



WIFTV Whistler Film Festival Film Market Preparation Additional Mentee Announced

VANCOUVER, BC (November, 2022) – WIFT Vancouver, in association with Whistler Film Festival (WFF) is pleased to announce Nessa Aref as an additional recipient of the 2022 WIFTV Whistler Film Festival Market Preparation Mentorship Program for her project *Bad Persians*, a comedy series centering on two childhood friends as they navigate through failing careers and disastrous love lives under the expectations of their seemingly flawless immigrant families.



“I genuinely thought I had not been selected this year, so to hear that they had been so impressed by my package that they created extra capacity for me was a wonderful surprise. Not only is it crucial to empower filmmakers to tell their own stories, but telling a story about the Iranian diaspora has never felt more important than it does now. HUGE thank you to WIFTV and WFF for this opportunity. I'm so excited to learn from everything the festival and this program have to offer.”

Nessa Aref is an Iranian-Canadian writer, director and producer. After showrunning two original web series, Nessa co-produced her first feature film, *Freaks* (2018), which premiered at TIFF. She later directed and co-wrote *The Mirror* (2019) as part of Crazy8s 2019 festival, streaming on Alter. Her second short film *Decomposing* (2021) is currently touring the festival circuit. She has written and directed episodes of the Al-Jazeera podcast series, *Hindsight* (2020 - 2021), narrated by Charles Dance. Her work is streaming on Netflix, CBC and Spotify to name a few. Her work focuses on identity, community, and coming of age. She is currently developing *Bad Persians*, a comedy series about the Iranian diaspora, as well as adapting her Crazy8s horror short *The Mirror* (2018), into a feature film.

Aref's project was one of the top two applications selected by the jury, which included Alisa Luke, Andy Alvarez, and Laura Arboleda; you can [read more about the jury here](#). The strength of Aref's project compelled WIFTV and WFF to offer an additional mentorship this year. Previously, the mentorship was only offered to one applicant.

The Whistler Film Festival Society is a charitable, cultural organisation dedicated to furthering the art and business of film by providing programs that focus on discovering,



developing, and promoting new talent culminating in the highly respected Whistler Film Festival and Content Summit each December. In all its programs, WFF strives for gender parity, inclusivity and diversity. The Whistler Film Festival Society is situated on the shared unceded territory of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and Liłwat7úl (Li'wat) Nations. Tickets, packs and industry passes are now available for the 2022 Whistler Film Festival at whistlerfilmfestival.com

WIFT Vancouver (WIFTV) is a member-based organisation committed to creating an equitable screen-based industry for women and gender diverse people. By addressing systemic barriers we believe we are also working towards more inclusive, representative media.

WIFTV incorporated in 1989 as a not-for-profit society registered in British Columbia. Our offices are located on the unceded traditional and ancestral homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.