



January 24, 2019

MEDIA RELEASE

TIFF ANNOUNCES 2019 WRITERS' STUDIO PARTICIPANTS

TORONTO – Today, TIFF announced the participants in the 2019 Writers' Studio. For this year's lab, the format will shift from an eight-month-long series to a five-day intensive workshop, making the programme more accessible to screenwriters from across the country.

After reviewing over 80 submissions, the following Canadian writers have been selected: **Maria Camila Arias, Connor Gaston, Sophie Goyette, Melanie Jones, Sharon Lewis, Faisal Lutchmedial, Lindsay MacKay, Katie McMillan, Geoff Redknap, and Lina Roessler.**

"We have seen such phenomenal talent come through the TIFF Writers' Studio, and this year is no exception," said Kathleen Drumm, TIFF Industry Director. "The decision to concentrate the lab within one week will allow us to provide a highly focused, intensive professional and craft development experience for our group of talented storytellers."

TIFF Writers' Studio will take place in March 2019 at TIFF Bell Lightbox. This year's lab will support the development of feature film scripts, with dedicated one-on-one discussions from international script consultants and expert guests. Participants will also receive complimentary access to the 2019 Toronto International Film Festival, TIFF's Industry Conference, Business Centre and Delegate Resources.

Notable TIFF Studio alumni include filmmakers Pat Mills (*Don't Talk to Irene*); Molly McGlynn (*Mary Goes Round*); Joyce Wong (*Wexford Plaza*); and Ashley McKenzie (*Werewolf*). Following their involvement in TIFF Studio, these filmmakers have gone on to success.

TIFF Writers' Studio is produced by TIFF International Programmer Jane Schoettle and supported by Share Her Journey.

TIFF Writers' Studio 2019 Biographies:

Maria Camila Arias

Maria Camila Arias is a screenwriter, teacher, and story editor. She has written several screenplays and fiction drama series. She recently wrote the screenplay for *Birds of Passage* (2018), which was shortlisted for Best Foreign Language Film at the 91st Academy Awards.

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



Connor Gaston

Connor Gaston is a filmmaker and a recent alumnus of the Canadian Film Centre and TIFF Talent Lab. His films have screened at top film festivals, including the Toronto International Film Festival. His first feature, *The Devout* (2015), won multiple awards and earned a Canadian Screen Award nomination.

Sophie Goyette

Sophie Goyette is a writer and filmmaker. Her credits include five short films and a feature, which have screened in competition at Sundance, Locarno, and TIFF and which have earned a total of 13 prizes. *Mes nuits feront écho* (2017), her first fiction feature, won the Bright Future Award at Rotterdam.

Melanie Jones

Melanie Jones is an alumna of Women In the Director's Chair, the From Our Dark Side incubator program, Crazy8s, and the Reykjavik Talent Lab. She wrote and directed her first feature, *FSM*, in 2015, and she has directed more than a dozen award-winning shorts, including the recent film *Shuttlecock* (18).

Sharon Lewis

Sharon Lewis is a director, showrunner, actor, and writer. She played the title role in *Rude* (95), which screened at Cannes. Her first feature was the award-winning Afrofuturist film *Brown Girl Begins* (17), and she is currently adapting her Dora-nominated play, *sistahs*, into a feature film.

Faisal Lutchmedial

Faisal Lutchmedial is currently a writer on the third season of the TV drama *Ransom* (2017–). He began his professional writing career in 2012 when he won the Writers Guild of Canada Bell Media Diverse Screenwriters Program. He also served as a story editor for the series *The Listener* (2009–14).

Lindsay MacKay

Lindsay MacKay is a writer and director. Her feature *Wet Bum* premiered at TIFF and was a finalist in the prestigious Zoetrope Screenwriting Competition. She is a graduate of the directing program at the American Film Institute and won a Student Emmy. Her work has screened worldwide, including at TIFF, SXSW, AFI FEST, Beijing, Shanghai, and Camerimage.

Katie McMillan

Katie McMillan is a Toronto-based screenwriter and director with a passion for social justice and the politics of representation. Her writing is informed by years of advocacy for female artists and artists with disabilities through her work with Women in View and Tangled Art + Disability.

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Geoff Redknap

Geoff Redknap has worked as a makeup artist for two decades, with credits on *Deadpool* (2016) and the upcoming *Terminator* reboot. He has written nine features, including his directorial debut, *The Unseen* (2016). The film had its world premiere at Fantasia, played 28 festivals, and won several awards. It was released by Raven Banner in 2018.

Lina Roessler

Lina Roessler is a writer, director, and actor. Her series of award-winning short films have played festivals such as TIFF Kids and Canada's Top Ten. She won a Golden Sheaf Award for best student production for the short film *Mustard Seed* (2017) at the Yorkton Film Festival.

Loglines for each of the participants' projects are available on request.

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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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TIFF Writers' Studio is supported by the Share Her Journey Campaign.

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For images, visit tiff.net/press.

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