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MEDIA RELEASE

TIFF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CO-HEAD JOANA VICENTE STEPS DOWN

September 29, 2021 (Toronto, ON) – After three years as Executive Director & Co-Head of the Toronto International Film Festival®, Joana Vicente is stepping down to return to her home country of the United States and roots in independent film, where she will assume the role of CEO of the Sundance Institute. On behalf of the Board of Directors of TIFF, Jennifer Tory, Chair, today announced Vicente’s departure, effective October 31, 2021.

“Joana has made a lasting impact on TIFF over these past three years as Executive Director & Co-Head. Though none of us anticipated planning two festivals amid a global pandemic, alongside Artistic Director & Co-Head, Cameron Bailey, Joana has helped us navigate this new reality while delivering the ground-breaking and industry-leading work TIFF has always been known for. We are deeply appreciative for all she has done for the organization and wish her the very best in her future endeavours,” said Tory. “While we know Joana loved being part of TIFF, we understand the desire to return to her career in independent film and reunite with family in the U.S. after the pandemic has separated families across borders for so long. Despite the ongoing impacts of Covid-19, we reflect on a successful 2021 having hosted the largest international public film festival to take place this year; welcoming 165,000 audience members, press and industry from Toronto, across Canada and around the world at over 670 screenings. We are incredibly confident in the team and excited about the future of TIFF.”

While at TIFF, Vicente, in collaboration with Co-Head Cameron Bailey, navigated the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic for the organization while spearheading a new strategic plan. She oversaw a reorganization of TIFF with the aim to ensure a more sustainable path to long-term stability, led a comprehensive digital strategy and innovation plan for the company, including the strategy and implementation of a fast pivot to digital for the organization’s year-round cinema operations and a hybrid model for the Festival. She increased industry partnerships, with a focus on partners led by or serving historically excluded communities, and created a new property, the TIFF Tribute Awards gala, now a broadcast TV show recognizing top Festival talent. Having just concluded a successful Festival earlier in September, she leaves her TIFF colleagues and the organization in a strong position to continue flourishing.

“I would like to thank Jennifer and the Board of Directors, Cameron and the TIFF team, its partners and supporters, and the city of Toronto for welcoming me with open arms three years ago,” said Joana Vicente. “I’m so very proud of what we’ve achieved together - the films we’ve shared, the projects we’ve led, and the growth we’ve marked through ongoing partnerships and collaborations. The last 18-months have been challenging for so many reasons, not least of which was living in a different country than my family. The opportunity to lead the team at Sundance and return to New York, feels like the right decision personally and professionally. As an international platform for world cinema making an impact locally and globally, TIFF has never been stronger, and I look forward to cheering the organization’s continued success.”

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



“Working so closely with Joana has been a pleasure. Her global perspective and strategic approach have been invaluable to our work on Festival and our year-round activities,” said Cameron Bailey, Artistic Director & Co-Head. “As what we do and the way we do it continues to evolve amid an ever-changing global landscape, one thing remains unchanged: TIFF is an internationally respected, locally-connected organization committed to transforming the way people see the world through film. I look forward to working alongside the TIFF Board of Directors as we continue to shape our future.”

TIFF and Sundance Institute are working together to support a seamless leadership transition for both organizations. Together with Cameron Bailey, the TIFF Board of Directors will review the organization’s structure to assess next steps and leadership needs to ensure TIFF’s continued success.

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, learning and entertainment facilities; and innovative national distribution program Film Circuit. The organization generates an annual economic impact of \$200 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 information, visit tiff.net. TIFF is generously supported by Lead Sponsor Bell, Major Sponsors RBC, L’Oréal Paris, and Visa, and Major Supporters the Government of Ontario, Telefilm Canada, and the City of Toronto.

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