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MEDIA RELEASE

TIFF INTRODUCES WRITERS' STUDIO CLASS OF 2022

TORONTO — TIFF is pleased to announce the eight screenwriters who will participate in the 2022 TIFF Writers' Studio. Now in its 11th year, Writers' Studio is a collaborative five-day intensive lab offering Canadian and international screenwriters and writer-directors a space to consolidate skills, exchange ideas, and discuss challenges, while participating in workshops, artist talks, peer-to-peer mentorships, and one-on-one project development consultations guided by industry experts. Returning to in-person attendance, Writers' Studio will take place March 21–25, 2022 at TIFF Bell Lightbox.

With over 150 submissions from around the world and Canada, TIFF is proud to announce that the following writers have been selected: **Abbesi Akhamie, Yuhi Amuli, Maggie Briggs, Yasmine Mathurin, Minos Nikolakakis, Gabriel Savignac, Daniel Warth, and Mayumi Yoshida.**

"In 2021, for the first time, TIFF invited international screenwriters and writer-directors to apply. This year will be the first time we will be welcoming international TIFF Writers' Studio participants in-person at TIFF Bell Lightbox, and we couldn't be more excited," said Geoff Macnaughton, Senior Director, Industry & Theatrical at TIFF. "Under the guidance of both Canadian and international experts, we look forward to seeing the evolution of the participants' projects and how the programme will help take their careers to the next level."

This year's lab will support the development of feature-film scripts with dedicated one-on-one discussions from international script consultants Christina Lazaridi, Trey Ellis, Alesia Weston, and Marietta von Hausswolff von Baumgarten. Additionally, the participants will engage in daily artist talks and workshops facilitated by renowned filmmakers and industry experts including Thyrone Tommy, Ashley Comeau, Rosemary Dunsmore, Brad Fraser, and Judy Lung. From the Canadian Film Centre's CBC Actors Conservatory, alumni Araya Mengesha, Vivien Endicott-Douglas, Ajuawak Kapashesit, and Janet Rose Nguyen will join for a full-day table read of the projects in development.

TIFF's Talent Development programmes are produced by Jane Kim, Industry Programming Producer, and Anita Tavakol, Associate Programmer, and supported in part by Share Her Journey. Now a permanent initiative, Share Her Journey began in 2017 as a five-year campaign and commitment to address gender parity and to champion women in front of and behind the camera through TIFF's Festival and year-round initiatives.

As a major supporter of Share Her Journey, the CHANEL Women Writers' Network provides funding to advance the careers of women and non-binary participants and alumni of TIFF Writers' Studio. The multi-year program, launched in 2021, includes additional access to script consultants and established screenwriters, peer-to-peer sessions with emerging filmmakers, and a talent summit that allows writers to showcase their work to producers and other industry insiders.

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



Four participants have been selected and will be awarded a grant to further the development of their feature-length script. CHANEL's participation extends and enriches TIFF's support for writers and writer-directors by facilitating the acceleration and development of their projects and by offering opportunities to connect with a diverse network of mentors and peers. The selected participants are **Abbesi Akhamie**, **Maggie Briggs**, **Yasmine Mathurin**, and **Mayumi Yoshida**.

New to Writers' Studio in 2022 is the Renee Perlmutter Memorial Fellowship for Literary Adaptation. One writer focusing on adapting literary work for the screen has been selected as the first Renee Perlmutter Memorial Fellow and will receive a grant toward developing their project. This year's recipient is **Gabriel Savignac**.

The Betty-Ann Heggie Speaker Series was launched in 2018 as a Share Her Journey initiative to spark conversation on gender equity in the screen industry, foregrounding female storytellers and leaders in key creative and decision-making roles. These sessions offer skills-building for industry professionals and generate awareness among public audiences, transforming opinions and actions that will favourably impact women in film. At the 2022 Writers' Studio, the Betty-Ann Heggie Speaker Series will generously support the Character Workshop with Rosemary Dunsmore and the Media Workshop with Judy Lung.

Notable TIFF Studio alumni include filmmakers Tracey Deer (*Beans*), Martin Edralin (*Islands*), Cory Bowles (*Black Cop*), Romeo Candido (*Another Life*), Julian De Zotti (*For the Record*), Lisa Jackson (*Indictment: The Crimes of Shelly Chartier*), Fawzia Mirza (*Noor & Layla*), Jasmin Mozaffari (*Firecrackers*), Sanja Živković (*Easy Land*), Taratoa Stappard (*Taumanu*), and Silvina Schnicer (*Carajita*). Following their involvement in TIFF Studio, many of these filmmakers have gone on to present their films at the Toronto International Film Festival, the Berlinale, and SXSW.

2022 TIFF Writers' Studio biographies:

Abbesi Akhamie (Nigeria/USA)

In My Father's House

Born in Heidelberg, Germany, Abbesi Akhamie is an award-winning Nigerian-American writer, director, and producer working between Lagos and New York City. Her work focuses on Africa and its diaspora as well as the politics of culture and identity. She is a graduate of New York University with an MFA in Film.

Yuhi Amuli (Rwanda)

Exodus

Yuhi Amuli is a film director, screenwriter, and producer from Rwanda. His directorial debut feature, *A Taste of Our Land* (20), premiered at the Pan African Film Festival in Los Angeles, where it won the juried Best First Feature Narrative Award. The film also won Best First Film by a Director at the African Movie Academy Awards. Amuli made the short films *Ishaba* (15), which won Best Short Film at the Rwanda Film Festival; *Akarwa* (17), which screened in Tanzania, South Africa, Rwanda, Canada, and Egypt; and *Kazungu* (18), which also won Best Short Film at the Rwanda Film Festival. He is an alumnus of Berlinale Talents 2021 and the 2020 TIFF Filmmaker Lab, which he attended with his second feature film, *Exodus*, currently in development.

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Maggie Briggs (USA)
Prone to Wander

Maggie Briggs is a filmmaker based between her hometown of Asheville, North Carolina, and New York City, where she received her MFA at Columbia University. Her thesis film, *To Sonny*, premiered at Clermont-Ferrand in 2020 and continues to tour the festival circuit. Her latest short, *Louis I: King of the Sheep*, a stop-motion animation she wrote and produced, had its premiere at the 72nd Berlinale. Her work as a producer has shown at festivals including TIFF, Palm Springs, and Nordisk Panorama. Her first feature in development, *Prone to Wander*, has been supported by Tribeca Film Institute, The Gotham, and Cine Qua Non. She is a writer on Samir Oliveros's second feature, which is in development with Fabula, and on Saim Sadiq's first feature, which is based on his short film *Darling*.

Yasmine Mathurin (Haiti/Canada)
Sorry Pardon Madame

Yasmine Mathurin is an award-winning Haitian-Canadian writer, director, and podcast producer. Her first feature documentary film, *One of Ours*, which she wrote and directed with the support of CBC documentary Channel and Sienna Films, won the Special Jury Prize for Canadian Features at the 2021 Hot Docs International Film Festival. She previously worked as an associate producer on the CBC Original Podcasts *The Shadows*, which won gold in the 2019 Canadian Digital Publishing Awards' fiction category, and *Tai Asks Why*, which was a 2019 Webby People's Voice Winner. Mathurin is a recipient of the 2019 Netflix-BANFF Diverse Voices Fellowship. She is an alumna of the 2017 Doc Accelerator Lab with Hot Docs, DOC Institute's 2018 Breakthrough program, the 2018 THREAD at Yale multimedia storytelling fellowship, and the 2019 UnionDocs Summer Documentary Lab.

Minos Nikolakakis (Greece)
Asphalt

Minos Nikolakakis was born in Athens and holds a master's degree in civil engineering from the University of Patras. He is a filmmaker who focuses on genre content. His short films as director, *Ticket to Ride* (03), *The Present* (05), *Marioneta* (07), *The Happy Life* (09), and *The Attic* (12), have played at festivals including TIFF, LA Shorts, Montpellier, and Uppsala. His first feature, *Entwined*, premiered at the 2019 Toronto International Film Festival and sold to Shudder.

Gabriel Savignac (Canada)
Le premier qui rira (You Laugh, You Die)

Gabriel Savignac obtained his degree in Film Production at Concordia University in 2015, where he was awarded the best fiction prize for his graduation film, *Ma Lionne*. His short film *Stay, I Don't Want to be Alone* (17) premiered at TIFF and has won awards. Savignac is currently finalizing the short-form digital series *Nichole*, which he co-directed. He is also developing a feature film called *Le premier qui rira (You Laugh, You Die)* and a short film called *Worst Case, You'll Fall*.

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Daniel Warth (Canada)
Enduring

Daniel Warth is a screenwriter and filmmaker whose Slamdance-winning feature *Dim the Fluorescents* was called “one of the year’s strongest debuts” by *The New York Times*. His second feature, *Enduring*, is in development with support from Telefilm Canada, Ontario Creates, and The Harold Greenberg Fund.

Mayumi Yoshida (Japan/Canada)
Akashi

Born in Japan and raised in three continents, Mayumi Yoshida is an actor, writer, and director based in Vancouver, BC. She is known for her role as Crown Princess Michiko in *The Man in the High Castle*. She’s an alumna of the 2021 Women In the Director’s Chair Career Advancement Module and the 2021 Women in Focus Mentorship at Whistler Film Festival, and is currently participating in the WarnerMedia x Canadian Academy Access Writers Program, TIFF Talent Accelerator, and TIFF Writers’ Studio. Her first short film as director, *Akashi* (17), which she also wrote and acted in, won several awards. In 2019, Yoshida received the Newcomer Award at Women in Film and Television Vancouver Spotlight Awards. Currently, she is directing her latest music video, “Different Than Before,” which was granted funding from Creative BC and RBCxMusic & Prism Prize. She also works on projects with A24, Apple, and Netflix as a Japanese cultural consultant. She is in development on her first feature film, and she is repped by Gersh, Atlas Literary and Characters Talent Agency.

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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, major exhibitions, and 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 and Visa,
and Major Supporters: the Government of Canada, Government of Ontario and City of Toronto.**

TIFF’s Industry programming is generously supported by Ontario Creates and Telefilm Canada.

**TIFF’s Talent Development programmes are supported in part by Share Her Journey, which is committed to
increasing the participation, skills, and opportunities for women behind and in front of the camera.**

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For more information, please contact Camila Ossa, Senior Manager Communications at cossa@tiff.net

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