

June 21, 2016

NEWS RELEASE

“WHAT DOES THE FUTURE OF CANADA LOOK LIKE?”

Jeff Barnaby, Danis Goulet and Kent Monkman among Indigenous filmmakers and artists commissioned to envision the year 2167 through virtual reality and immersive media

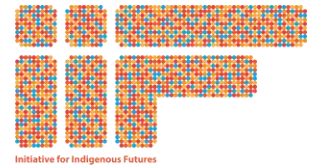


TORONTO — TIFF®, imagineNATIVE, Pinnguaq and the Initiative for Indigenous Futures announced today the joint project **2167**: an innovative virtual reality and immersive media series. Six Indigenous filmmakers and artists have been commissioned to create six VR projects in 2017, with each artist asked to set their work 150 years in the future. Three works will premiere at TIFF Bell Lightbox in **June 2017**, and three during **imagineNATIVE** in **October 2017** (also at TIFF Bell Lightbox), as part of TIFF’s sesquicentennial initiative called **Canada on Screen**. Award-winning filmmakers **Jeff Barnaby, Danis Goulet, Alethea Arnaquq-Baril** and Canadian artists **Kent Monkman, Scott Benesiinaabandan**, and the interdisciplinary arts collective **Postcommodity** will each create their own vision of the future in a two- to four-minute long virtual reality experience.

“As Canada commemorates 150 years in 2017, we’re investing in the strong Indigenous voices who’ve historically had limited access to share their stories. We want them to open a dialogue about what the future of our country could become,” said Jesse Wente, Director of Film Programmes at TIFF Bell Lightbox. “**2167** will show the power of the moving image to create a shared experience, and make a connection with Indigenous cinema’s history of creating empathy and understanding of Indigenous peoples and cultures. We are thrilled to join forces with imagineNATIVE, Pinnguaq and the Initiative for Indigenous Futures for this exciting project.”

“The idea for this project was born out of a love of science fiction and alternate realities. Often Indigenous people are seen as stuck in the past; with **2167** we wanted to take a very deliberate leap forward in time and see artistic visions about our place in the future,” said Jason Ryle, Artistic Director, imagineNATIVE. “In a year that in many ways commemorates a very complex history for Indigenous people, this project celebrates the decades to come and our role in shaping a new future for Canada. **2167** is a fantastic step in that direction.”

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



“Pinnguaq is very excited to be a part of the team to create **2167**. Indigenous perspective is often lacking in mainstream media, and what is so great about virtual reality is that it allows the viewer to experience a different frame of reference. When you put on the headset, for a few minutes the artists’ voices and creative interpretations of the world around them become yours,” said Nyla Innuksuk, owner and producer, Pinnguaq. “We look forward to seeing what these talented Indigenous artists — each with a unique perspective built on their personal, as well as collective, past — can imagine for the future.”

Jason Edward Lewis, Director, and Skawennati Fragnito, Coordinator at Initiative for Indigenous Futures added, “As teenagers, we fell in love with science fiction because it helped us to imagine the future. As we got older, we began to notice the lack of Native people in those futures. We started to think that perhaps the lack of stories and images of Indigenous people in the future was a big problem. If we can’t imagine ourselves there, maybe we won’t be there — however, if we start to look ahead to a time when we are thriving, integral agents of society, then we will inevitably assume our roles as such.”

The Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Canadian Heritage said, “TIFF will leave Canadians with wonderful memories of the greatest works in this country’s history. The screenings being offered in communities, which will highlight our rich heritage, are sure to amaze us. The project will also allow First Nations to put their perspectives on Canada’s future into images by means of a virtual reality film. The 150th anniversary of Confederation is a one-of-a-kind opportunity to create memorable moments for us all.”

2167 is a virtual reality project commissioned and produced by TIFF, imagineNATIVE, Pinnguaq and the Initiative for Indigenous Futures. **Canada on Screen** will begin in January 2017 and continue throughout the year with installations, special events, special guests, and free screenings. Additional programme details will be announced in the coming months.

Artist biographies:

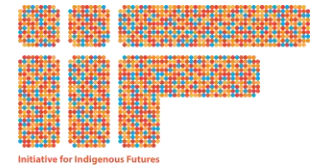
Alethea Arnaquq-Baril is an Inuit filmmaker from the Canadian arctic who runs Unikkaat Studios Inc. She directed and produced the award-winning feature documentary *Angry Inuk* (2016, Unikkaat/NFB co-production in association with EyeSteelFilm), taking home the Audience Choice Award at Hot Docs. Alethea’s previous work includes her award-winning APTN documentary *Tunniit: Retracing the Lines of Inuit Tattoos* (2010), and short films such as *Inuit High Kick* (2010), the NFB animation *Lumaajuuq: The Blind Boy and the Loon* (2010), and *Aviliaq: Entwined*, a lesbian love story as part of the Embargo Project (imagineNATIVE 2014).

Scott Benesiinaabandan is an Anishinabe intermedia artist that works primarily in photography, video, audio and printmaking. He has completed international residencies at Parramatta Artist Studios in Australia, Context Gallery in Derry, North of Ireland, and University Lethbridge/Royal Institute of Technology iAIR residency, along with international collaborative projects in both the United Kingdom and Ireland. Scott is currently based in Montreal, where he completed a yearlong Canada Council New Media Production grant through Obx Labs/Aboriginal Territories in Cyberspace and Concordia University.

Jeff Barnaby is a Mi’gmaq filmmaker from Listuguj, Quebec. His short films have played in numerous festivals, including Sundance, Tribeca, Fantasia, and Vancouver. His film *The Colony* (2007) was selected by the Festival as one of Canada’s Top Ten shorts. His debut feature *Rhymes for Young Ghouls* (2013) premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival, was awarded Best Canadian Feature Film at the Vancouver International Film Festival, and screened at Canada’s Top Ten Film Festival.

Danis Goulet is an award-winning filmmaker whose short films have screened at festivals around the world, including the Toronto International Film Festival, Sundance, Aspen Shortsfest, imagineNATIVE and Berlin International Film Festival. In 2013, her film *Barefoot* was recognized with a Special Mention from the Berlin International Film Festival Generation 14plus international jury and her film *Wakening* screened before the Opening Night Gala at the 2013 Toronto International Film Festival. She is an alumnus of the National Screen Institute’s Drama Prize Program and TIFF Talent Lab.

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Kent Monkman is well known for his provocative reinterpretations of romantic North American landscapes. His glamorous diva alter-ego Miss Chief appears in much of his work as an agent provocateur, trickster, and supernatural being, who reverses the colonial gaze, upending received notions of history and Indigenous people. His award-winning short films and video works have screened at various festivals, including the Berlin International Film Festival and the Toronto International Film Festival. Kent has been awarded the Egale Leadership Award, the Indspire Award and the Hnatyshyn Foundation Visual Arts Award.

Postcommodity is an interdisciplinary arts collective based in the Southwestern United States and comprised of Raven Chacon, Cristóbal Martínez and Kade L. Twist. The collective operates through a shared Indigenous lens that engages the assaultive manifestations of the global market. Through Indigenous narratives of cultural self-determination, Postcommodity braces against the ever-increasing velocities and complex forms of violence that have colonized the 21st century.

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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.

About imagineNATIVE

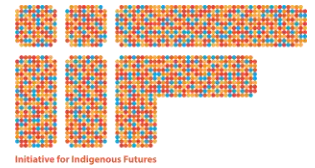
Founded in 1999, imagineNATIVE is the international centre for Indigenous-made media arts. Its annual Festival celebrates 17 years from 19-23 October 2016 and is the world's largest showcase of film, video, audio, and digital media works created by Indigenous directors, producers, and screenwriters. Year-round imagineNATIVE presents a national tour, screenings across Canada and internationally, and a community screening series based in the Greater Toronto Area. imagineNATIVE is committed to the professional development of Indigenous artists through its numerous workshops, labs, and panels through its Industry Series and through strategic partnerships internationally. imagineNATIVE showcases, promotes, and celebrates Canadian and international Indigenous filmmakers and media artists and is committed to a greater understanding by audiences of Indigenous peoples, cultures, and artistic expressions. For more information, visit imagnative.org.

About Pinnguaq

Pinnguaq is a company rooted in the creation of unique cultural experiences. They operate in Ontario, Nunavut and British Columbia, with a cutting edge mandate to create interactive experiences that push both the limits of technology and cultural expression. Pinnguaq has created games, films and environments in virtual spaces. Now they are looking to combine all of these elements into experiences that integrate unique interpretations of music and culture in an immersive and potentially interactive way. Pinnguaq's current and ongoing projects include marketing extensions of feature films such as *Bang Bang Baby*, which received the prize for Best Canadian First Feature at the 2014 Toronto International Film Festival, as well as video games, art installations, and music collaborations with artists such as Glenn Gould, Philip Glass, The Strumbellas, A Tribe Called Red and Polaris Prize Winner Tanya Tagaq. For more information, visit pinnguaq.com.

About Initiative for Indigenous Futures

The Initiative for Indigenous Futures (IIF) is a partnership of universities and community organizations dedicated to developing multiple visions of Indigenous peoples tomorrow in order to better understand where we need to go today. Through its four main components — workshops, residencies, symposia, and archive — IIF encourages and enables artists, academics, youth and elders to imagine how we and our communities will look in the future. IIF is conducted by Aboriginal Territories in Cyberspace (AbTeC), a research network based at Concordia University. For more information, visit abtec.org/iif.



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

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For images visit the media site at tiff.net/press.

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