



CREATIVE  
WOMEN  
WORKSHOPS  
ASSOCIATION

# Annual Report

2022-2023

**Creative Women Workshops Association (CWWA)**  
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Overseen by Creative Women Workshops Association (CWWA), the non-profit society based in British Columbia, Canada, Women In the Director's Chair (WIDC) offers professional leadership and story development, awards and production support for Canadian women and non-binary screen directors and writer/directors.

WIDC recognizes the term Woman/Women is in an evolution of language and note that our intention in our use is to be fully inclusive of underrepresented persons who may or may not identify as women and share the goals and values of WIDC to promote these marginalized voices and stories. Further, we gratefully acknowledge that the WIDC program originates from the traditional and unceded lands of the Coast Salish people, including the xmkym (Musqueam), Swxwu7mesh (Squamish), and sliwta (Tseil-wau-tuth) Nations. We also acknowledge the Indigenous Nations on whose traditional lands our guests, participants, and colleagues live, work and create. We commit to working together in the spirit of collaboration and respect for the generations that came before, those living now, and the generations to come.

## PROGRAMS

During 2022-2023 WIDC programs continued to be delivered via Zoom. Workshop days were shorter and the number of days per module lengthened to accommodate Zoom fatigue. Application fees and tuition continued to be waived, a value of approximately \$20k.

Thirty-four Canadian women and non-binary director participants, fifteen ACTRA actors and twenty-seven Instructors and Industry guests directly participated in WIDC programs this fiscal. **WIDC alumnae directors' names are bolded.**

### Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Work:

This module specially designed for WIDC by alumna **Dr. Rita Shelton Deverell C.M.** and fellow scholar and filmmaker, Dr. Dorothy Cucw-la7 Christian, offers articles written by the instructors, engages in anti-racism exercises, and discussions, investigates micro-aggressions and the importance of self-location and land acknowledgments. Participants are guided in developing their own personalized EDI Pledge. The EDI Pledge and theme of EDI is woven throughout all WIDC. programs and activities.

### WIDC Career Advancement Module (CAM):



**Fall 2022 Edition:** was presented in October 2022, in collaboration with St John's International Women's Film Festival, and the Reelworld Film Festival. Mandated to include a minimum 50% of director participants in this cohort would be from under-represented racialized communities the eight director participants included: **Alexandra Martinez Crowther, Asis Sethi, Cailleah Scott Grimes, Catharine Parke, Elizabeth Fraser, Giselle Miller, Holly Brace-Lavoie, Shelly Hong**, selected by a peer jury. Industry guests included Melissa Amer, (Telefilm Canada), Gosia Kamela (CBC Films), Mitch Geddes, (Bell Media), Carly McGowan (Independent Production Fund), Annelise Larson (Veria Search Media Marketing), Terry Markus, (Entertainment Lawyer and Executive Producer), Patricia Bebia Mawa (Producer, Silver Trust Media), and Mentor Directors, **Renuka Jeyapalan** and **Samantha MacAdam**. Guests met with the directors in roundtable discussions and invited directors to follow up when their projects were further along. Directors prepped for upcoming deadlines with support from WIDC one to one follow up coaching sessions. The cohort has also set up an online check-in group to help keep each other on track. The Spring cohort will meet with the same industry guests, along with mentor directors, **Gail Maurice** and **Dr. Jules Koostachin**.

**Spring 2023 Edition:** Began March 3, and will continue with once per week sessions through to July 3, 2023. Presented in collaboration with the Female Eye Film Festival and Vancouver International Women In Film Festival, eight director participants were selected by peer jury. Pictured (l to r) with mentors Dr. Dorothy Cucw-la7 Christian, **Dr. Rita Shelton Deverell C.M.**, Dr. Carol Whiteman, **Samantha Wan, Bruna Arbex, Paradox, Fateema Al-Hamaydeh, Vanessa Magic, Brishkay Ahmed, Brianna Russell, Murry Peters**).



### WIDC Story & Leadership Program:



**PART 1:** was delivered November 2022, to eight director participants (**Liz Whitmere, Luvia Petersen, Naomi Mark, Nika Belianina, Osas Eweka Smith, Sam Coyle, Sarah Strange, Supinder Wraich**) who developed their leadership and their fiction feature films and series projects. Dr. Carol Whiteman facilitated, with lead instructors Dr. Carolyn Mamchur, Karen Walton, Lori Triolo, Veena Sood, and mentor director, Mina Shum. Panel discussions and one-to-one sessions about the Director/DOP

relationship, preparing pitch materials and blocking were held with IATSE DOP's Kim Derko, CSC and Gayle Ye. This year's generous acting ensemble of 15 union members included Christina Scioli, Dmyitry Chepovetsky, Jo Bates, Kalyn Miles, Kaylah Zander, Knox Hamilton, Kyle Bailey, Lexi Doig, Lissa Neptuno, Lovina Yavari, Marsha Regis, Megan Leitch, Miles Foley, Nathan Witte, Stephen Adekolu. They workshopped the directors' scripts (1 series and 7 feature films) through audition simulation exercises, table reads, rehearsals, and a modified blocking for camera exercise via Zoom.

**PART 2:** (WIDC Whistler Film Festival Industry Immersion) was delivered over 17 days, offering the director participants festival passes to attend the summit, screenings and the festival signature Women In Focus series. The directors met in roundtables with industry experts: Kim Hsu Guise (Telefilm Canada), Gosia Kamela (CBC Films), Mitch Geddes (Bell Media), Mark Shapland / Carly McGowan (IPF), and Digital Media Marketing Mentor, Annelise Larson (Veria.ca). In addition, through the Whistler Film Festival, directors attended over 80 one-to-one meetings with industry guests.

**PART 3:** (one-to-one story consultation), meetings with Mentor Story Editor, Karen Walton ran January – February 2023.

**PART 4:** (career coaching), continues to be delivered through June 2023, and includes 3 hours each career coaching with Dr. Carol Whiteman, plus additional roundtables with a Mentor Director and Guest Producer, TBA.

## OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

### WIDC Launch & Awards Events:

June 3, 2022, WIDC launched its 26<sup>th</sup> annual slate of activities and presented two WIDC awards at a Zoom event with over 30 guests in attendance. The Inaugural WIDC Advantage Award was presented to alumna, **Luvia Petersen** and the 2022 BANFF Fellowship Award was presented to **Carolyn Saunders** (see more later in this report).

November 27, 2022, WIDC hosted a Fall Awards Zoom Event attended by approximately 30 where recent program cohorts were introduced, the Spring slate of programs was launched. The 2022 Feature Film Award was presented to **Susanne Serres** (*Celestine*) and CBC Films WIDC Talent Development Awards were presented to **Lindsay McIntyre** (2021) and **Nauzanin K. Knight** (2022). See other areas in the report for details.

### Collaboration with Weengushk Film Institute (WIFI):

WIDC offered one hour of 1+1 coaching for each of the five participants WFI's Women In Film Intensive for Indigenous and Black Women and Non-Binary Filmmakers. Two of the five participants have accessed their coaching session. A third participant requested additional time to prepare for their session.

WIDC has pledged to award up to two spots for these directors to attend an upcoming WIDC CAM session. The award will be adjudicated in collaboration with WFI Executive Director and Founder, Dr. Shirley Cheechoo.

### Working In Episodic / Collaboration with DGC:

WIDC members were invited to partake in fourteen DGC-hosted Online professional development sessions, workshops and interviews including:

- *Visionaries* (May 3)
- *Visionaries*, among them WIDC alumna **Nimisha Mukerji** (May 7)
- *Production Designers* (June 1)
- *Visionaries*, among them WIDC alumnae **Marie Clements, Sophie Jarvis, Gail Maurice** (September 11)
- *Visionaries Halifax*, among them WIDC alumnae **Mary Walsh, Marie Clements, Gail Maurice** (September 18)
- *Visionaries Calgary*, among them WIDC alumnae **Eva Colmers, Gail Maurice, Madison Thomas** (September 25)
- *Visionaries Vancouver*, among them WIDC alumnae **Marie Clements, Hayley Gray** (October 2)
- *TV Movie Workshop* (October 22)
- *Meet the Nominees* including **Nimisha Mukerji** (November 2)
- *Episodic Director Weekend Workshop* featuring WIDC alumna **Gloria Ui Young Kim** (February 3 & 4)
- *Sustainability Workshop* (March 14)
- *Virtual Production Weekend Masterclass* (March 18 & 19, 2023)
- *Rice Boy Sleeps Special Screening with Q&A* including WIDC alumna **Kathleen Hepburn** (March 20)
- *Production Designer Masterclass* (March 21)

### WIDC Safer Creative Spaces: Building a Mental Health Tool-kit Project:

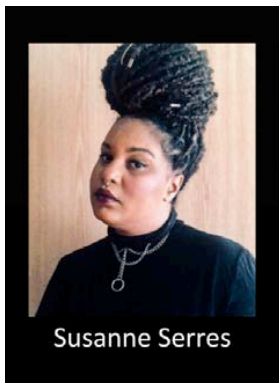
Inspired by work with WIDC's Talent to Watch projects and with funding support from the Canada Council for the Arts this one-year special project aims to create a tool-kit, workshop and protocols for ultra-low budget productions in Canada. In January 2023, a leadership team comprised of four leaders, one from each of WIDC, Family Services of Greater Victoria, Songhees Nation Family Counselling and a woman-led independent production company has begun gathering research and conducting consultations with mental health professionals, adult educators, artists, and members from under-represented communities. The project will culminate at the end of 2023 with a full report.

### Other Collaborations:

Through community collaborations, WIDC alumnae have received discounts to attend TIFF, VIFF, SJIWFF, FeFF, VIWFF, WFF and BANFF while WIDC offers promotional consideration, volunteer moderators and guest speakers.

## AWARDS

### WIDC Feature Film Award:



2022 award recipient, **Susanne Serres** for her debut feature, *Celestine*. The story is inspired by Susanne's own lived experiences as a Black queer woman living in Montreal. The award is valued at up to \$250,000 in kind services and rentals and was adjudicated by an alumnae peer jury and award sponsors. The film went to camera March 2 to 19, 2023 and will complete a second block of shooting in August 2023 when production will focus on the graphic novel elements of the film, supported by MELS virtual studio.

### Updates on previous FF Award winners:

**2020 FF Award - Kim Albright's** feature debut, *With Love and a Major Organ* world premiered at South By Southwest TV & Film Festival, March 2023, garnering tremendous press coverage as it continues its festival run. Kim is also a CBC Films WIDC Talent Development Award recipient for *WLAAMO*.

**2019 FF Award - Pamela Gallant** will go to camera on *Monica's News* in June/July 2023 in and around rural Nova Scotia.

**2018 FF Award - Shelley Thompson's** *Dawn, Her Dad and the Tractor*, is currently airing on Crave and won the 2022 NS Masterworks Award. Quoting journalist Morgan Miller in *The Coast*.

**2017 FF Award - Sonia Bonspille Boileau's** next venture, a limited series for cbc-radio canada, *Pour toi, Flora*, won the 2022 MIPCOM Cannes Diversity TV Award in the representation of race and ethnicity category.

**2013 FF Award - Marie Clements'** follow up feature *Bones of Crows* (see More WIDC Alumnae Highlights).





WIDC Advantage Award:

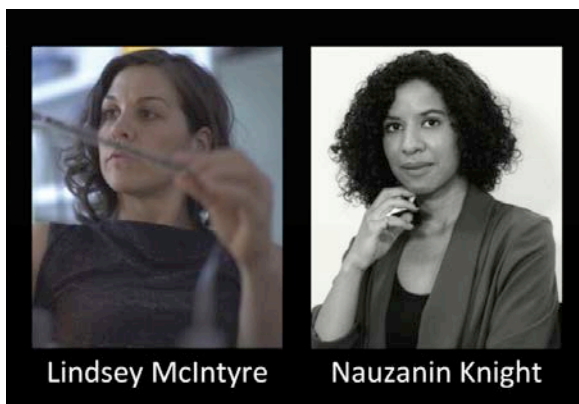
A WIDC peer jury selected **Luvia Petersen** and her debut feature, the psychological thriller *Human Nature*, as the inaugural recipient of the Advantage Award. The award offers WIDC's nomination for Telefilm Talent to Watch funding, a one-year mentorship along with a spot at the 2022-23 Story & Leadership program.

Further updates on past recipients (aka Talent to Watch Mentorship Award):

- 2019 TTW funding recipient, **Ana de Lara's** web series, *Best Friend Me*, now aims to go to camera in August 2023.
- 2018 TTW funding recipient, **Elizabeth Lazebnik's** feature film, *Be Still* earned multiple awards and nominations including 4 Leo Award nominations with 2 wins (Productions Design & Cinematography) and winner of a Female Eye Film Festival Best Picture Award.
- 2018 TTW funding recipient, **Reem Morsi's** feature film, *Hysteria* is completing postproduction Spring 2023.
- 2017 TTW funding recipient, **Winnifred Jong's** second season of *Tokens* garnered multiple 2023 CSA nominations including Best Direction for Jong.

WIDC BANFF Fellowship:

**Carolyn Saunders** received the 2022 WIDC Banff Fellowship which included a full pass to the online festival, along with a 2-month mentorship to help Carolyn prepare for her meetings at BANFF and strategize follow up. Carolyn attended the festival in person to pitch her feature film and television series projects.

CBC Films WIDC Talent Development Award:

Lindsey McIntyre

Nauzanin Knight

**2021 winner, Lindsey McIntyre** (*The Words We Can't Speak*, also the 2021 winner of the WIDC Feature Film Award) used part of her \$10,000 cash award to attend the Whistler Film Festival Screenwriters Lab to further develop her script. The remainder of the cash award has been allocated to mentorship, research trips to the North. Lindsey is in postproduction on a short concept film funded by the ISO, set to complete in spring 2023.

**2022 winner, Nauzanin Knight** (*When I was George*) was announced and celebrated at the WIDC Awards Zoom reception, November 27, 2023. Will receive a spot at Story & Leadership and a cash award of \$3,000.

## MORE WIDC ALUMNAE HIGHLIGHTS

### Industry Funding:

- 12 alumnae-led feature films funded by [Telefilm Canada](#):
  - [DEVELOPMENT](#):
    - **Dr Jules Koostachin** (*Angela's Shadow*, Indigenous Stream)
  - [NATIONAL](#):
    - **Lora Campbell** (as producer only); **Frances-Anne Solomon**
  - [INDIGENOUS STREAM](#):
    - **Dr. Jules Koostachin**
  - [REGIONAL](#):
    - **Mayumi Yoshida**; **Laura Adkin**; **Pamela Gallant**; **Sibel Guvenc**; **Freda Luk**; **Melanie Oates**
  - [TALENT TO WATCH](#):
    - **Nadine Valcin**; **Rolla Tahir**
- 4 alumnae-led projects received [IPF Funding](#) for:
  - [DEVELOPMENT](#):
    - **Eva Thomas** (as producer only); **Bronwyn Szabo**; **Shazia Javed**; **Joy Haskell** with **Rebeka Herron** (as producer only)
  - [PRODUCTION](#):
    - **Bronwyn Szabo** (*It Doesn't Show*)
- 1 alumna (**Gail Maurice**, *Rez in the City*) received [Pre-development Funding from the ISO](#):
- 2 alumnae-led digital series have received [CMF Funding](#):
  - **Zarqa Nawaz**, *Zarqa* season 2 (CBC Gem)
  - **Mary Walsh**, *The Missus Downstairs* season 3 (Bell Fibe)

### Industry Recognition: (sampling)

- 41 x CSA nominations for WIDC alumnae and their related projects
  - 8 for [Best Direction](#)
  - **Danishka Esterhazy** won Best Direction of an MOW
- 33 x Leo Award nominations for WIDC alumnae and their related projects
  - 4 for Best Direction
    - **Siobhan Devine** x 3; **Nimisha Mukerji** x 1
  - 2 for Best Picture
    - **Kate Kroll** (producer winner, *Portraits from a Fire*)
    - **Elizabeth Lazebnik** (producer nominee, *Be Still*)
- 8 x AMPPIA Award nominations for WIDC alumnae and their related projects
  - **Eva Colmers** x 5 (*short doc, Quinn*, including Best Direction)
  - **Eva Colmers** x 1 (*short, Dilly Digger & the Mushroom Adventure*)
  - **Nauzanin K. Knight** x 1 (*short, Abu & Mo: Two Orphans*)
  - **Nauzanin K. Knight** x 1 (*short, ColourBlind*)
- 2 x CIFF Awards for WIDC alumnae-led films
  - *Buffy Saint Marie: Carry It On* (feature doc) by **Madison Thomas**
    - Telus Audience Choice Award: Music On Screen
  - *Francheska: Prairie Queen* (feature doc) produced by **Michelle Wong**
    - Telus Audience Choice Award: Alberta Feature



Image from 2022 CSA's "winner Danishka Esterhazy"

- 2 x VIFF Awards for WIDC alumnae-led films,
  - Best BC Director, **Sophie Jarvis** (*Until Branches Bend*)
  - Audience Choice, *Lay Down Your Heart* (short doc) by **Marie Clements**
- 3 x Whistler FF Awards for WIDC alumnae-led films,
  - Borsos Award, Best Cinematography, *Polaris* (feature) by **KC Carthew**
  - Borsos Awards, Honorable Mentions:
    - Best Performance, in *Polaris* (feature) by **KC Carthew**
    - Best BC Director, *Broken Angel* (feature) by **Dr. Jules Koostachin**
- 2 x [Governor General's Awards](#) for WIDC alumnae **Nettie Wild** and **Shannon Walsh**
- 2 x [CMPA Indiescreen Awards](#) nominations for producers of alumnae-directed feature films
  - *Until Branches Bend* by **Sophie Jarvis** and *Rosie* by **Gail Maurice** (*Rosie was also a TIFF Top Ten*)

### Canadian Festivals: (sampling of festivals)

- TIFF
  - *Bones of Crows* by **Marie Clements**
  - *Until Branches Bend* by **Sophie Jarvis** (developed at WIDC)
  - *Rosie* by **Gail Maurice**
- VIFF
  - *Bones of Crows* by **Marie Clements** (Opening Night film)
  - *Lay Down Your Heart* by **Marie Clements** (short doc)
  - *Until Branches Bend* by **Sophie Jarvis** (developed at WIDC)
  - *Rosie* by **Gail Maurice**
- CIFF
  - *Bones of Crows* by **Marie Clements**
  - *Rosie* by **Gail Maurice**
  - *Until Branches Bend* by **Sophie Jarvis** (developed at WIDC)
  - *Buffy Saint Marie: Carry It On* by **Madison Thomas**
    - Telus Audience Choice Award: Music On Screen
  - *Francheska: Prairie Queen* produced by **Michelle Wong**
    - Telus Audience Choice Award: Alberta Feature
- FIN / Atlantic IIFF
  - *Bones of Crows* by **Marie Clements**
  - *Buffy Saint Marie: Carry It On* by **Madison Thomas**
  - *Polaris* by **KC Carthew**
  - *Rosie* by **Gail Maurice**
  - *Stay the Night* by **Renuka Jeyapalan** (developed at WIDC)
  - *Until Branches Bend* by **Sophie Jarvis** (developed at WIDC)
  - *My Name Is Andrea* by **Pratibha Parmar** (international participant CAM NZ)
  - *I Do(n't)* by **Katelyn McCulloch** (short)
  - *Dad and the Fridge Box* by **Mary Walsh** (short)
  - *Proximity* by **Jamie Miller** (short, MJ Award)

Image from *Bones of Crows*Image from *Rosie*Image from *Until Branches Bend*Image from *Polaris*



### WIDC Program Collaborator Festivals:

- Whistler Film Festival
  - *Broken Angel* (feature) by **Dr. Jules Koostachin** (developed at WIDC)
  - *Polaris* (feature) by **KC Carthew**
  - *Buffy Saint-Marie: Carry It on!* (feature doc) by **Madison Thomas**
  - *Smoke Eater* (short) by Gloria Mercer
  - Also, 12 alumnae were featured including:
    - Variety Canadian Stars to Watch: **Dr. Jules Koostachin, Gail Maurice**
    - Guest Speakers: **Marie Clements, Dr. Jules Koostachin, Rebecca Gibson, KC Carthew**
    - WFF Talent Labs: **Shelley Thompson, Kate Green, Lindsey McIntyre**
    - Power Pitch: **Kate Kroll** (producer, *What Comes Next* by **Alexandra Caulfield**, developed at WIDC)
  
- Female Eye Film Festival
  - *Carmen* (feature) by **Valerie Buhagiar** (Honorary Director Award winner)
  - *Be Still* (feature) by **Elizabeth Lazebnik** (developed at WIDC, WIDC nominee to TTW / recipient)
  - *Distant Cousins* (short) by **Winnifred Jong**
  - *Mulligan* (short) by **Katelyn McCulloch**
  - Also, Dr. Carol Whiteman was featured on two panels and co-facilitated the Directors' Roundtable w/ Festival Founder and Artistic Director, **Leslie Ann Coles**
  
- St John's International Women's Film Festival
  - *Stay the Night* (feature) by **Renuka Jeyapalan** (developed at WIDC)
  - *Vegas* (short) by **Anna Wheeler** (short developed at WIDC, MJ Award)
  - Also, 7 alumnae were featured on panels including:
    - **Renuka Jeyapalan, Melanie Oates, Samantha MacAdam, Jordan Canning, Latonia Hartery, Gloria Ui Young Kim, Tamara Segura**
  
- Reelworld Film Festival
  - *Saturday Fuego Diablo* (short) by **Anita Abassi** (short, developed at WIDC)
  - Also, WIDC alumna **Daniella Pagliarello** (*The Drop*, web series) was featured on the IPF panel.
  
- Vancouver International Women in Film Festival
  - *Broken Angel* (feature) directed by **Dr. Jules Koostachin** (developed at WIDC, opened festival) and was featured on the Director's panel, sponsored by WIDC.
  - *Rosie* (feature) by **Gail Maurice**
  - *Mistik* (short) by **Dr. Jules Koostachin**
  - *Send the Rain* (short) by **Hayley Gray** (developed at WIDC)

## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The CWWA Board is comprised of President & CEO, Dr. Carol Whiteman, alumnae representatives, **Siobhan Devine, Juanita Peters, Rama Rau**, and ACTRA representative / Board Executive Officer, **Heather Allin**.



With the addition of this year's cohorts, there are now **334 WIDC director alumnae** residing across Canada and internationally. A growing percentage (27%) are DGC members while approximately 27% are ACTRA members crossing over to directing. Over 30% self-identify as being from equity-deserving communities: Black, Indigenous, Persons of Colour. WIDC has not officially collected data on participation rates of individuals who identify as LGTBQ2SIA+ or as Persons with Disabilities. The Board continues to seek the counsel of community experts for guidance on respectful self-identification policy to help better implement, track and report on equity, diversity, and inclusion.

More WIDC alumnae became members of the DGC this year. While we have not collected comprehensive data on alumnae directors hired to direct episodic, or as directing producers and showrunners, we do know they are directing on series in record numbers across Canada, in the US and internationally.

On behalf of the Creative Women Workshops Association Board of Directors who oversee the WIDC program, we are extremely grateful to our sponsors and community collaborators who have stuck with us during the continuing challenging times caused by COVID-19. We know the successes of WIDC alumnae are due in no small part to the consistent and ongoing confidence shown through these important relationships. It has been inspiring to work with the media sector and alumnae across Canada this past year.

