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**MEDIA RELEASE**

## **2018 TIFF FILMMAKER LAB PARTICIPANTS ANNOUNCED**

### **Cassian Elwes, Julie Dash, William Oldroyd, and Elizabeth Karlsen to act as Governors**

**TORONTO** – The Toronto International Film Festival® announced today the 22 emerging directors from across the globe who have been selected for the 15th annual **TIFF Filmmaker Lab**, where they will gain inspiration and mentorship from acclaimed leaders in the film industry. The 10 Canadian and 12 international participants will engage in workshops, microsessions, and master classes focusing on creativity, the artistic process, and the independent voice.

Mentorship will be led by four distinguished Governors – producer Cassian Elwes (*Mudbound*), director Julie Dash (*Daughters of the Dust*), director William Oldroyd (*Lady Macbeth*), and producer Elizabeth Karlsen (*Carol*) – who will guide the group of filmmakers.

“Since its inception, the Lab has supported hundreds of filmmakers to further their artistry and craft,” said Kathleen Drumm, TIFF Industry Director. “Each year it brings together outstanding creators from around the world, deepening their industry understanding and empowering them to move forward with their projects and careers. This September, we are thrilled to welcome not only 22 remarkable talents, but also a collection of accomplished mentors and acclaimed filmmakers who will support and nurture the group.”

TIFF Filmmaker Lab, formerly Talent Lab, has helped develop the careers of many outstanding creators, including Michelle Latimer (*VICELAND’s Rise*), Sherry White (*Maudie*), Pat Mills (*Don’t Talk to Irene*), Jonas Carpignano (*A Ciambra*), and Joan Chemla (*If You Saw His Heart*).

The Lab is programmed by TIFF Talent Producer Jane Schoettle, with Associate Producer Eloise Veber. The five-day programme will run from September 4 to 8, 2018.

#### **The 2018 TIFF Filmmaker Lab participants are:**

**Canada:** Rodrigo Barriuso (Ontario), Patricia Chica (Quebec), Tracey Deer (Quebec), Luis De Filippis (Ontario), Jeremy Guenette (Manitoba), Yuqi Kang (Alberta), Jules Koostachin (British Columbia), David Strasser (British Columbia), R.T. Thorne (Ontario), Elad Tzadok (British Columbia).

**International:** Alex Anwandter (Chile), Amie Batalibasi (Australia), James Brown (UK), David Casademunt (Spain), Natalie Erika James (Australia), Cynthia Kao (USA), Giuliana Monteiro (Brazil), Ng’endo Mukii (Kenya), Mikko Myllylahti (Finland), Yanillys Pérez (Dominican Republic), Andrew Sala (Argentina), Rati Tsiteladze (Georgia).

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## Filmmaker Lab participant bios and projects:

**Alex Anwandter** is a director, screenwriter, musician, and prominent queer activist from Santiago, Chile. In 2012, *Time Magazine* named him as one of the next 10 musicians poised for US stardom. His debut feature, *You'll Never Be Alone* (16), had its World Premiere at Berlin, where it won the prestigious Teddy Award. Anwandter's current project, *A Golden Shotgun*, tells the story of a young, upper-class gay man who faces off with his religious housekeeper when she disputes his inheritance.

**Rodrigo Barriuso** is an award-winning, Cuban–Canadian filmmaker based in Toronto. His short *For Dorian* (12) won awards at Inside Out, MIX Copenhagen, and the Torino Gay & Lesbian Film Festival. Barriuso's debut feature, *Un Traductor* (18), premiered at Sundance and won Best Director at the Shanghai International Film Festival. His current project is *Epochal*, in which a transgender woman's self-determination and identity are challenged as she faces Alzheimer's.

**Amie Batalibasi** (Kosi/Feralimae) is an Australian–Solomon Islander writer, director, and producer. She was the Sundance Institute's 2017 Merata Mita Fellow and is a Berlinale Talents 2018 alumna. Her current project is a feature adaptation of her award-winning short film *Blackbird* (15), which explores the little-known history of Australia's Pacific Islander sugar slaves.

**James Brown** is an Australian–British filmmaker based in London. He spent a decade working in acquisitions for distributors in the UK, the US, Australia, and New Zealand before shifting to production. His award-winning film *Still Alice* (14) garnered a Best Actress Oscar for Julianne Moore. He directed the children's feature *You Can Tutu* (17) and the short *Failure to Thrive* (17). He is currently developing the feature *Black Cab*, in which a London florist is the only person who can stop a terrifying serial killer.

**David Casademunt** is a writer-director from Barcelona whose work has won more than 60 international awards. His short film *Jingle Bells* (07) was selected at the San Sebastián Film Festival, and his documentary *Rumba Tres: De ida y vuelta* (16) won Best National Documentary at In-Edit. He is currently developing his first feature film, *The Beast*, in which a boy and his mother, who live alone in the country, notice an eerie presence watching them – and getting a little closer each day. **Participation supported by La Incubadora.**

**Patricia Chica** is an award-winning Latina–Canadian director, producer, writer, and editor. Her documentary work has garnered over 50 awards and screened at over 300 festivals. Chica is currently working on her dramatic debut feature, *Montréal Girls*, which tells the story of an Egyptian student who meets two women in Canada – after which his perceptions are shattered and his destiny revealed.

**Luis De Filippis** is a Toronto-based trans femme filmmaker whose work celebrates otherness and employs a fierce female gaze. Their work has played internationally at festivals such as TIFF and Rotterdam. Their most recent work, *For Nonna Anna* (17), won the Special Jury Prize at Sundance. Their current project, *Something*

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*You Said Last Night*, follows Ren, a trans girl in her mid-twenties, as she negotiates mounting tensions on a family vacation.

**Tracey Deer** is an award-winning Mohawk filmmaker. She was the co-creator, director, and co-showrunner of the critically acclaimed TV series *Mohawk Girls* (10–17). Her documentaries have won two Gemini Awards, and in 2016, she received the Birks Diamond Tribute Award. Deer is currently developing her first narrative feature, *Beans*, which tells the story of a 12-year-old girl torn between innocent childhood and delinquent adolescence during the Oka crisis of 1990.

**Jeremy Guenette** has worked as a writer, director, producer, and editor in both English and French. His first feature film, *Mia* (17), was awarded Best Feature at the Windy Awards in Manitoba. He is currently developing his second feature, *The Forest*, in which an estranged father seeks the truth after finding out his son is on the run as a murder suspect.

**Natalie Erika James** is a Japanese–Australian writer, director, and producer. Her 2016 short, *Creswick*, premiered at Melbourne and won an AWGIE Award for best short-form screenplay. Her feature project, *Relic*, is being produced by Carver Films (*Snowtown*, *Partisan*) and Nine Stories (Riva Marker, Jake Gyllenhaal) and tells the story of three generations of women haunted by a manifestation of dementia that is taking over their family home.

**Yuqi Kang** was born in Inner Mongolia, China. Her feature documentary, *A Little Wisdom* (17), premiered at Busan, SXSW, Karlovy Vary, and Shanghai, and was awarded Best Canadian Documentary Feature at Hot Docs. She is currently developing her first narrative feature, *May You Have a Good Time*, which explores the well-being of China's single-child generation.

**Cynthia Kao** is an award-winning writer and director based in Los Angeles. Her work includes the short film *Groundhog Day For A Black Man* (16) and the WhoHaHa web series *In The Kitchen* (17), featuring Mae Whitman (*Arrested Development*) and Jane Levy (*Shameless*). Kao has written for *Ground Floor* (13–15), *CollegeHumor*, and *Adam Ruins Everything* (15–). Her debut feature project, *The One*, is a romantic comedy about a co-dependent stunt woman who dates herself to figure out how to find her soulmate.

**Jules Koostachin** is MoshKeKo Cree and a band member of Attawapiskat First Nation in Ontario. She is most known for *AskiBOYZ* (14–), her TV series with APTN; the short documentary *NiiSoTeWak* (17); and the short film *OChiSkwaCho* (18). She is currently developing the feature film *Broken Angel*, which follows an abused woman who must face her greatest fear and choose between fight and flight.

**Giuliana Monteiro** is a Brazilian writer and director based in NYC and São Paulo. She has an MFA in filmmaking from NYU Tisch School of the Arts. Her shorts have been selected by the Berlinale and other major

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festivals. She is currently working on her first feature, *Estrada para Livramento*, in which two estranged brothers embark on a journey through the south of Brazil in search of their younger brother.

**Ng'endo Mukii** is a Kenyan filmmaker. Her film credits include the award-winning shorts *Yellow Fever* (13) and *Nairobi Berries* (17). She is currently developing her debut feature, *The Goat Sunday*, which tells the story of two sisters trying to survive an otherworldly battle between good and evil after they are sent to live with their estranged, hyper-religious grandparents in rural Kenya.

**Mikko Myllylahti** is a writer, director, and award-winning poet from Finland. His feature screenplay *The Happiest Day in the Life of Olli Mäki* (16) won the Prize of Un Certain Regard at Cannes, was the Finnish entry for the Academy Awards, and has sold to more than 30 countries. His short film, *The Tiger* (18), premiered at Cannes' Critics' Week. His directorial debut will be *The Woodcutter Story*, which follows a kind and optimistic woodcutter who is tested after an open-pit mine is unearthed in his village.

**Yanillys Pérez** is a Dominican film director, writer, producer, and actor. Her feature documentary, *Jeffrey* (16), won the Dropbox Discovery Programme Filmmakers Award at TIFF; the FilmSlam Student Choice Award for Best Feature Film at Cleveland; and Best Feature Documentary at Trinidad+Tobago. Pérez is currently developing her first narrative feature, *Candy Town*, in which four young Dominican women commit armed robberies in order to buy luxury items they see advertised on TV.

**Andrew Sala** is a filmmaker from Argentina. He has written and directed several shorts, including *Murder in Junin* (12), which won the Best Fiction prize at the Tampere Film Festival and the Prix Spécial du Jury at Poitiers. His debut feature, *Pantanal* (14), premiered at Warsaw. Currently, Sala is working on his second feature, *La Barbarie*, about an introverted teenager from the city who is sent to work on his father's ranch.

**David Strasser** is a Vancouver-based director and screenwriter. His recent projects are the award-winning feature *Delinquent* (18) and the docu-series *Against the Grain: A Guide to Nonconformity* (18). In 2018, Strasser was a JETS participant at the Berlinale and was awarded the Telus STORYHIVE Banff Fellowship. He is currently developing his second feature, *Jackrabbit*, in which sibling runaways embark on a violent crime spree to avenge the man responsible for their mother's death.

**R.T. Thorne** is a multi-disciplinary filmmaker based in Toronto. He has directed series for Netflix, Disney, Bell Media, Hulu, and Corus that have earned him DGC and Canadian Screen Awards nominations. His short film *The Time Traveler* (16) won Best Short at the Canadian Film Festival. He is currently developing his debut feature, *40 Acres*, in which a Black family of militarized farmers find themselves forced to choose between helping an outsider or defending their birthright.

**Rati Tsiteladze** has directed and produced several award-winning shorts, which have screened at Melbourne, Tampere, Guanajuato, and Locarno. His short documentary, *Prisoner of Society* (18), was nominated for a

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European Film Academy Award. His current feature-film project, *The Empty House*, follows a 12-year-old girl caught in a whirlpool of conflicting emotions when her father returns from prison after seven years of absence.

**Elad Tzadok** is an Israeli–Canadian director, producer, and editor based in Vancouver. His award-winning short film *Run* (16) screened internationally and was nominated at the 2016 Leo Awards. His first narrative feature film, *Wrath*, explores the generational impacts of systemic racism and examines a dark part of Canada’s not-so-distant past.

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**About TIFF**

TIFF is a charitable 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](http://tiff.net).

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