

MATI DIOP TO RECEIVE INAUGURAL MARY PICKFORD AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING FEMALE TALENT AT TRIBUTE GALA

TIFF amplifies women and diverse voices at Festival 2019



Photo credit: Huma Rosentalski

TORONTO — Joana Vicente and Cameron Bailey, Co-Heads of TIFF, today announced director **Mati Diop** as the inaugural recipient of the **Mary Pickford Award** supported by MGM, to be presented at the TIFF Tribute Gala on Monday, September 9. The award, named in honour of Toronto native Mary Pickford, recognizes an emerging female talent who is making groundbreaking strides in the industry. Pickford was the pioneering actor, producer, and Co-Founder of United Artists, and the award is being launched in conjunction with United Artists' centennial this year. The creation of the award follows TIFF's continued commitment to championing women and diverse voices in front of and behind the camera.

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



“We’re thrilled to honour the incredible Mati Diop as our inaugural Mary Pickford Award recipient, as United Artists marks its centennial year,” said Vicente, Executive Director and Co-Head of TIFF. “She is a vibrant and important new voice within the industry and one to watch closely.”

“Mati Diop’s film *Atlantics* is a profound and unsettling work of art,” said Bailey, Artistic Director and Co-Head of TIFF. “We know this is just the start for such an original and authentic voice, and we’re delighted to celebrate her success at this year’s TIFF Tribute Gala.”

“Like Mary Pickford, Mati Diop has demonstrated her trail-blazing influence both in front of and behind the camera, making her the ideal inaugural awardee. We look forward to partnering with TIFF to honor Pickford’s legacy and United Artists in celebration of their 100th year,” said Jonathan Glickman, President of MGM Studios’ Motion Picture Group.

She has directed the short films *Atlantiques*, *Big in Vietnam*, and the documentary *A Thousand Suns* – all of which played the Festival – as well as *Snow Canon* and *Liberian Boy*. *A Thousand Suns* was presented by Claire Denis in 2013 as part of TIFF’s year-round Cinematheque programme. In 2019, Diop became the first Black female director to screen a film in competition at the Cannes Film Festival with her debut feature *Atlantics*, which was based on the short *Atlantiques* and went on to win the prestigious Grand Prix at the festival. The film, written by Diop and Olivier Demangel, stars Mama Sané, Amadou Mbow, Ibrahima Traoré, Nicole Sougou, Amina Kane, Mariama Gassama, Coumba Dieng, Ibrahima Mbaye, and Diankou Sembene. *Atlantics* will have its North American Premiere at TIFF and will be released by Netflix later this year. The film is produced by Les Films du Bal, Cinekap and FraKas.

Of all Festival titles in this year’s lineup, 36% are directed, co-directed, or created by women, and women comprise half the Festival’s programming team. Following the organization’s signing of the 50/50x2020 pledge at last year’s Festival, TIFF has steadfastly worked to integrate responsible data management and practices to understand the diversity and inclusion of its film programming. TIFF gave filmmakers the opportunity to self-identify to inform gender representation in the Official Selection. As part of TIFF’s Share Her Journey campaign, the organization will continue to provide over 120 female creators free access to TIFF’s Industry Conference and year-round programming. The overall number of speakers at this year’s Conference represents a 50/50 gender split, as do TIFF Talent Development initiatives such as TIFF Studio, Filmmaker Lab, and TIFF Rising Stars.

Mary Pickford was the highest-paid actor – male or female – during the late 1910s and was a savvy businesswoman who helped shape the industry as we know it today. In 1919, she revolutionized film distribution by partnering with Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, and D.W. Griffith to form United Artists. Pickford, who also went on to co-found what is today the Motion Picture & Television Fund and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, continued to be a part of United Artists through the early 1950s. The award will be supported by MGM Studios, whose retains the United Artist library as part of its global film and television library of content.

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TIFF previously announced that three-time Academy Award–winning actor **Meryl Streep** will receive the **TIFF Tribute Actor Award** sponsored by RBC; three-time Academy Award–nominated actor **Joaquin Phoenix** will receive the **TIFF Tribute Actor Award**; **Taika Waititi** will receive the **TIFF Ebert Director Award**; **Participant Media** will receive the **TIFF Impact Award**, accepted by Founder and Chairman Jeff Skoll and CEO David Linde; and Academy Award–winning cinematographer **Roger Deakins** will receive with the **Variety Artisan Award**.

The 44th Toronto International Film Festival runs September 5–15, 2019.

For information on purchasing a table for the TIFF Tribute Gala, please contact development@tiff.net.

TIFF prefers Visa.

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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 \$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.

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

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For more information, contact Emma Kelly, Senior Manager, Communications & Brand at ekelly@tiff.net or the Communications Department at 416.934.3200, or email proffice@tiff.net.

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