

WINNER OF 2020 TIFF–CBC FILMS SCREENWRITER AWARD ANNOUNCED



TORONTO — Today TIFF announced award-winning Canadian author and screenwriter Elyse Friedman is the recipient of this year's **TIFF–CBC Films Screenwriter Award** for her feature project *The Relationship Experiment*.

The TIFF–CBC Films Screenwriter Award was created to support Canada's diverse screenwriting talent and to fund the development of great Canadian screenplays. The Award is open to creators who are women, or Indigenous, or a visible minority, or who have a disability, and whose work reflects, represents, and reframes diverse perspectives at the centre of the Canadian experience.

As part of the Award, Friedman will receive a \$15,000 grant, along with support from a script consultant and complimentary access to the 2020 Toronto International Film Festival and TIFF Industry Conference in September.

"Writers can go for excruciatingly long stretches of time without any validation or income," said Friedman. "To receive both in the form of this award is something to jump up and down about (which I did when I got the call). I'm truly grateful to TIFF, CBC Films, and the jurors who have given me the best reward of all: time to write."

Friedman has written for screens large and small, radio, magazines, and the stage. Her recent novel *The Answer to Everything* was published by HarperCollins Canada. Her work has been shortlisted for the Trillium

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Book Award, the Toronto Book Award, the ReLit Award, and numerous National Magazine Awards. Her story *The Soother* won the Gold National Magazine Award for Fiction. Friedman is a graduate of the Canadian Film Centre. She has had two feature films produced, one of which premiered at TIFF in 2001. In 2019, her screenplay *Better Now* won the TIFF–CBC Films Screenwriter Award Jury Prize.

On making the announcement, the jury said, “Out of seven exceptional shortlisted projects, this year’s TIFF–CBC Films Screenwriter Award Jury selected the laugh-out-loud and timely feminist romp, *The Relationship Experiment* by Elyse Friedman. We loved *The Relationship Experiment* because it subverts societal expectations of how a woman is supposed to look and behave, with an off-beat spirit and sensibility like Noah Baumbach’s *Greenberg* and laughs and set pieces like Paul Feig’s *Bridesmaids*.”

The decision was made by a jury of screen-industry professionals: Mehernaz Lentin, Senior Director of CBC Films; writer-director Brad Fraser; screenwriter and script consultant Nikki Saltz; Charlotte Mickie, Vice-President of Celluloid Dreams; and TIFF Industry Programming Producer Jane Kim.

All screenplay applications were read and rated anonymously, without readers knowing the names of screenwriters. Projects were considered based on the quality of the script, the originality of the idea, story structure, dialogue, and characters, and likely audience appeal and achievability.

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About TIFF

TIFF is a charitable 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 Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario, 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.

About CBC Films

CBC Films encompasses the national public broadcaster’s continued investment in Canadian cinema and spans film initiatives including funding, pre-buys, and acquisitions for CBC broadcast and streaming platforms. CBC Films funding supports the production of feature films led by female, LGBTQ2+, Indigenous, and diverse filmmakers that reflect, represent, and reframe a range of perspectives through character-driven

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stories that are at the centre of the Canadian experience.

About CBC/Radio-Canada

CBC/Radio-Canada is Canada's national public broadcaster. Through our mandate to inform, enlighten, and entertain, we play a central role in strengthening Canadian culture. As Canada's trusted news source, we offer a uniquely Canadian perspective on news, current affairs, and world affairs. Our distinctively homegrown entertainment programming draws audiences from across the country. Deeply rooted in communities, CBC/Radio-Canada offers diverse content in English, French, and eight Indigenous languages. We also deliver content in Spanish, Arabic, and Chinese, as well as both official languages, through Radio Canada International (RCI). We are leading the transformation to meet the needs of Canadians in a digital world.

The Toronto International Film Festival is generously supported by Lead Sponsor Bell, Major Sponsors RBC, L'Oréal Paris and Visa, and Major Supporters the Government of Ontario, the Government of Canada, and the City of Toronto.

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