



Annual Report

WOMEN IN FILM & TELEVISION TORONTO

20

24

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Our Approach

Who We Are

Founded in 1984, Women in Film & Television – Toronto (WIFT+ Toronto) is a member-based, not-for-profit organization. We are passionate individuals who are dedicated to the education, engagement, and empowerment of our members at all stages of their careers within the screen-based media industry.

WIFT+ Toronto is dedicated to creating a community that is equitable, inclusive, and accessible. Membership is available to everyone, regardless of gender expression.

Our Mission

To build and advance the careers of our members by providing professional development, peer support, and mentorship.

Our Vision

To be a leader in building an equitable, inclusive, and accessible screen-based media industry.

Action Steps

In January 2024, the WIFT+ Toronto and Foundation for WIFT+ Toronto Board of Directors along with all staff convened for a strategic planning session to evaluate the goals outlined in our 2021 strategic plan and to set new priorities for the next two years. This collaborative session allowed us to reflect on our progress and identify key areas of focus that will guide the organization forward.

WIFT+ Toronto identified the following strategic objectives as their main priorities for 2024:

- **Membership Diversification:** We are committed to expanding our membership to include a broader range of professions and identities. By actively engaging individuals from diverse backgrounds, industries, and perspectives, we aim to build a more inclusive organization that truly reflects the communities we serve.
- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI):** Developing a formal DEI statement or policy remains a top priority. Our goal is to foster a culture grounded in respect, empathy, and inclusivity, ensuring that every member feels seen, heard, and valued.
- **Fundraising and Financial Growth:** We will continue to explore and pursue new opportunities to strengthen our fundraising efforts. By diversifying our revenue streams, we can support the sustainable growth of WIFT+ Toronto, as well as enhance the programs and initiatives that advance the careers of our members.

Impact

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ACADEMIC
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BANFF WORLD MEDIA
FESTIVAL SCHOLARSHIPS

Board of Directors

Barbara Escoto (Chair), VP, Content Platforms, Bell Media

Jennifer Chen (Vice Chair), Head of Studios, VP Content, Channel Zero Inc.

Sundra Sefa (Treasurer), Senior Financial Analyst, Telus

Sara Chan (Secretary), VP & Associate General Counsel, Corus Entertainment

Judy Adam, Chief Financial Officer, Boat Rocker Media

Tracy Alves, Director, Strategic Partnerships & Engagement, William F. White International Inc.

Julie Bristow, Founder and CEO, Catalyst

Nicole Chrysostom-Murray, Founder, Screenwriter, Filmmaker,
BrooklynBrown/Do.Dope.Shit Productions

Umbur Hamid, CEO & Partner, BoomBox Sound

Laura Heath Potter, Head of Communications, Canada, Paramount Streaming

Julie Kumaria, SVP, Marketing & Content Distribution, Hollywood Suite

Karthiga Ratnasabapathy, Vice President of Sales and Distribution, NBCUniversal

Skye R. Regan, Writer, Producer, Play All Day Productions

Anne Schneerer, Associate Vice President, National Bank of Canada

Victoria Valius, VP, Marketing and Co-Country Manager, Sony Pictures Television
and Home Entertainment

Committee Members

Executive Committee

Chair: Barbara Escoto (WIFT+)
Jennifer Chen (WIFT+)
Sundra Sefa (WIFT+)
Sara Chan (WIFT+)
Fennella Bruce (FDN)
Staff Contact: Karen Bruce

Finance Committee

Chair: Sundra Sefa (WIFT+)
Michelle Plaskon (FDN)
Barbara Escoto (WIFT+)
Fennella Bruce (FDN)
Jennifer Chen (WIFT+)
Judy Adam (WIFT+)
Staff Contact: Karen Bruce

HR Committee

Chair: Rhonda Britton (FDN)
Michelle Plaskon (FDN)
Kimberley Ball (FDN)
Laura Heath Potter (WIFT+)
Anne Schneerer (WIFT+)
Staff Contact: Karen Bruce

Strategic Planning & Governance Committee

Chair: Jennifer Chen (WIFT+)
Sara Chan (WIFT+)
Julie Bristow (WIFT+)
Judy Adam (WIFT+)
Sue Haas (WIFT+)
Staff Contact: Karen Bruce

Membership & Engagement Committee

Chair: Julie Kumaria (WIFT+)
Fennella Bruce (FDN)
Tamara Shannon (FDN)
Skye R. Regan (WIFT+)
Nicole Chrysostom-Murray (WIFT+)
Nellie Lindner (FDN)
Jennifer Shin (FDN)
Paula Sanderson (Member Rep)
Cindy Tang (Member Rep)
Staff Contact: Abby Brockhouse

Programming Advisory Committee

Chair: Laura Mingail (FDN)
Julie Bristow (WIFT+)
Emily Andras (FDN)
Victoria Valius (WIFT+)
Tamara Shannon (FDN)
Umber Hamid (WIFT+)
Karthiga Ratnasabapathy (WIFT+)
Tracy Alves (WIFT+)
Asis Sethi (Member Rep)
Sam Linton (Member Rep)
Tanya Green (Member Rep)
Liz Truchanowicz (Member Rep)
Staff Contact: Laurie Januska

Board Nominations Committee

Chair: Barbara Escoto (WIFT+)
Fennella Bruce (FDN)
Rhonda Britton (FDN)
Karthiga Ratnasabapathy (WIFT+)
Jennifer Chen (WIFT+)
Staff Contact: Karen Bruce

WIFT+ = WIFT+ Toronto Board Member

FDN = Foundation for WIFT+ Toronto Board Member

Programming

Our goal to be responsive to our members' needs and industry changes means that every year we strive to offer affordable and intensive professional development.

In 2024, we offered:

Programs

- Media Business Essentials
- Introduction to Entertainment Law
- Intermediate Production Accounting & Tax Credits
- Scripted Digital Series Incubator
- Pitch 101
- Business of Budgeting
- Lights! Camera! Learn!
- Pitch Perfect!
- IDM Futures Forward
- Leadership Development Series
- Second Draft: Screenwriting for TV Series

Mentorships & Scholarships

- WIFT+ Connect
- CBC Business of Broadcasting Mentorship
- Formosa Group Sound Mentorship
- Company 3 Post Production Mentorship
- Banff World Media Festival Scholarship

Member Events

The value of a WIFT+ Toronto membership continues to delight members, from networking, events, tours, and virtual how-to sessions.

The following is a selection of some of the networking events we hosted for all WIFT+ Toronto members in 2024:

- 9 Member Orientations
- 6 Walk & Talks
- 2 Executive Networking Events
- February - Virtual Scriptation Session
- March - The Great WIFT+ Toronto Networking Event
- Celebrating 40 Years
- June - Pride Happy Hour at Great Lakes Brewery
- July - WIFT+ Toronto at Immersion Room
- July - Virtual - Getting the Most from Your TIFF Industry Pass
- August - Free Member Screening of *THIS TIME* for International Allyship Day
- October - Virtual - Exploring the Relationship Between Composer and Director - An Inside Session
- October - Exclusive WIFT+ Member Spooktacular Screening - SMILE 2
- November - Wine and Cheese with Neshama Entertainment
- November - Networking with WIFT Australia
- Multiple invites to advance screenings & festival ticket giveaways throughout the year

Special Events

40th Anniversary Networking Event

We kicked off our 40th anniversary celebrations in March with the inaugural WIFT+ Toronto Networking Event, held in honour of International Women's Month at the Centre for Social Innovation: Spadina. This milestone event brought together over 160 members from across the screen-based industry, including emerging professionals, established leaders, and longtime supporters of WIFT+ Toronto.

This event marked not only the beginning of our anniversary year, but also the start of a new tradition that we plan to continue annually.



Special Events

Annual General Meeting

At our Annual General Meeting in May, WIFT+ Toronto members were invited to reflect on our accomplishments in 2023 and to share in our vision for the year ahead.

We were thrilled to officially welcome five new members to the WIFT+ Toronto Board: **Judy Adam, Julie Bristow, Nicole Chrysostom-Murray, Skye R. Regan,** and **Victoria Valius**. We also welcomed two new members, **Laura Mingail** and **Tamara Shannon**, to the Foundation for WIFT+ Toronto Board.



Special Events

Showcase

Our 15th Annual Showcase, held in front of a full house at the TIFF Lightbox, once again spotlighted the incredible talent within our community, featuring a selection of nine projects created by WIFT+ Toronto members.

The Showcase winners were:

- Best Directing: Asis Sethi, for *Rock the Cradle*
- Best Writing: Shaina Silver-Baird, for *Less Than Kosher (Episode 1)*
- Best of Showcase: Vanessa Sandre, for *The Pleasure is All Mine*
- Audience Choice: Vanessa Sandre, for *The Pleasure is All Mine*

Thank you to our 2024 Presenting Sponsor, **TIFF**; Supporting Sponsor, **DGC Ontario**; Event Partner, **Company 3**; and Event Supporters, **CBC**, **The Foundation for WIFT+ Toronto**, **Grande Camera**, **Jamie Gaetz**, **Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto (LIFT)**, and **Mongrel Media** for their support and donations.



Special Events

Reception@TIFF

We were thrilled to host our annual Reception@TIFF at the newly opened The Well, celebrating the spirit and creativity of our screen-based community and raising funds to support initiatives of the Foundation for WIFT+ Toronto!

It was another packed house as we celebrated the excitement and our members with projects in the festival, we welcomed back Her Worship Olivia Chow, Mayor of Toronto and had a very special surprise appearance from Naomi Watts!

Thank you to our Supporting Sponsors, **Hollywood Suite, Lionsgate Canada, Paramount+, Canada**; Event Sponsors, **Banff World Media Festival, Bell Media, Boat Rocker Media, Bushmills, CMPA, Coffin Ridge Boutique Winery, M.A.C, Maestro Dobel Tequila, Playback, Red Tape Brewery, and Seedtag** for their support and donations.



Special Events

Crystal Awards Luncheon Gala

Always an inspiring event, we were proud to celebrate the 37th annual Crystal Awards Luncheon Gala at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel hosted by Actress and Comedian, Allana Harkin. We toasted two of our mentorship programs, the Company 3 Post Production Mentorship, as well as the Formosa Group Sound Mentorship before honouring the six exceptional individuals whose contributions continue to elevate and transform the screen-based industry. We were also delighted to once again have Her Worship Olivia Chow, Mayor of Toronto join us in honouring our recipients.

This year's honourees were:

- Creative Excellence Award: **Lesley Barber**, Composer
- International Achievement: **Adrienne Arsenault**, Chief Correspondent, CBC News and Host, The National
- Innovation Trailblazer: **Gurbani Marwah**, Executive Director, Theatrical Releasing & Film Buying at Cineplex
- Mentorship Award: **Pat Divittorio**, Former VP, Programming, CTV & Specialty, Bell Media
- Outstanding Achievement in Business: **Agnes Augustin**, President & CEO, Shaw Rocket Fund
- Special Jury Award of Distinction: **Joy Loewen**, Vice President, Growth & Inclusion, CMF-FMC

Thank you to our Reception Sponsor, **Lionsgate Canada**; Supporting Sponsor, **Cineplex**; Event Sponsors, **Blink49 Studios**, **Netflix**, **Paramount+**, **Canada**, **Spin VFX**, **Telefilm Canada**, and **WildBrain**; Event Supporters, **Banff World Media Festival**, **Bell Media**, **Cinespace Studios Toronto**, **City of Toronto**, **Gallagher**, **MAC Cosmetics**, **Playback**, **Sunbelt Rentals**, and **Take 5 Productions**; Design & Production Partner, **Big Bang Beige**; and **Vignette Producers**, **MEM** for their support and donations.



Social Media Analytics

In 2024, WIFT+ Toronto continued to grow and cultivate an online community on our Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and X accounts:

1,654

POSTS

5.3%

ENGAGEMENT RATE

41,931

TOTAL FOLLOWERS

679,961

TOTAL IMPRESSIONS

2,094

NEW FOLLOWERS

Our Sponsors and Partners

CORPORATE SOCIAL BENEFITS PARTNERS

BellMedia



PLATINUM SPONSORS

BellMedia



LIONSGATE
CANADA

NBCUniversal



TELEFILM PARTNER
CANADA OF
CHOICE

GOLD SPONSORS

NESHAMA
ENTERTAINMENT

Paramount+



Toronto

SILVER SPONSORS

BLINK49
STUDIOS



CINEPLEX

COMPANY3



SEEDTAG

SHAFTESBURY

SPINVFX

WildBrain

Our Sponsors and Partners

BRONZE SPONSORS



Our Sponsors and Partners

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

ACADEMY • ACADÉMIE
OF CANADIAN CINEMA & TELEVISION / CANADIENNE DU CINÉMA ET DE LA TÉLÉVISION

BALANCING
ACT



BSO
BLACK SCREEN OFFICE | BUREAU DE L'ÉCRAN DES NOIRS



»imagine
NATIVE

INNOVATE
BY DAY

Inside
Out



ReelAbilities
FILM FESTIVAL

TORONTO
reel asian
INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

REEL CANADA



taafi™

TORONTO
BLACK FILM
FESTIVAL

tiff



TORONTO
JEWISH FILM
FESTIVAL

W
Writers Guild
of Canada

EDUCATION PARTNERS

CENTENNIAL
COLLEGE



YORK U



The Chang School
of Continuing
Education

FOUNDATION

WIFT +

TORONTO

Annual Report

FOUNDATION FOR
WOMEN IN FILM & TELEVISION TORONTO

20

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Our Mission

The Foundation for WIFT+ Toronto raises funds through individual and corporate donations, as well as our annual online auction during TIFF, to support and enable WIFT+ Toronto to carry out its mission and vision.

Funds raised help subsidize professional development courses and programs, scholarships, cash prizes at our annual Showcase event as well as membership bursaries.

"The extraordinary individuals it attracts make it unique, and that one of the many reasons why I love WIFT+ Toronto! There's no other organization like it. Professionals from all career stages come together to connect, network, and inspire one another, driving each other towards their goals with unparalleled support and motivation."

- Argie Eliopolos, Former WIFT+ Toronto Board Chair

Testimonials

"Congratulations, WIFT+ Toronto, on 40 years of empowerment and advocacy. As a producer and Festival Director at Canadian Film Fest, I'm deeply grateful for your invaluable support and opportunities from the early stages of my career, and the community this organization continues to cultivate and nurture. WIFT+ is necessary for the Canadian film and television industry, and I wish you continued success in the years ahead"

- Ashleigh Rains, Producer, Festival Director at Canadian Film Fest
& WIFT+ Toronto Member

"Every time my career jumps forward, it is always on the heels of a WIFT+ Toronto event. Whether it's a networking event that leads to the next ideal job, a workshop that helps me verbalize my next career steps so someone can provide the opportunity for growth, or an incubator where I'm given the tools to create my own work, WIFT+ Toronto is essential in bridging the gap of gender disparity in this industry, which heavily relies on networking. WIFT+ Toronto is also vital for removing barriers to entry in so many aspects of our industry. Thank you, WIFT+ Toronto, for all you do"

- Shannon Tasic-McNally,
2024 Scripted Digital Series Incubator Participant

"I'm thrilled to congratulate WIFT+ Toronto on 40 years of education and empowerment. For over a decade now, TIFF has been working with WIFT+ Toronto to ensure that the future of film is inclusive. I'm looking forward to seeing the organization continue to grow and thrive."

- Anita Lee,
Chief Programming Officer at TIFF, Founder of Toronto Reel Asian
International Film Festival & 2021 Crystal Award Honouree for Mentorship

"There is no clear path in this industry. Having a network of strong, talented women to connect with, be mentored by, and share the journey with, is so uplifting!"

- Shima Madjpour, WIFT+ Toronto Member

Impact

43

MEMBERSHIP
BURSARIES

18

PROGRAM
SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

3

BANFF WORLD MEDIA
FESTIVAL SCHOLARSHIPS

170+

INDIVIDUAL AND
CORPORATE DONORS

\$40k+

RAISED FROM SILENT
AUCTION & EVENTS

\$37k+

RAISED DURING
MATCHING CAMPAIGN

Board of Directors

Fennella Bruce (Chair), Media Consultant, Producer, Writer, FKB Media Solutions

Kimberley Ball (Vice Chair), Chief Content Officer, Super Channel

Michelle Plaskon (Treasurer), Senior Director, Finance and Administration, Brunico Communications

Nellie Lindner (Secretary), VP, National Practice Leader - Film and Entertainment, BFL Canada

Emily Andras, Showrunner, Vilcabamba Pictures Inc.

Rhonda Britton, Senior Manager, Talent Acquisition, Cineplex

Sue Haas, President & COO, NLogic

Laura Mingail, Founder, Archetypes & Effects

Tamara Shannon, Senior Vice President, Media, NBCUniversal

Jennifer Shin, Director of Development, Comedy, CBC

Our Champions

Donations received November 2023 - October 2024

CHAMPION \$10,000-20,000

BellMedia



MENTOR \$5,000 - 9,000

Alice Gilbert
John Witcher

PATRON \$2,500 - 4,999

David Kines

BENEFACTOR \$1,000-2,499

Karen Bruce
Hemingway's
Jennifer Keenan
Phem Inc.

SUPPORTER \$600-999

Neishaw Ali
Bryanny Bailey
Creative Clan
Laura Heath Potter
Helen Juvonen
Suzanne Taylor
Weston Trott

FAN \$300-599

Ron Burshtein
Sara Chan
May Cheng
Alison Duke
Gonzalo Escoto
The Fifth Business Inc.
Tanya Fox
Prentiss Fraser
Carolyn Froude
Victoria Fusca
Beth Janson
Laurie Januska
Mark Montefiore
Geoffrey Peers
Karthiga Ratnasabapathy
Sa'ad Shah
Sony Pictures Television

Our Champions

PARTNER \$100-299

Susan Alexander
Dr. Jill Andrew
Shannon Annett
Jennifer Ansley
Helen Argiro
Bad Lady International
maxine bailey
Kerry Ball
Scott Ball
Daniela Barbosa
Meghan Bechberger
Jennifer Bell
Carolyn Blaine
Jennifer Bol
Lisa Broadfoot
Sarah Brown
Fennella Bruce
Shelley Carroll
Penny Charter
Norman Chen
Olivia Chow
Stephanie de Bem
Julie Di Cresce
Tracey Dodokin
Philip Evans
Jason Evans
FORTÉ Entertainment
Jessica Finch
Martin Fisher

Fix-It-In-Post Inc
Tammy Frick
Stephanie Gosine
Lauren Grant
Tanya Green
Cheryl Grossman
Megan Guy
Sue Haas
Victoria Harding
Emily Harris
Christina Jennings
Naomi Johnson
Maureen Judge
Karmerce Inc.
Teresa Kelly
Emily Kulasa
Julie Kumaria
Lambur Productions Inc.
Agnes Lan
Monica Lapa
Jenny LeCollier
Lubomyra Lesychyn
Nellie Lindner
Anne Loi
Cynthia Lynch
Paula MacPherson
Shima Majdpour
Kimberley Manky
Angela Mastronardi

Gaye McDonald
Aimee Mitchell
Amy O'Grady
Ashleigh Rains
Rethink
Julie Sandwell
Theresa Scandiffio
Lianne Seal
Magali Simard
Heather Sinclair
Warren Sonoda
Kim Sparks
Lizzy Stanwyck
Michael Steinberg
Linda Stregger
Sundra Sylva
Catherine Tait
Suzannne K. Taylor
Liz Truchanowicz
Victoria Valius
Jane Walker
Barbara Williams
Windrun Media
Dave Wong
Tara Woodbury
Diane Woods
John Young
Anonymous (multiple)

Our Champions

FRIEND \$20-99

Kim Ball
Magdalena Beattie
Genevieve Begy
Heidi Brander
Meaghan Brander
Caitlin Brown
Kristina Catanzaro
Michelle Conn
Michelle Crespi
Sarah Cummings
Sonya Davidson
Kelly Ebers
Andrea Evans
Michael Foley
Zeynep Güler-Tuck
Jocelyn Hamilton
Venessa Harris
Danielle Hebert
Jennifer Hsiung
Jennifer Ierullo
Beth Janson
Lisa Kalushner
Arti Kaushal

Gloria Kim
Jenn Kuzmyk
Luba Lesychyn
George Macri
Carolyn Mauricette
Jessica Milliken
Garrett Neiles
Priscilla Pacheco
Gabor Pertic
Noureen Rahman
Karen Ralph
Muriel Rosilio
Kyle Russell
Katisha Shaw
Sabrina Spence
Sharon Stevens
Karen Thorne-Stone
Caroline Tyre
Aris Tyros
Susan Wallis
Linda Xiaoling Wang
Katie Wilson
Anonymous (multiple)

Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to read this report.

Stay updated on our socials and learn more about WIFT+ Toronto on our **website**.

Help us support others on their journey!

DONATE TODAY!



Member
Forum