Coast Costumes Consultant. She utilized her cultural knowledge of her people and her sketching/illustration skills and was able to honour her people and provide research and costumes for the Costume, Hair, and Makeup Department.

In 2022, she attended the Banff Centre for the Arts and Creativity and completed the Indigenous Screenwriting Residency Program. In 2019, she was accepted into the Women in Film & TV, Tricksters and Writers Program. Carmen is writing a television series, featuring Trickster, Sasquatch, and Wild Woman, in a family dramedy series. The show concept has got her placement in the Whistler Film Festival, Women in Focus, and starting in January of 2024, she is enrolled in the Sundance Collab: TV Writing program. “I am figuring it out. They are like a superhero family. I am creating the layers, the world they live in and I want to play with genre, right now, it’s working as an episodic series.”

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## **Alice Wang**

Creator | Writer | Director

**It's A Secret Productions Inc.**

Alice Wang is a Chinese-Canadian filmmaker based in Toronto. Keeping their parents happy with a degree in psychology from the University of Toronto, they have now transitioned to filmmaking and enjoy writing stories they've always wanted to tell. Alice has worked as a production coordinator at CBC Kids, Industry Producer at Canadian Film Fest, and Manager of Programming at Regent Park Film Festival. As ¼ of Videatur Collective, they're passionate about supporting youth from underrepresented communities in film and run programming to help QTBIPOC filmmakers create their first short films. An RBC "Emerging Director's Award" recipient, a participant of the BIPOC TV and Film Episodic Lab, and part of the 2023 Reelworld Emerging 20 cohort, Alice gravitates towards telling stories about loss, acceptance, and belonging with nuanced perspectives on family dynamics and self-actualization.

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## **Rua Wani**

Producer

**Adani Pictures**

Rua Wani is a producer and co-founder of Toronto-based Adani Pictures. Adani's mandate is to back storytellers and projects that provoke curiosity and engagement, centred in a belief that everyone's story deserves to be seen. Adani's slate of projects has won development financing from the Canada Media Fund, Ontario Creates, and the Bell Fund, and the company has been selected for the International Co-Production Market at EFM, the Canadian Creative Accelerator for Women in Film in New York and LA, the Canada-France Co-Production Lab at Series Mania, and CFC's Fifth Wave Labs. Before forming Adani Pictures, Rua was a scripted TV development and production exec working on celebrated primetime dramas and comedies, including the Emmy-winning "Orphan Black" (BBC America, CTV Sci-Fi Channel). Rua is an alumnus of producer labs at Series Mania, EAVE, Reelworld, and BANFF Spark. She is also a film festival juror, and a Lecturer at Toronto Metropolitan University, Sheridan College, and George Brown College. As a Kashmiri who has lived in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Indonesia, Canada and the UK, Rua's love of storytelling is rooted in discovering diverse realities.

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## **Jordan Waunch**

Director | Writer

**Hammer & Sash Digital Media**

Jordan Waunch is an award-winning Métis filmmaker, writer, and actor based in the Coast Salish territories. He is a member of Métis Nation BC, his family is from St. Albert, Alberta and descends from the historic Red River settlement in Manitoba. A graduate of the British Columbia Institute of Technology's Television & Video Production Program, Jordan has gone on to build a career focused on the development of Indigenous-led storytelling in film, TV, animation, and XR media. In 2019 he directed the project "Sisters Of Sorrow" through StoryHive's first-ever Indigenous Storyteller Edition and produced the Queer Indigenous horror film "Terror/Forming" (Dir. Rylan Friday). His most recent writing and directing project "Shadow Of The Rougarou" is playing on the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network's streaming service Lumi.

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## **Shirley Yip**

Creator | Producer | Director | Writer

**Rice Paper Pictures**

Shirley Yip is a trilingual Chinese-Canadian writer-producer-director. Growing up between Asia and North America, her storytelling explores cross-cultural experiences and complicated relationships. Shirley writes character-driven stories about people who are their own worst enemy and is drawn to themes of familial tension, romance, and perseverance.

Shirley is a graduate of the Canadian Film Centre's Bell Media Prime Time TV Program inaugural comedy cohort, where she wrote and directed a TV teaser for her original comedy series 88 Diner. Shirley's social-horror feature "Orchid Dream" was selected as part of the 2022 Reelworld E20 program. She was an alumna of the 2022 BIPOC TV & Film Episodic Lab. Her original pilot "Peeping Tam" was shortlisted for the 2022 Sundance Episodic Lab. She was a 2022 Disney Writing Program Semi-Finalist and 2021 ATX TV Festival Pitch Competition Finalist.

As a producer, Shirley founded Rice Paper Pictures, a production company that received Canada Media Fund for her one-hour drama series "House of Fortune". Her directorial debut "Marriage Interview" is starting its festival run. She holds an H.B.A. in Drama from the University of Toronto and Professional Certificates in Screenwriting and Directing from UCLA. Shirley divides her time between Los Angeles, Toronto, and Montreal. She is represented by Meridian Artists.

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## **Alain Zaloum**

Writer | Producer

**Slingshot Productions Inc.**

Alain Zaloum's career spans across many platforms and genres. He is a veteran television writer, director, and producer of factual programs as well as a writer and director of several award-winning feature films, from comedies to thrillers. Alain is co-creator of the critically acclaimed true-crime Netflix series, "Real Detective" and its Canadian version, the CSA award-winning series, "The Detectives" for the CBC, for which he was nominated twice for a CSA award (2020 & 2021) for best writer. Alain has also travelled extensively around the world, writing and directing shows for National Geographic, History, Travel, and Discovery Channels, including the popular series, "License To Drill in Louisiana". Most recently, he was story editor for the true-crime series "Forensic Factor", produced by Montreal-based Attraction for Bell Media. Alain wrote and directed several features for ABC, Lionsgate, and Equinoxe, including the award-winning indie, "David & Fatima", which co-stars Academy Award-winning actor Martin Landau and legendary screen icon Tony Curtis, in his last screen performance.

Before that, Alain was instrumental in launching the successful career of Canadian decorating guru Debbie Travis, directing and producing the first three seasons of "The Painted House" for W Network & PBS. He later produced and directed the Gemini-nominated series Her Money for W Network and was the series director of the hit comedy reality soap, "The Property Shop," which aired on HGTV US.

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## **Praneet Akilla**

Producer | Creator

**Akilla Express Ltd.**

Praneet Akilla is an award-winning Indian-Canadian Actor & Producer best known for his leading roles on The CW's, "Nancy Drew", Disney Freeform's "Motherland Fort Salem", and Netflix's "October Faction". He is currently the series lead of the Canadian Screen Award-nominated medical drama Skymed on CBC Gem & Paramount Plus. Over the last three years, Praneet has made the successful transition into producing a variety of critically acclaimed short films and digital series with his new production company Akilla Express, focusing on telling unique, genre-bending stories from a Third Culture Global Majority perspective.

Most recently Praneet produced and starred in the critically- acclaimed short film, "Mom vs Machine" which is currently on the film festival circuit with six Leo Nominations (B.C. Film & Television Awards) including Best Short Drama. With stops at Fantasia Film Festival, Whistler Film Festival, Reelworld Film Festival, and Brooklyn Horror Festival- the short film premiered on the Sci-Fi Streaming Platform- DUST in 2023. He is currently in development on a TV adaptation of the celebrated Canadian novel, "Junie" with 100 Dragons Media Inc. and a new comedy/musical series called Raksha with funding from IPF & Canada Media Fund. Praneet is a recent graduate of the National Screen Institute of Canada's "Access BIPOC Producers" program.

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## Chantelle Marie Anderson

Creator

**Nukinoh Productions Inc.**

Chantelle Marie Anderson is a Cree-Canadian filmmaker based out of Calgary, AB. Her short comedy screenplay, “Balls Out” (2020) received Official Selections from the Rhino Shorts Comedy Film Festival and Lit Laughs International Comedy Film Festival. With her creative team, she is currently working on a supernatural series called “Weaves of Blood & Bone” funded by Calgary Arts Development (2022) and the Indigenous Screen Office Development Program (2023). She met one of her creative writing partners during the 2020 Whistler Film Festival Indigenous Filmmaker Fellowship program where she wrote the pilot for her office comedy, “Start Me Up”.

Chantelle has directed 7 short films, including “Kaashkitamaashoo” (2022) which screened at 7 Film Festivals and was nominated for the 2022 AMPIA Rosie Award: “Best Scripted Production Under 30 Minutes”. Currently, she is exploring the world of STEM on- and off-reserves with her first short documentary funded by the Canada Council for the Arts (2022). Over the years, she has been a recipient of the imagineNATIVE & Calgary Society of Filmmakers (CSIF) Mentorship program (2018), Herland Mentorship program (2019), and Alberta Foundation for the Arts project funding (2018).

From her father’s lineage, she is honoured to be a member of the Onion Lake Cree Nation. From her mother’s side, she is blessed with third generation+ mixes of Irish, Scottish, German, and Dutch heritage.

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## **Leila Aziza Ateb**

Creator | Host

**Leila Aziza**

Born and raised in Montreal, Quebec, Leila is a versatile creator, dancer, and host, skillfully showcasing her talents across a broad spectrum of artistic activities while proudly representing her Tunisian and Portuguese origins. Her journey to mastery includes intensive dance training in the heart of New York, complemented by academic excellence with degrees in communication, political science, and journalism from the Université de Montréal and Sciences Po Paris.

Leila's hosting career serves as a platform for engaging in meaningful dialogues with influential figures, underscoring her commitment to thought-provoking conversations. In 2022, she was selected as part of the "Netflix-Banff Diversity of Voices" initiative. Currently, Leila captivates audiences with her CBC web series, "In the Pocket," delving into the vibrant dance communities of Montreal. This exciting partnership highlights her dedication to celebrating the diversity and richness of dance culture.

Through her ambitious projects, Leila seamlessly intertwines her profound passions for travel and dance, channelling their healing and inspirational power to catalyze global change. Leila's artistic endeavours not only reflect her talent but also embody a commitment to fostering connections, understanding, and unity, harnessing their healing and inspirational power to bring about global change.

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## **Ryan Atimoyoo**

Writer

**Gear Room Productions**

Ryan is an Indigenous Cree writer from the Little Pine Reserve, Saskatchewan and has studied at New York's Circle in the Square Theater School and holds a Joint MFA in Screenwriting and Film Production from The University of British Columbia. He is also a graduate of Netflix's Pacific Screenwriting Program in 2021.

In 2021, Ryan completed his first sci-fi, VR short film titled, "Chord VR" which screened at VIFF and worked on Season one of Netflix's, "Grendel" as a Script Coordinator. In 2022, he was a winner of Access Reelworld's competition to join the Writer's Room for the fifth season of "Hudson and Rex", and was a finalist for the NBC Launch Program. He also won a \$20K grant to complete a script and attained two buyer's agreements on two of his scripts. In 2023, Ryan won a \$20K prize to attend MIT's Virtual Reality incubator program, was a semi-finalist for the Fox incubator program and staffed as a Story Editor on the Paramount + series "Skymed" Season two. He has also recently completed his first co-write for CW's "Sullivan's Crossing", is a writer on "Skymed" season three and is currently represented by 3 Arts.

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## Gerald Auger

Creator | Producer | Director | Actor  
**4 Directional Studios**

Producer/Writer/Award-winning Director and Actor Gerald Auger is a Woodland Cree, knowledge keeper, and ceremonialist with a mission to advance the status, expose, and debunk the stereotyping of his people. On his way to following through with career plans as an Entrepreneur Graduate of Business Management, specializing in marketing and management, Gerald found himself working with Hollywood for 20 years as an actor. Although he was a sought-after actor, the roles that were coming to him no longer satisfied his true calling as a visionary and healer. In 2009, he undertook a six-year-long sabbatical in the wilderness – taking time to reconnect to his culture’s spiritual beliefs and values.

His credits include, “Walking Alone” – writer, producer, and director – dealt with Indigenous gangs - receiving industry acclaim, Best Film, and Best Director. Honor Thy Father – for the NFB, CBC & APTN, about spirituality in Indigenous communities, garnered Best Film Cultural Diversity. Warrior Women – a documentary that applauds young Indigenous women intent on reconnecting with their culture, language, spirituality, & healing as products of inter-generational impact from residential schools and colonization. Screen Roles: Pawnee Killer, “Hell on Wheels” (AMC); Soaring Eagle, “Into the West” (Dreamworks); Crow Chief, “Dreamkeeper” (Hallmark Entertainment); Timothy Whiteknife, “Tin Star” (HBO); Chief Wandering Spirit, “Bones of Crows” (CBC); Makamuk, “Lost Face” (Soma Films) - the Top 10 of the Oscars Short Film.

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## **Rodrigo Bascuñán**

Director | Producer | Writer

**Scenario Media**

Rodrigo is an award-winning writer, producer, and director, with a rather serendipitous path... In 1998, Rodrigo founded Canada's largest hip-hop magazine, Pound, which he ran for ten years. He co-authored, "Enter The Babylon System", a look at gun violence through the eyes of the hip-hop generation. Before launching "Scenario", he wrote and produced Netflix's docu-series, "Hip-Hop Evolution". The series was honoured with a Canadian Screen Award, an International Emmy, and a Peabody Award.

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## **Camille Beaudoin**

Director | Writer | Producer

**Mosaic Entertainment Inc.**

Camille Beaudoin is a mixed-blood Indigenous (Cree, Mohawk, Métis) and French- Canadian Writer, Director, and Producer from Treaty 6 territory in Alberta, now based in Vancouver, BC, always firmly rooted on Turtle Island. Camille has spent the last sixteen years as CEO and Creative Producer of Mosaic Entertainment guiding the development, production, and post-production of world-class screen content including three feature films, three mobile games, countless hours of online video, and over 100 episodes of TV. Projects Camille has helmed creatively include the winner of Kidscreen’s “Best Teen Movie”, “#Roxy” starring Booboo Stewart (Disney Descendants) and Danny Trejo (Spy Kids, Machete), four seasons of the comedy series, “Tiny Plastic Men” (nominated for Best Comedy Series at the Canadian Screen Awards three seasons in a row and listed on Vulture.com as one of Canada’s top 25 essential sitcoms), five seasons of the popular sketch comedy series, “Caution: May Contain Nuts” (APTN), and writing and directing, and the inaugural season of the business competition series, “Bears’ Lair” (APTN). Camille also directed six episodes of Lopii Productions’ “Couleurs Du Nord” and wrote the Chiefs of Ontario’s ‘Project Uplift’ rewrite of “Pocahontas”. Most recently, Camille was a contributing writer, director, and producer of “Inheritance”, an innovative interactive feature film exploring Indigenous land rights and reconciliation.

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## **Christopher Bernard**

Creator | Producer | Director | Writer

**Meta Font Productions**

Christopher has contributed his writing talents to, “Lego Friends: The New Chapter” and, “Luna, Chip & Inkie: Adventure Rangers Go!” He is a proud graduate of the Bell Media “Diverse Screenwriters Program”, the BIPOC Kids TV Writing Bootcamp, and the Millennial X Program. Beyond writing, Christopher directs and produces immersive Virtual Reality (VR) experiences, broadening his creative impact. He harbours a deep fascination with the origins of words, amassing a collection of vintage dictionaries, and is driven by a fervent desire to spark the imagination of young viewers. His passion for storytelling was recognized early on; in fifth grade, his teacher encouraged his budding talent by allowing him to craft adventure stories on the classroom’s ‘Commodore 64’ computer. Outside of his professional endeavours, Christopher is a coffee aficionado and enjoys watching children’s programming with his wonderful daughters.

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## Hedyeh Bozorgzadeh

Writer | Producer

**Remembrance Pictures Inc.**

Hedy is an Iranian-Canadian writer-producer and activist with a strong interest in socially conscious impact stories that focus on voices from the margins. She is an alumna of the UBC Film Program, LIFT Mentorship Program, WFF Writers' Lab, Wet Ink Collective, NFB Producer Trainee Program, NSI Business for Producers lab, CFC/Netflix Marketplace Accelerator, WEMW Impact Pyramid lab, and the recipient of grants from Canada Council for the Arts and N.F.B. (Pacific/Yukon). She has completed eight shorts, including, "The Temptation of Mrs. Anderson" (Montreal Short Film Festival, 2003, Sendai Short Film Festival 2003), and "The Silent Torch" as part of the anthology series, The Coloring Book: Digital Stories by Artists of Color, a community initiative at the N.F.B. (nominated, Leo Awards 2009). Hedy's first feature film, "Brother, Man," is currently in development with the CBC, Telefilm (Stream for Black and People of Colour), CMF (PPRC), and Creative BC (Project Development Fund). She won the WFF Power Pitch 2019 for the project. Hedy was part of Telefilm's RDVCANADA - MEET THE PRODUCERS initiative SXSW 2022 as well as the Banff Spark 2022 cohort.

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## **Trevor Cameron**

Writer | Director | Producer

### **Trevor Cameron**

Trevor is a Métis Writer, Director, and Producer. His work has been screened across the land and on TV internationally. Trevor was nominated for four Geminis (now Canadian Screen Awards), and several other international awards, including the Chicago International Children's Film Festival (Jury Award), and The American Indian Film Festival (Best Animation). From independent movies, documentary films to Children's TV, Trevor moved to a variety of other productions, primarily as a writer and director. Trevor's interest in telling Métis-specific stories has given him a distinct voice and perspective. Trevor Cameron looks for truth in life. In pursuit of stories, he's sacrificed complacency for U-Haul trailers and goes out of his way to create Métis characters.

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## Jay Cardinal Villeneuve

Filmmaker

**Reel Métis Mafia Films Inc.**

When Jay Cardinal Villeneuve, a Nêhiyawî-Bush Cree/Métis, arrived in Vancouver, he had just dropped out of college on a Theatre Scholarship, determined to be a filmmaker. Armed with a camcorder and an “exotic look” (according to casting directors), he shot numerous no-budget short films and played bit parts in some illfated TV shows. Day jobs included telemarketing (sorry folks), film projection, and performing in Gastown’s Storyeum Theatre until he got into Capilano University and graduated from the Indigenous Film Program. Jay then worked as a videographer recording private statements with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for several years while concurrently shooting his own projects; some playing festivals. He directed the critically acclaimed NFB documentary, “Holy Angels” which won him a Leo Award for Screenwriting, and recently wrapped his Louis Riel short drama, “Gods & Devils” which was shot on 35mm film, and will be hitting festivals this year.

He’s currently in production with the National Screen Institute - directing a short documentary on the “Tiny House Warriors”, and he can be spotted on Netflix; most recently in “The Mother”, opposite Jennifer Lopez! Although he’s still just Jay from the block. (lol). He also has three rad kids who often star in his cardinal cinéma c[art]el indie films.

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## Marlene Castanos Ortega

Producer | Director

**Divine Spark Films**

Marlene is a Mexican-Canadian filmmaker focusing on middle-aged female protagonists and exploring spiritual and psychological themes rooted in her Mexican heritage. With a background in acting, psychology, and transpersonal body-mind therapy, she brings a unique perspective to storytelling. In Canada, Marlene has contributed as a producer, production manager, and coordinator for various scripted and unscripted feature films and TV shows, including projects like “The Making of Percy Jackson,” “A Hero’s Journey,” “Heart of Gold,” and “Indigena,” as well as numerous independent short films. Currently, she is attached as an episodic director for unscripted TV shows with Silverlight Entertainment.

Marlene’s directorial debut, the short film “Teresa’s Choice,” showcased her storytelling skills, while her first feature documentary, “Good to Go,” was developed as part of Whistler Film Festival’s Doc Lab 2023-2024. She has also been selected as part of the Netflix-BANFF Diversity of Voices Initiative in 2024. As a BIPOC female creator, Marlene is committed to fostering opportunities for racialized and female collaborators, aiming to craft artistically compelling films that inspire and elevate human consciousness.

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## **Shubham Chhabra**

Director | Producer | Writer

**Honeywagon Media Inc.**

Shubham is a Director/Writer/Producer with an unquenchable passion for sharing compelling narratives rooted in South Asian culture. Having helmed numerous short films and documentaries, each with a distinctive voice and profound messages, Shubham's acclaimed short film "Cash Cows", which is the story of a young immigrant falling into an employment scam, secured the Best Screenplay award at the Mighty Asian Moviemaking Marathon in 2023, and is currently doing its festival runs.

His commitment to social issues is evident in the impactful Telus Storyhive's documentary "Ride Failing," shedding light on the challenges of wheelchair accessibility within Vancouver's taxi and ride-hailing services and another thought-provoking Telus documentary titled "Through My Eyes - An Artist's Re-Creation." This ongoing series intricately captures an artist with vision loss redefining her painting process. Shubham is currently working on writing and directing a documentary version of his short film "Cash Cows" highlighting the exploitation of international students. Beyond his independent projects, Shubham contributes as an assistant director to renowned TV shows and feature films such as "Fire Country," "Lost in Space," "Riverdale," and Disney's "Peter Pan & Wendy."

[honeywagonmedia.com](https://honeywagonmedia.com)

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## **Andrew Chiu**

Creator | Producer

**SRRNDR Content**

Andrew Chiu is a producer/creator with a Bronze Prize from Creative Pool and nominations from Shots, Webbys, and Shorty Awards. A Producer on Elvis Deane's "The Thought Of You" which premiered at "Blood In The Snow," Andrew's first short "Romantic Rouse", won the Audience Award for Best Short Comedy at Woods Hole Film Festival. His short BREATH ANEW premiered at Cinémathèque Québécoise and is distributed on SVOD. Andrew was chosen as an Emerging 20 by Reelworld and is an alumni of the Reelworld Producers Program and talent labs at Reykjavik, BiFan (South Korea), and Netflix Forum RIDM.

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## **Lisa Michelle Cornelius**

Producer | Actor

**Sunday Baby Films Inc.**

Lisa Michelle is an actor, producer and founder of Sunday Baby Films Inc. Sunday Baby Films is a Toronto-based production company with feature films, shorts and TV projects in development. One of her shorts, “To The Core” is a documentary on the prevalent rise of C-Section births happening around the world. It’s currently in development with funding support from Canada Council for the Arts and will be Lisa Michelle’s directorial debut. Filmmakers Monica Mustelier and Shonna Foster will co-produce. Lisa Michelle’s previous producer credits include the short film Rainbow Baby (2021), which currently appears on CBC & CBC Gem as part of their “Canadian Reflections” program. Lisa Michelle also served as Executive Producer of the feature film, “Pattern” (2022) screened at the Reelworld Film Festival, Montreal Black Film Festival and more, including being nominated for Best Feature at the British Urban Film Festival. “Pattern” is currently streaming on Highball TV.

In 2023, Lisa Michelle was selected to participate in the Reelworld Screen Institute Producer Program and is a member of Women in Film & TV Toronto (WIFT). In addition to performing and producing, Lisa Michelle is passionate about supporting artists through advocacy and mentorship, as well as bolstering diversity in all aspects of the film & TV industry. She was previously the co-chair of ACTRA Toronto’s Diversity & Inclusion committee, as well as an elected ACTRA Councillor and Executive Vice President.

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## Norm Coyne

Producer | Writer | Director

**Barker Street Cinema**

Norm Coyne is a Smelqmix/Syilx producer, writer, and director. Through the years, Norm's projects have appeared in Mashable, Fox News, CBR, Paste, CBC, Mental Floss, Nerdist, Playback and on Kevin Smith's podcast "Fatman Beyond". In 2015, Norm founded the blockbuster event Northern FanCon. The convention has hosted stars in Northern British Columbia including William Shatner, Kevin Smith, Nichelle Nichols, Lou Ferrigno, Tricia Helfer, Alan Tudyk and Karl Urban to name a few. Identifying its opportunity, Norm has developed the event into a local film industry catalyst and seen amazing results.

During his film career, Norm was executive producer of the acclaimed adaptation of Stephen King's, "The Doctor's Case" which went on to win awards at festivals internationally and was reported by ScreenRant as "The 5th Best Stephen King film adaptation (according to IMDB)". The momentum from the film helped Norm spearhead efforts to build film industry in Northern British Columbia. In 2021, he produced the feature films, "A Great North Christmas"(available on Tubi & Apple TV) and "The Way to the Heart" (available on Super Channel and Amazon Prime). In 2023, he was nominated for an Indiescreen award by the Canadian Media Producers Association in the "Emerging Producer" category for his work developing rural shooting locations.

Most recently, Conquest, a film he wrote and produced, world premiered at Fantasia International Film Festival and has been receiving acclaim at screenings since.

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## Seema Doad

Actor | Creator | Producer

**Two Wrongs Productions Inc.**

Seema Doad is an Indo-Canadian actor with over a decade of experience as a proud ACTRA member. She has appeared in notable projects including “The Handmaid’s Tale” (Hulu), “Jack Ryan” (Amazon), “Slasher” (Shudder), and “Accused” (Fox). Having been raised by hard-working immigrant parents, it was not easy to imagine a straightforward path to pursuing a career in the creative arts. Over the years, armed with wisdom gained through trial, error, and life experience, she discovered that you just have to start somewhere (anywhere) and fail along the way.

Her pilot project, “Two Wrongs”, stands as a testament to Seema’s commitment to understanding the intricacies of filmmaking. By co-creating and producing the project, she has embraced the challenges of being in front of the camera while also delving into the complexities behind it. The dual role of actor and producer has helped her embrace a multifaceted approach to gaining a comprehensive understanding of telling stories on screen.

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## **Arnolda Dufour Bowes**

Writer

### **Arnolda Dufour Bowes**

Arnolda Dufour Bowes is a Cree-Métis iskwêw, mom and wife from Saskatchewan with family roots from Sâkitawâk (Île à la Crosse), George Gordon First Nation and Punnichy, Sask. Her first book, “20.12m: A Short Story Collection of a Life Lived as a Road Allowance Metis”, received the Danuta Gleed Literary Award for 2021, and won the ‘High Plains Award for Best Indigenous Author’ in 2022. She is a Playwright Resident of the Gordon Tootosis Nîkânîwin Theatre in Saskatoon, and is an emerging screenwriter excited to be a part of Whistler’s Film Festival: Indigenous Filmmaker Fellowship. Her first novel for young readers, “Maggie-Lou, Firefox”, published by Groundwood Books, was released in October 2023 to rave reviews and received a star review from Kirkus Reviews. Her first non-fiction book, “Métis: The People & Nation,” was released by Saunders Books, an educational publisher, in January 2024.

Her most current work includes a short prose, “The Unravelling,” published in a literary magazine, ‘Grain’, in Winter 2024. She is excited to announce that her sensory art display, “Apples & Traintracks,” will be featured at Wanuskewin and Allan Sapp Galleries in the spring and fall of 2024. Arnolda continually searches for ways to improve and expand her craft and loves the art of sharing stories in a variety of forms.

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## **Mathew Edassery**

Co-Founder | Director

**Karuvachy Films Canada**

Mathew Edassery is a Toronto-based activist producer, creating spaces to promote diverse South Asian & BIPOC talents in the Canadian Film, Music and Media landscape. Acting on the dream of creating media to inspire change and influence action towards an inclusive and just world; Mathew, along with filmmaker Leena Manimekalai formed Karuvachy Films Canada Inc and produces impactful cinema addressing intersectional topics of climate, race and gender. Mathew is also Partner- Director of Dream Machine Productions Inc, a Toronto-based Event Company unleashing a new wave of South Asian sound, culture and creative energy into the North American entertainment scene.

His current projects “Saracura The Film” - A participatory climate cinema in Amazon ([www.saracurathefilm.com](http://www.saracurathefilm.com)), and “I Will Not Keep Quiet” – A feature documentary on rape survivors in India.

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## **Pablo Garcia**

Writer

**River Plate Films**

Pablo Garcia began his career writing for the landmark First Nations series, “Blackstone”. He currently has two scripts in pre-production for an anthology series by American director Alan Jacobs and is developing a limited series with Montreal producer Josette Perrotta.

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## Léa Geronimo

Director | Writer | Creator

Léa Geronimo (they/she) is a Francophone, Filipino-Caucasian, writer-director from a small town near Montreal. Now, in Toronto, Léa writes and directs short films, and develops their own slate of original TV series ideas. Their work explores the sometimes funny, sometimes difficult, parts of being human through their lens of offbeat humour. They've been selected to BIPOC TV/FILM's Showrunner Bootcamp led by Anthony Q. Farrell, Warren P. Sonoda's Directing Masterclass, the WIDC, Netflix-Banff DOV initiative, Reelworld's E20 program, to name a few. They've recently joined the prestigious Warner Bros Discover x Canadian Academy Writers Program. Léa has directed several episodes on several children's series (CBC Kids, TVO) and wrote for the Peabody-winning series, "Sort Of" (CBC, Max), garnering them a nomination for Best Writing in a Comedy Series from the Writers Guild of Canada. They've begun work on their first full-length film script intended as their feature directorial debut.

[leageronimo.com](http://leageronimo.com)

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## Hunter Grant

Writer

**Tooth and Nail Pictures**

Hunter Grant is an emerging Indigenous-Canadian writer. An Interior Salish Status Indian, he is also of mixed South Asian, West Asian, and European ancestry. His native language is English, but he also speaks and writes fluent French and Spanish. A frequent collaborator with his sister, Tooth & Nail founder Eva Grant, and a recent graduate of writing and film from the University of Victoria. He is a lover of genre horror, supernatural, sci-fi, comedy, and experimental storytelling. Recent and current credits include; script coordinator for “Degrees Of Separation”; story editor for “Forest Echoes”; and co-writer/co-director on “Entity”, a sci-fi feature screenplay currently in development. “Entity” was workshopped through the ReelWorld Screen Institute, pitched at the “Blood in the Snow Film Festival’s - Horror Development Lab”, and received development funding through CreativeBC and the Rogers Indigenous Film Fund. When not at Tooth & Nail, Hunter works with Tyhee Financial Services on community-based capital projects on First Nations lands, such as the construction of schoolhouses, daycares, health buildings, band offices, recreational facilities, and other initiatives for remote and under-serviced populations. A multisport athlete, Hunter also coaches youth rugby, most recently with the Thunder Indigenous Rugby Sevens, on their recent tours to California and New Zealand.

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## Yasmeen Grant

Lawyer | Creative Producer

**Tooth and Nail Pictures, Ltd.**

Yasmeen Grant is a BIPOC lawyer and producer for Tooth & Nail Pictures, an Indigenous-led film production company founded by her daughter, Eva Grant. Yasmeen is a first-generation Canadian of South Asian and European descent, and a graduate of the United World College of Southeast Asia, McGill University, and the University of Victoria's Faculty of Law. Yasmeen is fluent in English, French, German, Spanish, and Portuguese, working as an advocate and interpreter for South American Indigenous groups seeking to protect traditional knowledge and ecosystems. In 2008 she co-produced a two-part documentary for CBC Radio Ideas, entitled, "In Search of the Divine Vegetal," which focused on plant medicines of the Amazon and Andes. In researching this program, Yasmeen conducted and translated dozens of interviews with tribal Elders from across the Continent.

Yasmeen is a producer on the short-form series, "Degrees of Separation," currently in pre-production. Recent productions include the analog shorts, "How to Summon a Demon" and "Mechanism", as well as "Forest Echoes", for TELUS Storyhive. She is also developing an indigi-horror feature entitled, "Entity", funded by Creative BC, and an Indigenous sci-fi project entitled, "Ectopia". Yasmeen is currently developing industry protocols which uphold Indigenous cultural property. She also heads Legal & Asset Management for Tyhee Financial Services, an indigenously owned financial services company specializing in economic development and project management.

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## **Bernard Gray**

Director | Writer

**MPEG6 Productions**

After over twelve years of working as a producer in the agency production industry, Bernard Gray has embarked on his long-held dream of writing and directing commercial, episodic and feature content. Having worked with brands like Nike, NBA, Roots, Lego, Samsung, BMW and Air Canada, Bernard is a proven and accomplished storyteller. Genuinely curious and fiercely inquisitive, comfort is no friend to him. His drive to persistently learn and establish new strengths fuels his willingness to step outside what is familiar and endeavour to do what is difficult.

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## **Kamika Bianca Guerra-Walker**

Director | Writer

**The Paes Co.**

Kamika Bianca Guerra–Walker of Jamaican and Chilean heritage is a Calgarian, Multidisciplinary visionary - creating as a visual artist, poet, model, actress, and excels as a film director, producer, and writer. Her films have garnered recognition from prominent organizations for their ability to evoke empathy and change in treatment toward those experiencing mental illnesses, addictions, and homelessness. She is an alumni of The Canadian Academy of Cinema and Television’s Executive Residency Program, Netflix and FCF’s Being Black in Canada program, Arts Commons TD Incubator Program, Telus/Storyhive Black Creators Edition Program and has been a delegate with BIPOC TV & FILM and The Black Screen Office for Content Canada, VIFF, EFM and Berlinale. Kamika is the founder of mental health organization, The Walker Foundation and sits on the board of the Black Arts and Culture Council of Calgary.

She has directed short films, documentaries, docu-series, commercial advertisements and music videos. Kamika is currently in development for her directorial debut, feature documentary, “Finding My Way Back to You” which follows her journey of reuniting with her father in Jamaica after being separated for 13 years at the hands of the Canadian government due to his diagnosis of schizophrenia. Kamika’s ultimate aspiration is to continue exploring and blending artistic mediums to ignite societal change and inspire individuals to always approach life with compassion instead of judgment.

[kamika.ca](http://kamika.ca)

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## Zeynep Güler Tuck

Producer | Creator

**Özlu Creative + Community**

Zeynep is a Turkish-Canadian creator, producer, and emerging director who has led broadcast spots, web series projects, and newsworthy features with major U.S. & global media brands. Her digital content has inspired audiences all over the world to view, click, and donate \$1M+ to causes like social justice, STEM education for girls, and climate action. Zeynep's media company, Özlu Creative + Community, produces content and events for social change. She comes into filmmaking with a digital-first, equitable lens, and a drive to highlight the intersection of STEM and arts.

[ozlucc.com/portfolio-for-zeynep](https://ozlucc.com/portfolio-for-zeynep)

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## Brandon Hackett

Writer | Creator

Brandon Hackett is a Toronto-based comedian, actor and TV Writer. He served as an Executive Story Editor on the sitcom “Shelved” and as a Producer on “The Next Step” Season 8. He has also written for the shows The Popularity Papers, Run the Burbs, Tall Boyz, This Hour Has 22 Minutes and The Beaverton, the latter two garnering Canadian Screen Award nominations for Best Writing in Variety or Sketch Comedy. His feature screenplay “Toughen Up” was part of the 2023 Whistler Film Festival Screenwriters’ Lab. On the performance side, Brandon is an alumnus of Toronto’s Second City Mainstage, where he co-wrote and performed four revues, including the Canadian Comedy Award-nominated “Party Today (Panic Tomorrow)” and “The Best is Yet to Come Undone”. He is currently developing shows with several production companies, including his pilot “Burn It All Down”, and will be co-starring in the upcoming movie, “Paige Darcy and the Case of the Stoned Cat.”

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## Ahlam Hassan

Director | Writer | Actor

**Shoufini Films**

Ahlam Hassan is a writer, director and actor for the stage and screen. She is also a programmer at the Toronto Palestine Film Festival and Reelworld Film Festival. Her documentary short “DRM1000: Intro to Performance” about Black students graduating from theatre school, premiered at the 2023 Toronto Black Film Festival and has since toured across Canada. Ahlam produced a 16mm analogue short film titled “Bleak as the Setting Sun”, by writer-director Joanna Decc which will have its world premiere at the Canadian Film Fest in March 2024. Other short films Ahlam has produced include DELUGE (2023) written by Grace Wang and Rimah Jabr; and “Road Trip/ رحلة” for writer-director Rolla Tahir, about multi-generational Arab women journeying to take their Canadian citizenship test. Ahlam has recently been commissioned by Toronto Arab Film to create a short film titled, “Shouf!” with her collaborator Talal Itani. In 2021, she was selected for the inaugural “Image + nation StoryLab/ histoires queer contemporaines”, where she completed a screenplay under the mentorship of Eisha Majara that is now in pre-production.

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## Chris Hsiung

Producer

**Hidden Story Productions**

Chris Hsiung is an engineer turned documentary filmmaker. He runs Hidden Story Productions, a company dedicated to using digital media to nurture a more compassionate, just, and intelligent society. His friendships with Indigenous communities have led to several film collaborations including three feature documentaries, “Elder in the Making”, “Fox Chaser”, and “Warrior Fathers” all of which aired on CBC. Two of the films won an award for Best Feature Documentary. He produced over 30 short films and a 360 projection at the new Royal Alberta Museum, and the content and multimedia for a 32,000 square feet exhibit called the Indigenous Cultural Centre in Fort Edmonton which won a THEA Award for Outstanding Heritage Exhibit.

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## **Sandy Hudson**

Creator | Producer | Writer

### **Above the Palace**

Sandy Hudson is a producer, best-selling author, activist, and most recently, a lawyer. In 2022, alongside Rodney Diverlus, Hudson founded Above the Palace, an independent production company that aims to use storytelling as a tool for social change. Above the Palace's first production, "Aftercare" premiered at TIFF in 2023. Hudson is also a co-executive producer on Leslie Norville/Studio 112's "Black Life: Untold Stories", an eight-part docuseries about Black history in Canada currently airing on CBC Gem. She co-edited (with Rodney Diverlus and Syrus Marcus Ware) the Canadian bestseller, "Until We Are Free: Reflections on Black Lives Matter in Canada" (2020). Hudson's second book, "Defund: Black Lives, Policing, and Safety for All" (working title), is due for release in 2025. She is also a co-founder of Wildseed Centre for Art & Activism, a Black-owned and operated art-based community centre in Toronto. Her published work appears in Maclean's Magazine, The Washington Post, and The Toronto Star, and Huffington Post among others. Hudson holds a JD from the UCLA School of Law and a Master of Arts in Social Justice Education from the University of Toronto. She is best known for her work bringing the Black Lives Matter movement to Canada.

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## **Bree Island**

Director | Writer

**Mixed Creatives**

Bree Island is a member of the Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, from Treaty 8 territory. She is a visual artist, storyteller, and aspiring filmmaker. Much of her creative practice is focused on reclaiming ancestral knowledge, weaving stories old and new, decolonizing spaces, and imagining Indigenous futurisms. Her art and stories also an intimate sharing of nehiyaw / Cree worldviews and teachings and honors connections to land and spirit. Bree is in early development with her animated short film “ahcahkopyêsis”, a nehiyaw / Cree story about language reclamation set in a vibrant and surreal animated Woodland art world. She is also in the early stages of co-writing an animated Indigenous futurism/sci-fi limited series. Bree is the owner of “Mixed Creatives”, an Indigenous indie VFX and animation studio, operating out of the Coast Salish territories. They are currently working on several inspiring Indigenous film projects, including VFX/CGI for a Haudenosaunee dark fairy tale short film.

<https://mixedcreatives.com>

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## Satinder Kassoana

Creator | Director

**Breathing Forest Productions Inc**

Satinder is an Indian-Canadian filmmaker/actor passionate about exploring cultural diversity through his works. His technical and storytelling skills merge to create cinema that explores and celebrates the rich tapestry of cultural identities. His first short film, “Bonjour Ji (Eng/French),” broke new ground by challenging prejudices across races and communities and swept the Best Short Film awards at five international film festivals, marking its presence at prestigious events like the International Film Festival of South Asia Toronto 2015 and the Richmond International Film Festival USA in 2016.

His versatility as a relentless filmmaker was showcased again in “Don’t Walk Among the Dead”, an apocalyptic short film shot in the -35 degree winter of Alberta, realized through Telus’s funding and a successful Kickstarter campaign. While working as an editor for a leading production studio in Calgary, Satinder expanded his scope to documentaries with “Hockey United” in 2017, covering the compelling story of an Indian-descent ice hockey player. The doc earned a nomination for ‘Best Production Representing Cultural Diversity’ at the AMPIA Awards Alberta. With his crime drama feature film “Range Road 290 (2023),” Satinder delivered a Canadian-Punjabi film that brimmed with authenticity and cultural depth. It received critical acclaim in both India and Canada upon its theatrical release, especially after being spotlighted at the International Film Festival of South Asia Toronto.”

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## **Kathleen Edwards**

Director | Writer | Producer | Editor

## **KJ Edwards**

KJ Edwards is a Kanien'kehá:ka, mixed-settler filmmaker and media artist. Her family is from Kahnawa:ké and Longueuil, Quebec, Canada; while KJ was born and raised in Treaty 6 Territory, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Holding a BFA in Film Production from the Toronto Metropolitan University, KJ is trained in narrative, documentary and experimental filmmaking techniques, using both analogue and digital hybrid workflows. She is a 2023 MFA graduate from Emily Carr University of Art + Design. Her thesis work involved eco-processing analogue film, reflecting on the unpredictability of the medium as that of a collaborator, and the ways that dreams and memory can offer creative pathways toward content creation. KJ's 2021 short film, "Meet The Sky", starring Chanin Lee, T'áncháy Redvers, and Cheri Maracle, is still making festival rounds two years after premiering at the 2021 American Indian Film Festival, where it was nominated for "Best Live Short". "Meet The Sky" won Best of BC and the Short Film Impact Award at the 2023 Vancouver International Women in Film Festival. She is currently developing the film into a feature with funding from the Canada Arts Council and The Indigenous Screen Office, this feature was pitched at the first-ever Indigenous Screen Summit at the Banff World Media Festival in 2022. She is also currently in post-production of an analogue hybridmedia project called, "Tethers" that will be completed this year.

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## **Alireza Kazemipour**

Writer | Director

Alireza Kazemipour is a multi-award-winning Iranian-Canadian screenwriter and director with a master's degree in Cinema Studies from the University of Tehran. During a prolific screenwriting career in Iran spanning more than two decades, he has written for 32 series and mini-series (more than 750 episodes, four feature films, and 14 MOW as a series creator, writer, head-writer or co-writer in various genres. Since immigrating to Vancouver, Canada in 2016, he has written and directed three short films that have been screened in more than 220 Film festivals around the world, including Palm Springs, Interfilm Berlin, Short Shorts, Tirana, and Fribourg Film Festival, and have received 64 awards and nominations, including a LEO award for best screenwriting in Short Drama in 2023, Best Direction Award from the Reelworld Film Festival in 2022 and Best Directing Award from the Vancouver Short Film Festival in 2020. Alireza's work is often concerned with social justice, women's rights, and immigrant issues.

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## **Maria Kennedy**

Owner | Producer

**Little Engine Moving Pictures**

Maria Kennedy is the owner and co-founder of Little Engine Moving Pictures, a creator-driven company that specializes in producing and distributing original, award-winning live-action, CGI hybrid, and animated series and companion interactive for an international audience. Maria oversees Little Engine's business and sales strategy while maintaining strong partnerships with Canadian broadcasters, streamers and funding agencies. Her expertise lies in financing and pre-sales of new series. Since 2014, Maria has executive-produced 6 original children's series. Her science-based preschool series, "Now You Know" (78x7min) aired in over 100 territories, including Starz in the US and AMC Networks in Europe. Maria has rapidly earned a reputation for producing progressive kids' content that travels the world, winning awards at Kidscreen, Youth Media Alliance, and W3 Digital Awards, and receiving nominations for the Banff International Pilot Award and Prix Jeunesse Germany.

Maria has partnered with TVO, Knowledge Network, CBC, TFO, Société Radio-Canada, SuperChannel, OMNI, and funding agencies Shaw Rocket Fund, Canada Media Fund, Ontario Creates, Bell Fund, Rogers Telefund and COGECO Fund. Maria is on the board of directors for the Youth Media Alliance and a PAC board member for Centennial College Children's Media Program. She advocates gender, BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ equality, and champions equity in the workplace.

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## **Nauzanin Knight**

Writer | Director | Producer

**1844 Studios**

Nauzanin Knight is a Canadian writer, director and producer of Caribbean and Middle Eastern heritage. With a passion for social issues, she creates stories that reflect her unique background and international experiences. Nauzanin holds an MSc from University College London and is a published writer. She shifted her focus to filmmaking and has since written, directed, and produced a range of films, including “My Lyric I Never Knew,” (American Indian Film Festival; CBC Gem); “Precarity” (TELUS Optik On-Demand); “Notes on Being Un-Popular” (CINEfam/TIFF, the Big Pitch Audience Choice Award Winner 2022). She is in the process of directing “White Sands” (NFB). Outside of her own projects, she held the position of Story Editor on CityTV’s Hudson & Rex and director of reality series “The Sugar Mama”.

Nauzanin has also been recognized by Women in the Director’s Chair, the Whistler Film Festival Doc Lab, and the BANFF Spark, etc. She is a board member of BE Collective and EDI chair of the Alberta Media Production Industries Association. As an Executive Producer of 1844 Studios, Nauzanin is dedicated to fostering international artistic collaborations and promoting the universality of human emotions through striking stories. She believes in contributing to the discourse of diversity and inclusion in the film and television industry, having designed and published a guide titled “Building Inclusive Networks in the Film and Television Industry” in 2022.

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## **Jules Koostachin**

Producer | Writer | Director

**VisJuelles Productions Inc.**

Dr. Jules Arita Koostachin (Attawapiskat) is an award-winning filmmaker, mother, writer, performance artist and academic. With her background in community work, social justice themes emerge in her films, alongside bravery, healing, connection and humour. Jules honours her Cree-speaking grandparents who raised her, and her mother, a residential school Survivor/warrior. Relying on a creative eye, keen mind and strong heart, Jules' accomplishments include raising four sons while pursuing academics and artistry. Graduating from Concordia University's Theatre program, Jules went on to Ryerson University's Documentary Media master's program, receiving early recognition with an Award of Distinction and an Academic Gold Medal for her thesis documentary film, Remembering Inninimowin. Jules went on to do her Ph.D. in Indigenous documentary and protocols and processes, through the Institute of Gender, Race, Sexuality and Social Justice program at the University of British Columbia. Jules is represented by The Characters Talent (acting) and Lucas Talent (writing, directing).

[juleskoostachin.com](http://juleskoostachin.com)

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## **Jenny Lee-Gilmore**

Writer | Director | Actor

**Sleepy Girl Pictures**

Jenny Lee-Gilmore is an actor & filmmaker based in Vancouver, BC. She completed her BFA in Film Production at the University of British Columbia in 2019. Her debut short film Breakaway played in festivals across North America and was selected in the Top 9 of 2020's CBC Short Film Face Off. She recently wrote and directed a TELUS Originals mid-length documentary, entitled Overtime, about her mom's 55+ hockey team which earned her a nomination for the "One To Watch" award by the Vancouver Film Critics Circle. She was a member of the 2021 VIFF Catalyst mentorship program, BIPOC TV & Film Showrunner Bootcamp, 2023 GEMS TV Producer Lab and the Women In The Director's Chair Story & Leadership program. She's in post-production with CBC Short Doc, "Little Miss Sleepy" about her diagnosis with the neurological condition narcolepsy. She's currently writing a horror feature titled, "Dormant" inspired by her journey with narcolepsy and co-writing the feature drama, "Mixed Feelings" with Alyssa Aussant. Jenny is passionate about telling female-centric and Asian Canadian stories that are often overlooked or neglected by mainstream media and strives to create meaningful and authentic stories that resonate with audiences.

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## Ryan Mah

Director

**Black Rhino Creative**

Ryan Mah is a filmmaker based in Vancouver, Canada. A founding member of award-winning production company Black Rhino Creative, he has 10 years of extensive background experience in documentary productions that have screened on CBC, AMI TV, Knowledge Network, Telus Optik and Air Canada. He thrives on building relationships both on and off camera sharing his expertise in filmmaking by sitting on the National Screen Institute as a mentor and as a moderator for Telus Storyhive.

[blackrhinocreative.com](http://blackrhinocreative.com)

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## **Moniquea Marion**

Writer | Comedian | Producer

**Slaw Paw Productions**

Moniquea Marion is a Saskatchewan based Métis writer, comedian, and producer. She is a graduate of the Second City Conservatory in Toronto and the Upright Citizen's Brigade Theatre in NYC. She is one of six writers from across Canada to participate in the inaugural Reelworld Training Lab presented by Amazon MGM Studios. She was one of four writing/producing teams from across Canada to participate in last year's National Screen Institute's Series Incubator for her original scripted comedic series, Demon Child. She was also a part of last year's inaugural Creative Saskatchewan's Whistler Film Festival Market Accelerator for Fuel Up as an emerging producer. In 2022 she was part of the Women in Animation ACE accelerator with her original animated children's series, Yami's World. And before that in 2019 was a selected participant in the Reelworld E20 program. Marion is a twice nominated contender for Best Female Improviser by NOW Magazine in 2014 and 2015. She's responsible for creating and starring in three successful web series. She has written, produced, and starred in two successful one-woman comedic Fringe shows, "Glorious Loser" in 2018 and "Mumsical" in 2015 and she's a veteran performer of the Toronto and Montreal Sketch Comedy Festivals, The Big City Improv Festival and the SheDot Festival.

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## **Émilie Martel**

Creator | Director | Producer

**Kannon Films Inc.**

Émilie is a Franco-Ontarian with mixed Québécois and Huron-Wendat ancestry. She directed, wrote and produced diverse series spanning various genres, mostly her original creations. She has directed and produced two seasons of the animated youth series called, “Les Métis: notre culture, nos histoires”(19x13min); she created, wrote and directed a Géméau nominated non-scripted tween cooking series called, “Petites bouchées du monde” (33x13min) and created, co-directed and co-wrote a fictional teen series about girls in a hockey league called, “Gang de hockey” (8x13min). She also directed and produced a diverse portfolio of non-fiction series and independent films such as “Alias Marie-Soleil” (1x48min), “Quimsacocha” (1x8min), “Au coeur du Yukon” (7x52 min) and “180” (14x22min).. Her projects have received support from Hot Docs, the Canadian Council for the Arts, the Ontario Art Council, among others. In 2018, She received the Canadian Women Artists’ Award from the New York State Council on the Arts. She is also an alumna of Women in the Director’s Chair and the Access BIPOC Producer program from the National Screen Institute of Canada. She is currently working on a diverse portfolio of fiction and non-fiction series, shining a spotlight on women-centric stories, cultural diversity, and environmental themes.

[kannonfilms.com](http://kannonfilms.com)

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## Nicolas Martinez Sanchez

Creator | Producer | Writer

### Count on Montecristo

Nicolas Martinez Sanchez discovered his ambition and his passion at the age of 18, while working a summer job on the set of “The Last of Us”. Following that venture, he enrolled at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) during the fall of 2021, entering the esteemed Film and Video Production Program. Upon completing the first year, Nicolas was given the role of Media Production Coordinator for Calgary Pride, spearheading the “Calgary Pride Cast” (2022) as producer, director, editor and host. His creative journey continued, as he wrote and directed the super 16mm short “Crimson Emulsion”, and produced the highly acclaimed music video “Now in Color”. In 2023, his tenure at SAIT ended triumphantly by being one out of eight students to receive the “Warner Media Equity Award” for demonstrating academic achievement. A week after graduation, Nicolas was contracted by Telus to create his own LIVE reality show “Authentically Albertan”, serving multifaceted roles such as producer, director, writer, host and editor. The show’s unique premise impacted Alberta by showcasing the stories of its local entrepreneurs and artists. The first season captivated audiences throughout the summer of 2023, securing a lasting legacy as the show found a new home under Telus’ “On Location” program, in the ensuing fall and winter. Nicolas has also contributed to the Calgary indie scene through working in the AD department of Suncross Productions’ “The Children of Ar” and “The Woodsman”.

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## **Berend McKenzie**

Creator | Writer | Producer

**Small Brown Package Productions**

Berend's writing journey began in 2004 crafting short plays for the Loud & Queer Festival in Edmonton, Alberta. These pieces include, Bloodbath at St. Paul's, Jones'n, Wiener Talk, Fashion Police and Meet the Munts. These early works laid the foundation for their first full-length play, the outrageous and award-winning, queer puppet show for adults, Get Off the Cross Mary! They also created the award-winning one-person show for young people, NGGRFG, performing in schools, festivals, and theaters across Canada and into Europe. In 2021, Berend wrote their debut feature film, Hockey Night in Canada, and joined the inaugural year of the WBD Access X Canadian Academy Writer's Program, crafting their first pilot for the studio, Angry Little Black Man. Berend's published works include NGGRFG (Signature Editions,) Tassels (Brindle & Glass,) and Hockey Night in Canada (Arsenal Pulp Press.) Berend is currently completing their first auto-fiction novel, "Out/Liar". Berend's theatre acting credits include: "Poor Superman", "The Tempest" and their award-winning turn as Charlotte in Christopher Durang's, "Beyond Therapy". Berend's film and TV acting credits include: "Life or Something Like It" (Angelina Jolie), "Catwoman" (Halle Berry), "Jeremiah", "Cold Squad" and "Andromeda".

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## **Giselle Miller**

Writer | Director | Producer

**Orange Rose Productions**

Giselle Miller is a Jamaican-Canadian writer, actor and filmmaker living in Vancouver. Giselle fell in love with storytelling early, winning her first writing competition at 13. After completing an MFA in Creative Writing at UBC, she went on to write, produce and direct several short films and two seasons of the Leo Award-nominated web series, “Young, Single and Black.” Giselle also received Leo Award-nominations for her performance in the series. Last year, Giselle released two other web series “Big People Tingz” and “Yolanda the goddess.”

In 2023, Giselle was a participant in the Fiction Toolbox at the European Film Market, the Whistler Screenwriters Lab and the GEMS Emerging TV Producers Program. Her play, “The Spirit Has Teeth” was selected for the Or Festival and had its world premiere at the Jericho Arts Centre in 2023. Most recently, Giselle participated in Reykjavik Talent Lab and the WIDC Story & Leadership Program. One of the reasons Giselle became a filmmaker was to elevate black female voices in the industry. She wants to tell the types of stories that she isn’t seeing on screen so that they reflect complex, nuanced images of black people. Her productions have been featured in the Women of African Descent Film Festival, the Roma Shorts Film Festival and the Reel Q: Pittsburgh LGBTQ+ Film Festival. Giselle is the founder of Orange Rose Productions, a company that focuses on telling stories from black communities.

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## **Vanessa Mitchell**

Creator | Producer

**Madden & Mitchell Media Inc.**

Vanessa Mitchell is a creator, producer, actress and the co-founder of Madden & Mitchell Media Inc. who regards art as activism. Her background in advocacy propels her to develop content that authentically represents these diverse stories. Vanessa is currently developing three TV series. In partnership with Archipelago Productions, her serialized drama/comedy called, “Baked Goods” dives into the impacts of marginalization on a racial diverse community in Scarborough through the lens of a Jamaican- Canadian family. In co-production with Hungry Eyes Media, a limited drama series, “That Lonesome Road” which explores the largely untold stories of Black Canadian Freedom Fighters; Viola Desmond and Carrie Best writing by award winning author Lawrence Hill. Lastly, Vanessa is in early development with a drama/ sci- fi Dose of Joy. Vanessa is an alumnus of the Netflix- Banff Diversity of Voices Initiative 2021 & 2023, Reelworld Producers and E20 programs, Banff Spark and OBAC– Scale UP Business Bootcamp.

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## **Kaveh Mohebbi**

Writer

**Cinema Rex**

Kaveh Mohebbi is an Iranian-Canadian screenwriter who received his MA in Screenwriting at the London Film School (UK). Soon after he was a graduate of the Second City writing program where he wrote and produced the mainstage show, *Apocalypse Now, Desert Later*. In 2013, Kaveh was invited into the CFC Writer's Lab, which led to his involvement as co-writer on a number of short films including: the Official TIFF Selection; *STILL* and the Official Austin Film Festival Selection, *Life on Juniper*. Writing credits include: "This Hour has 22 Minutes", CBC Gem's "The Communist Daughter", "Overlord and the Underwoods", Nickeodeon's kids animated "Hamsters of Hamsterdale", Season 1 and 2 of Amazon's first Canadian scripted comedy, "The Lake" and Crave's "Late Bloomer", starring Jus Reign. Kaveh currently has an hour-long detective comedy, "Sandcastle" in development with eOne as well as a half-hour comedy, "Laughganistan", in development with Cameron Pictures and Amazon. On the feature side, his co-written feature, "Queen Tut", starring Alexandra Billings, just premiered this February nationwide.

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## **Kahstoserakwathe Paulette Moore**

Creator

### **The Aunties Dandelion**

Kahstoserakwathe Paulette Moore is an independent filmmaker, podcaster, and educator. Moore is Kanyen'kehà:ka (Mohawk), a fluent Kanyen'kéha speaker (ACTFL intermediate/high), and an enrolled member of Six Nations of the Grand River territory. Moore is a founding member/co-owner of The Aunties Dandelion: a media organization informed by traditional Onkwehòn:we (Indigenous) teachings and focused on revitalizing communities through stories of land, language, and relationships. She spent two decades in Washington, DC as producer/director/writer with Discovery Channel, National Geographic, and others. Moore is a Banff 2023 Indigenous Screen Summit pitch participant and 2022 Banff Spark program participant for women who owned media businesses. The Aunties Dandelion recently completed their first fully funded, short narrative film titled "VESS", with Glen Gould (Mi'kmaq) in the title role, along with Six Nations community members. The film is about a Six Nations carpenter/philosopher working through his considerable grief as he builds a home for a young family returning to territory.

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## **Faran Moradi**

Writer | Director

**Nova 9 Pictures**

Faran Moradi is an Iranian-Canadian filmmaker, born and raised in Ontario. Faran recently made his first feature film, set in the Toronto Iranian community called, “Tehranto”, which was shortlisted for Sundance 2021, was nominated for multiple Canadian Academy Awards and won Cinequest’s Best Feature in 2022. “Tehranto” recently completed its Canadian and American theatrical runs, and is now available On Demand. Faran went on to direct and edit on Emmy Award winning TV shows including; “Odd Squad”, and write and direct the award winning, short film “Blackpowder and Guilt”. He most recently directed four episodes of “Holly Hobbie” (Hulu) and two episodes of “Dino Dex” (Prime).

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## Helena Morgane

Filmmaker | Writer | Actor

**Goldwater Media**

Helena Morgane is an Afro-European Filmmaker-Actor/multidisciplinary creative based in North America, committed to the craft of complex intersectional storytelling. She is an alumni of the BIPOC TV & Film x Warner Bros. Episodic Writers Lab and The Barrow Group. Her work has screened at international festivals. A prolific creative and polyglot, she works globally, having collaborated with organizations such as Interscope, T.D.E., Shopify, NIA Centre for the Arts, and artists like Kendrick Lamar and Drake. Helena was a TEDx Speaker Coordinator, and as the Associate Programmer for TIFF Rising Stars 2020, she had the pleasure of hosting mentorship sessions with David Oyelowo, Tantoo Cardinal and the Casting Society of America.

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## Reem Morsi

Writer | Director  
**Scarab Films Inc.**

Before becoming a filmmaker, Reem worked as a professional scuba diver, and as a human rights officer at the UN and other organizations for over a decade. Morsi's many short films as a writer/director include, "Their Feast" (2012 TIFF, BBC, Cine Sud); "The Door" (Whistler, 2016), which won Best Drama (Yorkton, 2017) and multiple awards at WIFT Showcase, 2018; "Show & Tell" (2016 WIFT/BravoFact winner and Multiple Golden Sheaf Awards at Yorkton, 2017). Her multi-genre first feature film as a writer/director/producer, "Banned", a Telefilm Talent to Watch/CFC/Netflix Accelerator/CCA is currently in post-production. Her second feature, "The Last Mark", screened at TIFF Selects, 2021. Reem has also directed two episodes of Virgins!, a CBC Gem series. Her third feature as a director, "Queen Tut", a BIPOC LGBTQ feature film starring Alexandra Billings (Transparent), was released in 2024. She is also in development on her series, "Zahra's Faces" and "Sweet & Sore".

Morsi's feature film script, Bootleg, received many accolades including the Rainin Grant/San Francisco Film Society (2016), Berlinale Script Lab (2018), and highlighted at the Berlinale Talents Opening Ceremony, participated at Realness Pan African Screenwriting Residency & Cannes Film Festival Atelier des Cinemas du Mondes. Bootleg is currently in final stages of development.

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## **Kavita Musty**

Creator | Producer | Director

**ViDesi Desi Films**

Kavita Musty is an Indian Canadian actor, creative producer, writer, and filmmaker in Canada since 2021. After earning a BMSc at Western University, she switched tracks from pursuing medicine to acting and later began exploring filmmaking to create her own opportunities. Kavita recently played the lead role of 'Ruby' in the show, "Potluck Ladies" slated to release in the spring of 2024 on Hollywood Suite and Yes TV. Kavita explored film/TV/theatre acting in India for two years before shifting focus to the Canadian industry. She's a firm believer in the power of regular training as she consistently works on her craft at EVN acting studio. Kavita played the lead in the short film, "Changi Kuri" by Millennial X (CBC filmmaking program) in 2022 after which she came full circle by completing the program herself in 2023. Upon winning the pitch contest, she received funding to direct and produce her first short film, "Friends At My Expense" which screened at Nuit Blanche 2023. She has also acted in 10 or more short films and more than 10 commercials including: the award-winning short film "Scaring Women at Night" (an official TIFF 2022 selection).

Kavita's approach to creating art prioritizes collaboration and teaming up with a diverse group of creative minds. She believes more perspectives mean more insight which leads to more impact. Leading by example, she aims to be a role model for South Asian women whether contemporaries or prospective artists to explore their calling with courage and diligence.

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## Nightingale Nguyen

Filmmaker

### BIPOC Credits

Nightingale (she/her) is a community driven creative who focuses on facilitating and archiving conversations from diverse communities and perspectives. In 2018, she co-founded non-profit organization Bridging the Gap In Motion. Her non-profit focuses on creating healing relationships with impoverished nations such as Haiti through art and fundraising efforts. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Nightingale created the 'Quarantine Qapsule' (QQ), to archive counter-narratives of the Asian Canadian experience via artistic expression in Ontario, BC and Quebec. This initiative received nation-wide media attention from CBC, Fairchild TV, OMNI and more. In 2021, Nightingale became the recipient of the TELUS Take Care Incubator with VICE and created Asian Canadian mental health docuseries, "Breaking Ground". She was also the recipient of WarnerMedia Access Canada's Festival Access 2021. In 2022, wrote, directed and produced Vietnamese mental health short film, "Different Kind of Sick", funded by Canada Council For the Arts. Finally, Nightingale strives to continue using her platform to fuel her humanitarian initiatives, and advocate authorship from underrepresented communities.

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## **Ian Nsenga**

Creator | Producer

**Visionary Productions Ltd.**

Ian David Nsenga is an African/Canadian Producer/Director and member of the CMPA. For over a decade, Ian has worked in the film and music industries of Canada, US, Taiwan and Europe. Ian's passion for creative arts has helped shape a diverse career from acting to writing and running his own production company. Born in Nairobi, Kenya to Rwandan parents, Ian moved to Vancouver in 2005 to study film and communications. His work has been featured on Amazon, Google Play, Apple and have played at festivals around the world.

With his company, Visionary Productions, he has produced the feature film, "Amorosa" currently in post production, and "Colorblind" a film nominated for several international awards including: at the Montreal Black Film Festival, 'Best Picture' at the Whistler Film Festival, and the 'Boros Award' winner for 'Best Feature' at Silverwave Film Festival. The film is distributed internationally by Gravitas Ventures. His company is in development on several feature film and television projects, with partners such as: Warner Brothers, CAA, Panavision, and Amazon Prime.

[Visionaryproductionsinc.com](http://Visionaryproductionsinc.com)

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## Monica Ogden

Writer | Co-Producer

**Rage Sweater Theatre Productions**

Monica Ogden (she/they) is an award winning queer, disabled, non-binary Filipinx, performer and producer living on ləkʷəŋən and ƵSÁNEĆ lands. Her matriarchs are from Santa, Ilocos Sur, Philippines. Monica teaches anti-racism and disability justice, holding a BA with distinction in Gender Studies from the University of Victoria. Monica produces, alongside Adonis Critter King, with their QT2BIPOC company Rage Sweater Theatre Productions. Their solo show, “Monica vs. The Internet” (★★★★★ Winnipeg Free Press) directed and co-created by Adonis Critter King, toured to five provinces, to Second City Toronto, and the National Theatre School of Canada, and won the “Witness Legacy Award for Social Purpose and Responsibility Through Art” from the Pro Art Alliance & Witness Legacy Blanket (2019-20). With support from the BC Arts Council and Canada Council, “Monica vs. The Internet” was adapted into an accessible film/theatre hybrid captioned, interpreted, and translated into American Sign Language, in collaboration with Queer Based Media. The film premiered at RISER Digital Toronto with Why Not Theatre and screened in-person for Asian Heritage Month with Vancouver Asian Canadian Theatre and Odd Meridian Arts (2023). Monica completed Why Not Theatre’s “ThisGen Fellowship” for gender diverse BIPOC Producers (2022-24). They now work as Associate Producer for TYA company, Story Theatre, ensuring the next generation have access to QT2BIPOC stories, cultures, and education.

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## **Angela Onuora**

Producer | Writer | Director

**This Naija Girl Studios**

Angela is an award-winning filmmaker and interdisciplinary artist, director, producer, writer, actor, TV Host, music composer, and concept developer based in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario.

She is a current MFA student in Film at the prestigious York University, an award-winning 2019 graduate of Conestoga College from the Broadcasting Performance and Digital Media Graduate Program; founder of The RISE Class - a crash course in video production designed to empower the most underserved and underrepresented in the community; an Equity, Diversity & Inclusion advisory committee member to The Region of Waterloo Arts Fund; a film production mentor at the COVE/COVOX Arts Incubator. Her recent film is a historical documentary titled "Operation Lights Out - The Story of CANAIRELIEF", which tells the little-known story of the Canadian humanitarian effort during the Biafran War in Nigeria, fifty-two years ago. The official selection at six film festivals and winner of "Best Documentary" award at Toronto International Nollywood Film Festival, and Lake International Pan African Film Festival; Special Recognition Award at Silicon Valley African Film Festival; Special Recognition award from the US House of Representatives; Recognition of Outstanding Achievement from The State of California Senate; and Special Jury Prize at 2022 Eastern Nigeria International Film Festival.

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## Ivan Ossa

Creator | Director | Writer

**Kine Ukiyo Ma Ltd.**

Ivan D. Ossa is an award-winning film Director, Writer and Actor based in Toronto, Ontario.

Adapting his father's love for motion pictures, it wasn't long before Ivan decided to learn about filmmaking. Post academics, Ivan became the protégé of prolific music video director Julien Christian Lutz PKA Director X. He most recently worked as a showrunner assistant on Director X's new TV drama Robyn Hood. Ivan's written, directed, and executive-produced short films that have received recognition from various domestic and international film festivals. His latest film 'Express' was a Nominee for IMDB Short Cuts 'Best Canadian Film' Award at TIFF 2023.

Throughout his career, Ivan aims to continue writing and depicting humanity. Ivan wants to make thought-provoking films that encourage empathy, brings about peace and instills hopefulness and love in viewers. He is a storyteller who has been lucky enough to find film as a medium to achieve these artistic, professional and personal goals.

[ivandossa.com](http://ivandossa.com)

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## **Tanis Parenteau**

Producer

**TDEP Productions**

Tanis Parenteau is a producer/actor and member of the Métis Nation of Alberta. Her short form series 'Jason' premiered on APTN lumi Feb. 14th; her most recent short, 'Dating Indian', received an AMPPIA Rosie Award nomination for Best Scripted Production Under 30 Minutes and won Best Comedy at Edmonton Short Film Festival; and her debut short, 'A Big Black Space' premiered on ARTÉ, won Best Canadian Short at Dreamspeakers International Indigenous Film Festival, the Royal Reel Award at the Canada International Film Festival and received a Best Live Action Short nomination at the 12th Red Nation Film Festival. Her projects have been funded by Indigenous Screen Office, Bell Fund, Canada Council for the Arts, Alberta Media Fund, and Alberta Media Arts Alliance. Tanis is a member of Canadian Media Producers Association, Alberta Media Production Industries Association, and Peace Region Independent Media Arts Association. She is an alum of Banff Spark Accelerator for Women in the Business of Media, NSI Art of Business Management - Indigenous Edition, ISO/Netflix Indigenous Production Apprenticeship, Whistler Film Festival Producers Lab, The Genre Lab, AMAAS One2One, Netflix-Banff Diversity of Voices, AMPPIA Bespoke Mentorship, Alberta Producer Accelerator, Reelworld Amazon MGM Studios Line Producer Training Lab, and she was a mentor for Telus Storyhive Indigenous Storytellers Edition. She holds a Master of Fine Arts in Acting from The New School for Drama.

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## Shreya Patel

Creator | Producer | Director | Writer | Actor  
**Window Dreams Productions Inc.**

Shreya Patel is a model-turned producer, filmmaker, writer, and an actress. She's the graduate of the Second City Conservatory and can be seen perform improv and sketch comedy around the City of Toronto. Shreya has appeared in lead roles in numerous films, theatre productions, and most recently in Netflix's "Grand Army", and FX's "Mrs. America". Her first film role in "Vivid" helped garner the film multiple award nominations, while her feature film "Strangers In A Room" achieved acclaim by winning the Audience Choice Award at the prestigious 23rd Reelworld International Film Festival. Her directorial debut, the documentary, "Girl Up", about domestic human trafficking, was partnered with Toronto International Film Festival and Civic Action Summit. During this pandemic, she has gathered 66 countries on 6 continents and made a documentary called Unity showcasing the plight of the human spirit. It was the closing film at Munich International Film Festival. Following the release of Unity, Shreya remotely directed a music video called Freedom Dance by Faynyx with got over 1.2 million views on YouTube. Rolling Stone India reported about it. She is an honoree of Forbes 30 Under 30, Top 100 Most Powerful Women of Canada, RBC's Top 25 Canadian Immigrant Awards, and Women's Achiever Award. DissDash named her "Top 50 Coolest South Asians of 2021" along with Priyanka Chopra, Kamala Harris, and Hasan Minaj.

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## **Julian Ritchie**

Creator | Producer

**Gambade Films**

Julian was born and raised in the GTA with a proud Colombian heritage and developed a deep passion for the art of storytelling and music from a young age. Julian's professional journey began in feature distribution, working on marketing campaigns for features released in the Canadian market while also learning about development and sales. Once he amassed this wide range of knowledge, Julian was driven by his entrepreneurial spirit to found his own consultancy firm, specializing in film and television. With an astute understanding of the industry's landscape, he provides expert advice and strategic guidance to clients, helping them navigate the complex world of film and television and distribution. Julian's experience includes marketing and grassroots initiatives for Academy Award and BAFTA winning film and Golden Globe nominated Sound of Metal, CSA winning films such as "Violation", "Happy Place", "Castle in the Ground" and Gotham Award nominated "Shiva Baby". When he's not immersed in the world of film and television, Julian enjoys playing guitar, exploring Toronto's vibrant music and nightlife scene, allowing him to find inspiration in the creative pursuits of others.

As of March 2024, Julian has started a new chapter as the VP of Development for Gambade Films, as he hopes to continue championing emerging voices while also bringing to life his own stories.

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## **Ebonie Roberge**

Creator

**Nomad Production**

During her 20s, Ebonie worked as an International model and did many commercials and acting gigs which gave her the opportunity to see how the behind-the-scenes worked. After participating in “The Amazing Race Canada”, Ebonie decided she wouldn’t let her fear of the unknown win over her. She quit her job and left her hometown in Quebec to create her first web series, “Nomad Generation” ( in French) This gave her the opportunity to learn on the spot and combine her passions of traveling, directing, and storytelling. The series grew into an instant success and generated over 3 million views. The series was self-produced and Ebonie became an expert at landing major sponsorship deals. Recently, she produced her first snowboard movie, “Night Riders” in collaboration with Moment Factory. This is the first snowboard movie made entirely in the dark and back country in Quebec. Also, this is the first snowboard movie produced by a woman of color in Quebec. The short movie premiered at the IF3 International Mountain Film Festival in October, 2022. Ebonie is now working on multiple shows in the travel space.

[thenomadgeneration.com](http://thenomadgeneration.com)

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## Christine Rodriguez

Writer

**Productions La Tigresse**

Christine Rodriguez is a writer from Montreal who creates from a mixed-race, Afro-Trinidadian perspective to explore identity and self-expression in an ever-changing, multicultural world. She's working on a trilogy of short films called *Montrealismo*, exploring Montreal's Black community through music and magic realism. The first of the trilogy, *Fuego*, which she wrote, directed and produced in English, French and Spanish, earned her a nomination for "Filmmaker of the Year", by Gala Dynastie in 2022, and a coveted spot in the inaugural WBD Access x Canadian Academy Writers Program to write a feature version of the film. She's just completed the second film of the series, "A Dios", starring Juno and Dora award-winning artist Raneé Lee. She's already working on the third short, "Navidad", thanks to the continued support of the Canada Council for the Arts. Christine is also writing on a new supernatural/horror feature called, "The Rider", thanks to Telefilm Canada development funding. She's been the recipient of two Rogers – Black Screen Office development grants to write TV pilots. An award-winning playwright, Christine's been nominated a second time by Gala Dynastie, this time for Author of the Year, thanks to her YA play, "Simone, Half and Half", published by Playwrights Canada Press. An alumna of the Norman Jewison Writers' Lab at the Canadian Film Centre, Christine holds a Certificate of Professional Screenwriting from UCLA.

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## **Edmon Rotea**

Producer

**ERO Picture Company**

Edmon Rotea is an Edmonton-based documentary and feature film producer. Edmon strives to help filmmakers from diverse walks of life, including emerging, student, artistic, newcomer, indigenous, neurodivergent, and 2SLGBTQI+ filmmakers. Edmon has worked in the areas of healthcare, human services, national defence, food security and union activism—work and volunteer experiences that have inspired him to bring more attention and awareness to marginalized communities, workers, mental health, cultural, environmental, and social justice issues. Edmon’s producing credits include: the 2020 Telus StoryHive documentary “The Line”, and the hit indie feature film, “Skinamarink” that opened in nearly 700 theatres worldwide and grossed over \$2.1 million at the US and International Box Office in 2023. Skinamarink was recognized by both Variety and Rolling Stone as their #1 top horror film of 2023. Edmon serves on the board of directors for the Film and Video Arts Alberta Society of Alberta (FAVA) and the Alberta Media Arts Alliance Society (AMAAS). Last March, Edmon completed The “Osgoode Certificate in Entertainment Law” at York University in Toronto, Ontario. Edmon is also a decorated member and veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces Army Reserves, serving since 2004 on many deployments to help with flood and wildfire relief efforts. For his community service efforts, Edmon was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II’s Platinum Jubilee Medal in 2023.

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## **Sid Santiago Zanforlin**

Creator | Director | Writer

**Goggle Boy Films Inc.**

Sid Santiago Zanforlin is a LatinX Canadian director/writer originally from Montreal and now residing in the GTHA. He is a Canadian Film Centre graduate with a background as an IATSE cameraman, theatre director, writer/director of many shorts, music videos, two indie features and countless episodes of both factual and scripted TV. He has won a 'Mecca' award for theatrical revelation, nominated for a Banff Kid's TV award, won many short film awards, and his music videos have been on display at various museums including the MAC. Sid recently was shortlisted for a TV Directing CSA nomination. In another life he was a punk musician, and is a Juno nominated artist.

[directors.ca/directors/sid-zanforlin](https://directors.ca/directors/sid-zanforlin)

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## **Mostafa Shaker**

Creator | Producer

**Yalla Productions**

Mostafa Shaker is a comedian, writer, actor and producer based out of Vancouver, BC who started his career in Cairo, Egypt as a theatre actor and on-stage performer. In 2018, Mostafa made his transition into films and television to pursue his dream of telling stories for global audiences. He has worked as a junior writer on the Oprah Network's, "The Real Houses of..." He has also written and produced a number of commercials, independent shorts, and a limited web series called, "Thank you for Ghosting". Mostafa has been expressing his comedic artistic voice through projects that reflect his experience as a queer Arab immigrant. He's been part of the 2021 Netflix BANFF Diversity of Voices Program, the Whistler Film Festival Writers Lab, Creative BC's, 'Equity and Emerging Development Program,' the BIPOC TV & Film 'Showrunners Program', the NSI's 'Series Incubator' and Reel World's 'E20 Program'. Mostafa is currently in development with Crave and Sphere on a half hour comedy inspired by his own life. He is also in development with OMNI Films & Break the Room on another half-hour ,family comedy. He recently signed with Jennifer Hollyer Agency

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## **Nattasha Shrestha**

Writer | Story Editor

Nattasha Shrestha is a Southeast Asian storyteller who writes dramedy narratives that cut close to the bone. Having been raised internationally in over 5 different countries and continents, she brings a distinct, sharp and robust POV in screenwriting, seeking to explore the intersection between grief and comedy. After graduating from the University of British Columbia and the Vancouver Film School, she's since been a story editor for various shows and festivals, a graduate from the 2024 CFC Comedy Story Room Intensive, and winner of the Bell Media x VAFF Series Development Competition. She is currently in development for three of her own original shows, all in pursuit to celebrate unusual and underrepresented stories on screen.

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## **Renuka Singh**

Writer

**Renuka Singh Inc.**

Recognized by Playback as one of Canada's "10 to Watch", Renuka is a Vancouver-based screenwriter with roots in Kitimat, BC. Her recent credits include, "Allegiance" (CBC), "I Woke Up A Vampire" (Netflix), and "Reginald The Vampire" (Syfy). She is currently developing a half-hour original series with the support of the CMF and Bell Media. Renuka is an alumna of the Pacific Screenwriting Program's (PSP) Scripted Series Lab, and a member of the 2023 cohort of the Warner Bros. Discovery Access x Canadian Academy Writers Program. She contributes to her screenwriting community as a Board Member of the Pacific Screenwriting Program and is represented by the Jennifer Hollyer Agency.

[renukasingh.ca](http://renukasingh.ca)

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## Linda St. Pierre

Actor | Writer | Producer

**Phoenix Skye Productions Inc**

Linda St. Pierre is Dēnesųliné First Nation from Lac Brochet, MB. Linda has multiple projects in development went into production in fall of 2023 with, “Choices” a short film for which she wrote, acted, and produced; and “Bet’sune Yinesha” (His grandmother raised him), an animated documentary feature film under her production company banner, Phoenix Skye Productions Inc., Linda is also in pre-development for a feature film and pilot. Linda recently worked with Marie Clements Media and Screen Siren Pictures on the feature film and limited series, “Bones of Crows.” Linda has been a motivational speaker across Canadian reservations for the last 10 years. She wants to introduce Dene language and Indigenous stories into film and television.

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## Nicole Stamp

DGC Director | WGC Writer

**GoodStamp Productions**

Nicole Stamp is a three-time, Canadian Screen Award nominated director and writer, whose essays on race and gender have been published by CNN. Stamp is the creator-writer-host of “Media Stamped”, a media-literacy show for kids (Sinking Ship Entertainment / Global Citizen), coming soon to TELUS’ new streaming platform. A versatile TV director, Stamp has helmed: “Family Feud Canada” (CBC), “The Next Step”(CBBC), “Odd Squad “(PBS),” “The Fabulous Show” (Family), “Teletubbies” (Netflix), “Blue’s Clues & You” (Nick Jr), and “The Popularity Papers” (Corus). Stamp was nominated for a Writers Guild Award and 3 Canadian Screen Awards for Sinking Ship’s “Lockdown” (Family Channel / YouTube Originals), for both writing and directing. She cut her teeth with 10 years as a host, director, and writer on TVOKIDS (TVOntario). She has also written for “The Snoopy Show” (Apple TV+), and hosted the classic game show “Reach For The Top” (TVO), and “Inside Between”, a Netflix aftershow.

As an actor, Stamp’s work includes “Hudson & Rex” (CityTV), “Assassin’s Creed Origins” and “Avatar” (Ubisoft), “The Handmaid’s Tale” (HULU), and “Locke & Key” (Netflix).

Currently in development: “Hockey Bombs”, a family comedy to star CSA-winning actor Patrice Goodman, and “From The Wreckage”, Stamp’s feature film adaptation of an acclaimed rock musical written by teenage girls. A longtime youth mentor, Stamp cares deeply about equity issues. She set a Guinness World Record by playing dodgeball for 36 hours, an accomplishment she does not recommend.

[nicolestamp.com](http://nicolestamp.com)

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## **Wanda Taylor**

Creator

**First Day Films**

Wanda Taylor is an award winning author, screenwriter, educator and former television producer. She is the creator of First Day Films and the author of eight books of fiction and nonfiction; two have been adapted in screenplays. As a documentary filmmaker, her work has screened around the globe and most recently OnDemand as part of Eastlink Television's "Films That Teach" series. Wanda's work as a journalist can be found in magazines and publications across Canada, the US and the UK. She has worn many hats in film and television. Besides creating and producing content for daytime and lifestyle programming, she has worked as assistant director; casting director; and producer on numerous film projects. She currently teaches courses in screenwriting, fiction writing, journalism and communication in Toronto. Wanda has won numerous awards for her body of work, including the Women of Excellence Award for Arts and Culture. Her latest HarperCollins book, *The Grover School Pledge* (which she hopes to adapt for the screen) recently won the Northern Lights Book of the Year Award.

[wandataylor.squarespace.com](http://wandataylor.squarespace.com)

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## **Tammy Tsang**

Writer

### **Tammy Tsang Film**

Tammy Tsang is a writer and filmmaker born and raised in Vancouver. She has written and produced a number of short films including: “Driving to You” (2013), “Rocking On Air” (2019), “Lauren in the Bathroom” (2021) which screened at the Vancouver Asian Film Festival and won multiple awards in the Mighty Asian Moviemaking Marathon’s Ultra Short Category including: “Best Screenplay” and “Best Director”, and “Operation: Stuployd” (2023) which will premiere at the Los Angeles International Children’s Film Festival in March 2024. When not working on passion projects, she works as an assistant director in the film industry. Tammy’s writing room experiences include: a AAA video game through The Coalition Studio, and the development room for the Indigenous series, “Hey Cuzzin”. An alum of the Pacific Screenwriting Program’s Scripted Series Lab 2022 cohort, and a recipient of the 2022 Rogers-BSO Film Development Fund, Tammy aspires to show what stories Canadians can offer.

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## Alejandro Valbuena

Producer | Director

**Curare Films**

Arawak Artist Alejandro Valbuena made his mark in the film industry as a 1st AD, contributing to films showcased at prestigious festivals like Berlinale, TIFF, Sundance, Venice, and Cannes. His work garnered support from the BC, Ontario, Canada Arts Councils, BravoFACT, the NFB, and the Henson Institute. His short films have played at renowned festivals, including Oberhausen, London, Clermont-Ferrand, and the Smithsonian Museum. Alejandro's recent producing credits include: "Blue Miracle," a feature for Endeavour Content, and "A Translator," premiering at Sundance in 2018. He also forged a significant partnership with RT Features & Anonymous Content for his series, "My Fellow Americans," workshopped at Canneseries 2019. His feature screenplay, "Seeds" achieved distinction in the top 10% at the prestigious Nicoll Fellowship in 2021. His documentary, "The Wind's Thirst" was developed at Reelworld Film Emerging 20, receiving support from the Indigenous Screen Office, Telefilm Canada, Hot Docs, and Ford Foundation. He also won the Breakthru pitch at Hot Docs 2023 and secured a deal with CBC. Alejandro is a Eurodoc, Doc Institute, & EFM ToolBox alumni.

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## Hui Wang

Writer | Director

**Redbean Productions**

Hui Wang (a.k.a. Jane) is an award-winning Toronto-based documentary filmmaker with a passion for observational storytelling and versatile production and post-production skills. She is also a skilled freelance content researcher specializing in China-related documentary film projects. Born in Wuhan, Wang has been working and living in Canada since 2001, and is a graduate of the Honours BA English program at York University. She studied in the Film Studies certificate program at Toronto Metropolitan University (formerly Ryerson University) before returning to China to film her debut feature-length documentary “Last Harvest”, which won the Tokyo TV Forum Award (since rebranded the Tokyo Docs Award) at CNEX Chinese Documentary Forum-3 in Taiwan in 2012. The film was featured as the closing night film at Toronto’s Planet in Focus International Environment Film Festival and screened widely at festivals around the world, including the Whistler Film Festival, where it won both the “World Documentary Award” and the “Best Female-Directed Documentary Award”. Picked up by Paris-based CAT&Docs, Last Harvest has been licensed for broadcast on major networks in Asia and Europe (e.g., ARTE France and Singapore’s CNA). Wang is currently in post-production of her second feature-length documentary, “The Gardener and the Dictator”, supported by Hot Docs Crosscurrents Canada Doc Fund, Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council, Toronto Arts Council, and NFB’s FAP program.

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## **Abigail Whitney**

Creator | Producer | Director | Writer

**Abigail Whitney Productions**

Abigail Whitney is an independent award-winning theatremaker and filmmaker, recognized as an innovative and fearless game changer, transforming the Canadian arts scene, as highlighted in her 'Game Changer' feature in Canada's Ark Magazine. UofT's "The Varsity" newspaper published a personal essay about her acclaimed career, and in a second article, interviewed her on the front page in an article titled, "UofT student, model, and director—how does Abigail Whitney do it all?" Abigail has been named a "quadruple threat" by UofT News. Tom Power interviewed her on CBC's "Q" in their segment "How Abigail Whitney juggles school, a high-profile modeling gig, and directing her first play." She has also been featured in ByBlacks, CBC's OurToronto, Eboss Canada, and Broadway World. Her debut short film, "Seule," which she independently produced, wrote, and directed, received the "Best Film" award at the Short to the Point International Short Film Festival and the "Best Experimental Film" award at the Austin Micro Film Festival and is available for streaming on CBC Gem. Abigail's debut short documentary "Remembering Me" is featured in the Being Black in Toronto series presented by Netflix, and now streaming on CBC Gem's Absolutely Canadian national series. Abigail is working on her next short film and documentary. She is also directing and co-producing the Canadian premiere of her next theatre production, "The Noose," at Toronto's Next Stage Festival in October 2024.

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## Andy Wong

Creator

### BIPOC Credits

Andy Wong (He/Him) dreams of creating change in the North American film industry through producing, writing, and community driven initiatives. The stories that interest him are those that are character driven with a purpose of social enlightenment, or social change. He strives to support these stories by ensuring they are produced in the most respectful manner through his expertise in film production. As an assistant director in BC, his professional experience managing crew members, and film schedules has given him a well-rounded knowledge making him invaluable on film sets. Andy hopes to continue his community work in BC film and to one day make and support films that can put local films on the global market.

[beacons.ai/ndsocial](https://beacons.ai/ndsocial)

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## **Amir Zargara**

Writer | Director | Producer

**Zargara Productions**

Amir Zargara is an Iranian-Canadian (BIPOC) director and filmmaker, whose unique perspective is shaped by the cultural mosaic of Iran and Canada. His journey, characterized by the resilience of an immigrant and the challenges of living with a stutter, deeply influences his approach to filmmaking. Amir began his filmmaking journey with “Become the Wounded” in 2021. Since then, he has directed several narrative and documentary shorts, that he hopes to build his feature film career on. His work has earned recognition at prestigious festivals like: Hollyshorts and Nashville, highlighting his dedication to diverse, compelling narratives. At the heart of Amir’s philosophy is a belief in the inherent humanity of all characters. His films delve into the moral complexities faced by individuals, focusing on the gray areas of human character and advocating for empathy over judgment. This perspective is a direct reflection of his life experiences, bridging diverse cultures and personal challenges.

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