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**MEDIA RELEASE**

## TIFF 2019 CELEBRATES INDIGENOUS FILMMAKERS AND THEIR STORIES

**This year's lineup showcases Alanis Obomsawin, Zacharias Kunuk, Taika Waititi, Rachel Perkins, Jeff Barnaby, and more**

**TORONTO** – The Toronto International Film Festival® is proud to highlight the works of Indigenous filmmakers and artists, from veteran Alanis Obomsawin (Abenaki), who comes to TIFF with the provocative and emotional *Jordan River Anderson, The Messenger*, to relative newcomer Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers (Sámi/Blackfoot/Blood), with *The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open*.

“Supporting the voices of Indigenous people through film is a priority for TIFF,” said Cameron Bailey, Artistic Director and Co-Head. “We support the calls by leaders in Indigenous screen storytelling for more films to be made, and for greater narrative sovereignty. We’re inspired by this year’s films that shine a light on Indigenous stories of the present and past, and we’re excited to help bring these vital stories to global audiences.”

Obomsawin’s *Jordan River Anderson, The Messenger* is the Abenaki filmmaker’s 53rd film. Documenting the short life of a young boy from Norway House Cree Nation in Manitoba, born with a rare muscle disorder, the film is an exposé of blatant governmental disregard.

Prolific filmmaker Zacharias Kunuk returns to TIFF with *One Day in the Life of Noah Piugattuk*, a fictionalized account of an encounter between a respected Inuk elder and a government emissary, who tries to enforce a policy that will mean a fundamental rupture in the lives of Inuit. A post-screening Q&A will be moderated by Jesse Wenté, Director of the Indigenous Screen Office. *One Day in the Life of Noah Piugattuk* is powerful tale about colonialism and Inuit–settler relations.

New Zealand’s Taika Waititi will be honoured at the TIFF Tribute Gala with the inaugural **TIFF Ebert Director Award**. Waititi directed the superhero film *Thor: Ragnarok*, which made over \$850 million at the box office worldwide, and will write and direct the upcoming *Thor: Love and Thunder*. Waititi’s upcoming anti-hate satire, *Jojo Rabbit*, will have its World Premiere at TIFF and will be released by Fox Searchlight on October 18, 2019.

Mi’gmaq writer-director and 2010 TIFF Filmmaker Lab alum Jeff Barnaby returns with *Blood Quantum*, which was filmed in the Kahnawake Mohawk Territory and Listuguj, Quebec. The film features an Indigenous cast, including 2018 TIFF Rising Star Kawennáhere Devery Jacobs. *Blood Quantum*, the Opening Night Film in TIFF’s Midnight Madness programme, tells the story of an isolated Mi’gmaq community who discover they are the only humans immune to a zombie plague.

TIFF is a charitable organization with a mission to transform the way people see the world through film.

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Myriam Verreault's *Kuessipan*, based on Naomi Fontaine's novel of the same name, follows two Innu girls growing up as best friends in northeastern Quebec. Including many non-actors in her cast, Verreault brings the author's tale of compassion, understanding, and lifelong friendship to life.

In *The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open*, from writer-directors Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers and Kathleen Hepburn, a chance encounter brings two Indigenous women together after a traumatic experience. The film explores love, motherhood, and the damage of child removal policies on Indigenous families. Tailfeathers, who stars in *The Body Remembers When the World Broke Open*, is also featured at the Festival as an actor in Barnaby's *Blood Quantum*.

Director Daniel Gordon's documentary *The Australian Dream* is an insightful portrait of Adam Goodes, an Australian football star and a staunch activist for Indigenous rights both in his home country and around the world. *The Australian Dream* captures Goodes' passion and commitment to his Indigenous identity.

This year's Industry Conference (September 6–10) will also highlight key Indigenous speakers. Anishinaabe filmmaker Darlene Naponse will discuss environmentally sustainable practices, Jesse Wentz will address funding for under-represented documentary filmmakers, and Australian director-producer Rachel Perkins (*Black Bitch*, a Primetime selection at TIFF 2019) will talk about her experiences directing for television. *Black Bitch* is produced by Perkins' and Darren Dale's Blackfella Films, which specializes in Indigenous productions.

Earlier this summer, TIFF announced Anishinaabe writer and director Lisa Jackson as one of the inaugural Talent Accelerator recipients. Jackson will also be taking part in TIFF Writers' Studio in 2020.

The 44th Toronto International Film Festival runs September 5–15, 2019.

For film synopses, cast lists, images, and more information, see [tiff.net/films](http://tiff.net/films)

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#### **About TIFF**

TIFF is a not-for-profit cultural organization whose mission is to transform the way people see the world through film. An international leader in film culture, TIFF projects include the annual Toronto International Film Festival in September; TIFF Bell Lightbox, which features five cinemas, major exhibitions, and learning and entertainment facilities; and innovative national distribution program Film Circuit. The organization generates an annual economic impact of \$189 million CAD. TIFF Bell Lightbox is generously supported by contributors including Founding Sponsor Bell, the Province of Ontario, the Government of Canada, the City of Toronto, the Reitman family (Ivan Reitman, Agi Mandel and Susan Michaels), The Daniels Corporation and RBC. For more

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