



**CREATIVE  
WOMEN  
WORKSHOPS  
ASSOCIATION**

# Annual Report

2021 - 2022

**WIDC**

Women In the Director's Chair

25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



# Activity Report

March 31, 2022

“At WIDC you will  
take risks, make  
mistakes and  
discover talents  
you never knew  
you had.”

Anne Wheeler,  
C.M. (WIDC inaugural Mentor Director)

Launched in 1996/97, **Women In the Director’s Chair (WIDC)** offers Canadian women media creators a seriously road-tested [safe and inclusive space](#) for professional advancement, authentic voice, and the development of narrative media content.

The term woman/women is in an evolution of language and we note that our intention in our use is to be fully inclusive of underrepresented persons who may identify as she/her and or they/them and share the goals and values of WIDC to promote these marginalized voices and stories.

WIDC gratefully acknowledges that the WIDC program originates from the traditional and unceded lands of the Coast Salish people, including the xmkym (Musqueam), Swxwu7mesh (Squamish), and slilwta (Tseil-wau-tuth) Nations. We also acknowledge the Indigenous Nations on whose traditional lands our guests, colleagues, and participants live, work, and create. We commit to working together with respect for the generations that came before, those living now, and the generations to come.

# WIDC APPROACH



# WIDC EQUITY DIVERSITY & INCLUSION WORK

ALL WIDC programs now begin with a 2-hour Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Work session presented by

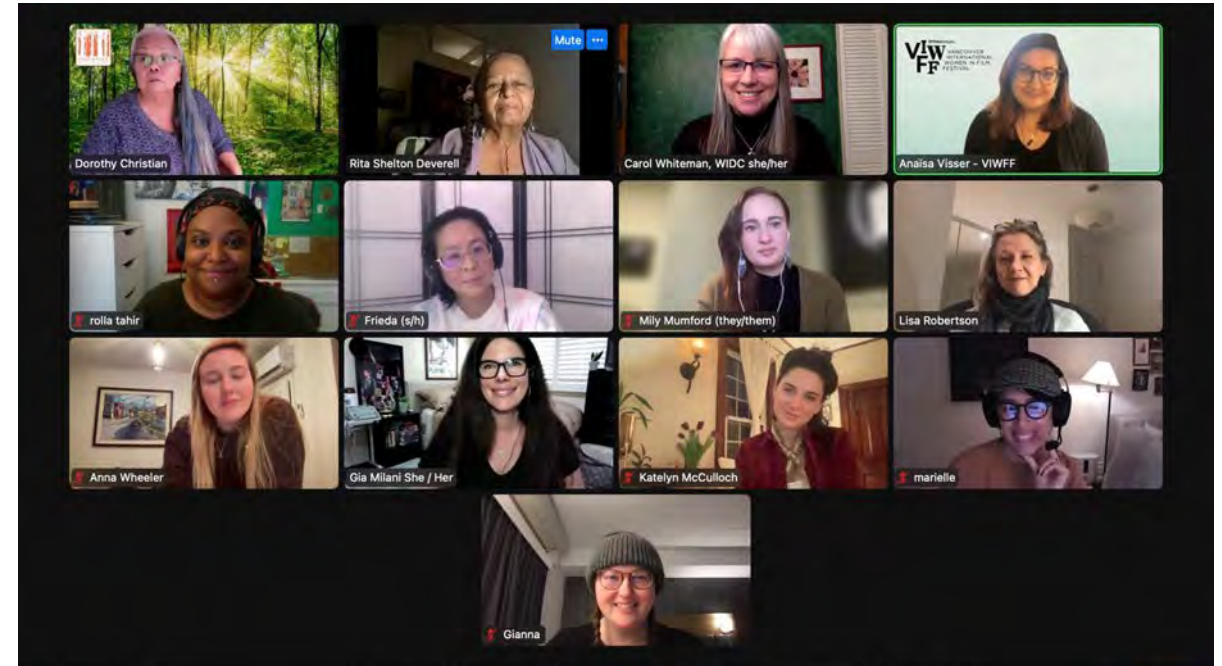
*Dr. Dorothy Cucw-la7 Christian* (at left)

*Dr. Rita Shelton Deverell* (at right)

The EDI theme is woven throughout the WIDC program experience as director participants are guided in crafting their own EDI Pledge for when they are *'the boss'*.

“The opening workshop was extraordinary and it set the tone for the rest of the workshop.”

Joy Haskell (BC), Story & Leadership



## WIDC CAM Spring 2022: EDI Work session, March 7, 2022

Pictured: Top row (L to R): Instructors, Dr. Dorothy Cucw-la7 Christian (BC), Dr. Rita Shelton Deverell C.M. (ON), WIDC Lead Mentor, Dr. Carol Whiteman (BC), VIWFF Director, Anaisa Visser (BC);  
Middle row: Rolla Tahir (ON), Frieda Luk (BC), Mily Mumford (BC), Lisa Robertson (ON);  
Third row: Anna Wheeler(NL), Gia Milana (NB), Katelyn McCulloch (NS), Marielle Quensey (QC);  
Bottom row: Gianna Isabella (AB)



# WIDC 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary PROGRAMS



WIDC delivered online programs including:

- ▶ **Story & Leadership** presented in collaboration with Whistler Film Festival  
(8 directors - online sessions are currently completing)
- ▶ **Career Advancement Module Fall 2021** presented in collaboration with Reelworld Film Festival and St John's International women's Film Festival  
(8 directors; 4 pictured L to R: Nika Belianina, Polly Pierce, Bronwyn Szabo and Dani Pagliarello met in Toronto after the CAM intensive was complete)
- ▶ **Career Advancement Module Spring 2022** presented in collaboration with Vancouver International Women in Film Festival and Female Eye Film Festival  
(9 directors; currently in session March to June 2022)
- ▶ **NEW Working In Episodic Roundtables** augmented with the support of the Directors Guild of Canada  
(52 directors have attended WIE sessions so far this fiscal)



# WIDC PROGRAMS - 2021-2022 Cohorts



**Story & Leadership Cohort:** l-r Top: Joy Haskell, Chris Deacon, Bal Brach, Alayna Silverberg; Bottom: Alexandra Caulfield, Niara Modi, Samantha McAdam, Léa Geronimo Rondot

**CAM Fall 2021 Cohort:** l-r Top: Nika Belianina, Daniella Pagliarello, Luvia Petersen, Polly Pierce; Bottom: Lorraine Price, Bronwyn Szabo, Eva Thomas, Dianne Wulf

**CAM Spring 2022 Cohort:** l-r top: Lisa Robertson, Marielle Quesney, Katelyn McCulloch, Gianna Isabella, Rolla Tahir; Bottom: Mily Mumford, Frieda Luk, Anna Wheeler, Gia Milani

# WIDC OBJECTIVES



- ▶ To enhance the *capacity* of under-represented creatives including mid-career Canadian women writer/directors, directors to advance and achieve their career and project goals, primarily in scripted production (feature film, television, and digital series).
- ▶ To elevate *internal confidence* in and *capabilities* of self-assessment, branding, marketing, communication, leadership, strategic planning, problem-solving and most importantly, *authentic creative voice*.
- ▶ To develop the *external confidence* of potential collaborators and industry in mid-career women writer/directors and directors by *building trusted allies* who will champion the advancement of their careers and project(s).
- ▶ To create a space where *creative risk-taking* and *innovation* can lead to discoveries of *under-represented voices* and the *creation of media content* for Canadian and international audiences.
- ▶ To *collaborate* with like-minded individuals, institutions, and organizations to maximize our collective effect.

Photos: Director Jules Koostachin, PhD, with her DP Sarah Thomas Moffat on set her debut feature film, *Broken Angel*

Bottom: Danishka Esterhazy, 2021 DGC Award for Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Movies for Television and Mini-Series, for *I Was Lorena Bobbitt*, and is currently a Producing Director on Syfy's upcoming high school horror-comedy series, DGC Production *Astrid and Lilly Save the World*.

Poster for *The Legend of La Llorona* directed by Patricia Harris Seeley, released in the US, Europe and on VOD.



# WIDC 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary SPECIAL EVENTS, AWARDS & DISTINCTIONS

- ▶ WIDC 25th Launch Event attended by over 50 guests
- ▶ WIDC 25th Promo screened at BANFF, WFF, VIWFF
- ▶ WIDC Film Co-presentation at VIWFF, *Querencia* by Mary Galloway (a WIDC Acting Ensemble alumna)
- ▶ WIDC Alumnae Panel Moderation, Guest Speakers at BANFF; Reelworld FF; SJIWFF; WFF; Deaf & Hard of Hearing Filmmakers Masterclass; Canadian Film Festival; VIWFF; TIFF; VIFF
- ▶ WIFT-T Crystal Jury Award of Distinction for alumna, *Dr. Shirley Cheechoo C.M.* presented by WIDC co-creator & producer, *Dr. Carol Whiteman*
- ▶ Governor General's Award to alumna *Dr. Rita Shelton Deverell, C.M.*

# WIDC FEATURE FILM AWARD



2021 WINNER

Lindsay McIntyre  
(BC)  
*The Words We  
Can't Speak*

Engaged in Script  
and community  
consultations



2020 WINNER

Kim Albright  
(BC)  
*With Love and a  
Major Organ*

Completed  
production in  
Vancouver



2019 WINNER

Pamela Gallant  
(NS)  
*Monica's News*

Final financing,  
polish and  
packaging



2018 WINNER

Shelley Thompson  
(NS)  
*Dawn, Her Dad &  
the Tractor*

Canadian and  
International  
theatrical release

 **CBC FILMS**  
WIDC TALENT DEVELOPMENT AWARD



2021 WINNER

**Lindsay McIntyre  
(BC)**

The Words We  
Can't Speak

Engaged in Script  
and community  
consultations

2020 WINNER

**Kim Albright  
(BC)**

With Love and a  
Major Organ

Completed  
production in  
Vancouver, 2022

2019 WINNER

**JJ Neepin  
(MB)**

Luminous

Selected as one of  
Playback 10 to  
Watch 2021

2019 WINNER

**Meeshelle Neal  
(ON)**

Sweet Release

Packaged the script  
at Whistler Film  
Festival Producer's  
Lab 2021

# WIDC BANFF FELLOWSHIP AWARD



Joy Haskell is a BC-based Indigenous story-teller who was also selected as a recipient of the BANFF DOV program. She subsequently was selected for the CFC / Netflix Feature Film Accelerator and the Academy Program for Indigenous Women Directors. She received CMF development funding for her series, *Hey Cousin*. Through WIDC she connected with fellow alumna Rebeka Herron who is now a producer for Joy's feature film *Cookies or Crack*.



# WIDC OUTCOMES

*(stepping-stones to success)*



2022 CSA Nominees

**WIDC**  
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Congratulations to WIDC alumnae  
nominated for Achievement in Direction

(L to R) Sharon Lewis ★ Danishka Esterhazy ★ Gloria Ui Young Kim  
Leah Cameron ★ Siobhan Devine ★ Winnifred Jong ★ Renuka Jeyapalan

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WIDC Alumnae and their related projects earned 41 CSA nominations; 36 Leo Award nominations; plus Rosies, Windies; Golden Sheafs; Wave Awards, Crystal Awards; Spotlight Awards; Emmys and countless festival awards

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Since attending WIDC, alumnae have directed over 100 Feature Films, 35 MOWs, countless Broadcast Episodes, Digital shorts, plus 100's of hours of documentaries, & other forms of entertainment

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WIDC Alumnae are part of a network of 330 women and non-binary screen directors and writer/directors, plus 1000's of industry professionals.

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Industry track-record for alumnae creating and directing award-winning content

# GRATITUDE AND WONDER

To show her gratitude for what her experience at WIDC gave her, one director participant made a donation to have trees planted in British Columbia.

*“A small expression of my immense gratitude for these past weeks! I wanted to share the energizing spirit of WIDC in a concrete way and circle back to BC from where it radiates!”*

**Niara Modi (ON), Story & Leadership**



**WIDC 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Greetings from Alumnae, Sponsors and Friends:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPEN3393p2U>

# MORE FEEDBACK FROM CURRENT COHORTS

“This program is so necessary. Women and gender diverse people are still woefully underrepresented in creative leadership positions - particularly directing. Your support for this program directly impacts the balance of power in the film and television industry.”

Alexandra Caulfield (BC)  
Story & Leadership

“The master classes with the guest speakers were extremely rewarding and helpful.”

Joy Haskell (BC)  
Story & Leadership

“After attending the WIDC Story & Leadership program this past year, I am open and ready to make the script the best that it can be .”

Alayna Silverberg (BC)  
Story & Leadership

“The WIDC CAM is such an invaluable program for emerging female, BIPOC and LGBTQ+ directing talent in Canada. It's an invaluable outlet for the directors to network with one another, thus creating a support system ... We appreciate your generous contributions to continuing to support underrepresented voices.”

Polly Pierce (BC)  
Career Advancement Module

“I learned a lot from the cohort's own experience. Thank you and watch out for me!”

Daniella Pagliarello (ON)  
Career Advancement Module

“I recently participated in the WIDC career Advancement Module and it was at my first one on one meeting with Carol that I had an epiphany: As a queer woman I had boxed myself in a new closet, this time as a director! I... Carol held space for me as I unpacked my desire to tell films that reflect my lived experience as a queer women.”

Luvia Petersen (BC)  
Career Advancement Module

*On average directors have ranked the WIDC program 10/10  
100% said they would refer the program to qualifying directors in the future.*

We are grateful for the ongoing financial and in-kind sponsorship, participation and collaboration of our industry colleagues.



**MENTORSHIP – DEVELOPMENT – PRODUCTION**  
*Advancing authentic voices on screen*  
[www.widc.ca](http://www.widc.ca) | [@WIDC\\_ca](https://twitter.com/WIDC_ca) | [facebook.com/widc.ca](https://facebook.com/widc.ca)

Major Sponsor since 1997	Participating Sponsors

WIDC Feature Film Award Sponsors (recent)

		KALOS STUDIOS	Elemental. COLOUR   SOUND   FINISHING
			MELS

Alumnae Awards presented with the participation and support of

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Community Collaborators


Founding Organizations

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# CONTACT

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More WIDC Alumnae:

<https://www.widc.ca/directory>



**CWWA**  
**Board of Directors**

Heather Allin  
Siobhan Devine  
Juanita Peters  
Rama Rau  
Dr. Carol Whiteman

Juanita Peters was named 2022 ACTRA Woman of the Year