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MEDIA RELEASE

TIFF INDUSTRY ANNOUNCES 2019 FILMMAKER LAB PARTICIPANTS, INAUGURAL TALENT ACCELERATOR

International and homegrown talent to receive mentorship from industry leaders

TORONTO – The Toronto International Film Festival® announced today the 20 directors selected for the 16th annual **TIFF Filmmaker Lab**, an exclusive mentorship opportunity that fosters creative thinking and project development through intimate workshops. New this year is the **TIFF Talent Accelerator**, a customized, year-long development experience for promising Canadian female creators. Two Filmmaker Lab directors are part of the inaugural class of six, with two producers and two writers benefitting from other Industry support programmes.

Led by renowned industry leaders and designed to inspire original voices, **Filmmaker Lab** will bring 10 Canadian and 10 International directors together with a variety of artists and film-business professionals. Four Governors – producer Cassian Elwes (*Mudbound*), writer-director Patricia Rozema (*Grey Gardens*), acting coach Miranda Harcourt, and director Lulu Wang (*The Farewell*) – will serve as guides throughout the four days of the programme. Participants will be provided with a space to explore creative concerns with these mentors, while also having access to all Festival offerings to add context to the insights gained.

“Championing filmmakers and helping them find their voice and realize their vision continues to be a part of TIFF’s mission,” said Geoff Macnaughton, TIFF Industry Director. “TIFF Filmmaker Lab is an integral part of this mission, as it allows the next generation of creators to learn from industry leaders, established filmmakers, and their peers. We continue to take pride in providing resources and financial support to accelerate the careers of these filmmakers and refine their craft in tangible ways.”

Reflecting gender parity in both the domestic and international groups, and with a higher number of applicants than ever before, TIFF Filmmaker Lab continues to be a valuable opportunity for emerging creatives and the established artists that want to empower them. TIFF Talent Accelerator is made possible by Share Her Journey, our successful fundraising initiative committed to increasing participation, skills, and opportunities for women behind and in front of the camera.

Past mentors and speakers at the Lab include: Darren Aronofsky, Juliette Binoche, Jane Campion, Alfonso Cuarón, Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, Julie Dash, Claire Denis, Ava DuVernay, Atom Egoyan, Cassian Elwes, Mia Hansen-Løve, Agnieszka Holland, Jia Zhang-Ke, Spike Lee, Steve McQueen, Sandra Oh, Ivan Reitman, Lone Scherfig, Jim Stark, Jean-Marc Vallée, and Wim Wenders.

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Past participants at the Lab include: Ian Harnarine (TIFF 2011 prize-winning short *Doubles With Slight Pepper*), Michelle Latimer (2017's *RISE*, on Viceland), Trevor Mack (*Portraits from a Fire*, in development with Telefilm Canada funds), Pat Mills (*Don't Talk to Irene*, 2017), Lina Roessler (the upcoming *Best Sellers*, starring Michael Caine), and Joyce Wong (2016's *Wexford Plaza*; the next season of *Workin' Moms* on CBC).

Filmmaker Lab and Talent Accelerator are programmed by TIFF Industry Programming Producer Jane Kim. The Lab will run September 4–7, 2019.

The 2019 TIFF Filmmaker Lab participants are:

Canada: Joseph Amenta (Ontario), Sofia Bohdanowicz (Ontario), Karen Chapman (Ontario), Aisling Chin-Yee (Quebec), Nicole Dorsey (Ontario), Martin Edralin (Ontario), Drew Lint (Ontario), Samantha Pineda Sierra (British Columbia), Geoff Redknapp (British Columbia), Charlie Tyrell (Ontario).

International: Abbesi Akhamie (USA), Cyril Aris (Lebanon), Andreas Bøggild Monies (Denmark), Chema García Ibarra (Spain), Beza Hailu Lemma (Ethiopia), Jennifer Peedom (Australia), Johanna Pyykkö (Norway), Silvina Schnicer (Argentina), Maya Vitkova-Kosev (Bulgaria), Charles Williams (Australia).

The 2019 TIFF Talent Accelerator participants are:

Directing: Sofia Bohdanowicz, Karen Chapman

Producing: Melissa Coghlan, Shasha Nakhai

Writing: Lisa Jackson, Jasmin Mozaffari

Filmmaker Lab participants:

Abbesi Akhamie is a Nigerian American writer, director, and producer based in New York City. She received her MFA in film from New York University. Her short film, *Still Water Runs Deep* (17), premiered at TIFF, and has been screened and broadcast worldwide. She is currently developing her debut feature film, *In My Father's House*, which follows an American woman who goes on a journey of self-discovery when she travels to Nigeria to confront her estranged father.

Joseph Amenta is a producer, writer, and director. Their recent short film, *Haus* (18), was fully funded by the Canada Council for the Arts and was screened in the International Competition at the Clermont-Ferrand Short Film Festival. In 2018 they completed their residency at the CFC Directors' Lab, and they have been invited to

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take part in TIFF's 2019 Talent Lab. Their upcoming first feature film, *Tribe* (20), received funding from Telefilm's Talent to Watch program and won the Toronto Screenwriting Conference Breakthrough Artist Award. They have an honours degree in Film Studies from Ryerson University.

Cyril Aris is a Lebanese writer-director based in Beirut and New York. His feature documentary *The Swing* (18) premiered in Karlovy Vary and won awards in El Gouna, Rome, London, and Budapest. His short film *The President's Visit* (17) premiered at TIFF and played in over 60 film festivals. Aris holds an MFA from Columbia University and is a voting member in the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Andreas Bøggild Monies is a Danish filmmaker. After having worked as a film editor for 12 years, he turned towards directing, resulting in the award-winning short film *Shadow Boxer* (18) about a young girl who takes up boxing after her mother is injured in the ring. He is currently working on developing this short film into his first feature film.

Sofia Bohdanowicz is a Toronto-based filmmaker. She won the Emerging Canadian Director award at the 2016 Vancouver International Film Festival for her first feature, *Never Eat Alone*. She won the Toronto Film Critics Association's 2017 Stella Artois Jay Scott Prize and was a runner-up for the 2018 Rogers Best Canadian Film Prize for *Maison du bonheur* (17). Her latest feature, *MS Slavic 7* (19), premiered at the Berlinale Forum. She is currently in development on a new project and is completing her MFA in film production at York University.

Karen Chapman is an award-winning filmmaker and an alumna of Emily Carr University, the Banff Centre, and the CaribbeanTales Incubator, where she won best pitch. In 2018, *Playback* named her one of five filmmakers to watch and she completed the Canadian Film Centre's Directors' Lab. In 2019, her film *Lessons Injustice* (17) won Best Screenplay at the Women in Film & Television - Toronto Showcase and she received support from the Harold Greenberg Fund for her film *Esequibo Rapture*. Currently, Chapman is preparing to shoot her first feature film, *Village Keeper*, through Telefilm Canada's Talent Fund.

Aisling "Ash" Chin-Yee is a Montreal-based filmmaker and a co-founder of the #AfterMeToo movement. Her feature directorial debut is *The Rest of Us* (19). Her producer credits include the feature films *Rhymes for Young Ghouls* (13), *Last Woman Standing* (13), and *The Saver* (15). She is currently directing a documentary feature about pianist Billy Tipton, and her feature drama *The Day Between* will start shooting in 2020. Chin-Yee was recently selected for the inaugural cohort of the leadership program 50 Women Can Change the World in Media & Entertainment.

Nicole Dorsey was born in Mississauga, Ontario. She has a BFA in film production from Ryerson University. She's worked extensively as a commercial and narrative director. Her debut feature, *Black Conflux* (19), was part of the WIDC Story & Leadership program and was a finalist in Francis Ford Coppola's American Zoetrope Screenplay Contest. Dorsey also directed the short *Arlo Alone* (16), which premiered in competition at the Atlanta Film Festival. The film was a Vimeo Staff Pick and won the A&E Short Filmmakers Award in the NSI Online Short Film Festival. With a strong penchant for character-driven material, Dorsey aims to present a

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realist portrayal of the human condition.

Martin Edralin is a Toronto-based filmmaker. His work has screened at international film festivals including TIFF, Sundance, and Locarno. His films include *Hole* (14), which won the Grand Prize at Clermont-Ferrand and a Canadian Screen Award for best live-action short; *Emma* (16), a Canada's Top Ten selection at TIFF; and *Building History: The Story of Benjamin Brown* (16), which was nominated for the Heritage Toronto Award for public history.

Chema García Ibarra made the short films *The attack of the robots from Nebula-5* (08), *Protoparticles* (09), *Mystery* (13), *The disco shines* (16), and *The golden legend* (19). His films have been selected for the Directors' Fortnight at Cannes, Sundance, and the Berlinale. He has received two honourable mentions from Sundance, and he won first prize in the Avant-Garde Competition at BAFICI. He also won the Méliès d'Or and was nominated for the European Film Awards.

Beza Hailu Lemma is an Ethiopian filmmaker based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. A graduate of Addis Ababa University's School of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, he has written, directed, and independently produced a number of short films, including 2017's *Ballad of the Spirits*. He is currently writing his debut feature film, titled *The Last Tears of the Deceased*. His work focuses on the intersection of faith, ancient tradition, and nature. Hailu Lemma is an alumnus of Berlinale Talents 2019 and Africa Centre's Artist in Residency program.

Drew Lint is a Canadian writer-director based in Berlin. In 2009 he graduated from Ryerson University's film program. His debut feature, *M/M* (18), premiered at Slamdance Film Festival and received a special mention from the jury at the Vancouver International Film Festival for the Emerging Canadian Director prize. In 2018, Lint was longlisted for the Directors Guild of Canada's Discovery Award.

Jennifer Peedom is a BAFTA-nominated Australian director, known for her gripping, intimate portraits of people in extreme circumstances. Her credits include the internationally renowned feature documentaries *Solo* (08), *Sherpa* (15), and, most recently, *Mountain* (17), a collaboration with the Australian Chamber Orchestra. She is currently developing her first narrative fiction film about Tenzing Norgay, one of the first people to climb Mount Everest in 1953, along with Edmund Hillary.

Samantha Pineda Sierra is a director, producer, and writer. Her work explores yearning, loneliness, and mental distress through the use of magic realism. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in media and communication, she studied film in England, Australia, Cuba, and Canada. She's been part of Berlinale Talents, the Oaxaca Film Lab in collaboration with the Sundance Film Institute, and FONCA's Jóvenes Creadores. Her films have been in more than 100 film festivals, winning several prizes.

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Johanna Pyykkö has a bachelor's degree in film directing from the Norwegian Film School. She has made award-winning shorts and been in writers' rooms on several drama series, one being the critically acclaimed *Home Ground (Heimebane)* (18–). Her short *The Manila Lover* (19) premiered in competition at the 58th Semaine de la Critique during Cannes, and her short *My Sister Dances* (19) premiered in the International Competition at Lago Film Fest.

Geoff Redknap's special makeup-effects artistry has spanned projects from *The X-Files* (93–18) to *Deadpool* (16). He attended the NSI's Drama Prize program, where he wrote and directed the award-winning short film *The Auburn Hills Breakdown* (08). He also attended the NSI's Features First program with *Hangfire* (then known as *Heaven's Door*), which was a finalist in the 2012 Austin Film Festival Screenplay Competition. He wrote and directed the feature film *The Unseen* (16), which premiered at Fantasia in Montreal. He is represented by Zero Gravity Management.

Silvina Schnicer is a filmmaker from Argentina. Along with Ulises Porra Guardiola, she co-wrote and co-directed the short films *La Bicha* (10) and *Destello* (16), both winners of the National Arts Fund in Argentina. Her first feature film, *Tigre*, had its world premiere at TIFF in 2017. She is currently working in her second feature film, *The Cottage*, in which a middle-class family finds a body during their summer vacation.

Charlie Tyrell is a Toronto-based filmmaker who works in a hybrid style that often combines live-action footage with stop-motion and 2D animation. His most recent documentary short, *My Dead Dad's Porno Tapes* (18), premiered at Sundance and won awards for best documentary short at the Canadian Screen Awards and SXSW. The film was also shortlisted for the 2019 Academy Awards and was selected for TIFF's Canada's Top Ten series.

Maya Vitkova-Kosev's debut film, *Viktoria* (14), was the first Bulgarian feature in competition at Sundance. The film won 10 awards and was named one of the best films of 2016 by *The New Yorker*. Vitkova-Kosev is currently working on her second feature film, *Afrika*, which was developed at the Sundance Institute's Screenwriters Lab in 2018 and won the Krzysztof Kieslowski ScripTeast Award for the best Eastern European script at Cannes the same year.

Charles Williams is a filmmaker born and raised in Victoria, Australia. His films have screened at over 150 festivals, including TIFF, Cannes, Clermont-Ferrand, SXSW, Telluride, Busan, and Melbourne. His latest short film, *All These Creatures* (18), won the Short Film Palme d'Or at Cannes. He is currently developing his first feature film, *Inside*.

Talent Accelerator participants:

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Melissa Coghlan is a Toronto-based producer. Her first feature, *Below Her Mouth* (16), premiered at TIFF. Her current projects in development are *Shot-Blue* and *All My Love Vadim*, which she is producing with Serendipity Point Films and Broken Head Pictures, the production company she co-founded in 2015.

Lisa Jackson is a Genie Award-winning artist working in film and media. She is known for her cross-genre approach. Her films have screened widely on television and at festivals including the Berlinale, Hot Docs, and SXSW. Her credits include *Indictment: The Crimes of Shelly Chartier* (17), which won Best Documentary at imagineNATIVE, and the virtual-reality work *Biidaaban: First Light* (18), which premiered at Tribeca and won a Canadian Screen Award. She is Anishinaabe and lives in Toronto.

Jasmin Mozaffari is a Toronto-based filmmaker. She studied film at Ryerson University's School of Image Arts. Her debut feature, *Firecrackers* (18), premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and won the award for best film at the Stockholm International Film Festival. In 2019, the film also won the Canadian Screen Awards for direction and editing and was named a *New York Times* Critic's Pick.

Shasha Nakhai is a filmmaker from Toronto with Compy Films and Storyline Entertainment. Her film with partner Rich Williamson, *Frame 394* (16), was shortlisted for an Oscar and named one of TIFF's Canada's Top Ten. She recently released her first feature documentary, *Take Light* (18), which enters the tangled web of Nigeria's energy crisis. Nakhai is currently adapting Catherine Hernandez's award-winning novel, *Scarborough*.

The 44th Toronto International Film Festival runs September 5–15, 2019. Register for Festival Industry accreditation online by August 23 at tiff.net/industry.

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TIFF is a charitable cultural organization whose mission is to transform the way people see the world through

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

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