

Harold C. Joe, Leslie D. Bland

Production company(ies)

Orca Cove Media, Less Bland Productions

Short biography of producer(s)

Harold Joe and Leslie Bland have produced and sold features, one-offs, and series for numerous broadcasters including CBC, APTN, Bell Media, Discovery Networks, FNX, Amazon, Super Channel, Hollywood Suite, Telus, Zoomer Media, Knowledge Network, AMI-tv, CHEK TV, Télé Québec, TV 5 Monde, Kwese (Africa), Chill (Russia), RSC (Hungary and Romania), Bytedance (China), NITV Australia, and Maori TV New Zealand.

Harold and Leslie completed the feature documentary *A Cedar Is Life* with the support of Super Channel, CHEK TV, the Canada Media Fund, Creative BC, and the Rogers Documentary Fund. It has been a selection to six festivals in Canada, the US, and Mexico, making its World Premiere at Red Nation International Film Festival, and its Canadian Premiere at the Victoria Film Festival. It is a Jury Award Winner at the Quetzalcoatl International Indigenous Film Festival and won the Audience Favourite Award at the Salt Spring Film Festival. Its theatrical run has featured many sold out screenings, and it has been nominated for two Leo Awards.

Previously they produced the feature documentary *Tzouhalem* with the support of Super Channel, CHEK TV, the Canada Media Fund, and the Indigenous Screen Office. *Tzouhalem* was an official selection to ten film festivals, making its World Premiere at the American Indian Film Festival, and its Canadian Premiere at the Whistler Film Festival. It received two Leo Award nominations, and has since been acquired by APTN, Knowledge Network, and FNX in the USA.

A scripted comedy heist feature *The Great Salish Heist*, with Graham Greene, Ashley Callingbull, and Tricia Helfer attached and inspired by Producer Harold C. Joe's experiences as a Cowichan Archeological Consultant is an official selection to five film festivals so far, picking up awards, selling out venues, and receiving standing ovations. It's currently playing in cinemas across the country.

Another scripted feature, a coming-of-age family dramedy, *Sweet Summer Pow Wow*, with support from Telefilm, the ISO, the CMF, Creative BC, the Shaw Rocket Fund, and Bell Media is currently in post-production.

Filmography of applicant(s) - include title and year and/or a link to your IMDb page

Sweet Summer Pow Wow, Coming of Age Romcom Feature, 2024 (in post-production)

The Great Salish Heist, Comedy Heist Feature, 2024

A Cedar Is Life, Feature Documentary, 2022

Tzouhalem, Feature Documentary, 2021

Muscle Muse, 10 x 30 Lifestyle TV series, 2020

Tips and Tricks for Everyday Living, 5 x 10 Lifestyle TV Series, 2019

Dust n' Bones, Documentary, 2018

The Wine Guys: Grape Escapes, 6 x 30 TV Series, 2017

Ollie and Emma, 6 x 9 Sitcom Series, 2016

Title of qualifying feature film

The Great Salish Heist

Expected release date in 2024:

February 9, 2024

Through which distribution model is your qualifying film expected to be released:

Festival

Name of theatrical distributor, film festival or streaming service releasing or exhibiting qualifying film:

Victoria Film Festival, Oakville Film Festival, Super Channel, and others

Film synopsis

A down-on-his-luck First Nations Archeologist seeking redemption teams up with a group of misfits from the Rez to break into a museum and reclaim sacred artifacts that rightfully belong to their people.

The inspiration: why was this an important film to make?

Xulputstun (Harold Joe) is an archeological consultant and cultural worker for Cowichan Tribes and neighbouring nations, dealing in repatriation of ancestral remains and sacred artifacts. The Great Salish Heist is inspired by Producer Harold C. Joe's experiences as a First Nations Archeological Consultant. The film deals with a very serious subject yet relays the message in an entertaining comedy heist feature.

The making-of: how did this film come together? What were the highlights/challenges of producing this film?

Did not receive Telefilm production financing, so putting the financing together was very challenging, and the producers had to cover over 20% of the budget through producer equity.

National pride: describe what uniquely defines you as a Canadian producer.

Harold and Leslie focus on developing projects with a strong point of authenticity, and producing them in a commercially viable way.

A member of the CMPA, Less Bland Productions is a company dedicated to creating high quality TV series and feature films for distribution in Canada and beyond. A company with original and eclectic tastes, producing scripted features and series, feature docs, and doc series, LBP facilitates Indigenous centered content through its affiliated company First Nations controlled Orca Cove Media.

Orca Cove Media Inc. a CMPA member, produces film, television and digital media projects that have distinctive First Nations content, empowering Indigenous people to share their stories with domestic and international audiences. Orca Cove produces both documentary features and series, as well as scripted series and features.

How will this film further your career as a producer?

The film is the first scripted feature that Harold and Leslie have produced.

What is your next step as a Canadian independent producer?

To continue to build the scripted stream for Orca Cove Media and Less Bland Productions, adding it to the foundation of documentary production activity that has already been established.