

TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES FIRST HONOUREES FOR THE 2021 TIFF TRIBUTE AWARDS



Alanis Obomsawin
Photo credit: Scott Stevens



Denis Villeneuve
Photo credit: Ulysse Del Drago

TORONTO – Joana Vicente and Cameron Bailey, Co-Heads of TIFF, are delighted to announce that award-winning documentary filmmaker, writer, singer, and activist **Alanis Obomsawin** will be honoured with the **Jeff Skoll Award in Impact Media** at this year’s TIFF Tribute Awards and Academy Award®-nominated French Canadian filmmaker **Denis Villeneuve** will receive the **TIFF Ebert Director Award**. The 2021 TIFF Tribute Awards will take place during the 46th edition of the Toronto International Film Festival.

“This year more than ever, TIFF is delighted to come together and celebrate leading industry talent with the 2021 TIFF Tribute Awards,” said Joana Vicente, Executive Director and Co-Head, TIFF. “An exciting highlight of the Festival is a career retrospective of one of the most acclaimed Indigenous directors in the world, Alanis Obomsawin, entitled ***Celebrating Alanis***. The Jeff Skoll Award in Impact Media recognizes leadership in creating a union between social impact and cinema. As a gifted documentary filmmaker and impassioned storyteller, Alanis brings awareness to vital Indigenous issues and is widely recognized as a national treasure because of her extraordinary body of work. What is truly beautiful is that this year, we are celebrating two incredible filmmakers, both of whom have deep personal ties to this country and have contributed to our cinematic landscape in very unique ways.”

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



“The TIFF Ebert Director Award recognizes filmmakers who have exemplified greatness in their career,” stated Cameron Bailey, Artistic Director and Co-Head, TIFF. “Denis Villeneuve’s many films, including **Blade Runner 2049**, **Arrival**, **Sicario**, **Enemy**, **Prisoners**, and **Incendies**, to name a few, and his upcoming epic adaptation of the seminal novel **Dune**, which he directed, co-wrote, and produced, are a testament to Denis’ boundless ability for authentic, passionate storytelling. There is no question Denis is an accomplished and outstanding filmmaker. He has a wonderful body of work and operates at an incredible level of excellence on the world stage. Over the years, Denis has brought many of his films to TIFF, so we feel a special closeness to him. It is wonderful to be celebrating his career at this time.”

The TIFF Tribute Awards honour the film industry’s outstanding contributors and their achievements, recognizing leading industry members, acting talent, directorial expertise, new talent, and a below-the-line artist and creator. The Awards also serve as TIFF’s largest annual fundraiser to support TIFF’s year-round programmes and core mission to transform the way people see the world through film. This year’s event will raise funds for TIFF’s diversity, equity and inclusion initiative and champion a safe, community-focused and inspiring return to cinemas. The 2021 TIFF Tribute Awards will be co-produced by Bell Media Studios and, for the second straight year, will be broadcast nationally by CTV and streamed internationally by *Variety*.

In 2020 the TIFF Tribute Awards celebrated the remarkable talents and contributions of Mira Nair, Sir Anthony Hopkins, Kate Winslet, Chloé Zhao, Terence Blanchard and Tracey Deer, some of whom went on to win awards on the international stage – such as Zhao (**Nomadland**), Deer (**Beans**), and Hopkins (**The Father**). Meryl Streep, Taika Waititi, Mati Diop, Joaquin Phoenix, and Roger Deakins were celebrated during the Awards’ inaugural event in 2019. More information on the 2021 TIFF Tribute Awards event and this year’s honourees to follow in the coming weeks.

A member of the Abenaki Nation and one of Canada’s most distinguished filmmakers, Alanis Obomsawin is a filmmaker and producer at the National Film Board of Canada, where she has worked since 1967. On December 10, 2020, Obomsawin received the Rogers-DOC Luminary Award at the DOC Institute Honours, which is given to an individual who embodies the creative spirit of the Canadian documentary tradition and displays generosity by supporting the next generation of doc makers through mentorship. In October, she received the Glenn Gould Prize, as chosen by an international jury. Obomsawin’s 2019 production **Jordan River Anderson, The Messenger** was her 52nd film, completed in the 52nd year of a legendary filmmaking career devoted to chronicling the lives and concerns of First Nations people and exploring issues of importance to all. On June 27, 2019, Obomsawin was named a Companion of the Order of Canada – its highest honour. In Fall 2021, the retrospective *Alanis Obomsawin: Lifework* will be presented at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin.

Denis Villeneuve is an Academy Award®-nominated French Canadian filmmaker best known for having directed **Blade Runner 2049**, **Arrival**, **Sicario**, **Prisoners**, and **Incendies**. His astute attention to detail and unique visuals have established Villeneuve as one of the premier filmmakers working today. Villeneuve is gearing up for the release of his highly anticipated film adaptation of Frank Herbert’s science fiction novel, *Dune*, which he directed and produced, as well as co-wrote with Jon Spaihts and Eric Roth. The film stars Timothée Chalamet, Rebecca Ferguson, Oscar Isaac, Josh Brolin, Stellan Skarsgård, Dave Bautista, Stephen McKinley Henderson, Zendaya, Chang Chen, with Charlotte Rampling, with Jason Momoa, and Javier Bardem.

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The Federal government announced Monday that the Canadian border will open to fully-vaccinated US citizens and permanent residents as of August 9, 2021, and to the rest of the world as of September 7, 2021, thus allowing TIFF to welcome a portion of its traditional volume of international press, industry and talent back to the Festival as permitted by the Canadian government. As a result of the opening of the border and cinemas in Ontario, TIFF has added the Scotiabank Theatre Toronto for the first five days of the festival to its list of in-person venues to accommodate a select number of additional public and Press & Industry screenings. Press & Industry screenings will also remain available online on TIFF Digital Cinema Pro for press and industry unable to travel. The Industry conference will continue to be a digital event only. More information on in-person screening capacities for Press & Industry, and how access will operate, to follow in the coming two weeks.

TIFF continues to work closely with the Province of Ontario, the City of Toronto, and public health officials on the safe execution of the Festival, with its number-one priority being the health and well-being of both Festival filmgoers and residents of the community. To help ensure the safest possible experience, TIFF has once again partnered with Medcan, a global health care leader providing medical expertise, consultation, and health inspiration to achieve its mission to help people “Live Well, For Life.” Based on the pillars of evidence-based care, exceptional client service, and the latest in technology, Medcan’s team of over 90 physicians supports employee health care across the continuum of health, including its “Safe at Work System,” which helps organizations navigate the pandemic.

For TIFF Tribute Awards hosting and promotional opportunities, please contact development@tiff.net.

For headshots, please see tiff.net/press.

The 46th Toronto International Film Festival runs September 9–18, 2021.

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, 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.

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The Jeff Skoll Award in Impact Media is supported by Participant Media.

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For more information, contact Alejandra Sosa, Head, Festival Media Relations & Strategy at masosa@tiff.net.

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