

TIFF RAMPS UP PUSH FOR GENDER EQUITY IN SCREEN INDUSTRIES

A five-year commitment to support and nurture female voices kicks off with a fundraising campaign: **Share Her Journey**



TORONTO — Today TIFF has announced a five-year commitment to grow its Talent Development programmes with female-forward programming to increase participation, skills and opportunities for women behind and in front of the camera. TIFF aims to:

- Champion diversity of gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and physical and cognitive ability within gender equity initiatives
- Launch a three-month residency programme for emerging female creators
- Introduce a new producers' accelerator programme for women
- Develop a speaker series to spark conversations on gender equity and gender identities in film
- Design comprehensive resources for educators to enhance the curriculum and support classroom discussions about women and gender in cinema
- Use industry data to track career trajectories and improve outcomes for women in film

“Inclusion, accessibility and diversity are central to our work at TIFF. We acknowledge that gender inequity is systemic in the screen industries, so change has to happen at every level. That includes getting more women into key creative roles,” said Cameron Bailey, Artistic Director, TIFF. “We plan to seek out, develop and showcase top female talent in the industry through our Festival and year-round initiatives. Our mission is to transform the way people see the world through film. One of the most powerful ways to do that is to foreground the perspectives of women.”

TIFF’s renewed commitment to promoting equal opportunities for women kicks off with the **Share Her Journey** campaign, running from **July 10 to September 17, 2017**. The campaign celebrates successful and inspirational women behind and in front of the camera whom TIFF has championed and supported over the years. The campaign also foreshadows exciting announcements around holistic diversity that the organization will make in the coming months.

TIFF has partnered with some of the most talented women working in the industry today. They join the campaign as Ambassadors and will help shape and advocate its message. The Ambassadors will also advise on determining



common challenges and shared needs, which will inform further organizational efforts towards gender parity. **Share Her Journey** Ambassadors include Nigerian actor-turned-filmmaker **Omoni Oboli**, whose risqué comedy *Okafor's Law* premiered in the City to City programme at the Festival in 2016; **Carol Nguyen**, a teen film wunderkind who has dominated the TIFF Next Wave division of Jump Cuts, taking home the top prizes in 2014, 2015 and 2016; award-winning documentary filmmaker, writer and producer **Jennifer Baichwal**, whose acclaimed films include *Manufactured Landscapes* and *Watermark*; and Oscar-nominated filmmaker **Deepa Mehta**, whose celebrated films include *Water* and *Anatomy of Violence*.

“As a cultural charity TIFF relies on the support of donors, partners, supporters and members, as well as fundraising events such as Soiree and BOOMBOX, in order to make our programming, educational and outreach activities possible 365 days a year,” said Betty-Ann Heggie, member of TIFF’s Board of Directors and Chair of the Philanthropy Committee. “With our **Share Her Journey** campaign we are aiming to raise \$3 million (CAD) over five years to continue our efforts to reduce the gender gap so we can see more diverse stories on screen. Philanthropy and the support of our donors are what make this organization exceptional and will enable this commitment to come to fruition.”

TIFF has already taken steps to combat the gender imbalance within the industry, while serving as a platform for women’s stories. Since 2016, TIFF’s Talent Development programmes such as Talent Lab, Studio, and TIFF Rising Stars have had a minimum of 50% female participation. To further strengthen and streamline opportunities, from 2018 TIFF’s professional development programmes will be consolidated under one moniker, TIFF Talent Labs, with clear pathways of support for writers, directors, producers and actors.

“By being part of our internationally-regarded programmes, female practitioners gain artistic and business tools, boost their marketplace understanding, make important connections and have conversations that can lead to future opportunities,” said Kathleen Drumm, TIFF Industry Director.

Visionary women have also featured prominently within the selection of guest speakers, governors and mentors involved in TIFF’s industry programmes. Nearly 30% of films at the 2016 Toronto International Film Festival were directed by women. The 2017 TIFF Bell Lightbox summer programme includes retrospectives on Ida Lupino and Kathryn Bigelow, two of Hollywood’s most important directors — masters of their craft who have also led the way for future generations of female filmmakers.

SHARE HER JOURNEY DONORS

The **Share Her Journey** campaign kicks off with two generous gifts by two passionate advocates for equal opportunities for women. The first \$80,000 donated to this campaign in 2017 will be generously matched by Betty-Ann Heggie and Anne-Marie Canning.

Betty-Ann Heggie will be donating a major gift over five years. A former vice-president of PotashCorp, Heggie is a member of Canada’s Top 100 Most Powerful Women Hall of Fame and is currently the Corporate Director, professional speaker and blogger for the *Huffington Post*. Her groundbreaking Womentorship program at her alma mater, the University of Saskatchewan, has had more than 1,800 women participate in the program’s networking events, professional development and annual women’s film festival. The program also developed and hosted a Canadian mentorship experience for women from Afghanistan.

The second gift is a generous donation by Anne-Marie Canning. A longtime donor to TIFF and one of the city’s premier philanthropists, she is a champion of women in the arts as well as healthcare, recently co-chairing an incredibly successful event in support of the University Health Network to pay tribute to the outstanding cardiologist, Dr. Heather Ross, Director, Ted Rogers Centre of Excellence in Heart Function.

“The door is starting to open for women filmmakers and I want to support TIFF’s efforts to build on the momentum we are seeing around the world,” said Canning.



The **Share Her Journey** campaign and fundraising efforts will kick off with a donor's event hosted at TIFF Bell Lightbox on **July 10**. The event includes a screening of *Outrage*, Ida Lupino's 1950 film about a young woman's fallout in the wake of sexual assault. The film will be introduced by the courageous activist, author and educator known as Jane Doe, who, in 1998 following an 11-year court battle, successfully sued the Toronto Police Service for negligence and discrimination in their investigation of her sexual assault. Jane Doe will delve into the film's subject matter through the lens of her experience with sexual violence against women and its systemic connections. *Outrage* is part of TIFF Cinematheque's retrospective *Ida Lupino: Independent Woman*, which celebrates her versatile talent and indelible contribution to the history of cinema by showcasing five of the films she directed and a selection of her finest work as an actor.

For more information on the **Share Her Journey** campaign and to make a donation, go to tiff.net/shareherjourney.

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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 Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario, 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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