

TFCA

TORONTO FILM CRITICS ASSOCIATION



BEST PICTURE 2024

28TH ANNUAL TFCA AWARDS



**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24 2025
OMNI KING EDWARD HOTEL**

28TH TFCA AWARDS



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



My friends Liz and Lew – he’s a TV producer – lost their house in the Pacific Palisades, along with their entire neighbourhood. It’s likely everyone here tonight knows someone affected by the southern California wildfires. About 681,000 Angelinos work in some sector of the entertainment business, after all. To pick just one union, the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, which includes set decorators, animal wranglers and makeup artists, 300 members lost their homes. And as we know, the industry in California is our industry in Canada. We’re entwined, inextricably, no matter what insanity Donald Trump visits upon us. Their pain is our pain, and our hearts go out to them.

I can’t think of another art form whose creation depends upon so many different professionals working together. A ballet company is mainly ballerinas; an orchestra mainly musicians. But film and television needs editors, drivers, florists, caterers, sound technicians, composers, stunt performers, costumers. It relies on permanent employees like studio executives – well, as permanent those positions can be – and freelancers like writers, producers, and actors. The end product looks so glamorous, but on the ground it’s mostly long periods of uncertainty punctuated by short bursts of insanely hard work.

I don’t have to tell you how challenging your last few years have been: covid shutdowns and strikes – both necessary, but tough -- and now this. But tonight I want to stress that we critics have your backs. No group thinks about your business as much as we do – studies it, challenges it, roots for it as much. We are a part of your business, just as you are a part of ours. And as you all know, our business has its own hurts and challenges.

So tonight, let’s celebrate what we do, together. The beautiful and thought-provoking work we’re able to pull off, against huge odds. We’re entwined, inextricably. I’m so thankful we’re all here tonight, and safe.

Johanna Schneller
President, Toronto Film Critics Association

28TH TFCA AWARDS



HOSTED BY TAMARA PODEMSKI



TAMARA PODEMSKI

Tamara Podemski is an Anishinaabe/Ashkenazi multidisciplinary artist whose work has spanned stage and screen for over 30 years. After starring in the Broadway company of *RENT*, she won the Sundance Film Festival's Special Jury Prize for Acting and an IFC Spirit Award Nomination for Best Supporting Actress in Sterlin Harjo's *Four Sheets to the Wind*. Tamara reunited with Harjo with a recurring role in his Emmy-nominated FX series *Reservation Dogs*, co-created by Taika Waititi. Tamara went on to hone her comedy chops playing Phoebe Waller-Bridge's love interest in the HBO mini-series *RUN*.

For her role in The CW and CBC's television drama *Coroner*, she won a Canadian Screen Award (CSA) for Best Supporting Actress (2021), as well as an ACTRA Award for Outstanding Performance — Female. The next year, for the same role, Tamara won her second CSA for Best Guest Performance, Drama Series, and received another two CSA nominations for Best Supporting Actress in the family drama *Unsettled* (APTN/TVO) and Best Ensemble for *Essex County* (CBC) with Molly Parker. After starring alongside Josh Brolin in Season 2 of *Outer Range* (Amazon Prime Video), Tamara went from Erica Tremblay's *Fancy Dance* (Apple TV+) opposite Lily Gladstone to the new sci-fi comedy *Murderbot* (CBS/Apple TV+) starring Alexander Skarsgård, and then joined two new Canadian police dramas, *Saint-Pierre* (CBC) and *Underbelly* (Crave), as well as landing a Michif-speaking role in Gail Maurice's upcoming feature film *Bloodlines*.

PHOTO BY JEFF VESPA

28TH TFCA AWARDS



2025 TORONTO FILM CRITICS ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

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Pat Mullen

Vice-president; *POV Magazine*

Marc Glassman

Treasurer *Classical 96.3 FM, POV Magazine*

Nathalie Atkinson

Noir City, Zoomer

Sarah-tai Black

Freelance

Kelly Boutsalis

Freelance

Liz Braun

AWFJ, Original Cin

Anne Brodie

What She Said Talk Radio

Bill Chambers

Film Freak Central

Susan G. Cole

Freelance

Thom Ernst

Original Cin

Marriska Fernandes

Freelance

Alicia Fletcher

A Year in Film (Hollywood Suite)

Eli Glasner

CBC News

Jason Gorber

Collider, CBC Radio

Karen Gordon

Original Cin

Sarah Hagi

Freelance

Barry Hertz

The Globe and Mail

Rachel Ho

Exclaim!

Peter Howell

The Toronto Star, Night Vision

Kim Hughes

Original Cin

Brian D. Johnson

Maclean's Magazine, The Walrus, Zoomer

Peter Knegt

CBC Arts

Chris Knight

National Post, Original Cin

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2025 TORONTO FILM CRITICS ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

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Liam Lacey
Original Cin

Joe Lipsett
Bloody Disgusting, Horror Queers

Saffron Maeve
Freelance

Angelo Muredda
Film Freak Central

Adam Nayman
The Ringer

Kathleen Newman-Bremang
Refinery29

Andrew Parker
The Gate

Jennie Punter
Variety

Gilbert Seah
*Afrotoronto; Toronto-Franco;
Festivalreviews*

Alice Shih
Fairchild Media Group, CineAction

Radheyana Simonpillai
CTV's Your Morning, CTV News Channel

Jim Slotek
Original Cin

Courtney Small
Cinema Axis, Frameline, Exclaim!

Victor Stiff
That Shelf

Glenn Sumi
Freelance

Kate Taylor
The Globe and Mail

José Teodoro
Freelance

Dave Voigt
In the Seats

Jackson Weaver
CBC

Rachel West
That Shelf, AWFJ

Norm Wilner
*Shiny Things/ Someone Else's Movie
(Frequency)*

EMERITUS

Jason Anderson, Linda Barnard, Tina Hassania, Bruce Kirkland

28TH TFCA AWARDS



ROGERS BEST CANADIAN FILM AWARD NOMINEE



RUMOURS



GUY MADDIN, EVAN JOHNSON, GALEN JOHNSON

It's not an homage to German Expressionism, with Grand Guignol acting. In fact, it's quite contemporary.

It's not even shot in Winnipeg. Are we sure this is a Guy Maddin movie? At least the weirdness factor checks out: G7 leaders, meeting in a German forest, encounter zombie bog mummies and a giant, pulsing brain. Maddin and co-directors Evan and Galen Johnson have their cast — including German Chancellor Cate Blanchett and Canadian PM Roy Dupuis — play against mysterious, apocalyptic events with delicious political triteness. If this is the filmmakers' most mainstream movie, we like where the muse is taking them. Wherever that might be. — JIM SLOTEK

28TH TFCA AWARDS



ROGERS BEST CANADIAN FILM AWARD NOMINEE



SHEPHERDS



SOPHIE DERASPE

Old ways and modern realities converge on the alpine paths in Sophie Deraspe's profound, immersive film. While traveling alone in southern France, a young Montreal ad exec (Félix-Antoine Duval, this year's TFCA Outstanding Performance in a Canadian Film) decides to take up the herder's staff. As the isolated milieu,

grueling rhythms and dark side of pastoral life begin fraying his resolve, Elise (Solène Rigot) arrives to join him. Sparked by co-writer Mathyas Lefebure's 2006 roman à clef, shot on location, and enlivened by actual events — births! raging storms! the transhumance! — *Shepherds* captures the physical challenges and philosophical revelations of the pair's transformative journey through exquisite visual storytelling and strong performances. — JENNIE PUNTER

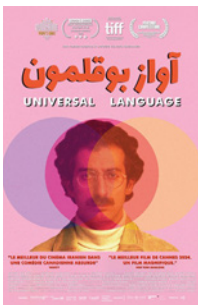
28TH TFCA AWARDS



ROGERS BEST CANADIAN FILM AWARD NOMINEE



UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE



MATTHEW RANKIN

A charming mash-up of Abbas Kiarostami's observational humanism and old-school Canadian absurdity, *Universal Language* reimagines our nation through an Iranian lens, where Farsi and French are the two official languages and Louis Riel is a national hero. (Not that he shouldn't be!) In wintry Winnipeg, a tour guide takes his charges to unimpressive landmarks,

while a depressed bureaucrat named Matthew Rankin (writer/director Rankin himself) returns from Montreal to visit a family he barely remembers. Their stories eventually intersect, but Rankin encourages us to enjoy the sights along the way: a world you can sink into, and recognize yourself in, even if their Tim Hortons menu is a little different. — NORMAN WILNER

28TH TFCA AWARDS



OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE IN A CANADIAN FILM



FÉLIX-ANTOINE DUVAL



In *Shepherds*, Mathyas (Félix-Antoine Duval), an aspiring shepherd, embraces the unknown as he trades in city existence for the hills of Provence and the promise of turning his pastoral imagination into reality. Duval's openness and naturalism allow us to feel all the ways Mathyas' new, traditional life overwhelms him – the callous farmers, the literal callouses – and all the ways it lives up to them: the exquisite natural beauty, the deep satisfactions of physical labour. His performance embodies the romanticism of co-writer/director Sophie Deraspe's adaptation, and makes reinvention seem

possible, which is something we all need to hold on to. — DAVE VOIGT

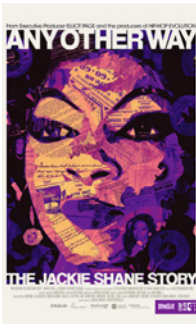
28TH TFCA AWARDS



ROGERS BEST CANADIAN DOCUMENTARY NOMINEE



ANY OTHER WAY: THE JACKIE SHANE STORY



MICHAEL MABBOTT, LUCAH ROSENBERG-LEE

In the documentary *Any Other Way: The Jackie Shane Story*, Michael Mabbott and Lucah Rosenberg-Lee tell the trail-blazing icon's story through her own words, showcasing her talent and how she broke barriers as one of the first out Black trans performers in Toronto's R&B scene. Because there's minimal video

footage of Shane at the time, the Toronto filmmakers animate her journey set against her vocals, a storytelling device that effectively captures her soul and details the challenges she faced as a trans woman. The documentary is a poignant tribute to her music and the fame she deserved, but sadly never achieved in life. — MARRISKA FERNANDES

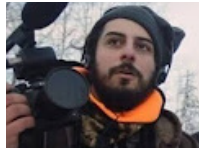
28TH TFCA AWARDS



ROGERS BEST CANADIAN DOCUMENTARY NOMINEE



YINTAH



JENNIFER WICKHAM, MICHAEL TOLEDANO, BRENDA MICHELL

An eye-opening and incendiary look at the lengths multinational corporations and the Canadian government take to build one of the world's longest and most controversial oil pipelines, *Yintah* is a powerful work of embedded, deeply personal journalism. Standing alongside Howilhkát Freda Huson and Sleydo' Molly Wickham — indigenous leaders of the Witsuwit'en people, who never ceded their lands as part of any treaty — directors Michael Toledano, Jennifer Wickham, and Brenda Michell unwaveringly place themselves on the front lines of a dangerous, sometimes violent battle between ancestral heritage and government-backed corporate interests. — ANDREW PARKER

28TH TFCA AWARDS



ROGERS BEST CANADIAN DOCUMENTARY NOMINEE



YOUR TOMORROW



ALI WEINSTEIN

Your Tomorrow is a post-apocalyptic documentary with a twist: The “post” is now. It chronicles the final summer of Toronto’s once-storied Ontario Place, dormant since 2012, now closed for the construction of a massive spa. Filmmaker Ali Weinstein mixes archival, optimistic footage of its early, space-age popularity — it opened in 1971 —

with present-day summer students, concertgoers, and a ragtag group of artists, birders, and nature enthusiasts who tried to stop Austria-based multinational Therme from moving in. Spoiler alert: They failed. A loving tribute to an attraction that was meant to last forever, and a reminder that nothing does. — CHRIS KNIGHT

28TH TFCA AWARDS



JAY SCOTT PRIZE FOR AN EMERGING ARTIST



J STEVENS

J Stevens' debut feature film, *Really Happy Someday*, is a testament to community, identity, and self-discovery. This moving portrait – produced, shot, and directed by Stevens and co-written with breakout star Breton Lalama – follows a stage musical performer's journey to find their voice after transitioning. Akin to a trans-*Boyhood*, told with humour, sensitivity, and most importantly, joy, the film exemplifies Stevens' commitment to showcasing diverse stories within the 2SLGBTQ+ community. Stevens' dedication to representation extends beyond the camera, reflecting their work with the Spindle Films Foundation, which supports trans, non-binary, and gender-diverse creatives through mentorship and development opportunities. With their creative vision, engaging storytelling, and commitment to inclusivity, J Stevens is a rising talent whose future in film is bright. We can't wait to see what they do next. —RACHEL WEST

28TH TFCA AWARDS



COMPANY 3 LUMINARY AWARD

COMPANY3



TONYA WILLIAMS

Tonya Williams has been an undeniable force in the Canadian and American film and television industries for 45 years. Though she's best known for her work on *The Young and the Restless* and *Polka Dot Door*, it's her unrelenting advocacy for racial equality that truly makes this award-winning actress, producer, and director a luminary. If the measure of a person is judged by where they stand in challenging times, then Williams' career warrants all the praise she has received. Long before diversity and inclusion became trendy initiatives, she was fighting against the imbalance of power within the Canadian entertainment industry.

As founder and executive director of the Reelworld Screen Institute, Reelworld Film Festival, and Reelworld Foundation, Williams took it upon herself to forge the type of meaningful change she wanted to see. These organizations, and initiatives such as Access Reelworld, a national database for racialized creators and industry professionals, have created spaces for marginalized voices to access valuable professional development opportunities. A co-founder of the Black Screen Office and member of numerous industry boards, Williams continues to be a beacon for change. Her light and impact will shine for generations to come. — COURTNEY SMALL

28TH TFCA AWARDS



TELEFILM CANADA EMERGING CRITIC AWARD

TELEFILM PARTNER
CANADA OF CHOICE



ALEX MOONEY

Over the past year, Alex Mooney, who is currently completing his degree in cinema studies at the University of Toronto, has generated an impressive range of bylines in Toronto, reviewing new releases and local retrospectives for alternative publications including *Exclaim!* and *In the Mood*, as well as essays and dispatches for respected American websites such as *Screen Slate*, *In Review Online*, and *MUBI Notebook*. These pieces are funny and trenchant, and sensitive to questions of form and representation. Taken together, they suggest a writer whose critical intelligence is already well beyond his years, with more fine work to come. —ADAM NAYMAN

28TH TFCA AWARDS



BEST PICTURE

***Nickel Boys*, RaMell Ross**

Runners-up

Anora, Sean Baker

The Brutalist, Brady Corbet

BEST DIRECTOR

RaMell Ross, *Nickel Boys*

Runners-up

Sean Baker, *Anora*

Payal Kapadia, *All We Imagine as Light*

OUTSTANDING LEAD PERFORMANCE

Marianne Jean-Baptiste, *Hard Truths*

OUTSTANDING LEAD PERFORMANCE

Mikey Madison, *Anora*

Runners-up

Adrien Brody, *The Brutalist*

Colman Domingo, *Sing Sing*

Ralph Fiennes, *Conclave*

Karla Sofía Gascón, *Emilia Pérez*

Demi Moore, *The Substance*

OUTSTANDING SUPPORTING PERFORMANCE

Yura Borisov, *Anora*

OUTSTANDING SUPPORTING PERFORMANCE

Kieran Culkin, *A Real Pain*

Runners-up

Clarence Maclin, *Sing Sing*

Zoe Saldaña, *Emilia Pérez*

Jeremy Strong, *The Apprentice*

Denzel Washington, *Gladiator II*

BREAKTHROUGH PERFORMANCE

Clarence Maclin, *Sing Sing*

Runners-up

Karla Sofía Gascón, *Emilia Pérez*

Mikey Madison, *Anora*

28TH TFCA AWARDS



BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY	<i>All We Imagine as Light</i> , Payal Kapadia
Runners-up	<i>Anora</i> <i>Challengers</i>
BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY	<i>Nickel Boys</i> RaMell Ross & Joslyn Barnes Based on the book <i>The Nickel Boys</i> by Colson Whitehead
Runners-up	<i>Conclave</i> <i>Dune: Part 2</i>
BEST ANIMATED FEATURE	<i>Flow</i> , Gints Zilbalodis
Runners-up	<i>Memoir of a Snail</i> <i>The Wild Robot</i>
ALLAN KING DOCUMENTARY AWARD	<i>Dahomey</i> , Mati Diop
Runners-up	<i>Occupied City</i> <i>Soundtrack to a Coup d'État</i>
BEST INTERNATIONAL FEATURE	<i>All We Imagine as Light</i> , Payal Kapadia
Runners-up	<i>Evil Does Not Exist</i> <i>Green Border</i>
BEST FIRST FEATURE	<i>Woman of the Hour</i> , Anna Kendrick
Runners-up	<i>40 Acres</i> <i>Janet Planet</i> <i>The People's Joker</i>

28TH TFCA AWARDS



SPECIAL CITATION



NO OTHER LAND



BASEL ADRA, YUVAL ABRAHAM, RACHEL ZORE, HAMDAN BALLAL

With an artfully urgent plea for peace, Palestinian journalist Basel Adra joins forces with Israeli reporter Yuval Abraham and filmmakers Rachel Szor and Hamdan Ballal to chronicle the history of forced house demolitions in his West Bank community, Masafer Yatta. *No Other Land* is an essential record of events preceding October 7, 2023 and devastating evidence of war crimes in Palestine. The Palestinian/Israeli collective's meticulous feat of citizen journalism

illustrates that there's no chance for peace in one land while its neighbour endures relentless violence. Note to distributors out there: as of press time, *No Other Land* still needs a home. — PAT MULLEN

28TH TFCA AWARDS



SPECIAL CITATION

SERENA WHITNEY AND THE REVUE FILM SOCIETY



REVUE CINEMA

SERENA WHITNEY

To understand why Canadians rallied around Toronto's Revue — the city's oldest operating movie theatre — as it faced eviction last year, consider how head programmer Serena Whitney helped the single-screen cinema

buck industry trends in a streaming-centric world. Thanks to Whitney's keen eye for films and curators, the Revue boasts more than 1,000 paid memberships, its screenings are regularly sold out, and some of our best-known filmmakers, including *BlackBerry*'s Matt Johnson and *Infinity Pool*'s Brandon Cronenberg, sing its praises. This past September, the cinema signed a new five-year lease. Let's hope the show goes on for even longer. — BARRY HERTZ

TFCA

TORONTO FILM CRITICS ASSOCIATION



A DANIELS/STEPHENSON PRODUCTION