



Tricksters and Writers: Women in Film & Television Vancouver Launches Screenwriting Program for Indigenous Women

For Immediate Release

Vancouver, BC (October 18, 2017) – Women in Film & Television Vancouver (WIFTV) is excited to launch a new program: Coyote, Raven, Spider, Wendigo: Tricksters and Writers, a feature film writing program for Indigenous women.

The program is a response to the overall lack of gender parity in the Canadian production landscape and in particular to the lack of feature films created by indigenous women. It is designed to increase the number of feature film scripts written by indigenous women and the number of indigenous women in key creative roles in the production of feature films.

The initial phase of the program will take place over twelve weeks, beginning on October 25 2017, where writers will participate in Master Classes and group sessions. Selected projects from this phase will receive further development including professional story editor consultations and directed actor table reads.

The program has been developed by WIFTV in consultation with Doreen Manuel and Peggy Thompson. Doreen is a Secwepemc/Ktunaxa First Nations filmmaker, as well as the Coordinator/Instructor of the Indigenous Independent Digital Filmmaking program at Capilano University. Peggy is a screenwriter and Professor Emerita of UBC's Creative Writing Program.

“Colonial constructs and laws stifled our voices, confined our people to reservations, brainwashed our children in Indian residential schools, which in turn destroyed our family system and created generations of trauma and unresolved grief; this resulted in Indigenous people being the most misrepresented and underrepresented nation involved in the film industry. Our empowerment comes through us telling our own stories with more of our Indigenous women writing and directing feature length films and breaking down those barriers”, said program advisor Doreen Manuel, “This program is an important step in achieving those goals.

This year's jury included filmmaker Doreen Manuel (*Freedom Babies, These Walls*), screenwriter Peggy Thompson (*The Lotus Eaters, Better Than Chocolate*), writer and producer Andrew Genaille (*Back in the Day, Two Indians Talking*), and award winning playwright and screenwriter David Geary.

Fifteen writers were selected from an open call for applications from Indigenous women living in the Vancouver area. Congratulations to:

Nikita Weiss Day

Petie Chalifoux

Robyn K Weasel Bear

Sarah Kelley

Mariel Belanger

Marcy Waughtal

Jessie Anthony

Dorothy Christian

Caitlyn Pantherbone

Wanda John-Kehewin

Joy Haskell

Brenda Prince

Sarah Stupar

Courtney Crane

Jenifer Brousseau

“We’re very excited by this cohort of women writers and look forward to the work ahead,” commented program advisor Peggy Thompson.

This program has been made possible by the generous support of Matrix Production Services, Canadian Media Producers Association (CMPA), Telus and Creative BC.

“We at Matrix are so grateful to be a part this program and to support the development of Indigenous women filmmakers”, said Veronica Braico, Vice President Matrix Production Services.

Women In Film & Television Vancouver (WIFTV) is an internationally affiliated not-for-profit society committed to advancing, celebrating and promoting the artistic practice and careers of women working in screen-based media. womeninfilm.ca

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Media Contact

Kaitlen Arundale – WIFTV Communications Coordinator

communications@womeninfilm.ca

Telephone: 604-685-1152