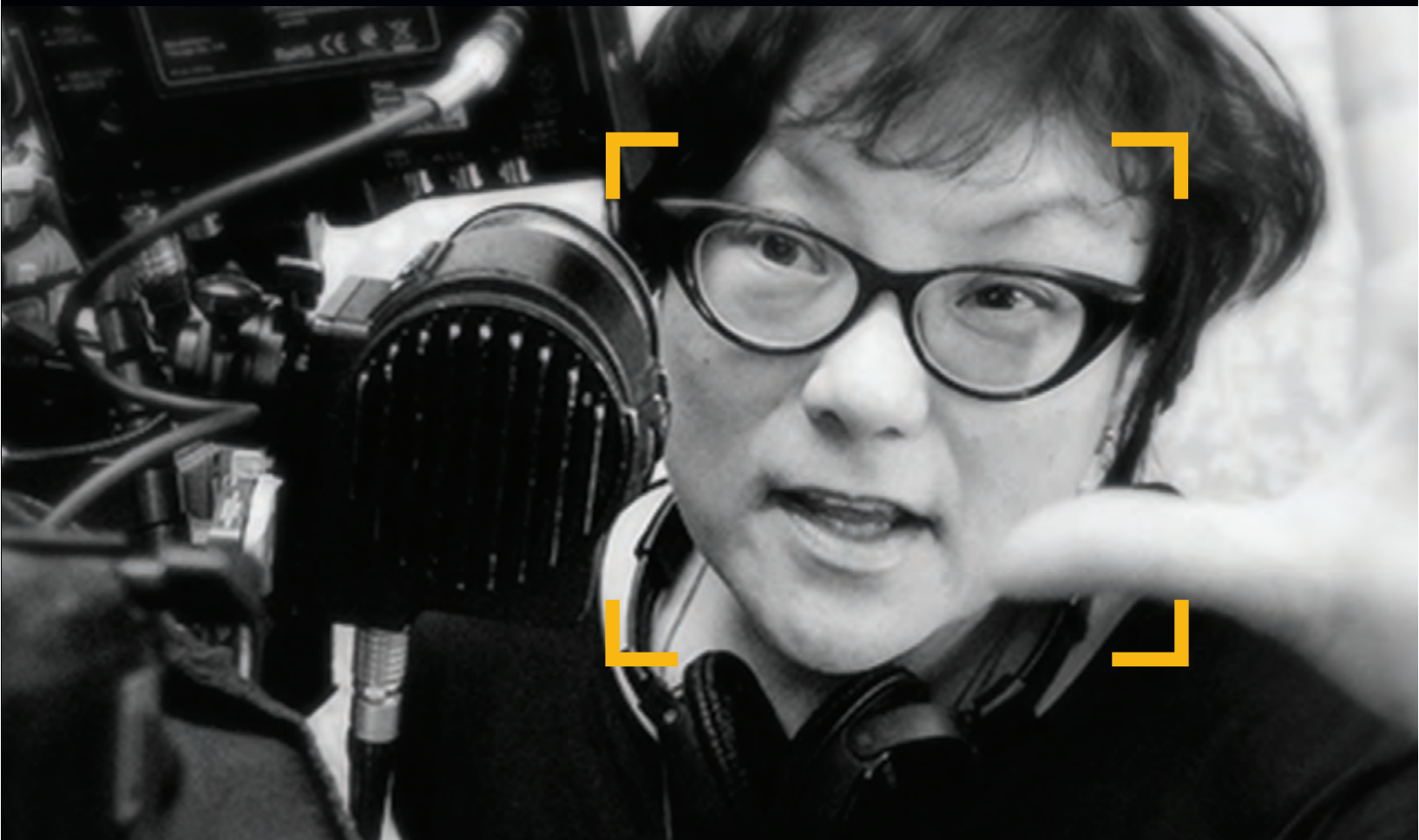


**Media**PLUS



women + diversity = the big picture



WOMEN IN VIEW

# Acknowledgments

We are indebted to the many individuals across the entire industry who helped bring this project into being; and, in particular, to the members of Canadian Unions for Equality on Screen (CUES) who first identified the need for this resource. MediaPLUS+ was made possible by the invaluable financial support and creative contributions of the following organizations and groups.



Women In View gratefully acknowledges and thanks the Ontario Media Development Corporation, Telefilm Canada, and the Canada Media Fund for their support of the research and writing of MediaPLUS+. Any opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the funders. The funders, the Government of Ontario, the Government of Canada and their agencies are in no way bound by the recommendations contained in this document.

# Diversity isn't the question. It's the answer.

Since 2012, five annual Women in View *On Screen* reports on employment in Canadian media have documented the lack of diversity onscreen and behind the camera. You'd never guess from industry statistics that 51% of our population is female; one in five Canadians is a racialized minority; and Indigenous people are the fastest-growing population group in Canada, with close to half the Indigenous population younger than 24 years of age.

It's time to create media by and about who we really are – a population that includes women of every race, culture, age, region, language, disability and sexual orientation. As filmmaker Aisling Chin-Yee stated in a recent interview, "We are not the problem. We are the solution to your problem."

MediaPLUS+ is intended for people working in every part of the media who believe change is imperative, and who want to be part of that change. This booklet is designed to open up the discussion, to help all of us "nudge" each other, along the entire production chain, into expanding our horizons, one purposeful decision at a time.

Over the past two years, we've spoken with people from

St. John's to Victoria, hearing about overt discrimination and abuse, as well as the everyday, unconscious bias that still marginalizes women at every level of production. We don't claim to have all the answers here, but we hope this discussion will continue so we can find answers together.

**Rina Fraticelli**  
Executive Director  
Women in View

The logo for Women in View features the words "WOMEN" and "IN VIEW" stacked vertically. The letter "O" in "WOMEN" is replaced by a stylized circular graphic composed of overlapping teal and pink segments.

## Join the conversation

Throughout 2018, Women in View will be hosting workshops and conversations about gender equity and diversity across Canada. Go to [mediapluscanada.ca](http://mediapluscanada.ca) to find out the one nearest to you — or to ask for help in organizing one of your own.



*Mary Kills People* writer's room (L-R): Lara Azzopardi, Supervising Producer; Morwyn Brebner, Executive Producer; Marsha Greene, Producer; Tara Armstrong, Creator and Executive Producer; Justin Giallonardo, Script Coordinator

# Real stories about real people

When I was in high school, I ran for student council. But after some incidents involving hate speech, I decided to drop out of the election. I told a guidance counselor about the racist incidents I'd experienced and said, "I don't want to work for a school that doesn't work for me." And I remember her response so clearly: she said if I wanted to change the system, I needed to be in the system.

I was furious. I couldn't believe she thought it was my responsibility to fix the problem. What about the principal? The *Student Handbook* with a lengthy Code of Conduct? Surely the path to justice wasn't up to a 17-year-old! Now I know – all too well sometimes – my guidance counselor had a point.

I didn't become a screenwriter to change the industry. But when Women in View asked me to collaborate on this booklet, I realized I had an opportunity to work from within to change a system that marginalizes women,

Indigenous and people of colour, the LGBTQ community, and people with disabilities. And if you're reading this, you have an opportunity to do the same. Because what I said to that guidance counselor is also true – it can't solely be the responsibility of marginalized people to change an industry that has largely shut us out.

Some of you might not be aware of these issues. Others won't have the tools or training to address them. My hope is that this booklet will offer ideas and resources to help you increase diversity on and off-screen. Because diversity equals specificity, which means authenticity, which reflects both our reality and our universality. If our goal as content creators is to tell real stories about real people, this is where we must begin.

## — Marsha Greene

Toronto writer/producer Marsha Greene has written for Global's hit series *Private Eyes*, ABC's *Ten Days in the Valley*, and the critically acclaimed *Mary Kills People* for Global and Lifetime.



Marsha Greene

# The True North: strong and diverse

The Canada we see on TV – featuring a disproportionate number of men compared to women, and with a minimum of diversity in either gender – is nowhere near as colourful as the Canada most of us live in.

This data from Stats Canada shows who we really are.

How does it compare with the world of your production and on your screens?

What can you do to make it better

## CANADA IS...

PEOPLE WITH  
DISABILITIES

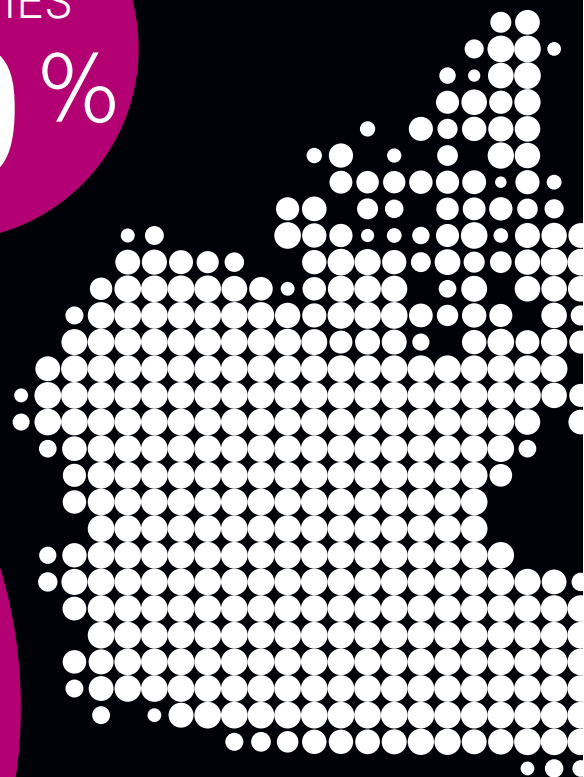
**15** %

RACIALIZED  
MINORITIES

**19** %

WOMEN

**51** %



\*This stat

## If you film it, they will come!

INDIGENOUS  
**5** %

LGBTQ  
**5** %

MOVIEGOERS:

**52** %

ARE WOMEN

WOMEN-LED  
FILMS MADE

**6**×

THEIR  
INVESTMENT

FILMS WITH  
**FEMALE LEADS**  
EARN MORE

**\$** +

# What we're up against

Recognizing the obstacles is a key step in working to get rid of them. Research on gender equity in the European audiovisual sector\* has identified the major barriers preventing women from working in the industry on equal terms with men.

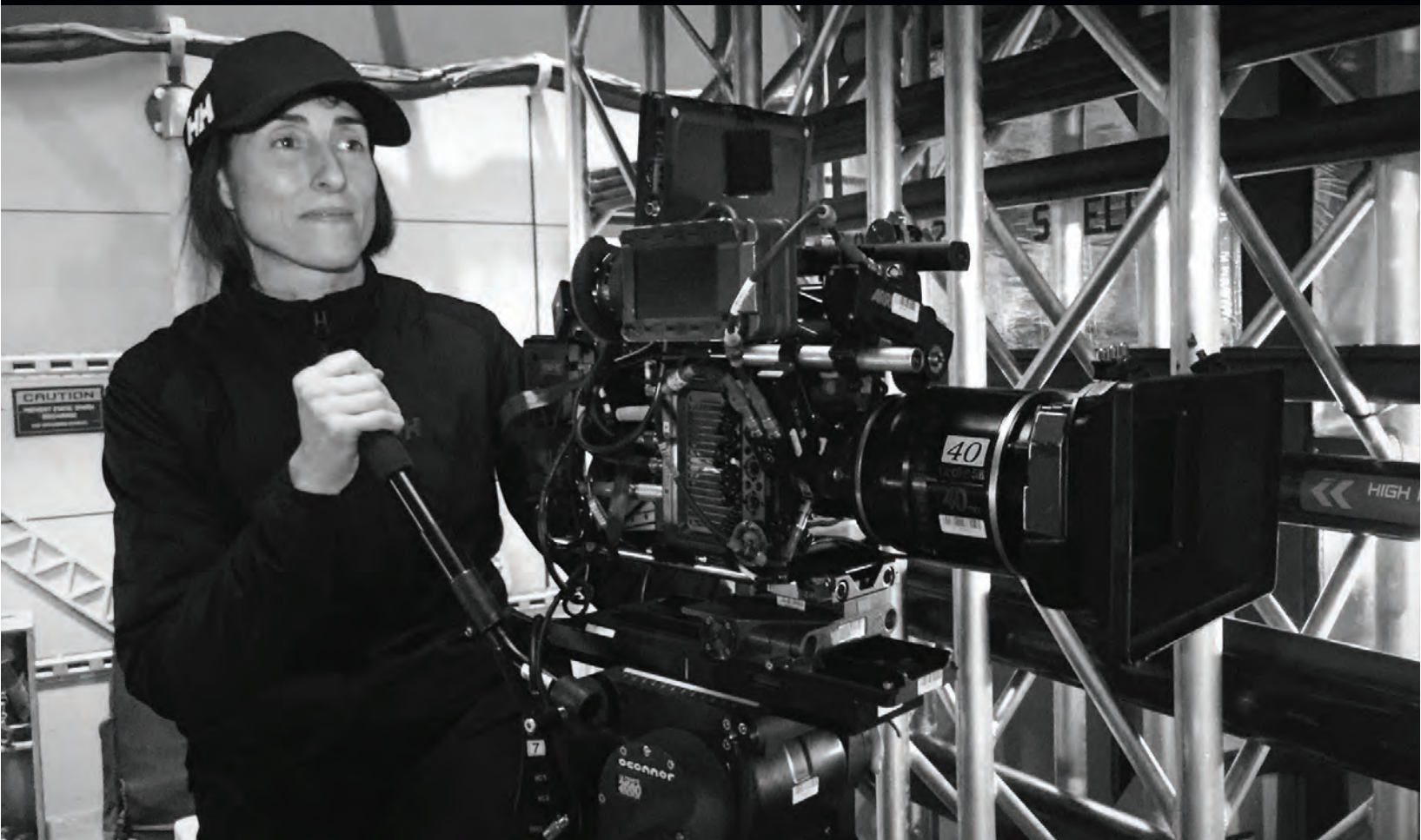
**10**  
obstacles

- 1 Lack of awareness of the prevalence of gender inequality
- 2 Conscious and unconscious gender bias at all levels of the industry
- 3 Lack of willingness to invest in financially ambitious female-created audiovisual content
- 4 Unequal distribution between women and men of funding for audiovisual content
- 5 Unequal investment on the part of equity investors
- 6 Unbalanced support for the dissemination of female-created content
- 7 Low representation of women on commissioning and funding panels, as well as on supervisory and executive bodies
- 8 Unequal pay between women and men
- 9 Failure to support parents and caregivers, and non-reconciliation of work/life balance in the sector
- 10 Unequal access to employment opportunities between women and men

*\* Recommendations of The Committee of Ministers on gender equality in the audiovisual sector to member States of the Council of Europe, 27 September 2017*



# TIPS & TOOLS TO GET YOU STARTED



Sarah Thomas Moffat, Director of Photography

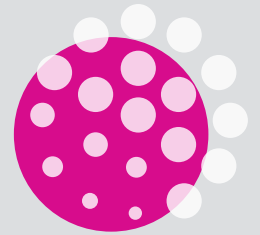
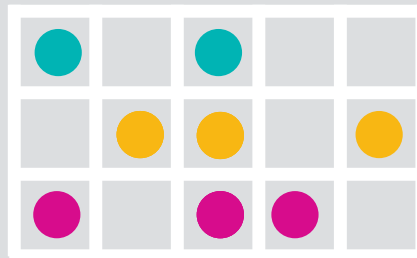
# Employers' checklist

## 5 things you can do right now

Everyone in a position to hire – both men and women – need to check their privilege and start opening doors to cast and crew who deviate from the old norms. It's not always easy – real change requires effort. But it pays off big time. Here are some tips to get you started.

## 1 Track your progress

Numbers don't lie. When the absence of diversity is the norm, you can mistake the smallest step for a major leap forward. Numbers tell a different story. Record and report the actual gender and racial diversity in your workplace from the top down. Then use that reality check to set goals. Use the monitoring form on page 16 of this booklet to get you started.



## 2 Look outside your circle

You don't know who you don't know.

If you aren't checking out the films of newcomers, seeking out prizewinners at indie festivals or routinely asking people outside your immediate circle, you likely have no idea of the talent out there.

Set goals: Commit to hiring one or two new women in each production. Commit to making half of new employees diverse.

## 3 Hire the women you train

Do bring women onto your set to shadow, intern and train in preparation for hiring them, but don't stop there. Hire them.

Sponsorship and mentoring means recognizing a talented individual and actively championing her both within your own productions and across your network of influence.



## 4 Congrats!

You've hired a talented individual who has a lot to offer your project.

Now make sure you take full advantage of what they have to offer. Tokenism doesn't help anybody.

Don't hire, or consult with a person of colour, or other rep of a marginalized community only to disregard their view. That's not consultation. That's exploitation.

## 5 Stand by your gal



We know: it's hard to tell someone you've hired in the past there isn't a spot for them this time. Or that they weren't exactly stellar. But don't use "affirmative action" as a shield. You're not only throwing your new hire under the bus, you're feeding the destructive misconception that diversity hiring is not talent-driven hiring.

Note that a London School of Economics study proved the reverse is true: quotas can work to weed out incompetent men.

### Take the pledge

ACTRA Toronto is asking producers to "Take the Pledge" as part of their #ShareTheScreen campaign.

Check it out at [actratoronto.com/sharethescreen](https://actratoronto.com/sharethescreen)

# Women's checklist

# 5



**We're all in this together**

**Women at every stage of their career can help advance gender diversity, both for themselves and for others.**



# 1

## Connect with other women

Think beyond the Old Boys' Network and focus on tapping into the New Women's Network. If your union, guild or association has a women's caucus and/or diversity committee, join it. If it doesn't, start one. There are lots of organizations and events where you can connect with others in your field. Check our online resource page and add to it. You'll find soulmates, as well as prospective partners, employers and future employees. And when you pay it forward, always make sure you're looking out for all your sisters.

# 2

## Be bold

Apply for every position you're interested in, every opportunity that speaks to you. Studies indicate that men typically apply for any position for which they have even half the skills called for; women typically expect to fulfill 100% of the skills before they consider themselves eligible to apply. Nobody has it all.

# 3

## Don't get caught in the training loop

Every professional wants to be as expert as possible, and to be on top of technological developments and trends. But don't get caught in a cycle of perpetual training. Every "experienced" professional started somewhere. You'll continue to learn as you work.

# 4



## Rejection isn't personal. Or fatal.

Or necessarily a reflection of your ability. It's a fact of life in this highly competitive, risk-averse industry. That doesn't mean you shouldn't get truly pissed off when a position you know you would have rocked goes to someone more entitled and less perfect for it. Remind yourself that it's the system that needs fixing – not you. So see what you can do about fixing it. And meanwhile, keep applying.

# 5

## Decode the Backlash



Somewhere on the road to equity, you'll likely encounter comments like these:

"I'm all for diversity, but it doesn't do anyone any good if someone is given a job they're not ready for." Translation: "The new guy we hired last year for the first time was a nice kid, with new energy. And my pal heard he did amazing at the indie film festivals. But this gal is a risk."

Or: "The boss just told me he'd love to give me an episode again this season, but he's got to hire a woman. Isn't this

reverse discrimination? What am I supposed to do about my mortgage or my kid's tuition?"

Translation: I'm not troubled by the fact that majority of episodes are still being given to men; but if a woman is being hired, her episode is the one I was supposed to have.

The good news? A backlash is proof that progress is being made and our diversity is being felt.

# Practice safe sets

## A safe workplace means zero tolerance for discrimination based on gender, race, sexual orientation or ability

### Take harassment and assault seriously

Being the “token” woman or racialized minority on a set (or anywhere else work is conducted) makes you an easy target. Everyone has a responsibility to acknowledge and to act on what they see. However, it’s up to the boss to establish a firm, widely-promoted policy of zero tolerance with real consequences. Like immediate dismissal. If you treat the women you’ve hired with respect, if you shut down the “locker room talk” when they’re not around, your cast and crew will follow. And your set will be a happier, more productive place.

### Watch your language

Sexist, racist, and homophobic “jokes” are all too common. Adding “just kidding” after an offensive remark only makes matters worse. And asking experienced female crew members if they need help carrying their equipment – however well-intentioned – can imply to them and others that you don’t see them as fully capable.

### Implement a safe reporting system

It’s important to understand why victims of harassment often don’t report it. Not everyone can afford to risk losing their job or being blacklisted. And harassment isn’t restricted to bosses. It also takes place between fellow crew and team

members. Make sure your union has effective reporting strategies for workers who’ve been harassed by their peers.

### Call for government action

Given the dangers and disincentives to individuals bringing charges, there is an urgent need for a government-empowered space where women (and, in some cases, men) who are harassed in their workplaces can safely report without fear of reprisals. An arm’s-length ombudsman could also allow for a record of reports to identify patterns of abuse; and be used, with proper permission, as a resource for potential legal action.

# The importance of speaking out



## Sarah Thomas Moffat

Sarah Thomas Moffat is a director of photography with over 20 years' experience. She is also the founder and administrator of a private Facebook group where female crew can share their concerns. Since its inception

in 2016, it has grown to almost 1,000 members, expanded to include offline gatherings, and become a powerhouse of resources with women sharing professional experience, advice and opportunities.

"It started with women of all ages reaching out to me with stories of harassment, gender-based rejection, pay inequity, bullying," says Moffat. Being "heard" is critical. "That's why the group has grown so rapidly. Women are bringing other women into this safe space. The support and trust they are building is creating positive change in their lives, both in the workplace and at home."

“

"I witness our DP constantly put down our female grips. They get flustered, which results in mistakes that cause even more put-downs. And other crew members feel obligated to laugh along."

"Many times I've been chatting to a director only to have a more "important" male crew member literally place his body in front of mine to interrupt and have his own conversation."

"If someone says something racist and I report it to my producer, either I'll be told I'm being too sensitive or that person will just get a 'warning' and I'll have to keep working with them for the rest of the show. And when it comes to hiring on the next show, I probably won't get the job. So where is the incentive to report?"

"When an issue arises, I always try to stay calm, keep my voice even, and rationally explain the problem, because I don't want to fall in to the 'angry black woman' stereotype and have my point of view dismissed."

”

# Check your progress



**What gets counted gets done**

Monitoring forms can be used at the beginning and end of production to track department heads. Forms can also be replicated and expanded to work within individual departments.

Check out industry and government resources for funding programs, both federal and provincial, that can help offset the cost of new, non-traditional hires.

Position	Female	Male	Racialized	Indigenous
Executive Producer				
Director				
Screenwriter				
Lead Actor				
Principal Actors				
Producer				
Line Producer				
Assistant Director				
Production Manager				
Locations				
Continuity				
Casting				
Director of Photography				
Camera Operator				
Special Effects				
Stunts				
Grip/ Gaffer				
Transport				
Production Sound				
Art Department				
Editor				
Composer				
Special Effects/ Animation				

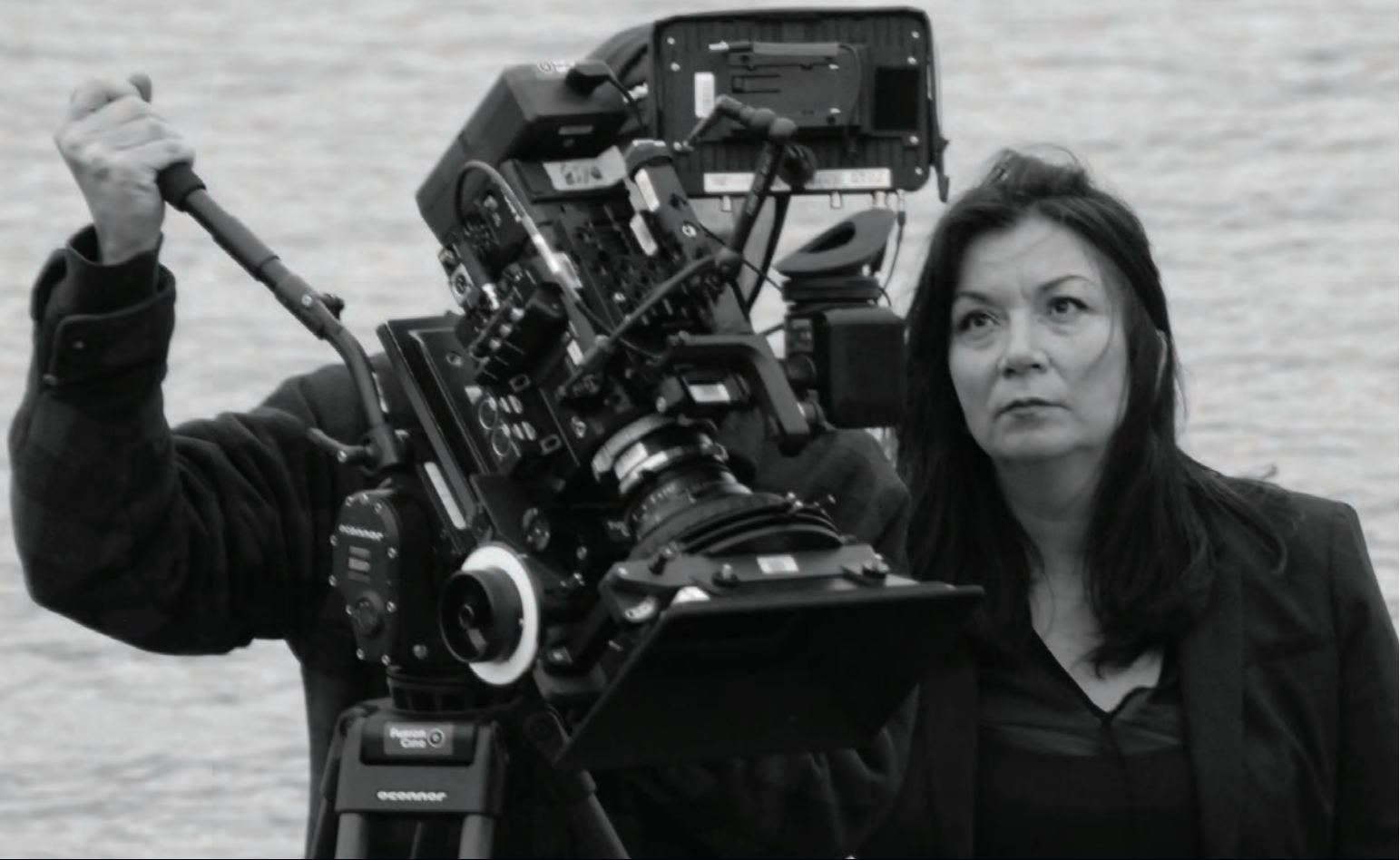
EXAMPLE

Go online at [mediapluscanada.ca](http://mediapluscanada.ca) to get downloadable or printable monitoring forms that you can customize.

*Thanks to the Swedish Union for Theatre, Artists, Media and Swedish Performing Arts*



# The view from her



Marie Clements, Director, *The Road Forward*

# The view from her



## Nathalie Younglai

Writer/director Nathalie Younglai has worked on *'Til Debt Do Us Part*, *Dino Dana* and *Bellevue*. She founded Indigenous & Creatives of Colour in TV & Film, is a recipient of Toronto ACTRA Diversity Committee's Sandi Ross Award, and works on the Writers Guild of Canada's Diversity Committee to help producers and showrunners identify people of colour for roles in their productions.

As for the "meritocracy" argument, Younglai doesn't buy it. "Look at all the producers' children who don't have much on their roster, but who get those chances. If you're going to take that kind of chance on a friend's kid, why not take the same chance on a person of colour?" And when you do hire a POC, don't expect them to only write the "diverse" characters,

she says. In fact, people of colour have even more insight, "because we've had to our whole lives examine what it is to be white. Because at some point we've all asked, 'how can I be more white to be accepted in this society?'"

*"There's this perception that one person of colour equals diversity. But one person is a token. We need to get to a place where there are more people of colour in all different roles so we can have a powerful voice."*

# Maya Bankovic



For cinematographer Maya Bankovic (*Working Moms*, *Below Her Mouth*), there's a lot of responsibility that comes with photographing people, and that means including diverse narratives. Finding crew whose sensibilities are suitable to the project is key. "It's really basic stuff – don't make homophobic jokes, don't make transphobic jokes."

Things are opening up, she says, but it's important to keep pushing. "There's an underlying notion that tokenism or quotas got me the job. I find it to be a micro-aggression and sexist." With more experience she's

able to avoid "teaming up with people who are going to doubt you" but starting out, she admits, "scripts would come to me that were shocking. They wanted a woman to lend credibility to something that was otherwise sexist." Those projects don't come to her anymore. "I know I'm putting the right energy out there based on the work I'm getting. When we have an opportunity to communicate with people by the millions, it's such a waste to simply produce the same old fairy tales. I'm doing work that is authentic to me."

*"You have to look outside the 'lists' for talent, especially in technical fields. Look in the documentary field and independent film world for women who are brilliant, talented, with a lot to say."*

# The view from her



## Noelle Carbone

Writer/producer (*Rookie Blue, Saving Hope, Cardinal, Wynonna Earp*) Noelle Carbone is also a co-creator of the Lexa Pledge, a guideline for writers and creators committed to producing meaningful arcs for recurring LGBTQ characters – for example, refusing to kill a queer character solely to further the plot of a straight one, and recognizing that the deaths of queer characters can have deep psychosocial ramifications for viewers.

“Do writers owe anything to their audience other than

entertainment? For me, being a lesbian who grew up in a blue collar town, in a tight-knit Roman Catholic Italian family, the answer is absolutely YES.”

As a storyteller, Carbone wants to reach queer kids who feel isolated, closeted, or ostracized by families and friends because of their “otherness” and let them see characters like themselves represented in a positive light – “falling in love, being accepted, getting married, having families, living happily ever after, and kicking ass.”

*“If you tell stories about marginalized communities – and you tell those stories respectfully, says Carbone, those communities will show up for you in a big, big way. So if writing to make the world a better place isn’t enough incentive, maybe a ratings boost is.”*

Director Dawn Wilkinson (*Kim's Convenience*, *Dino Dana*, *Nashville*, *Reign*) says her whole reason for getting into directing "was to see myself represented. There are so many people who are just starting to see that, and we need more." But it wasn't an easy road. "The reason I'm working is because I refused to give up when there was no opportunity. I refused to give up until the opportunities came."

Wilkinson encourages women to explore their own goals and strengths and figure out the kind of work they are most fit for. "I get hired on shows where there are a lot of female characters with interesting stories, or Black characters. I don't look at it as limiting, I think, great – there's something in here I can also relate to or connect with."


Wilkinson definitely sweats the small stuff – from how to approach old tropes like "having women run in high heels" to the casting of background actors and racial representation in a scene. "I'm creating that world with the background. I'll be specific, so that I am reflecting the world that I see."

*"Look at the worlds you're creating and ask yourself whose story you're telling. If it's not your own or not something you know intimately, find talented creators who share your vision but bring a new perspective you don't have."*

# Dawn Wilkinson



# The view from her



## Alethea Arnaquq-Baril

Alethea Arnaquq-Baril is an Inuk producer and filmmaker and owner of Unikkaat Studios. She is based in Iqaluit, Nunavut and has cultivated a worldwide audience with films about her culture (*Tunniit: Retracing the Lines of Inuit Tattoos*, the award-winning National Film Board animation *Lumaajuuq: The Blind Boy and the Loon*.)

Her most recent film, *Angry Inuk*, is about the importance of the seal hunt to Inuit culture, and the damaging consequences of

seal-product bans. She says that because Inuit culture is primarily an oral culture, there is little written in Inuktitut about the past and she feels compelled to record it “while the last elders that traditionally lived on the land are still alive.”

“Probably the most powerful thing I could do for myself and my fellow Inuit is to be a documentary filmmaker, because I don’t know how else I can contribute to helping our voices be heard on the world stage, on issues that are critical to us.”

*“Western media that excludes stories of women only tells half the human story. Excluding stories of non-white folks is even more limited. Let the stories of women and people of colour creep into our collective narrative and I promise, there will be riches.”*

## Kadidja Haïdara



As a scriptwriter with roots in Québec and Mali, Kadidja Haïdara makes it a point to include characters from a wide range of backgrounds in the TV and web series she writes – notably *Les Béliers*, *Quart de vie* and *Le chalet*.

“Producers often tell me we won’t find actors for the roles I write, but I’m determined. I come prepared with lists of names, and get involved in casting. We may have to do more auditions, but we always manage to find the right person. And it pays off: in the end, the series brings a new perspective and is more attuned to reality.”

It’s not that decision-makers are actively opposed to greater cultural diversity, in her view, but that they don’t necessarily see its value. “It’s a chicken and egg situation,” she says.

***“We aren’t aware of many diverse actors because there are no roles for us to see them in; but the more diverse roles we create, the more visible they’ll become.”***

Haïdara is proud that her efforts have borne fruit: producers who once came to her with all-white casts now include more diverse characters in their proposals.

## Winnifred Jong

Winnifred Jong has been a script supervisor for 15 years, most recently on *Frankie Drake Mysteries*, for which she also directed all six webisodes. The shift into directing came five years ago, when she started 2nd-unit directing on shows like *Flashpoint* and *X Company*. Still struggling to get hired to direct episodic TV, she’s now making shorts that have appeared in film festivals around the world.

“While I’m seen as ‘diverse,’” says Jong, “I’m also diverse in my taste and talent – I’m just as capable of directing sports or action or other genres as I am in telling stories about my own culture.”

As a long-time script supervisor, Jong is aware people might find it hard to think of her as a director.

But after working with nearly every director and actor out there, she’s been in a unique position to develop her own style. “I understand story,” she says. “One reason I’ve done so well as a script supervisor, I think, is because I know how to protect those stories – which is the ultimate skill for any director.”



## The view from her

# Margot Ready

Margot Ready is an art director and production designer based in Vancouver who has worked on *Bates Motel*, *Power Rangers*, *Man of Steel* and *The Magicians*.

"I've worked with many terrific crews, but the series I am working on now, *The Magicians*, is a completely new experience. Almost half the directors are women, the A-camera operator

is a woman, there are three female dolly grips." It's an empowering atmosphere. "We're not there yet, but I see more than a glimmer of light. I'm excited about where I am, the work I'm doing now, the barriers that are breaking down." Her dream?

"I'd love to design a big sci-fi feature. To create a cinematic world as big and complete as the *Star Wars* films I fell in love with as a young woman."



# Trey Anthony

Trey Anthony is an award-winning playwright, actor, stand-up comedian, and the writer/creator/star of Global's *'da Kink in my Hair*. Her play, *How Black Mothers Say I Love You*, is being adapted by Conquering Lion Pictures, directed by Clément Virgo. But she laments the current TV scene – token Black nurses or cops, Asian lab techs, and a lack of follow-through in fostering new voices. "I can't tell you how many diversity workshops I've been to, and there's no follow-up – no effort to get us in rooms, get us writing or producing, to make the training pay off." For her, "being Black, being a woman, being queer," the only thing to do is keep telling her own stories. "I have to push through, just doing the stuff I want, how I want."





## Martine Chartrand

Martine Chartrand is an acclaimed animator whose shorts (*T.V. Tango*, *Black Soul* and *MacPherson*) have won numerous awards including the prestigious Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival for *Black Soul*.

"I was one of a very few culturally diverse women working in animation," she says "and I'm grateful to Therese Descary at the NFB for giving me my first opportunity to direct." Distressed by the negative representation of Blacks in the children's cartoons of her youth, she was determined to represent Blacks with dignity.

Chartrand believes it's vital to counter ignorance and in particular to keep pushing producers and distributors who are reluctant to trust women of colour. "Having citizens from many cultures is a source of our society's wealth," she says, "and openness to the 'other' is a hallmark of our age."

"I advise young directors to cling fiercely to their ideas and to surround themselves with people, both in production and distribution, who believe in their projects." She is hopeful because, worldwide, she sees more and more women of diverse cultures directing animation.

## Christine Willes



Christine Willes is an actor in theatre, film and TV (*You Me Her*) as well as a long-time activist, currently on the board of the Union of British Columbia Performers (UBCP/ACTRA) and chair of its Women's Committee. She sees some hope in rising awareness: "Certainly the Weinstein scandal unleashed an activism I haven't seen in my 40-plus year career to date." But she's less interested in analysis of the issues, and focused more on action: "The discussion of what causes or contributes to gender inequality is a colossal dodge. I'd rather put my energy toward change."

One key tool is data, she says. "In Vancouver, we've been collecting stats about the percentage of work that goes to women and the percentage that goes to men. Over five years, the average hasn't changed: 65% goes to men; 35% to women." She highly recommends the use of a pre-production checklist of all staff, from performers, writers, directors, directors of photography, and producers, to crew members.

***"Everyone needs to stop and ask themselves: Have I considered gender equality in hiring?" she says. "It's very, very simple. Hire more women."***

# The view from her



*"Let's face it, a story line hinged on driving off in a car isn't going to be a blind person's casting call. But why not a story line with the unique and compelling details of a blind person making a quick get away? What does that look like, how does that happen? What great television that would be!"*

## Alex Bulmer

Alex Bulmer is an award-winning playwright, director, performer and screenwriter (for the BAFTA-nominated *Cast Offs*), as well as a consultant for the inclusion of artists with disabilities in all cultural arts and industries. After becoming blind in adulthood, she says, "I started to really develop an appreciation for language, how words can be a bridge between isolation and being part of the world around you." She laments the lack of screenwriters who are disabled: "I'm so tired of hearing 'it's not about the writing, it's about the casting.' It's about both."

Alex is all for progressive casting ("Why not a deaf performer as Juliet? Writing that has existed for centuries is screaming out for re-invention") but "including disabled people in our contemporary media needs to be about both casting and also about developing new story lines."

Meanwhile, she advises actors with disabilities to get as much training as possible, and warns against "getting yourself into a state of being permanently angry." The key to change is to keep the dialogue going. "It's important for disabled people to have a balance of pushiness – voicing the feeling of inequality or lack of inclusion – as well as gratitude when change is being attempted."

# Diversity pays off



Nimisha Mukerji (Director) and Michela Luci (Actor) *Dino Dana*



Tracey Deer

*Mohawk Girls* cast (L-R): Jennifer Pudavick, Brittany LeBorgne, Heather White and Maika Harper



## Diversity pays off

### Tracey Deer

Tracey Deer is a Mohawk writer, film director and producer, best known for her APTN series *Mohawk Girls*. It ran for five seasons to a target audience of women 18-34, but ended up attracting a significant number of males and older viewers as well.

"I think *Mohawk Girls* has shown the larger industry that diverse stories resonate with all audiences. It's about specific people in a specific place, but the themes are universal."

"I grew up in this country that told me that as an Aboriginal person I had no prospects, that expected me to be nothing but a nuisance. My guiding force for the last 20 years has been: I need to prove them wrong."

Her advice to producers who work with women and people of different backgrounds is to

*"It's important to project a fearlessness. As director, you're the captain of the ship, and no one wants to see the captain worried about the storm. Make a decision, and charge ahead. Don't second-guess yourself."*

respect their vision, and the fact they know what they're talking about: "You need to get out of their way and let the magic happen."

For creators, she says finding the right collaborators is key. "A lot of my work has been with APTN, which is about supporting Aboriginal stories. They've just allowed me to do what I do. It's about a connection and finding people as passionate as you are. Because when you get challenged, you'll have all these defenders around you as well."

# Michelle Latimer

Michelle Latimer is a director (*Alias*), actor (*Blackstone*), and curator (ImagineNATIVE Film & Media Arts Festival, Hot Docs International Documentary Film Festival) of Métis/Algonquin descent. She's especially proud of her Viceland series *Rise*, about contemporary Indigenous life: "Our show had the highest social media numbers for any new series for VICE."

Latimer credits a female producer for helping her find her voice. "I was producing a lot for men. And she pulled me aside and said, "Are you going to do it for men who

***"We're living in a global society. They want good stories. They want things that will resonate, and transcend race and gender."***

have had their stories told for years? You're an artist, you're a storyteller. You're an Indigenous woman. Your experience has value." And no one had ever said that to me. I grew up in a place where you shoved down your diversity. And you were successful if you were able to shove it down far enough. So it helped me so much for someone to say the very thing that you have been trying to hide has value."

In Winnipeg, where *Rise* is filmed, Latimer makes a point of hiring women, and has a predominantly Indigenous crew. "It means more effort, because you're going to be on phone calls and in meetings defending your choices. But that's what you sign up for if you're in a position of power and you're committed to seeing change."



Michelle Latimer

Latimer directing her short film *The Underground*



## Diversity pays off

# Christin Simms and J.J. Johnson

Sinking Ship Entertainment has a boatload of Emmy wins and nominations for its kids shows (*Odd Squad*, *Annedroids*, *Bookaboo*, *Dino Dan*) which have sold worldwide, including a recent deal with Amazon for *Annedroids*, a live-action/CG series starring a girl who's into STEM. A big part of their success, says founding partner J.J. Johnson, is down to one thing: diversity. "Diversity is an important social issue, but the truth is it makes business sense as well."

The company has partnered with Women in View's 2xMore initiative to hire more women directors on *Dino Dana*. "It's now a competitive advantage on our biggest-selling show," says Johnson. "We have a whole new talent pool."

Christin Simms, head of development, knows how diversity can lead to better

stories: "Writers from different backgrounds pitch ideas we'd never come up with on our own – on *Dino Dana*, our characters have deeper, richer stories than anything we could come up with."

"It takes some effort off the top – asking the WGC for help finding writers; doing more open calls with casting; bugging agents to send more names – but the rewards on the back end far exceed the little extra work it takes at the beginning," says Johnson. "There's more eagerness and innovation from both actors and crew members. Female crew members have responded so positively to female directors. Everyone comments on how different it feels to be on set."

Christin Simms and J.J. Johnson of Sinking Ship Entertainment

# Baroness Von Sketch

Forty-somethings Jennifer Whalen, Carolyn Taylor, Meredith MacNeill and Aurora Browne have made *Baroness von Sketch* a hit show on CBC in Canada and IFC in the US. “We had to create jobs for ourselves,” jokes Whalen, “since it becomes much harder for women to get hired after 40.”

Women still aren’t allowed to fail the way men are, she says. “With guys, there’s always a reason: He had a bad night. The production had problems. The show wasn’t promoted. When a woman fails, it’s because she wasn’t up to the job and the experiment of hiring her in the first place failed.”

What drove Whalen was “a deep thirst to see women portrayed as I know them to be,” she says. After working on comedy shows led by men, it comes as a huge relief to write jokes about women, by women, for women, without passing it through a male lens. “It’s taking away the female mystique, looking at the real female.” The result is a growing

audience that includes women and men, of all ages. “Women in their 40s make up a significant portion of audience that still watches traditional television. And the old model isn’t working anymore. It’s time to think outside the box.”

*“One reason for making the show was to create jobs for ourselves, since it becomes much harder for women to get hired after 40.”*  
— Jennifer Whalen



*Baroness Von Sketch Show cast (L-R): Aurora Browne, Jennifer Whalen, Meredith MacNeill, Carolyn Taylor*

## Diversity pays off

# Samantha Wan

Actor and filmmaker Samantha Wan is the co-creator and co-star, with Amanda Joy, of City TV's sitcom *Second Jen*. Wan also plays Zoe Chow in Global's hit detective series *Private Eyes*.

"Amanda Joy and I made *Second Jen* because we weren't seeing ourselves represented on screen."

Having been on both sides of the diversity challenge (writing and casting), Wan knows firsthand the barriers to casting racially diverse characters. What's needed, she says, is for agents to put diverse clients forward for leads (even when not specified), for casting directors to present pools that are sufficiently diverse, and for broadcasters and producers to develop greater trust in new faces. "Every level needs to stop passing the buck and take responsibility for their part."

Diversity behind the camera is also important. Having an Asian director, for example, was important to Wan because, "when we were setting out food for the dinner scene, our director was able to tell props how to set the table and redress certain food that didn't look right, even if it took more time. Authenticity is in the details and it's helpful to have more than one set of eyes to catch them."

As for other Asian female creators, Wan says, "find mentors. They won't be Asian" – she laughs – "but there are a lot of great people who want to help. It helps you keep moving forward."

***"It's about hiring. Don't hire one, hire at least two or three, or else you force them to be the token"***



Samantha Wan

Samantha Wan and Amanda Joy star in *Second Jen*





# Amy Cameron

Amy Cameron is an award-winning journalist, author, TV writer/creator and producer. Prior to co-founding Cameron Pictures with her sister Tassie Cameron (*Rookie Blue*), Amy was Executive in Charge of Production at CBC TV Drama for *Book of Negroes*, winner of nine Canadian Screen Awards and an NAACP award.

She's a firm believer in initiatives such as CBC hiring 50% female directors. "These efforts work," she says. "Many of the directors and writers I met through those particular examples are now people I am hiring on our productions."

The biggest obstacle for many in the industry, she says, is fear. "On paper, diversity makes sense. Who doesn't want a fresh perspective in a creative industry? In practice, though, when people are building a crew, begging for financing and shooting a series by the skin of their teeth, they don't want to take on any more

*Cameron is a firm believer in opening doors for women, from the CBC hiring 50% female directors to groups like Women On Screen working to develop female creators.*

risk." The result is that the same people get hired again and again, with few chances for newcomers.

"I also think it's partially a fear of exposing a hole in their knowledge: how do you find a diverse cinematographer or a writer with disabilities? How do you ask agents only for their LGBTQ directors? How do you dismiss a swath of people just because they're male and not female? If you don't have the language or understanding to explain why it's important to work with diverse creators, it becomes an awkward conversation really quickly."



Amy Cameron and Tassie Cameron on the set of *Mary Kills People*

Caroline Dhavernas and Richard Short in *Mary Kills People*



## Diversity pays off

### Isabelle Hayeur

Isabelle Hayeur is a producer and director of indie features, including *La bête de foire*, *Les Siamoises* and *Le Golem de Montréal*, as well as dance films such as *Une courte histoire de la folie* (*A Short History of Madness*).

She is the president and one of the founding members of Réalisatrices Équitables, the influential Québec organization of women directors. “We gathered data that demonstrated that women received less than 15% of public investment in feature films,” she said. “Something had to be done.”

The organization produced research, lobbied decision-makers and has undertaken numerous activities promoting directors. Ten years later, their efforts in partnership with those of other organizations like Women in View are

beginning to show results. The NFB, TFC and SODEC, for example, recently announced measures to achieve gender equity.

“We still have work to do,” says Hayeur. “In particular, in the fields of advertising, digital media and gaming where women continue to be under-represented, especially in creative positions.”

She wants to see producers and distributors pay greater attention to women audiences. “They would benefit from representing the real lives of women,” she says, “as well as their imaginative worlds.” And she wants to see more directing jobs offered to women. “Greater diversity will unleash new talent. Great work can come from the most unexpected places.”



Isabelle Hayeur

Réalisatrices Équitables, Board of Directors 2017



# Jennifer Kawaja

For Jennifer Kawaja, co-owner with Julia Sereny of Sienna Films (*Cardinal, I Claudia, Combat Hospital*), the question of diversity in film and TV boils down to what kind of world we want to live in. “Why would anyone want to be part of creating a society that disenfranchises and erases some people’s lives and stories in favour of those of a small minority?”

People have good intentions, and want to do the right thing, she says, “but most people making decisions in our industry, and creating work that gets made, were inculcated with fairly conservative white, upper-middle-class, able-bodied, heteronormative ideas about what is interesting and desirable in terms of what we create and program.”

The industry is starting to pay more attention to women and race now, she says, but it’s not

just about affirmative action in front of and behind the camera. “Real diversity across race, class, gender, sexual orientation, diversity of thought and so on, involves a much deeper reflection of ourselves, our biases, and about what gets made and by whom. The key is to get serious and humble about understanding how inequity functions, and to seek out how we can do that personally, corporately, institutionally.”

*“Increasing diversity forces us to create better stories, it makes us a richer, less parochial, more interesting and integrated society. You can’t have good storytelling without what I call deep diversity.”*



Jennifer Kawaja

Karine Vanasse and Billy Campbell in *Cardinal*



# Get inspired

Don't let anyone tell you that there aren't more than enough capable women to take up 50% of the jobs in every media occupation. Check out our short video, *Women Make Media*, for a glimpse of the tip of the iceberg of talented Canadian women working at every stage of media production. Find it at [mediapluscanada.ca](http://mediapluscanada.ca)

## ***Women Make Media***

Director: Mars Horodyski

Cinematographer: Christine Buijs

Editor: Pauline Decroix

Writer: Ellen Vanstone

Producer: JP Nynkowski

Music: *Give a Little* written by Lexie Jay and Jon Fedorsen. Performed by Featurette

Post Production: Tattersall Sound and Picture



Aleysa Young, Director, *Kim's Convenience*



Ruba Nadda, Director, *Frankie Drake Mysteries*



Mars Horodyski, Director and Christine Buijs, Director of Photography, *Women Make Media*



Dawn Wilkinson, Director, *Kim's Convenience*



Chalini Kulandaivelu, VFX Artist, Take 5



Jordan Canning, Director, *The Detail*



Jane Tattersall, Tattersall Sound and Picture



Yvonne Collins, B Camera, *The Detail*



Andrea Rusch, Assistant Re-Recording Mixer, Tattersall Sound and Picture

# Quick takeaways

## DON'T...



- ✘ Don't have a token woman or minority writer in the writers' room, only to dismiss everything she says.
- ✘ Don't assume a man over 40 can still be a love interest but a woman over 35 can only be his mother.
- ✘ Don't ever cast a white actor to play a racial minority character.\*
- ✘ Don't ever cast a white actor to play an Indigenous character.\*
- ✘ Don't ever cast a non-disabled actor to play a character with a disability.\*
- ✘ Don't be afraid to ask about appropriate language or behaviour if you are uncertain. A question, sincerely and respectfully asked, is never inappropriate.

*\* Unless you're making a historical film about a white actor who played a racialized or Indigenous character, or a non-disabled actor who played a person with a disability!*

## DO...



- ✔ Take the time and attention to light every skin colour appropriately. Make sure your makeup department has products for every skin colour.
- ✔ Make sure everyone knows you take inclusiveness seriously at all levels and not just in junior or support positions.
- ✔ Make sure every location/set/audition space/office including washrooms and private change facilities is physically accessible; and that people with disabilities are not inconvenienced or marginalized as they travel to and from set.
- ✔ See hiring women as an advantage, not a risk.
- ✔ Check out the many, many resources, guidelines, articles, groups on our website and elsewhere to find ways to make your productions as dynamic, creative and innovative as they can be.

# Women in View

Founded in 2010, Women in View is a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to strengthening gender and racial diversity in Canadian media. We do this through a range of initiatives that aim to generate awareness, promote talent and spark dialogue across the full spectrum of production, policy and artistic arenas.

Since 2012, Women in View's **On Screen** reports have documented the representation of women in Canadian media. The organization is currently leading a national campaign to shift the media landscape towards greater diversity through programs like **2xMore** and **Five in Focus** and the **MediaPLUS+** toolkit. We are currently developing **Roll Call**, a national database of Canadian women in media.

## Executive Director

Rina Fraticelli  
[rina@womeninview.ca](mailto:rina@womeninview.ca)

## Co-ordinator

Amber-Sekowan Daniels  
[amber@womeninview.ca](mailto:amber@womeninview.ca)

## Board of Directors

Aisling Chin-Yee  
Annette Clarke  
Tracey Deer (Chair)  
Jill Golick (Treasurer)  
Aisha Jamal (Secretary)  
Lizzy Karp  
Jan Miller  
Marie-Hélène Panisset (Vice Chair)  
Liz Shorten (Founding Chair)

## Women in View

Suite S-21, 401 Richmond St. W,  
Toronto, ON. M5V 3A8.  
+1-416-304-9398  
[info@womeninview.ca](mailto:info@womeninview.ca)  
[www.womeninview.ca](http://www.womeninview.ca)

# MediaPLUS+

**Editorial Director:** Rina Fraticelli

**Editor:** Marsha Greene

**Writer:** Ellen Vanstone

**Translator:** Hélène Lajeunesse

**Project Manager/Researcher:** Amber-Sekowan Daniels

**Design:** Joss MacLennan Design/  
Denise Maxwell, Joss MacLennan

**Québec Editor:** Sophie Bissonette

**Communications:** Innovate By Day

## Photo credits

**Page 3:** *Jennifer Rowsom*

**Page 4:** *Katie Demois*

**Page 9:** *Laura Loaiza*

**Page 23:** *Christine Buijs*

**Page 25:**  
Martine Chartrand photo/  
*Caroline Hayeur*;  
Christine Willis photo/*Kevin Clark*

**Page 26:** Michael Achtman

**Page 34:**  
Isabelle Hayeur photo/*Denis Lord*;  
RE Board of Directors/*Eve Lamont*

**Back cover:** *Setti Kane*

---

Back cover photo: Christine Buijs, Director of Photography, *Women Make Media*

# MediaPLUS

women + diversity = the big picture



## Join the conversation

Check out additional information, ideas, and downloadable resources on the website. We'd love your feedback.

Throughout 2018 Women in View will be hosting workshops and conversations about gender equity and diversity across Canada. Go to our website to find out if there's a session near you — or to ask for help in organizing one of your own.

[mediapluscanada.ca](http://mediapluscanada.ca)

MediaPLUS+ est disponible en français à  
[mediapluscanada.ca/fr](http://mediapluscanada.ca/fr)

## WOMEN IN VIEW

401 Richmond St. W. Suite S-21  
Toronto, ON M5V 3A8

416-304-9398

[info@womeninview.ca](mailto:info@womeninview.ca)

[womeninview.ca](http://womeninview.ca)

