

# TFCA

TORONTO FILM CRITICS ASSOCIATION



**BEST PICTURE 2025**

**29<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL TFCA AWARDS**

MONDAY, MARCH 2 2026  
OMNI KING EDWARD HOTEL

# 29<sup>TH</sup> TFCA AWARDS

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**Hello, and welcome to the 29th annual TFCA Awards.**

In this deeply concerning moment in history, millions of people were surprised to discover that what we needed most was a hot blast of Canadian gay hockey sex. But for many of us here tonight, the runaway success of *Heated Rivalry* confirmed what we've always known: Canadian creators are the world's best when it comes to smashing taboos.

From *In Praise of Older Women* in 1978 right up until this morning, breaking boundaries has been the Canadian brand. Everyone here can reel off a list of titles: *Last Night! A Winter Tan! Rude! Lilies, Hard Core Logo, The Hanging Garden, Kissed, Ginger Snaps, Love Sex and Eating the Bones*, and on we go. Sarah Polley and Atom Egoyan, Denys Arcand and Denis Villeneuve, Mary Harron and Patricia Rozema, Xavier Dolan and Bretten Hannam, Deepa Mehta and Sophie Dupuis, David Cronenberg and Brandon Cronenberg — envelope shredding is what we do, who we are.

After all, “Canadian filmmaker” is already one of the riskiest professions one could ever aspire to have. There's no point in climbing that mountain of impossibility unless the project is hugely personal, life-or-death intimate. But what our beloved risqué films demonstrate is that depicting sex is just the gateway to where we really want to go: depicting humanity. It's always been batshit-crazy to me that films with violence earn laxer ratings than films with sex. Because if you're open to all kinds of sex, then you're open to all kinds of people. Every race, religion, age, gender, kink. All our longing, fear, vulnerability, vanity, weirdness, tenderness. That openness — that willingness to be open — feels especially Canadian to me right now. When you're the most naked, you're the most nakedly human.

Thank you for getting down and dirty with us. I hope you enjoy the evening.

**Johanna Schneller**

President, Toronto Film Critics Association

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## 2026 TORONTO FILM CRITICS ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

**Johanna Schneller**

President; *The Globe and Mail*

**Pat Mullen**

Vice-president; *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*

**Marc Glassman**

*Classical 96.3 FM*, *POV Magazine*

**Jason Gorber**

*CBC Radio*

**Karen Gordon**

*Original Cin*

**Barbara Goslawski**

*Frameline*, *Exclaim!*

**Barry Hertz**

*The Globe and Mail*

**Rachel Ho**

*Exclaim!*

**Peter Howell**

*The Toronto Star*, *Night Vision*

**Kim Hughes**

*Original Cin*

**Brian D. Johnson**

*Zoomer*

**Peter Knegt**

*CBC Arts*

**Chris Knight**

*National Post*, *Original Cin*

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## 2026 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*

**Alice Shih**  
Fairchild Media Group, *Original Cin*

**Radheyana Simon Pillai**  
*CTV's Your Morning, The Guardian*

**Jim Slotek**  
*Original Cin*

**Courtney Small**  
*Frameline, Exclaim!*

**Victor Stiff**  
*That Shelf*

**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*

**Winnie Wang**  
Freelance

### EMERITUS

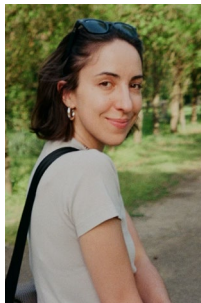
Jason Anderson, Linda Barnard, Tina Hassania, Bruce Kirkland

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## ROGERS BEST CANADIAN FILM NOMINEE



### BLUE HERON



#### SOPHY ROMVARI

Transcending the “autofiction” genre, Sophie Romvari’s *Blue Heron* follows a Hungarian family’s move to Vancouver Island in the 1990s, and the tragedy that struck in the process. It sees their story through the eyes of the family’s youngest, Sasha (Eylul Guven), in both the past and the present. An exploration of how time and age challenge the

memories we hold so dear, Romvari investigates and honours a deeply human experience with a film that cements the arrival of a great Canadian talent. — RACHEL HO

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## ROGERS BEST CANADIAN FILM NOMINEE



## NIRVANNA THE BAND THE SHOW THE MOVIE



### MATT JOHNSON

The powerhouse duo of Matt Johnson and Jay McCarroll have resurrected their moribund hilarious mockumentary web series *Nirvana the Band the Show* more than 15 years later for the big screen. So of course they borrow heavily from *Back to the Future*, as their characters (Matt and Jay, naturally) find themselves whisked back to

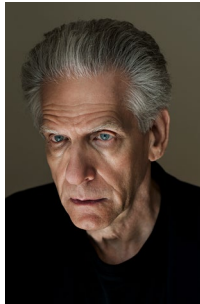
2008. The boys are still obsessed with playing a show at Toronto's Rivoli, and they're willing to do whatever it takes, breaking laws constitutional, paradoxical, physical, and even narrative along the way. It's all in good fun, and it's all very, very funny. — CHRIS KNIGHT

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## ROGERS BEST CANADIAN FILM NOMINEE



### THE SHROUDS



#### DAVID CRONENBERG

An enormously thoughtful, patient and frequently hilarious dissection of memory, sex, and the expiration date that we are all staring down, *The Shrouds* lands as something of a grand syllabus of David Cronenberg Studies. Yet the film isn't a last will and testament from the Canadian icon, either, no matter frequent his threats of retirement. If anything, this

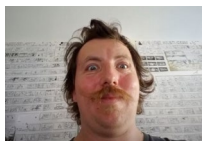
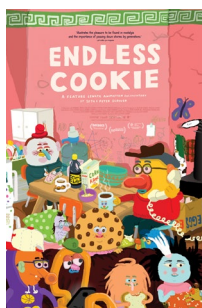
work is evidence of a fiercely alive filmmaker, as charged in his passion and committed in his ambitions as ever. — BARRY HERTZ

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## ROGERS BEST CANADIAN DOCUMENTARY NOMINEE



### ENDLESS COOKIE



#### SETH SCRIVER & PETER SCRIVER

Hilarious, psychedelic, and surprisingly poignant, *Endless Cookie* just might be one of the most accurate portrayals of community and the creative process. Not since Sarah Polley's *Stories We Tell* have we had such a warm and woolly exploration of memories served up by a buffet of oral anecdotes as those shared between Seth Scriver

and his Indigenous half-brother Peter. Don't let the colourful cartoons fool you: Under the seemingly shambolic collection of stories is a bracing view of survival and spirituality. — ELI GLASNER

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## ROGERS BEST CANADIAN DOCUMENTARY NOMINEE



### GHOSTS OF THE SEA



#### VIRGINIA TANGVALD

Virginia Tangvald's father Peter and her brother Thomas died separately at sea. She wants to know why. Through interviews with navigators, seamen, and family friends, she realizes that Thomas emulated their father, a famous sailor who worshipped personal freedom and answered to no one while taking outrageous risks. Even

more gripping, Tangvald hears horrifying evidence that Peter also wanted freedom to control the women around him. With its visually stunning backdrop of the raging seas, this is a devastating, brave, exploration of narcissism and obsession. — SUSAN G. COLE

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## ROGERS BEST CANADIAN DOCUMENTARY NOMINEE



### WHO KILLED THE MONTREAL EXPOS?



#### JEAN-FRANÇOIS POISSON

Contrary to the old adage, failure has many fathers, as one sees in director Jean-François Poisson's *Who Killed the Montreal Expos?* An insightful look into the fickle relationship between athletics and accounting, this film isn't an attempt to assign blame upon any one person or company for the folding of Canada's first Major League

Baseball team (sorry, Toronto). It's a call for a nuanced point of view and a wider sense of accountability. It's what the fans deserve. — ANDREW PARKER

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### OUTSTANDING LEAD PERFORMANCE IN A CANADIAN FILM



Charlotte Aubin (left)  
and Joan Chen (right)  
in *Montreal, My Beautiful*

#### **JOAN CHEN, *MONTREAL, MY BEAUTIFUL***

Joan Chen won her first Best Actress Award in China when she was a teenager, but at 20, she courageously left her comfort zone and went to the U.S. to study English and built her Hollywood career with masters like Bernardo Bertolucci (*The Last Emperor*) and David Lynch (*Twin Peaks*). She continues to take diverse roles worldwide. Her latest risk brings her to Quebec where she learned French to play a mother who finds liberation with a lesbian lover in *Montreal*. Her collection of awards now spans four continents and three languages. — ALICE SHIH

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### OUTSTANDING SUPPORTING PERFORMANCE IN A CANADIAN FILM



#### **ELLE-MÁIJÁ TAILFEATHERS, *SWEET ANGEL BABY***

The performances in *Sweet Angel Baby* set the film apart from the norm. In particular, Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers as Toni, an outsider in the town but friend to Eliza (Michaela Kurimsky), is an absolute powerhouse here as her character is the lynchpin to the entire film and shares a message that honesty with oneself is the route to happiness. Tailfeathers allows for vulnerability and stoicism in moments of self-discovery. It's a joy to watch.

— DAVE VOIGT

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**BEST PICTURE** *One Battle After Another*,  
Paul Thomas Anderson

Runners-up *Hamnet*, Chloé Zhao  
*Sinners*, Ryan Coogler

**BEST DIRECTOR** Paul Thomas Anderson,  
*One Battle After Another*

Runners-up Ryan Coogler, *Sinners*  
Oliver Laxe, *Sirāt*

**BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY** *Sinners*, Ryan Coogler

Runners-up *Marty Supreme*, Josh Safdie,  
Ronald Bronstein  
*Sentimental Value*, Joachim Trier,  
Eskil Vogt

**BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY** *One Battle After Another*,  
Paul Thomas Anderson

Runners-up *Hamnet*, Chloé Zhao,  
Maggie O'Farrell  
*No Other Choice*, Park Chan-wook,  
Lee Kyoung-mi, Don McKellar,  
Jayhe Lee

**OUTSTANDING LEAD PERFORMANCE** Rose Byrne,  
*If I Had Legs I'd Kick You*

**OUTSTANDING LEAD PERFORMANCE** Ethan Hawke,  
*Blue Moon*

Runners-up Jessie Buckley, *Hamnet*  
Leonardo DiCaprio,  
*One Battle After Another*  
Michael B. Jordan, *Sinners*  
Wagner Moura, *The Secret Agent*

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**OUTSTANDING SUPPORTING PERFORMANCE** **Benicio del Toro,**  
*One Battle After Another*

**OUTSTANDING SUPPORTING PERFORMANCE** **Nina Hoss,**  
*Hedda*

Runners-up Jacob Elordi, *Frankenstein*  
Amy Madigan, *Weapons*  
Sean Penn, *One Battle After Another*  
Stellan Skarsgård, *Sentimental Value*

**BREAKTHROUGH PERFORMANCE** **Abou Sangaré, *Souleymane's Story***

Runners-up Miles Caton, *Sinners*  
Chase Infinti, *One Battle After Another*

**OUTSTANDING LEAD PERFORMANCE IN A CANADIAN FILM** **Joan Chen,**  
*Montreal, My Beautiful*

Runners-up Deragh Campbell,  
*Measures for a Funeral*  
Vincent Cassel, *The Shrouds*

**OUTSTANDING SUPPORTING PERFORMANCE IN A CANADIAN FILM** **Elle-Máijá Tailfeathers,**  
*Sweet Angel Baby*

Runners-up Charlotte Aubin,  
*Montreal, My Beautiful*  
Troy Kotsur, *In Cold Light*

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**ALLAN KING DOCUMENTARY AWARD** *Come See Me in the Good Light*  
Ryan White

Runners-up *Orwell: 2+2=5*, Raoul Peck  
*The Tale of Silyan*, Tamara Kotevska

**BEST ANIMATED FEATURE** *Endless Cookie*  
Seth Scriver & Peter Scriver

Runners-up *KPop Demon Hunters*,  
Maggie Kang, Chris Appelhans  
*Space Cadet*, Kid Koala

**BEST INTERNATIONAL FEATURE** *Sirāt*, Oliver Laxe

Runners-up *It Was Just an Accident*,  
Jafar Panahi  
*The Secret Agent*,  
Kleber Mendonça Filho

**BEST FIRST FEATURE** *Blue Heron*, Sophy Romvari

Runners-up *Eephus*, Carson Lund  
*Sorry Baby*, Eva Victor

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### JAY SCOTT PRIZE FOR AN EMERGING ARTIST



#### XIAODAN HE

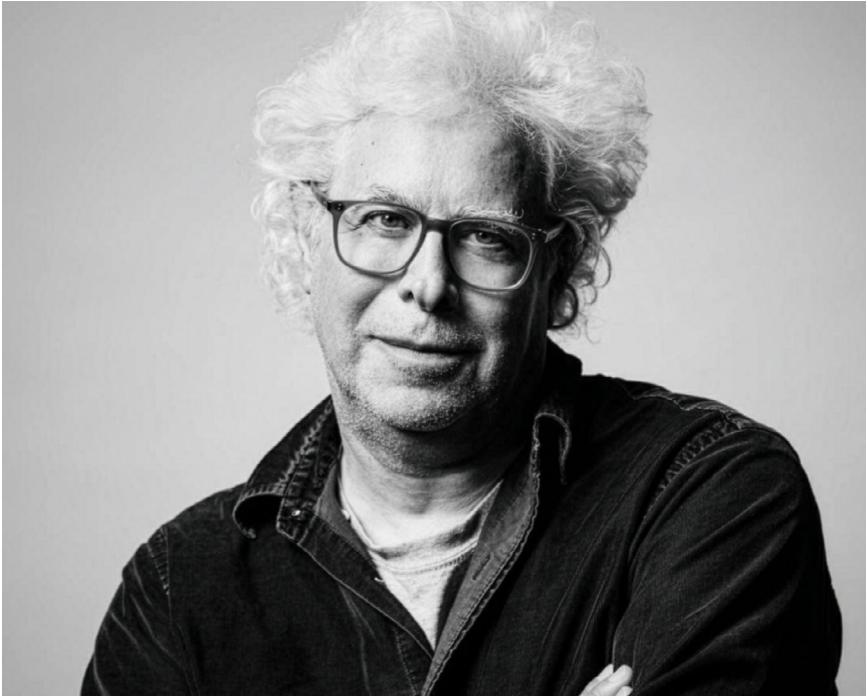
Quebec-based director Xiaodan He's credits include *A Touch of Spring* and the documentaries *Cairo Calling* and *My Father's Journey*. Her second dramatic feature, *Montreal, My Beautiful*, stars Joan Chen as a wife and mother who finally finds the strength to act on the queer desire she's repressed all her life. In addition to being a bright, generous drama about one woman's acceptance of herself, the film is also a subtle and occasionally devastating look at the cultural disconnect that can define the immigrant experience ... but doesn't have to. — NORM WILNER

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## COMPANY 3 LUMINARY AWARD

**COMPANY3**



### RON MANN

From early days sleeping on the beach at Cannes before clambering to screenings, to having his award-winning documentaries projected in prestigious theatres around the planet, to bringing restorations of Canadian films to audiences worldwide, and championing works by Canadian talents and international artists via his distribution company, Ron Mann has steadfastly provided audiences with films we like. He's somehow done all of these feats while remaining a total mensch. — JASON GORBER

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## TELEFILM CANADA EMERGING CRITIC AWARD

**TELEFILM** PARTNER  
CANADA OF  
CHOICE



### NIRRIS NAGENDRARAJAH

The TFCA receives many applications for this award, and it's always refreshing to encounter a voice that cuts through the echo chamber of *Tár* reviews and superhero hot takes. Nirris Nagendrarajah caught our attention with his clear and distinct voice, but also his efforts to use insightful, well-informed film criticism as a tool to both reflect and build community. You should read his work in publications like *Little White Lies*, *MUBI Notebook*, and *CBC Arts*—and surely more to come. — PAT MULLEN

# TFCA

TORONTO FILM CRITICS ASSOCIATION



A DANIELS/STEPHENSON  
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS & PRODUCTION