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MEDIA RELEASE

TIFF KIDS FESTIVAL INDUSTRY FORUM TO TACKLE REPRESENTATION, INCLUSIVITY AND CREATIVITY IN CHILDREN'S CONTENT

Speakers from the United Nations, *Thomas & Friends* and Australia's *Bus Stop Films* headline the conference

TORONTO — The TIFF Kids Industry Forum returns with full-day programmes on **March 8 and 9** as part of the **TIFF Kids International Film Festival™ (March 9–18)**. The Forum provides an opportunity for filmmakers, television and interactive producers, and childhood education and marketing experts to come together to discuss the latest trends in children's screen content.

This year's edition brings in key members of the global filmmaking community who will investigate and discuss media's responsibility to create safe and inclusive spaces, both on and off screen. The Forum also looks at aspirational content for early childhood and age-appropriate stories for older kids. The programme includes workshops on screenwriting, digital discoverability, and creating interactive content.

"The world of screen content is facing seismic shifts in the business landscape and children's content is no different," said Kathleen Drumm, Director, TIFF Industry. "We are excited to bring together some of the best and brightest leaders in the industry together at the Forum to discuss not only the challenges they're facing, but also the opportunities the next few years hold for creators."

Highlights include a keynote from Genevieve Clay-Smith, co-founder and CEO of Australia's **Bus Stop Films**. The groundbreaking not-for-profit production company and film school creates content about, and by, people with intellectual disabilities, and from other marginalized groups. The Forum will also host a dialogue about The Sustainable Development Goals with Jeffrey Brez of the **United Nations**, as well as representatives from Mattel's *Thomas & Friends*. It also features an opportunity for up-and-coming filmmakers to pitch their short film ideas to **Sesame Workshop**. The 2017 Forum hosted pitching sessions and those teams have gone on to create award-winning content for *Sesame Street*, which has screened all over the world.

Registered delegates will have access to keynote sessions, panels, one-on-one meetings with leading professionals, and workshops featuring over 30 leading artists and business executives in the children's entertainment and education industries. In addition, delegates will enjoy networking opportunities and access to TIFF's award-winning interactive playground, digiPlaySpace.

Industry registration for the TIFF Kids International Film Festival is now open and delegates can find more information at tiff.net/industry. TIFF offers two pass options this year: the **TIFF Kids Industry Pass** and the **TIFF Kids Forum Pass**. Both pass types include access to the Industry Forum (available on a first-come, first-served basis), the award-winning digiPlaySpace, and the TIFF Kids Festival Industry Lounge (located in the Bell Blue Room), in addition to exclusive online resources, including the TIFF Kids Festival Delegates Guide, and an invitation to the TIFF Kids Festival Industry Cocktail. The TIFF Kids Industry Pass also includes 10 advance public tickets (one per screening, subject to availability) and same-day tickets to public and school group screenings. The pass also grants access to the Industry Screening Library. College and university students are eligible for discounted rates. To find out more about these rates, contact us at tiffkidsindustry@tiff.net.

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TIFF KIDS FESTIVAL INDUSTRY FORUM – PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Breakfast at TIFF: It Takes a Village

What is the responsibility of the industry to maintain the safety and well-being of young performers in the workforce? On the set, after the premiere, online? We check in with the industry leaders to take stock of how we prioritize protecting these young industry professionals.

Speakers:

Carla de Jong (Head of Production, Sinking Ship Entertainment)

Tovah Small (Talent Agent, Meridian Artists)

Christina Collins (ACTRA Toronto, Child Advocate)

Moderator:

Natalie Semotiuk

CONNECTIONS | Ten minutes with...

A valuable opportunity to sit down for brief one-on-one meetings with some of the industry's leading experts. Multiple sessions scheduled throughout the forum. Experts include: Suzanne Wilson (Lambur Productions), Jamie Piekarz (JamPie Media), Rick Clodfelter (Universal Kids), Carrie Paupst Shaughnessy (Marble Media), Marie McCann (CBC Kids), Stephanie Betts (DHX Media), Kate Sanagan (Sinking Ship Entertainment), Genevieve Clay-Smith (Bus Stop Films), Kim Wright & Susan Scheiner (Sesame Workshop), Carlos Pacheco (Boat Rocker Media), Lisa Chatfield (Pukeko Pictures), Andrew Thomas (Hulu), Jeffrey Brez (United Nations), Cal Bruner & Bob Barlen (Independent Filmmakers), Marnie Malabar (TVO Kids). Available by advanced sign-up; space is extremely limited. Please see tiff.net/industry for the full lineup.

FOUNDATIONS | Digital Discoverability - Entertainment, meet Analytics

A crash course in understanding your audience and their viewing patterns, this Foundations workshop session provides the tools to help you stand out in a saturated market. *Space is limited; first-come, first-served.*

Speakers:

Carlos Pacheco (VP, Audience Development, Boat Rocker Media)

Deb Day (CEO & Chief Strategist, Innovate By Day: Strategic Marketing & Digital Content Studio)

Moderator:

Marney Malabar (Director, Kids TV, TVO)

Co-presented by the Canada Media Fund.

DIALOGUES | Adventures in the Mysterious Land of 8-12

The preteen audience has been a historically tricky demographic to program for. This *in between* crowd is too old for kid' stuff, but too young for the content they are drawn to (TV's *The Bachelor* being a favourite for this age range). We sit down with content creators and distributors working to tap into tweens' precocious taste with adventure tales, action, and age-appropriate dramas.

Speakers:

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Marie McCann (Senior Director, CBC Kids)
Rasko Miljkovic (Director, *Witch Hunters*)
Sarah Haasz (Producer)

Moderator:
Kate Sanagan (Head of Sales and Distribution, Sinking Ship Entertainment)

FOUNDATIONS | Sesame Street: Aspire to Inspire

Sesame Workshop returns to the TIFF Kids Forum to explore the curriculum for *Sesame Street's* upcoming 49th season, "Aspire to Inspire: If You Can See It, You Can Play It, You Can Be It." We get an invaluable look behind the curriculum building and production process that makes *Sesame Street* a longstanding thought leader in early childhood educational content.

Speakers:
Kimberly Wright (Film Producer, Sesame Workshop)
Susan Scheiner (Researcher, Sesame Workshop)

DIALOGUES | Match Point: Finding Co-Production Synergies

Tax credits, contracts, cultural customs, and creative visions all must be nimbly negotiated by the producers working on international co-productions. We sit down with three top notch producers to discuss the complexities and benefits of co-productions, and learn trade secrets for tackling tricky terrain and developing fruitful and enriching partnerships.

Speakers:
Andrew Rosen (Producer, *The Breadwinner*)
Lisa Chatfield (Producer, Pukeko Pictures)
Additional speaker to be confirmed.

Moderator:
Mary Bredin (Executive Vice-President, Content & Strategy, Guru Studio)

KEYNOTE | Everyone on the Bus! The Power of Inclusive Filmmaking

Bus Stop Films, Australia's groundbreaking, not-for-profit production company and film-school experience, is transforming the industry through their mission of inclusive filmmaking. Co-founder and CEO Genevieve Clay Smith shares Bus Stop's journey to create access to the filmmaking professions for marginalized people, especially those with intellectual disabilities. Clay-Smith's holistic and educational approach breaks down barriers while producing outstanding content.

Speaker:
Genevieve Clay Smith (CEO, Bus Stop Films)

CASE STUDY | Partnering for The Sustainable Development Goals with UN and *Thomas & Friends*

Mattel's retooled *Thomas & Friends: Big World, Big Adventure* brings a true international perspective to its new season of episodes. Created in collaboration with United Nations to integrate Sustainable Development Goals thematically into the content, this partnership links two global brands to reach a massive multilingual audience and align key positive messages for children across the world.

Speakers:
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Jeffrey Brez (United Nations, Chief, NGO Relations, Advocacy and Special Events)
Brenda Andolina (Fisher-Price)

FOUNDATIONS | Screenwriting for Animated Features

Acclaimed writers Cal Brunker and Bob Barlen (*Escape From Planet Earth*, *Son of Bigfoot*, *Nut Job 2*) lead an interactive, small-group session focusing on the craft of writing and (re-writing) screenplays for animated feature films. Designed for writers in early to emerging career to hone in on storytelling and scene craft. *Space is limited; first-come, first-served.*

SESAME WORKSHOP PITCH

The Sesame Workshop Pitch is back after a hugely successful event in 2017! Sesame's short film producers are here to meet talented Canadian producers, directors and writers who have been pre-selected to pitch their short film ideas, in front of a live audience. Previous pitchers have gone on to develop successful, long-lasting relationships with Sesame and produce award-winning content.

DIALOGUES | How to Maximize Your IP

Sequels, spin-offs, companion pieces and interactive content are all part of an ever-expanding tool-kit for media producers to pull from and maximize the full market potential of their IP. We look at a number of successful properties and the strategies that made them fly.

Speakers to be announced.

FOUNDATIONS | Going Interactive with VR/AR

Sinking Ship Interactive's Creative Director, Gavin Friesen, walks us through the digital landscape of AR and VR. What are the latest technologies? Which have already become obsolete? This session provides both an overview of the interactive content space and a deeper, practical look at the production timelines, budgets and teams involved in the creation of content pieces.

Speakers:

Gavin Freisen (Creative Director, Interactive, Sinking Ship Entertainment)

DIALOGUES Developing the landscape of Indigenous content for kids

Representing diverse cultures and communities is of the utmost importance in children's media today. Content creators and broadcasters are responding to a growing need for more Indigenous-focused content in the kids media landscape by creating thematically rich film and television that inspires and educates kids, in Canada and abroad.

Speakers:

Monika Ille (Executive Director of Programming, APTN)

Neil Christopher (Co-Founder, Taqqu Productions)

Additional sessions and guests, as well as dates and times, for the TIFF Kids Festival Industry Forum will be available at tiff.net/industry.

The TIFF Industry Office would like to thank the TIFF Kids Industry Advisory Committee for their support and guidance:

Jamie Piekarz

Producer, JamPi Media

Andrew Rosen

Producer, Aircraft Pictures

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Cal Brunker

Independent Filmmaker

Bob Barlen

Independent Filmmaker

Kate Sanagan

Head of Sales and Distribution, Sinking Ship Entertainment

Questions about the Forum programme can be directed to industryprogramming@tiff.net.

Questions about the registration process can be directed to tiffkidsindustry@tiff.net.

The TIFF Kids International Film Festival takes place at TIFF Bell Lightbox from March 9 - 18

Social:

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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 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.

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The TIFF Kids International Film Festival is supported by The City of Toronto and the Ontario Arts Council.

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For information, contact Cathleen Finlay at cfinlay@tiff.net or the Communications Department at 416.934.3200 or email proffice@tiff.net.

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