

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WOMEN IN FILM & TELEVISION VANCOUVER SHINES A LIGHT ON WOMEN IN "SHOW BIZ" WITH THE SPOTLIGHT AWARDS™

June 20th at Performance Works Granville Island

Red Carpet at 7 pm, Awards and Gala Party at 8 pm

Vancouver, BC – On June 20th, 2016, Women in Film & Television Vancouver (WIFTV) will honour some of the most influential individuals working in the industry, and those who support them, with their annual Spotlight Awards™ (presented since 1999), dedicated to BC women in screen-based media.

Among this year's award recipients are Rachel Talalay, Claude Joli-Coeur, Mina Shum, Gigi Saul Guerrero, Walter Daroshin, Katharine Montagu, Christine Larsen, Sabrina Furlinger, the Spear Sisters, Emily Yakashiro and Mary Galloway. Our award recipients have shown outstanding dedication, effort and ability behind the scenes, or behind the camera, and have made a significant impact on the film and TV industry. WIFTV is proud to celebrate their contributions.

"This year's recipients represent outstanding women and men whose contributions are exceptional." said Arwen Hunter, chair of the Spotlight Awards Jury and director of the WIFTV Board. "It is a privilege to acknowledge their significance."

The Spotlight Awards™ gala will be hosted by the vibrant and versatile Tracey Bell. Award winning entertainer, Tracey magically becomes Cher, Marilyn, Celine, Liza and more in seconds. Her high-energy musical routines inspire audiences to play along in a fantasy concert of glamour, humour and heart.

WIFTV is grateful for the generous support from Please Adjust your Set, Agentic Digital Media, Fusion Cine, Finalé, Troika, Capilano University Film Centre, Matrix Production Services, On Set Headsets and Tracey Bell.

SPOTLIGHT AWARD WINNERS 2015

Woman of the Year Award: Rachel Talalay (Director, Producer, Professor, & Activist)

This award is presented to an industry leader who has achieved significant success and who has created opportunities for other women in the industry. Currently, she is in the UK directing the acclaimed *Sherlock*, starring Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman. For 25 years, Rachel has been an inspiration and a guiding light for women filmmakers, producing, teaching, being an activist, a feminist and, most notably, a director. She has created history, becoming the 7th woman to direct *Doctor Who* in the show's 52 year history, shooting the two-part finale of series 8.

The jury noted “Rachel Talalay is on fire, she’s tough, and she’s an activist. By the nature of doing the groundbreaking work that she does, she’s forging a path for women.”

Please Adjust Your Set Award: Claude Joli-Coeur (Government Film Commissioner; NFB Chairperson)

This award honours a person or organization that has made a major contribution to promote gender equality in film, television or screen-based media. Claude is the 16th Government Film Commissioner and Chairperson of the National Film Board of Canada and his recent public announcement that the NFB is committed to ensuring 50 percent of its funding will go to films by women, has received praise from around the world and inspired other influential leaders to follow suit.

Claude Joli-Coeur is well-known for his ability to mobilize, his egalitarian leadership, and his strong commitment to Canadian communities. Throughout his career, which has spanned more than 30 years, Claude has strived to strengthen the voices that need to be heard, including First Nations and French-speaking Canadian groups.

Finalé Artistic Achievement Award: Mina Shum (Director)

This award honours a screen-based media artist (i.e. writer, director, producer, editor, director of photography or performer) who has created an outstanding recent work or a significant body of work. Mina Shum’s latest work, *Ninth Floor*, is a bold departure in style from Mina’s previous accomplishments as a filmmaker and has allowed her to creatively engage with the racism she experienced in her own childhood. *Ninth Floor* was featured in TIFF, and was recently in the top 10 touring program. Mina has been prolific in creating outstanding and insightful films since her first feature film, *Double Happiness*, which won a Special Jury Citation for Best Canadian Feature Film and the Toronto Metro Media Prize at the Toronto International Film Festival.

Wayne Black Service Award: Christine Larsen (Former Senior Business Analyst, Creative BC; Production Accountant)

The Wayne Black Service Award honours a major contributor to the screen-based media community, while working ‘behind the scenes’. This award is named in memory of Wayne Black of Alpha Cine who gave tirelessly of his time and talent to help filmmakers.

A screen-based media professional, dedicated to the development and promotion of BC content in film, television and digital media, Christine is currently involved in film and television production, working on series filmed in Vancouver. Before, she has worked as a Senior Business Analyst at Creative BC since 2007, where she oversaw and managed development programs. “Going well beyond her job description, and always supporting the efforts of independents, Christine encourages creators’ navigation through production of their project without any personal gain,” praise the jury, adding “She has served on the committee for WIFTVs Producer’s Workbook, on our board of directors, and juries across the

country, including sitting on the selection committee for Canada's best foreign language film."

Agentic Digital Media Innovation Award: Gigi Saul Guerrero (Director; Actress; Writer)

The Artistic Innovation Award honours a key creator of a recent production or body of work that exemplifies vision, experimentation and innovation. Gigi Saul Guerrero is a young, talented filmmaker who has found and created her own genre of horror. Over the last couple of years, Gigi has received international recognition for her outstanding original work with Luchagore Productions – tying together storytelling, passion and horror. Her work has been described as Tex-Mex with a touch of grindhouse-gore.

Working frequently under the constraints of a small budget has heightened Gigi's creativity, prompting experimentation and resulting in another level of depth in her storytelling. This belief in quality through innovation is undoubtedly a contributing factor to the many awards and consistent recognition at film festivals around the world including Morbido Film Fest in Mexico, Heavy Hitting Horror Fest in Whistler, Horrible Imaginings Film Festival in San Diego and the British Horror Film Festival in London.

Capilano University Film Centre Leadership in Education Award: Katharine Montagu (Actor, Educator, Director, Producer, Author)

The Leadership in Education Award is presented to a screen industry teacher who has demonstrated a commitment to creating opportunities for and sharing expertise with female students within an academic or professional development context. During Kat's fourteen year tenure at the Vancouver Film School, she's won the Writing Department's Excellence in Teaching Award twice, and the school-wide Instructor of the Year award in 2012. In addition to VFS, Kat teaches screenwriting at UBC, and has been a faculty member at BCIT and Art Institute of Vancouver.

"Katharine Montagu has spent many years mobilizing people and volunteering in the film and television community – going way beyond her teaching duties," said the jury.

Matrix Production Services Image Award: Spear Sisters (Directors; Writers; Actors)

The Image Award is awarded to a director, writer, editor or director of photography of an outstanding short work that shows production excellence or a unique, visionary approach. Kailey and Sam are best known for *Twilight Storytellers: The Mary Alice Brandon File*, winner of the international competition Twilight Saga Prequels. They are a force to be reckoned with and a duo that strives to create opportunities for women in film in every story they tell. For every project, their mandate is to tell female-driven stories and to challenge themselves as artists.

In light of their accomplishments, the jury noted that “to succeed within a very competitive, international contest like the Twilight Saga Prequels is incredible. The impressive production values of the *Mary Alice Brandon File* and its original approach set it apart. To make that vision happen and execute the film in such high profile fashion deserves great recognition and acclaim.”

Fusion Cine Honoured Friend Award: Walter Daroshin (President, Troika Productions Inc.; Chair, Motion Picture Arts & Sciences Foundation of BC; President, Leo Awards; Director, Hands in Peace Society (Canada); and former Trustee, Board of the Vancouver Waldorf School)

The Honorary Friend Award recognizes a person who has played a significant role in supporting women in the industry and promoting the goals of WIFTV. An award-winning photographer and filmmaker, Walter has been an activist and an innovator in Canadian film industry throughout his career, having been a member of the Captain of the National Advertising Benevolent Society of Canada, and founding Director of the Stein Valley Voices for the Wilderness Society, to name a few. Walter adjudicated the British Columbia Arts Awards Program, the Vancouver International Mountain Film Festival, and many others.

His commitment to equality and support for independent filmmakers through awards, festivals and organizations has not gone unnoticed. “Local film awards are a great service to the careers of both genders working in film and TV. The Leo awards provide a great deal of value, but not much glory for the organizers who also deserve to be recognized” says the jury, further noting “Walter’s commitment of sponsorship to the Sharon Gibbon Spotlight Award for the past three years has allowed Women in Film to shine a spotlight on the generous volunteer contributions that go unnoticed.”

Troika Sharon Gibbon Award: Emily Yakashiro (Production Coordinator; Editor-in-Chief, *The Closet Feminist*)

The Sharon Gibbon Award honours a member in recognition of her volunteer work with WIFTV advancing the organization’s goals. The award is named in memory of Sharon Gibbon, who exemplified these qualities in a career cut short too soon. Emily Yakashiro is a creative visionary, focused on channeling her abilities toward creating space for new, unheard voices. Through her work as a volunteer at the Vancouver International Women in Film Festival, and her website, *The Closet Feminist*, Emily encourages and supports women creating content. Speaking of her work, Emily states “I realized that if I wanted to help change things, I had to be at the start of the story, helping to promote and provide a new narrative in any form that challenged the status quo.”

Iris Award: Sabrina Furminger (Journalist; Reel People Columnist, The Westender)

The Iris Award is given to a person who has demonstrated a commitment to the

promotion of female creators and their screen-based works either through curating or programming, or through print and online media sources. Named after the Greek mythological figure Iris, associated with communication, messages, and new endeavors. Author Sabrina Furminger created the column Reel People, which notes the achievements of local film industry people in front of and behind the camera.

Sabrina writes with a great sense of humour, and has interviewed many of the movers and shakers of the industry in her columns, including many women working in the industry, such as Amanda Tapping, Pauline Egan, Rachel Talalay, and many others. Sabrina's dedication and support of local and women filmmakers has been invaluable over the years.

On Set Headsets Newcomer Award: Mary Galloway (Actor, Director, Writer, Producer)

The Newcomer Award recognizes a new artist or technician, including one who is shifting from one career to another (i.e. from an actor to a director) whose first few works have laid the foundation for an inspiring new career. On the journey to fulfilling her goal of becoming an actor, Mary also discovered a love and aptitude for writing. Most recently, her talents shone when she wrote, produced and starred in the short film *Ariel Unraveling*. It was her first screenplay and, while not selected to be produced for 2015 Crazy 8s, it was well received at the Victoria Film Festival and Mary was awarded a BravoFACT prize. Mary was also recently shortlisted for Kevin Spacey's Artists of Choice Awards and is sure to continue impressing and contributing to the diverse and ever-changing film industry.

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