

WINNER OF 2021 TIFF–CBC FILMS SCREENWRITER AWARD ANNOUNCED

Photo credit: Chloe Lai

TORONTO – Today TIFF announced award-winning Canadian writer-director Melanie Jones is the recipient of this year's TIFF–CBC Films Screenwriter Award for her project *Switchback*. As part of the Award, Jones will receive a \$15,000 grant, along with support from a script consultant and complimentary access to the 2021 Toronto International Film Festival and TIFF Industry Conference. She will be celebrated tonight at 7pm EST on TIFF Industry's Twitter and Facebook and on the TIFF Originals YouTube channel, in a conversation hosted by 2019 TIFF–CBC Films Screenwriter Award recipient Tracey Deer.

"I am thrilled to be chosen for this award," said Jones. "This draft was impacted tremendously by my time at the TIFF Writers' Studio, and I am delighted to be able to continue my journey with TIFF and CBC Films' support. The writing process, especially for deeply personal stories, can be fraught with alternating cycles of determination and doubt. This tremendous stamp of approval, including financial support and mentorship, will open many doors to bringing this story to the screen and furthering my career as a filmmaker in Canada. I am deeply grateful to TIFF, CBC Films, and the jurors for this honour."

Jones is an alumna of TIFF Writers' Studio, Women In the Director's Chair, the From Our Dark Side Incubator Program, and the Reykjavik Talent Lab. Her debut feature, *FSM* (made with the support of the IndieCan 10K Film Challenge), premiered at the Whistler Film Festival in 2015. The film earned her a Leo nomination for Best Direction and went on to a theatrical release in her hometown of Vancouver. Jones's work has screened at festivals around the world, garnering dozens of nominations and awards – including two audience choice awards and a Golden Sheaf Award for her most recent short film, *Shuttlecock*.

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



Now in its third consecutive year, the TIFF–CBC Films Screenwriter Award was created to support Canada’s diverse screenwriting talent and to fund the development of high-quality productions that reflect, represent, and reframe diverse perspectives through character-driven stories at the centre of the Canadian experience. The Award is open to experienced screenwriters who are women and/or who belong to an equity-seeking group, and/or who identify as having a disability.

The decision was made by a jury of screen-industry professionals: Mehernaz Lentin, Senior Director of CBC Films; playwright and story editor Brad Fraser (*Unidentified Human Remains and the True Nature of Love*); screenwriter and former head of the International Finance Forum for Ontario Creates Larisa Gutmanis; 2020 Award recipient Elyse Friedman; and TIFF Industry Programming Producer Jane Kim. Writer-director Amy Jo Johnson’s dramatic love story, *Ends of the Earth* was awarded an honourable mention and named the runner-up submission.

Together with the announcement, the jury said, “The shortlisted projects in 2021 were no less than incredible, making this a very close competition. We loved that this devious and surreal drama set on the West Coast Trail never prescribes to a single genre, challenging the audience to explore the complexities of the primal feminine with such an exhilarating spirit and making it an ‘on edge of your seat’ experience.”

All screenplay applications were read and rated anonymously, without readers knowing the names of the screenwriters. Projects were considered based on the quality of the script; the originality of the idea, story structure, dialogue, and characters; and likely audience appeal and achievability.

Social Media:

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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.

About CBC Films

[CBC Films](#) funds high-quality features that reflect, represent, and reframe a range of perspectives through character-driven stories that are at the centre of the Canadian experience, spanning more than 25 features to date led by female, LGBTQ2+, Indigenous and diverse filmmakers. With a robust library of over 120 Canadian films available to stream on [CBC Gem](#), CBC strives to create an unparalleled destination for Canadians to discover homegrown film.

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